



Essay on Cuba (1511-present)

Scott Pearson
Professor Emeritus
Stanford University

This essay reviews the political and economic history of Cuba from the beginnings of Spanish colonization in 1511 to the present day. Spain founded Havana in 1519 and turned the city into its primary port in the Caribbean. For two centuries, starting in the 1540s, the Spanish operated annual convoys (*flotas*) of ships, loaded with Peruvian and Mexican silver and gold, from Havana to Seville.

I begin this essay by discussing the links between Spanish silver and French and British pirates in the Caribbean (1520s-1720s). During the 16th century, Spain produced sugar cane in its new colonies of Hispaniola and Cuba. But the production of slave-based sugar in the Caribbean migrated to British Barbados (17th century) and to British Jamaica and French Saint-Domingue (18th century). The sugar boom in Cuba began only in the 19th century. The second section of this essay analyzes this shifting pattern of slave-based sugar production in the Caribbean between the 1520s and the 1890s.

In the third part of the essay, I look into political and economic change in Cuba between 1868 and 1958. I investigate the roles of Cuban nationalists, Spanish colonists, and American interventionists in the formation of the Cuban Republic (1868-1902), the interplay between Cuban political instability and American intervention (1902-1940), the rise and fall of Fulgencio Batista (1940-1958), and the Cuban revolution (1953-1958).

I end this essay by discussing conflict and adjustment in Cuba since 1959 under the revolutionary governments of Fidel and Raúl Castro. I look at the decade of nationalization and consolidation (1959-1968), the period of Soviet subsidies and domination (1969-1990), the Special Period of austerity (1991-1998) and tourism-led economic recovery (1999-2005), and the beginnings of economic reform under the leadership of Raúl Castro and Miguel Díaz Canel (2006-present). I append a time line, a bibliography, and a description of the sites that I visited in Cuba.

Pirates and Silver in the Caribbean (1520s-1720s)

Silver in Spain's American Empire. Shortly after Christopher Columbus discovered the Bahamas in 1492, Spain colonized the largest islands in the Caribbean basin – Hispaniola (1493), Puerto Rico (1508), Jamaica (1509), and Cuba (1511). In all instances, Spanish settlers devastated the Arawak Amerindian populations through disease and overwork and exploited minor gold resources.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_return_of_Columbus_in_Spain,_1493.jpg
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*King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella Welcoming
Christopher Columbus On His Return to Spain in 1493 –
Painting by Ricardo Balaca, 1874*

Spain conquered Mexico, Colombia, and Panama in the 1520s and Peru in the 1530s and discovered unprecedented silver resources. Spain controlled the entire Spanish Main (the Caribbean basin) until the early 1600s.

Seville monopolized Spanish trade with the Americas. The transportation of goods was organized into massive convoys (*flotas*) of 60-100 ships. Two fleets would sail annually – the *Flota*, to Vera Cruz in Mexico, and the *Galeones*, to Cartagena and the Panamanian Isthmus. The fleets would join together for the return trip, leaving from Havana and returning to Seville. The convoy system was expensive, but it provided protection for the silver fleet against pirates and hostile countries, facilitated the levying of taxes, and economized on the use of skilled pilots and navigators needed for the trans-Atlantic voyages.

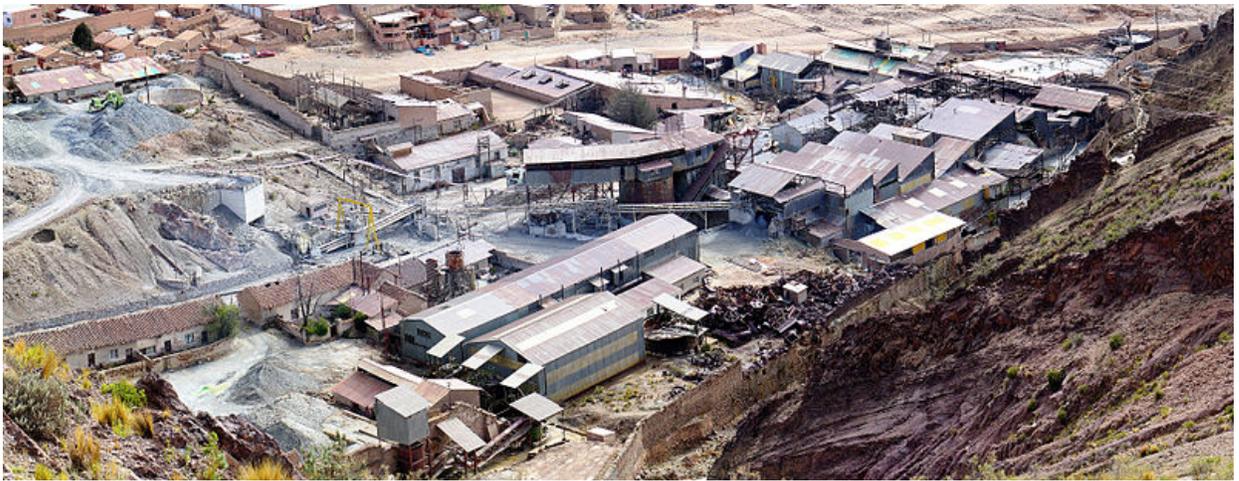


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:16th_century_Portuguese_Spanish_trade_routes.png>

Spanish (White) and Portuguese (Blue) Convoy Routes in the 16th century – Spanish Ships Crossed Eastward from Havana to Seville

Silver was by far the most significant resource obtained from the American colonies. Between 1503 and 1660, 16,000 tons of silver entered Seville from the New World, tripling the European stock of silver. Most silver was produced in the Potosí mines in southern Peru, especially after 1560 when new techniques of

refining silver were developed using mercury obtained from the Almadén mines in Spain. In addition, about 185 tons of gold were imported, raising European gold stocks by 20 percent. Spanish exports to the Americas were mostly cereals, wine, textiles, weapons, and horses.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Potosi_D%C3%A9cembre_2007_-_Industrie_Mini%C3%A8re.jpg>

*Potosí Silver Mines Today –
Source of 60 Percent of the World’s Silver in the Late 16th century*

Privateers and the Spanish Main (1520s-1610s). A privateer was an armed vessel, or its commander and crew, which had received a letter of marque and reprisal from its sovereign authorizing it to attack, seize, and plunder ships of hostile nations

during wartime. Attacks by French and British privateers against Spanish ships and ports were the main means of warfare in the Caribbean region during the 16th century.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:014Corsario.jpg>>*

Privateer – Painting by Mauricio Garcia Vega, 20th century

French privateers were the first to enter the Caribbean basin, and they were Spain's main antagonists between the 1520s and the 1550s, when France was at war with Spain. In 1544, French privateers plundered and razed Cartagena, one of Spain's principal

Caribbean ports. In the 1550s, 30 French privateer ships controlled the Caribbean Sea routes and pillaged Spanish coastal towns.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_Cartagena_from_the_fortification_East_of_the_city_-_2016_c.jpg>

*Caribbean Port of Cartagena, Colombia –
Razed and Plundered by French Privateers in 1544*

Between the 1560s and 1590s, the Spanish Main was regularly invaded by Elizabethan Sea Dogs (or Sea Rovers) in search of Peruvian silver. John Hawkins led the onslaught in the 1560s. Hawkins was a former African slave trader who later guided England's victory over the Spanish Armada (1588). In the 1560s, Hawkins introduced his cousin, Francis Drake, to privateering in the Spanish Main. Drake went on to lead attacks on

Nombre de Dios, the Spanish port on the Isthmus of Panama, in 1573, 1586, and 1595.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thomas_Cavendish,_Sir_Francis_Drake_and_Sir_John_Hawkins,_British_School.jpg>

*Three Elizabethan Sea Dogs –
Thomas Cavendish, Sir Francis Drake, and Sir John Hawkins*

Francis Drake's most remarkable exploit was his capture of the Spanish treasure ship, *Cacafuego*, in 1579 and its silver and gold worth 760,000 pesos (about \$20 million today) and his subsequent circumnavigation of the world on the 75-foot-long *Golden Hind*.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Golden_Hinde,_Londres,_Inglaterra,_2014-08-11,_DD_107.JPG>

*Replica of Francis Drake's Flagship,
The Golden Hind, Bankside, London –
Only 75 Feet Long, Circumnavigated the World (1577-1580)*

The plunder of most 16th-century privateers, however, was merchant cargo and slaves, not silver and gold. But this mundane

haul earned owners of privateering ships an annual rate of return of about 60 percent.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spanish_Caribbean_Islands_in_the_America_n_Viceroyalties_1600.png>

Spanish Possessions in the Caribbean Region in 1600

Buccaneers and Spanish Commerce (1620s-1680s).

Buccaneer is a term used to identify a pirate operating in the Caribbean region, originally applied to French hunters-turned-pirates on Hispaniola. (A pirate in the Mediterranean is a corsair.) Most of the buccaneers were British or French disaffected sailors

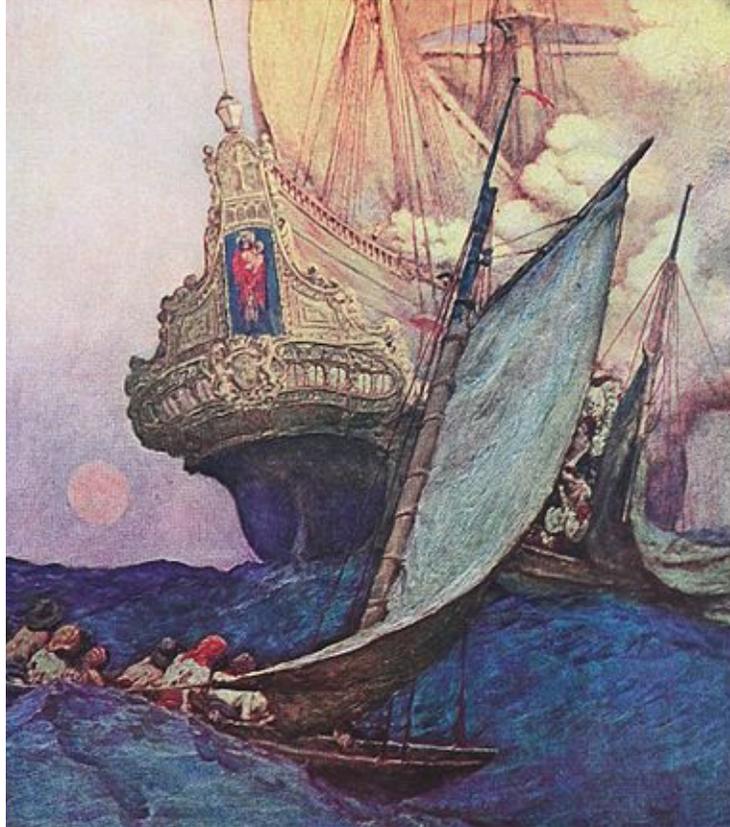
or religious refugees, and most buccaneer crews were multinational, often including Dutch pirates and runaway African slaves. During times of war, buccaneers became legal privateers, and during peacetime they reverted to being outlawed pirates.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pyle_pirate_handsome.jpg>

*Buccaneer of the Caribbean –
Illustration from Howard Pyle,
Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates, 1905*

In the 1620s, the Dutch West India Company destroyed Spain's trade monopoly, and Dutch merchant ships controlled Caribbean trade throughout the rest of the 17th century. Concurrently, Britain, France, and Holland established colonies in the eastern Caribbean islands. In 1655, Britain took Jamaica and, in 1697, France claimed the western third of Hispaniola (Saint Domingue, now Haiti) from Spain. The buccaneers took advantage of those changes to disrupt Spanish commerce and fight in wars (first between the northern European countries and Spain and later between Britain and France).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pyle_pirates_approaching_ship.jpg>

*A Buccaneer Attack on a Spanish Galleon –
Illustration from Howard Pyle,
Howard Pyle’s Book of Pirates, 1905*

Between the 1620s and the 1680s, the buccaneers operated out of two principal pirate havens. Tortuga, a small island northwest of Hispaniola, was an independent pirate kingdom throughout most of the 17th century, predominantly French. Port Royal, Jamaica openly housed at least 2,000 buccaneers, mostly British, for nearly four decades after England claimed Jamaica in

1655. The most renowned of the 17th century buccaneers, Henry Morgan, operated from Port Royal. Morgan profitably raided Portobelo (1668), Maracaibo (1669), and Panama City (1671), was knighted, and became Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica where he was a wealthy planter.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sir_Henry_Morgan_\(1635-1688\)_imp-cswc-GB-237-CSWC47-LS11-008.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sir_Henry_Morgan_(1635-1688)_imp-cswc-GB-237-CSWC47-LS11-008.jpg)

Sir Henry Morgan (1635-1680), Buccaneer, Politician, and Planter – Illustration by Church of Scotland Foreign Missions Committee, c. 1875

The Golden Age of Piracy (1690s-1720s). In the late 17th century, piracy in the Caribbean experienced a final burst and then subsided. During the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), Britain fought France and both sides used privateers extensively in the Caribbean. After the war, ex-privateers and unemployed seamen spread unlawful piracy in the Caribbean basin. A study of 700 known pirates between 1715 and 1725 showed that nearly three-fourths were British or West Indian and one-fourth were American. Rampant piracy occurred because governors in the Caribbean and American colonies judged the gains from contraband to outweigh the costs of disrupting normal trade.

