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Rebellion in the Bay: California's First Puerto Ricans

NITZA C. MEDINA

The presence of Puerto Ricans in San Francisco as early as the beginning of the twentieth century is intricately tied to their recruitment as contracted agricultural labor for Hawaiian sugar plantations. Although this population never reached the large numbers that communities like New York City boast, Bay Area Boricuas have a unique and fascinating history rooted in resistance. A combination of protest against unfair living conditions and broken promises, along with the sympathy of many San Franciscans, led to the successful escape of Puerto Ricans from the grips of labor agents in California during the early part of the century. This paper examines how migrants who never journeyed beyond San Francisco provide a picture about the nature of resistance to the terms and conditions of the labor contract and agents that the Hawai'i expedition engendered, a resistance that also characterized the people who did make it to Hawai'i.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the Spanish-American War of 1898 left the United States victorious in their declaration of the Monroe Doctrine, as Puerto Rico became one of its Caribbean possessions. In the effort to transform the island from a Spanish colony to a United States colony, the economy suffered a shift from a multi-crop economy to one dominated by sugar. As a result, laborers in coffee growing regions began to clamor for work. In addition, a natural disaster in the form of the hurricane San Ciriaco devoured the island in August of 1898, killing a record 3,369 people and further devastating the economy. As Arturo Morales Carrión states: "The coffee crop value[d] at more than \$7 million was totally destroyed. Plantain trees were washed away and whole coffee haciendas...

were abandoned." (Morales Carrión 150). Responding to these economic difficulties, Puerto Rican laborers began a movement out of Puerto Rico to various parts of the hemisphere.

The Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association (HSPA) began to recruit Puerto Rican workers to work on their sugar plantations. Although other companies from Cuba, Mexico, Ecuador, and Santo Domingo also recruited workers, the HSPA's promises were the most generous of the lot. HSPA recruiters R.A. Macfie and W.D. Noble promised good pay, guaranteed three years of work, food, housing, schooling, clothing, medical care, the protections of the United States government and free travel to Hawai'i (History Task Force 56–57). Workers only had to agree to go to Hawai'i.

Previously, the HSPA had recruited workers from the neighboring nations of Japan and China to work in Hawai'i. However, the recruitment of labor for Hawai'i was affected by the growing anti-Chinese sentiment in the United States. In the 1860's, Chinese laborers migrated to the United States to build the transcontinental railroad. Although it was believed that the railroad would bring prosperity to California, instead its completion in 1869 spurred an economic depression. San Francisco factories could not compete with Eastern factories that could now easily ship their cheap manufactured goods to the West. Chinese laborers, who held half of San Francisco's factory jobs in 1872, became the scapegoats of San Francisco's declining economy (Cole 76–82). Anti-Chinese fervor reached its apex in 1880 when the United States passed the Chinese Exclusion Act that barred Chinese immigration, citizenship eligibility, land ownership, and witness testimony in court.

In addition to China, the HSPA could not recruit agricultural workers from Europe or Japan. U.S. labor laws barred European contract labor and an edict by the Japanese Emperor banned agricultural worker recruitment (Livernash "Record-Breaking Run"). Their only other alternative was to look to domestic sources of cheap labor. In 1900, the daily news of the Spanish–American War and its aftermath provided the answer. The HSPA looked to Puerto Rico as their cheap labor source because it was a U.S. territory and thus unencumbered by international restrictions.

Hawaiian planters sought cheap agricultural labor in order to gain leverage in local labor disputes with their labor force. The planters introduced Puerto Rican workers to break the morale of Japanese workers who used strategically planned strikes to demand wage increases. According to the *Report of the Commissioner of Labor on Hawai'i*:

From the planter's point of view an important result of the Porto Rican immigration was the moral effect that their arrival had upon the Japanese. The latter had begun to fancy that with the enforcement of the Federal Chinese exclusion and contract laws after annexation they were complete masters of the labor situation in Hawai'i. (History Task Force 63).

