Caught between Empires: Pre-Famine Irish Immigrants in Santiago de Cuba, 1665-1847

Giselle Gonzalez Garcia

A Thesis in

the Department of History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts (History) at

Concordia University

Montréal, Québec, Canada

August 2020

© Giselle Gonzalez Garcia, 2020

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Giselle Gonzalez Garcia

Entitled: Caught-up between Empires: Pre-Famine Irish Immigrants in Santiago de Cuba, 1665-1847

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (History)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final Examining Committee:

______________________________ Chair

Dr. Peter Gossage

______________________________ Examiner

Dr. Barbara Lorenzkowski

______________________________ Examiner

Dr. Gavin Foster

______________________________ Thesis Supervisor

Dr. Jane McGaughey

Approved by ______________________________

Dr. Matthew Penney, Chair of the Department of History

August 26th, 2020 ______________________________

Dr. Pascale Sicotte, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science

Abstract

Caught-up between Empires: Pre-Famine Irish Immigrants in Santiago de Cuba, 1665-1847.

Giselle Gonzalez Garcia

This thesis examines the complex experiences of Irish immigrants in city and province of Santiago de Cuba. For some pre-Famine Irish immigrants, Cuba was an island of opportunities, and these often lay in the burgeoning sugar and coffee industries, industries that were dependant of enslaved labour and the slave-trade. Santiago de Cuba, a small city of almost no relevance to the Spanish American empire, appears as an unlikely destination for Irish migrants, but, although they were only a handful of families, their contribution is significant and under-explored.

The present work examines those Irish families who settled permanently in Santiago from the 17th century until the eve of the Irish Great Famine in 1845. They are composed of two distinctive groups of Irish immigrants. The first one arrived from Spain throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. They developed a sense of symbolic Irish identity, expressed through naming practices, and had a hand in creating the élite cohort into which the immigrants of the second group inserted themselves in the early decades of the 19th century. The first group employed strategies to achieve social mobility and to maintain some degree of ethnic cohesion. They saw in marital alliances as a highly strategic practice that placed them into the local élite and into key colonial institutions in order to assimilate and integrate into their host society. By contrast, the second group was composed of a wider cohort of clearly transnational and trans-imperial adventurers. They sojourned in the United States, towards which market they focused their enterprises by creating trading firms and investing in coffee cultivation. They exploited the interstices of the Spanish and British empires, and of the United States' "informal one", to become some of the wealthiest planters and merchants in eastern Cuba. By 1827 these groups had merged into one élite that was politically and socially conservative, and religiously Catholic. They were fiercely pro-slavery and fervent supporters of the maintenance of the Spanish colonial *status quo*.

The arguments made in this work are sustained in primary sources such as letters, genealogical data, parish records, business letters, and diplomat's dispatches, among others. These sources were found in archival collections in Cuba, Ireland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Spain.

Acknowledgements

This work was made possible by, first and foremost, the amazing support of Concordia University's School of Irish Studies, especially that of my supervisor Dr. Jane McGaughey. I will like to recognize as well the contributions of the History Department at the Universidad de La Habana, that first gave me the encouragement to pursue this line of research, specifically Dr. Danay Ramos Ruiz. The ideas that were born in Havana were also significantly updated at the Department of History of Concordia University. I especially acknowledge the incredible support I have received there and the intellectual inputs of professors Dr. Barbara Lorenzkowski, Dr. Andrew Ivaska, and Dr. Gavin Foster. Moreover, this dissertation benefited immensely from the financial support of the Department of History and the School of Irish Studies at Concordia, the Canadian Association of Irish Studies, and the many anonymous donors behind the generous scholarships I received. Field research in Ireland, Cuba, and the United Kingdom was made possible due to the generosity of the donors to Concordia International mobility awards, and those of Globalink MITACS. I will also like to acknowledge the institutions that welcomed me as a researcher and their generous staff. Archivists and librarians at the Archivo Nacional de Cuba, the Archivo de la Oficina del Historiador de La Habana, and the Biblioteca Nacional all in Havana. In Santiago, this research would not have been possible without the contributions of Dr. Yaumara López Segrera and MsC. Alfredo Sánchez Falcón at the Centro de Interpretación y Divulgación del Patrimonio Cultural Cafetalero. At the Centro de Interpretación de las Relaciones Culturales Cuba-Europa, to Onedys Calvo for providing an amazing space for the first presentation of many of the themes that have been expanded here. To María del Carmen O'Reilly at Biblioteca Rubén Martínez Villena for the support to access archival materials and for allowing the existence of a space that promotes the connections between Ireland and Cuba. To Shannon O'Neill at the New York University Special Collections for assisting me in accessing remotely the research material of the Kerby Miller collection. In Ireland, I will like to thank Christopher Moriarty and Roy Pearson, the keepers of the fabulous letters of James Jenkinson Wright at the Historical Library of the Society of Friends, and to Peter Lamb and Bill Jackson. To the staff of the National Library and the National Archives of Ireland in Dublin, the Manuscript Room at Trinity College Dublin, the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Liverpool, the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast, the National Archives at Kew Gardens and the Barings Archive in London, my most sincere gratitude. To Dr. Jane Ohlmeyer for supporting my field research in Ireland and welcoming to the Long Room Hub. In Liverpool, I was assisted by Dr. Ruth Canning. To Kendra Durant for the access to key databases for this research. I will like to also extend my appreciation to the Society for Irish Latin American Studies and its president Dr. Margaret Brehony for being truly encouraging and supporting of my work from day one. To Kerby and Patricia Miller, and Gera Burton for putting up with endless emails about Wright. To Dr. Maria Elena Orozco for promptly replying to my queries about Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey, and for assisting me with access to her publications on the Kindeláns. To the Embassy of Ireland in Ottawa, London and Mexico, specially to Brida Kelly and to the Ambassador Barbara Jones. I will like to extend my appreciation also to Matina Skalkogiannis for all the assistance she has provided me. More importantly, to the people who hosted me abroad: in Cuba: my cousins Marjory and Yilán Santana García; in Ireland: to Molly O'Duffy, Niall Meehan, Ann Speed, Margaret Brehony, Mercedes Varona, Síobhra Aiken, Patrick Mahony; in Northern Ireland and Liverpool to the Rosato family; and, in London, to Diego Fernández, Dayana Rodríguez, and José Ramírez. Thanks to all of you for your generosity and hospitality. To my cousins Lena and Isael García for your very valuable assistance in Santiago and to architect Roxana Valdés for the 3D reconstructions of La Gran Sofía. To those who read and corrected many versions of this thesis: my supervisor Dr. McGaughey, Kerby Miller, Margaret Brehony, Alan Mooney, Ernesto Domínguez López. To the Moran family (Emily, Diana, Tim, and Max), the de Beer family (Justin, Beverley, Marin, Lara, and Anya), Claudia Alemañy Castilla, and Linda Brain Beck, for your continuous support. I would not have made it here without you. To my adopted family in Montreal: Raquel Cruz, Amed Aroche, Mirta Crespo and Juan José Cruz. A special thanks to my partner Christian Weilbach, for always believing in me, for your endless patience, and also for literally making all of this happen. To my family in Cuba, especially to my mother Marta, my father Isidro, and my grandparents Luis, Iradia e Isabel, for always getting excited with my many hours of rambling about the Irish. Of course, all responsibility for errors and misinterpretations is mine.

To all of you: go raibh maith agaibh, muchas gracias a todos, thank you all!

Notes on Language

All text originally in a language other than English has been translated herein. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted, therefore, any errors of judgement on these matters are solely mine.

Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations....................vi
List of Tables, Figures, and Maps....................vii
Introduction....................1
Chapter 1....................13
Early Irish Migration to Santiago de Cuba: Family Formation, Social Networks, and the First Coffee Plantations....................13
The Irish "Wild Geese" in Santiago: Sebastián Kindelán O'Regan, 1757-1826....................22
Sebastián Kindelán's Administration, French Mass Immigration, and Coffee Plantations, 1799-1810....................32
Chapter 2....................37
Irish Immigrants among French Refugées in Santiago de Cuba: Introducing James Jenkinson Wright....................37
The Wrights and the Bells: The Radical Transformation of Irish Quaker Migrants in Santiago de Cuba....................39
Arrival, Settlement, and Assimilation: Richard Maxwell Bell and James Jenkinson Wright in Santiago de Cuba, 1807-1827....................49
Chapter 3....................59
'Don Santiago' Wright: The Transnational Life of an Irish Coffee Planter in Santiago de Cuba, 1807-1847....................59
Irish Merchants' Transnational Networks: Globalizing Santiago de Cuba's Coffee, 1807-1847...63
Building Transnational Networks of Influence and Local Spaces of Power: James J. Wright's Business Ventures, 1812-1845....................69
Chapter 4....................83
Irish Reactions to African Slavery in Cuba: "Don Santiago's" Notoriety as Human Trafficker and his Rhetoric of Tranquility....................83
La Gran Sofía Coffee Plantation: A Paradise for Whom?....................86
Letters to Dublin: Wright's Rhetoric of Tranquility and Loud Moments of Silence, 1833-1845. .96
Conclusions....................110
Tables....................115
Figures....................120
Maps....................138
Works Cited....................150

Abbreviations

Archives, Libraries, and Special Collections

ANC: Archivo Nacional de Cuba (Cuba’s National Archives, Havana)
- ESC: Escribanías (Legal Office)
    1. BD: Bienes de Difuntos (Deceased Assets)

AHOHH: Archivo Histórico de la Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de la Habana (Historical Archives of the Office of the City’s Historian, San Gerónimo College, University of Havana, Havana)
- MT: Fondo Moses Taylor (Collection Moses Taylor, also known as Fondo Manuel Moreno Fraginals)

CIDPCC: Centro de Interpretación y Divulgación del Patrimonio Cultural Cafetalero (Centre for the Study and Promotion of Coffee Cultural Heritage, Santiago de Cuba)
AHPSC: Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba (Santiago de Cuba’s Provincial Archives, Santiago de Cuba)
- PN: Protocolos Notariales (Notarial Protocols)

AGI: Archivo General de Indias (General Archive of the Indies, Seville, Spain)
AHN: Archivo Histórico Nacional (National Historical Archive, Madrid, Spain)
- OM: Orḿdenes Militares (Military Orders)
    1. CM: Caballeros Montesa (Knights of Montesa)
    2. CS: Caballeros Santiago (Knights of St. James)

AGS: Archivo General de Simancas (Simancas’ General Archives, Valladolid, Spain)
- SGU: Secretaría de Guerra (Secretary of War)

NYUASC: New York University Archives Special Collections (New York)
- KM: Kerby Miller Papers Collection

USNA: United States National Archives (Atlanta)
- DR: Diplomatic Records

BNA: British National Archives (Kew Gardens, London)
- FO: Foreign Office

BA: Barings Archives (London)
- HC: House Correspondence

TCD: Trinity College Dublin
HLRSF: Historical Library of the Religious Society of Friends (Dublin)

Terms

SEAP: Sociedad Económica de Amigos del País (Economic Society of Friends of the Country)

List of Tables, Figures, and Maps

Tables
1. Prominent Administrative Positions occupied by Irish Diaspora Members in Santiago de Cuba.
2. Irish Families in Santiago: Titles of Nobility.
3. Early Irish Settlers Families in Santiago de Cuba: Geographical, Ethnic and Religious Origins, and Surnames.
4. Group 2: Geographical, Religious, and Ethnic Origins.
5. Sebastián Kindelán O'Regan's coffee plantations in the Santiago de Cuba area.
6. Plantations owned by Irish and Irish diaspora members in Santiago de Cuba.

Figures
1. Irish Families Network in Santiago de Cuba: Kindelán – Garvey – O'Gavan – Duany.
2. Kindelán family endogamous marriages alliances with other Irish families.
3. Iglesia del Santísimo Cristo de la Candelaria (Church of the Holy Christ of Candelaria), Santiago de Cuba. April 2020.
4. The original 1842 lighthouse at the entrance of Santiago's harbour.
5. Rare photograph of the original 1842 lighthouse at the entrance of Santiago's harbour (before its destruction in 1898).
6. Present day lighthouse at the entrance of Santiago's harbour.
7. Layout of Coffee Plantation Kentucky, owned by James J. Wright, Henry Shelton, and Antonio Vinent.
8. Layout of Coffee Plantation La Gran Sofía, owned by James J. Wright, Henry Shelton, and Antonio Vinent.
9. Layout of Coffee Plantation La Idalia, owned by Sebastián Kindelán and Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey.
10. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Main House.
11. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Main House. Detail of one of the walls.
12. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Main House. Detail of one of the arches.
13. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Main House.
14. Tri-dimensional reconstruction of the main house of La Gran Sofía.
15. Tri-dimensional reconstruction of the main house of La Gran Sofía.
16. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Barracoons (Slaves' Barracks).
17. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Lime Kiln.
18. A View of La Sierra de La Gran Piedra, where James J. Wright's coffee plantations are located.
19. Café Ven "La Gran Sofía" located at Plaza de Marte, Santiago de Cuba's City Centre.
20. Café Ven "La Gran Sofía" (Inside), acrylic plaque commemorates coffee plantation La Gran Sofía.
21. Café Ven "La Gran Sofía" (Inside). Detail of the acrylic plaque that commemorates coffee plantation La Gran Sofía.
22. Baptism record of James J. Wright's (Dn. Santiago Wright) enslaved labourers: José Samuel, Margarita, Juan Bautista, and María Antonia. May 21, 1835.
23. Screenshot of the Database of the Archbishopric of Santiago de Cuba showing the list of baptism records available for James J. Wright's enslaved labourers. Notice the adoption of Wright as surname on the part of the African labourers.
24. Timeline of James J. Wright (red) and partners (blue) Thomas Brooks, Richard Stephens, and Louis A. Verbrugghe holding the United States, British, and Belgian consulates in Santiago de Cuba, 1824-1844.
25. Dissolution of Wright, Shelton, & Co. in 1838.

26. Creation of Wright, Brooks, & Co. in 1838.
Maps
1. Administrative Division of the Island of Cuba, 1800.
2. Location of Castlerickard Parish, County Meath, Ireland.
3. Eastern Caribbean Region: the Axis Santiago – Kingston – Port-au-Prince.
4. Wright and Bell Families' Migration and Settlement in Ireland, c.1660s.
5. Map of Friends' (Quaker) Meeting Houses in Ireland, 1794.
6. Map of the City of Santiago de Cuba (1857).
7. Coffee Areas in Eastern Cuba (General View).
8. Coffee Areas in Eastern Cuba (zoomed in).
9. Coffee Plantations in La Gran Piedra Area, Santiago de Cuba.
10. Prudencio Casamayor's plots of land in La Gran Piedra area.
11. La Gran Sofía, James J. Wright's most important Coffee Plantation in La Gran Piedra Area.
12. La Gran Sofía Coffee Plantation, Wright, Brooks & Co.'s Town House, and other Landmarks.
13. La Gran Sofía Coffee Plantation (770m above sea level).
14. James J. Wright's Companies main Trade Destinations (1826-1846).

Introduction

Cuba and Ireland are both island-nations linked to the Atlantic World, a world of inter-connectivity, but very few historical connections have been drawn between them.[1] One was subsequently settled by colonizers, migrants, people enslaved in perpetuity, opportunistic merchants, enslavers "of unblemished reputation", and colonial agents in the form of soldiers, administrators, bureaucrats; the other was subjected to exploitation and colonization by its closest and more powerful neighbour.[2] They belonged to the same sea of diversity that was the Atlantic World, and historical memories of their interactions can, in different forms, still be identified today. The experiences of the Irish in Cuba have been, at best, a curious footnote in the work of very prominent historians. For some pre-Famine Irish immigrants, Cuba was an island of opportunities, and these often lay in the burgeoning sugar and coffee industries that dominated Cuba's economic life during the first half of the 19th century. But more frequently, the best chances to amass wealth rapidly to subsequently invest in the coffee and sugar productions were in the euphemistic "African trade".

The present work examines those Irish families who settled permanently in Cuba from the 17th century until the eve of the Irish Great Famine in 1845. They are divided here into two distinctive groups. The first one developed a sense of symbolic Irish identity, expressed through their naming practices, and had a hand in creating the élite group into which the immigrants of the second group inserted themselves in the early decades of the 19th century. This thesis will dedicate its first chapter to examining the establishment in Santiago de Cuba of Irish "Wild Geese" families, and their strategies for social integration, assimilation, and creation of an élite cohort. The "Wild Geese", as they are popularly known since the beginning of the 17th century, are different subsequent groups of political and religious Irish exiles that found refuge in the European Catholic courts. The first wave took place in 1607 after the Earls of Tyrconnell and Tyrone left Ireland. This mass emigration continued after the Cromwellian conquest in 1649 and the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. Throughout the 18th century the

1 A notable exception is: Margaret Brehony and Nuala Finnegan, eds., [illegible], 1st Edition (Havana: Ediciones Boloña, 2019).

2 This work will employ the term "enslaver" over "owner" or "master", as well as "enslaved" in opposition to "slave". This linguistic shift in the scholarly literature that is produced today about slavery implies that being enslaved was a condition people were subjected to, and not a defining identity trait that they chose for themselves. Likewise, this work acknowledges the use of "United States" to refer to this country and "America" or "the Americas" to allude to the continent as a whole. If it is a specific domain of the European powers of the time, it will be referenced as "Spanish America", "British America", etc, preferring more specific geographic terms when possible. On this matter see: P. Gabrielle Foreman, "Writing about 'Slavery'? This Might Help," [illegible] (blog), accessed July 26, 2020, https://naacpculpeper.org/resources/writing-about-slavery-this-might-help/.

Irish "Wild Geese"'s numbers, many of whom integrated into the European multinational armies, were replenished following an intricate policy of recruitment. In Spain and Spanish America, many of these families became staunch supporters of colonial domination and the maintenance of a slavery regime.

By contrasts, the second group that this thesis examines was composed of a wider cohort of transnational and trans-imperial adventurers, many of whom were Irishmen. Their arrival in Cuba coincided with the consolidation of the social climbing strategies of the Santiago-based "Wild Geese": the administration of Governor Sebastián Kindelán O'Regan (1799-1810). By 1827 these groups had merged into one élite cohort. Kindelán's policies proved essential for the settlement in this region of this new group, that is why he has been selected as one of the case studies of the present work. The other case studies examined are those of Quakers James Jenkinson Wright (native of Dublin), Richard Maxwell Bell (native of Lurgan, Co. Armagh) and brothers Samuel and William Barnett Wanton (from Ballintra, Co. Donegal). This thesis revisits the lives of Kindelán, Bell and the Wanton brothers to provide a point of comparison to the story of James J. Wright. The similarities, but more importantly, the differences between these individuals enrich significantly the general conclusions that can be drawn about Irish experiences in Santiago and Cuba.

This research has found that in Cuba, Irish Quakers turned into Catholics that subscribed to a pro-slavery ideology and articulated a discourse that was similar to the one often found in the Old South of the United States. To do so, they left behind the moral strictures of their Quaker upbringing in Ireland. The present work constitutes the first one that examines Irish migrants of this denomination in Cuba. In Santiago de Cuba, Irish Quakers followed specific strategies for integration. These were: religious conversion, naturalization, creation of transnational and trans-imperial business networks, engagement in the illicit African slave trade, and the purchase of rural and urban properties in Santiago. They interconnected creating a web of close alliances and fierce competition. Moreover, they acted as shadowy figures that took advantage of the interstices of the empires that they had access to. This dissertation examines their strategic transnationality and their political, ideological, and religious reinventions.

In this work, transnationalism in understood as a concept that frames the interrelations of migrants with multiple places at once. Since the early days of global capitalism, migrants' societal transfers entailed their adoption of contingent identities and their developing of multiple, and sometimes flexible, cultural attachments. This thesis argues that, instead of framing 19th century Irish migrants in Cuba merely as transnational, it is better to understand their behaviours also as trans-

imperial. In Cuba, the Irish were perceived to belong to the British empire – an empire that had Ireland at its core. Many of them arrived in the Spanish's island of Cuba after having passed through the United States during the early formative years of its republic. The United States was then establishing its "informal empire" and had its own geopolitical ambitions. These saw their best expression in expansionism to the West and Pan-Americanism to the South. As early as 1823 with the Monroe Doctrine, the United States was seeking to fulfill its "manifest destiny". Irish migrants finally settled in Cuba, an important strategic enclave of the Spanish American empire. Therefore, this thesis examines the exploitation of the spaces of intersections between these empires through the analysis of the lives of some Irish migrants, particularly that of James J. Wright. It was by exploiting these in-between spaces that Irish migrants became some the wealthiest planters and merchants in eastern Cuba.

This thesis analyzes the life of Dublin-born enslaver and, for an undetermined period of time, slave-trader, James Jenkinson Wright, who emigrated with his family from Ireland to the Ohio frontier, but spent most of his adult life in Santiago de Cuba. In 1807, Santiago de Cuba was a small but rapidly-growing city that had a local élite that hoped to compete with Havana. In 1791, its geographical proximity to the French colony of St. Domingue made it the ideal recipient for multiple waves of thousands of refugees that fled from the turmoil caused by revolution there. It was this largely French influx that local historians have credited for "whitening" the nation and for the inception of a coffee industry that dominated world markets in the subsequent decades. Irish immigrants' participation in both of these processes has been overshadowed by the much higher numbers of French ones, this work rescues their hidden legacies. This dissertation argues that, although the numbers of Irish migrants were small, they significantly contributed to these processes. By the 1830s, the two biggest and historically more important coffee plantations in eastern Cuba, La Gran Sofia and Kentucky, were owned by Irish immigrant James J. Wright, not by French refugees. It was up in the mountains of La Sierra Maestra where Wright seized upon the communication technology of letters to maintain contact and affective bonds with family members in both Ireland and the United States. The practice of letter writing evinces Wright's transnationality and the contradictions within his identities.

In Ireland, the Wright family had enjoyed some economic success as merchants, had flirted briefly with the radical republicanism of the 1798 United Irishmen, and had followed the doctrines of Quakerism which preached pacifism and social equality, and, very early on, had condemned slavery. Paradoxically, James J. Wright, who had been brought up in this system of religious practices and beliefs, managed to defy them all. Arguably, "no Irish immigrant in the 'New World' re-invented

himself more thoroughly and successfully than James Jenkinson Wright".[3] Expanding from Miller's idea about Wright's reinventions, this dissertation examines his strategic transnationality and his insertion into Santiago's society. Born in 1788, James J. Wright came of age in the wake of the 1798 rebellion and the formal absorption of the Kingdom of Ireland into the United Kingdom, after the passing of the Act of Union in 1801 and the dissolution of the Irish Parliament. Some of the members of his family seem to have sympathized with the 1798 United Irishmen's rebellion; however, it appears they also were subjected to some of its violence.[4] The Quakers' doctrine of political neutrality prevented them from taking part in the 1798 events. Shortly after, in 1801, James's father, Joseph Wright went to Ohio to avoid further economic ruin.[5] The family followed a few months later. As a young man James found himself first helping his father in establishing the family in rural Ohio and then later in the midst of a burgeoning Baltimore, a city that was developing commercial links with the Spanish West Indies, and more importantly, with Cuba's main trading ports in Havana, Cárdenas, Cienfuegos, Nuevitas, and Santiago. James J. Wright first arrived in Santiago around 1811-1812, and settled permanently there by 1814. Whereas his family was politically progressive and praising the equality and democracy they had found in the United States, Wright became a staunch monarchical Spanish subject in Cuba. He believed in racial hierarchies and that order was to be found in the tight maintenance of the social [illegible]. Whereas his family had been quintessentially Protestant, he converted to Catholicism and sought to re-write his own family's history of migration to match the reality of his own life in Cuba. That is why this thesis will explore the evolution of what it meant to be Catholic for the Irish in Cuba, and how traditionally Protestant migrants, specifically Irish Quakers, reacted and adapted to living in a profoundly Catholic domain. This type of radical transformation of an Irish immigrant will be explored in detail in this study as a [illegible] case study of a prolific letter-writer that illustrates the transnational and trans-imperial lives of forgotten Irish immigrants in Cuba.

The Wrights have attracted the attention of the authors of [illegible], Kerby A. Miller, Arnold Schrier, Bruce D. Boling, and David N. Doyle, who dedicate a full chapter to the detailed letters and rich migration history of Joseph and Hannah Wright to the Ohio frontier.[6] The present work continues that story by following Joseph Wright's son to Cuba. James Jenkinson Wright has appeared in general works about "North American" merchants in Cuba and their

---

3 Kerby A Miller, "The Invention of an Irish Immigrant: James J. Wright and His Family in Ireland, Ohio, and Cuba" (Simposio de Estudios Irlandeses, Havana, 2020), 6.

4 Kerby A. Miller et al., [illegible] (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 200-1.

5 Miller et al., [illegible].

6 Miller et al., [illegible], 200-223.

role in laying the foundations for the United States' "informal empire" (i.e. economic domination or neocolonialism) in Cuba, which was a reality by the mid-19th century. In this context, Stephen M. Chambers' *[illegible]* mentions Wright briefly, mostly related to his role as United States' Consul and Commercial Agent.[7] *S*cholars of international migration to Cuba, like Jonathan Curry-Machado, and historians of coffee plantations and their associated cultural system and heritage, like Yaumara López Segrera, also acknowledge Wright in their works.[8] In local historiography, Wright played a supporting role to the better-known figure of Englishman Thomas Brooks, but this thesis contends that, until his demise, Wright was actually the more important of the two.[9] Unfortunately, Wright's untimely death in 1845, while on his way back to Santiago from visiting his relatives in Ohio, stopped him from participating in the consolidation of the commercial firm he had created in 1814. He was erased from the firm's name in 1846, and from its subsequent history of industrial capitalism in Santiago and Guantánamo. Overall, Wright appears as a peripheral figure, his importance and influence never truly discovered by historians. Ironically, although Wright has left few traces in Cuban historiography, he was still commemorated, at least indirectly, through La Gran Sofía, his most important plantation. Surprisingly, he was incorporated into the memorialization of a "French" coffee culture and material heritage in Santiago. But James Jenkinson Wright himself remains little known, although he became a key member of Santiago de Cuba's plantocracy. This is evinced in the chronicles of foreign travellers in Santiago, like Scottish David Turnbull and French Jean Baptiste de Rosemond, who did acknowledge Wright and provide important details about the context in which they met him.[10]

The families and individuals that are analyzed throughout this dissertation were chosen based on the richness of the archival and genealogical documentation that has survived, and that allows the researcher a glimpse into the full history of their emigration from Ireland, their sojourns in different regions, and finally, their arrivals and settlements in Cuba. In some cases, only the migrants' names or

---

7 Stephen M. Chambers, *[illegible]* (London: Verso, 2017), 32.

8 Jonathan Curry-Machado, *[illegible]* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)158; Yaumara López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico al Paisaje Arqueológico: presencia francesa y cultura del café en el sudeste cubano en la primera mitad del siglo XIX" (Doctoral Thesis, Santiago de Cuba, Universidad de Oriente, 2010), 88, 257.

9 This approach is found in: Elizabeth Badia Céspedes, "La familia Brooks Despaigne: su ascenso económico en Santiago de Cuba (1852-1865)," *[illegible]*, no. 146 (2018): 423–38.; Marial Iglesias Utset, "Los Despaigne en Saint-Domingue y Cuba: narrativa microhistórica de una experiencia atlántica," *[illegible]* 71, no. 251 (2011): 77–108, https://doi.org/10.3989/revindias.2011.004.

10 David Turnbull, *[illegible]* (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1840), http://archive.org/details/dli.bengal.10689.7734., 5-6; Jean Baptiste Rosemond de Beauvallon, *[illegible]* (Paris: Dauvin et Fontaine, 1844), http://archive.org/details/lledecuba00beaugoog, 394-5.

other small details were retrieved. That is why no further information is provided about these individuals. In James Jenkinson Wright's case we have a pre-Famine Irish migrant who managed to occupy a prominent and influential position in Cuban society, yet he managed to remain somewhat invisible. However, from an ideological, religious, and political point of view, his actions are full of contradictions. His greater legacy, and what separates him from Bell and the Wantons, are the letters he wrote between 1833 and his untimely death in 1845. These letters are held at the Historical Library of the Religious Society of Friends in Dublin. The correspondence is principally addressed to James's father's sister, Martha Wright, to another aunt Rachel Jenkinson, and to a cousin Jonathan Wright, who were all in residence in Dublin. These letters, although primarily addressed to these specific correspondents, were most likely shared among the rest of the immediate family still in Ireland. The replies from his aunts and cousin, unfortunately, did not survive; and the letters that Wright likely wrote to members of his family in the Ohio frontier settlement, if they exist, were not retrieved for this research. As a larger enslaver in eastern Cuba and *g e o* (i.e. engaged in the traffic of Africans) even after the slave-trade had been abolished in Britain, the United States, and Cuba, Wright did not want to leave traces behind. Yet, enslaved Africans were a key part of his life in Cuba, and their presence in the background of Wright's life filtered into his correspondence. It is not surprising that he developed a pro-slavery, paternalist discourse that probably scandalized his relatives back in Ireland. More shocking is the discovery in his will, not his letters, that the eternal bachelor had likely fathered children with some of his enslaved female labourers, which was not that uncommon.

Thematically, Wright's letters are mostly concerned with reporting about his health, the nature of his business in Cuba, and his opinions on general matters. As a merchant first, and a plantation owner second, he became a successful transnational entrepreneur. The key to his success lay in his cultivation of strategic personal relationships as well as his domination of key local spaces of power, such as the foreign consulates. In his letters, some important details about Wright himself arise. I have conceptualized them as the rhetoric of tranquility, and they are analyzed in greater depth in Chapter Four. Most of the letters were written in Santiago, eleven of them at the Sophie Estate (later La Gran Sofía plantation) up in the mountains of La Sierra Maestra, where Wright's different coffee plantations were located. Only one of his letters was sent from New York, two from Belmont (Ohio), while the remainder were written at Wright's urban residence opposite the wharf in the city of Santiago. They are a valuable source that offer details of the experiences, transformations, and assimilation of one Irishman in Cuba, in his own words. Through reading his letters, we learn that Wright was a good deal

more than simply a merchant. This study will analyze how Wright thought about himself, his family and the enslaved people he held captive in his plantations. They are essential to understand what motivated him to re-emigrate from Baltimore and settle permanently in Santiago de Cuba. How did he present himself in the eyes of his family, and what adjectives did he bestow upon the world he inhabited? What comparisons did he draw between his adopted home, Cuba, and his native land, Ireland? Finally, how did he see the enslaved people whose labour he profited from in Santiago? Based on these questions, this study undertakes a micro-historical approach. Methodologically, this allows the rescue of the seemingly unimportant life of one individual. From this example greater conclusions can be drawn about the Irish in Cuba, especially when Wright's case is compared with those of other Irish immigrants in Santiago and in the greater Caribbean area. However, this work is not strictly a biography. This study follows a thematic approach, not always chronologically attached to the lives of the men that compose the different case studies. It draws from genealogical sources, however, it does not present genealogical data in the traditional way. Making use of Digital Humanities tools, such as Palladio, it was possible use genealogies for the creation of visualizations of the social and kinship networks of a group of Irish families in Santiago. This network evince their strategic alliances and interactions, and is key to see them as an important pillar of the local community.

The study of the Irish in the Spanish Caribbean is still a historiographical lacuna. To situate these immigrants into the context of Irish Diaspora studies in the Caribbean, the works by Nini Rodgers, Orla Power, Donald Akenson, Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, and Liam Hogan, have been invaluable.[11] However, these authors are mostly concerned with the history of the British West Indies colonies (what is today the Anglo-Caribbean), or in the case of Orla Power, with the Dutch colony of St. Croix, today a part of the Virgin Islands, a United States' territory. These authors only touch on the Spanish domains. This dissertation contributes to the filling of this void, and in so doing it builds on the ground-breaking work of researcher Margaret Brehony.[12] Brehony has written extensively about the official "whitening" processes in which the Irish inserted themselves in Cuba, and alongside Nuala Finnegan is the editor of

---

11 See: Nini Rodgers, [illegible] (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Donald Harman Akenson, [illegible] (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014); David M Perry and Liam Hogan, [illegible] [illegible]; Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, [illegible] (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2019); Orla Power, "Beyond Kinship: A Study of the Eighteenth-Century Irish Community at Saint Croix, Danish West Indies," [illegible] 5, no. 3 (November 2007): 207–14.

12 Margaret Brehony, "Free Labour and 'Whitening' the Nation: Irish Migrants in Colonial Cuba," [illegible] 38 (2013): 7–18; Margaret Brehony, "Irish Free Labor and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1835-1844," [illegible] 47, no. 1–2 (2012): 70–93.

[illegible], the first bilingual compilation of works that explores the connections between these two island-nations written by both Irish and Cuban scholars.[13]

The present work acknowledges that the Irish presence in the Spanish Caribbean is a direct result of their early modern-period migration to Spain and to the Spanish American empire, especially during the 17th century. In identifying a “Wild Geese” presence in Santiago de Cuba, this dissertation draws from the work of historians Óscar Recio Morales, John Jeremiah Cronin, Thomas O’Connor, Igor Pérez Tostado, and Enrique García Hernán, who analyze in detail the patterns of behaviour of the Irish in Spain, the Spanish court, and the Spanish armies. Their volumes point to the early construction of an “Irish in Spain” sense of group identity, as well as an Irish “special status”.[14] Although the Spanish American colonies are peripheral to their main analysis, comparisons can be established with the Cuban cases at hand. The opening chapter of this thesis deals in greater detail with these specific themes.

To contextualize James J. Wright’s letters, other groups of primary sources were retrieved. At the British National Archives in Kew Gardens the collection of the Foreign Office records contains the dispatches that Wright sent from Santiago as a part of his role as British Consul. These comprise reports on the state of British commerce with the port of Santiago, on the illegal slave trade, and on British subjects in residence in the area. These documents are also revealing of the relationships established by Wright with local Spanish authorities, and of the ambiguities in Wright’s own identities. This will be addressed further in Chapter Three.

Another group of archival sources that sustained this dissertation is the Moses Taylor Collection, the originals of which are held at the New York Public Library. The copies accessed are located at the Archivo Histórico de la Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana (AHOHH, Historical Archives of the City Historian of Havana) at San Gerónimo College. These consist of business letters exchanged mostly between Thomas Brooks, one of Wright’s main partners in Santiago, and financier

13 Margaret Brehony, “Ethnic Whitening Processes and the Politics of Race, Labour, and National Identity in Colonial Cuba: A Case Study of Irish Immigrants, 1818-1845,” in [illegible], ed. Margaret Brehony and Nuala Finnegan (Havana: Ediciones Boloña, 2019), 75–95.

14 Óscar Recio Morales, ed., [illegible] (Madrid: Albatros Ediciones, 2012); John Jeremiah Cronin, “The Irish Royalist Elite of Charles II in Exile, c.1649-1660” (Doctoral Thesis, Fiesole, European University Institute, 2007); Thomas O’Connor, [illegible] (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Igor Pérez Tostado and Enrique García Hernán, eds., [illegible] (Valencia: Albatros Ediciones, 2010).

Moses Taylor in New York. They shed light on Wright's transnational business ventures, the [illegible] [illegible] of his firms, and the global network of partners and agents he managed to put together. Likewise, at The Baring Archive in London, similar sources were found that document Wright, Brooks & Co.'s financial relationship with Baring brothers and their bank. I also consulted archival sources at Ireland's National Library and National Archives, and the Manuscript Room at Trinity College Dublin, as well as digitized copies of materials held at the Archivo General de Indias (General Archives of the Indies), the Archivo Histórico National (National Historical Archives), and Archivo General de Simancas (Simancas' General Archives) all in Spain, and accessed remotely through the PARES repository.[15] These collections were particularly valuable for informing the part of this study that deals with the "Wild Geese". Likewise, Ancestry's database provided important genealogical data that was employed to reconstruct the Irish "Wild Geese" social and kin networks.[16] Through Ancestry key documents, such as copies of James J. Wright's and Richard Maxwell Bell's wills and testaments, were retrieved.

Finally, this research is profoundly indebted to the Centro de Interpretación y Divulgación del Patrimonio Cultural Cafetalero (CIDPCC, Centre for the Study and Promotion of Coffee Cultural Heritage) and its Director Dr. Yaumara López Segrera, for providing open access to their digitized repository of archival sources related to the local history of coffee cultivation in Cuba's eastern region. The original sources are held at the Provincial Archives of Santiago de Cuba, but it was not possible to access them. Public health authorities have kept Santiago's Provincial Archives closed to the public now for several years due to fungus contamination of its collections. A similar problem was encountered at the Archives of the City Historian of Havana, but in this case, it was possible to access the documentation. Sources that document the history of Irish migration to Cuba are in dire threat of disappearing entirely.

Chapter One, entitled "Early Irish Migration to Santiago de Cuba: Family Formation, Social Networks, and the first Coffee Plantations" examines how early Irish immigrants inserted themselves into Santiago's society. This chapter's main historiographical contribution is in connecting the trajectories of the Creagh, Duany, Garvey, and Kindelán families, with a larger diasporic group known as the Irish "Wild Geese", and in identifying their group strategies to achieve social mobility and to maintain some degree of ethnic cohesion. This work will then delve into how these families became part a local élite and inserted themselves into key colonial institutions. Greater analysis is devoted to

15 Portal de Archivos Españoles (PARES, Database), http://pares.culturaydeporte.gob.es/inicio.html.
16 Ancestry (Database), www.ancestry.com.

the figure of Sebastián Kindelán O'Regan as he represents the moment of consolidation of a long term strategy for these families. The nature of Kindelán's alliance with the local élite through his marriage with Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey, is key to understanding his assimilation into Santiago's society and the role he played in the modernization of the city, a process connected with the adoption of a slavery regime. This chapter also analyzes the appearance in Santiago of a specific type of diasporic memory associated with evocative Irish names. It is argued that some of these "Wild Geese" families used naming practices to maintain a connection to their Irish regional origins.

Chapter Two, "Irish Immigrants among French Refugees in Santiago de Cuba: Introducing James Jenkinson Wright", delves into the history of migration of the Wright family, their Cromwellian origins in Ireland, their adoption of Quakerism, the cause of their later migration to the United States, and the strategic transformations of James J. Wright's religious identity. Contrasting with Wright's case study is that of Richard Maxwell Bell, another Irish Quaker merchant in Cuba. Through the comparison between the two Irishmen, this chapter's main historiographical contribution is the general characterization of the nature and composition of the Irish diaspora to Cuba in different historical moments. Whereas the "Wild Geese" families developed a special relationship with Spain that facilitated their settlement in Cuba, men like Wright and Bell first went to the United States. Whereas the "Wild Geese" were mostly linked primarily to the Spanish military and the administration of the Spanish empire, the second group was almost exclusively devoted to agriculture and commerce.

Chapter Three, "'Don Santiago' Wright: The Transnational Life of an Irish Coffee Planter in Santiago de Cuba, 1807-1847", shifts the focus onto the transformation of James Jenkinson Wright, particularly his adoption of a transnational and trans-imperial lifestyle directly connected with his business practice, and the construction of a network of agents for his exports/imports business. This chapter also addresses Wright's domination of local spaces of power that aided him in his economic and social success, particularly that of the foreign consulates. It is also examined how the theoretical features of transnationality fit with Wright's identity-construction and behaviours. Moreover, transnationality explains the contradictions inherent in Wright's adoption of multiple identities, specifically his endorsement of a Spanish-planter way of life. The main input of this chapter is the distinctions it draws between the actions of the "Wild Geese" who military men and international actors in contrast with that of later migrants who became more clearer transnational and trans-imperial agents. Through the example of Sebastián Kindelán, it can be learned that the members of "Wild Geese" group

moved frequently, but did not modify dramatically their identities and loyalties, or engage in different ways with several societies at once.

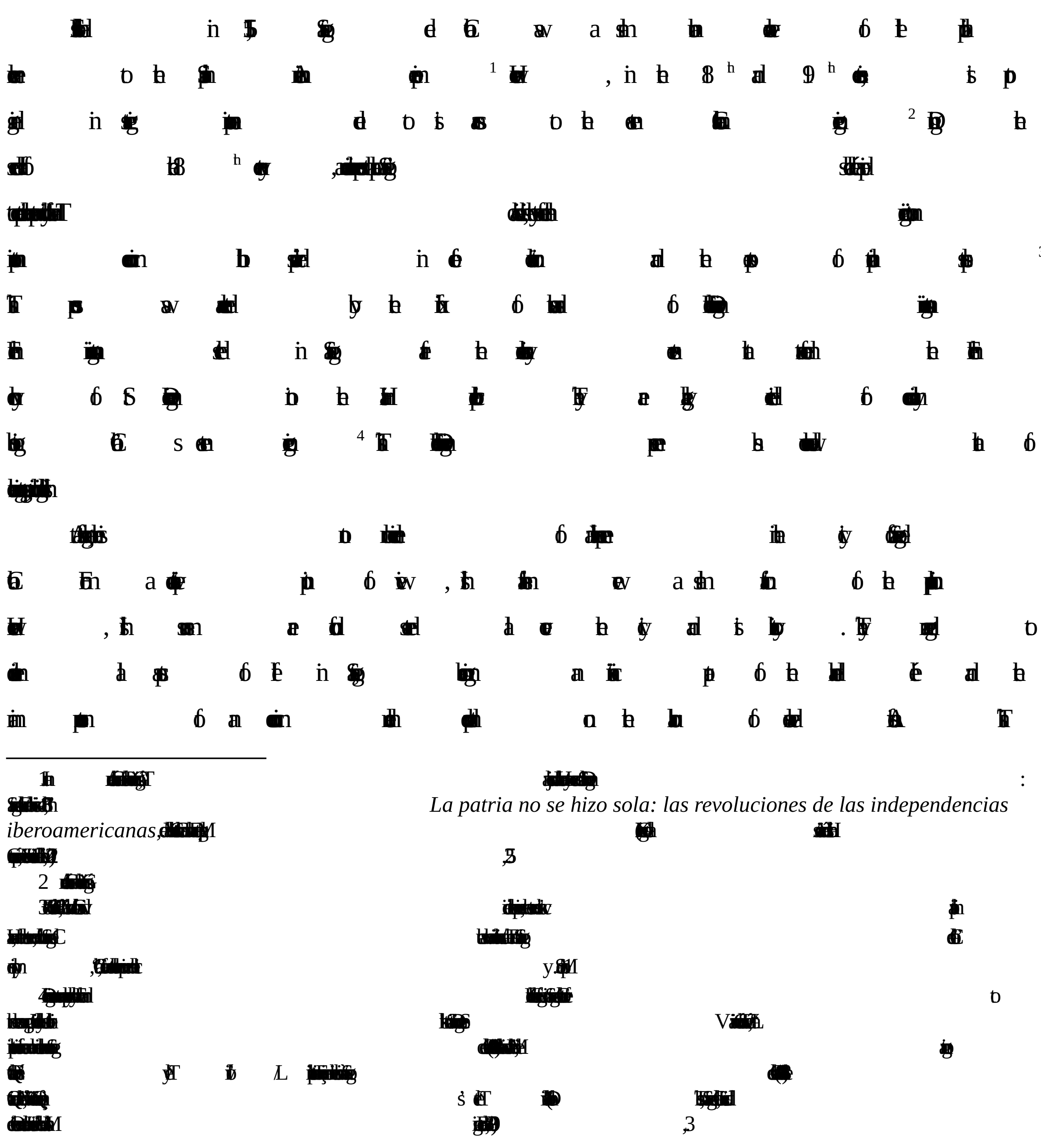
Finally, the fourth Chapter "Irish Reactions to African Slavery in Cuba: "Don Santiago's' Notoriety as Human Trafficker and His Rhetoric of Tranquility", delves into a phenomenon frequently forgotten or omitted from the analysis of Irish experiences in the Caribbean diaspora: their participation in the African slave trade and their endorsement of the maintenance of slavery. Although much of the evidence of the slave trafficking was purposefully destroyed, surviving documents provide irrefutable proof of Wright, Bell, and the Wanton brothers' involvement with the illicit traffic of African enslaved people. Their base of operation was Santiago's port, and this thesis argues that it was their early fortunes obtained from the slave trade which funded their later success as planters and merchants of "irreproachable reputation". More importantly, the analysis of Wright's letters reveals what I have conceptualized as a rhetoric of tranquility that is articulated around several axes: the maintenance of the colonial ***status quo***, a pro-slavery discourse, the denial or omission of the occurrence of events that threatened said ***status quo***, the attempts at discrediting prominent abolitionist figures, and the self-presentation as a benign and paternalistic "slave-owner".

Overall, this dissertation argues that pre-famine Irish immigrants in Santiago de Cuba were composed of two distinctive groups. The members of the first group started to arrive in the mid-17th century, and constructed an Irish identity that was intrinsically linked to Catholicism and was based on a "special" relationship construct that their condition as Irish afforded them in the Spanish monarchy's domains. The construction of a "special status" allowed members of this group to insert themselves into local élite cohorts and to effect social climbing. As military men, many of the members of this group lived very mobile lives that allowed to act as international actors. However, their loyalties and identities were not significantly affected by their mobility. Those in the second group began to arrive in the first years of the 1800s, and had no links to Spain, no special relationship with the crown, and initially no stake in Catholicism. This group's members suffered important transformations in their identities, and they reinvented themselves ideological and politically by drifting further away from republicanism and becoming conservative endorsers of slavery and colonial domination. Religiously they embraced Spanish Catholicism by effecting strategic conversions. Moreover, although their political loyalties lay with Spain and the Spanish American empire in theory, in practice many of these Irish immigrants' economic interests were in the establishment of an informal commercial relationship that gave priority to the more attractive, and geographically closer, United States. These immigrants aided in the creation

of an “informal empire” which accelerated their own transformation into transnational and trans-imperial agents. It was their transnationality what allowed them to take clear advantage of the interstices of empires. This was further amplified by their residence in eastern Cuba and their direct access to the liminal space that was the greater Caribbean area.

Chapter 1.

