

Distributed Online Collaborative Courses with the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC)

Virtual Exchange Faculty Showcase: Connecting Classrooms
Around the World

Presentation slides: www.dloc.com/AA00064117

Leah Rosenberg, rosenber@ufl.edu

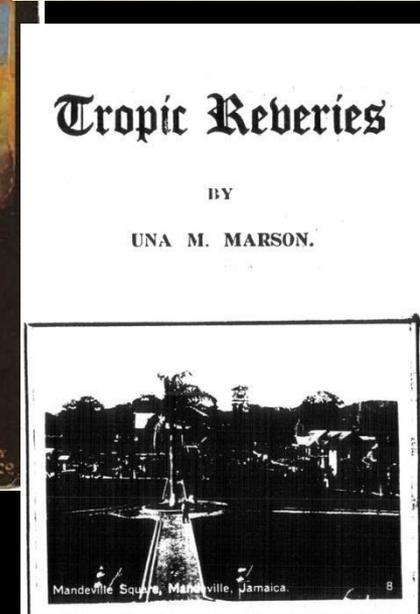
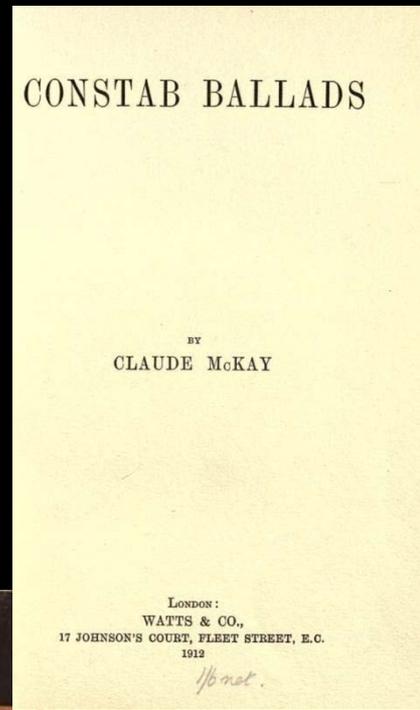
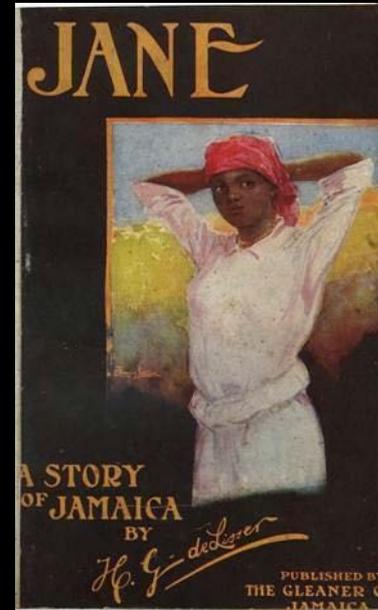
DOCC: Original Inspiration and Objectives:

To teach dLOC's growing collection of Early Anglophone Caribbean literature and provide explanatory materials for scholars, students, and the public.

J.J. Thomas *Froudacity*
Claude McKay *Songs of Jamaica*
and *Constab Ballads*

The Poetry of Una Marson
The All Jamaica Library
The Independence anthology of
Jamaican literature

And, nearly all books written
by Herbert de Lisser



Panama Silver, Asian Gold: Migration, Money, & the Making of Modern Caribbean Literature: Course Description



Concurrent migrations of Chinese and Indian indentured laborers to the Caribbean and Afro-Caribbean workers to and from the Panama Canal, at the turn of the twentieth century, profoundly influenced the style and scope of modern Caribbean literature. Both migrant groups worked under difficult conditions for exploitative wages, yet members of each managed to save enough to enter the educated middle class. Their cultural forms and political aspirations shaped Caribbean literary production as well as anti-colonial political movements. In this course, students learn how to use digital, print, and audiovisual archival material related to these migrations to enrich their reading of Caribbean literature. Scholars, librarians, and students at the three institutions will collaborate. We will hold some class discussions online and students at all three campuses will learn how to use create finding aids, revise metadata, and produce Digital Humanities projects such as curated exhibits to enhance the digital archives we use. We will read works by Claude McKay, H.G. de Lisser, Marcus Garvey, George Lamming, V.S. Naipaul, Ismith Khan, Ramabai Espinet, Meiling Jin, and Patricia Powell.

The Collaboration

Amherst College	
Seminar meets Tuesdays 1-4 in Cooper House 101	
 <p>Rhonda Cobham-Sander rcobhamsande@amherst.edu Office: Cooper House 102 Office hours: Wed./Thurs. 2-4</p>	 <p>Missy Roser Head of Research & Instruction mroser@amherst.edu office: Frost Library first floor</p>
	 <p>Kim Bain, Research Assistant</p>
University of Florida	
Seminar meets Tuesdays 12:50-3:50 in Turlington 4112	
 <p>Leah Rosenberg, rosenber@ufl.edu Office: Turlington 4346 Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3; Thursday 11-1 Phone: (352) 294-2848</p>	 <p>Dhanashree Thorat, DH expert, PhD candidate</p>
 <p>Laurie N. Taylor laurien@ufl.edu</p>	 <p>Margarita Vargas-Betancourt mvmart@ufl.edu</p>
University of Miami	
 <p>Donette A. Francis dfrancis@miami.edu Office: 410 Ashe Office hours: Wednesday noon-2:30</p>	 <p>Beatrice Skokan Librarian, Special Collections Department bskokan@miami.edu</p>
	 <p>Vanessa Rodriguez E-Learning & Emerging Technologies Librarian vrodrigu@miami.edu</p>

- pilot for intercollegiate digital humanities courses
- supported by libraries of all three institutions
- taught in fall 2013 and spring 2016 as a hybrid course with collaboration

What is a DOCC? Distributed Online Collaborative Course

A DOCC is a Distributed Online Collaborative Course. It is a feminist rethinking of the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) that has been widely used in distance learning education. A MOOC is pedagogically centralized and branded by a single institution. FemTechNet seeks to enhance the system using feminist principles and methods that support a decentralized, collaborative form of learning. The fundamental difference is that the DOCC recognizes and is built on the understanding that expertise is distributed throughout a network, among participants situated in diverse institutional contexts, within diverse material, geographic, and national settings, and who embody and perform diverse identities (as teachers, as students, as media-makers, as activists, as trainers, as members of various publics, for example).

