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*Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College*

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EPHEMERAL HINTERLANDS AND THE  
HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF TRUJILLO,  
HONDURAS, 1525-1950

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

by

Taylor E. Mack

B.A., University of Kansas, 1989

M.A., University of Kansas, 1992

May 1997

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Dr. Miles Richardson taught me much about observing people and their landscape. Dr. Paul Farnsworth taught me almost

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## ABSTRACT

The historical geography of Trujillo, Honduras is told through its changing hinterlands. This dissertation uses world systems to approach and understand the historical geography of Trujillo, however, the focus is on this peripheral area of the world system, rather than on the core. The coast of the western Caribbean experiences economic boom and bust cycles. The periodization of Trujillo's historical geography is based on the city's boom and bust periods, using primary documents from archives in Central America and Spain.

Trujillo's first boom period lasted from its founding in 1525 until 1550, based on gold exports from the interior. During this time many Old World plants and animals were introduced into Honduras through Trujillo. The native population declined rapidly from disease, overwork, warfare, and many simply fled. From 1550 to the 1640s, the people of Trujillo searched for an alternative product to replace gold, largely relying on sarsaparilla and hides, but to no avail. In the 1640s Trujillo suffered its worst pirate attacks, and was slowly abandoned by 1683. From the 1730s until 1782, Trujillo was a major center for contraband trade.

Reoccupied in 1782, Trujillo became a center for colonization, but the Spanish colonists were maladapted to the environment and most of them died. The Black Caribs, deported

from their homeland to the Honduran coast, came in similar numbers but were preadapted to the environment and flourished. The foreland for the port changed as trade opened up with Cuba, Great Britain, and the United States, which would eventually dominate the trade. Banana exports began in the late 1800s, and the United Fruit Company gained the concession to build a railroad to service Trujillo. Banana exports reached a peak in the early 1930s, then fell to almost zero by 1940, as banana diseases struck the plantations. Trujillo may be entering a new boom period based on tourism, but there are plans to build an oil refinery at the port. The growing highway network in Honduras, combined with the movement of the frontier of settlement, may create a more permanent hinterland for Trujillo.

**CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**

Over the nearly five hundred years since the arrival of the first Europeans, Trujillo, Honduras, and its bay have attracted Christopher Columbus, conquistadors, pirates, smugglers, Spanish colonists, foreign merchants, the British Navy, British mahogany cutters, North American fruit companies, the United States Navy, and tourists. During the colonial era port cities, including Trujillo, were of utmost importance, serving to link the New World and Europe. The unusually large natural harbor at Trujillo could hold many sailing ships, and over the centuries the bay has been the site's major attraction. Yet, Trujillo today is a small, peaceful town with few ships stopping at the port on the other side of the bay, and is just beginning to experience its first influx of modern tourism. Starting on the first day I arrived in Trujillo, January 5, 1992, the personality of the city, its ruined fort, the grave of a William Walker, the famous North American filibuster, the two Garífuna barrios, the way that the people sometimes refer to foreigners as *bucanero* or *pirata*, the shipping containers for Dole Bananas, and a host of other characteristics, began to suggest to me that major changes occurred throughout its history and would appear in its historical geography.

Trujillo's history is divided into several periods, delimited in this work by major activities in the hinterland and foreland. The periodization must be understood in the context of the world economy and its effects on Central America, Trujillo, and the port's hinterland. Each period in the historical geography of Trujillo is framed around hinterland change associated with economic boom and bust periods. World and regional events influenced these periods of economic prosperity

and decline that, in turn, affected Trujillo's historical geography. What were the political, economic, ecological and demographic connections that Trujillo had with the rest of humanity, via the world economy? What changes were wrought in the cultural landscape of this port city? To what areal extent did the hinterland of Trujillo change, and how did the demand on the world economy for regional products drive that change? How did the people of Trujillo and Central America react to changes in the world economy? In this study Trujillo, from its founding in 1525 to 1950, is the focus to the "understanding of places within the wider compass of the world-economy" (Taylor 1988: 164).

The peripheral areas of Spanish America are receiving more attention as the historiography of Spanish America has focused on more than just Mexico and Peru, the two most studied areas because of the "political and economic realities of colonial times" (Lovell 1992: xviii-xix). As a backwater of the Spanish Empire, Central America and its many regions cannot be considered as a simplified variation on Mexico's or Peru's colonial experiences, though each had similar institutions (Wortman 1982: xiii; Lovell 1992: xviii). Indeed, most people of the empire lived in similarly backward areas prior to the urban migrations of this century (Wortman 1982: xii; Lovell 1992: xix). To paraphrase W. George Lovell (1992: xi), for every San Juan de Ulua or Havana, for every Portobello or Cartagena, there were scores of Trujillos, minor ports connecting relatively unimportant areas of the empire with the European metropolis. This dissertation examines one such area that was a colonial backwater and its development in the national period since

Independence. Since that first trip in 1992, my study of Trujillo has been motivated by the, in the world of James J. Parson (1954: 5).

"old-fashioned reason that it interested and intrigued me and because it was one of those blank spots on the map and in the literature that seems never to have received much attention. What I found whetted my curiosity and has sent me scurrying back to the library for the answers to many questions which can only be found by the collation of field and documentary evidence."

### **Literature Review**

Historical geographers base their narratives on the sources available to them, relying largely on primary documents as the first for information and data (Lowenthal 1985: 237; Sauer 1941: 13). To tell the story of Trujillo, I have used primary sources for historical information and data about the city<sup>1</sup> to recreate its hinterlands, trade patterns, cultural landscape, and population characteristics. Secondary sources provided context at both the regional and world levels.

The Archivo General de Centro América (AGCA) in Guatemala City is, perhaps, the most important collection of primary documents on northern Central America and Trujillo (Binder 1991: 44). The AGCA has a large collection of documents on Trujillo and Honduras covering much of the colonial era, primarily from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to Independence in 1821. Over the years many documents have been destroyed by bugs, neglect, and pollution, while others have been stolen or lost. During the summer of 1992, I copied the reference numbers and a brief description from the card catalog for some 950 documents purported to be about Trujillo. During subsequent trips (the summer of 1993, 1994, and one week in February 1995), I found another two hundred or so references to Trujillo and its

hinterland in the Guatemalan archive. I examined with greatest care those documents I felt would shed the most light on hinterland development and decline, population characteristics, cultural landscape, and trade patterns, a strategy I continued in other archives.

The largest collection of Spanish colonial documents may be the Archivo General de Indias (AGI) in Seville, Spain. Although it does not have a card catalog like the AGCA, guidebooks are available in the AGI that give a general description of each *legajo*, literally meaning "bundle," each of which contains about a thousand or so sheets of paper. The section for the Audiencia de Guatemala, the colonial administrative unit under which Trujillo fell, contained over eight hundred *legajos*, generally ending around 1800. Using the guidebooks to decide which *legajos* to choose, I slowly scanned each page in search of information on Trujillo. A highlight of my two months at the AGI was the morning I located the original founding document for Trujillo, dated 1525 (Saldaña 1525). After Seville, I spent a week in Madrid seeking some obscure references in the Biblioteca Nacional and the Real Academia de Historia.

The Archivo Nacional de Honduras (ANH) in Tegucigalpa, housed at the birthplace of Francisco Morazán, the national hero of the country, contains a relatively small collection of colonial documents dating from 1606, with a three-volume guide to the contents. There was, however, precious little on Trujillo or its hinterland. Tegucigalpa was a late government center, so it was expected not to have a wide variety of colonial documents on Trujillo. The documents of the post-Independence era, however, were essential to building the historical geography of Trujillo

in the nineteenth century. This section had only been opened to researchers for the first time in 1994, and covered the nineteenth century and some early years of the twentieth century.

Like many archives, the documents of the ANH over the years have suffered deterioration and theft, and the only attempt at organization to date has been to stack documents on shelves according to year. For the first time in its history the ANH has a director trained as an archivist, Licenciado Carlos Maldonado, and he and his staff have begun that difficult task of organizing the archive (see Maldonado 1995). During my ten weeks in the ANH during summer 1994, my strategy was to search the stacks according to decade. Often documents were misfiled from other years, but eventually I covered all years until 1899.<sup>2</sup> The most exciting finds in the ANH were about 800 manuscript booklets of the 1895 census, a count previously unreported, and many original documents surrounding William Walker's capture of Trujillo in 1860, many of which had been forgotten.

In Trujillo are two archives, the Archivo Municipal de Trujillo (AMT) and the Archivo Eclesiástico de Trujillo (AET). In August 1992, many documents of the AMT were found in wrapped bundles with a haphazard organizational system and index that restricted their use. Of particular value were several manuscript censuses and loose documents about the Truxillo Railroad Company. The AET contains mainly wedding, birth, and baptismal records as far back as 1790, but not consistently until after the 1830s. There were also notes and correspondence from the priests of Trujillo starting in the late 1800s, and a manuscript census from 1945. Perhaps the most important historical document in Trujillo is the death certificate of

William Walker, kept under lock for safekeeping. All together, I spent about five weeks in Trujillo between the two archives, though there was little useful material for this study.

Of the published collections of primary documents the most important concerning Trujillo is the three-volume set by the Guatemalan archivist-historian Manuel Rubio Sánchez (1975). These volumes contain transcriptions of many documents from the AGCA, where he was once director, and reprints from published sources. Rubio Sánchez included only the barest analysis of historical events, and totally ignores any geographic analysis. Indeed, in his preface he says that his collection of documents about Trujillo:

*"no se pretende hacer ningún estudio específico ni llegar a conclusiones, sino únicamente una narración cronológica de los hechos que acaecieron en uno de los puertos más importantes de la Real Audiencia de Guatemala (Rubio Sánchez 1975: i).*

(does not try to make any specific study nor arrive at any conclusions, but only [is] a chronological narration of the acts that happened in one of the most important ports of the Real Audiencia de Guatemala.)

The two largest published collections of colonial documents are the classics: *Colección de Documentos Inéditos...del real archivo de Indias* (CDII 1864-1884) consisting of forty-two volumes and the *Colección de Documentos Inéditos...de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar* (CDIU 1885-1932) of twenty-five volumes. Another useful compilation is the seventeen volume *Colección Somoza: documentos para la historia de Nicaragua* (CDHN 1954-1957). These three collections contain many important documents about Trujillo and its hinterland, mostly for the early colonial period. Héctor M. Leyva's (1991) *Documentos coloniales de Honduras* includes several documents relating to Honduras throughout the entire colonial period. Other sources of

published documents are the *Boletín del Archivo Nacional* from the ANH in Tegucigalpa, and the *Boletín del Archivo General de Gobierno* from the AGCA in Guatemala City.

Secondary sources that provided valuable theoretical framework included port studies and regional or general studies.

Most studies on port cities fall within two categories (Broeze 1985: 210). The majority are studies of various aspects of port geography, such as development of the physical facilities, trade statistics and movements of products (Demangeon 1920; Hitch 1926; Kekoni 1932; Seeman 1935; Stevens 1936; Mead 1942; Wilson 1947; Tavener 1950; Morgan 1951; Weigend 1952, 1956; Hance and Van Dongen 1956, 1961; Rodgers 1958; Boschken 1988; Hilling 1988; Hoyle 1988; Fawcett 1989; Friedheim 1989; Hawley 1989; Hilling 1989; O'Connor 1989; Pisani 1989; Ricklefs 1989; Ryan 1989; Slack 1989; McCalla 1990; Charlier 1990-1991; Gilb 1992; Konvitz 1992).

Other port studies analyze the urban position of the port, with port functions and trade in an ancillary role, whereas others completely ignore the role of the port itself (Lewandowski 1975, 1977; Barragán Muñoz 1990; Koide 1990). While all examine ports, few of these investigations deal with methodology for ports or historical geography. Weigend (1958) provided a methodology for researching ports, and while not necessarily historical, some elements are applicable to this dissertation and will be discussed under methodology.

Although most port studies are usually ahistorical, especially those dealing with the transport function in ports (Broeze 1993: 385), some research does take a historical viewpoint. Bird (1957) examined the geography and historical development of London's docks and trade, but concentrated on only

these two aspects. His article of the founding of Australian seaport capitals is also historical, but only looks at their founding, ranging from 1787 for Sydney to Adelaide and Melbourne in 1837 (Bird 1965: 284, 291, 194). Dickson (1965) studied the historical changes of the ports of Ghana because of government policies, changes in trading patterns and changes in commodities.

Hoyle (1967) investigated looked at the changing hierarchies of ports on the East African coast from the first millennium A.D. to the middle of the nineteenth century, analyzing trade patterns, foreland and hinterland links, colonial policy and individual initiatives. Radell and Parsons (1971) researched the historical geography of Realejo, Nicaragua, a colonial port, describing ecological change in the hinterlands, the effects colonial policies had on the development of trade, and finally the demise of the port as the river slowly filled with silt.

Jacob Price's (1974) article on port towns in the late colonial and early national periods of the United States inspired Knight and Liss (1991) to edit their collection on ports of Latin America and the Caribbean. This anthology places the studies in a larger regional and world context, as well as view a "cohesion of economy and culture" (Knight and Liss 1991: 1). Ports included in the volume are Havana (Kuethe 1991; Salvucci 1991), Vera Cruz (Jiménez Codinach 1991), Cartagena (Grahm 1991), Buenos Aires (Socolow 1991), the ports of Guadaloupe (Pértotin-Dumon 1991), Saint Domingue (Geggus 1991), Jamaica (Higman 1991), and Brazil (Russell-Wood 1991). All of these articles focus on the port function of these towns, and, although they largely have an economic focus, they also incorporate geography, politics, population, and trade.

Regional studies include archaeological reports, ethnohistorical studies, and histories and historical geographies of Trujillo, nearby areas, and Honduras. The one history of Trujillo is for a popular Honduran audience, and while well written, does not analyze the city's history in terms of the world-economy (Cavero Olaya 1975). Archaeological studies of the north coast of Honduras that included Trujillo were written by Stone (1941) and Strong (1935; 1948). The pre-Hispanic archaeology of the Trujillo areas is dominated by the works of Paul Healy. He has investigated caves in the area and discovered objects suggesting Pre-Classical occupation and trade of a people developing more like Mesoamerican cultures than those of Lower Central America, from 1200-600 BC (Healy 1974a: 436; 1974b: 75).

Other sites revealed contact with Mayans of the Ulua Plain in the Late Classic period, yet remaining outside of Mesoamerica itself (Healy 1975: 62,66,68,; 1978a: 164). Healy also found a site unlike others in the area, with a highly organized arrangement of mounds and a moat, which may possibly be the Nahua-speaking community of Papayeca mentioned by Cortés (Healy 1978b: 27).

Several ethnohistorical studies of the north coast and interior have included Trujillo. Davidson (1991) placed Trujillo within the limits of the Pech (Paya) culture region for the sixteenth century. Lara Pinto (1991), however, has emphasized the possibility of a region dominated by Nahua-speaking Indians.

Ethnohistorical studies of the Garífuna include Trujillo, the site from which they dispersed through the shores of Honduras, Guatemala, and Belize (Davidson 1979, 1983, 1984; González 1986).

The only major historical work for any part of the north coast

is Davidson's (1974) study of the historical geography of the Bay Islands, just off the coast of Honduras. Many events that occurred in the Bay Islands affected Trujillo, and vice versa.

Several major histories of Central America provided the basis for the regional linkages Trujillo historically had with the rest of the isthmus in terms of political and economic connections. The basis of Woodward's (1985: iii) history is that the five republics (not counting Belize and Panama, a practice of all of these authors) from the colonial period to the 1980s, have a potential national unity, but that their political disunity has so far limited their social and economic unity, and expressed in the books subtitle "a nation divided". The Tulane historian strived to represent general trends in the region's history "while also explaining the major political, social, and economic events of the region's history" (Woodward 1985: iv). Perez-Brignoli (1989: xiv-xv), a historian from Costa Rica, presented "a concise overall panorama" of Central America's history from the beginning of the colonial era to the present, and "written for the broader public, conceived as a study that will help them to understand contemporary events in these uncertain times." Weaver (1994) provided a historical background to Central America's political economy. He rejected the notion that all things "good" or "bad" in Central America came from outside influence, and examined the internal dynamics of Central American politics and how those decisions affected the social formation of the region (Weaver 1994: 1-2). Like Woodward and Perez-Brignoli, Weaver covered the region from the first conquests to the present.

Other histories study the region in more detail. MacLeod (1973) examined the socioeconomic history of Central America as the region passed through several eras, rejecting the old division by centuries, and coming up with four major periods characterized by specific economic responses to the internal and external forces affecting the region. Floyd (1967) examined the confrontation between the Spanish and English over possession of the Mosquito Coast from the early 1600s to about 1800. Wortman (1982) studied the interaction and changes that took place between the Central American government and its society from 1680 to 1840. Torres Rivas (1993) focused on the political economy of the region in the twentieth century.

#### **Methodology**

The port function of Trujillo has been important to the city's history since its founding. Indeed, the site was selected and established on the southern shore of Central America's largest bay because of the protection from the prevailing Northeast Trade Winds. Weigend (1958: 185-198) described a six-point methodology to study ports that can be applied to historical geography. His first concerns the port's site and situation. Evaluation of the site includes the entrance, depth of water, tidal range, and climate. Human activity, including economic, political, and social forces, influences a port's situation. "It appears to be the human factor...that is paramount in the rise and decline of ports (Weigend 1958: 187). The changing situation through time of Trujillo as a port resulted in changes to its hinterland and forelands, and will be examined. Secondly, Weigend examined the carrier, the ship, that calls at a port. Changes in technology, especially larger,

faster, and specialized ships, will affect a port. The cargo passing through the port was the third point, and Weigend called for studying its origin and destination (Weigend 1958: 192).

Weigend's (1958: 192-193) fourth point is the hinterland, defined as the "organized and developed land space which is connected with a port by means of transport lines, and which receives or ships goods through that port." Hinterlands are of two types: (1) the import hinterland, destination area for cargo entering a port and headed to the interior; and (2) the export hinterland, or source region for cargo leaving a port. In the case of Trujillo, the port connected the interior of Honduras and Central America first with Spain, and then with Jamaica, Cuba, Belize, and the United States. The human factors affecting the port's situation - the economic, political, and social forces - all affect the hinterland. The export hinterland expands and contracts in relation to the demand and quality of its products on the world markets, whereas the import hinterland expands and contracts according to its ability to pay for goods and the quality of the transport network. Both are affected by political forces, both local and overseas, that may limit or encourage either exports or imports. All of these factors are how the world system influences the hinterland, acting through the port city. The changing hinterlands of Trujillo provide a framework to examine how the economic, political, and social forces, on both a local and world scale, affected the situation of the port through time.

A port's foreland, Weigend's fifth point is the seaward connections of a port through ocean carriers. Any location connected to a port by way of ocean-going ships is in that port's

foreland. Areas connected by coastal craft, however, are not considered to be in the foreland. Weigund wrote that the most meaningful units to analyze the relationship of a port to its hinterland are cargo tonnages, number of shipping lines, and departures. For Trujillo, much of this data no longer exists, if indeed it ever did, for much of its history. Weigund did write that the origin and destination of cargo moving through the port can be used to analyze the foreland, and much of this information can be reconstructed for Trujillo from historical records. Another difficult area to document for a port is its maritime space, the waters between the port and the foreland, Weigund's sixth point. The general pattern of maritime space for the colonial Honduran fleet is known through several documents.

Although Weigund studied modern ports, his six points are easily adapted to historical geography and Trujillo's individual case. Trujillo's situation, hinterlands, forelands, and cargo demonstrate the port's connections with Honduras, Central America, and the rest of the world.

"[N]either hinterland nor foreland nor the port itself has been able to influence or determine its destiny; rather, the totality of expansion and development in the world at each stage has narrowed or broadened its field of economic activity" (Weigund 1958: 188).

However, at the same time local and regional influences were also tremendous:

"...it is easy to conclude that the only important impulses of economic and political change in Central America have been from outside the region. But this conclusion is indeed a mistake; it is historically inaccurate, analytically misleading, and patronizing to attribute too much influence to external forces. This is true whether an author argues that everything 'good' or everything 'bad' in Central America is primarily the result of outside influence...The very real importance of foreign influences has to be understood in the contexts of the Central American nations' internal dynamics" (Weaver 1994: 2).

Trujillo and its hinterlands must be understood as to its place within the world economy, "but in order to properly understand the world-economy we must know the places that constitute its whole" (Taylor 1988: 264). The focus of this study is one of those places that constitute the whole world-economy, Trujillo. At the world level Frank (1966) studies the "development of underdevelopment" in the relationship of the dependent satellite with the metropolitan center, and Wallerstein (1974, 1980, 1989) examined the rise of the capitalist world-economy. "[F]or both the principal aim was to understand how the core subjugated the periphery," but their focus excluded investigation at the level of micro-populations (Wolf 1982: 23). Wolf saw Frank's and Wallerstein's work as pointing "to wider linkages that must be investigated if the processes at work in the periphery are to be understood" (Wolf 1982: 23). Wolf used the wider linkages of the world-system to emphasize the study of people and areas outside the core (Wolf 1982: 23; Taylor 1988: 261). "This holds true not only of the present but also of the past" (Wolf 1982: 3).

The framework of changing hinterlands provides a method that incorporates the world-system, yet retains the focus on Trujillo. The ecological, political, and economic factors that affect the port connect Trujillo's hinterlands to the world system. Regions, including the port's hinterlands, are not eternal, but change through time (Taylor 1988: 262). The study of the colonial port of Realejo, Nicaragua, by Radell and Parsons (1971), used a similar methodology of examining the ecological, political, and economic factors by which the port and the

hinterland were connected to the world-system, although it was not explicitly stated.

Carl Sauer's (1941) methodology for historical geography is incorporated throughout this study. Sauer wrote that historical geography is the reconstruction of past landscapes, examining the distribution of settlements and their land use through time, as well as those culture traits they invented and those they adopted from other groups (Sauer 1941: 8-9). Another of Sauer's themes is that of contact between different cultures and the struggle for areal control (Sauer 1941: 23), and at Trujillo there was contact between the native indigenous populations and the Spanish, the Spanish creoles and peninsulares, Spanish and English, Spanish and Miskitos, Spanish and Garífuna, and the Hondurans with the English, Cubans, and North Americans. Sauer wrote that historical geographers should view their study areas "with the eyes of its former occupants, from the standpoint of their needs and capacities" (Sauer 1941: 10). Although taking place through the filter of historical documents for the case of Trujillo's historical geography, "looking is so critical to the field [of geography] that it is tempting to characterize the discipline as not only an earth science, a spatial science, and a social science but also a visual science" (Richardson 1994: 157).

Fieldwork for historical geographers is not only getting to know their area of study, but they must have "[t]he ability to read documents in the field" (Sauer 1941: 14). To acquaint myself with the study area and with places mentioned in the documents, I have traveled to Trujillo from its historic hinterlands over old trade routes, walked throughout the city, and walked nearly the entire way around the bay.

Discussing anthropology, Eric Wolf (1982: ix), whose comments are also applicable to historical geography, wrote that "human populations construct their cultures in interaction with one another, and not in isolation," and that:

"the cultural connections...can be rendered intelligible only when they are set in their political and economic context. The insights of anthropology therefore have to be rethought in the light of a new, historically oriented political economy."

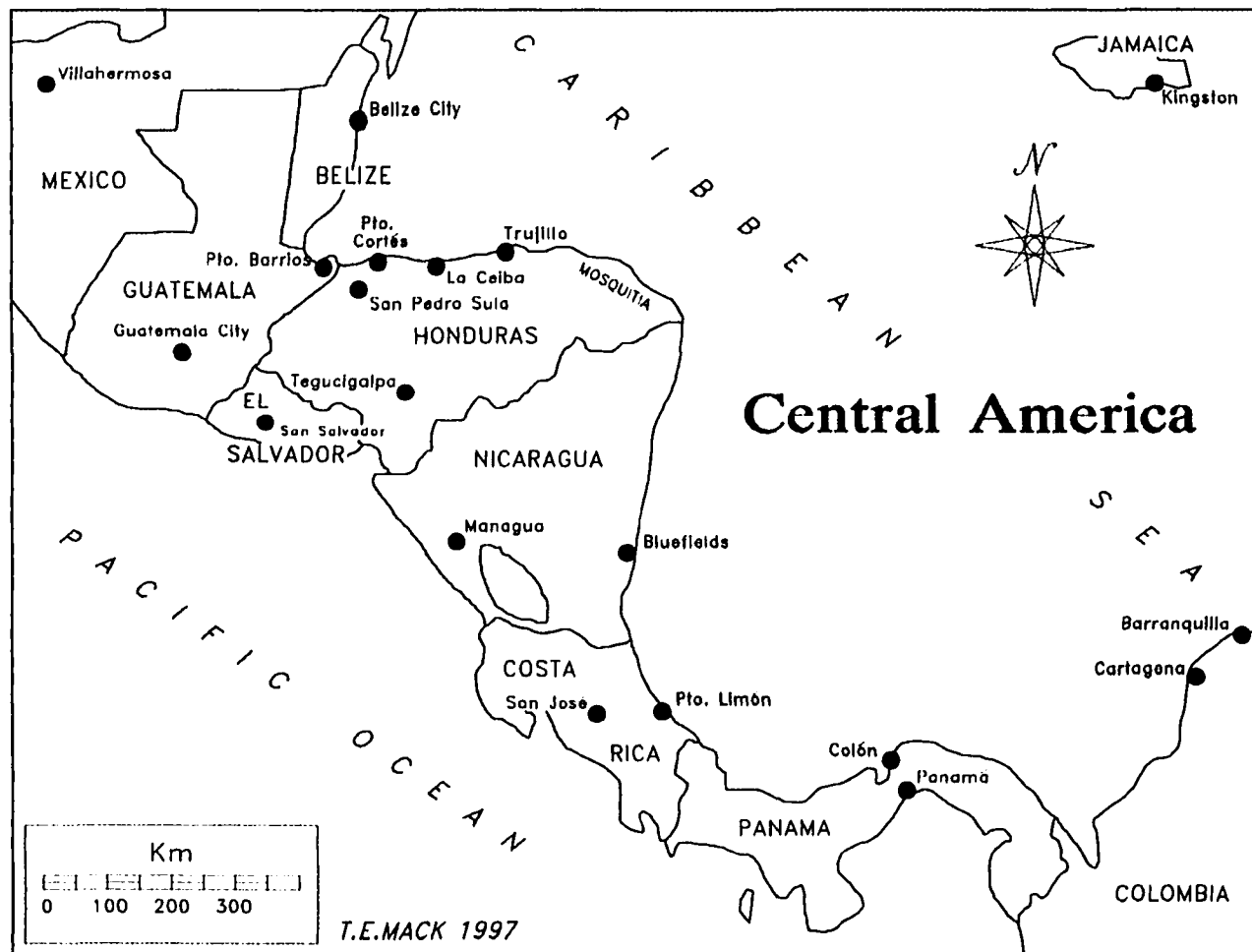
In studying ethnic groups both Helms and Nietschmann have described the economic trends of the Central America's Caribbean coast as a series of economic booms and busts since their ties to the world economy (Helms 1971: 27-28; Nietschmann 1979: 5). Going even further back in time, MacLeod (1992: xiii), has presented a periodization for Central American colonial history, beginning with the period from the conquest to the 1570s, a period of declining Indian populations, exploited for slavery, and silver and cacao production under the *encomienda*. From the 1580s to the early 1630s, the region enters an "era of experimentation" during which the people experiment with new crops and new approaches to problems with trade abroad and the decline in the Indian population. From the late 1630s to 1680, Central America was in a period of "isolation, of economic stagnation and depression," and a revival only began in the period from 1680 to 1720, based largely on smuggling. Central America during the colonial times experienced cyclical economic booms and busts, but MacLeod also saw regional differences to these cycles (MacLeod 1973: 47, 49). Loosely based on MacLeod's epochal periodization, I have divided Trujillo's historical geography into seven periods.

### Site of Trujillo, Honduras

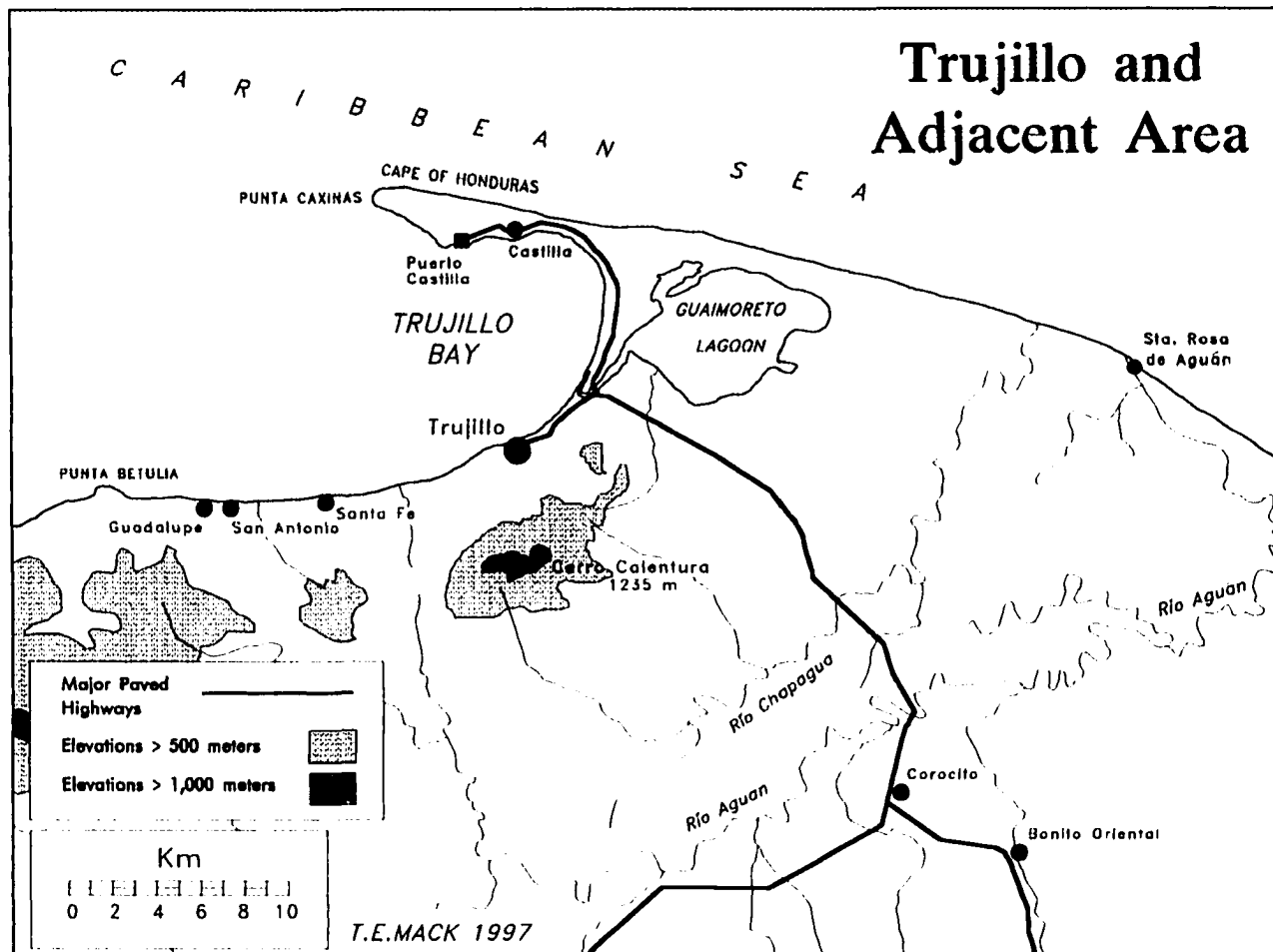
"The town lay at the sea's edge on a strip of alluvial coast. It was set like a little pearl in an emerald band. Behind it, and seeming almost to topple, imminent, above it, rose the sea-following range of the Cordilleras. In front the sea was spread, a smiling jailer, but even more incorruptible than the frowning mountains. The waves swished along the smooth beach; the parrots screamed in the orange and ceiba-trees; the palms waved their limber fronds foolishly like an awkward chorus at the prima donna's cue to enter." (O. Henry 1912: 11).

Modern Trujillo is located about midway along the Caribbean coast of Honduras, at the end of a coastal mountain range (Map 1). It lies some twenty to forty meters above the Bay of Trujillo, where the mountains come down nearly to the shoreline (IGNH 1987: 3063 IV) (Map 2). On either side of the center of town are two Garífuna barrios, Río Negro and Cristales, both named for the small rivers that flow from the slopes of the Cerro de Calentura that rises some 1,235 meters in altitude behind Trujillo. Reservoirs up the side of the mountain collect waters from the two streams and supply Trujillo with the famous, refreshing water for which the city was known during colonial times. Even during times of drought when other cities on the north coast had severe shortages, Trujillo had plenty of water. Trujillo is on the shore in the south-southeast section of the Bay of Trujillo.

To the west of Trujillo the mountain range hugs the coastline where there are three more Garífuna villages (IGNH 1978: 2963 I). Santa Fe, the largest of the three, is about seven kilometers from Trujillo. San Antonio is only three kilometers farther west, just next to Guadalupe, which is another kilometer more. The shoreline from Trujillo to Guadalupe is broken by several streams, the Río Mojaguay being the largest, but even it can be crossed on foot over the bar (IGNH 1987: 3063



Map 1. Central America.



Map 2. Trujillo and Adjacent Area.

IV). The low saddle at the headwaters of the Río Mojaguay is not quite three hundred meters in height. To the east-northeast of the city some three kilometers is the outlet for the Laguna Guaimoreto (IGNH 1987: 3063 IV). The lagoon is about nine kilometers long and six kilometers wide, and known locally for its fish, birds, monkeys, alligators, and other wildlife. The mountains that follow the coast end just to the east of Trujillo before reaching the lagoon.

The most startling physical feature nearby is the incredibly large sand spit, about ten kilometers in length that encloses the Bay of Trujillo on the north (IGNH 1988: Puerto Castilla). The spit is known as the Cabo de Honduras (Cape of Honduras); the western tip is officially named Punta Caxinas, but referred to locally as Punta Castilla, or simply La Punta.<sup>3</sup> On the southern shore of the spit is Puerto Castilla, the modern container port for Trujillo. From Punta Caxinas to the southern shore of the bay is a distance of thirteen kilometers. Just a short distance off the tip of the point the water goes to a depth of forty-five meters, with shoals, however, as shallow as thirteen meters. In the center of the bay the depth ranges from twenty-five to forty meters, with twenty-five meter depths right offshore at Puerto Castilla. The floor of the bay slowly rises from the center toward the south shore, with twenty meter depth half-way between Puerto Castilla and Trujillo, and only ten meters deep one kilometer off the shore of the city.

Longshore currents moving westwardly carried sediment deposited into the sea by rivers to the east of Trujillo Bay (Davidson 1991: 213). Over time the sediments built up, creating the spit and the Cabo de Honduras that form the bay. The sand at

Punta Caxinas is very soft and difficult to walk on, suggesting that the sand is still building along the spit. The prevailing Northeast Trade Winds have little affect on Trujillo Bay, being naturally protected from the open sea by the spit for most of the year. Open to the northwest, however, the bay is vulnerable to northerly storms systems, nortes, during the winter that enter the bay, stirring up the water and crashing waves onto the beach at Trujillo. Some waves travel twenty meters inland from normal water line. Puerto Castilla, however, on the north side of the bay, is protected even from the nortes. Trujillo Bay is the largest bay on Central America's Caribbean coast that is protected from the prevailing Northeast Trade Winds.

The north coast of Honduras lies in the *tierra caliente* (hot land), with an average daytime temperature around 90°F, and little variation between the coldest and hottest months (West and Augelli 1989: 40). During a norte in January 1996, everyone in Trujillo complained of the cold and wore jackets or sweaters, yet my thermometer never went below 70°F. Rainfall averages between eighty and 120 inches per year, with a marked dry period between early January and early May.

Beyond the mountains behind Trujillo is a large elongated valley, formed by the Río Aguán (IGNH 1991: Mapa General). The Aguán Valley extends some 175 kilometers inland, in a west-southwest direction. A little more than one hundred kilometers to the east of Trujillo is Cabo Camarón, traditionally known as the beginning of Honduras' Mosquitia, which extends down the coast to the Río Coco.<sup>4</sup> To the west of Trujillo ninety-five kilometers is the city of La Ceiba. Seventy and 120 kilometers beyond La Ceiba are the other Honduran ports of Tela and Puerto

Cortés. Forty kilometers beyond Puerto Cortés lies the Honduras-Guatemala border. Sixty kilometers north of Trujillo is the settlement of Bonaca, on a cay off the Island of Guanaja. On a clear day Guanaja is visible from 100 meters upslope at Trujillo.

The other two of the Bay Islands, Roatán and Utila lie out to sea in a northwesterly direction some seventy-five and one hundred kilometers from Trujillo.

#### **Columbian Contact and First Settlement**

Trujillo and the north coast of Honduras enter the historical record during Christopher Columbus's fourth and last voyage of exploration. Columbus left Cádiz, Spain for the New World in May 1502, on either the 9th (Colón 1947: 268), 10th (Anghiera 1964: 317), or the 11th (Porras 1504: 404). He left Puerto Viejo de Azua, near Santo Domingo, Hispaniola, on July 14, 1502 (Colón 1947: 272). He traveled in a southwesterly direction, apparently searching in the direction where he believed he would find the Ganges River of India (Nunn 1924: 72).

The first landfall was on an island Columbus named *Islas de Pinos* (Isle of Pines), but which the natives called *Guanasa* (Anónimo 1519: 257; Anghiera 1964: 317). Coral reefs that surround the present-day island of Guanaja in the Bay Island chain would have made a sailing in unknown waters dangerous, and the description more nearly fits the island of Roatán (Davidson 1991: 207).

While at Guanasa Columbus encountered a native merchant with a large canoe, with a crew of about twenty-five men and carrying the merchant's family (Anghiera 1964: 317; Colón 1947: 274-275). The merchant's cargo included copper hatchets, obsidian -toothed swords, dyed-cotton clothing, copper bells,

maize beer, and cacao beans. This was the first European contact with cacao, the source for chocolate (Bergmann 1969: 85). Columbus took a man named Yumbé, and chief of Guanasa, as an interpreter (Anghiera 1964: 317; Colón 1947: 275). From Guanasa, Columbus sailed south to a region on the mainland named *Quiriquetana*, around present-day Trujillo, which Columbus renamed *Ciamba*, thinking he had made landfall in southern China (Anghiera 1964: 318; Nunn 1924: 72-73). This area was divided into two regions named by the natives *Taia* and *Maia*, the first recorded use of the word "Maya" in Europe (Anghiera 1964: 318). *Maia* and *taia* are both Pech words for "theirs" and "ours" (Davidson 1991: 209). A fruit in the region that the natives of Hispañola called *caxinas* inspired Columbus to name the point of a large spit *Punta Caxinas* (Colón 1947: 276).

The inhabitants of the area around *Punta Caxinas* dressed in a similar manner to the people Columbus found in the canoe on Guanasa (Colón 1947: 277). This has been one indication that the people of the Bay Islands and around Trujillo Bay were of the same culture group (Stone 1941: 9-10, 96; Davidson 1974: 25-30; Newson 1986: 19,40; Davidson 1991: 212). On the morning of Sunday, August 14, 1502, Columbus sent to the shore of Trujillo Bay his brother Bartolomé, the captains, and many of the crew from his ships, with flags flying, to celebrate mass (Colón 1947: 277). This mass in Trujillo Bay was the first recorded on the mainland of the Americas. Farther along the coast Columbus let Yumbé leave for home once they came to an area where the native no longer understood the language (Colón 1947: 275). The people around *Cabo Camarón*, named *Costa de Oreja* by Columbus, were described as black, of an ugly aspect, did not cover themselves

with clothing, were very wild, and had holes in their ears to insert "huevos de gallina" (chicken[?] bones) (Colón 1947: 277).

The Wednesday following the celebration of mass, August 17, 1502, Columbus took possession of the land during a ceremony held at Río de la Posesión, today's Río Negro or Río Tinto (Colón 1947: 277; Porras 1504: 405). On September 14, 1502, Columbus reached Cabo de Gracias a Dios, so named because of the sailing against the currents and prevailing winds from Trujillo Bay to the cape (Colón 1947: 279). From Cabo de Gracias a Dios, Columbus continued to sail down the coasts of Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama.

Trujillo would not be settled until twenty-three years after Columbus's celebration of mass on the shores of the bay. From newly-conquered Mexico Hernán Cortés sent a group of men to establish a town in the vicinity of Puerto Caballos. Cristóbal de Olid, the expedition leader, however, renounced his loyalty to Cortés shortly after landing in Honduras (Cortés 1525: 610-614).

To regain command Cortés sent his cousin Francisco de las Casas to capture Olid, who eventually lost his head for his treason against his commander. Las Casas wanted to establish a new settlement around Triunfo de la Cruz, near present-day Tela, but found the land unsuitable. After Las Casas left Honduras to get supplies, those remaining behind went eastward to the shores of the bay formed by the Cabo de Honduras because they had heard of the good harbor located there. The settlers took possession of the land on behalf of Cortés, in the name of the King of Spain, on May 18, 1525 (Saldaña 1525: 1-1v). Las Casas instructed that the town be named after his hometown of Trujillo, Extremadura,

back in Spain, and about 110 men made up the initial settlement (Cortés 1525: 614).

The supply ship for the new town of Trujillo never did arrive. From Santo Domingo, however, el Bachiller Pedro Moreno arrived with a ship full of supplies, but refused to give any to the colonists. Moreno forced the colonists to pledge allegiance to the authority of the judges of Santo Domingo and to accept Juan Ruano, one of Moreno's men, as their captain. Only then did Moreno permit the supplies to be landed. Moreno also sent slaving parties inland from Trujillo. Shortly after the departure of Moreno the people of Trujillo rebelled against Ruano, who was later put on a ship for Santo Domingo. The colonists at Trujillo then reaffirmed their allegiance to Cortés, begging him to forgive them when he arrived in Trujillo several months later.

#### **Periodization of Trujillo's Historical Geography**

From the founding of Trujillo in 1525, to 1550, the city was the center of a search for gold in the interior. After 1550, however, there was little gold left, and Trujillo began an era of experimenting with sarsaparilla and hide exports, as well as resupplying passing ships. This period lasted from 1550 to about 1630. Pirate attacks on Trujillo, from 1540s to the 1640s devastated the city. Attackers and defenders used strategies and tactics that did not change for several hundred years. By the 1680s, however, the residents had abandoned Trujillo for the hinterland to escape attack. Though uninhabited, Spanish and English found Trujillo to be a good meeting ground for contraband trade through the 1770s. After the town was reestablished in 1782, Trujillo was a center for colonization of the Bay Islands

and Mosquitia, but by 1800 most had died. After their deportation from their home island of St. Vincent by the British to the Bay Islands, the Black Caribs found Trujillo and the environment to their liking, and spread throughout Caribbean coast of Honduras, Guatemala, and Belize. With the opening of "free trade" in the Spanish empire and the end of restricting trade solely with Seville and Cádiz back in Spain, Trujillo began to develop a foreland focusing on the Americas, largely with Cuba and Belize at first, but a nascent trade with the United States continued to grow through the 1800s. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the first regular banana exports began on the coast and in Trujillo. The Boston-based United Fruit Company built the Truxillo Railroad Company in the late 1910s and 1920s, bringing a banana boom to the city. By 1940, however, the boom was bust. During World War II the United States Navy used Puerto Castilla as a base to hunt for German U-boats, but the base was closed in 1946. The historical geography of Trujillo, however, is much more complex than the impression of this brief summary of the city's history gives. As William Porter, writing under his pseudonym O. Henry (1912: 8-10) suggests:

"For there are yet tales of the Spanish Main. That segment of continent washed by the tempestuous Caribbean, and presenting to the sea a formidable border of tropical jungle topped by the overweening Cordilleras, is still begirt by mystery and romance. In past times buccaneers and revolutionists roused the echoes of its cliffs, and the condor [sic] wheeled perpetually above where, in the green groves, they made food for him with their matchlocks and toledos. Taken and retaken by sea rovers, by adverse powers and by sudden uprising of rebellious factions, the historic 300 miles of adventurous coast has scarcely known whom rightly to call its master. Pizarro, Balboa, Sir Francis Drake, and Bolivar did what they could to make it a part of Christendom. Sir John Morgan, Lafitte and other eminent swashbucklers bombarded and pounded it in the name of Abaddon.

"The game still goes on. The guns of the rovers are silenced; but the tintype man, the enlarged photograph

brigand, the kodaking tourist and the scouts of the gentle brigade of fakirs have found it out, and carry on the work. The hucksters of Germany, France, and Sicily now bag its small change across their counters. Gentlemen adventurers throng the waiting-rooms of its rulers with proposals for railways and concessions."

#### Notes

1. Throughout the dissertation I use the words "city" and "town" interchangeably in their modern meanings, not in their historical and official meanings in the Spanish colonial system.
2. In October 1994, a third party accidentally threw nine of my notebooks from the ANH into the trash, which necessitated a frustrating return to Tegucigalpa to recover my research for four weeks in January 1995. Fortunately, I recovered most of the lost material.
3. La Punta may have inspired the name for a popular Garífuna dance style.
4. The Río Coco is also known as the Río Segovia, and historically as the Río Wanks.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**TRUJILLO'S GOLD HINTERLAND, 1525-1550**

The original motivation for the Spanish to come to Central America, and Trujillo, was economic (West and Augelli 1989: 235).

The Spanish searched for a product that would quickly bring riches and enable them to return home as wealthy men, so long and involved processing of mineral or plant products for manufacturing did not interest them (MacLeod 1973: 46). They searched for a product that would need little, and ideally no, processing. Gold was the single best product from the Spanish point of view, originating in the mineralized rocks from the eastern side of the Old Antilla geologic formation in Honduras (MacLeod 1973: 46; West and Augelli 1989: 235). The combination of rich mineral deposits and a large, dense indigenous population to supply the labor made an area especially attractive to the Spanish (West and Augelli 1989: 235). Because most Spaniards who came to Central America were not interested in long-term economic development and wished to return to Spain, much of their activity in Central America, including Trujillo had "more resemblance to a large raid than to an occupation" (MacLeod 1973: 47). Pillaging was "an ephemeral source of income" and did not yield long-term results (Weaver 1994: 13), be it raiding native treasures or the natural environment. The gold boom of Trujillo, from 1525 to 1550, was the first boom for the city and its hinterland.

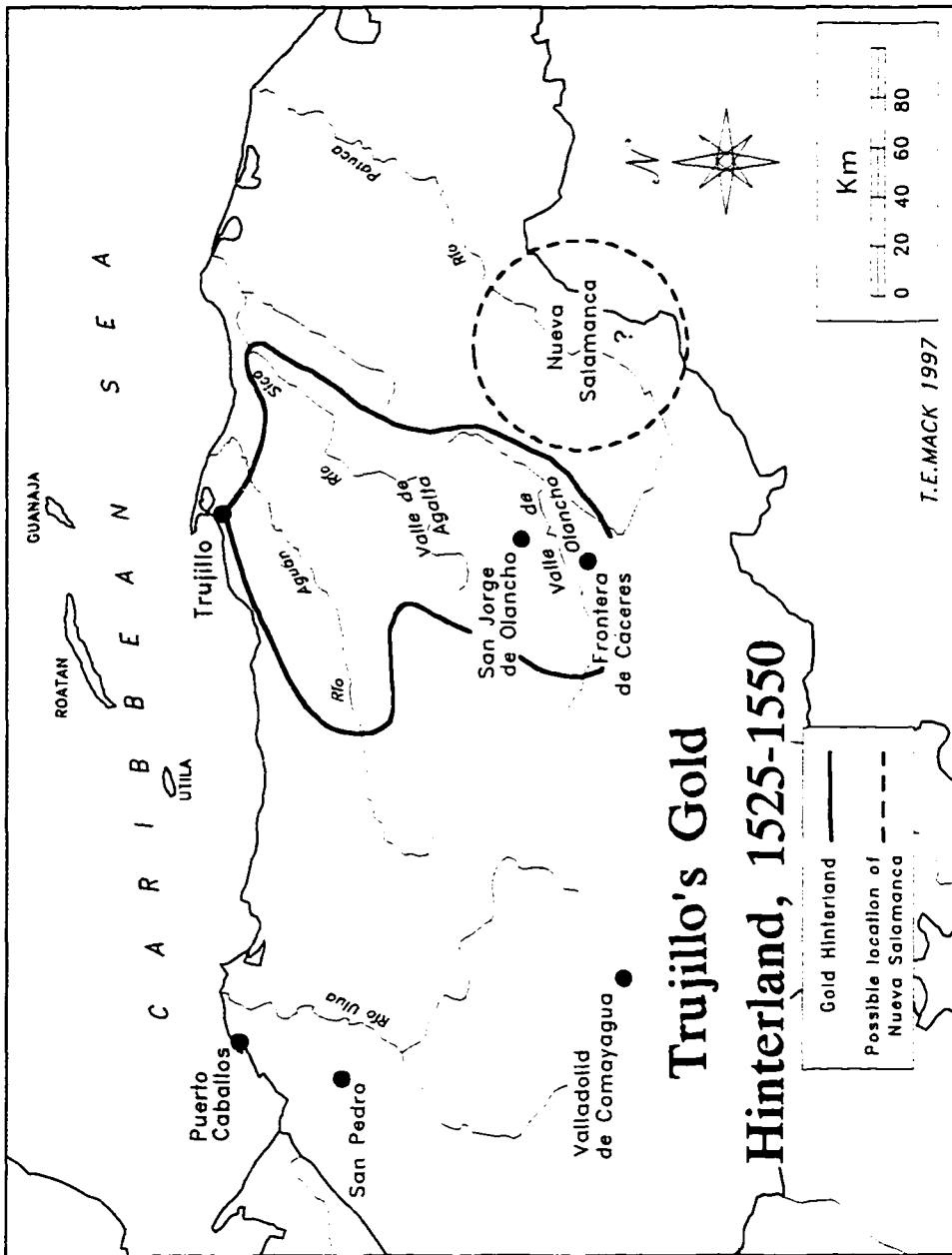
During the gold boom Trujillo developed a large hinterland because it was the most important Caribbean port for Central America during this period. From Trujillo the Spanish settled other towns from which to extract gold. These settlements brought changes to the landscape, including the introduction of Old World agricultural products and livestock. An important part of the landscape of Trujillo, although certainly not a passive

one, was the indigenous population. By the end of the gold boom period these people would be driven from their land and their society nearly destroyed.

### **The Gold Hinterland**

In his fifth letter to the emperor, Cortés (1526: 626), refers to the riches to the interior of Trujillo. He wrote that two provinces named Hueytapalan and Xucutaco were some eight to ten days journey away, with riches so great they would exceed those of Mexico, although the rumors might be two-thirds false. To what exactly Cortés was referring is unknown, however, he may have heard of the Olancho and other valleys to the interior from Trujillo (Map 3). A group sent by Cortés went up a valley for 35 leagues, likely the Aguán Valley, that he described as beautiful and populated with many large towns. He also said that it was suited for all types of livestock (Cortés 1526: 629), and this is likely the first reference to the grasslands of Olanchito and Sonaguera. He also asked for gear for horses and tools so the Spanish could search for mines (Cortés 1526: 631).

The Spanish quickly came to know of the gold deposits of the Olancho Valley, and they established the town of Frontera de Cáceres there in 1526, not quite a year after the found of Trujillo (Saavedra 1526: 58). The Indians of the valley were divided into three *repartamientos* (Salcedo 1527a: 247), but Frontera de Cáceres did not last long. An attack by the Indians killed fifteen of the Spanish and drove the rest from the settlement (Salcedo 1527a: 249-250). Salcedo (1527b: 22v), the governor of Honduras, felt that when more Spanish knew of the riches of Olancho, the valley would be settled. Central America's two gold smelters in 1528 were located in León and



Map 3. Trujillo's Gold Hinterland, 1525-1550.

Trujillo, because of the port (Vecinos y Cabildo de la Villa de Trujillo 1528: 70).

After the death of Salcedo, Cereceda succeeded him as acting governor of Honduras. He also had his eye on exploiting the known gold deposits in the Olancho Valley (Cereceda 1530: 409), but his attention was more closely focused near to Trujillo. Cereceda (1530: 425-426) wrote that many gold samples had been taken from around Trujillo. A very rich town with many signs of gold was some fifteen to eighteen leagues from Trujillo, and like Salcedo, Cereceda wished to establish a Spanish town to procure the gold (Cereceda 1530: 410, 426). Up to 1530, not much gold had been found, and the Spanish believed that the Indians were hiding it from them (Cereceda 1530: 426-427). The Spanish had seen a lot of gold when they first arrived; however, there was now much less. This may have been a sign that the first placer mines, especially those near Trujillo, had been used up, although reports of Indians hiding gold date from nearly the beginning of the town (Salcedo 1526: 53). He also stressed the need for mining towns to the interior of Trujillo (Cereceda 1530: 429).

Three years later Cereceda wrote of a *pueblo de minas* sixteen leagues from Trujillo, possibly the same location he had wished to establish a town in earlier (Cereceda 1533: 239). Gold was being taken out of the mines of Tayaco, in the Agalta Valley (Cereceda 1533: 247v). This location fits the earlier description from 1530. Thirteen leagues up the coast to the east of Trujillo, and three leagues inland, was another location where gold was found (Cereceda 1533: 278), probably on the reaches of the Río Sico inland from present day Iriona, before the Río

Paulaya converges with it. Placer mining operations were characteristically "shifting and ephemeral," with no large permanent settlements (West 1959: 769). Some Spaniards were living at the mines in the hinterland, while others lived on their haciendas or in town (Cereceda 1533: 248v).

Placer mining as done by the Spanish was conducted on a very low technological level (West 1959: 768-769). The main instruments used were the *batea*, a shallow wooden bowl for separating the gold and sand, and the *almocafre*, an instrument much like a hoe with a hook used for scraping the sand. The Indians stood in waist deep water all day to extract gold (Cereceda 1533: 238v). Trujillo, San Pedro and Gracias a Dios served as smelting centers, where Spaniards brought their gold to be registered, taxed, and refined. Pieces of gold were often used as a form of currency when coins from the Metropolis were not available or in short supply (Pedraza 1544a: 396).

Data on the early gold production for the Trujillo hinterland is very sketchy. In 1526, slightly more than 1,650 pesos had been found and reported in Trujillo (Salcedo 1526: 53).

Cereceda (1533: 282v) wrote that 3,535 pesos of gold were removed. The smelted gold for all of Honduras for the years 1539-1541 came to 73,468 pesos (Valdes 1541: 238). In 1540, some 8,000 pesos of gold could not be smelted at Trujillo because royal officials did not want to go there, for some unexplained reason (Torre 1540: 161).

Gold continued to be found near Trujillo and in the interior throughout the 1540s. The Bishop of Honduras, Cristóbal de Pedraza (1544a: 394) reported gold, as well as silver, around the city. Gold deposits were one and a half leagues from

Trujillo and out to a distance of fifteen leagues. Silver, a new mention, was fourteen or fifteen leagues from Trujillo. The pacification of the Olancho Valley and the establishment of the town of San Jorge de Olancho provided the Spanish with a new center to exploit the good gold and silver mines, as well as *liquidambar* (tree gum), of that valley (Pedraza 1544a: 401). Pedraza (1547: 33-34) also wanted a town established at "Xuticalpa" because of the many gold deposits found nearby. He also mentioned other mines located twenty to twenty-five leagues from Trujillo (Pedraza 1547: 47-48).

#### **Establishment of Towns**

The first major mark of the Spanish on the landscape of Trujillo was the actual construction of the town itself. Towns were also built in the hinterland, physically establishing the Spanish in the region. After Trujillo was founded the Spanish began to found other towns, using the *Reconquista* as a model for settlement (Elliott 1963: 55). Be it in Spain during the *Reconquista* or in the New World hinterland of Trujillo, towns were primarily military garrisons in conquered territory. The soldiers stationed there would be the only Spaniards for a long distance, and had the responsibility for putting down revolts and enforcing work orders placed on the native populations. "Colonization was consolidated, nevertheless, in widely separated enclaves that were strategically situated" (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 36).

The settlement of Trujillo and its hinterland did not resemble the model of transport evolution developed by Taaffe, Morrill and Gould (1993) that they based on their research in West Africa and then generalized for all for all developing

countries. Human geography's widespread application of their model to other locations and periods commits the "fallacy of retrospective theory" (Hornbeck, Earle, and Rodrigue 1996: 44-45). The specific case study from West Africa for a certain time period cannot be applied generally to the world regardless of context and time period (Hornbeck, Earle, and Rodrigue 1996: 44-45). This model fails to distinguish between the economic precepts that guided colonization and those for establishing urban settlements, neglects the "institutional dynamics of European political economy," and has been proven to fail in modeling settlement of "English North America or in the trans-Appalachian West" (Earle 1992: 86-7). Towns in Honduras were established before the search for a trade item began, similar to Earle's (1992: 63) findings for the "Carolinas, the Jerseys, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia," on in the case of English North America the settlers searched for crops; in Trujillo the search was for mineral wealth, initially based on plunder and later on extraction. Trujillo's early colonization was founded on exploitation, rather than on farming, the two basic types of colonization in the Americas (Haring 1947: 27).

The original site of the town was on the edge of the Bay of Trujillo, close to swamps at the foot of a mountain described as having a lot of trees (Salcedo 1526: 43). Cortés (1526: 622) mentions the help of Indians in felling trees to clear the site of the town. Salcedo claimed that everyday after 9:00 am, sunlight was cutoff to the town by the mountains, an exaggeration as the angle of the sun changes with the seasons, especially considering that the sun rises and sets north of the zenith of Trujillo preceding and after the vernal equinox. Because of the

swampy conditions at the site, structures of stone or wood were said not to be possible, and they were made of "tierra," (earth) possibly adobe (Salcedo 1526: 43). The town was then moved half a league away to a dry and airy location that received the sun all day long (Salcedo 1526: 44). There are no documents that described the form of the town, but ordinances issued by King Ferdinand in 1513 and by Charles V in 1523, later provided the basis for rational plans for cities in the Laws of the Indies, issued in 1573 by Philip II (Crouch, Garr and Mundigo 1982: 3). Because the earlier ordinances, on which the Laws of the Indies were based, came before the founding of Trujillo, it is likely that Trujillo's early town form complied with provisions that would later become law.

There was no church in the early years of the town, so mass was said in someone's house (Salcedo 1526: 50). There were two priests in Trujillo and one *cofradía de Nuestra Señora*, and Fray Juan de la Vega, a Franciscan who wanted to found a Franciscan house (Salcedo 1526: 50-51). Salcedo characterized the city as poor, with no crops yet, but he described the land as good, and asked for livestock to be sent from Jamaica because of the great need for provisions in Trujillo (Salcedo 1526: 50, 52). The *vecinos* later asked for livestock from Jamaica a second time, as well as free passage for 1,000 men to come to Honduras (Pobladores de la villa de Trujillo 1528: 69).

The Spanish population in Honduras during 1530, was given as 250, with 100 going to Naco (west of San Pedro Sula) and 40 or 50 to the mining towns around that city, and the rest, about 100, remaining in Trujillo (Cereceda 1530: 427). Provisions for Trujillo came from the Bay Island (Cereceda 1530: 434). Cereceda

specifically mentions "puercos," pigs, a European livestock known for quick reproduction and adaptation to local conditions (Sauer 1966: 157). Despite being the only town with a port in Honduras in 1533, Trujillo had not grown in population. Cereceda reported that in Trujillo there were only 30 people, both sick and healthy, and that they could not sustain themselves (Cereceda 1533: 248v). The Spanish and their Indian servants were eating "frutas salvages" (wild fruits) that they had gathered themselves (Cereceda 1533: 269v). The two priests in town could not celebrate mass because there was no wine or flour (Cereceda 1533: 280v), and many of the Spanish were moving to Naco because of the lack of Indians at Trujillo (Cereceda 1533: 278). Apparently little or no European livestock had yet to arrive in Trujillo, as Cereceda also asked for 80 horses, a lot of mares, 100 cows, and 150 pigs (Cereceda 1533: 281). He also wanted 800 men from Spain to supplement the population of Honduras.

The population of Trujillo had dropped significantly since the early 1530s. In 1533, there were "*cinquenta hombres en que hay 20 o 25 vecinos a quien se encomienden los Yndios*" (fifty men, in which twenty or twenty-five citizens have encomiendas of Indians) (Cereceda 1533: 278). The population in 1540 was reported to be a low of 14 or 15 (Torres 1540: 161). The small population of Trujillo in these years masks its strategic importance during this period. Although Spanish settlement in Central America was oriented towards the highlands and the Pacific Coast, it was through the Caribbean ports, especially Trujillo, the only port city, that the conquistadores and colonists were connected back to Spain (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 37).

The best early description of Trujillo was written in 1544 by the first Bishop of Honduras, Cristóbal de Pedraza (1544: 385-395). The population of Trujillo in 1540 had risen to thirty vecinos, but in 1544 had increased to fifty. He mentioned that two rivers descend from the mountains, one on each side of the town, matching the location of the Río Negro and Río Cristales, between which today lies the present city. The water was noted to be especially good, something for which Trujillo would continue to be known, even into the present. The summer, or dry season, ran from February to the beginning of September, and Pedraza claimed that it was not as hot as Seville, Spain, or other parts of the Indies. My observations from both Trujillo and Seville confirm Pedraza's report, as the sea breezes in Trujillo, lacking in Seville, make the summer quite tolerable. Winter, the rainy season, ran from October to February, although today many people say the rains begin in late May. Pedraza reported that the north winds of winter disturbed the calm of the bay, as they continue to do today, but three leagues away at present-day Puerto Castilla was another port, "*puerto de la guayana*," where ships went to avoid the nortes.

