UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Journey to Banana Land:
Race and Gender in Afro-Caribbean Labor Migration to Honduras and the United States

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

by

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2017

The Dissertation of Christina Estel Green is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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DEDICATION

To my abuelito, Adolfo Confesor Arzú. Thank you for instilling in me the importance of knowing my history. Without your weekly Sunday history lessons, none of this would have been possible. I hope that all of my hard work makes you proud. Because of you, I will always be a champion! Te extraño y te amo muchisimo. En su memoria, descansa en paz.

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Ethnic Studies; History; Black Diaspora Studies; Caribbean Studies; Latin American Studies; Gender and Women Studies; Labor Studies; Film Studies; Visual Studies

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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Professor Curtis Marez, Chair

While much has been written about banana production and, in particular, the influential United Fruit Company in the circum-Caribbean, relatively little has been written about Afro-Caribbean migrant laborers in general and female Afro-Caribbean migrant laborers specifically. So little has been written in part because so little can be found about or from Afro-Caribbean women workers in traditional historical archives. In my dissertation, I draw on my interdisciplinary interests in Ethnic Studies, Caribbean Studies, Latin American Studies, Black Diaspora Studies, and Gender and Women studies to examine the histories of Afro-Caribbean

labor migration during the inception of banana industrialization in the circum-Caribbean at the turn of the twentieth-century, with an eye toward capturing the experiences of Afro-Caribbean female migrant laborers. Using the industrialization of the banana as a backdrop, my project works to complicate depictions of racialized and gendered labor migration in the circum-Caribbean through a tracing of the development of racialization, gender, class, citizenship, and labor in various material depictions of Afro-Caribbean workers. I do so by conducting a visual and discursive analysis of a range of cultural artifacts – cinematic and documentary film, photography, UFCO advertisements, oral histories, and archival material from the United States, Honduras, and Great Britain.

INTRODUCTION

A letter written by Sir Edward Grey to the British Legation located in Guatemala on June 24, 1916 reads:

> I have had the honour to receive your dispatch No. 8 commercial (83309/0) of May 10th desiring information with regard to the migration and settlement of British West Indians in neighbhouring foreign countries…I think it may be opportune to recur again making special reference to my dispatch No. 38 confidential of May 4th, 1914, to the problem presented by the presence of large communities of coloured West Indians in these semi-organised republics and their relations with the local officials. These immigrants are not welcomed in the republics of Guatemala and Honduras, though their employment by the big fruit companies is recognised as an inevitable necessity for the development of the banana plantations and in certain capacities on the railroads spreading in the plantation areas. These men, of whom some are naturally bad characters while most appear to be arrogant and independent, arrive with an exaggerated sense of their importance as British Subjects and expect to enjoy, though under a foreign jurisdiction known to be backward and inferior, the same respect for the inviolability of their persons and habitations and for their technical legal rights as is afforded by the happier conditions of British rule.[1]

I chose to include the above passage for several reasons. For one, it reveals the white supremacist ideologies of the American consul in Central America toward black West Indian immigrants in the region. The foreign affairs officer presents West Indian migrant laborers presence as a problem in both Guatemala and Honduras. Second, the passage makes reference to the tense relationship between American "big fruit" companies, the black labor recruited to work on banana plantations, and the Central American countries which hosted them, pointing to a legacy of the United States as an imperial power and its capitalistic rule in the circum-Caribbean. Third, it provides context surrounding cultural

[1] Dispatch 52, Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Office, to British Legation in Guatemala, 24 June 1916, USNA RG 59, 371/2643.

differences and the ways in which black West Indian workers presented themselves as socially superior as British subjects to their "backward" Spanish-speaking mestizo and indigenous hosts. Lastly, the passage references the gendered makeup of the labor force hired by American fruit companies, as only male migrant laborers are mentioned. For the Central American countries in which West Indian migrant laborers settled, the presence of a large black male workforce was viewed as a threat to nationalist narratives of whiteness and pronouncements of mestizaje, or a majority mixed Spanish and indigenous population. In fact, countries such as Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica failed to incorporate the West Indian community into nationalistic ideologies.[2] Although West Indian women migrated to Central America for work, at times alongside their male counterparts and sometimes on and around American fruit company plantations, their presence is not mentioned and their experiences are rarely told.

The dilemma is twofold for the history that I wish to explore in this dissertation regarding gendered migrant labor from the Caribbean to Honduras and the United States: (1) Historical material which lends focus to Honduras's communities of African descent are few and far between. Although the Garifuna, (a black Carib community which formed and settled on the Caribbean coast of Honduras as well as other Central American countries such as Guatemala, Belize, and Nicaragua), make up a sizeable portion of the population in Honduras and have been integral to the social and cultural fabric of the country for over 200 years, they continue to be overlooked in traditional Honduran historiography. Historical discussions about the contributions

[2] Chambers, Glenn Anthony. *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration to Honduras, 1890-1940*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2010. Print. In the introduction to his monograph, Glenn A. Chambers writes, "The Republic of Honduras, like many of its Central American neighbors, embraced a concept of *mestizaje* that emphasized the Iberian and indigenous biological and cultural heritage of the nation. With this focus solely on the interactions between the Spanish and indigenous, all other elements of Honduran culture were ignored or denigrated. As a result, the historiography of Honduras is devoid of many black participants" (1).

of West Indians in Honduras is even less common, with some scholars maintaining that the African presence in Honduras was not significant enough to make a lasting impact, both racially and culturally, in the making of the nation. (2) Accessible archival sources with a focus on the West Indian diaspora in Honduras are not readily available. I found this to be true during my research trip to Honduras in the summer of 2015.[3] The facilitators of the archive located in Tegucigalpa at El Ministerio de Relaciones Exterriores (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) worked hard to provide over a dozen bounded books filled with correspondence from the years of 1899-1945 between the United States, Honduras, and the British Legation located in Guatemala as well as naturalization documents of immigrants from Palestine, Germany, Italy, and the Caribbean seeking Honduran citizenship. Both the facilitator of the archive at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the director of the National Archives of Honduras expressed their frustration with the lack of funding from the government to preserve and organize archival material. At the National Archives of Honduras, I was taken on a tour by the director and was amazed by the stacks upon stacks of documents that were packaged in butcher paper and tied with string, some of the documents neatly piled on the floor while others were piled on steel shelves. During our meeting, the director informed me that I would not find many primary documents in Tegucigalpa concerning the history of West Indians in Honduras because of the fact that West Indian labor migrants remained on the North Coast of the country in cities such as La Ceiba, Tela, and Trujillo. Moreover, documents pertaining to that period of history have largely been destroyed or have not yet been discovered due to the disorganization of archives found throughout the country. In fact, as Chambers points out, "Most historians of the West Indian diaspora in Central America have chosen to direct their efforts toward communities in

[3] This trip was made possible through a grant awarded by the Tinker Foundation and The Center for Iberian & Latin American Studies located at UC San Diego.

Costa Rica, Panama, and to a lesser extent Nicaragua due in part to the dearth of readily accessible archival sources available in these countries…"[4]

In the article "Forgotten Workers," Elisavinda Escheverri-Gent argues that "[t]he Central America of books, and indeed our imaginations, does not have very many black actors. That is not because blacks have not been present in the unfolding of Central American history. It is because their participation has been selectively ignored…Nowhere is this tendency more glaring than in the literature on labor history-especially that concerned with the important banana exporting sector."[5] Not only are the experiences of Black West Indian migrant laborers ignored in historical conversations about Central American labor history, but when discussed they largely focus on sites and sectors where male migrants were concentrated. As a result, historical scholarship has largely ignored the important roles that Black West Indian women played in sustaining the growth and success of U.S. owned agribusiness in Central America. Archival material is often collected in a way which works to leave out the less powerful. Most often than not, the voices and experiences of those that are left out of the archive are those of women and people of color. According to Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz, and Mary Elizabeth Perry, "Women's historians, in particular, highlighted the exclusion of documents pertaining to women, who were not until quite recently considered legitimate subjects of history and therefore of archival collection."[6] For the reasons stated above, this dissertation has been written through a practice of reading archives and other materials "against the grain" in order to explore the

[4] *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration*, 5.
[5] Echeverri-Gent, Elisavinda. "Forgotten Workers: British West Indians and the Early Days of the Banana Industry in Costa Rica and Honduras." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24.2 (1992): 275-308. Web.
[6] Chaudhuri, Nupur, Sherry J. Katz, and Mary Elizabeth Perry. *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources*. Urbana: U of Illinois, 2010. Print. xiv

collective West Indian migrant labor experience and connections to U.S. corporate interests, particularly American fruit companies, in Honduras, the United States and the circum-Caribbean at large.

While much has been written about banana production and, in particular, the influential companies of United Fruit and the Standard Fruit & Steamship Company, relatively little has been written about Black plantation workers in general and Black women workers specifically. So little has been written in part because so little can be found about or from black women workers in traditional historical archives. My dissertation adds to scholarship on Afro-Caribbean migrant labor to Latin America and the United States by conducting a visual and discursive analysis of a range of cultural artifacts – cinematic and documentary film, photography, UFCO advertisements, oral histories, and archival material from the United States, Honduras, and Great Britain. I trace the ways in which hegemonic ideologies of race, gender, class, citizenship, and labor circulated regionally between the U.S., Central America, and the Caribbean with the inception of banana industrialization, with an eye toward capturing the experiences of black women workers. The history that is made available about labor migration to Central America at the turn of the twentieth century is heavily concentrated on the male experience. Primary documents tend to focus on the experiences of male (im)migrant laborers, both Black and white, trivializing the experiences of the many black West Indian women that (im)migrated throughout the circum-Caribbean whether for work or companionship. Scholars such as Elisavinda Echeverri-Gent, Glenn A. Chambers, Frederick Douglass Opie, and Trevor W. Purcell have examined at length the history of West Indian labor migration to the Caribbean coasts of Central America. While these scholars all do the very necessary work of tracing the history of West Indian labor migration to Central America and the social, cultural, and racial resistances that

occurred in this region, the analysis of gender is not strong in their work. In other words, the experiences of black women workers are largely left out of this very important Central American labor history.

Using the industrialization of the banana at the turn of the twentieth century as a backdrop, my dissertation complicates depictions of racialized and gendered labor migration to and from Central America bringing Black women workers' experiences to the forefront of this often neglected history. My dissertation therefore asks: what role did banana-driven Afro-Caribbean migration to Honduras in particular, and Central America more broadly, play in constructions of blackness, gender, and nation at the turn of the twentieth century? How do Afro-Caribbean migrant women conform to and/or contradict patriarchal ideologies of gender, nation, and labor? Lastly, how can the archive be examined against the grain to create alternative histories and possibilities for female migrant labor experience?

I argue that examining the history, experiences, and lives of black female West Indian migrant laborers from the Caribbean to Central America and the United States reveals the roles that diasporic interaction, globalization, and colonialism have played in the social and political structures of labor, as well as their contributions to the shaping of raced, classed, and gendered ideologies which have worked to establish and maintain social, economic, and spatial orders of the black female body in regards to labor, migration, and (re)production. I also argue that drawing connections between different fields of study such as black diaspora studies, Caribbean studies, Latin American studies, and gender and ethnic studies to examine the black female migrant subject is necessary to discussions of migration, blackness, and labor.

Historical Background: Honduras as a "banana republic"

To understand Honduras as a "true" banana republic one must analyze the economic and political systems in process before, during, and after the multiple banana booms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to Dario A. Euraque, "The character of Honduran poverty and its relationship to land tenure, as well as its social and political implications, have always distinguished the country's position in Central American history generally."[7] As Euraque further explains, the region of Central America cannot be understood unless its economic, social, and political processes are linked to a late nineteenth to early twentieth century conjuncture. In other words, to understand the uniqueness of the region from the 1870s to the 1940s is to examine the economic, social, and political processes and their relationships to the industrialization of the region via agro exports. In his study of the region and state of Honduras from 1870-1972, Euraque points out that in the traditional historiography of Honduras, that the region of the North coast and its social and political importance to Honduran history is often dismissed due to an overwhelming focus on the oppression of laborers and economic power of banana companies[8] as well as the absence of an oligarchy.[9] This focus, in turn, takes away from viewing capitalists and workers as subjects of their own history and as more than mere extensions of the multiple banana companies that operated within this region.

Between the 1870s and the 1940s Honduras's North Coast transformed in distinct ways both socially and politically from the country's other geographic regions due to both the

[7] Euraque, Dario A. "Introduction." Introduction. *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic: Region and State in Honduras, 1870-1972*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 1996. Xvii-viii. Print.
[8] In the introduction to his book *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic*, Euraque analyzes more than just the effects of the oppressive power of banana imperialism on the north coast of Honduras. Rather, he looks closely at capitalists and workers of this particular region "as subjects of their own history rather than as mere appendages of the banana companies" (xix-xx).
[9] According to the Oxford dictionary, an oligarchy is a small group of people having control of a country, organization, or institution.

geography of the North Coast and its class structure. After the country gained independence from Spain in 1821, the government experienced lapses in stability due to civil wars and military control. The instability of the Honduran government and its economy contributed to the lack of a strong central state. Before 1870 Honduras relied on and profited from three alternating exports: cattle, hardwoods, and mineral products (gold and silver). According to Euraque, "Exports of cattle, hardwoods, and mineral products beyond Central America stimulated commercial growth in certain areas of the Caribbean territory during given periods: cattle to the Caribbean, especially Cuba (1850s-80s); hardwoods to Great Britain via Belize (1840s-70s); and gold (1830s-40s) and especially silver (1850s-70s) to England and the United States."[10] However, the export of these alternating commodities did not produce the strong economic foundation that the Honduran elite envisioned for nation building. In the late 1870s Honduran president Marco Aurelio Soto emphasized that an economic regeneration of the country was needed, and proposed commercial agriculture as the solution. Honduran liberal reformers believed that coffee was the solution to Honduras's economic woes. Coffee was the prime export elsewhere in Central America in countries such as Guatemala and Costa Rica, for example. However, Honduras never encountered the coffee boom it needed to ente r into the world economy. In addition to Honduras being in competition with Puerto Rico, Brazil, Colombia and other coffee producing colonies and nations in the Caribbean and Latin America, Honduras lacked infrastructure that would allow for transport of the crop from its mountainous regions to the coast for proper export.[11]

[10] *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic*, 3.
[11] Chambers, Glenn Anthony. *Foreign Labor and the Struggle for a Honduran Identity: West Indian Workers and Community Formation in the Republic of Honduras, 1876-1954.* Diss. Howard U, 2006. Print.

Honduras's "Green Gold"

After a failed attempt at the construction of a British financed Inter-Oceanic railroad between 1867-1870 put Honduras millions of dollars in debt, the nation turned to the United States for investment in Honduran mining production. Honduras lured in U.S. investors through generous concession agreements. As stated in the Honduran constitution of 1880, the liberal government assured the nation that it would do everything in its power to enhance the welfare and development of the country by stimulating progress in agriculture, industry and trade, by attracting immigration, colonizing arid land, building railroads and highways, helping new industries, and bringing in foreign capital through concessions and incentives.[12] The Honduran Liberal government offered all kinds of incentives to both Hondurans and foreigners in hopes of developing agriculture. Such incentives included: free land and exemption of property taxes to any foreigner that would use the land for agricultural or industrial purposes, and tax exemptions on the importation of machinery and tools.[13] Although concessions were offered to Hondurans as well as foreigners, most Hondurans did not benefit due to lack of capital. According to Chambers, between 1882 and 1915, 276 concessions were accorded primarily to promote the development of the mining industry.[14] In 1879, President Marco Aurelio Soto granted U.S. investors a ninety-nine-year concessionary contract to develop infrastructure such as railroads and ports. The concessionary contract also allowed U.S. investors access to land and Honduran silver mines as long as investors dealt with the debt claimed by previous British investors. However, the venture failed and in the 1890s the Cortes Interoceanic Railroad fell under the control of U.S. mining tycoon Washington S. Valentine, whom had operations near the capital of

[12] Acker, Alison. *Honduras: The Making of a Banana Republic*. Between the Lines, 1988.
[13] Chambers, 23-24.
[14] *Foreign Labor and the Struggle for a Honduran Identity*, 24.

Tegucigalpa.[15] The most profitable silver mining companies from about the late 1880s to the early 1900s were: Washington S. Valentine's New York and Honduras's Rosario Mining Company. By the late 1880s Honduran silver mines were primarily owned by foreign companies. Indeed, silver was the major export in Honduras during this time period with mines located in the interior of the country. Very rarely did mining companies establish themselves on the North Coast, a region of Honduras where bananas would later come to rule.[16] Values for mineral exports remained stable through the early 1900s, however, the value of banana exports quickly surpassed that of mineral exports after the 1910s. By the 1920s, banana exports became Honduras's largest export, representing 60 percent of total exports.[17] According to historian Glenn A. Chambers, by 1930, the banana industry accounted for 90 percent of Honduras's exports and the United Fruit Company represented 70 percent of this.[18] Between the 1890s and 1950 an increase in fruit production led to a rise in U.S. capital investment in Honduras. Three fruit companies throughout the late nineteenth and early-twentieth century engaged in the export of the banana and controlled the fruit industry on the North Coast of Honduras: the Vaccaro Brothers (later Standard Fruit and Steamship Company), the Cuyamel Fruit Company, and the infamous United Fruit Company.[19] Vaccaro Brothers was the first to arrive in the region in 1904. As mentioned earlier, the development of infrastructure was quite important to the export of

[15] *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic, 5.*
[16] According to Euraque, "The economic significance of this foreign investment remained limited to that area {Tegucigalpa}, where laborers for the mining companies rarely exceeded 1,500 workers even in the late 1940s. In the 1910s and 1920s the annual employment by foreign banana companies often amounted to ten or fifteen times the employment by the mining industry of the interior" (5).
[17] *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic,* 5-6.
[18] *Foreign Labor and Struggle for Honduran Identity,* 25.
[19] According to Chambers, the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company controlled the fruit industry in and around the city of La Ceiba while the United Fruit Company, which merged with the Cuyamel Fruit Company in 1929, controlled the fruit industry west of the city of San Pedro Sula. *Foreign Labor and the Struggle for Honduran Identity*, 29.

goods and U.S. investors provided the foreign capital Honduras needed to develop transportation such as railroads. The Standard Fruit Company was no different. According to Acker, the company built "…fifty-five miles of rail line from its headquarters and port in La Ceiba, through its plantations on the eastern end of the banana belt, and had four boats delivering its products to New Orleans."[20] Next came the Cuyamel Fruit Company, whose owner William F. Streich, sold his rights to the company to Samuel Zemurray, owner of the United Fruit. In 1910 Zemurray continued to finance a railroad that Streich had built in Cortes, which laid west to the operations of the Standard Fruit Company. By 1911 the railroad line amounted to a little over 10 miles.[21] Zemurray's railroad line had become a modernized force in the region, even more promising than the Cortes Interoceanic Railroad that was controlled by Valentine. After proving to be a very successful company with a lead in sales and an efficient irrigation method, Zemmuray sold the Cuyamel Fruit Company to United Fruit in 1929. The sale of Cuyamel to United Fruit drastically transformed the North Coast politically, socially, and economically and was the start of an empire that fueled a coup d' état in Honduras, sparked regional feuds between nations in Central America, and out the Honduran government under the company's thumb.[22]

West Indian Migrant Labor in Central America

The expansion of the banana industry in Central America followed a particular raced, gendered, and classed system of labor. Implemented by the U.S. as well as those "banana republics" (Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama) dominated by the United Fruit

[20] Acker, 62.
[21] *Reinterpreting the Banana Republic*, 7.
[22] Acker, 63. According to Acker, the United Fruit Company grew into a giant conglomerate that controlled over one million acres of Central America, as well as a fleet of a hundred vessels and most of Central America's rail lines. Furthermore, "By 1930, it had assets of over $242 million and owned more than three million acres. By 1952 it was exporting 1.6 million stems of bananas a year, accounting for between 80 and 90 percent of all banana trade with the United States."

Company, and including mostly West Indian and mestizo laborers, the banana plantation became a masculinized labor space and the banana a masculinized symbol of U.S. heteropatriarchy. In other words, banana republics in Central America were founded on a patriarchal nationalism, a nationalism that projected the agricultural industrialization of the banana as a racialized and gendered process in which the laborers, employers, and political leaders were all white and/or mestizo men. This racialized and gendered construction of agricultural migrant labor histories throughout the region have rendered the migrant experiences of black men, and to a greater extent black women, as nonexistent. Although few in number when compared to the hundreds of male migrant laborers recruited for manual labor in the fields, companies such as UFCO recruited women to work as domestics, cooks, and store clerks.[23] In other instances, women were brought over to the region to quell threats of labor strikes. An article in the bicentennial edition of the *Panama Canal Review* published in 1976 looks back at the early years of the building of the Panama Canal and the refusal of West Indian and American men to work unless women were recruited to the Isthmus. The First Canal Commission discouraged the recruitment of American women to Panama stating that the building of the canal was a "man's job" and that the "Isthmus was no place for a woman."[24] However, the anxieties of the commission were rooted in ideologies of race, gender, and respectability and it was not that the Isthmus was no place for a woman, but in the eyes of the commission it was no place for a white American woman. Nevertheless, when West Indian workers held a sit-down strike announcing, "No women, no

[23] Foote, Nicola. "Rethinking Race, Gender, and Citizenship: Black West Indian Women in Costa Rica, C. 1920-1940." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 23.2 (2004): 198-212. Web. 199.
[24] Hernandez, Fannie P. "Panama Canal Review: Men Dug the Canal...But Women Played a Vital Role." *Panama Canal Review*. Web. 06 Nov. 2014. 32.

work" and white American workers threatened to do the same, the commission was convinced that workers needed a social life, one that involved a "normal" American family structure, one that included a wife as caregiver and domestic servant. The review only discusses the recruitment and hiring of white women by the Isthmian Canal Commission as nurses and teachers. Although the recruitment and migration of Black West Indian women is not mentioned, we can still speculate that West Indian men working on the canal did send for their wives, daughters, and companions. For those West Indian women who were not sent for by a husband or lover, the kinship ties established in Central America allowed for many of them to travel and perform domestic and other forms of reproductive work for the West Indian male workforce. Whether recruited by fruit companies or canal commissions or sent for by husbands, companions, or other family members, West Indian women traveled to Central America to work, live, and financially maintain themselves and their families.

Black West Indians as well as other racialized groups (Arabs, Palestinians, and the Chinese), were viewed as a threat to the racial composition and moral fabric of the Central American countries they migrated to for work. The majority of the countries viewed this population of black workers as a necessary evil that was essential to each nation's capitalist ventures. However, the color and culture that accompanied the West Indian population was unwanted and many of the nations that received these migrants worked to make the stay of West Indians temporary. Work undertaken on black West Indian communities in Central America has largely focused on these communities as migrant labor populations imported by American companies and corporations. It is true that given the boom but then collapse of agricultural industrialization in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as racist national ideologies of belonging expressed by Central American countries in the form of anti-black legislation, many West

Indians often repatriated back to their islands of birth or sought work elsewhere in the circum-Caribbean. For example, in the 1930s the Honduran government worked to eradicate the Black West Indian population on the North Coast of Honduras through acts of deportation. According to Chambers, "Efforts to halt immigration to Honduras were officially sanctioned between 1929 and 1934 with the legislation of immigration reform. The reforms initiated a drastic shift in the racial dynamics of the banana industry and demonstrated extreme xenophobia and racism…"[25] The Honduran government took extreme measures to make West Indian settlement along its northern coast difficult.

Elsewhere in Central America, such as in Costa Rica, the Black West Indian migrant labor community began to settle permanently on Costa Rica's Atlantic coast. The United Fruit Company assisted in the settlement of this population by providing the West Indian community with access to land as smallholders of banana plantations. Due to a series of crop failures, UFCO changed its organization of production in order to ensure continued success of the Company in Costa Rica. However, despite being land-owners and the push made by middle-class West Indians to gradually assimilate into an Afro-Costa Rican identity, West Indians did not achieve citizenship in Costa Rica until 1949. Much of the discourse surrounding West Indian fitness for Costa Rican citizenship revolved around representations of female morality. Although Black West Indian women were often restricted from working on banana plantations and railroads in Costa Rica and elsewhere in Central America, their presence within the West Indian communities formed along the Caribbean coast was necessary. Gaining citizenship and access to rights in the countries in which Black West Indian men and women labored and lived depended very much on ideologies of gender, race, and morality. As Nicola Foote states, "In Costa Rica, as

[25] *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration,* 115.

elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean, the dominant discourse used black women's bodies as a vehicle for the presentation of Africans as primitive…In adopting patriarchal ideals of female virtue, though, black [men and] women believed they could advance the more general cause of black ascent."[26] Black men and women's bodies were represented as hypersexual and disrespectable. Blacks were viewed as primitive in the eyes of the Central American governments that hosted West Indian migrant laborers. The presence of West Indians in places such as Costa Rica and Honduras challenged Hispanic ideologies of mestizaje and citizenship. In order to gain access and rights in the Central American countries in which black West Indians settled, many West Indians bought into Hispanic ideologies of race, gender, and morality conforming to the moral standards set by each host country. However, the maintenance of social norms rested unequally on West Indian women. Black women were to be virtuous in the eyes of the community and nation. Both men and women believed that upward mobility and access to citizenship depended on women's sexual absence.[27] The immigration of West Indians into Central America began to taper off in countries such as Honduras after the 1930s due to anti-immigrant legislation. However, families that chose to stay in Central America would birth generations that would eventually assimilate into Hispanic society while still holding on to West Indian culture and traditions. And yet, West Indian settlement in Central America for those that chose to stay during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s was not always permanent. The implementation of the United States Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965 which eliminated the national origins quota system and granted countries in the Western Hemisphere non-quota status opened up a sizeable flow of immigration coming from the West Indies and elsewhere in

[26] "Rethinking Race, Gender, and Citizenship," 202.
[27] Ibid., 202.

the circum-Caribbean.[28] Not only did people from the West Indies make their way to the U.S. at this time but people of West Indian descent that had been born in or whose families settled in parts of Latin America, as well as other Afro-Latin Americans, would participate in migration to the U.S. In fact, the United States witnessed a significant increase in West Indian migration from 4,000 in 1962 to over 26,000 in 1971.[29]

Chapter Outline

In chapter one of my dissertation, "Setting the Stage: Early Twentieth-Century Racialized and Gendered Constructions of Honduran Banana Workers through the lens of U.S. Educational Films," I offer an examination of cultural and visual texts that center on the banana production process, plantation labor, and the United States' involvement in the export of the fruit and the industrialization of Honduras before and after WWII. I thus analyze *About Bananas* (1935), a silent educational documentary sponsored by the United Fruit Company, and *Emergency in Honduras* (1945), sponsored by the U.S. office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, not only as travelogues for U.S. consumption but also as propaganda justifying U.S economic and political intervention in Central America. I also argue that the linear narratives that these two films tell--as well as the gendered, raced, and classed relationships constructed in the films--work not only to depict Central American laborers as machines under U.S. power and control, but also represent the region as in need of U.S. paternal guidance for a seemingly large male workforce. In both films, black, mestizo, and indigenous women are made visible selling goods at the market of the central plaza, collecting drinking water, and cooking and cleaning for the male banana workers on fruit company encampments. However, their

[28] Palmer, Ransford W. "A Decade of West Indian Migration to the United States, 1962-1972: An Economic Analysis." *Social and Economic Studies* 23.4 (1974): 571-87. Web. 571.
[29] Ibid., 571.

visibility remains a backdrop to the highly masculinized narratives of the banana production process and war employment.

In chapter two, **"**Onboard the Great White Fleet: Racialized and Gendered Representations of Labor and Leisure in American Fruit Company Tourism," I extend my analysis of raced and gendered divisions of labor from chapter one. I examine the participation of American fruit companies in the tourism industry through an analysis of published texts such as advertisements and fruit company sponsored literature which worked to justify the imperial presence of American fruit companies in the Circum-Caribbean and their use of steamships as cruise ships beginning in the early 20th century. I am specifically interested in the United Fruit and Standard Fruit and Steamship Company lines that sailed affluent white Americans to established banana towns of the Caribbean, Central and South America. During this time period American fruit company advertisements were marketed to "first class" white Americans looking to engage in leisure activities abroad. Many of the advertisements feature middle to upper class white men and women lounging on cruise ships and enjoying the beaches of the tropics. While cruise ships connected white "travel gentry" to the Caribbean for leisure and relaxation, Black and indigenous peoples struggled for civil and social rights such as voting rights and access to jobs and land. Borrowing from Marcus Rediker's study of the slave ship, I argue that like the slave ship, the steamship can be examined as a vessel which has contained life, death, violence, pleasure, labor, and leisure.

For the third chapter, "Resisting the White Colonial Gaze: Banana Women in Caribbean Plantation Photography," I expand on Glenn Mimura's discussion of the creation of a revisionist archive through an analysis of photographs found in the "Caribbean Photo Archive" located on the photo sharing site Flickr. The photograph collection features archival material

collected from all over the circum-Caribbean between 1890 and 1970. One album in particular, titled "Banana Production, Jamaica," contains multiple photographs of black women working in the banana industry; many of the still photos appear staged. I examine selected photographs to reveal the ways in which Afro-Jamaican women banana workers, through my reading of their resistance to the white colonial gaze of picturesque photography, created a revisionist archive.

In chapter four, "Family Ties: The Lived Experiences and Migration Stories of Addie and Nelly McBride," I take an intimate approach to my discussion of the history of gendered migrant labor in the circum-Caribbean. In this chapter, I use the ethnographic method of oral history to challenge the power of the written archive, which too often dictates who and what are worth remembering. I include interviews conducted with my grandmother about her mother's migration from Jamaica to Honduras in the early decades of the twentieth century as well as my grandmother's memories of growing up in La Ceiba, Honduras, a banana town controlled and operated by the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company. Many of the archival documents pertaining to the multiple histories of American fruit company establishment in Honduras have either been destroyed or simply cannot be found. Primary documents such as correspondence between Great Britain and Honduras and the United States and Honduras, continue to privilege male migrant laborers' narratives and experiences, whether Black, white, or mestizo. The experiences of black West Indian women have remained invisible within archival materials gathered and written by imperial powers. This chapter centers the stories of black women migrants not found within the archive. There I investigate the types of labor done by Black West Indian migrant women and Garifuna women on and around banana plantations and other workspaces on the North Coast of Honduras such as railroad lines and seaports, as well as their decisions for migrating beyond the Caribbean and Central America to the United States.

The history of West Indian migrant labor to Honduras is not as well-researched as the histories of other Central American countries that encompassed the circum-Caribbean however, it is a history with an important contribution to labor studies. Centering black migrant worker's lives and experiences through the back drop of banana industrialization in the Caribbean and Latin America generates new ways of thinking about blackness, gendered migrant labor, and the effects of capitalism and colonialism. Through an interdisciplinary framework and the use of mixed methodologies, this dissertation seeks to center the lives and voices of those who often do not come through in historical materials found on black migrant labor in the circum-Caribbean, the lives of black women.

CHAPTER ONE

Setting the Stage: Early Twentieth-Century Racialized and Gendered Constructions of Banana Workers through the Lens of U.S. Educational Films

> "'A banana town, as they run. Grass huts, 'dobes, five or six two-story houses, accommodations limited, population half-breed Spanish and Indian, Caribs and blackamoors. No sidewalk to speak of, no amusements. Rather unmoral. That's an offhand sketch, of course.'"
>
> - O. Henry, *Cabbages and Kings*, 1904

> "A little thrill of satisfaction ran through the consul. Perhaps, he thought, the State Department, upon reading his introduction, would notice – and then he leaned back in his chair and laughed. He was getting as bad as the others. For the moment he had forgotten that Coralio was an insignificant town in an insignificant republic lying along by-ways of second-rate sea."
>
> - O. Henry, *Cabbages and Kings*, 1904

Introduction

The novel *Cabbages and Kings* is based on O. Henry's experiences in Honduras and set in Central America in the fictive Caribbean coast town of Coralio, Anchuria.[30] The first quote comes from a statement made by a character known as Frank Goodwin, an American investor who becomes wealthy from the exportation of products from Coralio, Anchuria to the United States. In chapter one of the book he is introduced as a "banana king, a rubber prince, a sarsaparilla, indigo and mahogany baron."[31] In the scene from which the quote is taken, Goodwin engages in a conversation with Isabel Guilbert, the wife of Anchuria's current president. Goodwin has traveled to a hotel in Coralio to arrest the President and retrieve the money that the president as stolen from the people of Anchurria. Isabel, also an American, asks Goodwin "what sort of town is this-Coralio…?" Goodwin responds smiling with, "'Not much of a town,'" and continues with the description seen in the first quote above.[32] In the second quote a consul for the United States by the name of Williard Geddie who also lives in Coralio is

[30] O. Henry. *Cabbages and Kings*. Myna Classics, 2009. Print.
[31] Ibid., 8.
[32] Ibid., 42.

working on his yearly report. While writing the report he reflects on the year as well as the twenty-percent rise in product exportation from Coralio. For a moment Geddie is thrilled by his success as a consul until he realizes that no one from the State Department will care because Coralio is too insignificant of a town to matter. The main characters of the novel are largely American businessmen, government officials and expatriates- living in what Henry refers to as the "volatile republic." I chose the above quotes to point out a number of things: (1) the ways in which O. Henry depicts Honduras in his novel as a backward, primitive country that is filled with corruption and harbors US fugitives, (2) O. Henry's racialization of the banana town of Coralio as a space of immorality that is populated by Spanish-Indian half-breeds, Caribs, and blacks who are depicted as being unenlightened, and (3) contradictions that turn up throughout the novel between portrayals of Honduras as an insignificant country with second-rate infrastructure and Honduras as essential for US capitalism and development.[33] In fact, *Cabbages and Kings* is ripe with what Kirsten Silva Gruesz refers to as "primitivist fixations," or "the idea that Central America nations are even later arrivals than the rest of Latin America to the table of modernity."[34] *Cabbages and Kings*, Like many other novels written in both English and Spanish which concentrate on United States political relations in Central America, reveal how the banana, as a single commodity, has been involved in an intricate connection of economic and

[33] In the story "The Lotus and the Bottle," O. Henry writes, "So many thousand bunches of bananas, so many thousand oranges and cocoanuts, so many ounces of gold dust, pounds of rubber, coffee, indigo, and sarsaparilla – actually exports were twenty per cent greater than for the previous year!" (18). In the chapter titled "Shoes," a U.S. consul by the name of John Atwood responds to a letter from a U.S. citizen enquiring about opening a shoe store in Coralio. He writes, "There are 3,000 inhabitants in the place, and not a single shoe store! The situation speaks for itself. The coast is rapidly becoming the goal of enterprising business men…" (108). It is clear from these examples that O. Henry viewed Honduras as only being as important as the biggest profit one could make as an American capitalist.