The Hawaiian planters systematically used racial tensions to create divisions in the work force, and as a result cemented managerial control over workers (Takaki 24). Thus, Puerto Rican workers were recruited not because of a labor shortage, but as scab labor. This was the context into which the first expedition of Puerto Ricans heading to Hawai'i stepped in November 1900.

Expeditions to Hawai'i: The Journey

Eleven contract labor expeditions left Puerto Rico for the Hawaiian sugar cane fields between November 1900 and August 1901. In order to see a more detailed human story of the migration, this study will focus only on the first expedition that left Puerto Rico, on November 22, 1900, and the migrants who abandoned the expedition in San Francisco. Of the 114 people who traveled in that first expedition to Hawai'i, 77 were men and boys over the age of twelve (History Task Force 45).¹ The *San Francisco Examiner* reported on the racial composition of the first expedition: "Three classes of Porto Rico's people were represented—the peasant or gibaró (sic), the mestizo, and the black; very few of the first and an equal number of the others" ("Porto Ricans are Prepared").²

Most of the migrants traveled with family members although some undertook the journey as individuals. Hawaiian planters preferred married men to single men because they saw them as "more reliable, less likely to run away or get drunk than single men" (Takaki 74). The recruiting notice encouraged the migration of families, offering enticing benefits that included the employment of women, boys, and girls; education for children; medical care; a residence; and food rations (History Task Force 56–57).

The first Hawaiian expedition left from Puerto Rico on November 22, 1900, and traveled by sea to New Orleans aboard the *Arkadia*. In New Orleans, the 114 Puerto Ricans transferred to a special two-car train on the Southern Pacific Railroad headed toward San Francisco. Initial reports about the migrants stated that they had been kidnapped from Puerto Rico to work on Hawaiian sugar cane plantations as slaves (*Centro* 19; "Porto Ricans Prisoners"; "Kidnaping Slaves"). The *New York Times* recounted that on December 6, 1900:

Two tourist sleeping cars, into which were packed 194 natives of Porto Rico—men, women, and children—arrived on the Southern Pacific Railway to-day from New Orleans and stopped a few hours.³ The natives came direct from their island home, and are on the way to Honolulu to work on the Spreckles sugar plantation.⁴ They were closely guarded by labor agents, and are due to ship at San Francisco on a certain date (History Task Force 21)

The same article discussed the claims about kidnapped migrants:

To avoid affording them any opportunity for escape, the agents had the cars sidetracked at a way station in the great desert, 300 miles east of this point, and remained there three days, so as to reach San Francisco in time to make perfect connections with the ship. Among the natives were a number of intelligent men. They said they were decoyed from their homes aboard a ship ostensibly to land on the other side of their island.... (History Task Force 21).

The *San Francisco Examiner* supports this story, reporting that the migrants “contend that they are being taken against their will and are giving the guards no little trouble” (“Kidnaping Slaves”). In the same article labor contractor George E. Baldwin insisted that the migrants had agreed to undertake the voyage, that he had paid their fares to Hawai‘i and felt they were now obligated to fulfill the contract. The migrants, however, told a different story. They believed they were only going to the other side of the island of Puerto Rico, not to the distant land of Hawai‘i (History Task Force 21).

In later interviews published by the *San Francisco Chronicle* the migrants stated that they had been deliberately misled by agents into believing that Hawai‘i was similar to Puerto Rico in its Spanish-based culture (“Porto Ricans Prisoners”). While some of the migrants may have indeed been informed that they were going to Hawai‘i, they may not have appreciated the distance between Puerto Rico and Hawai‘i. For example, although the labor agents initially said the trip would only take fourteen days, it actually took the expedition twenty-four days just to make half the trip (History Task Force 56–57). By the time the migrants reached New Orleans, they may have been dismayed to find out that they had not yet reached the island of Hawai‘i.

From New Orleans to San Francisco, the Puerto Rican migrants were transported under armed guard on the Southern Pacific Railroad in two or three cars. Labor agents took care to ensure that the Puerto Ricans did not desert the expedition by giving them a special train, stopping at isolated station stops, and delaying the train during the trip to insure they did not arrive in San Francisco before the ship arrived. Only the workers and the agents were allowed on this special train. Agents were intent on not losing their investment so they kept strict watch and control of the railroad cars and kept reporters or any other curious people away from the specially scheduled train (“Have We”). One observer declared that “The slave traders are afraid of publicity” (Livernash, “Record-Breaking”).