Excerpted from FemTechNet:

<http://fembotcollective.org/femtechnet/faq-for-femtechnet/>



Faculty & Librarian Collaboration

- Collaborative design of syllabus including assignments, incorporating archival-research techniques and introducing digital humanities aims and tools
- Pooling resources for guest lectures & for digitizing materials (5 guest speakers online, streamed to three campuses, supported by Academic Technology at Amherst and included as videos in dLOC)
- Working with librarians from each campus to choose appropriate technology and design technology-based assignments—and then to teach these to students

Final projects as exploration of DH + interests

ghostsinthewater.wordpress.com/history/

Ghosts in the Water: Chinese Women in Trinidad

Home Navigation **History** Women in the Narrative The Journey Across Black Waters Connections Beyond the Grave

Maps and Statistics Media Bibliography

History



Records show that as early as the 16th century, Chinese artisans, religious figures, and professionals were migrating to Southeast Asia[1]. With the Empire at its height, Chinese skilled labor was in high demand in foreign markets. However, these early migrations had nothing on the sheer numbers that migrated during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Some scholars refer to this period as the “classical migration period”. It was only during this period that migration patterns shifted, particularly in terms of push/pull factors of the time period, what *types* of migrants were making the journey, and *where* migrants were traveling.



Canal Zone Classrooms

A look into student lives in the segregated school system of the Panama Canal Zone

A Segregated History: Part I

This is a general introduction to segregation in the Canal Zone, which contextualizes the segregated school system. Click [here](#) to skip ahead to part II specifically about education.

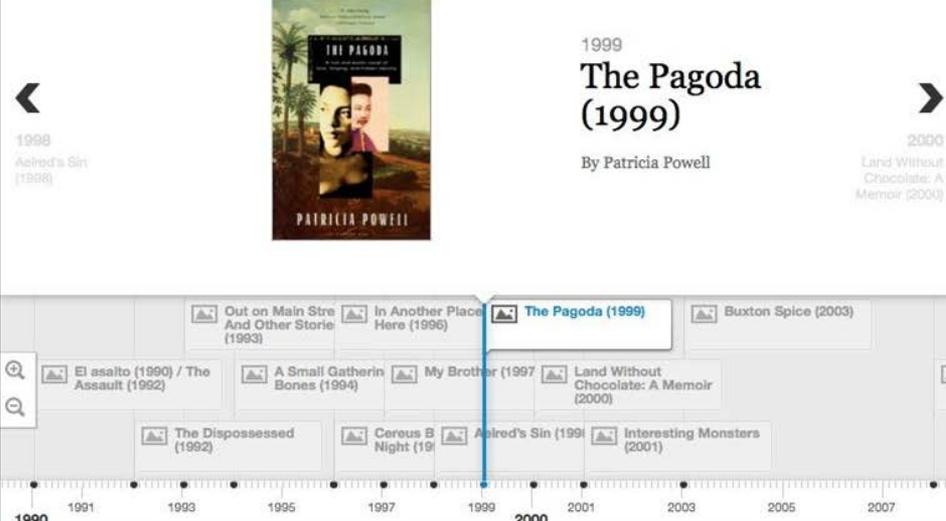
For most of the 20th century, the public school system in the Panama Canal Zone was segregated. As the *Silver People Chronicle* explains, this segregation was part of a

- MAPPING THE ZONE
- A SEGREGATED HISTORY
- ARCHIVED YEARBOOKS
- THE FLAG RIOTS OF '64
- ABOUT THE PROJECT
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- A Segregated History: Part I
- A Segregated History: Part II
- A Segregated History: Part III



1999

The Pagoda (1999)

By Patricia Powell

1998 *Alfred's Sin* (1998)

2000 *Land Without Chocolate: A Memoir* (2000)

Timeline items: *Out on Main Street And Other Stories* (1993), *In Another Place Here* (1996), *The Pagoda* (1999), *Buxton Spice* (2003), *El asalto* (1990) / *The Assault* (1992), *A Small Gathering of Bones* (1994), *My Brother* (1997), *Land Without Chocolate: A Memoir* (2000), *The Dispossessed* (1992), *Cereus B Night* (1991), *Alfred's Sin* (1999), *Interesting Monsters* (2001)



Map showing the location of **The Pagoda (1999)** in the Caribbean region, near Jamaica and the Caribbean Sea. Other locations marked include Tampa, Miami, San Francisco, Mexico City, Merida, Santiago de Cuba, Dominican Rep., Puerto Rico, Curacao, Panama, Medellin, Colombia, Ecuador, Quito, Santa Cruz, and Leticia.

