“Spain is the merciful heavenly body whose influence favors the Irish”:
Jaime O’Daly y Blake: Enlightened Foreign Immigrant, Administrator and Planter in Late Bourbon-Era Puerto Rico, 1776-1806

“España es el astro benigno que influye en favor de los irlandeses”: Jaime O’Daly y Blake: inmigrante extranjero ilustrado, administrador y plantador en el Puerto Rico del final de los Borbones, 1776-1806

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Resumen: Los "extranjeros" de diversos orígenes mundiales, tales como las Américas, Europa y África, han estado presentes en Puerto Rico durante casi todo el período colonial español. Sin embargo, pasaron desapercibidos hasta aproximadamente el último tercio del siglo XVIII, cuando una corriente numéricamente corta pero económicamente significativa de inmigrantes libres foráneos fue asociada con el desarrollo de la agricultura comercial. ¿Cómo se explica este cambio en esa coyuntura histórica? ¿A qué se debe que hayan desempeñado un papel tan importante en las colonias españolas del Caribe? ¿Cómo se las hicieron para superar los sentimientos xenófobos que aun estaban en boga en España y sus colonias de ultramar? Este ensayo intenta responder a algunas de estas inquietudes centrándose en la figura de Jaime O’Daly y Blake, un inmigrante de origen irlandés que estuvo estrechamente vinculado al desarrollo de las industrias tabacaleras y azucareras. Su emigración de Irlanda a España se sitúa en el contexto de la rivalidad anglo-española en Europa, y su integración en Puerto Rico se examina contra el trasfondo de la reorganización imperial conocida como las reformas borbónicas.

Palabras clave: Caribe hispano, inmigración extranjera, colonos irlandeses, reformas borbónicas, xenofobia.

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Abstract: “Foreigners” from various global origins, such as the Americas, Europe and Africa, have been present in Spanish colonial Puerto Rico nearly throughout its entire history. However, they went largely unnoticed until about the last third of the eighteenth century, when a numerically small but economically important cluster of free non-Hispanic immigrants became associated with the development of commercial agriculture. What explains this development at that historical juncture? Why were the foreigners able to play such a critical role in the Spanish American colonies? How did they fare at a time when xenophobic sentiments were still in vogue both in Spain and its overseas colonies? This essay seeks answers to some of these questions by focusing on Jaime O’Daly y Blake, an Irish-born immigrant who is closely linked to the development of both the tobacco and sugar industries. His emigration from Ireland to Spain is placed in the context of Anglo-Spanish rivalry in Europe, and his integration to Spanish colonial Puerto Rico is examined against the backdrop of the imperial reorganization known as the Bourbon reforms.

Key words: Spanish Caribbean, foreign immigration, Irish settlers, Bourbon reforms, xenophobia.

Starting around the last third of the eighteenth century, a trickle of industrious foreign immigrants began turning to Spanish Puerto Rico, bringing along valuable resources, including an enterprising zeal, capital, plantation equipment, marketing connections, technical skills and/or specialized knowledge of farming. Collectively, their activities helped to revitalize commercial agriculture in the peripheral colony, laying the groundwork for a future sugar production boom. Until then, the island had been a defenseless outpost on the margins of the Hispanic American economy. Except for the sporadic ships that called on it to replenish exhausted supplies, drop off ailing passengers, ride out hurricanes or to perform emergency repairs, Puerto Rico stood outside Iberian mercantile and immigration flows. As a result, its local residents, who as a rule were poor rural dwellers, had been reduced to eking out a living from subsistence farming and smuggling. Among them were Spaniards and Canary Islanders; local Amerindians or those brought forcibly from elsewhere in the Americas; “illegal” non-Hispanic European pirates, interlopers and castaways; presidiarios from New Spain and New Granada condemned to forced
labor in the San Juan fortifications; enslaved Africans; and runaways from the adjacent islands. Although the “undocumented” generally kept a low profile, they had little to worry about as Spain had been largely incapable of driving out the vast majority of them. Left to their own devices, those who stayed put eventually blended in with the rest of the population.

By contrast to the amorphous admixture of ethnicities, social races and statuses scattered about pre-plantation era Puerto Rico, the ambitious outsiders that arrived in the post-1760s and set roots down around San Juan and its hinterland appeared to be more defined. They originated mostly in Ireland, Italy and France, had some ties the non-Hispanic Caribbean, were active as merchants, planters or skilled workers and remained more or less clustered on the northern coast of the island, between the jurisdictions of Toa Baja and Loíza. Some integrated themselves deeper into colonial society through marriage, military service and occasionally, as in the case at hand, by filling administrative posts. Their contributions to Puerto Rico’s socioeconomic growth notwithstanding, relatively little is known of this influx. This essay is a case study of one of these immigrants, the Irish colonist Jaime O’Daly y Blake, whose saga unfolded against the backdrop of the Irish diaspora in the eighteenth century and its relationship to the reorganization of the Spanish empire under Charles III’s regime (1759-1788). From his arrival in 1776 until his demise in 1806, O’Daly y Blake figured notably in the island’s gradual transformation from subsistence farming and cattle ranching to commercial, export-based agriculture. By piecing together fragmentary primary and secondary materials on Ireland, Spain and Puerto Rico, I trace some of the major push/pull factors that shaped his Galway-Cadiz-St. Eustatius-San Juan journey, identify some of the transatlantic social, economic and political networks that sustained him along the way, and examine the challenges and opportunities he encountered while integrating himself into Spanish colonial Puerto Rico during the late Bourbon era.

**Non-Hispanics in the Indies: The “Foreign Menace”**

At first sight and judging by their economic success relative to the mass of impoverished peasants, migrants like O’Daly seemed to have adjusted well, and even thrived, in the new

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surroundings. But appearances can be deceiving, for behind the façade of success lurked a xenophobic undercurrent that threatened to derail the aspirations of the newcomers. In fact, the ambivalent status, hostile reception, or outright rejection of non-Hispanics in Spanish America stemmed from a pattern of opposition to foreigners that became a permanent feature of political life in early modern Spain. The foreign label was not solely intended as a legal instrument to distinguish those who rightfully belonged to the community of imperial subjects from those who did not. At the hands of biased parties, it also became a useful discursive weapon wielded against certain persons or groups whose presence or activities they opposed.

The European “discovery” of the New World spread this antagonism to the Indies. The Iberian transatlantic undertaking came just after La Reconquista and the ensuing forced conversion or expulsion of Muslims and Jews. At the time racial, ethnic and religions tensions in Spain were high, but so was the drive for territorial and economic expansion. With so much at stake, especially the prospects of gaining access to lucrative markets and commodities, the expedition’s financiers celebrated their stroke of good fortune, surely expecting a handsome return on their investments. By contrast, for those peninsulares who viewed Columbus’s growing power and influence from a narrow Ibero-centric perspective, he was just another outsider, a non-Hispanic who was exploiting Spain’s generosity selfishly. Misgivings in Spanish royal circles about the Admiral’s foreign-born status ultimately contributed to a string of protracted court battles about his legal claims in the Americas, intensifying a climate of resentment and/or distrust of non-Hispanics engaged in the overseas venture.

Such xenophobic sentiments eventually found their way into the Laws of the Indies. Numerous rulings, decrees, resolutions and ordinances banned foreigners from settling or trading on Spanish land and/or regulated the activities of those legally there. The application of these laws, however, soon proved to be a daunting task in the shifting multiethnic, multiracial arena of the Spanish Empire, which at different historical moments incorporated subjects of diverse European, Native American, African, Mediterranean and Atlantic provenance. In Europe alone,

the Spanish Crown had at one point or another counted natives of Austria, Holland, France, Italy, and even Ireland among its subjects. Identifying who was or was not a “foreigner” under these conditions rendered the enforcement of the statutes nearly unworkable.

In response, foreigners availed themselves of any opportunity they could find to enter Spanish America. For instance, in seventeenth-century New Spain, foreigners whom the Crown regarded as meritorious, useful or otherwise beneficial were afforded a means to legalize their stay through the process of composición, or special dispensation akin to a stay of deportation upon the payment of a specific sum. The intended recipients, though grateful for the opportunity to legalize their immigration status, considered it a financial burden to which they were subjected to stop or delay their expulsion. The royal concession excluded those unable to pay and/or with questionable backgrounds, who continued to live in the shadows of society. Foreigners who found themselves in this predicament took advantage of vulnerable areas, especially the long swaths of open, unprotected spaces cutting across the American seaboard, to explore, trade, plunder or colonize. Such was the case of the Spanish Caribbean in the post-1520s, when the diminishing volume of alluvial gold and increasing decimation of the aboriginal labor force prompted large numbers of Iberian colonists to relocate hastily to Mexico and Peru in search of greener pastures.