Trujillo also had "*una hermosa yglesia*" (a beautiful church) constructed of adobe walls, a wood and cane roof, and pillars of cedar (Pedraza 1544a: 385). The Spanish considered the mud and dirt around Trujillo to be good for making bricks, and tiles (Pedraza 1544a: 394). There was plenty of wood for construction, including cedars, pines, and oaks. The many waterfalls in the area around the town could also power mills for processing the timber.

The exchange of Old World and New World plants and animals in Trujillo had begun. Pedraza wrote on the agricultural products and potential of the area. He reported farms around Trujillo for many miles, up to five leagues away, and considered them to be much better than those of Castile and Andalucia (Pedraza 1544a: 393). Corn was native to this continent, and possibly the beans, which were said to be of two or three types (Pedraza 1544a: 394). He also claimed the yucca had been brought from the Caribbean islands to the Honduran coast. Flax also grew well, but the Spanish had not done much with the sugar cane, cañafistola, or cotton because they were busy doing other things. Among the vegetables Pedraza mentioned were cabbages, calabash (pumpkins), eggplant, beets, cucumbers, garbanzos, onions, garlic, coriander, spinach, turnips, carrots, thistle, and melons (Pedraza 1544a: 393).

Pedraza mentioned several types of old world fruit trees that were in Trujillo at this time (Pedraza 1544a: 391-2). Mentioned are oranges and citrons, similar to lemons, but larger. He wrote that the limes and lemons at Trujillo grew larger than in Spain. The mamey, quince and guava trees were also present at this time. Although not a tree, the banana was apparently plentiful in Trujillo, grown in large gardens (Pedraza 1544a: 392). Pedraza described both plantains and bananas:

*"tienen dentro unos como rollos de manteca de vacas dulces de comer sí platanos son aunque lleuan una fruta muy singular la qual no llevavan los que antiguamente se dezian platanos."* (Pedraza 1544a: 392).

(some inside have what is like rolls of fat from cows, sweet to eat, and yes they are plantain like though they have very singular fruit, but not that they used to have called the plantain).

Clearly the plantain was in Trujillo, and sometime later after the founding of the town the banana came in.

Pedraza also wrote about wild and domestic animals. The livestock at Trujillo was of a very good quality (Pedraza 1544a: 388-9). The meat of the cattle he compared with that of Valladolid or Burgos, back in Spain, and the pork was much better than that of Castilla. Jaguars and pumas that lived in the mountains and did not attack people, however, they did attack the livestock. The "adines," described as being like small wolves, ate chickens. Turkeys, pheasants, and birds of prey are mentioned, and Pedraza described the parrots as being the best in the Indies, with those from Guanaja being the best from here (Pedraza 1544a: 390). He also mentioned deer, both stags and does, and roe deer (Pedraza 1544a: 389). He claimed that the Spanish used arcabuzes and crossbows to hunt the hares and rabbits, which are eaten, and compared the meat to beef, but is certainly exaggerating when he claimed the hares to be the size of small mules (Pedraza 1544a: 389).

By 1547, Trujillo had a large number of Portuguese (Pedraza 1547: 40), likely associated with the sailing and slave trade. The cathedral was quite ornate, and lacked nothing (Pedraza 1547: 35). Six leagues from Trujillo was a valley, probably the Aguán, that was capable of producing wheat, livestock, vineyards, and sugar (Pedraza 1547: 33). Pedraza was clearly emphasizing the agricultural potential of the area, rather than the mining. The roads between Trujillo and its hinterland were in a horrible state (Pedraza 1547: 14).

While Cortés was in Trujillo some lords of "Huilancho" came to Trujillo and offered themselves as vassals to the King of Spain (Cortés 1526: 633). They brought news that a group of Spaniards had come from Nicaragua and were enslaving Indians and

asked for his help in stopping the damages they were committing in the valley (Cortés 1526: 634). Cortés never visited the Olancho Valley, but his Spanish from Trujillo did shortly thereafter begin to exploit the valley for its gold and Indian laborers.

Saavedra ordered the construction of the town of Frontera de Cáceres (Saavedra 1526: 58), and the town was established on 5 June 1526, near the two Indian towns of Telicachequita and Excamilpachecita, and a little more than one league from Escamilpa la Grande (Celada et al 1526: 61). To take possession of the land they were:

*"...cortando de los árboles ramas é arrancando de la yerba é cabando con sus manos de la tierra, haciendo otros muchos abutos de posesion"* (Celada et al 1526: 60).  
 (...cutting branches from the trees and pulling from the grass and digging with their hands of the earth, also doing many proceedings of possession.)

The Spanish also marked out sites for the church, plaza, hospital, jail, cabildo, houses, and residences of the governor and lieutenant, as well as put up a pillory and gallows (Celada et al 1526: 64). Frontera de Cáceres certainly did not last long as the Indian Cacique Unito, said to be "el Señor de Comayagua", led a revolt in which fifteen "Christians" (Spanish), and twenty horses were killed, thereby ending the life of the settlement (Salcedo 1527a: 247). Salcedo (1527b) felt confident that more Spanish would settle in the Olancho Valley, especially once the riches of the valley were more well know. The Spanish had clearly inteded to altedr the landscape with their particular imprint to establish their claim to the hinterland.

By 1530, the Spanish of Trujillo were taking more interest in the riches of the Naco Valley over the Olancho Valley. Naco had a lot of Indians and fertile land (Cereceda 1533: 278). There

were Spanish operating from a *pueblo de minas* sixteen leagues from Trujillo, most likely on the approach to the Agalta Valley (Cereceda 1533: 239). Some Spanish were living at their mines, on their haciendas, or at Trujillo (Cereceda 1533: 248v). They were not, however, able to sustain themselves with foodstuffs (Cereceda 1533: 248v), and were living off of "*frutas salvages*", (Cereceda 1533: 269v), certainly not the preferred Spanish diet of bread from wheat (Elliott 1963: 68; Crosby 1972: 65; Wallerstein 1980: 151). Some people of Trujillo wanted to send out parties to search for a place with more Indians than Trujillo (Cereceda 1533: 270). The settlements in the Naco Valley gave impetus to further exploitation of western Honduras. Although the initial settlers for the Naco Valley came from Trujillo, the port did not serve that hinterland. The ties between Naco and Trujillo were effectively cut.

Spanish settlement in Olancho was finally realized when the valley was conquered in the 1540s (Pedraza 1544a: 405). San Jorge de Olancho had been established with fifty vecinos living among a large Indian population (Pedraza 1544a: 402). Pedraza proclaimed Olancho as the richest gold site in all of Honduras, Higueras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Yucatán (Pedraza 1544a: 402).

By the time he wrote his account settlers had already brought cattle to the valley.

By the mid 1540s there were only six Spanish cities in Honduras, despite twenty years of conquest, settlement, and occupation (Oidores de la Real Audiencia de los Confines 1545: 89). The Spanish working out of Trujillo were also expanding beyond the Olancho Valley. Nueva Salamanca was newly established in 1545 (Oidores de la Real Audiencia de los Confines 1545: 89).

The exact location of Nueva Salamanca remains a mystery and reports of its location from contemporary documents do not lend much help in pinpointing its location. One report placed Nueva Salamanca in a land between Olancho and Trujillo, that runs to the drainage of the "laguna de León" that empties into the "Mar del Norte," and that the land was reported to be quite rich (El Rey 1546: 90).

Pedraza (1547: 14), however, gives a more precise, if not exact, description of where the Spanish established the town:

*"En el camino de la Villa del valle do Ulancho a la Nueva Salamanca, abrá otras XXX leguas y más que no ay pueblo en el camino ninguno, sino muy grandes mosquiteros de diversidades jéneros de mosquitos que nos comían vivos de noche y de día, y nos sacan los ojos, que no abía onbre que pudiese dormir en cama. De la Nueva Salamanca hasta esta çibdad de Trugillo ay çerca de quarenta leguas infernales, de manera que si alguno antes que muera quisiere ver el puragtorios y el infierno, véngase a esta tierra, y verá el purgatorio en todo el camino, y el ynfierno desda la Nueva çibdad de Salamanca hasta esta çibdad de Trugillo"* (Pedraza 1547: 14).

(On the road from the town of the Olancho Valley to Nueva Salamanca there will be another thirty leagues and more where there are not any towns along the road, but large mosquitos of diverse types of mowquitos that ate us alive, night and day, and take out our eyes, and there was no man able to sleep in bed. From Nueva Salamanca until this city of Trujillo there are close to forty infernal leagues, of such a manner that someone who wished before their death to see purgatory and hell, they can come to this land, and they will see purgatory along all the road, and hell from Nueva Salamanca until this city of Trujillo.)

#### **Affect on the Indigenous Peoples**

Indian slaves were used in Central America, especially where labor needs were intensive and could not be organized through indigenous methods. The major sources of slaves for exporting were not the densely populated highlands, where preexisting organizations were apparently used by the Spanish, but less populated areas where the social structure did not lend themselves to easy exploitation for Spanish purposes (Weaver

1994: 13). Slave exports in Central America began immediately with the arrival of the Spanish, with those slaves from the Caribbean coast going mainly to the islands of the Caribbean (MacLeod 1973: 50). Slave raids contributed to the animosity felt by the indigenous peoples towards the Spanish in the Trujillo area, leading to revolts, fleeing from the Spanish, and the eventual depopulation of much of Trujillo's hinterland by the end of the period.

#### Slave Raids from Trujillo

Cortés recorded the first slave raid in the Trujillo area (Cortés 1526: 618-620). Five or six days after the founding of the city an expedition led by the Bachiller Pedro Moreno arrived with authorization from the officials of Española. After allegedly forcing the vecinos of Trujillo to change the name of the city and accept Juan Ruano, a member of Moreno's expedition, as their leader, Moreno sent out a party that gathered slaves from the surrounding area and branded any that were caught. Later testimony credits Moreno with taking and branding some fifty slaves (Saldaña 1525b: 541). This slave raid caused much animosity between the Spanish and the indigenous population, which attacked Spaniards when they were out looking for food (Cortés 1526: 619). These natives came from a village "*que están a seis y a siete leguas desta villa*" (that is six or seven leagues from this town) (Cortés 1526: 619). These villages may have been Chapagua and Papayeca "*que están siete leguas desta villa y dos leguas el uno del otro*" (that is seven leagues from this town and two leagues the one from the other) (Cortés 1526: 620). The Nahuatl-speaking peoples of the Trujillo area may have been among the first slaves taken in this area.

Cortés wrote of another party of Spaniards, under orders of Pedrarias Dávila from Nicaragua, had taken women and children from the natives in the interior of Honduras in the province of "Huilancho" (Cortés 1526: 633-634). He also told of raids to the Bay Islands:

*"...ciertas isletas que están frontero de aquel puerto de Honduras que llaman los Guanajos, que algunas dellas están despobladas a causa de las armadas que han hecho de las Islas y llevado muchos naturales dellas por esclavos. Y en alguna dellas había quedado alguna gente, y supe que de la isla de Cuba y de la de Jamaica nuevamente habían armado para ellas para las acabar de asolar y destruir..."* (Cortés 1526: 637).

(certain small islands that are in front of the port of Honduras called the Guanajos, some of them are depopulated from the fleets that have been made from the islands, and carried many of the indigenous peoples from them for slaves. And some people had remained in some of them, and I found out that from the island of Cuba and that of Jamaica there was a new fleet heading for those [islands] to finish scorching and destroying them...)

Although Rodrigo de Merlo, the captain of a slaving expedition, had a license to take slaves in the Bay Islands from the authorities in Cuba, Cortés made him return the natives he had taken from *"una de las dichas islas que se dice Huitila"* (one of the said islands is that called Huitila [Utila]) (Cortés 1526: 637). Cortés said he did not punish de Merlo because he had the license, and the members of the slaving party remained in Trujillo after seeing how good it appeared (Cortés 126: 637-638).

Cortés seized Indians, but differentiated between himself and the slave raids. Cortés claimed the high moral ground by enslaving only those who revolted or refused to serve the Spanish. Holding caciques, Indian chiefs, as hostages was a technique employed by the Spanish to ensure servility among the subject Indians (Woodward 1985: 33). After seizing three lords of Chapagua and giving them an ultimatum, either return with their people to the villages and serve the Spaniards or be

punished as rebels, the Indians returned to their homes (Cortés 1526: 630). The Indians of Papayeca never did appear. The Spanish captured Pizacura, one of two lords of Papayeca, who promised to help them capture the other lord, Maçatel (Cortés 1526: 630-631). After Maçatel was captured and refused to bring his people back to the village, he was sentenced to death and executed. Some other Indians saw the result of resisting the Spanish and returned to their villages, but not the people of Papayeca. War was declared on them by the Spanish and some one-hundred slaves were taken, with the result that most of the others returned to their villages and willingly served the Spanish (Cortés 1526: 631-632). Pizacura was recaptured and taken with Cortés to Mexico City to show what the Spaniards could accomplish, but he died there, never to return to Papayeca and Trujillo (Cortés 1526: 632).

The Bay Islands continued to be a source of slaves for a time after the initial settlement of Trujillo. Salcedo, the governor appointed by the crown for Trujillo, wrote that the Bay Islands had been quite populated, but were now almost depopulated because the Indians were killed or enslaved (Salcedo 1526: 47). Some islands were already said to be depopulated and some Indians even went to the mainland to escape from Spanish slave raiders in the islands. He also wrote that the Indians of the Bay Islands served Trujillo and should come under the jurisdiction of that city rather than Santo Domingo (Salcedo 1526: 48).

Indians were subjected to slavery either for resisting the Spanish or because of previous servitude to other Indians (MacLeod 1973: 57). The Indians around Trujillo apparently gave some of their own slaves to the Spanish (Salcedo 1526: 40).

Salcedo emphasized that these Indians were already slaves under other indigenous peoples and that they were already slaves when presented to the Spanish.

*"Dicen questando aqui Fernando Cortés hizo proceso contra algunos destos que se tornaron a alzar idolos por esclavos, mandó que se herrasen en el rostro con un herro de C. Demas destos hai otros esclavos, como ya he dicho, que son que los mismos naturales de la tierra los tienen por esclavos i los compran i venden entre si unos con otros: estos son tan conocidos entre ellos que venidos a los Españoles ellos mismos confiesan ser esclavos de su nación. (Salcedo 1526: 40).*

(They say that when Fernando Cortés was here he proceeded against some Indians who returned to praying to idols to enslave them, and ordered that they brand the face with a mark of "C." Others of them are slaves, like I have already said, they are the same indigenous peoples of the land that have slaves and they buy and sell them between one another: these are well known among them that come to the Spaniards, those same confessing to be slave of their nation).

In 1525, shortly after the founding of Trujillo, Cortés wrote that *"...vinieron a mí ciertos naturales de la provincia de Huilanchó, que es sesenta y cinco leguas de aquella villa de Trujillo..."* (certain Indians came to me from Huilanchó, that is sixty-five leagues from that town of Trujillo) (Cortés 1526: 633). These Indians told of the arrival in their land of twenty horsemen and forty peones, likely from the Spanish settlements in Nicaragua, *"tomándoles sus mujeres e hijos y haciendas"* (taking their women and children and haciendas) (Cortés 1526: 634). Gabriel de Rojas, leader of the first Spaniards to enter Olancho from the south, was forced by Cortés' lieutenants to return the Indians he took. Rojas and his gang were more involved in hunting for booty, pearls, slaves, and have been described by MacLeod (1973: 50-51) as "roving bands of soldiers" rather than disciplined military troops.

The Indians around Trujillo and in the hinterland did not tolerate the Spanish intrusion and slave raids without

resistance. As previously mentioned, the Indians of Papayeca refused to return to their villages and serve the Spaniards until Cortés captured their leaders, executing one of them and keeping the other captive (Cortés 1526: 630-632). Some resistance took the form of maintaining their own culture in the face of fierce Spanish coercion. Three "idols" were being maintained in the Trujillo hinterland:

*"uno estava quatro o cinco leguas desta Villa, e el otro en otro pueblo que esta treinta leguas, i el otro en una Isla que esta doce o quince leguas desta Villa: dicen que son hechos de piedra a manera de muger y dis que es la piedra como verde y marmoleña. En estos dis que tiene toda la genta toda su esperanza i a ellos encomendan sus conucos e haciendas por que las hagan buenas i se las guarden de los tiempos adversarios" (Salcedo 1526: 41).*

(one used to be four or five leagues from this town, and the other in another pueblo that is thirty leagues, and the other on an Island that is twelve or fifteen leagues from this town: they say that they are made of stone in the manner of a women and say that it is green and marble. In them they say that all they people have hope in them and to them they commend their conucos and haciendas that they might make them good and that they guard them in troubled times).

The closest site matches the description of the location for the cities of Chapagua and Papayeca, while the one on the island was likely located on Guanaja, and the other likely up the Aguán Valley. Lara Pinto (1991: 234) links these idols with Aztec rituals and hence the Nahuatl speaking settlements around Trujillo, while Davidson (1991: 209) presents evidence that these were part of the Pech area. Much of their evidence rests on interpreting the word "Papa" from one line: *"dicen que esta con el una persona a quien llaman Papa i dicen que no tiene muger ni se puede casar..."* (they say that here is the person whom they call "Papa" and they do not have women nor are able to marry) (Salcedo 1526: 41). The debate rests on whether the Indians called the person "Papa," or whether Salcedo translated an Indian

word that was the equivalent of "Papa," or "Pope" in Spanish, implying that he was a religious leader of great stature rather than actually called "Papa" by the Indians. I tend to believe the former, for Salcedo wrote:

*"No son tan polidos ni de tanta razon segund me diezen como los de Mesico, paresceme que difieren poco de los de la Española quando estavan sin conversacion de Cristianos ... "*  
(Salcedo 1526: 42).

(They are not very good looking, nor of reason, according to what they tell me about those of Mexico, it appears to me that they differ little from those of Hispaniola when they were not converted to Christianity...).

The Indians around Trujillo reminded the Spanish of the Arawaks of Hispaniola, rather than those of Mexico. There was definitely a mix of indigenous peoples at the time of the settlement of Trujillo when some Indians were used to make war against the people of Papayeca, suggesting different tribes or groups (Cortés 1526: 630). Although the debate over the ethnic nature of those worshipping the idols will not be settled, the important thing is that they were actively maintaining their culture and native religion against Spanish coercion to Christianize.

Resistance also took the form of revolt, an action that could lead to slavery if the Indians were defeated. In Olancho the Cacique Unito, the "*Señor de Comayagua*," attacked and killed fifteen Spaniards and twenty horses, attesting to the importance of the equine transport to the Spanish (Salcedo 1527a: 250). At least some of the people of Trujillo blamed Indian attacks on the scandals, disrespect, and recent events of the Spanish towards the Indians (Vecinos y Cabildo de Trujillo 1528: 65). While Salcedo was in Nicaragua, Vasco de Herrera conducted war against the Indians around Trujillo, taking many slaves and destroying large pueblos, and upsetting the peace of the land (Cereceda 1530: 406-407). There was also an uprising by the Indians around

Trujillo and on the Bay Islands (Cereceda 1530: 417), suggesting a coordinated effort by the Indians to drive the Spanish from not only the city, but from its hinterland as well. In 1533, to the interior of the hinterland, there was mention of Indian attacks on the Spanish in Olancho (Cereceda 1533: 248). Cereceda wrote that most Indians rose up against the Spanish in the Trujillo area, and only with great difficulty were they pacified and returned to serving the Spanish (Cereceda 1533: 269-269v). Unlike the Aztecs of Mexico, the Indians around Trujillo and its hinterland, like the rest of Honduras, had no unified empire with a central authority, so each group had to be conquered individually (MacLeod 1973: 41; Weaver 1994: 10). After the conquest was complete Pedraza (1544a: 404) wrote that the mistreatment by the Spanish caused the Indians to attack.

Not all of the Indians responded as dramatically or violently by fighting the Spanish:

"Oppressed peoples have no obligation to act in ways academics find dramatic or exciting, but rather to survive and endure and to ensure the survival of their families and communities in the face of what threatens to be literally overwhelming pressures" (McCreery 1990: 174).

The Indian response to Spanish intrusion by fleeing their villages to more remote locations is well documented. Indeed, this response began as early as the founding of Trujillo when the caciques and people of Papayeca fled their villages and towns (Cortés 1526: 630-632). As early as 1526, Indians fled the Bay Islands in Trujillo's hinterland, trying to escape to the mainland to avoid the Spanish (Salcedo 1526: 47). The flight from their villages usually led to remote areas that the Spanish could not or were not interested in penetrating. One notice claims the Indians fled to the barren lands and rugged mountains

to avoid the Spanish, and to attack them when they were on the roads (Vecinos y Cabildo de Trujillo 1528: 65). Cereceda (1533: 269v) wrote that some Indians had hidden in the mountains, and when they did return to their villages, often less than half came back. Eleven years later Pedraza (1544a: 397) reported that some Indians still were in hiding in the mountains, not wanting to come down. After the Indians witnessed their relatives in chains and shipped to Santo Domingo, Cuba, San Juan de Puerto Rica, and Jamaica, many fled, with a great number of deaths along the way and after their arrival in the mountains (Pedraza 1544a: 397). There were reports of some forty hidden Indian pueblos in the hinterland, a few with as many as six hundred houses (Pedraza 1547: 34).

Trujillo and its hinterland were largely depopulated by the end of the gold boom. Depopulation in Trujillo and its hinterland, like much of the rest of the Spanish New World, can be attributed to slave raids, warfare, harsh treatment and working conditions, disruption of the food supply, psychological despair, dislocations, and Old World diseases (West and Augelli 1989: 246-147). The indigenous populations virtually disappeared along both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts of Central America (Weaver 1994: 12), including Trujillo and its hinterlands.

Complaints of depopulation started as early as 1526, with some of the Bay Islands being completely empty of people (Salcedo 1526: 47). Villages around Trujillo were depopulated as early as 1528 (Vecinos y Cabildo de Trujillo 1528: 65). Cereceda (1520: 407) declared that some towns that used to have one thousand souls had less than thirty by 1530, due to the insatiable greed of the Spaniards for gold and slaves. Torre (1540: 161) reported

that slave raids carried away people by force, leaving only the sick and old in the villages and contributing to the depopulation. In 1540, he reported that there were only 150 Indians in *repartimiento* to fourteen or fifteen Spaniards and asked for 100-150 African slaves to work in Trujillo, writing that there would shortly be no Indians to serve the Spanish (Torres 1540: 161). In 1547, Pedraza wrote that there used to be pueblos in the Trujillo area with two or three thousand houses and towns with six to eight hundred to one thousand houses, but then there were only about 150-180 Indians in *repartimiento* at Trujillo, and none of the vecinos had more than twenty Indians (Pedraza 1547: 32). There were no Indians that could be called upon to build the cathedral in Trujillo, so he asked for half a dozen African slaves (Pedraza 1547: 34). On the island of Guanaja there were only thirty Indians left (Pedraza 1547: 32). Pedraza described the land as destroyed and depopulated, and blamed the past governors, excepting Cortés (Pedraza 1544a: 196), and for more than thirty leagues in some parts there were no pueblos (Pedraza 1547: 13).

Slave raids, disruption of the food supply caused by village abandonment, and standing in cold mountain streams panning for gold all contributed to the spread of disease throughout the New World (Wolf 1982: 133-134). In the documents I have seen there is only one clear reference to diseases affecting indigenous peoples in Trujillo and its hinterland for 1533. Cereceda (1533: 277) wrote that an epidemic of "*sarampión*" (measles) hit the Indians especially hard, and even affected the Spanish as well. He reported that the epidemic occurred after the arrival of Alonso de Avila from the Yucatán, and that

sarampión continued to pass through the villages after the original outbreak. This epidemic was undoubtedly part of a general epidemic of sarampión throughout Central America in 1532-34 (MacLeod 1973: 98; Lovell 1991: 68). Measles was not recognized as a separate disease in Europe until the eighteenth century, and although today "sarampión" is translated as "measles", we must be cautious about applying the term "measles" to this or any other epidemic of "sarampión" through the 1700s (Lovell 1991: 70-71).

### **Conclusion**

The gold boom of Trujillo started almost immediately after the initial settlement. The Spanish exploited placer deposits with Indian labor, either slaves or those held in repartimiento or encomienda. By the late 1540s and 1550, the easily extracted gold had been removed, and much of the Indian labor needed for extraction had been wiped out. The Spanish had established several towns in Trujillo's hinterland, but only the town of San Jorge de Olancho still existed in 1550. The indigenous population had been wiped out so severely by slave raids, warfare, disease, and harsh treatment, that many Spaniards moved from Trujillo to Naco where there were more Indians to work for the Spanish. No long-term development had really taken place in Trujillo, and despite the gold boom, the city itself did not flourish during this period. European livestock and plants were introduced to Trujillo, and probably diffused to other parts of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala from this port.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**TRUJILLO, NEW PRODUCTS, AND  
NEW HINTERLANDS, 1550-1630s**

Between 1550 and the first half of the 1600s, Trujillo and its hinterland underwent great changes, brought about by the end of the gold boom and the beginning of a long economic bust for the city, port, and hinterland. Trujillo's gold production declined and only a small hinterland was left from which gold was still sometimes extracted. Between 1550 and the 1640s, the story of Trujillo and its hinterland became a search for alternative products for export. A new hinterland developed based on products other than gold, although much less lucrative. Old World flora and fauna introduced through Trujillo impacted the landscape. Spanish mercantilist policy stressed the export of gold, and now that Trujillo's hinterland had very little of the precious metal the city's sphere of influence began to diminish.

The port at Trujillo, although quite good, was a long distance from the centers of major economic activity in Central America and the use of the port declined. Trujillo did remain, however, an important resupply stop on the convoy route that connected the province with Spain until the mid-1600s.

#### **Decline of Gold Production**

The rapid decrease in gold production brought about the end of Trujillo's first economic boom period. After 1550 seldom is gold mentioned in the primary sources about Trujillo. The poverty of the city became more apparent as it was now "...tterra [tierra] mui pobre..." (very poor land) (Trujillo 1550: 334v). The transfer of the seat of the Audiencia from Gracias a Dios, Honduras, to Santiago de Guatemala in 1548 reflected the increasing and rapid decline of gold throughout the province and the decreasing importance of Honduras (Woodward 1985: 36). Gold production faltered throughout Honduras, the placers being

"simply the run-off, both figuratively and literally" from deposits in the Central Highlands (MacLeod 1973: 62). The easiest exploitable deposits, especially the gold placers, were exhausted, and primitive mining techniques used by the Spanish were insufficient to extract gold profitably from harder rock (MacLeod 1973: 61). The Spanish, in effect, were simply "looting":

"...for the invading Spaniards simply took the resources most readily and obviously available and sent them out of the country. Thus human beings and surface gold were exported in large quantities for the first thirty years after the conquest" (MacLeod 1973: 63).

The Spanish, however, blamed the decline of gold production on the loss of labor and new restrictions on slavery (López de Velasco 1575: 158; Vazquez de Espinosa 1629: 40; West 1959: 769; MacLeod 1973: 61).

López de Velasco (1575: 158), did report that some gold extraction took place, but the lack of African slaves to perform the work hampered production. Vazquez de Espinosa (1629: 40-41) reported gold in all of the rivers, although it could not be removed because of a lack of workers. Reports of large amounts of gold still existing in the valley of the Río Guayape may have kept optimism high (López de Velasco 1575: 158; Vazquez de Espinosa 1629: 39), but labor shortages again were blamed for the inability to extract the ore, with only fifty *negros* remaining to work the placer deposits in 1575 (López de Velasco 1575: 158). Occasionally throughout Honduras new discoveries of small, previously untapped, placer deposits were discovered and exploited, but the sites were quickly abandoned when the gold ran out (MacLeod 1973: 61). Gold production in Trujillo's

hinterland had declined precipitously and rapidly, never again to be important.

#### **New Products, New Hinterland**

The extraction of gold in the early boom years of Trujillo and Central America was, in effect, "looting" (MacLeod 1973: 63).

The most easily obtainable gold was mined from placers by slaves, or simply stolen from Indians. The land had been stripped of the most easily acquired riches by the 1560s (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 36). Although the "more obvious and immediate resources of wealth" had disappeared, plenty of other natural resources remained that could be exploited (MacLeod 1973: 62). With the realization that Indian populations were not inexhaustible, the Spanish began to use the remaining natives for service in local areas while they continued their search for alternative products (MacLeod 1973: 63).

"To a group eager for quick profits but unwilling to spend time and effort in manufacture, the plant life of Central America was an obvious place to search for saleable goods" (MacLeod 1973: 64).

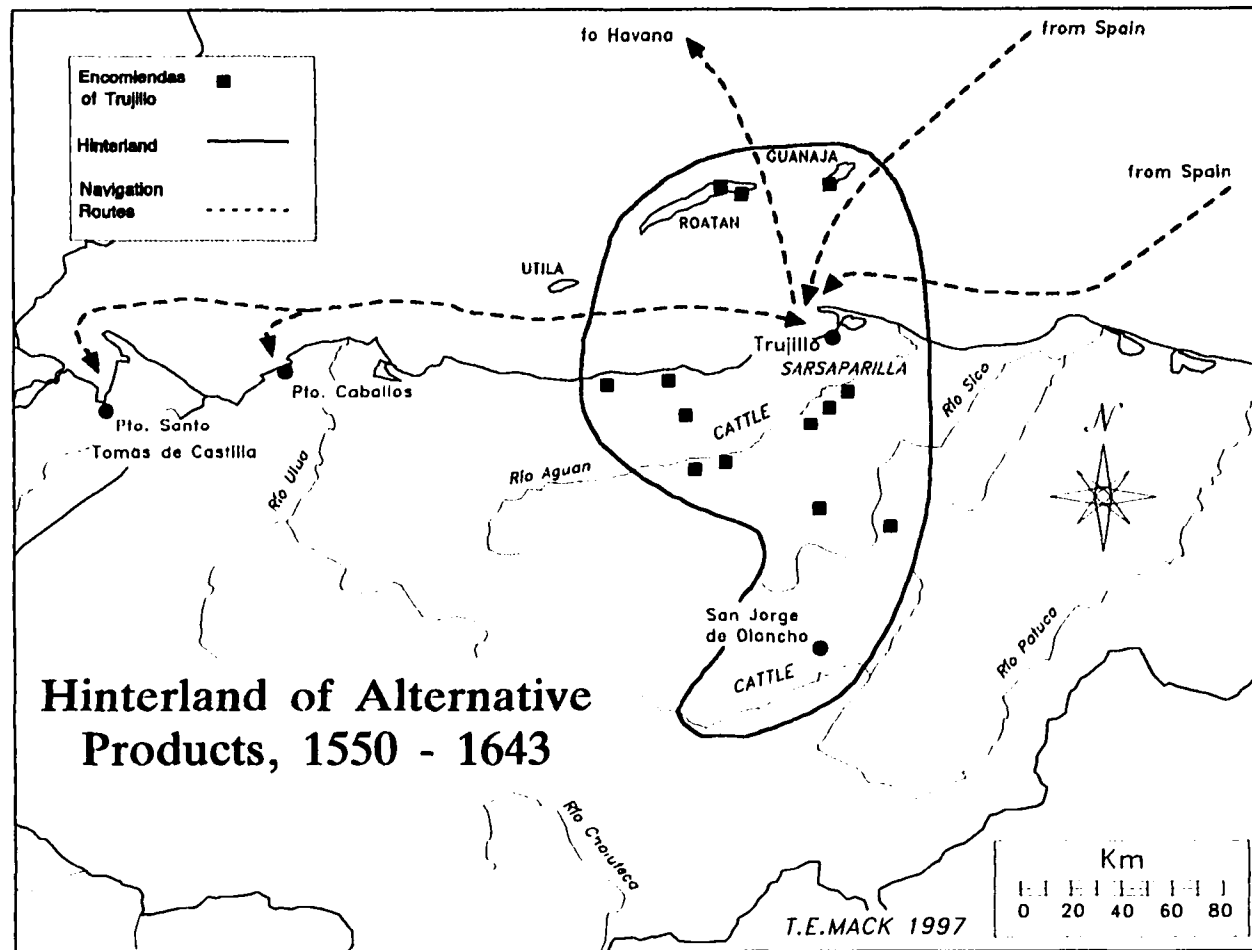
Throughout Central America a search began to find products to replace specie as an export. The demand in Mexico for cacao began increasing, and production in Central America spread through the Pacific Coast from Soconusco, Suchitepéquez (Zapotitlán), Izalcos, and Guazacapán, and into to Nicaragua (Bergman 1969: 90-94; MacLeod 1973: 61; Woodward 1985: 45; West and Augelli 1989: 262). Indigo produced on the lower Pacific slopes of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua was exported to Spain and Peru (Woodward 1985: 45; West and Augelli 1989: 262-3).

Other exports from Central America included balsam, beeswax, cañafístula, cochineal, copal, sarsaparilla, sugar, and tobacco (MacLeod 1973: 64-66; West and Augelli 1989: 261-264).

In the sixteenth and seventeenth century plant products of Central America provided for small, local boomlets, but they were not long-lasting, nor did they ever provide an economic opportunity for many people (MacLeod 1973: 49). The Spanish mercantilist policy, however, stressed the export of gold and silver from the New World to Spain, nearly to the exclusion of everything else (Weaver 1994: 26). Despite the export of these alternative products, without the large-scale production of specie like Mexico and Peru, Central America became and remained a colonial backwater in the Spanish empire (Weaver 1994: 26).

The people of Trujillo, like other areas of Central America, searched for an alternative product that would lead to wealth. After the decline of gold, Trujillo's most important export was sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), a plant native to the Americas (MacLeod 1973: 66) (Map 4). Sarsaparilla grows wild, not cultivated, in swampy areas. The roots of the plant were gathered to make a tea or tonic (Vazquez de Espinosa 1629: 41; MacLeod 1973: 66). As a medicine sarsaparilla had the reputation as a cure for a variety of diseases including syphilis, scrofula, fever, and plague (MacLeod 1973: 66).

Large quantities of sarsaparilla were shipped from Trujillo. López de Velasco (1575: 158) wrote that "*mucha y buena zarzaparilla*" (a lot of and good sarsaparilla) was exported from the city. Vazquez de Espinosa (1629: 41) wrote "*...se cria mucha en esta ciudad y comarca, de la mejor de las Indias...*" (they grow a lot in this city [Trujillo] and district, the best of the Indies). In the last decade of the sixteenth century "*...el mayor trato que tiene [Trujillo] es la çarsaparilla y queros que hasen la tierra adentro...*" (the largest trade that it [Trujillo]



Map 4. Hinterland of Alternative Products, 1550-1643.

has is sarsaparilla and hides that are made in the land to the interior) (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 13). In the 1580s as much as 3,000 to 5,000 arrobas (75,000 to 125,000 pounds) of sarsaparilla were exported from the Bay of Honduras, (MacLeod 1973: 66)<sup>1</sup>. Exports from Trujillo declined to only eight hundred arrobas in 1608, and 1,600 arrobas in 1610 (MacLeod 1973: 66-67). The decline of sarsaparilla continued until it was no longer a product of any importance by 1650.

The Indian population, which performed the work of gathering the sarsaparilla roots, continued to decline during this period, and hence, the harvesting of the roots declined also. Indians often had to wade in water in the swampy areas during the rainy season to collect roots. They also missed the sowing season to plant their *milpas*, leading to declines in food production. Gathering the root of the plant probably caused the plant to wither and die rather than reproduce (Weaver 1994: 27).

The combination of overexploitation by zealous Spaniards to get rich quick and the destructive methods of harvesting sarsaparilla led to the decline of the plant itself around Trujillo (MacLeod 1973: 66). By the 1590s the main source of sarsaparilla was reportedly five to six leagues from the city. Unstable prices in Europe, increased distance to the plants from Trujillo, the destructive methods used to gather the roots, the continued decline in the Indian population and work force, and the pitifully small profit margin made sarsaparilla a very poor substitute for gold, with the boomlet around Trujillo eventually ending (MacLeod 1973: 67).

Cattle ranching was often the only remaining option for many Spaniards after the decline of gold production (Perez-

Brignoli 1989: 44). Antonio de Carmona, under order of Cortés, brought the first cattle to Trujillo "...vacas y terneras y toros..." (cows and female calves and bulls), as well as mares and stallions, sometime in 1525 (Pedraza 1544: 414-5). Cortés' (1526: 623-4) own account does not mention the cattle, but does mention horses and meat, "carne," from both Cuba and Jamaica. It is likely that Cuba was the source for the first cattle to Trujillo, for by the end of the first decade of the sixteenth century Cuba had a large population of cattle and horses, and the Spanish had allocated much of the land for stock raising (Sauer 1966: 189). It was from Trujillo that "...se començo a poblar la tierra de todas estas cosas..." (they began to populate the land all of these things) (Pedraza 1544: 415). From Trujillo the *criollo* type of cattle, horned, usually brown with black about the head and shoulder area, relatively small, and still presently found in Honduras, spread throughout the countryside (Johannessen 1963: 37).

Cattle ranching began in the earliest years of Trujillo. Pedraza (1544: 389) reported there used to be a *vecino* in Trujillo with two hundred head of cattle, and another with more than fifteen head plus forty *novillos* (young bulls), with other men owning more than fifty to seventy mares and thirty to forty young stallions. The population of cattle, and the horses needed for stock management, grew so rapidly that some Spanish were engaged in commercial livestock raising from nearly the beginning of the Trujillo's existence. Spaniards from Extremadura and Castilla brought their ideas of cattle ranching, for those areas had been divided into large cattle estates since the *reconquista* (MacLeod 1973: 124), but the situation in the New World was

different with the depopulation of the Indians, extensive open ranges, and the lack of trained stockmen (Johannessen 1963: 27, 38). New World cattle ranching, as practiced in Honduras, modified the model from Spain to fit local needs. Roundups were held once a year and the cattle largely became feral. They had to defend themselves against jaguar attacks; otherwise they had virtually no natural enemies. Population decline among the Indians left uncultivated and savanna lands open for cattle grazing, where cattle were more easily controlled by Spaniards on horseback (Johannessen 1963: 27, 42), resulting in an extremely rapid increase of the livestock.

The Valle de Papayeca, reported by López de Velasco (1575: 158), was located five leagues to the south of Trujillo, and stretched thirty leagues towards Olancho, and most likely was the Aguán Valley. To get to the flat, temperate, and fertile valley one had to cross the "Río Huaguan" (Río Aguán). Most of the cattle ranching for Trujillo's hinterland was along the Río Aguán. López de Velasco (1575: 158) described the "Río Huaguan":

*"...estancias y atos de vacas, que se crían por la corambre, aunque la carne dellas es la mas estimada, y hay tantas, que valen á doce pesos..."* (...ranches and herds of cattle, that are raised for the hide, although the meat of them [the cattle] is the most esteemed, and there is much of it, they cost only twelve pesos...) (López de Velasco 1575: 158).

Savannas existed five or six leagues inland from Trujillo, somewhere around present-day Tocoa, where there was a large number of cattle (Antonelli y Quintanilla: 13). It is likely that cattle ranching from Trujillo was practiced as far as present-day Olanchito, because savannas remained open for grazing in that area until the 1850s, with some open up to the 1950s (Johannessen 1963: 73, 75). The development of these cattle

ranches in the Valle de Aguán eventually led to permanent settlements in the valley.

By 1590, Trujillo's commerce was largely in "çarsaparilla y queros" (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 13), an indication of the beginning of sarsaparilla's decline and an increasing importance in cattle products. English privateers described Spanish ships in Trujillo as "beinge laden with hides" (Thread 1592: 198), and taking another that was "...loaded up with hides the shippe which we tooke at our first comming; for she had but a thousand hides in her..." (Twitt 1592: 192), demonstrating the large number of hides shipped from Trujillo and the hinterland. French corsairs took the hides that were stored in the city when they sacked Trujillo. A Spanish military party surprised and captured the French in the Bay Islands, and recovered 700 hides (Cabildo de Trujillo 1596). Passing ships also purchased meat when stopping at Trujillo (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12v). Hides and leather from Trujillo's hinterland, Central America's as well, did not become booming industries because they competed directly with producers in Spain at a price disadvantage because of the enormous shipping costs (Weaver 1994: 27-8).

Although sarsaparilla and hides were by far the most important products from Trujillo's hinterland during this period, other products were raised or produced in the area. Horses were raised at Trujillo (Pedraza 1955: 389; López de Velasco 1575: 158), undoubtedly for Spanish use and probably under more care and control than the semi-feral cattle. Other food products included sheep, pigs, maize, cassava, fish, and deer (López de Velasco 1575: 158). English privateers also mentioned shipments of balsam and indigo out of Trujillo, as well as some red cloth,

probably dyed with cochineal, that likely came from elsewhere in Central America (Thread 1592: 198; Twitt 1592: 192). Wax and honey came from the mountains around Trujillo and the Indians of Guanaja and Roatán, islands subject to Trujillo, provided cassava, fish, chickens, and other foods for the city and ships that stopped at the port (Vazquez de Espinosa 1629: 41). Trujillo also provided fresh water for ships that called at the port (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12v). All these products proved to be of minor importance and did not sustain any local economic boomlets.

The search for other products that would lead to riches did not produce any new or sustained large growth in Trujillo's hinterland. Spanish mercantilist policy resulted in:

"...the subordination of the commercial possibilities of Spanish colonization in the New World in favor of promoting unilateral transfers of gold and especially silver from the mines in the New World." (Weaver 1994: 24).

The Spanish would tolerate, however, enterprises that supported the flow of specie back to Spain (Weaver 1994: 26), such as Trujillo's role in supplying ships with food and water. The Spanish often did not show much interest in developing industries other than silver or gold extraction, for "[t]hey had come to the Indies not to become farmers but to become lords" (Weaver 1994: 14). The lack of easy gold and silver to exploit and Spanish mercantilist policy that stressed precious metal exports to the near exclusion of everything else, combined to make Trujillo and Central America a backwater area in the Spanish empire (Weaver 1994: 24-16). The boomlet of sarsaparilla at Trujillo and the exports of hides did not interfere with silver shipments from Central America, and Trujillo's role as a Spanish outpost on the

coast, both of which helped to sustain Trujillo after the decline of gold production.

#### **Decline in the Sphere of Influence**

Trujillo and the rest of the Caribbean Coast, once the focus of so much Spanish interest and activity during the gold boom, had, by 1570, become a remote area and from then onward, played a subordinate role in Central America (MacLeod 1973: 148).

The Spanish did not try to develop the Atlantic coast during the early colonial period because of the fierce Indians, the extreme climate, the mirage of easy wealth, and the lack of money from the Crown for development (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 37). Despite brief surges in exports of indigo, cacao, and silver, Central America stagnated and became more isolated within the Spanish empire (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 45). Trujillo was part of the backwater Caribbean coastal zone, a backwater part of Central America that was itself a backwater of the Spanish-American empire. The entire Caribbean coast of Central America, including Trujillo, the main settlement on the coast (MacLeod 1973: 148), lay isolated from the rest of Central America. Roads, when built, were primarily for the use of transporting merchandise to the capital in Santiago (Woodward 1985: 47). The weakness of the export sector of the economy and that of the transport network exacerbated each other (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 45).

The Caribbean versant has a tropical, lowland climate that the Spanish were not prepared to adapt to in major ways. They may have even been maladapted for this type of environment (Jordan 1989: 495-496). Honduras's north coast provided the best location from which to export goods from Central America, for

Mexico and Costa Rica were definitely too distant (MacLeod 1973: 154). The coast proved to be unhealthy for the Spanish. An excellent breeding ground for malaria, yellow fever, and other diseases was found in the poorly drained swamps, lush jungle, heat, rainfall, and humidity of the coast (MacLeod 1973: 154). Establishing and maintaining deep-water ports in this environment found on the coast proved extremely difficult for the Spanish.

As the gold ran out the Spanish quickly lost any enthusiasm and interest they had in the coast, and Central America altogether. The conquistadors, Pedro de Alvarado being the best example, were not interested in Central America *per se*, but pursued the easiest way to get rich (MacLeod 1973: 100,102). Through the 1520s and 1530s the conquistadors raced across Central America chasing rumors of new riches just over the horizon. Neither were they administrators nor statesmen, thinking mainly in terms of how they could get rich quickest using the land they had conquered. The promise of El Dorado did not materialize from the exaggerated reports of wealth, disillusioning the conquistadors of Central America. The newly discovered riches of Peru brought the opportunity to chase after the riches of the Inca Empire, and Central America became a staging area before moving to South America, or was abandoned entirely (MacLeod 1973: 100,102; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 36). After the easy riches of gold placers were exhausted and the vast riches of Peru became apparent, Central America continued its decline and became increasingly isolated.

Rather than settle the entire *Costa del Norte*, the Spanish settled in enclaves strategically located on the coast, yet far from each other, because of their limited interest and, more

importantly, limited resources (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 36-37). The Spanish held, with rather uncertain control the Bay of Amatique, Puerto Caballos, Trujillo, the Desaguadero at the mouth of the Río San Juan, and later the area between the Matina and Banano Rivers in Costa Rica (MacLeod 1973: 154; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 37). Throughout this period Trujillo continued to be the only permanently settled port on the coast. Only a few slaves occupied Puerto Caballos with the Spanish living inland at San Pedro and settlement at Puerto Santo Tomás de Castilla lasted only a few short years. Few people lived at the Desaguadero and the Matina Coast of Costa Rica was but sparsely populated.

Trujillo and the other ports, however small and underdeveloped, remained as the life line between Central America and Spain, and could not be wholly abandoned (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 37). Central America itself was divided into two zones: the Caribbean that initially had an Indian population of low-culture or technology, and the Pacific zone and the highlands that were a high-culture area (MacLeod 1973: 44). Over the centuries the more advanced highlands and Pacific coast attracted the Mexican and Spanish conquerors. Yet, as the Spanish developed Central America into a Pacific oriented province they preferred economic ties with Spain and Europe, necessitating the Caribbean ports of the Costa del Norte. With limited resources and limited interest the Spanish developed Trujillo and other Caribbean ports only as much as they absolutely needed to. Development was minimalized as much as possible. As the Atlantic coast declined in importance to a minimum, so did Trujillo, resulting in a loss of it's sphere of influence.

Trujillo had been the first bishopric in Honduras because of its importance as a port and its hinterland full of gold. The reorientation of Central America made Trujillo less attractive for the seat of the cathedral. The bishop described himself and Trujillo as "...la mas pobre persona del mundo en trra mui pobre..." (the poorest person in the world in a very poor land) (Trugillen 1550: 334v). Trujillo had become so poor the people could not pay their tithes or support the assigned priests (Carrella 1565). The city of Valladolid de Comayagua became more attractive for the location of the cathedral, as well as other administrative functions, as the reorientation toward the highlands and Pacific continued. The decision was made to move the cathedral out of Trujillo to Comayagua. The exact date the bishopric was moved is unknown, and may have been as early as 1558 or 1559, although not officially until as late as 1572 (López de Velasco 1575: 155; Vazquez de Espinosa 1629: 41).

The territory of Trujillo's sphere of influence is most easily mapped by examining the encomiendas held by the Spanish of the city. As late as 1549 the town of Nueva Salamanca, apparently somewhere along the headwaters of the Río Patuca, was under the jurisdiction of Trujillo, as would be any encomiendas held by that town itself (Maximiliano y la Princesa 1549: 94). The extension of Trujillo's sphere of influence was large in it's first, gold mining boom. Throughout the 1550s the sphere of influence of Trujillo declined as the Indian population decreased. López de Velasco (1575: 157) reported less than six hundred *tributarios* living in twenty-four villages, with some three or four *encomenderos* from Trujillo. The largest encomienda was worth two hundred *ducados*. By 1582, the number of villages

decreased to nineteen, with 440 Indians (Obispo de Honduras 1582: 1). Contreras's (1582: 67) encomienda list totals only 403 "yndios tributarios" in nineteen villages. The lower Valle de Aguán, the Río Papaloteca, and the Valle de Agalta are all in the hinterland of Trujillo. Encomiendas on the islands of Roatán and Guanaja also came under Trujillo, but the island of Utila, however, was assigned to San Pedro (Contreras 1582: 67, 69). The two islands remained in the sphere of influence of Trujillo (Vazques de Espinosa 1629: 41), even during the first period when the English were challenging Spanish hegemony for the region.

The people of Trujillo depended on the Indian population for much their food, a common practice in Central America during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Woodward 1985: 46). From the list of food types around Trujillo (López de Velasco 1575: 158) it is likely that the Indians would have tended sheep, hunted deer, fished, cultivated maize and cassava, and raised pigs. The cattle around Trujillo and up the Valle de Aguán were semi-feral and needed little or no attention. There were also six or eight Indians who apparently just fished, paid their tribute with their catch, and supplied Trujillo with fish (Romano 1586). Coconut palms, plantains and "otras de la tierra" (others of the land) came from the area around Trujillo (Vazquez de Espinosa 1629: 41). Indians on the Bay Islands grew much of the food for local consumption, as well as supplying passing ships (Davidson 1974: 38). The one *pueblo* of Indians on Guanaja produced cassava, chickens and pigs in large quantities for the city (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12v). Indeed, Trujillo apparently could not survive without the food produced by the Indians in the Bay Islands:

"...en la dha çiuudad [Trujillo] no se coxe cossa ninguna de sustento que todo se trae de las islas dichas atrás [Bay Islands]" (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12v).  
 (in the said city they do not gather up anything of sustenance that all they bring is from the said islands previously mentioned

The Indians of Roatán and Guanaja were apparently quite good at raising food, providing cassava, chickens, fish, and other foods for Trujillo for a long time (Vazques de Espinosa 1629: 41). These same Indians also provided food for European interlopers challenging Spanish hegemony in Trujillo's sphere of influence.

Trujillo's commercial sphere of influence coincided with its hinterland for alternative products. The Valle de Papayela [Valle de Agalta] and the Valle del Río Aguán were both in Trujillo's sphere of influence (López de Velasco 1575: 157, 158).

Alternatives such as cattle and sarsaparilla were gathered from these regions. The encomiendas of 1582 clearly demonstrate this pattern upon the land. Antonelli y Quintanilla (1590: 13) and Vazquez de Espinosa (1629: 41) described the savannas to the interior where cattle grazed upon the grasses, all under the sphere of influence of Trujillo.

### **The Cultural Landscape**

During this time period Trujillo was constantly fortifying its site against attacks by buccaneers, privateers, and pirates.

Trujillo was a poor city (Trugillen 1550: 334v), whose purpose was basically to provide essential services to passing ships. Fortifications at Trujillo cost 1,000 gold pesos a year to repair (Criado de Castilla 1573), suggesting constant repairs and perhaps a maladaptation of building in the tropical climate. The Spanish considered the site to be strong for defense, with the gully or drop off facing the sea and at the foot of a mountain range, at its present site (López de Velasco 1575: 157). A

fence, or wall, constructed of *tapiera* (adobe or mud-covered) surrounded the city. Entrance to the city was through a door, kept closed at night for fear of pirates, and guarded by four *falcones* (falconets - small cannon). Two bronze cannons and four or five of iron made up the larger artillery pieces defending Trujillo. One English privateer went so far as to describe the simple fortifications as "the castle" (Twitt 1592: 192). The Cabildo Secular de Valladolid de Comayagua (1586:1) said that both Trujillo and Puerto Caballos lacked necessities to defend themselves, suggesting that the fortifications were poorly constructed and did not last long when they were built.

The port of Trujillo was said to be good, and capable of holding all the boats that they would want to put into the bay (López de Velasco 1575: 158). This same description claimed the port was in a sheltered bay, "*de todos los vientos*" (from all the winds), an obvious mistake in light of the *nortes* that disturb the Bay of Trujillo during December and January. Curiously enough, López de Velasco reported that the port was named "Juan Gil," but does not explain why or for whom, the name not appearing in other documents that I have seen.

The people of Trujillo constructed their buildings, presumably the church, cabildo, and homes, of adobe or mud, supposedly because of a lack of rocks available in the area (López de Velasco 1575: 158). The city was at the foot of the mountain, between two rivers, known today as the Río Cristales and Río Negro, and well supplied with good water. At the foot of a mountain range named "Guaymoreta" was a hut and a plot of harvested wheat, where the Spanish attempted to grow the materials for bread, their preferred staple food.

Just prior to the beginning of this period Trujillo had a population of fifty or more *vecinos* in 1547 (Pedraza 1547: 15). By 1575 the population of *vecinos* had risen to 100 (López de Velasco 1575: 157), perhaps because of increasing numbers of Spaniards in the sarsaparilla and cattle trades, requiring their presence in the city more than gold that would require them to be at the site. The population declined by 1582 to either twenty *vecinos* (Obispo de Honduras 1582), or thirty "*vecinos casados*" (married citizens) (Contreras 1582: 66). López de Velasco's population numbers may be either an inaccurate estimate, or simply a guess. It seems that with the sarsaparilla boom of the 1580s, Trujillo's population would have increased during that time period, and not before. Antonelli y Quintanilla (1590: 27) wrote that sixty "*vecinos, muy buena gente*" (citizens, very good people) resided in Trujillo, and Juan de Pineda (1594: 147) wrote that there were only twenty-five *vecinos*, more or less. Again, the population data given by Antonelli y Quintanilla may be on the high side, although it does reflect a possible population increase caused in part by the sarsaparilla boom of the 1580s. The decline by 1594 would reflect the bust in sarsaparilla trade.

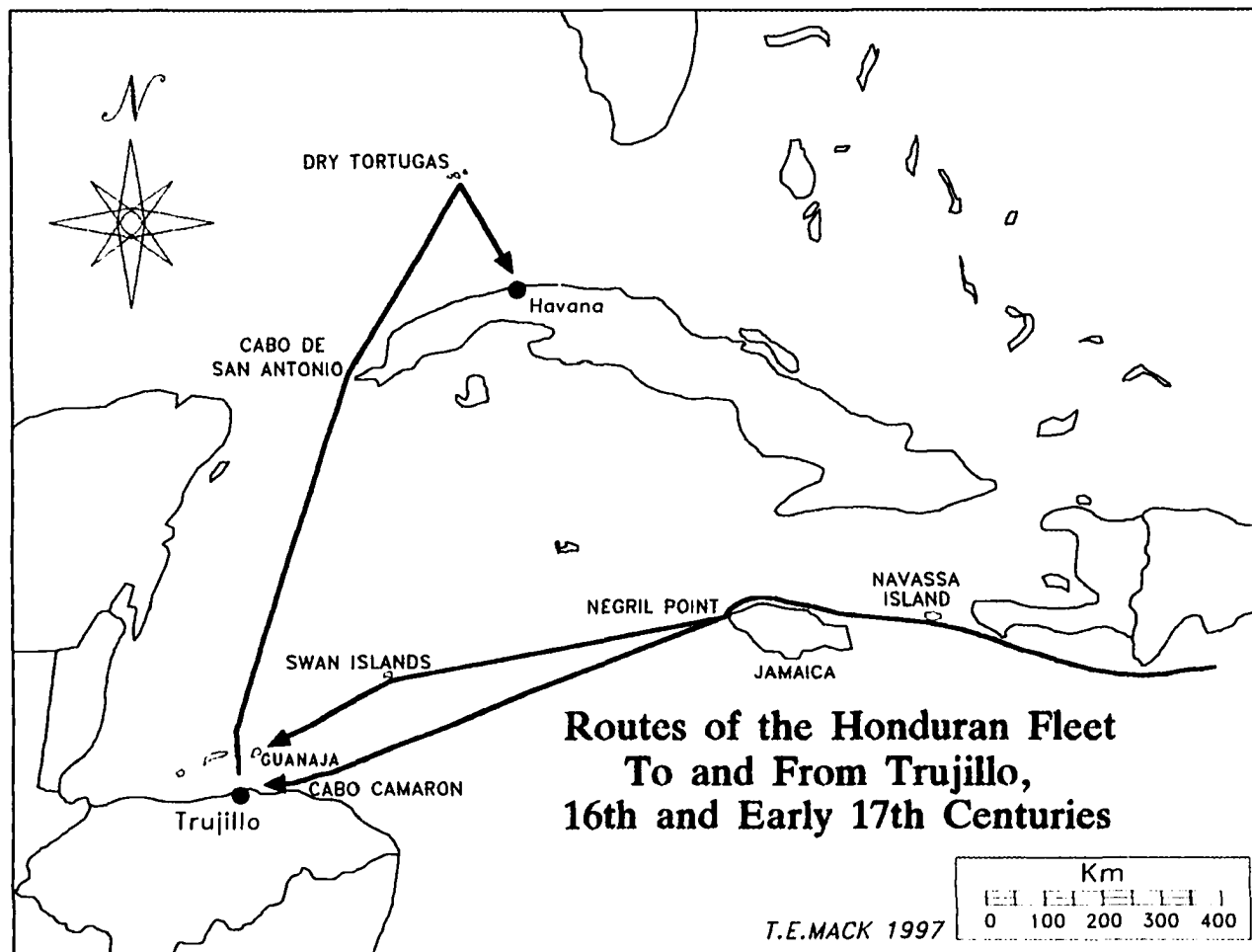
During the period of the gold boom the Indian population dropped precipitously, so this period of the alternative products and new hinterland began with much fewer Indians than at the time of colonization. Only six-hundred *tributarios* remained in twenty-four villages in 1575 (López de Velasco 1575: 157). Between Trujillo and Comayagua the land was depopulated for seventy leagues. Indian population declined to 400 "*indios casados y tributarios*" (married and tributary Indians) in nineteen villages in 1582 (Obispo de Honduras 1582), or 403

*indios tributarios* for Trujillo's encomiendas (Contreras 1582: 67). Trujillo and its hinterland were slowly losing its Indian population on which it depended for labor and food production.

#### **Port Function of Trujillo**

With the establishment of the city in 1525 Trujillo became the first permanent port in Central America, however, the end of the gold boom led to a decline in the port's importance. Although it was no longer the most important port, largely because of its distance from other population centers in the highlands oriented towards the Pacific (MacLeod 1973: 156), it still played a crucial role as a port city. Trujillo's port was the main resupply point for ships sailing between Spain and Guatemala.

Ships sailing from Spain to Guatemala first put into Trujillo, unloading the goods destined for the city before proceeding onward to Puerto Caballos (López de Velasco 1575: 157-158). Ships for Central America sailed from Spain with the *flota* for Nueva España, leaving the convoy at Cabo de Tiburón on Hispaniola, sailed past Isla "Navasa" (Navassa Island) and along the north coast of Jamaica to "cabo de Negrillo" (Negril Point), the westernmost extension of the island, then proceeded to Cabo de Camarón on the mainland (López de Velasco 1575: 158) (Map 5). Along another, very similar route from Jamaica the ships continued sailing to the Islas de Santanillas (Swan Islands), two sand islands some twenty leagues to the mainland, then bore west-southwest to the Island of Guanaja (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12). Regardless of the details of sailing between Jamaica and the mainland, the ships first put into Trujillo. From Trujillo



Map 5. Routes of the Honduran Fleet to and from Trujillo, 16th and Early 17th Centuries.

the ships continued onward to Puerto Caballos, (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12; MacLeod 1973: 156).

At times ships from Spain would make stops in Trujillo and Puerto Caballos, then proceed directly to the mouth of the Río Dulce where they sometimes simply dumped the goods on the beach for small boats and canoes to pick up later (MacLeod 1973: 157). Smaller vessels, however, often met the larger ships from Spain at Trujillo or Puerto Caballos, to tranship the goods for Guatemala (MacLeod 1973: 156). The shallow draft of the smaller vessels permitted them to cross the bar of the Río Dulce to enter into the Golfo Dulce. Unloading of the goods took place at Bodegas from which two routes to the highlands were used (MacLeod 1973: 157). One route went up the Río Polochic as far as possible, then transferred to mules for the land journey through Verapaz to Santiago de Guatemala. The other route left Bodegas by land to the Río Motagua, where the goods traveled to Gualán by water and the rest of the way to Santiago.

Ships leaving the Golfo Dulce or Puerto Caballos first retraced their route along the coast back to Trujillo. This route avoided the shoals and cays along the Yucatán Peninsula (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12, 12v). The prevailing Northeast Trade Winds along this coast caused the sailing ships to go roughly to windward along the coast upon leaving Puerto Caballos for Trujillo. The crews of the ships anchored at night, possibly because of the cays and shoals along the coast between the two ports, and would enjoy the land breeze while anchored. Ships left Trujillo sailing through the Caribbean and the Yucatan Channel, past Cabo de San Antón, then beat to the northeast to the Dry Tortugas from where they proceeded directly to Havana

town, the trip taking about four days (López de Velasco 1575: 158; Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12v). Ships had to leave Puerto Caballos for Trujillo any time after the beginning of April until no later than the eight of May (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12v). The ships then had to leave Havana by May, or June at the latest, so that they would miss the dangers of the hurricane season.

Vazquez de Espinosa (1620: 41) claimed that great business dealings occurred at Trujillo as ships sailed in both directions between Spain and Guatemala. The main reason, however, for stopping at Trujillo was for resupply. Upon arrival from Spain they ships entered the Bay of Trujillo where they "*...toman Refresco en ella y dexan la carga que traen para aquella çidad...*" (take refreshment in it [the bay] and leave the cargo they carry for that city [Trujillo]) (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12). Ships from Puerto Caballos stopped at Trujillo before leaving for Spain "*...a tomar refresco, donde toman carne y agua y casave y todo lo necesario que han menester para ir a España...*" (to take refreshment, where they take meat and water and cassava and all that is necessary that they have need of for going to Spain) ((Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590: 12v). Trujillo continued to function as a port, but instead of being the entrepôt for gold from the New World to the Old, it now served as a resupply center for a minor shipping route. Indians subject to Trujillo provided fish, chickens, and other food items for the ships (Vazquez de Espinosa 1629: 41).

