



Map 1

THE CHINESE IN LATIN AMERICA

A Preliminary Geographical Survey

with Special Reference to

Cuba and Jamaica

by  
Ching Chieh Chang

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the University of Maryland in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
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Name of Candidate: Ching Chieh Chang  
Doctor of Philosophy, 1956

Thesis and Abstract Approved:

F. Webster McBryde

Dr. F. Webster McBryde  
Lecturer with the rank of  
Professor  
Department of Geography

Chas. Y. Hu

Dr. Charles Y. Hu  
Professor  
Department of Geography

Date approved: May 17, 1956

## ABSTRACT

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Thesis directed by: Dr. F. Webster McBryde  
Lecturer with the rank of Professor  
Department of Geography

Dr. Charles Y. Hu  
Professor  
Department of Geography

The present study concerns itself with the geographical origin, distribution, routes of migration and ports of embarkation of the Chinese in Latin America. It also purports to bring out the similarities and dissimilarities in their demographic composition, economic activities and some other aspects in different Latin American countries. The term "Latin America" is used to include all the European possessions in the area, and the term "Chinese" is used to include all those of Chinese parentage, but not those born to Chinese who intermarried with individuals of other races.

Chinese immigration to Latin America on a large scale did not begin until the eighteen forties. Between 1847 and 1874, known as the coolie trade period, about one quarter of a million Chinese migrated to Latin America as "contract laborers". The great majority of them were "forced" immigrants, because they were kidnaped or decoyed by the coolie



recruiters and did not migrate voluntarily. After 1874, Chinese immigration entered a new era. All the immigrants came voluntarily. But the good time of free Chinese immigration did not last very long. In or before the first quarter of the 20th century, most of the Latin American countries adopted laws to prohibit the entrance of Chinese.

The Chinese immigrants were primarily from nine hsiens (or counties) in Kwangtung province immediately behind the port of Macao. Only those in Jamaica were not from this area, but exclusively from three hsiens in the same province north of Hongkong. At the present time, there are about 77 thousand Chinese in Latin America, and their distribution is highly localized. The localization of the geographical origin and the geographical distribution can be explained only in terms of the special type of Chinese emigration in general and the early history of the Chinese migration to Latin America in particular. Moreover, the Chinese are mainly concentrated in large cities. This is the result of their occupation. Almost all of them are engaged in commerce, and particularly in the grocery trade. Therefore, in places where their number is large, they are very influential in the grocery business.

The Chinese population in almost all Latin American countries is characterized by two demographical anomalies: the great excess of males and the abnormally large number of old and middle-aged people. This is owing to the fact that, within the past one hundred years, the number of

females among the immigrants has always been extremely small, and a large portion of the population still consists of immigrants who came in or before the nineteen twenties. Generally speaking, there has been no segregation against the Chinese along racial lines. Nevertheless, social contacts between Chinese and natives remain on a business basis and are purely functional. Racial consciousness still plays an important role among the Chinese, native-born as well as immigrants. Among the immigrants, it is also because most of them retain their Chinese nationality and want to go back to China eventually. Thus, in Latin America, the Chinese are not only racial minorities but also groups of aliens.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Within the past one hundred years or so, a great movement of human migration has originated from the continent of Eurasia. The currents of the tide of migration reached the coasts of all outlying continents and islands. The main stream of the migration originated from the European part of the continent of Eurasia, but its Asian part was by no means excluded from the historical movement. Several Asian countries also supplied a considerable number of emigrants. Among these are Japan, India and China.

In the last century, hundreds of thousands of Chinese left China for foreign lands. Because of numerous unfavorable factors working against the Chinese migration to countries outside of Asia, the number of Chinese entering inter-continental migration has been small as compared to that of those entering intra-continental migration. Consequently, more than 90 per cent of the Chinese in foreign lands are found in Asian countries, and they are especially concentrated in tropical Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, as the result of inter-continental migration, there are more than three hundred thousand Chinese in countries outside of Asia, and they are widely distributed geographically (Table I). There are Chinese in Africa and Australia as well as in North and South America. A considerable number

TABLE I

## THE NUMBER OF CHINESE OUTSIDE OF ASIA

Region	Number of Chinese	Year
Anglo-America	150,157	1950-1951 (a)
Latin America	77,142	1950 (b)
Pacific Islands	43,435	1940 (c)
Africa	14,851	1937-1948 (c)
Europe (excluding U.S.S.R.)	24,002	1940-1948 (c)
Australia and New Zealand	13,517	1945-1947 (d)
Total	323,104	

(a) U.S. 1950 population census and Canada 1951 population census.

(b) See Chapter III.

(c) China Handbook (137), p. 22-23.

(d) Australia population census, 1947; New Zealand population census, 1945.



of Chinese live on the small island of Mauritius in the middle of the Indian Ocean, and on the beautiful island of Tahiti in the middle of the Pacific (1). Nevertheless, among the 323,104 Chinese outside of Asia, about 70 per cent are in the Americas, and about one third of these are in Latin America (2).

Although the total number of Chinese in Anglo-America is much greater than in Latin America, the number per thousand total population is actually much larger in some of the Latin American countries (3). As a result, in these Latin American countries the Chinese have become important minority groups, while in the United States and Canada they are literally submerged in the huge population.

There are few systematic studies on the Chinese in Latin American countries, and all of these are in the field of history. Strangely enough, these historical studies are written neither by Chinese nor by Latin American students, but by Americans (4). Recently, two books on the Chinese in the Americas have been published, written by Chinese. Both

(1) China Handbook (137), p. 23.

(2) Unless otherwise indicated, "Latin America" in this study also includes all the European possessions in the Caribbean area.

(3) The number of Chinese per thousand total population is 8.9 in Trinidad, 4.8 in Jamaica, 4.4 in Cuba, 3.3 in Panama, while it is only 0.7 in the United States.

(4) The good example of the published works is The Bondage of Chinese in Peru by Watt Stewart. See W. Stewart (59).

of them contain a section on the Chinese in Latin American countries. One is published in Chinese, the other has both Chinese and English texts (1). The authors have visited the Chinese communities in all the countries covered, and they have compiled a good deal of information collected from the Chinese in those countries. However, their books are essentially in the form of a guide book, and not a small part of each is devoted to a "Who's Who" of the Chinese in the Americas. Nevertheless, they do supply some useful information. A few books on the Chinese in Latin American countries have been published in Spanish, but none of them is in any sense the result of academic research. They were published either to honor the Chinese community as an act of courtesy (2) or to propound anti-Chinese feelings (3). In the former case, the Chinese are praised with all kinds of flattering phrases. In the latter case, the entire book is apt to be full of derogatory comment about the Chinese minority. Thus, the only part of our knowledge of the subject which has been comparatively well organized belongs to the field of history. Students of other fields will still have a great deal to do to improve our understanding of the Chinese minority groups in Latin America.

The present study is done along geographical lines.

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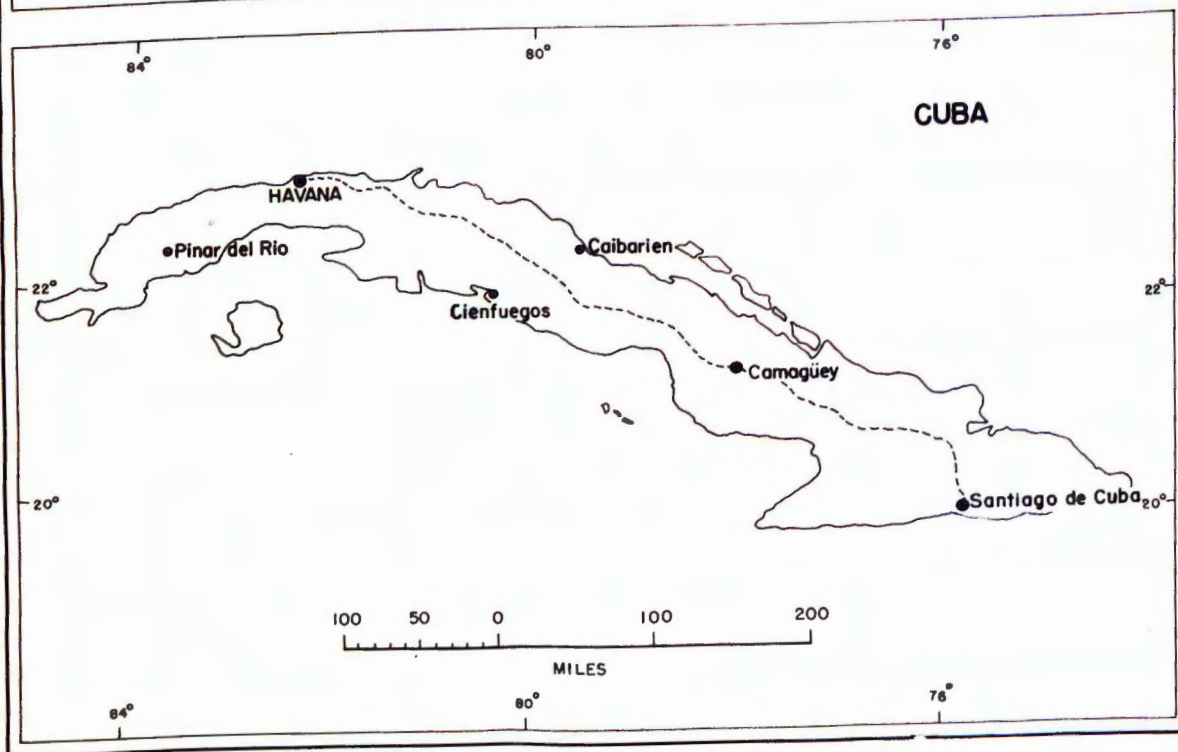
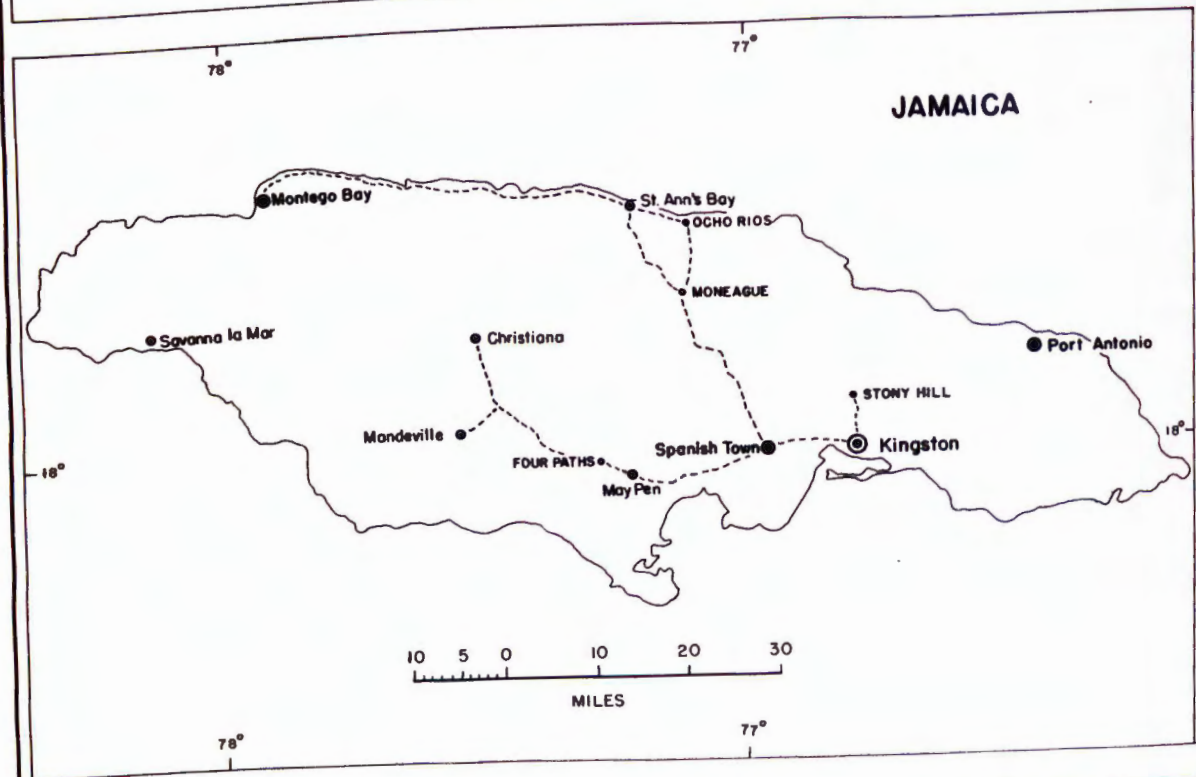
(1) K. M. Chen (9) and L. Liu (38).

(2) Dora Mayer de Zulen (43).

(3) J. A. Espinoza (24).



# FIELD TRIPS IN CUBA AND JAMAICA



Map II

It concerns itself with the geographical origin, geographical distribution and routes of migration of the Chinese in Latin America. It also attempts to study the similarities and dissimilarities of the present situation of the Chinese minority groups in different parts of Latin America.

The study was based upon field works, as well as library research in the Library of Congress and that of the Pan-American Union. Most of the recent census figures were supplied by the Library of the United States Bureau of the Census, which has all the published reports of the 1950 American Census from all the American Republics, including the British West Indies. Because of limited funds available for traveling and because of difficulties in obtaining entry permits, field work was conducted only in Cuba and Jamaica. As a result, some of the discussions in this study have to be limited to the Chinese on these two islands only.

Three months were spent in the field in the summer of 1954. About six weeks were allocated to each of the two islands. In Jamaica, most of the time was spent in Kingston and in the parish of St. Andrew, since more than half of the Chinese population in Jamaica is concentrated there, and all Chinese organizations and government agencies are located within these two areas. However, short visits were made across the island to most of the secondary spots of concentration of Chinese, such as Spanish Town, Montego Bay, Mandeville and May Pen. Short stopovers were also made in a number of small villages along the route (Map II).



While in the field the author gathered information from three sources: individual interviews (1), Chinese organizations and government agencies. One half of the time was spent on individual interviews, which were conducted in all the villages and towns covered by the field trips, as well as in the Kingston Metropoliton area. Natives as well as Chinese were interviewed. Among the Chinese, small shopkeepers as well as big businessmen, native-born Chinese, as well as Chinese immigrants, were covered by the interview. Except for one or two cases, both Chinese organizations and government agencies were very cooperative in supplying information. Most of their files and records including the graveyard records in the Chinese Benevolent Society and the business registration records in the Registrar's office were made available for reference. Quite a few days were spent in mapping. The results are presented in two maps, one showing the distribution of Chinese commercial establishments in downtown Kingston, including the size and location of Chinatown (Map XIII), the other showing the distribution of Chinese residences in the Kingston and St. Andrew corporated area (Map XII).

The same procedure of field work was followed in Cuba. Owing to the size of the island and the limited time available, only the three cities with the largest Chinese population were visited: Havana, Santiago de Cuba and Camagüey. Field mapping was also done in Havana. Because

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(1) See Appendix A for schedule used in interviews.



of the size of the metropolitan area, the mapped area covers only the vicinity of Chinatown. (Map XIV)

The large libraries in Kingston and Havana were also visited. The Institute of Jamaica and the library of the University College of the West Indies have some useful references on the Chinese in Jamaica, but the library of the University of Havana and the National Library of Cuba in Havana do not have any useful references beyond those which are also available in the Library of Congress and that of the Pan-American Union in Washington, D. C.

In this study, all the materials collected in the libraries and in the field are organized on a continental basis, and will be grouped according to related subjects instead of according to countries or regions. The preference of the systematic approach to the regional approach is mainly owing to the fact that one of the main purposes of the present study is to find out the similarities and dissimilarities in distribution, geographical origin, economic activities and other aspects of the Chinese minorities in different countries. Since there are more than twenty political units within the area covered by the study, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve this purpose if a regional approach was used.

Because of the limited areas covered by the field work and because of the limited amount of reference material

available in the libraries (1) the present study should be considered only as a preliminary reconnaissance. In some places the discussion is limited by the fact that information available is fragmentary. Nevertheless, factual findings are always useful in advancing the understanding of a subject, even if it is impossible as yet to make general statements or to draw unassailable conclusions. However in all cases, the author has endeavored to make his presentation as objective and his analysis as exhaustive as available data permit.

Finally, it must be pointed out that, in this study, the term "Chinese" is taken as referring to an ethnic group instead of a national group. Unless indicated otherwise, it includes all those who are offspring of Chinese parentage, whether they were native born or born in China, citizens of China or naturalized citizens of the country of adoption, but it does not include the offspring of those Chinese who intermarried with persons of other races.

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(1) The number of all the references, including books, articles, newspaper entries, and government publications, useful and available to the study is less than 150, and two thirds of them consist of statistical publications, including population census reports.



## CHAPTER II

### THE CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO LATIN AMERICA

#### A. Historical Retrospect

The history of the Chinese in Latin America can be traced back to the 17th century. As early as 1635 there was already a small group of Chinese living in Mexico City (1). How and why they came to the New World at that time and what happened thereafter are matters of historical interest only. For the purpose of the present study it is sufficient to limit the discussion to the 19th century.

In the early part of the 19th century a small number of Chinese arrived in Latin America as a result of two unrelated incidents. First, Chinese tea plants were introduced into the Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro in 1810. Soon thereafter several hundred Chinese tea growers were brought to Brazil by the Portuguese government with the hope of starting commercial production of tea. However, the experiment was a failure, and before long the Chinese turned to commerce and retail trade (2). Second, in 1830, a small group of Chinese from the Philippine Islands arrived in Cuba. Most of them were domestic servants of

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(1) H. H. Dubs and R. S. Smith (23), p. 387.

(2) A. Bradley (4), p. 51.

the Spaniards and had adopted Spanish customs (1). It was not until 1847 that the influx of Chinese in large numbers into Latin America really began.

Historical incidents in the middle of the 19th century on both sides of the Pacific led to this increase in migration of Chinese to Latin America. On the American side, the major events were the abolition of the African slave trade and the emancipation of slaves, which resulted in a widespread shortage of labor in Latin America. This was true especially on the large agricultural estates in the tropical lowlands of Cuba, Peru and the British West Indies. All efforts to import European labor were unsuccessful, and finally the estate owners turned to Asia for a labor supply. As a result of the constant pressure of the estate owners, importation of Chinese laborers into Cuba was authorized by the Spanish government in 1847 (2), and in Peru it was authorized by a special immigration law passed in 1849 (3). Soon thereafter the colonial government of the British West Indies also turned to China for labor, in spite of the large number of laborers already being imported from India. To meet the need of the plantation owners and to keep themselves in business, the African slave traders turned their ships away from Africa and headed for China.

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(1) Carteles (16), p. 14.

(2) A. L. Valverde (62), pp. 25-27.

(3) W. Stewart (59), p. 14.



At the same time, on the other side of the Pacific, the isolation policy of the Chinese empire began to crumble under the powerful impact of Western invasions. After China was defeated by the British in the Opium War, the Treaty of Nanking was signed between China and the British in 1842. By this treaty, five Chinese ports were opened for trade and Hongkong was ceded to the British. After that, the prestige of the Chinese Empire declined rapidly, and the Westerners began to make themselves masters along the coast of China. This brought a decisive change as far as Chinese emigration to Latin America was concerned. For about two hundred years, emigration was strictly prohibited by the Manchu government (1). According to Manchu law, "all officers of the government, soldiers, and private citizens, who clandestinely proceed to sea to trade, or who remove to foreign islands for the purpose of inhabiting shall be punished according to the law against communicating with rebels and enemies, and consequently suffer death by being beheaded." (2) After 1842 the law was no longer effective along the coast where the Westerners came to recruit Chinese laborers. Not only was the Manchu government unable to enforce the law on those

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(1) During the end of the Ming Dynasty and before the Manchu government consolidated its control over south China in the 17th century, there were considerable numbers of Chinese emigrating from southern coastal regions to the islands of the East Indies. However, the number of emigrants decreased rapidly after the Manchu government stabilized its control over south China at the end of the 17th century.

(2) Section CCXXV of the "Ta Tsing Leu Lee", see H. F. MacNair (41), Chapter I.



who left for Latin America willingly, but it was even unable to protect those who were kidnaped or decoyed by the coolie recruiters.

# 1. The Coolie Trade: 1847-1874

The importation of Chinese labor into Latin America was strictly on a business basis, and earned the name of "coolie trade". The "coolie trade" became as notorious as the African slave trade had been. The great majority of the Chinese brought to Latin America by the traders were kidnaped or decoyed by the recruiters. There were some who left China willingly, but their numbers were very small indeed (1), and most of them were political refugees during the Taiping rebellion (1849-1864).

Very few coolies went willingly or with any knowledge of the life in store for them. Their recruitment was accomplished through purchase, outright kidnaping, or what has been curiously described as 'moral persuasion'. Chinese and Portuguese man-buyers haunted China's inland waterways (on the Canton Delta). There was little safety for villagers and fishermen along the coasts. But by far the largest group was recruited from among those unsuspecting Chinese who were tempted to gamble at licensed establishments, where, according to pre-arrangement, they lost more money than they possessed and as a consequence were 'morally persuaded' to make good these losses through work. (2)

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(1) All the historical studies on Chinese coolie migration to Latin America in the coolie trade period available to the author, give no indication that there was any large number of Chinese who left China willingly. All agree that the great majority were brought to Latin America against their will by the coolie traders. See H. F. MacNair (42), pp. 409-414; W. Stewart (59), Chapter I; A. Bradley (4), pp. 46-48; and J. C. Walton (63), pp. 375-377.

(2) A. Bradley (4), p. 47.



In most cases, the coolie ships were over-crowded. Conditions on board these ships were very bad and the mortality rate was very high during the long voyage, sometimes almost reaching twenty per cent (Table II). In Latin America, the Chinese laborers were sold openly under the name of "contract laborers". The living and working conditions of these "contract laborers" were no better than those of the Negroes in the days of the African slave trade. "With every effort to be fair, it must be admitted that the coolie trade did, in many respects, resemble the African slave trade." (1) Many Chinese "contract laborers" died as a result of hardship before their contracts expired. The coolie trade lasted 27 years, from 1847 when the first shipload of Chinese reached Havana, Cuba, to 1874 when the last coolie trade port of Macao was closed by the Portuguese government under the "friendly pressure" of other powers. Within this 27 year period, almost a quarter of a million Chinese were brought over to Latin America to take the place of Negro and Indian slaves (2). Fifty three per cent went to Cuba, thirty seven per cent to Peru and eight per cent to British Guiana and the British West Indies (Table III). Only a small number went to other parts of Latin America.

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(1) W. Stewart (59), p. 76.

(2) In spite of the large number of Chinese brought to Latin America in the 19th century, the number of Chinese in this part of the world is less than one hundred thousand. The reasons for the small size of Chinese population at the present time will be given in the next chapter.

TABLE II

THE MORTALITY RATE OF CHINESE COOLIES  
ON COOLIE-TRADE SHIPS TO CUBA (a)

Year	Number of Ships	Number of Chinese Recruited in China	Number of Deaths on Ships	Percentage of Mortality
1847	2	612	41	6.7%
1853	15	5,150	843	16.3%
1854	4	1,750	39	2.2%
1855	6	3,130	145	4.6%
1856	15	6,152	1,184	19.2%
1857	28	10,116	1,589	15.7%
1858	33	16,414	3,029	18.4%
1959	13	6,799	778	11.4%

(a) A. L. Valverde (62), pp. 23-44.



TABLE III  
NUMBER OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS  
TO LATIN AMERICA  
1847-1874

Country	Year(s)	Number of Chinese Immigrants
Cuba	1847-1874	125,000 (a)
Peru	1849-1874	87,393 (b)
British Guiana	1853-1866	15,720 (c)
British West Indies: Trinidad	1853-1866	2,645 (d)
British Honduras	1865	474 (d)
Dutch Guiana	1853-1872	2,502 (d)
Panama	1850	1,000 (e)
Costa Rica	1865	600 (f)
Total	1847-1874	235,334

(a) D. C. Corbitt (18), p. 21.

(b) W. Stewart (59), p. 74.

(c) H. F. MacNair (41), p. 100.

(d) I. Ferenczi (25), pp. 506-513, and 537.

(e) K. M. Chen (9), p. 743.

(f) L. Liu (38).

The following is a brief account of the Chinese coolie immigration in Cuba, Peru and the British Caribbean Colonies.

Cuba. On September 23, 1817, a treaty was signed between Spain and Great Britain for the abolition of the African slave trade. According to this treaty the trade was to be discontinued on May 30, 1820, but in Cuba it did not stop completely until 1845. The sugar industry of Cuba had depended completely upon Negro slaves, and the end of the slave trade resulted in a considerable decline in sugar production (1). Efforts to import white labor were unsuccessful, and the hacendados began to complain bitterly about the labor shortage. Under pressure from them the importation of Chinese "contract laborers" was authorized by the Spanish colonial government in 1847, and in June of that year the first shipload of Chinese "contract laborers" arrived in Havana. "Contracts" for eight years were drawn up between the laborers and the Spanish consul, who acted for the contracting firms. These "contracts" were assignable without the individual consent of the laborers, and the coolies were sold openly in Cuba by the coolie traders to plantation owners (2). Although at the very beginning, the Spanish government issued a regulation requiring all "Asiatic colonists" (as the Chinese contract laborers were called) to be treated as free men, they received no better treatment

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(1) A. L. Valverde (62), pp. 23-25.

(2) A. Bradley (4), p. 48.



than the Negro slaves before them (1). Even the colonial authorities sometimes speculated openly in the sale of Chinese "contract laborers" (2). The abuse the Chinese suffered in Cuba finally moved the hearts of the Manchu rulers in Peking. In 1873 a Chinese commission was sent to Cuba to investigate the conditions. A report by this commission, published in 1876, indicated that of the 40,413 coolies in Cuba at that time, 80 per cent had been kidnaped or decoyed. It also pointed out that, of the 114,081 Chinese laborers who had been sent to Cuba between 1847 and 1867, only 53,502 escaped life servitude, and only a small number ever managed to return to China (3).

Before 1860, a coolie could become a free citizen and choose the occupation he wanted. But after 1860 a royal decree withdrew the privilege of becoming a free citizen. Coolies were forced either to sign another contract or leave the island after their contracts expired. Since very few could save enough money for a return passage, most of them had to sign another contract. In 1870, a new decree again authorized them to stay on the island after the expiration of their contracts (4).

Ninety per cent of the Chinese coolies brought to

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(1) A. L. Valverde (62), pp. 26.

(2) Carteles (16), p. 15.

(3) A. Bradley (4), p. 49.

