

THE EARLIEST SUGAR INGENIOS IN THE AMERICAS

--By Dr. Lynne Guitar (Ph.D. in history and anthropology from Vanderbilt University), an independent scholar and Resident Director of CIEE's program of "Spanish Language & Caribbean Studies" at the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, Santiago, Dominican Republic, with thanks to the Dominican committee that succeeded in gaining World Cultural Heritage protection for the *Route of the First Colonial Sugar Mills of America*, which Dr. Guitar assisted by providing the required English translations--much of their research has been incorporated into this summary of the Diego de Caballero, Santa Isabel/Boca de Nigua, and Santa Ana de Engombe properties.



The sugar *ingenios*¹ of 16th-century Hispaniola were one of the most fundamental socio-economic complexes in the colonization of the Caribbean, combining technology and labor from Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

Originally grown in Asia, sugar was brought to the Iberian Peninsula by the Moors. Spaniards developed their first plantations in the Canary Islands, while the Portuguese grew it on islands off Africa's northwestern coast. Christopher Columbus brought the first sugar cane to Hispaniola during his second voyage to the island in 1493. In 1504 the first recorded production of cane sugar took place using a mill powered by horses along the banks of the Nigua River. It

was for local consumption, as was the sugar manufactured in 1506 in the village of Concepción de la Vega. In 1515, American-grown sugar was exported for the first time to Spain. By 1522, Hispaniola's planters were shipping significant quantities to Spain for refining--2,000 arrobas, or 50,000 pounds annually. By 1530, shipments had risen to more than 2 million pounds, and they continued to rise, albeit sporadically because of slave uprisings, for the next thirty years.



This illustration is a colorized version of a 16th-century woodcut by Theodore De Bry, *De ontdekking van de Nieuwe Wereld*, Amsterdam: Van Hoeve, c1979, pg. 2.

¹ The Spanish word *ingenio*, which literally means "ingenious," initially referred to the mill, to the water-powered or animal-powered machinery that was used to press the juice from cane sugar. By the time the processes were imported to Hispaniola, however, the phrase *ingenio azucarero*, or the word *ingenio* alone, had come to encompass not only the mill, but the entire complex of equipment, buildings, lands, and workers devoted to cane sugar's growth, harvest, and production, as well as to the maintenance of all those who lived and worked there.

Sugar was the most advanced industry of its time, requiring a diversity of activities throughout the cultivation and industrial processes related to the sweet and its derivatives. In 2003, UNESCO declared what remains of six 16th-century sugar ingenios on Hispaniola as World Cultural Heritage sites (*Route of the First Colonial Sugar Mills of America*), for they gave birth to the cultivation of sugar throughout the New World. Sustained by the exploitation of Native and African manpower, and requiring the presence of specialized European technology for their installation and operation, the ingenios reflect the transfer of knowledge and technology of Asian, European, African, and American material culture in the genesis of the new continents' industrial heritage. In consequence, the first sugar industries of the New World possess an exceptional value for humanity, as much for the social processes they engendered as for the economic and technological processes that were involved the production of sugar from sugar cane.



The demand for sugar in Europe due to the closing of commercial access to Asia after Muslims captured Constantinople in the mid-1400s, the rapid acclimatization of the plant to American soil, the quick exhaustion of Hispaniola's gold mines (at least, of gold that was easily mined), the reduction of indigenous manpower and consequent introduction of African slave manpower, reoriented both the society and the economy of the colony toward sugar production. Through the mid-1500s, the sugar ingenios became the island's main population and production centers.