The exodus extensively depopulated the Greater Antilles, leaving them dangerously exposed to piracy and other forms of encroachments at the hands of Spain’s European enemies. Over the next two hundred years the islands became sparsely settled resupply stations, penal colonies and poorly defended strategic points. Faced with few options for improving their lot, the inhabitants of these regions had little or no incentive to cooperate fully with the metropolis or its representatives. With few exceptions, they engaged in or turned a blind eye to illicit activities, ignored official directives that went against their interests or simply “obeyed but did not comply.” Their noncompliant attitude, which sometimes bordered on insubordination, extended to the official prohibitions against doing business with foreigners, upon whom the locals frequently depended for information, slaves, weapons and various types of commodities that Spain had been unable to furnish to them cheaply or at all.

7 Eleonora POGGIO, “Las composiciones de extranjeros en la Nueva España, 1595-1700,” Cuadernos de Historia Moderna, 10, 2011, pp. 177-93.
On paper Spanish dominance over the Greater Antilles applied to the entire islands of Cuba, La Española and Puerto Rico. In practice, however, effective royal control did not extend beyond the fortified cities of Havana, San Juan, Santo Domingo and a few other settlements within easy reach of the colonial authorities. The remainder became “contact zones” where counter-hegemonic interactions often took place outside the colonized mold. These spaces were a common destination for numerous llovidos (stowaways), sojourners, turncoats, cimarrones and outlaws. Some went there to hunt cattle, fish and harvest other valuable resources. Seafarers fixed or outfitted their sea vessels, picked up rations, bartered, pillaged, lingered about, or mingled with the locals largely undetected or unopposed. Illegal trading often took place with the connivance of a vast cross-section of the island’s population. Most of the wheeling and dealing was part of a vast network of unofficial inter-island exchanges that fed an “irregular economy” operating through the eighteenth century.

White Refugees: Irish Servants in Pre-Plantation Puerto Rico

While admittedly small, the Irish presence in Puerto Rico predated the arrival of Jaime O’Daly y Blake. Irish soldiers, mariners, clerics, investors and coerced workers arrived in the Americas from at least the 1630s. Some of the involuntary migrants may have been part of a servant trade that included destitute Britons and Irish who were recruited or kidnapped, bound up as indentured laborers and shipped out to Virginia and Barbados. Oliver Cromwell’s colonizing forays in Ireland from the 1640s onward intensified the practice of transporting Irish prisoners, religious dissidents, “vagrants” and abductees to the British West Indies. Their attempts to free themselves from what some regarded as white bondage took various forms, from rioting to full-fledged rebellions, sometimes in conjunction with enslaved Africans and Amerindian captives. In several cases, Irish servants defected to French forces that invaded British-held territories in the Caribbean. When all else failed, they bolted to the sea in a

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desperate bid to regain their freedom elsewhere in the Caribbean or beyond as pirates, buccaneers and refugees.\textsuperscript{11}

The seaborne flight of white servants, especially those who had acquired specialized training in plantation agriculture and or the mechanical crafts, represented a significant financial loss to planters. As with maritime maroons, their escape paralyzed or shut down production altogether, incited other workers to follow suit and posed a major security risk in those colonies where enslaved blacks vastly outnumbered whites, a demographic shift that reached its peak in the eighteenth century. Legislation designed to promote white immigration and to retain white settlers in the British West Indies attests to the urgency with which the presiding plantocracy viewed white flight. The so-called “deficiency laws” passed in the British sugar colonies tried to correct that imbalance by requiring planters to keep a fixed ratio of white servants per the number of black slaves in their estates. Moreover, laws in St. Vincent, Barbados and Jamaica penalized anyone who concealed, entertained or transported white servants to sea without authorization.\textsuperscript{12}

In Jamaica, Irish servants refused to flight the maroons by deserting from their military units together with black shot.\textsuperscript{13}

Some of the escapees absconded to Puerto Rico, as suggested by a 1671 register of foreigners that listed 57 non-Hispanic individuals, most of them French, English and Irish.\textsuperscript{14} Irish runaways, sometimes labeled ingleses in the documents, also show up in other records of this period. For instance, two “British Catholics” who alleged that the English held them as slaves fled from nearby St. Thomas to Puerto Rico in 1657. Joseph Marques, a 21-year old native of Lambeg, northern Ireland, also absconded to Puerto Rico in 1688. He had been indentured nine years earlier in St. Kitts, where he experienced “slave-like” treatment. He was taken to Vieques with a British-led party intent of seizing the island from Spain, but fled to the woods at the first


opportunity. A maroon whom he met there helped him escape to mainland Puerto Rico. Another four non-Hispanics—identified as British and Irish—who were reputedly sailing from St. Thomas to Jamaica with a runaway slave turned up in Puerto Rico in 1700. An anonymous inglés, who was likely an Irish servant, commandeered a ship and led thirty-six African maroons and four Amerindian captives to Puerto Rico to request asylum in 1715. In 1729 authorities in the southwestern town of San Germán reported the arrival of twenty-seven women, nine men and seven children who were forced to land in Puerto Rico after a storm crippled the ship in which they were being transported from Londonderry, Ireland to New England. A gravely ill family was allowed to stay on the island, and the rest of the passengers were apparently “repatriated” to the British West Indies. It is safe to infer that many more Irish than those officially recorded slipped into the island undetected.

Like their counterparts in La Española studied by Igor Pérez Tostado, the Irish refugees generally arrived as individuals or small groups, often accompanied by Amerindians or Africans who were also fleeing servitude, and not infrequently by relocating from an adjacent colony occupied or controlled by England. In light of the frontier-like conditions, threat of enemy attacks and scarcity of Iberian defenders in both La Española and Puerto Rico, the local authorities of the Spanish Caribbean should have been favorably disposed toward Irish refugees who pledged allegiance to the Spanish monarchy and brought along military experience or other valuable skills. Such potential advantages, however, failed to persuade the Spanish Crown to loosen restrictions on foreigners. It acted vigilantly, never completely at ease with those who had lived among Protestants or who had a mutinous past, two conditions associated with Irish servants in the British Caribbean. Wary officials in Spain were particularly careful not to allow large, organized bodies of non-Hispanic aliens into areas that were susceptible to foreign infringement, rejecting proposals in 1686, 1694 and 1701 by Flemish and Irish colonists who wanted to do just

that in La Española.\textsuperscript{17} In sum, the Irish refugees qualified as “‘subjects without an empire’—rarely trusted by the English, and only cautiously accepted by Continental European powers.”\textsuperscript{18}

As Mark Quintanilla has correctly pointed out, the over-emphasis on servant participation in the West Indian labor market has tended to overshadow the valuable roles played by Irish farmers, merchants and speculators.\textsuperscript{19} Some of them would have been ex-workers who managed to acquire land, slide into petty trade, or build upon a seafaring or artisan trade. The ruling British West Indian plantocracy historically treated them as second-class whites. By the eighteenth century, however, mounting fear of being overrun by the large captive African/black population compelled it to protect its greater interests through appeals for white racial solidarity.\textsuperscript{20} Established and “new” whites did not always stay put in one place. In most of the eastern Caribbean islands with limited farming areas, plantations quickly wore out soils and stripped them of its ground cover and other valuable resources. Inter-European warfare, slave revolts, and periodic seismic phenomena, hurricanes, droughts and blights forced many of their colonists to criss-cross the archipelago in search of better economic opportunities. From Montserrat, an island strongly associated with Irish settlement, farmers moved to the Spanish and French colonies.\textsuperscript{21} Michael Keane, who multi-tasked as bureaucrat, planter, trader and cross-cultural broker, developed an extensive familial, political and mercantile network in England, Ireland and the British Antilles during the second half of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{22} A combination of economic, religious and political motivations triggered relocation to the Danish Caribbean of the likes of entrepreneur Nicholas Tuite, a native of Montserrat. He went there shortly after a 1748 Danish royal edict welcomed Catholics to settle St. Croix, ultimately making a fortune from


\textsuperscript{18} Kristen BLOCK and Jenny SHAW, “Subjects without an Empire: The Irish in the Early Modern Caribbean,” Past and Present, 210:1, 2011, pp. 34.


