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The Making of Mañana-Land: The American Mediterranean In The Age Of Jim Crow And The United Fruit Company

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by

JOSEPH FLOYD

Under the Direction of Charles Steffen, PhD

ABSTRACT

My dissertation “The Making of Mañana-Land” describes the creation of enclaves of agribusiness, tourism and militarism across the American Mediterranean, the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean, expanding into the Pacific with the Panama Canal. Building on labor histories of the banana trade, most notably by Jason Colby, as well as histories of tropical tourism, most notably Catherine Cocks, it examines workers and tourists side-by-side, describing the racialization of labor and leisure.

Imagined as a timeless mañana-land, the American Mediterranean was the crucible of a radical modernity that prefigured the future of globalized corporate capitalism. The U.S. imperial
state and the private empire of United Fruit, in cooperation with modernizing elites in Latin America and the U.S. South, expanded with public health campaigns to eradicate yellow fever, contain hookworm and malaria, and reporting hurricanes. Agribusiness corporations developed a rationalized approach to transportation, communication and administration. White managerial classes relied on the labor, skills and knowledge of non-white immigrant workers, including Black Jamaicans who brought banana planting to Central America, and Japanese and Mexicans in the citrus groves of Southern California. Vertical integration maximized corporate profits while slashing costs, making bananas and oranges cheap consumer staples and symbols of the abundance of capitalism, as trains and steamships that transported these fruits also carried growing numbers of wealthy white U.S. tourists.

Transnational labor migrations both created and undermined racial segregation. Afro-American migration, West Indian immigration and Mexican immigration altered the racial and cultural makeup of the U.S., creating Jazz Age subcultures and radicalized racial nationalisms. Racism against West Indians shaped nationalism in the Spanish Caribbean, opposing the corporate imperialism of United Fruit. Eugenics movements across the American Mediterranean claimed the sanitary legacy of public health campaigns against tropical diseases, advocating restrictions on non-white immigration, as well as more extreme eugenic measures, such as sterilization. By describing how capitalist globalization provoked backlashes against needed but unwanted immigrants, I will challenge ideas of globalization as a weakening the state, while drawing parallels with the contemporary rise of populist nationalism.

INDEX WORDS: Agribusiness, Tropics, Central America, Eugenics, Tourism, Transnationalism
THE MAKING OF MAÑANA-LAND: THE AMERICAN MEDITERRANEAN IN
THE AGE OF JIM CROW AND THE UNITED FRUIT COMPANY

by

JOSEPH FLOYD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
2019
DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family who have meant and continue to mean so much to me. To my grandfathers Lou Hamann and Joe Floyd, whose lives and legacies helped inspire my scholarly pursuits. To my mother and father, Diane and John Floyd, who worked so hard to raise and support me. Finally, to my brother Phillip who has been a friend and companion.
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1 INTRODUCTION

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United Fruit Company Steamship lines, Central America, the West Indies, South America and portions of the United States and Mexico (1909) (Library of Congress, Maps Division)
INTRODUCTION: THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN MEDITERRANEAN

From September 18 until December 31, 1895, the Cotton States and International Exposition drew 800,000 visitors to Atlanta, a city of 75,000.\(^1\) Thirty years after the end of the U.S. Civil War, it promoted agriculture and industries of the New South and sought to stimulate foreign and domestic trade amidst the worst economic depression in U.S. history. Despite fears that his speech “would encourage social equality,” Tuskegee Institute founder Booker T. Washington urged Back accommodation to white rule, and for Southern whites to rely on the labor of “8,000,000 negroes whose habits you know, whose loyalty and love you have tested,” instead of European immigrants “of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits.”\(^2\) The Negro Building, at the southern end of the fairground, near the Black Fourth Ward, displayed works of art and exhibits by colleges, churches and businesses. Displays of racial progress stood in contrast to the most popular exhibit, “The Old Plantation,” a recreation of slavery, with slave cabins and “real negroes as the actors.”\(^3\) Amidst appeals for racial harmony, there were eleven lynchings in Georgia in 1894, with Black men hung in Brooks Co. near Valdosta in December; by the time of Washington’s speech, there had been eight lynchings across the state in 1895.\(^4\)

Exhibits promoted inter-regional trade. West of the Negro Building, the California Building, in the Spanish Mission style, featured a thirty-foot tower of oranges, with fruit illuminated by electric lights, and samples of the sweet, seedless Navel oranges grown in semi-arid Southern California.\(^5\) Despite the name, the most international part of the exposition was the ethnographic voyeurism on display at Midway Heights. A Mexican Village featured the famed

\(^1\) Walter Gerald Cooper, Official History of Fulton County (Atlanta, Ga: Reprint Company, 1934), 415
\(^2\) The Cotton States and International Exposition and the South Illustrated (Atlanta: Illustrator Company, 1896), 98
\(^3\) The Cotton States and International Exposition and the South, 91
\(^4\) William Fitzhugh Brundage, Lynchings in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930 (Champagne, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 192
\(^5\) California’s Exhibit at the Atlanta Exposition, The Overland Monthly 23 no. 9 (September 1896): 387-401
military band, although objections from organizers led to the cancellation of a planned bullfight. “Streets of Cairo” had camel rides “with Arabs as drivers” and, behind closed doors, “sensuous Oriental dances” by faux-harem girls.\textsuperscript{6} A Chinese village featured acrobatic performances and “a bevy of Chinese ladies for a beauty show,” brought by concessionaire Kee Owyang.\textsuperscript{7} An Indian Village had Lakota veterans of the Black Hills War of 1876 and survivors of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre that destroyed the Ghost Dance movement, a woman “Yellow Dogface” and her son “Little Wound,” struck by two bullets from Gatling guns.\textsuperscript{8}

Organizers sought to develop trade with Latin America, an export market for Southern cotton and textiles. Two commissioners, who spoke neither Spanish nor Portuguese, traveled to Latin America. Charles Redding presented invitations to representatives of Mexican President don Porfirio Díaz and visited Costa Rica. Col. I.W. Avery spent nine months in South America, crossing the Andes and the Straights of Magellan and surviving outbreaks of yellow fever and cholera in Brazil. Political instability prevented financial commitments, and coverage of the trips revealed Southern ignorance of Latin America. An Atlanta Constitution article on the dedication of a statue of James Monroe in Buenos Aires described Argentines speaking Portuguese.\textsuperscript{9}

The Brazilian Republic promised an exhibit, cancelled due to outbreaks of cholera and yellow fever and a civil war in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Chile authorized an exhibit on nitrate mining, but shipping difficulties prevented its arrival. Argentina and Venezuela had displays of mineral and agricultural products. Only Costa Rica provided a pavilion, two Spanish colonial style buildings, a theater with “beautiful views” of the countries’ volcanic mountains

\textsuperscript{6}- The Cotton States and International Exposition and the South, 90
\textsuperscript{7}-Atlanta Exposition Notes, Stone: An Illustrated Magazine Vol. 11 June to November 1895 (Chicago, D.H. Ranck Publishing Co.), 353
\textsuperscript{8}- The Cotton States and International Exposition and the South, 91
and beaches projected on a twenty-four-foot screen by a stereopticon, with displays and samplings of “Indian curios,” coffee and chocolate. These displays were in keeping with the Exposition’s theme of a modernizing, white-ruled but racially harmonious southland.

### 2.1 The Banana Empire and the New South

An English-language tract written by commissioner Ricardo Villafranca, *Costa Rica: Gem of the American Republics* echoed these themes. Hoping to lure white U.S. immigrants to Costa Rica, he appealed to anxieties about the end of the Western frontier. “I have often been strongly impressed, and even grieved, while traveling over the western states and territories, at the hard efforts of an honest people trying to make lands, that seem to me like deserts, produce food.” He urged the next generation of North American pioneers to “go South, to Costa Rica, the tropical land,” possessing the advantages of “an almost unlimited territory, a tropical sun, a temperate climate, assured rains, lands whose fertility are exhaustless, and whose seasons permit two or more crops a year.” On this new frontier white supremacy was assured, as the few remaining Indians were “quiet and peaceful, looking upon the encroaching civilization with an air of resignation, and honoring the white man with almost spirit of worship.”

It is not accidental that these quixotic appeals for white immigration came at a time when thousands of Black West Indians, mostly from Jamaica, were immigrating to the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, drawn by railroad construction and the banana industry. Nearly 10,000,000 bunches of green bananas were exported to the United States from the Caribbean port of Limón.

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12-“Costa Rica, the tropical land, with a prolonged May day splendor, where neither oppressive heat nor freezing cold prevail, and the flowers are ever in bloom.” Villafranca, *Costa Rica: Gem of the American Republics* 8, 30
from 1886 to 1895. Villafranca suggested travelers from the South and West sail to Costa Rica from New Orleans on “the small steamers engaged in the banana trade,” a voyage of four days “which, together with the low cost of the passage is quite an inducement to those who are willing to disregard the lack of comforts on the vessels.” On the back cover appeared an advertisement for the main employer of Black immigrants, “Minor C. Keith, San José and Port Limon. Land Dealer and Producer and Exporter of Bananas.”

Minor Keith came of age amidst the Reconstruction of the post-Civil War South, commercial expansion in the U.S. Western frontier, and the beginnings of U.S. economic imperialism in Latin America. Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1869 sixteen-year old Minor Keith acquired a title to Padre Island, Texas “a bleak, uninhabited island near the mouth of the Rio Grande.” He hired Mexicans vaqueros to raise hogs and 3,000 longhorn cattle, which he had slaughtered for hides and tallow, feeding the beef to hogs, killed for bacon and hams, which he sold in the prosperous stockyard town of Corpus Christi. Keith’s uncle Henry Meiggs, “Don Enrique” designed the highest railroad in the world over the Peruvian Andes, linking the Pacific port of Callao with the copper and silver mines of Cerro de Pasco. In 1871, Costa Rican President Gen. Tomás Guardia awarded Meiggs a contract to build Central America’s first railroad. Meiggs entrusted the project to his nephew, Henry Keith, Minor’s father. Henry and his three sons reached Costa Rica via Panama, traveling by mule from the palm-shaded Pacific port

13-The Golden Caribbean: A Winter Visit to the Republics of Colombia, Costa Rica, Spanish Honduras, Belize and the Spanish Main Via Boston and New Orleans (Boston: Lee and Shepard, Publishers, 1900), 68 University of Texas, Austin Dig. May 20, 2008 1,692,102 bunches were exported in the year 1896
14-Villafranca, Costa Rica: Gem of the American Republics, 12
15-“Advertisements, “Minor C. Keith, San José and Port Limon Agent for Costa Rica & Honduras Steamboat Line” Villafranca, Costa Rica: Gem of the American Republics, 141
of Puntarenas to San José, descending mountains to reach Limón, “a dark, reef-strewn seacoast” surrounded by “unmeasured miles of swamp. The sunlight beat fiercely on the open coast, and waves of mosquitoes droned seaward from the vast crescent of jungle.”

German-Costa Rican labor contractor Guillermo Nanne imported the first six hundred Afro-Jamaicans, while Henry Keith brought another six hundred, with fifty-four Chinese coolies. Over 700 men were recruited on the New Orleans waterfront, some veterans of William Walker’s 1856-57 invasion of Nicaragua. All but twenty-five died of fever. About 200 Italians were recruited via a labor contractor in Mexico; 60 died in the first week, after which they mutinied and were stationed in the highlands of Turrialba. Crews came “from Canada, Holland and Sweden, from Syria, Turkey, India and Egypt. But for every white man or brown men there were at least twelve Jamaicans.” Construction faced challenges of torrential rains—254 inches or 21 feet in 1872 and “tropical fevers,” undiagnosed yellow fever and malaria. The first 25 miles of railroad took three years and claimed no less than 4,000 lives, including Henry Keith and three of his brothers. Afterwards Keith relied solely upon Afro-Jamaican laborers.

The railroad did not reach Costa Rica’s highland coffee fincas. Requiring cargo, in 1873 Minor Keith brought banana plants from Colón. Rhizomes of the Gros Michel cultivar, brought from Southeast Asia to the Caribbean island of Martinique and carried to Jamaica by the 1830s, were planted by Afro-Jamaicans who were experienced in banana growing, and by 1881, Keith

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18. Charles Morrow Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 46
19. Marquis James, Merchant Adventurer: The Story of W. Grace (Rowman Littlefield, 1993), 76
20. “Of those seven hundred men not more than twenty-five ever left Limón. All the others died of fever. Later he brought down fifteen hundred more; all of them died of fever. Samuel Crowther, The Romance and Rise of the American Tropics (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929), 148
21. Charles Morrow Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 52
22. Charles Morrow Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 52
made his first cargo shipments to New Orleans. Unable to compete with Ferdinand de Lesseps’ French company building the Panama Canal, Keith recruited laborers from Barbados, Martinique and Garifuna from Honduras. Among survivors of a wrecked steamship, he met his future wife, Cristina Castro Fernández, daughter of Costa Rican ex-president José María Castro Madriz and niece of Costa Rica’s current president Próspero Fernández Oreamuno, returning from a shopping trip to New Orleans. Marrying into Costa Rica’s aristocracy, Keith signed an 1884 contract with Costa Rican foreign minister Bernardo Soto Alfaro, his cousin-in-law. Keith received receivership rights to the Costa Rica Railway and 800,000 acres of land along the railway, exempted from taxes for twenty-five years. Unemployed Jamaicans planted bananas, and by 1886, 60 banana plantations existed along the railroad. With the collapse of French construction on the Panama Canal an influx of Jamaican laborers enabled the railroad to be completed, train service to the capital beginning on Christmas Day 1890.

Reflecting on the rise of the Costa Rican banana industry, Villafranca published English articles describing the planting and harvesting of the luxurious fruit, while ignoring Black laborers. In the Matina valley, “Hundreds of cars are loaded every day and the number of boats loaded with bananas far surpasses any freight. The harvest never ends. From January to December there is continuous cutting and marketing.” Limón had risen from “a few shanties” to “one of the most important cities fanned by the Caribbean breezes,” Villafranca emphasized its

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relative familiarity to U.S. travelers, its “distinctive appearance, not unlike the southern settlements” “English is the prevailing language,” he added, omitting other similarities, large Black populations, plantation monoculture and institutionalized racial segregation.  27

While Limón’s thriving banana industry and verdant tropical nature inspired admiration, the port’s large Black population inspired racist fears. A writer in Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly found Limón’s pestilential reputation exaggerated and described plans to raise the city and build a seawall, but warned, “the negroes at the Port have long been a dreaded element. Ignorant and brutal, profane, thievish and murderous they are, as a mass, the worst character imaginable. The honest and reputable darky of Jamaica will rarely leave his beautiful island home. Such as come down to Limon are the very scum of Kingston and its surroundings.” 28 A lurid account of the murder of a Frenchman, buried in a graveyard alongside the first white rail workers, plays on fears of lawlessness and violence in a place where free Blacks were the vast majority of the population. 29

Less than a decade later, The Golden Caribbean (1900), by Boston author Henry Blaney, offered a more inviting depiction of tropical travel. From Limón, with its “large and clean” hotel and “multicolored trees” the train to San José passes banana plantations and “little villages of Jamaica negroes.” Up mountains where the “Reventazon River roars and plunges through a narrow canyon,” humid air and “tremendous guava trees” gives way to cooling mountain breezes and coffee trees, changes in climate mirroring “changes of race from black to brown to white,” an invisible line where “the negro falls back before the increased energy of the white race.” 30

27-Ricardo Villafranca, “Costa Rica” in The National Geographic Magazine 8 no. 5 (1897) 145, 143
28-Cecil Charles, “Port Limon,” Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly Vol. 34 July to December 1892: 375
29-Cecil Charles, “Port Limon,” 376
30-Henry Blaney, The Golden Caribbean: A Winter Visit to the Republics of Colombia, Costa Rica, Spanish Honduras, Belize and the Spanish Main, 50-51 The author was known for “Old Boston”
Blaney departs aboard one of the “Admirals,” the first ships of United Fruit’s white fleet, amidst “snow and chilly winds” of New England, reaching open sea off Cape Cod. After two days, he recounted, “we are in another clime; all feeling of frost has disappeared and the officers of the ship put on their white duck suits and a tropical smile, and talk entertainingly of mermaids and such things to the lady passengers.”31 Speeding up and sanitizing tropical travel, the ship enabled wealthy whites to gradually immerse themselves in tropical nature. The luxurious Titchfield Hotel in Port Antonio, Jamaica, owned by United Fruit, was near British roads to jungle-clad mountains of the Golden Vale. In Cartagena, Colombia, “more Spanish than Spain itself,” “street cries are tropically Spanish, negro, and Indian,” but U.S. whites can rest in a “cool and spacious” American Hotel and travel by rail in cars with English speaking conductors.32 In San José, Costa Rica, greeted at the rail station by the “English-speaking manager of the Imperial Hotel,” Blaney focused on primitive scenes. Descriptions of December fiesta where “the Costa Rica peon lets himself loose,” Talamanca Indians “naked, except a breech-cloth,” appeal alongside illustrations of a barefoot, beshrouded “Indian Woman of Talamanca” bearing tropical fruits and a “Peon Market Cart,” the ancient bullock cart.33

*The Golden Caribbean* ends with an account of the five-day journey from New Orleans to Limón, Costa Rica, aboard the *SS Anselm*. While North American travel writers usually focused on the subtropical climate of New Orleans, Blaney situates the city on the northern edge of the tropics, departing in February “chilled to the marrow of our bones by the raw wind blowing down the Mississippi.” Passing that most Southern of sights “(the sight of all sights to a Northern man) a stern-wheeled steamer loaded to the gunwales with bales of cotton,” the ship

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31-Henry Blaney, *The Golden Caribbean*, 1
32-Blaney, *The Golden Caribbean*, 8
33-Blaney, *The Golden Caribbean*, 57, 44, 59
enters the Gulf of Mexico, cold northern winds giving way to calm seas and sunshine, at first
dazzling beautiful, but growing hazardous as the ships sails south.

“The sunsets are glorious, luscious in their dreamy beauty, reminding one that soon the
blazing tropics are to come with their stronger colors and contrasts. After three days voyage the
temperature increases-no longer can we bask in the sun-rather we must shun it and seek the
shady side the deck. The heat is humid and tends to lounging and deliberation, salt sea baths
drawn direct from the sea are now popular and one seeks to keep down the heat of blood.”34

In the transition from the cold temperate zone to the tropics, warmth quickly gave way to
oppressive heat, necessitating white travelers to take careful precautions to avoid sunburn and
heat exhaustion. In contrast to Villafranca’s quixotic appeal for settlers, Blaney’s guide describes
the tropical cruise, a new form of travel separating tourism from colonization. “As a floating
resort hotel, it created more distance between travelers and the places they visit,” writes historian
Catherine Cocks. “It offered the height of metropolitan luxury and cleanliness amid the
backward tropics.”35 As the debilitating effect of tropical heat precluded settlement and labor, the
tropical climate encouraged leisurely relaxation in a tropical sea secured by U.S. imperialism.
My dissertation explores the symbiotic growth of tropical agribusiness and tropical tourism
across the transnational space of the American Mediterranean Sea, the borderlands of North
America with the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico. It examines how scientific struggles
for control over tropical nature shaped discourses of scientific racism.

34. Blaney, *The Golden Caribbean*, 113
35. Catherine Cocks, *Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South in the Americas* (Philadelphia: University of
Pennsylvania Press, 2013) 55
2.2 The Scholarship of Mañana-Land

The making of mañana-land is a story that foreshadows the future rise and crises of global capitalism. Efforts to impose an extractive capitalist order on an unruly environment gave rise to new technologies of governing by reengineering spaces and populations. New practices of biopower developed with sanitary campaigns against tropical diseases and efforts to reshape spaces and populations, creating enclaves of agro-industrial production.\(^{36}\) A state-corporate apparatus developed to police public health and safeguard tropical trade in the transnational space of the American Mediterranean. This tropical sea tied together archipelagos of enclave economies, tropical fruit plantations, built by Black and brown workers, and winter playgrounds for white tourists.

Despite the tentative conquest of the tropics for agribusiness, militarism and tourism, the American tropics remained an unruly environment. Hurricanes and tropical storms menaced both plantations and port cities. Debilitating malaria and hookworm, exacerbated by rural poverty, proved impossible to completely eradicate. Monoculture aided the spread of plant diseases, the fungal infestation of Panama disease destroying older banana plantings and driving the expansion of United Fruit’s banana empire. Prohibition tourism, land and real estate booms in Cuba and Florida and in Mexican border towns, South Texas and Southern California epitomized the ephemeral prosperity of the “Roaring Twenties,” followed by the Great Depression. As economic booms gave way to busts, resentment at needed but unwanted immigrants and anger at perceived losses of national sovereignty fueled backlashes. West Indian and Mexican agricultural laborers imported by United Fruit and commercial growers across the southern U.S. led to eugenics movements, advocating race-based immigration restrictions. The labor needs of

\(^{36}\)Biopower refers to “an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations.” Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality/L’Historie de la Sexualité* Vol. 1 (1978), 140.
agribusiness preempted enforcement of immigration restrictions, but anti-immigrant populism and the economic crisis of the Great Depression led to a wave of restrictions and repatriations across the American Mediterranean. Describing an early form of corporate globalization and ending in an era of xenophobic nationalism, which saw the rise of nativism and populism in the Americas and fascism in Europe, I want to emphasize how, far from a withering away of the nation-state, globalized corporate capitalism led to racist, nationalist backlashes against needed but unwanted immigrants.

The United Fruit Company, the archetypal agribusiness firm, epitomized the early twentieth century Fordist model of mass-production and mass-consumption, and foreshadowed the future of neo-liberalism in its low-wage export enclaves and vertically integrated distribution networks. In the unruly topical environments of the American Mediterranean, the growing and increasingly intertwined managerial regimes of the imperial state and transnational corporations developed sophisticated strategies of governing through the reengineering of spaces and populations. These were shaped by efforts to eradicate yellow fever and malaria, to manage floods and hurricanes, to combat fungal infestations and manage racially diverse workforces. Tropical agribusiness and empire building transformed a perilous environment for white people from the world’s temperate zone into tropical fruit plantations and health resorts, “lands of romance and history” for the voyeuristic enjoyment of white tourists. The American Mediterranean, commoditized into a timeless “mañana-land” was radically modern. Its archipelagos of export enclaves epitomized a new form of agro-industrial production and a state-corporate apparatus of transnational government that foreshadowed the future of neoliberal globalization and the rise of the global South of mass-tourism, labor migrations and low-wage
agribusiness and manufacturing enclaves. This study engages with the existing scholarship of what I call “Mañana-Land” at six points.

2.2.1 The American Mediterranean and the origins of global capitalism

The Prussian naturalist Alexander used the term “American Mediterranean” in his 1799-1804 South American travels. The term reflected a need for comparability, a search for landscapes analogous to the Old World in the New. Naval strategist Alfred Mahan and geographer Ellen C. Semple described the American Mediterranean as Mare Nostrum of United States, claiming the mantle of the Roman Empire. Oceanographers have embraced the American Mediterranean, encompassing the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, as one of the world’s marginal seas, but historians have often avoided it, mindful of national and regional differences, and its Europeanizing and U.S-centric connotations. The “American Mediterranean” has been replaced by “Greater Caribbean,” a transnational region centered upon the tropical sea, spanning the southern coast of North America and the northern coast of South America. J.R. McNeill used the later term in his sweeping study of yellow fever and malaria colonial wars. The “Greater Caribbean” provides a framework for understanding the colonial history of the Americas. However, the “American Mediterranean” better describes the U.S.-dominated Caribbean-Gulf of Mexico basin of the early twentieth century. The “middle sea” encompasses borderlands of the Americas larger than the Caribbean-Gulf of Mexico, extending to Pacific.

Diplomatic historian Lester Langley resuscitated the “American Mediterranean,” “admittedly an awkward phrase,” to examine geo-political rivalries in the Caribbean Rim. U.S. historians have used it to challenge narratives of American exceptionalism. Matthew Guterl’s eponymously titled work uses the American Mediterranean to rethink the antebellum U.S. South in a transnational framework. Guterl’s description of the “nineteenth-century U.S. South as a messy, complicated borderland of sorts between North America and the Caribbean” is true in the twentieth-and-twenty-first centuries. He alludes to this in his epilogue, invoking the “Nuevo New South,” growing communities of legal and illegal immigrants from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean in U.S. Southern cities and agribusiness farms.

Understanding the connections between the U.S. and global South requires a discursive American Mediterranean even larger than the great tropical sea of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean. The westward march of U.S. empire fueled Southern dreams of expansion to the Pacific, leading to the filibustering invasions of William Walker and contributing to the American Civil War. The American Mediterranean of the early twentieth-century, far from a self-contained sea, was defined by the construction of the Panama Canal, the largest public works project in history, which connected the Atlantic, through the Caribbean, to the Pacific.

Understanding how the American Mediterranean served as a crucible of neoliberalism requires a synthesis of important concepts from scholarship on post-modernity and neoliberalism. Marxist geographer David Harvey first articulated the idea of technologies of time-space compression that condense or elide spatial and temporal distances. He characterizes

42-Guterl, American Mediterranean, 11
43-Guterl, American Mediterranean, 186-187
the rise of Neoliberalism in the late twentieth century as a counterrevolutionary political project carried out in response to the crisis of advanced capitalism.\textsuperscript{45} Anthropologist Aiwha Ong offers a Fouclaudian re-definition in her study of special economic zones in China and Southeast Asia, describing neo-liberalism as an informal technology of governing by re-engineering spaces and populations.\textsuperscript{46} This results in a form of graduated sovereignty, with different modes of governing populations and legal compromises and controls tailored to special production zones.

Key precedents for modern-day neoliberalism lie in the turn of the twentieth century age of imperialism. Ong portrays post-1970s neo-liberalism as a radical transformation in global capitalism, but acknowledges important precedents in the colonial history of East and Southeast Asia-most notably the Chinese treaty ports, the entrepôt of Singapore, and tin mines and rubber plantations in Malaya, reliant on imported Chinese and Indian labor.\textsuperscript{47} The insular and isthmian colonial empire of the United States was comparatively small and, until recently, comparatively neglected by U.S. historians. The post-colonial turn in the historiography of the British Empire generated new interest in how colonies shaped the “metropole.” Australian historian Warwick Anderson brought new imperial history to the U.S. with his study of colonial public health in the Philippines and techniques of population control and hygiene brought back to the Progressive-era U.S.\textsuperscript{48} Colonial Crucible, a collection of essays edited by Alfred McCoy and Francisco Scarrano, explores how empire-building transformed ideas of race, space and public health.\textsuperscript{49} These studies focus primarily on U.S. colonies and protectorates. Expanding U.S. imperialism beyond

\textsuperscript{45}David Harvey, \textit{A Brief History of Neoliberalism} (Oxford University Press, 2007)
\textsuperscript{46}Aiwha Ong, \textit{Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty} (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2006)
\textsuperscript{49}Alfred McCoy, Francisco Scarano, eds, \textit{Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State} (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009)
colonialism requires examining the close relationship between more informal, economic neo-colonialism, epitomized by the banana republics of Central America, and internal colonialism in the southern U.S.

### 2.2.2 Biopower and Ecological Imperialism

French philosopher Michel Foucault developed the concept of biopower to describe “the numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations.” The practices of public health require us to connect struggles to control human populations with struggles to control environments. Linda Nash’s *Inescapable Ecologies*, a history of “ecological” ideas of the body in California’s Central Valley, breaks down discursive tropes that separate humans from nature, placing struggles for control over human populations in an ecological context.

Environmental historian Alfred Crosby coined the term “ecological imperialism,” to describe the biological expansion of Europe. The American Mediterranean has proved fertile ground for studies of ecological imperialism. Paul Sutter brings the bureaucratic dimensions into focus through his analysis of an “environmental management state,” originating in conservation bureaucracies and irrigation projects of the West and culminating in the construction of the Panama Canal. Focused on state bureaucracies, he overlooks the integral role of private capital. Steve Marquardt offers a devastating critique of United Fruit’s capitalist monoculture through studies of failed efforts to eradicate fungal infestation of Panama disease. His environmental

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50-Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality* Vol. 1, 140  
51-Linda Nash: *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease and Knowledge*  
critique offers an important perspective on the racialization of labor, one that needs to be better integrated with social and cultural histories of the workers themselves.

Sanitary campaigns to eradicate yellow fever highlight the transnational scale of the environmental management state, and the emergence of a state-corporate apparatus policing public health across the American Mediterranean. Mariola Espinosa’s *Epidemic Invasions* (2009) shows how the sanitary measures imposed on Cuba served to protect U.S. trade interests and justified the Platt amendment.55 John McKiernan-González describes how campaigns against yellow fever and other tropical diseases served to demarcate racial and political boundaries in the Texas-Mexico borderlands.56 Studies focused on the “imperial state,” they offer a limited account of the role of private corporations, most importantly the United Fruit Company.

In contrast to yellow fever, a disease of port cities and shipping, malaria and hookworm were rural diseases, exacerbated by rural poverty and plantation monoculture.

William Link shows how the Rockefeller-funded campaign against hookworm, endemic among poor whites, shaped Southern progressivism.57 Margaret Humphreys analyzes how campaigns against yellow fever and malaria shaped local and federal intervention in public health, while showing how malaria in particular shaped racialized discourses of poverty.58 Steven Paul Palmer shows how Costa Rica’s coffee bourgeoisie spearheaded the first national anti-hookworm campaign.59 David Aliano’s seeks to understand the self-proclaimed civilizing

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mission behind United Fruit’s anti-malaria campaigns. Lara Putnam describes resistance of West Indian workers to anti-malaria measures, reflecting demands for worker productivity more than genuine public health. Catherine LeGrande’s history of banana workers in Santa Marta, Colombia shows how public health measures shaped cultural identities in unintended ways.

Integrating these histories of public health in the U.S. South and Latin America enables an understanding of the transnational dimensions of colonial public health and campaigns against anemia-inducing diseases across the American Mediterranean.

Scientific struggles to subjugate tropical nature extended from tropical medicine to tropical meteorology, evidenced by the cooperation of U.S. officials with United Fruit. The difficulties of shipping perishable bananas led United Fruit to invest in the wireless radio telegraph, delivering the first forecasts of developing hurricanes, wired to the U.S. Weather Bureau for the Gulf South and Cuba. Radio forecasting reduced deaths from hurricanes, as official reports revealed indifference to the deaths and sufferings of the poorest people, particularly people of color. Cuban-American historian Louis Pérez’s Winds of Change (2001), a study of hurricanes in nineteenth-century Cuba, portrayed hurricanes as catalysts for historical change, shaping the island’s economy, culture and emerging national identity. The immensity of hurricanes requires a transnational scale. Stuart Schwartz’s A Sea of Storms (2015) offers a panoramic history of hurricanes, describing storms that burst the bubble of the Florida land boom.

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60-David Aliano, Curing the Ills of Central America: The United Fruit Company’s Medical Department and Corporate America’s Mission to Civilize (1900-1940), Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe, vol. 17 no. 2 (2006): 36-37, 54-56


and crippled the neo-colonial economies of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. Connecting sanitary struggles against tropical diseases with struggles to manage tropical storms provides a transnational framework for understanding how U.S. imperialism and agribusiness sought to achieve the biopolitical conquest of the tropical American Mediterranean for agricultural mass-production and tropical trade and tourism.

2.2.3 Race and Labor in a Plantation Empire

The color line has always been a global problem, and its transnational scale has inspired numerous histories that have emphasized connections across the American Mediterranean between the U.S. South and the Caribbean. Historian Natalie Ring, tackling the turn-of-the-twentieth century “Problem South,” shows how attempts to eradicate diseases, address racial “problems” and engineer the “uplift” of poor and “backward” peoples in the U.S. South shaped and were shaped U.S. colonial policies in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Focusing on insular and isthmian colonies and protectorates, her study leaves connections between the U.S. South and Central American enclaves of United Fruit comparatively under-examined.

Social scientists and historians have emphasized the complexities of racial and class identities. In his study of Black West Indian and Hispanic banana workers in Bocas del Toro, Panama, anthropologist Philippe Bourgeois identifies ethnicity as an integral rather than exogenous variable that can be isolated from class. As an anthropologist, Bourgeois captures the divides of daily life among banana plantation workers in powerful prose. His study offers fewer insights into historical changes in the evolution of banana plantations as institutions. Aviva

Chomsky rectifies these shortcomings by offering a social history of West Indian banana zone workers in Costa Rica that examines evolutions of land ownership and labor relations.\textsuperscript{66} Chomsky’s analysis is both enhanced and constrained by Marxist materialism. She describes Afro-Caribbean religious practices while simplifying them as labor resistance, and the Black Nationalism espoused by onetime Limón, Costa Rica resident Marcus Garvey while overlooking the Garveyite movement’s emphasis on the leadership of the Black middle-class.\textsuperscript{67} Lara Putnam’s \textit{The Company They Kept} brings gender and sexuality into focus, describing the experiences of women in Caribbean Costa Rica, an overwhelmingly male enclave.\textsuperscript{68} Putnam dismisses United Fruit’s self-proclaimed civilizing mission as empty rhetoric, noting indifference of company officials to the lack of monogamous family life and high rates of sexually transmitted diseases.\textsuperscript{69} Focusing on neglected gender dynamics of banana plantations, Putnam’s dismissal of civilizing rhetoric based on the companies’ indifference to out of wedlock unions and sexually transmitted diseases among workers elides how public health campaigns against malaria and hookworm served as forms of biopower.

Historians have used commodity chains to connect Latin American banana plantation zones with U.S. consumers. Aviva Chomsky’s \textit{Linked Labor Histories} ties together the histories of banana plantations and workers in Caribbean Colombia with the textile-mill towns and workers of New England, the most important early consumers of the bananas imported by Boston-based United Fruit.\textsuperscript{70} John Soluri’s \textit{Banana Cultures} connects the culture of banana

\textsuperscript{66} Aviva Chomsky, \textit{West Indian Workers and the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica} (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1996)
\textsuperscript{67} Aviva Chomsky, \textit{West Indian Workers and the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica}, 202-06
\textsuperscript{69} Lara Putnam, \textit{The Company They Kept}, 9
consumption in the U.S. with the effects on workers and the environment in Honduras, breaking down barriers between social and environmental history.\textsuperscript{71} His final chapter offers a comparative analysis of the banana industry and California agribusiness, opening up new terrain for transnational study.\textsuperscript{72}

The transnational dimensions of race and labor have inspired historians to analyze the relationship between United Fruit’s plantation empire and the racialization of labor in the United States. Jason Colby, in a 2006 article, describes United Fruit’s Guatemala enclave during its earliest years, with a workforce of Jamaican immigrants, as “Jim Crow Colonialism.”\textsuperscript{73} African American historian Frederick Douglass Opie describes direct connections to the Jim Crow South in the migrations of African-American railroad workers to Guatemala.\textsuperscript{74} In *Business of Empire* (2011) Jason Colby refines his argument, drawing on the analysis of labor segmentation by Philippe Bourgeois, emphasizing United Fruit’s strategies of divide and conquer, which was on display when the company responded to unrest among West Indian workers by hiring Hispanics. He identifies these practices as rooted in the labor segmentation of factories in the Northern U.S.\textsuperscript{75} In its first decades United Fruit Co. was a New England firm, and the majority of its employees came from the Northeastern U.S. Largely immigrant working-class and middle-class families in Northern cities were the primary consumers of bananas. Accounts of labor division are somewhat overstated, since United Fruit’s hiring practices were driven by demand for cheap labor more than deliberate efforts to weaken labor organizing. Colby’s comparisons of United

\textsuperscript{71}John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2005)
\textsuperscript{72}John Soluri, *Banana Cultures*, 216-245
\textsuperscript{73}Jason M. Colby, “‘Banana Growing and Negro Management’: Race, Labor and Jim Crow Colonialism in Guatemala, 1884-1930,” *Diplomatic History* Vol. 30 Issue 4 2006: 595-621
\textsuperscript{74}Frederick Douglass Opie, *Black Labor Migration in Caribbean Guatemala, 1882-1923* (Gainesville and Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 2009)
Fruit banana plantations with Northern industries provide valuable insights but overlook important differences between agricultural and industrial enterprises, as well as discursive ideas about differences between the temperate and tropical zones and white and non-white peoples.

### 2.2.4 Tropical Tourism and Tropical Whiteness

The travels of tourists provide a framework for analyzing the transnational American Mediterranean, albeit one shaped by the racist biases of the tourist gaze, which reveal the discursive geographies of empire but constrict the agency of its subjects. The tropical travels of U.S. whites have been the focus of tourism historians. Christine Skwiot explores how tourism shaped U.S. imperialism in Hawai’i and Cuba, identifying both islands as occupied territories key to U.S. power.76

A comparative approach runs the risks of consolidating older models of universal history and assuming the idea of the nation as a fixed point of reference. Geographical zones, obscuring important political and cultural boundaries, provide a transnational framework shedding light on environmentalist origins of ideas about race, gender and power. Catherine Cocks describes a deliberately ambiguous tourist South defined by imputed tropicality, encompassing Florida, Cuba and the Caribbean, California and Mexico.77 Challenging tendencies to reduce tourism to racism and imperialism, she emphasizes how tourists’ temporary immersions in the tropics undermined ideas about relationships between the environment and human bodies and popularized anthropological ideas of human culture. Her emphasis upon the symbolic transgressions of tropical tourists, who were recounting their experiences at the zenith of scientific racism and scientific racism, is important but overstated.

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Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez explores how tourism and militarism have functioned together in Hawai’i and the Philippines. The construction of colonial and military installations, she argues, served as infrastructures supporting tourist practices, spaces and narratives. Conspicuously absent from Vicuña González’s analysis is how agribusiness functioned alongside militarism and tourism, from the pineapple industry of Hawaii, the island’s chief export and a tourist attraction, to abacá (Manila hemp) plantations that were indispensable to the U.S. Navy in the Philippines. An analysis of the symbiotic relationship between militarism, tropical agribusiness and tropical tourism is even more important in the American Mediterranean, dominated as it was by networks of military bases and tropical fruit plantations.

Catherine Cocks’ work is particularly important for bringing into focus symbiotic relationships between tropical fruit consumption and tropical tourism. Oranges and other citrus fruit advertised tourism-driven land and real estate booms in Southern California and Florida, with railroads carrying northbound citrus and southbound tourists. United Fruit played a major role in developing Caribbean tourism, its refrigerated banana boats serving as air-conditioned cruise ships.

Carey McWilliams first described California’s “Spanish fantasy past,” which romanticized and commoditized a “Spanish” colonial heritage while marginalizing Mexican Americans. Phoebe Kropp and William Deverell’s urban history of Los Angeles examine dichotomies between Spanish fantasies and anti-Mexican racism in historical memory, public

78. Catherine Cocks, *Tropical Whites*, 32-37, 90, 93-95
space and ethnic stratification in California. Matthew Bokovy study of the San Diego Exposition offers a somewhat more sympathetic account of how these fantasies undermined Anglo-centric narratives of national identity. David Weber’s history of the North American borderlands of New Spain describes the romanticizing of Spanish history across the southern rim of the United States. Limiting the scope of analysis to the U.S., historians of an Anglo “Spanish fantasy past” overlook its transnational dimension, shaping the culture of tourism abroad as well as at home and linking the development of the southern U.S. with imperialism in Latin America.

2.2.5 Eugenics and the Color Line

While transnational studies of eugenics, today recognized as a racist pseudo-science but at the forefront of modernity in the early twentieth century, have focused on northern Europe and North America, a number of historians have examined the relationship between eugenics in the U.S. and Latin America. Nancy Leys Stepan shows how Latin American elites, fearful of U.S. imperialism, embraced environmentalist French eugenics of puériculture and homiculture, rather than the biological determinism of North American eugenics. David Scott-Fitzgerald’s Culling the Masses, a study of immigration restriction across the Americas, emphasizes divides between environmentalists and hereditary determinists.

Alexandra Minna Stern’s Eugenic Nation explores the history of the eugenics in the United States, focusing on the Western U.S., in particular California, which led the nation in

81-Matthew Bokovy, The San Diego World’s Fairs and Southwestern Memory, 1880-1940 (University of New Mexico Press, 2005)
sterilizations, and the U.S.-Mexico border, through the creation of quarantine restrictions and the Border Patrol. Breaking down barriers between eugenics and public health, she explores how these scientific movements intersected in discourses of contamination and practices of prophylactic vaccinations, immigration restrictions and forms of racial and social segregation. Stern’s analysis avoids the terms positive and negative eugenics, but in challenging this simplistic dichotomy, it fails to offer an alternative approach.

The public health campaigns to eradicate yellow fever, malaria and hookworm helped lay the foundations for eugenics movements. U.S. eugenicists obsessed over poor southerners, both white and Black. Racial deterioration of poor whites and theories of the immunity of Blacks to tropical disease shaped a public health discourse of environmental and racial contamination, which legitimized racial segregation. Dr. Walter Plecker, architect of Virginia’s 1924 sterilization and anti-miscegenation laws, began his medical career as a hookworm inspector, an experience that shaped his preoccupation with the degraded condition of poor whites. Legal historian Paul Lombardo explores the justifications for compulsory eugenic sterilization, upheld by the Supreme Court in the trial of Carrie Buck, a poor white woman from Virginia.

Ideologies of racial eugenics, which faced important barriers in most of Latin America, developed in the Spanish Caribbean, where advocates of eugenics portrayed immigration restrictions and other eugenic measures as a continuation of the sanitary struggles for the eradication of yellow fever. Marius Turda and Aaron Gilette, examining the eugenics movements of Latin America and Latin Europe show how, with encouragement from French obstetrician and eugenicist Dr. Adolphe Pinard, Cuban physicians Domingo Francisco Ramos and Eusebio

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Hernandez developed homiculture as a synthesis of French puériculture and U.S. ideas of hereditary eugenics. José Aliano’s study of public health and national identity in Cuba, Puerto Rico and Brazil, and Spanish-language histories of Cuban eugenics by Armando García González and Raquel Alvarez Pelaez analyze the ideology of Finlayismo, advocating restrictions against Black and Asian immigration. Alejandro de la Fuente describes the growth of anti-Black racism, exacerbated by West Indian immigration, and the limits of post-independence Cuba’s promises of racial democracy.

Across the Americas, nativist and populist racial nationalisms excluded Blacks. Studies of West Indians in Costa Rica by Ronald Harpelle, Lara Putnam and Aviva Chomsky and in Honduras by Glenn Anthony Chambers describe how anti-Black racism fueled nationalist opposition to United Fruit. Histories of the African-American Great Migration and the race riots in the “red summer of 1919” by Cameron McWhirter, Jan Voogd, and Claire Hartfield, have described simmering racial tensions that exploded into violence, Black resistance to mob violence, and the spread of racial segregation. In the face of a rising tide of anti-Black racism, Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association spread Black nationalism. While

89-Alejandro de la Fuente, A Nation for All: Race, Inequality and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba (University of North Carolina Press, 2011)

2.3 Synopsis

In the discursive geographies of U.S. empire, the North American tropics, bordering the American Mediterranean Sea of the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, have been constructed as a timeless mañana-land. Lands of verdant and overwhelming nature and fecund sensuality, equally alluring and perilous, paradisiacal and pestilential, the American tropics have been a place of radical otherness from the civilization of the temperate world. However, these tropes of the timeless tropics belie the realities of a hyper modern political and economic order that developed across the American Mediterranean. The tropical sea spanned a network of exceptional spaces, enclaves of agribusiness, militarism and tourism, created by state-corporate environmental re-engineering and transnational migrations of laborers and tourists. Viewing tourism and labor side-by-side highlights the dramatic inequalities of globalized capitalism, in
which economic growth and technological innovations fueled rising standards of living but also created stark divides between rich and poor, white and non-white.

The first chapter “The Bio-Political Conquest of the Tropics” examines the corporate-state apparatus policing public health and tracking tropical storms across the American Mediterranean, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the aftermath of the First World War. Campaigns to eradicate tropical diseases shaped practices of bio-power, focused on removing threats to trade and U.S. whites and improving worker efficiency through sanitary surveillance of Blacks, Hispanics and poor whites. The first section “Quarantining the Tropics” describes outbreaks of yellow fever and campaigns to eradicate the disease, carried out in U.S. occupied Cuba and Panama and in the banana importing and exporting ports of the U.S. Gulf South and Central America. Public health policies sought primarily to safeguard commercial shipping and eradicate a disease fatal to whites from the temperate zone, ignoring diseases deadlier to local populations. The second section “Treating the Ills of the Tropics” examines campaigns against hookworm and malaria. These debilitating diseases, which reinforced perceptions of “tropical” peoples, at home and overseas, as backward, lazy and in need of surveillance and civilizational uplift. It describes efforts by the Rockefeller Foundation to eradicate hookworm and malaria in the U.S. South and tropical Latin America, and the growth of United Fruit’s Medical Department. The third section “For the Benefit of All Shipping” describes United Fruit’s Tropical Radio and its role reporting hurricanes in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. The creation of transcontinental radio networks and their use in forecasting hurricanes offered an unprecedented, but ultimately illusory, promise of security from nature’s deadliest and storms, security which excluded the poorest people, particularly people of color. Connecting sanitary struggles to eradicate tropical diseases with efforts to forecast tropical
storms, the biopolitical conquest of the tropics would lay the foundation for the rise of agribusiness empires.

The second section “Latitudes of Labor and Leisure” examines de-territorialized racial power to constitute labor relations from the dawn of the twentieth century to the aftermath of the First World War. Railroads and steamships carried white tourists alongside bananas and oranges, golden fruits that symbolized the abundance of tropical nature and American capitalism, harvested by Black, Asian and Hispanic immigrant laborers and distributed by southern and eastern European immigrant peddlers and grocers. The first chapter “Plantation Empire” describes the rise of United Fruit’s banana zones in Caribbean Costa Rica and Guatemala, examining the rise of a professionalized class of administrators relying on the banana growing skills of Afro-Jamaican immigrants. United Fruit drove down wages, tightened its grip on independent banana growers and developed the divided labor that led to tensions between West Indians and Hispanic workers. The second chapter “Fruit of Monopoly” examines racial power across refrigerated distribution networks. Refrigerated steamships and rail-cars, mechanized unloading of bananas in Gulf South ports, and marketing, most notably the California Fruit Exchange’s Sunkist brand, made bananas and oranges consumer staples. Railroads were corridors of Black migration, sparking violence that strengthened racial segregation, with European immigrants who developed the fruit trade occupying an ambiguous place. The third chapter “Seeing the Southland” explores how United Fruit developed tropical tourism through its “Great White Fleet,” using on-ship refrigeration to provide air conditioning to passengers. Travelers from the northern U.S. combined visits to the Caribbean and Deep South, connecting “foreign” and “domestic” tropical spaces in a discursive geography of a tropical southland encompassing all the Americas south of the northern United States. Examining labor and
tourism, this section explores the dynamics of de-territorialized racial power, based on white leisure and non-white labor.

The third section “Spanning the Southland” focuses on the era from the First World War through the 1920s, and the relationship between agribusiness, tourism and militarism in the American Mediterranean, expanding into the Pacific with the opening of the Panama Canal. The creation of transcontinental transportation and communication networks, alongside historical fantasies of Spanish conquistadors and missionaries, enabled U.S. whites to lay claim to a Caribbean and Pacific empire. The first chapter, “Through Lands of Romance and History” describes overseas and overland transportation networks. U.S. interventions in Mexico and recognition of the military value of roads led to the building of the California-to-Florida Old Spanish Trail highway, predecessor to Interstate-10. Wartime requisitioning of United Fruit’s ships enabled their conversion to oil. Prohibition led to tourism booms in Mexican border towns and Cuba. The building of a seawall and bridges along the Gulf Coast overlaps with United Fruit’s expansion into the Pacific. The second chapter “Security in a Sea of Storms” focuses on communications networks and the post-war expansion of United Fruit’s Tropical Radio. This radio network reflected corporate colonialism in Central America, reliant on the companies’ close ties to dictators, and the limits of technological security from tropical storms. Hurricanes struck Miami and Havana in 1926, followed by 1927 floods of the Mississippi and the Okeechobee hurricane of 1928, disasters that foreshadowed the Great Depression. The third chapter “Ghosts of Guale” examines the spread of a “Spanish fantasy past,” through ruins on the Atlantic Coast of Georgia and Florida, promoted as Spanish missions in the 1920s and 1930s. This compatible narrative of Spanish history in the U.S. South marketed the region to southbound tourists, before excavations revealed the ruins to be antebellum sugar mills, leading
to revived Anglo-centric historical narratives and stirring pride in slaveholding planters central to segregationist white Southern identity.

The fourth section “Drawing Hemispheric Color Lines” connects struggles to exploit tropical environments and labor forces with populist-nationalism and eugenics in the 1920s and 1930s. The first section “Migrations and Color Lines in North America” describes transnational labor migrations of Mexicans in Southwestern agribusiness, in particular California citrus ranches, Haitians and West Indians to Cuban sugar plantations and mills of United Fruit Sugar, and West Indian immigration to the Northeastern U.S., alongside the African-American Great Migration. It examines the radical modernity of migrant countercultures, from the subcultures around Jazz music to the Black nationalism of the Garveyite movement. The second section “Pan-American Eugenics” explores eugenics movements in the southern U.S. and the Spanish Caribbean, shaped by campaigns against yellow fever and hookworm and the science of tropical agribusiness, espousing rigid racial determinism, expressed in transnational movements for racial immigration restrictions, compulsory sterilization and other eugenic measures. The third section “Decay and Development in the Banana Empire” examines the ecological crises of Panama Disease, United Fruit’s embrace of scientific monoculture, overseen by agronomists, and its shift from West Indian immigrants to low-wage Hispanic migrants, particularly from the impoverished interior of Honduras and war-torn Nicaragua. It also describes the companies’ expansion into the Pacific, through the creation of new enclaves that West Indians were largely banned from settling in.

Throughout my dissertation, I will emphasize a fact that is as important for the present as it is for the past. Far from claims globalization would lead to a weakening of the nation-state, globalized corporate capitalism, as the catalyst for spectacular but unequal economic growth, has
continuously spurred the growth of xenophobic nativist-populist nationalist movements, backlashes against the unregulated power of transnational corporations and needed but unwanted immigrants.

Figure 2.1 The Cotton States Exposition, Atlanta, Georgia, 1895
The Cotton States and International Exposition and South Illustrated (Atlanta: Illustrator Company, 1896)
Figure 2.2 Costa Rica Building
The Cotton States and International Exposition and South Illustrated (1896)

Figure 2.3 Talamanca Indian Woman,
The Golden Caribbean: A Winter Visit to the Republics of Colombia, Costa Rica, Spanish Honduras, Belize and the Spanish Main Via Boston, New Orleans (1900)
3 SECTION 1: THE BIOPOLITICAL CONQUEST OF THE TROPICS

In 1914, Boston inventor and author Frederick Adams published *The Conquest of the Tropics*, which extolled the Boston-based United Fruit Company for having “awakened the slumbering nations bordering the Caribbean with the quickening tonic of Yankee enterprise.” In Honduras, the least stable of Central American countries, with “six so-called revolutions in the last fifteen years,” workers of a United Fruit subsidiary, the Tela Railroad Company, planted 9,000 acres of bananas on a 50,000-acre concession. The company port of Tela, with railroad yards, shops, offices and a hospital, epitomized “modern scientific sanitation” in a “practically virgin tropical wilderness.” Sanitation is described in martial imagery echoing the Indian Wars, “The medical staff was sent out ahead and placed on the firing line. They pushed into the wilderness with forts of mosquito-proof houses.”

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94 Frederick Upham Adams, *Conquest of the Tropics: The Story of the Creative Enterprises Conducted by United Fruit Company*, 356, 122, 279, 281
In language evoking the Western frontier, Adams extolled a biopolitical conquest of the tropics, with scientific sanitation transforming tropical rain forests and “pestilential swamps” into banana plantations. Images of a peaceful conquest belied the violence of banana companies. Sam Zemurray, a Russian Jewish immigrant, made a small fortune selling discarded ripe bananas in Mobile and New Orleans in the 1890s, using skills hone surviving hunger and pogroms in Moldova. In 1905, he organized the Hubbard-Zemurray Steamship Co., with a loan from Crawford Ellis of United Fruit, which owned 60% of its stock. In 1910 he bought 5,000-acres of land on the Cuyamel River, near the Guatemala border, developing banana plantations.95 Fearing U.S. State Department negotiations to reschedule the debt of Honduras would lead to taxation, Zemurray plotted revolution in the brothels of New Orleans’ Storyville district. In December 1910 exiled Honduran President Manuel Bonilla departed aboard Zemurray’s private yacht, rendezvousing with a ship in the Mississippi Sound. He was joined by a dozen supporters and two mercenaries, his former aid, Lee Christmas, an railroad engineer named generalissimo in the Honduran army, and Guy “Machine-Gun” Maloney, an Irish veteran of the Boer War.96 Sailing to the island of Roátan, landing on the Honduran mainland at Trujillo, Bonilla’s supporters captured the port of La Ceiba in January 1911 in a battle with the first use of machine gun fire to support infantry.97 While the sordid intrigues of banana men and mercenaries secured concessions that enabled the spread of banana monoculture, public health measures epitomized the self-proclaimed civilizing mission of imperialism. United Fruit’s Medical Department

95-For biography of Zemurray, Rich Cohen, *The Fish That Ate the Whale: The Life and Times of America’s Banana King* (Macmillan, 2005)
reported in 1913 that Tela, which “formerly was considered a pest-hole,” had “now become
healthful,” due to a “corps of doctors, dispensers, sanitary inspectors, nurses,” serving La Ceiba
and Puerto Cortes, dominated by Zemurray’s Cuyamel Fruit Co.98

Central American banana republics, insular Caribbean protectorates and the “New
South,” internal colony of Northern capital and entrepôt of U.S. imperialism in Latin America,
were bound together by a state-corporate apparatus policing public health across the American
Mediterranean. Tropical medicine epitomized what French philosopher Michael Foucault refers
to as biopower, the construction of the body in medical encounters and the cultivation of
individual practices of bodily self-management, and disciplinary power over the body politic.99

Expanding on the concept of biopower entails examining the close relationship between
bio-political struggles for control over human populations and control over larger ecosystems. In
the United States achievements in public health were a source of nationalistic pride, proof that a
one-time colony had not only equaled but was surpassing the great European powers. Neo-
colonial campaigns of mosquito eradication safeguarded tropical trade and enforced racial
segregation. Bio-political struggles for control over non-white tropical populations were
described in medical reports in which deaths of poor people of color appear as nameless
statistics. By challenging ideas that germs or miasmas transmitted diseases, vector theory and its
application in colonial public health shifted the focus of medical discourses of contamination
from tropical environments to tropical peoples, contaminated races that, through their immunity
to yellow fever and other tropical diseases, or lack thereof, posed threats to U.S. whites.

98-Annual Report, 1913, Tela (Honduras) Division, Annual Report, United Fruit Company Medical Department
(Boston: Press of Geo. H. Ellis, 1914), 73
99- The term is first used, briefly, in Michel Foucault, L’Histoire de la sexualité (La volante de savouir) Vol. 1
History of Sexuality (The Will to Knowledge: History of Sexuality) Vol. 1 (1976), 140-141; For exploration of
theoretical possibilities that the concept of bio-power has enabled. Vernon Cisney, Nicolae Morar, editors,
Biopower, Foucault and Beyond (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015)
Struggles for security from tropical diseases and tropical storms enabled a bio-political conquest of the tropics for U.S. empire and corporate capitalism, epitomized by the dependent development of the “New South” and the private empire of the United Fruit Co., the world’s largest agribusiness corporation.

The first chapter **Quarantining the Tropics** describes the eradication of yellow fever in transnational perspective. Utilizing the vector theory first proposed by Cuban Dr. Carlos Juan Finlay, quarantine and fumigation swiftly destroyed yellow fever. For centuries, this disease had made the Caribbean a “white man’s grave” and as a “stranger’s disease” had decimated the port cities of the U.S. South. These measures relied on martial law that proved harder to enforce in the U.S., during outbreaks in the Texas-Mexico border town of Laredo and Italians in New Orleans. After the later epidemic, United Fruit sponsored a quarantine inspection tour of Central America, a carefully orchestrated display on sanitary modernity. Colonial public health measures, and U.S. and United Fruit domination, proved a source of resentment for Latin American governments, which began to challenge rhetoric of sanitary and civilizational uplift.

The second chapter **Treating the Ills of the Tropics** examines how tropical medicine evolved with campaigns against hookworm and malaria, debilitating diseases endemic to rural areas, which proved difficult to eradicate. Transnational circulations of medical knowledge, an anti-hookworm campaign in colonial Puerto Rico the model for the Rockefeller Foundation in the U.S. South, extended to Latin America by International Health, which cooperated with United Fruit to combat hookworm and malaria. These campaigns relied on cooperation between public health bureaucracies, agribusiness companies and coffee and cotton planters. Public health

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bureaucracies, concerned with increasing worker productivity, had complex relationships rural populations suspicious of their motives and resigned to illnesses that were rarely fatal.

The third chapter Tropical Radio, Tropical Storms expands the biopolitical conquest of the tropics from campaigns against tropical diseases to struggles to manage tropical environments, examining the development of radio forecasting and its use to report hurricanes. United Fruit’s Tropical Radio met communication needs of the banana trade and its expanding fleet and delivered the first regular reports of hurricanes, wired to Weather Bureau officials in the U.S. South and Cuba. Reports offered unprecedented security from nature’s deadliest storms, a security denied to poorer nations and peoples, spurring unregulated coastal developments that exacerbated damage and deaths. Radio networks the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Blacks, Hispanics and poor whites in Cuba and the Deep South. Throughout this section, I will examine how struggles for control over tropical nature shaped the development of a state-corporate apparatus spanning the transnational space of the American Mediterranean.

3.1 Quarantining the Tropics

On September 7, 1897, Army surgeon Col. William Crawford Gorgas, from Fort Barrancas in Pensacola, Florida, reported an outbreak of yellow fever in Ocean Springs, Mississippi.\(^{101}\) Cases occurred “in a boarding house where the meetings of several Cuban refugees took place. It is said that these Cuban refugees, eluding quarantine officers, escaped from ships lying in the harbor and reached Ocean Springs by means of cat-boats.”\(^{102}\) The first refugee to contract the disease was the son of a Mrs. Gonzales, whose home was a base for


\(^{102}\)“Yellow Fever Notes,” The Medical News, Vol. 71 October,16, 1897 (New York: Lea Brothers & Co. 1897), 506 University of Michigan Library Dig. Feb. 11, 2008
smuggling operations by Cuban insurgents.\textsuperscript{103} Five days later, the New Orleans Board of Health announced six additional cases in the Gulf coast’s largest city. Soldiers were evacuated to Fort McPherson, Atlanta, Georgia.\textsuperscript{104} Over the next two months, fever raged in New Orleans with 298 certified deaths, shutting down businesses and shuttering the U.S. Mint.\textsuperscript{105} Cases were reported from Beaumont, on the Texas-Louisiana border, to Jackson, Mississippi. Cities in the Carolinas raised quarantines against arrivals from Atlanta, a destination for those fleeing fever.\textsuperscript{106}

An investigation by Dr. John H. White of the U.S. Marine Hospital Service found that the disease was introduced “not from Cuba, but from Guatemala,” carried by a Mr. Thomas Shanahan who had traveled from the Caribbean port of Puerto Barrios to Ocean Springs, who was “sick on arrival with chill and great fever and subsequent weakness.”\textsuperscript{107} However, belief that the epidemic was of Cuban origin persisted. The \textit{Houston Daily Post} declared, “Cuba, under Spanish rule, without anything like good sanitation, is a standing menace to the health of the Southern States.”\textsuperscript{108}

Yellow fever-carrying \textit{aedes aegypti}, a container-breeding mosquito that lays its eggs in and around standing water, thrives in port cities and aboard ships. A common childhood disease across the tropical world, it is fatal to adults without acquired immunity. Historians of disease and public health in the U.S. South, most notably Margaret Humphreys, show how responses to

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\textsuperscript{103} Dr. C.P. Wilkinson, in \textit{Journal of the American Medical Association} vol. 35 January 1, 1900) 309
\textsuperscript{105} Sir Rubert Boyce, \textit{Yellow Fever Prophylaxis in New Orleans}, 1905 (Committee of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, 1906), 2 Harvard University Libraries Dig. Jul. 29, 2008
\textsuperscript{106} “City Gates Open to Refugees: Atlanta Will Welcome All Who Come from Fever Districts,” Atlanta Constitution September 15, 1897; “Montgomery Fears Atlanta: Alabama Capital Quarantines the Georgia Statehouse Town,” Atlanta Constitution September 15, 1897;
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yellow fever, the “stranger’s disease,” afflicting non-immune visitors to southern ports, shaped Southern progressivism.\footnote{J.B. Pritchett, Strangers Disease: Determinants of Yellow Fever Morality during the New Orleans Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1853, Explorations in Economic History, v. 32 n. 4 October 1995 517-539} Cuban historian Mariola Espinosa shows how these campaigns against yellow fever in Cuba were a form of colonial public health, focused on eradicating a disease fatal for U.S. whites but against which adult native-born Cubans had immunity. In contrast to the eradication of yellow fever, U.S. public health officials largely ignored tuberculosis, which inflicted a much higher death toll, particularly among Afro-Cubans.\footnote{Mariola Espinsosa, Epidemic Invasions, 32-34}

These colonial public health campaigns, relying on sweeping fumigation and rigorous quarantine, expanded with the construction of the Panama Canal and the growth of United Fruit’s banana ports. Outbreaks of yellow fever in the border-town of Laredo, Texas and among Italian stevedores unloading banana boats in New Orleans, underscored the challenges of imposing colonial public health measures in the U.S. The transnational circulation of public health practices in these campaigns laid the foundation for a state-corporate apparatus policing public health and safeguarding trade across the American Mediterranean.

\subsection*{3.1.1 Vector Theory and Environmental Sanitation}

Cuban epidemiologist Dr. Carlos Juan Finlay first presented the theory that mosquitoes were a disease carrier or vector of yellow fever to the Real Academia de Ciencias Médicas in Havana, translated by New Orleans physician Rudolph Matas. He later presented his findings at the 1881 International Sanitary Conference in Washington, D.C.\footnote{Carlos Finlay, El mosquito hipotéticamente considerado como agente de transmisión de la fiebre Amarilla, Anales de la Real Academia Ciencias Médicas, Físicas y Naturales de la Habana, 18, 1881-1882 reprinted in C.F. Finlay, Carlos Finlay and Yellow Fever (New York: Institute of Tropical Medicine of the University of Havana and Oxford Press, 1940)} (Figure 3.1) The son of Dr. Edward Finlay, a Scottish doctor who fought with Simón Bolívar and French-born Elisa (Isabel)
de Barrés, Juan Carlos was raised on his family’s coffee plantation near Puerto Príncipe (Camagüey). Educated in Paris and Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, he remained a country doctor whose U.S. credentials were dismissed by European-trained physicians at the Universidad de La Habana. Finlay was a poor public speaker, due to a childhood bout with a nervous system disorder that left him with a distinct stutter, and accepted belief remained that yellow fever was a filth disease spread by germs.

In the U.S. South, yellow fever afflicted the “unacclimated stranger.” R.D. McCormick, a saloonkeeper from Tampa, arrived in Jacksonville in July 1888. Checking into a hotel, he fell terribly ill and on July 28, became the first victim. Jacksonville, with a population of 25,000, was a hub of sea and riverboat trade in cotton, lumber, and oranges from St. Johns River valley. It boasted twenty hotels accommodating 100,000 tourists in 1887-88. The outbreak of fever, with 4,656 cases and 427 deaths, reduced Florida’s largest city to “a no-man’s land of death and terror.” One victim, firefighter William Craugh, was “lying prostrate, his face red and yellow. He was partially delirious and apparently in a dying condition, with symptoms of the fatal black vomit.” The Clyde Line halted steamship service in Charleston. Railroads stopped in Waycross, Georgia, where residents threatened to rip up tracks. A camp for refugees was established on the St. Marys River, the Florida-Georgia line.

112. Homenaje al Doctor Carlos Finlay en el primer centenario de su nacimiento: 3 de diciembre de 1933
113. “Ridicule and contemptuous scorn constituted the only public notice given to Carlos Finlay for nearly twenty years,” Dr. Carlos J. Finlay remarks before the House of Representatives, October 28, 1943
115. Margaret Fairlie, “The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1888 in Jacksonville, The Florida Historical Quarterly Vol. 19 No. 2 (October 1940), 95
116. Greg Burnett, Florida’s Past: People and Events that Shaped the State (Pineapple Press, 1997), 240
117. Report Covering the Work of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association During the Yellow Fever Epidemic, 1888 (Times Union Print, 1889), 126, 97-198 Penn. State Univ. Dig. Sept. 18, 2010
118. Report Covering the Work of the Jacksonville Auxiliary Sanitary Association, 100-112
The director of the Marine Hospital Service, Dr. Joseph Porter of Key West, ordered the burning of “mattresses, pillows, comforts and blankets soiled by dejections from the sick,” and the boiling of linens in bi-chloride of mercury. Cuban American Dr. Diego Manuel Echemendia, quarantine officer at Tampa, directed the fumigation, aided by local doctors, including Dr. Alexander Darnes, Jacksonville’s first Black physician. Officials burned bonfires to pine, tar and pitch to destroy fever germs. (Figure 3.2) The war on yellow fever took a literal turn when, believing “violent concussions in the atmosphere would destroy the germs,” public health officials fired six cannons, “with the only result a lot of smashed windows and shattered nerves of women and children.”

An illustration of yellow fever as death, wearing a Cuban sombrero, alluded to its alleged origins. (Figure 3.3) Blaming the epidemic on trade with Cuba, the American Public Health Association urged President Grover Cleveland to send Army bacteriologist George Sternberg to Havana. “Do Sanitary Interests of the United States Demand the Annexation of Cuba?” asked the secretary of the Pennsylvania State Board of Health in 1889. Noting that the narrow entrance to Havana’s harbor prevented tides from entering, it complained of “feculent and putrefiable material, which now pours by thousands of gallons daily into this landlocked pond.” “A single widespread epidemic of yellow fever would cost the United States more in money, to say nothing of grief and misery, than the purchase money of Cuba,” his report concluded. Unsanitary conditions reflected deliberate indifference, “the native Cubans do not desire to stamp out yellow

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120-Fifteenth Annual Report of the State Board of Health-State of Florida (Jacksonville, Fla., February 9, 1904), 159; The Medical Standard, Vol. 6-7 (1889), 61
fever. They suffer little from it themselves and are glad to see it kill 1,000 Spanish soldiers a year.” Reminding readers “Cuba is the fever’s winter home, and from there every summer it begins its raid upon our Southern cities it may become necessary for the United States to annex the island in order to have to put it under proper sanitation.”

Political upheavals of Cuba’s War of Independence would provide the U.S. with an opportunity to acquire control over the island.

### 3.1.2 The Occupation of Cuba

Cuba’s War of Independence began with the Grito de Baire in February 1895. The insurgents, largely Afro-Cuban mambises (guerrilla soldiers) were confined to remote Oriente province. In autumn 1895, after an outbreak of yellow fever depleted the Spanish, mambi forces led by mulatto Gen. Antonio Maceo rode out of the eastern mountains, across the central plain, into the western valleys, burning sugar mills and plantations. By 1896, rebels operated in every province, controlling the countryside and avoiding pitched battles, as yellow fever attacked Spanish soldiers in cities. From 1895-1898, 16,329 Spanish soldiers and sailors died of yellow fever, compared to 3,100 in combat.

After the outbreak of yellow fever in New Orleans in 1897, attributed to Cubans engaged in gunrunning, Southern newspapers called for U.S. military intervention. The explosion of the

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123. “Yellow Fever in Cuba, ” Journal of the American Medical Association (Chicago) 9 no. 24 (1888), 864
Cornell University Dig. Jun 5, 2013
124. Rafael Gutiérrez Fernández, Héroes del 24 de febrero Tomos 1 y 2 Año 1932;
125. The word Mambi is associated with Juan Ethnus Mambi, a Black Spanish military officer during the Spanish re-conquest of Santo Domingo who deserted to fight with the Dominicans, Anel Anivac, Storia militare de Cuba (Soldiershop: 2015) Some sources cite the term to be of Kongo origin. Cuba Journal: Ejercito Mambi,” Cuba Journal 16 Marc 2011; Miguel Barnet, Biography of a Runaway Slave (Curbstone Books, 1995)
126. Louis A. Pérez, Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution (Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 118-119
127. J.R. McNeill, Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 300; At least 4,000 died on transport ships returning to Spain, Manuel Moreno Fraginals, José J. Moreno Masó, Guerra migración y muerte: El ejercito español en Cuba como via migratoria (Colombres: Ediciones Júcar, 1993), 151
128. “As to yellow fever,” Houston Daily Post September 7, 1897 “Where to Fumigate-Havana Atlanta Constitution October 26, 1897 quoted in Mariola Espinosa, Epidemic Invasions, 29
USS *Maine* in Havana provided the pretext and on April 25, 1898, the U.S. declared war on Spain. The war in Cuba lasted a few weeks. U.S. forces suffered 332 killed in combat, at El Caney and San Juan Hill, while nearly 3,000 soldiers eventually died of disease. On August 4, 1898, eight days before the Spanish surrender, which Cuban officers were excluded from, Gen. William Shafter urged “this army must at once be taken out of the island of Cuba and sent to some point on the northern seacoast of the United States. The army is disabled by malarial fever to such an extent that its efficiency is destroyed and it is in a condition to be practically destroyed by an epidemic of yellow fever sure to come in the near future.” Following the filth disease theory, Maj. George Barbour, sanitary officer in Santiago, whose population he judged “extremely ignorant, careless, superstitious and filthy,” ordered the burning of 100 corpses, and the slaughtering of 6,000 feral dogs. He also outlawed littering of offal and debris.

In 1899, outbreaks of yellow fever occurred in Florida. Yellow fever in Key West caused 68 deaths in a town of 25,000, although surgeon Joseph Porter noted the immunity of the 8,000 Bahamian and 9,000 Cuban residents ensured public resistance to disinfection. One death occurred in Tampa, “a drunken sailor named Walch,” who worked on a dredging-tug and had worked as a sailor on steamships towing Cuban cattle boats, whose crews “were a drinking lot and Walch was in their company.” Fifteen deaths occurred in Miami, a town of 1,700 at the

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129. “In less than two weeks are our army invaded Cuba, yellow fever made its appearance, and almost simultaneously attacked the troops from Siboney, the base of invasion, to the trenches before Santiago. From its appearance nearly 500 fever cases, most of them yellow fever, impaired the fighting force and seriously taxed the limited resources of the medical department.” Nicholas Senn, Medical-surgical Aspects of the Spanish American War (American Medical Association, 1900), 155 Univ. of Texas Dig. May 6, 2008

130. Investigation of the War with Spain, Spanish American War, 1898, Government Documents, Pamphlet Collection (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1899), 112


133. Dr. L.W. Weedon’s Report to Joseph Y. Porter, March 11, 1900 in Annual Report of the State Board of Health of Florida 11 (Jacksonville, Fla. 1900) 63-64
end of Henry Flagler’s Florida East Coast Railway. On September 28 I.R. Hargroove, a dance instructor at the Hotel Miami, died from a “typical case of yellow fever, including black vomit,” after he spent a night on a cattle boat, Laura, which arrived from Nuevitas, Camagüey, Cuba. The steamer Santa Lucia, in Biscayne Bay served as a camp for fever patients, with tents in the surrounding orange groves. Houses were fumigated with bi-chloride of mercury and fumigation of outgoing mail was instituted. Henry Flagler financed the building of a hospital and paid for immune nurses (male and female, Black and white), who came from Jacksonville and Key West. In contrast to the quick response to yellow fever, public health authorities were slow to address an outbreak of smallpox in a Black phosphate miners’ camp in the Bone Valley near Tampa, and their negligence led to twenty or thirty cases before vaccinations were carried out. Health officials blamed preventable disease on “migratory habits of negroes. The phosphate mines and turpentine camps are the places most exposed to danger.” Outbreaks of yellow fever and other diseases shaped discourses stigmatizing Blacks as a contaminated race, while revealing indifference to the deaths of Blacks.

3.1.3 Yellow Fever and Colonial Public Health in Cuba

An outbreak of yellow fever in Havana in 1900 centered in the neighborhoods around the Parque Central, “the cleanest and best constructed part of the city,” while “the malodorous district reserved to houses of ill fame did hardly have a case.” Treating a disease that defied Social Darwinist assumptions by afflicting the rich and sparing the poor, one Army physician

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134-162 of 368 men who voted to incorporate as the city of Miami in 1896 were Black, after the incorporation they lost voting rights, John Swell, Memoirs and History of Miami (1933), 179
bemoaned, “Yellow fever has not followed the poor or unclean, but rather the movement of nonimmunes,” with “the most aristocratic apartments on the second and third floors” more vulnerable than “the hovels crowded around a patio.”

A four-man Yellow Fever Commission led by Dr. Walter Reed, a Virginia-born Army physician, who read Carlos Finlay’s writings and had investigated yellow fever among soldiers stationed near the Potomac, definitively demonstrated Carlos Finlay’s vector theory, that *aedes aegypti* mosquitoes transmitted yellow fever. Non-immune subjects slept two weeks in a mosquito-proof house, with furniture soiled by fever victims, then transferred to the camp. There, vulnerable to swarms of mosquitoes, they died of yellow fever. Among the victims was a member of the commission, Baltimore physician Dr. Jesse Lazear, who died in September. Reed established Camp Lazear to continue the commissions’ work. (Figures 3.4 and 3.5)

The governor of Cuba, Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood, appointed as Chief Sanitary Officer William Gorgas, among the earliest physicians to embrace vector theory. Yellow fever played a key role throughout Gorgas’ life. His parents, Maj. Josiah Gorgas, survivor of fever at the battle of Veracruz and Chief Ordinance Officer for the Confederate Army, and Amelia Gayle, daughter of an Alabama governor, met during a yellow fever epidemic in Mobile. William Gorgas had survived fever in 1882 when stationed at Fort Brown, at the mouth of the Rio Grande, where he

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140. “Camp Lazear was established Nov. 20, 1900, and from this date it was strictly quarantined, no one being able to enter or leave except the three immune members of the detachment and the members of the board. Supplies were drawn chiefly from the Columbia Barracks.” George Sternberg, “The Transmission of Yellow Fever by Mosquitoes,” *Popular Science* July 1901, 225-241
met his future wife. Gorgas organized the Stegomiya Bridge. Staffed primarily by Cuban doctors, the Brigade poured oil on cisterns and inspected homes, screening rooms of fever victims with wire netting and burning pyrethrum powder to kill any remaining mosquitoes. Gorgas and three Cuban physicians, Carlos Finlay, Antonio Albertini and Juan Guiteras, diagnosed suspected cases. Penalties for concealing cases included a fine of $50.

Physician and statistician Dr. Jorge Le Roy y Cassá, secretary for the Yellow Fever Commission, reported that in 1901-02 there had been only twenty-one cases and three deaths among Havana’s non-immune population of 35-40,000 and concluded with pride that yellow fever, endemic to Havana for more than a century, had virtually disappeared. The priority placed on yellow fever resulted in the neglect of other diseases, most importantly tuberculosis, which killed over 900 people in Havana in 1901, afflicting workers in poorly ventilated cigar factories. Yellow fever, by contrast, ranked eighth among lethal diseases in 1900; 940 of the 1,244 deaths were Spanish immigrants, a stream encouraged by U.S. authorities who hoped to whiten Cuba’s population.

Dr. Juan Guiteras, speaking in Washington, D.C. 1902, warned threats of yellow fever had diminished, but not ended. Pointing out that the “States of the South still continue to depend

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146 “Mortality and Morbidity Reports and Reviews” The Sanitarian 56, 4 (1901), 556
only on maritime quarantines” he doubted the inhabitants of the Gulf South, many of whom were not “convinced to the validity” of vector theory, would voluntarily submit to fumigation. 147 Although yellow fever eradication epitomized colonial public health, the leading roles of Cuban physicians and acceptance of the science of vector theory inspired nationalistic pride, which challenged Cuba’s alleged sanitary shortcomings while criticizing public health officials in the U.S. for their reluctance to adopt similarly rigorous sanitary measures.

3.1.4 Public Health and State Power in the U.S.

The difficulty of imposing surveillance oriented public health measures in the United States became apparent in the summer of 1903, when an outbreak of yellow fever occurred in the Texas-Mexico border town of Laredo. On September 25, 1903, Cuban-American physician Dr. Gregorio Guiteras, cousin of Dr. Juan Guiteras, also a veteran of Havana’s Stegomiya Brigade, arrived in San Antonio. He met with Texas state health officer Dr. George Tabor and proceeded to Laredo, where they examined two corpses, determining both had died from yellow fever. 148

At this time, an epidemic raged in the Mexican states of Nuevo León and Tamaulipas, killing over 1,000 people, including 442 in Monterey. 149 Mosquitoes spread along the Mexican National Railway, with cases of infection appearing near the plaza of Nuevo Laredo, from which it was introduced to Laredo, Texas, a report noting the “two Laredos are practically one town and

149 Juan Mora-Torres, The Making the of the Mexican Border: State, Capitalism and Society in Nuevo León, 1848-1930 (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010), 135; Francisco Castillo Najera, The Campaign Against Yellow Fever in Mexico, American Journal of Public Health (Chicago, IL) March 1922 Vol. XII, no. 3, 181, For response by municipal authorities in Monterrey, Una gran empresa en Monterrey: el servicio de agua y drenaje para la ciudad (Tip. de Gobierno del Estado, 1905)
the plaza is frequented day and night by Americans.”

From September 25 to November 30, there were 1,050 cases of fever in and around Laredo, resulting in 103 deaths, 95 of which were Mexican. Headlines read, “Laredo Like a City of the Dead” after nearly 4,000 people fled.

In an article in the *Journal of American Medicine*, Dr. Gregorio Guiteras, who was attended to Spanish-speaking victims, blamed the outbreak on “the large peon population of Laredo, made up of the lowest class of Mexicans, ignorant and superstitious, seldom called a physician because of fear of being quarantined or sent to a hospital.”

“The ignorant class were filled with the idea that the doctors and authorities were in conspiracy against then, and that the main object they had in view was the making of money.” Locals opposed “the oiling of water barrels, especially among the ignorant classes, who were led to believe that our object was to poison the water.” The epidemic illustrated a need, the physician believed, for authoritarian health measures. “The Laredo epidemic has shown conclusively to my mind that results such as obtained in Havana in the suppression of yellow fever during the American occupation can not be obtained elsewhere without the undisputed authority and the means that were at the command of the Government of Intervention in Cuba. These powers in reality amounted to martial law.”

In contrast to constraints physicians faced in the U.S., Col. William C. Gorgas, as Chief Sanitary Officer of the Isthmian Commission, exercised powers equivalent to martial law in the Canal Zone, a 10-mile strip between Colón and Panamá. Arriving in June 1904, he clashed with

152-Laredo Like a City of the Dead: Yellow Fever Raging Despite Efforts to Stamp it Out” Los Angeles Herald Monday September 28, 1903 Number 362, California Digital Newspaper Collection
153-”The Yellow Fever Situation on the Mexican Border-What is Being Done to Protect the United States, Journal of the American Medical Association vol. 42 April 12, 1904, 1040
154-Gregorio Guiteras, The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1903 at Laredo, Texas, Journal of the American Medical Association, 43 no. 7 (1904): 311, 310, 119
U.S. officials until President Theodore Roosevelt appointed a chief engineer, George Washington Goethals, who embraced vector theory.\textsuperscript{155} Around 600,000 gallons of crude oil a year were shipped from Southern California, piped into tanks of galvanized steel carried by human “knapsack sprayers” and mule-drawn tank carts, and sprayed over ditches and pools of stagnant water, destroying breeding grounds of \textit{ades aegypti}.\textsuperscript{156} (Figure 3.6) Gorgas reported the last case of yellow fever in Panamá on November 11, 1905, and in Colón on May 17, 1906.\textsuperscript{157} With paternalistic pride obscuring their coercive power, the Isthmian Commission declared, “The people of Panama, themselves immune to yellow fever, submitted patiently to the annoyance and inconvenience of fumigation.”\textsuperscript{158}

From 1904 to 1914, 150,000-200,000 West Indians migrated to Panama, a “demographic tidal wave” in a country of less than 400,000.\textsuperscript{159} Gorgas reported that Canal Zone hospitals in Colón and Ancón saw “more deaths from pneumonia than from all other causes, and nineteen-twentieths of these deaths occurred among negroes,” mainly “Jamaican or Barbadian” pick-and-shovel man, who worked ten-to-twelve hour days and had arrived with “only the clothes they had upon them. They worked in the rain all day. At night he would go bed in his wet clothes.”\textsuperscript{160} In contrast to indifference to deaths from tuberculosis and pneumonia U.S. authorities exhibited in Cuba, the Sanitary Department took action to prevent these diseases from decimating their West


\textsuperscript{156} Joseph Albert Le Prince, \textit{Mosquito Control in Panama: The Eradication of Malaria and Yellow Fever in Cuba and Panama} (New York and London: G.T. Putnam’s Sons, 1916), 169

\textsuperscript{157} Noel Maurer, Carlos Yu, \textit{The Big Ditch: How America Took, Built, Ran and Ultimately Gave Away the Panama Canal} (Princeton University Press, 2010), 124; Panama Canal Record, Vol. 1 (1908), 222

\textsuperscript{158} Annual Report of the Isthmian Canal Commission for the year ending December 1, 1905 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1905), 33

\textsuperscript{159} Michael Conniff, \textit{Black Labor on a White Canal, Panama, 1904-1981} (, 1981), 25-29

\textsuperscript{160} The Panama Canal Hearings: Hearings Before the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, House of Representatives, Sixty-second Congress, December 18, 1911-Feb. 1, 1912, 277
Indian workforce. Washhouses and drying rooms were built in labor camps of Canal workers. In the subtropical borderlands of the U.S., medical authorities lacked the sweeping authority to implement surveillance-oriented colonial public health measures. These measures, relying on powers of martial law, derived their legitimacy from humanitarian rationale, but were shaped primarily by demands for worker productivity.

3.1.5 The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1905

In the summer of 1905, yellow fever epidemic struck New Orleans’s French Market “Little Italy,” “almost wholly inhabited by an Italian population intimately connected with the handling of bananas, the unloading of such cargoes, from fruit ships arriving from Central American ports.” Italians, mostly Sicilians, were ignorant of the diseases’ origins, not fluent in English and suspicious of doctors. It was not until July 21 that Surgeon John H. White of the Marine Hospital Service diagnosed two deaths as yellow fever. State health officials, who initially denied the outbreak, acknowledged over 100 cases and 21 deaths; the Marine Hospital Service estimated the number to be almost 200. Pathologist Sir Rubert Boyce of the Liverpool School for Tropical Medicine conducted autopsies, describing symptoms, “Skin yellow; spleen enlarged and dark, stomach contained black contents,” in another “Skin markedly yellow; muscles dark red stomach contains black vomit; cardiac end of stomach deeply congested.”

161.“Drying Houses at Labor Camps: Rainy Season Brings them Into Use Again,” Canal Record, 1 (1908), 323 Princeton University Library Jan. 30, 2009
162.Joseph Holt “To the People of New Orleans,” October 4, 1905, in Miscellaneous Papers of Dr. Joseph H. Holt (New Orleans, 1906), 6 Jones Hall Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University, New Orleans
164. “No Yellow Fever Here: Dr. Kohnke Says False Reports are Circulated,” Holt, “To the People of New Orleans,” October 4, 1905, 5, 4,
The epidemic spread to sugar plantations in surrounding parishes. In Patterson, thirty cases among “Italians employed in the mills.” A medical journal reported, “Outside Patterson, La. the Italians are in a riotous state and threaten to burn down the hospitals,” and a surgeon in St. John and St. Charles parishes “is said to have been mobbed by Italians.” In March 1906, one sugar planter bemoaned labor shortages caused by “an exodus of Italians from the parish, which has been going on since the last grinding,” fearing a recurrence of yellow fever.

Authorities erected inspection camps along the Louisville & Nashville at Flomaton, the Alabama-Florida line, on the Southern Pacific at Echo and Waskon, near Shreveport. On July 26, officials in Tampa learned of the death of an Italian. Dr. Joseph Porter insisted, “the Italian colony at Tampa and West Tampa suspected the nature of the man’s illness and purposely suppressed all facts connected with his sickness, and aimed to secrete the case.” On August 6, deaths were reported in Pensacola, two weeks later, three Greek men reported symptoms.

By September a case was reported in Atlanta, Georgia, where, a “refugee from Pensacola,” arriving on the Louisville & Nashville railway, “was promptly removed from the city, and died on September 5.” Tourism promotion by the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce had emphasized the lack of yellow fever, explaining that the cities’ elevation 1000 feet above sea level, and the “cool, bracing atmosphere, with breezes that blow over the foot-hills of the Blue

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167. “St. Marys Special Correspondence” The Louisiana Planter and Sugar Manufacturer 30 no. 3 (1906), 167 Univ. of California Jan 9, 2015
“Ridge” formed natural barriers to the spread of disease. Dr. C.P. Wertenbaker inspected railcars in Montgomery and Atlanta reported, “a large number of refugees variously estimated from 500 to 5,000, and every train from the infected districts brought others.”