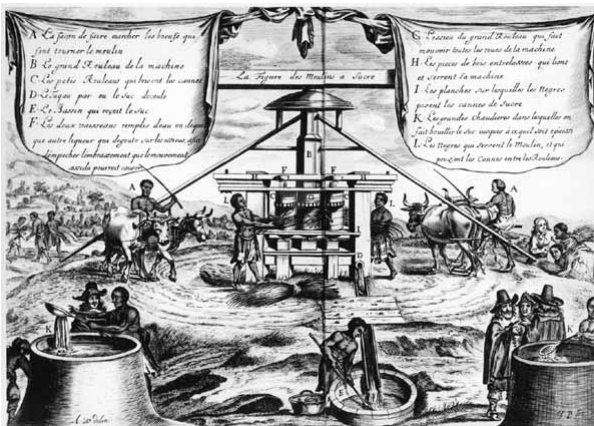


There were two types of actual sugar mills: hydraulic and animal powered. The latter type is called a *trapiche*. All successful ingenios were located in the proximity of a river, which provided drinking water, a source of energy, and permitted the transportation of products to and from the nearest ports. Rapid transportation to the ports where sugar could be shipped to Spain was exceedingly important because sugar has a "shelf life"—it spoils if not used within a given period of time, especially the sugar that was shipped out of Hispaniola, for it still contained a quantity of molasses. It was not refined into white sugar until it arrived in Spain.

Hydraulic sugar mills demanded the presence of continuous currents of water, since loss of flow in dry seasons stopped its production. Canals were dug to change the course of the water, and dams were built to elevate water levels. The nearby presence of forests was also needed for the firewood required to boil down the cane juice, both by day and by night during the harvest season.

The ingenios, therefore, required vast rural properties, although there were smaller sugar growers who paid to use the mills of the large ingenios. The large ingenios not only had a mill, many of them had their own church and cemetery. Each ingenio, large or small, had its farm where mainly tuberous vegetables and corn were raised (the basic crops of the indigenous peoples of the island) to feed both the free population and all of the slaves who were linked to sugar production. The proprietor usually built a large mansion on the property, although he and his family lived for most of the year in yet another mansion in the city of Santo Domingo or other smaller Spanish cities across the island, leaving the administrator and his family to run the rural property. Many of those administrators were the mestizo sons of the owner and his indigenous wife or mistress. Each ingenio also possessed several livestock ranches, establishments of considerable size that were dedicated to the breeding of animals, which provided food for the workers, energy to run trapiches, and transportation from the fields to the sugar mills as well as from the mills to the ports. There were a large number of specialized buildings and working areas, including, of course, housing areas for the multitude of workers employed by the various ingenios.

The processing of sugar required a great quantity of specialized manpower, both free and slave. Sugar production required masters, technicians who were well experienced with the nuances of sugar production. These sugar masters were generally from the Canary Islands or were of Portuguese origin, and there were both native and black slaves--over time, many of the slaves became specialized in a particular technical activity, although the majority worked in the fields as planters and harvesters. An ingenio also required cooks, blacksmiths, foundrymen, coopers, carpenters, farmers, stockmen, fishermen, seamstresses, mechanics... artisans and specialists of all kinds.



The heart of the ingenio, however, was the hydraulic mill or the trapiche. The mill, vertical or horizontal, was what squeezed the juice out of the cane using machinery brought from Spain (but usually made in Italy or Holland because of its complexity), as well as huge wooden crushing gears, most of which were carved from the largest of Hispaniola's trees. But human hands—slave hands—had to feed the cane through the crushing gears, often literally, for many of these workers lost

hands, limbs, even their very lives in the process because the huge gears could not be stopped easily or quickly once they were set in motion. The cane juice was sent via troughs or carried in buckets to the purging house, where it was cooked down into molasses, a very delicate operation that required technological expertise. Then the product was subjected to several delicate crystallization processes and, finally, set out to dry in cone-shaped clay recipients that were deposited in the drying houses, a kind of specialized warehouse, to await shipment to Spain.

The necessity of producing handmade articles related to the operation of the ingenios, such as the clay recipients employed in the crystallization and storage of the sugar, the clay tiles for the roofs of the buildings, as well as obtaining the lime that was used in the fabrication of sugar and in the construction of the ovens, were among other internal activities of the sugar establishment.

The copper recipients in which the cane juice was boiled (see photo, left, of two of these, along with other antiquities from Hispaniola's ingenios that were on display for sale along the highway near Santiago)



were manufactured in the ingenio's foundry, and working instruments such as plowshares and ironwork for the horses were made and repaired there. There was also a carpentry house where carpenters were in charge of the construction and repair of a wide variety of wooden objects, and where coopers made barrels.

