Black Women in the Making of the Hacienda Irurena: A Re-interpretation of a Coffee and Sugar Plantation Landscape in Puerto Rico

Sara Isabel Rodríguez Rivera

Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico

BA History of Art, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus, 2019

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Dr. Louis P. Nelson

Dr. Sheila R. Crane

Dr. Charlotte Rogers

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To the thousands of women whose names are written in the *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras*. Their resilience forged not only significant pieces of the history of the Hacienda Irurena but also of who we are today. This thesis is for them.

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Abstract

Black Women in the Making of the Hacienda Irurena: A Re-interpretation of a Coffee and Sugar Plantation Landscape in Puerto Rico

By

Sara Isabel Rodríguez Rivera

Department of Architectural History

School of Architecture, University of Virginia

In 1873, when slavery was abolished in Puerto Rico, the coffee and sugar plantation known as the Hacienda Irurena had the largest number of enslaved workers in the municipalities of Moca. Today the only tangible remnant of this site's history is a two-story, French-influenced manor house that has been transformed into a museum and event venue called the Palacete Los Moreau. This plantation museum now glorifies selected governors and mayors of Puerto Rico as well as the site's white planters. This current interpretation ignores the fact that this site was once owned and transformed by a former enslaved woman who wielded surprising power. How was this history erased over time? *Black Women in the Making of the Hacienda Irurena: A Re-interpretation of a Coffee and Sugar Plantation Landscape in Puerto Rico* unfolds a broader chronological history of this site and its cultural landscapes through the life accounts of female agents, whose lives counter the cultural hegemony asserted by the museum. By reading against the grain of archival resources and implementing an interdisciplinary approach, this thesis reveals how the production of coffee and sugar exploited and exhausted this plantation's lands and workers. More so, it excavates multivalent lived histories of the ones who forged this landscape, particularly the more than 300 enslaved women that were recorded in the *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras* [*Journal of Birthing Slaves*] of the Hacienda Irurena. In addition, a revaluation of the decisions taken since the 1990s by both cultural and governmental institutions reveals how the history of this site has been erased in its current public interpretation. Finally, the insights of a descendant from the enslaved community of the Hacienda Irurena reveals new ways to approach this site, inviting us to consider plantation landscapes and their remaining ecosystems, as witnesses of unwritten histories of women waiting to be heard.

After a while, a bus passed by with the name of the Central [sugar mill] on the front [...] The road slid over the plain's chest, between a multitude of coconut trees and vast sugarcane fields. Very soon I could distinguish the Central with its high black chimney and its white buildings. As the bus advanced, my eyes wandered over the humid plains of the valley, the green sugarcane fields whose roots sank into the swampy and dark soil. Before me, behind the Central, the mountain range, with picturesque houses of the land workers clinging to its greenery. At some distance two or three hills recently plowed, red, like open roses, in stark contrast with the blue and the green. The river crept among mangroves and bamboos. Suddenly, I glimpsed a flock of seagulls illuminating their flight over the deep blue— a flight of sun and whiteness that I envied—while my spirit soared in the morning glory like a surge of longings and desires. My longing was so elevated that when I heard the chauffeur say 'We've already arrived,' I experienced the effect of a fall. And I felt so small, my God! [1]

—Enrique A. Laguerre, *La Llamarada*

Introduction

By the end of the nineteenth-century in Puerto Rico, the Hacienda Irurena was a prominent plantation known for its extensive cultivation of sugarcane and coffee, as depicted in Enrique Laguerre's canonical Puerto Rican novel *La Llamarada* (1935). The cultivated lands spanned across the municipalities of Moca, Isabela, and Aguadilla, making it one of the leading plantations in the region with the largest enslaved community. Its development was part of a historical chapter characterized by the arrival of many immigrants to the island, especially after the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) and during the Royal Decree of Graces (1815). The Hacienda Irurena, however, was founded by a group of French immigrants known as the Pellot family,[2] who, with

[1] "A poco, pasó una guagua con el nombre de la Central enfrente […] Deslizábase la carretera sobre el pecho del llano, entre una multitud de cocoteros y de extensos cañaverales. Muy pronto pude distinguir la Central con su alta chimenea negra y sus blancos edificios. Según avanzaba la guagua, mis ojos recorrían las húmedas llanuras del valle, los verdes cañaverales cuyas raíces se hundían en el terreno alagadizo y moreno. De frente, tras de la Central, la sierra, sobre cuyo verdor se agarraban las pintorescas casitas de los campesinos. A alguna distancia dos o tres cerros acabados de arar, rojos, como rosas abiertas, en vivo contraste con lo azul y lo verde. Arrastrábase el río entre mangles y bambúes. De súbito, columbré un tropel de gaviotas iluminando su vuelo sobre el azul profundo—vuelo de sol y blancura que envidié—mientras mi espíritu se proyectaba en la gloria mañanera como un brote de anhelos y quereres. Fue tan elevada mi aspiración que cuando oí que el chauffeur decía <ya llegamos>, experimenté el efecto de una caída. ¡Y me sentí tan pequeño, Dios mío!" Enrique A. Laguerre, *Obras Completas* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1974), 27. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the author.

[2] Originally spelled in French as Peugeot.

careful land acquisition and a large number of enslaved laborers, established a prosperous coffee and fruit plantation. By the end of the nineteenth-century, Juan Labadie y Larré took over its management. During this period, Labadie focused on the cultivation of sugarcane as one of the main sources of production. With the installation of new machinery for such purposes, the Hacienda Irurena was transformed from a plantation to an estate. However, it was under the ownership of a mulatta named Cornelia Pellot who, following the death of her husband Juan Labadie, became the owner of the very plantation where she and her family had once been enslaved.

The only architectural remnants of Cornelia's legacy and this site's tangible history is a two-story, French-influenced manor house that has been renovated into a museum and event venue called the Palacete Los Moreau (Moreau Castle). This is the same name that Puerto Rican writer and educator Enrique A. Laguerre used in *La Llamarada*. Published in 1935, this novel became highly significant for its detailed study of the Puerto Rican landscapes and its critique of the socio-political struggles faced by the workers as a result of the island's monoculture of sugar and coffee. The novel's significance also stems from the fact that Laguerre was primarily inspired by the Hacienda Iurena's manor house and the daily events occurring at this site and surrounding areas. As Enrique A. Laguerre himself explained,

> In the field I started to examine everything. I did not limit myself to just hearing the affectionate voice of the peon who already spoke to me with respect, but I entered into the life of his home and became aware of his pain. The trunk of the missing tree told me the tragic story of erosion and droughts, the flowers long seen in childhood hinted at the anguish of a life that is leaving, [in] the cut of the sugarcane fields [...] now I saw a living choker of dejected men [...].[3]

[3] "En el campo empecé a examinarlo todo. No me limité a oír la voz afectuosa del peón que ya me hablaba con respeto, sino que entré en la vida de su hogar y tuve conciencia de su dolor. El tronco del árbol desaparecido me dijo la historia trágica de la erosión y las sequías, las flores largamente vistas en la niñez me insinuaban la angustia de una vida que

These words reveal how the Hacienda Irurena was not just another landscape for this novelist. It was also the place where he grew up and where a key part of Puerto Rico's economic and social history unfolded. For this reason, *La Llamarada* has been used as a primary source to define the spaces and the historical narrative of the museum. For example, this site is no longer known as the Hacienda Irurena but has adopted the name that Laguerre gave it in his novel. Additionally, a library located in the basement of the Hacienda Irurena manor house is dedicated to Laguerre's literary and educational contributions. His portrait is prominently displayed in the middle of the museum's living room, alongside the portraits of Moca's mayors. The surrounding landscape has also been transformed into a memorial site for this writer, following his death in 2005.

Even though much of the residence and landscape commemorates the life and work of Enrique A. Laguerre and some of its history as a sugar and coffee plantation, the way it has been promoted and curated greatly oversimplifies the complexity of its history and value. For example, the information provided to the visitors mainly focuses on the history of the Hacienda Irurena's foundation, featuring Pedro Pellot and Juan Labadie as the key protagonists. Regarding the structural development of the manor house, the museum only exalts Paul Servajean as the engineer. It also highlights the efforts of Moca's mayor, Eustaquio Vélez, who purchased the lands and initiated preservation efforts to promote a part of the region's history. This has undoubtedly fostered an uneven historical narrative that systematically erases the voices of the enslaved and later free workers who transformed this site over time. Among these neglected voices is Cornelia Pellot and her community. Being a woman, mulatta, and former slave, she became the owner of

se va, [en] el corte en los cañaverales […] ahora vi una gargantilla viviente de hombres abatidos […]." Enrique A. Laguerre, "Unas notas sobre La llamarada," *El Mundo*, August 6, 1939, 60.

this plantation during a time of systematic re-Europeanization of the island's elite.[4] Most importantly, Cornelia Pellot was responsible for overseeing the construction of the manor house, which still stands today as her enduring legacy.

One visitor, however, has taken a different approach when visiting this site. Instead of going through the monumental manor house or the nearby curated gardens, Frances Thomas walks around the open, silent, structureless surrounding land where the warehouses for the coffee and sugar production were once located. For Thomas, those grounds are neither empty nor silent. Rather, they are a sacred place of encounter with her ancestors, particularly with her great-grandmother: the enslaved woman, Petrona Pellot. As she navigates this space, she shares:

> When I visit [the hacienda] I always carry [a] bottle of water. I like to walk the grounds [and] talk to them. All those trees they touched. That is why I pour water to them, to give them encouragement. I thank them so much. They maintained the family. And, for me, family is very important. They went through so much and I thank them for what they went through. Many Africans could not overcome the notion of being property; they preferred death. I thank my relatives who did not kill themselves, that they fell in love and had children, with food or without food. Without those children my grandparents will have not existed. That is why whenever I pass, I say *¡bendición!* and I give thanks. [5]

In this way, Frances Thomas, as one of the descendants of the enslaved community of the Hacienda Irurena, invites us to consider plantation landscapes and their remaining ecosystem as witnesses of her unwritten history. From this perspective, the Hacienda Irurena becomes, in words

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[4] The Royal Decree of Graces, according to José Luis González, "sought a qualitative whitening, that is, a re-Europeanization of the white elite whose relative weakness in the face of the upward momentum of the mulatto sector had to be alarming for the colonial regime." José Luis González, *El país de los cuatro pisos y otros ensayos* (Colombia: Ediciones Huracán, 1980), 49.

[5] "Cuando la visito siempre llevo [una] botella de agua. Me gusta caminar por los terrenos, hablo con ellos, todos esos árboles ellos los tocaron. Por eso les hecho agua para darles aliento. Le agradezco tanto a ellos. Mantuvieron la familia y para mi familia es bien importante. Ellos pasaron tanto y le doy gracias por lo que pasaron. Muchos africanos no podían sobrepasar la noción de ser propiedad, preferían la muerte. Yo le agradezco a mis parientes que no se mataron, que se enamoraron y que tuvieron hijos con comida o sin comida. Sin esos hijos no salieron mis abuelos. Por eso siempre que paso digo ¡bendición! y doy gracias." Frances Thomas. Interview by Sara I. Rodríguez Rivera. September 10, 2022.

of Katherine Mckittrick, a site where the "surroundings are speakable."[6] But, what do such surroundings have to say and how do we make them speak? How can we confront issues like the ones stated by Michel-Rolph Trouillot about the "uneven power in the production of sources, archives, and narratives"?[7] How can we recover from historical obscurity voices such as Thomas' great-grandmother Petrona Pellot or the one of Cornelia Pellot?

Taking these questions into account, this thesis will challenge the social imaginary and the poorly conceived history constructed around the Hacienda Irurena site. By re-evaluating scarce sources, fragmented archives, and reconstructing the site's built environment through the perspectives and contributions of three women—a slave, a free slave, and a descendant—it seeks to humanize the ever-evolving landscapes of the plantation. While recognizing Laguerre's contributions to the site's historiography, it also highlights how novels like *La Llamarada* can serve as vital primary sources, enriching archival documentation to evoke the memory and lived experiences of these built environments.

The theoretical framework that has greatly influenced this approach consists of the contribution of scholars who have explored spaces of enslavement in the Caribbean and posed inquiries centered around female bodies. Marisa J. Fuentes, for one, makes visible the difficulties of dealing with fragmented archives and considers the bodies and voices of enslaved women as key pieces in the historiography of the Caribbean. Inspired by her work, I begin and end the history of the Hacienda Irurena with the names and life accounts of enslaved women, as Fuentes does, "in order to contest their fragmentation and to challenge the impetus of colonial authorities to objectify

[6] Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2006), ix.
[7] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 7.

enslaved people in the records by generic naming."[8] Furthermore, recognizing the built environment as a social construct, this thesis draws on Katherine McKittrick's work in *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*.[9] McKittrick's interdisciplinary analysis of black women's geographies in the Black diaspora opens new avenues for imagining spatial narratives.

This thesis is also informed by the scholarship of the art historian and genealogist Ellen Fernández-Sacco. Her work offers invaluable insights for researching Hacienda Irurena, particularly through her focus on Afro-Puerto Rican genealogy, material culture, and the intersection of slavery and freedom.[10] Her work on reconstructing genealogies and uncovering the historical memory of marginalized communities in Puerto Rico provides a critical framework for examining the lives of the enslaved individuals who lived and worked at Hacienda Irurena. Additionally, Fernández-Sacco's exploration of themes such as resistance, accommodation, and historical amnesia encourages a more nuanced understanding of plantation's history, emphasising the importance of remembering and preserving the experiences of those who have been overlooked in traditional narratives. Her interdisciplinary approach offers a more complex narrative that

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[8] Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press), 3.
[9] McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*.
[10] Some of Ellen Fernández-Sacco's scholarship consists of: Ellen Fernández-Sacco, "Reconstructing District 3's Missing 1872 *Registro Central de Esclavos* for Northwest Puerto Rico, Part 1," *Hereditas: Journal of the Sociedad Puertorriqueña de Genealogía* 20, no. 2 (2019): 68-90, https://www.academia.edu/49048096/Reconstructing_District_3s_Missing_1872_Registro_Central_de_Esclavos_Part_1; "Bound to History: Leoncia Lasalle's Slave Narrative from Moca, Puerto Rico, 1945," *Genealogy* 4, no. 3, 93 (2020):1-26. https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy4030093;
"Reconstructing District 3's Missing 1872 *Registro Central de Esclavos* for Northwest Puerto Rico, Part 2," *Hereditas: Journal of the Sociedad Puertorriqueña de Genealogía* 21, no. 2 (2020): 105-132; "Reconstructing District 3's Missing 1872 *Registro Central de Esclavos* for Northwest Puerto Rico Part 3," *Hereditas: Journal of the Sociedad Puertorriqueña de Genealogía* 23, no.1 (2022); "Reconstructing District 3's Missing 1872 *Registro Central de Esclavos* for Northwest Puerto Rico, Part 4," *Hereditas: Journal of the Sociedad Puertorriqueña de Genealogía* 24, no. 2 (2023) (forthcoming).

centers the contribution and legacies of Afro-Puerto Rican communities, providing a more comprehensive understanding of Hacienda Irurena's history.

In this way, the first chapter of this thesis delves into the early foundational history of the Hacienda Irurena. It aims to conduct a careful study of the Hacienda Irurena's built environment and explore the multivalent lived histories and experiences of the enslaved. In particular, it draws on the *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras* [Journal of Birthing Slaves], a source that documents over 300 enslaved women who were, as Fuentes describes, portrayed "in the manner in which they lived: spectacularly violated, objectified, disposable, hypersexualized, and silenced."[11] Therefore, I utilize a range of primary sources, as well as interdisciplinary scholars and a novelist, to read against the grain of existing colonized historiography and humanize these lives that have been reduced to objects of commodification. Given the paucity of scholarship about this site, the works of the historians Antonio Nieves Méndez, especially his book *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-2000* [History of a Town: Moca 1772-2000],[12] along with Haydée E. Reichard de Cardona's *Haciendas agrícolas del triángulo noroeste de Puerto Rico* [Agricultural Haciendas in the Northwestern Triangle of Puerto Rico],[13] are fundamental for reconstructing this plantation's history. Additionally, nineteenth-century primary sources from the Archivo General de Puerto Rico (AGPR) enable me to trace how the French family known as the Pellot began acquiring large tracts of land after arriving in Puerto Rico in 1810 and how these lands were exploited. This will illuminate the daily life of the enslaved, including Cornelia Pellot, through the production of one of the main commodities: coffee.

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[11] Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 5.
[12] Antonio Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-2000* (Moca: Editorial Aymaco, 2008).
[13] Haydée E. Reichard De Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas del triángulo noroeste de Puerto Rico… sus dueños e historias*, edited by José A. Amador Acosta (Aguadilla: Editorial Historias y Escritos Riqueños, 2020).

Due to the limited scholarship on coffee production in Puerto Rico, I will mainly revisit two coffee treatises: Joseph Hillman's *Coffee Planting: A Short Treatise Compiled with Special Reference to the Conditions of Culture in Cuba and Porto Rico* (1902)[14] and Francis B. Thurber's *Coffee: From Plantation to Cup* (1881).[15] These treatises will be supplemented by architectural evidence from Hacienda Irurena's property deeds. As McKittrick notes, "describing the landscape is not enough. The individual, the community, the land are inextricable in the process of creating history."[16] Therefore, I will examine aspects previously explored by scholars like Luis A. Figueroa in *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico*,[17] such as viewing the slave quarters, the *bohíos* and the provision grounds as settings of many Puerto Rican customs, past and the present.

The Pellot family eventually sold the plantation to Juan Labadie y Larré, who later married Cornelia Pellot. To explore their relationship, identify their children, and understand the division of property and Labadie's inheritance after his death in 1894, primary sources such as marriage certificates, birth certificates, and census records will be crucial. The second chapter will therefore focus more broadly on the period after the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico in 1873 and the subsequent transformation of Hacienda Irurena into a sugar production estate under the Labadie's management. A key aspect of exploration will involve revisiting property deeds and J. Ferreras Pagán's *Biografía de las riquezas de Puerto Rico* [Biography of the Riches of Puerto Rico] (1902),[18] to understand the changes in the estate's built environment. Pagan's descriptions will

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[14] Joseph Hillman, *Coffee Planting: A Short Treatise Compiled with Special Reference to the Conditions of Culture in Cuba and Porto Rico* (New York: William S. Myers, College of New Jersey, 1902).
[15] Francis B. Thurber, *Coffee: From Plantation to Cup. A Brief History of Coffee Production and Consumption* (New York: American Grocer Publishing Association, 1881).
[16] McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, 24.
[17] Luis A. Figueroa, *Sugar, Slavery, and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press).
[18] J. Ferreras Pagán, *Biografía de las riquezas de Puerto Rico*, tomo 1 (San Juan: Imprenta Luis Ferreras, 1902).

ultimately provide detailed information of the machinery and its origins, offering insights into the work environment for the newly free workers.

Due to the untimely deaths of many of Juan Labadie and Cornelia Pellot's children after she became a widow, the majority of Labadie's inheritance passed to Cornelia. As a result, the old wood plantation house was demolished and a Second Empire, French-influenced, two-story concrete structure was built. Therefore, this second chapter will also include a formal analysis of this new manor house, completed in 1905 under the direction of the Puerto Rican master builder Manuel Gómez Tejera. Both a house evaluation done in 1951 and Enrique Laguerre's novel *La Llamarada* will help reconstruct the house's original appearance. Meanwhile, this structure will be compared with other residences on the island, exploring how its French-inspired design reflected issues of identity formation and social hierarchies of power, aspects that have been previously explored by the Puerto Rican architects and historians Jorge Rigau[19] and Enrique Vivoni.[20]

The third and final chapter considers the factors that led to the current museum's historical interpretation of the Hacienda Irurena becoming generalized and ambiguous. To this end, I re-evaluate the decisions made by cultural and governmental institutions since the 1990s regarding the site's historic preservation. Documentation from the Mayor's Office of Moca details the turbulent acquisition of this site, or more accurately, its expropriation, as well as the initial conceptual design envisioned by Mayor Eustaquio Vélez for Hacienda Irurena. A drawing titled "Moreau House District Master Plan" reveals how the site was planned to be transformed into a

[19] Jorge Rigau, *Puerto Rico 1900: Turn of the Century Architecture in the Hispanic Caribbean, 1890-1930* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1992).
[20] Enrique Vivoni Farange and Silvia Álvarez Curbelo, eds., *Ilusión de Francia: arquitectura y afrancesamiento en Puerto Rico* (Rio Piedras: Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997).

residential district focused on ecotourism development. In contrast, letters responding to this design and the final conservation plan approved by the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña offer further insights into site's present use. Additionally, correspondence reveals why Enrique A. Laguerre was chosen to be part of the overall museum's narrative, a decision that ultimately created a significant imbalance between fiction and historical reality, leading visitors to become more aware of Laguerre's perspective of the site rather than its actual historical dynamics, including its past as a plantation and estate.

Overall, this research presents a corrective and interdisciplinary history of Hacienda Irurena. Most importantly, this work endeavors to reveal the overlooked stories that cultural institutions have failed to preserve and promote, such as the lives of the enslaved woman Gabriela, the freed owner Cornelia, and descendants like Frances Thomas. Their narratives offer a testament to the enduring and transformative legacies of the Hacienda Irurena.

Chapter One: Gabriela

I. October 12, 1870

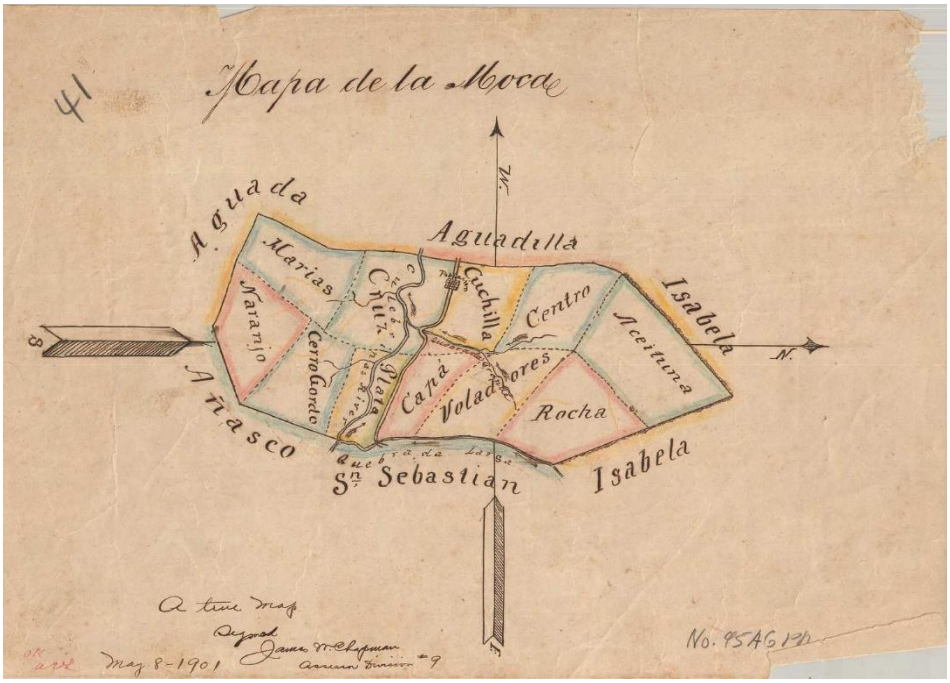

Figure 1.1 Topographic map of Moca, 1901.

According to the historian Antonio Nieves Méndez, in 1899, the municipality of Moca had 1,860 acres of land planted with coffee and 307 with sugarcane, totaling 2,167 acres of cultivated land.[21] To the north of Moca, in the neighborhood of Aceitunas, more than half of that amount of cultivated land was part of a single plantation: the Hacienda Irurena (Fig. 1.1). This site, with 1,200 acres of land, extended beyond the borders of Isabela and Aguadilla (Fig. 1.2), marked by "white scars of harvest glistening like the part in a woman's hair,"[22] as the young enslaved boy George Washington Black described when he saw the plantation where he was enslaved from afar in Esi

[21] Antonio Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-200* (Moca: Editorial Aymaco, 2008), 90.
[22] Esi Edugyan, *Washington Black* (New York: Vintage Brooks, 2018), 119.

Edugyan's novel *Washington Black*. Within those scarred grounds—as disclosed by a property deed from 1884—stood a building complex for the mass production of sugar and coffee. Some buildings housed coffee peeling machines and warehouses for the storage of coffee and farm tools, while other areas were dedicated to the arduous confection of sugar. Immersed in this landscape of production were "nine houses of material, roofed with *tejamaní* for slaves and *peones*."[23] In one of those houses, or perhaps in some other structures that preceded them, lived a Black woman called Gabriela.

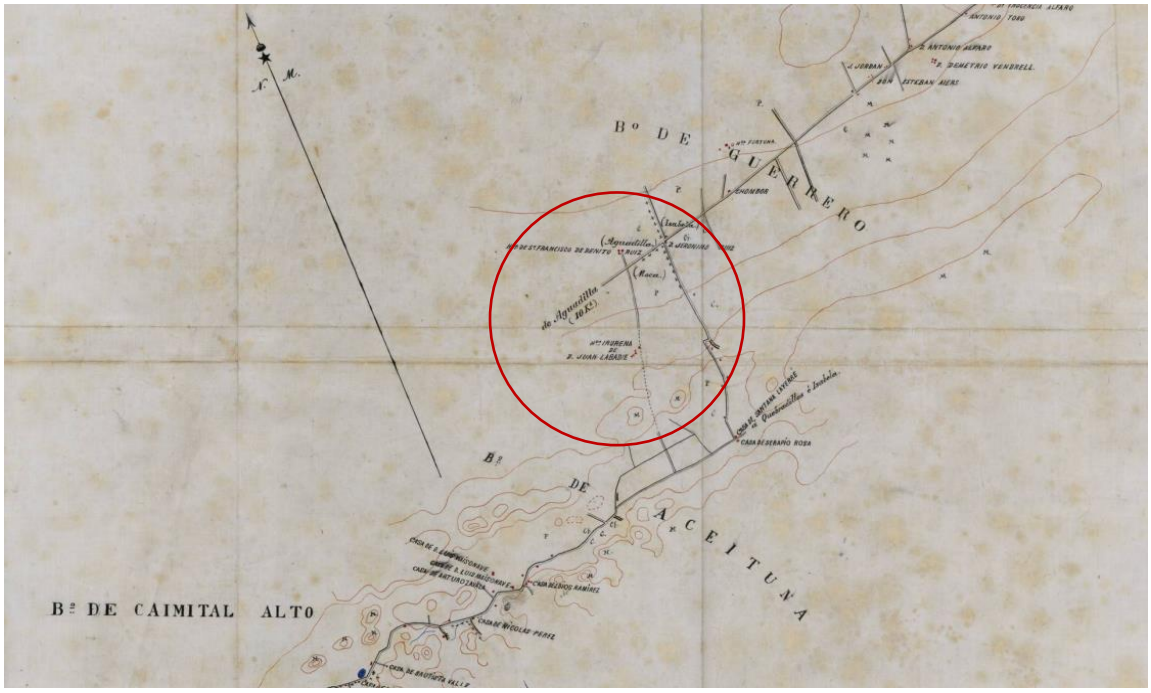

Figure 1.2 In this map we can see the proximity of the Hacienda Irurena to the municipalities of Aguadilla and Isabela by 1889.

