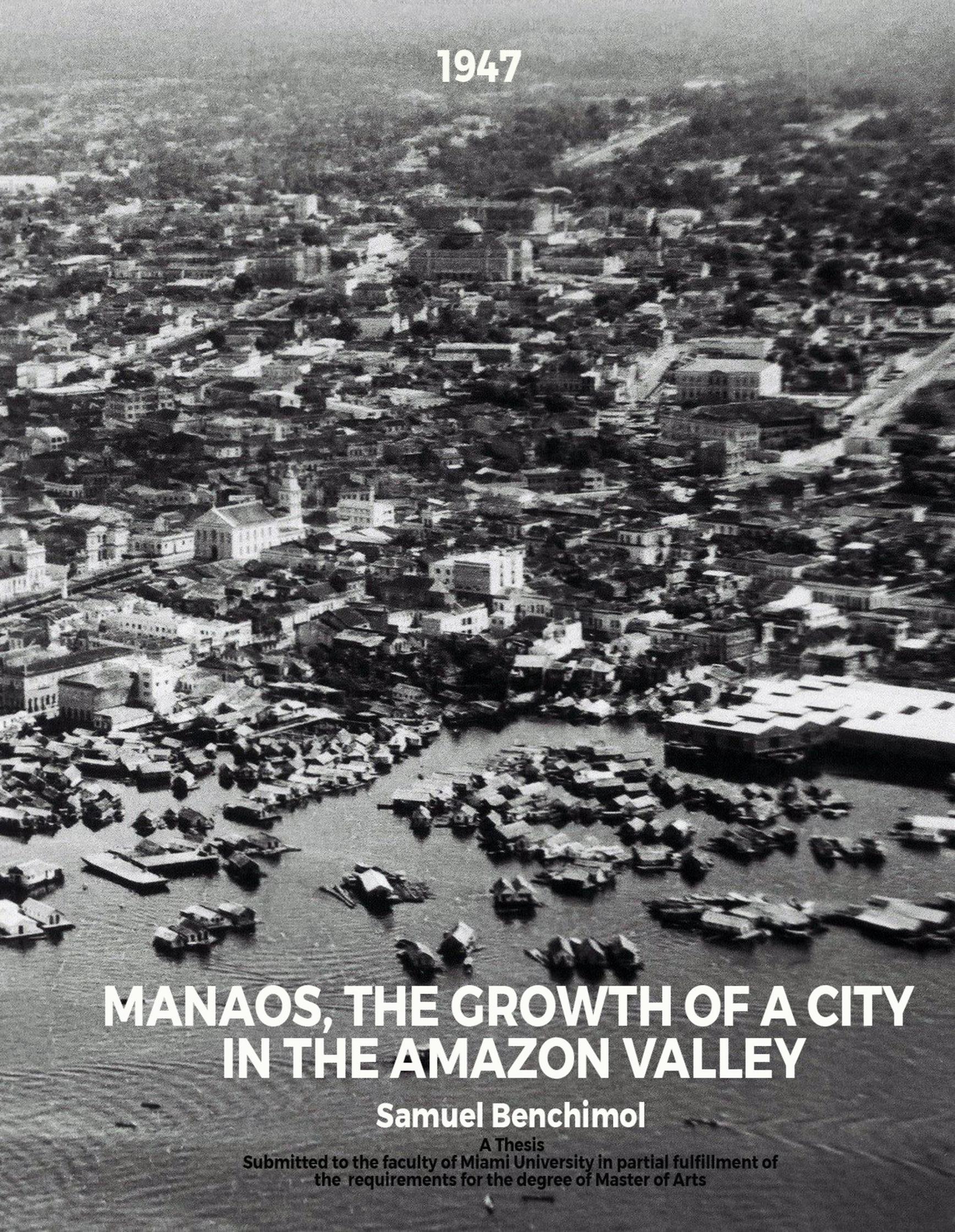


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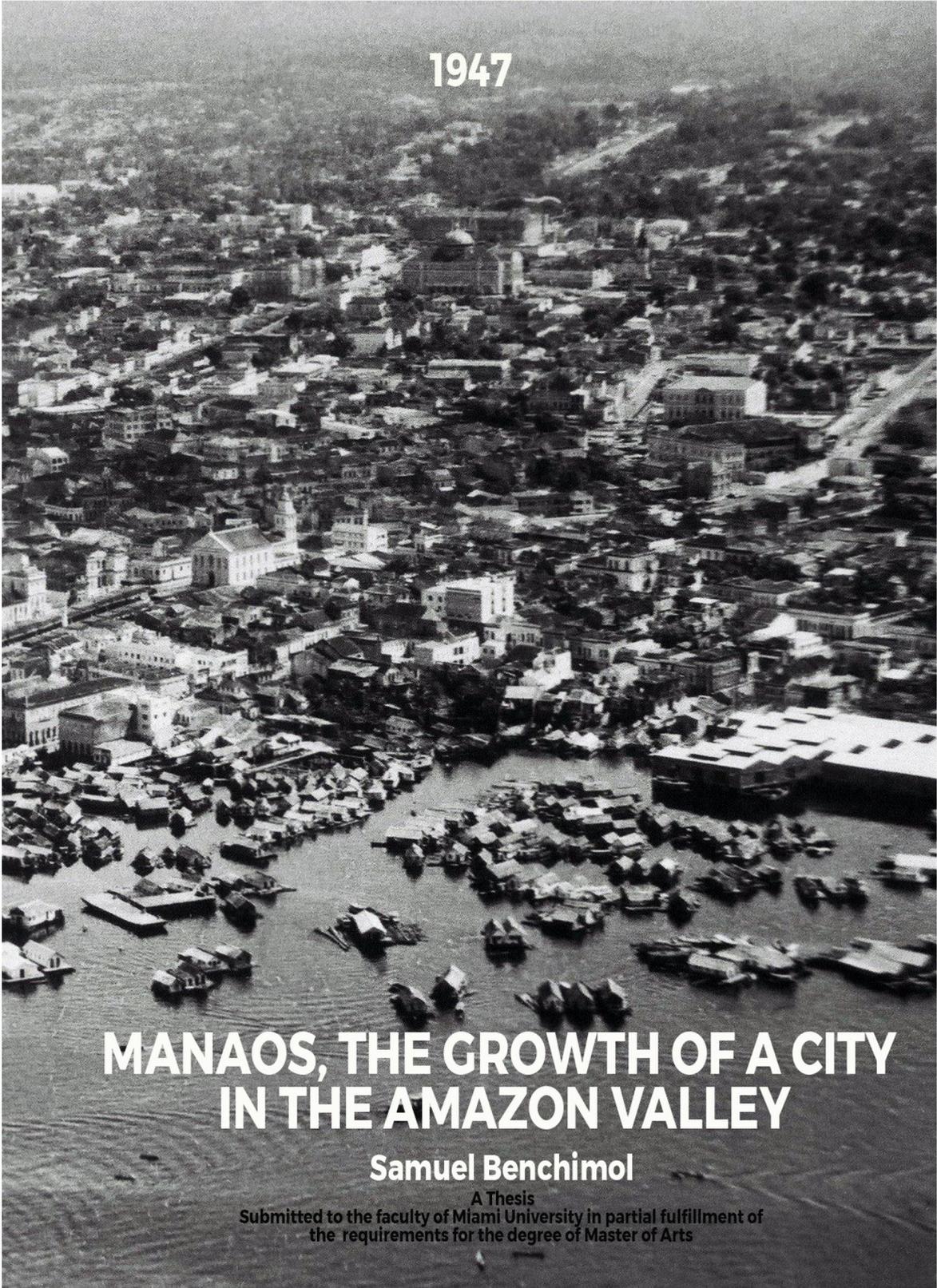


**MANAOS, THE GROWTH OF A CITY  
IN THE AMAZON VALLEY**

**Samuel Benchimol**

A Thesis

Submitted to the faculty of Miami University in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts



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by

Samuel Benchimol  
Miami University  
Oxford, Ohio

1947

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## SYNOPSIS

This thesis purposes to analyse the growth of Manaus within the frame work of the geographic and economic background of the Amazonia, to point out its social and ecological condition, and to interpret them in relation to the development of the city. The author tried to show in this thesis the multi-fold aspects of the city through the different of its history as a small village settled around the fort of São Jose do Rio Negro, as a decadent town in the beginning of the eighteenth century, as a boom city in the close of the nineteenth century. Chapter II is dedicated to this urban evolution of the city. But the growth of the community and its present-day characteristics can not be understood without a preliminary sketch of the Amazon region. Hence, the first chapter is devoted to an analysis of the natural environment, the political and economic forces, and the human factors which played important roles in the conquest and initial peopling of Amazonia. The third chapter is a study of contemporary Manaus from demographic, ecological and sociological points of views. The fourth chapter seeks to portray Manaus in its different moods and to describe the various ways of life of the people. The final chapter is concerned with trends and prospects. On the basis of the past and the apparent potentialities of the present, it draws attention to the probable future development of the city as the key-community of the Upper Amazon Valley.

Samuel Bechimol

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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S.B.

## PREFACE

"I found Manaus a village and transformed it into a modern city." This boast was made fifty years ago by the Governor of the State of Amazonas, Eduardo Ribeiro, when he left office. Although a great deal of truth is contained in the statement, the fact remains that Manaus is the product of almost three hundred years of history. A complex history it was. Slow progress, stagnation, and boom have been different phases of its development. No, the city is not a product of a single man but the outcome of the interplay of geographic economic, and human factors operating over many generations.

This thesis purposes to analyse the growth of Manaus within the frame work of the geographic and economic background of the Amazonia, to point out its social and ecological conditions, and to interpret them in relation to the development of the city. The author is a native son of Manaus and has been associated with it through all his lifetime. He will try to show in this thesis the multi-fold aspects of the city through the different periods of its history - as a small village settled around the fort of São Jose do Rio Negro, as a decadent town in the beginning of the eighteenth century, as a boom city in the close of the nineteenth century. Chapter II is dedicated to this urban evolution of the city. But the growth of the community and its present-day characteristics can not be understood without a preliminary sketch of the background of the Amazonian region. Hence, the

first chapter is devoted to an analysis of the natural environment, the political and economic forces, and the human factors which played important roles in the conquest and initial peopling of Amazonia. The third chapter is a study of contemporary Manaus from sociological, ecological, and demographic points of view. The fourth chapter seeks to portray Manaus in its different moods and to describe the various ways of life of the people. The final chapter is concerned with trends and prospects. On the basis of the past and the apparent potentialities of the present, it draws attention to the probable future development of the city as the key-community of the Upper Amazon Valley.

S.B.

## CHAPTER I

### BACKGROUND

#### A. Natural Environment.

Manaos<sup>1</sup> has grown from a small settlement of two hundred people, established around the Forte de São José do Rio Negro, to a commercial city of almost one hundred thousand inhabitants in 278 years since its foundation in 1669. It lies on the left margin of the Rio Negro, nine miles above the point that this northern tributary pours into the Amazon and 924 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. The equator is near, just 3 08' 30" to the north. The city's longitude west of Greenwich is 60 00' 00" and west of Rio de Janeiro is 16 49' 43". The altitude above the sea level is 98 feet. The climate of Manaos can be classified, within the general framework of tropical climates, as hot and damp. Observations carried on by the Meteorological Station of Manaos indicated that during the year of 1943 the maximus temperature reached the peak of 35 C. (95 F.), which occurred on October 24. The minimum temperature recorded was 20.8 C. (69 F.) on August 7. The annual average temperature for this year was 27.2 C. (81 F.). The range, it is seen, is not very wide. The humidity for this year averaged 81.9%. One hundred and ninety-two rainy days were recorded which gave an annual rainfall of 79 inches, as is shown in the accompanying table (Figure 1).