The ingenio's owners and administrators had to protect themselves against the frequent attacks of runaway blacks and pirates, which made it necessary to build military fortifications within the ingenio's grounds.

Each ingenio also had its market area, where neighboring planters and merchants from Santo Domingo converged. This ended up converting the island's ingenios into important economic centers. Over time, small towns grew up around them. Documentary sources provide evidence illustrating that the ingenios of Hispaniola kept up their agricultural production and cattle raising long after the Spanish shipping route moved from Santo Domingo to Havana, Cuba in the mid-1500s, which killed off Hispaniola's sugar industry. The same diversity of resources and labor that was required by sugar production favored the transformation of the ingenios into commercial cattle and agricultural ranches.

THREE CENSUSES OF *INGENIO* WORKERS ON HISPANIOLA

	<u>Spaniards</u>	<u>Indians</u>	<u>Africans</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>No. of Ingenios</u>
1530	427	200+	1,870	700	3,197+	14
1533	412	200+	1,880	1,525	4,017+	23
1545	---	5,125+	3,827+	---	8,952+	29

Ingenio Santa Isabel/Boca de Nigua

Built originally in the early 16th century, this ingenio on the Nigua River, called Santa Isabel, first belonged to Francisco de Tostado, a public notary who came to the island with Nicolas de Ovando's fleet in 1502. A newer ingenio, owned by the Marquis de Aranda, a Spanish nobleman, and administered by Juan Bautista Oyarzábal, was constructed over top of Santa Isabel's crumbling buildings in the early 1700s. (A document from 1731, the year the Treaty of Ryswick was signed, the treaty that defined the Dajabón or Massacre River as the frontier between the Spanish and French sides of the island, indicates that the ingenio belonged to the Marquis de Aranda by that date.) Construction of the 18th-century ingenio was the result of a series of authorized grants from the Spanish monarchy that were intended to raise the Spanish part of the island up to the levels obtained in the French Saint Domingue colony under a regime of intensive slavery. Its operational infrastructure indicates that it required abundant slave manpower, for it has a boiler house with five pans. It is of



French origin, modeled after the ingenios that were developed in the island's French colony and later on the island of Cuba, which centered all the requirements



in one unified physical space within and around a central plaza, unlike the ingenios built by the Spaniards, where the structures were segregated (these photos show the plaza in front of and behind the main boiler house).

In 1978, some of the ruins of the 18th-century ingenio were restored. Half of the boiler house was reconstructed, consolidating the original vestiges of the other half (photo, below left). The boiler house, with its adobe and brick walls, reproduces a classic model of the period and is considered by experts to be outstanding. It

has a series of five vents built of bricks where the sugar was boiled. The building has two levels separated by a vault of bricks, almost plane, terminating in a two-sided roof. It has a stone circular oven in the basement and a mill with an octagonal floor, reinforced by masonry buttresses and bricks, and roofed with tiles.





The ruins of the octagonal mill (photo, left) and the drying building, with its polygonal floor, (photo, below right) were also reconstructed in 1978. (The other structures did not experience intervention.) The central patio also had a well and a water reservoir. In this central patio are the remains of the surrounding walls, and partial walls and foundations that correspond to the buildings that were originally integrated into the work area.

The chapel, located at the outskirts of the group, has a single nave and a polygonal apse and portal. In the apse's sacristy, there is a reed-mace. This chapel is an example of the simple style of the family churches that were linked to the colonial sugar industry. The chapel was restored for the first time in 1922. From its restoration to the present, it has continued to fulfill its mission as a rural church for the residents of the area.



The nearby San Gregorio Church, which serviced all of the ingenios along the Río Nigua, was also partially restored in 1922, consolidating its structures.

The ingenio that today is known as the Ingenio Boca de Nigua is an historical place, most renowned as the site of the second major revolt of slaves in the Spanish part of the island, which took place in 1796 (the first major African slave uprising was on Diego Colon's ingenio in 1521). Ironically, in 1796, the same year as the rebellion, documental sources refer to it as one of the best "factories" in the Spanish part of the island. Below, see Darío Solano's account of the 1796 rebellion; he is the founder of Fundación Afrocimarrón.