(4) A. L. Valverde (62), pp. 42-43.

Cuba by the coolie traders were sold to sugar plantations, especially to those in the province of Matanzas. They worked in the ingenios (sugar mills) as well as in the sugar cane fields. In the tiempo muerto (slack season) they also cultivated rice fields. In the eighteen seventies, there was a general shortage of labor in Havana and other cities, and many Chinese migrated to the cities after their contracts on the plantations expired. The outbreak of the Ten Year War in 1868 gave the Chinese coolies a chance to escape from the plantations. The offer of liberty by the insurgents led many Chinese coolies to join the army of the rebels. As a result, Spain ordered the importation of Chinese coolies to be stopped in 1871, but it was not completely terminated until 1874 (1).

Peru. One of the many problems Peru had to face after gaining her independence was a serious labor shortage. Under the colonial regime this had to be overcome partly by forced Indian labor under the mita system and partly by the importation of slaves from Africa. Under the republic, slavery was frowned upon and the importation of slaves was prohibited, with the result that the supply of black labor gradually diminished. To meet the shortage of labor, the Congress passed a general immigration law in 1849. Its principal object was to make possible the introduction of Chinese labor, and the law became popularly known as the

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(1) D. C. Corbitt (19), pp. 302-303.



"Ley Chinesca", or the "Chinese Law" (1).

The abuses suffered by the Chinese laborers in Peru were even worse than in Cuba. The history of the Chinese laborers working on the guano islands off the Peruvian coast is one of the blackest chapters in the history of Chinese coolie immigration in Latin America. "Lodged like swine, starved and brutally flogged, the Chinese laborers were condemned to a living death of ceaseless toil without a ray of hope"(2). As a result of this deplorable state of affairs, the Immigration Law of 1849 was annulled by a decree in 1856 and the coolie traffic was prohibited. Although the traffic did not cease completely, the number of Chinese coolies brought to Peru was much smaller than that prior to 1856. Between 1850 and 1859, about 13,000 Chinese were introduced into Peru (3). Most of them were sold to the owners of haciendas on the coast in the province of Libertad and in the region around Lima. Considerable numbers were also used as house servants, cooks, bakers, mill hands and handyman in the mercantile establishments (4).

Peru's hacendados bitterly opposed, and were never reconciled to, the abrogation of the "Chinese law". As a result of their insistence, a new "Chinese law" was promulgated in March 1861. After 1861, the number of Chinese

(1) W. Stewart (59), p. 13.

(2) The West Coast Leaders (11), p. 10.

(3) W. Stewart (59), p. 73.

(4) W. Stewart (59), Chapter IV.

coolies brought into Peru increased considerably (1). The coolie trade was finally stopped after the port of Macao was closed to the trade in 1874. Between 1849 and 1874 about ninety thousand Chinese coolies had been brought to Peru. While many died before their contract expired, most of them lived to terminate the contracts. Some of them signed new contracts for an additional period. A few, very few, returned to China, but most of the others did not have money for the passage. By 1870, there were large numbers of Chinese in Peru who were free from any contract. Generally speaking the free Chinese preferred to move to population centers. They opened small shops in large towns in agricultural regions, such as Pacasmayo and Trujillo. Some were employed in domestic service. There was a tendency, however, for them to go to Lima. By 1870, already a considerable number of free Chinese were living in Lima (2).

The free Chinese in Peru at that time could form a community including members from almost all walks of life. Since a great majority of them, like those in Cuba, had been kidnaped from China, among them were small shop keepers and artisans of all kinds. When subjected to slavery under "contract", they could do nothing but wait for the expiration of the contract. Once they were free they would make a living by re-entering the occupations they had had before

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(1) The number of Chinese coolies brought to Peru between 1860 and 1874 was 74,247 as compared with 13,000 between 1850 and 1859. See W. Stewart (59), p. 73.

(2) W. Stewart (59), p. 124.



they were kidnaped. The Chinese community in Lima grew larger and larger as more and more free Chinese came to that city, and by 1878, it became so prosperous that there were Chinese theaters in that city (1).

The British Caribbean Colonies. The famous Act of 1833 declared all slaves in British colonies free on August 1, 1834. The tropical climate in British Guiana, Trinidad and Jamaica made it possible for the emancipated slaves to earn an easy living without the necessity of regular work on the plantations. Their withdrawal into the interior of the colonies from the coastal plantations caused a serious problem of labor supply for the plantation owners. At first, contract laborers were brought in from India. Later the colonial government also recruited Chinese laborers. In 1853 the first group of Chinese contract laborers was brought to British Guiana and Trinidad. Within the "coolie trade" period, about 18,000 Chinese were brought to British Guiana and the British West Indies (Table III), and the great majority of them were sent to British Guiana. As no return passage was provided for these laborers, very few of them ever returned to China. But not a small number of them re-emigrated to Jamaica and other British Caribbean possessions under contract or as free immigrants.

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(1) W. Stewart (59), p. 125.

## 2. Immigration After 1874

After the port of Macao was closed to the "coolie trade" in 1874, Chinese immigration into Latin America entered a new era. During the "coolie trade" period, most of the Chinese were "forced" immigrants, because the great majority of them were kidnaped and did not emigrate voluntarily. They were mainly concentrated in two countries, Cuba and Peru, with some in British Guiana. After 1874, all Chinese immigrants came voluntarily, though some of them still came under contract. Cuba and Peru continued to be the two major countries receiving Chinese immigrants. Mexico, Panama and Jamaica also entered the picture and received a considerable number of Chinese. But the good time of free Chinese immigration to Latin America did not last long. The Chinese Exclusion Law was passed in the United States in 1882. The practice was followed, in one way or another, by most of the Latin American countries in or before the first quarter of the 20th century (1). After 1921, the number of Chinese immigrants to Latin America became smaller each year. Most of those who did enter Latin American countries after 1921, entered illegally. Following are the highlights of Chinese immigration into Latin America after 1874.

Cuba. Although the coolie trade was terminated in

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(1) For details see Appendix B.



1874, the entry of Chinese contract laborers was not completely stopped until the end of the Spanish-American war in 1898, when the Chinese exclusion law of the United States was enforced on the island. How many Chinese entered Cuba between 1874 and 1898 is not known, because of the lack of records. On the eve of Cuban independence, the immigration laws of the United States were compiled into a concise document by the United States military authority in Cuba. This was known as Order No. 155 of the Headquarters Division of Cuba (1). According to this order, all Chinese, except diplomats, students, tourists and merchants, were excluded from Cuba and the entry of contract laborers was forbidden. Right after independence, Order No. 155 was confirmed by Presidential Decree No. 237 of August 11, 1902. But the law was not strictly enforced, and small number of Chinese trickled in each year. Shortly after Cuba entered World War I, all restrictions on contract laborers were discarded along with laws prohibiting the entry of Chinese. Cuba was assigned the task of providing the Allies with sugar. The sugar planters, always crying for more labor, asserted that they could not do their best unless the door was open to immigrants coming under labor contract, especially Chinese. On August 3, 1917, president Menocal signed a law permitting the entry of contract labor without restriction until two years after the end of the war. As a result, large numbers of Chinese entered Cuba. Old

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 626.

restrictions were not re-established until the end of 1921. Between 1917 and 1921, 12,537 Chinese entered Cuba (1). After 1921, the number of Chinese entering Cuba decreased rapidly. The great majority of those who entered between 1917 and 1921 remained in Cuba and formed the main portion of the present Chinese population on the island (2). In 1942, the number of Chinese immigrants registered at the Chinese consulate was 18,484. More than half of them entered Cuba within the five-year period from 1917 to 1921 (see Table IV). Most of those who entered after 1921 entered illegally. As Table III shows, at least 692 Chinese entered Cuba between 1930 and 1940, but the official Cuban records show that only 5 Chinese were permitted to enter within that period (3).

Peru. In 1874, when the port of Macao was closed to coolie trade, China and Peru signed a treaty, on the initiative of the Peruvian government, to promote free Chinese immigration to Peru (4). As a result of the treaty, Chinese immigration continued on a considerable scale until 1908, when popular outcry in Peru led to the imposition of

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(1) I. Ferenczi (25), p. 527.

(2) Although more than one hundred thousand Chinese have migrated to Cuba within the last hundred years, the number of Chinese in Cuba at the present time is only about twenty thousand. The reasons for the small size of the Chinese population at the present time will be given in the next chapter.

(3) D. C. Corbitt (19), p. 301.

(4) It means no "contract labor" immigration.



TABLE IV

## NUMBER OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN CUBA, 1943

According to Year of Entry (a)

Year of Entry	Number of Chinese Immigrants
Before 1902	100
1903-1916	1,700
1917-1921	11,384
1922-1929	4,605
1930-1940	693
Total	18,482

(a) Statistics on Overseas Chinese in Cuba (58),  
pp. 13-14.

certain restriction against the entry of Chinese. How many Chinese entered Peru between 1874 and 1908 is not known, because of the lack of records. The executive decree of May 14, 1909, prohibited the further entry of Chinese who possessed less than 500 Peruvian pounds in cash. Later in the same year the Peruvian government put into force new rules prohibiting the entry of Chinese laborers. The Chinese government immediately took the position that the decree of May 14, 1909 was incompatible with the stipulation of the treaty of 1874. As a result of negotiation between the two governments, the Porras-Wu Ting Fan Protocol was signed on August 28, 1909, by which the emigration of Chinese laborers to Peru was voluntarily suppressed by the Chinese government. Nevertheless, the Protocol left many loopholes for evasion, and immigration of Chinese laborers continued until the nineteen thirties, though the number of the immigrants was much fewer than before 1909 (1). In 1936, a quota system was adopted by the Peruvian government. The number of immigrants of any nationality was limited to two per thousand of the total population of that nationality residing in Peru. According to the 1940 census, there were only 10,915 Chinese by nationality in Peru. Consequently the number of Chinese immigrants would not have been more than 20 each year even if the full quota had been used.

Mexico. Unlike Cuba and Peru, Mexico did not participate in the "coolie trade". Although Chinese

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(1) L. A. Sanchez (54), p. 204.



immigrants started migrating southward into Mexico from the United States as early as 1864, the first group of Chinese immigrants directly from China did not arrive until 1891. Between 1891 and 1900, about 5 thousand Chinese contract laborers entered Mexico (1). Chinese immigration on a large scale started in 1900. It was under the Díaz regime that economic development really started in Mexico, and the lack of labor was keenly felt. In order to have large numbers of Chinese laborers, Díaz initiated a negotiation with China in 1899, and a treaty was signed. According to the treaty, the Chinese were given complete freedom to live and work in Mexico. The treaty also specified that the emigration of laborers with or without families was to be free. As a result of this treaty, a few steamship companies were organized by the Chinese to facilitate the emigration to Mexico, and all the Chinese came as free laborers without contract; some Chinese merchants came at the same time. Early in the nineteen twenties, Mexico began to change her immigration policy and immigration of laborers was prohibited in 1921. Consequently, the 1899 treaty between China and Mexico was revised in the same year and immigration of Chinese laborers was prohibited, though the entry of wives and children of those Chinese who entered Mexico before 1921, and the entry of Chinese other than laborers was permitted. After 1921, a small number of Chinese continued to come. Most of them came either as merchants or as children of those

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), pp. 496-7.

who entered Mexico before 1921. After 1926 more Chinese left Mexico than arrived (Table V). During the anti-Chinese period of the early nineteen thirties, about 6 thousand Chinese were expelled from Mexico (1). Chinese immigration almost completely stopped after 1931, when the anti-Chinese movement flared up in most parts of Mexico. According to official records, only 166 Chinese were admitted into Mexico between 1931 and 1940 (Table V). Immigration and emigration of Chinese in Mexico from 1911 to 1940 is summarized in Table V. Because of the lack of records, the number of Chinese immigrants and emigrants between 1901 and 1910 is not known. But according to the population census, by 1910 there were 13,203 Chinese in Mexico. The number of Chinese immigrants admitted between 1940 and 1950 was very small. Thus the number of net immigration of Chinese in the first half of the 20th century would not be much larger than twenty thousand.

Panama. After the first group of one thousand Chinese laborers was brought to Panama for the construction of the railroad during the "coolie trade" period in 1850 (2), no more Chinese laborers were imported until the eighteen eighties, when the French Canal Company brought a few hundred Chinese contract laborers from San Francisco (3). The majority of the one thousand Chinese coolies who came in

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(1) New York Times, September 5, 1931.

(2) J. B. Bishop (3), p. 48.

(3) K. M. Chen (9), p. 743.



TABLE V

NUMBER OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS AND EMIGRANTS IN MEXICO  
1911-1940 (a)

Years	Number of Immigrants	Number of Emigrants	Balance
1911-1915	15,218	2,872	12,346
1916-1920	5,199	3,339	1,860
1921-1925	4,046	3,825	221
1926-1930	2,531	3,479	948
1931-1935	127	6,000 (b)	5,873
1936-1940	39	50	11
Total	27,160	19,565	7,595

(a) Based on Mexican official figures, see Mexico (109), p. 204; Mexico (110), p. 326.

(b) There is no official record of the number of Chinese expelled from Mexico during the anti-Chinese period. This figure was based on the estimate given by New York Times, September 5, 1931.

1850 died of yellow fever and other diseases within a short time after their arrival. The rest of them re-emigrated to Jamaica under contract in 1854. Most of those from San Francisco stayed in Panama and entered small businesses after their contracts with the Canal Company expired. It was these few hundred Chinese who pioneered Chinese immigration in Panama and later attracted more Chinese to the area. Like Cuba, Panama, right after gaining her independence, adopted immigration laws to exclude Chinese. The independence of Panama was declared on November 3, 1903, and the law prohibiting the entry of Chinese was passed on March 11, 1904. But the law was never enforced strictly. Exactly how many Chinese entered Panama through the loopholes of the Chinese exclusion law after 1904 is not known. The number must not have been small, because the government of Panama has never ceased its efforts to stop the Chinese immigration by constantly revising its Chinese immigration law to close all loopholes. Between 1904 and 1932, within less than thirty years, the law has been revised three times. In 1941, an anti-Chinese movement broke out. About one thousand Chinese were forced to close their businesses and returned to China (1). After that the Chinese immigration to Panama practically came to an end.

The British Caribbean Colonies. During the "coolie trade" period, British Guiana received most of the Chinese

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(1) C. Shing (55), p. 211.



immigrants in the British Caribbean area. But, after 1870, the Chinese immigration into British Guiana almost completely stopped. On the other hand, Jamaica and Trinidad did not receive any large number of Chinese laborers in the "coolie trade" period, but the great majority of the free Chinese immigrants to the British Caribbean Colonies after 1890 went to these two islands.

As pointed out before, the first group of Chinese contract laborers entered Jamaica from Panama in 1854. Shortly thereafter some came from British Guiana and Trinidad under contract or as free immigrants. The Chinese immigrants who came directly from China arrived in 1884 (1). It was this group which formed the nucleus of Chinese population in Jamaica and started to attract more new immigrants thereafter. After 1884, all the Chinese came as free immigrants without any contract. The peak period of Chinese immigration was from 1920 to 1933. Three fifths of the China-born Chinese in Jamaica in 1943 came during this period (2). After 1933, very few Chinese entered Jamaica because of the strict enforcement of immigration regulations. In 1940, Chinese immigration was totally barred, and only native-born Chinese were permitted to re-enter Jamaica.

The Other Countries. Throughout the past one hundred years, the number of Chinese immigrants entering other Latin American countries has been, comparatively speaking, very

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 696.

(2) British West Indies (136), Vol. I, p. 39.

small. During the coolie trade period, Costa Rica imported six hundred Chinese contract laborers. After the coolie trade was closed, Guatemala and Venezuela brought over a small number of Chinese contract laborers in 1880 and 1885 respectively. The remaining countries of Latin America never received any Chinese contract laborers, and only small number of Chinese entered as free immigrants without contract. They first came not directly from China, but from those countries where large numbers of Chinese had been brought in to solve the problem of labor shortage. Thus, Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile probably received their first Chinese immigrants from Peru; Colombia and other Central American countries from Panama, Mexico and Cuba. Later, the small number of Chinese in these countries attracted more Chinese immigrants, either directly from China or from Peru, Mexico, Cuba and Panama. But before long, laws prohibiting the entry of Chinese were passed in most of these countries. The effect of these immigration laws on Chinese immigration in Latin America will be discussed in the next section.

#### B. The Effects of Chinese Immigration Restrictions

Although after 1900 the great majority of Latin American countries adopted immigration regulations prohibiting the entry of Chinese immigrants in one way or another the effect of these regulations on Chinese immigration in Latin America have not been the same in all cases. In order to see clearly in what way and to what an extent Chinese



immigration in Latin America has been affected by these regulations, it is desirable to review the special type of Chinese emigration before each case is taken for discussion.

In the past hundred years, Chinese emigration to foreign countries, including Latin America, has never been actively promoted by the Chinese government. The Chinese government did sign treaties with foreign countries such as Peru and Mexico in dealing with Chinese immigration in those countries. It only indicates that the Chinese government was no longer against the emigration of its subjects. But it never adopted any positive measures to guide and assist Chinese emigrants. The Chinese emigrants received guidance and assistances only from the members of their clans, some of whom were already in foreign countries. What is more, the geographical knowledge of the Chinese emigrants was very limited. Without guidance and assistance from the government, they tended to go only to those countries where members of their clans had already been admitted. This is not only because they could receive assistance from the members of their clans in the new lands, but also because these were perhaps the only countries they knew of. Therefore the geographical horizon of Chinese emigration was by and large limited by the distribution of Chinese immigrants in foreign countries. Before the coolie trade, the geographical horizon of Chinese emigration was limited only to the islands of the East Indies and the countries immediately south of China. It was broadened to Latin America only by

the efforts of a few Latin American countries which voluntarily "invited", either during or after the coolie trade, large numbers of Chinese coolie immigrants to solve their labor supply problems. Otherwise, Latin American countries perhaps would have remained unknown to the Chinese emigrants for a long time.

What is more, the majority of the potential Chinese emigrants had no means to pay the passage across the Pacific. Very few would wish to emigrate if they were "rich" enough to pay the passage. In most cases, the passages of the emigrants were financed by the members of their clans, either by those who were already in Latin America, or by those who stayed at home. They could receive the financial help from their clan only when they were to join the overseas clan members. Consequently they always emigrated to the countries where their clan members were. Of course those Chinese who emigrated to Latin America as contract laborers did not need this kind of help because their passages were financed by the contracting firms.

As a result of this type of emigration, if there is no regulation against the entry of Chinese, the number of potential new Chinese immigrants into a country would be in proportion to the number of Chinese immigrants already in the country, because more Chinese immigrants can guide and finance more new ones to come through clan relationship. It is in connection with this point that the effects of regulations against the entry of Chinese in Latin American



countries are to be discussed.

All the Latin American countries can be generally classified into three groups based on the effects of immigration laws of these countries on the Chinese immigrants into Latin America. The first group includes those countries, in which the immigration regulations have had a great effect on Chinese immigration to Latin America. The second group includes those where immigration restrictions against Chinese have affected the Chinese immigration only to a limited extent. The third group includes those whose immigration restrictions prohibiting the entry of Chinese did not affect Chinese immigration in Latin America at all.

Cuba, Peru, Mexico, Jamaica and Panama belong to the first group. The immigration restrictions of these countries have greatly reduced the number of Chinese immigrants into Latin America. With the exception of Panama, these are the countries which at first actively promoted Chinese immigration for their own benefit and then adopted immigration restrictions against Chinese only after a considerable number of Chinese had been admitted. The large number of Chinese in these countries would guide and finance more Chinese to come were it not for the immigration restrictions. The history of Chinese immigration in Cuba after 1902 proves this point very well. The Chinese exclusion law was first introduced to Cuba by the United States Military government in 1898, and was confirmed by the Cuban government in 1902. It was suspended for five years from 1917 to 1921, and again

was enforced ever since December of 1921. Even under the law of exclusion between 1902 and 1917, hundreds of Chinese entered clandestinely every year. As the law was suspended in 1917, within five years more than ten thousand Chinese were admitted into Cuba (Table IV). It is very clear that the number of Chinese immigrants was greatly reduced by the exclusion law of Cuba. If there were no such law and Chinese could enter Cuba as freely as in the period of 1917 to 1921, the number of Chinese in Cuba now would be much larger than it is.

The same thing is true in Peru. Although Peru never adopted a Chinese exclusion law as such, restrictions on the entry of Chinese were introduced as early as 1908. After 1908 the number of Chinese immigrants admitted into Peru decreased rapidly. Such is the case in Mexico also. The first restriction on Chinese immigration was introduced in 1921. Within ten years before 1921, more than twenty thousand Chinese entered Mexico without restriction, but within the same length of period after 1921 only about 6,500 Chinese were admitted (Table V).

The history of Chinese immigration in Jamaica tells the same story. The immigration restriction was first introduced in 1919 with the purpose of limiting the number of Chinese immigrants. At first, the regulation was not strictly enforced. As years went by, the regulations became tighter and tighter and the number of Chinese immigrants became smaller and smaller. Table VI shows the decrease in



in the number of Chinese immigrants from 1921 to 1940.

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN JAMAICA, 1943  
According to Year of Entry (a)

Year of Entry	1921-1930	1931-1935	1936-1940
Number of Chinese Immigrants	1,027	342	186

(a) Based on 1943 census.

In the case of Panama, there are no available statistical data to show the decrease in the number of Chinese immigrants caused by immigration restrictions; but the following fact will testify that the number of Chinese immigrants in Panama was greatly reduced because of the immigration restrictions. Within less than thirty years, between 1904 and 1932, the government of Panama revised its Chinese exclusion law three times in order to leave no loopholes in the regulations. The first Chinese exclusion law was introduced in 1904. According to this law, individuals of Chinese racial origin were prohibited from entry. But those who entered before the promulgation of the law were allowed to stay and to return if the absence was less than one year. However, the entry of wives and children of those

who were allowed to stay was not prohibited (1). In 1913, a new law was introduced to prohibit the entry of Chinese under the guise of returning after less than one year absence. According to the 1913 law all those who had entered prior to the effective date of that law were permitted to stay. Every Chinese in the country had to register. Only those whose names were in the "Registro de chinos" were permitted to return after less than two years absence (2). Thus one loophole of the law of 1904 was closed, and no more new immigrants could come under the guise of "returning". There must have been a considerable of Chinese entered Panama after 1904 under the guise of returning. Otherwise it would be unnecessary to introduce the new law. Another loophole was closed in 1928 when the number of "children" and "wives", who were permitted to enter, was limited to a total of ten a year (3). Even under such unfavorable immigration legislation, the number of Chinese immigrants still showed an increase between 1904 and 1930. It was estimated that the number of Chinese in Panama once reached 3,800 in the early nineteen thirties (4). The constant efforts made by the Panamanian government to perfect its Chinese exclusion law, and the number of Chinese who entered Panama through the loopholes of the law, prove very well that if there had been

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(1) Regulacion de la Inmigracion de los Nacionlidad China, March 11, 1904.

(2) Disposiciones Legales vigentes en la Republica de Panama con respecto a inmigracion China, Siria, y Turca, 1917.

(3) K. M. Chen (9), p. 743.

(4) K. M. Chen (9), p. 743.



no such law the number of Chinese immigrants to Panama would have been far greater.

The second group includes those countries which never promoted Chinese immigration, or did so only on a very small scale in the early period. They are Ecuador, Venezuela, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic, which are located geographically close to the Chinese population centers in Latin America, such as Peru, Cuba and Mexico. From these centers small numbers of Chinese had re-emigrated to the countries of the second group, and formed small nuclei of Chinese which in turn attracted more Chinese directly from China. The enactment of exclusion laws in these countries tended to reduce the number of Chinese immigrants to each individual country but had little effect on the Chinese immigration in Latin America as a whole. The major trend of Chinese emigration to Latin America had been toward countries like Cuba, Peru and Mexico, where large numbers of Chinese immigrants had already been admitted. Even if there were no such exclusion laws passed in the eight countries, the number of Chinese immigrants still would not be increased to any great extent. The small number of Chinese immigrants in these countries would only be able to guide and finance a small number of potential new immigrants to come through clan relationship. This point can be well proved by the number of Chinese immigrants in Chile which, like most of the countries of the second group, never actively promoted Chinese immigration.

Although Chile never adopted any immigration restrictions against the entry of Chinese, the number of Chinese in the country has never been larger than two thousand.

