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### Forgotten Migrations from the United States to Hispaniola

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# Forgotten Migrations from the United States to Hispaniola

Ryan Mann-Hamilton



## African American Settlements on Hispaniola

*Locations in the Dominican Republic and Haiti of populations descended from African Americans who immigrated to the island in 1824–1825. Adapted by Ryan Mann-Hamilton..Mann-Hamilton.*



[photo tagged samaná]

### **Musical Import**

*Dominicans of African-American descent in Samaná, Dominican Republic, playing bambula, a musical style that traditionally accompanied a French-Haitian dance and was brought to New Orleans by slaves of French colonists who fled Hispaniola after the Haitian Revolution concluded in 1804. Reprinted by permission of Ryan Mann-Hamilton.*

At the first Hamilton family reunion, held in Samaná, Dominican Republic, in 2002, I took the opportunity to question my aunts and uncles about our family's history and to share the story of our migration to the town with the mass of youngsters gathered for the event. Most of my cousins were amazed by the intricate details of movement, displacement, and transformation because they had never heard these stories before. The reaction that stood out came from a younger cousin brought up in Brooklyn. With a disconcerted look, he asked innocently, "So we're black?" It had never dawned upon him, even when staring at his own reflection, that we had come from blackness. He had absorbed the ideological myth of Taino and Spanish inheritance that was espoused by elite segments of Dominican society as a way to elevate themselves above Haitians, the blacks on the island. In the context of the United States, my cousin, unaware of the difference between race and ethnicity, had always envisioned himself as Dominican and hence different from the African Americans he

lived among.

As a descendant of the African American community who resettled in Samaná, I was motivated by my own historical ignorance of their migration and the various moments of uncertainty they had faced. My research started as a struggle to produce a response to the constant questioning around race and name that I was subjected to growing up in Puerto Rico. Because I had included my mother and her family's origins in Samaná in my research, my responses seemed inadequate. The last name Hamilton did not fit into the Puerto Rican or the Dominican national self-identity dominated by surnames of Iberian origin. Yet the intricacies of my family histories were never passed on to my generation, the details lost in the minds of my aunts, uncles, and mother, who defined themselves as Dominican and nothing else. As I discovered these details, I began to see myself within the larger context of the Diaspora, no longer bound by national imaginings. Our family history was like many of the African Diaspora, except that our migration was back to the colony instead of to the metropolis. With the ascertainment of our history came the burden of dissemination.

## **History**

The town of Santa Barbara de Samaná on the northeastern coast of the Dominican Republic suffered three devastating fires over the last 185 years. The "Great Fire of Samaná," in 1946, destroyed most records about land tenure, mercantile exchanges, births, and marriages that documented the community's history, its peculiar pattern of migration, and its unique ethnic and cultural population. Accounts differ as to where the fire started, but the communal memory points to a macabre story that traverses the realms of jealousy and domination, and attributes the fire to the artifices of General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. What rose from the ashes of this devastating incident was a disconnected community that no longer had control over its political, religious, and educational institutions. They were at the mercy of the ideologies transmitted through the powerful military and political structure in Santo Domingo, the capital. This was the final act in a series of efforts aimed at forcing the African American descendant community to succumb and consent to the nation-building pressures of the Dominican state.

For almost two centuries Samaná has captured the interest of various imperial powers with projects and desires that have led to a number of foreign interventions into the region's affairs.<sup>1</sup> Among these projects to dominate the region was the 1824 invitation from Haitian president Jean Pierre Boyer to free African Americans that brought an estimated 7,000 of them to the region.<sup>2</sup> At the time, Haiti controlled the entire island of Hispaniola and Boyer's intentions were part of a larger racial project to create a black republic and establish commercial relations with other Western nations. With this invitation, he hoped to attract a population that would be in solidarity with his efforts and, through this relationship, gain U.S. recognition of Haiti as an independent nation.<sup>3</sup> For Dominican historian José Gabriel García, "the motive behind Boyer's immigration scheme was not so much to provide the country with able laborers and artisans, but rather to change the social physiognomy of the Spanish part of the island and to awaken racial preoccupations in the immigrant's minds which would tend to create their identification with the Haitians."<sup>4</sup> In 1844 the Haitians lost control of that part of the island and retreated to the eastern portion.