Powered by Leaflet — Map data © 2011 OpenStreetMap contributors, Tiles Courtesy of MapQuest

Student Metadata Assignments Make West Indians Visible in the Archive of Canal Construction



“

East chamber of Gatun Lock after filling, showing Gatun Lighthouse, Panama”

“I selected this item because it struck me as unusual and relatively unique. After looking at the photographs in Smathers Room 100, I noticed that not many of them had a West Indian central figure, especially the ones that were trying to capture the glory of the Panama Canal. For this picture to have a Canal worker ... as a primary figure is very interesting. I thought that it worked even better to emphasize the power and strength needed to finish the construction of the Canal, and gave a “voice” to one of the workers we seldom hear from. Having him stand and look out over his, and his people’s great effort, and assess the final product is quite powerful. I appreciate the effort that the photographer and Underwood and Underwood took with this photo to document not only the achievement of the Panama Canal in the eyes of Americans, but in the eyes of the workers as well” Chelsi Mullen

Gaps and false certainty in Metadata

Title: "Native on Back"

<http://dloc.com/PCMI003554/00001/citation>

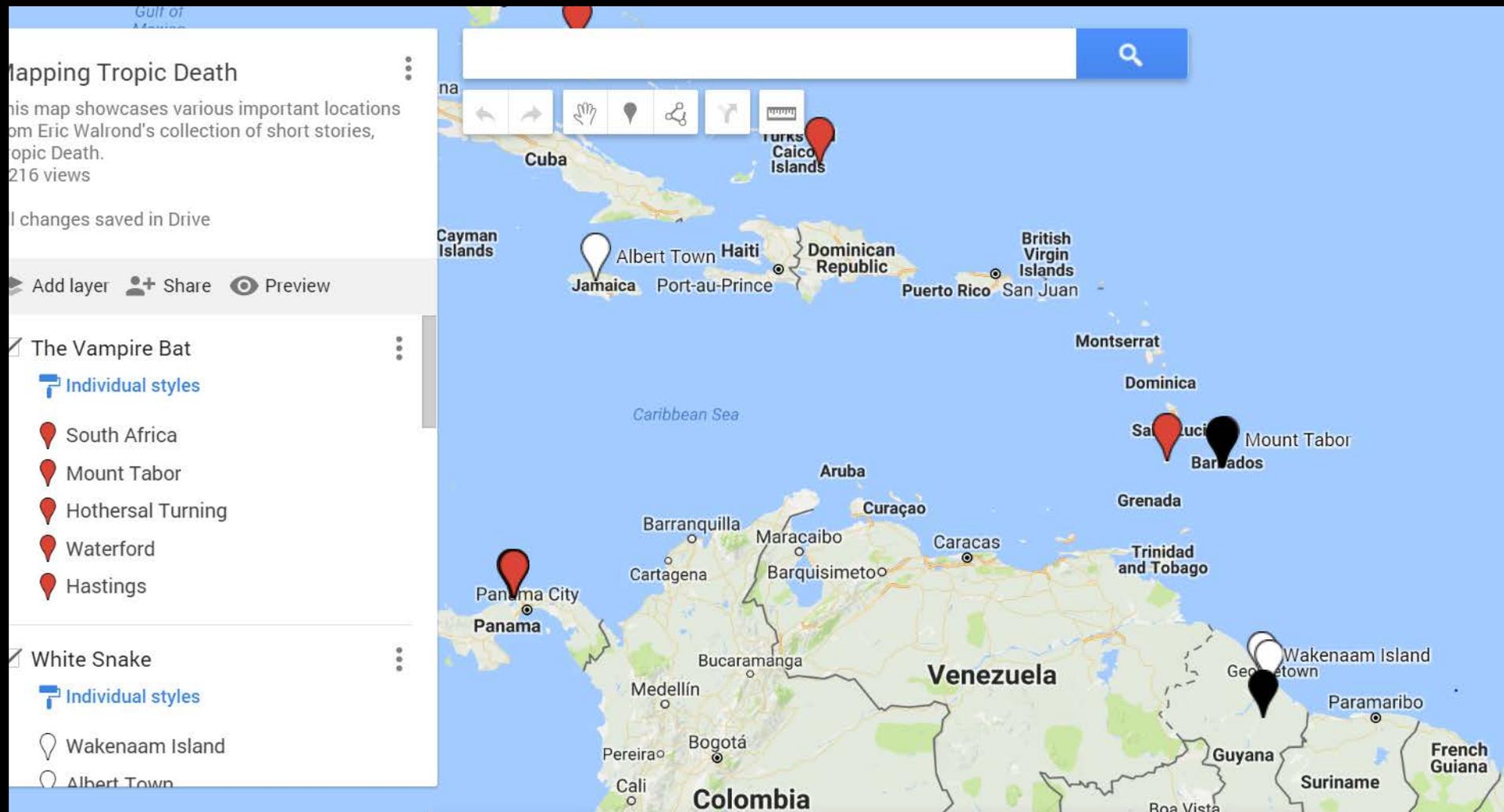


Description of a photograph of what appears to be an Amerindian or West Indian family Panama. The title is actually a note indicating that there is the word "Native" penciled on the back of the image.