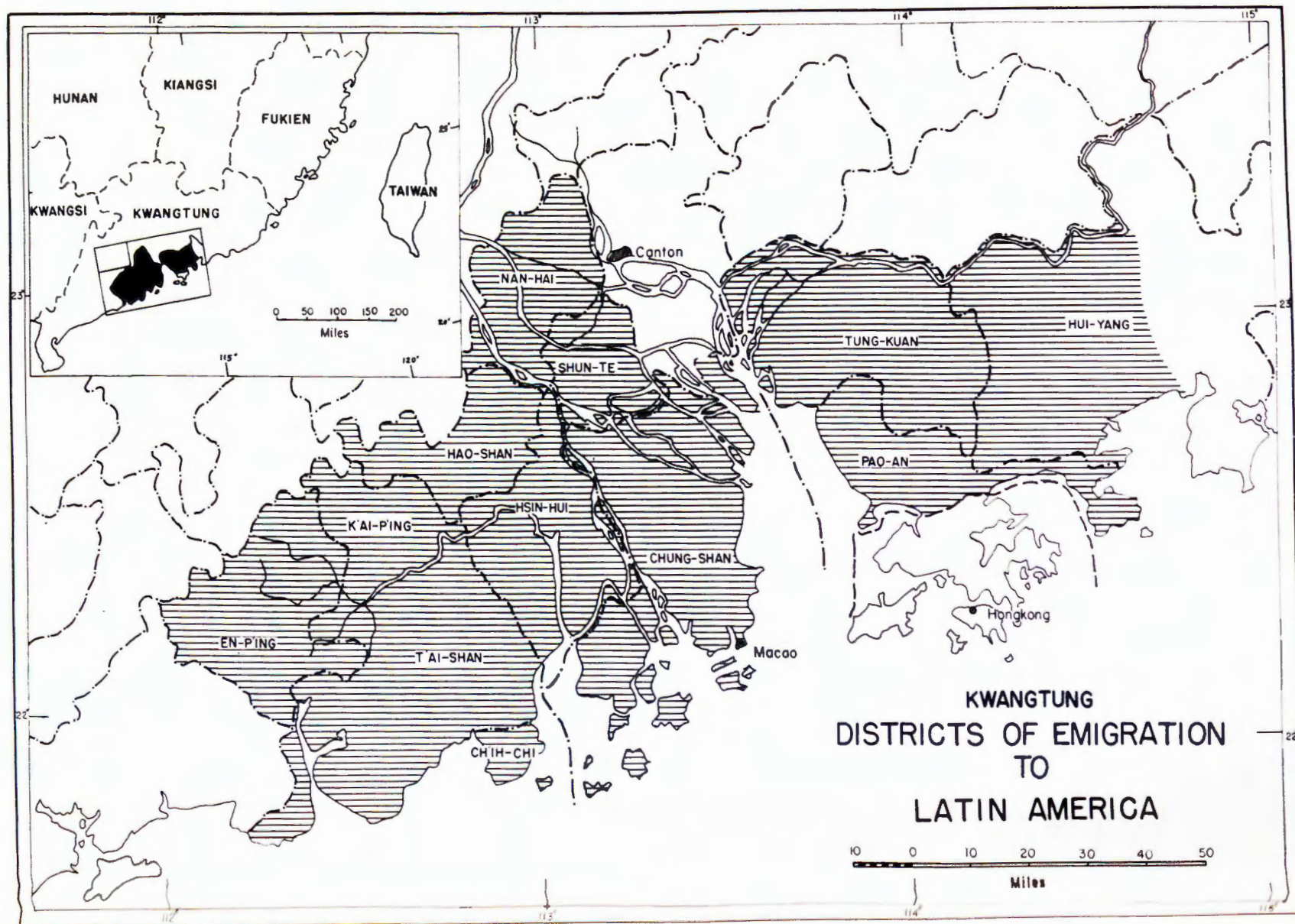
The third group of countries includes Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay. These are the countries which neither promoted Chinese immigration nor are geographically close to any Chinese population center in Latin America. On the other side of the Andes, they are completely beyond the geographical horizon of Chinese emigration to Latin America. Although Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay did adopt laws which prohibited the entry of Chinese, but the prohibition could hardly affect the Chinese immigration to any extent either in these countries or in Latin America as a whole. Argentina and Brazil did not adopt any immigration law against the entry of Chinese (though Brazil started to use a two per cent quota system in 1934), yet the number of Chinese immigrants in each of these two countries has never been more than a few hundred. In Paraguay, the immigration law prohibiting the entry of Chinese was passed in 1903 (1). After about twenty years, it was realized that it was not necessary to have such a clause of prohibition in its immigration law. In 1924 the prohibition of the entry of Chinese was abolished (2). But, even after that still very few Chinese immigrants came. There would be no difference if Bolivia and Uruguay also abolished their Chinese exclusion

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. (1) Immigration Law of 1903, Article 14.

(2) Act No. 691.





laws. In any case they would be the last three countries in Latin America to be reached by a large number of Chinese immigrants.

### C. Geographical Origin of the Chinese Immigrants

Kwangtung and Fukien are the two provinces which supplied more than ninety per cent of the Chinese emigrants to foreign countries (1), and those who emigrated to Latin America are exclusively from Kwangtung. Moreover, they are primarily from within an small area of about seven thousand square miles on the Canton Delta. Within the seven thousand square miles are the following nine hsiens (2): Chung-shan, T'ai-shan, Shun-te, Nan-hai, Hsin-hui, Kai-p'ing, Hao-shan, Kao-yao and En-p'ing (Map III).

The localization of emigration to Latin America within the nine hsiens is caused by the following factors. First, the nine hsiens are right behind the port of Macao, the main center of coolie trade. In the first few years of the trade, the slave traders did collect their human cargoes from Amoy, Swatow, and Hongkong as well as from Macao. But Hongkong was closed to the trade by the British government in 1853, and Amoy and Swatow were also closed by the Chinese government soon after. Under the protection of the

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(1) The rest are mainly from the Provinces of Yunnan and Kwangsi.

(2) The nine hsiens have 6,261,701 total population. The population figure is that of 1946, according to statistical data published by the Ministry of the Interior, Republic of China.



Portuguese, Macao became the only port open to the coolie trade. For about twenty years, the densely populated Canton Delta immediately behind the port of Macao was constantly haunted by the coolie recruiters who worked for the coolie traders. Consequently, the great majority of the emigrants to Latin America during the coolie trade period were from these hsiens. Secondly, these hsiens are also close to Hongkong, the only port on the south China coast which had shipping connections with American ports after the port of Macao was closed to the coolie trade. As a result, all those who emigrated to Latin America as contract laborers after the abolition of the coolie trade were also from these hsiens. Thirdly, as the Chinese emigrants were usually guided and financed by their clan members, emigrants only from these hsiens were able to go to Latin America, because almost all the emigrants brought to Latin America as contract laborers (either during or after coolie trade period) were from these hsiens.

Generally speaking, the number of emigrants from each of the nine hsiens decreases as the distance from the ports of Macao and Hongkong increases. Chung-shan, T'ai-shan, Shun-te, Hsin-hui and Nan-hai are by far the most important centers of emigration to Latin America. Further inland, Hoa-shan, Kai-p'ing, En-p'ing and Kao-yao only supplied comparatively small numbers of emigrants. From the land still farther north and west, very few ever emigrated to Latin America. For example, in Cuba 75 per cent of the

Chinese immigrants are from T'ai-shan, Hsin-hui, Chung-shan and Nan-hai and only 25 per cent are from the other five hsiens (1). The great majority of those in Peru and Panama are from T'ai-shan, Hsin-hui and Chung-shan (2).

In the Chinese cemetery in Havana, there are graves of immigrants who came from Fukien province in the very first few years when the port of Amoy was still open to the coolie trade. But Fukienese have disappeared from the Chinese population in Cuba long ago. There are two main reasons for this. First of all, the trade from the port of Amoy only lasted a few years, and it was on a small scale. A comparatively small number of Fukienese was ever brought over. Secondly, after the port of Amoy was closed to the trade, the shipping connection between Fukien on one hand and Cuba and Peru on the other was completely cut off, while the connections between Kwangtung and Latin America were kept through the port of Hongkong, even after the port of Macao was closed.

At this point, it should be pointed out that the Chinese in Jamaica are the only group of Chinese in Latin America not from the Canton Delta. They are almost exclusively from Tung-kuan, Pao-an and the western part of Hui-yang (Map III), the three hsiens east of the Chu-kiang

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(1) Statistics on Overseas Chinese in Cuba (58), pp. 7-8.

(2) K. M. Chen (9), p. 761; and L. Liu (38).

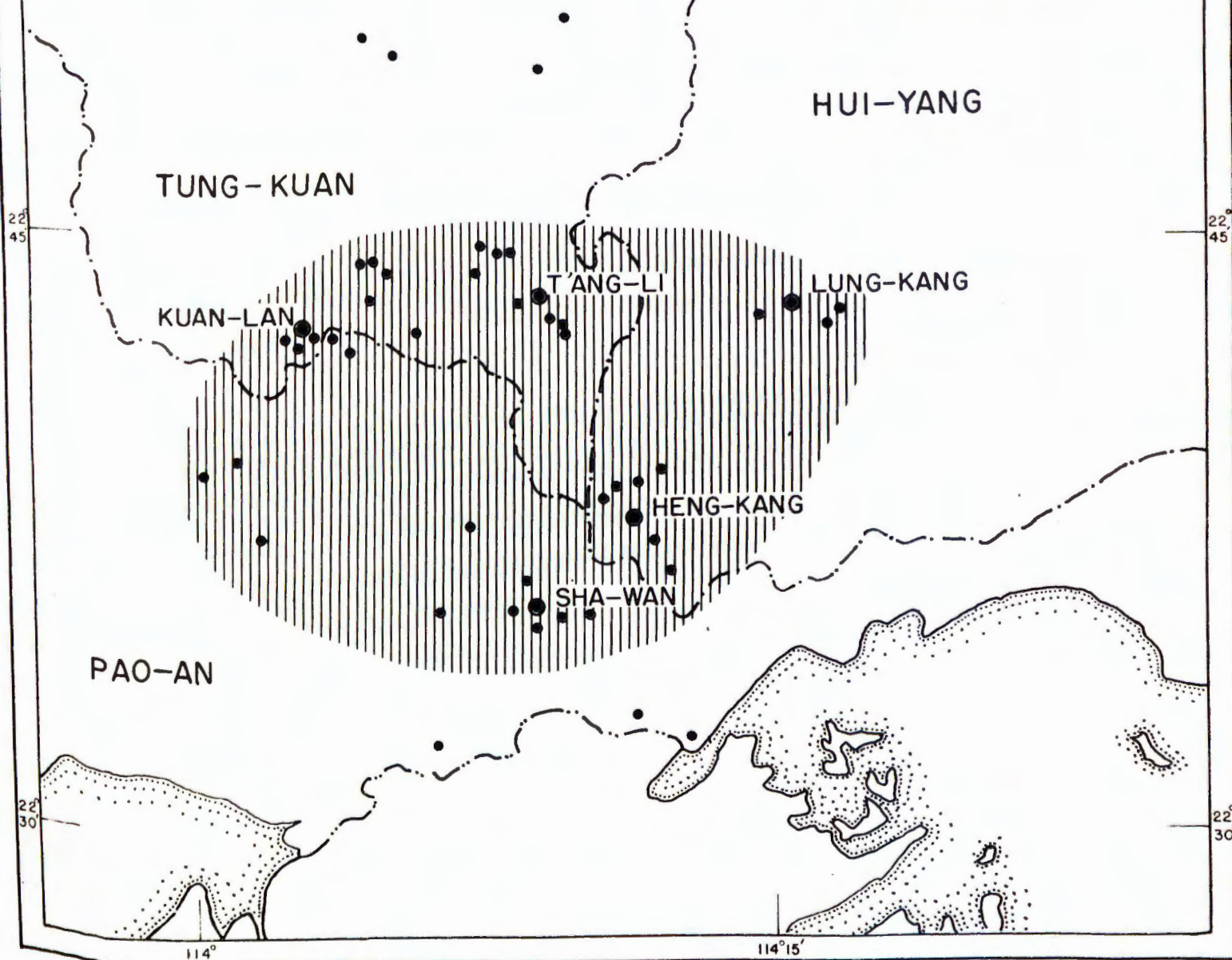
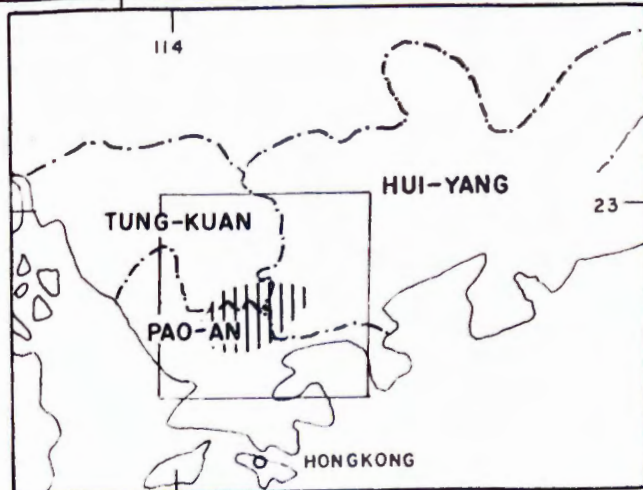


114°

# KWANGTUNG MAJOR AREA OF EMIGRATION TO JAMAICA



- TOWNS
- VILLAGES OF EMIGRATION



estuary directly behind the port of Hongkong (1). The reason for this is that Jamaica did not import any Chinese laborer in the coolie trade period. The only shipload of Chinese contract laborers Jamaica ever received directly from China was recruited by the British in 1884 from the three hsiens. Consequently, only those who were natives of these hsiens could emigrate to Jamaica under the guidance and subsidy of their clan members in that country.

The clan subsidy type of emigration even further accentuates the localization of origin of emigration. For example, within Tung-kuan, Pao-an and Hui-yang, the area of emigration is limited to only a few townships. Those who are from Tung-kuan hsien are mainly from Kuan-lan and Tang-li; those who are from Pao-an hsien are primarily from Sha-wan; and those who are from Hui-yang hsien are mostly from Lung-kang and Heng-kang (Map IV). Only a small number of Chinese in Jamaica are from areas outside of these few townships (Table VII). Furthermore, the clan subsidy type of emigration also tended to localize the origin of emigrants having the same surname within one township. For example, the great majority of the Chens in Jamaica were originally from Kwan-lan; most of the Tsengs and Chengs were from Tang-li; the Hos, mainly from Heng-kang; and the Lees, mostly from Sha-wan and Lung-kang; and more than half of the 910

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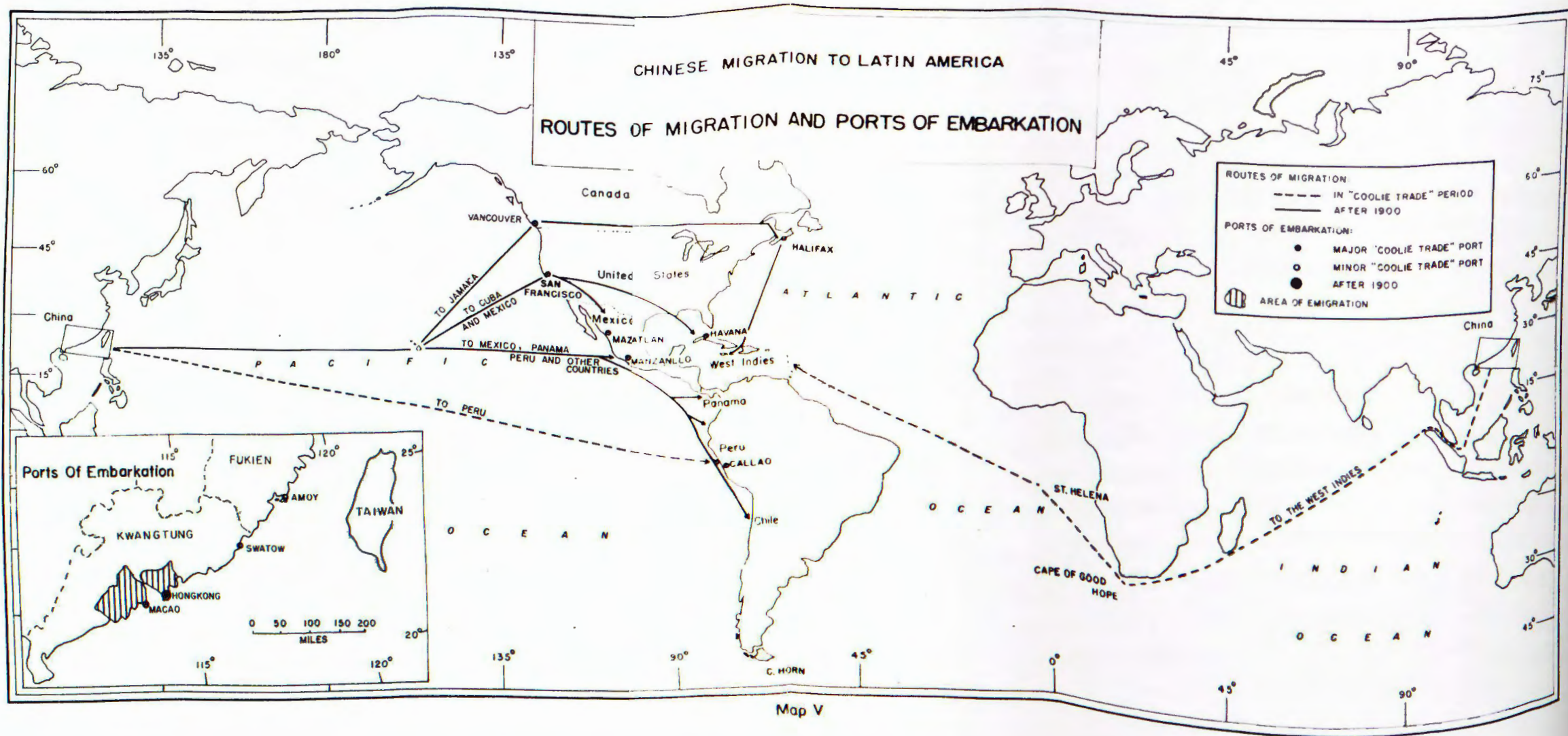
(1) Among all the Chinese immigrants interviewed by the author in Jamaica, only one was from the Canton Delta.



TABLE VII  
PLACE OF BIRTH OF 910 CHINESE IMMIGRANTS  
IN JAMAICA (a)

Place of Birth		Number
Hsien	Township	
Tung-kuan		493
	Kwan-lan	240
	T'ang-li	200
Pao-an		251
	Shu-wan	108
Hui-yang		166
	Lung-kang	67
	Heng-kang	76
Total		910
		691

(a) The table is based on the record of the Chinese cemetery in Kingston, Jamaica. The record includes all those who died between 1912 and 1953. Out of 1,289 with place of birth recorded, 1,018 were born in China, and 910 were born in Tung-kuan, Pao-an and Hui-yang.





Chinese immigrants in Jamaica (1) belong to these five clans.

The tendency of localization within a few townships also can be observed on the Canton Delta. For example, a great number of those from Nan-hai hsien are from Kiu-kiang, and those from T'ai-shan hsien are from Hai-yen.

#### D. Ports of Embarkation and Routes of Migration

During the coolie trade period, Macao was the only port of embarkation for those who emigrated to Latin America, although for a short period a number of ships did leave Amoy, Swatow and Hongkong with Chinese contract laborers for Peru and Cuba (Map V). In the harbor of Macao there were ships of all flags, including French, Portuguese, Russian, Dutch, American, Peruvian and others. Those ships whose destination was Peru always sailed eastward across the Pacific and headed directly for the port of Callao. The majority of these ships were Peruvian. Those whose destination was the West Indies sailed westward across the Indian Ocean, around the Cape of Good Hope and then across the Atlantic by way of St. Helena and headed for Havana and other ports (2). That was long before the Panama Canal was opened. Between China and the West Indies, the voyage around the Cape of Good Hope is

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(1) See footnote of Table VII.

(2) A. B. Lubbock (39), p. 69.



shorter than around Cape Horn (1), and the rough sea near Cape Horn was purposely avoided by sailing-ships in the 19th century.

After the coolie trade was over, Hongkong became the main port of embarkation for the Chinese emigrants to Latin America because of the regular direct shipping connections between Hongkong and American ports. The migration route to Peru did not change very much. Only the modern liners called at the ports of Mexico and Panama first, and then sailed southward along the west coast of South America. Along this route traveled all the emigrants to Panama, Ecuador, Peru and Chile, and also most of those to southern Mexico. The route to the West Indies around the Cape of Good Hope was abandoned as soon as the coolie trade was over. The first group of Chinese arrived in Jamaica directly from China in 1884 by way of Vancouver and Halifax. From that time on, the Hongkong-Vancouver-Halifax-Kingston route was used by most of the emigrants to Jamaica until the early nineteen thirties. Only a small number of them came by way of the Panama Canal. Those who emigrated to Cuba in the 20th century came mostly by way of the United States, especially during the five year period of mass migration between 1917 and 1921. Thus, Hongkong-San Francisco-Havana was the route of migration to Cuba.

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(1) The voyage around the Cape of Good Hope is 12,500 nautical miles and that around Cape Horn is 14,600 nautical miles by way of Fiji and 16,200 nautical miles by way of Honolulu, according to Philips' Mercantile Marine Atlas.



The Panama Canal was never used by any great number of Chinese emigrants to the West Indies. First of all, the northern routes are shorter ones (1). Secondly, there have always been more frequent direct shipping connections between Hongkong and Vancouver and San Francisco than between Hongkong and Panama.

Before the mass emigration to Mexico started in 1900 not a small number of the Chinese immigrants in that country had re-emigrated from the United States. Although there were direct steamship lines between Hongkong and Manzanillo, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, organized to serve Chinese emigrants to Mexico in the first decade of the century, they did not last very long. After that many of the emigrants landed at San Francisco first and then traveled overland to Mexico. This route was used especially by those whose destination was Baja California or other northern states.

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(1) For example, from Hongkong to Havana by way of San Francisco is 8,051 nautical miles, and is 10,995 nautical miles by way of Panama Canal.

### CHAPTER III

#### SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION OF CHINESE POPULATION IN LATIN AMERICA

##### A. The Number of Chinese in Latin America

It is almost impossible to give, without some margin of error, the number of Chinese in Latin America. This is mainly because the population censuses of all Latin American countries do not give the number of Chinese separately under "race" with the exception of the census of the British West Indies. Chinese are enumerated either as "Amarillos" or as "Asiaticos". However, most of the population censuses give the number of Chinese by nationality or by place of birth, and a few of them also give the number of naturalized Chinese.

Although all of the Latin American countries participated in the "1950 Census of the Americas", at the time when this dissertation was being written some of them, such as Cuba and Jamaica, had not published the results, and a few others, such as Chile and Colombia, had published only a very brief summary or part of the results, which did not offer anything of value to the present study. In these cases, the censuses of the nineteen forties and even of the nineteen thirties had to be used.

Besides the population censuses of the Latin American



countries, there are some Chinese sources of information. The Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission has its own estimates of the numbers of Chinese in these countries. The estimates were, by and large, based on Chinese consular reports of the nineteen forties. In their books, Mr. K. M. Chen and Mr. Ling Liu also give the numbers of Chinese in some of these countries which they visited recently (1). Most of these figures were compiled by the leaders of the local Chinese communities in each country. By checking all these data it has been possible to determine the numbers of Chinese in Latin American countries with considerable accuracy (2). The results are shown in Table VIII.

According to the numbers shown in Table VIII there are about seventy-seven thousand Chinese all together in Latin America at the present time. Within the past one hundred years or so, there have been more than three hundred and fifty thousand Chinese immigrants to Latin America (3). Why is the number of Chinese at the present time less than one hundred thousand? This is, to some extent, due to re-emigration to China such as in Mexico, but mainly due to the highly unbalanced sex ratio among the Chinese immigrants. Throughout the past one hundred years and in every country all over the continent, the most outstanding demographic

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(1) K. M. Chen (9) and L. Liu (38).

(2) For details, see Appendix C.

(3) See Chapter II.

TABLE VIII

## ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF CHINESE IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

By Race (a)

Country	Number of Chinese	Year	Country	Number of Chinese	Year
Argentina	250	1950	Mexico	12,000	1950
Bolivia	30	1950	Nicaragua	650	1950
Brazil	704	1950	Panama	2,700	1950
Chile	1,239	1950	Paraguay	10	1950
Colombia	650	1950	Peru	12,000	1940
Costa Rica	933	1950	Uruguay	60	1950
Cuba	23,000	1943	Venezuela	1,300	1950
Dom. Repub.	561	1950	Jamaica	6,886	1943
Ecuador	1,000	1950	Trinidad	5,641	1946
El Salvador	250	1950	Brit. Guiana	3,567	1946
Guatemala	1,000	1950	Surinam	2,293	1941
Haiti	37	1950			
Honduras	381	1950	Total	77,142	

(a) For sources see Appendix C.





feature among Chinese immigrants has been the extremely small number of women. This was true especially during the coolie-trade period (1). As a result of the unbalanced sex ratio, the Chinese population in Latin America has tended to show a natural decrease. Consequently, ever since Chinese immigration into most Latin American countries was limited by government regulations the Chinese population in Latin America has been decreasing continuously.

## B. Patterns of Distribution

### 1. Regional Concentration

The distribution of Chinese in Latin America shows clearly a pattern of regional concentration. Although there is not a single Latin American country which does not have Chinese, two-thirds of the total seventy-seven thousand Chinese in Latin America are concentrated in Middle America. The other one-third are in South America, and half of this number are concentrated in Peru. There are only about one thousand Chinese in the vast area east of the Andes and south of the Amazon. Among them more than seven hundred are found in Brazil (Map VI).

First of all, the immigration regulations governing the entry of Chinese into the Latin American countries have hardly anything to do with the uneven distribution. As a

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(1) The detail will be discussed in Chapter IV. Also see Appendix C.



matter of fact, Argentina never adopted any measure against the entry of Chinese and she has no more than two hundred Chinese. On the other hand, Cuba has the largest Chinese population in Latin America although she has adopted Chinese exclusion laws ever since 1898, except for a very short period between 1917 and 1921. Nicaragua, Guatemala and Costa Rica in Central America, as well as Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay in South America, adopted regulations barring Chinese immigrants, yet the three Central American countries have more than two thousand Chinese, while the three South American countries have less than one hundred.

Secondly, there is no correlation whatsoever between climate and the distribution of Chinese in Latin America. Although these Chinese emigrated from a humid-subtropical climate (Cfa), in Latin America they have settled in various climates. They are concentrated on lands of dry climate (BW) (such as Northern Mexico and the Pacific coast of Peru) as well as on lands of tropical-rainforest climate (Af) (such as British Guiana) and tropical-savanna climate (AW) (such as Cuba). There are less than 1 per cent in Cfa climate of Argentina and Paraguay.

The main factor which controls the distribution of Chinese in Latin America lies in the history of Chinese immigration. Large numbers of Chinese are found only in those countries which have actively promoted Chinese immigration in one period or another within the past hundred years. These countries are Peru, Cuba, Mexico and the

British West Indies. From them, small numbers of Chinese migrated into neighboring countries, such as Chile, Ecuador and Colombia, and through the years these migrants attracted more Chinese from China to join them. Countries such as Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina, which have never promoted Chinese immigration and are far away from these Chinese immigration centers, have never had a large Chinese population.

Even in the area east of the Andes and south of the Amazon, the history of Chinese immigration plays the leading role in the distribution of Chinese. This area includes Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina. Among these countries Brazil is the only one which once voluntarily brought in several hundred Chinese. Out of the 1,054 Chinese in all these countries at the present time, 704 are in Brazil.

## 2. Concentration in Urban Centers

The second characteristic of the distribution of Chinese in Latin America is concentration in cities, especially in a few large urban centers. This is true in almost every country throughout the continent, no matter whether the total number of Chinese in the country is large or small.

In Cuba, according to the 1943 census, 71 per cent of



the Chinese (1) live in cities of more than five thousand inhabitants, and 42 per cent are found in Havana alone. The 1940 census of Mexico shows that 62 per cent of the Chinese (2) lived in cities of more than ten thousand inhabitants and one-third of them were in Mexico City, Tampico, Mérida and Mexicali. In Peru there are no urban Chinese population data for the country as a whole. According to the 1931 census of the provinces of Lima and Callao, 84 per cent of the Chinese were classified as urban. In Panama, the 1940 census indicates that 85 per cent of the Chinese (3) were urban, and 62 per cent of these were in the city of Panama. In British Guiana, according to the census of 1946, 60 per cent of the Chinese were in Georgetown alone. In Jamaica more than half of the Chinese are in the metropolitan area of Kingston.