On August 26, authorities erected a sanitary cordon around Pensacola. Along East Government Street, pools of water were oiled and porches screened. The chief health officer reported “mosquitoes breeding in every conceivable place, little cups of water in the trees, vases of broken crockery . . . in roof gutters, where limbs of trees had fallen and made dams.” In New Orleans, the Marine Hospital Service, directed by Dr. White and aided by local volunteers, oiled 70,000 cisterns in the French Quarter with kerosene. Sulfur cans were distributed for a citywide fumigation of rooms and enclosed spaces on Sunday, August 20, when nearly 300 tons of sulfur were burned. (Figure 3.7 and 3.8)

Public health officials protested that Italian immigrants “have been one of the greatest difficulties that the health authorities have had to contend with. They are ignorant and superstitious and fight and impede the physicians in every way.” Sir Rupert Boyce found ideal mosquito breeding grounds in the French Market. “Human beings and animals were herded together in close proximity, the court yards were littered up with rubbish, consisting of rotting

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172-Atlanta: A Twentieth Century City (Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, 1905), 5  
175-“Florida Medical Association, thirty-seventh annual session, Jacksonville, April 6-8, 1906” The Journal of the American Medical Association, 1717  
176-Sir Rubert Boyce, Yellow Fever Prophylaxis in New Orleans, 51  
177-“The mosquitoes that were hatched before the screening and oiling were done are still about the city in vast numbers, and are, at the present crisis, liable to be as dangerous as rattle-snakes. To get rid of these mosquitoes requires fumigation by sulphur fumes. This fumigation, to be effective, must be done as a pre-concerted effort on a given day at a given time.” Rubert Boyce, Yellow Fever Prophylaxis in New Orleans, 57 Journal of the American Medical Association (Chicago, Il) Vol. 45 August 26, 1905 641 Univ. of Michigan Library Dig. Feb. 19, 2011  
178-St. Louis Medical Review, Vol. 52 September 9, 1905, 222
wood, tin cans, bottles and disused tubs. No proper drainage existed in the yards, the [water] closets were very dilapidated and constructed on the cess pit or pail system.”179 (Figures 3.9)

There were only six Blacks among the 452 recorded yellow fever deaths in New Orleans, but Blacks were suspected as carriers of yellow fever.180 In November a study by New Orleans physician Dr. C.M. Brady attributing the low death rate of Blacks to their “phlegmatic temper” and the fact that “the sweat glands of the negro are decidedly more active than those of the white.” Blacks played a major role in the epidemic, according to Brady, because they “tend to associate with the Italians on certain terms of social equality,” with Italian fruit-dealers having “a staff of several negro boy hangers-on, who promptly contract the disease from their masters and return to their specific homes with the usual consequences.”181 Quarantine restrictions dealt a blow to the banana trade. On August 11, after mosquitoes were found in banana-loaded railcars in Cairo, Illinois until October, no bananas were unloaded in New Orleans.182 Bananas were imported through Mobile, Alabama, free of yellow fever, due to quarantine enforced by Dr. Henry Goldthwaite and assistant Dr. Edward Francis.183 In the wake of the epidemic, which strengthened fears about the banana trade as a source of fever, United Fruit officials devised plans to improve the companies’ image.

3.1.6 The Quarantine Inspection Tour

In the winter of 1905, as frosts brought an end to the epidemic, Crawford Ellis, director of United Fruit’s Southern Division sought to dispel perceptions that the banana trade was

179. Rubert Boyce, Yellow Fever Prophylaxis in New Orleans, 1905, 4
180. Margaret Humphreys, Yellow Fever and the South, 165
181. C.M. Brady, “The Prevalence and Diagnosis of Yellow Fever in the Colored Race” The New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal, Vol. 58 554, 551
182. Imports of bananas to New Orleans fell from 9,000,000 bunches in 1904 to 7,000,000 by 1905, “The Future of the Crescent City” The Syren & Shipping Illustrated, 2 Sept. 25, 1907: 323
dangerous.\textsuperscript{184} On January 20, 1906 a party of state and federal public health officials, politicians and journalists from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas left New Orleans on a quarantine inspection tour of Central America, with Ellis serving as a guide.\textsuperscript{185} (\textbf{Figure 3.10}) This tour displayed successes in eradicating yellow fever, “allaying certain vague and unreasonable apprehensions previously existing with respect to the tropical fruit trade, the development of which, under the safeguards thrown down in recent years, has been of greatest benefit to the commerce of New Orleans and Mobile.”\textsuperscript{186}

Traveling aboard the SS \textit{Anselm}, they reached Limón, Costa Rica on January 26.\textsuperscript{187} \textit{New Orleans Picayune} editor Yorke P. Nicholson described the “first sight of the Central American mainland, high mountains rising to the sky and the city appearing, at the foot of the mountains, with a familiar sense of movement and activity.”\textsuperscript{188} They were greeted by United Fruit division manager Richard Schweppe, Dr. Emilio Echeverría and Dr. Benjamín de Céspedes, two Cuban physicians, veterans of the campaigns against yellow fever in Havana.\textsuperscript{189} In Limón, officials found “a modern town of 6,000 inhabitants, well-drained, well-paved and well-stocked with clean drinking water protected against mosquito infection.”\textsuperscript{190} (\textbf{Figures 3.11 and 3.12}) Dr. John McLaughlin of the Texas Board of Health reported a steel wharf extended 1500 feet into the water “making it impossible for a \textit{stegomiya} to fly,” while the hospital was “divided into six

\textsuperscript{184} “Progressive Men of America, No. 1 Crawford Ellis” \textit{Pan American Magazine}, Vol. 7 (Dec., 1908) 137
\textsuperscript{186} Biennial Report of the Louisiana State Board of Health (1906), 14-15
\textsuperscript{187}-Register of Ships 1898-1901, 49 Boston Fruit Records, Baker Library, Harvard Business School;
\textsuperscript{188}-Informe que rindiera la Comitiva de Oficiales de Sanidad del Sur, que visitara Puerto Limón en 1906,” Fernando González Vásquez y Elias Zeledón Cartín, \textit{Crónicas y Relatos para la Historia de Puerto Limón} (San José: Centro de Investigación y Conservación del Patrimonio Cultural 1999), 275
\textsuperscript{189} “Dr. Benjamin de Céspedes published not long ago a book on the hygiene of children in Costa Rica which was awarded a prize in a scientific competition by our Faculty of Science and Medicine, Actas de la Sexta Conferencia Sanitaria Internacional de las Repúblicas Americanas, vol. 4, 138
\textsuperscript{190} Informe que rindiera la Comitiva de Oficiales de Sanidad del Sur, 274
compartments, screened with twenty-four mesh wire double screen doors, arranged so that one will have to close the first door before entering the second.”191 Louisiana Sen. John H. Marks of Assumption Parish described a meeting with Dr. Céspedes, contrasted local sanitation measures with the “lack of drainage facilities and other modern health precautions” in New Orleans.192

Limón was United Fruit’s largest division, with 5,600 workers on the company payroll in 1904, 4,000 of whom were West Indian, mostly Jamaican.193 Health authorities expressed concerns over their immunity to yellow fever. Inspecting Port Limón in 1904, Dr. D.W. Goodman found *aedes aegypti* in the “western portion of the town, where most of the negroes live and where less care is taken of the premise and surroundings. . .the negroes living in the western or mosquito zone have been very much affected by malarial fever, but are practically immune to yellow fever.”194

The members of the quarantine tour extolled the sanitary laws devised by Dr. Céspedes, which forbade residents from having open cisterns or water tanks on their properties and outlawed the keeping of chickens, “because they scratch they ground, making holes in which water collects.”195 Dr. John White noted that enforcement was possible because “the population, consisting largely of Jamaican negroes, is tractable and under good discipline, being for the most part—and indeed, I may say almost entirely—employees of the United Fruit Company.”196 Sanitary laws met with resentment, if little resistance, confirming racist assumptions about the degraded and

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191-Inspector for Central America, Dr. J.W. Mclaughlin to George Tabor, February 23, 1906 Report of the State Health Officer of Texas ed. by George Tabor, September 1, 1904 to August 31, 1906 (Houston, State Printing Company, 1907), 35 Univ. of Minnesota Library Dig. March 17, 2015
192-Informe que rindiera la Comitiva de Oficiales de Sanidad del Sur, 293
195-Informe que rindiera la Comitiva de Oficiales de Sanidad del Sur, 280
196-Dr. J.H. White in Annual Report of the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service for the Fiscal Year 1906, 124
ignorant qualities of Blacks. German physician Dr. Carl Beck praised Dr. Céspedes as “the most hated man in Port Limon,” finding “the ignorant populace not only does not thank him, but the house-wives curse him heartily for having passed a law making it necessary for them to burn up the refuse twice a day, whereas formerly they simply threw it out on the street.”

Authorities enforced sanitary laws with authoritarian paternalism on a largely immune population, but the threat of yellow fever lingered. Inspecting the quarantine station on the offshore island of Uvita Dr. McLaughlin and Dr. Edward Francis of the Marine Hospital Service found no mosquitoes or larvae, but feared that mosquitoes “will find freshwater near the stems of coconut palm branches where rainwater gathers.” Dr. Henry Goldthwaite was apprehensive about “the possibility of infection from the Pacific coast, coming principally from San Salvador and Guayaquil,” Ecuador, ports which were “sources of plague” with connections to Puntarenas, Costa Rica’s Pacific port. Dr. John Thomas of the Mississippi River quarantine and the Louisiana Board of Health concluded that this was unlikely. He cited the policy of Costa Rica’s Northern Railway, a United Fruit subsidiary owned by Minor Keith, of not allowing the sale of tickets to passengers bound for the U.S. “unless they can prove they have been in San José for at least five days,” at the end of which symptoms of yellow fever would be visible.

After spending four days in Limón, the party boarded a train for San José. (Figures 3.13 and 3.14) Ascending into the mountains, the train passed fincas of coffee and sugarcane, John Marks observing, “the cane is grown on mountain slopes and not on the plains, as we do in Louisiana.” He also admired the volcanoes of Turrialba and Irazú, where “from its top, on a clear
day, one can see the two oceans, Atlantic and Pacific.” In Costa Rica’s capital they were greeted by government ministers and John Keith, grandson of United Fruit vice-president Minor Keith, who gave them a tour of the Teatro Nacional, “Probably the most beautiful theater on the American continent.” The tour of San José served as a perfect climax to this carefully orchestrated display of tropical modernity, designed to dispel the image of Central America as pestilential.

3.1.7 Epidemics and Banana Loading in Panama and Central America

On January 29, the quarantine inspection tour reached Bocas del Toro (Bocas Town), United Fruit’s Panama division, on Isla Colón, in an archipelago of islands, cays and islets. Dr. Edward Francis described an unsightly town of “4,000 people living in houses propped up out of the swamp, drinking rain water from barrels which at the same time were breeding Stegomiya fascinta.” Dr. White pointed out that the unattractive appearance ensured its freedom from fever, “the very fact that they are flooded by the rise of the tide is in itself a guarantee that the ground water of the city will not breed the stegomiya mosquito.” He tacitly acknowledged the environmental management of the Afro-Caribbean population. The party found mosquito larvae on Isla Colón and Nancy’s Cay, site of the United Fruit hospital. Sen. John Marks pointed out that bananas were loaded onto lighters and since plantations on mainland Changuinola were “free of infection we may consider trade with New Orleans to be without any danger.”

In Bluefields, on Nicaragua’s Mosquito Coast, La Ceiba, Honduras, and Belize Town, British Honduras, the dangers of yellow fever were less severe, due to the lack of docks and

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201.-Informe que rindiera la Comitiva de Oficiales de Sanidad del Sur, 291
203.-“Sanitary Reports and Statistics,” Annual Report of the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service (1907), 127
204.-“Bocas del Toro, Panama,” Annual Report of the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, 127
205.-Informe que rindiera la Comitiva de Oficiales de Sanidad del Sur, 293

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railways. At Bluefields, the only settlement reached by ships was a cay island “with two or three houses,” bananas and other cargo “have to be taken to or from the ships by means of a stern-wheeled steamboat of the type used on rivers in the South.”

In Belize, British authorities led by Sir Rubert Boyce had screened water tanks and were filling in swamps. Dr. White observed that bananas “do not come into the city, nor near it, it being impossible for a vessel to approach anywhere near the shore.” In La Ceiba, port of the New Orleans Vaccaro Brothers, where members of the party were greeted by a marching band and toured native villages, (Figures 3.15 and 3.16) bananas were lightered onto offshore steamships, Dr. White concluded the lack of railroads and a range of high coastal mountains “accounts for its comparative freedom from fever.”

Of greater concern was Guatemala, United Fruit’s newest division, where Minor Keith received a concession in 1904 to complete Guatemala’s Northern railway. On February 11, the tour visited Livingston and Puerto Barrios, expressing concern about the immunity of native Garifuna. They also noted the inadequate sanitary conditions tolerated by United Fruit. Livingston, lacking port facilities, was situated on high ground, with clean water, but Dr. White noted that “nearly the entire population consists of Caribs, who seemed to be practically immune to yellow fever.” “Port” Barrios, terminal of the Guatemala Railway, with “about 200 Jamaica...

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207. “A small outbreak occurred at Belize, British Honduras, and a timely inspection by Sir Rupert Boyce brought out the interesting fact that the disease probably existed there as early as January but was not declared until May.” James Carroll, “Yellow Fever,” in William Osler, Thomas McCray, editors, Modern Medicine: Its Theory and Practice (Philadelphia & New York: Lee Brothers & Co. 1907), 738-739
209. The Fruit Ports of Central America in their Relation to the United States” “Bluefields, Nicaragua,” Annual Report of the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service (1906), 118
211. Dr. J.H. White in Annual Report of the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service (1907), 112
negroes” and “plenty of stegomiya wiggle tails,” was built in the middle of mangrove swamps. Dr. White urged that this “town in name only should be removed before it becomes a town of fact.”

(Figure 3.17) His suggestion that the port be relocated to the relatively high ground of Santo Tomas was ignored for almost a half-century.

Particularly disturbing for the quarantine tour were Puerto Barrios’ rail connections to “the two most badly infected places in Central America during the past season,” Zacapa and Gualán, in Guatemala’s eastern highlands, where the epidemic had “a death list, respectively, of 600 and 800.” The railroads that ended the mountainous isolation of Central America served as a corridor for the spread of yellow fever, with outbreaks among a population of “Indians and Spanish and Indian mixtures” with “a poor resistance even to the malarial fevers.”

Officials in El Salvador ordered fumigation “to prevent, if possible, the invasion of yellow fever which lamentably ravages the city of Zacapa, in the neighboring republic.”

Despite this outbreak, Dr. Francis found no threat from the port itself. “Barrios claims to have had no fever in 1905, but that cases of fever from Livingston went straight through Barrios to Zacapa without stopping.”

3.1.8 Public Health and National Sovereignty

Despite concern over the danger of yellow fever outbreaks, health officials praised the achievements of United Fruit, favorably contrasting its rigorous surveillance-oriented public health policies with the obstacles they faced in their own states. On February 20, during their return voyage, they resolved “that no detention of either freight or passengers, except for

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212. Dr. White wrote in his report that “Santo Tomas, where high and dry ground exists” was “the best point for the establishment of a town.” Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, 112
213. Ibid
216. Dr. Francis, in Annual Report of the Public Health and Marine Hospital Service, 113
purposes of fumigation, be maintained against ports that are actually known to be healthy, such as Ceiba, Bluefields and Limon.”

On July 5, 1906 quarantine regulations were amended, enabling ships from Central America “to enter as soon as the crew, except for the master and chief engineer, shall have been removed from the vessel and placed in quarantine at the station and the living quarters of the vessel thoroughly fumigated and a new crew placed in charge.”

By contrast, the Cuban government of President Tomás Estrada Palma was assailed for alleged failures to uphold sanitary standards of the U.S. occupation. An outbreak of yellow fever occurred in Havana in November 1905, which killed twenty-six people before being brought under control by February 1906. Spanish immigrants brought the disease to Matanzas, where they were eight confirmed cases and four deaths. The growing number of immigrants from Spain and the Canary Islands, who lacked immunity to yellow fever, proved a concern. Of seventy-one cases of yellow fever in Cuba in 1906, all but eight were Spanish immigrants.

Dr. Juan Guiteras blamed the outbreak on the negligence of U.S. officials. He suggested that during the epidemic of yellow fever in New Orleans “some persons being in the period of incubation and not being under observation, had landed in Cuba; or that some ship from New Orleans had been allowed to move about freely, thus permitting ‘Stegomiyas’ to move about

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218- T.D. 27465 Amendment to special quarantine regulations for fruit vessels plying between fruit ports of Central America and ports of the United States south, Treasury Department July 5, 1906 *Treasury Decisions Under Customs and Other Laws*, Vol. 12 (July to December, 1906), 31
221- “Prevention of Yellow Fever in Havana,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Vol. 48 No. 11 March 16, 1907, 963
Cuba’s inability to construct new sewer and waterworks, due to a lack of funds and unrest following the disputed reelection of President Tomás Estrada Palma, elicited a letter from Secretary of State Elihu Root accusing Cuba of failing to honor treaty obligations. On September 29, 1906, after two weeks of failed negotiations and Estrada Palma’s resignation, envoy William Howard Taft announced the U.S. had assumed control over the Cuban government.

As Cuba’s alleged sanitary shortcomings justified a U.S. occupation, in democratizing Costa Rica politicians voiced concerns over the growing power of United Fruit. Ricardo Jiménez Oreamuno, a Cartago-born landowner, lawyer and deputy for San José, warned of the threat to national sovereignty by likening United Fruit to the East India Company. Finding examples of the threat of foreign domination closer to home, he evoked the 1856-57 war against the U.S. filibusters of William Walker, warning, “the same social forces that pushed Walker continue to act with equal energy in the American people.” Addressing Congress in August 1907, he called for an export tax of two cents gold on each bunch of bananas. Pointing out that profits from the sale of Costa Rican bananas exceeded $5 million a year, he contrasted the “millionaire Preston” to the “poor inhabitant of Limón,” concluding that, “lo más negro es Mr. Preston,” Jiménez bemoaned the fact that “we worry about the steogmiya fasciatur of yellow fever and we lie down with the stegomiya prestoniana.” Acknowledging United Fruit’s sanitary progress, he decried the loss of sovereignty and its reliance on a racially alien, exploitable workforce. “We admire this beautiful city of Limón, which looks like it is not part of Costa Rica; we see it atop a coral rock, prosperous and developing, but we do not also see that it is built on the black rock of

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injustice and misery of our society.”

Minor Keith’s railroad had been built through generous concessions from the Costa Rican government, hoping it would open the country to global trade and guarantee national sovereignty. Instead these concessions had become the foundation for United Fruit’s banana plantation empire, export enclaves of U.S. capitalism, with limited connections to the economies host nations, that served as ever present reminders of the limits of independence and the realities of U.S. domination.

3.1.9 Conclusion

Yellow fever pathologist Carlos Juan Finlay died in August 1915, at eighty-two, inspiring commemorations in Cuba but overshadowed by World War I elsewhere. By the time of his death, the first reports were emerging, from a new generation of pathologists, of a jungle form of yellow fever, with monkeys as natural hosts. Outbreaks of jungle fever among emerald-miners in Muzo, Boyacá, Colombia in 1907 and woodcutters in the Valle do Chanaan, Espírito Santo, Brazil in 1933. Jungle yellow fever proved the disease could not be eradicated. Cuban Dr. Domingo Ramos, a U.S.-educated protégé of Finlay, evoked “Heroes and Martyrs of the struggle against yellow fever” declaring, “thirty years after the first great victory against yellow fever, the final fight to conquer and eradicate this disease is taking place in Brazil and Colombia.”

The eradication of the centuries-old scourge of yellow fever from port cities and shipping lanes of the American Mediterranean enabled a biopolitical conquest of the tropics. Sanitary campaigns conducted in Cuba, Panama and the Central American banana ports were colonial

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227. Domingo F. Ramos, Monuments to the Memory of the Heroes and Martyrs in the Struggle against Yellow Fever (1938) Harry Laughlin Papers, D-2-3:10 Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo.
public health, designed to eradicate a disease that was fatal to U.S. whites and detrimental to tropical trade, and relying on powers of martial law that allowed authorities to subject largely immune populations to fumigation. Coercive colonial public health measures were adopted in the United States during yellow fever outbreaks in the border town of Laredo, Texas in 1903 and in New Orleans “Little Italy” in 1905. Proving the controversial mosquito vector theory, campaigns against yellow fever shifted discourses of contamination from miasmic environments to contaminated races of largely Black and brown tropical peoples who cohabited with mosquitoes.

Public health measures helped justify racial segregation and U.S. imperialism. Demands that Cuban authorities maintain sanitary standards constricted the island’s independence. The epidemic in New Orleans increased fears that southern European immigrants were inassimilable, and, through their proximity cities to Blacks, who had more widespread immunity to yellow fever, constituted a public health threat. In the wake of restrictions on the banana trade, United Fruit organized a quarantine inspection tour of Central America by Federal and state public health officials from the Gulf South. This carefully orchestrated tour obscured growing tensions between United Fruit and host countries, as political leaders began to challenge discourses of sanitary and civilizational uplift while criticizing United Fruit’s monopolistic concessions.

3.2 Treating the Ills of the Tropics

In 1911, United Fruit medical officials in Bocas del Toro, Panama reported that the last case of yellow fever on record in their division was in February 1906. They stated that recent years had seen a marked decrease in viral hemorrhagic fever, which had afflicted “white men who were reckless and in many cases alcoholics,” attributing its decline to changes in the makeup of workforce, with a new generation of college-educated white officials. While
remarkable progress was made eradicating diseases that had fatal to whites, diseases that took a larger toll on Black workers, such as malaria, remained widespread. “It is this infection that incapacitates our laborers, and we are in consequence compelled to protect them.” In contrast to the yellow fever-transmitting *aedes aegypti*, which lays its eggs in and around standing water, malaria-transmitting *anopheles* lays its eggs in freshwater swamps. As the felling of rain forests reduced native bird populations, these mosquitoes proliferated in the irrigation ditches of banana plantations and stagnant water in workers barracks. The report noted that conditions improved when West Indian workers settled in more spacious and better maintained single-family dwellings with their wives and children, but progress was limited by the fact that “yellow fever is a quarantinable disease, and malaria is not.” After the eradication of yellow fever, physicians and public health officials turned their attention to two diseases that were more debilitating than deadly but which proved harder to eradicate—malaria and hookworm, exacerbated by the spread of plantation monoculture and the growth of rural populations without access to sanitation.

Historians of the U.S. South, including Alan Marcus, Jo Ann Carrigan, and Margaret Humphreys emphasize diseases as a source of regional backwardness. Natalie Ring describes efforts to address Southern backwardness at the height of U.S. imperial expansion. In Latin America critics of U.S. imperialism, including Aviva Chomsky, dismissed these campaigns as impositions motivated primarily by demands for worker productivity.

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228.“Bocas del Toro (Panama) Division, Hospital and Dispensary Statistics from 1899 to 1911, United Fruit Company Medical Department, Annual Report 1912 (Boston: 1913), 55
231.-Aviva Chomsky, *West Indian Workers and the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica, 1870-1940*, 54-76

Public health officials relied on prophylactic measures, seeking to impose biopolitical controls of bodily management upon subaltern laboring populations. These debilitating diseases seemingly explained the lethargy and backwardness of tropical races of people. Medical campaigns to eradicate hookworm, and malaria, in colonial Puerto Rico, by the Rockefeller Foundation in the U.S. South and Latin America, and by United Fruit’s Medical Department, served to humanize monopoly capitalism, while aiding the expansions of the imperial U.S. state and transnational corporations. By imparting the values of hygienic modernity upon “backwards” tropical peoples across the American Mediterranean, public health campaigns concerned primarily with worker productivity served to create proletarianized labor forces.

3.2.1 Laziness Diseases in the U.S. South

Charles W. Stiles, born in New York, studied medical zoology in Paris, Berlin, Leipzig and Trieste in the 1880s, investigating a hookworm that caused anemia among miners in Switzerland and Italy.\footnote{Charles Wardell Styles, The Old World Hookworm, \textit{Uncinaria duodenalis} (Railliet, 1885) in C.W. Styles, The Significance of Recent American Cases of Hookworm Disease (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1902), 192-194 University of Chicago Library Dig. Oct. 18, 2010} In 1902, Dr. Stiles presented his findings to the Pan-American Sanitary Conference in Washington, D.C. He reported that \textit{Nector americanus} had long been endemic to the U.S. South, a “laziness germ” that was responsible, he declared, for “the pitiable condition of the poor white in many southern states,” and “inferior physical development and proverbial laziness of the ‘cracker.’”\footnote{“Is Laziness Due to a Germ: The Discovery of Dr. Stiles of the Public Health Service Described Before the Sanitary Conference at Washington,” Public Opinion vol. 33, no. 24, Thursday December 11 1902, 756}
Stiles’ claims were met with ridicule and defensive anger. Methodist Bishop Warren Candler of Georgia, brother of Coca-Cola’s Asa Candler, denounced the theory as “calculated to create further prejudice against the States and people of the South,” urging Southerners to resist a “million-dollar dose of vermifuge.” Decrying an insult to white Southern manhood, the Macon Telegraph demanded, “Where was that hookworm or ‘laziness’ disease when it took five Yankee soldiers to whip one Southerner?” 235 Outside the South, observers were more open to Stiles’ findings. A 1909 article in McClure’s magazine, tellingly titled, “Vampire of the South,” described the controversy this way, “the joke buzzed on-the ‘lazy bug, the lazy germ’: people laughed whenever he talked about it. But Dr. Stiles had seen emaciated men trying to wrest a living from half-tilled fields, and women, whose rest never came, trying to nurse starveling babes at withered breasts; and at last, in an address, the words were wrung from the man’s heart: ‘It isn’t a thing to laugh at when women and children are dying.’” 236 Most disturbing to readers, given widespread assumptions of white supremacy, was the fact that “the ‘poor whites,’ shiftless, ignorant, poverty-pinched, and wretched, are of pure Anglo-Saxon stock—as purely Anglo-Saxon as any in the country.” 237 The “relative immunity of the negro race” to Necator americanus, which had been found in West Africa, was taken as evidence that African slaves originally brought the disease, thereby exacting an “import tax” paid in “pure Anglo-Saxon blood.” 238 Investigating the sources of Black immunity, Dr. Charles Stiles white supremacist assumptions did not preventing him from considered the efficacy of Afro-American folk remedies-the habit of

236-Marion Hamilton Carter, The Vampire of the South, McClure’s Magazine (S.S. McClure, 1909), 621
237-Marion Carter, The Vampire of the South, 617
238-Marion Carter, The Vampire of the South, 631
“dirt-eating” and a “worm tea” that “negro women very frequently give their children,” to expel roundworms, which also expelled hookworm.\textsuperscript{239}

A 1908 lecture by Dr. Stiles to the North Carolina Board of Health on “The Medical Influence of the Negro in Connection with Anemia in the White” provided a medical justification for racial segregation and perceptions of Black laziness. The “two great anemia-producing diseases of the South,” hookworm and malaria, “which are so severe on the white are relatively less severe on the negro race,” proof “that the negro race forms the great reservoir for the supply of these infections.”\textsuperscript{240} He took a more measured tone before Black delegates at the Hampton Negro Conference in Virginia, but remained adamant that poor Blacks posed the most serious thread as carriers of hookworm. He insisted “the Negro, when compared to the white, presents a relative immunity to the direct effects of hookworm infection,” but Blacks suffered hookworm, the debilitating effects contributing to higher death rates from tuberculosis. Listing the signs of infection, “anemia, which is often mistaken for malaria,” dry skin and hair, ulcers, the practice of dirt-eating, and “an indisposition to work,” he asked if “the laziness charged to the Negroes today is not in reality due to this disease.”\textsuperscript{241}

Stiles’ speculations on racial immunity extended to malaria. At New York’s Metropolitan Club in 1907, speaking before investors in Mississippi and Louisiana cotton plantations, he lectured on Black immunity to malaria. “An attack of malaria which would put you in the grave would put a negro in his bed; an attack which would put you in bed would put a negro in the cotton field rather happy. You would go under medical treatment; the negro would not. You


\textsuperscript{240}Charles W. Stiles, Medical Influence of the Negro in Connection with Anemia in the White, Twelfth Annual Bulletin of the North Carolina Board of Health June 1908, 27

\textsuperscript{241}Charles W. Stiles, Hookworm Disease and Its Relation to the Negro” \textit{The Hampton Leaflets}, Vol. 5 No. 9 September 1909 (Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Hampton, VA), 10-11
would protect your family by screening your house against mosquitoes; the negro would not. The result is that the negro forms the greatest reservoir of malarial fever in the South”

Malarialogists took a more skeptical view towards theories of racial immunity. Dr. William Deadrick of Arkansas, the leading Southern physician in the study of malaria, rejected ideas that the Black race enjoyed absolute immunity, recognizing that Blacks had relative immunity “that increases generally as we go southward towards the equator. Thus the negroes of the Southern States display less immunity than the negroes of the West Indies or of tropic Africa.” Deadrick related the public health threat posed by Blacks to larger issues of immorality of “the negro population of the South, in whom syphilis, abuse of alcohol and tobacco, pneumonia and other etiologic factors are very prevalent.” While studies of malaria debated the extent of racial immunity, the disease was linked both with the alleged inferiority of Blacks labor and the debilitating effects of cotton monoculture, themes that would be increasingly emphasized in the propaganda of the U.S. Public Health Service. A 1923 cartoon depicted a white southern farmer carrying a heavy bale of cotton, on top of which a sickly, caricatured Black laborer snoozes, bitten by a giant *anopheles* mosquito. (Figure 3.18)

The effects of malaria were linked with the destructive boll weevil (*anthomus grandis*), an insect that feeds on cotton buds, which crossed the Rio Grande in 1892. To combat the boll weevil, of Central American origin, the Bureau of Plant Industry sent Dr. O.M. Cook to Guatemala, studying a weevil-eating kelep, the Guatemalan ant, used by Q’eqchi’ Mayan Indians of Cobán to protect cotton plants. Cook brought four thousand ants to a field station in

\[242\] The New York Farmers: Proceedings (Globe Stationary and Printing Co., 1907), 57-58
\[243\] William Heiskill Deadrick, A Practical Study of Malaria (W.B. Sanders & Co., 1909), 50
\[244\] Willian Deadrick, A Practical Study of Malaria, 232
Victoria, Texas, which devoured weevils. The boll weevil spread into the humid bottomlands of the Mississippi River by 1906-07, breeding grounds for weevils and *kn* mosquitoes. A study of Louisiana cotton plantations concluded, “portions of the loss through injury by the boll weevil must be debited to malaria,” resulting in loss of seven weeks labor, giving “the weevil an advantage over the plant.” As public health campaigns sought solutions to malaria and hookworm, medical studies strengthened perceptions of laziness and backwardness of Southerners, both white and Black.

### 3.2.2 Laziness Diseases in Latin America

In the Panama Canal Zone, cases of malaria eclipsed the more fatal yellow fever even prior to the eradication of the later disease. A report from the Isthmian Canal Commission insisted that as “sensational as yellow fever is the fact remains that malaria is a more serious pest.” In 1906, there were 21,739 cases of malaria among 26,546 employees, 821 per 1,000.

As Chief of the Board of Health Laboratory in the Canal Zone, Dr. Samuel Taylor Darling performed more than 4,000 autopsies, identifying the main vector, *anopheles darlingi*. Chief Sanitary Officer Joseph Augustin LePrince developed a larvacide mixture of carbolic acid, resin and caustic soda. Public health crews dug eight million feet of ditching, poured thousands of gallons of oil and kerosene over bodies of water, and bred fish, spiders and bats to eat *anopheles*

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246 “Malaria Mosquito Adds to Damage of Cotton Boll Weevil,” Weekly news letter to crop correspondents Washington, D.C. April 8, 1914: 13
mosquitoes. Twenty emergency hospitals with quinine dispensaries were erected. The recommended daily dose was six grains of quinine; authorities conceded three were more practical for laborers, to reduce side effects of nausea and dizziness. Colonel William Gorgas trained employees of United Fruit and Anaconda Copper, for its mines in Chile. The builders of the Madeira-Mamoré Railroad, built in the Brazilian Amazon between 1907-12 in the rubber boom, followed sanitary measures of the Panama Canal.

The effect of sanitary campaigns were described by British academic and politician Viscount Bryce, visiting Panama in 1911. “Not a puddle of water is left where mosquitoes can breed, for every slope and bottom has been carefully drained. Even on the grass slopes that surround the villas at Ancon there are little tile drains laid to carry off the rain. With the well-kept lawns and the gay flower-beds, the place has the air of a model village.” The eradication of yellow fever and the decline of malaria in sanitary campaigns designed to make the tropics inhabitable for whites and prevent debilitating illnesses amongst a primarily West Indian workforce did little to benefit Panamanians. Authoritarian measures, and the toxic chemicals used in fumigation, compounded the humiliation of gringo arrogance and de facto U.S. rule. New York journalist Willis Abbott, visiting in 1912, found that for the average Panamanian, “the arrival of the Americans brought him no particular prosperity unless he drove a hack [sic] they

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133 Bats were “used to great advantage by Dr. Charles A.R. Campbell who, in an effort to clear the mosquitoes from San Antonio, Texas, constructed a peculiar tower which he called a “Bat Hotel.”” 134
251. The Panama Canal Record Vol. 1 (Ancon, Canal Zone) Wednesday October 16, 1907, 7
252. “The First Class of Mr. Bryan’s University at Panama, *Panama Morning Journal* June 30, 1913
253. James Bryce, *South American Observations and Impressions* (New York: Macmillan company, 1920, first published 1912), 27 Biblioteca Nacional de Panamá; “the Canal Zone, following that of Havana [sic] has opened up possibilities for the settlement by Europeans of, and for the maintenance of permanent European population in, many tropical districts hitherto deemed habitable by their natives only.”
cleaned his town, but he was used to the dirt and the fumes of fumigation made him sneeze. 
Doubtless there was no more yellow fever, but he was immune to that anyway.”

Amidst Latin American resentment of U.S. imperialism, public health highlights a 
transnational discourse of whiteness. Like their U.S. counterparts, Latin American physicians 
expressed anxieties about Black immunity. In his study of Medellin, Colombia Dr. Teodoro 
Castrillón declared, “It is extremely rare that malaria, enemy of the white and mixed races, 
develops in the black and Indian, as these races are better prepared to cope with malarial 
infection.” Malaria threatened efforts of Latin American governments to whiten their 
populations through European immigration. In 1907, at an International Sanitary Conference in 
Mexico City, Colombian delegates Dr. Ricardo Gutiérrez and Dr. Genaro Payán bemoaned that 
malaria prevented their country from attracting “the foreign immigration we so desperately need. 
It makes men listless and transforms them into indolent workers.”

Presentations by delegates 
from Cuba and Costa Rica emphasized the debilitating effects of malaria. Cuban pathologist Dr. 
Juan Guiteras declared that with the eradication of yellow fever, malaria, endemic in “countless 
local and regional focal points ” across the island was “the greatest source of the destruction of 
lives and energy of the human race, after tuberculosis.” Costa Rican delegate Dr. Juan Ulloa 
called for “a war of no quarter on the anopheles which is the principle transmitter of malaria.”

255. Dr. Teodoro Castrillón, Contribución al Estudio de la Patología y de la Higiene: Medellín y sus Alrededores, 
Facultad de Medicina y Ciruja (Medellín, 1906), 15 Univ. of California Jan 29, 2008  
256. Informe de las Doctores Ricardo Gutiérrez Lee and Genaro Payan, Actas de la Tercera Conferencia 
Internacional de las Repúblicas Americanas celebrada en la Ciudad de México del 2 a 7 de diciembre 1907 
(Oficina internacional de las Repúblicas americanas, 1908) 145 Harvard Univ. Dig. March 10, 2009  
257. Juan Guiteras, Enfermedades Transmitidas por Insectos en Pan-América, Proceedings from the Second Pan- 
American Scientific Congress, public health and medicine, W.C. Gorgas chairman, December 27, 1915 to January 8, 
1916 11  
258. “Informe de Dr. Juan J. Ulloa, Delegado de Costa Rica, Actas de la tercera conferencia internacional de las 
Repúblicas Americás: celebrada en la Ciudad de México del 2 al 7 de dic. de 1907 (Oficina internacional de las 
Américas, 1908), 147
3.2.3 *Hookworm, Whiteness and the Politics of Treatment*

While malaria was endemic to low-lying swamps, hookworm was endemic from the subtropical U.S. South to highlands of tropical Latin America. The Army Medical Corps carried out the first successful campaign to eradicate hookworm in the newly acquired island colony of Puerto Rico after a devastating 1899 hurricane. The growth of coffee cultivation in Puerto Rico’s central mountain range created conditions favorable for hookworm. *American Medicine* emphasized that, “the wealth of the island is absolutely dependent upon the health of the peasantry, and the working capacity of the Porto Rican ‘jíbaro’ is enormously impaired by unicariasis.”

Col. Bailey Ashford, director of the Porto Rico Anemia Commission doubted census figures identifying 60% of Puerto Rico’s population as white. He cited “the dark skin, the heritage of the Spaniard of the south from which so many jibaros directly proceed” as well as “negro admixture,” but conceded “despite some mulattoes and a few negroes” “the vast majority of the mountain population should be considered white.”

Dr. Ashford expressed the same fears that Dr. Stiles had described in his studies of hookworm in U.S. South. Citing reports from stations in Puerto Rico’s mountainous interior, he wrote, “the negro is just as heavily infected, just as dangerous to the community as the white man, but he possesses a relative immunity to the effects of the parasite.”

Puerto Rican officials, resentful of U.S.-style racial segregation, took a more nuanced view. Puerto Rican physician Dr. Gregorio S. Domingo, in Barros, reported that the number of Black patients was proportionate to the population. He

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261 Bailey Kelly Ashford, Pedro Gutiérrez Igaravidez, *Uncinariasis (Hookworm Disease) in Porto Rico*, 160
suggested that the apparent Black immunity could be explained by the fact that Blacks worked on costal sugar plantations, away from the highland coffee *fincas*, where moist, shady soil offered ideal conditions for hookworm larvae.\(^{262}\)

The success of hookworm eradication in Puerto Rico led to an anti-hookworm campaign in the U.S. South, spurred by the growth of corporate philanthropic foundations and state boards of public health. The Rockefeller Foundation’s Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm Disease opened offices in Washington, D.C. in January 1910, led by Dr. Wickliffe Rose, ex-dean of the University of Nashville (later Vanderbilt University), who had visited Ashford’s hookworm treatment project in Puerto Rico. The Sanitary Commission signed cooperative agreements with the boards of health in nine Southern states, Virginia being the first in January 1910, Louisiana the last in November, joined by Kentucky and Texas in 1912. Physicians examined 548,992 children in 569 rural counties, finding 216,828 (39%) were infected.\(^{263}\) Doctors prescribed a standard treatment of Epsom salts and thymol (oil of thyme).\(^{264}\) Photographs graphically displayed the effects of hookworm. Sixteen-year old Selma Ellis, from the Sand Hills region of North Carolina, an “extreme case,” weighed only sixty-two pounds, with frail, bony legs scarred by an anemic ulcer. (Figure 3.20) A series of photos displayed characteristic symptoms of hookworm, a potbelly and “angle wings,” protruding shoulder blades, on white and Black teenagers from Mississippi and Texas. (Figure 3.21) Alongside these images were signs of the Sanitary Commission’s far reaching progress, a display of a sanitary pit privy,

\(^{262}\)Informe de los Directores de Estaciones, Anemia en Puerto Rico Report of the Permanent Commission for the Suppression of Uncariais in Porto Rico for the fiscal year 1906-1907, 83


\(^{264}\)Publications of the Rockefeller Sanitary Commission, 120-122
an outhouse preventing the spread of hookworm, at a county fair in Kentucky, and a “Negro roadside dispensary” in Leake Co., Mississippi. (Figures 3.22 and 3.23)

The Commission also assisted anti-hookworm campaigns in California gold mines. Dr. Herbert Gunn, hookworm inspector for the State Board of Health, reported the disease “is present in practically all the gold mines of California,” among Chinese and Japanese immigrants, and soldiers and civilians returning from the Philippines. However, the “greatest source of infection” were “Porto Ricans coming the Hawaiian islands,” where they worked as cane-cutters, more than 1,000 settling in San Francisco.265

While incidences of hookworm occurred in other parts of the U.S., hookworm remained most endemic in the U.S. Southeast. Studies of hookworm cited the disease as offering ostensible proof that contact with the African race invariably produced racial degeneration. A study by the Battle Creek, Michigan sanitarium, found it “an irony of fate” that “men and women whose ancestors were the flower of the race, should have been brought to their estate by the unclean habits of the negroes, formerly their slaves, who brought the hookworm with them from Africa on slave ships.”266

By contrast, proponents of hookworm treatment extolled its regenerative effects, transforming diseased poor “white trash” into productive laborers. One account described a Virginia family of “pallid, emaciated, shitless idlers” living in a “tumble-down board shanty,” two years later, after having received treatment, “they had built a frame house, harvested ample crops from their land, and the children were healthy, well-dressed and attending school.”267

265. “Spread of Hookworm in California,” San Francisco Call November 26, 1910
267. Hygienic Education to Fight Hookworm, The American Review of Reviews Vol. 48 (1913), 100 Univ. of Minnesota Dig. Dec 17, 2013
South’s textile mills relied on labor of white yeoman farmers, mostly women and children. A study by Dr. Charles Stiles found that out of 8,069 workers in 59 Southern cotton mills, 12.56%, one person in every eight, exhibited symptoms of hookworm infection. Noting that the disease was virtually unknown in New England textile mills, and that factory conditions in the two regions were largely identical, Dr. Sties reported that hookworm, not cotton lint, caused “cotton-mill anemia.” His research was welcomed by Northern mill owners who had relocated their mills to the South to take advantage of the region’s lack of child labor and workplace safety laws.\(^{268}\) The politics of hookworm treatment highlight racialized perceptions of disease susceptibility, particularly among “poor whites,” a disturbing contrast to ideas of white supremacy, and bolstering demands for racial segregation.

3.2.4 Redeeming the Tropics

The anti-hookworm campaigns launched by U.S. colonial authorities in Puerto Rico and the Rockefeller Foundation in the U.S. South was described in a *National Geographic* article titled “Redeeming the Tropics,” emphasizing a civilizing mission designed to impart a capitalist work ethic on plantation and factory workers. “In Porto Rico the average physically sound coffee-picker picks from 500 to 600 measures of coffee a day; scores of those suffering from hookworm disease can only pick from 100 to 250 measures a day.” The debilitating effects of this disease on productivity were equally visible in the U.S. South, where “the weavers in Southern mills are not naturally inferior to the European immigrants who operate the New England looms. Their labor is less efficient because vast numbers of them are victims of the hookworm.”\(^{269}\)

\(^{268}\) “Cotton Mill Anemia and the Hookworm” Medical Review of Reviews December 1912 Vol. 18 No. 12 (Austin Flint Associaition, 1912), 819

Campaigns against hookworm extended to Latin America under the International Health Commission of the Rockefeller Foundation, created in June 1913, after an anti-trust lawsuit against Standard Oil. Its resolutions emphasized hookworm “prevails in a belt of territory encircling the earth for thirty degrees on each side of the equator; that the infection in some nations rises to nearly ninety percent of the population; that this disease has been an important factor in retarding the economic, moral and social progress of mankind.” (Figure 3.24) An exhibit at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco featured wax-and-plaster models and photographs showing effects of hookworm. “It was pointed out what infection means: Impaired health; greater susceptibility to other diseases; stunted body; dulled mind; diminished results of teaching; blighted manhood and womanhood.”

As it entered Latin America, International Health was in contact with United Fruit’s Medical Department. Rose studied the fruit companies’ 1913 Annual Report on the incidence of hookworm disease among its plantation workers, and consulted with Dr. Robert Swigart, superintendent of United Fruit’s medical department, about salaries and benefits for physicians and cultural norms that needed to be observed when dealing with Latin American officials. International Health occasionally assisted United Fruit, most notably by setting up a temporary laboratory in the Nance Cay hospital of United Fruit’s Bocas del Toro division. However, company managers were reluctant to cede authority to International Health or interrupt plantation labor process.

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273-Steven Paul Palmer, Launching Global Health, 62-63
Public health infrastructure expanded to encompass institutions of higher learning. In 1913, doctors from Tulane University’s School of Tropical Medicine visited United Fruit’s hospital in Port Limón, Costa Rica. In an examination of the fecal matter from 210 patients, mostly immigrants from Jamaica and St. Kitts, the physicians determined that 169 of them, 80%, to be infected with hookworm.274 In 1915, doctors reported 35% of the 5,875 patients at the hospital of the Bocas del Toro division on Nancy’s Cay were infested with hookworm. This relatively low rate was due to the fact that island’s coral formation and salt-water was favorable to the spread of hookworm.275

In April 1914, Costa Rica became the first Latin American republic to welcome an International Health Commission, where U.S physicians built upon a national campaign against hookworm waged by Costa Rica’s coffee planters.276 In the 1890s, Costa Rica’s Dr. Carlos Durán, a coffee planter and British-trained physician who briefly served as Costa Rica’s President, had diagnosed anemic patients after reading articles on hookworm in the Alps published in the English medical journal *Lancet.*277 His diagnosis predated Dr. Stiles by a decade, although he lacked the training in medical zoology to identify the subspecies. In 1907 Dr. Mauro Fernández, a physician in Escazú, near San José, cited Durán’s report to the coffee-planters of the Sociedad Nacional de Agricultura, calling for a nationwide campaign against hookworm. He referred to *cansancio* or fatigue, “the greatest obstacle to the prosperity of our country.”278 President Cleto González Vizquez, faced with racially undesirable Black West

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Indian immigration to United Fruit’s Limón enclave and an exodus of peasants from highland coffee *fincas* to agricultural frontiers, supported hookworm eradication as a form of “auto-immigration,” improving the health and intelligence of Costa Rica’s native population. This campaign linked efforts to instill modern sanitary habits among peon laborers with the promotion of civic nationalism.

Racial assumptions qualified efforts to impose hygienic modernity. International Health’s campaign in Costa Rica was directed by Dr. Louis Schapiro, who learned Spanish and tropical medicine in the Philippines. In Rodeo and Aquiares, two coffee *fincas* on the Pacific and Caribbean slopes of Costa Rica’s Cordillera Central, surveys in 1916-17 found that 97% of the 243 patients in Rodeo and 447, 60% of the 745 in Aquiares were infected with hookworm. Outhouses were built in half the homes of Aquiares, Costa Rica and 30% of the homes in Rodeo. Officials returned a year later, finding that only 14 and 9 of the patients were re-infected. (Figures 3.25 and 3.26) In Guatemala, anti-hookworm campaigns met with less success. International Health physicians installed latrines on coffee *fincas* in Retalhuleu and Quetzaltenango but doubted Mayan Indian workers would use them. “The Indian laborers are not accustomed to a sitting posture and are inclined to revert to their old primitive habit of fouling the ground. The plantation owners, too, after going to the expense of erecting latrines, frequently

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do not bring about their use.” Struggles to bring sanitary modernity to the tropics, a self-proclaimed civilizing mission that served to legitimize globalizing U.S. corporate capitalism, were shaped by racial assumptions of white public health officials.

### 3.2.5 Experiments with Treatment

The outbreak of World War I brought a scarcity of the vermifuge thymol, manufactured in Germany, forcing physicians to experiment with alternative treatments. Chief among them was Chenopodium oil “Baltimore oil,” extracted from a perennial herb goosefoot. A 1912 study by Drs. W. Schüffner and H. Vervoort judged chenopodium a more effective vermifuge than thymol, which caused nausea, dizziness and vomiting.

International Health commissioned Samuel T. Darling and Joseph Barber to study the efficacy of chenopodium treating hookworm among workers on tea and rubber plantations in Ceylon and Malaya. International Health and United Fruit’s Medical Department embraced its use, ignoring warnings from Darling and Barber’s study that it led to deaths among children. In 1915, Dr. W.J. Lynn, head of United Fruit’s medical department in Costa Rica, reported experiments with a variety of chemicals, including thymol and eucalyptus oil, on 680 patients, “oil of chenopodium gave the best results in expelling worms from the intestinal tract.”

Despite these assessments, chenopodium led to fatalities. A 1918 report found, “In Ceylon, Panama, Dutch Guiana, Brazil, and a number of other countries, alarming symptoms, or death, have sometimes followed the administration of chenopodium.”

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284. John Rühr, “Infectious Diseases, Including Acute Rheumatism, Copious Pneumonia, and Influenza” *Progressive Medicine* (Lea Brothers, 1915), 178
286. W.J. Lynn, Superintendent Annual Report, 1915, Costa Rica Division, 26
287. “Smaller Dosage of Chenopodium Recommended” Annual Report, Rockefeller Foundation, International Health Division, 56 Penn State University Dig. Jun 21, 2010
occurred in São Paulo, Brazil, all but one of which were children under the age of ten, and seven deaths in Antioquia, Colombia, all among children.\textsuperscript{288} Officials recommended the dosage of three milligrams should be cut in half, with the use of castor oil as a purgative to prevent poisoning, but these directives were difficult to follow.\textsuperscript{289} Steve Paul Palmer describes the 1926 death from chenopodium hookworm treatment of José Vicente Quintero, a ten-year old street-sweeper in Bucaramanga, Colombia, recounted in a letter from his father Juan de la Rosa Quintero Parra to John D. Rockefeller. This article explores how corporate philanthropy addressed harmful outcomes in the face of growing nationalist opposition to U.S. imperialism.\textsuperscript{290}

While International Health focused primarily on hookworm eradication, it also branched into malaria. As a disease afflicting the Blackest regions of the Americas, demands of worker productivity dominated the politics of malaria eradication, with little of the rhetoric of promoting civic values that accompanied campaigns against hookworm. In contrast to World War I shortages of thymol, the war had little effect on anti-malarial quinine, made from Peruvian \textit{Cinchona} bark. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided an impetus behind an anti-malarial campaign by building levees in the Mississippi Delta, which opened up thousands of acres of new cotton lands. In 1917, amidst a wartime spike in cotton prices, International Health began an anti-malarial campaign in the Mississippi Delta. In Sunflower County, officials found 40% of 8,000 rural residents, almost entirely Black, had clinical malaria. A study of 30,000 residents of Bolivar County found that ten grams of quinine sulfate sterilized the blood of 90% of malaria carriers.\textsuperscript{291} Kerosene was poured in bayous and streams, and house-to-house inspections were

\textsuperscript{289} -“Small Dosage of Chenopodium Recommended” Annual Report, Rockefeller Foundation, International Health Division, Fourth Annual Report, January 1-December 31, 1917, (New York: 1918), 56
\textsuperscript{290} -Steven Palmer, “Towards Responsibility in International Health: Death Following Treatment in Rockefeller Hookworm Campaigns, 1914-1934,” Medical History, April 2010:149
\textsuperscript{291} -“Initial Experiment in Bolivar County, Mississippi,” \textit{Annual Report of the Rockefeller Foundation} (1919), 135
conducted. Those individuals who were found to be infected received tablets of quinine sulfate, but many refused to take large dosages voluntarily, complaining that the treatment caused nausea and dizziness.\footnote{Margaret Humphreys, \textit{Malaria: Poverty, Race and Public Health in the South}, 112-113} \textbf{(Figure 3.27)} Justifying new public health measures, International Health reports emphasized medical costs of malaria to planters. “[A]t cotton cultivating and picking time,” it reported “when labor is in greatest demand and when delay means money loss, malaria is most severe.” These reports expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the campaign on grounds that, “Most of the negroes can read, but as compared with white populations living under similar conditions the grade of intelligence is relatively low.”\footnote{“Test Demonstrations in Sunflower County, Mississippi,” \textit{Annual Repor of the Rockefeller Foundation for the year 1919} (New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 1921) 137, 135} Campaigns against hookworm and malaria epitomized the transnational circulation of public health practices and racial assumptions that underlay the biopolitics of empire across the American Mediterranean.

\subsection*{3.2.6 Disease and Spatial Segregation}
 Medical reports that emphasized the shortcomings of Blacks ignored how spatial arrangements of cotton plantations aided the spread of malaria. Because planters’ homes sat on high ground where breezes circulated, while sharecroppers lived in flood-prone bottomlands, the incidence of malaria was much more concentrated in the Black population. In addition to the location of sharecroppers’ homes, inadequate housing and diet exacerbated these racial disparities. Decades later, New Deal-era studies of Black sharecroppers in the Mississippi Valley described living conditions, “an unpainted one or two room shack where often a family of eight or ten must live, eat, sleep, and give birth. Usually it has no outhouse of any kind. For food his family must depend on the three ‘M’s’-meal, molasses and side meat. This diet led to pellagra,
causing diarrhea, dermatitis and dementia, while cramped quarters and proximity to swamps made Black sharecroppers vulnerable to *anopheles* mosquitoes.\(^\text{294}\)

In Central American banana zones, as in the cotton plantations of the U.S. South, spatial arrangements safeguarded whites from malarial infestation. United Fruit adopted anti-malarial measures in its company towns. In Bocas Town, in a project undertaken with the Panamanian government, swamps were drained, and sand pumped in, filling in all *anopheles* mosquito breeding grounds and raising the town above sea level.\(^\text{295}\) The Panamanian government saw anti-malaria initiatives as integral to nation building, but had to join with United Fruit to create a public health showcase. In 1913, the medical superintendent in Tela, Honduras, described sanitation work in New Tela, home to United Fruit employees. “The buildings of the better class of employees have all been screened. Known breeding places of mosquitoes have all been oiled or larvacided, as is required. Grass in the town site proper has been kept cut. Regular inspections of the laborers’ quarters and the white employees’ quarters has been made, and any insanitary conditions found have been reported and corrected.”\(^\text{296}\) These showpieces of sanitary modernity were superficial. A Naval medical report contrasted “New Tela,” home to United Fruit officials and skilled workers, with “Old Tela,” “occupied by the natives” “Its streets are narrow, crooked, unpaved and filthy. It has no sewerage system, no water system, no system of disposal and is surrounded by swamps.”\(^\text{297}\)

\(^{294}\) The Workmen’s Circle Call Vo. 8 (1940)


\(^{297}\) “New Tela is occupied by employees of the united Fruit Company. Its population is about 2,000, of which about 250 are from the United States. The remainder is composed mostly of Jamaicans. The streets are broad and unpaved but clean; there is a cesspool system of sewage disposal” T.A. Fortescue, “La Ceiba, Tela and Puerto Cortez, Honduras, Puerto Barrios, Guatemala,” United States Naval Medical Bulletin Vol. 10 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1916) 748
United Fruit Medical Department Superintendent Dr. W.E. Deeks, a Canadian who had worked at Ancon Hospital in the Panama Canal Zone, noted “encouraging results” of quinine sterilization achieved by International Health physicians among sharecroppers in Bolivar and Sunflower counties in the Mississippi Delta. He doubted the applicability of these measures on banana plantations. “Malaria cannot be cured by the use of quinine alone when patients are suffering from other debilitating constitutional diseases, such as syphilis, hookworm, nephritis, etc. without treating the current condition.”\(^{298}\) Racial prejudices limited the scope of public health. A 1911 report to the Canal Commission exemplified Dr. Deek’s racial views; “the negro lives and sleeps in their [natives] houses, exposing himself constantly to endemic malarial infection. As long as he has a roof over his head and a yam or two to eat he is content, and his idea of personal hygiene is on part with his standards of marital fidelity.”\(^{299}\) The application of field-tests in Mississippi to the banana plantations of Costa Rica exemplified the internationalization of public health across the American Mediterranean. Transnational circulation of public health knowledge shaped the production of racial knowledge, stigmatizing Blacks as a contaminated race.

### 3.2.7 The Achievements and Limits of Tropical Medicine

United Fruit’s Medical Department, incorporated in 1913, oversaw the building of state-of-the-art public hospitals and field dispensaries for banana plantation workers, exemplifying a commitment to bringing sanitary modernity to the tropics, as assumptions about contaminated races limited the humanitarian scope of tropical medicine. A hospital accommodating 250 patients opened in October 1913 on a hill north of the railroad in Quiriguá, Guatemala, the heart

\(^{298}\) W.E. Deeks to Andrew Preston, March 1, 1920, *United Fruit Company Medical Department, Annual Report 1919* (Boston: 1920), 7

of United Fruit’s enclave, under the direction of Scottish Dr. Henry Macphail. Dr. Richard P. Strong, Harvard professor of tropical medicine, judged it “the most satisfactory hospital in relation to construction, with the exception in some respects of the Philippine General Hospital at Manila, which I have visited in the tropics.” In Santa Marta, Colombia, where an arid climate offered fewer breeding places for *anopheles* mosquitoes, quinine dispensaries were established in the banana *fincas* of Rio Frio, Sevilla and Aracataca, and a hospital for 200 patients was built.

In 1918, United Fruit’s Medical Department published its first data, reporting that its doctors treated 6,994 cases of malaria in hospitals and 26,606 in field dispensaries. Of these cases, 68 ended in death. In Costa Rica, a post-war revival of exports depended upon Hispanic laborers recruited primarily from the Pacific lowlands of Guanacaste and neighboring Nicaragua. A superintendent reported, “At least 90 per cent of the new laborers who started to work with the Company this year have been brought in from the northwestern section of the country, where malaria and, especially intestinal parasites are very prevalent.” He added that, on average, these newcomers lasted three to six weeks before succumbing to “malaria, intestinal parasites, tropical ulcers and concomitant secondary anemia.” Constant clearing of rain forests for newer and larger banana plantations led to recurrent outbreaks of malaria. Company doctors recognized the relationship between plantation development and malaria. A 1924 report explaining that work entailed in the planting of 40,878 acres was responsible for malaria outbreaks among laborers.

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working “under conditions where no preventative measure can be taken except by quinine prophylaxis. That moreover can be a difficult problem owing to the antipathy of the uneducated laborers in regard to the taking of quinine.”

Dr. Henry MacPhail at a 1924 conference in the United Fruit-owned Myrtle Bank Hotel in Kingston, Jamaica, insisted upon the need for muscular injections of quinine. He reported that, over the last ten years, his Guatemala division treated 53,638 victims of malaria in its dispensaries and clinics, 11,695 in the main hospital. Taking pride in this record, he insisted upon the impossibility of eradicating epidemic diseases in a humid tropical climate among Black and mestizo laborers suffering from poor diets, high rates of alcoholism, lowered immunity, and an apathetic culture.

In the Motagua Valley the vitality of the population is low, for various reasons. They are badly nourished and their long years of suffering from malaria and hookworm have seriously affected their stamina. As a result the resistance to any ailment is low and one sees many forms of disease running riot there in a manner seldom observed among a population unaffected by these causes. A few years ago, it was nothing unusual to have in the hospital—all at the same time—a dozen cases in comatose condition and there I have seen brilliant results obtained from intramuscular injections of quinine.

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305 United Fruit Company Medical Department Annual Report, 1925, 43
306 Administration of Quinine in Acute Malaria: With Special Reference to the Value of Intramuscular Injections by Neil P. Macphail, Medical Superintendent, Guatemala Division, United Fruit Company, International Clinics, V. 4 December 1924 Read before the international Conference on Health Problems in Tropical America at Kingston, Jamaica, July 21-23, 1924
307 Administration of Quinine in Acute Malaria: With Special Reference to the Value of Intramuscular Injections by Neil P. Macphail, Medical Superintendent, Guatemala Division, United Fruit Company International Clinics, V. 4 December 1924 Read before the international Conference on Health Problems in Tropical America at Kingston, Jamaica, July 21-23, 1924, 24, CIRMA, Antigua Guatemala Macphail reported that in the Guatemala division, over the past ten years, 53,683 patients were treated for malaria in dispensaries, and 11,695 in the main hospital.
As Macphail advocated quinine injection, International Health studies conducted in the U.S. South called into question the effectiveness of quinine prophylaxis. In Leesburg, Georgia, near Albany, International Health established a malaria research station, initially directed by Dr. Samuel Darling, former Chief of the Board of Health Laboratory in the Panama Canal who later traveled to Syria as part of a League of Nations sponsored study of malaria, where he died in a car crash. Studies divided seventy-four Black children with splenic enlargement, a prominent sign of malaria, into two groups: one group went untreated, while the other group received standard therapy. Experiments revealed that quinine cleared the blood of Plasmodium parasites and the spleens began to recede, but when dosages were reduced, the spleens of victims grew again, and “hard work in the field, plowing the hot sun, or harvesting heavy crops would provoke a relapse in cases receiving treatment, even when plasmodia had been driven from the peripheral blood.” Quinine prophylaxis remained integral to bio-power on United Fruit banana plantations, as company officials sought to inject plantation workforces with a capitalist work ethic, relying on preventative measures that ignored squalid living conditions of banana workers. (Figure 3.28) A report by United Fruit’s Medical Department on “Problems of Preventative Medicine in the Tropics,” acknowledged successes in eradicating “indolence diseases” in the U.S. South but insisted that such measures faced greater obstacles due to the low sanitary and educational levels of Black and mestizo Hispanic laborers on tropical banana plantations.

It is impossible to secure the cooperation of laborers in the elimination of artificial breeding places for mosquitoes—such as empty cans and containers, wallow holes, rubbish and so on—and usually these are adjacent to dwellings. Natives go barefooted at all times; no toilet

308. For account of the significance of this study, Margaret Humphreys, Malaria: Poverty, Race and Public Health in the United States (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 2001), 76-77
309. “An Experiment With Standard Dosage of Quinine Treatment,” Annual Report, Georgia Department of Public Health Department for 1924: 125 Univ. of Chicago Dig. Apr 20, 2011
facilities are provided and excerta are deposited in the open fields, and even when such facilities are installed it is almost impossible to persuade the laborers to take advantage of them; proper sewage is not available and would not be utilized if available.310

As United Fruit medical officials expressed frustration over the costs of debilitating disease and the difficulties of asserting bio-political control, due to the cultural and hygienic shortcomings of their workers, campaigns against malaria and hookworm proved integral to the self-proclaimed civilizing mission of U.S. capitalism. A 1918 article in *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, the first Catholic clerical magazine published in the U.S., cited International Health and United Fruit’s Medical Department as epitomizing values of Social Gospel Christianity. United Fruit had shown “that the tropics may be made habitable,” making “the vast food-resources of the tropics available for the world’s ever-increasing population,” International Health was “aiding in making the tropics habitable for white men, also enabling the natives of those countries to become more industrious and productive.”311 Victor Cutter, who had taken over as president of United Fruit, wrote with pride that his company’s work against malaria and hookworm was first and foremost a sound business investment. “Extensive sanitation work has been carried out. Malaria and hookworm campaigns have given excellent results. These expenditures have not been charity nor philanthropy, but common-sense business procedure on the theory that improvements in standards of living and service to the public are profitable.”312

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310. “Problems of Preventative Medicine in the Tropics,” United Fruit Medical Report 1925, 300 Latin American Library/Mattis Medical Library, Tulane University
3.2.8 Conclusion

“In the tropics we find much more anemia than in any other part of the world,” declared the author of an article on tropical anemia, “as a result mainly of two diseases, one caused by an intestinal parasite—the hookworm, and the other caused by a blood parasite—the malarial organism.”313 Following the eradication of yellow fever, tropical medicine developed with campaigns against these debilitating diseases, exacerbated by plantation monoculture and rural poverty. United Fruit and the Rockefeller Foundation joined with physicians and public health officials from the U.S. South and Latin America, who viewed sanitary and hygienic modernity as indispensable to regional development and nation building. These campaigns depended upon transnational circulation of medical knowledge across the American Mediterranean. Anti-hookworm campaigns in colonial Puerto Rico led to the Rockefeller Foundation’s highly publicized anti-hookworm campaign in the U.S. South, extended from tropical Latin America under International Health. The success of these programs was dependent on local cooperation and input, most notably in Costa Rica, where International Health physicians built on a national campaign against hookworm. Efforts to increase worker productivity drove campaigns against malaria, from the Panama Canal and Central American banana zones to the cotton fields of the Mississippi Valley. Spread by swamp-dwelling anopheline mosquitoes that thrived on monocultured plantations and in workers’ homes and camps, malaria, unlike yellow fever, could not be quarantined. Public health officials, distrustful of Black and brown laborers, relied on prophylaxis, most notably intramuscular injections of quinine.

Hookworm and malaria offered environmental and medical explanations for poverty and backwardness. Public health provided philanthropic legitimacy to global capitalism, while being

313-Mr. M.J. Rosnau, “Tropical Anemia,” American Medicine 9 no. 6 (1905): 982
intricately linked to the globalization of northern models of scientific management, imposed on recalcitrant Black, brown and “poor white” peoples across the American Mediterranean. Propagandists of public health portrayed campaigns against malaria and hookworm as a civilizing mission, treating the illnesses of tropics by injecting tropical peoples with drugs that would transform them into modern capitalist workers. Public health campaigns were presided over by agribusiness corporations, landowners and employers preoccupied with worker productivity rather than genuinely concerned about public health. Workers resigned to diseases that, while debilitating were rarely deadly, displayed resistance and selective cooperation. These affirmations of subaltern agency strengthened discourses of scientific racism and tropical contamination.

3.3 Tropical Radio, Tropical Storms

On August 25, 1909 the 5,000-Ton United Fruit steamship SS Cartago passed through a hurricane in the Yucatán Channel. As winds reached 100 miles per hour and rain and water poured over the deck, the captain radio-telegraphed a report to New Orleans, used by the U.S. Weather Bureau to issue a warning before the storm made landfall near the mouth of the Rio Grande on August 27. Capt. Wallace Reid of the Brazos Island Life-Saving Station “battled with the furious waves for nearly an hour” to rescue seven tourists in Tarpon Beach, a fishing-and-duck hunting resort on South Padre Island, Texas. In Mexico, el Ciclón del Nueve caused torrential rain and flooding, with 3-5,000 deaths in Tamaulipas and Nuevo León. A flashflood of the Río Santa Catarina engulfed half the city of Monterrey, and the downfall of powerful

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Porfirian governor Gen. Bernardo Reyes helped set the Mexican Revolution in motion.\footnote{Isidro Vizcaya, \textit{Los orígenes de la industrialización de Monterrey: un historia económica y social desde la caída del Segundo Imperio hasta el fin de la Revolución (1867-1920)} (Monterrey: Fondo Editorial de Nuevo León, 2006), 131}

(Figure 3.29) The broadcast of the SS \textit{Cartago}, the first ships-report of a hurricane, initiated a new system of storm warnings that were “broadcast in the Gulf and Caribbean Sea by the United Fruit Company radio stations for the benefit of all shipping” and wired to the U.S. Weather Bureau “for the benefit of the Gulf coast of the United States and for Cuba.”\footnote{E.B Garriott, ‘Weather, Forecasts and Warnings for the Month,’ \textit{Monthly Weather Review} Vol. 38, No. 2, August 1909, 539; Roy Mason, “The History of the Development of the United Fruit Company’s Radio Telegraph,” \textit{Radio Broadcast} Vol. 1 No. 5 (Sept, 1922), 394, Univ. of Michigan Lib. Dig. Dec. 16, 2008}

The geographic isolation of the Caribbean Rim of Central America and the logistical challenges of shipping highly perishable bananas led United Fruit to become an investor in the new technology of space-time compression, the wireless radio telegraph. The company developed a transnational network of wireless stations that spanned the American Mediterranean, serving a fleet of new, fast, refrigerated steamships. Radiotelegraph and forecasting would bring unprecedented security from nature’s deadliest storms, security that was dependent upon the private empire of United Fruit and was limited to the U.S. and its sphere of influence. Historians of communications and media, Jill Hills and Alejandra Bronfman, have examined United Fruit’s transcontinental radio network and broadcasting monopoly.\footnote{Alejandra Bronfman, \textit{Isle of Noise: Sonic Media in the Caribbean} (Chapel Hill, NC and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 37-41; Jill Hills, \textit{The Struggle for Global Communication: The Formative Century} (Bloomington, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 164-166}

United Fruit’s Tropical Radio network and its use in hurricane forecasting epitomizes the scope and, limits, of corporate imperialism. Safeguarding commercial shipping, while saving thousands of lives and millions in property, reports of developing hurricanes helped legitimize United Fruit’s close ties to the U.S. government and U.S. hegemony in neighboring Cuba. Hurricane forecasting brought unprecedented, but often illusory, security from nature's most
powerful storms, spurring new developments that exacerbated the damage from storms. Disaster management epitomized the expansion of the state and corporate bureaucracies. As regular radio reports of developing hurricanes reduced death tolls, it highlighted stark racial and socio-economic disparities and revealed official indifference to deaths and sufferings of the poorest people, particularly people of color.

3.3.1 The Origins of a Tropical Radio Network

In 1900, the Central American banana trade faced seemingly insurmountable, logistical obstacles. The only telegraph cable station on the Caribbean coast of Central America, at Colón, near the terminus of the Panama Railroad, had no connections to neighboring countries. Messages from United Fruit headquarters in Boston had to be telegraphed to Galveston, Texas, dispatched by overland cable via Mexico to San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua, then transferred to landlines of the governments of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Tropical corrosion, insects, washouts, and political disputes all interrupted service. If, and when, telegrams reached San José, Costa Rica, they were dispatched via landlines to Limón, then carried by native messengers, Afro-Caribbean turtle-fisherman who paddled in Ceiba tree cayucos (dugout canoes) down surf-smashed, reef-strewn coast to Bocas del Toro, Colombia, a journey of 30 to 60 hours.  

United Fruit historian Frederick Wilson describes the life and death of these messengers. Alfredo Cerrares, the epitome of tropical Black masculinity “nimble and handsomely muscled,” carries a “homemade water jug fashioned from the butt of a banana stalk” with “a solitary gold

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319. Charles Morrow Wilson, *Empire in Green and Gold: The Story of the American Banana Trade* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1947), 154; ‘Connections were formed as followed, Veracruz by cable to Coatzalcoalcos, 123 ½ miles on the Atlantic side of the isthmus of Tehuantepec, completed January 7th, 1882. By landline, 220 miles to Salina Cruz, near Tehuantepec on the Pacific coast. The line is continued from Salina Cruz by cable to La Libertad, El Salvador, 434 ½ miles; to San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua by cable, 264 ½ miles, where it is joined by Government land lines.” James D. Reid, *The Telegraph in America and Morse Memorial* (Self-published, 1886), 524 Harvard University Library Dig. Jul 18, 2008
tooth; a battered derby; a pair of ragged white duck breeches, the legs of which had been hacked off about eight inches above the knees—to ensure sufficient ventilation.” Paid $25 per message, Alfredo became “the richest man in his village. He built a manaca shack at least twice as big as any other,” acquiring a younger wife and a shrine in front of his home. “But one day during the late summer hurricane season of 1902, Alfredo Cearres failed to appear at Bocas with the scrap of paper.” His overturned canoe was found high on the beach half filled with sand, beyond the boat his bloated corpse, with the money belt still tied around his neck. 320

Despite these obstacles, the center of the banana trade shifted from Jamaica to Central America. In August 1903, a hurricane struck Jamaica, virtually destroying Port Antonio and other towns on the north coast, including the offices, wharves, plantations and hotel of United Fruit, leveling banana crops of two years and killing at least sixty-five people. Colonial Secretary Sidney Olivier, First Baron Olivier, a Fabian socialist, refused a request by banana planters for a loan of a quarter million pounds, loaning a more modest fifty thousand pounds, which struck many as “a peculiar form of socialism.” 321 As hurricanes devastated Jamaica, plantations expanded in Costa Rica and newly independent Panama, where United Fruit relied on the banana growing skills of Jamaican immigrants.

In 1904, Mack Musgrave, Superintendent of United Fruit’s Electrical Department, made a two-week mule-back journey along jungle trails from Limón to Bocas del Toro, and reported that laying telegraph lines would be impossible. In 1905, the company commissioned the first radio stations in Latin America for Limón and Bocas del Toro, with 200-ft steel towers and

320. Charles Morrow Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 2-3
321. Notes on Lord Olivier’s Official Career in Jamaica by the late Mr. Herbert G. De Lisser, Editor of The Daily Gleaner, Sydney Olivier, Letters and Selected Writings edited with a memoir by Margaret Olivier with some impressions by Bernard Shaw (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1948), 232-233
equipment from DeForest Co. of New York. In 1906, radio stations were erected at Bluefields and Rama, on Nicaragua’s Mosquito Coast. United Fruit acquired a concession as sole conveyer of bananas grown along the Río Escondido River, granted by President José Santos Zelaya to the Bluefields Steamship Co. of Jake Weinberger, “an affable Southerner who gambled wildly for the love of gambling and mixed an excited English and dog Spanish with violent gestures in a highly original language.” In October 1906, a hurricane made landfall near Bluefields, ripping off corrugated tin roofs, destroying banana plantations, reported by the captain of United Fruit SS Limon, who described devastation of an Afro-Creole fishing village on Little Corn Island.

The storm passed into the Gulf of Honduras, damaging a Norwegian steamship Harald carrying bananas to Mobile. It made a second landfall in Cuba, killing twenty in Havana, “all Cubans of the poorer class,” and disrupting streetcar service. The storm made a third landfall in the Florida Keys on October 18, where 135 workers on Henry Flagler’s Florida East Coast Railway were killed, 104 workers on a railway barge swept out to sea without any trace, while at least seventy passengers drowned on two ships St. Lucia and Peerless that sank off Elliot Key. The hurricane wiped out pineapple farms on the Florida Keys but did not lessen Henry Flagler’s determination to complete the railroad and develop Key West as a deep-water port for the

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323 - Charles Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 94-95
324 - “The United Fruit Steamer has arrived here from Puerto Limon and reports that Bluefields is in ruins and that the banana plantations have been destroyed. Capt. Porter says that Little Corn Island does not appear to show any signs of life when the Limon passed.” New York Times Oct. 25, 1906 José Díaz Fernández-Partagás, eds. “A Reconstruction of Historical Tropical Cyclone Frequency in the Atlantic From Documentary and Other Historical Sources (1997), 42
325 - “A cyclone of unprecedented severity swept over the provinces of Havana and Pinar del Rio Wednesday night and resulted in 20 deaths in this city and a dozen or more persons injured. The money loss is estimated at $200,000 “Devastation in Cuba” Providence News-Democrat Oct. 20, 1906
Panama Canal. As the banana trade shifted from Jamaica to Caribbean Central America, logistical challenges led to the construction of wireless radio-telegraph stations. The limits of early radio communication impeded the ability to prepare for the impact of hurricanes.

3.3.2 Spanning the American Mediterranean

Over objections of its more conservative New England shareholders, United Fruit president Andrew Preston and vice-president Minor C. Keith made costly investments in a network of wireless radio stations spanning the American Mediterranean, with the goal of establishing direct communication between the U.S. and Caribbean Central America. In 1907, they purchased United Wireless (DeForest) stations at New Orleans, on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain, and Burrwood, 100 miles downriver on the Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River, for communicating with land stations and ships at sea.\(^{327}\) For a relay between New Orleans and Limón, the company acquired Swan Island, 1.2 square miles of sand and coral off the north coast of Honduras. Claimed by the U.S. under the Guano Islands Act, the island was home to a “ragged, rum-ridden” old schooner captain Alonzo Adams and ten coloured Grand Cayman laborers who harvested coconuts and mined phosphate.\(^{328}\) A ship chartered in New York anchored offshore, carrying a cargo of engines, generators and steel for a 250-ft tower, transported to the island by rowboat. A Baltimore construction-crews, who used pulverized ledge rock and beach sand to make cement, spent eight months building a lighthouse and radio station, which initially did not function during the nine-month tropical static season.\(^{329}\) Officials

\(^{327}\) ‘Laying of the foundation mats began in 1903-04, by 1908, the jetties were complete, and a coaling station and wharf were completed; the coaling station and wharf at Southwest Pass were completed; foundations for the office and sixteen homes were constructed.’ (3) Mark E. Martin, ‘Burrwood, Louisiana and the Southwest Pass Jetties,’ Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University; Roy Mason, The History of the Development of the United Fruit Company’s Radio Telegraph System, *Radio Broadcast* Vol. 1 No. 5 (September, 1922), 380

\(^{328}\) Charles Morrow Wilson, *Empire in Green and Gold: The Story of the American Banana Trade* 158

\(^{329}\) Roy Mason, “The United Fruit Company’s Radio Telegraph System” Radio Broadcast V. 1 (1922), 382
conceived the idea of a part cable, part radio connection between the U.S. and Central America. Arranging steamship schedules to ensure one was in Colón harbor six days a week, a telegraph route known as “Via Radio Colon” enabled United Fruit’s offices in Port Limón and Bocas del Toro to receive cable messages from New York.\(^{330}\)

Canadian-born professor Dr. Reginald Fessenden successfully tested his 500-cycle note spark transmitter between Brant Rock, Massachusetts and Machrihanish, Scotland, sending messages in Morse Code over a distance of 3,000 miles.\(^{331}\) Musgrave purchased two 25 kw transmitters, and had them installed at New Orleans and Cabo de San Antonio, Cuba’s westernmost tip, where a Baltimore construction-crew battled sand flies, mosquitoes and a tropical storm to erect a second relay station.\(^{332}\) After successful tests, Fessenden transmitters were installed in Swan Island, Limón, Costa Rica, Colón Panama, and Santa Marta, Colombia, with 2 KW transmitters placed on all United Fruit steamships.\(^{333}\) In July 1909, United Fruit’s stations sent the first radiotelegraph messages from New Orleans to Port Limón, a distance of over 1,500 miles.\(^{334}\)

At the heart of this tropical radio network was remote Swan Island. Boston heiress Isabel Anderson, traveling to the Canal Zone on the SS Cartago, recalled the nighttime approach to Swan Island “moving slowly toward the light [sic] till we made the outline of the little reef and saw the twinkling lantern.” Noting this station was one of several operated by United Fruit along

\(^{330}\)Charles M. Wilson, *Empire in Green and Gold*, 161-162
\(^{334}\)Charles Morrow Wilson, *Empire in Green and Gold*, 163
“dangerous points on this coast, where governments refuse to do their duty,” she expressed pride that it “was the result of Boston enterprise.” United Fruit promoted Swan Island as “one of the most beautiful spots in the Caribbean Sea, enjoying an even temperature year round.” Radio crewmembers found it less pleasant. In an account of his time as operator, E. Jay Quinby wrote, Damn the tropics, and Damn Fred Mueller back there in Boston for talking him into accepting this assignment at Swan Island, which Mueller had described as a veritable paradise in the Caribbean Sea. He hadn’t mentioned the inevitable malaria, the poisonous vipers, loathsome creatures that crawled by night, and the clouds of winged pests that swarmed by day and raised itching welts to torture a man’s soul hour by hour, day by day, night by night.

On October 12, 1910, SS Abangarez reported hurricane-force squalls south of Cuba. On the 13th with a tidal surge engulfing the port of Batabanó, el Ciclón de los Cinco Días lashed the island twice. In Havana, waves breached the Malecón seawall, flooding suburban Vedado and Centro Habana, from wealthy town-homes to the city jail, where prisoners clung to barred windows. Losses exceeded $1 million, due to the destruction of Customs House warehouses. Jesuit college observatories in Cienfuegos and Havana tracked the storm; police, fireman, and Rural Guards evacuated people. Deaths were reported from flooding in the working-class

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335. Isabel Anderson, *Odd Corners* (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1917) 70  
336. Roy Mason, “The United Fruit Company Radio Telegraph System” *Radio Broadcast* 1 no. 5 (1922), 382  
339. ¿En Octubre hubo uno o dos ciclones? *Observatorio Metrológico Magnético y Sísmico del Observatorio de Belén de la Compañía de Jesús* (Habana: Avisador Comercial, 1910), 13-15  
340. “El ciclón dejó sin techo el dock principal, y el agua penetró en está, averiando las mercancías más caros, que estaba confinadas a la guardia de la Administración de Aduanas.” ‘El Ciclón de la Cuba,’ *La Correspondencia de España* (Madrid), 20 de octubre de 1910.  
341. Reseña Meteorológica Año de 1910, *Observatorio Metrológico, Magnético y Sísmico del Colegio de Belén de la Compañía de Jesús en la Habana* (1910), 3-6
dockyard *municipio* of Regla.\(^\text{342}\) Over 100 people died around Artemisa, in La Habana province and Viñales and Vuelta Abajo, Pinar del Rio where mudslides demolished tobacco *vegas* and *bohíos*, peasant houses of palm thatch, mud and timber.\(^\text{343}\) Eloisa Sánchez, a Viñales schoolteacher, wrote, “The intensity of the wind was such and its rigor so tremendous that the neighbors thought the final hour had arrived and began praying to the Lord.”\(^\text{344}\) Spanish newspapers reported, “thousands of peasants have been left without shelter, clothing or food.”\(^\text{345}\) Passing off Key West, flooding Weather Bureau offices, the storm moved over Florida.\(^\text{346}\) Warnings limited deaths to seven Cuban fishermen whose schooners sunk off Punta Gorda, Florida, a one-armed man and his child drowned in Ten Thousand Islands and a black man drowned fording a river in St. Johns County.\(^\text{347}\) These deaths went unmentioned as Jacksonville *Times Union* triumphantly declared, “The Weather Bureau sent out its warnings and then men went to places of safety and not a single life was lost, where, but for the warnings, thousands would have drowned.”\(^\text{348}\) (Figure 3.31)
3.3.3 “Nothing is Hurricane Proof”

In 1911, Mack Musgrave was granted a leave of absence to undertake a secret government communications survey in Alaska, returning two years later to Seattle to convalesced from exposure, dying in 1913.\(^{349}\) George S. Davis, ex-director of the U.S. Naval Radio Station in Brooklyn, became general manager of United Fruit’s radio division. United Fruit purchased the Wireless Specialty and Apparatus Co. of Boston, acquiring a patent on the crystal detector, the most effective reception device in tropical static.\(^{350}\) In 1911-12, the Swan Island and New Orleans stations were reequipped with 50 KW, 500-cycle Marconi transmitters. Four 320-foot steel masts and a 300x600 foot directional antenna was raised in New Orleans, where the station stretched over twenty acres, and two additional 250-ft steel towers and a similar antenna built at Swan Island.\(^{351}\) United Fruit commissioned a station identical in Santa Marta, the port of Colombia’s Magdalena banana zone, shielded from hurricanes by the world’s highest coastal mountain range, with telegraph lines reaching the Andean capital of Bogotá.\(^{352}\)

In 1912, the Weather Bureau began vessel weather service in cooperation with United Fruit Steamship Co., New York & Cuba Mail (Ward Line) and Panama Railroad Steamship Line.\(^{353}\) Ship captains of United Fruit’s Great White Fleet and radio operators at Bluefields, Swan Island, Cape San Antonio and Burrwood became deputy Weather Bureau observers, their

\(^{349}\) Charles Morrow Wilson, *Empire in Green and Gold*, 164


\(^{352}\) “El representante de la Compañía de frutas en este puerto, Sr. Carr, se entenderá con su agente en Bogotá para que éste a su vez lo haga con el Ministerio de Gobierno a fin de estudiar la manera de poder establecer la estación inalámbrica para el servicio exclusive de la compañía frutera. Santa Marta Abril 24 de 1908 Misión de R. Reyes Presidente titular de la República à los Departamentos de la Costa Atlántica y Antioquia Abril a Mayo 1908 (Bogotá: Imprenta Nacional, 1908), 158-159

\(^{353}\) The report also noted, “Vessel weather service has also been started on the Pacific coast on vessels of the Nippon Yusen Kabushika Kaika, plying between the orient and points on the Pacific coast.” *Report of the Chief of the Weather Bureau, 1911-1912* (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1913), 26.
twice-daily observations relayed via Swan Island and New Orleans to the Weather Bureau in Washington. In April 1913, Weather Bureau district chief Dr. Isaac Cline, an important, if controversial, figure in the 1900 Galveston hurricane, installed meteorological equipment at each of these radio stations, “hurricane listening posts,” traveling from New Orleans via Limón, Costa Rica and Havana. In theory, United Fruit’s new steel radio towers were hurricane proof, but a 1915 hurricane with winds of 130 mph blew down coconut palms and toppled all three radio towers. Thousands of miles away in Boston, “Mr. Andrew Preston penciled in a memorandum on an envelope flap: ‘Nothing is hurricane proof.’”

At 1:30 p.m., August 15, 1915, the 3.191-ton United Fruit ship SS Marowijne, vanished without a trace as a Cape Verde type hurricane moved up from Jamaica into the Yucatán Channel. All 96 crew and passengers died; a search for survivors by the collier USS Jupiter called off after a life preserver from the ship washed up on Cozumel several weeks later. The radio station at Cape San Antonio, in the direct path of the storm, was demolished, described by operator John (Jack) Cole.

Our kitchen was the first to go, then the gas plant, water-house and roof of water storage plant were blown down, and some of the iron roofing carried for miles into the woods. Next the tower, which had been guyed with 1” steel cables, broke in two about halfway up, breaking the guys which blew straight out with the force of the wind. The roof of the operating house was blown off and the windows and doors blown in. Myself, the cook and engineer were inside at the time and we then took shelter in the engine house. The operating house, although of steel construction on concrete foundation, was moved about 8 feet off of its foundation. The engine house, where we went for shelter, stood only about twenty minutes after we got there.

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356 Roy Mason, “The United Fruit Company’s Radio Telegraph System,” Radio Broadcast 1 no. 9 (1922) 389
357 Charles Morrow, Empire of Green and Gold: The Story of the American Banana Trade, 163-164
Crawling through flying sand and timbers, they reached a lighthouse at land’s end, finding a wrecked Honduran schooner. The next day, “a native family, carrying five dead bodies, arrived at the station on the way to the lighthouse. This family, named Soto, who had lived in this locality for three generations, lost five of their number during this storm.”