After the 1796 rebellion, the ingenio's production began to decline due to the insecurities experienced by the proprietor and his administrator, insecurities that revolved around the difficulties of enforcing intensive slave labor in an era influenced by growing concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity. It was also about this time that the Spanish side of the island began to understand the economic value of diversifying agricultural production instead of relying on a mono crop like sugar. With the Haitian Occupation of the eastern part of the island in 1822, the lands were divided up among its former slaves and some of the Haitian soldiers, and the ingenio was abandoned.

During the 20th century, it was part of a vast rural estate that belonged to the Dominican dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo; it was, by then, dedicated to cattle raising. After his death, the lands became part of the Dominican Republic state until, by means of Law 492 of October 27, 1969, the mill was declared to be a cultural heritage monument of the Dominican Republic, with the title of "Ruins and Facilities of the Nigua Sugar Mill."

Excerpts from three censuses in the first half of the 16th century that indicate the number of workers (both slave and free) on the ingenio that today is known as Boca de Nigua and other neighboring ingenios:

1530: The ingenios on the Río Nigua that belonged to Juan de Ampies, Esteban Pasamonte, Francisco Tostado, Diego Caballero, and the heirs of Francisco de Tapia, all together, had a total of 700 Africans, 150 Spaniards, and 200 Indians.

1533: There were several ingenios and haciendas (cattle ranches) at the head of the Río Nigua, where it joined the Río Yamán, six leagues from Santo Domingo. They belonged to the royal treasurer Esteban Pasamonte, Francisco Tostado, the heirs of Francisco de Tapia, and to secretary Diego Caballero. The only numbers provided, however, say that there were "at least" 700 Africans, 200 Indians, and 150 Spaniards living together in this region (the same quantities as the 1530 census), "for it is the most populous river that there is at present on this island." Altogether, the census noted there were five ingenios on the Río Nigua, with clerics residing on the two main ones.

1545: Santa Isabel, on the Río Nigua, upriver from Caballero's ingenio and five leagues from Santo Domingo, was owned by the scribe Francisco Tostado. It had 70 Africans and 130 Indians.

Also on the Río Nigua were:

- Seven leagues from Santo Domingo on the Río Nigua was an ingenio named San Cristóbal for the father of the founders, the brothers Miguel and Esteban Pasamonte. It had 207 Africans and 300 Indians.
- An ingenio owned by the heirs of Miguel de Pasamonte on the Río Nigua, eight leagues from Santo Domingo, was described as "one of the best ever built on this island." It had 80 Africans and 300 Indians.
- Eight and a half leagues from Santo Domingo on the Río Nigua was an ingenio owned by the royal accountant Alonso de Avila with 200 Africans and 352 Indians. (Oviedo wrote that in 1536, it was owned by Avila's heirs, his sister and Esteban D'Avila.)
- Nine leagues from Santo Domingo on the Río Nigua was an ingenio owned by Lope de Baldesia, who boxed his sugar using a kind of balsa wood called *champanes* that grew at the river's mouth. It had 95 Africans and 80 Indians.
- Eight leagues from Santo Domingo on the Río Nigua was an ingenio founded by the royal factor Juan Ampies called Yamán (Oviedo said it was owned in 1536 by Ampies' widow, doña Florencia de Avila Yamán). It also produced cacao and had 110 Africans and 500 Indians. (Either it was right next to the ingenio owned by the heirs of Miguel de Pasamonte, above, and the ingenio called Pedergal, below, or the distance given from Santo Domingo was only an approximation, for all three are listed as being eight leagues from Santo Domingo on the Río Nigua.)
- Eight leagues from Santo Domingo on the Río Nigua was an ingenio called Pedergal owned by Bachiller Antonio de Fuenmayor. It had 114 Africans and 218 Indians.