Early Irish Migration to Santiago de Cuba: Family Formation, Social Networks, and the First Coffee Plantations

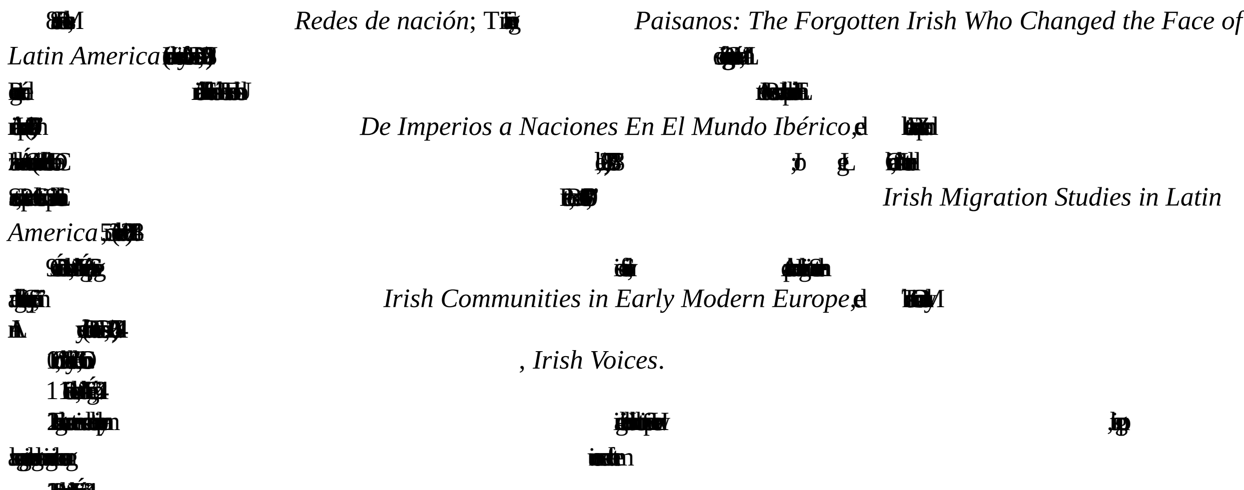


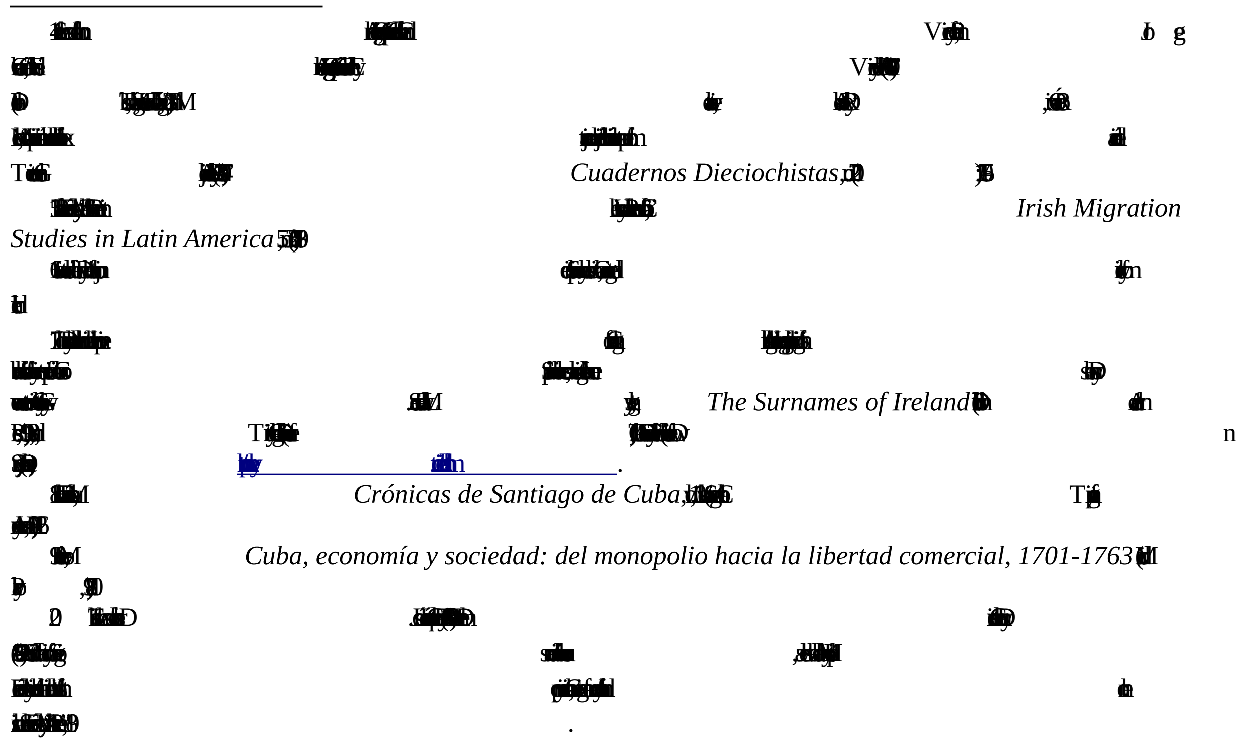
La patria no se hizo sola: las revoluciones de las independencias iberoamericanas,

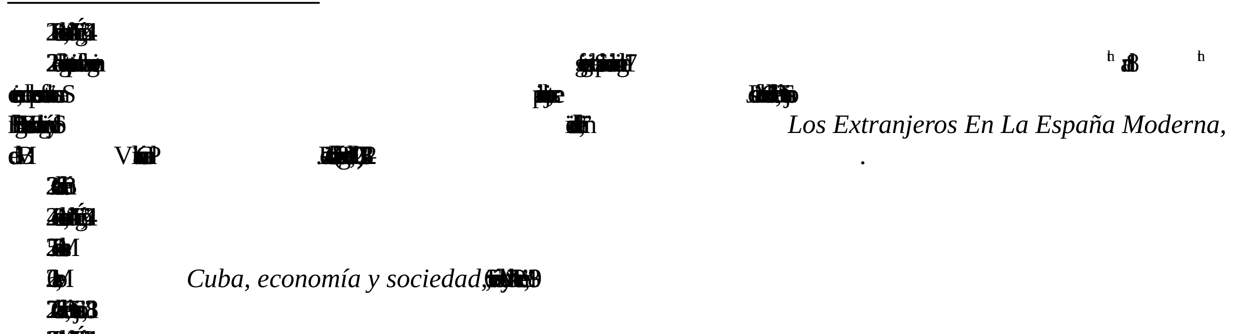
5 *criollo*

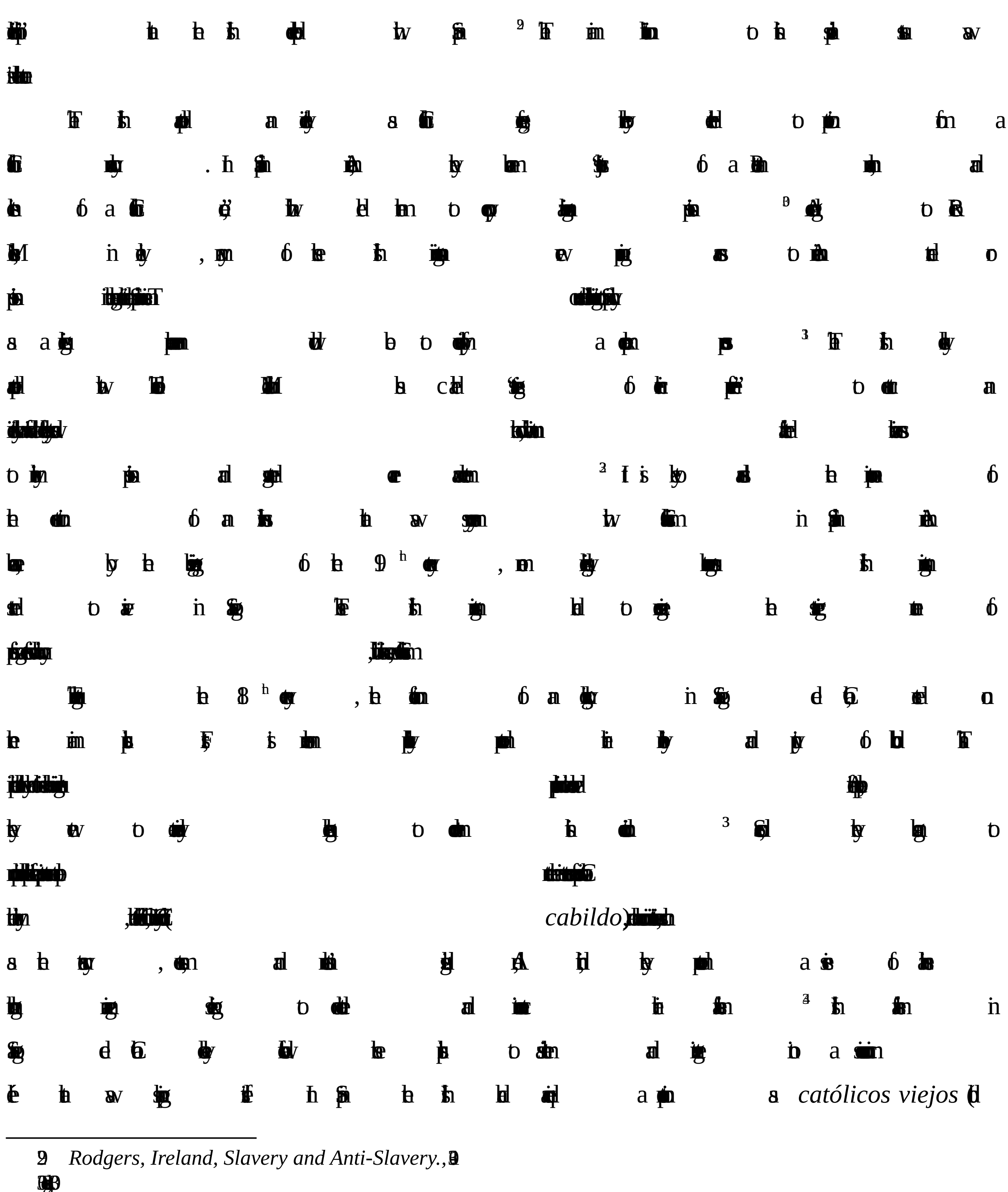
, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*,

Surviving Kinsale: Irish Emigration and Identity Formation in Early Modern Spain, 1601-40









Rodgers, Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery.

Comparative Politics 42,

Contrastes: Revista de historia moderna,

[illegible] a [illegible] *pureza de sangre* [illegible] (*moros*) [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] *The North American Role in the Spanish Imperial Economy, 1760-1819*, [illegible]

[illegible]

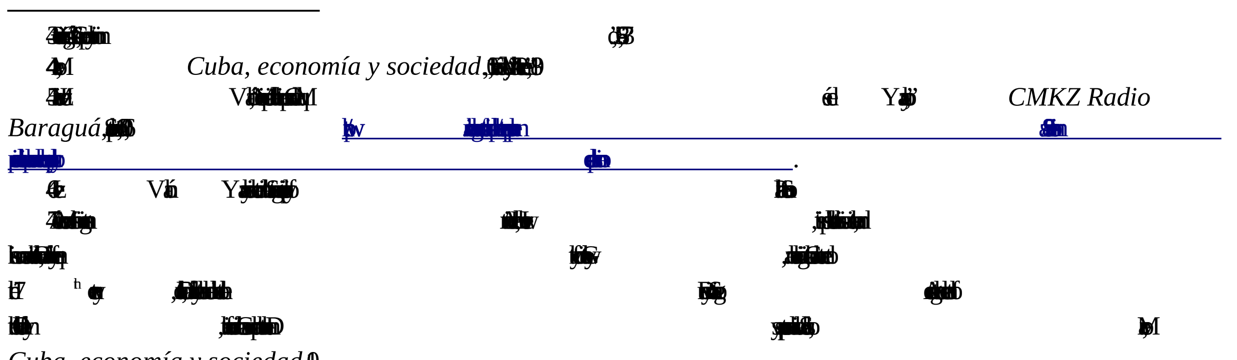
[illegible]

[illegible]

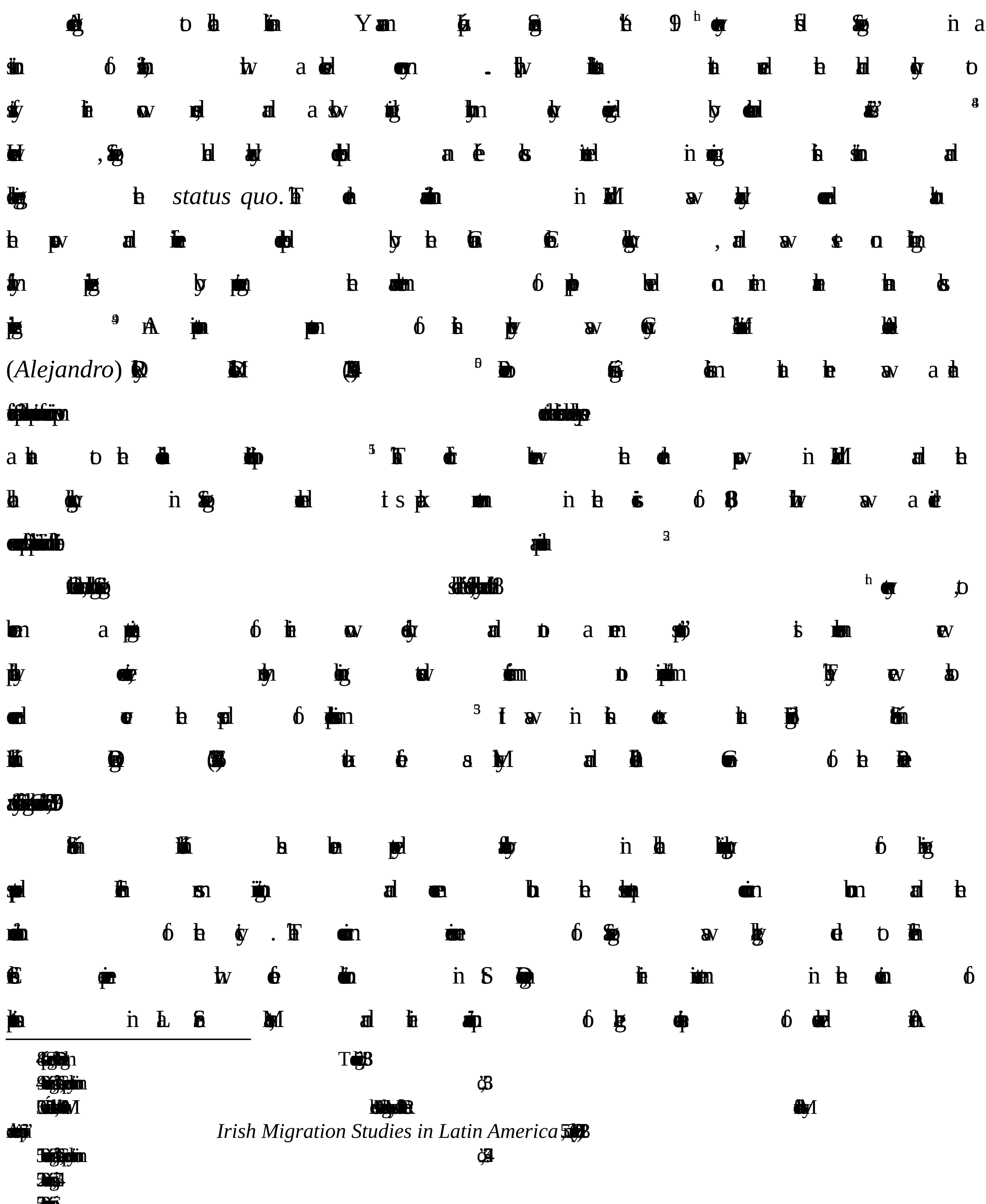
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]



The Irish “Wild Geese” in Santiago: Sebastián Kindelán O’Regan, 1757-1826.



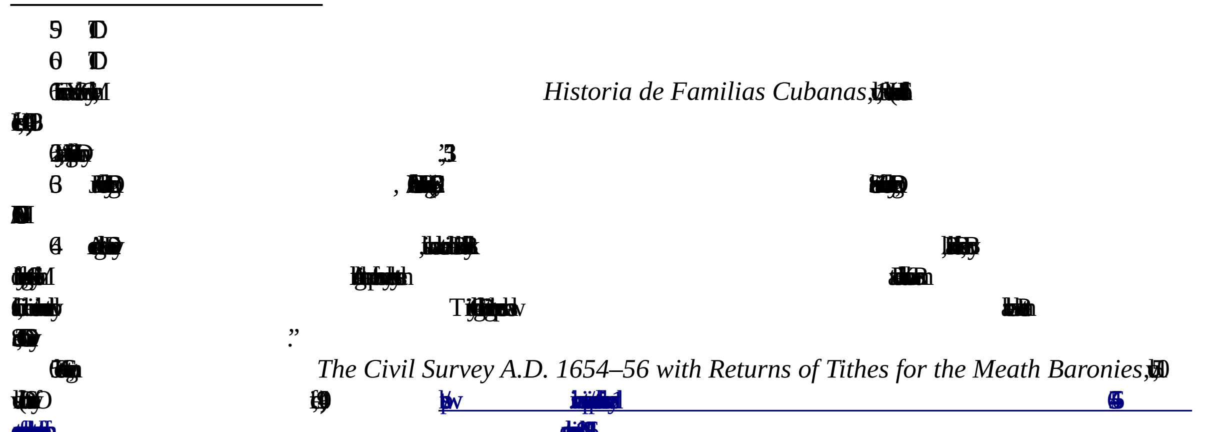
[illegible] *blanqueamiento*) [illegible]

[illegible] To [illegible]

[illegible] (*Vicente*) [illegible]

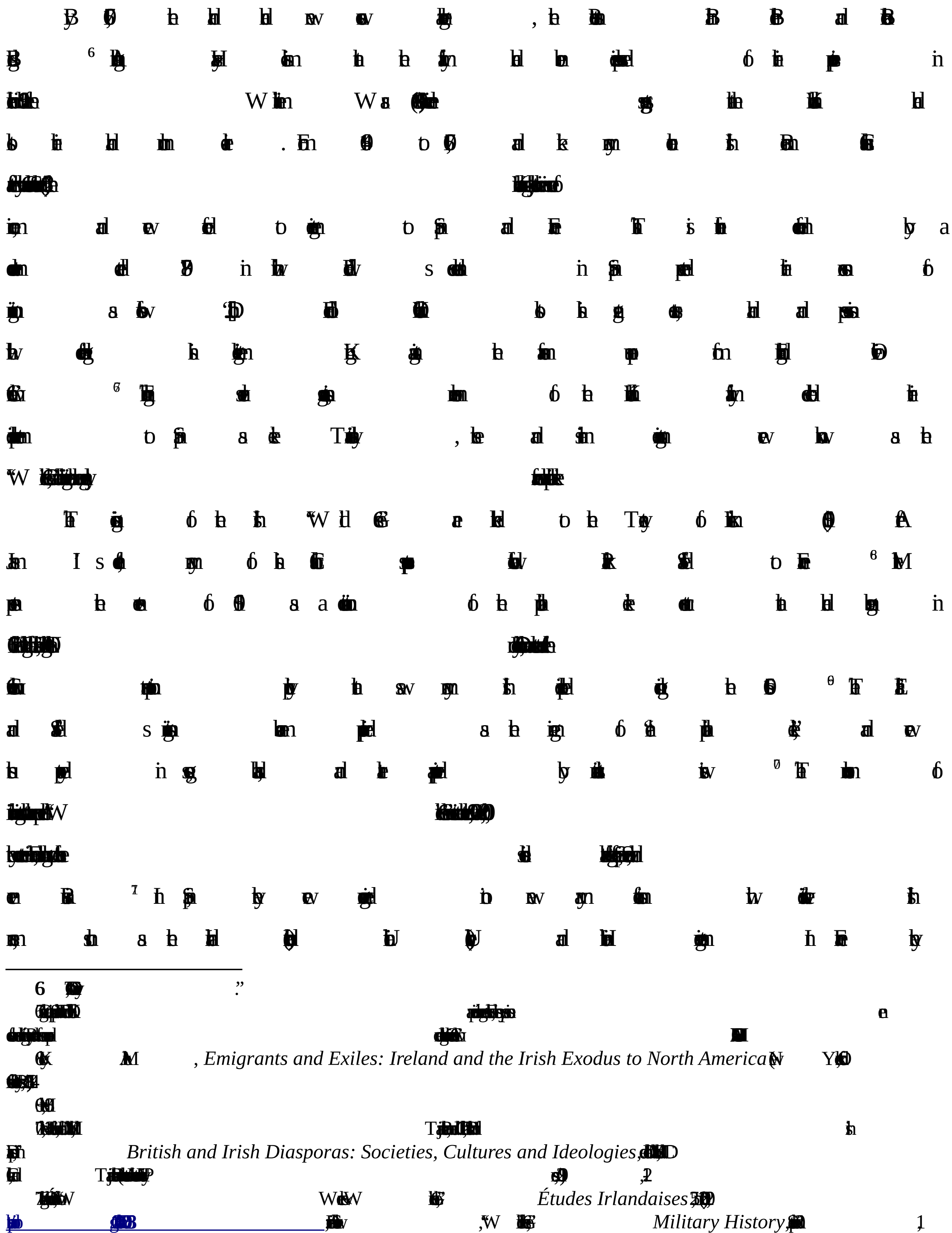
[illegible] To [illegible]

[illegible] *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* [illegible]



Historia de Familias Cubanas

The Civil Survey A.D. 1654–56 with Returns of Tithes for the Meath Baronies



Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America

British and Irish Diasporas: Societies, Cultures and Ideologies

Études Irlandaises

Military History

[illegible]

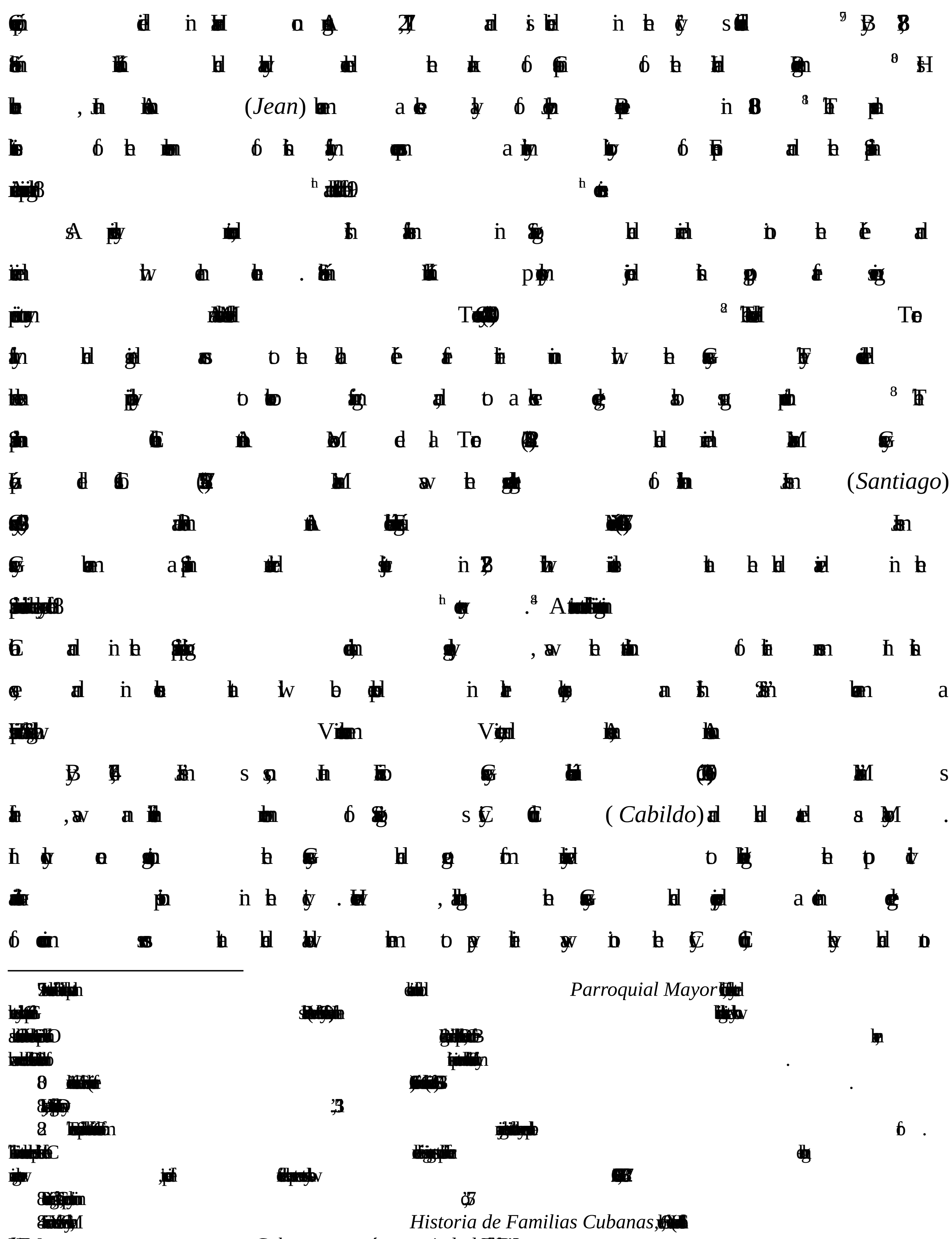
Irish Brigades Abroad: From the Wild Geese to the Napoleonic Wars [illegible]

[illegible], The Wild Geese: The Irish Brigades of France and Spain [illegible]

[illegible] Immigrants & Minorities [illegible]

[illegible] Regimiento de Irlanda [illegible]

[illegible] Alejandro [illegible]



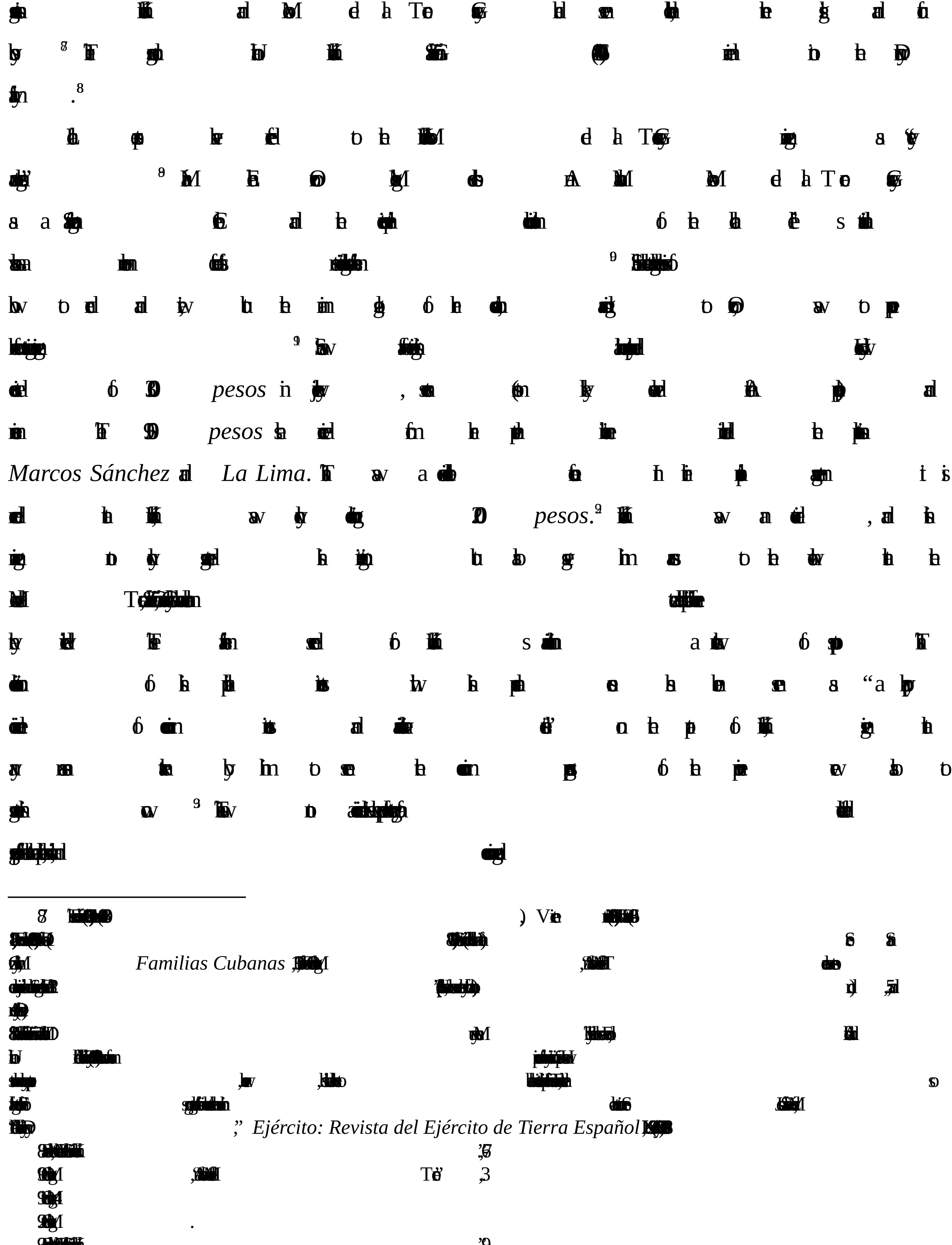
[illegible]

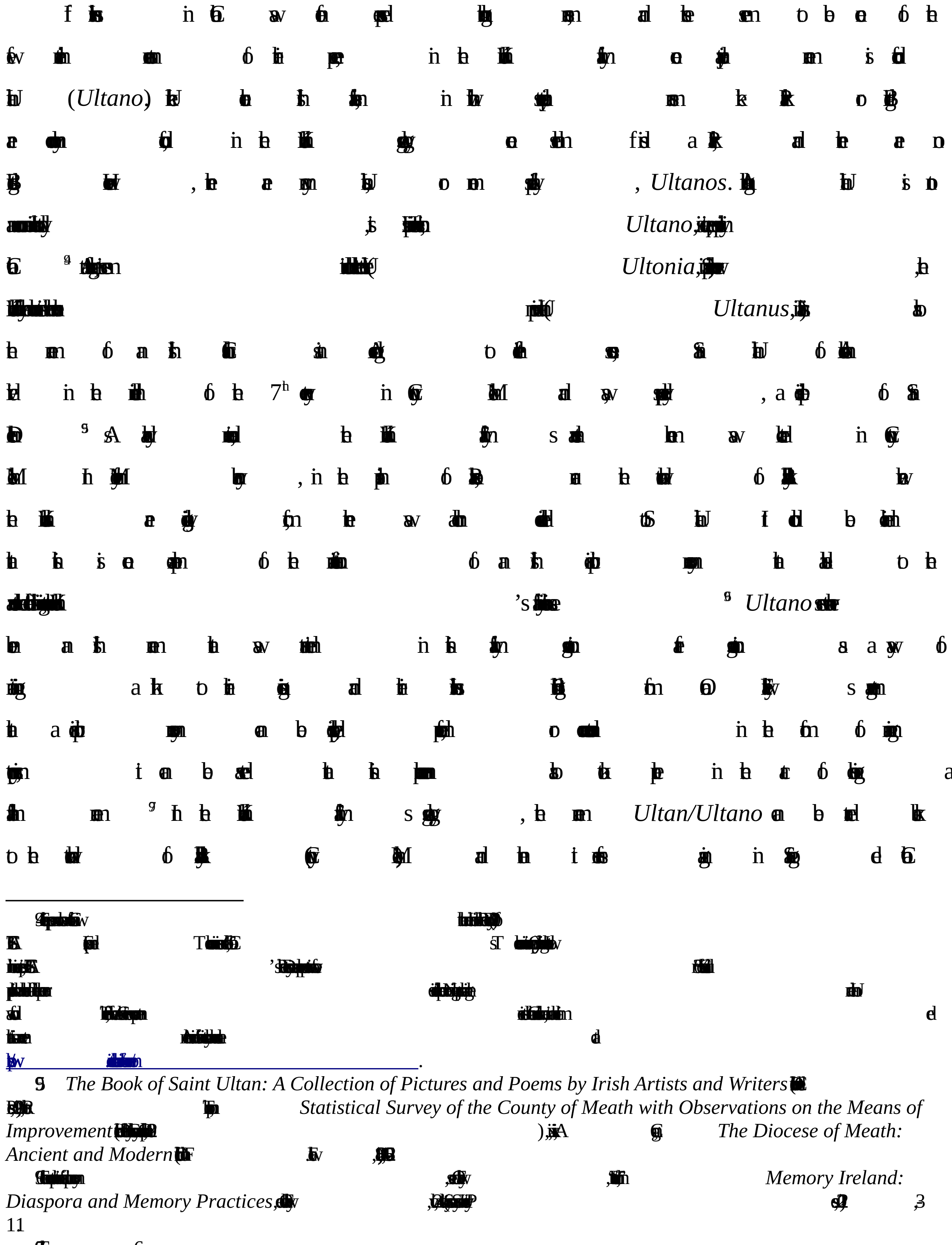
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] *Irlanda y Cuba: Historias Entretejidas / Ireland & Cuba: Entangled Histories*, [illegible]





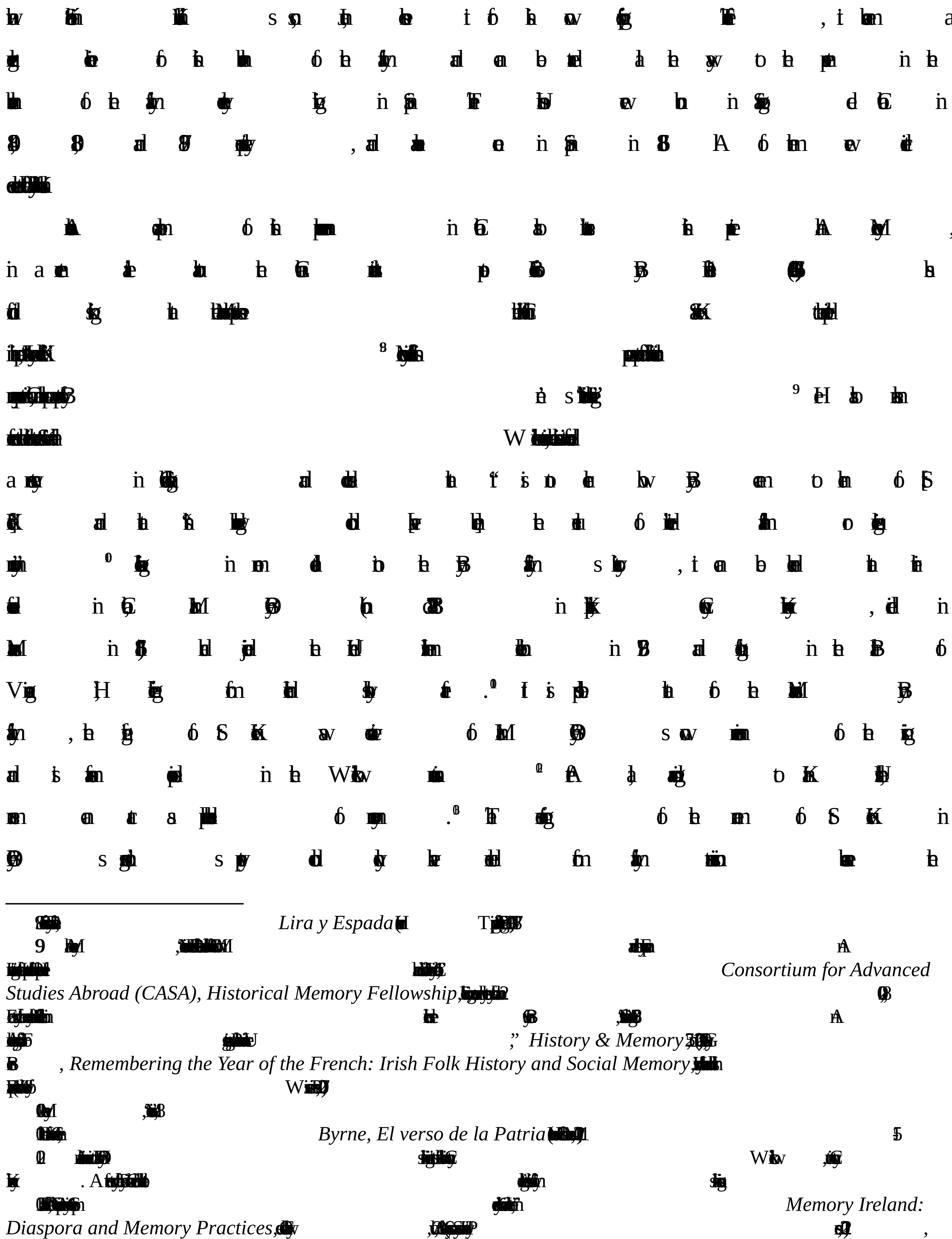
The Book of Saint Ultan: A Collection of Pictures and Poems by Irish Artists and Writers

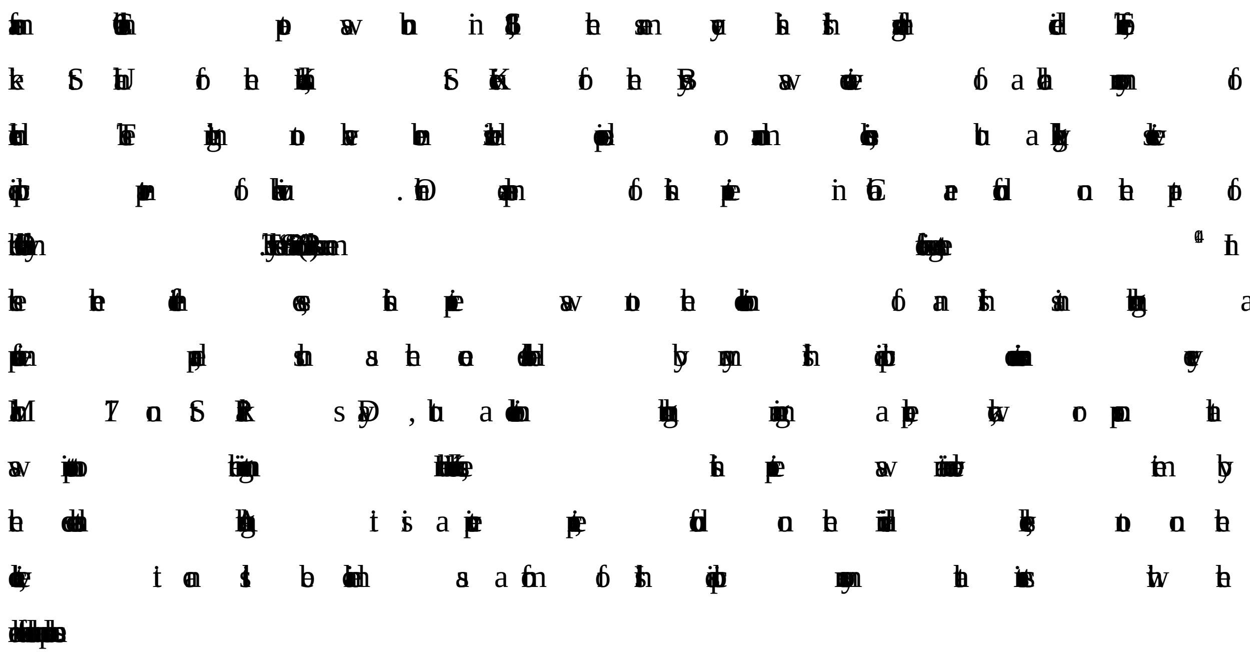
Statistical Survey of the County of Meath with Observations on the Means of Improvement

The Diocese of Meath: Ancient and Modern

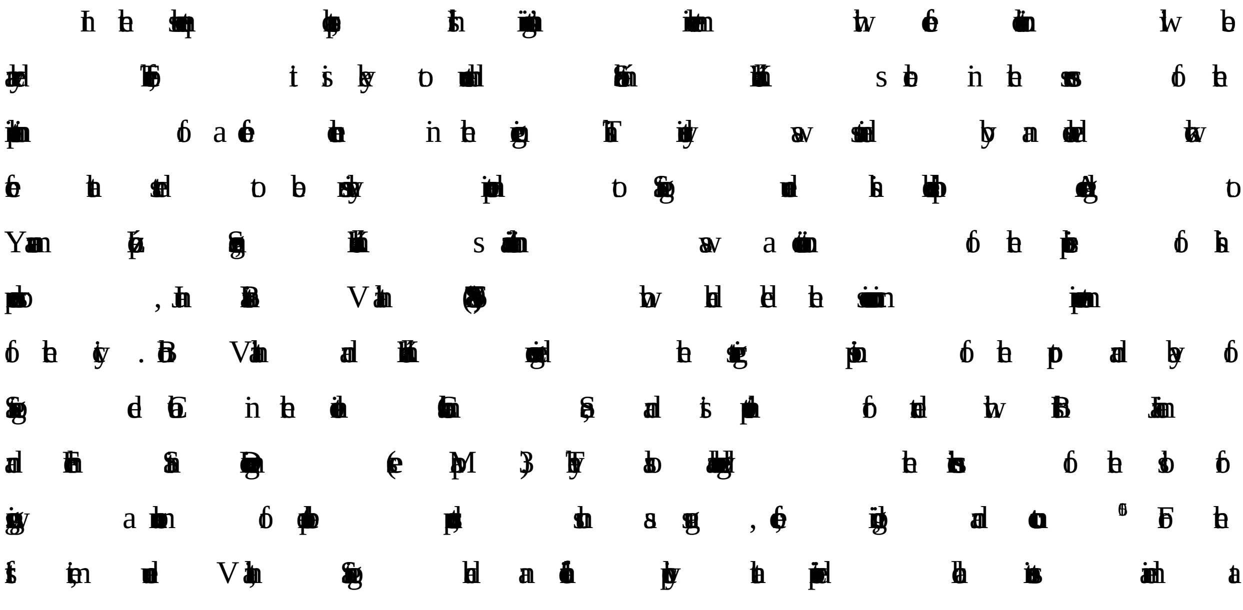
Memory Ireland: Diaspora and Memory Practices

11

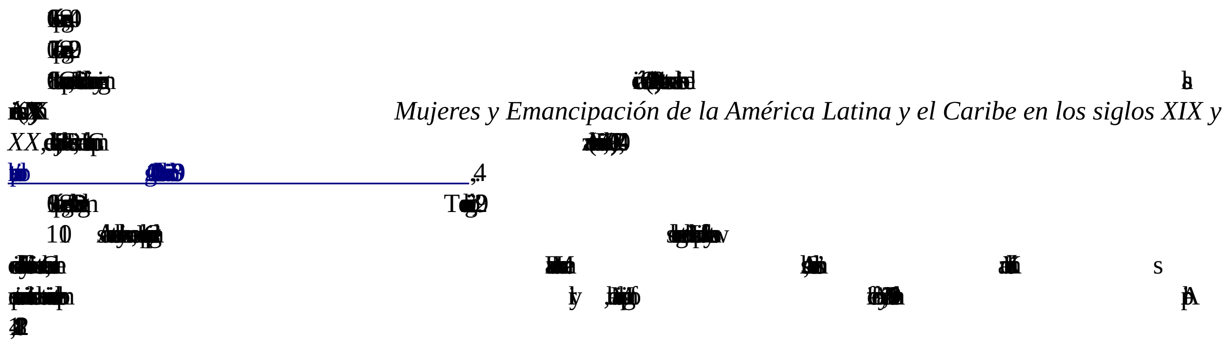




Sebastián Kindelán's Administration, French Mass Immigration, and Coffee Plantations, 1799-1810



Irlanda y Cuba: Historias Entretejidas / Ireland & Cuba: Entangled Histories



Mujeres y Emancipación de la América Latina y el Caribe en los siglos XIX y XX,

[illegible] to [illegible] [111] [illegible] by to [illegible] [illegible] a [illegible] [12] [illegible] to [illegible] in [illegible]. [13]

[illegible] to [illegible] to [illegible] a [illegible] in [illegible] a [illegible] [14] [illegible] by [illegible] [15] [illegible] in [illegible]

[illegible] in [illegible] a [illegible] in [illegible] We [illegible] by a [illegible] (*mayorazgo*) [illegible] to [illegible]. [illegible] A [illegible] a [illegible] a [illegible] [16] [illegible] in [illegible] I [illegible] in [illegible] in [illegible]

111 [illegible]

12 [illegible]

13 [illegible]

14 [illegible]

15 [illegible]

16 [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] to [illegible] . [illegible]
[illegible] a [illegible] 6 a
[illegible] [illegible] W [illegible]
[illegible] i [illegible] 6 a [illegible]
[illegible] 6 [illegible] in [illegible] a [illegible]
[illegible] in [illegible] to [illegible] in [illegible]
[illegible] , [illegible] "W [illegible] a
[illegible] a [illegible]
[illegible] 9 [illegible] -
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]

Chapter 2.

Irish Immigrants among French Refugées in Santiago de Cuba: Introducing James Jenkinson Wright

Only a small fraction of 19th-century Irish migrants left behind any material vestige of their existence; and even fewer were able to pen letters as a way of maintaining regular contact with their relatives back in Ireland and thus to describe their experiences in their own words. Pre-famine Irish immigrants were mostly illiterate. Those who managed to write letters and sent them back home, rarely had their correspondence preserved by their families. Working-class Irish often found no time, or had no skill, to write journals, keep diaries, or memoirs. Consequently, there are very few letters, diaries, and other personal documents in existence today compared to the millions of migrants who, in theory, might have produced them. In this sense, as in so many others, James Jenkinson Wright was an exception to the rule. In the context of Irish migration to colonial Cuba, especially, his collection of letters is unique.

In Cuban and international historiography, James J. Wright appears as a peripheral figure who remains until today, virtually unknown. Yet, Wright and his family left a rich and voluminous correspondence that has been preserved in different collections located mainly in Ireland, the United States, Great Britain, and Cuba. This includes the thirty-seven letters that Wright wrote from the mountains of La Sierra Maestra and his Sophie plantation to different members of his family who resided in Dublin.[1] Most of these letters, twenty-five of them, were exchanged between James and his paternal aunt, Martha Wright (1780-1865), sister of James's father, Joseph. Martha Wright was James's most important correspondent back in Ireland. However, there are also three surviving letters that Wright wrote to his maternal aunt, Rachel Jenkinson (?-1835), the sister or sister-in-law of his mother, Mary Jenkinson; their content indicate that these were the only letters he ever wrote to her. Finally, James J. Wright's remaining nine letters to Ireland were written to his cousin, Jonathan Wright (1794-1879). It is from this

1 Wright's plantation appears in the primary sources as: Sophie, La Sofía, Sofía, and La Gran Sofía. He also kept correspondence with his relatives in Ohio (United States), but, if any of these still exist, none have been recovered for the present work.

correspondence, covering the years 1833-45, that important details of the life of this Irish immigrant can be recovered. This corpus also testifies to the profound transformations that Wright witnessed and experienced and provides its reader with some glimpses into the life and mentality of an Irish migrant in 19th-century Cuba. Moreover, Wright's moments of silence, and his omissions, are revealing of how an Irish immigrant integrated into a society with an economic system dependant on the maintenance of slavery.

The first half of this chapter offers an introduction to the Wright family, its origins and history of migration, and a discussion of the early years of its "most remarkable and successful member": James Jenkinson Wright.[2] Understanding where James J. Wright comes from helps in uncovering the nature of the connections forged between him and the family members he was corresponding with. As it will be seen, the significance of Wright's transformation into a Spanish-like Catholic settler in Cuba, 'Don Santiago', is better understood when compared with his family's Quaker origins. James J. Wright himself was searching for his family's ancient past as a way to justify the life he led in Cuba and his identity as a planter and enslaver. Both of these traits could not be reconciled with the identity he had prior to leaving Ireland. The story he told of his family's origin does not entirely match with archival documentation. To study this family's history is not a matter of specifying the Wrights' longevity in Ireland, nor a questioning of their rights to claim being call "Irish"; it is an attempt to shed light onto the contradictions inherent within a diasporic identity.