[34] Silva Gruesz, Kirsten. "The Mercurial Space of "Central" America: New Orleans, Honduras, and the Writing of the Banana Republic." *Hemispheric American Studies*. By Caroline Field Levander and Robert S. Levine. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2008. 140-65. Print.

social relations.[35] Throughout the novel O. Henry pivots on hemispheric hierarchies of modern/primitive. The stories uphold the hegemonic narrative of the U.S. as a modern, white, wealthy nation paternally guiding Honduras's "simple-hearted children of nature."[36]

The labeling of Honduras as a "banana republic" includes many historical, political, and economic complexities.[37] In fact, it was a phrase first coined in O. Henry's novel.[38] O. Henry was born William Sidney Porter on September 11, 1862 in Greensboro, North Carolina. He died June 5, 1910 in New York City. 'O. Henry's fugitive escape to Honduras began in 1895 while working as columnist at the *Houston Daily Post* when he was ordered back to Austin on charges of embezzlement during his employment at First National Bank of Austin. According to C. Alphonso Smith, "The indictments charged that on October 10, 1984, he misappropriated $554.48; On November 12, 1984, $299.60; and on November 12, 1895, $299.60."[39] O. Henry fled to New Orleans where he boarded a fruit steamer to Honduras, "His knowledge of Spanish and his ignorance of Honduras made the little Central American republic seem just the haven in which to cast anchor…'The freedom, the silence, the sense of infinite peace, that I found here, I cannot begin to put into words.' His letters to Mrs. Porter from Honduras show that he had determined to make Honduras is home."[40] William spent 7 months in Honduras before returning to the U.S. in 1897 to take care of his sick wife. Upon his return he was sentenced to five years in an Ohio penitentiary on charges of embezzlement. While in prison, William adopted the

[35] Other novels that have centered Central American and United States relations through discussions of the neocolonial powers of American fruit companies include Carlos Fallas's 1941 novel *Mamita Yunai*, Ramón Amaya Amador's *La Prisión Verde*, and Miguel Angel Asturias' *Cien años de soledad.*
[36] O. Henry, 53.
[37] The term "banana republic" first appears in O. Henry's *Cabbages and Kings* in the story titled "The Admiral."
[38] In the chapter "The Admiral," O. Henry describes Anchuria as a "…small, maritime banana republic."
[39] Smith, C. Alphonso. *O. Henry Biography*. Garden City: Doubleday, Page, 1916. *Archive.org*. 2006. Web.
[40] Ibid., 137.

pseudonym O. Henry and began writing numerous short stories, including *Cabbages and Kings.* By definition, a banana republic refers to a country that is politically unstable and whose economy depends on a limited exported resource. Honduras's rise as a banana republic in the twentieth century was defined by the country's primary export of the banana fruit, and the nation's economic and political dependence on foreign markets. The fact that O. Henry glossed the nation's political instability as a playground for corruption is emblematic of the racialist knowledge he deployed to obfuscate issues of foreign investment.[41]

In regard to area, Honduras is the second largest Central American nation, it has access to both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, and its regional position gives it access to overseas and regional trade. However, due to a lack of infrastructure and the cooperation of the country's elite, Honduras opened itself to foreign interests, investment and political chaos. Due to Honduras's geography and failed attempts to use foreign investment to develop transportation systems, members of the landowning elite were isolated from each other and therefore, engaged in differing, commercially profitable economic activities, such as gold and silver mining in the mountains near the capital of Tegucigalpa. The result was that leadership formed in different regions of Honduras, often defying a central authority while having no interest in collectively assuming a role in national economic progress.[42] In a 1914 dispatch U.S. Secretary of State William J. Bryan American consul JE/C writes, "The greater part of the population is of Indian and mixed blood and those of mature age are ignorant and uneducated, while ordinarily peaceful and orderly and submissive to authority, they are yet quick tempered, impulsive and excitable…" Further he states, "The higher classes are composed of people of wealth, education, and refinement…There is, however, no unity of purpose or action amongst them. They are divided

[41] Acker, Alison. *Honduras: The Making of a Banana Republic*. Boston, MA: South End, 1988. Print.
[42] Ibid., 47.

into numberless factions, each faction representing some individual of dominating intellectual ability…"[43] The above passage reveals the U.S. government's racialized views of Hondurans and a noted lack of leadership and cooperation among the country's elite. In the eyes of the U.S. Honduras was composed of two classes, one lower and one higher and both too "Indian" and too "ignorant" to work collectively. In this way, U.S. observers presented a racist explanation for the vacuum in central authority that was actually produced by competition among local elites, such that San Pedro Sula in the northwest, a tiny banana town that would eventually control the nation's economic life, initially developed in relative isolation from the economy of the capital of Tegucigalpa in the south-central highlands.

In what follows, I offer an examination of cultural and visual texts that center on the banana production process, plantation labor, and the United States' involvement in the export of the fruit and the industrialization of Honduras before and after WWII. In addition, I critically analyze the racialized and gendered constructions that are produced around Honduran labor and banana work in the two films *About Bananas (1935)* and *Emergency in Honduras (1945).* Early cinematic production in Latin America as well as thousands of educational and industrial films sponsored and produced by U.S. companies and government agencies promoting the Good Neighbor Policy, serve as useful visual and cultural texts for studying U.S. imperial interventions in Latin America as well as Latin America's neocolonial dependency on U.S. capital and foreign investments during the interwar period. I argue that the two films depict, mediate and reinscribe hierarchies of race, gender, labor and nation both within the United States and Honduras. The production of both films works to create divisions between white American consumers and the agricultural workers, largely people of color, providing the products being consumed. These two

[43] Dispatch 84, JE/C, American Consul in Tegucigalpa, to Secretary of State, 17 September 1914, USNA RG 59, 815.00/1547.

films, and other like them, project the United States as a powerful force of imperial nation building and a global leader in economic control. I also argue that the racialized and gendered constructions of the two films erase the labor of a largely black West Indian male and female workforce in the Caribbean coast of Central America.

"Learn by Seeing": The Use of Educational and Industrial Films in Depictions of Central America

The creation and dissemination of educational films in both the U.S. and Latin America marked the United States as the ultimate good neighbor and arbiter of Latin American productivity and success. The two films that I analyze *About Bananas* (1935), a silent educational documentary sponsored by the United Fruit Company, and *Emergency in Honduras* (1945), sponsored by the U.S. office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, function not only as travelogues for U.S. consumption but also as propaganda for justifying U.S economic and political intervention in Central America. The linear narratives that these two films tell as well as the gendered, raced, and classed relationships constructed in the films work not only to depict Central American laborers as machines under U.S. power and control, but also as a region in need of U.S. paternal guidance for a seemingly large male workforce.

Analyzing early cinema production in Latin America as well as films sponsored by U.S. companies and government agencies illuminates not only the multiple methods of communication used to reach different audiences, but also the distinct ways in which the U.S. showcased its imperial power and Latin America's neocolonial dependency before and after WWII. Thousands of educational and industrial films sponsored by American companies and government agencies were created over the course of the twentieth century. *About Bananas (1935)* and *Emergency in Honduras (1945)* are just two examples of the ways in which the United States sought to promote agricultural business and positive inter-American relations

during periods of intense political and economic instability around the world. American companies such as the United Fruit Company and U.S. government agencies such as the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs were well aware that one of the best ways to capture an audience's attention in both the U.S. and Latin America was through motion picture. As Dean McClusky writes in his article "The Nature of the Educational Film," "…the motion picture is a powerful educational tool, whether it be used to 'entertain' or formally to 'teach'**."**[44] Audiences in the U.S. and Latin America learned about each other (languages, cultures, customs) through film. *About Bananas and Emergency in Honduras* provide a glimpse into U.S. economic and political involvement in the region of Central America during the interwar period. It could be argued that what these two films are selling are the narratives of the United Fruit Company and the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs that sought to foster friendly U.S.-Central American relations during the 1930s and 1940s. What is the function of the ephemeral or educational documentary short in depictions of Central America, specifically, Guatemala and Honduras during these time periods? What type of imagery is invoked about farming, labor, nation, modernity, gender, power, and race in these two films? What did these images mean to the film's original audience? Finally, who do the films disappear through the narratives that they tell?

I analyze the first film, *About Bananas* (1935), as a type of travel narrative made for U.S. citizens to explore the region of Central America, the labor, and the production of the banana without leaving the comfort of their homes or country. The eleven-minute silent film takes the audience along a linear presentation of how the banana is cultivated in the "virgin jungles" of

[44] McClusky, Dean. "The Nature of the Educational Film." *Hollywood Quarterly* 2.4 (1947): 371-80. *JSTOR*. Web.

Guatemala and loaded onto UFCOssteamship The Great White Fleet.[45] The film then focuses on the studies performed by scientists on the banana's nutritional value in the U.S. and the fruit's incorporation into the diets and daily lives of U.S. citizens. I reveal how the laborers in Central America and the region itself are presented to U.S. citizens as machines under U.S. power and control, bringing forth a commodity that assists in reproducing strong healthy white citizens. Depictions of hierarchies of power, nation, and labor can be examined in *About Bananas.* More specifically, the film projects the United States as a leader of capitalist democracy. The narrative told in this film, at times, strives to connect both U.S. and Latin American audiences through the theme of the good neighbor. In other instances, *About Bananas* works to disconnect U.S. citizens from the lives of overworked and underpaid banana plantation laborers. The second film, *Emergency in Honduras* (1945), presents the Central American country and banana plantation laborers as barely holding on economically after a decline in banana production during WWII. The narrator presents the film as a "war story." It describes Hondurans as "tough" and the soil of Honduras as "rich and capable of producing war material lost in the Pacific." The twenty-one-minute film goes on to describe laborers in Honduras as "…good workmen. Fast, careful, and thorough." However, the ships that once connected Central America to the U.S. through transatlantic trade are being used for the war, causing the banana to plummet in terms of economic priority and loss of employment for plantation workers. The film boasts about the U.S. Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and the Honduran government once again coming together to provide work for the many plantation laborers that were left jobless. The film plots out a plan to have these men build a road from the north coast of Honduras around Lake Yojoa to the Honduran capital Tegucigalpa and on to the country's Pacific coast. This labor is described

[45] I will be using the abbreviation UFCO to refer to the United Fruit Company throughout this chapter.

as “men’s work,” and the women are seen doing the men’s laundry, cooking food, and gathering buckets of water from a water system built by U.S. engineers. Although women’s productive and reproductive labor helped to sustain male banana workers in turn keeping the U.S. war effort afloat, the women in both films are pushed to the background and their labor described in terms of common sense notions of female productive and reproductive work.

The Function of the Educational Documentary Short

About Bananas is an ephemeral, silent black and white film sponsored by the United Fruit Company. According to the Prelinger Archives, ephemeral films are non-fiction films made for educational, industrial, or promotional purposes.[46] In the thousands of films collected and preserved in the Prelinger Archives one can find a large number of educational, industrial, promotional, and amateur films produced by and for different organizations and institutions such as U.S. corporations, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, community and interest groups, and governmental units. But why film? Why was the motion picture the chosen medium of communication for U.S. companies such as the United Fruit Company? The motion picture communicates in multiple methods and it is an effective tool used for telling a story. According to McClusky, “It presents facts realistically. It dramatizes human relations and events. It arouses emotions. It transmits attitudes…it depicts the imaginative. And it can enable one to see the unseen.”[47]More importantly, in the case of *About Bananas*, the ephemeral film is used by the United Fruit Company to sell its agro export product of bananas to the U.S. consumer during the Great Depression when sales of the banana declined. In the case of *Emergency in Honduras*, the film sponsored by the U.S. Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs boasts inter-American unity in the production of war material and the creation of infrastructure in Honduras

[46] "Prelinger Archives." *Prelinger Archives*. N.p., 4 June 2005. Web. 12 Apr. 2015.
[47] McClusky, 371.

toward the war effort during WWII. In accordance with the Good Neighbor Policy and the United States' fear of Axis power and ideologies taking over Latin America, the film serves as a promotion for friendly relations between the U.S. and its southern neighbors as well as a spotlight on the U.S. as the hero that solves the economic, social, and political issues in Honduras during the mid 1940s such as unemployment, poverty, and lack of modern infrastructure and leadership.

The genre of sponsored film is as old as the motion picture. It is estimated that 300,000 industrial and educational films have been made in the United States or sponsored by every major company, national business association, and educational institution. Although it was used to train, sell, and persuade far more than any other type of motion picture, the film type is not as well known.[48] Definitions of industrial and educational films such as *About Bananas* and *Emergency in Honduras* have been debated since the early twentieth century. However, as Rick Prelinger notes, sponsorship is the common thread that links these film types together and works for both internal viewing (such as training films) and titles used specifically to target customers, the public, and other businesses. In fact, in his paper titled *The Field Guide to Sponsored Films*, Prelinger lists 452 of the most significant or influential examples of industrial and educational films produced during the twentieth century. Each entry includes a description of the works' major characteristics, discusses the rationale behind each film's production, and the reaction and impact of each film. Not surprisingly, two films sponsored by the United Fruit Company and produced in 1956 make the list as both influential and significant. The first sponsored film by UFCO to make the list is *The Living Circle*, a 14-minute 35mm color film with sound. According to the film's description it was produced to "…blunt 'Communist propaganda claims' in the

[48] Prelinger, Rick. *The Field Guide to Sponsored Films*. San Francisco, CA: National Film Preservation Foundation, 2006. Web.

American and Latin American press. Using animation and live action, the short describes the benefits of the 'living circle' or interdependent trade between Central America and the United States."[49] Seventeen million viewers reportedly saw the film in its first eight months of release. It is also the companion film to another documentary short sponsored by the United Fruit Company titled *Bananas? Si, Señor!* This UFCO sponsored film was also a 14 minute, 35mm color film with sound and is described as an "introduction to the banana industry that blends live action and animation…[it] promotes United Fruit's 'industrial integration' and contribution to the Central American economy."[50] Fourteen million people reportedly saw the film in the first eight months of its release. Both, *The Living Circle* and *Bananas? Si, Señor!,* were distributed with Spanish sound tracks for Latin American audiences. Although both films sponsored by UFCO were produced twenty years after the UFCO sponsored film *About Bananas*, from both film descriptions it becomes obvious that several themes continue to be recycled and narrated in every film: U.S. economic support of Central America, the suppression of threatening political systems, the maintenance of U.S. democracy in Latin America, U.S.-Central American interdependency, and "Good Neighbor" relations. On the surface, *About Bananas* and *Emergency in Honduras* seem like soft-sell propaganda for agricultural consumption, American patriotism, economic stability, and U.S.-Central American interdependency and unity. However, examining these two films in depth as part of a larger historical framework reveals much more about the bananas production process, U.S.-Latin American politics, labor relations and social hierarchies, and U.S. ideologies about modernity, society, and culture in both the United States and Latin America.

The Good Neighbor Policy, the motion picture, and banana production

[49] Ibid., 55.
[50] ibid., 10.

At the end of WWI, the United States no longer feared political intervention in Latin America by any European or Asian country. The United States was also incomprehensibly stronger than Latin America, particularly in its military. According to Bryce Wood, "after 1919…these rationalizations for the use of force [carrying out treaty obligations, protecting the lives and property of U.S. citizens, the promotion of stable democratic governments in Latin America], which had formally been acceptable either as substitutes or reinforcements for the national security argument, lost much of their former persuasiveness among important sectors of public opinion…if not in the Department of State itself."[51] Even so, the U.S. had a habit of political interference in the Caribbean and Latin America, so much so that between 1898 and 1920 U.S. Marines or soldiers were ordered to enter the territory of Caribbean states on twenty separate occasions.[52] The United States regarded such intervention as a legal right under international law. For example, as Woods notes, Marines were sent to Honduras in 1924 to "…protect the 'American Minister and American colony' because 'a condition of anarchy seem[ed] likely to develop.'"[53] In fact, just four years earlier, the Vaccaro Brothers and Company, a New Orleans based American Fruit Company which in 1926 would change its name to the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company, requested U.S. military aid in the small port town of La Ceiba, Honduras due to developing "labor troubles."[54] The year of 1924 also saw

[51] Wood, Bryce. Introduction. *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy*. New York: Columbia UP, 1961. Print.
[52] Ibid., 5
[53] ibid., 5
[54] Telegram, Vaccaro Brothers and Company, to Secretary of State, 16 August 1920, USNA RG 59, 815.5045/4. In the telegram addressed to U.S. Secretary of States the American fruit company writes, "Advised from Ceiba Spanish Honduras labor troubles have developed politically strikers invading city of Ceiba endangering property lives of all foreigners. Understand American consul has asked United States protection therefore won't you please send immediately warship or gunboat to save situation."

increasing tension and resistance against West Indian migrant laborers in the cities of Trujillo and Puerto Castilla. In a July 1924 political report from American consul George P. Waller he states, "Anti-Negro agitation increases…feeling is rapidly increasing against negro laborers who are employed in various capacities along the North Coast of Honduras…Most of these Negroes are of British nationality, and when trouble comes…a heavy burden will fall upon American Consular officers."[55] American consular officers feared taking on the burden of quelling tension due to an absence of British officers in the region. Although military intervention by the U.S. continued to occur in Latin America after WWI, the U.S. did not have the desire for conquest or a need for defense and therefore struggled with the creation and implementation of policies in Latin America. Episodes of U.S. political and military intervention in the Caribbean and Latin America had become expensive and the forceful coercion of its neighbors to the south did not bode well for U.S. promotions of democracy. Ongoing interventions into the internal affairs of Latin American and Caribbean states caused widespread fear and distrust of the U.S.

Although the Good Neighbor Policy is often associated with the Roosevelt administration, the phrase "Good Neighbor" was originally coined in 1928 by President Hoover in a speech delivered during a stop in Ampala, Honduras while on a month-long goodwill tour through Central and South America in the days between his election and inauguration.[56] In a foretelling of the new U.S. policy toward Latin America, along with his expressed concern over inter-American relations, Hoover declared: "I come to pay a call of friendship…I would wish to symbolize the friendly visit of one good neighbor to another…we have a desire to maintain not

[55] Political Series 20, George P. Waller, American Consul in La Ceiba, to Secretary of State, 14 July 1924, USNA RG 59, 815.5045/47.
[56] DeConde, Alexander. "Herbert Hoover's Good Will Tour." *The Historian* 12.2 (2007): 167-81. Web. Also see the U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian "Travel of President Herbert C. Hoover" for a list of travel dates.

only cordial relations of governments with each other but relations of good neighbors."[57] His speech came at a time of great tension between Latin America and the U.S. due to the U.S.'s armed interventions in Haiti and Nicaragua. Hoover would later withdraw U.S. troops from Haiti during his presidency. The discussion of the good neighbor was again brought up in the 1933 inauguration speech of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the speech, he declares:

> In the field of world policy I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor – the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others – the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.[58]

The Good Neighbor Policy was presented as a policy of noninterference in Latin American domestic affairs. At the Montevideo Conference in 1933, U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull declared: "'No state has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another…no government need fear any intervention on the part of the United States under the Roosevelt administration.'"[59] It was a policy of reciprocity in hopes that in complying with Latin American demands of noninterference and intervention, that the U.S. would also benefit through Latin American fulfillment of U.S. desires. Although the U.S. vowed not to interfere in Latin American affairs, in the event that these affairs involved United States government special interests such as economic policy, the treatment of persons and investments of U.S. citizens, and issues of hemispheric defense, the U.S. would quickly intervene in the form of newly constructed policies. In such cases, U.S. companies and corporations such as United Fruit, which had a huge interest in the region of Central America, would be protected under the Good Neighbor Policy as

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[57] DeConde, Alexander, and Graham H. Stuart. *Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1951. Print.
[58] "Franklin D. Roosevelt: Inaugural Address." *Franklin D. Roosevelt: Inaugural Address*. The American Presidency Project, n.d. Web. 12 Apr. 2015.
[59] Wood, 118-119.

long as the policies and practices of such companies and corporations complied with furthering the national interest of the U.S.[60]

A popular medium used to show concrete examples of the "friendly" feelings present between the United States and Latin America was the motion picture. Film, and its production as a type of visual education that could be disseminated to a wide and diverse audience, became a favored source for promotions of inter-American cooperation. Film was such a sought after medium for communication that the United States Department of the Interior created the Division of Motion Pictures to meet the demand for governmentally produced and sponsored film. According to Hearon Fanning, the reasons behind the government's dedication to the use of film as a medium of education and communication were the following: "[t]he coming of the convenient 16mm. projector; the Hay's organization's recognition of the motion picture's educational opportunities; the American rejuvenation of the European documentary film idea; an inherent tendency on the part of American to be modern, and [an] amazing mass interest in pictures of any kind from anywhere."[61] President Roosevelt promoted the Good Neighbor Policy in an attempt to maintain hemispheric unity in the face of foreign threat and invasion. This policy later became a part of the Office of War Information guidelines for the motion picture industry. However, according to Shari Roberts, "[f]ilms were not products of a simple, top-down application of the Motion Picture Bureau of the office of War Information guidelines. Film studios did, however, in general, follow these guidelines – incorporating pro U.S. involvement both directly and indirectly into films, and encouraging actors to participate in U.S.O tours and

[60] Wood, 8.
[61] Hearon, Fanning. "The Motion-Picture Program and Policy of the United States Government." *American Sociological Association* 12.3 (1938): 147-62. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 Oct. 2014. Hearon was the Director of the Division of Motion Pictures for the Department of the Interior in 1938.

Hollywood canteens."[62] Of Course, the above guidelines were specifically set for Hollywood cinema and film production. Federal departments such as the departments of Interior, Agriculture, and War established their own laboratory and film facilities and actively engaged in the production of educational film.

The promotion of the Good Neighbor Policy can be examined in both *About Bananas (1935)* and *Emergency in Honduras (1945)* through discourses of labor and production. In the documentary short *About Bananas* the United Fruit Company sponsored film directly relates to the Good Neighbor Policy through UFCO's economic investment in Central America and its agricultural production of the banana. Scenes of Central American labor production, specifically Guatemalan labor production, in conjunction with scenes of U.S. social and cultural prosperity and patriotism work rather unevenly to depict the United Fruit Company as an ambassador of inter-American harmony and unity. One way in which the UFCO sponsored film *About Bananas* narrates discourses of the "good neighbor" is through the use of film as a type of neocolonial voyeurism. The film works to take U.S. citizens, specifically school-aged children, on a journey to the land of its southern neighbors to explore the process of banana production.[63] The film opens up with a title card that reads: "Our bananas come from these countries bordering the Caribbean Sea," afterward a map appears illustrating the region of the Caribbean and those places involved in banana production. The next title card proceeds with "Let's visit some of these countries." In the scene that follows there is an image that appears from the first-person point of view, an image that is frequently used in films with themes of travel and adventure. An

[62] Roberts, Shari. "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat": Carmen Miranda, a Spectacle of Ethnicity." *Society for Cinema and Media Studies* 32.3 (1993): 3-23. *JSTOR*. Web. 1 Sept. 2015.
[63] On the Archive.org webpage for the film *About Bananas (1935)*, it states that the United Fruit Company sponsored film is an educational film about bananas and Central American countries. At the very end of the film the title card reads: "Dudley Circuit Service Classroom films." Educational film dissemination in the classroom began to take hold at the start of the twentieth century.

image that is representative of imperial conquest and colonialism, the point-of-view shot of the first person optical telescope as seen in figure 1. The trope of the telescope is very much a part of the imperial imaginary found in film. As Ella Shohat and Richard Stam discuss in *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, "Photographers and filmmakers were especially attracted to trains and ships, engines of empire that delivered raw materials from the interiors of Asia, Africa, and the Americas into the heart of Europe."[64] Furthermore they argue, "…the camera, like the microscope, [and I would argue the telescope], atomized the 'other.' The new visual apparatuses demonstrated the power of science to display and even decipher otherized cultures…"[65] In fact, Curtis Marez analyzes the ways in which hierarchal forms of seeing and being seen are constructed by corporate agriculture through the use of visual technologies in his discussion of speculation, agribusiness and whiteness. Marez states:

> Whereas farm workers are represented as ignorant, unskilled, technologically primitive in management accounts, agribusiness corporations represent themselves as modern and high-tech. In such contexts technology becomes an entrepreneurial tool or weapon for struggling with other men of capital, and it is implicitly articulated to ideologies of market competition and white male risk taking over and against feminized, racialized, and queer technological inferiority…[66]

This cinematic trope of the telescope works to incite adventure and excitement in cinematic travel for the audience viewing the film, however, this scene can also be examined as the economic and industrial colonization of Latin America by U.S. companies such as United Fruit and also as the start of a UFCO travelogue which takes U.S. audiences on a journey into the

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[64] Shohat, Ella, and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism Multiculturalism and the Media*. London: Routledge, 2014. 104.
[65] Ibid, 106.
[66] Marez, Curtis. *Farm Worker Futurism: Speculative Technologies of Resistance*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2016. Print. 62.

lives, culture, and society of Guatemala, its people, and United Fruit banana workers. As Shohat and Stam point out, as a technology of imperialism, film allowed white westerners to gaze at the "other" and giving spectators in the West a sense of ownership over the lands they were cinematically exploring. According to Shohat and Stam, "The 'spatially-mobilized visuality' of the I/eye of empire spiraled outward around the globe, creating a visceral, kinetic sense of imperial travel and conquest, transforming European spectators into armchair conquistadors,

Figure 1: Telescope View. This point-of-view shot is revealing in terms of U.S. neocolonial conquest of Central America. (*About Bananas*, 1935, Prelinger Archives)

affirming their sense of power while turning the colonies into spectacle for the metropole's voyeuristic gaze."[67] The scenes that follow the one described above work to depict Guatemala, as well as the other Latin American nations working with the United Fruit Company, as backward yet useful for industrial productivity and U.S. economic gain, and posits the United Fruit Company as an ambassador for promoting the Good Neighbor Policy through the company's cultivation and exportation of the fruit and its service to assisting in the strength and health of the U.S. and its citizens. In fact, during the period of the Good Neighbor Policy, while the European film market was dwindling because of the war, Hollywood flooded the film industry with Latin American themed films with hopes to "…enlist Latin America for hemispheric unity against Axis powers."[68]

"Beasts of Burden": Examinations of Modernity and Gendered Labor in *About Bananas (1935)*

Words such as "ancient", "primitive", and "virgin jungle" are used in describing Guatemala, its customs, and the land that the United Fruit Company occupied for fruit cultivation. Such words and phrases, as well as carefully organized film scenes, combine to create a fantastical view of Guatemala as antiquated and outside of the modern scope of the United States. As one title card in the beginning of *About Bananas* states, "Here civilizations have flourished, died, and been reborn." In her book *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale,* Maria Mies discusses the dialectic of progress and retrogression in regards to colonization and housewifization by stating, "In the same measure as European conquerors and invaders 'penetrated' those 'virgin lands', these lands and their inhabitants were 'naturalized', declared as wild, savage nature, waiting to be exploited and tamed by the male civilizers."[69] Through this

[67]Ibid.,104.
[68] Ibid., 157.
[69] Mies, Maria. *Patriarchy and Accumulation on A World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labor*. London: Zed, 2014. Print.

cinematic journey of the banana industry and the medium's opening as a source for international travel through space and time white men, women, and children in the U.S. learn something of who they are through the film's promotion of imperialism. In addition, the film's language and representation of women of color and indigenous women takes Central American women out of time and marks their labor and cultural practices as both "primitive" and "natural" and therefore unproductive in comparison to the productive work done by male Honduran banana workers and the modernisms of U.S. white Americans. In a scene at the start of the film there is a title card that reads, "An ancient custom still exists…" followed by images of indigenous women gathered in a plaza surrounding a large fountain filled with water. The women are then seen taking clay pots, filing them with water, and placing them on their heads. These women are then filmed running with the large pots on their heads behind "primitive ox-drawn carts" that are guided by an indigenous man. The women seem as though they are an extension of the oxen in front of them as they run to keep up with the animal, suggesting a parallel between the oxen and women as "beasts of burden." Barbara Babcock examines the colonialist fascination with Pueblo women bearing water jars or *ollas* in the Southwestern United States through a visual analysis of tourist guide covers, postcards, expedition photography, museum artifacts, and magazine covers. Babcock asks, "What does it mean not only that the Other is frequently represented as female…but that women and the things they make are both symbols and sources of cultural identity, survival, and social continuity and also mediators between cultures and vehicles of exchange and change?"[70] Babcock engages Said's concept of orientalism in order to discuss how Western visual representations of Pueblo women in the Southwest mark practices of and the labor put into pottery making as both "natural" and "primitive." She writes that "this is aesthetic

[70] Babcock, Barbara A. "'A New Mexican Rebecca': Imaging Pueblo Women." *Journal of the Southwest* 32.4 (1990): 400-37. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 25 Apr. 2015.

primitivism" represents "a form of colonial domination-a gaze which fixes and objectifies, which masters."[71] I use Babcock's ideas to analyze the United Fruit Company's neocolonial romanticization and nostalgia for indigenous Central American women, land, and culture as "ancient" untouched territories ripe for U.S. industrialization and modernity. The United Fruit Company's representation of indigenous women as the authentic, timeless, and primitive Other seeks to mark them as harmless subjects of the company's capitalist endeavors.

The first half of the film, which focuses on the modern banana industry and the process from cultivation to export from Guatemala to the "world market," is juxtaposed to the second half of the film which posits the United States as a modern virile nation that benefits economically from the neocolonial conquests of U.S. companies such as United Fruit, as well as socially, as the banana is represented as a nutritious source of energy for white U.S. citizens, producing "sound healthy bodies." Moreover, while indigenous Central American women are imagined as the natural, primitive neighbor to the global North, white women are represented as vibrant and modern housewives and mothers. In fact, the primitiveness of Guatemalan culture is defined in opposition to U.S. modernity, which is figured throughout the film by technology (trains, steamships, cranes, explosives, revolving machines) and science (exemplified in scenes where scientists demonstrate the nutritional value of the banana for American consumption). For example, the film recreates a scene from the late 19th century where a white woman interferes with her son's attempt to grab a banana from an outdoor fruit stand. The title card that precedes the scene reads, "In grandmother's day, parents believed that bananas caused stomach-ache." The proceeding title card reads, "Today we laugh at this old-fashioned idea…" In the scene that follows, a doctor chats with a mother and her son about the importance of bananas for children's

[71] Ibid., 404.

health. No longer are Americans stuck in old-fashioned ways of thinking about the exotic fruit. White women as well as the banana have crossed into modern times, whereas women in Central America remain stuck in time and tradition. In fact, the second half of the film is about Americans and their acceptance of the exotic fruit as nutritious and valuable to their health, as one title card makes clear, "Bananas are more than a delicious fruit- - they are one of America's most important foods." *About Bananas* uses some stop motion animation to represent vitamins and minerals found in the fruit, most likely to appeal to children for classroom education. However, the film is also made to capture adult audiences' attention through its presentation of U.S. athleticism and strength as white men and women are shown participating in popular activities and pastimes of the era such as track and field, baseball, tennis, basketball, and football (figure 2).

In her work on Indian transnational surrogacy, Kalindi Vora argues that Indian surrogates invest human vital energy "through the biological and affective labor involved in the surrogate work, thereby supporting the lives of those individuals, families and societies that consume this energy."[72] Borrowing from Vora's work on vital energy, I argue that the same analysis can be made for banana workers where the conditions of agribusiness "are part of a larger trend in global capitalism where life becomes commodity and carrier of value."[73] Of course one must take into account race, class, and gender differentials when examining the extraction and investment of vital energy. In the case of banana cultivation and exportation, as seen through the lens of UFCO in *About Bananas*, the consumer (white, middleclass Americans) and the producers (mestizo and Black banana workers in Guatemala and Honduras) of productive and

[72] Vora, Kalindi. "Indian Transnational Surrogacy and the Commodification of Vital Energy." *Subjectivity* 28 (2009): 266-78. Web.
[73] Ibid., 266.

reproductive labor are marked differentially in regards to race, class, gender, and value, in turn, producing disparities between where the value is extracted and where it is invested.[74] What the film and the United Fruit Company propose is that American strength, health, enjoyment, and prosperity is owed to the efforts of the United Fruit Company and the nutritious values of fruit coming from the Caribbean and Latin America. However, the economic, social, and political vitality of the United States was just as much owed to banana workers in Central America as it was to any U.S. fruit company, if not more so. Nonetheless, by the 1940s the banana and its workers in Central America had taken a hard hit due to the lingering effects of the Great Depression and the start of WWII.

[74] Ibid., 267. According to Vora, "Because the consumers and producers of the biological and affective labor commodified in commercial surrogacy are marked by differentials of race, class, and gender, Indian trasnational surrogacy reproduces a disparity between where this value is extracted and where it is invested."

Figure 2: Nutritional Facts. The UFCO sponsored film works to showcase the banana as essential to U.S. strength, health, and enjoyment. (*About Bananas,* 1935, Prelinger Archive)

World War II, the Banana, and War Production in Honduras

If the United States believed that energy was a source that could be transferred from the banana worker to U.S. consumers, the scramble to maintain that energy was vital during the devastation of WWII. Like *About Bananas*, *Emergency in Honduras (1945)* discusses the process of banana production. Like *About Bananas (1935) and Emergency in Honduras (1945)* there were many films produced for and sponsored by the United Fruit Company, which were used to educate the American public about the culture, traditions, and lifestyles of Latin Americans, as well as the process of banana cultivation and exportation in the countries in which UFCO had established itself. The film *Journey to Banana Land (1950),* a 20-minute educational

film in color and with sound produced by The William J. Ganz Company, and presented by the Institute of Visual Training in cooperation with UFCO, continues the narratives found in both *About Bananas* and *Emergency in Honduras*. *Journey to Banana Land*, like *About Bananas*, takes place once again in Guatemala some 15 years after *About Bananas* was first produced. The film once again opens up a discussion about UFCO's existence in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean and takes viewers on a tour through Guatemala City. The opening title card states, "Travel with us on the Great White Fleet and meet your neighbors in Middle America. See how they live and what they grow. Follow the banana right back to your own home." Common tropes of the primitive Indian, women as beasts of burden, and the simple farm worker continue to circulate in the film as it has in the films mentioned above. In other words, although *Emergency in Honduras* captures advances in technology with shots of trains and the railway system, modern Spanish architecture in Guatemala City, and the use of steamships in Guatemala's Caribbean ports, the people of Guatemala are still discussed as being "primitive," "old-fashioned," and "simple" --a narrative that never seems to change with time.

However, in this film sponsored by the U.S. government agency of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the production of bananas is narrated as coming to a standstill as Honduran banana workers' energies are switched from producing exportable fruit to producing exportable war material for the U.S. war effort. Promotion of the Good Neighbor Policy is carried throughout the film through its depictions of the United States as a patriarchal savior to downtrodden unemployed banana men. Discussions of U.S.-Central American unity are revealed through a united labor effort between the U.S. and Honduras to combat feared Axis power. At the start of the film the voice of an authoritative male narrator begins the discussion of Honduran war efforts with a question: "Had a banana lately?" This question reveals that the role

and importance of the banana in U.S. consumption has gone down. Further he states, "Probably not. Pretty tough. But it's been tougher on some other people, some people in one of the countries that used to be called banana republics. There's quite a story [sic] if you're not having bananas, and it's a war story." The mood of *Emergency in Honduras* is starkly different from the light-hearted happy tone of the film *About Bananas* produced just ten years prior. Americans' joyful consumption of the banana has been sacrificed for the assurance of peace and freedom for its nation and Latin American nations such as Honduras.

The Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA), originally known as the Office for Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations Between the American Republics (OCCCRBAR), was established by President Roosevelt in August of 1940 and headed by Nelson A. Rockefeller. It was later named Office of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA) in 1945.[75] The function of the agency was to distribute news in the form of film, advertising, and radio in Latin America in order to counter German and Italian fascist propaganda. According to José Piedra, "Its declared purpose was to 'show the truth about the American way' and to that effect hired Hollywood Studios to engender propaganda geared to fulfill the promise of the U.S. Good Neighbor Policy."[76] U.S. policy makers feared that the enhanced powers of Nazi Germany and the totalitarian propaganda of Germany and Italy would easily make its way into weak Latin American political structures.[77] In order for the U.S. to ensure an allied relationship with its neighbors to the south, it once again turned to film as a medium for communication.