Boca de Nigua: La rebeldía africana en Santo Domingo

by *Darío Solano*

<http://alainet.org/docs/1014.html>

Boca de Nigua ha sido un hecho de gran trascendencia. El 30 de Octubre de 1796 en el Ingenio de Boca de Nigua, administrado por el noble español Juan Bautista de Oyazabal y propiedad del Duque de Aranda, donde la dotación compuesta por 200 esclavos se dispuso a sellar una de las páginas más bellas del proceso de conformación de la identidad dominicana.



Motivados por los aires libertarios que se venían dando en Haití, los negros de Boca de Nigua tomaron por asalto a los esclavistas e iniciaron un movimiento de liberación en la parte española de la isla, lo que hoy es conocido como República Dominicana. La consigna era construir un gobierno popular con diversidad étnica, naturaleza reivindicativa que sitúa esta acción redentora como la más importante del territorio por su connotación política, propuesta aún vigente para nuestros pueblos.

Entre fuego y tambores estalló la revuelta de los esclavos. Procedieron a destruir y quemar las plantaciones agrícolas y todos los símbolos que los encadenaran al régimen: cañaverales, casas y todas las propiedades del amo. Ajusticiaron a los dos mayores que se encontraban en el ingenio, uno ahogado dentro de una pipa de aguardiente y otro a latigazos en recompensa de los fuetes cotidianos que esgrimía sobre las espaldas de los negros trabajadores.

El orgullo del colonialista español no concibió el hecho de que "negros sin alma" fueran capaces de luchar por la liberación de su gente. El proyecto revolucionario de Boca de Nigua tuvo que pagar un costo muy alto, pero dejó sentadas por siempre las bases para la defensa de los derechos humanos del negro en Santo Domingo.

El esclavista Oyazabal hizo intento de repeler la revuelta con ayuda de algunos blancos, pero le fue imposible detener la avalancha ante la correlación de fuerza y el poderío de los alzados que se adueñaron de una parte de las armas que estaban en poder de sus opresores. Tuvo Oyazabal que ir a la ciudad y recurrir al gobernador de la isla, Joaquín García, para que dispusiera de ayuda militar.

Con una fuerza militar repleta de armas sofisticadas, cañones, metrallas y hombres especializados salieron contra los rebeldes. Luego de grandes batallas los esclavistas españoles lograron dispersar a los alzados hacia el bosque y otras zonas aledañas al ingenio. Mas adelante, con el pago de recompensas, se realizó un operativo de apresamiento de los negros sublevados. La meta era la de capturar a toda la dotación insurrecta.

De ambos lados se registraron bajas. De los rebeldes, 7 fueron muertos y 69 hechos prisioneros. Esta situación paralizó el triunfo de la emancipación de los negros. Unos tantos blancos fueron muertos y heridos.

Los rebeldes fueron sentenciados un mes más tarde. Cinco fueron juzgados por encabezar la rebelión, y según el tribunal se les condenó con "muchísima equidad y compasión" a la horca. Les cortaron las cabezas y descuartizaron sus cuerpos, ordenando que los fijaran en los cuatro puntos cardinales de la ciudad amurallada de Santo Domingo. Otros cincuenta fueron sentenciados a recibir cien azotes en la picota pública, más el suplicio de presenciar las ejecuciones de sus compañeros para luego ir a servir de diez a quince años de presidio en el Ingenio de Boca de Nigua. A los confinados se les impusieron grilletes en los pies y garabatos pegados al cuello. A cinco de los rebeldes se les sentenció al destierro para cumplir condenas en presidios de Panamá, La Habana, Cartagena y Veracruz.

Este fue el costo de la Rebelión Negra de Boca de Nigua, que, si bien no logró inmediatamente el objetivo propuesto, debilitó las bases de la esclavitud en la medida en que los insurrectos lograron expandir su ideal libertario por todos los ingenios azucareros de la época. Cuatro años después, en 1801, el General Haitiano Toussaint L'Ouverture usó el sitio para declarar la libertad de todos los esclavos de la isla y para negociar paz con las autoridades de España en Santo Domingo, representado por Leonardo del Monte, José Sterling, y un oficial real, Francisco Gazcue.