Cover for Scalar Book containing the Mapping Assignment

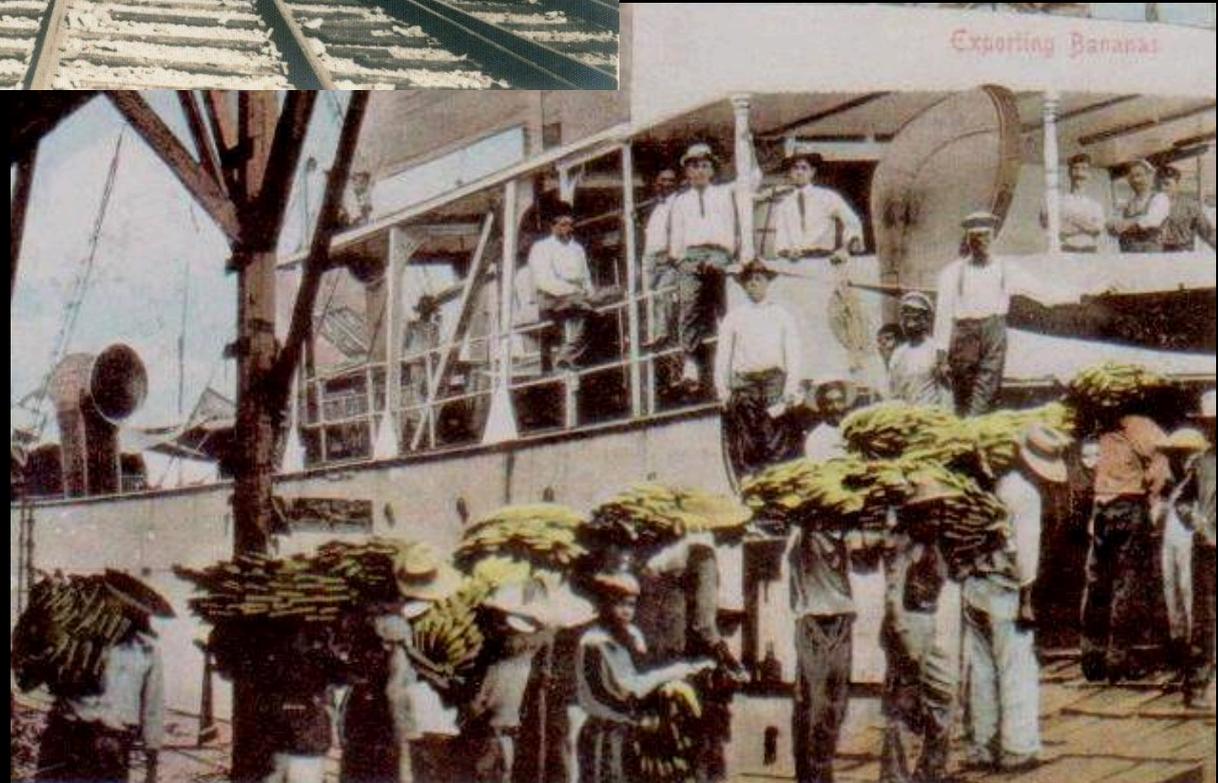


The Class was divided into five cross-campus working groups, each ‘mapped’ key locations in Eric Walrond’s *Tropic Death*, an influential Harlem Renaissance collection of short stories set in West Indian communities in Latin American and the Caribbean – and the ships that connected these communities in Panama, Guyana, Barbados, and Honduras and Jamaica.





Karina Vado elucidated the significance of the reference to Tela in Walrond's "The Yellow One."



The Opening of Eric Walrond's Tropic Death

Among the motley crew recruited to dig the Panama Canal were artisans from the four ends of the earth. Down in the Cut drifted hordes of Italians, Greeks, Chinese, Negroes – a hardy, sun-defying set of white, black and yellow men. But the bulk of actual brawn for the work was supplied by the dusky peons of those coral isles in the Caribbean ruled by Britain, France and Holland.

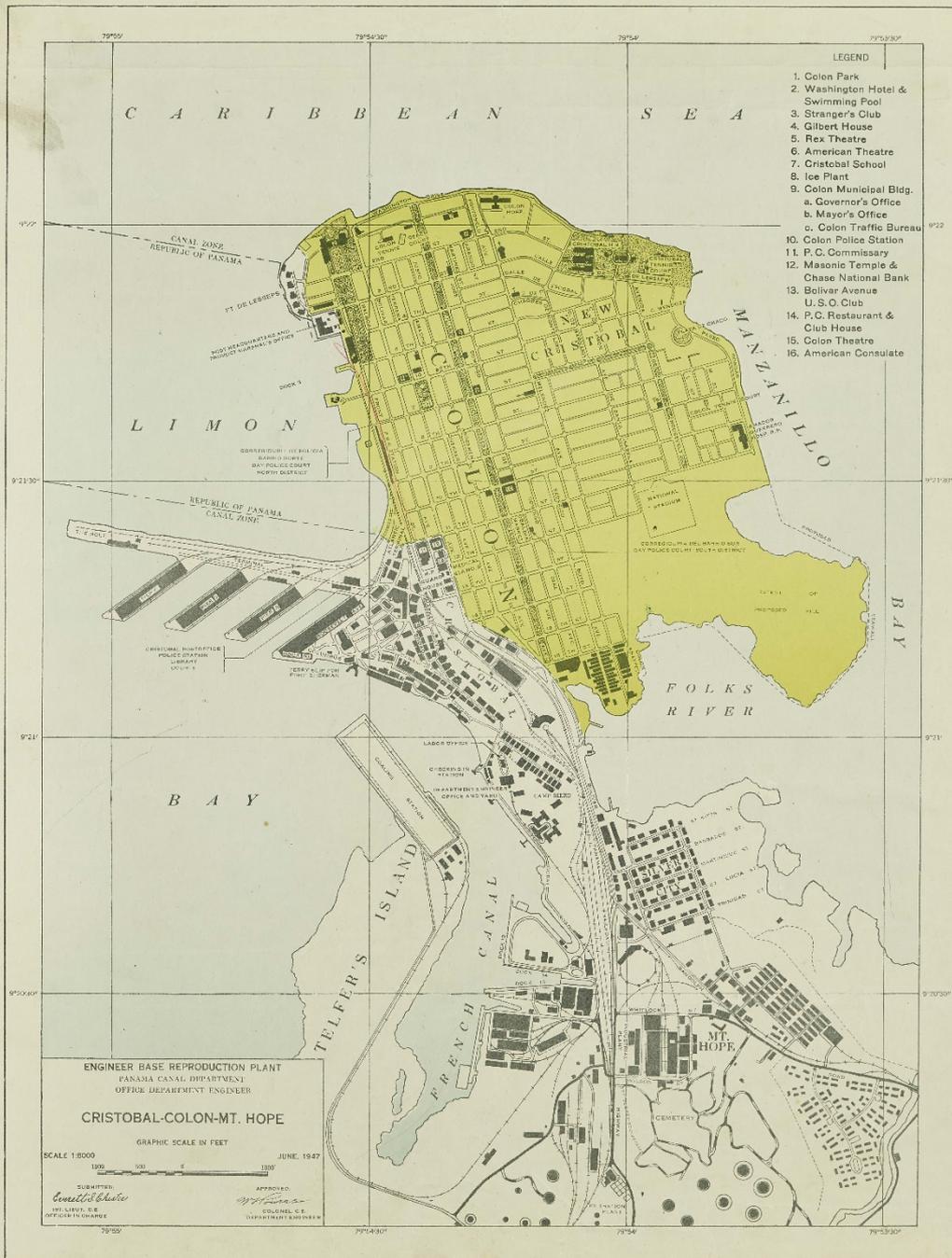
At the Atlantic end of the Canal the blacks were herded in boxcar huts buried in the jungles of “**Silver City**”; in the murky tenements perilously poised on the narrow banks **Faulke’s river**: in the low, smelting cabins of Coco Te. The “Silver Quarters” harbored the inky ones, their wives, and pickaninnies.”