Before the storm made landfall near Galveston Island, Texas on August 17, the Weather Bureau sent “men on motorcycles over the whole of the island, thirty miles in length, warning people they would almost certainly be drowned unless they came into town immediately.” The hurricane caused $50 million in damages and at least 275 deaths, including sixty-two on two pipe-dredges and a tug wrecked in Houston Ship Channel, and forty-two on Galveston Island. (Figure 3.32) Only eleven people died in the city itself, where Galveston’s Seawall held even as a twelve-foot storm surge flooded Downtown, preventing a repeat of the 1900 hurricane that killed 6,000 people. Reliable radio reports of developing hurricanes greatly limited deaths in the U.S. Gulf South, even as the power of these storms defied efforts of engineers to design hurricane-proof structures.

3.3.4 **The Promise and Limits of Forecasting**

In September 1915, another hurricane passed into the Yucatán Channel. With warnings broadcast by telephone and telegraph, Weather Bureau chief Dr. Isaac Cline held twenty-five steamships at port, a day before the storm made landfall in Grand Isle, Louisiana on September 29. In New Orleans, 86 mph winds leveled the First Presbyterian Church in Lafayette Square.

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360-‘The Latest Galveston Hurricane,’ *Popular Science Monthly* 87 no 6, December, 1915, 485 University of Michigan Library, Digitized April 27, 2009

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and tore the cupola off the Presbytère, ripping up streetcar barns in the Uptown neighborhood.

(Figure 3.33) The Mississippi rose six feet, and there was a thirteen-foot surge from Lake

Pontchartrain. As power outages caused drainage pumps to fail, a crevasse in the Florida Avenue

levee flooded Black, colored and immigrant neighborhoods of the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth

Wards. 363 Winds destroyed the antenna of a US Navy wireless, and damaged the Marconi

station, leaving Tropical Radio station as New Orleans’ only means of communication for

several days. 364

After Manuel Marquez, Creole of color caretaker of the Anglers Lodge in The Rigolets,

was unable to evacuate guests, “his lifeless body, along with 23 others of those who were in the

club, were found strewn over the marshes.” 365 The storm flooded homes and destroyed villages

of Cajun, Filipino and Isleño (Canary Islander) farmers, fishermen and fur-trappers in Lafourche

and St. Bernard parishes. 366 One survivor Julia Shiel, in her native Isleño Spanish, recalled,

“There were thirty-six of us in Victor González’s little boat [sic] the water was so high it took us

to the woods.” 367 In Plaquemines parish, the last 70 miles of the Mississippi, at least 200 people
died, as the storm flooded fishing villages, truck farms, orange groves, and rice and sugar

Sewage and Water Board of New Orleans, October 14, 1915, 13-15
Communication Hearings before the Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, House of Representatives,
Sixty-fourth Congress, Second Session on HR 19350 a bill to regulate radio communication, January 11 to 16, 1917
(Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, 1917)
(Preservation Resource Center, New Orleans, LA) September 2013, 18-19
366. “At Leeville, on Lower Lafourche, of the 100 houses in the village, only one was left standing, At Golden
Meadow and from that point to Cut Off, 100 houses were demolished.” Isaac Cline, Hurricane of September 29,
1915, Monthly Weather Review, September 1915 465; In St. Bernard, “More than thirty people perished, most of
them trappers, hunters and fishermen.” Gilbert Din, The Canary Islanders of Louisiana (Louisiana State University
Press, 1988), 145
367. Jeanne L. Gillespie, “Life and Death Along the Waterways of South Louisiana” in Recovering the U.S. Hispanic
Literary Heritage José F. Arranda, Silvio Torres-Sailant (eds.) (Houston: Arte Público Press University of Houston,
2002), 206
Bill Keife, a reporter on a boat carrying relief supplies, wrote, “For miles and miles, especially on the left bank of the river, a thin strip of land is all that separates the river from the Gulf, which had backed up from behind. Marooned families, with the livestock that weathered the storm, can be seen on these bits of land.”

Isaac Cline, comparing the storm to the Cherniere Caminada hurricane of 1893 that killed 3,000 people, declared with pride “the fact that only 275 lives were lost, in all that vast stretch of 300 miles of coastline, including the most populous center in the South, tells the story of the valuable services rendered the people of this section.”

Black sharecroppers from sugar plantations flooded by broken levees relocated to New Orleans. The migrants included early jazz musicians, including Sam Morgan’s Jazz Band, founded by four brothers from Belair Plantation in St. Bernard parish.

On August 12-18, 1916, the United Fruit steamships SS Tenadores and Turrialba reported a tropical storm before it struck Corpus Christi, Texas on August 19, destroying piers and wharfs in the harbor, and flooded Fort Brown, at the mouth of the Rio Grande. Timely warnings limited the death toll to six people in a steamer sunk off Port Aransas, three drowned in Corpus Christi bay, and six “unidentified Mexicans,” killed when hurricane-force winds swept over the Rio Grande Valley. The Caller-Times declared, “Corpus Christi defies tropical

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368 ‘From Myrtle Grove to Buras-100 dead, 31 killed in Pointe à la Hache, 50 dead in Barataria Country, Frenier, which was swept by the waters of Lake Pontchartrain, 25 dead’ New Orleans Times-Picayune October 3, 1915. microfilms of Times-Picayune, submitted by Gladys Stovall usgarvies.net
369 Isaac Cline, The Tropical Hurricane of September 29, 1915, Monthly Weather Review 43 no. 9 (1915): 466
hurricane,” proclaiming Corpus Christ’s high bluff and Padre Island protected its semitropical beaches from cyclones.373

Hurricane forecasting was more limited in the Caribbean than the U.S. Gulf of Mexico. In September 1917, the third hurricane to strike Jamaica in three years wiped out banana plantings and ground provisions in the northern parishes. In Port Antonio, cradle of the Caribbean banana industry, banana boats “departed empty for Cuba and Central America.374 Jamaica’s banana exports, which reached 16,200,000 bunches valued at $6.9 million in 1912 declined to 2,394,514 bunches valued at $1.4 million by 1917. A consular report the following year noted nearly 40% of adult males had immigrated to Cuba, drawn by high wages in the sugar boom of la danza de los millones.375

Moving north, the hurricane struck the Isle of Pines, severely damaging grapefruit plantations of U.S. colonists, flooding the port of Nueva Gerona.376 The cyclone passed over Cuba, leveling sugarcane fields around Artemisa.377 The SS Abangarez and SS Suriname, at Pilottown, La., reported hurricane-force squalls. As the storm made landfall on the Florida Panhandle on September 29th, steamships, shrimp, and oyster boats were in harbors. Wind and waves damaged Pensacola’s wharves and docks, grounding the USS Quincy, a recently seized

373. Daily Corpus Christi Caller, September 9, 1919 in Mary Jo O’Rider, The People of Corpus Christi and Their Port (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 94
375. Due to 1912., Edward Cipriani, Vice-Council, Port Antonio, ‘British West Indies’ Supplement to Commerce Reports: Daily Consular and Trade Reports Issued by Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce Annual Series No. 22b March 6, 1919, 1 Univ. of California Library, Dig. May 1, 2009)
376. “Not only was the crop ruined completely but the groves were left in such a deplorable state that it will take at least two years before they can be brought back to their original healthy condition.” Consul W. Bardel, ‘Nueva Gerona, the Isle of Pines,’ The Cuba Review and Bulletin 13 no. 4 (1921), 13
377. La caña toda la ha acostado y en muchas fincas ha partido los cañaverales, por lo que es de esperarse gran merma en la próxima zafra. (The cane has been flattened and in many fincas it has uprooted the young cane-stalks, so it is expected there will be a large decline in next years harvest.) Raul Fernández, Observador en el ‘Central’ Orozco,’ septiembre de 1917 Boletín Oficial del Observatorio Nacional (Habana: Imprenta Nacional, 1917), 23

docs.lib.noaa.gov
cargo ship of the German-American Lumber Co., which owned vast tracts of timberland in West Florida, but deaths were limited to five people drowned in floods near the inland rail-town of Crestview.\footnote{H.C. Frankenfield, ‘Forecasts and Warnings for September 1917,’ \textit{Monthly Weather Review}, Vol. 45, No. 10, October 1917, 458, 459 docs.lib.noaa.gov}

As the U.S. entered World War I, the Navy took over Tropical Radio stations in New Orleans and Burrwood. Director George S. Davis argued that this action denied United Fruit the profits of its investments. He reminded Congress, “It is almost entirely through the fruit company’s system of stations” that the Weather Bureau could “issue warnings which have saved millions of dollars in shipping in the Gulf and Caribbean Sea.”\footnote{George S. Davis, Gen. Super., United Fruit Co. Wireless Dept., New York, in Radio Communication Hearings before the Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, House of Representatives, Sixty-fourth Congress, Second Session on HR 19350 a bill to regulate radio communication, January 11 to 16, 1917 (Government Printing Office: Washington, DC, 1917) Harvard University Library Dig. Jul 24, 2008} In September 1919, with United Fruit’s ships still in the Atlantic, requisitioned for wartime use, a hurricane passed over the Florida Key, sinking the Ward Line SS \textit{Croydon}, with nine survivors rescued off Cape Florida, and the Spanish SS \textit{Valbanera}, drowning all 488 crew and passengers, Canary Islander immigrant sugar-cane cutters.\footnote{All 400 passengers and 88 crewmen drowned when the Spanish ship SS \textit{Valbarena}, en route from Havana, sunk on Rebecca Shoal, a coral bank 40 miles west of Key West. Of 37-man crew on the Ward Liner mail-ship SS \textit{Croydon}, 27 drowned. Nine survivors were found on a lifeboat off Cape Florida, H.C. Frankenfield, ‘Special Forecasts and Warnings: Weather Warnings Sept. 1919’ \textit{Monthly Weather Review}, September 1919, 672 docs.lib.noaa.gov} On September 15, a clear day in which warning flags had been lowered on the beach and boardwalk of Corpus Christi, the storm struck with a sixteen-foot tidal surge, piling debris and corpses coated in oil from wrecked tankers.\footnote{Mary Jo O’Rear, \textit{Storm over the Bay: The People of Corpus Christi and Their Port} (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 105-106} The official death toll was 287, the actual closer to 600; oil-covered corpses went unidentified, hundreds disappeared as officials downplayed the storms’ severity.\footnote{Michael Ellis, \textit{The Hurricane Almanac}, (Corpus Christi, TX: Hurricane Publications, 1988), 78-79} Surveying the ruins of Corpus Christi’s North Beach, a Houston reporter wrote, “every one of the 400 beach houses has been destroyed, most
of them beyond a trace, while here and there a mourning palm tree hanging low, its oil-begrimed leaves marking the spot of some former showplace.”

3.3.5 Conclusion

In September 1920, a low atmospheric pressure trough moved up the Caribbean Sea, attaining tropical storm strength as it entered the Gulf of Honduras. The Vaccaro Brothers steamship SS Yoro, carrying bananas from La Ceiba, reported winds of 64 miles per hour to Tropical Radio’s Swan Island station; at Burrwood, Louisiana, the Southwest Pass of the Mississippi, the barometer was four degrees lower, a rising tide indicating the approaching storm. The Weather Bureau issued warnings to all points on the Louisiana and Texas coast with telephone and telegraph connections, and 4,500 people evacuated from Galveston. When it made landfall in Houma, Louisiana, with winds of 100 mph, winds and heavy rains uprooted trees, damaged homes, rice and sugarcane fields and washed out railroads, with $1.4 million in damage, but only one death, from electrocution by a downed wire.

Scientific struggles for control over tropical nature extended to efforts to monitor hurricanes. The enormous logistical difficulties in shipping highly perishable bananas led United Fruit Co. to become the first U.S. corporation to invest major capital and manpower in wireless radio telegraphy. United Fruit’s growing wireless network meshed with a new fleet of fast, refrigerated banana-carrying steamships, large enough to withstand developing tropical storms. Radio stations and ships delivered to the U.S. Weather Bureau the first regular radio reports of developing hurricanes passing from the Caribbean into the Gulf of Mexico. These reports

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384. “Great Hurricane Nears the Gulf Coast; Coming up from the Yucatan Peninsula,” The Washington Reporter, September 21, 1920
ensured an unprecedented level of security from hurricanes, helping to legitimize United Fruit’s increasingly close ties to the U.S. government and the de facto U.S. protectorate over neighboring Cuba.

The wireless radiotelegraph network that formed a protective barrier against hurricanes highlights the dramatic racial and socio-economic inequalities of the American Mediterranean. As radio reports, storm forecasting and disaster planning dramatically reduced the numbers of deaths from hurricanes, official reports reveal indifference to the deaths of poor and non-white people. Poor whites, Blacks and Hispanics, particularly living outside urban centers, had limited access to radio communications, and were routinely ignored by government officials. Promises of security from hurricanes spurred tourism-driven real estate developments, exacerbating property damage. The wartime decline in commercial shipping, with the requisition of United Fruit’s fleet and radio station, revealed the limits of existing technologies of storm forecasting and a lack of hurricane observations at sea resulted in catastrophic natural disasters.

3.4 Conclusion: The Biopolitical Conquest of the Tropics

Charles M. Wilson proclaimed the banana plantation zones of the Caribbean Rim of Central America “an extension-psychological-if not geographical-of the pioneering advance towards the western boundaries of the United States.” Unlike the West, “Central American jungle remains an eternal frontier,” impositions of civilization ephemeral and temporary, requiring “costly sanitary and medical works” that kept at bay endemic tropical diseases and natural disasters. At the dawn of the twentieth-century, as the United States emerged as a global power, the bio-political conquest of the American tropics, in campaigns against yellow fever, malaria and hookworm, and efforts to forecast hurricanes, epitomized a radical form of
modernity, based on the administrative and bureaucratic powers of an imperial state and transnational corporations.

The science of tropical medicine challenged centuries-old ideas about relationships between humans and the environment, showing that the tropics could be not only habitable but also temporarily healthy for whites. Black West Indians, mestizo Hispanics, Black and poor white Southerners and southern European “new immigrants” were all stigmatized as contaminated races, whose unsanitary living conditions and immunity (or lack thereof) to tropical diseases posed threats to U.S. whites. Authoritarian health measures of U.S. and United Fruit officials in U.S. occupied Cuba, the Panama Canal and Central American banana enclaves emboldened Progressive era reformers.

The sciences of tropical medicine and tropical meteorology were at the vanguard of medical and technological modernity, which physicians from tropical Latin America and the U.S. South, played a leading role in shaping. Public health and disaster planning, reflecting demands for worker productivity and efforts to safeguard property and lives of U.S. whites, shaped discourses that legitimized segregation. The successes and failures of tropical medicine and tropical meteorology demonstrate how state-corporate struggles for the subjugation of human bodies, carried out in the context of struggles to subjugate and systematically exploit larger ecosystems, shaped a bio-political conquest of the American Mediterranean for the incipient forces of globalizing corporate capitalism. The complex ecology of the American Mediterranean defied its would be conquerors, from the stubborn persistence of endemic tropical diseases to the dangers of tropical storms.
Figure 3.1 Carlos Finlay and aedes aegypti mosquito

Figure 3.2 Fires to "destroy" yellow fever germs, Jacksonville, 1888
https://www.suwanneedemocrat.com/opinion/remembering-swannee-officials-take-precautions-for-yellow-fever-outbreak/article_8865910e-5d26-11e8-86a3-0743e09a97fa.html
Figure 3.3 Yellow Fever as Death, wearing a Cuban sombrero

Figure 3.4 Building No. 1 Fomites Building Camp Lazear, February 1, 1901
Figure 3.5 *Patient at Camp Lazear,*
Philip S. Hench Walter Reed Yellow Fever Collection University of Virginia

Figure 3.6 *Man using a knapsack to spray larvicide or oil on a ditch, Panama, 1916,*
Courtesy of Digital Public Library of America
Figure 3.7 Map of New Orleans during yellow fever epidemic of 1905, Sir Rubert Boyce, *Yellow Fever Prophylaxis in New Orleans, 1905* Matas Medical Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Figure 3.8 French Market "Little Italy" Boyce, *Yellow Fever Prophylaxis*
Figure 3.9 *Fumigation Crew, Boyce, Yellow Fever Prophylaxis*

Figure 3.10 *Members of the Quarantine Inspection Tour Aboard the Anselm*
John N. Teunisson, United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, 1906 Latin America, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Figure 3.11 *View of Port Limon* John N. Teunisson, United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, 1906, Latin America Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Figure 3.12 *Pier and Harbor*  
John N. Teunisson, United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, 1906, Latin America Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Figure 3.13 *Party in front of Northern Railway car, Limon, CR*
John N. Teunisson, United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, 1906 Latin America, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Figure 3.14 *Party in front of Teatro Nacional, San Jose, CR*
John N. Teunisson, United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, 1906 Latin America, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Figure 3.15 *Native Hut, La Ceiba, Honduras*
John N. Teunisson United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, 1906 Latin America
Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Figure 3.16 *Government Band, La Ceiba, Honduras*
John N. Teunisson United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, 1906 Latin America
Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Figure 3.17 *Puerto Barrios, Guatemala*
John N. Teunisson, United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, 1906 Latin America
Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Figure 3.18 *The Southern Farmer's Burden 1923*
Photo collections, Records of the U.S. Public Health Service, Records Group 90 U.S.
National Archives, College Park, Maryland
Figure 3.19 *Victims of hookworm in Puerto Rico, Bailey Ashford, Pedro Gutierrez Uncinariaisis (Hookworm Disease in Porto Rico: A Medical and Economic Problem (1911)*

Figure 3.20 *Selma Ellis, Cerro Gordo, Columbus Co., North Carolina, Extreme Case of hookworm disease; ill for 8 years*

Photo at Fair Bluff, N.C. dispensary, 1911 *Rockefeller Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm Disease Publications 2-9 (1910-1919)*
Figure 3.21 Characteristic symptoms of hookworm disease. W.H., colored, Leake county; Miss 17 yr old, 85 lbs.; R.D. Kaufman county, Texas 16 yr old, 63 lbs; 3 yr old child, Case county, Texas.” Rockefeller Sanitary Commission for the Eradication of Hookworm Disease Publications 2-9 (1910-1919)

Figure 3.22 Dr. J.N. McCormack demonstrating the Kentucky sanitary privy
Figure 3.23 Negro roadside dispensary, Leake Co., Mississippi. All but three in group infected. 
*Rockefeller Sanitary Commission of the Eradication of Hookworm Disease Publications 2-9 (1910-1919)*

Figure 3.24 Distribution of hookworm, Rockefeller Sanitary Commission
Figure 3.25 Family on a Costa Rican coffee finca, Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica

Figure 3.26 Laborers on a Costa Rican coffee finca, Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica
Figure 3.27 Health worker makes house-to-house distribution of drugs in malaria chemoprophylaxis studies. The tablets are taken in the doctor’s presence, June 1939 Photo collections, Record of the U.S. Public Health Service, Record Group 90, U.S. National Archives, College Park

Figure 3.28 "Native Workers Home, ideal breeding conditions for anopheles mosquitoes" United Fruit Medical Department (1925), Matas Medical Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Figure 3.29 Weather Analysis and Flooding in Monterrey during el Ciclón del Nueve NOAA Central Library, Silver Springs, Maryland El Puente San Luisito después de la inundación de 1909 Monterrey Mexico Journal Publicado por Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, 1909

Figure 3.30 Wireless Radio Station, Port Limón, Costa Rica
Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics (1914)
Figure 3.31 *Interior of the wireless telegraph station at Port Limón*

Figure 3.32 *Smashed streetcar barn, Uptown New Orleans, Hurricane of 1915*

Figure 3.33 *Destroyed causeway, Galveston, Texas, Hurricane of 1915*
In 1912 the new U.S. chargé d’affaires to Guatemala, twenty-six-year-old Hugh Wilson traveled by ship to Puerto Barrios. In “the black moist night of the tropics” he was greeted by “a huge figure in tropic white,” Victor Cutter, manager for United Fruit. The young diplomat saw the loading of a banana boat. “A line of negroes stripped to the waist and bare-footed, each bent under the load of a huge bunch, strode up the wharf, mounted the gang plank under the yellow flare of two resinous torches, passed their burden through a chain gang of handlers.” At its head “the blackest and biggest buck of all smoked a cigarette and whirled a machete.” A train for Guatemala City left at dawn, “through the banana lands, a sea of them. They seemed to stretch out to the horizon.”

A graduate of Dartmouth College, Victor Cutter had “learned the art of banana growing and negro management in Costa Rica.” Jamaican Blacks were “cheerful and reasonably industrious, but full of liquor they became dangerous.” Cutter “could fight the wildest of them, could outshoot them, his endurance was unlimited” and in Cutter’s rise to president of United Fruit, Wilson surmised that he had retained “the willingness to bash a buck negro should the later become drunk and obstreperous.” An account of a hunting excursion exemplifies the need for symbolic displays of white male martial prowess and mastery over nature. Wilson, Cutter and three Blacks traveled by train, the gasoline engine disturbing “every creature of the jungle that bordered the tracks with two dense green walls. Parrots squawked, macaws screamed, monkeys chattered. Birds of every color sailed over us. Suddenly a great black turkey cock soared across the track. Simultaneously we raised our guns and fired. The turkey dropped on the track so close

387. Hugh Wilson, The Education of a Diplomat, 38
388. Hugh Wilson, The Education of a Diplomat, 37
the negroes nearly threw us out of the car by the violence with which they jammed on the brake.”

When another bird appeared, Cutter dissuaded Wilson from firing, as he “his[ed] savagely ‘Don’t shoot’” “‘Didn’t you see those niggers’ eyes bulge at the first shot? They never saw anyone hit a bird on the wing when moving along a railroad. We would probably miss the second shot and spoil the whole thing.’ I didn’t fire another shot from the car and our prestige was saved.”

This display of white mastery and its constricting effect upon human agency mirrors memoirs of British imperialists, such as George Orwell’s *Shooting an Elephant*, in which he recounts his experience as a police officer in Burma. Written without the anti-imperialist critique of Orwell, by Ivy League-educated Northeasterners in language brimming with anti-Black racism, this account illustrates United Fruit’s Jim Crow imperialism, in which symbolic displays of prowess were integral to “management” of a Black West Indian workforce unaccustomed to white American racism.

At the dawn of the twentieth-century, with the rise of the U.S. as a global power, latitudinal labor discipline and de-territorialized racial power developed across the American Mediterranean, reflecting the multiple and segregated conditions of workers. Latitudinal power, used by Aiwha Ong to describe neo-liberalism in Southeast and East Asia, is applicable to imperialism resting on racial assumptions of the need for non-white labor in tropical climates. Transformations of tropical rain forests in Central America into vast banana plantations, semi-desert scrublands in Southern California and hummock lands in Florida and into citrus groves, exemplified the re-engineering of spaces and populations to create enclaves of low-wage agro-industrial production--“factories in the field” where white managerial classes depended on the

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389 Hugh Wilson, *Education of a Diplomat*, 71-72
labor and agricultural skills of Blacks, Hispanics and Asians. In scale, managerial sophistication and technological prowess, they epitomized a new form of capitalist agricultural production, based on migrant labor, mass production and mass consumption. Ships and trains that transported tropical fruits brought growing numbers of white tourists, tropical tourism advertising tropical fruit. Viewing migrations of tourists, laborers and commodities side-by-side highlights inequalities of globalized corporate capitalism, in which economic growth and technological innovations fueled rising standards of living, but also exacerbated stark divides between rich and poor, white and non-white.

The first chapter **Plantation Empire** describes racial and ethnic conflicts and evolving patterns of land ownership and labor management in the banana zones of United Fruit, focusing on the era from the 1900s to the end of World War I. In Limón, Costa Rica, cradle of United Fruit, the company relied on West Indian contract planters, whose skills at banana growing enabled them to plant fruit on lands infested by Panama disease. The company used its stranglehold over railroads and ports to thwart a potential competition and prevent West Indians contract planters from developing into an independent peasantry. In the newer division of Guatemala, dominated by company-owned plantations, West Indians occupied an elevated position above Hispanic *mozos* in labor hierarchies. Racial tensions exploded into outbreaks of violence, prompting military interventions and restrictions on West Indian immigration.

The next chapter, **Fruit of Monopoly** examines the transformation of bananas and citrus into consumer staple through the creation of refrigerated distribution networks. Refrigerated steamships, mechanized unloading and pre-cooling plants for rail cars carried highly perishable tropical fruits that ripened in transport, transportation networks reliant on the labor of working-class whites, southern European immigrants and Blacks. Vertical integration of distribution and
marketing, monopolistic inland railways, United Fruit’s steamship fleet, and its Fruit Dispatch and the California Fruit Growers’s Sunkist brand, slashed consumer costs. Southern and eastern European immigrant “jobbers,” grocers and peddlers developed the retail fruit trade, occupying an ambiguous place in racial hierarchies in an era when Black urban migration and the reliance of railroads on Black labor led to the spread of lynchings and race riots. Vertical integration enabled the creation of commodity chains, developing in conjunction with racialized labor hierarchies shaped by de-territorialized latitudinal power.

The final chapter Seeing the Southland explores evolving discursive geographies iterated U.S. white tourists in the southern U.S. and the Caribbean, aboard ships of United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet,” which developed cruise ship tourism. Tourists from the northern U.S. connected foreign and domestic tropical spaces in a “tropical” southland. Lands of backwardness, poverty and racial anarchy, they were also alluringly exotic, particularly for female tourists, offering romantic Latin cultures and temporary relief from rigors of northern civilization. Tropes of the timeless tropics conflict with belated recognition of tropical modernity, in relatively white Costa Rica, and the impositions of U.S. imperialism, the Panama Canal, United Fruit’s banana empire, which are portrayed in travel guides and travelogues as offering models for the modernization of both Latin America and the U.S. South.

4.1 Plantation Empire

A 1912 article in National Geographic article on Costa Rica’s banana industry “Where Our Bananas Come From,” praised “the Jamaica negro,” experienced in banana growing and working “through torrential downpour and the sweltering heat of a tropical sun.” The ubiquity of
the banana was due to the “ability of the black man to work year after year in an environment that all too frequently is fatal to the white man.”  

In tropical lands where white people were putatively incapable of working, labor hierarchy went hand in hand with racial segregation. Banana company officials relied on the racialized perceptions of disease susceptibility that had shaped slavery and its successors, sharecropping and tenant farming in the U.S. South and the West Indies. Banana plantations were an industrial form of slash-and-burn agriculture, combining Afro-Caribbean vernacular agricultural knowledge with scientific planning and vertical integration. Banana plantations required the clearing of large tracts of jungle and were threatened by soil exhaustion, floods, washouts and blowdowns. The high-volume, low-profit margin trade rested the exploitation of virgin lands acquired for little or no money and indentured labor. Limón, Costa Rica, the cradle of United Fruit’s plantation empire, offered abundant land and relatively high wages for land-poor Afro-Jamaican peasants, on whose banana growing skills white officials depended, particularly with the spread of Panama disease *Fusarium* wilt. (Figure 4.1) Afro-West Indians immigrants fleeing overcrowded islands benefitted from free land and high-wages but resenting U.S.-style racism, and United Fruit’s stranglehold on trade and transportation. In Caribbean Guatemala, United Fruit developed company-owned plantations. As it increased hiring of Hispanics resentment at the elevated position of West Indian Blacks in labor and cultural hierarchies of an export enclave sparked racial violence, military interventions and restrictions on Black immigration.

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391-Edwin Fraser, “Where Our Bananas Come From,” *National Geographic* 23 no. 7 (1912): 729
4.1.1 Building an Enclave

Victor Cutter was raised on his family farm in Dracut, Massachusetts, across the Merrimack River from the textile-mill center of Lowell. As a young boy, he worked sixteen-hour days on his family farm and attended public school with children of Irish and French Canadian mill workers. Graduating from Dartmouth College in 1904, he took a job with the United Fruit in Costa Rica. United Fruit president Andrew Preston tried to dissuade him. “The place is full of yellow fever and malaria’ he said. ‘Many good men go out there and never return. A lot has been written about the glamour of the tropics, the lure of its adventure. But if you go there for United Fruit you will find that most of it is hard work. You will be cut off from your friends. And at the start you will take the lowest job a white man holds in the tropics—that of timekeeper.’ ‘When may I sail,’ asked Cutter.\(^{392}\) Victor Cutter’s records, written in a “leaky, thatched roof hut” by “a smoky old lamp or candle,” describe the arduous tasks of overseeing banana plantations.

Days filled with mending pack saddles, harness, watching repairs on bridges, cutting fruit, clearing up after floods, blowdowns, taking up work on contracts of cleaning and pruning, settling disputes of labor, clearing lands with the problems of underbrushing, lining planting and felling. Digging bits and hauling them. Repairing old telephone lines. Getting out on rush emergency work for extra fruit cutting. Treating the mules for colic after an all night work job.

Despite the hardships, the neo-colonial tropical frontier offered opportunities for a young white man. Promoted to overseer, he moved into “small cozy wooden cottage, high off the ground to escape damage from frequent floods of nearby Matina River.” (Figure 4.2) By 1906,

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\(^{392}\)“Building a Business Empire in Tropical Jungles: How Victor M. Cutter Carried the Frontiers of American Civilization Into the Tropics—From Timekeeper to President of United Fruit Co. in 20 Years,” Forbes Magazine March 15, 1926, Box 3, Folder 1 Victor Cutter Papers, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College (henceforth VCP)
the twenty-four year old Cutter was superintendent of Zent, largest district in United Fruit’s
Costa Rica division. In 1907, he left for Guatemala, bringing five hundred West Indians.  

In 1908, United Fruit developed banana plantations on the Río Sixaola, the Costa Rica-
Panama border. Armed gangs invaded Talamanca (Bribri) Indian lands, destroying thatched-roof
palenques and garden plots, massacring men, women and children. Survivors fled with the cry
¡síkua dátse! (vienen los blancos/the whites are coming). Antonio Saldaña, the Bribri cacique
and “rey de Talamanca, died on January 3, 1910. Oral tradition among the Birbri, described by
anthropologist Philippe Bourgeoisie, held that they were assassinated at the orders of United
Fruit.  

Losers from storms spurred investments. In December 1908, floods washed away the
bridge over the Río Reventazón, “a narrow-gauge locomotive was carried into the river with the
landslide and rolling over and over like a boulder was carried several miles downstream.” United
Fruit contracted A.W. Buell of the Baltimore Bridge Co. to design a bridge capable of
withstanding floods. Preoccupied with material losses, company officials showed
little concern for deaths of Black workers. Anglican bishop Herbert Bury, crossing the
Reventazón on a cable, remarked that, “only a short time before six Jamaican negroes were being
hitched over when the cable broke and they were precipitated into the flood below, to have their
brains dashed out against these sharp points and rough edges, and carried down to the sea. None

393. Sheet 2 Farm Days 1904, United Fruit Company, 1929-1933, Box 1, Folder 8, VCP; “We Greet the New
President of the United Fruit Company,” Fruit Dispatch Vol. 10, No. 7 November 1924 Box 1, Folder 8, VCP
394. Alejandra Boaz Villareal, La Frontera Indígena de Gran Talamanca, 1840-1930 (San José: Editoriales
Universitarias Públicas Costarricenses, 2014), 232
395. Philippe Bourgeois, Ethnicity at Work: Divided Labor on a Central American Banana Plantation (Johns Hopkins
University Press, 1989), 31
396.“Launching the Reventazon Bridge, Costa Rica” Engineering Record, Building Record and Sanitary Engineer
of the bodies were ever found, I was told, and my informant didn’t seem to care.” The perils of banana growing drove demand for land and narrow profit margins necessitated exploitable labor.

4.1.2 Labor and Land

In a remote enclave, the Costa Rican government exercised limited authority, and little control over immigration. Costa Rica outlawed Chinese immigration in 1897 and in 1904 prohibited the entry of Turks and Syrians. In 1909, the U.S. minister protested after officials deported two Syrian merchants in Limón with U.S. passports. Chinese from Panama and Jamaica were “dropped off” on beaches, working in Chinese-owned *pulperias* (dry-goods stores) and *cantinas*. No restrictions exited on the more than 20,000 Black West Indians who resided in Limón, due to the dependence of company officials on their banana-growing skills. Twenty-five percent of bananas were grown on company owned farms. (Figure 4.5) United Fruit purchased 75% of its bananas from “private” contract planters. Hispanic Costa Ricans and foreigners owned *fincas* on the Río Reventazón and the Línea Vieja of the Northern Railway above Siquirres, relying on Jamaican labor. Jamaican ex-railway workers, speaking limited Spanish and unable to become Costa Rican citizens, squatted on “no name land” adjacent to the Main Line, delivering their bananas to railroad by mule-back, to be picked up by crews of loaders. (Figures 4.6 and 4.7) Drawing on practices of their island home, smallholders kept gardens of subsistence crops—yams, plantains, *ñame*, rice and beans—while raising Gros Michel bananas.

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397- Herbert Bury, *A Bishop Among the Bananas* (London: Wells, Darton & Co., Ltd. 1911), 156
399- “The Chinese of Central America,” The Chinese in Central America and the Caribbean ed. by Walton Look Lai, Chee Bang Tai (BRILL, 2010), 115
Company inspectors rejected bananas for minor imperfections and favored larger bunches of “first-grade” fruit, weighing 140 to 180 tons. (Figure 4.8) A mysterious infestation caused banana plants to wither and bear stunted fruit, “with the dry, brown leaves rattling in the wind. A puff of wind stronger than the rest eventually sends the stately plant crashing to the earth.”400 In Bocas del Toro and Limón, year-round rainfall facilitated the spread of the disease, carried by drainage water and boots. By 1908, United Fruit abandoned 16,000 hectares in Panama and Costa Rica.401 Plant pathologist E.F. Smith identified a fungus, *Fusarium cubense*, which infested “the vascular bundles of the bananas,” causing plants “to throw out numerous low suckers, and make a dwarfed, worthless growth.”402 Panama disease opened new lands to West Indian smallholders, who dug up diseased plants, replacing them with healthy rhizomes. This slowed the spread of Panama disease, but reduced the size of bananas, making it more likely for fruit to be rejected.403

Alongside Panama disease, United Fruit officials struggled with losses from floods and blow downs. In late July and early August 1910, heavy rains flooded banana plantations in Zent and Río Banano, while heavy winds flattened a million stems.404 Landslides in the mountains near Turrialba closed the railroad to San José.405 In the rail junction of Siquirres the death of a woman named Sanchez, one of several dozen suspected cases of yellow fever, led to new quarantine restrictions.406 General manager Richard J. Schwppe wrote to Victor Cutter, now in

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400. E.W. Brandes, Banana Wilt, *Phytopathology* Vol. 9 No. 9 September 1919: 351;
401. In 1912 1,450 acres were abandoned, Ministerio de Fomento, Memoria (1911), L; (1912), xxix, Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica henceforth ANCR
404. “Estimated damage to companies property in Zent 350,000 stems, Banana River 125,000 stems. Outside planters all districts 400,000 stems. Schwppe to Andrew Preston, August 2, 1910, Incofer #4953 ANCR
405. Mullins to A.W. Preston, July 29, 1910, Incofer #4953
406. Richard J. Schwppe to C.H. Ellis, August 4, 1910, Incofer #4953, ANCR
Guatemala, “I hope your Division will get through the year without any disaster. Here we seem to be doomed.”  

Political problems compounded environmental ones. In 1910, Costa Rican president Ricardo Jiménez Oreamuno enacted an export tax of one-cent gold per bunch, to go into effect in October. United Fruit officials cut pay by 40%. Pay cuts and killings of two Jamaicans by a white foreman led to an Artisans & Labourers Union, growing to 5,000 members, with support of Protestant churches and Black fraternal organizations. Union leaders enlisted support of U.S. white railroad workers, conductor L.M. Mathis fired for fomenting “dissatisfaction and uprising,” and had been “run out of Mexico” for the same reason. On August 1, Emancipation Day in the British West Indies, a general strike was declared, nine “pick up gangs” refused to load bananas. General manager Richard Schweppe reported there was enough labor to load the Barranca, bound for England, with plans to recruit “another gang of 100 Costa Ricans from the interior.” Blow downs had reduced cargos, and with a reliable supply of “Spanish speaking labor” on August 6, he declined an offer from Minor Keith to transfer workers from Banes, Cuba, because they would be paid $1.50 per day, while local wages were $1.18. United Fruit’s hiring of Hispanic labor weakened labor organizing through racial divisions, and served to drive down wages as the company struggled with losses from natural disasters and political challenges to its neo-colonial dominance in democratizing Costa Rica.

407. Richard Schweppe to Victor Cutter August 2, 1910, Incofer #4953 ANCR
409. Minor C. Keith to Samuel T. Lee, August 3, 1910, Samuel T. Lee to William Merry, August 3, 1910, Incofer #4953 ANCR
410. Richard J. Schweppe to Minor Keith, August 2, 1910 Incofer #4953 ANCR
411. Richard J. Schweppe to Minor Keith, August 2, 1910 Incofer #4953 ANCR
4.1.3 Strikebreakers, Riots and Resistance

On November 16, 1910, an overcrowded steamship docked in Limón, its cargo, registered as “670 bultos que contiene cada uno un trabajador,” Black men from St. Kitts, plantation workers on an island where a lack of arable land ensured the dominance of sugar estates. Promised seventy cents a day, they were herded into freight cars and sent to plantations, where they learned they had to purchase supplies, housing was non-existent and all they would be given to eat were bananas. A group marched on United Fruit’s commissary in Port Limón. Police brawled with the rioters; one man was shot, several beaten. This riot and its aftermath reveal forms of resistance to company domination and embryonic Black Nationalism, in the actions of a young Marcus Garvey.

The government sent 250 soldiers. The U.S. Navy frigate USS Tacoma steamed offshore. British vice-consul C.C. McGrigor, an engineer on United Fruit’s payroll, threatened rioters with imprisonment and was pelted with stones. Two Jamaicans, J. Washington Sterling and Charles Ferguson joined with Kittian Joseph Nathan, all obeah men, Igbo and Afro-Creole sorcery. In Anachristina Rossi’s novel Limón Blues

One of the St. Kitts men began to speak. He was an obeah man dressed in a red coat. He was next to a bonfire and for a moment the flames dyed his face with a glow or made shadows under his eyes and nose. Suddenly a breeze stirred the flames and his figure grew more agitated. La voz del powerman salió larga y cavernosa y con su largo brazo flaco escandió la frase: ‘My name is Nathan and this is a strike.’

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413- Hitchcock to Jiménez, November 29, 1910 in Serie Gobernación, 3134, ANCR “This is the only written reference to Nathan’s ties to obeah, and it is difficult to ascertain exactly what this charge meant to a North American UFCO official.” Aviva Chomsky, The West Indian Workers of Costa Rica, 194
414- Anacristina Rossi, Limón Blues (San José: Alfaguara, 2002), 77-79
British consul F. Nutter Cox arrived on November 27, with Black Jamaican Wesleyan Rev. E.A. Pitts announced the men would receive standard wages. Officials deported Joseph Nathan to St. Kitts on the SS Ellis. In mid-December, a physician reported seeing 150 patients from St. Kitts. All were anemic, most suffered malaria and hookworm, and several were on the brink of starvation.415

With the collapse of the 1910 strike, a wave of religious revivalism swept Limón. Mass meetings featured dancing, drumming and spirit possession of myalism, opposed to obeah, based upon group worship and healing. In March 1911, the Limon Times decried a “loud and disgraceful” gathering of “250 to 300 people of the unwashed kind” in the dockside slum of Cienaguita, led by a myal man Zacheus. “In a sort of enknown [tongue] [they] commenced yelling at the top of their voice and a few of the more ‘strong-winded’ ones, standing up, went of in a sort of trance [trance] and for a considerable time kept up a loud groaning. They claim to be seized by the holy spirit and while in this state they are said to possessed of healing power.”416 This prompted a response from a young Jamaican timekeeper Marcus Garvey. Denouncing the Millennial Darwinists, predecessors to the Jehovah’s Witnesses, and criticizing myalism, reflecting his disdain for the superstitions of African magic, Garvey nevertheless decried an attack on religious freedom of “six or eight psuedo [pseudo] gospel pounders” as an “unwarrantable insult.”417 Founding The Nation as a rival newspaper, in May 1911, Garvey criticized the fire department, which, during a recent fire, allowed Black establishments to burn,

but saved the home of banana planter Cecil Lindo, a white Jamaican expatriate.418 Drunken firemen assaulted Garvey and destroyed his printing press, which the port’s only print shop, owned by the Costa Rica Northern Railway, refused to repair. With help from his uncle, he fled aboard the SS Cartago.419

Despite the racism of Costa Rican officials, West Indians occupied an elevated position in labor hierarchies over Hispanics. (Figure 4.9 and 4.10) Witnessing the nighttime loading of a banana boat, journalist George Putnam described “a line of singing, leisurely Jamaicans” carrying bunches to the mechanical loader, which conveyed the fruit to gangs loading the fruit. A series of platforms extend into the hatches, “on each are a couple of darkies, who pass the bananas down to the team below. At the bottom are Spaniards who carry the heavy bunches-they will weigh about sixty-eight pounds each, on average-to other Jamaicans who pack them for the voyage.” In the cold, cavernous ships hold, illuminated by electric lights, West Indian workers sang, “and all seemed to take pleasure in their work, except perhaps the Spaniards who did the carrying from the foot of the human stair to the packers.”420 “Jamaicans” receiving fifteen cents an hour for nighttime loading and ten cents an hour for daytime while “Spaniards” received twelve and a half cents and a eight and a half cents for the same work.421 Many Hispanics came from the Pacific lowlands of Guanacaste, where Minor Keith owned large cattle haciendas and gold mines.422 In 1911, West Indians were brought from Limón to Abangares gold mine as

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418- Cecil, Vernon and Stanley Lindo worked as secretaries to Minor Keith Elizabeth Castillo Araya, Turrialba 100 Años de Desarrollo (San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 2003), 118-119
421- Ibid
422- In 1911 42,514 tons of ore were mined and milled “Abangares Report,” Engineering and Mining Journal Vol. 93 March 30, 1917, 615 Univ. of Chicago Dig. Dec. 11, 2012
foremen. Workers were strip-searched to prevent them from stealing gold, sparking a race riot in which a mob of Hispanics killed fourteen Blacks.423

In November 1911 governor of Jamaica Sidney Olivier visited Costa Rica. A Fabian socialist critical of U.S. racism, he reported United Fruit paid relatively high wages and squatters could occupy vacant lands, which “the negroes will not be slow to do when they have been here longer. They will I expect in no time have thousands of cultivations of their own on the slopes of the mountains.”424 The lack of roads stood in contrast to Jamaica, “the houses are all built along the railway and children wander and play along the line.”425 He voiced concern over “the immense plurality of young men noting “The largest building in Siquirres a pile of four stories-was pointed out to me as the local brothel, an institution quite unnecessary in Jamaica, and with the further result that great numbers contract disease and on their return to Jamaica disseminate a very active and virulent form of syphilis.”426 Olivier left convinced Jamaicans faced no unfair treatment, but Caribbean Costa Rica was a cauldron of racial, ethnic and class tensions.

4.1.4 Monopoly and Race

Olivier predicted Jamaican immigrants to Costa Rica would form a free peasantry, eventually leading to labor shortages similar to those faced by Jamaica’s white planters. His cursory visit offered limited observations on how United Fruit’s monopolies enforced control over land and labor. United Fruit dictated use of land to squatters, who faced eviction if they refused sign contracts to sell bananas exclusively to the company. A potential rival shattered the

423 “Al final de cuentas no quedó vivo un solo negro de los que estaba trabajando ese día. Mataron alrededor de catorce, los cuales hoy se encuentran enterrados en la llamada “Cementerio de Los Negros” allá en la Sierra” Guillermo García Mora, Las minas de Abgangares: historia de una doble explotación (San José: Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica, 1984), 57-62
424 Sydney Olivier, Letters and Selected Writings (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1948), 137
425 Ibid
illusory freedom of contract planters. Joseph DiGorgio, Sicilian owner of the Baltimore Fruit Exchange, formed the Atlantic Fruit & Steamship Co. in 1911, acquiring a line from Galveston, Texas to Tabasco, Mexico, and plantations in Cuba, Nicaragua and the Black River region of Jamaica. DiGorgio acquired the Earl Fruit Co. operating fruit packinghouses in Los Angeles and Sacramento. *U.S. Investor* noted Atlantic Fruit enjoyed the “cooperation of Italian fruit-growers throughout the country,” handling both bananas and “California fruit,” but United Fruit “has played the banana game in about the same way Mr. Rockefeller has exploited petroleum.” With passengers and freight, it could “lay its own product down from its own boats in every Atlantic seaport from New Orleans to Boston without transportation costs [and] it would be hard to argue very much on the assumption that no one is going to get rich competing with them.”

Atlantic Fruit sent an agent to Santa Marta, Colombia in March 1910, finding all growers under contracts to deliver fruit to United Fruit. Aided by Syrian merchants in Barranquilla, Atlantic Fruit agents obtained 16,000 bunches of bananas, brought to New York on the SS *Prinz Joachim* of the Hamburg-America Line in June 1912. United Fruit instituted proceedings against Atlantic Fruit, but a judge dismissed the case. In January 1911, Atlantic Fruit signed a secret agreement with Costa Rica’s largest private banana planter, Cecil Lindo, one of several brothers from a family of Sephardic Jewish sugar planters in Jamaica who served as secretaries.

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432. “Banana Trust Beaten: Injunction Against the Atlantic Company Refused: Effort to Prevent Rival from Disposing of Santa Marta Bananas in the United States Fails,” *Fruit Trade Journal and Produce Record*, Vol. 47 No. 9, June 8, 1912, 3
for Minor Keith, purchasing his 20,000-hectare plantation in Parismina for $3,500,000.\textsuperscript{433} The agreement was voided, because the United Fruit had loaned the Lindo Brothers $1,000,000.\textsuperscript{434} Cecil sold out to United Fruit for $1,500,000, investing in coffee and dairy cattle haciendas in Turrialba, on the Caribbean slope of the Cordillera Central, near brother Stanley Lindo’s Finca Aquiares, one of coffee plantations that were the sites of anti-hookworm campaigns.\textsuperscript{435}

In June 1912, Atlantic Fruit & Steamship Co.’s agent in San José advertised in the Limón Times as the firm that brought competition to Jamaica.\textsuperscript{436} Offering 35-50 cents per bunch, higher than the 30 cents paid by United Fruit, Atlantic agents purchased 2,500 bunches for a sailing of the SS Prinz Sigismund.\textsuperscript{437} Investigations revealed a Jamaican named Morris cut fifty bunches on Finca Montana, in Matina, and a man brought sixty-five bunches on mule-back to the railroad, by a sign marked “Atlantic Fruit.”\textsuperscript{438} United Fruit obtained a court order, authorizing train dispatchers and alcaldes (mayors) to enforce an embargo against Atlantic Fruit. Northern Railway officials fenced off lands within fifty feet with barbed wire.\textsuperscript{439} Gangs of armed men destroyed bananas delivered at signs marked Atlantic Fruit. The Limon Times described how, in Siquirres, “five whites and six negroes” drove away several blacks guarding a pile of bananas and hacked the bunches to pieces with machetes. “At Sixteen Miles, Alfredo Volio, a native planter, saw white men with a revolver. At Puita, a way station, 750 stems were cut to pieces.”\textsuperscript{440}

\textsuperscript{433}R.M. Schweppe to C. Vernon Lindo, June 22, 1912 INCOFER #4820, ANCR
\textsuperscript{434}“Testimony of Mr. Bradley Palmer, Representing United Fruit Company of New York, Investigations of So-Called Shipping Combine: Hearings Before Committee on the Merchant Marines and Fisheries, House of Representatives on H. Res. 587, Parts 14-28, 1383
\textsuperscript{435}Elizabeth Castillo Araya, Turrialba 100 Años de Desarrollo, 118-119 Cecil used the proceeds from the sale of Hacienda Juan Viñas to relocate to New York, Stanley purchased a number of properties. His son administered Finca Aquiares, sight to International Health hookworm program, until 1953.
\textsuperscript{436}Jeffrey Casey Gaspar, Limón 1880-1940: Un estudio de la industria bananera en Costa Rica (San José: Editorial Costa Rica, 1979), 107; George Chittenden to R.C. Wetmore, June 5, 1912, INCOFER #5036
\textsuperscript{437}George Chittenden to Andrew Preston, July 10, 1912, INCOFER, #5036,
\textsuperscript{438}Report by W.L. Merrill, Depository, July 10, 1912, INCOFER, #5036, ANCR
\textsuperscript{439}Limon Times, June 22, 1912 quoted in Aviva Chomsky, West Indian Workers in Costa Rica, 72-73
\textsuperscript{440}“Banana Fight in Court,” Fruit Trade Journal and Produce Record, June 29, 1913, 11
Desperate Atlantic Fruit agents offered $1 per stem; workers picked up rejected bananas piling up near the wharf or discarded by railway tracks. The SS *Prinz Sigismund* left Limón on July 7 with “71 stems of bananas which were bought at the boat’s side, after being carried on heads through town,” 2,400 bunches of embargoed fruit were shipped to Boston on the United Fruit ship SS *Limon*. A train with 1,030 bunches was embargoed on the docks on July 13, loaded onto the SS *Esparta*. General manager W.E. Mullins nervously noted “local and Government feeling” was in favor of Atlantic Fruit “as a consequence of the intense desire for competition.”

L.W. Merrill, investigating thefts of bananas from company lands in Zent and Estrada, cited reports “that the Jamaicans walked the streets of Estrada threatening to shoot all the UFC white men. They publically said that embargoed or not they will cut their fruit and deliver it to the Atlantic.” The only policeman, a Jamaican, “hid in his house or took sides with the rioters and law breakers as he did not present an appearance.”

Superintendent George Chittenden conveyed the disregard the company had for families of squatters that resided on lands for decades, “D. Kelly and his daughter Dora Kelly claim to have a supplementary title, but such can easily be demolished when necessary proceedings are started.” Hispanic landowners with legal titles also faced pressure. United Fruit threatened to revoke the contract of Don Luis Espinach, owner of a *finca* in Guácimo, informing him that that two men carried away bananas. Generous loans, used for political advantage, were made to

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441. Walker Spencer to George Chittenden, July 8, 1912, INCOFER, #5036, ANCR
442. W.E. Mullins to Manuel Montejo, July 15, 1912 INCOFER #5036, ANCR
443. George Chittenden to Andrew Preston, July 10, 1912, INCOFER, #5036, ANCR
444. L.W. Merrill to W.E. Mullins, July 8 1912, INCOFER, #5036, ANCR
445. Mullins to Chittenden, 6 July 1912, INCOFER #5036, ANCR
446. Chittenden to Sr. Don Luis Espinach, Guácimo June 22, 1912, INCOFER #5036, ANCR
larger pro-company planters, including a young Army officer Federico Tinoco.\textsuperscript{447} The tactics provoked criticism from diplomatic officials. Chester Donaldson, U.S. consul in Limón, denounced the “strangulation of competition and elimination of the private or small planters,” describing not only “trick and subterfuge” against Atlantic Fruit, but the use of railroads to control trade in coffee, with shipments from San José and Cartago for Hamburg-America Line sidetracked to ensure loading onto United Fruit vessels.\textsuperscript{448} The State Department ignored these warnings. The pioneering age of independent growers was giving way to a new phase in the banana industry, dominated by large company-owned plantations, run by a professionalized class of white administrators, and safeguarded by authoritarian dictators.

4.1.5 United Fruit in Guatemala

United Fruit’s newest enclave developed in Guatemala, ruled by strongman President Manuel Estrada Cabrera, who maintained order without the democratic messiness of Costa Rica. The Caribbean lowlands of Izabal were home to the Garífuna of Livingston, Ladino cowboys and Q’eqchi’ Mayans who fled forced labor on German coffee \textit{fincas} in Alta Verapaz.\textsuperscript{449} In Puerto Barrio author Nevin Winter heard “Spanish, German, French, English, the sibilant Chinese and the unintelligible gibberish of the Carib.”\textsuperscript{450} Up to 2,500 U.S. Blacks worked on Guatemala’s Northern Railway, which went bankrupt in 1894, stalling sixty kilometers east of the capital. U.S. consul W.F. Sands described Black railway workers as “mostly Louisiana roustabouts or ‘bad niggers’ from the Mississippi levees and steamship wharves.”\textsuperscript{451}

\textsuperscript{447} In regard to ‘El Trebol’-all of us, I think agree that the farm is not with amount of loan, viz. $110,000, but I do no just see how Don Federico Tinoco is ever going to be in position to pay back this sum” S.G. Schermerhorn September 5, 1912 INCOFER #4857 ANCR
\textsuperscript{448} Chester Donaldson to Secretary of State, May 12 1914 M-669 reel 30, RG 59 NACP
\textsuperscript{450} Nevin Winter, \textit{Guatemala and Her People of Today} (Boston: Page Company, 1909), 146
\textsuperscript{451} W.F. Sands, \textit{Our Jungle Diplomacy} (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 99-100
Crow, they died in large numbers due to dysentery and yellow fever. Nevin Winter described Black railway workers ferried over the Río Motagua at Gualan, where floods had washed away a bridge. “A more dejected lot of ‘cull’ud gemmen’ I never saw, for they had already heard of the life that lay in store for them, and they were trying to devise ways and means for their return to ‘God’s country,’ as one of them called it.”

Some Blacks found opportunities denied in the U.S. Simon Shine, from Montgomery, Alabama owned a barbershop and bar in Zacapa with his Guatemalan mistress. In September 1909, the governor of Zacapa, Gen. Enrique Aris, beat Shine and a customer, George Milliken. He wrote a letter to Theodore Roosevelt, “there were some words and I answered as best I could in Spanish. All I said was ‘Si, Señor.’ the General hit me with a hard blow in the face, and his nephew hit me over the head with a revolver a heavy forty-four.” Demanding the protections accorded to U.S. whites, he asked, “Mr. President, won’t you order the man-of-war now at Puerto Cortez to come over here and investigate the beating up of American citizens.”

Division manager Victor Cutter had his skills in “negro management” put to the test facing down armed members of a Garífuna logging gang who marched on Puerto Barrios when sparks from a locomotive burned their palm-thatched manaca camp. In January 1908, 9,000 acres of plantations extended along the railroad for 60 miles. The railroad had seventy bridges, 3,000 tons of steel viaducts built by the Baltimore Bridge Co. crossed the summit peaks of the Cordilleras, including 244 ft. deep Las Vacas ravine, to reach Guatemala City. The line was

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453. Frederick Douglass Opie, Black Labor Migration in Caribbean Guatemala, 1882-1923 22, 42
454. This letter is quoted in “Our Citizens Mistreated in Central America,” The Literary Digest 38 no. 4 1909: 1000
455. “Correspondence United Fruit Company, 1929-1933,” Box 1, Folder 8, VCP
incorporated as International Railways of Central America, reflecting Minor Keith’s dream of a Pan-American railroad through Mexico.\(^{457}\) (Figure 4.11 and 4.12)

In December 1909, after a white foreman murdered a Jamaican, George Reid, and a timekeeper declared “$30 a month is enough for any nigger,” workers armed with revolvers, machetes and clubs hijacked a train and raided a commissary, threatening “to take the life of any white man they meet.”\(^{458}\) Soldiers arrived on December 18, but did not disarm workers, due to Estrada Cabrera’s reluctance to antagonize the British consul, demanding payments on Guatemala’s debt.\(^{459}\) After officials arrested strike leaders, the company provided housing for soldiers. Blacks and whites looked down on the undersized, ill-clad soldiers. One traveler described a jail in the village of Tenadores, near Puerto Barrios, “made of bamboo and roof thatched with palmetto leaves and strongly fortified by barefoot soldiers whose uniform is anything but striking.”\(^{460}\)

In the 1910s, thousands of Hispanics migrated to the banana zone, Ladino peasants from Guatemala’s eastern highlands, a hot, dry cattle ranching frontier, and neighboring parts of Honduras and El Salvador. Guatemala’s Ladinos included “the domestic servants, muleteers, small farmers and tenants, herdsman and not a few beggars and robbers.”\(^{461}\) Folk Catholicism centered on the miracle-working Cristo Negro of Esquipulas and the festival annual pilgrimage

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\(^{457}\) “Guatemala Railroad,” *Industrial Development and Manufacturers Record* Vol. 53 April 23, 1908, 52


\(^{461}\) Mr. H.H. Bancroft, “the most numerous class of the population of Central America, next to the pure Indians, are the ladinos, most of whom are half-breeds including mestizos (the offspring of white and Indian), mulattoes, quadroons octoroons and zambos (or sambos the offspring of negro and Indian)” “Guatemala” *Encyclopedia Americana*, Frank Converse Beach, Vol. 4 1903, 1432
in January.\textsuperscript{462} A Protestant missionary journal described a convert, Domingo Castillo, who had made the pilgrimage carrying heavy stones on his shoulder, while disparaging pilgrims who “drink and carouse and with the money they put in the church box thinking to buy protection from evil.”\textsuperscript{463} With Ladino migration to the Caribbean banana zone, a three-tiered system of racial segregation would emerge.

\textbf{4.1.6 Divided Labor and Racial Violence}

Ladinos, who as mestizos, enjoyed an elevated position over indigenous Mayans in Guatemala’s racial caste system, found themselves at the bottom of labor hierarchies in United Fruit’s enclave. Medical reports praised the Garífuna, employed as stevedores, as “strong, well nourished, keeps excellent health,” while the “West Indian on the whole, keeps excellent health,” but “native laborers are very susceptible to malaria” hookworm and venereal disease.\textsuperscript{464} Frederick Adams wrote, “The people of this republic stand in less fear of the coast lowlands than do the natives of the rest of the Central America, but the trustworthy Jamaican negro does the most of the physical labor.” Guatemalans “are poorly nourished and have very little disease-resisting power. They drink large quantities of vile native rum and are quarrelsome and vicious under its influence. They are dirty in their habits and fall easy prey to malaria.”\textsuperscript{465} Compounding this humiliation, some Ladina women, who worked as cooks, washerwomen, and prostitutes, resided with better paid West Indians and U.S. Black employees of United Fruit and IRCA, and were derisively referred to as \textit{negreras} (women who sleep with blacks). (Figure 4.13)

\textsuperscript{462} Douglass Sullivan González, The Black Christ of Esquipulas: Religion and Identity in Guatemala (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2016)
\textsuperscript{464} Guatemala Division,” -United Fruit Company Medical Department (Boston.: United Fruit, 1913) 35
\textsuperscript{465} Frederick Adams, \textit{Conquest of the Tropics}, 200, 274
To meet the need for skilled labor, United Fruit hired 1,100 West Indian and 300 Spanish workers from Panama, laid off as the Canal neared completion, arriving as deck passenger on United Fruit ships.\(^{466}\) One newspaper complained, “We might as well set up a foreign dependency in Puerto Barrios, since every ship that arrives from Cólón keeps bringing more beasts for United Fruit and IRCA.”\(^{467}\) Compounding the humiliation of Black immigration, Minor Keith and the IRCA directed coffee cargoes through Puerto Barrios, setting high freight rates for the Pacific ports of San José and Champerico. Retahulehu coffee \textit{finqueros} and wharf owners petitioned in vain for equitable rates in July 1914, as the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. withdrew from Guatemala.\(^{468}\)

Amidst disputes in the Pacific, racial tensions on the Caribbean coast exploded into violence. The town of Quiriguá, two miles from Mayan ruins, set aside as an archaeological park, held “administrative offices, railroad yards, machine shops, electric light and ice plants” and a state-of-the-art hospital.\(^{469}\)\footnote{\textit{Annual Report, United Fruit Company Medical Department} (1913), 43-44} (Figure 4.14) While white Company officials resided in comfortable screened bungalows, West Indian and Hispanic banana workers labored, drank and gambled in close vicinity. In what apparently began as a gambling dispute, on the evening of Saturday, May 9, 1914, Owen H. Hughes, twenty-six-year old white foreman of Finca Tehuana, witnessed four or five Ladinos chasing down two Jamaicans. Nathan Gordon escaped by diving


into the Rio Motagua, while Alfred Esson received machete blows to the hand and face and was shot. The next morning, Sunday, May 10, fifty Jamaicans crossed the railroad tracks, marching on a Ladino workers camp. According to Rita Flores, a twenty-nine-year-old illiterate domestic from Chiquimula, the women faced an armed mob. She and several other women sought help from three Black American railway workers, who convinced the mob to return.

Carmen Villagrán, a literate, married thirty-year-old domestic worker from Chiquimula, praised the U.S. Blacks who acted on their behalf. By contrast, she described the Jamaicans as “criminals who commit all kinds of atrocities against Spanish-speaking people, killing, assaulting men and women and raping them without any consideration, and it shows in the spirit of the Jamaicans the desire they have to exterminate the Spanish.” The mob returned that afternoon, killing two Ladinos, Juan Cisneros and José Ángel Ramirez, severely wounding a third, Mercedes Garrido. Francisco Meza, an illiterate thirty-three-year-old Honduran, saw “twenty or thirty Jamaican blacks” shooting at Ramírez as he returned from work. “Being already dead one of the attackers struck him with two machete blows to the face, leaving it cut up into three parts.”

At 9 am on May 11, a telegraph from the commander of the Los Amates garrison reported “more than 60 armed blacks” were “killing all the Guatemalan natives [matando todos los hijos del país].” The commander ordered the governor (jefe político) of Izabal to “take any

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470. Testimonio de Jorge Ferguson G. y varios Ladinos 12 May 1914, MRE, Leg. 8567, AGCA
471. “la declarante y algunos otros vecinos se trasladaron a otro campamento al otro lado de la vía donde residen unos negros americanos, quienes mediaron por ellas,” Testimonio de Rita Flores, May 12, MRE, Leg. 8567, AGCA
472. Testimonio de Carmen Villagrán, 12 May 1914, MRE, Leg. 8567, AGCA
473. Felipe Morales to Estrada Cabrera, 11 May 1914, MRE Leg. 8567, AGCA
474. Testimonio de Francisco Meza, 12 May 1914, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, ‘Las Desordenes en Quiché y Tehuana, Distritos de Quiriguá, Leg. 8567, AGCA
475. Felipe Morales to Estrada Cabrera, 11 May 1914 MRE Leg. 8567, AGCA
steps necessary to repress the evil.”

At six in the morning on May 12, he arrived at Finca Tehuana with 100 soldiers, from Los Amates, Livingston and Zacapa. At the Ladino workers camp they found the corpse of Cisneros, “houses on this side of the track were all with open doors, with garbage, clothing, foodstuffs and furniture indicating they have been violently abandoned.”

A squadron under Lt. Meleio Estrada marched on the West Indian workers camp at Finca Quiché, where an assailant fired shots at Lt. Estrada’s four-man bodyguard, and a machete-wielding Jamaican attacked a sergeant. A search yielded no firearms, an officer insisted, “the Jamaicans were warned of the patrol and could have hidden their weapons in the mountains.”

Soldiers assaulted two Jamaican men, Alexander Wallace and Robert Fleming, seated at a table having breakfast. After trying to escape, Fleming was captured, beaten with rifle butts, and thrown off the porch of the camp house, as fifteen soldiers fired shots. In Finca Tehuana, soldiers wounded a sixteen-year-old walking to work, and looted camp houses. “Suit-cases and mattresses were ripped open and much money amounting to some thousands of dollars gold, the accumulated savings of these labourers, was stolen as well as other effects and possessions.” At Finca Mixco, they took members of a railway grading crew as prisoner, William Jackson “received two balls in the stomach and two in the ear and was attacked with gun butts and machetes. The soldiers stripped his boots off his corpse.”

In the Guatemalan banana zone, long simmering racial tensions, due to the humiliation of United Fruit’s neocolonial domination and

476. Comandancia de Departamento de Izabal, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, ‘Las Desordenes en Quiché y Tehuana, Distritos de Quiriguá,’ Leg. 8567, AGCA
477. Comandancia de Armas del Departamento de Izabal
478. Felipe Morales to Estrada Cabrera, 11 May 1914, MRE leg. 8567
479. Alban Young, British Consul, to Sr. Dr. Luis Toledo Herrate, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, June 1, 1914, ‘Las Desordenes en Quiché y Tehuana, Distritos de Quiriguá,’ Leg. 8567, AGCA
480. A. Young to Toledo Herrate, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, British Legation, June 1, 1914, ‘Las Desorden en Quiché y Tehuana, Distritos de Quiriguá,’ Leg. 8567, AGCA
practices racial segregation exacerbated by the subordination of native Hispanic Ladinos to English-speaking Blacks, exploded into violence with the killings at Quiriguá. Violence prompted military intervention and repression of West Indians, reducing the autonomy of an export enclave. United Fruit would adapt to a rising tide of Hispanic nationalism, fueled by anti-Black racism, as the diplomatic response revealed the reach limits of British imperial citizenship on the eve of the first World War I.

4.1.7 **Black Immigrants between Empires and Nationalism**

Soldiers arrested forty to fifty West Indians, jailed in Zacapa. British consul Alban Young expressed concern, informing officials “the Jamaican is accustomed to more daily nourishment than the Guatemalan needs.” He criticized the governor and his soldiers for invading “United Fruit property, “shooting indiscriminately at the negroes and their houses. Authorities were fully aware of the foreign nationality of the individuals against whom they were proceeding and that the facts show a regrettable absence of that careful regard for law and justice entailed by international organizations when directing police measures against foreign subjects.” He protested the arrest of the chief foreman of Finca Quichè, James Brown. A captain from the Los Amates garrison described Brown as a “rouge, known thief and murder,” who had “attacked the escort of Lieutenant Estrada.” Young insisted Brown was “one of the best overseers in the employ of the Fruit Company,” and according to “white officials in charge,” was in the office when the mob killed Francisco Cisneros and José Ángel Ramirez. Privately, British diplomats insisted on the value of state violence in keeping Black workers in their place.

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481. Alban Young to Sr. Dr. Luis Toledo Herrate, Minister of Foreign Relations, May 19, 1914, ‘Las Desordenes en Quiché y Tehuana, Distritos de Quiriguá,’ Leg. 8567, AGCA
482. Alban Young to Sr. S. Luis Toledo Herrarte MRE, June 1, 1914; Legación de S.M.B., Memorandum, 29 de mayo de 1914, ‘Las Desordenes en Quiche y Tehuana, Distritos de Quiriguá,’ Leg. 8567 AGCA
483. Cpt. Manuel Cordón to Estrada Cabrera, May 14, 1914, Leg. 8567, AGCA
484. Alban Young to Sr. S. Luis Toledo Herrarte MRE, June 1, 1914
Vice consul Godfrey Haggard conceded, “The general sentiment was that these events, though deplorable, would teach the Jamaican labourer a much needed lesson.”

Concern with British imperial citizenship in a small Central American republic ended with the outbreak of World War I in Europe and Britain’s entry into the war in August 1914. The closing of saw mills in the logging center of Belize Town, British Honduras “which threw numbers of Jamaica negroes out of employment,” prompted fears in Guatemala of a new influx of Black immigrants. In September 1914 the Guatemalan National Assembly introduced a law requiring immigrants of “la raza de color” to deposit $100 American gold at the customs house of their port of entry, returned upon their departure, reduced to $50 by a decree from Estrada Cabrera. Revealing the ambiguity of the color line across the Americas, the first victim was the nephew of the Minister that proposed the law, whose uncle was forced to make the deposit before he could purchase a return ticker on a United Fruit ship from New Orleans to Puerto Barrios. As United Fruit scaled-back operation and laid off workers, Guatemalan officers harassed West Indians, especially those living with Ladinas. In May 1916 the commandante of Quiriguá abducted María Rivera, wife of James White, a thirty-six-year-old Jamaican; after White intervened, she was “torn to pieces” in a rail collision, and he was thrown in jail.

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485. Haggard report, Young to Grey, 1 June 1914, Foreign Office 371/1921 (27762) quoted in Jason Colby, The Business of Empire, 119
486. Stuart Lupton to Secretary of State, September 14, 1914 M-655 roll 29 RG 59, USNACP
487. “Con el objeto de restringir hasta donde sea posible la inmigración de individuos de la raza de color, el Gobierno guatemalteco ha expedido un decreto disponiendo que no podrán desembarcar éstos en los puertos de la República si no hacen un depósito de $50 oro americano por cada uno, el cual será devuelto a los que se reembarcan.” Boletín de la Unión Panamericano, Vol. 40 (Washington, D.C. 1915), 377; For debate over amount, Ingrid Castaneda, Dismantling the Enclave: Land, Labor and National Belonging on Guatemala’s Caribbean Coast, 1904-1954, 46; Jason Colby, The Business of Empire, 138
488. Stuart Lupton to Secretary of State, September 14, 1914 M-655 roll 29 RG 59, USNACP
489. “Criminal: Cornelio Ortega por Abuso de Autoridad Rf. No. 854-d paquete #3 (1916), JPI, Jason Colby, The Business of Empire, 139-140
West Indians left Central American banana zones to harvest sugarcane in Cuba, build U.S. Army forts in Panama, and serve in the British Army, where racism led many to question loyalties. In 1917, Marcus Garvey founded the New York division of the Universal Negro Improvement Association. In January 1917 Gen. Federico Tinoco, Costa Rica’s Minister of War, a banana planter in debt to United Fruit, overthrew President Alfredo González Flores, who had refused to evict squatters from company lands and granted land to West Indian fishermen in Cahuita. Tinoco enacted a law requiring all immigrants to register with the Costa Rican government. In December 1917, the radical rhetoric of the Garveyite movement combined with racist harassment, spiking costs of living and stagnating pay to lead to a strike by West Indian workers in Sixaola, Costa Rica and Bocas del Toro, Panama. Hispanics from Guanacaste, Costa Rica and Rivas, Nicaragua were imported. Company officials evicted striking workers from housing. One Mr. Bettle, a 114-year old worker interviewed by Philippe Bourgeois, recalled seeing men dying of hunger while “hiding in the bush.” United Fruit broke the strike, but Tinoco fell from power in Costa Rica in August 1919. Francisco Aguilar Barquero, a member of González’s cabinet, led a return to civilian democracy, as restored relations with United Fruit reflected an increasingly Hispanic workforce.

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491-Ronald Harpelle, *West Indians in Costa Rica*, 44


494-Philippe Bourgeois, *Ethnicity at Work*, 60
4.1.8 Conclusion

“The Jamaican negro is the workman who has made possible the wonders which the United Fruit Company has achieved in Central America,” noted Frederick Adams, who pointed out that, with the exception of Colombia, West Indian immigrants formed the largest group in all of the banana zones. “With a steady and well-paid job, a house and a garden, chickens and other fowl, the Jamaican negro is as happy and contented and much better off than on his native island.”495 Like Afro-Americans migrating north in the Great Migration, Jamaicans and other West Indians fleeing overcrowded islands left declining plantation economies in search of economic opportunities. Reproducing U.S.-style racial segregation, Limón, Costa Rica and Central American banana zones had more than a superficial resemblance to Jim Crow, but offered abundant land and relatively high wages. In the pioneering decades of the banana industry, in which a managerial class of white overseers depended upon the agricultural skills of mostly Jamaican, Afro-West Indian immigrants, United Fruit’s banana zones developed in isolation, with minimal presence of national governments. Labor unrest led United Fruit to increase hiring of Hispanics. United Fruit tightened its monopolistic grip on railroads, ports and shipping in the face of a potential competitor, the Atlantic Fruit Co., revealing the limits of the independence enjoyed by West Indian smallholders.

Shifting strategies of labor control were shaped by shifting plantation agriculture, in response to Panama disease, and the demands of the extremely high-volume, low-margin banana trade, where profits rested on the exploitation of free or cheap lands and low-wage labor. A new division Guatemala epitomized the future of the banana industry, dependent upon large, company-owned plantations and a growing stream of migrant Hispanic laborers, who worked

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495 - Frederick Adams, *Conquest of the Tropics*, 138, 292
under and were paid less than English-speaking Afro-American railway workers and Afro-West Indian banana workers. In a nation based on a rigid racial caste system that elevated Hispanic Ladinos above indigenous Mayans, racial tensions between “native” Hispanic Ladinos and Blacks grew, exacerbated by economic competition and neo-colonial domination. Among a largely single male workforce with access to alcohol, guns and machetes, ethnic and racial tensions spilled over into episodes of violence, leading to military interventions and restrictions on West Indian immigration.

4.2 Fruits of Monopoly

In 1899 *Scientific American* wrote, “bananas do not stand long sea voyages and the result is that a considerable market is closed to them.”⁴⁹⁶ Six years later, the magazine marveled, “Only a few years ago the banana was a luxury in many northern families. Although fairly common on the city markets, it was too expensive to be used by most families living in and near the small towns; but now it is so abundant and cheap as to be a common article of commerce in every grocery story, while in the cities it is known as the ‘poor man’s fruit.’”⁴⁹⁷

The transformation of the banana from an exotic luxury into a consumer staple reflected technologies of time-space compression. United Fruit launched a fleet of fast, refrigerated white steamships, nicknamed the “Great White Fleet” for the U.S. Navy’s 1907-09 world-circling armada, with racial and imperial connotations. United Fruit’s marketing subsidiary Fruit Dispatch grew with regulated monopolies of railroads. Mechanized unloading expedited rail shipments and the banana became essential for working-class women and children. Refrigerated distribution networks also facilitated the growth of fruit production in the subtropical southern

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⁴⁹⁶-“The Banana as the Basis of a New Industry,” *Scientific American* Vol. 80 no. 4 (1899): 137 Univ. of Minnesota Dig. Feb. 5, 2013
U.S. California citrus growers, organized under the Sunkist brand, sponsored refrigeration plants, and launched the first advertising campaign for a perishable commodity. Doctors, dieticians and home economists extolled the nutritional value of bananas and oranges, associated with tropical tourism, and symbolizing the abundance of American capitalism.

4.2.1 A Great White Fleet

At the dawn of the twentieth century, ships in the banana trade depended on natural draft ventilation, exposing fruit to wind and salt-spray. Before 1899 hurricanes destroyed its banana plantations in Jamaica, Boston Fruit purchased the Four Admirals, 2,100-ton vessels built by Philadelphia’s William Cramp Ship & Engine Co as dispatch ships for the War of 1898. Painted white to minimize radiation of the tropical sun, they carried 35,000 bunches of bananas, at 14 knots, cutting travel time between Jamaica and Boston from seven to five days. 498 (Figure 4.15)

In 1901 Elders Dempster & Co., of Alfred Jones, importer of West African palm oil, launched three 3,000-Ton refrigerated ships on a Bristol-Jamaica run. 499 The SS Port Morant reached Bristol on March 11, Atlantic storms leaving crew injured, but 18,000 bunches of bananas intact, a rebirth of the slaving port’s trade with the West Indies. Railways were surprised the fruit was not in boxes, like Dwarf Cavendish bananas from the Canary Islands, but it was quickly sold and dispatched to cities across England. 500 Britain’s largest banana merchants, Elders & Fyffes of London, bought the ships; United Fruit Co. acquired 45% of its capital. 501

499. The Handbook of Jamaica for . . Comprising Historical, Statistical and General Information Vol. 28 (London and Jamaica: 1908), 434
500. R.M. Parsons, The White Ships: The Banana Trade at the Port of Bristol (Bristol: City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, 1982), 10
The bulky apparatus, took up a fifth of the cargo space. “The fabulously rich London market could bear the extra costs, but the principle United States markets insisted on cheap bananas.”

In 1903 Andrew Preston, Minor Keith and Captain Bill Anderson met in Montreal with Llewellyn Williams, who developed the Linde or Williams system, with refrigerator coils above an iron tank receiving calcium brine, distributing air in a brine spray. In 1904 the Venus, a thirty-year veteran of the banana trade, was transferred to the Cramp Dry Dock in Philadelphia and fitted with refrigerating machinery. In the first two trips from New Orleans to Limón, a six-day voyage, brine spray kept the cargo-space too moist. On the third trip, the spray system was used in the first three days, but only one day on the return trip. Temperatures in the hold rose from 46° in Limón to 52° at the mouth of the Mississippi, the 26,000 bananas turned out less than 2% ripe. Lee Christmas, mercenary general in Honduras, vacationing in New Orleans, received “many a lusty laugh at bars and bawdyhouses with the rhetorical question: ‘Ain’t it just like them gah-damned Yankees to commence by refrigeratin’ Venus.’”

Andrew Preston placed orders with Workman Clark & Co. of Belfast, Ireland for SS San Jose, Limon and Esparta, 3,300-Ton vessels, carrying 45,000 bunches of bananas and 18 passengers. The San Jose sailed from Belfast on August 4, 1904, loading fruit at Port Morant, Jamaica and Limón, returning to Boston, a fourteen-day journey. Assigned to the run between Limón and New Orleans in the winter season, these ships kept their cargoes at a minimum of 53°F, established as the ideal temperature for bananas.

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502. Charles M. Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 138
503. “Facts about the Butcher’s Plant,” Butcher’s Advocate 39 no. 9 (1905): 29
504. “In the USA,” Ice and Cold Storage 7 no. 4 1904: 69
505. Charles M. Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold
506. Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 139
The first of three of thirteen 5,000-ton refrigerated ships built for United Fruit by Workman Clark, the SS Cartago, Heredia and Parismina, began service from New Orleans to Panama in 1908. (Figure 4.16) The foundations of a “Great White Fleet,” nicknamed for the U.S. Navy’s 1907-09 world circling armada, these steamships were capable of speeds of 13 knots, carrying 50,000 bunches of bananas and 100 passengers. They were outfitted with large decks and dining rooms, social rooms, a library, and a smoking room with a well stocked bar.509

United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet” carried wealthy tourists on Caribbean cruises. Its most valuable southbound cargoes were “barrels of meat from the Chicago packing houses, sacks of flour from Minneapolis, clothes from New York and machetes from Connecticut.”510 (Figure 4.17) The Caribbean was second only to Europe as a market for the lumber that was exported from the Deep South, in a lumber boom that was dependent on the labor of Black debt peons and convict laborers. As construction began on the Panama Canal in 1904, one observer wrote, “the interior mills of Louisiana and Mississippi are sending down large quantities of timber, which is being sent to Panama on the vessels of the United Fruit Company.”511 From the port of New Orleans, United Fruit ships carried cargoes of yellow pine and oak lumber, rosin, barrel staves and box shocks.512 (Figure 4.18) Seeking to increase the cargo trade, in 1908, United Fruit first published directories of manufacturers, exporters, importers and banks “to encourage and extend the commercial relations between the merchants of New Orleans and Central America and...
Subsequent editions, expanded to include Cuba, Jamaica and Mexican Gulf ports, were published in 1912 and 1915. As the Panama Canal reached completion, United Fruit compensated for the declining volume of construction cargoes by advertising U.S. manufactured goods for Latin American and Caribbean markets.

4.2.2 Mechanization and Railroad Monopolies

Bananas were brought to consumers by mechanized unloading and monopolistic railroads. Electrical conveyors were installed at the banana wharf of the Mobile & Ohio in 1903. Mechanical unloaders were installed at United Fruit’s Erato Street wharf, described in the California trade magazine *Electrical West*, alongside a guide for travelers between San Francisco and New Orleans on the Southern Pacific’s “Sunset Express.” By 1914, the New Orleans Dock Board owned seven banana conveyors, unloading 16,583,000 bunches. (Figure 4.19) In Galveston, Texas, a port for bananas from Tabasco, Mexico, mechanical unloaders were installed at the Santa Fe wharf when United Fruit began importing Central American fruit.

Machines cut unloading time from twenty-four hours to seven or eight and the number of men from six hundred to three hundred. *Popular Mechanics* marveled at labor saving efficiency, emphasizing how they reduced reliance on Black labor. Previously “negroes who were stationed in the hold one hatch at a time” had unloaded bananas. “They passed the fruit

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513. Business Directories of Manufacturers, Dealers, Exporters, Importers and Banks and Bankers of New Orleans, Louisiana and British Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Spanish Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama (1908) Louisiana Research Collection, Tulane University
514. Banana Carriers’ Link Belt Machinery Company (1905), 21; Annual Report of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company December 1905, xxvii
517. “Four steamers are now engaged in the banana trade between Frontera [Tabasco], Galveston, Mobile and New Orleans A.J. Lespinasse, consul, U.S. Frontera, State of Tabasco, “The Fruit Dispatch began to import bananas through Galveston in June 1912.” “Rates on Fruit” “In the Matter of Rates on Tropical Fruits from Gulf Ports to Various Destinations” *Traffic World* 14 no. 7 July 18, 1914, 109
518. “Electrically Driven Banana Conveyors,” *Electrical Engineering* 3 no. 4, April 30, 1908, 663
from deck to deck, and then to the shore, as a bucket brigade passes water from hand to hand.”
With the new machines, “only a few negroes are needed, the fruit is not bruised, and 2,500
bunches can be unloaded per hour.”519 (Figure 4.20 and 4.21)

Refrigeration and mechanization ensured the ripening and sanitation of tropical bananas
for white consumers. The Iowa Reformatory Press, for example, described a run of the SS
Parismina from Bocas del Toro, Panama to New Orleans, with a 50° temperature in the hold
during the return voyage. On the waterfront “Italians of New Orleans are in all their glory” “with
push-carts, express wagons, etc.” Bananas are unloaded by “massive fruit elevators, some fifty
feet high with folding arms that can be lowered into the holds of a ship an endless running belt
running from the ship to the inspectors table.” This modern machinery is juxtaposed with a
motely, multi-racial workforce of Blacks and darker-skinned immigrants. “Negroes, Italians,
Greeks and Turks hopelessly mixed carry the fruit from the table where it is counted to the
various cars.”520 (Figure 4.22)

Because unloading machines moved too fast for human workers, bunches weighing from
60 to 120 pounds had to be loaded into every third pocket. Even with 1,000 men working, the
maximum number that could be profitably employed, machines could only be run for forty
minutes every hour, a 33% loss in time that resulted in the loss of part of the cargo due to
ripening, particularly during humid summer months.521 In 1920, conveyors were extended to a
dockside monorail trolley. This “mechanical stevedore,” enabling bananas to be unloaded almost

519. “'Electrical Banana Unloader for Ships’” Popular Mechanics (Chicago) April 1908, 236
521. “Even with 1,000 men, the greatest number that can be economically employed on the wharf, it is not possible for
the machines to work more than 40 minutes each hour.” Thomas Ewing Dabney, “Mechanical Stevedore That Handles Bananas,” Scientific American Vol. 123 Nov. 27, 1920 Univ. of Michigan Dig. March 27, 2012
without human handling, saved three hours, eliminating 400 jobs, at a savings of 2.5 cents per bunch.522

The primarily Black and Sicilian workers on the United Fruit Co. docks on Erato and Thalia Streets, along with the Southern Pacific docks in Algiers Point, also mechanized, received the lowest wages on the New Orleans waterfront and were the only dockworkers not represented in the biracial Dock and Cotton Council.523 Mechanization enabled United Fruit to resist a 1921 strike on the New Orleans waterfront begun by screwmen, longshoremen who packed cotton bales, joined by 12,000 workers.524

Mechanized unloading developed in conjunction with monopolistic railroads. Of 14 million bunches unloaded in New Orleans in 1911, over 90% were handled by just two lines, the Illinois Central and New Orleans & Northeastern (N.O.&N.E.).525 The N.O.&N.E., which ran to Meridian, Mississippi, connecting to the Southern Railway, hauled 10,040 cars of bananas by 1912.526 Atlanta had a reputation as a “banana dumping ground” where retailers acquired smaller bunches to sell by the dozen.527 The lower profits of a poor region were partly offset by demand for refrigerated rail cars of the summertime Georgia peach trade. In 1913, the Southern Railway enlarged an icing plant at Atlanta’s Inman Yards, servicing “peach specials.”528 The Illinois Central handled 14,000 carloads in 1907, three to four thousand forwarded west on the St. Louis

522. Thomas Ewing Dabney, “Mechanical Stevedore that Handles Bananas” Scientific American 123, November 27, 1920, 558 Univ. of Michigan Dig. March 27, 2012
527. John Soluri, Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009) 67-68
528. “Peach Movement Light,” Fruit Trade & Produce Record 47, June 8, 1913: 7
& San Francisco ("Frisco"). By 1912, it carried 17,789 carloads, and owned 2,800 Armour-built cars. "Banana special" express trains, fifty to seventy cars by the 1910s, made the journey from New Orleans to Chicago, a distance of 923 miles, on 33-hour or 60-hour schedules, the former only eight hours slower than passenger trains.

Accidents occurred on “speed runs” where trains traveled over fifty miles per hour. On July 30, 1907, a locomotive boiler of an Illinois Central banana express train exploded south of Milan, Tennessee, killing four people, injuring eleven. A train of seventy cars of bananas and strawberries fell into a ditch near Jonesboro, Arkansas in April 1913, tying up traffic on the Frisco, Illinois Central and Mobile & Ohio railways. In June 1921 a banana and cantaloupe train collided with a train carrying 40,000 pounds of dynamite on the Frisco railway near New Albany, Mississippi, blowing a hole sixty feet deep, shattering glass in windows four miles away. “As a negro laborer stated, it rained bananas and cantaloupes for half an hour after the explosion.” Such accidents, often spectacular, did little to disrupt the explosive growth of the banana trade. As mechanization cut costs of unloading bananas, the monopolies of United Fruit and inland railways ensured the creation of nationwide refrigerated distribution network.