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[75] Cramer, Gisela, and Ursula Prutsch. "Nelson A. Rockefeller's Office of Inter-American Affairs and the Quest for Pan-American Unity: An Introductory Essay." 15-51. Web. 15.
[76] Piedra, Jose. "JUMP CUTA REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY MEDIA." *"The Three Caballeros" by José Piedra*. Jump Cut, June 1994. Web. 06 Feb. 2015.
[77] Dispatch 84, JE/C, American consul in Tegucigalpa, to Secretary of State, 17 September 1914, USNA RG 59, 815.00/1547. It appears that the United States had always been fearful of a totalitarian takeover in Honduras. In a September of 1914 dispatch to the Secretary of State JE/C writes, "…on account of an enormous economic system its resources are insufficient for its needs, its treasury is often empty and it is

John Hay Whitney, Director of the Motion Picture Division of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs declared that "the menace of Nazism and its allied doctrines, its techniques and tactics, must be understood from Hudson Bay to Punto [sic] Arenas. Wherever the motion picture can do a basic job of spreading the gospel of the Americas' common stake in this struggle, there that job must and shall be done."[78] War-related issues caused interruptions in international trade and capital flow and Latin America's economies were left vulnerable. As Gisela Cramer and Ursula Prutsch state, "Economic disruptions were expected to produce political destabilization that, in turn, was feared to provide a fertile ground for Axis interference."[79] This fear is made obvious in several of the scenes captured in *Emergency in Honduras (1945)*. The narrator walks the audience through the process of banana production on the country's north coast. The narrator states, "Bananas have been proof of what Honduran soil can do. The whole north coast of Honduras was banana country, the greatest producing area in the world. It was an amazing machine for tropical agricultural production." Here the labor of Honduran banana workers is elided by suggesting that bananas are magically produced by the "soil" itself. The audience is then taken on a tour through a Honduran banana plantation and down one of its railroad lines. Men are filmed cutting down bananas and packing the bundles onto mules and taking them to be cleaned and packed onto railcars destined for the ship ports. The narrator goes on to say, "Up to the war, this fruit represented almost 70% of all Honduran exports. Thousands of men worked to produce the banana that moved out to the markets of the world, up to the Caribbean to New Orleans and New York, across the Atlantic to

constantly compelled to seek financial aid in the shape of temporary loans on order to tide over its pecuniary difficulties. And its principal reliance in such times of stress has been through foreign, principally German, commercial interests."

[78] Ibid., 1.

[79] Ibid., 15

England and Europe…That is, before the war…North coast Honduran economy stopped with a jolt. A few bananas still moved and the fruit companies did what they could to keep men on, but thousands had to be let out, and there were thousands more dependent on them." The narrator explains that the ships once used for exporting bananas were converted into war ships, causing exports of the fruit to decline, leaving many men unemployed. The narrator goes on to say, "Shifting economic gears takes time and organization. For a man to get broke and hungry takes no time at all. Or sometimes bitter. Bitterness can breed distorted thinking, and on some telephone poles swastikas began to appear. Something had to be done." The narrator implies that a lack of employment for Honduran banana workers lead some individuals to accept Nazi propaganda. At this point in the film men can be seen laying around lethargically, presumably bored from a lack of work. A young man sits in front of the doorway to his home; stick in hand, drawing the symbol of a swastika in the dirt as shown in figure 3. According to the film, U.S. fears of Axis interference were beginning to manifest themselves in the actions of unemployed banana workers. The solution according to the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs was to come up with an emergency plan of action, one that would use the agricultural skills of banana workers to cultivate and extract other natural resources such as mohagany, rubber, and palm nut oil to assist in the war effort. However, the exportation of the material would also require that the U.S. find solutions to Honduras's lack of modern infrastructure. The issue of a lack of modern infrastructure became a solution to the lack of employment as a result of a decline in banana cultivation and exportation. The U.S. government was all about moving resources in and out of Honduras fast, which required fixing and building roads that would connect Honduras's north coast to the capital of Tegucigalpa and on to the Pacific coast. The film's focus around the U.S government's creation of an emergency mission specifically aimed

at Honduran unemployment depicts the United States as a patriarchal figure willing to lend a helping hand to its pre-modern neighbor to the south. The United States' intervention in the economic struggles of Honduras, and the United States "willingness" to bring its good neighbor into modernity through the development of Honduran infrastructure, manages to send a particular message to U.S. citizens, a message that characterizes the U.S. as a First World, autonomous, competent, civilized nation working to "help" its Third World, dependent, pre-modern neighbor in a time of need, although it is apparent that the U.S. was just as dependent on Honduras for the extraction of its natural resources for use toward the war effort as Honduras was on the U.S. for economic stability.

"Men's Work" and Women's Labor

In both *About Bananas* and *Emergency in Honduras* the work of men, both Honduran and American, is showcased throughout the length of each film. In *About Bananas* agricultural work is depicted as a masculinized type of labor as men can be seen felling trees, cutting down banana bunches with machetes, loading bananas onto trains, and stacking banana bunches on American fruit steamers. In the film *Emergency in Honduras,* the building of infrastructure such as roads and bridges, the digging of ditches, the construction of camp housing, and the chiseling of stone, is considered to be "men's work."[80] However, in each film women can be seen providing labor and assisting in the daily reproduction of male banana workers. In *Emergency in Honduras* women are described as assisting in the management and maintenance of camp life.[81] Although women are represented as being the organizers of camp life, their labor is not explicitly viewed as productive and/or contributing to U.S. capitalist accumulation. Rather, their labor is

[80] The narrator in Emergency in Honduras states that the building of infrastructure on the northern coast of Honduras, specifically the building of a road around Lake Yojoa which then connected to a road that lead to the Pacific Ocean, was considered to be "men's work."

[81] The narrator states, "as the men hacked out the road, the women moved in and organized camp life."

naturalized and thus exempted from being viewed as productive work in which a living wage is deserved and provided. Women, both mestizo and black, can be seen prepping food, cooking meals, washing laundry and dishes by hand, gathering pots of water, and selling treats such as shaved ice for men and boys during a Sunday "market day." Although the work done by these women on and around the work camps are naturalized as domestic and therefore unproductive

Figure 3: Unemployed Workers. The U.S. government sponsored film works to portray unemployed Honduran banana workers as defeated and susceptible to sympathizing with Axis powers and propaganda. (*Emergency in Honduras*, 1945, Prelinger Archives)

labor, it is the, at times, unpaid domestic labor of these women that allows for and is the pillar of capitalist accumulation.[82] According to Maria Mies, the exploitation of women's labor is made possible through the contradictory process of capitalist patriarchy. Mies states, "in the course of the last four to five centuries women, nature and colonies were externalized, declared to be outside civilized society, pushed down, and thus made invisible as the under-water part of an iceberg is invisible, yet constitute the base of the whole."[83] In this way, and as Mies points out in her work, colonization, and might I add imperialism, do not affect men and women in the same way.

Although *About Bananas* and *Emergency in Honduras* largely focused on male laborers and the work they did for U.S. fruit companies and the U.S. government, the women who appear in each film, both American and Central American, are not only used to reinforce ideologies around the nuclear family, but also as juxtapositions to one another in discourses of modernity and primitivism as well as leisure and work, with white American women being depicted as the more modern and productive counterpart. According to Mies, "…we cannot understand the modern developments, including our present problems, unless we include all those who were 'defined into nature' by the modern capitalist patriarchs: Mother Earth, women, and colonies."[84] "The laundry is a gift from nature," is a statement made by the narrator in *Emergency in Honduras* while women wash clothes in the river by hand. This statement implies that laundry is a naturalized type of labor within sexual divisions of labor. Further Mies writes, "Thus, the

[82] In the forward of Maria Mies book, Silvia Federici writes, "More important, combining the theories produced the Wages for Housework movement, especially its identification of women's unpaid domestic labour as the pillar of capitalist accumulation, with the third-worldist analysis of peasant economies and colonization, the book develops a theoretical framework that enables us to think together different forms of exploitation and social movements…" (x).
[83] Mies, 77.
[84] Ibid.,, 75.

progress of European Big Men is based on the subordination and exploitation of their own women, on the exploitation and killing of Nature, on the exploitation and subordination of other peoples and their lands."[85] Although, as Mies points out, women were externalized and "declared to be outside civilized society,"[86] European notions of 'progress' and modernity worked to humanize white women and their labor while simultaneously dehumanizing women of color and marking their labor as unproductive through racialized and gendered discourses of family and work. This can be analyzed in the film *About Bananas* through the examination of white women as consumers. The white American women that appear in the film as mothers and housewives caring for their children, fixing bowls of bananas and milk (per doctor's orders), are viewed as investing in the health of their children, and quite literally, the future of the United States. *About Bananas* makes it very clear that the housewife as a consumer was responsible for the health of the nuclear family. In fact, as Mies points out, "women, not men, are the optimal labour force for the capitalist accumulation process on a world scale."[87] Women, as the optimal labor force, are further exploited through both international and sexual divisions of labor and what Mies refers to as "housewifization." These divisions of labor are made between men and women, with "men defined as 'free-wage' labourers, women as non-free housewives – [as well as] a division between producers and consumers."[88] However, the division between producers and consumers also creates a division between women, white women in the global North and women of color in the global South, where women in the colonies are producers of the commodities that women in

[85] Ibid., 76. Here I believe that Mies , in her discussion of European Big men, is referring to those men with authority and power such as those who carried out the work of imperialism as conquerors, colonizers, and colonists in the new world.
[86] Ibid., 77.
[87] Ibid., 116.
[88] Ibid., 116.

the West consume. As Mies states, "poor Third World women produce not what they need, but what others *can buy.*"[89]

Even so, strategies of international divisions of labor and housewifization also work to define Third World women, not as workers, but as housewives by universalizing the housewife ideology.[90] Yet, through examinations of women's labor in the films *About Bananas* and *Emergency in Honduras* it becomes clear that the universalizing of the housewife ideology reveals major discrepancies between the housewife in the West and the housewife in the global South along race and class lines. Whereas the white middle-class Western consumer housewife is allowed the privilege of working within the home as well as enjoying leisure activities, housewives of color in the global south must work inside and outside of the home alongside their husbands to maintain the family. As Mies writes, "Whereas in Europe and the USA many workers can afford to feed a 'non-working' housewife (due to exploitation of the colonies), the vast masses of Third World men will never be in a position to have a 'non-working' housewife at home."[91] The neocolonial exploitation of Honduras and other Central American countries by American fruit companies allowed for the wives of white American men to remain in the home, in turn, marking the white Western model of the nuclear family as both modern and progressive, while simultaneously marking women and households in the global South that did not follow Western ideas of family and labor as primitive and regressive. Imperial nations such as the United States used capitalist divisions of labor to bring the labor power of those under control,

[89] Ibid., 118.
[90] Mies argues, "By universalizing the housewife ideology and the model of the nuclear family as signs of progress, it is also possible to define work women do… as *supplementary work*, her income as *supplementary income"* (118).
[91] Ibid., 119.

i.e. Hondurans, under the command of capital and a white supremacist nation.[92] Dichotomies of civilized/uncivilized, modern/pre-modern, strong/weak, us/them, competent/incompetent continue to play out throughout both *About Bananas (1935)* and *Emergency in Honduras (1945)* through the film's corporeal surveillance and dissection of the Central American laborer's body.

Cinematic Surveillance: Corporeal Dissections of Labor and Leisure

It is no secret that the idle hands of Honduran banana men struck fear in the U.S. government as I have described with the examples taken from *Emergency in Honduras*. In fact, corporeal surveillance is a theme found throughout both films. The focus on microprocedures of production involving workers' hands is evident in the camera's focus on this isolated part of the body. The camera's focus on and dissection of particular parts of banana workers' bodies creates racial, ethnic, and class divisions between the laborer (Guatemalan, Honduran, and West Indian banana men and women) being filmed and the white American consumer watching the film. Hands have symbolized both the weakness and strength of workers' bodies. Industrial films such as the 1936 General Motors film *Master Hands* showcase the power of and reliance on workers' hands for industrial production. In *About Bananas* the focus on the banana worker's hands can be examined as UFCO's promotion of U.S. imperialism and Central American contribution to the American agroindustry. A celebratory educational documentary short, *About Bananas* was produced by UFCO with significant timing. According to Max Fraser, "By 1936 the country had already suffered through the worst years of the Great Depression…New Deal relief and public spending programs had managed to reverse temporarily the economic free fall of the early

[92] In conversation with Martha Mamozai's study of German colonialisms impact on women both in Germany and in Africa, Mies writes, "Mamozai's study shows that colonization did not affect men and women in the same way, but used the particular capitalist sexual division of labour to bring the labour power of Africans under the command of capital and the White Man" (97).

1930s…"[93] American companies such as United Fruit were determined to find ways to appeal to the consumer and take advantage of the brief economic turnaround. Changes in regard to representations of labor during the 1930s reflected a shift in American popular culture. There was a movement away from nineteenth century cultural values placed on work, industriousness, and production to a new "culture of abundance."[94] According to Fraser, "It was at this moment… that American popular culture began to identify less with representations of work and workers and more with those of the characteristically modern mass-consumer."[95] This shift in representations of labor and leisure are evident in the examples provided earlier involving the filming of Americans participating in leisure athletic activities at the end of the film *About Bananas*. Even so, the act of filming banana workers, more specifically banana workers' hands, as a part of the banana production process, reveals cinematically how Central American banana workers were imagined socially by UFCO and the American consumer. The shots taken of workers hands is part of an imperial gaze that works to reinforce divisions of labor whereby Hondurans are constituted as workers and American viewers as consumers.

UFCOs *About Bananas* provides a lens to examine how U.S. hegemonic ideologies of imperialism were reflected in film through the dissection of Central American bananas workers' bodies as well as dominant ideologies of work and leisure and the types of bodies that were categorized as fitting under these activities. Though the U.S. had reached machine-age modernity by the mid-1930s, regions of the world that held U.S. industrial interest in, such as Central America, had not. Throughout the first half of the film, male banana workers can be seen planting the banana root, cutting bunches of bananas down, securing the bunches to the backs of

[93] Fraser, Max. "Hands off the Machine: Workers' Hands and Revolutionary Symbolism in the Visual Culture of 1930s America." *American Art* 27.2 (2013): 94-117. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 26 Oct. 2014. (96)
[94] Ibid., 97.
[95] Ibid., 97.

trained mules, cleaning banana bunches and loading the bunches on train cars to be sent to the port, and securing and organizing the bunches onto UFCO ships of the Great White Fleet. The procedures filmed at the port of the organized process of UFCO banana workers loading banana bunches onto ships looks extremely mechanistic, as if the workers are parts to a machine that make up an industrial assembly line. At one point in the film a title card reads, "Busy pick-up engines quickly assemble train loads of bananas" and it becomes difficult to distinguish whether these "pick-up engines" are the trains or actual banana workers.[96] The film production of *About Bananas*, (camera focus, angles, and lighting), creates a barrier between the banana worker and the American consumer watching the film. This can be examined through the blurring of workers' faces and the camera's strategic focus on the backs of banana workers as well as their hands. Although there are moments when workers are collectively made to look like robotic parts of an industrial machine, the times where the camera focuses on the workers' hands creates a narrative that posits the labor of banana workers as natural and the banana workers' body as an extension of the banana or the earth itself. The visual dissection of the workers' body is representative of the labor power that is abstracted from the worker. In this sense, it is clear that the U.S. views Central America as being only as good as its labor source and exports allow. In *About Bananas* there is no personalizing view of workers' faces; instead the film focuses on the close ups of banana worker's hands. In analyzing this film, as a cultural text, I have located many scenes that can be examined for the effective emotional disconnect created between white U.S. audiences and racialized Central American banana workers on screen. Men are filmed felling trees with their backs toward the camera. Workers are filmed planting banana roots while their faces are hidden away by hats or sometimes cast away by dark shadows due to insufficient

[96] *About Bananas* (1935).

camera lighting. Workers faces are sometimes seen through long shots, but even then, the scenes are set up to direct the audiences' attention to the process of agribusiness rather than creating a connection between Americans and Central American laborers. By contrast, even the bananas have "eyes" and the animated cartoon characters presented throughout the film have faces. The anthropomorphic characteristics given to the banana, such as the description of the banana root having eyes, or later with the animated creation of Miss Chiquita banana in 1944, work to humanize the fruit while simultaneously dehumanizing banana workers. This is demonstrated in figure 4 where a banana worker's fingers can be seen pointing to the "eyes" of the banana root, planting the root into the ground, and peeling back a nine-month old banana stalk. Through film techniques, such as the close-up, meaning is made. According to Allan Rowe, "the close-up has a particular place in the development of film."[97] It is usually a place where the audience becomes intimately connected to a leading character through close-ups of the character's face. This film technique enables the audience to read the thoughts and feelings of the character. However, how are close-ups of other body parts such as a character's hands read differently? When body parts are dissected through the use of the close-up, such as workers' hands in *About Bananas*, do they then become props? According to Rowe, props are also used to signify meaning in film. He states, "while all scenes are constructed around a number of props-to make the sequence 'look right'-by the use of close-up, and dialogue, our attention can be drawn to particular objects. This in itself suggests the significance of particular objects-we know that such objects will be of importance in the narrative."[98] If we examine this in terms of the story being told in *About Bananas*, then the workers' hands can be analyzed as props that are important to the film's

[97] Rowe, Allan. "Film Form and Narrative." *An Introduction to Film Studies*. Ed. Jill Nelmes. London: Routledge, 1999. 88-120. Print.
[98] Ibid., 97.

meaning making around colonialism, agribusiness, and industrialization. The seemingly disembodied hand of Central American workers serves the health and wellbeing of U.S. fruit companies as well as U.S. citizens.

The corporeal dissection of workers' bodies has been documented extensively through visual culture. Whether made to showcase American industriousness to the world or educate the American public on the systems of production of different American industries, visual culture has served as a tool of communication in socially constructing meanings of labor. As stated previously in this chapter, the corporeal dissection of the laborer works to mechanize rather than humanize the bodies at work, and as I will discuss, the U.S. had a particular obsession with workers' hands. The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces the usage of the word *hand* to denote a human being beginning in the mid-1600s. In the centuries that followed, the phrase "hired hand" would become a common colloquialism heard about the workplace.[99] According to Fraser, "Man's technological vision had given birth to machinofacture, but in the process machinofacture had given birth to a new vision of man…In the age of the human motor, workers were quite literally men paid to think not with their heads but with their hands."[100] The industrial separation between brain work and manual labor was a strategy used to ensure the productivity of the routinized and mechanized assembly line invented by the Ford industrial model. However, the industrial separation of high skilled and low skilled labor would be used to inscribe particular raced, classed, and gendered ideologies onto workers' bodies in all divisions of industrial labor, one being agriculture. Raced, classed, and gendered ideologies of the agricultural worker's body manifested themselves in narratives about the types of bodies suitable for the backbreaking grittiness of agricultural labor. Historically, these bodies belonged

[99] Fraser, 102.
[100] Ibid., 103.

Figure 4: Close-up on Hands. The camera takes close-up shots of workers' hands in the planting and cultivation of the banana. The workers' faces are strategically left out of these shots. (*About Bananas*, 1935, Prelinger Archives)

to people of color and discussions of nature, skill, temperament, race, and culture would be used to justify the exploitation of agricultural workers in and outside of the U.S.[101]

[101] Mize, Ronald L. "Power (in)-Action: State and Agribusiness in the Making of the Bracero Total Institution." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 50 (2006): 76-119. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web. 24 Jan. 2015. The U.S. government's creation of the Bracero Program is an example of U.S. labor exploitation within the agricultural industry. The economic and social turmoil that took place in between the period of the Great Depression and World War II forced the United States to seek a cheap labor force to meet its agroindustrial demands. The term *Bracero* can loosely be translated in English as "one who works with his arms" or in other translations "strong arms." The translation of the term *Bracero* literally points to the

The Disappearance of West Indian Migrant Labor

In the article "Forgotten Workers," Elisavinda Echeverri-Gent writes, "The Central America of books, and indeed our imaginations, does not have very many black actors. That is not because blacks have not been present in the unfolding of Central American history. It is because their participation has been selectively ignored."[102] Further she writes, "Nowhere is this tendency more glaring than in the literature on labor history-especially that concerned with the important banana exporting sector."[103] Both *About Bananas* and *Emergency in Honduras* create particular narratives about race and gendered labor. The narrative constructed by both films would have one believe that workers hired by American fruit companies and the U.S. government were largely Honduran and Guatemalan, racialized as mestizo, and native to the countries in which they worked. However, a large percentage of United Fruit Company's labor force was Black and British West Indian. Black West Indian labor was vital to the industrialization of Central American countries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Difficult economic conditions in the West Indies contributed to tens of thousands of Jamaicans seeking employment off the island. [104] The West Indian migrant laborer was not the only Black population that existed in Central America. According to Frederick Douglas Opie, over 1,100 people of African descent lived in the capital of Guatemala in the 1590s. In fact, populations of mulattoes of both Indian and African descent were found in regions all over

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corporeal dissection of Mexican agricultural workers' bodies and the importance that was given to the workers' arms and hands to the process of agricultural production and U.S. economic growth and stability.

[102] Echeverri-Gent, Elisavinda. "Forgotten Workers: British West Indians and the Early Days of the Banana Industry in Costa Rica and Honduras." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 24.2 (1992): 275-308. *Cambridge Journals Online*. Web. Mar. 2014. (275).

[103] Ibid., 276.

[104] According to Echeverri-Gent, Jamaica suffered from a major agricultural crisis beginning in the mid-1860s. She writes that between "1881 and 1891 43,000 Jamaicans left the island." 179.

Guatemala.[105] The same can be said for Honduras where the first sizeable cargo of 1,000 to 1,500 enslaved Africans were brought to the then Spanish colony in the 1540s to mine gold.[106] In addition, Afro-Indigenous groups such as the Garífuna had existed in the Caribbean coasts of Central America since the 1790s in what are now Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.[107] An established Honduran population of West Indian descent had also resided in the Bay Islands archipelago of Honduras since the 1830s. Guatemala and Honduras, with the assistance of American fruit companies, began to recruit both Black American and Black West Indian migrant labor to work on railroad construction in the late nineteenth century. According to Opie, "from 1894 to1904 there were probably between 2,000 and 2,500 Black American immigrants working in Guatemala. The first boatload of West Indian workers (200 of them) did not arrive until 1893."[108] In Honduras the number of West Indian consistently ranged between 5,000 and 10,000 people from the late nineteenth through the mid twentieth centuries, where migrants sought work in the railroad and banana industries. Why then are Black migrant laborers disappeared from the films *About Bananas* and *Emergency in Honduras*? The answer may have to do with the anti-black immigration laws and policies passed in both Guatemala and Honduras during this time period.

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[105] Opie, Frederick Douglass. *Black Labor Migration in Caribbean Guatemala, 1882-1923*. Gainesville: U of Florida, 2009. Print. 9.

[106] Chambers, Glenn Anthony. *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration to Honduras, 1890-1940.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2010. Print. 4.

[107] According to Chambers, "The aforementioned Garifuna represented the most significant ethnic group because of their unique racial and cultural heritage. Their origins stem from miscegenation between captive African shipwrecked on the island of St. Vincent in the seventeenth century and the indigenous Carib Indian population that embraced them…This alliance manifested itself in the establishment of Maroon communities in St. Vincent, which disrupted the colonization efforts of French and later British for almost a century." (10)

[108] Opie writes that the Garifuna showed little interest in wage-labor jobs because they operated well-established subsistence economies. Guatemalans refused to work on the Caribbean coast because of fear of malaria (14-17).

In Honduras, Black West Indian labor was preferred over mestizo or Garifuna labor by American fruit companies. As explained by Chambers, "North Americans preferred West Indian laborers because they spoke English and many had prior experience in the banana industry in the Caribbean."[109] Because of their experience in the banana industry in places such as Jamaica, Costa Rica, and Panama, many West Indians were employed work in "higher-skilled" as overseers and foremen, relegating Hondurans and other Central American workers to lower-paying, lower-skilled positions. This discrepancy in waged-labor and employment opportunity led to a large amount of tension between West Indian migrant laborers and their mestizo counterparts in Guatemala and Honduras. According to historian Dario A. Euraque, "[t]he laboring peoples on the Caribbean coast consisted not of proletarianized Indians but mostly of mixed-race migrants from Honduras's interior and of peoples of predominantly African descent…these peoples consisted of West Indian blacks imported by the banana companies from the English-speaking Caribbean and of descendants of the Garifuna…"[110] By the 1920s, as Euraque points out, Honduran intellectuals viewed the blackness of this laboring population on the Caribbean coast as a threat to the "mestizo" nation. In the context of Guatemala, where *About Bananas* was filmed, Douglas W. Kraft states "by 1914, Guatemalan jealousies erupted into racial violence which, throughout the next decade, came to be supplanted by systematic harassment, demonization, and reprisals against the West Indian population."[111] In 1921, the Guatemalan government instituted Presidential Decree Number 875 increasing an immigration deposit fee of USD$50.00, first implemented in 1914, to USD$200.00 in order to permanently

[109] Chambers, 6.
[110] Euraque, Dario A. "The Threat of Blackness to the Mestizo Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Honduran Banana Economy, 1920s and 1930s." Ed. Mark Moberg. *Banana Wars: Power, Production, and History in the Americas*. Ed. Steve Striffler. Durham: Duke UP, 2003. Print. 231.
[111] Kraft, Douglas W. *Making West Indians Unwelcome: Bananas, Race & the Immigrant Question in Izabal, Guatemala, 1900-1929*. Diss. U of Miami, 2006. Print.

curtail Black immigration.[112] Similar anti-black immigration laws were passed in Honduras during this time as well. Laws such as the 1906 Police Law, which was not originally aimed at West Indians but was eventually used to mark Black West Indians as criminal, made it legal to arrest and fine West Indians who participated in gambling, those suspected of public intoxication, or public scandal. Such acts were determined by the Honduran government as conduct that would lead to the decline of Honduran society, and many West Indian immigrants were often deported if accused. Immigration laws of 1929 and 1934 prohibited Black immigration to Honduras causing the West Indian population to decline significantly.[113] The above factors may explain the reason for a lack of Black presence within both *About Bananas* and *Emergency in Honduras.*

Not only are the experiences of Black West Indian migrant laborers ignored in historical conversations about Central American labor history, but when discussed they largely focus on sites and sectors where male migrants were concentrated. As a result, historical scholarship has largely ignored the important roles that female Black West Indian migrant laborers played in sustaining the growth and success of U.S. owned agribusiness in Central America. The demographics of this migrant group varied. Some West Indian women accompanied their spouses to Central America to provide reproductive and affective labor. Others traveled with a companion or family member(s) to begin a new life abroad. Still others were women of various ages who traveled by themselves with the hopes of making a living for themselves and/or the family they left behind on the island.

[112] Ibid., 203.
[113] Chambers, 8.

CHAPTER TWO

Onboard the Great White Fleet: Racialized and Gendered Representations of Labor and Leisure in American Fruit Company Tourism

> It is a peculiar and mysterious trait of a considerable portion of the people of the United States that they know little and seem to care little about the national neighbors to the tropical south.
>
> - Frederick Upham Adams, *Conquest Of The Tropics*, 1914

> Here at once is apparent a happy distinction which Jamaica can claim over many adjacent territories. She has good roads. She is a very old established country, for she began making sugar even before Havana was founded, and you will see as your car drops down the hill presently, the vestiges of old stone aqueducts which the early Spanish planters built to irrigate their fields.
>
> - William McFee, *The Gates of the Caribbean*, 1922

The book, *Conquest Of The Tropics: The Story of the Creative Enterprise Conducted by the United Fruit Company*, begins with a publisher's note that reads, "This book is the first of a series planned to describe certain big business whose histories and operations concern and should interest the public…It is planned as an open and above-board presentation frankly putting forth the interesting points of large business enterprises."[114]The intentions of the United Fruit Company can be discerned from this quote. It worked to represent its enterprise as forthcoming and open to its North American consumers. From the language, one can assume that UFCO believed that by "opening" the company up to its consumers and making them feel a part of the business that the sale and consumption of its products and services would soar. Published in 1914, the book is described on its title page as being Vol. 1 of a series entitled *Romance of Big Business*. *Conquest Of The Tropics* details the history of the United Fruit Company and its successful enterprises throughout what Frederick Upham Adams refers to as the "American

[114] Adams, Frederick Upham. *Conquest of the Tropics; the Story of the Creative Enterprises Conducted by the United Fruit Company*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, 1914. Print.

Tropics" at the turn of the twentieth century. While the book can be presented as a historical artifact that introduces the reader to the history of United Fruit Company's big business enterprise in the global south, it also functions as a travelogue recording the glorified colonial experiences of the United Fruit Company in the circum-Caribbean. In fact, Adams writes, "The great nations of history are those which encouraged their citizens to go out into the world and develop it commercially and industrially."[115] According to Adams and the United Fruit Company, nations such as Spain and Great Britain were "great" because of "merchants who followed fast on the heels of her military adventurers" and in the case of Great Britain, whose "sons have been trained for centuries to know and act on the truth that there are no geographical boundaries and no national limitations to the enterprise of a British subject."[116] In the eyes of United Fruit Company officials the circum-Caribbean was an accessible space for industrialization and economic gain.[117] The Caribbean, Central America, and South America became the agricultural playground of the United States and big business.

Not only was the Caribbean, Central America, and the north coast of South America viewed as regions where the United Fruit Company should establish itself and "draw supplies of indigenous products," but these regions were also filled with the labor force needed to ensure the company's global influence and capital accumulation. According to Adams, "If we include the tropics of the New World…we have an area of approximately 6,361,000 square miles, and with a

[115] Ibid., 3.
[116] Ibid., 4.
[117] Those brave enough to venture into the "wilderness" of Central and South America were looked upon as pioneers. In chapter one of *Conquest Of The Tropics, Our Neglected Neighbors,* Adams writes, "Our school-books and our histories dwell with pride on the records of the pioneers who braved the wilderness and paved the way of our empire from the Atlantic to the pacific" (10).

total population of about 57,000,000 people, most of whom are Indians and negroes." [118] Many of those people would become the recruited labor force on American fruit company plantations. As the title of Adams' book suggests, The United States took full commercial and financial advantage in the industrialization of the circum-Caribbean, conquering land and people whom UFCO thought to be frozen in time and in need of modernization. The Age of Invention (1870-1900) facilitated in the growth of industrialization as well as the movement of migrant labor in the region of the Caribbean. During these thirty years a number of mechanical and electrical products and tools were invented including but not limited to the telephone, the typewriter, the wireless telegraph, the automobile, the electric light, the trolley car, elevated and underground railroads, and the steel-constructed building.[119] However, the mechanical marvel that revolutionized ocean travel and assisted in the global reach of UFCO and other American fruit companies, the steamship, had been invented decades before at the turn of the nineteenth century. The *Great Western,* built in Bristol, UK and designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was the first steam-powered ship to cross the Atlantic in 1845.[120] By the 1870s, travel aboard a steamship from England to New York took less than a week, a shift from the 14-16 day travel it took just thirty years prior.

The United Fruit Company as well as other American fruit companies not only utilized steamships to export fruit from the Caribbean, Central and South America to the U.S. more rapidly, but also as a vessel for plantation tourism. Like sociologist Mimi Sheller, who conducts research on the mobilities of the Caribbean, I am interested in the concept of travel, particularly

[118] Ibid., 6. *Adams* includes the countries of Central America, and the West Indies, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, and the British, Dutch, and French Guianas in his description of tropics of the New World.
[119] Ibid., 13-14.
[120] *The Open Door Web Site: History: The Industrial Revolution: Steamships Continued*. Web. 11 Sept. 2015.

its place in the study of gendered labor and migration. In this chapter I extend my critical examination of neocolonial voyeurism and my analysis of raced and gendered divisions of labor and leisure from chapter one. I use Marcus Rediker's research on the history of the slave ship to argue that both the slave ship and the steamship can be examined as vessels which have contained life, death, violence, pleasure, labor, and leisure. How might Rediker's historicization of the slave ship and its central role in the transatlantic slave trade be used to examine the cruise ship's inherited legacy from the slave ship as a vessel that contains anti-black violence, labor exploitation, imperialism, and globalization? In the ship's many functionalities, both social and structural, how has it aided in the consumption of the Caribbean and its people? I am specifically interested in the United Fruit and Standard Fruit and Steamship Company cruise ship lines, which sailed affluent white Americans to established banana towns of the Caribbean and Central and South America beginning in the early twentieth century. I analyze several visual texts both archival and cinematic, including drawings taken from the pages of the United Fruit Company published book *Cruises O'er the Golden Caribbean* and the 1943 blockbuster musical *The Gang's All Here.* Whereas in the first chapter I argue that the two films *About Bananas (1935)* and *Emergency in Honduras (1945)* allowed for a type of American neocolonial voyeurism from afar, in this chapter I argue that the development of fruit company cruise ship lines, such as UFCOs the Great White Fleet, allowed for affluent white Americans to physically travel, consume, and fetishize the people and lands of banana towns in the circum-Caribbean that they read about and watched on film.

In figure 5 an eye-catching passage in a 1916 advertisement for the United Fruit Company's steamship service and luxury cruise line, The Great White Fleet, reads: "…every voyage, every port, every route of the Great White Fleet through the Golden Caribbean has the

romance of buried treasure, pirate ships, and deeds of adventure-centuries ago."[121] In the upper right corner of the UFCO advertisement three pirates sift through a treasure chest filled with gold. The Caribbean had been a haven for pirates during the Golden Age of Piracy which lasted from 1650-1730. During this time, pirates in the Caribbean pillaged Spanish and British colonies as well as ships for goods being exported to Europe. Piracy flourished in the Caribbean due to multiple ports established by pirates in Jamaica, Haiti, and the Bahamas. Many pirates were sanctioned as mercenaries by colonial governments to aid in the ventures of imperialism. In his discussion of maritime law during the 'Golden Age' of Caribbean and Atlantic piracy Roger Luckhurst writes, "At the time nations at war were able to declare captains of ships 'privateers.' These captains had an official 'letter of marque' that allowed them to attack any enemy ship and take their goods, provided they gave a cut of the booty to their own government."[122] Once viewed as a dangerous menace (stealing from the upper-class), tales of piracy became a source of adventure. Pirates were viewed as an inspiration for rebellious fun, hence their inclusion in the ads for the United Fruit Company's Great White Fleet cruise ship line. In the upper left corner of the advertisement mountains and typical Caribbean landscape are painted in the background. At the center of the advertisement a white middle-to-upper class woman in a long white dress lounges in a wooden chair on the deck of the Great White Fleet cruise ship. With an open book in her lap she holds a young boy, presumably her son, standing at her side. Both she and the boy stare off into the distance as a white ship captain, dressed in all white, points them to the sight of land ahead. In a mark of nationalism, the advertisement makes sure to point out that passengers on board the Great White Fleet are "sailing under the American flag." Passengers' access to the

[121] "United Fruit Company." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, Web. 11 Sept. 2015.
[122] Luckhurst, Roger. "Culture - The Timeless Allure of Pirates." *BBC*, BBC, 21 June 2017, www.bbc.com/culture/story/20170621-the-timeless-allure-of-pirates.