The ports of the *Costa del Norte*, Trujillo, Puerto Caballos, and Puerto Santo Tomás de Castilla, were plagued by problems that were erroneously blamed for the entire cause for

the economic downturn of Central America in the latter half of the sixteenth century (MacLeod 1973: 154). Frequent exaggeration of the characteristics of each port, both positively and negatively, plague the researcher sifting through the primary sources. With careful perusal of the documents, and working with the benefit of hindsight and geographical and historical knowledge, it is possible to reconstruct the pros and cons of each port, discovering which problems were real, imaginary, or exaggerated.

The shift in emphasis in Central American Spanish colonization to the highlands and the Pacific Coast led to the isolation of the *Costa del Norte*, essentially the ports of Trujillo and Puerto Caballos. Early in the colonial period the Spanish realized that opening roads throughout the entire Audiencia would be an extremely difficult undertaking (Vasco de Plaxencia 1550: 334v). Both Puerto Caballos and especially Trujillo were simply too far over roads in horrible condition from the main centers of economic power and production in Guatemala and El Salvador:

"...for there was little point in using a good port if the routes of access to it from the productive hinterlands were prohibitively long and expensive." (MacLeod 1973: 154).

Although Trujillo and its port were known for the expansive bay sheltered from the prevailing winds, it still suffered from negative perceptions, some based on facts, others on dubious information. The city was said to have bad vapors, with little explanation of what that meant but possibly referring to bad odors from the nearby lagoon and other lowlands (Antonelli y Quintanilla 1590:13). Travel between Trujillo and Puerto Caballos was perceived, and rightfully so, to be quite difficult.

One had to cross several big rivers without the aid of bridges, the road was strewn with boulders and passed through mangroves (Consejo de Indias 1596c: 210). The sea passage was dangerous and many ships between the ports were lost (Criado de Castilla 1603: 3).

Trujillo was more secure from pirate attacks than Puerto Caballos (Criado de Castilla 1603: 2v), but the defenses were in poor condition much of the time, leaving the city defenseless (Cabildo Secular de Valladolid de Comayagua 1586: 1). The so-called fort at Trujillo was never really a full fledged fort during the sixteenth century but was really a large fence or wall of mud or adobe, with artillery scattered on the promontory on which the city was built (López de Velasco 1575: 157; Criado de Castilla 1603: 3). Sometimes the corsairs would land on the beach lower down from the promontory and escape the cannon shot.

The large bay could only have been fully defended at enormous cost, which the Spanish were unwilling to do (Floyd 1967: 14).

Puerto Caballos was the principal port for Central America between 1570 and 1604, despite its many drawbacks (MacLeod 1973: 156). The road between the port and Guatemala was long and difficult, impeding transport of products in a timely manner. The port itself was shallow (MacLeod 1973: 154), and infested with "*broma*" or *barva*, the marine parasite "...que se comen los nabios" (that eats the ships) (Consejo de Indias 1596c: 210). The nearby swamp gave a disagreeable odor to the port and flooded each year inundating the houses (Criado de Castilla 1603: 2v). The water was bad and the abundance of mosquitos and other insects kept the people from sleeping at night. Defense of the port was difficult because of the open nature of the site.

Because of these problems Puerto Caballos was inhabited year round only by a few slaves, "*negros y mulatos*," with the Spanish residing inland at San Pedro (Criado de Castilla 1603: 2v; MacLeod 1973: 154).

The governor of the Audiencia, Alonso Criado de Castilla, blamed the conditions of Puerto Caballos and Trujillo for the economic decline affecting the audiencia, and wanted to eliminate the long journey to either port, especially Puerto Caballos (Floyd 1967: 15; MacLeod 1973: 154). A survey determined that the a small bight in the Bay of Amatique could accommodate ships up to six hundred tons (Floyd 1967: 15). The governor claimed the site was of a temperate climate unlike the rest of the coast, and missionary efforts could be directed toward the nearby Indians (Criado de Castilla 1603: 3v). The abundance of fish and the nearby "*estancias de ganado*" (cattle ranches) could supply the ships that called to the port (Criado de Castilla 1603: 11).

Puerto Santo Tomás de Castilla was established in 1605 on the site (Floyd 1967: 15).

Between 1606 and 1610 the legal exports of the Audiencia increased to record levels, most passing through Puerto Santo Tomás de Castilla (MacLeod 1973: 158). Much of the coastal trade pattern, however, remained the same. Criado de Castilla (1603: 3v) had written that ships from Spain would first stop at Trujillo before making their way to Puerto Santo Tomás. Shipping records show that preliminary stops were made at Trujillo before proceeding to the new port (Anónimo [1606]). Trujillo continued its role on the shipping routes, but, as planned, Puerto Caballos was abandoned in favor of Puerto Santo Tomás (Criado de Castilla 1603: 3v; Floyd 1967: 15).

After 1610 the volume of trade between Spain and Guatemala, passing largely through Puerto Santo Tomás, began to decline (MacLeod 1973: 158). The nascent indigo trade began to decline, and pirate attacks on the coast increased. The merchants of Guatemala and El Salvador began to send their products overland to Veracruz. Puerto Santo Tomás did not improve the economy of the Audiencia, mainly because the enthusiasm for the port came almost entirely from the Governor Criado de Castilla (MacLeod 1973: 158). After his departure from the Audiencia the problems with Puerto Santo Tomás became evident. The climate was as hot as the rest of the coast, disease came to the inhabitants and nearby Indians who ran away whenever possible, the seas outside the port were difficult to navigate, and the port was as hard to defend as Puerto Caballos had been, being attacked on April 12, 1606 by a force of seven boats (Criado de Castilla 1606), and even being sacked in 1607 (MacLeod 1973: 158-159). Many Indians lost their life building the road from the port to Santiago, that in the end proved to be long and dangerous passing through near desert conditions and always threatened by Cimarrons. The Count of La Gómera claimed Puerto Santo Tomás was a liability and reestablished the old pattern of shipping, a preliminary stop at Trujillo, then unloading goods at Puerto Caballos or the mouth of the Río Dulce, transferring to smaller craft to cross the bar to travel through the Golfo Dulce to Bodegas, and proceeding further inland in canoes or on mules (MacLeod 1973: 158-159). Overland travel between Honduras and Puerto Santo Tomás was nearly impossible, prompting a request for the reestablishment of Puerto Caballos, especially since both ports shared the same risks for vessels calling at either one (Consejo de Indias 1627: 215).

### Conclusion

The isolation of the *Costa del Norte* from the rest of Central America hindered development of Trujillo. While the site was still a good one for a port, the large, sheltered bay, good water, a defensible position, its situation had changed. No longer did it have a rich hinterland full of gold immediately behind the port. Spanish mercantilist policy, stressing the flow of specie that Central America was short of, especially compared to the new silver deposits of Mexico and Peru, created a backwater out of the Audiencia. Trujillo's new hinterland, developed from the decline in gold production and the rise of sarsaparilla and cattle, provided the city and port with food and some exportable products of low value, especially compared to gold and silver. Trujillo was dependent on a declining trade between Spain and Central America. Moreover, the port was a long distance from the highlands of Honduras and Guatemala, which had a more Pacific orientation. Dependent on a declining trade, Trujillo also declined. Furthermore, the entire *Costa del Norte* became increasingly less attractive for development and trade as Spain's European rivals began challenging that country's hegemony in the New World during the age of the corsair and pirate.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**STRATEGY, TACTICS, AND DEPOPULATION:  
PIRATE ATTACKS ON TRUJILLO, 1558-1680s**

Trujillo suffered its first pirate attack in 1558, in which the vecino Hernando Ocrama died defending the city (Marroquín 1558: 106-7), with the city to be occupied by outside troops many times over the next 350 years. From the early 1540s to about 1610 the Caribbean was full of corsairs and buccaneers attacking the Spanish ports, Trujillo included (Floyd 1967: 13-17). The French were the first to conceive the idea of "no peace beyond the line" (Watts 1987:130). Regardless of the situation in Europe as to war or peace, there literally was no peace beyond what in fact was two lines, south of the Tropic of Cancer and west of the meridian of 46° W, originally for the purpose of France to deny responsibility for French corsair activity in the Caribbean while at the same time allowing the Spanish to take the necessary measure to defend against them. From 1610 to 1625 peace in Europe once again brought a relative calm to Trujillo and the rest of the Caribbean, but the outbreak of a European war in 1625 once again brought other European powers into the Caribbean, during which time the residents of Trujillo suffered the most devastating attacks ever (Floyd 1967: 16). European penetration into territory claimed by Spain began in earnest during this period. Disruptions in the economy caused by these attacks, for the entire Spanish Empire on both sides of the Atlantic, but in Trujillo's case particularly on the Costa Norte, resulted in diminished trade and eventual abandonment of the city for nearly one hundred years. Spanish military power along the Costa Norte was far less than was minimally needed for defense of the region because of Spanish preoccupation with events in other parts of the empire and in Europe (Davidson 1974: 43).

The pirate attacks on Trujillo show use of geographic factors on the parts of both the attackers and the defenders. The purpose of this chapter is to examine what those factors were to better understand the final response of abandonment of Trujillo for one hundred years. First, the geography of the pirates's strategy will be examined, as well as the strategic response by the Spanish in Trujillo and along the Costa Norte. The tactical use of geography by both sides will then be studied, concluding with the slow abandonment of Trujillo by 1683.

#### **Geography of Pirate Strategy**

Winds and currents, combined with the sailing technology of the period, placed constraints on the routes and timing of sailing ships. These constraints gave pirates an advantage knowing approximately when and where the Spanish would sail (Galvin 1991: 26). Atlantic winter storms and the Caribbean hurricane season influenced the scheduling of sail times (Galvin 1991: 48). The Spanish government initiated the fleet system by 1543 to protect ships to the Indies from pirates, as well as to enforce the trade regulations, obstruct contraband, and to collect taxes (Haring 1947: 303,304; Galvin 1991: 52).

For the next two hundred years the Spanish strove for an idealized convoy system and schedule to conduct the riches of the Indies to Spain, and carry products to the New World (Haring 1947: 304-305). The fleet for New Spain, including the Honduras fleet, left Spain in the spring, while the fleet for Panama and Cartagena left in August. Both fleets passed the winter in the Americas, then met in Havana for the return trip to Spain. The ideal was seldom achieved. After 1580 the fleets often skipped a year, and in the middle of the seventeenth century the schedule

almost broke down completely as sailings became more intermittent. What was a logical Spanish response to individual pirate attacks, the large number of ships protecting each other, turned out to be a boon for pirates as "...the convoy system virtually eliminated guess work for pirates" (Galvin 1991: 54). The predictability of the sailings permitted pirates to watch the established sea routes, including the Honduras fleet that called on Trujillo, at more or less regularly scheduled times of the year (Galvin 1991: 38).

Pirates of all nations took to prowling the Spanish trade routes (Galvin 1991: 51). Pirates were looking for the treasure of Peru and Mexico, and the Central American coastline was ill protected against such piratical adventuring (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 51-51). The fleet bound for New Spain, with whom the Honduras fleet remained as long as possible, had the reputation of being less protected than the Tierra Firme fleet for Cartagena (Goslinga 1971: 164. The Honduras fleet, the main trading ships within the Gulf of Honduras, was especially vulnerable to attack by either officially licensed English and Dutch privateers, or the free-lance pirates that operated in these water (Weaver 1994: 28.)

As seen in the previous chapter, the main shipping route of the Honduras fleet was to first put into Trujillo to restock fresh water and other provisions. After leaving Trujillo the ships proceeded to Puerto Caballos, Puerto Santo Tomás de Castilla, and the Golfo Dulce. This route became a pirate favorite, and so began the pattern of intercepting ships at Trujillo, then moving on to attack at other ports within the Gulf of Honduras. The pirates were able to attack all the ports in

the Gulf of Honduras, and intercept almost any ship sailing between ports, thus increasing their efficiency in gathering booty. One report mentions attacks on Trujillo by French corsairs in 1572, and at other locations of the coast (Matute 1590). Although the report is lacking in details as to time and routes of pirate attacks, this appears to be the first mention of the pirates' strategy of prowling the Spanish shipping lanes in the Gulf of Honduras.

This strategy was prevalent in the 1590s, before trade seriously declined through the Gulf of Honduras. In 1592, English privateers attacked Trujillo on the 9th of May, before moving on to Puerto Caballos to sack the town and capture a ship, only to return to Trujillo on June 6th (Thread 1592: 198; Twitt 1592: 192-193). The French pirate Geremias attacked Trujillo on 16 July 1595, burning the town, then went on to the Golfo Dulce to pillage there (Consejo de Indias 1596a: 1). After pillaging in the Golfo Dulce, Geremias then went to Roatán, apparently to resupply his ships. I was also a good place for him to observe the shipping route (Consejo de Indias 1596b).

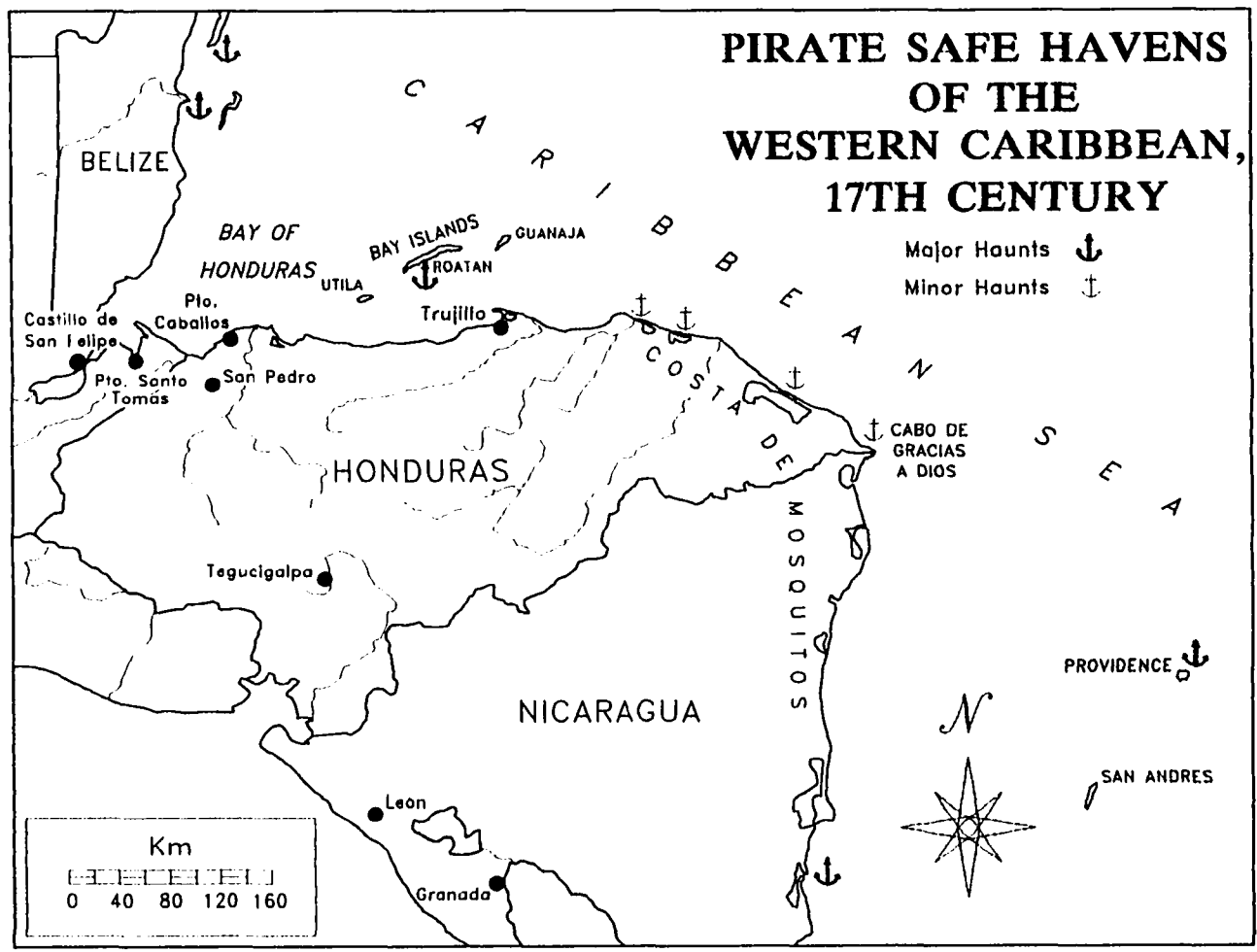
The pirate's attack did not always attack Trujillo first, sometimes proceeding to Puerto Caballos first. Whenever Puerto Caballos was attacked the people of Trujillo apparently prepared for attacks on their town. The people of Trujillo, in 1594, had news of English attacks on Puerto Caballos, and began preparations to defend the town for what they considered to be the inevitable attack (City of Trujillo 1594a: 281-283). The English did come later, with the pirates trying to capture the lookouts on Punta Castilla, although the town itself was not directly attacked (City of Trujillo 1594b: 315-316).

Later pirates still followed this same strategy of watching the shipping lanes in and out of Trujillo and the rest of the Gulf of Honduras. A corsair of unidentified nationality prowled the Gulf of Honduras in December 1639, and in March 1640, anchored in Puerto Caballos and Puerto Santo Tomás de Castilla, meeting no resistance (Avedaño 1643: 173). After his famous attack of 1639, Captain Nathaniel Butler waited 14 days at "Punto di Castillo" for passing Spanish treasure ships (Butler 1639: 57-66). Captain William Jackson's more infamous raid appears to have been motivated, at least in part, by a strategy of capturing Spanish ships on the route from Spain (Jackson 1643: 53-54)<sup>1</sup>.

The "famous corsair" named Diego Diaz, also known as Dieguillo or Diego Lucifer, captured Trujillo in 1641 (Ciudad de Trujillo 1643: 174). After leaving Trujillo, but before returning to Portugal, Diego Diaz robbed along the Gulf and coast of Honduras.

The pirates who attacked Trujillo on New Year's Eve in 1646, then returned during the first part of March 1647, in what appears to be two months of roving the sea lanes of the Gulf of Honduras (Avedaño 1647: 181). The pirate Lorenzo careened his ships on Roatán and Guanaja so that he could watch the entrance and exits along the coast of Honduras (Audiencia de Guatemala 1686: 1).

Incredibly enough, the pirates until the 1600s, had to make their strikes from Europe, a long way from home. Pirate safe havens provided a base from which to attack much closer to the target and shipping lanes, yet were remote enough to deter Spanish counter-attacks (Galvin 1991: 129) (Map 6). Off-shore islands and irregular coasts studded with inlets made good safe havens (Galvin 1991: 24-27). Central America's Caribbean coast



Map 6. Pirate Safe Havens of the Western Caribbean, 17th Century.

has such features that were utilized by pirates (West and Augelli 1989: 281). Shoals, cays, reefs, and mangrove tidal inlets provided safe havens for pirates, despite the difficult navigational conditions that also acted as a defensive measure against Spanish detection and attack. The locations had to provide more than defensive positions. Pirates a long way from home needed provisions and fresh water, anchorages, marine stores to conduct repairs, and beaches where they might careen their ships (Galvin 1991: 130). The islands and coasts within the Gulf of Honduras and the Mosquito Coast provided such safe havens for pirate attacks on Trujillo, and the pirates were then in the best positions to constantly harass shipping in the region (Galvin 1991: 353).

English settlement on Providence Island, off the Nicaraguan coast, provided the most spectacular safe haven, simply for its early challenge to Spanish hegemony in the region (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 52-53; Galvin 1991: 154-157). English Puritans established their colony on the island in 1629<sup>2</sup> (Rowland 1935: 298; Galvin 1991: 154), where they were able to take advantage of fresh water, timber, the capable harbors, and the islands natural defenses (Galvin 1991: 154-157). Although the English colony lasted only some twelve years, being destroyed by the Spanish in 1641 (Rowland 1935: 299), Providence proved to be an excellent safe haven. Not only was the Providence colony well suited to attack shipping out of Panama and the Río San Juan (Galvin 1991: 153), it was the base from which Butler initiated his famous, 1639 attack on Trujillo (Butler 1639: 48; Anónimo 1640: 172-173).

Closer to Trujillo was the safe haven of Cabo de Gracias a Dios on the Mosquito Coast. The first Spanish mission to pacify

the Cabo de Gracias a Dios failed when the Franciscan friars sent to convert the inhabitants were brutally killed (Miranda 1624: 138-140). The Spanish would not attempt settlement there again for another 163 years, which would once again fail. The Mosquito Coast was vacant of Spanish occupation, leaving it open to foreign interlopers.

The English search for dyewood (*Haematoxylon campechianum*) attracted them to the mainland of Tierra Firme, along the Mosquito coast, Cockscomb Coast, Campeche, and the Laguna de Terminos (Galvin 1991: 138-148). The heart of the dyewood made a fixing dye, valuable in Europe for the ability to provide lasting colors from yellow to red to black on textiles (Galvin 1991: 138). The English were also interested in trade with the indigenous peoples. The first English trading expedition to Cabo de Gracias a Dios arrived in 1633, initiating a history of English involvement along this coastline for the next 250 years (Floyd 1967:18-21). The friendly trade that developed by the English became a long-lasting relationship with the ever-loyal Miskito Indians (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 53). Miskito Indians learned the lessons of pillage quickly from the English in their raids on Spanish settlements and shipping (Floyd 1967: 22; Weaver 1994: 28). During this early period, especially in the largest attacks on Trujillo, the Miskito played a smaller role, providing provisions to pirates with provisions, mainly turtle meat (Galvin 1991: 132-137). Butler (1639: 49-51) left the Providence colony and sailed to the Mosquito Cays and Cabo de Gracias, where he picked up seven Indians who would hunt for turtles for the small fleet, then left to sack Trujillo. After Captain William

Jackson's (1643: 58-59) infamous raid on Trujillo, he sailed to the Cabo de Gracias a Dios safe haven.

The closest pirate safe haven to Trujillo was the Bay Islands, Guanaja just 60 kilometers off the coast, and Roatán some 75 kilometers from Trujillo (Aguilar Paz 1954). The French were apparently the first interlopers to use the Bay Islands in 1536, followed by other Europeans for the next one hundred years, without any attempt at permanent settlement (Galvin 1991: 120), all the while the islands were in the hinterland of Trujillo. Larger pirate fleets preferred the south coast of Roatán, with its larger harbors, while smaller fleets preferred the leeward lagoon of Guanaja, offering a myriad of protective cays and reefs with many routes of escape (Galvin 1991: 120). The Bay Islands provided pirates with a safe haven from where they could watch the shipping lanes, provision their ships, take on fresh water, cut logwood, and careen their vessels (Davidson 1974: 40-53).

Late in 1638, or early 1639, the Lord Rich colony on Roatán became the first attempt at permanent settlement in the Bay Islands (Davidson 1974: 49). The colony consisted of emigrants from Maryland and Virginia in the British North American colonies. The settlement lasted only about four years, but during this time it may have exported the first dyewood from the Bay Islands (Davidson 1974: 50).<sup>3</sup> With the beginning of the English Civil War, the Roatán colony and others no longer received the support they needed from England, and the settlement failed (Davidson 1974: 51-52). The last of the English leaving the Bay Islands began to carry out raids on the mainland settlements of Central America (Davidson 1974: 52), Trujillo being the largest and most important on the coast. The Bay

Islands once again became a place for temporary pirate camps for the next century, until the British military occupation in 1742 (Davidson 1974: 52).

Thirty or so French corsairs on Guanaja were captured in about 1560, and taken to Santiago de Guatemala (El Rey 1561: 110). The "Lutherans" were "given quick justice," implying death, whereas the Catholics were sent to work in the mines, a fate possibly worse than death. To be taken at all implies that these French were not able to escape, suggesting that they were careening their ship, rather than making a direct attack on the shipping lanes or Trujillo. The previously mentioned Geremias attacked Trujillo in 1595, and burnt the town (Consejo de Indias 1596a: 1). Geremias then proceeded to follow the shipping lanes to the Golfo Dulce, before proceeding to "an island 20 leagues away" from Trujillo, most likely Roatán. A Spanish force attacked the pirates, and in a six hour battle they killed Geremias, captured some of the other pirates, and recovered stolen goods (Consejo de Indias 1596b: 1). Relations between the French and the indigenous people of the Bay Islands may have soured over the years. In March of 1639, a joint French and Dutch force attacked the Indians of Guanaja, sacking and burning the settlement (Anónimo 1640: 172-173; Butler 1639: 57).

The English during the mid-1600s used the Bay Islands as a safe haven, especially after establishing the colony on Roatán. The Spanish perception of the islands was that they were pirate dens, a place to hide from what little Spanish force there was to chase them, and a handy place to resupply with help from the Indians (Avendaño 1643: 173). In the summer of 1639, the Roatán colony must have still been small and inconsequential, because

Captain Butler went instead to Guanaja to search for "water, woode, and some fresh victualls" (Butler 1639: 56), after attacking Trujillo. The relationship the English had with the native Bay Islanders may not have been much better than that of the French, and certainly was not equal to that enjoyed by the Miskito peoples. In his search for supplies Butler (1639: 56) wrote that they would get these from "the Inhabitant Indians either by fayre means or foule." His text suggests that the English resorted to force only after the Indians would refuse to trade. Jackson (1643: 52-53) arrived at Roatán before his attack on Trujillo, wrote that the islands are "Inhabited by Indians who are ffreinds to ye English, and Dutch men of Warr yt use this Bay." The Indians must have trusted the English to some extent, because after his attack on Trujillo, Jackson (1639: 57) was asked by some 120 Indians to return them to the islands, "because the Indians have been removed by the Spanish." Roatán and the other Bay Islands continued as pirate safe havens in the later half of the seventeenth century. In 1658, two unidentified enemy ships were at Roatán, watching the shipping lanes, and making passage to Trujillo very risky (El Rey 1658: 188). In the 1680s, a pirate identified as "Lorenzo," had spent the summer on Roatán, careening his ships to make repairs (Castro y Ayala 1684: 2; Audiencia de Guatemala 1686: 1). He was also watching the coast for any shipping out of the province that he could intercept (Audiencia de Guatemala 1686: 1). The pirate safe havens proved to be an effective strategy for carrying out attacks along the Caribbean coast.

### **Spanish Strategic Response**

To counter pirate attacks, Trujillo needed defenses. English corsairs described chasing "a shipp under the walls of the towne" (Thread 1592: 198), and the defensive works as "the castle" (Twitt 1592: 191). The fortifications were at least strong enough so that the residents felt confident in their abilities to take on a threatened pirate attack (City of Trujillo 1594: 316). The Spanish Empire, however, was not so wealthy, and could not afford to carry out defenses throughout the empire (Haring 1947: 256). The king himself complained of the cost of defending Trujillo and the Costa del Norte from pirate attacks, expecting the money to have come from the vecinos, not from the royal treasury (El Rey 1602: 150-151).

Trujillo's defenses were not such that they were permanent, nor long-lasting. There was a constant need to renovate or rebuild the thatched huts and trenches lined with sticks that were ordered for Trujillo (El Rey 1610: 154-155). The fortifications cost 5,000 to 6,000 tostones each year. Later, the defensive works at Trujillo were describes as "un castillo" (a castle) to guard and defend the city and ships that anchored there (El Rey 1629: 163-164). The "castle" only had six artillery pieces, with the vecinos serving as soldiers for lack of anyone else to man the defenses. Nor were they able to thwart the taking of Trujillo by enemy forces, "even though they might arrive in only one boat" (El Rey 1629: 163-164). Later documents merely say that the port and city were undefended or without defenses against any enemy invasion, again, testifying to the temporary nature of the structures (Anónimo 1640: 172; Bustamante 1656: 187).

After reoccupying the city in 1782, Matias de Galvez (1782: 15) wrote about the old city ruins that were left. He noted the construction of "forts with weak and false walls." Surrounding the town was a dry stone wall, apparently much of which was limestone, plastered with lime. No roof tiles could be found, suggesting to Galvez that the roofs were of wood or palm thatch. His description is quite different from the Montanus (1671) print, "A View of Truxillo Harbour, Honduras,..." This print shows a substantial wall surrounding the city, a fort on the promontory, watch towers, and porticos. Montanus's print dates from a period of extreme decline in the fortunes of Trujillo, and is an imagined view of the city, likely drawn from second-hand descriptions made by others. Galvez and Montanus both agree on one point, however, about the portal or door in the wall leading down to the port facilities.

The Spanish only achieved temporary successes in their efforts to drive the British from the Bay Islands (Davidson 1974: 43-45). Reasoning that the islands were used by the British and other foreign interlopers mainly to reprovision ships, the Spanish authorities decided to remove the indigenous people who provided the provisions. By depopulating the Bay Islands and denying provisions the Spanish thought the foreign intruders would no longer find the islands an attractive pirate safe haven.

The order to depopulate the islands came in 1641, and must have been partially carried out by the time of Capt. William Jackson's raid on Trujillo in 1643. Before he left Trujillo, 120 Indians of Guanaja and Roatán asked to be returned to their homes on the islands (Jackson 1643: 58). The plan to depopulate the islands continued until the end of August of 1650, by which time all the

natives had been removed, many to the Golfo Dulce (Davidson 1974: 45). The plan did not entirely work. Several reports indicate that the pirates continued using the islands as a safe haven after depopulation was completed (El Rey 1658: 188; Castro y Ayala 1684: 2; Audiencia de Guatemala 1686: 1). It is likely that by depopulating the Bay Islands, the Spanish had inadvertently hurt Trujillo by removing the main source of provisions for the city.

### **Geography of Pirate Tactics**

The geo-strategic factors of the pirates often evolved around sailing ships, however, the geo-tactical factors were much more amphibious in nature (Galvin 1991: 39). The men had to leave their ships to attack the city, necessitating moving troops from the ships to the land. Pirate tactics for capturing Trujillo followed the general pattern of entering the bay, landing men outside of cannon range, sizing the town, sometimes burning it, and occasionally moving into the near hinterland to plunder.

To first get to Trujillo pirates had to cross the Bay of Trujillo. The open bay was hard to defend and easy to enter, but it was also easily watched. The views of Trujillo drawn by Laet (1644: Plate III) and Montanus (1672) both show watchmen at Punta Caxinas with warning fires to alert the town to enemy ships passing the point. Captain Butler (1639: 53) crossed the point at 2:00 am, at which time the watchmen lit their fires, but he did not reach the Trujillo for another four hours, giving plenty of warning to the citizens of the city. To prevent the warning from being given, sometimes men were sent to capture the lookouts (City of Trujillo 1594: 315; Jackson 1643: 54). A ruse that was

used on at least two occasions was to fly the Spanish flag to trick the watchmen from alerting the town and allowing the pirates to proceed peacefully to attack the city with surprise (Twitt 1592: 191; Rubio Sánchez 1975: 180).

Once the bay was crossed the next objective was to transfer fighting men from the ships to the shore, usually right outside of the range of the cannon. While a frontal assault on the city was possible, there was little reason to resort to such tactics and endanger the lives of the men. Trujillo was on a hill above the beach, probably affording the fort's cannon with better range than the enemy's ship cannon. Laet (1644: Plate III) shows the Dutch fleet in two parts, one part engaging the city in artillery fire as the other part of the fleet landed troops in small boats, landing to the west of Trujillo and marching along the beach in the direction of the city. Jackson (1643: 54) landed men on the shore two or three miles below the town, whereupon they marched to Trujillo, taking it without any resistance. Both the Dutch and Jackson's troops had some men who went behind the town to attack from the undefended, mountain-side of the city, rather than the heavily defended beach-side (AGI 1644: 1; Newton 1933: 163-164). Butler's account has even less detail:

"...we grew so angry as that wee resolved to shore and to lett them feele the contrary, the wich being done wee marched up to the Towne, in their very faces, and after some quicke voollies of small shott had been exchanged betwixt us, we beate them out of the Towne, and entered itt ourselves." (Butler 1639: 54)

Although these accounts are from the mid-seventeenth century, it is likely that earlier raiders used very similar tactics. When a British group tried taking Trujillo in 1592, they met resistance that seemed well planned, as if the defenders already knew the

tactics that would be used to attack the city. Twitt wrote that they attacked the town directly:

"but they had placed such a company of musketers under a rampire, which they had made with hides and such like, that it was too hote for us to abide, . . . wee discovered great store of shot intrenched in those places where they suspected we would have landed." (Twitt 1592: 193).

Once Trujillo was seized by enemy forces they usually did one or two of several things. First, the town was usually plundered. The purpose of most of these attacks was to acquire booty. During the first attack in 1558 Trujillo was robbed (Marroquín 1558: 106-107). It would be a fair assessment to say that each time Trujillo was captured it was also robbed. Butler (1639: 55) wrote that they left Trujillo fairly quickly "...being loathe to lose time in an unprofitable stage..." because of the poverty of the town.<sup>4</sup> Jackson and his men were "found it [Trujillo] in a very poorre and ruinous Condicion..." (Jackson 1643: 56). The "houses [were] sufficiently plundered to out hands," and "...upon deligent search we found divers Chistes of Sugar, Tobacco Sarsaparilla and some small quantitie of plate, but nothing of any considerable vallue..." (Jackson 1643: 54-55).

Many times the enemy set fire to Trujillo. The church was burned in the 1558 raid, and the French pirate Geremias burnt the town in 1596 (Marroquín 1558: 106-107; Cabildo de la Ciudad de Trujillo 1596: 1). Van Hoorn set the city on fire in 1633, and a pirate raid in February 1644, also burnt the town (Obispo de Honduras 1644: 1; Rubio Sánchez 1975: 168-169). Captain Butler refrained from burning the town, apparently struck by the citizens pleas of extreme poverty, writing that he

"brought up the reare myselfe, the better to preserve the Towne from the rage of our men, who cride out, Fire itt, Fire itt: the which I was resolved to hinder and soe did" (Butler 1639: 55).

In 1641, the pirate Diego Diaz, also known as Dieguillo or Diego Lucifer, held Trujillo for 25 days, then burnt the city before leaving (Ciudad de Trujillo 1643: 174). During a Dutch attack in August of 1643, someone apparently wrote on the head of the crucified Christ, the one specific act mentioned in the profaning of the church (Rubio Sánchez 1975: 175-176).

Occasionally the enemy would enter into the hinterland of Trujillo. Jackson's men went some leagues inland, robbing the valleys and *estancias* of the surrounding area (Obispo de Honduras 1644: 1). The pirate Diego Diaz reportedly entered inland for some 12 leagues (Ciudad de Trujillo: 1643: 174). Another attack in February 1644, may have also gone inland, the report noting that Trujillo and nearby *estancias* were totally depopulated (Obispo de Honduras 1644: 1).

A demand for a ransom was common by buccaneers and pirates, either to deliver citizens captured or to keep from burning the captured towns. The burning of 1596, may have been in response to the non-payment of a ransom demand (Consejo de Indias 1596a: 1). A small ransom of 479 tostones and 2 reales was apparently paid to Van Hoorn in 1633,<sup>5</sup> but Trujillo was still burned, perhaps by accident (Newton 1933: 163-164). During an attack on the last day of the year in 1646, the pirates took two negros, and upon their return in March of the next year the pirates took many men and women captives aboard their boats where they "committed various cruelties in cold blood, with no other objective than to satisfy their inhumanity" (Avedaño 1647: 181). Again, in 1688, citizens of Trujillo became captives during the July 12th attack by the Pirate Coquezon (Ordoñez de Solis 1689: 230-131).

The population of Trujillo was never large enough to

provide an adequate defense of the city against large enemy forces like the Van Hoorn, Butler, and Jackson raids. In the late 1620s, the citizens of Trujillo served as soldiers, for there were no others to defend the city (El Rey 1629: 163-164). In 1643, the year of Jackson's raid, there were no more than 39 men capable of taking up arms, with only 22 firearms in the city (Avedaño 1643: 173). Trujillo's population was also quite racially mixed. Besides Spanish there were also "free Negroes and slaves" and Indians listed among those captured by Jackson (AGI 1644: 2). Another document tells us that the mulatto and mestizo residents of Trujillo reside on their haciendas for much of the year (Avedaño 1643: 173). Troops from Soconusco sent to Trujillo after Jackson's raid consisted of 29 free mulattos, and 83 Spanish and mestizos (Robles 1643: 1). In 1670, there were some mulattos, some Negroes, and some Indians of Roatán serving the Spaniards charged as lookouts for Trujillo. Later when there were only sentinels assigned to watch the city there were five mulattos, six Spanish, and 1 lieutenant presumably also a Spaniard. Slave ships from Africa called at Trujillo, although not always legally, which is the likely source for the racial mix of the city (Anónimo 1642: 35; Castro Ayala 1660: 192-193).

Although the Spanish tried to defend Trujillo and establish better fortifications for the city, the Spanish Crown simply could not afford to defend all of its territories in the New World. Many times Trujillo was either poorly defended or undefended. The vecinos of Trujillo simply did not have many options when it came to large pirate attacks, and they often chose the course of self-preservation by fleeing into the mountains and valleys of the hinterland. During the first attack

by the French in 1588, many of the people fled up the mountain side to escape (Marroquín 1558: 106-107). By 1610, retiring to the safety of a valley 2 leagues from Trujillo, in the hinterland, had become a well-established practice (El Rey 1610: 156). After two or three hours of exchanging cannon fire between his ships and Trujillo's fortifications, Captain Butler finally landed men to take the town. They "found the town utterly empty of Inhabitants haveinge all of them runne awaye one way and conveyed their good out another way" (Butler 1639: 54). Jackson (1643: 54) reported entering Trujillo without any resistance, all of the people having fled and left their houses.

#### **Depopulation of Trujillo**

The Spanish tactical response of fleeing from pirate attacks eventually became a strategic response of abandoning Trujillo to live in the hinterland away from the coast. The king, as early as 1610, recommended the people leave the town and settle inland, keeping a warehouse at the port for storing trade items, much as they had done at Puerto Caballos and Las Bodegas (El Rey 1610: 154-155). Apparently all the people of Trujillo already had haciendas in the interior (El Rey 1629: 163-164), and the mulatto and mestizo residents already were spending most of the year there away from the city (Avedaño 1643: 173).

After the large raid by Jackson in 1643, the population of Trujillo must have slowly moved inland. A Juez Reformador de Milpas was appointed in 1648 for the "Valles de Truxillo, Olancho y jurisdicción de las Minas de Tegucigalpa," implying that many had already moved to the Valle de Truxillo, the lower Aguán Valley (Avedaño 1648: 185). A census in 1683, reported that Trujillo was depopulated, all the inhabitants having moved nine

leagues to a valley inland from the port (Castro y Ayala 1683). There were only six Spanish at the port, presumably watchmen or sentinels, with five mulattos, and a lieutenant. A list of arms for the forts and cities of the provinces of Guatemala in 1684, does not list Trujillo, and a report on the bay the following year suggests that this would be a good site for a port, indicating one is not there now (Aguilar 1684; Sierra Osario 1685: 2v). The tribute list for Trujillo, from 1685, listed only the pueblo de Utila, Agalteca, and Tomalé, for a total of 3 tostones, 4.5 reales (Anónimo 1685: 10), indicating a tremendous drop in the native population around Trujillo.

The people of the Valle de Truxillo were living in scattered settlements throughout the lower Aguán Valley. Piedra Blanca was the principal settlement, but there were other, unauthorized settlements (Ayala 1698: 3-3v). The scattered settlements could not unite quickly enough to defend against an enemy that would enter the region, so the authorities wanted to force them into one settlement at Piedra Blanca. By 1702, there were 32 families reported for the port of Trujillo, but living in the lower Aguán Valley (Manrique 1702). Twenty-two families lived in Piedra Blanca, and another ten lived at Sonaguera. They were living inland so they could flee any danger from attacks, yet were reportedly close enough to the port to be able to resist any hostile activity. The city of Trujillo itself, would not be reoccupied by the Spanish until 1782, 100 years after it was first reported abandoned.

## Conclusion

The two main objects of piracy were punishing the enemy and taking booty, or gaining a profit. There is evidence that some people of Trujillo began trading with the enemy fairly early on a limited scale. A slave ship from Angola of unidentified nationality came to Trujillo in 1640, and traded African slaves with the people of the city (Anónimo 1642: 35). An English slave ship arrived in Trujillo in 1660, but the report says the people of the town did not dare to buy them and trade with the enemy, but at least an attempt was made to bring in unauthorized merchandise, in this case a human cargo (Castro Ayala 1660: 192-193). In 1673, a Dutch ship entered Trujillo and purchased supplies, apparently through trade with the town's people (Escobedo 1673: 216-217). Distrust must have been great, considering the history of attacks on Trujillo. Yet, we see here the slow end of piracy and the slow transformation to smuggling by direct trade with the enemy.

## Notes

1. Floyd (1967: 24) wrote that Jackson's attack on Trujillo was to retaliate for the Spanish attack and capture of the English settlement on Providence Island. This claim is repeated by Perez-Brignoli (1989: 53) without a citation. In his own log Jackson (1643: 51) wrote that they had decided on attacking San Pedro, having received reports of large quantities of silver stored there. An Indian, captured for the purpose of obtaining information, informed them of the expected arrival in Trujillo of tow ships outbound from Spain, loaded with guns and ammunition (Jackson 1643: 53). The Indian also claimed that in Trujillo there was a large amount of silver and other goods from Guatemala. Jackson's own log does not mention revenge for the attack on Providence as the motive for the Trujillo attack in 1643.

2. Perez-Brignoli (1989: 52-53) gives the date of the colony as 1631, apparently referring to the arrival of the first contingent of colonists from England (Floyd 1967: 18). Floyd (1967: 192, note 2) dates the charter for the colonization to December, 1630, citing a secondary source, rather than the December 1629 date given by both Rowland (1935: 298) and Galvin (1991: 154).

3. For the first exports of dyewood from the Bay Islands, Davidson (1974: 50) cites a document from 1642 by Melchor A. Tamayo, and was in the Archivo General del Gobierno, since renamed the Archivo General de Centro América (AGCA), in Guatemala City. I have been unable to locate this document in the AGCA. The card catalog no longer has the card for this document. Another document by Melchor Alfonso de Tamayo (1642: 1), mentions that pirates taking products from the island, including *tablazon* (planking), possibly a reference to dyewood. The heart of the dyewood tree was cut out in a large, squarish block of timber, possibly the *tablazon* referred to by Tamayo.

4. Newton (1933) wrote that Captain Butler ransomed Trujillo back to the inhabitants for 16,000 pieces of eight, partly in bullion and partly in indigo. His claim is contrary to that of Butler's own log.

5. Newton (1933: 163-164) says that the captured treasure amounted to only some hides, sarsaparilla, and indigo. Goslinga (1971: 226) writes that the Dutch took a few bronze and iron cannon, some hides, and a small ransom of about twenty pounds of silver. Goslinga's account seems closer to that described by Anónimo (1638: 1) of 479 *tostones* and 2 reales.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**THE SMUGGLING HINTERLAND OF TRUJILLO, 1730s-1770s**

Trujillo's hinterland for contraband goods was one of the largest hinterlands in the port's history, despite the fact, and probably because the city was abandoned. Contraband, being an illegal activity conducted in secret, is difficult to study, all the more so when it is in the past. The conventional wisdom is that only unsuccessful contraband is documented (Clark, Dawson, and Drake 1983: 6), however, in this chapter we will see that some extremely successful smuggling was well documented, only the Spanish could not prevent its occurrence on this frontier.

The increase in demand for Central American indigo combined with the peculiarities of the Spanish shipping system to make for a culture that was steeped in various levels of contraband activity. The British were exceedingly active in the Caribbean during this time period, causing the Spanish to fear increased settlement in territory the crown claimed, but had not occupied (Consejo de Indias 1741: 1). Through their settlements, the British carried on an active illicit trade with Spanish settlements. Trujillo, located on the frontier was a major entrepôt for smuggling, with a large hinterland. Spanish attempts to stop contraband trade through Trujillo and other routes provide documentation of this illegal commerce, but without any settlements on the coast, the Spanish were helpless in stopping the influx of illegal goods.

#### **Contraband Trade in the Spanish Empire and Central America**

The cacao trade provided Central America with its early agricultural export product, but had declined rapidly by 1600 everywhere except Costa Rica's Matina Coast (MacLeod 1973: 348; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 56). Indigo then replaced cacao as the predominant agricultural export, but Central Americans would have

to wait through the depression of the long seventeenth century before indigo became truly important to the economy. The expansion of the English textile industry during the century of world economic expansion starting in the 1730s led to an increase in the demand of indigo, used as a fast, blue dye (Wallerstein 1989: 57; Weaver 1994: 39). Indigo production in Central America expanded from merely supplying textile production in Peru and Mexico, to being in demand in Europe for the growing English textile industries that were driving the industrial revolution (Thoves and Arana Salazar 1746: 3v; Weaver 1973: 38; Wortman 1982: 120).

Central American indigo was in demand in Europe as a dye, but the cost of transport was high (Wortman 1982: 120). Pirate attacks, taxes, European wars, corrupt officials and the cost of dealing through middlemen all increased the price for Central American indigo. Although important to Central American growers, within the Spanish commercial system indigo was of much less importance than silver, precious stones, and even cochineal (MacLeod 1973: 354-355). The principal market for indigo, unlike cacao, was in Europe, and Central American producers suffered from the lack of regular shipping. Central American indigo producers faced two major problems: Spain did not need indigo, nor did it produce many products to send in return; and the cost and irregularity of shipping had to be solved (MacLeod 1973: 348). One solution was contraband trading.

Contraband trade under the Spanish commercial system took many forms. One of the first possibilities was simple tax evasion (MacLeod 1973: 351). To lower costs both peninsular and creole Spanish evaded payment of taxes, evidently as early as

trade between Spain and Central America commenced in the early 1500s (MacLeod 1973: 352). Rising taxes in the seventeenth century led to increased tax evasion, making bribery and corruption so widespread in the colonial economy that this has carried on through time into the present (Woodward 1985: 51). Another device used was to smuggle through the official flotas (MacLeod 1973: 352). Many ships carried undeclared goods on their manifests and stopped at unauthorized ports, a system in place well before 1605 (MacLeod 1973: 355). By 1600, the trade of the New World through Seville, Spain, was largely controlled by foreign interests using either loans to Sevillian merchants or worked through Spanish agents (MacLeod 1973: 351-352). Though apparently not quite legal, this practice seemed grossly unfair to the Creole merchant who had to work through the Spanish agents, much to their detriment.

Both Spanish and foreign sea captains used the *arribada maliciosa* (malicious or bad arrival) to trade directly in Spanish ports of the Americas (MacLeod 1973: 358). A ship damaged at sea, short of supplies, lost in storms, or otherwise unseaworthy, could enter a port claiming *arribada maliciosa*, and expect to be given safe anchorage as the common law of the sea dictates. To pay for "repairs," goods could be sold under the supervision of local officials, but often became a mini-fair for minor and out-of-the-way ports. The illegal use of the *arribada maliciosa* was just short of dropping all pretenses and engaging in direct trade with foreign and enemy ships (MacLeod 1973: 352).

Illegal trade flourished throughout the Americas as the Hapsburg dynasty came to a close early in the eighteenth century (Wortman 1982: 39, 98). The illegal wine trade along the Pacific

coast of South and Central America and Mexico was great, as was illicit trade with the Manila galleons and trade in cacao from Guayaquil. Silver was smuggled throughout the empire to Mexico, in exchange for Asian textiles. Silver from Peru went to Holland, via Central America. Many Central Americans used the cover of the church to avoid paying taxes on trade with Mexico and Spain. The king complained that contraband goods did not pay taxes, hurting the treasury so much that the crown could not pay to protect or defend the colonies from enemies or those engaged in illegal trade (El Rey 1740: 19,19v). It is quite likely that the *contrabandistas* would rather not have had such protection against their activities.

In Central America, a full-scale contraband trade took a long time to develop into a regular system. This was partly due to the relative unimportance of Central America in European trade (MacLeod 1973: 355). Piracy, rampant throughout the Caribbean, bred distrust among the Central Americans and other Europeans, and "smuggling is to some extent the antithesis of piracy" (MacLeod 1973: 362). After the Dutch took Curaçao in 1634, and the English captured Jamaica in 1655, other Europeans slowly turned away from piracy as a means to tap into the Spain's wealth in the Americas, and took to smuggling as a more profitable venture now that European powers had greater access to Central America through soon-to-be smuggling depots (MacLeod 1973: 360; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 52). Contraband also began to complement the logwood cutting in Belize by the British (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 27). After 1680, the expansion of the British shipping and overseas trade, along with the beginning of the industrial revolution in the textile mills, created a larger demand for

indigo and other Central American products that could not be met by trade with Spanish agents in Seville (MacLeod 1973: 384).

"The great age of direct contraband trade had begun, and the various little ports on the Bay of Honduras...became smugglers' havens (MacLeod 1973: 384).

Smuggling became prevalent throughout Central America. "Everyone in the Spanish community of Central America joined in enthusiastically, from Presidents, *oidores*, bishops to humble mestizo traders and peddlers." (MacLeod 1973: 384). *Alcaldes mayores* claimed they had to engage in contraband trade to pay for bribes to receive a satisfactory *residencia*, the official inspection at the end of a term of office (Wortman 1982: 100). One inspector in Honduras received more than 15,000 pesos. Church officials were named as smugglers (AGI 1749b: 3). As early as 1688, the governor of Honduras, along with others, shipped 800 - 1,000 cases of indigo, hides, and sarsaparilla directly to Holland, bypassing Seville and all the taxes involved (MacLeod 1973: 365-366). In 1745, another governor of Honduras, Joseph Balenzuela, along with Pedro de Campos and Joseph Parilla, the lieutenants of Olancho el Viejo and Olanchito, was heavily involved in illicit trade (AGI 1745a: 14v-16). Balenzuela apparently often traded through Trujillo, and de Campos hid a Frenchman held for smuggling who had escaped from the jail in Comayagua. Balenzuela's wife reportedly received a ring from a smuggler trading openly in Comayagua during *Semana Santa*. Thorivio Rivera, known as the captain of all smugglers, had a bodyguard of six to eight well-armed men, "because the governor is a jealous businessman" (AGI 1745a: 18v). In the 1660s, the president of the Audiencia de Guatemala, Martín Carlos de Mencos,

the highest Spanish official in Central America, was accused of trading 400 cases of indigo and eight bars of silver with the Dutch (MacLeod 1973: 356-357). In his defense he claimed that contraband trade with the enemy was the only way to raise the money his late wife willed to a convent in Spain. Mencos was later rewarded with a second term of office and an encomienda, receiving special mention for proving to be a worthy governor for keeping the peace, with no reference to his illegal activities. At the close of Trujillo's great age of smuggling in the late 1770s and early 1780s, one report claimed that "all the people of that land support themselves by trade with the English" (Sierra 1776: 46).

#### **Increased English Presence on the Costa Norte**

By the mid-seventeenth century the British came to dominate the contraband trade of Central America (Wortman 1985: 64). They were interested in obtaining from the Spanish gold, silver, cattle, cacao, sarsaparilla, balsam, hides, and for their manufacturing both logwood and indigo (Thoves and Arana Salazar 1746: 3v). The British also established settlements on the mainland of Central America, in territory claimed, but not occupied, by Spain. These settlements centered on extracting logwood, a tree whose heart was the basic ingredient for fixing dyes of all colors in the English textile industry (Floyd 1967: 58; Naylor 1989: 35). Buccaneers early on burned ships carrying logwood, out of ignorance of the properties of the timber (Naylor 1989: 34). In 1655, a group of buccaneers arrived in London with their prize, to find it was loaded with precious logwood selling for 100 pounds per ton. The British began to move into important logwood regions on the Spanish American mainland to harvest the

wood. Campeche, in Mexico, and Acla, in Panama were important early centers, but a small, continuous migration of British fortune seekers and former buccaneers began to extract logwood from the area between Cabo Camaron to Nicaragua, Roatán, Bluefields, and, most importantly from Belize (Consejo de Indias 1743b: 1; 4v; Floyd 1967: 55; Naylor 1989: 35; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 26). Along the Miskito Coast, the British were aided, and at times hindered by their allies the Zambos-Mosquitos (Floyd 1967: 59,66).

Jamaica became a secure base from which to conduct contraband trade with the Spanish mainland, channeled through the logwood settlements (Floyd 1967: 26; MacLeod 1973: 368). According to Spanish sentiments, the loss of Jamaica seemed to be of little consequence at the time, but had proved otherwise, leading to the fortified sites and illicit commerce conducted through Roatán and Black River (Thoves y Arana Salazar 1746: 2).

Jamaica's location made it an excellent base from which to conduct trade with Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and on the mainland (Floyd 1967: 28). By the 1680s, the merchant interests in Jamaica had supplanted and suppressed piracy, with a subsequent rise in the trust Central Americans had in trading with the British (MacLeod 1974: 367). British merchants could safely store goods on Jamaica, while at the same time providing an outlet to London and Amsterdam for Central American goods. Nothing in British law prevented Jamaican merchants from penetrating Central America, although it did violate Spanish law.

Faster and more efficient ships operating more frequently through the Gulf of Honduras made trading between Jamaica and Central America more efficient and profitable, solving some of

the shipping problems of which the Spanish continued to suffer. Central America's agricultural exports, including indigo, sarsaparilla, and cacao, could still be profitable after the trans-Atlantic voyage.

Settlements at Jamaica, Belize, and the Miskito Coast formed a triangle of British power in the western Caribbean (Dawson 1983: 676. From the Miskito Coast the British merchants would trade with the interior of Central America. Beyond the Spanish frontier and with their allies the Miskito Indians the British settled in several places along the shore. In the 1700s, Bluefields, Nicaragua, developed into a thriving community of about a thousand people, including Englishmen, Blacks, and people of a mixed and varied ancestry (Floyd 1967: 57). After settling at the mouth of the Rama River, other Englishmen moved inland along the Maíz River about fifty miles upstream, essentially the southernmost English settlement. Along the entire Miskito Coast there were some 1,500 Englishmen, not including their Indian allies and African slaves. In the 1700s, however, it was from the western end of the Shore that the British would have their largest settlements, most important for contraband trade, especially through Trujillo.

The largest and most important British settlement on the Miskito Coast was Black River, at the present day site of the pueblo of Palacios, in the Department of Cabo de Gracias, Honduras, at the mouth of the Río Negro. Located some sixty miles east of Trujillo, Black River was founded sometime in the early 1730s by William Pitt, an English trader who settled there via Bermuda and Belize, possibly after a Spanish attack on Belize in 1730 (Clark, Dawson and Drake 1983: 4; Dawson 1983: 682;

Naylor 1989: 40). Floyd (1967: 56) wrote that Pitt, a distant relative of the English Prime Minister of the same name, selected Black River as a settlement site as early as 1699. The site is surrounded by lagoons and rivers, acting as a natural defense (Díez Navarro 1758: map; Dawson 1983: 686, 689). Nearby savannas provided pasturage for a large number of cattle that provided fresh meat for daily meals (Sierra 1776: 12). Ship masts were cut from nearby stands of timber, sarsaparilla roots were again exported, and aquatic animal life such as turtles, manatees, fish, and oysters, and tropical food plants such as the wild banana, provided daily sustenance (Sierra 1776: 12; Floyd 1967: 56; Dawson 1983: 683). Blocking entrance to the river and the lagoons surrounding Black River was the infamous, shifting bar, described as "extremely dangerous" (Franco 1759: 2), that made a attack by sea highly unlikely (Dawson 1983: 683; Naylor 1989: 40).

The settlement built up over the years. In 1748, a seven-pointed fort controlled the entrance to the lagoon, probably the destination for artillery sent to Black River the year before (Dawson 1983: 685-686). Two hundred yards to the east of the main fort, closer toward the river mouth, an artillery battery provided cross-fire (Díez Navarro 1758: map; Dawson 1983: 687). Within and close by the settlement were some 300-350 palm-thatched houses with wood frames, divided into sections for English, Indians, and slaves, and warehouses for clothing and wood, important import and export products (Díez Navarro 1758: map; Dawson 1983: 688). Dawson (1983: 688) estimated the total population of Black River, including several outlying, smaller settlement, to be about one hundred Englishman, six hundred

slaves, and three thousand Zambos-Mosquitos nearby. Indeed, without the alliance and protection of the Zambos-Mosquitos it would have been unlikely that the British settlement at Black River would have thrived (Floyd 1967: 57; Dawson 1983: 683; Naylor 1989: 41).

The British presence on the Miskito Coast was well situated for contraband trade with the interior. From the British base at Black River, English goods imported from Jamaica were traded for Central American products. Honduran silver mines were once again in production, and part of the yield was easily diverted to the contraband trade on the coast (Floyd 1967: 60). Around 1700, and for approximately the next eighty years, a smuggling network developed between the English of Black River and the Spanish and Indians of the interior, primarily using rivers as trade routes (Díez Navarro 1758: 2,2v,3v-4; Floyd 1967: 60). The Ulúa, Chamalecon, Leán, Aguán, Limones, Negro, Sico, Paulaya, and Patuca Rivers all provided thoroughfares for illicit commerce between the coast and interior. Large piraguas could ascend the Río Aguán as far as San Jorge de Olanchito, some 40 leagues upriver, and the Río Limones provided passage for 14 leagues to the interior well into the Olancho district (Díez Navarro 1758: 3v).

British occupation in Honduras was not limited to Black River or the Miskito Coast. The original British settlement had been at the Cabo de Gracias a Dios (Floyd 1967: 56), and by 1711, a modest hamlet of eight or nine Englishmen had already been established at the mouth of the Río Plátano (Díez Navarro 1758: 4v; Dawson 1983: 681). Small British settlements were also located at Brus Lagoon, Cayos Cochinos, and a ranch for William

Pitt had been established in the savannas along Guaimoreto Lagoon, just outside of Trujillo (AGI 1745b: 8v; Díez Navarro 1758: 4v; Ferminor 1776: 123v; Sierra 1776: 55; Floyd 1967: 56).

For the Spanish the most distressing British settlement was made at Roatán, in the Bay Islands. The British temporarily occupied the island, first in 1742 through 1749, then later in 1779 until their dislodgement in 1782, although impromptu and unofficial settlements existed in between these periods (Sierra 1776: 53; Davidson 1974: 54-58, 61-62). The Spanish feared that Roatán would become "...like another Curaçao" the center for Dutch contraband in the southern Caribbean (Thoves and Arana Salazar 1744: 2v). British occupation of the Bay Islands threatened Spanish shipping from Europe with Central America (AGI 1742b: 1-3). To build their fortifications on Roatán, the English, much to the horror of the Spanish, used stone and bricks from the ruined fortifications at Trujillo (AGI 1742a: 1,2v; AGI 1742b: 1-3; AGI 1745b: 2). From their settlements on the coast of Honduras, and especially Black River, the British could carry on an extensive contraband trade with Spanish subjects to the interior. One of their main points for meeting to conduct this trade was Trujillo.

#### **Trujillo as a Contraband Entrepot**

The British and Spanish could take good advantage of Trujillo's frontier and coastal situation for illicit commerce. The mouth of the Río Aguán, one of the important rivers over which smuggled goods were carried (Díez Navarro 1758: 3v; Floyd 1967: 60), is only about twenty miles from Trujillo. The closest settlement to Trujillo was the town of Sonaguera, in the Aguán Valley, then San Jorge de Olanchito, both said to be corrupted by

illicit commerce (Díez Navarro 1745: 1). The nearby Agalta Valley was the frontier of Spanish settlement, as well as a major route of contraband traffic (Ferrandíz 1770: 1). The British ranch at the Laguna de Guaimoreto contained a large number of cattle, two hundred to three hundred mules and horses, five houses, ten saddles, and more than forty harnesses for carrying cargo by mule, all of which apparently belonged to William Pitt (AGI 1746d: 3v, 7v, 14-14v). As early as 1737, reports described the Bay of Trujillo as a shelter for foreign ships participating in illicit commerce with Black River (Rivera 1737: 2). With the English at the eastern edge of the Laguna de Guaimoreto, and the Spanish nearby at Sonaguera, the safe anchorage provided by the bay made Trujillo not only an entrepôt for smuggling, but the frontier line where Spanish and English met.

As early as 1732, the king proposed constructing a fort at Trujillo, and a few years later the President of the Audiencia proposed two forts, one at Trujillo and the other on the Matina Coast of Costa Rica, with a coast guard to stop illegal trading (El Rey 1732: 1; Rivera 1738: 1v,2). The Consejo de Indias (1740: 1) ordered the fort to be built at Trujillo, but ever mindful of the exchequer, warned against cost overruns, specifically citing the Castillo de Puerto Caballo in Venezuela where the final cost of 1,319,974 pesos exceeded the original estimate of 669 pesos by an astonishing 197,305%! Over the years sentinels had been assigned to Trujillo to watch and report on contraband trade, but the sketchy records do not indicate if they were always assigned there over the years (Consejo de Indias 1740: 1; Thoves 1744: 1; AGCA 1752: 3,4,8). Díez Navarro (1745: 1), charged with surveying the coast and building the

fortifications, decided that Trujillo was too close to the English, and could be cut off by Zambo-Mosquitos penetrating up the Río Aguán (Díez Navarro 1744: 9). The English could not be forced off the coast because of the Spanish lack of troops, money, provisions, supplies, equipment and transport (Consejo de Indias 1743a: 1). Trujillo was left undefended throughout this heyday of smuggling.