West Indian Migration to Panama in Tropic Death by Dhanashree Thorat



Roberto Reid's description is the main source for locating Silver city or Silver living quarters and provides two possibilities of where the story takes place

The area known as Rainbow City today showed up in maps as a little settlement called Guava Ridge during the French Canal construction era of the 1880s. After the Americans acquired the rights to build the Canal in 1904, the area already included a **townsite at Folks River (called "Fox" River up to 1915)**, which consisted basically of a collection of small, portable houses that had been put up by the French and were in disrepair. At the time the Americans inherited 24 main buildings in three rows between the railroad shops and the main line. There also existed a settlement on the shores of Limón Bay, overlooking Telfer's Island. This area, which came to be known as **Camp Bierd**, included a few houses for families but mostly consisted of crowded one-story barracks for dock workers. (Emphasis in the original, (Roberto Reid, The Silver Townships- Rainbow City- Part I," Silver People Chronicle)



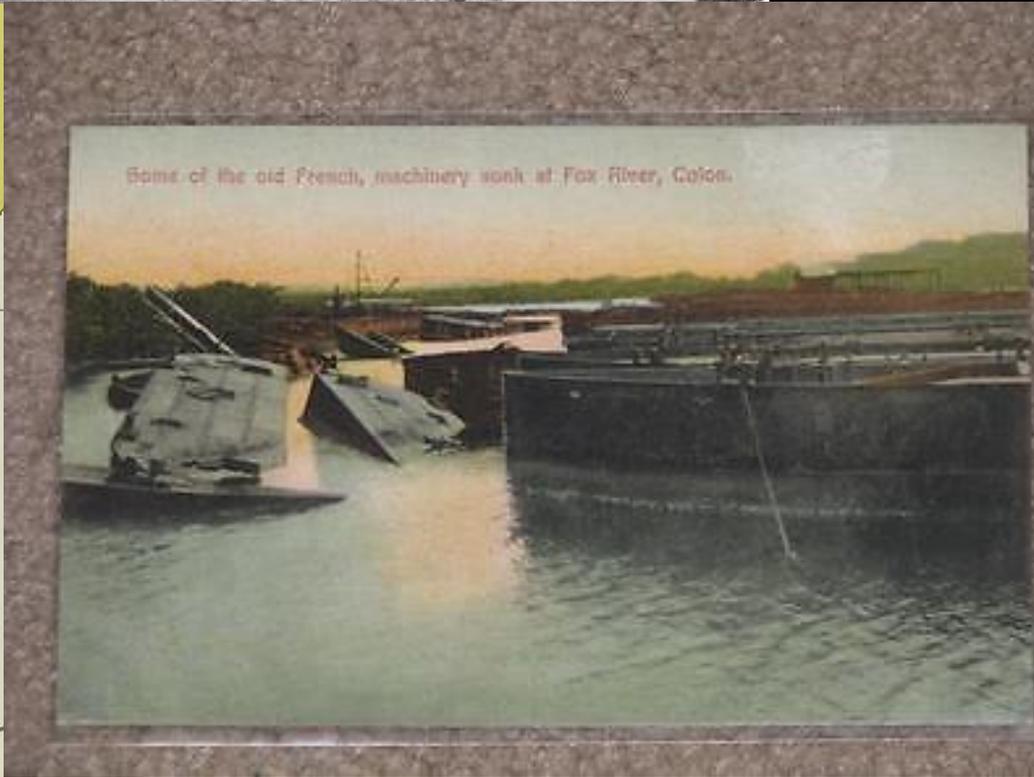
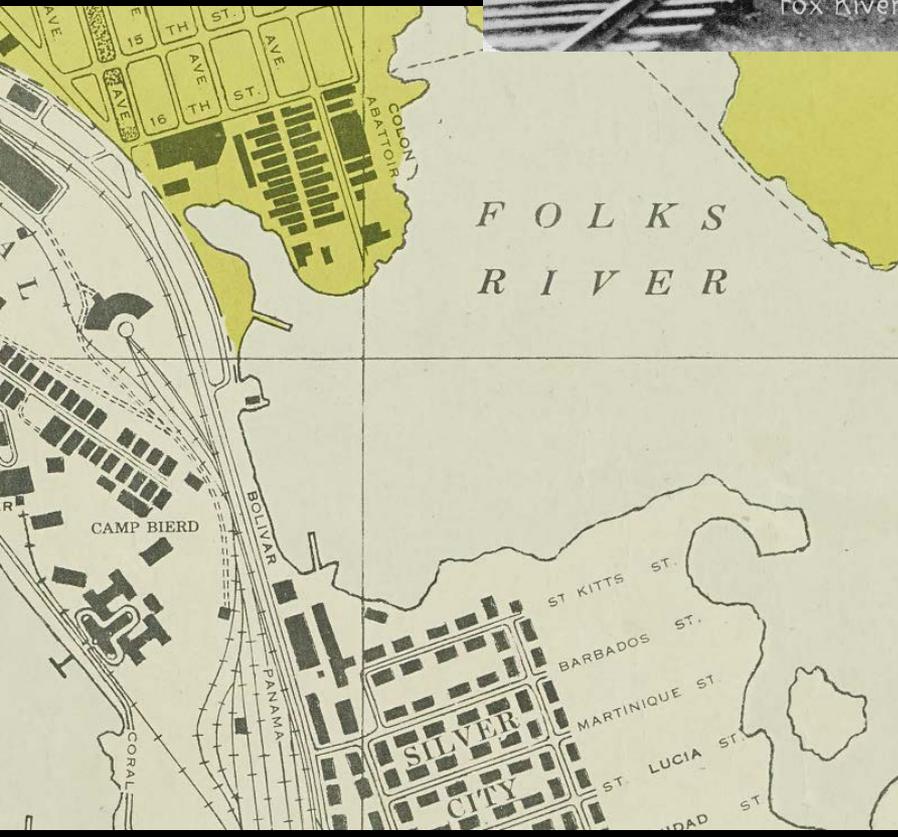
1944 Map

