

Maroons, colonists, and slaves have forged further transformations of freedom. My research in Trelawny Town/Maroon Town and Accompong also reveals the creolization process among the Leeward Maroons, including their complex relations with white elites and black and coloured non-Maroons as well as the creole kinship system and death rituals that persisted among the Trelawny Town Maroons in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone. In addition, although the book has an excellent Index and List of Abbreviations, it would have benefited from a List of Illustrations.

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CASEY, MATTHEW. *Empire's Guestworkers. Haitian Migrants in Cuba during the Age of US Occupation*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2017. xii, 313 pp. £64.99.

Over the first three decades of the twentieth century, Cuban sugar production increased massively. From just 350,000 tons at the end of the independence war in 1898, the country's output recovered rapidly, and in 1929 for the first time more than five million tons were obtained. Cuba's position as the world's leading producer of cane sugar, although under increasing competition from elsewhere, appeared to be secure. However, the country, where land still appeared to be plentiful, had always suffered from a chronic shortage of labour. This had spurred the continuation of slavery well into the late nineteenth century. But following slave emancipation in 1886, it proved increasingly difficult to tie the native working class to the plantations. As extensive swathes of land in the east of the island were turned over to sugarcane in the early twentieth century, labourers needed to be obtained, and large numbers of migrants arrived from elsewhere in the Caribbean. Of these, the largest group, around 200,000, came from Haiti.

The Haitians were seen as being peculiarly suited to the hard work of cane cutting, a racial caricature that owed much to the previous century's perception of the neighbouring island as a dark, dangerous, uncivilized other. Cuba in fact owed much to the Haitian revolution that by 1804 had established the first black republic. What had till then been the world's leading sugar- and coffee-producing colony, with the rebellion of the slave population and the ending of French dominion Haiti became a pariah state. A bogeyman to frighten plantation owners into acceptance of continued Spanish control over Cuba. But at the same time, these Cuban planters took advantage of the vacuum particularly in sugar production that Haiti left, and the island's fortunes rose as their neighbour's languished. So it was that, in the early twentieth century, so many impoverished rural Haitians flocked to Cuba, ostensibly for seasonal work, but many of them staying.

The Haitians figure prominently throughout the existing literature on early republican Cuba, along with the role that they played within the multinational melting pot of the island and its sugar industry. However, Matthew Casey's exhaustively researched and engagingly written study is the first to explicitly focus on them, sensitively deconstructing who they were, where they came from, and what their different experiences in, and contributions to,

Cuba were. Importantly, he traces their story not from the point of their arrival and departure as immigrant labour, but from their places of origin in Haiti, and the sites of their eventual return when many were forcibly repatriated in the 1930s. The result is a very human account of migrants who have too often been seen as an undifferentiated mass: the archetypal black other to be despised, feared, and scapegoated.

Casey's approach eschews a top-down, state-focused view. Instead, he begins from the stories of the migrants themselves; and it is they who are kept in the foreground, even as he builds up from this to the national and regional level. He by no means ignores the importance of the power of sugar companies, US imperial policy, Cuban state officials, and racial ideologies in determining the context within which the migration took place. However, he is particularly concerned with showing the day-to-day efforts of the Haitians themselves to assert their autonomy, despite the hostile circumstances they often found themselves in. But he goes further. Rather than seeing the Haitians as the isolatable, clearly distinguishable group that they were too often perceived as being, by contemporary commentators and subsequent historians alike, Casey reveals the interconnection between them and other national groups. Far from Cuban rural society being organized according to race and nation, he shows how social, economic, and religious networks cut across such obvious divisions.

Likewise, Casey recognizes that migration itself cannot be approached only from the official sources. Too often, the authorities were blind to what was actually taking place, at a level below where they cared to look. He shows how the maritime border between Haiti and Cuba had always been porous, and next to impossible to control effectively. Long before Haitian immigration was officially sanctioned in 1913, migrants were moving between the two islands. What the formal policy did was institutionalize something that was happening anyway, making it "legible". Likewise, after 1931, when the Cuban state began to forcibly repatriate the Haitians, many nevertheless remained, and though movement between the two islands was reduced it certainly did not end.