As a result of the control contractors wielded over them, many migrants became fearful that they would lose their lives if they did not obey the labor agents. One migrant, Aurelie de Soto, stated that “When I began to learn my situation I wished to quit, but I was told that it was dangerous to rebel in the United States, because I might be hanged on a telegraph pole” (“Porto Ricans Enticed”). The reference to a lynching suggests that migrants

were aware of the violent practices used to subdue non-white populations in the U.S.

Attempts by recruiters to hinder any communication with people along the route failed. Often the Puerto Ricans were able to communicate with people along the way and rumors quickly spread about the better wages that could be earned on the continent; and the “strange” foreign traditions and peoples in Hawai‘i. They were also told they would be sold into Chinese slavery. It is most likely that the migrants spoke to Mexican Americans living along the route or reporters in the area who spoke Spanish. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the principal trouble on the special train was that “Mexicans...have been talking to the Porto Ricans and telling them they could get good wages by running away from the cars and going on their own hook” (“Treatment”). Similarly, twelve-year-old Santiago Padillo said he learned about Hawai‘i by talking with Mexican Americans: “Sometimes when Señor Alves and Señor Rundle were not listening I have had a word with some Mexican-speaking Spanish in your country when the train was not moving. But these men [the labor agents] do not wish us to speak with any persons” (“Porto Ricans Enticed”). These moments made it possible for Puerto Ricans to collect pertinent information throughout their journey.

The *San Francisco Call*, in contrast, reported that the Puerto Rican workers were treated well, and were especially rich as a result of the money they received from the yellow journalists: “Happy, well fed and ragged, joyously jingling small change—lucre lotted from the overzealous yellow newspaper agitators—the children of Porto Rico passed through the city [of Los Angeles] this afternoon” (“Porto Ricans Pass”). The paper’s representative did not hear “a word of evidence that they [the Puerto Rican migrants] were being mistreated.” One possible reason for the discrepancies of this report is that the newspaper only interviewed the labor agents and did not speak to the workers themselves. Another reason could be that the owner of the *San Francisco Call*, John D. Spreckels, was possibly related to Claus Spreckels, one of the sugar plantation owners (Young 146).

Besides the constant vigilance of the armed guard, conditions in the railroad cars were unsanitary. Although the agents promised a physician before initiating the journey, none was ever provided. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that the migrants lived “in a pitiable condition from a sanitary standpoint, having been in the same cars for ten days. Two of the women have given birth to children in the cars and are in bad condition” (“Porto Rican Prisoners”). Olegario Rodríguez, one of the migrants on the expedition, clearly represents the frustration level on the train.

[Señor MacFie] said...that before leaving San Juan I should be presented with \$23, and that on the voyage from San Juan to New Orleans there should be for the Porto Ricans a physician known to us and good clothing for all who were in need of it. But at San Juan he at first refused to pay me any money, and when all of us made protest and many refused to make the voyage he paid each of us \$5 and promised that more should be paid later, which has not been done. And the physician was not provided, nor the clothing, except that a few who were nearly naked were a very little helped (Livernash, “Record-Breaking”).

Thus, MacFie did not fulfill the promises made in his advertisement or through his oral contracts with the migrants. Rodríguez’s remarks were substantiated by the photographs that the *Examiner* printed of the barefooted children in their thin clothing. According to the notice the children were to be provided “upon embarking with clothing, underclothing, footwear, and blankets” (History Task Force 56–57). Yet, as the photographs show, the

children were in clothing that most likely was the same in which they embarked. They certainly did not have clothing enough for winter weather in San Francisco.

The combined result of broken promises, the various rumors collected throughout the Southwest, the long trip, and the lack of freedom they experienced created doubts in the minds of the migrants about the promise of a better life in Hawai'i.