Landfills have already changed the city's shape.

1944



Fox River, Canal Zone.



Some of the old French machinery sunk at Fox River, Colon.

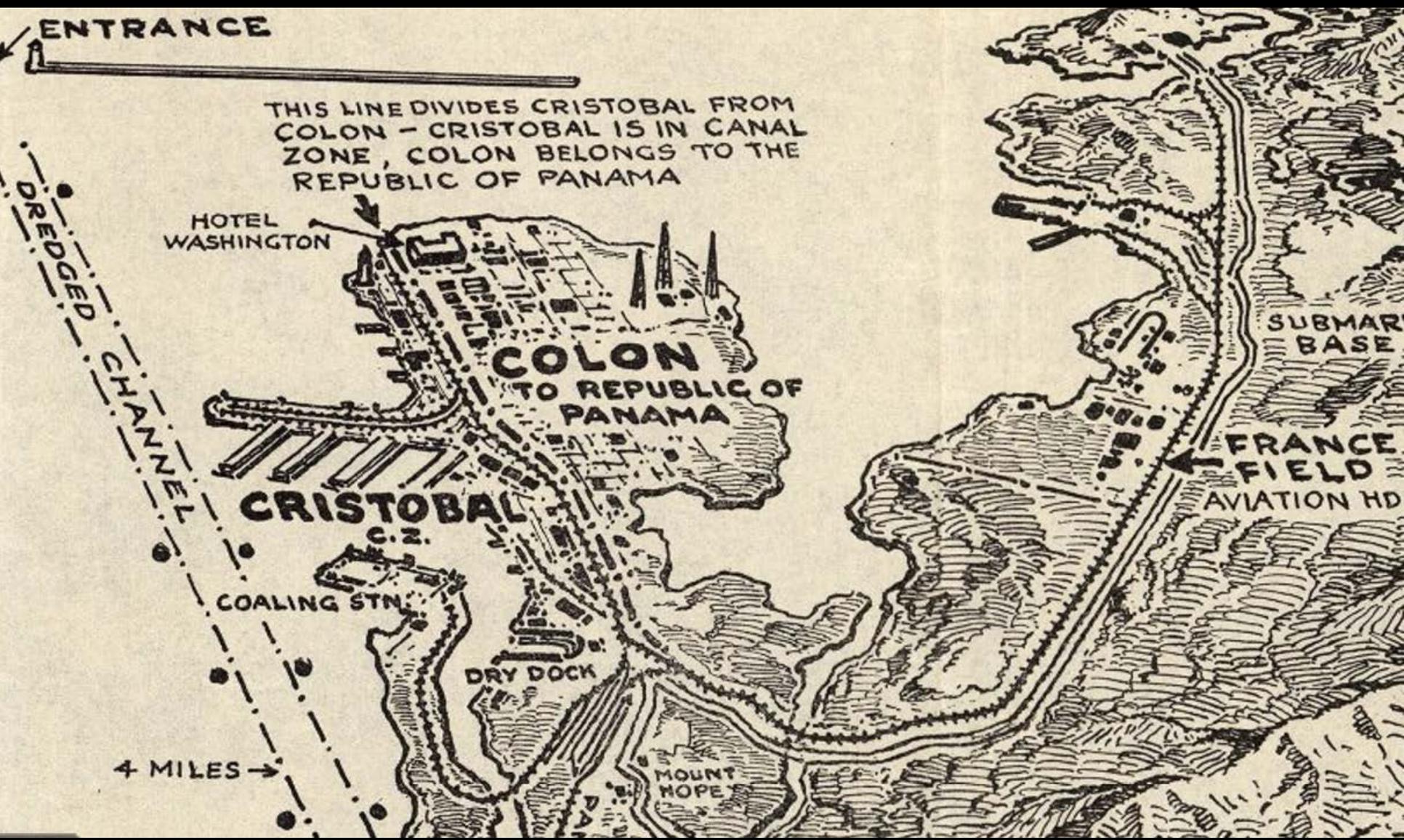
Housing for silver workers at Camp Bierd, 1908-1909
*Source: A. B. Nichols Photograph Album 2, Linda Hall
Engineering Library*



1845 When Colon was an island called Manzanilla



1924 Charles Owen Map



Current Image of Colon from Google Maps



Tropic Death and Tropicality



Diving for Coins Nassau Harbour
<http://www.oldbahamas.com/id62.html>

By invoking the classic tourist image of boys diving for coins flung by tourists from a cruise ship deck, *Tropic Death* challenges the tourist guides and photographs that denied the humanity of Caribbean people and forces the reader to see that the great migration of West Indians to Panama as the flip side of the great white migration south, as the necessary condition for tourism, the Canal, and US modern power more generally.