Caribbean is intricately tied to United States imperialism. During the early twentieth century, the Great White Fleet steamship line both provided luxury cruises for wealthy white North American tourists seeking adventure and relaxation in the tropics while at the same time transporting Black labor across the Caribbean to various fruit plantations, in addition to shipping various fruit commodities, like the banana, to the United States. "The Great White Fleet" was originally a popular nickname given to a fleet of sixteen battleships that sailed around the globe from 1907-1909 while President Theodore Roosevelt was in office. According to the Theodore Roosevelt Center, "Called the Great White Fleet because the ships were painted white instead of modern gray, the fleet covered 43,000 miles and made twenty port calls on six different continents…The Great White Fleet was an important show of America's naval power to the rest of the world."[123] A few of the steamship were purchased in 1909 by the United Fruit Company for transporting both fruit and passengers. The ships are said to have been painted white in order to reflect the sun in order to keep the temperature of the bananas below deck lower. However, the ships were also refrigerated helping to minimize spoilage of fruit onboard. In any case, the ships were literal vessels for imperialism both as navy ships and as cruise ships. Passengers onboard the ship (largely white), were encouraged to wear white as opposed to wearing the bright colors often seen being worn by Caribbean peoples.[124] According to Catherine Cocks in her book *Tropical Whites*, "Advertisements and illustrations for travel articles about the tropics regularly placed white-clad tourists in colorful market scenes," that thereby highlight their whiteness.[125] Further

[123] "Great White Fleet." *TR Center - Great White Fleet*. Dickinson State University, Web. 31 July 2017.
[124] For more on the preferred dress of patrons onboard the Great White Fleet refer to Cocks, Catherine. *Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South in the Americas*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 2013. Print, and More, Lindsey. "Washington State University." *Fall 2014 Blood for Bananas United Fruits Central American Empire Comments*. 30 Aug. 2014. Web. 31 July 2017.
[125] Cocks, Catherine. *Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South in the Americas*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 2013. Print.

she writes, "Donning sheer, snowy garments, northerners opened themselves to summer, the season when—and in the case of travel southward, the place where—nature's powers reached their Zenith and the virtuous necessity for human labor its nadir."[126] Cocks examines the American history of the development of the global tourist south, or what she refers to as "southland." *Tropical Whites* traces shifts in ideologies of the tropics as the "white man's grave" in 1880 to having "the most ideal winter resorts" by 1940.[127] Such a shift in the way North Americans viewed the

[126] Ibid., 1-2.
[127] Ibid., 2. According to Cocks, this shift in beliefs required a rearticulation of the relationship between the environment and human bodies, "…a rearticulation that diminished nature's power to shape humanity and enhanced humanity's power to manage nature for its own benefit."

Figure 5: "United Fruit Ad 1916" by Unknown - Scribner's Magazine 1916.

Caribbean required a change in the way whites conceived of human variation, particularly racial and sexual distinctions. The whiteness of the ship as well as the people onboard symbolized the imperial powers that the United States had over the Caribbean and Latin America.

Race and Tourism in the Caribbean

The allure of the cruise ship line is not surprising considering the large economic, social, and political impact that the United Fruit Company had in not only the circum-Caribbean but throughout the hemisphere during the twentieth century. A pioneer of capitalist globalization, its steamship service shortened the length of time required for fruit exportation and leisurely travel to and from the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States. However, amid the marvel of multiple steamship lines there was something hidden, the labor of thousands of Black men and women who migrated throughout the circum- Caribbean for work on and around American fruit company plantations. Scholarship which makes reference to racial accommodations on board steamships such as the Great White Fleet are limited. However, in the information that I have gathered it seems that to see a black person on board a steamship with white patrons who was neither a migrant worker or ship attendant was rare. The historic cruise ship, the Titanic, is one example of this. Out of the 2, 208 passengers recorded aboard the ship the night it sank, there was only one black man present. The man's name was Joseph Laroche. He was a Haitian born engineer traveling with his wife and two daughters from France to Haiti on board the Titanic. Laroche left France because of the racial discrimination he faced as a black engineer. He and his family boarded the Titanic in hopes that once in Haiti he would be surrounded with more work opportunities. In an article written for *The Root,* Henry Louis Gates Jr. writes, "'It is strange that nowhere in the copious 1912 press descriptions of the ship and the interviews with the survivors was the presence of a black family among the passengers ever mentioned," especially given "the

keenness of the passengers and crew to take pot shots at other ethnic groups…'"[128] Laroche's wife and two daughters survived but Joseph did not.

The racialized and gendered labor of Afro-Caribbean migrants supported white North American leisure and relaxation in the region, and it also laid the economic foundation upon which American fruit companies as multinational corporations were built. However, as I discuss in this chapter, the racialization, sexualization, and festishization of Afro-Caribbeans by white pleasure-seeking tourists simultaneously worked to objectify the Black body for tourist's entertainment while also relegating Black labor to a peripheral view. For many white tourists, the Caribbean was simultaneously the devil's playground and paradise. In an 1880 report of his tour of inspection in the British West Indies, climatologist James Froude writes, "these contented peasants 'have no aspirations to make them restless,' and 'if happiness is the be all and end all of life,' then they are 'the supremest specimen of present humanity.'"[129] Further, as Cocks makes clear, "the pessimistic climatic determinism of the nineteenth century cast the tropics and their residents as necessarily primitive and lacking the capacity to become civilized."[130] The Caribbean, or tropics as white tourists called it, was a region of relaxation, a getaway from the temperate weather to the north. It was also a region where Black men and women's productive and reproductive labor was exploited and made invisible in white tourists' search for entertainment and pleasure.

The dichotomous ideologies of civilization and primitivism found in the industrial films *About Bananas (1935)* and *Emergency in Honduras (1945)* are also found in the tourist industry's portrayal of the Caribbean at the turn of the twentieth century. As Cock's states, "[the]

[128] Gates Jr., Henry Louis. "Was a Black Man on the Titanic?" *The Root*, Www.theroot.com, 2 Dec. 2013, www.theroot.com/was-a-black-man-on-the-titanic-1790899141.
[129] Cocks, 20.
[130] Ibid., 21.

portrayal of the contest between temperate civilization and tropical backwardness sums up the complex ideas about the relationships among nature, race, and sexuality…" Further she writes, "Rather than imperil civilization by eroding the virtue of the civilized, the tourist industry promised that the warm places of the world would be a well-deserved reward…a reward to civilization's continuance."[131] Tourism and colonization of the Caribbean were akin to one another, and at the turn of the twentieth century whites were traveling to the Caribbean for both personal and economic well-being. Among other things, ideas about climate and environment along with white supremacy were used in racializing people of the global south as dark-skinned, lazy, emotional, hot-blooded, and hypersexual.[132] These were very distinct characterizations given by white tourists traveling from temperate climates in the global north who described themselves as light-skinned, cool, rational, hardworking, and in need of tropical relaxation.

High humidity and the blazing tropical sun were said to be an ill match for the mental and physical health of white travelers. Whites traveling to the Caribbean in the late nineteenth century were advised by physicians to wear hats and special underwear that would shield their heads and kidneys from worrisome effects.[133] However, as U.S. imperialism picked up at the turn of the twentieth century in the Caribbean and Latin America, sunshine began to be prescribed by physicians as a remedy to illness. Not only was white travelers' physical fitness at risk of deterioration due to an unforgiving tropical climate, but their moral vigor was said to be at risk as well. In a criticism of the U.S. colony in Panama in the 1920s Stephen Graham writes, "'Apathy, listlessness, no doubt, is the chief danger [to whites] in Panama, and that being a spiritual danger

[131] Ibid., 16.
[132] Ibid., 17-18.
[133] Ibid., 22. In chapter one of her book, Cocks cites a guidebook written by a T. Phillip in which he advises, "'In elevated districts the golden rays of the sun possess a suitable banefulness which sometimes produce curious disorders…After hours of exercise in the sun at high altitude strongmen have been known to faint…The nerves of the most phlegmatic will sometimes twitter and become jangled.'"

it is more to be regarded than the material danger of disease.'"[134] As Graham suggests, travel to the Caribbean and the mingling of travelers with native inhabitants put whites in danger of losing their superiority over the "inferior primitives" that inhabited the lands in which they wished to explore.

Floating Palaces of Invisible Labor

The climate of the tropics may not have been viewed as good for white tourists but it was deemed perfect for white agribusiness. As poor Afro-Caribbean labor migrants seeking economic relief left their islands for work in the United States and Latin America, wealthy white Americans boarded steamships for lands they had previously only read about. Two large U.S. fruit companies, Standard Fruit and United Fruit, took full advantage of the growing popularity of pleasure travel to the Caribbean at the turn of the twentieth century. Prior to the 1900s, tourists sailing the Caribbean Sea on freight ships were viewed as prospective citizens in the places they explored. In fact, there was, and still remains, a close relationship between tourism and colonization. The end of the nineteenth century brought with it an expansion of U.S. imperialism in the Caribbean and Latin America. The United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War of 1898, ending Spain's colonial empire in the Western Hemisphere and securing itself as an imperial power in the Pacific. In the end, the U.S. acquired Cuba, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, establishing control in the Caribbean region and pursuing economic and military interests in Asia. The Caribbean witnessed multiple U.S. military interventions in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Nicaragua in support of U.S. economic interests. U.S. imperial expansion opened up the gates to pleasure tourism in the Caribbean region, as well as an innovative form of transportation following not too far behind, the cruise ship. According to

[134] Ibid., 24. There was also the fear that white travelers and colonists would physically and morally degenerate from being in the company of their listless, hypersexualized, darker-skinned peers.

Cocks, this new service played an important role in creating tropical whites and pulling tourism and colonization apart: "This mode of travel encouraged tourists to regard the places they visited solely as playgrounds, not sites of potential settlement or investment."[135] The increasing political, economic, and military involvement of the U.S. in the Caribbean and Latin America played a key role in facilitating tourism. U.S. companies already established in the region, such as Standard Fruit and United Fruit, took advantage of the capital that could be accumulated by pleasure tourism.

Historically, ships have been the vessels in which both coercive and voluntary Black labor has been transported throughout the transatlantic. While white American tourists, at the turn of the twentieth century, boarded ships headed to the Caribbean for vacation and relaxation, Afro-Caribbeans from the Bahamas, Jamaica, and elsewhere were recruited and crowded onto ships for agricultural work in the United States and Latin America. In fact, Jamaican men made up the majority of Caribbean guestworkers in the United States during and after World War II. The reason behind the massive labor migration outside of the island was poverty. In Jamaica, Black Jamaicans owned little of the land on the island but were put to work most of it. According to Cindy Hahamovitch, half of the cultivated land in Jamaica was divided among just 1,400 mostly foreign land owners, the bulk of them American and British corporations…The British Tate and Lyle Sugar Company – owned 60,000 acres and produced a third of the island's major sugar cane. Two American banana companies – United Fruit and Standard Co. – controlled the rest of the island's best."[136] For the majority of Jamaicans blackness and poverty were inseparable. As British subjects, they were pinned under the thumb of the island's white elite.

[135] Ibid., 43.
[136] Hahamovitch, Cindy. *No Man's Land: Jamaican Guestworkers in America and the Global History of Deportable Labor*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2014. Print. 51.

The changing of one's fortune was often accomplished by leaving the island for work and by the turn of the twentieth century, such departures had become a rite of passage. Jamaicans left to build the Panama Canal, to work on sugar, coffee, and banana plantations and clear forests for railroads in Central America and the Caribbean, and drill oil in South America. According to Hahamovitch, "Between 1911 and 1921, 9 percent of Jamaica's population left, with thirty thousand people heading to the United States and ten thousand to Cuba each year."[137] As the demand for Afro-Caribbean migrant agricultural labor grew so did the growing Caribbean tourist industry.

Americans traveling from the U.S. felt very deserving in their conquest of the tropics, in part because American big business insisted that they were. The United Fruit company made it especially known in their advertisements, travelogues, and guidebooks that their conquest of the tropics was not only of great benefit to the U.S. but also for those "tropical negroes and Indian tribes" of the global south, which in the eyes of United Fruit, were isolated and too far removed from modernization because of the wilderness and jungle that surrounded them. Frederick Upham Adams expresses these beliefs in a chapter titled "Attacking the Wilderness." Adams writes:

> To-day these former wildernesses constitute one of the most productive agricultural sections of the globe. To-day the ships from all the world enter the beautiful harbors of Central America and land their passengers in ports which are as sanitary as those of Massachusetts…Who performed these miracles? They were wrought by American citizens who had the imagination, the courage, and the ability to attack and conquer the countless dangers and problems of the tropical wildernesses, and who did this through the organization of enterprises which helped by the foundations of the United Fruit Company.[138]

[137] Ibid., 52.
[138] Adams, 50-51.

The hard work, courage, and imagination of U.S. citizens were thought to be the powerful forces behind the taming of the Caribbean and its people. Therefore, the land acquired by U.S. big business was advertised as belonging to all U.S. citizens. In other words, the white, wealthy, elite traveling from the United States to the Caribbean would always and already be entitled to its lands and the native peoples that inhabited them. In the eyes of the white elite, their support of big business, whether a fruit company or other enterprise, assured a type of symbolic ownership over places not known to them. The desire for pleasure travel created an opening for profit making. According to Cocks, "…pleasure travelers might also become investors, if not in the fruit business then in related enterprises, and at the very least their adventures advertised the transformation of the tropics into a font of health and joy."[139] The launch of the United Fruit Company's cruise ship line 'The Great White Fleet' in 1899 served as an enterprise which ensured capital investment into the company through pleasure travel. With investments in Caribbean leisure travel by U.S. fruit companies came the construction of fruit company owned hotels and resorts in the very places where fruit companies had long established themselves. For instance, the Titchfield Hotel built in Port Antonio in the 1890s, was considered to be one of Jamaica's most successful resort hotels. Owned by the United Fruit Company, it appealed to elite travelers. However, the hotel as well as UFCO-controlled transportation to the resort caused a disruption of capital for smaller government subsidized hotels in Kingston, leaving Jamaican owned businesses scrambling to stay afloat.[140] By the 1920s, fruit company owned cruise ships had established themselves as sources of premiere travel transport for the white elite. However, as whites traveled to the Caribbean for relaxation and leisure, Afro-Caribbeans left the islands, the great majority on steamships, for the U.S. in hopes of finding work.

[139] Cocks, 51.
[140] Ibid., 51.

The early twentieth century experienced what is known as the 'Golden Age of Agriculture.' During this time prices and wages rose significantly, migrant laborers from the Caribbean and Latin America traveled throughout the United States and the circum-Caribbean as guestworkers for farmers as well as large fruit companies. However, high wages and the ability to maintain oneself as a guestworker came to a standstill with the outbreak of WWI. According to Hahamovitch, "The outbreak of World War I sent wages spiraling…and farmworkers racing for better paying jobs at the front lines."[141] For West Indian migrant laborers, anti-black racism and xenophobia, as well as the start of the war, left many laborers displaced and jobless. The Panama Canal project, which depended on the labor of thousands of West Indian workers, was completed in 1914 and after its completion the Panamanian government worked to expel West Indians from the country. Opportunities for work began to wane in the 1920s. Agricultural production in the United States had taken a big hit due to WWI, and no more than a decade later the world would feel the effects of the Great Depression. With a surplus of migrant labor and work no longer available, nations began implementing anti-black and anti-immigrant legislation to keep the foreign population down. Afro-Caribbean labor migrants were hit hard. In the United States, the immigration Act of 1924 reduced Jamaican migration by 97%.[142] Other places in the Caribbean and Latin America followed suit with their own racially discriminatory legislation. As Hahamovitch notes, "Concerned, perhaps, that Caribbean migrants blocked from the United States would turn to Latin America, Panama and Venezuela banned West Indians entirely…In 1935, ten thousand Jamaican migrants returned home from Cuba."[143] Other nations in Latin America with sizeable West Indian migrant populations, such as Guatemala and Honduras, also

[141] Hahamovitch, 23.
[142] Ibid., 52.
[143] Ibid, 52-53.

implemented anti-black and anti-immigrant legislation in order to curtail the settlement of Black migrant labor.[144] Preserving racial homogeneity was the goal of these nations, even though the nationalistic narratives of whiteness created were myths. Despite the hardships of the 1920s and 1930s, the white elite continued to board cruise ships to explore the Caribbean as Afro-Caribbeans piled onto ships headed for the United States and other places in the circum-Caribbean for a chance at economic stability. One thing is certain; the ways in which Black laborers and white vacationists experienced their trips on the large steamships traveling around the Caribbean were drastically different.

The 1940s brought with it a different set of political issues, WWII and the fight against totalitarianism. As analyzed in the film *Emergency in Honduras (1945)* in chapter one, the United States implemented emergency worker programs as a way to recruit labor in the global south and extract resources from Latin America and the Caribbean for use toward the war effort. In 1943, the British colonial government agreed to allow Jamaicans to join Bahamians in the United States as agricultural guestworkers and wartime laborers. For decades, Bahamians had migrated from the Caribbean to the east coast of Florida for farm work. Since the turn of the twentieth century Bahamian men and women built cities in Florida, such as Miami, harvested and processed crops, cooked, cleaned, and tended to white children.[145] However, during the Great Depression nation-states expelled foreign workers in order to care for their own; the United States was no exception. The Second World War changed the dynamics of foreign labor in the United States. U.S. policy makers justified the reintroduction of a guestworkers program

[144] For more information about anti-black racism in Guatemala during banana industrialization see Frederick Douglas Opie's book *Black Labor Migration in Caribbean Guatemala, 1882-1923.* For information on the treatment of West Indian migrant laborers in Honduras see Glenn A. Chamber's book *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration to Honduras, 1890-1940.*
[145] Hahamovitch, 22.

as a response to the "war emergency" that followed the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbor. According to Hahamovitch, "Immigration restrictions [such as the Literacy Act of 1917 and the Immigration Act of 1924] led to guestworkers programs as states sought to guarantee employers access to the immigrant workers that restrictionists were trying to deny them."[146] By the early 1940s, negotiations between the United States, the Bahamas, and the British secretary of state for the colonies allowed several thousands of Bahamian men and women between the ages of twenty and forty to leave for the United States with their families to do farmwork.[147] The privilege of bringing one's family during labor migration would end with the recruitment of Jamaican labor migrants. Jamaican men and-only-men would be allowed to participate in the U.S. guestworkers program.

Shipped Labor and Cruising Leisure

In July 1943 over 4,000 Bahamians and over 8,000 Jamaicans were employed under the United States Emergency Farm Labor Program. Several thousands of other British West Indians would follow hailing from the islands of Barbados and British Honduras (Belize).[148]Since 1942 Bahamian men and women traveled to the U.S. by way of Navy and steamships. According to Fitzroy Andre Baptiste, "The United States government undertook to handle the costs of the two-way ship and land movement of the workers between the capital ports of Nassau, Bahamas and Kingston, Jamaica and their places of employment in the United States…"[149] However, these war sponsored ships were not the floating palaces that frequented the circum-Caribbean on touristic voyages as Hahamovitch notes:

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[146] Ibid., 12.
[147] Ibid., 43.
[148] Baptiste, Andre Fitzroy. "Amy Ashwood Garvey and Afro-West Indian Labor in the United States Emergency Farm and War Industries' Programs of World War II, 1943-1945." 7 Apr. 2005. Web.

[149] Ibid., 9.

> A U.S. troop transport vessel, the *Shank* had been built to hold 1,800 men, but 4,000 recruits were crammed on board. The ship was so overcrowded that the recruits had to arrange shifts for meals, water, toilets, and bunks. George Pitt, a machinist from Spanish Town, wrote home that men had to wait in line for hours to eat and were treated like prisoners by the military police guarding the vessel. On their third day at sea, he and other observers reported, MPs turned a fire hose on the recruits. One man died on the voyage by his own hand according to the Jamaican official who investigated the incident, by accident, according to the U.S. Department of States, and at the hands of MPs according to Jamaican's on board. Whichever report was true, it was an auspicious beginning.[150]

West Indian migrants who sailed on board steamships to work on the Panama Canal or on United Fruit Company plantations were often crowded onto decks with no accommodations for food or sleeping arrangements. At times, 700-800 West Indian workers would be crowded onto the deck on a steamship sailing to Central and South America.[151] In a monograph published in 1914, titled *Panama; the canal, the country, and the people,* Arthur Bullard describes his experience on board a steamship full of West Indian migrants sailing from Barbados to Panama to work on the canal. In describing the scene upon first entering the steamship Bullard writes, "About four o'clock I rowed out and went aboard. Such a mess you never saw…there were more than seven hundred negroes aboard, each with his bag and baggage."[152] Further he writes, "We pulled up anchor about six. All of the ship's officers had moved into the saloon; it was the only clean place aboard; a sort of white oasis in the black Sahara."[153] Bullard, a white man, makes mention of the ship having segregated areas for the white officers and black migrants on board. All 700 migrants were forced to stay above the deck in the hot sun while the white officers and other white passengers were provided the privilege of enjoying private quarters. At one point in the narrative Bullard compares the conditions on board the deck of the steamship to slavery. He

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[150] Hahamovitch, 56-57.
[151] "Steamships Transported West Indians, Tourists, and Writers." *Panama Canal Zone*, 11 Feb. 2014, canalzone.wordpress.com/walrond/steamships/.
[152] Bullard, Arthur. *Panama; the Canal, the Country, and the People*. The Macmillan Company, 1914.
[153] Ibid., 30.

writes, "Of course these negroes were not very comfortable. But they were free! There are many men still living who can remember when slave-ships sailed these very waters. It is hard to imagine what life on a slave-ship must have been."[154] Bullard makes note of the discomfort experienced by black migrants aboard the ship. However, he justifies the racist and inhumane treatment of the workers by commenting that at least they are free. They are now free men on board a ship to earn money in a new land, unlike generations before them who sailed aboard ships as chattel.

Strange and powerful European machines, as Marcus Rediker refers to them in his book *The Slave Ship,* ships have historically been used as vessels in which to transport coerced and exploitable Black labor via the transatlantic slave trade. Quoting W.E.B DuBois in reference to transatlantic slavery, Rediker writes, "'…the most magnificent drama in the last thousand years of human history - the transportation of ten million human beings out of the dark beauty of their mother continent into new-found El dorado of the West. They descended into hell.[155] And hell it was for the 4,000 Jamaican recruits crammed on board the *Shank* to be transported for labor on U.S. farms. The ill treatment of recruits on board the ship is no coincidence, but instead stemmed from a legacy of white supremacy and chattel slavery in the circum-Caribbean region. The experience of George Pitt and other Jamaican recruits, although distinctly different from the chattel slave experience, can be connected to the legacy of slavery and the forced agricultural labor that accompanied it. In his discussion of the history of the slave ship Rediker states:

> The so-called golden age of the drama was the period 1700-1808, when more captives were transported than any other, roughly two-thirds of the total. More than 40 percent of these, or 3 million altogether, were shipped in British and American ships. Ships carried the captives primarily to sugar islands (where more

[154] Ibid., 37.
[155] Rediker, Marcus. *The Slave Ship: A Human History*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2011. Print. 4.

than 70 percent of all slaves were purchased, almost half of these at Jamaica) …[156]

According to Rediker, scholarship on the slave ship remains limited. I would also add that the same could be said for scholarship on American fruit company cruise lines. The slave ship has been a neglected topic within the abundantly rich historical literature on the transatlantic slave trade. Yet, studying such a vessel is extremely important in understanding the historical processes of gendered migration (coerced and otherwise), labor, and globalization. As Rediker poignantly states, "There exists no analysis of the instrument that facilitated Europe's 'commercial revolution,' its building of plantations and global empires, its development of capitalism, and eventually its industrialization. In short, the slave ship and its social relations have shaped the modern world, but their history remains in ways unknown"[157] Although the slave ship and cruise ship are functionally and historically different, both ships can be examined as vessels which have contained life, death, violence, pleasure, labor, and leisure, things that have and continue to remain throughout the evolution and mobility of the ship.

Consuming the Caribbean

As stated above, the ship has historically functioned in different ways for different purposes across space and time. As examined in the film *Emergency in Honduras* (1945) in chapter one, ships have been adapted to cater to the needs of a nation so that one year it may be a vessel for exporting fruit from the Caribbean to the United States and the next a war machine aiding in the fight against totalitarianism during WWII. This was not only true of the steamship but the slave ship as well. As Rediker states, "…the slave ship was a strange and potent combination of war machine, mobile prison, and factory."[158] As a war machine the slave ship

[156] Ibid, 5-6.
[157] Ibid., 10.
[158] Ibid., 9.

could be used to combat other European forts, ports, and vessels, or it could be used against non-European vessels in the battle for imperial conquest and resource extraction. The steamship carried much of the same functions as a transporter of agricultural goods and people, war machine, and vessel for neocolonial conquest. Both the slave ship and the cruise ship as "ship-factories" produced 'race.' As Rediker notes in his discussion of the slave ship, "The voyage thus transformed those who made it. War making, imprisonment, and the factory production of labor power and race all depended on violence."[159] While the cruise ship is often associated with leisure and not violence, the race making on and off board the cruise ship, its participation in colonialism, and its facilitation of the consumption of Black life and culture in the Caribbean through tourism, perpetuated a violence that would work to separate workers from tourists.

During the transatlantic slave trade and the colonization of the Caribbean, exploited Black bodies were literally consumed as both a form of state sanctioned punishment against slaves that were deemed "out of place" and entertainment for colonists. In "You Should Give them Blacks to Eat" Sara E. Johnson does a historical investigation of a form of Black consumption, (canine warfare techniques used in Haiti, Jamaica, and Florida conflicts during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries). According to Johnson, "Beyond being used to hunt down black rebels, dogs were employed to publicly consume them in a staged performance of white supremacy and domination…The slave's torture served as an ultimate example of his, and by extension, all slaves' expendability."[160] Flesh-eating dogs were employed to torture and punish Black slaves that dared to rebel against the horrors of plantation slavery. For those slaves who rebelled against their captors on board slave ships, or who did not survive the Middle Passage,

[159] Ibid., 10.
[160] Johnson, Sara E. ""You Should Give Them Blacks to Eat": Waging Inter-American Wars of Torture and Terror." *American Quarterly* 61.1 (2009): 65-92. *Project MUSE [Johns Hopkins UP]*. Web. 68.

the deep sea would consume them and seal their fate. I use this example from Johnson's work to point out that the consumption of the Caribbean and its inhabitants is not something metaphorical but a very literal act. In fact, the relationship between the consumer and the consumed is one that is asymmetrical. In her book *Consuming the Caribbean*, Mimi Sheller discusses the myriad ways in which Western European and North American publics consumed nature, human bodies, and cultures of the Caribbean over the past 500 years. According to Sheller, "[t]he mobile flows of consumption under investigation here include: edible plants, stimulants, human bodies, cultural products, knowledge collection, and entire 'natures' and landscapes consumed as tropical paradise."[161] The Caribbean became an object of desire in popular cultures of consumption. For centuries travelers and tourists have moved through the Caribbean, creating images of the Caribbean that continue to circulate in popular culture, as well as capture and collect objects from the Caribbean as keepsakes from 'adventures.' According to Sheller, "In broadening the concept of travel to include many kinds of mobility, one can begin to draw links between seemingly disparate patterns of colonization, forced transportation, commodity trade, consumption, migration, tourism, and representation."[162] In what ways did popular culture and media aid in the exoticization and consumption of Black labor and bodies as part of the banana industry?

Exoticizing Black Gendered Migrant Labor

As discussed above, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, and North America were linked by the triangular trade. The making of the modern world involved the movement of people, goods,

[161] Sheller, Mimi Beth. *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies*. London: Routledge, 2008. Print.3-4. Sheller states that edible plants included sugar cane, bananas, and tropical fruit; the stimulants included coffee, tobacco, rum, and cannabis; human bodies included those of slaves, indentured laborers, and contemporary service workers; cultural products included texts, images, and music; and knowledge collection included studies of botany, ethnology, and linguistics, 3-4.
[162] Ibid., 5.

ships, and information in a circuitous route. Examining the ship as a mobile object in Caribbean consumption is important here. The circulation of printed visual images was an important early element in the emergence of consumer societies at the turn of the twentieth century. The Caribbean became visible as well as graspable through the representation of the region in texts such as travel narratives, geographic handbooks, photograph albums, and ethnographic exhibits.[163] In the opening page of her book, *An Eye for the* Tropics, Krista A. Thompson includes a poem published in Kingston, Jamaica's *Daily Gleaner* on January 18, 1901. The poem, titled "Our Friends the Tourists," describes everything from the dress of tourists that sail to Jamaica to the interactions between the foreigners and people of the island. It reads:

> *Clad in fearful and wonderful garments, which they fondly imagined to be ordinary tropical clothing…*
> *they came ashore in the spirit of explorers and seemed quite disappointed to find we wore clothes*
> *and did not live in the jungle.*
> *O who would be a tourist*
> *And with the tourist stand,*
> *A guide-book in his pocket,*
> *A Kodak in his hand![164]*

This poem speaks to the stereotypical imaginaries of the Caribbean by North American tourists. What the poem reveals is tourist consumption of Caribbean culture through perceived dress, their assumed entitlement to the land "in the spirit of explorers," and their preparedness to capture and consume the natural environment of Jamaica and its people through film while confirming notions of primitiveness and timelessness. However, tourist's exoticization of Jamaica and the rest of the Caribbean occurred before stepping foot onboard the luxury cruise ships that sailed

[163] Ibid., 26.
[164]Thompson, Krista A. *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*. Durham: Duke U, 2006. Print.

them throughout the Atlantic. One way in which the exploration of the Caribbean was made possible was through travel narratives and texts. An example of this is a United Fruit Company book published in 1927 titled *Cruises O'er the Golden Caribbean*. Printed for steamship passengers, the book allowed for a kind of consumption of the Caribbean by tourists while they traveled. The Steamship sailed from the United States to Cuba, Jamaica, Panama, Costa Rica, Colombia, Guatemala, and Honduras. In the book, each country and island in which the Great White Fleet sailed has its own section dedicated to educating passengers about the country or island's customs, culture, people, and tourist interests along with an artistic sketch of what passengers could expect these places to look like upon arrival. In figure 6, a page dedicated to Jamaica reads, "JAMAICA is English throughout. Here and there on the island you will find remnants of Spanish occupation, but in churches and gateways, statuary and names of streets Old England has left such a deep impression that to all intents and purposes the Island might have been always an English colony."[165] The page offers a glimpse into Jamaican life and a bit of history involving the island's multiple colonizations. The black and white sketch depicts what looks to be Black men and women walking about a town square. Some women walk with baskets of fruit and goods on their heads while others sit and sell goods for purchase. In the bottom right corner of the page a more colorful picture is presented, one central to much of the visual culture of the Caribbean: two Black women selling baskets of goods under a palm tree, their donkey in tow. According to Thompson, the 'native man with donkey' was a stock character in many photographic representations of the Anglo-phone Caribbean taken during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thompson writes, "The icon had been imprinted on numerous photographs and postcards since the start of the tourism industry in the 1890s, in an effort by the

[165] "Cruises O'er the Golden Caribbean." *UFDC Home - All Collection Groups*. United Fruit Company Steamship Service, Web. 14.

colonial government and tourism interests to constitute a new idea of Jamaica."[166] This visual construction for tourism, 'native man with donkey,' is one that is still circulated in photographs and other textual and visual material today. The reasons such images continue to be circulated in representations of the Caribbean are quite complex, as well as are the material, political, and social affects that images such as the one described above have on those that inhabit the region. However, what this image and others like it do is construct Afro-Caribbean inhabitants as props for economic gain, objectifying Black bodies and blackness and subjecting inhabitants to

[166] Thompson, 2.

Figure 6: Jamaica Advertisement. *Cruises O'er the Golden Caribbean* (1927). United Fruit Company.

tourists' colonial gaze. How do elements of visual culture become representative of the people and places that are captured in its frame? Some explanation lays in the British colonial government's push to change the image of Jamaica at the turn of the twentieth century.

Before the tourism boom began in the 1890s the West Indies, like the rest of the Caribbean, was stigmatized as a fatal breeding ground for tropical diseases. Many of the white colonists and military men who ventured into the region had their lives claimed by cholera, malaria, and yellow fever. The Caribbean was viewed as a death trap, very much the total opposite of what the region would later be described as: relaxing and rejuvenating. Beginning in the 1880s, tourism promoters along with British colonial administrators, local white elites, and American and British hoteliers in places such as Jamaica and the Bahamas began to transform the perception of the islands through campaigns. The region would no longer be viewed as the tropics of death but rather as a tropical paradise.[167] British and American companies, such as the United Fruit Company, partnered with the British colonial government to create picturesque visual images and representations of the Caribbean. For example, the United Fruit Company enlisted the services of American and British photographers as well as local artists to produce photographs, postcards, photography books, illustrated guides, stereo-views, and lantern slides to create a large repertoire of visual images of the islands as tropical, picturesque, and desirable.[168] Not only did the visual representations created project a particular image of the Caribbean to the outside world but it also shaped how local communities learned to see themselves and the islands they inhabited. As can be seen in figure 6 above, the marketing strategy for many companies and the British colonial government was to advertise the islands as premodern and in need of tourist's modernity and capital intervention. The marketing also worked to mark blacks as

[167] Ibid., 4.
[168] Ibid., 4.

primitive and existing in the past. However, the emergent black middle-class on the islands contested these portrayals. According to Thompson, "In the early twentieth century, black and emergent black middle classes (or "brown" in the case of Jamaica) at times contested the tropicalized images, precisely because these representations typically image blacks as rural, exotic, primitive, and unmodern despite their modernizing efforts."[169] However, visual and textual material such as the United Fruit Company published book *Cruises O'er the Golden Caribbean* assisted in representing the Caribbean and its inhabitants as exotic, primitive, and unmodern through the contrasting photographs of passengers on the Great White Fleet cruise ship and the drawings depicting island life. Figures 7 and 8 capture the significant differences in depictions of labor and leisure created by the United Fruit Company. Figure 7 captures a scene in which passengers on board the Great White Fleet participate in a game of golf on the ship's deck. The photograph itself is a testament to just one of many leisurely activities that passengers can participate in while on their travels to the Caribbean. Not only does the photograph capture an American pastime, Golf, but it also works to mark who is and what is American. Those seen entertaining themselves and enjoying the cruise are white middle to upper-class men and women. This capturing of leisure and joy on board the ship contrasts with the drawing that follows in figure 8. The drawing that centers the page in figure 8 works to capture daily life in Costa Rica's capital, San Jose. The caption states that San Jose has been termed "…the most typical Spanish City in the Western Hemisphere." The capital is also described as being "clean" and "Well laid out" as well as home to an opera house that cost over a million dollars to build. The caption exemplifies Costa Rica's Eurocentric values and strivings toward whiteness. Contrast this drawing to the one done literally outside of its frame, those drawn are Black, working-class, and

[169] Ibid., 13.

Deck golf usually attracts attention

and quality of mattresses used. They are level; not too hard nor yet too soft, and the sheets and pillow cases are spotlessly clean and well laundered. Sleep is a pleasure under these conditions.

And you will enthuse over the bathrooms. Tiled flooring, done in white enamel, porcelain tub and lavatory. Hot and cold water, fresh or salt, tub or shower for in the tropics frequent baths are not a luxury, they are a necessity. And you will note that the mirrors are so placed that shaving is a pleasure and that there are handy racks to hold toilet equipment and drinking glasses within easy reach, and—again a detail—the bath towels are the thick, fleecy, five-foot kind of honest to goodness towels that really dry up the dampness in a highly efficient manner.