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530 30 I.C.C. 510-232 “Rates on Bananas from New Orleans, La., Galveston, Tex. and Other Gulf Ports to Topeka, Kan. Lincoln, and Beatrice, Neb.” The Traffic World vol. 13 no. 23 January to June 1914, 1248
532 “Boiler Explosion on Illinois Central,” The Railway Age, Vol. 44, No. 5 August 21, 1907, 159
533 “Fruit Train Wrecked,” Fruit Trade & Produce Record, April 12, 1913, 11
534 E.W. Giddens, “Carload of Dynamite Wrecks Toll Line,” Southern Telephone News 9 no. 9 (1921), 21
4.2.3 Citrus and the Marketing of the Tropics

As United Fruit brought the vertical integration of the banana trade, California citrus growers centralized their distribution and marketing. The growers of the California Fruit Exchange, formed in 1905, benefitted from gas-powered water pumps, cyanogen fumigation and a year-round harvest season. Valencia oranges grew in the cooler coastal valleys of Orange and Los Angeles counties harvested in the summer, Navel oranges in the warm inland valleys of Riverside and San Bernardino in the winter, and lemons year round.\(^{535}\) The Fruit Exchange formed a Supply Company due to lumber shortages after the San Francisco earthquake, made bulk purchases of “cover crops,” to aid the growth of citrus trees, cyanide gas and sulfuric acid, acquiring timberland, a lumber mill and box factory in Hilt, near the Oregon border.\(^{536}\)

California Fruit Exchange and Southern Pacific Railway hired the Chicago advertising agency of Albert Lasker, developing the Sunkist (Sun-kissed) brand. The $14,000 campaign, the first for a perishable commodity, was launched in Iowa, center of migration to Southern California. Southern Pacific ran special fruit trains with banners “Oranges for Health-California for Wealth,” touring lecturers promoted health benefits of citrus and travel to California.\(^{537}\) Cartoons portrayed California as a young girl, offering her oranges to an Iowa farm-boy clad in a heavy winter coat. (Figure 4.23) J. Arthur Reid of the Los Angeles Semi-Tropical Fruit Agency reported the campaign’s success; “we reduced the price of oranges by half and sold 40 percent

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\(^{535}\) The largest proportion of the California orange crop, the remaining 84 or 85 per cent, comes from Southern California, the territory from Santa Barbara to San Diego. *The Story of California Oranges and Lemons* (Los Angeles: California Fruit Growers Exchange, 1936) Univ. of California-Riverside

\(^{536}\) *Fruit Growers Supply Company, 40 Years of Service 1907-1947*, 14-17 Huntington Library, San Marino, Ca.

more fruit.” As the campaign expanded, packinghouses ordered six million stickers for “Sunkist Oranges” and one million for “Sunkist Lemons” by the fall of 1908. The Southern Pacific offered a low one-way “colonist” rate. By 1910, 625,000 people purchased tickets, 800,000 by 1916.

Midwestern migrants to citrus belt towns recreated a conservative Protestant culture, in a land free from hardships of winter and labor on isolated family farms. Packinghouse workers ranged from “wives and widows of Americans who have come to California for their health and are poor to Spanish, Mexicans, Japanese, Chinese.” Citrus pickers included “white men, Chinamen, Mexicans and Portuguese,” but largely Japanese Issei, who filled the labor vacuum left by the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, in the citrus groves of Southern California and the plum and peach orchards of the northern part of the state. Displaced peasants from Meiji Japan turned migrant laborers (dekasegi), they were paid lower wages and rarely received housing, traveling between groves by bicycle. (Figure 4.24, 4.25 and 4.26) Korean independence activist Ahn Changho formed a citrus labor bureau in Riverside, seventy Koreans settled in barracks built for Chinese railroad laborers. In California citrus ranches and irrigated cantaloupe farms in the Imperial Valley, where temperatures exceed 100°F, the Dillingham Commission on immigrant labor reported Japanese “endure the heat better than white men.” Mexicans, the main source of

538. J Arthur Reid, “The Organization of a Fruit Distributing System,” Experimental Station of the Agricultural College of Utah Circular No. 1 Memoranda of Plans for Arid Farm Investigations” April 1909, 131 Univ. of California Library Dig. Nov 12, 2014
540. Richard H. Barker, Citrus Powered the Economy of Orange County for over a half century: Induced by ‘a Romance: An illustrated, compelling history (s.p., 2008), 11
543. Museum Plaque, California Citrus State Park, Riverside, California
labor on ranches, “stand the heat well, but are lazy, irregular, lack ambition, are of a roving class and are generally considered the least efficient of laborers.”

Labor leaders warned that “one million Japanese Napoleons,” ex-soldiers in the Russo-Japanese War, “will turn their eyes around for a new territory to conquer.” Fruit growers resented Japanese success in truck farming, including the strawberry-raising Nippon Colony in Santa Ana, Orange County. Under the Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907, Japan issued no new passports to dekasegi laborers, in return for the U.S. enabling immigration of wives and children. The U.S. Navy “Great White Fleet” reached San Francisco in May 1908, enforcing U.S. naval and white supremacy in the Pacific.

The fortunes of the citrus industry, dependent on Asian labor, took a turn for the worse after a freeze struck Southern California from December 1912 to January 1913. At the urging of the Fruit Exchange, oil refineries worked overtime producing solid trainloads of fuel for smudge ports (orchard heaters). C.C. Teague, of Limoneira Ranch recalled, “The freeze lasted several nights. The oil in the heaters would completely burn out at night and they had to be refilled the next day. This required much labor and the men were forced to work day and night with almost no sleep.” The frost left citrus groves “withered and brown,” unheated orchards were

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548. Charles Collins Teague, Fifty Years as a Rancher: The Recollections of half a Century Devoted to the Citrus and Walnut Industries of California and to Furthering the Cooperative Movement in Agriculture (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1944), 65
“practically frozen to the ground.” An expected 10 million-box crop fell to 4 million boxes, the inferior quality led the Fruit Exchange to ban its packinghouses from making shipments.

The frosts enabled progressive governor Hiram Johnson passed the Alien Land Law of 1913, barring “aliens ineligible for citizenship” from owning land, limiting leases to three years. Shackling Issei tenants to white landowners, sharecropping was suited to citrus growing and truck farming. Wataru Tomosaburo Donashi settled with his wife on twenty acres employer in Yorba Linda, planting orange trees and vegetable gardens, leasing additional lands from whites, and hiring Mexican workers. An enlarged Citrus Experiment Station was established in Riverside, relying on the skills of early settlers, including two Black men, David and Oscar Stokes, who grafted the first Navel oranges. Eleven million boxes of citrus were shipped from California in 1914. Profits were thin. The Placentia Growers Association reported costs of packing, shipping, and salaries to be 38 ½ cents per box. Japanese Issei agricultural colonies on the Gulf of Mexico spread citrus growing. Kosaku Sawada, who immigrated to a rice-farming colony of Japanese Christians south of Houston, Texas, bought thirty acres near Mobile, Alabama introducing improved varieties of cold-resistant Satsuma oranges to South Alabama and West Florida. The vertical integration that ensured a constant, year-round supply of bananas extended to oranges and other citrus fruit, as the California Fruit Exchange marketed

549 - Teague, Fifty Years a Rancher, 63
552 - Yoneko Dobashi Iwatsuru, Hon. Stephen K. Tamura, Orange County Japanese History Project, California Digital History Library Yoneko concedes to having learned more Spanish from her father’s workers than she did in school
554 - Annual Report of the Placentia Orange Growers Association Fullerton and Placentia, Season 1915 Placentia Orange Growers Association Papers, California State University-Fullerton
555 - Masazaku Iwata, Planted in Good Soil: A History of Issei in United States Agriculture (New York: Peter Lang Inc. 1992)
oranges alongside Southern California’s balmy subtropical climate, promoting tourism and settlement. The growth of the citrus industry depended on the labor and agricultural skills of Japanese immigrants, whose presence fueled racial fears.

4.2.4 Refrigeration and Regulated Monopolies

The transport of highly perishable tropical fruits led to refrigerated distribution networks. California citrus growers, who suffered annual losses from decay of $500,000 to $1,250,000, took the lead. New York-born horticulturalist G. Harold Powell of the US Dept. of Agriculture identified the source of decay as blue mold fungus. (Figure 4.27) As general manager of the California Fruit Exchange he advocated measures to reduce decay, labor controlled by growers associations and paid by the box, modern packinghouse machinery, and quick shipment after picking and packing. Working with the California Fruit Exchange, the Los Angeles Ice & Cold Storage Co. erected a precooling plant with Linde refrigeration equipment. Precooled railcars required only one icing en route to the East. Within a decade, precooling plants were built in Roseville, Colton and San Bernardino, in the foothills of the Transverse and Sierra Nevada mountains. (Figure 4.28)

California’s 1913 “Great Freeze” helped revive the citrus industry in Florida. That year 100,000 acres of citrus were planted in high pinelands and hummock of central Florida, ideally suited for grapefruit and sour oranges, and over 1,000,000 boxes were shipped. White fly infested every district. Losses from decay averaged 10%, due to the humid climate,

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559. “Precooling of Fruit,” *Ice and Refrigeration* Vols. 40-41 June 1911, 327
“packinghouse equipment of the crudest type,” and the fact that Florida oranges and grapefruit, harvested in the winter, were rarely iced. The Citrus Exchange, formed in Tampa in 1909, urged packinghouse owners to adopt icing and limit the cargoes of citrus to 300 boxes per car in order to prevent decay.

Refrigeration of bananas proved even more complicated. The banana “when harvested, is practically a living organism drawing sustenance from its stalk, with sap flowing and tissues changing in the ripening process it generates heat within itself.” Bananas ripen and decay in heat and turn black in temperatures of less than 45°. Fruit Dispatch, United Fruit’s distribution subsidiary, sent “messengers,” mostly Italian immigrants, who, in winter months, insulated doors of boxcars with paper and straw and added kerosene and charcoal heaters. Company executives depended on the knowledge of banana messangers, amidst complaints that habits of squatting and sitting damaged the fruit. (Figure 4.29)

Traveling by caboose, messengers returned free of charge three days after the arrival of fruit at its destination. Frederick Adams, witnessing the loading of the SS Sixaola in Limón, with fruit cut to ripen on the seven-or-eight-day journey to New York, described shipments to New Orleans. Superintendents would have to know if bananas were bound “for consumption in and near New Orleans or for shipment by rail to Chicago, St. Paul, Omaha, Kansas City or other centers of banana distribution.” Speed was essential, “There must be no delays, no accidents. A fog in the Gulf of Mexico, a strike in New Orleans, a freight wreck south of Cairo, a snow-

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564. “From Every Land to Your Table,” Everyland vol. 9 October 1918, 292; Philip Keep Reynolds, The Story of the Banana (Boston: United Fruit Educational Department, 1929): 41  
blockade in Illinois,” could cause cargoes of bananas to ripen prematurely, thereby becoming unsellable.566

Bananas traveled in the opposite direction of cargoes of grain, coal and timber. The Illinois Central’s Stuyvesant Docks in New Orleans stretched along the Mississippi from Louisiana to Napoleon Avenue, 4,700 feet with deep water the entire way and 500-1,000-ft tracks lined with grain elevators and coalbunkers.567 Despite shorter distances, freight rates to Southern cities were often higher. The Waco Freight Bureau sued the Houston & Texas Central, alleging its rate of 75 cent per 100 pounds on bananas from New Orleans was discriminatory, compared to 45-cent rate from Chicago. A court found the rates justified. “Trains out of New Orleans to northern points are made up entirely of bananas, sometimes as many as four or five trainloads moving out in a day,” in Texas “most of the refrigerator cars are returned empty, as there is no suitable freight with which they can be loaded back from Texas to New Orleans.”568

Northbound trains of bananas were iced in the summer and heated in the winter in Fulton, Kentucky. R.H. Wade Ice Factory was enlarged with “Vogt” steam ice machines, producing 300-pound blocks.569 In 1903, the Illinois Central built an ice plant in Mounds Junction, near Cairo, the southern tip of Illinois. By the summer of 1916, 600 to 700 carloads were iced per day, according to railroad officials who recalled how rail cars of ripe bananas had once been dumped in rivers.570 In 1904, Fruit Dispatch, United Fruit’s distribution subsidiary,
erected an insulated banana shed in Mounds, holding eighty cars, leased exclusively to cars licensed to the company.  

(Figure 4.30) Fruit Dispatch introduced refrigeration used in California and the steamships of the company’s “Great White Fleet” to Midwestern rail hubs. A banana pre-cooling plant in Springfield, Missouri, headquarters of the St. Louis & San Francisco, heated or cooled over 7,500 carloads in 1908, before their eight to ten-day journeys to San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver.  

(Figure 4.31) In 1909, the Illinois Central and Fruit Dispatch built a storage house at Dubuque, Iowa, on the Mississippi. Four miles of pipes cooled and heated forty-four cars at a time and 3,000 cars or $2,000,000 of bananas, a year. Mexican bananas from Manzanillo were unloaded in the newly dredged port of San Pedro, Los Angeles in January 1910. A “short thick fruit, not as large as the choice bananas from Central America,” a newspaper account found that consumers judged it to be of equal quality, except one “Italian from New Orleans,” an agent of Fruit Dispatch. Refrigerated transportation networks carried the fruits of the tropics, making bananas and oranges consumer staples, available year-round.

4.2.5 Immigrant Peddlers and Urban Markets

In the rapidly growing cities of the Progressive era United States, immigrant banana peddlers and grocers developed an important new economic sector, selling amazingly large tonnages of fruit. By the 1890s, the pushcart-peddler, a recent immigrant, Italian, Greek or Russian Jew, often raggedly dressed and speaking broken English, was already a familiar fixture

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574.“First Mexican Bananas: Steamer Discharges Cargo of 4,000 Bunches of Luscious Fruit Unloaded in San Pedro,” *Fruit Trade and Produce Record* 42 no. 1 January 29, 1910: 13
of new urban landscape. Sigmund Krausz’s 1896 photographic essay of “street types” described the “swarthy banana peddler,” an ignorant but industrious “degenerate descendant of the ancient peoples of Rome or Sparta,” who “pushes his cart contentedly through the thoroughfares of the city, crying “Ban-na-nos! Ba-na-nos!” 575 This image remained largely unchanged by 1922, when Frank Silver and Irving Cohn wrote the hit song, “Yes We Have No Bananas,” inspired by a Greek peddler pushing a wagon through the streets of Manhattan, yelling to a women in tenement window, “Yes, we have no bananas/we have no bananas today.” 576

In Chicago’s South Water Street, the world’s largest produce market, sales of bananas amounted to $1,200,000 by 1910. 577 (Figure 4.32) Most of this enormous trade passed through the hands of street peddlers. Representatives of the California Fruit Exchange met with “jobbers” in the fruit markets of South Water Street that handled both bananas and citrus fruit, noting that more fruit jobbers were pushing the sale of bananas, less than half the price of oranges, lemons and grapefruit. 578 As the poor man’s fruit, bananas were an object of health concern. Physicians reported cellars on South Water Street were “large and well-lighted and kept free of decaying fruit or filth of any kind.” On the Near West Side, where most peddlers lived, “you will find the bananas hung in the living room that may shelter a dozen or twenty people, in cellars in which the water stands half a foot deep and emits a frightful stench from the decaying fruit that is all about.” 579

Immigrant fruit peddlers were described in racist language, with begrudging respect for their role creating a new economic sector. (Figure 4.33 and 4.34) Fruit Trade Journal urged

575-Sigmund Krausz, Street Types of the Great American Cities (Chicago: Werner Co., 1896), 142
578-“Distribution,” The Sunkist Courier, June 1919: 210
readers, “Don’t look with contempt upon the Dago man who engineers the pushcart and calls out ‘Fina fresha da banan, onla five centa dozen.’ He is doing part in making worth to the retail trade of the United States a business of $200,000 a day, or over $60,000,000 annually.”580 Writers praised the Italian fruit peddler who “takes to the retail fruit trade by nature, as a Chinaman does to laundry,” and bestows “his inherited racial art sense in ‘composing’ his wares,” bananas and oranges, and the salesmanship of the Jewish peddler “who learned human nature in the hard school beyond the pale of the ghetto.”581

Peddlers competed with grocers, often upwardly mobile immigrants. J.V. Piazza of Chicago became the world’s largest individual banana handler, owning a chain of grocery stores across the Midwest, five in Chicago, three in St. Paul-Minneapolis, and in Madison, Wisconsin and Dixon, Illinois, handling 50,000 to 60,000 bunches of bananas a week.582 The profits from these sales enabled him to take a trip to his native Italy aboard the luxurious RMS Lusitania in December 1907.583 Chicago grocers lobbied the city council for high licensing fees and joined with trade unions and middle-class citizens to enact an anti-noise ordinance. The mayor suspended the ordinance when two hundred peddlers marched on city hall on June 20, 1911 after the murder of a Greek peddler, George Matropolis.584 When the ordinance was reinstated on July 24, peddlers called a general strike and two days later rioted on Maxwell Street, on Chicago’s Near West Side, throwing stones through grocers’ windows, spraying

582- Piazza’s Banana Outlet,’ *Fruit Trade Journal and Produce Record*, 39 no. 11 October 17, 1908: 6
583- “Chicago Trade Notes,” *Fruit Trade and Produce Record* 38 no. 12 December 14, 1907: 17
584- “Peddlers to Strike Today-To Leave Horses in Barns,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 24, 1911
kerosene on produce, and overturning pushcarts of strikebreakers. Three-hundred-and-fifty policemen brawled with the rioters, who were armed with banana knives and pistols—one man was killed, four policemen and a dozen strikers severely injured. Southern and eastern European immigrant peddlers and grocers, viewed with nativist disdain, were responsible for the development of the retail fruit trade that met the food needs of rapidly growing cities.

4.2.6  Railroads and Racial Violence

The railroads that carried bananas north relied on the low-wage labor of Blacks migrating out of the South. In 1910, 103,000 Blacks worked on railroads, working on track gangs, as roadbed repairers and maintenance of way men, and in higher-paid but dangerous jobs such as firemen, brakemen, switchmen, flagmen and boiler workers. Relatively well-paid sleeping-car porters, whose jobs evoked ideals of Black servility, were an integral part of the Black middle-class, publicizing job opportunities in the North and West. Tenements were home to Blacks and European immigrants. Josephine Baker, born in 1906, was raised in the Mill Creek area of St. Louis, near Union Station, playing in rail-yards as a child, performing in Black vaudeville theaters before her rise to fame as a vedette, singer and entertainer in Paris, where her “Banana Dance” helped link bananas with colonial fantasies of exotic and sexually available dark-skinned women.

Railway officials praised Black workers. James Clarke, general manager of the Illinois Central’s southern lines, insisted, “when intelligently, properly treated and justly dealt with there

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586-“Of 136,000 Negro railroad workers in 1924, 115,000 were either common laborers or porters.” Lorenzo Greene, Carter Woodson The Negro Wage Earner (Washington, D.C., 1934), 268
588-Doris A. Wesley ed., Lift Every Voice and Sing: African-Americans in Twentieth-Century St. Louis (University of Missouri Press, 1999), 3
is no better laborer to be found among any race in the world. They are peculiarly fitted for labor in semi-tropical climates and by nature cheerful, obedient, kind, imitative and contented.”589 The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen excluded Blacks. Its magazine declared, although Black brakemen and switchmen were paid 15 cents less than whites, “the negro in train and yard service is the most expensive investment a railroad ever made” when his “carelessness, ignorance and gross incompetency is footed up.”590 During the Illinois Central shopmen’s strike of September 1911, workers in the machine shop of McComb, Mississippi attacked Black and immigrant strikebreakers. Harry Marsalis, then a seventeen-year old machinist apprentice, recalled, after strikebreakers threw ballast rock, several of the strikers shot up the railcars.591 The governor placed the town under martial law, the shop surrounded by a stockade. In January 1912, a mob fired upon five Black men returning from work, killing three.592

Dramatic outbreaks of racial violence occurred in the rail-towns of the lower Midwest. Springfield, Missouri was home to a large Black population, a safe haven from the all-white sundown towns of the Arkansas and Missouri Ozarks. On April 14, a mob of 2,000 broke into the jail and lynched three Black men, Horace Duncan, Fred Coker, and Will Allen, under a replica of the Statue of Liberty.593 Workers in the Frisco railway machine shop minted medallions to celebrate the lynching.594 Cairo and Mounds Junction, Illinois, jumping off points

590- “A Parting Shot,” The Railroad Trainmen’s Journal, Vol. 17 No. 7 July 1900 780
591- Harry Marsalis, “The McComb Railroad Strike of 1908” MSM 491, Mississippi Moments
592- Terrence Finnegan, A Deed So Accursed: Lynching in Mississippi and South Carolina (University of Virginia Press, 2013) Ovid Demaris, America the violent (1971), 161
594- “Medallions for Lynchings,” digitalcollections.missouri.edu
for Blacks from the Mississippi Valley, had Black businesses, doctors and aldermen.\textsuperscript{595} In a largely Southern city, whites decried a “floating colored population” described as including “most of the ‘bad niggers’ from St. Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville, Memphis, Vicksburg and New Orleans.”\textsuperscript{596} In November 1909, 10,000 people gathered in Cairo’s town square to lynch two men taken from the town jail, Henry Salzner, a white photographer, and Will James, a Black man, who “was strung up to the public arch, the rope broke and at last 500 shots were poured into his body.”\textsuperscript{597}

As lynching spread north, urbanization in the South fueled tensions. Incited by racist rhetoric during a gubernatorial primary, mobs rampaged through downtown Atlanta in September 1906. Black women and men were beaten, shot and stabbed, dragged from trolley cars, and lynched from lampposts.\textsuperscript{598} On Auburn Avenue, a Greek peddler was pelted with his bananas by a mob that took him for a Black man.\textsuperscript{599} A young Black man fled into the Walton Street fruit stand of a Greek immigrant, Jim Brown. With three Greek assistants, Brown defended his property with stools and chairs, inciting the rioters, one of whom threw a chunk of marble, wounding his son Eustace.\textsuperscript{600} Shattering images of a racially harmonious “New South” the Atlanta riot solidified racial segregation, and bolstered the Back-to-Africa movement of

\textsuperscript{595} “During the World War I era, R.W. England was an alderman. He may have been the first black man elected to a Municipal Government position in the State of Illinois.” “In 1919 Mounds had 16 grocery stores, 5 restaurants, 3 hotels, 2 lumber yards, 2 coal and ice businesses, 3 drug stores, 2 hardware stores, 2 shoe shops, several pool halls, a race track.” “Mounds” Pulaski Co. Historical Book Committee, Pulaski Co., Illinois 1987 Vol. 1 (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Co., 1988), 15-16

\textsuperscript{596} W.L. Clanahan, “Cairo’s Negroes: Former Resident Says They Are Spoiled by Coddling and Are a Menace,” \textit{New York Times}, November 14, 1919

\textsuperscript{597} “Cairo Mob Lynches Men of Two Races: Women in the Crowds that Takes Vengeance on Negro and White Murders,” \textit{New York Times} Friday, November 12, 1909

\textsuperscript{598} Rebecca Burns, \textit{Rage in the Gate City: The Story of the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot} (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2006)

\textsuperscript{599} Mark Bauerlein, \textit{Negrophobia: A Race Riot in Atlanta, 1906} (New York Encounter Books, 2001), 169

Bishop Henry McNeal Turner, who declared “hell is an improvement on the United States where the Negro is concerned.”  

Southern and eastern European immigrants, in their proximity to Blacks, could be victims of mob violence, but riots made it clear that they occupied a higher position. In the Springfield, Illinois riot of 1908, U.S. whites and European immigrants, Italian and Polish coal miners, destroyed Black businesses and homes, lynching and murdering at least nine people.  

This riot, in the home of Abraham Lincoln, led the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. It inspired the East St. Louis massacres of May and July 1917, in the wartime Afro-American Great Migration of the South. After Blacks were used as strikebreakers in aluminum factories in East St. Louis, sprawling, polluting factories in flood-prone bottomland, white mobs, mostly Poles and other Slavic immigrants, burned homes, stabbed, shot, burned and mutilated Blacks, with their bodies were thrown in the river. Survivors fled across the Mississippi to St. Louis, where crowds gathered on the levee, including a nine-year old Josephine Baker, who recalled watching “the glow of burning Negro homes lighting the sky.” NAACP founder W.E.B. DuBois decried the massacre in The Crisis. Marcus Garvey, in New Orleans, declared on July 8, “this is no time for fine words, but to lift ones’ voice against the savagery of a people who claim to be the dispensers of democracy.”  

Riots exposed the violence of populist racism, while giving rise to the Civil Rights movement.

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602. “Italians are overrepresented among the 115 rioters. Two Italians were shot during the rioting which suggests that they were active either in the Levee or Badland attack.” Robert Senechala de la Roche, In Lincoln’s Shadow: The 1908 Race Riot in Springfield, Illinois (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 107
603. Mary White Ovington, “How the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Began,” The Crisis August 1914 184-188
4.2.7 From Poor Man’s Fruit to Middle-Class Tables

Railway networks that were corridors for migrations which fueled racial tensions, ensured a constant supply of bananas, the “poor man’s fruit” and a staple of the poorest women and children. In 1908 the Chicago Board of Education reported 10,000 schoolchildren were insufficiently fed, living on “bread saturated with water for breakfast, day after day” and lunches of “bread and bananas and an occasional luxury of soup made from pork bones.” Many frequented the South Water Street produce market “begging for dead-fowl in crates or decayed fruit.” Muckraking McClure’s described Russian Jewish Regina Sigerson, who lived on $3 a week, “subsisted mainly by eating bananas and wore a spring jacket through the cold winter.” In “Leny the Oldest” a sixteen-year-old Russian Jewish girl in a tenement in New York’s Lower East Side, leaving for work in a shirt factory, “grimaced at the onions and dark break and hurriedly snatched a banana from a heap of half-decayed fruit. She wrapped two slices of bread and another banana in a piece of newspaper, for her lunch.”

The majority of bananas were purchased by middle-class families, their popularity bolstered by women’s magazines and cookbooks, which introduced recipes for bananas and oranges to housewives, who rejected the foods of their grandmothers, brown bread, thick soups and dried fruit pies. Bananas and citrus were relatively cheap and available year-round, their associations with warm tropical climates enhancing the appeal. Culinary expert Fannie Farmer, author of The Boston Cooking-School Cookbook (1896), wrote of the banana, “Less than forty years ago this fruit was almost unknown in the United States, and now it ranks with oranges in

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606.“Hungry School-Children in Chicago,” The Literary Digest Vol. 37 October 31, 1908, 618
607.“Working Girl’s Budgets,” McClure’s Magazine Vol. 36 November to April 1910-11, 210
608.Ida M. Evans, “Leny, the Oldest,” The Coming Nation: A Journal of Things Doing and to be Done 105 no. 9 September 14, 1912: 5
extent of consumption. In fact, during the winter months, these are the only fresh fruits obtainable in many remote country districts.”

In the *Ladies Homes Journal* “Before the Spring Fruits Come” offered recipes for citrus and bananas, making them visually appealing for middle-class tables. These included “Banana Float,” on milk and gelatin, “Banana Salad,” over a bed of lettuce with chopped nuts and French dressing, “Banana Sandwiches” with raisins, walnuts and ginger, “Mint and Orange Salad” and orange “Sunflower Jelly.” Black Chicagoan Rufus Estes, born a slave, who worked on as a chef on Pullman rail cars, in his 1911 cookbook, offered recipes for banana sandwiches, banana croquettes, and Baked Bananas, Porto Rican Fashion.” In Atlanta, a dumping ground for cheap bananas, a 1921 Women’s Club cookbook featured the first written recipe for banana pudding.

Academic studies emphasized health benefits of banana and citrus. Male nutritionists and female home economists explained these nutritional benefits while advising mothers how to serve the fruits. Alice Merritt, an instructor of home economics at Iowa State College, Ames, documented germicidal properties of juice of oranges and lemons, and extolled the value of banana as a food fruit, a “source of cheap nourishment” for children, but warned “dry, green bananas often found in the stores are unfit to eat.” Guides by the Children’s Bureau, epitomizing the Progressive focus on prenatal care, advised mothers to give teaspoons of orange juice to newborn infants and that “Bananas provide sugar in a form easily digested by a baby and

612-Rufus Estes, Good Things to Eat, as Suggested by Rufus: A Collection of Practical Recipes for Preparing Meats, Fowl, Fish, Puddings, Pastries, Etc. (1911), 46, 48, 120
613-The recipe is the first in a section “Pastries, Puddings and Dumplings” *Atlanta Women’s Club Cookbook* (Johnson Dallis Company, 1921), 177
614-Alice Meritt, “The Value of Fruit in the Diet,” *Proceedings of Iowa State Horticultural Society for the year 1903* December 8, 9, 10, 11, 1903 (Des Moines, 1904) 132;
are also a good source of several vitamins.”615 As cheap, healthy consumer staples, tropical fruits contributed to declining infant morality and rising standards of living in the Progressive era United States.

### 4.2.8 Tax-less Bananas

The importance of the banana became clear when U.S. President Woodrow Wilson summoned a session of Congress in 1913 to resolve the “tariff question.” Eager to avoid the embarrassment of the thwarted tariff reform of 1894 that discredited Grover Cleveland, the Democratic majority in Congress pushed through the U.S. Revenue Act of 1913, cutting duties on essential goods while imposing sales taxes on luxuries.616 The Senate Finance Committee ruled the banana fit the definition of a luxury, including a duty of five cents per bunch with the hope of raising $1,000,000 annually.617

Senators from the West Coast States supported the tariff, as fruit growers eyed Eastern markets with the opening of the Panama Canal. Oregon Sen. Henry Lane vowed with the opening of the Canal “the fruit section of the Pacific coast,” it guaranteed free access to Atlantic ports, could supply “all the fruit people can consume.” He insisted “good old Oregon and Washington apples” were healthier, free of the digestive problems associated with consuming bananas ripened by “artificial means.”618 The Los Angeles Herald ignoring the appeals of local

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banana jobbers, declared, “Bananas don’t interest us,” mocking claims of the banana a “poor man’s fruit,” concluding it was, “Man’s poor fruit, we should say. Oranges are better.”619

The cheapness of bananas provided the argument against the tariff. *Housewives League* pointed out that four bananas could be purchased for five cents, eight for ten cents, while ten cents purchased only two oranges or four peaches. The tariff would raise the price of bananas “to such a degree that, instead of being the “poor man’s fruit,” they would soon become a luxury available only to those who do not have to watch the pennies when they do their marketing.”620 Republican Senator John H. Week of Massachusetts pointed out, in “the sections of the city where those having the smallest resources live” particularly immigrants, the banana is “to a large extent it is the basic food on which they depend.”621 Joseph Di Giorgio of Atlantic Fruit Co., hosted Jamaican banana planters in New York and Washington, D.C., warned that the “imposition of this tax will be a great hardship on the poor, especially the factory workers of New England and the miners of the middle western States.”622

*A New York Times* editorial “Apples and Bananas,” which criticized New York State’s small, family-owned apple-orchards, contrasted the high price of apples with the cheapness of both bananas and citrus. City-dwellers “are eating bananas, oranges and grapefruits because domestic fruits are dear and inaccessible,” the writer defends United Fruit’s monopoly, concluding, “There is as much need for an apple trust as ‘bad’ as the fruit trust.”623 An even more strident defense of the banana trust came in the *Houston Post*, “Consider the Banana.” Asking how “the home grown apple is placed beyond the reach of the average consumer and that the

619. “‘Bananas Don’t Interest Us, Los Angeles Herald no. 257 July 28, 1913’
620. “‘What a Tax on Bananas Would Mean,’ *Housewives League Magazine* 2 no. 1 (1913): 12 2
622. “‘To Oppose Banana Duty: Jamaica Sends Noted Deputation to Washington, Fruit Trade and Produce Record Journal Vol. 49 July 28, 1913, 4
623 -Frederick Adams, *Conquest of the Tropics*, 338
foreign grown banana increased in quality and decreased in price?” The answer was vertical integration.

The banana is a perishable fruit. It must be marketed immediately on its importation, and the business is one which requires millions in investment and the risks incident to its fleets sailing in waters menaced by hurricanes and northers. It is a farce when apples grown within 10 miles of St. Louis or New York sell by weight for 10 times the price charged for bananas shipped from Costa Rica or Colombia, South America. There is no secret about the low cost of bananas. They are produced and handled on an enormous scale by companies which put them on the market without the interference of middlemen who extort large commissions.  

In the face of Progressive-era political reforms, the defeat of the banana tariff provided a defense of the necessity of agribusiness. Only vertically integrated corporations such as United Fruit could profitably produce food on a scale large enough to feed millions.

4.2.9 Conclusion

“Two articles of food are practically always to be found in every part of the United States and almost always at a low price when the distance which they are transported is taken into account,” pointed out an 1917 editorial in the *Saturday Evening Post* “How to Cheapen Food,” addressing wartime food rationing, “The two items are oranges and bananas.” The fruits of monopoly, bananas and citrus, were transformed from exotic luxuries into essential consumer staples through cost slashing vertical integration of transportation, distribution and marketing.

Bananas and oranges ripened in transit. United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet” of refrigerated banana, cargo and passenger-carrying steamships carried two-way cargoes of southbound tourists and cargoes of Southern lumber and (mostly) Northern manufactured goods. In the ports of the Gulf South, where Jim Crow weakened labor organizing, mechanized unloading of

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bananas cut labor costs, expediting long overland journeys by railroad to cities in the Midwest and West, with precooling and heating plants stationed at strategic junctions. Southern California’s irrigated citrus ranches, many of which were organized under the Fruit Growers Exchange cooperative, produced oranges and lemons year-round, adopting pre-cooling of railcars to prevent decay, while relying mostly on low-wage Japanese Issei labor and making heavy use of irrigation and pesticides.

Bananas, “the poor man’s fruit” and a middle-class staple, and to a lesser but still important extent oranges and other citrus fruit, particularly California citrus marketed under the “Sunkist” label, developed into consumer staples. Essential for middle and working-class women and children, bananas and oranges became symbols of the abundance of American capitalism. The retail fruit trade was increasingly dominated by southern and eastern European “new immigrants,” working as pushcart peddlers and grocers, occupying an ambiguous place in racial hierarchies, facing nativist prejudice as they acculturated into U.S whiteness. In the face of Progressive era political reformers attempts to impose a tariff, defenses of the banana and the banana industry emphasized the benefits of monopolistic agribusiness corporations and the efficient exploitation of both tropical nature and the labor of immigrant and non-white peoples.

4.3 Seeing the Southland

“It has been clearly proved during the past four hundred years, since the discovery of the Americas,” wrote Boston author John H. Stark, in a 1902 guide to Jamaica, “that the tropical section of it, within the Gulf States on the north and the Argentine Republic on the south, is not a
white man’s country and never will be. He can exist there only as a master.” Recognition that the tropics were not white man’s country did not entail that they should be left alone. “Tropical nature left to itself creates foodless jungles and miasmic swamps,” Frederick Adams declared in *Conquest of the Tropics* (1914), a paean to the “Yankee enterprise” of United Fruit, which had transformed “the miasmic swamps and jungles of Central America into vast plantations of nodding banana plants.”

At the dawn of twentieth century United Fruit developed Caribbean tourism alongside the banana industry through tropical cruises on its “Great White Fleet” of banana, cargo and passenger carrying refrigerated steamships. Wealthy U.S. white tourists visited the Caribbean alongside the U.S. Deep South, finding commonalities as well as differences and connecting these regions through the discursive geography of a “tropical” southland that encompassed all of the Americas south of the northern United States. Alluring and perilous, paradisiacal and pathological, as Nancy Lays Stepan writes, the tropics “signified less a geographic concept than a place of radical otherness to the temperate world.”

Tropical tourism offered U.S. whites relief from the climactic and cultural rigors of northern civilization, as the appeal of exotic lands fostered a rudimentary romantic racialism that affirmed cultural differences. Tourist travelogues romanticized and denigrated tropical peoples as timeless and primitive, as guides and journalists proudly reported the modernization of the tropics through U.S. empire building. With the tropics portrayed as antithetical to the white supremacist civilization of the temperate world, particularly the northern United States, tensions

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between modernity and tropicality shaped tourists and traveler’s perceptions of the American Mediterranean.

4.3.1 White Privilege and White Leisure

A 1909 article in International Railway Journal advertising travel to “Beautiful Jamaica” and United Fruit’s Titchfield Hotel, noted a new weekly service from New Orleans to Colón, Panama on three “magnificently appointed ships” Cartago, Parismina and Heredia.629 These most novel feature of these ships was

a refrigerating plant by means of which not only is fruit and other cargo of perishable nature carried in an artificially cooled atmosphere but the private suites, staterooms, dining saloon and smoking rooms are artificially cooled, the temperature being regulated to suit the tastes of passengers by means of devices which supply a current of cold air until a satisfactory temperature is attained, when the current can be stopped.”630

The leisure of tropical tourism began at sea, where, in contrast to voyages across the cold, stormy North Atlantic, the warmth of the Gulf Stream invigorated passengers. Replacing second- and-third class cabins on Atlantic steamships, spacious decks enabled sea breezes to circulate, allowing “dreamy afternoon hours in your steamer chair, your interest alternating between your novel and the broad, placid expanse of ocean.”631 In 1912, aboard the Santa Marta, the first of the seven 5,000-Ton vessels assigned to United Fruit’s New York division, journalist Moses Blumenthal found respite in “deep, loungy chairs” and “roomy state rooms,” as the ship “steadily chugged mile after mile along the glinting coast, towards the south, we shed our weariness and

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630 “Beautiful Jamaica,” International Railway Journal 19 no. 11 (February 1909), 17
631 Cruising the Spanish Main to the Tropics to Jamaica Central and South America (Boston: United Fruit Steamship Service, 1912), 8; Advertisements declared, ‘Only first class passengers carried,’ ‘The Great White Fleet,’ United Fruit Steamship Co. Advertisement, New Outlook, Vol. 107 July 1914
winter clothes.” 632 Adams described “a last look at snow-covered New Jersey headlands glimpsed through windows traced with fog,” arriving the next morning “in the Gulf Stream, and already there is in the air a breath which whispers of the tropics.” 633

Glossy advertisements featured images of leisure alongside romantic history. “There the Pirates hid their Gold,” proclaims one adpromiting every route “through the Golden Caribbean has the romance of buried treasure, pirate ships and deeds of adventure-centuries ago.” A dapper captain guides a young mother and her child, with an image of buccaneers burying a treasure chest, framed by blue sea and mountains. (Figure 4.35) United Fruit’s guide Cruising the Spanish Main featured a ship of the “Great White Fleet” alongside a gold-laden Spanish galleon, a teleology that linked U.S. white tourists with both conquistadores and pirates. (Figure 4.36)

Wintering tourists from the Northeast traveled to United Fruit’s Titchfield Hotel in Port Antonio, Jamaica. Founded in 1897 by Lorenzo D. Baker, who first shipped Jamaican bananas to the Boston, it was operated by the same staff as Baker’s summer hotel in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. 634 After the hotel was destroyed in a 1904 hurricane, the Titchfield was rebuilt with one hundred and fifty rooms, offering “sea-bathing on coral sands-wonderful opportunities for tennis and golf, riding and driving-with a panorama of sea and sky that reminds the traveler of the Mediterranean.” 635 (Figure 4.37) Frederick Adams predicted “this part of Jamaica will outrival Florida as a winter resort,” declaring, “Nothing can exceed the scenic possibilities of a headland jutting into a tropical sea with tropical mountains climbing ridge upon ridge until their

632 M.L. Blumenthal, ‘To Panama for Rest and Fun’ National Magazine Vol. 36, No. 4 (September 1912): 842
633 Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 128
635 Frank Fonda Taylor, “To Hell with Paradise”: A History of the Jamaican Tourism Industry, 59; Cruising the Caribbean in the wake of pirates (Boston: 1915), 5
heights are lost in the indescribable clouds.” The luxurious hotel served to resuscitate the moribund master-servant culture of the era of Great House sugar plantations, as the reliance on American staff upheld U.S. norms of racial segregation. Jamaica defied the racial stereotypes of U.S. whites, based on lowly opinions of southern Blacks. “In appearance the Jamaican negroes are about the same as our Southern darkies, but there the resemblance ends,” wrote Moses Blumenthal. Jamaican English, “while very hard to understand, on account of the peculiar accent, is quite remarkable for its purity and choice of words.” He describes segregation at sea, with white passengers separated from migrant workers. Boarding the Santa Marta in Kingston are “seventy Jamaican negroes and Chinese going to work on or along the Canal. For a small sum they are allowed places on the lowest deck and awning bow. They bring their own sleeping accommodations, mostly canvas steamer chairs, and most of their food. It was curious that the seventy-odd we carried made no noise—on the shore the same gathering would have been deafening.”

In November 1914, as the outbreak of World War I closed Europe to U.S. tourists, United Fruit began passenger service from New York to Havana on the Pastores, first of three luxurious new 7,000-ton ships, with a speed of 15 ½ knots, space for 60,000 bananas and accommodations for 140 passengers. Early passengers included New York journalist Felix Orman, who attended concerts in the open air Palm Court, enjoying mild breezes off the coast of South Carolina, while being struck by “young Spanish women of appealing beauty, always carefully chaperoned by a watchful duenna.”

636. Frederick Adams, *Conquest of the Tropics*, 140, 138
639. The Railroad Reporter and Marine News 9, no. 11, November 1914, 19 New York Public Library Dig. Dec. 11, 2008
Orman marvels at Havana’s harbor. “The water in the bay was smooth and glassy, lapping the coral reefs that support the old brick fortifications of Morro and Cabaña.”\footnote{Felix Orman, The Diary of a Memorable Voyage,’ New Outlook, Vol. 111 (September 1915): 1206} For many tourists, fortresses epitomized the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty, “dungeons and dark passageways, some leading out into the sea, in which men were starved, murdered and pushed out into the water for the sharks.”\footnote{Charles W. Johnston, The Sunny South and Its People (Chicago: Press of Rand McNally & Co. 1918) University of Wisconsin-Madison Dig. Apr 6, 2012} Felix Orman focused on Havana’s “picturesque” charms. “I rode in an old but comfortable carriage through the quaint streets, past the tiendas where curios and goods from all nations were on sale, along the Prado with its great palms, to the Malecon, along whose course, skirting the sea, I went for several miles.”\footnote{Felix Orman, The Diary of a Memorable Voyage,’ New Outlook Vol. 111 (September 1915) : 1206} The islands of Jamaica and Cuba, offering amenities unavailable in most of Latin America, became winter playgrounds for elite white tourists, offering leisure in lands secured by British colonialism and U.S. imperialism.

4.3.2 Gateways to the Tropics

For many tourists, the subtropical southern U.S. offered a more gradual transition to the tropics. The Gulf Coast line of the Louisville & Nashville, with connections to the Florida railways of Henry Flagler and Henry Plant to Tampa and Miami, brought tourists to “the stretch of sunny coast line from New Orleans to Pensacola.” This included Pass Christian, Biloxi, Mississippi and Mobile, Alabama, “of Franco-Spanish founding,” with “picturesque and antique architecture” and Black populations “picturesque and original beyond the average from the admixture of plainly-marked foreign blood.”\footnote{New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, International Railway Journal, Vol. 19 No 11, (February 1909), 15} Magazines guided tourists to resorts along the Atlantic coast of the U.S. South Cuba and the Bahamas, winter playgrounds for elite recreation, their appeal enhanced by the seamless
transition to the tropics. “Where Winter Time is Playtime” described golf in Pinehurst, “the balmy woods of North Carolina,” polo in Aiken, South Carolina, and golf in Augusta, Georgia. After visiting St. Augustine, Florida, “genuine antiquity” visible in “the hanging balconies of the old town,” travelers could drive on “Ormond’s wonderful stretch of firm beach” “made famous the world over by winter racing” and “through palmettoes and drives through orange groves.”645 In Palm Beach travelers enjoyed fishing, golfing and being “wheeled by a negro down a ‘jungle trail,’” from Miami, on “Bay Biscayne full of pleasure crafts-yachts houseboats, motor-boats,” travelers reached Nassau, Bahamas, “the northernmost limits of the tropics” ideal for “surf-bathing” in “sapphire deep seas” and “turquoise shallow waters.”646 In Key West, “it is but nine hours by steamer” to Havana “ancient Cuban city that Morro Castle guards,” Jamaica featured “the delectable Blue Mountains,” motor car trips to United Fruit banana plantations at Golden Grove and mineral springs at Bath, and Panamá “on the Pacific side the isthmus, is a winter resort in the making.”647

In 1911 the Chicago & New Orleans Ltd., premier passenger train of the Illinois Central, was renamed the Panama Limited. With Pullman cars, “all-steel, electric lighted,” carrying only first-class passengers from Chicago and St. Louis to Memphis, the Panama Ltd. made the journey in twenty-five hours. On November 1916, it became a deluxe all-sleeping-car train, running on a 23-hour schedule.648 Advertisements featured banana plants and wrought-iron in the “French Quarter, replete with many unique scenes and customs,” “SONG BIRDS AND

646-Jamaica: Land of Steams and Woods (Jamaica Tourist Association, 1912), 32
647-“it is possible to take in Costa Rica-a side trip worth while for seeing the big banana plantations and San José. An alternative side trip combines Cartagena, Puerto Colombia and Santa Marta. Cartagena is absorbingly interesting, but going ashore is difficult on account of quarantine regulations.” H.S. Adams, “Where Winter-Time is Playtime, 344-346
FLOWERS” in the winter” and “the old French and Spanish sections, teeming reflections of A
Past Foreign Epoch” and “the gateway to the West Indies, Panama and Central America” via
United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet.”

“Cruising the Spanish Main,” a 1912 brochure, declared the “reason for using the New Orleans gateway for the trip to these tropical countries is the opportunity for visiting, en route, the quaint and fascinating Crescent City.” A guide by female mountaineer Anne Smith Peck pointed out that travel from semi-tropical New Orleans enabled tourists “to avoid the possibility of two or three cold stormy days on the sea before entering the region of perpetual summer.”

New Orleans was a gateway for Latin Americans traveling to the U.S. for business and shopping. *Mercurio*, a Spanish language trade magazine of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, edited by Joaquín Cornejo Bonilla, son of Honduras president Miguel Bonilla, and graduate of the New Orleans Military Academy, promoted the city’s subtropical climate and Latin ambience. It advertised “Nueva Orleans, la Ciudad Latina Americana” “a modern American city with a Parisian atmosphere and the exotic charm of the semi-tropical zone” featuring luxurious department stores with Spanish-speaking employees. As the Gateway to the Americas, New Orleans was becoming the hub of hemispheric trade networks that spanned the American Mediterranean, through which North America consumed Latin American raw materials and Latin America consumed North American manufactured goods.

650.-Cruising the Spanish Main, 27
652.-Percy Alvin Martin, Who’s who in Latin America: A biographical dictionary of the outstanding living men and women of Latin America and Brazil (1940), 75

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4.3.3 *Through the Deep South to the Caribbean*

Northern tourists remarked on the foreignness of New Orleans and the Gulf South. On a summer vacation in 1917, Chicago schoolteacher Jane Perry Cook spent several days in New Orleans before boarding a United Fruit ship for Panama, delighting in the cities’ “foreign” appearance, with “French courtyards” and “Spanish tiled-roofs,” and “tropical trees in the parks, boulevards and cemeteries. The royal palm, the cabbage palm, the palmetto and the banana all give to the city the tropical appearance we are wont to associate with the Mediterranean. The banana tree grows luxuriantly here, but it never fruits.” Despite this exotic ambience, the “quaint old Creole city,” with its “relics of long ago,” including “picturesque” cisterns, breeding grounds for mosquitoes, is giving way to twentieth-century modernity. Canal Street skyscrapers and the dockyards of United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet, where “the great bunches of green bananas are lifted up by an endless belt carrying pockets not unlike those in which grain is carried in an elevator.”

Boston heiress Isabel Anderson, traveled in 1915 with her husband, diplomat Larz Anderson, house boating from Charleston, South Carolina to Florida, visiting New Orleans during Carnival, and traveling to Panama aboard the SS *Cartago*. She describes a “primitive” plantation on St. Catherine’s Island, Georgia, home to “black ‘gally’ negroes with their unintelligible language and barbarous ways,” “lawless Cubans” in Tampa, “turpentine groves with their negro cabins, and shanties of poor whites, swarming with children,” and sponge fishermen in the “slipshod” village of Cedar Key, Florida. The later were “dark-skinned Greeks,

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with red kerchiefs on their heads, who looked quite like pirates.” Traveling by train across the “flat and sandy, scraggly and scratchy” pine forests of northern Florida, she glimpsed “shanties,” uncultivated fields and “empty tins everywhere, shining on the ground,” noting “throughout this portion of the South, the proportion of the people who can neither read nor write is very large.” Verdant nature enlivens visible poverty. “The splendid magnolias grew as big as oaks, the dogwood was in flower, and great masses of wisteria, apparently growing wild, covered the ramshackle shanties and even great trees with their lovely mauve blossoms.” The foreignness of the South is particularly poignant given that the Civil War was recent history. After a night in Mobile’s Battle House Hotel, a “haven of rest” in a “dying” port, Mrs. Anderson and her husband rented a launch and traveled over the “opalescent yellow waters of Mobile Bay, vast in extent but very shallow,” guided by the letters of her father, a Naval officer during the 1864 Battle of Mobile Bay.

Arriving in New Orleans, “very foreign in its appearance and the spirit of its people, who enjoy themselves like Latins do,” Mrs. Anderson and her husband watched the Mardis Gras parades of Rex and Comus. The SS Cartago had “delightful roomy cabins, with pretty chintz hangings, were on an upper deck. The officers of the boat were Scotch or English, and the stewards West India negroes, well-mannered and soft-spoken.” (Figure 4.38) Steaming down the Mississippi, “a narrow strip of almost flooded land” with “little shanties on piles that seemed to be floating,” the ship passes from the Gulf of Mexico into the Caribbean. Tales of New Orleans pirate Jean Lafitte are followed by the “great Spanish Main,” “of Columbus and Balboa,

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655. Isabel Anderson (Mrs. Larz Anderson), Odd Corners (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1917), 18 University of Wisconsin, Madison Library Dig. Apr. 30, 2008
656. Isabel Anderson, Odd Corners, 50
657. Isabel Anderson, Odd Corners, 50
658. Isabel Anderson, Odd Corners, 51-52
659. Isabel Anderson, Odd Corners, 59, 56-58
660. Isabel Anderson, Odd Corners, 62-63
of Davalos and Ponce de Leon who went as far north as St. Augustine” and “Drake, Morgan, and Kidd, of galleons, privateers and treasure fleets.”

In contrast to the romanticized tone of female writers, Minneapolis street pastor Gulian L. Morrill, who published under the moniker “Golightly,” in his alliteration-laden *Rotten Republics* (1916) disparaged Central America as a “the land of dirt, disease, destitution, darkness, dilapidation, despots, delay, deviltry and degeneracy.” He begins “leaving the grippe and winter of Minneapolis” as “the L & N ‘lynching nigger’ route soon carried me through the states of cotton and child labor to New Orleans,” the “Crescent City of climate, creole, carnival, carnality, cotton, conventions, cane-sugar, cafés, cemeteries and Canal Street.” He boarded the SS *Ellis*, a Norwegian steamer chartered by United Fruit, where “the passengers were packed in her cabin, smoke-room and dining-saloon like Stavanger sardines.” Far more impressive was the use of cyanide gas to fumigate ships. “It all seemed a waste of time and money to me then, but not after I had been to Central America and had seen how necessary it was.” He expresses a wish that fumigation be used against immigrants “who infect and poison our institutions.”

The vitriol of Morrill, unvarnished by the sentimentality of female travelers, reveals the raw racism that underlay U.S. attitudes about Latin America.

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661. Isabel Anderson, *Odd Corners*, 61, 67
662. Gulian L. Morrill, *Rotten Republics: A Tropical Tramp in Central America* (Chicago: M.A. Donohue & Co., 1916), forward Morrill served as a pastor of the People’s Church, founded in 1903 as “a place for all creeds, classes and conditions of non-church going people.” Services have been held in the Masonic Temple, Unique theater and Auditorium and the pastor has brought his aid to the orchestras, organ soloists and chorus as well as in the form of lantern pictures, illustrating the subjects of his discourses.” Horace Hudson, *A Half-Century of Minneapolis* (Minneapolis: Hudson Publishing Company, 1908), 85
663. Gulian L. Morrill, *Rotten Republics*, 1
664. Gulian L. Morrill, *Rotten Republics*, 4
666. Ibid
4.3.4 Mayan Ruins and the Fate of Civilization in the Tropics

A relatively short voyage of two to three days from New Orleans, United Fruit’s enclave in Guatemala featured mysterious ancient Mayan ruins. Gulian Morrill, leaving New Orleans, passed “dead plantations and dismal swamps” on the Mississippi and the “long white dreary shore” of the Yucatan, a “hot purgatorial peninsula for the peon.” The Ellis called at Belize, “which stands for what it rhymes with-trees, fleas, breeze, sneeze, teas, eyes, keys and disease.”667 The ship arrived at Puerto Barrios, which Frederick Adams conceded to be “the least attractive and sanitary” of United Fruit’s ports.668 Morrill wrote of “wading through swamps and climbing over uneven board walks to smelly, ratty hotels (I don’t know why there are so many unless to accommodate the multitudinous bugs and mosquitoes).”669

In the spring of 1910, an eighty-acre park was set aside for the rediscovered Mayan ruins of Quiriguá, on the left bank of the Rio Motagua.670 Excavations by the School for American Archaeology, directed by Dr. Edgar L. Hewitt, required “the destruction of a mass of tropical vegetation amounting to a thousand tons per acre, the removal from the buildings of trees a hundred and fifty-feet high and twenty-five feet in circumference, without destroying monuments, stairways, walls.”671 Every member of the staff suffered severe malaria. Noting the ruins were located in a region “now extremely unhealthy for the white race,” Hewitt attributed

667-Morrill, Rotten Republics, 13 Of Mexico, “This Tropic of Cancer is a tropical cancer and the only cure is Uncle Sam’s sword.” (10)
668-Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 198
669-Gulian L. Morrill, Rotten Republics, 29

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their downfall “to the development of diseases, such as caused the deterioration of ancient civilizations of southern Europe.”

Guides boasted “monoliths, temples and columns which are scattered over an area of seventy-five acres constitute one of most the baffling and last known archaeological mysteries of this hemisphere.” Mayan ruins inspired comparison to ruins in Southeast Asia, lost cities abandoned to jungles, imagined, in accordance with white supremacy, as being built by long-vanished superior races of men that struggled to bring civilizations to the tropics. U.S. consul W.F. Sands suggested the “an alien sacerdotal aristocracy, claiming divine descent of superior development,” akin to “Brahmans of Indo-China” who built Angkor Wat. Ruling over a “conquered race,” they “taught them nothing of their higher civilization” before “inbreeding, idleness and fever took their toll.”

Frederick Adams, who denigrated “the ignorant and physically deficient Indian tribes of Guatemala,” marveled at the “mighty works of men who had risen to a high civilization in an age when our Saxon ancestors will still members of savage tribes.” He likened the stelae of Quiriguá to Japanese art, suggesting that “parts or all of Mexico and Central America were once settled from Japan, or—which is equally possible-Japan was originally settled in some great migration from Central America.” (Figure 4.39) Gulian Morrill, less impressed, wrote of the stele, “The faces are anything but intelligent, have a silly, vacant stare that proclaims the empty mind and must have been as hard-headed and stony-hearted as the stone from which they were quarried several miles away.”

673. United Fruit Steamship Service, Cruising the Spanish Main, 36
675. Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 211
676. Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 213
677. Gulian L. Morrill, Rotten Republics, 32
at Quiriguá are monuments to modernity of United Fruit, imagined as heirs to the builders of ancient ruins, a master race civilizing the tropics. Frederick Adams describes contract piecework through which jungles are cleared and bananas planted and cut, insisting on the unsuitability of wage labor among Black and brown workers in the tropics. “Only a theorist would dream of paying Jamaican negroes and Central American Indians by day wages. . . . These toilers lack the natural altruism which impels some men to work when they are not watched, and you cannot watch negroes and Indians scattered in a wilderness of banana plantations which extends in all directions.”

Mayan ruins fired the historical imaginations of U.S. whites, attesting to the existence of advanced civilizations in the Americas centuries before its discovery by Europeans. Ancient ruins excavated and preserved at the behest of United Fruit bolstered narratives of white mastery in the American tropics.

4.3.5 The Panama Canal and the Imposition of Modernity

The Caribbean’s greatest attraction for U.S. tourists was the Panama Canal, history’s largest public works projects and the ultimate symbol of U.S. global power. On southbound voyages, ships of the “Great White Fleet” assigned to a New Orleans-Colón run bypassed Cuba and Central America, stopping only at the “lonely but powerful wireless station on Swan Island, “2,000 acres of sand and coral.”

Aboard the Turrialba in 1910, Boston journalist Joe Mitchell Chappelle and his fellow passengers were entertained by the “exciting narratives” told by “the weather-beaten sea captain” Alonzo Adams, who had lived on Swan Island for thirty years, and greeted the sight of the tiny island, “with its groves of cocoanuts waving a welcome.”

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678. Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 201
Approaching the Panama Canal at night, passing through “a torrential tropical rain storm,” Mrs. Anderson wrote “the rows of lights twinkling along the shore made one feel it must be a second New York rather than Colon-Cristobal.” The terminals in Cristobal, the Canal Zone administrative center, contrast to the “sleepy, sad little town” of Colón. Guides assured tourists that “Colon, so long ago a tropical pesthole, is now as healthful and wholesome as any northern city.” Moses Blumenthal acknowledged its cleanliness but judged it “a nasty little Spanish-American town,” pitying undersized native carriage-horses that “suffer all the storied cruelty of the Latin.” Mrs. Anderson found Colón “picturesque,” “with its motely crowds of people, its porticoed houses and small shops, its plazas full of foliage and flowers. . .There were East Indians with embroidered caps and turbans, and Chinese, and queerest of all, the San Blas Indians, who were very amusing in baby derby hats.” The diplomats’ wife urges the U.S. to occupy the San Blas islands, to secure to the Panama Canal. Jane Perry Cook, a single female, marveled at the “strange sight” of “pure blooded Jamaica negroes, black as coal, strong, muscular, and well-built,” unloading the ships’ cargo of yellow-pine lumber for railroad ties.

The primary attraction was of the Panama Canal. Guides promised, “A visit to the Canal Zone will fill every patriotic American with a sense of the real power and stability of a government which can successfully prosecute such a colossal undertaking.” Joe Mitchell Chappelle predicted “The success of the work on the Isthmus will be the solution of many vexed problems in the Latin republics.” Blumenthal praised “the spirit that animates even the

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681. Isabel Anderson, *Odd Corners*, 71
682. United Fruit Steamship Service, *Cruising the Spanish Main* (1912), 26
684. Isabel Anderson, *Odd Corners*, 71-72
686. United Fruit Steamship Service, *Cruising the Spanish Main*, 23
blackest laborer,” “The country is no longer ‘Mañana,’ tomorrow never is on the Panama Canal. It is now, today and todays work.”

Isabel Anderson dined with her husband as guests of Canal Zone governor Gen. Clarence Edwards in his villa atop Ancón Hill, overlooking the Pacific entrance to the Canal. “The servants were a black cook from Jamaica, who was very good, although she smoked cigarettes all the time she was cooking, a chambermaid from Martinique and a butler, who was a well-trained Panamanian.” Crossing from the Canal Zone into the capital of Panamá, she thrilled at “stepping into a Central American city, a hotbed of sedition and dramatic incident,” then “crossing back over the street into a well-governed American community—much better governed than communities at home.”

Panama outside the Canal Zone remained alien, exotic and primitive. Jane Perry Cook passed estates of the wealthy and “straw-thatched huts of the Indians,” a lesson in the regions stark inequalities, en route to the “ruins of old Panama, destroyed by Henry buccaneer Morgan in 1671.” She shared a ferry to Taboga Island, in the Gulf of Panamá, with “a chattering crowd of Panamanians of the poorer class, often called ‘Spigotties,’ because in the early days of American occupation their invariable reply to all questions was ‘No spiggoty Inglis.’” Face to face with the squalor and sensuality of tropical humanity, she was struck by the “indescribable confusion” of the baggage and the gaudy dress of women, who “make telling use of cheap small fans, not only for purposes of coquetry but sometimes, alas, to conceal their lack of teeth.”

689. Isabel Anderson, Odd Corners, 75
690. Isabel Anderson, Odd Corners, 76
693. Ibid
From the Panama Canal, ships traveled to Colombia and Costa Rica. On Colombia’s Caribbean coast, Frederick Adams wrote, “glistening waters, ancient cities and mountain-butressed shores still hold the glamor and spell of the romance which will ever invest the Spanish Main.” 694 In Santa Marta, “you are within a step of the equator while before your eyes sparkle the snow-tipped mountains of the Sierra Nevada.” 695 Visitors could tour irrigated banana plantations in Rio Frio and the “ancient” port of Cartagena, “the most fascinating city along the winding reaches of the Caribbean.” 696 Gulian Morrill, decrying inflated meal costs aboard the Almirante, traveling from Colón to Santa Marta, judged the “White Fleet pirates” heirs to the pirates of the Caribbean. 697

Most ships called at Bocas del Toro, Panama and Limón, Costa Rica. Felix Orman, aboard the Pastores, was amazed at the natural beauty of Bocas del Toro, islands “thickly adorned with cocoanut palms, orleander, hibiscus, mango. The purple water of the bay and its numerous islands have as a framework a semicircular range of mountains that rises in four ridges from the sea.” 698 United Fruit guides depicted the town’s Anglican Church, large homes and well-paved streets, dispelling its pestilential reputation, assuring travelers that “Bocas del Toro is Invitingly Neat.” (Figure 4.40) Frederick Adams, who described how mangroves were filled in and Bocas Town raised above sea level, bemoaned the lack of accommodations, confidently predicted the region “will become the Thousand Islands of the Tropics.” 699 Jane Perry Cook remarked upon scenic vistas of islands and mountains but also the fate of Bocas del Toro’s original banana plantings. “The dreaded banana disease infected these plantations and

694-Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 220
695-Cruising the Spanish Main, 40
696-Cruising the Spanish Main, 40; Cartagena Today and Tomorrow,’ Pan-American Magazine, Vol. 18, 31 University of Texas Dig. June 27, 2008; Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 237, 221
697-G.L. Morrill, Rotten Republics, 246-247
698-Felix Orman, A Diary of a Memorable Voyage, New Outlook, Vol. 111, September 1915, 1210
699-Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 146
destroyed them.”700 Amidst displays of the conquest of the tropics in the Panama Canal and United Fruit banana plantations, references to Panama Disease attest to the corrosive power of tropical nature.

4.3.6 Costa Rica and Tropical Civilization

The extent and limits of tropical civilization were on display in neighboring Costa Rica. United Fruit ships docked for up to five days at Limón.701 An English schoolmaster, arriving aboard the Nicoya, of Elders & Fyffes, was unimpressed, judging Limón, “a roadstead rather than a port” with “five or six streets of rather squalid looking houses.”702 Frederick Adams, describing the piles of discarded bananas rotting on Limón’s docks, rejected by inspectors, marveled at the scenic vistas of royal palm trees, banyans and bougainvillea of Limón’s Parque Vargas and the speed and efficiency with which 50,000 bunches of bananas are loaded onto the Sixaloa. Stevedores, who included “turbaned Hindoos” and “exiled revolutionists from Honduras and Nicaragua,” consisted mainly of “skilled and sturdy” “Jamaican negroes” “black as the ace of spades, carefree as the birds who sing in the adjacent park,” who sung Methodist hymns while carrying bananas from cars onto conveyor belts and into the holds of ships.703 “The lot of the average American negro,” Adams concludes, “is pitiful compared to that of those who still regard Jamaica as their home, but who can win more money and greater comfort along the coast lands of Central America.”704 With this comparison the Boston author indirectly encourages Black migration out of the Jim Crow South to the industrial cities of the northern United States.

700-Jane Perry Cook, A Summer Vacation in the Tropics, The Educational Bi-monthly Vol. 10 (1915): 76
701-“For five days, the steamer is your hotel while at port in Limon, thus giving the tourist ample opportunity of visiting San José. . .” Cruising the Spanish Main, 29
703-Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 174
704-Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 174
Segregation in transportation was absent. George Putnam, on a 6 a.m. train to tour a banana plantation in Zent, bemoaned that the first-class car “is devoted chiefly to the transportation of darkies,” including a group of women returning from a shopping trip. The gaudy fashions and voluptuous figures of Black women seem a parody of white, bourgeoisie standards of respectable womanhood. “One buxom coloured lassie was envied much in the eyes of her sisters, thanks to a vivid hat of rainbow hues and broad scope which she bore proudly on her head.”

The realities of segregation are described in an incident recounted in an article in Putnam’s Magazine. Limón is notable for the “zopilote, the hideous black scavenger buzzard,” cleaning the streets and gutters. On a train stop at Matina “in the banana belt” a tourist purchases ten bananas for five cents, to be scolded by a Costa Rican: “Never pay for a banana you eat in this country! To do so violates our religion. Besides, you’ll spoil our niggers.”

Tourists traveled by train on “one of the loveliest rides in the world,” passing “through miles and miles of arching banana leaves, along the Reventazon River and up among the verdant plateau of the cordilleras.” Escaping the tropical heat for the cool highlands, they reveled “in the sweetness of the air, the wonderful effects of the light and shade produced by the clouds, and realize we were in white man’s land indeed.” Costa Rica’s capital San José, 3,840 feet above sea level in the Valle Central, offered “metropolitan” amenities, including “an opera house and the only streetcar line south of Mexico City in North America.”

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709 *Cruising the Spanish Main*, 32
streets” and “million-dollar opera-house,” concluding that, although “modernity has not come to Costa Rica” visitors would be “enchanted with its tropic ‘dolce far niente.’”  

In contrast with his contempt for the mestizo, mulatto and Indian populations of the rest of Central America, Frederick Adams attributed Costa Rica’s political stability to a population “fully 80 per cent” “pure Caucasians,” and the fact that “Indian tribes” had acquired a “veneer of civilization” subduing “the instinct to take to the warpath.” Even the vitriolic Gulian Morrill grudgingly acknowledged Costa Rica’s progress, while emphasizing its dependence on the U.S. The men, he wrote, “spend most of the time in the cultivation of coffee and manners, and their money extravagantly. They leave the cultivation of brains and bananas to the gringo Yankee.” More impressive was the beauty of its young women, which he half-jokingly viewed as a commercial opportunity. “I want to organize a company to export them to the U.S.A and place them on the marriage market,” he quipped, where like Costa Rica’s bananas and coffee, they would “mellow, grow ripe and sweeten with age.” Elevated above its largely mestizo neighbors, Costa Ricans, as white Hispanics, were viewed by U.S. tourists as a feminized Latin race, whose pre-modern charms offered respite from northern civilization.

4.3.7 Return Voyages and the Borderlands of the Tropics

On return journeys, tourists traveled second-class to bananas. En route to New Orleans, Isabel Anderson wrote, “the decks freighted with thousands upon thousands of bunches of bananas.” After the “first cool winds” in the Yucatán Channel passengers were examined at a quarantine station in Pilottown, the mouth of the Mississippi, with “everybody standing in a long

710 “Where to Go for Winter Vacation,” Literary Digest 53, no. 2 (December 24, 1916): 1682 Univ. of California, Berkley Libraries, Dig. Apr 26, 2012
711 Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics, 164
712 Ibid
713 G.L. Morrill, Rotten Republics, 202
714 Isabel Anderson, Odd Corners, 98-99
line with thermometers sticking out of their mouths and looking most self-conscious and rather absurd." (Figure 4.42) Jane Perry Cook toured plantations in Panama and Costa Rica with “long tunnels cut in the living green banana groves,” and visited Havana, delighting in its “strange architecture,” markets with “new and interesting fruits,” and Chinese carrying produce on poles. As her party broke up, some travelers headed to Key West and Miami and “thus prolonged a tropical experience by a stay of two weeks among the orange groves of eastern Florida.”

In contrast to the romanticized tone of female tourists, Des Moines, Iowa lawyer and travel writer Charles (C.W.) Johnston disparages tropical backwardness. In Along the Pacific, Through the Golden Gate, written for the 1915 San Francisco Panama-Pacific World’s Fair, described travels from Vancouver, Canada to the Panama Canal. The Sunny South and its People (1918), describes the Southern states, beginning with his trip from Panama to New Orleans aboard a United Fruit ship. Disgusted by Latin America, concerned about the effects of Southern California’s mild climate and the poverty, backwardness and racism of the U.S. South, he expresses skepticism that U.S. civilization born in the temperate north could overcome the inertia of the tropics.

Southern California, developed by Midwestern migrants, including Johnston’s friends from Iowa, epitomizes how “initiative and aggressive spirit always originates and migrates from colder climates to milder ones.” In the citrus belt town of Riverside, he observes of the region’s largest agro-industry, “the orange and lemon propositions are rich man’s game here like

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715 Isabel Anderson, Odd Corners, 99
717 Charles W. Johnston, Along the Shores of the Pacific by Land and Sea, through the Golden Gate (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1916), 117
horse racing in the east,” due to the costs of irrigation, fumigation and fertilizer. The city of Los Angeles was “like a country town-easy, lazy, good natured” but in its sprawling, suburban growth, “the traffic on the streets is the worst I have ever seen.” Balminess belies dangers of a climate that “destroys energy and force of character,” evident in California’s high suicide rate and insane asylums. Johnston likened Southern California to Palestine, for its for its climate, crops, “oranges, olives, nuts,” and its mysticism and radicalism. Madness grows stronger as the climate grows more tropical. In San Diego, near the Mexican border, “you have socialism, the I.W.W., Madam Tingley and her theosophy here you meet individuals bareheaded and barefooted obeying some command from above.”

Visionary madness on the edges of the tropics is absent from Latin America, where Johnston saw only squalor and anarchy. On a steamship from Los Angeles, he enjoys a conversation with an English-speaking lawyer en route to Guadalajara, but optimism gives way to disgust, in Manzanillo, a town of “about 1,500 people and several millions of mosquitoes,” with soldiers quartered in the only hotel. In the Gulf of Fonseca, between El Salvador and Honduras, on a rusty steamship built for the Alaska trade, rotting meat was thrown overboard, devoured by unsightly black birds, “dark in color, like the natives,” on shore “you could see birds of beautiful plumage, but they sang not. Lions would move as if worn out, showing no life or energy; so with all animal life. If the climate has this effect on wild life, why not on the life and energy of man?”

718. Charles W. Johnston, Along the Pacific by Land and Sea, 176-179
719. Charles W. Johnston, Along the Pacific by Land and Sea, through the Golden Gate, 184. Of Los Angeles, “50,000 to 100,000 tourists are here most of the year, many of them inexperienced in city life, so they walk on all sides of the narrow sidewalks, are out day and night with nothing to do but walk up and down, eat fruit and attend the movies.” (184)
720. Ibid
721. Johnston, Along the Shores of the Pacific, 213
722. Johnston, Along the Shores of the Pacific, 280
723. Johnston, Along the Shores of the Pacific, 242-243
Juxtaposition of sanitary modernity and tropical squalor are on display in Panama. The Canal Zone towns of Balboa and Ancon, officials wear white duck-suits, work in modern offices, and reside on paved streets in raised homes. In Panama City, with Chinese owned cantinas and the “Coco Grove” red-light district, visited by U.S. sailors, “people have no life or energy to do anything at all, the same as all humanity similarly situated in hot climates. Some are naked, many barefooted and poorly clothed and housed, and many sleep in the open the year round, steal, beg and often go hungry.”

In The Sunny South and its People, Johnston departs the Hotel Tivoli in Panama. Boarding the United Fruit SS Turrialba for New Orleans, a luxurious contrast to the ships on the Pacific, “the staterooms being equipped with electric lights, fans, and cool, clean, fresh air day and night, and with berths upon which one can study think, sleep and rest.” At Almirante, he toured plantations, “bananas by the mile” “surrounded by jungles which were inhabited by monkeys, baboons, lions, tigers and snakes,” noting “a ground parasite that kills banana plants in ten to fifteen years.” Havana compares favorably to Panama in cleanliness and organization, but Cuba’s recent growth derives “largely from an injection of foreign energy and capital. The Cubans do not take the American push and energy very kindly.” Similarly New Orleans, “asleep since 1860,” is “just beginning to go after business in a business-like way,” due to the Panama Canal. The “old city where the poor are everywhere” is likened to Panama, with “old and rusty” “Spanish” buildings and ragged washerwomen. “The people here are more intelligent

724. Johnston, Along the Shores of the Pacific, 252
725. Charles William Johnston, The Sunny South and its People, 13
726. Johnston, The Sunny South and its People, 20-21
727. Johnston, The Sunny South and its People, 24
728. Johnston, The Sunny South and its People, 27
and more industrious, but just as poor, and if the climate were as warm here as in Panama City they would be no better clothed.”

Across the South, Johnston encountered racism and poverty, legacies of slavery and the Civil War. Judging the region “two generations behind the Northern and New England states” he optimistically concluded, “The railroad and industrial enterprises are rapidly making a new South.” This is evident in the region’s rapidly growing inland cities, most notably Atlanta, which, with a mild climate, factories and rail-yards “resembles a Northern or New England city more than any other Southern city.” Describing the life of Minor Keith, whose Central American railways “created wealth where it did not exist before,” making the banana “a cheap wholesome food for the rich and poor,” he cites the United Fruit founder as an example of the enterprising, masculine virtues upon which the future development of the South will ultimately depend.

4.3.8 Conclusion

Amidst the early twentieth-century rise of U.S. empire, the private empire of United Fruit in the Caribbean epitomized the organizational and technological revolutions of modern capitalism. United Fruit developed passenger service as an adjunct of the banana trade, pioneering a new form of travel, cruise ship tourism, aboard the ships of its “Great White Fleet,” a nickname with connotations of imperial and racial triumph. Citrus fruit promoted tourism in the semi-tropical southern rim of the U.S. The “conquest of the tropics” by agribusiness, the banana empire of United Fruit and, to a lesser but still important extent, citrus growers in California and Florida, were promoted as offering a model for the modernization of both tropical

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729. Johnston, The Sunny South and its People, 27, 33
730. Johnston, The Sunny South and its People, 186, 367
731. Johnston, The Sunny South and its People, 177
732. Johnston, The Sunny South and its People, 21
Latin America and the U.S. South, a region that remained, to many observers “foreign” in its
tropicality.

Northern travelers connected the U.S. South with the Caribbean and Latin America in a
tropical southland that was poor, pestilential, primitive, and in need of colonial “uplift” but also
alluringly exotic, offering relief from the rigors of civilization. As both pathological peril and
winter playground, this southland remained a place of radical otherness from the white
supremacist civilization of the world’s temperate zone. Depictions of the American tropics as
lands of romance and history, contrasted with dramatic impositions of modernity, epitomized by
the Panama Canal and the archipelagos of enormous banana plantations developed and
controlled by the United Fruit Company. The eradication of tropical diseases, the rise of tropical
fruit plantations and the growth of tropical tourism shattered older assumptions of the tropics as
the “white man’s grave.” The encounters of northern tourists with the American Mediterranean
strengthened ideas of environmental determinism that legitimized scientific racism and
imperialism.

4.4 Conclusion: Latitudes of Labor and Leisure

The Southern Commercial Congress, the “New South” business organization, met in
Mobile in October 1913, promoting Panama Canal to the U.S. Gulf South, attended by ministers
from Costa Rica, Panama, Peru and Brazil, Southern congressmen and heads of the Southern
Epitomizing aspirations that, as a gateway to a U.S. dominated Caribbean, the U.S. South would
regain wealth and power lost in the Civil War, the Congress was dedicated to the memory of the
late Alabama Senator John T. Morgan, who advocated a Nicaraguan canal. Delegates departed
for Panama on a sixteen-month trade mission, dedicating a bronze plaque to Morgan, “The
Father of the Canal Idea,” on a bluff overlooking Gamboa, where the last dyke was blown up on October 13, breaking “The Continent’s Backbone” and “wedding the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific.” Woodrow Wilson, the first Southern elected U.S. President since 1848, delivered the keynote speech, predicting tides of trade and exchange, confined to “the northern half of the globe,” with the opening of the Panama Canal “will now swing southward athwart parallels of latitude.” Without referencing United Fruit or other banana companies, whose fruit was unloaded in Mobile’s harbor, he criticized concessions to foreign capitalists in Latin America, promising “emancipation from the subordination of foreign enterprise.”

This speech offered one of the first critiques of the underdevelopment of enclave capitalism. Latitudinal power, in white leisure and non-white labor, shaped the transnational space of the American Mediterranean. The bio-political conquest of the tropics enabled the rise of the plantation empires of agribusiness and overseas and overland transportation networks carrying tropical fruits, workers and tourists. The labor needs of factories in the field would be met by proletarianized, indentured labor, West Indian (mostly Jamaican) Blacks, mestizo Hispanics and Asians, with Japanese Issei migrants in California citrus groves. In contrast to the hardships of agricultural workers, luxury and transience defined the travels of tropical tourists in fast trains and steamships, painted white for tropical service, offering segregated accommodations within and beyond the borders of the United States.

The discursive geographies of northern tourists conflated the southern U.S. with tropical Latin America portrayed the tropics as timeless and primitive. Imagined mañana-lands belie a hyper-modern socio-economic order across the transnational space of the American

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Mediterranean that foreshadowed the future of neo-liberalism. Tropical fruit plantations epitomized reengineering of spaces and populations by corporations and governments for agro-industrial production. Tourism served as a secondary revenue stream, advertising the health benefits of bananas and oranges. Mechanized unloading and refrigerated distribution, relying on regulated monopolies of railroads, serving as technologies of time-space compression, slashed labor costs while guaranteeing the availability and affordability of bananas and oranges.

Southern and eastern European immigrants developed the retail fruit trade, facing nativist distrust, as they acculturated to U.S. whiteness by embracing anti-Black racism.

From the citrus belts of Southern California and the Jim Crow era U.S. South to the Panama Canal and United Fruit’s private empire of banana plantations, white leisure was contingent upon non-white labor. Divided labor fueled ethnic and racial tensions, sparking outbreaks of violence from military interventions and killings of West Indians in banana zones of Central America to lynchings and race riots in the U.S. that erupted in cities along the north-south corridors that brought bananas and Black migrants north.
Figure 4.1 Limon Province and Northern Railway of Costa Rica
Geography and Maps Division, Library of Congress

Figure 4.2 Victor Cutter overseeing banana harvest in Costa Rica
190 Victor Cutter Papers, Rauner Library, Dartmouth College
Figure 4.3 Antonio Saldaña, Bribi cacique, the last "rey" de Talamanca
Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica
Figure 4.4 *Reventazón River Bridge*, Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica

Figure 4.5 *West Indian workers and a white overseer on a company-owned plantation*  
Archivo Nacional de Costa Rica
Figure 4.6 "One way of transporting bananas: These primitive methods are usually employed by the smaller growers of bananas."
Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics: The Story of the Creative Enterprises Conducted by the United Fruit Company (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1914)

Figure 4.7 "The box trains, with crews of loaders, pick up the bunches which have been piled beside the track."
George Palmer Putnam, The Southland of North America: Rambles and Observations in Central America During the Year 1912
Figure 4.8 "First Grade Fruit," banana plantation in Costa Rica, 1912, Victor Cutter Papers, Rauner Library Dartmouth College

Figure 4.9 "Jamaicans loading Bananas by hand at Limon, a method now replaced by continuous belt loaders"
George Putnam, Seeing the Southland Rambles and Observations in Central America During the Year 1912
Figure 4.10 Loading Bananas at One of United Fruit's East Coast Ports, George Palmer Putnam, The Southland of North America

Figure 4.11 Map of International Railways of Central America, Guatemala and neighboring countries, with planned line to El Salvador, and United Fruit's enclave in Izabal, Guatemala
Library of Congress Geography and Map Division
Figure 4.12 Library of Congress Geography and Map Division

Figure 4.13 "Scene in Guatemala: A small squad of the army of 60,000 which enables the United Fruit Company to help satisfy the hunger of the world"
Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics: The Story of the Creative Enterprises Conducted by the United Fruit Company (1914)
Figure 4.14 Train station in Quirigua, Guatemala

Figure 4.15 "Admiral" steamships, Jamaica: The Summer Land (1904)
Figure 4.16 SS Cartago, 1909.
Economic Geography (1928), Victor Cutter Papers, Dartmouth College

Figure 4.17 United Fruit ships on the New Orleans waterfront
Library of Congress Prints and Photograph Division, Washington D.C.
Figure 4.18 *Banana-unloading machines in New Orleans, Frederick Adams Conquest of the Tropics (1914)*

Figure 4.19 *United Fruit Company banana conveyors, New Orleans 1910*  
Library of Congress Prints and Photographic Division, Washington D.C.
Figure 4.20 "Unloading of fruit at Mobile, Alabama, ca. 1890"

Figure 4.21 "Busy scene on arrival of banana cargo at New Orleans"
Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics (1914)
Figure 4.22 "Unloading the banana cargo at New Orleans: Horizontal conveyors delivering bananas to railway cars"

Figure 4.23 California offering citrus to Iowa, cartoon used in the initial advertising campaign of Sunkist, Rahno Mabel MacCurdy, History of the California Fruit Growers Exchange (1925)
Huntington Library, San Marino, California

Figure 4.24 Placentia Orange Growers Fullerton Packing House and Crew 1910
Placentia Orange Growers Association Papers, California Citrus Collection, California State University, Fullerton
Figure 4.25 "Japanese pickers at work"
The Christian Evangelist Vol. 80 (1906)

Figure 4.26 "A winter picking scene shows green groves with golden fruit against snow capped background"
_The Story of California Oranges and Lemons_ (1936) Rivera Library, University of California-Riverside
Figure 4.27 The effects of blue mold fungus on oranges and lemons, Howard Fawcett
Science Library, University of California-Riverside
Figure 4.28 *Trainloads of oranges and lemons at an icing station at San Barnardino, California.*
The Story of California Oranges and Lemons (1936) Rivera Library, University of California-Riverside

Figure 4.29 "Smoking and squatting causes damage to the fruit"
Figure 4.30 Heating shed Mounds, Illinois, Illinois Central Railroad. "A whole train of railroad cars can fit into this 'warmhouse' for protection against cold in the winter." Unifruitco, December 1948, Library of Congress Prints and Photograph Division, Washington, D.C.

Figure 4.31 Frick refrigerating machine, American Linde coolers, Banana cooling shed Springfield Missouri, Ice and Refrigeration, Vol. 29 No. 3, September 1, 1905
Figure 4.32 South Water Street produce market
Viajando por los Estados Unidos (Unión Panamericana, 1931)
Figure 4.33 "Early banana importers were mostly Italian immigrants." Unifruitco Magazine, December 1948
Library of Congress Prints and Photograph Division, Washington, D.C.

Figure 4.34 "For a long time wagons were the accepted means of transportation."
Unifruitco Magazine, December 1948, Prints and Photograph Division, Washington, D.C.
Figure 4.35 "There the pirates hid their Gold"
United Fruit Company Steamship Service, advertisement, 1914
Figure 4.36 United Fruit Steamship and Spanish Galleon
Cruising the Spanish Main (Boston: United Fruit Company Steamship Service, 1912)
Figure 4.37 Hotel Titchfield, Port Antonio
Jamaica: The Summer Land (1904) New York Public Library

Figure 4.38 A nook on the United Fruit Company's SS Calamares, Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics (1914)
Figure 4.39 One of the superb monoliths of Quirigua, Frederick Adams, Conquest of the Tropics (1914)
Figure 4.40 "Bocas del Toro is invitingly neat," Cruising the Spanish Main (1912)

Figure 4.41 "Bird's eye view of San José" Cruising the Spanish Main (1912)
Figure 4.42 *New Orleans Quarantine Station, Disinfection Shed, New Orleans Quarantine Station*
Photographic Collection, Records of U.S. Public Health Service, Record Group 90, U.S. National Archives II, College Park, Maryland
5 SECTION 3: SPANNING THE SOUTHLAND

In 1915, amidst the violent backdrop of World War I, the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition celebrated the opening of the Panama Canal and the city’s rebuilding after the 1906 earthquake. A California-Panama Exposition opened in San Diego, “the American port nearest to the western gate of the Canal.”735 A town of less than 50,000, known for eccentrics and radicals—the theosophist commune of Madame Tingley, IWW “free-speech fights,” a filibuster invasion of Tijuana organized by the Mexican anarchist Magón brothers-San Diego did not inspire confidence that it could host an international exposition. However, attendance shot upward at the end of the year as visitors to San Francisco’s fair came south. In October Los Angeles business and civic leaders pledged $150,000 to keep the exposition going for another year.736

San Francisco emulated the Neo-Classicalism of the earlier Chicago and St. Louis World’s Fairs. The San Diego exposition’s chief architect Bertram Goodhue drew on the Baroque architecture of Spain and colonial Mexico. Puente de Cabrillo, an arch-bridge modeled on Toledo’s Roman Alcántra, named for the first European to navigate the coast of California, brought visitors over a ravine down El Prado, with buildings based on cathedrals in Puebla, Guadalajara, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosi and Queretaro, and gardens of palm trees, citrus groves, acacia, eucalyptus and bougainvillea. The California Building had a bell-tower modeled on Seville’s Torre de Giralda, a dome and façade on cathedrals in Taxco and Mexico City. The face of the building was decorated with a pantheon of European explorers, at its pinnacle,

736 Matthew Bokovy, The San Diego World’s Fair and Southwestern Memory, 1880-1940 (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 37-38; “The attendance for the first month since the declaration day, March 18, has been more than 75,000 greater than for the corresponding month of 1915.” “Along the Trail,” Santa Fe Magazine 10: 86
Franciscan Fray Junípero Serra, founder of California’s first missions. (Figure 5.1 and 5.2) Inside the California Building visitors could enjoy the first exposition of Mayan art in the U.S. featuring ruins of “a new Egypt” and “another Orient,” “memorials of a race that ran its course in America before the continent was seen by Europeans.” Murals were arranged around plaster castes of the Mayan stele of Quiriguá, Guatemala, set aside as an archeological park by United Fruit.