The idea of transporting African Americans to Haiti had been expounded by the early 1800s, an interest expressed by both the U.S. and Haitian governments.<sup>5</sup> It was under the leadership of Haitian president Boyer that attempts were made to implement the idea. Boyer enlisted Jonathan Granville to be his representative in the United States for this endeavor. Granville's role was to gain support for the migration of African Americans to Haiti and take charge of travel arrangements for those who accepted the invitation. Boyer had supplied Granville with 50,000 pounds of coffee to be sold in order to finance the migration.<sup>6</sup> The first stop for Granville was Philadelphia, where he met with the Reverend Richard Allen. He later traveled along the Eastern Seaboard, meeting with other African American political and religious leaders.<sup>7</sup> As part of his efforts toward dissemination of Boyer's proposal, invitations were printed in many of the local newspapers. An article published on July 1, 1824, in the *Niles Weekly Register* in Baltimore promised "a free country to Africans and their descendants."

The African Americans who accepted Boyer's invitation departed between 1824 and 1825 from various ports on the East Coast and were

taken to various areas of what was then the united island of Haiti.<sup>8</sup> Most of the immigrants who arrived in Samaná were members of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Bethel Church of Philadelphia led by Richard Allen, at that time one of the few church buildings where blacks could preach to their own communities.<sup>9</sup> The African Methodist Episcopal Church was the first major religious denomination in the West founded over sociological and theological beliefs and differences. It rejected “the negative theological interpretations which rendered persons of African descent second class citizens. Theirs was a theological declaration that God is God all the time and for everybody. The church was born in protest against slavery—against dehumanization of African people, brought to the American continent as labor.”<sup>10</sup>

The first ship of immigrants arrived on November 29, 1824, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.<sup>11</sup> As many as 7,000 arrived on different voyages and were assigned to different areas around the island. The Haitian government had a vision for the placement of the new immigrants, desiring to populate specific areas with black families who would be receptive to and supportive of the newly created nation. Boyer was eager specifically to receive agricultural laborers and artisans to fulfill the needs of his country. His “plan was to send 3,600 emigrants to traditionally Haitian areas and 2,400 to traditionally Spanish areas.”<sup>12</sup> Upon arrival some families chose to stay in the Haitian capital, while others were scattered to the communities of Puerto Plata, Samaná, Santo Domingo, and La Romana. It is unclear why these areas were selected over others, but the strategic location, abundance of land, and scarce population in the Samaná peninsula may have influenced the decision. The Bay of Samaná had also been used as a point of entry for the French forces led by General Charles Leclerc intent on stifling the Haitian Revolution. In responding to a potential repeat of this threat, Boyer may have presumed that ties between the African Americans and the United States would prevent the French from attempting to meddle in Haitian affairs.

The emigrants escaped a racially divided U.S. society and attempted to assert their own ideals in forming the community of Samaná. Because most of the African Americans had come from cities, they had long since forgotten the toils of the land. Many of the emigrants returned home after only months of working the land, succumbing to the pressures of their

new environment. Reverend Narcissus Miller went to Samaná along with 20 families with 33 different surnames. Most of the emigrants could read and write in English. They had the possibility of freedom for the first time because they owned their land, were judged on their merits and not the color of their skin, and were participants and decision makers in their own liberation. The isolated location of Samaná allowed the community to establish institutions to support their endeavors during the initial period on the island.

One of those embarking upon the life-changing journey with assistance from the Bethel Church and the guidance of Reverend Allen was my ancestor John Hamilton.<sup>13</sup> He was born in Maryland in 1801, and while it is unclear whether he had recently been freed or had escaped captivity, he sought to improve his fortunes in a new country. He was given the role of protecting the American flag, which the emigrants carried to remind themselves of their previous home and the mission they had embarked upon.