The concentration in urban centers is even more clearly shown in countries with a small Chinese population. The 1950 census of Honduras shows 92 per cent of the Chinese were in cities, and that of El Salvador shows 94 per cent in cities. In the Dominican Republic, 96 per cent of the Chinese are urban.

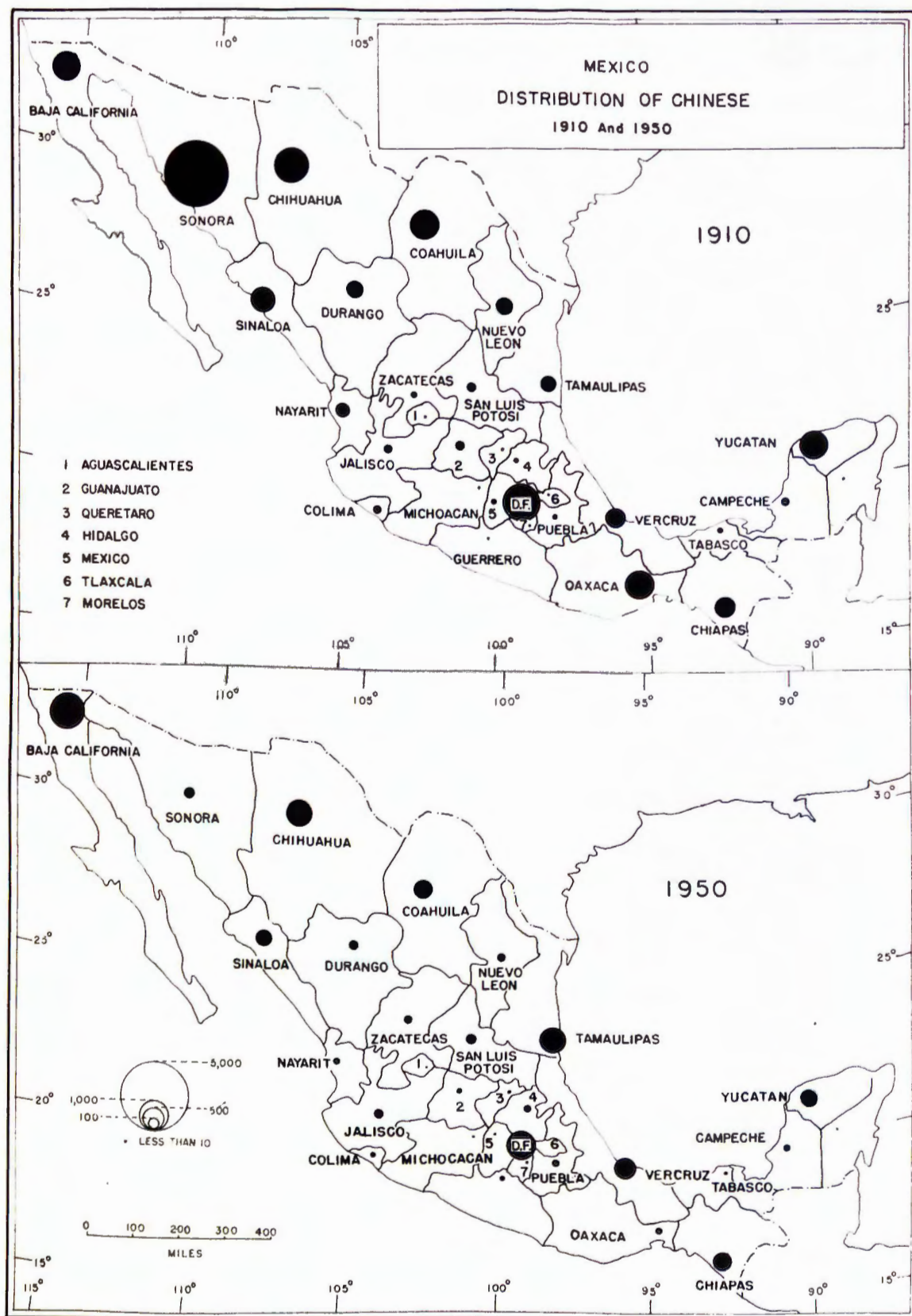
In Venezuela, according to the 1941 census, 63 per cent of the 1,022 Chinese numbered were in Caracas and Maracaibo. In other countries the trend of urban concentration is the same although we do not have census figures

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(1) By place of birth.

(2) By place of birth.

(3) By nationality.





to show the exact percentage of the urban Chinese population. In Colombia, most of the Chinese are found in Barranguilla (1), in Ecuador, most are in Guayaquil (2); and in Chile, the Chinese are concentrated in the cities of Iquique, Antofagasta and Santiago (3).

Why are the Chinese in Latin America concentrated in cities? The main reason is their occupation. Almost all of them are engaged in commercial activities, and naturally they find cities to be the best place to practice their business.

In general, we may conclude that the distribution of Chinese in Latin America as a whole is mainly determined by two factors: the history of immigration and the occupation of the Chinese.

### 3. The Distribution of Chinese in Mexico

The great majority of Chinese in Mexico are not found in the densely populated central region, but in the sparsely populated outlying regions (Map VII). More than 75 per cent of the total Chinese population of Mexico are in the states of Baja California, Coahuila, Chiapas, Chihuahua, Nuevo Leon, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, Veracruz and Yucatán. In the central region, the Distrito Federal is the only place which has a large number of Chinese, and all the other ten states

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(1) L. Liu (38), p. 13.

(2) K. M. Chen (9), p. 787.

(3) K. M. Chen (9), p. 793.



of this region together have less than 5 per cent of the Chinese in Mexico. Thus, all the urban centers, except Mexico City, which have large numbers of Chinese are found in the outlying regions (Map VII). From the very beginning, the states in the north and along the Gulf coast have been the main receiving areas of Chinese immigrants. It was in the sparsely populated outlying states that the lack of labor was keenly felt around the turn of the century when railroads were to be built, minerals to be mined, and plantation agriculture to be developed. Chinese laborers were brought in first from the United States and then directly from China to meet the need. It was also in these outlying states that local economic prosperity was experienced and new urban centers were growing during the first quarter of the century, when the Chinese immigration was in full swing. Most of the Chinese eventually settled in the growing urban centers to benefit from the prosperity by applying their talent in trade.

The Chinese immigration into Yucatán was closely associated with the development of henequen cultivation and the growth of the city of Mérida. During the Spanish-America War, the supply of manila hemp was cut off. The demand for inexpensive supplies of strong twine in the world market was high (1) and stimulated the expansion of the cultivation of

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(1) Especially in the expanding U.S. wheat regions where large amount of binder twines were needed by the ever-increasing number of harvest machines.



henequen into large scale production. Chinese laborers, among other nationals, were brought over to work in the henequen plantations. The first group of 800 Chinese laborers arrived in 1900. Before long, some of them left the plantations and settled in Mérida. Their success in commercial fields under the general economic prosperity enjoyed by the city also attracted more Chinese to join them in later years.

In Baja California, as early as 1880, there were Chinese laborers from the United States working in the gold mines of Real and Alamo (1). But the real stimulation to Chinese immigration was the development of cotton plantations in the Mexicali district and the growth of the city of Mexicali. Since 1909, the need of labor in the newly developed cotton plantations attracted a large number Chinese immigrants to the Mexicali district. The Chinese contributed not only their labor to the cultivation of cotton, but also their commercial ingenuity to the growth of Mexicali. When the Chinese laborer first came to the Mexicali district, Mexicali was only a small village. During the course of the following 30 years, its population increased to 19,000 by 1940. The Chinese did not fail to enjoy the prosperity of the evergrowing border city. Most of the retail business of Mexicali has always been in their hands, and it has always been one of the centers of Chinese population in Mexico.

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 544.

The Chinese immigration in Tamaulipas was closely associated with the prosperity and rapid growth of Tampico, which was caused by the petroleum industry. The Chinese first worked on the construction of the railroad connecting Tampico with San Luis Potosí, then in the oil fields. But above all, business opportunities in the prosperous city of Tampico attracted more Chinese to come and to stay. The population of Tampico increased from 14,000 in 1905 to 120,000 in 1924, and the number of Chinese increased from about 200 in 1910 to more than 6,000 in 1920.

Chiapas received its first Chinese immigrants in 1890, not as laborers but as merchants. They were from Panama. Their success in business in the city of Tapachula attracted more Chinese to settle in the state of Chiapas, and especially in the city of Tapachula. In 1898, one thousand Chinese laborers were brought to Oaxaca to build a railroad (1). Some of them migrated to Chiapas in later years.

The Chinese migration to the states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Sinaloa and Sonora was initiated by the construction of railroads and the development of mining industries. Later on the growth of the cities along the railroads and in the mining districts offered good chances to the commercially inclined Chinese to stay and be prosperous and also attracted more Chinese to join them. In 1864, the first group of Chinese laborers was brought from the United

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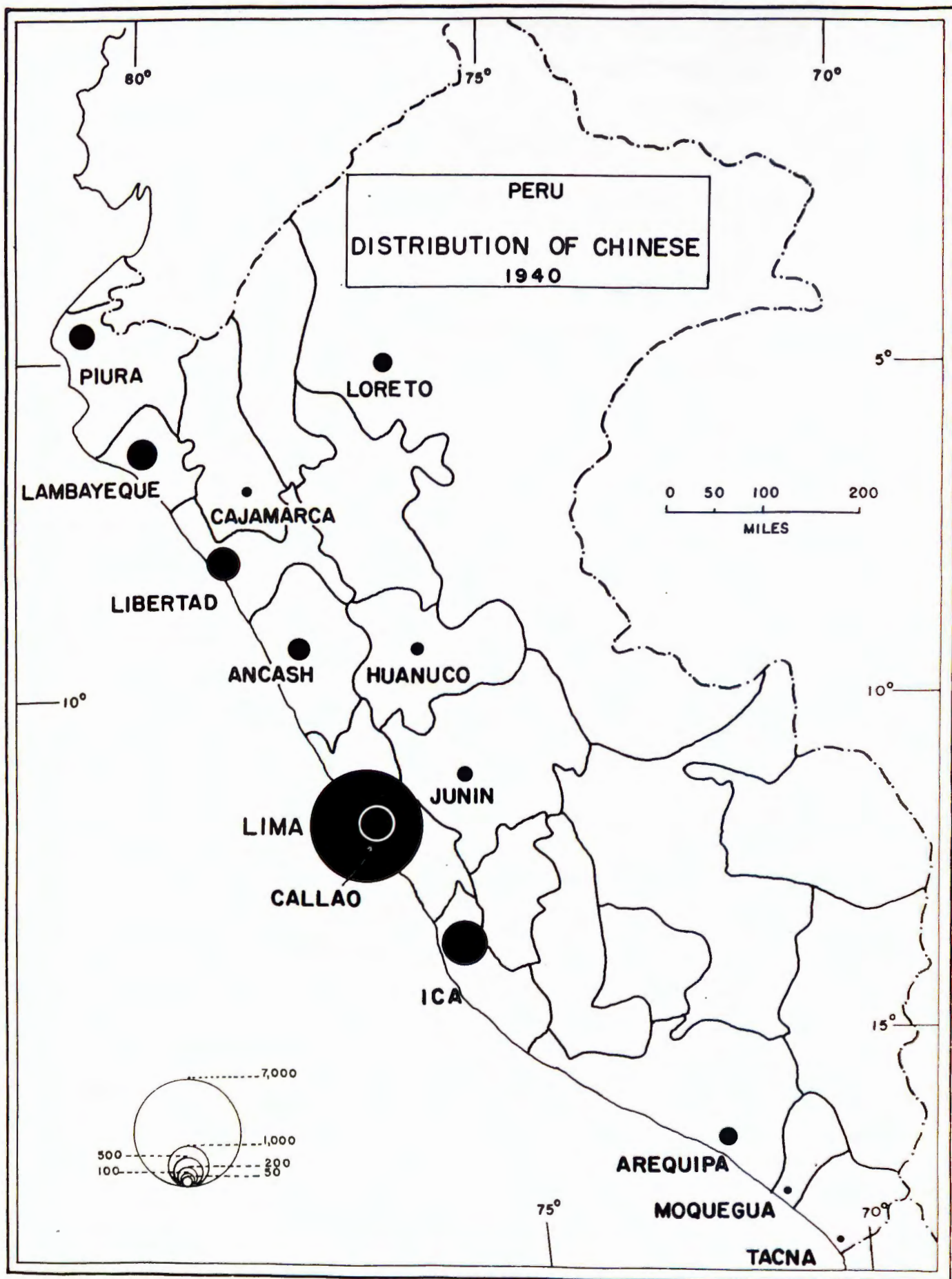
(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 497



States to work on the construction of the Nacional Central, which extends from Juárez, Chihuahua southward. Coahuila received 800 Chinese to work in the coal mine of San Felipe in 1896. Before long most of these laborers escaped from the coal mine and headed for Monterrey and other cities. In Monterrey they were joined by 400 more Chinese in 1904, who were brought over to work on the construction of the reservoir. In the first decade of 1900 the construction of the South Pacific Railroad from Guaymas to Mazatlán in Sinaloa, and the copper mines of Cananea in Sonora drew large numbers of Chinese immigrants. As a matter of fact, Guaymas and Mazatlán were the two major ports of entry for Chinese immigrants to Northern Mexico, and Sinaloa and Sonora received more Chinese immigrants than any other state during the construction of the South Pacific Road. By the end of 1910, the present pattern of distribution of Chinese in Mexico had already taken shape (Map VII). In the following twenty years, the great majority of Chinese immigrants were to be received by these outlying states. If there were any large number of immigrants who settled outside of these states, they were to be found in the city of Mexico, the largest commercial center of the country. For example, within the three years of 1927-1929, there were 1,329 Chinese immigrants to Mexico and all of them were exclusively received by the eight outlying states and the city of Mexico (1).

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(1) Mexico (106), p. 33 and Mexico (107), p. 24.



Map VIII



There has been no change in the general pattern of distribution between 1910 and 1950 (Map VII). Throughout these forty years, the great majority of Chinese immigrants have always been in the eight outlying states and the city of Mexico. However, the number of Chinese in Sinaloa and Sonora declined rapidly after 1930 (Map VII). This decline was caused by an anti-Chinese movement which broke out in these two states in 1930 and 1931, and which resulted in the emigration of a large number of Chinese from the area (1). All the other states also show a decrease in the number of Chinese. The decrease was due mainly to a lack of new immigrants and to more deaths than births because of the small number of Chinese women in Mexico.

#### 4. The Distribution of Chinese in Peru

Although about 64 per cent of the Peruvian population lives in the highlands and only 25 per cent on the coast, the great majority of Chinese in Peru are found in the coastal provinces (Map VIII). Out of 10,915 Chinese in 1940, only 507 of them are found in the highlands. Along the Pacific coast, the province of Lima has the largest Chinese population, which amounts to almost two-thirds of the Chinese in Peru. A considerable number of Chinese can be found also in almost every province along the coast, from Piura in the

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(1) The causes of anti-Chinese movement will be given in Chapter V.

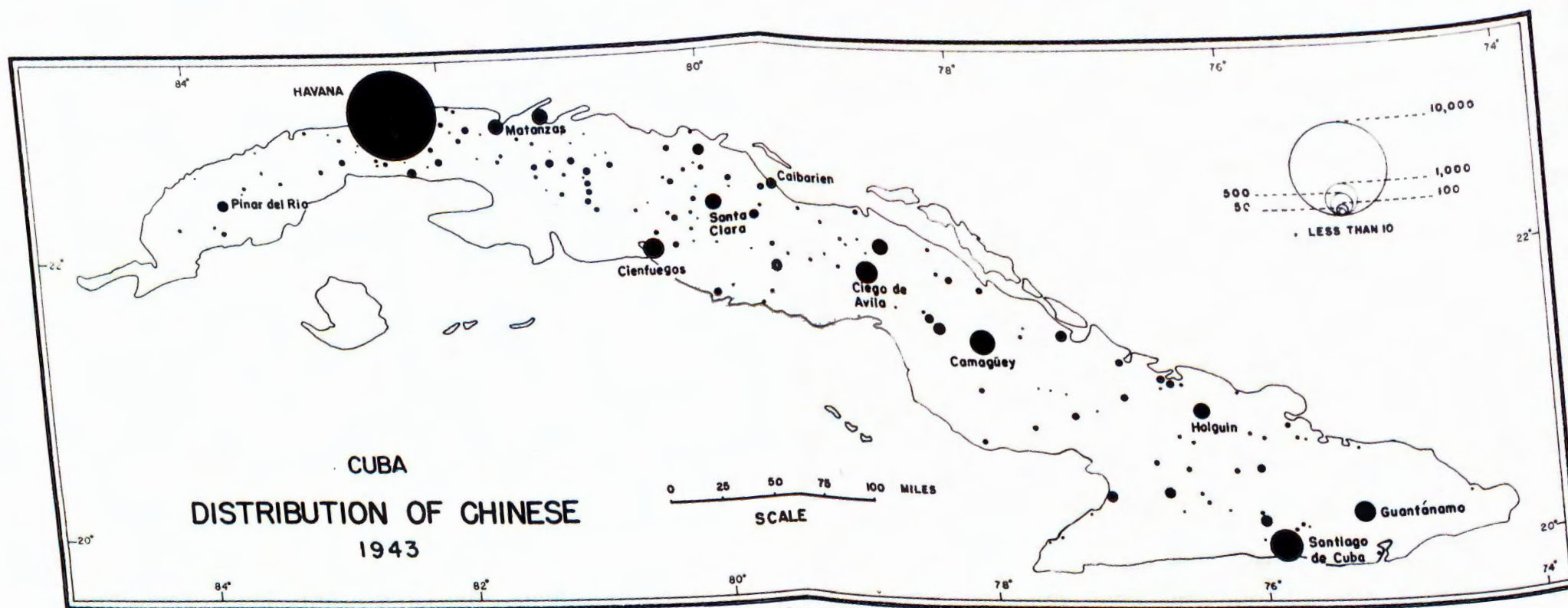
north to Arequipa in the south. Within the province of Lima, they are concentrated in the city of Lima, which next only to Havana, has the largest Chinese population in Latin America. Outside of the province of Lima the Chinese are found mostly in the major port cities, such as Callao, Paíta, and in the major urban centers of the large oases, such as Piura, Chiclayo, Trujillo, Ica and Arequipa.

#### 5. The Distribution of Chinese in Chile

From the very beginning, the Chinese in Chile have always been concentrated in the sparsely populated desert area of the north, especially in Tarapaca. They came first to work as cooks, laborers and servants in the mining camps. After saving a small amount of capital they entered into small businesses of various kinds in the mining communities.

In 1930, of 1,605 Chinese in Chile, 893 were in Tarapaca and 415 in Antofagasta. During the Second World War some of them migrated southward to Santiago, where the Chinese population increased from 139 in 1930 to more than 300 in 1950. However, Iquique in Tarapaca, one of the driest spots on the earth, still has the largest Chinese population in Chile. The third major city which has a large number of Chinese is Antofagasta.





Map IX

## 6. The Distribution of Chinese on the Caribbean Islands

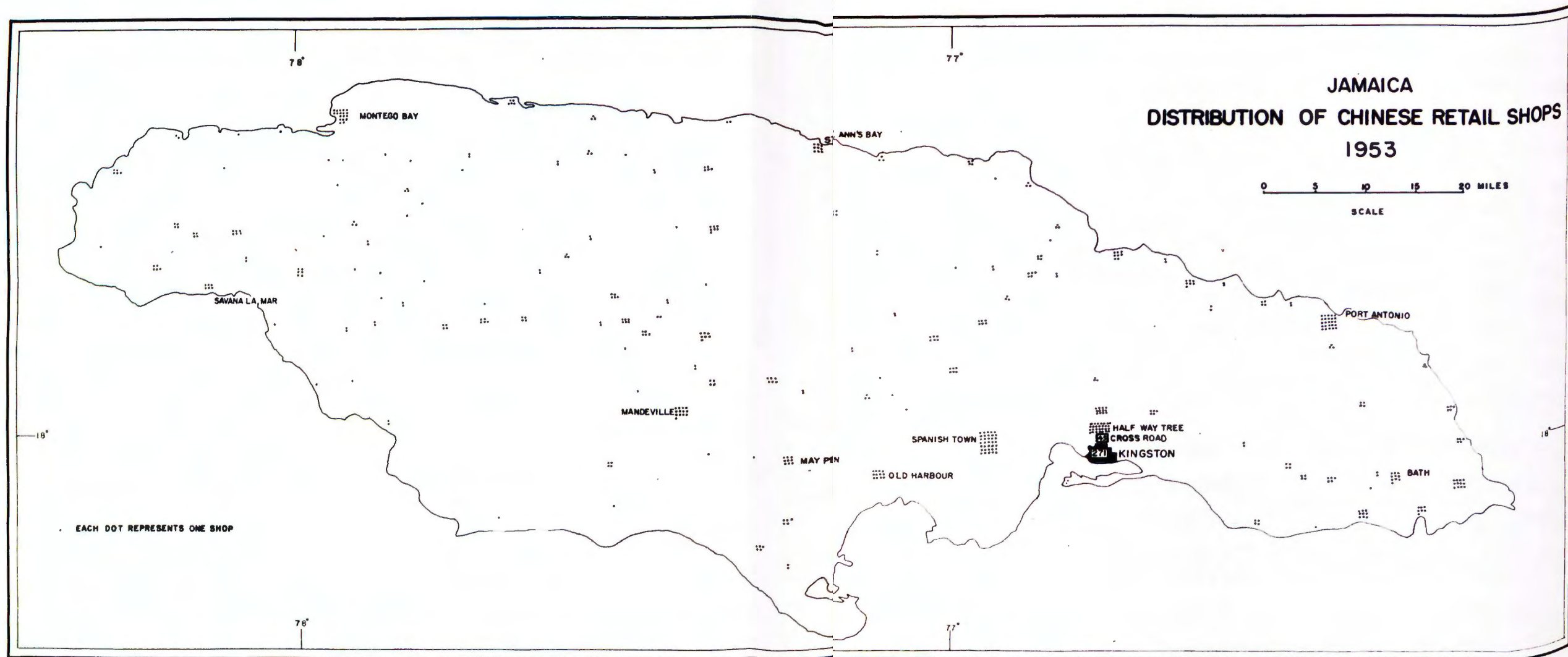
In Cuba, Jamaica and Trinidad live 45 per cent of the Chinese in Latin America. The distribution of Chinese on these small Caribbean islands is quite different from that in Mexico, Peru and Chile, where the majority of the Chinese population is found in the relatively less-populated areas. On the Islands the pattern of distribution of Chinese population follows closely that of the total population.

Cuba has the largest Chinese population among all the Latin American countries. Out of 78,000 Chinese in Latin America 23,000, or about 30 per cent, are in Cuba. They are widely distributed throughout the island, in small villages as well as in large cities. From Pinar del Rio on the west to Santiago de Cuba on the east, Chinese are found in most settlements of more than one thousand inhabitants, and in every city of more than five thousand (1). Nevertheless, the majority of Chinese are concentrated in large cities. Generally speaking, the number of Chinese in a city decreases as the size of the city decreases. The largest Cuban urban center, Havana, has the largest Chinese population, not only in Cuba, but also in Latin America. It has about ten thousand Chinese in its metropolitan area, outranked only by San Francisco and New York City in the Western Hemisphere.

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(1) According to 1943 census there are 256 cities and villages of more than 1,000 population. All but 74 of them have some Chinese. In the same year there were 55 cities of more than 5,000 population.





The second largest Chinese population center is Santiago de Cuba, the second city of Cuba. Camagüey, the third city, is the third largest Chinese population center, which is followed by Ciego de Avila, Cienfuegos and Guantánamo in order (Table IX) (Map IX).

In Jamaica and Trinidad, the Chinese distribution shows the same pattern as in Cuba. They are widely distributed throughout the islands with heavy concentration in the capital cities. Within the city of Kingston, an area less than 11 square miles, live 2,472 Chinese, 35 per cent of the total in Jamaica. Within its metropolitan area, which includes Halfway Tree and Cross Road, there are at least 3,500 Chinese. After Havana and Lima, Kingston is the third urban center with large Chinese population in Latin America. Outside of the Kingston Metropolitition Area, Chinese can be found in almost every town and village. Traveling from Kingston in any direction across the island one can hardly find a town or village without seeing at least one or two Chinese shops. Generally speaking, the number of Chinese is generally in proportion with the size of the settlement. Spanish Town, Port Antonio and Montego Bay are the three large towns outside of Kingston, and stand out as three secondary Chinese concentration centers on the island. Map X shows the distribution of Chinese retail shops on the island, since the great majority of the Chinese in Jamaica are in retail business (1), the map can be used as a fairly accurate

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(1) See Chapter V.