Attractions included Navajo, Hopi and Zuni Indians from New Mexico and Arizona in a human zoo and a Japanese temple and gardens that formed a pre-modern contrast to trade exhibits of Japanese manufactured goods. A Feria Típica in Tijuana featured cockfights, gambling, bullfighting and prizefights. United Fruit used the California Expositions to advertise cruises from New York to Havana and the Panama Canal, “o’er the blue Caribbean to shores made famous by Columbus, Balboa, De Soto” with return trips to New Orleans and travel by rail to San Francisco and San Diego.

In a variation on the U.S. as New Rome theme of world’s fairs, the California-Panama Exposition cast the U.S. as heir to Spain’s empire, and ancient indigenous civilizations. The guide proclaimed, “In the absorption of building a great English speaking nation, we have lost sight of the part played by Spain in American history; still further we have lost sight of the great

738. Official Guidebook of the Panama-California Exposition (San Diego January to December 1915), 20
739. “Replica of Stela D at Quirigua” “Replica of Stela E at Quirigua” Edgar Lee Hewitt, Latest Work of the School of American Archaeology at Quirigua (J.W. Bryan Press, 1916, Plate X-XI; Official Guidebook of the Panama-California Exposition (San Diego January to December, 1915), 22;
740. Official Guidebook of the Panama-California Exposition 11, 14-15; The Painted Desert was organized by the Santa Fe Railroad, “President Ripley in San Antonio,” Santa Fe Magazine Vol. 10 (1915), 55
works of the native American race, which we know of only in its decadence.” Latin-ness was feminized as an object of adulation and conquest. A journalist boated the Saxon race, in conquering the Latin, absorbed “their tradition, their romance, their musical nomenclature . . . [and] made this romance the background of our own history in this fair port of San Diego on this golden coast of California.” One visitor, George W. James contrasted the masculine “dignity and power” of San Francisco’s Worlds Fair with the feminine charms of San Diego’s exposition, likened to “a young maiden, who was as good and cheerful as she was pretty and attractive.” Mrs. Isabel Anderson delighted in San Diego’s “Spanish” scenes, a “church with two huge bells and the plaza with its pigeons,” attendants “in Mexican costume, and dancers did the fandango in the square, while the castanets clicked and the people cried ‘Hola!’ ‘Hola!’” These exotic sights were made possible by the ubiquitous U.S. military. The New Mexico building, based on the mission church at Acoma Pueblo, overlooked a U.S. Cavalry encampment. The guide directed visitors to the coaling station of the U.S. Navy’s Pacific fleet on San Diego Bay.

The California Expositions came at the height of the wartime boom in tourism to the American tropics. The growth of tourism spurred the expansion and development of new transcontinental transportation networks, United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet” and the California-to-Florida Old Spanish Trail. Spanning the southland, these networks functioned as overseas and overland corridors of U.S. imperialism, demarcating spatial and racial divides across borderlands of the U.S. with Latin America and the Caribbean.

743-Panama-California Guidebook, 20
746-Isabel Anderson, *Odd Corners*, 136
747-Isabel Anderson, *Odd Corners*, 136
748-Official Guide Panama-Pacific Exposition, 6

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This section examines the symbiotic relationship between agribusiness, militarism and tourism. The first chapter, “Through Lands of Romance and History” describes wartime and post-war expansion of United Fruit’s fleet and the planning and construction on the Old Spanish Trail highway. It explores the close relationship between agribusiness, militarism and tourism, and examines the leisure travels, romantic historical fantasies and racial assumptions of U.S. white tropical tourists, modern-day conquistadores, enjoying a variety of pleasures restricted or forbidden at home. Modern transportation networks expedited journeys, enabling tourists to enjoy a voyeuristic distance while they traveled overland by automobile over the Old Spanish Trail or cruised the Caribbean aboard the steamships of United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet.”

The next chapter, “Security in a Sea of Storms” explores the post-war expansion of United Fruit’s Tropical Radio through the firms evolving political domination of Central America and ongoing efforts to report developing hurricanes. United Fruit’s Tropical Radio expanded with powerful new stations in New Orleans, Miami and the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa, and a monopoly on wireless communications between the U.S., Central America and Colombia. Tropical Radio provided medical services to commercial shipping and reports of hurricanes. The limits of forecasting were epitomized by 1926 hurricanes that struck Miami and Havana, bursting the bubble of Florida’s Land Boom and eroding Cuban economic sovereignty and democracy.

The final chapter “Ghosts of Guale” explores how the “Spanish fantasy past,” the mythologies that celebrated Spanish explores, conquistadores and missionary priests, reshaped historical memory and regional identity in the U.S. Southeast. Ruins of sugar mills on the Atlantic coast of Florida and Georgia were misidentified as long-lost sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish Franciscan missions. Providing ostensible ruins from the earliest Spanish
attempts to explore North America, the mission myth enhanced the prestige of these Deep South States. This “Spanish mission myth,” broadly compatible with white supremacy, provoked a backlash of revived Anglo-centrism and defensive pride antebellum slaveholding planters that legitimized racial segregation.

5.1 Through the Lands of Romance and History

In 1913 Indiana auto parts magnate Carl G. Fischer sold his company, Prest-O-Light, to finance the building of the Collins Bridge across Biscayne Bay to Miami Beach, Florida.\(^{749}\) For the 1915 San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition, he led a movement for a New York-to-San Francisco Lincoln Highway. Highway promoters predicted 25,000 automobiles would travel the route of the Lincoln Highway, seeing “every variety of scenery, from the flat rich cornfields of the Mississippi Valley to the towering peaks of the Western mountains.”\(^{750}\) Visitors to the Panama-Pacific Expedition celebrated the dawn of the motor age at the Palace of Transportation, with exhibits by Ford, Packard, Hudson, Cadillac and a demonstration of a Ford assembly line.\(^{751}\) The Ocean-to-Ocean Highway Bridge, funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, spanned the Colorado River from Yuma, Arizona to the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation. San Diego motorist and real estate developer Ed Fletcher, director of the Panama-California Exposition, financed a moveable wooden plank road over the Imperial Sand Hills/Algodones Dunes.

Tourism historians have begun to elaborate how agribusiness, militarism and tourism functioned symbiotically. Historian Vernadette Vicuña-González analyzes the relationship

\(^{749}\) Thousands of dollars are being expended on improvement work on Miami’s ocean front properties. The famous Collins bridge, two and a half miles long and spanning Biscayne Bay at a picturesque point, furnishes easy access to the city.” George Chapin, Florida 1513-1913 Past and Future: Four Hundred Years of Wars and Peace and Industrial Development (S.J. Clarke publishing co., 1914), 516;

\(^{750}\) Albert Beveridge, “Lincoln Highway” Saturday Evening Post, March 20, 1915

\(^{751}\) C.L. Edholm, “Motor Car Exhibits At the Panama Exposition,” Horseless Age, Vol. 36 35, 37, 39
between tourism and militarism in Hawai‘i and the Philippines but overlooks agribusiness. Catherine Cocks describes tropical tourism aboard banana boats of United Fruit in the Caribbean and the citrus belts of Florida and Southern California but overlooks the role of military bases.

The wartime and post-war growth of the Old Spanish Trail highway and United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet” epitomize the symbiotic relationship of agribusiness, militarism and tourism across the American Mediterranean. As the construction of the Panama Canal connected the world’s oceans, the outbreak of World War I in Europe led to the boom in tourism within America and the Americas. The growth of tourism led to the expansion of passenger service on United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet” and plans for the first transcontinental auto-trails, inspired by the successes of the California expositions. The first highways were envisioned as tourist trails, but the war in Europe affirmed the military value of roads. U.S. military interventions in revolutionary Mexico laid the foundation for the growth of military bases across the southern borderlands. Wartime requisitioning of United Fruit’s steamships enabled conversion from coal to oil, enhancing the image of cleanliness for passengers, as United Fruit shifted its focus the less-profitable passenger service by focusing on cargo service. Road construction proceeded and shipping services expanded, as regional and national bourgeoisie in the U.S. South and Latin America worked to develop modern infrastructure for purposes of regional development and nation building. Envisioning themselves as later-day conquerors, tourists described alluringly backward, “lands of romance and history,” narratives carefully fostered by tourism promoters. These racially tinged perceptions of tropical backwardness belied the radical modernity of the American Mediterranean.

752. For history of pineapples and tourism in Hawai‘i, Gary Okihiro, Pineapple Culture: A History of the Tropical and Temperate Zone (Univ. of California Press, 2010).
753. Mention is made of the U.S. occupation of Veracruz, Mexico and WWII era tensions over military bases in the Caribbean, Catherine Cocks, Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South, 92, 176
5.1.1 A Modern Old Spanish Trail

The “Old Spanish Trail,” a modern highway with dubious claims to Spanish antiquity, epitomized the close relationship between tourism and militarism. Carl Fischer led a movement for the Dixie Highway to bring Midwestern motorists to Tampa and Miami. The Dixie Highway Association formed in April 1915 in Chattanooga, Tennessee to “join the north and south by means of a concrete road of uniform excellence.” Good Roads organizations in the U.S. South emphasized road building as necessary for regional economic development. Alma Rittenberry of Birmingham, Alabama, active in both the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Daughters of 1812, conceived a Chicago-to-New Orleans Jackson Highway, “just as important, if not more so, than the Panama Canal.” This highway would enable farmers to bring crops to urban markets and reduce the rural isolation and “poverty and illiteracy” that were the “curse” of the South.

The movement for an Old Spanish Trail highway began in Mobile, Alabama, bypassed by the Dixie and Jackson Highways. As banana imports stagnated, and the boll weevil infested the cotton fields of Alabama, civic and business leaders sought a road that would “afford tourists the ability to see Florida towns, come through Mobile and go west along the Mississippi Coast through New Orleans and to California.”

In December 1915, the first convention of the Old Spanish Trail Association brought 400 delegates to Mobile’s Battle House Hotel. Bolstering its historic claims, Florida offered dirt roads from the Alabama line to Tallahassee and from Lake City to Tampa, allegedly following the route taken by the expedition of Spanish conquistador Hernando de Soto in 1540. The one

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757. “Plan for Another Southern Road,” *Motor Age* 28 (December 1915), 25
758. “Minutes of the Convention of the Old Spanish Trail, December 10-11, 1915,” 3-4
delegate from outside the Southeast was Arizona “pathfinder” Harry Locke, who had mapped over 12,000 miles of roads in Arizona in 1912, including a route from Los Angeles to the Grand Canyon. En route to Mobile, he made a log of West Texas, traveling east via Fort Worth, Dallas, Shreveport and New Orleans, which he proposed as the route of the highway.

Although the first highways were conceived as tourist trails, World War I and the role of France’s road network preventing German conquest, led to recognition of the military value of roads. The Federal Aid Road Act enacted on July 11, 1916 provided $75 million in matching federal funds to States. In November 1916 a Bankhead Highway Association formed, for co-author Alabama Sen. John H. Bankhead, planning a road from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles, via of Charlotte, Atlanta, Birmingham, and Dallas.

Events in revolutionary Mexico spurred the growth of military bases. In the U.S. occupation of Veracruz, Mexico, begun in April 1914 the Navy’s five aircraft left Pensacola on two ships, searching for mines in the harbor. After Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa’s raid on the border post of Columbus, New Mexico in March 1916, the U.S. Army Punitive Expedition, primarily cavalry and horse-drawn artillery, crossed into Chihuahua, Mexico. In the first use of aviation in U.S. military history, eight Curtiss biplanes attempted unsuccessfully to fly over 12,000 foot-mountains and were grounded by dust storms and damaged by heat. More successfully, the U.S. Army used 120 motor trucks to carry supplies to a base south of the

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760 - “New Log of Texas Roads,” Automobile Journal 40 (August 1915), 29
763 - Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, to Henry Woodhouse, May 19, 1914 in Henry Woodhouse, Textbook of Naval Aeronautics (Century Company, 1917), 137 Univ. of Michigan Dig. Nov. 15, 2006
764 - “Government’s Aeros Not Suitable for Mexico,” Aerial Age 3 (April 3, 1916), 86
Mormon colony of Casas Grandes.\textsuperscript{765} Drivers faced “great clouds of dust and fine sand, raised by the gentlest breeze, [which] sweep across the deserts and plateaus of Chihuahua, envelo\n\pating the trucks and lodging sand in the truck carburetors, as well as the eyes and throat of the driver.”\textsuperscript{766} Observers judged native horses nearly equal to motor trucks in stamina. A writer for \textit{New Outlook}, riding on “a little sorrel desert rat,” “the sort of horse that is keeping Pancho Villa and his picturesque desperadoes ahead of the bigger, handsomer but softer steeds of the American cavalry,” described his horse galloping along in “a fifteen-mile dead heat with motor trucks across a blistering desert.”\textsuperscript{767}

The Punitive Expedition returned to El Paso in February 1917, leaving behind roads in Doña Ana County, New Mexico that were “nearly impassible in places as a result of chuckholes and natural deterioration constant use by heavy armor motor trucks.”\textsuperscript{768} In the east, civic leaders proposed the construction of a paved military highway from Atlanta’s Fort McPherson to Pensacola “a navy base convenient to the Atlantic Ocean and the Panama Cana.” This highway would be built using convict labor from the U.S. penitentiary in Atlanta. In May 1917, Florida’s legislature urged Congress to create a national military highway, “from Miami and Tampa, Florida through the Gulf Coast States to California,” putting convicts to work on paving crews. The report noted that the Florida panhandle, a sparsely populated region of tobacco plantations, small farms of poor white “crackers” and logging and turpentine camps, had “few railroads suitable for the transportation of troops from one coast to the other and the local dirt roads are

\textsuperscript{765}“F.-W.-D Trucks in Mexico: More than 120 Machines Used by Army in Operations Along the Border,” \textit{The Motor Truck: The National Authority of Power Haulage} 7 (September 1916), 370

\textsuperscript{766}“Motor Trucks Severely Tested in Mexico,” \textit{The Spokesman and Harness World}, May 1916, 256


\textsuperscript{768}Harry Locke, “Need of Connective System in Arizona and New Mexico,” \textit{Western Highway Builder} (Los Angeles, Cal.) Vol. 1 No. 2 February 15, 1919, 4 University of California Libraries Dig. Apr. 14 2014

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not passable by heavy, motor-driven trucks sufficiently large to carry guns.”769 The first roads were envisioned as tourist trails. As World War I in Europe revealed the military necessity of roads, U.S. military interventions in Mexico exposed the inadequacy of existing railways and roads in the southern borderlands of the U.S.

5.1.2 *Tropical Tourism and Militarism in the Wake of World War I*

The Old Spanish Trail and United Fruit’s Great White Fleet epitomize the symbiotic relationship of military and agribusiness securing the southern borderlands of the U.S. Following the U.S.’s entry into World War I, commercial steamships were requisitioned for use as military transports. United Fruit’s SS *Pastores* and *Tenadores* were among the first ships chartered by the U.S. Army, converted from coal to oil, fitted with rapid-fire rifles and machine guns, while retaining their civilian crews. The SS *Pastores* left Hoboken, New Jersey in June 1917 with 1,800 soldiers, the first contingent of the American Expeditionary Force.770 In 1918, United Fruit acquired two 6,500-ton oil-burning steamships, the SS *Toloa* and *Ulua*, which carried Chinese laborers from Nova Scotia to France and British soldiers to in the Arctic Sea ports of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, Russia, where they fought the Bolsheviks.771

In 1916, United Fruit made a contract with the Mexican Eagle Petroleum Co.772 Oil from Tampico, Mexico supplied Puerto Barrios, Guatemala and ports in Honduras.773 To meet its fuel needs, in 1921 United Fruit Co. signed a contract with the New England Oil Corporation for the

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770. Reaching St. Nazarie, France, “Pastores and Tenadores docked almost simultaneously but the Tenadores put down her gangway seconds ahead, and thus won the historic honor of landing on French soil the first men of the American Expeditionary Force” John Melville, *The Great White Fleet*, 80-82
772. “Mexican Petroleum Co.. Fuel Oil Journal 7 no. 5 May 1916, 12
773. Certifican: que con los requisitos de lay, se ha despachado para Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, conduciendo petróleo crudo El Vapor Americano Tamesi, El administrador, Aduana Maritima de Tampico, Tamaulipas, ANCA; “The steamer Panuco, owned by the Freeport & Tamaulipas, discharged the first cargo of fuel oil at Ceiba, Honduras” *Fuel Oil Journal* 6 no. 8 August 1915: 87
first oil produced in Maracaibo, Venezuela.\textsuperscript{774} The discovery of three wells near Los Angeles between 1919 and 1921 resulted in history’s first oil glut. Oil shipments from California through the Panama Canal began in 1922, reaching its height with 909,876 tons in 1923.\textsuperscript{775}

Oil-fueled steamships projected an image of cleanliness, tied to the whiteness of ships and their segregated accommodations. “Every ship in the Fleet is an oil burner, white and clean, with no cinders or smoke to mar the enjoyment of long days spent on carefully awninged decks.”\textsuperscript{776} President-elect Warren Harding traveled from New Orleans to the Panama Canal in November 1920 aboard the SS \textit{Parismina}, repainted “from stem to stern,” returning to New York on the SS \textit{Pastores}.\textsuperscript{777} Holding up United Fruit as a model of laissez-faire, \textit{National Magazine} declared Harding was “desirous of observing what the individual, fired by American initiative, was doing ‘on its own bottoms,’ independent of the financing of government budget.”\textsuperscript{778}

Passenger service brought prestige but limited profits. The first ships built by Workman Clark of Belfast for United Fruit after the war, the 3,600-Ton San-boats had accommodations for only four passengers.\textsuperscript{779} Four 2,800-Ton cargo ships \textit{Maravi}, \textit{Macabi Manaqui}, \textit{Mayari}, named for sugar-growing regions of eastern Cuban, hauled raw sugar from United Fruit Sugar Co. centrales (sugar mills) to its Revere refinery in Boston.\textsuperscript{780}

As United Fruit resumed passenger service, the Old Spanish Trail Association was revived in 1919. Delegates agreed on a route from Houston through San Antonio to El Paso,
linking the Army bases of Fort Sam Houston and Fort Bliss.  

By February 1920, 280 of 597 miles of gravel road through Texas were completed. In April, a party made a 400-mile journey to Van Horne, where the Old Spanish Trail intersected the Bankhead Highway. Despite recognition of the military value of the Old Spanish Trail, the Pershing Map designated the Bankhead Highway as the southern trunk line of the U.S. highway system. In a display of the military importance of highways, on June 14, 1920 an Army convoy of sixty-five motor vehicles departed Washington, D.C., traveling west across the Bankhead Highway and arriving in Los Angeles on October 9.

Even as military planters designated the Bankhead as the nation’s main southern highway, road builders in the Gulf South emphasized the importance of the Old Spanish Trail. At a January 1921 convention in Gulfport, Mississippi, at the Grand Southern Hotel, Pascagoula Judge Charles Chidsey delivered a speech on “The Old Spanish Trail as a Military Necessity.” Harral Ayres traveled to Washington, D.C. in June 1922, with San Antonio Rep. Harry Wurzbach, gathering signatures to declare the Old Spanish Trail a basic trunk-line of the U.S. highway system. Secretary of War Gen. J.M. Wainwright insisted on the need for highways along the Gulf of Mexico coast and Mexican border. A Congressional declaration emphasized its value of as a military and tourist trail. The report declared the southern rim of the U.S. to be

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781 In 1917-18 San Antonio’s Fort Sam Houston saw over 1,400 buildings built to house and train 112,000 soldiers  
El Paso’s Fort Bliss expanded with a steel hangar for twenty-seven airplanes, brick barracks for the 7th Cavalry and a brick cantonment for the 82rd field artillery “Extensive Improvements at Fort Bliss,” Texas Trade Review and Industrial Record 25 Sept. 15, 1920: 10  
782 “Texas and the Old Spanish Trail,” The Highway Engineer & Contractor Vol. 2 No. 1 February 1920, 57  
783 “The convoy consisted of 48 trucks, seven touring car and six motorcycles, 18 officers, 160 enlisted men, “Army Convoy Ends Trip over Bankhead Highway,” Western Highways Builder October 9, 1920, 23 Univ. of California Dig. Apr 14, 2014  
784 Charles Chidsey, “Credit for ‘Old Spanish Trail’ Highway Plan,” Manufacturers Record 82 Issue 1 June 27, 1922, 90 Univ. of California Dig. July 19, 2013  
785 Statement by the War Department, July 7, 1922, was signed by J.M. Wainright, Acting Secretary of War, The Old Spanish Trail: The Highway of Old History connecting Florida-California-Mexico Final Report, San Antonio, Texas, June 1, 1929, 7 George A Smathers Library, University of Florida
“the natural resort of the North American people,” due “its winter sunshine, its gulf pleasures in summer and its background of ancient and romantic history” noting that it “embraces all the extensive military, naval and air defenses and depots of the Gulf Coast and the Mexican border.” The symbiotic relationship between tourism and militarism drove the development of roads in the southern borderlands of the U.S., as tourism carried travelers further south.

5.1.3 Conquistadores Abroad

Prohibition led to a boom in tourism to Tijuana, other Mexican border-towns and Havana, Cuba, with smaller but significant numbers of tourists traveling further south. Travel guides and advertisements illustrated early explorers, conquistadores and pirates, guiding tourists to scenes of antiquity and recreational activities epitomizing masculine modernity. Tourists were latter-day conquistadores, enjoying illicit pleasures unavailable at home, while benefitting from privileges secured by U.S. power.

On July 4, 1920, the first under Prohibition, 65,000 people visited Tijuana in 12,654 cars, exhausting San Diego’s gas supply. Hollywood actors, including Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Fatty Arbuckle, frequented Tijuana. Prohibitionists deplored, and tourists flocked to, Tijuana’s “gambling dens, long drinking bars, dance halls, hop joints, cribs for prostitutes, cock fights, dog fights, bullfights.” More than two-thirds of travelers to California via southern highways first visited Mexico in Juárez, where “bars, cabarets, gambling houses, brothels, honky-tonks, lewd shops, and dope parlors” eclipsed cultural attractions of the Old Mission.

786 "Washington Declaration, June 1922" The Old Spanish Trail: The Highway of Old History connecting Florida-California-Mexico Final Report by the Executive Board, San Antonio, Texas, June 1, 1929, 5-6
788 Quoted in Humberto Félix Bauerman, Tijuana la horrible: Entre la historia y el mito (Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2003), 178
One of the first motor lodges, in the Pueblo Revival style, opened in 1923 in El Paso “next to Juarez, Mexico, next door to demon rum.”

The number of tourists to Havana grew from 30,528 in 1924-25 to 62,547 in 1927-28, peaking after the Miami hurricane of 1926. The popular Terry’s guidebooks described not only historical attractions, hotels and restaurants, but also Havana’s red light districts, “delirious haunts where star-eyed radiant-faced señoritas and surprisingly emancipated demoiselles dance the winsome and beguiling habanera without fear of being pinched by some solemn, horse faced minion of the law.”

United Fruit’s early guides, Cruising the Caribbean in the Wake of Pirates, extolled the “romance and history” of the Caribbean. Colorful illustrations recreated Hernando de Soto kissing his wife, doña Isabel de Bobadilla, on the ramparts of Castillo de la Real Fuerza in Havana harbor in 1539, before departing on his ill-fated expedition to La Florida, and English pirate Henry Morgan ransoming captured Spanish women after the 1670 sack of Panama. Such scenes suggested romance and sexual captivity. (Figure 5.3 and 5.4)

Gates of the Caribbean (1923), by William McFee, an Anglo-Canadian ship’s engineer for United Fruit, featured minimalist, black-and-white illustrations of cathedrals, beaches and the Panama Canal. Aimed at elite tourists paying higher fares, it analogies to the Mediterranean, while extolling “congeries of antiquity and modernity” unique to the Caribbean. In Havana, likened to Malta for its harbor, an illustration of the Cathedral, containing the tomb of Christopher Columbus, appears alongside accounts of the present-day city, suggesting its

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790. 1923 Newsreel Footage of Auto Court in El Paso” “Drive the Old Spanish Trail”
792. Terry’s Guide to Cuba Including the Isle of Pines (New York 1929), 200
793 Cruising the Caribbean in the wake of pirates (1915), 10 Latin American Library, Tulane University
idiosyncratic modernity. (Figure 5.5) Jai Alai, a sight “bizarre to a northern sportsmen,” attests to the masculine bravado of athletic culture, “Fords of unbelievable sumptuousness” serve as taxis, “more adapted to the narrow streets of a Spanish city.” New York fur merchant Richard Otto traveled to Havana on the SS Ulua. Impressed by Jai Lai “faster than base ball and far more spectacular,” compared to previous visits, he found “cracks in the wonderful Cuban sugarbowl” as a fall of sugar prices left Cubans “frankly poor and frankly sore,” humiliation exacerbated by uncouth U.S. tourists who “travel to Havana to become speedily and consistently stewed.”

With a sense of inferiority, white Southerners and upper class Cubans adopted the elite sporting culture of the Northern U.S., American football. In 1921, the Ole Miss Rebels football team traveled to Havana on the SS Atenas for a New Years game against Club Atlético de Cuba. “A few hours out to sea the boat started pitching back and forth and our boys got green,” recalled captain Lawrence Wells. “Somebody told us we wouldn’t get sick if we’d eat a lot and keep our stomachs full. That is what we did and we had a great trip despite loosing the game.” The Cuban team dominated, winning 21-0. This small but symbolic victory in an elite and quintessentially North American sport, one that was not embraced by the Cuban masses, in contrast to more populist baseball, challenged narratives of U.S. superiority and U.S. whites as conquerors abroad.

Themes of conquest were prevalent in guides. In one advertisement, silhouettes of Spanish conquistadores arise from the smokestack of a United Fruit ship, alongside the ruins of Old Panama Cathedral. (Figure 5.6) In McFee’s guide the Panama Canal was billed as a “tribute

794. Fords have “elaborate upholstery and a system of colored plates which identify them to the initiated. And while it would not do to accuse the drivers of attempting suicide as they shoot with startling velocity across the city streets, they recall the story of an indignant American in Paris who asked his drive ‘If they had no speed limit in that city.’” William McFee, The Gates of the Caribbean: The Story of a Great White Fleet Caribbean Cruise (Boston: United Fruit Co. Steamship Service, 1923), 4, 7


796. Lawrence Wells, Ole Miss Football (Oxford, Ms. Sports Yearbook, 1980), 27
to the men who faced and conquered a narrow strip of volcanic jungle and fever-haunted swamp,” a pantheon of white masculine heroes, “whether conquistadores or merchants or buccaneers.” This was seen in Old Panama’s ruins, tales of buccaneers and “dauntless young men from New York and New England” en route to Gold Rush California, on the Chagres River, as Black rowers sing, “Ol’ Susanna don’t you cry for me/I’m off to California wid’ my banjo on my knee.” These images evoke white stereotypes of Black physical strength and musicality, omitting the West Indian “silver-roll” workers who build the Canal.

Richard Otto, marveling at the Canal, is disdainful of Panama. “Apart from the many American officers and enlisted men I did not see a single white person.” Offended by “fancy niggers,” “from Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad, big lazy fellows that assure you they are ‘British subjects, Sah!’” he was contemptuous of “native Indians who speak Spanish.” Costa Rica compares favorably. From the sweltering port of Limón, where ants from loaded bananas infest passenger quarters, a train ride past “Uncle Tom cabins” with “happy plantation negroes,” through mountains and jungles. They arrived in San José, with a “delightful climate, mild days, cold nights,” “dignified elderly couples, dressed in somber black and looking quite respectable apart from the fact that they are barefoot,” and an Independence Day parade of schoolchildren “without one black face among them, the negro not allowed to enter the interior.” United Fruit advertised Guatemala, with “relics of the lost civilizations of the Mayan Indians.” Radical journalist Carlton Beals, visiting the ruins of Quiriguá, found no vacancy in the company hotel or Los Amates, a “straggling thatched-roof Indian pueblo” with clapboard houses where

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797. William MeFee, *Gates of the Caribbean*, 15
798. This includes “a sprinkling of East Indians, Chinese, Japanese” “unhappy blends of black” Richard Otto, “Otto’s 1921 Travelogue” *Fur Age* Vol. 7 November 1921: 34
799. Among the primitive scenes are “the old bullock carts with solid wooden wheels, exactly as used in the time of the well known firm of Abraham, Issac & Jacob,” Richard Otto, “Otto’s 1921 Travelogue” *Fur Age* Vol. 7 November 1921: 34
800. The Gates of the Caribbean
“employees of the company on Saturday nights bestow money and caresses on mulatto and Indian girls,” and slept on the porch of the hotel “lulled to repose by a mosquito symphony.” While more adventurous travelers like Carlton Beals were critical of U.S. imperialism, the vast majority of white tourists, whose enjoyment of tropical leisure and pleasure depended upon the power of the U.S. and United Fruit, and asserted themselves as modern-day conquistadores.

5.1.4 Tropical Lands within the United States

While cruises remained an elite luxury, automobile ownership, reaching 15,000,000 by 1923, enabled middle-class families to enjoy vacations. Tourism-driven land and real estate booms in Florida, Southern California and the Southwest fostered a “Spanish fantasy past,” claiming the mantle of Spanish history through narratives that relegated present-day Hispanics and Blacks to the roles of romantic primitives. The Old Spanish Trail Association, which first promoted an “Orange Groves to Orange Groves” Trail, refined its marketing campaign under the leadership of New Jersey financier Harral Ayres, residing in San Antonio due to aiding health. Ayres crafted a narrative of a road “in the footsteps of padres and conquistadores,” that would “keep alive the remarkable history of the old Spanish days, of Cavalier and Conqueror, of Columbus, Cortes and Pizarro, of Ponce de Leon, De Soto and Coronado and of the great orders of priests whose missions are scattered along the Trail.” Mission ruins from San Diego to San Antonio, Louisiana’s Evangeline Oak, pepper harvests in New Iberia, Louisiana and the Old Gate of St. Augustine, Florida blended Southeast and Southwest into a single sunny southland, a mañana-land within the continental United States.

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803-“Cover,” *Old Spanish Trail* August 1920, Louis J. Blume Library, St. Marys University, San Antonio
A trade magazine of Southern manufacturers advertised a “Path-to-Paradise” along which motorists could travel “in the footsteps of the Spanish conquistador and the Franciscan monk, missionary to the Indians.” This proposed road would extend from “San Diego and the California chain of missions,” across Arizona and New Mexico “with their history of Spanish gold-seekers and Pueblo Indians,” through San Antonio to Louisiana, Florida and St. Augustine, with its “picturesque” colonial fort and “mission ruins” in New Smyrna, Florida and St. Mary’s Georgia.805 Coquina and tabby ruins of antebellum sugar mills misidentified as Spanish missions blended with pastoral scenes of Black poverty. On a branch of the Dixie Highway, a ferry across the Altamaha River in south Georgia passed through a “charming, practically unknown country where the sleepy donkey and equally lazy negro eke out an existence as picturesque and primitive as that bequeathed to them by the early Jesuits.”806 In a hybrid of racial and regional iconography, the “Path-to-Paradise” envisioned hotels and lunch-stations “at the end of each day’s journey” built “in the appearance of Spanish missions,” serving “typically Southern products and Southern dishes in Southern styles, cooked by black mammies.”807

San Antonio advertised its Spanish-Mexican heritage. Department store owner J.J. Sterue described a “Mexican Village” in San Antonio’s Breckenridge Park, where “the senoritas promenade one way on their path, while the senors promenade the other on theirs. Black eyes, warm smiles flash greetings of the heart and soul while the Banda de Juvenil plays the romantic heirs of their land and their Fathers.”808 Hispanic culture was relegated to a romantic past as “old traditions,” but Mexicans and Mexican Americans were the majority of South Texas’ population.

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805. “Path to Paradise” Planned as Part of Highway System Connecting Florida With Other Southern States,” Industrial Development and Manufacturers Record 77, January 15, 1920, 144
806. Florence Pette, “From the Wintry North to the Palmy South,” Motor Travel 11, no. 11 February 1920, 11
807. “Path to Paradise” Planned,” 144
808. J.J. Sterue, “Preserving the Old Traditions,” Old Spanish Trail, August 1920, 18
Consul Gonzalo de la Mata found “the streets of the Mexican quarter are daily thronged with poor families, destitute or nearly destitute of funds and property, who are anxious to secure work. At nights hundreds of them sleep in the streets and in the open.”

Tourism promoters in the Southeast advertised semi-tropical nature and Spanish conquistadores, “cavaliers,” whose fates fit within the “Lost Cause” that romanticized the defeat of Confederacy in the U.S. Civil War. Gulfport mayor W.H. Bouslog extolled motoring along the Mississippi coast, as “the highway skirts the Gulf of Mexico, the Spanish Main of ancient days and a French sea when the French peopled Louisiana. On the land side of the road, sheltered in moss-draped lived oaks, are the homes and hotels of the people.”

The Mobile chamber of commerce described the 1542 battle where “De Soto’s army of Spanish caballeros and soldiers” fought “an Indian kingdom” of Tuscaloosa. The Indian chief “perfect specimen of physical manhood,” although his warriors “could not stand up against horses, gunpowder and armor,” “from that day forward the Spanish grandees and adventurers drank deep of the bitter cup and three years through the jungles of the South and into the jungles of despair.”

Hot Springs, Arkansas, a resort in the Ozark Mountains, advertised alleged ties to de Soto. Arkansas historian Dallas Herndon, quoting a survivor of the expedition, the ‘Gentlemen of Elvas,’ describing a “lake of hot brackish water,” wrote, “it is practically certain that they were at the now famous Hot Springs.”

Tourism magazines boasted that de Soto, in his 1541 visit, was

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809. “Mexican Laborers Flooding South Texas—Declared that All Will be Needed on the Farms, When Properly Distributed,” Industrial Review and Manufacturers Record, March 25, 1920, 126 New York Public Library Dig. Nov. 18, 2013
810. W.H. Bouslog, “Along the Shores of the Gulf,” Old Spanish Trail August 1920, 10
811. “Mobile, Pride of the Old South: Birthplace of the Old Spanish Trail and Reminiscent of Ancient history, Old Spanish Trail August 1920, 11
Hot Springs “first press agent.”\(^{813}\) A ‘Hernando De Soto Fountain,’ with a statue of the Spanish conquistador receiving a drink from an Indian maiden, decorated the men’s hall of the Fordyce bathhouse.\(^{814}\) Fantasies of a pastoral southland fueled the growth of tourism, portraying land that was timeless and seasonless, but these marketing ploys overlooked modernization of dependent development.

5.1.5 Business and Bananas in the Gulf South

The roles of the Central American banana trade and tourism in the Gulf South epitomized how economic development in a region that remained in many respects an internal colony of Northern capital was closely tied to U.S. imperialism in Latin America. A 1921 Chamber of Commerce report, “New Orleans the World’s Greatest Port,” predicted that, as the U.S. turned from war-raved Europe to resource-rich Latin America, “the advantages which made New York are now handed over to New Orleans.”\(^{815}\) At a January 1926 convention the Western Fruit Jobbers Association at New Orleans’ Roosevelt Hotel, Victor Cutter, president of United Fruit, announced, barring “a serious storm or other unforeseen consequences,” plans to import 16 million bunches.\(^{816}\) A Spanish-language guide of the Pan-American Union promoted New Orleans as a port of entry for Latin American businessmen and tourists, due to geographic and cultural proximity. The guide described New Orleans’ Mardis Gras Carnival, noting its “customs, traditions and idiosyncrasies very much resemble those of Latin peoples, and for this reason the matters of Latin American businessmen receive the best reception and are well

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\(^{813}\) ‘Our First Natural Park: De Soto was its First Press Agent,’ *Outing: Sport, Adventure Travel, Fiction*, Vol. 75 (1920), 295

\(^{814}\) The Fordyce Bathhouse, Hot Springs National Park (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1988)

\(^{815}\) John H. Berhard, published by the New Orleans Association of Commerce, New Orleans as the World’s Greatest Port, June, 1921, 51 Louisiana Heritage Collection, Jones Hall, Tulane University

\(^{816}\) “Greater Banana Trade to Boost City’s Prosperity: United Fruit Company to Increase Shipments, President Says” New Orleans Times-Picayune, January 13, 1926 Victor Cutter papers, Box 3, Folder 2 Baker-Berry Library, Dartmouth University
understood and cared for." Photos of Canal Street and the Garden District appear alongside the Tennessee River from Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga, which offered northbound travelers their first view of temperate mountain landscapes.

Despite New Orleans’ importance as a port, its geography presented barriers to transportation. Motorists heading east had to take a $10-20.50 ferry across Lake Pontchartrain, and pay $8 to cross the Pearl River on the ferry of the Weston Lumber Co. sawmill in Logtown, Mississippi, until the operation shut down in 1930. Mississippi’s Gulf Coast, a haven for Cuban rumrunners since the state became the first to enact prohibition in 1906, was transformed into “an American Riviera,” of such palatial hotels as the Tivoli, Buena Vista, Edgewater Gulf and Gulfport’s Grand Southern. Doctors extolled balmy breezes that blew off the “sun-kissed wavelets of the Mexican Gulf” but called for removal of “tumble down fences and shanties” and the building of a concrete wall. In 1924, Harrison County, Mississippi authorized a 2% gasoline tax for 22 miles of seawall, paving and concrete bridges. (Figure 5.8) At the center of the seawall was Gulfport. Founded in 1898 as a lumber port for the Gulfport & Ship Island Railway, lacking the romantic French and Spanish history of its neighbors, civic and business leaders advertised the port’s future as a “gateway to Panama” and port for the Central American banana trade, on the grounds that it closer to open sea than New Orleans and Mobile.

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817. *Viajando por los Estados Unidos* (Washington, D.C., Unión Panamericana 1931) 26
820. “Mississippi Gulf Coast” “Old Spanish Trail: Highway of the Southern Borderlands (August 1926), 15
821. “Take a fruit ship from South American ports and it is about 24 hours shorter route to Chicago and Northern markets through Gulfport than by New Orleans. Fruit, after being on salt water, when striking fresh water, as it does coming up the Mississippi River for a distance of 110 miles to New Orleans, begins to rot.” B.C. Cox, *Gulfport, Gateway to Panama* (Gulfport Commercial Union, 1909), 7
Overlapping routes of highways led to confusion about names. At the Dixie Highway Convention in Jacksonville in May 1922, the Old Spanish Trail ceded north-south routes to Tampa and Miami, for roads from Tallahassee to Jacksonville. Built over the Apalachicola River at Chattahoochee, Florida in 1922 at a cost of $1 million, “Victory Bridge” was promoted as part of “the Old Spanish Trail from Jacksonville to New Orleans and on to San Francisco, which has been selected as one of the main military roads of the country.”

Minor Keith bought the German-American Lumber Co of West Florida, seeking new sources of pine lumber for Central American railways. He acquired Lynn Haven, a Union veterans colony, along with 200 acres of timberland and a lumber mill in Panama City, Florida, on a direct line from Chicago to the Panama Canal. Together with Coca-Cola’s president Asa Candler, he bought the Atlanta & St. Andrew’s Bay Railway, but the Georgia Central blocked a planned railway to Atlanta. In 1920, Minor Keith opened the Pines and Lynn Haven Hotels on St. Andrew’s Bay. A promoter described the climate as “Cleopatran, for this bay lies on the same line of latitude as Egypt,” hoping “what [Henry] Flagler has done for the east coast and [Henry] Plant has done for the southwest coast, we are hoping Keith may do for the St. Andrews Bay community.”

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822. S.H. Peck, “The Progress of the Work: The Old Spanish Trail is one of the Oldest Continental Highway Projects in the United States and one of the Most Difficult to Build” *Old Spanish Trail Travel-log West Texas Edition* (San Antonio, Texas: 1925), 43-44
824. German-American Lumber Company Records, 1887-1927, MSS 1986-27 Florida State University
826. “Atlanta & St. Andrew’s Bay Railroad Company, Moody’s Manual of Investments, American and Foreign Transportation (Moody’s Investor Service, 1921), 352
In more tropical South Florida, the Land Boom fueled excessive optimism about tropical agriculture. W.E. Boles of Oldsmar, on Tampa Bay, formed the Florida Banana Growers Association in 1920, with 230 members by 1923. He promoted the cultivation of Dwarf Cavendish bananas, grown in the semi-tropical Canary Islands, promising profits of “$400-1,000 per acre,” greater than oranges or grapefruit. 828 An article in a citrus-growers periodical pointed out that the Southern California citrus belt was on the same latitude as Charleston, South Carolina. It called for the adoption of the oil-burning smudge pots used by California citrus growers to prevent frost, since Florida was “as well suited for the tropical fruits as California is for semi-tropical.” 829 Nothing came of these efforts, due to the high costs of land, Florida’s semi-tropical climate, with periodic cold spells, and difficulties transporting the thin-skinned Cavendish hampered banana growing. The Cavendish bananas was immune to Panama disease of the Gros Michel banana, and rhizomes were planted on Standard Fruit plantations in La Ceiba, Honduras in the 1940s. 830 In 1962, a dockside berth was dredged at Gulfport, Mississippi to serve a new terminal, along Intersate-10, successor to the Old Spanish Trail, enabling boxes of bananas to be loaded onto motor trucks. 831 The visions of civic boosters in Gulfport would be realized by the mid-twentieth century, due in part to efforts at regional economic and infrastructural development in the Gulf South during the 1920s.

828 W.E. Bolles, Secretary of the Florida Banana Growers Association, Commercial Banana Growing (Tampa, 1921), 4-5 George A. Smathers Library, University of Florida
829 John B. Beach, “Beach Advises Planting Avocados and Bananas,” The Citrus Industry Vol. 4 No. 11 November 1923, 17 Orbach Library, University of California, Riverside
830 Thomas L. Karnes, Tropical Enterprise: The Standard Fruit Company in Latin America (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 283-284
831 “United States Seaports, Gulf coast” “Gulfport Mississippi,” (1962), 106
5.1.6 *Bridging Waterways, Spanning Oceans*

As the Old Spanish Trail abandoned ambitious plans for a highway that ran from Miami to Los Angeles, the western part of the road reached completion. When the first zero milestone was dedicated in San Diego in 1923, Col. Ed Fletcher reading an address by U.S. President Calvin Coolidge, who pressed a button in Washington, D.C. that set off a mission bell. In 1924, Texas Governor Pat Neff, dedicated a second marker, a boulder of Texas granite, in San Antonio’s Military Plaza, the Hispanic Plaza de Armas.\(^{832}\)

In the poorer states of the U.S. Deep South, bays and rivers were obstacles to road building. Travelers crossing Mobile Bay relied on private ferries, “bay boats,” that cost $4-6. Traveling auditor R.L. Bodine, in 1921, waited four hours for a ferry on the dock at Fairhope, on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, during which time a truck carrying oranges struck his car.\(^{833}\) Bridge building galvanized the Mobile Chamber of Commerce and railroad magnate John T. Cochrane. The Cochrane Bridge over Mobile Bay, ten and a half miles of steel spans, concrete trestles and dredged causeways, opened on June 4, 1927. (Figure 5.10) Over 500 motor vehicles crossed in the first thirteen hours, each one paying $1 per car.\(^{834}\) The bridge ensured a “ferryless roadway between all the cities of the American Riviera, from Pensacola to New Orleans, and thence to the Pacific Coast.”\(^{835}\) While Alabama Governor Bibb Graves spoke of sectional reconciliation, his wife Dixie christened the Tenesaw River trestle with a bottle of Satsuma orange juice.\(^{836}\) The road cut through Africatown, founded by West Africans who arrived with the last illegal shipment of slaves to the U.S. in 1859, including Cudjoe Lewis, last known

\(^{832}\)“Zero Monuments-San Antonio, Texas and San Diego, California,” Old Spanish Trail Travelog March 1929, 11
\(^{834}\)“Bridge Dedication a Riot of Pomp and Color” Mobile Register, Wednesday June, 15, 1927 Cochrane Bridge Collection, Folder 3 Local History & Genealogy Library, Mobile Public Library
\(^{835}\)“The Bridge,” Charles Cochrane Collection, Box 6 Folder 1 McCall Library, University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama
\(^{836}\)“Bridge Dedication a Riot of Pomp and Color” *Mobile Register*, Wednesday June, 15, 1927
A writer for the *Chicago Tribune* in 1931, observing convict labor on unpaved roads on the eastern shore of Mobile, described slavery-like conditions: “A crew of Negro convicts, in black and white stripes and bossed by foremen with rifles, keep the dirt level in dry weather, and they are sometimes there to push cars when the rain turns the roads to a sea of mud.”

Bridge construction occurred alongside the Alabama State Docks. Directed by William Sibert, who oversaw the building of the Gatún Locks and Dams on the Panama Canal, the Docks featured coalbunkers, an industrial canal, and rail and switching facilities. City officials envisioned the Docks as the key to Mobile’s future role as a port for Latin American trade.

During bridge opening, in a ceremony exemplifying privileges accorded elite Latin Americans, Governor Graves paid respects to Capt. Alan Cuellas of the Mexican Navy gunboat *Bravo*, in Mobile for repairs. The *Mobile Register* urged U.S. manufacturers to look to Latin America. This region represented “[t]he market at our door,” where “purchasing power and demand are lower than normal” but growing. The article cited Mexican President Plutarco Elias Calles, “who told American shoe manufacturers several years ago that there are eight million barefooted Mexicans who would wear shoes if properly approached and educated to that habit.”

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840. “Governor, Mayor Pay Respects of Gunboat Captain.” *Mobile Register*, Wednesday June, 15, 1927. Local History & Genealogy Library, Mobile, AL.

Mexican Presidents Álvaro Obregón and Plutarco Elias Calles, who led the so-called “Sonora gang,” commercial farmers and professionals from Mexico’s northernmost state, recognized the importance of roads. Mexico’s Comisión Nacional de Caminos made plans for a Rio Grande-Mexico City highway. The first forty-mile segment from Mexico City to the silver mining town of Pachuca, Hidalgo, en route to Laredo, opened in 1926.\textsuperscript{842} The Meridian Highway from Winnipeg, Canada to Galveston, Texas was extended to Laredo and construction began on a road from Nuevo Laredo to Montemorelos, Nuevo León, south of Monterrey.\textsuperscript{843} Old Spanish Trail guides urged adventurous motorists to travel further south, reminding them “Border Towns Are Not the Real Mexico,” but warned promises of a highway to Mexico City by 1931, “does not mean it will be a good road or provided with reasonable conveniences so soon.”\textsuperscript{844}

As roads and ports spanned the Mexican borderlands and Gulf of Mexico, United Fruit entered the Pacific. High costs of transporting bananas overland from New Orleans and Galveston led fruit wholesalers in Los Angeles to erect refrigerated banana plants.\textsuperscript{845} The fruit needs of California were met by monthly shipment to San Francisco of Cavendish bananas from Hawai‘i, wrapped in banana leaves and rice straw, and shipments from Salina Cruz, Oaxaca, Mexico to Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{846} In October 1927, United Fruit’s oldest ship the SS Limon, brought the first bananas from Limón, Costa Rica, to San Francisco. Transiting the Panama Canal and

\textsuperscript{842} Los Caminos de México, Bibliografía mexicana de estadística, Vol. 2 (1926), 535;
\textsuperscript{843} Howard Erlichmen, Camino del Norte: How a Series of Watering Holes, Fords and Dirt Trails Evolved into Interstate 35 in Texas (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006), 160-165, 170-226; E.A. Kingsley, “Mexico to Undertake Extensive Broad Building Program” Good Roads Vol. 61 Aug. 21, 1921, 62; Genesis y evolución de la administración pública de Nuevo León (2005)
\textsuperscript{844} “Sectional Description of the OST” Old Spanish Trail Travel Bulletin (Fort Stockton, 1931), 3
\textsuperscript{845} “One of the Largest and Most Complete Banana Plants of Pacific Coast Installed by W.W. Crenshaw of Los Angeles,” Fruit Dispatch Vol. 10 No. 7 November 1924
\textsuperscript{846} A small quantity, about 250,000 bunches, is shipped to San Francisco from the Hawaiian Islands. Philip Keep Reynolds, The Banana: Its History, Cultivation and Place Among Staple Foods (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927), 65-66; Weekly shipments of 15,000 bunches in the vessels making a speed which should land the fruit in Los Angeles from eight to ten days” “More Mexican Bananas for the United States,” The Citrus Industry (Tampa), March 1923: 14
facing stormy weather off the Gulf of Tehuantepec, Oaxaca, it arrived at its destination with 45,000 bunches on November 6. The Norwegian captain Einar Peterson and ship-engineer John Melville received the keys to the city. With new banana plantations developing around Puerto Armuelles, Panama, the SS San Mateo and other ships began service from Panama to San Francisco and Los Angeles via Balboa, Puerto Armuelles and San José de Guatemala. The SS San Mateo brought the first cargo of bananas purchased by United Fruit in Guayaquil, Ecuador to the enlarged port of Mobile, Alabama in January 1934.

The Los Angeles Star Herald, describing the voyage of the Limon, reminded readers of California’s Gold Rush ties to Panama. “In the days of the ‘Forty-niners’ millions of dollars of gold from California came to Panama, the greater part of it being carried back to the East Coast of the United States by the men who made their stakes in the gold fields. Tuesday the United Fruit Company began its service of shipping the ‘green gold of the tropics’ to California.” Promoting the region as an export market for manufactured goods, it quoted Victor Cutter on of the merchandise business of United Fruit fleet had grown from $3,000,000 to $10,000,000 over the last fifteen years. This rise was attributed to the companies’ civilizing influence, ignoring Latin America’s economic and demographic growth.

Samuel Crowther, a Philadelphia journalist and collaborator with Henry Ford, likened the banana to the automobile as luxuries, turned consumer necessities through mass production. He urged U.S. manufacturers to look south, where “the steamship service of the United Fruit company to Caribbean ports is so fast and so regular that these countries can be included in

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850. “Green Cold to California” Los Angeles Star Herald October 27, 1927 Box 3 Folder 2 VCP  
851. “Green Cold to California” Los Angeles Star Herald October 27, 1927 Box 3, Folder 3, VCP
freight routes with little more trouble than in they were domestic cities.”852 Linking consumerism with public health, the role of shoes in the fight against hookworm, he proclaimed advertising t“is reaching the mozo,” describing thatched roof huts of workers whose only possessions were “a cotton shirt and a pair of trousers, a machete and a hat” were “completely covered with American magazine pages.”853 Crowther pointed to the Southwestern U.S. as proof that cultural differences were not barriers to consumer demand. “A Michigan manufacturer who sets out to sell automobiles in Texas-parts of which are more Spanish than Central America-does not study, say San Antonio as a foreign land.”854 On the eve of the Depression, as widening inequalities festered beneath a façade of abundance calls for globalized U.S. capitalism were crouched in warnings of under-consumption.

5.1.7 Conclusion

“Going south, headed for one of the Gates of that alluring congeries of romance and modernity we call the Caribbean, our emotions have certain special qualities apart from those engendered by any ordinary trip abroad,” inspiring “a new curiosity, a vague notion of doing something romantic.”855 For tourists cruising the Caribbean aboard the luxurious ships of United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet” or motoring across the “Spanish borderlands” on the Old Spanish Trail highway, a Spanish “fantasy past” situated U.S. whites as latter-day conquistadores, partaking in the pleasures of the tropics, while enjoying the protections of U.S. empire.

The promotion of tropical tourism as a relief from the climactic and cultural rigors of northern civilization subtly fostered an incipient sense of romantic racialism, affirming and even

853. Samuel Crowther, The Romance and Rise of the American Tropics, 344
855. William McFee, The Gates of the Caribbean, 3
celebrating racial differences. However, in an age that was apogee of worldwide white supremacy, the growth of tropical tourism strengthened white supremacist ideals while enforcing U.S.-style racial segregation on a transnational scale. The gleaming white steamships, modern automobiles and paved highways that carried tourists south epitomized the modernity and technological prowess of U.S.-style capitalism. Tourists and travelers imagined links to Spanish conquistadors, explorers, and missionary padres, teleological narratives that legitimized U.S. empire building, while casting them as heirs to earlier European colonial empires. Such narratives served to relegate mestizo Hispanics and Blacks to roles of romantic primitives, at best picturesque tourist attractions, at worst racial nuisances. Tropes of the timeless tropics belied the radical modernity of the American Mediterranean, epitomized by the convergence of corporate agribusiness and militarism. Tourism and leisure rested on the foundations of a powerful U.S. empire and a state-corporate regime regulating the transnational space of the American Mediterranean, a tropical sea that spanned archipelagos of tropical fruit plantations, military bases and tourist resorts.

5.2 Security in a Sea of Storms

In 1922, The Wireless Age reported, “the Radio Corporation of America has received orders from the United Fruit Company for five radio stations, three for Central America and two for the United States, each with a sending radius of more than two thousand miles,” to “link the Americas” in a radio relay route that stretched from the U.S. across Central America to Bogotá, Colombia. These five stations: in New Orleans, Hialeah, Florida, Almirante, Panama, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Managua, Nicaragua, created a wireless radio-telephone and ship-to-

856 Five New Stations to Link the Americas by Radio’ The Wireless Age 10 no. 1, October 1922: 50 University of Michigan Library, Dig. Oct. 29, 2009
shore radio telegraph network that spanned the American Mediterranean. (Figure 5.11)
Alongside the automobile and oil-fueled steamships, the radio epitomized the technological revolutions of the 1920. The transcontinental Tropical Radio & Telegraph, with shares in the Radio Corporation of America, strengthened United Fruit’s dominance of the Caribbean Rim of Latin America, as the services it provided legitimized United Fruit’s ties to the U.S. government and exemplified the humanitarian pretenses of globalizing capitalism.

Communications historian Christina Drale describes the integral role of United Fruit’s Tropical Radio in the postwar rise of an American radio cartel. The expansion of Tropical Radio exemplifies the link between the companies’ humanitarian claims and the sordid realities of corporate imperialism, relying on military dictators to uphold neo-colonial concessions and suppress nationalist political and labor movements. Tropical Radio’s forecasts of developing hurricanes safeguarded tropical shipping and urban centers in the U.S. South and Cuba, even as this security was conspicuously unavailable for most of the Caribbean Rim of Latin America.

A false sense of security from hurricanes facilitated Florida’s tourism-driven land boom and the Prohibition era tourism boom in Cuba. Two 1926 hurricanes laid waste to Miami and Havana, inflicting deaths and enormous damage on the seaside showpieces of Miami Beach and Centro Habana, ripping away veneers of prosperity and revealing racial and class inequalities. Highly publicized accounts of damage hurricanes inflicted on wealthy neighborhoods stands in contrast to racist indifference to deaths of Afro-Cubans and Afro-Americans during these storms. Following these storms, floods on the Mississippi in 1927 and the Okechobee hurricane in 1928, highlight racist neglect of Blacks who died or were displaced, as well as the stark inequalities hidden by a decade of economic growth. In Cuba and the U.S. South, hurricanes and floods dealt

blows to sugar and cotton plantations, and the systems of agricultural tenancy that sustained plantation economies since the abolition of slavery. United Fruit’s Tropical Radio represented struggles for order by transnational corporate capitalism, but hurricanes and other natural disasters, the winds of change, brought about socio-economic, cultural and political transformations across the American Mediterranean.

5.2.1 The Expansion of Tropical Radio

As one the earliest investors in the radio telegraph, United Fruit Co. acquired a minority interest in the Radio Corporation of America, organized in 1919 by General Electric of New York to control the emerging radio industry. Tropical Radio head George S. Davis served on RCA’s board of directors. In 1921 a cross-licensing agreement with RCA gave it a broadcasting monopoly in “Fruit Company Territory,” e.g. almost all of Central America.858

Tropical Radio president George S. Davis contracted A.W. Buell, who had designed bridges for Minor Keith’s railways in Costa Rica and Guatemala, developing triangular steel radio towers.859 William Beakes, involved in the earliest experiments with radio, became Chief Engineer, and Col. W.P. Rothrock, of Pittsburgh’s Fort Pitt Bridge Works, who supervised the third tracking of the New York Elevated rail, its Chief Designing Engineer.860 In 1921, United Fruit erected a 350-ft tower in Almirante, Panama.861 Radio equipment, engines and steel for a 420-foot tower were shipped to Amapala, on the Pacific coast of Honduras, lightered ashore through mangroves, and “hauled, packed or dragged by ox teams” up an 80-mile mountain trail.

859Charles Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 164
861Panama Canal Record Vol. 15 (1922) 202; Radio Service Bulletin Issues 41-60, 10
to Tegucigalpa.\textsuperscript{862} In the remote capital of Honduras, a town of only 30,000 with no railroad connections, the largest wireless station in the Americas was placed in service in December 1922. \textsuperscript{863} In Managua, Nicaragua, where 100 U.S. Marines enforced a 1916 treaty making the country a protectorate, Tropical Radio commissioned a station with a 320-ft steel tower, giving “direct communication with the U.S. through Miami and New Orleans.”\textsuperscript{864} Tropical Radio expanded its New Orleans station, on Lake Pontchartrain. In 1923, it commissioned a 90-acre station with two 432-foot steel towers, later expanded to five, near Miami, in Hialeah. Hialeah was a real estate development of aviator Glenn Curtiss on the “high prairie” at the edge of the Everglades, where Seminole Indians had docked their canoes to display alligator pelts and ibis plumes.\textsuperscript{865} The costs of construction, with the refitting of stations in Swan Island, Santa Marta and Burrwood, exceeded $4 million, “far beyond the immediate needs of the banana trade.”\textsuperscript{866}

As the Tropical Radio network expanded, company officials increased the services it provided for commercial shipping in the Caribbean. In August 1922, Tropical Radio inaugurated free medical radio service from all United Fruit hospitals and passenger ships carrying physicians, “primarily for the benefit of ships not carrying doctors.”\textsuperscript{867} Eighteen messages were handled in the first six months, 147 in 1923. In one message, a cattle-boat owned by Lykes Brothers of New Orleans, en route from Barranquilla, Colombia to Veracruz, Mexico, radioed a

\textsuperscript{866} Charles Morrow Wilson, \textit{Empire in Green and Gold}, 165-166
\textsuperscript{867} Radio Service Bulletin, issued by Monthly Bureau of Navigation Washington DC, November 1, 1922-No. 67: 10
call for aid to the United Fruit SS Calamares, whose physician advised the crew how to sew up wounds of a crewman with deep gashes on his forearms that had severed several arteries.\textsuperscript{868} United Fruit positioned itself as a benevolent hegemon. In \textit{Radio Broadcast} in 1922, Roy Mason proclaimed Tropical Radio “characteristic of the true American spirit of initiative,” proof of the benefits of private enterprise over “government ownership and regulation.”\textsuperscript{869} A transnational corporate colonial empire that epitomized the technological revolutions of a new century was thus celebrated in the language of classical liberalism and American individualism.

5.2.2 \textbf{Dictatorships and Gunboat Diplomacy}

United Fruit Co. continued its close partnership with Guatemala’s aging dictator Miguel Estrada Cabrera, weathering the political turmoil caused by the collapse of his regime. In April 1918, United Fruit received a concession to build a wireless station in Puerto Barrios, with connections to Guatemala City, “for the general public to fully utilize the benefits of wireless communication with the rest of the world.”\textsuperscript{870} A series of tremors from November 1917 to January 1918 destroyed Guatemala City and the colonial capital of Antigua. In the Cementerio General 8,000 dead were shaken from their graves, threatening pestilence.\textsuperscript{871} Authorities burned corpses in a giant bonfire. Discredited by his handling of the earthquake, Estrada Cabrera refused to leave office after being declared mentally unfit by the National Assembly. On April 9, 1920, soldiers attacked students and workers marching in support of the new Unionist Party. Revolutionaries seized control of Guatemala City, raiding Army barracks and capturing French

\textsuperscript{868}George S. Davis, The Radio Medical Service, United Fruit Medical Department Report (1927), 162
\textsuperscript{869} Roy Mason, The History of the United Fruit’s Radio Telegraph System, \textit{Radio Broadcast} Vol. 1 No. 5, September 1922, 399
\textsuperscript{870} Contrato celebrado el día de 1918 entre el Gobierno de Guatemala (que en lo de adelante se llamará el Gobierno) por una parte y la United Fruit Company, Secretaría de Estado en el Despacho de Fomento, Guatemala, C.A. Año de 1918, AGCA
\textsuperscript{871} Louis Cavarbel, \textit{Au Guatemala, L’Illustration} (Paris, France, 1918)
howitzers. Besieged in San José Castle on April 20, Estrada Cabrera surrendered.\footnote{Adrián Vidaurre, Los últimos treinta años pasados de la vida política de Guatemala (La Habana: Imprenta Sainz, Arca y Cia, 1921)} President Carlos Herrera refused to approve United Fruit’s concessions and revived plans for a Central American Union. He was deposed in a coup led by Gen. José María Orellana in December 1921.\footnote{“...by the Government of Carlos Herrera, President of Guatemala...was overthrown in the early morning hours of December 5. Forty-five persons were killed and scores wounded in the brief fighting with the police of Guatemala City, the capital” “Thomas Dawley, “How the Central American Union Was Born,” \textit{Current History} Vol. 15 Issue 2, February 1922: 626} Guatemala’s wireless station in Puerto Barrios was built 1923, after General Electric’s Electric Bond and Share Company acquired the formerly German owned Empresa Electrica.\footnote{Llegó a Puerto Barrios el Material Pedido por la ‘United Fruit Company’ para la Construcción de una Nueva Estación Inalámbrica, \textit{Diario de Centro América}, 3 de Abril, 1923, Hemeroteca Valenzuela, Biblioteca Nacional de Guatemala} 

In neighboring Honduras, economic rivalries between banana companies exacerbated political instability and posed additional challenges for United Fruit. A disputed Presidential election led to a civil war in March 1924. United Fruit backed Tiburcio Carías Andino against a Liberal regime favorable to its rivals, Vaccaro Brothers (Standard Fruit) and Sam Zemurray’s Cuyamel Fruit Co. Carías besieged Tegucigalpa with 4,000 men. His ally Gen. Vicente Tosta moved on the Vaccaro port of La Ceiba; four acres burned in the fighting, the U.S. consulate was fired upon, with a U.S. citizen killed. Thirty-five Marines from the USS \textit{Denver} landed on February 29.\footnote{Los Caudillos de la Revolución Convinieron en Proclamar al Señor Davila como Elemento de Conciliación de los Hondureños \textit{Excelsior} Jueves 27 de Marzo.; Los Desastres de la Actual Revolución de Honduras; Información Gráfica de Algunos Aspectos de la Ruina Ocasionada por Incendios en San Pedro Sula, \textit{Excelsior}, Miércoles 26 de Marzo Hemeroteca Valenzuela, Biblioteca Nacional de Guatemala}

In the United Fruit port of Puerto Castilla, U.S. consul Willard Beaulac, in “a sequel straight from O. Henry,” received a message from the rebels demanding the surrender of government forces and sent a request for a warship to proceed to Trujillo. In the home of the Melhados, Trujillo’s leading merchants, the commander agreed to turn over the city. Soldiers
“had broken into a cantina and got themselves properly liquored up. Groups of armed men, in various stages of inebriation, were pillaging stores and occasionally firing at one another in a disorganized way.” The arrival of a U.S. destroyer led to military patrols. For two months, 200 Marines occupied Tegucigalpa. The Tropical Radio station was placed under the protection of an armed guard, as Sumner Wells conducted negotiations aboard the cruiser USS *Milwaukee*.  

In *The Romance and Rise of the American Tropics* (1929), an effusive account of United Fruit’s private empire published on the eve of the Great Depression, author Samuel Crowther, described Honduras as showing the “Americanization of the Caribbean.” Tegucigalpa is “a tumbledown place, its single modern improvement being the American wireless station. By contrast, the “American zone” is a land of vast banana plantations, railroads and well-stocked commissaries that undersold Syrian merchants who trafficked in “bad liquor and firearms.” His account exaggerated the prosperity of banana enclaves and obscures how they fostered underdevelopment.

At an April 1928 speech at the Bond Club of New York, broadcast in Spanish over Tropical Radio, United Fruit president Victor Cutter urged Wall Street financiers to invest in Latin America. “Road building is in its infancy. Cotton cacao, tobacco, fruits, wool, rubber all await development, mining contracts are available, oil is present in abundance. Department stores are still unknown.” The Costa Rican newspaper *La Tribuna* published a response, insisting that the greatest barriers to trade were United Fruit’s monopolies, including Tropical Radio, “which aims to monopolize-always monopoly!-radiographic communications,” and

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878 Samuel Crowther, *The Romance and Rise of the American Tropics*, 256
879 *Knitting a Hemisphere*, *Wall Street Journal* April 3, 1928 Box 3, Victor Cutter Papers
prevented Mexico from supplying Honduras with a radio tower. United Fruit was independent from the U.S. government, but its private empire remained integral to U.S. power.

5.2.3 Hurricanes and Land Bubbles

As United Fruit tightened its grip over Central America, radio reports of storms provided an illusory sense of security. In September 1924 Tropical Radio’s Swan Island station began twice-daily weather reports “for the special benefit of all shipping in the Caribbean,” rebroadcasting reports from U.S. and British Naval stations in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, San Juan, Puerto Rico, Kingston, Jamaica and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad during hurricane seasons. Even with radio forecasting, hurricanes inflicted a deadly toll. Swan Island and the SS *Ellis*, an aging cargo ship en route from Honduras, reported a hurricane in October 1922, used by the Weather Bureau to issue to warnings to Florida. Instead, the storm struck the islands of Cozumel and Isla Mujeres, wrecking the *Nieves*, a Mexican Navy motorboat carrying passengers and cargos of copra, chicle and sponges from Quintana Roo. A survivor recalled, “We were about forty people, including a woman and three children, one of whom was breastfeeding. We spent 14 to 16 hours on the reef, suffering from cold, hunger and being battered and scrapped as we struggled in the choppy waves and the dreadful darkness.” Passing over the Yucatán, the storm caused damage and loss of life in Tabasco and Veracruz, stranding the Ward Line SS *Moro Castle*.

880. Un Discurso de Mr. Cutter Costa Rica La Tribuna April 18, 1928 Box 3 Victor Cutter Papers
883. “Entrevista con José María Cervara” La Revista de Yucatán, 25 de octubre 1922 in Felipe Madrid Villanueva, El Ciclón de 1922, TVIslasMujeres, 4 de Octubre de 2011
884. W.P. Day, Disturbances in southern waters during the hurricane season of 1922, Monthly Weather Review December, 1922, 657
On October 19, 1924 SS Heredia delivered a radio report as it was caught in cyclone. Capt. Burmeister recalled,

“The whole sea was a boiling, seething mass. It was impossible to see any distance. The sea was breaking in such a manner that it was impossible to tell whether the water in the air was rain or sea water. I estimated the wind to be below 120 mph. I ordered every pound of steam used in keeping her under control. There was water in the staterooms and even in the captain’s room on the bridge.”

The storm struck the Isle of Pines, demolishing the wireless station at La Fé and flooding grapefruit groves and packinghouses of U.S. settlers, dashing hopes for U.S. annexation.886 The hurricane killed 90 people in the fishing village Arroyos de Mantua, Pinar del Rio, where, as witnesses recalled “the sea rushed over the beach and the town with extraordinary force, destroying everything.”887 Winds reached 160 mph off Mariel, but the first recorded Category 5 hurricane skirted Havana, where Dr. José Carlos Millas of the Observatorio Nacional judged it “one of the most severe ever experienced at this latitude.” It weakened as it moved over Key West, where the SS Heredia’s report enabled ships to take shelter and the P & O Steamship to suspend Havana ferry service.888

The illusory sense of security from hurricanes resulting from regular weather reports, and a series of relatively calm storm seasons in which South Florida was spared a major hurricane

885-Extracts from Interview with Capt. Burmeister, Charles Mitchell, ‘Notes on the West Indian Hurricane of 1924,’ Monthly Weather Review, October, 1924, 497 docs.lib.noaa.gov
886- The 1925 Hay-Quesada Treaty recognized Cuban sovereignty over the Isle of Pines Treaty between the United States and Cuba for the Adjustment of Title to the Isle of Pines The American Journal of International Law Vol. 19 No 3 Supplement: Official Documents (Jul. 1925), 95-98
helped foster one of the most spectacular land bubbles in U.S. history. From 1920 to 1925, Miami’s population grew from 30,000 to 200,000.\footnote{For history of Florida’s 1920s Land Boom, John Kenneth Ballinger, \textit{Miami Millions: The Dance of Dollars in the Great Florida Land Boom} (Franklin Press, 1936); Nick Wynne, Richard Moorhead, \textit{Paradise for Sale! Florida’s Booms and Busts} (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010)} Tangled mangroves were drained and grand hotels, golf courses and polo grounds shops and palatial homes were built in pseudo-Spanish styles atop pumped-in sand around grass lawns and planted palm-trees.\footnote{Carl Fischer owned four polo grounds, four golf courses and six luxurious hotels worth $25 million, Stanley Turkel, \textit{Great American Hoteliers: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry} (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2009), 34-35} Dixie Highway developer Carl Fischer, John Collins and son-in-law Arthur Pancoast, of the Pancoast Hotel, barred Catholics and Jews from buying property. Blacks were barred from Miami Beach. Black women and men, who worked as maids, cooks, porters and janitors, were bussed in from Miami’s Colored Town and Coconut Grove.\footnote{Miami hip-hop artist and Liberty City native Luther Campbell wrote that at the time of his birth, in a Miami Beach Hospital in 1960, “black people weren’t even allowed to work on Miami Beach except to work as maids or janitors at the resorts. If you were a black person working on Miami Beach you have to carry an ID card. Get caught without the card and you’d be escorted off the island or taken to jail.” Luther Campbell, \textit{The Book of Luke: My Fight for Truth, Justice and Liberty City} (New York: Harper Collins, 2015), 34} White leisure was dependent upon Black labor. Carl Fischer boasted of employing “the most wonderful Bahama negroes you ever saw” as gondoliers in his Nautilus Hotel, rowing white tourists through palm-shaded waterways, “stripped to the waist and wear big brass rings. And possibly necklaces of live crabs or crawfish.”\footnote{Quoted in N.D.B. Connolly, \textit{A World More Concrete: Real Estate and the Remaking of Jim Crow South Florida} (University of Chicago Press, 2014), 23}

The labor needs of Miami and South Florida’s land boom were met Bahamian immigrants, unaccustomed to U.S. racism. An Afro-Bahamian community center, the Odd Fellow’s Hall in Coconut Grove was bombed in 1917. In 1921, members of Miami’s Ku Klux Klan kidnapped a Bahamian minister Rev. H.H. Higgs.\footnote{“Warning him to stop advising Negroes to ‘demand the right to vote, to refuse to enter Jim Crow cars and to defend the honor of their women at any cost’ a hand of Ku Klux Klan took Rev. H.H. Higgs, a Negro minister from Cocoanut Grove from his home on July 7 and whipped him.” American Civil Liberties Union, \textit{Report on the Civil Liberties Situation} (Washington, D.C.: ACLU, 1921), 77-79} Afro-American workers who labored
building the state’s expanding roads encountered resentment in rural communities. In May 1926, in Labelle, on a highway from Fort Meyers to Palm Beach, Henry Patterson, a laborer in a road building gang who sought a drink of water from a white house wife, was abducted by a mob and dragged behind an automobile, “while several of his captors stamped his face and cut his body with knives.”

Florida’s racial violence did nothing to deter its appeal, but by 1926, frenzied real estate speculation collapsed. On January 10, 1926, the *Prinz Valdemar*, a Danish steel-hulled schooner that had previously hauled coconuts from Honduras and Nicaragua, en route to becoming a floating hotel, capsized in Miami harbor. Efforts to salvage the ship led to the closure of Miami’s harbor, forcing the Florida East Coast, Seaboard Air and Atlantic Coast Line to embargo non-essential goods. With shortages of consumer staples compounding high prices, Florida’s land bubble began to collapse. Meanwhile, newly arrived residents remained unfamiliar with dangers of tropical storms, and radio forecasting created a false and dangerous perception of security.

5.2.4 *The Great Miami Hurricane*

On September 17, 1926, a weak tropical storm, reported at Swan Island, crossed Cuba and curved towards Andros Island, degenerating into a tropical depression and dissipating over the Straits of Florida. The *Miami Herald* declared that the storm was not going to strike Florida. As this provided residents with a sense of security, a far more powerful Cape Verde-type hurricane was forming above the Virgin Islands, which lashed Turks and Caicos with 130

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mph winds, strong enough to rip spines off prickly pear cacti. The storm left 4,000 homeless and 17 dead on Bimini, Bahamas.\textsuperscript{897} That day Miami had blue skies with light breezes. With no reports from Tropical Radio, which tracked storms in the Caribbean, and sporadic reports from a British government radio station in Nassau, it was not until 11:30 p.m. when Weather Bureau chief Richard Gray raised red and black hurricane flags atop the Federal Building, a few hours before the storm struck.\textsuperscript{898}

Around 6 am, as winds died down, people crowded into the streets, ignoring pleas of Richard Gray. A stream of cars began racing across the causeway. The rear-eye wall swept over the city a half hour later, bringing a ten-foot tidal surge. “Miami Beach was entirely inundated, and at the height of the tide, the ocean extended to Miami, three and one-half miles across Biscayne Bay.” As seas receded, they left streets filled with sand. One automobile dug up “contained the bodies of a man, wife and his two children.”\textsuperscript{899} (Figure 5.12 and 5.13)

The Red Cross reported 375 deaths, 6,131 injuries, 47,000 homeless, and over 800 missing.\textsuperscript{900} Many of these casualties were outside the city of Miami. In the truck-farming town of Moore Haven, the waters of Lake Okeechobee breached muck dikes and 150 people “drowned like rats in a trap in the first rush of flooding water,” their bodies swept into the Everglades, devoured by buzzards.\textsuperscript{901} In Hialeah, 120 mph winds scattered the grandstand of its Jockey

\textsuperscript{897}-George Goodwin, The Hurricane at Turks Island, September 16, 1926 Monthly Weather Review Vol. 54 No. 10, October 1926, 416-417 docs.lib.noaa.gov; “Bahamas are hard hit by hurricane: Thousands of People Left Homeless on 3 Islands,” New York Times, September 22, 1926


\textsuperscript{899}- R.W. Gray, Monthly Meteorological Notes at Miami, Fla. for the Month of September 1916, 3 in Charles Mitchell, 'West Indian Hurricane of September 14-22, 1926 Monthly Weather Review 54 no. 10 October 1926: 412

\textsuperscript{900}-Jay Barnes, Florida's Hurricane History, 120

\textsuperscript{901}--“Some escaped in automobiles, others climbed to places of safety, but hundreds were drowned like rats in a trap.” Joseph Hugh Reese, Florida’s Great Hurricane (Miami, L.E. Fesler, 1926), 54
Club, and toppled all five 436-ft towers at the Tropical Radio station, where families took shelter.⁹⁰²

Miami’s Colored Town and Coconut Grove, due to their inland locations, were spared destruction of wealthy coastal neighborhoods. Winds ripped off roofs and porch planks and shattered windows of fail frame house, scattering debris over muddy unpaved streets. To put down outbreaks of looting, martial law was declared, and 300 police officers sworn in.⁹⁰³ City and count authorities issued a “negro conscription order,” National Guard entered Colored Town, conscripting men and women to clear debris in Miami Beach. Shaddie Ward, a Bahamian immigrant boarding house owner, resisted conscription. A soldier fired shots, wounding his wife Shaddie and daughter Mabel.⁹⁰⁴

The storm made a second landfall on September 21 at Perdido Key, the Florida-Alabama border. Winds of 100 mph demolished wharves and warehouses in Pensacola and the sawmill town of Bagdad and twisted a Louisville & Nashville drawbridge over the Bayou Chico into “a mass of tangled metal.” The storm caused $43 million in damage but no deaths, aside from an increase in malaria and pneumonia.⁹⁰⁵ The lack of deaths on the Gulf Coast, a testament to the preparedness of the population, was overshadowed by the virtual destruction of the “Magic City” in the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history, revealing the limits of storm forecasting and prematurely plunging Florida into the Great Depression.

In the aftermath of the hurricane, residents looked to Hialeah’s rebuilt Tropical Radio station as a symbol of Miami’s role “the future key city of Latin-American trade.” “Millions of

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⁹⁰² Jay Barnes, *Florida’s Hurricane History*, 113-115, 119
⁹⁰³ “Devastated by the Great Hurricane that Killed,” *Illustrated London News* 169, Sept. 26, 1925
⁹⁰⁴ N.D.B Connolly, *A World More Concrete*, 50-51
⁹⁰⁵ “The storm tide reached 9.4 feet above normal at Pensacola, 10.4 feet at Fort Pickens, and 14 feet at Bagdad.” Jay Barnes, *Florida’s Hurricane History*: 121
dollars worth of trade, which Miami ships have no part in carrying,” the *Miami News* reported in 1928, “is being guided intelligently and efficiently between the great northern markets and the producing areas of Central America by a Miami agency of communication.” In 1928, Pan-American Airways began Miami-Havana passenger flights, commissioning the first modern passenger terminal in the United States. Predications that Miami would become the hub of Latin American trade came true in the later half of the twentieth century, with unforeseen demographic changes, as an influx of refugees from the Cuban Revolution transformed Miami into the Gateway to the Americas and Hialeah into the most Hispanic city in the United States.

### 5.2.5 *El Ciclón del 26,* the Havana Hurricane

In October 1926, as the remaining residents of South Florida began rebuilding, a tropical depression developed in the Caribbean, gaining hurricane strength near Swan Island. This storm made landfall in Cuba with 150 mph winds, destroying much of the city and province of Havana, the wreckage revealing growing socio-economic and racial inequalities. President Gerardo Machado y Morales, elected in 1925, faced a steep decline in global sugar prices and recognized Cuba’s dependence of tourism. Countering the tawdry image of bars and prostitution, secretary of public works Dr. Carlos Miguel de Céspedes, grandson of the author of Cuba’s declaration of independence, hired French landscape architect Jean-Claude Nicolas Forestier to transform Havana into the “Paris of the Tropics,” overseeing a redesign of paseo del Prado and Malecón seawall. Opulent monuments concealed the divide between wealthy Havana and the

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906. “Tropical Radio Station is Big Asset to Miami,” *Miami News*, June 24, 1928  
impoverished, largely Afro-Cuban countryside, divides that grew as rural migrants flocked to Havana’s outlying *barrios*.

The storm struck the Isle of Pines, leaving 1,400 homeless, killing 22, including 3 U.S. settlers.\(^{910}\) Poet Hart Crane, overseeing repairs at Villa Casas, his grandmothers’ citrus plantation, described the storm in “Eternity.” The loss of his home “parts of the roof reached the Yucatan” pales next to the port of Nueva Gerona. “The town, the town/wires in the streets and Chinamen up and down/with arms in slings plaster strewn dense with tiles/and Cuban doctors, troopers, trucks, loose hens/the only building not sagging on its knees/Hotel Fernandez was requisitioned into pens for cotted Negroes.”\(^{911}\) A tidal surge left the port of Batabanó six feet underwater, and demolished Güines and Central Toledo sugar mill in La Habana province, leveling thatched roof *bateys* of laborers and fields of sugarcane, tobacco, *platános* and maize.\(^{912}\)

“That night of the 19th-20th I will never forget,” wrote Dr. José Carlos Millas, of Havana’s Observatorio Nacional. “When tired of so many turns I sat, in the early hours of the morning, in the Observatory lobby, that magnificent stage allowed contemplation, from above, on the city, the bay, the ships and the *barrios*, through an almost continuous rain, a panorama that seemed to be, as it was, an omen of something sinister.”\(^{913}\) Twenty-five foot waves overtopped the Malecón seawall, driving debris of cars, trolleys, and corpses, grounding four steel-hulled steamships.\(^{914}\) Capt. Francisco Jordán of the steamship *Jibaro* logged, “We can see


\(^{911}\) Hart Crane, ‘Eternity’ in Maurice Riordan *Hart Crane: Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010), 50-52

\(^{912}\) The storm destroyed 1,876 homes in Güines and 1,082 in Batabanó, Secretaría de Obras Publicas de la República de Cuba, *Memorias de los Trabajos Efectuados con Motivo del Último Ciclón que Azotó la Isla el 20 de Octubre de 1926* (Havana: Secretaría de Obras Públicas, 1927) Chapt.1 Sect. 9.

\(^{913}\) José Carlos Millas, ‘El Huracán de la Habana de 1926,’ *Boletín del Observatorio Nacional* vol. xxii octubre de 1926, 198

\(^{914}\) The storm sunk two Cuban Navy vessels, incl. *Hatuey*, presidential yacht, damaged light cruiser *Patria*, *Memorias de los Trabajos Efectuados con Motivo del Último Ciclón que Azotó la Isla* Ch 1, Sect. 8
nothing outside the boat. The water of the sea and sky are the same, enveloping us."915 An official report “The thunder of the storm, the whistling water of the hard winds, the incessant beating of the showers, the torrents of water where each drop struck the face like a bullet, formed an spectacle that would be classically beautiful for its exciting grandeur if it were not so tragically terrifying.”916

In the hills of Mariano, corpses and mud-soaked rubble stretched from the brick barracks of Cuba’s Army headquarters Camp Columbia to Barrio Pogolotti, Havana’s first planned working-class neighborhood, where compact blocks funneled winds, ripping off wood and tile roofs, which smashed into walls and filled streets.917 Damage was severe in Centro Habana, where “The wind knocked down the trees along paseo del Prado, Parque Central, Campo del Marte, Parque de la India, and almost all of the parks and plazas of the city.”918 A photo of a board driven through the trunk of an immense Cuban royal palm offers proof of the force of the wind. (Figure 5.14 and 5.15)) The storm shattered the Greek column holding aloft a new monument to the USS Maine.919 The Red Cross estimated 600 dead, 9,000 injured and 6,500 families left homeless.920 Destruction of sugar plantations reversed overproduction and declining prices. Buoyed a 50% rise in sugar prices and a surge of U.S. investment, spurred by the upcoming Pan-American Conference, “reconstruction was carried on with such a pace that now,
only a few months later, there is little, aside from the crippled trees, to show the cyclone came this way.”

President Gerardo Machado, who ordered police and soldiers to shoot looters, abandoned promises not to run for reelection and assumed dictatorial powers. Displaced Afro-Cubans settled in squatter settlements and working-class barrios outside Havana. Fifteen-year old Arsenio Rodríguez moved with his family to Barrio Quemados of Marianao after their home near Güines was destroyed. Meeting son musicians in the sociedades (social clubs) of Quemados and Pogolotti, he would go on to become Cuba’s greatest bandleader, creator of son montuno the basic template of modern salsa music. Havana was quickly rebuilt, but the hurricane dealt a fatal blow to Cuba’s fragile democracy, increasing its dependence on the U.S. and enabling Machado to become the first in a long line of dictators. By accelerating rural-to-urban migration, the hurricane fostered important social and cultural changes, even as it exacerbated republican Cuba’s growing racial and class divides, eroding myths of racial democracy forged in the war of independence that persisted amidst realities of U.S. domination.

5.2.6 When the Levees Broke

Natural disasters washed away remnants of slavery in North America. The Great Mississippi flood of 1927 disrupted the racial labor market equilibrium of the Mississippi Delta. In the summer of 1926, as hurricanes swept over the American Mediterranean, record rainfall swelled rivers of the Mississippi Valley. By Christmas Day 1926, the Cumberland River in

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921. Mr. Morris to Sir Austen Chamberlain Received April 20 A 2696/2696/13 Reports for 1927 (311) Cuba Before Castro: British Annual Reports, 1895-1950
Nashville rose to the highest level ever. Floods on the Tennessee River in Chattanooga killed at least sixteen people, leaving thousands homeless.\textsuperscript{925} On New Years Day the Mississippi broke flood stage at Cairo, Illinois, by May the river crested at a width of sixty miles below Memphis, breaching 145 levees, killing over 1,000 people, leaving 700,000 homeless.\textsuperscript{926} The Army Corps of Engineers levees-only policy neglected spillways and floodways.\textsuperscript{927} In flood relief efforts, directed by Herbert Hoover, whites were housed indoors, 200,000 Blacks, mostly sharecroppers and tenant farmers, found shelter in outdoor camps. Blacks were forced to perform heavy labor under armed guards. Anti-lynching activist Ida Wells, NAACP head Walter White and the \textit{Chicago Defender} exposed the abuses of the relief efforts. In Greenville, Mississippi 13,000 evacuees (95% Black) were left without food or water.\textsuperscript{928} The flood, which led to an exodus of displaced Blacks to Chicago and other Northern cities, caused dislocations described in Blues songs, most famously “When the Levee Breaks” by Memphis Minnie and Kansas City Joe. “Oh cryin’ won help you, prayin’ won’t do you no good/when the levee breaks, mama, you got to move/I’s a mean ol levee caused me to weep and moan/gonna leave my baby and my happy home.”\textsuperscript{929}

\textsuperscript{925}Tennessee Valley Authority, \textit{The Chattanooga Flood Control Problem} (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939), 66-68
\textsuperscript{926}Senate report found the flood resulted in the “Loss of more than 246 lives. Drove 700,000 people from there homes Flood Control in the Mississippi Valley Report Submitted by Frank Reid, Chairman from the Committee on Flood Control (to Accompany H.R. 8129), (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O, 1928), 142
\textsuperscript{929}Paul Garon, Beth Garon, \textit{Memphis Minnie’s Blues} (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2014); Robert Springer, \textit{Nobody Knows Where the Blues Comes From: Lyrics and History} (Oxford.: University of Mississippi Press, 2006)
On April 15, 1927, Good Friday in a heavily Catholic city, fifteen inches of rain fell on New Orleans in eighteen hours, covering parts of the city in four feet of water. City officials devised a plan to have 30 tons of dynamite set off at Caernarvon levee. Dynamite breached the banks on April 29, causing floodwaters to spill from the crevasse, inundating the downriver parishes of St. Bernard and Plaquemines, home to 10,000 people, including Creoles, Cajuns, Croatian oystermen and Spanish-speaking Isleño (Canary Islander) trappers. Refugees were housed in a New Orleans warehouse, whites on the fifth floor, Blacks on the sixth. Parish leaders dismissed pledges of $150,000 as “pigshit.” In response, bankers promised $2 million. Losses in destroyed or damaged homes, ruined crops and lost income from wildlife harvests totaled $35 million. Only one trapper received compensation, Manuel Molero of Delacroix’s Acme Fruit Trading Co., a wealthy bootlegger, who hired a lawyer, obtaining a $1.5 million settlement.