Starting in the 1690s, Nassau on New Providence Island in the Bahamas became a pirate haven and regularly housed 700 buccaneers. Nassau had a strategic location, near the Florida Straits, and a good harbor, deep enough for pirate ships but too shallow for naval warships. Until 1718, the British colonial government was accommodating.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pyle_pirates_city.jpg>

*Buccaneers Extorting Tribute from the Citizens –
Illustration from Howard Pyle,
Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates, 1905*

The leading – and most notorious – pirate captains during piracy's Golden Age (1690-1725) commanded at least two ships, each with a crew of more than 200 men. Bartholomew Roberts (Black Bart) commanded two large and two smaller ships and took 400 prizes (victim ships) in 30 months before he was killed in

Gabon in 1722. Edward Teach (Blackbeard) had two large ships when he was killed on Ocracoke Island, North Carolina in 1718.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Capture-of-Blackbeard.jpg>>

*Capture of the Pirate, Blackbeard, 1718 –
Painting by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris, 1920*

Colonial governors, led by Woodes Rogers in the Bahamas, demanded an end to disruptive piracy during a post-war trade boom. Piracy in the Caribbean ended because of better law enforcement by the Royal Navy (400 pirates were hanged between 1716 and 1726) plus Rogers' program of pirate amnesty and bounty hunting in the Bahamas.



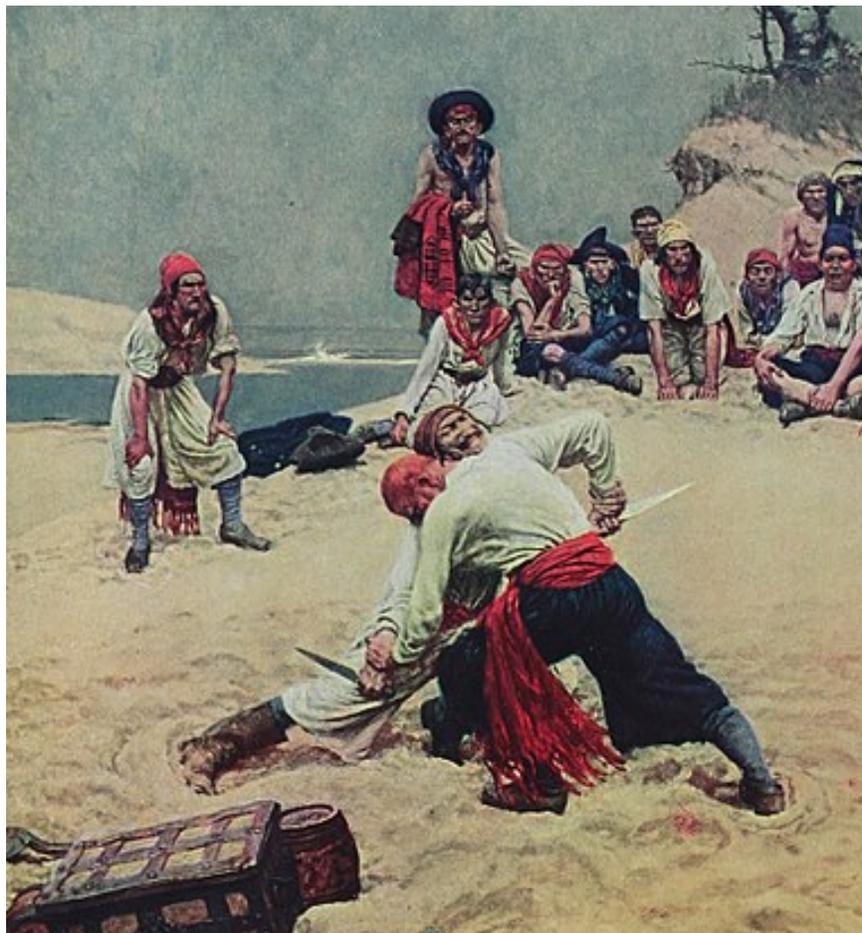
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
 >https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CIA_map_Central_America_%26_Caribbean.png>

The Spanish Main (the Caribbean Basin) – Site of Caribbean Piracy, 1520s-1720s

Piracy in the Caribbean – Truth and Fiction. Piracy

returned briefly to the Caribbean in the decade after the Napoleonic Wars (1815-1825). Thereafter, piracy was romanticized in novels (Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*), plays (Barrie’s *Peter Pan*), and poetry (Byron’s *The Corsair*). Some of the literary images reflect an accurate picture of Caribbean pirates.

Most pirate communities were democracies in which the crew elected the captain, set the itinerary, and agreed to distribute the spoils in written articles. Sometimes the captaincy was decided through fighting. Attacking pirates were heavily armed, often carrying several pistols, cutlasses, and knives, and some even used crude hand grenades.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pyle_pirates_treasfight.jpg>

Who Shall Be Captain? – Painting by Howard Pyle, 1911

The flags of pirate ships often portrayed a skull-and-crossbones, among many threatening symbols, on a black or red Jolly Roger (from the French *jolie rouge*, pretty red). Many pirates also kept parrots as pets, similar to Long John Silver's Cap'n Flint, sometimes for the purpose of selling them on the lucrative London bird market.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_Edward_England.svg>

*Pirate Flags Carried the Skull and Crossbones
in Truth and Fiction*

Other literary images of pirates are totally or mostly fictional. Although pirates preferred to capture treasure chests filled with

silver and gold, most plunder instead was merchant cargo (cloth, textiles), slaves, and items to maintain pirate ships (sails, cables, tools). Pirates rarely, if ever, buried their treasure and instead quickly spent their shares of booty on gambling, alcoholic drink, and women.

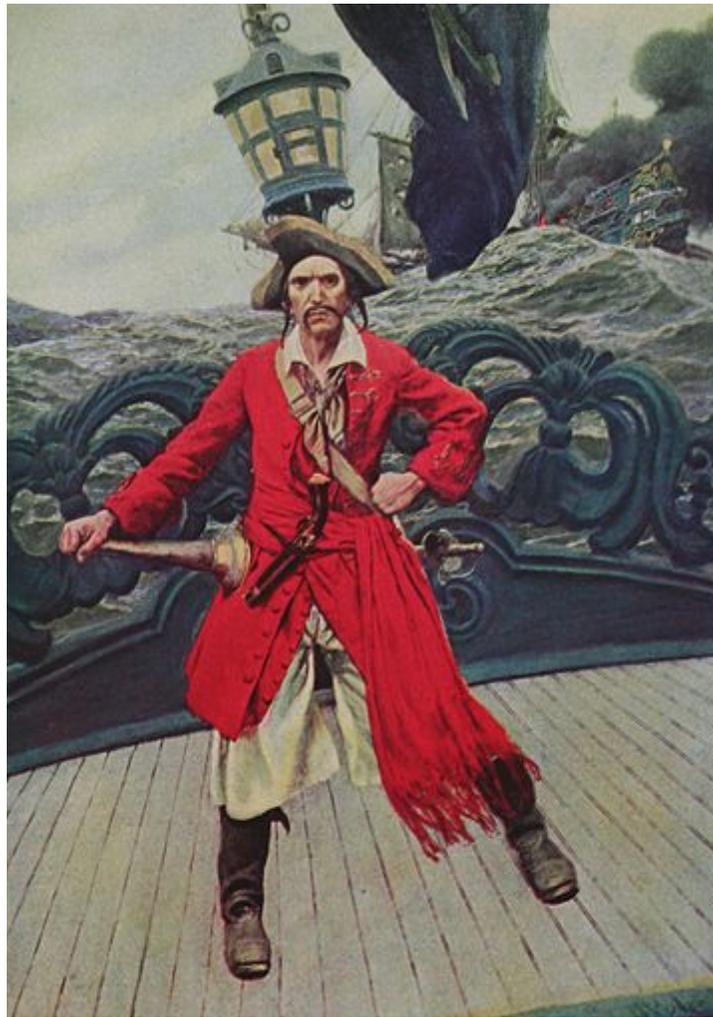


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pg_154 -
_So_the_Treasure_was_Divided.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pg_154_-_So_the_Treasure_was_Divided.jpg)>

*So the Treasure was Divided (and Not Buried) –
Illustration from Howard Pyle,
Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates, 1905*

Only one example of pirates forcing victims of a boarded ship to walk the plank to their deaths has been recorded (during a pirate attack on the Dutch ship *Vhan Fredericka* out of Jamaica in

1829). Pirate captains were much more likely to be vicious, greedy, and brutish than to be aristocratic, well-educated, and kind such as Captain Hook. Despite the romantic imagery, piracy was a murderous undertaking with few redeeming features.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pyle_pirate_captain.jpg>

*Pirate Captains Were Vicious and Wore Practical Dress,
Not Aristocratic Garb –
Captain Keitt, Painting by Howard Pyle, c. 1911*

The Caribbean (1520s-1890s) – Sugar and Slaves

Spanish Hispaniola, 16th century. Christopher Columbus landed on San Salvador Island (Watling's Island) in the Bahamas on October 12, 1492. A year later, the Spanish crown sent Columbus and his brother, Bartholomé, with 1,500 men to establish a settlement in the Americas. The Columbuses settled in Hispaniola (Isla Española) but were poor administrators and were sent back to Spain in chains in 1500.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Landing_of_Columbus_\(2\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Landing_of_Columbus_(2).jpg)>

Christopher Columbus, Landing on San Salvador Island, October 1492 – Painting by John Vanderlyn, 1847

Two Amerindian peoples – the Arawak and the Carib – inhabited the Caribbean region. Estimates of their pre-contact populations range from 250,000 to 6 million. The Arawak lived in the Greater Antilles (Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica), Trinidad, and the Bahamas, whereas the Carib inhabited the Lesser Antilles and the Virgin Islands.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:School_children_Bigi_Poika.jpg>*

Carib (Kalina) Schoolchildren, Bigi Poika, Surinam, 2002

The Arawak people nearly disappeared within two decades after Spanish contact. The Spanish settlers enslaved the Arawak, overworked them in gold mines, and introduced European and

African diseases against which the Amerindians had no immunity – smallpox, tuberculosis, typhus, measles, yellow fever, and malaria.

The Spanish had had ample experience producing slave-based sugar cane in plantations in the Canary Islands, and Columbus brought seedlings of sugar cane to the Caribbean in 1493. Sugar was first exported from Hispaniola to Spain in 1516.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Digging_the_Cane-holes -
Ten_Views_in_the_Island_of_Antigua_\(1823\),_plate_II_-_BL.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Digging_the_Cane-holes_-_Ten_Views_in_the_Island_of_Antigua_(1823),_plate_II_-_BL.jpg)>

Slave-based Sugar Cane Production in British Antigua, Digging the Cane-holes, Painting by William Clark, 1823 – Sugar Output in the Spanish Caribbean Was Minor Until the 19th century

The Caribbean islands had good land and climate for sugar cane production. Although the Spanish had decimated the Amerindian population, they could have imported African slave labor. But after the conquests of Mexico and Peru, Spain largely ignored its island possessions. When the Spanish crown introduced a trade monopoly and convoy system, the production of sugar cane in the Spanish Caribbean became infeasible. Little sugar was produced there after the 1570s.

The Atlantic Slave Trade. After the opening of labor-intensive plantations in the Americas to produce sugar and cotton in the late 16th century, Portugal, Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands became heavily involved in the African slave trade across the Atlantic Ocean. Slavery in Africa had long pre-dated the Atlantic slave trade. Early African kingdoms practiced slavery widely, and there was a longstanding export of African slaves to Arab areas.