TABLE IX

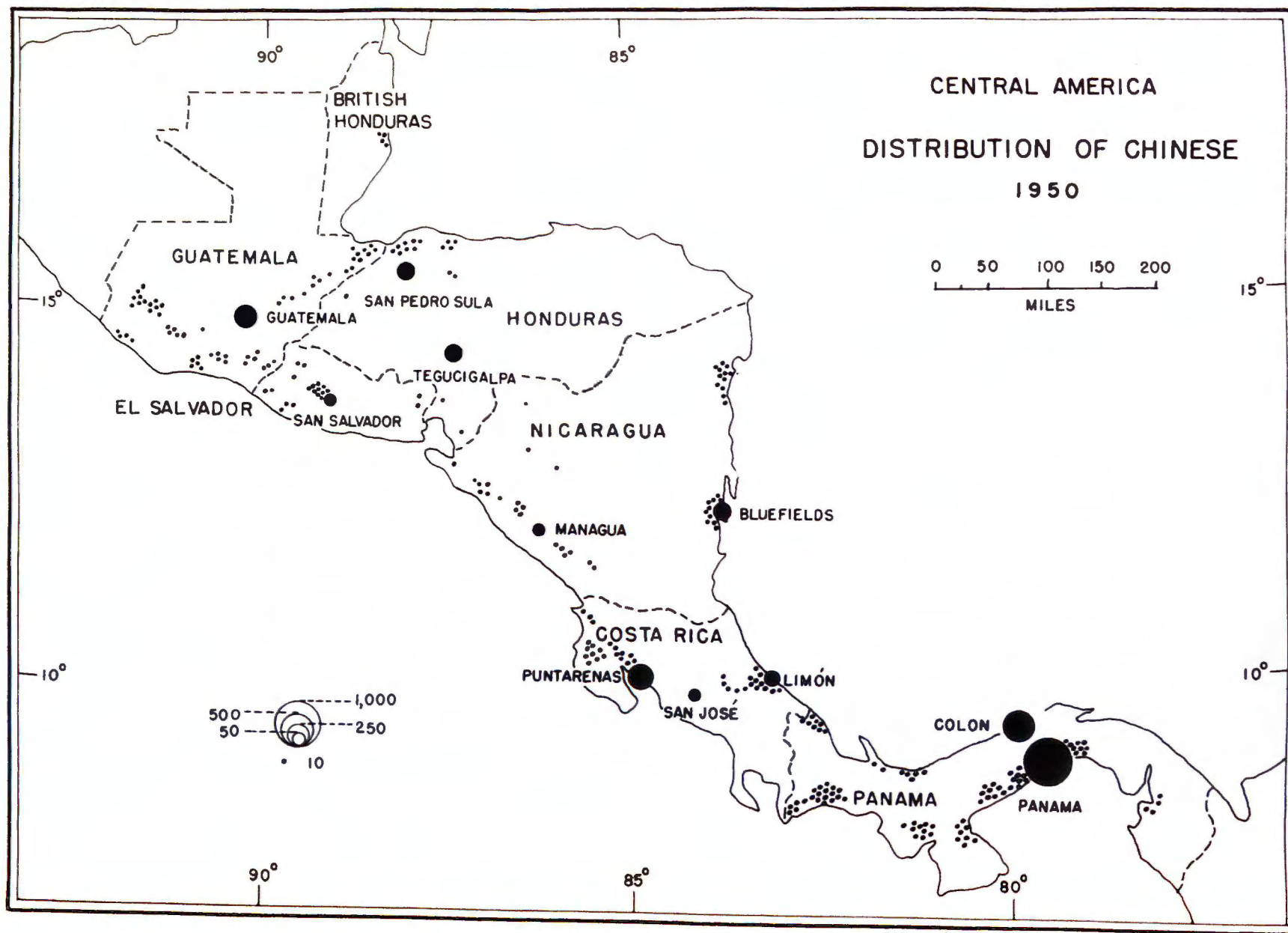
## CUBAN CITIES WITH MORE THAN 200 CHINESE POPULATION

City	Number of Chinese (a)	Total Population (b)
Habana (c)	9,570	807,858
Santiago de Cuba	1,086	118,266
Camagüey	601	80,509
Ciego de Avila	525	23,802
Cienfuegos	453	52,910
Guantánamo	375	42,423
Santa Clara	269	53,981
Cardenas	237	37,059
Holguin	209	35,865

(a) Chinese consular report 1944.

(b) 1943 census

(c) Havana metropolitan area, including Marianao and Regla.



Map XI



index of Chinese distribution.

In Trinidad, Port-of-Spain has 2,441 Chinese, about 43 per cent of all the Chinese on the island, and is the fourth Chinese urban center in Latin America. Outside Port-of-Spain, Chinese are widely distributed throughout the island, following closely the distribution of total population as shown by Table X.

#### 7. The Distribution of Chinese in Central America

There are about 5,900 Chinese in the 6 Central American republics, only 7 per cent of the total in Latin America. Except in El Salvador where the Chinese urban population is only 60 per cent of the total Chinese population in the country, in Central America as a whole the great majority of the Chinese are classified as urban population. There are more than 1,200 Chinese in Panama City alone. It is the largest Chinese urban center in Central America and has more Chinese than any of the other five republics. Colon, with five hundred Chinese, is the second largest Chinese urban center. The capital city and the leading port are the concentration spots of Chinese in each of the other republics (Map XI).

TABLE X  
DISTRIBUTION OF CHINESE AND TOTAL POPULATION  
IN TRINIDAD (a)

City of County	Number of Total Population	Number of Chinese
Port-of-Spain	92,793	2,441
St. George	146,431	1,144
Victoria	116,283	837
St. Patricke	69,183	530
Caroni	61,739	310
E. Corties	44,333	337
St. Andrew	23,285	193
Nariva	11,815	43
David	5,037	58
Mayaro	4,196	43

(a) Based on the 1946 census.



## CHAPTER IV

### DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

#### A. Sex Groups

Although Chinese immigrants have resided in Cuba and Peru for almost one hundred years, and in most other Latin American countries for at least fifty years, the Chinese population in almost all of these countries still has not developed a normal demographic composition either in sex ratio or in age group.

Today, one of the outstanding demographic anomalies of the Chinese population in Latin American countries is the unbalanced sex ratio. There is a great excess of males among the Chinese in almost all of these countries. This is mainly caused by the fact that throughout the past one hundred years, the great majority of Chinese immigrants were single males. There were few Chinese coming over in families and the number of female immigrants was very small indeed. This was true especially during the coolie trade period. For example, between 1847 and 1859, out of 42,401 Chinese entering Cuba, only 52 were female (1), and out of 87,393 entering Peru between 1849 and 1874, no more than one hundred were female (2). After the coolie trade period, during the

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(1) A. L. Valverde (62), p. 33.

(2) W. Stewart (59), p. 73.

last quarter of the 19th century, the number of females among the Chinese immigrants was still extremely small. For example, by 1899, among the 14,863 Chinese immigrants in Cuba only 49 were female (1). Thus, the large number of Chinese immigrants in the 19th century left very few descendants of pure Chinese blood, and the Chinese population in Latin America at the present time mainly consists of the immigrants after 1900 and their descendants.

The number of female Chinese immigrants in Latin America was still very small during the past fifty years, although it was somewhat larger than that of 19th century. Table XI shows unmistakably the general picture all over Latin America. As a result, the number of native-born Chinese after 1900 is also very small. Consequently, the Chinese population in most countries at the present time consists mainly of immigrants (Table XII), and their unbalanced sex ratio throws out of balance the sex ratio of the Chinese population as a whole (Table XIII).

There are quite a few reasons which account for the small number of Chinese female immigrants. First of all, the Latin American countries, as a rule, rarely thought of encouraging Chinese immigration to populate their lands. They have always looked to Europe for more immigrants although most of them, except Argentina and Brazil, never received any satisfactory number of European immigrants. It

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(1) Cuba (85), pp. 220-225.



TABLE XI

NUMBERS OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN SELECTED  
LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES  
By Sex (a)

Country	Sex of Immigrant		Year
	Male (Number)	Female (Number)	
Cuba (b)	24,445	202	1931
Mexico (b)	15,555	421	1930
Panama (c)	3,350	788	1930
Chile (d)	1,897	57	1920
Jamaica (c)	1,783	328	1911
Guatemala (d)	739	20	1921
Honduras (d)	170	22	1926

(a) Based on official population censuses.

(b) By place of birth.

(c) By Chinese race

(d) By nationality. Since very few Chinese immigrants were naturalized, the figures can be used to indicate the approximate number of immigrants.

TABLE XII

PERCENTAGES OF IMMIGRANTS AMONG TOTAL CHINESE POPULATION  
IN SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Country	Chinese in Population			Year
	Total (a)	Immigrants (b)		
	(Number)	(Number)	(Percent)	
Cuba	23,000	18,484	79	1943
Panama	2,700	1,851	68.5	1950
Guatemala	1,014 (c)	670	66	1940
Costa Rica	933	586	62.8	1950
Mexico	12,000	6,180	51.5	1950
Trinidad	5,641	2,366	40	1946
Jamaica	6,886	2,552	30.7	1943

(a) See Table VIII.

(b) Official population censuses.

(c) By yellow race.



TABLE XIII

SEX RATIO OF CHINESE POPULATION IN SELECTED  
LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES (a)

Country	Male (Number)	Female (Number)	No. of Males per 1,000 Female	Year
Cuba (b)	17,593	1,336	13,180	1943
Dom. Repub. (b)	490	71	6,901	1950
Panama (b)	3,207	675	4,751	1940
Guatemala (b)	807	207	3,900	1940
Honduras (b)	289	93	3,017	1950
Costa Rica (b)	631	302	2,089	1950
Trinidad (c)	3,749	1,892	1,981	1946
Jamaica (c)	4,343	2,543	1,707	1943

(a) Based on official population censuses.

(b) By yellow race. Since there are only a few or no Japanese immigrants in the country, the figures can be safely used to indicate the sex ratio of Chinese.

(c) By Chinese race.

was only when the shortage of labor became a serious problem that they reluctantly opened their door to Chinese immigrants. And this was done only with the intention of solving the urgent problem of labor shortage temporarily and not with the intention of populating the country. Therefore, during the coolie trade period, the coolie traders were only interested in bringing over Chinese male laborers and only an extremely small number of Chinese female immigrants were involved. Between 1917 and 1921, when the labor shortage in sugar plantations forced Cuba to reopen its door to Chinese immigrants, only Chinese males were admitted and Chinese females were again excluded.

After 1900, most of the Latin American countries within the geographical horizon of the Chinese emigrants adopted restrictions against Chinese immigration, which varied from total exclusion to various regulations to limit Chinese immigrants to very small numbers. These actions undoubtedly expressed the unfriendly attitude of these countries toward Chinese immigrants. To migrate to a foreign country of unfriendly attitude is always a risk, and only single men can afford to make the venture.

The second major reason which accounts for the small number of Chinese female immigrants in Latin America lies with the immigrants themselves. The great majority of Chinese immigrants did not come with the intention of settling permanently, but came with the intention of working temporarily. Whether or not they went back to China eventually is



another question. The important point here is that they intended to go back at the time when they came. With such an intention, they rarely brought their women-folks with them. At the same time, the long voyage across the Pacific is another factor which prevented the majority of Chinese immigrants from bringing their families with them even if they had wanted to do so. The Chinese emigration has always been an individual proposition. There has never been any government subsidy. Anyone rich enough to pay the passage across the Pacific for his whole family ordinarily would not emigrate. The majority of the emigrants were subsidized by members of their clans, some of whom were already established in foreign countries. Only men, and in most cases unmarried young men, could receive such subsidies. It was only after the immigrants were successful in business in their adopted countries that they found it was hard for them to give up their businesses to go back, and therefore they would have to send for their families, or their brides if they did not want to marry native girls. This explains why the number of Chinese female immigrants was also very small even in the British West Indies and Mexico during the first quarter of the century when Chinese immigrants were admitted to Mexico without any restriction, and almost without restriction to the British West Indies.

Because of all the factors stated above working in combination, Chinese female immigrants were limited to a very small number. Nevertheless there are differences from



country to country in Chinese immigration policies and in the enforcement of Chinese immigration regulations, and as a result the sex ratio varies accordingly. The two extreme cases are Cuba with 13,180 males per thousand females, and Jamaica with 1,707 males per thousand females (Table XIII). From the very beginning, because of the different attitudes of British colonial government in Jamaica and Spanish colonial government in Cuba, the percentage of females among the Chinese immigrants brought to Jamaica in the 19th century was much larger than that in Cuba. For example, there were only 52 females among the 42,501 Chinese entering Cuba between 1847 and 1859 (1), but there were 122 females among 680 Chinese immigrants entering Jamaica in 1884 (2). After 1900, the Chinese were absolutely excluded from Cuba except during the five-year period between 1817 and 1921 when a large number of exclusively male Chinese was admitted. The women-folk of the prosperous Chinese businessmen were able to enter only through illegal channels, and the number was naturally small. But, in Jamaica, no strict regulations against Chinese immigrants were rigidly enforced until the nineteen forties, and their wives and brides had always been able to enter with little difficulty.

#### B. Age Groups

At the present time, among the Chinese immigrants in Latin America, there are much more middle-aged and old people

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(1) A. L. Valverde (62), p. 33.

(2) K. M. Chen (9), p. 696.



than young ones. This is mainly because Chinese immigration in any considerable numbers stopped in all the countries before 1930 and the number of children among the immigrants before 1930 was very small, as was that of female immigrants. Although very few data on the age composition of the immigrants exist, the following available figures will throw some light on the whole picture of the age composition of the immigrants.

Among the 18,484 Chinese immigrants registered at the Chinese consulate in Cuba in 1948 only 3.4 per cent were younger than 30 years of age, and 60 per cent were older than 40 years of age (1). Out of 10,915 Chinese immigrants in Peru in 1940, seventy per cent were older than 35 years of age (2). In Chile, 70 per cent of the Chinese immigrants were older than 50 in 1950 (3), and in Venezuela 50 per cent of the immigrants were older than 40 (4). In Chiapas, Mexico, 50 per cent were older than 50 (5).

Since the immigrants still constitute a large portion of the Chinese population in Latin American countries (Table XII), the pattern of distribution among age groups of the Chinese population as a whole is, to a great extent, determined by the age composition of the immigrants.

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(1) Statistics on Overseas Chinese (57), pp. 5-6.

(2) Peru (127), Vol. I, pp. 518-519.

(3) K. M. Chen (9), p. 793.

(4) Venezuela (133), Vol. VIII, p. 168.

(5) K. M. Chen (9), p. 549.

Therefore, generally speaking, there are ~~much~~ more middle-aged and old people than young ones among the Chinese. This is greatly different from the age composition of any normal group of population, which shows that the number of people decreases from the younger age group to the older age group. Of course, the degree of difference from the normal pattern varies from country to country as the percentage of immigrants varies from 30.7 per cent in Jamaica to 79 per cent in Cuba (Table XII). Figure 1 shows the age composition of the Chinese population in Trinidad, where 40 per cent of the Chinese are immigrants, and in Costa Rica, which has 62.8 per cent of the Chinese as immigrants. The abnormal bulge on the male side between ages 30 and 75 is very striking, and at the same time the two diagrams show very well the unbalanced sex ratio in the middle and upper age groups. No data on age groups of the Chinese population in other countries exist. If the same kind of diagram could be made for Cuba or Panama, the bulge on the male side between ages 30 and 75 and the unbalanced sex ratio in the middle and upper age groups would be even more striking.

The abnormal demographic composition both in sex and in age of the Chinese population in Latin American countries indicates strongly that in the near future, if no new immigrants are added, which is very unlikely, the Chinese population will continue to decrease before the large numbers of middle-aged and old Chinese people pass away.



# Age-sex Pyramids for Chinese Population in Costa Rica and Trinidad

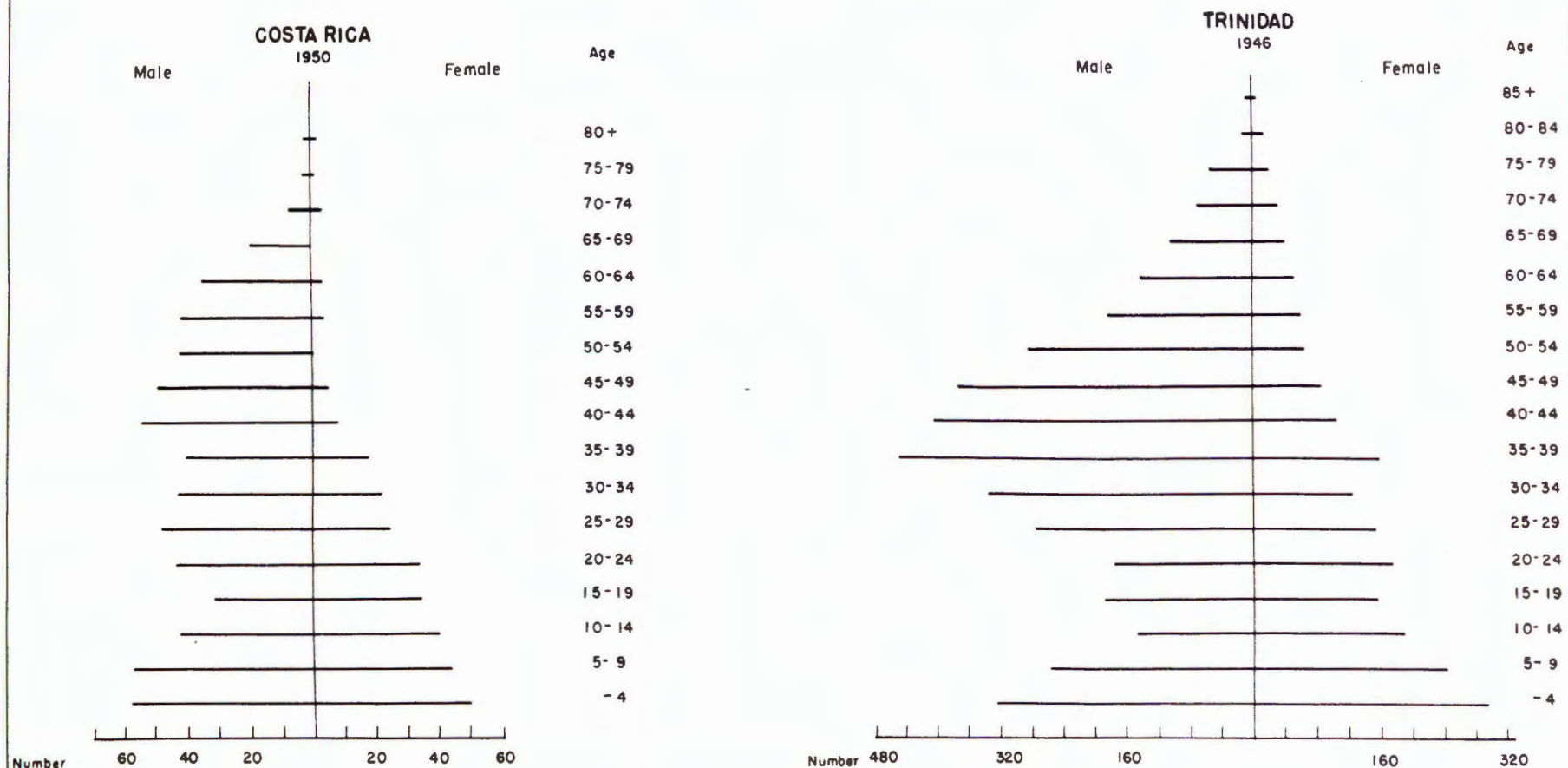


FIG. 1

## CHAPTER V

### ECONOMIC ASPECTS

#### A. Introduction

In the United States and Canada, the majority of the Chinese population are associated with only two lines of business - restaurant and laundry. Out of some twenty thousand business firms owned and operated by Chinese in the United States, more than ten thousand are laundries, and about five thousand are restaurants and cafés (1). The number of grocery stores and department stores owned and operated by Chinese has been increasing in recent years, but the number of restaurants and laundries owned and operated by them is still much greater. The economic enterprise of the Chinese in Latin America presents a completely different picture. Except in a few localities, the Chinese in Latin America as a whole operate very few laundries and the number of Chinese restaurants is also very small as compared with other Chinese businesses. The majority of Chinese in Latin America are concentrated in the field of retail business, especially along the line of grocery trade, although in a few places they also make good headway in wholesale and import businesses, agriculture and industry.

The role that the Chinese play in the local economic

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(1) L. Liu (38).



life of Latin American countries differs greatly from place to place. This is mainly due to the fact that the distribution of Chinese in Latin America is very uneven. They play an important role in countries where their number is large, and their role is very insignificant where their number is small. This is not so much determined by the absolute number of Chinese in each country, but rather by the relative number of Chinese as compared with the total population of each country. For example, the approximately six thousand Chinese in Jamaica, which has less than one and a half million total population, virtually control the grocery trade of the island, while twice this number of Chinese in Peru, which has eight million total population, play a much smaller part in the grocery trade of that country. Of course, there are some other factors which determine the part the Chinese has been playing in local economic life, and which will be discussed below. However, the relative number of Chinese as compared to the total population in each country can be used as an index of their importance. Table XIV shows the relative number of Chinese in each country and also shows unmistakably the general situation. The details of the part the Chinese play in the economic life of the Latin American countries are discussed in this chapter.

#### B. Jamaica

According to the official record of the Registrar's office, Spanish Town, Jamaica, in 1954 there were 12,178

TABLE XIV  
NUMBERS OF CHINESE PER TEN THOUSAND POPULATION  
IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES (a)

Country	No. of Chinese per 10,000 Pop.	Year	Country	No. of Chinese per 10,000 Pop.	Year
Trinidad	89	1946	Dom. Repub.	2	1950
Brit. Guiana	84	1946	Chile	2	1950
Jamaica	48	1945	Salva	1.3	1950
Cuba	44	1943	Colombia	0.5	1950
Panama	33	1950	Uruguay	0.3	1950
Peru	14	1940	Argentina	0.16	1950
Costa Rica	10	1950	Brazil	0.13	1950
Nicaragua	6.5	1950	Haiti	0.1	1950
Mexico	5	1950	Paraguay	0.07	1950
Guatemala	4	1950	Bolivia	0.07	1950
Ecuador	3	1950			
Venezuela	2.6	1950			
Honduras	2.5	1950			

(a) Numbers of Chinese population are based on Table VIII; total population of each country is based on last official population census.



business establishments on the island, which include small corner stores as well as million-dollar enterprises. About one tenth of them are owned and operated by Chinese, a minority group consisting of less than one per cent of the total population. The great majority of the 1,250 Chinese-owned businesses are in the grocery trade and its related fields. The Chinese virtually control the grocery business on the island, wholesale as well as retail. They also control a substantial part of the import business and the manufacturing along the grocery line.

The growth of Chinese business in Jamaica started with small retail grocery stores in the eighteen eighties. After about 70 years, the majority of the Chinese population are still in the retail grocery business. Out of the 1,250 Chinese-owned businesses in 1954, one thousand and twenty one were retail grocery stores. They included small corner stores as well as self-service supermarkets after the American style (Figures 2 and 3). Although there is only one Chinese-owned retail grocery store out of every eight on the island, the Chinese stores carry at least 80 per cent of the total retail grocery business, mainly because of the following three reasons. First, as a rule, the Jamaican-owned stores have very little capital, usually no more than one hundred pounds, while the Chinese stores have much greater capital, usually from 500 to 1,000 pounds, or even more. As a result, the Chinese stores have much larger and better stock than the Jamaican-owned stores. Secondly, the Chinese storekeepers





Fig. 2. Jamaica's Only Self-service Super Market.  
Owned and operated by Chinese, it is  
located in Half Way Tree and serves the  
high class residential area north of  
Kingston.



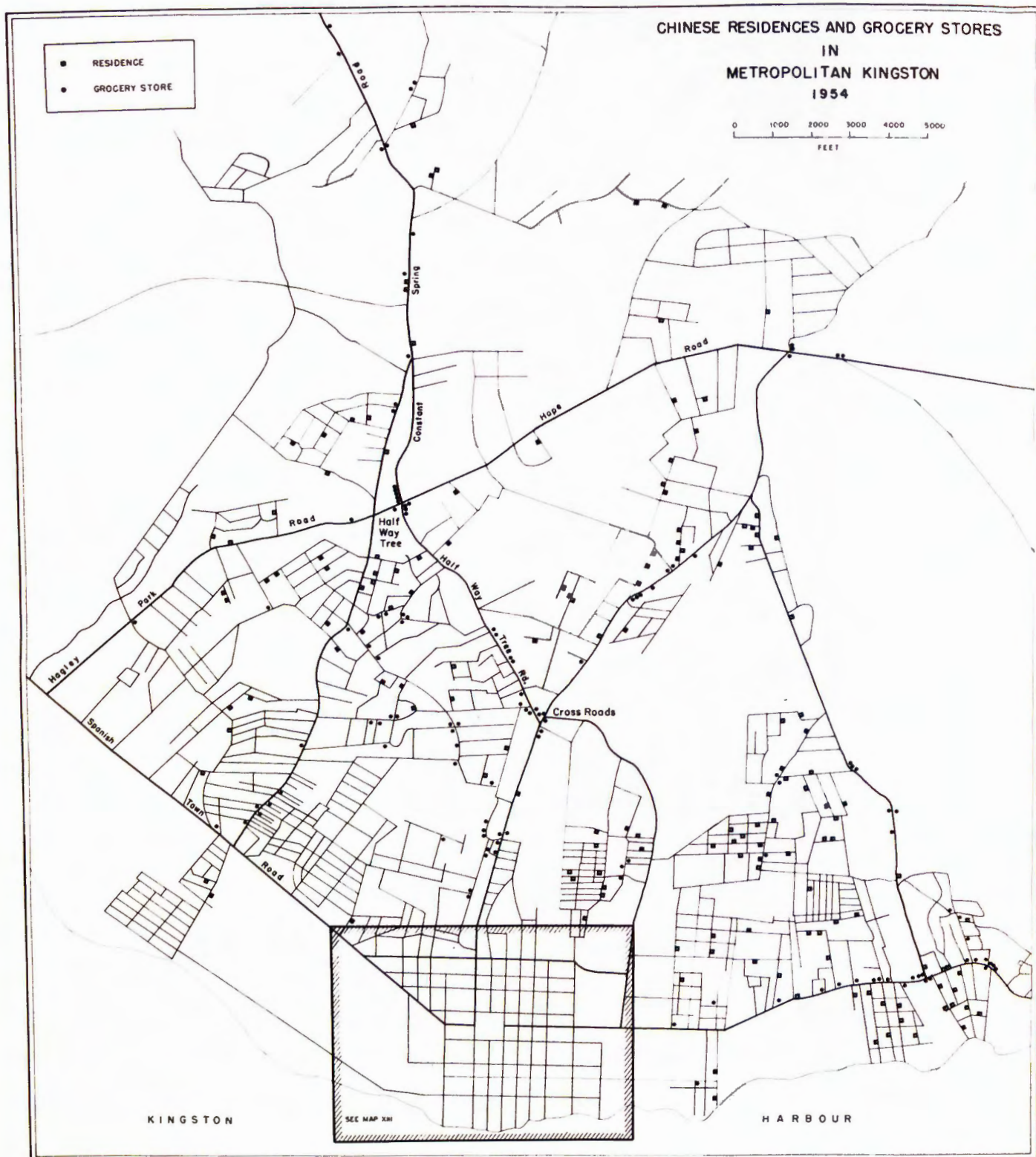
Fig. 3. A Chinese Grocery Store in Jamaica.  
Most of the Chinese grocery stores in  
metropolitan Kingston look like this one.



give their customers better service, including free delivery and buying on credit, which the small Jamaican stores with a small amount of business cannot afford to offer. Almost all the Chinese stores are found in large settlements on the island. It is only in the small isolated settlements that the Jamaican stores find no competition from the well-stocked Chinese shops. Thirdly, the wholesale grocery business is virtually controlled by the Chinese, and most of the Chinese retail stores are closely related to the wholesale business. Thus, the Chinese stores can easily maneuver the retail price, while the Jamaican stores are rigidly controlled by the small margin of profit.

