

## **Trinidad and Tobago as the hinge of a primary and secondary diaspora between Africa, the Caribbean and South America, especially Venezuela circa 1797 to 1914.**

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### **Introduction**

This paper locates the twin-island. Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the Commonwealth or English-speaking Caribbean at the hinge around which a primary, 'in' diaspora from sub-Saharan Africa and a secondary, 'out' diaspora to Venezuela in particular and to the Spanish Main in general occurred, from 1797-1802 to 1914. Between 1797 and 1802, Trinidad in particular changed sovereignty from Spain to Great Britain during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic "World War". Its operation as an important hinge in the "in" and "out" movement of African and African-descended groups was evident even in the period of Spanish rule prior to 1797- 1802. That was more so far the British takeover.

It must be said upfront that the pattern of migration - forced or *galut*. or voluntary or *tephuztzot* [For Hebrew terms see Joseph E. Harris (ed.) *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*. Howard University Press 1993 pp. 11 & 461 - in and out of Trinidad historically has been more complex than the preceding suggests. Prior to the onset of the European period of the New world, Trinidad and Tobago experienced waves of "in" migrations by Amerindians from the South American mainland. These migrations continued into the first half of the 20th century. According to Trinidad oral sources, South American-origin Indians called Guarahones frequented southern parts of Trinidad annually up to the Second World War: despite boundaries between Venezuela and Trinidad. A feature of the history of Trinidad from Emancipation in 1838 to the present has been the migration, legal and illegal, of Afro-West Indians mainly from, St. Vincent, St. Lucia and Dominica into the island. Before Emancipation, 'in' migration came from French Saint Domingue and Martinique. This was especially so when the French Caribbean territories were caught up in the twin storms of the metropolitan French Revolution and the periphery slave revolt in Saint Domingue. In the post-Emancipation period, too, Trinidad and Tobago received its share of 'in' migration of Madeirans (Portuguese), Continental Indian and Chinese indentures in order to alleviate a so-called labor shortage arising from the exodus of freed blacks from plantations.

An epistemological and pedagogical point is that several of these migrations were circulatory. This was certainly true for Amerindian migration patterns during prehistoric and historical times. Before and after Emancipation, Afro-West Indians replicated the Amerindian pattern 'out' to Venezuela and the main; back and forth. No sooner had some Continental Indian indentures 'in-migrated' to Trinidad after 1845 than they 'outmigrated' to the Spanish Main.

### **The geostrategic position of Trinidad and Tobago in the Atlantic System**

The key to understanding the role played by Trinidad and Tobago in the above-described pattern of 'in' and 'out' migrations is geography. Firstly, the islands are located astride the narrow Straits of Dakar from West Africa, a major source of the 11-15 million Africans who were 'galuted' into the Atlantic slave-trade-diaspora between 1451 and 1870. Next there is its proximity to the Windward Islands (Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada, Carriacou and Petit Martinique) as well as to Barbados. Thirdly, a narrow strip of water, the Gulf of Paria, separates Trinidad from Venezuela and, hence, to the bulge of South America. The bulge comprises Brazil. (See Maps 1 & 2).

### **Primary and Secondary Migration into Trinidad. Provincia de Venezuela, 1784.**

For the purpose of this paper, the starting point is 1797-1838. The period coincided with the Bourbon colonial reforms, the change of sovereignty from Spain to Great Britain and the transition from slavery to Emancipation and a free society in the history of Trinidad. Tobago's history followed a different trajectory to that of Trinidad until unification in 1898.

Prior to 1797-1802, Trinidad was a "Provincia de Venezuela" after the title of a study by Jesse Noel, former University of the West Indies Professor. The territory was a veritable backwater of the larger Spanish Empire in the Americas. Catholic State and Church administered a population that comprised Amerindians and a small number of African slaves. Some of the latter seemed to have entered Trinidad by secondary migration from Venezuela. According to University of the West Indies Professor, Bridget Bereton, in her book, *A History of Modern Trinidad, 1783-1962*, p. 15

A census taken in the middle of 1784 .... recorded 335 Spaniards and 384 French settlers, 765 'mixed' Spaniards and 633 French free coloreds (persons of mixed European and African descent) and free blacks, 260 'Spanish slaves' and 2027 'French slaves'.

The Amerindian population, which stood at an estimated 30,000-40,000 in 1492, had declined to about 1500 in 1784. The reasons, were the same as for the Americas under Spain and Portugal: disease; enslavement in encomiendas and wars of resistance such as the Amerindians uprising against their Capuchin encomenderos at the Mission of San Francisco de los Arenales (San Rafael in today's Trinidad) in 1699.