In the remote mountains of Santiago de Cuba, Wright was able to maintain familial, economic, cultural, as well as political ties with what he often called "his natal soil" – Ireland. This is a key characteristic of transnational actors, but it is not the only one.[3] This chapter will contextualize Wright's life and compare his case with that of other pre-famine Irishmen who settled in Santiago de Cuba, migrants with whom he often had to interact, and either allied with or competed against. One of them was Richard Maxwell Bell (1777-1847). The second half of this chapter will delve into a comparison of Bell's and Wright's paths into their settlement in Santiago.

2 Miller et al., [illegible], 222.

3 Nancy Foner, "Transnationalism Old and New," in [illegible], ed. Eric Foner (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 63.

The Wrights and the Bells: The Radical Transformation of Irish Quaker Migrants in Santiago de Cuba

The same events that caused the Kindelán family's dispossession, displacement, and exile to continental Europe, and their enrolment in the Spanish armies, brought the Wright and Bell families to Ireland. Both of these families claim that their founders sailed to Ireland with Oliver Cromwell in 1649 – in the case of the Wrights, in the ship carrying Cromwell himself.[4] The Cromwellian Settlement could have granted both families land ownership at the expense of the defeated Irish Catholics.[5] The Down Survey of Ireland, made in 1655-1656, records the establishment of three Protestant Wrights: Christopher and John in County Westmeath, and William in County Cork.[6] These three men are the founders of the main branches of this family in Ireland.

In contrast, the Bells had come to Ulster from Scotland in the first years of the 1600s, and by 1610 were one of the settler families of the Ulster Plantation. Thus, when Archibald Bell III (1620-1707) went to Ireland with Cromwell in 1649, he had already some distant kinship connections to Ulster's settlers in County Armagh and County Antrim.[7] According to the genealogist Antonio Herrera-Vaillant, who is a direct descendant of this family in Cuba, the Bells that went to Ireland were originally from the Scottish region of Arkinholme, near the town of Dumfries (today Dumfriesshire), in the parish of Langholm and the county of Galloway.[8] This is an area that is only eight miles away from the border with England, and ninety miles from Bolton-upon-Swale, in northern Yorkshire, where the Wright family may have originated (see Map 4). Some of the genealogists, including James J. Wright himself, speculated that the Wrights came to Ireland from northern Yorkshire, but their deeper history of migration can be traced back to the Norman conquest of Britain.

4 *W* [illegible], Historical Library of the Religious Society of Friends, Dublin (hereinafter HLRSF); Antonio Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell, magnate santiaguero y su descendencia hispanocubana," [illegible] 19 (2016): 216-7.

5 Audrey Lockhart, "The Quakers and Emigration From Ireland to the North American Colonies," [illegible] 77, no. 2 (1988): 67.

6 TCD, "Down Survey."

7 Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell.", 217.

8 Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, 216.

According to the Down Survey, John Wright received 134 acres of profitable land in the townland of Clownstown (Clawnestowne), in the parish of Mullingar, in Fertullagh barony, County Westmeath, which had been previously owned by the Catholic Walter Russell. In turn, Christopher Wright acquired 174 acres in the parish of Foyran, barony of Demifore, also in County Westmeath; this land had belonged to another Irish Catholic, Robert Nugent.[9] Although the official family genealogy, held in the Historical Library of the Religious Society of Friends in Dublin, begins with a Thomas Wright in County Wexford, it is possible that either John or Christopher Wright had founded this branch of the family in Ireland, and that Thomas had been the son of one of them. In letters exchanged during the 1830s, James Jenkinson Wright in Santiago and his cousin Jonathan in Dublin speculated that their family originated in Bolton-upon-Swale, in northern Yorkshire (see Map 4).[10] It was in this area, they believed, where their ancestors had been fervent Catholics who were supposedly involved in the Essex Rebellion in 1601 and killed by government forces four years later, in 1605, for participating in the Gunpowder Plot to overthrow the Protestant monarch James I.[11] Perhaps coincidentally, these rebellious Wrights were also named John and Christopher, and both Jonathan and James J. Wright speculated that the descendants of these two men had fled to Ireland, where they could continue to be faithful Catholics. As noted above, however, the Down Survey, recorded John and Christopher Wright as Protestants. According to Miller, James J. Wright's story of his early Catholic rebel ancestors may have been an exercise in personal reinvention: Wright desired that his ancient family history should align better with his own personal religious choice, specifically, with his earlier conversion to Catholicism in Cuba.[12]

Quaker sources contradict James's and his cousin's speculations: they record the emigration of Thomas Wright from England to Ireland as a part of Cromwell's entourage. This Thomas Wright, who was James J. Wright's paternal great-great-great grandfather, had supposedly loaned money to Cromwell for his Irish expedition, and in turn received land as a form of payment.[13] According to historian Audrey Lockhart, this was not uncommon among the

9 TCD, "Down Survey."

10 James J. Wright to Jonathan Wright, Santiago de Cuba, July 8, 1842. HLRSF/Letter 37.

11 Wright.

12 Miller, "Invention of an Irish Immigrant."

13 Joseph Wright Research Material, Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University Archives Special Collections (hereinafter NYUASC)/Kerby Miller Papers (hereinafter KM)/Box 14/Folders 10-11. (Accessed by courtesy of Kerby A. Miller).

first Quaker settlers in Ireland.[14] Thomas Wright was from Saffron Walden, Essex, and most likely had been heavily influenced by Puritanism, given how strong this doctrine was there in the early 1600s.[15] Regardless of whether their founder was a John, a Christopher, or a Thomas Wright, it is certain that the Wright family's arrival and settlement in Ireland was linked to the Cromwellian conquest, land confiscation and redistribution – from which the Wrights could not have benefited unless they were Protestants. Unlike the "Wild Geese" families discussed in the previous chapter, who were regarded as Old Catholics, when Wright arrived in Santiago he was an Irish Quaker, a condition that put him at a significant disadvantage. His settlement in Cuba depended on his religious affiliation, which is most likely why he decided to convert to Catholicism. This was his first attempt at a reinvention of his identity.

From their arrival during the 1650s until the end of the 18th century, the Wright family evolved and became one connected with trade and manufacturing, as well as farming. In 1757, they leased land in Ballinclay townland, Liskinfere parish, Gorey barony, in County Wexford (see Map 4).[16] More importantly, they had become members of the Society of Friends, also known as Quakers. The Society of Friends was born in the north of England as one of the many Protestant sects that emerged in the context of the Reformation. Their main promoter in England was George Fox, and their founder in Ireland was William Edmundson, a Cromwellian soldier who was also a shopkeeper in Lurgan, County Armagh.[17] According to Desmond Neill, the first Quaker meeting in Ireland took place in the year 1654.[18] The following decade, the Friends, as they called themselves, gained many adherents in Ireland.[19] Neill estimates that by the end of the 17th century there were around 6,000 Quakers in all of Ireland.[20]

The history of the Quakers in Ireland largely differs from that of other Protestants denominations. Like Roman Catholics, Irish Quakers frequently faced social ostracism and political disabilities, and were affected by the Penal Laws, although not to the same extent as

14 Lockhart, "Quakers and Emigration.", 67.
15 Joseph Wright Research Material, NYUASC/KM/14/10-11.
16 Joseph Wright Research Material.
17 Desmond Neill, "The Quakers in Ireland," [illegible] 6, no. 1 (1995): 9–10.; Lockhart, "Quakers and Emigration.", 68.
18 Neill, "The Quakers in Ireland.", 10.
19 Lockhart, "Quakers and Emigration.", 67.
20 Lockhart.

Catholics.[21] Very few Irish Friends were landlords; most were tenant farmers and craftsmen. According to Lockhart, they “endured much vilification and persecution”.[22] Partly because they refused to pay tithes to the Church of Ireland, the legally-mandated faith, they were excluded from political positions and professions and barred from pursuing a university education. They also became notorious for their disregard for figures of authority, which was symbolized by their refusal to take off their hats in the presence of magistrates or to swear oaths in court.

Like the Wrights, the Bells joined the Society of Friends. In 1649, Archibald Bell III (1620-1707) arrived in Ireland. He seems to have only remain in Ireland until 1651.[23] Archibald had been born in Arkinholme, parish of Langholm, Scotland, and after several trips back and forth between Scotland, England and Ireland, he settled permanently in Ireland in 1655. By 1670, Archibald Bell III had leased some land in Trummery, County Antrim; and it was in this locality where, in 1657, he joined the Society of Friends.[24] According to Herrera-Vaillant, Bell was one of the Quakers’ first adherents in Ireland.[25] Bill Jackson claims that Trummery was “something of a Quaker colony”.[26] The first settlements of Friends in County Armagh were around Lurgan and nearby areas (see Map 5), although there were never more than a few hundred members in this county.[27]

From 1655 until 1902, the Bell family remained in County Armagh, near the west side of Lough Neagh. Archibald Bell III was a tailor by trade, but in Ireland he became an agricultural labourer.[28] According to Jackson, his descendants in County Armagh were tanners and, like the Wrights, they went into trade and were particularly active in the linen industry. Jackson asserts that, “[d]oubtless they raised cattle in Trummery on the meadowy bank of the Lagan, and tanned

---

21 The Penal Laws were a series of legal attempts to limit the actions and lives of Irish Catholics and other Protestant dissenters. Their main purpose was to force these groups of people into accepting the Established Church of Ireland. They entailed exclusion from holding public office, entering universities, disenfranchising, holding firearms, and even owning land. They were repealed over time. One of the was effected in 1829 with the adoption of the Catholic Emancipation Act.

22 Lockhart, 68.

23 Bill Jackson, [illegible] (York, 2005): 8. (I thank the author for granting me access to his work).

24 Bill Jackson, “Ringing True - the Quaker Bells of Trummery 1657-2007,” [illegible] *e*, June 29, 2006, http://www.rjtechne.org/quakers/archive/jakson06.htm. See also: Jackson, [illegible], 10.

25 Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, “Richard Maxwell Bell.”, 217.

26 Jackson, “Ringing True.”

27 Ross Chapman, “Early Quaker Records in County Armagh,” [illegible], no. 12 (2013): 72, 74.

28 Jackson, “Ringing True.”

the hides six miles away in streams on the outskirts of Lurgan...".[29] This author adds that, in his opinion, the Bells, all the way to the 1800s, were typical farmers of their times. However, Richard Maxwell Bell's life in Santiago de Cuba was most atypical, even when compared to the fellow countrymen with whom he shared this city.

Richard Maxwell Bell (1775-1847) was born in Lurgan, County Armagh, to Alexander Bell (1753-?) and Anne Maxwell (?-?).[30] Richard was their third child and the great-great-grandson of Archibald Bell III of Trummery. In 1773, Alexander Bell had been disowned by the Quakers for marrying-out, because the Maxwell family, also of Scottish origin, belonged to the Church of Ireland.[31] Quakers were very strict in discipline and demanded religiously endogamous marriages, although the small numbers of Irish Quakers had been steadily shrinking since the 1680s because of emigration to the American colonies. This made demands of endogamy increasingly difficult to fulfill. This was a problem that the Wrights also faced, and, as a consequence, Quakers numbers waned both in Ireland and the United States. Although Alexander Bell, Richard's father, was disowned due to his wife's Anglican connection, it seems that he was later readmitted and his offspring continued to identify and practice as Quakers. This would have been possible for them especially if they resorted to emigration, as did Richard Maxwell Bell and later Joseph Wright, James's father. However, for both James J. Wright and Richard Maxwell Bell, the maintenance of this religious endogamy in Cuba would have been near to impossible.[32] This circumstance is also complicated by the powerful position of Catholicism in Cuba: to settle in Santiago, and purchase property and land, they had to be practising Catholics.

Shortly after June 27, 1792, at the age of 15, Richard Maxwell Bell emigrated to Philadelphia. Quakers had started to emigrate from Ireland to Pennsylvania in 1682.[33] Pennsylvania "rapidly became the largest and most famous of the Quaker colonies" in colonial North America, and nearly ten percent of its original settlers came from Ireland.[34] By the time

29 Jackson.

30 The Maxwells resided in the parish of Shankill. For further details on this family, see: Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell.", 218-21.

31 Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel., 218.

32 The other two Quaker families found thus far that also settled in Cuba, the Wanton and Scull families, also converted to Catholicism.

33 Chapman, "Early Quaker Records.", 74.

34 Lockhart, "Quakers and Emigration.", 74.

Bell emigrated, Pennsylvania was a well-established Quaker destination. Bell, like his Scottish forefathers, had members of his family already living in this region, which facilitated his arrival and initial settlement. However, he remained in Philadelphia for only a short period of time, as on August 30, 1793, he was issued a certificate of removal to the Burlington (New Jersey) Monthly Meeting of Quakers, to which he was subsequently admitted.[35] The record of his admittance states:

> Richard Bell produced a Certificate from the Monthly Meeting of Friends held at Lurgan in the north of Ireland, dated the 27th of the 6th Mo[nth] 1792 [June 27, 1792], directed to Friends in Philad[a] [Philadelphia] with an Endorsement thereon by the Mo[nthly] Meeting of Philad[a] [Philadelphia] held the 30th of the 8th [August 30] Mo[nth] 1793, recommended him to this Meeting, which were read and accepted.[36]

On Bell's certificate of removal from Lurgan's Monthly Meeting, dated June 27, 1792, it is recorded that he emigrated with the "consent of his parents[,] ... leaves clear of debt and marriage engagements" and that he "pretty frequently attended our Meetings for Worship and Discipline".[37] It is not clear what were his reasons for emigration, but Bell seems to have been an economic migrant. There is no evidence that he ever presented himself as a political or religious exile. James J. Wright, on the other hand, did employ this trope on at least one occasion, but it is well documented that James's father's emigration was mainly economically motivated.[38] Therefore, Wright seems to have employed this purely as a rhetorical device. This differentiation is another departure from the characteristics of the Irish "Wild Geese" seen in the previous chapter.

The document cited above shows that in spite of Bell father's being disowned, Richard M. Bell had continued to adhere to the Quakers. For a period of his early life, Bell did move frequently. For example, he only stayed in Burlington between 1793 and 1795, when he returned to Pennsylvania.[39] In Pennsylvania he made contacts that later would be important to further his career in commercial business in Santiago. Between 1795 and 1800, Bell went to sea and captained a ship engaged in what his genealogists have euphemistically referred to as "trade

---

35 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Minutes Collection, [illegible] Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. Call Number: [illegible] Ancestry (Database).

36 Burlington Monthly Meeting, [illegible]: 133. Ancestry (Database).

37 Burlington Monthly Meeting, [illegible]: 108. Ancestry (Database).

38 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, September 4, 1836. HLRSF/Letter 10.

39 Sadsbury Monthly Meeting, [illegible], 143. Ancestry (Database).

between the Congo in Africa and the Antilles", but it is very likely that he was a participant in the traffic of enslaved African people.[40] Of Bell's genealogists, Jackson agrees with this latter possibility, however Herrera-Vaillant quoting from Jackson, completely omits it from the official family history.[41] This shows that even today, admitting a history of complicity in the traffic of enslaved people is a sensitive issue both in Cuba and Ireland. As it will be explored further in chapter four, this is another trait that Bell and James J. Wright had in common: they both made their early fortune in the profitable business that was African slavery.

James Jenkinson Wright (1788-1845) was the third son of Joseph Wright (c.1757-1844) and Mary Jenkinson (1754-1790).[42] His father Joseph has been described as "one of many [Irish] emigrants... of urban and mercantile backgrounds" in the United States during this period.[43] In 1780, Joseph was the owner of a shop in Dublin located on Skinner's Row, later renamed as Christ Church Place. Due to financial ruin, in 1801 Joseph was forced to escape his creditors by resorting to a hasty emigration to the United States.[44] For a different reason than the case of Alexander Bell, it was Joseph's financial ruin which caused him to be disowned by the Quakers.[45] Already in his mid-40s and accompanied by his brother Benjamin, he "left [his] family in Ireland, crossed the Irish Sea from Dublin to Liverpool, and on 1 July embarked on the American ship [illegible] for Baltimore".[46] They arrived in the United States almost at the end of August of that year. Soon after Joseph's brother Benjamin died, leaving him alone in an unknown land. It was Benjamin's death and subsequent burial that brought Joseph into contact with members of the Baltimore Quaker community. These new social relations pointed him towards the Ohio frontier, known at the time as the Northwest Territory. Joseph ended up settling, buying land, and relocating his family from Dublin to this region. In 1802, alongside two other Dublin Quakers, William Philpot and Ralph Heath, Joseph acquired the third part of a section of land located on McMahon's Creek, in what later became Belmont County. His share amounted to 215 acres, sizably bigger than the 136 acres that his family had leased in Ballinclay,

40 Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell.", 222.
41 Jackson, "Ringing True."
42 The couple had four sons: Joseph Jr. (1785-1808), John (1786-1831), James (1788-1845), and Nehemiah (1790-1873).
43 For Joseph and Hannah Wright's full history and letters, see: Miller et al., [illegible], 200-22.
44 Miller et al., 200-1.
45 Miller et al., 201.
46 Miller et al., 202.

County Wexford, and that, following the rule of primogeniture, his elder brother John had inherited.[47]

In 1798, before his emigration and seven years after losing his first wife, Joseph had married Hannah Green (c.1757-1805). It was Hannah who prepared the family in Dublin for emigration, including Joseph's sons from his first marriage – except for his eldest son, Joseph Jr, who joined the family in Ohio a year later. In the Northwest Territory Joseph wanted to found a self-sufficient Quaker colony.[48] To achieve this he surreptitiously encouraged the emigration of members of his family and other acquaintances. Yet, it was mostly Quakers from Virginia and other southern states that migrated into this region, partly because they rejected southern slavery, which is ironic in view of James J. Wright's later career.[49] Equally ironic is that later, when Joseph's pioneer and speculative efforts failed, it was his son's slave-earned remittances from Santiago that kept the family economically afloat.

Although having been disowned in Ireland, the geographical distance of emigration allowed Joseph to inaugurate a Quaker Meeting House at Plainfield – only a three-miles distance from his new home. In 1808, he divided his holding into different lots and founded Wrightstown, whose name was later changed to Belmont. This region has been described as a "fertile, hilly, oak- and hickory-forested country, just across the Ohio river from Wheeling", [now West] Virginia.[50] Joseph won appointment as the local postmaster and hoped that Belmont would become the county seat, but this never happened.[51]

Like Richard Maxwell Bell earlier, Joseph Wright' s third son, James Jenkinson Wright arrived in the United States at the young age of 14; but unlike Bell, who seems to have emigrated alone, Wright was accompanied by his step-mother Hannah and his siblings and half-siblings. According to family letters, soon after their arrival in Ohio, Joseph's sons were kept busy building a log house, clearing the forest for the harvest, and planting crops.[52] Ironically, this branch of the Wright family had traditionally been engaged in trade. Their letters show that Joseph had no previous agriculture experience, and that their first attempts at farming yielded

47 Miller et al., 201, 214.
48 Miller et al., 211.
49 Miller et al., 218.
50 Miller et al., 206.
51 Miller et al.
52 Miller et al., 214.

modest results. Perhaps it was the confrontation with the harsh realization of a life in farming that turned James against remaining in Ohio. The incessant hard labour required to build a settlement in the Northwest Territory certainly impacted James's life, and probably influenced his and his brother Joseph Jr's decisions to relocate to Baltimore, Maryland, to seek a different kind of employment. Their decision might also have been motivated by a lack of economic security. The authors of *[illegible]* have presented Joseph Jr's relocation to Baltimore as an "escape" from the rusticity of life in his father's pioneer settlement, and from the intensity of the manual labour.[53] It is very likely that James followed this path for the same reasons.

Joseph Jr. started to work in Baltimore, as a clerk in a Quaker merchant firm, for an annual salary of $450. His prospects there rapidly improved. In letters to his uncle in Dublin, Nehemiah Wright, Joseph Jr. describes his life in Baltimore thus:

> I will now inform thee that my brother James Wright now lives with J. Roberts whose employment I resigned two months since. I am at present employed by a merchant here at $600.00 per annum. My principal [job] is to post the books. I have still to post the books for J. Roberts so that I have but little leisure time. I do not expect to stay long in my present situation as I have had the good fortune to be countenanced by some merchants here for whom I am to get employment in the West Indias [sic]. I am to sail in a few weeks for St. Domingo in a vessel belonging to a merchant here. St. Domingo belongs to the blacks with whom we carry on a very profitable trade.[54] My employer intends to consign the cargo to a man in St. Domingo and he sends me out to get an idea of the business and in case the man there is dead or unable to transact the business I am to sell cargo and purchase coffee for the amount. For which my commission as super cargo will be two thousand dollars. But if the merchant in St. Domingo transacts the business and I only attend to acquiring a knowledge of the business he only pays me six hundred dollars clear of all expenses which I think is a liberal offer as I may make the voyage in three months. He promises me in case I return and get an idea of the St. Domingo trade to appoint me super cargo of the vessel on the next voyage with a salary of two thousand dollars. It is however, a very dangerous undertaking both as to the sickliness [sic] of the climate and the danger of being captured by the French privateers. However, I must do something to better my situation in the world and if possible get a sufficient means to go into business myself...[55]

---

53 Miller et al., 219

54 This suggests that he was embarking for Haiti (St. Domingue), not to be confused with Santo Domingo, the Spanish part of the island Hispaniola.

55 Joseph Wright Jr to Nehemiah Wright, Baltimore, November 4, 1807. Originals in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Accessed courtesy of Kerby A. Miller.

Although there are no surviving letters from this period of James's life, it is valuable to learn of his brother's business-oriented mentality. Perhaps James was hoping to pursue a similar path and career? His later engagement with the coffee trade in Santiago and his settlement there suggest as much. This seems to be confirmed by Joseph Jr himself, who, in the same letter excerpted above, adds at the end: "I expect that my brother James Wright will do very well here. He is a smart business man and possesses very [good] business qualities".[56] Joseph Jr. died in 1808 in what appears to have been a maritime accident. It is important to note that James J. Wright began to get involved in the Baltimore commercial community right after he moved from Ohio to Baltimore in 1807, coincidentally, the same year in which the port of Santiago de Cuba was opened to commerce with North America, and a regular trade was established between these two cities. As the above letter shows, in Baltimore, Wright started working for J. Roberts as a clerk, but he was also there with the ambition of learning how to become a successful merchant himself. By 1811-1812, James J. Wright had already visited Santiago de Cuba. By 1814 he was already permanently established there.

These stories of migration help in understanding how and why James J. Wright became a transnational actor in Santiago de Cuba. Wright had left Ireland at an early age, but kept tight links to members of his family, maternal figures that had a key hand in his motherless upbringing. His father's emigration brought him to the United States, a land where he was confronted with a hard rural life that contrasted significantly with his urban Dublin days. That may be why Wright forged a path of his own. In Santiago he led a life that was occasionally rural, but often urban. In the United States, James J. Wright was a temporary sojourner. Yet, close his close kinship network remained in this land, specifically, his father and all his surviving brothers and sisters. In Cuba, Wright maintained relationships with three different societies: the land of his birth and ancestral home; the land where his father and siblings lived; and the land of his adoption and residence. He sent remittances to both Ireland and the United States, thereby engaging economically with the societies he had left behind. Later, his own business interests reinforced this economic connection. As it will be seen in detail further on, this is the basis of the construction of Wright's transnationalism. The multiple identities he resorted to in Cuba are closely linked to the history of his family's migration, and to his own.

56 Wright.

Arrival, Settlement, and Assimilation: Richard Maxwell Bell and James Jenkinson Wright in Santiago de Cuba, 1807-1827

In 1809, the Napoleonic invasion of Spain brought as a consequence the expulsion of the French-Creole immigrants from Cuba. Subsequently, this had a direct repercussion on the price of land in Santiago, which fell dramatically due to the hasty sales that many immigrants had to effect before leaving the island. Governor Kindelán's supposed benevolence towards the French-Creole people also brought him difficulties. Since he had taken over the governorship and allied with some of local élite families, a different wealthy faction, led by the Archbishop of Santiago, Joaquín de Osés Alzúa Cooparacio, had antagonized Kindelán, even encouraging attempts against his life. In the context of the French-Creole exodus, Archbishop Osés Alzúa saw an opportunity to remove Kindelán from office by accusing him of being an [illegible] (Pro-French). Osés Alzúa directly questioned Kindelán's loyalty to the Spanish crown and its interests. These actions against Kindelán prove the unstable nature of the "special status" pact between Irish immigrants in Spain and the Spanish crown. The moment geopolitical alliances shifted, suspicion and claims of disloyalty were brought against a group, in this case the Irish, symbolically embodied here in the person of Kindelán. To make matters worse, back in Spain, Kindelán's own brother, Juan Kindelán O'Regan (1759-1822), who had a prominent position in the Spanish army, decided to support Joseph Bonaparte's invasion. No doubt this weighed heavily in the accusations against Governor Kindelán in Cuba. It is interesting that Juan Kindelán's shift of alliances has been somewhat erased from the Kindelán family's saga.

Although the crown representatives in Spain and Havana supported Sebastián Kindelán's claim to be a loyal Spanish subject, he asked to be removed to a different position, and was sent to assume the governorship of eastern Florida. It was in this context that his wife, Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey penned two documents that only recently have been discovered by historians. These are two extensive and detailed letters. In the first one, she defended her absent husband in the trial against him. Her second letter, "the first [political] manuscript composed by a Hispanic Creole woman" in Spanish America, was addressed directly to the Spanish King and distributed among the local authorities.[57] The letters' contents varied from refuting the

57 Orozco Melgar, "Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre.", 5.

accusations made against her husband to making accusations of her own against Archbishop Osés Alzúa; but it is her detailed description of the political, economic, and social situation of Santiago that make these letters so valuable to historians.[58] Few women at the time would have dared to challenge publicly a powerful figure of authority, especially an archbishop.

Mozo de la Torre Garvey describes how the immigrants who had brought so much prosperity and boosted the economic life of Santiago had almost all left. The period from 1807 until 1810 was a tumultuous time for Santiago's inhabitant. It was in this context that Cuban coffee started to be exported to key North American ports, some of which already had a significant Irish presence. Kindelán's carefully planned policies ensured that those white and wealthy French-Creole planters, who had already settled in Santiago and became Spanish subjects, could keep the booming coffee industry alive. The ones who were forced to leave the island were able to return years later. Indeed, the few who successfully evaded the expulsion order became very prosperous. In general, the mass-exodus of French-Creole immigrants created a vacuum that was seized as an opportunity by others, including Richard Maxwell Bell, who arrived in Santiago in the year 1800.

It seems that Bell had resided for a number of years on the island of St. Croix, a part of the Danish West Indies. Perhaps it was his sojourn there that brought him into contact with Santiago's growing plantation- and trade-oriented economy. According to Orla Power's work, by the end of the 18th century there was already a well-established Irish merchant community in St. Croix.[59] Power claims that they engaged in transnational business ventures and had close ties to London, Copenhagen, the Spanish Caribbean, the British island of Montserrat, and even Montreal.[60]

It was not until 1807 when Bell formalized his settlement in Santiago. Unlike James J. Wright, who never contracted any such union, Bell decided to join the established élite through the fastest means – marriage.[61] On September 24, 1807, he wed Candelaria Yrady López del Castillo (1786-1842), the only daughter of Bell's main business partner, José Joaquín Yrady

58 Orozco Melgar.

59 Power, "Beyond Kinship.", 207-14. See also, Rodgers, [illegible] 58.

60 Power, "Beyond Kinship."

61 Albeit there is evidence that James J. Wright followed this same path as Bell, except for contracting marriage, the specific dates of his religious conversion and naturalization are not clear.

García (1730-1811).[62] The Yradys were a prosperous family of Basque origin.[63] Their alliance with Bell mostly follows the characteristics outlined in the previous chapter. However, Varinia González Estévez states that in 1807 non-naturalized foreigners were still kept from legally acquiring real-estate or land in Santiago.[64] It was not until 1813 that Bell applied to become a Spanish naturalized subject, a status that he finally secured in 1821.[65] Until then, Bell's marriage was perhaps the only way for him to gain access to property ownership in Santiago.

By 1813, Richard Maxwell Bell was the proprietor of numerous plots of land located in Santiago's La Marina quarter (see Map 6).[66] This neighbourhood had been one of the peripheral areas of the city that became inundated with French Domingoises in 1803, although it appears that they were not the area's only immigrant settlers. This quarter was mostly inhabited by people with little resources, and it was not a racially homogeneous one.[67] Its name, La Marina, indicates its proximity to the harbour. Bell was one of the immigrants who contributed the most to the urban development of the city on its northwestern side.[68] Later, Wright's company also leased a house in this area (see Maps 6 and 12) that had multiple functions, serving as James's town residence, the main offices of his company, and the seat of the British Consulate at one time, and of the United States' Commercial Office at another.[69]

La Marina quarter gradually evolved into one whose inhabitants specialized in different commercial endeavours, and whose infrastructure was developed towards serving the needs of the port.[70] These characteristics made La Marina an ideal location for Irishmen like Bell and Wright to settle. It is significant that, even though these immigrants made sizable fortunes, they continued to inhabit an area of the city that generally was associated with people of humble means – an area from which the old élite families distanced themselves. According to González Estévez, the old Creole families remained quite literally on higher ground avoiding the lower

62 Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell.", 222-3.
63 Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, 225.
64 González Estévez, "La implantación francesa.", 80.
65 Bacardí Moreau, [illegible] 2, 172-173.
66 González Estévez, "La implantación francesa.", 126.
67 González Estévez, 77.
68 González Estévez, 106.
69 González Estévez, 126.
70 González Estévez, 120.

areas near the harbour.[71] Irish families like the Kindeláns, the Garveys, and the Duanys also fit this description. Yet, by 1817 a plot in La Marina quarter could cost as much as 1.190 *pesos*. This shows how much value real-estate started to acquire after 1812, when some of the French Domingoises immigrants returned.[72] Many of these returnees were immigrants of means who had left behind economic assets when the order came for their expulsion. The rising prices of land are indicative of a shift in the kind of immigrants that could continue to afford to integrate into the propertied classes. There is proof that some of the newly-arrived Irish immigrants resorted to making money in the slave trade, and then invested in purchasing rural plots in Santiago's mountains.

Due to their Quaker and Protestant origins, and unlike the Irish Catholic "Wild Geese" families described in the previous chapter, Richard M. Bell and James J. Wright needed to take special and very public measures in order to ensure their acceptance into Santiago's local élite. They had to distance themselves from their Quaker origins. Given the growing concerns over the large foreign presence in Cuba, composed mostly of French Domingoises, immigrants had to meet two requirements: first, to show loyalty towards the Spanish crown; and second, to conform to the norms of the established religion – Roman Catholicism.[73] These expectations were later formally outlined by the Spanish crown in the Royal Decree (*Real Orden*) of 8 July, 1811, as a mechanism of control over the return of the Domingoises to Santiago.[74] The immigrant population constantly had to display public manifestations of good conduct and loyalty.[75] For Bell, marriage and the required conversion to Catholicism were not enough to guarantee his acceptance and later his assimilation. He responded to these circumstances in different ways. First, as a direct consequence of his Catholic baptism, he changed his name from Richard Maxwell to *Ricardo Maxwell*.[76] This is a more complex identity shift than the ones described Chapter One, and unlike those examples, it was not merely a translation of a name. For James J. Wright this shift was symbolic of his transformation into the planter "Don Santiago", but he also explained it to his own family thus: "Santiago is the spanish [sic] for James, therefore you ought

71 Santiago is a city located among several elevations. Its oldest part was in the highest point of these, and the immigrants settled at the bottom near the harbour.

72 González Estévez, "La implantación francesa.", 131-2.

73 González Estévez, 105.

74 González Estévez.

75 González Estévez.

76 Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell.", 225.

not to direct Santiago James, but either one or the other, as you please, I am well known either way”.[77]

Second, because even religious conversion, naturalization, and marriage were not sufficient to gain acceptance by the city’s élite, Bell financed and directed the construction in Santiago of a new Catholic church: la Iglesia del Santísimo Cristo de la Candelaria (Church of the Holy Christ of Candelaria, Figure 3).[78] In 1826, Bell requested official permission from the local authorities to build a church. Permission was granted, and construction started in 1827. This church was to be located north of the city at the interception of Gallo Street with San Antonio Street (see Map 6).[79] González Estévez claims that the building of this church was part of the renovation and reorganization of La Marina quarter.[80] The justification for this undertaking lay in the growth of the urban centre and its expansion towards the vicinity of what was called at the time as the “neighbourhood of the beach” (*barrio de la playa*).[81] This is how Bell himself explained his undertaking:

> Don Ricardo Maria Bell resident in this city with all due respect to you, say that: at the end of the past year of eighteen twenty seven I conceived a project, as you and all neighbours are aware, to build a Church in the far corner of the city towards the north of the neighbourhood of recent settlement known as El Cocal or the beach near the Yarayó bridge... [T]o this endeavour I was stimulated by consideration towards those separated by a long distance from the other known temples [located] at the city centre. These may have been otherwise deprived of the exercise of **our Holy Religion** ....[82]

The main force behind the construction of the church was Richard Maxwell Bell, who has been described by local historiography as “an immigrant of Irish origin from Santo Domingo”, although Bell’s previous residence on that island is not mentioned by his genealogists.[83] In Bell’s proposal for the construction of the Church of La Candelaria, some interesting discursive devices appear. First, he positions himself as part of a dominant group when employing the phrase “our Holy Religion”, thereby referring to his conversion to Roman Catholicism. Second, he adopts a

---

77 Don is an honorific term usually reserved to show authority or distinction. Its use during colonial times was strictly limited to white people. Its equivalent for women is *Doña*, and they abbreviate as Dn. or Da. About the name “Santiago”, see: James J. Wright to Jonathan Wright, Santiago de Cuba, October 29, 1843. HLRSF/Letter 40.

78 This church is also known as La Iglesia del Cristo de la Salud and as La Iglesia del Cristo de la Candelaria.

79 González Estévez, “La implantación francesa.”, 139.

80 González Estévez, 142.

81 González Estévez.

82 Quoted in Spanish in González Estévez, 144. Translation, italics, and bold highlights are mine.

83 González Estévez, 143.

patronizing tone towards his neighbours of humble means, on whose supposed behalf he felt entitled to act. Third, he uses a charity endeavour to advance his own assimilation into the community. González Estévez argues that Bell was seeking public recognition and a heightened social status.[84]

Bell not only believed that this church should be built; he also donated the land where it was to be located.[85] As can be observed in Map 6, many of the urban properties that Bell acquired during his life were located in this area. Bell's role in the construction of a Catholic church has been interpreted by his genealogists and by González Estévez as one that "ratified not only [his] oath of fidelity to the Spanish crown but also to the Holy [Roman Catholic] Religion".[86] Of course, this contrasts starkly with Bell's Quaker upbringing and values.

Richard Maxwell Bell also took the initiative of opening a subscription of funds for the church's construction, so that his wealthy neighbours, if they wished, could join him in this charitable enterprice.[87] While Bell spearheaded the initiative, other prominent immigrants quickly seized the opportunity for conspicuous piety and commercial promotion. Among them were the members of two leading merchant firms: Wright, Shelton & Co., and Backus, Casamayor & Co.[88] The first of these limited-partnership companies was owned by James Jenkinson Wright, Antonio Vinent Ferrer, and Henry Shelton; the second one by Thomas Backus and Prudencio Casamayor. According to González Estévez, these firms were already leading the commercial life of the city, a subject that will be further explored in chapter three.[89]

Wright, Shelton & Co., specifically, donated two iron structures for the windows of the church plus a considerable amount of boards, wood and tools valued at 100 *pesos*.[90] Other donors were Gustavo Dufourcg and Luis Dutocq, all close acquaintances of Wright – frequently mentioned in his letters. Also among those that donated money (100 *pesos*) was Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey, by this time, Kindelán's widow.[91] The Duanys also gave funds for the

84 González Estévez, 145.

85 González Estévez; Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell.", 228.

86 González Estévez, "La implantación francesa."; Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell."

87 González Estévez, "La implantación francesa.", 145.

88 González Estévez, 145-146. See full list of donors in Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell.", 227-9.

89 González Estévez, "La implantación francesa.", 146.

90 González Estévez.

91 González Estévez.

building of the church. The association in this enterprise of Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey and Ambrosio Duany, members of three of Santiago's oldest Irish Catholic families, with the recent and formerly-Protestant immigrants, Bell and Wright, symbolizes the forging of a fascinating historical and ethnic continuity.[92] Whereas Bell and Wright were trying to secure a position in their adopted social sphere, the Garveys, Kindeláns and Duanys were the enablers, but also the gatekeepers, of assimilation into their established élite cohort.

The process of building this church constituted an urban event of collective character.[93] On February 3, 1828, the Archbishop of Santiago in person, after blessing the site, laid the first stone, thus marking the beginning of the construction process. A large crowd of people of means witnessed the moment.[94] Bell, most assuredly, had gained his desired attention. People donated a total of 1.855 *pesos* 3 *reales*, plus materials. Bell himself invested another 3,000 *pesos* on top of the plot of land that he had already donated, and made his own enslaved labourers work on the construction site.[95] The church's first Mass was celebrated in February 1831, and the edifice was finally completed that December, at a total cost of 9,337 *pesos*. González Estévez notices the name chosen for the church, frequently referred to in the documentation as the Church of La Candelaria. This author observes that Bell's wife name was Candelaria Yrady, a name that was evocative of the Virgin Mary, and that her celebration in Cuba takes place every 2nd of February.[96] This author suggests that on top of the previous reasons outlined, Bell also may have wanted to pay homage to his wife with the name chosen for his church. González Estévez concludes that, in spite of being a modest and austere church in comparison with others in the city, which is ironically quite fitting with a Quaker style (see Figure 3), its construction marked the expansion towards the northeast areas and the growth of the urban setting. This church became a landmark of the area, and a space for the social participation of the community.[97] But, mostly, it symbolizes the acceptance of immigrants like Wright and Bell into their new community, and evidences their participation in the same social spaces with the already established Irish families.

---

92 It has not been possible to identify to which one of the many "Ambrosios" that integrated the Duany family the sources refer to here.

93 González Estévez, "La implantación francesa.", 147.

94 González Estévez, 148.

95 González Estévez.

96 González Estévez.

97 González Estévez, 151-2.

The cases of Richard Maxwell Bell and James Jenkinson Wright show that the newly arrived Irish immigrants in Santiago during the first few decades of the 19th century comprised a more diverse group – one that was ethnically and religiously different from the one described in the previous chapter. Some of its most important members were of Protestant stock and connected to the Baltimore and Philadelphia Quakers. Unlike the "Wild Geese" group, these Irish had a direct connection to the United States, especially with its eastern Atlantic cities, and no links with mainland Spain or its military forces. This is significant because it symbolizes the shift in the route of Irish immigrants into Cuba. It was no longer Spain, but the United States that served as the intermediary destination. These immigrants did not manifest loyalty to Spain by performing military service, but rather seemed more concerned with displaying loyalty by embracing the militant Spanish version of Roman Catholicism. Due to these circumstances they found it harder to integrate into the local élite, even though – as Bell's case study shows – many of them resorted to the same strategies and mechanisms employed by Irish families that had arrived earlier.

When Cuban historiography has discussed Irish immigration it is generally understood that these immigrants were Catholics, and that this was one of the reasons for their fast assimilation into Cuban society. James Jenkinson Wright is the first case of an Irish Quaker landowner and "slave-holder"; however, he was not the only one. Alongside Wright were Richard Maxwell Bell, and Samuel and William B. Wanton from Ballintra, County Donegal, who were also Quakers established in Santiago. In the western area of Matanzas there was an Irish Quaker family whose surname was Scull. The Irish in Cuba were far from being homogeneously Catholic in origin. Religious conversion was an important part of their assimilation process. During the 19th century, religious conversion was a prerequisite to access naturalization and the purchase of agricultural land and urban properties in Cuba. To secure their place in Cuba, the members of this cohort embraced religious conversions. This contrasts with the "Wild Geese" migrants who were indisputably Roman Catholics and boasted of their "Old Catholic" background and the "special status" that such a condition afforded them, which in turn worked to their social and economic advantage.

Bell and Wright both lived in Santiago de Cuba for nearly the same time-period, Wright dying in 1845 and Bell only two years later in 1847. However, Bell was almost twenty years

older than Wright. They emigrated to the United States at about the same age: Bell was 15 whereas Wright was 14 years old. They were both involved in the trade and enslavement of African people, and that is how they made enough capital to invest in buying land and other properties in Santiago. Bell settled in Santiago around 1800, Wright did this a decade later, but by 1827 they were both engaged in the same social circles.

Bell quickly connected through marriage with Santiago's élite families, and in all ways he behaved like any other member of this establishment. However, there is evidence that suggests that he found it more difficult than Sebastián Kindelán to find acceptance by this cohort, whereas James J. Wright seems to have never really aspired to a full assimilation. For example, the local accusations and insinuations that Bell and his families were really "Jews" are symptomatic of an abiding prejudice.[98] It seems that Bell either gained the locals' affection or was a victim of their mockery when they nicknamed him [illegible], which is the literal translation into Spanish of his name and surname.[99] As has been seen, Bell resorted to public acts of philanthropy, such as the construction of the Church of La Candelaria, to build a reputation among his peers but also to ensure a swifter acceptance by their élite cohort. Although Wright seemed less concerned with acculturation, it was still advantageous for his company to engage socially with members of the upper social classes in Santiago; therefore, he was also a participant in Bell's charity project.

In the United States' newspapers, Richard Maxwell Bell was [illegible], the Spanish version of Richard. Unlike the "Wild Geese" families described in the previous chapter, the transformation of his name was a more complex phenomenon.[100] Although some authors have portrayed Bell as "Scotch-Irish", Bell and his descendants viewed themselves as "Irish" despite their family's origin in the Scottish lowlands. [illegible] published a correction to Richard Maxwell Bell's obituary because the newspaper had incorrectly labelled him "a Scotchman by birth". In the correction, which was probably demanded by the family or their lawyers, this was changed to "Irishman".[101] More recently, Bell's genealogists have labelled him

98 Herrera-Vaillant y Buxó-Canel, "Richard Maxwell Bell.", 233-234; Bacardí Moreau, [illegible] 2, 255-6.

99 John Glanville Taylor, [illegible] (London: Richard Bentley, 1851), 98.

100 See, Richard Maxwell Bell obituaries published in the [illegible], October 15 and October 16, 1847. Newspapers (Database), www.newspapers.com.

101 [illegible]. See also: Bacardí Moreau, [illegible] 2, 87, 172.

as “Scotch-Irish”, but there is no evidence that Bell himself or his immediate descendants ever used this hyphenated identity.[102] Finally, Wright also identified as “Irish”, although he was more strategic than Bell when it came to displaying his multiple identities and using them to his own advantage. Unlike Wright, Richard Maxwell Bell seemed more preoccupied with fitting into Santiago’s élite and with embracing his transformation into a Spanish subject and a Catholic. In Cuba, their transformation was radical, and they both lived in ways which were consistently far from the teachings and preachings of their Quaker upbringing. Wright’s multiple identities, and his role as a transnational actor will be the focus of the next chapter.

102 Jackson, “Ringing True.”, 212.

Chapter 3.

‘Don Santiago’ Wright: The Transnational Life of an Irish Coffee Planter in Santiago de Cuba, 1807-1847

On March 12, 1843, Thomas Brooks, an Englishman who became James J. Wright’s closest business partner, wrote to the New York financier Moses Taylor: “Our ‘valiant and respected’ chief writes in great spirits... Don Santiago has great confidence in our tobacco operations in this country [United States], if we are only firm in holding for the proper time...”.[1] Brooks’ use of quotation marks in the original correspondence seems to imply that James J. Wright was neither valiant nor respected. However, this Irishman had become the head of one of the most important commercial firms in eastern Cuba. Were Brooks’s words an expression of typical English racial prejudice against the Irish? Were they a show of envy or simply mockery? Without further sources that document Brooks relationship with Wright it is difficult to fully understand the meaning of these words. Nonetheless, what is even more striking in this letter is the reference to James J. Wright as “Don Santiago”.

As it has been shown in previous chapters, Irish immigrants in non-English speaking areas of the diaspora had their names translated into locally-accepted variants. Nini Rodgers recognizes that “Irish names mutated strangely into Spanish”.[2] Many of them became unrecognizable. In some cases, this translation was associated with more complex shifts in their identities, such as religious conversion or change in political affiliation. In Wright’s case, becoming not just Santiago, but *Don* Santiago, was symbolic of his adoption of a specific lifestyle as a Spanish-Creole plantation-owner and member of the slave-holder class.[3] His new name also encompasses his transformation from Irish immigrant into a transnational and trans-imperial actor, which will be the main focus of this chapter.

---

1 Thomas Brooks to Moses Taylor, Philadelphia, March 12, 1843. Archivo Histórico de la Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana (hereinafter AHOHH), Fondo Moses Taylor (hereinafter MT)/Folder 236/45/ Letter 16.

2 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, 31.

3 Miller, “Invention of an Irish Immigrant.”

Transnationalism is a concept that describes the interrelation of individuals, places, and institutions, and explores the connections among them.[4] David Gerber has traced its origin to "the widening of the modern world ... caused by the dynamic unfolding of capitalism across an international stage".[5] It is employed in this chapter to describe the relationship of Irish immigrant James J. Wright with Ireland, Cuba, and the United States through the creation and operation of his commercial firms: Wright & Shelton (1814-1826), Wright, Shelton & Co. (1826-1838), and Wright, Brooks & Co. (1838-1846). Nancy Foner defines transnationalism as the "processes by which immigrants 'forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement'".[6] In Wright's case, the evidence to a life-long transnational link with his native Ireland is found in the collection of thirty-seven letters that he penned between 1833 and 1845 and sent to his relatives in Dublin. According to Gerber, "letters were the medium by which peasants, laborers, craftsmen, and housewives became engaged in transnational relationships".[7] Wright's letters are full of comparisons between Cuba and Ireland. To Wright, Ireland was his "natal soil" while Cuba was his "home" and "the land of his adoption".[8]

Patricia Clavin argues that transnational actors typically present a fluidity when it comes to embracing a particular national or ethnic identity, a professional attribution, a political affiliation, and an specific cultural attachment; this could be seen as a direct consequence of their journeys, movements, displacements, or societal transfers.[9] Wright saw himself as Irish and Quaker by birth; he became a United States citizen due to the naturalization of his father; however, he also became a Spanish subject and converted to Catholicism while living in Cuba. The fluidity of his multifaceted identities allowed him to occupy a unique position in Cuban society. Some, but not all, early 19th-century Irish migrants in Cuba fit this same characterization. Foner's study suggests that it was not until the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries,

4 Patricia Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism," *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (2005): 421, 427.

5 David A. Gerber, "Epistolary Ethics: Personal Correspondence and the Culture of Emigration in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 19, no. 4 (2000): 6.