The control of the wholesale grocery business by Chinese is the most influential factor in favoring the Chinese in retail grocery business. As a rule, a successful Chinese retail grocer will enter into wholesale business, in most cases without relinquishing his retail shop. This is true especially in the country outside of the Kingston Metropolitan area. There the Chinese wholesale grocer also does retail business. After Chinese becomes a wholesaler, he is in a position to subsidize his relatives in China to come to help him in his growing business, first as apprentices in his own shop, and then, he helps them establish retail shops of their own, as outlets for his wholesale business. Thus, a great number of Chinese retail groceries are closely related to the wholesale business.

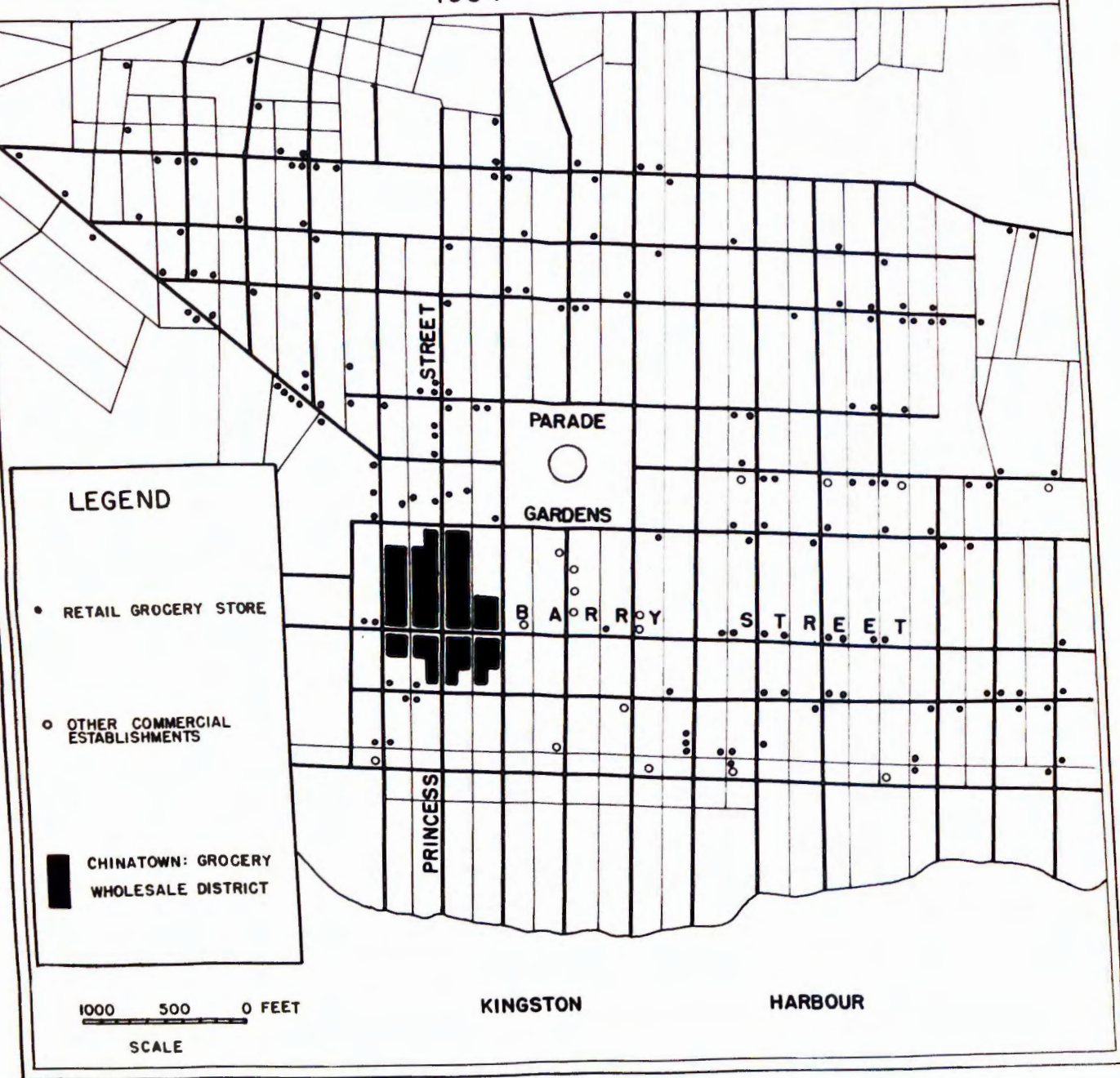
Of the 1,021 Chinese retail grocery shops, one third



Map XII



# JAMAICA CHINESE COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS IN DOWNTOWN KINGSTON 1954



Map XIII



are in the Kingston Metropolitan area. In downtown Kingston one seldom walks two blocks without seeing a Chinese grocery, which is, in most cases, located on a corner of a block, the best location for neighborhood retail stores. The high-class suburban residential areas north of Kingston are exclusively served by Chinese stores clustered at Cross Road and Half Way Tree and along the major roads leading to Kingston (Map XII).

In 1946, there were 14 leading wholesale provision merchants in Jamaica, ten of which were Chinese (1). In 1954, there were 46 wholesale grocers on the island, and 38 of them were Chinese (2). The largest Chinese wholesalers are in Kingston. They not only supply the majority of the retail shops all over the island, but also the small wholesalers in other towns. In Kingston, all the Chinese wholesale business firms are located within a few blocks along Barry Street and Princess Street, the China Town of Kingston (Map XIII). Here is the center of grocery trade of the whole island, and here also are concentrated other big Chinese businesses.

Chinese grocers in Kingston who are wholesalers on a large scale eventually enter the import business and become commission agents and manufacturers' representatives. But in all cases, they still carry on their wholesale business. The Chinese are very successful in the business of importing

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(1) Reference Book of Jamaica (140), p. 96.

(2) According to the official records of the Registrar's Office, Spanish Town, Jamaica.





Fig. 4. The National Baking Co. in the Suburban Area of Kingston, Jamaica. Owned and operated by Chinese, it is one of the largest modern baking establishments on the island.



Fig. 5. A Small Chinese Bakery in Moneague, Jamaica.



Fig. 6. The Largest Private Soap Factory in Jamaica.  
It is also the largest Chinese-owned  
industrial establishment on the island.



edible fats and oils.

Thus, it is very clear that even in industry, the major interest of the Chinese is also directed toward the grocery trade. All the products manufactured in Chinese-owned factories are sold in retail groceries, whether it is bread, soft drinks, ice cream, soap or margarine. It is even more interesting to note that a great number of the larger factories are affiliated with Chinese wholesale firms. This is especially true in the baking industry in the country. This kind of vertical syndicate-style control over the grocery trade by the Chinese, from manufacturing, and importing through wholesale to retail, explains why an observer concluded that "it would be very difficult now, short of political interference, for the black or colored population to make much headway in this business" (1).

What are the factors which account for the success of the Chinese in grocery trade in Jamaica?

First, there has been no competition in the grocery trade. This was true especially in the early period of immigration when the Chinese started to establish themselves in the trade. In the eighteen eighties, there were very few retail groceries in Jamaica. It was the Chinese, opening shops wherever they went, who pioneered in this trade on the island. White men were unwilling to work for the tiny profit to be obtained from a small retail grocery and, at that time,

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(1) L. Broom (5), p. 123.



it was considered a humiliation to wait on former slaves in a small shop. White men were there to work in the colonial government, to administer the large plantations and other big businesses and to make big money. The majority of the Negro population did not know how to run a small shop so as to make a profit. Negroes laboring as slaves on the plantations had no opportunity to acquire the habits of thriftiness and willingness to work long and hard, and the ability to be courteous to patrons, which are imperative to successful shop-keeping. All these virtues cannot be acquired over night. It takes many generations to cultivate them. Thus, Chinese immigrants, armed with these attributes, found little competition from the Negroes and easily captured the virgin field of the retail grocery trade. In later years, after the Negroes began to realize why the Chinese were so successful, it was too late for them to enter the trade, which was already fully under Chinese control.

Second, the Chinese in Jamaica always take good care of the education of their children. If their first aim is to save money to increase their business capital, their second aim is to educate the younger generation. "All trades are inferior to being a learned man". The old Chinese maxim drove them to give their children the highest education they could possibly afford. This has an important bearing on the growth of Chinese business in Jamaica from small retail shops to large wholesale and import businesses and the related industries. Without this emphasis on education, Chinese



business on the island would not have grown far beyond the stage of retail business. To manage a large wholesale import business and to run an industrial firm, much more than just thrift and hard work are needed. In most cases, the big Chinese businesses in Jamaica are in the hands of Jamaican-born Chinese, educated either in China, in England, or in the United States.

Third, in Jamaica there have never been restrictions against Chinese in commercial activities. A Chinese on the island enjoys the full rights of a native-born citizen in doing business, even if he is an unnaturalized immigrant. This favorable situation cannot be found in most of the other Latin American countries which have a considerable Chinese population. The lack of restrictions in Jamaica attracted some experienced Chinese businessmen. Their leadership was soon accepted by small Chinese shopkeepers and their success set a pattern for all Chinese to follow.

Outside of the grocery trade and its related industries, Chinese can be found in almost all kinds of small business, but the number of them is very small and has little significance. The number of Chinese engaged in farming is also very small. In 1943, there are only 81 farms owned by Chinese and all but 7 of them are farms of less than 50 acres (1). Almost all the Chinese-owned farms are devoted to rice cultivation. Chinese have no share in sugar-cane cultivation, the major agricultural activity of the island.

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(1) According to the 1943 census.



## C. Cuba

Although in Jamaica the Chinese immigrants started with small retail grocery shops, and some of them worked themselves up to wholesalers, importers and industrialists, in Cuba the majority of them started with small vegetable and fruit stores or laundry shops and worked themselves up to retail grocery businesses. Very few of them ever got beyond the retail grocery stage. The majority of the well-to-do Chinese in Cuba are retail grocers. There are about 3,500 commercial enterprises owned and operated by Chinese in Cuba. Among them 1,667 are retail grocery stores, 720 are fruit and vegetable shops, 591 are laundries, 281 are restaurants, and the remaining 241 comprise various other trades (1).

In Cuba, the Chinese do not control the grocery trade as their brethren do in Jamaica, although the total Chinese capital invested in Cuban retail grocery stores is much larger than that in Jamaica. The amount of his investment is the most guarded secret of every Chinese businessman. According to the best estimation, the amount of capital invested in retail grocery stores by Chinese in Cuba amounts to 20 million dollars (2), while that in Jamaica amounts only to less than 5 million dollars. This is not so much

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(1) Raymond S. D. Yoh (66), p. 4.

(2) The estimation was made by the **Bank** of China, Havana, Cuba.



because there are more Chinese-owned retail grocery stores in Cuba than in Jamaica, but mainly because the retail grocery stores are generally larger than those in Jamaica (Figure 7). The purchasing power of the populace in Cuba is higher than in Jamaica and can, therefore, support larger stores.

Among the 19,000 retail grocery stores in Cuba only 1,667 are owned and operated by Chinese, about one in every 12 stores. The Chinese play an important part in the retail grocery business of the island, although they do not monopolize the trade in any sense. First of all, the non-Chinese-owned stores are in a very strong position to compete with the Chinese-owned stores, not only in number, but also in amount of capital, especially those stores owned by the Spanish immigrants. These Spanish control the bulk of the grocery trade in Cuba just as the Chinese immigrants do in Jamaica.

Second, almost all the wholesale grocers in Cuba are of Spanish origin, and are affiliated with the Lonja del Comercio. The Lonja wholesalers practically control the wholesale and the import trade in food stuffs. There are only a few Chinese merchants registered as importers and wholesalers, and the business volume of these few does not compare with that of the Lonja importers.

Third, because of the small number of Chinese female immigrants in Cuba, the number of Cuban-born Chinese is very small; thus most of the small Chinese businesses have no



Fig. 7. A Typical Chinese Retail Grocery Store in  
Downtown Havana, Cuba.



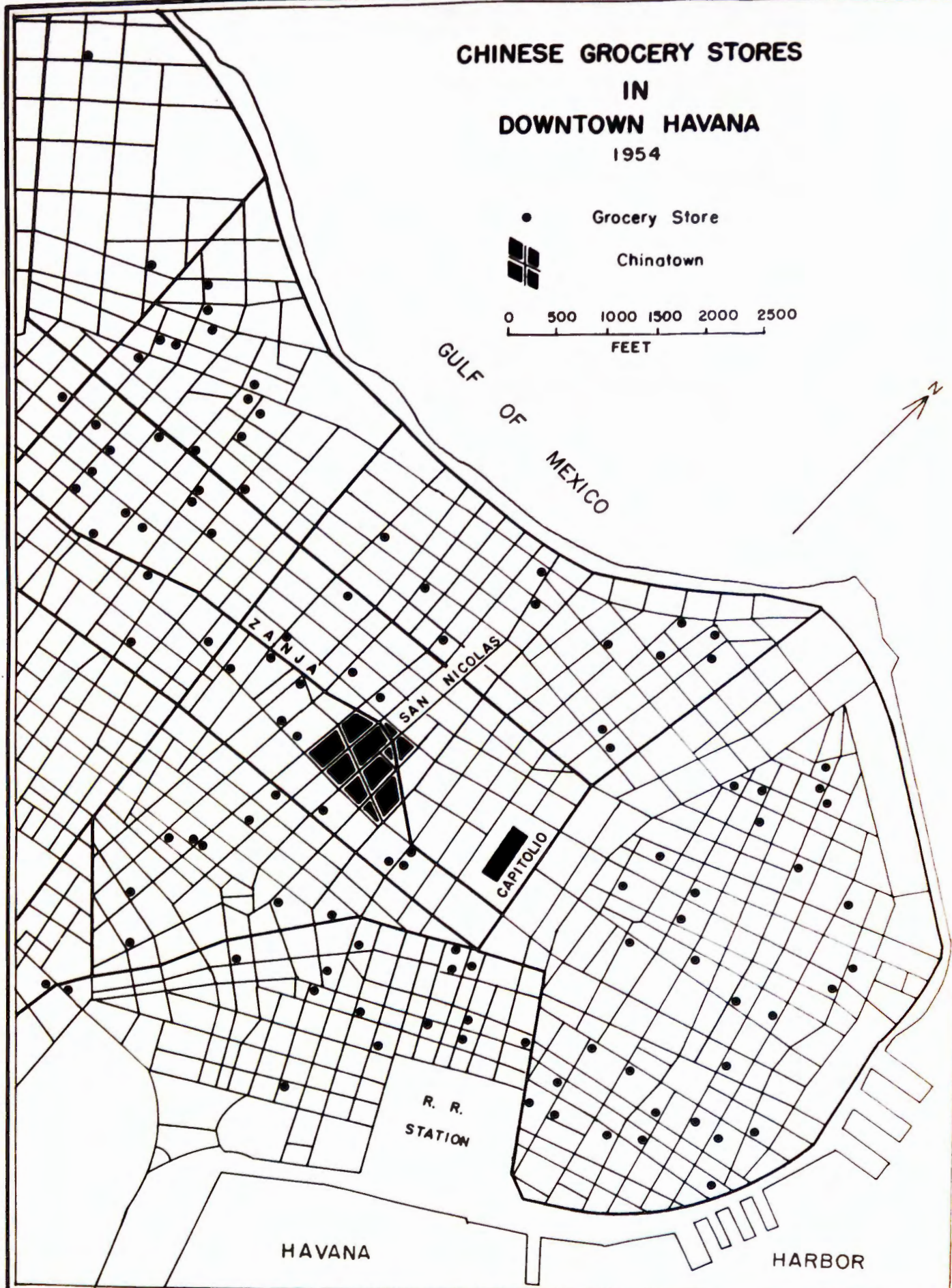
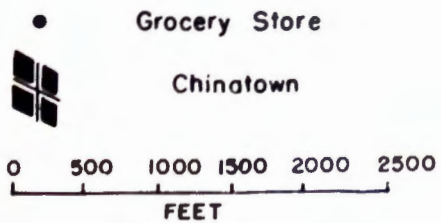
chance to survive beyond one generation. Within one generation, it is hard for Chinese immigrants to reach beyond the small retail stage. This is not only because of severe competition but also because of lack of education and experience on the part of most Chinese immigrants, who came to Cuba mainly as laborers to work on sugar plantations. They may be able to run a moderate retail shop, but very few of them are competent to operate a large business. Fourth, because of the official ban on Chinese immigration, competent Chinese merchants feel reluctant to come to Cuba.

Although some Chinese in Cuba have complained bitterly about the restrictions imposed on the Chinese in commercial activities by the Cuban government, these restrictions did not exist until the nineteen thirties and they are not directed towards Chinese immigrants alone, but to all immigrants, regardless of geographical or racial origin. The main theme of the restrictions is to require that 50 per cent of the employees of all foreign-owned business firms, large or small, commercial or industrial, must be Cuban citizens. Perhaps these restrictions do hurt Chinese more than any other immigrants because it has always been very hard for a Chinese to become naturalized, and the majority of Chinese immigrants could not find a job except in a Chinese-operated business.

About half of the Chinese retail grocery stores are concentrated in the Metropolitan Area of Havana, and the other half are distributed throughout the island. One can



# CHINESE GROCERY STORES IN DOWNTOWN HAVANA 1954





find a Chinese retail grocery store on almost every other street in Havana (Map XIV), and in most of the large settlements all over the island.

Most of the Chinese retail grocers in Cuba once were small vegetable and fruit storekeepers. At the present time, there are more than seven hundred vegetable and fruit retail shops owned and operated by Chinese in all parts of the island. Some larger shops, with more than one thousand dollars capital, also handle a limited variety of canned goods. These stores are in the transition stage of becoming retail groceries.

In connection with the vegetable markets, a small number of Chinese engage in truck farming near the big cities. All the farms are of small size and the lands are rented. There are about 50 such farms in the suburbs of Havana alone.

Outside of Canada and the United States, Cuba is the only country where a considerable number of Chinese are found in the laundry business, and in Cuba the percentage of laundry shops owned by Chinese is even larger than in Canada and the United States. There were about 1,200 laundries in Cuba in 1954, of which almost half are Chinese (1). But the business volume of the Chinese laundries is much smaller than their number would suggest, because most of them are small shops and are able to stay in business only by capitalizing

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(1) According to Mr. Francisco Garcia Pujol, vice-president of Sabates, S.A., one of the largest soap manufacturing factories in Cuba.



on handwashing (Figure 8).

About 85 per cent of the Chinese commercial establishments in Cuba are in the three trades mentioned above. The remaining 15 per cent are distributed in various other fields, among them almost 300 in the restaurant business. The Chinese restaurants in Cuba are very different from those in the United States and Canada. In Cuba, there are very few Chinese restaurants richly decorated in Oriental motifs and specialized in authentic Chinese dishes. The great majority of them are just like any other small restaurant serving popular Cuban food at reasonable prices. This is mainly because of two factors. First of all, authentic Chinese dishes are not in popular demand in Cuba. Second, Chinese with comparatively large capital all go into the retail grocery business, so the great majority of Chinese restaurants have only a small amount of capital and, therefore, are unable to spend large amounts in decorating to attract patrons.

In each of the larger cities, such as Santiago de Cuba, Havana and Camagüey, there are a few high-class Chinese stores specializing in silk, embroideries, china, ivory, and the like, imported from the Orient (Figure 9), but their number is so small that they are of no importance either in the local economic life or in the Chinese community.

While the Chinatown of Kingston is the economic center of the Chinese in Jamaica, the Chinatown of Havana serves only as a social center for the Chinese in Cuba. There are very few big Chinese businesses in Cuba and not all of them





Fig. 8. A Typical Chinese Laundry in Downtown Havana, Cuba.



Fig. 9. A Chinese Novelty Shop in Havana, Cuba.  
It deals in ivory, silk, and other imported  
Oriental goods.



are located in Chinatown. The Chinatown of Havana is right behind the Capitolio, and occupies about 10 blocks centering at San Nicolas Street and Zanja Street (Map XIV). Within these 10 blocks are located all the headquarters of all Chinese professional and social organizations, and each one of them has its own building. There are also all kinds of Chinese businesses in Chinatown, but they mainly serve the Chinese population in Havana.

#### D. Mexico

After the turn of the century, when Chinese immigration was either totally excluded or restricted in one way or another in most of the Latin American countries, Mexico was the only country which welcomed Chinese immigrants with open arms. There was no restriction on Chinese immigration whatsoever until 1921, when Chinese laborers, along with laborers of all other nationalities, were excluded. Chinese could come freely and could engage in any line of trade according to their own choice. The Chinese immigrants enjoyed a period of prosperity during the first quarter of the century. Wherever a considerable number of them settled together they became, within the span of only one generation, an important minority group in the field of commerce, and this in spite of some local anti-Chinese incidents. But the good time did not last very long. At the beginning of the nineteen thirties, the anti-Chinese movement erupted



violently in a few northern states where large numbers of Chinese immigrants were concentrated. It uprooted completely the vigorous young plant of Chinese economic enterprise in the States of Sinaloa and Sonora, the two economic strongholds of Chinese immigrants in Mexico at that time. With the exception of what happened in Panama in 1941, the anti-Chinese movement in Mexico is unique in the history of Chinese immigration in Latin America. Incidents of the same kind occurred in Jamaica and Cuba, but they were of minor importance and did not greatly affect the Chinese immigrants as a group, and never affected the economic status of the Chinese on these two islands. It is in Mexico that the economic status of the Chinese immigrant has undergone a drastic change because of the anti-Chinese movement. The anti-Chinese outbreak in Sinaloa and Sonora during 1930 and 1931 marks the end of the growth of economic strength of the Chinese minority group in Mexico. The minority group experienced a severe setback in the field of commerce and have never recovered. The Chinese businesses in existence at the present time are mainly those founded before 1930 which survived the anti-Chinese movement.

The anti-Chinese movement of the early nineteen thirties in Mexico was caused by a combination of a number of factors. First, it was because the Chinese constituted a racial minority. Second, it was because they were successful in business and became keen competitors of the Mexicans. It is universal all over the world that among the



natives there always are animosities towards any group of foreigners who are successful in business, especially when they become keen competitors. The feeling is partly because of jealousy of the wealth acquired by the foreigners, and partly a kind of insecurity at seeing a group of foreigners more successful than themselves. The antagonisms could be held in check by laborious adjustments on the part of the minority foreign groups. But economic or political changes can upset the delicate balance, and once again release the antagonistic forces. This was exactly what happened in Mexico in the early nineteen thirties. Because of the economic depression of that period, a large number of unemployed Mexican immigrants in the United States returned to Mexico, especially to Sonora and Sinaloa (1). It created serious problems for the local authorities of the two states. It was under such circumstances that hostile feelings towards the Chinese were capitalized upon by the local authorities, and the anti-Chinese movement broke out in the two states. It soon spread over all Mexico, but in other states it was not so intense as in these two. Here the Chinese virtually controlled the grocery trade, so that anti-Chinese feeling was much stronger than in other states. Finally, it must be pointed out that, at that time, the prestige of China in international power politics was at its lowest ebb. Manchuria was just being occupied by the Japanese, and North China was facing further Japanese invasion. Thus, China was

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(1) "Chinese Labor in Mexico" (14), p. 244.



in no position to protect her overseas subjects. If China had been a world power, things would have been quite different.

Before 1930, the economic strongholds of the Chinese living in Mexico were in the states of Sonora, Sinaloa, Coahuila, Chihuahua and North Baja California. They were especially influential in Sonora and Sinaloa, where the majority were engaged in commerce. Besides numerous small independent retail stores, Chinese owned two large chain stores, each of them operating more than two hundred branch stores all over the two states (1). The Chinese practically dominated the retail business (2). They played so important a part in the economy of the two states that after their exodus, due to the 1930 anti-Chinese movement, banks were closed because of the withdrawal of Chinese deposits and the business of the two states became stagnant (3). At the present time, there are only a few hundred Chinese in the two states. Most of them are engaged in small retail grocery enterprises, and no longer play an important part in the local economy. These few Chinese shops are the only relics of the great Chinese commercial activity of the nineteen twenties.

In Coahuila, the Chinese immigrants experienced a

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 532.

(2) New York Times, August 10, 1931.

(3) New York Times, December 26, 1931; also see K. M. Chen (9), p. 534.



period of prosperity during the first decade of the 20th century. Among their various enterprises throughout the state, the Chinese owned and operated banks and streetcar lines in Torreón. Chinese capital from the United States and Canada was invested in these ventures, as well as capital from the Chinese living in Mexico (1). But the anti-Chinese incident in Torreon caused by revolutionists under Madero in 1911 scared away all capital from the United States and Canada. Banks were closed, streetcar and other large businesses were liquidated. Nevertheless, the local Chinese continued in their efforts to establish and develop small private businesses, mostly groceries, and have been successful regardless of recurring anti-Chinese incidents in 1914, 1920 and 1926. At the present time, there are more than fifty Chinese commercial establishments in Torreón alone. Forty of these are grocery stores, including seven wholesalers with investments from a few hundred thousand dollars to more than one million dollars (2). Torreon is one of a few cities in Mexico where a small number of Chinese are still prosperous and continue to control a considerable part of the local grocery trade.

In Baja California, Chinese immigrants have always been concentrated in the district of Mexicali. In the nineteen twenties they were the most important minority group

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 517.

(2) K. M. Chen (9), p. 520.



not only in number but also in economic activities. More than 80 per cent of the cotton produced in the area was cultivated by Chinese share-croppers or cash renters, and more than 90 per cent of the retail business of Mexicali was also in the hands of Chinese (1). The reasons for the domination of Chinese in the retail business are: (a) When large number of Chinese first came to the district, Mexicali was only a small border town. Commerce was yet to be developed. Besides supplying the majority labor for the newly developed cotton plantations, the Chinese also pioneered in the retail business. (b) Since the great majority of the share-croppers and cash renters were Chinese, and Chinese were likely to be patrons of the Chinese retail shops, there was a better chance for the newly established Chinese retail shops to get a good start. (c) Among the Chinese who engaged in commerce were some experienced Chinese businessmen from the United States, with large amounts of capital to invest (2). (d) The Americans in Baja California concentrated their interest on cotton plantations only, and the local natives were in no position to compete with the Chinese in retail business.

However, since the end of nineteen twenties, the economic status of Chinese immigrants in the Mexicali district has declined rapidly. First of all, in 1928 the local authority enforced a restriction of employment on all

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 535.

(2) L. Liu (38).