Although Manaus has an uniform climate with a very little variation in temperature the year around, a seasonal pattern can be discerned: (1) a rainy season from November to April, and (2) a dry season from May to October. However, what determines this overall classification is merely a greater or lesser frequency of rainy or sunny days during certain months of the year. Hence, the people of Manaus are accustomed to joke about the weather by saying that we have only two kinds of seasons: (1) hot-months with rainy-days and (2) hot-days within rainy months.

But this seasonal pattern of precipitation is not so important in the life of the people as is the two-fold annual cycle of the Rio Negro. The ups and downs of the river for the majority of the people who live in the outskirts of Manaus are of tremendous importance, often involving changes of residence. As we will see later on, the high and the low water influences profoundly the ways of life and the economic activity of the whole population. Some of the peculiar attitudes of the people and some of the characteristic aspects of the city, to a great extent, may be explained by an analysis of the river fluctuation. For six months in the year, from December to June, i.e., during the rainy season, the Rio Negro increases in volume and speed of flow. The next six months, from July to December, the water level drops markedly. The difference between the high- and the low-water level at Manaus is from forty to fifty feet (see Chart in Figure 2). To meet this exigency a great floating wharf and dock was

constructed to permit frank anchorage the year round for ocean going vessels of any draft.

During the time of the flood, navigation is practicable to any distant point of the head waters of the upper rivers. In Manaus these are the months of the "aviamentos"<sup>2</sup> to the upper Rio Negro and

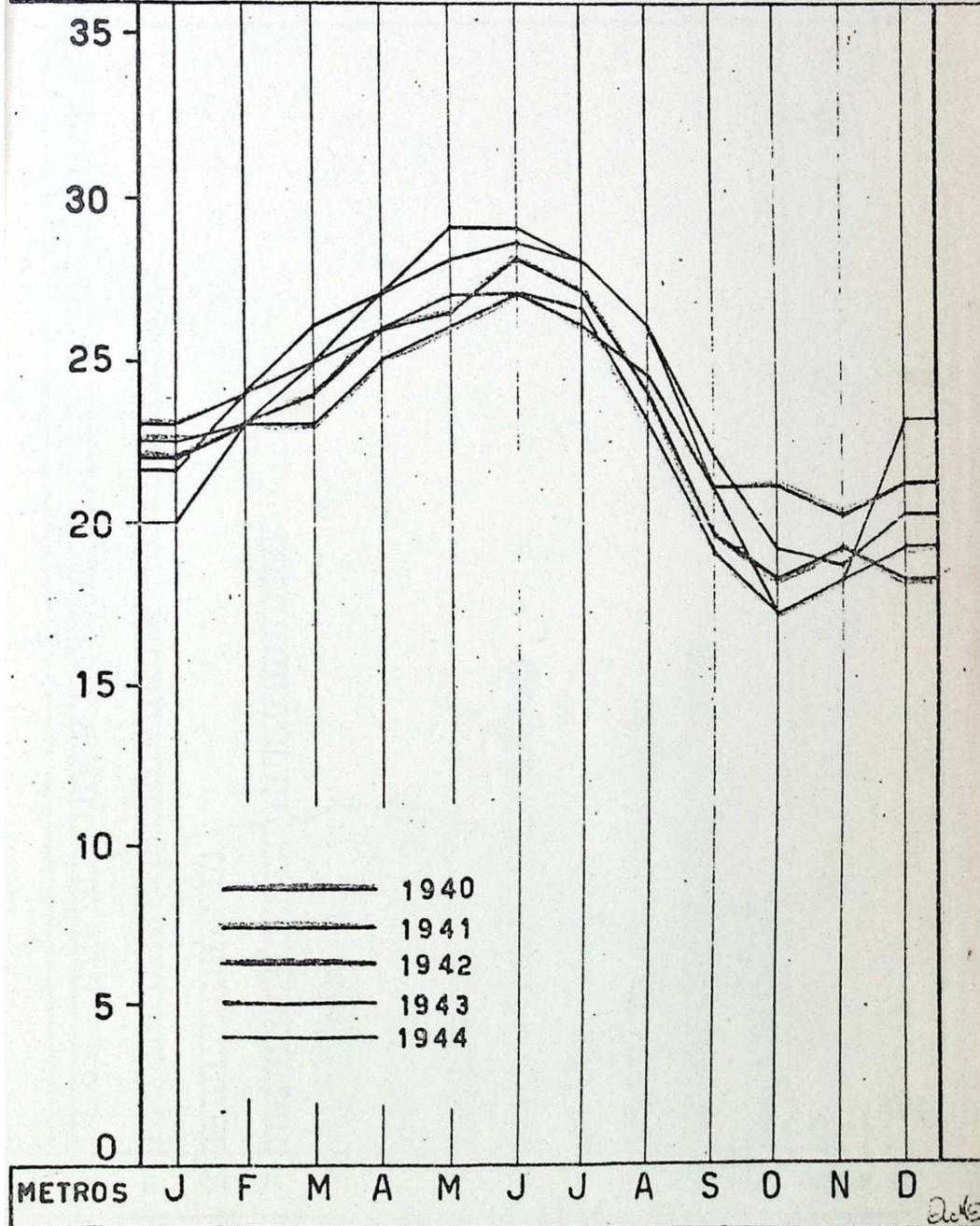
<u>MONTH</u>	<u>TEMPERATURE</u> <i>in</i> <u>Centigrade</u>	<u>HUM</u>
January . . . . .	26.0	8
February . . . . .	25.6	8
March . . . . .	25.8	8
April . . . . .	25.7	8
May . . . . .	27.3	8
June . . . . .	26.7	8
July . . . . .	27.1	7
August. . . . .	27.3	8
September. . . . .	28.3	7
October. . . . .	29.3	7
November. . . . .	28.3	7
December. . . . .	26.6	8
<hr/> Mean. . . . .	27.2	8



Figure 1. Mean Monthly Climatological Data for Manaus  
During 1943.  
(Data furnished by the Estacao Meteoreologica de  
Manaos, 1943.) ← [voltar](#)

# MOVIMENTO DAS AGUAS DO RIO NEGRO, NO PÔRTO DE MANAUS

1940 / 1944



NOTA:-- CÔTA SOBRE O NÍVEL DO MAR NO ÚLTIMO DIA DO MÊS  
( SERVIÇO HIDROMETRICO DA MANAUS HARBOUR LTD. )

Figure 2. Water-Level chart of the Rio Negro, in the port of Manaus ↵ voltar

Rio Branco. Boats, ships, launches, and barges can deliver supplies to the trading points located beyond the waterfalls in the Campos Gerais, where livestock is raised, to the goldminers of the Rio Branco, and to the missionaries in Santa Isabel and Barcelos, engaged in the catechesis of the Indians. Before the high-water drops, these boats come downstream loaded with piassava, balata, rubber, and other forest products. They bring also cattle to feed the population of Manaus.

This river pattern is not peculiar to Rio Negro but is common to all affluents of the Amazon. The southern tributaries, however, rise two or three months after the Rio Negro. This cycle difference avoids a sudden decline in the level of the Amazon and helps to keep it from drastic variation in the volume of water and the speed of the stream as would otherwise take place.

The difference between the flooding of the northern and southern tributaries also tends to stabilize the economic activity of Manaus. What happens with the Rio Negro, Rio Branco, Içá, Japurá and other northern affluents during the months January-June similarly occurs with the Rio Purus, Madeira, Juruá during the months May-November, permitting free navigation in their head waters where the best rubber camps are located. Supplies must go up during this season so that rubber will come down later on. This river cycle alternation keeps business going and brings more life to the city. In the good old days it brought not only commercial life, but also social and night life. Enriched rubber barons

and moneyed rubber workers used to come down to Manaus every year or so to recuperate their health in some hospital and to spend their money in the cabarets and bars of the town, returning when the last boat sailed upstream.

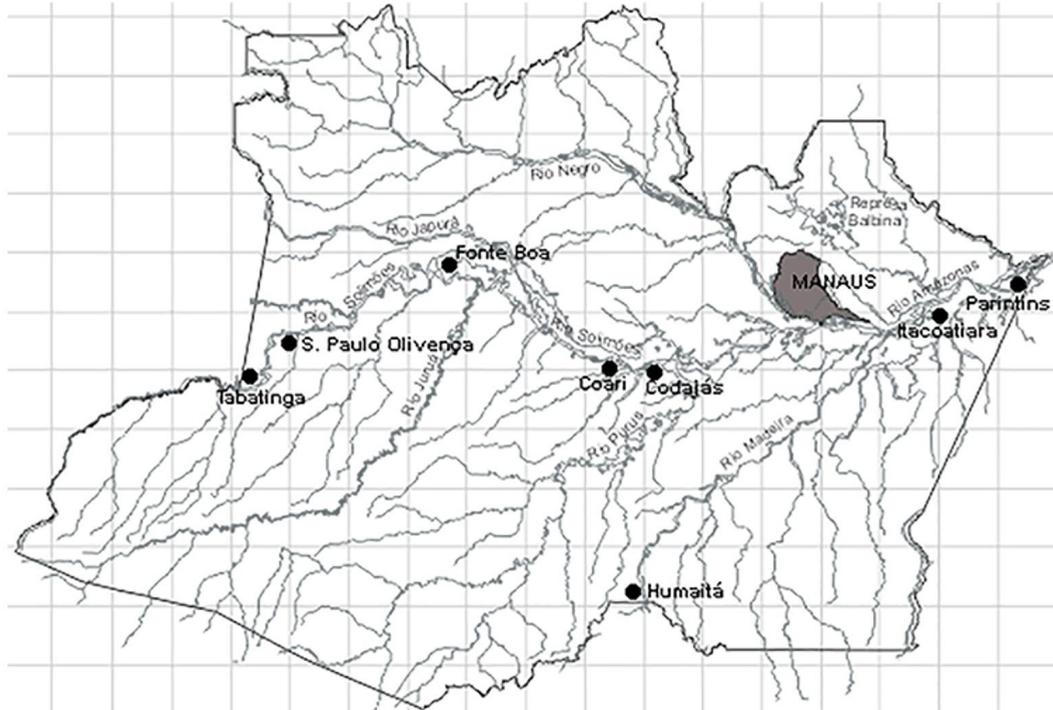


Figure 3. River Map of the State of Amazonas Showing the more important riverine towns ← [voltar](#)

Directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, everybody takes advantage of the rivers. The salesman waits to come to Manaus to sell his merchandise before the high-water season is announced. Merchants prepare their supplies and reinforce their stocks to attend the customers of the upper-rivers. Shipyards quickly repair the boats to send them away in good time. Rubber-washing factories expand operations as the rubber comes in. Exports fill the warehouses and the harbor becomes crowded with ships from everywhere. Employment raises steadily. A lot

of other plants, such as those of nut peeling, reopen when rubber is slack. The people of Manaus have plenty of good beef available in the Municipal Market when the water is high. Later they have to live on a fish diet when the river goes down. Nevertheless, they really like this fish season because it is the period of abundance, of cheap food-not only of fish but of vegetables, fruits, milk, and manioc flour. Life is easier for the poor people and less expensive.

So, in the Amazon Valley rivers have a pervasive influence throughout the whole society and culture. Without exception all of the towns and cities are scattered along the river banks, as we can see by the accompanying map (Figure 3). The rivers both for the people of interior and of the city, are not only a fruitful source of food but the best and easiest way of travel. The native people master their canoes and montarias<sup>3</sup> and know their streams as well as the modern chauffeur knows the maze of metropolitan streets. They predict storm and flood, they take advantage of wind and stream, they understand where and when to get fish. Many devices have been invented to adapt to the natural environment. Houses are sometimes built on piles in preparation for the floods or on floating rafts so as to go up and down with the river. Canoes are light and speedy, easy to paddle up or downstream. Plantations of manioc and beans are planned to be cropped before the high water. On farms a float-corral may be constructed in which to gather the cattle and keep them safe from inundation.