This enslaved woman's name has survived in the fragile pages of the *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras*, a document that systematically records the name of thousands of enslaved women of

[23] Registro de la Propiedad de San Sebastián, Finca 168, Folio 1, Tomo 03, Pueblo de Moca, Puerto Rico. Document given by France Thomas.

the Hacienda Irurena, along with the dates of birth and the given names of their children. Gabriela appears in the journal above the slave Maria Antonia in the year 1870 (Fig. 1.3). On October 12 of that year, at the age of 28, she gave birth to a baby boy named Leoncio.[24] In the *Cédulas de Esclavos from 1868-1873*, a resource that served almost as a census record for enslaved individuals, Leoncio appears within days of being born (Fig. 1.4).[25] He is classified as a mulatto, with an unknown father, without siblings, and owned by the planter Don Juan Pellot. A single surviving page of a slave baptism record from the Hacienda Irurena suggests that Don Juan Pellot gave Leoncio his freedom when he was baptized (Fig. 1.5). However, due to the unbearably poor living circumstances, this legal freedom would not last long. Returning to the *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras*, next to Leoncio's name, we can see a circular symbol with a cross. This symbol appears numerous times in the journal, usually next to the names of those who passed away. Leoncio, barely two years of age, died on April 16, 1873,[26] on the same year the Abolition of Slavery took place in Puerto Rico.

These valuable historical documents weave a tapestry of the life experiences within the Hacienda Irurena, offering us glimpses into the intertwined fates of a mother and of a son. Yet, we learn more about their human conditions when we juxtapose these texts with the natural and constructed environment they inhabited. Thus, let us now immerse ourselves in the lived realities of Gabriela, by introducing the Pellot family and reconstructing spaces of coffee production and processing, transforming them into landscapes of everyday existence.

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[24] *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras*. Private collection of Haydée E. Reichard De Cardona.
[25] *Cédulas de Esclavos from 1868-1873*, Puerto Rico, Parte 8, Moca, 33. Document transcribed and given by Ellen Fernández-Sacco.
[26] *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras*.

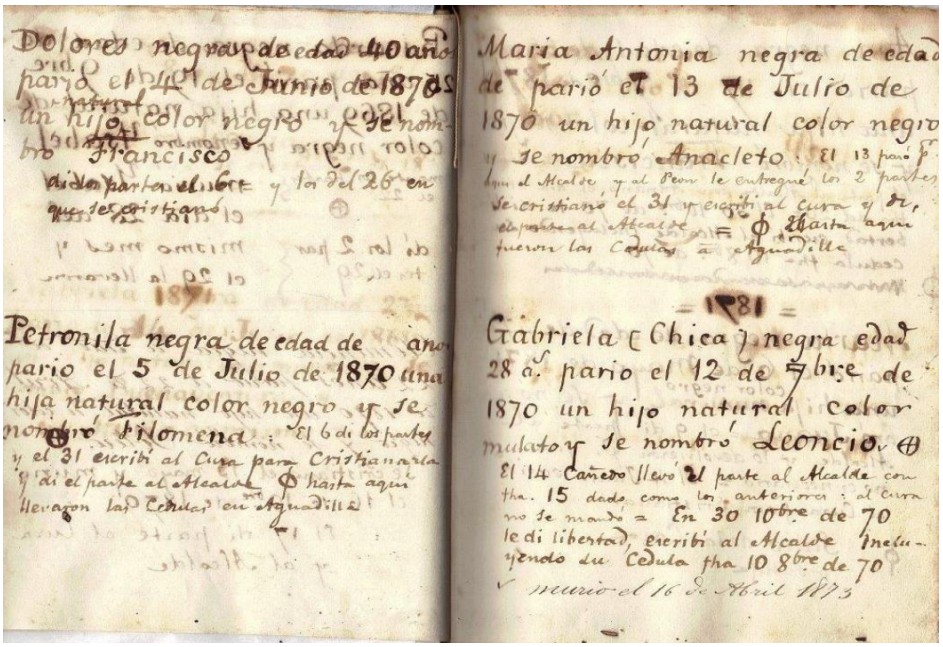

Figure 1.3 The slave Gabriela and her son Leoncio recorded in the right page of the *Libreta de Escalvas Paridoras* by 1870.

PUERTO RICO, CÉDULAS DE ESCLAVOS 1868 – 1873 Parte 8
Aguada, Aguadilla, Isabela, Lares, Moca, Rincón y San Sebastián

###	Año	Pueblo	Imagen	Esclavo	Edad	Color	Cédula	Oficio	Amo	Padrón	Padres	Hijos	Detalles	Natural
325	1870	Moca	0535	Felícita	09	Mulato	Rural	-	D~~ y González, sociedad	Voladoras	-			
326	1870	Moca	0540	Gregorio	12	Negro	Rural	Labrador	Suárez, Don Juan	Aceitunas	María de la Cruz			
327	1870	Moca	0542	Bernardina	1 m	-	Rural	-	Rivera Quiñones, Doña Dolores	El Pueblo	Lucía			
328	1870	Moca	0543	Francisco Saturnino	Días	Negro	Rural	-	Pellot, Don Juan	Aceitunas	Dolores		Baja por manumisión	
329	1870	Moca	0545	Venancia	35	Colorado	Rural	Labrador	González, Don Manuel de Jesús	La Rocha	Casimiro y Águeda	Edelmira, Celestina, Rafaela, Avelina, Victoriano, Eladia, Santos	Amo vecino de Lares	
330	1870	Moca	0546	Juan Manuel	07	Mulato	Rural		Méndez, Don Ricardo	Voladoras	Dominga		Amo de Aguadilla	
331	1870	Moca	0551	Isabel	27	Tinto	Urbana	Doméstico	Pérez, Don Antonio y esposa Catalina Benejan	El Pueblo	Merced y Catalina	Josefa, Cándida y Anacleto		
332	1870	Moca	0552	Antonio Abad	23	Mulato	Rural	Labrador	Pérez, Don Antonio y esposa Catalina Benejan	El Pueblo	Juana			
333	1870	Moca	0553	Pablo	24	Tinto	Rural	Labrador	Pérez, Don Antonio y esposa Catalina Benejan	El Pueblo	Ana			
334	1870	Moca	0554	Víctor	13	Mulato	Rural	Labrador	Pérez, Don Antonio y esposa Catalina Benejan	El Pueblo	Juana			
335	1870	Moca	0555	Josefa	06	Mulato	Urbana	-	Pérez, Don Antonio y esposa Catalina Benejan	El Pueblo	Isabel			
336	1870	Moca	0556	Anacleto	04	Mulato	Urbana	-	Pérez, Don Antonio y esposa Catalina Benejan	El Pueblo	Antonio Abad e Isabel			
337	1870	Moca	0557	Pedro Ramón	11 m	Mulato	Urbana	-	Pérez, Don Antonio y esposa Catalina Benejan	El Pueblo	Isabel			
338	1870	Moca	0634	Nicasio	12	Mulato	Rural	Labrador	Kleibring, Don Enrique	El Pueblo	Balbina			
339	1870	Moca	0635	Balbina	26	Mulato	Rural	Labrador	Kleibring, Don Enrique	El Pueblo	Manuela	Nicasio		
340	1870	Moca	0641	Carlos Tiburcio	1 m	-	Urbana	-	Pagán, Don Restituto	El Pueblo	Eleuteria			
341	1870	Moca	0767	María Juana	Días	-	Rural	-	Zabala, Doña Angelina	Capá	-			
342	1870	Moca	0778	Sinforosa	16	Pardo	Rural	Labrador	Lassalle, Don Marcelino	Bartolo	Andrés y Dominga			
343	1870	Moca	0783	Francisca	Días	Negro	Rural	-	Pellot, Don Juan	Aceitunas	Ana			
344	1870	Moca	0784	Leoncio	Días	Mulato	Rural	-	Pellot, Don Juan	Aceitunas	Gabriela			

Figure 1.4 Leoncio appears registered in the slave census of the year 1870 with only days of being born.

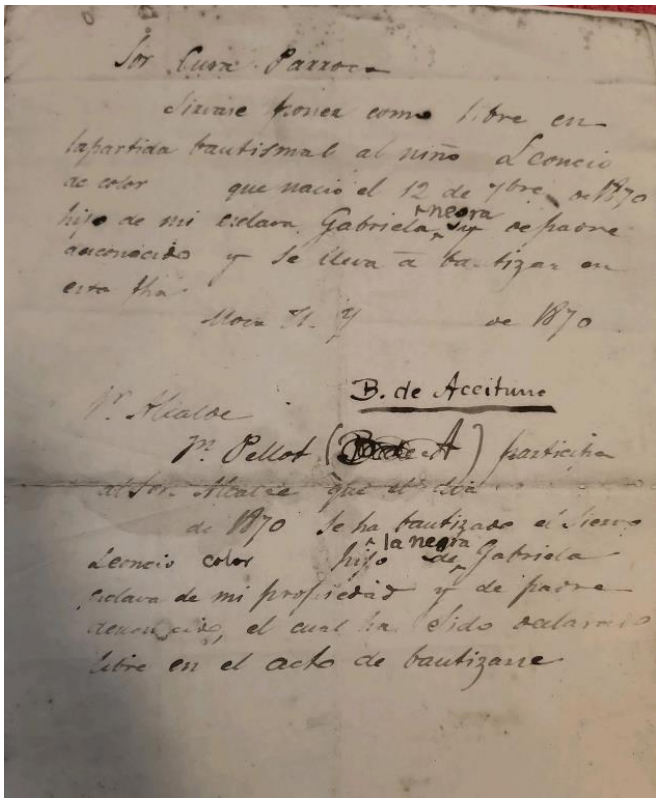

Figure 1.5 Baptism record and liberty of Leoncio given by the planter Juan Pellot in 1870.

II. The Pellot Family and the Building of the Hacienda Irurena (1810-1843)

During the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), many plantation owners emigrated to other Caribbean colonies, including Puerto Rico. In the book *Historia General de Puerto Rico* [General History of Puerto Rico], Fernando Picó explains how in "1804, after consolidating the triumph of Haitian independence and the Haitians occupying Santo Domingo, the ports of Mayagüez and Aguadilla were crowded with Dominican and French refugees. Many of these came with minor assets, although some came with money, jewelry, and slaves."[27] As a result, the coastal areas of

[27] "En 1804, tras consolidar el triunfo de la independencia haitiana y luego de que los haitianos ocuparan Santo Domingo, lo puertos de Mayagüez y Aguadilla estaban atestados de refugiados dominicano y franceses. Muchos de estos vinieron con escasos haberes, aunque algunos llegaron a traer dinero, joyas y esclavos." Fernando Picó, *Historia general de Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán Inc., 2008), 158.

Aguada, Aguadilla, Moca, and Isabela, for example, were populated by emigrants from Hispaniola who already came with vast knowledge and skills in sugar agriculture.[28] One of the many French families that arrived during that period and established themselves in the region of Moca was the Peugeot family—later translated into Spanish as Pellot.[29] Secondary sources have repeatedly assumed that this family included five siblings: Pedro, Juan, Carlos, Graciela, and Mariana. However, the death certificate of Pedro Pellot, along with an 1884 property deed of the Hacienda Irurena, confirms that he only had two sisters, Mariana and María,[30] while Juan and Carlos were actually nephews (Fig.1.6). The death certificate also discloses that he was from the Basque region of Hondarribia, Gipuzkoa, located between the Franco-Spanish border.[31] Most probably, this could have been the location from where this family emigrated.

Although many aspects of this family's arrival and settlement on the island have remained a mystery, it is certain that in Puerto Rico, Pedro Pellot started acquiring large quantities of land soon after the beginning of the nineteenth century. In his book, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772 al 2000,* Antonio Nieves Méndez gives an overview of the different stages the Pellot family went through to acquire several parcels of land towards the foundation of what would eventually become the Hacienda Irurena.[32] Nieves presents evidence dating back to 1810, which documents a plot of land of about 688 acres that Pedro Pellot bought from Pedro Manuel Abadía y Valencia. Pedro

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[28] Haydée E. Reichard De Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas del triángulo noroeste de Puerto Rico... sus dueños e historias*, edited by José A. Amador Acosta (Aguadilla: Historias y Escritos Riqueños, 2020), 125.
[29] The historian Antonio Nieves believes that the Pellot Family could have settled around the year of 1804. Antonio Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772 al 2000* (Moca: Editorial Aymaco, 2008), 357.
[30] Due to the poor conditions of the death certificate the name of "María" is not clearly legible.
[31] Libro 8, Folio 11 de Defunciones de la Parroquia San Carlos Borromeo de Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. Document provided by Haydée E. Reichard De Cardona.
[32] Most of the information regarding the acquisition of land by the Pellot family from 1810 until 1860 is retrieved from the book Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo*, 118-120.

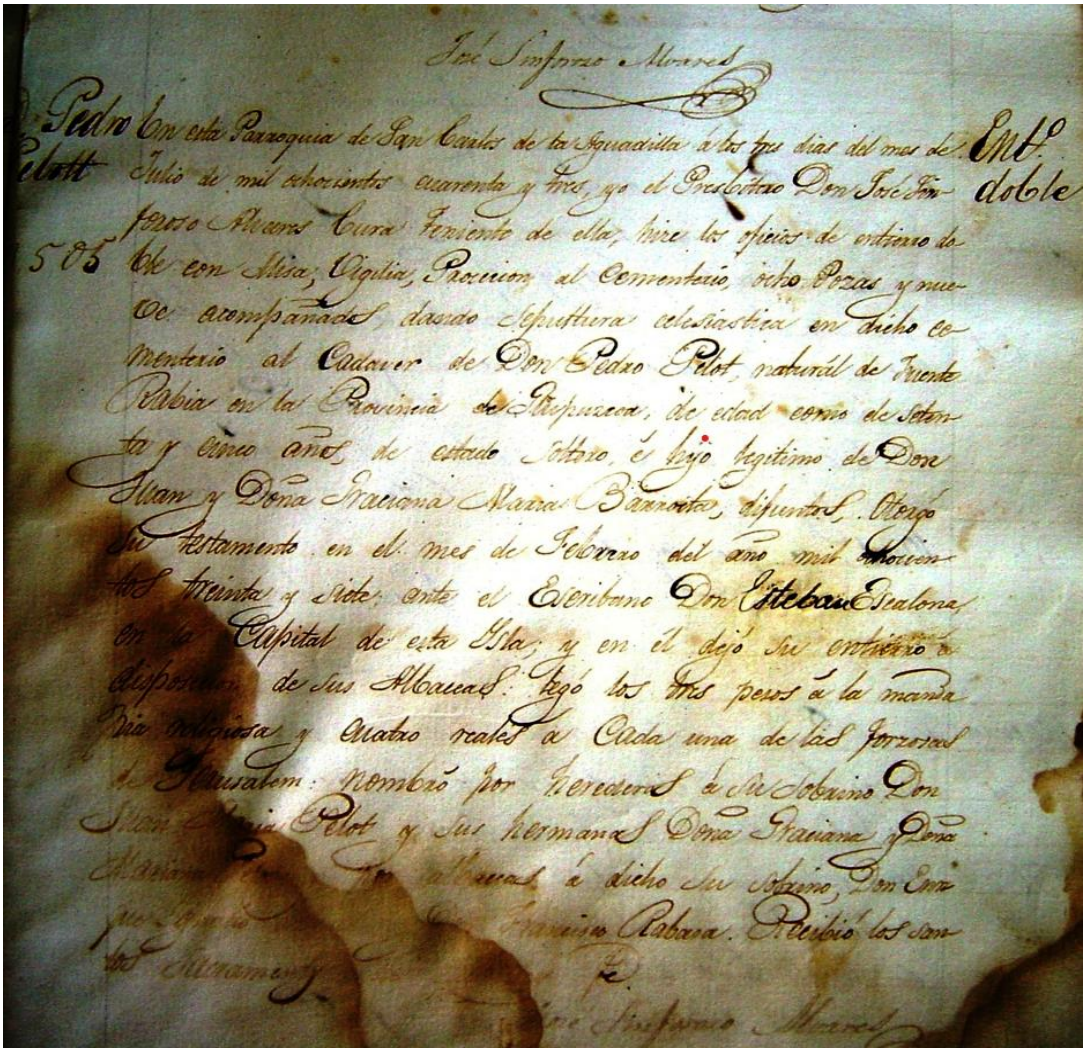

Figure 1.6 Death certificate of Pedro Pellot from the Parish records of San Carlos Borromeo de Aguadilla.

Manuel Abadía along with his wife and a couple of enslaved individuals, were part of the large emigration to Puerto Rico from the Hispaniola in 1803. When Abadía was established in Moca, he acquired a property in partnership with Martín Acevedo that would later be transformed into a plantation. This is how, with the purchase of 300 acres of land in 1810, Pedro Pellot will become part of that partnership along with Abadía and Acevedo. Later, in 1816, Martín Lorenzo de Acevedo sold 400 acres of land to Pedro Pellot. The continuous acquisition of land led to Pedro Pellot being registered in 1824 as a plantation owner of French origin and the proprietor of a

plantation located in the neighborhood of Aceitunas in Moca. However, Pellot's eagerness to expand the property did not stop.

By June 27, 1825, Pedro Pellot was granted the title of property to the lands that were owned by both Abadía and Acevedo, making him the administrator of Abadía's plantation of 688 acres. After Pedro Manuel Abadía's death in 1828, his wife Yomara Errea gave permission for the rest of their plantation to be sold to Pedro Pellot, along with 75 enslaved individuals. The historian Antonio Nieves Méndez further asserts how "[i]n addition to the hacienda, Pellot acquired on May 7, 1832 two properties in the neighborhoods of Guerrero and Ceiba Baja in Aguadilla, adjacent to [what would become] the Hacienda Irurena."[33] Over these years, Pedro Pellot became a man of great economic and social power in Moca. He even came to be involved in politics, serving as the mayor of Moca by 1814 and elected for a second time, though health problems prevented him from continuing.[34] His health continued to deteriorate, and at the age of sixty-five Pedro Pellot passed away in 1843. Because he never married or had children, on his testament written in 1837, he declared his nephew, Juan Pellot, and his two sisters as heirs of his property.

During Pedro Pellot's management, Nieves points out that "it is not possible to specify the year in which the hacienda was founded nor what name it had originally."[35] However, the name Irurena formally appears recorded as "Yrurena" in a document from 1847 (Fig. 1.7). Here, a total of 27 plantations of minor crops and 7 coffee plantations that were active in the *barrio* [neighborhood] Aceitunas, with Irurena being one of them under the ownership of Juan Pellot. The Hacienda Irurena was documented with 80 acres of *monte* [open fields], 85 acres of coffee, 10 acres of *frutos*

[33] "Además de la hacienda, Pellot adquirió el 7 de mayo de 1832 dos propiedades en los barrios de Guerrero y Ceiba Baja de Aguadilla colindantes con la Hacienda Irurena." Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo*, 119.
[34] Rubén Sánchez Babilonia, *Moca: Notas para su historia* (San Juan: Comité Historia de los Pueblos, 1986), 398.
[35] "[…] no se puede precisar el año en que se fundó la hacienda no que nombre tenía originalmente […]" Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo*, 118.

menores [minor crops], 11 *caballerías* and 60 acres of pasture.[36] Juan Pellot appears not only to have the largest coffee plantation in Aceitunas but also to have been the largest slaveholder, with 105 enslaved people and 0 *peones* [paid workers], even when most of the other planters had more paid workers. Later on, Juan Pellot will continue purchasing land by 1851, along with acquiring a large number of enslaved individuals. The historian and genealogist Ellen Fernández-Sacco, in her article "Reconstructing District 3's Missing 1872 Registro Central de Esclavos," perceives these acquisitions as symbol "of the overall growth of the use of enslaved labor at the rise of sugar and coffee cultivation in Puerto Rico going into the nineteenth century."[37] Later on, this site and its fortune will be inherited and managed by the last member of the Pellot family who came from Sainte-Adresse, France: his cousin Carlos Pellot.[38]

As we can see, the Hacienda Irurena stands as a testament to its role as a major coffee producer under Pellot family's ownership during the first half of the nineteenth-century. To unravel the layers of this plantation's rise to prominence and understand how it became one of the largest in the region, it is essential to explore its intricate coffee-making process, along with the machinery and other structures that were part of this landscape. And by intertwining insights from the *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras* and the *Cédulas de Esclavos from 1868-1873*, a fuller picture of the living conditions of the enslaved community within the confines of this system will emerge.

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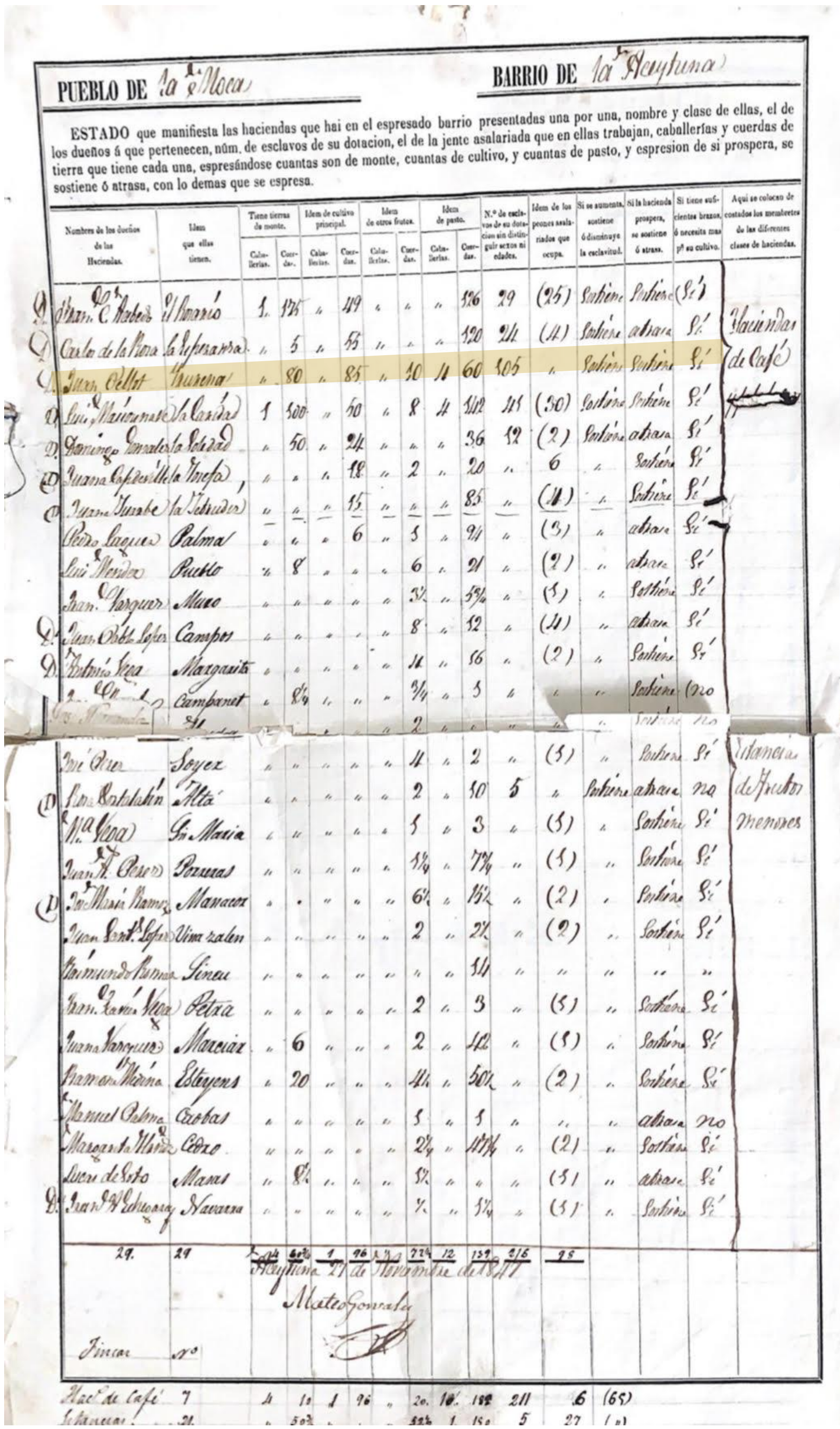
[36] "Records of the Spanish Governor of Puerto Rico," Political and Civil Affairs, Censo y Riqueza 1841-1850, Box No. 5, Entry 9, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

[37] Ellen Fernández-Sacco, "Reconstructing District 3's Missing 1872 Registro Central de Esclavos," *HEREDITAS* 20:2 (2019), 72.

[38] Registro de la Propiedad de San Sebastián, Finca 168, Folio 1, Tomo 03, Pueblo de Moca, Puerto Rico. Document given by France Thomas.



PUEBLO DE la Moca **BARRIO DE** la Aceytuna

ESTADO que manifiesta las haciendas que hai en el espresado barrio presentadas una por una, nombre y clase de ellas, el de los dueños á que pertenecen, núm. de esclavos de su dotacion, el de la jente asalariada que en ellas trabajan, caballerías y cuerdas de tierra que tiene cada una, espresándose cuantas son de monte, cuantas de cultivo, y cuantas de pasto, y espresion de si prospera, se sostiene ó atrasa, con lo demas que se espresa.