The Journey Derailed: Escape into San Francisco

While traveling along the Southern Pacific train route, many migrants did attempt to bolt the train. Those who were successful in escaping were rounded up by local sheriffs and returned to the labor agents. One group of migrants continually attempted to escape: "Two escaped at Sanderson, Tex., but the county Sheriff arrested them and delivered them to the guards. They made attempts to escape at every station, but were arrested" ("Porto Ricans Prisoners"). In another example, Claude Puey, a sixteen-year old boy, tried to escape from the expedition, but was captured. An agent cornered him in one of the train cars and fired a bullet into its roof. The boy came out because he did not want to be shot in the head ("Paupers").

Workers also tried to escape in Southern California, but they were again unsuccessful because labor agents, in conjunction with the local sheriffs, caught them and returned them to the special trains ("Porto Ricans Prisoners"). On December 13, 1900, the *Examiner* reported on migrants who twice attempted to escape in Pomona. In the first attempt two people were successful, but in the second—in which twenty-seven people fled—none was.

In the second attempt to escape made by a band of twenty-seven Porto Ricans at this place a locomotive was used by Señor Alvez in chasing the fugitives. They were captured finally and brought back to the train, where they were hustled into the cars and the doors locked on them... . Señor Alve' (sic) methods in capturing the party ... are not known ("Dash for Liberty").

By the time the migrants arrived in San Francisco on December 14, 1900, many of them had made the decision that they would go no further ("Porto Ricans Prisoners").

On December 15, 1900 the *San Francisco Examiner* carried a story with the headline "Threats And Force Put 66 Porto Ricans On Rio, But Fifty Others Escaped."⁵ The day before thirty-eight to fifty-two⁶ Puerto Ricans abandoned the contract labor expedition in San Francisco rather than continuing to their final destination on the Lahaina sugar cane plantation in Hawai'i. The laborers had endured twenty-four days of travel by ship and train to get to San Francisco from their Caribbean island of Puerto Rico. The newspaper report claimed that the Puerto Rican laborers refused to board the steamer *Carolina* that would carry them to the *Rio de Janeiro*, which would eventually take them to Hawai'i. The altercation was described as follows:

In desperation many of [the Puerto Ricans] walked up the gangplank and gained the Carolina's rails. About forty of them refused to go on board. With these the overseers pleaded, promised, cajoled and argued. Then threats were made. But the number that had hesitated had been forced to take a stand and they stubbornly refused to cut off their hopes by following those already embarked.

Suddenly all became confusion. Mixed with the pelting of the rain and

the howling of the wind were the curses of the drivers and the quietly but defiantly uttered refusals of the driven...the [overseers] resorted to force. Seizing some of the puny blacks, they attempted to shove them up the gangway leading them to the steamer.... It was rebellion. The worms had turned, and the men who supposed they were dealing with weaklings made helpless by terror found themselves in contention with stiff backbones and set minds. The overseers stepped aside. They had been beaten ("Nearly Half").

A total of fifty-five workers escaped during the transfer from the Southern Pacific train and the steamer *Rio de Janeiro*. Most likely, the extensive San Francisco newspaper coverage about these migrants, along with the growing sympathy of San Franciscans, caused recruiters to refrain from using the police to track down the escapees, as was previously done. Of the 114 who began the journey, only 56 completed the trip, landing in Hawai'i on December 23, 1900. (Camacho Souza 165). All were sent to work on the Lahaina plantation in Hawai'i. The 56 people that escaped in San Francisco became the founders of the Bay Area Puerto Rican community.

San Francisco Community's Reaction

All of the Puerto Rican migrants were able to find homes and additional clothing within six days of arriving in San Francisco ("All Porto Ricans in New Homes"). The migrants were distributed among different households, often miles apart, making it difficult to maintain a sense of community. They settled in San Francisco and in nearby towns with host families and charitable institutions.