Ingenio de Diego Caballero

Diego Caballero de la Rosa, one of the richest and most powerful of the early Colonial Era Spaniards, was the First Secretary of the Real Audiencia in Santo Domingo from 1511 to 1534. This early 16th-century ingenio on the Nigua River, where it meets the Yuca River, was probably first constructed in 1512 or 1513 and was expanded in 1518 as a result of Caballero's petition to the crown for an extra league of land on which he proposed "to build a village." In his petition, Caballero stressed that he had spent more than 15,000 *ducados* of his own money to make improvements to the ingenio, improvements that included the construction and maintenance of a church, which he described as "very adorned with ornaments of silk and linen, with a cross and chalice, candelabra and silver wine containers." Caballero obviously chose to describe how richly appointed the church was as a demonstration to the crown of his devotion to Christianity and his efforts to convert the slaves under his care. (His responsibility was to provide an appropriate atmosphere where Christianity could be taught and practiced; it was a clerical responsibility to catechize, baptize, etc.) Caballero also bragged that his ingenio had "more than seventy houses built of stone and straw," presumably of stone with straw-thatched roofs. Throughout the documents of the era, it is clear that Spaniards equated stone houses with progress and civilized customs, so Caballero was bragging here about how well his slaves lived. It would also appear that living quarters were ample (though we have no archaeological evidence yet at this ingenio), for he only claimed a population at that time of "more than twenty Spaniards and 150 Africans and Indians." That would mean an average of two and a half people per house, so it could be that he was counting only workers. The actual population, including children and older people, may have been higher.

Caballero's descriptions make his ingenio and his intentions seem very pleasant for all, yet he gives us little idea of what the working conditions were like for the slaves. One indication that things weren't as rosy as Caballero portrayed them is that one of the witnesses who testified to the veracity of Caballero's statements in his petition for more land noted that it had taken Caballero five to six years to build his ingenio, that many Indians and Spaniards had died in the process (Africans were not mentioned), and that no cane had been milled in all that time.



The Diego Caballero's ingenio is an important example of an early hydraulically operated sugar mill; it used a vertical traction wheel to turn the mill. Although most of the ingenio's structures are in ruins, the long rectangular purging house/warehouse built of stone, the boiler house (which is a Spanish-style "train" with five vents built of brick, finished with lime and sand—photo, left), the ovens, water canals, reservoir, and mill were excavated and partially restored by Dr. Fernando Luna Calderón, who unfortunately died in November of 2005. Luna Calderón and

his archaeological team worked with these structures in 1988, excavating them, measuring them, analyzing them, recording and photographing them, and reinstating some missing parts, such as the remains of the ovens, the boiler house, reservoir walls, and the canals. The water canals, lined with stone, criss-cross the length of vast ingenio's grounds. They once carried the Río Nigua's water from a distance of about a league to the mill site. The ingenio also had its own port facilities on the Caribbean Sea, where today there is a rocky beach called Playa Diego Caballero. In its prime, this ingenio was known for having the first and largest goat ranch on the Island and is also where the first grape vineyards were planted in 1535, though the vineyard was not successful.



Caballero also owned another ingenio, this one on the Río Ocoa, that was called Capecipi or Cepi Cepín.

Like the ingenio of Boca de Nigua, the Diego Caballero Ingenio's production began to decline due to the insecurities that the proprietor experienced because of rebellions by the enslaved workers, but these were the rebellions of the mid-1500s, not the late 1700s. Nonetheless, it appears that some cane continued to be grown and milled here until the time of the Haitian Occupation of the eastern part of the island in 1822, when the lands were divided up and the ingenio was abandoned. During the 20th century, like the Ingenio of Boca de Nigua, Diego Caballero's ingenio was part of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's vast rural estate. After his death, the lands reverted to the state of the Dominican Republic.

Excerpts from three censuses in the first half of the 16th century that indicate the number of workers (both slave and free) on the ingenio that today is known as Diego de Caballero:

1530: Diego Caballero's ingenio on the Río Nigua had 70 Africans, 10 Spaniards, and an uncounted number of Indians (the census shows a ? instead of number in the last category).