\textsuperscript{22} QUINTANILLA, “‘From a Dear and Worthy Land,’” pp. 59-76.
agriculture and commerce, including slave trading. The subsequent mass transfer of Catholics from the Leewards to the Danish colony is credited to him. His economic contributions to the development of St. Croix earned him a special recognition in 1760 from Denmark’s King Fredrick V.

**Enter the Bourbons: Opening the Door to Selective Foreign Immigrants**

From the perspective of overzealous imperial planners the activities of “foreigners” in and around the Hispanic Caribbean was yet more disturbing proof of the growing erosion of Iberian royal authority in the Indies. Therefore, when the Council of the Indies pored over Jaime O’ Daly y Blake’s 1775 petition to settle in Puerto Rico, it all but dismissed him as another uninvited intruder. As will be shown below, they were troubled by what they believed to be O’Daly self-aggrandizing motives, but they linked this concern to the broader perennial pattern of inter-imperial rivalry in the Americas. From about the early 1600s, the eastern Caribbean islands fell, one after the other, to England, France, Holland, Denmark and Sweden (in the case of St. Barthélemy). Eventually, the Bahamas, Jamaica and the western portion of Hispaniola were also incorporated under the non-Hispanic sphere of influence. The shocking 1762 British occupation of Havana, a key Spanish strategic post and port of call for the Iberian-bound treasure fleet, was simply the last straw that broke the camel’s back. At the very least, it demonstrated that the Atlantic defensive perimeter of the Viceroyalty of New Spain was penetrable, making Veracruz the next potential target of British amphibious attacks.

In response, Charles III hastened the overhaul of Cuba and Puerto Rico by systematically reinforcing their fortifications, strengthening their economies and rechanneling colonial production to the Hispanic American mercantile system. The Irish-born commander Alejandro O’Reilly, a career officer who exemplifies a long tradition of Irish soldiers who distinguished themselves in the Spanish army, was sent to both islands to start this process. Like other top

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brass members of his generation, many of whom also held aristocratic titles and served at the highest governmental echelons in Bourbon Spain, O’Reilly set the tone for the changes to come.\textsuperscript{26} The royal envoy saw the British occupation of Havana as symptomatic of a wider set of inter-related problems in the Hispanic Caribbean that needed immediate corrective attention. For instance, his report on Puerto Rico stressed its weak defense infrastructure, stagnant economy and feeble trading ties to Spain, all of which left it open to foreign territorial and economic encroachment. He believed that keeping both islands within the imperial fold called for more than a military build-up. It also required their transformation into self-supporting, export-oriented agricultural colonies.\textsuperscript{27} Puerto Rico would have to adopt the plantation system operating in St. Croix by enticing skilled or capable colonists, especially those with capital or slaves.\textsuperscript{28} A decade later Fray Agustín Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, who penned the first official history of Puerto Rico in 1788, also urged the Crown to capitalize on the island’s bountiful natural assets by subsidizing immigration and promoting commercial agriculture.\textsuperscript{29}

Neither of them uttered the word “foreigner” when they suggested the need to entice colonos to Puerto Rico. Perhaps that’s what they implied, for immigration to the Hispanic Caribbean in the second half of the eighteenth century consisted mostly of soldiers, slaves and presidiarios. Over 1,100 Iberian and Spanish American convicts were sent to Puerto Rico from 1760 to 1765.\textsuperscript{30} Only 427 of the nearly 11,100 emigrants who sailed legally from Cadiz to Spanish America between 1765 and 1824 went to Puerto Rico.\textsuperscript{31} Moreover, it seemed illogical to try to persuade peninsulares to come to Puerto Rico at a time when the Bourbons were recruiting...
Catholics across Europe to develop desolated or unproductive regions in Spain. Asentistas landed 12,575 enslaved Africans in San Juan between 1766 and 1770, most of whom were transshipped out of the island due to the landowners‘ lack of capital with which to purchase them. Reformers in Spain even considered deporting gypsies to Puerto Rico in 1762 and 1783. Albeit in smaller numbers, maritime maroons and free-coloreds from the adjacent settlements of the Hispanic Caribbean also found their way to Puerto Rico.

In time, it became increasingly obvious that the alternative to Spanish immigration—and one with a precedent in the Laws of the Indies—involved granting passage selectively to “safe” or “useful” foreigners through special licenses. The Crown reluctantly embraced this idea but chose Trinidad, not Puerto Rico or Cuba, as a testing ground. The eastern Caribbean island was sparsely inhabited, commercially undeveloped and poorly protected. In 1776, the Crown “experimented” by enticing Catholic immigrants with offers of tax exemptions and land grants. In 1783 it broadened the concessions by issuing a Cédula de Población y Comercio de la Isla de Trinidad. While French colonists carved thriving plantations, British merchants, the majority of whom professed to be Irish Catholics, quickly monopolized the island’s commerce. Encouraged by their successes, other economically active foreign colonists like Jaime O’Daly y Blake sought to try their luck in Puerto Rico.

Jaime O’Daly y Blake: Irish “Foreigner” in the Service of the Spanish Crown

33 AGI-SD, leg. 2516, “Mapa Abreviado de los Negros introducidos en Puerto Rico por el Asiento actual á nombre de Aguirre Aristegui y Compañía desde el mes de Agosto de 1766, en que dio principio con la primera Cargazon hasta ultimo de Diziembre de 1770 con su salida a los Puertos que tiene contratado, y és á saver,” March 25, 1772.
Jaime O’Daly y Blake was born around 1736 to Demetrio (Dermot) O’Daly and Juana (Joanna) Blake, at Cloonbrusk, County Galway, in the Irish province of Connacht. The Dalaigh clan had deep roots in Ireland, going as far back as the 4th century. One Dermot O’Daly reputedly was the first member of the family to settle in County Galway, in 1578. Dermot’s grandson, Lieutenant Dermot O’Daly, who may have been Jaime’s grandfather, fought the British intrusion into Galway during the 1640s. But the confiscation of property and the mass deportation of Irish dissidents and prisoners continued. As the fortunes of the Irish Catholic landed gentry deteriorated further, a new wave of Irish emigration to continental Europe ensued. Some members of the O’Dalys moved to Spain, a widely-travelled destination for Irish religious, political and economic exiles. Uncle Denis, of the Dominican Order, decided to continue his religious vocation there around 1718 and eventually became the “procurator” who oversaw the affairs of Irish clerical students at the Court of Madrid from 1726 until his death in 1753. In that capacity, Denis also sponsored several Irish military officers and other notables who claimed nobility titles in Spain.

Both Jaime, his oldest brother Tomás (b.1722), and several other close siblings also left for Spain. Tomás, who probably headed off first, joined the Spanish armed services, enrolling in

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38 Archivo Histórico Catedral, San Juan, Puerto Rico, Libro 17 de Defunciones, fols. 295-295v, Fondo N.S. de los Remedios, Sección Sacramental, caja 84, “Defunción de don Jaime O’Daly y Blake.” The author is grateful to Ms. Else Zayas León, Director of the Archivo Histórico Arquidiocesano at San Juan, Puerto Rico, for the church records on the O’Daly brothers.


44 A cousin, Col. Pedro O’Daly, served on the Hibernia Regiment and distinguished himself during the Spanish War of Independence. Another blood kin, Timoteo O’Daly, died heroically while fighting the British at Pensacola, Florida, during the American Revolutionary War. See Jaime O’Daly to King, AGI-SD, leg. 2393, July 6, 1797; W.S. MURPHY, “The Irish Brigade of Spain at the Capture of Pensacola, 1781,” Florida Historical Quarterly, 38:3, 1960, pp. 216-25.
Juan (John) Sherlock’s Ultonia Regiment in 1744. The Ultonia, like O’Reilly’s Hibernia, was one of the early Irish infantry units established during Philip V’s golden age of foreign involvement in the Spanish military. Tomás’ enlistment was a potentially risky decision, not just personally but also for his family back home. Between 1722 and 1756, Ireland obstructed or outlawed recruitment in the military establishments of France and Spain, and leveled severe penalties, such as confiscation of land and charges of treason, against violators. Although several members of his family embraced a military profession, Tomás was not the archetypical Irish soldier of fortune or mercenary. Neither was his career consistent with those who were “more seduced by the social prestige, honorific titles, and possibilities of attaining the rank of general than by the monetary remuneration offered by the profession.” Considering his successful transition to planter in Puerto Rico, he probably viewed military service as a practical vehicle for upward mobility.