In the scale of values, heat and rain do not count very much because the season here is measured in terms of the river's annual cycle not in terms of the temperature. Flood is more important than storm. Streams count more than rain. We have, so to speak, a horizontal season, whose measure is given by the water level, volume, and speed, instead of a vortical season whose measure is made by inches of rainfall, percentage of humidity, or degrees of heat. In the latter, the season comes from the sky, snow, rain, and sunheat and the weather is one of the main preoccupations of the everyday life and an almost obligatory theme to start a conversation. In Amazonia, on the other hand, a typical conversation of a native cabocle<sup>4</sup> starts the question, "What is your guess for the next enchente<sup>5</sup>", or "Do you think we are going to have a big flood this year?". When somebody asks a native man how far is Manaus from Codajas or Manacapuru, his answer would not be in terms of miles but in terms of days, depending on the epoch of the years, "One or two days if you travel during the enchente or two or three days if you travel during the vasante". The high water creates furos and paranás<sup>6</sup> which shorten distances. He is not mile-minded, as are the people who get used to highways and roads, but day-river minded as are all primitive riverine people. In another paper I observed that the river is not only a geographic or economic accident in people's lives. It has also a powerful appeal in naming the major biological or social events of existence. It is customary to say, for

instance, "I was born in the Solimões", or "I got married in the Rio Negro" or "He is working in the Juruá". These river references in daily conversation reflect a great deal of the psychology of this society<sup>7</sup>.

Manaos, as one of the riverine towns in the Amazon Valley, follows this same pattern. Without railroads or highways, it has to rely on water-ways for transportation with the outside world and with its hinterland. Recently airplanes have been playing an increasingly important role in communication, breaking down somewhat the absolute dependence of the river navigation. But even so, the main means of travel is still the ship, the boat, the barge, and the canoe in a multitude of varieties and sizes. All of these craft converge easily on present day Manaos, making it the transportation center for the whole area. Its position near the mouth of the Rio Negro puts the upper reaches of that stream, including the important Rio Branco, definitely in its hinterland. It lies between the Lower Amazon and the Solimões<sup>8</sup> and has convenient access to Rio Madeira and the Rio Purus. Its location, in short, contribute to its status as the metropolis of the Upper-Amazon Valley.

The site of Manaos, so advantageous to develop a commercial and transportation city, did not, it seems, provide for a very good agricultural foundation. Herndom, who visited Manaos, in 1852, wrote:

I saw no cultivation except in the gardens of the town. The rock in the neighborhood of Barra (Manaos) is peculiar; it is a red

sandstone covered with a thin layer of white clay. The soil in the immediate neighborhood of the town seems to be poor.<sup>9</sup>

Humboldt, fifty years before Herndon, held the same opinion on the whole Rio Negro. When he asked the Indians if the land was fertile, they answered that the soil was not good for manioc but it was a very good land for the ants.<sup>10</sup> He also mentioned that these Indians ate a kind of ant pie which, according to the missionaries, was a very substantial food.

Even today the people of Manaus depend for alimentation on beef from the Rio Branco, milk from the Careiro and Cambixé, and fish from the Manacapuru Lake and other fishing grounds in the Solimões. Manioc flour mainly comes from the State of Pará. Beans, rice, corn, and almost all foodstuff are imported from areas outside of the Amazon Basin. Whether or not this situation is due to the poor quality of the soil near Manaus, it is hard to say since almost none or very few geological and agronomic researches have been made.<sup>11</sup> However, it is most likely a consequence of the forestry activities, the so-called destructive extractive industries, which always have had more appeal as a source of wealth and easy money than has the hard work of agriculture and farming. Hence, the main problem of the city is to keep the food supplies coming to Manaus and going from Manaus to the rubber campos, small villages, and other trading points in proper time. If the supplies fail to arrive when due, there will be no rubber, no nuts, no regional production. This problem has

been a chronic one since the early days. Herndon wrote about it almost one hundred years ago:

I was surprised to find that provisions were getting very scarce. The supply of flour gave out so that for some time then there was no bread in the city; and beef was killed but once a fortnight.<sup>12</sup>

As is general with the riverine towns in the Amazon Basin, Manaus is not rooted in its land. Its dependence on the river as a means of transportation and source of food and the trading character of its function as a middleman dominated city did not stimulate any kind of interest in agricultural settlement. So far, only small farms may be found in the neighborhood.

## **B. Political Forces.**

According to the Treaty of Tordesilhas, which divided the New World in two parts shared by Portuguese and Spaniards, the frontier of the Portuguese in America during the sixteenth century was limited to the eastward projection of Brasil. The whole Upper Amazon, as well as the Low Amazon, was supposed to be part of the Spanish colonial empire. The expeditions to the interior, the settlements of missionaries, the construction of forts, and the exploitation of the land in the seventeenth century laid a basis for the Portuguese claim to the regions.

Portugal on the one side and Spain on the other, rivals in the New Continent as well as

in Europe, tried to expand their colonies in South America as far as they could. The process of colonial frontier expansion followed different lines. The Spaniards stopped when they were fortunate enough to find gold and precious metals, one of the main reasons why they were in America. They settled along the Pacific coast, and the Andes tended to handicap their inland expansion. However, as soon as they crossed the mountain, they spread out into the backland of Amazonia. Their direction of movement was, therefore, from west to east.

The Portuguese in contrast, first established themselves on the Atlantic Coast at Recife and Bahia. Next, they moved southward toward La Plata Basin. Then they followed the coast northwestward until they reached the mouth of the Amazon River, their starting point for a westward penetration of that Valley.

Portuguese colonial expansion followed a quite definite pattern. It began with a fort to defend the land against the Indians and against rival European powers, especially Spain. The missionary accompanied the soldier and the colonist. The first attempted to convert the Indians, the second protected the territory, and the third exploited the natives, the land, and the forest. They worked in different ways, often hardly aware that they were cooperating in printing the seal of Portuguese right upon the country.

At the close of the sixteenth century the Portuguese founded Natal (1597), the initial step in the direction of the Amazon. The

Fortaleza do Ceará came next in 1612 and Santa Maria de Belem do Pará seven years later, in 1619. The Forte do Presepio, around which Belem started, is a historical mark in the events of the Portuguese penetration into the Amazon Valley. It was from Belem that they advanced to conquer the rest of the Amazon.

In 1639 Pedro Teixeira commanded the first Portuguese expedition from Belem to Quito, a journey requiring more than two years for the round trip. It was accomplished a century after the Spaniards, commanded by Francisco de Orelana, came down the Amazon River from Quito to its mouth, for the first time. But the Spaniards, preoccupied elsewhere, made little effort to establish dominion over the region. So, when the Portuguese were ready to occupy the Amazon, they did not encounter strong opposition.

The Rio Negro was the next step. In 1657 Bento Maciel Parente commanded an expedition to Rio Negro with twenty-five soldiers and three-hundred Indians. This was followed in 1669 by Francisco da Mota Falcão who built the Fort christened José do Rio Negro, starting a small settlement which eventually grew into the city of Manaus.

The Rio Negro was vital both for Portugal and Spain. For Spain it was a way to conquer the Amazon Basin coming from the Orinoco. For Portugal it meant the control of the Upper Amazon and a possible route for the conquest of the Guiana and the Orinoco Basin. Both parties early became aware of the importance of the Rio Negro and fortified it in the section already occupied. The construction of

the Fort of São Jose, near the mouth of the Rio Negro, was made according to this plan, "For the better safety of His Majesty". Later on, the Portuguese built farther up the river the Fort of São Gabriel and São José de Marabitanas. The Spaniards constructed in their part of the Rio Negro the Fort of San Carlos. Humboldt who visited the Rio Negro during the years of 1799-1804 wrote about this political rivalry:

In the Rio Negro the devils of European politics seem to worry all minds. The neighbor country beyond the Amazon is not called, in the language of the Spanish missionaries either Brazil or Capitania do Grão Pará, but Portugal. Even the Indians and Mulattoes, who I have seen coming from Barcelos to the Spanish Forte de San Carlos, are referred to as Portuguese. They hate each other and it seems that the close parentage between the language of Camões and Lopez de Vega does not serve for anything but to separate more and more these people.<sup>13</sup>

Portugal, however, advanced more in the conquest of the Rio Negro. We find Portuguese in this river from the second half of the seventeenth century onward. They were not only in the mouth of the river, around the Forte de São Jose, but further up, exploring the land, enslaving the Indians in those famous "tropas de resgate"<sup>14</sup>, converting them, building military defenses, and making scattered settlements. This process went on into the next century when the Treaty of 1777 recognized the Portuguese right to the land already occupied by them. Humboldt explains

the reason of the Portuguese supremacy in the Rio Negro:

In the Rio Negro the Spaniards cannot rival the Portuguese. How could they receive help from the so-far-away Province of Caracas when they saw the Portuguese population expanding rapidly along the river? The banks of the Low Amazon, from Forte da Barra up to São Jose de Marabitanas, are pretty well settled by a great number of villages and hamlets. The Portuguese section of the Negro is more than ten times more populated than is the Spanish section. I know at least eleven small villages scattered along twenty-five leagues, without counting nineteen more up to the Rio Negro mouth.<sup>15</sup>

There were other contenders for the region. The Dutch in Guiana, were trading with the Indians and infiltrating through into the Rio Negro. The British expanding in Guiana foresaw the Orinoco and the Rio Negro as key positions for approaching the Amazon. Walter Raleigh, who travelled in the Orinoco from 1595 to 1617, said in a letter to the Queen Elizabeth, "It seemeth to me that this Emyre of Guiana is reserved for the English nation."<sup>16</sup> He did not stop with that. He was mainly responsible for the spreading of the myth of El Dorado and of the Imperial and Golden City of Manaca when he wrote that "each mountain, each stone in the Orinoco's jungle shines like Gold: if this is not gold, it is the mother of Gold."<sup>17</sup> The Orinoco and the Rio Negro seem to have had a powerful appeal to the imagination of people. The Dutch, the British, the Spanish, and the Portuguese, all of them in pursuing this myth, made of the Rio Negro a well-known region

calling the attention of their kings to the remote land. But, as has been indicated, the Portuguese claim was clear before the end of the eighteenth century.

### C. The Human Factor.

In 1865 Tavares Bastos characterized the Province of Amazonas as a desert—a desert inhabited only by 40,443 souls scattered over 1,500 miles from Parintins up to Tabatinga along the banks of the Amazon River.<sup>18</sup> Manaus at this time had a population of only 2,080 inhabitants more than two centuries after its founding.

Three races composed the population of the region—Portuguese, Indians, and Negroes. The last were always an insignificant ingredient in the melting pot, just 256 in 1865. There was much crossing between Portuguese and Indians, producing the so-called caboclos or mestizos. This amalgamation of Portuguese with Indians was even stimulated by a special law during the government of Marquis de Pombal and Mendonca Furtado (1758). The law provided privileges for the mixing of Whites with Indians. To marry an Indian woman meant an increased chance to get an office or a nobility distinction. In sharp contrast, a royal act declared infamous all of the Whites who married Negro women or vice-versa.<sup>19</sup> This applied only to Amazonia. So it seems that this region was the only part of Portuguese-America which had in effect a discriminatory policy against the Negro. Nevertheless, miscegenation between Whites and Negroes went

on so that there was a growing mulatto population.