However, the African population of Trinidad surged from about 2,500 in 1748 to 10,000 in 1797 and to over 20,000 at Emancipation 1838 in tandem with the shift from small scale tobacco production to a 'late-developing', sugar plantation economy. The Trinidad situation was similar to that experienced by Cuba from the juncture of the Seven Years War (1756-1763) into the first half of the 19th century.

A pre-Emancipation stream constituted Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani, Ibo, Ewe-Foh and others that had been caught up in the fighting connected to the simultaneous rise of the Mushín Caliphate to Sokoto and Gwandu and the collapse of the Yoruba Empire of Old Oyo in the modern Nigerian-Benin (ex-Dahomey) zone from the turn of the 19th century. (Maureen

Warner-Lewis, *Guinea's Other Suns: The African Dynamic in Trinidad Culture*, Dover, Massachusetts, The Majority Press, 1991, ch. 2, pp. 7-24)

Some of these ethnic Africans were rescued by the British-led Anti-Slave Trade Squadron off the West Coast; taken to Freetown in Sierra Leone; and 'liberated'. Between 1834 and 1867, some 9,000 'Liberated Africans' entered Trinidad under indentured contracts. (K. O. Laurence, *Immigration into the West Indies in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, Devon House, Caribbean University Press, 1971, p. 14)

Another pre-Emancipation stream were African-Americans or "Merikins", as they were called in the local literature. These African-Americans had supported the British in their wars against the "Yankees", for example the 1812-1814 War. They had served in Black Regiments such as the Corps of Colonial Marines. In religion, they tended to be Baptists. The British first settled them in Nova Scotia in Canada. From there, they moved the "Merikins" to Trinidad to settle and develop Company Villages in then virgin lands. Today, the descendants of these "Merikins" live in the Company Villages with names as New Grant, Matilda Junction, Hardbargain, Hindustan and Indian Walk in South Trinidad. The name of Hindustan mirrors the African-Indians interaction that arose from the entry of the Indian indentures after 1845. (Patricia Stephens, *The Spiritual Baptist Faith: African New World Religious Identity. History & Testimony*, London: Karnak House, 1999, pp. 19-19).

Yet another pre-Emancipation stream had entered Trinidad from older, saturated Caribbean plantation colonies via an illicit slave trade after abolition in 1807. Between 6 and 10,000 slaves were bought in between 1811 and 1833 from the Bahamas, Grenada, St. Vincent and Barbados (Information by courtesy of University of the West Indies Professor, Claudius Fergus).

With Emancipation in 1838, ex-slaves and "Liberated Africans" dispersed across Trinidad and Tobago. In Trinidad, for example, they dispersed across the East-West corridor of the North between Cocorite and Diego Martin (a name of which has been and is "Sierra Leone"); through Port of Spain, the capital, and environs such as Behnont, to St. Joseph, Tunapuna and Arouca.

There was also an axis of dispersal to the South and Central of Trinidad: Couva, Claxton Bay, Oropouche and Gasparillo. Anthony De Verteuil, a contemporary planter-historian of the social category known as "French Creoles", describes the African settlement of Oropouche as "nooks and comers" in which were herded together large bands of immigrants imported into the colony, particularly Negroes and Kroomen. In fact the population of Oropouche may be characterized as a heterogeneous collection of the inhabitants of different countries, in an unsettled and migratory state: Congoes, Yarrabas and Koomen ... Coolies and Chinese ... ; Americans.. Spaniards ... ; emigrants from the British and French colonies; with a limited number of natives of Trinidad ...

De Verteuil was seeing things through the binoculars of his class, who had imbibed the Scientific Racism of the period. According to this, the enslaved Africans were pieces or things that had come out a history-less "Dark Continent". In another epistemological point, this was not so at all. The millions of Africans "galuted" into the trans-Atlantic slave trade

and New World slavery between 1492 and 1870 were human beings who had resided in societies with history, culture etcetera prior to contact with Europe and North Atlantic world. They were drawn from branches of the major language-family of West Africa and the Congo, namely Niger-Kordofanian or, to some, Niger-CongoKordofanian. These major branches were and are: according to Joseph Greenberg:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 & 2. Mandingo or<br>Mande-speaking and Fulani | Senegal, Gambia and interiors                   |
| 3. Ashanti                                      | Gold Coast                                      |
| 4. Fante  |   |
| 5. Ewe-Foh                                      | Dahomey   |
| 6. Yoruba                                       | West Nigeria                                    |
| 7. Ijaw   | Delta and coast of East Nigeria                 |
| Ibibio  |   |
| Efik  |   |
| 8. Igbo or Ibo                                  | Hinterland of East Nigeria                      |
| 9. Bantu  | Nigeria-Cameroons into the<br>Congo River Basin |

Others like the Hausa (Nigeria) spoke a language related to the Sahara, namely the afro-asiatic language family that includes Berber and Semitic (Greenberg).