Nombres de los dueños de las Haciendas.	Idem que ellas tienen.	Tiene tierras de monte. Caballerías.	Cuerdas.	Idem de cultivo principal. Caballerías.	Cuerdas.	Idem de otros frutos. Caballerías.	Cuerdas.	Idem de pasto. Caballerías.	Cuerdas.	N.º de esclavos de su dotacion sin distinguir sexos ni edades.	Idem de los peones asalariados que ocupa.	Si se aumenta, sostiene ó disminuye la esclavitud.	Si la hacienda prospera, se sostiene ó atrasa.	Si tiene suficientes brazos ó necesita mas pª su cultivo.	Aqui se colocan de costados los membretes de las diferentes clases de haciendas.
Juan C. Arbeis	El Rosario	1	125	"	49	"	"	"	126	29	(25)	Sostiene	Sostiene	(Sí)	Haciendas de Café
Carlo de la Rosa	La Esperanza	"	5	"	55	"	"	"	120	24	(4)	Sostiene	atrasa	Sí	
Juan Pellot	Ausena	"	80	"	85	"	10	1	60	105	"	Sostiene	Sostiene	Sí	
Luis Maisonave	La Caridad	1	500	"	50	"	8	4	142	45	(30)	Sostiene	Sostiene	Sí	
Domingo Gonzalez	La Soledad	"	50	"	24	"	"	"	36	12	(2)	Sostiene	atrasa	Sí	
Juana Lopez [illegible]	La Josefa	"	"	"	18	"	2	"	20	"	6	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Juan [illegible]	La [illegible]	"	"	"	15	"	"	"	85	"	(4)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Pedro Laguer	Palma	"	"	"	6	"	5	"	94	"	(3)	"	atrasa	Sí	Estancias de frutos menores
Luis Mendez	Pueblo	"	8	"	"	"	6	"	91	"	(2)	"	atrasa	Sí	
Juan Vazquez	Muso	"	"	"	"	"	3½	"	5½	"	(5)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Juan Pablo Lopez	Campos	"	"	"	"	"	8	"	12	"	(4)	"	atrasa	Sí	
Antonio Vega	Margarita	"	"	"	"	"	11	"	56	"	(2)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
[illegible]	Campanet	"	8¼	"	"	"	¾	"	5	"	"	"	Sostiene	no	
[illegible]	[illegible]						2					"	Sostiene	no	
José Oliver	Soyez	"	"	"	"	"	4	"	2	"	(5)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Ramón Bastidas	Alta	"	"	"	"	"	2	"	10	5	"	Sostiene	atrasa	no	
Mª Vega	Sn. Maria	"	"	"	"	"	5	"	3	"	(5)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Juan A. Perez	Pozuelas	"	"	"	"	"	1½	"	7½	"	(5)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
José María Ramos	Manacor	"	"	"	"	"	6½	"	15½	"	(2)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Juan Antº Lopez	Vinazalen	"	"	"	"	"	2	"	2½	"	(2)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Raimundo Ramos	Sineu	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	14	"	"	"	"	"	
Juan Ramón Vega	Petra	"	"	"	"	"	2	"	3	"	(5)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Juana Vazquez	Marciaz	"	6	"	"	"	2	"	12	"	(5)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Ramón Marín	Esteyens	"	20	"	"	"	4½	"	50½	"	(2)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Manuel Palma	Crobas	"	"	"	"	"	5	"	5	"	"	"	atrasa	no	
Margarita Muñiz	Cozo	"	"	"	"	"	2½	"	11¾	"	(2)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
Lucas de Soto	Maras	"	8½	"	"	"	5½	"	"	"	(5)	"	atrasa	Sí	
Juan Jª Echevarría	Navarra	"	"	"	"	"	½	"	5½	"	(5)	"	Sostiene	Sí	
29.	29	[illegible]	[illegible]	1	96	[illegible]	72¼	12	159	216	95				

Aceytuna 27 de Noviembre de 1847

Mateo Gonzalez

Fincas	Nº											
Hacª de Café	7	4	11	1	96	"	20	16	188	211	6	(65)
Estancias	21	"	50½				52½	1	150	5	27	( )

Figure 1.7 Census Record from Moca in which Juan Pellot appears owning 105 slaves by the year 1847.

III. The Structures of Coffee Production and Slavery

In October of 1945, Leoncia Lasalle, then 112 years old, recounted her life as an enslaved woman across various plantations on the island. Leoncia vividly remembered the grueling routine, describing how: "at four o'clock in the morning everyone got up to start work. At six o'clock, the steward blew the conch, and everyone went out to work, and at seven o'clock at night he would play it again to come and eat."[39] In this same way, men, women and children would start running the Hacienda Irurena before dawn, which by 1847 had over 95 acres of crops that had to be tended, as Francis B. Thurber states, with "great care and unceasing attention."[40] In regards to this work, Joseph Hillman reveals in his treatise on coffee cultivation in Cuba and Puerto Rico, the relentless exploitation of both the land and its enslaved workers. Hillman explains how "sites were selected, clearings were made, and the land was planted and worked for all it was worth, until its store of available plant food had been used up; then the plantation was abandoned and the process of selection, clearing, planting, cropping and robbery of the soil was repeated."[41]

The sowing process began with the careful selection of coffee grains, which were planted, as Hillman describes, "at a depth of about an inch and a half, the finger or a small stick being used for the purpose, and after they are placed in the hole the earth is pressed down over them with the hand."[42] The seeds were organized in endless rows about six inches apart. Hillman continues to explain that in approximately "twenty days the young coffee plants will begin to appear, and they

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[39] "a las cuatro de la mañana ya todos se levantaban pa' comenzar el trabajo. A las seis, el mayordomo tocaba el caracol, y todos salían al trabajo, y a las siete de la noche lo tocaba otra vez para venirse a comer." Interview made by Luis M. Díaz, retrieved from his book Luis M. Díaz Soler, *Historia de la Esclavitud Negra en Puerto Rico* (Universidad de Puerto Rico: Editorial Universitaria, 1974), 153-54.

[40] Francis B. Thurber, *Coffee: From Plantation to Cup. A Brief History of Coffee Production and Consumption* (New York: American Grocer Publishing Association, 1881), 5.

[41] Joseph Hillman, *Coffee Planting: A Short Treatise Compiled with Special Reference to the Conditions of Culture in Cuba and Porto Rico* (New York: William S. Myers, College of New Jersey, 1902), 2.

[42] Hillman, *Coffee Planting*, 5.

will remain in the seed-bed for a year and a half, when they will have attained a height of about thirty inches and be ready for transplantation to the site selected for the coffee grove."[43] Following this, the plants were transplanted to their final site for growth and later harvest. The work in the coffee crops was not gender segregated. Thurber notes that "women and children were largely employed in gathering the fruit, carrying it from the field in baskets to the mill house or terrace for preparation of the berry for market commerce."[44] Historian Guillermo Baralt adds that they were also trained to classify the coffee beans.[45] These statements are evidenced by a black and white postcard titled "Coffee Pickers," published around 1920 by James W. Hayman (Fig. 1.8). This image depicts a Black woman in a bright white dress with a waisted belt holding a basket where she has been putting the coffee beans that she has been collecting for hours, accompanied by a young girl and a little boy. In relation to the tasks assigned to children, evidence shows that six years old children worked, as Díaz Soler states, in "weeding the land by hand, taking care of the animals, and helping in various jobs related to agriculture and the industry."[46] At the Hacienda

Figure 1.8 Coffee pickers in early twentieth century, Puerto Rico.

[43] Hillman, *Coffee Planting*, 5.
[44] Thurber, *Coffee: From Plantation to Cup*, 7.
[45] Guillermo A. Baralt, *La Buenas Vista 1833-1904: Estancia de frutos menores, fábrica de harinas y hacienda cafetalera* (San Juan: Fideicomiso de Conservación de Puerto Rico, 1988), 86.
[46] Díaz Soler, *Historia de la Esclavitud Negra en Puerto Rico*, 155.

Irurena, children as young as five years of age, such as Belén and Elena, were recorded as laborers in the *Cédulas de Esclavos* of 1870.[47]

After gathering and classifying the berries, came the process of pulping that involved transporting the coffee berries to warehouses where the machinery was located. Regarding the machinery and coffee preparation for the market, which greatly varied across the Caribbean, B.W. Higman notes that in Jamaica, one of the first steps was to remove the skin and pulp the coffee berry.[48] The enslaved individuals used a pulper or grater-mil, which was turned by hand, animals, or water (Fig. 1.9). The 'scum' or leftover skins were washed, and the beans were placed in basons, where "water was run and turned with a rake." The beans were then spread across raised beds to dry for a day, being turned periodically with rakes. When it rained, Higman states that the beans were "swept into round masonry holes set in the middle of each platform and covered by plantain leaves or tarpaulins." Once fully dried, the beans were stored until the end of the harvest, then the parchment covering of the beans was removed with a "wooden grinder wheel turned around a masonry trough." Finally, the coffee was winnowed by hand or with a fan-mill, then picked and bagged for shipment.

Figure 1.9 A boy pulping coffee in Brazil.

[47] *Cédulas de Esclavos from 1868-1873*, Puerto Rico, Parte 8, Moca, 33. Document transcribed and given by Ellen Fernández-Sacco.

[48] The following description of coffee preparation was taken from B.W. Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed: Plantation maps and plans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica Publications Limited, 1988), 161-62.

Tracing the specific methods used at Hacienda Irurena for coffee production is challenging due to the lack of primary sources from the first half of the nineteenth-century. However, some later sources might give us a glimpse around the Irurena's landscape of production. One of them is the 1884 property deed, which describes a two-story structure housing the machinery for removing the hull from the coffee bean. The first story was made out of *material* [masonry], while the second level was wooden, a common architectural typology in the Hacienda Irurena, to be discussed further later in the chapter. After pulping, there were seven *glacis* [raised beds] available, usually made of wood, for the drying of the coffee beans. The plantation also had warehouses, one for the *tahona*, a machine was mainly used to 'shine' the coffee beans for higher market prices.[49] B.W. Higman argues that many of these machines and steps taken to produce coffee relied on natural resources like water, hence six *aljíbes* [cisterns or wells] were present for the collection of water at the Hacienda Irurena.

Other key workspaces included the warehouses for woodworking, suggesting that the enslaved prepared materials for the plantation's structures. Similar buildings were found on other coffee plantations, such as the Hacienda Buena Vista in Ponce, Puerto Rico. Historian Guillermo Baralt notes that in the Buena Vista, enslaved individuals "worked hard in the construction of the buildings […] it was the enslaved who cut hundreds of pieces of wood with axes to make the *tejamaní* that would cover them."[50] In this case, six enslaved individuals split 700 pieces of wood and cleaned or fixed 540. These carpentry tasks and other masonry tasks explains why La Buena

[49] Baralt, *La Buenas Vista,* 92.

[50] *Tejamaní* or *tejamanil* are medium size wood roofing shingles that were commonly used in plantation structures during the eighteenth and nineteenth century in the Caribbean. In a 1914 recollection of Portuonso, while describing the structures of the hacienda La Fortuna in Cuba, he states that they were covered by "[…] roofs of small plates of *tejamaní* and supported by four pillars […]." Recollection cited in Guillermo Sierra Torres, "El papel de los bateyes en los procesos culturales en Cuba: Algunas consideraciones histórico-antropológicas," *Batey: Revista Cubana de Antropología Sociocultural* 9, no. 9 (2017): 5.

Vista had a greater number of enslaved people than the vast majority of haciendas and sugar estates."[51] Meanwhile, at the Hacienda Irurena, structures for coffee deposit and storage were also present. About these storage units, the Spanish Black Code of 1826, mandated plantations to have a warehouse for agricultural tools. To prevent slave revolts, the enslaved were required to store their tools in supervised units at the end of the day.[52]

The organization of these structures can be better visualized in a model by P.J. Laborie (Fig. 1.10). This idealized model of a Jamaican coffee plantation shows gardens [B] and orchards [C] to the south, with coffee and woodlands surrounding these areas. Following the orchards to the right, are animal establishments, including poultry [M], stables and pen [N]. To the left are situated the drying platforms or *glacis* [K]. Near them, remain the warehouses for scum coffee [G], the bason to wash the coffee [F] and the mill house [E], which connects to the river [O] via a canal or pipe [I].

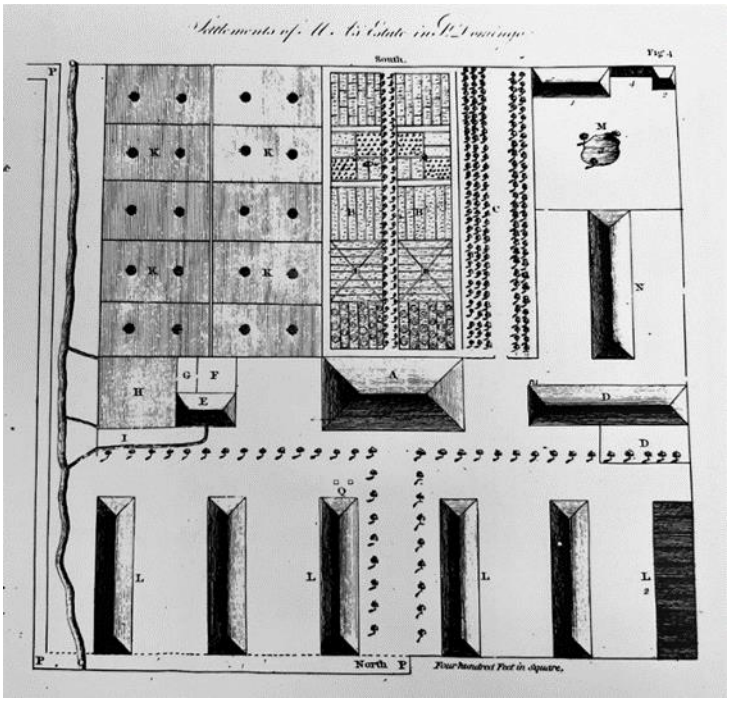

Figure 1.10 An idealized model of a coffee plantation settlement according to P.J. Laborie.

[51]"[…] trabajaban afanosamente en la construcción de las edificaciones de la estancia […] fueron esclavos los que rejaron con hachas cientos de pedazos de madera para hacer el tejamaní que las forraría. Esta esta ocasión seis esclavos rajaron 700 pedazos de madera y limpiaron o arreglaron 540. Estas tareas de carpintería y otras de albañilería explican el que la buena vista tuviera una dotación de esclavos mayor que la de la inmensa mayoría de las haciendas y estancias de azúcar […].". Baralt, *La Buenas Vista,* 64.

[52] Manuel Lucena Salmoral, *Los Códigos Negros de la América Española* (Madrid: Ediciones UNESCO-Universidad Alcalá, 1996), 288.

In terms of living conditions in the neighborhood of Aceitunas, Manuel Ubeda y Delgado's 1876 statistical study indicates that, three years after the abolition of enslavement in Puerto Rico, there were nine houses, one of which may have been the first manor house of the Hacienda Irurena.[53] This manor house was recorded in the 1884 property deed as a two-story structure with a kitchen, and the rest of its dependencies forming "four bodies."[54] Similar to the warehouses, the first floor was made from *material* and the second of wood, roofed with *tejamaní*. J. Ferreras Pagán wrote about most of the sugar plantations that he visited in Puerto Rico during the late nineteenth century, "on many occasions through rough journeys walking."[55] When he visited the Hacienda Irurena manor house, he described it as a beautiful old wooden house sheltered by *tejamaní*, facing south, while in front of it, laid the whole body of establishments, some destined for the collection of coffee and others for the manufacture of sugar.[56] This placement is similar to the model by Laborie, with the manor house [structure A] centrally located near other dependencies such as the kitchen and hospital [structure D] (Fig. 1.10). In regards to this placement, Dell Upton argues that, in the context of plantations in Virginia, the "planter intended that this landscape would be hierarchical, leading to himself at the center,"[57] which explains why manor houses were often the largest and most relevant structures, creating a strict social hierarchy over the owner and the ones owned.

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[53] Manuel Ubeda y Delgado, *Puerto Rico: Estudio Histórico y estadístico* (Puerto Rico: Tipografia del Boletín, 1878), 180-81.
[54] Registro de la Propiedad de San Sebastián, Finca 168, Folio 1, Tomo 03, Pueblo de Moca, Puerto Rico. Document given by France Thomas.
[55] J. Ferreras Pagán, *Biografía de las riquezas de Puerto Rico*, tomo 1 (San Juan: Imprenta Luis Ferreras, 1902), 56.
[56] Ferreras Pagán, *Biografía de las riquezas de Puerto Rico*, 56.
[57] Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia," in Robert Blair St. George ed., *Material Life in America 1600-1860* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), 362.

Figure 1.11 Aerial shot of the Hacienda Buena Vista manor house in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Although details about its design, decorative motifs, and spatial organization remain unclear, the Hacienda Irurena's first manor house was one of the largest buildings on site. The 1884 deed and Pagán's accounts reveal that it followed common architectural typologies of houses that were being built in coffee and sugar plantations on the island. The first floor, likely masonry, served as office or storage space, while the second level, made of wood, functioned as residence, similar to the one in the Hacienda Buena Vista in Ponce, built in 1845 (Fig. 1.11). The upper section had a balcony running along the front façade, sometimes extending to the sides, with multiple double-leaf doors. The roofing system was often an extended gable or hip roof covered in *tejamaní* (Fig. 1.12). Regarding the division and functionality of its spaces, manor houses typically had a rectangular floor plan, with spaces arranged according to the planter's needs. Thus, as Carol F. Jopling states, the manor house was "often as simple as vernacular buildings"[58] in its arrangements by having the *sala* [living room] as the main central space, followed by a *comedor* [dining room]. Meanwhile, the rest of the dependencies such as the *dormitorios* [bedrooms], *baños* [restrooms] and

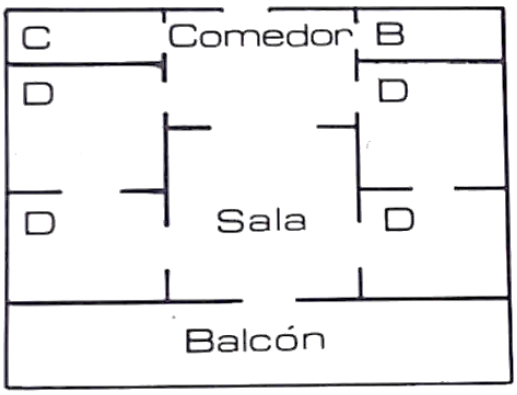

Figure 1. 13 A common Spanish house interior plan.

[58] Carol F. Jopling, *Puerto Rican Houses in Sociohistorical Perspective* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1988), 120.

cocina [kitchen] were distributed on the sides, facing the common areas, as we can see in the interior plan by Jopling (Fig. 1.13).

The property deed also mentions nine houses made of masonry and covered with *tejamaní* for the enslaved individuals and *peones.*[59] This short description might refer to slave quarters located to the north in Laborie's model [structure L] (Fig. 1.10). These quarters were typically one-story rectangular masonry structures with individual doors, similar to those at Hacienda Boca Chica, which housed around 125 slaves (Fig. 1.14).[60] However, an image from 1904 of the Hacienda Buena Vista shows another way the slave quarters were being built. In this case, the image shows a two-story wooden structure with a high placement of the windows (Fig. 1.15). Although the exact location of these dwelling has not been clearly defined, Haydée Reichard De Cardona notes that the specific location of these dwellings was locally designated as "Petit Guinea," since many of the enslaved that were owned by the Pellot family came from Guinea.[61] A 1936-1942 topographic study, however, locates Petit Guinea near the current manor house of Hacienda Irurena, towards the south (Fig. 1.16). Another point of view is offered by the historian and genealogist Ellen Fernández-Sacco, who situates the slave quarters much further south, near

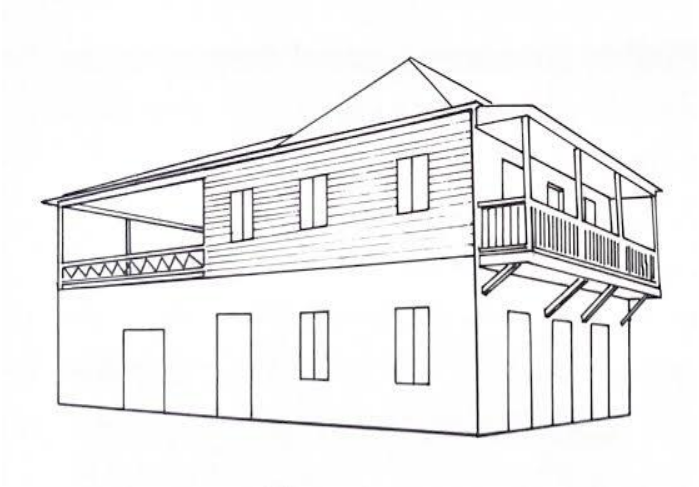

Figure 1.12 Elevation of a hacienda manor house.

[59] Registro de la Propiedad de San Sebastián, Finca 168, Folio 1, Tomo 03, Pueblo de Moca, Puerto Rico. Document given by France Thomas.
[60] Jopling, *Puerto Rican Houses*, 19.
[61] Haydée Reichard De Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas del triángulo noroeste de Puerto Rico*, edited by José A. Amador Acosta (Aguadilla: Historias y Escritos Riqueños, 2020), 179.

today's neighborhood of Aceitunas and across the irrigation system of Moca's canal (Fig.1.17), but given its proximity to this important water source, it is likely to think that the warehouses were the ones constructed in this location.

Figure 1.14 Slave Quarters made from masonry, located in the Hacienda Boca Chica, Puerto Rico.

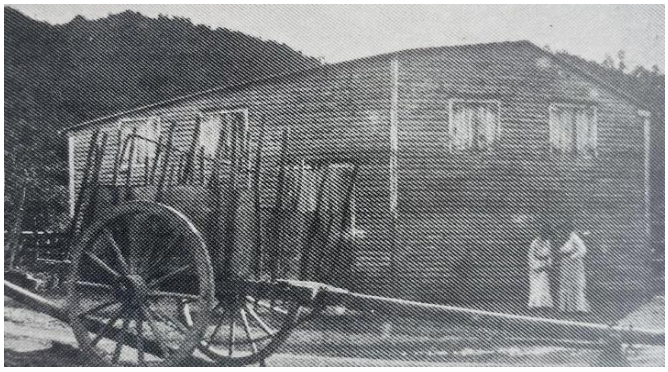

Figure 1.15 The Hacienda Buena Vista slave quarters.

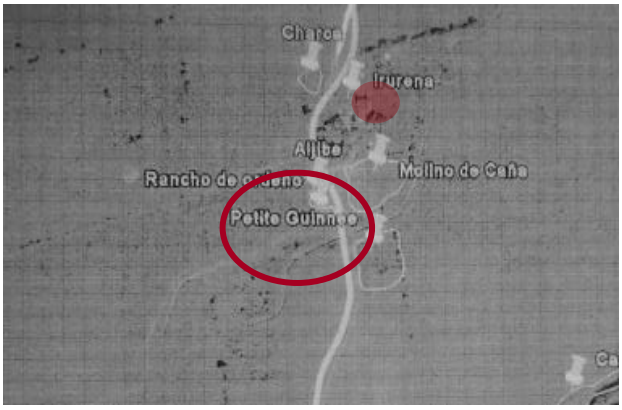

Figure 1.16 Aerial shot of Petit Guinea at a distance from the Irurena manor house.

Figure 1.17 Location of Petit Guinea near the community of Aceitunas according to Ellen Fernández-Sacco.

Thus, Manuel Ubeda y Delgado did not just recorded houses in his statistic study; he also noted that there were 159 *bohíos*, housing a total of 168 families in Moca.[62] This suggests that the majority of the population in Moca were once enslaved or working as *peones*. It also specifies that

[62] Ubeda y Delgado, *Puerto Rico*, 180-81.

this community mainly lived in *bohío* structures, which, in the case of Irurena, may have preceded the slave quarters. Jorge Flinter, who published accounts regarding the Spanish colonies and the condition of the enslaved in Puerto Rico by 1832, observed that:

> The slave huts here are like those in other colonies, situated conveniently near the work areas, at some distance from the master's dwelling, but generally within sight. Unlike the black houses of other islands, they are raised off the ground on posts, with the floor being boarded or made of wild cane or crossed palm, tightly joined. This method of building their huts is very necessary because of the humidity of the ground, which would be harmful to health if they were lodged at ground level.[63]

As this observations suggest, the *bohío* were essentially a post-and-beam structure, usually conceived with a rectangular or square plan, with a thatched roof, commonly without windows, and a small door to the interior.[64] Regarding the materials used, Jorge Flinter described how the *bohíos* "vary in size according to the number of people in the family; they are generally built of wood and roofed with palm, or of a kind of dry grass that is tough, similar to hay."[65] Following Flinter's observations, other materials that were used to clad the frame and enclose the dwellings included cane and *yagua*. Some of these constructions can be appreciated in a couple of early twentieth-century stereographs from the Library of Congress. For instance, the stereograph titled "A Native Porto Rican Thatched Hut" from 1904 shows a square structure constructed with a mixture of organic materials, such as wood on the sides, along with what appears to be woven

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[63] "Las chozas de los esclavos de aquí están como en las demas colonias, situadas por comodidad cerca de las labores, á alguna distancia de la vivienda del amo, pero generalmente á la vista. Diferente de las casas de negros de otras islas, se levantan de la tierra sobre postes, el suelo esta entablado, ó hecho de caña brava ó palma cruzada y estrechamente unida. Este método de construir sus chozas es mui necesario a causa de la humedad del terreno, que seria perniciosa á la salud, si se alojasen á raíz del suelo." Jorge Flinter, *Examen del Estado Actual de los Esclavos en la Isla de Puerto Rico* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1976), 40-41.

[64] Arleen Pabón, "Por la encendida calle antillana: Africanism and Puerto Rican Architecture," in *A Museum Studies Approach to Heritage*, edited by Sheila Watson, Amy Jane Barnes, and Katherine Lloyd (London: Routledge, 2018), 172.

[65] "Las chozas de los negros varían en tamaño segun el número de personas que hai en la familia; generalmente son construidas de madera y techadas de palma, o de una clase de yerba seca mui correosa, parecida al heno […]." Flinter, *Examen del Estado Actual de los Esclavos*, 42.

dried cane on the façade, and covered with a hay thatched roof (Fig. 1.18). Other variation of a *bohío* is presented in a second stereograph called "Cabin in the Jungle at Byamays, Porto Rico," in which we see a more rectangular-shaped structure raised from the ground, as Flinter once observed (Fig. 1.19).

As these images present, the *bohíos* were very much unstable structures, therefore, walls were in many cases unnecessary. Yet, Carol F. Jopling points out that there were cases in which "the walls were hung on the post-and beam frame and braced against the floor or ground. The *bohío* and its successors have an open plan with screening walls separating the interior from the exterior."[66] Within this space Flinter recalls that there was barely any furniture, other than a "hammock made of the strands of coconut bark [that] runs through the hut diagonally, serving as a seat by day and as a bed at night."[67]

Puerto Rican architect and historian Arleen Pabón, in her chapter "Por la encendida calle antillana: Africanism and Puerto Rican Architecture," has made an effort to describe and delineate the origins of the enslaved dwellings to remember the Africanness within Puerto Rican architecture. Here, Pabón reflects upon the ways these structures provided "a place where personal roots could be planted,"[68] by stating that:

> Walls define boundaries: within them you have status, personal definition. If you were a slave, outside of the seemingly flimsy boundaries established by the walls of your *bohío* you had nothing and were considered nothing. The more openings present in a hut, the more transparency and lack of privacy experienced within the interior. For the enslaved population (and you were enslaved whether you were a slave, a freed slave, or an *arrimao*) the bright outdoor space was not their space but a cruel stage, a vivid reminder of the

[66] Jopling, *Puerto Rican Houses*, 65.
[67] "Una hamaca hecha de las hebras de la corteza del coco atraviesa la choza diagonalmente, y sirve de asiento por el dia y de cama por la noche." Flinter, *Examen del Estado Actual de los Esclavos*, 41.

[68] Pabón, "Por la encendida calle antillana," 171.

> unfortunate situation that they experienced. A dark, enclosed interior created a sense of intimacy that protected [...].[69]

In this way, as the planters created barriers of social definition through their manor house, the enslaved were also creating their own set of boundaries within the limits of the landscape and dwellings in which they were confined. Therefore, Hacienda Irurena was not only a site of production and forced labor but also a place where the enslaved were establishing intimate settings that have influenced many Puerto Rican cultural customs today.

Figure 1.18 Stereograph of a Puerto Rican thatched *bohío* and family.