Of the three racial stocks, the most important during the period of settlement and occupation were the Indians. Nobody knows exactly how many of them there were. However, an estimate made by Araujo Amazonas, in 1840, shows that out of the 40,584 inhabitants of the Camarca do Alto Amazonas, 23,339 were civilized Indians of the following tribes: Manaos, Barés, Banibas, and Passés in the Rio Negro; Catauixys, Macuxys, Juunas, and Juris in the Solimões; Ipurinas, Jamamadys, Muras, and Paumarys in the Purus; Miranhas in the Japurá and Içá; Mundurucús, Maués, and Parintins in the Madeira.<sup>20</sup> The percentages for all the components of the population, in order of magnitude, were: 58% Indians, 26% Mestizos, 9% Whites, 4% mulattos, and 3% Negroes. Mestizos and Indians, therefore, constituted 84 per cent of the whole population of the Province at that time.<sup>21</sup>

In the quasi-absence of the Negro-slavery, Indians and Mestizos, especially the former, were the manpower of the city and of the interior. Missionaries and colonists disputed over the status of Indians in bitter quarrels. In spite of many lapses of the missionaries, they did seek to protect Indians from some forms of exploitation. Marquis de Pombal finally abolished Indian Slavery (1755). Even so, a kind of peonage existed in the second and third century of the occupation of the Amazon Valley. During this long period, Indians constituted the blood and the life of the new colony, as Arthur Reis aptly said.

Without them the region would have been paralysed. It was they who paddled the canoes up and downstream, who hunted in the woods and fished in the river, who planted the land, who guided the expeditions, and who transpassed rapids up and down. They could sense the proximity of danger in the forest and tell how to escape from it. They knew the flora and fauna and how to use them. Finally, it was they who started the first primitive communities-opening streets and alleys, building houses, and helping the merchants to barter with uncivilized tribes.<sup>22</sup>

Among the explorers and settlers of Amazonia in the early period, three kinds of people can be distinguished. The missionaries occupied an important role. They were Jesuits and Carmelites mainly. They brought Indians to their missions, congregated them in small villages and hamlets, taught their children in schools, and encouraged agriculture.

Another significant figure in the occupation of the Valley were the sertanistas.<sup>23</sup> They explored remote and unknown regions in the hinterland during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Through their actions Portugal could claim later on the right to the Amazon. The Juridic principle of uti-possidetis<sup>24</sup> rests on their deeds. The slave traders, who were also peddlers, were the third of these early arrivals. They carried on the tropas de resgate, hunting Indians in order to sell them as slaves to the sugar plantations of Pernambuco or into domestic service in Manaus, Belen, and Maranhao.

Portugal, which ruled the country until 1822 developed the policy in the Amazon Valley. Portuguese were the main authors of frontier expansion toward the hinterland, penetrating the river up to Tabatinga, a distance of over two thousand miles. They stood against the Spanish, the Dutch, the French, and the British. Most of the present-day Brazilian frontier in the Amazon was due to their work. Besides the Portuguese themselves very few Europeans settled in Amazonia before the latter part of the nineteenth century.

The above are the main figures of the dramatic days of hardship in the first two centuries of Upper Amazon settlement. The year of 1877 marked a turning point in the history of the Valley, in its occupants, and in its economic destiny. Rubber began to be exported in important quantities about 1870. Prices rose attracting a stream of immigrants from several sections of the country. However, the chief States from which they came were Ceara,<sup>25</sup> Parahiba, Rio Grande do Norte, and Pernambuco. The flow of immigrants expanded vastly in 1877. Starting that year, all of the Northeastern States were subjected to a protracted and dreary famine due to one of the worst droughts of their history. Thousands and thousands of families kept moving year by year into Amazonia in search of the fabulous riches that the sky-high price of the rubber promised. From 1677 to 1900 these migrants numbered more than 150,000.<sup>26</sup>

The pattern of exploitation of the land, for the first time, changed markedly. The cearense (contrary to the caboclo who always insisted in living in the Low Amazon, fishing and cultivating land periodically flooded) went further, settling in the headwaters of the rivers Madeira, Purus, Acre, and Jurua, where the best quality of rubber was found. They possessed a different kind of culture and personality. In contrast to the caboclo who was generally unambitious and slow in speech and action, the cearenses were quick, light footed, ambitious, and talkative. Thus, they were bound to be the main figures of the rubber boom.

This boom inaugurated a new phase in the history of the Valley. The growth of the population of the State of Amazonas was marked. It was 57,610 in 1872; 147,915 in 1890; 249,576 in 1900; 363,166 in 1920; and finally 438,008 in 1940. This represents an eight-fold increase in less than seventy years.

During the boom days the foreigner became important for the first time: Englishmen, Germans, Americans, Frenchmen, Syrians, and Portuguese concentrated in Manaus and Belem.

Two centuries lay back of this rapid recent expansion. Through the whole history the human factor was as important as the geographical, political, and economic forces.

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1. Manaus was named after the Manao, an Indian tribe that inhabited the region in the early days of the settlement.-  
volar

2. Aviamentos , regional expression for food stuff and other supplies for the interior. - [voltar](#)
3. Montaria, a one piece wood canoe, very light and easy going. - [voltar](#)
4. Caboclo, a mestizo of Indian and white who lives in the riverside. - [voltar](#)
5. Enchente, high-water "season". Vasante, low-water "season". - [voltar](#)
6. Furos, paranás: short-cuts between two rivers, channels having water only during the rainy season. - [voltar](#)
7. Samuel Benchimol, Cearense na Amazonia, Rio 1946, p. 41. - [voltar](#)
8. It is customary to call the Amazon river from the mouth of the Rio Negro up to Tabatinga as Solimões River. From the mouth of Rio Negro down to Belem it is named Baixo-Amazonas, Low-Amazon. The Peruvians refer to their section as the Marañon. - [voltar](#)
9. Herndon, W. L. Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon, p.277, vol I - [voltar](#)
10. Humboldt, Alexander, Viaje a los Regiones Equinociales del Nuevo Continente, hecho en 1799/1804. Vol IV p. 247 - [voltar](#)
11. Recently Avelino Oliveria and Othon Leonardos, classified the soil of Manaus under the heading Formação Manaus to characterize a peculiar kind of sand, clay and rock found in the neighborhood of the city. He defined it, "Formação terciária, pliocenica, apresentando-se em forma de um arenite de textura media, cimento caolinico, branco geralmente manchado de vermelho, com impregnações de oxido de ferro." Cf. Geologia de Brasil, p. 652. - [voltar](#)
12. Herndon, op. cit., P. 273. - [voltar](#)
13. Humboldt, op. cit., p. 254. - [voltar](#)
14. Tropas de resgate: literally, slavery troops. They were expeditions organized to hunt the Indians with the purpose of enslaving them. - [voltar](#)
15. Humboldt, op. cit., p. 254 Vol IV. - [voltar](#)
16. Raleigh, Walter, in Humboldt, op.cit., P. 575. - [voltar](#)
17. Ibid., p. 590. - [voltar](#)

18. Tavares Bastos, Valle do Amazonas, p. 214. - [voltar](#)
19. Bertino de Miranda, A Cidade de Manaus, pp. 7-10. - [voltar](#)
20. Araujo Amazonas, Diccionario Topographico do Alto Amazonas, in Agnelo Bittencourt, op.cit., p. 151. - [voltar](#)
21. Agnelo Bittencourt, Chorographia do Estado do Amazonas, p. 151. - [voltar](#)
22. Arthur Reis, O Processo Historico da Economia Amazonense, p. 10. - [voltar](#)
23. Sertanista, explorer of the backland or sertão. In São Paulo he was called bandeirante. - [voltar](#)
24. Right based upon the first occupation and possession of the land. - [voltar](#)
25. The people of Amazonia call all of them Cearense, a patronimic for the native of the state of Ceara. - [voltar](#)
26. The outstanding episode of this great movement was the occupation of the Acre, then under the rather vague sovereignty of Bolivia. After a war with Bolivia the Acre, by the Treaty of Petropolis (1903) became a Brazilian Territory. - [voltar](#)

## CHAPTER II

### THE URBAN EVOLUTION OF MANAOS

#### A. Reason for the founding of the Forte de São José do Rio Negro.

The first Portuguese to see the Rio Negro was Pedro Teixeira who commanded an expedition up to Quito in 1639.<sup>1</sup> Later on in 1657, Bento Maciel Parente brought with him two missionaries, five soldiers, and about three-hundred Indians, settling them near the Taruma River. This expedition was followed by others so that the Rio Negro became a favorite place for the slave-traders and the great source of Indian manpower for the Grao-Para market.

Many of these Indians were holding Dutch armament when they were captured. Missionaries and chieftains of these expeditions warned the Portuguese authorities in Belem do Para about the incidents. These reports led to the suspicion that the Dutch were already settled in the Orinoco and in the upper-Rio Negro. It was later discovered that the Dutch had succeeded in forming an alliance with the powerful and bellicose tribe of Caribe.<sup>2</sup>

In 1668 the Governor of the Capitania do Grão Pará, Coêlho de Carvalho, sent Pedro Da Costa Favela to investigate the Dutch Peril in the Rio Negro. This audacious sertanista was well-known for his barbarousness and his thorough knowledge of the jungle. When Favela came back he vividly impressed the Governor

Carvalho with his account of the Dutch in the Rio Negro and also reported the Spanish missions already settled in the Solimoes River.

In the following year, the Governor sent another expedition to the Negro, this time commanded by Francisco da Mota Falcao, specialist in construction of Forts. His main objective was to fortify the mouth of the Rio Negro in order to curb Dutch and Spanish infiltration. Falcão chose a hill between two creeks, three leagues up to the confluence of the Negro with the Amazon. There, with the help of his son, Manoel da Mota Siqueira, he built a Fort of stone and brick, of quadrangular shape, furnished with four pieces of ordnance: two of brass, caliber number one, and two of iron, caliber number three.<sup>3</sup> This strong-place was christened then Casa Forte de São Jose do Rio Negro, Governor Berredo in a letter to the King of Portugal hailed the Fort as constructed "for the better safety of His Majesty from his enemies" which he felt would "prevent great damage in our negotiations with the foreigners."<sup>4</sup>

The Fort was thus the first landmark in the Rio Negro. Around it the missionaries gathered the Indians of the neighborhood. Most of these violently opposed the missionaries' action. The savage Mura was a constant threat to the safety of the small hamlet. A few soldiers brought from Para were not enough to prevent S. Jose from being attacked. In those days nobody would cross the river or go beyond the limits of the strong-place. Sergeant Guilherme Valente of the Fort, however, venturing up-

river to Uaranacua and Cabory, succeeded in gaining the sympathy of and an alliance with the Indians Caboriocenas, Carahiahis, and Manao by marrying the daughter of the principal tuchaua<sup>5</sup> of the powerful nation of Manao. This alliance brought peace and tranquility to the Fort for awhile.