The Mande, Fulani and Hausa lived in the eco-system under the Sahara called the Western Sudan. The Western Sudan was a belt of grain food (rice, millet), animal husbandry (cattle, sheep) and horse (for cavalry). Culturally, the Western Sudan was partly Islamic by 1400-1600.

On the other hand, Asante, Fante, Ewe-Foh, Yoruba, Ijaw, Ibibio, Efik and Igbo were forest Africans mainly. The forest was and is infested by the tsetse fly. Malaria and sickle cell anaemia are endemic diseases. Agriculture was (and is) known in tropical crops such as yams and palm oil, supplemented by chickens (Guinea fowl) and fish. Yarn, the oil palm and chicken are counted as domesticated in this zone of Africa.

Next, the “homeland” of most of the Bantus in the New World was the River Basin of the Congo. The co-system was and is a mix of the Western Sudan and the Forest of West Africa. Grain and tropical crops were cultivated. On account of the tsetse fly, however, cattle, sheep and horses were not present. Further inland, however, cattle formed a key part of the political economy of inland Bantus.

The culture of the Africans in the forests of West Africa and in the mixed ecology of the Congo River Basin was non-islamic by and large, before and after 1400-1600.

Whether inhabiting the Western Sudan, Forest or the Congo River Basin, these Africans by 1400-1600 lived in so-called Iron Age Societies. The term refers to a sub-Saharan version of the Agricultural-Urban Transformation that had produced the civilizations of the Nile Valley, Iran-Iraq, India etcetera. The Iron Age ‘revolution’ reached Africa under the Sahara from 3-2000 B.C.: coinciding with the use of technologies of melting iron, bronze and copper.

On the foundations of this Iron Age 'revolution' from 3-2000 B.C., many complex societies were in existence by 1400-1600. AD knew of agriculture of different types, including growing rice in wetlands; metalurgy (iron, copper, bronze) which was applied to warfare and to art; knowledge of Sirius A and B in the galaxy, numerology, on the basis of which calendars and sense of time were mounted; and , most importantly, religion with Creation Stories. Commerce, international and regional, was known to most of these Africans. The commerce involved slave-trading across the Sahara, for example. The labor used within domestic economies and in regional and international commerce was slave-based to some extent. Currencies of varied kinds (gold and gold dust, copper, salt and imported cowrie-shells) underpinned the political economies of the varied Africans.

Over millennia, the above West and Central African languages of the different groups of 'naciones' in the words of Sandoval, the 17th century Jesuit anthropologist -historian, had diverged and were generally unintelligible the one to the other. However, contact across elastic frontiers before and after 1450 had contributed to some breaking-down of linguistic and cultural barriers. To be specific, the language had emerged as an lingua franca across coastal Senegal-Gambia- Sierra Leone-Liberia and their hinterlands by virtue of Mande imperialism and commercial dominance under the Empires of Ghana and Ancient Malí from the late B.C. era to the period of contact with Portugal and Europe in the mid-15th century.

The same was true of Yoruba linguistic and cultural influence astride West Nigeria and Dahomey by and after 1450. Yoruba in Nigeria and Ewe-Foh in Dahomey (and some of the languages in today's Togo and East Ghana) were becoming mutually intelligible.

In the new World, we know of pidgín languages: a mix of African, Amerindian and European languages. We also know of religion-cultural 'syncretism', "reinterpretations", and "transculturations" The Epistemological and pedagogical point for African Diaspora Studies is that African-to-African pidgin formations. as well as religio-cultural interactions, were evolving in parts of the "Homelands" with elastic frontiers to the Atlantic crossing. With the coming of Europe from 1450- these processes evolved on both side of the Atlantic.