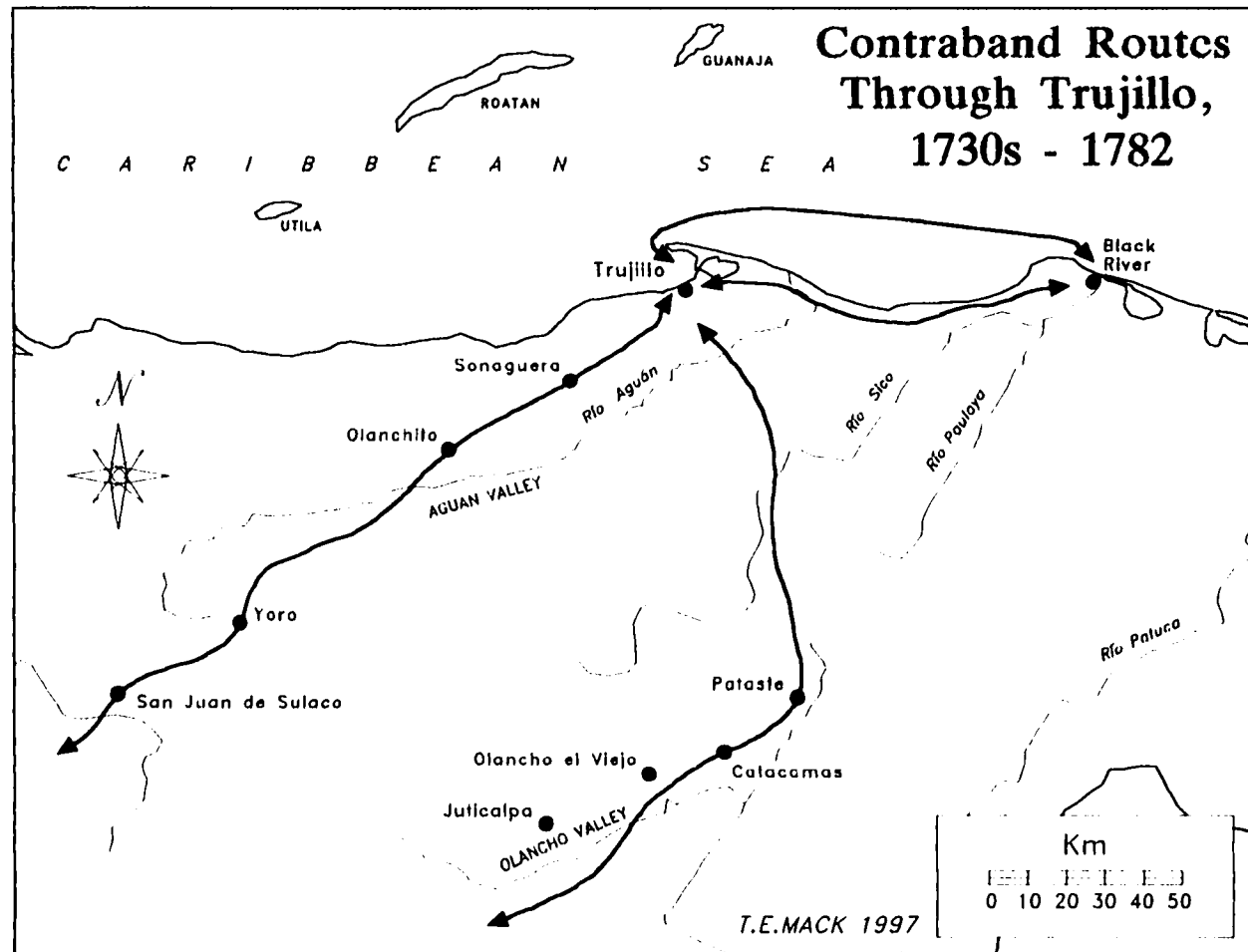
From the investigations and prosecution of contraband activity it is possible to tell much about the geography of the trade. This data is by its very nature incomplete, because the most successful contraband, which during this time period was apparently the vast majority, was not recorded. Not all the records of illegal trade document the prosecution nor capture of contraband. Díez Navarro's mission was to survey the coast for the purpose of building a fort, yet his major account, the only complete survey of Central America's colonial defenses, contains significant information on unlawful trading. Sierra (1776) was sent on an undercover mission to learn all he could about the contraband trade. He did not prosecute nor fight the trade, but merely reported it. That contraband was extensive and recognized by many of the inhabitants of Central America comes across from a wide variety of accounts, including commissions to capture smugglers and their goods, to reports that merely discuss the widespread nature of the trade.

Trujillo served as a natural site for the exchange of contraband goods. British traders could bring their goods from Black River or Jamaica and barter with the Spanish without having to go inland, although they obviously did. By 1718, commerce between these groups was taking place in Trujillo, the British at

times coming in great force (AGI 1725: 310v,312). The anchorage on the spit was in regular use by British ships by 1737 (Rivera 1737: 2). Called Puerto Nuevo (AGCA [1778]: 73) or Puerto Escondido (Díez Navarro 1758: 3), this anchorage was sheltered from any winds and afforded a refuge from the rough, open seas. Trujillo would also have been only a single break-of-bulk point with the transfer of goods from the ship to the mules on shore. Most of the nearby rivers mouths were noted for their bars that would not allow large ships to enter, necessitating a break-of-bulk from ship to small boats that could cross the bar and proceed upriver, then switching to the mule transport. This would have been much like the situation at the Golfo Dulce with the bar at the Río Dulce.

Three trade routes for smuggling focused on Trujillo (Map 7). Two routes connected Trujillo to its hinterland, and the other connected it to the foreland. The first route followed the Aguán Valley through Yoro and then to Comayagua. The second route served the Olancho district. The third connected Trujillo and Black River.

The route through the Aguán Valley is rather straight forward. The valley cut by the Río Aguán is over one hundred miles long running roughly west by southwest into the interior from the coast, and was said to be the direct route from Yoro (Thoves 1744: 1v). Probes into illicit trading revealed a road from Trujillo that crossed over the mountains separating the port with the Aguán Valley (AGI 1744: 8). The road is indicated on the map of Trujillo by Díez Navarro (1744: map). The first part of the road ran along the beach before moving up into the mountains (Sierra 1776: 46). "Part of the road is mountainous,



Map 7. Contraband Routes Through Trujillo, 1730s-1782.

and covered by trees..." (Díez Navarro 1744: 8v). This road sounds like the old pass over the mountains to the west of Trujillo, today known as "La Culebrina." This path follows the Río Mojaguay that flows into the Bay of Trujillo, crosses a saddle between the mountains that is the lowest elevation, and enters into the Aguán Valley along the Río Higuerito. Once the road was out of the rough mountain terrain it turned toward Sonaguera, the first populated town on the route to the interior (Díez Navarro 1745: 1).

Sonaguera was the closest town to Trujillo, about eight leagues by the road, as well as the closest to Black River (Díez Navarro 1744: 8v; AGI 1764). The frontier was at Sonaguera; "...es la parte mas al Lesste de dha Provincia..." (is the most eastern part of the mentioned Province) (Díez Navarro 1744:10v).

The Río Aguán also served as a trade route for smuggled goods by the people of Sonaguera (Díez Navarro 1744: 11; Sierra 1776: 55).

Apparently the town consisted of scattered houses in a ruined state, and without the usual Spanish grid pattern with a plaza, but in gullies and ravines (Díez Navarro 1744: 10v; AGI 1764). Although not very large, with only thirty to thirty-five residents, the majority of the populace were Mulattos (Franco 1759: 2; AGI 1764). The people of Sonaguera supposedly were fugitives from justice from more populated areas (AGI 1764), and described as "worse than the Zambos Mosquitos, they are pirates, thieves, and murderers" (Franco 1759: 2).

The main occupation in Sonaguera was smuggling. Mulattos from the town were seen in Black River trading with the British (Franco 1759: 2). They not only traded with the Black River settlement, but also conducted trade for others wishing to get in

on the action (AGI 1764). Some from Sonaguera carried chickens and plantains to the ships at Trujillo (AGI 1746c: 4v), reminiscent of the city's old function of resupplying sailing vessels. There may have been some trade with French smugglers, because in 1742, a Frenchman living in Sonaguera was arrested for contraband trading (AGI 1744b: 7). Contraband trade was, however, mostly with the British, and had a great influence on the town, a stated fact by Díez Navarro (1744: 9v) talking about the trade of Sonaguera, but also true about their culture. Marcos Reyes, a mulatto from Sonaguera, told an undercover investigator that he and many of the others of the town spoke English, learning it as children since they were communicating with the British (Sierra 1776: 43). The residents of Sonaguera also won the appellation of being "los maiores encubridores" (the biggest fences [receiver of stolen goods]) from Díez Navarro (1744: 10v).

Olanchito was the next settlement up the Aguán Valley along the route from Trujillo to the interior (AGI 1764). When sentinels for Trujillo were reestablished, the orders specifically stated that the recruits were not to be from Sonaguera, but from San Jorge de Olanchito (AGCA 1752: 8,9). Suspicion for contraband trade also fell heavily on the people of Olanchito (Rodriguez 1745:19). A large investigation was started on the suspicion that the priests from Olanchito were engaged in smuggling, but came to nothing as nobody called to testify seemed to know anything at all about illegal commerce (AGCA 1744a). Large piraguas could also enter the Río Aguán and move upriver all the way to Olanchito (Díez Navarro 1758: 3v).

The contraband trade route passed through Yoro, at the head of the Aguán Valley (Thoves 1755: 1v; AGI 1745b: 3, 9v). Crossing the Montañas de Yoro, the route went to Sulaco (AGI 1745b: 9v). The Indians of San Juan de Sulaco reported that a Ramon de Baide claimed to work for the governor of Honduras, and regularly passed through the town with large amounts of contraband (AGI 1745a: 17v). From Sulaco the route may have divided passing through Tapale and Guarabuquí (AGI 1745b: 8v). Contraband trade with Comayagua from Trujillo likely passed along the Aguán Valley route, and that with Tegucigalpa may have sometimes passed through this course.

Trunks full of goods carried by mule train passed between Trujillo and Olancho el Viejo (AGI 1745a: 14v), the second route connecting Trujillo with its hinterland. Unlike the Aguán Valley that enters a long way inland, the Olancho Valley is an interior upland valley, and to reach the coast one must pass over at least the Sierra de Agalta. A number of roads connected the villages of the Olancho Valley to the coast (AGCA 1769: 1v), probably meeting the main thoroughfare along the floor of the valley. The Indians of Manto claimed to have seen the governor of Honduras himself moving illicit goods brought from Trujillo through Olancho el Viejo (AGI 1745a: 15v). Simón de Figeroa, a *contrabandista* living in Mineral de Cedros had been involved in trafficking smuggled freight from Trujillo through Olancho (AGI 1745a: 17). Pedro de Campos sold cattle to William Pitt at Trujillo, also leaving from Mineral de Cedros passing through Olancho (AGI 1745a: 18). Jano, Yocón, and Agalta are all specifically mentioned for open trade that passed to Trujillo (AGI 1745b: 9v). Several new roads had been opened by smugglers

to facilitate their traffic from Olancho to Trujillo (AGI 1745a: 17; AGI 1745b: 9v)

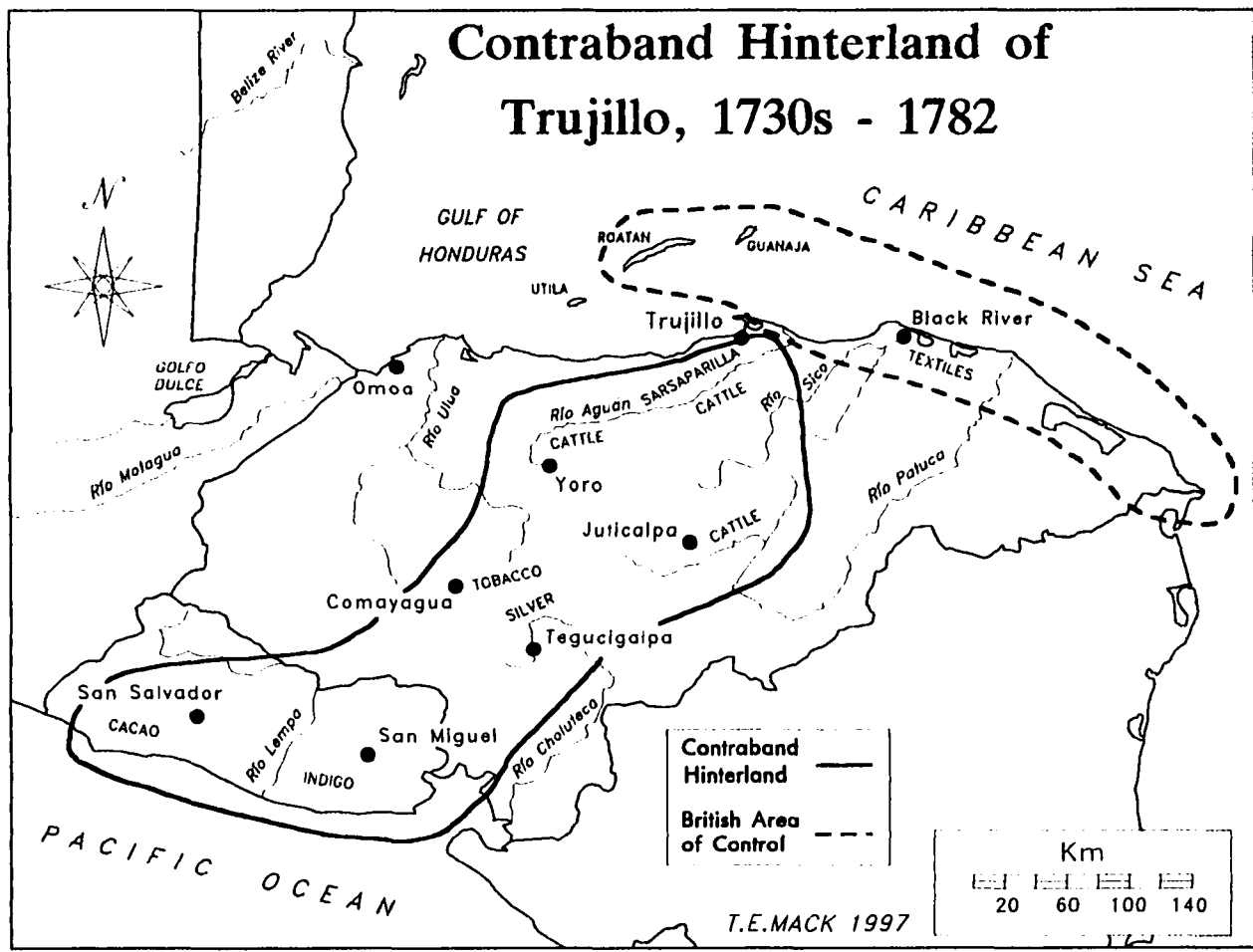
Two other routes connected the Olancho Valley with the Black River settlement, both bypassing Trujillo. From the documents it is difficult to tell if either was more important than the route through Trujillo. The first route left Catacamas through Pataste, to the Guampú, and then down the Río Paulaya (Franco 1759: 2v-3; AGCA 1769: 1-1v; Ferrandíz 1770). The other route passed through the Agalta Valley, the frontier of Spanish settlement with the Zambos-Mosquitos (Ferrandíz 1770). There are no details available from the documents that I have seen on this route, but it presumably followed the Río Sico that drains the valley until eventually reaching Black River.

The third overland smuggling route that focused on Trujillo connected the port directly with Black River, its foreland. Mainly for moving cattle, the path must have started near the city because they had to move along the beach and then cross the mouth of Guaimoreto Lagoon (Sierra 1776: 45). The route cut across Punta Castilla (Sierra 1776: 45; AGCA 1778: 73), probably after following the beach around to the narrowest part of the spit after crossing the entrance to the lagoon. Most of the area to the northeast of the lagoon is rather swampy and difficult to cross, necessitating the circuit around the bay. The trail continued along the beach to Black River (Sierra 1776: 45; AGCA 1778: 74). To cross both the Río Aguán and Río Limón canoes and pitpans were used to move cattle to the opposite river bank. At Punta de Piedras Gordas, also called Peñones Grandes, the road, said to be very good, left the beach and went inland for a short way (Sierra 1776: 46; AGCA 1778: 74). At Peñones Chicos was a

point that either forced the route into the sea, but only to a depth of the middle of the leg, or an alternative route going over the rocks through a forest (Sierra 1776: 74). An Englishman was running a sugar mill at his hacienda at Seri-Bor (Ciriboya) that the route passed through, proceeding to the Río de Sacrelay (Sangrelaya?) and on to the Barra de Cric, an easy ford where the water was no more than chest deep. Two roads ran from there to Black River, one along the beach, and the other apparently at some point inland.

#### **Contraband Hinterland of Trujillo**

The major trade routes for smuggled goods connected Trujillo to its hinterland, but the hinterlands were more than just the trade routes (Map 8). A wide variety of goods came from the hinterland, but what the British wanted were gold and silver, the most desired products, and cattle, cacao, sarsaparilla, balsam, and hides, but for their manufacturing in England they really wanted logwood and indigo (Díez Navarro 1744: 12; Thoves and Arana Salazar 1746: 3v). Among the items passing from Trujillo to the hinterland in the interior were clothing, cloth, linen, and hats, food items such as wine, almonds, and raisins, spices such as pepper and cinnamon, and miscellaneous items (AGI 1744b: 2,2v). The contraband trade through Trujillo by Spanish and English subjects was summed up as exchanging foreign clothing for fruit extractions (Rodriguez 1745: 19). Foreshadowing the extensive illicit commerce to come, as early as 1718, British ships reportedly took on water and bought tallow at Trujillo, proving that early on the British were aware of the potential for trade with the port's hinterland (AGI 302: 312).



Map 8. Contraband Hinterland of Trujillo, 1730s-1782.

From the Aguán Valley came many products. Two locations, the savannas along Laguna Guaimoreto and the town of Sonaguera need be specially considered. All the cattle at Guaimoreto probably originated, or at least were descended, from cattle from the interior. Many horses and mules were also seen at Guaimoreto (AGI 1746d: 3v, 14). It is not clear if this livestock was raised here by the English, or if the savannas of Guaimoreto served as a holding area for cattle brought from the interior. At least one trader from Yoro, Pedro de Campos, the lieutenant of that town, brought cattle from his town and put them in the Guaimoreto savannas to sell to William Pitt of Black River (AGI 1745a: 18). The people of Sonaguera played a large role in contraband trade, and from their community came mules, horses, and hides (AGI 1744b: 37-39; 1745b: 8v). Trade was also heavy in cattle from Sonaguera (AGI 1746c: 4v; 1746d: 6v), although these may have come from further up the valley and only passed through the town on the way to Trujillo (AGI 1745b: 2; Sierra 1776: 45). Olanchito is also said to have provided cattle for smuggling out through Trujillo (AGI 1745b: 2v,3). The savannas along the lower Aguán Valley would have provided fodder for either cattle raised in those areas or passing through to Trujillo from the upper part of the valley. Food products, however, including plantains and chickens were sold by the residents of Sonaguera to supply passing ships (AGI 1746c: 4v). Besides cattle, sarsaparilla was another major smuggled product from the Aguán Valley (Sierra 1776: 14). A wide variety of imported cloth and clothing, food, spices, and other products were found on the road from Trujillo near Sonaguera (AGI 1744b: 2,2v).

The upper Aguán Valley, however, provided a wealth of products, as well as acting as a major thoroughfare for farther areas of the hinterland. Through Partido de Yoro a large amount of indigo and tobacco passed to Trujillo (Thoves and Arana Salazar 1744: 1v). The Valle de Locomapa and surrounding area was well known for trade with the English through Trujillo (AGI 1745b: 13). Haciendas in the valley, which was located in the upper Aguán system, produced cattle from Guare, Locomapa, and San Roque. Although not in the Aguán Valley, the town of Sulaco was connected to Trujillo by the route and the great amount of traffic that reportedly passed up and down the valley (AGI 1745a: 17v). Lorenzo de Castro and Alejandro Romero, of Yoro and Olanchito respectively, after spending the night in Sulaco, were caught with fifteen loads of contraband goods, and at the estancia de San Antonio they had lost one bundle of clothing (AGI 1745b: 9v). These goods must have been destined for points beyond the Aguán Valley, as they had already left the valley. Indigo passed through an area between the villages of Tapale and Guarabuque, destined for transport through the Aguán Valley, but coming from an outside source area (AGI 1745b: 8v).

Cattle was the main contraband product of the Aguán Valley that passed through Trujillo, with large numbers coming from the upper part of the valley. Cattle from Yoro was traded for clothing at Trujillo (AGI 1745a: 18). At one time three separate parties of cattle drovers left Yoro with a total of 400 head of cattle (AGI 1745b: 2v). The trade in cattle through the Aguán Valley became so great that oversupply drove down the price that the English paid for contraband livestock from an initial ten pesos per head to six pesos four reales (AGI 1745b: 3).

Sarsaparilla was another important product, coming from the lower and wetter areas of the valley. Plenty of indigo was transported through the valley, but evidently it came from outside sources (AGI 1745b: 8v). Supplying the English ships engaged in smuggling at Trujillo with food supplies other than meat was a very minor part of the trade of the valley, and evidently only from Sonaguera. Textiles and luxury food products were the main goods introduced through Trujillo, but many of these goods were apparently destined for locations outside of the Aguán Valley.

Olancho was well connected through contraband trade with Black River, and at the very least by two routes. The first route ran from Catacamas up the Ríos Tinto and Pataste to the Río Paulaya directly to Black River (AGI 1745b: 1-1v; Franco 1759: 2v-3). The other route connected through Trujillo, although there are no details on the exact location of the route. Much of this trade seems to have made its way to Comayagua, Tegucigalpa, and points beyond (Díez Navarro 1744: 12; AGI 1745a: 14v,16v,17,25v). Englishmen were reported to be trading in Olancho for indigo, and openly selling textile goods in Juticalpa (AGI 1745: 15v-16v). Englishmen and other foreigners even opened a new road from Olancho el Viejo, the present-day village of Boquerón, that ostensibly passed through the Agalta Valley to Trujillo (AGI 1745a: 17). The community of Mineral de los Cedros was strongly connected early on in the period to Olancho el Viejo and, via the newly opened road, to Trujillo (AGI 1745a: 17, 18).

The illicit trade through Olancho must have been enormous, because forbidden trade goods were openly exchanged in Olancho el Viejo (AGI 1745a). Indigo, likely grown outside the region, was

a major trade item with the English, as was silver (AGI 1745a: 15v, 17). Cattle from Olancho was another favored item for trade to the English, and followed the new road through Olancho el Viejo (AGI 1745a: 17). Investigators discovered contraband textiles and clothing from England in Juticalpa, eighteen cargass worth (AGI 1745a: 16). One record show the lieutenant from Yoro went to Trujillo by way of Olancho, rather than down the Aguán valley. At Guaimoreto he sold cattle to William Pitt and brought back English clothing items (AGI 1745a: 18).

Much of Trujillo's contraband trade came from or went to Tegucigalpa, said to get the major portion, and Comayagua (Díez Navarro 1744: 12). Indigo, silver, gold, sarsaparilla, and other goods reportedly came from Tegucigalpa and Minerales de los Cedros (AGI 1745b: 3). From Comayagua items traded to the English included slat, cacao, necklaces, hammocks, tallow, lard, deer hides, and other goods not specifically mentioned by name (AGI 1745: 3v). The governor of Honduras, Joseph de Balenzuela, and a Miguel de Sugadis, both from Comayagua, were indicted for trafficking in smuggled goods that went through the port of Trujillo (AGI 1745a: 25v). English goods sold openly in the markets of Comayagua, and illegal goods abounded in both Comayagua and Tegucigalpa (AGI 1745a: 16v; Díez Navarro 1744: 12).

Trujillo's contraband hinterland extended beyond the two major municipalities of Honduras to Nicaragua and San Salvador.

From Nicaragua came cacao, and maize specifically mentioned came from the city of León (Díez Navarro 1744: 12). Indigo from El Salvador, however, was a major trade product on the contraband market (Díez Navarro 1744: 12; AGI 1745b: 3). Mule trains were

said to pass continuously in public view from San Miguel, passing through both major routes in Honduras to Trujillo (AGI 1745b: 3,9v). English goods sold openly in Nicaragua and San Salvador (Díez Navarro 1744: 12; AGI 1745a: 16). Every year people from San Miguel traded indigo for English clothing at Black River (Sierra 1776: 44).

There is little information on the prices for exchange between the English and Spanish, but some does exist. English paid eight reales for indigo in 1745, but although trade in indigo continues the price is not mentioned, although it was traded for clothing in the later part of this period (AGI 1745b: 2; Sierra 1776: 44). Data for prices for Spanish silver and gold exist only for 1745, selling for ten reales and sixteen pesos per ounce, respectively (AGI 1745b: 2v). In 1776, sarsaparilla sold for two reales per pound, and hides went for three or four reales apiece, the difference likely due to size and quality (Sierra 1776: 44). The English preferred big horses for resale in Jamaica, and paid twenty-five pesos when they were available. They also asked their Spanish counterparts for mules, but there had not been any trade in that animal. Cattle initially sold for 10 pesos per head, but the price fell to six pesos four reales, probably from oversupply (AGI 1745b: 3). By 1776, cattle were selling for six or seven pesos per head at Trujillo, but if taken to Black River the English paid as much as twelve pesos (Sierra 1776: 44). Cattle herders received twelve to eighteen pesos for delivering cattle to Black River, and six to eight pesos for delivering letters. Enough cattle, as well as other provisions, were taken to Black River that fresh supplies of food were found

daily in the settlement, and the price for beef rarely exceed one-half real per pound (Sierra 1776: 12).

#### **Plans to Stop Contraband on the Costa Norte**

Throughout this period Trujillo remained undefended and unsettled by the Spanish, thereby making it one of the best ports for conducting contraband trade in Central America. Illegal trading flourished at Trujillo because of the large bay protected from the Trade Winds, the access to a large hinterland in the interior, and the lack of any Spanish defense of the bay other than a few sentinels. Spanish plans for stopping contraband took a long time to come to fruition, and when they did, contraband flourished as ever on the Costa del Norte. The entire Audiencia de Guatemala was a "forgotten outpost of a declining empire," impoverished by pirate attacks and earthquakes, thus too poor to defend its Caribbean Coast (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 53-54). After the War of Spanish Succession and the initiation of Bourbon reforms in the Spanish Empire, Spain began the process of stopping contraband on the Costa del Norte, although its efforts really began after with the renewed expansion of the world-economy in 1750 (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 54-56; Wallerstein 1980: 190).

As early as 1738, the Presidente de Guatemala, Pedro de Rivera y Villalón, proposed a coast guard to stop contraband based at two presidios, one in Costa Rica at the mouth of the Río de Matina and the other at Trujillo (Rivera 1738: 1v-2). He must have greatly underestimated the manpower needed to defend the coast, for he proposed only fifty men at each site. Rivera was, however, the first to recognize that without bases from which to operate it would be a futile effort to attempt the expulsion of

the English from the Mosquito Coast (Floyd 1967: 75). Based on the Rivera plan, the Consejo de Indias proposed that a frigate of 120 men and officers with twenty cannons ply the Costa del Norte (Consejo de Indias 1741: 13-14). Two forts were again proposed for the Matina Coast and Trujillo, funded by Guatemala, with the frigates funded by Mexico. The year before the Consejo de Indias stated that no engineer capable of planning and building the forts was in the entire audiencia (Consejo de Indias 1740). Ever careful of costs, the Consejo de Indias warned against cost overruns.

To build the forts at Trujillo and the Matina Coast, the crown sent Luis Díez Navarro, a fifty-year-old native of Málaga (Floyd 1967: 78). Díez Navarro was a twenty-five year veteran of Spanish military service, serving in Africa, working on the forts at Cádiz, and taking part in the siege at Gibraltar in 1726. Several years later, Díez Navarro transferred to New Spain and directed the reconstruction of the fort of San Juan de Ulúa at Vera Cruz. Later he began erecting the new mint in Mexico City, and upon its completion in 1742, he left for Guatemala. Díez Navarro was the single most important Spanish official in defending the Caribbean coast of Central America, and carried out the only complete survey of defenses for the region during the colonial era (Floyd 1967: 79).

Díez Navarro began his reconnaissance in January of 1743, taking a year and a half to complete it (Floyd 1967: 79). Immediately he discounted fortifying the Golfo Dulce (Díez Navarro 1744: 2v). The Castillo de San Felipe was fifteen leagues from the mouth of the Río Dulce, and in a ruined state with only twenty men. Ships had to unload their cargo at the

mouth of the Río Dulce before the bar and transfer it to "lanchas y piraguas" that carried it to Las Bodegas, a collection of thatched huts that provided little protection for the cargo. The route to the capital then ran up the Río Motagua.

Because of the negative aspects of the Golfo Dulce, Díez Navarro concentrated his attention on Trujillo and Omoa as locations for a fort for the northern portion of Central America's Caribbean coast. The recommendations of Díez Navarro led to the decision to leave Trujillo undefended at this time, and instead build the fort at Omoa, which he details in his report (Díez Navarro 1744).

Díez Navarro first reports the great distance Trujillo is from Santiago de Guatemala, the capital of the Audiencia, a total of 268 leagues, and ninety-five from Comayagua (Díez Navarro 1744: 8v). Besides being far from the capitals of the audiencia and the province, the size of the Bay of Trujillo worried Díez Navarro. He mentioned that it was a great distance from Punta de Castilla to Punta de Quemara (present-day Punta Betulia). One fort on the spit near Punta Castilla would be unable to defend the entire bay (Díez Navarro 1744: 9). Enemy ships would have been able to sail into the bay, and because of its size, out of cannon-shot of the fort while in full view. Even if more than one fort were to be built on the Bay of Trujillo, Díez Navarro related that the Zambos-Mosquitos could easily enter through the Río Aguán and cut off the fort(s) and Trujillo, especially at times when they needed the most help, presumably when reinforcements and resupply were needed during times of attack. The closest towns to Trujillo were Sonaguera, San Jorge Olanchito, and Olancho el Viejo, all corrupted by illicit

commerce, as well as being of mixed blood, i.e. not pure Spanish, casting doubts on their loyalty in times of crisis (Díez Navarro 1744: 9v). The English had also begun settlement on Roatán, even using material taken from Trujillo, implying that any fort at Trujillo would have been surrounded by English and Zambos-Mosquitos (Díez Navarro 1744: 9v,10). The British were simply too close to Trujillo to construct a fort, especially since settling on Roatán (Díez Navarro 1744: 1). Because of the size of the Bay of Trujillo the English would not themselves bother with fortifying the bay, so it was not important to occupy Trujillo to stop English fortifications (Díez Navarro 1744: 7).

Díez Navarro found Omoa to be the most secure, cleanest, and most tranquil port on the entire coast of Honduras (Díez Navarro 1744: 3v). He envisioned Omoa to be the base from which armed ships would defend the coast (Díez Navarro 1744: 4). In his opinion, Omoa would be the least costly place to build a fort, and there would be security for cargo as well as the health of the inhabitants. Omoa was also much closer to Santiago, being only thirty-six leagues farther from that city than the Golfo Dulce. The cedars and other trees would be able to provide material for repairing ships careened at Omoa, ostensibly under the protection of the cannon. The transport of products to Omoa would be easy, and Díez Navarro mentions indigo, cacao, vegetables, sarsaparilla, vanilla, balsam, honey, wax, and "*Palo de Brazil*" (logwood). He foresaw the residents applying themselves to cultivating the area around Omoa, and pictured them discovering new products for trade in the wilderness surrounding the proposed fort. Because trade would increase, the rents and taxes would increase, presumably to the benefit of the treasury

(Díez Navarro 1744: 4-4v). Díez Navarro also pictured Omoa being a center of commerce, taking over all of the trade that was currently moving illegally through Trujillo and other points along the coast (Díez Navarro 1744: 4v).

Díez Navarro imagined Omoa as the center from which the coast would be defended (Díez Navarro 1744: 4v). Being about halfway between both Trujillo and the Golfo Dulce, ships from Omoa could easily defend that part of the audiencia. English involved in contraband at the many river mouths of the coast could be stopped. Not only could Omoa serve as a base for the coast guard, but Díez Navarro foresaw the offensive against the English beginning there, first cutting off the English at Roatán and dislodging them from the island, then attacking the Mosquitos along the rest of the coast (Díez Navarro 1744: 4v-5). Omoa would also be a center of population, and the fort could protect the settlers, who could also help the fort in time of need (ie. attack) (Díez Navarro 1744: 5).

The Spanish government did not act on Díez Navarro's recommendations for nearly eight years, until 1752, when a special military committee recommended a much smaller fort to be built than the original plan had called for (Floyd 1967: 107). The immediate aim of the special committee was to establish a customs station at Omoa, as well as provide a base for the coast guard to stop smuggling. Because of economic concerns the plan of Díez Navarro was reduced substantially, from a fort with four bastions down to three (Hasemann 1986: 3). Díez Navarro began construction by the end of 1752, on part of the complex that became known as the Recinto El Real, a early structure with barracks, warehouses, offices, chapel, and other rooms (Floyd

1967: 108; Hasemann 1986: 3). Construction on the Fortaleza de San Fernando de Omoa, the principal fort and defensive structure, did not begin until September of 1759 (Hasemann 1986: 8). Delays, changes in plans, and funding problems plagued the construction of the fort, and when it was captured by an English force on 20 October 1779, construction was still incomplete (Hasemann 1986: 8,9).

The fort at Omoa did not, however, stop contraband trade in Central America (Floyd 1967: 111-114). A few smugglers ships were captured, but contraband continued to flow into Central America, and Omoa itself even became a center for smuggling, where a commander himself took part in occasional smuggling operations. "The very fort whose function was to control contraband thus proved to be a contraband center" (Floyd 1967: 114). Also, most legal trade from Guatemala also continued to flow through the Golfo Dulce (Floyd 1967: 105). Ultimately, Omoa proved ineffective in stopping the contraband trade at Trujillo and other points along the Caribbean coast.

### **Conclusion**

Contraband at Trujillo certainly did not stop at the end of this period, continuing even down to more recent times with stories of selling diesel fuel to German U-boats during World War II then informing the United States Naval Base at Puerto Castilla as to the submarines' whereabouts. Stories and rumors about drug running abound all along the Costa Norte as they do in the much of the Caribbean.

It was, however, during this period that Trujillo was open to smuggling as never before. Spanish trade policies made legal trade at times unprofitable, and indigo, Central America's main

export product, could not trade favorably after paying all the various taxes and passing through diverse middlemen before reaching European markets. Long-time practices to evade taxes broke down inhibitions loyal Spanish subjects had to breaking the law, eventually leading to full scale contraband with the enemy, a treasonous offense. England, by this time, had switched from piracy to smuggling on the mainland, finding contraband trade more profitable. The Black River settlement on the Mosquito Coast gave the English a prime location from which to distribute English goods, and it was easily accessible to Trujillo, one of the finest harbors in all of Central America.

The Spanish did not try to reoccupy Trujillo after it was abandoned, leaving the bay open and undefended to whomever might enter. Both English and Spanish found Trujillo a convenient place to meet to exchange goods, making the port one of the leading contraband entrepôts in Central America. Trujillo's situation in relation to the Aguán Valley connected the port with a large hinterland in the northern part of Honduras. Through the Agalta Valley, Trujillo was well connected to the vast interior hinterland of Olancho in the east-central part of Honduras. Connections at the opposite ends of Olancho and the Aguán Valley linked Trujillo farther on, with Comayagua, Tegucigalpa, El Salvador, and occasionally with Nicaragua. Indigo and other products flowed along these routes to Trujillo, where it was exchanged for English textiles and clothing, produced cheaply in the first factories of the Industrial Revolution.

The Spanish did not have the means during this period to stop the contraband, although they seem to have recognized the extent of their problem. Rather than fortify Trujillo, which

Díez Navarro decided was too close to English outposts at Black River and Roatán and could not be properly defended against attack, the Spanish decided to build a fort at Omoa. From Omoa the Spanish were to have been able to attack contraband trade along the Costa Norte, but again, they did not have the resources to conduct such a campaign during this period. Omoa itself became a center for contraband trade, and Trujillo remained as open as before to English and Spanish haggling over their respective contraband products and trade.

**CHAPTER SIX**  
**RECOLONIZATION OF TRUJILLO, 1782-1880s**

After the Bourbons came to power in Spain in the beginning of the eighteenth century, their policies in Central America strove to rebuild the trade routes between colonies and the Metropolis, create a new fiscal policy through changes in taxation while reinvesting in defense, reopening the silver mines of Honduras, and, most directly impacting on Trujillo, beginning efforts to dislodge the English from the Caribbean coast and ending contraband Trade (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 55). The Spanish did succeed in removing the English from the coast and resettling Trujillo. The Spanish recognized that "*gobernar es poblar*" (to govern is to populate), and without physical occupation, an area could not be under the control of the government (Griffith 1975: 3). The site at Trujillo was an obvious choice for settlement and fortification, as occupation by the Spanish could also put a large dent in the contraband trade so prevalent from the port (Evia 1782: Mapa). To populate their new territory colonists were brought in from Spain and the Canary Islands. Unexpected colonization came in the form of the Black Caribs, deported by the British from their home on St. Vincent to Roatán, and hence to Trujillo. Whereas the Spanish colonists were generally maladapted to their environment, the Black Caribs did well, being preadapted from their island home.

#### **Trujillo as a Military Base**

Before the English could be driven from the coast, Trujillo had to be reoccupied to act as a base from which to launch any attack. The military weakness of Spain and Central America was such that settlement at Trujillo could not be attempted during much of the eighteenth century (Floyd 1967: 168). The hostilities between England and Spain came to Honduras when an

English force captured the fort at Omoa on 20 October 1779, and held it for five weeks (Hasemann 1986: 9). The Spanish realized they needed to reoccupy Trujillo, but diplomatic attempts to regain Gibraltar delayed any action that might have been too aggressive (Floyd 1967: 155). The American victory and British defeat at Yorktown in 1781, brought to the Spanish the realization that the American Revolution was nearing an end and "England would soon be free to reassign troops to the Caribbean," and not be preoccupied with events in North America (Floyd 1967: 156). The Spanish decided to act quickly to retake Trujillo and secure the coast before the English could deploy more troops to the Caribbean.

A force bound for Trujillo left Guatemala City on 17 December 1781, and by the time it arrived in San Jorge de Olanchito on 17 February 1782, it numbered 1,600 militia men, with two hundred veteran infantry (Herbias 1782: 1-4). The army marched on to Sonaguera, and followed the route over the mountain at La Culebrina, along the Ríos Higuerito and Mojaguay. The first troops entered Trujillo on 2 March 1782, and by 9 March, four divisions totaling 1,600 men were camped along the bay at a site now known as Campamento. Between 10 and 14 March, more troops and provisions were landed. The main encampment was at Campamento, a name that is still used for this same area (Evia 1782: Mapa). Rather than immediately occupying the site of the old, and present, city, the force stayed at Campamento. There was water from the nearby Río Mojaguay, and in case of an attack and retreat were to be necessary they could not be cut off from the only route over the mountains. This route had been used in the past, and would be used again in future retreats from attacks

on Trujillo in 1797, and 1860 (Anónimo 1797: 333; Martinez 1860b).

Earlier in 1779, Colonel Dalrymple received orders for the English reoccupation of Roatán, holding the island until the Spanish attack (Davidson 1979: 61). From Trujillo, some two-hundred veterans and one-thousand militia men arrived at Roatán on 15 March 1782, trying to negotiate a surrender that met with refusal from the English officers (Herbias 1782: 4-9). During the next two days contrary winds drove the Spanish off course and fumbled up the plan, but not too seriously because the English, after vowing to fight to the last man, surrendered at sunset on the 16th. During the night the terms of surrender were not finalized, and fighting continued at eight the next morning until the English finally conceded defeat. One-thousand men went through Roatán rounding up slaves that fled during the fighting, and burning all of the English houses and plantations. On the 21st, seventy-one English soldiers, 135 English inhabitants, and 300 slaves were shipped to Havana as prisoners. The Spanish destroyed all English fortifications and anything they could not carry away, taking most of the arms back to Trujillo. They found the port at Roatán to be very good and healthy, and suggested renaming the island "San Teodoro Savado de Lazaro," a name that never did stick (Gálvez 1782b). In all, the Spanish claimed the loss of only two men with four wounded (Gálvez 1782a).

On 27 March, a force left Trujillo for Río Tinto where the English settlement of "La Criva," a corruption of "Black River," was located (Herbias 1782: 9v-11). As they approached "Mistecric" (Mustee Creek), they found the 200 houses and sugar mills abandoned by the English and their slaves. Entering Black

River on 1 April 1782, the Spanish met no opposition, as the English had fled in their boats. Because of the bad weather and the lack of a harbor at Río Tinto, orders were sent for the ships to return to Trujillo and to send reinforcements by both land and sea, but in smaller boats that could cross the bar (Herbias 1782: 11; Gálvez 1782c). Gálvez, in completing a vow he made to the Sacred Virgin, renamed Black River "Concepción de Honduras" (Gálvez 1782c; Herbias 1782: 10v). Because of the difficulty in crossing the bar at the river mouth, Gálvez ordered the reopening of the road between Trujillo and Black River that the *contrabandistas* had used to transport cattle to the English (Gálvez 1782c). The king later ordered two well-armed *balandras* (a type of small ship) to patrol the coast to stop English contraband and any attempts to resettle in the area (El Rey 1782: 1). He recommended that the boats could either be apprehended from the corsairs then occupying Providence Island, or bought from the "*Americanos del Norte*" (Americans of the North, ie. U.S.A.).

The English, however, shortly returned to Black River. On 12 April 1782, they captured the entire French naval fleet in the Eastern Caribbean, putting the Spanish on the defensive (Floyd 1967: 160-161). The English force of eleven ships with one-thousand Shoremen, Jamaican militia, and Zambos-Mosquitos came to Black River on 28 August. On 31 August, the Spanish commander surrendered "Concepción de Honduras" to the English, but the prisoners were allowed to leave for Omoa after swearing they would not take up the fight again until after an exchange of prisoners. Both the Spanish and English were ready to end the war, Spain negotiating from a position of strength after

making considerable territorial gains throughout the war, not just reoccupying Trujillo, but regaining Florida, the Banda Oriental (Uruguay), and Minorca (Floyd 1967: 163). The Treaty of Paris was signed at Versailles on 3 September 1783, thereby ending not only the American Revolution and the independence of the United States of America, the English agreed to evacuate the Miskito Coast<sup>1</sup> (Floyd 1967: 163-164). The English settlers on the coast complained and further negotiations dragged on for three more years. Spanish officials claimed that families from New York, the Floridas, and Europe came to settle at Black River and Cabo de Gracias, and that the English had even fortified both Black River and the Cabo (Herbias 1785b: 1-1v; Herbias 1785c: 1).

The English wood cutters had extended their range beyond Black River towards Trujillo as far as the Ríos Aguán and Chapagua (Herbias 1785a: 2). Floyd (1967: 164) credits the delay to Spanish insistence on the return of Gibraltar, but Anderson, however, states that:

"...throughout 1783, Spain's position at the bargaining table had been to insist on British removal from both the Mosquito Shore and Gibraltar. When Britain agreed to all provisions, except the surrender of Gibraltar, Spain immediately agreed. Historians have assumed that Spain would have been willing to agree to extensive sacrifices for the return of Gibraltar. however, there is no proof of this. On the contrary, the documents indicate that the Spaniards considered their Caribbean holdings of greater value than Gibraltar and very adeptly used the Rock as a pawn in the negotiations." (Anderson 1970: 25).

The English would finally agree to the evacuation of the Miskito Coast with the convention signed in London on 14 July 1786, but would not leave Black River until the following summer (Estacheria 1787a: 1; Dawson 1983: 703). Documents by the Spanish reveal the excitement they felt in reoccupying Trujillo.

The sheer size of the Bay of Trujillo impressed the officials so much that they declared it would be the principal port for the entire Costa Norte (Gálvez 1782c). It was not just the size of the bay, but the conditions they found to be favorable: a sand and gravel bottom, deep, small seas, and ships could enter with the wind coming in any direction (Evia 1782: mapa). The resources found around the bay were also impressive.

The abundance of clean and tasty fresh water coming from the mountains especially excited the officials (Evia 1782: mapa). These waters were "*las mejores del Reino*" (the best of the Kingdom) supposedly at time carried to Spain for gifts (Gálvez 1782c). Pasture for cattle was only one league from the city at Guaimoreto, where the mules and horses for the expedition were pastured along with some cows for meat. Evia (1782: mapa) realized the potential for growing a wide variety of crops in the area, including yuca, yams coconuts, plantains, sugar cane, maize, and rice. He also mentioned the wild lemon and orange trees, first coming to this shore not long after the Trujillo was founded. He also mentions the wild cacao, which Gálvez (1782c) wrote filled the area, with people from the interior coming to pick the pods. Also present were fine woods for houses and other projects (Evia 1782: mapa).

Looking towards the future, Gálvez (1782c) implored the King not to have commerce return to Puerto Santo Tomás de Castilla or the Golfo Dulce. He foresaw Trujillo as the future base for commercial shipping from Central America, bypassing Guatemala. Specifically he mentioned indigo, cacao, hides and skins, fine woods, and balsam. Pleading for the refortification of Trujillo, Gálvez suggested sending two to three hundred

families from Spain or the Canary Islands to colonize the area. He envisioned an agricultural settlement, with the people toiling in the fields with their tools, planting flax and hemp, and cultivating the agricultural products that were there already. Perhaps included to impress the ever thrifty Bourbons, Gálvez said that with maize growing so fast in the area and with cattle so cheap colonization by Spanish families would not cost much, needing funding only until the harvest of the first crop of maize. Most of the statements of Gálvez were more or less accurate, except that Trujillo would never be the center for Central American commerce, but most incorrectly, the last colonization effort from Spain in the Americas would eventually fail, and at a horrendous cost in terms of funds and human life.

#### **Trujillo as a Center for Colonization**

Gálvez (1782c) was not the first to propose colonization for the Costa Norte. Pedro River y Villalón, the Captain General for Guatemala, proposed a coast guard station at Trujillo and the Matina Coast to stop contraband and drive the British out (Floyd 1967: 74). The example of Belize was all too clear to the Spanish, because without occupying the coast they were forever driving the English logwood and mahogany cutters from the region, only to have them return once the Spanish forces had left. The military might of Spain and Guatemala was insufficient during most of the eighteenth century to guarantee Trujillo's security, so settlement plans had to wait until after reoccupation (Floyd 1967: 168). After the reoccupation of Trujillo, a suggestion to the king recommended a garrison be placed there as well as a small population made up of families from Spain and the Canary Islands (AGI 1782: 1).

Since the end of the war in 1783, Gálvez had planned the details for colonizing Trujillo and Río Tinto (Floyd 1967: 166).

The colonization plan for Trujillo was similar to a very ancient model. Roman conquests were often followed up by establishing colonies, for example as they did after finally defeating Pyrrhus, King of Epirus (280 BC), by Caius Gracchus at Carthage (122 BC), and by Julius Caesar "to found or people a score of cities from Gibraltar to the Black Sea," (Durant 1944: 38, 117, 192, 194). The families of Greek and Roman colonists carried their respective cultures with them as they established colonies throughout their respective regions (Durant 1939: 71; Durant 1944: 38). The purpose of these colonies were many:

"they relieved unemployment, the pressure of population upon the means of subsistence,..., they acted as garrisons or loyal nuclei amid disaffected subjects, provided outposts for and outlets Roman trade, and raised additional food for hungry mouths in the capital...[and] The Latin language and culture were spread..." (Durant 1944: 38).

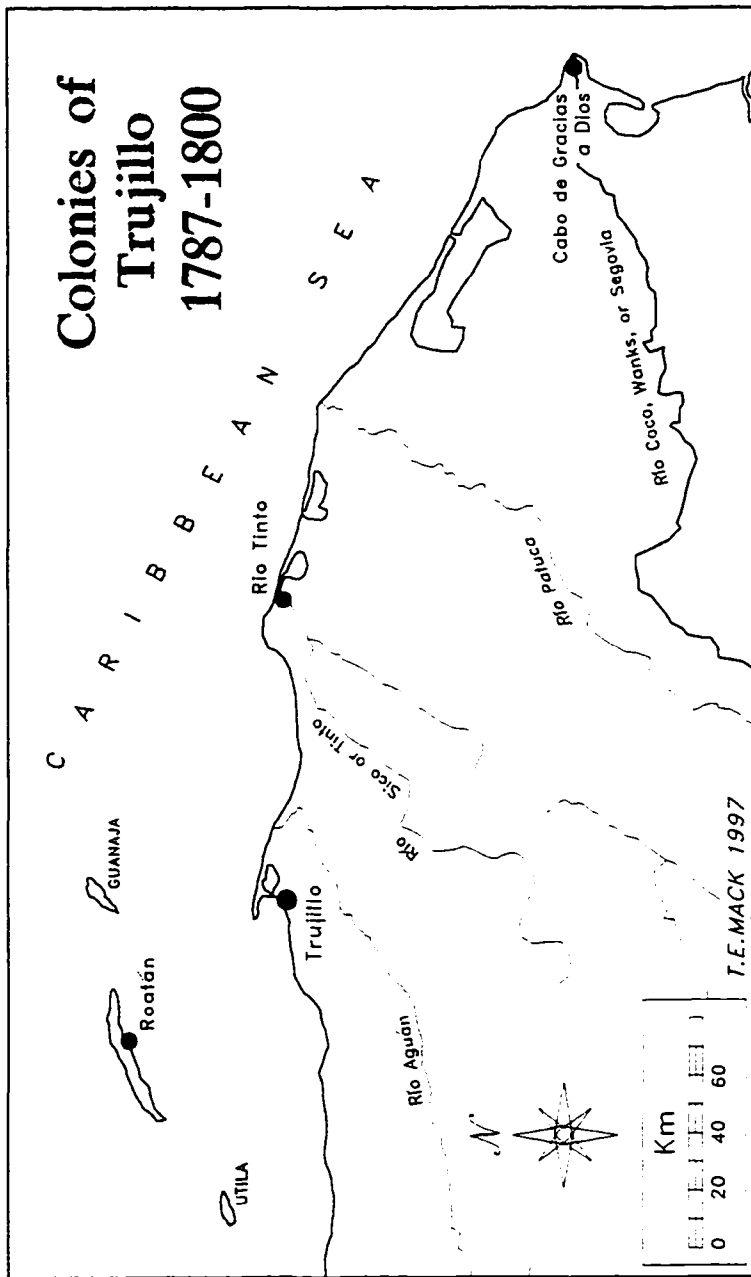
Trujillo became the administrative center for the coast, with Havana to provide provisions and military and naval support, and Mexico to provide further financial assistance; "The system was to prove particularly ineffective" (Sorsby 1974: 145).

In the summer of 1787<sup>2</sup>, with the departure of the English, the Spanish took formal possession of Black River, renaming it Río Tinto (Estachería 1787a: 1; Dawson 1986: 43). The Spanish fully realized that "loyal citizens of the empire must be induced to take up residence on the coast, which somehow had to be made secure" (Floyd 1967: 166). By the time they had taken possession of Río Tinto, the problem of who to settle there had already been addressed back in the Old World.

The vanguard of Spanish colonization for Trujillo and the Miskito Coast consisted of 210 families of impoverished people

from overcrowded areas of Spain (Floyd 1967: 168). From the Canary Islands came 306 settlers, making up sixty families (AGCA 1787: 21v)<sup>3</sup>. Ever since Columbus first sailed to the Americas, there had been an "almost unbroken current of migration from the archipelago [of the Canary Islands] to the New World," because of high birth rates, chronic poverty, and "proximity and favorable winds" to the New World (Parsons 1983: 449). Isleños (Canary Islanders) had the reputation for being hard-working and outstanding at colonization. Other projects had also called upon Isleños to colonize frontier areas in Texas, Louisiana, and the Venezuelan Guyana, where their presence could serve as a "human barrier" to further penetrations by other European powers. The other one hundred fifty families came from Galicia-Asturias in northwestern Spain (Herbella 1787a; Floyd 1967: 168).

The call went out for "*Labradores, i Artesanos pobres*" (poor laborers and artisans) to go to the Miskito Coast, with the enticement of receiving dwellings, private property, cattle, equipment and seeds, implying an agricultural colony (Herbella 1787a)<sup>4</sup>. The original plan called for thirty of the Isleño families to settle in Trujillo, a few families to go to Roatán, and the rest, not quite thirty families, to settle at Río Tinto (Estachería 1787b: 2v) (Map 9). Of the 150 Galician and Asturian families, between eight and one hundred were to settle at Cabo de Gracias a Dios, and the rest later settling at Bluefields when the settlement there could be started. There is no evidence for a Bluefields colony or any families moving there (Floyd 1967: 169). With the Miskito King living at Sandy Bay, Nicaragua, a Bluefields settlement could have easily been cut off from



Map 9. Colonies of Trujillo, 1787-1800.

Trujillo, providing no guarantees of safety to the residents from the hostile Miskitos.

Not all of the people who signed up in Spain went to Trujillo, as an undetermined number petitioned to be released from their contracts. One entire family from the Canary Islands did not go, and to make up the deficit of one family, a nineteen year-old boy and a seventeen year-old girl from families already going got married, technically creating the last family (AGCA 1787: 21v). At La Coruña, a would-be-colonist, Juan Suarez, successfully petitioned to be released from his contract as his wife "*mira con orror la transmigración a América*" (looks with horror to the migration to America) (Suarez 1787: 1; Herbella 1787b: 1). Another successful petitioner was Manuel Ortiz, whose wife had stomach problems and did not want to leave her homeland (Ortiz 1787: 1; Herbella 1787a: 1). The family of Francisco de Naya resisted moving to the Miskito Coast because they heard the region was "*la mas infeliz de America*" (the unhappiest in America), and that there were many malicious insects, and that "*no sienda la intención de V.M. sacrificar a sus Vasallas*" (not being the intention of His Majesty to sacrifice his vassals) therefore they should be excused (Poras 1787: 1).

The Isleño colonists were the first to arrive at Trujillo on 15 July 1787 (Estachería 1787b: 1). As soon as they arrived the Isleños began to demand their promised lands and equipment, but the officials at Trujillo had no prior notice of the Isleños imminent arrival and had to request instructions about what to do with the colonists (Estachería 1787b: 2). From Guatemala City came the promise of supplies for each family for one year: a set of clothing for each family, two blankets of cotton or other

material of little value, three arrobas of cotton for the women, a plow and plowshare to colonists with flat land, three young bulls or oxen for beasts of burden, two *fanegas* of seed corn, one *fanega* of beans for planting, one horse and one mare, four goats, one hog, one heifer, six chickens and one rooster. Each pueblo was to have two or three male goats and uncastrated hog, undoubtedly for breeding purposes. Each man was to receive a rifle with twelve bullets and powder, and any son capable of managing a rifle was also to receive a firearm. From other documents it appears that seeds, goats, hogs, and possibly some chickens were delivered, but from the large number of complaints from the colonists it is unlikely that they ever received anywhere near what they were promised (Estachería 1787c: 1).

The second group arrived from Galicia-Asturias with forty-two families on 14 September 1787 (Estachería 1787d: 1; AGCA 1791a: 544-560). Some small children onboard ship arrived with smallpox, so the infected people were quarantined on Roatán in an abandoned building (Estachería 1787d: 2). By December 1787, two more ships arrived carrying a total of eighty-four families, with the last ship arriving sometime in early 1788, with forty families (Naxera 1787: 459; AGCA 1791a: 560-585). Between July 1787, and early 1788, a total of 1,397 colonists had arrived at Trujillo (AGCA 1787: 21v; AGCA 1791a: 535-585). Many of the colonists apparently never left Trujillo, but a large part of the *Isleños* went to Río Tinto to make up the majority of colonists at that site, Roatán received colonists from all three groups, and only a few ever went to Cabo de Gracias, which became largely a military post (AGCA 1791b: 596-597, 620, 636; Echeverría 1792: 1; Cano 1793: 1; Sorsby 1972: 149).

### Conditions on the Coast

Almost immediately upon their arrival many of the colonists became sick and many started to die, and the blame was placed on the climate, considered to be malignant and adverse (AGCA 1789a: 1). A scant four months after their arrival at Trujillo, one entire Isleño family at Río Tinto had already perished, with a total of forty-seven already dead, including six infants born at the settlement (Herbias 1797: 197). The only symptoms found in the documents refer to the bodies swelling up with no hope of recovery (Herbias 1787: 297). Part of the problem early on at Río Tinto was the lack of promised assistance the colonists received (Sánchez et al 1787: 296). The colonists and administrators asked for negroes and people of color to do the labor because the colonists could not function under the conditions found at Río Tinto (Herbias 1787: 298).

The Spanish appear to have been in a quandary on how to describe the environment. Because they wanted to encourage colonization they highlighted the natural fruitfulness of the land around Trujillo, claiming that one needed only to deposit seeds in the earth and the seeds would produce with flourish greatly (Anónimo 1798: 226-227). Yet, they also emphasized their perception of a harmful environment by claiming Trujillo was unhealthy, like all the other locations on the coast of the Americas, and the people suffered frequent illnesses, attributable to the climate (Anónimo 1797b: 278). The dense vapors that covered the mountain received blame for impregnating the atmosphere, and the people of Central America at that time though Trujillo had been healthier in the past (Anónimo 1797b: 278-279). The occasional optimistic report belied the suffering

of the people at Trujillo, and especially those on the Miskito Coast.

The people found the land at Trujillo to be rocky in parts, but overall quite good for growing tropical crops (Villa and Gandara 1791: 1v). They did not, however, manage the land well.

The colonists did not know when to plant maize, and the exceptionally small harvests, said to be as if the seeds had not been planted, were blamed on sowing out of season (Villa and Gandara 1791: 1v). Planted with seeds from Havana, the one vegetable garden did not produce any food because insects ate everything before it ripened (AGCA 1791b: 603). The rations would have to continue, because it would take many years to clear the interlacing roots of the robust trees found in the area (Villa and Gandara 1791: 1v; AGCA 1791b: 602). Between the fifty-seven milpas parceled out to the colonists and negroes, they only produced ten fanegas of maize (AGCA 1791b: 602). Roatán had thirty-one plantain fields with two hundred plants in each one, as well as plantains growing on Barbaretta and Santa Elena Islands nearby (AGCA 1791b: 622). At Cabo de Gracias one large plantain field comprised four thousand plants, but this was the only crop they were growing (AGCA 1791b: 639). Trujillo had neither goats nor pigs, the latter becoming what the Spanish said was a different species, likely referring to the feral nature of loose pigs (Villa and Gandara 1791: 1v).

Complaints of cattle pasture also surfaced. The pasture by Guaimoreto, considered so good during the days of extensive contraband through Trujillo, was now muddy, and the scarcity of pasture could not support cattle (AGCA 1791b: 602). There were no haciendas or cattle herds at Trujillo, except for about ninety

head, though annually they needed 1,300 head for Trujillo and six hundred head for Río Tinto (AGCA 1791b: 602, 628). At Cabo de Gracias the garrison needed some one hundred eighty head of cattle per year, and good savannas reportedly were nearby where they maintained six horses, a bull, and forty-one head of cattle (AGCA 1791b: 639). Several years later Trujillo received permission to graze two hundred fifty head at Guaimoreto, but reports claimed the savanna was still short of pasture and the grass grew no larger than about four inches (García 1795: 319). Seven leagues away, at Ilanga, a hacienda kept some cattle for the part on the savanna there because of the regular pasture and abundant water (AGCA 1791b: 601). The muddy conditions and lack of pasture at Guaimoreto in 1791, in contrast to the good conditions reported during the contraband period, suggests overgrazing (Villa and Gandara 1791: 1v). At Río Tinto, however, the pasture reportedly could have been used again, needing only a light clearing, suggesting that when the cattle of the English were removed from the savannas the forest began to regrow (AGCA 1791b: 628).

"Unfortunately there was no plan to maintain the colonists until they became self-sufficient" (Sorsby 1972: 147). Shortages began immediately and shortly after their arrival at Río Tinto in 1787, the Isleños requested that they be given the promised aid and supplies (Sánchez et al 1787: 296). The settlers supposedly went about naked or badly dressed from the lack of supplies (AGCA 1800a: 102). Because of the inability of the colonists to grow food, Trujillo and the colonies relied on unreliable, and often poor quality, imports and constantly suffered shortages (AGCA 1800a: 100v, 101v, 104). Scarcity of provisions occurred in

1790, when ships from Havana could not sail to Trujillo because of threats of war (Villa 1790: 2v-3). In 1791, the wretched state of agriculture throughout the Province of Comayagua meant shortages and expensive prices for the settlements on the Costa Norte (AGI 1791: 4). At Río Tinto in 1792, there was no sugar in the warehouse, only the sick received a wine ration, and the Miskitos did not receive their allotment of aguardiente (Echeverría 1792: 1). Trujillo and Río Tinto again suffered shortages in 1793 (García 1793: 8v).

Again in 1797 and 1798, provisions ran short, bread was saved for only the sick and the sentinels, officials doubted they could withstand any attack upon Trujillo, both Roatán and Río Tinto cried for stores, and at one point only five days of rations remained in the warehouses (Domas y Valle 1797: 1; Salablanca 1798a: 11,12,14). The ship "Lidia," from the United States, gained permission to sell goods and clothing in Trujillo for a six day period in 1799, even though trade at the time with the United States was not allowed, but the shortage of goods forced the hand of the city's officials (Muniesa 1799: 1-1v).