However, the Fort failed to curb the infiltration of the Dutch who came down from Guianas and Surinan to Rio Branco to trade with the Indians of the Rio Negro. A dispatch from Governor Berredo, dated 1719, informed the Ultramarine Council at Lisbon that a "large convoy of Dutch commodities was trafficking with our Indians of the nation of the Manaos in the headwaters of the Rio Negro."<sup>6</sup>

Its site was inadequate and its artillery insufficient. Governor Berredo then proposed to the King that the Fort be moved to Jauapery, a "more strategic place to watch the Dutch since it was furnished with at least twenty pieces of ordnance." The Ultramarine Council approved the suggestion in 1720 but no further step was taken. Ineffective as it was, the Fort continued to exist in the same old place, garrisoned by only a score of soldiers. It was finally disarmed in 1783 and its artillery was moved up to Barcelos, the capital of the Capitania at that time.<sup>7</sup>

## **B. Early Colonial Growth.**

After the missionaries arrived in 1695, the hamlet around the Forte do São Jose began to

grow. Indians, Barés and Passés from the Japurá River; Banibas from Içana and Ixie; Manaos, Merequenas, Aroaquis, and Jurís from the Rio Negro and Solimões were gathered together near the Casa Forte by the Carmelite missionaries and sertanistas. Manoel Dias, a former criminal, brought two-hundred of them who seem to have been the main contribution to the original settlement. The missionaries built a small church of wood, clay and thatch which they named for Nossa Senhora da Conceição, who has remained the patron saint of the community to date.

Francisco Xavier Ribeiro, who visited the place in 1778, tabulated the first census: 228 Indians, 34 whites, and two slaves.<sup>8</sup> Growth was very slow. Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira eight years later found almost the same number of people.

Life was not easy in those colonial days. From 1720 to 1727 the people of the neighborhood and the garrison of the Fort were constantly frightened by a determined uprising of the powerful Manao against sertanistas and missionaries who ventured into their territory. They refused to barter with the colonists and did not submit to the catechesis of the Carmelites. Under the leadership of the famous Ajuricaba or Iurikawa they succeeded in uniting many of the tribes of the Rio Negro into a sort of confederation against the Portuguese.<sup>9</sup>

With the growth of the settlement, the place needed a name. The people started to call it "Logar da Barra."<sup>10</sup> While it had no

official sanction this name gained recognition and was used for almost one century.

The physical aspect of Barra was not very pleasant according to Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira who visited there in 1786. The houses numbered about 45, all of them thatched; and of these 36 were inhabited by Indians. The best homes belonged to the Vicar and to the Commander of the Fort.<sup>11</sup> Despite the poor fertility of the soil, the Indians in the neighborhood were engaged in raising manioc, tobacco, cocoa, cotton, coffee, and maize. In the year 1787 they cropped eight arrobas of coffee, 76 alqueires of maize, and 322 alqueires of manioc flour.<sup>12</sup> The livestock numbered 21 head of cattle, owned by five residents. Rodrigues Ferreira at that time held a pessimistic view of the future of Barra. Poorly located, its settlers unable to police the river against the contrabandists of the frontier, the colony was without economic basis for further development, according to his report.<sup>13</sup>

The future of the village appeared dark indeed when it did not succeed in becoming the capital of the Capitania<sup>14</sup> de São José do Rio Negro, which was created by the Royal Act of March 3, 1755. Although this Act chose São José do Javary, Governor Mendonca Furtado decided that the capital should be located in Mariua, in the upper-Rio Negro, far away from Barra. Thirty-six years later, however, Governor Lobo D'Almada inaugurated his administration in Barra which thereupon became the head of the Capitania. This Governor made very considerable improvements in the village.

He built a governor palace, a hospital, a barrack for the garrison, and a jail. He created some industries: a pottery factory, a cotton mill, a hammock factory, a wax candle factory, and a bakery.<sup>15</sup>

The economic situation of the Capitania in general and of Barra in particular became prosperous.<sup>16</sup> D'Almada's fame as a good administrator grew so much that the Governor General of Grao Para, D. Francisco de Souza Coutinho, envious of his accomplishments, suggested to Lisbon that the capital be changed to Mariua, the former rival capital. The move was ordered by the Royal Act of August 2, 1798. This Act was a real misfortune to growing Barra.

Without doubt Barra was a better location for the political capital of the Capitania. Pereira Caldas in a letter to the Conde dos Arcos advocated the return of the government there for several reasons.

"It is situated near the confluence of the Solimões, with the Negro; it could face an attack of the Spaniards from the Solimões down to the Low-Amazon, which would eventually cut communication with the Negro and perhaps open the way to Matto Grosso through the Madeira; provisions are more abundant and easy to get; it offers more facility for transportation to the whole Capitania and Low as well as to Upper-Amazon.<sup>17</sup>

Hearing all of these good reasons and urged by Colonel José Simões de Carvalho, the Ultramarine Council at Lisbon in 1808 agreed to return the political capital to Barra. But

even then, it was not incorporated as a community.

More than one hundred years had passed and Barra still did not show very much progress. In the first decade of the nineteenth century a new Church was built, devoted to Nossa Senhora dos Remedios, and a new avenue was opened during the administration of Joaquim do Paçó. The whole place was comprised of not more than two-hundred houses, nearly all of which were destroyed by fire in 1821.<sup>18</sup>

In the decades of the 1820's and 1830's, Barra was a center of political events. The news of the Independence of Brazil arrived in Barra on November 9, 1823 and on that same day the people voted to adhere to the Brazilian Empire. However, the political status of the Capitania remained the same, that is, subjected to what was now the Province (instead of Capitania) of the Grao Para. This was done contrary to the Constitution of 1823 which had provided for provincial status.

Logar da Barra in 1830 had a population of 1,188 inhabitants, but it was still unincorporated. Without an Audience Chamber, the people of Barra had to go to Serpa, one hundred miles downstream, to make their claims. Barra was almost a suburb of Serpa, said Artur Reis.<sup>19</sup> Finally in 1832 Logar da Barra was raised to the status of town with the name of Villa de Manaos and the first election of aldermen was held on December 7, 1833. In this decade Manaos was also the theatre of the bloody revolution of the

Cabanos.<sup>20</sup> Its growth was checked by disorder and the loss of lives and property

### C. Manaus' Landscape One Hundred Years Ago.

By 1847 Manaus had only eleven streets and one square. The names of the streets were known by the names of their most important resident. There were 232 houses altogether, thatched houses in the majority of cases. The inhabited area did not go beyond the Bairro dos Remedios to the east, S. Vicente to the west, and the present Praca da Saudade to the north. It was hilly, full of ups and downs and creeks. During the months of high-water of the Rio Negro these creeks flooded the town and divided it into several isthmuses. The sanitary aspect was not bad, but the Hospital, located in São Vicente, was in deplorable condition.<sup>21</sup>

Lewis Herndon who explored the Valley of the Amazon under the direction of the United States Navy Department at that time gives the following description of Manaus:

The town of Barra is built on elevated and broken ground. It is intersected by two or three ravines, containing more or less water according to the state of the river, which are passed on tolerably constructed wooden bridges. The houses are generally of one story, though there are three or four of two, built of wood and adobe, and roofed with tiles. The floors are also of tiles, and the walls are plastered with the colored earth which abounds on the banks of the Amazon. Every room has several hooks driven into the walls, for the purpose of hanging hammocks. People find it more comfortable, on account of the heat to sleep in hammocks. There are few mosquitoes, these insects always avoiding black water.

Provisions were very scarce; the supply of flour gave out so that for some time there was no bread in the city; and beef was killed but once a fortnight. But there are very fine fish taken about Barra.

The population of Barra according to official returns gave 3,614 free persons, 234 slaves; the number of marriages, one hundred and fifteen; births, two hundred and fifty; and deaths, twenty-five.

There are three or four large and commodious two-story houses that rent for two hundred and fifty dollars a year. The ordinary house of one story rents for fifty dollars. The town taxes are ten percent on the rent of the house; a dollar a year for a slave and three dollars a year for a horse.

I have no hesitation in saying that I believe in fifty years Rio de Janeiro, without losing a title to her wealth and greatness, will be but a village to Para, and Para will be what New Orleans would long ago have been but for the activity of New York and her own fatal climate, the greatest city of the New World. Santarem will be Saint Louis and Barra, Cincinnati.<sup>22</sup>

#### **D. Cidade de Manaus.**

Before becoming Cidade de Manaus by the Act. n. 68 dated September 4, 1856, the settlement was called Cidade da Barra in 1848, Villa de Manaus in 1833, and Logar da Barra since the beginning. This name changing seems to be characteristic of the other early rival towns along the Negro and the Amazon. Mariuá changed its name to Barcelos; Serpa to Itacoatiara; Egga to Teffé; Luzéia to Maués; Vila Nova da Rainha to Parintins. In most

cases the change meant the restoration of the old Indian names.<sup>23</sup>

After 1850, Manaus was the capital of the Province of the Amazonas which was created in that year. This status gave to it a chance to grow more rapidly than it had during the past. A.C. Tavares Bastos who visited It in 1865 remarked that "the city grows every day." It would be interesting to analyze the composition of the Manaus' population at that time. The following table presents the data as to color, sex, marital status, freedom status, and occupation: ano 1865.

<u>Color</u>	<u>Number</u>
<i>Native Whites</i>	676
<i>Foreign Born Whites</i>	168
<i>Mulatoes and Mestizes</i>	480
<i>Negroes</i>	56
<i>Indians</i>	<u>700</u>
	2080

<u>Sex</u>	
<i>Men</i>	1,084
<i>Women</i>	<u>996</u>
	2080

<u>Color</u>	<u>Number</u>
<i>Single</i>	1,673

<u>Color</u>	<u>Number</u>
Married	338
Widowed	<u>69</u>
	2080

<u>Freedom Status</u>	<u>Number</u>
Freemen	1,923
Slaves	<u>157</u>
	2080

<u>Occupation</u>	
Soldiers	256
Servants	344
Craftamen	242
"Agregados" <sup>24</sup>	238
Government clerks	126
Merchants' clerks	88
Merchants	76
Not-declared occupation	<u>700</u>
	2080 <sup>25</sup>

**E. The First Impetus: The Introduction of the Steam Engine Ship.**

Up to 1853 navigation between Belem and Manaus and between Manaus and other river towns and villages of the Madeira, Purus and Solimoes Rivers, was carried on by small boats, caravels, sailing vessels, and canoes. They spent on the average between Belem and Manaus 60 days upstream and 30 days downstream. One startling record was made by the sailboat, "Vingador", which accomplished the journey upstream in 11 days.<sup>26</sup> Fifty boats between fifteen and sixteen tons and two-thousand canoes, equipped with six thousand paddlers, were engaged in the transportation between the two cities at that time.<sup>27</sup>

The first Company to attempt steam ship navigation on the Amazon River was the "Companhia de Navegação e Comercio do Amazonas," incorporated in 1853 by the initiative of Irineu Evangelista de Sousa and Visconde de Mauá. This company started to operate in the same year. The first merchant steamship to navigate in the waters of the Amazon and the Negro River was the boat, "Marajo," which arrived at Manaus on January 11, 1853 spending 11 days in the route Belem-Manaos.<sup>28</sup> Later on another ship, "Rio Negro," went farther up to Nauta, Peru, spending on route 20 days up and 11 days downstream. In 1855 was inaugurated the first line to Rio Negro. Seven ships comprised the fleet.<sup>29</sup>

Another venture was started in 1867 by a Portuguese merchant, Alexandre de Paula Brito de Amorim, who incorporated the "Companhia Fluvial do Alto Amazonas" designed to serve in

the navigation between Manaus and the southern tributaries Madeira, Purus, and Jurua Rivers.

In 1866 the Amazon River was opened to the merchant marine of all the nations, as a result of the efforts of Tavares Bastos.

This measure was a great necessity for the increasing trade of Belem and Manaus and of great aid to the bordering Republics of Peru, Bolivia and Venezuela. To Manaus it gave a chance for direct communication with the outside world. So, in 1872 a new company was incorporated in London, "The Amazon River Steam Navigation Company Ltd.," which started operations immediately. Its ships numbered 21 in the year 1877 and were later on augmented to thirty.