6 Foner, "Transnationalism Old and New.", 62.

7 Gerber, "Epistolary Ethics.", 6.

8 On the subject of Ireland as his natal soil, see: James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, HLRSF/February 28, 1834. Letter 4; September 4, 1836, Letter 10; June 7, 1840, Letter 16; August 20, 1840, Letter 17; May 5, 1841, Letter 35. On the subject of Cuba as home, see: HLRSF/October 6, 1833, Letters 1 and 2; February 28, 1834, Letter 4; August 25, 1837, Letter 11.

9 Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism.", 422.

that migrants started to become more and more transnational. In contrast, Gerber argues that the European voyages of exploration of the 15th century, and the subsequent mass migration, inaugurated the developing of transnational attitudes.[10] This is directly connected to the facilitation of ways of communication linked to technological improvements, such as the magnetic compass and advances in ship design, and later the telegraph, the “penny post”, and the steam ship. These discoveries made it increasingly easier and cheaper for migrants to develop and maintain transnational ties. In Wright’s case, his correspondence with his aunts Martha and Rachel, and his cousin Jonathan, is key to understand how he maintained such links, and how his transformations were received by members of his family.

Today, it could be claimed that most, if not all, migrants are transnational actors; however, transnationalism is not a new phenomenon despite its relatively-recent academic conceptualization. Clavin argues that “transnational encounters are frequently characterised as ‘border crossing’”, an act where the actors are capable of both transforming while they themselves are being transformed.[11] Merchants are well-defined transnational actors. James Jenkinson Wright was both a migrant and a merchant, and it is arguable that few Irish migrants in Cuba underwent such a complete and radical transformation as the result of their migratory experience.[12]

In the first half of the 19th century in Santiago de Cuba, Wright was one of many transnational actors. Between 1808 and 1812, a multinational conglomerate of foreign adventurers began to arrive in Santiago; although there were many Irish among them, this group was diverse. Gradually, their business visits became more frequent and their physical presence more permanent. By 1812, they were a small but influential cohort of newly-settled planters and merchants – some of them combining both of these roles. Among them there were some Irishmen who can be traced back to Baltimore and Philadelphia. Some of the Irishmen that fit this characterization were James Jenkinson (*Santiago*) Wright, Richard Maxwell (*Ricardo María*) Bell, William (*Guillermo*) B. and Samuel Wanton, Simon and Cornelius (*Cornelio*) O’Callaghan, and Philip (*Felipe*) Boylan (see Table 4). Although this group represents a continuity with the one presented in the first chapter, they also differed notably from the “Wild Geese” on account of

10 Gerber, “Epistolary Ethics.”, 6.
11 Clavin., 423.
12 Miller, “Invention of an Irish Immigrant.”

their Quaker connections, their more diverse ethnic origins, their strategies for settlement and assimilation, and their transnational business-oriented lives.

The term transnational signifies the belonging to a given nation, but it also entails a transcendence of the nation and a duality signified by engaging with multiple nations at once. This seems to be the case for some Irish migrants in colonial Cuba.[13] James Jenkinson Wright, went from an Ireland that had failed to become a its own independent nation-estate in 1798 to a vibrant, fully independent, and republican United States – a new nation that set some important precedents for the emerging ones in Spanish America. What differentiates him from Sebastián Kindelán and the other "Wild Geese" migrants? Wright's most radical transformation did not take place in the United States – the land where his father had chosen to emigrate – further south, in the small city that was Santiago de Cuba.

If it is assumed that Wright was a transnational actor, his transnationality was not bilateral in character, but triangular. His life involved an active engagement with three very different societies: the one he had left behind in Ireland; the one in the United States where his next-of-kin lived and to which market he oriented most of his business; and the one in eastern Cuba where he spent most of his adult life. Each of these regions occupied a specific place and function for him. However, Cuba was not an independent nation-state, and did not become one until 1902 – very late in comparison with other American nations. Nonetheless, its insularity always gave it a sense of territorial integrity. In 1807, Cuba was a key and strategic region of the Spanish American empire, and continued to be so until 1898. Instead of understanding the life of James J. Wright as transnational, it is more accurate to claim that it was trans-imperial – starting in a British empire of which Ireland was part, passing through a United States that, even before the Monroe Doctrine (1823), had already started to draw its own area of geopolitical influence to fulfill its "manifest destiny", and ending in an Spanish American empire of which Cuba was an integral, and after 1808, fiercely loyal member. Wright's trans-imperialism was also triangular.

---

13 See: Margaret Brehony, "'From Clonmany to Cuba': Patrick Doherty – a Transnational Life, 1830-1884," in *Paper Presented at Drew University*, 2015. (Accessed by courtesy of the author); Jonathan Curry-Machado, "Privileged Scapegoats: The Manipulation of Migrant Engineering Workers in Mid-Nineteenth Century Cuba," *Caribbean Studies* 35, no. 1 (2007): 207–45; Curry-Machado, *Cuban Sugar Industry*; Jonathan Curry-Machado, "In Cane's Shadow: Commodity Plantations and the Local Agrarian Economy on Cuba's Mid-Nineteenth-Century Sugar Frontier," in *Global Histories, Imperial Commodities, Local Interactions*, ed. Jonathan Curry-Machado (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 143–67.

Trans-imperial approaches are a more recent historiographical turn that seeks to examine the spaces of intersectionality among empires. Historians engaged in this conversation study actors that "thought and moved globally, and that ... skilfully exploited the in-between spaces of empires that wielded immense power".[14] This concept allows for explorations of behaviour patterns in people who moved both within and between nations and empires. This was the reality of James J. Wright and that of many other Irish migrants to Spanish America.

Clavin argues that transnational individuals develop a multiplicity of attachments and identities.[15] Wright's example shows that the Irish in Cuba did not only act within the framework of the British empire but also the Spanish empire, while keeping watch on what was happening in North America. Wright embodies many aspects of empire. His case study shows how individuals were able to take on business opportunities regardless of political, religious, and even moral boundaries. This would explain why, despite his Quaker upbringing, Wright became a Catholic capable of holding more than 300 enslaved African labourers. Throughout his life Wright showed acute disregard towards acting within the constraints of specific social spheres, and he maintained "multiple identities and loyalties".[16] This is a clear manifestation of transnationality. This chapter explores how James J. Wright became a transnational and trans-imperial migrant, and will exemplify the transformations that he undertook to become "Don Santiago". To do so, Wright's insertion in Cuba's coffee culture and his role in globalizing Santiago's coffee will be examined.

Irish Merchants' Transnational Networks: Globalizing Santiago de Cuba's Coffee, 1807-1847

Alejandro García Álvarez claims that coffee is Cuba's national drink *par excellence*; its consumption has persisted through time and survived even the complete collapse of the industry

14 Josh Allen, "Everyday Empries: Trans-Imperial Circulations in a Multi-Disciplinary Perspective – Origins, Inspirations, Ways Forward," *Past and Present* (blog), May 5, 2017, https://pastandpresent.org.uk/everyday-empries-trans-imperial-circulations-multi-disciplinary-perspective-origins-inspirations-ways-forward/.

15 Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism.", 427, 430.

16 Foner, "Transnationalism Old and New.", 78.

after the Independence Wars (1868-1898).[17] To many artists and intellectuals, Cuban coffee and the cultural practices around it are an important indicator of identity. Coffee has even become a common cultural signifier that unites today's widespread Cuban diaspora.[18] *Coffee arabica*, the plant out of whose fruits the beverage is made, is not indigenous to the island of Cuba. It was brought over around the year 1748.[19] Augustine Sedgewick argues that "'coffee' is not merely a bean and a drink, already an internationally tradable and consumable commodity, but a plant, [an] industry dedicated to the cultivation and processing of that plant into its commodity form, and a social relation of production in that industry".[20]

The success of Cuban coffee exports to the United States mostly have been attributed to a generically homogeneous "North American" group of merchants. This umbrella term frequently found in Cuban economic historiography does not differentiate among Irish, Scottish, Irish-Americans, Anglo-Americans, and others. The success of coffee and of coffee plantations in Cuba has also been strongly linked to French immigration and culture.[21] Santiago's intellectuals have defined coffee as a cultural system, and today the archaeological remnants of coffee plantations are identified as a "cultural landscape" worthy of UNESCO's recognition and protection.[22] How did that come about? Regardless of how strong the French presence was in Cuba's coffee culture, what role did Irish immigrants, like James J. Wright, play in its success?

In 1793, the war between France and Spain had caused the adoption of free trade from Cuban ports with neutral third parties. This inspired an eagerness in Cuban-based merchant and planters to trade with the United States and British North America. During the 1790s, every time Spain could not provide its Caribbean colonies with basic supplies, they chose to turn to the

---

17 Alejandro García Álvarez, "Auge y decadencia del café en Cuba colonial," *Stvdia Zamorensia* 8 (2008): 293–312.

18 See, for example, the work of Irish-Cuban-American intellectual Andrea O'Reilly Herrera, *Cuban Artists Across the Diaspora Setting the Tent Against the House* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 83, 203.

19 García Álvarez, "Auge y decadencia.", 297.

20 Augustine Sedgewick, "What Is Imperial about Coffee?: Rethinking 'Informal Empire,'" in *Making the Empire Work: Labor and United States Imperialism*, ed. Daniel E. Bender and Jana K. Lipman (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 315.

21 Jesús Guanche, "Prólogo," in *El Cafetal: Cultura y Sociedad*, by Rolando Álvarez and Marta Guzmán (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2013), 1; Juan Pérez de la Riva, "La implantación francesa en la cuenca superior del Cauto," in *El barracón y otros ensayos* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975), 351–434.

22 Santiago's and Guantánamo's provinces coffee plantations are protected UNESCO World Heritage since the year 2000. López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico.", 14; see also: Oficina del Conservador de Santiago de Cuba, *Sitio Cultural vinculado al desarrollo cafetalero del sudoriente de Cuba* (Colombia: Editorial Nomos S.A., 2005).

nascent United States for provisions, especially for flour.[23] The attractiveness of the United States market convinced Cuban-Creole planters that their economic success depended more on the new republic, rather than remote and backwards Spain. In return, the United States market demanded abundant quantities of sugar, coffee, tobacco, and other tropical products.

By 1802, Governor Kindelán was reporting to Madrid that there was already a considerable number of sugar mills, and some coffee plantations, that were yielding good results and abundant crops.[24] Sebastián Kindelán himself purchased land and established coffee plantations (see Table 5 and Maps 8, 9 and 10). He was not the only member of the Irish-Creole élite to invest in coffee (see Table 6). The Creagh family, for example, were owners of the coffee plantation El Rincón, while the Duanys had La Concepción and Mao. By the end of his life, Kindelán and Mozo de la Torre Garvey owned a two-storey urban house located in Satiago's Plaza de Dolores, a prominent and exclusive location that signalled their social status and the wealth they had acquired through the plantation scheme. In a city located on an area of great seismic activity, two-storey houses were a rare sight. According to Orozco, this property was valued at 37.580 *pesos*, and its two stories and rooftop were quite the novelty.[25] By 1803, there were 108.000 coffee trees (*cafetos*) on Santiago province's ground, and in 1807, only four years later, there were more than one million units. According to Kindelán's own testimony, in 1807 there were 192 different coffee planters established in the area.[26] In 1827, there were 2.067 coffee plantations all over the island.[27]

The year 1807 was a milestone in the history of coffee production in Santiago. This was the year in which Santiago's coffee began to be exported in large quantities to the United States, specifically to the ports of Baltimore, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and New York.[28] From the moment the United States became an independent nation, the British refused to allow the nascent republic to engage in trade with the rest of its West Indies colonies. The United States'

23 Linda K. Salvucci, "John Leamy's Atlantic Worlds: Trade, Religion, and Imperial Transformations in the Spanish Empire and Early Republican Philadelphia," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 38, no. 1 (2020): 1–24, https://doi.org/10.1353/cht.2020.0000.

24 López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico.", 53.

25 Orozco Melgar, "Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre.", 4.

26 López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico.", 53.

27 Rolando Álvarez and Marta Guzmán, *El Cafetal: Cultura y Sociedad* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2013), 17.

28 López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico.", 55.

commercial life depended for a while on the exchange with the French Caribbean. However, after the revolution in St. Domingue, Spanish America, and Cuba specifically, became the United States merchants' principal market for imports and exports. From 1802 until 1808, many United States-based merchants established trade relations with Cuban ports, but it was Philadelphia that had "the largest concentration of Spanish shipping into any North American port city".[29]

Michelle Craig McDonald argues that from 1806 to 1807, the Spanish West Indies – predominantly Cuba – "for the first time, emerged as North America's dominant [coffee] supplier".[30] Since 1783, the demand for coffee in the United States had grown at a fast pace.[31] Coffee became both an article for consumption and a very profitable article for re-exportation.[32] Initially, it was the port of Philadelphia, not New York, that dominated North America's coffee import market.[33] Linda K. Salvucci claims that although the United States-Cuba trade was centred in Philadelphia, other ports enjoyed a "healthy trade" with Cuba.[34] Salvucci enumerates them in descending order as follows: Baltimore, New York, and Boston.[35] Both McDonald and Salvucci agree that all major United States ports were involved in the Cuban trade. In a recent ground-breaking article, Salvucci analyzes the key role played by Irish-born merchants in Philadelphia during the 1790s in establishing and solidifying trade routes with Cuba.[36] She pays close attention to men like John Leamy – whose brother James was based permanently in Havana – George Meade, and John Barry, among others.[37] Salvucci's work is important but Havana-centric; the coffee trade with Santiago de Cuba is seldom mentioned in her work.

29 Michelle Craig McDonald, "The Chance of the Moment: Coffee and the New West Indies Commodities Trade," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2005): 466–8, https://doi.org/10.2307/3491531; Roy F. Nichols, "Trade Relations and the Establishment of the United States Consulates in Spanish America, 1779-1809," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 13, no. 3 (1933): 289–313, https://doi.org/10.2307/2506405.

30 McDonald, "The Chance of the Moment.", 468.

31 McDonald, 441.

32 McDonald.

33 McDonald, 442.

34 Linda K. Salvucci, "Atlantic Intersections: Early American Commerce and the Rise of the Spanish West Indies (Cuba)," *The Business History Review* 79, no. 4 (2005): 805, https://doi.org/10.2307/25097114.

35 Salvucci.

36 Salvucci, "John Leamy's Atlantic Worlds.", 1-24.

37 Salvucci.

Salvucci's time-frame concludes in the year 1807, which she argues was a watershed moment due to the opening of Cuban ports to free trade and the destruction of monopolistic business ventures held by Philadelphia Irishmen like Leamy.

James J. Wright's case shows that in 1807 Philadelphia did not entirely lose its prominence in trade with Cuba. Thomas Brooks' letters to Moses Taylor show that Wright's company continued to do most of its shipping to this port city.[38] In recognizing the importance of the year 1807, Salvucci's interpretation fits perfectly with those of Orozco, López Segrera, and other local Santiago historians. These authors see 1807 as the end-moment of a mercantilist model that had defined the business relationship between Cuba and the United States, and the shift towards the prominence of Philadelphia merchants' main competitors, those in Baltimore and New York.[39] For merchants in Baltimore, like Wright's employers, it was just the beginning of a profitable venture in Cuban coffee trade. According to Salvucci, they had the added advantage of not being directly supervised by the Spanish General Consul, who was based in Philadelphia.[40] When James Jenkinson Wright arrived in Baltimore in 1808, the merchants already invested in the West Indies trade were just beginning to explore business opportunities in Santiago de Cuba. Baltimore had grown as a port-city between 1776 and 1810. This growth was not only in population but also in the proportion of the population that was involved with the marine sector.[41] As shown in the previous chapter, Joseph Wright Jr., James 's brother, mentions in his letters that he was supposed to go to Saint-Domingue as supercargo. Were his employers, who later may have employed James himself, also increasingly interested in the Santiago coffee trade?

In 1807, Sebastián Kindelán reported to Marquis Someruelos, then Captain-General of the island:

> It must be admired the sudden progression of the coffee establishments in this jurisdiction since the year 1804. Before, only 8 coffee plantations of little importance were in existence, and during that very same year 56 new ones were created, and more than 500 thousand trees were planted, a number that is five times higher than what existed in the preceding years; and, in the following three years until the present [1807] this has been doubled.[42]

38 AHOHH/MT

39 Salvucci, "John Leamy's Atlantic Worlds.", 11, 13; López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico.", 54.

40 Salvucci, "John Leamy's Atlantic Worlds.", 13.

41 David Head, *Privateers of the Americas: Spanish American Privateering from the United States in the Early Republic* (Athens, Georgia: University Of Georgia Press, 2015), 65-6.

42 Quoted in López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico.", 58.

The following year, 1808, a turn in Spanish policies in response to the Napoleonic invasion (May 2, 1808), inaugurated the expulsion of all French and French-Creole immigrants from the Spanish empire. In April 10, 1809, Captain-General Someruelos formally ordered them expelled from Cuba. In Santiago, however, Kindelán's response was a cautious one. He managed to delay the exit of these immigrants from the city for eight months, granting them enough time to settle their affairs and to designate representatives to tend to their businesses while they were absent.[43] One of these was Prudent Cassimajour (1763-1842).

Irish immigrants in Santiago de Cuba interacted closely with the French settlers, to the point that Wright's and Brooks's business letters are full of expressions in French. Moreover, their plantations, often purchased from French settlers, retained the French name (Sophie turned Gran Sofía, is one example). Prudent Cassimajour, who was both their occasional ally and competitor, was a key figure to their settlement in Santiago. Prudencio Casamayor, as he became widely known, was a Domingois immigrant who like Bell, had settled early in Santiago. He had been born in Sauveterre de Béarn, Pyrénées-Atlantiques, Aquitaine in France, and had initially emigrated to Saint-Domingue where he was engaged in coffee cultivation and trade. In 1803, Casamayor was aiding the Spanish colonial authorities acting as a translator in the interrogations to which the newly-arrived Domingois were subjected.[44] He himself became a Spanish naturalized subject in 1804.[45] Perhaps it was this role that brought him into close contact with Governor Kindelán, with whom he seems to have developed a very profitable friendship. If Sebastián Kindelán was the political engineer of the coffee boom, Casamayor was its economic one.

Casamayor saw in land speculation his most profitable opportunity. After Kindelán allowed naturalized subjects to buy land in 1803, he bought extensively in La Gran Piedra area (see Map 10). He then proceeded to divide it into lots, and re-sold it or leased it to the newcomers (see Map 10). Casamayor's business thrived when a new group of adventurers arrived after 1810-1812.[46] It was land-ownership that cemented the status of the newly-settled cohort, including that of James Jenkinson Wright and Richard Maxwell Bell. From 1812 to 1827, Wright purchased an

43 Andreo García and Provencio Garrigós, "Tan lejos de La Habana y tan cerca de Saint-Domingue.", 13.
44 González Estévez, "La implantación francesa.", 36.
45 González Estévez.
46 González Estévez., 43.

extensive amount of land. He effected this purchase alongside his partners Antonio Vinent and Henry Shelton. In La Gran Piedra area he developed eight different plantations named: La Sofía (also known as Sophie and La Gran Sofía), El Santiago (its name appears occasionally as St. James, St. Jamie or St. Jaime), El Kentucky, El Kentuckito (Little Kentucky), La Carolina, Andalucía, El Potrero, and Santa Rita (see Maps 8, 9 and 10).[47] Their sizes varied from 5 to 22 *caballerías* (that is, from ~166 acres to ~730 acres) each.[48] As seen in the previous chapter, whereas Wright invested heavily in rural plots to grow coffee, Bell had accumulated a considerable number of urban plots in Santiago's La Marina quarter. However, Bell also purchased land in the mountains of La Sierra Maestra (see Table 6, and Maps 6 and 9).

This process is recorded in the map that Casamayor himself commissioned for the purpose of selling the plots. There are two remaining copies of this map: one is preserved at the Archivo General de Indias (AGI, General Archive of the Indies) in Spain, and the other at La Isabelica, a coffee plantation turned museum located in the mountains of La Gran Piedra in Santiago.[49] Although they differ slightly from one another, both copies of this map suggest that in La Gran Piedra area, apart from Casamayor, James Jenkinson Wright was the biggest landowner (see Map 10).

Building Transnational Networks of Influence and Local Spaces of Power: James J. Wright's Business Ventures, 1812-1845

In 1817, Joseph Wright Sr. reported to his relatives in Dublin:

> James I have not seen for more than five years when I last saw him it was in Baltimore he has been mostly at Sea & trading to the W[est] India Islands & is now Settled in the island

47 Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba (hereinafter AHPSC)/Protocolos Notariales (PT)/Libro 20 (1827). Accessed courtesy of the Centro de Interpretación y Divulgación del Patrimonio Cultural Cafetalero (hereinafter CIDPCC).

48 A *caballería* is a land measure unit frequently used in Cuba and Latin America. 1 Cuban *caballería* is equivalent to approximately 33.16 standard acres, and to 20 Irish acres. https://www.convertunits.com/from/caballeria+[Cuba]/to/acre Accessed June 8, 2020.

49 "Plan de los varios terrenos comprados por don Prudencio Casamayor (entre Guantánamo y Juraguá), con el objeto de proporcionar su cultivo en café, subdividiéndolos según lo demuestra el plan para venderlos a plazos, facilitando la abertura de sus caminos y acomodando los compradores con negros fiados," AGI/MP/Santo Domingo/811; and Marileydis Brunet Hurruitiner, "Los recintos funerarios en los cafetales Perseverancia y La Reunión en la cordillera de La Gran Piedra: Propuesta de Conservación preventiva y Ruta Patrimonial" (Bachelor Thesis, Santiago de Cuba, Universidad de Oriente, 2015). See Map 10.

> of Cuba at S[t]. Jago [sic] where he is in partnership with a young Spaniard in the Commission buisiness [sic] & does a great dale [sic] for merchants in Baltimore & New York, in Selling Cargoes & making returns in goods ... he is making money fast & .... he says he will not Stay there long, he is not married.[50]

This information provided by Wright's father is relevant because, although Wright had accumulated plenty of land in Santiago, it was his participation in the commission business that shaped his transnational life-style. According to Emilio Bacardí Moreau, in 1814 Wright had legally established his first commercial firm in Santiago de Cuba.[51] This enterprise was most likely the result of his partnership with two men, the Connecticut native Henry Shelton (1795-1843) and the Spaniard Antonio Vinent Ferrer (1787-1858). This firm, Wright & Shelton, in association with Vinent & Co., lasted until 1826.

Antonio Vinent Ferrer had been born in San Carlos de Puerto de Mahón in Menorca (Balearic Islands) in 1787. In 1805, he emigrated to Santiago de Cuba. According to the prominent genealogist Francisco Xavier de Santa Cruz, Antonio Vinent Ferrer was *Avenidor* (mediator) of the Real Consulado de Comercio (The Royal Merchant Guild).[52] The Real Consulado de Comercio was the most important economic institution in Cuba. It was complemented by the actions of the intellectual lobbies established in the Sociedades Económicas (SEAP) of Santiago and Havana. As seen in chapter one, the SEAP of Santiago was an institution controlled by members of the local élite to promote their economic interests, especially by the Irish-Cuban families Duany, Creagh, Garvey, and Kindelán. Richard Maxwell Bell also associated to SEAP.[53]

According to Ralph Lee Woodward Jr, the Spanish Royal Merchant Guild provided "import-export merchants with a tribunal for commercial litigation and an institution for the protection and promotion of their commerce".[54] Despite their rebirth during the 1780s and 1790s as a part of the Spanish liberalization policy, merchants' guilds were extremely monopolistic and

50 For the full transcript of this letter see: Miller et al., *Irish Immigrants*., 219-20.

51 Bacardí Moreau, *Crónicas* 2, 314.

52 According to the Real Academia de la Lengua Española (Royal Spanish Academy, RAE in Spanish), *avenidor* is the person that mediates between two parties in dispute. See: https://dle.rae.es/avenidor Accessed June 9, 2020. See also: Santa Cruz y Mallen, *Familias Cubanas* 1, 194, 292; 2: 403-6. Antonio Vinent's son, Santiago Vinent Gola married María Cristina Kindelán Sánchez-Griñán, Sebastián Kindelán's granddaughter. These Vinent were also related with the Duany family, and the branch of the family that remained in Spain intermarried with the prominent and aristocratic O'Neills.

53 See: Enrique Hurtado de Mendoza Collection of Cuban Genealogy. International University of Florida. https://dloc.com/ifiuhurtado.

exclusive in orientation, and a remnant of mercantilist economics that slowed capitalist development and stifled competition in Spanish America.[55] Woodward claims that the Spanish merchants' guilds exerted a firm control over merchant activities in the port cities in which they were established.[56] Moreover, they tended to be dominated "by a privileged group of the wealthiest merchants" who usually worked solely for the self-benefit of their class.[57]

Taking the nature and characteristics of these institutions into account, Wright's association with Vinent, who was an important member of Cuba's merchant guild, can be characterized as strategic. Wright's status as *extranjero* (foreigner) – despite his naturalization as Spanish subject – probably excluded him from occupying a position in the guild himself. Therefore, Wright needed to align his own economic interests with people like Vinent. The Real Consulado de Comercio was a key local space of power that guaranteed economic control: one that Wright was able to infiltrate through the fusion of his interests with those of Vinent. Woodward's work further supports this interpretation when he concludes that merchant guilds allowed foreign merchants to dominate Spanish American commerce.[58]

To contextualize further the importance of the association between Vinent and Wright, it is necessary to understand that, in order for Wright even to attempt to start a business in Cuba would have required the support of at least one peninsular Spanish, not merely that of a Creole.[59] Even the *Pennsylvania Gazette* reported in 1792 that "all foreigners who arrive [in Cuba] must value themselves on a Spaniard, and all their business transacted by him and in his name".[60] Given Spanish authorities' strong prejudices against foreigners, this restriction was extended into the first decades of the 19th century. This is why Wright depended on Antonio Vinent. In this same capacity, Richard Maxwell Bell associated with Yrady, who later became his father-in-law.

---

54 Ralph Lee Woodward, "Merchant Guilds (Consulados de Comercio) in the Spanish World," *History Compass* 5, no. 5 (2007): 1577, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2007.00463.x. See also: Robert S. Smith, "A Research Report on Consulado History," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 3, no. 1 (1961): 41–52; Regina Grafe and Alejandra Irigoin, "A Stakeholder Empire: The Political Economy of Spanish Imperial Rule in America," *The Economic History Review* 65, no. 2 (2012): 609–51; Fidel J. Tavárez, "Colonial Economic Improvement: How Spain Created New Consulados to Preserve and Develop Its American Empire, 1778-1795" 98, no. 4 (2018): 605–34, https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-7160336; Chambers, *No God but Gain*, 32.

55 Woodward, "Merchant Guilds.", 1578-9.

56 Woodward, 1579.

57 Woodward.

58 Woodward, 1580.

59 Nichols, "Trade Relations.", 290; see also: Chambers, *No God but Gain*, 29.

60 McDonald, "The Chance of the Moment.", 468.

However, unlike Bell, Wright never married; therefore, he needed to resort to other methods to ensure the success of his business ventures in Cuba. Furthermore, Vinent provided him with linguistic assistance, acting as his personal translator on several occasions. This lasted until Wright himself acquired enough Spanish not to depend on his partner.[61]

Until 1826, Wright operated under the firm Wright & Shelton in association with Vinent & Co. Santiago's *Protocolos Notariales* (Notarial Protocols) show that between 1812 and 1826, Wright purchased all of his land and enslaved labourers under this arrangement. The dimension that Wright's first firm managed to reach is recorded in Philadelphia's *National Gazette*. On May 8, 1826 it reported that,

> ... the failure of the house of Cheaine & Casamajor Jr. for about 600,000 dollars, was made public on the morning of the 23d. This failure, and that of Wright & Shelton, have given a death-blow to the business of this place [Santiago de Cuba] for some time to come, confidence is lost, and I believe not a dollar of credit could now be obtained...[62]

Wright's economic recovery might have been related to the beginning of a new business association with the Englishman Thomas Brooks (1791-1865). Brooks, who seems to have been a close friend of brothers Henry and Philo S. Shelton (1805-1890), was key in developing the trade relationship with New York's financial capitalists and bankers, specifically with Moses Taylor (1806-1882). Between 1826 and 1838, the original firm became Wright, Shelton & Co., and it is likely that Thomas Brooks was already a silent partner. In 1837-1838, Henry Shelton faced bankruptcy, which eventually led him to develop a mental illness and ultimately to commit suicide in 1843.[63] After Shelton's business failure, on December 1st, 1838, the firm became Wright, Brooks & Co., and operated under that name until Wright's death in 1845.

All the commercial firms that James J. Wright created in Santiago were transnational not only in orientation but also in composition.[64] They kept him constantly connected to what was

---

61 AHPSC/PT/Libro 20 (1827).

62 "Extract of a letter from St. Jago de Cuba, dated the 23d March," *The National Gazette*, Philadelphia, May 8, 1826.

63 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, October 21, 1842. HLRSF/Letter 23; James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, March 25, 1843. HLRSF/Letter 24; James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, June 5, 1843. HLRSF/Letter 25; *The Evening Post*, New York, January 12, 1843; *Hartford Courant*, Hartford, September 9, 1843.

64 See, a similar analysis of Brooks & Co, the continuation of Wright, Brooks & Co., after James J. Wright's death, in: Jonathan Curry-Machado, "Indispensable Aliens: The Influence of Engineering Migrants in Mid-Nineteenth Century Cuba" (Doctoral Thesis, London, London Metropolitan University, 2003)., 60.

happening in the United States, mainland Spain, and Europe. Wright's main source of revenue was not just the trade of goods. Map 14 shows the geographical scope of Wright's trading patterns. In addition, the circular that his firm sent to Moses Taylor, dated December 1st, 1838, demonstrates the incorporation into the enterprise of the Belgian Louis A. Verbrugghe, and the Englishmen Thomas Brooks and Richard Stephens as main partners.[65] Before his suicide, the bankrupt Henry Shelton, Wright's lifelong business partner, had been demoted to *commanditaire*.[66] Although Stephens's precise role in the firm cannot be specified beyond his investment of capital, he, Brooks, and Verbrugghe had important connections with the Jamaican and French markets, and with the well-established French-Creole immigrants in Santiago and Kingston, Jamaica. For example, both Brooks's and Stephens's wives were members of the French-Domingoise coffee élite.[67] Furthermore, Brooks had made his initial fortune in Jamaica, while Verbrugghe was constantly visiting Kingston.[68]

The Moses Taylor Collection preserved at the New York Public Library (NYPL), with copies at the Archives of the City of Havana (AHOHH), provides detailed information on the transnational *modus operandi* of James J. Wright's companies, their geographical scope, and the role played by each actor in the trade chain.[69] Throughout their thirty-one years of existence,

65 Circular from Wright, Brooks & Co., to Moses Taylor, December 1st, 1838. AHOHH/MT/Letter 1/Folder 235/46.

66 *Commanditaire* is a French term used to describe a person who is solely an investor or sponsor in a business venture, and that does not engage in the day to day running of the business. See: Wright, Brooks & Co. Circular to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, October 1, 1842. AHOHH/MT/Folder235/26/; Thomas Brooks to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, October 1, 1842; Boston, November 27, 1842; Philadelphia, January 14, 1843. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/53/Letters 8, 15 & 19 and Folder 236/45/Letter 5.

67 Thomas Brooks married Rosa Despaigne Ducongé. See: Iglesias Utset, "Los Despaigne." Richard Stephens had a first marriage to Maria Catalina Rousseau, and a second union to Mathilde Elizabeth de la Mothe de Carrier. Ancestry (Database).

68 Iglesias Utset., 91; Thomas Brooks to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, March 19, 1841. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/40/Letter 1.

69 The Moses Taylor Collection consists of letters, the majority of which were exchanged between Thomas Brooks and Moses Taylor. It is not precisely known when Thomas Brooks became a prominent partner of Wright, Shelton, & Co., but it is probable that he started his participation between 1826 and 1837. The Moses Taylor Collection, frequently misidentified by other scholars as the Manuel Moreno Fraginals Collection, is far richer in the details that it provides about United States investments in Cuban products, and their early dominance of the Cuban exports and imports markets. For the purpose of this research only 130 letters exchanged between Thomas Brooks and Moses Taylor have been consulted. These are the ones covering the years between 1837 until 1846. After James J. Wright died in 1845, Brooks continued the firm, but with the incorporation of his sons in 1846, he effectively transformed it into a family enterprise. The life of Brooks & Co. continued well into the 20th century.

Wright's firms acted as *consignataires,* sending shipments of sugar, coffee and tobacco to ports in the United States, France, Spain, and other European countries (see Map 14).[70]

The first step for Wright and his associates was to buy from local planters once the latter had transported their products from their estates to the port. As seen in the previous chapter, Wright's city home was adjacent to the docks, a convenient position, which indicates that business took precedence for him over comfort; he could have followed the established customs of the local élite and reside near the more fashionable *plazas,* like the Kindeláns and Duanys at Plaza Dolores. Although immigrants like Wright, Bell, and Casamayor were exporting coffee produced on their own plantations, they also became the middlemen between other planters and the different markets. They not only purchased coffee from the Santiago-based planters, but also bought *muscovado* sugars, molasses, tobacco, rum, and other tropical products. Occasionally, Wright and his partners made purchases from planters based in Trinidad de Cuba and Cienfuegos in the West, and from those in Cumberland Harbour – as they referred to Guantánamo Bay at the time, in the East. Although Wright and his partners never tapped into the Havana-area trade, which was dominated by the Spanish-Creole planters, the Moses Taylor Collection shows that the competition is Santiago was not less ruthless.[71]

Throughout the Moses Taylor Collection it can be seen that planters had their own resources. Wright or Brooks occasionally complained of planters holding back products to get better prices. Also, they could enlist their own ships if they had contacts abroad.[72] According to Roland T. Ely, merchants and planters in Cuba were frequently at odds.[73] In Brooks's correspondence to Moses Taylor many examples of this can be found. In December 1837, for instance, Brooks wrote to Taylor: "Our Coffee market has not broken yet as planters do not seem

70 *Consignataire* is a French word that can be translated into English as shipping agent. The frequent use in Wright's and Brooks' correspondence of "consignataire"and "commanditaire" to define the roles of the partners if their firms is revealing of how much their lives in Santiago de Cuba were influenced by the large French-Domingoise presence.

71 Thomas Brooks to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, January 13, 1838. AHOHH/MT/Letter 7/Folder 235/4.

72 Thomas Brooks to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, April 24, 1838. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/4/Letter 2; March 10, 1842, Folder 235/26/Letter 3; Wright, Brooks & Co. to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, January 14, 1843, Folder 235/22/Letter 5.

73 Roland T. Ely, "The Old Cuba Trade: Highlights and Case Studies of Cuban-American Interdependence during the Nineteenth Century," *The Business History Review* 38, no. 4 (1964): 456–78, https://doi.org/10.2307/3112547, 472.

anxious to sell and only in for small lots of low quality [coffees] are yet forward".[74] In another letter, Brooks accused them of having "high pretensions".[75]

Once shipped, these products were received, redistributed, and sold by a network of agents and representatives. These agents' roles were to procure insurance for the cargoes, to enlist reliable captains to conduct the vessels, to provide information on the demand for specific products and the oscillation of their respective prices, and to send over specie (gold and silver). The latter was key because there were no financial institutions established in Cuba until the 1850s; therefore, commercial firms like Wright, Brooks & Co. had to be their own banks.[76]

The network of agents and partners put together by Wright consisted of banker and merchant Moses Taylor in New York, Quaker merchant Benjamin Sand Burling in Philadelphia, William Howell in Baltimore, and Philo Strong Shelton – brother of Wright's partner Henry Shelton, in Boston.[77] In the United Kingdom, the influential Baring Brothers' bank of London, which had managed the Louisiana Purchase, acted as guardian of their European interests.[78] Even in the Cuban city of Cienfuegos, Wright's company had its own agents in the person of Wittram & Co.[79]

On many occasions, Wright, Brooks, & Co made use of the back and forth trade to make their agents send them specific products under consignment. For example, in 1843 they received a consignment of Irish cod, beef, candles, soap, potatoes, onions, apples, cheese, butter, salmon, and whale oil.[80] Wright's firm was counting on making a profit from the scarcity of these products in Santiago. On several occasions, Wright, Brooks & Co. provided the Consolidated Cobre Mining Association of Santiago with much-needed lumber "for underground use".[81] The

74 Thomas Brooks to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, December 22, 1837. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/5/Letter 1.

75 Thomas Brooks to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, December 5, 1838. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/46/Letter 3.

76 Ely, "The Old Cuba Trade.", 471.

77 Thomas Brooks to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, March 19, 1841. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/40/Letter 1. About Moses Taylor's prominence in financial capitalism in New York and his Cuban interests, see: Daniel Hodas, "MOSES TAYLOR–New York Merchant American Industrialist and Finance Capitalist: A Case Study in Success," *Proceedings of the Business History Conference* 2 (1974): 95–131; Ely, "The Old Cuba Trade."

78 Wright, Brooks & Co. to Barings Brothers, Barings Archives (hereinafter BA)/Series House Correspondence (hereinafter HC) 4/4.6.6; Wright, Brooks & Co. to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, May 20, 1842. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/26/Letter 6.

79 Wright, Brooks & Co. to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, May 20, 1842. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/26/Letter 6.

80 Wright, Brooks & Co. to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, January 3, 1843. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/22/Letter 4.

81 Wright, Brooks & Co. to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, August 17, 1841. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/27/Letter 1.

labourers in the copper mines were a mix of Africans, free and enslaved, with Irish, Welsh, and Cornish wage workers. By 1841, Wright, Brooks & Co. were officially agents of the Consolidated Cobre Mining Association, just as they had been agents of Lloyd's, the London-based insurance company, since 1839.[82]

More importantly, when the need arose to build a lighthouse to guide the vessels through the narrow entrance of Santiago's harbour, Wright, Brooks & Co. were responsible for making inquiries about the technology, its operations, the manufacture costs, the quality of the lanterns, and the oil for its maintenance. Moreover, they facilitated the import of everything needed to make it possible.[83] Although the original 1842 lighthouse was destroyed during the United States' military occupation of Santiago in 1898, it was rebuilt, and it still stands near the Morro Castle San Pedro la Roca (see Figures 4, 5 and 6).

James J. Wright and his associates built a transnational business-model that was outwards oriented, but much of their success depended on the relationships they managed to forge with local Spanish political authorities and Santiago's Creole élite. Wright's success in achieving this is recorded by the French traveller, Jean Baptiste de Rosemond, when he states:

> ... the Spanish aristocracy [is] entirely different from the Creole aristocracy, represented by their excellences MM. de Miranda, de Castillo, the marquis of Yarayabo, and the three families [Sánchez-]Griñan, San-Lazare and Kindelan. I was initiated into French society at a dinner given in my honour by the Belgian consul, M. [V]erbrugghe, a young man of courage, science and etiquette. There I made the acquaintance of MM. Joseph Dufourg, de Ribeaux, Couronneau and Eugène Révé, four Frenchmen who honour their country abroad as though it was ensconced in their own bosom. As for English society, it appears to me to have found marvellous representation in M. Wright, a merchant to whom we like to accord entirely superior commercial intelligence, and in whom I, myself, have found the soundest ideas on the moral and material interests of the country he adopted many years ago. [84]

---

82 Wright.

83 Wright, Brooks & Co. to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, April 28 and August 8, 1840. AHOHH/MT/Folder 235/24/Letters 1 and 3; February 2 and May 20, 1842. Folder 235/26/Letter 2 and 6.

84 Original quote in French: "... l'aristocratie espagnole [e]lle se destingue entièrement de l'aristocratie créole, représentée par leurs excellences MM. de Miranda, de Castillo, le marquis de Yarayabo, et les trois familles Griñan, San-Lazare et de Kindelan. Je fus initié à la société française dans un diner que me donna le consul belge, M. [V]erbrugghe, jeune homme de cœur, de science et de belles manières. Là, je fis la connaissance de MM. Joseph Dufourg, de Ribeaux, Couronneau et Eugène Révé, quatre Français qui, à l'étranger, font honneur à leur pays comme ils en feraient l'ornement dans son propre sein. Quant à la société anglaise, elle me parut merveilleusement représentée par M. Wright, négociant auquel on se plaît à accorder une inteligence commerciale tout-à-fait supérieure, et dans lequel j'ai trouvé, moi, les idées le plus saines sur les intérèts moraux et matériels du pays qu'il a adopté depuis tant d'années." In: Rosemond de Beauvallon, *L'île de Cuba*., 394-5. (Translation by the author, and correction by Alex-Ann Haley Adams).

Rosemond's testimony demonstrates the following: first, that Wright was highly respected in Santiago's élite circles, as shown by his presence at this event alongside the "Wild Geese"-descended Kindeláns and the Duanys (alluded to in this excerpt in the person of the Marquis of Yarayabo, see Table 2); and, second, that Wright's partner Verbrugghe's role as Belgian consul is mentioned. This second detail is of the utmost importance to understand how James J. Wright and his business partners established relationships with, and wielded influence over, the local Spanish administrators. This is related to Wright's attempts to monopolize and control one specific space of power: the foreign consulates in Santiago. His condition as an enslaver was problematic to achieve such control; nonetheless, the archival evidence points to his success.

During the 1830s and 1840s the political influence of Wright, Brooks & Co. grew significantly. In different moments, all of its main partners occupied important positions in Santiago de Cuba; more specifically, they acted as British, United States, and Belgian consuls (see Figure 24). Wright himself boasted to have acted as both United States' Consul (1824-1826) and as British Pro-Consul (1839-1842).[85] Wright was designated again as United States' Consul in 1844, but he unexpectedly died in New Orleans on his way to taking office. On at least one recorded occasion, Wright abused his position as British Pro-Consul to make inquiries on behalf of one of the business commissions that Wright, Brooks, & Co. had obtained: the building of the Lighthouse at the entrance of the Morro Castle.[86] More importantly, when Wright himself, or members of his firms, were not acting as consuls, they still made sure that the person who held the office was under their influence. In this way they ensured that Charles Clarke succeeded Wright as British Consul by soliciting the assistance of London financiers, specifically of Baring brothers.[87] In his correspondence Wright alludes to this when he says:

> I have a letter [that] states that I shall be British Pro Council [sic] for the [Island?] in February next and I presume under the entire [sanction?] of Lord Palmerston and our authorities here ... I think I told you that when in active business here before that I was several years American Consul indeed the present Consul obtained his appointment by and through us.[88]

---

85 Wright's exact title was: United States' Commercial Agent. See: James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, September 4, 1836. HLRSF/Letter 10.

86 BNA/FO/453/3: 279, 299, 316.

87 Thomas Brooks to Baring Brothers & Co., London October 17, 1840. BA/HC4/4.6.6/Letter 3. On Barings brothers and their bank, see: Philip Ziegler, *The Sixth Great Power: A History of One of the Greatest Banking Families, the House of Barings, 1762-1929* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1988).

88 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, December 30, 1838. HLRSF/Letter 13.

To understand the importance to Wright of controlling the consulates, a brief description of the history and roles of these institutions in Cuba is necessary. In 1797 the United States first established its consulates in Cuba, designating Daniel Hawley as Consul in Havana, and Josiah Blakely for Santiago.[89] Hawley and Blakely were appointed to occupy this office in spite of Spain's open opposition to it. For years, Spain still refused to officially acknowledge their presence or their offices on the ground.[90] The British, on the other hand, did not establish regular consular services until 1825.[91] Curry-Machado claims that the consuls were generally selected from the resident merchant community in Cuba, and their British origins was not a necessary requirement.[92] Consuls established in Cuban ports had as their main task to boost the confidence of the commercial partnerships and the creation of trade networks.[93] If these consuls were merchants themselves, this was a happy coincidence of interests. However, when the appointed consuls had no pre-established personal business relations in Cuba, the holding of this office prompted them to pursue them.[94] They were set from the outset to form friendships with local bureaucrats, friendship that they then could exploit for the benefit of advancing trade interests.[95] For example, on March 7, 1840, James J. Wright, as acting British Pro-Consul, wrote to José María del Águila, who had just finished his mandate as Intendent of the Santiago province.[96] Wright's main concern was to acknowledge the appointment of the new official to this post; however, he adds:

> I avail myself of this opportunity in order to return you my sincerest acknowledgement for the attention and courtesy I have always met with on your part not only in the relations of private life, but also whenever the duties of my Office as Her Majesty's Proconsul at this Port led me to encroach with your time.[97]

The contents of this letter could be interpreted as an admission on the part of Wright that he had developed a private relationship with key Spanish officials in Santiago. During his tenure, Wright

89 Nichols, "Trade Relations.", 299.
90 Nichols, 295.
91 Curry-Machado, "Indispensable Aliens.", 60.
92 Curry-Machado.
93 Nichols, "Trade Relations.", 293; Curry-Machado, "Indispensable Aliens.", 60.
94 Nichols, "Trade Relations.", 291.
95 Nichols, 290, 300.
96 James J. Wright's title was British Pro-Consul, although he was the acting British Consul during the absent of the officially appointed Consul, John Hardy Jr. Hardy never returned to occupy the office; he died shortly after.
97 James J. Wright to José María del Águila, Santiago de Cuba, March 7, 1840. BNA/FO/453/3: 239.

also corresponded frequently with Pedro Becerra, who in 1839 acted as the interim Governor of the Province of Santiago for an eight-months period. Becerra was also Richard Maxwell Bell's son-in-law, who, unlike Wright, seems to have had a preference for effecting strategic and advantageous marriages.[98]

Consular duties included the gathering of information on the political state of Cuba and its relationship with Spain. This would have made Wright aware of everything that had been taking place in Cuba, a circumstance that is not shown in his private correspondence. Both British and United States' consular agents were responsible for developing the foundations of an "informal empire", one in which Spain was still nominally controlling Cuba, but its economic benefits were going first to the United States and then to England.[99] Chambers describes this phenomenon as a type of empire that was "grounded not on military or political control, but on indirect economic power".[100] According to Philip D. Curtin, "consuls were prime agents of informal empire".[101] This is relevant because, early on the newly-formed United States developed a desire to annex the island of Cuba to their union. This intensified after the Louisiana purchase (1803-1804), and was formalized in the Monroe Doctrine (1823), a doctrine that has shaped Cuba-United States relations to date.[102] The annexation never came to fruition, but Cuba's economic dependence on the United States' market was already a reality by the mid-19th century. The foundation of this type of economic domination was in the actions of transnational and trans-imperial shadowy figures like James J. Wright, whose role as United States' Consul, British Pro-Consul, merchant, and shipping agent significantly contributed to the establishment of an informal empire in Cuba.

That Wright managed to fulfill these roles tells of his unique position as an Irish born-British subject (often perceived as "English" by foreign visitors such as Rosemond), as a United States' naturalized citizen due to his father's emigration to Ohio; and finally, as a Spanish subject in Santiago. There are two ironies to him occupying, and benefiting from, these interstices of

98 Pedro Becerra and Ana María Bell Yrady were married on January 26, 1834. The couple had eight children.

99 For the conceptualization of the term "informal empire", see: Chambers, *No God but Gain*., 2; Philip D Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)., 240.