Chinese-owned commercial establishments, which required that 80 per cent of all employees must be Mexican citizens. This restriction deprived a large number of Chinese of employment and forced a number of Chinese stores to close, although the restriction was abrogated before long (1). This hardship was soon followed by the anti-Chinese movement in the states of Sinaloa and Sonora. The disaster experienced by the Chinese in these two states discouraged some of the Chinese in other states. A number of them in Mexicali closed their businesses and left for China voluntarily, although the anti-Chinese movement in this area never went beyond the stage of agitation. At the same time, the world-wide depression of the early nineteen thirties caused a sharp decline in cotton production in the area and the commerce of Mexicali suffered accordingly. As a result, not a small number of Chinese stores were liquidated. Besides, Chinese immigration was stopped almost completely in 1931. The number of Chinese in Mexicali has decreased continuously ever since, while the total population has increased rapidly. Thus, the percentage of Chinese in the total population has become smaller and smaller. At the present time, Mexicali's total population of 140,000 includes only about one thousand Chinese, while in 1919, there were seven thousand Chinese in a total population of less than thirty thousand.

Nevertheless, the Chinese in Mexicali at the present

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 535.



time are among the most prosperous in Mexico and they still control a substantial part of the retail business of that city. Although half of them are engaged in the grocery trade, they also own 13 small department stores, 12 hotels and 25 restaurants mainly doing business with American tourists.

Besides Mexicali, Tiajuana is the only place in Baja California where a considerable number of Chinese commercial establishments can be found, and they are prosperous. It was not until after Pearl Harbor that Tiajuana became one of the concentration places of Chinese in Baja California. During the war, while nightclub life was curtailed within the United States, Tiajuana, only 16 miles cross the border from San Diego, became a city of entertainment for Americans. Chinese from other parts of Mexico took advantage of the opportunity for prosperity and hundreds of them moved to the city. At the present time there are about one hundred commercial establishments, including nightclubs, hotels and restaurants, owned and operated by Chinese, and still doing business mainly with American tourists. The majority of the Chinese in Tiajuana, however, are in the grocery trade (1).

Besides Baja California, Tamaulipas and Chiapas are the only two states where the Chinese contribute significantly in the field of commerce. At the present time there are about two hundred Chinese commercial establishments in the state of Chiapas. These are distributed in 23 towns and

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), pp. 541-542.



cities, with Tapachula having one third of them. Almost all of them are groceries. Each of the nine leading grocery dealers has capital of more than half a million dollars. In the state of Tamaulipas, Chinese commercial wealth is concentrated in the metropolitan area of Tampico. Of the three hundred Chinese-owned establishments in the area about one third is engaged in grocery trade, including seven wholesalers with capital ranging from two hundred thousand to half a million dollars. Next in economic importance to the grocery business is rice milling. In all of Latin America, this is the only place where Chinese enter into this line of business. There are 57 rice mills owned by Chinese in the metropolitan area.

Outside of Baja California, Tamaulipas and Chiapas, the economic activities of the Chinese in Mexico have very little significance in local economic life. This is either because the number of Chinese is too small, as in most of the other states, or because there is no particular concentration of them in any one or two cities, as in Chihuahua and Vera Cruz. Mexico City is unique, not only in Mexico but also throughout Latin America, in that almost all Chinese here are in the restaurant business. Thus, Mexico City alone duplicates the pattern of Chinese industry found in the large North American cities, although there is no Chinese laundry in Mexico City.



## . E. Peru

Of all the Latin American countries, Peru is the only one where the Chinese immigrants invested heavily in agriculture. They played an important part in the country's agricultural development, especially in cotton cultivation. In the development of cotton plantations in Mexicali, Mexico, the Chinese immigrants only supplied the majority of the labor force, while the management and capital were in the hands of American firms. But in Peru, the Chinese were among the investors and very few of them worked as laborers on the cotton estates. During World War I, Chinese businessmen in Peru were among the first to see the great future of cotton cultivation in the country. Large sums of money were invested in the purchase and development of cotton estates. In the nineteen twenties, more than ten Chinese firms ranked among the most important cotton growers (1). The acreage under cotton cultivation in Chinese-owned haciendas amounted to seven thousand fanegadas ( 52,000 acres), employing about six thousand Peruvian farm lands (2). At that time a substantial portion of the Peruvian cotton production derived from Chinese cotton estates. But while the cotton acreage in Peru as a whole almost doubled during the next ten years or so, that owned by Chinese increased only slightly. In

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(1) "China in Lima" (11), p. 11.

(2) "The Chinese Colony in Peru" (12), p. 80.



1937, the large Chinese cotton estates employed more than seven thousand Peruvian farmhands with an annual payroll of 6 million pesos (1). Deducing from this increased labor force, a safe estimate of the extent of the Chinese-owned cotton estates would be no more than 63,000 acres in the late nineteen thirties; and since there were 415,000 acres under cotton cultivation in the whole country (2), about one seventh of the total cotton production in Peru just before the World War II was from Chinese cotton estates. Since, from the very beginning, Chinese immigrants have been concentrated in the Province of Lima, almost all the Chinese cotton estates are found in the Rimac Valley and in the neighborhood of Huacho (3).

Although Chinese immigrants have been playing an important part in the development of cotton cultivation in Peru, the majority of them are small merchants engaged mainly in retail business. In the last century, most of the Chinese coolies started their own businesses as small grocery retailers. They became very successful in the trade as early as the eighteen seventies. The main reason for their success was their high mercantile skill as indicated by a Peruvian newspaper, *El Comercio* in 1877:

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(1) "Chinese Resident in Peru" (15), p. 16.

(2) Figuero-Acosta (26), p. 102.

(3) K. M. Chen (9), pp. 784-785.



They have made themselves truly notable, as much for the abundance, richness, and variety of their stocks as for the cheapness of their sales and the fine treatment which they accord their patrons. (1)

Those who came in the later years as free immigrants joined these established merchants in the retail grocery business. By the nineteen twenties, the Chinese dominated the grocery trade in the province of Lima. Especially in the Lima metropolitan area, their retail grocery shops ranked second to none (2). The Chinese were such an important group in Lima that the commerce of the city "would suffer immeasurably if the Chinese corner grocery stores were for any cause to disappear" (3). However, within the last thirty years, there has been a strong tendency among the small Chinese traders to shift away from specializing in grocery retail to general retail business. At the present time, only one tenth of the 370 Chinese commercial establishments in the city of Lima are still in the retail grocery business, while one third is in general retail business. The rest of them are distributed among various kinds of businesses, from used-furniture stores to restaurants and hotels. The same tendency may also be observed in other cities in Lima Province (4).

During the nineteen thirties, the Chinese owners of

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(1) W. Stewart (59), p. 218.

(2) "China in Lima" (11), p. 11.

(3) "The Chinese Colony in Peru" (12), p. 80.

(4) K. M. Chen (9), pp. 768-785.



of small retail shops began to face very strong competition from Japanese immigrants, who had been coming to Peru in large numbers since the nineteen twenties. The competition was especially strong in Lima Province, where the majority of the Japanese were also concentrated. By the nineteen thirties, most of the shops in the urban centers of the Chancay Valley were operated by Japanese, who have displaced Chinese in the field of retail business (1). The shift of Chinese interest from retail groceries to general retail business possibly represents the adjustment made to the strong competition from the Japanese immigrants. Besides the small retail shops, there are about 20 large wholesale and importing houses, Chinese owned, in Lima and Callao. While the Chinese wholesalers and importers in Jamaica import an insignificant amount of goods from China, those in Peru have been doing a considerable amount of importing business from China, mainly through Hongkong (2). Another interesting point is that most of the Chinese owners of large import and wholesale houses are among the important Chinese investors in cotton plantations, just as those in Jamaica are also investors in industry.

Among all the Chinese in Latin America, those in Peru have perhaps attained the highest economic status. Ever

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(1) J. F. Normano and Antonella Gerbi (44), p. 88.

(2) The annual import from China averages \$700,000 from 1931 to 1937. The main items are cotton goods, silk, rice and tea; see "Chinese Resident in Peru" (15), p. 15.



since 1909, when the Porras-Wu Ting Fang Protocol prohibited the entry of Chinese laborers and safeguarded the rights of other Chinese to do business in Peru, the Chinese immigrants here have been enjoying the most favorable atmosphere for merchandizing ever found in Latin American countries. There has never been any agitation against Chinese. Their economic enterprises have never suffered a setback such as occurred in Panama and the Northern States of Mexico. There have never been any restrictions imposed on their economic activities. Until 1936, Chinese immigrants other than laborers could enter Peru freely, while they have been refused entry in most of Latin American countries under Chinese-exclusion laws. Possibly there has been nearly the same favorable situation in Jamaica, but the economic development on that small island is much more limited than in Peru and the number of Chinese is also much smaller. Although the Chinese in Jamaica control every step in the sale of groceries in that island and have also made good headway in industry, the Chinese in Peru are still far ahead in amount of capital and volume of business.

#### F. In Central America

The total number of Chinese in the six Central American countries is much smaller than that in Cuba, Mexico, or Peru, and even smaller than that on the small island of Jamaica. Except in Panama, the economic enterprises of the



Chinese in Central America have never achieved any great significance, although most of the Chinese are prosperous merchants. A few have invested in industry and agriculture, but the majority are engaged in retail business, chiefly the grocery trade.

As early as the first decade of the 20th century, there were already more than one thousand Chinese retail shops in Panama, most of them grocery stores. The economic position of the small Chinese traders was fair at that time (1). Within the next quarter of a century, they constantly improved their economic position and reached the peak of success in the nineteen thirties. By 1940, they had become the most important group in the grocery trade, and the grocery retail business was almost entirely in their hands (2). However, their prosperity was arrested by ruthless prosecution in 1941 under the regime of President Arnulfo Arias, an ultra-nationalist ruler. Besides Mexico, Panama is the only country in Latin America where the economic enterprise of the Chinese experienced a severe setback due to ruthless prosecution by local authorities.

In April 1941, Arias promulgated a law known as "nationalization of commerce", by which the Chinese were prohibited from retail business except in Oriental goods. Furthermore, a decree on employment was also issued forbidding employment of Chinese in commercial enterprises except in

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(1) H. F. MacNair (41), pp. 94-95.

(2) C. Shing (55), pp. 210-211.



restaurants and laundries. This was not only an insult to the Chinese, but actually a fatal blow. Local authorities, especially the Mayor of the capital, began to enforce the law abruptly and drastically. According to a Chinese diplomat serving in Panama at that time:

The steps taken by the Mayor were so barbarous that hardly any precedent can be found in this hemisphere except perhaps in the anti-Chinese campaign in certain Mexican provinces many years ago. . . . The democratic and conservative elements of the country sympathized with the Chinese in distress, but dared not raise their voice. . . . It was later learned that the United States Ambassador to Panama deeply sympathized with the difficulties confronted by the Chinese, but his hands were tied by a policy of non-interference. (1)

As a result, more than five hundred Chinese shops were forced to be liquidated at low prices with a total loss of more than one million dollars (2), and large numbers of Chinese were left unemployed. Fortunately, through an arrangement between the Chinese Minister and the United States authority of the Canal Zone, more than one thousand Chinese who had lost their jobs and business were employed by the Canal, and later on went back to China (3).

At the present time, all Chinese commercial establishments are owned either by naturalized Chinese, by native-born Chinese, or by Chinese married to Panamanian women, because the 1941 law is still in force. Although they are still

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(1) C. Shing (55), pp. 209-210.

(2) K. M. Chen (9), p. 744.

(3) C. Shing (55), p. 210.



mainly in the grocery business, they no longer dominate the trade as they did before 1941.

Among the Chinese in the other five Central American countries, those in Guatemala are generally more prosperous and their economic position is comparatively stronger (1). In the early period, the majority were tailors and only a few engaged in the business of importing Oriental goods (2). Later on, they all shifted into the retail business, with a few still engaged in importing. It was during and after World War I that they became well established in business, when there were more than four hundred Chinese commercial establishments all over the country. Nevertheless, all of them were of small capital. At the present time, there are about three hundred Chinese stores with a total capital of less than \$2,500,000. Ninety per cent of them have a capital of less than five thousand dollars. They are exclusively in the grocery and general retail business (3).

In Nicaragua, the Chinese own and operate four soap factories, which manufacture 70 per cent of the soap sold in the country. They also own two lumber yards and three shirt factories (4). This is the only country in Central America where the Chinese are successful outside the field of commerce. Nevertheless, the majority of the Chinese in

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(1) L. Liu (38).

(2) K. M. Chen (9), p. 748.

(3) K. M. Chen (9), 749-751.

(4) L. Liu (38).



Nicaragua as well as the majority in Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica, are in the retail grocery business (Table XV).

#### G. In Other South American Countries

Chile. The Chinese in Chile have always been concentrated in the Province of Tarapaca. At present they are still an important minority group in Iquique, where the 134 Chinese grocery stores almost control the grocery trade of the city. There are 482 Chinese commercial establishments altogether in more than a dozen Chilean cities. More than half of them are grocery stores, and 189 are carnicería (meat markets). Less than ten per cent are engaged in other businesses. The capital of all the Chinese stores is small. Even the largest Chinese businesses do not have a capital of more than ten thousand dollars (one million pesos) (1).

Venezuela. Before 1938, the Chinese were a strong group in the business of botiquines (2) in Caracas. In 1938 all the 107 botiquines owned by Chinese were closed by Venezuelan authorities. Some of the Chinese who had worked in the botiquines began to engage in truck farming through arrangement made by local authorities (3). But most of them entered into other commercial activities, mainly fruit stores and

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 793.

(2) Bars where alcoholic beverages are sold by drinks.

(3) Juana de Avila (2), pp. 14-15.



TABLE XV

NUMBERS OF CHINESE-OWNED COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS  
AND RETAIL GROCERY STORES IN SELECTED  
CENTRAL AMERICAN CITIES (a)

City	Total No. of Chinese Com. Establishments	No. of Retail Grocery Stores	Percentage of Retail Grocery Stores
Managua	23	21	91
Bluefields	22	20	90
San José	55	50	90
Limón	68	60	88
Puntarenas	53	50	91

(a) L. Liu (38).

Cafés (1). The rest of the Chinese in the country are mainly concentrated in the grocery, laundry and restaurant businesses. Because of the economic prosperity of Venezuela brought about by the exploitation of petroleum in the past quarter of a century, the Chinese merchants in this country are among the most prosperous ones in Latin America.

Ecuador. As early as the first decade of the 20th century, the Chinese in Ecuador were prosperous and respected merchants (2). At the present time there are about three hundred Chinese commercial establishments in the country, mainly concentrated in Guayaquil. They are engaged in the dry goods as well as the grocery business. The majority of them have a small capital and the total investment of all the Chinese in the country is only about two million dollars (30 million sucres) (3).

Other Countries. In Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay, the number of Chinese is so small that they do not average one in ten thousand population. Even if there are a few individual Chinese who are successful in business, the Chinese as a group do not contribute significantly in any locality of these countries. In Argentina, the majority of the Chinese are in Buenos Aires. The successful ones are retail dealers in imported Chinese antiques, silk,

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(1) Overseas Chinese Congress (47), p. 88.

(2) H. F. MacNair (41), pp. 100-101.

(3) K. M. Chen (9), p. 787.



tea, china and the like. The rest are employed as cooks and waiters in Argentine restaurants or are engaged in small retail businesses of various kinds (1). In Colombia, most of the Chinese are prosperous small businessmen, of whom more are in the retail grocery business than in any other trade. For example, in Barranquilla, the city which has largest Chinese population in Colombia, there are 19 Chinese retail grocery stores and only 12 Chinese laundries and 4 Chinese restaurants (2). Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay have less than one hundred Chinese altogether. All of them are barely making a living in various small businesses.

Surinam. The great majority of the Chinese in Surinam are engaged in commerce. They are very strong in the baking industry, more than half of the bakeries being in their hands. They also own the largest lumber yard in the colony (3).

#### H. On Other West Indian Islands

Trinidad. There are more Chinese per ten thousand population on Trinidad than in any other Latin American area. Except for Jamaica, perhaps there is no other country or colony in the Americas where the Chinese play such an important part in local commerce. There are more than two thousand commercial establishments owned by Chinese on this island of less than one

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 794.

(2) L. Liu (38).

(3) Overseas Chinese Congress (47), pp. 85-86.



million population. About half of them are grocery stores. Large Chinese firms with capital of hundreds of thousands of dollars are successful also in exporting and importing. In recent years they are facing keen competition from Jewish and Indian merchants who have captured not a small part of the business from the Chinese hands (1).

Hispaniola. The great majority of Chinese on the island is in the Dominican Republic. There are less than fifty Chinese in Haiti, operating a few small businesses. Even in the Dominican Republic, the few hundred Chinese are engaged only in small restaurant and grocery businesses. Nevertheless, they have made significant advances within the last 20 years. In the nineteen thirties there was no other Chinese business except laundries (2).

### I. Conclusion

From what has been said in this chapter, it is very clear that, except for a few, all the Chinese in Latin America are concentrated in commercial activities. Even those few, who engaged in economic activities other than commercial, such as manufacturing in Jamaica and agriculture in Peru, did so only after their success in commerce. It is very interesting to note that, although almost all of the Chinese immigrants are engaged in commercial activities, the majority of them

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(1) L. Liu (38).

(2) L. Liu (38).



were farmers before they left China. There are a number of reasons which account for their concentration in commercial activities instead of agriculture.

First, since almost all the immigrants had the intention of going back to China, they would not make any investment in farm lands, which to them meant to stay permanently.

Second, they left China to seek economic betterment. With the small amount of money they earned either as plantation laborers, railroad construction workers or miners, they could make larger and quicker profits in small retail businesses than in small-scale farming.

Third, even if they had wanted to engage in farming, it would have been very hard, if not impossible, in most cases for them to purchase small parcels of farm land. In Latin American countries, most lands are in the hands of large plantation owners or hacendados. Even natives have often had a hard time acquiring land. When the hacendados have wanted to sell their lands, it has been done more through large scale selling than piecemeal. That is why only a few successful Chinese businessmen have been able to buy farm estates, as in Peru.

Fourth, most Chinese immigrants came as single males without bringing their families with them. It was much easier for single males to run a retail shop in towns and cities than to run a farm in rural areas.

Finally, in later years, most of the Chinese immigrants came under the subsidies of their clan members who had become

successful in business. Their success lured the newcomers to join their trade. Furthermore, all the newcomers had to work for a few years in the commercial establishments of their clan members to pay back the subsidies they received. Consequently it was much easier for them to enter the business of the same line than to do otherwise.

The Chinese immigrants in Peru are of two main types: the early Chinese immigrants and the later Chinese immigrants. The early Chinese immigrants are of the 19th century, the Chinese who came to Peru, where they were free from constraints, were able to work Peruvian women as wives. They intermarried with the lower class whites as well as natives. The descendants of the early Chinese immigrants are now almost indistinguishable from the mass of Peruvian citizens - as they white, black, red or mixed (1). At the present time, more than half of the Chinese immigrants in Peru are married to native women and in Mexico; it is estimated that at least 70 per cent of the Chinese immigrants are married to Mexican women (2). This estimate is substantiated by the field survey made by Mr. Chen in a few Mexican cities in 1950 (Table XVI). The Chinese immigrants in Mexico are also intermarried with white women as well as with natives. Between 1910 and 1937, there were 1761 Chinese who intermarried with native women, 585 married with very few with Indian women. Between 1938 and 1957, there were 772 Chinese who intermarried with native women, 585 married with very few with Indian women and only 27 married Indians (3).



## CHAPTER VI

### SOCIAL ASPECTS

#### A. Inter-racial Marriages

Because of the extremely small number of females among the Chinese immigrants, the number of inter-racial marriages between these immigrants and native women in Latin America has been considerable. As early as the 19th century, the Chinese coolies in Peru, once they were free from contracts, were able to win Peruvian women as wives. They intermarried with the lower class whites as well as mestizas. The descendants of the early Chinese immigrants are now almost indistinguishable from the mass of Peruvian citizens - be they white, black, red or mixed (1). At the present time, more than half of the Chinese immigrants in Peru are married to native women and in Mexico, it is estimated that at least 70 per cent of the Chinese immigrants are married to Mexican women (2). This estimate is substantiated by the field survey made by Mr. Chen in a few Mexican cities in 1950 (Table XVI). The Chinese immigrants intermarried with white women as well as with mestizas, but very few with Indian women. Between 1930 and 1937, among the 772 Chinese who intermarried with native women, 584 married mestizas, 261 married whites and only 27 married Indians (3).

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(1) W. Stewart (59), pp. 225-232.

(2) C. P1 (48).

(3) Mexico (109), p. 120.

TABLE XVI

NUMBER OF MARRIED CHINESE IMMIGRANTS HAVING MEXICAN WIVES  
IN SELECTED MEXICAN CITIES, 1950 (a)

Number of Married Chinese Immigrants					
City	Total	Married to Chinese Women		Married to Mexican Women	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Tiajuana	48	4	8.4	44	91.6
Juárez	64	5	7.9	59	92.1
Tampico	179	7	3.9	172	96.1
Monterrey	32	2	6.1	30	93.9

(a) K. M. Chen (9), pp. 511, 522, 526 and 542.



In Guatemala, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Colombia, the majority of the Chinese immigrants also intermarried with native women (1). For example, from 1946 to 1952, nineteen Chinese immigrants were married in Colombia and 17 of these were to Colombian women (2). In 1945 and 1946, out of 14 Chinese immigrants married in Nicaragua, 12 have Nicaraguan wives (3). The percentage of Chinese immigrants married to native women in Panama and Ecuador is also very high, as indicated by the number of children born to a Chinese father and a native mother. There are more than three thousand such children in Panama and about two thousand in Ecuador (4).

In Cuba, it is estimated that about 50 per cent of the Chinese immigrants have Cuban wives (5). This estimate was proved to be correct by the author's field study. In Santiago de Cuba at least 40 per cent of the Chinese immigrants have Cuban wives and the percentage is even higher in Camagüey. The majority of them are said only to "live with Cuban women". Only a comparatively small number of them ever get married formally. Whether formally or informally, they have always been able to intermarry with the whites as well as the mestizas and Negroes. For example, in 1900 and 1901, out of the 29

(1) L. Liu (38).

(2) Colombia (78), 1946-1952.

(3) Nicaragua (118), 1945: p. 55; 1946: p. 43.

(4) K. M. Chen (9), pp. 743 and 787.

(5) C. Pi (48) and L. Liu (38).



intermarriages between Chinese and Cuban women registered in the government record, 13 were between Chinese and whites, 9 were between Chinese and mestizas and 4 between Chinese and Negro women (1).

Whether or not the intermarriages between the Chinese immigrants and the natives are legally registered, and whether the native women are whites, mestizas or Negroes, is mainly determined by the social and economic status of the Chinese. If a Chinese is a prosperous and respected merchant in the local community (but still not rich enough to smuggle in a Chinese bride), he usually marries a white girl or a mestiza. If he is not doing so well in business or only has a small business such as a fruit store or laundry, the likelihood is that he will just "live" with a lower class white, mestiza or Negro woman without any fuss about formal matrimonial ceremony. Whether the marriages are formal or informal, the results are just the same - breeding large numbers of Chinese mestizos (2). The Chinese mestizos in Cuba intermarry freely with members of every racial group. After one or two generations, their offspring can hardly be distinguished from the natives - be they white, black or mixed.

The Cuban wives of the Chinese immigrants and their mestizo children are very well accepted by the Chinese

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(1) Cuba (87), pp. 98-99.

(2) The term "Chinese mestizos" is coined by the author to indicate children born to a Chinese father and a native mother (whether white, mestiza or Negro), and their offspring.



community in Cuba. It is mainly because there are very few who have Chinese wives and children of pure Chinese blood. It is also because among the Chinese there is no sharp difference in social and economic status between those who have Cuban wives and mestizo children and those who have not.

The situation in Jamaica is very different from that in Cuba. First of all, the great majority of the population in Cuba is white, while in Jamaica it is black. There has been no intermarriage between Chinese and whites in Jamaica except one or two cases in recent years. The intermarriages are almost exclusively between the Chinese immigrants and Negro women. There were more than five thousand "Chinese coloured", as the Chinese mestizos are called in the British West Indian Census, in Jamaica in 1943. Almost all of them are the descendents of the Chinese immigrants and their Negro "common-law wives". In Jamaica, a woman who lives with a man as his wife without a legal marriage ceremony is the man's "common-law wife". A common-law wife is socially sanctioned among the Negro population. It is very interesting to note that the Chinese immigrants have always willingly accepted Negro women as common-law wives, but they rarely marry them.

Although large numbers of Chinese immigrants have taken Negro women as their common-law wives, the Jamaica-born Chinese rarely marry Negroes or Chinese mestizos, nor do they accept them as common-law wives. In recent years, the number of marriages between Jamaica-born Chinese and Chinese mestizos is increasing slowly, but the marriages are only between



Chinese boys and Chinese mestizas, and in most cases, they are not approved by the bridegrooms' parents. Up to the present time, the Chinese mestizos have not been as favorably accepted socially by the Chinese in Jamaica as in Cuba, although the Chinese are always willing to employ Chinese mestizos in their business. This is partly because children born out of wedlock are usually unacceptable in Chinese society, but mainly because there have been a considerable number of pure-blood Chinese among the younger generation, as the entry of Chinese wives and brides has never been prohibited in Jamaica. The Chinese mestizos either marry among themselves or intermarry with Negroes, but the intermarriages with Negroes are mostly with Negro girls. Very few Chinese mestizas ever marry Negro boys.

The pattern of intermarriage among Chinese, Chinese mestizas and Negroes in Jamaica is the result of the interaction of a number of factors. First of all, the intermarriages between Chinese immigrants and Negroes were mainly owing to the small number of Chinese female immigrants. At the same time, the common-law wife custom also makes it easy for the Chinese immigrants to live with Negro women without the feeling of being tied down socially. Among the Jamaica-born Chinese there is no shortage of marriageable women. The basic cause for intermarriage on the Chinese side no longer exists. Secondly, the intermarriages are mostly between small Chinese shopkeepers and the Negroes. There is no great difference in social and economic status between



the two groups, but most of the Jamaica-born Chinese are from families of successful Chinese merchants who are rich enough to bring their Chinese wives or brides to Jamaica. There is a sharp difference in social and economic status between the Jamaica-born Chinese and the average Negro. To be sure, there is a small group among the Negroes which forms the upper social class among the natives and is successful in business. But this group consider themselves the future masters of the island and have already adopted the attitude of a majority group towards the Chinese. At the same time, undoubtedly the Jamaica-born Chinese have a very strong racial pride. Racial consciousness still plays a dominant role and consequently the possibility of intermarriage between these two groups becomes very slight.