San Franciscans were kept abreast of the situation of the Puerto Rican migrants, who garnered increasing sympathy and support. Championing the cause of the destitute migrants, the *San Francisco Examiner* helped the migrants find work and lodging and organized a clothing drive⁷ (Livernash "Have Not Yet"; "Will Protect"). The Chicago House on Pacific Street, where many of the migrants were lodged, became the site for the give-away.⁸ One San Franciscan commented that he and another boy were donating clothing because, "All we want is to see that the poor people are not suffering from the cold." Many society women also brought baskets of clothing to donate and "Spanish" women from Telegraph Hill "called and comforted them [the migrants] in their native tongue." Charles Wiley, a hatter from Kearney Street, and Stabens & Friedman, a sailor's outfitter from Pacific Street, also donated clothing (Livernash, "Have Not Yet").

The *San Francisco Chronicle* described the clothes distribution comically stating "Some men were sporting two vests, a kind of garment to which they were evidently strangers in their island home" ("Charitable"). The *Examiner* described it in gentler tones:

With the tender instincts of a mother, each [woman] looked to the welfare of her little ones first. A pretty warm flannel skirt was picked out for this one and a flannel jacket for that one. They passed the various little garments back and forth to one another, trying to select just what each child most needed and what was nearest its size. Then after they had chosen a full wardrobe for their babes, they selected clothes for themselves (Livernash, "Have Not Yet")

Interviews with the migrants conducted by the *Examiner* provide glimpses of those first Puerto Ricans who settled in San Francisco. One such interview was with Lola

Dolores Marzán, a sixteen-year-old bride. She had become ill as a result of being out in the rainstorm the day of the escape from the expedition. She was, however, more concerned about the fact that the ship had left with the family's trunk, which contained the receipts of payment for their home back in Puerto Rico. According to the *Examiner*, Alves, "in order to coerce them into going, held their baggage, and so the precious deed, along with their only worldly possessions" (Livernash, "Have Not Yet").

The *Examiner* also spoke to migrants Señora Miguela and Señora Guadalupe who were staying at the Infants' Shelter at 512 Minna Street with their children. Both were described as "semi-starved" and finally able to acquire food. Mrs. Cooper, one of the attendants at the Infants' Shelter, described the trouble they had communicating with the Puerto Rican women:

If we could only speak Spanish! My heartaches for these two poor women, who try to tell me their needs, but to me it is only a pretty jumble of musical Spanish which I cannot understand. All we can do is to anticipate their wants, and I think that we have succeeded so far (Livernash, "Have Not Yet").

The Puerto Rican children happily played in the Shelter's yard with the American children, apparently not much affected by the language barrier.

The *Examiner* also printed the opinions of San Francisco community leaders on the subject of the Puerto Rican migrants. W. H. Cole, Delegate to Building Trades Council, commented "There is no doubt in my mind that these people [the migrants] were deceived into coming and the planters who brought the Porto Ricans hither should sent (sic) them back to their home country." Cole, although sympathetic to the migrants, did not want the Puerto Rican migrants to be integrated to the San Franciscan economy instead calling for their repatriation. He did not mention whether the Puerto Ricans wanted to go back to Puerto Rico or if they preferred to take their chances in San Francisco. He either assumed the migrants wanted to leave or was unconcerned about their wishes. Another community leader, W.H. Goff, Delegate to Labor and Building Trades Councils stated, "I think the Southern Pacific Railroad should take care of these people. The railroad company is responsible for their being here and should take them back. It is a shame to leave them here without means." While Goff did not blame the migrants for their situation, like Cole, he believed the migrants should go back to Puerto Rico. A third community leader, T.E. Zant, Vice-President of the Pile Drivers' and Bridge Builder's Association, was strongly opposed to the migrants staying in San Francisco:

These people should not be left in San Francisco to compete with home labor. It is an out rage (sic) to leave them here without means, and the corporations that are responsible for their being here should arrange for sending them back where they came from (Livernash, "Have Not Yet").

Zant's strong nativist stance was echoed by Mrs. Clara A. Clivio, District Visitor of the Associated Charities, who stated, "The Porto Rican contract laborers now in this city must be cared for. They are not accustomed to this climate and are sluggish and listless in their habits.... I think that they should be returned to their native land, if they do not wish to go to Hawai'i" (Livernash, "Have Not Yet").