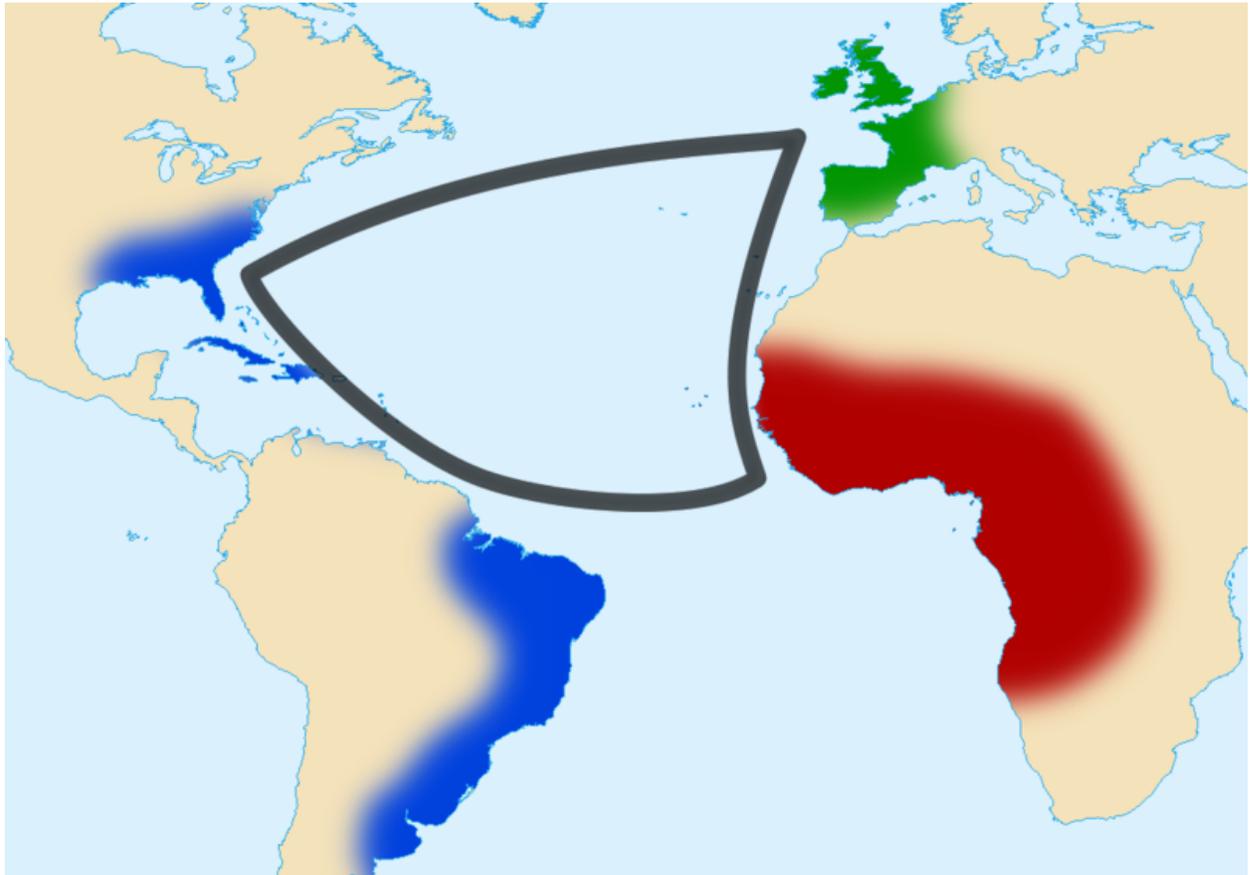


Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Slave_Trade_by_Auguste_Francois_Biard.jpg>

The Slave Trade – Painting by Francois-Auguste Biard, c. 1833

The enormous demand for African slaves in the Americas greatly accelerated slave-raiding in Africa. The Atlantic slave trade followed a triangular pattern – European cloth and other manufactures were sent to Africa and exchanged for African slaves, the slaves were shipped to the Americas and traded for sugar, rum, and other American commodities, and the American

goods were carried to Europe and swapped for European manufactures.

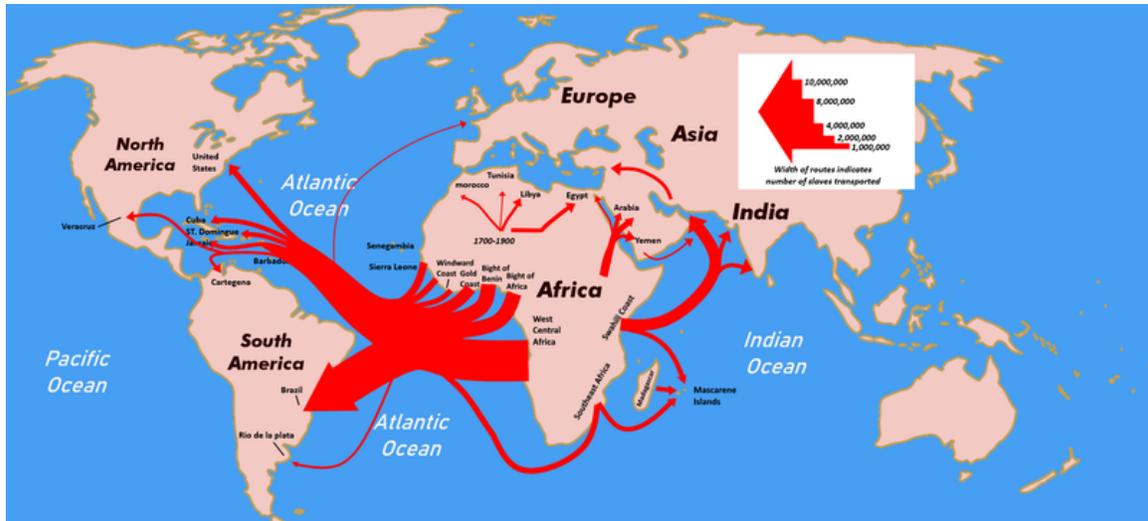


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Triangular_trade.png>

Triangular Trade Route – Europe, Africa, America

About 9.5 million African slaves survived the horrendous Atlantic crossing. Of that total, 300,000 slaves were transported in the 16th century, 1.3 million in the 17th, 6 million in the 18th, and 1.9 million in the 19th. Most of the slaves were shipped to the

Caribbean (3.8 million) and Brazil (3.7 million). The Guianas (in northern South America) took 1.6 million African slaves, whereas the United States received only 400,000.

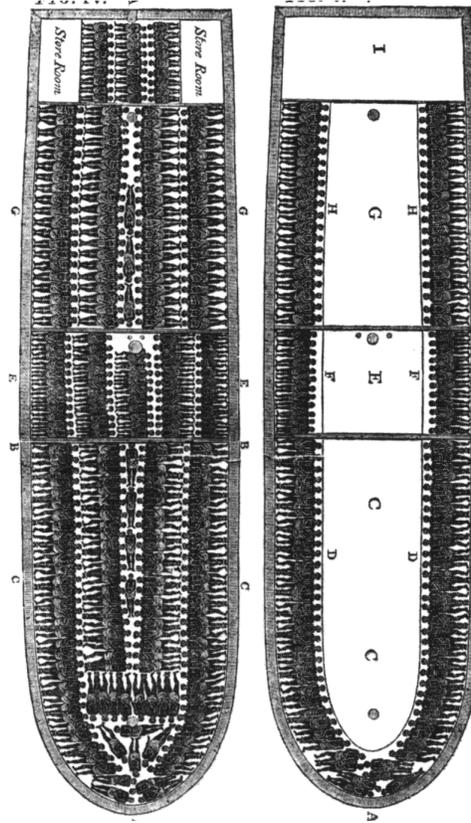


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:African_Slave_Trade.png>

The African Slave Trade, 16th-19th centuries

The slave trade devastated raided areas (especially the Middle Belt of West Africa and the Congo Basin) and slowed African adaptation of new techniques to produce legitimate exports. But the sub-Saharan African population grew (to about 60 million by 1800) because of the introduction of American food crops (maize, cassava, and beans). When the Atlantic slave trade

was abolished in the 19th century, slave prices fell and the practice of slavery within Africa expanded significantly.

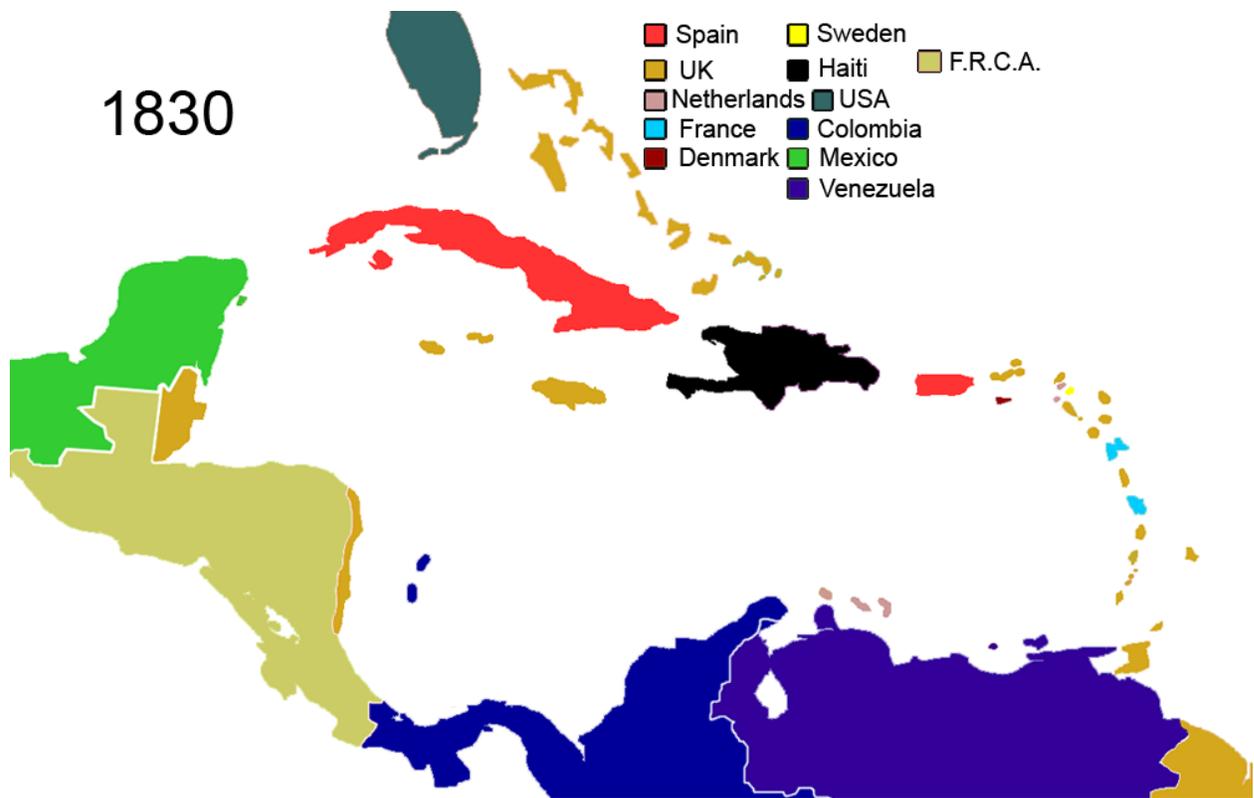


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Slave_ship_diagram.png>

*The Horrors of the Middle Passage –
600 Slaves Crowded into the Space of 10 Cruise-ship Cabins*

British Barbados, 17th century. The first British settlements in the Caribbean islands were on St. Kitts in 1624 and Barbados in 1627. Spain had abandoned the Lesser Antilles, and there were no longer Amerindians on Barbados. Private British

farmers hoped to grow tobacco, cotton, or indigo. Barbados thrived, and 10,000 British settlers arrived by 1640. About 1645, the planters on Barbados switched to sugar cane and had 5,500 African slaves and even more white indentured laborers working their plantations. With the introduction of African diseases (yellow fever and malaria), three-fourths of the white laborers died within two years compared with one-third of the African slaves. The planters shifted to African slave labor and employed 80,000 slaves in 1667. The sugar and slavery nexus in the Caribbean, based on the plantation system, thus began in Barbados.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Political_Evolution_of_Central_America_and_the_Caribbean_1830_na.png

*Colonial Political Control in the Caribbean Region, 1830 –
 British (Dark Tan), French (Light Blue), and Spanish (Red)*

Cane production – planting in wide holes, spreading animal manure, and harvesting – was very labor-intensive. Sugar processing – milling, boiling, drying, and distilling – required careful management and ample labor. Because sugar prices were high, Barbadian planters received annual rates of return of 50

percent in the 1650s, and Barbados was Britain's richest colony until 1710.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Mill_Yard_-_Ten_Views_in_the_Island_of_Antigua_\(1823\),_plate_V_-_BL.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Mill_Yard_-_Ten_Views_in_the_Island_of_Antigua_(1823),_plate_V_-_BL.jpg)>

Grinding Sugar Cane with a Windmill in Antigua, The Mill Yard, Painting by William Clark, 1823, British Library, London – 80,000 African Slaves Produced Sugar in Barbados, 1660s

The British Navigation Act (1651) created a trade monopoly for British merchants by requiring that all trade between Britain and its colonies be done by British traders and ships. The intent was to cut out the dominant Dutch merchants and allow the British

British Jamaica and French Saint-Domingue, 18th century. During the 18th century, Jamaica replaced Barbados as the leading producer of sugar in the British Empire. British planters used the Barbadian plantation and processing system of sugar production without making any significant technological innovations. A typical medium-sized sugar plantation on Jamaica consisted of 900 acres and 200 African slaves.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rose_Hall_\(Jamaica\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rose_Hall_(Jamaica).jpg)>

*Rose Hall, Jamaica –
Estate House of a Former Sugar Cane Plantation*

During the 18th century, about 700,000 slaves were imported from Africa (reflecting the high death rate of slaves in Jamaica).