1533: The ingenio of Diego Caballero had 10 Spaniards and 70 Africans (same quantity as cited in the earlier census), "with another 200 persons living nearby" [perhaps in the village he had founded on the extra league of property for which he had petitioned the crown]. It also had a resident clergyman.

1545: Diego Caballero's ingenio on the Río Nigua, "near where it emptied into the sea, four and a half leagues from Santo Domingo," was listed as "one of the biggest and richest on the island." It had 310 Africans and 50 Indians at that time.

Caballero's other ingenio, Capeciipi or Cepi Cepín on the Río Ocoa, had 70 African slaves and 365 Indian workers in 1545.

Ingenio Santa Ana de Engombe

The Ingenio Santa Ana de Engombe, on the eastern bank of the Haina River, which was very near the route of the ancient royal road to the gold-bearing mountains of the Ciboa and just outside of today's Santo Domingo, was built in the early 16th-century, circa 1516, by Pero (or Pedro) Vázquez de Mella. By the 1540s, he or his heirs had taken on a Genoese partner, Esteban Justinian. The ingenio had a hydraulically operated mill, a large owner's mansion set atop the highest hill in the region, a chapel, purging house/warehouse, and other buildings which have not yet been excavated or renovated. The chapel and the mansion were restored in 1963. For their restoration, some missing parts were applied, respecting and differentiating the original materials from the new ones.



The ingenio owner's mansion at Engombe is large, rectangular, and has two levels, both built of stone with an elegant double-arched arcade in the Mudejar style (with Isabelina and Renaissance-style embellishments) and the remains of balconies on its second level. Some specialists have said that the mansion resembles the "Casa de Colón" (also called the "Columbus Palace," although its

official name was the Alcazar and it was built for Diego Colón, Christopher Columbus's elder son) on the banks of the Río Ozama in today's Zona Colonial, since they both have the same beautifully framed double-arched arcade. It is more likely, however, that the 1955-1957 restored version of the Casa de Colón was modeled on the elegant mansion at Santa Ana de Engombe--a drawing of the original, albeit decaying, Casa de Colón by an American named Samuel Hazard circa 1870 shows a very different three-storied structure dominated by two tall towers separated at the lower level by a three-arched arcade.



The chapel of the Engombe ingenio is unique. It is the only religious construction from the 16th century on Hispaniola that lacks elements from Gothic architecture and, instead, has elements of Renaissance architecture. In relatively excellent condition (it is the only building on the ingenio with a roof), it is still occasionally used for Catholic masses.

Originally hydraulically operated, the mill, built of stone and with a polygonal floor, was converted some time in the past to a horse-powered trapiche, as evidenced by archaeological and architectural analysis. It has never experienced restorative intervention, nor has the long rectangular drying room/warehouse that was built of stone and bricks (photo, right).



During the 17th century, Engombe continued producing sugar, but was badly affected by the 1655 invasion of the English Armada sent by Oliver Cromwell, directed by Generals Penn and Venables. They and their men stayed briefly at Engombe to rest and re-supply their food and water for the last league of their overland march toward Santo Domingo. They burned and ransacked Engombe before leaving. The English were unsuccessful, however, in their plan to take the city of Santo Domingo for England, and thus take the entire island and begin to cash in on the sugar boom. (Disappointed, the English generals sailed to the less well defended Spanish-held island of Jamaica and took it as their own, a feat for which the English Crown awarded General Penn a land grant in the Americas that his nephew William used to found Pennsylvania—ironically, William Penn was a Quaker, a man of peace.)

In 1762, a notary sale record of the ingenio described it, calling it Santa Ana of Engombe (the first documentation of its complete name), listing its structures, agricultural establishments, and cattle lands. An inventory of the property in 1795 registers with great detail the relative attributes of its structural properties and furnishings, emphasizing the predominance of agricultural production, especially sugar, over cattle production on the estate. In the 19th century, Santa Ana de Engombe was abandoned by its proprietors and, in the 20th century, it became part of the properties of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo by means of Law 293 (February 13, 1944). After Trujillo was assassinated in 1961, the land was given to the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD), which built the nearby School of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine and today operates an experimental agricultural and cattle ranch in and around the property. The gift of the “Ruins of the Sugar Mill of Engombe, its residence and facilities,” was officially recognized by means of Law 492, dated October 27, 1969.