Ships from Havana carrying flour were already several months late arriving in Trujillo in 1796, and the cities officials suspected the ships had been lost at sea (Letona 1796: 1). The city officials purchased one hundred "pieces" of flour, sending thirty-five to be divided between Roatán and Río Tinto and three to the bergantine "San Antonio" (Javalois 1796: 1). Only the sick received bread and the rest ate tortillas, yet, five years later officials in Guatemala City complained that the price paid was too high, even when suffering a shortage, and the officials at Trujillo had to repay the extra cost because there

was no good reason to sacrifice the royal treasury (Wading 1801: 1-1v).

Everything Trujillo and the colonies needed, except for meat maize, and beans, came from the royal treasury out of Havana (Villa 1790: 2v-3; Anónimo 1797b: 278; AGCA 1800a: 101v). Havana received some blame for sending old flour (AGCA 1800a: 604). The settlements on the Costa Norte remained isolated, however, from the rest of the Province of Comayagua, where shortages also occurred regularly, hampering any help from the interior (AGCA 1800a: 100v, 101v). Also, the dangerous bar at Río Tinto made entering the river extremely difficult, making resupply dangerous while endangering precious supplies (García 1793: 8v). Roatán had to receive all of its provisions by small boat from the royal warehouses at Trujillo (Salablanca 1798a: 11). Flour, the desired staple product, and other food products quickly spoiled at Trujillo (AGCA 1800a: 102). The poor storage facilities received partial blame, having only a leaky thatch roof, a dirt floor creating humid conditions inside, poor ventilation, and many insects (AGCA 1791b: 603-604).

Housing conditions were just as wretched as those for the royal warehouses sheltering the food. At Trujillo two families often crowded into the small houses, described as weak, very badly covered with palm, with walls covered with mud, and only a hide for a door (Villa and Gandara 1791: 1v). In 1791, there were thirty-three mud-covered houses, only twelve of adobe, and nine covered with only palm thatch (AGCA 1791b: 598). The adobe houses lasts between four to six years, but the other houses needed replacement every year, costing one hundred pesos each. Each house was fourteen varas, about 105 square feet, and 296

colonists lived in thirty-seven of the houses, averaging eight people per house (AGCA 1791b: 598; Barnes, Naylor and Polzer 1981: 68-69,71). At Roatán the houses cost 150 pesos each, were covered with mud and thatch, but lasted several years because the troops building them used nails (AGCA 1791b: 619-620). The thatch had to be replaced every two years because of decomposition and hurricanes. At the Cabo de Gracias eighteen thatched houses, said to be of bad quality, needed rebuilding every two years (AGCA 1791b: 636,637). Río Tinto had thirty-seven houses described as dirty, temporarily made, and of the most wretchedness (Dambrine 1795b: 2). Houses had roofs made of thatch (AGCA 1791b: 627). Adobe and cement houses were too expensive to build, though they lasted longer, and bajareque houses were of the same nature as ones made of adobe (Dambrine 1795b: 3,4). The houses at Río Tinto did not last long, and were infested with rats and an infinite number of insects (Dambrine 1795b: 5).

The houses at Trujillo lacked separate kitchens, so they cooked inside the house, often causing fires (AGCA 1791b: 598). A fire in 1791, caused a serious house shortage, and house fires appear to have been commonplace (AGI 1791: 3v-4; AGCA 1791b: 598). Over a seven year period, from 1787 to 1794, there were at least three major fires in Trujillo (Nobas 1794: 6). In the mulatto barrio in 1794, a house with a palm-thatched roof caught fire, the strong breeze spreading the conflagration (Muniesa 1794b: 1-2). Within one-half hour nineteen houses had caught fire, six of which were royal property (Nobas 1794: 6). Many buildings were badly burnt, but those with tile roofs were spared (Muniesa 1794b: 1-2; Nobas 1794: 6v). On the night of the fourth

and fifth of April 1796, nine houses roofed with palm thatch burnt to the ground (Junta 1796: 1). Another fire on the night of 18 February 1797, started in a small palm-thatched covered, bajareque house that completely burned in a matter of a few minutes, eventually spreading to twenty other homes (Anónimo 1797a: 4; AGCA 1797b: 1-1v, 7).

The housing shortage continued in Trujillo for many years, largely because of a perceived labor shortage (AGI 1791: 3v,4; Troncoso 1793: 1; García 1795a). The only explanation for the shortage must be that the Spanish colonists did not know how to build houses and were incapable of learning, or they were too incapacitated to erect them. In 1791, soldiers did the construction at Trujillo and along the Costa Norte, and a request was made for prisoners to work on royal projects (AGI 1791: 3v-4). By 1793, the new city of Guatemala had been built in the Valle de la Hermita, freeing the prisoners for transport to Trujillo for construction work (Troncoso 1793: 1). In six months time at Trujillo, the fifty prisoners cost 2,365 pesos 6 3/4 reales, whereas the same number of soldiers would have cost 3,241 pesos, a saving of 815 pesos 1 1/2 reales (Muniesa 1794a: 1). Prisoners had received one pound of bread daily, at great cost (Valle 1794: 1). For greater savings a diet of tortillas was suggested, and plantains when tortillas were not available. Although bread provided better sustenance, with the savings yielded by serving tortillas and plantains the prisoners could receive even more of those foods.

Besides the houses, Trujillo's other buildings were also in poor condition. Much of the construction in Trujillo consisted of mud-covered walls with a palm thatch roof, including the

hospital, barracks, and bakery (AGCA 1791b: 590; 592; 598; 599).

The hospital in 1791, was a temporary structure, needed frequent repairs, was predicted to last about two years, and the rains, dew, and winds were especially hard on the building (AGCA 1791b: 590). In 1797, the hospital was in wretched condition, gloomy, stinking, roofed with palm-thatch, open at parts to the weather, and compared to the poorest hut in Trujillo (Anónimo 1797b: 278).

The barrack consisted of three temporary buildings in constant need of repair that did not last long, although they were some of the few buildings with tile roofs in Trujillo, and one served as the temporary church, not having a building of its own (AGCA 1789b: 6; AGCA 1791b: 592, 598; Nobas 1794: 6v). The bakery, with good ovens, the three warehouses, and the prison also had tile roofs (AGCA 1791b: 599; Nobas 1794: 6v). The blacksmith's workshop had a building, another on the beach housed the three piraguas and canoes of Trujillo, and two buildings were out on Punta Castilla for depositing provisions brought from Havana, for preventing the spread of smallpox (AGCA 1791b: 594-595; 599).

The Río Tinto settlement had a poorly-constructed wooden chapel with thatched roof, but lacked a bell, high cross, and the necessary accoutrements to properly celebrate mass deteriorated quickly (Nuñez 1789: 1; AGCA 1789b: 2v, 7; AGCA 1791b: 625). The Roatán settlement had five mud-covered, thatch roofed houses that served as barracks, pharmacy, command post, officer's quarters, and one that covered the two bread ovens (AGCA 1791b: 621). A smaller house served as the soldier's kitchen. A warehouse and the dock of half stone, half wood construction, rounded out the buildings at Roatán. At Cabo de Gracias there were a hospital, a

chapel served by a chaplin, and three warehouses (AGCA 1791b: 635-636).

Manuel Fernando Dambrine, the commander at Río Tinto, described the only type of house that he considered appropriate for that climate and the only type that lasted were the ones the English had built (Dambrine 1795b: 5). When the Spanish captured Black River in 1782, he claims that some of the English houses still existed, with some being at least forty years old. The houses were built of local wood, boarded on the sides, floor, and ceiling to prevent the wind, considered harmful to the health, from entering. Strong timbers were used on the crossbeams and roofbeams, and the connections and bonds between boards gave these houses great strength. One feature that greatly impressed Dambrine was that the houses were elevated about four feet off the ground on cylindrical pieces of wood buried nearly three feet into the ground. Elevating the houses ventilated excessive moisture from the ground into the air, rather than into the interior of the structure, as was common with the houses that had been built by the Spanish. Being above the ground, these houses were not subject to flooding that was common in the area. The English houses were not subject to infestations of rats, snakes and other bugs that other houses at Río Tinto had. Dambrine estimated the cost to build similar houses at nine hundred to one thousand pesos per house of 12 to 15 varas, without the need for a lot of extra materials or laborers, except sawyers for cutting the boards. Although the elevated, English houses had many advantages, there is no evidence that any were constructed to house the residents.

The population of the colonists began to decline almost immediately upon their arrival to Trujillo and the coast. Between their arrival in July of 1787, and the end of November of 1787, forty-one of the 306 original Isleño colonists had already died (Herbias 1787: 297). Six infants, newborn since the colonists arrived, had also died, and the entire Riotorto family, all eight had passed away (Herbias 1787: 297). Three whole families had already lost all the parents and were made up of only orphans. Orphans would comprise a large part of the colonist's population from 1787, until the demise of the program in 1800 (AGCA 1791b: 596, 597; Villa and Gandara 1791: 1; AGCA 1800b: 13-13v). Trujillo had a total of 296 colonists in 1791, with fifty-seven married couples and at least fifty-six orphans (AGCA 1791b: 596-597). Soldiers had already married widowed colonists, creating a dilemma for officials in that did these "new families" receive rations and equipment promised the original colonists, as well as the applicability of those promises to orphans that reached adult age (Villa and Gandara 1791: 1).

In four years the population of the colonists had declined to only 489 colonists at Trujillo, Río Tinto, Roatán, and Cabo de Gracias, for a decrease of sixty-five percent of the original number of colonists (AGCA 1791b: 596-597, 599-600, 620, 623-626, 634-636, 647). In 1793, the number of colonists on the coast had dropped to 311, with a total of thirty-four other people now attached through intermarriage, only twenty-two percent of the original 1,397 colonists (Cano 1793: 1). Of the original 306 Isleños, only 127 had survived by 1793, and of the 1,091 Gallegos and Asturianos, only 184 were still listed as colonists,

presumably all that were still alive (Cano 1793: 1). In the documents that list the colonists the letter "M" appears in the margins next to the vast majority of the names of those that came to the coast, because someone, in a different hand and ink, began writing "*murió*" (died) but became too tired to spell out the entire word (AGCA 1787; AGCA 1791b).

The Río Tinto settlement's population, including soldiers, fell from 265 in 1791, to 239 in the next year (AGCA 1791b: 623-626; Echeverría 1792: 1). There were 123 soldiers and militia, and 116 colonists, ninety-three of whom were *Isleños* (Echeverría 1792: 1). By 1798, the settlement declined to only eighty-seven colonists, seventy-three being *Isleños*, and only one Gallego (AGCA 1798a: 4-5v). Numbers are unavailable for the Roatán and Cabo de Gracias sites, although by late 1795 the Cabo de Gracias site had been evacuated, and the last mention of the Roatán settlement was in 1797 (Dambrine 1795: 45-52v; AGI 1797: 1).

Several English residents of Black River stayed on at Río Tinto, at least six who had contracts with the local Spanish officials (Dawson 1986): 43). Robert Sproat, a Scottish doctor, stayed on at Río Tinto as the physician and surgeon (Sproat 1787: 294-296; Dawson 1986: 50-51). Robert Kaye, Francis Meny, and John Pitt were all merchants who had permission from the Spanish to conduct trade on the coast (Dawson 1986: 44). Stephen Winter cut lumber under contract for boat-building at Río Tinto (ANH 1791-1793: 1). Not much is known of the Englishmen's activities prior to the attack on the settlement in 1800, but they received recognition for their assistance that helped the remaining Spanish colonists survive (Sorsby 1972: 147; Naylor 1989: 70).

The number of soldiers is difficult to calculate because some documents give the information, and others just refer to colonists. The soldiers were stationed at the four main sites of Trujillo, Río Tinto, Roatán, and Cabo de Gracias, but there were also scattered outposts in which small numbers of soldiers were assigned. In 1791, there were eleven soldiers and one officer at Punta Castilla, probably acting as lookouts for ships, ready to notify Trujillo if any ship entered the bay (AGCA 1791b: 600). Other posts that year included fourteen soldiers at Campamento Viejo, seventeen at the savannas of Ilanga, seven at Guaimoreto, four at Chapagua, five at Limon, and six at the Aguán, the last four posts probably serving as lookouts for anyone that might have tried to enter the rivers that provided access to the lower Aguán Valley (AGCA 1791b: 600). Stationed out of Río Tinto small garrisons of soldiers protected various points along the coast, including Quepriva, Plantin River (Río Platano), Bonic, and Tabacunta, all with two soldiers, Brus Laguna with three, and five posted at Metecrih (Echeverría 1792: 1). In 1798, the other available source on outposts, listed sentinels posted at Plan Riba, Botus, Puntilla, Sacralaya, Limoncito, Brus Laguna, Tabacontada, Que Priva, and Paya, without giving any numbers (AGCA 1798b: 8-13v).

The soldier's mission was to guard against any possible English assaults, but at Río Tinto and Cabo de Gracias they were really there to guard against the Zambos-Miskitos. The English had plied the Zambos-Miskitos with gifts, guns, and grog, but the Spanish had no intention of liquoring-up armed and hostile Indians, giving "stupid little things" to the Zambos-Miskitos and tried limiting their trade to only the Spanish (Sorsby 1972: 147-

148). The dissatisfaction of the Zambos-Miskitos with their gifts, in 1791 totaling some 2,000 pesos, caused the Spanish residents of Río Tinto and Cabo de Gracias to live in fear of attacks (AGCA 1791b: 627; Sorsby 1972: 147-148). The Spanish requested two launches with cannons to guard the mouth of Río Tinto in time of war for any escape that might be necessary due to Zambos-Miskitos aggression (AGCA 1791b: 630). The gifts to the Indians annually included two or three barrels of aguardiente, tobacco, shirts, cloth, shoes, hats, salt crackers, penknives, straight razors, gun powder, soap, four barrels of white wine, sherry, red wine, Malaga wine, machetes, bread, meat, bacon, lard, chickens, pastries, sugar, cigars, raisins olives, butter, chocolate, cheese, fish hooks, and at least one cast iron pan (AGCA 1791: 638, 640-642; Sánchez y Gonzalez 1792: 1; Ariza y Torres 1793: 1). The flints and gun powder were probably only enough for hunting, and not enough to mount an attack. By 1799, a crown inspector, Colonel Roque Abarca, condemned giving gifts to the Zambos-Miskitos (Sorsby 1972: 152). The colonists feared the Zambos-Miskitos, who were irritated with the trinkets they were given, and did not venture far from the settlement, condemning them to live on the sandy and poor soils along the coast rather than the more fertile land to the interior (Floyd 1967: 170).

By 1800, only the Río Tinto colony remained of the three settlements outside of Trujillo. Between two and three in the morning on September 4th, the Zambos-Miskitos surprised and attacked Río Tinto (AGCA 1800b: 1). Those who survived the attack left so quickly they had not any time in which to put on their clothes, leaving in only their undergarments, with some of

the women tying scarves around their breasts, and lost all of their possessions (AGCA 1800b: 1, 6v). Walking all the back to Trujillo they had only wild fruit they could forage on the way. The list of colonists who survived the attack had only fifty-eight names, and two years later their were only twenty-seven left at Trujillo, including six widows and five orphans (AGCA 1802: 13-13v). It is possible that some of the soldiers survived the attack. One is listed with the twenty-seven remaining colonists in 1802, although his name does not appear on the list of the fifty-eight surviving colonists made shortly after the attack (AGCA 1800b: 11-12; AGCA 1802: 13-13v). In any case, Spain's last attempt at colonization on the mainland of the Americas ended in disaster, and:

"Although not a true precursor to the revolutions that were to follow, the success of the Mosquitos demonstrated the weakness of Spain's dominion in America and led to the use of the Shore as a base by revolutionary leaders." (Sorsby 1972: 152).

In economic terms, the cost of colonization since the departure from Spain of the Isleños, Gallegos, and Asturianos in 1787 through 1798 was 1,552,483 pesos paid by the Reino de Guatemala, and does not included an estimated 500,000 pesos for provisions and goods sent from Havana (Wading 1798: 1). This fantastic amount, about two million pesos, was for a colony with the mission to impede English settlement and contraband on the coast, that was to be self-supporting after one growing season (Wading 1798: 1). Trujillo's population in 1801 consisted of eighty Spanish families, with twenty unmarried single persons, for a total of only 480 "almas" (souls) fourteen years after the colonization program began with nearly 1,400 colonists (Anguiano 1804a: 289).

Many reasons have been given for the failure of the Spanish colonies out of Trujillo. Floyd (1967: 183-184) partially blames wars in Europe for taking attention away from the colonies, but Spain did not declare war against Revolutionary France until 1793, six years after the founding of the colonies and after a large number of the colonists had already died. Sorsby (1972: 148) blames "geographical isolation, the illicit commercial activities of foreigners, the indolence of Spanish officials," and the miserly gifts the Miskitos received from the Spanish. The Spanish sources I have seen make no mention of illicit foreign commerce, and the main problems with isolation stemmed from the dangerous river bar at Río Tinto, and that these were the only coastal settlements in Honduras at the time. The indolence of Spanish officials did contribute to the demise of the colonies, for example, after seven years the decision about which land the colonists were to receive had not yet been made, likely a large contributing factor to the fact that the colonists could not support themselves through agriculture, as they were expected to do (Cano 1793: 1; Junta de Truxillo 1793: 1; Quintana 1794: 316). Also, there simply was not enough money for the Intendencia de Comayagua to support the military troops and other costs of colonization on the Miskito Coast (Brillante 1796: 1v).

Although they had tense relations with the Spanish, the Miskitos did not attack for thirteen years. The Spanish saw the success of the English settlement of Black River, based on contraband and the cultivation of indigo and sugar, and tried to replace it with a colony self-supporting in agriculture, as evidenced by the private property, seeds, plows, cattle, goats, hogs, and chickens

promised to the colonists (Herbella 1787a: 1; Estachería 1787c: 1).

While all of the above certainly contributed to the ruin of the colonies of Trujillo, the main reason for the demise was that the colonists were maladapted to the conditions in which they encountered on the Costa Norte. Only a few months after their arrival on the coast, Gabriel Herbias, the Spanish administrator of Río Tinto, wrote that the only way to populate the coast was to have the people use blacks (Herbias 1787: 298). Most of the men who listed a profession put "labrador" (farm laborer), followed by carpenter, bricklayers, shoemakers, and tailors (AGCA 1787; AGCA 1791a). The farm laborers could not adapt to the tropical conditions, still planting out of season after three and one half years on the coast, and not growing near enough food to feed themselves (Villa and Gandara 1791: 1v; AGCA 1791: 602). The carpenters were incapable of raised houses of wooden planks, with interior ceilings and walls, like the ones the English had built and the Spanish commander at Río Tinto felt were far superior to the homes built by the Spanish (Dambrine 1795b: 5). Spanish houses used the ground as a floor, were subject to flooding, the thatched roofs let in rain, were infested with rats and bugs, and did not last long because of the materials used and needed replacing every one to three years (Nuñez 1789: 1; Villa and Gandara 1791: 1v; AGCA 1791: 589, 619-620, 627, 636-637, Dambrine 1795b: 5). Only a few buildings had tile roofs, and the thatch was susceptible to catching fire, a common occurrence in Trujillo in these years (Muniesa 1794b: 1-2; Nobas 1794: 6-6v; Junta 1796: 1; Anónimo 1797a: 4; Anónimo 1797b: 278; AGCA 1797b: 1-7). Not ever building proper living quarters for the tropics,

nor growing food to feed themselves, the colonists were maladapted to the environment, and from the first began to die in large numbers that quickly put the future of the colonies in doubt.

#### **Trujillo as a Center for Racial Diffusion**

In John Augelli's (1962: 119-120) Mainland-Rimland concept of culture areas of Middle America, the Rimland has a dominant African component, or at least a significant minority. During the time of the Spanish colonists, the African component entered into the racial matrix of Trujillo and the Costa Norte. In contrast to the voluntary migration of the Spanish, the Blacks at Trujillo and the coast for the most part came involuntarily. They did, however, adapt much better to the environment, eventually becoming a major minority in Honduras and Belize, dispersing from Trujillo.

The first major Black group at Trujillo were the *Negroes Yngleses* (English Negroes). As early as 1789, the king ordered that escaped Negro slaves were not to be returned to the English, and by 1791, some from Belize and Río Tinto (Black River) had settled outside of Trujillo at Campamento Viejo (El Rey 1789: 1-3v; AGCA 1791: 599). Ten more escaped slaves from Belize arrived in Trujillo in 1792, and it may be likely that others trickled in during the next several years (AGCA 1792: 1). By 1791, the *Negroes Yngleses* at Campamento had already planted some milpas and cultivated plantains, but since they did not qualify for receiving a ration, the only help they received from the Spanish government was a gift of eight machetes (AGCA 1791: 600). At Campamento they grew vegetables and fished, helping to provision the forty-two *Negroes Yngleses* that served in the military (AGCA

1797a: 1; AGCA 1798c: 1v-2). The Spanish established a settlement between Trujillo and Río Tinto using the Negroes Yngleses, and other free Blacks lived at Río Tinto (García 1792: 1; Bodegas 1792: 1-1v). The earliest numbers available on their population are from 1801, when three hundred were listed on the census (Anguiano 1804a: 289).

In 1793, Spain declared war on France, then in the midst of its own revolution, attacking France, then being attacked itself, ceding Santo Domingo to the revolutionary government of France and entering the war on their side against the British (Floyd 1967: 183-184). During the ensuing war 310 *Negroes Franceses* (French Negroes) came to Trujillo on March 10, 1796, that included forty-one officers, seventy-four soldiers, 121 women, fifty-nine children, and fifteen infants (Gandoqui 1796: 45; Echeverría 1796: 17). The next year there were one hundred Negroes Franceses serving in the military at Trujillo (AGCA 1797a). The Negroes Franceses received tools to build their own homes, and sixty-two of them received a ration, probably because of military service (Echeverría 1796: 18; Salablanca 1798b: 11v).

The 1801 census, finally written in 1804, listed two hundred Negroes Franceses, and in 1802, there were 190, compiled from a list divided by age and sex (Anguiano 1804a: 289; Dambrine 1802: 36-39). In 1802, six of them went to Chapagua to mark land for a settlement, and settled there later in the spring (Rossi y Rubi 1803: 44).

#### **Arrival of the Black Caribs**

The largest group with an African racial component to come to Trujillo were the Black Caribs, today known as the Garífuna. Carib Indians in the Lesser Antilles captured or adopted African

slaves and Europeans from the new European plantations, and possibly from a wrecked slave ship, and on the island of St. Vincent the new phenotype of the Black Caribs developed (Gullick 1984: 38; Gonzalez 1988: 7-8). The Black Caribs, though related to the other Caribs of St. Vincent and the other islands, recognized themselves as a different ethnic and political group.

After the Carib War of 1795-1796, between the British and Caribs on St. Vincent, the British divided the Caribs into Red and Black groups (Davidson 1983: 88; Gonzalez 1988: 23). Deciding to exile the Black Caribs, the British thought that since they would transport them anyway, they might as well put them where they could disturb the Spanish (Davidson 1983: 90)<sup>5</sup>. The British transported the Caribs from St. Vincent, stopped at Jamaica, then headed for the Bay Islands (Davidson 1983: 89-95). One ship was captured by the Spanish and taken to Trujillo, the rest continued to Roatán, landing the Black Caribs on April 12, 1797. The other transport ship was recaptured by the British in their attack on Trujillo on April 27-28, 1797. By the end of September most of the Black Caribs<sup>6</sup> had been moved to Trujillo (Dambrine 1797: 1).

Visiting Trujillo in 1802, Daniel McKinnen prophesied that "Their total extinction is...near at hand..." (McKinnen 1804:51, quoted in Gonzalez 1988: 41).

Davidson (1983: 97-98) cites English sources that put the original number of Black Caribs at 2,300 to 2,500, and himself estimates that the population was between 1,800 and 2,500. From two Spanish sources, one taken in September at Trujillo and the other on Roatán in October, there were a total of 1,696 Black Caribs (Dambrine 1797: 1-2; Bitto 1797: 1-3v). The exact number deported may never be known because of inconsistent and confusing

reports by both Spanish and English sources (Davidson 1984: 15).

Some of them were already Catholic, though many still practiced polygamy (Dambrine 1797: 1-1v). While the men had not received any instructions in the European method of handling arms, all males from age twelve made good use of the rifle (Dambrine 1797: 2). Very early on in their contact with the Black Caribs, the Spanish discovered that they were good at hunting as well as making cane baskets and rope (Dambrine 1797: 2). In order for the Spanish to know these traits they must have observed the Black Caribs in the hunt and while making baskets and ropes, during the first five months after their arrival. When asked about their loyalty to the British, the Black Caribs replied to the Spanish officials that having been prisoners of the English, they would embrace the party of the Spanish, and then received promises of aid if they became Spanish subjects (Bitto 1797: 1-3v). After their arrival at Trujillo the Black Caribs received a ration from the Spanish administration. The daily ration for 1,256 Black Caribs included five head of cattle, and between ten and seven ounces of rice per person, depending on if they served in the garrison, as fifty-two already were doing, worked on royal work projects, or not (Salablanca 1798b: 11v; Gandara 1798: 10). Besides working as soldiers or as laborers on the royal projects, the Black Caribs had also been hired as *piragüeros*, manning the piraguas (AGI 1798: 1). The documentation available on the Black Caribs is not very extensive, probably because they were not receiving rations for very long.

The British provided the Black Caribs with, among other items, cassava plants, griddles, graters, and assorted tools,

expecting them to recreate the agricultural-fishing-mercenary lifestyle they had had on St. Vincent (Gonzalez 1988: 40-41). Cassava, or manioc, was the mainstay of the Black Carib diet, who utilized the bitter variety that first needs the poisonous juice (hydrocyanic acid) extracted before it can be used (Gonzalez 1988: 100). Not relying on receiving a ration that was likely to be cut off as quick as the Spanish could, the Black Caribs planted fields mainly of cassava, and being skilled fishermen, supplemented their diet with their catch (Ayzinena 1813: 1). Each day the Black Caribs carried their goods to Trujillo, implying they lived outside of the city in their own pueblos, sold their goods in town, and bought what they needed (Ayzinena 1813: 1v). By 1813, the Black Caribs had almost exclusively all of the sown land around Trujillo, growing yuca (cassava), maize, and rice (Castillo 1813: 474-475). The Black Caribs also engaged themselves in the local cash-economy, serving as soldiers, laborers, and sailors (AGI 1798: 1; Castillo 1813: 474). The Black Caribs also had taken advantage of their seafaring skills and were in frequent contact with the English of Belize, often transporting contraband goods back to Trujillo (Limonta 1813: 1-2). One Spanish report claimed the Black Caribs main activities were fishing and contraband (Tornos 1816: 298).

The population of the Black Caribs increased rapidly, and one report attributed their natural fecundity to polygamy, long associated with high fertility rates (Tornos 1816: 298; Gonzalez 1988: 119). The 1801 census listed four thousand "Negroes Caribes" (Black Caribs), an incredible increase of nearly 137 percent over the numbers the Spanish counted in 1797 (Anguiano 1804a: 289; Dambrine 1797: 1-1v; Bitto 1797: 1-3v). After the

Carib War on St. Vincent the British interred the captured Black Caribs on the island of Baliceaux, where a disease, possibly yellow fever or typhus, struck many of them (Gonzalez 1988: 21). The high infant mortality at that time meant that most of the women of child-bearing age were no longer lactating, and were consequently much more likely to become pregnant (Gonzalez 1988: 118). During their first year at Roatán and Trujillo, as many as five hundred to six hundred infants may have been born, and the population may well have risen to four thousand by 1804 (Gonzalez 1988: 118-119). Spanish estimates of the Black Carib population growth around Trujillo came to nine or ten thousand around the year 1816 (Tornos 1816: 298). The rising Garífuna population was surpassing that of all other groups combined in the Trujillo area. By 1821, the Garífuna made up just over sixty-four percent of the population of Trujillo and the nine pueblos under its jurisdiction (Palomar 1821: 2). Even though the Black Caribs had served the Spanish faithfully and fought well as soldiers of the garrison, even helping put down the insurrection in Granada in 1812, the Spanish still feared their large numbers, fearing that they might take over the entire Costa Norte (Ayzinena 1813: 1v; Limonta 1813: 1-2; Tornos 1816: 298).

The Black Caribs did not come to extinction, and did in fact prosper at Trujillo, largely because they were preadapted to the conditions they encountered on the Costa Norte. The island environment of St. Vincent was not too different from that found in the Trujillo area, with fishing and agriculture important to the Black Caribs subsistence at both locations (Ayzinena 1813: 1v; Gonzalez 1988: 28). Included in the supplies for the Black Caribs at deportation from St. Vincent were cassava plants,

graters for extracting the hydrocyanic acid, iron griddles for cooking the cassava bread (Gonzalez 1988: 40, 103). Both Island Caribs and Black Caribs at Trujillo sold surplus foodstuffs at markets, taking part in the local cash economy, and the produce of the Black Caribs was a great help in feeding the population of Trujillo as they cultivated empty land around the city (Castillo 1813: 475; Ayzinena 1813: 1v; Gonzalez 1988: 108). European livestock had been introduced into the Caribbean islands during the first Spanish settlements, and Europeans regularly landed livestock on islands where they multiplied and thrived, and were available when Europeans came back to permanently settle the islands (Sauer 1966: 158,181,194; Crosby 1972: 78). By the time the Black Caribs reached Trujillo, they were well acquainted with European livestock and animals that flourished in the tropics, especially chickens and pigs, both of which are still essential in Garífuna ancestor rites (Gonzalez 1988: 101).

The Black Carib men at Trujillo immediately engaged in wage labor as soldiers, having had a lot of experience with firearms back on St. Vincent (AGI 1798: 1; Azyenena 1813: 1v; Davidson 1983: 88). Trujillo readily accepted the Black Carib soldiers into the depleted ranks of the Spanish. The Black Caribs, adept at handling boats on the sea, established villages outside of Trujillo along river mouths so they had easy access to the sea (Castillo 1813: 475). They also made use of their navigational and seafaring skills, taking a large part in the handling of commerce at the port and longer-distance trade, as well as smuggling (Castillo 1813: 474). Fishing was a well-used subterfuge to conceal smuggling activities (Gonzalez 1988: 131).

Island Caribs engaged in long-distance trading networks

throughout the Lesser Antilles and to the South American mainland, using *areba* (cassava bread) for food because it would not spoil if kept dry (Gonzalez 1988: 171). Growing cassava at Trujillo and making bread would have provided the characteristic foodstuff for long-distance ocean travel for the Black Caribs, enabling them to take advantage of their navigational skills to travel to Belize where they worked at wage labor extracting mahogany, and engaged in contraband trade (Limonta 1813: 1-2; Davidson 1979: 471; Davidson 1984: 17-18; Gonzalez 1988: 55).

The diverse genetic components of the Black Caribs, dating back to the first mixing of Africans into the Carib bloodline, and continuing on the islands and the mainland with other African, European, and Indian groups, helped give the Black Caribs a genetic edge to their survival in Central America (Crawford 1984: 4). Black Caribs also have abnormal hemoglobins in their blood that renders some resistance to malaria, a result of the African admixture that Europeans did not have making them more susceptible to the disease (Crawford 1984: 5). Also, cassava consumption may be linked with alleviating some symptoms of sickle cell anemia (Crawford 1984: 5). The diverse genetic background of the Black Caribs increased genetic variations in the population, and people who moved out of the Trujillo "homeland" carried a wide range of genetic material. The Black Caribs were not genetically maladaptive, with little or no variation in the genetic material as is often common for small groups that subdivide and colonize new areas (Crawford 1984: 4).

Not only did the Black Caribs survive their deportation in 1797, they actually flourished. Population increased rapidly, and one way of relieving population pressure was immigration

(Davidson 1984: 17). One name by which the Black Caribs have been known is "Trujillianos," indicative of the central importance of Trujillo as the "national capital and mother settlement" of Black Carib culture and migration in Central America (Davidson 1984: 16,13; Gonzalez 1988: 61). Black Caribs had migrated eastward into Mosquitia by late 1804, and probably established the village of Sangrelaya by 1814, (Davidson 1984: 17). Attempts to establish villages in Carataska Lagoon and near Cabo de Gracias a Dios in 1821 failed, and Black River/Río Tinto became the effective eastern limit of Black Carib settlement, eastward belonging to the Miskito (Davidson 1984: 17). The bulk of Black Carib population remained in the Trujillo core area until the 1830s, when they participated on the losing side of the Republican Wars in Central America (Davidson 1984: 16). Between 1802 and 1827, Black Caribs were sailing to Belize, often working in logging camps, but did not plan permanent settlements there until after the reprisals following their support for the loyalist uprisings in the 1830s, when they fled the Republican reprisals (Davidson 1979: 471). In 1832, 150 Black Caribs settled in Livingston, Guatemala, and also eventually filled in the coastal area from Trujillo westward to the Honduras-Guatemala border (Davidson 1979: 468; Davidson 1984: 18-19). Today, the Garífuna (Black Carib) culture area today runs from Plaplaya in Honduras's Mosquitia, westward along the coast to Dangriga in central Belize (Davidson 1984: 20). There are also significant Garífuna communities today in New York City, New Orleans, Los Angeles, and London (Gonzalez 1988: 70).

## Conclusion

Spanish colonization at Trujillo was a failure that cost in both money and human lives. Spanish colonists failed to adapt to the tropical environment, floundered in their attempts at agriculture, and never built housing that they found satisfactory for themselves, even though British houses still existed that they found to be superior to those of their own construction. Disease killed so many of the colonists that the Spanish were unable to occupy the coast as they planned once they regained it from the British. The Miskito attack on Río Tinto destroyed the last Spanish colony to be established in the New World.

From Trujillo, however, a large African element entered the coast in the form of the Black Caribs, the first Central American ancestors of today's Garífuna. Finding the environment similar to St. Vincent, from where they were banished, the Black Caribs settled on unoccupied land around Trujillo, fished, and grew cassava. Almost immediately the men began to travel long distances along the coast, making contact with the English in Belize, and familiarizing themselves with the shores of the Bay of Honduras. The Black Caribs also had genetic qualities that gave more resistance to malaria and yellow fever than Europeans or Indians had, and their vigorous genetic diversity proved useful when they broke into smaller groups for colonizing the coast. Although early chroniclers thought the Black Caribs would die out, they in fact flourished. Trujillo was the center from which the Black Caribs diffused, and their culture area extends from Plaplaya in eastern Mosquitia of Honduras running westward to Dangriga, Belize. At Trujillo the planned colonization of Spanish citizens failed miserably, but the unplanned and forced

immigration of the Black Caribs to Central America became the successful colonization out of Trujillo, today making the Costa Norte of Honduras a distinctive area from the rest of the country and Central America. At a church service in La Coruña, Galicia, for the Spanish colonists before leaving for Trujillo in 1787, the front cover of the program for the service quoted from Chapter 4 of the Book of Deuteronomy, "*Vosotros pasareis, i posereis una tierra excelente, (...you are about to cross and occupy that good land)* Deuteronomy 4:22 (Oxford Study Bible 1992). That passage proved more applicable for the Black Caribs than for the Spanish colonists.

#### Notes

1. Throughout this chapter I refer to Honduras's Caribbean coast from Cabo Camaron to Cabo de Gracias as the "Miskito Coast." The Spanish documents on which I rely refer to this area as the "Costa de Mosquitos," and I translate that directly, only using the spelling the Miskito people in Honduras currently prefer. The British usually referred to this area as the "Mosquito Shore," with the term "Mosquito Coast" being reserved for Nicaragua's Caribbean coast. In the Spanish documents the terms "Costa Norte" or "Costa del Norte" refer to the entire Caribbean coast of Guatemala and Honduras.
2. Dawson (1986: 43) dates the Spanish taking formal possession to August of 1787, but Estachería (1787a: 1) gives the date as 21 June 1787.
3. Parsons (1983: 464, 449) wrote that the Isleños "comprised the principal Spanish element" in the Trujillo area, and must have had a supporting role in missionizing to the Miskito Indians. They made up, in fact, less than one-quarter of the colonists (23.9%), nor did they have a support role in missionizing to the Miskito Indians (AGCA 1787: 21v; AGCA 1791a: 535-585).
4. Floyd (1967: 168) implied that the colonists from Galicia-Asturias came from rural areas of the "overpopulated minifundia lands." The evidence points to these settlers as both rural and urban poor (Herbella 1787a; AGCA 1791a: 535-585).
5. Woodward (1985: 80) wrote that these were slaves from the eastern Caribbean, but the Black Caribs were never enslaved, even though they lost the Carib War.
6. I have used the term "Black Carib" throughout this chapter rather than "Garífuna," the term by which these people are known

today. Gonzalez (1988: 8) uses "Black Carib" to denote the people that evolved on St. Vincent by 1700, that were descended from persons of Island Carib and African background, and who, some two hundred years later, became the Garífuna of today. Most Spanish documents refer to these people as "*Negroes Caribes*," or simply "*Caribes*."

**CHAPTER SEVEN**  
**DEVELOPMENT OF AN AMERICAN FORELAND, 1782-1880s**

Despite the disastrous results of Spain's final attempt at colonization in the New World, Trujillo began its full development of an American foreland. The colonization of Trujillo and the Mosquito Coast was in relation to Spanish Bourbon defensive policies and philosophies, whereas the development of the American foreland came about from Bourbon trade policies. The world economy was expanding and Spain finally began to change its position on "free trade." Indigo production underwrote Central America's place in the world economy in the late eighteenth century, but by the late 1790s until independence in 1821, the Central American economy declined into a general depression, despite the continued expansion in the world economy. Trujillo's hinterlands declined during the depression, but its foreland became completely reoriented toward the Americas, turning away from Spain after nearly 275 years.

During the first years of independence under the ill-fated Central American Federation, the free-trade and closed-trade factions fought in the newly independent states. The Conservative, closed-trade factions generally gained power after the breakup of the federation. British incursions into Honduran territory challenged the new Central American state's hegemony over areas that were perceived to be in Trujillo's sphere of influence. Some incursions received formal recognition from the British consul, while others were private, and largely unsuccessful if not calamitous, undertakings. The Trujillo hinterland expanded and contracted with the economy, and great changes took place in the landscape of Trujillo.

### **Spanish Trade Policies and "Free Trade"**

After founding colonies in the New World, Spain, like other European countries, strove for self-sufficiency (Haring 1947: 293). The prevailing view saw colonies as "potential sources of wealth" to be exploited by the mother country (Haring 1947: 293).

Spain limited contact with American colonies only through Seville, and later Cádiz, for control, but in the process they made it difficult for small merchants to enter the market (Haring 1947: 296). Stressing the circulation of bullion, both silver and gold, Spain's economic policy was classical mercantilism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, involved "...state policies of economic nationalism and revolved around a concern with the circulation of commodities" (Wallerstein 1980: 37). After the ascension of the Bourbons to the throne of Spain, the world economy again began to expand as colonies began to supply the mother countries with products for industrialization (Wortman 1982: 157; Weaver 1994: 38).

The British capture of Havana in 1762, opened the eyes of the Spanish to the possibilities of free exchange among the various Spanish subjects in the colonies and metropolis (Haring 1947: 318). Spanish trade with Cuba had been limited to about five or six ships a year, but the British, upon their capture of Havana, inaugurated free trade for all British sailing ships. During the year they held Havana, the British had nearly one hundred ships enter the seaport, an increase of twenty times the previous Spanish shipping. For a kingdom consequently strapped for revenue, the British trade at Havana "made this object lesson the more impressive" (Haring 1947: 318).

The reforms to Spanish trade began in 1765, when Charles III enacted *comercio libre*, or free trade (Wallerstein 1989: 213). "Free" trade, however, did not mean what we today normally take it to mean. Any Spanish subject could trade directly with the Spanish colonies, a situation that led to the dissolution of the Casa de Contratación in 1790, after 287 years of operation (Haring 1947: 320). Spanish subjects enjoyed a more accessible trade under the imperial framework, yet Spain still maintained its monopoly on commerce with its colonies (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 60; Wallerstein 1989: 213). The Spanish free trade was mercantilism in the form developed by the Dutch, English, and French during the previous century, and represented a maturation of the "less-developed" mercantilism under the Hapsburgs (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 59). Although not free trade in our sense, and limited to only Spanish subjects, the reforms of *comercio libre* had a profound impact on trade within the empire.

Trade within the empire boomed. Cuba could trade directly with certain cities in Spain, rather than being limited to Cádiz, and experienced a transformation from the trade boom of the 1760s and 1770s (Kuethe 1991: 26-27). Whereas before 1760, only five or six ships called at Havana, in 1778, over two hundred ships entered the port (Haring 1947: 320). Sugar production expanded in Cuba as the available capital increased, and Venezuela and Peru supplied the island with copper for the sugar kettles, and Buenos Aires began shipping salted beef to feed the increasing numbers of slaves and soldiers on the island (Kuethe 1991: 26-27; Liss 1983: 81,82). Cuba's trade throughout the Caribbean increased (Kuethe 1991: 27). Buenos Aires hides exports increased over five times, from 150,000 hides to 800,000 hides

per year as ranches replaced the hunting of wild cattle, and Venezuela shipped large amounts of private cacao to Spain (Haring 1947: 320; Liss 1983: 81). Cartagena, however, did not seem to benefit much from the new regulations, as most of its commerce was already handled by foreign shipping and contraband trade (McFarland 1990: 320-321; Grahn 1991: 175). Trade increased, however, throughout the Spanish America as a whole, increasing between 1778 and 1788 some seven hundred percent (Haring 1947: 320-321).

The industrialization then occurring in northern Europe demanded raw materials, food for the expanding urban populations, and markets for its industrial products (Weaver 1994: 38). Indigo, which produced a colorfast, blue dye, replaced cacao as the major crop and source of hard currency for Central America back in the late sixteenth century, after initially being processed from leaves picked in the wild (MacLeod 1973: 177-178; Wolf 1982: 140; Woodward 1985: 45). The *Indigo tinctoria* plant later replaced the earlier use of *Indigo suffrutiosa*, but the name given it in the Nahuatl language was *xiquilite* (MacLeod 1973: 178-180). The perennial indigo plant grew from three to six feet tall in well-drained soils, and harvesting of the leaves could begin as early as five to six months, but waiting for two or three years produced better quality dyes. Harvesting usually began in July, after which the leaves were placed in steeping vats of water for several hours. When the water bubbled and turned blue, the liquid was drawn into a second vat, "leaving a mass of malodorous vegetation in the steeping vats." The liquid in the second vat was oxygenated by beating, and then was left to settle. The sediment left in the second vat after draining the

water went through a drying process, leaving the indigo dye. Small and medium-sized farms in El Salvador produced most of the indigo, but it was also grown in Guatemala and Nicaragua on the Pacific slope (Woodward 1985: 45).

The industrial revolution in Europe created currents felt throughout Central America. Central American indigo had an excellent reputation on the world market, and the production of the highest quality category, known as *flor*, brought success to the region's cultivators (Wortman 1982: 186). Indigo production increased in Central America to meet the demands for the product in the European textile industry, and became one of Central America's three major sources of economic growth in the second half of the eighteenth century (Wortman 1982: 157; Weaver 1994: 38). Cultivation of indigo increased as prices remained high, and owners changed land devoted to food production over to indigo, an industrial crop in the same manner as rubber and palm oil, lowering local food production (Wortman 1982: 157; Wolf 1982: 325-332). The influx of capital into the indigo regions, combined with the decline in local food production, allowed indigo growers to import food from the tablelands of Honduras and Nicaragua, and the highlands of Guatemala (Wortman 1982: 157). The need to supply indigo laborers with grains, meat, cloth, and other items resulted in a network that linked different areas of Central America to the indigo region.

In the 1790s and first years of the 1800s, however, Central America began a cycle of depression, even as the world economy continued expanding (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 1989: 62; Wallerstein 1989: 55). The excellent reputation of the *flor* indigo from Central America eroded as producers made more lower quality

*sobresaliente* (medium quality) and *corte* (low quality) that were cheaper to produce (Wortman 1982: 186). From 1779 to 1791, *flor* quality indigo accounted for twenty-one percent of all exports from Central America, but in 1794, 1796, and 1797, it made up only three percent of all indigo exports. War with the British and locust infestations also contributed to the economic decline in Central America at this time, but the almost exclusive production of lower quality indigo guaranteed that the region's indigo producers could not compete with newly opened areas of cultivation (Wortman 1982: 185-186; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 63; Weaver 1994: 42). Indigo production in Venezuela, outside of Caracas, maintained production of high-quality dyes, reducing the demand for Central American dye within the Spanish empire. The British began their own production of indigo in the Bengal region of India in 1778 or 1779, when the American Revolution cut their North American supply (Wallerstein 1989: 140). Expanding production in India three or fourfold, indigo producers after 1805 exported an average of nearly five and a half million pounds annually, outproducing Central America's peak production years by some five times! (Wortman 1982: 86; Wallerstein 1989: 140). Britain soon imposed high tariffs to protect its own production, and Central America's indigo trade declined through the period to independence (Wortman 1982: 86). It was during this period of the expanding world economy, the implementation of free trade within the Spanish Empire, and the indigo boom and bust that Trujillo entered upon the world stage after being reestablished in 1783.

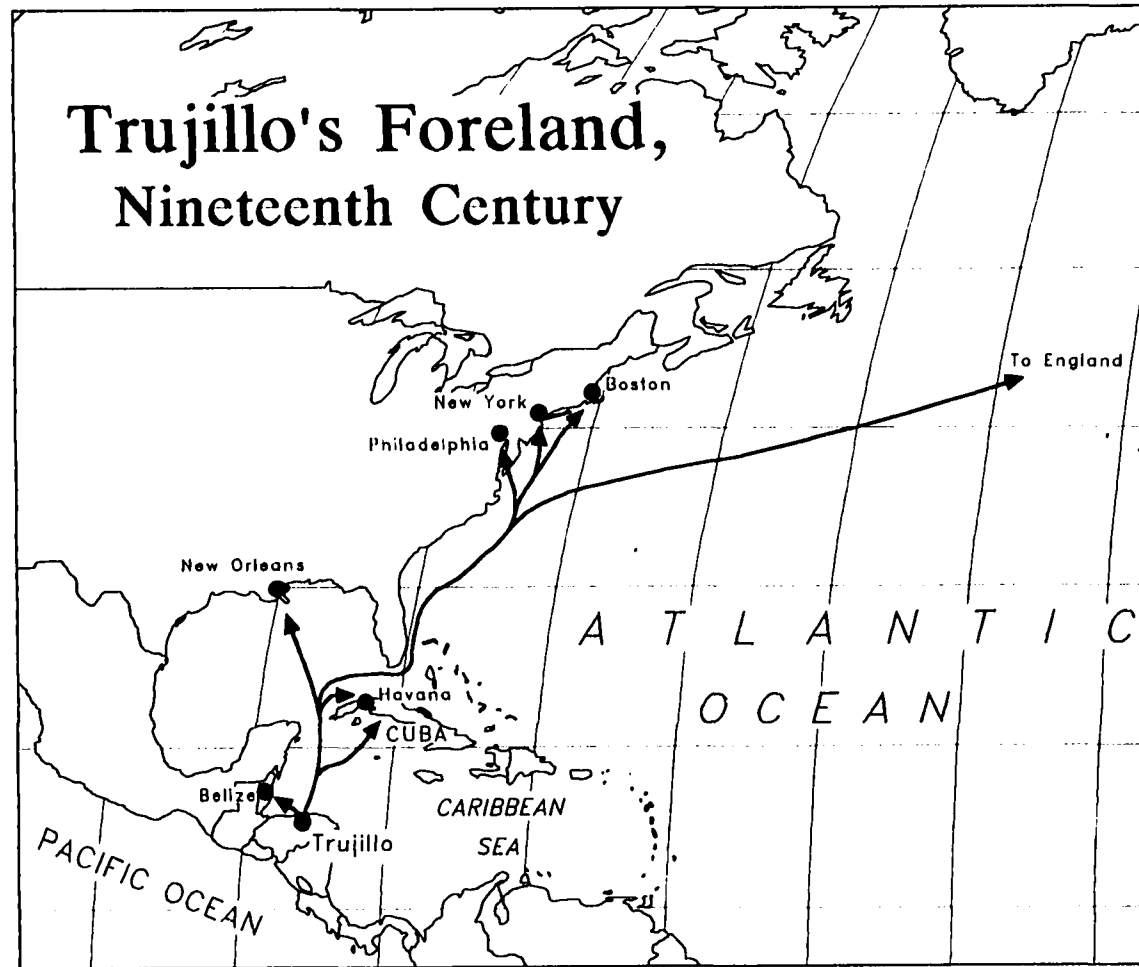
### Trujillo's Foreland Development to Independence

Trujillo's modern foreland began to develop after the city's reestablishment. A foreland is the area across the sea that is connected to a port by ocean carriers (Weigund 1956: 3; Weigund 1958: 195).

"The study of a foreland can be approached either in terms of the port's shipping connections as expressed by number of shipping lines, number of departures, or net tonnage moving in a certain direction, or in terms of the origin and destination of cargo moving through the port. In view of the primary function of the port, cargo tonnages are more meaningful in analyzing the port-foreland relationship than the number of departures or arrivals either of ships or of net register tonnages. A breakdown of cargo data by type (bulk, general) or nature (ore, oranges, and the like) will contribute further to comprehension of the problem" (Weigund 1958: 196).

Weigund's proposal for studying forelands does not, however, take into account political economy, essential to understanding the context in which the port-foreland relationship develops. Also, the existing historical documents most times do not mention the cargo's tonnage, often using such ambiguous terms as barrel, bottle, box, chest, jar, and often using the Spanish diminutive suffixes that mean little or large, such as *caja*, *cajita*, and *cajón* (box, little box, large box or chest). "There were...numerous customary measures, whose equivalents are practically impossible to establish" (Carrera Stampa 1949: 12). The trade data that does exist is incomplete, with only time periods available. While tonnages and the number of departures cannot be determined, the data does lend itself to geographic analysis, listing the port of departure and the products carried, giving a reliable picture of the development of Trujillo's foreland (Map 10).

Cuba, by far, dominated the developing foreland of Trujillo for several decades. All reported imports from Cuba alone



Map 10. Trujillo's Foreland, Nineteenth Century.

totaled 456,391 pesos to Trujillo for 1800<sup>1</sup> (Real Consulado de Comercio de Truxillo 1801: 371). The primary source lists Batabano, Trinidad, and Havana, in that order for amount exported to Trujillo, although nearly half of the total amount is listed only as "Cuba," with no particular city credited. For 1801, Cuba dominated the foreland for exports from Trujillo. Of the 149,484 pounds of indigo exported from Trujillo, nearly seventy-eight percent, some 116,194 pounds, went to Cuba, with the three above mentioned cities and the island itself listed as destinations (Anónimo 1801: 372). The indigo exports include only the sobresaliente and corte grades, the medium and low quality ranks. Other exports to Cuba included 2,346 pesos in currency, silver, hides, turtle shell, mules, and about thirty-seven percent of the sarsaparilla exported from Trujillo.

The staple food in the ideal and desired Spanish diet was bread from wheat flour, and they went to great lengths to procure it (Kuethe 1991: 30). Most of the flour at Trujillo came from Havana, and the amount needed to sustain the city and the colonies at Río Tinto and Roatán gained the attention of the officials in Guatemala City by the enormity of the imports (Anónimo 1797b: 278; AGCA 1798c: 1). Spain tried to supply the citizens of Havana with all the flour they needed, part of which came from Mexico, part from Spain itself, but much of it came from the recently independent United States (Kuethe 1991: 30). Havana's largest trading partner was Philadelphia, the source of much of the flour that was reexported through Cuba to other parts of the Spanish empire in the Americas (Salvucci 1991: 48). In 1790, fifty percent of the United States's total exports were flour shipped to the Spanish West Indies, and likely the source

of much of the flour going to Trujillo (Salvucci 1991: 45). The poor storage conditions and humid climate at Trujillo, as well as the old flour sent from Havana, received the blame for the quick deterioration of the stores at the port city (AGCA 1791b: 604). Strangely, despite the documents mentioning that most of the provisions, including flour, came from Cuba (Villa 1790: 2v-3; Letona 1796: 1; Anónimo 1797b: 278; AGCA 1800a: 101v; AGCA 1800b: 604), there were only three ship arrivals that listed flour among their cargo in the existing documents from 1799 through 1802 (Anónimo 1800f: 369; Anónimo 1802d: 389; Anónimo 1802e: 244). Some notices for ships, however, listed only "géneros" (goods, merchandise), and two ships from Philadelphia, an important exporter of flour to the Spanish Caribbean, had their cargo described only as "víveres" (provisions), and likely carried some flour (Anónimo 1800e: 218; Anónimo 1800f: 369; Anónimo 1802a: 385; Salvucci 1991: 45,48).

An analysis of the shipping announcements gives a general idea of the items from the Cuban foreland that entered Trujillo (Anónimo 1800b: 173; Anónimo 1800c: 190; Anónimo 1800d: 202; Anónimo 1800e: 218; Anónimo 1800f: 369-370; Anónimo 1802a: 385-386; Anónimo 1802b: 386-387; Anónimo 1802c: 219; Anónimo 1802d: 235; Anónimo 1802e:244; Anónimo 1802f: 308; AGCA 1802b: 19). Beverages were important, and a total of ten ships carried *aguardiente* (liquor). Eight ships had wine listed among their cargoes (important for celebrating mass), and one ship had beer, and another had gin. Coffee beans provided the only other item for beverages on the lists. Items that would provide protein among the foodstuffs included garbanzo beans, hams, pork, herrings, sardines, salmon, and *bacalao* (cured cod). Cooking

oils in the shipping registers included both olive and almond oil. Spices among the shipments included cinnamon, garlic, cloves, and pepper. Honey was the only sweetener listed, but raisins and dried figs probably served as sweets or treats. Vinegar, olives, onions and noodles rounded out the major food items.

The ships brought other items of merchandise to Trujillo besides just food. Household items included crockery plates, bowls, and serving dishes, crystal glasses, irons, pins, and pincases. Machetes, hoes, and knives were for farming and outdoor work. Tobacco was another item carried, along with military stores and ammunition. Textiles and clothing, however, made up much of the cargos. Specific clothing items included socks, stockings, shoes, and hats. A wide variety of textiles entered at Trujillo, including various cottons, linens, and muslin. Cotton textiles accounted for 13.52 percent of total imports in 1800 (Real Consulado de Comercio de Trujillo 1801: 371).

Three ships in this period arrived at Trujillo from Campeche (Anónimo 1802d: 235; Anónimo 1802e: 244; AGCA 1802b: 19). Specific foodstuffs mentioned included barley, corn, flour, lard, vegetables, rices, salt, white and brown sugar, and wine. Shoes, hats, tobacco, hammocks, and wax were among the non-food items. There was also one load of logwood to Trujillo, but that was intended for trans-shipment to Spain. These three ships, however, are the only ones in the records that called at Trujillo.

In November of 1797, trade with neutral nations received royal approval (Wortman 1982: 199). The order ostensibly applied

to only the peninsula of Spain, and though it was never published in the Americas, Central American authorities interpreted the order as also applying to their territory. The loss of trade during the Napoleonic Wars forced the government into accepting trade with neutral nations as a way to meet demands (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 63). On June 9th, 1797, Daniel Edes of the United States, came from New York and sold six casks of aguardiente, sixty barrels of flour, and two barrels of salted beef in Trujillo (AGI 1797b: 409). He returned in late 1797, or early 1798, coming from New York, with another cargo of provisions, but this shipment started worries about contraband shipments amongst the neutral shipping (AGCA 1798d: 1, 21-22v). In April, 1798, Daniel Edes proposed a regular trade with Trujillo, offering every six months during the war to bring a shipment of flour, beef, pork, bread, butter, beans, and rice (Edes 1798: 1-1v). Two ships from Philadelphia arrived with provisions and clothing, and exported from Trujillo 292 arrobas (about 7,300 pounds) of sarsaparilla, nearly sixty-three percent of all of Trujillo's export of that product for 1800 (Anónimo 1800c: 218; Anónimo 1800e: 369; Anónimo 1801: 372). There is no record of the arrival of a ship from New Orleans in 1802, but one ship did leave for New Orleans with three hundred pesos in money and six cases of aguardiente, despite it being November and months before Mardi Gras (Anónimo 1802f: 308).

There must have been some restrictions placed on what ships from neutral countries could sell in Trujillo and other Central American ports. As early as May, 1799, the ship *Lidia*, out of Philadelphia, received permission to sell only those items allowed under the free trade laws, and only because of the

shortage of goods at Trujillo (Muniesa 1799: 1). Sometime before October, 1800, the authorities in Central America must have prohibited free trade with neutral countries, because during that month the officials announced that United States merchant ships could stop for repairs in Trujillo under a treaty of friendship (O'Neill 1800: 1). Repairs were to be paid in cash, and only if the ship did not have enough money could the captain sell goods to pay for repairs, and only enough to cover costs. In 1801, the authorities in Guatemala announced that only French ships had permission to sell goods for repairs, but that French and United States merchant ships did not have any open access to free trade, despite the war (Presidente de Guatemala 1801: 1).

Selling goods to pay for repairs must have been an often used pretext for trading illegally, insomuch as the government in Guatemala warned against such a practice (Presidente de Guatemala 1801: 1). In 1804, the *Lady Washington*, out of Norfolk, Virginia, sprung a leak in the Gulf of Mexico on March 17, and four days later lost her masts and riggings in a storm (AGCA 1806a: 1v-2,6v,8-8v). Trujillo officials did not want to help the ship or let its captain sell merchandise to pay for repairs, as stipulated by the orders from Guatemala. The city officials, however, finally relented, and the *Lady Washington* was repaired.

Contraband had become a problem again at Trujillo, despite the resettlement of the port city to stop such activity.

High taxes had again made contraband a viable economic alternative to legal trade (Wortman 1982: 186). Belize was a major center for contraband trade with Central America and the Costa Norte (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 1989: 63). As early as 1795, Spanish officials began to prosecute contraband more thoroughly

(ANH 1795: 1). Ship captains used many methods to slip illegal items into port. Sailing from Trinidad de Cuba, the *María Luisa* simply hid illicit goods in a cask of rice and barrels of coffee (AGCA 1814: 3-3v). British goods carried in neutral ships entered the Spanish trade system in Cuba, then Spanish ships conveyed the goods to Trujillo, such as the *Esperanza* out of Santiago, Cuba, and the *Santo Cristo* out of Trinidad de Cuba in 1806 (AGCA 1806b: 2-3). Another ploy was to stop at an illegal port before going to Trujillo. In 1795, the schooner *Fiel*, bound for Trujillo, left Cádiz, Spain, but stopped in Jamaica to trade on its way to its official destination (Echevería and Gandara 1795: 16-16v). The schooner *Nuestra Señora del Carmen* left Trinidad de Cuba and proceeded directly to Kingston, Jamaica, where it stocked up on British clothing, then continued onward to Trujillo (AGCA 1809: 1). The French schooner *La Elena* demonstrated a stratagem for neutral ships, by clearing its cargo at Puerto Rico before it proceeded to Trujillo (AGCA 1801: 1, 18-20). The officials at Trujillo felt this was tantamount to contraband and charged the captain, who, perhaps in all innocence, claimed that his papers were in order from Puerto Rico and that the clearance from one part of the empire cleared him and his cargo for other parts. In 1806, the *Robertico*, left Philadelphia and stopped in Havana for clearance before continuing on to Trujillo (AGCA 1815: 177). Trujillo officials still had not figured out if this constituted legal trade or not, and various government officials would produce some 280 folios over the next nine years discussing this incident.

Back in 1792, officials at Trujillo had captured a British boat loaded with goods that was trying to engage in commerce

(Troncoso 1792: 1). As late as 1813, Black Caribs outside of Trujillo had in their possession several trunks full of foreign clothing that they had smuggled (AGCA 1813: 4). Several residents of Campamento permitted two British ships to trade there in return for receiving some money and illicit goods (Dambrine 1803: 1-5). To the leeward (west) of Trujillo British ships engaged in contraband trade for cattle, wood, and other "*frutos de la costa*" (fruits of the coast) (Bernárdez 1803: 395). Most of the British smuggling, however, had moved to the unoccupied area between the fortified ports of Trujillo and Omoa. Mainly from Belize, the British called at Triunfo de la Cruz and Puerto Sal, exchanging machetes, textiles, and linen for cattle (Dambrine 1803: 3; AGCA 1803: 30v, 38-38v). The Río Lean provided access to the Yoro Valley in the interior (Anguiano 1798: 1; Bernárdez 1803: 396).

A wide variety of people engaged in contraband, from the Black Caribs to Manuel Fernando Dambrine, the military commander at Trujillo, many were suspected of illegal commerce (Anguiano 1803: 402; AGCA 1813: 4). One report stated that "*El Puerto de Trujillo es una madriguera de contrabandistas*" (the port of Trujillo is a den of smugglers) (AGCA 1798d: 21v), and another simply indicted the entire town: "*todos son en aquel puerto [Trujillo] contrabandistas*" (everyone in that port [of Trujillo] is a smuggler) (Anguiano 1804: 413).