The pre-crossing sharing of culture among contiguous Africans embraced so-called "secrets societies" in the Eurocentric literature. Following Michael A. Gomez in his recently-published and mark-winning book, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: the Transformation of Africa Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (of the United States), the University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London, 1998), the proper name for these African institutions are "societies of men and women or male and female societies". They were "the functional equivalents of social, cultural, and governmental agencies, and the secrecy within which they operated was only a mean to the realization of their purpose" (p. 95). One of these societies was the Poro for men in the Senegambian region. Its existence predated the Atlantic crossing and its 'governance' was across ethnic, linguistic and religio-cultural communities, albeit with a Mande or Mende influence.

The varied West and Central Africans had their religions, their specific Supreme God and their specific Creation Story. Almighty God was Olodumare to a Yoruba; Chukwu or Chi to an Ibo; and Nzambi or Nzambi a\_Mpungu\_ to a Kikongo Bantu. They had their cosmogonies\_and cosmologies Cosmology is that aspect of religious philosophical belief which concerns the fundamental character of the universe. Cosmogony is that part of Cosmology concerned specifically with the creation of the universe...

(J. D. Elder, pioneer African Diaspora Professor of Trinidad and Tobago in “Yoruba Cosmology and Cosmogony”: lecture delivered on 23 April 1991 at the University of the West Indies, African and Asian Studies. The citation is at page 1 and comes, by cross-reference, from J. Gould and W. Koell, Dictionary of the Social Sciences, Free Press, 1965, pp. 42-42).

Notwithstanding, there were (and are) certain commonalities to the traditional religions of the Africans caught up in the trans-Atlantic galut. They include:

- 1 The belief that God is the ultimate explanation of the genesis and sustenance of both humankind and all things.
2. The belief that God is transcendental and can be only approached by humans via mediums (Yoruba orisas for example) and Ancestors/Living Dead.
3. The belief that there is a continuum between those who are alive and those about to be born.
4. The belief that animals, plants, phenomena and objects are part of the Divine Plan in the Universe.

Africans astride elastic frontiers such as Nigeria and Dahomey were into sharing of belief-system. prior to the Atlantic crossing. With the advent of Europe from 1450 to 1500 along the coasts of West Africa and the Congo River Basin, African traditional religions also interacted with Roman Catholicism. Accordingly, we need not believe that Brazilian Candomblé or Cuba Santería of Trinidad Orisa or the Vodun and Rada of Haiti and Trinidad had their genesis in the Americas. The roots often go back to the critical period of 1450 and 1600 in Atlantic history.

The Africans rhythm in post-Emancipation, described by De Verteuil as part of “a heterogeneous collection of ... inhabitants... in an unsettled and migratory state” and requiring “ the lessons of civilization and the watchful eye of the law”, was really that of community-building. The community-building included Black Muslims, traditional Africans expressions and Afro-Christian expressions. For example, Belmont, a district of Port of Spain, was the home of a Black Muslim community up to and including the 1850s. ‘Mandingoes’ were prominent in it. The term. ‘Mandingo’ shows that many were of the Mande linguistic and ethnic stock. However, ‘Mandingo’ was used as a generic term to describe African Muslims of non-Mande ethnic stock in Trinidad: Hausa, Fulani and some Yoruba.

Some of the Trinidad Muslims had stretched themselves out of Belmont into South Trinidad by the 1870’s: founding a settlement that is called today Mandingo Road (See Map 3). In South Trinidad, many of them interacted with incoming Continental Indo-Muslims; and came to be called “Injin(s) from Africa” on account of their straight hair or

through ‘douglarisation’. In Trinidad, a ‘douglah’ is the progeny of an African-Indian relationship. (Maureen Warner-Lewis, *Guinea's Other Suns*, p. 19)

The black Muslim community in and around Port of Spain, numbering about 140 persons, was economically-sufficient. Their leaders, with names as Jonas Mohammed Bath, Mohammedu Sise and Mohanimedou Maguina (who died at the age of 100 in 1852) petitioned the British Colonial State in 1838 to be repatriated. Sise and his family were repatriated to Bathurst in Gambia via London in 1838. It is not known how many more were. My guess is that most of them, did not succeed; and settled down to make Trinidad (later Trinidad and Tobago) their new home or ‘golah’ (Carl Campbell, “Jonas Mohammed Bath and the Free Mandingos in Trinidad: The Question of their Repatriation to Africa 1831-1838, *Journal of African Studies* 2 #4 Winter 1975-6 pp. 467-495).