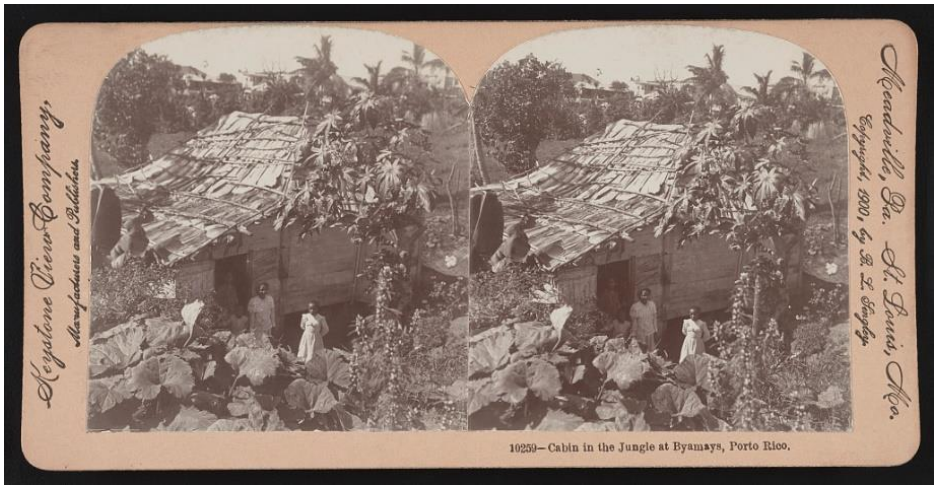

Figure 1.19 Stereograph of a "Cabin in the Jungle at Byamas," Puerto Rico, along with surrounding provision grounds.

[69] Pabón, "Por la encendida calle antillana," 172.

For instance, the Spanish Black Code established that each planter would allow their slaves to have recreational time after attending mass and hearing the Christian doctrine.[70] This 'recreational time' was only permitted within the plantation site, under supervision, and it could only last "from three in the afternoon until sunset or prayers, nothing more."[71] The code also stated that any activities should remain gendered segregated. For instance, all men could sing, play ball, or bocce, while separately, women could engage in games of garments or other activities. One common activity practiced among the enslaved was the Afro-Caribbean martial art called *Kokobalé* (Fig. 1.20). Carlos Padilla states that *Kokobalé* was "practiced with sticks or machetes and the musical accompaniment of the Puerto Rican bomba. This tradition includes elements of wrestling, music, dance, and rituals."[72] Thus, it was a practice deeply rooted, as Padilla states, in "the ancestral memory housed in the body and soul,"[73] which became an avenue to contest the dehumanizing institution of slavery. Linked to this practice was the *bomba* dance, frequently held outside the *bohíos,* in a cleaned and level *batey*—a vast open space designated for celebrations and community gatherings. Similar to *Kokobalé,* the *bomba* was born as a dance that, before emancipation, became a tool of communication among the enslaved, and in many instances, a way to rebel against the injustices and cruelty held in this landscape. This dance was also one of the few means they had to challenge their tired bodies to express and feel glimpses of the liberty and authority that had been stolen from them.

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[70] Lucena Salmoral, *Los Códigos Negros*, 288.
[71] Lucena Salmoral, *Los Códigos Negros*, 288.
[72] "El Kokobalé es una tradición marcial de origen afropuertorriqueño que se practica con palos o machetes y el acompañamiento musical de la bomba puertorriqueña. Esta tradición incluye elementos de lucha, música, danza y ritos." Carlos "Xiorro" Padilla, "El Kokobalé, Wakanda y The Woman King," *80grados*, February 8, 2023, https://www.80grados.net/el-kokobale-wakanda-y-the-woman-king/?fbclid=IwAR3pddsz6FytOPxpw9GkDdlnrhyccZ7n_kKCwbY7NXY-7Zpi3BLG6mBNSoU.
[73] Pedro Lebrón Ortiz, *Filosofía del Cimarronaje* (Editora Educación Emergente, 2020), 39. Cited in Padilla, "El Kokobalé, Wakanda y The Woman King."

Figure 1.20 Photograph of men practicing Kokobalé.

Plantations were also settings where our traditional foods—composed mainly of plantains,[74] root vegetables, rice, beans, various types of fritters or *salcocho*[75]—were consumed and mostly grown in the provision grounds. As seen in the stereograph titled "Cabin in the Jungle at Byamays, Porto Rico" (Fig. 1.19), the provision grounds were located near the *bohíos*. Here, Flinter observed how the enslaved spend their little free time left growing "vegetables and roots to sell in the market […] [and] [s]ave enough money to buy their freedom […]"[76] In this way, they were using the same grounds that bound them to plant and produce their own freedom.

[74] Díaz Soler, *Historia de la Esclavitud Negra en Puerto Rico*, 161.
[75] Díaz Soler, *Historia de la Esclavitud Negra en Puerto Rico*, 161.
[76] "En sus horas desocupadas cultivan hortalizas y raíces para vender en el mercado […] [y] ahorrar dinero bastante para comprar su libertad […]." Flinter, *Examen del Estado Actual de los Esclavos*, 42.

Over the years, the Hacienda Irurena's enslaved community grew to be one of the largest in the municipality of Moca. Historian Antonio Méndez has traced its growth since the arrival of the Pellot family to Puerto Rico with some of their surviving baptism records. As a result, he found that from 1800 to 1810, Pedro Pellot owned a total of six slaves.[77] However, by 1810 to 1824 his slave holdings increased to 23, some of whom came from either Congo or Guinea.[78] Fernández-Sacco further explains that in

> […] 1825 Pellot and another *hacendado* [planter], Luis del Río, obtained the Royal licenses and purchased 300 enslaved Africans mostly born in Guinea from a French vendor on the island of Guadeloupe. Some of the enslaved on the Pellot's hacienda spoke French, as they were brought from Saint Domingue—presently Haiti—and arrived to Puerto Rico in the decade after the uprising began in 1791.[79]

In 1847, 105 slaves were registered under Juan Pellot. These numbers drastically increased in the *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras*. The fragile pages of this journal document more than 322 names of women who gave birth at Hacienda Irurena during the period of 1823-1874. The high mortality of children and mothers also becomes tangible by looking at the countless cross symbols next to their names. In addition, many of them were marked as sold with a fine line of a red ink. Therefore, the evidence contained in this journal suggests that the Hacienda Irurena was also a landscape of forced slave production.

The *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras* is one of many reasons why it is important to understand the built environment alongside the lived experiences of those who forged it. By doing so, the founding history of the Hacienda Irurena is no longer just about the way the Pellot family successfully established one of the largest plantations in the region. The Hacienda Irurena is rather part of a larger story and complex landscape that impacted thousands of enslaved women, men,

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[77] Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo*, 359-60.
[78] Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo*, 363.
[79] Fernández-Sacco, "Reconstructing District 3's," 76.

and children. From sunrise until sundown, they were the ones who carried the complex knowledge of the land and the ones who picked up the wood and built the structures we praise today. The Hacienda Irurena was a home for this community, where within the constraints of their *bohíos* or barracks, they managed to keep the essence of the place they came from through their food, music, and dances. Not to forget how this plantation was also the space where women were part of a system of forced reproduction of enslaved individuals for economical profit.

Yet, within this system, resilient figures were also born and raised. The *Cédulas de Esclavos* of 1870 record 123 men, women, and children as laborers, among them a young girl of only ten years named Cornelia Pellot.[80] Born to an enslaved woman named Dolores Pellot, Cornelia's paternal lineage remains unknown, though it has been previously suggested that her father may have been the very planter, Juan Pellot, who claimed ownership of her life.[81] Little is known of her early years, spent under the wight of bondage. However, as the dawn of the twentieth-century approached, Cornelia Pellot would claim ownership of Hacienda Irurena, and the one to forge a new chapter of this site's historical development.

[80] *Cédulas de Esclavos from 1868-1873,* Puerto Rico Parte 8, Moca, 33. Document transcribed and given by Ellen Fernández-Sacco.
[81] Reichard De Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas*, 160.

Chapter Two: Cornelia Pellot

I. The Face Behind the Façade

During the tumultuous beginnings of the twentieth-century, a new manor house for the Hacienda Irurena was begun amidst a landscape that, for many, felt like the never-ending cycle of sugar and coffee production. This monumental yet delicate structure was commissioned by Cornelia Pellot, a mulatta who became the owner of Hacienda Irurena, the very plantation where she was once enslaved. The construction of this new manor house and working landscape would not only mark the life of its owners but also the lives of everyone who once passed through it. Among them was the Puerto Rican educator and writer Enrique Laguerre, who was born in 1906 in "a country house surrounded by coffee, sugar cane, and minor fruit plantations,"[82] only 2.2 km away from Hacienda Irurena. Recounting his childhood, Laguerre writes:

> I was born on the border, between two eras. And I was born and raised in a rural area of the Municipality of Moca, quite far from the town, although closer to Isabela and Aguadilla. However, the lack of paved roads and the few means of transportation extended the distances in such a way that I did not see a car and visit the town until I was nine years old. It is natural to think that the influence of the old days persisted in our way of life.[83]

That "influence of the old days" that Laguerre mentions points to the daily struggles that many Puerto Ricans endured while working and living near plantations and estates. His childhood became one of the sources that shaped his writing, allowing him to paint with words "our customs

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[82] Olga Casanova Sánchez, *La crítica social en la obra novelística de Enrique A. Laguerre* (Río Piedras: Editorial Cultural, 1975), 59.

[83] "Nací en la frontera, entre dos épocas. Y nací y me crié en una zona rural del Municipio de Moca, bastante alejada del pueblo, aunque más cercana a Isabela y Aguadilla. Sin embargo, la falta de caminos afirmados y los pocos medios de transportación alargaban las distancias de tal modo que vine a ver un automóvil y a visitar el pueblo cuando ya entraba en los nueve años. Es natural pensar que la influencia de la vieja época persistiera en nuestro modo de vida." Ricardo E Alegría, ed, *Enrique Laguerre: Homenaje al novelista y humanista* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: Centro de Estudios avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 2001), 1.

and traditions, our history and landscapes, our virtues and weaknesses, and above all, our [people's] tragedy."[84]

Inspired by Hacienda Irurena and his lived experiences in the nearby surroundings of this plantation, Enrique Laguerre published his novel called *La Llamarada* in 1935. In this novel, he delves into the social and economic consequences after the U.S. forces' invasion of Puerto Rico in 1898. He denounced the socio-political conditions that were suffered by the agricultural workers due to the exploitation of the land through the monoculture of sugar and coffee, which lasted until the 1950s on the island. However, Laguerre also immortalizes Haciendas Irurena's manor house—a real building that he would have come across—as the Moreau residence in his novel. And through the eyes of one of the characters, a first encounter with this residence is revealed in a romantic yet stinging voice:

> We arrived at nightfall. The moon was already illuminating, highlighting the whiteness of the plaster of the sumptuous residence. The site was surrounded by delicious despair. The *bucares*, mangoes, the oaks, the *ausubos*, and other trees opened the dusty branch of the moon. Flowers. A wonderful garden, in front of the house, with its perfumed lilies, roses, jasmines and lady of the night […].[85]

These words, spoken by the character Juan Antonio Borras, make us feel as though he is bearing witness to a scene captured in one of the few surviving photographs of the Hacienda Irurena's manor house (Fig. 2.1). Following Borras' words, in this image, the whiteness of the plaster of this two-story structure is highlighted, while it appears to remain under construction due

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[84] "Laguerre, trabaja nuestras costumbres y tradiciones, de nuestra historia y paisajes, nuestras virtudes y debilidades, y sobre todo, de nuestra tragedia de pueblo." Enrique A. Laguerre, *Obras Completas* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1974), 9.

[85] "Llegamos al anochecer. Ya alumbraba la luna, haciendo resaltar la blancura del enlucido de la suntuosa residencia. Los recintos estaban circundados de deliciosa penumbra. Los bucares, los mangos, los robles, los ausubos y otros 'arboles abrían el ramaje empolvado de luna. Flores. Un maravilloso jardín, enfrente de la casa, con sus perfumantes lirios, rosas, jazmines y dama de noche." Laguerre, *Obras Completas*, 49.

to the exposed water pipes and missing windows on one side. Elegant hallways frame the curves of each level, interrupted by a dual perspective of open double sash doors in rhythm with the tall, sleek columns. And, indeed, there is a garden. This garden is being contemplated from the upper level by the only image we have of Cornelia, whose white dress and headband almost makes her one with the structure. Monumentality, beauty, and luxury define this image. Yet, if we glace through the edges of the house, we can notice remnants of the landscape of coffee and sugar production and "despair" that led to the ongoing development of this site through the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century.

Previously, we saw the Hacienda Irurena as a coffee plantation owned by the Pellot family. This second chapter will focus on the built environment's transformations that led this plantation to produce sugar simultaneously with coffee. Documents such as property deeds and the accounts from Ferreras Pagán will once again become fundamental source in considering what other buildings were part of the Hacienda Irurena, under the ownership of the last member of the Pellot family by 1884. Then, the structural evolution of this site will be examined, now in the hands of a new owner: Juan Labadie y Larré, who would become Cornelia Pellot's husband. By referencing primary sources like marriage certificates, death certificates, and newspapers, we will delve into the life of Cornelia Pellot and how she became the owner of the Hacienda Irurena. Above all, the chapter questions who was the creator behind the design of the new manor house, how this structure appeared at the time of its creation, and what this French-inspired design could have meant within the social context of early twentieth-century Puerto Rico. This chapter will also rely on Laguerre's novel as an important first-person narrative about the buildings, landscapes, and everyday life of plantations like Hacienda Irurena.

Figure 2.1 Cornelia Pellot along with the engineer Paul Servajean in the balcony of the Hacienda Irurena manor house.

II. The Hacienda Irurena as a Sugar Producer

In 1870, Cornelia Pellot was a 10-year-old enslaved child laboring on the Hacienda Irurena. However, her life, along with the lives of those around her, drastically changed three years later when the Spanish Courts approved a law leading to the abolition of enslavement in Puerto Rico. On March 22, 1873, this decree liberated around 29,000 enslaved women and men on the island.[86] Historian Luis M. Díaz Soler notes that this decree "[…] was a compromise law that rested on three fundamental points: first, full civil liberty; second, forced temporary hiring, and third,

[86] Ivonne Acosta, "Historia: Abolición de la esclavitud (1873)", *Enciclopedia PR*, accessed February 1, 2023, https://enciclopediapr.org/content/abolicion-de-la-esclavitud-1873/.

postponement of the political rights of freedmen."[87] Therefore, after emancipation, 'liberty' came with conditions. The newly freed individuals were forced to work for three more years, while slaveholders were promised compensation for their economic losses by the "Spanish government and local banking firms."[88] According to Díaz Soler, all former slaves, "with the exception of the incapacitated and minors, were forced to be hired either with his former [slaveholder] or with any other person."[89] They were not allowed to travel to other parts of the island without the consent of the *hacendado*.[90] Furthermore, the already freed laborers could not demand a higher wage than those offered before emancipation, and their clothing and food expenses were deducted from their daily wages.[91]

Consequently, many former enslaved individuals remained within the premises of the plantations and estates where they had been enslaved. Statistics from this period confirm that the production of coffee, sugar, tabaco, and honey did not significantly change.[92] Typically, free laborers in Puerto Rico were put to work cutting sugarcane, while the enslaved were employed in its production.[93] However, Luis M. Díaz Soler explains that when the enslaved were free to hire, sugar plantations "lacked enough laborers for milling. Some slaves indulged in vagrancy during the first days of their freedom, and others, when hired, sought the estates that offered the highest

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[87] "[…] fue una ley de transacción que descansaba sobre tres puntos fundamentales: primero, plena libertad civil; segundo, contratación temporal forzosa, y tercero, aplazamiento de los derechos políticos de loa libertos." Luis M. Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras: Editorial Universitaria, 1974), 353.
[88] Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 375.
[89] "Todo ex esclavo, con excepción de los incapacitados y los menores de edad, estaba obligado a contratarse, bien con su antiguo amo o con cualquiera otra persona." Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 353.
[90] Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 356.
[91] Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 353.
[92] In 1872 Puerto Rico exported 1.885.241 quintals of sugar, 6.087.550 gallons of honey, 177.208 quintals of coffee and 61.761 quintals of tobacco. Meanwhile, in 1873 the exportation of most of the products increased. The island exported around 2.023.913 quintals of sugar, 6.082.539 gallons of sugar, 270.895 quintals of coffee and 51, 766 quintals of tobacco. Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 352.
[93] Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra*, 359.

remuneration."[94] The shortage of laborers on many estates and plantations around the island forced owners to change their production system and introduce modern industrial methods. Yet, in the case of the Hacienda Irurena, they managed to retain a large number of workers after emancipation while simultaneously implementing new technology in the built environment.

By the time of the abolition of enslavement on the island, the Hacienda Irurena was both a coffee and sugar producer owned by Carlos Pellot. A 1884 property deed reveals that in addition to the coffee machinery warehouses and structures for storing tools and construction materials, there were a series of buildings designed for the preparation of both sugar and rum. For instance, the deed mentions a masonry and wood structure, roofed with wood shingles, which housed the *alambique* [mill] for distilling rum. Additionally, there is evidence that the Hacienda Irurena produced its own barrels, as indicated by the description of a masonry structure for carpentry and cooperage.[95]

The production of sugar, like that of coffee, began with soil preparation, which included plowing and raking.[96] Workers would then fertilize, hoe, and plant the sugarcane stem. In the novel *La Llamarada*, Enrique Laguerre provides a vivid depiction of the workers in the sugarcane fields he grew up observing. Laguerre writes:

> When the laborers were already working, I looked around the labor fields. In the sugar cane fields, already grown, some young men watered water and some men weeded. They were with their clothes completely wet from the moisture of the plants. They moved among the multitude of bushes forming a straw noise. Still, I did not know how arduous this task was.

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[94] "[…] carecían de jornaleros suficientes para la molienda. Algunos esclavos se entregaron a la vagancia durante los primeros días de su libertad, y otros, al contratarse, buscaron las haciendas que ofrecían mayor remuneración." Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra,* 359.

[95] Registro de la Propiedad de San Sebastián, Finca 168, Folio 1, Tomo 03, Pueblo de Moca, Puerto Rico. Document given by France Thomas.

[96] The information related to the planting and confection of sugar was extracted from the book Duhamel Zayas Rivera, "Procesos agrícolas y fabril de la caña de azúcar," in *El verdor y dulce de nuestra caña de azúcar* (Edición del autor, 2004), 171-181.

> In the lands sown a few days ago, in whose furrows the seeds had just bloomed, they also moved irrigators, opening and covering ditches with the cutting shovel, while the water was blackening the reddish earth. The irrigators barely gave truce to their work. A group of young boys and women irrigated the fertilizer, which formed pallid little paths.[97]

Indeed, the workers ended up completely wet from the moisture of the plants, as the cultivation of sugarcane required constant irrigation. The *aljíbes* (water reservoirs) and nearby waterways within the Hacienda Irurena were vital for sugar production. After six or more months, the arduous task of harvesting the cane began. In *La Llamarada*, the character Segundo Marte embodies this painful task, describing how: "It's not just anything to be within the sugarcanes. The leaves cut, they scratch the face and hands...also the hair. Around ten o'clock, when you are sweating, your whole body burns. The heat is horrible, a real hell."[98]

This process is also depicted in a set of black and white stereograph cards from 1899, published by M.H. Zahner (Niagara Falls) and now preserved in the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs. One of these images, titled "Porto Rico [sic.]. Plowing sugarcane fields," shows a line of oxen being guided by six relatively young male workers plowing and preparing the crumbling soil for the planting of sugarcane (Fig. 2.2). In the same heat endured by these men, another card captures two Black women clearing the remains of the sugarcanes with hoes, while a little girl looks directly at us as she tries to cover herself from the heat with her little hand. Meanwhile, a man all dressed in white appears to oversee their work (Fig. 2.3). A third image shows workers cutting the tall sugarcanes while their feet sink into the soil. These three men, like

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[97] "Cuando los peones estaban ya trabajando recorrí los campos de labor con la mirada. En los cañaverales, ya crecidos, regaban agua unos mozos y desyerbaban algunos hombres. Estaban con la ropa completamente mojada por la humedad de las plantas. Movíanse entre la multitud de matas formando ruido de paja. Aún yo no sabía apreciar lo ardua que es dicha tarea. En los terrenos sembrados pocos días atrás, en cuyos surcos acababan de abrotoñar las semillas, movíanse también regadores, abriendo y tapando acequias con la pala de corte, en tanto que el agua iba ennegreciendo la tierra rojiza. Los regadores apenas daban tregua a su faena. Un grupo de rapaces y mujeres regaban el abono, que formaba cenicientos caminitos." Laguerre, *Obras Completas*, 43.

[98] "No es cualquier cosa estar metido en las cañas. Las hojas cortan, arañan la cara y las manos… además el pelo. A esto de las diez, cuando se está sudando, le arde todo el cuerpo a uno. El calor es horrible, un verdadero infierno." Laguerre, *Obras Completas*, 67.

the women, wear long sleeves and handmade hats to protect themselves not only from the burning sun, but also from the sharp wounding leaves, as the character Segundo Marte claims (Fig. 2.4).

Figure 2.2 Stereograph of men plowing sugar cane fields, c.1899.

Figure 2.3 Men cutting sugar cane, c.1899.

Figure 2.4 Two woman and a child hoeing sugar cane, c. 1899.

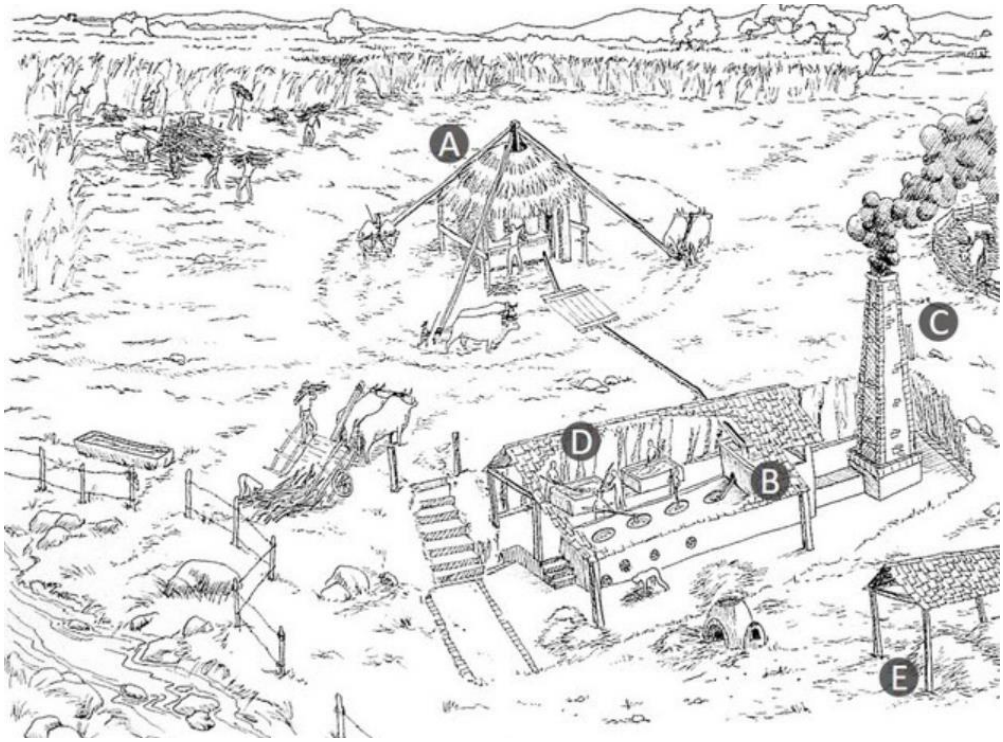

Figure 2.5. Drawing made by the artist Elena Mortijo in which she recreates one of Puerto Rico's sugar technologies during the nineteenth century.

After the sugarcane was cut and collected, it was transported to the buildings designated for its processing, usually in wooden carriages pulled by oxen. First, the freshly cut sugarcanes were distributed and washed with water. Then, as illustrated in the drawing by artist Elena Mortijo (Fig. 2.5), the cane was taken to the *trapiche* [A]. The property deed records the building housing the *trapiche* as a masonry structure covered with zinc. Additionally, a fragment from a cadastral document from 1892-93 describes "an ox-powdered sugarcane mill, made of wood and zinc, with a circumference of 54 meters."[99] This suggests that it was a circular structure enclosed by a conical roof, with a masonry foundation. Inside, wooden rollers squeezed and extracted the cane juice known as *guarapo*, leaving behind the scraps called bagasse, which were taken to the *bagaceras* [drying sheds] [E]. The Irurena had two of these structures, one covered with zinc and the other with straw, where the bagasse was dried and later use as fuel for the furnaces.

Figure 2.6 Reef Bay Sugar Factory Boiling House in the Historic District of Saint John, Virgin Islands.

[99] Fondo Hacienda, Catastro Moca Urbano, Tomo 1, Año 1892-93, Folios 110-116, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Dpcument retreived from Antonio Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo: Moca 1772-200* (Moca: Editorial Aymaco, 2008), 120.

The property deed also mentions a building destined for sugar processing, referred to in the cadastral document as the *casa de pailas*, [boiling house], measuring 12 meters by 7 meters.[100] This likely refers to the building where the *guarapo* was processed into sugar. Here, the cane juice first underwent a purification process, where chemicals were added and heated. The juice was then filtered and poured into a longitudinal brick stove known as the *tren jamaiquino* [boiling coppers], depicted as structure B in Elena Mortijo's drawing. An extraordinary surviving example of this structure is the one located in Reef Bay Sugar Factory Historic District of Saint John, in the Virgin Islands (Fig. 2.6). Inside this masonry structure is the *tren jamaiquino* (Fig. 2.7), containing four *pailas* [bowls] of different sizes. The sugar cane juice was transferred from one of these *pailas* to another by the workers until it reached a thick consistency known as *melao* [cane honey]. This stove was connected to a brick chimney [C] that facilitated the evacuation of heat and smoke from the *tren jamaiquino*. The *melao* ended up in the smaller bowl called *tacho*, where was then cooked at high heat until it transformed into sugar. Finally, the sugar was transferred to a cooling station [D] where it was stirred until cool. The mixture was then shoveled into containers for the honey separation or purge process before being packed and transported to refineries.