Guidebooks to Panama mix admiration for US ingenuity and power

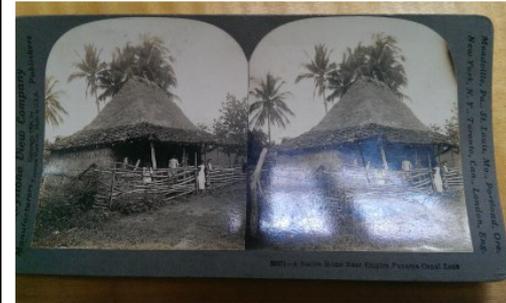
with a tropical romance, the Panama-Pacific Line's *My Trip Through the Panama Canal* praises "the beauty and magic charm of [the Canal's] natural setting," the "deep verdure of islands and hillsides; the colors of flowers amidst green along the shores; the waving foliage of shore side banana-plantations, each with its palm-thatched house; the purpose slopes of the mountains in the Continental divide." The man-made order and sanitation of the US Canal operations are presented as part of this tropical landscape. Alongside the thatched huts and banana leaves, tourists will see "the red roofed military stations; the model, spotless towns in the Canal Zone." History enters this tourist vision only in the far-distant history of Buccaneers, Columbus, who are featured on the tourist map of Colon included in the brochure.

These descriptions match the broader tropical discourse on the Caribbean and Latin American that Art historian Krista Thompson calls "tropicality." Thompson argues that the early tourist industry in the Caribbean produced a fixed idea of the Caribbean as tropical embodied in a series of snapshots: palm-lined beaches, banana leaves, rushing water falls, quaint and docile "natives," exotic fruits and vegetables. This visual canon of "Tropicality" was a "new imperial way" of seeing the Caribbean and other "southlands," that defined the space and its citizens as simple primitives outside the march of progress, who existed to serve and entertain the white tourist and settler. The whole diverse region was marketed as one homogeneous, primitive, and fertile Eden, safe for tourists and investment.

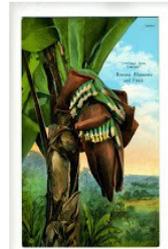


The Panama Pacific Line

TROPICALITY



Panama Canal Museum Stereograph Collection



Postcard: Greetings from Jamaica

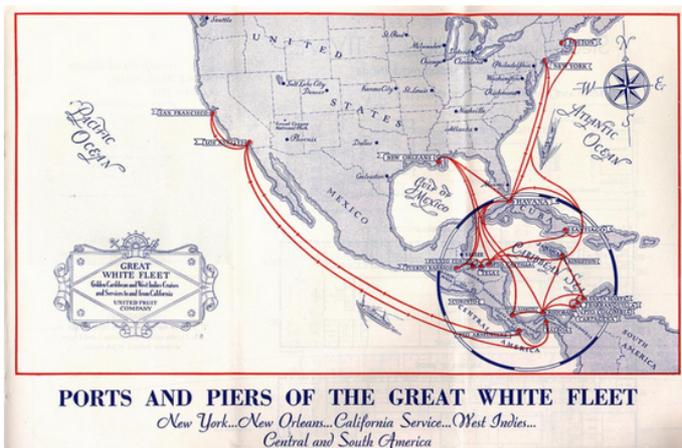
Tropic Death

In his introduction to *Tropical Death*, Arnold Rampersad notes that "In some respects, the distinguishing mark of Walrond's art in *Tropic Death* is the sense of paradox enshrined in its title. Typically the tropics evoke images of vitality and fecundity, as well as relaxed, even lazy, indulgence in the sensual world" (14). In reading *Tropic Death*, I was overcome with the unrelentingly dark, ominous, grotesque, sickened adjectives used to describe Panama and with Walrond's willingness to highlight the horror and racial violence that the discourse of tropicality sought to obscure. "Wharf rats" opens with a description of men sleep half-naked in "wormy singlets"; these garments are made of string but this depiction suggests that they are insect-ridden, as if the men are going to rot and be eaten by worms (67). The sea is not part of a glittering crystalline backdrop to paradise but a "Deathpool, a spawning place for sharks, for barracudas! (73); "Black" and "impenetrable," the only light ("A flash of lightning") is the shark that will kill him (82). The "Deathpool" into which Philip dives is filled with the detritus of imperial history: "Old brass staves—junk dumped there by the retiring French—thick, yawping mud, barrel hoops, tons of obsolete brass, a wealth of slimy steel." By disturbing these waters, Philip awakens a "mankiller" of a shark that "bore down on him" and "A fiendish gargle—the gnashing of bones—as the sea once more closed its jaws on Philip"; soon after the shark also eats his brother Ernest (83). Tourists scream, "women fainted"; there is talk of a gun, but nothing is done to save the young men. This is a telling image of the alienation between the two migrations, the West Indians who did the "actual brawn for the work" of US imperial expansion and dive deep into imperial history on the one hand, and on the other, the white, wealthy tourists who look down from above, unhampered by history or environment, equipped with maps and brochures that speak only of old Spanish history of Columbus and buccaneers—of bananas leaves waving in the breeze and quaint thatched huts. This proximity and alienation is what makes the space of Panama one of tropic death for West Indies and of ignorant pleasure for white tourists.

The Great White Migration South

The Great White Migration South Strengthened and Unified a modern White Identity for a wide range of White U.S. citizens, for the elite who traveled and for the less privileged who followed those travels in books, magazines, and increasingly film.

“Action-all vacation long! Seeing-exploring-marveling. A visit in romantic Panama City—a day-light sail through the wonderful Panama Canal—a stop at gay Havana with all its alluring attractions—and home across the Continent!”



United Fruit Company Shipping and Cruise Routes

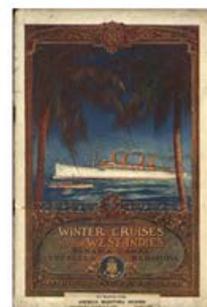
Today's enormous Caribbean cruise industry was born in the late-nineteenth century and built on the growth of corporate agriculture, the Citrus and Banana industries, that constructed Florida's railroads and produced steam ship service to the many Caribbean and Latin American ports where the United Fruit Company did business. The Panama Canal facilitated the growth of this industry and thousands upon thousands of white wealthy tourists traveled through it on pleasure tours following its opening in 1914.