The chapter structure of *Empire's Guestworkers* loosely follows the trajectory of a seasonal migrant – from Haiti, into Cuba's sugar plantations, from there into other areas of economic, social and cultural life on the island, and back again – and the rise and fall of the migration system itself. Each chapter begins with an individual story about specific Haitian migrants, drawn from a range of different sources: archival and literary, historical and anthropological. Though Casey quickly moves from this to more general considerations, the effect is to maintain the history very much grounded in the real lives that it deals with. But at the same time, he has to grapple with the sparsity of written migrant voices, as do all who seek to uncover the experience of those whose illiteracy or lack of power have left them all but invisible. Casey is explicit about this problem, and the study provides an excellent example of how to go about extracting such history as much from the silences and shadows cast, as from whatever concrete documentary evidence can be found. He is also careful to consider the actual meaning of such material, which can never be taken at face value, but must always be considered in the context of the power relations and social realities that migrants such as the Haitians were forced to grapple with.

After first setting the regional and global context of the Haitian migration, and the perceived necessity of it in Cuba, Casey explores the making of the Haitian-Cuban border, and the creation of temporary migrants. He looks at the interrelationship between the two states, "intimately linked by transnational flows of goods, people, and ideas" (p. 59), and their place in the Atlantic world of the nineteenth century; then shows how migration was already occurring before the authorities began to try to make it "legible" through the formal creation of temporary contract

labourers. The migration is seen against the backdrop of the occupation of Haiti by the United States between 1915 and 1934, “causing massive transformation in the rural and urban areas of the country” (p. 60). However, the areas of the country that experienced rebellion and systematic land expulsion were quite different to the districts in the South from which most migrants left for Cuba, although “ruptures in rural life occurred” throughout. Casey examines the realities of rural life in Haiti, the reasons for travelling to the neighbouring island, and the alternatives to this that were available. He also discusses the private networks, and state regulations, which established the migratory flow of contract labourers.

The vast majority of the Haitian migrants were young men, bound directly for the sugar harvest as cane cutters. They quickly became stereotyped as “the only workers who would perform the labor that former slaves had been forced to do” (p. 110). However, the reality was that cane cutters were not exclusively Haitian, nor were Haitians exclusively cane cutters. On the plantations there was a great deal of interaction between the Haitians and other migrants and Cubans, together creating “new worlds out of shared experiences”, including unionization and class struggle. For the Haitians who remained in Cuba, establishing families, coffee provided a secondary potential source of income during the year, often combined with continuing seasonal work in the sugar fields. Casey goes on to look at the importance and diversity of religious belief, and the reality behind the prejudices about the witchcraft and voodoo that fuelled the discrimination and negative profiling of the Haitian migrants in Cuba.

While the majority of the Haitians were rural labourers, a small number of literate Haitians settled in Cuba’s cities. Casey shows how these “maintained strong social and commercial networks with Cubans” (p. 234) and provided an important connection back to public affairs in Haiti. While they were significant in political mobilizations and debates around race, they also established urban–rural networks, ostensibly intended to provide support to the mass of migrants, but often taking advantage of them in the face of the forced repatriations. Casey ends by following the returning migrants back into Haiti, and the political and social role played by them in the era following US occupation. The book concludes with a consideration of the “enduring legacies” of the migration, which continue into the present day with the descendants of those who remained in Cuba.

Casey draws on a rich range of sources, from archives and contemporary periodicals in Cuba, Haiti, and the United States as well as an exhaustive interrogation of the many references existing in the literature to the Haitian migration, and encounters with present day descendants. Through this, he has succeeded in putting together a fascinating and sensitive account of the shared and parallel history of Cuba and Haiti, and of the individuals who gave so much and received so little in return. It does more than tell their story. Through the lens of their lived experience *Empire’s Guestworkers* also shows the history of both Cuba and Haiti in a new and revealing light.

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