The African Americans in Samaná immediately focused on forming their own institutions to make their transition as smooth as possible. They created their own English-language schools, an AME-affiliated church, and cultural organizations that became the backbone of the community. These structures were their attempt at creating a sense of agency in the place they now called home. The church helped to maintain the English language and customs through its weekly services and yearly celebrations, such as the Harvest Festival held in October. “Of the five to six hundred colonists in 1870 there were two hundred members of the Methodist church ... the average attendance at public worship being three to four hundred.”<sup>14</sup> Because of their isolation they had little contact with the national conflicts that prevailed on the island. After the Haitians were driven from the eastern part of the island, the new nation changed governments and countries of alliance many times throughout the subsequent years. The African American community continually aligned themselves with forces that meddled in their political and religious affairs the least. As the generations passed, the descendants began to speak Spanish and participate in the politics of the region, becoming involved in several of the Dominican revolutionary movements opposed to the imperial designs of Western powers. In most cases, the descendants chose to fight for

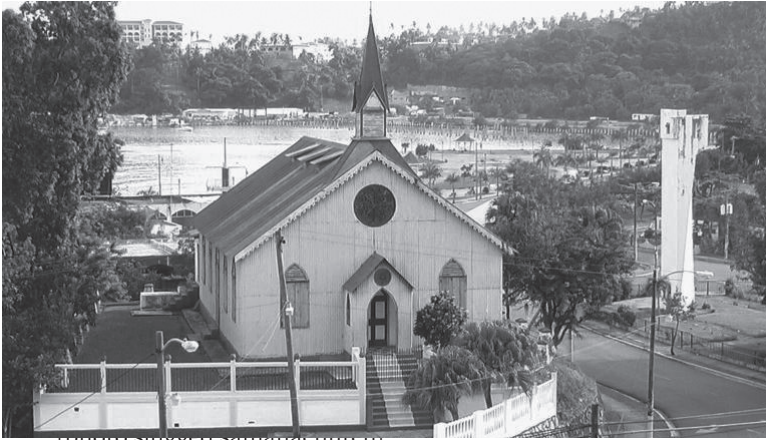
the independence of their new nation.

The golden years for Samaná were from 1870 to 1900. The relative prosperity and the land ownership of much of the community prior to Trujillo's dictatorship allowed Samaná to escape the sway of his rural penetration tactics. The community established a library, theater, baseball teams, printing press, and newspapers, and even provided lighting for many public areas, a public service unavailable in the rest of the country. Samaná's prime location and importance to foreign and national trade brought an influx of products and services from other countries and the establishment of consulates representing the French, Italian, Dutch, and U.S. governments. Ship logs indicate that the port of embarkation for goods headed to Samaná was most often in the United States, but cargo ships also came from Italy, Norway, Spain, France, Britain, and other economic powers of the time. At the same time, infrastructure projects linking Samaná by road to the rest of the nation made it less feasible for the once-isolated community to maintain its autonomy.

From the beginning, the African Americans placed "great emphasis on religion and education."<sup>15</sup> "We once had a schoolhouse and a mission house and did much in the way of scattering books and teaching the people; but all was destroyed and burned up during the wars."<sup>16</sup> For the African Americans the church was the foundation of their familial lives and "had traditionally provided and continues to provide the sources for role models and mate selection."<sup>17</sup> Various travelers' accounts from the 19th century mention that those in the community rarely intermarried with Spanish-speaking outsiders, which could account for their ability to maintain English as a dominant language for so long in a foreign land. The constant influx of English-speaking peoples of African descent from St. Kitts, Nevis, and other Caribbean islands is another reason for the continued use of English even after schooling was in Spanish.<sup>18</sup> Once the church services began to be conducted in Spanish, English was relegated to the home environment, where many of the youths could understand the language but did not speak it.