Belmont was also the home of a Trinidad version of the Haitian Vodun Imown as Rada. The principal linguistic-ethnic group linked with Rada was the Ewe-Foh from old Dahomey. Trinidad Rada, however, intertwined Yoruba, Ibo and other African groups. As stated, the history of this intertwining might go back to the ‘homelands’ astride Dahomey and Nigerians.

Trinidad Rada is the subject of a Ph.D. thesis nearing completion by Emmanuel Kwaku Senah, a Ghanaian student at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad. Senah is tracing its roots back to the ‘homeland’ and its transfer to and adjustment in Trinidad. According to Senah, several groups of Ewe-Foh entered Trinidad just before and after Emancipation in 1838. They either introduced Rada or strengthened of it in Trinidad. One Ewe-Foh individual was Daaga or Donald Stewaar, his British name. He was a soldier in a Black Regiment, the First West Indian Regiment. Daaga led a Mutiny against the British Colonial State on the night of 17-18 June, 1837 at a station in St. Joseph, the capital of Spanish Trinidad. According to Edward Joseph’s contemporary *History of Trinidad* (London, 1838), Daaga led his fellow mutineers, drawn apparently from groups other than Ewe-Foh, to the chant of a “a war song”:

Daaga: Dangkaree (Come to plunder)                      Au fey (Come to slay)

Respondents: Oluu werrei (We are ready)  
                         Au lay (To obey).

The Mutiny was crushed by the British and most of the men executed. Going to his execution, Daaga reportedly said defiantly:

“Do you ~ that Daaga fears to fix his eyes on death?”

(Based on a combination of E. K. Senah, “African Continuities in the Caribbean: Towards a Re-Interpretation of the Central Concept in the Social History of the EweFoh/Rada Presence in Trinidad” paper presented to a Staff-Graduate Students Seminar of die Department of History, the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, (circa 1996); and Tom August. “African Resistance in the Caribbean: The St. Joseph Mutiny of 1837 San

Diego State University, circa 1997? Both Senah and August draw from Joseph's original account).

Today, the Behnont Rada expression is still practised by the descendents of one Agbojevi Zahwenu, alias Papa Nanee, alias Robert Antoine. Zahwenu/Papa Nanee is mentioned in local newspapers in 1886 as the 86 years old "priesf" of the Rada community who faced the courts of Trinidad for worshipping "little black images as gods" in violation of "obeah" Ordinances No. 1 and 6 of 1867 and 1868. "Obeah" was the term used in the laws of the British Colonial State in the Caribbean to demonize African tradition religion. Such laws still exist in the books of independent Trinidad and Tobago, though steps are afoot currently to remove them. The "little black gods" mentioned in 1886 Rada case and in an earlier one of 1873 involving one Hou Quarvee, alias John Cooper, were the Ewe-Foh vodzusi of Dangbwe: Age; and Aviekete. But the 1873 list of "black god" included Ogun of the Yoruba pantheon, in an example of "syncretism" of "reinterpretation" and other terms in African Diaspora Studies in the New World. In yet another example of the complexities of "syncretism" or "reinterpretation", we hear in the 1873 written data that the Rada community venerated the Roman Catholic saints of the Virgin Mary; St. Michael; St. Catherine; and St. Bernard. This practice earned the Rada community the wrath of one Pèrre Francois, a Roman Catholic priest. He raided the Belmont Rada, "carrying off their clay popotes".

Contemporary data show the presence of Yoruba-influenced orisa and die Afro-Christian Shouters or Spiritual Baptists in Trinidad. In different degrees, each "straddled" Roman Catholicism; and these expressions also were persecuted by the Colonial State. The appropriately-named Shouter Prohibition Ordinance of 1917 aimed to suppress this Afro-Christian expression. Just earlier in October 1912, the British Colonial Authorities in St. Vincent had directed a similar Ordinance against the "Shakers" there. "Shakers" were the Spiritual Baptists of St. Vincent. Shakers had emigrated to Trinidad from the 1880s. Almost certainly, die 1912 suppression measure resulted in further migrations of them to Trinidad. There they found themselves victims of a second Ordinance. (Patricia Stephens, *The Spiritual Baptist Faith*, ch. 4, pp. 43-67 for discussion of the St. Vincent and Trinidad proscription).