Figure 7: Deck Golf. *Cruises O'er the Golden Caribbean* (1927). United Fruit Company.

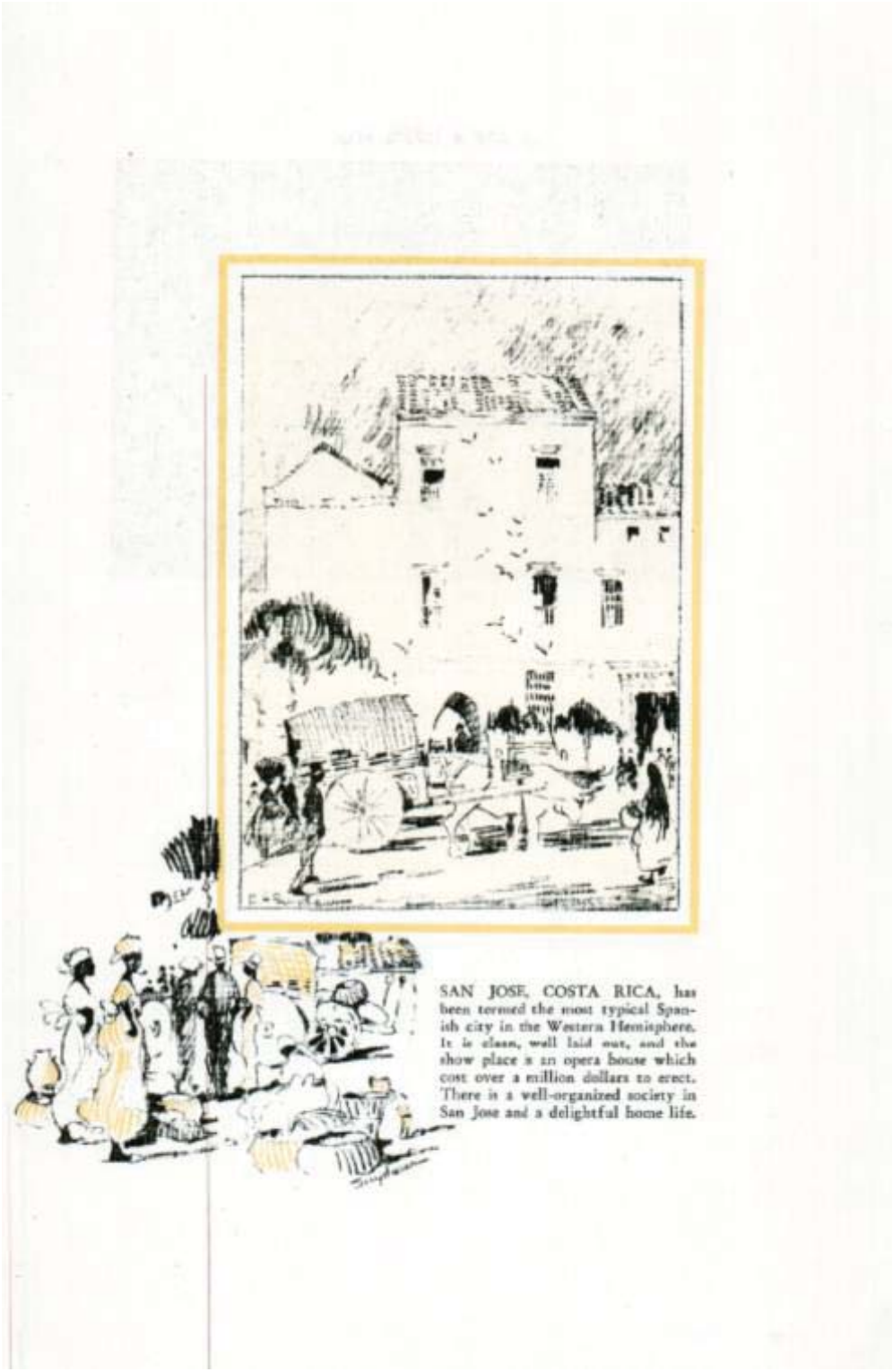

Figure 8: Costa Rica Advertisement. *Cruises O'er the Golden Caribbean* (1927). United Fruit Company.

do not fit into San Jose's bourgeois scene. Their blackness and their labor is literally marginalized to a peripheral view.

Caribbean Desires and the Erasure of Afro-Caribbean Women's Labor

In the opening musical number "Brazil" of the 1943 musical comedy *The Gang's All Here* starring Brazilian actress and singer Carmen Miranda, the steamship plays an important role in connecting the audience not only to the characters of the film but also to U.S. policies such as the Good Neighbor Policy. In the opening scene of the musical number, the audience is introduced to a pitch-black background. A spotlight shines on the face of a man who sings the following in Portuguese:

> *Brasil*
> *Abre a cortina do pasado*
> *Tira a mãe preta do serrado*
> *Bota o rei congo no congado*
> *Brasil*
> *Deixa*
> *Cantar de novo o trovador*
> *A merencória luz da lua*
> *Toda a canção do meu amor*[170]

Out of the darkness of the screen a white ocean liner appears with the words "S.S. Brazil" on the side of it. Immediately white middle to upper middle-class passengers shuffle off of the ship

[170] The following is an English translation of the lyrics:
Brazil
Open your curtains of the past
*take the black mother away from the desert (cerrado is an arid area of Brasil that a lot of Afro Brazilians lived in, like in Minas Gerais and other. Areas of the. Northeast of Brasil- there are no cerrados in the south of Brazil where all the European descendants live)
*put the coho king in the congado (a congado is an Afro brasilian cultural manifestation of music and dance you need to actually use the word congado as there is no substitute for it)
Brazil
Let the king of the thunder sing once again
The melancholic moonlight
All the songs of my love

waving to their family and friends awaiting their arrival on the ship's dock. As passengers joyously join their loved ones, imported goods from Brazil are unloaded from the ship. Men can be seen unloading bags of sugar and coffee. Much like the United Fruit Company's steamship line, the Great White Fleet, the S.S. Brazil is showcased as a multi-functional ship: ocean liner, war machine, and importer of Brazilian goods, including actress Carmen Miranda. As the men working on board the ship push tubs of sugar and coffee out of sight, a large hamper full of mixed fruit descends and through a seamless transition becomes Carmen Miranda's hat, implying that she too has been imported to the United States as a product of Brazil. As she joins the hustle and bustle of the crowd Miranda sings:

> *Brasil*
> *Esse coqueiro qu dá côco*
> *Ôi onde amarro a minha rêde*
> *Nas noites claras de luar*
> *Brasil*
> *Brasil*
> *Prá mim*
> *Brasil*[171]

After Carmen Miranda's introduction, a city politician drives on to the shipping dock with his entourage to present her with a key to the city and asks her "Got any coffee on you?" It is a moment of humor intended for the audience but also one that reveals the economic relationship

[171] The following is an English translation of the lyrics:
Brazil
This coconut tree which gives its coconut
(Sounds better if you say bears it's fruit)
Where I tie my hammock
During the clear moonlit nights
Brazil
Brazil
For me
Brazil

between the United States and Brazil. Brazil grows coffee that Americans want and pay for, and Miranda is representative of all things Brazilian such as the exocitized goods shipped to the U.S. for consumption. The musical number that opens the film, "Brazil," then turns into "You Discover You're in New York" and the audience watching the film discover that they are witnessing a Broadway musical as the movie camera's pan out to reveal the stage. At the end of the opening number a commentator on stage grabs Carmen Miranda's hand and says, "Well, there's your good neighbor policy." He then embraces Miranda saying, "Come on honey. That's good neighborin.'" Carmen Miranda was a symbol of the good neighbor policy implemented between the United States and Latin America by President Franklin Roosevelt, and as discussed in chapter one, its main principle was non-intervention and non-interference in the domestic affairs of Latin America. The bags of coffee and sugar being carted away from the ship in the film's opening scene as well as Carmen Miranda and the Good Neighbor Policy were considered to be just some of many exchanges between the United States and Latin American countries that created economic opportunities and kept the peace during war time. Although Carmen Miranda made it very clear through the interviews she conducted during the height of her fame that she was Brazilian and represented Brazilian culture, in the U.S. her exoticized, sexualized, flirty image stood in as a representation of all of Latin America including the Caribbean. However, as Mimi Sheller points out, the Caribbean and its history has often been pushed to the periphery in spatially and temporally imagined geographies of western modernity.[172] Sheller adds, "[t]he anachronistic spaces and evicted peripheries of contemporary social theory are also apparent in

[172] In Sheller's *Consuming the Caribbean* she writes, "Despite its indisputable narrative position at the origin of the plot of Western modernity, history has been edited and the Caribbean left on the cutting-room floor. Having washed its hands of history, the North can now present itself as the hero in the piece, graciously donating democratic tutelage, economic aid, foreign investment, military advisers, and police support for the Caribbean region" (1).

the social imaginary of wider cultural contexts such as the media and popular culture."[173] Although pushed to the periphery in the minds of many Americans, the Caribbean became an object of desire in popular cultures of consumption, including the big screen. This is examined through one of Carmen Miranda's most popular musical performances which happens to be showcased in *The Gang's All Here*, "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat."

According to Shari Roberts, the "Brazilian Bombshell," Carmen Miranda, was a favorite for Hollywood and Broadway musicals during wartime. Roberts states, "In the years from 1939 to 1944, just prior to and during U.S. involvement in World War II, Carmen Miranda…appeared in eight Hollywood musicals and two Broadway musical revues, all of which were highly successful."[174]As well received as Carmen Miranda was, her "star text" was conflicted according to Roberts. Her parodic star text was filled with ethnic, racial, and gender stereotypes about Latin Americans and women. Miranda was the allowable cultural "other" during a period in the U.S. where anyone with dark skin and dark hair was labeled as a possible enemy of the state.[175] Although Miranda was accepted as the Brazilian bombshell, the film's that required her entertainment still found ways to mark her as foreign and untrustworthy. For instance, in one scene of *The Gang's All Here*, after a flustered Peyton Potter, played by comedian Edward Everett Horton, dances the "Uncle Samba" with Miranda's character Dorita, he turns to James Ellison's character, Andy Mason, after learning that Mason has just gotten off of the phone with his wife and asks, "Did you tell her about me out there dancing with that South American

[173] Ibid., 3.
[174] Roberts, Shari. ""The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat": Carmen Miranda, a Spectacle of Ethnicity." *Cinema Journal* 32.3 (1993): 3-23. *JSTOR*. Web. 3.
[175] Ibid., 4. According to Shari Roberts, "…during WWII, Axis powers –the Japanese, the Germans as represented by Hitler, and the Italians as represented by Mussolini-were portrayed in the popular press by ethnic stereotypings that stressed dark hair and dark skin." Blonde hair and fair skin, therefore, became unquestionably American."

savage?" Potter's remark is a testament to how not only Dorita is viewed but how Latin America as a whole is viewed by Americans and the United States during the war years of the 1940s as savage and dangerous. According to Roberts, "…the popular press described Miranda in terms of the physical, of the body-as wild, savage, and primitive, like an exotic animal, 'enveloped in beads, swaying and wriggling, chattering macaw like…'"[176] Besides the United States' xenophobic fears, something that is made apparent through this film is the United States' consumption of the global south including the Caribbean, especially in what appears to be the musical number paying homage to U.S. big businesses such as the United Fruit Company. The musical number begins with an organ grinder walking through the audience of the club, a small monkey on top of the musical instrument as he walks. The monkey then climbs a fake banana tree and the audience is taken away to some vast exoticicized island somewhere in the global south full of sand, water, a bright blue sky, and young white women. As the camera pans over the island the audience is introduced to a number of beautiful women laying under the banana trees. The women are dressed in bright yellow head scarves, black cropped shirts, and bright yellow frilly skirts, what Americans perceived as Caribbean or tropical attire, as can be seen in figure 9. The colors of the outfit are the same as the colors used in the drawing of Figure 8 in the UFCO book *Cruises O'er the Golden Caribbean.* The chorus girls are anthropomorphic bananas brought to life. As the camera pans over the island, the women appear to be lounging around on the sand under the shade of the palm trees. A whistle, similar to that of a "cat call," is sounded and the women jump up, waving their hands as they run to form two lines to welcome in Carmen Miranda's character Dorita who is also playing "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat." In chapter one I discuss film as a medium used during WWII by U.S. big businesses, such as the United Fruit

[176] Ibid., 10.

Company, as well as the U.S. government to get Americans and Latin Americans on board for the war effort against Axis forces. One of the scenes that I analyze in the film *Emergency in Honduras (1945)* can be examined alongside the musical number "The Lady in the Tutti Frutti Hat," and that is the scene where Honduran banana workers are depicted as lethargically lying around on empty shipping docks as well as outside of the housing once used by banana companies to dorm banana workers. In chapter one, I discuss how these workers are viewed by the U.S. government as bitter and dangerous, their leisure viewed as creating room for disloyalty and deception as a man is filmed in one scene drawing a swastika in the dirt outside of his home. The need to find employment for these banana workers was a large priority for the U.S. government, or so the film claims. Good relations between Honduras and the U.S. was depicted as being contingent on the steady labor of banana men. I bring up this analysis from chapter one in order to point out stark differences between the way in which the leisurely activity of banana men is depicted in *Emergency in Honduras* and the lounging of banana women in *The Gang's*

Figure 9: Scene one from the musical number "The Lady in the Tutti Frutti Hat" from the musical *The Gang's All Here (1943).*

All Here. Whereas the lounging around of banana men is viewed as unproductive and undesirable, the lounging of women under banana trees is desired. The exoticization and sexualization of the women in the tutti frutti musical number is what, in part, creates a desirability and festishization of the Caribbean for the audience. The "whiteness" of the women in the scene normalizes the leisurely activity of the banana women therefore marking the activity

as a productive act. According to film historian Drew Casper, who did commentary for the Carmen Miranda DVD Collection, the musical number was a way to take the audience away from their concerns of the war. Again, as I discuss in chapter one, it was a type of voyeurism and travel that Americans could do without leaving the U.S. In *Unthinking Eurocentrism* Ella Shohat and Robert Stam discuss the voyeurism found in orientalist Hollywood films stating, "Hollywood's ethnography has been premised on the cinema's capacity to initiate the Western spectator into an unknown culture. Orientalist films invite the spectator on a temporal/spatial tour of a celluloid preserved culture, implicitly celebrating cinema's capacity to promote panoramic spectacle and temporal voyeurism."[177]The musical number is filled with suggested innuendos and eroticism playing off of the "Brazilian bombshell" stereotype. According Shohat and Stam, "Miranda's figure in the number 'The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat' is dwarfed by gigantesque vegetative imagery." Further they write, "The bananas in Miranda's song not only enact the agricultural reductionism of Latin America's monocultural products but also form phallic symbols, here raised by 'voluptuous' Latinas over circular, quasi-vaginal forms."[178] The Hollywood film exoticizes, objectifies, and exploits women from the global south while simultaneously whitening the Caribbean and eliding the labor of Afro-Caribbean women on banana plantations.

Carmen Miranda enters into the musical number sitting on a pile of bananas in an ox drawn cart with the assistance of two shirtless men in white pants and a group of men with guitars, flutes, and tambourines trailing behind her. The scene creates an orientalist view of the

[177] Shohat, Ella, and Robert Stam. *Unthinking Eurocentrism Multiculturalism and the Media*. London: Routledge, 2014.148.
[178] Ibid., 157-158.

global south as the musicians play along in attire of the peasantry.[179] Miranda in her banana motif costume, (a fruit filled hat of bananas and strawberries and black dress adorned with the same fruit), becomes the banana queen, exotic and desired by American men yet too strange to be taken as a serious companion which can be exemplified through the lyrics of the number as Miranda sings:

> Americanos tell me that my hat's too high
> Because I will not take it off to kiss a guy
> But if I ever start to take it off aye-aye… (Miranda winks at the camera)
> I do that once for Johnny Smith
> And he is very happy with
> The lady in the tutti-frutti hat

Miranda's flirtatiousness and charm throughout the musical number work in tandem to make her desirable to the American public. Throughout the number elements of the set are made metaphorical. The chorus girls gather around Miranda and enclose her in a circle of bananas that transform into xylophones. Giant strawberries become beach balls as the chorus girls perform a spectacular synchronized dance with the giant fruit. At the end of the musical number the chorus girls wave goodbye to Carmen Miranda as she leaves aboard the ox-drawn cart. The girls return to lounge on the island under the banana trees and at the end Miranda is deemed the banana queen. Her performances and colorful

[179] According to Edward Said, orientalism dates back to European enlightenment and colonization of the Arab world. Orientalism provided rationalization and justification for European colonialism through marking the East as inferior and in need of rescue from the West. I use Said's term to draw attention to the ways in which U.S. film has reproduced orientalist ideas of the "other" through racist and stereotypical depictions of Latin Americans whether it be through song and dance or perceived attire or animalization, naturalization, and infantilization.

Figure 10: Scene two from the musical number "The Lady in the Tutti Frutti Hat" from the musical *The Gang's All Here (1943)*.

costumes are often examined as being a hybrid of Latin American cultures often mixing Brazilian, Mexican, Cuban, and Argentinian cultural performances in her films. Although Miranda is examined as being a cultural bridge between American and Latin American audiences during the years of the second world war, it is important to point out that her *colorful* act was made successful through her appropriation of Afro-Brazilian culture and performance. Carmen Miranda's appropriation of Afro-Brazilian culture is an example of the consumption of Afro-diasporic culture and people that has historically taken place in the Americas and the Caribbean without having to acknowledge the existence of Afro-descendant populations. In other words, Miranda's appropriation of Afro-Brazilian dress and dance styles only worked to acknowledge the existence of Blacks and blackness in Latin America only for entertainment purposes, erasing the oppressive systems that marked Afro-descendent peoples and their labor as invisible. Brazil's multiracial self-identity was reconceptualized in the 1930s to include the oppressed Afro-Brazilian population, right around the time that Miranda was introduced to American audiences. One of the ways in which Brazil asserted the presence of its Afro-Brazilian population was through the music and dance traditions of samba as well as the candomblé religion that had been banned during slavery.[180] According to Roberts, "With the introduction of the radio in Brazil in the 1920s, the samba proved profitable for record companies and quickly spread as a form of popular music throughout Brazil.[181]Carmen Miranda was performing Afro-Brazilianness in her acts and as her characters on film. In fact, in a 1941 interview discussing Miranda's use of "negro" dress the interviewer states, "Her costumes were inspired by those of

[180] Roberts, 12. According to Roberts, "After the abolition of slavery in 1888 and the lifting of the ban against African religion and its music and rituals, newly freed black slaves established favelas, the destitute hillside African-Brazilian communities of Rio, and there developed the original samba de morro."

[181] Ibid., 12.

the Negroes in Bahia…In Bahia the Negro girls walk to market, wide skirts flaring…Carmen explains, ‘'An' wone boy, born in Bahia, make beeg song in Brazeel about theez Bahiana dress. An' I say, I will put theez dress an' seeng theez song. You can't put theez dress, they say, because theez dress only Negroes put. Bah!' She gave it the brush-off. 'I put, but in gold an' silk an' velvet, an' I seeng in Rio.’”[182] The interviewer stated that Miranda gave the costumes “new life,” but what Miranda highlights in her response is Brazil’s denial of its Black population and the ways in which Brazil has historically and traditionally worked to erase Brazil’s Afro-descendant population from its national narrative. Nevertheless, the clothing that is worn by the chorus girls in the tutti-frutti musical number is dress traditionally worn by Bahian women. In fact, “The candomblé temples of Rio were established by women, freed slaves from Bahia, the sixteenth-century capital of Brazil. These women, Bahians, were stereotyped within Brazil as women with shawls, turbans, and flirtatious ways…Miranda adopted this Bahian costume, which signified African religion, music, and tradition to Brazilians, as her trademark outfit, and it came to mean Brazil to North Americans via Fox's Bombshell.”[183] The dress of the chorus girls in the tutti-frutti number is very similar to the dress of Black women throughout the African diaspora as exhibited in Figures 6 and 8 from *Cruises O’er the Golden Caribbean.* Not only did Miranda’s appropriation and adaptation of Afro-Brazilian culture, in many ways, erase Afro-Brazilians through her performance, but her performances also worked to tropicalize Brazil and create a myth of Brazil as tropical paradise as can be seen in “The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat.” As Sheller states, “It is not only things or commodities that are consumed, but also entire natures, landscapes, cultures, visual representations, and even human bodies.”[184] However, the images

[182] Ibid., 13.
[183] Ibid., 13.
[184] *Consuming the Caribbean*, 14.

produced in the *Gang's All Here* about the Caribbean and labor in the Caribbean erase the work that was being done by Afro-Caribbean women in the region for centuries.

The history of Afro-Caribbean women working on plantations is one of labor not of leisure as the Tutti Frutti musical number fantasized. The Caribbean as a region has a long and deep history of using women's labor whether through enslavement or indentured servitude. However, this history is erased through the performance of the chorus girls in the musical number. This is not surprising given the fact that women's labor is often made invisible in discussions about Caribbean labor history as well as labor history internationally. According to Rhoda Reddock, "Up to three decades ago, students of history of this region may have been able to safely conclude that women's contribution to the regional labour movement had been minimal; indeed they would have questioned the extent to which women, with few exceptions had been workers in the past at all."[185]The invisibility of Afro-Caribbean women's labor can be attributed to the myth of the housewife, or the idea that women's place was in the home taking care of housework and children. However, in examining women's work and labor in the Caribbean it is important to analyze it through the intersections of gender, race, and class as historically, Black women in the Caribbean were not afforded the luxury of only laboring in the home as a housewife. According to Reddock, "The only housewives in this region for many centuries therefore were the minority of white women, wives of plantation owners who accompanied their husbands. But these were few as the English-speaking Caribbean was not a region of settlement but rather one of extraction."[186] The history of Black women's labor in the

[185] Reddock, Rhoda. ""Forever Indebted to Women: The Contribution of Women in the Development of the Caribbean Labour Movement"." The University of the West Indies-Open Campus CONSORTIUM FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH LECTURE SERIES. University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. 22 Oct. 2008. Lecture.
[186] Ibid., 3.

Caribbean began with the institutional introduction of slavery in the region. Contrary to popular belief, most enslaved women worked out in the field not in the home. Afro-Caribbean women continued to work on plantations well after emancipation in the region. The reality was that most working-class Afro-Caribbean women continued to work in agriculture or as service workers even when they did not become wage-workers.[187] Many of them migrated throughout the region alongside men to work on and around plantations and farms. As examined in Cindy Hahamovitch's book *No Man's Land,* women from the Bahamas often migrated to the United States with Bahamian men to work on South Florida farms beginning in the 1890s. Bahamian workers were familiar with working conditions in the United States, especially in southern Florida, due to the intertwined history between the region and the Bahamas.[188]By the turn of the twentieth century Bahamians moved north from Key West to the Florida mainland settling in Miami's "Colored Town" and seasonally working in agriculture, tourism, construction, and sponging.[189] By the 1930s, Bahamians were largely sought after by U.S. Sugar to cut sugar cane and compete with African American workers who refused to put up with the sugar corporation's oppressive labor system. A decade later, in 1943, thousands of Bahamians traveled to the U.S. to work as guestworkers to counter the loss of Black farmworkers who left to fight during WWII, "[t]ogether, the United States, the Bahamas, and the British Secretary of State for the Colonies allowed five thousand Bahamian men and women between the ages of twenty and forty to leave

[187] Ibid., 5.
[188] Hahamovitch, 33. According to Hahamovitch, "Many white Bahamians were descendants of American loyalists who had departed eastern Florida with their slaves after the American Revolution. Many black Bahamians were descendants of those slaves…In the late 1860s, white Bahamians had emigrated to the Florida Keys, complaining that emancipated blacks in the Bahamas had become too assertive. Black Bahamians followed them, attracted by high wages in Key West's cigar, sponging, and wrecking industries."
[189] Ibid., 33.

for the United States to do farmwork and to bring their families with them."[190] However, by 1945 Afro-Caribbean women would be banned from U.S. recruitment for work on farms. For example, Jamaican women were not invited to participate in the U.S. recruitment of Jamaicans as guestworkers during WWII. No official reason was given by the government for this ban. However, it seems that the ban had something to do with the U.S. governments experience with Bahamian women. According to Hahamovitch, "The immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) soon banned women from the program when a few Bahamians had abortions after being threatened with deportation for becoming pregnant. The ban would last for decades, forcing women to stay at home and male guestworkers to choose between living with their families and providing for them."[191] Afro-Caribbean women's reproductive labor was only good when, and only when, their labor resulted in the production of agriculture.

The cruise of the Great White Fleet from the United States to the circum-Caribbean brought with it racialized and gendered ideologies of labor and leisure and its embodiment. The Great White Fleet was an extension of the region's legacy of chattel slavery and the United States' history of colonialism and imperialism. Once used as a vessel to export fruit from the Caribbean, the steamship became an aid in the consumption of Afro-Caribbean people and their labor. Not surprisingly however, Afro-Caribbean workers found ways to resist the multiple technologies of the neocolonial voyeuristic gaze.

[190] ibid., 43.
[191] ibid., 3.

CHAPTER THREE
Resisting the White Colonial Gaze: Banana Women in Caribbean Plantation Photography

In the article "A Dying West?" Glen Mimura asks, "How differently might United States history appear today were it not told from the standpoint of its victors?"[192] He asks this question in his examination of the overlooked work of Frank Matsura, a Japanese photographer who recorded the changes happening in "latter-day frontier society and continuing Indian presence in Washington's Okanogan County" at the turn of the twentieth century.[193] What is remarkable about Matsura's photography, as Mimura points out, is his departure from the dominant understanding of frontier life often captured and celebrated in Western film, literature, and popular culture. Mimura views Matsura's photography collection as a "revisionist archive-in-the-making," and views Matsura's life as a "representational foil against the nostalgic mythos of the frontier and its vanishing Indians –toward a more democratic, inclusive account of its history."[194] In connecting Mimura's examination of the archive to my own work I ask: what is a revisionist archive and what might a revisionist archive reveal? Do the subjects of photographs have the power to revise a photograph's meaning? I have analyzed photos found in the "Caribbean Photo Archive," located on the photo sharing website Flickr, to reveal the ways in which Afro-Jamaican women banana workers, through my reading of their resistance to the white colonial gaze of picturesque photography, created a revisionist archive. Art Historian Krista A. Thompson, whose work is discussed extensively throughout this chapter, provides an important analysis of how powerful forces produced photographic images of Jamaica in support of exploitive tourist and agricultural industries.

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[192] Mimura, Glen M. "A Dying West? Reimagining the Frontier in Frank Matsura's Photography, 1903-1913." *The American Studies Association* 62.3 (2010): 687-716. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web.
[193] Ibid., 687.
[194] Ibid., 688.

Building on such top down work, in this chapter I attempt to take a bottom up approach, foregrounding black women workers and their resistance to a white colonial gaze.

In the introduction to *Partial Recall,* an edited anthology of essays on photographs of Native North Americans, Lucy R. Lippard writes, "As Indian people struggle at all social levels to be recognized as active subjects rather than passive objects in the ongoing history of this country, photographs play a significant role."[195] This statement can be applied to all native peoples caught in the line of the colonial gaze. When I began research for this project I looked in every archive I could find on the United Fruit Company for evidence of Afro-Caribbean women laboring on or around fruit company plantations at the turn of the twentieth century. Archives such as The United Fruit Company Photograph Collection, 1891-1962, located at Harvard University's Baker Library contains 78 boxes with approximately 10, 400 photographs in 75 albums of United Fruit Company history in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the on-line archive's web page the images

> …depict planting, spraying, irrigation, and harvesting, as well as construction and operation of the company's units and research laboratories, which produced bananas, sugar, abaca (for use as hemp), cacao, palm oil, cattle, and mahogany. Also recorded is evidence of hardships and damage suffered from floods, windstorms, and fire. These corporate documents capture a way of life in company towns and villages—from construction and running of railroads and wharves to daily scenes in company-built schools, hospitals, worker homes, and recreational facilities.[196]

Many of the photos document the labor done by banana workers in Latin America and the Caribbean. Workers are photographed planting stalk, loading train cars with banana bunches, cutting bunches of bananas down from trees and piling them onto donkeys, as well as building

[195] Lippard, Lucy R. Introduction. *Partial Recall: Photographs of Native North Americans, November 3-December 3, 1993*. Elkins Park, PA: Tyler School of Art, Temple U, 1993. 14. Print.
[196] "United Fruit Company Photograph Collection - Photography Collections - Historical Collections - Harvard Business School." *United Fruit Company Photograph Collection - Photography Collections - Historical Collections - Harvard Business School*. N.p., n.d. Web. 05 Feb. 2017.

infrastructure such as railroads. However, in the photographs that I have accessed, the banana workers have all been men. Any woman that appears in the photos are either the wives of white American UFCO managers or white medical staff, such as nurses. None of the women photographed appear to be black. In March of 2016, while conducting research I came across a photograph collection titled "The Caribbean Photo Archive" on the photo sharing website Flickr. It contains pictures collected from various archives and publications in the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, and the United States. According to "The Caribbean Photo Archive" page on Flickr, the albums are privately owned by archivist Patrick Montgomery. Montgomery also owns Archive Farms, Inc., a U.S. based company that "owns and manages specialized archives of historical photos and historical footage."[197] The National Archive (UK) has a photograph collection that it has shared on Flickr photos from the British Caribbean at the turn of the twentieth century. The site page to the collection states, "These images from the Colonial Office library photographic collection (CO 1069) and the Central Office of Information British Empire collection of photographs (INF 10) have been added to Flickr so that you can comment, tag and share them easily."[198] The photo albums on the website all pertain to particular places in the Caribbean (Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the West Indies). The time period of the photographs in each album range from the 1880s to the 1970s. The website also states that the photographs are a part of the "Colonial Office photographic collection held at The

[197] *Archive Farms, Inc*. Web. 17 July 2017. Other collections include: The Travel Film Archive, The Bert Morgan Archive, The History of Photography Archive, The Burton Holmes Archive, The Industry Film Archive, The Newsreel Archive, The Food Film Archive, The Educational Film Archive, and the Silent Film Archive.
[198] "Caribbean." *Flickr*. Yahoo! Web. 16 Feb. 2017

National Archives, uploaded as part of the "Caribbean Through a Lens Project." According to The National Archives (UK), the "Caribbean Through a Lens Project" has been working with community groups to "share and explore [their] collection of Caribbean images." The photographs display Caribbean history over a span of 100 years and different groups of people have used to the photograph collection to "…inspire exhibitions, reminiscence sessions, workshops and poetry."[199] "The Caribbean Photo Archive" on Flickr is an imperial archive. The collection displays photographs spanning two centuries in the Anglophone Caribbean. Independence was not given to British controlled colonies until the mid-twentieth-century beginning with Jamaica in 1962 and ending with St. Kitts and Nevis in 1983. The photographs exhibited are very much a part the historical documentation of British colonial and imperial power. According to Ann Laura Stoler, "The archive was the supreme technology of the late nineteenth-century imperial state, a repository of codified beliefs that clustered (and bore witness to) connections between secrecy, the law, and power."[200] Stoler chooses to examine colonial histories as those that are living and actively shaping the present. She writes, "…we are just now critically reflecting on the making of documents and we choose to use them, on archives not as sites of knowledge retrieval but of knowledge production, as monuments of states as well as sites of state ethnography."[201] In rereading the archived photographs found on Flickr as sites of knowledge production about the Caribbean I ask the following: What were the political and social conditions that produced these photographs? How might one explore a revisionist history or turn a photograph collection into a revisionist-archive? Finally, in what ways did the subjects

[199] "Caribbean through a Lens." *The National Archives*. The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU, Web. 20 Feb. 2017.
[200] Stoler, Ann Laura. "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance." *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 87-109. Web.
[201] Ibid., 90.

being photographed through a "Caribbean lens" resist or participate in the white colonial gaze to put forth a different story, a revisionist history?

Labor Unseen

The choice to focus this chapter's analysis more on banana production in the circum-Caribbean and less on banana production in Central America is intentional. Research conducted on the banana exporting industry during the early decades of the twentieth century is often geographically compartmentalized into discussions of banana export and industrialization in the Caribbean versus Central and South America. When connections between the Caribbean and Latin America are made concerning the banana industry it is often in reference to the empire created by the United Fruit Company or the connections to black migrant labor shared in the region. The research that has been written concerning black West Indian migration to banana producing countries in Central and South America have largely focused on male banana workers. The contributions of black West Indian women to the expansion of banana industrialization in the first half of the twentieth century are either ignored or marginalized. Although scholars such as Lara Putnam, Aviva Chomsky, Glenn A. Chambers, and others have stated that the United Fruit Company did not allow women to labor on banana plantations in Central America, the photographs taken of Afro-Jamaican women banana workers in the "Caribbean Photo Archive" on Flickr proves that the historical contributions of women to banana production in places such as Caribbean was vital to the success of banana industrialization.

Caribbean societies have always relied on the labor of women for their cultural, economic, and social development. Afro-Jamaican women were defined according to European ideologies of race, class, and gender. According to Michele A. Johnson, "…they and their work, whether agricultural, industrial, entrepreneurial or domestic, were relegated to the margins of the

region's considerations."[202] Stuck within a triple jeopardy of discrimination, black women have been the backbone of the western economy since the introduction of slavery. Women worked alongside men on Caribbean plantations. Although women shared the horrors of slavery alongside their enslaved male counterparts, the institution itself was not gender neutral. Johnson explains this in her discussion of the types of work given to slaves based on their gender, "when positions of authority (slave drivers), skill (sugar boilers) or relative autonomy (transportation workers) were created, they were assigned to male slaves. Slave women (and their unpromoted male counterparts) prepared the land, planted, tended and harvested the sugar cane (using sharp machetes), transported large bundles of canes on their heads."[203] At times this labor resulted in amputated limbs or death. Throughout the Caribbean colonies, women dominated fieldwork. The historical context of gendered labor within the institution of slavery in the Caribbean is important here because of the changes that occurred after emancipation as well as times of labor migration and settlement throughout the circum-Caribbean. After the emancipation of slaves in Caribbean colonies (between 1774-1886), some freed black women refused to work in the field, while others only worked in the fields part-time to feed and provide for their families. Freed black women constituted 30-50% of labor in the agricultural sector after emancipation.[204] Freed blacks refused to work on the plantations of planters that once owned them and therefore their labor was replaced with the indentured servitude of men and women from China and India. As men emigrated at the turn of the twentieth century to places such as Panama to (build the canal) as well as Cuba, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala for work on fruit plantations, women continued their work as agricultural laborers as evidenced in the photographs analyzed

[202] Johnson, Michele A. "Community Voices Women's Labours in the Caribbean." *Atlantis*32.1 (2007): 172-83. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web.
[203] Ibid., 174.
[204] Ibid., 176.

throughout this chapter. However, as some women migrated to join their husbands, fathers, and loved ones in Central America the ideologies and politics of gendered labor changed.