Jamaican sugar production gradually slipped because of the loss of the protected export market in British North America (after American independence in 1776), the decline in Jamaican soil fertility, and the rapid increase of sugar output in the British Leeward Islands, especially St. Kitts.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Slaves_cutting_the_sugar_cane_-_Ten_Views_in_the_Island_of_Antigua_\(1823\),_plate_IV_-_BL.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Slaves_cutting_the_sugar_cane_-_Ten_Views_in_the_Island_of_Antigua_(1823),_plate_IV_-_BL.jpg)>

Slaves Harvesting Sugar Cane in Antigua, Painting by William Clark, 1823, British Library, London

France claimed Saint Domingue (the western third of Hispaniola) from Spain in 1697 and quickly turned its new colony into the world's leading producer of sugar. The French introduced

irrigation and created 7,000 large sugar plantations. By 1789, on the eve of the French Revolution, Saint Domingue was the richest colony in the world, produced 40 percent of the world's sugar and half of the world's coffee, and accounted for two-fifths of total French trade. In 1791, the colony's 435,000 slaves rebelled and were emancipated. After Haiti became independent in 1804, the country's near-subsistence small farmers produced little sugar for export.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Haitian_Revolution.jpg>

*The Haitian Revolution for Independence from France, 1791-1803
– Attack on Crête-à-Pierrot, 1802,
Painting by Auguste Raffet, 1839*

To supply the sugar plantations, the Atlantic slave trade peaked in the 18th century at about 6 million survivors. Britain (2.5 million) and France (1 million) supplied most of the slaves to the Caribbean region. After Britain banned the slave trade in 1808, most of the 1.9 million slaves traded in the 19th century went to Brazil or Cuba.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Toussaint_Louverture_-_Girardin.jpg>

*General François-Dominique Toussaint Louverture –
Leader of the Haitian Revolution and Governor-General of
Saint-Domingue (1797-1801)*

Spanish Cuba, 19th century. Cuba was only a minor participant in the world sugar market until the 19th century. Cuba

is the largest island in the Caribbean, had largely virgin soil in 1800, and has an ideal climate for cultivating sugar cane. But restrictive Spanish trade policy, which banned other countries from trading with Cuba, limited Cuba's sugar output.

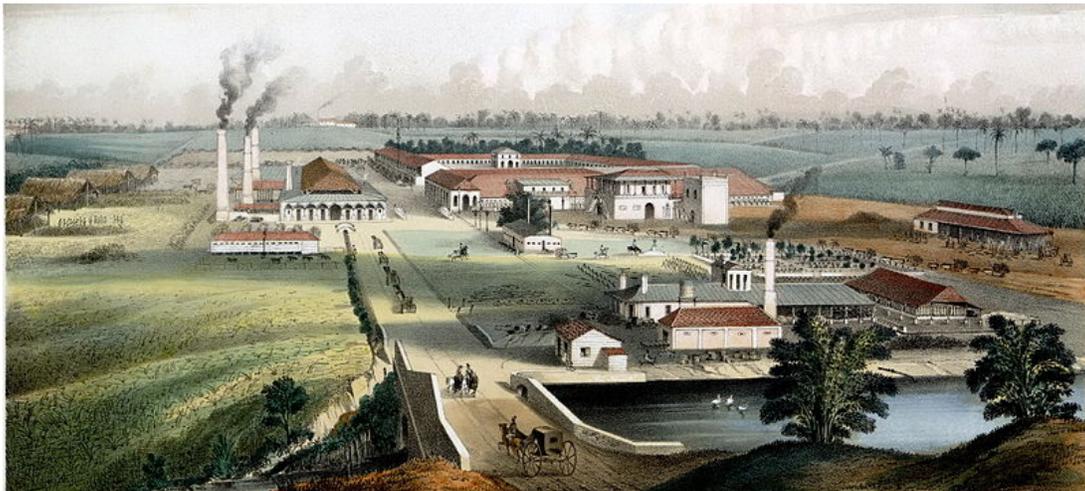


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spanish_Empire_Anachronous_0.PNG

Cuba in the Spanish American Empire, Early 19th century

Cuba's sugar boom began only after that policy was changed in the late 18th century. Cuban land ownership was highly

concentrated, permitting the formation of large plantations (many over 10,000 acres). Labor for sugar production was provided mainly by African slaves, but also by poor white emigrants from Spain. Cuba leapt to the lead in sugar production by introducing better-yielding varieties of sugar cane and by applying new technology in processing – steam engines, mechanized milling, horizontal grinding mills, vacuum pans, centrifuges, and industrial chemistry.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ingenio_Flor_de_Cuba_1857.jpg>

*Mechanization of Cuban Sugar Milling –
Drawing in Los Ingenios (Sugar Mills), 1857*

That modernization required capital, and during the second half of the 19th century American corporations invested heavily in

Cuban sugar cultivation and processing. The sugar boom slowed but did not stop when slavery was ended in Cuba in 1886. Cuba fought a brutal War of Independence from Spain (1895-1898) and achieved qualified independence after the United States defeated Spain (1898).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sugar_Mill,_Matanzas_Province,_Cuba.jpg>

Sugar Mill, Matanzas Province, Cuba, 1898

In part because of Cuban expansion, world sugar production increased eightfold between 1840 and 1900. Sugar beet production in Europe increased tenfold, encouraged by high subsidies, and

European governments expanded production in their Asian colonies (Dutch East Indies, Spanish Philippines, and British India, Mauritius, and Australia). Although the world price of sugar plummeted, Cuba was able to compete efficiently and expand sugar output.

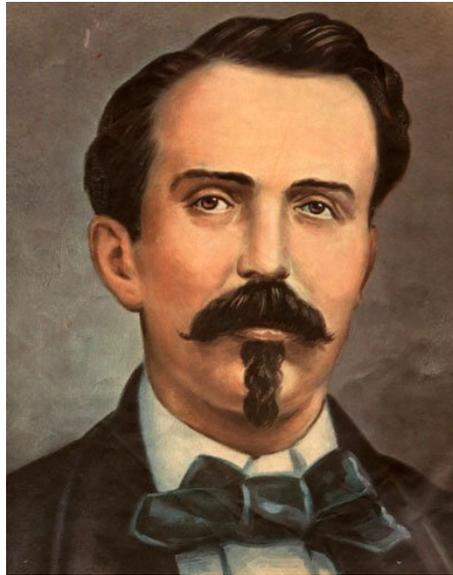


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saccharum_officinarum_-_K%C3%B6hler%E2%80%93s_Medizinal-Pflanzen-125.jpg>

Sugar Cane (Saccharum officinarum) – Indigenous to New Guinea

Cuba (1868-1958) – Wars and Revolution

Formation of the Republic of Cuba (1868-1902). The first war for Cuban independence from Spain, the Grito de Yara War, broke out in 1868 and was fought over the following decade. The armed separatists grew to a force of 40,000 of a total population in Cuba of 1.4 million. Spain brought in 100,000 troops, confined the rebellion to eastern Cuba (away from most sugar production), and eventually quashed it. In the Pact of Zanjón (1878), Spain agreed to political reforms and a general amnesty.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carlos_Manuel_de_Céspedes.jpg>*

*Carlos Manuel de Céspedes (1819-1874) –
Leader of the Grito de Yara (Ten Years) War (1868-1878)*

José Martí (1853-1895) emerged as the intellectual and political leader of the Cuban independence movement. Exiled to New York, Martí was an accomplished writer, poet, artist, and political organizer. He unified Cuban separatists and in 1892 founded and led the Cuban Revolutionary Party. Martí died in the 1895 invasion that triggered the Cuban-Spanish War.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JoseMartimonumentweehawken.jpg>>

*Monument of José Martí (1853-1895), West New York, New Jersey
– “The Fatherland Is An Altar, Not a Stepping Stone”*

The Cuban War of Liberation was fought with the hope of obtaining *Cuba Libre*, unconditional sovereignty – from Spanish

colonialism and potential American annexation – and of resolving socio-economic inequities. The 200,000 Spanish troops followed a scorched earth policy in the Cuban-controlled countryside, and the Cubans retaliated in the Spanish-controlled urban areas. Spain introduced *reconcentration*, forcing 300,000 rural-dwellers into concentration camps.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cuban_soldiers_1898.jpg>

*Riflemen of the Mambi (Cuban) Army –
Close to Victory over Spain in 1898*

In February 1898, as the Cubans sensed victory, the US battleship, *Maine*, exploded in Havana harbor, precipitating an

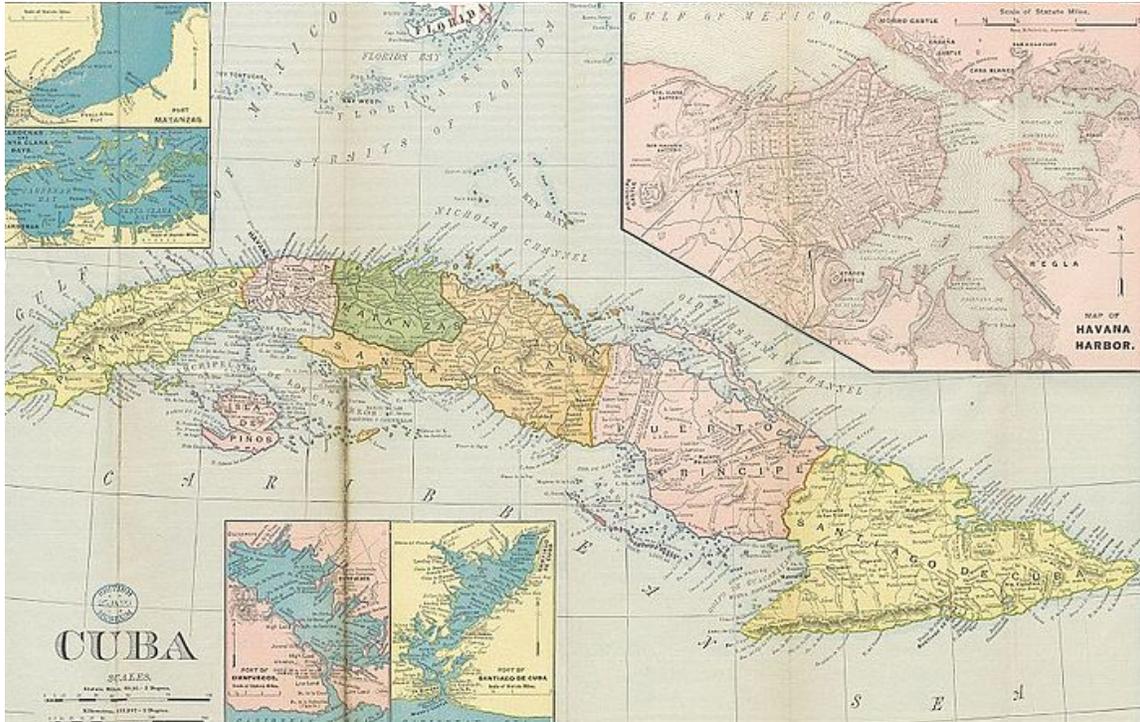
American invasion. The Americans defeated the Spanish in three months, but excluded Cuban separatists from the peace talks.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:MckinleyTeddy1900.jpg>>

*McKinley-Roosevelt Campaign Poster, 1900 –
“The US Took Foreign Soil for Humanity’s Sake”*

The US imposed military rule for four years, favored the Cuban propertied elite, and restricted Cuban suffrage to five percent of adults, setting a pattern for future American intervention in Cuba.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:\(1898\)_MAP_OF_CUBA.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:(1898)_MAP_OF_CUBA.jpg)>

*Cuba in 1898 –
Map Produced in 1898 and Held in the British Library, London*

Political Instability and U.S. Intervention (1902-1940).