Most of the Puerto Ricans were hired as domestic labor, which did not bring them into direct competition with American (i.e. Anglo) labor. Instead of directly financing

the return of the migrants to Puerto Rico, the *Examiner* helped place the homeless migrants with jobs in the San Francisco Bay Area by advertisement their plight. They sent word to the Spanish-speaking settlements of the area, letting them know about the situation of the Puerto Rican migrants. The *Examiner* reported, "As a result a message was received from Salinas last evening saying that five or six of the Porto Ricans could find work on the Spanish ranches in the vicinity of that town" ("Successful Efforts").

The first to find employment was Mrs. Petronila Giménez, a young widow. She and her four and a half year old son, Serafin, went to the home of F.G. Gould where she was needed "to help care for his little ones and to aid his wife about the house." Gould also wanted Giménez to serve as his translator during a trip he and his family were planning to Mexico ("Successful Efforts"). Gould and his family lived in Dimond in Alameda County.

Another migrant, Juan Pérez, twelve years old, went to the home of T.B. Carrington who had "a block of land in the mission." Carrington wanted him to help with the horses, pigs, dogs, poultry, and cows. Carrington said he would gladly return Juan to his parents, who had gone on to Hawai'i, if they sent for him ("Successful Efforts").

Mrs. Juanina Verales, a Spanish woman who lived on 428 Pacific Street, adopted a third migrant. She took in Joaquín Colón, a fourteen-year old boy. She wanted him to help out around her house and said that she hoped that he would come to be like a son to her ("Porto Ricans are Finding Work").

Migrants found work on ranches with Spanish-speaking populations of "Castilian descent and of the best families" ("Porto Ricans are Finding Work") in San Francisco and in the surrounding Northern California area. On December 19, Dr. Gonzales, a rancher, wrote the following letter to his foreman regarding a Puerto Rican migrant he had employed:

Mr. J. M. Escobar—Dear Sir: I send to you the bearer, whose name is Salvador Morales. Fix him a place in the small room, near harness room. Make bunk and he can make mattress of straw and let him board with Juan. There is a comforter in the toolroom; give it to him. Let him help you and teach him how to clean stables, feed horses, as he goes to work with you. Also teach him how to milk, so if you go to plowing he will keep everything in good order for you. He is a poor boy that came here from Porto Rico, so I have taken him for humanity's sake. Have patience with him—teach him. I hope he will be grateful. I will write to you soon and will tell you when I will come. Yours truly (sic), DR. M. E. GONZALES ("Finding Homes")

Young men were highest in demand, but women and nurse girls were also sought after ("Porto Ricans are Finding Work"). One notable exception was Ramón Arbelo, a twenty-two year old who was taken in by the priests of Santa Clara College. According to the *Examiner*, "he will be educated and given an opportunity to become a good American citizen" ("Finding Homes").

As a result of the advertisements by the *Examiner* and the *Daily Index* many employers came to San Francisco to hire the migrants. The employers were hesitant to hire them when they saw the color of their skin: "Much curiosity was expressed as to their color, bearing and demeanor, whether they would be capable to do work or were simply idle folks." Mateo Figueroa and his wife dispelled the employer's doubts of their spirit. "They told Mr. Sargent that they were not lazy, but wanted to work" ("Finding Homes").

The final accounts about the migrants in local newspapers occurred during their first Christmas in the United States. Reports from the cities of Berkeley, San Jose,

Oakland, Salinas, and Tracy told of food and gifts presented to the Puerto Rican migrants who were placed with charitable families in the Northern California area by the *San Francisco Examiner*. Claudino Puty, nineteen, and Santiago Parnilla, fourteen, were placed with Dr. N. Maritola of Oakland, and were fed turkey, played baseball with neighborhood boys, and received presents from the family. The boys were said to be happy with their stay at the house ("Alameda").