The contact with the British must have brought news to Spanish officials of new plants brought to England's Caribbean possessions, eventually changing the landscape at Trujillo with more plant introductions. Captain William Bligh sailed to Tahiti aboard the HMS *Bounty* to obtain breadfruit plants, however the

mission failed after the infamous mutiny led by Fletcher Christian (Powell 1973: 11). Breadfruit was to be a cheap and abundant source of food for slaves in the British West Indies, so another mission set out for Tahiti, again led by Bligh because he knew the route, had connections with Tahitian leaders, and had experience taking care of breadfruit plants onboard ship (Powell 1973: 8-9, 11). Bligh and his ship arrived in Tahiti at Matavai Bay on April 9, 1792, and within a week began collecting plants until he had filled the HMS *Providence* with 2,126 breadfruit plants, then left on July 18, 1792 (Powell 1973: 13-15). During a stop at Timor, Bligh picked up other fruits and plants for transport to the West Indies, including mangoes, jambos, and karambola (Powell 1973: 18). Bligh's first landing in the West Indies was at St. Vincent, on January 23, 1793, where he gave the local botanical gardener some 439 breadfruit plants before sailing to Jamaica, making Port Royal harbor on February 5, 1793 (Powell 1973: 23-26). Two gardens on Jamaica received the plants, some 346 total, then spread them through the island (Powell 1973: 27-29). Bligh later carried many plants to Kew Gardens, where they gave akee the scientific name of *Blighia sapida*, after the captain who was the first to carry it to the botanical gardens in London (Powell 1973: 34). "[I]n consideration of the very essential benefit this country had acquired by the importation of the breadfruit, and other useful plants, and from the constant, tedious, and painful care exerted by him for their preservation, during a long and dangerous voyage" Bligh received one thousand guineas from the Jamaican government (Powell 1973: 40).

In 1801, Alejandro Ramírez, a Spanish official, brought to Trujillo a variety of plants from Jamaica, apparently after traveling without official permission nor hiding his travels (Wortman 1982: 199). Many of the plants were of the same variety as those that Bligh had brought back during his voyage in 1793, and "...*muchas de ellas son curiosas toda útiles y las más no conocidas en este reyno*" (many of them are curious, all are useful and most of them are not known in this kingdom) (Ramírez 1801: 412). The purpose of bringing the plants was similar to that of Bligh's mission, the introduction of new plants to feed the population, and they hoped that:

"...*de aquí a diez, veinte, cincuenta años, unos diez siglos, el Arbol del Pan podrá preservar la vida de algunas familias, la Canela, la Pimienta, las dos nuevas especies de caña dulce, el Alcanfor, el Mango, etcétera, podrán contribuir al regalo, á la salud, y á la comodidad de algunos millares de individuos, los quales disfrutarán de estas ventajas...*" (Ramírez 1801: 412).

(...from here in ten, twenty, fifty years, some ten centuries, the breadfruit will be able to preserve the life of some families, the cinnamon, the pepper, the two new species of sugar cane, the camphor, the mango, etcetera, will be able to contribute to the joy, to the health, and to the comfort fo some thousands of individuals, who will enjoy these advantages...)

Don Juan Ortiz de Letona, the Minister of the Real Hacienda at Trujillo, took charge of the plants, of unknown number (Table 1) (Ramírez 1801: 412). In many cases it is unknown what some of the plants in the catalog refer to.

Among the plants brought to Trujillo were two varieties of breadfruit (*Artocarpus incisa*), the one from Tahiti that does not have seeds and the "*Arbol del Pan de la India Oriental*" that does.

The breadfruit is common in the lowlands of the Caribbean coast of Honduras, and has since been accepted as a food largely by the Miskitos, but not on a large scale by the Ladino population. Another food plant that was not widely accepted by Ladinos was

Table 1. Plants left at Trujillo in the care of don Juan Ortiz de Letona, 1801 (Ramírez 1801: 412).

<u>Botanical Names</u> <sup>1</sup>	<u>Names from the Catalog</u>
Artocarpus incisa (Artocarpus altilis)	Arbol del Pan de Otabeiti <sup>2</sup> (breadfruit - unseeded variety)
" "	Arbol del Pan de la India Oriental (breadfruit - seeded variety)
Cycas cicinalis	El Seigo de China (sago palm)
Hisarum grayns	planta moviente (?)
Olea fragrans	Olivo de China (?)
Eugenia nova	Manzano de Otabeiti (malay apple, pomejack, jambos?)
Cicia disticha (Pyllanthus acidus)	Cherimalla (Otaheite gooseberry)
Laurus Ciunamomum	Arbol de la Canela (variety of cinammon)
Artocarpus integrifolia (Artocarpus heterophyllus)	Faack, Faca, o Chaque de la India (jackfruit)
Chrysophilum cainito	Manzana de la estrella (star apple)
Mangifer indica	El Mango de India (mango)
(Blighia sapida) <sup>3</sup>	Aki Arbol alto, africano (akee)
Averrihoa bilimbi (Averrhoa bilimbi)	Bilimbi (bilimbin, bilimbi, cucumber tree?)
Nerium Oleander	Rosal de la Mar del Sur, Astro de Italia (oleander)
Laurus Campbora (Cinnamomum camphora)	Arbol de Alcanfor (camphor tree)
(Panicum maximus)	La yerba de Guinea (Guinea grass)

1. Botanical names given first are those from the catalog, those in parentheses are the modern, approved names (Allaby 1992; Coombes 1985; Kelsey and Dayton 1942; Mabberley 1987).
2. A misspelling or misprint of Capt. Bligh's spelling of "Tahiti" (Otaheite) (Powell 1973: 19, 20, 23).
3. Akee did not have a botanical name until after this voyage, and than was named after Capt. Bligh.

the akee plant (*Blighia sapida*). Guinea grass (*Panicum maximum*), a lowland tropical forage grass, likely was brought to replace native grasses in overgrazed areas<sup>2</sup>. The sago palm (*Cyca circinalis*) was apparently the only palm variety introduced at this time. The mango (*Mangifera indica*), another of the plants, on the other hand, has spread throughout Central America and is a major fruit consumed by the Ladinos. In the fiscal year 1880-1890, Trujillo was the only port in Honduras to export mangos, sending 291 barrels to the United States (Vallejo 1893: 291). While the mango has generally been accepted throughout Central America, the breadfruit is largely restricted to the Caribbean coast, and eaten only in Mosquitia. Among the plants were two varieties of sugar cane "las cañas de Borbon y de Otabeiti," described as larger than common cane, requiring less time to grow, needing less care, and rendering more fruit, but exhausting the land faster (Ramírez 1801: 412). Some cuttings of these cane varieties were left at Trujillo, the rest going to a hacienda at Quirigua, Guatemala. Trujillo was the Central American origin of many of these plants.

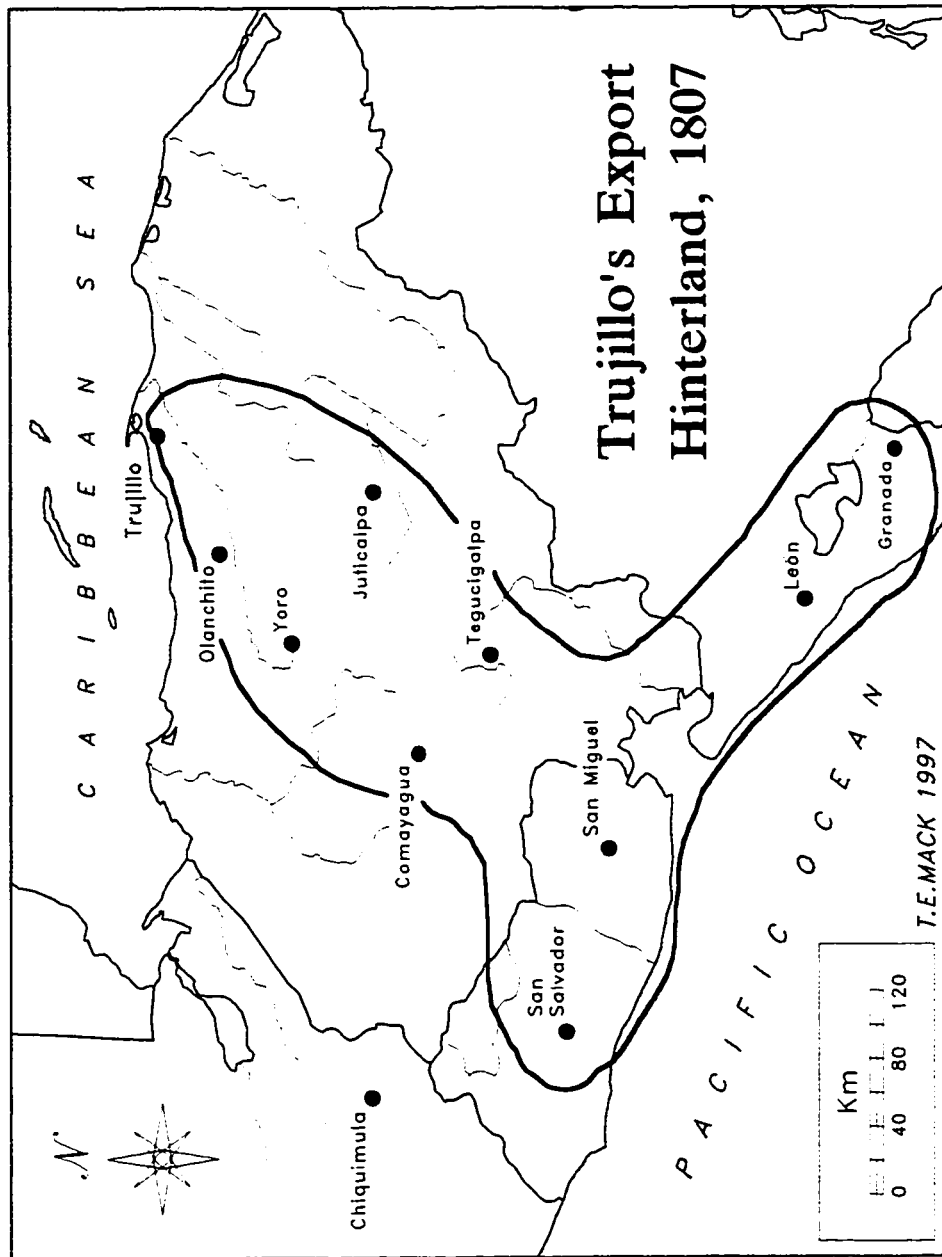
#### **Trujillo's Hinterlands in the Period of Developing Forelands**

Trujillo had two different hinterlands during the period it developed its new American foreland. According to Weigund (1958: 194) the import hinterland is the area "of destination for goods imported through the port," whereas the export hinterland is "where outbound shipments of the port originate." The import hinterland for Trujillo covered a wide region, however, most of the documents do not itemize specific goods, listing only *efectos* (goods or merchandise), making it nearly impossible to determine

what imported goods left the port to the different areas of the hinterland (AGCA 1805; AGCA 1807)<sup>3</sup>.

What little specific information does exist for Trujillo's import hinterland is mainly for Tegucigalpa, and indicate that both the city and province of that name received a wide variety of imported products (AGCA 1805). Food items imported through Trujillo to Tegucigalpa included beer, red wine from Catalonia and Matagalpa, aguardiente, and cooking oil. Textile goods consisted of dresses, handkerchiefs, scarfs, and a variety of cloth, including muslin, cotton, and cheesecloth. Wax, paper, earthenware plates and cups, furniture, porcelain jars and cups, and small plates of undetermined material composed the miscellaneous items listed for shipment to Tegucigalpa. Goods imported for Comayagua included almond oil, textiles, cups and jars. The limited amount of information only provides some general idea of the products shipped to Trujillo's import hinterland.

Trujillo's import hinterland was larger than simply Tegucigalpa and Comayagua, as the documents from 1806 and 1807 indicate (AGCA 1807) (Map 11). The imports that stayed within the Intendencia de Comayagua, which included both the cities of Comayagua and Tegucigalpa accounted for about twenty-seven percent of the imports by value (AGCA 1807).<sup>4</sup> Nicaragua received just under twelve percent of the imports by value, and the province of San Salvador received by far the largest, nearly sixty-one percent. I have found only one other document for this period reflecting the import hinterland, a part of a ship's manifest for 1823 that was described as full of errors (AGCA 1823: 1). Except for sixty-four reams of paper, some saffron, a



Map 11. Trujillo's Export Hinterland, 1807.

barrel of almonds, some capers, and two packs of French linens, the bulk of the cargo was wax, and most of the cargo had been marked with Guatemala as the destination. Comayagua and Tegucigalpa were to receive some wax, and six other packs of wax had been marked for Guatemala or San Miguel. This document suggests that Trujillo's import hinterland may have included Guatemala City, but care must be exercised in using only one document in which many errors were suspected.

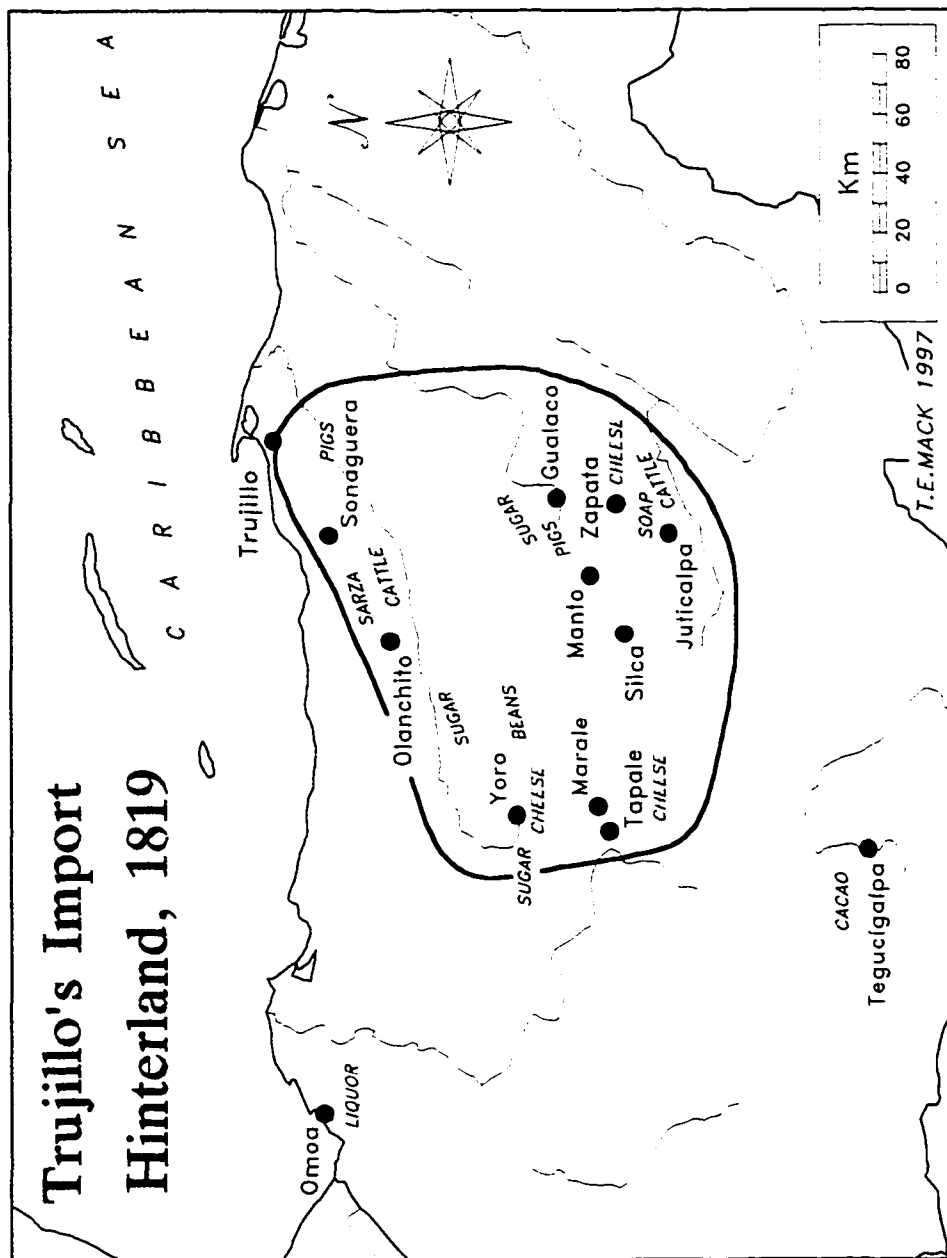
The export hinterland for Trujillo is not clear from the few documents that exist. One document covers goods introduced into Trujillo between November 1, 1799 through the end of March 1800, and the another for 1819 (Anónimo 1800g: 365-366; AGCA 1819<sup>5</sup>). It is not clear which items were for export or local consumption within Trujillo and the surrounding area. Doubtlessly, the 15,263 pounds of indigo brought to Trujillo during the end of 1799 and first quarter of 1800 were exported, but other items might or might not have been for export, such as the 9,500 pounds of soap (Table 2) (Anónimo 1800g: 365-366). It is likely, however, that local use consumed much of the food items in table two, the category into which most items classify.

The most precise picture of Trujillo's hinterland comes from 1819 (AGCA 1819) (Map 12). The list includes sixteen villages or cities that sent goods to Trujillo from 29 May, 1818 through June 4, 1819. The most important items were cattle, cheese, soap, and *dulces*<sup>6</sup>. During that time period, Olanchito, the most important town in Trujillo's hinterland in the Aguán Valley, sent a total of 197 head of cattle (the largest number from any single location), thirty-eight pigs, 29 *cargas*<sup>7</sup> of *dulces*, fifty pesos of cacao, fifty pesos of chocolate and twelve

Table 2. Goods introduced into Trujillo, November 1, 1799, through March 31, 1800 (Anónimo 1800g: 365-366).

<u>Product</u>	<u>Number/Volume</u> <sup>1</sup>
ganado vacuno (cattle)	1,291 cabezas (head)
cerdos (pigs)	290
velas de sebo (tallow candles)	2,606
chocolate	1,042 pesos
añil (indigo)	15,263 libras (pounds)
quesos (cheeses)	148 zurrone de á 20 cada uno (leather bags, 20 pounds each)
rapadura (brown sugar)	500 zurrone (leather bags)
sal (salt)	14 zurrone (leather bags)
sebo en pan (tallow in loaves)	18 arrobas (450 pounds) (1 arroba = 25 pounds)
jabón (soap)	380 arrobas (9,500 pounds)
naranjas chinas (oranges)	4 cargas (1,216 pounds?) (1 carga = 304 pounds) <sup>2</sup>
cigarros de tusa (cigars rolled in corn husks)	8 caxones (crates)
carne de cerdo (pork)	12 pesos
manteca de res (beef lard)	31 arrobas (775 pounds)
carne salada (salted meat)	22 pesos
zapatos (shoes)	399 pares (pairs)
conserva de naranja (orange preserves)	34 pesos
mechas de papelillo (paper wicks)	300 docenas (dozen, 3,600 total)
pimienta de tierra (pepper of the land[?])	½ arroba (12.5 pounds)
maíz (corn)	80 fanegas (8,080 pounds) (1 fanega of corn = 101 pounds)
suelas (leather soles?)	10
ajos (garlic)	1 carga (304 pounds?)
frijoles (beans)	107 arrobas (2,675 pounds)
harina (flour)	267 arrobas (6,675 pounds)

1. All weight equivalentents are approximates. Conversion factors into Standard American English units is from Barnes, Naylor and Polzer 1981: 73-74.
2. The carga was usually estimated, and often represented a measure of volume rather than weight, hence is the most inexact of the above measures (Barnes, Naylor, and Polzer 1981: 73).



Map 12. Trujillo's Import Hinterland, 1819.

*cargas* of sarsaparilla. Sarsaparilla gathering must have been located solely within the Aguán Valley, because Yoro was the only other location to send any to Trujillo, four *cargas* worth. Yoro also sent thirty-five head of cattle, eight cheeses, 101 pesos of *dulces*, and 16 pesos worth of soap. Sonaguera, the only other village in the Aguán Valley, sent only six pigs to Trujillo. Omoa, the only other city on the coast besides Trujillo, sent six barrels of aguardiente, and Tegucigalpa sent two loads of cacao.

The rest of the villages in Trujillo's hinterland were in the Olancho district, either in the Olancho Valley itself, the Agalta Valley, or the surrounding mountains (AGCA 1819). Gualaco, in the upper reaches of the Agalta Valley, Juticalpa, in the Olancho Valley proper, and Yocón, in an upland valley surrounded by mountains that separate the Olancho and Aguán Valleys, were the locations that sent the most goods to Trujillo.

The document records only two products coming from Juticalpa, but arriving in large quantities. A total of 504 cheeses and 627 pesos of soap came from Juticalpa. Yocón sent more heads of cattle (107) than Gualaco (38), but sent only twelve young steers compared to Gualaco's 104. Gualaco, however, must have been the cheese capital of Olancho, sending a total of 952 cheeses to Trujillo, while Yocón sent 235, the third largest total for any one location after Juticalpa. Both locations also sent pigs and soap, and Yocón also sent 85 pesos of *dulces* and Gualaco sent eight *arobas* (about two hundred pounds) of tallow. While most of the goods sent to Trujillo at this time were for local consumption, the sarsaparilla was for export, and other products probably also were sold to supply the ships coming into the port.

### Central American Independence

Central American independence brought an end to the hated trade monopoly by Spain, and in the process changing Trujillo's relationship with its foreland forever (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 64).

As Spain was losing Mexico, it surrendered political hegemony over Central America, "...a territory whose economy was not crucial to its existence," explaining the peaceful move to independence "completed virtually through a formal declaration" (Torres Rivas 1993: 1). Central American independence, declared on September 15, 1821, was a conflict between upper classes, the criollo elite and the peninsulares and crown of Spain, a "revolution from above" (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 64; Weaver 1994: 44). Central America for a time was united with Mexico, a decision made all the easier by Mexican troops entering the region, in a union filled with tension as demonstrated by El Salvador's announcement in December of 1822, of their desire for admission as a state the United States of America (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 64, 66; Weaver 1994: 51). Central America dissolved the annexation by Mexico and became completely independent on July 1, 1823, incorporating the five states of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica into the "Federation of Central America" (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 67).

The criollo elite that now ruled Central America immediately began their internal political disputes, based largely on what form of political control each group felt was best for class rule (Weaver 1994: 53). Isolation between the separate states resulting from the physical geography of the region, the poor communication between regions, the lack of an export in great demand on the world market with the consequent

economic weakness, and the varied external connections each region had, all contributed to the difficulties and civil strife within the Central American republic (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 70; Torres Rivas 1993: 3). The other states challenged Guatemala's long-time dominance over Central America under colonial rule, and began exercising powers of sovereignty without consulting the central government. This led to the civil war from 1825 to 1829 in which Francisco Morazán, a leader of the Liberals<sup>8</sup>, crushed Conservatives who strongly supported the Church and wished to restore the colonial *status quo* (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 70).

The Conservatives' political stance has been described as an "enlightened despotism" that strongly respected the Church, and "pleaded for moderation, order, and the stability of traditional, familiar institutions" (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 77; Woodward 1983: 92; Wynia 1990: 15). Liberals, on the other hand, took inspiration from the revolutions of the United States of America and France, wished to curb the power of the Church, establish public education, and increase their profits by taking land from the Church and Indians that they saw as unproductive, and aspired to create a "modern, progressive state, casting off the burden of Iberian heritage," all as they embraced *laissez-faire* economics and free trade (Woodward 1983: 92; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 77; Wynia 1990: 15; Booth and Walker 1993: 22). Into this political mix came the traditional localism brought about partly by geographic isolation within Central America, and the divergent interests of merchants and agricultural producers (Torres Rivas 1993: 5). During the post-independence period Britain dominated foreign trade with Central America, largely through Belize,

probably based on relationships established through contraband (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 64).

The Central American Federation broke up after 1838, when Nicaragua, followed by Costa Rica and Honduras, seceded from the union when the federal Congress announced it would take customs income from the existing states (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 73). Morazán tried to keep the federation together, but was defeated by the army led by Rafael Carrera, the mestizo pig farmer from Guatemala, and all pretenses to the existence of the federation faded away. After trying to reunite the federation, Morazán met his death by a firing squad in San José, Costa Rica, on September 15, 1842 (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 75). The Liberal rule under the federation ended as Conservative regimes came to power in all of Central America after the end of the federation (Weaver 1995: 60-61). Through the rest of the nineteenth century Conservatives would change their position to support free trade, and Liberals eventually make compromises with the Church, "[t]he Liberal and Conservative parties eventually degenerated into ideologically indistinguishable clan-based political factions" (Booth and Walker 1993: 22).

Each of the separate countries of Central America then inherited a portion of the loans owed by the Federation to British banking houses. At independence, the Central American treasury had only sixty Spanish reales in the treasury, just seven and one-half pesos (Torres Rivas 1993: 1). The federation borrowed five million pesos from Barclay, Herring and Richardson of London in 1825, but when the bond issue failed during the bond market collapse in London, Central America received only 328,316 pesos (Wortman 1982: 237; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 72). The foreign

debt burden in all of the Central American countries rose quickly as London banking houses took advantage of Central America's poor economy to float public bonds, raising only little real money for each of the countries, but incurring a large debt that was largely squandered on civil war (Torres Rivas 1993: 6-7). In 1953, Honduras still owed 600,000 pounds to pay off loans used to cover defaults on their share of the original 1825 loan, and Nicaragua would not be able to cancel its loans until 1961 (Torres Rivas 1993: 7, 155).

Honduras, as an independent state was weak with little export economy (Weaver 1994: 90-91). The rugged terrain throughout the country obstructed the development of an agro-export economy based on coffee until after the Second World War.

Market networks within Honduras were only local, with few national or international connections, if any. Unlike other Central American countries, however, a large land-owning elite did not form a national social class within the state, but operated on local and regional levels. Honduras did, however, try to restore its economy by "the old fatal illusion of silver mining" (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 88). "Regional fragmentation, enormous difficulties in communication between regions, and backwardness continued to dominate Honduran life and to prevent a truly national power from consolidating" (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 88). "Honduras as a nation remained a formal rather than actual political entity during the nineteenth century" (Weaver 1994:91).

#### **Trujillo's Foreland Development and Maturation**

This then was the situation into which Trujillo was thrust by the events following independence. Few documents exist to enable the reconstruction of the port's foreland for the first

few decades after independence.<sup>9</sup> Fortuitously, there are thirty-nine folios from 1824, describing the embarkations from Trujillo between January 3, 1824 through November 10, 1824 (ANH 1824). Belize, through its rising role as the trade entrepôt for Britain, was an important part of Trujillo's foreland. From Trujillo, Belize imported about ninety-four head of cattle, 349 cattle hides, and a large amount of sarsaparilla, over 2,500 pounds and thirty *tercios*<sup>10</sup>. Two ships from Boston played a role in the foreland, supplying flour to Trujillo and sailing back to the United States with only 184 hides, but with 11,585 pounds of sarsaparilla.

Although the record shows Havana did not import any cattle from Trujillo, it was a dominating force in the port's foreland, a role it had since the establishment of free trade under the Spanish in the late eighteenth century. Havana imported from Trujillo some 2,088 hides, 8,450 pounds plus 58 *tercios* of sarsaparilla, and cacao ( 5 *tercios* plus 4 *zurrones*) from Nicaragua. Trinidad de Cuba also imported from Trujillo 3,375 pounds plus 120 *tercios* of sarsaparilla. Both Havana and Belize had the largest number of boats calling at Trujillo, with fifteen from Havana and twelve from Belize.

After the previous document (ANH 1824) there is little precise information on exports to and imports from Trujillo's foreland. Again, many times the ship's cargo is listed as simply *viveres* , *frutos del país* (fruits of the country), *mercaderías* or *mercancías* (merchandise), and *efectos* or *géneros* (goods). Several ships's manifests, however, do provide more detail for the years 1840 and 1841. Three ships from Belize brought flour, lead, dishes, oil, cotton, pork, textiles, trinkets, rifles,

lead, and powder to Trujillo, (Correl 1840a: 36; Correll 1840b: s/f; Sorrel 1840b: s/f). From Boston came beds, chairs, a cart, crockery, flour, salt, wine, gin, and one piece of marble (Nikerson 1841: 67). Products from Havana to Trujillo included barrels, hogsheads, noodles, pepper, raisins, oil, garlic, cumin, coffee, liquor, thread and wax (Sorrel 1840b: s/f). Havana's exports from Trujillo were *frutos del país* (Sorrel 1840b: s/f; Sorrel 1843: 252-253). The only ship from Trujillo to Belize in this period left in ballast without a cargo (Sorrel 1840b: s/f).

In January of 1843, two ships from Belize arrived with *viveres*, leaving in ballast, and three arrived from Havana with *mercancías* and *efectos* (Sorrel 1843: 252-253).

Recording ship arrivals at Trujillo in 1853, the United States consul provided the best records on the port's foreland since 1824 (Consular Despatches 1853a; 1853b). By 1853, Belize had far outstripped Havana for domination of Trujillo's foreland.

Havana had only four ships to Trujillo that year, bring in rum and sugar, and exporting hides. One ship from New Orleans brought salt, and three from Boston brought "general" cargo and left with hides, sarsaparilla, and lima wood. A steam ship of the British Royal Navy called at Trujillo, and a London ship arrived in ballast, but left with a load of mahogany. Thirty-seven boats, however, went between Belize and Trujillo. All the boats from Belize imported "dry goods," except six that brought logwood. Twenty carried sarsaparilla on the outward leg from Trujillo, however, sixteen left Trujillo in ballast.

For eight separate months, between December 1868, and January 1872, I have found the shipping records of Trujillo scattered through the Archivo Nacional de Honduras in Tegucigalpa

(ANH 1868; 1869 a,b,c; 1870a, 1871a,b; 1872). The ships vary widely in size, from a thirteen ton, British schooner out of Roatán carrying foreign merchandise to a Spanish ship bound for Havana displacing 589 tons that left Trujillo with four hundred head of cattle (ANH 1869b; ANH 1871a). The biggest change from 1853 was the declining trade with Belize and Havana, taken over by the large cattle trade to Batabano, Cuba. During the month of August 1869, the only month that has numbers listed, Trujillo shipped 892 head of cattle to Batabano alone (ANH 1869c). From Batabano, Trujillo received liquor and merchandise, mostly on consignment, but four ships arrived in ballast. To Belize, Trujillo shipped only fourteen head of cattle, *productos del pais*, and the British Consul, though technically he was not considered cargo. Of the twelve boats to Belize, two carried undetermined cargo, if any, and seven left Trujillo in ballast. Trujillo imported mostly merchandise on consignment, and a few listed provisions, from Belize. A report from the United States consul at Roatán said that Honduras was "unable to compete with the Morgan line from Texas, which now supplies the Cuban market" (Frye 1875: 5). Honduras did, as we will shortly see, compete competitively for the Cuban market several years later.

From Havana, Trujillo received consignment goods and provisions, but did send four hundred head of cattle on one ship alone. The record for Havana is very incomplete because of the nature of the original documents, and although these probably were the products imported to and exported from Trujillo, the volume of shipping may likely have been quite high. The trade between Trujillo and Boston was on the decline, with only two ships arriving at the port during this period, bring provisions,

and only one ship leaving Trujillo, with merchandise. New York had replaced Boston as the main foreland in the United States from Trujillo. Ships sailing between the two ports exported hides, merchandise, *productos del pais*, and sarsaparilla from Trujillo, and imported provisions for the city, and munitions and Remington rifles for the military. There was also some incidental trade from Trujillo to Izabal, Guatemala, Grand Cayman, Jamaica, London and Penzance, England, and New Orleans. Several ships from Trujillo's foreland also began to stop at Omoa and Roatán before proceeding to the port, and make a call at the same two after leaving, thereby economically extending the Honduran foreland from those foreign ports.

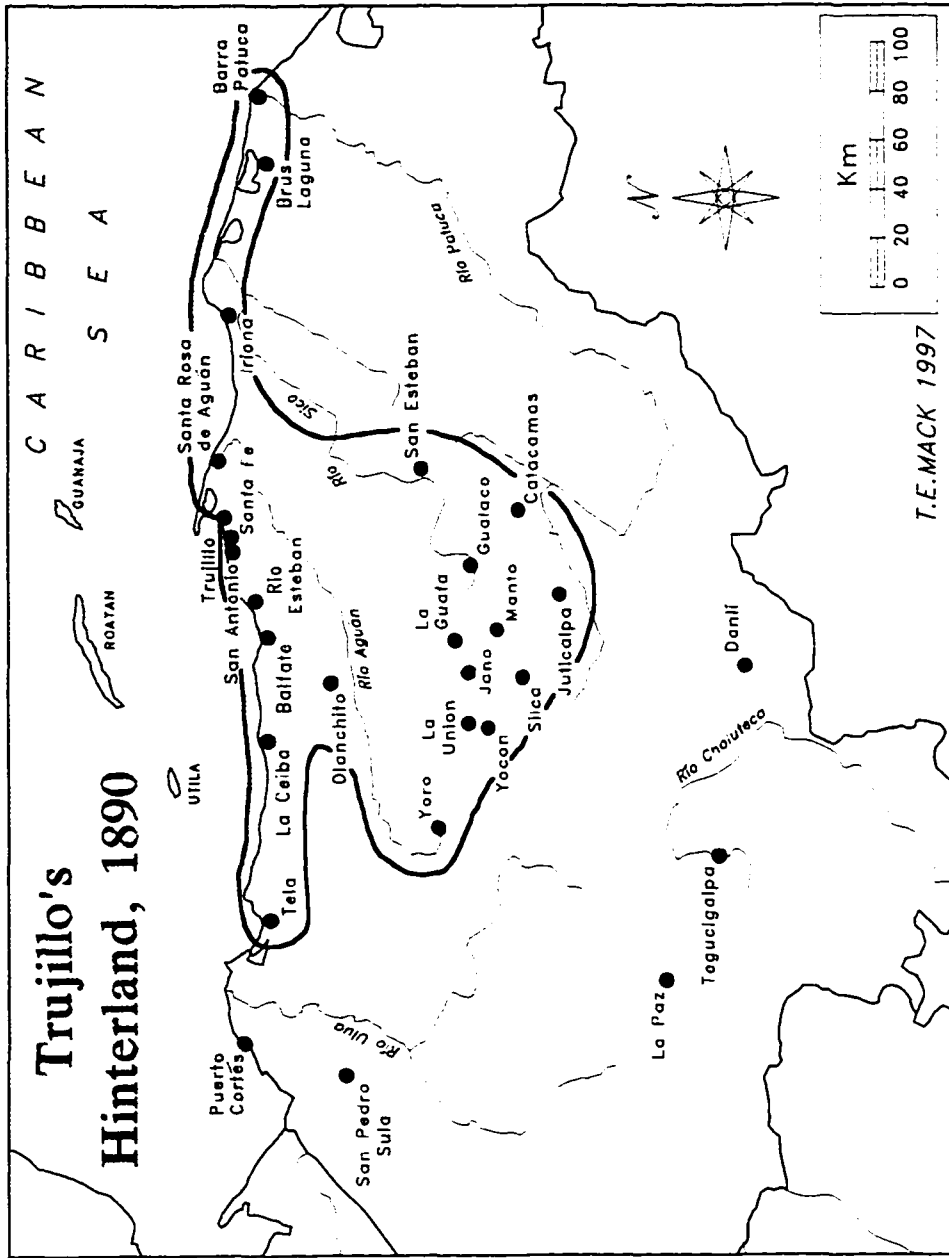
The next period of time covered by the documents is about ten years later, covering the months of September 1879, and January, April, August, and September of 1880 (ANH 1879; 1880a,b,c,d). The small sailing schooners were being either shut out of the trade at Trujillo by the larger steamships, or were no longer important enough to include on the lists of maritime movement for the port. The smallest ship, an British one from Belize, was still 108 tons; most were in the range of 350 tons, with one Spanish steamship displaced 671 tons, and an American steamship sailing between Trujillo and Cuba was 833 tons. British trade from Belize continued at a smaller scale, but there were two ships directly from London and one from Liverpool that called at Trujillo with merchandise and powder. Both ships were probably large enough to have taken up the slack in trade of the small sailing vessels formerly from Belize. New York's trade appeared to have declined to one ship in this period.

Cuba continued to dominate the hinterland of Trujillo, especially through Havana, although Cien Fuegos had three ships, and Manzanillo had one. From Cuba, Trujillo received merchandise on consignment, but the exports of cattle to Cuba were huge, undergoing a phenomenal increase with the advent of the larger steamships entering commerce. All fifteen ships from Havana conveyed cattle from Trujillo, and although only nine have the amount listed, it came to an incredible 4,286 head for these five months. The average ship carried 476 head of cattle for export.

The two ships bound for Cien Fuegos left Trujillo with a total of 1,358 head of cattle. Hides were no longer listed as export items as the increase in live cattle exports became more important, but some may have been included in the listings of *productos del país* for ships bound for other ports. New Orleans ran a distant second to Havana in numbers of ships calling at Trujillo, bringing in merchandise and a shipments of powder. The export from Trujillo to New Orleans, and one ship to Mobile, Alabama, was fruit. These ships often stopped at other points in Honduras before continuing to New Orleans, but these incipient shipments in the fruit trade really mark the end of Trujillo's developing foreland in the America's and Trujillo's inclusion in the fruit trade from the late 1870s to 1940.

#### **Trujillo's Hinterland in the Late Nineteenth Century**

Reconstruction of Trujillo's hinterland (Map 13), mostly for export, from independence to the late 1870s and early 1880s is difficult because of the same lack of documents that plagued constructing the port's foreland. There are enough documents, however, to get an overall, general view of the city's hinterland, constructed from the major routes that served



Map 13. Trujillo's Hinterland, 1890.

Trujillo, information from land titles, correspondence between government officials, and occasionally special information detailing a certain product of the hinterland. Examination of the major routes allows a look at the products that came to Trujillo from those areas. The roads to and from Trujillo were generally in poor condition, partly attributed to the heavy tropical rains that seasonally inundate the region (Gonzales 1872: 2; Viada 1884: 17). Leaving the town to the west, one would have simply walked along the beach before reaching the point to cross the mountain, there being no road whatsoever (ANH 1882a: Plano). Most trade traveled by mule, the primary mode of transport, often blamed for causing damage to merchandise (McConnico 1885: 4-7; Viada 1884: 17). Recognizing that roads and routes were vital to commerce and trade, orders for repairs were made on several occasions to speed commerce and protect merchandise from damage, and guards were placed at some locations to protect traveling merchants and the conveyance of their goods (ANH 1861: 1; Junta Itineraria de Trujillo 1860a: 1; 1860b: 2; Gonzales 1872: 3; Viada 1884: 17). Occasionally the roads were purported to be in excellent condition, but by mule-back it still took ten days to reach Tegucigalpa from Trujillo, at the cost of fifteen to twenty dollars per person, including mules and attendants (Robles 1887: 1; Lombard 1887: 16-17).

Two main routes connected Trujillo with its hinterland, one to the Agalta and Olancho Valleys, the other entering the Aguán Valley after crossing the mountains behind the port. The road to the Agalta and Olancho Valleys first left Trujillo towards the mouth of the Laguna de Guaimoreto, actually running along the shoreline at the mouth, then continued through the savannas along

the shore of the lagoon, skirting the end of the mountains (ANH 1842: 4; *Julía* 1881: Plano). The road crossed the Río Chapagua and Río Aguán, probably entering the mountains along the Río Bonito Oriental on the way to the Agalta Valley, although the exact details are lacking. The route to the Aguán Valley ran westward from Trujillo along the beach past Campamento, then followed the Río Mojaguay inland and up over the lowest part of the cordillera near Trujillo (ANH 1859: Plano; ANH 1882a: Plano).

Once over the divide the road continued down the other side along the Río Higuerito (listed on some maps as the Río Tulofio), to the village of La Brea and westward along the foot of the mountains to Sonaguera (ANH 1864: plano; ANH 1867: plano; ANH 1875a: plano; ANH 1882a: plano; ANH 1882b: plano; ANH 1882c: plano; ANH 1882d: plano; ANH 1882e: plano; ANH 1882f: plano). From Sonaguera the route continued to Olanchito.

Cattle grazed throughout the Aguán Valley, and many no doubt ended up as exports through Trujillo. In the summer (dry season) the lower areas adjacent to the Río Aguán accommodated cattle for pasture for many years (ANH 1842: 4v; *Viada* 1884: 15).

Savannas throughout the valley farther upriver also provided pasture for cattle (ANH 1853: 29v; ANH 1869d: 15; ANH 1882g: 27v). The cattle shipped from Trujillo definitely came from the interior of Honduras, but it is not clear from where, although one man did sell cattle to merchants in Trujillo for export (*Cáceres* 1880a: 1; *Mera* 1880: 1v). Some people used Trujillo to export rubber from Mosquitia, but I have found only one reference for this activity (*Echenique* 1880: 2-3v). Sarsaparilla continued to be exported, for the Honduran product was deemed much superior to others at the time (ANH 1882g: 11).

In all the documents I have found, there is only one mention of coffee at Trujillo. Liberal governments came to power throughout Central America in the 1870s, and promoted coffee cultivation (Helms 1975: 244-251; Woodward 1985: 149-159; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 83-92; Torres Rivas 1993: 14-20; Weaver 1994: 69-70). During the Liberal presidency of Marco Aurelio Soto, Honduras encouraged the cultivation of coffee (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 88). Coffee production did not become important in Honduras, however, until after World War II, largely because of the rugged terrain and poor transport system that made transporting coffee difficult and expensive (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 88; Weaver 1994: 70). There was, however, a large number of coffee trees planted in the area around Trujillo (ANH [1880e]: 1). The list includes the owners name and number of trees, however no exact locations are given, other than around the city, but probably up the side of the mountain away from the beaches. The total number of coffee trees planted around Trujillo totaled 21,290, but ownership covered a wide range. The Señores Alvarado owned 8,000 coffee trees, while several owners had only twenty to fifty. The median number of coffee trees held was two hundred, with an average of nearly 687 trees. I have been unable to find any other citation regarding coffee planted around Trujillo for any era, and it is not cultivated today. The project must have died out during the various political problems of the Soto administration (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 88).

The other export product mentioned during this period is wood. Government officials recognized the value of a wide variety of trees for export, including silk-cotton, India rubber, palm, coconuts, cedar, rosewood, guanacaste, yellow sandalwood,

yellow dyewood, and Brazil wood (Viada 1884: 15,17). By far the most important type of tree was mahogany. Hondurans, or their foreign contractors, cut mahogany throughout the Aguán Valley (Hernandez 1861: 1; ANH 1875b: 1; Cuellar 1877: 1; ANH 1882g: 6; Viada 1884: 15).

The most detailed information found is from two documents from 1870 and 1880. The first documents the number of trees cut in the Trujillo district in 1869 (ANH 1870a: 1). The largest number cut came from the area around Chacalapa, on the north bank of the Río Aguán east of Sonaguera, with 230 trees. The area around Quebrada de Arena, on the south bank of the river west of Bonito Oriental, yielded 208 trees, while the cuttings at Cuyulapa at Sonaguera produced 127. The other four areas, Nansal, Montaña de Aguán, La Brea, and Boca del Chapagua, produced significantly fewer trees, ranging from four to sixteen, for a grand total for the year of 601 mahogany trees. The 1880 document covers the years of 1878 and 1879 (Cáceres 1880b: 1). The number of trees cut increased tremendously to 941 for 1878, and 1,242 for 1879, totaling 2,183 mahogany trees cut for both years. The cuttings at Monga yielded 669 trees for both years, the largest number for any area in that period. Sonaguera produced 554 cut trees, Chichicaste 501, and Corozo 429. The Hondurans were not the only ones interested in exporting mahogany from the coast, and fought various British intrusions into Trujillo's sphere of influence.

#### **British Intrusions into Trujillo's Sphere of Influence**

The major intrusions by the British into Trujillo's sphere of influence came about largely as a means to extract mahogany. By the mid-1830s, Belize, the major site of British timber

extraction in Central America, had largely been cleared of easily obtainable precious wood, including commercial mahogany (Naylor 1889: 113). Having cut a tree, the mahogany cutters had to drag the log to the river, and "Only such mahogany-trees were cut as grew at a reasonable distance from the creek, and our work was thus extended sometimes to [sic] many miles from the camp" (Bell 1899: 188). At about the same time the British government extended the favorable tariffs enjoyed by Belize to wood extracted from other regions, giving incentive for the Belizean wood cutters to move to areas of more accessible and cheaper mahogany in the Bay of Honduras (Naylor 1989: 113, 117). East of Trujillo, in Mosquitia, the Mosquito King began to grant mahogany concessions to British citizens, in areas claimed by Honduras (Naylor 1989: 113).

At the same time, Francisco Morazán, the leader of the Central American Federation, acquired the mahogany concession along the Costa Norte of Honduras (ANH 1835: 1; Morazán 1835: 1-1v). Morazán contracted with Marshall Bennett, an longtime resident of Belize, to administer the mahogany cutting along the coast, which, added to Bennett's own concession to colonize and cut mahogany in Guatemala, gave Bennett control of nearly the entire coast (Griffith 1965: 30). The concession was to last twelve years for the removal of all the mahogany or Brazil wood between 88° 49' W and 84° 15' W long., and north of 15° N latitude, specifically mentioning the Chamelecon, Ulua, Salado, Papalotepe, Aguán, Laguna de Guaymoreto at Trujillo, and the Valle de Olanchito (ANH 1835: 1). This concession ran well into Mosquitia to the area of the mouth of the Río Patuca. "The best mahogany stands were located just east of Trujillo on the Román

[Aguán] and Limón Rivers," where Bennett began to cut mahogany, however, British cutters with grants from the Mosquito King began moving into the area around the mouth of the Río Aguán (Naylor 1989: 113). The conflict between Honduras and Great Britain began, all just outside of Trujillo.

Frederick Chatfield, the British consul to Central America, Colonel Alexander McDonald, the new Superintendent of Belize, followed official British policy that time claimed the Mosquito Kingdom, a British protectorate, extended to the Cabo de Honduras, the end of the spit at Trujillo Bay (Naylor 1989: 113-115). Morazán ordered Bennett to remove his crews from the area while the dispute was to be settled (Naylor 1989: 113). The disintegration of the Central American Federation prevented Morazán from returning his and Bennett's crews to the mouth of the Aguán. Chatfield, however, maintained that the Honduras border extended only to the Cabo de Honduras [Punta Castilla/Punta Caxinas], not the Wanks River [Río Coco], and that the territory was under British protection and held by the Mosquito king (Chatfield 1845: 19; Chatfield 1850: 1-1v).

In 1845, R.C. Wardlaw, a British citizen, tried to cut a road from the Río Chapagua, near the mouth of the Río Aguán, to La Brea, to meet the Camino Real and bring cattle directly to the mahogany cuttings (Sorrel and Bernardez 1845: 18). Honduran officials claimed the British must pay import duties on the supplies they brought in that consisted of 26 barrels of flour, 19 barrels of pork, 2 barrels of crackers, and chains and axles for removing the cut mahogany logs (Sorrel and Bernardez 1845: 18; Lamothe 1845: 18-19). Chatfield (1845: 19) warned the Honduran government not to interfere with "the subjects of her

Britannic majesty on the Roman River." The threat to Honduras was not an idle one, as the British corvette *Alarm* not only took possession of the Río Aguán in late 1847 or early 1848, but landed British troops at Trujillo to protect the British mahogany camps (Santos Guardiola 1848: 1).

In October 1849, Captain M. Nolloth, commander of H.M.S. *Plumper*, entered the port of Trujillo, with orders to demand \$11,061 for repayment of property seized from British subjects cutting mahogany on the Río Aguán (Nolloth 1849a: 1). Nolloth's orders specifically stated that the Honduran commander at Trujillo had to turn over the requested amount immediately and that there was not any time to confer with officials in the capital, and "[h]aving received your reply without the sum claimed by my Government, I must hold you responsible for its consequences" (Nolloth 1849a: 1). The commander at Trujillo did not pay, so on October 4, 1849, Nolloth captured Trujillo, seized \$1,200 from the customs duties, thereby establishing a tradition by foreign powers in Central America for the next sixty or seventy years, and sent to the capital for the balance (Nolloth 1849b: 1).

The British mahogany works were quite extensive, as evidenced by one set of mahogany cuttings on a portion of the Río Aguán's south bank in 1849 (PRO 1849[?]). This cutting operation displayed the dendritic pattern of truck paths cut through the forests, and covered some forty to fifty square kilometers. In 1852, the Honduran government again demanded that British citizens leave the Río Aguán mahogany cuttings, a demand which the British in the region refused (Hume 1852: 1). It would not be until January 1860, that the Mosquito Reservation boundaries,

under the Treaty of Managua, would be established with Bluefields as the southern boundary, and Cabo de Gracias a Dios as the northern boundary (Naylor 1989: 197). Naylor (1989: 198) believes that the British adhered to their policy of claiming the border as the Cabo de Honduras/Punta Castilla because it involved very little drain on British military or diplomatic resources, and made a useful bargaining tool in diplomatic negotiations. The Mosquito Coast meant little to the British, and once it became a sticking point in negotiations or was no longer useful, the British simply gave it up, because most of the British investment had been by private means by "a small number of adventurers who were pursuing private gain in a remote area where their activities could escape close scrutiny and supervision" (Naylor 1989: 198).

Mahogany cutting was not the only British activity in Trujillo's sphere of influence after Central American independence. In 1823, Trujillo sent word to the government that a British corsair/adventurer named MacGregor, the very one who had sacked Portobello a number years earlier, had established a new colony at Río Tinto, the site of the old British and Spanish settlements (Gutierrez 1823: 1; Rodriguez 1823: 9; Velasco 1823: 16). Gregor MacGregor, a Scottish adventurer and self-styled cacique (chief) of Poyais, as he named the area around Río Tinto, had fought with Simon Bolivar in Venezuela in 1811, received a promotion to general, had a falling out with other officers, led unsuccessful raids in Florida, Panama, and Colombia, landed on the Mosquito Coast in 1820 and obtained a land concession from George Frederick, the Mosquito King (Dawson 1982: 1). MacGregor returned to London, and in 1823, floated unregulated bonds that

traded largely in the coffee houses of Cornhill, Exchange Alley, and Lombard Street, all to finance a colonization project at Río Tinto (Dawson 1982: 2). The superior printing and color quality of the bonds encouraged investors of the legitimacy of MacGregor's scheme, and though the bonds were undersubscribed, he still grossed 160,000 pounds, not counting the money made from the sale of commissions in the Poyasian army "to militarily ambitious young men with more money than grey matter" (Dawson 1982: 2).

Would-be colonists read the book by a mysterious "Capt. Thomas Strangeways that described the "State of Poyais," how easy it was to be provided a living and get rich, and the grandeur of St. Joseph, the capital that supposedly existed at the mouth of the Río Tinto (Hasbrouck 1927: 443-44; Dawson 1982: 1). What the book in fact described, said one reviewer, was not the Río Tinto in Mosquitia, but plagiarized descriptions of Jamaica (Hasbrouck 1927: 445). Dawson (1989: 1) said that the people who enrolled to be colonists were teachers, shopkeepers, and clerks, but Hasbrouck (1927: 446) wrote that the immigrants were Highlanders pushed off the land by the encroachment of sheep farming, and that many were elderly people expecting to spend the rest of their years living comfortably and easily. Describing his fellow colonists, James Booth, the surveyor for the colony wrote that "...the major part of the lower classes were too evidently of the vicious order of society; for I could scarcely have believed that all Scotland could have produced so many idle, worthless vagabonds" (Hasbrouck 1927: 455).

Four ships carrying colonists left Britain in 1823, although the last one was apparently lost at sea and never heard

of again (Hasbrouck 1927: 447-456). The first ship arrived at Río Tinto on February 11, 1823, and the few provisions landed were ruined when soaked by salt water. Another ship arrived about a month later, only to find no capital city, provisions, housing, or land grant because King George Frederick canceled them after claiming MacGregor had defrauded him. Early in April 1823, a small boat with five people from Río Tinto arrived in Belize and pleaded for assistance. The superintendent in Belize removed all the colonists from Río Tinto in four trips, the last on June 25, 1823, at a cost of 3,790 pounds 4 shillings. The last boatload of colonists arrived at Río Tinto in August 1823, but refused to land and forced the boat to take them to Belize. Over the next several months the Poyais colonists were given land around the present town of Dangriga, formerly Stann Creek, but by April 1824, all but six had abandoned the site. Close to 200 people died in this colonizing fiasco, and only 45 ever returned to Great Britain, the rest scattered around the Bay of Honduras.

When news of the disaster of the colony reached London, MacGregor fled to France where he again sold bonds for the Poyais colony (Dawson 1982: 2). He was arrested and spent ten months in a French jail for fraud, returned to London, and sold Poyais bonds again! The Poyais bonds were reissued to defraud a group of bond speculators, and were promoted again in 1830 and 1834, but were now printed in both English and French. MacGregor eventually fled to Venezuela, the only country in which he was safe, received citizenship and his former rank of general. At his death in 1845, MacGregor was buried not only with full military honours attended by the president, cabinet members, and

the diplomatic corps, but was buried in the Pateon Nacional, near Simon Bolivar.

Trujillo and its sphere of influence were spared another colonization scheme at Río Tinto in the 1830s. A group of speculators swindled by MacGregor and holding Poyais bonds organized the Rio Tinto Commercial and Agricultural Company to resell the bonds in another bond fraud (Griffith 1965: 20-23). Meanwhile the Eastern Coast of Central America Commercial and Agricultural Company, formed by a different group of Poyais bond holders, also wanted to create another bond scam, but wished to validate the Poyais claim on Río Tinto with the new Central American Federation, and give some legitimacy to their deception.

Their representative first stopped in Belize where Marshall Bennett, the mahogany concessionaire, convinced him to petition the Guatemalan government for a land concession, as they were intent on attracting foreigners to settle in their territory (Griffith 1965: 29-46). The Eastern Coast Company gained a concession to nearly 13 million acres in Guatemala, and "[t]he directors had, in short, experienced the miracle of having a palpably fraudulent undertaking turn suddenly legitimate in their hands" (Griffith 1965: 46). Rather than taking place in Trujillo, the disaster of the Eastern Coast Company's colonization took place in Guatemala's Río Polochic region during the late 1830s.

The British Central American Land Company and the Yorks and Lancashire Land and Emigration Company, both tried to rekindle the failed settlement at Río Tinto in the late 1830s and early 1840s (Naylor 1989: 126-128). Thomas Young (1842) wrote an extensive account of Mosquitia during 1839-1841 when he traveled

through the region as an agent for the company. Fort Wellington, as the settlement was called, apparently had thirty-seven people in several houses (Young 1842: 156). Young paints a picture of a prosperous colony throughout his book, but other documents contradict his account. The Hondurans thought the settlement was for mahogany extraction, and feared losing all of Mosquitia if the planned two hundred families ever arrived (Herrera 1840: 15-16). Yellow fever hit the colony in the early part of 1841, and the superintendent died (Sorrel 1841a: 63; Sorrel 1841b: 63-64).

Seven colonists, apparently all that remained, made their way to Trujilló, abandoning the settlement, and ending all British attempts at colonizing the coast.

The largest British intrusion and threat to Trujillo and Honduras, in terms of sheer numbers, came from their reoccupation of the Bay Islands. In mid 1830, a report from Trujillo said the English had settled on Roatán, in the process killing the corporal of the small Honduran garrison (Sages 1830: 1)<sup>11</sup>. Honduras had some sort of colony on Roatán at the time, the colonists were evacuated even though they had permission from the government to settle on the island. The British immigrants to Roatán were largely from the Cayman Islands, of which 700 arrived between 1830 and 1843, many coming out of fear of the upcoming abolition of slavery (Davidson 1974: 75-80). By 1850, there were 1,600-1,700 British inhabitants in the Bay Islands, a very large number of whom were emancipated slaves, except for the Black Caribs of Punta Gorda. The United States held that the settlement violated the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, as well as infringing on the Monroe Doctrine. The British government, by 1860, had lost its dominance in the western Caribbean, due

partially by the increasing political activities of United States and the competing business interests in the region (Naylor 1989: 191). It was no longer advantageous to hold onto the mahogany cuttings on the Río Aguán or the Bay Island.

Many of the British settlers to the islands, however, prepared to fight the transfer of the islands to Honduras, and secured the services of William Walker "for the purpose of aiding the 'Bay Islanders' to free themselves from the Honduran [sic] government" (Fulton 1860: 1). William Walker, originally of Tennessee, was a soldier of fortune who, in 1855, led a revolt in Nicaragua against the Conservative government, but refused to hand the country over to the Liberals who had engaged his services (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 82). The State Department of the United States recognized Walker's government in May 1856. Walker tried to annex Nicaragua to the United States, and even declared English the official language (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 82; Weaver 1994: 62). Four Central American countries joined together to drive Walker out of Nicaragua, the greatest show of solidarity among the Central Americans since the Federation dissolved. In May 1857, President Juan Rafael Mora, of Costa Rica, defeated Walker, who fled to the United States.

Sometime in late 1859 or early 1860, some Bay Islanders sought out Walker because they:

"were desirous of securing such assistance as would preserve inviolate to you and your children the well-regulated freedom the British Crown bestowed upon you. It was natural for those who sought aid to maintain you in your former to apply to the Americans naturalized in Nicaragua. Five years ago I, with others, sought to plant in Central America the liberty which the experiences of a thousand years has endeared to those living under the rule of the Laws of Alfred: and for seeking this object a coalition of several states was formed against us" (Walker 1860a: 1).

Walker compared the Bay Islanders to his experience in Nicaragua:

"...we acquired our rights, both of citizenship and property in Nicaragua by the toils we passed and the blood we shed in the service of the Republic. With rights acquired in the same manner, speaking the same language and cherishing the same traditions of law and liberty, it is natural that you and me should make common cause against the enemies who aim to deprive us of privileges justly and laboriously acquired" (Walker 1860a: 1).

"General William Walker and some 100 Americans" left New Orleans on June 13, 1860, for the Bay Islands (Fulton 1860: 1). Walker's movements were not kept secret. J. Price, the Acting Superintendent of British Honduras and Lieutenant Governor of the Bay Islands, in a communication with the commander at Trujillo, stated that the "the island of Ruatan will be protected by a military force, and one of her Majesty's vessels of war will be at hand ready to repel any aggression [by Walker] upon the Colony," and noted that Walker and his force reportedly were in the Swan Islands (Price 1860: 1-2v). The British warships off Roatan convinced Walker that his plan for the Bay Islands was doomed, and unable to return to the United States without some glory, "[a] wild scheme took shape in his mind - a way of making a grand gesture of defiance to the powers that were frustrating him" (Carr 1963: 263). Walker decided to capture Trujillo, then make some sort of deal with the Hondurans.

Trujillo suffered Walker's attack that began at 4:00 am on August 6, 1860, after bringing his boat, the *Taylor*, into Trujillo Bay near Laguna de Guaimoreto, where he first landed his men (Martinez 1860b: 1)<sup>12</sup>. Norberto Martínez, the Commandante of Trujillo, reported that Walker's men only took about fifteen minutes to capture the city, and that most soldiers shamefully abandoned the field of combat, leaving behind Martínez, six soldiers, and Don Antonio Sorrel, whom Martínez called a patriot

for his actions (Martínez 1860b: 1). There are no Honduran reports of any serious misconduct by Walker after capturing Trujillo, and the United States consul, perhaps a bit biased, wrote that Walker molested nobody, that property was generally safe, and that the citizens had deserted the city (Follin 1860: 1). Walker and his men were relatively lightly armed, averaging only twenty musket cartridges per soldier of fortune (Dolan 1860: 1). Walker himself signed for one Minie [sic] Musket, one cartridge box, one side belt, twenty musket cartridges, and twenty-five musket caps (Walker 1860b: 1). Against a reinforced Honduran militia, backed by a British warship, Walker was unable to hold out in Trujillo, and fled the city on August 21 or 22, 1860, leaving the schooner *Taylor*, and traveling overland (Martínez 1860c: 1v).

Trapped at Río Tinto with the Honduran military surrounding him by land, and the British war ship *Icarus* by sea, Walker surrendered unconditionally on September 3, 1860, to Captain Noel Salmon, of the British navy (Alvarez 1860a: 1-2). Captain Salmon had convinced Mariano Alvarez, the leader of the Honduran forces, that the filibusters who surrendered should be returned to their home countries, "under the condition that they are allowed to return to the United States after first giving their oath never to participate in any future expeditions against any of the Central American States" (Salmon 1860: 1-1v). Although Captain Salmon reported seventy prisoners, a list by Alvarez recorded seventy-five Americans, including Walker, two Irish, three Germans, and one Canadian, Pole, and Englishman (Salmon 1860: 1v; Alvarez 1860b: 1).

On September 5, 1860, Captain Salmon turned Walker over to the Honduras authorities in Trujillo, so that "the leaders of the Filibusters that surrendered to me on the 3rd...at Black River [Río Tinto], [could] be dealt with according to law" (Salmon 1860: 1). On September 21, 1860, Walker's men boarded Her Britannic Majesty's Steamer *Gladiator*, bound for New Orleans (Prudot 1860b: 1). Rudler, Walker's second in command, received a four year prison sentence to be served in Comayagua, but was later released after serving only a portion of the sentence (Alvarez 1860c: 168; Calderon 1929: 168). Walker received a sentence of death for the crime of filibustering from the Hondurans, and, being Roman Catholic, received the holy sacraments from the priest in the church that stands today in Trujillo (Alvarez 1860c: 168; Ramirez 1860: partida 1,124). Before the firing squad "he met his death like a Christian and a man" (Prudot 1860a: 1). The United States consul paid 10 pesos 2½ reales for Walker's casket, with trimmings (Diaz and Sosa 1860: 1). Walker was buried in Trujillo's old cemetery, marked by a square, white, stone block, surrounded by a small wrought iron fence, with a well worn path leading to the grave made by the number of tourists who have visited it ever since<sup>13</sup>. Later that year the Bay Islands were peacefully turned over to Honduras by the British.