The AME Church as the uniting entity of the migrant group became the space where collective praxis shaped and created an intellectual class whose members believed they were different from the population of the peninsula. The church assumed a space of contention against





[photo smuggled samanachurch]

### **Born of Mother Bethel**

*This building, shipped from England in 1901, initially housed Bethel AME Church, a central community institution for descendants of African Americans who live in Samaná, Dominican Republic. The church was named after Mother Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia, to which most of the immigrants belonged when they left the United States in 1824 and 1825. Currently, this structure in Samaná serves as the home of St. Peter's Evangelical Church, while Bethel AME is located in a newer building. Reprinted by permission of Ryan Mann-Hamilton.*

national ideologies. It became a space of collectivity, of organizing, and of maintaining the English language within the community. Religion became a further space of contention as the ministers of Samaná's AME churches were hired from off the island because of parishioners' residual desire to be preached to in English. In the 1930s the Dominican state under Trujillo, with the support of the Catholic Church, saw the need to intervene in the religious practices in Samaná. The centrality of the church to the descendant community's cultural and linguistic identity needed to be undermined. In the 1940s the Evangelical Church intervened to exert ecclesiastical and language control over the AME institution.<sup>19</sup> These interventions caused abrupt changes in the religious and educational systems and the community's historical links to its African American past. "After the 1931 integration of the AME into the Iglesia Evangelica, the pastors were Puerto Rican until in 1957 the first Dominican (but not American) minister was appointed."<sup>20</sup>

An' the pastors that preached here before came from Jamaica, an when came from England, but, this bein' independent country and the language of the country Spanish, well they preach in Spanish to win the natives from here. Well then the work was transferred to the Board of Christian Work in Santo Domingo, An' they prepared young men, they had sent them to seminary to Puerto Rico. An when they graduated they come back to Santo Domingo and they're preachin' Spanish. But we still preach in English for the ol' people who don't understand or didn't learn Spanish language. (Vigo interview of Sam James)

The active members of the AME Church included my grandfather, Ezra Hamilton. With minimal formal education, he spoke English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole, and identified as an African American. He dedicated himself to the task of feeding his family by working as a horse trainer, fisherman, and agriculturalist. His most prolific work was as a shoemaker able to make any shoe by simply looking at a picture of it or receiving a description from the patron. On my visits to Samaná, whatever health he was in, my grandfather would hike the mountain and go fetch the only horse he had. He offered the horse to each of the grandchildren who visited, promising it was ours and ours alone. One can only imagine the battles that ensued when more than one of us wanted to ride the horse, and the lessons learned when we found out the horse belonged to all of us. He is still remembered fondly as “el Viejo Ezra,” and when he passed, a service was held in his honor at the AME Church. He serves as inspiration for all my research.

My mother was the second of seven children, born of the marriage between Altagracia Coplin (Copeland) and Ezra Hamilton. This union brought two of the African American descendant families together. Of my six aunts and uncles, all married partners outside the community, most migrating and establishing their families in places like Spain, France, and, in the United States, Texas, New York, and Puerto Rico. My grandmother still lives in Samaná, and my uncle is involved in many projects to create educational and economic options for the local youth. The scattering of the Hamiltons is one of the reasons for the difficulty in compiling and

sharing the family's story. When they were growing up, my grandfather always emphasized to his children the importance of receiving a proper education. Although they grew up hearing English spoken in the home, their educational experience was solely in Spanish. Those who speak English today learned it later in their lives and maintain an accent when speaking it.

When my father asked for my mother's hand in marriage, the condition set by my grandfather was that she had to first finish high school and then she could choose what to do. As an interracial couple, my parents—my father is a first-generation white American and my mother a black Dominican—were concerned about their acceptance in U.S. society and chose Puerto Rico as the location to begin their family. As a result of this choice in location, I grew up envisioning myself as Puerto Rican and denying my “Dominican” history. This adherence to Puerto Rico and my nationalist political stance blinded me to the intricate and contested realm of identity and history that I had unwittingly disregarded. It was the exploration and delving into that history that gave me the tools to embrace my Dominican, African American, Afro Caribbean, and Caucasian identities as elements of the whole.