Excerpts from three censuses in the first half of the 16th century that indicate the number of workers (both slave and free) on the ingenio that today is known as Santa Ana de Engombe:

1530: Pero Vázquez's ingenio had 120 Africans, 20 Spaniards, and an uncounted number of Indians (the census shows a ? instead of number in the last category).

1533: The ingenio belonging to Pedro Vázquez, on the Río Haina, three leagues from Santo Domingo, had 20 Spaniards and 120 Africans, with "at least" another 400 persons living along the river on their own small farms and haciendas.

1545: The unnamed ingenio owned by the *veedor* ("supervisor") Pedro Vázquez de Mella and Estevan Justinian Ginovés on the Río Hayna, four and one-half leagues from Santo Domingo, had 100 Africans and 80 Indians.... Vázquez appears to have taken Justinian on as a partner after the 1533 census was taken and either relocated his ingenio one and a half leagues further upriver after selling his original lands to Admiral Luis Colón (Diego Colón's oldest of many sons; also, of course, Christopher Columbus's grandson) or the distance calculation was wrong in either the 1530 or 1533 census.

Admiral Luis Colón's ingenio was listed on the 1545 census. It was called Cañaboba and was located on the Río Hayna just three leagues from Santo Domingo, and it had 215 Africans and 300 Indians.... Diego Colón's ingenio, which was called Nueva Isabela, was on a site that was four leagues from the Capital, and in Davila's day, the Admiral's ingenio was called La Isabela and was on the Río Ibuca, five leagues from the capital. The Columbus family, therefore, kept moving their sugar production closer and closer to Santo Domingo.

THE COMPLETE CENSUS DETAILS FOR 1530, 1533, AND 1545 CAN BE FOUND IN:

HISPANIOLA INGENIO CENSUS FROM 1530. Data from a law suit between the civil and ecclesiastical cabildos of Santo Domingo in AGI, Justicia 12, N1, R2. Full text in Esteban Mira Caballos, *El indio Antillano: Repartimiento, encomienda y esclavitud (1492-1542)* (Seville: Ediciones ALFIL, July 1997), 155.

ALONSO DE AVILA'S CENSUS OF 1533. Data from AGI, Justicia 12, 149, ff10v-15; full text in José Luis Saez, *La iglesia y el esclavo negro en Santo Domingo: Una historia de tres siglos* (Santo Domingo: Patronato de la Ciudad Colonial de Santo Domingo, Colección Quinto Centenario, 1994), 267-272.

ALONSO DE FUENMAYOR'S CENSUS OF 1545. Data cited in Luis Joseph Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista de la Isla Española de Santo Domingo trasumptada el año de 1762: Traducida de la Historia General de las Indias escrita por Antonio de Herrera coronista mayor de su Magestad, y de las Indias, y de Castilla; y de otros autores que han escrito sobre el particular* (Santo Domingo: Publicaciones del Museo de Las Casas Reales, 1975; originally published 1763), 217-221.

**FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON SOCIAL-CULTURAL
RELATIONS AMONG INDIANS, AFRICANS, AND SPANIARDS ON
HISPANIOLA'S 16th-CENTURY SUGAR INGENIOS, SEE:**

Guitar, Lynne. "Boiling it Down: Slavery on the First Commercial Sugarcane Ingenios in the Americas (Hispaniola, 1530-1545), in Jane G. Landers and Barry M. Robinson (eds.), *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2006: 39-82.

Guitar, Lynne. *Cultural Genesis: Relationships among Indians, Africans, and Spaniards in rural Hispaniola, first half of the sixteenth century*, doctoral dissertation completed in 1998 for Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN. UMI Microform no. 9915091.