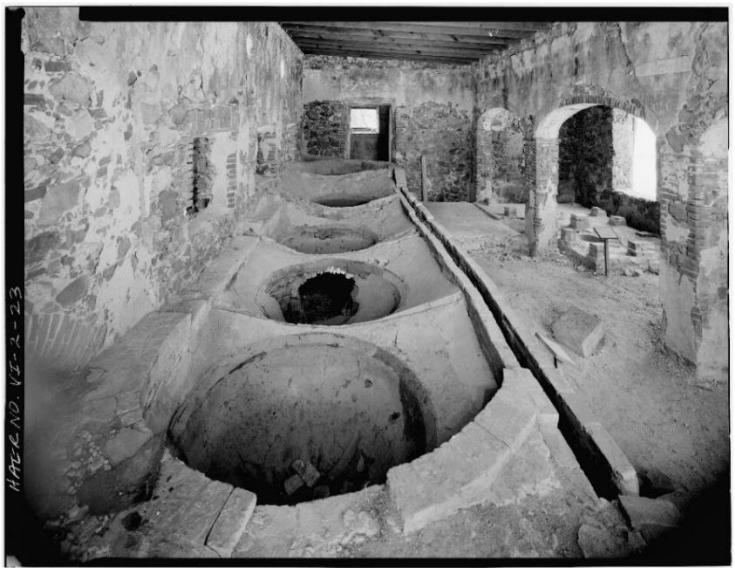

Figure 2.7 Reef Bay Sugar Factory boiling copers in the Historic District of Saint John, Virgin Islands.

[100] Fondo Hacienda, Catastro Moca Urbano, Tomo 1, Año 1892-93, Folios 110-116, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Document retreived from Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo*, 120.

With these structures in place, Carlos Pellot, the last member of the Pellot family to own Irurena, sold the property, according to the property deed, to "Juan Labadie y Larré, neighbor and owner from Moca, single, and with fifty-seven years of age, for the amount of twenty-five thousand *pesos.*"[101] The Aguadilla Registry indicates that the site was sold in 1878, although the property deed was completed in 1884. It is still unclear how Juan Labadie y Larré met the Pellot family. Some scholarship suggests that Labadie was a descendant of a man named Carlos Lav(b)adie, who served as a butler in the Hacienda Irurena in 1820.[102] Other sources claim that Juan Labadie was working as the administrator of the Hacienda Irurena and later became the owner when the Pellot family decided to return to France.[103]

Although the figure of Juan Labadie and his connection to the Pellot family remains obscure, there is clear evidence that some transformations occurred within Irurena's built environment under his ownership. For example, Ferreras Pagán points out a series of renovations related to its machinery, describing how the house of *alambique*, whose apparatus is made out of the system of *Cabezote*, was newly constructed in the year 1875.[104] He continues by stating that a steam machine installed was "bought from the extinct Hacienda Tripolis in Rincón. It belong[ed] to the house of Mirrles Tait Watson of Glasgow; with its 10x6 multitube boiler […]."[105] In his article "Sugar Machines and the Fragile Infrastructure of Commodities in the Nineteenth Century," David Singerman explains that already by 1860, 70 percent of mills in Cuba were already steam-

[101] Registro de la Propiedad de San Sebastián, PR, Finca 168, Folio 1, Tomo 03, Pueblo de Moca, Puerto Rico. Document given by France Thomas.
[102] Nieves Méndez, *Historia de un pueblo*, 120.
[103] Haydée E. Reichard De Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas del triángulo noroeste de Puerto Rico... sus dueños e historias*, edited by José A. Amador Acosta (Aguadilla: Historias y Escritos Riqueños, 2020), 160.
[104] J. Ferreras Pagán, *Biografía de las riquezas de Puerto Rico*, tomo 1 (San Juan: Imprenta Luis Ferreras, 1902), 56.
[105] Ferreras Pagán, *Biografía de las riquezas de Puerto Rico*, 56.

driven.[106] This rapid industrialization of sugar production was spreading across the Caribbean, creating the perfect setting to "incorporate the workshops of empire into the empire of sugar."[107] One of these workshops was Mirrlees Watson, one of the largest makers of machinery, which managed, as Singerman notes, to "dispatched over 2,000 mills from its 800-strong workshops" in Glasgow, Scotland.[108]

In this way, the built environment of Hacienda Irurena reflects a transition from being solely a coffee plantation to incorporating machinery aligned with the demands of sugar production on the island. Moreover, it demonstrates how construction materials and machineries, part of a global commodity exchange between the Caribbean and other countries like Britain and Scotland, were being repurposed. An incredible example of the Mirrlees Tait Watson of Glasgow's machinery designs can be found in a drawing plat from 1868 (Fig. 2.8). Here we can see the overall elements required for a sugar factory, such as the mill, the pumps, and the boilers. This plat also invites us to question how large the structure in which these machineries were installed could have been. No further accounts, reports, or scholarship have shed more light on the dimensions of this structure or how it operated. Thus, a possible example of the sugar factory has remarkably survived in an engraved ten-cents copper token from Hacienda Irurena (Fig. 2.9). This object gives us a sense of not only how monumental the sugar mill structure was but also reveals a trading system and possible additional structures that were part of the Irurena and never recorded.

[106] David Singerman, "Sugar Machines and the Fragile Infrastructure of Commodities in the Nineteenth Century," *Osiris* 33 (2018): 64.
[107] Singerman, "Sugar Machines," 65
[108] Singerman, "Sugar Machines," 65

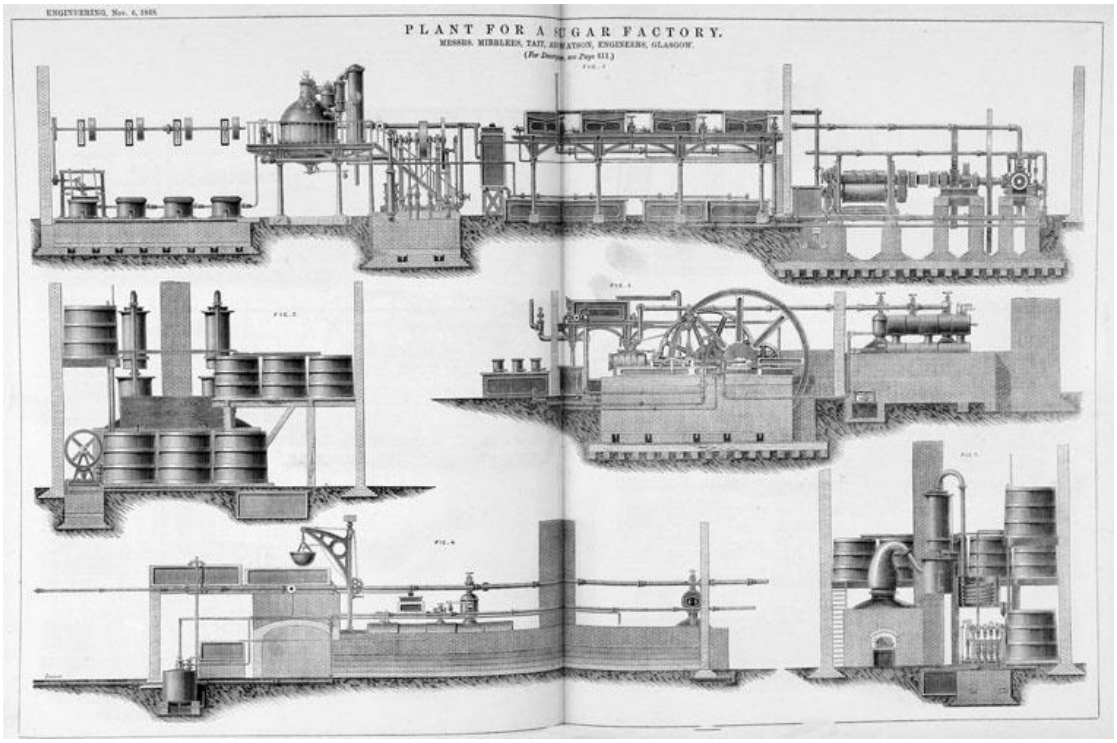

Figure 2.8 Plant for a Sugar Factory from Mirrlees, Tait and Watson, 1868.

After the abolition of enslavement and the subsequent years of forced labor that emancipated enslaved individuals had to endure, landholders found themselves economically affected since, according to historian Luis Antonio Rodríguez Vázquez, "they would have to disburse funds in metallic to pay to the employees, which they did not have to do previously."[109] Additionally, there was a currency shortage on the island, which led the landholder to adopt a system of *riles* or tokens as a substitute for legal money.[110] The design and manufacture of this new currency differed from estate to estate. Historian Luis Antonio Rodríguez, in his book *Plantation Tokens of Puerto Rico: A Guide Book Catalog*, explains that the tokens were made of

[109] Luis Antonio Rodríguez Vázquez, *Plantation Tokens of Puerto Rico: A Guide Book Catalog* (Ponce: Ediciones Numismáticas Arybet, 2010), 17.
[110] Rodríguez, *Plantation Tokens*, 17.

different metals, sizes, and forms. Some, Rodríguez notes, were "minted in copper, nickel, aluminum, brass and lead."[111] The designs engraved on these tokens were mostly simplistic. The majority had the name or just the initials of the estate or plantation, along with its value. Others incorporated small details such as stars or flowers. Meanwhile, some tokens showed more intricate designs that characterized the plantation. For instance, the Hacienda Santa Clara in the municipality of Lares, featured the iconography of the saint from whom the plantation bears its name: Saint Claire. In the case of Hacienda Irurena, its token has a sugarcane plant engraved with the name of the site on one side. The other side of the coin depicts the boiling house where most the sugar was likely being produced. Many tokens were manufactured annually within these sites or in shops around the island. However, there were cases in which landowners with significant economic resources, as Rodríguez explains, issued "tokens of good quality minted in Europe or the United States."[112]

Figure 2.9 The Hacienda Y[I]rurena copper coin.

[111] Rodríguez, *Plantation Tokens*, 18.
[112] Rodríguez, *Plantation Tokens*, 19.

In this way, the token from Hacienda Irurena indicates the currency in which workers were paid daily, while also suggesting that there were likely additional structures on this site. One example is the shops that served as economic trade centers. Because, this monetary system worked internally within plantations and estates, the tokens could only be used in shops located inside the plantations or estates—though there were circumstances in which some sites accepted tokens from other plantations as well. Rodríguez comments that the stores were called *tienda de raya,* which "supplied diverse kind of food—many times of lower quality—and merchandise. The employee traded the tokens for what he needed, returning the tokens to the hands of the landowner, which proceed to pay with the tokens."[113] The products sold in these shops were at much higher prices than those in shops outside the plantations. For this reason, in many instances, the land workers barely received payments due to the low value of such tokens.[114] Laguerre provides a vivid glimpse of this erased history:

> It was Saturday, payday, and I had to go out to meet Don Florencio. The checkpoint was located next to the store […]. There were many people standing at the mouth of the royal road, in front of the pay house: chatty or gloomy blacks, yellowish whites or light browns, retracted *mestizos*...A heterogeneous crowd but condemned to the same penalty: the slavery of the cane field. And almost all of them wore humble but clean suits.[115]

Laguerre portrays a community where the color of their skin was no longer their condemnation, but rather, it was their life tied up to the monoculture of sugar and a system where their earnings were being recaptured by the estate owners. The novel also notes there were venders and a

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[113] Rodríguez, *Plantation Tokens*, 18.
[114] Rodríguez, *Plantation Tokens*, 18.
[115] "Era sábado, día de pago, y debía salir a encontrarme con don Florencio. La caseta de pago estaba situada junto a la tienda [..]. Había mucha gente estacionada en la boca del camino real, frente a la casita de pago: negros parlanchines o sombríos, blancos amarillentos o morenotes, mestizos retraídos…Una muchedumbre heterogénea pero condenada a la misma pena: la esclavitud del cañaveral. Y casi todos lucían trajes humildes pero limpios." Laguerre, *Obras Completas*, 74.

barbershop. In front of the store, there was a mill that sold *guarapo*, while local vendors were scattered throughout the site selling fritters, *empanadillas*, sweets, and *pasteles*.[116]

Although I have demonstrated some of the buildings that were part of the Hacienda Irurena during most of the nineteenth century, it is, however, difficult to establish their exact location. No documentation or study has yet surfaced that would allow me to understand the spatial organization or location of these buildings and their structural evolution. Therefore, I believe that with archeological research, or the use of advanced technology such as Lidar, could reveal the exact location of these buildings and the footprints of this plantation's history. Still, there is another part of the structural development of the Hacienda Irurena that has not yet surfaced. Ferreras Pagán, in his book *Biografía de las riquezas de Puerto Rico*, finishes his description of the Hacienda Irurena stating that, by the time he visited it, "the capacity of their lands embraced an extension of 1,292 acres of which they dedicate for cane, around 50 […]."[117] They had employed "40 workers," two butlers, one of them named Don Juan Andriarena, and some *capataces* [foreman]. Meanwhile, the Irurena was being represented by "Mrs. Widow."[118] Here Ferreras Pagán is referring to Cornelia Pellot. By the time Pagán' s book was published in 1902, Juan Labadie had passed away, leaving her as the head owner of the plantation. Through the establishment of a new currency and the Hacienda Iruena becoming an estate, Cornelia Pellot was benefiting from these changes. But, how did she meet Juan Labadie y Larré in the first place? What circumstances led her to become the owner of the Hacienda Irurena? And how did she reimagine this site?

[116] Laguerre, *Obras Completas*, 74.
[117] "La capacidad de sus tierras abrazan una extensión de 1,292 cuerdas de las cuales dedican para caña, alrededor de 50 […]." Ferreras Pagán, *Biografía de las riquezas de Puerto Rico*, 56.
[118] Ferreras Pagán, *Biografía de las riquezas de Puerto Rico*, 56.

III. The *Mulatta* Behind the French Façade

Oral tradition suggests that Cornelia Pellot, while growing up, started working as a maid for Juan Labadie y Larré.[119] The historian Haydée E. Reichard believes that while Cornelia was a free laborer, she started working for him, leading them to develop a relationship. As a matter of fact, when Labadie was around fifty-four years and Cornelia twenty-one, she gave birth to their first daughter, Joaquina, who was baptized in 1881.[120] Later, in 1884, their second child, Juan Florencio, was born, followed by Pablo in 1892 and Pedro Lucas in 1894. Before their last son was born, in 1891, Juan Labadie recognized his children as legitimate through a public deed of legitimation of natural children under the notary Juan Arroyo Budía.[121] Two years later, on September 23, 1893, Cornelia and Juan Labadie were married, but their marriage did not last long.[122] On December 27, 1894, Cornelia Pellot became a widow following the death of her husband due to acute bronchitis.[123]

Initially, Juan Labadie's fortune was bequeathed mostly to his children. However, Pedro Lucas died when he was barely nine and a half months old. Later, in 1899, the fourteen-year-old Juan Florencio also passed away. By the end of the nineteenth-century, Cornelia Pellot became the main owner of the Hacienda Irurena and its fortune. This was further amplified when her daughter Joaquina requested her part of the inheritance because she was planning to get married in 1899, leaving her share of the land to her mother.[124] After most of the land came under her ownership,

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[119] Reichard De Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas,* 160.
[120] Parroquia de San Carlos Borromeo de Aguadilla, P.R., Libro 15, Folio 235, #233. Document retrieved from Reichard de Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas,* 162.
[121] Reichard de Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas,* 162.
[122] "Cornelia Pellot in the Puerto Rico, Civil Registrations, 1885-2001," Departamento de Salud de Puerto Rico; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Registro Civil, 1836-2001.
[123] "Juan Labadie Y Larré in the Puerto Rico, Civil Registrations, 1885-200," Departamento de Salud de Puerto Rico; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Registro Civil, 1836-2001.
[124] Reichard De Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas,* 167.

Cornelia Pellot decided to demolish the old plantation manor house and build a new one in concrete. Thus, the Hacienda Irurena's manor house, with its wood structure constructed during the Spanish regime, became part of the past. Within the context of another ruling regime—this time characterized by the colonization of Puerto Rico by the United States—a new design would arise by 1893.

Most of the existing scholarship and the Palacete Los Moreau museum narrative attributes the design of this new structure to the French engineer Paul Servajean, a prominent figure in the sugar and railroad industry. In the early twentieth-century, Servajean was the administrative director of one of the most powerful sugar mills on the island known as the Sucrerie Centrale Coloso de P.R.[125] Previously, he was the director in charge of projects concerning the Railroad of Puerto Rico.[126] However, by 1914, a newspaper titled "El Progreso de Aguadilla. Tres Bonitas Construcciones*"* [The Progress of Aguadilla. Three Beautiful Constructions] featured three structures of "great perfection and exquisite architectural taste"[127] in the municipality of Aguadilla. The first one was the newly built manor house at the Hacienda Irurena (Fig. 2.10). Interestingly, this article attributes both the design and the construction of this structure to Manuel Gómez Tejera and not to Paul Servajean. This is evidenced above the Irurena's manor house picture, where the

[125] His appointment as administrator of the Central los Colosos appeared in a newspaper article titled "El 14 de Julio en la Central Coloso," *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico,* July 27, 1910, Library of Congress, accessed January 2, 2022, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn91099747/1910-07-27/ed-1/seq-2/.
[126] "Notas y Noticias," *La Correspondencia de Puerto Rico*, August 23, 1906, Library of Congress, accessed January 2, 2022, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn91099747/1906-08-23/ed-1/seq-2/.
[127] "El Progreso de Aguadilla. Tres Bonitas Construcciones." Ca 1914. Document provided by the historian Reichard de Cardona.

article describes it as a "building of Mrs. Pellot Widow of Labadie, in the Hacienda Irurena, constructed and designed by the builder D. Manuel Gómez Tejera, of Aguadilla."[128]

Not much information is known about Gómez Tejera, other than a surviving inscription card which reveals that he was a white builder, born on June 15, 1876, living in the municipality of Aguadilla with his wife, Matilda Acevedo.[129] However, the result of his work was, as Laguerre described in his novel, "a majestic concrete two-story structure,"[130] with an overall L-shaped plan, embellished with a Second Empire French influence, as a Caribbean adaptation of a French chateau. From each of the corners of the façade, two towers crowned by onion domes rise tall. Ornaments, along with balconies traced by iron fences, divide the decorative repertoire into two. The first level features a robust design with the incorporation of cornerstones. Meanwhile, still following the rhythm of elegant Doric columns, additional ornaments that echo traditional plastering techniques frame each of the double sash doors on the second level. The structure is elevated three feet above ground level with small openings, allowing continuous

Figure 2.11 Casa de Doña Bisa in San Sebastián, Puerto Rico.

[128] "Edificio de Doña Cornelia Pellot Viuda de Labadie, en la Hacienda Irurena, construido y diseñado por el constructor D. Manuel Gómez Tejera, de Aguadilla." *El Progreso de Aguadilla,* document provided by the historian Reichard de Cardona.
[129] "Manuel Gomez Tejera in the U.S., World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," Registration State: Puerto Rico; Registration County: Aguadilla County, National Archives and Records Administration, accessed January 4, 2022.
[130] Laguerre, *Obras Completas*, 49.

ventilation around the house.[131] This system was commonly implemented in early twentieth-century dwellings on the island. One example is the Palladian Villa-inspired structure known as the Casa de Doña Bisa, which today stands facing the public plaza of the municipality of San Sebastián (Fig. 2.11). This house, now a history museum, was designed by the architect Ettiene Totti and completed by 1917. Similar to the Hacienda Irurena's manor house, this construction is defined by its monumentality, as it was conceived with four levels, made out of reinforce concrete, while the rooftop was in concrete and bricks. Both the Hacienda Irurena's manor house and Doña Bisa's house, as stated in the *National Register of Historic Places*, "evidences a transitional period, as the then-new material used—reinforced concrete—follows design principles devised for masonry and cut-stone construction."[132] In this way, the builder D. Manuel Gómez Tejera forged a striking structure layered in elegance and delicacy while embracing a new chapter of modernity with the implementation of new construction materials.

It is difficult to trace the original spatial division and social dynamics within the Hacienda Irurena's manor house due to a great fire that occurred during the 1990s. The interior of the house was almost completely destroyed, including valuable documents such as the original plans of the residence and many of the plantation owner's records. However, a property evaluation done by 1951 reveals valuable details about the materials used and the number of rooms the house had before its restoration.[133] For instance, the evaluation indicates that the house had a mostly concrete wall foundation. The floors also were in reinforced concrete and wooden beams. The roof structure

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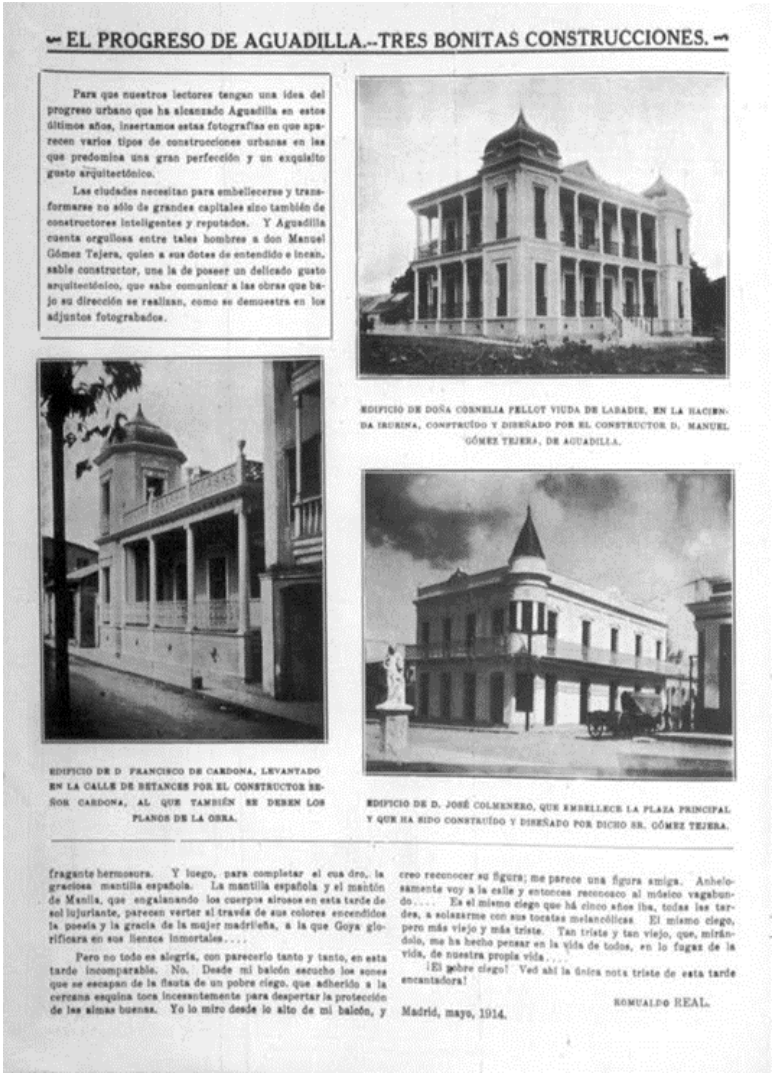
[131] "Palacete Los Moreau," *mocapr*, accessed January 2, 2022, https://mocapr.weebly.com/lugares-turiacutesicos.html.

[132] National Park Service, "Hacienda Irurena Manor House," *National Register of Historic Places* (August, 1987), page 4, accessed January 3, 2022, https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/87000735.

[133] The fallowing structural description were retrieved from "Descripción de mejoras. Tasado en 5 de abril de 1951," Folder Palacete Los Moreau, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



EL PROGRESO DE AGUADILLA.--TRES BONITAS CONSTRUCCIONES.

Para que nuestros lectores tengan una idea del progreso urbano que ha alcanzado Aguadilla en estos últimos años, insertamos estas fotografías en que aparecen varios tipos de construcciones urbanas en las que predomina una gran perfección y un exquisito gusto arquitectónico.

Las ciudades necesitan para embellecerse y transformarse no sólo de grandes capitales sino también de constructores inteligentes y reputados. Y Aguadilla cuenta orgullosa entre tales hombres a don Manuel Gómez Tejera, quien a sus dotes de entendido e incansable constructor, une la de poseer un delicado gusto arquitectónico, que sabe comunicar a las obras que bajo su dirección se realizan, como se demuestra en los adjuntos fotograbados.

EDIFICIO DE DOÑA CORNELIA PELLOT VIUDA DE LABADIE, EN LA HACIENDA IRURENA, CONSTRUÍDO Y DISEÑADO POR EL CONSTRUCTOR D. MANUEL GÓMEZ TEJERA, DE AGUADILLA.

EDIFICIO DE D. FRANCISCO DE CARDONA, LEVANTADO EN LA CALLE DE BETANCES POR EL CONSTRUCTOR SEÑOR CARDONA, AL QUE TAMBIÉN SE DEBEN LOS PLANOS DE LA OBRA.

EDIFICIO DE D. JOSÉ COLMENERO, QUE EMBELLECE LA PLAZA PRINCIPAL Y QUE HA SIDO CONSTRUÍDO Y DISEÑADO POR DICHO SR. GÓMEZ TEJERA.

fragante hermosura. Y luego, para completar el cuadro, la graciosa mantilla española. La mantilla española y el mantón de Manila, que engalanando los cuerpos airosos en esta tarde de sol lujuriante, parecen verter el través de sus colores encendidos la poesía y la gracia de la mujer madrileña, a la que Goya glorificara en sus lienzos inmortales....

Pero no todo es alegría, con parecerlo tanto y tanto, en esta tarde incomparable. No. Desde mi balcón escucho los sones que se escapan de la flauta de un pobre ciego, que adherido a la cercana esquina toca incesantemente para despertar la protección de las almas buenas. Yo lo miro desde lo alto de mi balcón, y creo reconocer su figura; me parece una figura amiga. Anhelosamente voy a la calle y entonces reconozco al músico vagabundo.... Es el mismo ciego que há cinco años iba, todas las tardes, a solazarme con sus tocatas melancólicas. El mismo ciego, pero más viejo y más triste. Tan triste y tan viejo, que, mirándolo, me ha hecho pensar en la vida de todos, en lo fugaz de la vida, de nuestra propia vida....

¡El pobre ciego! Ved ahí la única nota triste de esta tarde encantadora!

ROMUALDO REAL.

Madrid, mayo, 1914.

Figure 2.10 Newspaper article featuring the newly built manor house of Mrs. Pellot Widow of Labadie, in the Hacienda Irurena, by the builder D. Manuel Gómez Tejera.

was made from reinforced concrete and wood, while the finish was cement and galvanized iron. As for the windows, some of them were boarded, while others had blinds or glass. Regarding the spatial division, the first floor comprised a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, three hallways, four rooms, one bathroom and a pantry. On the second floor, however, there was a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, three hallways, five rooms and two bathrooms. Most of the flooring was wood, with the exception of the bathrooms and the basement, which had polished concrete floors.

Meanwhile, the bathroom and kitchen walls were covered with tiles. These details highly suggest that this structure was indeed divided into multiple residences. In fact, it is thought that the Hacienda Irurena's manor house was split into three residences. The upper level was the residence of Cornelia, while her son and his family, along with the servants, occupied the first level.[134]

Though the fire may have wiped away most the interior's tangible history, Enrique Laguerre invites us to walk through the first floor of this house in its early stages one more time. By imagining the living room, "simply furnished with two paintings on the wall, some armchairs, a cushion sofa, a piano, a radio and two pots. From the ceiling, an electric lamp hangs down, imitating a spider with five candles. All of this can be noticed with a single glance, and in everything there is reflected a sober and refined taste."[135] Between such monumentality, elegance, and delicacy in the exterior, along with the "the sober and refined taste" of its interior, we are prompted to ask: Why did Cornelia, Paul Servajean, and Manuel Gómez Tejera insert a predominantly French design in the context of a Caribbean plantation?