Tomás, who enjoyed the status of hidalgo, also benefited from an esprit de corps that allowed prominent Irish figures to use their influence in the Spanish Court to shower favors on their relatives and/or compatriots. His hoja de servicio or military file states that one “sereníssimo señor Infante Emanuel,” who is described erroneously as a brother of the Spanish monarch, recommended his enlistment as a second lieutenant. After seeing action in Lombardy in 1745 Tomás advanced to lieutenant and went on to study engineering at the recently established Real Academia de Matemáticas in Barcelona. Following stints in Madrid, El Ferrol and Girón, in 1756 he sought a promotion to military engineer with the rank of captain by appealing once again to uncle Denis, who got him in touch with Spanish Secretary of War Sebastián de Eslava. Although his unit’s commander ranked O’Daly dead last among the pool of forty officers in his

51 It is possible that the Infante in question was a brother of the Portuguese king João V and uncle to the future queen of Spain, Bárbara de Braganza—personal communication from Diego TÉLLEZ ALARCIA. See also his work: D. Ricardo Wall. Aut Caesar aut nullus. Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 2008, pp. 77-8.
class, by 1760 he attained the post of “Ingeniero Segundo” (Lieutenant Coronel). Soon after he was appointed Chief Engineer of the Fortification Works of San Juan, Puerto Rico, a job that came with a generous proprietary grant of land. On May 22, 1761 he received authorization to leave for Puerto Rico, and two months later officially assumed the position.

While Tomás’ military record reveals important clues about his incorporation into the Spanish armed services, comparatively little is known of Jaime’s experiences in the metropolis. He left Ireland for Cadiz about two decades after Tomás and went into business, which by that time had become an important motivation for Irish emigration to Spain. The opening of new trade routes that linked key Irish companies with commercial centers in Europe and the Americas, and the favorable treatment of Irish merchants in Spain under Philip V, stimulated this trend. Besides, “European trade was one of the few lucrative enterprises from which catholics [in Ireland] were not excluded.” By about 1750 foreign merchants controlled over eighty percent of the wholesale trade of Cadiz. The Irish traders’ share of this branch of commerce was noteworthy, ranking second after their French competitors. Thus, when Jaime arrived in Cadiz in the early 1760s, he joined a small but tight-knit, economically active Irish community with strong ties to international trade. Mercantile flows in the Andalucian port city often blended legal and illegal exchanges with both Europe and the Americas, especially the West Indies. In dealing with a diverse transatlantic clientele Jaime, who spoke Spanish, English and French, must have enjoyed a major advantage over his monolingual peers.
Not surprisingly, by the mid-1770s Jaime resided in the Dutch Caribbean colony of Saint Eustatius, from where he billed the Spanish Crown for just over 34,000 pesos that a business associate, Ricardo Downing Tennius, loaned to the Governor of Puerto Rico to repair two naval vessels of a Spanish flota damaged by a 1772 hurricane in the eastern Antilles. To satisfy the debt, a 1774 Royal Order authorized Jaime to ship out a corresponding amount in silver or agricultural products from Puerto Rico for sale in the Dutch island. The following year he solicited a permit to reside in Puerto Rico, where he intended to employ his skills and capital to help develop Tomás’ estate into a thriving sugar plantation. He envisioned it as a model for other planters, an estate that would also be capable of producing indigo, coffee and cotton while generating revenues for the Spanish Royal Treasury.

The Crown’s fiscal or legal counsel pointed out that Jaime’s request conflicted with the Laws of the Indies and the state’s interests that banned the transit of foreigners on Spanish territory, let alone their settlement and trading with its subjects. On the other hand, he also noted, the same rules that ban foreigners in the Indies also exempt, overlook and consent those who, in the judgment of the Crown, are indispensable and useful to the public good, as exemplified by technicians and artisans needed in many places in the Indies, as long as such persons (foreigners) do not harm either the state or the royal interest. Under such conditions and after taking the required precautions, granting access to some foreigners would be acceptable. In his view, the fact that Jaime hailed from Ireland, whose subjects felt entitled to special privileges in Spain, had no bearing on the matter under consideration. On the other hand, he felt that Jaime was adorned with several notable qualities that merited attention and reflection. Not only was the petitioner in possession of a 1774 royal dispensation that was appropriate and just, he was also a skilled artisan whose knowledge of agriculture and financial assets would boost the island’s economy, increasing the likelihood that “in a few years the important branch of sugar [production] would be developed and perfected.”

Interim Intendant Juan Francisco Creagh to Secretaría de Estado y del Despacho de Hacienda, July 25, 1794. I wish to thank Professor José Buscaglia Salgado for bringing this information to my attention.

62 AGI-SD, leg. 2364, Jaime O’Daly to King, June 30, 1784; the order excluded some products—see Bibiano TORRES RAMÍREZ, *La isla de Puerto Rico (1765-1800)*. San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1968, pp. 97-8

63 Jaime O’Daly to King, May 13, 1775.
The fiscal recognized that perhaps Jaime was being deceitful by offering to collect a debt and aid his brother, but only wished to invest in agriculture himself. Even if this were the case, he reasoned, his motive was beneficial to Spain because the natives of Puerto Rico were either unwilling or unable to farm despite a mild climate and fertile land, and thus the island was of no real value to the royal coffers. Puerto Rico, he went on, either lacked sugar mills or had an insufficient number of them, which made the one established by Tomás, another foreigner and the supplicant’s brother, highly commendable. The legal adviser observed that “the future [economic development] of the [Spanish Caribbean] islands has always hinged on the planting and cultivation of sugar, coffee, indigo and cotton, upon which a reciprocal trade could be established, both internally and externally, that would produce many benefits and a sizable increase [of income] for the Royal Treasury and the inhabitants both of Spain and the Indies.”

Hence, he concluded, the Crown would do well to approve Jaime’s residential permit since the laws that bar foreigners are designed to exclude those mainly intent on using Spain and its colonies for their own designs and then return to their homelands richer without leaving the slightest utility in this kingdom.

The legal endorsement failed to persuade the Council of the Indies, which maintained that what Jaime sought was fundamentally at odds with the Laws of the Indies, which strictly forbade foreigners from settling in Spanish America. According to the ministerial body, there was a series of potential economic, religious and political risks involved. In the first place, it stressed the “aggravating special circumstances of the applicant, who confessed to being both a resident and merchant of the nearby Dutch colony of Saint Eustatius.” It pointed out that it was not known for sure if he was a real Catholic, a requisite condition for admission. In addition, the major military build-up and economic reorganization of Spanish colonial Puerto Rico that was currently underway would likely be comprised. In “the actual state of affairs [a likely reference to intensified Anglo-Spanish rivalry in the Americas following the Seven Years’ War], at the point when Puerto Rico is being militarily fortified, with attention being paid to its population and the reapportionment of land among the natives and Spanish vassals, it would be harmful to extend residence [in the island] to a foreigner used to trading with the Dutch and the subjects of other nations that possess colonies in that region….” Members of the Council also believed that

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64 Jaime O’Daly to King, May 13, 1775.
Jaime would likely “continue to trade with them, introducing goods, extracting hard currency and agricultural products, and undermining the measures that are being taken to deter smuggling in…[Puerto Rico].”

Clearly, then, the fiscal and Council had starkly opposite legal positions on the subject of foreign immigration in general, and of the potential rewards and liabilities they envisage in the case before them. The contrast certainly reflected the challenges (inadequate domestic human and material resources) and opportunities (an indispensable need for external sources of labor, technical expertise, and capital) that Spain faced as it explored, settled and exploited the Americas while simultaneously safeguarding its own imperial interests in that part of the world. The complexity of the situation was compounded by Spain’s support of Irish Catholics who, as the legal adviser hinted, believed that they should receive preferential treatment in Spain. Ultimately the Crown concurred with its legal adviser, granting Jaime a two-year residential permit on June 27, 1775. A Royal Treasury addendum advised that the Governor of Puerto Rico would be consulted at the conclusion of the term on any future agricultural improvements credited to Jaime, who anticipated that the information would be taken into consideration to fix his permanent residence in Puerto Rico. Six months later Jaime, along with his black slave Carlos Boon (an unmarried twenty-year old whom he had brought along from the island of Saint Eustatius) and Ignacio Sanz Alvaro (an orphaned, single twenty-year old from Castile), underwent the customary pre-emigration checks prescribed by the Casa de Contratación in Cadiz. On February 23, 1776, a license authorized his party to embark to Puerto Rico. They did so March 17, boarding one of the transport vessels ferrying the Victoria infantry regiment headed for active service on the island.