The decade of the 1880s in Trinidad was a high-point of colonial repression of both African and Indian cultural expressions. The repertoire of African culture expressions then included the annual Carnival and formative calypso; "Nation Dances" that: were organized by ethnic-based "secret societies", with their Kings, Queens, Dauphins and Dauphinesses, and Princes and Princesses; Calinda/Kalinda\_which invariably involved the movement of stick-fighting; the equally, aggressively-danced bamboula,\_and the more elegant Bel Air. The women dancers in the last wore and still wear the billowing "French Creole" dresses. An influence on Trinidad Bel was probably migrants from St. Lucia in the Windwards, where patois, an Afro-French pidgin, is a virtual lingua franca to this day. Migrants from the Grenadines might also have introduced a variant of Calinda/Kalinda\_known as the Chica. The Chica was danced with a cloth in hand and around the neck, and not with the stick of "bois" of the Calinda/Kalinda\_ (Gordon Rohlehr, *Calypso and Society in Pre-Independence Trinidad*,\_published by the author, Port: of Spain, Trinidad, 1990, pp.



19-42; and Donald R. Hill, *Calypso Calaloo: Early Carnival Music in Trinidad*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993, ch. 2. pp. 1221 and ch. 3, pp- 22-43).

Tobago, with its heavy African-descended population, is currently the seat of Africanisms in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Its annual show-piece is the Tobago Heritage Festival in the month of July leading up to August 1 of Emancipation Day, a national day in The Republic. There, we see both continuities and adaptations, with a longer time-depth than for Trinidad. A highlight of the Festival is the traditional Tobago Wedding enacted in a village called Moriah. The Wedding reveals the syncretism between the European and the African culture streams. The groom and bride wear European attire, but the procession, drumming, singing, dancing and feasting are African. (J. D. Elder, *African Survivals in Trinidad and Tobago*, London Karia Press, 1988).

Closer to Africa is the Saraka Feast . Saraka is Yoruba, but 19<sup>th</sup> century data show that Hausas were associated with its observance. Saraka is a Feast of Thanksgiving, where sacrifice is offered to ancestors, and spirits. The sacrifices include generous gifts of provisions, livestock and rum. The ritual is enacted with prayers, singing and drumming. (Warner -Lewis, *Guinea's Other Suns*, pp. 5,31, 50,55, 62,78,116f, 121f, 191) Africanisms in Tobago as well as in Trinidad, show up to this day in many ways. Some of them are French Creoles or reflect the "syncretism" between the French and the African streams. And/or, they show connections with the neighboring islands of the Eastern Caribbean: sources of 'in-migration' to Trinidad. The following are examples:

Personal Names: Kwasi (Quashie), Kojo (Cudjoe), Kofi (Cuffle, Cuffee) and Surnames: Kwamin (Kwame, Quamina) These are Akan male day-names

In Folktales: Anansi, Soukouyan/Sukaya, La Diabliesse and Douens/Dwennes.

Sukuyas are female creatures that are said to fly at night and suck the blood of victims. Apart from flying, the sukuya moves by turning herself into a fireball. To ward her off, salt must be put in front of one's door before going to sleep.

La Diabliesse (French Creole) are also said to manifest: in the shape of a woman at night - a beautiful one. Behind this, however, is a veritable she devil, with an ugly face that is covered with a broad hat and cow's feet that are covered with a long skirt. La Diabliesse is the scourge of sexually-wayward males.

Douens/Dwennes (French Creole) are the spirits of deformed wailing children who had died before christening. The spirits roam the streets of the night.

In foods: akara, a delicacy that is made from saltfish mixed with flour and seasoning and usually eaten at breakfast.

Kalalu/Callaloo, a standard at the Sunday lunch table. Edible bushes are cooked with saltine<sup>4</sup> coconut milk etcetera and seasoning.

Names of Endearment:

nana/grandmother; nenen/godmother or aunt; du du/sweetheart

Names of Derision: mohnol, muk, inumu, boboli, meaning a stupid person. Tabanka, a description for a man whose woman has been taken by another man.

Economic Activities: susu or pooling of money to redistribute by turns of hands

Names of private parts of the body, names with sexual overtones:

bambain (backside), punani (female genitals), hototo, (too much penis)

A good source for the above and more is Richard Allsopp, (ed.) [with a French and Spanish Supplement edited by Jeannette Allsopp], *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usages* (Oxford University Press 1996).

### **Emergence of the 'Afro-Saxon' Middle Class**

The period between 1797 and 1914 saw the emergence of an Afro-Saxon middle class in Trinidad especially. The term, "Afro Saxon", expresses the socialization of this category in the British/European. culture-stream via Christianity: Roman Catholicism; Church of England of Anglicanism; Non-Conformist such as Methodism; and their Church schools. Or the schools were State ones that were established after Emancipation.