To answer this question, I want to incorporate the work of the Puerto Rican architect and historian Jorge Rigau and his book, *Puerto Rico 1900: Turn of the Century in the Hispanic Caribbean 1890 to 1930*. He states that there was a clearly changing social panorama during the early twentieth-century, fostered by innovative developments in trade and commerce, in which a new powerful social group was rising, serving as mediators between foreign investors and local producers.[136] This new elite would displace the native *criollo* [creole] landowners. In this way,

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[134] Reichard De Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas*, 168.
[135] "La sala, sencillamente amueblada, Dos cuadros en la pared; sillones, butacas y un sofá de cojines; un piano, una radio y dos tiestos. La lámpara eléctrica imita a una araña con cinco bujías. En todo eso me fijé de una sola ojeada y en todo se reflejaba el gusto sobrio y refinado de estas dos encantadoras mujeres." Laguerre, *Obras Completas*, 51.
[136] Jorge Rigau, *Puerto Rico 1900: Turn of the Century Architecture in the Hispanic Caribbean, 1890-1930* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1992), 56.

increasing competition for social status and public recognition lead both this new Caribbean elite and fellow landowners to adopt new architectural expressions befitting their personal achievements and social aspirations.[137]

However, the rise of a new social elite was not the only factor behind the use of French-inspired architecture on the island. In the book *Ilusión de Francia: arquitectura y afrancesamiento en Puerto Rico,* Enrique Vivoni claims that in "Puerto Rico, Frenchness is inseparable from the experience of modernity. A product of precarious but willful elites, the desire for modernity in Puerto Rico reclaims for a model of liberal civilization with a secular French texture, strong public opinion and cultural density."[138] To this is added the fact that for Puerto Rican architects, the use of the French style in their designs represented, as Vivoni explains, a "gesture of affirmation and a claim of legitimacy of the Puerto Rican intellectual class against the U.S. government."[139] An example of this was the work of Rafael Del Valle Zeno who, in 1908, participated in the competition for the design of the Capitol of Puerto Rico, where he competed against mainly North American architects who favored Neoclassical designs (Fig. 2.12). Trained under the fundamentals of the École de Beaux Arts, his design flourished in the French canons, privileging the classical orders. Through symmetry and proportion, these


LA CORRESPONDENCIA DE PUERTO-RICO.

CONCURSO PARA EL CAPITOLIO DE PUERTO-RICO.

Figure 2.12 Propose design for the Capitol of Puerto Rico by Rafael Del Valle Zeno.

[137] Rigau, Puerto Rico 1900, 57.
[138] Enrique Vivoni Farange and Silvia Álvarez Curbelo, eds., *Ilusión de Francia: arquitectura y afrancesamiento en Puerto Rico* (Rio Piedras: Archivo de Arquitectura y Construcción de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1997), 14.
[139] Vivoni Farange and Álvarez Curbelo, *Ilusión de Francia*, 37.

orders became vehicles for representing the useful and the beautiful, while the monumentality of the structure epitomized the sublime.[140]

Works like those of Del Valle Zeno, in consonance with the arrival of modernity as part of Puerto Rico's rapidly changing architecture during the first half of the twentieth-century, reveal an interesting parallel with the literary movement known as *modernismo*. Jorge Rigau further explains this connection:

> There were indeed themes shared constantly by both architecture and literature; poets and builders alike endorsed experimentation, longed obsessively for the past, and jointly praised urban and rural life. Opulence, exoticism, ornamentation, colors, gardens, and special sequences equally seduced them, all part of a pursuit of the aesthetic ideal. As modernist writers borrowed or invented new terms and means of expression to enrich in Spanish lexicon, architects attempted something comparable in their buildings. It was at this time that the profession of architecture came of age in Puerto Rico.[141]

This is why, when you visit regions that once served as ports in Puerto Rico, such as San Juan or Ponce, you will notice that public buildings and residences adopted a variety of architectural languages from international metropolitan centers like England, Spain, United States, and, of course, France.[142] Some examples include the Casa Wiechers-Villaronga, the Casa José de Diego, and the Antiguo Casino in both Ponce and San Juan.

These different languages were freely adopted in a spirit of renewal, driven by a strong sense of identity. The Hacienda Irurena, in this way, was a product of a century of experimentation—a time when façades were treated as poems, alternating language and composition through the use of new construction materials and techniques like concrete and iron.[143] This brought together elements of a fragmented identity shaped by the experience of a colonized landscape. Therefore, I

[140] Vivoni Farange and Álvarez Curbelo, *Ilusión de Francia*, 42.
[141] Rigau, *Puerto Rico 1900*, 52.
[142] Rigau, *Puerto Rico 1900*, 57.
[143] Rigau, *Puerto Rico 1900*, 57.

believe the Hacienda Irurena manor house became, for Cornelia Pellot, a white mask[144]—a mask that hid centuries of oppression, forced labor, and cultural alienation, but at the same time served as a path to redemption. Just as French architecture was Rafael Del Valle Zeno's way of redeeming Puerto Ricans in the face of the social and economic injustices brought by U.S. colonization, for Cornelia Pellot, her house was her tool to secure her family's legacy within the emerging elite.

While Cornelia Pellot managed the Hacienda Irurena, her son Pablo Labadie went to study in New Orleans. Upon his return, he stayed at the estate to assist his mother in running the site and married the Italian María Eurite.[145] In 1920, while Cornelia Pellot was still the head of the estate, as census records reveal, Pablo decided to continue with sugar production.[146] Around 1924 and 1928, the water channels within Irurena were transformed into a major irrigation canal that connected with the municipalities of Isabela and Moca.[147] Meanwhile, throughout the decade of 1930 to 1940, most of the north side of Moca was still largely dedicated to the planting of sugarcane, minor crops, fruit

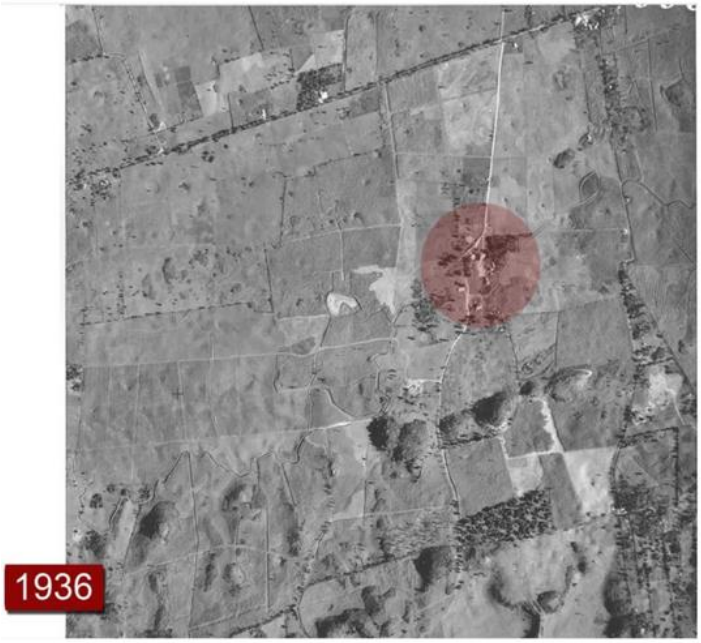

Figure 2.13 Aerial shot of the Hacienda Irurena by 1936.

[144] Here, the white mask becomes a symbol of accommodation. Buckridge explains the phenomenon of accommodation, using the work of Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Mask*, pointing out how: "Accommodation occurs once the colonized person has been culturally alienated and its forced to confront the culture of the colonial power." Steeve O. Buckridge, "Drees as Accommodation," in *The Language of Dress: Resistance and Accommodation in Jamaica, 1760-1890* (The University of the West Indies Press, 2004), 112.
[145] Reichard de Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas*, 169.
[146] Reichard de Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas*, 169.
[147] Oficina de Planificación, Municipio de Moca, "Desarrollo Urbano," *Plan de Área Finca Palacete Los Moreau: Memorial* (2009), 16.

trees, pastures, and root vegetables.[148] This is clearly seen in an aerial photograph from 1936, in which the Hacienda Irurena appears with large acres of cultivated land, while the newly constructed irrigation canal crosses the site from below (Fig. 2.13). This image also offers a glimpse of surviving dependencies, most likely related to sugar production, located near the manor house.

Despite Pablo Labadie's management strategies during the 1920s, the drastic changes in the cost of sugar and the overpowering presence of larger American sugar corporations led to the decline of Hacienda Irurena's production. As a result, most of the land was sold to Central Los Colosos, reducing the hacienda's holdings from 1,300 to just 110 acres.[149]

On September 8, 1931, the doors of the Hacienda Irurena manor house opened one last time for Cornelia Pellot, who passed away at the age of 80 from uterine cancer.[150] Cornelia's burial has been remembered by the people of Moca as a carnival—a carnival where nearby communities and all those who once worked and knew the Hacienda Irurena gathered on the streets. The sound of the tambourines, along with the lively songs of the *pleneros*, filled the air. In this way, amid dances, food, and music, the memory of her life and legacy was celebrated.[151]

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[148] Oficina de Planificación, "Desarrollo Urbano," 16.
[149] Reichard de Cardona, *Haciendas agrícolas*, 169.
[150] "Cornelia Pellot de Labadie in the Puerto Rico, Civil Registrations, 1885-2001," Departamento de Salud de Puerto Rico; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Registro Civil, 1836-2001.
[151] Frances Thomas. Interview by Sara I. Rodríguez Rivera. September 10, 2022.

Chapter Three: Frances Thomas

I. *Vengo de eso, de la resistencia*[152]

During the research for this thesis, I crossed paths with Frances Thomas, a current resident of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. Thomas was born on March 6, 1958, and raised in a family of six. Her mother, Virginia Román Pellot, was Puerto Rican, while her father, Frank Thomas, was a North American soldier. Because of this, much of Thomas' childhood took place on military bases in Louisiana and South Dakota. Later on, due to her father's health conditions and early retirement, the family moved to his hometown in Memphis, Tennessee. However, when Frances Thomas was about eight years old, they returned to Puerto Rico because her mother, a Black woman who did not speak English, refused to continue living in a still heavily racially segregated environment.

Back in Puerto Rico, Thomas' father passed away in 1999. It was then that she noticed the birthplace on his birth certificate did not match the information she had been told by her family. Driven by the curiosity she had possessed since childhood, Frances Thomas developed a deep interest in genealogy. After work, she would spend her time at the archives, searching for answers about her father's past. In that process, she discovered some of her extended family, which led her to board a plane and fly to Mississippi to meet them. Soon enough, she embarked on the same journey with her mother's side of the family, learning that her history was linked to a site not far from where she resided. Through baptism records and slave censuses, she tracked down her great-great-grandparents, Julián and Ana Pellot, who were captured and taken from Africa, and enslaved at the Hacienda Irurena. Together, they had a daughter named Petrona, who passed away in 1901,

[152] "I come from that, from resistance." Frances Thomas. Interview by Sara I. Rodríguez Rivera. September 10, 2022.

leaving behind a family of seven children: Leoncio, Encarnación, Filomeno, Evaristo, Dionisia, Joaquín and Cefelina—Thomas' grandmother.

Armed with this knowledge, Frances Thomas now navigates the Palacete Los Moreau—as the Hacienda Irurena is called today—in a way that differs from most visitors. It is outside the manor house, in the scarring sound of emptiness and the resilience of nature, that she confronts her past. She perceives each tree and bit of land as carriers of her history, a place where she feels and cherishes the spirits of the ones who endured the terrors of the transatlantic slave trade and fought to survive. This is how, with pride, Frances Thomas reclaims her past and identity, remembering, "I come from that, from resistance."

This chapter navigates a phase of great uncertainty in the history of Hacienda Irurena. Most of the Labadie and Eurite family members have emigrated to New Orleans or moved to different parts of the island, leaving the site in a state of great deterioration. Even the manor house, once featured in local newspapers as one of the most pristine structural designs of its time, became a target of constant vandalism. This situation was aggravated in 1993 when a great fire destroyed most of the residence's interior, leaving behind mostly the façade. In this way, Cornelia's legacy was erased, along with thousands of stories like those of Frances Thomas' descendants. All that remained were the stories of the nearby communities that had once been part of this estate's history.

Therefore, this chapter examines how plantation landscapes like Irurena are being re-imagined and managed by the government and its cultural institutions today. More specifically, it questions how this now museum have chosen to portray this site's history and cultural legacy.

II. The Final Chapter of Hacienda Irurena

Two decades after Cornelia's death, a neighborhood that would later be known as Aceitunas began to take shape to the northeast of Hacienda Irurena. In a second aerial shot from 1963, it is clear that the development of this community near the irrigation canal was being carried out in blocks (Fig. 3.1). The neighborhood extended along the PR-464 road, which runs from west to east and then from south to north until it intersects with the State Highway PR-2. Because the Labadie family continued to sell property over the years, it is uncertain whether the parcels of land where this community settled were privately owned or government property. Yet, while this community continued to flourish, the landscape that Cornelia Pellot once foresaw persisted in sugar production despite struggles. By 1983, the Hacienda Irurena had begun planting "planting of pineapple (black pineapple) brought from Spain,"[153] as seen in the carefully cropped parcels of land captured in an aerial shot from that year (Fig. 3.2). This photograph also reveals that the dependencies visible in the 1936 aerial shot near the manor house were now gone, while the neighborhood of Aceitunas has visibly expanded.

On April 11, 1987, the Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office successfully nominated the "Hacienda Irurena Manor House" to the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination sheds light on the final stages of this property as a site of sugar and minor agricultural production. For instance, the Hacienda Irurena was claimed to be owned by Juan Labadie Eurite—one of Cornelia Pellot and Juan Labadie's grandchildren. At the time, he was living in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico, meaning that the manor house was left as an unoccupied, vacant, private property with

[153] Oficina de Planificación, Municipio de Moca, "Atecendentes Históricos," *Plan de Área Finca Palacete Los Moreau: Memorial* (2009), 12.

Figure 3.1 Aerial shot of the Hacienda Irurena along with the community of Aceitunas by 1963.

Figure 3.2 Aerial shot of the Hacienda Irurena by 1983.

restricted access.[154] Meanwhile, the landscape was described as "an open space, surrounded by cane fields on the rear and an ample lawn in front."[155] By 1987, the Hacienda Irurena manor house was a mostly abandoned structure, still owned by the Labadie family descendants. However, a photograph taken by Elliud Sánchez Medina in 1992 shows that although the structure was in poor condition, it remained largely unaltered since its construction in 1905, aside from minor maintenance changes (Fig. 3.3). For example, some of the structure's early architectural details can still be admired, along with the later "use of metal louvered modern windows in the back portion of the side of the façade, and replacement of roofing material with similar ones."[156] ‘

[154] National Park Service, "Hacienda Irurena Manor House," *National Register of Historic Places* (August, 1987), 1, accessed January 3, 2022, https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/87000735.
[155] National Park Service, "Hacienda Irurena," 2.
[156] National Park Service, "Hacienda Irurena," 5

Figure 3.3 Image of the "Castillo Labadie" before its restoration.

Given the poor state of this property, three main reasons led the National Park Service to nominate Hacienda Irurena as a historic site. First, the manor house is "the only building still standing of an agricultural conglomerate where both coffee and sugar were planted and processed."[157] Second, "it is a successful adaptation of architectural design in one of the grand tradition—in this case, French Chateau—then in vogue in Europe, to the context of a Caribbean plantation."[158]Third, this site was "immortalized in Puerto Rican literature, under the name 'Hacienda Palmares' of the Moreau family, in the famous 1935 novel by Moca-born writer Enrique A. Laguerre, *La Llamarada*."[159]

[157] National Park Service, "Hacienda Irurena," 3.
[158] National Park Service, "Hacienda Irurena," 3.
[159] National Park Service, "Hacienda Irurena," 3.

When the Hacienda Irurena manor house was incorporated in the National Register of Historic Places on January 8, 1992, the Assembly of the Municipality of Moca sought to also declare the Castillo Labadie (Labadie Castle)—referring to the Hacienda Irurena manor house—"as a cultural and historical heritage of the municipality of Moca and its geological environment as an ecological forest […]."[160] They argued that the Labadie Castle was "devoid of official protection and its deterioration and vandalism [were] affecting [the property]."[161] Thus, the Municipality of Moca understood that it was their duty to protect the cultural heritage of their people and perpetuate it for future generations so they could "fulfill the civic and governmental responsibilities that correspond[ed] to [them]."[162] This nomination would eventually allow the Municipality of Moca to proceed with the acquisition of the property, dedicating it to public and cultural use. To achieve this, they planned to work alongside E.LA. [The Commonwealth], the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña [Institute of Puerto Rican Culture], the Departamento de Agricultura [Department of Agriculture], and many other agencies to make the acquisition and restoration of the property possible. They also requested that the Cámara de Representantes [House of Representatives] and the Senado de Puerto Rico [Senate of Puerto Rico] declare the property and its geographical environment of public interest to allocate funds for its acquisition and restoration.[163]

The process of contacting agencies began quickly after the motion was presented. By March 6, 1992, the mayor of Moca, Eustaquio Vélez, wrote a letter to the governor of Puerto Rico, Don

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[160] Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico, Municipio de Moca, Oficina de la Asamblea Municipal, "Para declarar el Castillo Labadie como patrimonio cultural e histórico del Municipio de Moca y su entorno geológico como bosque ecológico para la recreación pasiva," Resolución Num.6, 8 de enero de 1992, page 13, Folder Palacete Los Moreau, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

[161] Ellos alegan que para ese entonces el Castillo Labadie está "desprovisto de protección oficial y su deterioro y el vandalismo [estaba] afectando [la propiedad]." Asamblea Municipal, "Para declarar el Castillo Labadie como patrimonio cultural," 13.

[162] Asamblea Municipal, "Para declarar el Castillo Labadie como patrimonio cultural," 13.

[163] Asamblea Municipal, "Para declarar el Castillo Labadie como patrimonio cultural," 13.

Rafael Hernández Colón. In this letter, Vélez sought the governor's support for nominating the Irurena's manor house as a "cultural, tourist and economic heritage of both Moca and the people of Puerto Rico."[164] He also hoped to discuss the possibility of buying or expropriating the Irurena, which by that time comprised 111 acres of land. However, this acquisition process did not last long. Another letter, this time from lawyer Ramón H. Banuchi Eurite to the mayor, reveals that on July 7, 1992, the last owner of Hacienda Irurena, Mr. Juan Labadie Eurite, decided to proceed with the acquisition of the property and the land through forced expropriation. By proceeding in this manner, the Municipality would obtain the title to the property, while Mr. Juan Labadie Eurite would receive a reasonable compensation for it.[165]

Before going through the process of forced expropriation, other agencies were contacted by the mayor to continue the designation of Hacienda Irurena as a historic site of Moca. To this end, the Junta de Planificación [Planning Board] was contacted in February of 1993. Interestingly, these communications reveal that the land was still being used as pineapple farm and cattle ranch, while the building was unoccupied and vandalized.[166] Following this, mayor Eustaquio Vélez created a project named "Parque Palacete de los Moreau" [Palacete de los Moreau Park], envisioning the old Hacienda Irurena as a site with educational, touristic, cultural, and ecological facilities. A few months later, the petition for the expropriation of Hacienda Irurena was heard by the Tribunal

[164] "Carta de Eustaquio Vélez a Rafael Hernández Colón, 6 de marzo de 1992," Folder Palacete Los Moreau, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
[165] "Carta de Ramón H. Banuchi Eurite a Eustaquio Vélez, cc. Juan Labadie Eurite, 7 de julio de 1992," Folder Palacete Los Moreau, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
[166] "Carta de Eustaquio Vélez (Alcalde) a Norma Burgos (Presidenta de la Junta de Planificación) para la Designación de Sitio-Histórico-Ficha de nominación, 23 de febrero de 1993," Folder Palacete Los Moreau, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Superior de Puerto Rico [Superior Court of Puerto Rico] on October 8, 1993, a process that would last several years before its conclusion.[167]

In October 1997, a contract was drawn up between the Municipality of Moca and the company Castañer Wood Work to carry out the "manufacture, installation, painting of wood doors and windows" in the manor house.[168] These tasks were scheduled to begin on October 10, 1997, and finish by February 9, 1998. However, by January 1998, this company requested an extension of the contract because the hardware for the installation of doors and windows was coming from Spain, causing delays in the construction work. [169] Still, in a letter from March of that same year, the Castañer Wood Work Company noted that they found it difficult to continue the installation of the doors since most of them "on the first floor will have to be removed in order to finish the floors of the balconies and installation of tiles."[170] Additionally, the letter states that "special moldings [had to] be manufactured to correct the defects caused by the adjustments that must be made in the doors since the ones stipulated and built in the drawings do not adapt to the existing reality."[171] Due to these complications, the mayor finally decided to extend the project until December 31, 1998.[172] These back-and-forth correspondences not only reveal where many of the construction materials were sourced, but also some of the challenges that influenced many of the decisions made during the restoration of the house, including the later elimination of all the original doors.

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[167] "Carta de Eustaquio Vélez a Pedro R. Pierluisi, Secretario de Justicia para la Proyecto: Construcción de Parque Palacete, Los Moreau en Moca, Puerto Rico. Expropiación Forzosa, 8 de octubre de 1993," Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.
[168] "Contrato de Construcción entre Eustaquio Vélez y Castañer Wood Work, 10 de octubre de 1997," Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.
[169] "Carta de Castañer Wood Work a Eustaquio Vélez Hernández para el Proyecto Palacete Los Moreau, 8 de enero de 1998," Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.
[170] "Carta de Castañer Wood Work a Eustaquio Vélez Hernández para el Proyecto Palacete Los Moreau, 4 de marzo de 1998," Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.
[171] "Carta de Castañer Wood Work a Eustaquio Vélez."
[172] "Contrato de Construcción entre Eustaquio Vélez y Castañer Wood Work, 1 de junio de 1998," Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.

But, after having already begun some woodwork projects, it is pertinent to inquire what specific elements comprised the "Palacete de los Moreau Park" project, and what the repercussions would be on the original structure of the manor house, its landscape, and to the nearby communities.

III. The Conceptual Design for the *Moreau House District Master Plan*

The mayor's vision for the site is revealed in a letter from October 22, 1999, titled *Plan Maestro para el Entorno de la Mansión Labadie* [Master Plan for the Surrounding Areas of the Labadie Mansion].[173] Estimating the use of about 536 acres of land, this plan proposed four major projects. First, the Palacete Los Moreau would be restored as a "Center for Cultural Activity" with "Exhibition Rooms," or it would be completely transformed into a "Museum."[174] In order for it to become "the Cultural Center of the area," it would also be necessary to work on the "gardening and landscape conditioning of its patios."[175] Second, to facilitate access to the site, a vial connector was designed to run from north to south, between the highways of PR-2 and PR-464. Thirdly, there was the development of hotels and residences. Lastly, the plan focused on the conservation of natural resources, including an irrigation system that passes through the middle of the site, and the protection of a karst zone.

This plan can be better visualized in a conceptual design drawing called the *Moreau House District Master Plan* (Fig. 3.4), created by a consulting firm called Inter Group (Architects-Engineers-Planners).[176] This firm was hired by Eustaquio Veléz to study the topographic physical

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[173] "Carta de Eustaquio Vélez a Mario A. Corino para el Plan Maestro para el Entorno de la Mansion Labadie (Palacete Moreau), 22 de octubre de 1999," Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.

[174] "Carta de Eustaquio Vélez a Mario A. Corino, 22 de octubre de 1999," Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.

[175] "Carta de Eustaquio Vélez a Mario A. Corino, 22 de octubre de 1999," Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.

[176] The year of the design of this project is not specified in the drawing. However, in a letter from February 28, 2000 it is informed that a firm called Inter Group were hired by the Municipality of Moca to "orient, document and administer" the project. "Carta de Arq. Luis I. Vélez a Ing. Maritza Borges para el Desarrollo Urbano Mixto y Acceso

conditions of the land parcels and to build a general site plan for its correct management. In the *Moreau House District Master Plan*, the approximate extent of land needed for construction covered a total of 557.6744 acres, 110.8701 of which were already owned by the Municipality of Moca, while 446.8043 acres were to be acquired from La Eulalia, Inc. As it can be observed, it was going to be a massive development project, potentially funded by the Federal Government, the Legislature, the Department of Tourism, and the Municipality of Moca.[177]

To better understand the drawing, we can divide it into two main sections. The first half of the drawing illustrates the "Moreau Mansion Historic District" (Fig. 3.5). In this section, there are a couple of access points to get to the historic district. One of them is the existing road of PR-2 that goes across the northern part of the island, located on the upper left side of the map. Here, commercial pavilions that would provide funds for the maintenance of the park and a large parking lot for the visitors are situated.[178] The main entrance to the mansion's site is marked by two rectangular structures that could be used for a "hotel or parador."[179] From there, visitors are presented with a space dedicated to Enrique A. Laguerre called the "Laguerre Court." Next to it is the "Pavilion Station," which is one of the many stopping points of the train that serves as one of the main sources of transportation across the site. Other stops offered to visitors include the "Park Station," the "Arboretum Station," the "Lake Station," and the "Village Station," which connects with the other half of this project, the residential district. Meanwhile, on the top of the drawing, bordering the existing PR-464 road to the east, a parcel of land has been left for future

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Palacete Los Moreau; PR-22 y Proyecto AC-200072-Municipio de Moca," 28 de febrero de 2000, Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.

[177] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau, Moca Puerto Rico*, 8, Folder Palacete Los Moreau, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

[178] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau*, 7.

[179] "Descripción General del Proyecto," in *Declaración de Impacto Ambiental Preliminar: Palacete los Moreau*, 1-2, Folder Palacete Los Moreau, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

development. Crossing vertically across this parcel of land, a road extension was planned to connect to the PR-464 road.