The Platt Amendment, designed in 1901 by Elihu Root, the American Secretary of the Treasury, severely limited Cuban sovereignty and became the focus of intense Cuban distrust of the US. The Platt Amendment gave the US the rights to intervene militarily, construct military bases, oversee public finances, and veto treaties in Cuba. The Cuban Constituent Assembly, which

was drafting a new constitution, was forced to accept those conditions before the US would end its military occupation. The US soon built a naval coaling station at Guantánamo Bay.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tr-bigstick-cartoon.JPG>

Theodore Roosevelt and His Big Stick in the Caribbean, 1904

During the first four decades of the Cuban Republic, Cubans engaged in politics while foreigners took control of much of the economy. By 1910, Americans owned 60 percent of Cuba's farmland. American, British, and Spanish investors also controlled Cuba's railroads, ports, mines, and banks. The sugar industry

continued to dominate Cuba's economy. Starting in the 1890s, American investors modernized sugar production, introducing better varieties of sugarcane and more efficient milling techniques. Cuban output reached 1 million tons, and most Cuban sugar was sold in the US market.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pinar_del_R%C3%ADo_\(1983\)_02.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pinar_del_R%C3%ADo_(1983)_02.jpg)>

*Foreigners Owned 60 Percent of Cuba's Farmland –
Tobacco Plantation, Pinar del Rio Province*

By the mid-1920s, sugar output had increased to 5 million tons. But a collapse in the world sugar price caused Cuba and other producing countries to introduce supply restrictions in hopes

of raising prices. Cuba's economy fluctuated along with the unstable sugar sector. The US Marines intervened in Cuba in 1906-1909, 1912, and 1917-1923 to maintain security, protect American investments, and prop up favored politicians. Cuban politics was marked with corruption, violence, and infighting. The threat of American intervention was both cause and effect of that unfortunate situation.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coat_of_arms_of_Cuba.svg>

*Coat-of-Arms of the Republic of Cuba (1902-1959) –
American Intervention Helped To Corrupt Cuba*

War-time Prosperity and Post-war Dictatorship (1940-1958). Fulgencio Batista was an army sergeant and typist from a modest, multi-ethnic (mulatto) family. In 1933, he gained control of the army and backed a series of seven puppet presidents. Batista was elected president in 1940 as a reformer. He supported a new constitution in 1940 that designed a social democracy for Cuba. In his four-year presidency, Batista was a popular populist. His popularity reflected the prosperity that Cuba enjoyed during World War II.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Batista2.png>>

*Fulgencio Batista, Populist President of Cuba (1940-1944) –
Portrait in 1940*

In December 1941, Cuba declared war on the Axis Powers, and it benefited from American war spending and trade, loan, and aid agreements. During and after the war, sugar production more than doubled, from 2.7 million tons in 1939 to 5.8 million tons in 1948, and sugar prices were high. As a result, Cuba's national income rose 40 percent in that decade. But the government squandered the chance to reduce dependence on sugar and improve the lives of Cuba's one million cane cutters, farm workers, and small farmers.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cuba_canna_da_zucchero.jpg>

*Sugar Plantation in Cuba –
Cuban Sugar Output More Than Doubled Between 1939 and 1948*

Fearing a victory by the leftist Ortodoxo Party in the 1952 election, Batista engineered a military coup and destroyed the liberal democracy that he had helped to create twelve years earlier. He became an anti-Communist strongman with close ties to both the American government, which wanted stability, and the mafia, which operated brothels and casinos in Havana. Batista's corrupt government contained more than twenty dollar-millionaires.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Havana_with_Price_Tours,_So_Near_and_Yet_So_Foreign,_90_Miles_From_Key_West,_Visit_Cuba,_Courtesy..._\(NBY_6508\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Havana_with_Price_Tours,_So_Near_and_Yet_So_Foreign,_90_Miles_From_Key_West,_Visit_Cuba,_Courtesy..._(NBY_6508).jpg)>

*Havana in the 1950s –
A Playground Controlled by the American Mafia*

The inequalities in Cuba's highly skewed economy widened. Eight percent of the farmers owned three-fourths of the land; 22 sugar firms alone owned one-fifth of the land. By 1958, American investment in Cuba totaled \$1 billion, and US firms, concentrated in sugar and nickel production, employed 150,000 Cuban workers.

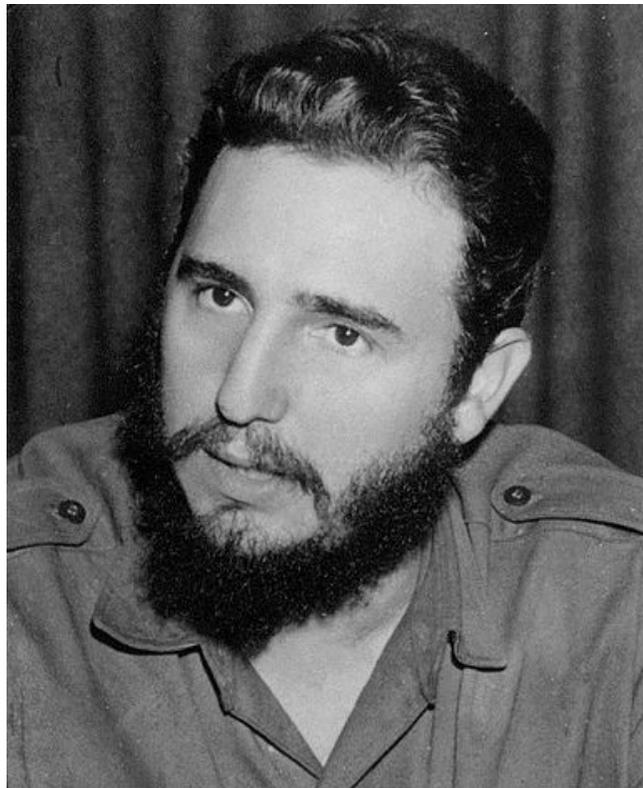


Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:People_in_Cuba_1972_PD_5.jpg>

Poverty in Rural Cuba – Few Small-scale Farmers Owned Land

Civil War and the Cuban Revolution (1953-1958). Fidel Castro – and his younger brother, Raúl – were the sons of a wealthy, white sugar planter. Fidel studied law at the University of Havana. He was a brilliant student leader – anti-American and

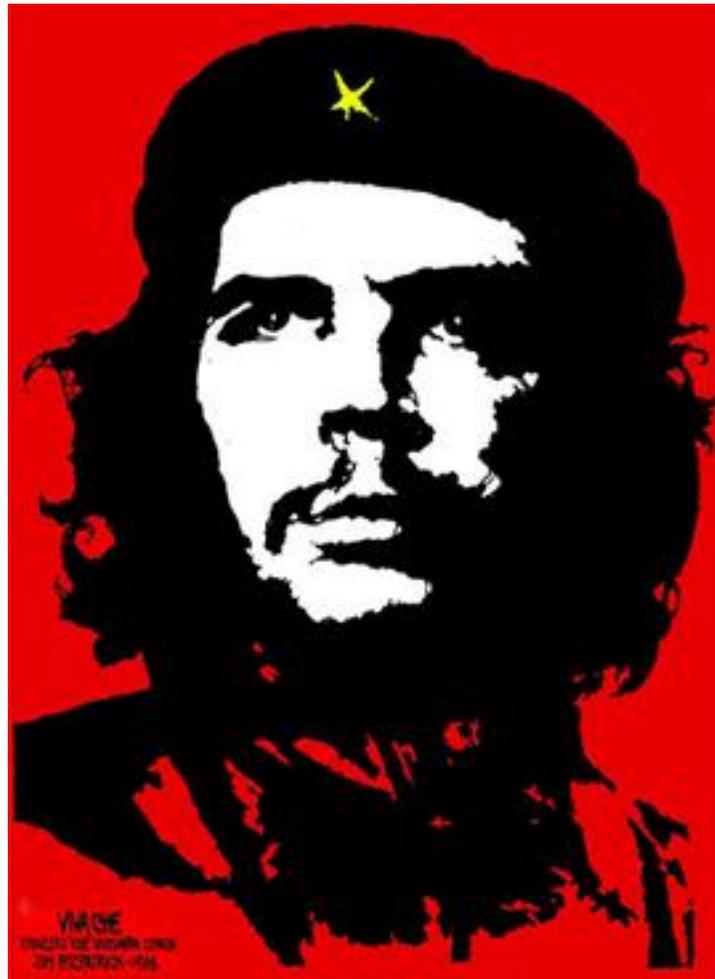
pro-social change. He married Mirta Diaz Balart and approached a career in politics in the new, left-leaning Ortodoxo Party. After Batista's 1952 coup, Fidel became a revolutionary. On July 26, 1953, Fidel and Raúl led 150 comrades in a disastrous attack on the Moncada army barracks in eastern Cuba, hoping to obtain weapons. Sixty-one of the revolutionaries were killed and the rest were captured, tried, and jailed.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fidel_Castro_1950s.jpg>

*Fidel Castro, Leader of Revolutionary Cuba (1959-2006) –
Pictured in the 1950s*

After the Batista regime released them in 1955, the Castro brothers went to Mexico to train fighters for the 26 of July Movement. One recruit was a young Argentine doctor, Ernesto (Che) Guevara.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at [h<tps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:FitzpatrickChe.jpg>](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:FitzpatrickChe.jpg)

Che Guevara – Jim Fitzpatrick’s Iconic Poster (1968), Based on Alberto Korda’s Heroic Guerrilla (1960)

In November 1956, Fidel, Raúl, Che, and 78 other men landed the *Granma* at Playa Los Colorados. Most were killed or captured, but the three leaders and several others escaped into the Sierra Maestra and launched the Cuban Revolution. There was widespread support for regime change in Cuba.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Granma-route-mine-20.png>>

Route of the Granma from Tuxpan, Mexico to Playa Los Colorados, Cuba, November 1956

Most Cubans despised the Batista regime. Castro promised a set of reforms that attracted mass support – land reform, more industry, and literacy and anti-corruption campaigns. He also promised to curb American ownership of Cuban land and companies. The Revolution was fought simultaneously by two

groups. The Castros led the *sierra* wing and waged a rural war on the economy by burning 2 million tons of sugar fields in 1958.

Frank País headed the *llano* or urban sabotage group and made key strategic decisions. In March 1958, the US government placed an arms embargo on Cuba. Batista fled into exile on the last day of 1958.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LaCaballeriaCorrales.JPG>>

La Caballeria (The Cavalry) – Raúl Corrales Forno's Photograph of the Victory by the 26th of July Movement, January 1959



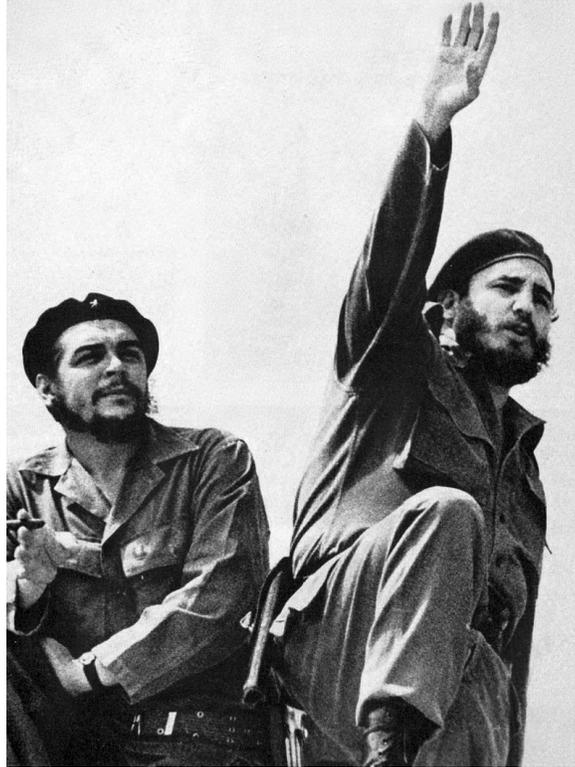
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Revolution_Map_of_progress.jpg>

*Key Sites in the Cuban Revolution, 1956-1958 –
From East (Sierra Maestra) to West (Havana)*

Cuba (1959-present) – Conflict and Adjustment

Consolidation and Diversification (1959-1968). Fidel Castro quickly revolutionized Cuba's economy. By late 1960, his government had nationalized land (holdings greater than 1,000 acres), most businesses, all banks, and much housing. Owners were compensated by 20-year bonds according to values stated in their tax returns. Che Guevara led a shift to focus on industry and diversify away from sugar production. That unsuccessful experiment was abandoned in 1965. Fidel introduced one-party rule in 1961 by merging the PSP (Cuba's longstanding Communist