100 Chambers, *No God but Gain*., 27.

101 Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, 246.

102 On the Monroe Doctrine and its implications for Latin America and Cuba, see: Mark T. Gilderhus, "The Monroe Doctrine: Meanings and Implications," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2006): 5–16; Frederick Merk, *The Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism, 1843-1849,* [1st ed.]., Borzoi Book (New York: Knopf, 1966); and, David W. Dent, *The Legacy of the Monroe Doctrine: A Reference Guide to U.S. Involvement in Latin America and the Caribbean* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999).

empires: one is his fidelity. In a city that had questioned Sebastián Kindelán's loyalties only a few decades before, how could have James J. Wright overcome this? He did not. In 1839, Pedro Becerra seems to have questioned Wright's loyalties. In a dispatch to Becerra, Wright states:

> In answer I beg to state that I am the only one and am acting as Proconsul, during the absence of Jno. Hardy Jr. Esquire, having been duly appointed and acknowledged in this Capacity by Her Britannic Majesty. I beg further to state to your Excellency that I am a subject of Her Most Catholic Majesty Queen Isabel the Second.[103]

The second paradox was that a significant part of the British Consul's role in Santiago was to be vigilant in identifying violations of the treaties proscribing the trade in enslaved African people. As it will be examined later in more detail, during the 1820s Wright himself had been involved with this illegal traffic. Furthermore, Wright communicated to his family that he personally held in slavery around 300 people. Slave-ownership alone would have been enough to prevent him from occupying any positions in the British foreign service.[104] In the words of Charles Clarke, the person whom Wright had entrusted to replace him as British Consul:

> There are only three other British Subjects resident in this place whose standing in society would warrant the Consulate being entrusted to them – they are all three partners in the house of Wright, Brooks and Company, and they are all three ineligible, from the fact of their being large holders of Slaves – added to which Mr. Wright was a notorious Slave Trader in former years.[105]

In 1844, James J. Wright had to travel to the United States. He was probably called back to Ohio due to the failing health of his 86-year-old father. On that occasion, Thomas Brooks wrote to Moses Taylor:

> We shall soon be looking for news of Mr. Wrights [sic] arrival in the U[nited] States... Will he go to Europe? I think not! in fact I shall not be surprised to hear of his decision on a return to Cuba after 6 or 8 months residence in the U[nited] States. The climate and ways of Cuba will probably suit him best.[106]

---

103 BNA/FO/453/3: 205.

104 In 1838 John Hardy Jr. writes to Santiago's authorities: "it is a matter of notoriety, that over since the year 1833 no Gentleman having the honor of holding a Commission from Her Most Gracious Majesty, whether on a Civil, Naval or Military Capacity, is permitted to acquire property in slaves", Hardy himself procured enslaved African workers for his mining business, and in 1839 appointed his friend James J. Wright his successor as British Consul. BNA/FO/453/3

105 BNA/FO/634.

106 Thomas Brooks to Moses Taylor, Santiago de Cuba, May 12, 1844. AHOHH/MT/Folder236/44/Letter 1.

The same man who referred to Wright as “Don Santiago” was informing their most important business partner of his complete assimilation into the lifestyle of Cuban planters.[107] This is also evocative of the transformation that this Irish immigrant underwent. Foner suggests that, for transnational actors, “plans to return entail a continuing commitment to the norms, values, and aspirations of the home society”.[108] Wright never returned to Ireland, where his Catholicism and his “Cuban ways” would have contrasted significantly with his relatives’ religious faith. He did go back temporarily to the United States, but Wright’s transnational transformation reached such a degree that his closest partner could not believe that he could keep away for long from Cuba, his adopted land. Brooks’s assessment proved to be right. On his journey to return to Cuba in 1845, Wright died in New Orleans.

Another feature that Foner identifies as a symptom of transnationality is the participation in several economies.[109] By exploiting the in-between spaces of empires and showing a surprising flexibility in his allegiances, James J. Wright became one the wealthiest planters and merchants in eastern Cuba. His firm was one of the largest in Santiago, and he had a hand in globalizing Cuban coffee consumption. His timing could not have been better. Due to the rise of Brazilian and Javan coffees, which were cheaper to produce than Cuba’s, coffee production started decline by the late 1840s. The beginning of the first Independence War (1868-1878, also known as the Ten’s Years War), and the *mambises*’ strategy of destroying what they considered to be Spain’s sources of wealth, put an end to the golden age of coffee in Cuba.[110] The industry never recovered to its pre-war levels.

Wright’s transnational entrepreneurship is exemplified by his different commercial firms: Wright & Shelton (1814-1826), Wright, Shelton & Co. (1826-1838), and finally Wright, Brooks & Co. (1838-1846). He and his partners managed to position themselves successfully as intermediaries between Cuban-Creole planters and buyers in the United States and Europe. Through consignments, they imported basic products needed in Santiago: lumber, fish, rice, and

107 Foner acknowledges that assimilation and transnationalism are not mutually exclusive, and often present themselves combined. See: Foner, “Transnationalism Old and New.”, 78.

108 Foner, 66.

109 Foner, 67.

110 *Mambí*, whose plural form is *mambises*, is the name the Cuban rebels took, and it is the name by which they are widely known. See the work of prominent Irish Fenian James J O’Kelly, *The Mambi-Land, or, Adventures of a Herald Correspondent in Cuba* (Ann Arbor, MI: Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan, University Library, 2006).

flour, among others. The firms were integrated by its chief, the Irishman Wright, in association with the Spaniard Antonio Vinent, the Englishmen Thomas Brooks and Richard Stephens, the Connecticut-native Henry Shelton, and the Belgian Louis A. Verbrugghe. With a shipping business oriented to many different cities, and networks of agents working closely with Wright and his partners, it can be ascertained that his multiple enterprises were transnational in nature, composition, and action, and that they influenced Wright's own life greatly. The construction of a transnational identity also permitted him to occupy and dominate another space of power, that of Santiago's foreign consulates. This attempt at monopolizing the consulates directly benefited his company's business. Finally, Wright's identity was deeply influenced by the cultural practices he encountered in Santiago, which led him to adopt the lifestyle of a Catholic Spanish-planter and merchant, which in turn significantly modified how he perceived his Irishness. Although he was not alone, his is an interesting example of the type of transformations that Irish Quaker immigrants underwent in Cuba.

Chapter 4.

Irish Reactions to African Slavery in Cuba: "Don Santiago's" Notoriety as Human Trafficker and his Rhetoric of Tranquility

There are key questions that have frequently defined the scholarly debate around Irish immigration to the Caribbean: if the Irish had been in positions of power, if they had been the colonizers and not the colonized, how would they have reacted to occupying positions of power? Were the Irish "white" slaves? Did the Irish participate in the traffic of African people? To what degree did Ireland's economy and society engage in, and benefit from, enslaved African labour? Researchers like Nini Rodgers, Donald Akenson, Orla Power, Liam Hogan, Jonathan Jeffrey Wright, and others, have confronted these questions, although their studies have focused primarily on the British or Anglo-Caribbean. Their works present a diverse and a far from homogeneous picture.[1] The diversity of their interpretations of the lives of Irish men and women along the Caribbean imperial frontier reveals the complexity of Irish attitudes, especially, when they were directly confronted with strategies in support of colonialism that depended upon maintaining slavery as an economic and social institution.

Donald Akenson and Nini Rodgers, when looking at the specific case of the island of Montserrat – regarded as the only mostly "Irish" colony of the Caribbean – have argued that the Irish were both the colonizers and the colonized, a statement with which Liam Hogan agrees.[2] In the case-study of Belfast-native John Black, Jonathan Jeffrey Wright has found evidence that supports the idea that many Irishmen in this region were "the product of a world in which many viewed slavery as a legitimate form of commercial activity".[3] Orla Power has analyzed Irish colonists in Danish St. Croix, and has also presented a similar conclusion that economics trumped morality and humanitarianism.[4]

1 See: Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*; Akenson, *If the Irish*; Perry and Hogan, "No, the Irish."; Wright, *Ulster Slave Owner*.

2 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, 2; Akenson, *If the Irish*, 14; Liam Hogan, Laura McAtackney, and Matthew C. Reilly, "The Irish in the Anglo-Caribbean: Servants or Slaves?," *History Ireland* (blog), February 29, 2016, https://www.historyireland.com/18th-19th-century-history/18th-19th-century-social-perspectives/the-irish-in-the-anglo-caribbean-servants-or-slaves/, 20.

3 Wright, *Ulster Slave Owner*, 27.

4 Power, "Irish Planters."

Liam Hogan, on the other hand, has devoted his career to further the idea that, despite its popularization, mostly among conservative elements of the United States' and Ireland's societies, "the Irish were not slaves".[5] Notwithstanding the similarities between indentured servitude and African slavery, there were also stark differences. Indentured servitude had a time-limit, whereas slavery was perpetual and hereditary.[6] Moreover, although exploitation of the Irish and Africans under these regimens was in some day-to-day respects similar, at least in theory and sometimes in practice, the Irish could legally address their grievances and enjoy some protections under the law, whereas in the Anglo-Caribbean, the Africans had no legal protections.[7] In Cuba, however, *Las Siete Partidas*, a Spanish legal code created in the 13th century, had specific provisions for the enslaved population, and granted them limited rights, among them, the prerogatives of purchasing themselves, of holding some small properties, of marrying a free person, and of being granted freedom after a time-period living "as if" the person was free while remaining in the vicinity of their legal owner.[8]

Denying that the Irish were slaves and that their situations were therefore not fully comparable to those of their African counterparts, does not mean that there were not marked class-differences, and therefore divergent political ideologies at play, among Irish immigrants to the Caribbean. This could explain why at least some Irish indentured servants – those who survived, attained freedom, and subsequently even enjoyed upward social mobility – acquiesced in, and sometimes profited from, the slavery regime that made a few of them very wealthy. However, this picture becomes more complex. Although some middle and lower-class Irish in Cuba were also owners of enslaved people, so were free Africans and their descendants.[9] How can this apparent contradiction be explained? Slavery in the Caribbean and Cuba was an intrinsic part of society and affected all of its strata. Abolitionists usually condemned the physical abuses

5 Perry and Hogan, "No, the Irish."

6 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, 7.

7 Rodgers.

8 Adriana Chira, "Uneasy Intimacies: Race, Family, and Property in Santiago de Cuba, 1803-1868." (Doctoral Thesis, Michigan, University of Michigan, 2016): 181-2.

9 See for example the case of Irish woman Ana Macalsis [sic]. From the inventory that the authorities conducted after Macalsi's untimely death in Havana in 1846 it can be extracted that this Irish woman was of modest means, however, she owned an African enslaved woman that was most likely employed in domestic chores. ANC/ESC/BD/313/5420.

they saw in large coffee, cotton, and sugar plantations, but domestic slavery existed, and was also violent.

The history of slavery in Ireland is, according to Nini Rodgers, a largely forgotten one that has been purposely neglected either out of shame or because of its apparently marginal importance.[10] This can be demonstrated in alluding to the example of St. Patrick, Ireland's most important Catholic figure, and a symbol himself of Irish identity. St. Patrick, not the myth, but the man, was brought over to Ireland and sold into slavery.[11] If the history of slavery in Ireland has been diminished, the history of Irish involvement with slavery in the diaspora is a historiographical lacuna. Rodgers demonstrates how intertwined Irish economy and society was with the Black Atlantic and the traffic of enslaved people. Irish products fed the enslaved in the Caribbean, and Irish linen clothed them. In turn, Caribbean-produced sugar, coffee, and tobacco were consumed all over Ireland.[12] Many transnational actors, with life-stories similar to that of James J. Wright, had a direct hand in creating and maintaining this system.

These are pioneering studies on Irish involvement with slavery, specifically addressing the role of the Irish as either active enslavers and traffickers, or fierce abolitionists who made common cause with the oppressed Africans. Yet, their works focus primarily on the British West Indies, where an Irish presence was most obvious and visible. Even though Rodgers mentions Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo briefly, her main subject is the British Leewards islands. Akenson's study is limited to Montserrat, whereas Jonathan Jeffrey Wright turns to the island of Trinidad.[13] The Spanish Caribbean and the lives of the Irish there still have not found a solid place in the historiography of the Irish Caribbean diaspora.

Irish experiences in Cuba and Spanish America, were slightly different from others all over the Caribbean. An example of this were the varied attitudes towards Catholicism that ranged from an arguably more relaxed British enforcement of the Penal Laws in mostly Protestant

10 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*., 1-2.

11 Rodgers, 12.

12 Rodgers, 22, 80-1. For the conceptualization of the Black Atlantic, see: Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 2007).

13 Akenson's work on Montserrat is valuable to understand the role of the O'Farrill family in Cuba, the most powerful of all of the Irish-Cuban families, and single-handedly responsible for the introduction of thousands of trafficked Africans into Cuba. Rodgers also succinctly mentions the role of the O'Farrill family. Jonathan Jeffrey Wright's volume mentions briefly the Ulster Irish Black family connections with the Cuban Finlays, but the rest of the study is limited to the island of Trinidad.

islands, to an intertwined correlation between Irishness and Catholicism in the Spanish and French ones.[14] In Cuba, Irish Catholicism played a major role in winning societal acceptance and assimilation.[15] Rodgers describes how in the British Caribbean islands many Irish Catholics converted to Protestantism, whereas in Cuba the opposite process took place. Wright's and Bell's cases typify the latter. The cases analyzed by Rodgers, Salvucci, and those presented here, show that in Caribbean societies Irish identity markers such as religious affiliations were more relaxed, and interchangeable. Irish migrants converted to Catholicism or to Protestantism, wherever and whenever it was advantageous or strategic to do so. This relaxation was made possible by the liminality of the Caribbean space, and by the dynamics at play in its societies.

This chapter examines the contributions of shadowy figures like James J. Wright and Richard Maxwell Bell to the maintenance of colonialism and to the importation of new forms of economic domination. Their adaptation to the Spanish slavery regime, and the obvious advantages they obtained from it, illuminate the attitudes some Irish migrants assumed when interacting with a slavery-dependant society. But Wright and Bell also exemplify the contradictions inherent in assuming such a position. This chapter will address James J. Wright's most important transformation: his becoming the biggest holder of enslaved African people in eastern Cuba while being a Quaker-born convert to Catholicism, and holding the offices of United States' Commercial Agent (Consul) and British Pro-Consul. Wright's moments of confrontations with his own family, and more significantly, with the staunch abolitionist Dubliner, Richard Robert Madden, shed more light onto the fluidity of his transnationality.

La Gran Sofía Coffee Plantation: A Paradise for Whom?

In 19th-century traveller literature, Santiago's coffee plantations were often described as an earthly paradise.[16] Richard Henry Dana Jr. immortalized them in his writing in the following manner:

---

14 About the British tolerance to Irish in their Caribbean colonies, see: Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*., 54.

15 For the context of Irish Catholicism in the British Caribbean, see: Rodgers.

16 Rosemond de Beauvallon, *L'île de Cuba*, 455-6.

> Coffee must grow under shade. Consequently the coffee estate was, in the first place, a plantation of trees ... Economy and taste led the planters ... to select fruit trees, and trees valuable for their wood, as well as pleasing for their beauty and shade .... The plantation was, therefore, laid out like a garden, with avenues and footpaths ... It was a beautiful and simple horticulture, on a very large scale. Time was required to perfect this garden, – the Cubans call it paradise.[17]

However, a paradise for whom? Most certainly he was referring to a white planter class that conceived of the *cafetales* as a social space in which they had an opportunity to display competing notions of beauty and taste. For the French-Creole planters in particular, it was a way to boast their presumed cultural superiority.[18] For the Cuban-Creole planters, it was a cultural competition with the newly-arrived French. At the bottom were the often anonymous enslaved labourers who were responsible for the manual planting and the maintenance of a so-called paradise, which for them was nothing more than a prison.[19]

As early as 1807, the Baltimore Monthly Meeting of Friends took a stance against slavery.[20] This was the same Quaker Meeting that admitted 19-year-old James J. Wright into their fellowship in August of that same year.[21] They later disowned him in 1827 after having confirmed that Wright was "holding his fellow men in bondage and being concerned in the African Slave trade".[22] 1808 was the year selected by the young United States as the end-moment for the human traffic in enslaved African people. It coincided with a similar measure approved by Westminster in 1806-1807.[23] However, their stance against human trafficking was more of a political statement and less of a proactive fight against it. In the words of Nini Rodgers: "the

---

17 Richard Henry Jr. Dana, *To Cuba and Back: A Vacation Voyage* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1859), 117-8.

18 Claudia López Moreno, "El aroma del café francés. Aportes culturales de la presencia francesa en el partido Ramón de las Yaguas" (Bachelor Thesis, Santiago de Cuba, Universidad de Oriente, 2018) describes this process in its entirety.

19 In today's slavery studies there is a clear demarcation between using the word "enslaved" vs "slave". This indicates an accepted separation between how the Africans saw themselves and their circumstances. A similar transformation has undertaken the use of "enslaver" over "owner" or "master". Slavery was a forced dehumanizing condition, and the use of this specific language has perpetuated it. Therefore, I use enslaver to refer to people like James J. Wright, and enslaved to refer to the labourers held at his plantations. See: Foreman, "Writing about 'Slavery'?"

20 Baltimore Yearly Meeting, *Minutes, 1807-1824*, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania: RG2/B/B353 1.1, 3. Ancestry (Database).

21 Baltimore Yearly Meeting, *Minutes:* 53.

22 Baltimore Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (May 31, 1827), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania: RG2/B/B3551.6. Ancestry (Database).

23 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, 96; Chambers, *No God but Gain*, 7.

external slave trade was banned without touching the internal institution" of slavery.[24] Due to British pressure, Spain finally outlawed slave trafficking in 1820. However, the Spanish colonial authorities in Cuba, whose economic interests often lay in the maintenance of slavery, were complicit in its continuity. Statistical evidence demonstrates that the traffic actually intensified after it was prohibited. In the case of Cuba, more than eighty-five percent of the African people trafficked into the island were imported after this activity had been declared illegal.[25]

The official narrative of condemning the slave trade while not making any real attempts to actually suppress it, helps explain why by 1827, Wright had gained a reputation as a trafficker.[26] It is difficult to determine the level of involvement that Wright had with the African business. Like many others employed in this piratical enterprise, he made sure that evidence of his involvement did not survive. Chambers claims that people involved in the enslaved people's traffic adopted a code of silence by "avoiding correspondence whenever possible and routinely destroying their records".[27] Evidence suggests that Wright was involved with the slave trade since the early 1820s, perhaps even earlier, and it was not until his trip back to the United States in 1833 that he rekindled his relationship with his relatives in Ireland. Wright himself explained to his aunt Martha that he did not keep the correspondence he received.[28] This seems to suggest that he had adopted some of the behaviours of the traffickers. But there are some traces of archival evidence that firmly link him to the slave trade.

In 1828, British patrols captured the vessel *La Fanny* after it was reported by a member of its crew for having both French and Dutch papers.[29] Upon a closer inspection, the British Mixed Court of Justice in Sierra Leone, an institution created to hold people responsible for engaging in the illegal trade, determined that *La Fanny's* port of departure had been Santiago de Cuba, a Spanish port. Therefore, it was likely that its French and Dutch papers were a forgery.[30] On board *La Fanny* there were a total of 283 Africans. Their demographic distribution was: 57.8% men,

---

24 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, 24.

25 Chambers, *No God but Gain*, 6.

26 Baltimore Yearly Meeting, *Minutes* (May 31, 1827), Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania: RG2/B/B3551.6. Ancestry (Database).

27 Chambers, *No God but Gain*, 84.

28 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, December 27, 1835. HLRSF/Letter 7.

29 This was a frequent subterfuge that traffickers used to avoid being detained by the British. See: Hugh Thomas, *Cuba or The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998)., 158-161.

30 Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Database), https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database.

16.8% women, 11.9% boys, and 13.9% girls; their collective shipboard mortality rate was 6%.[31] After the Mixed Court interrogated the twenty-two members of its crew, the British authorities reported to the Foreign Office in London:

> There is a fact connected with this Vessel, which, differing from the testimony of all the other Witnesses, appears most suspicious. Eugene Honora, a boy belonging to 'La Fanny' swore, "that a Mr. Wright appointed the Master to the command of 'La Fanny' at St. Jago de Cuba; that he is the Owner of that Vessel; knows him to be the Owner because he put the Captain on board, and furnished the Crew with provisions and money; that Mr. Wright was either an Englishman or an American, and resides opposite the Wharf at St. Jago [sic] de Cuba; that he is the Owner and Consignee of the Slaves on board, who were to be delivered on the Coast of Cuba, for his real account, risk, and benefit; his ground for this belief is, that the Vessel and outward bound Cargo belonged to him, the latter having been put on board from his Stores". We have been informed that the names of the Firm of Joli and Company, who appear as the Agents of Messrs. Bonnaffe and Lariviere of Guadaloupe [sic], are Joli and Wright. It is probable from this circumstances, that, as Joli and Company shipped the Cargo, as is fully shown they did in the French Papers, that the Witness may have thus supposed Mr. Wright was the real Owner; if otherwise, it must show the gross subterfurges [sic] of the Parties concerned in these nefarious transactions.[32]

There are several key facts in this record which suggests that the Wright in this account is actually James J. Wright. First, his presence in Santiago de Cuba in 1827 is well documented, as is the location of his residence opposite the wharf (see Maps 6 and 12). Second, the witness account that this Wright was "either an Englishman or an American", reveals that this person probably heard him speaking the English language, and did not know the difference between people from the United States, England, or Ireland. In Santiago's archival material there is no evidence of the presence of another person with the surname Wright inhabiting the city at the time. Moreover, in the *Protocolos Notoriales*, Wright is often described as Irish, but also as Anglo-American.[33] Travellers, like Rosemond, mistook him for an Englishman. And finally, the voyage of *La Fanny* had begun on October 27, 1827. Baltimore's Quakers had disowned Wright in May of that year. This indicates that, although this ship's trip started in October, and it was captured between March and April of the following year, Wright had already gained a reputation

31 Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Database).

32 D. Denham & Wm. Smith to The Earl of Dudley, Sierra Leone, May 24, 1828. Foreign Office, *Correspondence with the British Commissioners at Sierra Leone, The Havana, Rio de Janeiro, and Surinam Relative to the Slave Trade* (London: R. G. Clarke, 1828), 86.

33 AHPSCU/PN/1819: 225.

as a trafficker, and he must have been engaged in the trade for quite some time if news of his activities had reached the Baltimore Quakers.

Wright's earliest recorded involvement with the illegal traffic dates back to December, 1820, and is documented on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database. The names Wright & Shelton, alongside one Antonio Vincan (this could be a typo for Antonio Vinent) appear as owners of the schooner *Ana Maria*, a Spanish vessel captured by the British and tried at the Mixed Court in Sierra Leone in May, 1821. When the *Ana Maria* left Sierra Leone, it had contained 491 enslaved Africans, but when the British boarded the ship, it contained only 401. Thus, in the few days that it took for the British cruisers to pursue and detain the vessel, 90 people had lost their lives. This represents a mortality rate of 18.3%. The gender distribution was similar to that of *La Fanny*. Men composed 47.6% of the total, whereas only 20.2% were women. Children comprised 32.2% of the total, 14% of them girls and 18.2% boys.[34] The large presence of male adults in both *La Fanny* and *Ana Maria* reveals the true nature of the traffic and the intentions of people like Wright; they wanted labourers who could be rapidly incorporated into the production processes of the plantations. The small quantities of females indicate that in their capitalist mentality it was more profitable to work these people to death, re-replenishing their numbers through the illegal trade, rather than allowing them to form families and reproduce.

Santiago's *Protocolos Notariales* document Wright's business dealings since 1819, and perhaps earlier, with three other Irishmen: Richard Maxwell Bell, and brothers Samuel (c.1789-1842) and William Barnett Wanton (dates unknown). They were all of Quaker origin, and they were all participating in the illegal traffic of Africans.[35] As was seen in Chapter 2, Bell's genealogists claim that he made his fortune in the euphemistically called "African trade". About the adoption of this term to refer to the traffic, Rodgers sustains that: "No merchant so engaged would have described himself as a slave trader. They were merchants engaged in the Guinea trade or the African trade, a trade which always included articles other than slaves".[36]

34 Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Database).

35 Baltimore Monthly Meeting (Eastern, Western, Homewood), Haverford College; Haverford, Pennsylvania; *Minutes, 1803-1847*; Collection: *Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Minutes*; Call Number: 1116/51. Ancestry (Database).

36 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, 96.

The Wanton brothers, originally from the village of Ballintra, parish of Drumholm, in south Co. Donegal, were in the group of multinational adventurers that made Santiago their home after 1810.[37] There is evidence that a William B. Wanton, "comerciante" (merchant), was already living in Santiago in 1814.[38] In 1819, he appears as *Guillermo* in Santiago's *Protocolos Notariales* and as "irlandés naturalizado" (naturalized Irish).[39] This indicates that, similar to Wright, the Wantons had settled in Santiago, naturalized as Spanish, established a partnership with a local by the name of Juan Morales, and purchased a coffee plantation named Santa Rosa (see Map 9).[40] These Irish Quakers had strong links to Baltimore and Philadelphia, and it can be confirmed that they, like Wright and Bell, converted to Catholicism before 1819.[41]

Samuel Wanton died in Santiago in 1842. Upon his death, his female relatives in Ballintra, Co. Donegal, received a handsome sum of around $2,000 *pesos*, although Wanton's worth was valued from £6,000 to £7,000 pounds sterling.[42] This money had resulted from the liquidation of the Santa Rosa estate, and the division of the total value of the property among the different partners. This included funds resulting from the sale of the enslaved Africans who worked on the plantation.[43] Brooks & Co. remitted the inheritance to Ireland in 1847, five years after Wanton had died.[44]

William B. Wanton was the person to whom sailors departing for Africa asked to draw up their wills before leaving Santiago. Wanton appears frequently as the main beneficiary and first executor in the wills they made before embarking.[45] His brother Samuel, drafted his own will before departing for Africa himself in 1819.[46] Samuel Wanton's name is mostly off the records, appearing only occasionally; however, the name of the vessel in which he went to Africa did

---

37 Charles Clarke to the Mayor of Lifford, Co. Donegal. Santiago de Cuba, October 31, 1842. BNA/FO/453-4, 300.

38 AHPSCU/PN/1814, 58.

39 AHPSCU/PN/1819, 26.

40 Charles Clarke to the Mayor of Lifford, Co. Donegal. Santiago de Cuba, October 31, 1842. BNA/FO/453-4, 300.

41 Baltimore Monthly Meeting, *Minutes*, 1803-1847: 1116/51; William Barnet Wanton, *Maryland, Federal Naturalization Records, 1795-1931*, National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter NARA), Washington, D.C., No.654310, 1903 – 1972: RG 21. Accessed through Ancestry Database June 25, 2020; AHPSCU/PN/1819, 290.

42 James Forbes to Isabella Dinsmore, British Consulate, Santiago de Cuba, June 5, 1846. BNA/FO/453-5, 228.

43 Forbes.

44 Forbes, 383.

45 AHPSCU/PN/1819, 134, 145-6.

46 AHPSCU/PN/1819, 290.

leave its marks. In his will, Samuel Wanton stated that he was "soon to depart for the coast of Africa" in the Spanish schooner *Teresa*, alias *La Golondrina*.[47] *La Golondrina* was captained by Francisco Gerandi (or Geraudy), who was associated with Samuel's brother William.[48] On the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database appears a very active *Teresa*, but it is not recorded that this ship ever left from Santiago, but from Havana. *La Golondrina*, however, does appear as departing frequently from Santiago for the coast of Africa. Between 1810 and 1820, this vessel undertook a total of nine recorded trips across the Atlantic, and then a tenth in 1836, after the declaration of the traffic as illegal.[49] This interruption could have been related to the Spanish prohibition of the trade in 1820, and the fact that the British cruisers grew into their role policing the Atlantic Ocean and became more effective. This combination made the trips to Africa more dangerous, but also more attractive because, if successful, they were very lucrative.[50] It could have been that, for a number of years, *La Golondrina* managed to evade capture and therefore does not appear in the records from 1820 until 1836. More importantly, in the span of ten years, in *La Golondrina* 2,469 people were trafficked, but only 2,174 survived the crossing and were subsequently sold into slavery in Santiago de Cuba. On this ship alone and solely for the nine trips that have made the records, 295 Africans lost their lives.[51] Like the Irish famine vessels in Black '47, ships like *La Fanny*, *Ana Maria*, and *La Golondrina*, and many others engaged in the African trade, were their own kinds of coffin ships. This evinces that Irish Quaker immigrants' involvement with the traffic of African people had become an intrinsic part of their lives in Santiago de Cuba.

In addition to *La Fanny* and *Ana Maria*, Wright owned the schooner *Faire*, which he sold in 1819 for the small fortune of $6,000 *pesos*.[52] It has not been possible to connect the vessel *Faire* with Africa and the slave trade; however, given the nature of its owner, and the illicit activities in which he was involved, it may well have been involved. Like Wright's ownership of the *Ana Maria* and *La Fanny*, William B. Wanton was the owner of the schooner *Brutus*, a ship that on at least one occasion was registered as engaged in the African traffic.[53] The *Protocolos*

47 AHPSCU/PN/1819, 290.
48 William B. Wanton gave Francisco Gerandi a power of attorney in 1819. AHPSCU/PN/1819, 263.
49 Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Database).
50 Chambers, *No God but Gain*., 86.
51 Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Database).
52 AHPSCU/PN/1819, 195-6.
53 Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (Database).

Notariales also reveal that William B. Wanton had a business relationship with Wright. On one occasion, he owed Wright $3.751 *pesos*, a debt that seems to have been related to the insurance of an unspecified vessel.[54] In 1835, Charles Clarke, who was acting as British Consul in Santiago, wrote to Wright, Shelton, & Co. in response to this firm's appeal for the Consul's in-writing support of William B. Wanton's business trip to Jamaica. Clarke finishes his letter thus: "I have great pleasure in attesting his high respectability not only individually as a gentleman but also as the confidential agent of yourselves".[55] This is the same Charles Clarke whose re-appointment as British Consul in Santiago, Wright, Brooks & Co. were trying to secure in 1840. In a *quid pro quo* style they solicited the support of Baring Brothers in London for Clarke's appointment.[56]

The institution of slavery and the illegal trafficking of human beings made it possible that millions of people were perpetually forced to work. Enslavers who identified as Irish, such as Wright, the Wanton brothers, and Bell, quietly, but significantly, contributed to upholding this institution, and economically benefited from it. In just one of his many plantations, La Gran Sofía, James Jenkinson Wright managed to hold under bondage the considerable number of three hundred people, and he trafficked into the country many more. They were nothing more to him than merchandize. Wright himself reported to his Quaker aunt Martha Wright in Dublin: "indeed you will have sometimes to defend me to yourself for an occasional delay [in the correspondence] by the consideration that I have the wants of 300 beings to attend to and their labours to direct, without losing sight at the same time of other affairs".[57] It is noticeable that he calls them "beings" when addressing his aunt, and does not explicitly mention that they were actually subjected to bondage. This presupposes Martha Wright's possible condemnation of his nephew's lifestyle. Even if Wright understated the number of enslaved African labourers he had, which is likely he did, this number is still considerable for a coffee plantation, given that coffee, unlike sugar, did not require a large labour force to be produced.[58]

As shown in Maps 9, 10, 12, and 13, La Gran Sofía is located in La Sierra de la Gran Piedra at 800 meters above sea level, and 8 km east of La Gran Piedra (The Big Rock, the most

54 AHPSCU/PN/1819, 244-5.
55 Charles Clarke to Wright. Shelton, & Co., Santiago de Cuba, February 21, 1835. BNA/FO/453/2.
56 Thomas Brooks to Baring Brothers & Co., London, October 17, 1840. BA/HC4/4.6.6.
57 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Sophie Estate, Santiago de Cuba, January 2, 1835. HLRSF/Letter 6.
58 García Álvarez, "Auge y decadencia.", 301.

recognizable landmark in the area). Local experts in Santiago, particularly Dr. López Segrera, have found that the most striking feature of La Gran Sofía, the most important coffee plantation in the Santiago area and Wright's crown jewel, was the size of its barracks (see Figure 8).[59] From 2008 to 2010, Dr. López Segrera conducted an interdisciplinary study of La Gran Sofía due to the importance of this heritage site as a key material remnant of the coffee cultural landscape of eastern Cuba. La Gran Sofía has the largest quantity of surviving structures that are directly linked to the industrial process of coffee production in the Santiago area, and its slave barracks (barracoons) have been described as impressive because they held the greatest number of enslaved people in the region (see Figure 8).[60] López Segrera estimates that more than a hundred labourers were confined there, a figure that, when contrasted with Wright's own account, suggests that in reality this number was much higher.[61] She explains that "the *batey* of this *cafetal* stands out due to the impressive size of its buildings, specially its *barracones*, the main house, the dryers, the fermentation tanks, the coffee house, the lime kiln, and others" (see Figures 8, 16, and 17).[62]

Nonetheless, this is a material heritage that is danger of disappearing in its entirety. The access road to the plantation was significantly damaged after Hurricane Sandy in 2012, and it is located in an area of frequent seismic activity. Historically, La Gran Sofía, and many of Wright's other former properties have been affected by earthquakes. In 1852, Miguel Estorch reported that:

> In La Anita, Carolina, San James, La [Gran] Sofía, El Kentucky, and La Africana, a few walls came down, others suffered from cracks, the dryers and pools have also cracked ... the beautiful and spacious main house of La [Gran] Sofía, which was in another time a recreation place for its wealthy owner D[on]. Santiago Wright, abandoned since a few years ago ... has been almost destroyed.[63]

López Segrera admits that "a considerable proportion of the coffee material heritage is today in an archaeological state where the structures are partially or completely buried" (see Figures 10,

59 López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico.", 247.
60 López Segrera., 256.
61 López Segrera., 128.
62 *Batey* (plural *bateyes*) is a word of taíno origin. It denotes the residential area of a plantation where the labourers lived and worked. See: López Segrera., 247.
63 Miguel Estorch, *Apuntes para la Historia sobre el Terremoto que tuvo lugar en Santiago de Cuba y otros puntos el 20 de Agosto de 1852 y temblores subsiguientes* (Havana: Imprenta de Loreto Espiral, 1852)., 39.

11, 12, and 13).[64] However, with the aid of geographers, architects, archaeologists, biologists, and other experts, López Segrera and her team managed to map and three-dimensionally reconstruct La Gran Sofía, the main site from which Wright wrote to his aunts in Ireland (see Figures 14 and 15).

If there is a symbolic place of memory (*lieux de mémoire*) in Santiago connected with Wright and Ireland, it is La Gran Sofía.[65] But the memories it evokes are not necessarily positive, comfortable, or unproblematic ones. In spite of its complex and controversial past, La Gran Sofía has been memorialized and incorporated into the city's coffee legacy, and its historical and cultural life, in two different ways. One is its inclusion into *Caminos del Café* (Coffee Roads), which is a project of the Oficina del Conservador de la Ciudad (City's Conservation Office).[66] In spite of the negative memories the plantations evoke, Santiago's inhabitants are invested in preserving, restoring, and rescuing sites like La Gran Sofía because they are symbolic spaces associated with the fusion of cultural elements that led to the construction of a Cuban nation and a Cuban identity. A sense of *cubanía* (i.e. Cuban identity or Cubanness) does not exist without coffee or sugar, and the significant African contribution to it was already conceptualized in José Martí's post-colonial vision of a Cuban nation "con todos y para el bien de todos" (with all and for all).[67]

The second instance of memorialization can be found at the Plaza de Marte where the Café Ven "La Gran Sofía" is located (see Figures 19, 20, and 21). It was one of the many new establishments that were opened for the 500th Anniversary of the foundation of the city in 2015. Arguably, this place commemorates La Gran Sofía as an important part of the coffee legacy of the region, and not James J. Wright, its Irish owner. However, although it is a regular Café, accessible and popular with the locals, on one of its walls, printed on acrylic, one can find several photographs of the archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía, with a text that reads:

---

64 López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico.", 253.

65 For the conceptualization of place of memory, or lieux de mémoire, see: Pierre Nora and Lawrence D Kritzman, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

66 Casa Dranguet, "Patrimonio cafetalero de Santiago de Cuba: sus tres principales parques arqueológicos," *Casa Dranguet* (blog), October 26, 2019, https://casadranguet.wordpress.com/2019/10/26/patrimonio-cafetalero-de-santiago-de-cuba-sus-tres-principales-parques-arqueologicos/.

67 José Julián Martí Pérez (1853-1898): ideological father of the Cuban nation, member of the Independence Army, and modernist poet.

> This coffee plantation was the greatest of all of those located in La Sierra de La Gran Piedra ... it was created at the beginning of the third decade of the 19th century. Initially known as La Sophia, it was owned by the partnership formed by Santiago Wright, of Irish nationality, and who owned other coffee plantations in the area, with Antonio Vinent and Enrique Shelton. Later on, on November 27, 1872, it was sold as La Gran Sofía by its then owner Juan Fernández de Castro to the Banco de Cuba.[68]

In the *Protocolos Notariales*, which testify to Wright & Shelton's financial ruin in 1826, La Sophia appears as one of the seven different coffee plantations they mortgaged to pay off their debts.[69] More importantly, from the text of the plaque cited above, and located inside the Café Ven "La Gran Sofía" (see Figure 21), it can be observed that out of its three co-owners only Wright's Irish nationality is highlighted. A memory of his Irishness has been locally preserved and transmitted over time; local curators of this memory considered this information sufficiently relevant not to be left out. In a city focused on the celebration through memorialization of its French pedigree, La Gran Sofía stands out as an Irish *lieux de mémoire*. In spite of its grandeur, importance, and commemoration, La Gran Sofía is just one of many Irish coffee plantations in the area, the majority of which have not even been linked to a memory of Irish immigration to Santiago de Cuba or studied (see Table 6 and Map 9). For example, Wright's Kentucky coffee plantation was one of large surface area, and it can be claimed that, after La Gran Sofía, it is the second in importance in the area.[70]

Letters to Dublin: Wright's Rhetoric of Tranquility and Loud Moments of Silence, 1833-1845

The richness of James J. Wright's case study is found mainly in the collection of letters that have been preserved in Dublin, documenting the life of this Irish immigrant in Cuba. To date, as primary sources for the study of Irish migration to the Spanish Caribbean and Cuba, and of Irish reactions to and interactions with slavery, they are unique. A study of the lives of men like Wright or Bell, who occupied such a prominent role in the building of transnational networks of trade and exchange, should not be reduced to a quantitative analysis of their rightful place in

68 Translation by the author of original inscription located at Café Ven "La Gran Sofía". See Figure 21.
69 HPSC/Protocolos Notariales (hereinafter PN)/1827: 45-46, 50-58, 125-126, 131, 148, 168.
70 Oficina del Conservador de Santiago de Cuba, *Sitio Cultural*., 53.

world markets and economic history. The existence of Wright's letters allows the researcher to bridge the quantitative with the qualitative, and add key elements to Wright's migratory experience, such as his participation in the maintaining of slavery in Cuba, a fact that is never mentioned in his business letters or those of his partners.[71]

When the correspondence starts, Wright presents himself to his Irish aunt Martha in this way:

> After many long years of continual turmoil and anxiety and unremitted perseverance, I at last feel myself getting clear of many of my troubles, and obtained what may be reasonably considered a competence as to fortune... I reside in the Island of Cuba as a Merchant and Coffee Planter but it is in the latter branch that I am myself actually employed, I am a Catholic from conviction and an old Bachelor from necessity, and bear I believe an unblemished reputation this latter I name for your satisfaction, and not from my own egotism ...[72]

It is evident that Wright benefited in Cuba from the establishment of an equivalence between Irishness and Catholicism, a process that had taken place during the century prior to his arrival.[73] This was a process in which the "Wild Geese" played a significant role in the 17th and 18th centuries, and by the time Wright settled in Cuba, this was a well-established idea in Spanish America: Irish meant Catholic.

When Wright's letters are compared with similar corpus found in the Anglo-Caribbean, common themes emerge. For example, Wright's letters from Cuba also tell of financial difficulties and ambition, and of the migrant's longing for a return to the motherland that, in many cases, never took place.[74] Return migration, Rodgers claims in her work on the British West Indies, was thwarted by the pressures exerted upon the migrants to remain in the host society.[75] On numerous occasions, Wright wrote about making a trip back to Ireland, but there is evidence of his anxiety about being away from La Gran Sofía and his consequent inability to personally supervise his enslaved labourers. In his first letter to his aunt, written in 1833 from

---

71 On a similar approach to Irish migrants correspondence, see: Miller et al., *Irish Immigrants;* David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia.* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994); Arnold Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigration, 1850-1900.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956); and, Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber, and Suzanne M. Sinke, eds., *Letters across Borders: Epistolary Practices of International Migrants* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

72 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, New York, October 6, 1833. HLRSF/Letters 1 and 2.

73 A similar idea is presented in: Wright, *Ulster Slave Owner*., 31.

74 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*., 83.

75 Rodgers.

New York when Wright was on his way back to Santiago after visiting his relatives in Ohio, he wrote: "I leave this City for home in about three weeks for being a farmer I must be on the ground during crop, which will have commenced before I can get there [to] do all I can".[76] His reference to Cuba as his "home" is important. It evinces Wright's emotional connection with his adopted land – although a decade earlier, according to his father, Wright had had no intention of settling there permanently.[77] In another missive, his attachment to Cuba becomes even more explicit:

> It is needless for me to repeat that nothing would afford me more pleasure than revisiting the natal soil, but really I found things so ve[ry] much out of order here, from my 4 Mos [months] absence in the United States that I should be continually on thorns thinking that affairs in Cuba were most probably suffering, however it is yet possible that I may gather myself together and pop up on you some of these days[78]

Historian Jonathan Jeffrey Wright has found similar tropes in the letters of Belfast-native John Black. He has identified in Black's letters a rhetoric of sensibility, which he presents as part of a clear strategy to maintain and reinforce familial ties on the part of the Irish migrant, and to hide the true nature of an Irish slaveholder.[79] Black, like Wright, also manifested in his correspondence a desire to re-visit what they both denoted as their "native soil".[80] There are some unique themes that encompass Wright's exchange with his aunts and cousin that are worth highlighting. One is the frequent way in which he refers to Cuba using what I call a rhetoric of tranquility. In Wright's letters, Cuba is an everlasting peaceful island, removed from political turmoil. Apparently, political affairs never disrupted Wright's idyllic life in Santiago. This is, most assuredly, far from true. Whoever reads Wright's accounts of his time in Cuba might imagine that there were no moments of challenge to the colonial status quo, that everyone was content and happy, even the enslaved. The rhetoric of tranquility in Wright's letters is articulated around several axes: the maintenance of the colonial status quo; the denial and omission of political events that threatened or disrupted said status quo; the confrontation with – and attempts to discredit – abolitionist figures; the articulation of a discourse in favour of slavery; and a self-

---

76 James Jenkinson Wright to Martha Wright, New York, October 6, 1833. HLRSF/Letter 2.

77 Miller et al., *Irish Immigrants,* 219-220.

78 James Jenkinson Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, February 28, 1834. HLRSF/Letter 4.

79 Wright, *Ulster Slave Owner*, 42-5.

80 For James J. Wright's use of this trope see: HLRSF/Letters 11, 14, 18, 20, 27, 35, & 40; For John Black's, see: Wright., 39.

presentation as a benign enslaver. The following examples illustrate how all of these themes are present in Wright's writings.

Wright's business interests depended upon the maintenance of a balance of power over, and the continuity of traffic in, African people. He was counting on continuing to profit from his investments in coffee; that is why his workers had to keep the plantation running. Wright felt that he was the only one who could guarantee this, and that therefore his sojourns abroad were detrimental to the process. He was, in no way, an absentee planter, like many Irish and English planters were in the British, French, and Danish Caribbean. Moreover, he needed to guarantee that tropical products continued to be shipped to international markets. If there was any rebellion among Wright's enslaved labourers during a time when African revolts in Cuba were becoming more frequent, his letters never mentioned them.[81] Adriana Chira claims that, between 1825 and 1844 alone, Cuban authorities uncovered at least sixty conspiracies among the enslaved.[82] For all these reasons, I argue that Wright employed a rhetoric of tranquility when writing to Moses Taylor and his other business partners, since stability was essential to profitable commerce. But why would Wright depict Cuba in this way to his relatives in Ireland? The answers are found in the letters themselves.

There are moments of tension and confrontation in Wright's private correspondence, especially when addressing the issue of slavery and Wright's own role as an enslaver. Even though the sources tell a one-sided story, because the letters penned by Martha Wright, Rachel Jenkinson, and Jonathan Wright have not been preserved, there is evidence that his relatives learned of his activities and challenged him about them. In 1836, Wright responded to his aunts' arguments against the acceptance of his £50 pounds sterling annual remittances thus:

> .... [I]t is probable that she [Rachel Jenkinson] may think that the monies transmitted are the product of slave labour, it is not so, I am a sleeping partner in the firm by which the drafts are drawn holding 1/8 interest in the Concern it is a Commission House in which is Partner the Consul of the U[nited] States (which Office, by the bye, I held myself for 4 or 5 years and the Government nominated upon my resignation the Gentleman recommended to them by me) and it holds no land cultivated by slaves, nor has ever since its establishment in 1826 been engaged either as principal or agent in the traffic of Slaves, nor in any other branch of business to my knowledge that one of the Society of friends would not be

81 About enslaved people's rebellions, see: Aisha K. Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba: La Escalera and the Insurgencies of 1841-1844* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

82 Chira, *Uneasy Intimacies*, 176.

> authorised [sic] to engage in, and the drafts transmitted are from my legitimate profits in said house...[83]

Wright's letter to aunt Martha was disingenuous in many ways. First, Wright was not a mere "sleeping" partner in the business; he was the main partner in Wright, Shelton & Co. Second, he used his former position as United States' Consul (and on another occasion, as the British Consul as well) to support his denial of any involvement in slavery.[84] As explained in Chapter Three, representatives of the United States, and especially those of Britain, were legally barred by their own governments from involvement in either slavery or the illegal traffic – a stricture often ignored. Third, Wright's claims that he held no lands cultivated by enslaved people, that he was not involved in the slave trade, and that his wealth was not a direct result of slavery, were simply false. Finally, the same Society of Friends, whose rules he seems to have been abiding by despite being a converted Catholic, had disowned him for these very same reasons. When Wright's maternal aunt, Rachel Jenkinson, died in 1837, the "draft which she declined using" was discovered uncollected.[85]

In 1842, Martha Wright seems to have inquired about a "Dr. Madden". This was none other than Dr. Richard Robert Madden (1798-1886): Irish Catholic, staunch abolitionist, historian of the United Irishmen, and one of the first Irish Catholics to be appointed to a position in the British Civil Service after the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Act (1829). Perhaps Martha Wright had come across Madden's account of slavery in Jamaica, published in 1835, in which he claims that he was not surprised by news of the continuation of the traffic in human beings; and that he had "not been little surprised to find persons, even of a religious character, advocating slavery less as a system beneficial to the community than pleasing to the Divine authority...".[86] Or perhaps Martha Wright had heard of Madden's widely read pamphlet, "Regarding the Slave

83 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, September 4, 1836. HLRSF/Letter 10.