Jaime’s original 1774 order granted him mercantile privileges in Puerto Rico while servicing the debt. But he had to abide by several conditions. In the first place, he could not purchase the products in Puerto Rico with macuquina coinage, an unsteady medium of exchange that Spain

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65 Jaime O’Daly to King, May 13, 1775.
66 Jaime O’Daly to King, May 13, 1775.
67 Jaime O’Daly to King, June 30, 1784.
68 Jaime O’Daly to King, June 30, 1784.
69 Archivo General de Indias, Casa de Contratación, leg. 5522, Núm. 1, R.21. I wish to thank Ms. Dinah Monllor, doctoral student at the Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, for sharing this information with me.
70 TORRES RAMÍREZ, La isla, p. 98.
gradually began removing from circulation starting in 1771.\textsuperscript{71} He would be allowed to buy merchandize from the Real Compañía de Barcelona to be subsequently bartered in Puerto Rico for the agricultural products. He was forbidden to export cedar and cattle, two highly coveted articles of illegal trading that were highly prized in the sugar colonies of the eastern Caribbean.\textsuperscript{72} Obviously, these restrictions were meant to discourage contraband, especially with Saint Eustatius, a well known commercial entrepôt and smuggling base.\textsuperscript{73} Recent cases involving Irish and British interlopers operating in Puerto Rico certainly did not help Jaime’s case. In 1770 governor Juan Dabán deported the Irish immigrant Thomas Fitzgerald after an investigation tied him to illegal trade in the southeastern coastal town of Humacao. The Crown did likewise with Juan (John) Kennedy, British factor of the Compañía de Asiento de Negros, who was charged with the same offense.\textsuperscript{74} Two years later, island officials arrested Daniel O’Flaherti (also appearing as O’Harnerty), but he escaped from custody with the apparent aid of his local captors.\textsuperscript{75}

Jaime’s two-year residential license was due to expire June 1777, but he remained in Puerto Rico nearly a decade beyond that time. Repeated dispatches issued during that period to the governor of Puerto Rico to be on the lookout for unwelcomed or unauthorized foreigners apparently had no negative impact on his status.\textsuperscript{76} None of his requests for naturalization filed in 1784 and 1786 addressed the question of how he managed to elude removal following the expiration of the residential permit. We can only guess at what may have transpired. Since state-issued lettered instruments, such as citizenship or naturalization documents, were not the only or chief means by which immigrants gained acceptance or membership in a given community, other mechanisms or forces were clearly at work. As Tamar Herzog has suggested, whether one was

\textsuperscript{72} TORRES RAMÍREZ, \textit{La isla}, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{74} AGI-SD, leg. 2282, Council of the Indies to King, June 1, 1770; AGI-SD, leg. 2388; “Real Cédula,” July 21, 1770 (Núm. 331), \textit{Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico}, I, 1914, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{75} AGI-SD, leg. 2352, “Testimonio de los autos seguidos contra varios individuos de Humacao, sobre ilícito comercio; y…subasto de dos negro, y negra, y una yegua frisona, Puerto Rico, año de 1770”; Muesas’ expulsion order is found in AGI-SD, leg. 2282, Council of the Indies to King, July 3, 1772; see also, Hector R. FELICIANO RAMOS, “El comercio de contrabando en la costa sur de Puerto Rico,” \textit{Revista/Review Interamericana}, 14:1-4, 1984, pp. 5-13.
\textsuperscript{76} TORRES RAMÍREZ, \textit{La isla}, p. 98.
an insider or outsider was more dependent on how a subject’s rights and obligations of the specific locale were understood and operationalized by those who lived and worked in that specific area. This seems to have been the case of Jaime, who claimed that he used his knowledge, professional and business contacts and other resources to help his brother and local landowners transform their estates into economically viable plantations, while also paying his share of taxes and other duties to the colonial state. In the eyes of those within his network of beneficiaries, associates and friends, he must have been seen as an asset that was well-worth supporting and protecting.

In addition, had Jaime wished to evade detection, he could have easily disappeared into the vast underground of people in the run known to have taken refuge in the island’s predominantly forested region located not far outside the walls of San Juan. There, a sparse, overwhelmingly rural population and undeveloped communications infrastructure would have provided him a natural, safe haven. The secluded location of his brother’s rural estate, where Jaime reputedly lived, also insulated him from the eyes and ears of unwelcome outsiders and/or government officials who might have tried to run him out. But this was not the case. Jaime frequented San Juan on a regular basis on business and owned properties, including a house. The more likely explanation is that Tomás used his contacts in the upper leadership of the Spanish military, perhaps even O’Reilly, with whom he worked closely while overhauling the San Juan bulwarks, to shield Jaime. As chief of the fortification works of San Juan and a respected planter, Tomás could have also leveraged his privileged access to the Spanish governors of Puerto Rico to advocate on behalf of his brother. For his part, Jaime claimed that he had supporters in high places, including the eighteenth-century proyectistas Bernardo Ward and Jerónimo Uztáriz, both of whom reputedly served as his fiadores or guarantors.

Regardless of what may have happened in the interval just discussed, Jaime evidently made good use of the time to enhance his lucrative enterprises in Puerto Rico. In late 1783, he wrote the Crown on the subject of his residential status, noting that his brother had passed away in

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78 The Captain Generals relied on the translation skills of English-speaking persons like Tomás, as in a 1779 case involving a British spy discussed by José G. RIGAU PÉREZ, “‘On His Majesty’s secret service’: un espía inglés en San Juan en 1779,” Revista de Historia, 1986, 2:3, pp. 169-179.
1781, leaving him to care for the deceased’s worldly possessions, widow and orphaned children. Nothing apparently came out of it, for on the following June he forwarded a new petition for naturalization to the Spanish Crown. Most of this document outlined his contributions to the Puerto Nuevo plantation and the island’s agricultural economy, supported by the sworn testimonies of twenty-two witnesses, “of integrity, impartiality, education and character on account of their social status, public and military positions, roles, circumstances and verified Catholic lineage.” Only a few other haciendas in the island, he declared, possessed as many slaves, trained personnel, equipment and farm animals as the Puerto Nuevo estate that he had masterfully nurtured on behalf of his late brother. He secured the technical blueprints needed to successfully set it up and get it running, and sent them to his brother from Saint Eustatius before relocating to Puerto Rico. From the time it became operational, the estate had contributed over 14,000 pesos in taxes to the local treasury. He also owned another 10 caballerías of land (over 2,000 acres) in the partido of Loíza that raised more livestock and grew rice, corn, legumes and other provisions, “to the admiration of all [who have seen] the said orchards.” His urban real estate included “one of the best houses of [San Juan],” which he acquired for the considerable sum of 11,200 pesos. By this time, he had satisfied the terms of the 1774 royal order, “without causing any complain or inconveniences to the sellers or to the royal coffers… [and generating] 5,433 pesos in taxes in just four-years.”