Intermarriage of the Jamaica-born Chinese and the Chinese mestizos is hindered by the same factors. The majority of the Chinese mestizos are the offspring of those Chinese who were not very successful in business and therefore were unable to bring their Chinese wives or brides to Jamaica. Therefore, the Chinese mestizos are generally from the lower social and economic class among the Chinese. Since they were offspring of Negro mothers, the Chinese with very strong racial pride do not allow themselves or their children to intermarry with them. Of course, among the Chinese mestizos there are some who are successful in business, and among the Jamaica-born Chinese there are those who are liberal minded and do not subscribe to racial pride. Nevertheless,



the number of intermarriages between the Chinese and the Chinese mestizos is still very small.

#### B. Segregation or No Segregation

In Latin America, segregation along racial lines does not exist. Therefore the Chinese generally have not been subjected to any form of segregation, whether residential, occupational or institutional. There is only one case of occupational segregation known to the author, which is found in Panama. According to the 1941 Presidential Decree, the Chinese in Panama were permitted to engage only in the restaurant business and in business dealing with Oriental goods. Even in this case, the segregation is not strictly along racial lines, because it was only imposed on Chinese immigrants, and Panama-born Chinese still can engage in any type of business of their choice.

In a few of the large Latin American urban centers, such as Lima, Havana and Kingston, there are "Chinatowns". The existence of Chinatowns in these large cities has nothing to do with segregation. They are completely different from the "Ghettos" in some of the European cities. They are not quarters specially reserved for the Chinese, and Chinese businesses or residences are not required to stay within Chinatown. As a matter of fact, the great majority of the Chinese businesses and residences in Havana and Kingston are located outside of Chinatown. In Kingston, the Chinatown



consists of only a few blocks along Barry Street and Princess Street. Besides Chinese businesses there are also businesses owned and operated by whites as well as by Negroes. The fact that there are more Chinese businesses within the few blocks is mainly due to trade congregation. In all large cities, the leading firms of each trade tend to concentrate within a certain area of a city. In Kingston, all the grocery wholesalers are concentrated within the few blocks along Barry Street and Princess Street. Since the majority of the grocery wholesalers in Kingston are Chinese, there are more Chinese firms than non-Chinese in the wholesale grocery district.

The growth of Chinatown right behind the Capitolio in Havana can be traced back to the 19th century when some of the Chinese coolies worked as free laborers in Havana after their contracts on the sugar plantations had expired. At that time, the railroad station was situated just outside the city of old Havana where the Capitolio stands now. The Chinese coolies were mainly concentrated near the railroad station. This was because of their economic status at that time, not because of the practice of racial segregation. As in some of the large cities everywhere, the low income laborers are always found living near railroad tracks on the outskirts of the city. As Havana grew larger and larger in the 20th century, Chinatown became part of downtown Havana and shared the prosperity of the downtown area. Even after the Capitolio was built on the site of the old railroad



station, Chinatown remained where it was in the old days. At the present time, all the social organizations of the Chinese are located in Chinatown. Each one of them has its own building. Some of the buildings which house the organizations cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and are richly decorated (Figure 10).

In the old days, almost all the Chinese in Cuba and Jamaica lived in their shops. There were hardly any Chinese who owned separate residences. In recent years, especially since World War II, there are more and more Chinese living away from their business premises. When they started to penetrate into the residential areas, they never faced any resistance from the neighborhood into which they desired to move. In Havana, Chinese residences can be found in the newly developed high-class residential area in Vedado as well as in the middle-class residential area in the old section of the city. In Kingston, Chinese residences can be found everywhere throughout the metropolitan area (Map XII). Some of the most beautiful houses in the high-class residential area north of the city are residences of rich Chinese businessmen (Figure 11).

There is also no occupational or institutional segregation against Chinese in Cuba and Jamaica. Chinese children can attend any school of their choice. Churches and all other social organizations are wide open for Chinese membership without any restrictions. The concentration of Chinese along a few lines of trade in Cuba and especially in the grocery





Fig. 10. Kiukiang Club, Havana, Cuba. It is an organization of all immigrants from Kiukiang, Nan-hai. The picture shows the reception room of the club, which also has a library, conference room, and bar in the expensive newly completed building.



Fig. 11. A Chinese Residence in Suburban Kingston, Jamaica. In recent years increasing numbers of prosperous Chinese businessmen have built modern homes of this type in the residential area north of Kingston.



trade in Jamaica is not caused by occupational segregation, but rather by voluntary congregation in the few trades. Chinese can engage in any type of trade they like. As a matter of fact, among the younger generation more and more Chinese are leaving the old trades engaged in by their fathers and entering various new occupations, as doctors, lawyers, contractors and the like, without encountering any prejudice in their professions.

Although there has been no segregation against Chinese in Cuba and Jamaica, the social contacts between Chinese and the natives, specially in Jamaica, are generally still very limited. In Jamaica, these contacts are exclusively on business and are functional. Such contacts are impersonal, as they are only part of the business. As soon as business is over, social contacts cease to exist. The friendships and social affairs of the Chinese are limited largely to their racial group. Even intermarriage does not carry the social contacts between the two races beyond the individual household. Chinese rarely associate intimately with the relatives of their common-law wives, and their common-law wives never come into close social contact with Chinese outside of their household. The Chinese always keep a cordial relationship with the natives, but outside of the common-law marriages, they avoid intimate personal association. To be sure, there have always been frequent group social contacts between the Chinese and the natives, such as athletic contests between Chinese teams and native teams,



the natives being invited to public meetings of the Chinese community, and the like. But close social association on an individual basis is rare. This is mainly because the Chinese socially segregate themselves, consciously or unconsciously.

The reasons for the "active segregation" practiced by the Chinese in Jamaica are numerous. First of all, about one third of the Chinese population in Jamaica still consists of immigrants. The Chinese immigrants always regard their stay in Jamaica as temporary. They intended to go back to China at the time when they came to Jamaica, and they still want to do so eventually. Since their ultimate aim is to return home, they do not feel obligated to plunge into native social life during their stay. Most of them will never go back, some because of their success in business and their heavy investments in Jamaica, which they are not willing to give up, others because of their lack of success in business and their consequent inability to pay the passage. Nevertheless the "sojourner's attitude" persists among them. Secondly, the majority of the immigrants does not have a good command of English. They may be able to master some "Jamaican English" essential to their business, but for intimate social activities language is still a great drawback for them. It is not unusual to find an old Chinese immigrant in his sixties, who still cannot speak good English although he has amassed a great sum of money through hard work and thrift for the past thirty or



forty years. It remains for his well-educated Jamaica-born children to invest his capital in a large business. "Work hard and always work hard" is the motto of Chinese immigrants. They work twelve hours a day and seven days a week, and they rarely give themselves a rest. The only thing they care for is their business. They do not care about social activities. This also partly explains why they always keep to themselves.

The "active segregation" is not only practiced by the Chinese immigrants but to a certain extent also by the Jamaica-born Chinese, the great majority of whom do not want to go back to China and all of whom have a good command of English. This is partly because racial consciousness still persists and partly because the economic status of the Jamaica-born Chinese is higher than the Negro. The active segregation, combined with their monopoly of the grocery trade, places the Chinese in Jamaica in a very precarious position. Up to now, not a single Jamaica-born Chinese has entered the political arena of the island. This makes the situation even worse. As the political influence of the natives within the colonial government of the island and the urge toward self-government increase, any agitation from an ill-willed local politician could lead to great damage to the Chinese. This is a serious problem facing the Chinese in Jamaica, and they are just beginning to be aware of it. Lately articles in The Pagoda, an English weekly published by the Jamaica-born Chinese, encouraged the young members of their race to enter the political arena; and to give up the



practice of active segregation (1).

Receiving no assurance, but highly conscious of the part they (the Chinese) occupy in the social structure of the island, and the contribution they must make in the important decisions that will determine the shape of things to come, they sometimes face the future with mixed feelings of anxiety, fear and timidity.

With the advent of the political awakening of the Jamaican mass, their fate assumes new dimensions. For no matter how cosmopolitan the constitution, the fact remains that the local born Chinese fall into a minority group and can easily be identified by reason of their color and occupation.

There is need then to enter the political arena, to put forward men and women of leadership who will champion their political rights. There is also the need for men of the highest calibre who will determine what self-government will mean to the Chinese (2).

The "sojourner's attitude" also persists among the Chinese immigrants in Cuba, who constitute 80 per cent of the island's Chinese population. Their social contacts with the natives follow the same pattern as in Jamaica. Since they do not control any link in the chain of economic life in Cuba, their position is not so vulnerable as that of their brethren in Jamaica.

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(1) B. Browne (6), p. 18.

(2) L. R. Chin (10), p. 5.



## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

Numerically, the Chinese in Latin America as a whole are not important at all. They amount to only a small fraction of one per cent of the 150 million total population. Furthermore, they are very unevenly distributed. In most of the Latin American countries, their number is so small that no significance can be attributed to their existence whatsoever. It is only in a few countries where they are highly concentrated that they become minority groups of importance.

Even in the countries where the Chinese are highly concentrated, they seldom amount to more than one per cent of the total population. But the significance of a minority cannot always be measured solely on a numerical basis. The importance of the Chinese in these countries is much greater than their numbers would indicate. This is mainly because of their concentration within a limited field of commercial activities, especially in the trade of provisions.

The small number of Chinese has been so influential in trade in the places where they are highly concentrated that within the past 25 years they have been subjected to ruthless persecution by the local authorities in two separated cases - Northern Mexico and Panama. In other places, they have been able to avoid the same kind of

persecution perhaps only by laborous efforts of delicate adjustments to local situations, which could be thrown out of balance by any drastic change, either economical or political, in their adopted countries. At least, the Chinese in Jamaica are facing this kind of uncertainty. Close studies of those in Trinidad and coastal provinces of Peru in this respect are highly desirable for a full understanding of the Chinese minority groups in Latin America.

What is more significant is that the Chinese population in Latin American countries consists mostly of immigrants, the majority of them still retaining their Chinese nationality. Thus, the Chinese there constitute not only a racial minority but also an alien group. In the past, because of the weakness of their home government, they did not become a factor in international politics. But, as a powerful new government emerging across the Pacific, they may assume their role in due course.

As important a minority group as the Chinese are at the present time, their importance is bound to decline in the future.. Although a number of Latin American countries, including Cuba, abrogated their Chinese exclusion laws right after World War II, it is doubtful that there will be a large number of new Chinese immigrants, if any, in the future. First, it does not seem likely that emigrants from lands under Communist control will be admitted by any of the Latin American countries. Second, it is also unlikely that under the new Communist regime



there will be any emigrants leaving China for foreign lands unfriendly to Communist regime. Furthermore, even there is no ideological differences between Latin American governments on one hand and the Chinese government on the other, it is still doubtful that Chinese immigrants will be admitted in large number, because the basic immigration policies of all the Latin American countries still strongly prefer European immigrants. Since the number of females among the Chinese in Latin America is very small, the size of Chinese population will become even smaller. Since most of the immigrants who consist of a large portion of the Chinese population, are of middle or old age, there will be no immigrants with Chinese nationality left and the Chinese will cease to be an alien group before long. As there is a tendency among the young native-born Chinese to shift away from the trade practiced by their parents to other trades and professions, in the future, their economic activities will not be concentrated in the grocery trade alone. They might be individually successful in various trades and professions, but they will no longer be an influential group in any particular trade.

Finally, will the small number of native-born Chinese be able to retain their racial identity and continue to form small racial minority groups in the future, or will they eventually be assimilated by the native population? No simple straight answer can be given to this question. Although assimilation is a very slow process, and racial

consciousness still plays an important role in human mind, different social, economic and other circumstances in different countries will set different tempos of racial assimilation. Based on the present trend in Jamaica, it seems that the Chinese there will be able to maintain their racial identity for some time to come. But whether or not those in other Latin American countries will be able to do so is a question which can be answered only after further investigations are made along the line of process of racial assimilation.



## APPENDIX A

## SCHEDULE USED FOR INTERVIEWS IN THE FIELD

Country \_\_\_\_\_

Community (City, Town or Village) \_\_\_\_\_

	1	2	3	4	5
Last name	1				
Relation with the head of the family	2				
Sex	3				
Age	4				
Occupation	5				
Citizenship	6				
Race	7				
Place of birth	8				
Country					
Province	9				
Minor Municipal Division	10				
Education	11				

The following are only for those who were born in China:

Year of arrival	12
Why you left China?	Economic reason 13
	Other reason 14
Who sponsored your trip?	15
Occupation in China	16
Have you changed occupation since arrival in country?	17
Previous occupation	18
Want go back to China eventually? (yes or no)	19



## APPENDIX B

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF LEGISLATIONS  
RELATING TO CHINESE IMMIGRATION  
IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES\*

- 1847: Cuba - Importation of Chinese "Contract laborers" was authorized by the Junta de Fomento.
- 1849: Peru - A general immigration law, known as the "Chinese law", was passed on November 17, 1849; Chinese coolie migration to Peru started.
- 1856: Peru - The 1849 "Chinese law" was annulled and coolie trade was prohibited.
- 1861: Peru - A new "Chinese law" was promulgated, and Chinese coolie trade resumed.
- 1871: Cuba - Spain ordered the coolie trade closed.
- 1889: Ecuador - Decree dated September 14, 1889 excluded all Chinese.
- 1890: Uruguay - The Immigration Act of 1890 excluded all Asiatic and African persons.
- 1896: Guatemala - Decree dated January 25, 1896 excluded Chinese citizens.
- 1897: Costa Rica - The Act of May 22, 1897 prohibited the immigration of individuals of Chinese nationality.
- 1902: Cuba - Decree No. 237 of August 11, 1902 confirmed Order No. 155 of the United States military authority in Cuba, which introduced the Chinese exclusion law of the United States to Cuba.
- 1903: Paraguay - The Act of September 30, 1903 excluded individuals of the black or yellow race.

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\*Excluding European possessions.



- 1904: Panama - The Regulation of Chinese Immigration of March 11, 1904 excluded all Chinese.
- 1912: Costa Rica - The Act of May 22, 1897 was confirmed by the Act of January 15, 1912.
- 1913: Panama - Law 50 of March 2, 1913 excluded individuals of Chinese race.  
Decree No. 44 permitted only those Chinese whose names were registered in "Registro de Chino", to return after an absence of less than two years.
- 1917: Cuba - Chinese laborers were admitted by a law dated August 3, 1917.
- Panama - According to Decree No. 8 in 1917, the prohibition stated in Law 50 of 1913 did not extend to individuals of Chinese race who are native citizens of other countries.
- 1918: Venezuela - According to the Immigration Act of June 26, 1918 only persons of European race were accepted as immigrants.
- 1921: Cuba - The 1917 law was revoked, once again excluding all Chinese.
- Ecuador - The exclusion decree dated September 14, 1889 was confirmed by the Act of October 18, 1921.
- 1924: Guatemala - Decree No. 875 of September 15, 1924 excluded all Chinese and other individuals of Mongolian race.
- Paraguay - The exclusion of individuals of yellow race was abolished by Act No. 691 of October, 1924.
- 1926: Panama - According to the Act No. 13 of October 23, 1926, the exclusion of Chinese by race did not extend to those who were nationals of Pan-American countries.
- Cuba - Decree No. 570 of April 27, 1926 excluded individuals of Chinese origin.
- 1928: Panama - Act No. 6 of 1928 limited the number of Chinese admitted under Act No. 16 of 1927 to ten a year.



- 1930: Nicaragua - Chinese were excluded by the law dated May 5, 1930.
- 1933: Brazil - A 2% quota immigration system was established by the Federal Constitution of May 24, 1933.
- 1934: Honduras - According to Article 14 of the Immigration Law of 1934, Chinese immigration was prohibited.
- 1935: Mexico - A quota system was established by the General Population Law of December 30, 1935. The number of Chinese admitted was limited to 100.
- 1936: Peru - A 2% quota system was established.
- Venezuela - The Immigration Act of 1936 prohibited the entry of any person not of the white race.
- 1937: Nicaragua - Article 5 of the Immigration Law excluded individuals of Chinese race.
- 1939: Peru - All Chinese were excluded pending the conclusion of a new agreement between the two government.
- 1943: Cuba - Chinese exclusion laws were abolished as a result of the new treaty between China and Cuba, which was promulgated on April 10, 1943.
- Costa Rica - Decree No. 51 of December 28, 1943 repealed all restrictions based on nationality and race which had been imposed on the Chinese immigrants.
- 1944: Honduras - Decree No. 61 of March 3, 1944 excluded citizens of China from the persons classified as undersirable immigrants.
- Guatemala - Decree No. 3106 of June 2, 1944 removed from all the laws in force at that time the phrases which classified Chinese as undesirable immigrants for racial or other reasons.
- El Salvador - Decree No. 16 of July 18, 1944 repealed all dispositions which considered the Chinese as undesirable immigrants.



Ecuador - Decree No. 601 of August 1, 1944 repealed all restrictions based on nationality or race, which had been imposed on Chinese immigrants.

Nicaragua - All restrictions in regard to the citizens of China in Article 5 of the Law of 1930 was abolished by Decree No. 318 of 1944.

Argentina. The latest population census available is the Third National Census of 1947. At that time there were 257 Chinese by nationality, and among them only 20 were females. Because of the small number of women and boys, as well as lack of new immigrants, the number of Chinese has remained considerably in the past forty years. The Chinese Affairs Commission gives the number of 1947 as 257. According to Mr. Chen the number in 1947 is "about two hundred" (2). It is reasonable to assume that there are about 250 Chinese in Argentina.

Bolivia. The 1950 demographic census shows no Chinese in Bolivia. Between 1942 and 1943 there were 26 Chinese immigrants and 5 Chinese nationals (3). In 1940, Mr. Chen reported that there were only 30 Chinese who registered in the Chinese Consulate (4). Therefore the number of Chinese in Bolivia could be no more than 30.

Brazil. According to the 1950 census the number of

(1) China Yearbook (137), p. 23.

(2) K. M. Chen (9), p. 79.

(3) Bolivia (70), Demography, 1942-1943.

(4) K. M. Chen (9), p. 79.

## APPENDIX C

ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF CHINESE  
IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Argentina. The latest population census available is the Third National Census of 1914. At that time there were 462 Chinese by nationality, and among them only 20 were females. Because of the small number of women and because of lack of new immigrants, the number of Chinese declined considerably in the past forty years. The Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission gives the number in 1945 as 200 (1). According to Mr. Chen the number in 1950 is "more than two hundred" (2). It is reasonable to assume that there are about 250 Chinese in Argentina.

Bolivia. The 1942 demographic census shows no Chinese in Bolivia. Between 1942 and 1945 there were 36 Chinese immigrants and 5 Chinese emigrants (3). In 1950, Mr. Chen reported that there were only 20 Chinese who registered in the Chinese consulate (4). Therefore the number of Chinese in Bolivia would be no more than 30.

Brazil. According to the 1950 census there were 646

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(1) China Handbook (137), p. 22.

(2) K. M. Chen (9), p. 794.

(3) Bolivia (70), Demografia, 1942-1945.

(4) K. M. Chen (9), p. 796.



Chinese by nationality, and 58 naturalized Chinese. The total number of Chinese population in Brazil is 704.

Chile. According to the census of 1930, there were 1,605 Chinese by nationality, among them 66 were females. Because of the small number of women and because of lack of new immigrants the number decreased to 1,500 in 1945 (1). In 1950 the total number including native-born Chinese was only 1,239 (2).

Colombia. In the censuses of 1912, 1918 and 1938 there is no information on the number of Chinese in Colombia. According to the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, in 1943 there were 550 Chinese (3). Between 1941 and 1950 there were 164 Chinese immigrants and 82 Chinese emigrants, so the net increase within the twelve years is 82 (4). Therefore we could say the number of Chinese would not be more than 650 by 1950.

Costa Rica. According to the 1950 census there were 723 Chinese by nationality and 933 Amarillos. Since there were no Japanese or other nationalities of yellow race, it is reasonable to assume that all the 933 Amarillos are Chinese.

Cuba. The census of 1943 indicates that there were 15,822 Chinese by place of birth, including 165 females. There were only 18,934 enumerated as yellow race, which includes

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(1) China Handbook (137), p. 22.

(2) K. M. Chen (9), p. 793.

(3) China Handbook (137), p. 22.

(4) Colombia (78), Anuario General de Estadística 1941-1950.

all persons of Asiatic origin. In the past one hundred years the number of Chinese female immigrants has at no time been greater than 300 (see Table A). Therefore the number of native-born Chinese can not be very large. According to the Chinese consulate in Cuba, there were 18,484 Chinese immigrants registered in the consulate in 1942. The 1943 Cuban census figure seems to be too low. This is perhaps because some of the Chinese immigrants entered illegally and therefore purposely avoid being enumerated by official census takers. At the most, the total number of Chinese in 1943 could not be more than 23,000. Although the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission in 1945 claimed that there were 32,000 Chinese in Cuba, the number must have included all the half Chinese: that is, offspring of a Chinese father and Cuban mother.

TABLE A

## NUMBER OF CHINESE FEMALE IMMIGRANTS IN CUBA (a)

Year	1877	1899	1907	1919	1931	1943
Number	66	49	46	284	202	165

(a) According to official censuses from 1877 to 1943.



Dominican Republic. According to the 1950 census there are 561 Amarillos, and 510 Chinese by place of birth. Among the 510 only 42 are women. Since there are no Japanese in the republic, it is reasonable to consider all the 561 Amarillos as Chinese. Among them 51 were born in the republic. According to Mr. Liu in the same year there were 515 Chinese in the republic (1). His number perhaps does not include the native-born Children.

Ecuador. The first population census in Ecuador was taken in 1950. And at the time when this dissertation is being written, only a very brief summary of the census has been published, which contains no information of value to the present study. According to the Dirección Nacional de Estadística, in 1942 there were 885 Chinese by nationality, among them only 12 were females (2). In 1948 The Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission claimed that there were 3,700 Chinese in the country (3). This figure much include all the half-Chinese, who number more than 2,000 (4). Because of the small number of women, the number of native-born Chinese could never be large. By 1950 the total number of Chinese could be no more than 1,000.

El Salvador. According to the 1930 census there were

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(1) L. Liu (38).

(2) Ecuador (93), p. 61.

(3) China Handbook (137), p. 22.

(4) K. M. Chen (9), p. 787.

284 Chinese by nationality, among them 29 were female. According to the 1950 census, there were 140 Chinese by nationality and 150 Chinese by place of birth. In both cases, only 14 were females. There were about 100 native-born Chinese (1) in the same year. The total number of Chinese would be about 250.

Guatemala. The 1950 census gives no information on the number of Chinese either by nationality or by race. According to 1921 census there were 759 Chinese by nationality. Among them only 20 were females. According to 1940 census there were 670 Chinese by nationality. Only 41 of them were females. By 1950, the total number of Chinese including native-born could not be more than one thousand.

Haiti. According to Mr. Liu, in 1950 there were only 37 Chinese in Haiti (2).

Honduras. The 1950 census shows that there were 382 Asiaticos. Since there were no Japanese or other Asiatic nationalities in that year, all the 382 Asiaticos could be considered as Chinese.

Mexico. According to 1950 census there were 6,180 Chinese by place of birth, and 5,124 Chinese by nationality. There is no information on the number of Chinese by race or that of naturalized Chinese. The 1940 census indicated that the number of naturalized Chinese was 1,805. Thus in 1950 the number of Chinese excluding native-born ones would be about seven thousand (1,805 naturalized and 5,124 by nationality).

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 758.

(2) L. Liu (38), p. 21.



Since the number of Chinese female immigrants has never been very large (see Table B), the number of native-born Chinese could not be very large either. Therefore, by 1950 the total number of Chinese in Mexico would seem to be around 12,000.

TABLE B

## NUMBER OF CHINESE FEMALE IMMIGRANTS IN MEXICO (a)

Year	1895	1900	1910	1921	1930	1950
Number	22	18	85	179	421	457

(a) According to official censuses from 1895 to 1950.

Nicaragua. The 1950 census report shows 487 Chinese by nationality. The Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission estimated that in 1945 there were 600 Chinese. Mr. Liu indicates that in 1950 there were more than six hundred Chinese (1). His number seems to be acceptable.

Panama. The census of 1950 indicates that there were 1,851 China-born Chinese. There is no information on the number of native-born Chinese. The 1940 census shows that there were 3,882 Amarillos. Among them only 989 were born in Panama. Since there were 65 Japanese women and 224 Chinese women at that time, about four-fifths of the 989

(1) L. Liu (38), p. 18.

native-born Amarillos would be Chinese. If the number of native-born Chinese was 800 in 1940, it could not be more than 900 in 1950. Therefore the total number of Chinese in Panama in 1950 would be about 2,700 (1,851 China-born and about 900 native-born).

Paraguay. According to Mr. Chen, there were only 10 Chinese in this country in 1950 (1).

Peru. The census of 1940 indicates that there were 10,915 Chinese (550 female), 17,598 Japanese (5,853 female) both by nationality, and 41,945 Amarillos. Since there were no naturalized Japanese and only 43 naturalized Chinese up to 1940, all the 13,432 Amarillos with Peruvian nationality except 43 were native-born Chinese and Japanese. As the number of Japanese women is about ten times as large as that of Chinese women, out of the 13,432 native-born Amarillos, at most, 1,200 were Chinese. Thus, in 1940 the total number of Chinese would be about 12,000.

Uruguay. According to Mr. Chen, there were about 60 Chinese in Uruguay in 1950 (2).

Venezuela. According to the census of 1950 there were 1,241 Chinese by nationality and 37 naturalized Chinese. The number of native-born must be very small because of the small number of Chinese women (see Table C). Thus, the total number of Chinese in 1950 would be about 1,300.

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(1) K. M. Chen (9), p. 796.

(2) K. M. Chen (9), P. 796.



TABLE C

## NUMBER OF CHINESE WOMAN IN VENEZUELA (a)

Year	1936	1941	1950
Number	9	43	52

(a) According to official censuses of 1936, 1941 and 1950.

Jamaica. The census of 1945 indicates that there were 6,886 Chinese by race in Jamaica. Among them 2,552 were born in China; 4,334 were born in Jamaica.

Trinidad. According to the census of 1946, there were 5,641 Chinese by race in Trinidad. Among them 2,366 were born in China; 3,275 were native-born.

British Guiana. The census of 1946 indicates there were 3,567 Chinese by race in the colony. Among them only 441 were born in China.

Surinam. In 1941 there were 2,293 Chinese in the Dutch colony (1).

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(1) 1941 Surinam Government official figure.

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