84 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, December 30, 1838. HLRSF/Letter 13.

85 James Wright was sending his aunt Rachel Jenkinson, who has lost her property, the annual remittance of £50 pounds sterling to cover debts she had incurred with the Society of Friends. See: James J. Wright to Rachel Jenkinson, Santiago de Cuba, December 27, 1835, HLRSF/Letter 8; James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, February 28, 1838. HLRSF/Letter 12.

86 Richard Robert Madden, *A Twelvemonth's Residence in the West Indies: During the Transition from Slavery to Apprenticeship with Incidental Notices of the State of Society, Prospects, and Natural Resources of Jamaica and Other Islands* (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea and Blanchard, 1835), 112.

Trade in Cuba" (1839), published in Boston.[87] Likewise, according to Gera Burton, Madden's *A Twelvemonths Residence in the West Indies* (1835) had a considerable impact on the abolitionist debate in Britain, on Daniel O'Connell, and on the British Parliament's early eradication of the post-emancipation system of apprenticeship in Jamaica, which Madden described as nothing but "modified slavery".[88]

Soon after Madden's *A Twelvemonths Residence in the West Indies* came out in 1835, he was in Havana employed as Judge Arbitrator in the Mixed Anglo-Spanish Court. He also acted as first Superintendent of Liberated Africans. Both of these positions he held until 1839. Madden's reputation preceded him to Havana, and Miguel Tacón, then Captain-General of the island, labelled him a "dangerous man" and tried to block his arrival.[89] Madden learned quickly of the devices used by the Creole and Spanish planters to hide the fact that the illicit trade in enslaved Africans was continuing; and he gained a reputation for showing up, unannounced, in sugar and coffee plantations to find proof of the presence of *bozales* (Black people born in Africa) imported after 1820.[90] There was at least one attempt against Madden's life while in Cuba, and upon leaving the island to participate in the famous *Amistad* trial in the United States, he continued to campaign against Cuban slavery.[91] In light of these key facts about Madden's career and political convictions, there is no surprise in Wright's reply to his aunt: "I am not personally acquainted with Doctor Madden, he is of a clique to which I am diametrically opposed".[92] If Wright's interests depended on the maintenance of the *status quo* in Cuba, Madden's sole mission was to challenge the entrenched institution of slavery.

Madden was not the only abolitionist figure that met with Wright's disapproval. Coinciding with Madden's presence in Havana, Scotsman David Turnbull (c.1794-1851) arrived in Santiago in 1838. Unlike Madden, Turnbull and Wright did meet, with Turnbull even staying overnight at Wright's town residence: "Turnbull once received the hospitality of my house, but it was before,

87 Gera Burton, "Richard Robert Madden, A Twelvemonth's residence in the West Indies," in *Irlanda y Cuba: Historias Entretejidas / Ireland & Cuba: Entangled Histories*, ed. Margaret Brehony and Nuala Finnegan, 1st Edition (Havana: Ediciones Boloña, 2019), 43.

88 Burton, 36, 38; see also: Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, 93-4. On Daniel O'Connell's views on the slavery question, see: Bruce Nelson, *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012): 57-118.

89 Burton, "Liberty's Call.", 39.

90 Burton, 40.

91 Burton, 39.

92 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, April 13, 1842. HLRSF/Letter 21.

I became aware of the tendency of his writings and his acts".[93] Turnbull, appointed in 1840 as British Consul in Havana, was another key figure in the campaign against slavery in Cuba. In his *Travels in the West*, Turnbull mentions Wright.[94] In Wright's home, Turnbull found "all sorts of English comforts and accommodations", and he referred to Wright as an "excellent host".[95] Moreover, Turnbull testifies to Wright's close friendship with the then British Consul John Hardy Jr., who was the person who later nominated Wright for this office. Wright and Turnbull corresponded frequently due to Wright's tenure as British Pro-Consul coinciding with Turnbull presiding over the Havana consulate. Their respective views and attitudes towards slavery were at the opposite ends of the political spectrum. While in Cuba, Turnbull was trying to prove that British subjects were holding people in bondage. Having his activities become too subversive, Turnbull was eventually forced to flee from the island in 1842. Afterwards, he was blamed for the largest uprising of the enslaved Africans in Cuba, known as "La Conspiración de la Escalera" (The Conspiracy of the Ladder), which took place in 1844.[96] Wright never mentioned the 1844 uprising in his letters, but given that the rebellion took place in Matanzas (in western Cuba). This rebellion involved many people, including some Irishmen and the famous poet Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés (Plácido). Given its dimension, extent, impact, and violent aftermath, Wright must have been aware of its occurrence.[97] This is another example of a moment of silence in Wright's correspondence, one that preserves the rhetorical façade of tranquility.

It seems Madden's notoriety in Ireland also reached Jonathan Wright, James' cousin. Jonathan seems to have asked his cousin "what sort of man is Doctor Madden?". Wright's subsequent reply summed up his views on both Madden and Turnbull, and left no doubt as to his position on the issue of slavery:

> ... no two more noxious individuals ever were resident of this Island, they have both done all they could to introduce discord and strife into our happy and tranquil country and

93 Wright.

94 Turnbull, *Travels in the West*., 5-6.

95 Turnbull., 6.

96 For more details on Turnbull and the events of 1844, see: Curry-Machado, *Cuban Sugar Industry*.

97 For a historiographical study of La Conspiración de La Escalera (The Ladder Uprising, also known as the Year of the Lash) see: María del Carmen Barcia Zequeira and Manuel Barcia Paz, "La Conspiración de La Escalera: El Precio de Una Traición," *Catauro, Revista Cubana de Antropología*, 2001, 199–204; Robert L Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988); Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion*; and, Michele Reid-Vazquez, *The Year of the Lash: Free People of Color in Cuba and the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Athens, Ga; London: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

> Turnbull has published a book full of known lies and misstatements ... and I have little doubt but that Madden will pursue a like course in order to replenish his purse, and that his work will be as little entitled to credit as that of his friend, who except as regards the statistics compiled from others, filled it with a tissue either of woeful ignorance or sheer and willful [sic] prevarications.[98]

This excerpt demonstrates that, in Wright's mind, tranquility was linked to the maintenance of slavery and the colonial *status quo.* This is key to understanding his political views and his transformation from Irish Quaker to "Don Santiago", Cuban Catholic planter and slaveholder. About one thing Wright was right: Madden's *The Island of Cuba* did come out in 1849, and it remains one of the most valuable depictions of 19th-century Cuban society, the system of slavery, and the centrality of the island in the illegal African traffic.[99] Madden's work is also an important Irish contribution to Cuban historiography.

Much like his fellow Irish Protestant countryman John Mitchel, Wright articulated in his letters a pro-slavery ideology. In so doing, he offered direct comparisons between Cuban society and Ireland.[100] This pro-slavery discourse was closely linked to Wright's self-presentation as a benign enslaver. According to Rodgers, in mid-19th century a "theory of happy slavery" evolved in the south of the United States. This entails the idea of a "benevolent and good master" who was protecting the enslaved from the financial burdens of capitalist society – a theory defended by Irish nationalist Mitchel himself in the 1850s.[101] Two decades earlier than Mitchel's more eloquent articulation, examples of this discourse can be found in Wright's letters:

> I am altogether devoted to Agriculture say Coffee and reside 30 miles from town on the Estate from which I date the present entirely surrounded by negroes who I believe are happy [and] content. I am sorry to observe that the [Poor?] of our native country are not as satisfied as our slaves here, who are well lodged clothed fed with their wives and children

98 James J. Wright to Jonathan Wright, Santiago de Cuba, July 8, 1842. HLRSF/Letter 37.

99 Richard Robert Madden, *The Island of Cuba: Its Resources, Progress, and Prospects, Considered in Relation Especially to the Influence of Its Prosperity on the Interests of the British West India Colonies* (London: C. Gilpin, 1849).
Its most recent re-edition in English was in 2012.

100 Both John Mitchel in the Old South of the United States, and James J. Wright in Cuba, articulated a similar pro-slavery discourse based on a common paternalistic view over the enslaved. The existence of such a discourse among Irish immigrants to slave-holder regions should be re-examined. In his writings, James J. Wright even anticipates the Civil War three decades before it happened when he correctly identified the profound division in the United States around the issue of slavery. See: James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, December 30, 1838. HLRSF/Letter 13. For the subject of John Mitchel, see: Bryan McGovern, "John Mitchel: Ecumenical Nationalist in the Old South," *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 5, no. 2 (2001): 99–110.

101 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery,* 69.

> around [and?] address their masters with more freedom and confidence than the Poor do the Rich in Ireland.[102]

In this specific excerpt, Wright shows a paternalistic view of his enslaved, whom he "lodged, clothed, and fed"; however, it has to be argued that it was a part of Wright's financial gain to do so, and that this does not necessarily imply a demonstration of affection towards them. This resonates with the arguments for gradual abolition, with full compensation for slave-owners, which some members of the wealthy Cuban-Creole intellectual élite were making at this time. Increasingly, some leading Cubans were promoting the benefits of "free labour", especially of newly imported non-African labourers, whose food, clothing, and housing the employers would no longer have to provide. "Free labour," they argued, would both make plantations more productive and profitable, and also "whiten" Cuban society.[103] A few experiments of this kind took place during the 19th century. The planters created schemes that brought Irish workers, Canary islanders, *yucatecos* (indigenous Mexicans), and coolies (Chinese) to labour on plantations and public works alongside the unfree Africans, although obviously the imported members of the latter groups could not promote the élite's "whitening" goal.[104]

Another frequently-found feature of the rhetoric of tranquility is the defence of slavery under the false invocation of a humanist sensibility. An example of this in Wright's correspondence is:

> You must not believe the many falsehoods [which?] are published and have currency as regards the workings of [our?] institutions, slavery sounds very badly but neither hunger [nor?] [c]old is experienced by any, in all human institutions evils exist certainly in the hands of bad masters, negroes [sic] are to be pi[tied?] but there are not many such, and in the hands of good ones they are much better off than in Africa.[105]

Contrasting with this self-presentation as a good master is the realization that the maintenance of the slavery regime was inherently violent.[106] Missing accounts of such violence are telling moments of silence on the part of Wright. In a "progressive" age of abolition, and with

102 James J. Wright to Jonathan Wright, Santiago de Cuba, December 27, 1835. HLRSF/Letter 31.
103 Brehony, "Irish Free Labour.", 70-93.
104 Brehony.
105 James J. Wright to Martha Wright, Santiago de Cuba, October 31, 1841. HLRSF/Letter 19.
106 For first-hand descriptions of such a violence, see: "The Master's Violent Hand" in: Gloria García Rodríguez, *Voices of the enslaved in nineteenth-century Cuba: a documentary history* (Chapell Hill: The University of Carolina North Press, 2011), 145-59.

restlessness increasing among the enslaved, what other recourse than to violence could have guaranteed the submission of more than 300 closely confined people? Missing from Wright's correspondence are references to the *mayorales* (overseers), who were usually white people hired to run the daily activities of the plantations and organize and supervise the workforce.[107] But overseers were also in charge of physical punishments.[108] The overseers' most powerful weapon was the whip, but there was an entire arsenal of instruments of torture. At La Isabelica Museum, located only eight kilometres away from Wright's La Gran Sofía, a collection of such artifacts has been preserved.

Wright's complicity with his overseers is not shown in his letters, but does appear in his last will and testament. Bequeathing loyal enslaved people with money to purchase their own freedom was a typical device for manumission in 19th-century Cuba. This was often done in recompense for services rendered. In some cases, the enslaver granted full freedom; in others, they left pecuniary funds for the enslaved to purchase their own liberty. The enslaver could also provide for the enslaved to be put under *coartación,* which was, according to Gloria García Rodríguez, a sort of conditional freedom.[109] Nonetheless, the release of funds and the execution of a will usually took years; there were cases in which the enslaved died before realizing their freedom. Paradoxically, even after the death of their enslaver, the enslaved were still subject to the former's wishes. For example, in Richard Maxwell Bell's will, he granted freedom and $200 *pesos* to his *mulato* enslaved labourer Thomas, but he was to continue working for Bell's son, José Alejandro Bell Yrady, for a period of five more years after Bell's death.[110] In Wright's will, drafted in Santiago de Cuba on March 15, 1844, he bequeathed $450 *pesos* to the enslaved Aquiles, "former overseer of the Kentucky plantation, to buy his own freedom from current master Antonio Vinent".[111] Historians have commonly portrayed overseers as white free labourers, often implying that only white people could exert violence over the blacks.[112] The fact

107 García Rodríguez, 23.

108 Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion,* 34.

109 García Rodríguez adds that *coartación* was the enslaved legal right to be appraised for a fixed value, a price that they could then pay in instalments to secure their freedom. See: García Rodríguez, *Voices of the enslaved,* 2.

110 Richard Maxwell Bell, will dated September 23, 1847, proved September 23, 1847, no.42, box no.1-49, 1848, Pennsylvania Wills and Probate Records, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Ancestry (Database).

111 James Jenkinson Wright, will dated March 15, 1844, proved September 21, 1846, no.2052, box 2020-2071, 1845-1846, Belmont County, Ohio Wills and Probate Records, Belmont, Ohio. Ancestry (Database).

112 Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion*, 39.

that Wright's favourite overseer, Aquiles, the only individual of this group mentioned in his will, was not only black but also an enslaved person, testifies to the complexity of slavery in Cuba.

The violence of enslavement as an institution can also be found in the high rate of mortality that researchers have found among the enslaved population. Unfortunately, there is no data found thus far for Wright's plantations. Notwithstanding, it must be taken into account that "normal" work regimen for the Africans on coffee plantations varied between fifteen and sixteen hours per day.[113] García Álvarez argues that, although it has been frequently claimed that working in coffee production was less physically demanding than labouring on sugar plantations, coffee was a year-round staple, whereas sugar was seasonal.[114]

Finally, to understand how James J. Wright saw his enslaved, as well as the racism inherent to his position, it is necessary to take a closer look at his own private life and the details that he never divulged in his letters to Dublin. As has already been mentioned, it was possible to locate Wright's last will and testament, a document that is revealing of how he saw the enslaved Africans with whom he interacted most of his life. The first clauses in wills are usually reserved for the next-of-kin. In Bell's will for example, he provides for his surviving children, and his sister Elena.[115] Wright's principal heirs were his brother Nehemiah and his father Joseph, both in Belmont County, Ohio. Given that Joseph Wright, Sr., passed away before his son, Nehemiah inherited the bulk of Wright's properties in Cuba and the United States. However, Wright also provided for eight *mulato* children. It is not only significant that Wright provided for these children; it is the way in which he worded his bequest that is most revealing:

> I give and bequeath sixteen thousand *pesos* to eight mulatto children, minors, born from African slaves from my Estate, and baptized already, or must be baptized again as free, they are named Julio, Ana, and Zelia whose mother is the black woman Caridad; Carlos and Felicia, of the black woman Luisa; Luis, son of black woman Oliva; Cecilia, daughter of black woman Felicité; and, Marcelina, daughter of the black woman Matilde.[116]

Wright made specific provisions for them. First, he left them under the care of a woman by the name of Luisa Bessasse.[117] These children were to be taken away from the care of their

113 García Álvarez, "Auge y decadencia.", 299.
114 García Álvarez, 301.
115 Bell, will.
116 Wright, will.
117 It has not been possible to locate any information about Luisa Bessasse, and the nature of her relationship with Wright.

mothers, whom Wright also liberated in the provisions of his will, and were to be brought up until they reached their adulthood by Bessasse. Bessasse was to become their legal guardian. Second, the $16,000 *pesos,* $2,000 each, were to be left in the hands of Wright's close associate, friend, and business partner Louis A. Verbrugghe, and an annual interest rate of six percent was to be extracted and given to Bessasse for the daily support of the children. However, even though Wright singled out these children, granted them freedom, and made all these specific provisions for their economic support, he also significantly limited their lives in the following manner:

> ... their education cannot be extended beyond learning how to read, write, and the principal rules of arithmetic, and none of them [could continue their education] after reaching the age of fourteen, in which case the boys should be put to learn a profession for at least seven years, and the girls should learn how to sew clothes for at least four years, until they each come of age and get their respective two thousand *pesos* ...[118]

Beyond the separation of social roles and functions according to gender, this excerpt shows that, in Wright's mentality, mixed race people had a specific, inferior place in society, and no matter how much means or wealth they accumulated, there was an insurmountable ceiling to their upwards social mobility. A confirmation of Wright's racist attitudes is found, once more, in his correspondence with Dublin. In 1836, he wrote to his cousin Jonathan:

> ... all men cannot be equal - here there must be freedom of power etc., and though at the sounding of the last great trumpet, the elevated brows of Kings will lose the impress of regalia, and the Slave will wear his immortality as free beside the Chrystal Waters, yet in the temper of the invisible godlike, and undying intellect there are distinctions which I believe will live in heaven, the scale of human beings [is?] a graduated thing; there must be and are gradations on earth, and our blessed faith teaches us there will also be the same in heaven.[119]

This political statement disguised in a religious tone was a far cry from the family's earlier sympathy with the republican ideals of the 1798 United Irishmen, to the point of honouring the figure of Robert Emmett and constructing a myth of political exile to the United States.[120] Here, the core of Wright's transformation into "Don Santiago" is revealed. He not only defended the slavery regime, but also believed that if those once enslaved ever reached freedom, they were still inferior beings and would continue to be so after death. In his political ideology, there were

118 Wright, will.

119 James J. Wright to Jonathan Wright, Santiago de Cuba, September 5, 1836. HLRSF/Letter 32.

120 Miller et al., *Irish Immigrants,* 223.

notions of a white racial superiority discourse. But, why, then, did Wright liberate these specific eight children and their respective mothers? He also provided an explanation as to his decision in the text of his will:

> ... about these eight mulatto children, the dispositions contained in this will related to them cannot be considered as proof, evidence, or recognition of my paternity ... it is in pure consideration of having been born from white fathers and mothers that are my favourite and obedient servants.[121]

Who were those "white fathers"? Their names are never mentioned. Moreover, what roles did the enslaved women Caridad, Luisa, Oliva, Felicité, and Matilde play in Wright's plantation? Wright's familiarity with them could be indicative of their working close to him as domestic servants rather than field labourers. If so, according to Rodgers, "sexual exploitation [was] implicit in domestic slavery".[122] But, even if these females were not labouring in the main house, Aisha K. Finch suggests that sexual assaults on enslaved women were deeply ingrained in plantation culture, and seen as a normalized form of punishment.[123] Just as whipping and physical mistreatment was implicit in the maintenance of slavery, so was rape.

Once more, Wright's actions contradicted his words. First, his bequest of a handsome fortune of $16,000 *pesos*, $2,000 each (bear in mind that a similar sum was received by Isabella Dinsmore in Ballintra, Co. Donegal, as her total inheritance from Samuel Wanton), seems overly generous to have been mere charity. Moreover, each of the enslaved mothers of these children received her freedom plus $350 *pesos* each. Rather than charity, this suggests compensation. Second, Wright's instructions were specific as to the care of these children, and he appointed his closest friends to the task. Third, his own denial of paternity could be interpreted, paradoxically, as an admission. Rodgers suggests that Irish migrants in the British Caribbean often left a genetic mark among the enslaved.[124] What Wright's denial of paternity could only accomplish was to legally impede these children from claiming a certain position in Cuban society – a society that, unlike that of the United States, had room for wealthy people of colour and openly admitted natural children. Nonetheless, his attitude reflects Wright's beliefs in white superiority, and reaffirms his conviction of their inferiority because of their mixed race condition. Their skin

121 Wright , will.
122 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, 25.
123 Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion*, 15, 40.
124 Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery*, 82.

colour, in Wright's social and political vision, did not made them his equal or worthy of his recognition and wealth. Paradoxically, given that Wright was their legal owner, these children most likely became the bearers of his Irish surname regardless of Wright's disputed paternity.

This chapter has examined the interactions of Irish-born James J. Wright with the institution of slavery, and his involvement with the human trafficking and enslavement of people of African origin. The main purpose of the analysis has been to insert figures like Wright, Richard Maxwell Bell, and the Wanton brothers, who are frequently marginal in traditional historical narratives, into the more general scholarly debate around Irish involvement with slavery and the traffic. Much has been said of Irish contributions to the colonization of the British Caribbean empire, but their presence in its Spanish equivalent is still a historiographical lacuna.

In spite of the intentional destruction of many records that documented the traffic of African people, some have survived that provide irrefutable proof of Wright's participation in it. Moreover, in spite of his many moments of silence regarding the inherent violence of the slavery condition, his letters are a testament to the condemnation he provoked in the rest of his Irish Quaker family. His defence of slavery, and his racist and paternalistic views of the enslaved, also come through in his writings. However, Wright's confrontation with Richard Robert Madden also reveals that not all of the Irish endorsed slavery: indeed, many also fought it. Yet, Irishmen who supported and profited from slavery have been neglected and their painful memory considered a shameful footnote in the history of Ireland and the Irish Diaspora. To remember this side of Ireland's international legacy could help in understanding current civil society debates in Ireland, such as the one promoting the idea that the Irish in the Caribbean, like the Africans, were slaves too. Refuting the arguably contemporary popular idea does not erase a history of oppression of the Irish in Cuba and the Caribbean; rather, it deepens the complexity of the positions some Irish migrants chose for themselves, and complicates over-simplistic understandings of the enslaved, the enslavers, and the societies in which they lived.

Conclusions

In Havana, in February 2017, Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, said: “Any honest overview of the Irish influence on Latin America seeming to be complete must acknowledge that some Irish exiles, even some who had suffered the realities of colonialism in Ireland, became themselves the agents of colonialism in Spanish-ruled Latin America.”[1] Of the case studies examined in this dissertation, Sebastián Kindelán’s best embodies this reality, since he occupied evident spaces of power within the Spanish American empire and helped to reinforce colonial domination over Cuba. This dissertation has examined the emigration to Santiago de Cuba in different historical moments of people born in Ireland who identified themselves abroad as “Irish”. Irish migratory routes into Cuba were not direct. Some Irish went first to Spain, and many settled in the Spanish American empire as colonial administrators or members of the Spanish armies. Other Irish were among many indentured servants transported to the Caribbean British colonies, and from there they settled everywhere in the area. For example, the O’Farrills arrived in Cuba from Montserrat, the Kellys from Barbados, the O’Donovans from Puerto Rico, and the Bells from St. Croix. A third group of Irish came from the United States, the country that received the biggest influx of Irish immigrants worldwide.

The oldest group examined in this thesis left Ireland in the aftermath of the Cromwellian conquest (1649) and after the Catholic defeat that the Treaty of Limerick (1691) represented. This group was often referred to as the Irish “Wild Geese”. These emigrants followed the path established after the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell fled to continental Europe in 1607 following their defeats in Ulster. Building on this tradition, the Irish soldiers who left in the 1690s saw themselves as political and religious exiles. They scattered all over Europe. By contrasts, the protagonists of this dissertation went to Spain. After their sojourn there, they had access to the Spanish American empire, of which Cuba formed an important part. Already in the 1660s, there is a documented presence of Irish “Wild Geese” members in Santiago de Cuba. The

1 Michael D. Higgins, “Speech at the Opening of an Exhibition on the Irish in Latin America,” February 16, 2017, https://president.ie/index.php/en/media-library/speeches/speech-at-the-opening-of-an-exhibition-on-the-irish-in-latin-america-1. (I thank Alan Mooney for pointing me to this source).

representatives of this type of Irish migrants in eastern Cuba were the Duany, Creagh, Garvey, and Kindelán families.

These families identified as “Irish in Spain” and established a close connection between Catholicism and Irishness – one from which later immigrants benefited. In Cuba, Irish “Wild Geese” families were always at a numerical disadvantage. This led them to adopt long-term strategies for maintaining some degree of ethnic cohesion. Intermarriage was often the way by which they effected ethnic fidelity. The complex social networks described in Chapter One attest to their alliances with prominent local families as well as each other, a practice that was continued over time. In this way, they became an intrinsic part of Santiago’s local élite. Moreover, in Santiago’s Irish “Wild Geese” cohort there are remnants of a specific diasporic memory, one in which names and naming practices were used to evoke memories of Ireland and to transmit to descendants a sense of Irishness.

Often linked to the Spanish armies and deployed all over Europe and Spanish America, the Irish “Wild Geese” were highly mobile international actors. In this sense, they contrast with the second group identified and examined throughout this dissertation, namely of transnational and trans-imperial individuals like James Jenkinson Wright, Richard Maxwell Bell, and Samuel and William Barnett Wanton. Whereas the Irish “Wild Geese” were old Catholics whose loyalty to the Spanish crown was tied to their “special status”, Wright’s group was made up of more religiously diverse Irish immigrants, Quakers in this case. Their Protestantism made their assimilation into Santiago’s élite circles more difficult. But even among members of Wright’s group, there were differences in their migratory experiences. Some, like Bell, resorted to marriage, others like Wright, preferred striking economic and political alliances with key residents, more specifically, with men like Antonio Vinent. Moreover, whereas the Irish “Wild Geese” enjoyed a “special” relationship with Spain, the second group had no such links, and their claims of loyalty both to the Catholic Church and to the Spanish crown resided in the oath they took when they became naturalized and formalized their religious conversion. Conversion to Catholicism was an essential requirement for their settlement in Cuba. Suspicions of disloyalty often led them to engage in public manifestations of allegiance to the crown and to the Church. They had to continuously, and publicly, demonstrate their loyalties. To achieve this, they resorted to charitable enterprises such as the construction of a Catholic temple, paradoxically in a Quaker-

like style. Even after they had publicly affirmed their sympathies and loyalties, Bell and his descendants were still labelled “Jews”, which denotes prejudice against their settlement in the city; while Wright was questioned by local authorities about whether or not it was true that he was actively working as British Consul for the benefit of the English crown.

This dissertation has also examined the naming practices of Irish immigrants in Cuba. For example, members of the Irish “Wild Geese” families translated their first names, sometimes even their surnames, into Spanish and followed the local custom of adding the maternal surname to the paternal. The case of John Duany becoming Juan Duany Lynch was mentioned as illustrative of this general practice. However, Irish men like Wright and Bell, had more complex alterations in their names. In Wright’s case his embracing of “Don Santiago” signified not merely a translation but a complete transformation. He transformed from Quaker to Roman Catholic, from Irish merchant to Spanish planter, enslaver, and trafficker in African people. These radical changes were diametrically opposed to the morals of his Quaker upbringing. However, this fits the pattern of behaviours that some authors have conceptualized as symptoms of transnationalism, such as adopting multiple identities and using them strategically.[2] As a transnational actor in Santiago, Wright often used interchangeably his multiple identities to secure his economic advantage. Moreover, by sending remittances to his aunts in Ireland, and supporting his family back in Ohio, Wright was engaging with these economies. This behaviour has been also described as a feature of transnationalism.[3] Furthermore, for outsiders like Jean Baptiste Rosemond, Wright behaved as a polite “Englishman”, but for his closer friends he often deployed his “Cuban ways”. This hybridity best embodies his transnationalism.

Alongside his life-long partners Antonio Vinent and Henry Shelton, James created his first firm, Wright & Shelton, in 1814, and under different names this enterprise continued until Wright’s untimely death in 1845. What later became the famous firm known as Brooks & Co., had its origins in Wright’s establishment. If Brooks & Co. is seen as a continuity, then it can be claimed that the firm that Wright had founded dominated the economic life of eastern Cuban during half a century. In different moments, and under different names, Wright’s companies were positioned as intermediaries between Cuban-based producers and buyers located in the United

2 Clavin, “Defining Transnationalism,”: 427, 430.
3 Clavin.

States and Europe. Occasionally, the firm imported needed products consigned to other local enterprises, but more often its partners seized the opportunity to provide what was locally in demand due to scarcity. To succeed in this commission business, Wright and his partners established a network of agents that upheld their interests in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and London. It has been argued that the transnational nature of his own firm, the multinational composition of the main partners, as well as Wright's own origins, migration history, and circumstances, contributed significantly to shape his transnationality.

Arguably, it was the profits of his commercial establishment and those obtained from participating in the illegal slave trade, that allowed Wright to accumulate enough capital to subsequently invest in coffee production. He purchased not one or two but eight different estates. It was in La Gran Sofía from where he often wrote to his family members in Dublin. La Gran Sofía was the largest plantation in the area. Today it still takes archaeologists and historians by surprise because of the dimension of the barracks that housed the enslaved population. Local historians estimate that Wright held from 100 to 200 people; Wright himself claimed 300. Even the lower figure would still be impressive because coffee, unlike sugar, did not require such a large labour force.

Throughout Wright's correspondence, there is a haunting longing for returning to Ireland, a sentiment he shared with many other migrants. Although he frequently mentioned a desire to return in his letters to his aunt Martha, Wright left at the early age of 14 never to return to his native soil. The contents of his letters suggest that his aunt Martha raised questions regarding Wright's participation in slavery. As agents of the Spanish crown, as settlers in the Caribbean, and as immigrants in the United States, many Irish men and women had to confront the reality of African slavery. In Wright's adamant denials of involvement with slavery, his awareness of his family's likely condemnation can be inferred. Yet, in his omissions, Wright letters produce telling moments of silence. These have been articulated in what I refer to as a rhetoric of tranquility. In Wright's discourse, Cuba was a peaceful, "nothing-ever-happened" ideal and happy place. Historical sources show that this was far from true. That Wright deliberately presented Cuba in this way demonstrates his adherence to the established *status quo*. His transformation into the planter "Don Santiago" came with the firm support of a colonial order that secured the continuity of his handsome profits in the production and export of tropical staples. Paradoxically, it was the

United States' "informal empire" the one economically benefiting from his actions, and not Spain's official one. The economic system that Wright was a part of was sustained by enslaved labour; hence Wright's staunch support for slavery, his vehement opposition to abolitionism, and his self-presentation as a good enslaver. Wright's example of an Irish settler in Santiago further complicates the narratives about the Irish Caribbean diaspora. As agent of imperialism and "slave-owner", he was far more on the side of the oppressor than on the side of the oppressed.

Finally, this dissertation has aimed to articulate the different migratory waves and routes of Irish pre-famine immigrants to Cuba. Following a micro-historical approach confined to Cuba's eastern region, this work anticipates the continuation of this line of research; one that will expand and generalize Irish experiences in the whole island of Cuba, as well as compare and contrast with the rest of the Caribbean, Latin American, and Anglo-American diasporas. This research has employed the case studies of a few Irish immigrants to Santiago, namely those of Sebastián Kindelán, James Jenkinson Wright, and Richard Maxwell Bell, to first identify and then generalize bigger patterns of behaviour and trends in Irish pre-Famine immigration. Overall, these Irish migrants in Cuba were extremely strategic, developing long-term strategies for social integration and assimilation. In looking into the individual it was possible to find interesting, but not always unique, characteristics of the Irish in Cuba, that enrich significantly what it is thought was this group's experience in the region.

Tables

1. Prominent Administrative Positions occupied by Irish Diaspora Members in Santiago de Cuba.

Family Group	Year	Name	Position
Duany	1744	Andrés Duany	Ordinary Mayor
Garvey	1764	Juan Francisco Garvey Hechavarría	Ordinary Mayor
Creagh	1775	Tomás José Creagh Serrano	Mayor
Creagh	1776	Tomás José Creagh Serrano	Mayor
Creagh	1782	Juan Francisco Creagh Montoya	Mayor
Creagh	1783	Francisco Creagh	Regidor
Creagh	1783	Juan Bautista Creagh	Ordinary Mayor
Garvey	1791	José Nicolás Pérez Garvey	Mayor
Kindelán	**1799**	**Sebastián Kindelán O'Regan**	**Governor**
MacSwing	1819	Juan Manuel Cagigal MacSwing	Captain General
Duany	1820	Rafael Duany	Mayor
Kindelán	**1822**	**Sebastián Kindelán O'Regan**	**Deputy Captain General**
Bell	1844	José Alejandro Bell Yrady	Ordinary Mayor
MacCrohon	1847	José MacCrohon	Governor
MacCrohon	1851	José MacCrohon	Governor
Kindelán	1856	Juan Kindelán Mozo de la Torre	Mayor
Duany	1866	Rafael Duany Valiente	Mayor
Lynch	1873	Juan Nepomuceno Burriel Lynch	Governor
Prendergast	1877	Luis Prendergast Gordon	Governor
Kindelán	1895	Sebastian Kindelán Sánchez-Griñán	Governor
Kindelán	1897	Juan Antonio Vinent Kindelán	Governor
Duany	1898	Demetrio Castillo Duany	Governor

Compiled from the work of Emilio Bacardí Moreau, *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba* 1 & 2 (Santiago de Cuba: Tipografía Arroyo Hermanos, 1925).

2. Irish Families in Santiago: Titles of Nobility

Family Group	Year Created	Name	Title
Duany	1821	Juana María de las Cuevas Duany	Marchioness of the Candelaria de Yarayabo
Duany	1864	Andrés Duany Valiente	Count of Duany
Duany	1864	Rafael Duany Valiente	Count of Duany
Kindelán	1747	Barbara Kindelán O'Regan	Marchioness of the House of Cagigal
Kindelán	1604	Cristina Vinent Kindelán	Countess of Carlet
O'Gavan	1851	Bernardo Hechavarría O'Gavan	Marquess of O'Gavan

Compiled from the work of Francisco Xavier de Santa Cruz y Mallen, *Historia de Familias Cubanas* 9 vols. (Havana: Editorial Hércules, 1940).

3. Early Irish Settlers Families in Santiago de Cuba: Geographical, Ethnic and Religious Origins, and Surnames.

Family Group	Ethnicity	Religion in Ireland	Religion in Cuba	Date of Arrival	Irish Surname Variants	Claimed Origin	Surname Origin	Down Survey
Duany	Irish	Roman-Catholic	Roman-Catholic	1655	O Duany, O'Duan, O'Duane, Devany, O'Devanny, Ó Duibheannaigh, Ó Duibheamhna, O'Duanmhaigh	Ireland	Donegal, Connaght, Cork	Galway
Garvey	Irish	Roman-Catholic	Roman-Catholic	early 18th century	MacGarvey, Mac Gairbhith	Ireland	Donegal	Mayo
Creagh	Irish	Roman-Catholic	Roman-Catholic	early 18th century	Craobhach	Ireland	Clare	Limerick, Cork
Kavanagh	Irish	Roman-Catholic	Roman-Catholic	early 18th century	Caomhánach	Waterford	Wexford	Wexford, Carlow
O'Halloran	Irish	Roman-Catholic	Roman-Catholic	early 18th century	Ó hAllmhuráin	Galway	Galway, Clare	Galway
O'Gavan	Irish	Roman-Catholic	Roman-Catholic	late 18th century	O Gavan, Gavin, Gaughan, O'Gaughan, Ó Gábháin, Ó Gáibhín	Ireland	North Connacht, South Munster, Mayo, Cork	
Kindelán	Irish	Roman-Catholic	Roman-Catholic	1799	O Kindelan, Ó Caoindealbháin	Meath	Westmeath, Meath	Meath

Compiled from the works of Francisco Xavier de Santa Cruz y Mallen, *Historia de Familias Cubanas* 9 vols. (Havana: Editorial Hércules, 1940) and Edward MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999).

4. Group 2: Geographical, Religious, and Ethnic Origins

Cuban-Irish Surnames	Ethnicity Origins	Religion in Ireland	Religion in Cuba	Date of Arrival	Irish Surname Variants	Claimed Origin	Surname Origin
Bell	Scotch-Irish	Quaker	Roman-Catholic	1800	French origin	Armagh	North-Eastern Ulster
Wright	Anglo-Irish	Quaker	Roman-Catholic	1808-1811	English origin	Wexford	Ulster, Dublin,
Wanton	Scotch-Irish	Quaker	Roman-Catholic	Before 1814	Scottish origin	Donegal	Donegal
O'Callaghan	Irish	Roman-Catholic	Roman-Catholic	early 19th century	Ó Ceallacháin	Ireland	Cork, east Clare,
Morrison	Anglo-Irish			early 19th century	English origin	Cork	Ulster
Boylan	Irish	Roman-Catholic	Roman-Catholic	early 19th century	O'Boylan, Ó Baoighealláin	Cavan	Monaghan, Fermanagh, Louth

Compiled from the works of Francisco Xavier de Santa Cruz y Mallen, *Historia de Familias Cubanas* 9 vols. (Havana: Editorial Hércules, 1940) and Edward MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999).

5. Sebastián Kindelán O'Regan's coffee plantations in the Santiago de Cuba area.

Name of Plantation	Products	Value
Santa Ana	Coffee	128691
Trinidad del Olimpo	Coffee	62676.5
Santa Bárbara del Guayabal	Coffee	1058
La Caridad de Las Gracias	Coffee	86313
San Cayetano de Aguadores	Sugar	2792
Concepción de la Idalia	Coffee	22535
Humanidad	N/A	N/A
TOTAL		304065.5

Compiled from the works of Isabel Bandera Merlet, "El Gobierno de Sebastián Kindelán en el Departamento Oriental, 1799-1810" (Bachelor Thesis, Santiago de Cuba, Universidad de Oriente, 1982); Varinia González Estévez, "La implantación francesa en el medio urbano en Santiago de Cuba (1800-1868): el barrio de 'La Marina'; el antiguo 'Quartel Francés' y el 'Tivolí' / L'implantation Française en milieu urbain à Santiago de Cuba (1800-1868): le 'Quartier de La Marina', l'ancien 'Quartier français' et le 'Tivolí'" (Doctoral Thesis, Santiago de Cuba, Universidad de Oriente en co-tutelle Université Michel de Montaigne Bordeaux 3, 2009); and María Elena Orozco Melgar, "Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre: los acentos de una mujer criolla en el Santiago de Cuba de 1812" (Unpublished, accessed courtesy of the author), n.d.

6. Plantations owned by Irish and Irish diaspora members in Santiago de Cuba

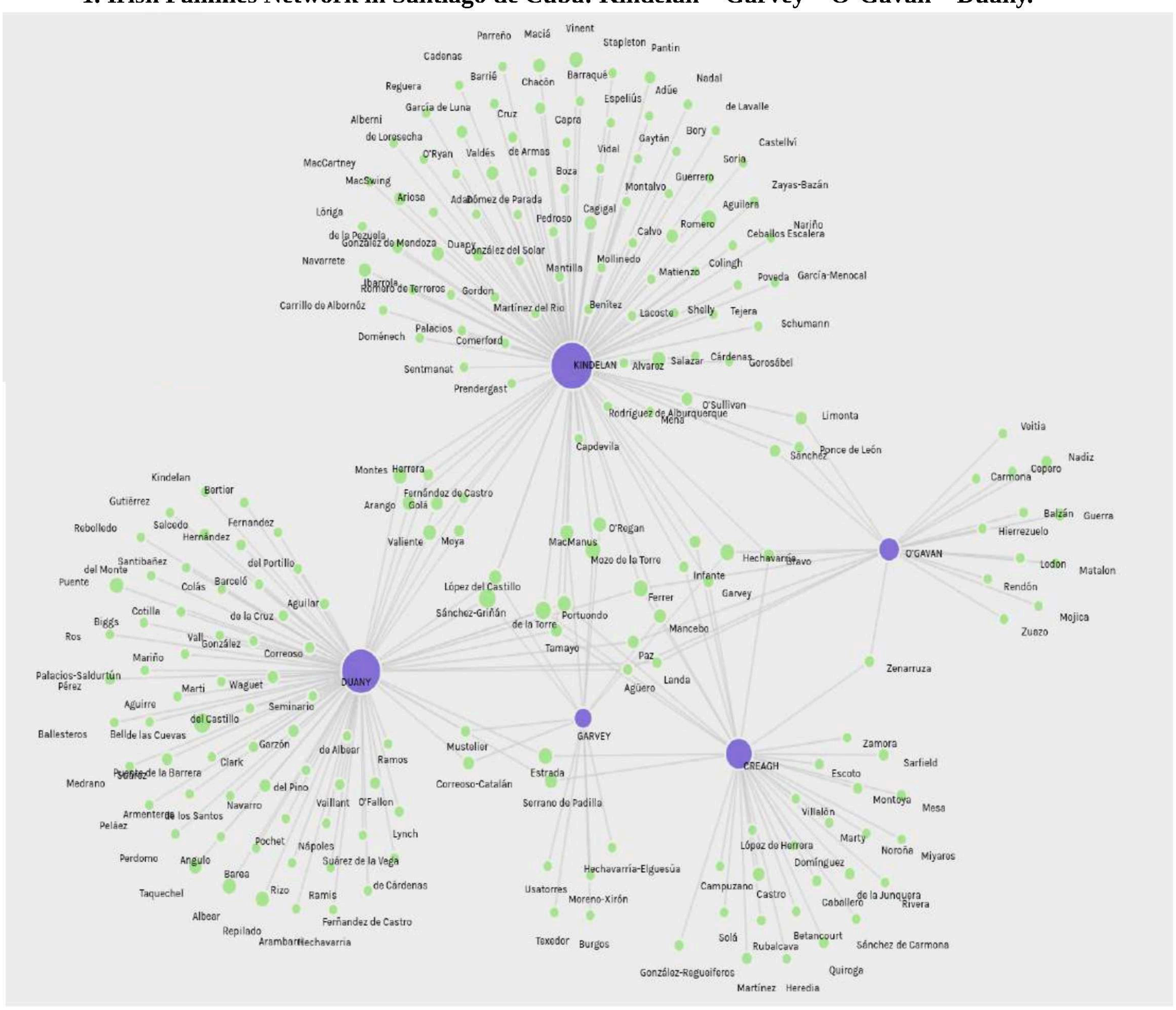
Family Group	Owner	Plantation Name	Product
Wright	James Jenkinson Wright	La Sophia (La Gran Sofía)	Coffee
Wright	James Jenkinson Wright	El Santiago (St. James)	Coffee
Wright	James Jenkinson Wright	Kentucky	Coffee
Wright	James Jenkinson Wright	El Kentuckito (Little Kentucky)	Coffee
Wright	James Jenkinson Wright	La Carolina	Coffee
Wright	James Jenkinson Wright	Andalucía	Coffee
Wright	James Jenkinson Wright	Santa Rita	Coffee
Wright	James Jenkinson Wright	El Potrero	Cattle Ranch?
Bell	Richard Maxwell Bell	El Recuerdo	Coffee
Bell	Richard Maxwell Bell	Soledad	Cattle Ranch?
Bell	Richard Maxwell Bell	Santa Elena de la Demajagua	Coffee
Bell	Richard Maxwell Bell	La Perseverancia	Sugar
Bell	Richard Maxwell Bell	Santa Ana	Sugar
Bell	Richard Maxwell Bell	La Candelaria de Guayama	Coffee
Creagh	Thomas Creagh	Rincón	Coffee
O’Callaghan	Cornelio O’Callaghan	Santa Rosa	Cotton
O’Callaghan	Cornelio O’Callaghan	La Seferina	Coffee
Wanton	William Barnett Wanton	Santa Rosa	Cotton
Kindelán	Sebastián Kindelán O’Regan	Santa Ana	Coffee
Kindelán	Sebastián Kindelán O’Regan	Trinidad del Olimpo	Coffee
Kindelán	Sebastián Kindelán O’Regan	Santa Bárbara del Guayabal	Coffee
Kindelán	Sebastián Kindelán O’Regan	La Caridad de las Gracias	Coffee
Kindelán	Sebastián Kindelán O’Regan	San Cayetano de Aguadores	Sugar
Kindelán	Sebastián Kindelán O’Regan	Humanidad	N/A
Kindelán	Sebastián Kindelán O’Regan	Concepción de la Idalia	Coffee
O’Fallon	Ricardo O’Fallon	San Bartolomé	Coffee
Duany	Rafael Duany Valiente	La Concepción	Coffee
Duany	Rafael Duany Valiente	Mao	Coffee

Bell	José Alejandro Bell Yrady	La Perseverancia	Sugar
Bell	José Alejandro Bell Yrady	La Candelaria de Guayama	Coffee
Bell	José Alejandro Bell Yrady	Nueva Candelaria	Coffee
Bell	José Alejandro Bell Yrady	Santa Elena de la Demajagua	Sugar
Bell	José Alejandro Bell Yrady	La Calixta	Hacienda
Bell	Ana María Bell Yrady	La Perseverancia	Coffee
Garvey	Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey	La Lima	Sugar
Garvey	Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey	Marcos Sánchez	Sugar
Garvey	Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey	Trinidad del Olimpo	Coffee
Duany	Marqués de Yarayabo	Songo	Sugar
Duany	A. Duany, Valiente & Co.	La Cubana	Sugar
Duany	Marqués de Yarayabo	La Perseverancia	Coffee

Compiled from APSCU, *Protocolos Notariales*: 1814, 1819, 1845.

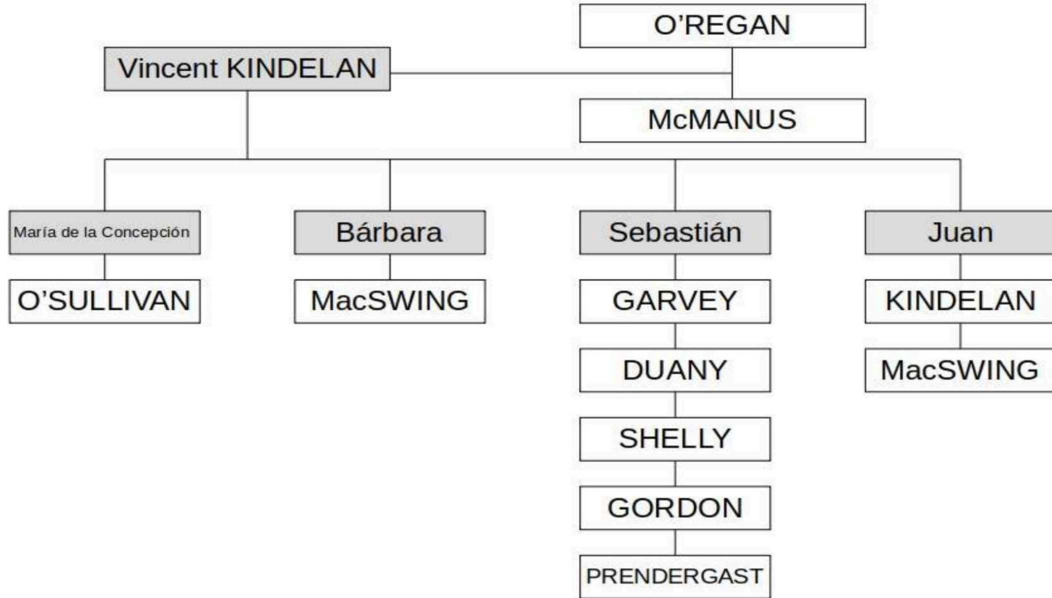
Figures

1. Irish Families Network in Santiago de Cuba: Kindelán – Garvey – O'Gavan – Duany.



This network visualization reveals the complex patterns of the social interaction of these Irish families in Santiago de Cuba among each other, and with other Creole and Hispanic families. The nodes in purple represent the main Irish families of this study, while the nodes in green are the families they interacted with. The edges, or connections, can represent a wide variety of human interactions. In this case they represent a formalized link or alliance effected by marriage. The data that sustain this visualization is a compilation from multiple sources, including genealogical databases like Ancestry (www.ancestry.com), and secondary sources, such as, Francisco Xavier de Santa Cruz y Mallen's *Historia de Familias Cubanas* 9 vols. Modelled by the author using Palladio (http://hdlab.stanford.edu/palladio/).