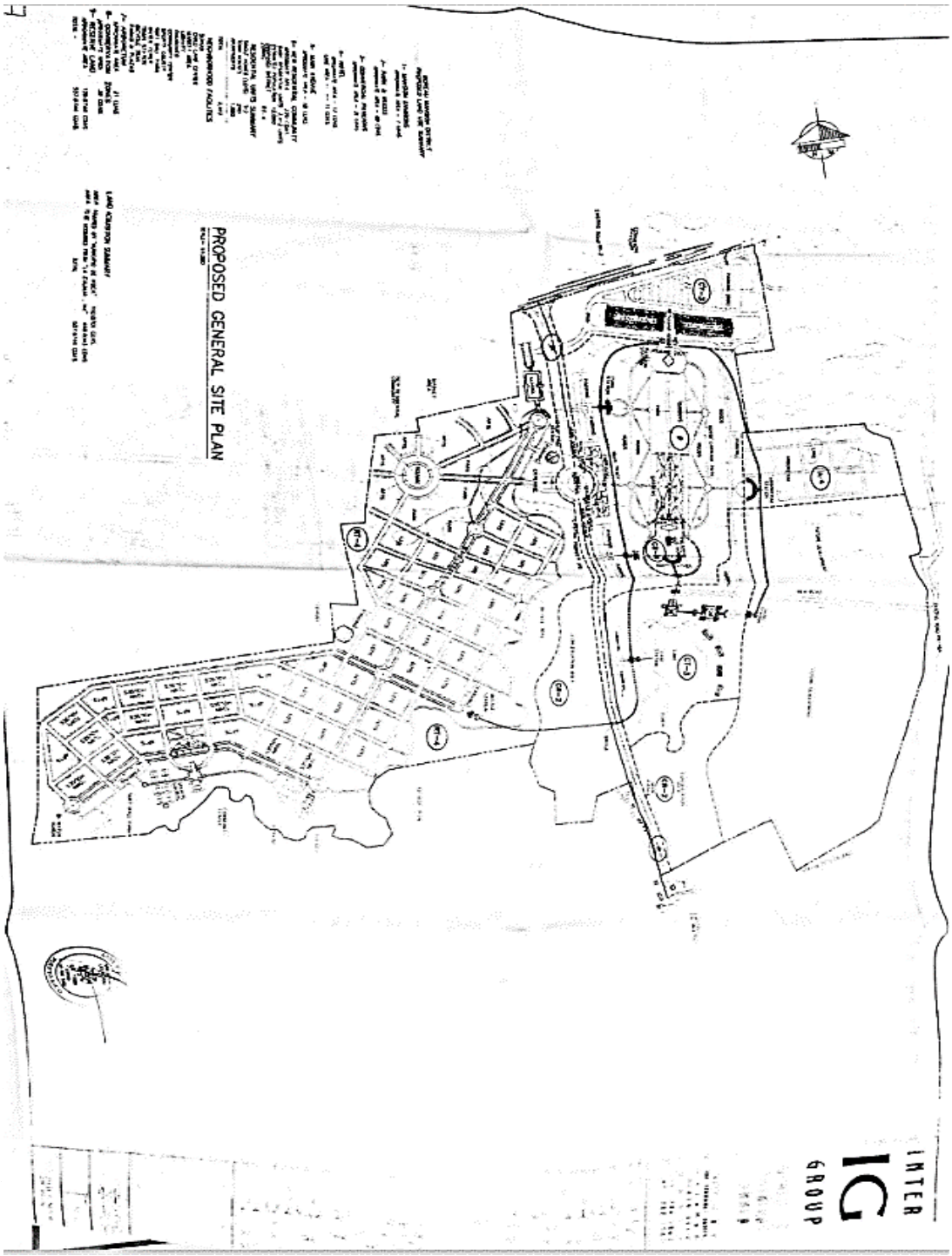

Figure 3.4 Overall conceptual design drawing of the Moreau House District Master Plan.

Serving as the point of origin and destination for visitors,[180] the center of the drawing notes the "Mansion Environs," which comprises about 7 acres of land. Here, the Hacienda Irurena manor house—or, in this case, the Palacete Los Moreau —is facing a highly curated garden, surrounded by preserved green areas. In these preserved areas, 64 acres of land were designated for parks and woods, while an arboretum in the upper side would comprise 21 acres, and conservation zones would cover about 36 acres. This section of the master plan is better informed by the final proposal presented by the Municipality of Moca to the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña.

The final proposal specifies that the manor house would be rebuilt to its original design and "used as a museum; with its rooms on the first floor, the galleries, and basements as living rooms that recreate the charm of a nineteenth-century hacienda house, with its furniture and decorative environment."[181] Also, the proposal states that "in this building there would be all the possible documentation and explanation of *La Llamarada*."[182] As a tribute to Enrique A. Laguerre, "a space would be dedicated for his work and the enjoyment of the people [...] a room where his works, manuscripts, books, and memories are preserved for the touristic, cultural and intellectual use of the people of Puerto Rico and visitors."[183] Because this project was conceived as a "recognition and homage in life for Don Enrique Laguerre and his most widely read novel," they aspired to "recreate the Moreau Palace as similarly as possible to the descriptions made in *La Llamarada*."[184] In this way, the Municipality of Moca planned to recreate the Mangosal de los Mayordomos described in the novel by planting some "*bucares*, mangoes, oaks, *ausubos*, and other trees"[185] in

[180] "Carta de Arq. Luis I. Vélez a Ing. Maritza Borges," 28 de febrero de 2000, Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.
[181] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau*, 37.
[182] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau*, 37.
[183] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau*, 37.
[184] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau*, 37.
[185] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau*, 38.

the surroundings of the residence. They also planned to create a "wonderful garden, in front of the house, with perfuming lilies, jasmine roses and *dama de noche*."[186]

Regarding the preserved ecological environment surrounding the residence, the Municipality of Moca wanted to have varieties of sugarcane and coffee that were grown on the island available. In this sense, they intended to develop "a museum with the different themes related to [the] sugar and coffee industries. It was also proposed to create a forest or botanical garden [with a] bird sanctuary."[187] Additionally, because the Isabela irrigation canal currently crosses the parcel of land owned by the Municipality of Moca, they claim that, with the corresponding permits, the water would be used to create ponds or lakes for the planting of fish and shrimp and the development of aquaculture, that would help to generate jobs. [188] These artificial lakes and ponds are clearly seen in the drawing's recreational areas, which apparently were also going to be supplemented by "small streams" of water to maintain the forest and grounds.

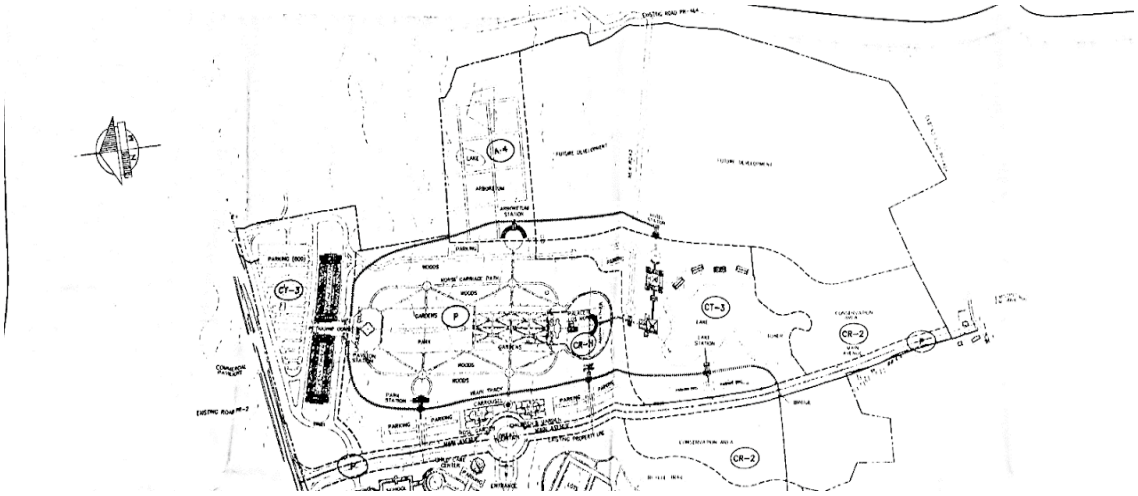

Figure 3.5 The Moreau Mansion Historic District illustrated in the first half of the Moreau House District Master Plan.

[186] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau*, 38.
[187] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau*, 38.
[188] Gobierno Municipal de Moca, *Propuesta para crear Parque Palacete los Moreau*, 38.

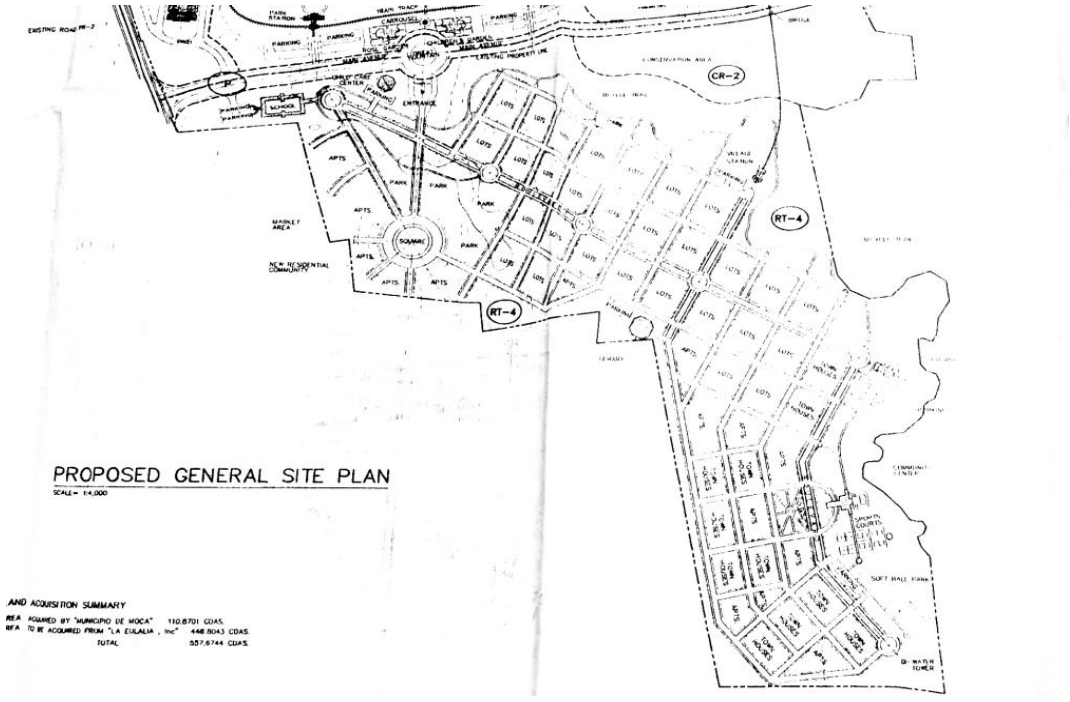

Figure 3.6 The development of a residential district located on the second half of the Moreau House District Master Plan.

In the case of the second half of the drawing, a road connector between PR-2 and PR-464, featured in the drawing as the "main avenue," serves as a dividing element between the historic and the residential districts (Fig. 3.6). Almost in the middle of it, a great fountain directs visitors to 220 acres of a brand-new residential community and facilities. According to according to the drawing's legend descriptions, in those acres of land, they calculated the construction of around 240 townhouses, 1,800 apartments, and 312 open lots for single homes. Additionally, they planned to develop some neighborhood facilities such as a school, a childcare center, a market area, a library, churches, a community center, sports courts, a softball park, a water tower, a bicycle trail, and some parks and plazas.

As noted, some of the land that the Municipality of Moca projected to use had not yet been acquired. Therefore, they sought to expropriate parcels of active agricultural farmland that were part of a family-owned business called Finca Eulalia Inc. Because of this, by November 1999, they filed a complaint requesting an order that would allow them to measure, evaluate, and/or create plans of the land and existing structures of this property.[189] A drawing from March 2000 titled *Proyecto: Plan Maestro Sector Mansion Moreau, Moca* (Project: Master Plan of the Moreau Mansion Sector, Moca), shows that the Municipality of Moca only owned about 524 acres of land, identified in the drawing as Predio [Property] A, B, C, D and E (Fig. 3.7). Meanwhile, the areas identified as Parcela [Parcel] A, B, C, D, E, and F were the ones they wanted to expropriate. In this way, it becomes evident how the master plan was going to be carried out mainly on this family's farmland. Moreover, if we look closely at the right side of the drawing, due to the proximity of this project, it could have eventually impacted the community of Aceitunas.

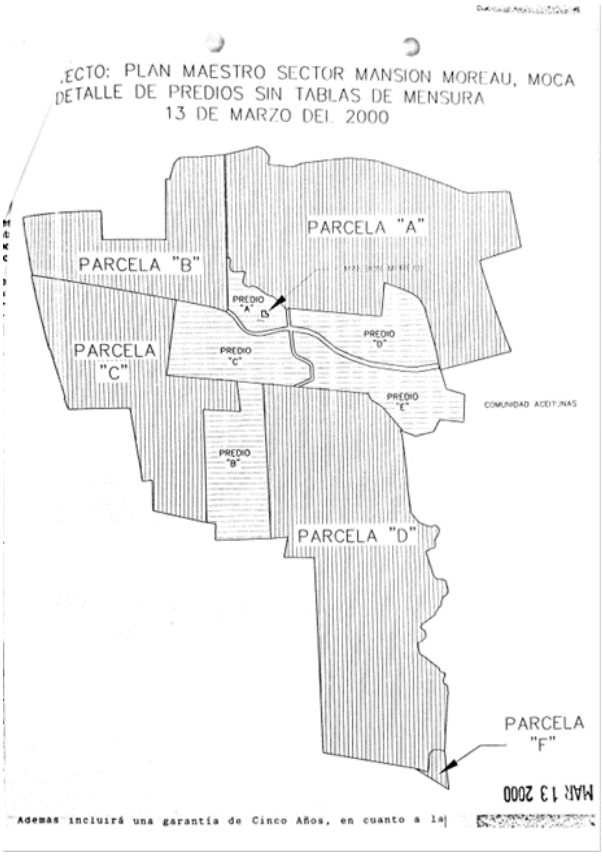

Figure 3.7 Drawing for the Project: Master Plan of the Moreau Mansion Sector, Moca.

[189] "Querella entre el Municipio de Moca (Querellante) y Marcelino Nieves y Otros (Querellado)," 8 de febrero de 2000, Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.

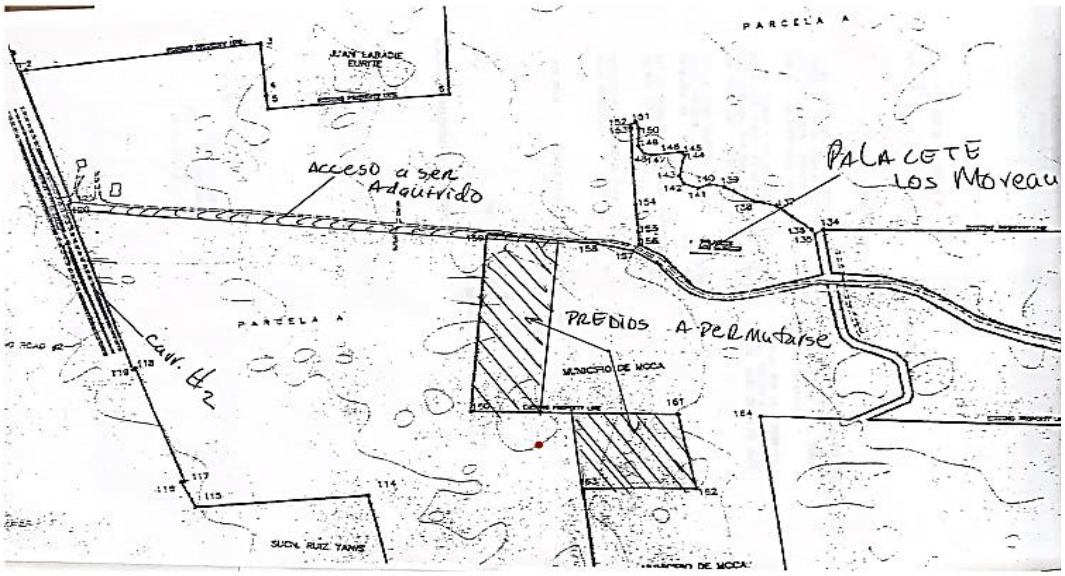

Figure 3.8 Drawing of the land to be acquired for a road construction

The acquisition of these parcels did not come easily. The owners of Eulalia fought in court for several years to prevent the Municipality of Moca from entering their property. The case ended with a "Settlement Agreement" dated by April 30 of 2002, disclosing that the Municipality of Moca would desist from developing their project by forced expropriation. In the meantime, the owners of Finca Eulalia Inc. agreed to sell the Municipality of Moca an undeveloped "dirt road" located on the farm. The acquisition of this road would create a more accessible entrance to the manor house, with "green areas on both sides."[190] The proposed road is presented as "acceso a ser adquirido" [access to be acquired] in a drawing from the Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca [the mayor's office archives] (Fig. 3.8). It runs from the State Highway of PR-2, which is situated on

[190] "Acuerdo Transaccional entre Marcelino Nieves Ríos (Demandante) y el Municipio de Moca (Demandado), 30 de abril de 2002." Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.

the left side of the drawing, crosses part of Finca Eulalia Inc. [Parcel A], and ends up at the property belonging to the Municipality, where the "Palacete los Moreau" is located.

It is important to mention that two years before both parties settled on this agreement, some agencies began to voice their concerns about the potential impact of the *Moreau House District Master Plan* on the natural resources. One of these voices was Brenda Echevarría, the director of preservation and conservation of agricultural lands, who was responsible for examining the soil where this project was to be developed. In her studies, she concluded that the land was well-suited for raising cattle. Its topography was predominantly flat and extensive, and the soils were excellent for large-scale agricultural activities.[191] Additionally, the parcels of land bordered the Estación Experimental Agrícola de Isabela [Isabela Agricultural Experimental Station] to the north, near the PR-2 highway. Because of this, Echevarría warned that the approval of the *Moreau House District Master Plan* would "adversely affect the agriculture of the site and the area in general, since it will establish a precedent of non-agricultural development of great magnitude and stimulate the displacement of agriculture in this area."[192] Consequently, the Department of Agriculture of Puerto Rico objected to the proposed project and recommended that the Planning Board not authorize the project, which had already been approved on March 1, 1995.[193]

Around the same time, Mayor Eustaquio Vélez recruited Wilson J. Román,[194] who established the Planning Office and prepared the Territorial Planning Plan for the Municipality of Moca.[195] In a letter written on June 28, 2000, Román sought endorsement and approval of the

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[191] Gobierno de Puerto Rico Departamento de Agricultura, "Carta de Brenda Echevarría a Municipio de Moca," 26 de abril de 2000, Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.
[192] "Carta de Brenda Echevarría a Municipio de Moca," 26 de abril de 2000.
[193] "Carta de Brenda Echevarría a Municipio de Moca," 26 de abril de 2000.
[194] Wilson J. Román is the current Representative of Puerto Rico's 17th District of Aguadilla and Moca.
[195] "Wilson J. Román López," Cámara de Representantes, accessed May 2, 2022, https://www.camara.pr.gov/team/wilson-j-roman-lopez/.

Moreau House District Master Plan from the Department of Agriculture of Puerto Rico. He argued that the "vast majority of the project aims for a healthy social coexistence and structural and economic growth, and promotes ecological preservation."[196] Additionally, due to the increasing demand for housing in this area each year, there was an urgent need for a new residential district. Román further argued that the project would:

> […] Encourage, stimulate, and implement tourism incentives to promote capital investment by local and foreign companies. Identify appropriate land for sustainable tourism development, promoting environmental conservation. Boost Puerto Rico's image as a tourist destination. Promote tourism development by improving the quality of the offer of tourist facilities. [And] [t]he afforestation included in the Plan will improve the ecological conditions of the site and reduce the problem of land erosion. The proposed commercial and residential uses will have strict guidelines to harmonize with the landscape and historical value of the place.[197]

Even though Wilson J. Román's words strongly advocated for the preservation and good management of the lands, the Municipality of Moca ultimately never provided substantial evidence or further planning on how they intended to execute the plan. As a result, the *Moreau House District Master Plan* never reached full development. The way Hacienda Irurena was and has been managed by the Municipality of Moca serves as an example of what Mildred González Valentín, the Sub-director of Zones and Monuments of the ICP, stated in a 2005 report on historic monuments in western Puerto Rico:

> Dangerously we are transforming and "modernizing" ourselves without considering or valuing the important cultural and natural resources that have distinguished and characterized us over the years. It is common knowledge of the interest of private investors and the government itself to turn the western region into the new tourist spot of Puerto Rico. However, when proposing and developing projects for this purpose, it is often overlooked that the attractions that tourists seek are those that define the idiosyncrasy of the place. This includes in addition to our beaches

[196] "Carta de Wilson J. Román y Eustaquio Vélez a Miguel A. Muñoz (Secretario Departamento de Agricultura) para el Palacete Los Moreau," 28 de junio de 2000, Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.
[197] "Carta de Wilson J. Román y Eustaquio Vélez a Miguel A. Muñoz," 28 de junio de 2000.

> and exuberant nature, the resources belonging to the built historical heritage: traditional and historical architecture.[198]

In this context, Hacienda Irurena is one of the many historic sites where governmental institutions failed to fully consider the historical and social repercussions of implementing large-scale modernization projects. Essentially, the preservation efforts outlined in the *Moreau House District Master Plan* leaned toward the development of ecotourism, which would have primarily created a site of leisure rather than exposing and preserving the available archeological resources.[199] One of the primarily sources was the manor house, which was intended to honor the figure of Enrique A. Laguerre by reconstructing the way he portrays the property in his novel *La Llamarada*, rather than confronting the actual history of this former plantation. Lastly, we must also reflect on how the proposed residential district would not have been economically accessible for all communities due to its proximity to a historic complex. This was intended to be a major tourist destination that would have led to the forced expropriation of local residents from the neighborhood of Aceitunas. To this extent, what would have been created was a significantly and overall gentrified site.

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[198] Mildred González Valentín, *Informe sobre estructuras de valor histórico arquitectónico identificadas en diferentes inventarios de recursos culturales localizadas en los pueblos de la región oeste a ser incluidos en el plan maestro de desarrollo y mercadeo turístico del oeste*, 15 de abril de 2005.

[199] The lack of efforts in carefully evaluating the archeological evidence in the Hacienda Irurena was denounced on December 8, 2000 by the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña. They carried out an evaluation of the "Moreau House District Master Plan" in accordance with the "Regulation and Archaeological Evaluation of Construction and Development Projects," in which they concluded that "there is a possibility that the development activities contemplated by this project could affect resources of an archaeological and/or historical nature." "Carta de Ovidio Dávila (Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña) a Eustaquio Vélez Hernández para la Evaluación Fase 1A Des. Urbano Palacete Los Moreau Bo. Aceitunas, Moca, Puerto Rico," 8 de diciembre de 2000, Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.

IV. A Walk Through the Castillo Los Moreau Museum

Figure 3.9 Aerial view of the Hacienda Irurena today.

Today, the Hacienda Irurena's manor house, also known as Castillo Los Moreau,[200] functions as a museum and event venue. Tours are offered free of charge around the fully restored residence and some of its surrounding areas. There are two different access points that visitors can take to reach this historic site. As shown in the aerial view image, one of them is the road constructed after the settlement agreement between the Municipality of Moca and the Finca Eulalia Inc. (Fig. 3.9). This road leads from the PR-2 highway and then crosses the open fields where the manor house stands. The second access point, visible in the lower section of the image, requires visitors to take the State Road PR-404, which winds through a mostly residential area, and then make a quick right turn before continuing towards the neighborhood of Aceitunas.

[200] Also referred to as "Palacete los Moreau."

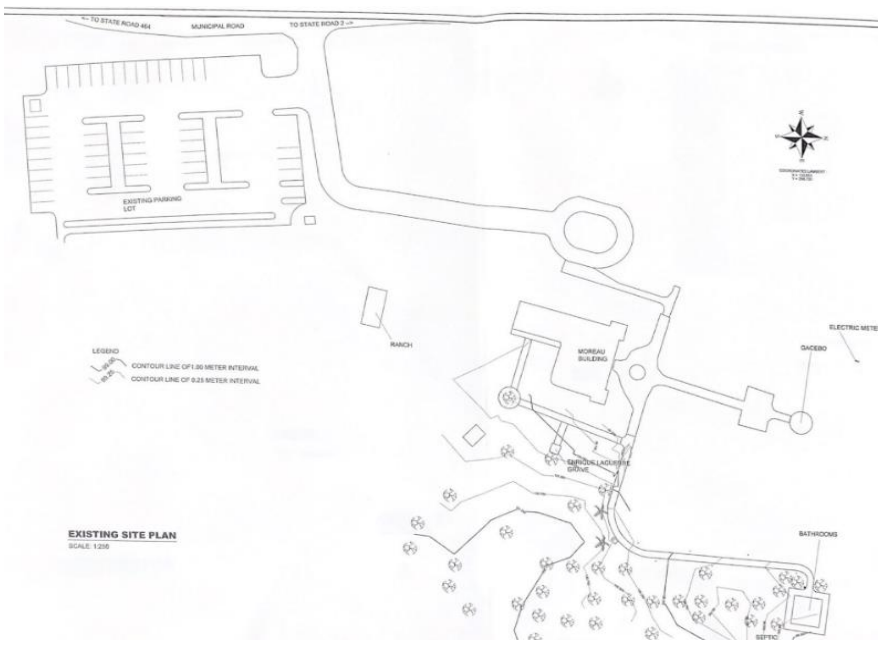

Figure 3.10 "Existing Site Plan" with most of the current dependencies in the Castillo or Palacete Los Moreau.

As visitors approach from either access points, they experience a brief drive with side views of beautiful open fields were acres of sugarcane and minor crops were once planted. To the south, a parking lot is available, as illustrated in an *Existing Site Plan* by the firm Gonzalez & Associates (Fig. 3.10). Currently, facing the parking lot stands a modern multipurpose pavilion, one of the several locations available for event rentals. This pavilion is a large octagonal open concrete structure dedicated to the engineer José R. Méndez Eurite. Interestingly, a *Proposed Site Plan* by Gonzalez & Associates shows that this pavilion was originally intended to be located near Enrique Laguerre's grave on the east side of the residence (Fig. 3.11). It was even supposed to have a covered pathway connecting to the exterior bathrooms built with the same materials and design as the pavilion. However, this plan was mainly rejected by the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña due to the potential damage that it could cause to the fertile grounds surrounding the manor

house.[201] The final decision to relocate the pavilion near the parking lot has caused visitors to first encounter modern structures rather than focusing on the site's main feature—the manor house. Additionally, the pavilion's design lacks acknowledgement or intention to create a dialog across the built environment, resulting in an abrupt rupture between the past and the present (Fig. 3.12).