O’Daly’s economic accomplishments were hard to ignore. In little less than eight years he had been at the center of the agrarian-commercial revival of the island envisioned by the Bourbons. However, his critics could and did point to his foreign status, and their unflattering reports began reaching the criminal prosecutor Julián Díaz de Saravia, who was conducting the

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79 The claim that Uztáriz was his fiador or guarantor seems unlikely because the writer died in 1732, when Jaime was still a child.
80 TÖRRÉS RAMÍREZ, La isla, p. 99.
81 A brief description of the Puerto Nuevo and San Patricio haciendas can be found in Fernando MIYARES GONZÁLEZ, Noticias particulares de la isla y plaza de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico [1775]. San Juan: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1954, p.94; and in André Pierre LEDRÚ, Viaje a la isla de Puerto Rico en el año 1797, 5th. edition. Río Piedras, P.R.: Instituto de Literatura Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1971, p. 44.
82 Jaime O’Daly to King, 1784.
83 Jaime O’Daly to King, 1784.
84 Since Tomás passed away in 1781, from this point forward Jaime will be identified as O’Daly.
residencia of former Governor José Dufresne.\textsuperscript{85} Taking notice of them, O’Daly sought to establish, in typical Enlightenment fashion, how his particular immigration case was consistent with the spirit and letter of Spanish immigration law. The statutes, he affirmed, though predicated on well-founded and forceful arguments, were premised on assumptions that clashed with both natural and civil good sense and were incompatible with an “indubitable reality” that contradicted their legal rationale. They were based, he explained, on the suspicion that aliens would have a harmful impact on Spanish interests without taking into account documented evidence to the contrary. Furthermore, they failed to consider, as savants and politicians had concluded, that when “loyalty is safely upheld, the establishment of a foreign farmer, artisan or merchant, far from injuring the Nation, has a positive effect on the growth of population and the number of hands that are gainfully employed.”\textsuperscript{86}

He also leaned on History in order to buttress his legal argument, citing precedents in both Roman and Spanish customs and law that illustrated that “even our princes and rulers have considered...[the notion of incorporating foreigners into the host society] to be one of the best ways to develop the state.” He pointed out that the Roman rulers Romulus, Augustus and Trajan grew the empire by promising foreigners equality with its citizens. So did the immediate predecessors of the Spanish Crown, Alonso of Aragon, Alonso VI, and King Ferdinand in rebuilding the Iberian cities of Pamplona, Toledo and Seville, respectively. Each of these cities, he claimed, owed their opulence to the foreign and native craftsmen, farmers and workers that repopulated them. Accordingly, a law instituted by one of the sons of Alonso X stipulated that special care should be taken in settling the monarchy with good people, preferably native-born or, in their absence, industrious outsiders who, once rooted in the new land, would partake in local affairs as anyone else. For Philip IV, he went on, the wellbeing of republics was measured by the state of their population, whose preservation and growth was of paramount importance. Thus, the monarch welcomed to the Spanish realms skilled and productive foreigners whose trades or occupations were useful to the Crown, and granted them the same rights as his other subjects. In 1703 Philip V went even further, O’Daly concluded, by allowing Irish and Dutch

\textsuperscript{86} O’Daly to King, 1784.
Catholics to reside, trade and own real estate within the Spanish domains, and by abolishing foreign immigration laws in the Spanish Mediterranean island of Mallorca a few years later.\(^8^7\)

He further drove his point home by noting that in 1776 the Genoese Juan Baptista Pérez, a resident of Mexico City who initially applied for a *carta de tolerancia*, was granted naturalization after the Crown waived the remaining unmet prerequisites needed for securing Spanish citizenship. In 1783 the Crown permitted the brothers Julio and Enrique O’Neill to relocate from Danish Saint Croix to Puerto Rico upon taking an oath of loyalty and vassalage. Both were allowed to bring along their slaves and agricultural implements needed to grow sugar, indigo and other commercial crops, and allotted untenanted land in compliance with the agrarian guidelines of the 1778 Royal *Cédula*.\(^8^8\) Simultaneously, he continued, the Crown opened up its eastern Caribbean colony of Trinidad to foreign Catholic immigrants from friendly powers, promising them naturalization once they completed their first five years of residence in the Spanish colony. A judgment in his favor, O’Daly noted, would attest to the King’s sound settlement policy, which would lay the foundation for enticing other skilled, hard-working or affluent foreigners to Puerto Rico. Colonizing the Kingdom with virtuous vassals would set the stage for a new politically wise and economically revitalizing immigration model “to attract from among the aliens a considerable number of industrious hands for labor, commerce, arts and the trades...knowing that they would be treated as Spaniards in all their productive endeavors and needs.” He asked rhetorically, “why wouldn’t many of them want to come [here] to enjoy [such privileges] in this happy land?”\(^8^9\)

In its ruling, the Crown acknowledged O’Daly’s multiple contributions, but noted that he nevertheless lacked two of the legal criteria for naturalization. His length of residence was still two years short of the ten prescribed by law, and he was unmarried. He received a *carta de tolerancia* on December 21, 1784.\(^9^0\) The concession cleared up his residential status and may have indirectly helped him overcome pending fraud and smuggling charges that Díaz de Saravia leveled against him. The Council of the Indies eventually dismissed the indictment on

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\(^8^7\) O’Daly to King, 1784.
\(^8^8\) O’Daly to King, 1784. The 1778 *cédula* aimed at privatizing and reapportioning Crown lands among farmers in order to spur commercial agriculture—see Cayetano COLL Y TOSTE, “La propiedad territorial en Puerto Rico: su desenvolvimiento histórico,” *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico*, 1, 1914, pp. 239-310.
\(^8^9\) O’Daly to King, 1784.
\(^9^0\) AGI-SD, leg. 2366, Jaime O’Daly to King, October 31, 1786.
procedural grounds, pointing out that the prosecutor failed to give O’Daly an opportunity to challenge the accusations.  

Even better, O’Daly made a favorable impression on Charles III, who on December 20, 1785 entrusted him with the direction of a future Real Factoría de Tabacos to be established in Puerto Rico.  

The creation of a royal company was well in keeping with the Bourbon monarch’s imperial overhaul of the Hispanic Caribbean. Tobacco was one of the cash crops that were prominently featured in several reports of agricultural conditions in Puerto Rico compiled after 1765.  

The factoría was the latest of a string of revitalization measures aimed at transforming these tropical staples into marketable commodities. The 1762 British occupation of Havana accelerated this process, which began a few decades earlier with the gradual confiscation and redistribution among commercial farmers of Crown lands in Puerto Rico that had been illegally occupied, under-exploited or that otherwise produced no benefits to the royal treasury.  

Chartered companies were part of the strategy for rechanneling colonial production to metropolitan coffers. But the Compañía de Barcelona, which held exclusive trading rights with Puerto Rico, folded in 1784 in a cloud of suspicion over its alleged involvement in illegal transactions.  

Communications between the metropolis and the Spanish Antilles were also improved with the establishment of a regular transatlantic mail system.

Following the O’Reilly report, Bourbon reformers refocused their attention on the Spanish American colonial periphery. Colonial officials in Puerto Rico were instructed to apprehend deserters, maroons and “vagrants,” to cut down illegal traders, to draft eligible men into the maritime guilds and the disciplined militia and to create or expand urban settlements in order to better manage the island’s dispersed rural population. New regulations supported the production

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91 The Council’s final ruling is dated September 27, 1786—in Jaime O’Daly to King, 1797; GIL-BERMEJO GARCÍA, Panorama histórico, p. 282; TORRES RAMÍREZ, La isla, p. 98.  
92 The Factoría is the focus of Edgar PÉREZ TOLEDO’s work, “Real Factoría Mercantil: contribución la historia de las instituciones económicas de Puerto Rico (1784-1795).” Río Piedras, P.R.: Tesis de Maestría, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1983.  
95 TORRES RAMÍREZ, La isla, pp. 86-93.  
of tobacco, coffee and sugar, promoted the large-scale importation of African captives to fill the island’s expanding labor needs and strengthened ties to the metropolis via additional Hispanic Caribbean and Iberian ports, of all which culminated in the implementation of the 1778 Free Trade Act to “promote the settlement of hitherto neglected territories, reduce the evil of contraband trade, generate increased revenues, and, above all, further develop the empire as a market for Spanish agricultural and manufactured goods, and as a source of raw materials for Spanish industry.”

As it turned, however, the misnamed comercio libre had an uneven impact on the Spanish colonies, with Havana gobbling up over ninety seven percent of all Caribbean exports to Cádiz between 1778 and 1820.

The resurgence of the tobacco industry in Puerto Rico came on the heels of a similar unsuccessful attempt in La Española, where officials had been advocating for the commercial cultivation of the leaf since the 1720s. Two of its governors, Alfonso de Castro and Manuel de Azlor y Urriés, actively promoted it during their respective terms of office. As a result of their efforts, a tobacco monopoly was finally set up in the capital of Santo Domingo in 1763. Plans were also drawn out to bring experts from New Spain to enhance the agricultural and manufacturing skills of the local tobacco producers. However, optimism soon turned to disenchantment after the Seville Royal Tobacco Company fixed the Santo Domingo quota at only 12,000 arrobas annually. In addition, the higher quality Cuban tobacco continued to outsell the Dominican product, except when specific conditions negatively impacted the former. The British occupation of Havana was one such event, at which point the Crown authorized the founding of a factoría in Santo Domingo. Once Spain regained control of Havana, the Dominican tobacco industry lost its momentum and ultimately its share of the market in Seville.