#### **Trujillo's Cultural Landscape and Population**

The only lengthy, deliberate description of Trujillo comes from Young, the Deputy Superintendent of the British Central American Land Company, from his visit in 1841 (Young 1842: 139-146). The rest of the descriptions are often from government officials complaining about the general state of decline in

various public buildings. In 1841, Young (1842: 139) wrote that Trujillo "Has now little attraction; many of the present buildings having been suffered to go to decay." Forty-three years later, William Burchard, the United States consul to Roatán, found Trujillo in much the same condition. "Wars, revolutions, and earthquakes have made ruins of many of its public buildings, and left but few vestiges of its ancient wealth and prosperity" (Burchard 1884: 3)<sup>14</sup>.

Young estimated Trujillo's population at one thousand "Spaniards" [Hondurans], Ladinos, and French Creoles, and 1,500 Black Caribs (Young 1842: 140). The Black Caribs lived in "two villages on the sea beach," probably referring to the two Black Carib barrios of Río Negro and Cristales. In 1875, F.E. Frye, the United States consul in Trujillo, estimated a total of 1,500 inhabitants, half of whom he estimated to be Caribs (Frye 1875: 4v). Both estimates were probably intelligent guesses at the number of residents at Trujillo. Young (1842: 140) thought the "Spanish" inhabitants were "low of stature...sallow and sickly," but that the Black Caribs, "on the other hand, are tall and athletic, perfect pictures of health." He continues his descriptions, sometimes disparaging the females of Trujillo for being "Lax in their morality" and that they "cannot be considered beautiful," however he tempers the last comment by saying "yet there is something in their contour and walk which excites admiration. The manner of wearing their handsome blue and red shawls, and their symmetrical forms are very pleasing" (Young 1842: 143, 140). Young's writings may have been biased in such a way as to attract colonists, first by picturing the Black Caribs in a favorable light for would-be colonists to hire upon their

arrival to Honduras, and providing an image of women who single male colonists might engage in relationships or even marriage. By 1880, however, a migration from the interior to the coastal regions of Honduras had begun (Mera 1880: 1). Because of a shortage of wage labor in Olancho men moved to the coast for jobs to support their families in the interior. This migration to the coast began earlier than has been thought, even before the start of the large fruit companies.

The Black Caribs, however, were not only in Trujillo, but also in three villages, Santa Fe de Punta Hicaco, San Antonio, and Guadalupe (ANH 1855: 18). By 1869, the small settlement at Campamento was described as the "*Caribal de Campamento*" (Carib village of Campamento), and the *Negros Ingleses* that formerly inhabited it either died out, or had been absorbed by the Black Carib culture (ANH 1869d: 14v). Cassava was the main agriculture product of the Black Caribs, and they also grew plantains, coconuts, coffee, and other items that the document did not describe in detail (ANH 1855: 15, 18). Fishing supplemented their diet, and some worked as sailors. Any surplus the Black Caribs sold in the market in Trujillo. The market simply met in the plaza, before 8:00 am (Young 1842: 143). Fish was both inexpensive and abundant, probably accounting for the reason why only one or two cattle were butchered each day for the entire city (Young 1842: 146). Cassava bread and plantains were inexpensive, but wheat bread and fowl, presumably chickens, were both costly. The rest of inhabitants of Trujillo did not engage in agriculture (Young 1842: 142).

The city's defenses were in horrible shape during this period. Goats played on the small sections of the old city's

walls that still existed, "now standing alone as a monument of departed grandeur" (Young 1842: 145). "The fort is a most wretched affair," and did not have any artillery in town that was fit for service (Young 1842: 139; Sorrel 1840a: 1). In 1859, the customs house and barracks both threatened collapse, and the necessary repairs were ordered (Rojas 1859: 13v). In the following year, a wall of the headquarters building fell during a storm, and the entrance gates to the fort were on the verge of disfunction (Martínez 1860a: 1). Ten years later, in 1870, the barracks, arms warehouse, and munitions depot all were in complete ruin (Martinez 1870a: 1). The commander of Trujillo wrote about the great need for repairs to all of the national buildings within the fort of Santa Bárbara, but in 1875 the hospital and barracks were still in ruin, and only a small portion of the fort was used by the military (Martínez 1870a: 1); Frye 1875: 4v).

The church was somewhat run down by 1841, judging by Young's (1842: 139) description that it "must at one time have been a handsome building; it now looks naked and miserable." Repairs must have been conducted on the church throughout the years, and in 1875 it was "still kept in partial repair" (Frye 1875: 4v). The only real addition to Trujillo over the years had been a forty-foot tower for a new lighthouse out on the Cabo de Honduras (Tablada 1870: 1). Most houses in Trujillo were "but poor specimens of house buildings" (Young 1842: 139). The best houses in town, of which there were few, had balconies, white-washed walls, and thatched, tiled or shingled roofs (Young 1842: 139). The streets of Trujillo were paved with stones and stone

bridges crossed streams, supposedly all done in colonial times (Frye 1875: 4v).

### Conclusion

By the late 1870s, Trujillo had changed dramatically from the late eighteenth century. The centuries old trade pattern with Spain no longer existed, except through cattle exports to Cuba. Belize was no longer an important trading partner, and Trujillo's trade with the United States of America slowly increased in importance. Most of the colonial buildings were in ruins, and the modern city was beginning to take shape. The cattle exports to Cuba, however, would soon give way to exports of yellow gold, the banana, and usher in a new period of boom and bust for Trujillo.

### Notes

1. The primary source (Real Consulado de Comercio de Trujillo 1801: 371) states that the figures for 1800 are incomplete because of missing ship registrations. The amount of imports do not add up correctly in the published primary source, possibly due to errors in the original addition, the transcription, or when published. The totals given are from my addition of the numbers.

2. *Panicum maximum* is an important fodder grass in Central and South America, growing well in the shade of tree plantations, as reported from mango plantations in India (Bogdan 1977:182-183). Citing Parsons (1972), Bogdan (1977: 183) suggests that guinea grass first came to the Americas on slave ships. The account by Ramírez (1801) suggests that guinea grass was a deliberate transplant by people of European origin.

3. AGCA 1805, is a collection of trade receipts and registers on small bits of paper, some bound together with a piece of string, some loose. AGCA 1807 is much the same, consisting of forty-eight receipts. There are no folio numbers available.

4. To arrive at the percentage for imports by value from Trujillo to the different regions of its hinterland, I totaled all receipts for each of the different regions. Some receipts, however, gave the hinterland as two regions, totaling some 24,571 pesos 4 reales, or 23.41% of the imports by value. Using the receipts listing single destinations I figured the proportion of trade for the three regions of Comayagua, San Salvador, and Nicaragua, the applied those proportions to the receipts listing multiple destinations. This procedure does not yield an exact

measure of the percentage of imports to each region, but does produce an image of the hinterland with some accuracy as to the value of trade each region produced.

5. AGCA 1819, is similar to both AGCA 1805 and AGCA 1807, where folio numbers simply do not exist for pieces of paper put together into a folder. See note 3 above.

6. What is meant precisely by the term *dulces* from the document (AGCA 1819) is unknown. The modern meaning is sweets or candies, but might also mean preserved or candied fruit (Larousse 1993: 264).

7. For the quantity or volume of a *carga*, see note 1, figure 2.

8. The terms "Liberal" and "Conservative," as they applied to the political parties of early nineteenth-century Central America, should not be confused with the terms as they apply to late twentieth-century North America. In the United States today, "modern conservatives would likely find themselves very much at home with the economic policies of nineteenth-century Central American Liberals" (Booth and Walker 1993: 22).

9. For the post-independence period the main archival source is the Archivo Nacional de Honduras, in Tegucigalpa. In Honduras several historians, geographers, and anthropologists have informed me that a fire in the 1880s destroyed the main archive in Comayagua, then the capital of Honduras, leaving only those documents that were left in Tegucigalpa. The Archivo Nacional has never had the money or personnel to organize the documents for the post-independence period. The current director, Licenciado Carlos Maldonado, the first director trained as an archivist, has an organization project underway, but is hampered by lack of funding and lack of proper storage facilities for the documents.

10. The modern equivalent of the *tercio*, an old, customary measure, has proven impossible to determine (Carrera Stampa 1949: 12).

11. Davidson (1974: 78) dates this event to 1838.

12. Certain coincidences are to be noted between the first name of the author and the name of Walker's boat. Walker attacked Trujillo on August 6, 1860; the author was born on August 6, 1960.

13. Some tourists have reported to me about two graves for Walker in Trujillo. Walker, however, was only buried in the old cemetery. The similar stone block behind the hospital is to mark where he was shot by the firing squad. A stone wall surrounds the cemetery, and in 1992 someone hit it the corner with their car, creating a small hole. I heard a mother tell her children that if they were not good, the ghost of William Walker would come out through the hole in the wall and get them.

14. Feldman (1988: 148) lists five earthquakes that struck Trujillo, although none were documented by primary sources. The

first was supposedly July 1764, destroying 108 houses, although Trujillo was uninhabited at the time (Feldman 1988: 153). The next two supposedly occurred on July 8 and 18, 1851 (Feldman 1988: 160-161). Feldman suggests that British or United States documents may confirm the secondary source, which does not itself cite any primary sources; however, in my research the United States consuls did not mention an earthquake in those years. The fourth earthquake on August 26, 1853, was described as a strong quake that caused damage from Guatemala to Trujillo, and the secondary source quotes a letter from Trujillo on February 10, 1854, referring to continuing tremors (Feldman 1988: 162). The last earthquake, on September 25, 1855, was recorded in two secondary sources, but with detailed information concerning the time, 10:45 am, the wave action in the bay, other tremors throughout the day and over the next 17 days (Feldman 1988: 162).

**CHAPTER EIGHT**

**YELLOW GOLD: THE HINTERLAND OF TRUJILLO  
AND THE TRUXILLO RAILROAD COMPANY**

The latest boom to hit Trujillo was that of yellow gold, the banana. While Trujillo was exporting cattle to Cuba in large numbers in the late 1800s, entrepreneurs from the United States started importing to that country tropical fruit from Trujillo and the Honduran coast. The first major phase of the banana era was from the 1860s or 1870s until 1900, the second phase from 1900 to 1929, and the third from 1929 that was affected by the Great Depression (Kepner and Soothill 1935: 95; Weaver 1994: 109-111). The phases for Trujillo, specifically, however, differ slightly from the general model for Central America as a whole. Trujillo entered the banana era in the late 1870s, with its first phase lasting until the early 1900s. The city's second phase ran from about 1910 to 1919, the time period when railroad concessions were granted, revoked, and sold. The third phase of Trujillo's banana era lasted from 1919 to the mid-1930s, the boom period of banana production that ended with the fourth phase, the decline of production in the late 1930s. The banana hinterland was not one of the larger hinterlands for Trujillo, but did bring the city fully into the world economy.

Throughout the latter third of the nineteenth century the Central American republics sought to develop export economies based on agricultural products (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 84). Western Europe's and the United States' rapid economic advances through the 1800s greatly impressed Central American Liberal politicians (Woodward 1985: 155). The legislatures passed economic reforms that favored production of export crops and foreign capital in the belief that expansion of agro-exports would increase revenues, raise the general standard of living, and spark industrialization, eventually bringing about economic

development (Woodward 1985: 157-163). The export of agriculture products, however, only paid for imported manufactured goods with little development occurring along the lines they envisioned.

Costa Rica began exporting coffee in the 1830s and 1840s, followed by Guatemala and El Salvador in the 1870s, shortly after the Liberals regained power (Torres Rivas 1993: 17; Weaver 1990: 70). Both Nicaragua and Honduras failed to develop national economic bases at this time because of civil war and political instability (Torres Rivas 1993: 18). Nicaragua would not develop a coffee economy until several decades later. The poor state of transport in Honduras, hampered by the rough topography, made shipment of coffee difficult from the interior and added significantly to the cost (Weaver 1994: 70). Coffee would not become important as an export item in Honduras until after the Second World War. The early fruit shipped out of Trujillo, and other coastal locations, grew right on the coast and was not hampered too much by transport difficulties.

#### **Trujillo's Early Fruit Exports**

The first banana plantations in Honduras were in the Bay Islands (Kepner and Soothill 1935: 95). In 1855, the Bay Islanders exported mainly plantains and coconuts to Belize and the United States, each accounting for fifty-eight percent and forty-one percent of the Bay Islands' total exports (Davidson 1974: 85). By 1859, exports from the Bay Islands had doubled to 3,690,000 plantains and 1,325,000 coconuts, with ninety percent of exports going to the United States. In 1855, 12,000 bunches of bananas were among the imports from the Bay Islands, and increased to 51,000 bunches in 1859. Between 1857 and 1876, the fruit from the Bay Islands regularly traded in the New Orleans

market (Timoteo 1880: 132; Davidson 1974: 83). The first use of steam ships in the Bay Islands fruit trade began in 1878, by S.Oteri and Brothers of New Orleans. By 1880, there were five steam ships of United States registry in the fruit trade with the islands (Burchard 1880: 4). The Bay Islands were struck by a severe hurricane in September, 1877, abruptly ending commercial fruit growing on the islands, but production quickly moved to the mainland as Bay Islanders bought fruit to make up for the deficit in their production (Timoteo 1880: 131; Davidson 1974: 83-84). Fruit importers from the United States soon sought to buy directly from the mainland.

Schooners and steam ships from the United States, mainly New Orleans but also from Mobile, New York, and Tampa, plied the coast for fruit (Timoteo 1877: 132; ANH 1880b: 1; Cáceres 1880c: 1; Lombard 1887: 15; Burke 1891: 1; Bureau of the American Republics 1894: 20; Kepner and Soothill 1935: 96). Trujillo had weekly steamers to New Orleans, and every three weeks a steamer to New York (Bureau of the American Republics 1894: 20). The Oteri Brothers of New Orleans charged \$35 gold for the four to six day passage to Trujillo (Lombard 1887: 15). Some tramp steamers were involved in the fruit trade, and were usually of Norwegian registry (Kepner and Soothill 1935: 95). Steamers from the United States made several stops along the coast over a couple of days to leave orders for fruit, then sail to Trujillo (McConnico 1885: 9). At Trujillo, the steamers unloaded any cargo for the city, registered with customs any cargo dropped off at the previous stops, then began to load fruit. Leaving Trujillo the steamers sometimes made up from ten to twelve stops along the coast to load fruit. A complete trip would take

between fifteen and eighteen days. In 1880, there was recorded two steamships and one schooner from New Orleans that loaded fruit at Trujillo, then stopped along the coast to take on more fruit at La Ceiba, Roatán, and Bambu (ANH 1880b: 1).

The most important fruit was bananas, however, coconuts, mangos, pineapples, vanilla, sarsaparilla, rubber, deerskins, and hides were other export items (Burchard 1884: 4; Vallejo 1893: 290-292). By 1889, Trujillo led Honduras with banana exports at 78, 294 stems valued at \$391,492.00, accounting for nearly forty percent of bananas exported from the country (Vallejo 1893: 290-292). Coconuts were the second most important item with just over six million nuts exported at a value of \$121,826.00, nearly eighty-two percent of Honduras' coconut exports. Forty-eight percent of Honduras' vanilla exports, some four hundred pounds, and nearly sixty-four percent of the pineapples exported at just over 13,000 pieces of fruit, left from Trujillo. Trujillo orange exports were second only to Roatán at forty percent. Although Trujillo exported only 291 barrels of mangos that year, the city accounted for one hundred percent of Honduras' exports, another possible indicator that Trujillo was the source area for the introduction of the mango into Honduras, and possibly for most of Central America.

The fruit trade during this period, however, was plagued by numerous problems. The amount of fruit available for export was not constant, in part because competing fruit companies that plied the coast created uncertain demand and disorder (Torres Rivas 1993: 33). The local growers, after receiving word that a ship wished to purchase fruit, cut the banana stems from the plants, and brought them to the beach either in canoes, on mules,

or on their own backs (McConnico 1885: 9). When the ship arrived the fruit was carried through the salt water to dories that served as lighters along the open roadsteads. This means of loading made large amounts of the fruit unfit for export. The fruit companies at first bought fruit at the ship, making the hazards of loading a responsibility of the local growers, but in 1893 the law made the companies purchase fruit on the beach and take the responsibility for loading (Kepner and Soothill 1935: 96).

In 1895, Trujillo had a population of at least 1,540 (Honduras 1895)<sup>1</sup>. Just over half of the residents of Trujillo were ladino, and forty-four percent were Black Carib, or Garífuna. Only one resident was identified as mulato, another specifically as Paya (Pech), two as *indio* (Indian), and three as *indigena* (indigenous). The foreign community consisted of sixty-eight people with many as families, although some were single men. The largest foreign contingent was formed by twenty-two individuals from Cuba, followed by sixteen from England, twelve from France, nine from the United States, and four from Germany.

There was one each from Canada, Ethiopia, Italy, Spain, and Switzerland. The term "*yngles*" (*ingles*, English) was applied indiscriminately to a wide variety of people, including three merchants who came from London, Scotland, and Jamaica, a laborer and baker from Belize, a day laborer from Jamaica, a carpenter from Roatán, and two seamstresses who came from Honduras (presumably the Bay Islands). As *yngles* covered a wide variety of people from the British Isles and the British Caribbean, it is likely that some of these people may have been of African ancestry (Argueta 1995). Other Central Americans were not

counted as foreigners and probably represented some minor migration throughout the isthmus. The total number was small with only one Guatemalan, three Nicaraguans, four Salvadorans, and two Costa Ricans.

As early as 1880, the internal migration of people was underway to the coasts from Olancho, where people were pushed off land by growing cattle ranching and they searched for wage labor opportunities (Mera 1880: 1). In the 1895 census (Honduras 1895), forty-six people were listed as coming to Trujillo from the Olancho district, the most for any single area of the Honduras. Twenty-three came from Juticalpa and seven from Catacamas, the two largest towns in Olancho. Forty-one people came from various towns throughout the Aguán Valley, with twenty-two from Olanchito alone, followed by Sonaguera with six. The third largest source region of the internal migration to Trujillo was the Agalta Valley, with five from Gualaco and eight from San Esteban, for a total of thirteen. The rest of the thirty-seven people in Trujillo from other parts of Honduras were from various parts of the country, including the nearby coastal areas, Yoro, San Pedro Sula, Choluteca, Comayagua, and further small towns.

#### **O. Henry (William Sydney Porter) and Trujillo**

The author William Sidney Porter, who wrote under the pseudonym "O. Henry," came to Trujillo on a fruit steamer from New Orleans in late 1895 or early 1896, after fleeing from authorities in Houston, Texas, where he was to face charges of embezzlement (Smith 1924: 136, 138; O'Connor 1970: 54). "His knowledge of Spanish and his ignorance of Honduras made the little Central American republic seem just the haven in which to cast anchor" (Smith 1924: 138). At the time that Porter fled

Texas, Honduras did not have an extradition treaty with the United States (Langford 1957: 101; O'Connor 1970: 54).

"Honduras was a wise choice for any fugitive...It was indulgent toward the American bank presidents, swindlers, confidence men, gold mine promoters and others who found it necessary to seek a respite from North American life, and hospitably refused to extradite any of them" (O'Connor 1970: 57).

Apparently Porter planned to stay in Honduras and he "seemed to feel free and at ease there, with the exception that he did not have Athol [his spouse] and Margaret [his daughter] with him" (Langford 1957: 105; Smith 1924: 137). Porter's wife was ill with tuberculosis and could not travel (Langford 1957: 105). Smith reports on a supposed journey around South America by Porter in the company of the Texas bank robber Al Jennings (Smith 1924: 139-140)<sup>2</sup>. Friends and neighbors in Austin, Texas, however, reported that Porter frequently wrote to his wife and only mentioned Honduras, not any other Latin American country, and that Al Jennings's stories were total fabrications (Langford 1957: 103-104). Porter left Trujillo for New Orleans in February, 1897, because his wife was dying from the tuberculosis (O'Connor 1970: 62). Porter was finally found guilty of embezzlement and sentenced to five years on February 17, 1898, and entered the federal penitentiary in Columbus, Ohio, on March 25, 1898 (Smith 1924: 146). He served three years and three months of his sentence, and was released early for good behavior on July 24, 1901.

Porter later wrote *Cabbages and Kings*, a book containing a series of short stories, somewhat interconnected, that took place in the fictional port city of "Coralio," in the country of "Anchuria" (Henry 1912). "Here Honduras becomes Anchuria and Trujillo becomes Coralio" (Langford 1957: 104-105). With a few

exceptions most of the details in the geography and description of Corralio throughout Porter's stories fit Trujillo, more so than other port cities along the Caribbean coast of Honduras, Central America, or Mexico. That "Anchuria" is Honduras there is little doubt. In *Cabbages and Kings*, an American woman questions an American resident in Corralio:

"Are there any inducements, say in a social or in a business way, for people to reside here?"

"Oh, yes," answered Goodwin, smiling broadly. "There are no afternoon teas, no hand-organs, no department stores - and there is no extradition treaty." (Henry 1912: 82).

Honduras was the only Central American country that did not then have an extradition treaty. Describing the American colony of Corralio, Goodwin, an American merchant said:

"Some are fugitives from justice from the States. I recall two exiled bank presidents, one army paymaster under a cloud, a couple of manslayers, and a widow - arsenic, I believe, was the suspicion in her case. I myself complete the colony, but, as yet, I have not distinguished myself by any particular crime." (Henry 1912: 82).

Porter always said that he was innocent of the embezzlement charges, and may have been speaking through the character of Goodwin in this case to say so (O'Connor 1970: 54).

Corralio "was set like a little pearl in an emerald band. Behind it, and seeming almost to topple, imminent, above it, rose the sea-following range of the Cordilleras" (Henry 1912: 11). Trujillo is the only port along Central America's Caribbean coast that has the mountains directly behind the city. The other ports, including Puerto Cortés and La Ceiba, Honduras, as well as Puerto Barrios and Livingston, Guatemala, and Belize City, do not have the mountain range immediately behind the ports. Corralio also had "a ruined cathedral in which Columbus had once set foot" (Henry 1912: 24). Trujillo is the oldest city on the coast and its bay is the only one that Christopher Columbus visited. The

other ports on the Caribbean coast were only founded in the nineteenth century . Similar to the Río Aguán that discharges into the Caribbean to the east of Trujillo, "The Rio Ruiz is a small river, emptying into the sea ten miles below Coralio" and glides "with breadth and leisure, through an alluvial morass into the sea" (Henry 1912: 162).

In describing Coralio's population as "half-breed Spanish and Indian, Caribs and blackamoors," Porter, depicts, though a bit imprecisely, the population of Trujillo (Henry 1912: 81). The people lived in "Grass huts, 'dobes, five or six two-story houses," similar to Trujillo of the late nineteenth century (Henry 1912: 1). Bernard Brannigan, one of Porter's characters, was an Irish merchant who settled and married in Coralio. His home was:

"a modern wooden building, two stories in height. The ground floor was occupied by Brannigan's store, the upper one contained the living apartments. A wide cool porch ran around the house half way up its outer walls." (Henry 1912: 25).

Several buildings in Trujillo's center still have this arrangement, although the ground floor may be divided into several shops rather than one store. On the outskirts of Coralio, as in Trujillo, "were set the palm-thatched huts of the Caribs," comparable to the Garífuna barrios of Río Negro and Cristales (Henry 1912: 24).

Trujillo, unlike Coralio, did not have "the Casa Morena - the summer 'White House' of the President of Anchuria" (Henry 1912: 25). The "Casa Morena" was a fictional addition to Trujillo so that Porter could have the President of Anchuria visit Coralio. Porter's description of the president's route to Coralio from the capital city San Mateo, through the port of

Solitas, fits the general geography of Honduras from Tegucigalpa, to Puerto Cortés to Trujillo, for that time period.

"A narrow-gauge railroad runs twenty miles into the interior from Solitas. The government party travels by carriage from San Mateo to this road's terminal point, and proceeds by train to Solitas. From here they march in grand procession to Coralio..." (Henry 1912: 311).

Though it would have been nearly impossible to "march in grand procession" from Puerto Cortés to Trujillo, the general description still fits. Puerto Cortés had the only railroad in Honduras at the time, and ran only a short ways inland. It is more likely, however, that one would have traveled between Puerto Cortés and Trujillo by boat.

Porter captured the trade of Trujillo in his stories. The United States consul's report on exports from Coralio match those of Trujillo for the same period:

"So many thousand bunches of bananas, so many thousand oranges and coconuts, so many ounces of gold dust, pounds of rubber, coffee, indigo and sarsaparilla - actually, exports were twenty per cent greater than the previous year!" (Henry 1912: 28).

Coralio was characterized as "a banana town" (Henry 1912: 81). The large fruit company throughout *Cabbages and Kings* is the "Vesuvius Fruit Company," owned by an Italian family from New Orleans that ran a line of steamships to Coralio. The Oteri Brothers of New Orleans likely provided the model for the Vesuvius Fruit Company<sup>3</sup>. The *Karlsefin* called frequently, though irregularly, at Coralio, and was a tramp steamer from Norway, like many of the tramp steamers that called at Trujillo in the early days of the fruit trade (Henry 1912: 49; Kepner and Soothill 1935: 95). Though New Orleans was the main trading partner in the fruit trade for both Trujillo and Coralio, the tramp steamers sometimes made "erratic trips to Mobile or

Charleston, or even as far north as New York, according to the distribution of the fruit supply" (Henry 1912: 49). Because of shallow water at both Trujillo and Corralio there were "lighters freighting bananas and oranges out to the fruit steamers that could not approach nearer than a mile from the shore" (Henry 1912: 156). Like the fruit ships calling at Trujillo that wished for a full load cargo, the *Ariel*, a ship of the Vesuvius Fruit Company line leaves Corralio, then "She drops down-coast to Punta Soledad to complete her cargo of fruit. From there she sails for New Orleans without delay" (Henry 1912: 222).

Although Porter viewed Trujillo through the North American biases of his day, his sometimes prejudicial descriptions of Corralio and Anchuria belie an affection for Trujillo and Honduras. In *Cabbages and Kings*, Porter captured the essence of Trujillo in the early period of the fruit trade, just a few years before that period came to an end. In this period transportation problems were a large obstacle to transactions involving large amounts of fruit (Kepner and Soothill 1935: 96). Inland from Trujillo bananas could be bought for 6.25 cents per bunch, yet sold in Trujillo for fifty to seventy-five cents per bunch (McConnico 1885: 7). What was needed was a way to transport large amounts of bananas from the interior to the ports, and when railroads were introduced in the Central American banana trade, this early period of the fruit trade came to an end and changed the industry completely.

#### **Railroads and U.S Investment in Central America**

The United States emerged from its Civil War in 1865, with a budding industrial complex that quickly grew into the world's leading industrial power, and then into the "globe's financial

center" (LaFeber 1993: 31). For the first time United States investors had large amounts of money for investment overseas. Unlike the British, who preferred to buy government securities, the North Americans directly invested in banana plantations, mining, and railroads, which led to power in the politics of Honduras. In the 1890s, the United States began to extend its sphere of influence over Central America's economies, politics, and military, replacing Great Britain (LaFeber 1993: 31). British investment in Costa Rica in 1914 totaled some \$40 million, whereas United States fruit companies alone had \$30 million invested in the country (LaFeber 1993: 35). In 1911, Minor Keith, of the United Fruit Company, funded Costa Rica's British debt in exchange for the right to lay first claim on the country's custom receipts, and "almost single-handedly Keith broke England's hold and brought Costa Rica into the North American system" (LaFeber 1993: 57).

Much of the investment by North Americans went into railroads. The first rail line in Costa Rica ran fourteen miles from Puntarenas to Esparta in 1854 (Woodward 1985: 161). The El Salvador Railway Company, owned by British investors, opened in 1882. Liberal dictators made railroad development a top priority in their plans for state development (Woodward 1985: 177). Central American leaders viewed railroads as modernizing elements that could also open new lands for cultivation and provide a new source for jobs (Torres Rivas 1993: 32). Mirroring the view in Central America, the President of Mexico, Lerdo de Tejada, in 1873 said "they could, with use of railways, make Mexico one of the richest countries on earth" (Winberry 1980: 113). Developing railroads proved to be especially difficult along the Caribbean

coast in the late nineteenth century, and foreign company after company failed to raise sufficient amounts of capital to overcome the tropical vegetation, rains, and unforgiving terrain (Woodward 1985: 160-161). Torres Rivas (1993: 30) takes a classic dependency-theory view of the relationship between fruit companies of the United States and Central American leaders. "The United States guaranteed these profits through extraeconomic measures, which included military intervention, diplomatic pressure, and partial control of public institutions" (Torres Rivas 1993: 30). However, we cannot forget that:

"the importance of the venality of top governmental officials cannot be underestimated. It is clear that successive presidents, ministers, and other top governmental officials benefited substantially from their dealings with the United Fruit Company" (Weaver 1994: 96).

Corruption of government officials in Honduras and other Central American countries combined with the often unscrupulous business practices of the fruit companies to cheat the countries (Weaver 1994: 100; LaFeber 1993: 77).

Costa Rica granted a railroad concession to be built between Puerto Limón and San José to Henry Meiggs in 1871, and he in turn gave the project to his nephews, including Minor Cooper Keith, who would finally finish the railroad in 1890 (Woodward 1985: 177-178). During construction, and at a time when the enterprise lacked capital, Keith began to wonder about the banana, a fruit the Jamaican laborers liked but the Costa Ricans workers, and Keith himself, did not fancy (Wilson 1968: 54). To test the market Keith sent 250 bunches of bananas to New Orleans in 1874, and brought a return of nearly \$1.00 per bunch. Keith began shipping bananas regularly in 1878, to help finance the railroad, building trunk lines into banana lands years before the

mainline was completed to the capital (Woodward 1985: 178). The Tropical Trading and Transport Company, formed by Keith, established shipping lines between the Gulf Coast of the United States and Costa Rica. During a trip to hire workers from the Black Carib village of Santa Fé outside of Trujillo, Honduras, Keith heard of the wreck of his ship the *Konig* at Punta Castilla in Trujillo Bay (Wilson 1968: 61-63). Among the passengers whom he assisted, Keith met Cristina Castro, the daughter of a president of Costa Rica, and the future Mrs. Keith.

Lorenzo Baker, a ship captain from Boston, began to ship bananas from Jamaica, and in 1885, with Andrew Preston, formed the profitable Boston Fruit Company (Wilson 1968: 71-72; Woodward 1985: 178). Both Baker and Keith knew that quick transport of the fragile fruit was critical to the growth of the banana trade, and promoted steamships for fruit transport (Adams 1914: 65; Wilson 1968: 33). Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, both Boston Fruit and Keith's Tropical Trading and Transport began to buy smaller companies that traded in fruit (Woodward 1985: 178). In 1899, Andrew Preston, who succeeded the then deceased Baker as head of Boston Fruit, and Minor Keith merged their companies to form the United Fruit Company.

The Great White Fleet and the steam ships of other, smaller fruit companies needed deep harbors to accommodate steamships, and Central America had only five such harbors that had access to large tracts of land suitable for banana cultivation: Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, Puerto Limón, Costa Rica, Bocas del Toro, Panama, and Puerto Cortés and Trujillo in Honduras (Adams 1914: 66).

Honduras came fully into the world system in the late nineteenth century as their exports were largely under the control of foreign companies, usually from the United States (Torres Rivas 1993: 20). At first North Americans attempted mining in Honduras, but when the returns were less than a fortune, they turned to bananas (Woodward 1985: 180). Although the derogatory term "banana republic" was originally applied to Honduras, the one-crop economy, foreign control of bananas, and the ensuing large-scale corruption involving Central American presidents, ministers, and other top officials were also fully applicable to the other republics in the isthmus (LaFeber 1993: 42; Weaver 1994: 96). In Honduras, fruit companies built railroads, bought land, established banks, "and bribed government officials at a dizzying pace" (LaFeber 1993: 43). Leading United States capital investments in Honduras from the end of the nineteenth century to 1912, were the Vacarro Brothers of New Orleans, and Sam Zemurray, "known in the trade simply as Sam the Banana Man" (LaFeber 1993: 43; Argueta 1989b: 10).

Railroads in Honduras merely served the plantation zones, despite what the original concessions usually stipulated (Torres Rivas 1993: 36). Land concessions in the areas they were to build railroads gave the fruit companies the opportunity to manage their own plantations (Perez-Brignoli 1989: 102). Central American governments knew that deep-water ports were essential to development, but granted control of the docks and piers to the fruit companies to develop (Woodward 1985: 160; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 102). The Vacarro Brothers controlled the port facilities at La Ceiba, their Honduras headquarters and terminus of their railroad, and Sam Zemurray's Cuyamel Fruit Company controlled the

docks at the end of his railroad in Puerto Cortés (Karnes 1978: 15; Woodward 1985: 179-180; Argueta 1989a: 36). The United Fruit Company operated the docks at Tela through their subsidiary, the Tela Railroad Company, and at Puerto Castilla, across the bay from Trujillo, through the Truxillo Railroad Company (Kepner and Soothill 1935: 112). Vacarro Brothers reincorporated in 1924 as Standard Fruit and Steamship Company (Karnes 1978: 92). Zemurray later exchanged control of the Cuyamel Fruit Company in a stock swap with United Fruit that made him the largest single stockholder, and united the two companies in December, 1929 (Wilson 1968: 245). United Fruit's stock fell in the Great Depression, from \$163 to \$35 a share in 1930 alone, and continued to fall until January 1933, when Zemurray became "managing director" and returned confidence in the company (Wilson 1968: 248, 257). These large fruit companies had created their own enclaves in which they operated.

The production within the banana enclaves had little impact on other parts of Honduras (Weaver 1994: 100). Tax money generated from enclave economies have supported national development, and:

"This revenue, then, is a source of resources that does not depend on the consent of any domestic constituency and thereby may be used to develop state power unencumbered by interest groups in civil society" (Weaver 1994: 100).

Development from enclave economies occurred in the guano enclave of Peru in the middle-nineteenth century, Bolivia's tin enclave and Venezuela's oil enclave of the early-twentieth century (Weaver 1994: 100). A source of economic power in Honduras was political control of the state, because of the taxes paid by the export enclaves, regardless of how unfair the tax structure was for the state (Weaver 1994: 102). Corruption by Honduran

officials partly kept the state from using the income generated by the enclaves for development. The deep foreign debt through British loans and swindles and cheating of earlier railroad contractors, however, led Honduras to make extra generous railroad and tax concessions to United States fruit companies that seemingly offered real opportunities for development of the north coast and a national railroad network (Weaver 1994: 100-101). The rivalries between Honduras's political parties and fruit companies, with the Liberals backed by Cuyamel Fruit and the conservative National Party backed by United Fruit, intervention by the United States government, sometimes with military force, in Honduran internal affairs, invasions from neighboring states, and a quick succession of eighteen presidents in the first three decades of this century, all contributed to keep the state from developing (Weaver 1994: 102). Enclave economies that developed from railroad concessions were also found in other countries, as well as in Honduras. United Fruit had enclaves in Santa Marta, Colombia, Puerto Limón, Costa Rica, and Puerto Barrios, Guatemala (Wolf 1982: 324-325; Torres Rivas 1993: 33, 34, LaFeber 1993: 77; Weaver 1994: 87).

Within the banana enclaves the fruit companies controlled large portions of the infrastructure. Transport was controlled through ownership and operation of the railroads, docks, and steamships serving the ports (Kepner and Soothill 1935: 341; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 103; Torres Rivas 1993: 37). United Fruit's Great White Fleet and Standard Fruit's fleet dominated shipping and transport from the enclaves, which were in fact better connected to New Orleans than with Tegucigalpa (Woodward 1985: 180). Overseas radio communications often came under the control

of the fruit companies (Kepner and Soothill 1935: 341). United Fruit's Tropical Radio Telegraph Company, a wholly owned subsidiary, virtually controlled radio communications between Central America and the United States (Woodward 1985: 179). Fruit companies also controlled water supplies, electrical generation, and telephone systems (Kepner and Soothill 1936: 113). The fruit companies also controlled worker's housing, renting to them facilities within the enclave that distanced them from the local town and retail facilities.

Rather than send empty fruit ships to Honduras and Central America, the fruit companies loaded them with goods for their commissaries that channeled the wages of the local laborers back into company coffers, and isolated the laborers from the local market (Kepner and Soothill 1935: 319; Torres Rivas 1993: 35; Weaver 1994: 92). Although banana salaries were higher than the national average, by between one hundred and three hundred percent, the workers often received part of their wages in coupons, commissary orders, or cash advances for use at the commissary (Gooch 1927: 462; Kepner and Soothill 1936: 319; Torres Rivas 1993: 35). Since the fruit companies used few local goods, controlled transportation, and most of the employees' wages went to commissary purchases, "there were no forward linkages with the domestic economy" (Weaver 1994: 92).

Although the operation of the banana plantations developed into enclaves, the fruit companies themselves were quite diversified (Argueta 1989a: 259; Weaver 1994: 87). United Fruit's involvement in so many activities in the enclaves led to the nickname "*el Pulpo*" (the Octopus), because they had their hands in everything (LaFeber 1993: 57). Standard Fruit opened

Banco Atlántida in 1913, and later the Cervecería Hondureña<sup>4</sup>, Honduras Sugar & Distilling Company, Fábrica de Manteca La Blanquita, Aguán Valley Company, and Compañía Industrial Ceibeña that provided water and electric service to La Ceiba, and produced ice and soda (Karnes 1978: 49, 71, 188; Argueta 1989a: 259). The Cuyamel Fruit Company, under Sam "The Banana Man" Zemurray, owned Sula Sugar Company and Ingenio La Lima, San Pedro Light & Power Company, Planta Eléctrica Incorporated, Public Utilities Honduras Corporation, Campaña Agrícola del Sula, Ferrocarril Nacional, and the Cortés Development Corporation (Argueta 1989b: 75). In the first three decades of the twentieth century the north coast of Honduras had become an enclave controlled by foreign companies, and commercially oriented towards the United States rather than the rest of the nation (Argueta 1989a: 126; LaFeber 1993: 43).

In the ten years between 1914 and 1924, United Fruit spent an unprecedented amount to develop new banana lands in Honduras (Kepner and Soothill 1936: 111-113). The vast amounts of land suitable for banana cultivation in Honduras made the country attractive to *el Pulpo*. Within that ten year period United Fruit's investment in Honduras rose to \$26,000,000 as they constructed railroads, hospitals, streets, bridges, offices, housing, water and electric systems, and port facilities. Their investment in Costa Rica and Colombia at the same time were only \$9,000,000 and \$6,500,000, respectively. Banana production in Honduras was three times the amount United Fruit produced in any other country. Much of this development of United Fruit went into Puerto Castilla, across the bay from Trujillo.

### **The Trujillo Railroad Company**

Trujillo had one of the five natural, deep-water harbors in Central America that had access to large tracts of land suitable for banana cultivation and river valleys through which railroads could run (Adams 1914: 65-66)<sup>5</sup>. The first railroad concession at Trujillo went to James P. Henderson in 1909, to build a line from Trujillo Bay or Laguna Guaymoreto to Juticalpa with a branch line that eventually would connect Tegucigalpa (CNH 1909: 137-144). Henderson was to receive five hundred hectares for each kilometer of railroad built, and could bring in foreign workers, except Chinese, without special permission of the National Congress. In April 1910, all the rights and obligations of Henderson's concession were transferred to the Honduras National Railroad Company, but Henderson was still in charge of the project. The transfer may reflect that he merely incorporated his activities under United States laws (CNH 1910: 146). Although Henderson and the Honduras National Railroad Company built about twenty kilometers of track from the lagoon near Trujillo, the government ordered the used rails to be replaced with new, steel track on October 28, 1909 (CNH 1911: 147-150; Gooch 1927: 459). Although a locomotive had run, by September 1910, all work on the railroad had stopped, with the company failing to build any of the required ten kilometers in the second year of operation (CNH 1911: 147-150). After failing to pay the fine stipulated by the contract for failure to construct the requisite length of track each year, Henderson lost both the concession and the ten thousand gold pesos deposited with the government as a guarantee to carry out the contract.

In 1912, Victor Camors, of New Orleans, contracted for the railroad concession from Trujillo to Juticalpa, with Juan T. Glynn, a North American merchant residing in Trujillo, as his agent (Rosales 1912: 151-157). The contract again included a branch line to Tegucigalpa, and provisions to bring in foreign workers, except Asians and "coolies." Camors had one year in which to submit plans for a dock, and within three months of final approval of the plans, to begin railroad construction, with five years to complete the first twenty kilometers. Article VII of the contract authorized Camors to transfer part or all of the concession to a third party, and the tenor of the document gives the impression that Camors did not actually ever plan to construct a dock or railroad, but to sell the concession. Apparently Camors and United Fruit struck a deal for the transfer of the concession sometime in 1913, but the final approval from the Honduran government did not come until the next year (Rosales 1913: 1-2; SE-DFOPAH 1914: 176-177; Kepner and Soothill 1936: 111).

On April 29, 1914, the Truxillo Railroad Company<sup>6</sup>, a wholly owned United Fruit subsidiary, gained the concession for the railroad from Trujillo (SE-DFOPAH 1914: 176-177). Again, the concession stipulated the building of a railroad from Trujillo to Juticalpa, with an extension to Tegucigalpa (CNH 1916: 178-181).

The Truxillo Railroad Company was to build a dock in Trujillo Bay to accommodate the size of ships that customarily navigated the coast. The Truxillo Railroad Company had to build twenty kilometers of track on the principal line each year for the first five, then twelve kilometers each year afterwards until the line reached Juticalpa and Tegucigalpa. The contract was revised in

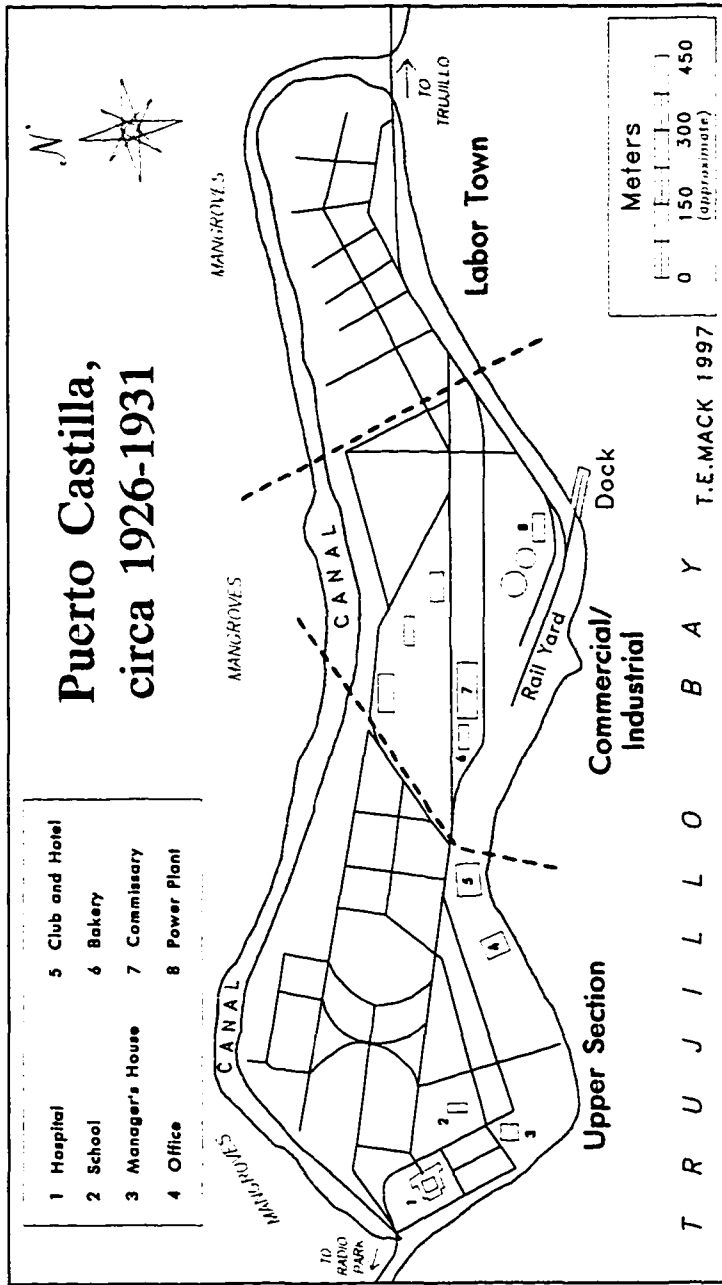
1918, and permitted the Truxillo Railroad Company to import free of duties all the materials necessary for the construction and operation of the dock and railroad (Escobar 1918: 182-183). The original contract with Camors ceded ten thousand hectares of land for each twenty kilometers built, and was part of the concession transferred to Truxillo Railroad Company (Rosales 1912: 151-157).

The Truxillo Railroad Company built their port out near the end of the spit that forms Trujillo Bay, at a place then called "El Rincon" (Gooch 1927: 467; Antúnez 1936: 56). On September 15, 1921, the centennial of Central America's independence, "with much oratory, the name was changed before a distinguished company of guests and visitors," and has since been known as Puerto Castilla (Gooch 1927: 467; Antúnez 1936: 56). Supposedly the port was originally to have been much closer to Trujillo, but, as the story goes, the citizens asked too much for their land, so United Fruit and the Truxillo Railroad Company changed their plans and rented the land on the point from the Black Caribs "for a pittance a year" (Kepner and Soothill 1936: 144; Colten 1977: 4). The land on the point at one time had been *ejido* land for the Black Caribs of Cristales (ANH 1889: 1). Another likely explanation would be the depth of the water; out by the spit it is deeper. The water in front of Trujillo does not attain a depth of five meters until 300 meters from the shore, and ten meters until a kilometer off shore, rather insufficient to the steamships (IGNH 1988: Puerto Castilla). Right at the end of the dock built by the Truxillo Railroad Company there was a depth of 10-15 meters (Meza Calix 1936: 137). Also, the occasional nortes that pass through do not directly affect Puerto Castilla, whereas the beach at Trujillo is pounded by the storms. The true

explanation about why the port was located on the spit may include some elements of the land deals and some about the water's depth.

Construction of the port was already under way in April 1914 (CNH 1914: 172-175). It is not clear when the port began to handle cargo, but workers began to move into the port in 1917 (Meza Calix 1936: 137). Puerto Castilla was divided into four sections, from west to east, Radio Park with the antennas for overseas communications, the upper section that included housing for Americans, a schoolhouse, the hospital, and the hotel and club, the commercial section that encompassed the dock, railyard, workshops, commissary, and administrative buildings, and "Labor Town," the crowded housing area for local workers (Gooch 1927: 465, 46; Stark 1931: 420) (Map 14). The upper section of the port had a fence to separate it from the people living in Labor Town (Murry 1977: 1). A canal surrounds the port, originally cut by the Truxillo Railroad Company to dispose and drain away liquid waste (Colten 1977: 22).

In the commercial section of Puerto Castilla, construction of the dock area, including a building for the Customs agent, had begun by April 1914 (CNH 1914: 173). The dock itself was constructed of reinforced concrete, covered by a wooden structure, and included facilities for potable water, electricity, and fuel for ships (Gooch 1927: 462; Stark 1931: 420; Antuñez 1936: 55; Colten 1977: 15). There were some ten to fifteen meters of depth at the end of the dock, providing sufficient depth for steamships (Meza Calix 1936: 137). In 1927, loading onto the ships at Puerto Castilla averaged 6,500 stems of bananas per hour, and sometimes achieved 7,000 stems loaded per



Map 14. Puerto Castilla, circa 1926-1931.

hour (Gooch 1927: 462). Near the dock was the railroad yard, allowing trains full of bananas to pull up to the dock to transfer the fruit aboard ship (Gooch 1927: 463; Colten 1977: 16).

The power plant at Puerto Castilla consisted of four boilers and four steam turbines with a total generating capacity of 700 kilowatts (Gooch 1927: 464). The daily average production was 226 kilowatts, and 13,200 watts were used to supply Trujillo with municipal lighting. Steam whistles at the power plant signaled the hour throughout the port (Anonymous 1926a: 679). The telephone system had a total of 292 phones in the entire division of the Truxillo Railroad Company, with 186 on the Puerto Castilla switchboard (Gooch 1927: 465). When the port first opened rainwater provided drinking water, and brackish water from the lagoons and swamps was the source for "washing water" (Wilson 1968: 196). In 1921, construction began on a reservoir some 407 feet above sea level, but the first dam washed away in a heavy rainstorm (Gooch 1927: 464; Wilson 1968: 197). Work progressed and eventually the thirteen mile long, eight-inch pipeline began serving Puerto Castilla in 1923, averaging 600,000 gallons daily in 1925. An ice plant at the port produced 241,200 pounds of ice in November 1926 (Gooch 1927: 646). The 30,000 square foot commissary was located in the commercial section, toward the upper section of the port, with a bakery on the west side of the building, and a small meat market to the east (Colten 1927: 18, 21).

The railyard handled all the rail equipment for the Truxillo Railroad Company. In 1926, the railroad had twelve Baldwin and ten Porter locomotives in operation, ranging from

twenty-two to fifty tons (Gooch 1927: 459). Bananas and freight were carried in 537 cars, 247 of which were double-decked. The shops at Puerto Castilla constructed thirteen of the fifteen passenger cars in service using native mahogany. In 1933, there were seventeen locomotives operating on the railroad, 382 banana cars, and twelve passenger cars (Thomas 1933: 2). By 1939, the railroad only operated six locomotives, sixty-six cars for bananas, and seven for passengers, reflecting the decreasing production of fruit in the hinterland (Robinson 1939: 4).

The upper section of the port housed American workers and their families. There were at least fifty houses of various sizes in this section of the port visible in an oblique aerial photo from 1931 (Stark 1931: 420). The homes were constructed of reinforced concrete built atop concrete block foundations (Colten 1977: 17). In one section was a large baseball diamond, and another section had a park with many trees and criss-crossing walkways (Stark 1931: 420). Children in the upper section attended a school built in a style reminiscent of Spanish-colonial architecture, with a bell tower and covered walkways on two sides, said to be "the most elaborate in the Tropics" (Gooch 1927: 463). The Club and Hotel building was built between March and August, 1926, at a cost of \$38,000, \$2,000 under budget (Gooch 1927: 463). The wooden frame had walls and footings of reinforced concrete, and used mahogany for paneling inside. A screened porch faced the bay, and "Every night the spacious porch is crowded with bridge, pinochle and chess enthusiasts" (Anonymous 1926b: 107.) A billiards room housed two billiard tables. The Club Room was heavily paneled, with tables and large comfortable chairs, including several rocking chairs, and the

Dining Room had about twenty tables. The upper section also included a library, the office building for the Truxillo Railroad Company, the manager's house, and several fairways for a golf course (Stark 1931: 420; Gooch 1927: 466; Colten 1977: 18). Lining the paved streets and decorating yards were several variety of palm trees, and there were several large, open areas (Stark 1931: 420; Colten 1977: 17).

Also in the upper section was the hospital. It was a large two-story structure with a central, open courtyard, today standing in ruin and about the only structure left from the heyday of Puerto Castilla. The hospital was probably the only area of the upper section in which the lower echelon workers were allowed. In 1933, the staff consisted of three doctors, five nurses, and twenty-six assistants (Thomas 1933: 6). A total of 3,082 patients were admitted during the past year, with 15,737 seen in the clinic. There were 1,675 operations performed at the hospital, 29,122 tests performed in the laboratory, and ninety-seven people passed away that year. The number of patients admitted in the fiscal year from July 1, 1938 to June 30, 1939, declined to 1,257, with 13,600 seen in the various clinics, including those along the railroad line (Robinson 1939: 5). Only 6,504 tests were performed in that period, not including 1,753 blood tests for malaria taken in the fields. The doctors performed ninety-four surgeries with general anaesthetic and 2,843 with local anaesthetic. Thirty people died at the hospital, twenty-two from various illnesses and eight by *violencia* (violence).

Across the canal and to the west of the upper section was Radio Park (Gooch 1927: 465). Cement bases with creosote pilings

supported two huge antenna towers rising to 312 feet in height. Constructed for \$25,000, the antenna construction was accomplished under budget in only forty-nine days. Three radio operators kept Puerto Castilla and the Truxillo Railroad Company in contact with the rest of the United Fruit's operations and the United States. With the opening of Radio Park at Puerto Castilla, United Fruit closed down their radio station on Swan Island.

The far eastern section of Puerto Castilla was known as "Labor Town" (Gooch 1927: 467; Colten 1977: 22; Murry 1977: 2). Labor Town consisted of 319 buildings, with a total of 940 rooms to house the port's laborers and their families. Each building included a kitchen, and in 1926 rented for a maximum cost of \$2.50 per month per room (Gooch 1927: 467). Potable water service consisted of a cold water faucet located near the kitchen window, and the Truxillo Railroad Company provided free electricity (Gooch 1927: 467; Murry 1977: 5). Three foot tall concrete pilings supported the wood-framed houses (Colten 1977: 22). Built in 1922-1923, each house had a porch under a continual pitched roof, shutters for the windows, but no screens, vertical wood siding, and side by side rooms, and some were multi-family dwellings (Colten 1977: 22). The clustering of houses very close together allowed for a population density far greater than that in the elite, upper section of the port. Whereas the upper section was farthest away from the noise and commotion of the railyard and docks, the railroad track leading into Puerto Castilla passed adjacent to Labor Town (Stark 1931: 420; Colten 1977: 17). Not all the workers always lived in Labor Town. Known as the "Little Great White Fleet," the Black Caribs

sailed the boats with white sails back and forth between Cristales and Puerto Cristales on their way to and from work (Gooch 1927: 463).

The workers of the Trujillo Railroad Company did not receive coupons or company script for their wages, however, cash advances available at any commissary in the division channeled their retail trade back to the fruit company (Gooch 1927: 462). Even residents of Trujillo could shop at the commissary at Puerto Castilla (Colten 1977: 21, 27). Merchants in Trujillo complained that the fruit company commissary captured much of the business they had had from rural customers that then took the train to Puerto Castilla (Colten 1977: 27-28). Río Negro, however, was a center for weekend entertainment that attracted fruit company employees to the Garífuna barrio of Trujillo, where there were a number of bars, restaurants, and hotels (Colten 1977: 28-29). Even though much of the retail trade had been diverted to Puerto Castilla, the people of Trujillo felt, and many still do, that the city enjoyed its most prosperous times in the days of the fruit company (Colten 1977: 29).

Puerto Castilla had taken much of the trade from passing directly through Trujillo (Antúnez 1936: 55). For the fiscal year 1928-1929, Trujillo's revenue from export taxes totaled \$119,039.96 (Anónimo 1930: 950). Seventy-two percent of the export taxes paid applied to goods shipped to the United States, and twenty-seven percent to Germany. Taxes paid on goods shipped to England came to less than one-half percent. The export taxes paid on goods shipped out of Puerto Castilla, however, came to \$14,067,620.60, an increase of slightly more than 118 times that of Trujillo. Again, taxes on goods shipped to the United States,

came to almost sixty percent of the total, followed by Germany with just over twenty-five percent, and England with 12.5 percent. Export taxes on shipping to Holland accounted for only 2.34 percent, while trade to Guatemala and Costa Rica were both under .002 percent. Most trade in the passed through Puerto Castilla, owned and operated by the Truxillo Railroad Company and United Fruit, which led to the description of the port as "*un puerto extranjero, en suelo hondureño, lo mismo que Tela Nueva*" (a foreign port on Honduran soil, the same as Tela Nueva [headquarters for United Fruit's other Honduran subsidiary, the Tela Railroad Company]) (Antúnez 1936: 56).

Puerto Castilla had connections to many ports in both the United States and Europe. In 1930, United Fruit's "Great White Fleet" sailed every Monday from Puerto Castilla to New Orleans, and every second Sunday to New York, via Tela, Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, Belize, Kingston, Jamaica, and Santiago Cuba (Truxillo Railroad Company 1930: 26). There was also service to Mobile and various English ports, usually Liverpool, without any fixed itinerary. United Fruit's British holding company was Elders and Fyffes, Ltd, of London (Gooch 1927: 457). In 1933, a total of 143 ships called at Puerto Castilla, an average of one ship every 2.55 days (Thomas 1933: 4). Exports totaled 81,639 tons, while imports only total 1,589 tons. Puerto Castilla's foreland with the United States included the ports of Baltimore, Boston, Charleston, Galveston, Mobile, New Orleans, and New York. Its foreland in England included Avonmouth, Liverpool, and Preston. Exports to England accounted for sixty-six percent of the bananas that left through Puerto Castilla in 1932-1933, with thirty-four percent to the United States (Thomas 1933: 5).

The rail line connecting Trujillo and Puerto Castilla ended in Río Negro (Colten 1977: 28-30). From Puerto Castilla the train turned off the main track at Empalme, near the base of the spit, and proceeded around the shore of the bay for 13.7 kilometers to Trujillo (Truxillo Railroad Company 1929: 26-27; Thomas 1933: 1). Trains ran daily between Trujillo and the port, a forty minute trip, but the schedule from 1938 shows only one train daily, except for Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays when there were two trains (Moore 1938a: 2). In 1940, there were still daily trains, but only one per day (Scott 1940: 1). The hill that rises from the Garífuna barrio to the center of Trujillo is too steep for a railroad. The former train station was near the beach, to the east of the present dock (Colten 1977: 30). The rail line ran from the station and crossed the Río Negro near the mouth. The west end of the current airstrip covers part of the old route that continued through Hacienda Jericó, part of the fruit company cattle ranching activities to the east of Trujillo (Colten 1977: 24). Both the railroad and the water pipeline crossed the estuary of Laguna Guaimoreto not far from the beach, then continued around the bay to Puerto Castilla. The Truxillo Railroad Company built an airstrip just north of the mouth of the entrance to Laguna Guaimoreto, but it suffered severe problems of subsidence in the soft soil of the former mangrove swamp, in places as much as two meters, and was subsequently abandoned (Colten 1977: 26).

According to a geography text, the houses in Trujillo were of stone and adobe with tile roofs (Meza Calix 1936: 137). Some houses built by the Truxillo Railroad Company were made of very durable wood from the United States and Jamaica, and are still

there today (Colten 1977: 31). Three foot tall concrete pilings are a diagnostic feature of fruit company construction (Colten 1977: 24; Murry 1977: 10). Fruit company houses also had screened porches, zinc roofs, and false galleries of a Caribbean style that may have diffused somewhat through Trujillo (Colten 1977: 31). Many older homes in Trujillo and both Garífuna barrios today are of bahareque, a construction style that probably was popular among lower-income households. In 1940, there were 668 houses in Trujillo, and 304 in Puerto Castilla (AMT 1940: 327).

The Plaza Colón, at the north end of town, had the church and an old hotel on the south side, the *ayuntamiento* (city hall) on the north side, and the old customs house on the east side (Meza Calix 1936: 137). Trujillo also had three public schools and one private secondary school (Anónimo 1933: 32-35). Trujillo had both wide and narrow streets in this later part of the banana period, much as it does today (Meza Calix 1936: 137). Gooch (1927: 464) wrote that the Truxillo Railroad Company built many of the municipal improvements at the request of local authorities, including stream revetments, curbs, gutters, and sewers. In the past many residents have denied the Truxillo Railroad Company's involvement in local improvement projects (Colten 1977: 31). The projects may have been built with local labor working under the municipal authorities, but funded by the fruit company through Trujillo's government. In 1933, Trujillo received \$14,473.79 from the Truxillo Railroad Company in taxes (Thomas 1933: 5).

The only list of businesses in Trujillo during the fruit era is from 1933 (Anónimo 1933: 32-35). Many of the businesses

were in the service sector, including the barber shop, printer, restaurant, soda parlor, movie theater, casino, book store, two newspapers, two hotels, and five bars. The soft drink factory and bed manufacturer were the only industries in Trujillo. The three liquor stores, eighteen grocery stores, three drug stores, and fourteen general merchants made up the retail trade; however, many of the general merchants are listed among the grocery stores, and all five hardware stores are listed among the general merchants. Specific occupations mentioned include a photographer, bookkeeper, printer, carpenter, engineer, three physicians, four accountants, and four tailors.

Calculating the population of Trujillo is difficult, because the manuscript census summaries sometimes did not distinguish between those people who lived in the city itself with those who lived within Trujillo's jurisdiction. The 1926 census listed a total of 6,782 people for the entire *municipio*, with 3,554 males and 3,228 females (AMT 1926: 450). By 1930, the total population increased to 8,827, an increase of just over thirty percent in four years (AMT 1930: 346). A little more than half of the population, 52.1 percent, were Mestizos, and 36.3 percent were listed as *Negros* (AMT 1930: 347). *Blancos* (Whites) made up only 8.7 percent of the population, *Indios* were 2.8 percent, and just eight people were listed as *Amarillos* (Yellows), and must have been of Asian origin. The urban population was 5,940, which may have included both Trujillo and Puerto Castilla, and 2,887 were listed as rural (AMT 1930: 348).

In 1933, the Trujillo Railroad Company had 4,592 total employees, but many of them were scattered throughout the banana

growing areas and did not live in Trujillo or Puerto Castilla (Thomas 1933: 8).

By 1935, the Trujillo municipio had grown again, to a total population of 10,256, a 16.2 percent increase from 1930, and an increase of 51.2 percent from 1926 (AMT 1935: 408). Trujillo itself had a total of 3,294 residents, with 1,476 males and 1,818 females (AMT 1935: 407). Puerto Castilla's population was 2,796, with 1,531 males and 1,265 males. The percentage of Mestizos went up to sixty percent of the population, while the Black population declined to 33.9 percent (AMT 1935: 408). In the first half of 1935, Honduran authorities had deported an undetermined number of Blacks from Belize and Jamaica, most of them for not having the proper papers to work in Honduras, citing that they took jobs on the Trujillo Railroad Company away from Hondurans (Martínez 1934a,b,c; García 1934). Despite the deportations, the number of Blacks increased in real numbers by 8.4 percent, from 3,208 to 3,479, (AMT 1935: 408). The percentage of whites went down to 4.96 percent of the population, and decreased in numbers by 259 people. Indians and Asians also declined numerically, by 55.8 and fifty percent, respectively.