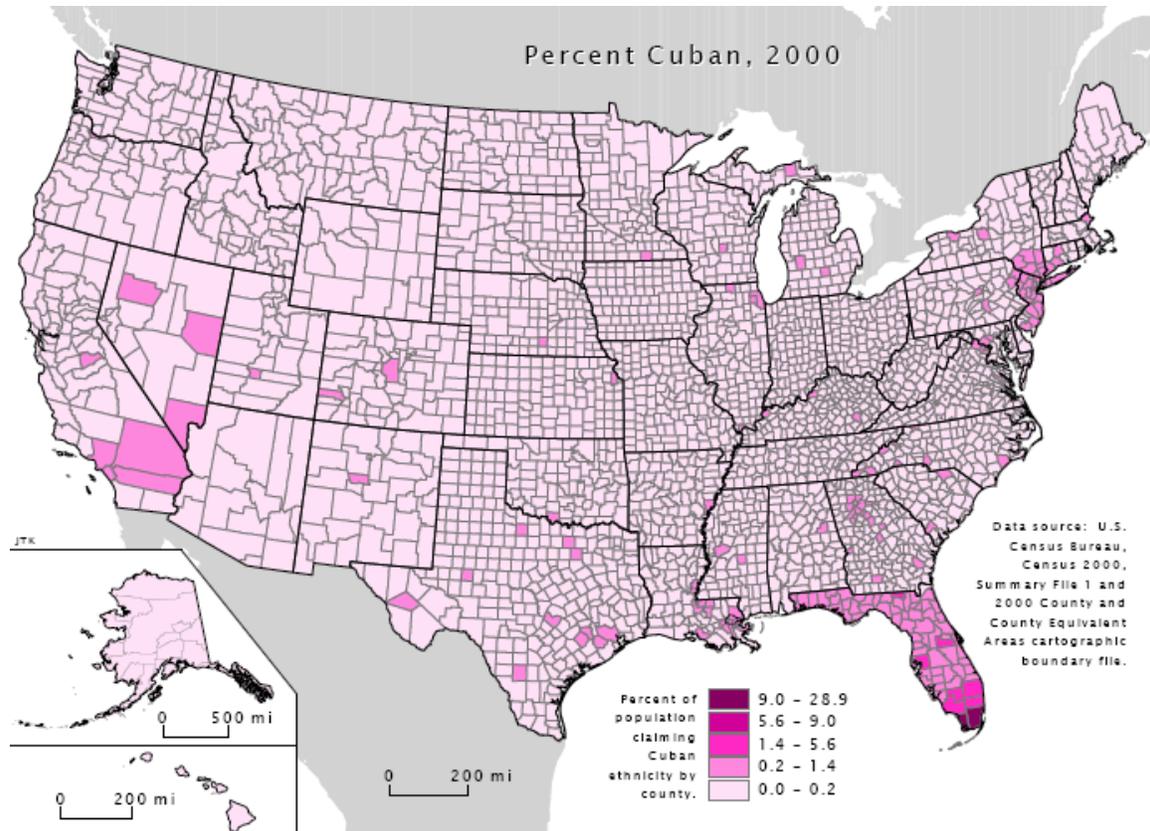
party) into his revolutionary party. In 1965, Cuba's single ruling party was renamed the Cuban Communist Party.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CheyFidel.jpg>>

*Che Guevara and Fidel Castro –
Photograph By Revolutionary Photographer Alberto Korda, 1961*

In the first four years of the revolution, about 200,000 Cubans emigrated, mostly to the United States. Four-fifths were skilled workers or professionals. A further 260,000 Cubans emigrated in the Freedom Flights between 1965 and 1973.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Census_Bureau_2000,_Cubans_in_the_United_States.png

*Percent of US Population With Cuban Ethnicity, By County –
 2000 Census*

The Bay of Pigs invasion in April, 1961 bolstered Fidel’s revolutionary image in Cuba. Designed by the CIA under Eisenhower and implemented by Kennedy, the invasion was a complete failure. Brigade 2506 consisted of 1,511 Cuban exiles, led by former Batista officers. They had no air cover and received no local Cuban support. In December 1962, Cuba released 1,124

prisoners in exchange for \$53 million of American food and medicines.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons, available at*
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Attack_near_Playa_Giron._April_19,_1961._-_panoramio.jpg>

Cuban Army Counterattack – Bay of Pigs Invasion, April 1961

But Fidel was humiliated after the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962. To balance US nuclear missiles in Turkey and defend Cuba, Khrushchev planned to install 80 nuclear missiles in Cuba, protected by 42,000 Soviet soldiers. Following detection of the sites, Kennedy imposed a US naval blockade of Cuba. After

13 tense days, the Soviets agreed to withdraw in return for American promises to restrain from invading Cuba again.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cuban_missiles.jpg>

*CIA U-2 Photograph of Soviet Missiles –
San Cristobal, Cuba, November 1, 1962*

Soviets and Sugar (1969-1990). In its second decade, Cuba's revolutionary government aligned its economy tightly within the Soviet bloc. Between 1969 and 1989, Cuba's national income grew at an annual rate of 4-5 percent, reflecting Soviet aid, trade, and investment. Soviet aid, worth \$4-6 billion per year, was

provided in diverse forms – grants to cover trade deficits (and roll-overs of the debts incurred), premium prices for guaranteed purchases of sugar, and petroleum imports at less than world prices. The Soviets also offered technical assistance in economic planning, industrial rehabilitation and development, spare parts, and higher education for Cuban students.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cuba-Russia_friendship_poster.jpg>

Poster From the 1960s Depicting Fidel Castro and Nikita Khrushchev – “Long Live the Eternal, Indestructible Friendship and Cooperation Between the Soviet and Cuban Peoples”

Integration into the Soviet bloc required that Cuba continue its dependence on sugar. Cuba's production of sugar increased by 40 percent between 1959 and 1989 (after declining in the first half of the 1960s). Cuba retained its position as the world's leading exporter of sugar, although its share of world production declined from 12 to 8 percent. The Soviets assisted the Cubans in mechanizing cane cutting and rehabilitating sugar mills.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Evstafiev-zafra.jpg>>

Harvesting Sugar Cane in Cuba – Still Required A Lot of Labor

In the 1970s, Cuba adopted an incentives strategy, linking wages to productivity and prices to scarcity in most sectors. Cuban policymakers tightened central planning and, in 1976, introduced a Soviet-style, five-year plan, focusing on industry. Cuba joined the Soviet-bloc's trade organization, COMECON, enabling the Soviets to cover Cuban trade deficits without using hard currency.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rolling_cigars,_Vi%C3%B1ales,_Cuba_\(13967131698\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rolling_cigars,_Vi%C3%B1ales,_Cuba_(13967131698).jpg)>

Cuban Industry, Rolling Cigars Manually – Viñales, Cuba

Cuba's new prosperity allowed it to embark on a revolutionary foreign policy. Its assistance to guerrilla fighters in

seven Latin American countries was successful only in Nicaragua. In Africa, its troops and medical personnel aided regime change in Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, and Angola. Cuba ceased aiding revolutions in 1990.

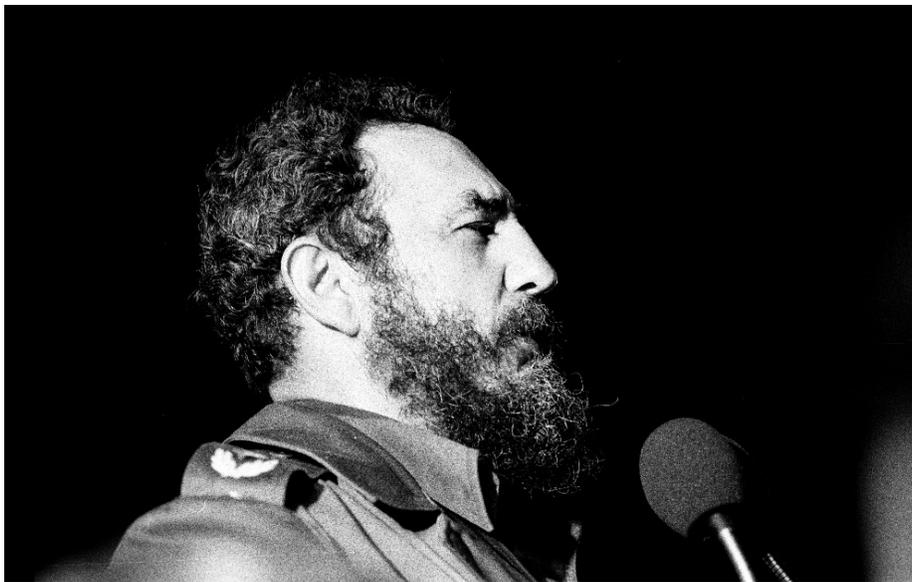


Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cuban_PT-76_Angola.JPG>

Cuban-manned Soviet PT-78 Tank in the Streets of Luanda, Angola, 1976 – Cuban Troops Led MPLA to Victory in Angola

Austerity and Tourism (1991-2005). Revolutionary Cuba's prosperity ended with the implosion of the Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union and COMECON ended in 1991, Cuba lost its preferential position. Trade with the former Soviet countries fell

90 percent to less than \$1 billion in 1993. The trade, sugar, and oil subsidies all were phased out by 1993, and Cuba was \$5 billion per year poorer. Between 1989 and 1993, Cuba's national income fell by 34 percent and its import capacity was reduced by 70 percent. Fidel Castro declared a Special Period and led his country through a miserable time of austerity and reform. A fifth of the workforce was unemployed, food and water shortages were common, electrical blackouts were a regular feature, and bicycles (imported from China) replaced cars.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fidelcastro1978.jpg>>

Fidel Castro in the Special Period, 1991-1998 – “A Revolutionary Will Always Will Be More Powerful Than Money”

Fidel was forced to make many compromises. State land was allotted to private farmers to expand food and cash crops. Dollars were permitted as an official currency alongside the peso, and the Black Market expanded. Remittances from Cubans abroad were encouraged.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Castro_sign.jpg>

*Cuban Propaganda Billboard, With a Quote from Fidel Castro –
“To Fight Against the Impossible and Win”*

Cuba opened new trade links – especially with China,
Canada, the European Union countries, and Venezuela (which

provided 100,000 barrels per day of petroleum in exchange for the services of 20,000 Cuban medical professionals).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hugo_Rafael_Ch%C3%A1vez_Fr%C3%ADAs.jpeg>

*Hugo Chávez, President of Venezuela (2002-2013) –
Traded Venezuelan Oil for Cuban Medical Services*

Cuba passed laws to encourage foreign investment in joint ventures and received \$6 billion in commitments, led by investors from Spain and Canada. Joint ventures in the tourist sector, mainly 175 luxury hotels in Havana and beach areas, encouraged a boom in tourism. The number of visitors to Cuba rose from 350,000 in

1990 to 3.5 million by 2015 – bringing \$3.5 billion. Tourism, led by visitors from Canada, Spain, and Italy, created 100,000 jobs.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cuba_Varadero.jpg>

Foreign-owned Hotels in Varadero – Cuba’s Largest Beach Resort Complex Attracts More Than 1 Million Tourists Annually

Continuity and Change (2006-present). Raúl Castro assumed leadership of Cuba in 2006, after his older brother, Fidel, had a series of surgeries (probably for diverticulitis). After 19 months in an interim role, Raúl was elected President of Cuba in February 2008. In his inaugural address, Raúl stressed the need for Cuba to introduce reforms to increase worker productivity, apply

market-based incentives, and enhance Cuba's economic efficiency and international competitiveness.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Raul-castro-2015_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Raul-castro-2015_(cropped).jpg)>

*Raúl Castro, President of Cuba (2006-2018) –
Focused on Economic Reforms To Raise Productivity*

In 2018, Raúl Castro stepped down as President but retained the position of First Secretary of the Communist Party. Raúl was followed as President by Miguel Díaz Canel, his hand-picked successor, in October 2018.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Miguel_D%C3%ADaz-Canel_2019.jpg>

Miguel Díaz Canel, President of Cuba (2018 –) – Pictured in 2019

Following the implosion of the Soviet Union and the subsequent ending of Soviet grants to Cuba, Cuba's economy fell into a tailspin. Per capita income in Cuba (measured by the World Bank in constant 2010 dollars) declined by 36.5 percent between 1989 and 1993 and recovered to its 1989 level only by 2005.

Between 2005 and 2018, per capita income grew at an annual average rate of 3.5 percent. In 2018, the per capita income in Cuba was only \$8,821, 14 percent of the US level.

Cuba's emphasis on health and education brought significant gains in social welfare between 1959 and 2019. The Cuban population grew from 7 million in 1959 to 11.3 million in 2019. Life expectancy lengthened from 57 to 79 years, and the infant mortality rate (per 1000 births) declined from 40 to 6. Adult literacy in Cuba improved from 76 to 99+ percent, and the rate of primary school completion rose from 56 to 98 percent. All Cuban indicators for 2019 were equal to or better than those for the US.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Front_view_of_Universidad_de_La_Habana.jpg>

The University of Havana – Founded in 1728, 24,000 Students

Raúl Castro's government moved cautiously to introduce economic reforms in hopes of raising the productivity of Cuba's aging workforce. It leased idle agricultural land to private farmers and permitted them to purchase inputs on private markets and to market output in farmers' markets. But those incomplete reforms did not lead to large increases in agricultural production. About 585,000 Cubans (about 12 percent of the labor force) are registered for private employment. Nearly all work in service jobs, many of them tourism-related. Many of the new private tourist business, such as *paladares* (restaurants in private homes), have been funded by remittances (mostly from Cuban-American relatives in Florida).

China, Japan, Russia (90 percent of Cuba's Soviet-era debts), and the Paris Club of Western nations.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Juego_de_domino.JPG>

*Policy-making in Cuba – Domino Players (Juego de Domino),
Painting by Cuban Artist José Rodríguez Fuster, 2008*

In its attempts to encourage direct foreign investment, Cuba has stressed joint ventures between foreign investors and the Cuban government. Important examples include joint-venture

investments by Brazil (Mariel port and special development zone), Venezuela (petroleum refinery), and China (nickel mine).