On April 27, two days before the flooding of downriver parishes, the SS Castilla, the newest ship of United Fruit’s fleet, arrived in New Orleans with a cargo of bananas from its namesake Honduran port. The ship made a silent entry, the captain ordered to avoid using whistles or sirens, due to a temporary ban on waterfront demonstrations for fear that noise would spread panic among the populace, who might think that the river had breached the levees. United Fruit’s fleet and radio network enabled the banana trade to continue uninterrupted by

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934. The Shipbuilder and Marine Engine-builder 34 no. 6 (1927), 318; John Melville, The Great White Fleet, 123-124
natural disasters. The flooding of downriver parishes and toll bridge fueled resentment of the political machine of the New Orleans Ring, leading to the election of populist governor Huey Long in 1928. Long oversaw building of free bridges, completing the Old Spanish Trail. His contentious relationship with the United Fruit Company, which likely contributed to his assassination, would foreshadow the challenges the company faced from Latin American nationalists.

Hurricanes shaped the fall and rise of plantation agriculture, from coffee fincas of colonial Puerto Rico to the truck farms of South Florida. In September 1928, the San Felipe Segundo hurricane crossed Puerto Rico. Twenty-five inches of rain fell in the Cordillera Central, leaving hundreds of thousands homeless and destroying sugar mills, coffee plants and shade trees, crippling the rural economy. Despite the devastation, effective preparation ensured a relatively low death toll of 312.\(^{935}\) The storm lashed the Bahamas, damaging Nassau hotels, demolishing homes and churches on the island of Eleuthera. Radio reports from the SS Castilla were relayed via the Tropical Radio station in Hialeah, and the Weather Bureau issued warnings before the storm made landfall at Palm Beach, where only 26 residents died.\(^{936}\) The storm smashed dikes on the south shore of Lake Okeechobee, drowning 2,500 people, more than three-quarters Afro-American and Afro-Bahamian migrant workers on truck farms, whose bodies were burned in funeral pyres or thrown into mass graves.\(^{937}\) Novelist and folklorist Zora Neal Hurston,
in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) describes the storm from the point of view of Janie Crawford and her lover Tea Cake, migrant bean-pickers in the town of Belle Grade.

The monstropoulos beast had left his bed. The two hundred miles-an-hour wind had loosened his chains. He seized hold of his dikes and ran forward until he met the quarters; uprooted them like grass and rushed on after his supposed-to-be conquerors, rolling the dikes, rolling the houses, rolling the people in the houses along with other timbers. The sea was walking the earth with a heavy heel.938

Hurston’s account, embellished with literary license, reclaimed the agency of the storm’s Black victims, while mocking white claims to have conquered tropical nature, the claims made by United Fruit, and its propagandists. As Tropical Radio reports delivered to the Weather Bureau enabled effective preparations, natural disasters were exacerbated by failures of environment management and racist indifference to the deaths of the poorest people, particularly Blacks and other people of color.

5.2.7 Conclusion

In September 1931, steaming from Havana to Cristobal, Panama, the captain of the SS *Atenas*, Norwegian Sigurd Pedersen, detected a developing hurricane. The ship faced gale force winds and powerful waves, but, by avoiding the center of the storm, the SS *Atenas* rode through the edges of the tropical storm with such ease “that the passengers were able to enjoy dancing on the promenade deck the same evening.”939 On September 10, the hurricane made landfall at Belize City, the capital of British Honduras, with tidal waves flooding the town in five feet of water, destroying more than 70% of the buildings, and causing 2,500 deaths.940 British colonial

940. “400 Believed Dead in Hurricane,” *Register-Guard* September 11, 1931
officials withheld warnings, reluctant to cancel festivities, mistakenly believing coral reefs would protect the city.\textsuperscript{941}

United Fruit’s Tropical Radio epitomized the scope of corporate imperialism limits of technological struggles from tropical storms. Following the disruptions to the banana trade of World War I, United Fruit expanded its private empire through concessions from weak Central American governments, secured by reliably authoritarian dictators. A new system of free medical services for commercial shipping in the Caribbean and regular reports of developing hurricanes, enabled United Fruit to position itself as a benevolent hegemon while tightening its grip over Caribbean shipping and the banana trade. During the height of the 1920s, a series of devastating hurricanes and floods inflicted death and devastation across the American Mediterranean, shattering veneers of prosperity, revealing rising inequalities and exposing the limits of technological security from tropical storms. The American Mediterranean is a sea of storms, its tumultuous ecology defying mirroring the turbulent courses of capitalist development and underdevelopment of the lands that border it. Despite promises of security, hurricanes would rip apart facades of superficial opulence, while inflicting heavy tolls upon poor people of color, victims of government neglect. The destructive power of nature’s deadliest storms served to expose socio-economic and racial inequalities across the American Mediterranean in an age of empire and Jim Crow.

\textbf{5.3 Ghosts of Guale}

While hiking through palmetto thickets near St. Marys (the southernmost town in coastal Georgia) in the fall of 1909, Savannah journalist Walter J. Hoxie and a party of fellow bird watchers came upon large tabby (oyster shell cement) ruins. Locals knew this as a “sugar house,”

\textsuperscript{941}—“From the publisher,” \textit{Amandala}, September 14, 2004
built by John McIntosh around 1825 and abandoned during the Civil War. Writing in the Savannah Morning News, Hoxie described them as “an old castle” and asked, “If over these battlements then waved the great flag of Spain with its castles and lions, what a fierce fight was made about these strong walls.”\footnote{Walter John Hoxie, “A Mute Appeal,” Savannah Morning News October 6, 1909 in Marmaduke Floyd, Georgia’s Disputed Ruins: Certain Tabby Ruins on the Georgia Coast, ed. E. Merton Coulter (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 163}

St. Marys resident and author James Vocelle’s History of Camden County, Georgia (1914) cited a 1698 account of the Santa María mission by Jonathan Dickenson, a Philadelphia merchant shipwrecked off Florida, asserting that this sugar house was actually a Spanish mission, “the origin of which antedates the English colonization of the Americas. . . Where once was heard the voice of the priest as he told the wandering Indians of the “Great Spirit” who rewards the good and punishes the wicked there is today a forest where there is little to be heard save the signing of the birds and the sighing of the pines.”\footnote{James Thomas Vocelle, History of Camden County, Georgia (Jacksonville, FL.: Kennedy Brown Hall Co., 1914), 15-16}

In a 1916 edition of Memories and Annals of Glynn County, first published in 1897, Charles Spalding Wylly, a descendent of antebellum planters, identified the St. Marys ruins as “the ruined remains of the mission or monastery of Santa Maria de Gondelopes [sic], still known as Mariana. . . On the plantation Evelyn is another ruin that may have been connected with this early history.”\footnote{Charles Spalding Wylly, Memories and Annals of Glynn County (Brunswick, GA, 1916), 75-76 Wylly’s history of the missions of Florida is taken from John G. Shea, History of the Catholic Church Within the Limits of the Present-day United States (New York, 1890)}

These claims gave birth to a quixotic theory that the tabby ruins of long-abandoned antebellum sugar mills and cotton barns on the coast and islands of Georgia were ruins of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spanish missions to the Guale and Timucua Indians. This theory was born of a desire to enhance Georgia’s stature by linking it to the earliest Spanish exploration of the continent. Unfortunately, debate over the tabby ruins obscured the true nature of the Spanish
presence in the region. It would take historians of the late twentieth century to make clear the complex relationship between the ruins, Spanish exploration and English settlement.

5.3.1 Missions and Mission Myths

The first Jesuits in the Americas came to Spanish Florida with the conquistador Pedro Menéndes de Avilés in 1568. They founded ten missions from the Miami River to the Chesapeake Bay (Ajacán), but faced native uprising and left for Mexico in 1570. The Franciscans arrived in 1573 and steadily expanded their presence after 1595, setting up a chain of missions north of San Agustín (St. Augustine, Florida’s only Spanish settlement) that included Santa Catalina de Guale (St. Catherine’s Island) and San Pedro de Mocama (Cumberland Island). By 1655, seventy friars served twenty-six thousand native converts in Florida. By the time of the visit of Gabriel Díaz Vara Calderón, bishop of Cuba in 1674-75, the Franciscans had established four mission provinces: Guale, Timucua, Apalachee and Apalachicola. In the late seventeenth-century, English and French pirates, most notoriously the corsair Michel de Grammont, and slave raiding Westo and Yamasee Indians (armed and instigated by English and Scots colonists in Virginia and Carolina) attacked the missions of Guale and Mocama, the eastern or coastal Timucua villages. The survivors fled to modern Florida by 1687, settling in “refugee missions” on Isla Santa María (Amelia Island) and the Río San Juan del Puerto (St. Johns River). South Carolina governor Col. James Moore led an English-Yamasee invasion in 1702 that, after failing to capture fortified San Agustín, ended with the destruction of these missions.945 The Anglo-Indian slave trade culminated in the Yamasee War (1715-17), in which an anti-English alliance of southeastern Indians nearly destroyed Carolina, prompting calls for a buffer colony that

945 For an account of the retreat of Guale and Mocama from modern Georgia, see John E. Worth, The Struggle for the Georgia Coast (Tuscaloosa, Al.: University of Alabama Press, 2007), 9-56
resulted in the founding of Georgia in 1732-33.\textsuperscript{946} The fact that much of Georgia had once been part of the Spanish Florida would be largely unknown prior to the rise of the theory that depicted the tabby ruins as long-lost, centuries-old missions.

Theories of Spanish mission ruins on the Atlantic Coast originated with the retired New York City stockbroker and Florida land developer Washington E. Connor, who believed coquina (seashell-limestone) ruins on his New Smyrna estate were ruins of a Spanish mission. His French-educated wife, Jeannette Thurber Connor, researched Spanish records and identified the ruins as Mission Atocuimi de Jororo, her efforts reviving the Florida Historical Society.\textsuperscript{947} Mrs. Connor made several visits to St. Marys between 1916 and 1919 and became convinced these were ruins of the Santa María mission.\textsuperscript{948} The idea that tabby ruins of coastal Georgia were Spanish missions centuries older than the iconic missions of California and the Southwest gained momentum in the 1920s with Florida’s Land Boom and studies by University of California professor Dr. Herbert Eugene Bolton, the historian of North America’s Spanish borderlands and his students Mary Ross and John Tate Lanning. This “mission myth” led to a mini-land boom in coastal Georgia in the late 1920s (peaking after the virtual destruction of Miami in the 1926 hurricane) that led to the creation of Georgia’s first state park but would be shattered by archaeological investigations that proved the ruins to be nineteenth-century sugar mills and cotton barns. This local dispute over memory reminds us that, like nations, regions are imagined.

\textsuperscript{946} For a history of the Yamasee War, see David Ramsey, The Yamasee War: A Study of Culture, Economy and Conflict in the Colonial South (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2008)

\textsuperscript{947} Jeanette Thurber Connor was the oldest daughter of Jeanette Meyeres Thurber, one of the first major patrons of classical music in the US, founded of the National Conservatory of music of America (1884) and responsible for bringing Czech composer Antonín Dvořák to the United States. David Nolan, “St. Augustine to Astor” in The Book Lovers Guide to Florida ed. Kevin McCarthy (Sarasota, FL. 1992), 101; Jeanette M. Thurber Connor, Colonial Records of Spanish Florida 5 no. 1 (Tallahassee, FL, 1925), 35-40; Zelia W. Sweet and Reverend J.C. Marsden, New Smyrna, Florida, its history and antiquities (1925) Florida History and Heritage Collection, George A. Smathers Library, University of Florida, Gainesville.

\textsuperscript{948} Marmaduke Floyd, Georgia’s Disputed Ruins in E. Merton Coulter ed. Certain Tabby Ruins on the Georgia Coast (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 161-63
communities created by genealogical narratives of serial continuity. More than just an example of archeology debunking a romantic myth, the demise of the tabby mission ruins theory was part of the triumph of a revitalized Anglo-centric historic narratives shaped by southern defenses of white supremacy and antebellum plantation society, and by the Anglo-American alliance of World War II.

5.3.2 Searching for Spanish Borderlands

The theory of Georgia’s tabby mission ruins rose and fell with its most passionate advocate, Mary Ross. Born in Camden County in 1885, she grew up in Brunswick, Georgia when it was one of the world’s largest ports for naval stores (turpentine, rosin). Her father worked as a bookkeeper and her family, which had converted to Catholicism, attended St. Francis Xavier Church. Trained as a teacher at the State Normal School in Athens, Georgia, from 1906 to 1910 she taught elementary school in Tucson, Arizona Territory. During this time, she visited the ornate Baroque church of Mission San Xavier del Bac on the nearby Tohono O’odham reservation. Ross entered graduate school at the University of Chicago but transferred to the University of California at Berkley to study under Herbert Bolton. Pursuing her education with money from a brother killed in World War I, she studied Anglo-Spanish conflicts in the greater Caribbean and worked as Bolton’s first teaching assistant. She received her Masters degree in 1919, and taught at Berkley’s University High School. She published only a few articles, but coined the title of Herbert Bolton’s manifesto, “The Epic of Greater America.”

950. Johanna Mendelson Forman, Mary Leticia Ross Papers: A Descriptive Journey (Atlanta, 1979) xii-xiv, 156 San Xavier del Bac has been described as “the most sophisticated example of Spanish colonial architecture in the United States.” Michael Scheeling Durham, The Desert States: The Smithsonian Guide to Historical America (New York, 1989), 163. The term “Greater America” used in the title of Bolton’s inaugural address as president of the American Historical Association in 1932e belief that Ro was coined by Mary Ross, See “French Intrusions and Indian Uprisings in Georgia and South Carolina (1577-1580), Georgia Historical Quarterly 10 (September 1923):251
Ross studied records from the Archivo de Indias (transcribed by Mrs. Isabella Wright, an American expatriate in Seville) and corroborated mission sites with tabby ruins in her native Glynn and neighboring McIntosh counties. In Spanish Days in Glynn County, she eulogized the missions of Guale as the “guardian of Florida,” along the Atlantic route of Spanish treasure fleets, and a source of “virtuous sassafras,” until their destruction by “heathen Indians, envious Carolinians and covetous Caribbean pirates.” Photos showed the tabby ruins, “concrete evidence of Spain’s purpose and determination,” identified as “Old Spanish Well at Tupiqui, in McIntosh County today known as the Thicket,” the “Octagonal Fortifications at Mission San José de Zápala” on Sapelo Island, “Mission Santo Domingo, on the south bank of the Altamaha,” on Elizafield (Evelyn) Plantation, a DuPont family estate. She declared, “These once noble (but now ruined) structures, which tell the tale of Spanish Guale and mark the birth of Georgia history, deserve statewide recognition and preservation. They are our oldest monuments, and any one of them might easily rival California’s famous shrines as a mecca for Dixie Highway travelers.”

After World War I, the eastern division of the Dixie Highway brought motor tourists through coastal Georgia en route to the beach resorts of Florida. In California, Herbert Bolton embraced the belief that Ross’s tabby ruins were fifteenth and sixteenth-century Spanish missions, a visible reminder of the civilizing efforts of Spain, long been overlooked by historians in the U.S. who clung to the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty and intolerance. The prologue to Bolton’s The Spanish Borderlands (1921) declared, “Scattered all the way from Georgia to San Francisco are the ruins of Spanish missions.” His chapter on Florida praised the sixteenth-

951-Mrs. Isabella Wright assisted both Mary Ross and John Tate Lanning in their research See Forman, Mary Leticia Ross Papers, xv; E. Merton Coulter to the honorable Claude Bowers, US Ambassador to Spain, February 6, 1935, Cator Woolford Papers, MSS 210 Kenan Research Center, Atlanta History Center (hereafter cited as KRC)
952-Mary Ross, Spanish Days in Glynn County (Brunswick, GA. n.d.) 7-8, 20-21, 24
953-In favoring the Savannah route through Milledgeville, Sandersville, Louisville, Savannah, Darien and Brunswick, Mr. [Atlanta Constitution editor Clark] Howell called attention to the scenic and historic attractions on this route.” “Dixie Highway to Select East Georgia Route,” Motor Age 29 (January 29, 1916):13
century Jesuits who accompanied Pedro Menéndez de Aviles, vilified for overseeing the massacre of French Huguenots, an event that epitomized the Black Legend. “Brother Domingo translated the catechism into the native Guale tongue and Brother Baez compiled a grammar, the first written in the U.S.”

Georgia Historical Quarterly editor James G. Johnson offered a more critical appraisal of the Spanish legacy. In 1923 he wrote on San Miguel de Guadalupe (1526), the first European settlement in North America, and Santa Elena in present-day South Carolina, capital of Spanish Florida from 1566 until its abandonment in 1587, after Sir Francis Drake’s raids. Noting their failures, Johnson reminded readers that these settlements antedated the beginning of English colonialism in North America at Roanoke Island and Jamestown, insisting that just because “the early attempts at planting colonies on the Atlantic mainland were unsuccessful does not detract from their interest.”

Johnson’s “The Yamasee Revolt of 1597 and the Destruction of Georgia’s Missions” described a Guale rebellion against heavy-handed missionaries that killed five Franciscan priests, including long-time Florida resident Father Pedro de Corpa. By contrast, Mary Ross’s 1926 “The Restoration of the Spanish Missions in Georgia, 1598-1606,” a follow-up to Johnson’s article, praised the diplomacy of Franciscan friars who won the loyalty of the Talaxe villages, leading to a golden age of “Spanish Georgia” before “the Anglo-Saxon came up out of the Caribbean and hammered at the Gualean gate.”

In 1925, Bolton and Ross published The Debatable Land: A Sketch of the Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Georgia Country. It was published as an introduction to a translation of

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954 Herbet Bolton, The Spanish Borderlands (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1921), viii, 159
955 James G. Johnson, “A Spanish Settlement in Carolina, 1526” Georgia Historical Quarterly 7 (December 1923): 339
957 Mary Ross, The Restoration of the Spanish Missions of Georgia, 1598-1606” Georgia Historical Quarterly 10 (September 1926): 195
“Demonstración Historiographica del Derecha de España a Nueva Georgia” (Historic Proof of Spain’s Title to Georgia) by Sergeant Antonio de Arredondo, an officer from Havana during the 1742 Spanish invasion. In his introduction Bolton wrote, “This contribution from the Pacific Coast to the history of the Atlantic Seaboard is a token of the unity of the story of all Spanish North America.” A map guides readers to the sites of ruins identified as Santa María, Santo Domingo, Tolomato and Tupiqui and the presidio San José de Zápala. The book begins with an insert with “the ruins of Santa María Mission, near St. Marys, Georgia” and an account of “Scores of devoted missionaries [who] lived among these children of the forest and taught them the Gospel of Christ. Small soldier garrisons protected the missionaries from their neophytes and guarded the country against intrusions of unwelcome neighbors.” (Figure 5.16) Inverting the Black Legend, Christian Guale and Timucua were victims of “savage attacks by French and English freebooters” and “appalling” slave raids by Westoes (described in Spanish as “Chichimecos,” the name of the nomads of northern Mexico) and “heathen Yamasees,” “savage allies” of the English and Scots in nearby Carolina.958

5.3.3 Mission Ruins and Tourism

Fueling interest in Georgia’s reputed mission ruins was the land boom in the semitropical Golden Isles. Howard Coffin on the Hudson Motorcar Company, who owned Sapelo Island, began this boom by purchasing and developing St. Simons Island. Brunswick city manager Fernando J. Torras, son of a Spanish consul and a Brunswick woman, and one-time engineer on the Madeira-Mamoré railroad in the Brazilian Amazon designed a causeway over the marshes of Glynn to St. Simons, completed in July 1924.959 Coastal Georgia’s land boom reached its height

958 Herbert Bolton, Mary Ross, The Debatable Land: A Sketch of the Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Georgia Country (Berkley, CA), xi, 16, 38, 10, 23
959 Torras applied techniques from railway building in the wetlands of Rondonia to design the four-mile causeway with five bridges Patricia Barefoot, Brunswick: The City by the Sea (Mt. Pleasant, SC, Arcadia Press, 2000), 58;
after the Great Miami Hurricane burst Florida’s land bubble. Glynn Island became Sea Island with the 1928 opening of the Cloister hotel, a luxurious Spanish Colonial Revival resort designed by Addison Mizner of Palm Beach (the California-born architect and son of a U.S. consul to Guatemala) who had brought this pseudo-Spanish style to Florida’s land boom.

New evidence of the Spanish origins of the tabby ruins came in the spring of 1926, when Jeanette Thurber Connor made a final trip to Georgia, to the ruins of “The Thicket” and found a cross-shaped foundation. Photos of these ruins, with their tabby cross and “arched windows of Spanish colonial construction” appeared in reporter Robert A. Grave’s September National Geographic article, “Marching through Georgia Sixty Years Later.” Brunswick schoolteacher and local historian Margaret Davis Cate claimed the tabby ruins were Spanish missions in Our Yesterdays and Todays: A Story of Brunswick and the Coastal Islands (1926), with photos of “Ruins of Spanish mission at Santo Domingo de Talaxe” and “Spanish Mission in The Thicket Near Darien.” These latter ruins were the site of the tabby cross, the “rude grave of some martyred priest, possibly Father [Pedro de] Corpa . . . .These is nothing in all America more interesting than these tabby structures, she proclaimed. “Centuries have elapsed since they were built and nothing has been done to preserve or restore them, yet one can easily distinguish the buildings and the use to which each was put. Not even in the missions of California or the states

Torras also worked on railways in Mexico, Cuba and for the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad in Birmingham, Alabama, “Torras, Fernando J.” Who’s Who in Engineering (New York, 1922), 1:1273 Five to six thousand people died in the construction of the Ferrovia Madeira-Mamoré from 1907-12. According to legend, the “Devil’s Railway” had one dead worker for every tie.” Manoel Rodrigues, A Ferrovia do Diabo: Historia de uma Estrada de Ferro na Amazônica (São Paulo, 1959)
962. Floyd, Georgia’s Disputed Ruins, 173
963. Ralph A. Graves, “Marching Through Georgia Sixty Years Later,” National Geographic 50 (September 1926): 274
bordering Mexico, which were established more than a century after the Georgia missions, can anything be found to rival the ruins here.”

In September 1927, at the height of coastal Georgia’s land boom, photos of the “ancient missions and strongholds on the Georgia coast . . .which antedated Oglethorpe by 150 years,” appeared in an Atlanta Constitution rotogravure, “With the Dons on Georgia’s Treasure Trail.” A scene from “The Thicket” showed palmettos around walls “where once a Spanish garrison was quartered,” by a “historical watering place.” Near Darien, a moss-draped live oak grows “where once a Spanish altar stood.” On St. Simons Island, tabby ruins of the magazine of Fort Frederica, a British garrison founded by James Oglethorpe in 1736 to defend against a Spanish invasion, appear alongside a chimney of an antebellum rice mill rising from “ruins of [an] old Spanish monastery.” Mary Ross returned to Georgia to guide the Atlanta Constitution photographer. She worked with James A. Robertson of the Florida Historical Society, which received the New Smyrna ruins in 1928. Robertson believed the New Smyrna ruins to be a mission later turned into a sugar mill, a theory he suggested for the ruins at St. Marys. A 1929 guide to “The Old Spanish mission fields” on the Old Spanish Trail highway listed “known standing ruins . . .of oyster shell in a forest north of Brunswick, Ga.” alongside the missions of El Paso-Santa Fe, San Antonio, Nogales-Tucson and “the California coast.”

Coastal Georgia’s growing dependence on tourism reflected the precipitous decline of the region’s ports. Darien, Brunswick and Savannah were among the worlds’ leading exporters

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964. Margaret Davis Cate, *All Our Todays and Yesterdays: A Story of Brunswick and the Coastal Isles* (Brunswick, GA: Clover Brothers, 1926), 26, 36
965. “With the Dons on Georgia’s Treasure Trail,” Atlanta Constitution, September 11, 1927, 13-14
968. “Old Spanish Mission Fields, Old Spanish Trail Travel-log” (San Antonio, TX March 1929) 4 Old Spanish Trail Collections, St. Marys University, San Antonio TX
of lumber and naval stores from 1875 to the early 1900s. Dependent on Northern capital and indentured Black labor, the Southern lumber boom had reached its height during the building of the Panama Canal. With South Georgia’s yellow pine and cypress forests depleted (1,500,000 acres had been lost to lumbering), the last lumber mill in Darien closed by 1923, killing Brunswick’s port.\textsuperscript{969}

As the Great Depression burst the tourism-driven land bubble, forcing the DuPonts, Carnegies and Howard Coffin to sell off their winter estates, Georgia writes had more skeptical views of the reputed mission ruins. St. Simons Island native Caroline Couper Lovell’s \textit{The Golden Isles of Georgia} (1932), based on Charles Spalding Wylly’s writings, declared the ruins at St. Marys were “undoubtedly the remains of the Mission of Santa Maria de Guadeloupe,” but doubted the other ruins were of Spanish origin. “If this is true, it is strange that none of the oldest coast inhabitants knew of any traditions to that effect.” Her chapter on Guale took a wistful tone. “Stilled forever are its musical bells and only in the lovely names bestowed on the islands by the Spaniards is there a memory of the days when they belonged to Spain. Ossabaw-Obispa. St. Catherine-Santa Catalina, Sapelo-Zápala, St. Simons-San Simón.”\textsuperscript{970}

\textbf{5.3.4 Struggles over Colonial Origins}

While historians paid homage to Spanish Guale as a forerunner to Georgia, interest in Anglo-Spanish struggles shed new light on Georgia’s English origins. Eastern historians balked at Bolton’s Hispanophilia, but his comparative approach to colonial empires inspired Brown professor Verner Crane’s \textit{The Southern Frontier 1670-1732} (1929), a study of the struggle for the modern U.S. South between England, Spain and France. He described the establishment of


\textsuperscript{970}Caroline Couper Louvell, \textit{The Golden Isles of Georgia} (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1933), 17
the first English outpost in Georgia, Fort King George, a wooden blockhouse built on the
Altamaha River in 1721 “surrounded by malarial marshes” and “a hospital of sick and dying
soldiers”; it burned in 1725, was haphazardly rebuilt, and abandoned two years later.\(^{971}\) Bessie
Lewis, an Ohio-born schoolteacher from Pine Harbor in northern McIntosh Co. searched South
Carolina archives and by 1932 located the fort site on the north branch of the Altamaha River in
Darien, next to Darien’s last and largest sawmill, which had destroyed any remnants.\(^{972}\)

Savannah historian Marmaduke Floyd, a descendent of Camden County planters, dealt a
fatal blow to the alleged antiquity of coastal Georgia’s tabby ruins. In a lecture to the Colonial
Dames in 1933, he declared they were not Spanish missions but conformed to a form of tabby
patented by Thomas Spalding.\(^{973}\) Floyd appealed to the pride of Savannah—wounded by
newfound interest in the Spanish era, which undermined its claim to be Georgia’s first city—and
dismissed not only the mission ruins theory, but also the significance of Spanish history. “The
Spaniards came to Georgia to missionize the country and cared little to develop its trade
potentialities and it was on that account that the missions met their demise when shrewd English
traders circulated among the Indians.”\(^{974}\) His pride in forgotten achievements of Georgia’s
antebellum planters resonated with southern historians, in particular University of Georgia
professor E. Merton Coulter, whose histories justified secession, defended the Confederacy and
condemned Reconstruction and racial equality. Among Floyd’s critics, Society for Georgia
Archaeology president and Atlanta real estate leader Robert R. Otis, descendent of Thomas

\(^{971}\)Verner Crane, *The Southern Frontier 1670-1732* (Tuscaloosa, Al: University of Alabama Press, 1929), 246
\(^{972}\)Bessie Lewis, “Old Fort King George: Located Near Darien” Savannah Morning News, October 25, 1932; Bessie
Lewis was born in Akron, Ohio. Her father invested in Fairhope Land Company, which in 1913 established Pine
Harbor, a failed resort that became a residential community. See Buddy Sullivan “Introduction” in Bessie Lewis,
*Old Fort King George* (Brunswick GA, 1973) The Lower Bluff Sawmill, operated by Hilton & Dodge Co. from
1888 was Darien’s largest sawmill and in 1924 became the last mills to close Sullivan Memories of McIntosh, 30
\(^{973}\)Floyd, *Certain Tabby Ruins*, 24-25
\(^{974}\)Marmaduke Floyd Speaks on Old Tabby Ruins” Savannah Morning News May 9, 1935
Spalding, found Floyd “vicious in his opinions re the old Tabby ruins” and doubted that “old southern planters built more enduring structures for their sugar and slaves than they built for themselves.”

Belief that the tabby ruins were Spanish missions remained widespread. In March 1934 Atlanta businessman Cator Woolford deeded Elizafield plantation to the state of Georgia for a new state park to preserve the ruins of Santo Domingo de Talaxe. James A. Ford, a Louisiana State graduate student who had worked on the dig at Ocmulgee Indian Mounds in Macon, excavated the ruins with Civilian Conservation Corps labor. His report, issued on June 25, concluded the ruins were a sugar mill: “There is no evidence that missions or forts along this coast were constructed of tabby by the Spaniards.” Measurements were in English feet, and “archaeological investigation showed no Spanish artifacts or other indications of Spanish occupation.” Proud of their mission, residents of Brunswick were angered by Ford’s findings; moreover, the park service criticized Ford’s investigation, charging that he relied more on records from Marmaduke Floyd than actual excavations. The CCC resumed work at the site on July 31. Further digs found several artifacts believed to be Spanish, including a potsherd and a stirrup that were submitted to the Smithsonian as proof that the park was the site of Mission

975 Robert R. Otis to James M. Mallory, March 15, 1935, Society for Georgia Archeology MSS 144, KRC
976 Ruth Pannell to E.L. Brothwell, “Deed to which Cator Woolford conveyed to the State of Georgia the Santo Domingo tract” August 28, 1934 Cator Woolford Papers, MSS 210 KRC
978 “Comments of Park Committee on Mr. Ford’s Summary,” July 16, 1934 Society for Georgia Archaeology MSS 144 KRC
979 J.M. Mallory, “Chronology of Santo Domingo State Park, December 1935” Society for Georgia Archaeology MSS 144 KRC
Santo Domingo—despite the absence of any evidence that the tabby ruins were on Spanish origin.”

James M. Mallory, a State Parks board member, wrote to an increasingly skeptical E. Merton Coulter that the ruins were worthy of preservation whether they were a Spanish mission or an antebellum sugar mill, insisting, “we should concentrate on the known advantages rather than the speculative disadvantages of the park.” Chief among these advantages was its location; a report noted, “The property is within a mile of U.S. Highway 17, known as the Coastal Highway, and is the popular route of travelers from Canada, New England and Eastern states to Florida and Cuba.” However Dr. James G. Johnson, returning to Georgia from the University of Colorado to survey to site, insisted “the identification of the ruins must be air tight. I would not relish a critical and public drubbing by archaeologists for a careless piece of work.”

5.3.5 **Spanish Borderlands in the Deep South**

Some believed that Georgia should celebrate both its English and Spanish heritage. Cator Woolford in a speech to the Atlanta Women’s Club declared, “Georgia is the most historical state in the Union, with its Spanish and English history.” At a time when Southern states were promoting and romanticizing antebellum history, Santo Domingo Park included ruins of the manor house, slave quarters and rice mill of Elizafield plantation. The Atlanta *Journal* proclaimed, “Two import eras in our history, two important stages in our civilization are to be

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980-“Dr. Hough says that fragment of a bowl is, in his opinion, Spanish faience (majolica) Copy of letter from W.A. Wetmore, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian to R.C. Job, managing secretary, Brunswick Board of Trade, July 13, 1935 [taped to a copy of John Tate Lanning, The Spanish Missions of Georgia (Chapel Hill, NC, 1935) at KRC
981-“He [Ford] spent only nine days, some not full days, excavating it at rather shallow depths,” James M. Mallory to E. Merton Coulter July 16, 1935 Cator Woolford Papers, MSS 210, KRC
982-Comments of the Park Committee on Mr. Ford’s summary, July 16, 1934 Society for Georgia Archeology, MSS 144 KRC
983-James G. Johnson to Robert R. Otis, September 30, 1934 Cator Woolford, MSS 210, KRC
preserved for future generations. The first is the era of Spanish colonization in Georgia, which antedated Oglethorpe by something like 200 years. In the park are the tabby ruins of missions established by Spanish priests who accompanied the Conquistadores northward into Georgia on their search for a mythical El Dorado. The second is the era of plantation life and slavery. A tourism brochure guided visitors to the ruins of Tolomato, Santo Domingo and Santa Maria missions “historic shrines” from “the days of Spanish Conquistadores and Franciscans” alongside landmarks of “courageous colonists,” “swashbuckling pirates” and “the most glamorous era of all, the Golden Plantation Days.”

This complimentary vision of Spanish history in the American South culminated in Duke professor Dr. John Tate Lanning’s *The Spanish Missions of Georgia* (1935) with a foreword by E. Merton Coulter. (The book was bound in brown cloth in honor of the Franciscans.) Tate Lanning’s gender and professional credentials enabled him to supplant Mary Ross as the authority on the Spanish borderlands of the southeastern U.S., as his travels and research took him to the heartlands of colonial New Spain in Mexico and Guatemala. A North Carolinian who made only a handful of visits to Georgia, he based his history on records in Sevilla, Havana and Mexico City. His introduction, written in Mérida, Yucatán, stated the history was a history of Georgia’s missions “not an attempt to authenticate disputed ruins.” Eliding controversy, he proposed, “tabby construction, which was taken from the Spanish tapia” was “probably used by Franciscan monks, and carried into our national period by American planters.”

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985 “Georgia’s New State Park” Atlanta Journal March 3, 1935 Society for Georgia Archeology MSS 144 KRC
986 “Landmarks Committees of McIntosh, Glynn, Camden Counties,” An Introduction to the Georgia coast, a land of Romance and Adventure (March 1935),” Society for Georgia Archaeology MSS 144 KRC
987 The Spanish Missions of Georgia commercial pamphlet by University of North Carolina Press, n.d., Society for Georgia Archaeology MSS 144 KRC
In *The Spanish Missions of Georgia* photographs of ruins in the studies of Bolton and Ross are replaced by ink-drawings recreating scenes of mission life. A religious procession marches towards a columned Misión Santa María. Franciscan monks gather around a tabby Well of Tolomato as Indian neophytes draw water. *(Figure 5.17)* Other illustrations, based on engravings in a 1675 martyrology, depict deaths of Jesuit missionaries. Father Pedro Martinez “the first Christian martyr on Georgia soil” is being killed by a muscular, half-naked Indian who appears to summon the clouds with his hands. “Segura and the friars,” “dispatched with the very axes which they had lent to the savages.” In contrast to the local pride of Mary Ross, Tate Lanning depicts Guale and Timucua as backwaters whose demise seems foreordained. “What with swampy country, cold winters, and hot summers, and the Indians bread exclusively of maize (which the Indian, the natural enemy of work, cultivated only slightly) even the self-abnegating friars had trials enough holding their bodies together and their spirits undaunted.”

Santo Domingo State Park opened on November 22, 1935. Visitors entered through a gate “caped with red Spanish tiles.” The headquarters was “of Spanish design” with “a patio and arched cloisters” and a “Mission Well” that was a replica of the Well of Tolomato depicted in *The Spanish Missions of Georgia*. Santo Domingo State Park was billed as a memorial to “the first civilization on the North American continent” but Georgia governor Eugene Talmadge’s speech at the opening of the park epitomized the Black Legend, declaring, “Spain did not develop her possessions. They were looking for phantom gold, and found phantom death. How

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988. New York Times Magazine, June 10, 1934
989. Mathias Tanner, Societas Iesu ad sanguinis et vitae profusionem militans in Europa, Africa, Asia et America Contra Gentiles, Mahometanos, Judeos, Hæreticos, Impios, Pro Deo, Fide Ecclesia Pietate (Prague, 1675), 444, 450 Austrian National Library Digital Collection
different has been the policy of the English-speaking people who came to America. Here they
built their homes, their churches, cleared the land and established a government.“

John Tate Lanning’s next publication, *Diplomatic History of Georgia: A Study in the War
of Jenkins Ear* (1936) sparked new interest in Georgia’s eighteenth-century British history,
contrasting the 1742 victor of the British soldiers of Fort Frederica and the Scottish Highlanders
of Darien over a Spanish invasion at the Battle of Bloody Marsh with earlier defeats of British
expeditions against St. Augustine, Cartagena de Indias and Santiago de Cuba. Tate Lanning’s
narrative begins in the 1720s with the founding of Fort King George, where “less than fifty years
ago Spanish mission bells from Santo Domingo and Tolomato sounded over the Bocas de
Talaje.”

5.3.6 *Debunking the Mission Myth*

At Darien’s bicentennial on April 16, 1936, the Colonial Dames and St. Andrew’s
Society of Savannah dedicated a pink marble monument “to the Highlanders of Scotland who
founded New Inverness” (renamed Darien for the failed Scottish colony in Panama) whose
“valor defended the struggling colony from Spanish invasion.” A speech by Dr. Jefferson
Randolph Anderson invoked a “Spanish era” that preceded Oglethorpe and the Highlanders,
praising “efforts by Europeans of another tongue and another race than ours to civilize and
Christianize the native races in this territory known to them as Guale, and which we today call
Georgia.” He caused controversy by declaring, “our historians have been strangely silent about
the fact that here in our own state and upon our own coasts and islands had been many Spanish

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992.“Santo Domingo Park Dedicated,” Brunswick News, November 22, 1935 Society for Georgia Archaeology, MSS 144 KRC
993. John Tate Lanning, The Diplomatic History of Georgia: A Study of the Epoch of Jenkins’ Ear (Chapel Hill, NC:
University of North Carolina Press, 1938), 11
994.- “To the Highlanders of Scotland who founded New Inverness in 1736 AD” Highlanders Monument Darien GA
settlements and missions which antedated those of California by more than a century and some of those ruins are still in evidence.”

In response to this speech, the Colonial Dames appointed a committee chaired by E. Merton Coulter, which visited the ruins under the guidance of Marmaduke Floyd, and recommended the publication of Floyd’s study. In 1937, E. Merton Coulter published *Georgia’s Disputed Ruins*, with the studies of Marmaduke Floyd and James A. Ford, and an 1816 pamphlet by Thomas Spalding with his formula for tabby—which proved that the ruins were antebellum sugar mills and cotton barns. Floyd mourned the loss of a “brilliant culture” with the collapse of coastal Georgia’s great plantations in the Civil War, “abandoned to hordes of Negroes, who farmed a few patches or moved to cities and places of employment,” then reforested for timber speculation. Declining memory of antebellum history led Charles Spalding Wyly, in his old age, to forget or ignore the achievements of his grandfather, Thomas Spalding. Emphasizing the proclivity for exaggeration and fabrication of the local Gullah-Geechee Black population he criticized Mrs. Connor, who believed fanciful stories told by “the Negroes around the Thicket,” described as “glib with information about the ruins, calling them Spanish missions” during the visit when she discovered the supposed tabby cross. Floyd dismissed Bolton and Ross’s *Debatable Land* as a “Californian’s product,” attributing the popularity of the mission ruins theory to the spread of “California Spanish mission affectations [which] after the World War decorated hot dog stands and synagogues, filling stations, hotels and houses of every use from Texas to Maine, from the sea mark to the mountain tops.”

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996 Floyd, Georgia’s Disputed Ruins, 2, 3, 178, 177, 182
Focusing on the authenticity of the ruins, Floyd and Ford largely ignored the English-incited slaving raids against Guale and Timucua.

Relying on Crane’s account of the bishop of Cuba’s 1675 visit, Floyd and Ford insisted Misión Santo Domingo de Talaje had always been on St. Simons Island. Spanish records, however, show that the Guale pueblo of Talaje was on the Altamaha River during the visits of the governor of Florida in 1603 and the bishop of Cuba in 1606. It was relocated to St. Simons following Westo slaving raids in 1661. These oversights went unnoticed as *Georgia’s Disputed Ruins*-by proving “the old tabby ruins had never been Spanish missions”-restored the “purity and reliability of history” on Anglo-American lines.

Robert R. Otis insisted on the importance of Georgia’s earlier Spanish history. In a letter to the owner of The Thicket in 1938, he hoped a historian “familiar with sixteenth century Spanish” would one day document, “The true history of the part Georgia played in the discovery, exploration and settlement of these United States from 1515 to 1735.” No such historian would be forthcoming. John Tate Lanning’s subsequent research focused on colonial Mexico and Guatemala. His discovery of a seventeenth-century thesis at the University of México supporting the Cartesian method and Copernican system led to the publication of *Academic Culture in the Spanish Colonies* (1940), which challenged age-old views of Spanish obscurantism. Herbert Bolton, who never visited Georgia, distanced himself from the controversy over the tabby ruins, allowing his former protégé Mary Ross to take the blame. Vilified and humiliated, Mary Ross

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997. Floyd insisted Talaxe was located on St. Simons Island in 1604 during the visit of Florida governor Canzo. Floyd Disputed Ruins, 14. According to Mary Ross, “Mission Talaxe was ten leagues north of San Pedro [Cumberland Island] It was centrally located on the mainland up a large freshwater river. Ross, “Restoration of the Spanish Missions,” 190. Verner Crane believed “San Domingo de Talaje occupied St. Simons Island by 1674.” Crane, *The Southern Frontier*, 8


999. Robert R. Otis to Lewis Crum, January 10, 1938 Society for Georgia Archaeology, box 3 MSS 144 KRC


continued to teach high school in Berkley but vowed never to publish again.\textsuperscript{1002} In his letter Otis recommended The \textit{Franciscan Conquest of Florida} (1937) by Maynard Geiger, archivist of California’s Santa Barbara mission, but the work of a Franciscan clerical historian received little notice in overwhelmingly Protestant Georgia.\textsuperscript{1003}

State park officials downplayed controversy. A 1937 state parks bulletin stated, “Whatever they are, the tabby ruins commemorate some ancient era of Georgia history.” It focused on the natural beauty of the setting, “on the banks of a deep lagoon,” under “a grove of beautiful trees-live oak, laurel, hickory, pine-all hung with tapestries of Spanish moss.”\textsuperscript{1004} An April 10, 1938 \textit{Atlanta Journal} rotogravure featured a group of female tourists posing by the “Mission Well,” and “the famous ‘disputed ruins,’ identified by some archaeologists as remains of Santo Domingo de Talaxe and by other archaeologists as a sugar mill on Eliza Field plantation, built around 1820.”\textsuperscript{1005} A Civilian Conservation Corps newsreel, “A Nationwide System of Parks” with Santo Domingo Park, declared, “Along Georgia’s subtropical coast are many memories of a Spanish civilization which marked this part of the world a century before Jamestown.”\textsuperscript{1006} With no verified mission ruins, a 1940 report billed Santo Domingo Park as a memorial to “the days when the Little Brothers of St. Francis proceeded with their sacrificial ministrations among the Creek Indians of the village of Talaxe.”\textsuperscript{1007}

\textsuperscript{1002}Johanna Mendelson Forman, Mary Letitia Ross Papers: A Descriptive Inventory xvi, xiii Mary Ross would return to Brunswick due to her sister’s illness in 1956
\textsuperscript{1003}Robert R. Otis to Lewis Crum, January 10, 1938 Society for Georgia Archaeology box 3 MSS 1444; Maynard Geiger, \textit{The Franciscan Conquest of Florida} (1573-1618) (Washington DC, 1937)
\textsuperscript{1004}State Department of Natural Resources (in cooperation with the State Department of Education), Natural Resources of Georgia (Atlanta, 1937), 21
\textsuperscript{1005}Santo Domingo State Park, Atlanta Journal rotogravure, April 10, 1938
\textsuperscript{1006}“A Nation Wide System of Parks 1939” YouTube video 16:13 posted by U.S. National Archives Sept. 23, 2009, online at \url{http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I9YcPahmUg}
\textsuperscript{1007}“Santo Domingo State Park, Georgia Department of Natural Resources report December 9, 1940,” 1, 5-6 Cator Woolford Papers MSS 210 KRC
E. Merton Coulter dealt another blow to popular belief that the tabby ruins were Spanish missions with his biography *Thomas Spalding of Sapelo* (1940). Coulter described Spalding’s tabby construction and its use in the sugar mills mistaken for missions.¹⁰⁰⁸ *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* (1939) described the “Mission de Atocoumi” in New Smyrna Beach and a 1696 rebellion by the Jororo Indians that destroyed it, “The priest and two of his Indian converts were slain, and the church ornaments stolen. The mission was used as a sugar mill during the British regime.”¹⁰⁰⁹ A 1941 study by eighty-five year old Captain Charles H. Coe, son of the founder of Glencoe, Florida and a newspaper editor whose *Red Patriots: The Story the Seminoles* (1898) was the first sympathetic account of the Seminole Indians, definitively proved the coquina ruins to have been a sugar mill destroyed during the Second Seminole War; it had never been a Spanish mission.¹⁰¹⁰

### 5.3.7 Preservation and the Politics of Memory

As the “Spanish mission myth” fell into disrepute, digs at the Fort King George site on the Altamaha River in Darien in 1940 found graves of fifteen British soldiers.¹⁰¹¹ This find gained new significance with the U.S.’s entry into World War II. On Christmas Day 1941 citizens of Darien dedicated a monument marking the gravestones of “the Soldiers of Fort King George” who “lost their lives in this first planned effort to hold the Old Southeast for English-speaking people.”¹⁰¹² The *McIntosh News* declared, “It seems particularly appropriate that at this time, when England and America are fighting together in the most terrible war the world has

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¹⁰⁰⁸ E. Merton Coulter, *Thomas Spalding of Sapelo* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1940), 119, 131-32
¹⁰⁰⁹ Federal Writers Project, *Florida: A Guide to the Southernmost State* (Florida Department of Public Instruction, 1939), 305
¹⁰¹⁰ Charles Coe, *Debunking the So-Called Spanish Mission at New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County, Florida* (Daytona Beach, FL., s.p. 1941)
¹⁰¹¹ Jeannine Cook, *Fort King George: Step One To Statehood* (n.p. 1990) xvi
¹⁰¹² “To the Soldiers of Fort King George” historical marker, Fort King George State Park 302 McIntosh Road, Darien GA
ever known, the graves of these soldiers who died protecting the southern English frontier in America so long ago should be marked.”

Brunswick boomed during World War II. Blimps from its Naval Air Station detected German U-Boats in the Atlantic and workers in its shipyards built ninety-nine Liberty ships, many exported to Britain under the Lend-Lease Agreement. Margaret Davis Cate wrote on the Battle of Bloody Marsh, a powerful symbol of wartime Anglo-American alliance, and founded the Fort Frederica Association, raising funds to purchase the site for a national monument. After the dedication of Fort Frederica Monument in 1945, the State of Georgia deeded Santo Domingo Park to a Brunswick paper mill owner and philanthropist for the creation of Boys Estate, a home for at-risk children.

With the triumph of a strengthened Anglo-centric narrative of Georgia’s origins, interest in the Spanish missions did not vanish. The St. Simons historian Brunette Vanstory’s *Georgia’s Land of the Golden Isles* (1956) eulogized the “missions that endured for more than a century as the Franciscans cultivated the soil of the Golden Isles and the soul of the Red Man.” On the origins of the tabby ruins, she wrote, “Historians search old records, archaeologists dig, dreamers dream, and the old, vine covered ruins remain, inscrutable, enigmatic, beautiful.”

Excavations at the site of Fort King George in 1952 and 1968 found Spanish artifacts, majolica shards, olive-oil jars, rosary beads, a sword hilt, a silver jingle, a coin minted in

1013. “Fort King George Graves Marked” McIntosh County (GA) News, December 25, 1941
1015. Margaret Davis Cate, “Fort Frederica and the Battle of Bloody Marsh Georgia Historical Quarterly 27 (June 1943):111-74; Albert Macunary “historic Site Report of Fort Frederica National Monument (Washington, D.C., 1945, 14. A native of St. Augustine, the archaeologist Albert Macunary saw Fort Frederica and Castillo San Marcos as “complimentary sites where the national park visitor may yet visualize the story of an exciting and inspiring period of American history and see this story from the wildly separate viewpoints of the two major contestants.” 11
Mexico, and a skull first thought to be that of Father Pedro de Corpa, which Caldwell found in a trash pile. In 1967, when Bessie Lewis broke ground on a museum to “the first English settlement in the land which is now Georgia,” it displayed these items alongside artifacts from Fort King George and the turn-of-the-twentieth century Lower Bluff sawmill. Local pride focused on Georgia’s eighteenth-century British heritage. In 1988, a cooperative effort of the Lower Altamaha Historical Society and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources led to the reconstruction of Fort King George on the ambitious scale of the original specifications, creating a visible symbol of Georgia’s English heritage. A British garrison that lasted only six years acquired a public visibility denied to the Spanish Franciscan missions that existed for over a century, or the Guale and Mocama Indians who inhabited the modern Georgia coast for millennia.

5.3.8 Conclusion

Discursive geographies of empire shaped not only the economic and social realities of the present but also historical memory of the past. The Spanish fantasy past associated with Southern California and the Southwest, and tourism to Mexico and Cuba, took root on the Atlantic coast of the U.S. South, where it conflicted with Anglo-centric narratives of U.S. history. A “mission myth” which identified tabby and coquina ruins of antebellum sugar mills in coastal Georgia and northern Florida as long-lost sixteenth-century Spanish Franciscan missions bolstered the Spanish borderlands school of U.S. historiography. Dr. Herbert Bolton at the University of California celebrated Spanish explorers, reflecting a relative broadening of U.S. whiteness which challenged Anglo-centrism, albeit one that deliberately marginalized mestizo Hispanics.

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1018. David Hurst Thomas, Historic Period Indian Archaeology of the Georgia Coastal Zone (Athens, GA, 1993), 26
1020. Sullivan, Memories of McIntosh, 3
The antiquity of alleged mission ruins in coastal Georgia and northern Florida lured motorists bound for semitropical beaches in South Florida, fuelling a mini-land boom after the virtual destruction of Miami in the 1926 hurricane and leading to the creation of state parks. Historical narratives celebrated Spanish missionaries as the first white men, predecessors to English colonists and antebellum planters, historical narratives compatible with racial segregation, offering a pantheon of white men that marginalized the largely Black local population. The backlash against the mission myth was driven only partly by demand for historical accuracy, reflecting wounded Anglo-centric pride and celebrations of the forgotten achievements of antebellum planters, a narrative linked with defenses of Jim Crow segregation.

5.4 Conclusion: Spanning the Southland

At the dedication of the final zero milestone marker of the Old Spanish Trail, in St. Augustine, Florida in April 1929, Harral Ayres reminded his audience, “Long before the Pilgrim Fathers settled New England, Spanish princes, adventurers and Mission Fathers were exploring and settling this Old Spanish Trail country.” Evoking a pantheon of conquistadores, Ponce de Leon, Hernando de Soto, Coronado and Cabrillo, remains of this history could be found in ruins of “old stone missions, old aqueducts and other ancient works,” visible to modern motorists on the Old Spanish Trail highway. Earlier guides mentioned alleged ruins in coastal Georgia, a 1931 travel bulletin, listing “Mission Centers of the United States,” described St. Augustine as “charmingly old Spanish” but, despite thirty-eight Spanish missions in Florida and Georgia, concluded, “No great mission structures were built.”

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1021 Dedications Address by Harral Ayres, Managing Director The Old Spanish Trail: The Highway of Old History connecting Florida-California-Mexico Final Report by the Executive Board, San Antonio, Texas, June 1, 1929 George Smathers Library, University of Florida
1022 Dedications Address by Harral Ayres
1023 Old Spanish Trail Travel Bulletin (Fort Stockton, TX: 1930), 2
Spanish fantasy past transformed U.S. historical imagination and identity, shaped by the converging forces of agribusiness, militarism and tourism.

United Fruit’s “Great White Fleet” and the Old Spanish Trail spanned the southland, connecting enclaves of tropical agribusiness, tourism and militarism. Tourism-driven land and real estate booms in California, the Southwest, Florida and coastal Georgia, and Prohibition tourism booms in Cuba and Mexican border towns shaped the American Mediterranean. Tropical Radio network served United Fruit’s fleet, with a broadcasting monopoly in the Caribbean Rim. A fantasy past, bolstered by narratives that created imagined monuments to Spanish history, reflected absurd dichotomies between admiration for Spanish history and modern-day mestizo Hispanics and Blacks, relegated to romantic primitives in ways that reinforced racial segregation.

The private empire of United Fruit, tourism and tourism-driven land and real estate driven booms forged the borderlands of the Americas in an age of empire and Jim Crow. The limits of security from hurricanes and storms were revealed in a series of natural disasters that exposed racial and socio-economic inequalities that underlay a decade of superficial opulence and foreshadowed the coming Depression.
Figure 5.1 Official Guide, Panama-California Exposition, showcasing the Puente de Cabrillo, California Building

Figure 5.2 Official Guide, Panama-California Exposition, showcasing Replicas of the Ruins of Quirigua, Guatemala, inside the California Building
Figure 5.3 Hernando de Soto and his wife Isabel de Bbadilla in Havana, "Farewell on the Ramparts of La Fuerza [Havana, Cuba] in 1539"
Cruising the Caribbean in the Wake of Pirates (1916) Latin American Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Figure 5.4 "Sir Henry Morgan after the Capture of Panama in 1670, Fixing the Ransom of Captured Spanish Women"
Cruising the Caribbean in the Wake of Pirates (1916)
Figure 5.5 Havana Cathedral, William McFee, Gates of the Caribbean (1923)
Figure 5.6 Advertisement for "Great White Fleet," Caribbean Cruises, 1936
Figure 5.7 Map of the Old Spanish Trail, "Through the Lands of America's Ancient History"

Figure 5.8 The Mississippi Gulf Coast seawall at Biloxi and paving in Tallahassee Old Spanish Trail Guide (1925)
Figure 5.9 "Victory Bridge," Apalachicola River
Old Spanish Trail Guide (1925)

Figure 5.10 Opening of the Cochrane Bridge, Mobile, Alabama, 1927.
Hammels Scrapbook, Doy Leal McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of South Alabama
Figure 5.11 *Map Showing Stations of United Fruit and Tropical Radio*
Economic Geography (1928), Victor Cutter Papers, Rauner Library, Dartmouth College
Hanover, New Hampshire

Figure 5.12 "Destruction of Homes in Miami Beach,"
Prints and Photograph Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Figure 5.13 "Wreckage, showing smashed automobile at the south end of Miami Beach"
Prints and Photograph Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Figure 5.14 Paseo del Prado after 1926 Havana hurricane, Memorias de los Trabajos Efectuados con Motivo del Ultimo Ciclón (Habana, Imprenta Nacional, 1927)
Figure 5.15 Cuban Royal Palm with flying debris, "A test of the power of the wind"  
Memorias de los Trabajos Efectuados con Motivo del Ultimo Ciclón (1927)

Figure 5.16 Santo Domingo Mission, Glynn County  
from Herbert Bolton and Mary Ross, *The Debatable Land: A Sketch of the Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Georgia Country* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1925)
Figure 5.17 *The Mission Well of Tolomato*, Jan Tate Lanning
The Spanish Missions of Georgia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935)
SECTION 4: DRAWING HEMISPHERIC COLOR LINES

“Mexicans, both Indians and mestizos, have been found to be useful workmen in the United States. West Indian negroes have been found to be useful,” Dr. Robert Franz Forester conceded in his 1925 report “The Racial Problems Involved in Immigration from Latin America and the West Indies to the United States.” Alluding to United Fruit, “An American fruit corporation with the plantations of Central America is said to have secured better services from Central American workers than local employers secure.” He warned economic value did not outweigh eugenic threats. “No man is a worker alone. He is a citizen and a father of citizens also. There are evident differences between the traits of a hundred thousand Swedish immigrants or a hundred thousand negro or Mexican immigrants; when these immigrants have passed away there will still be differences between the children of the Swedes and the children of the negroes or Mexicans.” In 1919, Foerster authored a study describing alleged physical and hygienic deficiencies of southern Italians, cited in support of the 1924 National Origins Act. Now he warned that the National Origins Act, with its quotas restricting southern and eastern Europeans, inadvertently gave preference “to immigration from the black and brown stocks.”

The 1920s and 1930s witnessed the growth of nativism in the U.S., mestizo populism in Latin America, völkisch nationalism in Europe—which were, as Lara Putnam notes, “differing labels for a common phenomenon.” In the Americas, movements whose racial and nationalist goals were often at crosscurrents drew hemispheric color lines. Public health officials

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1025 Robert Foerster, The Racial Problems Involved in Immigration from Latin America, 56
1026 Robert Franz Foerster, The Italian Emigration of Our Times (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1919)
1027 Foerster, The Racial Problems Involved in Immigration from Latin America and the West Indies, 61
and intellectuals built on the legacies of campaigns against yellow fever and other tropical
diseases, embracing eugenics as racial sanitation. U.S. eugenicists denigrated the mestizo
populations of Latin America and West Indian Blacks, as political considerations and demand for
undocumented Mexican labor prevented quotas on immigration from Latin America. In the
Spanish Caribbean and Central America, public health officials, labor leaders and politicians
embraced U.S.-style racial eugenics to decry the dangers posed by Black West Indians, who held
a privileged position in the neo-colonial labor hierarchies of the Panama Canal and United Fruit.

The United States pioneered race-based immigrant exclusion with the 1882 Chinese
Exclusion Act. After granting railroad concessions to Minor Keith, Costa Rica and Guatemala
enacted laws restricting the entry of Chinese in 1897 and 1909.1029 A bill introduced in 1914 by
Mississippi Sen. John Sharp Williams to ban immigrants of the “African race,” in response to
immigration of West Indian ex-Canal workers to New Orleans and Florida, was defeated in
Congress, in Williams words, due to “political reasons—or Republican Party reasons—the fear of
the defection of the negro vote in the doubtful Northern States.”1030 In the republics of the
Hispanic Caribbean and Central America, as volatile sugar prices and banana disease caused
economic contractions, nationalist public health officials and politicians resentful of U.S. and
United Fruit imperialism enacted restrictions on the entry and employment of immigrants of la
raza negra or in the case of Panama, “Negroes whose first language is not Spanish.”1031

1029-David Fitzgerald, Culling the Masses (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) 358;; Chi Hsien
Chang, International Efforts of World Colonization and Migration in the Twentieth Century (University of
Wisconsin-Madison, 1933), 161
1030-John Sharp Williams, Thomas Jefferson: His Permanent Influence on American Institutions (New York:
Columbia University Press, 1913), 140
1031-Lara Putnam, Radical Moves: Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age (Chapel Hill, NC and London:
University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 82-122; Leyes Expedidas por la Asamblea Nacional de Panamá en las
Sesiones Ordinarias y Extraordinarias de 1926 a 1927 (Panamá: Imprenta Nacional, 1927)
The first chapter, “Labor and Race in the borderlands of North America” describes northward tides of labor migration bringing Mexicans and West Indians to the U.S., Haitians and Jamaicans to Cuba, and Afro-American migrants to the Northern U.S. Working-class white resentment sparked violent race riots and massacres, creating a strict system of segregation. Mexican immigrants provided a low-wage, largely undocumented workforce for citrus groves, cotton fields and cities and towns of Southern California and the Southwest. Racial underclasses created subcultures of modernity—Jazz music and dance spread across the circum-Caribbean and was embraced by Mexican-American youth, Marcus Garvey’s UNIA spread transnational Black nationalism across the African Diaspora and spanned the American Mediterranean.

The next chapter “Pan-American Eugenics” examines eugenics movements in the United States and the Hispanic Caribbean. It explores how eugenics built on public health campaigns against yellow fever and other tropical diseases. Scientific interests of California fruit growers in selective breeding shaped a eugenics movement that led the U.S. in the practice of sterilization, disproportionately targeting Mexicans. Poor whites and Blacks in the U.S. South, stigmatized in campaigns against hookworm, malaria and human-born ailments, were favorite targets of sterilization. Cuban eugenicists advocated immigration restrictions and more extreme eugenic measures, including sterilization, as continuations of sanitary struggles to eradicate yellow fever, leading the movement for a Pan-American Eugenics Conference. Resentment of U.S. imperialism and discrimination against Mexican immigrants prevented the adoption of a Eugenics Code.

The final chapter, “Decay and Expansion in the Banana Empire” explores transformations in the Central American banana zones. The fungal epidemic Panama Disease altered land tenure and labor forces. Company practices of labor management and public health
focused on alleged deficiencies of mestizo Hispanic *mozos*. Resentment the elevated position of West Indians sparked strikes and race riots in the banana zones of Guatemala and Honduras. Public officials and politicians restricted Black migration to new banana zones on the Pacific coast, most notably in Costa Rica. Hispanic nationalists in Central America, opposing the private imperialism of United Fruit, looked to the U.S. as a model of modernity, to justify their calls for anti-Black immigration restrictions and racial violence. Throughout this section, I will emphasize how, far from a withering away of the nation-state, globalized corporate capitalism, with its practically limitless demand for cheap, exploitable labor, sparked the rise of radicalized racial nationalisms.

6.1 Labor and Race in the Borderlands of North America

“We know the Mexican and he knows us, we are not afraid of him. There never was a more docile animal in the world than the Mexican,” declared Fred Roberts of the South Texas Cotton Growers Association, to the Senate in January 1920, demanding exemption of Mexican agricultural workers from literacy tests. No other source of labor was available. “The returned soldier will not do it, because he did not pick cotton before he went away; he has merely to come to fill the notch that was left when he went to war. The negro will not do it any longer because he has what he considers a better job in the North or East, where he can go to the factory district.”

Economic arguments for immigration steeped in paternalistic racism laid the foundations for the institutionalization of illegal immigration. Political scientist Aristide Zoldberg describes how draconian restrictions on immigration from Asia and Europe open the overland “backdoor”

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of the U.S.-Mexico border. Historian Lara Putnam describes the growth of immigration restrictions across the circum-Caribbean aimed at Afro-Caribbean immigrants from the West Indies that were selectively enforced in deference to employer needs, drawing analogies to the U.S.-Mexico borderland.

The labor needs of U.S. agribusiness were met by new waves of mestizo Hispanic migrant workers-Mexican *braceros* in Texas cotton fields and citrus-groves in California, Central American *mozos* in the banana plantations of Central America, Jamaican and Haitian *braceros* in Cuban sugar mills and estates. Afro-West Indian immigrants to New York joined Afro-Americans fleeing the rural South in the Great Migration. The Black Nationalism of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), headquartered in Harlem, spread across the Black belts of the American Mediterranean. The rhythms of Jazz, epitomizing rollicking modernity, shaped youth subcultures from the Black-owned ballrooms of Harlem to Mexican-American *pachucos*. Currents of labor migration shaped radical ideas that challenged the values of the age of empire, even as medicalization and racialization of Blacks and Hispanics strengthened racial segregation.

6.1.1 Restrictions and Exemptions

Immigration enforcement began when Mounted watchmen of the U.S. Immigration Service began patrolling the Mexican border in 1904, pursuing violators of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. In 1920, 1,906 Chinese admitted to the U.S. went to Mexicali, the cotton-growing district of Baja California and the center of Mexico’s Chinese community. Officials in Calexico arrested twenty-six Chinese, reporting that smugglers were making runs by automobile as far as

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1034 Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age*, 43
San Francisco. Officers in Nogales, Arizona arrested two Chinese, Wong Yoke and Lee Kong Chong.\(^\text{1035}\) San Francisco’s Chinatown declined from 30,000 before the 1906 earthquake to 5,600 by 1919, with a ban on gambling, enforced by the special police squad.\(^\text{1036}\) In contrast to stereotypes of criminality, Chinese merchants in Mexicali campaigned to restrict hours of saloons, shut down dance halls and convert gambling houses into restaurants and movie halls.\(^\text{1037}\)

The number of Chinese passing from Key West to Havana rose to 4,599 in 1920. In May, authorities seized a Cuban fishing vessel in Tarpon Springs with rum, whisky, and 17 Chinese.\(^\text{1038}\) In 1922, agents arrested six of eleven Chinese smuggled from Havana to New Orleans on the Southern Railway in Baltimore. A sailor Chung Fook, who was to receive $750 for each man delivered safely to New York, had made arrangements.\(^\text{1039}\) Two Chinese in Havana, Hui Tuny and Moi Chung, stowed away for New York in the cargo-hold of the Untied Fruit ship SS *Ulua* in September 1921, where, with 250 bottles of Scotch whisky, customs officials found them “senseless and rigid. They were carried to the deck and rolled in blankets in the sunshine for more than an hour before they began to thaw,” after which they were sent to Ellis Island to be deported.\(^\text{1040}\)

Prohibition complicated border control. “Unlike contraband Chinese or contraband narcotics, the smuggler of contraband liquor has his own money actually invested, amounting oftentimes to many thousands of dollars,” the Los Angeles office noted, and “shoots, shoots first,

\(^\text{1037}\) Ramon Jurado “Wiping Out the Last Frontier: Inspired by Thrift and Good Business Sense the Chinese have Transformed a Wide Open, Lawless Town on the Mexican Border into a Model Community,” *Illustrated World* 36 no. 5 (January 1921): 683-684
\(^\text{1038}\) Annual Report of the Commissioner General for the Fiscal year Ended June 30, 1923: 22
\(^\text{1039}\) Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1921: 22
and shoots to kill as soon as he is challenged,” with the deaths of six agents in 1921. Mexican smugglers or “coyotes” received up to $1,000 for smuggling European immigrants. Officials in San Antonio conceded the impossibility of guarding “thousands of miles of winding twisting river front, traversing a lonely almost uninhabited section covered with dense brush,” where the typical smuggler, “goes armed to the teeth and does not hesitate to fire upon officers at first sight.”

Lobbying by Southwest agribusiness and the U.S. State Department, seeking to prevent President Plutarco Elias Calles from nationalizing Standard Oil-owned refineries, exempted Mexico from the National Origins Act. The construction of roads on both sides of the border, alongside upheavals in Mexico, the Cristero Rebellion, led to the growth of immigration. Mexican *braceros* hired by labor recruiters (*enganchadores*) traveled by truck and car. The Texas Bureau of Labor reported 227,000 pickers worked in 1927, migrating from the Rio Grande to East and Central Texas and the Panhandle. “The average Mexican laborer, at the beginning of the season, bundles his entire family, even including babes in arms, into a cheap truck, together with whatever camping equipment he is able to get together, and moves from one section to another as the cotton opens.” Cotton planters in the Mississippi Delta imported 500 Mexicans in 1925, as Black migration to Northern cities led to labor shortages. Living in unscreened bunkhouses and cabins, many succumbed to malaria; examinations of 47 laborers found 21% had Plasmodium malaria parasites, eighteen reported falling ill after their arrival.

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Restrictions on Asian and European immigration, circumvented by human smuggling, exempted a growing wave of undocumented Mexican migrants, relegated to the bottom of labor hierarchies by the coercive bio-politics of race.

6.1.2 The Great Migration and the Nationalization of Segregation

Beginning in 1916, when the Pennsylvania railroad recruited several hundred workers from Jacksonville, Florida, over half a million Blacks left the U.S. South. As the Boll Weevil spread to Alabama and Georgia by 1915, destroying 400,000 bales a year, hundreds of migrants packed northbound trains in towns like Tifton, Georgia and Eufaula, Alabama, where floods on the Chattahoochee destroyed cotton that survived the boll weevil. In central Alabama’s Black Belt and the Mississippi Delta, the numbers reached the thousands. In April 1917, 700 Black men from New Orleans left for New York on Southern Pacific steamships.

The Chicago Defender published letters from migrants, describing discrimination and racial violence. A Lexington, Mississippi schoolteacher wrote, “I am compelled to teach 150 children without any assistance and receive only $27 while a white with 30 gets $100.” A letter from Troy, Alabama enclosed “a photo of a lynching which speaks for itself. I do wish there could be sufficient pressure brought to have federal investigation of such work.”

Segregation likely contributed to lower death rates for Afro-Americans during the 1918 influenza pandemic. Public health officials in Philadelphia and Black newspapers like the Chicago Defender, Baltimore Afro-American and Philadelphia Tribune noted this fact, which

1048. Emmett Jay Scott, Negro Migration During the War (Oxford University Press, 1920), 68
contrasted with higher Black death rates from tuberculosis and pneumonia. White doctors attributed this to racial differences. A study of death rates of white and Black soldiers in the U.S. Army insisted that the skin and “lining of the mouth and the naso-pharynx is much more resistant to microorganisms in negroes than in whites.”

Racial tensions exacerbated by military demobilization exploded in the “red summer” of 1919. On July 26, in Chicago, seventeen-year old Eugene Williams was stoned to death after drifting over an imaginary line dividing beaches on Lake Michigan. Armed gangs invaded Chicago’s South Side Black Belt, met by residents with gunfire; the result was 38 deaths-23 Blacks, 15 whites. Immigrant banana peddlers stood on dangerous on racial fault lines. Four Black teenagers with pocketknives stabbed to death Carmen Lazerroni, a sixty-year Italian immigrant driving a banana wagon.

Violence reached its apogee in 1921 in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with the destruction of a Black community, “because they were prosperous and owned oil lands and other property which whites coveted.” Armed Black men sought to prevent the lynching of a shoeshine boy arrested after stumbling over a white female elevator operator. Mobs of whites invaded the Black neighborhood of Greenwood, setting fire to homes and businesses, six bi-planes dispatched by police dropping incendiary bombs of flaming turpentine.

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1053. Predicting the post-war Civil Rights movement, the writer concluded, “It is true that conceivably a race inspired by the spirit that Gandhi preaches in India would discover a more effective form of resistance than by force of arms. “The Tulsa Horror Symptom of a Malady,” The World Tomorrow Vol. 4-5 July 1921, 198
Racial violence strengthened segregation. A 1925 report found 30% of Blacks and 26% of Mexicans in Chicago lived in households of more than one family.\textsuperscript{1055} Sociologist Charles S. Johnson, noting Mexicans were replacing Blacks in railroad and construction work, and in brickyards and steel mills, feared “that Mexican labor can be used as a whip for Negro labor as the Negro was used as a whip for white labor.”\textsuperscript{1056} A Methodist Church in South Side Chicago found “a few Mexicans have been shot and a few Negroes cut up,” but insisted sporadic outbreaks of violence were attributable to moonshine.\textsuperscript{1057}

In Los Angeles, the largest Black community in the West, home to retired railroad workers and refugees from the Tulsa massacre, Johnson found racism against Chinese and Japanese has “in large measure overlooked the Negro.” A “practically limitless” supply of cheap labor from neighboring Mexico limited Black employment in factories, but the racial ambiguity of Mexicans offered Black opportunities. Blacks did not work alongside Mexicans in factories where Mexicans were classified as white, but Black foremen oversaw Mexicans in factories where they were classified as colored.\textsuperscript{1058} Imperialism abroad and sectional reconciliation at home helped nationalize racial segregation. The influenza pandemic shaped pathologies of racial difference and race riots strengthened segregation. Replacing “ethnic” whites at the bottom of labor hierarchies, Blacks coexisted, often uneasily, with new waves of Mexicans.

\textsuperscript{1055} Elizabeth Hughes, “Living Conditions of Small-Wage Earners in Chicago,” (Chicago (Ill) Department of Public Welfare, 1925), 13
\textsuperscript{1057} Robert Redfield papers in Paul S. Taylor, Mexican Labor in the United States Vol. 2 Issue 2 (1932): 230
\textsuperscript{1058} Charles S. Johnson, “Negro Workers in Los Angeles Industries,” Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life 5-6 no. 8 August 1928: 240 Two-thirds of Black union members were waiters and musicians, waiters and sales-clerks were displaced by “girls from southern and midwestern small towns who have come to Hollywood by the hundreds. . . . to test their fortune in motion pictures. (240, 239)
6.1.3 Mexican Labor and Racial Segregation in California

Demand for Mexican labor grew most rapidly in Southern California. The number of Mexican citrus pickers grew from 2,317 in 1914 to 7,004 in 1920, 30% of the workforce. By 1926, 10,000 naranjeros labored in Southern California groves.\textsuperscript{1059} The Mexican presence grew as Japanese Issei transitioned to truck farming, and the 1924 Asian Exclusion Act ended immigration from Japan.\textsuperscript{1060} In 1919, the California Fruit Exchange warned “I.W.W. and Russian Bolshevik agitators” instigated a strike among Mexican pickers in Charter Oak, with threats “that packing houses would be burned, that killing acids would be thrown on the trees and copper nails driven into the trunks.”\textsuperscript{1061} The shift to Mexican labor led to a decline in wages. By 1923-24, pay for pickers fell to $30 biweekly, before deductions for gloves and living expenses.\textsuperscript{1062}

Prohibition increased demand for orange juice, used to mask bootleg liquor, “bathtub” gin. In 1923, the California Fruit Exchange sold over 12,000 electrical Sunkist juice extractors.\textsuperscript{1063} Refrigerated shipments of oranges and lemons transited the Panama Canal to the Eastern U.S., Britain and Europe.\textsuperscript{1064} Monoculture exacerbated crop diseases. Red, black and Citricola citrus scale infested groves, smoothing trees in “a heavy blanket of fungus smut.”\textsuperscript{1065} Scale was controlled through costly cyanide fumigation, but growers reported insects were

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\textsuperscript{1059} Gilbert González, \textit{Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California} (Champagne, Il: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 7-8; Carey McWilliams, \textit{Southern California: An Island on Land} (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1946), 218
\textsuperscript{1061} “Agitators Cause Trouble Among Orange Pickers in the South,” \textit{California Citrograph} (Redlands, CA) Vol. 4 No. 5 March 1919, 129 Univ. of California, Berkley Dig. Apr 21, 2015
\textsuperscript{1062} Matt Garcia, \textit{A World of Their Own: Labor and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles} (Chapel Hill, NC and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 38
\textsuperscript{1063} “The 12,000 Sunkist extractors provide new consumption for 600,000 boxes of fresh fruit Annual Report of the General Manager of the California Fruit Growers Exchange for the year ended October 31, 1923, 15
\textsuperscript{1064} In January 1921 the first ship left San Pedro, Sixteen ships transited the Panama Canal in 1922, “Water Transportation Popular: Heavy and Successful Fruit Shipments Via Panama Canal,” \textit{Western Fruit Jobber} 8 April 1922, 37 Univ. of California, Berkley Dig. Nov. 5, 2013
\textsuperscript{1065} Annual Report of the General Manager of the California Fruit Growers exchange for the year ended Oct. 23, 1923, 19 Huntington Library, San Marino, California
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developing resistance. In 1925, Brogdex patented a method of treating citrus with a fungicidal chemical wash. The Placentia Orange Growers Association dismissed the results. “We are not convinced there is any material advantage up to the time of sale in these Brogdex or waxing process to cover our fruit, over clean fruit packed with its natural color and ‘bloom.’”

California citrus growers benefitted from an influx of Mexicans fleeing gang-labor (enganche) on railroads, mines and cotton ranches in the inland Southwest, drawn by the healthier climate and higher wages of inland California. Francisco Chico, interviewed by historian Gilbert González, worked on an Arizona cotton ranch after his mother died of influenza in 1918 and his father perished in a copper mine. In 1921, when cotton prices fell to 1¢ a pound, his uncle hired a truck owner to take the family to California, a six-week journey across deserts littered with animal and human carcasses. They worked picking oranges for $1 a day in Riverside, settling in the citrus worker village of La Fabrica in Anaheim, Orange County. Labor shortages caused by migration to California led Arizona cotton growers to import 1,500 Puerto Ricans in 1926. Housed in unventilated shacks and leaky tents, several hundred workers went on strike.

The California Fruit Growers Exchange promoted philanthropic efforts towards Mexican migrant workers. Beginning with the El Monte experiment, citrus growers constructed model “camps” of small barrack-like homes for families of Mexican workers “who were living in

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1068. Officers of the Placentia Orange Growers Association, October 31, 1930 Placentia Orange Growers Association Papers, California State University-Fullerton
1069. Gilbert González, Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900-1950 (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994) 54
shacks made of brush, weeds and tin cans reinforced by an occasional piece of discarded lumber."\textsuperscript{1071} (Figure 6.1) One official justified citrus worker “camps” as investments in productivity of workers previously “content with dirt floods, unsanitary and unhealthy living conditions, a cigarette for breakfast, coffee and a cigarette and frijoles for dinner,” and in social cohesion, since families were more likely to remain on citrus ranches than single men, who migrated to cities.\textsuperscript{1072} Social reformers voiced concern over urban barrios. A schoolteacher in Los Angeles contrasted the quick comprehension of Japanese women to the slow learning ability of Mexican women, due to the fact that “for the most part, the Mexicans who come to us are the cholos, a primitive people, more Indian than Latin, brought here originally by the corporations for peon labor.”\textsuperscript{1073} In the Mexican slums of Los Angeles’ Ann Street district, north of the old Plaza, the Church of All Nations, the cities’ largest social welfare organization, reported, “28% of Mexican habitants have no sinks, 32% have no lavatories, and 79% have no bathtubs.”\textsuperscript{1074}

Immigrants expressed pride in their families’ assimilation. Pedro Nazas, from Jalisco, crossing at El Paso in 1918, worked on railroads across the Southwest and in a Los Angeles stockyard. “When I had saved a little money, I sent for my sister and put her in school. Now she can speak English and is getting business training.”\textsuperscript{1075} Anastacio Torres, from Guanajuato, labored on railroads in Kansas, and picked cotton and lemons in the Imperial Valley with his sister and her children. He then found a job as a gardener in Beverly Hills, before being fired for not being a citizen. He disliked U.S.-born pochos, “they only want to talk in English and they

\textsuperscript{1071} First Annual Report of the Commission of Immigration and Housing of California, January 2, 1915: 37
\textsuperscript{1074} G. Bromley Oxnam, The Mexican in Los Angeles from the Standpoint of Religious Forces of the City, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 93-94 (January 1921), 131
\textsuperscript{1075} Manuel Gamio, The Mexican Immigrant in the United States (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 48
speak Spanish very poorly.” Mexican-American youth found an identity in the subculture of pachuiquismo, which spread from Juárez/El Paso’s Segundo Barrio to Arizona and Los Angeles. Pachucos wore zoot suits, pachucas sported dark lipstick and bouffant hair, listening and dancing to swing jazz and Cuban rhumba, speaking Caló slang captured in recordings like Don Tosti’s “Pachuco Boogie.” Mexicans met labor needs of California and the Southwest, comprising a laboring racial underclass. Mexican-American children of the border drew on Black Jazz music and dance in defiance of Anglo racism, asserting independence from their immigrant parents.

6.1.4 Citrus and Labor in Florida

Another citrus kingdom was emerging in Florida, alongside a land boom. Visitors to Florida found the state Western rather than Southern, in its “rollicking” spirit, relentless land speculation and traces of its “Spanish” history, evident in “ancient vine covered sugar mills, the missions, the coquina forts, and the picturesque names of towns.” The citrus industry extended to the northernmost and traditionally Deep South region of the state. Cold hardy Satsuma oranges thrived in West Florida, as Minor Keith’s hotels and the Old Spanish Trail highway reduced the region’s isolation. Panama City grower William Wilson emphasized how Satsuma oranges were “solidifying the State,” united by a staple industry, citrus fruit. The center of the citrus industry was in peninsular Florida, below the frost line, in low most

1076. Manuel Gamio, The Mexican Immigrant in the United States, 58
1077. Earliest mentions of pachucos, gang warfare with native Califas, Mexican-American: Readings for Students in Mexican American Studies (Los Angeles Unified School District, 1936)
hammock soil ideally suited to sour oranges and grapefruit. The Tampa-based Florida Citrus Exchange promoted health benefits of grapefruit and orange juice. During the 1918 influenza pandemic, physicians prescribed grapefruit juice. Orlando grower Dr. P. Philips traveled to Chicago and wired the first carloads for distribution.\(^{1081}\)

Florida growers faced the problem of losses from the fungal disease melanose, exacerbated by humidity and heavy rainfall. Spraying of Bordeaux mixture, a mixture of copper sulfate and baked lime, controlled melanose. The mixture killed friendly fungi that controlled scale and whitefly, outbreaks forcing growers to spray with oil emulsion.\(^{1082}\) (Figure 6.2) The embrace of scientific agriculture drew admiration from leading figures in California’s citrus industry. Dr. James Barrett of the Riverside Citrus Experiment Station reported, “California has a real competitor in the Ridge country of Florida.” While admiring Florida’s progress, he insisted California growers had a distinct advantage over their competitors. Florida growers viewed their groves as a whole, as tracts of land, while the owners of Southern California “citrus ranches” dealt with individual trees in a manner similar to a stockbreeder, focusing on improving a select few commercial varieties.\(^{1083}\)

On the edge of the South, Florida was at the center of the Afro-American Great Migration. Writer James Weldon Johnson recalled migrants for New York at the train station in Jacksonville “carrying flimsy suitcases, new and shiny, rusty old ones [sic] banjos, guitars, birds and cages.”\(^{1084}\) Labor shortages caused by Northern migration led to strikes. Workers at the Sawyer & Godfrey packinghouse of Crescent City struck in October 1919, demanding 10¢ for every box of oranges. Workers who labored in the potato fields of Hastings, where truck farms

\(^{1081}\)“Combat Influenza With Grapefruit,” *The Citrus Industry*, Vol. 1 Issue 2 February 1920, 16
\(^{1082}\)O.F. Burger. E.F. DeBust “Controlling Melanose,” *The Citrus Industry* 4 no. 10 (October 1923), 6
\(^{1083}\)“Florida as Seen by California Expert,” *The Citrus Industry* 4 no. 3 (March 1923), 17
\(^{1084}\)James Weldon Johnson, The Making of Harlem, in Alain Locke *Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro*, 638
catered to Florida East Coast Railroad resorts, also demanded a pay increase. A writer for the Georgist magazine *The Freeman* found almost slavery-like conditions in the citrus groves and packinghouses of Winter Haven, Florida, east of Tampa. Arriving from the apple-orchards of Washington’s Yakima Valley, the author noted similarities in appearances of packinghouse towns, but “the inertia of ‘cracker’ and ‘nigger’ labor” stands in stark contrast to white farm workers in the West. He cited “a Negro struck down with an iron bar at one of the packing houses” and a foreman who, learning pickers plans to ask for a raise, “lined up the men at the end of the day and said to them-‘if any of you -------- ‘niggers’ thinks he is worth more than $2.50 a day speak up.’ The group answered in chorus that they needed to keep up with the cost of living, which was increasing. ‘Than take your pay and get the hell off the grove’-the overseer roared.”

Blacks founded higher wages as servants, butlers, hotel waiters, restaurant chefs and sailors on private yachts. By 1925 the manager of one citrus farm conceded, “Some of those South Carolina niggers have got to emigrate down this way or we won’t have orange pickers in a year or two.”

Jim Crow expanded south towards the edges of the tropics with Florida’s citrus industry and the state’s land boom.

### 6.1.5 Cuban Sugar, West Indian Labor and the “Dance of the Millions”

Across the Straits of Florida, in Cuba, a regime of racial segregation was developing under the aegis of U.S. sugar companies. From September 1919 to May 1920, the price of sugar rose from 6 ½ cents to 22 ½ cents per pound then fell to 3 ¾ cents. This boom and bust,
known as *la danza de los millones*, aided the expansion of United Fruit Sugar, “Boston” and “Preston” mills on Banes and Nipe Bay producing half a million bags from cane grown on company-owned lands, shipped to the Revere Refinery in Boston.\(^{1089}\) The Texas Oil Co. erected fuel tanks at the port of Antilla and Mayarí.\(^{1090}\) In its vertical integration, United Fruit was the exception to the practices of Cuba’s sugar industry. Cuban and Spanish *colono* small farmers grew more than 80% of Cuba’s cane.

Travel writer Harry Franck visited Cuba at the height of the sugar boom. Taking a ferry from Key West to Havana, and then traveling by rail, he described city giving way to farms and then ranchland as the train headed west to east, an almost exact inversion of traveling across the U.S. The third-class passenger cars are a “veritable riot of color,” more striking given the lack of racial segregation.