Monterey County seemed to have the most migrant placements with twenty-four adults, (eighteen men and six were women) and eight children going to area ranches. Ramón Martín, his wife, and two children settled in a house in the Santa Lucia hills. One of the children was just three days old. In this particular case, there is no mention of a hosting family. The newspaper reported that they had a Puerto Rican meal of garbanzos, sweet potatoes, cornmeal, beans and a little coffee for their Christmas dinner. A woman named Carmela Bellafano settled with Mrs. Alexander Chaboy and her two daughters. She was given clothing and a new Sunday dress and was reported to have said she was happier than at any time since her mother's death a year before ("All Satisfied"). Even Mayor R. F. Johnson of Salinas hosted a Puerto Rican couple on his ranch.

It is unclear whether all the Puerto Rican migrants stayed indefinitely with their host families, working for their room and board, or if these were temporary accommodations until the migrants were able to support themselves. Some of the articles do seem to imply a permanent settlement, but this requires further investigation.

Conclusion

The first Puerto Ricans migrants to settle in California did not plan to live in the Golden State. Their intention was to work in the sugar cane fields of Hawai'i in order to obtain a better quality of life than was available to them in Puerto Rico because of the economic and political changes that occurred after the Spanish-American War. In addition, the devastation caused by the natural disaster San Ciriaco caused a state of desperation among Puerto Ricans, especially among those in the Southwestern Puerto Rico who endured the brunt of the storm.

During the journey from Puerto Rico to Hawai'i, the migrants decided to abandon the expedition rather than continue with a company that did not deliver on its promises or allow them freedom of movement. These migrants risked their lives by abandoning the expedition but they felt they did not have any alternatives. Although previous attempts at escape failed because local authorities returned the migrants to the labor contractors, they were successful in San Francisco. With the help of local San Francisco newspapers, notably the *San Francisco Examiner*, they were able to locate homes and clothing in less than a week, with a majority of these migrants settling in Monterey County.

Subsequent Hawaiian expeditions added to the Puerto Rican population of California but, in addition, informal migrations of family members from Puerto Rico took place, through what Clarence Senior and Don O. Watkins described as the "family intelligence service" (30). A family member moves to a different place, and settles in the area. When that person finds out about job opportunities in the area, he or she sends word back to their family and friends back home and ends up fostering new migrations. Formal and informal migrations added to the Puerto Rican community in California, eventually creating the second largest population of Puerto Ricans in the United States until 1950, with concentrations of Puerto Ricans in San Francisco, Oakland and Los Angeles, all locations which directly corresponded to ports with ties to Hawai'i (Maldonado 203). These areas remain places where there are large numbers of Puerto Rican in the Golden State.

NOTES

- ¹ The total number of migrants that traveled with the eleven Hawaiian expeditions was 5,203, of which 2,869 were males above the age of twelve. The remaining 2,334 were women and children.
- ² A Puerto Rican newspaper *La Miseria* also supports this contention: “la emigración constara de dos terceras parte de negros y mulatos y una tercera parte de blancos” (History Task Force 1982: 30).
- ³ Most reports state that the first expedition numbered 114 people.
- ⁴ John D. Spreckles denied that he or Claus Spreckles contracted to hire the Puerto Rican migrants on their way to Hawai‘i. In the *San Francisco Call* he stated that he was not importing any help, but that he did know that other Hawaiian plantations were doing so. He emphatically denied any connection to the kidnapping report. However, Spreckles may have been trying to mislead reporters in order to keep his company’s involvement quiet (*San Francisco Call*, “Porto Ricans for Plantations” 7 December 1900: 5).
- ⁵ Americans anglicized “Puerto Ricans” to “Porto Ricans” during this time.
- ⁶ The San Francisco newspapers fluctuate regarding the number of actual escapees. The *Chronicle* reported fifty-four, the *Examiner* reported fifty, and the *Call* reported thirty-eight (“Charitable People”; “Nearly Half”; “Porto Ricans Desert Bosses.”)
- ⁷ The *San Francisco Examiner* at this time was a Hearst paper that was pro-labor (McGloin 254-260). Along with many other San Francisco newspapers, it favored the promotion of charity (Young 167).
- ⁸ The migrants also stayed at a lodging-house on Steuart Street; the City and County Hospital; an Infants’ Shelter; and used beds in the prison at the Hall of Justice (“Porto Ricans Are Now”; “Dessert Bosses”, Livernash, “Have Not Yet”).



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