For example, the West Indian elite in Costa Rica used women to symbolize class differences on the basis of respectability. According to Nicola Foote, "Poor black women were pathologised and denied access to the myth of female morality."[205] The West Indian elite in Costa Rica believed that in order to achieve citizenship that both men and women needed to assimilate to eurocentric norms of family. This in turn meant that poor black women were policed in regard to gendered ideas about femininity, domesticity, and respectability. Foote writes, "Norms of respectability focused on gender-roles and the family. Consequently, an essentially white middle-class femininity centered on motherhood, the home and 'sexual purity' was projected as the ideal for black womanhood."[206] The same could be found in West Indian migrant communities in Honduras. Records analyzed from Holy Trinity church in La Ceiba reveal that the majority of women listed their occupation as housewives or domestic workers. According to Glenn A. Chambers, "The fact that the majority of women did not work outside the home was not uncommon. Judging from the account of some, gender roles were very traditional, with the male as the provider and the female as mother and caregiver."[207] In British colonies such as Jamaica both men and women worked on banana plantations as small shareholders. During the 1880s and 1890s men and women who owned banana plantations sold the fruit to American fruit companies interested in exporting the crop for investment. There are also links between Black West Indians, banana production, and Central America before migration in the

[205] Foote, Nicola. "Rethinking Race, Gender, and Citizenship: Black West Indian Women in Costa Rica, C. 1920-1940." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 23.2 (2004): 198-212. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web.
[206] Ibid., 201.
[207] Chambers, Glenn Anthony. *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration to Honduras, 1890-1940*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2010. Print.

starting decade of the twentieth century. Export banana production in places such as Honduras began at the same time as Jamaica. Black West Indians dominated banana production on the Bay Islands during the 1870s and 1880s.[208] In Honduras, banana production shifted from the Bay Islands to the mainland in the 1880s. However, prosperity for smallholders was not guaranteed. According to Historian John Soluri, "Evidence of conflicts in Honduras between growers and shippers over prices, fruit rejections, and shipping schedules can be found from the early 1880s—long before shipping companies began to integrate vertically. As was the case in Jamaica, a relatively competitive market enabled, but did not guarantee, prosperity for late-nineteenth-century producers in Honduras."[209]

This statement is important because it reveals a historical connection between Jamaica and Central America beyond labor migration. It also speaks to different histories of gendered labor in the circum-Caribbean. Labor on fruit plantations for West Indians men and women changed as they migrated from the islands to Central America. West Indian women did not labor on the banana plantations of Costa Rica and Honduras as they had in Jamaica. The lack of female labor on banana plantations was not due to any ideologies of femininity and labor on the part of American fruit companies, but more so the fact that West Indian women had room to explore different employment opportunities.

According to Putnam the West Indian women that traveled to Central America did not labor on banana plantations as they had in Jamaica. She states, "The United Fruit Company proved perfectly willing to employ women as field workers and dock laborers in Jamaica; that it

[208] The Bay Islands, once a British possession, became a possession of Honduras in 1861. However, the Black West Indians that settled on the islands continued to live and work on them even after it was no longer under British rule.
[209] Soluri, John. "Bananas Before Plantations. Smallholders, Shippers, and Colonial Policy in Jamaica, 1870-1910." *Iberoamericana* 6.23 (2006): 143-59. Web.

did not do so in Central America reflected differences in local labor markets and in immigrant women's freedom to maneuver them, rather than any ideological commitment to a particular vision of femininity…"[210] West Indian women have largely been excluded from the histories of banana production in Central America. However, this exclusion is not due to a lack of agricultural participation and labor. According to Foote, "…women were present in the banana communities: although men were preferred by recruiters for manual labour in the fields, women were brought over by the UFCO to serve as domestics and to work in the company kitchens and stores."[211] Women were paid by male banana workers to clean laundry and cook hot meals, as well as for sexual intimacy and companionship. Gender and labor on banana plantations was a bit different in Honduras. The majority of West Indian women who migrated to Honduras at the turn of the twentieth century did not work outside of the home. Most of the banana workers, whether West Indian or native Honduran were male. According to Chambers, "Even occupations such as cook that were considered the domain of women in other industries were filled by West Indian men in the banana camps.[212] West Indian women in places such as Costa Rica and Honduras sought employment as domestic workers and street vendors. Many of the women worked as domestic workers for white American fruit company executives. White American women preferred black West Indian women as domestics because of the ability to communicate with workers in English rather than Spanish. However, the sharing of language was not the only reason behind the preference for black domestic workers, white Americans had also brought with them from the United States racist ideologies of the South and "having black 'servants' catered

[210] Putnam, Lara. *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 2002. Print.
[211] "Rethinking Race, Gender, and Citizenship," 199.
[212] *Race, Nation, And West Indian Immigration,* 83.

to their notions of white superiority."[213] The West Indian women who migrated to Central America found ways to challenge adversity through various skill sets. While some women stayed in the home as caregivers to their husbands and children, other women went outside of the home to work. West Indian women's work was both productive and reproductive. Their labor assisted in reproducing the workforce of the United Fruit Company, whether on the plantation or ship docks, or in the home. Other women made a living as teachers, nurses, and street vendors selling the sweet delights hot meals and pastries to men and women far from home.

In chapters one and two I analyzed the different ways in which the history of American fruit companies and the hand they played in United States and Latin American social and political relations have been told through different media forms such as educational film, fruit company advertisements, and literary propaganda. However, photography has also been used to tell different narratives about American fruit company presence in the Caribbean and Latin America. Like film and literature, photographs tell their own stories. The stories that photographs tell are interpreted differently depending on space and time. At times, one must look beyond the surface level of a photograph to gain understanding of the statement that each subject is making. Lucy R. Lippard writes:

> The past is hidden from us for many reasons, among them social amnesia and the absence of public images containing any more than fragments of real experience. As we look *inside* the images that have survived since photography appeared in the mid-nineteenth century-especially those taken since 1888, when the introduction of the Kodak box camera opened the field to everyone-we can at least sense vicariously the intersections of, and the differences between, the mythic Wests of white culture and of Native cultures.[214]

[213] Ibid., 83.
[214] *Partial Recall*, 14.

Can a photograph really represent a "real experience" when taken through a white colonial lens, or does the image and or subjects in the image only represent fragments of a real experience as interpreted by the viewer? How do colonized subjects resist the white supremacist gaze of the colonizer? What powers are at play? I asked myself these questions while sifting through various photos of Jamaican banana women workers. Throughout the "Caribbean Photo Archive" are staged portraits featuring Caribbean workers and families, some of the photographs were taken on the street while others were taken in a photography studio. The photos were taken during a period of transition for places such as Jamaica. During the 1880s photography was used by the British colonial government as a way to promote its Caribbean colonies for foreign investment and international tourism. In 1889 the Governor of Jamaica, Sir Henry Blake formed a committee of wealthy landowners and local businessmen with the goal of organizing a large exhibition that would put Jamaica on display for the rest of the world. The committee was known as the Awakening Jamaica committee. The emancipation of slavery in 1838 sent Jamaica's lucrative sugar into decline. One of the ways in which Jamaica was exhibited as a valuable investment for foreign capital was through its tourism, and tourism was promoted through the photographic images that were taken of the island and its black inhabitants.[215] According to a webpage for an exhibition being held in London, England from February to April 2017 titled "Making Jamaica: Photography from the 1890s," the Awakening Jamaica committee hired an internationally recognized Scottish photography company called Valentine & Sons to "…produce promotional photographs of Jamaica and its inhabitants creating a romantic and seductive portrait of the island as a commercial and tourist paradise."[216] Valentine & Sons was

[215] "Exhibitions." *Making Jamaica: Photography from the 1890s | Autograph ABP*. Autograph, Web. 08 Mar. 2017.
[216] Ibid

founded in 1851 by James Valentine. The well-known photographic company which produced topographic images of Scotland in the 1860s later became known for its postcards.[217] The "Making Jamaica" webpage describes the exhibit being held in London this year as "More than 70 historical photographs, lantern slides and stereocards [which] reveal the carefully constructed representation of this transitional period in Jamaica's history. For [the] first time, its people are depicted as an industrious nation post-emancipation, and their surroundings as a desirable tourist destination and tropical commodity."[218] The British government wanted to steer away from perceptions of Jamaica as a poor, formerly enslaved colony in the Caribbean that needed modernizing. Instead, the British colonial government depicted the island as luxurious and romantic as well as worthy of foreign investment, infrastructure, and leisure. The portraits taken of Jamaican landscape and inhabitants by well-known photographers such as James Valentine, Dr. James Johnston, J.W. Cleary, and E. Bavastro during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reveal more than scenic views and industrious people. The photographs exhibit the resistance of its black Jamaican subjects to the white colonial gaze of the photographer. In the essay "In our Glory: Photography of Black Life," bell hooks states that there is an importance to photography in black life. Hooks writes, "Cameras gave to black folks, irresponsive of class, a means by which we could participate fully in the production of images."[219] Black people through

[217] "Photographic Archive of J Valentine and Co., Dundee." *Archives Hub*. Web. 08 Mar. 2017. A photographic archive titled "Photographic archive of J Valentine and Co., Dundee" held at the special collections of the University of St. Andrews in Scotland describes Valentine's nineteenth century views as being "…aimed at the national middle and upper class tourist market, with the production of both drawing room albums containing selections of photographs arranged geographically and individual landscape prints… Subjects concentrated on the genteel tourist sights and places in Scotland, then to England in 1882 and on to fashionable resorts abroad, including Norway, Jamaica, Tangiers, Morocco, Madeira and New Zealand before 1900."[217]

[218] "Exhibitions." *Making Jamaica: Photography from the 1890s*.

[219] Hooks, Bell. "In Our Glory: Photography and Black Life." *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. New York: New, 1998. 54-64. Print.

the diaspora found ways to resist the colonial gaze and rupture the white supremacist eye. This resistance can be seen through the photographs collected in the Caribbean photo archive on Flickr.

At the end of the nineteenth century the British colony of Jamaica became a modernization project for the mercantile elite and British colonial administrators that lived on the island. The main goal of the British government was to create a new visual image of Jamaica, encouraging foreign investment and tourism. In the book *An Eye For the Tropics* Krista A. Thompson shares an excerpt from an editorial written in 1892 which expressed the ideas that the British metropole had about Jamaica and its inhabitants. The editorial states, " 'the popular idea of Jamaica [at home] is of an island ruined by emancipation, a region of derelict estates with a scattered population of negro squatters, paying no rent, living in squalid huts, supporting life on yams and bananas, and indebted to the calabash tree for the household utensils' (DG, 2 February 1892)."[220] Those in Great Britain viewed the island of Jamaica as stricken by poverty and filled with "primitive" newly emancipated blacks, whom the British believed lacked the cultural fortitude to make Jamaica an attractive place to call home. The white supremacist views of the British elite always worked to erase the truth of the matter which was that the forced black labor of thousands of slaves had made Jamaica one of Great Britain's richest colonies in the Caribbean during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Now that the once enslaved population was free, the British worked to find ways to supplement the flow of capital going to and coming from the island. The vision of "New Jamaica" included photography that showcased the island as a large and luxurious garden landscape where both Jamaica's vegetation and inhabitants were fetishized for the gain of foreign capital and investment.

[220] Thompson, Krista A. "Framing "The New Jamaica"." *An Eye for the Tropics: Tourism, Photography, and Framing the Caribbean Picturesque*. Durham: Duke UP, 2006. 29. Print.

An example of the ways in which Jamaican flora and fauna and "native" inhabitants were often photographed together can be observed in a photograph titled "Native Woman, Jamaica," located in one of the *Caribbean Photo Archive's* albums "Banana Production." The subject of the photograph, a young Jamaican woman, stands barefoot wearing a white tattered blouse and a tied up patterned skirt. She leans against a bundle of tied up sugar cane stalks as she balances a bunch of bananas on her head with one hand. Cacti line the back of the photograph. The photograph looks to be staged, as if the photographer taking the photo directed the woman to stand in the center of shrubbery and vegetation while showcasing two of the most profitable agricultural products of Jamaica: sugar cane and bananas. In fact, these types of photographs were prevalent during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and were highly regarded among the American and British tourists who frequented the island. According to Thompson:

> Many benefactors of Jamaica's tourism industry at the beginning of the twentieth century were simultaneously involved in the developing fruit trade (primarily in bananas and citrus fruits); hence many of the photographic images disseminated by these companies in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century had dual aims…The New Jamaica was also refashioned as a touristic landscape of desire by presenting the island as a place where the "fruits" of colonialism, both the "benefits" derived from British colonial rule and American Enterprise, could be observed and certain agricultural products cultivated on the island could be visually and literally consumed.[221]

Photographs like "Native woman, Jamaica," were commissioned by the likes of Jamaican governor Henry Blake, whom in the 1890s supported an international exhibition of Jamaica to "…bolster the trade of agricultural products (especially bananas) that the island offered for sale" as well as "…inspire the island's majority black population in the ways of industry and enterprise."[222] The British elite and the colonial government believed that the black population

[221] Ibid., 30.
[222] Ibid., 31.

would benefit from the international exhibition by opening their eyes to their "primitive" conditions. The exhibition was held on the island of Jamaica and opened on January 27, 1881.[223] The exhibition drew participation from as far away as Russia and Holland however, blacks resisted the white supremacist ideologies of the British elite by steering clear of the exhibition, refusing to attend it.

Resisting racialized consumption

The photo captured above is part of a larger history of the "imperial picturesque."[224] Beginning in the late eighteenth century, planters began to petition British artists to create picturesque images of their property amid growing conversations about the immorality of slavery and debates about black slave labor. Artists such as architect James Hakewill toured the island and painted picturesque landscapes commissioned by planters and landowners in Jamaica. In 1825, Hakewill published *A Picturesque Tour of the island of Jamaica* which included paintings of 21 different estates.[225] However, among the rolling hills, sugar cane mills, and palm trees captured in the paintings was a deliberate erasure of black slave labor. According to Thompson, "The aesthetics of concealment, long a central part of picturesque aesthetics, provided a ready-made mask through which planters and the artists they commissioned could disguise the conditions, violence, and brutality of the plantation."[226] Nonetheless, by the nineteenth century the inclusion of black labor into the colonial landscaping of Jamaica was considered to be part of the vision of the "imperial picturesque." Like the vegetation and agriculture that planters and

[223] Ibid., 30.
[224] According to Krista A. Thompson, the "imperial picturesque" is an aesthetic that was deeply connected to British imperialism in the West Indies. The British aesthetic was especially popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth century during Jamaica's "silver age," a time during which the sugar plantation system brought great economic prosperity to planters and landowners in the British West Indies.
[225] *Framing "The New Jamaica"*, 36.
[226] Ibid., 38.

landowners worked to capture, slaves were considered to be “natural” to the Jamaican landscape. The “naturalness” of the island, the ability to see and consume the exotic agriculture and black labor on the island is what drew the tourism and foreign investments of Americans and British elite.

Figure 11: "Native Woman, Jamaica" (1900). The Caribbean Photo Archive.

As the banana industry grew in Jamaica, it too became the subject of photography taken to capture the attention of consumers and foreign investors. At the start of the twentieth century banana plantations and banana workers replaced sugar plantations and naturalist images of flowers as the sought-after image that represented the "new Jamaica." The type of banana that was introduced to American consumers, and later which the United Fruit Company made a large profit off of, is known as the Gros Michel banana. Said to be introduced to the Caribbean through the island of Martinique, the crop was planted in Jamaica by a French botanist around 1836. By 1898 Lorenzo Dow Baker, the founder of the Boston Fruit Company later known as the United Fruit Company, had shipped over 16 million stems to the United States.[227] The United Fruit company wanted to sell a "planters' dream" to tourists who held nostalgic views about the imperial picturesque, which included tours of banana plantations and visual access to banana workers. Resistance to the white colonial gaze can be seen in the photograph above as well as other photographs similar to it in the Caribbean Photo Archive. The woman being photographed in "Native Woman, Jamaica" seems to show displeasure with whomever is behind the camera. She frowns as she looks passed it, refusing to engage the viewer. In her analysis of photographs taken of Native Americans at the turn of the twentieth century, Lippard discusses various photographs found in archives where Native peoples can be seen hiding their faces from the camera. Lippard states, "Soon it was recognized as the ultimate invasion social, religious, and individual privacy."[228] Those caught in the gaze of the camera often tried to avoid being captured for numerous reasons. The technology of the camera was viewed as "shadow catchers." According to Lippard, "The transfer of black-and-white likeness to paper meant to some that part

[227] Ibid., 49.
[228] *Partial Recall*, 29.

of their lives had been taken away..."[229] Others believed that being captured in a photograph meant that their power had been diminished by the photographer's white gaze. While the young woman in the photo is unable to hide her face, she employs a similar strategy as the subjects described by Lippard. She avoids the camera's gaze by looking off in an unseen distance.

There is much to be analyzed in the above image. The young woman is simultaneously holding on to two staple agricultural products of Jamaica and much of the Caribbean: sugar cane and banana. It is not clear whether the young woman poses in the picture as a worker for a large fruit company or local farm. However, even if the young woman participated willingly she did not participate joyfully. In her discussion of photography and black life bell hooks writes, "All colonized and subjugated people who, by way of resistance, create an oppositional subculture within the framework of domination recognize that the field of representation (how we see ourselves, how others see us) is a site of ongoing struggle."[230] Further hooks states, "The camera was the central instrument by which blacks could disprove representations of us created by white folks."[231] I argue that the photograph, Native Woman, Jamaica (1900)," was staged in an effort to capture one of Jamaica's many landscapes. It was a commodification of the island's "native" vegetation and inhabitants, an imperial window into what foreign investors could have and own pieces of: colonial land, its agricultural resources, and black labor.

A stereocard published by Keystone View Co., date unknown, captures the industriousness of Jamaica through a visual image of banana workers at a port unloading banana bunches from train cars and filing in line to load them onto fruit steamers in preparation for exportation to the north. The photograph titled "Loading a Fruit Steamer with Bananas for

[229] Ibid., 30-31.
[230] "In Our Glory," 57.
[231] Ibid., 59.

Northern Markets, Kingston, Jamaica" (figure 12), provides a visual for one part of the banana production process: the preparation for export of the fruit. In the photograph two Afro-Jamaican women stand directly in front of the camera capturing the scenery of the port. One of the women looks at the camera while the other woman, although physically facing the camera, looks away from its lens. On the side of the photograph sits railcars filled with bunches of bananas. A group of Afro-Jamaican women stand near the opening of one of the railcars awaiting their turn to unload the shipment, some of them carrying the bunches on their heads as they walk to the bridge that will take them to the fruit steamer which can be viewed in the distance. One woman stands out in the photograph for what she chooses to do while in the gaze of the photographer. The woman appears to be standing off on her own as if she is waiting to join the other women who are surrounding the railcar. She places both her hands on top of her head, almost as if she is dancing for the camera. Upon a closer look at the woman, it appears that she is smiling. Her energy is unlike any of the other women captured in the photograph. On one hand her performance disrupts the monotony of banana production showcased in the photograph. On the other hand, she perpetuates the stereotype of the happy-go-lucky black worker. The stereotype of the "happy slave" can be traced back to chattel slavery and the stereotype of the sambo. Although the sambo has historically been gendered male, it was a stereotype that became so pervasively and generationally transmitted that it began to be viewed as a biological fact among whites. According to Laura Green, "The sambo stereotype flourished during the reign of slavery in the United States. In fact, the notion of the 'happy slave' is the core of the sambo caricature…Although sambo was born out of a defense for slavery, it extended far beyond these bounds."[232] However, there are two women disrupt the stereotype of the "happy black worker"

[232] Green, Laura. "Stereotypes: Negative Racial Stereotypes and Their Effect on Attitude Toward African-Americans." *Perspectives on Multiculturalism and Diversity* XI.1 (1998-99): Web.

through their own gaze. Two women in the center foreground of the photograph stare in the direction of the photographer. One woman rests her hand on a steel handle connected to the train car in which other women can be seen unloading bunches of bananas. The other woman stands directly in front of the photographer. She stares at the camera as if to deliver the unknown audience a message, "I am not here for your entertainment." Photographs such as the one described were printed out as postcards and used for lectures that focused on the industriousness of Jamaica. These photographs were the calling cards used to collect foreign investment. Agricultural labor is known to be quite arduous, backbreaking, and time consuming. In part, it is because agricultural labor is all of those things. Even more so, the composition of the photograph cuts against picturesque notions of Jamaica as labor production, not vegetation, is central to the photograph. Unlike a portrait which engages with a subject More intimately, the above photograph is taken with more of a wide angle shot which is characteristic of landscape photography. Except, instead of the photograph capturing the picturesque elements of Jamaica's landscape, it focuses on the production of Afro-Jamaican female workers. The photograph is taken in such a way that women can be seen working in the foreground, mid-ground, and background, each depth of field referring to different aspects of industrial activity, like a factory assembly line.

Figure 12: "Loading a Fruit Steamer with Bananas for Northern Markets, Kingston, Jamaica." Caribbean Photo Archive.

In "Looking at One's Self Through the Eyes of Others" Shawn Michelle Smith analyzes photographs collected by scholar W.E.B. Du Bois for the 1900 Paris Exposition. In the essay Smith argues that Du Bois's portrait collection problematizes "...the images of 'negro criminality' that worked to consolidate a vision of white middle-class privilege at the turn of the century."[233] Smith uses Du Bois's concept of double consciousness to analyze the different ways in which blacks resist the white supremacist gaze of photography. She states, ""In *The Souls of Black Folk,* W.E.B Du Bois describes 'double consciousness' as the 'sense of always looking at

[233] Smith, Shawn Michelle. ""Looking at One's Self through the Eyes of Others":W.E.B. Du Bois's Photographs for the 1900 Paris Exposition." *African American Review* 34.4 (2000): 581-99. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web.

oneself through the eyes of others" …For Du Bois, the African American subject position is a psychological space mediated by a 'white supremacist gaze…and therefore divided by contending images of blackness- those images produced by a racist white American culture, and those images maintained by African American individuals, within African American communities."[234] Further she writes, "I argue that Du Bois's 'American Negro' photographs disrupt the images of African Americans produced 'through the eyes of others' by simultaneously reproducing and supplanting these images with a different vision of the 'American Negro.'"[235] Could the same be said for the woman in figure 12? Perhaps the act of the laboring women staring into the camera lens can be viewed as a disruption to its gaze.

The photographs, stereocards, and postcards produced of Jamaica's landscape and inhabitants served as consumable objects for North American tourists who had a taste for the tropics, both literally and visually. Images such as the one's analyzed above "…fed metropolitan desires for both eating tropical fruit and visually consuming tropical landscapes."[236] In fact, the fruit industry catered to the oral and visual consumption of tourists in Jamaica. Company's such as the United Fruit Company participated in creating photos of "new Jamaica's" picturesque by photographing banana plantations and banana workers.[237] The United Fruit Company also provided excursions for travelers onboard its cruise ships, the black and indigenous inhabitants being one of the main attractions of the excursion. According to Catherine Cocks for $2 to $5 travelers would "take a carriage (later an automobile) ride around the port city and its vicinity, with visits to major public buildings, monuments, gardens, and the neighborhoods of poor or

[234] Ibid., 581.
[235] Ibid., 581.
[236] Thompson, 57.
[237] According to Thompson, the visual formulation of the new picturesque was an updated version of the imperial picturesque which worked to capture sugar plantations and slave labor. The new picturesque replaced sugar plantations with bananas and slaves with banana workers (61).

minority residents who might qualify as picturesque (usually those of African descent, although Chinese and East Indian locals might also serve the purpose, while in Central America indigenous people had the role)…"[238] Photographs of bananas, banana plantations, and banana workers were used to signify the taming of the tropics. As I analyze in Chapter one, the United Fruit Company made educational films such as *About Bananas (1935)* to showcase the Caribbean as a place that was no longer "wild" or "savage," as well as to capture the productivity of indigenous and black workers under the control of American corporations. The same message was captured in photographs taken by United Fruit. As Thompson states, "These artistically 'laid out' environments differentiated Jamaica from characterizations of the tropics as places of wild and threatening nature. The very presence of bananas on the landscape signified that the tropical had been tamed."[239] A photograph taken in 1907 by photographer J.W. Cleary titled "Banana Carriers-Jamaica," for example, captures the desire of the white gaze to tame Jamaica's nature and its people. In addition, this photograph as well as the ones analyzed above, can be read for the active process of fetishizing black female labor through a white male colonial gaze. In the article "Defining Women Subjects," Roshini Kempadoo writes, "Analysis of women in colonial photographs also allows us to consider the construction of masculinity and, in particular, to acknowledge the predominance of the male gaze in determining the meaning of images of women. It is widely acknowledged that men historically (if not contemporaneously) have controlled the production of images."[240] Photography and its technologies contributed to visual

[238] Cocks, Catherine. "More and More Attractive Each Year." *Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South in the Americas*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania, 2013. 41-72. Print.
[239] Ibid., 64.
[240] Kempadoo, Rossini. "Defining Women Subjects: Photographs in Trinidad (1860s–1960s)." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* 7 (2013): 1-14. Web. 4.

perceptions about the Caribbean and was used to make visible distinctions between colonist and colonizer, between white and non-white, men and women.

Unlike the two photographs above, "Banana Carriers" is taken in a photography studio. The scene is staged. Two Afro-Jamaican women are positioned in the center of the photo, surrounded by tropical plants and foliage. One of the women stands barefoot, holding onto the stems of a palm tree. She looks directly into the camera lens in a bold manner. The other woman sits on a stool with a bunch of bananas resting on her lap. She appears unenthused by the person behind the camera. The Afro-Jamaican women appear to be props in a staged photograph most likely taken for touristic amusement and consumption. In chapter one of her book Thompson analyzes the same photograph and writes:

> Two women command a central position in the photograph, one of who attaches herself to the new signifier of tropicality, the banana tree. The other woman, seated, holds a bunch of bananas squarely in front of her, with her fingers spread in such a way that the banana stems seem an organic extension of her body…the black women in this photograph become the tropicalizing elements included in the foreground. They similarly 'go with' the tropicalized new landscape of Jamaica, as signified by the banana.[241]

Thompson's analysis of "Banana Carriers" alludes to the push of the British colonial government as well as the Jamaican elite to present Jamaica as an island of productivity, a place where both resources and labor were being produced. This explains the obsession with capturing banana workers "at work" whether staged or photographed candidly on banana plantations. The banana workers in such photographs are often placed in positions where the corporeal is indistinguishable from the fauna and flora that surround the worker's body. In other words, the hands and fingers that extend into the bunch of bananas being held, the holding onto the trunks of palm trees, and or the placing of fruit on the heads of workers all function to make banana

[241] Ibid., 61.

workers appear as extensions of their labor, which in the case of banana workers are the bananas and banana trees themselves. The clothing of the two women also function as an element of the picturesque. The aestheticizing of the women's uniform worked to naturalize labor exploitation. Many white tourists traveling from the United States held onto racist ideologies of black labor and subservience. In the West, clothing played a significant role in identifying blacks who were enslaved or free. In particular, one piece of gendered clothing, the headwrap, was used by white slave masters as a way to maintain southern white power over black slaves. Helen Bradley Griebel states, "In effect, whites used these dress codes to outwardly distinguish those without power from those who held it."[242] Furthermore in reference to several black codes that were instated throughout the South she writes, "The preceding codes and comments show that whites expected the headwrap to mark the black woman's social status as different from that of women in the white community.[243] Although the headwrap was used by white supremacists to control the status of enslaved black women, black women throughout the diaspora have worn and continue to wear headwraps as a symbol of cultural pride. The headwrap has also functioned as a form of protection for laboring black women especially while carrying things on their heads.

Although Thompson's analysis subtly reflects upon the representation of banana workers' bodies as machines, her analysis overall is about the picturesque and how the two banana workers photographed were used to direct the West's attention to the makings of a "new

[242] Griebel, Helen Bradley. *The African American Woman's Headwrap: Unwinding the Symbols*. Cornell University, n.d. Web. 27 July 2017.

[243] In regard to dress codes implemented during chattel slavery in different southern states Griebel writes, "The earliest, South Carolina's Negro Act of 1735, 'specifically set a standard of dress for the enslaved and free African Americans'…In 1740 amendments, South Carolina's slave code further elaborated the dress regulations… In 1786, while Louisiana was a Spanish colony, the governor enacted a dress code which forbade: 'females of color ... to wear plumes or jewelry'; this law specifically required "their hair bound in a kerchief."

Jamaica." I, however, am analyzing the photograph for more than its picturesque image. Although the photograph was taken to exemplify industriousness, the subjects of the photograph present a corporeal resistance to its message.

Figure 13: "Banana Carriers, Jamaica" (1907). Caribbean Photo Archive.

They are disrupting the visual and discursive message of the picturesque through their body language.

In her analysis of bell hook's essay *Glory,* Shawn Michelle Smith writes, "As bell hooks reminds us, despite the historical prohibition against the black gaze, especially during slavery, African Americans have observed white people with 'a critical, 'ethnographic' gaze."[244] Although "Banana Carriers, Jamaica" was made for the gaze of white North American and British tourists interested in the fruit production and plantation labor of Jamaica, it appears as though the two Jamaican banana workers are constructing their own analysis of the colonial gaze of white tourists through their critical ethnographic gaze. The two women are agents in their own analysis of an unknown audience gazing back at them. In reference to another scholar, Robert Young, Smith states, "'The ideology of race…from the 1840s onward necessarily worked according to a double logic, according to which it both enforced and policed the differences between whites and non-whites but at the same time focused fetishistically on the product of the contacts between them."[245] The showcasing of Jamaica's industriousness involved capturing blacks at work. The British colonial government was invested in selling black labor through the technology of photography to ensure foreign capital and investment in the island. However, as bell hooks so brilliantly states, "…the camera became in black life a political instrument, a way to resist misrepresentation as well as a means by which alternative images could be produced."[246] "Banana Carriers, Jamaica" is an example of the embodiment of colonizing fantasies; fantasies which had once depicted Jamaica as a tropical island which brought illness and apathy to white travelers, later exalting the island for the beauties of its nature, agricultural production, and

[244] "Looking at One's Self," 589.
[245] Ibid., 59.
[246] "In Our Glory," 60.

industriousness. The banana women present an alternative image, one that resists the fetishistic and colonial gaze of banana tourism. With her seemingly defiant pose and facial expression, it is as if she is visually signaling her difference from the scenario in which she has been scripted. Perhaps she is not a banana woman but was paid to pose for a photograph that she knows will be viewed by hundreds of tourists who are paying for a glimpse of Jamaica's picturesque. Her eyes signal to the photographer to hurry and be done with it all. The woman sitting to the left of her also resists the fetishistic nature of the photograph by resting her face in her hand. The woman exudes a lack of interest in what the photographer is attempting to capture. The woman appears tired, weary even. she may have been in the studio for quite some time posing until the photographer feels as though he has captured the perfect photograph. I analyze the photo for all of the non-verbal cues that both women care to share with the audience. I wish that I could ask them why they are participating and if they know they are being used as props for mass consumption. I imagine that they are tired of being made into spectacles for the country's economic gain.[247] Of course, my analysis of the photograph is speculative. It is not known whether the photographer directed the women to take those positions or whether the women chose to be captured in those positions. However, as contradictory as the photograph may appear, their participation reveals a resistance to the a white-supremacist gaze of new Jamaica.

Conclusion

Roshini Kempadoo writes, "Of primary importance is that images are not only about how they look, but how they are looked at. Consideration can, therefore, be given to the women subjects in the photograph as well as to who is doing the looking." Further she writes, "As a

[247] For examples of scholars that do a great job of speculating the meanings of photographs, in regard to a subjects' facial expressions and body language, refer to Rayna Green's essay "Rosebuds Of The Plateau: Frank Matsura and the Fainting Couch Aesthetic" and Jimmie Durham's essay "Geronimo!" in the anthology *Partial Recall: Photographs of Native North Americans* edited by Lucy R. Lippard.

colonial process, photography contributed to the operation of repeatedly representing the colonial subject as primitive, childlike, mentally deficient and sexually charged or in need of civilising."[248] In this chapter I have analyzed photos found in the "Caribbean Photo Archive," located on the photo sharing website Flickr, to reveal the ways in which Afro-Jamaican women banana workers, through my reading of their resistance to the white colonial gaze of picturesque photography, created a revisionist archive. For many decades, the labor history of women in the Caribbean remained obscured, as if women have made little contribution to the flow of labor within the region. Black women in the Caribbean, plagued by the triangulation of racism, sexism, and classism, often did not, and many would argue do not, have the privilege of remaining homemakers like their white counterparts. According to Rhoda Reddock, "The post-slavery Caribbean provided a good example of the opportunistic manipulation of notions of 'worker' and 'housewife.' Caribbean women, although, descendants of slaves and indentured labourers brought to the region for work on plantations, were subject to state policy and employment practice based on the assumption that they were not 'real workers.'"[249] Black women have also been both gendered and sexualized as "not-male" but too masculine to be considered feminine and therefore delicate and in need of protection like white women. White supremacist ideologies about gender and race have contributed to the laboring of black women since chattel slavery. As Kempadoo points out black women "were not seen as women in the same sense that white women were. Since slavery, African females had been seen as at once women-in as much as they were sexualized, reproductive and subordinate-and not-women, that is not pure, not feminine, not

[248] "Defining Women Subjects," 4.
[249] Reddock, Rhoda. ""Forever Indebted to Women: The Contribution of Women in the Development of the Caribbean Labour Movement"." The University of the West Indies-Open Campus CONSORTIUM FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH LECTURE SERIES. University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. 22 Oct. 2008. Lecture. 4.

fragile but strong and sexually knowing and available."[250] At times, the methods involved in the archiving of historical photographs, no doubt, reflect white supremacist ideologies of race and gendered labor in the Caribbean.

The photos taken of Afro-Jamaican banana women workers and found in the "Caribbean Photo Archive" reveal a layered complexity to not only the technology of the photograph as visual text but also to ideologies of gendered labor in the Caribbean. My method in regard to the reading of each photograph included in this chapter has served to analyze several different factors: the person behind the lens, the subjects being captured, consumers of the photographs, and the ways in which subjects both participated in and resisted the white colonial gaze. The photographs examined are important to discussions surrounding the West's imperial power in the Caribbean, such as the colonial stronghold of American fruit companies in the region, as well as the history of black women's contributions to circum-Caribbean nation building through both their productive and reproductive labor in and around the plantation labor system. Although photography has been used as a technology of colonialism, the women in the photographs above provide alternative meanings to the historical archive through their self-awareness and their awareness of the photographs audience. Their resistance to the white gaze of the camera is inherent in their body language, facial expressions, and refusals to look into the camera's lens. I read these archival photographs against the grain in order to make a space for the envisioning of each woman's historical presence and their active contribution in the creation of a revisionist archive.

[250] "Defining Women Subjects,"5.

CHAPTER FOUR
Family Ties: The Lived Experiences of Addie and Nelly McBride

"Human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators."
-Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*

All I have of my great-grandmother is a copy of her obituary photo, nicely preserved in a frame saved by her youngest daughter, my grandmother. I had never seen a picture of my great-grandmother before conducting research for my dissertation but growing up I always imagined what she looked like. As a child I relied on the stories that my mother shared with me about her childhood, growing up on the Westside of Chicago, and the close bond she had with her Jamaican grandmother. My mother described her as being a light-skinned black woman with Gray eyes and a heavy-set build, her Jamaican patois strong. Her weight and struggle with diabetes had kept her in bed for much of my mother's childhood, or at least what my mother could remember of her grandmother. The grandchildren were assigned the task of taking care of her. However, it was my mother who would often be by her bedside reading the Bible to her, cleaning her up, and running to the corner store to get her grandmother soda crackers and other treats that she had been forbidden to eat due to her diabetes. My great-grandmother passed away when my mother was nine-years-old, and it had been tough for my mother to let go of her. My grandmother, born Nelly McBride, the youngest of twelve children, has always claimed that she does not know much about her mother's personal life and history. After all, my great-grandmother was 50 years-old when she gave birth to my grandmother, and being

Figure 14: Obituary photo of Addie McBride (1974).

that my grandmother was the youngest child her siblings often overlooked her in many discussions involving matters of her family.