The decade of the 1870's continued the expansion of navigation on the Amazon and Negro. Brito Amorim, who previously incorporated the "Fluvial," succeeded again in 1874 in organizing the "Liverpool and Amazon Royal Mail Steam Ship Company Ltd." Manaus now was visited by ocean-going vessels which carried on the trade between its port and those of Europe, mainly Lisbon, Liverpool, and Hamburg. In subsequent years the "Red Cross Line" and the "Booth Steam Ship Company Ltd.," both subsidized by the provincial government, started to operate other lines between Europe and Manaus. "Lampport Holt Line Co." and more recently still "Moore McCormick," began regular transportation between United States and Manaus.<sup>30</sup> The rates of passage and freight were excessive, complained Tavares Bastos. A first-class passage between Belem and Manaus

cost about 100\$000.<sup>31</sup> A case of bottles of cachaça,<sup>32</sup> which was worth 4\$000, paid 1\$200 and an aroba of rice paid \$300.<sup>33</sup> But this did not matter too much because as soon as "a trader makes one trip in a steamer he begins to set some value upon time and forsakes his three-month mode of getting up steam for three or four days's trip."<sup>34</sup>

The introduction of the steamship in the Amazon Valley was a tremendous stimulus to Manaus. It expanded trade and gave the city the opportunity to become the transportation center. Even at the outset Mr. Nesbitt could see the great impetus the new means of transportation was bringing to the region. Writing to Fletcher in 1857, he said:

The business of the steamers is constantly on the increase; and the industrious inhabitants of the villages now can collect their seringa, Brazil nuts, sarsaparilha, cacao, etc, and send them down to Para by the steamer, and, on her return-trip receive their money. This is creating new artificial wants, and, of course, making the people exercise more industry for the purpose of supplying their newly awakened demand.

Neither are the advantages of steam confined to the business-relation of life; but there is evidently an increasing desire on the part of the great mass of the people to learn more of the outside barbarians. These steamers certainly have done wonders in the last four years toward revolutionizing the whole business of the Amazon Valley.<sup>35</sup>

## **F. The Second Impetus: The Harbor.**

The steamship created new needs as well as new opportunities. As Manaus toward the close of the nineteenth century became an important transportation center, equipping its port adequately was urgent. Foreign ocean-going vessels from the United States and Europe required better harbor facilities. Import and export houses demanded better warehousing.

A British Company, The Manaus Harbor Company, Ltd., was incorporated in London for the purpose of constructing the port of Manaus. A special engineering problem was posed by the great difference between the high and the low-water level of the Rio Negro. To meet this exigency, a great floating dock and a wharf were built. Nine warehouses with an area of 14,450 m<sup>2</sup> provided sufficient space to store the imported merchandise and to handle the exports.

The new harbor began operating in 1903. The following figures give an idea of the expansion it made possible. The year before the improved facilities were completed 482 vessels entered the port, 142 foreign and 342 coastwise and inland. Eight years later, during the peak of rubber production, shipping reached 1,400 vessels. In 1941 the port registered 1,565 ship entrances and 2,464 exits which carried 143,461,243 kilos of imports and 64,039,367 of exports.<sup>36</sup>



Figure 4. The river, the harbor, and the steamship [← voltar](#)

Figure 4 presents some pictures of the river, the steamship, and the harbor all so important to the city's growth. The river had been there large and deep since time immemorial. The steamship and the harbor provided the technological means for making Manaus the transportation center and the metropolis of the Upper-Amazon. The harbor especially gave it a great advantage over Itacoatiara and other riverine rival towns.

### **G. The Third Impetus: The "Cearense"-Immigrant and the Foreigner.**

In the decade of the 1860's, the population of Manaus had reached a little more than two thousand; that of the whole Province, 46,187.

It was still composed of the same kind of people as it had been since the earliest colonial days: soldiers, missionaries, clerks, slaves, some merchants. Most of them were pure Indians, and mestizos, a fair number of Portuguese, and a few Negroes and mulattoes.

The following decade of the 1870's, as we have already indicated, brought to the Amazon Valley thousands and thousands of new people. After 1877 this rush reached its largest proportions. The drought in the State of Ceará and the booming rubber in the Amazon re-enforced each other. In the year of 1877-1878 the migrants amounted to 19,910, and by 1900 they totalled 158,126.<sup>37</sup>

Although the majority of this human contingent was destined for the interior of the Valley Acre, Madeira, Purus, etc. many remained in Manaus as small traders, craftsmen, stevedors, soldiers, clerks, and even beggars. Some frustrated in their quest for wealth in the forests; others, more fortunate, moneyed by the spectacular rise in the price of rubber; still others, sick with malaria they contracted in the jungle returned to settle in the city.

These people, named "Cearenses" as a whole no matter what their State of origin were racially and culturally different from the mestizo or caboclo of Manaus and of the interior. They were mainly cowboys and tillers of the soil a rough human type accustomed to a hard life in a treacherous climate that periodically brought severe droughts. Their ancestry was predominantly Portuguese with some Indian and Dutch admixture.

Characteristically they were alert, talkative, quick of action, ambitious and venturesome. They were the pioneers of the rubber rush and today form the main contingent in the population of the Amazon and Manaus.

After the depression of 1914, which bankrupted the Amazon economy, most of the people deserted the jungle and came downstream to Manaus. Full of diseases, mainly beri-beri and malaria, they contributed to the high index of mortality in the city, becoming at times a burden to the community.<sup>8</sup> As a whole, however, their influence is recognized as good by the people of Manaus and today they are praised as heroes by every public speaker in the town.

World War II, bringing an economic revival to the city and to the interior, attracted thousands of new cearense who are now migrants following the same old path that their forefathers did.

The foreign population was relatively small up to 1865. At that time it numbered only 168, mainly people from Portugal and Peru. During the rubber boom, foreigners arrived in greater volume, drawn by the business prosperity. Englishmen set up the tram lines, sanitary systems, subfluvial telegraph lines, telephone lines, and the floating docks. Americans built the waterworks. Germans and Englishmen settled as big exporters, Portuguese established themselves as "aviadores", importers, and grocers. Syrians became mostly merchants, itinerant traders, peddlers,

"regatões". Italians specialized in the shoe business, but most of them were employed as unskilled workers, porters mainly. Greeks were contracted to work in the construction of the Madeira-Mamore railway at Porto Velho. Polish girls came to explore the prostitution business.

Foreign population, always a minority, declined markedly after the collapse of the rubber boom. In 1920 foreigners numbered 16,936 in the State and 8,848 in the city. The depression of the 1920's and 1930's obliged most of them to emigrate to their homelands or to move to more prosperous cities of Brazil or other countries. The 1940 Census reported only 6,796 foreigners in the State and 3,971 in Manaus.

#### **F. The Rubber Boom.**

It was in the year of 1743 that the Frenchman, Charles Marie de la Condamine, coming down the Amazon River noticed the use of rubber among the Indians of the Omagua tribe.<sup>39</sup> About a century later, in 1839, Charles Goodyear discovered the vulcanising process which makes possible to keep rubber from becoming sticky in hot weather and brittle in cold weather. The Amazon Valley then found itself in possession of a monopoly of this raw material demanded by an unlimited world market.<sup>40</sup> But not until after 1870 did rubber start to upset the whole economy of the Valley.

We have seen that in the pre-rubber days the life of the whole area was based upon an incipient agriculture mainly coffee, manioc, rice, tobacco, and cotton and upon the so-called "drogas do sertao", salsaparilha, piassava, copaiba, nuts, oleaginous seeds, and the like. With the appearance of rubber, this primitive agricultural riverine society, concentrated mainly in the Low-Amazon, whose principal figure was the native caboclo, suddenly collapsed. In its place rose another composed of adventurers, foreigners, cearense immigrants who went further into the Upper-Amazon and its southern tributaries.

Manaos, which had been recently incorporated as a city, soon began to feel the stimulus of the rubber trade. In 1867 commercial establishments in the town numbered 76; two years later, 212. By 1902 there were 62 firms devoted to the rubber trade alone. In the meantime two banks were incorporated. The Banco do Amazonas was founded in 1895 and the Banco Amazonense in 1904.<sup>41</sup> A little later the Banco Nacional Ultramarino, a Portuguese Bank, and the Bank of London and South America, Ltd., a British Bank, opened branches in Manaos. Most of the old important firms of present-day Manaos were established in this period. J.G. Araujo & Cia, founded in 1877, expanded its business all over the interior and in the city. It operated in retailing, wholesaling, furnishing supplies, manufacturing, importing, exporting and it controlled most of the rubber trade of the region and in the city. J.S. Amorim, J. Rufino, J. Soares, Portuguese; Jose Tadros,

Syrian; Paulo Levy, Jewish; Berringer, German; Higson, British all started business and prospered during this period. With the exception of the German, which was closed during the late war, they are still operating.

The Rubber was the lifeblood of the State and of Manaus. All activities were tied up with it. It was the basis of exports, transportation, and production. Most of the people abandoned the agricultural areas of the Low Amazon to adventure in the "seringais".<sup>42</sup> Manaus and the rest of the region became completely dependent on foodstuff and other products from the outside.

Imported goods appeared in great quantity and variety: olive oil and wines from Portugal and Spain; butter and cheese from Holland; liquor, champagne, jewelry, and millinery from France;<sup>43</sup> clothes from England; paintings from Italy. Even stone to macadamize the streets were imported from Portugal.

The new wealth brought new social life. Seringueiros and seringalistas used to come to Manaus almost every year after the rubber collection to recuperate their health in some hospital or to spend their money enjoying themselves. Many stories have been written about the good old days of rubber boom. Travellers, tourists, and writers who have visited Manaus since the boom, were responsible for most of what has been said about it in an exaggerated fashion. Stories of seringueiros lighting cigars with a five hundred milreis bill, buying the most expensive diamonds, taking baths in champagne,

or losing all their money in some gambling house are common in these writings.<sup>44</sup> They are either a product of imagination or were extremely rare extravaganzas of eccentrics. However, these stories are still told in Manaus, passing from one generation to another as a kind of Golden-Age folklore.

By 1890 the value of rubber was already high and the world demand for it continued to increase. Prices rose up to the dazzling height of 1910 when the merchants who "would have sold at seventy-five cents a pound and made a profit found themselves with a dollar and a half, two dollars, two dollars and a half, and then three dollars without knowing why; money came like dew from heaven."<sup>45</sup>

The following table gives a partial idea how spectacular the boom was. Later figures were omitted because they were unsuited for comparison due to foreign exchange fluctuation.

---

<u>Year</u>	<u>Exports (in kilos)</u>	<u>Value</u>
1892 . . . . .	11,775,843	38
1894 . . . . .	11,661,379	50
1896/7 . . . . .	12,385,768	70
1897/8 . . . . .	12,905,346	100
1903 . . . . .	16,509,677	110

---

The State revenue, whose main source was the export tax upon rubber<sup>47</sup>, had a seven-fold increase in less than ten years as shown by the following table:

---

<u>Year</u>	<u>Revenue</u>
1890 . . . . .	3.570:593\$123
1894 . . . . .	5.989:651\$429
1894 . . . . .	9.623:882\$645
1895 . . . . .	10.263:579\$955
1897/8 . . . . .	20.476:114\$687
1899 . . . . .	25.044:886\$887 (48)

---

Reporting these figures Eduardo Ribeiro, governor of the state during the period of 1892-1896, said in his address to the State Congress; "The revenue sources of this State are inexhaustible."<sup>49</sup>

He cleverly took advantage of this period of prosperity to reform Manaus completely - erecting new public buildings, opening and paving new avenues, and building bridges over the creeks and rivers that had handicapped the city's growth. It was during his administration also that the Opera House, a symbol of the good old days of the rubber boon, was constructed at a cost of 11.000:000\$000.<sup>50</sup>



Figure 05. The Opera House of Manaus ← [voltar](#)

In the Amazon Valley during the boom a very few unsuccessful attempts were made to develop rubber production under a systematic plan of cultivation. The common philosophy of the rubber businessman in those days was based on the belief that the monopoly of the production of the wild rubber would be maintained indefinitely. Hence, the high price of the product would continue; operators would make money out of it, and Manaus would keep its position as the world rubber capital. But Amazonian production was not meeting the world demand, even before the automobile. The pressure of price meant that increasing efforts were put forth to develop rubber elsewhere. Success finally crowned these foreign efforts and Amazonia lost its control of the market.