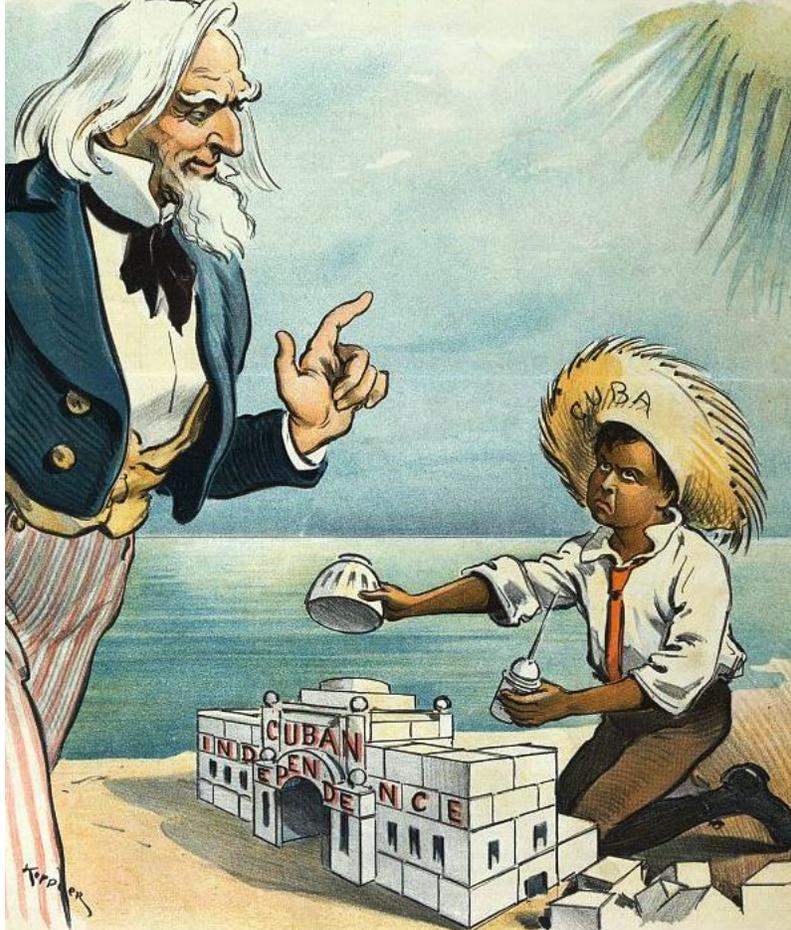
*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mariel_1.jpg>*

*Mariel Port and Special Development Zone –
Constructed and Funded by Brazilians*

Foreign analysts have identified three critical future reforms – the development of private wholesale markets for inputs, the unification of Cuba’s dual currencies followed by a substantial devaluation, and the granting of greater autonomy to managers of state-owned enterprises. In December 2020, Canel announced that Cuba will soon set a single fixed exchange rate of 24 Cuban pesos

to the US Dollar, the first official devaluation of the Cuban peso since the revolution in 1959.

American policies toward Cuba have damaged the Cuban economy, but they have not changed the Cuban government. Economic sanctions were intended to create pressures for regime change. In 1960, the US government introduced an economic embargo, banning trade and investment relations between the US and Cuba. The Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (Helms-Burton) Act in 1996 attempted to impede third-country investment in Cuba by denying American visas to officials of companies that buy properties in Cuba claimed by their former owners.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Puck_magazine,_1901_February_27.jpg>

“Cuban Independence” – Puck Magazine, February 1901

In December 2014, Presidents Barrack Obama and Raúl Castro jointly announced a break-through improvement in US-Cuban relations. The two countries agreed to swap high-level prisoners accused of espionage, and Cuba freed numerous political prisoners. In May 2015, the United States removed Cuba from its list of countries that sponsor terrorism (improving Cuba’s

prospects for foreign investment). Then in July 2015, Cuba and the United States restored full diplomatic relations and re-opened embassies in each other's capitals. However, Raúl Castro stated emphatically that full normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States will require that the United States remove its embargo of American trade and investment in Cuba, give Cuba full sovereignty of the Guantanamo naval base, and pay compensation for past American sanctions.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Press_conference,_Havana.jpg>*

Presidents Barrack Obama and Raul Castro, Havana, March 2016

In June 2017, the US government reversed policy direction and suspended sanctions relief for Cuba. Soon thereafter, the US re-introduced restrictions on American travel and business in Cuba. Additional restrictions on American travel to Cuba were introduced in June 2019. Those re-introductions of sanctions and controls did not result in any meaningful shifts in Cuban policies.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cu-map.png>>

Contemporary Cuba

Time Line for Cuba

1492-1800

Colonial Cuba

- 1492 Christopher Columbus discovered San Salvador Island, Bahamas – for Spain
- 1493 Christopher and Bartholomé Columbus colonized Hispaniola for Spain
- 1503 *Casa de Contratacion* (House of Trade) set up in Seville to manage trade with America
- 1503-1660 16,000 tons of silver and 185 tons of gold shipped from Spanish America to Seville
- 1508 Spain colonized Puerto Rico
- 1509 Spain colonized Jamaica
- 1510s-1610s Spain controlled the entire Spanish Main (the Caribbean Basin)
- 1511 Spain colonized Cuba
- 1516 Sugar was first exported from Hispaniola to Spain
- 1519 Spanish colonists founded Havana as the capital of Cuba
- 1520s-1550s French privateers plundered Spanish ships and settlements

- 1540s-1740s Peruvian silver was transported across Panama (from Pacific to Caribbean) by mule caravans, loaded on Spanish convoy ships
- 1540s-1740s Spain operated *flotas* (convoys of ships) – from Seville to Vera Cruz, Cartagena, and the Panamanian Isthmus – from Havana to Seville
- 1540s Spanish colonists discovered hugely productive silver mines in Mexico
- 1544 French privateers plundered Cartagena, Colombia
- 1560s-1590s English privateers (Elizabethan Sea Dogs) plundered Spanish ships and settlements in the Spanish Main
- 1560 new technique discovered to refine silver – using Spanish mercury
- 1571-1815 Manila Galleon Trade Route operated – Manila to Acapulco – annual convoy – Canton silk, porcelain traded for silver
- 1577-1580 Francis Drake, English privateer, *The Golden Hind* – second circumnavigation of the world
- 1579 Francis Drake captured the Spanish treasure ship, *Cacafuego*
- 1588 John Hawkins, a former privateer, helped guide England's victory over the Spanish Armada
- 1620s-1690s Dutch merchant ships controlled the Caribbean trade

1620s-1680s	Buccaneers operated from two havens – Tortuga (Hispaniola) and Port Royal (Jamaica)
1624	British planters settled St. Kitts
1627	British planters settled Barbados
1650s-1700s	Barbados was Britain’s richest colony – slave-based sugar exports
1651	British Navigation Act created monopoly for British merchants
1655	Britain took Jamaica from Spain – Jamaica became the leading sugar producer in the British Empire
1668-1671	Henry Morgan, English buccaneer, raided Portobello, Maracaibo, and Panama City
1690-1725	Golden Age of Caribbean Piracy – centered in the Bahamas
1690s-1720s	Nassau, New Providence Island, Bahamas housed 700 buccaneers
1697	France took the western third of Hispaniola (Saint Domingue, now Haiti) from Spain
1700-1789	Saint Domingue was the richest colony in the world – produced 40 percent of the world’s sugar and half of the world’s coffee

1701-1714	War of the Spanish Succession – Britain defeated France
1716-1726	Woodes Rogers, Governor of Bahamas, and Royal Navy ended piracy in the Caribbean
1718	Edward Teach (Blackbeard), English buccaneer, killed on Ocracoke Island, North Carolina
1722	Bartholomew Roberts (Black Bart), English buccaneer, killed in Gabon
1800-1958	Colonial and Independent Cuba – Wars and Revolution
1791-1804	slave rebellion in Saint Domingue (Haiti) – led by Toussaint Louverture – war with France ended in Haiti’s independence in 1804
1793-1815	Napoleonic Wars – Britain and allies defeated France
1808-1814	Peninsular War – France, led by Napoleon Bonaparte, conquered and ruled Spain
1808	Britain banned the slave trade
1838	Britain fully emancipated its slaves – ended the forced apprenticeship of former slaves in its colonies
1840s-1890s	Cuba became the world’s largest and most efficient sugar producer

- 1846 UK adopted free trade and stopped giving trade preferences to Caribbean sugar imports
- 1848 France emancipated all slaves in its colonies
- 1853-1895 José Martí – political leader of the Cuban independence movement – writer, poet, artist
- 1863 Netherlands emancipated all slaves in its colonies
- 1868-1878 Grito de Yara War – Spain (100,000 troops) defeated Cuban nationalists (40,000 troops), led by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes
- 1878 Pact of Zanjón – Spain agreed to political reforms and a general amnesty for Cuban nationalists
- 1886 Spanish colonial government abolished slavery in Cuba
- 1895-1898 Cuban-Spanish War (Cuban War of Liberation) – brutal conflict – Cuban rebels nearly won
- 1898 *USS Maine* exploded and sank in Havana Harbor
- 1898 Spanish-American War – United States defeated Spain – excluded Cuban rebels from peace talks – Spain lost its colonies
- 1898-1902 American military occupation of Cuba
- 1901 Platt Amendment – undercut Cuban sovereignty – allowed US to intervene military in Cuba, construct military bases, oversee public finances

1903	Panama became independent with US support
1904-1914	US Government constructed the Panama Canal – Panama Canal opened on August 15, 1914
1906-1909	US Marines invaded and occupied Cuba – protected elites
1912	US Marines invaded and occupied Cuba – protected elites
1914-1918	World War I – Britain, France, Russia, Italy, US defeated Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire – Cuba joined the Allies in 1917
1917-1923	US Marines invaded and occupied Cuba – protected elites
1939-1945	World War II – Allies (Britain, France, US, USSR) defeated Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan, Finland) – Cuba joined the Allies in 1941
1940-1944	Fulgencio Batista – popular president – populist, reformer, social democrat
1952-1958	Fulgencio Batista – hated dictator – corrupt, anti-Communist – links to US government, mafia
1953-1958	The Cuban Revolution
1953	Moncada barracks attack – government won – Fidel Castro jailed
1956	Fidel, Raúl Castro, Che Guevara – <i>Granma</i> landed at Playa Los Colorados

1956-1958	Sierra Maestra guerrilla warfare – 26 of July Movement victorious
1958	Fulgencio Batista fled into exile – New Year’s Eve day
1959-present	Independent Cuba – Conflict and Adjustment
1959-1969	More than one million Cubans emigrated, mostly to Florida
1959	Land reform in Cuba – 2.5 million acres taken from foreign land-owners
1960	Castro government nationalized land (holdings greater than 1000 acres), most businesses, all banks, and much housing
1960	US government introduced an economic embargo, banning trade and investment relations between the US and Cuba
1961	Bay of Pigs invasion – US government failure – Cuban exiles
1961	Castro government introduced one-party rule
1962	Cuban missile crisis – Soviets withdrew missiles – Castro ignored
1965	Cuba’s single ruling party renamed as the Cuban Communist Party

1969-1989	Cuban economy grew at 4-5% annually – received \$4-6 billion/year in Soviet aid – was world’s leading exporter of sugar
1970-1990	Cuba aided revolutionary movements in Latin America and Africa
1976	Cuba joined the Soviet-bloc’s trade organization, COMECON
1989-1991	Soviet Union and COMECON imploded and ended
1989-1993	USSR ended subsidies – Cuba’s national income fell by 34 percent
1990-2015	Annual tourist visits to Cuba increased from 350,000 to 3.5 million
1991-1998	Special Period of austerity in Cuba
1996	Cuban Liberty and Solidarity (Helms-Burton) Act passed in US – impeded investment in Cuba
2006	Raúl Castro assumed leadership after Fidel Castro had surgeries
2008	Raúl Castro was elected President of Cuba – pledged reforms to increase Cuban labor productivity and competitiveness
2011	Cuban Communist Party approved 313 economic reform guidelines

- 2013 Raúl Castro was re-elected President of Cuba – promised not to run again in 2018
- 2014 Russia wrote off 90 percent of Cuba’s Soviet-era debt
- 2014 Presidents Raúl Castro and Barack Obama announced the completion of secret negotiations and rapprochement between Cuba and US
- 2015 Cuba and the United States restored diplomatic relations in July
- 2016 Cuban Communist Party held seventh congress in April – but only one-fifth of 313 reform guidelines had been fully implemented
- 2016 Fidel Castro died from natural causes at age 90 in November
- 2017 US government reversed policy toward Cuba – suspended sanctions relief – re-introduced restrictions on American travel and business
- 2018 Miguel Díaz Canel became President of Cuba in October 2018 – Raúl Castro remained as First Secretary of the Cuban Communist Party
- 2020 Miguel Díaz Canel announced that Cuba will soon set a single fixed exchange rate of 24 Cuban pesos to the US Dollar
- 2020 Cuba ranked 70th of 189 countries in the UNDP’s Human Development Index

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Sites Visited in Cuba

Cuba By Sea

Stanford Travel/Study Program

February 23-March 5, 2017

Ship-based Aboard *Le Ponant*

Santiago de Cuba

Santiago de Cuba was founded in 1515 by Don Diego Valasquez, who established many of Spain's earliest settlements in Cuba. With 425,000 residents, Santiago today is Cuba's second largest city (after Havana) and a leading port. In the 17th century, Spain built the Morro Castle on Santiago's coast to protect eastern Cuba from invaders. Known in Cuba as the city of revolutions, Santiago was the place where Carlos Antonio Cespedes began Cuba's first war of independence from Spain (the Grito de Yara or Ten-year War, 1868-1878) and a center of the Cuban-Spanish War (1895-1898). San Juan Hill, where Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders fought inconclusively in July 1898, overlooks Santiago.