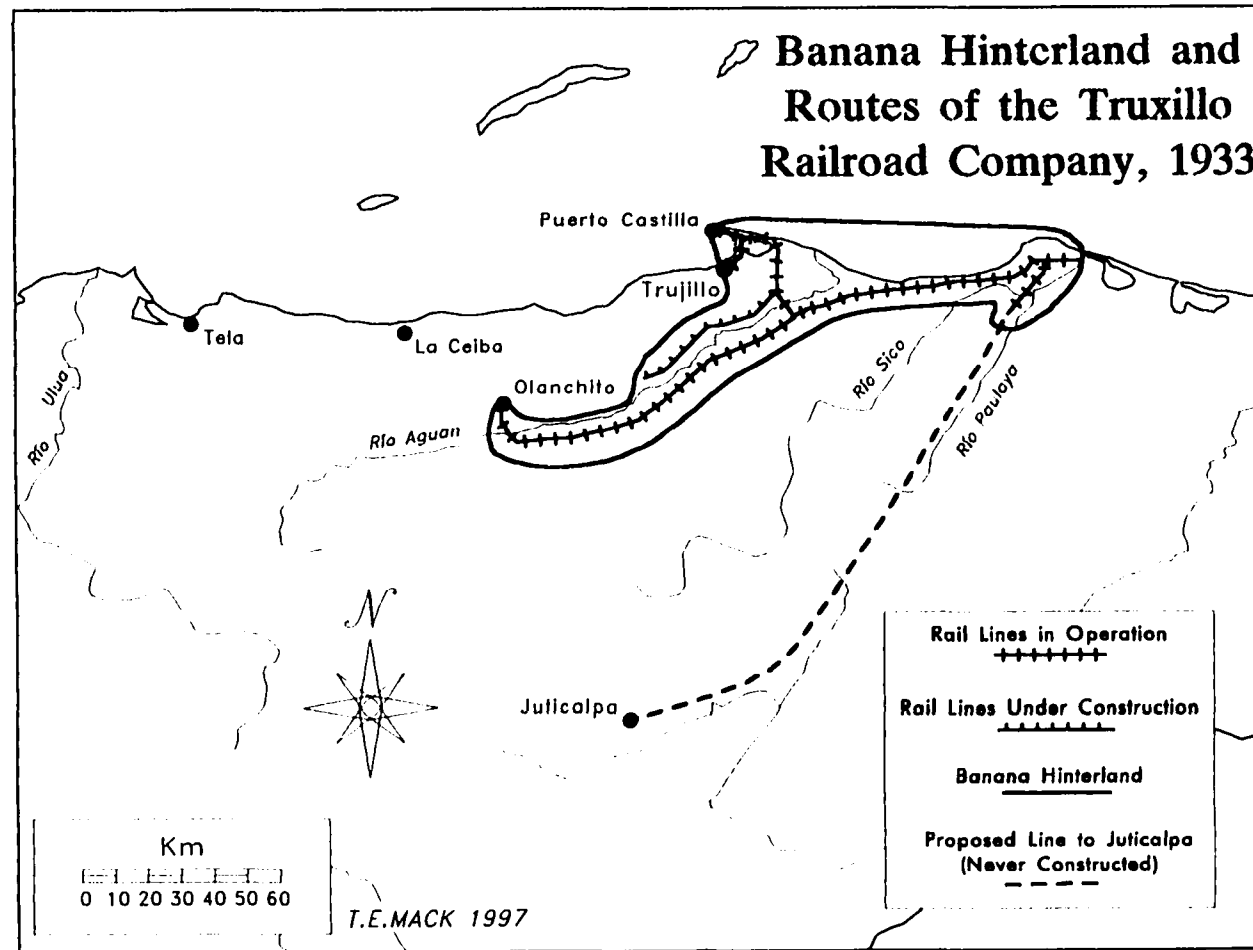
Trujillo's population declined over the next ten years. In 1940, the city's population decline by 6.77 percent, to 3,071 people (AMT 1940: 320). Puerto Castilla, however, suffered a population drop of 48.4 percent, to 1,443. In 1945, Trujillo's population declined to 2,957, but Puerto Castilla lost another 329 people (AMT 1945, vol II: 118). The 1945 census did not, however, count the United States citizens assigned to the U.S. Naval base at Puerto Castilla.

### The Banana Hinterland

The Truxillo Railroad Company's early years of building the tracks remains unknown. The ceremonial name change in 1921, implies that the port was ready to export bananas from the hinterland (Gooch 1927: 467; Antúnez 1936: 56). In 1921, a map of *ejido* land for Limón, to the east of Trujillo towards Mosquitia, shows a line of track for the company (ANH 1921: mapa). Although there must have been much vegetation to cut through, construction on the level floor of the river valley must have gone quickly once the vegetation was cut.

According to the contract with the Honduran government, the Truxillo Railroad Company began to construct a rail line to Juticalpa. Rather than go through the Agalta Valley, the "*Línea Principal*" (Principal Line) to Juticalpa passed around Laguna Guaimoreto on the north and east sides, then again turned eastward running roughly along the coast towards Mosquitia, then turned southward to follow the Río Paulaya (Thomas 1933: 1) (Map 15). A map shows that most of this route was constructed by at least 1921 (ANH 1921: mapa). The trip from Puerto Castilla to Sico, the last stop on the 146 kilometer journey, took six hours (Truxillo Railroad Company 1929: 26-27). A branch line at Punta Piedra ran for 2.8 kilometers to a limestone quarry (Gooch 1927: 459; Thomas 1933: 1). Trains must have run fairly often in the earlier years of the fruit company, but by 1938, service was limited to just Thursdays, the last year of service along the route (Moore 1938a: 2).

The branch line to Olanchito provided the main service for the Aguán Valley. For most of the 95.9 kilometers the line ran near the south bank of the Río Aguán, then crossed the river just



Map 15. Banana Hinterland and Routes of the Truxillo Railroad Company, 1933.

before reaching Cruceta, the last stop before Olanchito (Truxillo Railroad Company 1929: 26-27; Anónimo 1933: Plano General; Moore 1938a: 2). The 139.5 kilometer trip from Puerto Castilla to Olanchito took a scheduled five hours and five minutes, but the return trip was scheduled for six hours, perhaps to load bananas and rail cars from the farms on the way to the port (Moore 1938a: 2). In 1938, trains to Olanchito left Puerto Castilla on Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, and service from Olanchito returned to Puerto Castilla on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays (Moore 1938a: 2). In May 1940, however, the reduced train service ran only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, leaving Puerto Castilla at 7:00 am to reach Olanchito at 12:05 pm, starting the return trip at 12:35 pm and making Puerto Castilla at 5:40 pm (Scott 1940: 1). This line to Olanchito, along with the line to Trujillo, was the last line in operation for the Truxillo Railroad Company, and although the records do not indicate when service actually ended, it must have been in late 1940 or 1941.

The north bank of the Río Aguán did not have any service in 1929, and the Pires branch line was first listed on railroad's holdings in 1933 (Truxillo Railroad Company 1929: 26-27; Thomas 1933: 1). This short line branched off the main line at kilometer 37.5, and ran close to the Río Aguán for 13.9 kilometers (Thomas 1933: 1; Anónimo 1933: Plano General). Already under construction in 1933, a longer branch line to Santa Ines replaced the Pires branch line, which does not appear on any schedules after 1933 (Anónimo 1933: Plano General; Moore 1938a: 2). The Santa Ines line left the main line at kilometer 87.6 and ran north of the Pires line, although still along the relatively

level valley floor, for a total of 87.6 kilometers (Moore 1938a: 2). In 1938, service was limited to only Mondays and Fridays, taking three hours, ten minutes from Puerto Castilla to Santa Ines, and four hours for the return trip (Moore 1938a: 2). The Santa Ines branch line appeared on the company's holdings in August, 1939 (Robinson 1939: 3).

On a trip through the Aguán Valley, a captain of a ship for the Great White Fleet wrote "This would appear to be the ideal banana country - a rich fertile river valley, with plenty of water with which to irrigate it," and sitting in a house on one of the company's farms saw a "...rolling sea of waving green bananas extending as far as the eye can see..." (Fagen 1927: 21).

Bananas, however, were not grown along the entire route. One had to travel some forty-two kilometers along the route from Puerto Castilla before reaching any of the banana farms (Gooch 1927: 459). In 1926, there were some 43,000 acres (17,409 hectares) under banana cultivation in six districts (Gooch 1927: 460). The amount of land the fruit company had in bananas declined by 1933, to 12,610.28 hectares, a decline of 27.56 percent in just eight years (Thomas 1933: 5). Exports from Puerto Castilla in 1930, mainly bananas, brought in a total of \$14,067,620.60 in export tariffs (Anónimo 1930: 950). According to the amount of export taxes paid, nearly sixty percent of the exports went to the United States, with forty percent going to Europe, divided between Germany (25.2 percent), England (12.5 percent), and Holland (2.3 percent). By 1933, however, Europe received sixty-six percent of banana exports, and the United States just thirty-four percent (Thomas 1933: 5). The Truxillo Railroad Company exported 5,421,507 stems of bananas in 1933,

with 14.42 percent of the total, some 781,719 stems, bought by the fruit company from local producers (Thomas 1933: 5). Local producers increased their share of bananas exported by the Truxillo Railroad Company to 53.46 percent of the exports in 1939, though the number of stems had declined in real numbers (Robinson 1939: 1).

Besides bananas, the Truxillo Railroad Company also exported coconuts and had large herds of cattle. The coconut plantation near Trujillo Bay had five hundred acres (202.43 hectares) in cultivation in 1927, and production remained steady throughout the next decade, with 209.63 hectares in 1933, and 210 hectares in 1939 (Gooch 1927: 460; Thomas 1933: 5; Robinson 1939: 2). The livestock herd of the company was some 4,100 head in 1926, for animals of all types, and an average of 78 dairy cows being milked produced 11,156 gallons of milk (42,217.6 liters) (Gooch 1927: 462). Much of the livestock were kept at Hacienda Jericó, to the east of Trujillo a few kilometers. Many of the animals, however, especially mules, must have been for use in the banana districts. In 1933, the company had 1,847 head of cattle, and 2,051 mules (Thomas 1933: 5). By 1938, the herds had been reduced to only 426 head of cattle, and 428 mules (Moore 1938b: 1). The amount of pasture was similarly reduced, from 2,990.29 hectares in 1933, to only 704.98 hectares in 1939 (Thomas 1933: 5; Robinson 1939: 2).

#### **Banana Disease and the Decline of the Hinterland**

The decline through the 1930s of the Truxillo Railroad Company is evident in the production numbers. From 5,421,507 stems of bananas exported in 1933, there were only 364,764 stems exported in 1939, a decrease of 93.27 percent (Thomas 1933: 5;

Robinson 1939: 2). Between 1927 and 1939, the amount of land in banana production declined by 17,129.36 hectares, a decrease of 98.39 percent (Gooch 1927: 460; Robinson 1939: 2). By 1938, the cattle herd went through a reduction of 76.94 percent, and mules went through a reduction of 79.13 percent from their 1933 levels (Thomas 1933: 5; Moore 1938b: 1). Coconut exports completely stopped in late 1938 (Robinson 1939: 2). Although the Great Depression was in full swing during the 1930s, the final market prices for bananas held up during much of the decade as the United Fruit Company adjusted production levels (Weaver 1994: 110-11). Honduras's income from export taxes did not suffer nearly as much as the other Central American countries that depended on coffee, because the taxes reflected the wholesale price paid to the producer by the overseas transporter. At Trujillo and Puerto Castilla, the producer, the Trujillo Railroad Company received payment from the Great White Fleet, both owned and operated by the United Fruit Company. Company policy determined the price paid at the Honduran ports, and hence the export taxes paid, and fell slowly through the 1930s, even when paid to independent producers. "But in any case, much of the quantity reductions resulted from disease, not corporate strategy" (Weaver 1994: 11).

In 1933, Sigatoka (*Mycosphaerella musicola*, *M. fijiensis*), a leaf blight, hit banana plantations in Trinidad, then spread through the Caribbean, including Honduras (Shaw 1942: 371-372; J.A. Samson 1986: 174; Stover and Simmonds 1987: 281). Small yellow and green specks appear on the leaves of banana plants, and though sometimes they remain small and little or no harm is done, they usually grow larger, completely destroying the leaves

and reducing photosynthesis (Shaw 1942: 373-374; Stover and Simmonds 1987: 283-284). Immature banana bunches then fail to ripen, but stems at a stage ready for marketing often ripen prematurely during transport before they reach market, with abnormal smells and flavors. To control Sigatoka, named after the valley in Fiji where it appeared around 1910, some ten years after first being identified in Java, the Bordeaux Mixture was effective (Shaw 1942: 372, 375-376; J.A. Samson 1986: 175). Application of Bordeaux Mixture involved installation of pipes throughout the banana producing areas, and applied by hand-spraying at 500 pounds pressure. "It has been said that costs are about the same as initial expenses of putting banana ground into production" (Shaw 1942: 376). The high cost forced many small producers who sold to the larger fruit companies to leave the business.

The other devastating disease to hit Central American banana production was Panama disease, named for the country where it first appeared around 1903 (Karnes 1978: 143). The fungus (*Fusarium oxysporum* forma *cubense*) attacks the rhizome at any stage of plant development, producing wilted leaves and decayed roots that kill the plant, and spreads by infected soil, tools, and water (J.A. Samson 1986: 174; Stover and Simmonds 1987: 310-313). There is no treatment for Panama disease, and the only two strategies for combating the infection, in the past and in the present, are to either change to a banana variety not susceptible to the disease or abandon infected land. In the 1930s, Standard Fruit at La Ceiba, Honduras began experimenting with Cavendish varieties of bananas that were immune to Panama disease, unlike the Gros Michel variety then grown<sup>7</sup> (Karnes 1978: 182-183). The

Gros Michel banana, however, is quite hardy with regularly shaped fruit, and can be transported on the stem without suffering much damage from handling that would lower its value on the market (J.A. Samson 1986: 155). The Cavendish varieties, however, are more easily bruised, less symmetrically shaped, and must be removed from the stem and boxed before shipping. Standard Fruit's experiments with the Cavendish bananas proved successful against Panama disease, but proved too costly in the 1930s, because of the cost of boxing (Karnes 1978: 143). In the 1950s, Standard Fruit finally began to replant the Gros Michel with the Giant Cavendish because the costs of Panama disease had gotten out of control (Karnes 1978: 283-285). In 1959 and 1960, Standard Fruit improved the boxing and ripening of the Cavendish varieties, and began switching to box shipment. United Fruit began to use boxes to ship much of their fruit for the first time in 1963. All of this was, however, too late for the Truxillo Railroad Company.

Before the adoption of the more fragile Cavendish varieties, banana companies simply had to abandon land infected by Panama disease. By 1910, 20,000 acres (8,097 hectares) of banana land had been abandoned in Panama, and entire 1911 crop in Surinam succumbed to the disease (Karnes 1978: 144-146). By 1926, an estimated 100,000 acres (40,486 hectares) had been abandoned throughout Central America, largely on the Caribbean coast. To check the spread of the fungus fruit companies required workers to disinfect machetes, and even flooded fields for eighteen months to two years, hoping to kill the fungus. Nothing, however, halted the advance of Panama disease, so fruit companies simply kept moving to new, uninfected lands.

"[S]taying ahead of Panama disease was much like running in place...(Karnes 1978: 185). Between 1910 and 1955, most of the banana plantations in Central America and the Caribbean were destroyed by Panama disease (Stover and Simmonds 1987: 313).

Both Sigatoka and Panama disease racked the lands of the Truxillo Railroad Company (Moore 1938b: 1; Argueta 1989b: 65). When the lands of Trujillo's hinterlands began to be infected with the banana diseases is unclear, and some of the decline in land cultivated between 1926 and 1933, must have been at least partially due to the afflictions (Gooch 1927: 460; Thomas 1933: 5). The National Congress recognized that by 1937, the Truxillo Railroad Company's land in the Black River district, from Corocito to Punta Rieles, where the tracks ended in the Paulaya Valley, were rendered unusable because of "*algunas enfermedades*" (some diseases) (CNH 1937: 189). Though the line operated in 1938, the fruit company had received permission in 1937, to close down the 123 kilometers of rail line between Corocito and Punta Rieles, the last stop some 166 kilometers out from Puerto Castilla, and remove all equipment (CNH 1937: 190; Moore 1938a: 2). In 1939, there was no scheduled service to the Black River district (Robinson 1939:3). To this day Juticalpa and Tegucigalpa have never been connected to the coast by rail service.

Truxillo Railroad Company reported that both Sigatoka and Panama disease racked the extensive lands they held (Moore 1938b: 1). The fruit company produced only 176,782 stems in the 1938-1939 fiscal year, a decline from the 4,639,788 stems they produced themselves in 1933, a drop of 99.996 percent (Thomas 1933: 5; Robinson 1939: 1). In 1939, the Truxillo Railroad

Company bought 365,207 stems from local producers, 67.38 percent of the total the company "produced" that year, but 170,201 stems, 46.6 percent, were not exported, being unsuitable for market (Robinson 1939: 1). Only 279.64 hectares remained in cultivation for bananas that year, all were infected by Sigatoka and Panama disease, and would reportedly be abandoned in the next few months (Robinson 1939: 2). Although the company was in the processes of combating Sigatoka, quite successfully, and probably with Bordeaux mixture, the costs were quite high, and there was no treatment for Panama disease.

Through the 1930s, United Fruit permitted Standard Fruit, operating out of La Ceiba, to expand their railroad and banana operations into the Aguán Valley, along the north bank of the river, looking for land free from Panama disease (Karnes 1978: 185). While the Truxillo Railroad Company was succumbing to the diseases in the lower Aguán, Standard Fruit expanded production in the upper Aguán, increasing production from 4,000 stems in 1936 to 1,000,000 in 1939. The trains last ran from Puerto Castilla to Trujillo and Olanchito in 1940 (Scott 1940: 1). The Tela Railroad Company removed most of the tracks along the routes, and many buildings from Puerto Castilla, including all but two houses and the hospital in the elite, upper section of the port (CNH 1942: 208; Colten 1977: 17).

Many Hondurans with whom I have spoken believe the Truxillo Railroad Company wished to leave Trujillo and abandon the city and hinterland to their fate. In the book *Truxillo con X*, the author writes that the company, "*alegando los estragos de la enfermedad denominada Sigatoka*" (alleging the damages of the disease named Sigatoka), duped the government into authorizing

the partial suspension its activities, referring to the Black River district (PGH 1979: 23-24). Not only did Sigatoka devastate the banana fields, but even more fatally Panama disease wrecked havoc among producers, not only the Truxillo Railroad Company, but every producer in Central America, Mexico, Colombia, and the Caribbean (Shaw 1942: 371-372). With all of its banana lands infected, and no more uninfected land available in which it could grow bananas, the company turned Puerto Castilla over to the Honduran government (CNH 1942: 193-194). Abandonment of banana lands was quite common after the Panama disease devastated so much land through all of the Caribbean of Central America, and the Truxillo Railroad Company followed the same course (Karnes 1978: 185; Woodward 1985: 181-182; Stover and Simmonds 1987: 313; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 104). Banana diseases were largely responsible for the major reorientation of the business toward the Pacific coast of Central America in the late 1930s and early 1940s (Shaw 1942: 371). It should be noted that although United Fruit pulled out of Trujillo, it did not pull out of the Sula Valley. Although the actions of the Truxillo Railroad Company were consistent with the then current policies of the banana business in Central America, the original contract never stated that the principal purpose of the railroads were for growing bananas, but for connecting both Juticalpa and Tegucigalpa with the Caribbean coast (Argueta 1989b: 65). The government of Honduras, however, gave their permission for the Truxillo Railroad Company to abandon the routes based on the potential to grow bananas.

Colten (1977: 8-9) reported a story that the Truxillo Railroad Company wanted land in Mosquitia for banana cultivation,

but this was during a time of a boundary dispute between Honduras and Nicaragua. Since the land the company wanted was in the disputed area, so the story goes, the company pulled out of the deal. I have not found anything in the documentary record to support this story. The Truxillo Railroad Company would have had to build hundreds of kilometers of new railroad to serve Mosquitia from Puerto Castilla, an unlikely scenario given the cost of new railroads. Rather than use Puerto Castilla as the terminus, it seems likely that the company would have had to build a small port in Mosquitia.

There is no doubt, however, that when the Truxillo Railroad Company pulled out of the region, Trujillo and the hinterland fell into a deep decline, just as in other regions where fruit companies pulled out due to banana diseases (Woodward 1985: 181; Perez-Brignoli 1989: 104).

The Truxillo Railroad Company lost their concession, but received permission to remove the rolling stock, rails, steel bridges, and many buildings from the land they had operated, except for leaving the dock and hospital at Puerto Castilla, and the water pipeline and electrical system for the people who remained at the port living in Labor Town (CNH 1942: 194). The rails between Trujillo and Puerto Castilla probably were removed in 1942, and road construction began along the route of the old railway to connect the city and port (Colten 1977: 7-8). The building that served as Trujillo's train station in Río Negro burnt down early one morning in 1944 (Mejía Glynn 1944; López Pineda 1944).

During the Second World War, Honduras allied itself with the nations against fascist aggression, and permitted the United

States the use of Puerto Castilla as a naval base, which was established in 1943 (PGH 1979: 23). The relations between the personnel of the United States Navy and the people of Trujillo were extremely amicable, although once several Marines, without provocation, threw a Honduran doctor off the dock, causing injury (Maldonado 1944; AET 1946: 8). The naval base pumped some \$30,000 monthly into Trujillo and Honduras (PGH 1979: 23). The focus of local trade was once again on Trujillo rather than Puerto Castilla, boosting the economy of the city, which was also a favorite entertainment spot for the naval personnel (Colten 1977: 28). After the war, however, the base was no longer needed and closed on February 14, 1946 (AET 1946: 7-8; PGH 1979: 23).

*"La Base Naval de Puerto Castilla iza la bandera hondureña - ante autoridades civiles y militares y numeroso pueblo trujillano - y levanta anclas via Panamá. La gente ve partir, con lágrimas en los ojos a quienes por cuatro años les habían proporcionado trabajo, pan y diversiones (emphasis theirs)" (AET 1946: 708).*

(The Naval Base of Puerto Castilla hauled up the Honduran colors - before civil and military authorities and many Trujillanos - and raised anchors for Panama. The people watched them set off, with tears in their eyes, for those who for four years have provided the with work, bread and entertainment.)

Banana exports did not completely come to a halt after the Truxillo Railroad Company left Puerto Castilla. From July 1, 1948 to June 30, 1949, four schooners regularly sailed between the port and Tampa carrying bananas (AMT 1951: 2-4). Whereas the port used to load 6,500 stems of bananas per hour, these schooners at the most carried 3,682 stems in the largest load, but the smallest was a mere 397 stems. The total for the year was only 82,322 stems, a decrease of 98.48 percent from the 1933 level. For the period of July 1951, through March 1952, 90,107 stems of bananas were exported from Puerto Castilla, again all to Tampa, an increase of 9.46 percent over the level for the

complete 1948-1949 fiscal year (AMT 1951: 5). There is no information about from where the bananas came. The figures are a decrease from the Truxillo Railroad Company's exports of stems purchased from independent, local producers. It is doubtful that the bananas came from Standard Fruit's plantations along the north bank of the Río Aguán near Olanchito, as they had their own railroad to La Ceiba. Other products exported included coconuts, copra, several hundred cattle, some mahogany, deer skins, and cattle hides, one of the oldest export products from Trujillo's hinterland (AMT 1951: 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 17, 20-21, 45).

Several companies used Puerto Castilla in the 1970s and early 1980s, as a base of operations. Honduras Plywood, S.A., operated out of the massive, old commissary building from 1962 to 1970 (Colten 1977: 20). It is alleged that when the company left Puerto Castilla, it tore down walls and broke windows to facilitate moving equipment out of the building (PGH 1979: 207).

La Empacadora del Norte, S.A., a processing plant for meat, shrimp, lobster and fish, operated from offices and a new dock near the location of the old Truxillo Railroad Company offices (Colten 1977: 15-16; Murry 1977: 3). The hospital building had been sacked of most equipment and many materials after the United States Navy shut down the naval base at Puerto Castilla, and in the 1970s, the building served to house supplies, nets, and lobster traps for the seafood packing company (PGH 1979: 206; Colten 1977: 20).

Hurricane Fifi in September, 1974, caused much damage to Puerto Castilla, including many houses in Labor Town and the old dock itself (Murry 1977: 6; PGH 1979: 206). Time and the tropical environment, combined with an almost total lack of

maintenance, caused much of the damage and deterioration to Puerto Castilla (PGH 1970: 205-207). In the late 1970s, in preparation for modernizing the port, the residents of Labor Town were moved out of the port itself to the new village of Castilla, on the road before reaching the port (Murry 1977: 8-10). Most facilities from the days of the Truxillo Railroad Company at Puerto Castilla were destroyed during renovation and modernization of the port to a container facility, and the only visible remnants of the fruit company days are the hospital ruins, a few black-topped roads in the former upper section, and the pipeline that still supplies freshwater from the mountains behind Trujillo<sup>8</sup>.

The most lasting legacy of the Truxillo Railroad Company in the landscape is the old railroad bed. After the removal of the rails, the people of the region began to use the road bed, between Trujillo and Puerto Castilla, and the Aguán Valley, for a road (Colten 1977: 12). Inclement weather hindered movement on the unpaved road in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and Trujillo did not become truly connected with the rest of Honduras by a paved, all-weather road until the mid to late 1980s<sup>9</sup>. The road from Olanchito through the lower Aguán Valley follows the road bed of the old railroad for much of the way, but several road cuts through large hills to the east of Trujillo now direct the route south of Laguna Guaimoreto rather than to the north along the original course.

During the planning stages in the 1970s of El Cajon, the hydroelectric dam along the Río Sulaco in the departments of Yoro and Comayagua, optimistic planners for Puerto Castilla and Trujillo had several ideas for redevelopment of the area, based

on cheap electricity. Among the plans were an aluminum smelting plant, oil storage facility, fruit canneries, flour mill, brewery, sawmills, and rebuilding the railroad through the Aguán Valley (Buckholtz 1977: 5-8). Plans also included a new airport, and even building "Nuevo Trujillo" to handle a projected influx of some 45,000 people, with "Antigua Trujillo" kept as a historic site and tourist attraction. None of these plans ever came to fruition, and during the summer of 1994, the water level of El Cajon had been so depleted that the entire country had moving electrical blackouts for fourteen hours a day. Rural electrification and increased electrical usage throughout the country used water faster than it could be replaced in the reservoir, especially after several years of drought. Honduras simply does not have the electrical capacity to run so many projects.

#### **Conclusion**

The early fruit trade was relatively haphazard in operation, with foreign owned steamers stopping at various points along the coast to buy fruit from local growers. Trujillo was a major port of call for many of the ships involved in the fruit trade from the mid 1800s to the end of the century. The trade in coconuts, pineapples, and mangos was soon overshadowed by the banana, yellow gold, and a new boom period appeared to be on the way. After 1900, however, the tropical fruit trade in the United States was consolidated into a few large companies, dominated by the United Fruit Company. Honduran officials saw railroad contracts as a means of improving the dismal transport in the country with the fruit companies taking most of the risks. The government had to give huge land concessions to fruit companies

to attract them to Honduras, and thereby gave the foreign companies land on which to grow their own bananas, blocking out local producers.

The fruit companies often made many improvements in the local infrastructure besides the railroad, including city streets, water and electrical services, and hospitals. At Trujillo, the port was shifted to Puerto Castilla, on the end of the spit across the bay. Local commerce in the city was hurt by the enclave activity of the Truxillo Railroad Company, but overall the 1920s and early 1930s was a time when the city thrived. Banana diseases, however, slowly ate away at the fruit company's profits and land, until the Truxillo Railroad Company was forced to pull out of the area. Since the late 1930s, during the last years of decline of the fruit company, Trujillo suffered another economic bust, temporarily mitigated by the presence of the United States Naval base during World War II, and other plans for development have fizzled or been rather unrealistic. Some of the impacts on the landscape of the fruit company days are still evident; however, time, deterioration, and development have obliterated most features. The one lasting development has been the road through the lower Aguán that follows the old rail bed, and connects Trujillo by land with the rest of the country.

#### **Notes**

1. These population figures came from the unpublished manuscript census for Honduras from December 26, 1895 (Honduras 1895). Not all of the fifty-page booklets that make up the manuscript census had the municipality printed on them, and the deteriorated state of many of the booklets suggests that some have been lost. My figures come from all the booklets available in the Archivo Nacional de Honduras in Tegucigalpa, for Trujillo, Río Negro, and Cristales.

2. Al Jennings later claimed that on July 4, 1896, he, his brother Frank, Porter, and a few others celebrated the United States Independence Day by shooting pistols in the air in

Trujillo instead of firecrackers (Langford 1957: 103). Jennings claimed that the shooting scared off revolutionaries who thought their shooting was a counter-attack by government forces, and would later inspire Porter's short story, "The Fourth in El Salvador." While a good tale, that apparently is all that Jennings' story was, a work of fiction (Langford 1957: 103).

3. In conversations with colleagues in the Geography Department and at national meetings, some have speculated that the model for Porter's "Vesuvius Fruit Company" was the Vacarro Brothers Company that later became Standard Fruit. Vacarro Brothers were not involved in Honduras until some twenty years after the Oteri Brothers had begun their regular shipping lines to Trujillo, and Salvador D'Antoni, one of the founding partners of Vacarro Brothers, first visited Honduras with Santo Oteri in 1899 (Karnes 1978: 9). It is more likely that the Oteri Brothers provided Porter with the model of the Italian family who owned a fruit company.

4. While Salvador and Vincent D'Antoni were aboard one of the fruit ships discussing opening a line of beer, they became fixated on one of the life preservers, and the popular line of beer in Honduras today continues to go by the brand name "Salva Vida" (life preserver) (Karnes 1978: 49).

5. The other four natural, deep-water harbors in Central America are Puerto Cortés, Honduras, Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, and Bocas del Toro, Panama (Adams 1914: 65-66).

6. Kepner and Soothill (1936: 144) berate United Fruit; "Even Trujillo's ancient name has been misspelled consistently by the company." In all fairness, we would have to say that "Trujillo's ancient name" was misspelled on the document of the city's founding in 1525 (Saldaña 1525). Until the early-twentieth century the name of the city had been spelled as "Truxillo," "Trujillo," and "Trugillo" since its founding. In the documents that I have seen, "Trujillo" did not come into common use until the mid-nineteenth century, and did not become the most used version until the first part of the twentieth century.

7. All together there are an estimated one hundred to three hundred edible banana cultivars, usually designated by their genome groups (J.A. Samson 1986: 155). Linnaeus designated bananas as *Musa sapientum* and plantains as *M. paradisiaca*, however his descriptions were based on hybrids of the same genome, and "his names may therefore not be used as general names for either banana or plantain" (Stover and Simmonds 1987: 96; J.A. Samson 1986: 139). The current usage is "to abandon formal Latin names altogether," designating the bananas as *Musa* followed by the group and subgroup names, such as Cavendish or Gros Michel, then the horticultural varieties (Stover and Simmonds 1987: 94-95; J.A. Samson 1986: 140). The cultivars and clones among the Cavendish subgroup include the Giant (also known as Grande Naine), Dwarf, Valery, Americani, Lacatan, and Robusta (J.A. Samson 1986: 156-157). "To avoid confusion all Latin names should be disregarded, a procedure which...has the sanction of the International Code" (Stover and Simmonds 1987: 96).

8. Puerto Castilla is currently home to a Honduran naval base, and security reasons precluded any mapping or extensive visual surveys of much of the port area today.

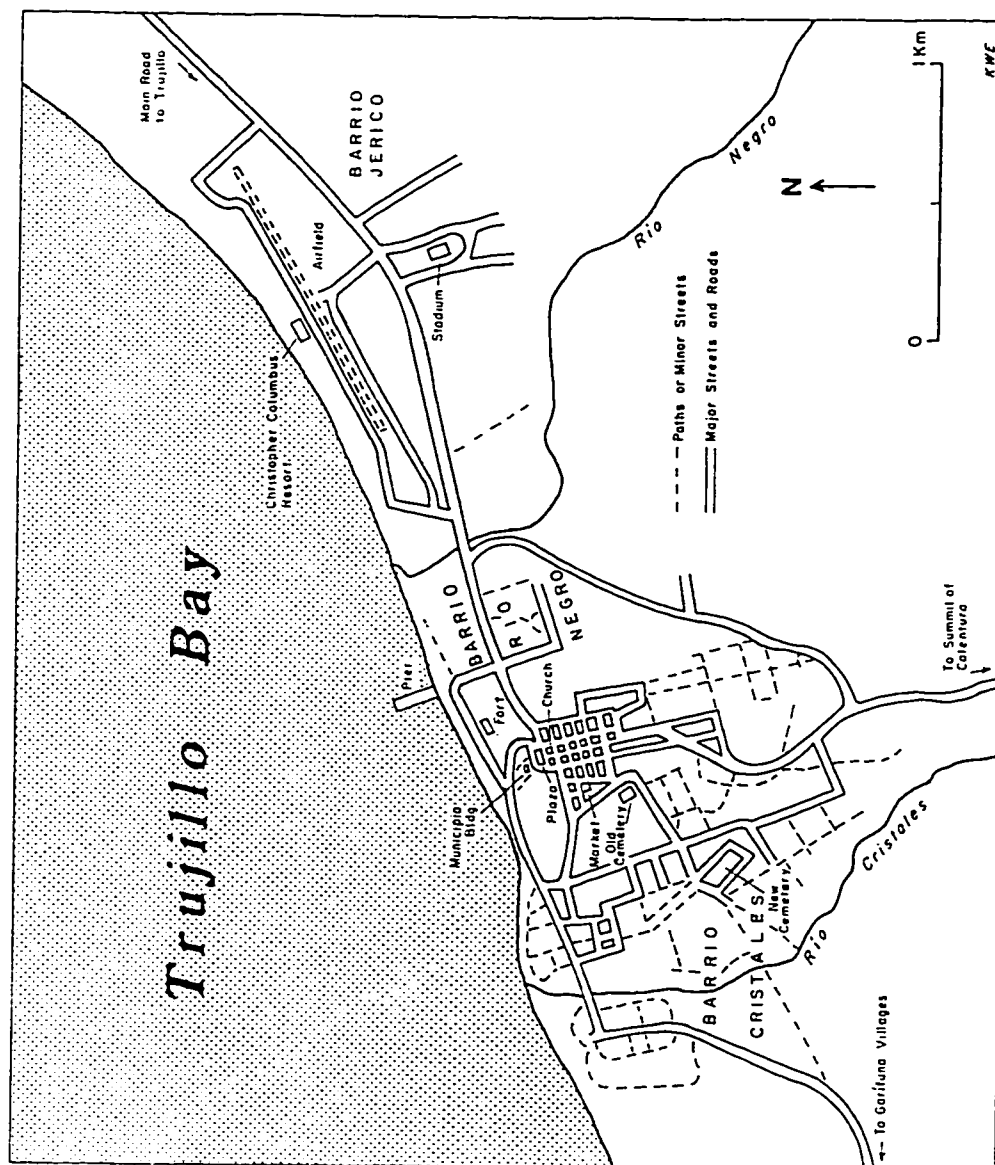
9. The source for this information comes from a government report on the Trujillo area, and included extensive plans for developing the city, port, and immediate area. The citation was lost when a janitor inadvertently threw out several of my notebooks, and the library at the National University was closed each time during subsequent visits.

## **CONCLUSION**

Trujillo's historical geography has been examined through a world-systems theory perspective, but the focus has remained on changes that occurred within this region rather than on the activities of the core area. To summarize, Trujillo's boom and bust economic cycles will be examined, as well as their relationship with similar cycles in Central America. Trujillo's position as a frontier port suggests why the city never developed more than it has until now (Map 16). Finally, current events in Trujillo hint at the possibilities for the city's future development.

#### **Summary**

Spanish mercantilist policies stressed bullion export over agricultural products, and the gold boom characterized Trujillo's first period of its historical geography, from 1525 to 1550. The conquistadors and early Spanish settlers exploited placer deposits of gold in the rivers and streams throughout the Aguán, Agalta, and Olancho valleys. So that they could eat familiar foods and employ draft animals, the conquistadors and early settlers introduced a wide variety of Old World plants and animals through Trujillo to the interior. From Trujillo, the Spanish established other towns in the hinterland, but by the end of the period the only Spanish settlement left in the hinterland was San Jorge de Olancho. To secure a labor force the Spanish enslaved Indians in the gold region, and the severe treatment, disease, and warfare all began to take their toll. As the indigenous population declined many Spanish left Trujillo for the Uluá Valley where, at the time, more Indians resided. The city itself did not thrive during the gold boom because the settlers



Map 16. Trujillo, early 1990s.

exported all precious metals back to Spain instead of using it for local development. By 1550, the gold boom had ended.

Although Spain continued the bullionist preferences, Trujillo and its hinterland had to seek alternative export products in the second half of the sixteenth century, after the decline of the placers. Sarsaparilla proved an early success for use in medicinal teas in Europe, and that from Trujillo was claimed to be the best. Overexploitation of the plants, a dwindling Indian population used to gather the plants, and depreciating market prices in Europe combined in the decline of sarsaparilla from Trujillo. Cattle hides from Trujillo's hinterland competed directly, and at the disadvantage of distance, with the domestically raised products from Spain. Trujillo was simply too far from the population centers in the highlands of Guatemala and Honduras to serve as the major port for the region, and the Audiencia, headquartered in Guatemala, established the short-lived port of Santo Tomás in Guatemala in 1605. The port of Trujillo functioned as a resupply center for the Honduran flota that made the city its first and last stop in Central America, largely because of its safe and sweet water supply from the mountains behind the town.

Throughout the latter half of the sixteenth century and the seventeenth century, other European countries wished to share in the jealously guarded wealth of Spain's American possessions. They turned to piracy to earn a profit through booty, or to simply punish their enemy, Spain. Throughout the Caribbean, pirates established safe havens from which they could launch attacks and to where they could return for rest and repairs. The Bay Islands, Providence Island, and Cabo Gracias a Dios served

pirates that often attacked Trujillo. To counter pirate attacks the Spanish established convoys for the mutual protection of their ships, but the semi-regular schedules often served to guide the pirates in their planning. The Honduran flota that called at Trujillo was one or two ships, and not large enough to provide much defense. Pirates also landed troops to capture towns, and at Trujillo they used remarkably similar tactics throughout the years. Because a frontal assault was not possible against the cannons of the fortifications, pirates attacked Trujillo by landing troops on the beach out of cannon range. The ship would then pull in front of the fort to fire upon the town while the troops assaulted along the sides. When overwhelmed, the residents of Trujillo fled to the mountains behind the town. After the devastating attacks in the 1630s and 1640s, many residents began slowly to abandon the town for the safety of the hinterland, trusting to the defense of distance rather than to Trujillo's fortifications. By the 1680s, Trujillo was abandoned.

During the economic downturn throughout Central America in the seventeenth century, more and more of the residents began to turn to direct, unsanctioned trade with the enemy, smuggling. Spanish trade policies and taxes made profit-making a difficult proposition for many Central American producers. The English textile industries during the Industrial Revolution increased the demand for indigo, a fast, blue dye extracted from native plants in Central America. From the 1730s until the early 1780s, Trujillo proved to be a convenient meeting place for both Spanish subjects and English merchants and settlers from Black River, at the northern end of the Mosquito Coast. Although not the only site for smuggling, Trujillo proved to be popular and busy enough

to attract the attention of Spanish officials. Contraband flowed in and out of Trujillo by two major routes, first established during the gold period, along the Aguán Valley, and through the Agalta and Olancho valleys. Indigo and cattle were the two most important items the Spanish traded for English textiles, the most valued import. The hinterland for Trujillo's contraband trade included much of Honduras and El Salvador, and spilled over into Guatemala. The Spanish authorities first proposed a new fort at Trujillo to stop contraband trading, but Diez Navarro, a Spanish engineer, found Trujillo's site and situation too risky and expensive for Spanish resources at that time. Instead of Trujillo, the new fort was built to the west at Omoa, too far away to halt contraband through Trujillo.

By the early 1780s, Spanish military forces in Central America had been built up to a sufficient level to challenge the English, and taking advantage of the English forces tied up in North America during the American Revolution, the Spanish military reoccupied Trujillo in March, 1782, from where they drove the English out of the Bay Islands, then captured, and subsequently lost the Black River settlement. Regaining the Black River settlement in the treaty negotiations, the Spanish realized that without their subjects physically settled on the coast, the English would eventually reoccupy the territory. Spain's last colonization from the homeland to the New World occurred at Trujillo.

Colonists from the Canary Islands, Asturias, and Galicia proved to be maladapted to the conditions they encountered at Trujillo, Roatán, Río Tinto (Black River), and Cabo de Gracias a Dios. The colonists were incapable and unwilling to farm, never

built houses capable of protecting them from the rains, and quickly began to succumb to disease. Inept administration, an unwillingness to live up to promised help, and mounting military and economic difficulties exasperated the colonists' situation. By 1800, most of the nearly 1,300 colonists were dead, and in September of that year the Mosquito Indians attacked Río Tinto, driving the few surviving colonists back to Trujillo, and ending the colonization project. The Black Caribs of St. Vincent Island proved to be unwilling, but capable colonists, arriving in 1797, after their deportation from the homeland by the British. The 2,000 or so Black Caribs proved to be preadapted to the environmental conditions at Trujillo that were similar to St. Vincent. They exploited the fishing grounds around Trujillo and planted bitter cassava, their staple food, in the hills around the city. Arriving in similar numbers to the Spanish colonists, the Black Caribs rapidly increased their population and soon began to settle areas away from Trujillo, eventually to occupy the coast of the Bay of Honduras from Black River to Dangriga (Stann Creek), Belize.

The restrictive Spanish trade policies eased somewhat with the "free trade" of the late Bourbons, permitting trade between Spanish colonies rather than only with the port of Cádiz and the city of Seville. Central American indigo suffered from competition from Bengali indigo grown by the British, but just as important, the producers in Central America also produced less of the high quality dye, and more of the easier produced, low quality product. Trade out of Trujillo declined with the reduction indigo exports through the end of the colonial period, however, the port's foreland grew to include Cuba (source of most

of the city's food), Belize (a source for English goods), and even some trade directly with the United States. The large hinterland of Trujillo that included indigo producing regions of El Salvador and Nicaragua had shrunk by Independence to include only the nearby Aguán and Olancho valleys.

After Independence in 1821, Central America was no longer constrained by the Spanish trade policies. The foreland of Trujillo continued to include Belize on a larger scale than previously, but the trade with Cuba, still a Spanish colony, remained an important part of the foreland throughout most of the next fifty years, especially receiving cattle exports from Honduras. Belize gradually would become less important in the foreland of Trujillo, and the importance of the United States trade with the city increased. English intrusions into the perceived hinterland of Trujillo caused friction between Great Britain and Honduras, as each disputed the ownership of the territory immediately to the east of the city. Two ill-fated colonization attempts by English adventurers and swindlers at Black River/Río Tinto incited fear of an invasion among the people of Trujillo, but both projects came to naught. The mahogany cutting by English citizens along the Río Aguán, however, directly challenged Honduran claims to hegemony, resulting in the taking of Trujillo by English armed forces on two occasions. Honduran territorial claims were further challenged by the English in the Bay Islands, but in 1860, William Walker had to abort an attempt to take the islands before the English could turn them over to Honduras, instead attacking and capturing Trujillo. The table was turned on Walker, for

after his capture he was executed at Trujillo, and remains buried there today.

Fruit exports from the Bay Islands to the United States grew throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, until a hurricane in the late 1870s drove much of the business to the mainland. Trujillo was a major stop for fruit ships that would place orders for bananas and other fruits at various points along the coast before reaching the port, load some fruit at Trujillo, then retrace their route picking up the fruit brought to the coast from the interior. Although somewhat haphazard, fruit production remained in local hands, and New Orleans became an early center for the fruit trade from Trujillo and Honduras.

Central American governments, deep in debt to British bond holders, increasingly viewed railroads as the key to development, and granted generous concessions to fruit companies to build railroads, at little financial risk for the governments. Consolidation of many of the fruit companies led to the founding of the United Fruit Company, which obtained the concession for the railroad in Trujillo's hinterland through its subsidiary, the Truxillo Railroad Company. With the land grants fruit companies began growing their own fruit, driving many local producers out of the market, only to find employment from the same companies as laborers. The enclave economy established by the Truxillo Railroad company was typical of many banana enclaves of Central America. Commissary privileges hurt local merchants, transportation and production of fruit remained in company hands, and there was little contact with the rest of the national economy. The Truxillo Railroad Company did fund many municipal improvements in Trujillo, and the city and region did prosper

during the banana boom. All of this came to a halt, however, as Sigatoka and especially Panama disease destroyed banana production in the fruit companies hinterland of the lower Aguán Valley, and along the coast to the Paulaya Valley. By 1940, the banana boom had gone bust, and the United States Naval base at Puerto Castilla provided needed, but only temporary promise for a sustained economy.

#### **Trujillo's Boom and Bust Cycles**

The economic boom and bust cycles of Trujillo, and the territorial expansion and contraction of its hinterland, are comparable to similar activities found on Central America's Mosquito Coast (Helms 1971, Nietschmann 1979). The timing of Trujillo's boom periods does not match those found by Helms (1971: 29) for the Mosquito Coast, but are extremely similar in their speculative nature (Figure 1). The booms produced by gold, smuggling, and bananas were all based on speculation to produce quick wealth for a few people, rather than on sustained development to benefit the majority. Figure 3 displays these booms, not as quantitative measures of volume or value, but as approximations of the relative importance of the products throughout Trujillo's history, thereby showing the sequential nature of the cycles. Sarsaparilla and hides in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and cattle exports in the mid to late nineteenth century produced local boomlets for Trujillo. The most devastating bust periods followed the pirate attacks of the 1630s and 1640s, and the banana bust of the late 1940s. Reliance on the export of products from speculative enterprises left Trujillo exposed to the capricious nature of the world economy.

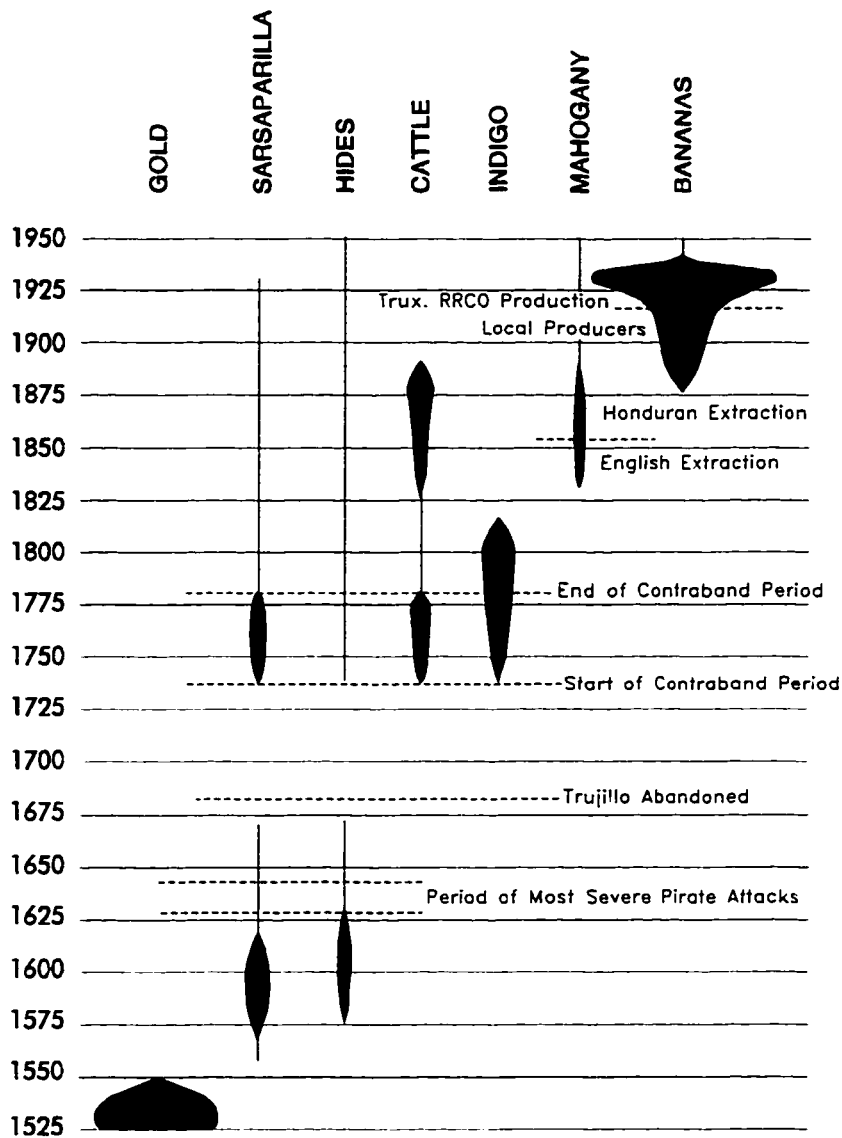
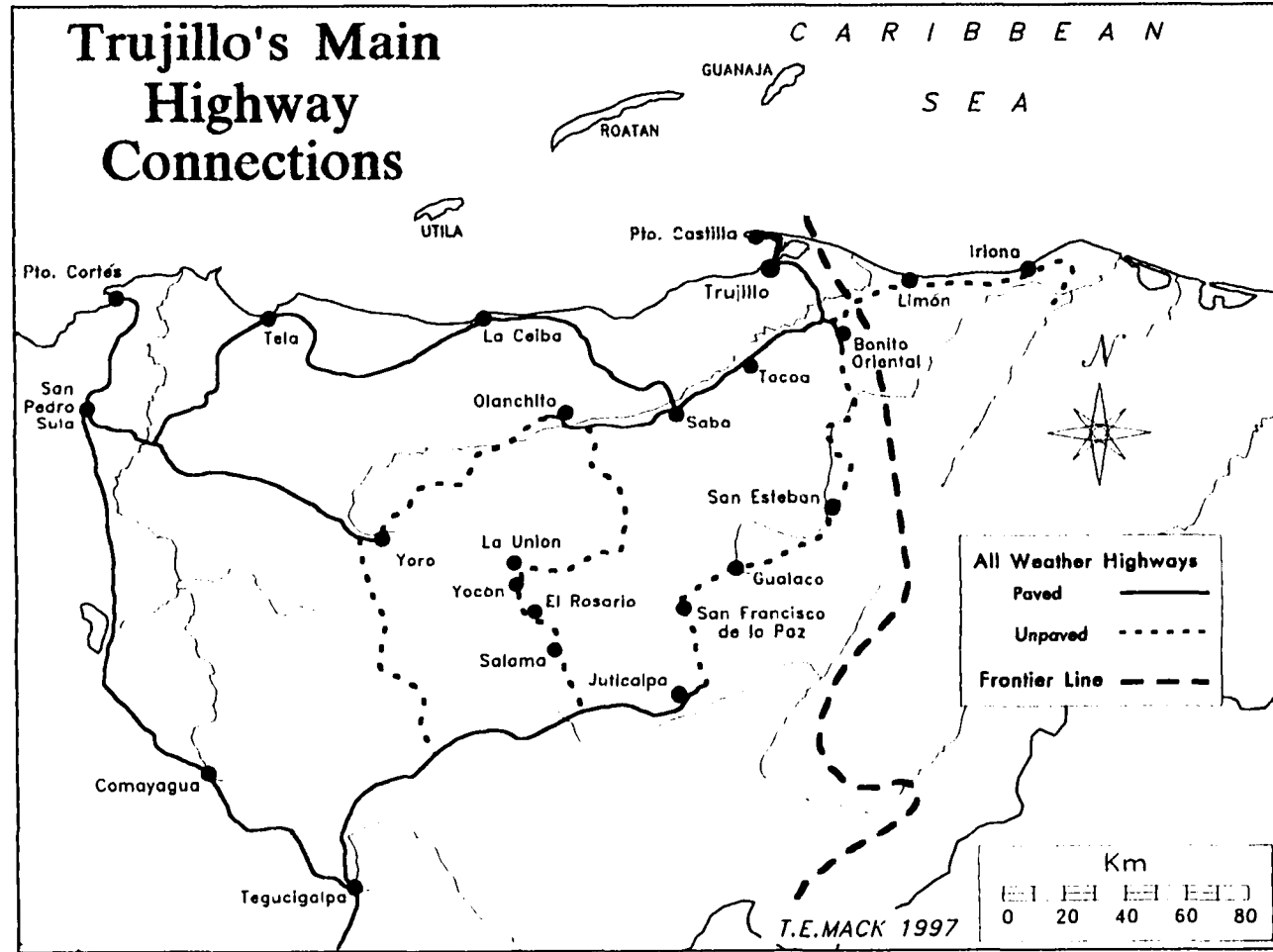


Figure 1. Export Products from Trujillo's Boom Periods.

### **Frontier Port Concept**

From the founding of the city in 1525, the frontier of Spanish and Ladino settlement in Honduras has ended at Trujillo on the coast, thus making it qualitatively different from the country's other major Caribbean ports. Whereas Puerto Cortés, Tela, and La Ceiba developed as the settlement frontier pushed into the areas adjacent to those ports, Trujillo has always been on the frontier. For hundreds of years the frontier of settlement ran roughly in a north-south direction inland from the coast, just east of Trujillo, to Olancho. Speculators during the boom periods extended the city's hinterland, but without permanent settlement and development the frontier never moved eastward, and then came the subsequent decline in the hinterland during the bust periods. As a frontier port Trujillo did not attract long-term development, and Trujillo did not develop a permanent infrastructure through which the port was connected to an extended hinterland. Trujillo did attract some development because the site's natural advantages combined well with its position on the frontier to make the port important enough to settle and maintain, to protect the frontier against foreign or Indian incursions, guard against contraband, and keep out foreign interlopers. These functions are similar to any frontier outpost, only that Trujillo happens to be on the coast and can serve as a port.

Recently the frontier of Ladino settlement in Honduras has begun to move steadily to the east (J.R. Samson 1996). At the same time a permanent, and all-weather, road system has developed to serve Trujillo (Map 17). The main highway through the lower Aguán Valley uses the old rail bed built by the Truxillo Railroad



Map 17. Trujillo's Main Highway Connections, 1996.

Company, and is now completely paved from Trujillo to both Puerto Castilla and Olanchito. The main highway through the Agalta Valley into the Olancho Valley is still mostly an all-weather, dirt road, but is paved from Corocito in the Aguán Valley to Bonito Oriental. Plans include paving the roadways from Olanchito farther up the Aguán Valley to Yoro, and from Bonito Oriental to San Esteban and, eventually, to Juticalpa. Bus service is now available eastward from Trujillo to Santa Rosa de Aguán along all-weather, dirt roads. Development of the old Truxillo Railroad Company rail bed east of Trujillo continues towards Mosquitia. Bus service along the all-weather road is currently available to Limón, on the eastern coast, with taxis operating between that town and Irión. The recent movement of the frontier line of Ladino settlement and the developing transportation infrastructure both feed off of each other, and give ample evidence of, finally, a permanent hinterland for Trujillo.

#### **Trujillo, Present and Future**

Today the lower Aguán Valley is filled with African palm oil plantations instead of bananas, but the most promising prospect for Trujillo remains tourism. Since my first arrival in Trujillo in January, 1992, the few hotels in town have expanded, and several new ones have opened, including the Christopher Columbus Beach Resort, an international, first-class hotel, owned by a Honduran domestic airline. Bus service to Trujillo, once available only from La Ceiba and one bus per day from Juticalpa, now includes six buses daily each to Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, largely on recently paved highways. Only small coasting craft engaged in cabotage call directly at Trujillo, but the

Honduran airline will stop at Trujillo for passengers staying at their hotel. My first trip to Trujillo from the capital took nearly two full days in 1992, but in January, 1996, the bus trip from Trujillo to Tegucigalpa took only eight hours. The increased availability of transportation to Trujillo makes it a more likely choice as a destination for more tourists. A list of visitors between October 25, 1995 and January 9, 1996, to the office of FUCAGUA (Fundación para la Conservación de Calentura y Guaimoreto), a local non-governmental organization dedicated to protecting the environment of the mountains and lagoons around Trujillo, included people from the United States, Spain, Israel, South Africa, Germany, Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, Italy, Belize, Guatemala, Great Britain, and Finland, as well as Hondurans and several groups of school children with their teachers from Olancho (FUCAGUA 1995-1996: 1-3).

Brochures in Trujillo promote ecotourism trips to Laguna Guaimoreto, alligator sightseeing on the Río Chapagua, and trips to nearby Garífuna villages. All of these were available before, on an irregular and informal basis, but are now served as package deals for increasing numbers of tourists. Trujillo even boasts a Spanish-language school for those who wish to study the language and live with a local family. Whereas Trujillo was once primarily visited by the back-packing, adventure-seeking tourists in their late-teens and early-twenties, more affluent and middle-age tourists visit the large resort two kilometers from the center of town, and an air-conditioned bus delivers them to the plaza in front of the church. Not only are the numbers of tourists increasing, but the nature of tourism in Trujillo is undergoing change, and has begun to impact on the local culture.

During a visit in January, 1995, was the first time I was approached by a roving vendor selling handmade necklaces and bracelets, as well as the first time a child openly begged for coins. It is far too early, however, to predict what course tourism in Trujillo will take, or if this will only prove to be a mini-boom, much like sarsaparilla in the late 1500s. Although a popular destination with Hondurans and other Central Americans, especially during *Semana Santa* (Holy Week), Trujillo's tourism relies largely on foreign visitors, and will be subject to forces beyond its control, such as recessions in the tourists's home countries that might curtail foreign travel, or tourist areas opening in other nearby countries.

Trujillo's incipient tourism boom may be prematurely cut off if the Honduran government approves plans for a new oil refinery to be built on four hundred hectares at Puerto Castilla.

Information gathered by FUCAGUA, gleaned from various Honduran newspaper accounts, indicate that the refinery plans predict a workforce of 1,200 employees in the first stage, eventually rising to 5,640. Planned capacity for the refinery is 150,000 barrels of oil per day, to produce gasoline, kerosene, and jet and diesel fuel for export. Total cost for all phases of the refinery is US\$2 billion, with the Honduran government receiving US\$1,000,000 per year for thirty years for renting space at the port.

Although there is some local support for the refinery in Trujillo, many oppose the plans. Many residents, while they would welcome the jobs, fear that the eventual pollution produced by the refinery will harm the environment, the very thing that has brought tourists to the city. Fears include oil polluting

the beaches, destruction of the mangroves on the spit near Puerto Castilla, and irreparable harm to the fragile ecosystem of Laguna Guaimoreto. It is far too early to tell if the plans for the refinery will go the way of the other schemes to develop Puerto Castilla and Trujillo after the demise of the Truxillo Railroad, or if the refinery will actually be built. The people of Trujillo must wait and see what development the future holds in store for them, whether it will be another cycle of boom and bust, or if more sustained development will finally come to this most historic city in Honduras.

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- AG. Audiencia de Guatemala.
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## VITA

Taylor Eugene Mack was born on August 6, 1960, in Richland Center, Wisconsin, in the heart of the Driftless Area. Most of his childhood was spent in Waukesha, near the Midwest metropolis of Milwaukee, and, despite leaving there in 1977, he has retained his Upper Midwest accent ever since.

After high school Taylor enlisted in the United States Army, serving his country in New Jersey, Massachusetts, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Maryland, and the Caribbean nation of Grenada, from July 1979 through January 1984. Rising through the years from the rank of private to specialist fifth class, his job positions included administrative specialist, military policeman, and explosive ordnance disposal technician, this last being his duty during the invasion of the Caribbean island nation of Grenada in 1984. Taylor received an honorable discharge after earning the Army Commendation Medal, Army Service Medal, and Good Conduct Ribbon. Taylor then enlisted in the Kansas National Guard at the rank of sergeant, serving for one and one-half years as an squad leader in the anti-tank platoon of a mechanized infantry battalion.

Taylor began his undergraduate studies at the University of Kansas in January 1984, and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in May 1989. He majored in geography, was granted departmental honors, and graduated with distinction. Continuing at the University of Kansas for his Masters of Arts degree, Taylor wrote his thesis, *The Origins and Diffusion of Greyhound Racing in the United States*, and graduated in May 1992. While studying for his degree, Taylor developed an interest in Latin America, and later concentrated his research in that region.

America, and later concentrated his research in that region.

Taylor received a Board of Regents Fellowship from Louisiana State University, and continued studying geography for his doctoral program. During his archival research in Honduras, Guatemala, and Spain, Taylor developed his skills in reading colonial Spanish paleography. His field research for his dissertation has taken him through Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Belize, Mexico, and Spain. Besides spending time in archives with dusty old documents, Taylor likes reading, brewing his own beer, occasionally visiting a greyhound or horse track, and foreign adventure travel.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

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**Major Field:** Geography

**Title of Dissertation:** Ephemeral Hinterlands and the Historical  
Geography of Trujillo, Honduras, 1525-1950

**Approved:**

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December 16, 1996