Taken as a whole, the limited success of Bourbon reformism in Puerto Rico and the problems plaguing the Dominican tobacco business help to explain the formation of the Royal Tobacco Company in Puerto Rico. The project was built on previously established commercial links between Amsterdam and Cadiz that had been in existence in one form or another from the second

half of the eighteenth century. They grew out of Spain’s inability to meet the mounting demand at home and its colonies for certain goods, which opened the door to foreign suppliers that filled the vacuum. In these circumstances, a joint Hispano-Dutch company seemed like a feasible vehicle for deterring smuggling and raising colonial revenues. Inevitably, “the implementation of some of these projects, far from removing foreign interests from the closed system of Spanish trade, linked colonial production to European centers of finance and commerce like Amsterdam.”

The selection of O’Daly to fill this sensitive post was not surprising given his vast transatlantic network that extended from Puerto Rico to the non-Hispanic Caribbean, the United States and Europe. In many ways he both benefited from and contributed to the growing Enlightenment-infused interest in documenting the natural history, population, rural conditions and economic potential of eighteenth-century Puerto Rico. In 1769, for instance, Governor Miguel de Muesas, widely regarded as one of the leading reformers of the latter half of the eighteenth century, commissioned the military commander Andrés de Vizcarrondo and the slave trade agent Alejandro de Novoa to reconnoiter the island and ascertain the state of commercial agriculture. Vizcarrondo projected the tobacco yield in 1770 to exceed two million pounds. Surprisingly, in 1775 Muesas officially reported a harvest under 800,000 lbs. In August of the same year he requested that one hundred Cuban tobacco cultivators be sent to Puerto Rico to instruct local farmers on its cultivation and processing for commercial sale.

Two decades later, and at the request of Governor Juan Dabán, O’Daly drafted a comprehensive report on the aromatic leaf that laid the groundwork for establishing the royal monopoly. He estimated the 1784 harvest at 600,000 lbs, a figure closer to that given by Muesas, but well below that estimated by Vizcarrondo. While it is possible that Vizcarrondo
miscalculated the volume of tobacco production, it was well understood that the overwhelming bulk of it found its way to foreign markets through illegal channels.

O’Daly did more than just quantify how much tobacco was being produced; he also wrote about its cultivation, harvesting, processing and marketing. In doing so, he displayed a keen understanding of export-based agriculture, but also of the associated political economic doctrines gaining currency during this period. O’Daly wrote about the planting and harvesting seasons of tobacco, its geographic distribution on the island, manufacturing process and the typical yield (in units or rolls) per sown acre. From his perspective, the backward state of the tobacco industry stemmed from the growers’ ignorance of farming best practices and a dearth of servile labor. Since it was widely believed that cultivators concealed the actual amount of tobacco they produced, O’Daly suggested ways to hold them fiscally responsible for the under-paid taxes.\(^\text{105}\) In his judgment, purchasing their tobacco with fairly priced imported commodities was crucial for the success of the enterprise. O’Daly proposed the establishment of regional depots, staffed by competent and well compensated employees, and a transportation system to ferry the tobacco to a main warehouse near the port of San Juan before its shipment overseas.\(^\text{106}\) Lastly, he hinted at being the right man to lead the factoría by underscoring the importance of having a “practical knowledge and clear grasp of the principles [governing] commerce in the [Caribbean] and its connection to and dependence on that of Europe….”\(^\text{107}\) He sounded confident, informed and reassuring, but the creation of the factoría greatly diminished the volume of Puerto Rican tobacco exports when compared to the vast quantities of it that had been previously smuggled to St. Eustatius.\(^\text{108}\)

Regardless, the royal employment helped O’Daly inch closer to his goal of attaining naturalization. On January 27, 1787, about two years following his royal appointment, the Crown granted him the status of a Spanish subject while he remained at the helm of the company.\(^\text{109}\) With his residential situation on firmer ground, O’Daly continued to work on his various agricultural and commercial enterprises. Although he carefully cultivated reciprocal

\(^{105}\) MOSCOSO, pp. 196-208.
\(^{106}\) GIL-BERMEJO GARCÍA, p. 172.
\(^{107}\) MOSCOSO, p. 208.
beneficial relations with key members of Puerto Rico’s lettered elite, he also attracted his share of detractors. As José Manuel Espinosa has observed, colonial treasury officials were displeased with his complete control of the factoría, arguing that it functioned outside the customary bureaucratic channels. They also claimed that the commodities sent by O’Daly’s trading associates in Amsterdam landed in San Juan without government inspection and identified irregularities in his management of the royal funds invested in the enterprise. For their part, local merchants saw their businesses threatened by what they viewed as the factoría’s exclusive right to trade tobacco for imported European goods. Since they could not compete with it, they demanded that Puerto Rico be given the same concessions granted to Spanish Trinidad in 1783, or at the very least, the right to acquire the same goods in the nearby entrepôts of the eastern Caribbean. The growers’ inability to deal with buyers of their choice placed them at a disadvantage when it came to negotiating with factoría agents, who had the final word on weighing, rating and pricing the product.  

In 1789, the Aragonese clerk Joseph Martín de Fuentes tried unsuccessfully to unseat O’Daly from the factoría’s directorship. Fuentes had applied for a job at the Banco Nacional de San Carlos when he learned of an accountant vacancy at the Real Factoría from Manuel Félix Riesch, one of O’Daly’s commercial agents in Cadiz. He later forged a recommendation from Riesch to O’Daly without realizing that the position had already been promised to Juan Sayus, a Frenchman who had been naturalized in Spain. With the bogus paperwork at hand, Fuentes persuaded the Casa de Contratación to allow him to travel to Puerto Rico to take up the job of contador mayor at the Real Factoría. Once on the island, the impostor immediately challenged the selection of the two “foreigners”—O’Daly and Sayus—for jobs that he felt should have been filled with Spaniards. In drawn out, scathing letters addressed to the Spanish Crown he denounced their alleged incompetence, disloyalty and fraudulent business practices. When his diatribes failed to get both parties suspended or fired, Fuentes vented his frustration on Governor Miguel de Ustáriz. After several unsuccessful attempts to persuade Fuentes to temper his

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109 Jaime O’Daly to King, 1797.
criticism or to get him off the island, Ustáriz threw him in jail, where the controversial jobseeker met an untimely death under highly suspicious circumstances.\footnote{111}

The Fuentes affair placed in bold relief a xenophobic atmosphere that permeated some quarters of the late eighteenth-century Hispanic world. As already mentioned, strategic considerations and economic protectionism were behind some of the negative views on foreigners expressed in Spanish royal circles. Hence, the Bourbon reforms did not grant foreign immigrants unrestricted access to the Spanish colonies. Foreigners still faced tough admission criteria, limitations on where in the colonies they could establish themselves, restrictions on their spatial mobility, bans on their commercial activities and rigid requirements for legalizing their immigration statuses. Matrículas and other registers containing detailed information about their identities, occupations and whereabouts kept track of them. Some were also subjected to periodic surveillance. Generally and with the usual caveats, eighteenth-century Spanish immigration rules seemed more lenient towards individual applicants. The influx of large, organized bodies of foreigners was discouraged. The rejection of several proposals for founding foreign colonias in Puerto Rico with Germans, Franco-Dominguans and Irish Catholics, some of which involved slave trading and mercantile privileges, bears this out.\footnote{112}

For various sectors of Puerto Rico’s colonial society, however, other factors molded their attitudes towards non-Hispanics. As noted earlier foreign immigrants, such as smugglers, often became a valuable conduit of outside information, contacts and goods that were otherwise unavailable or in short supply in Puerto Rico. Thus, just about everyone—from landowners to government functionaries—enthusiastically and actively participated in illegal trade.\footnote{113} For the colonial elite specifically, the real or perceived benefits that foreigners provided could only go so far. The cabildo, or city council, for instance, was fiercely protective of its traditional prerogatives, and often took on the governor, intendant or other high officials who challenged the corporation. Firmly in the hands of the leading vecinos or citizens, most of them creole