WHITE MIGRATION SOUTH

When traveling through the canal, tourists had many cruise lines to choose between

Ship lines from UK to Colon: Royal Mail Steam Packet, Frederick Leyland and co., Elders and Fyffe, the Harrison Line, and from the US: The Royal mail Packet, the Hamburg American, the Panama Railroad Steamship line, and The United Fruit Company—and others.

List from Aspinall, Algernon E. *The Pocket Guide to the West Indies, British Guiana, British Honduras, the Bermudas, the Spanish Main, and the Panama Canal* (1914) (pp. 14-22)



Winter Cruises to the West Indies



Advertisement: Panama Pacific Line

Tourism to the Caribbean and Latin American played a large part in shaping the idea of white modern identity in the United States. The region offered white, respectable, modern citizens an escape from a wide variety of restrictions imposed by their modern, northern lives. Historian Catherine Cocks argues that early tourism fundamentally changed the idea and reality of the Caribbean and Latin America for white tourists. Earlier generations had thought the tropical environment and proximity to people of other races were extremely dangerous. Tropical fevers could kill and exposure to tropical peoples and cultures could permanently contaminate white travelers. However, by

regard to mosquito-borne diseases, a greater sense of the power of culture vis-à-vis nature made it possible for white northerners to travel south without thinking that

they might risk their status and identity. They could enjoy what the tropics had to offer without risk whether those attractions were young men diving for coins, carnival masquerades, or tropical scenery (not to mention alcohol, sensuality, and interracial romance or sex).

Ironically, travel to the Caribbean, a largely non-white region assisted northern whites in seeing themselves as different and superior to their southern neighbors even as they increasingly borrowed from and dabbled in things tropical. Afro-Caribbean dance and music, Caribbean and Latin American fashions all became sampled by northerners. Tanning for darker-skin color, wearing skimpy swim suits, going to sexy Afro-Cuban night clubs and even brothels were all experienced as ways of living up modern whiteness and adding spice to white marriages and thus strengthening them. Cocks argues that Caribbean culture served to strengthen white northern ideas of manhood and womanhood in a period of stress and change when US women were increasingly challenging traditional gender roles by gaining the right to vote, by working outside of the home, marrying later, and bearing fewer children, and men's muscular masculinity was increasingly challenged by sedentary office jobs. In this context, the Caribbean and Latin America was a place where white men could experience nature, flex their muscles, and find traditional women. They could even bring their modern white wives and allow the Caribbean to infuse them with the femininity and sensuality that modern respectable society had deprived them of.

Cruises made tasting the tropics safely easy. The United Fruit Company named its ships the great white fleet, and many cruise ships were white. These great white vessels allowed tourists to travel into the tropics, visit local sites during the day and return to the white ship and its white culture in the evening, or they could enjoy the tropics from the safety of the deck, as did tourists in "Wharf Rats" as they watched black men diving for coins from above.

Works Cited:

Cocks, Catherine. *Tropical Whites: The Rise of the Tourist South in the Americas*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

Steamships Transported West Indians, Tourists, and Writers

The Steam ships of the early twentieth Century carried West Indian workers bound for Panama, tourists heading south, and West Indian writers, Eric Walrond and Claude McKay. Steam ships make visible the extent to which both the West Indian migration to Panama and the touristic migration south were part and parcel of the same expansion of US power, both transported along with the bananas and other products of US corporate power.

There was, however, an enormous difference in the way tourists and workers traveled in steam ships. West Indians workers on their way to Panama were crowded onto decks, with little or no accommodation for food or shelter. When recording their memories in the 1963s, the men who worked during the Construction period recall the ships that brought them to Colón.



Llegue a Panama el 7 de Febrero del ano de 1902 en el gran barco de la Pacific Mail Steamship co. "City of Sisney" anclo al este de la isla de Flamenco.

Suazo, Alfonso: lote 63—casa 215, Seccion A de MariaEugenia, Chilibre, R.P.

I came to Panama on the Royal Mail Boat the Attrato on the first of August 1909 on Sunday morning. I landed in Colon, the place was unsanitary, no good streets.

Alexander Arnold N. c/o Vicent H. Harrison, Box 1304 Colon, R.P.

My first experience landing at colon, on the

ninth of Oct 1905, from the Royal Mail ship, Orinoco, having had a hazardous trip, of thirteen days of bad weather, poor accommodation, in general with sparing meals on a crowded ship, we were all more or less hungry.

Austin Harrigan, estefeta Chorrillo, Apartado 5993, Panama, R.P.

R. M. S. P.
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Southampton and Cherbourg
to
**West Indies
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& New York**
Via Barbados, Trinidad, Puerto Colombia, Cartagena,
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to Bermuda, St. Kitts, Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica,
St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Barbados, Grenada, Trinidad,
& Demerara.

STEAMSHIPS

Sir I came to the soil of Panama from Barbados landed in Cristobal docks on the 21st of April 1909, between 1 and 2 pm with the last trip of the S.S. Solent.

G. Mitchel Berisford, Estefeta Chorrillo, Apto 6104, Panama R.P.

from the Isthmian Historical Society competition for the best true stories of life and work on the Isthmus of Panama during the construction of the Panama Canal

United Fruits Ships—filled with fruit and tourists—carried Claude McKay when he immigrated to the United States from Jamaica in 1912. Eric Walrond was working as a cook's mate aboard a different UFC ship, the SS Turriabla when he wrote *Tropic Death*. (Brittan, 313; Davis 71).



This is the ship on which Walrond worked as a Cook's mate and wrote *Tropic Death*

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Advertisement in the Pocket Guide to the West Indies and noted by Austin Harrigan and Alexander Arnold as the company that transported them to work on the Canal

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Regular Weekly Services of Mail
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