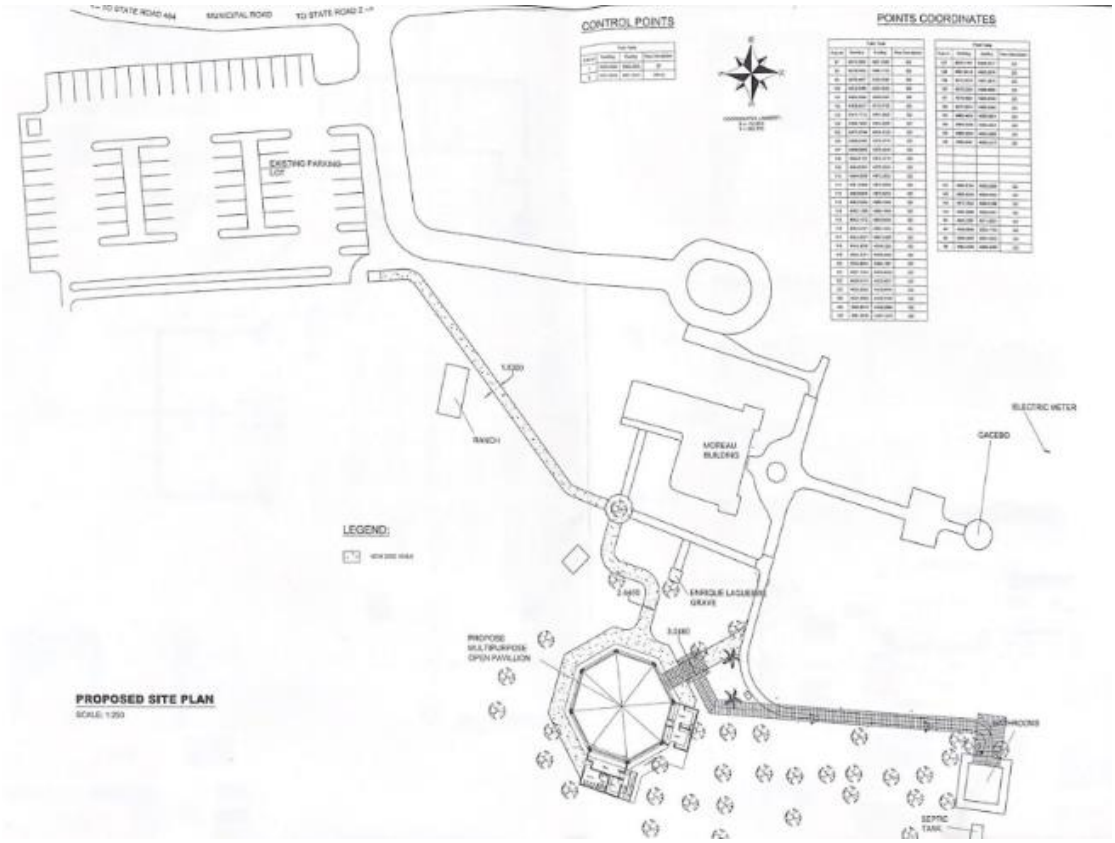

Figure 3.11 The "Proposed Site Plan" in which shows the proximity of the pavilion from the manor house.

[201] "Carta del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, Oficina Regional Oeste, Programa de Patrimonio Histórico Edificado, a el Municipio de Moca sobre comentarios al proyecto para la construcción de gazebo en el predio "A" de la Hacienda Labadie," 30 de abril de 2010, Caja Num. 7, Bo. Aceitunas, Palacete Los Moreau, Ayuntamiento Municipal de Moca, Puerto Rico.

Figure 3.12 View of the octagonal pavilion from the parking lot.

From the parking lot and pavilion, a concrete pathway leads around the east gardens, ultimately guiding visitors to Enrique A. Laguerre's burial site, which is surrounded by a garden full of tropical flowers and mostly trees mentioned in *La Llamarada* (Fig. 3.13). One of these is the *flamboyán* [flamboyant], a tree that can grow up to 15 meters tall, dominating the landscape with its extensive branches and beautiful orange and red flowers that bloom every spring (Fig. 3.14). After passing by the burial site, the pathway continues towards the main entrance of the residence and further up to the bathrooms and resting area (Fig. 3.15).

In the *Existing Site Plan,* on the south side of the residence, there is a structure labeled as the "ranch" (Fig. 3.10). This structure refers to the remains of an original water cistern once used to collect rainwater for consumption (Fig. 3.16). Meanwhile, passing near this water cistern, a paved road loops across the east side of the manor house to facilitate visitor's arrival. A part of a red train has been positioned on one side of the loop as a focal point for visitors to take pictures (Fig. 3.17). Although this element was not part of the original site, it is used to showcase an

example of the rail transport for sugarcane that once passed near plantations on the island from the late nineteenth-century until the 1950s.[202]

Figure 3.13 Burial site of Enrique A. Laguerre.

Figure 3.14 View of the westside gardens, where bright *flamboyán* trees are blooming.

Figure 3.15 The bathrooms and resting areas.

[202] However, the history that this object showcases could not be far from the actual history of the Hacienda Irurena. For example, in a letter from Enrique Laguerre to Eustaquio Vélez, the novelist shares that the manor house uniqueness not only relies on its particular design and its relationship with two of the main agricultural industries of Puerto Rico, but also because it is "associated in some form to the railway in the country […]." "Carta de Prof. E. A. Laguerre a Eustaquio Vélez Hernández," 12 de agosto de 1992, Folder Palacete Los Moreau, Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Figure 3.16 The remaining water cistern which originally was covered with a zinc gable roof, just like the one protecting the machinery on the side.

Figure 3.17 The remains of a train located on the eastside of the residence.

To the north, a French-style iron gazebo faces the façade of the residence. It is adorned with a pathway of palm trees and two small concrete fountains on either side, reinforcing the monumentality of the two-story manor house (Fig. 3.18). The façade exudes a tropical feel through the vivid colors of its walls and stained-glass windows. Yet, the brightness of these colors is balanced by the detailed ironwork of the railings, the subtle decorative white moldings, and the majestic side towers crowned with onion domes. It is no wonder this site has been referred to as a 'palace' or a 'castle.' As visitors walk the pathway from the gazebo towards the residence, a small sign with a brief history of the museum, titled "The Old Labadie House," welcomes them before they enter through the mahogany front doors, where the main living space awaits.

Figure 3.18 View of the façade from the north gazebo.

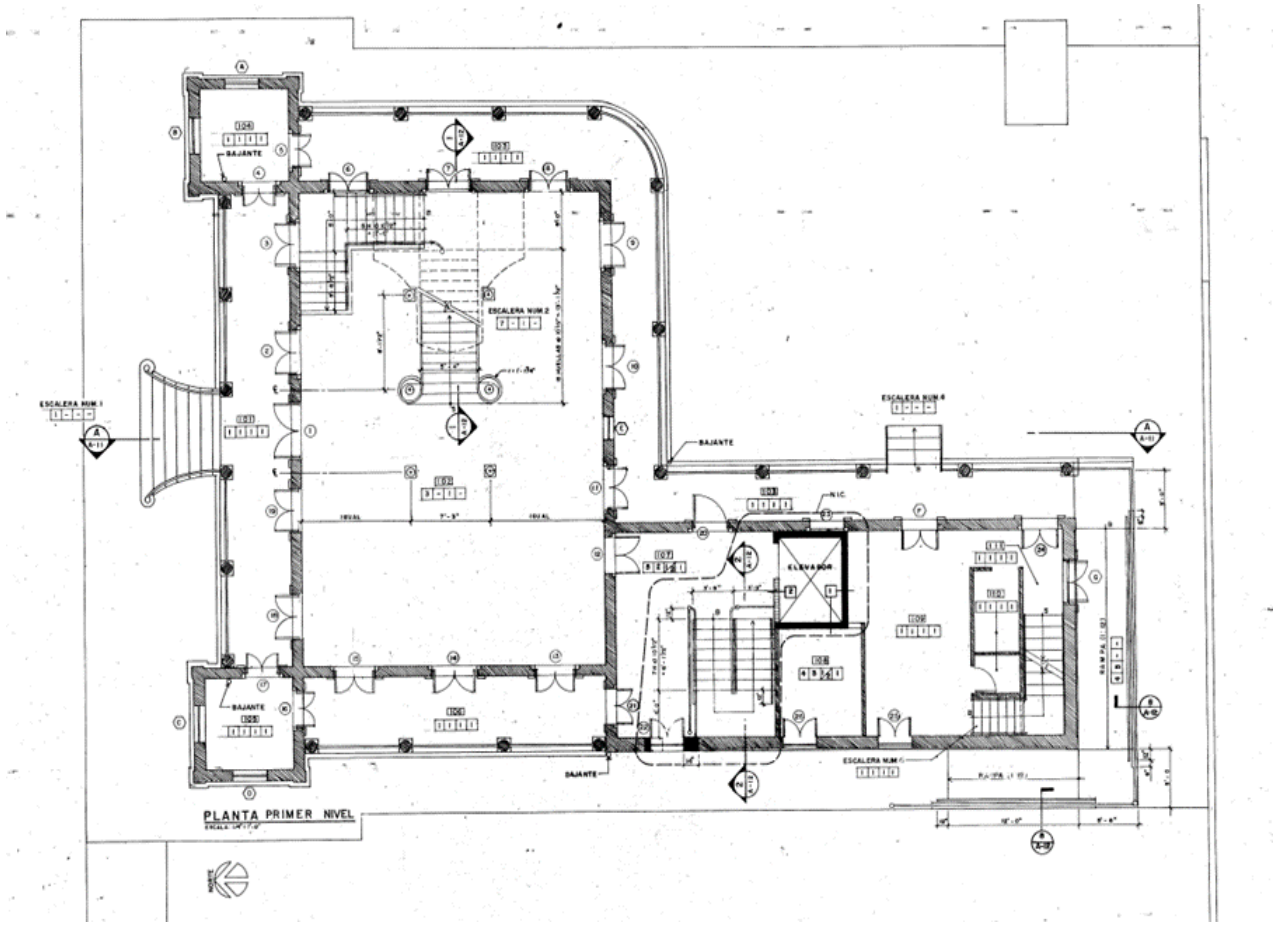

Figure 3.19 First floor drawing for the reconstruction of the Irurena's manor house.

Since this structure has undergone major restorations and alterations over the years, the floor plans produced by the firm Milton R. Lluch, Arquitecto in 1994, will serve as our main guide to understanding the overall current spatial divisions. The first-floor plan, for instance, reveals that both side towers are actually small individual rooms that connect with the balconies, which today serve as administrative offices for the museum staff (Fig. 3.19). The main living room, however, has remained an open horizontal space with relatively low ceilings due to the later addition of a T-shaped staircase. Numerous wood double sash doors, which also serve as windows, open towards different parts of the balconies. The addition of wood in most of the ceiling, stairs, and floors has

darkened today's living room space. Therefore, the great number of doorways—approximately fifteen of them—helps provide much-needed natural light and constant air circulation. Since this area aims to replicate a typical early twentieth-century Caribbean plantation house, some antiques from the period have been placed throughout the living room. For example, a sitting area with handmade wood and straw furniture embellishes the space, along with a piano (Fig. 3.20). Other smaller objects that have been donated or acquired, such as crystal vases, irons, tableware, and a *mundilllo* crafting stand,[203] are showcased in glass vitrines or in the room's corners. Additional glass vitrines feature pictures of the owners, including the only surviving image of Cornelia Pellot, along with printed documents of the house deeds and newspaper fragments announcing the death of Juan Labadie y Larré (Fig. 3.21). More images hang on each wall, notably photographs of the façade and some rooms of the residence before its restoration, portraits of Enrique A. Laguerre, and portraits of all of Moca's mayors (Fig. 3.22).

As seen in the basement floor drawing, in the left corner of the living room, wooden stairs lead to the basement (Fig. 3.23). This part of the house can be also accessed through the vertical space that follows the living room, which also includes an elevator and additional stairs. The basement area has been turned into a public library for the community in honor of the writer Enrique A. Laguerre. Most of the walls are stacked with books, many of them collections of Laguerre's literary works. Additionally, several desks with computers were placed for the community use (Fig. 3.24). Unfortunately, because the floors and stairs of all levels have sunk due to floods caused by Hurricane Maria in 2017, the basement and most of the residence can no longer be accessed.

[203] A handmade bobbin lace made by artisans.

Figure 3.20 Photograph of the main living room in which we can see the handmade furniture, the wood double sash doors on the back and the walls decorated with the pictures of Moca's mayors.

Figure 3.21 One of the glass vitrines showcasing some antiques and surviving photographs of the Labadie family and the manor house.

Figure 3.22 On the walls we can see a painting of Enrique Laguerre and, above it, a photograph of the current mayor of Moca, while on the right corner hang four surviving images of the house before the restoration.

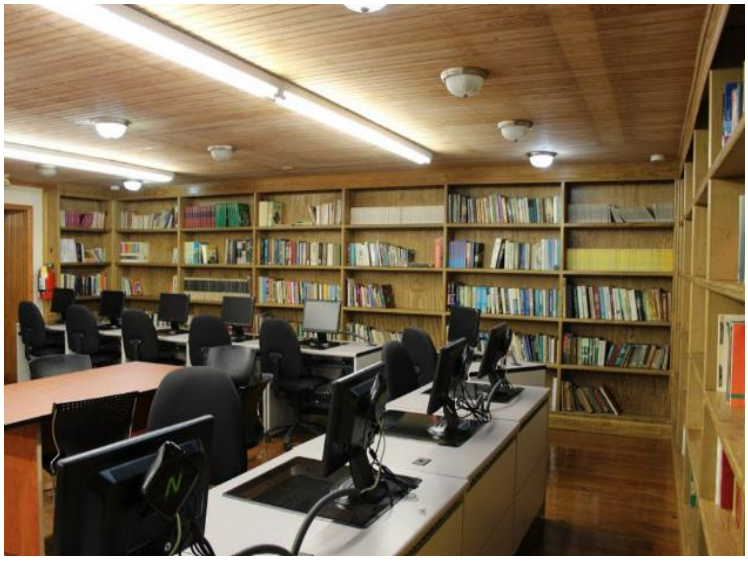

Figure 3.24 The current public library located in the basement of the residence.

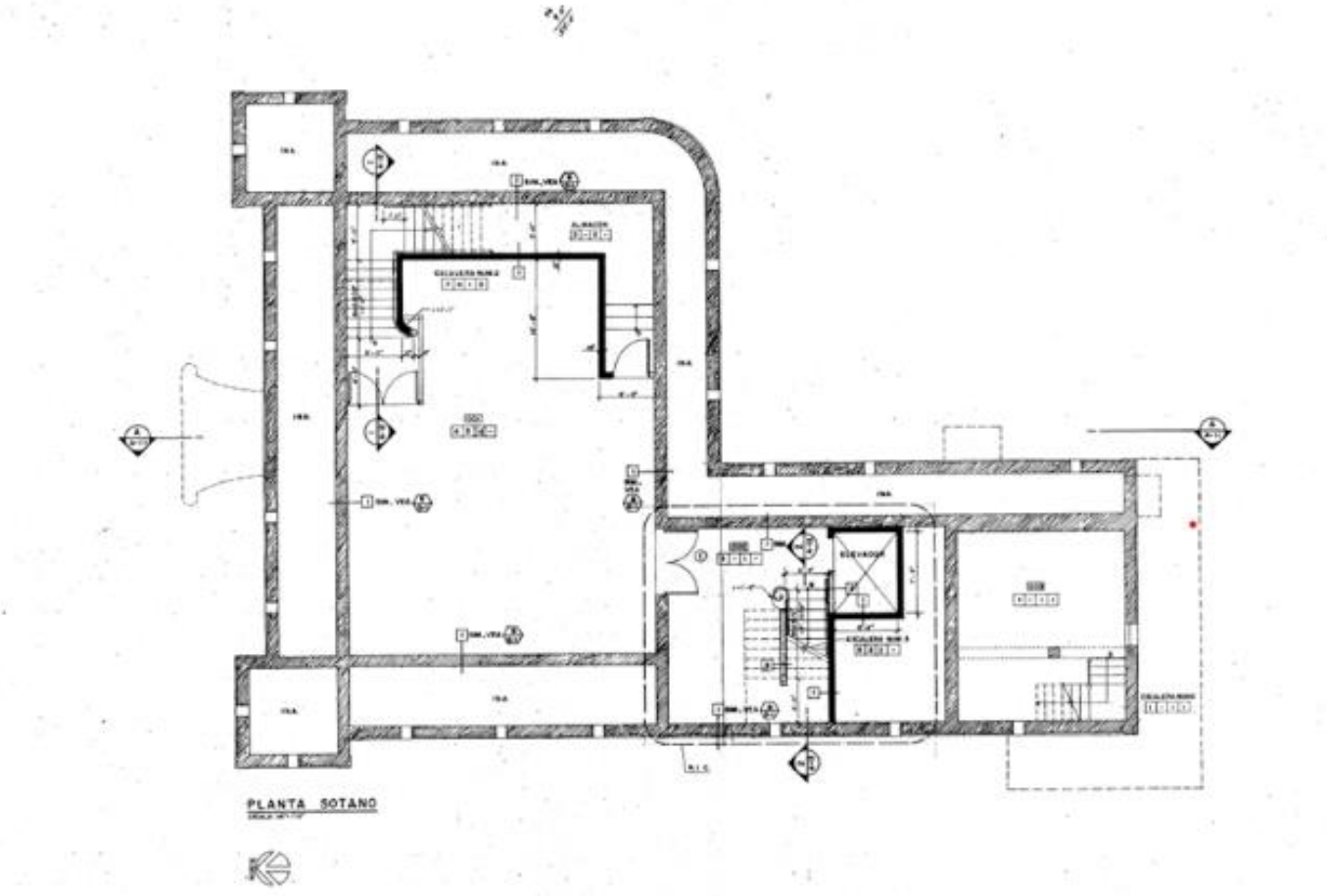

Figure 3.23 Basement floor drawing.

Returning to the first floor and ascending the T-shaped staircase (Fig. 3.25), a spacious open second floor is revealed (Fig. 3.26). Additional pictures, this time of unnamed land workers, alongside portraits of the Governors of Puerto Rico, decorate each of the walls. Objects not original to the site, like farming tools, are placed across the floor. However, an original double sash door from the residence has been preserved in one corner and identified with a piece of laminated paper as "The original door in Castillo Labadie" (Fig.3.27). The rows of open doors lead to different parts of the balconies, offering a breathtaking view of 120 acres of land encompassing the municipalities of Isabela, Aguadilla, and Moca. At the entrance to one of the balconies, additional images of land worker cutting sugarcane and other sugar plantations are displayed. But suddenly, visitors are also presented with a medium-sized bulletin board full of images of weddings that were held at this site, marketing this historic site as an event venue (Fig. 3.28).

Figure 3.25 Picture of the T-shaped staircase located in the center of the main living room.

Figure 3.26 Second floor of the residence.

Figure 3.27 The only surviving original door displayed on the second floor of the residence.

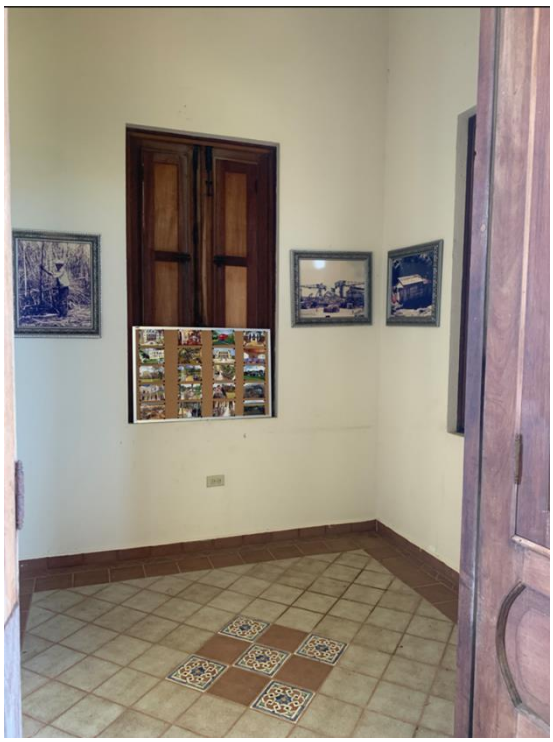

Figure 3.28 One of the entrances from the second-floor balcony where photographs featuring sugar cane land works and plantations hang on the wall along with a bulletin board full of weeding pictures taken on this site.

While navigating through the current dependencies of Hacienda Irurena, it becomes clear that this site has been transformed into a setting that privileges political propaganda rather than honoring the complex history embedded in this landscape. The overall restoration of the property has obliterated many of its original features. Consequently, open spaces that could inform visitors about the history of sugar and coffee in the region, along with the life and contributions of its people, are being used to perpetuate cultural voids. These voids are shaped by the presence of every picture of governors and mayors that hang on the residence's walls and cluttered by objects intended to hold on to an idealized past that never existed. As a result, stories and legacies like those of Cornelia Pellot or the enslaved woman Gabriela have been erased or minimized, leaving their descendants as the sole carriers of such stories. How do we reckon with this? What other ways could the history of this hacienda have been portrayed?

Because this is not my story to tell, when I met Frances Thomas, I took the liberty of asking her: How would you like this space to be used today? Her immediate answer was: "as a living museum."[204] She wants visitors to see what sugar and coffee crops look like and learn about how they were processed. Moreover, she would like the history of Hacienda Irurena and her ancestors to come alive through the built environment, their food, music, customs, and stories.

Still, while considering all the possibilities for this site and acknowledging the reality that it has a long way to go in terms of restoration and study, I decided to immerse myself once again in the beautiful gardens surrounding the manor house. For the first time, I paused not to analyze the structure or the land but to feel the cool breeze of the *flamboyán* tree and hear nothing more than nature speaking. At that moment, Thomas' words came to my mind, reminding me: "We are

[204] Frances Thomas. Interview by Sara I. Rodríguez Rivera. September 10, 2022.

living the blessings of our great-great-grandparents. They never leave us… we are not alone."[205] And this is how the silenced landscape that I confronted at the beginning of this thesis project suddenly was not that silent anymore.

[205] Frances Thomas. Interview by Sara I. Rodríguez Rivera. September 10, 2022.

Conclusion

I visited the Hacienda Irurena for the first time in 2017. I remember it like it was yesterday. The monumentality and intricate design of the manor house, along with the landscape where it is located, took my breath away as a young art history student eager to learn more about French architecture in Puerto Rico. Yet, I also remember how powerless and frustrated I felt as I left the museum, witnessing how significant pieces of my island's history were being disregarded. In that moment, my frustration transformed into a commitment—a commitment to showcase a more truthful historiography of this site. More so, a commitment to make visible the contributions of the Black woman captured in the photograph lying in the crystal vitrine covered with dust (Fig. 2.1). I wanted Cornelia Pellot's voice to be heard in a room filled with portraits of men. This commitment accompanied me throughout my master's program, and through two years of research, I came to realize that this was not just Cornelia's story.

With barely any scholarship written about Hacienda Irurena, it quickly became clear how challenging it would be to piece together the fragmented archives of this site. However, as I organized these documents and conducted interviews, it was heartening to see how the site's history was kept alive in the shared memory of nearby communities. One of those community members was Frances Thomas. As I met her, I saw that her approach to a silenced past was not so different from the methods I was using in this thesis. Frances Thomas' curiosity led her to discover a broader history, not only of herself but also of a geography that, in the words of Katherine McKittrick, is "entwined with strategic and meaningful languages, acts, expressions, and experiences."[206] This is why this thesis has not been limited to a deep evaluation of Puerto Rican

[206] Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2006), xxxi.

architectural historiography. Rather, it has approached current plantation landscapes by having the courage, like Frances Thomas did, to ask why and how. In this process, I have reconsidered how to read and use both primary sources and living memory to surface voices that have been systematically erased.

This re-evaluation of primary sources informs the first chapter, as it explores the initial shaping of the Hacienda Irurena's built environment during the first half of the nineteenth-century. By 1847, the Pellot family developed one of the largest plantations in the municipality, comprising pasture, open fields, coffee, and minor crops. This was the only plantation in Moca to own one hundred and five enslaved individuals and not to have any paid workers. Descriptions of deeds, the accounts of Ferreras Pagán, and coffee treatises unpacked a series of structures that were part of the landscape, along with the arduous work required for coffee production. Within the limits of this landscape, we considered the enslaved dwellings and provision grounds as settings for cultural identity. The *Libreta de Esclavas Paridoras* provided more than 300 names of women who were used in the forced reproduction of slave labor and in the production of coffee at Hacienda Irurena. By reading this journal, along with limited archival evidence, against the grain, it was possible to reveal a broader and more complex history of this site. Most importantly, the lives and contributions of the enslaved, like Gabriela and her son Leoncio, could be acknowledged.

This thesis has also shown how women of color were agents in the transformation of the built environment by shedding light on stories like Cornelia's. In the second chapter, we enter an era of great political, social, and economic shift, dominated by the empire of sugar production. This chapter traced how Cornelia Pellot, a so-called *mulata* who was once an enslaved woman, conceived a French-inspired manor house. She became the head of Hacienda Irurena after Juan Labadie y Larré, the second planter of this site and her husband, passed away. During Labadie y

Larré's ownership, however, the built environment of the Irurena evolved and adapted to the necessities of the time. This clear transition from a coffee plantation to a sugar estate, along with the exhausted lives of the workers after emancipation, were vividly depicted in Enrique Laguerre's novel *La Llamarada*. This work offered one last glimpse of the early stages of Hacienda Irurena's two-story manor house, with its French-inspired language adopted by Manuel Gómez Tejeras. In this way, literary works, like Laguerre's novel, became essential tool for rescuing information that had escaped the archives.

The third and final chapter demonstrates how historical sites like Hacienda Irurena have been re-imagined by the government, as seen through a close examination of the proposed *Moreau House District Master Plan*. What was once a plantation was now to become a historical district replicating Laguerre's vision of the site in *La Llamarada*. However, this master plan also contained a residential area that threatened to encourage gentrification, forcing the relocation of many in the local community of Aceitunas. Due to anticipated environmental repercussions and a lack of funding, the Municipality of Moca only succeeded in constructing a road and restoring Hacienda Irurena's manor house as a museum. Today, poor management of the site and the selective memory on display there convey an oversimplified version of a multilayered history to visitors. Yet, Frances Thomas' navigation of this site reminds us that the voices of the descendants of enslaved laborers at Hacienda Irurena provide significant connections to spaces of enslavement, enriching an often-avoided history.

Writing a first extensive historical evaluation of the built environment and lived experiences of this site has given me an opportunity to reaffirm my commitments as an architectural historian. Initially, I struggled to reconcile two contradictory versions of Cornelia Pellot: one, a woman of color who was born enslaved and became the owner of the very plantation where she was

oppressed, and another, a woman who participated in a system of exploitation. These contradictions not mine to resolve. As a young historian studying a period between enslavement and emancipation, I have learned that the systems of oppression and dehumanization we confront will never make complete sense. As I argued in Chapter Two, the Hacienda Irurena manor house can be seen as a "white mask" that Cornelia Pellot wore, signaling her ability to "play the game." Like many women of her time, Cornelia had to navigate and adapt to the limits and norms of her society to claim power that was never meant to be hers. Architecture became a language in which she could be part of the dialog of the emerging elite on the island. It was a tool for her to be heard, seen, and remembered. The Hacienda Irurena manor house is her story of redemption, and Cornelia's story is also our story.

Looking forward, I hope that the Municipality of Moca, along with cultural institutions, will re-evaluate how Hacienda Irurena's history is promoted and preserved. This re-evaluation should create a setting that provides opportunities for descendants to be reincorporated into this history and, finally, gives Cornelia Pellot her voice back. Moreover, future research could explore the roles of other underrepresented groups in the evolution of plantation landscapes across the Caribbean or delve deeper into the relationship between architecture and social identity in post-emancipation societies. As I reflect on this journey, I am reminded that history is not just a record of what was but a call to engage with what is and what could be. In this way, I hope that this thesis serves as a catalyst for ongoing efforts to restore and recontextualize Hacienda Irurena, transforming it into a site where all voices, particularly those of the descendants of enslaved communities, are heard and honored.

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