2. Kindelán family endogamous marriages alliances with other Irish families



3. Iglesia del Santísimo Cristo de la Candelaria (Church of the Holy Christ of Candelaria), Santiago de Cuba. April 2020.

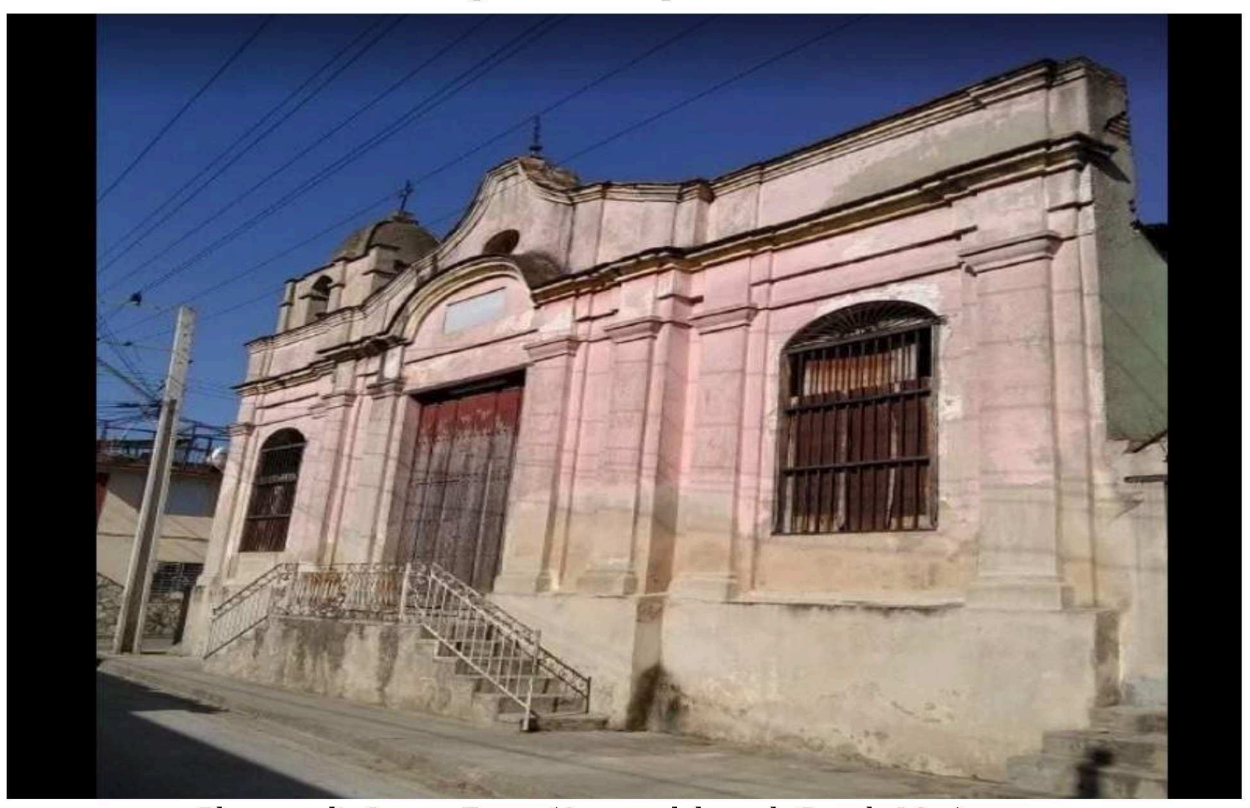


Photo credit Susana Ferrer (Accessed through Google Map).

4. The original 1842 lighthouse at the entrance of Santiago's harbour.

Photo taken by the author during field research at the Morro Castle Museum, Santiago de Cuba. February, 2020.

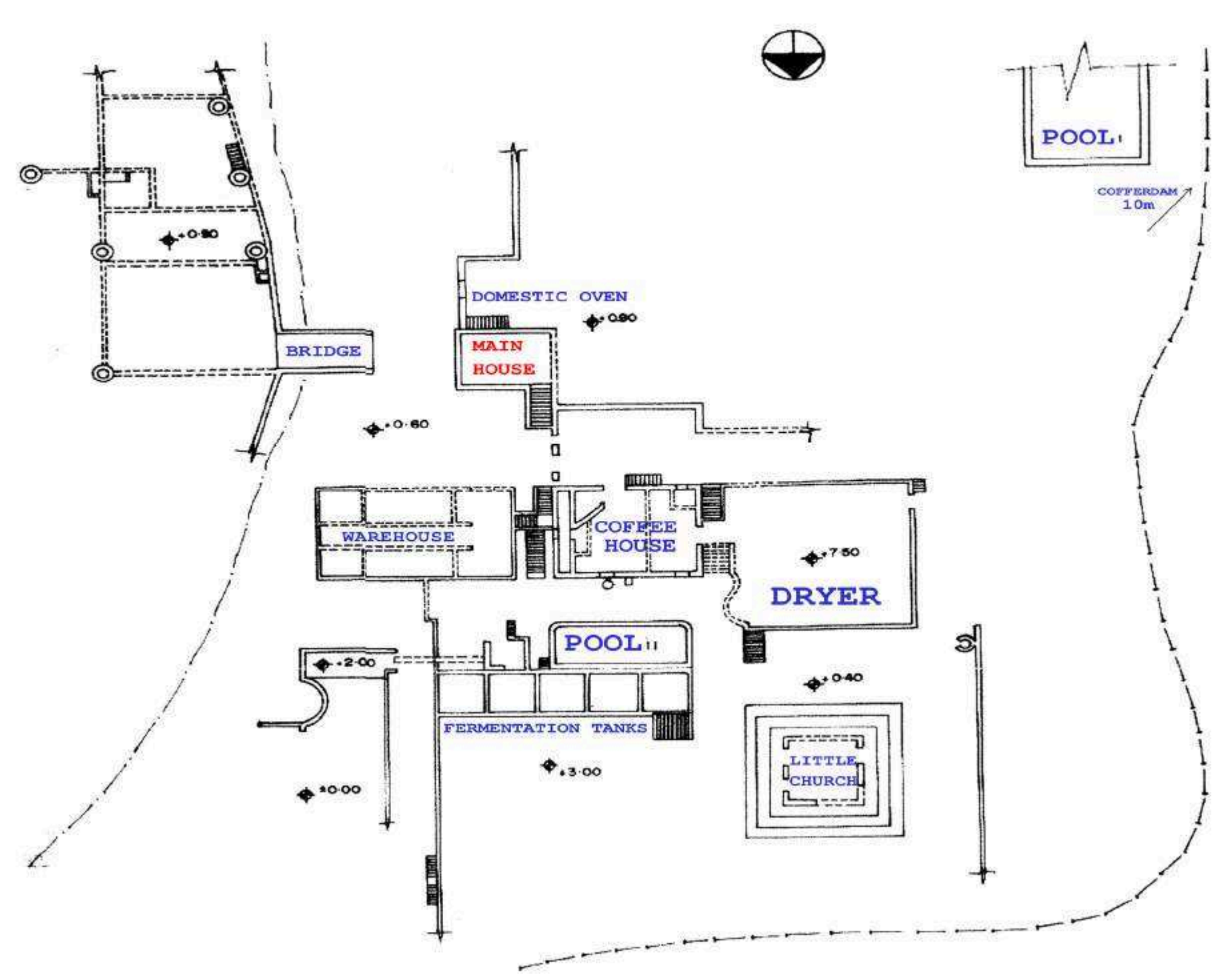
5. Rare photograph of the original 1842 lighthouse at the entrance of Santiago's harbour (before its destruction in 1898).

SOURCE: Robert P. Porter, *Industrial Cuba* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899).

6. Present day lighthouse at the entrance of Santiago’s harbour.

Photo taken by the author during field research. February, 2020.

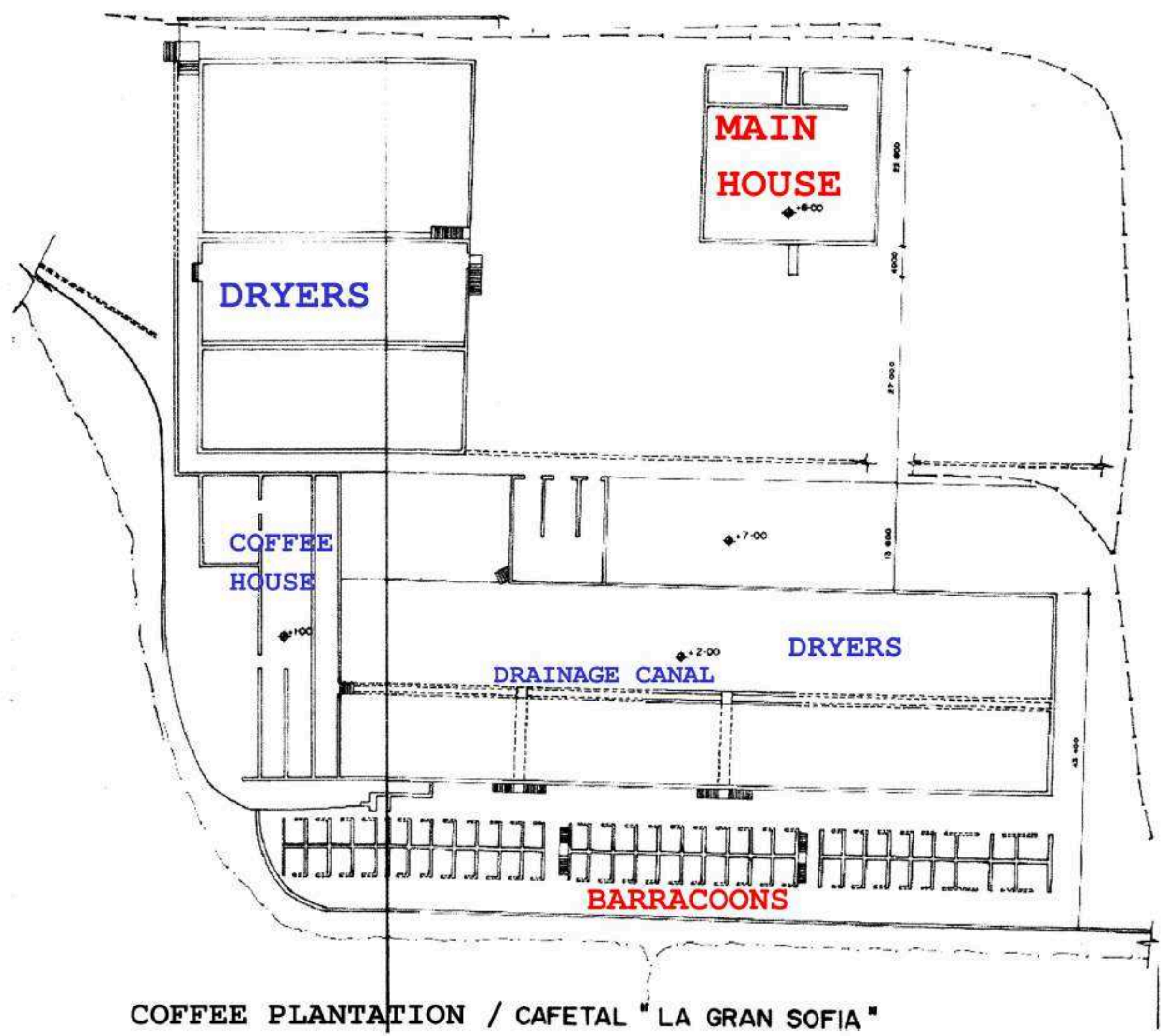
7. Layout of Coffee Plantation Kentucky, owned by James J. Wright, Henry Shelton, and Antonio Vinent.



COFFEE PLANTATION / CAFETAL "KENTUCKY"

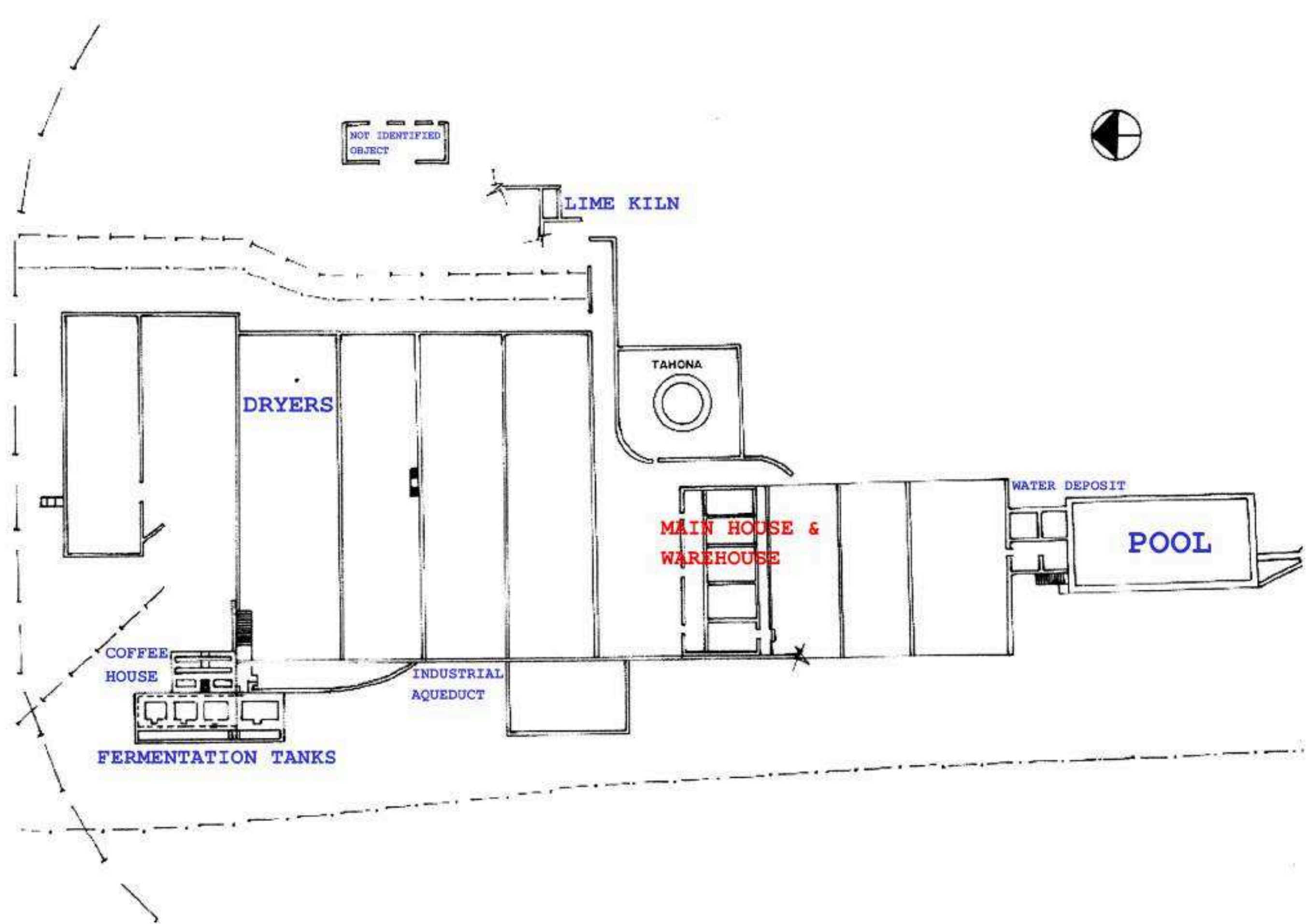
SOURCE: UNESCO (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1008/)

8. Layout of Coffee Plantation La Gran Sofía, owned by James J. Wright, Henry Shelton, and Antonio Vinent.



SOURCE: UNESCO (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1008/).

9. Layout of Coffee Plantation La Idalia, owned by Sebastián Kindelán and Ana Manuela Mozo de la Torre Garvey.



SOURCE: UNESCO (https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1008/)

10. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Main House.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Yaumara López Segrera (2008)

11. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Main House. Detail of one of the walls.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Yaumara López Segrera (2008)

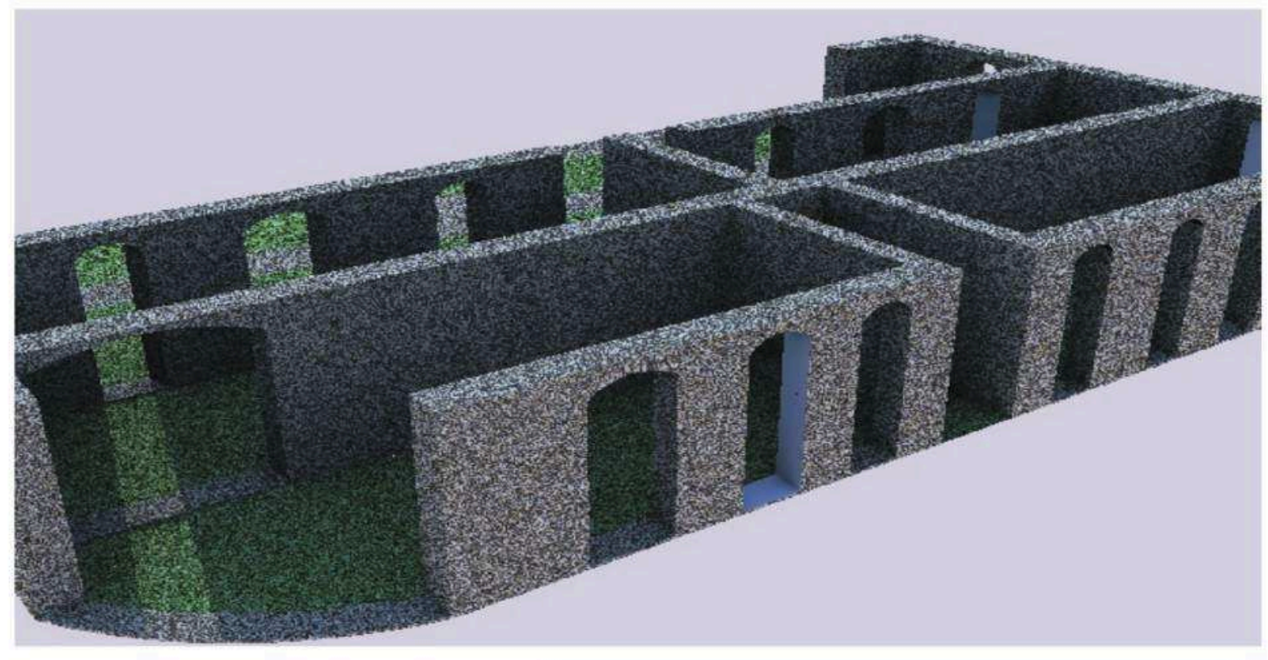
12. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Main House. Detail of one of the arches.

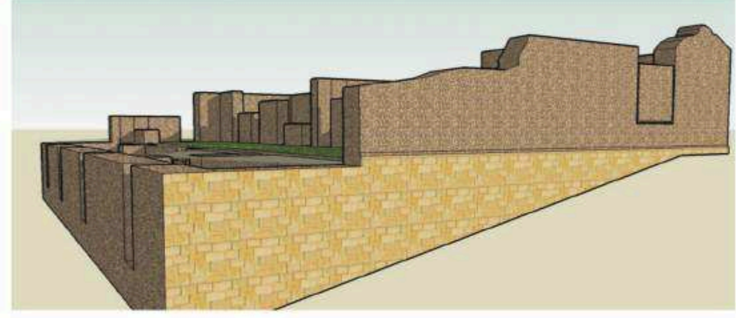
Photo courtesy of Dr. Yaumara López Segrera (2008)

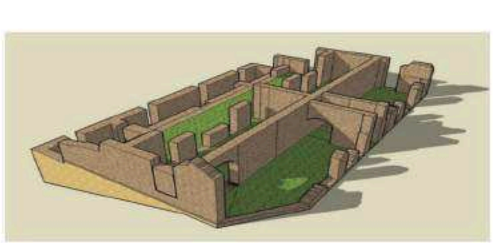
13. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Main House.

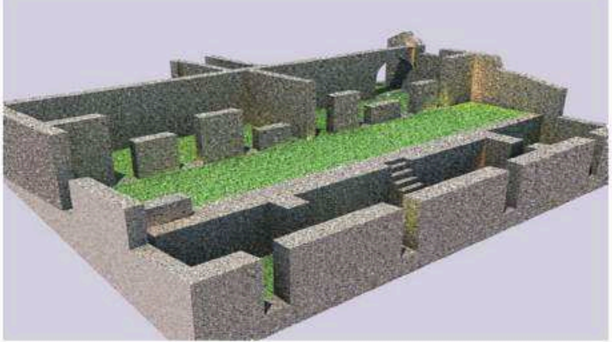
Photo courtesy of Dr. Yaumara López Segrera (2008).

14. Tri-dimensional reconstruction of the main house of La Gran Sofía.



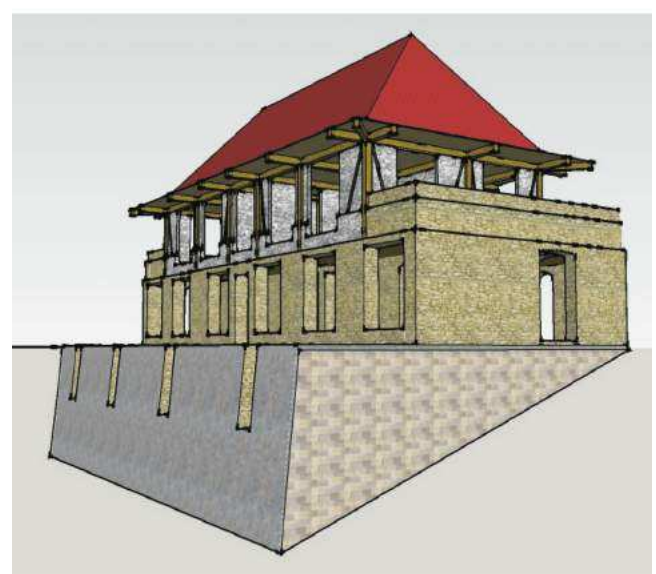


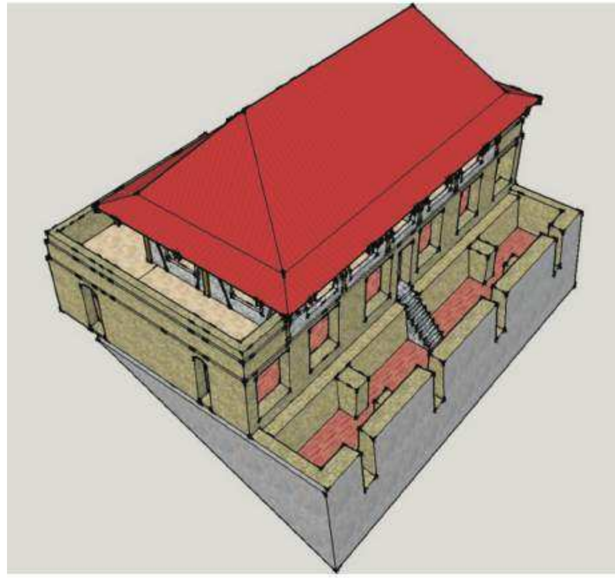


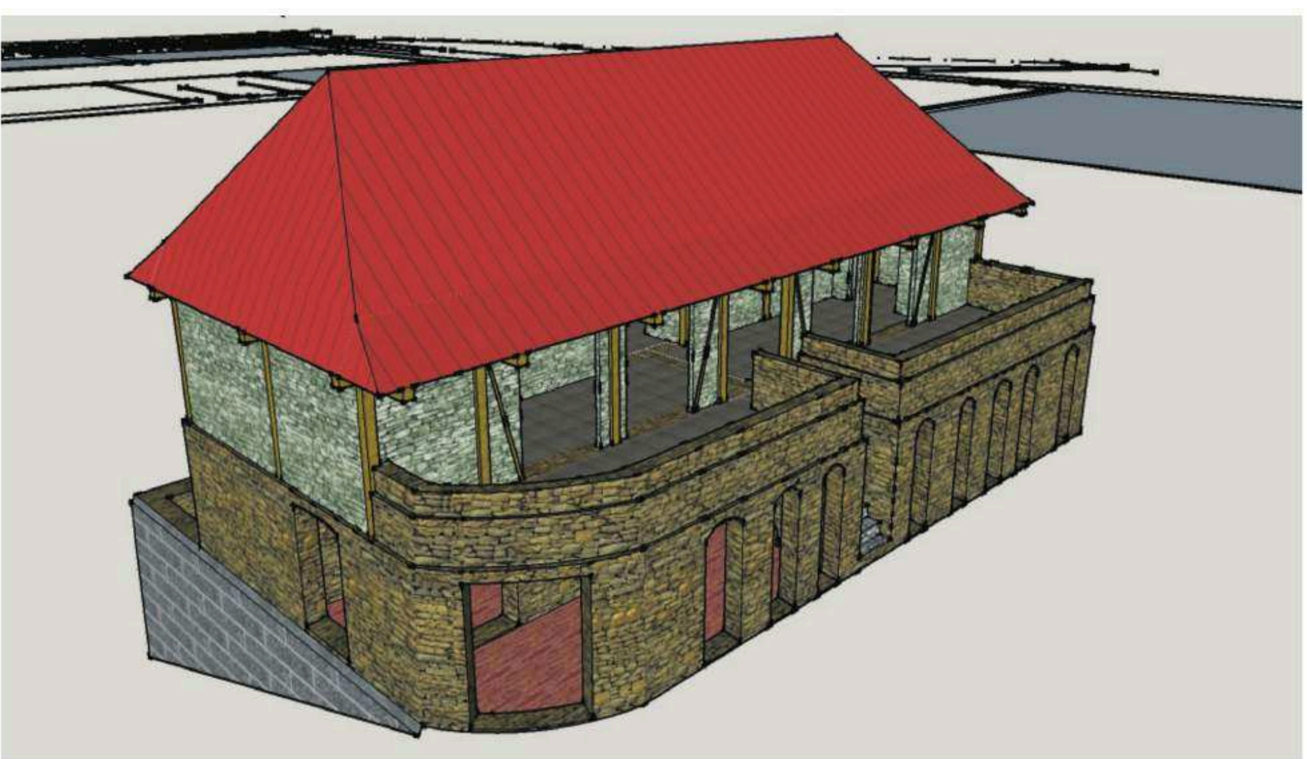


SOURCE: Yaumara López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico al Paisaje Arqueológico: presencia francesa y cultura del café en el sudeste cubano en la primera mitad del siglo XIX" (Doctoral Thesis, Santiago de Cuba, Universidad de Oriente, 2010).

15. Tri-dimensional reconstruction of the main house of La Gran Sofía.







SOURCE: Yaumara López Segrera, "Del Paradigma Tecnológico al Paisaje Arqueológico: presencia francesa y cultura del café en el sudeste cubano en la primera mitad del siglo XIX" (Doctoral Thesis, Santiago de Cuba, Universidad de Oriente, 2010).

16. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Barracoons (Slaves' Barracks).

Photos courtesy of Dr. Yaumara López Segrera (2008).

17. Archaeological ruins of La Gran Sofía's Lime Kiln

Photo courtesy of Dr. Yaumara López Segrera (2008).

18. A View of La Sierra de La Gran Piedra, where James J. Wright's coffee plantations are located

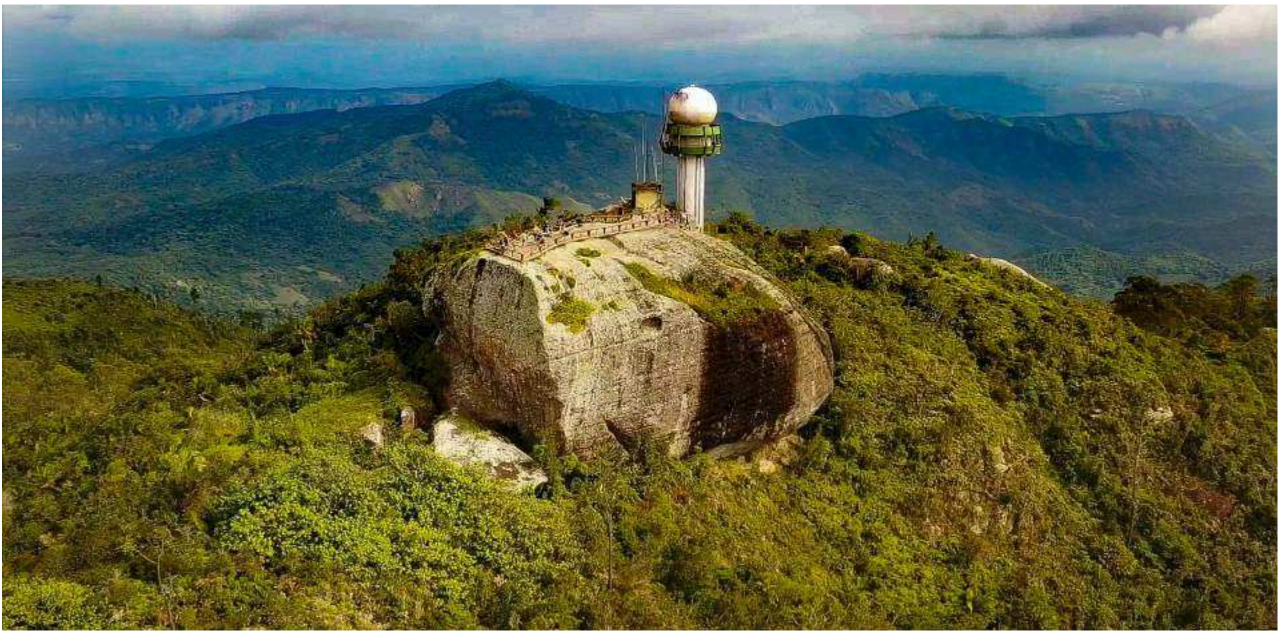


Photo credits are due to Rubén Aja. Published by OnCuba.

19. Café Ven "La Gran Sofía" located at Plaza de Marte, Santiago de Cuba's City Centre.

Photo taken by the author during field research (February, 2020)

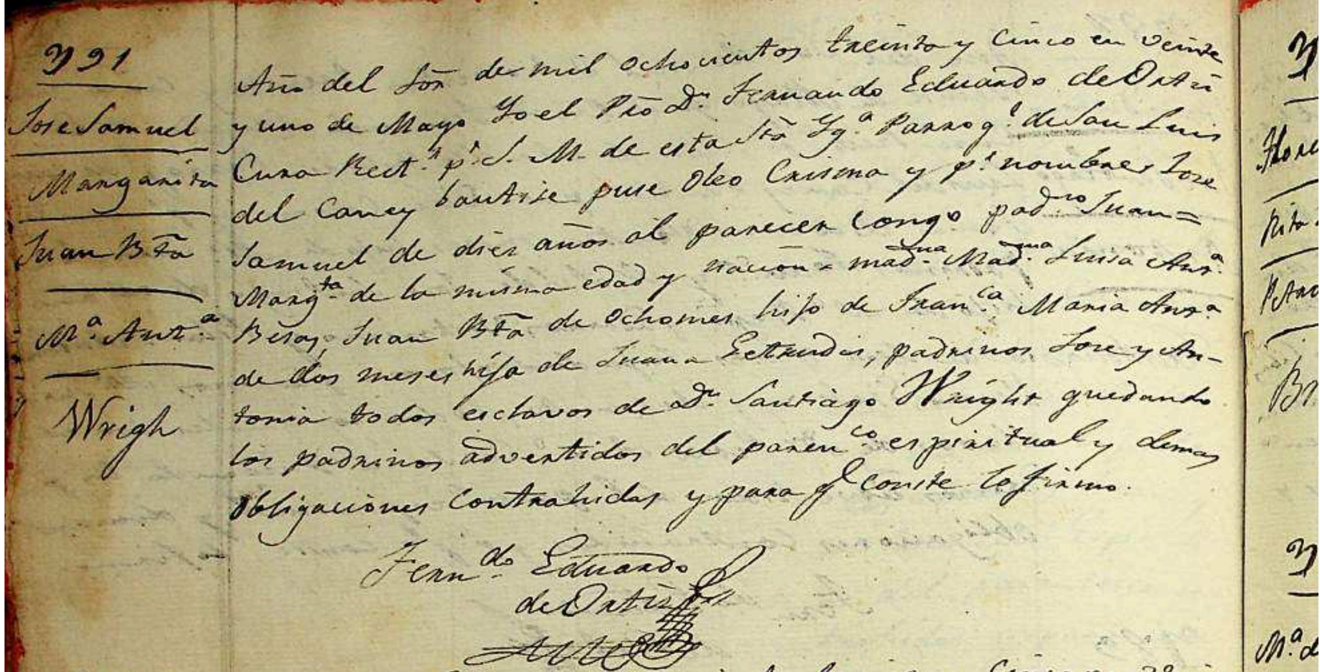
20. Café Ven “La Gran Sofía” (Inside), acrylic plaque commemorates coffee plantation La Gran Sofía.

Photo taken by the author during field research (February 2020).

21. Café Ven “La Gran Sofía” (Inside). Detail of the acrylic plaque that commemorates coffee plantation La Gran Sofía.

Photo taken by the author during field research (February 2020).

22. Baptism record of James J. Wright's (Dn. Santiago Wright) enslaved labourers: José Samuel, Margarita, Juan Bautista, and María Antonia. May 21, 1835.



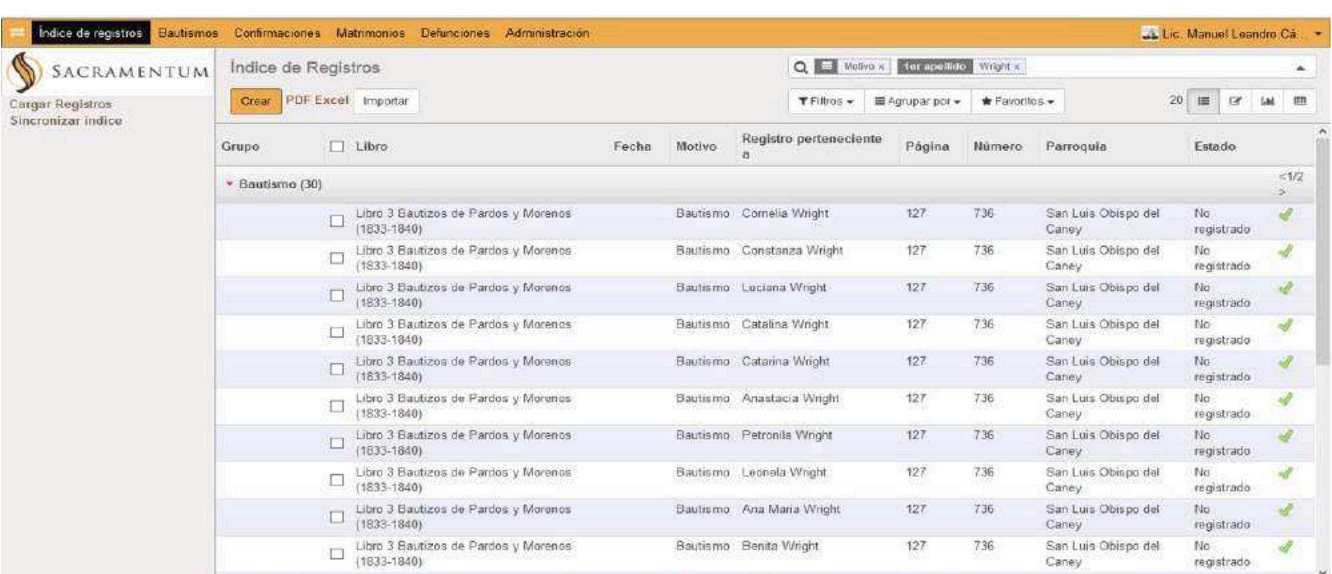
391
Jose Samuel
Margarita
Juan Bta
Mª Antª
Wrigh

Año del Sor de mil ochocientos treinta y cinco en veinte
y uno de Mayo Yo el Pbro Dr. Fernando Eduardo de Ortiz
Cura Rect. [illegible] de esta Sta Ygª Parrqª de San Luis
del Caney bautize puse Oleo Crisma y pª nombre Jose
Samuel de diez años al parecer Congo pad[illegible] Juana
[illegible] de la misma edad y nacion [illegible] Maria Luisa [illegible]
[illegible] Juan Bta de ochomes hijo de Franca Maria [illegible]
de dos meses hija de Juana [illegible], padrinos Jose y An-
tonia todos esclavos de Dn. Santiago Wright quedando
los padrinos advertidos del parentesco espiritual y demas
obligaciones contraidas y para q. conste lo firmo.

Ferndo Eduardo
de Ortiz

SOURCE: Parish Church San Luis Obispo del Caney, Book 3 of Baptism of People of Colour and Slaves (1833-1840), 70/391 . They were baptized at the home of James J. Wright. Photo courtesy of the Archbishopric of Santiago de Cuba (2020).

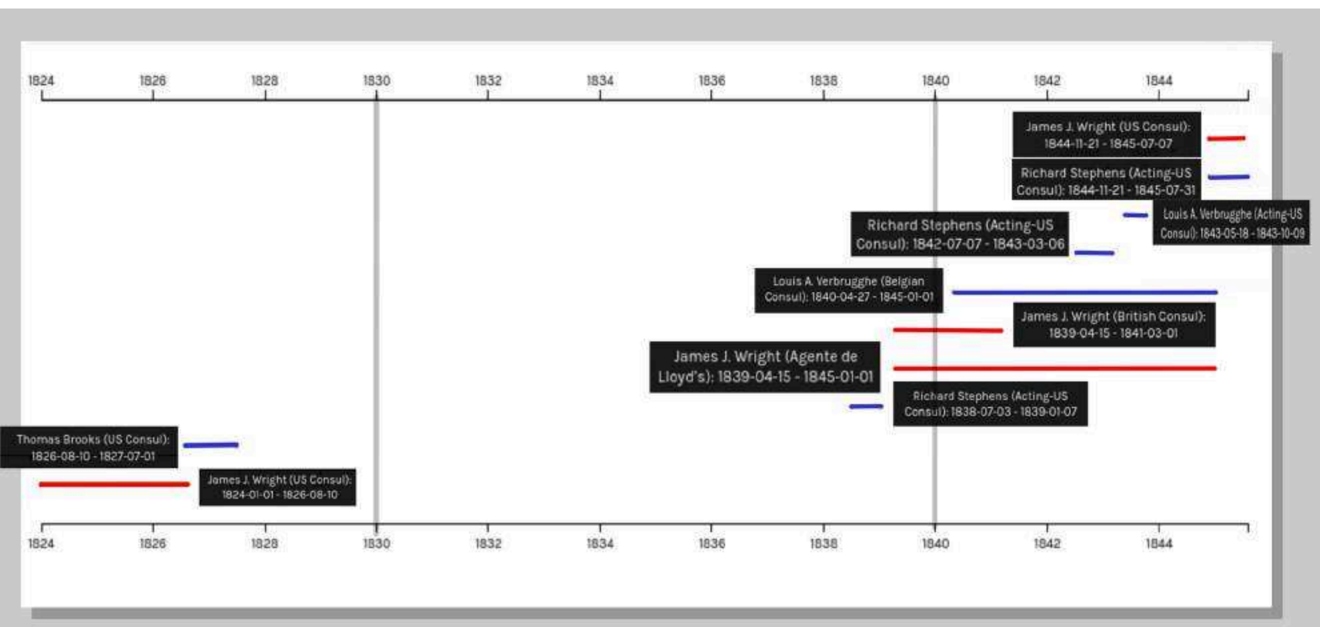
23. Screenshot of the Database of the Archbishopric of Santiago de Cuba showing the list of baptism records available for James J. Wright's enslaved labourers. Notice the adoption of Wright as surname on the part of the African labourers.



Grupo	Libro	Fecha	Motivo	Registro perteneciente a	Página	Número	Parroquia	Estado
Bautismo (30)								
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Cornelia Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Constanza Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Luciana Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Catalina Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Catarina Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Anastacia Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Petronila Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Leonela Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Ana Maria Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado
	Libro 3 Bautizos de Pardos y Morenos (1833-1840)		Bautismo	Benita Wright	127	736	San Luis Obispo del Caney	No registrado

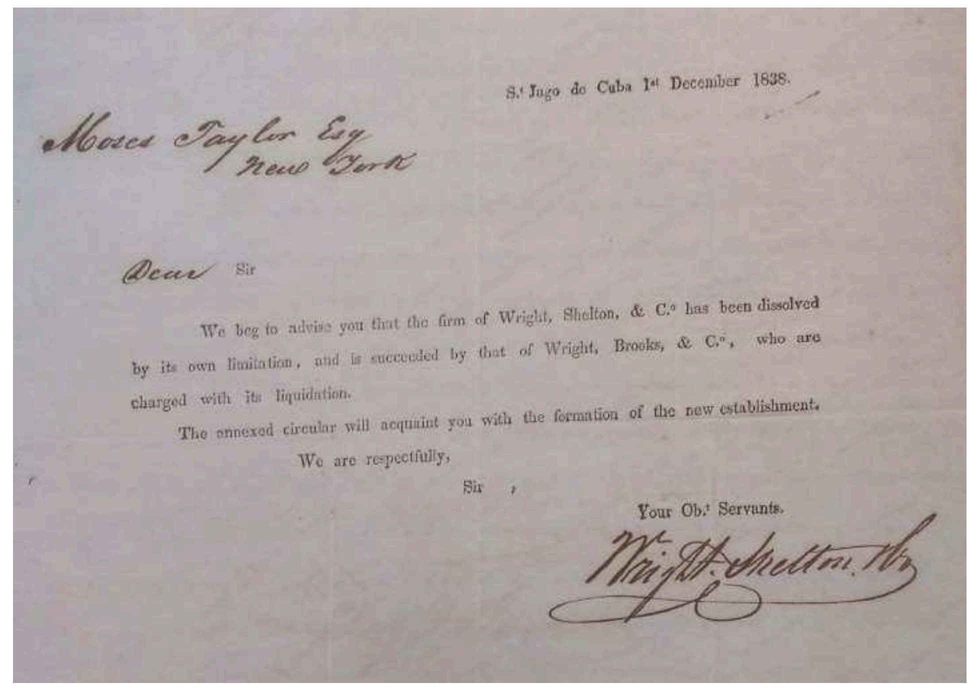
Photo courtesy of the Archbishopric of Santiago de Cuba (2020).

24. Timeline of James J. Wright (red) and partners (blue) Thomas Brooks, Richard Stephens, and Louis A. Verbrugghe holding the United States, British, and Belgian consulates in Santiago de Cuba, 1824-1844.



Made by the author using Palladio.

25. Dissolution of Wright, Shelton, & Co. in 1838



S.t Jago de Cuba 1st December 1838.

Moses Taylor Esq
New York

Dear Sir

We beg to advise you that the firm of Wright, Shelton, & C.o has been dissolved by its own limitation, and is succeeded by that of Wright, Brooks, & C.o, who are charged with its liquidation.

The annexed circular will acquaint you with the formation of the new establishment.

We are respectfully,

Sir,

Your Ob.t Servants.

Wright Shelton & Co

SOURCE: AHOHH/MT/Letter 1/Folder 235/46.

26. Creation of Wright, Brooks, & Co. in 1838

S.t Jago de Cuba 1st December 1838.

Moses Taylor Esq
New York

Sir,

With reference to the annexed circular we take leave to inform you that the business of the late firm of Wright Shelton & C.o will be continued by Sant.o J. Wright, Thomas Brooks, Richard Stephens and Louis A. Verbrugghe under the firm of

WRIGHT, BROOKS, & C.o

who are charged with the liquidation of the late firm.

Mr Henry Shelton, and Mr Joseph Dufourcq remain as "commanditaires" in the present establishment, for the same amount of capital as they had in the late firm.

Referring to our respective signatures at foot, we are respectfully,

Sir,

Your obedient servants
WRIGHT, BROOKS, & C.o

Signature of Mr S.o J. WRIGHT — Wright Brooks & Co

" " Mr T. BROOKS — Wright & Brooks & Co

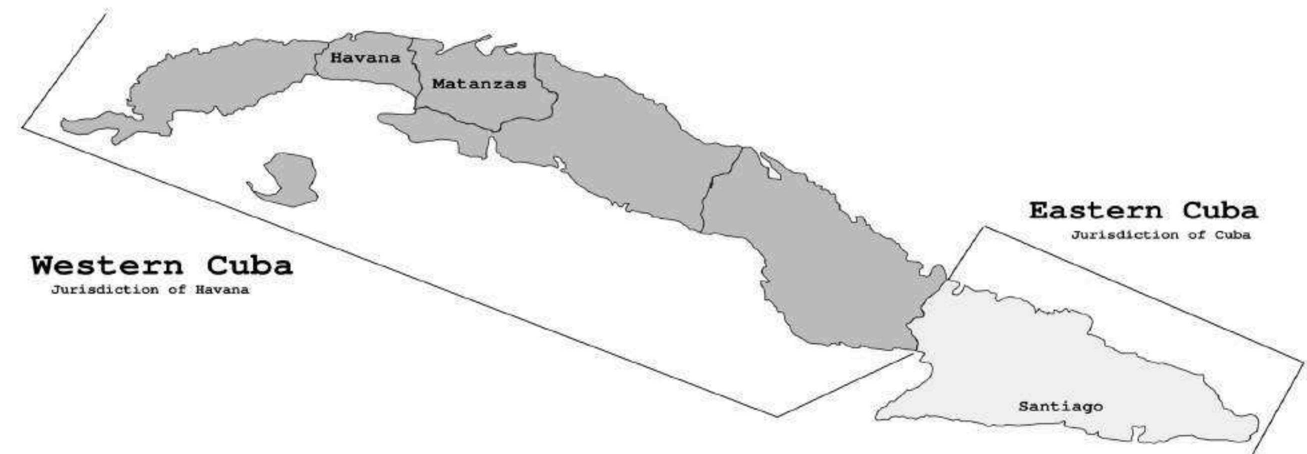
" " Mr R. STEPHENS — Wright & Brooks & Co

" " Mr L. A. VERBRUGGHE — Wright, Brooks & Co

SOURCE: AHOHH/MT/Letter 1/Folder 235/46.