As I scoured through the various archival and secondary sources in order to construct a historiography of the community of Samaná and my own family's involvement there, I stumbled upon what appeared to be a map. I had seen it invoked by other authors with no note about its origins. But rather than a map, the document was actually a visionary plan of what would have been called Port Napoleon. General Marie Louis Ferrand, the commander-in-chief of the French armed forces in Santo Domingo, created the plans for the port city in 1805, imagining Port Napoleon as the capital of the French empire in the Caribbean.<sup>21</sup>

The plan invoked a European vision of planning and structuring, with long boulevards, central plazas, government buildings, coastal boardwalks, and bridges that connected reef islands. It was a plan that would invoke the great wealth from the colony at the disposal of the colonizers, a vision of the expected extraction of resources. The Haitian Revolution, the first of its kind in the Americas, succeeded in defeating the French and thwarting their plan for Samaná. Ferrand's was deposited in U.S. and Dominican archives but remained active in the minds of political actors intent upon developing Samaná for their own benefit, without

regard for its inhabitants.

The plan may have garnered U.S. interest. On January 24, 1871, the steamer *Tennessee* arrived in the port of Samaná.<sup>22</sup> Aboard were representatives of the government of Ulysses S. Grant, an assortment of politicians, scientists, and military officials who arrived to conduct a survey of the region and to further the political aim of annexing the peninsula of Samaná and the rest of the Dominican Republic to the United States.<sup>23</sup> The secretary of the delegation was Frederick Douglass. One of his duties was to interview the African American inhabitants about the potential annexation and what their personal affiliations would be in that event. Those interviewed included my great-grandfather Charles Hamilton, who, along with many of the descendants of African Americans, expressed a desire for annexation in the hope it would bring economic and political stability to the region.<sup>24</sup>

The U.S. intervention into the political and economic landscape of Samaná during the period of 1870 to 1900 coincided with intense prosperity in the region. During its golden period, the political structure in Samaná was dominated by African American descendants. One of the most prominent was General Moisés Alejandro Anderson, also known as “Macabon.”<sup>25</sup> The construction of the railroad connecting El Cibao, the principal agricultural region of the country, to the Samaná peninsula made it the central point for the departure of and entry of goods to the Dominican nation.<sup>26</sup> Weekly steamer lines were established between New York and Samaná, two printing presses produced weekly newspapers, and a chocolate factory and soap-manufacturing enterprise provided jobs and steady incomes to most inhabitants.<sup>27</sup> They had time for leisure. Many of the African Americans participated in the marching band organized by the town authorities and passed to their children a desire for musical training.

The trade in mahogany provided economic support for many families, including the Hamilton and Vanderhorst families. Together the two families owned a large boat and sailed to the various Caribbean islands to trade the wood they had harvested from the nearby mountains.<sup>28</sup> Samaná at the time had its own intellectual and political class. Many were members of the Freemason Lodges and Ladies Associations that worked for the welfare of those in need. In the 1890s, there was an increased migration to Samaná of Spanish-speaking Dominicans as well as English speak-

ers from the British Antilles.<sup>29</sup> It was the prosperity, independence, and diversity in thought that intrigued the political and military interests of other nations and influenced their attempts to assert dominion over the region.

The final invocation of the plans designed by Ferrand came in the name of Dominican national prosperity, with the dedication of the town of Samaná as tourist city of the Dominican Republic. In 1974, President Joaquín Balaguer destroyed the colorful wooden palm-plank homes that were the pride of the town of Samaná and embarked upon a reconceptualization and redesign of the community in line with his vision.<sup>30</sup> He established government-owned hotels and built government buildings, the coastal walkway known as the “malecon,” and a walking bridge that connected the outer islands of the peninsula. All this was done through his own political machinations and with the technical support of the Spanish government, which had entered into an accord to assist the country’s tourist industry.<sup>31</sup> These plans were part of a greater vision of transforming the physiognomy of the region, exploiting its resources, and establishing visions of modernity. They imposed the thought and design of foreign elements and architectural styles inappropriate to the town.