There are leather-faced Spaniards returning from the *zafría*, fresh, boyish faces of similar origin and destination, Basques in their *boianas* and corduroy clothes, untamed-looking Haitians sputtering their uncouth tongue, more merry negroes from the British West Indies, Chinamen and half-Chinamen, Cuban countrymen in a combination shirt and blouse called a *chamarreta*, men carrying roosters under their arms, men with hunting dogs, negro girls in purple and other screaming colors, including furs dyed in tints unknown to the animal world, and a scattering of Oriental and purely Caucasian features from the ends of the earth.\(^{1091}\)

Racial assumptions determined divisions of labor. Except for Canary Islanders, Spanish immigrants avoided cane-cutting, preferring construction work, seeking to acquire land and become *colonos*. Chinese, seen as weaker but more intelligent, ran boiling houses, one writer

\(^{1089}\)“Carta de Cuba,” *Sugar* Vol. 20 Octubre 1918: 426 Cornell University Dig. Oct. 8, 2009
\(^{1090}\)“Erection of Fuel Oil Tanks in Cuba,” September 8, 1919 *Commerce Reports* 3 July-September, 1919: 1279
\(^{1091}\)Harry Alverson Franck, *Roaming Through the West Indies* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1920), 51
noting he often saw “a mayoral or Cuban overseer, standing in front of a boiling house clock ask a Chinese laborer who had not been on the island two months if it was time to ring the noon-time bell.” Jamaicans and other West Indians worked as cane-cutters, and in railroad and pipeline construction. Haitians occupied the bottom rung as cane cutters. Some were upwardly mobile. D. Beauville Frailler worked as a labor recruiter. Haitian-born José Miguel drove oxen on a plantation in Banes. Outside of work, racial barriers blurred. In Preston, a Cuban rural guard murdered Haitian Ney Louis-Charles in a rivalry over a Jamaican prostitute. Rates of malaria reflected labor divisions. The director of the hospital at Preston reported at the beginning of the harvest season, as 5,000 Haitians cane-cutters arrived, and Jamaicans were withdrawn from construction, the number of Haitians with malaria rose from 49 in November 1920 to 345 in February 1921, while the number of Jamaicans fell from 264 to 76. (Figure 6.3)

United Fruit Sugar officials, mostly New Englanders, described a tropical frontier that was both forbidding and fascinating. Engineer Everett Brown, from Swampscott, Massachusetts, home of United Fruit president Andrew Preston, arrived in August 1919. He wrote to his wife Ethel, “this is no place for a white woman, it is raw country in every way. Rurales on patrol, vaqueros (cow-punchers), niggers and Cubanos galore, everybody rides saddleback, regular wild west, no carriages. The cane-cutting season is just closed and there are a lot of Haitians and

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1093. British consul Godfrey Haggard reported West Indians were “murdered, ill-treated, imprisoned and fined,” a threat to British citizenship, although “these coloured people are mere drones in the hive of the British Empire. They are quarrelsome and lazy and bring nothing to us in business, in taxes or in prestige.” Reports for 1922, Mr. Godfrey Haggard to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston received May 16 Confidential 12190 in Cuba Before Castro: British Annual Reports 1898-1958 Vol. 2: 146
Jamaica negroes going home. They are crowded around the stores and saloons today.”

Noting the prevalence of Haitian Vodou, he described an incident where “negroes were shot by the guards” in Banes for allegedly trying to sacrifice white children, fears of Black brujos serving as the primary justification for acts racial violence in the Spanish Caribbean. He suggested to his wife that her fears of “Voodoism” were correct, “They hold their dances once every two weeks or so. I have heard the tom-toms going.”

Arriving in 1926 to begin work as a stenographer in Banes, Mark Trafton, whose uncle was a friend of the late Andrew Preston, described complex racial and cultural hierarchies in the enclave. A saxophonist in Boston, he learned “fascinating” Latin music “the danzon, paso doble and later the merengue” attending dances at the Banes Club as the novio of Maria Eugenia de Cardenas, blonde daughter of a Spanish colono. He spent five months in Banes, with well-stocked stores, swimming pools and a polo club. Promoted to timekeeper, he oversaw 150 Haitian cane-cutters, described in dehumanizing language. “They were a sorry lot, almost like animals. If asked his name, each would reply in his Patua lingo, Jose fils (Joe’s son).” Haitian workers “lived in long, narrow, open wooden buildings, about 40 in each structure. . . .It was eerie listening to them at night as they chanted and danced around a huge bonfire in some voodoo ritual, spurred on by drinking fermented cane juice-guarapo.” United Fruit Sugar’s enclave was an outpost of U.S. style racial segregation, company officials and Spanish-Cuban colonos relying on exploitable, undocumented West Indian Black workforce, most importantly Haitian cane cutters, stigmatized as ignorant, superstitious and violent.

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1097. Everett Brown to Ethel and Susie Brown, August 17, 1919, Everett Brown Collection, Box 1, Folder 2, University of Florida
1098. Everett Brown to Ethel and Susie Brown, November 20, 1919, Everett Brown Coll., Box 1, Folder 2,
1100. Mark Trafton, “Raising Cane and Growing Bananas,” 102
6.1.6 Harlem and Black Modernity in the Metropolitan North

On the northern part of the island of Manhattan, far removed geographically but connected to the plantations of the American Mediterranean by the shipping that brought bananas and sugar, a new and different Black community was emerging, defined by relative affluence. Despite “a certain amount of poverty and a certain very pitiable degree of overcrowding” hidden behind its “brownstone fronts,” Rollin L. Hart declared Harlem, “Greatest negro city in the world” with “magnificent negro churches, luxurious negro apartment houses.” The source of this prosperity was clear, “While undesirables pour in from the Southern states, a highly ambitious and on the whole very well-educated type arrives from the British West Indies. To this influx of West Indian negroes-40,000 have come, they say-Harlem’s prosperity is largely due.”

Noting local police acquiesced to West Indians carrying firearms, he insisted such attitudes were a reason why New York had been spared violent race riots.

Afro-Caribbean immigration reached 5,000 per year from 1914 to 1923, falling during the Cuban sugar boom, peaking at 12,250 in 1924, plummeting to 321 in 1925, after a provision in the 1924 National Origins Act restricted the number of visas from non-self-governing colonies. West Indians arrived on stemships of United Fruit and other lines as second-class passengers, workers, and sometimes as stowaways. In “My Grandmother’s Eyes”, Michelle Cliff narrates the arrival of her Jamaican grandmother on a United Fruit ship in 1923. “A stowaway, I lived on bananas for five days-to this day-I cannot bear the smell of bananas,” her grandmother recalled.

1102 Caribbean Migration, InMotion African-American Migratory Experience, Schomburg Center, New York
1103 Michelle Cliff, Everything is Now: New and Collected Stories (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 8
Viewed as more reliable workers than U.S. Blacks, West Indians were overrepresented in higher-paid service jobs, such as doormen and elevator-men in upper-class apartments.\footnote{In one study, out of 100 Black apartment house employees, 58 were West Indians, 42 Americans, Forrester Washington, \textit{A study of negro employees of apartment houses in New York City} (National Urban League for Social Services Among Negroes, 1916) 12 University of Virginia Dig. Mar 25, 2011} James Weldon Johnson, the son of Bahamian immigrants to Florida, admired the West Indian-owned real estate companies that bought Harlem’s big elevator apartments.\footnote{James Weldon Johnson, “The Making of Harlem,” in A. Locke, ed. \textit{Harlem: The Mecca of the New Negro}, 638} Wifried Adolfus (W.A.) Domingo, editor of Marcus Garvey’s \textit{Negro World}, described the sight of West Indians “accustomed to wearing cool, light-colored garments in the tropics” who “would stroll along Lenox Avenue on a hot day resplendent in white sheets and flannel pants,” a style of dress adopted by U.S. Blacks.\footnote{W.A. Domingo, “Tropics in New York” in A. Locke, ed. \textit{Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro}, 650} If U.S. Blacks emulated the fashions of West Indians, their success inspired resentment. W.A. Domingo, a tailor and trade union organizer and the son of a Spanish father who exemplified the middle-class, mixed-race “coloured” status of most immigrants in their native islands, noted among U.S. Blacks “a considerable amount of prejudice against West Indians. It is claimed that they are proud and arrogant, that they think themselves superior to the natives,” feelings strongest among “the educated Negroes of New York.”\footnote{W.A. Domingo, “The Tropics in New York,” in A. Locke, ed. \textit{Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro}, 640}

West Indians, particularly those from Panama, were well represented among the writers, musicians and athletes of the Harlem Renaissance. Eric Walrond, who was born in British Guiana, raised in Barbados and Panama and worked as a clerk and hospital secretary in the Canal Zone and New York, authored a collection of short stories, \textit{Tropic Death} (1926), offering vivid vignettes of West Indian Colón. “Creole girls led, thwarted, wooed and burned by obeah-working weed-smoking St. Lucien men. Jamaica girls, fired an inextinguishable warmth, danced
whirling, wheeling, rolling, rubbing, spinning their posteriors and their hips in circles, quivering to the rhythm of the mento.”

West Indians crossed cultural, linguistic and sexual borders. Boxer Alfonso Teofilo “Panama Al” Brown, who learned the sport from U.S. sailors as a shipping clerk in Colón, moved to New York in 1923, settling in Paris, where he joined Josephine Baker’s *La revue négre* as a tap dancer with help from his lover Jean Cocteau. John Isaacs, bilingual son of a Panamanian mother and Jamaican father, won the 1939 World Professional Basketball Tournament with the New York Renaissance, an all-Black team that played at the West Indian-owned Renaissance Casino.

Luis Russell, born in Bocas del Toro, worked as a pianist at a casino in Colón, acquiring jazz records from U.S. sailors. After winning the lottery, he settled with his family to New Orleans in 1919, rising to prominence as a bandleader, moving to Chicago in 1925 to play with King Oliver, founding the New York-based Luis Russell orchestra. Vernon Andrade led the band at the Renaissance Casino & Ballroom, where a teenage Frankie Manning, future star of Lindy-Hoppers, learned to dance. Andrade settled in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, where he was neighbors and in-laws with jazz singer Carmen McRae, born in Harlem to parents from Costa Rica and Jamaica. Trombonist Clyde Bernhardt played in Andrade’s orchestra in the

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113. Carmen’s father Oscar McRae emigrated from Costa Rica in 1915 managed a health club in the McAlpin Hotel Leslie Gourse, *Carmen McRae: Miss Jazz* (Billboard Books, 2001), 11
1930s, with Puerto Rican, West Indian and U.S. Black musicians, preforming with a teenage Ella Fitzgerald. “Half of Andrade’s band was West Indian. Since I worked in a few West Indian bands myself, a lot of the guys though I was West Indian too,” recalled North Carolina-born Bernhardt, “Even Andrade, who was from Panama but his people came from the Islands teased me, ‘Bernhardt,’ he say, ‘what part of Barbados you from?’” The hierarchies of Harlem’s entertainment industry inspired humor, but also resentment, exemplified by the response of Bernhardt’s uncle to Andrade’s scheduling demands, “That West Indian thinks he owns a band of nigger slaves. The hell with that damn monkey chaser!” West Indian immigrants epitomized the self-confidence of the “New Negro,” inspiring resentment and admiration. The convergence of Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean migrations and cultures shaped the modernist Black ascetic of the Harlem Renaissance.

6.1.7 Black Nationalism across the American Mediterranean

In 1921, the Socialist The World Tomorrow sent Worth Tuttle, a white North Carolina-born journalist and civil rights activist, to interview Marcus Garvey. She found, “his bearing is that of the educated West Indian Negro, who, neither pathetically humbled nor pathetically arrogated by the burden of prejudice of the United States, meets the white man on his own ground.” When she raised lynchings and disenfranchisement, Garvey reminded her of the global scale of Black oppression, “Jim Crow cars, lynching and burning will prevail so long as Negroes have no united power, no united voice, no economic background to support that voice.”

1114 Musicians included” Chico Carrion, a Puerto Rican trumpet man, Joe Thomas, from Tulsa, Oklahoma on tenor” saxophone, Peter Briggs from Charleston, S.C. on bass, Clyde E.B. Bernhardt, I Remember: Eighty Years of Black Entertainment, Big Bands and the Blues (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 118-119
1115 Clyde E.B. Bernhardt, I Remember: Eighty Years of Black Entertainment, 124
1116 Worth Tuttle, “A New Nation in Harlem,” The World Tomorrow Vol. 4 September 1921, 279 Harvard University Dig. Aug 14, 2008

Bahamians and West Indians in Florida and New Orleans shaped the militancy of UNIA. The head of the Key West division Rev. T.C. Glashen, a Jamaican born in British Honduras, was arrested and deported in 1921. Bahamian Rev. R.H. Higgs, the organizer of a UNIA chapter in Coconut Grove, Miami was abducted by the Ku Klux Klan.\footnote{Report by Bureau Agent Leon Howe 7/6/21 in Robert A. Hill The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers Vol. 12, 243; Chanele Nyrere Rose, \textit{The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights and America’s Tourist Paradise, 1896-1968}} A New Orleans division formed in the Uptown home of bank porter Sylvester Robertson in October 1920. His wife Alaida
Robertson, originally from Bluefields, Nicaragua, organized in Louisiana, Georgia and Mississippi. To support this effort, Garvey dispatched special organizer Adrian Johnson, a Jamaican who worked on the Panama Canal and served in the British Army. The New Orleans division had grown to over 4,000 members when Garvey visited in July 1921, arriving from Guatemala on the United Fruit SS *Suriname*, closely watched by the Bureau of Investigation.

Heightening the fears of U.S. officials, in the Caribbean, UNIA leaders ignored Garvey’s injunctions against labor organizing. During a strike of 17,000 West Indian workers on the Panama Canal in 1920, the UNIA chapter in Colón aided families evicted from their homes. A UNIA chapter in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, led by Barbados-born lawyer Clifford Bourne, backed a stevedores’ strike in February 1920. Before UNIA delegates in Harlem, Bourne reported, “United Fruit Company only paid the laborers $1.50 per day. After we established our Association, we got together and succeeded in establishing a union; we then demand that [they] raise the laborers salary to 100 per cent. We established a charitable fund and everybody held up work for about fifteen days.”

In Banes, Cuba, a UNIA chapter with 300 members epitomized the shift away from political activism. After United Fruit officials shut down UNIA offices in Preston and an organizer was “grossly assaulted and beaten,” UNIA abstained from labor organizing, serving as a social organization for the British West Indian community, organizing cricket matches and

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funerals, a procession for secretary Mrs. Beatrice Bradshaw filling the plaza. In 1921, Garvey embarked on a tour of the Caribbean. In Limón, Costa Rica, where Garvey first emigrated from Jamaica in 1910, fifteen thousand people greeted him “wild jubilation,” delaying loading of bananas on three ships. Traveling to San José in a railcar usually reserved for whites, he met with United Fruit officials, assuring them of his opposition to labor organizing. George Chittenden, general manager of the Costa Rica division, telegraphed Victor Cutter that, much to his surprise:

Garvey was the most conservative man of any attending the meetings. He told them they should not fight the United Fruit Company, that the work given them by the United Fruit Company meant their bread and butter and that they would not only deserve but receive the same respect as the United Fruit Company, once they had farms, railways and steamships of their own and showed they could operate them.

Attitudes of accommodation were suited to Central America and Cuba, where West Indians employed by United Fruit faced a rising tide of Hispanic nationalism. In the U.S., accommodation with segregationists led to attacks on the Garveyite movement. Marcus Garvey met with the Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan in Atlanta in June 1922, proclaiming shared goals, “The Klan wants America for white folks. We want Africa for Africans.” A “Garvey must go” campaign, led by the NAACP, Chicago Defender, and A. Philip Randolph, of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, appealed to anti-West Indian sentiment, and gained

1128. George Chittenden to Cutter Dec. 21, 1919 reprinted in Steve Striffler and Mark Moberg, Banana Wars, 120
strength after known Garveyites in New Orleans murdered Rev. James Eason, Garvey’s chief U.S. organizer turned greatest critic. Arrested for tax fraud, a jury sentenced Garvey to five years in the Atlanta Federal penitentiary in June 1923. In 1927, he was deported from New Orleans to Panama aboard the United Fruit SS Saramacca. The Garveyite movement continued to operate in the Black belts of the American Mediterranean, from the banana belt of Central America to the Deep South, providing a source of Black identity amidst dehumanizing oppression.

6.1.8 Conclusion

After being deported from the U.S., Marcus Garvey returned to Kingston, Jamaica on November 10, 1927, arriving aboard the United Fruit ship SS Santa Marta, bound from Panama. He was greeted with “deafening cheers,” a capacity crowd gathering to hear Garvey defend Black rights to citizenship in the British Empire and denounce Chinese, Syrian and Lebanese merchants who monopolized most of the island’s trade. Asian exclusion was included in the political platforms of Garvey’s Peoples Political Party, formed in 1929 and the dissident Garveyites who founded the Native Defenders Committee. Afro-Jamaicans had been targets of anti-immigrant nativism in the United States as well as Central America and the Spanish Caribbean. In colonial Jamaica, nativism politically mobilized the Black majority, and epitomized the spread of racial nationalism across borderlands of the American Mediterranean. As the U.S. imposed draconian restrictions on Asian immigration, and limited the entry of Southern and Eastern Europeans, labor shortages led to new waves of migration, Blacks migrating out of the South to Northern cities, new waves of undocumented Mexicans meeting the growing labor needs of the Southwest. During Cuba’s sugar boom and its aftermath, United

Fruit Sugar imported braceros from Haiti, Jamaica and other islands of the British West Indies, the collapse coinciding with the height of West Indian immigration to the U.S. Race riots consolidated a violent form of racial segregation in Northern cities, immigrant “ethnic” whites acculturating to the U.S. by embracing anti-Black racism.

Migrations spurred social and cultural changes. The African-American Great Migration and West Indian immigration, often via Cuba, Panama and Central America, converged in the Harlem Renaissance. The vibrant rhythms of Jazz music, dance and fashions shaped a youth subculture that spread from Harlem and other Black enclaves to the Caribbean, and to Mexican-American *pachucos* in the Southwest. The radical Black Nationalism of the Garveyite movement spread across the Black belts of the American Mediterranean, both the U.S. South and the Caribbean coast of Central America. The social and cultural changes of the Jazz Age slowly eroded the values of an age of empire, provoking conservative reactions that contributed to a hardening of racial color lines, even as they brought challenges to U.S. neo-colonialism and white supremacy.

### 6.2 Pan-American Eugenics

In December 1927, the Pan-American Conference on Eugenics and Homiculture met in Havana, Cuba. In the first international eugenics conference outside Europe and North America, twenty-eight delegates from sixteen countries debated a Pan-American Code of Eugenics and Homiculture, “a kind of eugenic NAFTA.” The Code required nations of the Americas to “enact and apply immigration laws forbidding the entrance of those somatically non-

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responsibles, or having bad germinal conditions,” and to segregate and possibly sterilize “individuals of bad or suspicious germinal condition.”

Historian Nancy Leys Stepan, in her study of eugenics in Latin America, dismissively concludes that, “the story of Pan American eugenics is the story of failure.” The racial determinism of U.S. eugenics, exemplified by Harvard biologist Dr. Charles Davenport, who sought to apply Gregor Mendel’s laws of heredity to human populations, contrasted with the environmentalism of Latin American eugenicists, fearful of U.S. imperialism and more influenced by French ideas of puériculture, a term referring to prenatal care.

Despite fundamental ideological differences, eugenicists, public health officials, and politicians across the American Mediterranean advocated immigration restrictions as a form of racial sanitation, building upon the legacies of public health campaigns against tropical diseases. Eugenic Pan-Americanism appealed to shared scientific values and a common European heritage uniting Anglo and Latin America, as well as a rising tide of both anti-Asian and anti-Black racism in the U.S. and Latin America. Rising opposition to U.S. imperialism in Latin America and resentment at U.S. racism towards Mexican immigrants limited the scope of cooperation. Nevertheless, discourses of environmental and racial contamination provided a framework for Pan-American eugenics.

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1132 “Las naciones de América dictarán y aplicarán leyes de inmigración que les defienda de la entrada en su territorio de individuos somáticamente irresponsables o de condiciones germinales malas o procedentes de naciones que no hayan aceptado este o no cumplan los preceptos de este Código.” Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura de las Repúblicas Americanas celebrada en la Habana, Cuba desde el 21 hasta el 23 de diciembre de 1927 21-23, 1927 (Publicadas por el gobierno de la República de Cuba, 1928): 169

6.2.1 Pan-American Eugenics and Pathologies of Race

The father of Pan-American eugenics, Cuban physician Dr. Juan Domingo Ramos epitomized a post-independence elite, whose authority derived from education and control of public administration. (Figure 6.4) Born in the capital of rural, tobacco-growing Pinar del Rio, Ramos studied at the Universidad de la Habana. After receiving the Leonard Wood scholarship in 1906, he attended Cornell University and interning in New York City’s Columbus Hospital, before moving to Paris to study under obstetrician Dr. Adolphe Pinard, pioneer of puériculture. In *Homicultura* (1911) Ramos and his mentor Dr. Eusebio Hernández, an obstetrician and War of Independence veteran, expanded puériculture to a holistic science addressing the role of heredity in human development.

Criminological studies relied upon medical analogies to campaigns against yellow fever, advocating measures to eradicate witchcraft. Fernando Ortiz’s *Hampa Afro-Cubano: Los Negros Brujos* (Afro Cuban Underworld: The Black Witches, 1906), a study of Abakuá, a secret society whose initiates, Ñañigos, were accused ritual killings, declared, “in the defensive struggle against witchcraft we must eradicate the sorcerers, isolate them from their followers, like those sick from yellow fever, because witchcraft is essentially contagious.” (Figure 6.5) West Indian immigration fueled public fears of Black brujería and child sacrifices, the most common pretext for racially motivated violence in the Spanish Caribbean. In April 1919, after a story circulated about the murder of a baby girl in Matanzas, a Jamaican immigrant in Regla, Havana, José Williams, was arrested and charged with the crime. A mob of 3,000, mostly stevedores instigated...
by labor bosses, broke into the jail, seized Williams, tied him to a mules’ tale, using red-hot pokers to make the animal run and when he was cut loose, Williams was ripped to bloody shreds on cobblestone streets.\textsuperscript{1137}

Public health officials made analogies to yellow fever, using language of contamination. Sanitary statistician Dr. Jorge Le Roy y Cassá, secretary to the 1900 Yellow Fever Commission, in an editorial published in the \textit{Heraldo de Cuba} in 1922, warned, “Haitians practice witchcraft, contaminating black Cubans with an atavistic leap backwards [\textit{salta atrás}]. They have a superstitious cult of ‘Voodoo,’ full of acts of black magic.” Jamaicans live “live in perpetual idleness” “They neither work, nor produce nor consume,” while “in Oriente and Camagüey a large number of Jamaican women are prostitutes.”\textsuperscript{1138} Dr. Francisco María Fernández, successor to Dr. Juan Guiteras as Secretary of Public Health, decried “dangerous Jamaican and Haitian immigration,” responsible for the spread of malaria, tuberculosis, smallpox, syphilis and other “repugnant diseases that attack the vitality of the race.”\textsuperscript{1139}

Dr. Domingo Ramos attended the Second International Conference of Eugenics in New York City in September 1921.\textsuperscript{1140} Visiting the Eugenics Record Office in Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, he urged Dr. Charles Davenport “to do, for the improvement of man’s hereditary in the whole America, what General Gorgas did for the improvement of man’s environment in the tropics.”\textsuperscript{1141} At the November 1922 Latin American Medical Congress in Santiago de Chile, with

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{1137} José Antonio Duarte, \textit{Historiología cubana: Desde 1898 hasta 1944} (Ediciones Universal, 1974), 294;
\item \textsuperscript{1138} J. . . Le Roy Cassa \textit{Inmigración antisanitaria}, 19 in \textit{United Fruit Company: Un Caso del Dominio Imperialista en Cuba} (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1976), 248
\item \textsuperscript{1139} F.M.C. <<Notas Editorial>> \textit{Crónica Médico-Qirúrgica} de la Habana t.47 n. 21 quoted in Armando García González, Raquel Alvarez Pelaez, \textit{Las trampas del poder: sanidad, eugenésia y migración: Cuba y Estados Unidos (1900-1940)} (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1997), 197-198
\item \textsuperscript{1140} Scientific papers of the Second International Congress of Eugenics: Held at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, September 22-28, 1921, Vol. 2, 443, 470
\item \textsuperscript{1141} \textit{Scientific Papers of the Second International Eugenics Congress, New York, 1922} (Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins, 1923), 5-19; Domingo F. Ramos to Charles Davenport, September 12, 1922, Charles Davenport Papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, file 1
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
addresses by Dr. Domingo Ramos on “Herencia y Eugenesia” and Dr. Aristides Mestre on “Brujeria y criminalidad en Cuba,” the Cuban delegation first called for a Pan-American Eugenics Conference.1142

In the U.S., the progressive imperialism had given way to an age of isolationism and nativism, epitomized by Eugenics Records Office director Dr. Harry Laughlin, a Princeton-educated secondary school teacher and chicken breeder from the till-prairie town of Kirksville, Missouri. Speaking before Congress, in support of restrictions on immigration from southern and eastern Europe, he insisted “Because our foundation stock is of northwestern Europe we find the assimilation of immigrants from this section to be a much simpler task than the Latin or other stocks less closely related to us in nationality.”1143 Pan-American eugenics, building upon campaigns against yellow fever and uniting U.S. and Latin American elites, conflicted with a U.S. eugenics movement defined by opposition to “Latin” immigration.

6.2.2 Western Eugenics and the Limits of Whiteness

The determinism of U.S. eugenics was epitomized by the movement in California, where fruit growers applied their interest in selective breeding to human populations. The leading figure in California’s eugenics movement was date “rancher,” plant explorer and marriage counselor Paul Popenoe. A Kansas-born graduate of Los Angeles’ Occidental College, he traveled in the Middle East and North Africa, collecting date specimens that were introduced to the Coachella Valley.1144 His travels led him to speculation on decline of Islamic civilization. Popenoe

1143-Statement of Harry H. Laughlin, “Biological Aspects of Immigration,” Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, Sixty-sixth Congress, April 16-17, 1920
1144-Paul Popenoe, Charles Bennett, Date Growing in the Old World and New (Altadena, CA: West India Gardens, 1913)
presented his findings on “Islam and Eugenics” at the Second International Conference of Eugenics in New York City, serving on a panel alongside Dr. Domingo Ramos.1145

California sterilized over 6,000 patients by 1929, more than half the total number sterilized in the U.S. (Figure 6.6 and 6.7) Paul Popenoe and Pasadena lemon grower E.S. Gosney who founded the Human Betterment Foundation, co-authored “Sterilization and Human Betterment.” They provided a medical description and a moral justification for this practice, “Sterilization was seen to be not a punishment but a protection, alike to the afflicted and their families, to society and to posterity.”1146 Blacks, 1.5% of California’s population in 1930, comprised 4% of all sterilizations.1147 The study reported 39 percent of men and 31 percent of women sterilized were foreign born. The racial ambiguity of Mexicans, often counted as white, contributes to shortages of statistics. At the Norwalk State Hospital in Los Angeles County 380 Mexican patients, who comprised 7.8% of admissions from 1921 to 1930, were sterilized at rates of 11% for females and 13% for males.1148 A study of occupations of fathers of men sterilized at Sonoma, in northern California, found the lowest class “hoboes and odd job men” were underrepresented “because these individuals rarely have families.” By contrast, children of common laborers were overrepresented, “due partly to the presence of certain stocks, such as Mexicans, who are found preponderantly among the common laborers.”1149 Based on her study

1146. Paul Popenoe and E.S. Gosney, Twenty-Eight Years of Sterilization in California (Pasadena, Cal., Human Betterment Foundation, 1938), 2-4
1147. Paul Popenoe and E.S. Gosney, Twenty-Eight Years of Sterilization in California 10
1149. Paul Popenoe, Occupations of Fathers (1927); E.S. Gosney and Human Betterment Foundation Papers, Box 6, Folder 7, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena
of state records, historian Alexandra Stern estimated that Mexicans, who represented 4 percent of California’s population, comprised 7 percent of men and 8 percent of women sterilized.1150

Intelligence tests, invented by French psychologist Dr. Alfred Binet and Dr. Théodore Simon, were popularized in the U.S. by Stanford University professor Dr. Lewis Terman, who developed the National Intelligence Test with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, used to justify racial discrimination. The California Association for Social Welfare reported “Japanese and Chinese children present no problem in delinquency” while “the negro race appears to contribute to the ranks of delinquency in relatively large numbers.” Mexicans posed the most severe problem. They rarely “pass beyond the third grade,” which, the report insisted, “is not because of language difficulties but is more likely due to low intelligence. Apparently the average intelligence of Mexican children is not greater than three-fourths that of American children.”1151 A study by Dr. Lewis Terman concluded that Mexicans ranked at the bottom among “feeble-minded” inmates at San Quentin prison. A typical case was described:

Mexican. Age 23 years. Mental age about 8 years. Crime, robbery. Stole a watch. Sentence two years. Attended school three years in Mexico and also a short time in California but could talk very little English.” “Mexican, Age 32. Five years in California. Mental age 9 years and 6 months. Attended school in Mexico for three years. Speaks very little English. Is a rancher. Robbery, one year. General appearance very stupid.1152

Tests of 341 pupils at the California School for Girls in Ventura and 1,250 boys at Whittier State School in 1922 reported median IQs of 81 for whites, 77 for blacks and 68 for

1152 H.E. Knollin and Lewis Terman, “A partial psychological Survey of the Prison Population of San Quentin, California; Based on Mental Tests of 155 Consecutive Entrants,” Survey of Mental Deviation in Prisons, Public Schools and Orphanages in California (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1918), 15-16
“Mexican-Indian” children. Dr. Herbert Popenoe, brother of Paul Popenoe, tested 467 boys at Preston School of Industry in northern California’s Gold Country reporting the median IQ for whites between 80 and 84, for blacks between 70 and 75 and for Mexicans 65.\textsuperscript{1153} Even relatively well-off Mexican children tested below average. In 1925 tests of 250 children at the integrated Palms School in Los Angeles, it was reported that the median IQ of Mexican students was 78, below the median for whites of 100.25, despite the relative prosperity and assimilation of the twenty-five Mexican children’s families, five of whom owned automobiles and in thirteen cases the parents could speak English.\textsuperscript{1154} Dr. Thomas Garth, at the University of Texas, administered tests to over 1,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans, reporting a median IQ of 78. The child with the highest score (124) claimed to be a “Spanish American,” cited as evidence that intelligence increased with white blood.\textsuperscript{1155} Undaunted by labor needs, Garth warned that Mexicans brought “sickness and disease of a contagious sort, poverty and a tendency to get into problems with the law.”\textsuperscript{1156} Reflecting the hardening racial color lines of U.S. whiteness, Western eugenics stigmatized Mexicans as a contaminated race, legitimizing an informal system of segregation against Mexicans. In the Eastern U.S., anti-Black racism shaped eugenics.

### 6.2.3 Eugenics and the Color Line

Eugenicists appealed to public health to justify racial segregation. In their textbook *Applied Eugenics* (1918), Paul Popenoe and University of Pittsburgh biologist Roswell Hill Johnson, defended segregation as a humanitarian public health measure to prevent disease. “The


\textsuperscript{1154} Mrs. Leo Gamble, Principal, Palm School “The Mexican: An Educational Asset or an Educational Liability,” *Los Angeles Educational Research Bulletin* Vol. 5 No. 4 December 1925, 9

\textsuperscript{1155} Thomas Garth, “The Intelligence of Mexican Children,” School and Society (Feb. 2, 1924), 139-141

\textsuperscript{1156} Thomas Garth, “The Industrial Psychology of the Immigrant Mexican” *Industrial Psychology Monthly* 1 March 1926, 183
A white man kills the Negro with tuberculosis. In North America, the Negro can not kill the white man with malaria or yellow fever, to any great extent. But the Negro has brought some other diseases here and given them to the white race; elephantiasis is one example, but the most conspicuous is hookworm.\footnote{Paul Popenoe and Roswell Hill Johnson, \textit{Applied Eugenics}, 291} The authors cited intelligence tests of Virginia schoolchildren reporting that “mulattoes” and “quadroons” scored higher than “pure Negroes” but lower than whites. Such data was proof that “in general the white race looses and the Negro gains from miscegenation.”\footnote{George Oscar Ferguson, \textit{The Psychology of the Negro: An Experimental Study} Archives of Psychology No. 36 April 1916 Paul Popenoe, Roswell Hill Johnson, \textit{Applied Eugenics}, 292}

Efforts to strengthen racial segregation contributed led to sterilization laws in the U.S. South. In 1921, after a legal challenge overturned Indiana’s 1907 sterilization law, the oldest in the U.S., Dr. Harry Laughlin drafted a “model sterilization law.”\footnote{Harry H. Laughlin, \textit{Draft of Model Eugenical Sterilization Laws}, Harry H. Laughlin Papers, E-2-3-6 Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo.} Eighteen states passed sterilization laws modeled on Laughlin’s, which in turn formed the basis for the 1933 law in Nazi Germany.\footnote{Stefan Kuhl, \textit{The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism and German National Socialism} (Oxford University Press, 2002) James Q Whitman, \textit{Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Laws} (Princeton University Press, 2017)} Virginia enacted a “Eugenic Sterilization Act” and a “Racial Integrity Act” in March 1924, the later requiring every person to be classified as white or colored at birth, and making interracial marriage a felony. These two laws were the result of a lobbying campaign by the Anglo-Saxon Clubs an “elitist version of the Ku Klux Klan” founded in Richmond in 1924 by composer and folklorist John Powell, explorer Earnest Sevier Co and Dr. Walter Ashby Plecker. A fundamentalist Presbyterian, who believed God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for racial intermixing, as Virginia’s registrar of vital statistics Plecker reported “the considerable
number of degenerate white women giving birth to mulatto children.”

His work as a public health official shaped his preoccupation with degeneracy of poor whites. A study of hookworm in Southside Virginia, bemoaning white children of the South, the “last stand” of “our native Anglo-Saxon race,” overwhelmed by “the hordes from southern Europe,” due to the debilitating effects of hookworm infestation “are barely keeping step with the children of their ex-slaves.”

The obsession of eugenicists with poor whites was epitomized by the first person sterilized under Virginia’s law, Carrie Buck, an eighteen-year old at the State Colony for Epileptics and the Feebleminded, whose mother had been committed for prostitution and syphilis, and whose foster parents committed her after Carrie became pregnant from rape. The U.S. Supreme Court, in *Buck v. Bell* (1927), ruled in favor of sterilization, Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, “The principle that sustains compulsory vaccination applies to the cutting of the fallopian tubes.”

The public preoccupations of eugenicists focused on poor whites, but Black women comprised half of the more than 7,000 sterilizations in Virginia and North Carolina. Mississippi and Alabama enacted laws in 1928, but the poorer states of the Gulf South initially sterilized fewer patients. In the 1950s, with the mechanization of cotton picking and white backlash against the Civil Rights movement, unsuspecting Black women in rural hospitals were sterilized through a procedure known as the “Mississippi appendectomy,” a term coined by Delta

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sharecropper turned Civil Rights activist Fannie Lou Hammer, the most famous victim of the state mandated program.\textsuperscript{1165}

While the U.S. South was embracing sterilization in conjunction with segregation and anti-miscegenation, Dr. Charles Davenport and his former student Dr. Morris Steggard completed a study of the supposed detrimental effects of race crossing in Jamaica, financed by the Carnegie Institution, with assistance from the Rockefeller’s International Health and the Jamaica Hookworm Commission. Adolescent subjects, 197 male, 173 female, were subjected to anthropometric surveys, psychological evaluations and intelligence tests.\textsuperscript{1166} Subjects came from the agricultural class; one-third were from the townships of Gordon Town and Seaford Town, home to rural whites who descended from German indentured servants.\textsuperscript{1167} Race Crossing in Jamaica (1929) found “no evidence of hybrid vigor,” “Browns” scoring lower on intelligence tests than “Whites,” and scoring lower in the sensory and physical attributes described as more developed among “Blacks,” greater musical capacity, longer arms and legs.\textsuperscript{1168}

While one of Davenport’s ex-students, geneticist William E. Castle, warned against “sweeping” pronouncements about the inferiority of racial hybrids, comparative racial research continued.\textsuperscript{1169} From 1932 to 1944, Eugenics Records Office researches led by Dr. Steggerada conducted bodily measurements of Black students at Alabama’s Tuskegee Institute and Mayan Indians in the Yucatán, overlapping with and laying the foundation for the Tuskegee syphilis

\textsuperscript{1165}--Chana Kai Lee, For Freedom’s Sake: The Life of Fannie Lou Hammer, 21; Harriet Washington, Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Women (Doubleday, 2006)
\textsuperscript{1166}--Charles Davenport, Morris Steggard, Race Crossing in Jamaica (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1929), 23
\textsuperscript{1167}--Douglas Hall, Bountied Immigration into Jamaica: With Special Reference to German Settlement in Seafor Town (1972); Seafor Town was home to the mixed-race Kameka family, one of the family case studies, white subjects also included a dozen Cayman Islanders Davenport, Steggard, Race Crossing in Jamaica, 27
\textsuperscript{1168}--“musical capacity is more developed among the Blacks than it is among the Whites. This superiority is most marked in time, rhythm, intensity and pitch in tonal capacity Whites appear to be slightly superior” Davenport, Steggard, Race Crossing in Jamaica, 28
\textsuperscript{1169}--William Castle, “Race Mixture and Physical Disharmonies,” Science 71 (1930): 604-605
experiment and similar experiments with untreated syphilis in Guatemala. Compiling anthropometric data, presented at the Second Pan-American Eugenics Conference, Steggarada shied away from sweeping pronouncements of racial inferiority, even as he complained about resistance to his experiments. In the U.S. public health campaigns against hookworm and other diseases, most notably tuberculosis and syphilis, provided a precedent for medical experts and philanthropists to advocate eugenic segregation. Beyond the borders of the U.S., in the republics of the Spanish Caribbean, public health campaigns against yellow fever laid the foundation for eugenics movements that embraced ideas of scientific racism.

### 6.2.4 Eugenics in the Spanish Caribbean

The rigid racial determinism of U.S. eugenics stood in contrast to discourses of mestizaje in Latin America, developed into a nationalist ideology by critics of U.S. imperialism, José Vasconcelos, the cultural caudillo of the Mexican Revolution, and Peruvian Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre, founder of the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA). Mestizaje rejected U.S.-style racial segregation and racial eugenics, resentful of Anglo-American racism and fearful of U.S. corporate imperialism. The racial ideals of U.S. eugenics gained a foothold in the neo-colonial U.S. protectorates of Panama and Cuba, as the end of Canal construction and declining of sugar prices stoked resentment of Black West Indians and Asians. Cuban Dr. Domingo Ramos promoted Finlayismo as a form of racial eugenics for the Spanish Caribbean, claiming the legacy of late yellow fever pathologist Dr. Carlos Finlay, whose discovery suggested that Hispanics could play a leading, rather than a subordinate, role in the shaping of medical modernity. While claiming the mantle of Cuban nationalism, Ramos and his protégés looked to the U.S. as a model

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of modernity. The Instituto Finlay, at La Universidad de la Habana, lobbied Cuba’s Congress to enact U.S.-style laws requiring sterilization of criminals and mental defectives.\footnote{There are two other problems we suppose you would like to consider: the sterilization laws of criminals and mental defectives and the previous medical certificate to marriage. In Cuba, Dr. Fernandez at the time he was in the House of Representatives, presented a law on the former point and the latter is now under consideration suggested by Dr. Lopez del Valle before the National Board of Health.” Dr. D.F. Ramos, Profesor de la Escuela de Medicina, Havana, Cuba to Dr. Charles Davenport, September 23, 1927, C-2-5:11, Harry Laughlin Papers, Truman State}

At a 1924 convention of the Club Rotario de la Habana in Havana’s Hotel Plaza, Ramos described monuments to Carlos Finlay in Havana’s harbor and in Panamá near the entrance to the Panama Canal, as reminders that “Thanks to Finlayismo the American tropics has been sanitized and made habitable for the European and American of the temperate zone.” Appealing to white supremacist ideals of elite Rotarians he placed “the work of Finlay next to Columbus,” in the conquest of the Americas, evoking Cuba’s Wars of Independence, ignoring the role of yellow fever aiding Cubans, alongside the building of the Panama Canal. “It was necessary that the Cubans to finish with their war of emancipation for the freedom of America in order for a Cuban, who, with his scientific discovery would allow the conquest of this Continent for the white race.”\footnote{Domingo Ramos, “La Internacionalidad del Finlaismo: Discurso en la sesión celebrada por el Club Rotario de la Habana, para iniciar la propaganda en pro del Finlaismo, Hotel Plaza, Habana, Febrero 17 de 1924” in Domingo Ramos ed., \textit{Cuba en la higiene internacional y el Finlaismo: esquemas informes discurso legislación} (Habana: Imprenta La Propagandista, Maximo Gomez, 1924), 53-54}

In Panama, eugenic ideas of racial difference were espoused by Olmedo Alfaro, son of exiled Ecuadorian president Eloy Alfaro, who, in the newspaper \textit{El Seminario Gráfico} decried the dangers of “Antillean blacks that infest our major cities, that are lowering our standard of living with their exotic customs and have given Panama the appearance of African hordes.”\footnote{Olmedo Alfaro, Semanario Gráfico, 30 de agosto de 1924 quoted in Virginia Arango Durling, \textit{La inmigración Prohibida en Panamá y sus Prejuicios Raciales} (Panamá: Publicaciones Juridicas de Panamá, S.A. 1999), 36} He appealed to growing fears as the end of Canal construction brought an influx of wives and children ex-Canal workers, who moved into overcrowded neighborhoods in Panamá and Colón.
His pamphlet *El Peligro Antillano* (1924) ostensibly disavowed racism and endorsed *metizaje*, while arguing against the assimilability of West Indian immigrants. He insisted that differences between Afro-mestizo Panamanians and West Indians were cultural, contrasting U.S. and British racism with “Indo-American civilization” “where the man of color develops in an environment where he is treated with a sense of respect,” but also biological. “Between the inhabitants of Central America and their African neighbors in the West Indies, there are physical differences of thousands years of different development. It is known that the Ibero-American race cannot join with them without loosing some of its strength.”

Anti-Black racism was linked to populist nationalism among the Hispanic urban poor. In response to housing shortages, a Liga de Inquilinos (Renter’s League) organized rent strikes in Panamá and Colón in October 1925, crushed by U.S. soldiers with considerable violence. U.S. charge d’affaires Dana Munro dismissed the leaders of the movement as “foreigners, including Spaniards, Peruvians and other Latin Americans who are for the most part well known communist agitators,” noting that one organizer, Peruvian communist J.H. de Blasquez Pedro, had been expelled from the country. In the wake of the strike, economic and racial discontent sparked 1926 race riots where gangs of Hispanics invaded West Indian tenements in Panamá, “banging on doors at midnight and shouting ‘afuera chombos!’ [a racist term] and worse.”

A new law, signed by Panamanian president Rodolfo Chiari on October 23, 1926, exemplified how cultural attributes shaped eugenic constructions of race and race mixing in the Spanish Caribbean. Language, not race, served as the criteria for immigrant exclusion, placing

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1175. “Trabajadores a la Unión! Aprestaos a Conmemorar con Entusiasmo y Solidaridad el 10 de octubre de 1925” Enclosure No. 1 to Dispatch 1176 September 1926 M-607 roll 33 RG 59 USNACP
1176. Dana Munro to Secretary of State October 22, 1925 M-607 roll 33 RG 59 USNACP
1177. Sidney Young “Sid Says: Within the Law” *Panama American*, Oct. 27, 1926
“Blacks from the Antilles and Guianas whose native language was not Spanish” on a list of banned races, along with Chinese, Japanese, East Indians, Syrians and Turks. A labor law required seventy-five percent of employees to be Panamanian citizens. Defying the leaders of the local Inquilinos movement, Juan Demóstenes Arosemena, governor of Colón, argued these laws were unenforceable in a city with a majority West Indian population, and suggested rewards for denunciations of violators were “a golden opportunity for frock-coated vagabonds to make money at the expense of honest people.” U.S. minister J.G South feared the law would antagonize United Fruit, dependent “almost entirely upon West Indian labor,” and impede the development of new banana plantations on the Pacific coast in Chiriquí. In January 1927, a new law allowed Afro-West Indian immigration in cases where “there are not workers in the Republic in number or quality required to carry out the work.”

In Cuba, where Afro-Cubans enjoyed a longer tradition of political organizing, rooted in the War of Independence, efforts at immigration restriction focused on the Chinese, who were associated with gambling, organized prostitution, and drug trafficking. Under pressure from the U.S. State Department, Cuban President Gerardo Machado announced investigations into illegal entries of Chinese in September 1926. A week later, when the Cuba Mail Line SS *Orizaba* arrived in Havana from Hong Kong, Cuban officials imprisoned 35 Chinese for possessing false certificates. The civic activism of Afro-Cuban middle-class, organized in the Club Atenas,

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1178 *Ley 13 de 1926 (De 23 de Octubre) sobre inmigración, Decreta Leyes Expedidas por la Asamblea Nacional de Panamá en las Sesiones Ordinarias y Extraordinarias de 1926 a 1927 (Panamá: Imprenta Nacional, 1927)*
1179 *“Governor Arosemena of Colon Explains Opposition to Law 6,”* Panama Star and Herald January 19, 1927 M-607 reel 33 RG 59 USNACP
1180 *J.G. South to Secretary of State, December 13, 1926 2 M-607 reel 33 RG 59 USNACP*
1181 *Ley 16 de 1927 (de 31 de Enero) por la cual se reforma y adiciona la Ley 13 de 1926 de 23 de Octubre Leyes Expedidas por la Asamblea Nacional de Panamá en las Sesiones Ordinarias y Extraordinarias de 1926 a 1927 Edicion Oficial revisada por el Secretario de la Asamblea Nacional Panamá: Imprenta Nacional, 1927*
1182 *detaining an additional 42 Chinese over the following days Capitalist Expansion, Republican Legislation,”* Miriam Herrera Jerez , Mario Castillo Santana, *Contested Community: Identities, Space and Hierarchies of the Chinese in the Cuban Republic* (Leiden, NL and Boston, Brill, 2017), 32-33
and the power of U.S. sugar companies prevented restrictions. In the wake of the October 1926 hurricane, as the Cuban government spent lavishly on public works beautifying Havana, the British consul reported that in Cuba’s countryside, amidst falling sugar prices, “large numbers of vagrant and almost starving labourers, most of whom are immigrant West Indians, [are] making their way from village to village in a vain search for work.”

Faced with racist backlashes against West Indian and Asian immigrants, public officials in Panama and Cuba embraced eugenics, seeking to introduce racial restrictions on immigration.

6.2.5 Towards a Pan-American Eugenics Movement

As racism mobilized elites and popular movements across the Spanish Caribbean, resentment at U.S. racism limited Latin American support for immigration restrictions. Seeking to secure Latin American participation in the Eugenics Conference, Dr. Ramos expressed anxieties about possible U.S. restrictions. Dr. Laughlin promised there would be “no quota limitations on reciprocal freedom of immigration between the United States and any other American state which maintains a high standard for immigration selection as does the United States.”

Laughlin worked with Texas Rep. John C. Box, who, in 1926, introduced a bill enacting a quota on immigration from Mexico, extended in a Senate version written by William Harris of Georgia to all of Latin America. Representing an east Texas district where cotton planters suffered from labor shortages due to the lack of Mexican braceros, Box embraced

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1183. Mr. Morris to Sir Austen Chamberlain Received April 20 A 2696/2696/13) Reports for 1927, British Archives on Cuba: Cuba Before Castro Vol. 2 1913-1931, 311
1184. Harry Laughlin to Domingo S. Ramos, September 23, 1927, Harry Laughlin Papers C-4-1:7, Truman State University, Kirksville, MO
vitriolic language, decrying “the Mexican peon” as a “blend of low-grade Spaniard, peonized Indian and negro slave.”

As the U.S. Congress debated restrictions on immigration from Latin America, the Pan-American Eugenics Conference met in Havana in December 1927, with twenty-eight delegates from eleven countries. (Figure 6.8) In his opening address, Cuba’s Secretary of State Dr. Rafael Martínez Ortiz expressed pride that the Americas was inhabited by “two superior races,” the Saxon and Latin, urging delegates to prevent “the entry in our societies, of individuals or of races not capable of amalgamating or fusing with ours.” Delegates met at the Hall of the National Board of Sanitation, the former Real Academia de Medicina, reminded by Dr. Ramos, “[Carlos] Finlay communicated to his companions of the Academy, whose chairs their successors today occupy, the news of his great discovery.” He declared the Pan-American Eugenics Code the culmination “of the great national contest for the improvement of sanitation” begun “with the practice of the brilliant ideas of an American physician born in this Island, Dr. Carlos Finlay.”

Dr. José A. López del Valle, director of the Instituto Finlay, found it fitting that in “the country of the great Finlay,” where “the initiation of the works to combat yellow fever was made,” a Eugenic Code would ensure “the best immigration of strong, healthy and vigorous men,” leading to a “new hygienic era, beneficial for humanity in all manners.”

U.S. delegate Dr. Charles Davenport, in a speech translated by Dr. Ramos, described the reasons for the US. 1924 Immigration Act. Beginning with Columbus’ discovery of Cuba, he

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1186. John C. Box before the Key Men of America in Washington, D.C., Reprinted in Congressional Record, 70th Congress, 1 a session 1928, 69
1187. “Por fortuna nuestro Hemisferio está en inmensa mayoría poblado por dos razas superiores. Son las que han dado a la civilización contemporánea su impulso favorable: la Latina, nacida y desarrollada de modo especial, en los países ribereños del Mediterráneo europeo, y la Sajona, son sus ramas afines, Escandinavia y Germánica.” Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de las Repúblicas Americanas, 36-37, 206-207
1188. -Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura, 40-41, 213
1189. Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura, 46, 218
1190. -Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura, 138-149, 310-311
decried the African slave trade and Chinese coolies as examples of dangers of prioritizing labor needs over racial and cultural homogeneity.\textsuperscript{1191} Downplaying the Act’s discrimination against Latin Europeans, he insisted quotas did not derive from beliefs that “the different races of Europe greatly in their intelligence or capacity” but were designed to enable immigrants to assimilate, to preserve “a reasonable degree of homogeneity” and eliminate “carriers of inferior, physical, mental and moral qualities.”\textsuperscript{1192}

Davenport faced objections from Mexican delegate Dr. Rafael Santamarina. An academic colleague of Dr. José Vasconcelos and a minister in the government of Plutarco Elias Calles, Santamarina translated and adopted the Binet-Simon intelligence tests for use in the mental asylums of Mexico City.\textsuperscript{1193} However, he warned against using intelligence tests as criteria for immigration, citing testing discrimination against Mexican immigrant children “in the Southern States of the United States.” “Some American authors, some psychologists of reputation, have had no qualms to point the Mexican child as mentally inferior, which is absolutely false. What has happened is that Mexican children have been tested with North American tests.”\textsuperscript{1194}

Panamanian Rafael Álvarez Alvarado, seeking to win Latin American support for the Code, described how construction on the Panama Canal exposed conflicts between labor needs and dangers of inassimilable immigrants. Canal builders relied on Black West Indians when it became clear that southern Europeans “could not endure not only the climate but the working conditions, it being necessary to be constantly under the water and removing large quantities of dirt.”\textsuperscript{1195} Blacks were now “distributed in the cities of Panamá and Colón,” a dangerous

\textsuperscript{1191} - Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura, 67, 232
\textsuperscript{1192} - Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura, 67, 233
\textsuperscript{1193} - Víctor Colotla, “Rafael Santamarina y los orígenes de la psicometría en México,” Revista de Historia de la Psicología, vol. 5 núm. 4 (abril de 1984): 163-170
\textsuperscript{1194} - Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura, 67-68, 234
\textsuperscript{1195} - Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura, 72-73
admixture to Panama’s mestizo population. He cited Panama’s 1926 immigration law restricting an “inferior race, the negro” while exempting “countries of Latin origin in the Caribbean.”

Strident criticism came from one of South America’s leading eugenicists, Peru’s Dr. Carlos Enrique Paz Soldán. A supporter of APRA and an investor in Peru’s coca industry, he led campaigns against bubonic plague and yellow fever in Lima. Founding the Institute of Social Medicine at La Universidad de San Marcos, promoting puériculture among Lima’s urban poor, Dr. Paz Soldán advocated “eugenization and biosocial progress” declaring “gobernar es sanear, es eugenizar.” His views differed from those of Ramos, viewing homiculture as a “sector” rather than an “entity,” insisting, “Eugenics is still on a theoretical field.” He stressed the question of Asian immigration. Having previously expressed alarm over the high birth rate of Peru’s Japanese immigrants, stressed the question of Asian immigration. He insisted he was an in an “agnostic position,” personally opposed to “yellow immigration,” but with the rise of Japan as a world power and the growth of the Republic of China, “each of our nations is too weak to resist this immigration.”

The Pan-American Eugenics Conference highlights the hemispheric scale of pseudo-scientific racism and populist-nativist anti-immigration movements, as well as contradictions rooted in disparities between the power of the U.S. and the republics of Latin America, increasingly resentful of economic colonialism.

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1196. *Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura*, 73
1197. *Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de Eugenesia y Homicultura*, 236
1199. “The Eugenization of America,” *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 73, 1168
1200. *Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de las República Americanas*, 81, 251, 247
1201. La independencia del Perú y la colonia japonesa (Lima: Imp. E. Ravago, 1926) *Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de las República Americanas*, 106, 270
6.2.6 The Limits of Pan-Americanism

The Pan-American Eugenics Conference exemplified the transnational growth and limits of elite eugenics movements. Despite warnings from Dr. Domingo Ramos that the U.S. “will fix a quota for the entrance in their country of individuals proceeding from American nations,” all of the delegates rejected the proposed Eugenics Code except the U.S., Cuba, Panama and the Dominican Republic. The deep divisions revealed at this small conference contrasted with grandiose but superficial displays of unity at the subsequent Pan-American Congress. Arriving in Havana on the battleship USS Texas, U.S. President Calvin Coolidge ostensibly disavowed territorial ambitions. Delegates largely ignored the guerilla war then being waged against U.S. Marines in Nicaragua by followers of Augusto Sandino. In the early 1920s, Sandino had worked as a mechanic for United Fruit in Quiriguá, Guatemala and for a Standard Oil refinery in Tampico, Mexico. Immersed in the radicalism of the Mexican Revolution he portrayed his war as a struggle of the “Indo-Hispanic race” against U.S. imperialism. Sandino sent a message to the Pan-American Conference. “As Coolidge was delivering expressions of unity and Pan-Americanism, his soldiers were violating Nicaraguan women, his airplanes were burning villages and murdering defenseless men, women and children.”

Following the Pan-American Congress, an Immigration Conference, sponsored by the League of Nations at the request of Fascist Italy, met in April 1928, with delegates from thirty-seven nations, mostly Europe and Latin America. The U.S. refused to send a delegation, as did Brazil, the largest immigrant-receiving nation in Latin America. Eugenics Records Office

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1202, *Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de las Repúblicas Americanas*, 68
1203, Havana Greets the President, *The Outlook* Vol. 148 (1928): 178
1205, “At the Havana conference, thirty-seven nations were represented by voting delegations and four by observers.” Second Emigration Conference, Havana, 1928, C-2-5:11, Harry Laughlin Papers, Truman State University, Kirksville, Mo.
director Dr. Harry Laughlin attended as a non-voting representative of the new Pan-American Office of Eugenics and Horticulure, writing to chair Francisco María Fernández, “I shall be much interested in doing what I can to rally the immigrant-receiving nations to demanding the racial and eugenical basis for their control of human migration.”

Charles Davenport hoped Laughlin’s reputation would prevent Italy from dominating the Conference “in the interest of exporting Italian man-power for temporary wage earning abroad.”

Laughlin solidified his reputation as an anti-immigration hardliner when he spoke before Congress on March 7, 1928, calling for a provision to the 1924 National Origins Act “that only white persons shall be admitted to the United States as immigrants or naturalized as citizens thereof.” Such a law was necessity to limit Latin American immigration to “persons of pure white (in this case Castilian descent),” barring “those Mexicans who are mostly Indian, with little Spanish and occasionally some black blood.” Furthermore, he insisted it “would not constitute discrimination against the American negro,” and who “does not want the West Indian blacks to come into competition with him.”

Laughlin arrived in Havana on March 30, staying at the Hotel Plaza, and drafted a statement setting out the eugenic basis for immigration restriction. He did this at the request of the Cuban delegation and enjoyed “an interesting talk” with a South African delegate in “support of the ‘seed stock’ idea in immigration control.” Davenport urged him to attend the entire conference, but Laughlin, ever the dour Midwestern, protested that, “It is quite expensive living in Havana, and besides I am anxious to move on to Kirksville, Battle Creek, Washington, and Cold Spring Harbor.”

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1206. H.H. Laughlin to Francisco Fernandez, March 24, 1928, C-2:5-11, Harry Laughlin Papers
1207. Charles Davenport to Madison Grant, January 16, 1928 Harry Laughlin Papers
1208. American History in Terms of Human Migration Extracts from Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, 70th Congress, first session, March 7, 1928 Statement of Dr. Harry Laughlin with three appendices United States Government Printing Office, 1928, 13 D-4-5:8 Harry Laughlin Papers
1209. Harry Laughlin to Charles Davenport, April 3, 1928, C-2-5:11 Harry Laughlin Papers
Secretary of State Dr. Rafael Ortiz, in the opening address, sought to attract southern European immigrants prohibited from entering the U.S. Seeking to dispel the island’s unhealthy reputation, he declared that Cuba “is one of the healthiest countries of the earth. The annual death rate is hardly over thirteen per thousand” thanks to “the marvelous discovery of the Cuban savant,” Carlos Finlay, had eradicated “the terrible scourge of yellow fever.” The Cuban delegation introduced resolutions requiring the vaccination of immigrants against typhus and smallpox, and of dogs against rabies. Shipping companies were obligated to repatriate immigrants rejected by medical officials free. Demands for immigration restriction were limited to the Dominican delegation, led by minister Dr. Ricardo Pérez Alfonseca, reflecting nationalist fears in a country recently occupied by the U.S. and where U.S. sugar companies were importing workers from neighboring Haiti. These efforts resulted in a vaguely worded resolution expressing commitment to eugenic principles, “To direct migrations according to the abilities of individuals and groups, to those countries where such skills are most necessary, and can be useful.” The Immigration Conference further highlighted the failures to create a transnational framework for racial immigration restrictions and eugenics. To focus only on these failures underestimates the significance of the spread of eugenics movements across the American Mediterranean, and their successes in drawing color lines.

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1210 Second International Conference of Emigration and Immigration, Address of Dr. Rafael Martinez Ortiz, Secretary of State of the Republic of Cuba, Delivered in the opening session the 31st of March 1928, C-2:511 Harry Laughlin Papers
1211 Proyecto de Resolución, Tema 1, “Vacunación artificia y antivariólica de los emigrantes antes del embarque”; Tema 3 “Vacunación obligatoria antirrábica de los perros que vayan a ser embarcados” Tema 11 “Convenios entre los países de inmigración y las compañías de navegación,” C-2:511 Harry Laughlin Papers
1212 Tema 7 “Informaciones a los emigrantes sobre las aptitudes necesarias para su empleo en los países donde intentan dirigirse,” C-2:511 Harry Laughlin Papers
6.2.7 Conclusion

Two presentations at the Pan-American Eugenics Conference epitomized the differences between Latin American and U.S. eugenics. Chilean Dr. Manuel Bianchi’s “The Armed Forces as a School of Homiculture,” describing Chile’s extreme climates, from the desert heat of nitrate mines in the north to the almost sub-Antarctic south, focused on compulsory military service as a means of molding populations. Dr. Davenport’s speech addressed racial hybrid-types. He spoke favorably of Latin American mestizos, “better acclimated to the tropical conditions than the Europeans and more ambitious than the Indians” but decried dangers of black-white crossings, insisting “the mulatto shows an ambition and push, combined often with an intellectual inadequacy, which makes him dissatisfied with his lot and a nuisance to others.”

The divergent histories of U.S. and Latin American eugenics and the political limits of Pan-Americanism should not obscure the transnational dynamics of these movements. Across the American Mediterranean, eugenics movements built on the legacy of public health campaigns against tropical diseases, linking environmental and racial sanitation. Populist nationalist backlashes against immigrants combined with public health discourses of contaminated races to fuel the growth of pseudo-scientific racism. Immigration restrictions, intelligence testing and compulsory sterilization were embraced by modernizing elites in the southern U.S. and the Spanish Caribbean. Conflicting ideas of whiteness combined with Latin American resentment at U.S. imperialism, prevented the creation of a hemispheric eugenics code. Demands for immigration restrictions laid the foundation for repatriations and restrictions.

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1213 Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de las Repúblicas Americanas, 111
1214 Actas de la Primera Conferencia Panamericana de las Repúblicas Americanas, 120

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6.3 Disease and Development in the Banana Empire

“The United Fruit Company and its lesser competitors can hardly keep pace,” declared radical journalist Carlton Beals in Banana Gold (1932), an account of his travels to Central America and his interview Nicaraguan revolutionary Augusto Sandino. “Their engineers go slashing through the jungles; their railroads reach iron fingers out and out; their yellow clapboard buildings, hotels, bunk houses, stores, offices, hospitals, warehouses spring up like mountainous fungi beside a hundred steams and marshes, in the heart of vast mangrove forests, and on a dozen glowering shores.”\textsuperscript{1215}

The expansion of United Fruit’s banana empire, whose enclaves Beals likens to “mountainous fungi,” was driven by the response to the fungal epidemic \textit{Fusarium} wilt, Panama disease. Steve Marquardt shows how the spread of Panama Disease led United Fruit to shift from independent growers, West Indian immigrants and Hispanic planters who relied on their labor, to large company owned banana farms and scientific monoculture, overseen by white agronomists and engineers, and reliant on the deskilled, directed Hispanic migrant laborers.\textsuperscript{1216} Marquardt’s ecological critique correlates with Jason Colby’s account of United Fruit’s shift from West Indian to Hispanic labor. Colby likens labor divisions to United Fruit’s banana plantations to Northeastern factories, drawing on the older “factories in the field” analogies that Marquardt problematizes, utilizing the agro-ecological perspective of environmental historians Donald Worster and Warren Dean.\textsuperscript{1217}

Rather than an extension and imposition of northern industry, United Fruit and the banana empire reflected transnational circulations of ideas and practices about race and labor,

\textsuperscript{1215} Carlton Beals, Banana Gold (J.P. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, London, 1932), 144
\textsuperscript{1216} “‘Green Havoc’: Panama Disease, Environmental Change and Labor Process in the Central American Banana Industry,” The American Historical Review 106 no. 1 (February 2001): 49-80
\textsuperscript{1217} Jason Colby, The Business of Empire: United Fruit, Race and U.S. Expansion in Central America, 5-6;
tropical nature and agricultural mass-production across the transnational space of the American Mediterranean. Sanitary campaigns against yellow fever, malaria and hookworm paved the way for the rise and expansion of United Fruit’s banana plantation zones. Discourses of public health and public health shaped the rhetoric of a new generation of Hispanic nationalists in Central America who challenged the companies’ neo-colonial dominance. Fearful of both U.S. domination and the radical ideas of the Mexican Revolution, Augusto Sandino’s rebellion in Nicaragua and Communist-inspired labor movements, Central American elites inverted the rhetoric sanitary and civilizational uplift that justified concessions to United Fruit and other banana companies. Denouncing the racial and cultural threat posed by inassimilable Afro-West Indian immigrants, they embraced pseudo-scientific eugenics and populist racism and enacted restrictions prohibiting Black immigration and migration to new enclaves on the Pacific coast. As they decried the neo-colonial dominance of the U.S. and United Fruit, Hispanic nationalists aligned with the white supremacist intellectual currents of Pan-Americanism, advocating immigration restrictions as forms of racial sanitation.

6.3.1 Panama Disease and Searches for Alternative Crops

Panama disease took its name from the country where observers first described the disease. Inspections of the Changuinola district in Panama in 1917 found 15,000 acres where it was impossible to grow Gros Michel bananas, on land that, just five years earlier, had sustained the division’s most productive farms. By 1920, Panama disease infested 45,000 acres in Costa Rica’s Sixaola valley. \(^{1218}\) (Figure 6.9 and 6.10)

From 1916 to 1918, Massachusetts Institute of Technology microbiologist Samuel Prescott directed soil surveys in Costa Rica, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, and Jamaica, but

\(^{1218}\) E.W. Brandes, “Banana Wilt,” *Phytopathology* 9 no. 9 (September 1919): 349
failed to find a correlation to the spread of the pathogen. Plant pathologist Dr. Vining Dunlap established an Agricultural Research Station in Changuinola, Panama, experimenting with disease-resistant bananas, including two varieties of Cavendish banana, the Lacatan from the Philippines and Valery from the Belgian Congo. These varieties were too thin-skinned for existing means of handling. In 1925, U.S. Department of Agriculture plant explorer Harry T. Edwards brought from Davao, Philippines to Changuinola 1,000 rhizomes of abacá or Manila hemp (*Musa textilis*), a relative of the edible banana used in rope making. Low global prices impeded commercial cultivation until the Japanese conquest of the Philippines in 1941.

Searches for alternative crops had little success. H.S. Reed of the Citrus Experiment Station in Riverside judged Navel oranges from United Fruit’s Finca Navarro near Cartago, Costa Rica “as good as any I ever ate anywhere, having that true California flavor,” but exports were limited to the Panama Canal Zone. Pineapples grew on the slopes of Costa Rica’s Turrialba volcano. The first shipments, transported in refrigerated holds with bananas, resulted in losses of 50 percent. West Indians smallholders grew cacao on abandoned banana lands, with disease-resistant Lactan or Red Bananas as shade plants. In 1926, United Fruit purchased equipment cacao-drying plants in London, transported on the SS *Ulua* and erected in Limón and Almirante, Panama. By 1928, 50,000 acres of cacao were planted, producing 7,000,000

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1224. M.M. Marsh to Harold Parker, May 27, 1921, INCOFER #7177, ANCR
pounds of high-grade bean.\textsuperscript{1225} Cacao prices remained low, due to British and French policies in the Gold Coast and Ivory Coast, West Africa.

By the mid-1920s, Panama disease had led to the abandonment of over 7,000 acres in Honduras and 5,000 in Guatemala.\textsuperscript{1226} A Jamaican foreman in Honduras wrote “we have given up hopes of ever checking the Panama disease for I have dug, burned, lined, and made no end to abandonments all to no effect.”\textsuperscript{1227} Colonial officials in Jamaica forbade the import of banana plants from Central America. A “nine root rule” required the destruction of all plants within a radius of one chain from an infected plant. These measures slowed, but did not halt, Panama disease.\textsuperscript{1228} Only the irrigated banana farms of Santa Marta, Colombia remained free of the disease. Water soak stunted plants, and proximity to the sea led to salting up of irrigation canals and the abandonment of tracts of land. However, due to the absence of Panama disease, banana exports from Caribbean Colombia rose from 5 million bunches in 1911 to 10 million in 1926.\textsuperscript{1229}

British plant pathologist Claude Wardlaw and Laurence McGuire traveled throughout Central America, studying the spread of Panama disease. Changuinola, Panama, site of the first outbreaks, had been “completely abandoned.”\textsuperscript{1230} In Siquirres, Costa Rica, they observed, “the standing vegetation consisted of the remaining clumps of bananas, secondary bush and grass, and “one area” was so grown up in secondary bush that it was necessary to cut a way through.”\textsuperscript{1231} Both observers criticized the banana industry for its lack of scientific techniques-crop rotation,

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{1225} Victor M. Cutter “Caribbean Tropics in Commercial Transition,” Victor M. Cutter, \textit{Economic Geography} October 1926, 494, VCP
\bibitem{1226} C.W. Wardlaw, \textit{Banana Diseases including Plantains and Abaca} (Longmans, Green & Co. 1961), 190
\bibitem{1227} Journal of the Jamaica Agricultural Society (1923)
\bibitem{1228} The Annual Report of Jamaica Together with the Departmental Records (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1922) 275
\bibitem{1229} Claude W. Wardlaw, Laurence McGuire, \textit{Panama Disease of Bananas Reports on Scientific Visits to the Banana Growing Countries of the West Indies, Central and South America} (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1929), 47
\bibitem{1230} Claude W. Wardlaw, Laurence McGuire, \textit{Panama Disease of Bananas}, 48
\bibitem{1231} Claude W. Wardlaw, Laurence McGuire, \textit{Panama Disease of Bananas}, 51, 27-38
\end{thebibliography}
improved drainage, breaking up the soil for aeration. McGuire pointed out that, “Economic
conditions are such that it is more profitable to exploit new lands than to improve the existing
plantations.”

The Lancetilla Experiment Station was established near Tela, Honduras in 1926, with
Wilson Popenoe as chief agronomist. (Figure 6.11) After accompanying his brother Paul to the
Middle East, Wilson tracked down avocados in Guatemala and Mexico, and worked at the Office
of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction in Miami. Twenty-five strains of African oil palm
(Elaeis guiniensis), mostly obtained from the U.S. Rubber Company in Sumatra, were used to
establish plantations in Honduras and Costa Rica. Panama Disease precipitated the decline of
United Fruit’s older divisions, relying on scientific monoculture and selective breeding.

6.3.2 The Kingdom of the Banana Companies

The Lancetilla station stood at the heart of United Fruit’s largest division. Carlton Beals
observed, “Honduras is the kingdom par excellence of the banana companies,” United Fruit, in
Tela and Trujillo, the Cuyamel Fruit Co. in Puerto Cortés and Standard Fruit in La Ceiba
controlling railroad networks, banana plantations and commissaries, paying no taxes and
importing goods duty free. (Figure 6.12 and 6.13) “Hondureños are obliged to become poorly
paid employees of the banana company, in positions inferior to imported Jamaican negroes.”
Workers slept in palm-thatched manaca camps, suffering from malaria, and venomous barba
amarilla snakes, whose bites inflicted blindness, bleeding, paralysis, and if untreated, death.
Destructive floods descended with “dream-like inevitability,” described in one account:

1232. Wardlaw, McGuire, Panama Disease of Bananas, 83
1234. Frederic Rosengarten Wilson Popenoe: Agricultural Explorer, Educator and Friend of Latin America
1235. Carlton Beals, Banana Gold, 121
Heavy rains have converted *quebradas* into rivers and rivers into raging torrents. The Aguán, muddy and savage, sings and moans as it rushes forward into the Caribbean. Thousands of acres of land are inundated. Railroad bridges are going out; irrigation projects are badly washed and damaged. Don Pepe’s family swarm to a bridge spanning the Bonito River. One woman clung to a small baby.\(^\text{1236}\)

West Indians comprised a middle class of skilled workers in company towns, separated from Hispanics and native Garífuna, who worked for as stevedores. La Ceiba and other ports were home to Bay Islanders, descendants of Cayman Islanders, who clung to their English heritage. A small number of U.S. Blacks resided in Honduras. George Bullock, a cook in Puerto Cortes, “an old time American negro” requested U.S. citizenship for Roque, his son by a Honduran woman Transito Tejada.\(^\text{1237}\) By contrast, there were few cases of intermarriage between West Indians and Hondurans, other than Bay Islanders. The privileged position of West Indians was an obstacle to the Garveyite movement. D. Erastus Thorpe, director of Tela’s UNIA division, described a backlash after he barred a white English minister Rev. Harold Dunn from presiding over the funeral of UNIA member, Stephen Gayle. He complained that many Blacks “are now ardent worshipers at the white parson’s church ‘because they cannot allow the white parson who had come all the way to England to preach to them, to starve on account of Garvey and his foolishness.’”\(^\text{1238}\)

The complexities of a three-tiered racial caste system and the challenges of overseeing banana plantations was described by Harry Hutchings, a white West Indian, came from Jamaica as a timekeeper in Tela in 1922. He learned banana growing from a Black Jamaican foreman, his

\(^{1236}\) Charles Morrow Wilson, *Empire in Green and Gold*, 241-242

\(^{1237}\) George P. Shaw to Secretary of State, June 5, 1924, RG 85 vol. 152 UNSACP

Spanish improving while working with Honduran foreman Cristino Galeas. Emphasizing linguistic and cultural differences, he wrote, “In those days, 1922-25, the Honduran farm labor was tough to handle, especially for those who did not speak fluent Spanish and were strangers to Latin custom and thinking.” Migrants were targets of banditry. “Nearly all our labor came from the interior, some as far as the borders of Nicaragua which was perhaps one week away on foot. They had to be tough because, on their return home, they had to outwit the bandits who readily guessed that anyone coming from the coast usually carried several months earnings.”

Alcohol exacerbated violence, with Bay rum sold in commissaries and cheap aguardiente (guaro) distilled in illicit stills. “Paydays were more often than not enlivened by drunken fights and, since the laborer was never parted from his machete, a twenty-six-inch broad-bladed knife that was kept as sharp as the soft steel allowed, there were frequent killings and serious wounds.”

Efforts to evict squatters reveal limits of company power. A squatter in a manacca shack outside Finca Nevada stood down Hutchings and a foreman, after being alerted to their presence by his dogs, swearing in Spanish, as he sharpened his machete, “Esta es mi casa! Soy Hondureño y soy hijo del país, y ni ustedes ni niun otro hijo de puta va a quitarme de aquí! (I am a Honduran and native of this country and neither you nor any other s.o.b is going to run me off from here!)”

Hispanic mozos formed a labor force for large, company-run banana farms of United Fruit’s newest divisions, at the bottom of racial hierarchies, beneath white company officials and skilled Black West Indian workers. Deeply resentful of their inferior status in their own country, Hispanics proved easy to exploit but extremely difficult to control.

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6.3.3 Medicalizing the Mozo

Reports of United Fruit’s Medical Department documented physical and moral deficiencies of mestizo Hispanic mozos and Blacks, as well their suitableness for arduous labor on banana plantations. Physicians dwelt upon the effects of malaria, hookworm, pneumonia and venereal diseases. Dr. C.M. Winn, physician in Puerto Castilla, attributed pneumonia to poor personal hygiene, workers “come in at night wet from perspiration and lie down to sleep in the same wet clothing,” and poor diets, as “many of our laborers, particularly those without families, scarcely eat more than one or two articles, generally rice and beans, --and those improperly cooked.”¹²⁴¹ Venereal diseases were widespread among a disproportionately single male population. The hospital in Almirante, Panama treated 204 cases of syphilis in 1929. A forty-year old Panamanian man began exhibited symptoms in 1924, experiencing a burning sensation in his eyes while bathing in the ocean. A twenty-two-year-old Black woman entered hospital complaining about a tumor on her right eye and was found to be suffering from syphilis-induced keratitis.¹²⁴²

The most graphically racist depiction of the medicalized mozo came from a Hispanic physician, Cuban-American Dr. José López, of the Truxillo Railroad Company. Dwelling on debilitating effects of disease, he described the typical mozo laborer as suffering from “impoverished blood where the plasmodia of malaria is playing havoc.” His “mental age is that of a moron,” his “eyes possessing a Mongolian slant” that showed “an air of dreaminess about them that verges on apathy,” as they lounged in hammocks, smoking, or squatting on railroad tracks. Linking their backwardness to a primeval tropical environment, López concluded, “their

¹²⁴¹ Honduras Division, *Thirteenth Annual Report, United Fruit Medical Department* (Boston, 1924), 71-72
¹²⁴² O.T. Brosius, I.E. Peon, H.R. Eichelbaum, Almirante Hospital, Syphilis in the Tropics-With Case Reports” *United Fruit Company Medical Department Report* 15 (1926), 149, 152
minds are as indifferent as the primeval jungle which surrounds the banana plantations. The future is something intangible and non-existent. Their ‘mañana’ is only a convenient wastebasket to which can be relegated all the tasks that should be accomplished in the present-day, especially so, if in any way, they would interfere with the rest of body and soul."\textsuperscript{1243} (Figure 6.14)

Medical studies marveled at how workers rapidly recovered from fatal wounds. “The Machete versus the Microbe” by Dr. Alfred Gage, a physician in hospitals in Quiriguá and Tela, described a dozen cases. One Honduran man had seven gunshot wound in his ribs, chest and thigh; a Garífuna man had nine machete wounds, an eight-inch wound in the collarbone, and a six-inch wound above his ear; a Nicaraguan had his entire right cheek cut off.\textsuperscript{1244} Survival from wounds fatal to “the average Anglo-Saxon,” inspired theorizing. “Most of the machete wounds are received during a drunken brawl, the majority of the patients arrive at the hospital intoxicated, and some even in a state of coma. I have coined the phrase, alcoholic anesthesia, for such a condition.”\textsuperscript{1245}

Case studies of injuries attested to the effectiveness of preventative medicine. They also reveal the indifference of company officials to the causes of violence, both workplace injuries and in worker camps, particularly the women who worked as kitchen cooks, domestics or came as wives of workers. In May 1926 a twenty-three-year-old Salvadoran man was admitted to the Tela hospital after falling into a drainage pump, ripping off skin, fat and muscle, but survived after a cotton pad and bi-chloride solution was applied to exposed intestines.\textsuperscript{1246} (Figure 6.15) A

\textsuperscript{1243} José López, “, The Lower Class of Tropical American Patients: A Psychological Sketch,” \textit{United Fruit Company Medical Department Report} 19 (1930), 163-164
\textsuperscript{1244} Alfred Gage, The Machete Versus the Microbe in Central America, United Fruit Medical Department 1925, 210-211 Matas Medical Library, Tulane University
\textsuperscript{1245} Alfred Gage, The Machete Versus the Microbe in Central America, \textit{United Fruit Medical Department Report} 14 (1925), 209-211 Matas Medical Library, Tulane University
\textsuperscript{1246} R.B. Nutter, A Brief Description of an Extensive Injury, \textit{United Fruit Medical Department Report} 15 (1926): 215-216 Matas Medical Library, Tulane University
twenty-five year-old pregnant woman was admitted to the hospital in Tela in June 1930, with a machete wound to her abdomen. She was etherized, dirt removed from intestines, wounds swabbed and sutured, and the fetus aborted during a febrile attack. The woman survived and was released after thirty days.\textsuperscript{1247} (Figure 6.16) The medicalization of the mozo shaped ideas of pseudo-scientific racism, situating mestizos at the bottom of racial hierarchies, emphasizing the debilitating effects of disease even as they marveled at the abilities of workers to endure hardship and potentially fatal injuries. Public health discourses of contaminated races legitimized the labor management strategies of a company that was increasingly dependent upon the exploitation of mestizo labor.

6.3.4 Labor Upheavals and Racial Tensions in Guatemala

Racial tensions sparked labor strikes in Guatemala. West Indian stevedores in Puerto Barrios supported the revolution that overthrew Manuel Estrada Cabrera, but the new Unionist government of Carlos Herrera raised the entry fee for “immigrants of color” from $50 to $200. United Fruit manager G.M. Shaw objected, “this regulation will hamper that company in its operations, as they are largely dependent on negro labor.”\textsuperscript{1248} The railway workers union, allying with its counterpart in Mexico, expelled U.S. Blacks and West Indians, and declared a strike in March 1921. Black railway workers enjoyed a privileged position in comparison to the U.S. In a saloon in Zacapa, where travel writer Eugene Cunningham was invited to drinks by a Black worker, a United Fruit mechanic “California Jack” Dempsey voiced “contempt for the ‘niggers’ about him.” The saloon-owner, a U.S.-born white man “who termed Spanish monkey talk and

\textsuperscript{1247} R.B. Nutter, “Incised Abdominal Wound-Case Report” United Fruit Medical Department Report 15 (1926 153
\textsuperscript{1248} Benton McMillan to Secretary of State November 23 1921 M-655 roll 29, USNACP
insisted on speaking English,” warned him “that his end would come suddenly from a knife in the ribs,” if he kept using that word.  

Tensions in railroad towns reached a boiling point in Puerto Barrios. Carleton Beals judged the port “an achievement in ugliness in a natural setting of beauty,” a “hodge-podge town, built on a pestiferous marsh, reeking with spilled petroleum, out along the twisted paths where are massed in utter promiscuity the atrocious blue and yellow shacks of negroes and Indians and Chinese.”

Journalist Arthur Ruhl emphasized its in-between-ness. “You are not exactly in the United States,” he concluded of Puerto Barrios, “although American faces, talk and methods are all about, nor are you in the real Guatemala of white walls, blue volcanoes, mule-trains and highland air.”

In a neo-colonial port, resentment at exploitation was compounded by perceived privileges enjoyed by West Indian Blacks. On February 3, 1924, 200 Hispanic stevedores refused to load 36,000 stems onto the SS Suriname. In a telegram, strike leaders Julio Molina, Genaro Ochoa and Teódulo Zavala declared, “for many years we have been giving our labor to United Fruit Co. while harming our wives and children.” They demanded a pay raise, an end to payment in company script, medical services in Spanish and an equitable division of labor “between Guatemalans and West Indians [los negros ingleses], favored by the Fruit Company.”

Strike leaders were arrested but Governor Santiago Quiñonez ordered their release. United Fruit officials brought three hundred workers from banana farms, mostly West Indians, who were attacked by a mob of two hundred men, wounding many of the Black workers.

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1250. Carleton Beals, *Banana Gold*, 146
1252. “La Huelga del Norte,” *El Imparacial* 19 de Febrero, Hemeroteca Valenzuela, Guatemala City
1253. Julio Molina y demás trabajadores, 3 de Febrero de 1923 no. 926 Palacio nacional Guatemala, Señor Ministerio, Legajo 22091 Despacho de Fomento 1923 Expediente Núm. 336, ANCA
and a white superintendent Mr. Ames, “right in front of armed Government troops and policemen.” The SS *Suriname* left for Puerto Castilla, Honduras with 30,000 stems rotting on the pier. The strike spread to banana plantations as armed men seized engines in Bananera and Quiriguá.

Editorials in support of the strike appeared in Guatemala’s largest newspaper, *El Imparcial*, explaining to readers United Fruit’s practice of paying in script, valid only in “Commissaries that charge an arm and a leg [*ojo de la cara*] for essential goods.” Editor Alejandro Córdova presented an appeal from the strikers to U.S. chargé d’affaires Arthur Geissler insisting that United Fruit’s monopolies were detrimental to Puerto Barrios, which, with free trade, could become a “Central American Buenos Aires.”

United Fruit general manager Rufus K Thomas dismissed charges of favoritism, noting the company employed less than four-hundred West Indians, in contrast to 4,000 Hispanics, and denounced the strike as showing “all the signs of Bolshevism,” “the lack of guarantee of property and the loss of the principle of authority.” Hoping to discredit the strikers’ nationalist claims, he pointed to the foreign origins of Honduran Julio Molina and Salvadoran Genaro Ochoa, who, he insisted, was “not a Company employee but a notorious gambler who resides in the red light district.” On March 3, Thomas met with Minister of Development Rafael Ponciano, who warned that another strike would occur unless the company made concessions. Ponciano made a

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1254 R.K. Thomas, 3-19 February 1923 M-655 roll 20, US National Archives, College Park, MD (USNACP)
1255 Guatemala, 5 de Febrero de 1923 Señor Ministro de Fomento; “Huelga de Norte” El Cuarto Poder, Guatemala, Jueves 8 de Febrero de 1923 Hemeroteca Valenzuela, Guatemala City
1256 R.K. Thomas, 3-19 February 1923 M-655 roll 20 USNACP
1257 “Huelga de Norte” El Imparcial, Sabado, 17 de Febrero de 1923, Hemeroteca Valenzuela
1258 Los trabajadores de Puerto Barrios Ante el Excmo. Señor Ministro de Norte América, Página 6 Puerto Barrios, 13 de febrero de 1923, Hemeroteca Valenzuela
1259 In response to charges of favoring West Indians, he pointed out that their were 4,000 Hispanics on the company payroll, in contrast to 400 Blacks Memorandum de R.K. Thomas 24 de Febrero de 1923, Biblioteca Valenzuela;
1260 R.K. Thomas to Leon Ellis, 3-19 February 1923 M-654 roll 70 RG59, USNACP
number of “threatening remarks” that Thomas found “nothing short of Bolshevism,” arguing that in a strike the government had a responsibility to side with its citizens. He declared his support for the building of a new port in neighboring Santo Tomas to replace United Fruit-controlled Puerto Barrios. Amidst rumors of a military coup, President Orellana replaced Santiago Quiñonez, with Gen. Enrique Arís, who had used heavy-handed tactics against U.S. Blacks in Zacapa in 1909. On March 15, the USS *Tacoma* arrived in Puerto Barrios. Having patrolled Limón, Costa Rica during the strike of 1910, the ship remained integral to United Fruit’s gunboat diplomacy. The captain boarded a train to meet with Orellana, while soldiers arrested twenty strikers, who were deported to Bluefields, Nicaragua.1261

Seeking to weaken labor organizing, in 1925 Guatemala’s National Assembly issued a decree requiring employees of all companies to be at least seventy-five percent Guatemalan, applied exclusively to West Indians.1262 The Assembly renewed a ban on Asian immigration, despite protests from Guatemala’s 1,100-strong Chinese community, which dominated the countries’ dry-goods trade. A petition by merchants Antonio and Santiago Chang warned the law would lead to family separations.1263 The Japanese ambassador in Mexico Dr. Aoki filed a *protest* on behalf of three Japanese residing in Guatemala.1264 No racial restrictions were enacted against Blacks, but labor laws barred West Indian immigration. A 1925 report found, of the West Indian banana workers, “those negroes now employed have been in the country for several years and regard Guatemala somewhat as home.”1265 The privileged position of English-speaking Blacks exacerbated the humiliation of United Fruit’s neo-colonialism. Labor and racial

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1261-“Llegará hoy a esta capital la oficialidad de *Tacoma*” El Excelsior, 15 de Marzo, 1923, Hermoteca Valanzuela
1262-Decreto No. 1567 April 15, 1925 M-655 roll 20 RG 59 USNACP
1263-Petition of the Chinese Colony in Guatemala,” Leon Ellis to Secretary of State, M-655 roll 29 RG 59 USNACP
1264-“Trade Relations with Japan” Arthur Geissler to Secretary of State, M-655 roll 29 RG 59 USNACP
1265-Agricultural labor in Guatemala” Nov. 19 1926 M-655 roll 30 RG 59 USNACP
grievances sparked a strike with nationalist support. Faced with the threat of revolution, the government coopted a popular movement by restricting immigration.