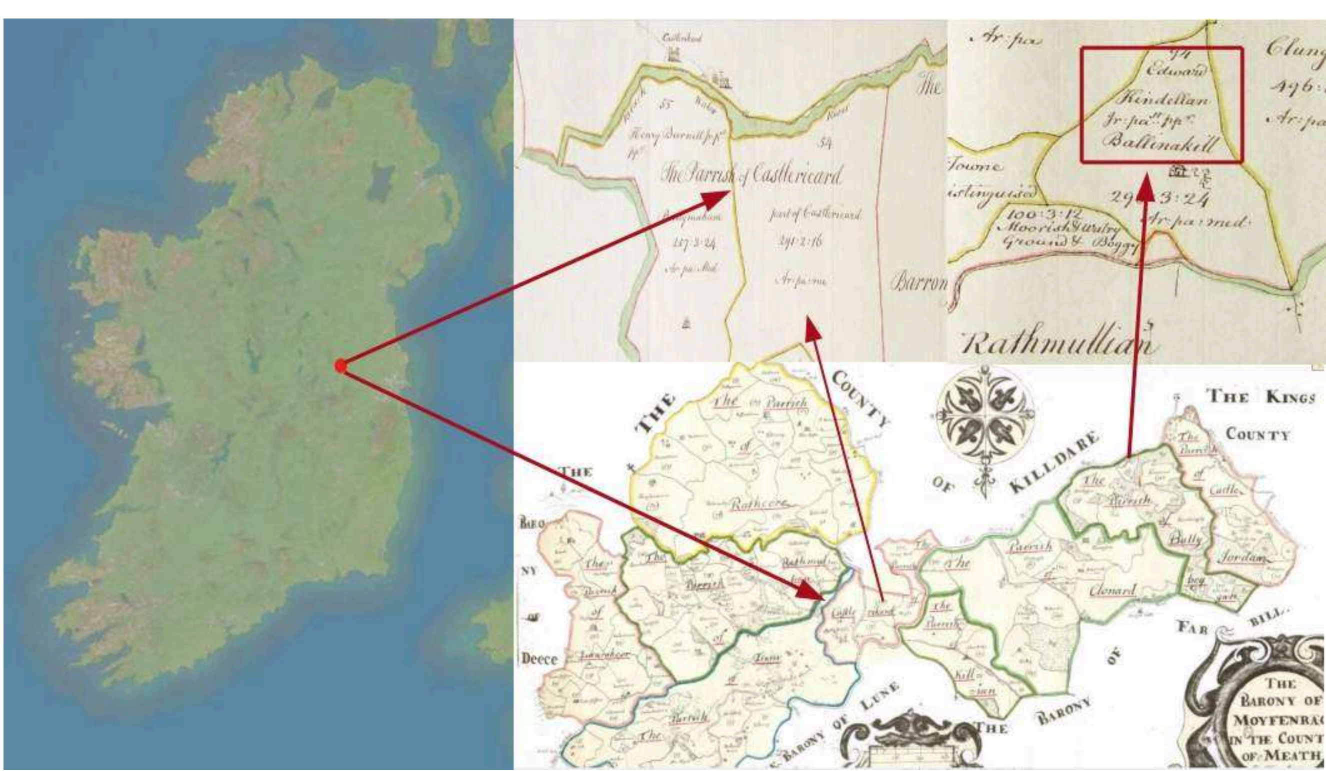
Maps

1. Administrative Division of the Island of Cuba, 1800.



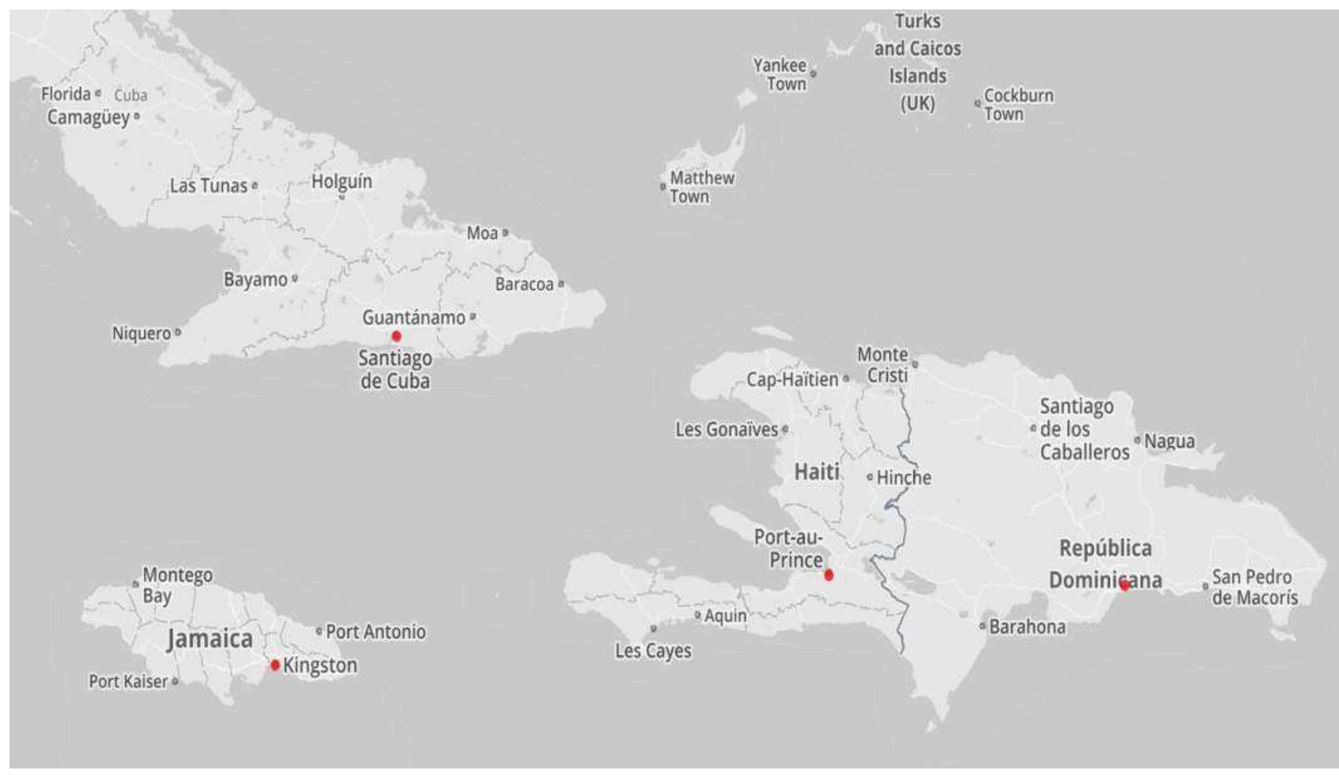
Made by the author using Glimpse.

2. Location of Castlerickard Parish, County Meath, Ireland.



SOURCE: Trinity College Dublin, "The Down Survey of Ireland," (Database), http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/index.html

3. Eastern Caribbean Region: the Axis Santiago – Kingston – Port-au-Prince.



Made by the author using Palladio.

4. Wright and Bell Families' Migration and Settlement in Ireland, c.1660s.

In red places of origin in England and Scotland, and in blue places of settlement in Ireland.
Made by the author using Palladio.

5. Map of Friends' (Quaker) Meeting Houses in Ireland, 1794.

SOURCE: Ross Chapman, "Early Quaker Records in County Armagh." *"Before I Forget...": Journal of the Poyntzpass and District Local History Society*, no.12 (2013): 72.

6. Map of the City of Santiago de Cuba (1857).

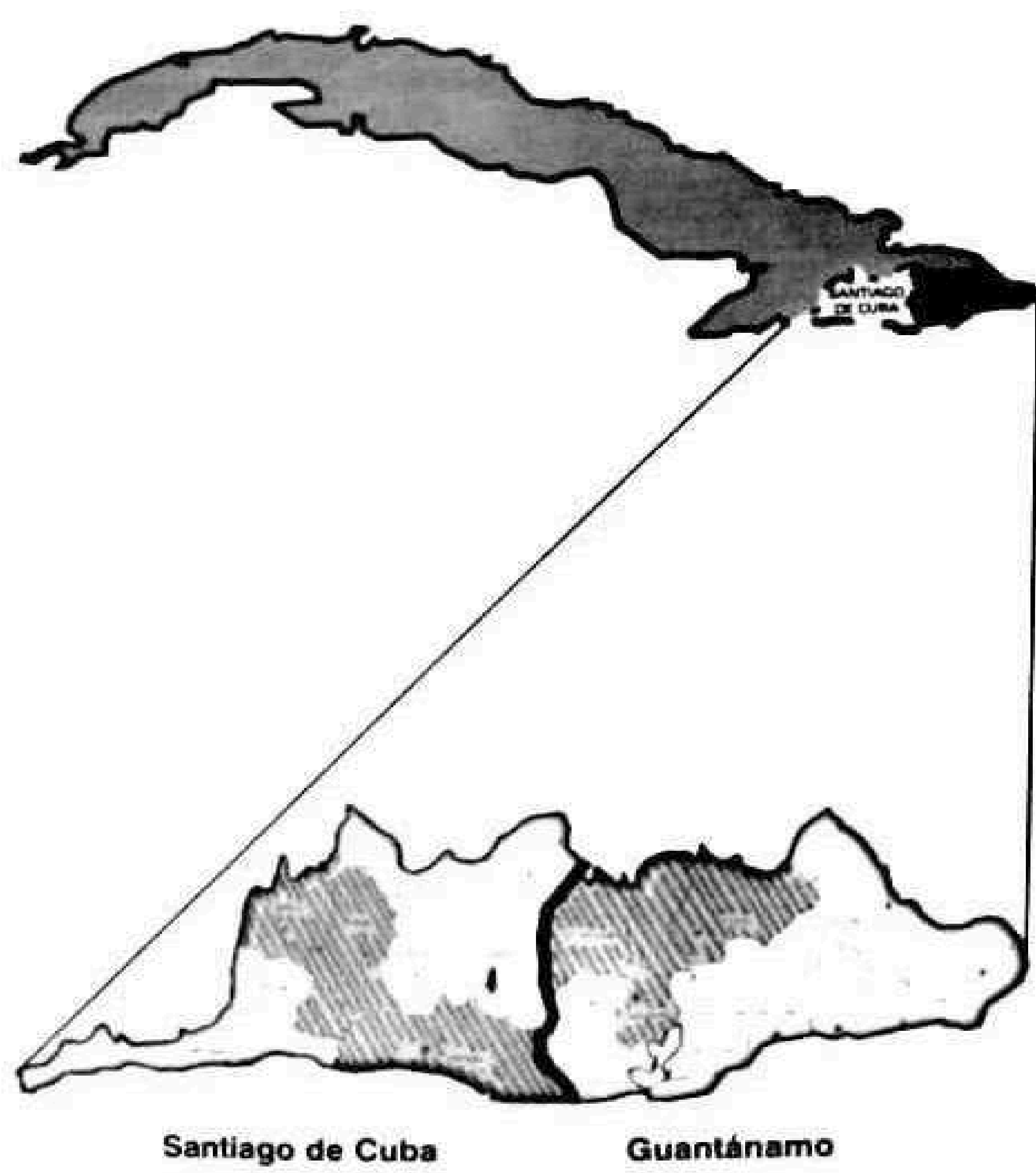
House leased by Wright, Shelton & Co. (1835)

Richard Maxwell Bell Properties (1847)

Location of the Church of La Candelaria

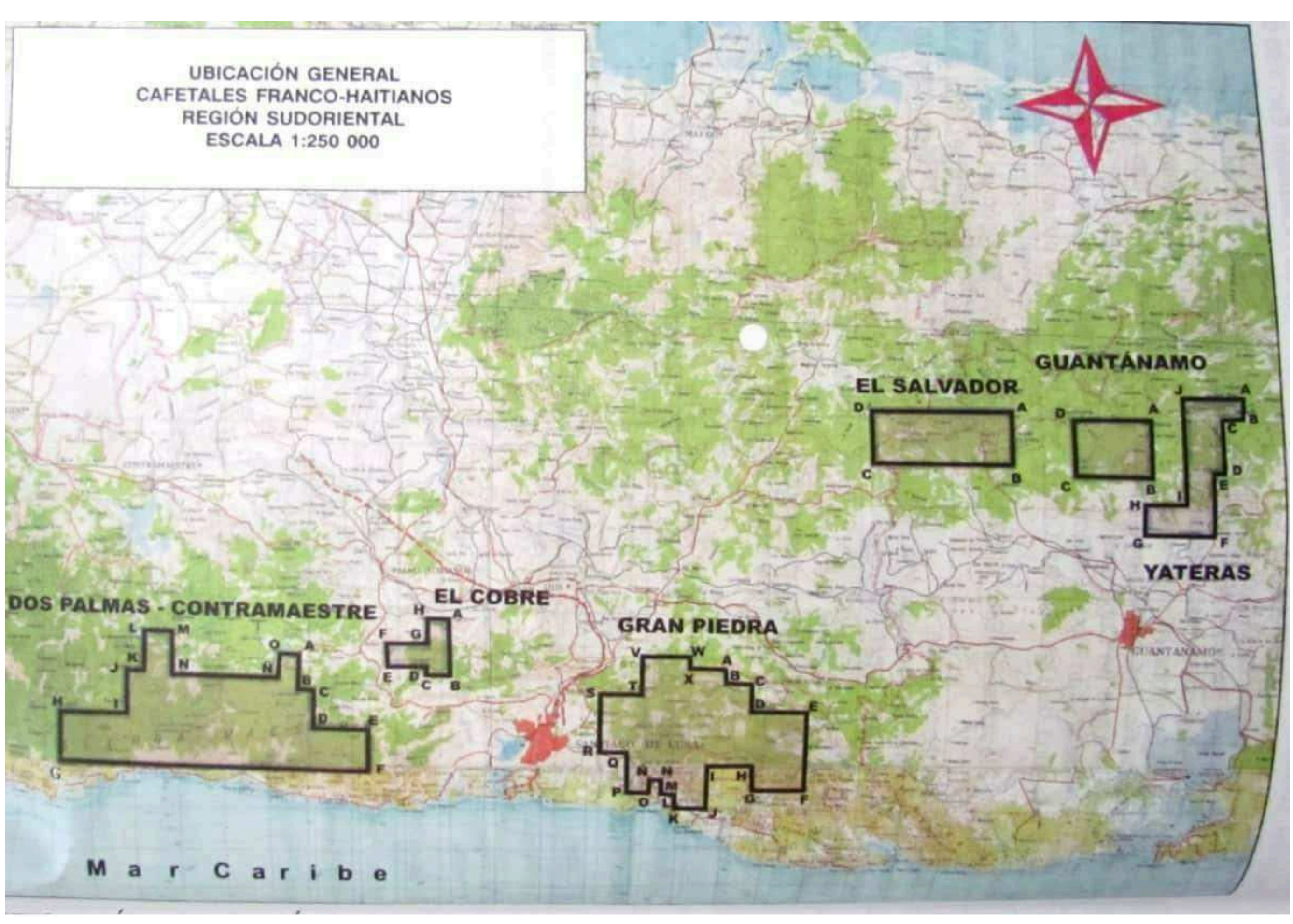
SOURCES: Original Map of Santiago de Cuba in 1857. Digitized by the Centro de Interpretación y Divulgación del Patrimonio Cultural Cafetalero (CIDPCC). Accessed courtesy of CIDPCC. The author added to the original map the location of Wright, Shelton & Co. house in González Estévez, 168; and the approximate locations of the urban plots owned by Richard Maxwell Bell at the his death in 1847.

7. Coffee Areas in Eastern Cuba (General View)



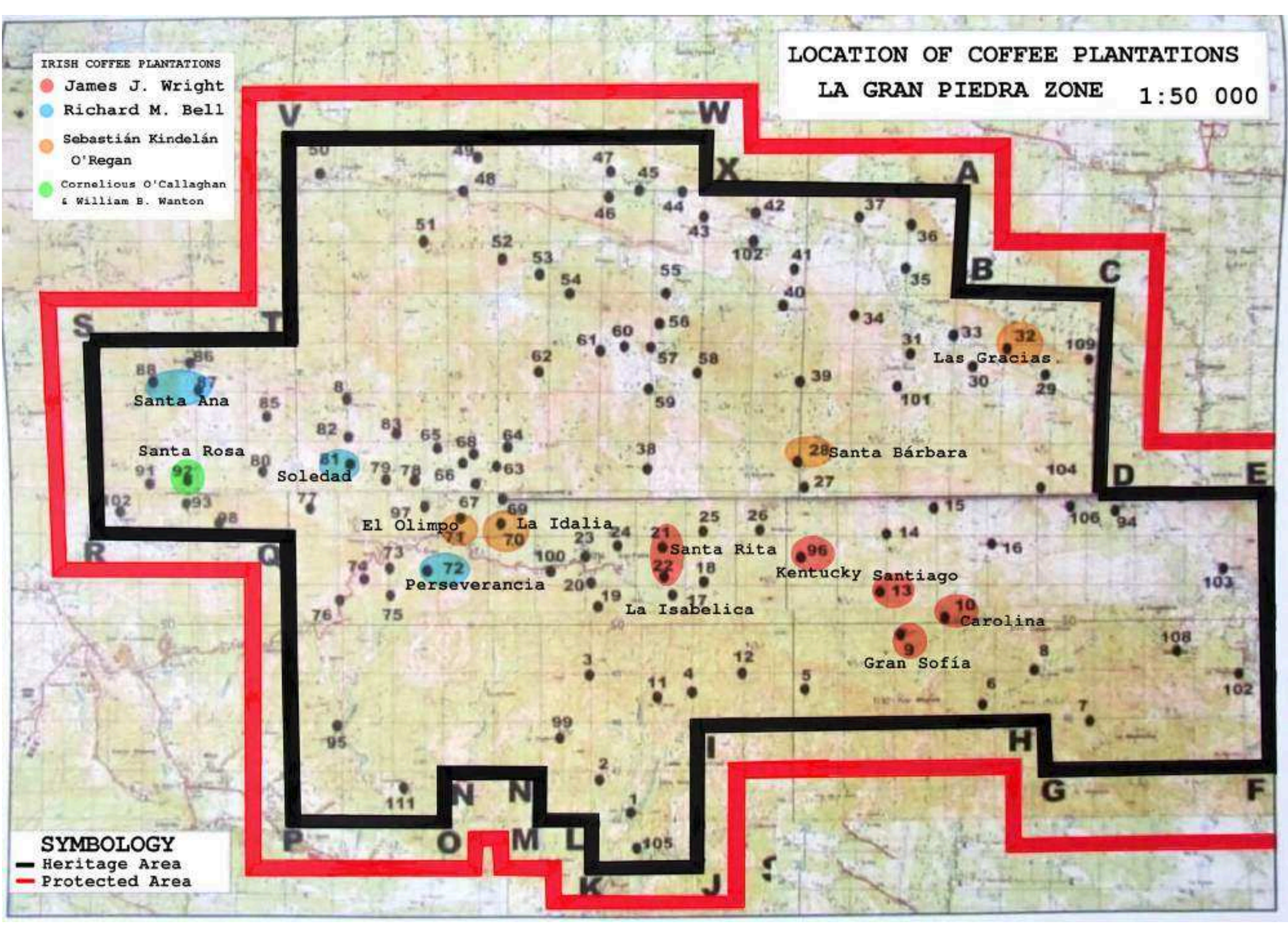
SOURCE: Oficina del Conservador de Santiago de Cuba, *Sitio Cultural vinculado al desarollo cafetalero en el sudoriente de Cuba* (Colombia: Editorial Nomos S.A., 2005): 26.

8. Coffee Areas in Eastern Cuba (zoomed in)



SOURCE: Oficina del Conservador de Santiago de Cuba, *Sitio Cultural vinculado al desarollo cafetalero en el sudoriente de Cuba* (Colombia: Editorial Nomos S.A., 2005): 28.

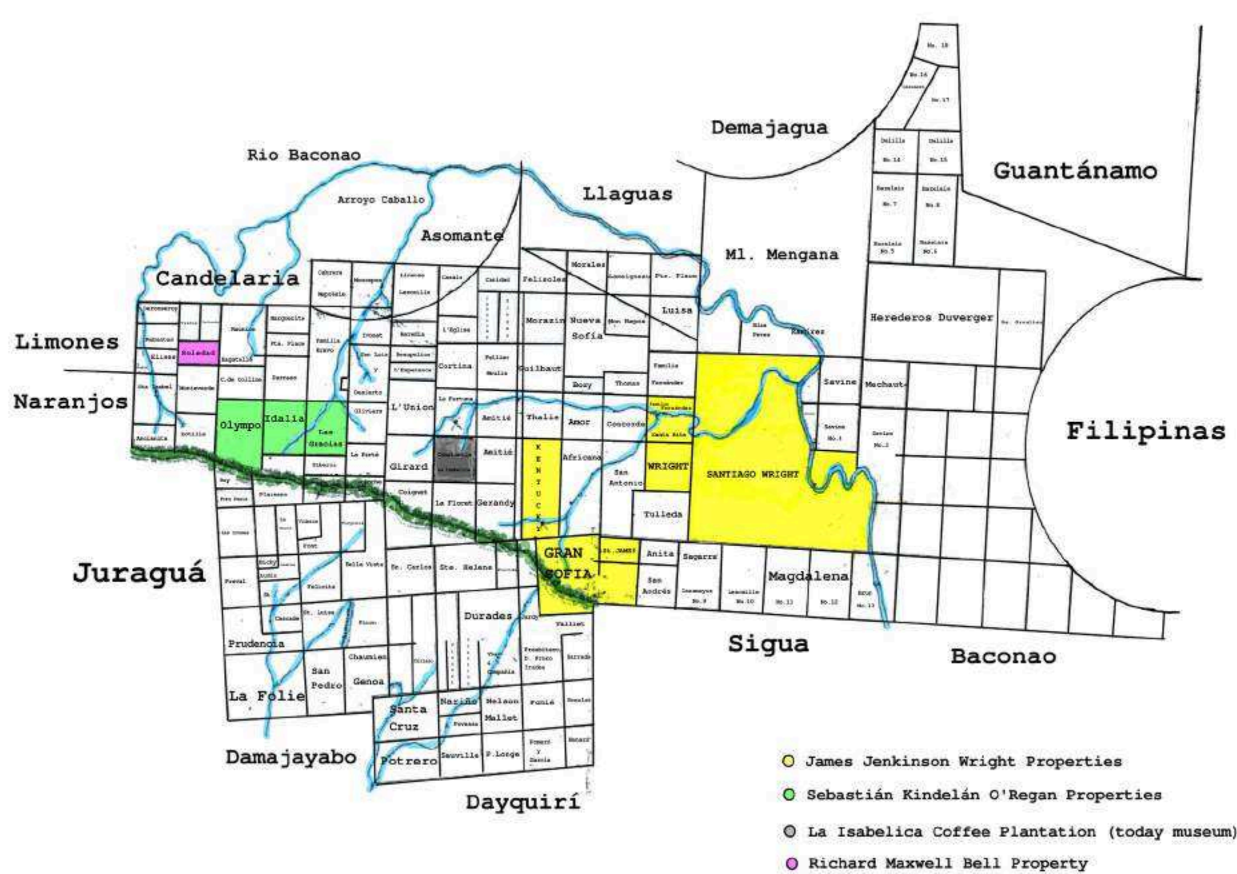
9. Coffee Plantations in La Gran Piedra Area, Santiago de Cuba.



Modified by the author for the purpose of this thesis.

SOURCE: Oficina del Conservador de Santiago de Cuba, *Sitio Cultural vinculado al desarollo cafetalero en el sudoriente de Cuba* (Colombia: Editorial Nomos S.A., 2005): 29.

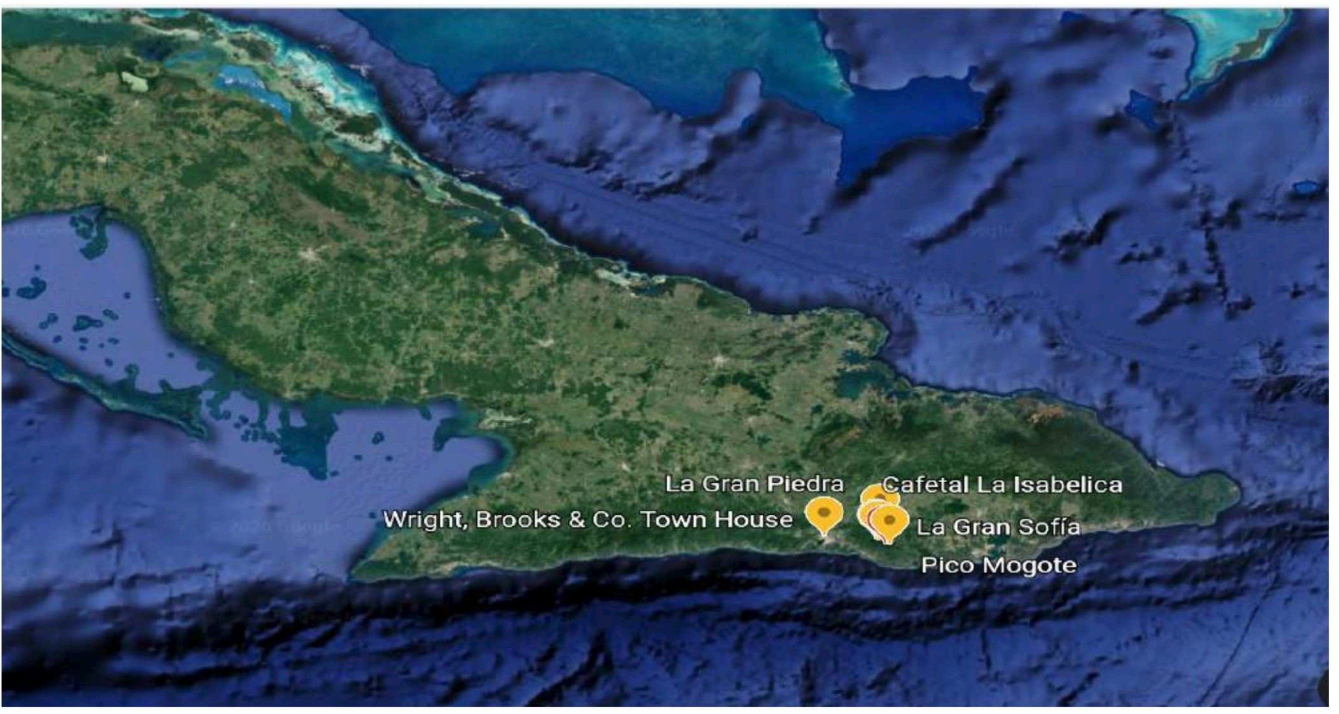
10. Prudencio Casamayor's plots of land in La Gran Piedra area.



Originals modified by author for the purpose of this research

SOURCES: "Plan de los varios terrenos comprados por don Prudencio Casamayor (entre Guantánamo y Juragua), con el objeto de proporcionar su cultivo en café, subdividiéndolos según lo demuestra el plan para venderlos a plazos, facilitando la abertura de sus caminos y acomodando los compradores con negros fiados," (1832) AGI/MP-SANTO_DOMINGO/811; and the 1838 copy at La Isabelica Coffee Museum, Santiago de Cuba, reproduced in: Marileydis Brunet Horruitiner, "Los recintos funerarios en lso cafetales Perseverancia y La Reunión en la cordillera de La Gran Piedra: Propuesta de Conservación preventiva y Ruta Patrimonial." (Bachelor Thesis, Santiago de Cuba, Universidad de Oriente, 2015).

11. La Gran Sofía, James J. Wright's most important Coffee Plantation in La Gran Piedra Area.

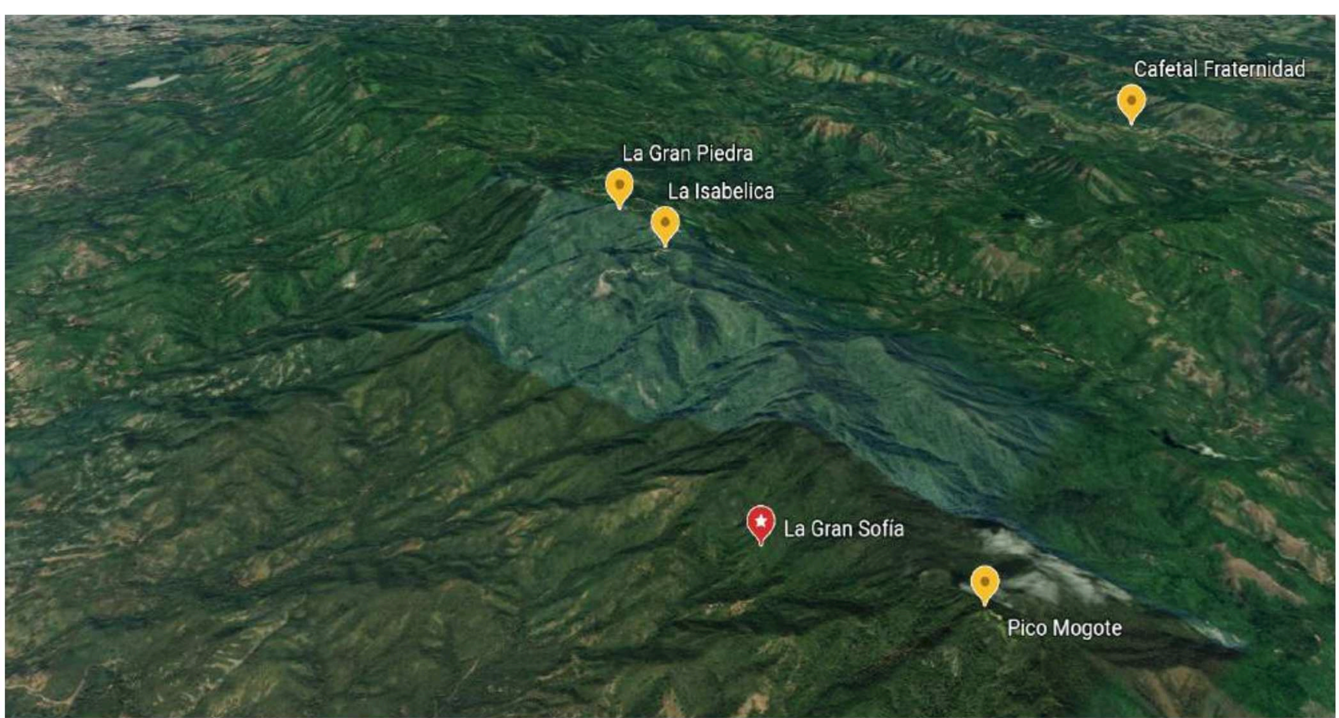


Made by the author using Google Earth Technology

12. La Gran Sofía Coffee Plantation, Wright, Brooks & Co.'s Town House, and other Landmarks.

Made by the author using Google Earth Technology

13. La Gran Sofía Coffee Plantation (770m above sea level).



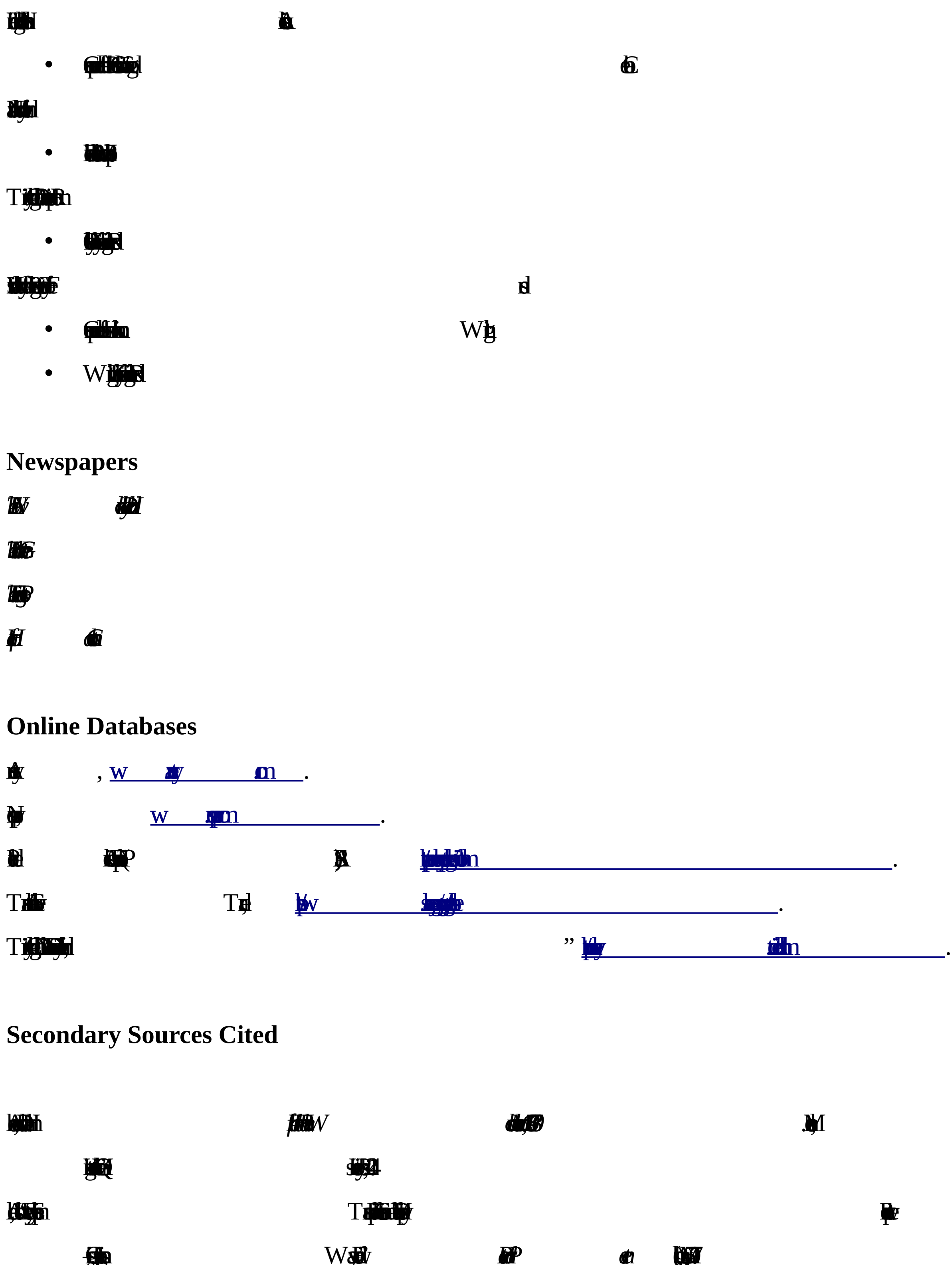
Tri-dimensional view showing elevations.
Made by the author using Google Earth Technology

14. James J. Wright's Companies main Trade Destinations (1826-1846).

Made by the author using Palladio.

Works Cited

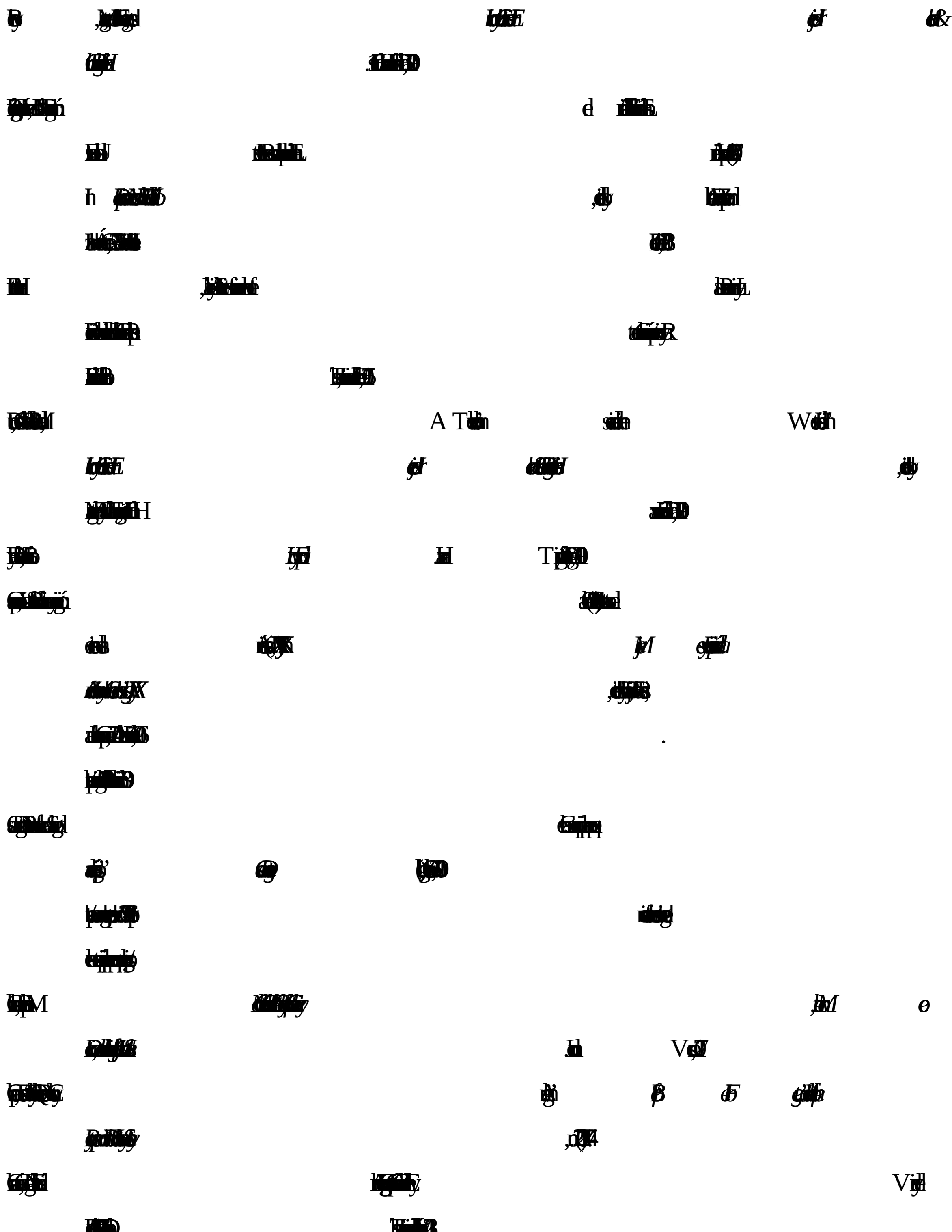
Archival Sources



Newspapers

Online Databases

Secondary Sources Cited



[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] T[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] A [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] N Y[illegible] 1

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] A [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] W[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] *C* [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] . *T*[illegible] *AV*[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] T[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] W. [illegible] [illegible] *A*[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] . W[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] T.[illegible] T[illegible]

[illegible] ." [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Tim [illegible]

[illegible] .W [illegible]

[illegible] .T [illegible] N [illegible] Y[illegible]N Y[illegible]

[illegible] , V[illegible]

[illegible] 8

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] 1

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] /

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] 3

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

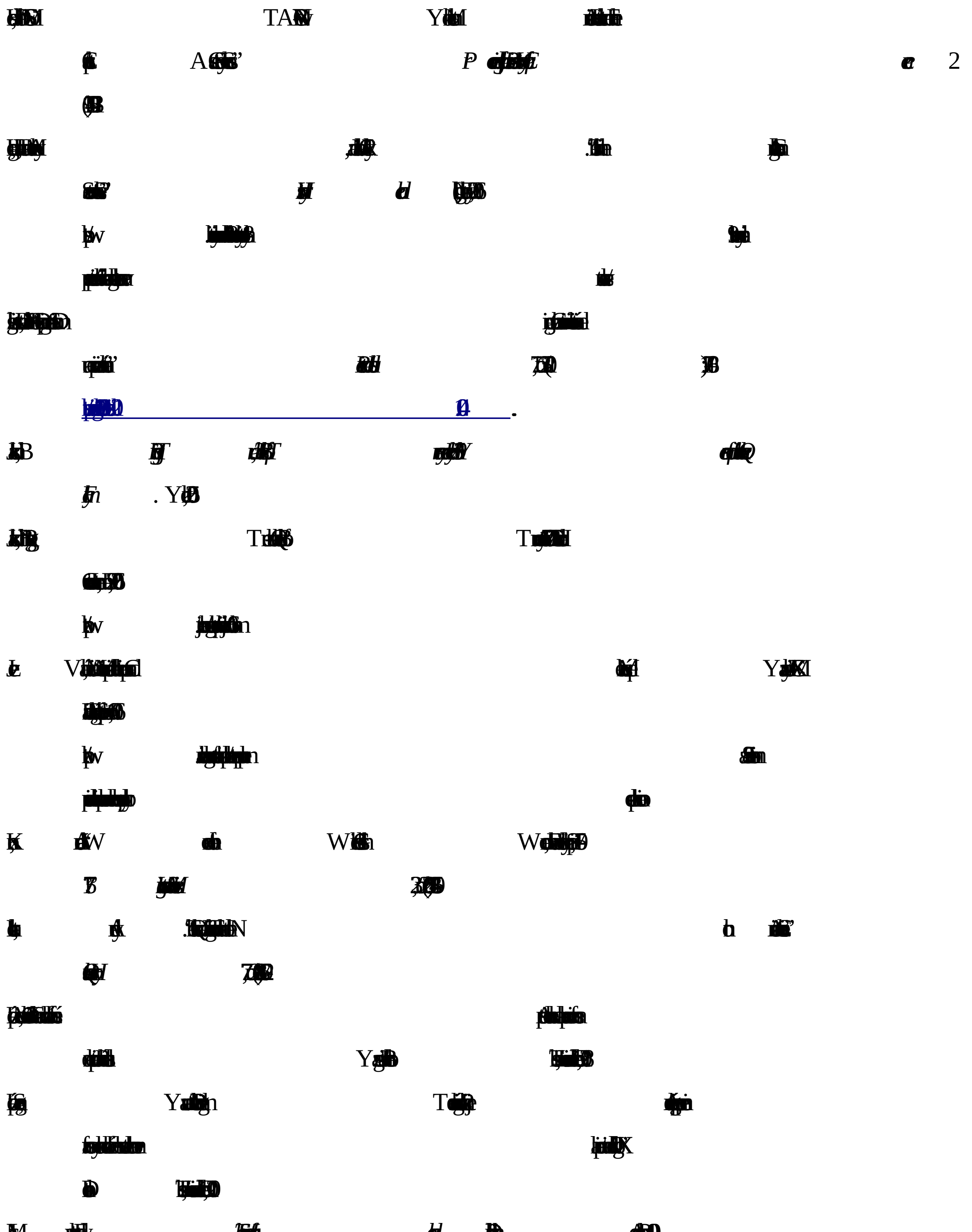
[illegible]

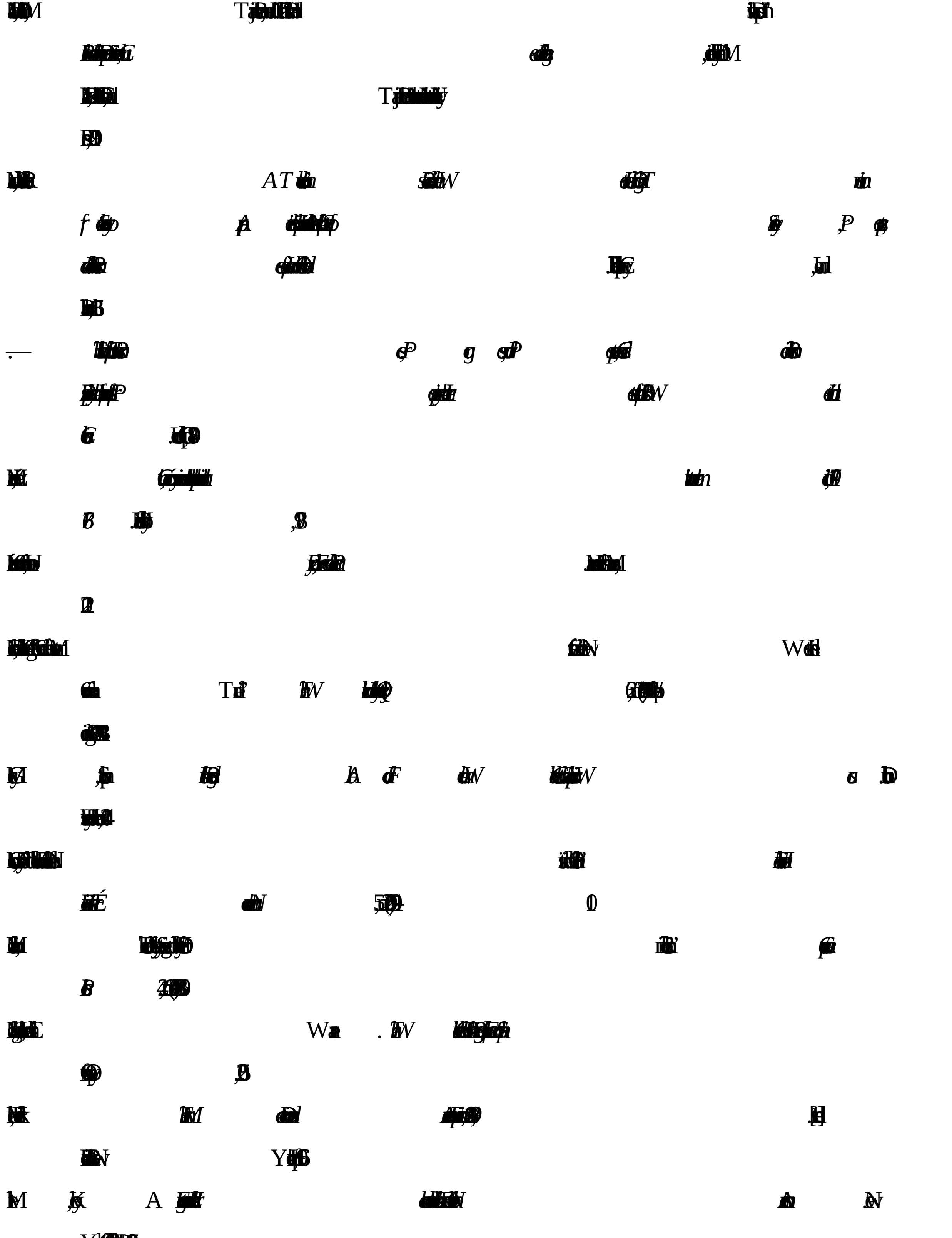
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]





[illegible] W[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] Y[illegible]
[illegible] d
[illegible] T[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] ,
[illegible] 0
[illegible] 1
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Y[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] o
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] ,
[illegible]
[illegible] .
[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] T[illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] W[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] *E*
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] T[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] . V[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] W[illegible] T[illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] A[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] W[illegible]’ [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] W[illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] 1
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
E *p* [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] .
[illegible] [illegible]