During Balaguer’s 1974 intervention in Samaná, the government forcefully occupied lands and relocated many of the African American–descended families to different areas of the town. My grandparents and their children were forced to move eleven times in a period of six years for the various “civic” projects taken up by Balaguer.<sup>32</sup> The compensation they received for their forced relocation was insufficient to rebuild homes elsewhere, and many were forced to live in the cement multiunit apartment building erected by Balaguer.<sup>33</sup> The older generations in Samaná still remember this painful moment of conversion and reassembly that led to the deaths of many elders, heartbroken that their beloved Samaná had been destroyed.<sup>34</sup> Many families chose to rebuild elsewhere and migrated to the urban spaces where their children could get an education and find employment. Family, which had been at the forefront of maintaining the identity and history of the African American descendants, saw its influence diminished with the flight to cities and the separation of relatives. Throughout, the descendants have navigated the treacherous road of international and national projects intensified by cartographic imaginings.

Subsequent presidents have continued these efforts to transform Sa-

maná for tourist-related endeavors. While prior governments had always emphasized and for the most part succeeded in transforming Samaná and its inhabitants into Dominican citizens, the current emphasis of tourist advertising seeks to reclaim their histories of migration, and showcase and capture them as a selling point to prospective visitors. In 2009, Centro Cuesta Nacional created a marketing campaign with a focus on Samaná highlighting the natural beauty of the region. Along with the typical tourist items sold, such as towels, plates, and cups, was a DVD on the history and landscape of the region. In addition, a new fashion-oriented magazine was created that showcased the many new vacation rentals, private villas, and magnanimous projects pending in Samaná designed for the affluent. The picture book and historical synopsis of the region of Samaná cost the equivalent of \$115 and was not affordable for many of the region's inhabitants. Instead, the book catered to those who had never lived there but made Samaná their vacation choice.

The community of Samaná is currently going through a process of foreign gentrification and environmental degradation and shows signs of extreme cultural and social change. This process has now reached its height with the entry of Spanish multinationals that have purchased and remodeled six hotels in the area and have been important in the establishment of an international airport near the town and the building of a new highway connecting the area to the capital, Santo Domingo. There has been a resurgence of English language in Samaná because of the increased tourism, but its importance for the community "has shifted from performing a highly symbolic and affective function to strategic commercial functions."<sup>35</sup> The community is rapidly being taken over by foreigners and affluent Dominicans, who are devouring the lands for sale to construct yacht clubs and limited-access facilities.

These changes to Samaná society and the African American community have had dire effects on the young. The histories of their migration are no longer taught in the educational system of Samaná and are instead relegated to oral histories provided to a few within the various descendant families. Too many grow up without knowing the history of their families and their surnames. They are bombarded by foreign images of capital and consumed by an increase in drugs and AIDS in the region. They observe the mostly white tourists who seasonally invade

their coasts, spending lavishly and effortlessly. They watch as the beaches they grew up on are now set aside for hotel guests, and notice that the cell phone service they rely on for communication is cheaper for tourists than residents.<sup>36</sup> Influenced by the educational indoctrination received throughout various generations, many young people are denying their history and seeking partners of lighter complexion to “improve the race.” To reclaim their black identity is now a revolutionary act.

There are efforts from within the community to garner support for the “Samaná Center for Education, Culture, and History,” to provide a space for the community to gather, showcase the histories and unique culture of the region, and create an archive and educational hub for the community. These attempts would showcase Samaná as much more than pretty beaches and landscapes, departing from government plans, business designs, and tourist visions. Support for this endeavor has come from local people, not the government. As the prices of basic necessities increase, the inhabitants have seen little benefit from the images being transmitted of Samaná as a subtropical paradise. In the eyes of the country’s elite, the people matter little in the grand scheme for the region, but it will be the community that makes Samaná a magical peninsula of redemption.