When Mr. Wickham in the year of 1876 obtained from the Amazon Valley the seeds for the foundation of rubber production in Nalasia, disaster was spelled for Manaos.<sup>51</sup> The following figures show how Manaos lost the title of the world rubber capital in favor of Singapore:<sup>52</sup>

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<u>Year</u>	<u>Wild Rubber</u> Percent of total	<u>Plantation Rubb</u> Percent of tota
1910	88,2	11,8
1912	69,3	30,7
1914	43,1	56,9
1918	22,4	77,6
1920	9,2	90,8

---

This meant depression, the collapse of the whole economic and business structure of the Valley and of Manaos. Rubber was the main reason for the settlement of the Upper-Amazon, the chief basis of the economic life of the region, the principal source of revenue for the State budget, and the trade stimulus which made it possible to maintain the business organization in Manaos. In 1914, the rubber price dropped from a peak of 17\$000 in 1910 to a minimum of 3\$000 a kile and went even lower

in the subsequent years. The following table illustrates the extent of the collapse:

---

<u>Year</u>	<u>Exports (in Kiles)</u>	<u>Value (in mil.</u>
1910	9,879,688	85,752:449\$.
1911	8,765,427	58.710:378\$.
1914	8,552,308	33.678:989\$.
1921	4,122,059	8.126:180\$.

---

When the depression hit very little commercial activity went on in Manaus. Many of the rubber workers, settled in the headwaters of Acre, Purús, Madeira, etc., drifted into Manaus when they could not return to their homelands. They lived in poor thatched-houses built by themselves on the outskirts of the town under pretty low living conditions. In the majority of cases their poverty was aggravated by the large number of children per family. Some of the well-settled commercial houses in Manaus went bankrupt and many businessmen became impoverished since they dealt on a credit basis. The British Consul at Belem do Para, in 1914, reported the effect of the depression as follows:

Travellers arriving here from the Acre report the acutest distress among the seringueiros. Many of those in the remoter parts are described as absolutely starving, and deaths from starvation have already been announced. This is largely due

to the impoverished condition of the rubber merchants, estate owners and aviadores, who have been unable to furnish the usual supplies. <sup>53</sup>

The growth of Manaus as a commercial and transportation center was suddenly checked. The depression was long, broken sometimes by periods of partial recovery or even by an artificial boom, during the year 1925 and World War II. The port of Manaus, in 1923 registered the entrance of only 964 ships while thirteen years earlier the figure had been 1,400. The urban area, which in the years 1913, reached the banks of the Igarape da Terceira Ponte, has remained the same to date. There has been an increase in the population of the whole city since the boom, but there has been an increase in poverty as well. Very few buildings and residences have been constructed. Travellers who visited the city twenty or thirty years after the boom found it as it was or even worse.

Vera Kelsey, who probably interviewed some of the people of the old generation when she was in Manaus, transmitted in her chapter about the city the feeling of nostalgia for the "good old days" which still exists:

Elderly widows to-day recall with tears and sighs those palmy days when their rubber-fortuned husbands ordered for them by cable toilettes and jewels from Paris for galas in the Theater; blooded horses and luxurious carriages for the daily promenade; porcelain and silver services, painting and furniture from Europe's finest shops for their homes. Those were the days when whole families traveled to Europe and sons of the rubber barons studied at the Universities of Portugal and England. <sup>54</sup>

This description reflects to some extent the longing for the days of the boom which stirred the townspeople after the depression came. Boom and depression have been much a part of the life of the city. The accompanying chart (Figure 6) is intended to show the ups and downs of the business cycle in Manaus as measured by rubber exports during a period of forty-five years.

Paraphrasing Eduardo Ribeiro, we could say that the rubber changed Manaus from a poor village into a modern city. Since the boom, it has had a hard struggle, but it has remained a city.

# EXPORTAÇÃO DA BORRACHA ESTADO DO AMAZONAS

1900/46

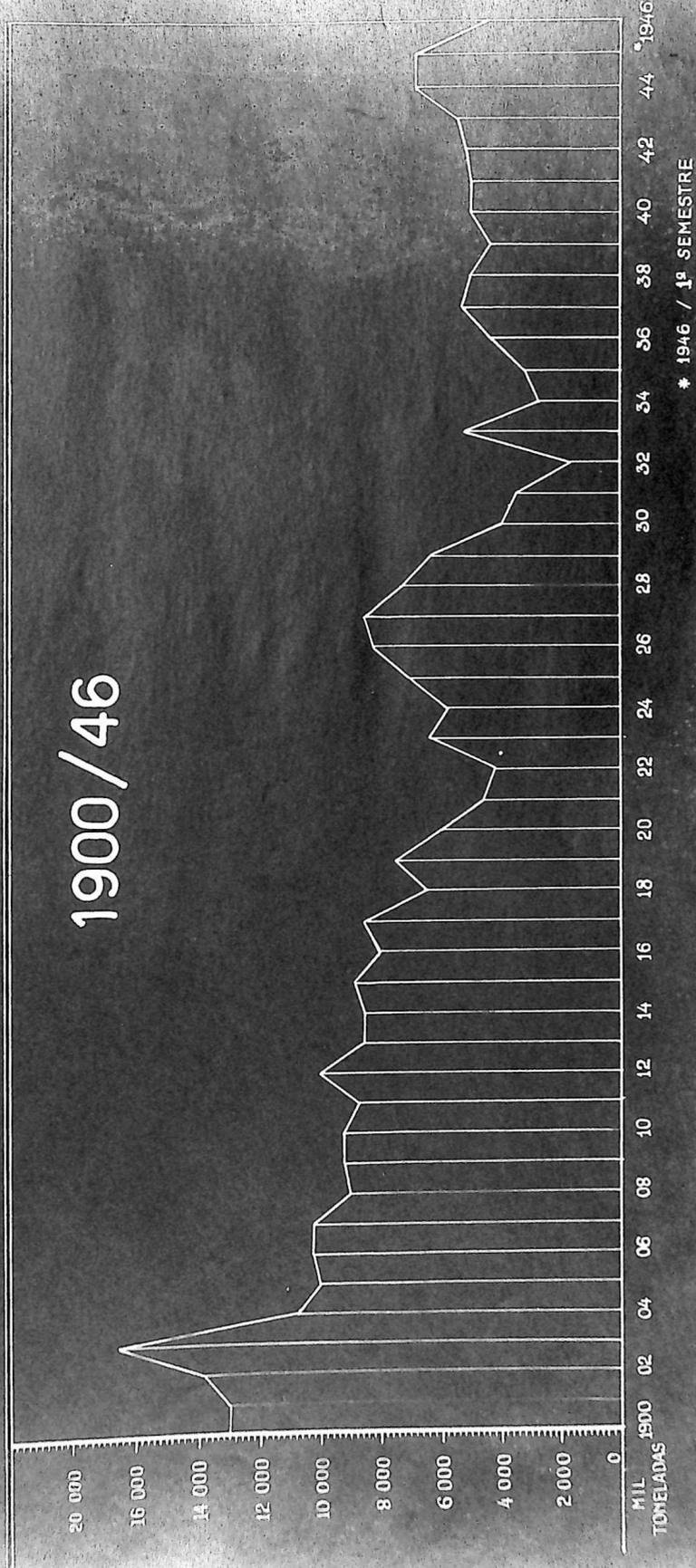


Figure 06. Chart of rubber business cycle ← voltar

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1. Before Pedro Teixeira we have the Carvejal's account: "Saturday, the eve of Holy Trinity, June 3, 1542, the Captain pursuing our voyage, we saw the mouth of another great river on the left, which emptied into the one which we were navigating (and) the water of which was as black as ink, and for this reason we gave it the name of Rio Negro which river flowed so abundantly and with such violence that for more than twenty leagues it formed a streak down through the water, the one (water) not mixing with the other." Discovery of the Amazon River, Carvajal's account, p. 204. (Underlining by the author.) - voltar
2. The Caribe tribe was the traditional enemy of the Indians of the nation of Manao, which dominated the Rio Negro. The Dutch armament found in the hands of the Indians of the Rio Negro was acquired by the Manao in war with the Caribe. Cf. A. Reis, Manaos e Outras Villas, pp. 29-31. - voltar
3. Artur Reis, Historia do Amazonas, pp. 47-48. The name of the constructor of the Fort and the right date of the founding is still a controversial point. Aprigio Menezes, Agnelo Bittencourt, and J.B. Faria e Souza gave the date of 1669 and credit to Mota Falcão, A. Reis has raised some doubts about it. - voltar
4. A. Reis, op.cit, p. 33. - voltar
5. Tuchaua, Indian name for a chief. - voltar
6. The presence of the Dutch in the Orinoco similarly was felt dangerous for the interest of Spain. Francisco de Meneses, governor of Trinidad, reported in 1694: par. "I cannot refrain from submitting for your majesty's royal consideration the paucity of men, arms, and ammunition that there is in this province for the purpose of being able to resist any attack that" - voltar
7. A. Reis, op. cit. p. 47. - voltar
8. Francisco X. Ribeiro de Sampaio, Appendice Ao Diario de Viagem, n. 3, A. Reis, op.cit., p. 43. - voltar
9. In 1727 Governor João da Maya Gama sent an expedition "to come to terms with these savages, especially the disloyal Ajuricaba, a haughty, insolent man, who styled himself governor of all these nations" (Maya Gama in a letter dated September 26, 172. In Edmundson, op.cit., p. 235. This

expedition succeeded in capturing Ajuricaba, thereby ending the resistance of the Manaos against the Portuguese. Ajuricaba, during his lifetime, was considered a hero among the Indians. His death was certainly dramatic according to the tradition still related in present day Manaos: par. "They bound him with chains and placed him aboard a caravel. As long as the ship sailed down the Rio Negro, Iurikawa remained quiet. But when he saw the dull gleam of the Amazon ahead and realized that they were carrying him away from his own land, he leaped overboard, chains and all, and died in his beloved black water." Vera Kelsey, Brazil in Capitals, pp. 156. - [voltar](#)

10. Logar da Barra, literally means "Place at the entrance of the harbor." Cf. Arthur Reis, Manaos e Outras Villas, p. 41. - [voltar](#)
11. Alex. Ferreira, Diario in A. Reis, op.cit., p. 47. - [voltar](#)
12. Arroba, an ancient measure of 32 pounds in Portugal. Alqueire, measure for dry goods. It is worth 13 litres. - [voltar](#)
13. Alex. Ferreira quoted by A. Reis, op.cit., p. 47. - [voltar](#)
14. Capitania, one of the colonial administrative divisions of Brazil. - [voltar](#)
15. A. Reis, Historia do Amazonas, p. 134. - [voltar](#)
16. Lobo D'Almada also introduced livestock in the valley of the Rio Branco, initiating an industry which was to have later a great expansion. Cf., Lobo D'Almada, Um Estadista Colonial, A. Reis. - [voltar](#)
17. Joaquim Nabuco, Documentos, in A. Reis, op. cit., p. 50. - [voltar](#)
18. A. Reis, op.cit., p. 63 - [voltar](#)
19. A. Reis quoting Conego Andre Fernandes de Sousa, in Manaos e Outras Villas, p. 58 - [voltar](#)
20. The Revolution of the Cabanes seemed to be an insurrection of peons, mestizos and Indians, against the Portuguese who held the legal authority. It lasted more than four years (1835-1839). - [voltar](#)
21. A. Reis, op. cit., pp. 65-72 - [voltar](#)
22. Herndom, op.cit., pp. 277 and 371. - [voltar](#)