Our Stanford group visited the Parque Cespedes (where Fidel Castro gave his victory speech in January 1959), the Revolutionary Square (which featured a statue of Antonio Maceo, an Afro-Cuban hero in the Cuban-Spanish War), the Cathedral Santa Ifigenia Basilica (built in 1522), and the Casa de Don Diego Velasquez (the home of the city's founder and now a museum of Cuban history). We climbed San Juan Hill, saw the Moncada army barracks, where Fidel and Raul Castro launched their revolution in 1953, and went to the Santa Ifigenia Cemetery, where Jose Marti, Cuba's national hero, and Fidel Castro are buried. At the Morro Castle, the Vocal Vidas, a female quartet, performed a spectacular concert for us.

Trinidad

Trinidad de Cuba, in Sanctus Spiritus Province (south-central Cuba), was founded by Diego Velasquez in 1514, only three years after Spain colonized Cuba. The first Spanish settlers created a beautiful small city around a central square (Plaza Mayor) on a hill above the Caribbean Sea, providing a good vantage point to spot pirate invaders. Following the Haitian slave revolution (1791-1804), many French refugee planters relocated to Cuba and established sugar or coffee plantations. Trinidad prospered during the 19th century because of the wealth of nearby sugar plantations. Today, the central part of Trinidad is a UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Site and a favorite attraction for tourists visiting Cuba.

On arrival in Trinidad, we visited the Santander family pottery workshop and interviewed local artisans. We took a guided walking tour of the impressive buildings surrounding the Plaza Mayor – once government centers and now museums. Of special interest was the Museum of Architecture, the former home of Francisco Iznaga, a Basque immigrant. We discussed local entrepreneurship with the owner of a small private hotel and restaurant, attended a concert of Afro-Cuban music by Los Congos Reales, a family group, and visited a home that was a center for the popular Santería religion, a syncretistic blend of Yoruba *orisha* deities (from Western Nigeria) and Catholic saints.

The Bay of Pigs

The Bay of Pigs invasion in April, 1961 bolstered Fidel Castro's government in Cuba. During the last year of the Eisenhower administration, the CIA concocted a plan to invade Cuba, command a beachhead, and await an expected counter-revolution by anti-Castro forces. At the last minute, the landing site was switched from Trinidad to the Bay of Pigs on the remote southern coast of central Cuba. The invasion force consisted of 1,511 Cuban-American mercenaries, under contract to the CIA. After

the plan became known to the Cubans, the Kennedy administration chose not to risk air cover. The invasion failed after three days of fighting and greatly embarrassed the US government.

After docking in Cienfuegos, our group boarded two busses to drive westward to Zapata National Park and the Bay of Pigs. We first went to Playa Girón, a key invasion site, which now houses a museum commemorating the Cuban government's victory. Photographs in the museum documented graphically the total failure of the invasion attempt. The museum also contained military equipment used by both sides – American tanks supplied to the invaders and Russian tanks, which the Cubans had but did not use. We then continued north along the mangrove coast of the Bay of Pigs to Playa Larga and observed the point of furthest inland advance of the Cuban-American mercenaries.

Cienfuegos

In 1819, 46 French sugar planters from Bordeaux and Louisiana founded the town of Cienfuegos (“100 fires”) on a large natural harbor in south-central Cuba. When the production of sugar cane in Cuba expanded during the 19th century, Cienfuegos became one of Cuba's wealthiest towns, featuring seven theaters. Tomas Terry became the richest man in Cuba by engaging in slave-trading, money-lending, and property investment (including ten sugar mills). He sponsored the building of an architectural gem, the Teatro Tomas Terry, on Cienfuegos's central plaza. The theater seats 950 guests in a ground floor plus three tiers of balconies. Today, Cienfuegos is home to about 140,000 residents.

Following our memorable reconnaissance of the Bay of Pigs, the Stanford group had lunch near the Gran Parque Natural Montemar, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, and were briefed by a park official about the park's rich ecosystems and birdlife, featuring the world's smallest bird, the bee hummingbird. We then visited the

Korimacao Community Arts and Cultural Project, which offers gratis support for resident artists, and saw live musical and dance performances. After returning to Cienfuegos, we walked through the attractive center of the city to the Palacio de la Blanca, where we attended a concert by the leading a cappella group in Cienfuegos, including nine women and nine men.

Punta Frances, Isla de la Juventud

The Isla de la Juventud is Cuba's second largest island and the seventh largest island in the Caribbean. Christopher Columbus discovered the island on his second voyage in 1494, called it La Evangelista, and claimed it for Spain. During most of Cuba's history, the island was known as the Isle of Pines. In 1926, the Cuban government erected a prison near Nueva Gerona, the main town, and Fidel and Raul Castro (and the other revolutionaries from the failed Moncada uprising) were imprisoned there between 1953 and 1955, before Fulgencio Batista's government released them. After the revolution, Fidel changed the island's name to the Isle of Youth. Today, the island has about 90,000 residents.

Punta Frances is part of the National Marine Park, which constitutes about half of Isla de la Juventud. *Le Ponant* could not drop anchor in the fragile reef region. So the ship drifted while our group took Zodiacs into shore. There we found unspoiled white-sand beaches and an unusual mangrove-based ecosystem of plants, utilizing brackish water. Some in our group enjoyed walks with local naturalists, employed by the park, while others went snorkeling to observe marine life near a coral reef lying about 500 meters offshore. Eco-tourism is in its infancy in Cuba, but the country is attempting to encourage conservation and sustainable tourism in its national parks.

Havana

Spain began to colonize Cuba in 1511, founded St. Christopher de Havana on November 15 (St. Christopher's Day), 1519, and turned Havana into its primary port in the Caribbean. For two centuries, starting in the 1530s, the Spanish operated annual convoys (*flotas*) of ships, loaded with Peruvian and Mexican silver and gold, from Havana to Seville. Today, Havana is the capital of the Republic of Cuba and has 2.2 million residents, one-fifth of Cuba's population. The Cuban government has begun to restore many of Havana's grand buildings, which span four centuries of architectural styles. The local government taxes tourist businesses to fund the restoration. Since 1982, Havana's historic center has been a UNESCO World Heritage site.

We explored the Revolutionary Square and then walked through Old Havana, visiting the Plaza de Armas and the Plaza Vieja, and stopping at the Taller de Grafica Experimental, an art cooperative and print-making shop. After lunch, we attended a spectacular performance of flamenco dancing by Irene Rodríguez and her company. A Cuban architect led us on a walking tour of central Havana and introduced us to Havana's Great Theatre in the Centro Gallego. We enjoyed informative visits to the Museum of the Revolution and the National Museum of Fine Arts. Jeffery De Laurentis, the American Ambassador to Cuba, and his wife, Jennifer, hosted us for a lively discussion of U.S.-Cuban affairs.

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Cuba Family Adventure
Stanford Travel/Study Program
December 27, 2013-January 3, 2014
Land-based

Matanzas

Matanzas is often called the “Athens of Cuba” because it has long served as a cultural center. Located about 40 miles east of Havana on Cuba’s north coast, Matanzas was founded in 1693 to buttress and help protect Spain’s principal harbor in Havana. The attractive, small city boomed in the 19th century, when sugarcane production expanded rapidly in west-central Cuba. Much of the architecture in old Matanzas dates from the mid- and late-19th century, when the town served as a cultural center for sugar-barons and a trade node for the production and processing of sugar. Today, Matanzas has a population of 125,000 people and a diverse economy based on small-scale industry.

Havana – Neighborhood Projects

The Cuban Government subsidizes neighborhood groups to undertake various types of social projects. For our People-to-People program, Stanford Travel/Study organized a series of visits so that our families could interact with participants in a range of neighborhood projects. Papito, a creative barber, has revived his neighborhood around a barbering theme and created a small museum of barbering. Jose Fuster, a celebrated ceramic artist, has decorated 15 homes in his neighborhood with his distinctively colorful mosaics. Elias, a practitioner of the Santeria religion (a syncretic blend of West African animism and Cuban Catholicism), has created a place of worship in his neighborhood.

Havana and Matanzas – Museum Visits

To help introduce our families to Cuban history and culture, we paid visits to three Cuban museums. The Museum of the Cuban Revolution, housed in the former presidential palace, contains key documents and photos of the revolution (1953-1959). The National Art Museum offers exhibits by Cuban artists and proves a fascinating summary of evolving trends in Cuban art as attitudes toward the revolution changed and government tolerance of protest

increased. The Museum of Cuban Pharmacy in Matanzas houses a collection of pharmaceutical equipment and jars in the former home of the Triolett family pharmacy, which operated continuously between 1882 and 1964.

Havana and Matanzas – Performance Groups

The children in our group were especially fascinated by our visits with three performance groups. Two were children’s groups. La Colmenita (the Little Beehive) is an impressive, 24-year-old project to introduce Cuban children to the performing arts especially musical theater. We enjoyed a rendition of Beatles’ songs in English. The Angels of the Future project is an amazing, three-year-old effort to teach circus skills to Cuban kids. An ex-performer teaches 92 kids in a low-budget, after-school program. In Matanzas, the renowned Matanzas Chamber Choir, made up of mostly young adults, entertained us with a poignant selection of Cuban, other Latin, and American songs.

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The World Less Traveled by Private Jet Stanford Travel/Study Program January 24-February 16, 2013 Airplane-based, Aboard a TCS and Starquest Expeditions Jet

Havana

Our group was introduced to Havana with a moving concert by an all-women string orchestra at the Basilica San Paola. During our full-day in Havana, we divided into three sub-groups. One sub-group visited an urban farm to gain an understanding of this creative method of reducing Cuba’s food imports. A second focused on art in Cuba, visiting the Museo de Bellas Artes, the

decorated home of Jose Fuster, and the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA). After a walking tour of Old Havana, the third sub-group took a ferry to Regla to learn about the Santeria religion. They visited the Regla Church, the Guanabacoa Museum, and the Santero Home. Santeria is a popular syncretistic religion that combines Yoruba religious practices (from Western Nigeria) with Christianity.

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Cuba Seminar
Stanford Travel/Study Program
April 15-24, 2012
Land-based

Artemisa Province and Havana I

In 2011, the government of Cuba created two new provinces, bringing the country's total to 16. The former Havana Province was divided into two, forming a new Artemisa Province and a shrunken Havana Province. In the far western part of Artemisa Province lies a 5,000-hectare bio-sphere preserve, Las Terrazas (the terraces), designated in 1971. To create the park, the government settled the former rural residents into a newly-built, well-equipped village, which today has about 1,000 residents. In 1994, the project added several small hotels and restaurants within Las Terrazas to provide employment opportunities for the villagers and a retreat for Havana-based tourists.

We drove west to Las Terrazas to visit a slave-based coffee plantation in the low mountains, operated by French exiles from Haiti during the first half of the 19th-century. We also had a guided tour of the organic vegetable gardens, farmed by villagers to supply Havana restaurants and domestic needs. Later, we enjoyed a delicious Cuban lunch and coffee at locally-run

establishments within the scenic preserve. Back in Havana, we observed the operations of the Partagas cigar factory, where 600 workers hand-make 25,000 high-quality Cuban cigars daily. We ended the day in the iconic Hotel Nacional, constructed in 1930 – the hangout of pre-revolutionary, up-scale visitors to Havana.

Trinidad

Our one-day visit to Trinidad was a highlight of our time in Cuba. On arrival in Trinidad, we were briefed on Cuba’s extensive system of maternity hospitals, a key dimension of the government’s preventive care program. We then took a guided walking tour of the impressive buildings surrounding the Plaza Major – once government centers and now museums. We also visited a home that was a center for the popular Santería religion, a syncretistic blend of Yoruba *orisha* deities (from Western Nigeria) and Catholic saints. During the drive back to Cienfuegos, we observed the extensive sugarcane valleys and visited a former sugar mill that processed slave-based sugarcane.

Havana II

We wrapped up our visit to Cuba with one final day in Havana. We had a very interesting discussion with a Foreign Service officer in the United States Special Interests Section, the surrogate American Embassy (the U.S. does not have diplomatic relations with Cuba). We next bussed out to the Cuban Art Schools (ISA) and interacted with Cuban student painters, engravers, and metal sculptors and their instructors. We ended our fascinating visit to Cuba with a guided tour of the University of Havana. Founded in 1728 and the largest of Cuba’s 43 universities, Havana has 25,000 students. We were honored to visit the university’s most prestigious building, the Aula Magna, built in 1910.

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