\footnote{112} See, for example, the petitions of Jacques Concanon, AGS-Estado, exp. 6948, Núm. 11, April 20, 1761; Juan Tuite, AGS-Estado, exp. 6961, Núm. 14, December 23, 1766; and the Knight of Losevil, AGI-SD, leg. 2393, April 13, 1789; consult also HULL, Charles III, pp. 167-68 and Jorge L. CHINEA, “Francophobia and Interimperial Politics in Late Bourbon Puerto Rico: The Duke of Crillón y Mahon’s Failed Negotiations with the Spanish Crown, 1776-1796,” New West Indian Guide, 80:1-2, 2007, pp. 37-53.
merchants and large landowners, the cabildo also obstructed the appointment of candidates for public office who were outside its inner circle, including those belonging to the so-called castas, that is, mixed bloods.\textsuperscript{114}

Supporters of O’Daly learned just how exclusive this legislative body was when in 1793 the interim intendant Francisco Creagh y Montoya tried to rig the elections for several vacant city council seats. Regarded as enlightened and enterprising, Creagh was born into a family with Irish ancestral ties in Santiago de Cuba, where he established himself as a lawyer, educator and public servant.\textsuperscript{115} A controversial figure, in 1785, he along with his brother Tomás were incarcerated in Cuba after the Conde de Gálvez accused the pair of illegal trading. Juan Francisco escaped to Spain, where he managed to get the indictment dropped. As regidor perpetuo (lifetime alderman) of Santiago de Cuba, in 1789 he advocated for the city’s free port status and the introduction of slaves.\textsuperscript{116} Shortly thereafter he relocated to Puerto Rico, where in 1793 he tried to persuade several councilmen to appoint O’Daly to the post of alcalde ordinario or town magistrate. O’Daly was described as Creagh’s ahijado, although it is not clear if the relationship was that of godson or protégé. In a request to the Governor asking for a formal investigation of the alleged act of nepotism, members of the assembly whom Creagh had approached the day before the election protested his fraudulent attempt to manipulate the ballot in order to favor “the foreigner O’Daly,” who ultimately did not get the seat.\textsuperscript{117} Since members of the cabildo had been periodically implicated in illegal land grabbing and smuggling, it is possible that O’Daly’s election would have also cut into these exclusive, and profitable, office-holding benefits that the regidores obviously wanted to keep for themselves.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{113} Fernando PICÓ, Historia general de Puerto Rico. Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1986, p. 95.
\textsuperscript{116} Carlos M. TRELLES, Ensayo de bibliografía cubana de los siglos xvii y xviii. Matanzas: El Escritorio, 1907, p. 38.
\textsuperscript{117} “Contiene la justificación hecha para probar el empeño que tuvo el Auditor de que se eligiese Alcalde Ordinario al Estraniero Dn. Jayme O’Daly, que resistió el Ayuntamiento,” AGI-SD, leg. 2372, December 16, 1793; see also Actas del cabildo de San Juan de Puerto Rico, 1792-1798. San Juan, P.R.: Municipio de San Juan, 1967, pp. 66 and 79.
\textsuperscript{118} Juan A. GIUSTI CORDERO, “Puerto Rico and the Non-Hispanic Caribbean: un reto al exclusivismo de la historiografía puertorriqueña.” In: María Dolores LUQUE and Juan E. HERNANDEZ CRUZ, eds., Obra historiográfica de Arturo Morales Carrión. San Germán, P.R.: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales del Caribe y América Latina, 1993, pp. 18-19.
Although O’Daly was not personally implicated in the council matter, the “foreigner” classification continued to haunt him thereafter. His fortunes took another bad turn during the 1797 failed British occupation of the island. Shortly after seizing Spanish Trinidad, the British dispatched a naval convoy of approximately 60 ships and an estimated 6,000 to 13,000 combatants, to take over Puerto Rico. By the middle of April, a 3,000-man strike force landed on the northern coast near the village of Cangrejos and began advancing towards San Juan. A detachment of British soldiers raided several close-by plantations, including the properties of O’Daly. During the attack Governor Ramón de Castro received reports that English-speaking foreigners residing in Puerto Rico were providing intelligence to the invaders. As a precautionary measure, he ordered the surveillance of British and Irish immigrants on the island.\footnote{119} Eventually, he jailed O’Daly and other high-profile Irish colonists who were suspected of aiding and abetting the enemy. After nearly two months in an unsanitary vault under guard, O’Daly was placed under house arrest and given eight days to leave to island. He subsequently filed a grievance with the Spanish Crown, which directed Castro to suspend the proceedings and forward all paperwork concerning the O’Daly matter to the Council of the Indies for a final determination. In the end, O’Daly was cleared of the charges and remained in Puerto Rico.\footnote{120}

O’Daly’s 1797 memorial, or petition for redress concerning his incarceration and expulsion order once again implored the munificence of the Spanish Crown, restating how it had always championed the Irish cause.\footnote{121} The supplication also reiterated, in no uncertain terms, his economic contributions to the island’s budding export-based economy. Since his arrival, he wrote, “I have applied myself to agriculture: I was the principal interested party at the Puerto Nuevo plantation, the agent of its development, the one who enlightened and stimulated those who were not as skilled in this field.”\footnote{122} In addition to Puerto Nuevo, he had also acquired the adjacent San Patricio estate, then (1798) valued at over 40,000 pesos. Moreover, he felt that while he could not lay claim for Puerto Rico’s economic growth during the past three decades, he promoted it actively by his industrious example, which many imitated. As a result, “only two

\footnote{120} O’Daly to King, 1797.
\footnote{121} O’Daly to King, 1797.
\footnote{122} O’Daly to King, 1797.
years after my arrival the governor went along with the cabildo and local residents by allowing foreign technicians skilled in the operation of sugar mills to immigrate to the island with their equipment and tools as long as they were Roman Catholics and swore allegiance to Spain...."  

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These developments, O’Daly avowed, ultimately made the difference between the stagnant state of the economy then (c.1775) and its growth at the present time (c.1797).

Conclusions

Viewed in its totality, the migratory experience of the O’Daly family opens a window from which to peer into some of the major changes impacting on the Spanish transatlantic empire in the Bourbon era. On a broad plane, it allows us to appreciate the importance that Irish immigration played in at least three key areas: the defense of Catholicism in Europe, the jockeying for imperial supremacy amongst competing powers in that part of the world and the economic revitalization of late Bourbon Spain. The trio—trade, war and religion—“were the sinews of Hiberno-Spanish relations in the early modern period.”  

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The creation of Irish colleges, the formation of Irish military regiments and the establishment of Irish business associations in the peninsula were all part of this unique bond in which Spain came across as the dominant defender of oppressed or exiled Irish Catholics. The O’Dalys epitomized the persistence of that deeply-rooted connection: uncle Denis joined the pro-Catholic religious crusade, Tomás the military, and Jaime the mercantile world.

De jure and de facto bias towards “foreigners” engendered disabilities that adversely affected a broad range of people for various reasons and in different places in the Ibero-American world. Hence, the deployment of the foreign label against the Irish-born Jaime should come as no surprise. However, it was not necessarily his place of birth outside of the Spanish dominions that his critics found objectionable. If that were the case, countless other people in like circumstances in eighteenth-century Spain that fit the foreign mold would have been equally victimized. Many, like his brother Tomás, were apparently not subjected to the same level of differential treatment. Jaime was less a target of a pervasive nativistic aversion of non-Iberians than a casualty of the

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123 O’Daly to King, 1797.
growing frustration inside Iberian manufacturing and mercantile sectors with the impoverished or backward state of Spanish industry and its displacement by foreign imports. Outcompeted Iberian entrepreneurs in particular vented their dissatisfaction on foreigners, and even on their Spanish-born offspring, whom they universally regarded as gobbling up this lucrative global trade, especially with Spanish America and the rest of Europe. Their counterparts in Puerto Rico such as tobacco growers, merchants accustomed to smuggling the leaf to the Danish and Dutch Caribbean and some of the cabildo officials who partook or benefited from the illegal transactions equally resented Jaime O’Daly’s interference as head of the Royal Tobacco Factory. The fact that the ambitious merchant-planter-administrator legally traded with the non-Hispanic Caribbean with a license that no one in the imperial administration bothered to properly monitor, enjoyed exclusive control of a state monopoly in which he seemingly mixed personal and “official” business, owned or controlled two of the most profitable plantations on the island, had important transatlantic social, economic and political contacts and enjoyed the support of high-placed officials in Spain and Puerto Rico (at least prior to the 1797 British attack) further alienated his disgruntled adversaries.

125 Margarita GARCÍA-MAURIÑO MUNDI, La pugna entre el Consulado de Cádiz y los jenízaros por las exportaciones a Indias (1720-1765). Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 1999, pp. 21-25.