I visited the Bethel AME Church in Philadelphia in early 2009, intent on finding further documentation of the Hamilton family history and the African American migration to Samaná. The link to the Philadelphia church had been severed by the late 1800s, but I assumed had been documented in some way by the Bethel Church. To my surprise after communicating with the archivist and the pastor, both were unaware of the groups of emigrants who had been organized and given a religious mission by Reverend Allen. This point of departure is an important detail told by the descendants in Samaná, even borrowing the Bethel name to give to the second African Methodist Episcopal Church in Samaná.

This year also commemorates the 185th anniversary of the AME Church presence in Samaná and the arrival of the African American community. On July 12, 2009, a Sunday service was offered. In the audience was a group from Hostos Community College in the Bronx, who were in Samaná to learn about the intricate history of the community and observe firsthand the pitfalls of development and tourism. The encounter

provided an opportunity for students to meet with the elders and for the elders to have a moment to express their history, song, and culture to a group that paid attention to them as people—and not just as historical remnants, but as living descendants. Testimonials by many elders of the church indicated their happiness at being able to expand their weekly services to include a more prolonged and detailed exposure to their history and current dilemmas. Mrs. Ana King delighted us with her songs and Mrs. Leticia Wilmore, the church historian, narrated the history of the community. Invigorated by the large turnout, the church choir, led by Lincoln Phipps on the trumpet, echoed through the hall as the bellows of the churchgoers rang out in unison. As they stood in their best Sunday clothing, Bibles in hand, smiles lighting up their faces, their pride and dignity somehow evident, I was overcome by emotion knowing that in this same structure had sat five generations of Hamiltons and the last generation had finally come home.

After the service, the elders explained the variety of community games, sung in English, they took part in growing up. Some remembered the games differently than others, and as they debated the instructions, together they agreed upon the rules. “You put your left foot in,” chanted the chorus of laughing voices. The students and faculty from Hostos frolicked and smiled with the church elders, as hand in hand they ran around in circles, slipping and sliding on the green grass as the onlookers clapped along. To end the gathering, Ana King once again transfixed us with her deep voice, and Mrs. Wilmore<sup>39</sup> treated us to a batch of ginger beer<sup>37</sup> and “coconetes.”<sup>38</sup> Once the day was over, I drove Mrs. Isabella Green, Mrs. Wilmore,<sup>39</sup> and Mr. Phipps home and thanked them for the beautiful experience of sharing and learning. As Mrs. Wilmore slowly climbed out of the car, Mrs. Green quipped “old age” and smiled. They had but one request, to somehow become reunited with their African American brothers and sisters so that their stories could be remembered.



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**Notes**

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<sup>1</sup>The United States, France, Germany, Britain, and Spain have all at some point vied for control of Samaná. The peninsula of Samaná has been under Spanish and French dominion and for a brief period was annexed to the United States.

<sup>2</sup>It is estimated that 5,000 to 7,000 African Americans migrated to Haiti.

<sup>3</sup>The United States did not recognize Haiti as a sovereign nation until 1862, when the United States was embroiled in the Civil War.

<sup>4</sup>Harry Hoetink, “Americans in Samaná,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 2 (April, 1962): 3–21.

<sup>5</sup>Julie Winch, “To Reunite the Great Family: Free Blacks and Haitian Emigration.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians, April 6–9, 1989. St. Louis, Mo.

<sup>6</sup>Hoetink, “Americans in Samana,” p. 6.

<sup>7</sup>Winch, “To Reunite the Great Family,” p. 8.

<sup>8</sup>To finance the emigration, President Jean Pierre Boyer “deposited 25 tons of Haitian coffee with a commercial agent in NY.” In order to attract many of the emigrants, Boyer offered incentives to the African Americans. They would receive full political and civil rights, freedom of worship, free passage, paid sustenance for four months, and an allocation of 36 acres per every 12 farmers. Boyer was also seeking support for his black nation by seeking solidarity with other blacks in the hemisphere. Jonathan Granville was hired by Boyer to recruit these black families to make the journey.