The 'prestige' schools for the children of the French-Spanish élites were St. Mary's College (boys) and St. Joseph's Convent (girls). Well into the 1870s, the language of instruction was French. This was to protest the passage of the English Language Law of 1840, as well as another measure, that made the Church of England the State Church. The school of the English Establishment became the Queen's Collegiate School. Founded in 1857 and later renamed Queen's Royal College, it was "a government run and financed college offering secular and classical education on the lines of the British public school to Brereton, *A Modern History of Trinidad, 1783-1962*, pp. 124-125).

Under an Education Ordinance of 1870, the Colonial State set up a dual system of state-aided Church School, side by side with, Government or Ward Schools at the primary level. By 1885, there were 61 Church/Denominational and 55 Government Schools. The language of instruction was English. The increasing thrust of English as the official language of State and education, combined with a measure of 1870 disestablishing the Church of England, led the French-Spanish elites to abandon French as the language of teaching in their 'prestige', secondary schools.

These developments, along with socio-economic changes, created openings for bright black and colored children to enter the secondary tier of education, from a base in the primary schools. Moreover, a system of Annual Island Scholarships, set up by the State, opened the horizon of Tertiary Education to them in the prestige Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in Britain. This socialization produced the first generations of AfroSaxons leaders of thought and action in Trinidad by 1914. They included the following:

1 John Jacob Thomas. (1840-1889), whose *Froudacity* (1889) was a fierce Afro-conscious rejection of the scientific racism of James Anthony Froude, the Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford University in his *The English in the West Indies of the Bow of Ulysses* (1887). Froude wrote his book in the wake of a visit of three days in 1887 to Trinidad, as a guest of the colonial Attorney-General.

2. Philip Hma Douglín, a “Liberated African” from the Rio Pongo in the present Republic of Guinea, who rose to become the first black Vicar of the Church of England in Trinidad. His astringent Afro-race-consciousness is evident in a speech that he delivered at the celebrations of 1 August 1888, to mark the Jubilee of Emancipation in 1838.

3. Henry Sylvester-Williams (or Henry Sylvester Williams) (1869-1911). He was instrumental in the formation of the African Association, later named the Pan-African Association, in London in 1897. In turn, the Pan-African Association convened the 20th century first Pan-African Conference in Westminster Town Hall, London, between 23 and 25 July, 1900. This year marks the centenary of this historic event.

### **In-Migration from Barbados and other Caribbean Territories**

The parents of Henry Sylvester-Williams were migrants from Barbados to Trinidad. They formed part of a larger ‘in-migration’ to Trinidad before and after Emancipation in 1838. The impulse was mostly economic. Trinidad was the land of opportunity for blacks in the more populated smaller islands of the Eastern Caribbean. However, we cannot rule out an ideological pulse to migration. By this, I mean the search by individuals and families for what I call their “Province of Freedom”. This pulse was behind the well known migration of Afro-West Indies to Britain, the United States and Central America after 1838, in part. It was also the pulse behind a less-known, out-migration from Trinidad to the Spanish.

### **Down the Spanish Main to Venezuela Particularly**

‘Out-migration’ from Trinidad to the Spanish Main by mainly Afro-West Indians is the subject of a just-passed Ph.D. thesis by Michael Ferguson Toussaint in the Higher Degree program of the History Department of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad. The author of this paper supervised Toussaint’s thesis. What follows reflects the author’s debt to Michael Toussaint.

Toussaint illuminates two broad phases of this ‘out-migration’ from Trinidad to the Main generally and to Venezuela in particular:

1. Circa 1800 to Emancipation in Trinidad and the British Caribbean in 1838. This period was one of slavery in the British Caribbean. In Venezuela and in Latin America, it was the onset of the Wars of Independence from Spain and Portugal. Venezuela swung from slavery to Emancipation to slavery. Migrants, joined the armies of Bolivar. Or they simply engaged, in marine marronage. An attraction was clearly the virgin Caribbean-fronting island of Venezuela.

2. From Emancipation in Trinidad and the British Caribbean to about the outbreak of the First World War. This is the period of legal freedom, in the British Caribbean. However, legal freedom was not matched by economic opportunities and political freedom for the free black population. Hence, ‘out-migration’ was, as stated before, the expression of a search for one’s or a group’s “Province of Freedom”. Equally, the discovery of gold, or reports of such discoveries, in places such as the Guayana region of south-western Venezuela in the 1850s and 1860s fuelled ‘out-migration’ of blacks not only in Trinidad but

in other islands as far north as the then Danish West Indies (today's United States Virgin Islands).