My family history, the life story of that of my great-grandmother, Addie McBride, has swirled across lips and bounced off of tongues in the form of rumors and tales, no one ever sure that their version of her history is accurate. I first became fascinated with the history of my great-grandmother after the stories that I had heard growing up of her migration from Jamaica to Honduras at the young age of fifteen. I imagined what her life must have been like back in Jamaica, the daughter of a white woman (family stories go back and forth about whether her mother was English or Irish), and a black Jamaican man, a relationship itself entangled within the histories of colonialism, enslavement, racism, and miscegenation. What would possess her to migrate across the Caribbean to a place unknown to her at such a young age? Had her migration been her decision or was it forced upon her? At the age of 30, my grandmother too migrated from Honduras to the United States on her own to join her sisters in Chicago, building a better life for her three children that awaited her back in Honduras. Migration, it would then seem, is in my blood. Both my great-grandmother and grandmother worked as domestic laborers in the places that they migrated to, looking after children, cleaning houses, cooking food, selling goods. Their histories and geographies traveled are what has inspired my work. Their stories and the stories of women like them remain unknown in the archive as well as in scholarship that examines gendered labor and migration in the Caribbean.

This chapter lends a personal and intimate touch to the history of Afro-Caribbean women's migrant labor in the circum-Caribbean. The history shared in this chapter is one not found in the archive, and although one could argue that the very act of sharing these stories through my research is a form of archiving, they are stories not easily captured in the capital "H" historical sense. My travels to archives in Honduras and the United States have brought about just as much disappointment as it has awe for the stories of Afro-Caribbean gendered migrant

labor that are missing or that cease to exist. That is not to say that there is no archived material which reveals the lives and lived experiences of Caribbean migrants in places such as Central America. In fact, scholars who center their work on Caribbean labor migration to Costa Rica and Panama have used extensive archival material found in these countries in their research.[251] However, scholarship which focuses on Afro-Caribbean migrant labor in Honduras at the turn of the twentieth century and beyond is quite scarce.

I come from a family of storytellers. Every Sunday morning my grandfather would come over bearing gifts in the form of produce (bananas, pineapples, sugar cane, and mangoes), and stories about his beloved Honduras. He reminded my siblings and me that to know our history, our roots, was extremely important in understanding ourselves and who we were in the world. We were Honduran, we were Garifuna, we were the grandchildren of Adolfo Confesor Arzu, and we were to be proud. My grandfather's love of storytelling and his obsession with history lives within me. According to Trouillot, "History is the fruit of power, but power itself is never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous."[252] This chapter is about history and resistance. It deals with a history told through oral narrative and memory. I use the act of storytelling and oral narrative to write the memories of my great-grandmother Addie, and grandmother Nelly, as lived examples of gendered migrant labor from the Caribbean to Central America and the United States. This chapter uses multiple layers of information much like the layers to my great-grandmother's history. In it, I connect multiple research methods (historical and ethnographic) and texts to tell a story. Archival material in the form of correspondence letters between Great Britain and Honduras, declarations of citizenship, and photographs are analyzed alongside the

[251] See Lara Putnam, Aviva Chomsky, Philippe Bourgois, Elisavinda Echeverri-Gent, Ronald N. Harpelle.
[252] Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. "Preface." Preface. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. S.l.: Beacon, 1997. Print.

oral narrative of my grandmother to begin tracing the lives my grandmother and great-grandmother lived in Honduras and their connection to gendered labor and migration in the circum-Caribbean. The very act of my sharing of these stories with my great-grandmother and grandmother at center stage is a resistance to the history that is chosen to be nationally archived, memorialized, and remembered, as well as a history that is made public in places such as Honduras.

I had heard stories about Honduras my entire life. Any chance my grandfather had to tell my siblings and me about his childhood and life as a poor farmer boy and how he had walked miles to school barefoot, he would, with a sense of pride I have yet to encounter in anyone else. I knew so much about my grandfather and his life in Honduras growing up in a Garifuna community near La Ceiba. My grandmother, on the other hand, did not volunteer information about her childhood like my grandfather did. Perhaps she had learned to keep her memories to herself as her mother had done. What I did know about my grandmother was that she was the youngest child and that both of her parents were West Indian, her mother from Jamaica and her father from Roatán, an island belonging to Honduras as well as an island occupied by many West Indian inhabitants. However, what had captured my interest the most about my grandmother's history was the story of her mother's migration. My great-grandmother's migration story contains many layers. Each layer that is peeled away reveals something new and at times disrupts my family's knowledge of our history. What I had heard over and over again was that my great-grandmother was a racially mixed woman. She was very light-skinned with sandy brown hair and gray eyes. For years my family had thought that my great-grandmother's father was white and her mother black. One year he would be described as an Irish man and the next year he was English. At times, during the storytelling, my great-grandmother had run away because her father

was thought to be a very intimidating man, although no one knew what he had done. Other rumors circulated that my great-grandmother left Honduras for work and that she had run off with missionaries. One of the more frequently told stories told by my great-grandmother to her grandchildren, was her memory of fishing in Jamaica with her two younger brothers. While on the beach they would catch and bury the fish in clay letting the hot sun cook the fish and afterward they would crack it open and eat the fish. My mother remembers this story so vividly because it was one of the only times that my great-grandmother supposedly ever talked about her life in Jamaica as a young girl, as well as one of the only times she had ever mentioned that she had siblings. Any other information about her life in Jamaica was sealed up, rarely to be spoken of. My great-grandmother's life and her secrets intrigued me. At a very young age, I knew that I needed to find out more about her and her life and that one day I would dedicate myself to uncovering the pieces missing from my family history. In her book *Lose Your Mother* Saidiya Hartman writes, "Unlike my grandparents, I thought the past was a country to which I could return."[253] Similar to Hartman I believed that I too could uncover my family's history in my visit to Honduras during the summer of 2015, but I quickly discovered that to piece the puzzle together I had first to find the pieces, and locating those pieces would be near impossible.

In December of 2015, I sat with my grandmother Nelly in the guest room of her 2-flat apartment building that she owns on the Westside of Chicago to discuss what she knew about her mother's journey to Honduras as well as my grandmother's life as the child of West Indian migrants in La Ceiba, Honduras. I was nervous to interview my grandmother. I had prearranged questions made up, but I wanted the conversation to be free-flowing, informal. I was aware that

[253] Hartman, Saidiya V. *Lose Your Mother: a Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008. 15.

not many people have the privilege of interviewing the elders of their family, and so I felt honored to interview my 80-year-old grandmother about what she remembered about her mother and the banana town where my grandmother had been born and raised. I wanted to know what my grandmother remembered about her mother and if my great-grandmother had ever shared any history with her. I wanted to know why there were so many gaps and silences surrounding her migration and life in Jamaica. Why are there so many secrets? What do I do with the rumors that circulate and become familiar? Should I try to fill the gaps or uncover the missing pieces to my family's history?

Addie's Story

"I have more information on my mother now." It was a relief to hear those words as four months prior I had gone to her beloved Honduras to conduct two weeks' worth of research in the National Archives on a Tinker Grant and had found little of what I had gone to search for in regard to Afro-Caribbean women's labor and migration histories in Honduras. I began my research at the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), in Tegucigalpa. Nilda Lopez, a lawyer, and facilitator of the archive at the ministry assisted me with my research along with Nicol Ortiz, a history student attending the National Autonomous University of Honduras. The boxes that were waiting for me upon my arrival to the archive contained books filled with correspondence letters between Great Britain and Honduras as well as the British Legation and Guatemala at the turn of the twentieth century between 1899 and 1940. These letters reveal the concerns of British subjects in Honduras and Guatemala during this particular period, such as the mistreatment of British subjects, arrests of British subjects, violence against British subjects, labor laws, and citizenship and immigration laws in Honduras. West Indian migrant laborers that traveled from places such as Jamaica, Trinidad, or the Grand Cayman

Islands for work on the railroads or American fruit company plantations in Honduras were referred to as British subjects in the correspondence letters between the British legation and the Central American countries that hosted them. While at the Ministry I also examined naturalization documents from the 1930s to 1950s. Within these naturalization books, one can find people from all over the world (Palestine, Germany, Italy, the Caribbean) that were applying for Honduran citizenship. There were very few documents that pertained to the naturalization of Black British subjects from the West Indies. Many of the Black West Indian migrant laborers that traveled to Honduras for work at the turn of the twentieth century would return to Jamaica or other Caribbean islands when work was no longer available. Still, there were those like my great-grandmother who would never return to the island and instead remained in Honduras where she married and raised her children.

As the story goes, my great-grandmother was born Addie Louise Martin on November 21, 1891, to a white mother and a black father in Montego Bay Jamaica. She was one of four children. My grandmother learned that her mother had grown up on a farm and at the age of fifteen had found herself pregnant and unwed. Upon hearing the news of her pregnancy, my great-grandmother's father kicked her out of the house and sent her to live with her half-sister who also resided in Montego Bay. While living with her half-sister, she met someone who planned to travel outside of Jamaica to the Island of Roatán, (the largest of the Bay Islands of Honduras), and also where my great-grandmother gave birth to a baby girl named May. In fact, there had been a stable population of people of West Indian descent on the island dating back to the 1830s. According to Glenn A. Chambers, "The Bay Islanders were descendants of earlier Caymanian and Jamaican families who migrated independently to the region in the 1830s

following the formal emancipation of slavery in the British Caribbean."[254] Although the Bay Islands became a part of Honduras in 1859 (due to the agreement in the Monroe Doctrine), the islands had been ruled informally as a British possession since the 1840s. Bay Islanders became Honduran citizens however, the culture very much remained British. Chambers states, "Through the first half of the twentieth century, many in the Bay Islands, unwilling to accept Honduran citizenship, continued to identify as British subjects and disavowed any political or cultural association with Honduras."[255] Bay Islanders maintained strong economic and social connections to the British crown and its colonies. According to Lara Putnam, during the early years of banana expansion in places such as the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, Kingston and the Parish of St. James located in Montego Bay were "proportionately overrepresented" by Jamaicans. Much of the reasoning behind such a large Jamaican population in Central America is due in large part to construction projects that had taken place in Costa Rica and Panama during the end of the nineteenth century.[256] For my great-grandmother, who was among thousands of other Jamaican migrants from Montego Bay, Roatán was 500 miles removed from the island in which she had been born and raised, but it was an island that may have felt familiar to her both socially and culturally.

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[254] Chambers, Glenn Anthony. *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration to Honduras, 1890-1940*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2010. Print.
[255] Ibid., 11.
[256] Putnam, Lara. "Introduction." *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 2002. 3-19. Print.
In chapter two of her monograph "Sojourners and Setters," Putnam states, "The Northwest parishes, in particular St. James with its port in Montego Bay, had been 'heavily involved in the emigration to Panama [in the 1880s], both through the numbers who emigrated and the lucrative trade in foodstuffs which these parishes maintained with the Canal Zone while work was in progress. It seems that St. James's close integration into Central American economic cycles and migratory circuits during the French canal project was reflected in the make-up of the Jamaican populace of Limón two decades later" (51).

Upon her arrival in Roatán and after giving birth to her first daughter, my great-grandmother sought work as a domestic laborer. As my grandmother tells it, my great-grandmother worked for my great-grandfather and his wife who had been very ill. As a migrant worker and live-in maid, my great-grandmother left her daughter May with family. Sadly, May did not live past infancy. I later learned that my great-grandfather's first wife died during childbirth and not to loo long afterward sought my great-grandmother's hand in marriage. As my grandmother states, "my father fell crazy in love with my mother, so he married her." Addie and Walney McBride would go on to have ten children: Neville, who died as a toddler, Raymond, Lynell, Elva, twins Ama and Oma, Walney Jr., Gloria, Esther Lou, and lastly my grandmother, Nelly.

It was common for West Indian women who migrated for work in the circum-Caribbean to participate in domestic labor as it was one of the few lines of work, other than teaching, made available to women. While Afro-Caribbean men were recruited for work on fruit plantations and in the building of infrastructures such as the Panama Canal and multiple railway systems in Central America, the Afro-Caribbean migrant women who accompanied them were crucial to the export economies of Central America. The labor of social reproduction was considered women's work. Not only did women contribute to the export economy through their reproductive labor (the bearing and rearing of children), but they also helped through their productive labor (cooking, cleaning, providing shelter, sex, and companionship), and helping to sustain the regional workforce. In her examination of Afro-Caribbean migrants on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, Lara Putnam writes, "Women reached Limón from Kingston and Cartago, St. Lucia and San Juan del Norte. Some came with a male partner by their side, others on their own. (West Indian girls in their early teens were often sent by their mothers to work with an older female

relative or friend)."[257] Of course migrant men could have performed the same tasks that they paid women to do, and some men did, however as Putnam writes, "…every evidence is that men preferred to pay women to do their laundry when they could afford it – and that they preferred to pay for more intimate comforts as well, rather than improvise on their own or with each other."[258] Because migrant men outnumbered women two to one during plantation expansion in the early half of the twentieth century, women were able to sell their domestic services to workers to make a living for themselves and their families. While doing archival research at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tegucigalpa, Honduras I came across a few letters written by the government of Honduras in the early-to-mid twentieth century for Afro-Caribbean men and women who wanted to become Honduran citizens. In one letter from April 13, 1937, a widowed woman by the name of Irene Watler, originally from the Grand Cayman Islands, asks to become a Honduran citizen. The detailed naturalization document states that Irene Watler had lived in the port town of Guanaja, one of the Bay Islands of Honduras, for fourteen consecutive years. She had worked as a domestic worker since her arrival to Honduras in 1922. In the document it states that Ms. Watler, under Honduran law, must be willing to give up all protections and allegiances to the English government (the Grand Cayman Islands were still under British colonial rule), and agree to all Honduran law and authority.[259] I provide this anecdote, as well as others, as an

[257] Ibid., 7.
[258] Ibid., 52.
[259] Republica De Honduras. Secretaria De Relaciones Exteriores Y Cooperación Internacional. *Libro De Naturalizaciones*. 1936-51. Print.
The exact wording of the document reads as follows:
"El suscrito Secretario de esta Gobernación Politica Departamental, CERTIFICA:
Que en el expediente de naturalización presentada por la señora Irene Watler v.de Connor, se encuentra la resolución que literalmente dice: 'GOBERNACION POLITICA del Departamento de Islas de la Bahia, Roatán, trece de abril de mil novecientos treinta y siete. -VISTA la solicitud presentada por la señora Irene Watler v.de Connor, mayor de edad, viuda, de oficios domésticos, originaria del Gran Caimán, colonia británica y residente en el puerto y municipio de Guanaja, de este departamento, desde el año de mil novecientos veintidós, pidiendo naturalización como hondureña, fundándose en que hace más de

example of the different West Indian women who migrated to Honduras, like my great-grandmother had, and the similarities in cultural, political, and social trajectories between these women migrants.

In the same Naturalization book, which covers Honduran naturalizations between 1936-1951, there is a naturalization request from a woman by the name of Mildred Gertrude Daniels, widow of Victor Albert Parham, who is from the British controlled island of Trinidad. In her naturalization letter, she states that she first arrived in Honduras in 1923 by way of the port of La Ceiba, a banana town built by the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company and also the port town in which my grandmother was born. In the letter she goes on to say that she has lived in Honduras for twenty-eight consecutive years, building her life in the town of Trujillo, a port town historically associated with the United Fruit Company. In the letter, it is not clear the type of work she did although it does mention that either herself or her husband worked in domestic trades. In the letter, she also proclaims her immense desire to become a Honduran citizen and professes her love for the country.[260]

I include these examples of naturalization letters because they reveal the lives of women who migrated to both the Islands of Honduras and its mainland from the West Indies. These

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catorce años consecutivos que reside en el puerto municipio de Guanaja, de este departamento, haciendo formal protesta de renunciar a toda protección extraña y especialmente a la de Inglaterra, y someterse en un todo a las leyes y autoridades hondureñas.'"

[260] Republica De Honduras. Secretaria De Relaciones Exteriores Y Cooperación Internacional. *Libro De Naturalizaciones*. 1936-51. Print. The exact wording of the letter reads as follows: "Se solicita carta de naturalización. Señor Gobernador Politico. Yo, Mildred Gertrude Daniels v.da de parham, mayor del edad, - viuda, de oficios domésticos y de este vecindario, muy respetuosamente comparezco ante el señor gobernador político a manifestar y pedir lo siguiente: lo, Conforme el documento que presento compruebo que soy natural de la isla de Trinidad, colonia Inglesa, y por consiguiente súbdita británica y con dicha ciudadanía ingresé a la República de Honduras en el año de mil novecientos veintitrés por el Puerto de La Ceiba. Desde la fecha indicada tengo ya de residir en este país cerca de veintiocho años consecutivos, en donde al lado de mi esposo Victor Albert Parham, ya fallecido, fundamos nuestro hogar en el puerto de Trujillo, y por consiguiente tengo inmensos deseos por obtener la cuidaría hondureña, para lo cual impulsada por el gran amor que guardo para honduras..."

women worked in Honduras, built homes and families, and dedicated themselves towards the betterment of the country. Most importantly, it reveals that not all Caribbean migrants left the places in which they migrated too, some chose to remain and become citizens never to return to the islands that they had left behind. In fact, this was the case for my great-grandparents. However, the letters also tell of women who often had to sacrifice distance between family, friends, and their country of origin to establish and secure themselves in the places in which they migrated. Both of the women mentioned above stated in their letters that they were widows. They had settled in Honduras with their partners, established a family, created a livelihood, and considered the country their new home. I often wondered if my great-grandmother had ever wanted to return to Jamaica or if she had kept in contact with any of her siblings while she was in Honduras. Sadly, but not surprising, no one in my family knows if she did, however, there is some historical evidence that institutionally it may have been difficult for migrants to keep in contact with the families that they left behind. In a letter sent from the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Honduras on November 16, 1908, to the British Legation located in Guatemala, it states that the Bay Islands had no post office where British subjects could purchase stamps to send letters back home. The letter reads as follows:

Monsieur le Ministre,

Acting under instructions from my government, I have the honour to approach your excellency in the following matter.

> It would seem that no little difficulty is experienced in the exchange of letters between the Cayman Islands – a dependency of Jamaica – and the Bay Islands, from the fact that there is apparently no post office in either of the three islands, Utila, Roatán, and Bonacá so that the considerable number of Cayman natives who live there and wish to communicate with their homes are unable to buy stamps. An irregular and unsatisfactory means of…. communication is

maintained through the captains of vessels which occasionally sail between the groups of islands.

The Excellency

Don E. Constantino Fiallos

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Tegucigalpa.[261]

This correspondence makes clear that many West Indian migrants had limited means regarding communication among family and friends left on the island. Perhaps this affected the way that my great-grandmother was able to communicate with her family back in Jamaica. Perhaps my great-grandmother decided that when she left the island, she would also leave her family behind as well. No one in my family truly knows what her relationship was with her family after she left. However, what has been made clear is that she rarely, if ever, talked about her family. My great-grandparents eventually left the island of Roatán to the Honduran mainland and settled in a port town called La Ceiba located on the northern coast of Honduras. According to my grandmother, her mother remained a housewife, while her father went off to work as a "bridge gang" worker for the United Fruit Company. La Ceiba had been a banana town controlled by the Standard Fruit and Steamship company during my grandmother's childhood, but my grandmother was certain that her father had worked for the United Fruit Company: "My father worked for the United Fruit Company…they dealed with different trains and things. He was a bridge gang…he was a bridge gang worker. He built bridges over the river where the train could pass and run. He was doing bridges and working on putting down rail tracks with other

[261] Constantino Fiallos, Don E. Letter to British Legation in Guatemala. 16 November 1908. Republica De Honduras Secretaria De Relaciones Exteriores Corespondencia Europea, 1899-1909. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

men…he worked there until he retired. My mother never did went to work. She was always at home washin and cookin, doing whatever she had to do." Many West Indian women in Honduras were restricted to the type of work made available to them. A great majority of women participated in work which required their reproductive labor, whether as a housewife or a domestic worker. According to Chambers, "Full-time domestic work for women was only possible for those West Indian households who could afford it."[262] For my great-grandfather to have hired my great-grandmother as a live-in domestic worker it must have meant that he could afford to hire domestic labor. I can only assume that my great-grandfather paid for my great-grandmother's services due to his wife, at the time, being rather ill and possibly incapable of performing domestic work around the home. My great-grandfather was one of many West Indian men who worked for the United Fruit Company who not only worked on banana plantations but were integral in building the railway system in many Central American countries in which the United Fruit Company had established itself. According to Glenn A. Chambers, "…La Ceiba emerged as the center of a large district devoted to the production of tropical fruits for exports to the United States."[263] West Indians in Honduras worked for one of three fruit companies: the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company, the United Fruit Company, and the Cuyamel Company. Furthermore, "The Standard Fruit and Steamship Company eventually controlled the fruit industry in the region in and around La Ceiba, while the United Fruit Company…controlled the fruit industry from west of San Pedro Sula to La Lima and Tela and from Trujillo to Puerto Castilla."[264]After this admission by my grandmother, I immediately thought about the film *Emergency in Honduras* (1945) which is discussed in length in chapter one. My great-

[262] Chambers, 83.
[263] Ibid., 27.
[264] Ibid., 28.

grandfather had a hand in building the railway system and bridges in Honduras that were owned and used by the UFCO. Had he been a part of the emergency labor act implemented in Honduras in places such as La Ceiba for banana men who had found themselves out of work during WWII? My family's connection to my research had run much deeper than I thought it would. At that moment I was observing my research in a much more private matter than I had before.

Nelly's Story

My grandmother was born Nelly McBride on November 22, 1935, in La Ceiba, Honduras. She is the youngest of all of her siblings. Growing up I had heard stories about my grandmother's childhood from my mother and my aunt, but my grandmother rarely volunteered the facts of her life unless they were stories about my grandfather's infidelity. One thing that she always seems to bring up about her life is the fact that my great-grandmother was 50 years-old when she gave birth to my grandmother. My grandmother has always been amazed by this and believes it was a miracle that she was even born. The day I sat down with my grandmother to do the interview she mentioned her mother's age at her birth and said, "My mother had me when she was 50 years-old. That's terrible, right? She was 50 years-old when she had me, but I'm glad I'm here." My grandmother shares the same birthday as both of her parents. She always jokes that she was their birthday gift that day in 1935. The youngest of nine children, my grandmother was protected by her siblings but not coddled. She had learned from an early age the value of work and was put to work as a girl by my great-grandmother. My great-grandmother would bake bread and put my grandmother and her sisters to sell it in the streets of La Ceiba as a form of extra income while my great-grandfather was away at work. My grandmother's relationship to work and her memories associated with work are, at times, complex. Her ideas about productive and reproductive labor are sometimes contradictory. She does not remember her mother working

outside of the home as a wage laborer. However, in interviewing my grandmother, she often mentioned informal ways in which her mother earned a living such as with the baking and selling of pastries. In her discussion of West Indian migrant women in Costa Rica Putnam mentions the act of "higglering," a practice done by women in Jamaica.[265] Higglering is largely seen as an illegitimate and illegal vocation among Jamaicans. The occupation is often associated with black working-class women. "My mother had a lot of kids, and where we lived in Honduras…we lived in La Ceiba, and there she raised us." I asked her if she remembered the name of her neighborhood that she lived in as a child and she replied with "It was called Calle Hospital D'Antoni. Segundo-cuatro-tercer casa." She switches from speaking in English to Spanish as she recites the address from memory and then back to English again. "I even remember the number of the house still," she says as she smiles at me proud of herself for remembering the address of her childhood home. While conducting research in Honduras, my mother and I visited La Ceiba. My mother had accompanied me to Honduras in part to heal her grieving heart. My grandfather had passed away just a few months before in May, and my mother had been very close to her father. However, I also believe it was a way for her to reconnect with a place that she had not seen since her departure from the country at the age of three. We rode on a bus for eight hours from Tegucigalpa to La Ceiba and stayed at a hotel in the center of the city right across from the central plaza. Our hotel was steps away from a park known as Parque Swinford or Swinford

[265] Brown-Glaude, Winnifred. "Spreading Like a Dis/ease?: Afro-Jamaican Higglers and the Dynamics of Race/Color, Class and Gender." *Lived Experiences of Public Consumption: Encounters with Value in Marketplaces on Five Continents*. By Daniel Thomas Cook. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 111-36. Print.
According to Brown-Glaude, higglering is an activity that takes place in Jamaica's informal economy. She writes, "Higglering is a Jamaican term that denotes the informal economic activity of small-scale street vending dating back to the days of slavery and is dominated by black, lower class Jamaican women."

Park. Constructed in 1999, Parque Swinford is named after William Steele Swinford, General Manager of Standard Fruit of Honduras from 1976-1978 and again from 1990-1999. A web page on the travel site Lonely Planet states that Parque Swinford is "…a lush, tropical botanical oasis in the heart of La Ceiba, complete with a restored train carriage from the area's railway heyday."[266] However, the park is more than a tropical botanical oasis. It is a park built in remembrance of the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company and the large historical and economic impact it had in La Ceiba, Honduras. The history of the Standard Fruit Company, which later became the Dole Fruit Company, is displayed in the entrance way of the park. A brief history of the

Figure 15: Standard Fruit Railcar. Parque Swinford in La Ceiba, Honduras.

[266] Planet, Lonely. "Parque Swinford in La Ceiba, Honduras." *Lonely Planet*. Web. 28 Jan. 2017.

Figure 16: San Jose Railcar. Parque Swinford in La Ceiba, Honduras.

Standard Fruit Company is outlined in English, a way to signal that the park is tourist attraction and not something built for the actual residents of La Ceiba, as well as a timeline of contributions that the fruit company made to the town.

In 1907 the fruit company, then known as the Vaccaro Bros., a company started by Sicilian immigrant brothers, constructed the city's first railroad line to export material and fruit out of the port of La Ceiba to New Orleans, Louisiana where the company was headquartered. Louisiana witnessed a rise in Italian migrant labor in the last half of the nineteenth century. Many Italian immigrants traveled to Louisiana to work in the sugarcane fields as a response to the scarcity of labor in the sugar industry. In 1900, Italians comprised the largest immigrant population in Louisiana. The labor migration of Italian immigrants was linked to the city of New Orleans as the center of Midwestern distribution of commodities between the Mediterranean and the United States. According to Jean Ann Scarpaci, "Planters continued to welcome them as replacements for black labor…Most Italians filled the unskilled, low-paying jobs that were essential to the cultivation and harvesting of sugarcane, for the planters did not change wages or work functions as the ethnic composition of the labor force changed."[267] Many Italian immigrants viewed plantation work as temporary. "It provided a means to accumulate savings in order to embark on a career as agricultural or business entrepreneur."[268] In terms of their racial status upon arrival in the United States, Italians were viewed as non-white. In the Jim Crow South Italian immigrants, such as the Vaccaro brothers, were viewed as more black than they were white, "It was not just that Italians did not look white to certain social arbiters, but that they did not *act* white. In New Orleans Italian immigrants were stigmatized in the post-Civil War period because they accepted economic niches (farm labor, and small tenancy, for instance) marked as "black" by local custom, and because they lived and worked comfortably among

[267] Scarpaci, Jean Ann. "Immigrants in the New South: Italians in Louisiana's Sugar Parishes, 1880-1910." *Labor History* 16.2 (2008): 165-83. Web. 173.
[268] Ibid., 178.

blacks."[269] According to Scarpaci, Italians had no reason to dislike blacks, they both worked with and lived next to blacks however, "…once aware that they shared the same socio-economic position, at the lowest level of Southern society, they decided to avoid further association with blacks."[270] The fear of being associated with blacks lead many Italian immigrants to leave the sugarcane fields as laborers or tenants with the intent to gain upward mobility as farmers and business men. In his discussion of the DiGiorgio Fruit Company Curtis Mares analyzes the connection between agribuisiness corporations and ideologies of whiteness through his study of Italian immigrant and fruit company owner Joseph DiGiorgio. According to Mares, "DiGiorgio, for instance drew on traditions of white agrarian reproductive masculinity with its trademark image of the DiGiorgio 'Jolly Farmer'…But in the case of the DiGiorgio Fruit Company, its white media image was complicated by the fact that its founder and public face, Joseph DiGiorgio, was an Italian migrant, an identity not readily assimilated to whiteness."[271] Furthermore, Mares makes note that DiGiorgio's newfound whiteness was constructed in opposition the Chinese and Japanese in the West: "When the United States entered the war the state classified all non-naturalized immigrants from Japan, Germany, and Italy as 'enemy aliens'…Whereas Italians were imprisoned in the hundreds, approximately 110,000 Japanese were interned. Moreover, in contrast with the Japanese, the Italians' suspect status was short-lived…"[272] The Vaccaro brothers and Joseph DiGiorgio attained whiteness and white privilege through a disavowal of and separation from black and Asian laborers. With their newfound white

[269] Jacobson, Matthew Frye. "Anglo-Saxons and Others, 1840-1924." *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. New York: ACLS History E-Book Project, 2005. 57. Print.
[270] Scarpaci, 177.
[271] Marez, Curtis. "Farm Worker Futurism in the 1940s." *Farm Worker Futurism: Speculative Technologies of Resistance*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2016. N. pag. Print. 53-54.
[272] Ibid., 56.

status the Vaccaro brothers established their agribusiness in the Caribbean and Latin America making towns, such as my grandmother's hometown of La Ceiba, banana towns controlled by American fruit company entrepreneurs. *A* list of "important dates" is captured at the entrance of Parque Swinford. Within the list are the following dates which mark the company's social and political influence in La Ceiba:

> **1899**-Vacarro and D'Antoni's first trip to Honduras.
> **1908**-Arrival of the first train over Vaccaro Railroad.
> **1912**-A potable water system was donated to La Ceiba.
> **1913**- Banco Atlántida was founded in La Ceiba.
> **1922**-Vacarro Bros. & Company was liquidated and Standard Fruit & Steamship Company was established in its place.
> **1924**-Vicente D'Antoni Hospital was inaugurated and donated to the city.

My grandmother had grown up on the same street of a hospital built by the Standard Fruit & Steamship Company. My sharing of family history alongside the history of US-Honduran relations is important because it reveals the ways in which US companies controlled the capital, infrastructure, and social networks of the cities and towns in which they established themselves. According to a Dole fruit web page titled "Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability," Hospital Vicente D'Antoni (HVD) was a hospital donated by Vicente D'Antoni Foundation, a non-profit foundation made up by the Standard Fruit Company Honduras and members of the La Ceiba Municipality. Further, the web page states, "In 1924, The Vaccaro Brothers Company constructed a hospital in La Ceiba to provide medical services for employees, their families, and the entire community. HVD is a general hospital that is incorporated with the National Autonomous University of Honduras and acts as a school hospital. It participates in Stanford University's Interplast program and has exchange programs in place with the Tulane Medical Center from the University of Tulane and Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, both

located in Louisiana, USA."[273] Many of the investments made in Honduras by the Standard Fruit Company and the United Fruit Company, such as the hospital described above, were only done after getting concessions from the local government who desired foreign investment for economic modernization. According to Marcelo Bucheli, the alliances between multinational corporations such as Standard Fruit and United Fruit and local governments in Latin America "…depended on the ability of the banana sector to generate economic stability and on the need the government could have to approach the working class."[274] In other words, investments made by US fruit companies (infrastructure, transportation, schools, etc.) in the places in which they established themselves was an investment made in producing more labor and therefore more economic capital. As a bridge gang worker for the United Fruit Company, my great-grandfather's productive labor was utilized to build infrastructure that literally assisted in the movement of capital from the northern coast of Honduras to the United States. Here I am specifically referring to the bridges that were built to transport exported materials and goods. The need to control Latin American labor for U.S. economic gain was paramount, as explored in the film *Emergency in Honduras* (1945) analyzed in chapter one.

Infrastructure and economic development were not the only things brought to Central America by the American fruit companies that settled on its coasts. Jim Crow ideologies of racial segregation and white superiority were brought along as well. In his essay, "'Banana Growing and Negro Management,'" Jason M. Colby examines the impact of racial practices abroad at the turn of the twentieth century in an era of foreign investment in the Caribbean and Latin America. Colby does this by analyzing the racial culture of U.S. colonialism and the social dynamics of

[273] "Dole Sustainability." *Dole Sustainability » Honduras: Hospital Vicente D'Antoni*. Web. 29 Jan. 2017.
[274] Bucheli, Marcelo. *Good Dictator, Bad Dictator: United Fruit Company and Economic Nationalism in Central America in the Twentieth Century* (2006): n. Web.

Guatemala. The United Fruit Company was an empire. It had placed itself in the Caribbean, Central and South America. According to Colby, "In the early decades of the twentieth century, the corporation was the largest agricultural enterprise in the world and the dominant economic force in the Caribbean basin."[275] In his discussion of two young white men working in Guatemala, the first a twenty-six year old by the name of Hugh Wilson appointed as U.S. Chargé de d'affaires in Guatemala City; and the second a thirty year old superintendent for the United fruit Company named Victor M. Cutter, Colby writes:

> Displays of white skill and courage proved just as important as enforced nonwhite deference. Cutter's "handling of negroes was remarkable," Wilson noted: "He excelled in everything they admired. He could fight the wildest of them, he could outshoot them, his endurance was unlimited and his occasional flash of ferocious temper kept them cowed." "Such qualities were necessary." He explained. "These negroes from Jamaica were cheerful and reasonably industrious, but full of liquor they became dangerous."[276]

The passage reveals what Colby refers to a "the Jim Crow culture of the Caribbean empire."[277] White superintendents like Victor M. Cutter of the United Fruit Company had controlled the black labor force through a racially violent white supremacist mentality similar to that of an overseer. Black migrant workers were viewed by white management as happy and hardworking but they were also dangerous and not to be trusted. In fact, Wilson shares his first impressions of the black labor force working on the banana plantations in Puerto Barrios, Guatemala:

> "In the 'black moist night,' a 'line of negroes stripped to the waist and bare-footed, each bent under a load of huge bunch [of bananas] strode up the wharf,' where they 'passed their burden into the hold through a chain gang of handlers.' 'At the head of the gang plank, the blackest and biggest buck of all smoked a cigarette and whirled a machete,' chopping off excess banana stems as they passed."[278]

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[275] Colby, Jason M. ""Banana Growing and Negro Management": Race, Labor, and Jim Crow Colonialism in Guatemala, 1884-1930." *Diplomatic History* 30.4 (2006): 595-621. *JSTOR [JSTOR]*. Web, 599.
[276] Ibid., 596.
[277] Ibid., 597.
[278] Colby, 595.

Wilson's reflection is more than just an observation of his first trip to a Guatemalan banana plantation in 1912. His thoughts expose the legacy of U.S. chattel slavery in the management of black banana workers through his reference to chain gangs and his description of black male workers as bucks. The details of his visit in regard to the connections between U.S. racial culture and colonialism in Central America.