<sup>9</sup>The church was also one of the main supporters of the Underground Railroad, and some of the emigrants were runaway slaves seeking human dignity and economic opportunity. The emigrants also included a large number of black families whose oral histories claim they are descended from prominent American political families such as Burr, Hamilton, Adams, and Vanderhorst.

<sup>10</sup>African Methodist Episcopal Church <http://www.ame-church.com/> (accessed July 6, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Jean Stephens, “La Emigración de Negros Libertos Norteamericanos a Haití en 1824–25.” *Estudios Dominicanos* vol. 3 #14 (1974), p. 40.

<sup>12</sup> Hoetink, “Americans in Samana,” p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Archival research conducted by author.

<sup>14</sup> Hoetink, “Americans in Samana,” p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> Hoetink, “Americans in Samana,” p. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Hoetink, “Americans in Samana,” p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Valerie Smith, “A Merging of Two Cultures: The Afro Hispanic Immigrants of Samaná, Dominican Republic,” *Afro-Hispanic Review* (January and May 1989), p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> Gregorio Elias Penzo Devers. *Compendio Histórico de Samaná*, 1991, p. 201.

<sup>19</sup> Hoetink, “Americans in Samana,” p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Hoetink, “Americans in Samana,” p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Justo German Hernandez. “Samaná Una Península y Cinco Imperios.” *Revista Dominicana de Antropología y Historia* (1984), p. 151.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Commissioners Report. The Samaná Bay Company of Santo Domingo. New York: National Archives January 20, 1873, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> The ship had left from New York on January 17, 1871. It returned to the United States by way of Jamaica and landed in Charleston on March 26, 1871. The total duration of the representative’s trip was 70 days. The three representatives were Benjamin Wade of Ohio, Andrew White of New York, and Samuel Howe of Massachusetts.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Commissioners Report, p. 256.

<sup>25</sup> Written in 1939 by Luis Eduardo Bourget and titled “Estampas de Macabon.” The book ridiculed General Anderson and his legacy, making fun of his broken-English-tinged Spanish, the darkness of his skin, and the supposed idiocy of his followers.

<sup>26</sup> Of the town of Sanchez’s founding members, many were the descendants of the African Americans.

<sup>27</sup> Devers, p. 189.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 169.

<sup>29</sup> There were others like the Rojas brothers, leaders of the failed “Grito de Lares,” which was the first cry of Puerto Rican independence from Spain, Ramon Emeterio Betances, and other Cuban and Puerto Rican exiles who in Samaná schemed their return and future independence of their “patria.” They most likely influenced many of the African Americans to imagine their new land in the same way.

<sup>30</sup> Felix Fernandez, *Samaná, Colección Orgullo de mi Tierra* (Santo Domingo: Editora Vista Color, 2009) p. 296.

<sup>31</sup> Fernando Infante, *12 Años de Balaguer* (Santo Domingo: Editora Letra Grafica, 2003), p. 181.

<sup>32</sup> Unpublished interview with Altagracia Coplin 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Unpublished interview with Aristoteles Vanderhorst 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Unpublished interview with Papito Coplin, Samaná 2006.

<sup>35</sup> José Vigo. *Language and Society in Samaná*, Schomburg Center for Research on Black Culture, New York, 1987, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> When purchasing a cell phone in the summer of 2009, I was asked for a foreign passport and was told that if I had one, the price of the phone and the service would be 100 pesos, the equivalent of \$3 cheaper than it would be for residents. No explanation was given as to why, only that it was company policy.

<sup>37</sup> Both Ms. King and Mrs. Wilmore are descendants of the African Americans and members of the AME Church. It takes at least five days to make ginger beer, so we were extremely happy, honored, and thirsty after all the games.

<sup>38</sup> Coconut bread.

<sup>39</sup> Mrs. Wilmore’s home is one of the few remaining old homes made of coconut palm in Samaná. After the fire of 1946 and the forcible reconstruction in 1974, most of the homes were made out of cement.