El Callao quickly emerged as a point of concentration of this Afro-West Indian 'out-migration' from the base of Trinidad into Venezuela.

As the migrants moved and settled in El Calloo and other areas in Venezuela, they carried their culture-bag. Building on the anthropological work of Angelina Pollak-Eltz in her *Black Culture and Society in Venezuela: La Negritud in Venezuela* (Caracas, Lagoven, 1994), Toussaint notes the following continuities in El Callao:

1. The use of English as the lingua franca among children despite the existence of only one English school in El Callao until the 1930s.
2. Anglicanism, including British-type tea parties.
3. The game of cricket.
4. Africanisms in funerary practices: "nine nights wake", followed by a "forty days service" to wing the soul of the deceased to its final resting place. These ceremonies were accompanied by singing, dancing and feasting.
5. The observance of Carnival and Emancipation Day.

The 'in-migrants' to Venezuela comprised patois-speaking French West Indians of Martinique as well as from Trinidad. They concentrated at Guiria. Not surprisingly, there was an Afro-French flavour to the Carnaval in Guiria.

Toussaint does not mention the presence of orisa in El Callao and other areas settled by the Afro-West Indians. My guess is that this expression was going among the transfers and continuities from Trinidad, Tobago and other islands by 1900. This is an area for further research.

By the 1920s, another transfer was Garveyism. In his *Race First The Ideological and Organizational Struggles of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Improvement Association* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood press, 1976) pp. 361-373, Tony Martin provided a list of over 1,200 UNIA branches in some 40 countries. Trinidad had 30, the third highest after Cuba (52) and Panama (47) in the circum-Caribbean. On branch is listed for Venezuela at El Callao. In a follow-up study, "Marcus Garvey and Trinidad, 1912-1947" (12th Conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians, Trinidad and Tobago, 1980) Martin microed the data for the 30 Trinidad UNIA branches. The data included several places which have figured in the literature on 'out-migration' to Venezuela. In light of this, we hear from Toussaint that El Callao became "the major centre of Garveyism in Venezuela and one of the largest in Latin America".

## **Conclusion**

The essence of diaspora is movement and movement, with adjustments. It is rarely a one-step process for an individual or group. More the case, the process is 'in' and 'out' and even circulatory. The ability of individuals or groups to do so is often facilitated by the geographical position of a country. Trinidad is one such country in its relation to West-Central Africa; to other Caribbean islands; and to the Spanish Main, as we look at the 'in' and 'out' of Africans and African-descended peoples from 1797 to 1914. The result is a rich repertoire of Africanisms in both Trinidad and Tobago. The cultural repertoire is

extremely rich in Trinidad, given the ‘in-migrations’ in this period of new European streams to add to the existing Spanish-French ones; of Asians (Continental Indians and Chinese) and of Syrian-Lebanese from the Middle East. Many of these streams used Trinidad to ‘out-migrate’ to the Spanish-Main.

Toussaint’s research opens up the possibilities for further work on Afro-West Indian ‘out-migration’ southwards to Venezuela and other South American countries in the period under discussion and after. By its nature, this migration was secretive. The migrants were not always welcome by the Venezuelan Authorities. Friction with Great Britain in the 19th century over the Venezuela-Demerara (British Guiana) border explains this unwelcome attitude of Venezuela in part. Also Venezuela’s attitude to the migration was not free of racism and the eugenics movement that enveloped the Atlantic System by the close of the 19th century.

We know from Sidney M. Greenfield’s “Barbadians in the Brazilian Amazon” (Luso - Brazilian Review, XX. #1, Summer 1963, pp. 44-64a), that there was a migration of Barbadians to what became known as Porto Velho in Amazonia in 1907. The sponsoring agency was a railway construction company; and the labor was to build a railway to exploit rubber. (See Map 5).

The opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 undermined the viability of the completed Amazonian railway, while competition from Asian rubber forced cutbacks in Amazonian rubber production. Some of the West Indians returned home. Others, however, settled, contributed to the development of Porto Velho and stamped a British-Afro-West Indian flavour on “the regional society and culture of the Brazilian Amazon”. Greenfield’s data about this flavour replicates some of what Toussaint tells us of El Callao in Venezuela. How many more El Callaos and Porto Velhos remain to be unveiled by research? Such research fits into the objectives of ALADAA and this particular symposium

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