6.3.5 Race Riots in Honduras

While the strike in Puerto Barrios was motivated primarily by labor grievances and secondarily by racial resentment, in Puerto Castilla, Honduras racial animosity among Hispanic workers sparked anti-Black race riots. In 1923, an editorial in the Trujillo newspaper *El Precursor* “El Problema de los Negros,” denounced exploitation by Black foremen and supervisors. The author insisted that preferential treatment of West Indians resulted in the “superiority of an inferior race” that “has embittered the soul of the people,” with Blacks as “the lord and overseer of the Honduran,” and native workers mistreated, fired and often “forced to wander sick and penniless through the camps.”

In January 1924, the Honduran National Assembly failed to pass legislation barring importation of “blacks or coolies,” thereby helping spark the revolution of 1924, an insurgency launched by Tiburcio Carías Andino’s Nationalist Party. The short but violent war was compounded by a rare drought, with fires destroying half of the banana plantings. The Truxillo Railroad Co. laid off hundreds of workers, but still employed “several thousand negroes,” recruiting West Indians fleeing Guatemala. Willard Beaulac, U.S. consul in Puerto Castilla, insisted this preference for Black labor due to the fact that, “British negroes employed

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1266 Translation of an article entitled “El Problema de los Negros” appearing in the August edition of El Precursor, Trujillo, Honduras, Enclosure no. 1 Dispatch no. 9 August 23, 1923 Puerto Castilla Beulac to State Department, August 23 1923 M-647 roll 32 RG 59, USNACP
1267 Franklin Morales to Secretary of State January 12, 1924 RG 85 vol. 152 USNACP
1268 Willard Beulac, “Drought Causes Damage in Honduras” Commerce Reports Vol. 3 Issue 27 (1924), 52
by the fruit companies are traditionally steady dependable workers, while natives can not, as a
rule, be depended upon to stay at work.”\textsuperscript{1269}

Amidst heightened racial tensions, a Jamaican watchman shot a Honduran seen
“prowling” around a warehouse. On July 13, Dr. Girón Aguilar of Trujillo, a physician and
politician, made a speech calling on “all loyal Hondurans” to drive West Indians Blacks out of
the country. Beaulac described Aguilar as an “anti-American agitator,” but Aguilar cited the
United States as proof of the value of anti-Black violence, noting that in one U.S. state “thirty-
five negroes had been lynched in one year,” nothing there were forty-eight U.S. states and asking
listeners to “draw [their] own inference.”\textsuperscript{1270} Leaflets from the “North Coast Nationalist Party”
displayed a skull-and-cross-bones and a graveyard and a warning, “Negroes, you can receive a
free passage to this site—simply get in touch with any Latin American.”\textsuperscript{1271} (Figure 6.17)

When white superintendent Barney Ness sought to negotiate with rioters who marched
on the railyards they demanded deportation of all Blacks. Reminded of treaties with Britain,
strike leader José Batres Rodenzo, declared, “Que me importa la ley,” punctuated by shouts from
the mob of, “Let’s kill the negroes,” “Let’s do the same to the negroes in Honduras as was done
to them in Guatemala,” “Chop their heads off.”\textsuperscript{1272} Levi Gooding, a Jamaican roundhouse
foreman, saw a mob armed with machetes and pistols seize a train engine and was attacked and
stabbed in the chest by seven Hondurans, including one of the workers he oversaw, a callboy
named Pedro Pacheco.\textsuperscript{1273} A mob broke into the home of Amos Rich, a Cayman Islander
employed in the building department, then conversing with his wife, striking him over the head

\textsuperscript{1269}“ General Strike and Anti-Negro Disturbances in Puerto Castilla” Willard Beaulac to Secretary of State, July 16
1924, RG 85 vol. 152 USNACP
\textsuperscript{1270}Willard Beaulac to State Department, July 16 1924 vol. 125 RG 84 USNACP
\textsuperscript{1271}The word “campo” field is underlined and translated into English as “site”, Flier enclosed in Beaulac to State
Department July 16 1924 vol. 125 RG 84 USNACP
\textsuperscript{1272}Willard Beaulac to State Department, July 16 1924 vol 125 RG 84 USNACP
\textsuperscript{1273}Beaualc to State Department July 19 1924 vol. 125 RG 84 USNACP
with a machete.\textsuperscript{1274} James Soule, a Jamaican employed at Finca Lerida, remembered at 1 am, a train of “several hundred natives” threatened the thirty Blacks living on the farm with death. Soule and his pregnant wife escaped by hiding in the bush, but at seven am thirty soldiers entered his house and “notified him that if he did not leave they would kill him.”\textsuperscript{1275}

“Three hundred armed strikers marched “to Puerto Castilla with the avowed purpose of expelling the negroes,” Beaulac nervously reporting, “the government is taking no action and apparently sympathizes with the strikers.”\textsuperscript{1276} With company officials unable to guarantee their safety, “nine hundred negroes,” five hundred women and children and four hundred men, were placed aboard the \textit{Banan}, a steamship in the harbor.\textsuperscript{1277} Finding that four Blacks were U.S. citizens, Beaulac notified the U.S. Navy Special Service Squadron, but did not request intervention. Unlike strikes, racial violence that threatened lives of Black workers did not justify gunboat diplomacy. After the riot, “four hundred negroes left for La Ceiba, the Bay Islands, and British Honduras,” Beaulac fearing a mass exodus would force the company “to practically cease operations, since it is dependent upon negro labor to a very great extent.”\textsuperscript{1278} In banana zones and company ports of Caribbean Guatemala and Honduras, tensions between West Indians and growing number of Hispanic migrants sparked violent race riots and mob violence.

\textbf{6.3.6 Race and Nationalism in Costa Rica}

In Costa Rica, a \textit{leyanda blanca}, celebrated the countries whiteness as the source of its political stability.\textsuperscript{1279} In a preface to Costa Rica’s 1927 census, Dr. José Guerrero attributed the
“social and political order that have prevailed in our country” to the fact that “the population of Costa Rica includes a high percentage of the white race.” The exception was Limón province, where Blacks were 55% of 32,789 inhabitants. 1280

As Panama disease spread, and war reduced shipping, banana exports declined sharply from the 11 million stems in 1911 to 7 million in 1918.1281 Changes in loading led to a strike by stevedores in Limón in 1921, with tepid support from the San José-based Confederación General de Trabajadores. Unemployed workers from Siquirres broke the strike. Noting the strike saw “usual flow of eloquent oratory in which the Jamaican negro delights” U.S. consul Steward McMillin surmised United Fruit “has been able to keep the whip hand, because of the same love of talk which the negro possesses here.”1282 Layoffs and low pay led many West Indians to leave, migrating to Cuba. Between 1920 and 1921 banana prices rose by 50 percent. United Fruit and independent growers planted bananas on lands abandoned a decade, and exports recovered. The second banana boom drew Hispanics from the Pacific lowlands of Puntarenas and Guanacaste and Nicaragua. In his novel Mamita Yunai, Carlos Luis Fallas, described the origins of one guacasteco worker, who had fled into the jungle after murdering an American foreman who raped his wife.

Eulogio Ramirez was born in Guanacaste, on a cattle hacienda, raised among horsemen, horses and bulls At sixteen, when he began to learn the suelto de compás of the marimbas and long for the black eyes of his cousin [suspiro por los ojos negros de su prima], he joined with other local boys and, following the example of thousands of guanacastecos, decided to seek his

1280 Censo de Población de Costa Rica, 11 de mayo de 1927, ANCR
1281 “Informe: Que Presentó a la Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País,” La Gaceta-Diario Oficial Martes 19 de febrero de 1927

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fortune in the Atlantic banana zone, because his land is happy and the women very pretty, but the life of the peon is very hard and the pay miserable.1283

The allure of higher wages gives way to hardships of menial labor Hispanics were forced to perform, harvesting bananas and cacao, cutting down dead plants (chapias), digging irrigation ditches (zanjas), felling trees and clearing brush for new plantings.1284

In 1926, the Costa Rican government granted United Fruit rights to build a railroad to the Rio Sarapiquí, near the Nicaraguan border, and plant 5,000 acres of bananas, in exchange for accepting a tax increase of two cents.1285 A group called the Sociedad de los Amigos del País, for the secret societies of Enlightenment Spain and Spanish America, made a presentation opposing the new contract. Its leader, Alejandro Alvarado Quiros, had ties to the Cooperative Bananera Costaricense, an association of banana planters led by Alvarado’s cousin José Joaquín Quiros, widely regarded as a front for the Cuyamel Fruit Company. He also enjoyed close ties to the Liga Cívica de Costa Rica, which a U.S. minister described as a “Costa Rican Ku Klux Klan.”1286

Economist Dr. Marco Aurelio Zumbado, general secretary of Amigos del País, demanded the Northern Railway lower its rates and reserve at least 50% of jobs for Costa Rican citizens. He urged politicians to see “that companies like United Fruit, with the character of trusts, are not the government of the United States.”1287 Appealing to coffee planters squeezed by high freight rates, Zumbado declared “coffee produces much more for the economy, without dangers to

1283. Carlos Luis Fallas, Mamita Yunai, 104-105
1284. “Así comenzó su peregrinación, finca por finca, a través de toda la inmensa Zona Bananera. Hoy en las chapias, mañana en la corta de cacao o de banano, otro día en las zanjas y casi siempre en las volteas, pues llego a hacerse un buen hachero con el tiempo.” Carlos Luis Fallas, Mamita Yunai 105
1285. Roy Davis to Secretary of State, November 16, 1926; La United Fruit Company propone al Gobierno invertir la suma de $8,000,000 en la zona de Río Frío a cambio de que se le fije el impuesto de dos centavos, La Tribuna, octubre 27 de 1926, M- roll RG 59 NACP
1286. R.M. de Lambert to Secretary of State, June 13, 1928 M-669 roll 30 RG 59 NACP

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national sovereignty and with complete returns for Costa Rican planters. The banana money remains in the Company’s commissaries and returns to Boston or the Negroes carry it directly to Jamaica.” He denounced Black immigration as “unacceptable and illogical” in a nation that outlawed Chinese immigration and restricted “Syrians and other branches of the white race.” Blacks, valuable as they might be as “packhorses,” were “fatal to the social order, vicious and criminally-inclined (as we see by the crime in the Atlantic zone), mixing with our race, which is already blackening, and sending all their savings to Jamaica.”

A February 1927 announcement in *La Gaceta* condemned United Fruit for exercising “dominion and control” over “a vast extension of the Atlantic zone,” imposing “onerous contracts” on Costa Rican growers, and importing Blacks “predisposed to infirmities such as tuberculosis, leprosy, syphilis and insanity.” The article suggested sterilization, as used on Black women in the U.S. South. It mentioned a visitor to San José, “who claimed to be an American doctor,” and “brought some mysterious injections which in the Southern States of the North America are now applied to Negroes to sterilize and prevent the propagation of the race.” Costa Rican nationalists, denouncing the threat of West Indians, linked to foreign domination, looked to the radical eugenic measures in the U.S. and appealed to ideals of whiteness and anti-Black racism.

### 6.3.7 Expansion to the Pacific

United Fruit suspended negotiations with Costa Rica in 1928, after the government refused to expel Victor Raúl Haya da la Torre, the Peruvian political theorist and founder of APRA, who

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1288. Marco Antonio Zumbado, *Un aspecto del asunto: Una visión del problema*, 17, 19
1289. Informe: Que Presentó a la Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *La Gaceta-Diario Oficial* Tuesday, February 19, 1927, 16 Serie Congreso no. 15400, ANCR
1290. Informe: Que Presentó a la Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, *La Gaceta-Diario Oficial*
spoke in San José in support of Sandino’s rebellion in Nicaragua. As United Fruit confronted a rising tide of nationalism, the company relied on state violence. In Caribbean Colombia, a strike demanded an eight-hour workday, hourly wages and an end to the task system. On December 8, 1928, soldiers massacred workers and their families gathering for Sunday Mass in Ciénaga, Santa Marta.

In contrast to the growth of nationalism in Costa Rica and Colombia, Panama, a de jure U.S. protectorate, granted the United Fruit subsidiary Chiriquí Land Co. a generous concession to build a railroad and grow bananas on 35,000 acres. Mormon missionaries founded the Panama Sugar Co. in 1916, establishing a mill at Progreso, on the Costa Rican border. The company went bankrupt in 1921 and the jungle reclaimed former plantations. With the signing of the contract, the port of Rabo de Puerco, on the Burica peninsula, where the sun rises over the Pacific, was renamed Puerto Armuelles, for police captain Tomás Armuelles, who died during the 1921 Coto War with Costa Rica. The town earned the name “Puerto de la Muerte” and a 1929 study found a malarial infection rate of 56 percent. The study found a familiar pattern of racial segregation. “Latins congregated together in the manacca (palm-thatched) shelters of ‘Rabo de Puerco’; West Indian negroes were grouped in the shingle huts of ‘Silver City’ and the temperate zone employees lived between, in an odd assortment of buildings.”

Mark Trafton, after returning from Cuba, took a job with the Chiriqui Land Co. in 1928, traveling by steamship from New Orleans to Panama, reaching Puerto Armuelles on a rusty schooner. The town, he observed, consisted of “a few labor camps, long narrow buildings on

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1291. Informe: Que Presentó a la Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País, La Gaceta-Diario Oficial
1292. Mauricio Archila Neira, Leida Jazmín Torres Cendales editors Bananeras, Huelga y Masacre 80 años (Universidad Nacional de Bogota, Bogotá, 2009)
1294. J.R. Maltsberger, United Fruit Company Medical Department Annual Report 19 (1930): 34-37
stilts with large bodegas for storage of equipment and materials.””

He oversaw, “A boatload of Nicas, about 200 real tough but hard working men, unbelievable when sober but unpredictable when drunk, often using a machete to cut up an erstwhile drinking companion!”

In contrast to his racist contempt for Haitian cane cutters he oversaw in Cuba, the Spanish-speaking Trafton had a convivial relationship with his workers, treated to a going away party by contractor Tomas Mairena. Another ex-overseer questioned the politics but not the skill of his Nicaraguan logging gangs, “150 or more of them, many of whom were supporters of Augusto Cesar Sandino, the Nicaraguan bandit, or patriot-depending on your point of view. These men had been chased out of Nicaragua, but whatever their politics, they were artists with an ax.”

On the frontier of a plantation empire, lines of racial segregation blurred. Trafton worked under Bob Cover, a white Jamaican born in Costa Rica, “a rough and tough, but kind-hearted bushwhacker,” who warned, “don’t mess around with my woman.’ His woman was Amy, a young, good looking and very pleasant black Jamaican, also born in Costa Rica. She was the best sancocho [chicken stew] cook I have ever known!”

Close but non-conjugal interactions between white men and women of color occurred during fiestas with Chiricano ranchers, one of the few diversions for company officials, the highlight of which were dances with “short but pleasant and good-looking mestizas with long black hair but with there upper and lower front teeth filed to sharp points.”

By 1929, the railroad reached La Esperanza, with engines and rolling stock from Almirante and Limón. Trafton recalled, “In the enjoyable solitude of my jungle life, I wasn’t

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1295. Mark Trafton, Raising Cane and Growing Bananas, 105
1296. Mark Trafton, Raising Cane and Growing Bananas, 112
1297. Interesting if True, Edward Scott, Article from the Havana Post, September 30, 1955, ANCR
1298. Mark Trafton, Raising Cane and Growing Bananas, 108
1299. Mark Trafton, Raising Cane and Growing Bananas, 115
even aware of the Wall Street stock market collapse in October, 1929.”

When he began a job as an office clerk, Puerto Armuelles had over a hundred houses for laborers in “Silver City,” an airstrip, radio tower, office buildings, and a three-story hospital. In the hills of Las Palmas, cooled by breezes, “between trees, shadows and carefully cultivated gardens” were houses for married employees, with a swimming pool, tennis courts for whites who “lacked for nothing, like spoiled children with all the indulgence of the company.” United Fruit’s expansion into the Pacific brought about the creation of new export enclaves, relying on low-wage Hispanic labor, largely from war-torn Nicaragua, overseen by a veteran class of company officials.

6.3.8 **Barring Black Migration**

In Honduras, where the Depression dealt a blow to the banana industry, West Indians proved a target of nativist resentment. In 1929, the newspaper *El Sol* reported in Tela “people are outraged by immigration of blacks,” and went so far as to threaten that, if the government failed to act, “we will take up the machete and express this undesirable race that takes away our work, our bread.”

Honduran President Vicente Mejía Colindres issued a law requiring Blacks to deposit 5,000 silver pesos, $2,500. Sam Zemurray’s Cuyamel Fruit Co circumvented this law using a World War I treaty guaranteeing passage to British citizens. As racial resentments reached a boiling point, in 1930, *El Sol* received a letter announcing the founding of a Honduran version of the Ku Klux Klan in San Pedro Sula, terminus Cuyamel’s National Railway.

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1300 Mark Traffon, *Raising Cane and Growing Bananas*, 119
1301 Panamá y la Frutera: Análisis de una Confrontación Económico-Fiscal (Panamá, 1972), 82
1304 Marvin Barahona, *La hegemonía de los Estados Unidos, 1907-1932* (Tegucigalpa: Centro de Documentación de Honduras, 1989), 200; Mario Posas Amador, El Ku Klux Klan en Honduras *Imaginación* 12 no. 4 (1992)
Environmental changes exacerbated the decline of older banana zones. In the Talamanca valley, floods destroyed bridges and railroads, inundated banana farms, and led to a spike in malaria, forcing United Fruit to dismantle railroads and bridges. (Figure 6.18 and 6.19) Pedro Falsimagne, of the Sixaola Banana Co. petitioned for “the reconstruction of twenty-eight bridges broken up by United Fruit when the rails were torn off, leaving the squatters and farmers in that area completely isolated.”

In 1930, Costa Rica granted United Fruit the right to build and operate a dock in Golfito on the Pacific coast. Warning that Blacks would migrate to new banana zones, Dr. José Guerrero published an article in Otilo Ulate’s La Tribuna, “Como quiere que sea Costa Rica, blanca o negra?” (What Do We Want Costa Rica To Be, Black or White?)

The black man is the shadow of the banana. The extraction of green gold cannot do without this human element, for reasons of language, of submission and obedience, of life adopted to the environment in which the banana plant grows and for the physical resistance of the negro, typical of the primitive race it is; by the absence of an ethical and historical ideal concerned with freedom or slavery, which is replaced by religious superstitions and childlike amusements.

Guerrero described conversations with a U.S. minister, who privately urged him to restrict Black immigration, and a tourist who was reluctant to believe Limón was Costa Rica. He distinguished the interests of United Fruit, “who manage nigger workforces in foreign lands,” from those of the U.S., which grappled with the “negro problem,” that had persisted “despite the struggles of Lincoln and the generosity of the American people.”

Challenging anti-Black sentiment, W.A. Petgrave of Siquirres, editor of the West Indian newspaper Searchlight, pointed out “were there no Minor Keith, and as a consequence no United

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1305. Petición de Pedro Falsimagne, 5 de Abril de 1934, Serie Fomento Limón No. 3805 88-92, ANCR
1306. ¿Cómo se quiere que sea Costa Rica, blanca o negra? El problema racial del negro y las actuales contracciones bananeras La Tribuna Mié. 13 de Agosto de 1930 Biblioteca Nacional Miguel Obregón Lizano, San José, CR
1307. ¿Cómo se quiere que sea Costa Rica, blanca o negra? La Tribuna Miércoles 13 de Agosto de 1930 “Among the civilized nations, none has contemplated the Negro problem as the United States,”
Fruit Company, and no Negro, who was able to stand the hardships,” Costa Rica would have remained isolated and in debt.\textsuperscript{1308} West Indians appealed to history, but United Fruit officials fearful for the future sought to reduce their imperial profile. In a new contract, presented to the Costa Rican Congress in 1930, it accepted a tax increase of two cents per stem and granted abandoned lands to Hispanic settlers. In October, Compañía Bananera de Costa Rica took over production, with a Compañía Surtidora handling merchandise operations of the companies’ commissaries.\textsuperscript{1309}

In 1933, the Costa Rican Congress appointed a commission led by Otilo Ulate, traveling to Limón to investigate United Fruit’s compliance. The commission presented a petition by 500 Hispanics, demanding deportation of Blacks. “It is not possible to live among them, because their bad morals do not permit it: for them there is no family, nor female honor, and for this reason they live in an overcrowding and promiscuity dangerous for our homes, founded on the religion and good morals of Costa Ricans.”\textsuperscript{1310}

In August 1934, Limón was gripped by a strike by 10,000 banana workers, organized into the Sindicato de Trabajadores del Atlántico. Planters sought to discredit the strike as “a revolt with Communists leading Nicaraguan malcontents and followers of the late General Augusto Sandino.”\textsuperscript{1311} Costa Rican officials acted to prevent the transfer of West Indians, who had remained loyal to United Fruit, to the Pacific. On December 10, 1934, a decree by President Ricardo Jiménez Oreamuno declared “Colored People Are Prohibited from Occupying the Pacific Zone.”\textsuperscript{1312}

\textsuperscript{1308} W.A. Petgrave, A Reply to Audacity, \textit{The Searchlight} 20 August 1930 Biblioteca Nacional de Costa Rica
\textsuperscript{1309} -Marsh to Heads of All Departments, September 29, 1930 INCOFER #729, ANCR
\textsuperscript{1310} -Petition to Congress by residents of Limón, signed by 574 Hispanics, Congreso Constitucional Sección Legislativa 1933 No. 16753, ANCR
\textsuperscript{1311} -“Banana Strike Settled: Costa Rican Workers Get 8-Hour Day,” \textit{New York Times}, August, 29, 1934
\textsuperscript{1312} - Contrataciones de 1934, en lo que respecta a la zona del Pacifico, Fomento 3387 ANCR
Carlos Lluis Fallas’ *Mamita Yunai* begins with the narrator listening, but not understanding, conversations of West Indians on a train, immigrating to Panama. They describe their plight in accented Spanish, punctuated with English words. “I know many families of blacks [negritos] in Limón who are surviving off of small crabs and bananas. The farms are abandoned and there is no work. What are we going to do? Los blancos tiene el *chance* del Pacifico, pero ¿nosotros? You see that we have difficulties even becoming citizens! We cannot work, nor cultivate the land, nor will they allow us to earn a living on the Pacific. So we have to die of hunger?”

In a country where national identity emphasized whiteness, the decline of the banana enclave in Limón and United Fruit’s expansion into the Pacific enabled Costa Rican intellectuals and political leaders codified racial segregation, marginalizing the West Indian minority.

### 6.3.9 Decay and Expansion

In Honduras an airborne fungus, Sigatoka, or leaf spot disease, reached epidemic scale after floods in 1935. In November 1935, tests directed by Dr. Vining Dunlap were begun spraying Bordeaux mixture.\(^{1314}\) (Figure 6.20) Sigatoka and Panama disease forced the Truxillo Railroad Company to cut its workforce from 6,416 in 1929 to 616 by 1937 and dismantle 125 kilometers of railway.\(^{1315}\) Planting began on the Pacific coast of Guatemala around Tiquisate in 1937. The first completely mechanized division, tractors replaced mules, and 18,000 acres of bananas came into bearing after only ten months, aided by an overhead sprinkler system spraying Bordeaux mixture.\(^{1316}\)

\(^{1313}\)Carlos Luis Fallas, *Mamita Yunai* (1940), 11
\(^{1314}\)Problems and Progress in Banana Disease Research (United Fruit Company, 1958), 11-12
Construction on the Golfito-Palmar Railway in Costa Rica began in 1938, with locomotives and supplies from Puerto Castilla. The region had few settlers, the white Jamaican Webb family, and Chinese Maria Wong and Juan Chan, who ran a cantina and store in the Boruca Indian village of Pozo Norte. Cacique Venacio Mora, served as an agent, bringing bananas by dugout cayucos. Railroad builders and overseers epitomized a rugged pioneering generation of banana men. Foremen Francisco Otero, a Spanish immigrant, worked on United Fruit railways in Cuba and Honduras. Sid Banack, a Pole from Chicago, worked on the Overseas Railroad to Key West and the Truxillo Railroad. Sam Russell became yardmaster in Puerto Armuelles after losing his truck farm in Lakeland, Florida. Dalmatian Croats recruited from the Panama Canal Zone, oversaw the building port facilities and a hospital at Golfito.1317

The majority of workers were Nicaraguans and Hondurans, familiar with banana planting, although “machete fights were common during wild Saturday night sprees.”1318 One such worker, José Gutierrez left Nicaragua with his family at age fourteen, sailing down the Río San Juan del Norte, working with his father in Limón. In 1937, he left Limón by train, reaching Puntarenas, transferring by launch to Quepos.1319 Collapsing coffee prices brought migrants from the Valle Central. Three hundred workers petitioned for land reform, insisting poverty “prompted us to move to this zone, where an infernal climate decimates our numbers daily,” and “all of us long to return to the mild climate of our homes, where we can work our own lands, with our own resources.”1320

1318 Clyde Stephens, Impact of the United Fruit Company in southwest Costa Rica, 639
1320 Petición de los bananeros, 1940 ANCR, Fomento 3387, Ana Luisa Cerdas, El Surgimiento del Enclave Bananero en el Pacifico Sur, Revista de Historia 4 no. 28 Julio-Diciembre 1993
United Fruit officials on the Pacific coast protested the ban forced them to deny work to qualified West Indians, although “many of the Guanacasteco workers are people of color” and “there are many foreign workers, also of color, especially Panamanians, who have crossed the frontier from the region of Chiriquí.” In 1940 a petition by two residents of Limón, Jorge Curling and Roberto Sutherland Polson, among the minority of Costa Rican-born West Indians who had become citizens, objected that the law, discriminating against “the black race” “has given rise to questions: What country do we belong to, our parents or to Costa Rica? What value do the laws grant to the adoption of citizenship? What importance could naturalization have if it is not to serve his country at any moment, aid the development of the society in which one enters into to take part?”

In December 1941, the SS Pastores left New York for Quepos. Once a luxurious passenger liner, which brought President Warren Harding from the Panama Canal, the ship had been reclassified as a freighter. Passing off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, the captain received a radio message, describing the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. On the eve of a world war that would destroy the colonial world, United Fruit’s new Pacific enclaves epitomized the transformation of the banana industry, reliant upon monoculture, irrigation, and pesticides, and deskillied and indentured Hispanic labor.

6.3.10 Conclusion

“‘Central America is going black’ was his thesis. Every year more negroes from Jamaica and British Honduras come flooding into the banana fields,” Carleton Beals wrote, describing the views of “Don Pancho,” a passenger on a sloop from Puerto Cortes to Puerto Barrios. Don

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1321 Sr. Lic. don León Cortés, Presidente de la Republica Apartado #1155, ANCR
1322 Petición de Jorge Curling de Lisser y Roberto Sutherland a Señor Presidente de la Republica, Fomento 3387 No. 766188, ANCR
1323 John Melville, The Great White Fleet, 83-84
Pancho “painted a mournful picture of degeneracy from the mixing of negro, Indian and the flotsam and jetsam of the *boca costa* region—a jumble of broken backward people festering in the hot banana ports where drink and disease and promiscuity and the immoralities of a dozen dislocated races stalk like black specters through hot restless nights.”

As older divisions withered away from Panama Disease, white managers and agronomists relied on the deskilled labor of migrant Hispanic *mozos*, directed by West Indian skilled laborers. Hispanic nationalists combined anger of United Fruit’s neo-colonial dominance with racist resentment of Black West Indians, with strikes, race riots, and political movements aimed at immigration restriction. Political leaders and public intellectuals decried racial threats posed by West Indian Blacks, while differentiating the United States from United Fruit. United Fruit adapted to restrictions on Black immigration, employment and migration to new Pacific banana zones, which brought about the nationalization of the banana industry with overwhelmingly Hispanic workforces, in accordance with transnational American values of white supremacy.

### 6.4 Conclusion: Drawing Hemispheric Color Lines

A 1928 renewal of a petition by the Universal Negro Improvement Association to the League of Nations described the transnational scale of Black oppression. In the U.S., where Blacks were one-tenth of the population, “we are often abused, maltreated and murdered without redress,” while in Central America, Blacks working for United Fruit “have been led into ambush, and have been killed by native Indians.” Blacks were a despised racial minority across the

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1324 Carlton Beals, *Banana Gold*, 139-140
1325 Renewal of Petition of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities’ League to The League of Nations September 1928 Office of the President General Universal Negro Improvement Association, MG 442, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York
American Mediterranean, facing racist violence and disenfranchisement in the U.S. and Latin American enclaves of U.S. capitalism. The globalization of corporate capitalism and the reengineering of populations to meet the ever-growing labor needs of tropical agribusiness, led to important social changes that would ultimately sweep away the colonial order.

Transnational currents of labor migration brought hundreds of thousands of Mexicans to the U.S., becoming a labor force for Western agribusiness. Thousands of West Indians immigrated to the Northeastern U.S, the fusion of Afro-American and Afro-West Indian cultures shaping the modernist Black ascetic of the Harlem Renaissance, from Black Nationalism jazz music. A despised minority, Blacks were elevated above mestizo Hispanics, Central American mozos and Mexican braceros, in the labor hierarchies of Anglo-American capitalism. Modernizing elites in the Spanish Caribbean and Central America and in the southern U.S. both embraced eugenics as a form of racial sanitation that built on campaigns against yellow fever, hookworm and malaria. Boom and bust cycles of capitalism and agribusiness sparked backlashes against needed but unwanted immigrants. U.S. eugenicists decried demographic changes resulting from immigration of Mexicans and West Indians. Their efforts helped to nationalize racial segregation and facilitated Southern support for extreme eugenic measures, most notably sterilization. Nationalists in Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean embraced aspects of eugenics, linking anger at the neo-colonial dominance of United Fruit with racism against Black West Indians. During the post-war era, multi-racial political coalitions would emerge that would challenge the power of United Fruit in Central America, as Afro-American and Latino Civil Rights movements challenged racial segregation in the southern U.S.
Figure 6.1 "Citrus camps" for Mexican laborers before and after the construction of "model towns"

Report of the California Commission of Immigration and Housing (1915)
Figure 6.2 Citrus fumigation with Bordeaux spray in Florida

Figure 6.3 Haitian workers moving to the dock of Punta Tabaco to be repatriated
La United Fruit Sugar Company: Un caso del dominio imperialista en Cuba (1976)
Figure 6.4 Domingo Francisco Ramos, leader of the Pan-American eugenics movement *Cubans of Today* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1919)

Figure 6.5 "Afro-Cubans played a drum" Fernando Ortiz, *Hampa afro-cubana: Los negros brujos* (Madrid: Librería de Fernando Fé, 1906)
Figure 6.6 Map of Status of Eugenical Sterilization in the U.S. with the number of operations performed by 1935. California, with 9,997 leads the U.S. Harry Laughlin Further Studies on the Historical and Legal Development of Sterilization in the United States (1936)
Harry Laughlin Papers, Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri
Figure 6.7 Sterilization performed at the Sonoma State House, California, 2,850 Child-Minded Inmates Sterilized to Prevent the Spread of Idiocy
San Francisco Chronicle, August 1934, E.S. Gosney Papers and Records of the Human Betterment Foundation, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California
Figure 6.8 Delegates to the first Pan-American Eugenics Conference, Havana, Cuba, December 1927

Actas de la primera Conferencia Panamericana de la Eugenesia y Homicultura de las Republicas Americanas La Habana, 21-23 de Diciembre, 1927. George A. Smathers Library, University of Florida, Gainesville
Figure 6.9 *Banana Wilt or Panama Disease; Gros Michel banana attacked by Fusarium cubense.*

Claude Wardlaw, *Diseases of the Banana and of the Manila Hemp Plant* (1935), Orbach Science Library, University of California-Riverside
Figure 6.10 Aerial view of a banana plantation showing areas abandoned due to Panama disease. Claude Wardlaw, Laurence MacGuire, Panama Disease of Bananas: Reports on Scientific Visits to the Banana Growing Countries of the West Indies, Central and South America (H.M. Stationary Office, 1929) Orbach Science Library, University of California-Riverside

Figure 6.11 Lancetilla Experiment Station, Tela, Honduras. View of office building, propagating shed, plant shed and greenhouse, July 1926. United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University, Boston
Figure 6.12 Railroads near Tela, Honduras
United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University, Boston.
Figure 6.13 *Harvesting bananas near Puerto Castilla, Honduras, 1925.*
United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University, Boston.
Figure 6.14 Photo of Central American mozos in the Puerto Castilla hospital, "a parade of sadness and disease—of short stature, lemon colored skins, high cheek bones, with soft brown eyes possessing a Mongolian slant."
José Lopez, The Lower Class of Tropical American Patients, United Fruit Company Medical Department Nineteenth Annual Report (1930)

Figure 6.15 "A Brief Description of an Extensive Injury"
United Fruit Medical Department Fifteenth Annual Report (Boston: United Fruit Company, 1925), Matas Medical Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana
Figure 6.16 "Incised Abdominal Wound-Case Report"
United Fruit Medical Department Fifteenth Annual Report (Boston: United Fruit Company, 1923), Matas Medical Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Figure 6.17 "Negroes, you can receive a free passage to this site—simply get in touch with any Latin American"
Photostats of fliers enclosed in Willard Beaulac to State Department July 16, 1924. Vol 126 RG 84, U.S. National Archives II, College Park, Maryland
Figure 6.18 Floods in Talamanca valley, Costa Rica-Panama border, 1926-27. "New stream through old creek channel, Line 100 Sipuro December 1927."
United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University, Boston

Figure 6.19 “Trestle bridge between Suretka & Lari, Damage near end, January 2, 1927.
United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University, Boston.
Figure 6.20 Overhead spraying system delivering Bordeaux spray, "Overhead irrigation is one of the most significant developments. without the plume-like spray above the banana field there would be fewer, smaller plants."

7 CONCLUSION: THE AMERICAN MEDITERRANEAN AND GLOBAL CAPITALISM

The completion of the Old Spanish Trail highway, alongside United Fruit’s entry into the Pacific, came at the climax of a decade of spectacular but starkly unequal economic growth. In April 1929, business and political leaders gathered in St. Augustine, Florida to dedicate the final zero mile-stone marker of the Old Spanish Trail, hewn from coquina (seashell-stone) used in the town’s Spanish fortresses. The ceremony featured a reenactment of Ponce de León’s 1519
discovery of Florida. In the shadow of Henry Flagler’s pseudo-Spanish Gilded Age hotels, the ceremony epitomized romantic fantasies of the past and the superficial opulence of the present that masked an impending crisis.

In Florida, battered by hurricanes that burst the state’s land bubble, a new crisis emerged when the Mediterranean fruit fly first appeared in April 1929, spreading across the belt of citrus groves in the central part of the state. Larvae fed upon pulp of host fruits, reducing them to inedible mass. In California, where the Mediterranean fruit fly led to quarantine regulations on tropical plants from Hawai’i, including banana plants, citrus growers and state authorities established quarantine inspection to prevent the entry of Florida fruits. An eighteen-month campaign eradicated the fruit fly and saved Florida’s citrus industry, at a cost $7.5 million, with 300,000 pounds of lead arsenate sprayed and thousands of bushels of citrus destroyed.

As Florida authorities eradicated the fruit fly, road builders celebrated the completion of the Old Spanish Trail highway. Seven automobiles left San Diego, California in a motorcade on March 23, 1929, arriving in St. Augustine after a journey of 2,743 miles; a return motorcade of 100 cars left on October 2, less than a dozen of which reached California. In the weeks before the Wall Street Crash, the motorcade passed through the poorest parts of the United States, vast areas left behind by a decade-long economic boom that concentrated wealth in the hands of a small elite. By 1929 more than 60% of families earned less than $2,000 a year--the poverty line--

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1326. Old Spanish Trail Monument at St. Augustine” Audit and Final Report of the Old Spanish Trail (1929) Ponce de Leon Celebration and Dedication of the Zero Marker of the Old Spanish Trail April 2-4, 1929 St. Augustine, Florida, George A. Smathers Library
1329. Old Spanish Trail Motorcade to California, October 2-14, 1929 Central Library Texana Room, San Antonio Public Library

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and 40% earned less than $1,500.\(^{1330}\) Deindustrialization was felt in textile mill towns of New England, important early consumers of bananas, as factories relocated to low-wage states in the U.S. South.\(^{1331}\) On Wall Street frenzied stock market speculation masked economic slowdown and rising consumer debt. Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929 the worst stock market crash in U.S. history signaled the beginning of the Great Depression.

### 7.1 The Great Depression and United Fruit’s Banana Empire

One of the corporate trusts large enough to withstand the effects of the Depression, United Fruit saw its profits plummet from $44.6 million in 1929 to $6.2 million by 1932, and its stock sell for one-tenth of its pre-Depression value.\(^{1332}\) Sales reached an all time high of 65 million bunches in 1930, due to the banana’s continuing importance as a staple of the poor. New York newspapers reported the story of how eight jobless young women, all sharing a tenement, survived for more than a month on a diet of five bananas a day, cut into eight equal portions, to be eaten as one, two or three meals.\(^{1333}\)

Seeking escape from turbulent economic times, in 1932, United Fruit president Victor Cutter vacationed with his family at Miami Beach’s Pancoast Hotel. Publicizing his remarks critical of city leaders for their neglect of port facilities, the *Miami Herald* boasted that the head of a company “whose ships carry pleasure seekers on cruises to every part of the Western Hemisphere,” vacationed in Miami Beach. “While on the sands of the beach he sees the great white ships of his company plying their course through the Gulf Stream on their way to the

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\(^{1330}\) Pennsylvania State Emergency Relief Board, The Unemployment Relief Digest Vol. 1-2 xxii; Social Science Vol. 14 January 1939, 52; Cooper’s International Journal, Vol. 44-52 (1934), 62


\(^{1333}\) Charles Morrow Wilson, *Empire in Green and Gold*, 248-249
romantic ports of the West Indies and South America. These ships, returning, are laden with the fruits which supply the principle markets of the civilized world.” A lifelong Republican, Cutter endorsed President Herbert Hoover’s promises of recovery. In Boston, as “earnings hit a toboggan slide,” Cutter and his New England associates were pushed aside by Sam Zemurray, the Russian Jewish “Ex-peddler of ripe bananas” who became United Fruit’s largest shareholder after the sale of his Cuyamel Fruit Co. In his thick Eastern European-Southern accent that met with ridicule, he declared to a boardroom of New England executives, “You gentlemen have been fucking up this business long enough. I am going to straighten it out.”

United Fruit sought to revive business by modernizing its aging fleet. Using the mail subsidy of the 1928 Jones-White Merchant Marine Act, it ordered its first ships built in U.S. shipyards, with the U.S. government subsidizing 75% of construction. The SS Talamanca and Segovia were launched at Newport News, Virginia in August 1931, from the shipyards that built the U.S. Navy’s Great White Fleet. (Figure 7.1) First Lady Lou Henry Hoover christened the ships with water from regions of Central America for which the ships were named, in Mayan-style clay bottles. The SS Antigua and Veragua launched from the Bethlehem Steel Co. yard in Quincy, Massachusetts. Each of these 7,000-Ton Mail Ships boasted twin-screw turboelectric engines, reaching speeds of 17 ½ knots, and boasted accommodations for 115 passengers, 14 staterooms with private baths, a library, lounge and reading room, a glass-encased ballroom and

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1334 “Miami Beach Vacation Choice of Ship Owner Victor N. Cutter, President of United Fruit,” Miami Herald March 20, 1932 Box 4, Scrapbook 4, Victor Cutter Papers  
1336 “United Fruit Twin Launching Two Vessels in its Six-Ship Construction Program to Take to Water,” Boston News Bureau August 13, 1931  
1337 John Melville, The Great White Fleet, 138-139
promenade deck and, the most novel and luxurious feature, “a permanent outdoor swimming pool.”

On its maiden voyage from New York to San Francisco in December 1931, the SS *Talamanca* was the first ship to call at mainland South Florida’s first deep-water port, Port Everglades, Fort Lauderdale. The SS *Talamanca, Chiriqui*, and *Antigua* were assigned to the California-Panama run. The *Quirigua, Veragua* and *Peten* (formerly the *Segovia*) began in the New York-Havana-Cristobal-Costa Rica run. When United Fruit abandoned the Limón Division in 1934, the ships were assigned to Puerto Barrios, Guatemala and Puerto Cortes, Honduras, the major banana-loading ports.

Glossy brochures advertised the spacious new ships of the “Great White Fleet.” Passengers exercised in swimming pools, lounged on sun decks and enjoy deck sports “ping pong” and “shuffleboard.’ These were images of white luxury and leisure amidst “glorious sunlight” and “sweet sea breezes from the Caribbean.” Guides featured photos of tropical nature, from Jamaican waterfalls to the mountain lake of Atitlán in Guatemala, alongside scenes of everyday life, a milkman delivers by mule in San José, Costa Rica, a “Indian maiden homeward bound from the public fountain,” and marimba players performing in Mayan *traje* in Guatemala. Taken together, these were familiar tropes of a mañana-land, whose sights and scenes are made accessible for tourists through the technologies of imperialism. Amidst these pre-modern scenes are reminders of spreading modernity, cars passing under the gates of Cartagena’s Torre de Reloj, and parked by Havana’s Cathedral. These were combined with assurances of spatial and

1338-“Two Mail Ships Are Launched-Talamanca and Segovia-Sponsored by rrs. Herbert Hoover in twin Launching in Newport News-Enter Service in December and February, Martine Review Vol. 61 September 1931, 19 Univ. of Michigan Dig. Oct 17, 2009
1340-John Melville, *The Great White Fleet*, 142, 144 This celebratory account ignores the strike
racial segregation for U.S. whites, a couple enjoying “fine modern hostelry” of the Prado Hotel in Barranquilla, Colombia, the lobby of the new Gran Hotel de Costa Rica and Havana’s Casino Nacional, with a game of Jai Lai, linking modernity to white recreation.\footnote{Ships and Ports of the Great White Fleet (United Fruit Company, 1936), 10-12, 24-25, 16}

As United Fruit expanded its fleet, passenger service declined with the rise of air travel. In March-April 1929 Col. Oscar Morales López, a Guatemalan cadet, flew from Galveston, Texas to Mexico City to Guatemala City in a Waco biplane bought with government funds, nicknamed “El Quetzal” for Guatemala’s national bird.\footnote{León Aguilera, Treinta años de El Imparcial, o La lucha de un diario por su independencia (1952)} Pan-American Airways took over the Compañía Mexicana de Aviación, beginning service between Brownsville, Texas to Tampico, Tuxpan, Veracruz and Mexico City.\footnote{Roy Reginald Roadcap, World Airlines Record (R.R. Roadcap & Associations, 1950), 127} Carlos Irigoyen, a Guatemalan who claimed U.S. citizenship, lobbied on behalf of California-based Pickwick Airways. His brother, Juan Irigoyen, announced plans for an aviation company, fearing a Pan-American monopoly would exacerbate the “prejudicial economic effects of monopolistic control of sea and land transport by the United Fruit Company.”\footnote{Arthur Geissler to Secretary of State, September 28, 1929 M-655 roll 12 USNACP} In 1930, Pickwick went bankrupt and Pan-American began flights from Brownsville to Guatemala City, DC-3 planes making the journey in eight hours by the 1940s.\footnote{Earl Parker Hanson, The New World Guide to the Latin American Republics Mexico and Central America (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1943), 16}

\section*{7.2 Racial Fantasies and Nightmares}

The increase in Latin American tourism helped inspire racial fantasies and nightmares among U.S. eugenicists. The 1935-36 California-Pacific International Exposition in San Diego, which aimed to promote business amidst the Great Depression, reused the buildings and grounds of the 1915 Panama-California Expo. A new generation of fair-goers toured reproductions of
Mexican cathedrals and stele of Quiriguá. Federal funds paid for a building modeled after the Mayan Governor’s Palace in Uxmal, Mexico. Standard Oil of California commissioned an Art Deco Tower of the Sun, based on El Castillo pyramid in Chichén-Itzá.\textsuperscript{1346} The commodification of Mayan and Hispanic art did not entail respect for Latin American sovereignty. In 1938, Standard Oil lobbied the U.S. government for sanctions against Mexico after President Lázaro Cardénás expropriated its refineries. After the 1954 coup that ousted democratically elected Guatemalan President Jacobo Árbenz and reversed land reforms opposed by United Fruit, Standard Oil received concessions to drill off Guatemala’s Pacific and Caribbean coasts.\textsuperscript{1347}

The brilliance of Mayan civilization, and its seemingly complete and total collapse, gave rise to racial fears among eugenicists. These were suggested in a paper written by Dr. Edward Pallette, president of the Human Betterment Foundation in Pasadena, California, founded by sterilization advocate E.S. Gosney. A “highly developed culture,” the Mayans “left a record in stone of the number who died each year from ‘black vomit’ or yellow fever, until none was left to longer make the record.”\textsuperscript{1348} Modern medicine had exterminated yellow fever and other diseases “which have, in centuries past, ravaged the civilized world,” but eugenic decay posed new threats. He warned that half of graduates of women’s colleges were unmarried, native-born U.S. whites were out-reproduced by “undesirable and unassimilable stocks,” and “at least 60% of our adult population” was at the intelligence level of adolescents. “The ‘movies’ are supported by the same group, for these people need a great deal of entertainment. Jazz music is all definitely moronic-composers, producers, consumers.”\textsuperscript{1349}

\textsuperscript{1347} Esso received concessions in 1967, World Oil Vol. 167 (Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing Co, 1968)
\textsuperscript{1348} Edward Pallette, “Human Betterment,” \textit{Read at the first general meeting of the California Medical Association at the sixty-sixth annual session, Del Monte, Cal. May 1-5, 1937: 2}
\textsuperscript{1349} Edward Pallette, “Human Betterment,” 7

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civilizational decay, Pallette praised the sterilization law enacted by Nazi Germany. “If German plans along this line are carried out, a superior race will result.”

Members of the Northern California Eugenics Society described degenerate descendants of the Mayans when they visited coffee fincas in Guatemala’s western highlands in 1939, at the height of the ten-year dictatorship of Jorge Ubico. After a flight that afforded vistas of “volcanic cones, over colorful jungle,” they toured a finca and sampled coffee over dinner with the owner, who complained their peons, paid 10-25 cents a day, were being lured away by the higher wages paid by United Fruit. “We have trouble with some Indios who came back from the coast with crazy ideas about wearing shoes.” The achievements of ancient Mayans are described in stark contrast to the poverty of “Central American Indios” who “exhibit the characteristic high fecundity of the Amerid. There is usually a new baby every year.” The author concluded with a warning, “The great Maya civilization crashed because, although the slave case was spared, the eugenically high-powered castes were destroyed to a man, by the Conquistadores. Eugenically speaking we should not be amazed that the Indian, despite deep-seated hatred of the Spaniard, of ‘ladino’ has, in approximately 4 centuries, never produced a leader to throw off their yoke.”

California eugenicists who evoked the fall of the ancient Mayans appealed to anti-Mexican racism, driven by stories about pachuco gangs. One article warned of “Rat-like Marihuana Vendors,” “the Mexicans who came north in the great trek of the twenties” and who were “the first to become jobless in the depression. Ratlike brains among them, familiar with the power of marijuana in Mexico, they turned to that trade here,” one family arrested for selling

1351. “Coffee Coast’s Living Standards,” Eugenic Pamphlets No. 18 (1939) E.S. Gosney & Human Betterment Foundation, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA
1352. “Coffee Coast’s Living Standards,” Eugenic Pamphlets No. 18 (1939)
marijuana cigarettes to schoolchildren. On the back of a pamphlet, a pie-graph depicted a nation darkened by illegal immigration. A narrow white sliver on a black circle depicted the “Law of Differential Birth Rates,” “If one old-time American couple multiply at a 3-child rate, and another, Mexican peon, at a 9-child rate,” the author concluded “their great-grandchildren, provided all live, will be as the white area to the above sector of the black area.” (Figure 7.2)

Racism did not preclude cooperation with Latin American eugenicists. The Human Betterment Foundation praised a sterilization law enacted in Veracruz, Mexico in 1932, the only such law enacted in Latin America, and asked for an English translation. It sent copies of Gosney and Popenoe’s “Sterilization and Human Betterment” to the Mexican Eugenics Society and Costa Rica’s secretary of public health. After the second Pan-American Eugenics Conference in Buenos Aires in 1934, the efforts of Dr. Domingo Ramos to create academic departments of eugenics and homiculture came a step closer to fruition with plans for an institute at the University of Miami, Florida, which would organize teaching and research projects in Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. The Human Betterment Foundation received copies of proceedings from the 1939 Pan-American Child Conference in San José, Costa Rica, a meeting of Latin American eugenicists focused on puériculture. It failed to respond to a request for a tour of its Pasadena facilities by Sra. Esperanza Peña Monterrubio, founder of the

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1353. “Those taken into custody ranged from the grandmother to a young mother who during the trek came across the border as a girl of 7 . . . The District Attorney said this family, according to his detectives, sold as many as 1000 marijuana cigarettes a day. At 25 cents the family’s sales ran $250 a day. “Ratlike Marihuana Vendors, Eugenic Pamphlets No. 16 (1937)
1354. Eugenic Pamphlets No. 16 (1937)
1355. Frank Reid, Asst. Secy. Human Betterment Foundation to Honorable Secretary, State Board of Health, Veracruz Mexico May 26, 1939, Folder 8 Box 10 E.S. Gosney Papers
1356. Frank Reid, Asst. Secy. Human Betterment Foundation to A. Peña Chavaria, San José, Costa Rica, February 9, 1939 Folder 6.16, E.S. Gosney Papers
1357. Preliminary conversation between president Bowman Ashe, Professors and Doctors Pearson and Zamora of the University of Miami and Dr. Francisco M. Fernandez, Past Director and Dr. D.F. Ramos, Delegate, of the Pan-American Office of Eugenics and Homiculture Feb. 9, 1935, D-4-5:8, Harry Laughlin Papers
1358. VII Congreso panamericano del niño San José, CR Circular N. 17 Folder 6 Box 16 E.S. Gosney Papers
Mexican Eugenics Society. This seeming oversight, prompting a letter of apology, suggests how racial barriers in the United States excluded even the most elite Latin Americans.

7.3 **Agribusiness and the Fruits of Capitalism in California**

As eugenicists in California took the lead advocating radical eugenic measures, the state’s powerful agribusiness interests expanded amidst the upheavals of the Great Depression and the repatriation of Mexicans, finding a new source of cheap labor in “Okies,” poor whites fleeing the Dust Bowl of the southern Great Plains. In 1935 the California Department of Agriculture instructed public health officials and police to establish quarantines at border crossings, including the Ocean-to-Ocean Bridge of the Old Spanish Trail over the Colorado River, inspecting migrant families for diseases.

Demand for “Okie” labor was driven by Mexican repatriation. During the 1930s, 400,000 to 2,000,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans were repatriated, voluntarily or forcibly. City police, sheriffs and Department of Labor immigration agents carried out raids and roundups, *levas*, in Mexican *colonias*. José David Orozco, a radio broadcaster in East Los Angeles, the largest Mexican colonia in the U.S., described “women crying in the streets when not finding their husbands,” after roundups. From San Diego-Tijuana to the Rio Grande Valley, the roads along the U.S.-Mexico border were filled with “battered Fords, carrying two or three families and all their worldly possessions, they are drifting back to el terenaso-the big land.”

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1359. Dr. Alberto P. León Secretario General del Departamento de Salubridad Publico, to Frank C. Reid, Ast. Secy. Human Betterment Foundation November 9, 1940 Box 8 Folder 10 E.S. Gosney Papers

1360. Frank J. Taylor, California’s Grapes of Wrath, *Forum and Century* Vol. 102 July to December 1939, 236 The author reports the entry of 285,000 migrants, noting “many thousands have ridden in on freight trains”


1362. Francisco Balderrama, Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 70-71

Impoverished “Okies” glutted labor markets, lowering wages for Mexican, Filipino and Japanese workers. Mexican pickers in the Japanese-operated berry fields of El Monte in eastern Los Angeles County went on strike in 1933, Japanese Issei breaking the strike by mobilizing the labor of women and their Nisei children. In June 1936, 2,500 Mexican *naranjeros*, half of citrus-pickers in Orange County struck for higher wages. The Anaheim police attacked striking female packinghouse workers, one of whom, twenty-nine year-old Virginia Torres of Placentia, bit an officer’s arm, sparking a “Citrus War.” Strikers attacked strikebreakers with “iron bars, clubs and their fists,” pelted them with oranges, and burned the car of a foreman. County sheriff Logan Jackson, an orange grower, deputized over 400 men, mostly private guards of citrus grove, armed with shotguns, clubs and teargas, his orders were to “shoot to kill.” Sweeps by police and immigration officers arrested anyone who looked Mexican, resulting in overflowing jails where guards assaulted prisoners.

Conditions were even worse in northern California, where Dust Bowl migrants labored under conditions typified by the DiGiorgio orchards and vineyards. In 1919, after Atlantic Fruit Company had gone bankrupt in an ill-fated attempt to challenge United Fruit’s monopolies in Costa Rica and Colombia, Sicilian fruit merchant Joseph DiGorgio had bought 5,845 acres of saline scrubland north of Arvin, California, in the San Joaquin Valley. He obtained water by drilling wells. The DiGorgio Fruit Co. grew to own 50 miles of farmland, producing tomatoes and citrus in Florida, peaches, plums, pears and grapes in the Santa Clara and San Joaquin

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1364. Charles Wollenberg, “Race and Class in Rural California: The El Monte Berry Strike of 1933,” *California Historical Quarterly* Vol. 51 No. 2 (Summer 1972), 155
valleys of California. After Prohibition DiGorgio expanded their vineyards, becoming the largest grape-growers in the U.S.\footnote{Peter’s Tomato Farm Sold: DiGorgio Fruit Corporation. . .,” Fruit Trade and Produce Record, Vol. 66 January 12, 1922: 7; California Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin, Vol. 546-560 (1932), 100}

In the plum orchards of Yuba City, north of Sacramento, owned by DiGorgio Fruit Co. through the Earl Fruit Co. “a few skilled Orientals” received the highest wages, Mexicans were paid 35 cents per hour, while “the ‘bottom of the heap’ workers were poor whites living in tents,” paid 30 cents. A quickly suppressed strike in Yuba City in May 1939 inspired John Steinbeck’s \textit{Grapes of Wrath}.\footnote{Walter J. Stein, California and the Dust Bowl Migration (Wesport, Conn.: Greenwood Press 1973), 270} Through its portrayal of the Joads, a family of displaced Okies, the novel elicited sympathy for agricultural laborers by portraying them as heartland Americans. The release of \textit{Grapes of Wrath} prompted Carey McWilliams to collect his journalistic exposes on Mexican farm labor in Southern California into the \textit{Factories in the Field} book series.

Another, less direct, depiction of the Depression came when audiences at the Fox Theater, a Spanish Colonial Revival movie palace in Riverside, California were treated to a technician’s preview of \textit{Gone with the Wind}.\footnote{Steve Wilson, \textit{The Making of Gone With The Wind} (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2014), 248} The film glamorizing the Old South first previewed in a citrus belt town that foreshadowed the future of the southern Sun Belt. Suburban shopping districts and spacious homes with manicured lawns hid Mexican “jim-towns,” a term evoking Jim Crow, used by Carey McWilliams to refer to Mexican \textit{colonias} “clusters of bizarre shacks” that stretched “from San Diego to Santa Barbara,” separated by road and railroad track, vulnerable to floods and downwind of pesticides.\footnote{Carey McWilliams, \textit{Southern California: An Island on Land} (New York: Duell, Sloane & Pearce, 1946), 218}  

Carleton Beals, the radical journalist who traveled across Mexico and Central America, upon returning to his native Southern California in 1939 visited the National Orange Fair in San
Bernardino. Hollywood royalty was on display, “manikins of Joan Crawford and Marlene Dietrich lolling in the lawn chairs among garden paths laid out with lemons and grapefruit. Pretty-boy Clark Gable in neat white flannels and an open-throat shirt under fake orange trees glistening with two large golden globes.” The exhibits showed “gorgeous taste, and yet such hybrid mixtures that it was garish, a bit crude, lacking in pure form and subtlety, devoid of finesse, largely boosterism run amuck,” which, as Carey McWilliams surmised, was “a rather good description of Southern California.” Raised in Pasadena, Beals bemoaned that, compared to the oranges of his youth, the fruit at the Fair “has lost just a bit of its half-wild pungency and its virile resistance—the tang has turned to juice and sugar.” This account of oranges conveyed the transformation of California, from a frontier into suburbs whose gilded prosperity concealed striking racial and economic disparities.

7.4 Specters of Slavery in the South

Boosterism run amuck was on display at the Atlanta premier of *Gone with the Wind*, on December 15, 1939, as 2,000 people filled the Loew’s Theater on Peachtree Street, decorated as one of the film’s Greek Revival plantation homes. Junior Leaguer Margaret Palmer, whose figure confirmed most closely to Vivian Leigh, wore Scarlett O’Hara’s costume at a *Gone with the Wind* Ball. Author Margaret Mitchell, expelled from the League as a youth for dancing a Jazz Age Parisian street dance, did not attend the Ball but declared: “It was a great thing for Georgia to see the Confederates come back.” Four elderly surviving Confederate veterans were guests of honor. The film’s Black stars were barred from attending the premier. In attendance was a

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1372. Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* 225
ten-year old Martin Luther King Jr., who sang in a “Negro Boys’ Choir,” from his father’s Ebenezer Baptist Church, dressed as plantation slaves, posing for photos atop bales of cotton.\footnote{Michael Larry Dyson, \textit{I May Not Get There with You: The True Martin Luther King Jr} (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000). 307-308}

\textit{Gone with the Wind} epitomized the mythology of the “Lost Cause” a celluloid fantasy of a white master class of graceful belles, dashing gentlemen, charming rouges, and loyal and trustworthy slaves. As Hollywood romanticized the Confederacy, a new form of slavery was reintroduced in parts of the U.S. South. Following the 1928 Okeechobee hurricane, the Florida legislature had created a flood control district, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers drafted plans for floodways, control gates and levees.\footnote{U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, \textit{Herbert Hoover Dike, Major Rehabilitation: Environmental and Impact Statement} (2005); Bill Gregware, Caroll Gregware, \textit{Guide to the Lake Okeechobee Area} (Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, 1997), 24} Construction began on the Herbert Hoover Dike in 1930 and sawgrass wetlands were transformed into sugar plantations of the U.S. Sugar Corporation of Clewiston, Florida. Desperate Depression-era Blacks were recruited to cut sugarcane, paid less than $3 a day for ten-hours (the cost of food and supplies was deducted from paychecks), and kept locked in at night. Those who tried to leave were threatened with violence. In November 1942, a federal grand jury indicted the manager and three superintendents of U.S. Sugar, with the owner of a Florida turpentine plantation were prosecuted for violations of the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery.\footnote{Alec Wilkinson, \textit{Big Sugar: Cane Seasons in the Fields of Florida} (Knopf Doubleday Publishing, 1992), 142; Margaret G. Wilson, \textit{Florida’s Labor System: A Symposium} (Miami, Florida International University, 1991), 65}

The first workers imported by U.S. Sugar were Bahamians, who left for better-paid and less-dangerous work on truck farms and citrus groves. To find replacements, the company turned to the British West Indies, where immigration restrictions and repatriations of workers from Panama, Cuba and Central American banana zones led to worsening economic and social conditions, sparking labor unrest. In May 1938 police attacked striking workers of the West
Indies Sugar Co. after strikers marched on the offices of the mill manager, killing four
demonstrators, including “an old Negro woman [who] was bayonetted to death.”
Desperate colonial officials signed a guest worker agreement. The first Jamaican workers, 800 cane-cutters,
arrived in Florida in 1943, housed in tents surrounded by barbed wire, working under bosses
with rifles and blackjack whips, forced to sign a “Jim Crow creed” to abide by segregation.
To meet wartime needs, U.S. Sugar imported 8-10,000 contract workers from Jamaica, St. Lucia
and Barbados to Florida. Objections by Jamaica’s new Black-majority Labour government in
1944 were overruled after officials in Barbados offered to fill the quota.

Colonial officials viewed guest worker agreements as a way to address discontent.

Construction on the Panama Canal’s Third Locks, begun in 1939, employed West Indian workers. President Anulfo Arias known as the “criollo Führer” for his racist ideology of
Panameñismo promulgated a 1941 constitution depriving descendants of West Indians and
Chinese of citizenship. Arias’ pro-Axis sympathies led to his removal in a U.S.-backed coup,
and the Panamanian legislature struck down the Arias Madrid constitution but the U.S. entry into
World War II brought construction of the Third Locks to a halt.

After the Japanese conquest of the Philippines left 2100 acres of abacá in Changuinola,
Panama was the only planting in the Americas. United Fruit signed a contract with the Defense
Supplies Corporation, to plant an initial 20,000 acres and company engineers designed a

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1380 Amsterdam News, November 6, 1943; Cindy Hahamotovich, “In America, Life is Given Away,” Jamaican
Farmworkers and the Making of Agricultural Immigration Policy” in Catherine McNickol Stock, The Countryside in
1381 Felipe Juan Escobar, Arnulfo Arias o El credo panameñista 1930-1940. Eensayó psico-patológica de la
política (1946); Patricia Pizzurno Gelós, Estudios sobre el Panamá republicano, 1903-1989 (Manfer, 1996) 227;
Alfredo Fernando Reid Ellis, Las causas y las consecuencias de la migración, política y cultural en al área del
Caribe y de América Central durante siglo xx (Paris: Ediciones Publibook, 2004), 136
1382 Andrew Zimbalist, John Weeks, Panama at the Crossroads: Economic Development and Political Change in
the Twentieth Century (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1991), 14-15
decortication mill at Almirante, separating fiber by machine. The abacá boom provided employment to the remaining West Indians, residing on lands abandoned to Panama disease in Limón and Bocas del Toro, Panama. (Figure 7.3) Labor needs were met by an influx of 6,000 Central American workers and their families, mostly from Honduras, with United Fruit chartering airplanes that flew from San Pedro Sula to Sixaola and Changuniola.

In the U.S. West, the use of Jamaican contract workers met with little success. Some 1,300 Jamaicans picked oranges in Southern California in 1945, working alongside Mexican braceros, Navajo Indians and German POWs, but were judged unsatisfactory workers. The Placentia Orange Growers Association reported, “Jamaican Negroes proved quite troublesome, very poor pickers an disinclined to turn out the work.”

The United Farm Workers, a Mexican-American and Filipino union in California, expanded into the Eastern U.S. when it organized Afro-American orange pickers in the Florida groves of Coca-Cola owned Minute Maid in 1972. The following year, a United Farm Workers drive to unionize Caribbean sugar cane-cutters in Florida was defeated. Journalists found workers housed “in bare wooden structures that have no toilets or running water. The communal toilet is more than 100 yards away.” One worker explained, “If the” supervisor sees us talking to a white man, we get sent home, sure’ said one cutter in a half-whisper. ‘We complain about the food here-we get sent home,’ the worker continued, ‘we say we want more

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1383 Charles Morrow Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 290-291
1384 Philippe Bourgeoisie, Ethnicity at work: divided labor on a Central American banana plantation, 188-191; Clyde S. Stephens, Bosquejo Historico de la Provincia de Bocas del Toro, Panama/Outline of History of the Province of Bocas del Toro, Panama (Eustis, Fl: S.P.S publications, 2008), 78-79
1385 Placentia Orange Growers Association, Minutes of May 17,1945 232 Placentia Orange Growers Association Papers, California State University, Fullerton
1386 “Chavez Signs Florida’s First Farm Pact,” New York Times, March 1, 1972
money for the cane, we get sent home.” In an age of Civil Rights, the specter of slavery survived in Florida’s sugar industry and its brutal exploitation of Caribbean migrant laborers.

7.5 The Banana Empire in the Post-War World

The United Fruit Company’s ambitions plans for economic expansion in the post-World War II era were exemplified by a new advertising campaign, a rhumba-inspired jingle “Chiquita Banana,” composed by ad executives hired by Fruit Dispatch and sung by Patty Clayton. The ad first aired in 1944, when it received 376 plays each day. The lyrics, “I’m Chiquita Banana and I’ve come to say/Bananas come to ripen in a certain way. . .But bananas like the heat of the very, very tropical equator/so you should never put bananas in the refrigerator,” depicted middle-class kitchens equipped with electrical appliances, far removed from the pushcart peddlers of “Yes we have no bananas.” Spanish-Cuban Xavier Cugat, who led the orchestra at the Waldorf Astoria, recorded a version. Cartoonist Dik Brown created “Miss Chiquita,” an animated banana based on Portuguese-born Brazilian samba singer and dancer Carmen Miranda, Hollywood’s highest paid actress by 1945, due to her performance in a series of musicals, that, despite being poorly received in South America, reflected clumsy attempts at Pan-Americanism.

On Columbus Day, 1944, the Escuela Agrícola Panamericana officially opened in a highland valley of the Río Yeguare, fifty miles from Tegucigalpa. The school had 140 students from Honduras, Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. The Director was United Fruit’s chief agronomist, Dr. Wilson Popenoe. This school epitomized Pan-Americanism, the elite-led modernization of Latin America under U.S. tutelage. United Fruit adapted to the Good Neighbor Policy, renouncing

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1388 Charles Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 185, Mary Cross, A Century of American Icons: 100 Products and Slogans from the 20th century (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 2002), 95
1389 Charles Wilson, Empire in Green and Gold, 198
U.S. intervention in Latin America, while backing reliable dictators. Samuel Zemurray’s philanthropic endeavors extended to the Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University in New Orleans, directed by his daughter, archaeologist Doris Zemurray Stone.\footnote{International Director of Anthropologists Sec. 1 Western Hemisphere (National Research Council, Washington D.C., 1940), 148; Mary Ann Levine, “Creating Their Own Niches: Career Styles Among Women in Americanist Archaeology between the Wars” Cheryl Claassen ed. Women in Archaeology (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 26-28}

As U.S. political and corporate elites planned a post-war world, dramatic political changes were sweeping across the American Mediterranean. World War II and the fight against Nazism discredited scientific racism and brought to the forefront contradictions between U.S. ideals of democracy and treatment of racial minorities, serving as the catalyst for the Afro-American Civil Rights Movement. A wave of popular revolutions across Latin America mobilized the masses and challenged the power of United Fruit.

In Costa Rica, the Communist Party grew after the 1934 banana workers strike and held cabinet positions under President Rafael Calderón Guardía (1940-44), who broke with the coffee planters who had backed his rise. Otilo Ulate, who, as a journalist, published articles criticizing United Fruit and their West Indian Black workers, defeated Calderón in the 1948 election, but was denied victory by the legislature. José Figueres Ferrer, a coffee planter and self-styled “farmer socialist,” raised a force of 700, mostly Nicaraguan exiles, defeating the 300-strong Costa Rican army and Communist militia in a civil war that lasted forty-four days, leaving 2,000 dead.\footnote{Kyle Longley, The Sparrow and the Hawk: Costa Rica during the Rise of José Figueres (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1997); Ivan Molina Jiménez, “El resultado de las elecciones en Costa Rica: Una revisión a la luz de nuevos datos” Revista Historia de América No. 130 enero-junio 2002} Coming to power in the nation’s most violent civil war, Figueres abolished the army, nationalized the banking system, guaranteeing public education, expanding voting rights and carrying out land and labor reforms. Elected to a second term as candidate of a new National Liberation Party in 1953, Figueres criticized United Fruit’s concessions, which, as Gonzalo
Facio, head of Costa Rica’s legislative assembly, pointed out, were “based on the distrust of large interventionist Companies towards the governments of underdeveloped countries.”

After the 1954 coup in Guatemala, Figueres softened his rhetoric and emphasized his anti-communist credentials. To weaken the Communist-led banana workers union, in 1953 Figueres’ administration granted Costa Rican citizenship to West Indians of Limón province, overturning laws that Blacks from in the interior and the Pacific.

In Guatemala, a popular front alliance of liberals and communists led to an “October Revolution” which overthrew President Jorge Ubico in 1944. President Juan José Arevallo, an advocate of spiritual socialism, enacted labor laws that were resisted by coffee planters, who mobilized in defense of the debt peonage system that bound Mayan Indians to coffee fincas. Banana workers in United Fruit’s Tiquisate division on the Pacific coast organized a union that spread to the Caribbean coast, where descendants of West Indians played leading roles.

Banana workers helped elect Jacobo Árbenz, a left-leaning military officer. The son of a Swiss-German father nicknamed el Chelón (the big blonde) by his largely mestizo and indigenous supporters, Árbenz signed a land reform law in 1952, redistributing to landless peasants and former banana workers large tracts of company-owned lands left vacant through the flood-fallow system used to contain Panama disease. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had served as United Fruit’s chief lobbyist. His younger brother, CIA director Allen Dulles was on United Fruit’s board.

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1392 Gonzalo Justo Facio to José Figueres, April 6, 1953 Fondo Documental Caja 184 Ex. 520 No. 17 1952-1954, Archivo Nacional de Panamá
1393 Trevor Purcell, Banana fallout: class, color and culture among West Indians in Costa Rica (Los Angeles, CA: Center for African-American Studies, University of California-Los Angeles, 1993), 45-50
1395 Walter Lefebre, Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1993), 58-60, Stephen Streeter, Managing the Counterrevolution: The United States and Guatemala, 1954-
In the heightened atmosphere of the Cold War, in June 1954, the CIA authorized a military coup that overthrew Árbenz and reversed land reform. Following the coup, more than 1,000 workers were massacred at the Finca Jocotán on the Pacific coast, while in the Caribbean banana town of Morales United Fruit’s head foreman machine gunned over two dozen union leaders, including Afro-Guatemalan congressman Alaric Bennett.\textsuperscript{1396} The coup led to a series of unstable military regimes that set the country on the path to Central America’s most violent civil war, which lasted from 1961 to 1996 and left over 200,000 dead, reaching its height in the early 1980s with the genocide of indigenous Mayans.

In Honduras, Tiburcio Carías Andino became President in 1933, in a campaign financed by United Fruit. The presidency of Carías was the longest period of continuous rule in Honduras’ history. In 1949, his successor Juan Manuel Gálvez, a former United Fruit lawyer granted the company a generous new twenty-five-year contract. The relatively weak Honduran government did not outlaw all opposition parties and Gálvez enacted labor reforms. In May 1954, wildcat strikes in Tela, Puerto Cortes, and La Ceiba spread to plantations, as over 100,000 banana workers struck.\textsuperscript{1397} After Gálvez ignored their request to send the Army, United Fruit agreed to a wage increase. In September, rains from Tropical Storm Gilda flooded Río Ulúa banana farms of the Tela Railroad Company, which fired over 10,000 workers.\textsuperscript{1398} Natural disasters that had shaped the rise of the agribusiness empire of United Fruit helped to bring about its decline, as the banana empire struggled to adjust to a post-colonial world.

\textsuperscript{1396} Greg Grandin, \textit{The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War} (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 66-67
\textsuperscript{1397} Richard Allen LaBarge, \textit{La Huelga de la Costa Norte: An Economic Analysis of the 1954 Strike Against the United Fruit Company in Honduras} Paper presented to the Fourteenth Southeastern Conference of Latin American Studies, Atlanta, Georgia, 14-15 April 1967
\textsuperscript{1398} Walter R. Davis, Hurricanes of 1954 \textit{Monthly Weather View} 82 (Dec. 1954) 370-373
7.6 Post-Colonial Turn—The End of United Fruit and Jim Crow

As anti-imperialist nationalism spread in Latin America, racial segregation was crumbling in the U.S. The first blow came in *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947), when a U.S. Appeals Court outlawed remedial schools for Mexicans in Orange County, California, not because Mexicans were “white,” as attorneys for the plaintiffs argued, but because the schools violated the equal protection clause by providing inferior facilities, textbooks and courses. Among the plaintiffs were Gonzalo Méndez, a storeowner and ex-orange picker from Chihuahua, Mexico, and his wife Felicitas, daughter of Puerto Ricans who picked cotton in Arizona and oranges in California. She had been racialized as “Mexican” by whites and as black by Mexicans, which earned her the nickname *La Prieta*.1399

In *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) the Supreme Court declared segregated schools “inherently unequal.” Chief Justice Earl Warren cited the “doll study” by of two Howard University psychologists, Dr. Kenneth and Mamie Clark.1400 Kenneth was born in Panama Canal Zone in 1914 to Jamaican parents. Over objections of their father Arthur, a cargo superintendent for United Fruit, his mother Miriam brought her children to New York in 1919, where she worked in a garment factory, residing in a Harlem tenement.1401 Mamie Phipps grew up in relative prosperity in the Jim Crow South, as the daughter of a Arkansas-born mother and an West Indian physician and manager of a heath resort for Black tourists in Hot Springs,

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Arkansas. The Clarks exemplified a generation of intellectuals and activists, shaped the segregated modernity of the American Mediterranean, who shattered assumptions of Black inferiority.

The racial integration of U.S. popular culture was aided by Harry Belafonte’s *Calypso* (1956), the first million selling LP by a single artist. Born in Harlem in 1927, Belafonte’s father worked as a galley cook on United Fruit steamships, and, from 1932 to 1940, he lived with his maternal grandmother in Kingston. The most popular single, “Day-O (The Banana-Boat Song),” a cover of “Day Dah Light,” a Jamaican mento song recorded by calypso musicians from Trinidad, described loading bananas on a night shift. Musicians in the Caribbean had little regard for his watered-down calypso music, but Bellafonte, became the first Black male sex symbols and exemplified celebrity political activism, using his newfound wealth to bankroll the Civil Rights movement.

While the “Banana Boat Song” embedded fantasies of handsome, singing Black stevedores in the popular imagination, mechanization transformed banana unloading. Standard Fruit introduced Panama-disease resistant Giant Cavendish to La Ceiba, Honduras, and received a concession to replant abandoned banana lands in Limón, Costa Rica. After being acquired by Los Angeles-based Castle & Cooke, which owned the Hawaiian Pineapple Co. (Dole), in

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1403. “Harold was Jamaican and like Millie the produce of a mixed-race union. His mother was a black Jamaican, his father a white Dutch Jew who had drifted over to the islands after chasing gold and diamonds, with no luck at all, in the newly formed colonies of West Africa. Harold had grown up just as poor as Millie, but he was making a name for himself as a cook, sometimes in New York restaurants, more often United Fruit Company boats, banana boats, between New York and various Caribbean and South American ports.” Harold Belafonte, Michal Shnayerson, *My Song: A Memoir of Art, Race and Defiance* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 13
1967, Standard Fruit relocated unloading to Gulfport, Mississippi, on Interstate-10 where a new terminal enabled fruit to be loaded onto trucks. In less than a decade, United Brands relocated its unloading operations.\textsuperscript{1406} A 1967 court ordinance ordered the integration of the beaches of the Mississippi Gulf coast, a struggle that led to the “Biloxi wade-ins,” three protests between 1959 and 1963, which saw white mobs attack Black beachgoers. The Garveyite movement, associated with the Black Nationalism of Malcolm X that took root in Northern ghettos, played a key role shaping the Civil Rights movement. Dr. Gilbert Mason, a physician who led the wade-ins, credited a minister involved in the Garveyite movement with instilling the “message of Marcus Garvey about pride in who you are and about the absolute necessity of black entrepreneurship and black economic empowerment.”\textsuperscript{1407}

The Cold War made Jim Crow segregation and the United Fruit Co. political liabilities. After the 1954 Guatemalan coup led to anti-U.S. demonstrations across Latin America, the Department of Justice initiated an anti-trust lawsuit, which concluded in 1958 with United Fruit agreeing to sell off its Guatemalan assets to an “independent fruit company,” a process completed in 1972, with their sale to the California-based Del Monte.\textsuperscript{1408} United Fruit’s fortunes fell further after the 1959 Cuban Revolution, led by Fidel Castro, son of a Spanish\textsuperscript{colono}\ who sold sugar to United Fruit mills, and Che Guevara, an Argentine doctor who fled Guatemala after the fall of Árbenz.\textsuperscript{1409} In 1958, guerillas sacked company sugar warehouses, kidnapped

\textsuperscript{1407} Gilbert Mason, James Patterson Smith, \textit{Beaches, Blood and Ballots: A Black Doctor’s Civil Rights Struggle} (Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2007), 27
\textsuperscript{1409} “One of the legends about Angel Castro [Fidel’s father], widely circulated by an American columnist, was that he had been fired by the United Fruit Company for stealing refined sugar.” Mario Lazo, \textit{Dagger in the Heart: American Policy Failures in Cuba} (New York: Twin Circle, 1970), 110
employees and attempted to levy a tax on every bag on sugar.\textsuperscript{1410} The Castro regime nationalized the mills of United Fruit Sugar, selling sugar to the Soviet Union. The company supported the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, supplying the exile army with two ships and leasing the Tropical Radio station on Swan Island to the CIA to broadcast anti-Castro propaganda.\textsuperscript{1411}

Reeling from setbacks, in 1963, United Fruit launched a $4 million dollar “Miss Chiquita” advertising campaign, marking bananas with a blue and gold sticker bearing an image based on Carmen Miranda. Epitomizing stereotypes of sexualized Latinas, “Miss Chiquita” sold boxes of Cavendish bananas packed by female workers, \textit{empacadoras}.\textsuperscript{1412} Record sales and rising profit margins enabled United Fruit to acquire A&W Root Beer, Baskin N’ Robbins, and the California vegetable firm InterHarvest. Corporate raider Eli Black acquired control of United Fruit, merging it with his AMK Corporation to form United Brands.\textsuperscript{1413}

The United Farm Workers, led by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta, organized Filipinos and Mexicans in DiGorgio vineyards and Salinas valley lettuce fields of InterHarvest, although the citrus-growers of Sunkist Brands resisted unionization.\textsuperscript{1414} A rabbi turned financial speculator who thought of himself as a liberal, Black sought to improve the companies’ image in Latin America, signing a contract with the United Farm Workers, befriending Cesar Chavez, and inviting him to his temple at Passover.\textsuperscript{1415} In 1974, Hurricane Fifi struck Honduras, killing over 8,000 people and

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\textsuperscript{1410} Thomas Paterson, \textit{Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution} (Oxford University Press, 1995), 45
\textsuperscript{1412} For study of Chiquita campaign and interviews with empacadoras, John Soluri, \textit{Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption and Environmental Change in Honduras & the United States}, 161-193
\textsuperscript{1413} “The Rise and Fall of the Big Banana,” \textit{North American Congress on Latin America’s & Empire Report 7} (1973): 36
\textsuperscript{1414} Fears of losing Sunkist advertising prevented the publication of Gloria Steinem’s interview with Cesar Chavez, C. Edwin Baker, \textit{Advertising and a Democratic Press} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014) 47-48
\end{flushright}
flooding all of United Brands’ banana plantations.\footnote{U.S. Department of Agriculture, Fruit Situation (1978) reported 75% of Tela Railroad Co. banana plantings were flooded; the harvest of 1975, 370,000 tons, was the lowest in the history of Honduras, \textit{Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, The World Banana Economy, 1970-1984: Structure, Performance and Prospects}} In 1975, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Committee uncovered a $2.5 million bribe to Honduran President Gen. Oswaldo López Arellano. On February 3, 1975, Black committed suicide by jumping out of a window of his office on the forty-fourth floor of the Pan-American Building in Manhattan.\footnote{“44 Story Plunge Kills Head of United Brands,” \textit{New York Times}, Feb. 4, 1975}

### 7.7 Epilogue

The story of the American Mediterranean and globalized corporate capitalism comes full circle in the age of neo-liberalism. After Eli Black’s suicide, the Cincinnati-based American Financial Group bought into United Brands. In 1984, Carl Linder took control of the company and renamed it Chiquita Brands. A conservative Republican like United Fruit’s founders, Linder accelerated the process of divestiture in a restructuring that returned to the contract farming from the age of Minor Keith. Chiquita abandoned most of its unionized divisions, palm oil plantations in Golfito, and banana plantations around Puerto Armuelles, Panama and Tela, Honduras, where unemployed workers have recently occupied lands. The 30-40,000 banana workers on the Pacific coast of Guatemala labor in near slave-like conditions, working twelve to fourteen-hour days on a contract basis, with substandard housing, non-existent medical services and paramilitaries restricting access to plantations. Between 1997 and 2004 a Chiquita subsidiary in Colombia paid $1.7 million to right-wing paramilitary terrorists, resulting in a $25 million fine from the U.S. Department of Justice.\footnote{Chiquita to Pay $25 million fine in terror case,” ABC News March 15, 2007; Michael Evans, “‘Para-politics’ goes bananas,” The Nation April 2007} A French NGO sued the Chiquita subsidiary Compañía Bananera
Atlántica of Costa Rica for exposing workers to pesticides and using a private militia to intimidate labor organizers.\textsuperscript{1419}

The rise of agribusiness and its role shaping the American Mediterranean challenges narratives that seek to establish a dichotomy between Fordist and post-Fordist, neo-liberal modes of capitalist production, suggesting underlining continuities in the history of globalized corporate capitalism. The dawn of the twentieth century saw the rise of a new form of quasi-industrial agriculture, capable of meeting food needs of millions of people. Agribusiness required the transformation of tropical environments whose complex and volatile ecologies and disease environments both demanded and defied increasingly sophisticated scientific planning, and relied on environmentally unsustainable monoculture and migrant laborers, isolated by legal status, race and language. Agribusiness, tourism and militarism secured U.S. empire across the American Mediterranean. U.S. empire and domestic racial dynamics mutually shaped each other, creating transnational discourses of white supremacy and eugenics that drew hemispheric color lines, even as they reflected social changes that weakened these color lines.

Transnational movements of capital and labor continue to tie together the American Mediterranean. In the U.S. Southeast, which, outside South Florida, had few Hispanics before the 1990s, documented and undocumented immigrants from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Colombia, and Peru meet labor needs of agribusiness, poultry and livestock processing, textile manufacturing, and construction and service jobs in suburban cities like Charlotte, Atlanta, Nashville and post-Katrina New Orleans. In the Sunbelt “New South” of the post-Civil Rights era, where suburbanization has created a new form of de facto racial segregation, Latino immigrants, isolated by language, have proven more exploitable.

\textsuperscript{1419} Chiquita Ingestible Bananas \textit{Peuples Solidaires} March-June 2007
than African-Americans, the region’s traditional low-wage workers. New waves of immigrants from Latin America and Asia have been a driving force behind the growth of the Sun Belt, enclaves of affluence exacerbate divides in the U.S. South, which remains the nation’s poorest region, with large rural areas trapped in poverty and underdevelopment.

Economic growth has narrowed the divide between the global North and global South, but out of all the nations in the tropics, only the East Asian city-states of Singapore and Hong Kong have joined the developed world. Tropical diseases and tropical storms, greatly exacerbated by global climate change, offer compelling explanations for poverty. In the former and present-day “banana republics” of Central and South America, Chiquita, Dole, Del Monte and banana growers’ cooperatives rely on paramilitary “death squads” to intimidate, kidnap and kill labor organizers. Restructuring of the banana industry has left vacuums filled by narcotrafico, cocaine trafficking routes converging in current and former banana ports. In comparatively prosperous Costa Rica and Panama, Blacks in Limón, Almirante, and Colón remain marginalized by poverty and racism. The fledgling democracies of Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador have been decimated by the U.S.’s “War on Drugs.” Young people raised without parents, who immigrated to the U.S., have been recruited by maras gangs, formed in the 1980s by refugees from Central America’s Cold War civil wars and inmates of California’s prison-industrial complex. Global warming has brought devastating droughts and catastrophic floods, pushing small farmers off their lands. Today a new wave of Central American refugees fleeing climate-changed induced food insecurity and the explosion of drug trafficking and gang violence are risking their lives migrating across Mexico to the U.S. border, to be imprisoned in concentration camps, deprived of food and water, with children forcibly drugged and separated from their parents.
In 2015, Jimmy Morales, a YouTube comedian known for his blackface routine, defeated former First Lady Sandra Torres to become elected President of Guatemala, running a right-wing populist campaign of anti-corruption and cultural conservatism, appealing to evangelical voters by opposing abortion and gay rights, and denying the genocidal conduct of Guatemala’s military in the country’s civil war. This election in a small Central American country, receiving limited coverage in the international press, foreshadowed the election of real estate developer and reality-TV star Donald Trump, who defeated former First Lady Hillary Clinton to become President of the United States. Running a right-wing populist campaign of cultural conservatism and white nationalism, Trump has referred to Mexicans as “rapists,” Central American gang members as “violent animals,” and publicly attacked Black athletes protesting police violence.

Discourses of contaminated environments shaped discourses of contaminated races. Immigrants needed as workers but unwanted as citizens have been denigrated as biological and cultural threats. Globalizing capitalism, responsible for unprecedented economic and population growth, has always been driven by boom-and-bust cycles, with spectacular but ephemeral prosperity giving way to realities of environmental degradation and economic underdevelopment. The American Mediterranean of the twentieth century, like that of the twenty-first century, was shaped by the ebb-and-flow of transnational movements of capital and labor in environmentally and economically unsustainable, boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism that give rise to populist-nationalist movements fueled by racism, xenophobia and economic and cultural discontent.
Figure 7.1 First Lady Lou Henry Hoover Christens New Ocean Liners, Launching of the
SS Segovia in 1929 Prints and Photographs Division United State Library of
Congress, Washington, D.C.
Figure 7.2 "The Law of Differential Birth Rate"
_Eugenical News_, No. 16 (1937) E.S. Gosney Papers and Records of the Human Betterment Foundation, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California

Figure 7.3 Laborer on abaca plantation, Changuinola, Panama
_Unifruitco Magazine_, December 1948, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.
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