American fruit companies controlled many aspects of the towns they owned. One aspect of control was where workers and their families shopped for goods. My grandmother mentioned this in one of her memories from her childhood of going to the United Fruit Company commissary with her family to shop for food: "Certain part [sic] was for the United Fruit Company. They called it Mazapan. And there where they had a commissary in that place…where all the white people lived and all that…and we used to go to the marketplace to buy meat and stuff like that. We'd go in there and we had a pass because our father worked for the United Fruit Company." Zona Mazapan is a neighborhood near the central plaza and Swinford Park in Honduras. While conducting research in La Ceiba, a tour guide stated that it was the neighborhood in which the white managers, supervisors, and executives of the Standard Fruit Company lived. A small bilingual nursery-12th-grade school was established in zona Mazapan in 1928 by the Standard Fruit Company, and today Mazapan School offers a U.S.-style college preparatory college instruction program. Racial segregation was a part of UFCO culture. Banana towns, such as La Ceiba, had segregated neighborhoods and schools and the banana workers themselves were often segregated. For example, United Fruit was known for racially segregating workers in its Central American divisions in order to hinder labor organization between West Indian and Costa Rican or Honduran communities. In his research on West Indian workers for the United Fruit Company in Costa Rica Ronald N. Harpelle found that, "Hispanics could easily

blame West Indians for their plight because the fruit company maintained a divided workforce as part of its management strategy. Segregation was a fact of life in Limón and over the years there had been many confrontations based on ethnic divisions."[279]My grandmother had grown up in a neighborhood in La Ceiba known as Barrio Ingles or "English Town." The community was referred to as English Town because of the large settlement of English-speaking Afro-Caribbean migrants from the West Indies. The Standard Fruit Company and United Fruit Company had brought with it the Jim Crow-esque residential divisions that the United States was experiencing. White workers lived in one area of La Ceiba, black West Indian workers lived in another area, and Honduran workers, both Garifuna, and mestizo, lived in another. In the anthology *Problematizing Blackness*, contributor Felipe Smith discusses his family's history as West Indians in La Ceiba, Honduras and the historical significance of the neighborhood of English Town. He writes, "Racism of local law enforcement officials and mutual hostility with displaced local workers led the banana companies to create West Indian enclaves like "Barrio Ingles," or "English Town," settlement of Mazapán, in which Spanish was forbidden to be spoken, into which the Spanish-speaking could not venture without encountering violent resistance."[280] Spanish was not my grandmother's first language. She and her siblings grew up in an English-speaking household. To learn Spanish, my grandmother had gone to "Spanish School" as she called it. At the age of thirteen, my grandmother enrolled herself in a private school. She was working at a café and used the earnings to educate herself. She knew how to speak Spanish but she did not know how to read and write in Spanish and the Spanish school that she enrolled in

[279] Harpelle, Ronald N. "Bananas and Business: West Indians and United Fruit in Costa Rica." *Race & Class* 2.1 (2000): 57-72. Web.
[280] Smith, Felipe. "Coming of Age in Creole New Orleans: An Ethnography." *Problematizing Blackness: Self-ethnographies by Black Immigrants to the United States*. Ed. Percy C. Hintzen and Jean Muteba Rahier. New York: Routledge, 2003. 113-28. Print.

made her more fluent in the language. Earlier in the interview my grandmother suggests that she had made the decision to attend "Spanish school" on her own. However, later in the interview she recalls being a young girl and watching her mother get chastised by representatives of the Honduran government whom she believed were taking a census of her community and home. My grandmother states, "They start to criticize my mother and say…the people came all the time to sit us down to go to Spanish school. They come like census or something to find out who going to school and everything and she used to hide them. She used to hide her children them because she didn't know no better…and she used to bring me out because I was the littlest one in her arms not ready to go to school." For the West Indian communities that settled in places such as Honduras and Costa Rica after the 1930s, learning Spanish and assimilating into Honduran and Costa Rican culture was not a choice. In his discussion about Limón, Costa Rica Harpelle writes, "There is ample evidence to suggest that after 1934, a conscious effort was made by Costa Rican authorities to force the integration of West Indians in Limón. English schools were closed, farmers were pushed off their land and people were deported in order to purge the province of its 'foreign character'."[281] Attempts to rid Honduras of its West Indian population were made as well in the 1920s. In 1923 Liberal Party deputies associated with the Federación Obrera Hondureña (FOH), introduced a bill that sought to "…prohibit 'the importation into the territory of the Republic of negroes of the African race and coolies.'"[282] Two years before my grandmother's birth in 1933, a Honduran government decree forbade the re-entry of blacks into the country who had recently left. This meant that anyone who had left the North Coast of Honduras for work or to visit family in places such as Jamaica, were turned away upon their

[281] *Bananas and Business, 58.*
[282] Euraque, Dario A. "The Threat of Blackness to the Mestizo Nation: Race and Ethnicity in the Honduran Banana Economy, 1920s and 1930s." *Banana Wars: Power, Production, and History in the Americas*. 229-50. Print.

return to Honduras. According to Chambers, "Such restriction created many problems for the West Indian community on the North Coast because most maintained some connection with their home countries."[283]

My grandmother informed me that as a child she did not attend public or private schools, instead, she was given lessons by a neighbor and that is how she was educated early on in her childhood. At eight-years-old my grandmother had caught typhoid fever and she had to relearn how to walk and talk again. She insists that becoming sick and having to relearn how to walk and talk made her even smarter than she had been before getting sick. Not too long after recovery, she began being taught school lessons by her neighbor: "The lady used to keep school in her yard. She had a big yard and she used to get children to teach them. It was no school where you get your papers or public school…we had public school but my mother didn't send me to public school. She sent me to that school to Ms. Foskins [sic]…I still know her name. I was very smart. If I'd had parents that would've sent me to [sic]…I would have been someone real up there."

What my grandmother had observed as a child was that education was not viewed as important for girls and women as it was for boys and men. A girl and woman's place was in the home cooking and cleaning. Education outside of the home had been reserved for boys and men as my grandmother makes clear: "They always think that the girl children didn't need education because they were thinking about the way they lived. They would look at the boys to send them to school because they were going to be the husbands, but that wasn't so. That was a big mistake. Girls would be at home cookin, cleanin, washing the dishes. That's what the girls would be doing and that was a bad idea." In analyzing a register of marriages documented by Holy Trinity Church in La Ceiba, Honduras between 1915-1954 Chambers writes, "According to the available

[283] *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration*, 71.

data, the majority of the women listed their occupations as housewives, domestic workers, or having no job at all. The fact that the majority of women did not work outside the home was not uncommon. Judging from the accounts of some, gender roles were very traditional, with the male as the provider and the female as the mother and caregiver."[284] My great-grandmother stayed at home as a housewife while my great-grandfather left home for up to three weeks at a time for the United Fruit Company. My grandmother had learned at a very young age her place in the world, and the lack of opportunities presented to her because of her gender. "Everybody had a chore to do ya know. I used to have to scrub the kitchen…that was my job. And grind the corn. We's grind the corn to make corn cake. We used to make the big iron pot of corn cake. The family was big so…ya know [sic]." As a young girl my grandmother had been assigned domestic duties around the house. Everyone had a task assigned to them which helped to keep the house running. My grandmother recalls her father being gone for long periods of time for work. She remembers him coming home every 2 to 3 weeks but he did not stay at home for long before having to go back to work. Due to his long absences, my great-grandmother took on the responsibility of raising her children on her own. "She practically raised us by herself, said my grandmother. My grandmother also recalled how it was when her father would come home from his assignments with UFCO, "We used to have to get his clothes cleaned up and everything, but when he had time off he had a boat where they go fishin' in…and with his partners and them, you know his friends and things like that, they used to bring in all those fish. And guess who had to [sic], when it come time, who had to clean it?" My grandmother laughed and pointed at herself. When my grandmother had her own children she made sure to split the chores evenly among them. They were not split according to gender as had been done when she was a child: "[Sic] I didn't do it

[284] Ibid., *83.*

with Steve and Luis. Everybody had their turn to wash dishes. Well, I'm a more modernized person." My grandmother equated the gendering of chores as being part of an outdated ideology: women's work was to be done in the house cleaning, cooking, and rearing the children.

At the age of thirteen my grandmother began to work at a café in order to pay for her own education. The name of the café was *Café Viola,* and as my grandmother recalls, her job was to wash the clothes of the owner of the café and his family. My grandmother had started as a washerwoman as a teenager. While working for the family she fell ill with tuberculosis. She claims that she must have caught the illness from one of the other washerwomen she worked with: "I took sick, I got TB. At my job, where I used to wash all these families' clothes, was out in the sun and at those times you had to spread the sheet on the grass in the sun to heat it and all that. And we were washin, we wash on the washer boats, so the pelting sun was on me and somebody must have had some disease and I caught it. I nearly died." My grandmother also remembers picking up laundry from a beauty shop owner by the name of May De Chinchia. My grandmother would collect the laundry and bring it home to her older sister Gloria to wash. Her older sisters Lynell and Ama would bake coconut bread and have my grandmother sell it in the street and at the local hospital: "I used to go to the hospital. I used to go to the hospital D'Antoni. I used to be selling bread to all them sick people. They hungry because they only used to give them flour porridge…So when I come I used to sell out! I used to sell it for three cent at that time, but my basket used to be full and I used to sell that off, and that's why they had a habit of sending me to sell bread because I could sell it fast." My grandmother and her siblings participated in the informal economy as a means of survival while their father was away. My grandmother's participation in the informal economy as a washerwoman and street vendor

allowed her to educate herself up until the end of the eighth grade, a privilege her parents could not provide her.

At the age of sixteen my grandmother worked for a woman, her name was Maria Francioni. My grandmother would clean her home. According to my grandmother, Maria often expressed how she wished my grandmother was her child. "I worked with her to clean the house but she fell crazy in love with me, and she used to hug me up, she used to kiss me…she used to tell me, 'I wish you were my little girl.' She was a white lady, some kind of mix Italian." My grandmother remembers the sandwhiches that Maria taught her to make for guests who visited the home, "She used to bake nice cakes and she used to do nice sandwhiches. She would get this big Italian bread and she'll cut the top and she'll cut out the bottom and the white part she'll put eggs and cheese and olives and different things…that's when she was gonna invite people to the house, you know they have their little parties and things, and I knew to make all that because she used to show me." The "motherly" comments and gestures of love that Maria showed my grandmother may have been done, whether knowingly or unknowingly, as a way to manipulate her through what Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo refers to as maternalism. According to Hondagneu-Sotelo, "When employers give used clothing and household items to their employees, or offer them unsolicited advice, help, or guidance, they may be acting, observers have noted, manipulatively."[285] Further she states, "Such gestures encourage employees to work harder and longer, and simultaneously allow employers to experience personal recognition and validation of themselves as kind, superior, and altruistic."[286] My grandmother worked for her for two years. After Maria's husband passed away she could no longer afford to pay for my grandmother's

[285] Hondagneu-Sotelo, Pierrette. *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. Berkeley: U of California, 2007. Print.
[286] Ibid., 11.

labor. When I asked how much Maria Francioni paid my grandmother she responded with, "Well she would pay me but very small money and then I would have to take it home to mom. You know…I never used to spend my money. My mother would the money where I worked for." Maria paid my grandmother four Honduran lempiras a month, which today would equal seventeen U.S. cents. Maria suggested that my grandmother travel to another city on the north coast of Honduras, about 119 miles from La Ceiba, called San Pedro Sula. While in San Pedro Sula, my grandmother who was only seventeen at the time, began working for a woman whom she claims treated her horribly. The woman's name was Maria de Holston. She was a mestiza woman married to a white American man. My grandmother recalls being verbally abused. The environment was so abusive that my grandmother only worked for Maria for three weeks: "She was a cruel woman…so I worked there for three weeks and she used to put me to do too much work and then she used to say 'apúrate, apúrate' "hurry up! Hurry up! You know like slave thing, and I couldn't take that. I wasn't the type to take it and I wasn't the type to take her." Maria de Holston dropped my grandmother off at a station, it wasn't clear whether my grandmother had been dropped off at a bus station or a train station, and my grandmother remembers one of her older sister's working in La Lima, a city about twelve miles from San Pedro Sula. However, with limited means of public transportation, it would have been hard for my grandmother to get to her sister in times of need. My grandmother's memory of migrating for domestic work reveals the vulnerabilities that many black West Indian women faced as domestic laborers while working far from support networks such as family. West Indian domestic laborers often remained vulnerable to the will and care of their employers.

The day Maria de Holston dropped my grandmother off at the station she thought about traveling back to La Ceiba however, after some thought, she decided to remain in San Pedro

Sula. My grandmother admits to being angry with her family for allowing her to migrate such a far distance from her at such a young age, she was only sixteen years old when she left home. Perhaps my great-grandmother thought nothing of the travel as she too had migrated for labor at my grandmother's age. Nonetheless, my grandmother felt a line should have been drawn. While in San Pedro Sula my grandmother began working for a Jewish family who had a baby boy, whom she recalls, was quite sickly. She recalls that the father of the boy was very worried about his care: "I was workin' being a babysitter and…ummm…they had a little boy that was very delicate and they couldn't find nobody to work for them. The man was so afraid that the little boy could die because when he was born they to give him a... what you call it? Surgery. A heart operation because when he was a baby he used to get blue." My grandmother had no certifications to work with a child with the types of health issues that the boy had, but she worked for the family for quite some time. During her employment with the family as a nanny, the mother of the boy had become pregnant and the family decided to go back to the United States. My grandmother states that she almost accompanied the family back to New York to continue taking care of the boy but that the family decided instead to take a young Spanish-speaking nanny: "I would have come up to the United States with them because she was pregnant, she was going to go have her baby in New York, and I was going to go with them to New York. But since I speak English so good, instead of taking me they took a Spanish girl that can't speak no English. So she wouldn't know what's going on. So she went with them and I was angry." My grandmother's memories of this event are revealing but not surprising. Scholars who concentrate on West Indian migrant labor in Central America discuss white American's preference for West Indian employees, whether on banana plantations or in their home as domestic laborers, as many of them felt more comfortable with the fact that West Indian's spoke

English. My grandmother believes that the family she worked for was scared, that once in the United States, that she would run away. That my grandmother's ability to speak English would bring about more opportunities, perhaps employment with better pay, and that my grandmother would abandon them.

The family returned to Honduras after the birth of their second child resulted in a still born delivery. Upon their arrival, my grandmother began working for the family once again but her employment was short-lived. My grandmother recalls that after the death of their second child the father had become even more overprotective of Mitchelin, the first born son. She remembers an incident where the father threatened her as my grandmother walked up and down the street with the boy: "The man was too delicate with him and that little boy…one time I was just walking him up and down on the sidewalk and he said, 'what you doin? Get inside with this little boy…get inside!' I was frightened because…you know I was just walkin up and down the sidewalk. Then he said, 'if anything happens to this little boy I will shoot you!' That's a bad life. You know them people back up in that time they like to use people like slaves." My grandmother went on to work for a doctor and his wife who lived across the street from the Jewish family. She continued to work as a nanny for their three children. With the new family the pay was better and according to her "life was better." According to Hondagneu-Sotelo, "Domestic employees who are in frequent daily contact with their employers often have at least one story of a blow-up… It usually begins with a conflict over a minor issue, which quickly flares into an explosive verbal confrontation."[287] Further she writes, "The issues that spark blow-ups-distrust, disrespect, surveillance, betrayal, and perceived insubordination-are least likely to create tension in weekly housecleaning arrangements. They become most contentious in live-in and live-out daily

[287] *Doméstica,* 114.

jobs…"[288] My grandmother had experienced multiple types of violence as a domestic worker. She was a young woman far from her home and away from her parents and older siblings. She was the victim of verbal abuse as demonstrated in the recollections above. At one time she feared for her life as a young black woman working for wealthy white employers whose white supremacist ideologies and practices contributed to the ways in which they communicated and interacted with her. Throughout the interview my grandmother expressed how her employers treated her like a slave, and her references to the way things were "back then" draw connections between Jim Crow practices within and outside the United States. There were many times where she wondered why her parents had given her permission to migrate for work at such a young age. Although subordinated by factors such as gender, race, and class my grandmother did not hesitate to break ties with employers who mistreated her. She had learned quickly to be her own advocate and to analyze the steps of her white employers. These were memories that she claims she will forever hold on to.

My grandmother remained in San Pedro Sula working for a Spanish doctor and his family. She was a nanny for his three small children. She loved to take the kids to the matinee. One day while at the theater with the children she met my grandfather. As the story goes, he had caught her eye and she asked if he would purchase her movie ticket: "I was seventeen years old going into eighteen then and I met him…and I say 'joven'…I was the one." She laughs. "I said 'joven…puedes comprarme mi ticketa?'It was crowded and you had to push to get to the front to buy a ticket. It was hard to get to the front. He looked around at me and it looked like my face and his face collapse [sic], and he said 'cómo no?' When he done buy a ticket for me and everything and we were coming out, he started walking behind me, and these kids were

[288] Ibid., 118.

wondering why this guy walking behind this girl for? I had a beautiful build and I was cute. He turned around and he must have said, 'this is the one for me.' I just asked him to do me a favor and buy the ticket, but that ticket was it! He asked me 'donde trabajas?' He walked me home with the kids and everything. That's how I met your grandfather." My grandfather, Adolfo Arzu, was born to Garífuna parents in the village of Río Esteban, a Garífuna village not too far away from La Ceiba where my grandmother was from. The Garífuna are an afro-indigenous group that mostly reside on the Caribbean coast of the country. He had grown up very poor and had only completed his education up until the third grade as his assistance was needed on his family's farm. At the age of eleven he became the apprentice to a tailor and after his apprenticeship he migrated to San Pedro Sula for work as a tailor. My grandparents remained together in San Pedro Sula. My grandparents were wed at the age of eighteen, my grandmother was six months pregnant with their first son, Luis. My grandmother never went home while pregnant because she knew her parents would "condemn her." My grandmother and great-grandmother shared similar experiences as young women: both had gotten pregnant at young ages and both migrated for work as domestic laborers. However, there was a slight difference between them both. My grandmother had gone against her parents' wishes and married non-West Indian man, and because of that she was condemned. According to Chambers, although West Indians and the Garífuna often lived in close proximity to one another and shared the same social backgrounds (both were Caribbean and of African descent), West Indians refrained from engaging in intimate relationships with Garífunas because West Indians perceived themselves to be of a higher social standing:

> For the West Indians, the Garífuna represented the consummate other. In addition to being Spanish-speaking, Catholic, and Honduran, the Garífuna in many ways represented for the West Indian that which was 'uncivilized.' One

> descendent of West Indians in Tela recalled that, as a child she was taught that the Garífuna were 'savage and uncultured.'"[289]

My grandfather worked for a tailor shop called "caballeros elegantes," and my grandmother worked as a seamstress. They also had a tiny restaurant which became very popular in San Pedro Sula, from what my grandmother recalls. However, their marriage was filled with infidelity on my grandfather's end, and a couple of years after having their third child, my mother, my grandmother made the decision to immigrate to the United States, specifically Chicago. My grandmother's older sister Lynell was the first to leave Honduras for Chicago. After settling in Chicago, Lynell sent for another sister, Elva. Once settled, Elva sent for their brother Walney Jr. Esther Lou was the next to leave for Chicago. She had gotten pregnant and had a baby out of wedlock while in Honduras and was sent to live with her siblings in the U.S. Ama left with Esther to Chicago, as she had been helping to take care of Esther's son. When I asked my grandmother why she had chosen to migrate to Chicago from Honduras she said, "I was in San Pedro Sula with my husband you know and selling chicharron con yucca, you know, trying to make two ends meet. After a while I had three children when I came up to the United States. Nancy was born and Nellita and Luis. And I got a chance to work for Ms. Aileen Goldman. They got a job up here [Chicago] for me. And her mother used to pay me $50 a week. But I came…I decided to come because my life was ruined back home, messed up! He was running around and my life was terrible." My grandmother had chosen to leave Honduras, in part because of marital issues, but also because her whole family, including her mother had immigrated to the United States. My grandmother made a difficult decision and that decision was

[289] *Race, Nation, and West Indian Immigration*, 94.

to leave her three young children with my grandfather for a year while she worked and saved up for their reunion in Chicago.

My grandmother was employed by Ms. Goldman as a live-in housekeeper. A contract had been written up for my grandmother upon her arrival however, the stipulations of the contract were not honored: "I worked for her for six months only because, I'm gon tell you, she promised that she was going to give me a little private room to sleep in and that…you know…that I would be comfortable. She had put that on paper and everything like a contract. I had to work for her for a year but come to find out I was sleeping in the basement on a couch. They used to sit down on that couch until 10-10:30 at night, and I had to go to bed to sleep because I used to do everything in that house…cook, wash, clean, everything! And I didn't have anyone to communicate with either." My grandmother was very upset with the arrangement. She remembers being given the weekends off but she would have to return to sleep at Goldman's residence in Highland Park every Sunday night. After six months of sleeping on the couch in the basement she had enough. She remembers calling the immigration office to ask about her rights as a domestic worker: "I didn't like my situation, my sleeping situation and all that, so I called up the immigration office. Your grandmother wasn't a stupid lady you know. You're all wrapped up but you still have some sense. I call immigration office and I ask them a question. I say, 'if a person is working with someone and they already paid that transportation back to that person who paid their transportation to come to work for them, and they are living in a not [sic] good environment…' and I told them about the basement and how I was living and everything. You know what they tell me? 'You done paid them the transportation? You don't have to stay there.' I was lucky. They say, 'You don't have to stay there. You can find you another job. You is free. You have your papers. Your green card and everything. Go and look for you a job.'" My

grandmother was able to use her agency as an English-speaker to communicate with the immigration office about her rights, an opportunity that non-English-speaking domestic workers often do not have. As a documented worker she felt confident enough to ask about her rights as a domestic. She knew how to use the resources available to her, a right that is kept from undocumented domestics and other workers. The discussion of my grandmother having her "papers" and being "free," although stated in connection to her having her green card, is very reminiscent of speech associated with the United States history of chattel slavery and the status of blacks as enslaved or freed people. My grandmother was a black woman working for a white wealthy family. Domestic work in the U.S. is stained with the legacy of chattel slavery. While working in Chicago my grandmother met an Afro-Jamaican woman who worked for the Office of Immigration. She claims they built a friendship and that the woman helped my grandmother to get her three children to the United States: "I told her about my circumstances and she said, 'well, I can make up papers for you.' You know in them times it was easier. And she started to make up these papers right away for me and she had liked me. Every time she see me she would say, 'I'm gon help you, I'm gon help you.'" My grandmother had to negotiate. She wanted her children to come up to the U.S. but not my grandfather. However, she asked for him to be given the documentation to migrate as well as she knew my grandfather would not allow for their children to leave Honduras without him. After seven months of paperwork, my grandmother and her children were reunited in Chicago. A Jewish family that my grandmother was working for at the time, after learning that my grandfather and their three children were coming to Chicago, talked to a Jewish factory owner and assisted my grandfather in securing a job at Hart, Schafer, and Mark [sic]. The factory, located in downtown Chicago, was known for making suits. It was

work that my grandfather knew well as a tailor. Not long after working for the factory my grandfather quit his job and opened up his own tailor shop on the West Side of Chicago.

Conclusion

The history of West Indian migrant labor is varied. After searching for stories that included the voices of black West Indian women and their stories of labor and migration and hitting dead end after dead end, I shifted from searching in the archive for these voices to turning to my family and asking my grandmother to share her history and experience as well as that of my great-grandmother. The oral history passed down from my grandmother about her life and experiences as the daughter of West Indian immigrants in Honduras, as well as her narration of my great-grandmother's life, reveal a history more richly told than what is often found within the archive. The oral history collected in this chapter adds to scholarship that centers the stories and lives of West Indian migrant laborers in Central America at the turn of the twentieth century and beyond. More importantly it strays away from a concentration around the histories of West Indian migrant labor in places such as Costa Rica and Panama which too often are the go-to sites in regard to banana industrialization and West Indian migrant labor, and shines a light on the history of West Indian migrant labor in a place that is lesser known for its Afro-Caribbean population and history, Honduras.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this dissertation, I analyze histories of gendered migrant labor in the circum-Caribbean and bring to the center the social and political experiences of Afro-Caribbean labor migrants at the turn of the twentieth century and beyond. I do this by using the industrialization of the banana as a backdrop to trace the ways in which hegemonic ideologies of race, gender, class, and labor circulated regionally between the United States, the Caribbean, and Central America, as well as the ways in which ideologies of blackness and citizenship were reinforced and resisted through plantation culture both on and off American fruit company plantations. I turn to interdisciplinary frameworks to explore a history of black migrant labor, that in many ways, has only been scratched at the surface. I draw from visual studies, Caribbean studies, Latin American studies, ethnic studies, and black diaspora studies with an eye toward capturing the histories and experiences of black women workers. In chapter one I offered an analysis of two films: *About Bananas* (1935), a silent educational documentary sponsored by the United Fruit Company, and *Emergency in Honduras* (1945), sponsored by the U.S. office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, not only as neocolonial forms of neocolonial voyeurism for U.S. consumption but also as propaganda justifying U.S. economic and political intervention in Central America. In chapter two I continued my analysis of neocolonial voyeurism as it connects to the United Fruit Company cruise ship line, the Great White Fleet, and the steamship's connection to tourism and the consumption of black labor. I argue that like the slave ship, the steamship can be examined as a vessel which has contained life, death, violence, pleasure, labor, and leisure. Chapter three examined the possibilities in creating, what Glenn Mimura terms, a revisionist archive. I analyze an archive in which photographs taken of Afro-Jamaican banana women in the early decades of the twentieth century tell an alternative history from that which is

intended by the archivist. Building on art historian Krista A. Thompson's work on white tourists in the Caribbean, I attempt to take a bottom up approach, foregrounding black women workers and their resistance to a white colonial gaze through my reading of photos found in the "Caribbean Photo Archive," located on the photo sharing website Flickr. Lastly, chapter four lent a personal narrative to the history of gendered migrant labor in the circum-Caribbean. Through an interview conducted with my grandmother, I share the history and experience of my great-grandmother's migration from Jamaica to Honduras in the 1900s as well as the oral history of my grandmother who was born and raised in La Ceiba, Honduras, a banana town controlled and operated by the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company. This chapter brings with it an intimate perspective not found in fruit company archives about the lives of West Indians on Honduras's North Coast.

Towns along the North Coast of Honduras that were once occupied by American fruit company plantations, such as the United Fruit Company and the Standard Fruit and Steamship Company are again being colonized, the land ripped away from the Garifuna and black creole communities by foreign investors in order to create a tourism metropolis. Canadian millionaire, Randy Jorgenson, as well as other foreign investors, have taken a particular interest in the city of Trujillo, Honduras with the goal of developing the town for real estate and tourism. During the industrialization of the banana, Trujillo was used by the United Fruit Company as a port town for steamships to dock and export fruit back to the United States. According to the national black newspaper *San Francisco Bay View*, Jorgenson "…moved to Trujillo, Honduras, heart of Garifuna land, in 2007 to develop tourism in Trujillo. He began buying land for real estate development in gated communities…with the intention of building a cruise ship port, oceanfront

commercial center and park with a zoo."[290] In 2011, The Organización Franternal Negra de Honduras (OFRANEH) filed a lawsuit on behalf of all Garifuna communities concerning communities' rights to collective and communal land titles. According to the North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA):

> Between 1997 and 2002, most Garífuna communities received formal ownership titles to a significant portion of land. This major accomplishment reflects the Garífuna's success in pressing for the recognition of their ethnic distinctness and their linking of this identity to lands of traditional occupation. In most cases, however, the titles are limited and apply only to the casco urbano of the community. In other words, communal titles have generally been granted only to areas where Garífuna houses are actually located, leaving untitled areas where the communities' agricultural activities take place. Yet these areas—in addition to those used historically by the community for hunting, fishing and other activities—comprise the majority of Garífunas' territorial claims. Mestizo cattle ranchers, real estate speculators, large businesses and foreigners target these territories for invasions. Powerful Honduran military, business and political actors hold land in these areas and have sponsored a number of legislative efforts designed to reduce the size of Garífuna territory.[291]

Theoretically, Honduran constitutional recognition of Garífuna land rights under communal titling should protect the land from market sales. However, the current tourism boom has "…created incentives for land invasions and intimidation, as well as bribery and outright violence against Garífuna communities."[292] As has been done historically, the Garífuna are being pushed out of their communities by the Honduran government to make way for foreign capital and investment. Every year the land of indigenous peoples and Afro-Hondurans erodes. Since becoming president in 2014, Juan Orlando Hernández has taken measures to eliminate the rights of Honduran and indigenous communities. According to Tim Smith, "…this political

[290] Bohn, Diana. "Honduras: Government-Supported Tourism Pushes Garifuna Maroons off Their Land of 200 Years." *San Francisco Bay View*, 30 Dec. 2016, sfbayview.com/2016/12/honduras-government-supported-tourism-pushes-garifuna-maroons-off-their-land-of-200-years/.
[291] Thorne, Eva T. "Land Rights and Garífuna Identity." *NACLA*, North American Congress on Latin America, nacla.org/article/land-rights-and-gar%C3%ADfuna-identity.
[292] Ibid.

marginalization runs in tandem with a government land-grab movement, which began in 1992 with the passage of the Honduran Agricultural Modernization Law.[293] The effects of this land-grab can be seen in cities such as Trujillo and Tornabé where rezoning for tourism has decreased Garifuna land. The encroachment on indigenous and Afro-Honduran land and anti-black racism has resulted in large populations of Garifuna migrating from Honduras to the United Sates to escape violence and access employment opportunities. Many of the migrants are women with young children.

The year 2015 marked the beginning of a decade dedicated to people of African descent in the Americas. Proclaimed by the UN Assembly as the International Decade for people of African Descent (2015-2024), the United Nations as well as other human rights organizations aim to:

> Promote respect, protection and fulfillment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by people of African descent…Promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies…[as well as] adopt and strengthen national, regional and international legal frameworks according to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and to ensure their full and effective implementation.[294]

According to the United Nations the Program of Activities is to be implemented at certain levels: national, regional, and international. The organization states, "The promotion and protection of human rights of people of African descent has been a priority concern for the United Nations. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action acknowledged that people of African descent were victims of slavery, the slave trade and colonialism, and continue to be victims of their

[293] Smyth, Tim. "Garifuna People Are Risking Everything to Flee Their Ancestral Honduran Homelands." *VICE News*, 21 Aug. 2014, news.vice.com/article/garifuna-people-are-risking-everything-to-flee-their-ancestral-honduran-homelands.
[294] "International Decade for People of African Descent." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/en/events/africandescentdecade/plan-action.shtml.

consequences."[295] The decade provides a framework for member states, civil society, and the United Nations to come up with concrete measures to promote full inclusion of African descended people in every aspect of society and to combat forms of intolerance such as racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia. Many organizations have come together in the circum-Caribbean to discuss anti-blackness and its effects on people of African descent in the Caribbean and Latin America.

During the summer of 2015 I had the privilege of meeting with Zulma Valencia, the Vice President of the non-profit organization Organización de Desarollo Étnico Comunitario or ODECO. Based in La Ceiba, Honduras ODECO is an ethnic community development organization that works with the Garifuna community in La Ceiba and other parts of Honduras. Founded in 1992, the organization responds to the needs of the Afro-Honduran population (Garifuna, creoles or English-speaking, and colonial peoples). They advocate for the economic, social, political, cultural and environmental rights of Afro-Hondurans, a population which has historically been marginalized from the rest of Honduras. ODECO's motto is, "Buscamos Voces Que Acallen El Silencio…" and they find those voices through events held within Garifuna communities throughout Honduras and elsewhere in Central America.[296]

As I sat in her office Zulma shared with me her plans, as well as the plans of then President of ODECO Celeo Alvarez Casildo, to bring awareness and change to Afro-Honduran communities.[297] The year prior, in October of 2014, ODECO was one of several organization that commenced a three day conference held in La Ceiba, Honduras for the seventh meeting for

[295] Ibid.
[296] The motto translates to "We Are Looking for Voices To Silence The Silence…"
[297] Honduran Garifuna activist, Celeo Alvarez Casildo, passed away on April 11, 2016 due to lung cancer. He was known for his leadership in his championing for the rights of Afro-descendant populations in Honduras and elsewhere in Central America.

Afro-Central American Women and the Diaspora (VII Encuentro de Mujeres Afrocentroamericanas y la Diáspora). Other organizations in attendance were Organización Negra CentroAmericana (ONECA), Central American Black Organization (CABO), Honduran Wuritian Lamidan Meriga (Howulame), Ecología y Salud ECOSALUD, de Honduras, Centro de Mujeres Afropanameña, CEMP de Panamá, URACAAN de Nicaragua, Iseri Ibagari de Guatemala, y en su condición de invitados especiales la Organización Comunitaria para el Desarrollo de la Mujer Afrodescendiente OCDEMA, Alianza Nacional de Comunidades Latinoamericanas y Caribeñas NALACC de los Estados Unidos, KONIC de Nicaragua, ONUSIDA, and Centro Universitario Regional del Litoral Atlántico (CURLA) among others. People traveled from Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and the United States to discuss the empowerment of Afro-Central American women. According to the poster Zulma provided during our meeting the conference aims to create a space for the convergence of Afro-Central American women and the diaspora to strengthen leadership and participation in the process of political advocacy for Afro-Central American women and the diaspora. The discussions that have begun to form from conferences and meetings, such as the one above, are especially important in relation to scholarship being written on Afro-Caribbean women and migration.

Fields such as black diaspora studies and Latin American studies have collectively examined the ways in which global processes such as migration have allowed for the flows and exchanges of cultural forms and traditions throughout the Western Hemisphere to take place. However, their analysis in regard to blackness and the ways it has been conceived in both nation and diaspora have remained limited, in turn, rendering Afro-Latin American and Afro-Latinos invisible. My dissertation intervenes in black diaspora studies and Latin American studies--and

both fields scholarship on labor and migration--to examine the contributions that back women bring to the studies of race, gender, and migration. In addition, bringing the histories and experiences of Afro-Caribbean women migrants, such as the Garifuna, to the center assists in foregrounding my examination of the ways in which black diaspora studies, ethnic studies, and Latin American studies intersect. The number of Garifuna women and children migrating to the United States has steadily risen. The illegal land grab taking place in Garifuna communities throughout Honduras, and the violence that follows, has pushed both men and women to migrate to other countries such as the United States. There has been a rise in Garifuna Women and children seeking safety in shelters near the Guatemalan/Honduran border as these women make the dangerous trek to the United States. in hopes of reuniting with family in places

Figure 17: VII Encuentro de Mujeres Afrocentroamericanas y la Diáspora. Poster for the seventh meeting for Afro-Central American Women and the Diaspora held in La Ceiba, Honduras

such as New Orleans and New York. This shift in the racial makeup of migrants traveling from Central America allows for an opportunity to open up a discussion about blackness, migration, and Latinidad.

The Caribbean, Central America, and the U.S. have always been connected whether through U.S. militarization in the region, capitalist development, or political intervention. These processes have, in turn, resulted in the migratory currents of populations from the south to the north. The different historical migrations of both West Indian and Garifuna women push us to reconceptualize and reframe the relationship and histories between the U.S., the Caribbean, and Latin America in regards to what Dzidzienyo and Oboler refer to as "…the flow and counterflow of racial ideas…"[298] The history of the circular migration of black groups from the U.S. and the Caribbean to Central America and back again calls for a critical examination of black diaspora studies, ethnic studies, and Latin American studies together. I plan to continue my study of Afro-Caribbean women's histories and experiences of gendered labor and migration through the collection of oral narratives. In this second project *Generational Crossings: Narratives of Afro-Caribbean Women and Migrant Labor*, I aim to facilitate research into the under-documented histories of Afro-Caribbean women labor migrants in the circum-Caribbean, particularly to Central America and the United States.

[298] Oboler, Suzanne, and Anani Dzidzienyo. *Neither Enemies nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 5.

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