23. "The towns of Brazil do not have the permanence of the old cities of Europe. The lack of permanence is particularly striking in town nomenclature. Changes in the names of towns are extremely frequent, and the result does not facilitate the acquirement of geographical knowledge of the country." Pierre Deffontaines, "Origin and Growth of the Brazilian Network of Towns," in Geographical Review, Vol. 28, 1939, pp. 370/399. - [voltar](#)
24. The meaning of agregados is obscured. The author suspects it means a kind of status of obligatory dependance. - [voltar](#)
25. Tavares Bastos, op.cit., p. 225. Araujo Amazonas and Herdon however gave to Manaus by this time a population of 3,850. - [voltar](#)
26. Ibid., p. 169 - [voltar](#)
27. Arthur Reis, O Processo Historico da Economica Amazonense, p. 58. - [voltar](#)
28. A. Reis, op.cit., p. 61 - [voltar](#)
29. "Rio Negro" and "Tapajos" were the packets from para to the Barra do Rio Negro, making a semi-monthly trip. The "Marajo" ran between the Barra and Nauta, in Peru, making a trip every two months. The "Monarcha" was running on the Rio Negro, from the barra to the mouth of the Rio Tapajos. The "Cameta" was a regular packet on the Tocantins, between the city of Para and the town of Cameta, making monthly trips." Mr. Nesbit's letter to Rev. Fletcher, Brasil and the Brazilians, p.576 - [voltar](#)
30. A. Reis, O Processo Historico, p. 61-62. Cf. also Agnello Bittencourt, Chorographia do Amazonas. - [voltar](#)
31. The old Brazilian currency was the mil reis (1\$000) which is worth now one cruzeiro (CR\$1,00) in the new unit of currency. One cruzeiro in present-day foreign exchange rate is worth approximately five American cents. Therefore 100\$000 ia figured now CR\$100,00 or five dollars. One hundred Years ago it would have been worth twenty or thirty dollars before the depreciation of the Brazilian currency. - [voltar](#)
32. Cachaça, regional brandy made from sugar cane. - [voltar](#)
33. Tavares Bastos, op.cit., p. 183. - [voltar](#)
34. Fletcher, op.cit., p. 576. - [voltar](#)
35. Fletcher, op.cit., p. 576. - [voltar](#)

36. Boletim do Trafego do Porto de Manaos, Manaos Harbour Co., Ltd., Manaos, 1940/1941. - [voltar](#)
37. Samuel Benchimol, op. cit., p. 38. These figures represent a rough estimate since there were no official records to keep up to date the entrance of the immigrants at that time. - [voltar](#)
38. "Les seringueiros atteints de fèvres pernicieuses aggravés par leur détestable hygiène qui vient mourrir dans la ville, augmentent de près de 20 p. 100 le tableau mortuaire de Manaos; celui-ci serait de 28,36 pour 1,000." Paul Walle, Voayage au Brésil, p.416. - [voltar](#)
39. "La resine appellée Cahuchudans les Pays de la Province de Quito voisins de la Mer, est aussi fort commun sur les bord du Maranon et sert aux usages." Charles Marie de La Comdamine, Relation abreegés d'un voyage fait dans l'interieur de l'Amérique Meridional, Paris, 1745, pp. 78-79. - [voltar](#)
40. Preston James, Latin America, p. 552. - [voltar](#)
41. A. Reis, O Processe Historico, p. 68. - [voltar](#)
42. Seringais, rubber camps. - [voltar](#)
43. Paul Walle who visited Manaos by that time gives a very interesting description of the shopping district of Manaos: par. "En dehors de ces grosses maison il existe à Manaos plusieurs magasins de modes et de nouveautes. On remarque dans les principales rues un certain nombre d'enseignes aux noms francais. Il semble que dans cette ville le commercant francais ce sont mieux acclimaté. Nous tenions autre fois une bien meillure place qu'aujourd'hui; surtout au point de vue de la vente des articles de Paris, jouets, étoffes de prix, modes, ligerie fine, bijouterie et tout particulièrement les vins, liqueurs et conserves. Depuis que les compagnies allemandes et anglaises possèdent de fait le monopole de la navigation sur le fleuveroi, los produits allemands, anglais, italiens et belges concurrent les notres, surtout pour les articles de Paris, la bijouterie fine et fausse, et un peu de etoffes, En ce qui concerne les modes, les vins, liqueurs et conserves, notre situation oat toujours bonne. La population on grand majorite sait apprecier la qualite de nos produits et le bon gout de notre fabrication." Au Bresil, Du Rio São Francisco L'Amazonie, p. 429. - [voltar](#)
44. "Under the star of rubber it was transformed into a city where for some thirty years flourished one of the most

- bizarre extravaganzas this planet has even known.", Vera Kelsey, op. cit., P. 153. par. "Manaos thought it would become a second Paris. The beat diamond market of the world was here". "A Metropolis of the Jungle," Travel, 1920, pp. 10-13. - [voltar](#)
45. L.E. Elliot, Brazil To-day and To-Morrow, p. 187. - [voltar](#)
46. A. Reis, op.cit., p. 85. - [voltar](#)
47. Since 1900 all the rubber produced in the State of Amazonas destined for the foreign market had to be dispatched through Manaos, according to a governmental Act dated of July 4, 1900. This Act gave to Manaos the monopoly of the export rubber business, avoiding thus the competition of the Belem do Para's exporters. - [voltar](#)
48. "Grace awx prodigieux rendement des droits d'exportation, L'Etat d'Amazonas occupe por l'importance de ses ressources budgetaires la troisieme place parmi les Etats confederées du Bresil.", Paul Walle, op. cit., p. 418 - [voltar](#)
49. Agnelo Bittencourt, op.cit., p. 291 - [voltar](#)
50. "The social life of this fantastic city centered around the beautiful Opera House, where the greatest prima donnas and tenors in the world sang to the opulent citizens of Manaos." From an article in Living Age, 1938, "The Ghost City of Manaos," p. 354. - [voltar](#)
51. "Two Englishmen killed Manaos. A Mr. Farris was sent out to Brazil by the Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew with instruction to smuggle out of Brazil, against the Law of the country, a number of rubber seedlings for experimental purposes. Farris succeeded in his mission when he evaded the vigilant Brazilian inspector by stuffing two crocodile skins with the precious seedlings; but the embryo rubber trees died shortly after arriving at Kew. Almost immediately the Director of Kew Garden commissioned another Briten, Henry Wickham, to make a new attempt. Wickham collected the seedlings and escaped the Argus-eyed Brazilians by placing the seedlings in the moist core of sone bales of wool (sic) which he shipped to London. In order to disarm suspicion, he had sent innocent bales of wool to England for some months before making his successful bid to break through the vigilant cordon of officials." The Living Age, Vol. 354, p. 354. - [voltar](#)
52. "It was a victory of the rational capitalism based on scientific methods of production and supported by cheap Asiatic labor over the primitive world riches. Thus the European spirit on the soil of Asia won the battle against

the former rubber continent and modern industry became emancipated from the Brazilian world supremacy in rubber." J.F. Normano, Brazil: A Study of Economic Types, pp. 37-38.  
- [voltar](#)

53. Charles Burley, North Brazil, p. 123. - [voltar](#)

54. Vera Kelsey, op.cit., p. 140 - [voltar](#)

CHAPTER III  
OVERVIEW OF PRESENT DAY MANAOS

**A. Population Analysis.**

Population has been referred to incidentally a number of times in previous discussions. Here we shall assemble the available figures. The data are neither very abundant nor very reliable, but they will suggest some of the main features of the demographic situation. It may be added that almost no systematic work has been done for Manaus in this field. This pioneer effort has meant taking figures as they could be found from many sources.

As has been indicated, most of the growth of the city has taken place during the last 75 years. In 1865 it was said to have had 16,655 inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> This figure is for Manaus Município<sup>2</sup> rather than the city itself. By 1940 the Município increased more than three times the 1872 figure. In the meantime the population for the whole State of Amazonas and Territory of Acre<sup>3</sup> rose to 519,776. The following table gives specific figures for Manaus compared with those for State and Territory:

---

*Manaos  
Município\**

*Amazon  
and Ac*

**Manaos      Index Amazor  
Município\* Number and Ac**

		<i>Index Number</i>		
1865. . . . .	16,655	-		40,4
1872. . . . .	29,334	100		57,6
1890. . . . .	39,720	132		147,9
1900. . . . .	50,300	171		249,7
1920. . . . .	75,704	258		455,5
1940. . . . .	106,399	362		517,7

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\* The first Federal Census taken in the year 1872 considered the Município as the territorial unit. The same unit was maintained in the following Censuses. There are no exact figures for the city itself in the previous census before 1940

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It is interesting to note in this table that growth of the population was first felt in Manaus, rather than in the State, beginning with the year 1872. This year as we have seen was a sharp turning point in the upward trend of population growth. By that time the inhabitants of Manaus comprised 50.9 per cent of the population of the whole Province. In the following decades the stream of immigrants to the interior was marked, so that in 1900 Manaus held only 20 per cent of the total population. Forty years later, the percentage

was almost the same, having dropped to 16.6 per cent in 1920.

The 1940 Census also revealed, for the first time history of the city a surplus of females over males in the population as the following table indicates:

---

<u>Year</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Male excess</u>
1972	16,846	12,488	4,358
1920	39,291	36,413	2,878
1940	52,823	53,576	753

---

As far as the State population is concerned, in contrast, the traditional situation of female scarcity still persists. This disequilibrium began in the earliest days of the rubber boom when cearense males used to come alone to work in the rubber camps. Nevertheless, in the tabulation for the years 1940 we can observe a declining excess of males in the State. For instance, the 1920 Census showed an excess of 29,238 males over females. By 1940 this preponderance dropped to 13,446. It may be that in the next Census of 1950, planned to be effective all over the Americas, this excess of males will rise again in view of the recent war-effort immigration during the 1941-1945 period.

Figure 7 shows graphically the age and sex composition of Manaus' population. This graph approximates the form of a pyramid, with the younger members forming the base and the older ones constituting the apex. The base of the pyramid is very wide and indicates a rapid natural increase of population due to a high birth rate.<sup>4</sup> The figures bring out also that 50 per cent of the total population in the city are aged between 0-19 years, 46 per cent between 20-59 years, and 3.9 per cent above sixty years old. The high proportion of the middle-age group is due in large part to the migration of young adults to the city during the last twenty years. The age group above sixty years is relatively small due to the above factor plus the short life expectancy in the city. However, this age-group has risen 1.0 per cent since the 1920 Census.

The general trend of female advantage as far as expectation of life is concerned is observable in our analysis. The following table shows the number of males compared with the females in the age groups above sixty years old, according to the 1920 and 1940 Censuses.

---

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>1920</u>				
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Fe</i>
60-69	670	696	1,366	1,414	.
70-79	182	237	419	395	

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>1920</u>			
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Males</i> <i>Fe</i>
80-89	60	69	129	83
90-99	16	27	43	11
100-	5	4	9	6
<i>Total</i>	<i>933</i>	<i>1,033</i>	<i>1,966</i>	<i>1,909</i>

The crude birth rate for Manaus is shown to be high by the fact that the population aged between 0-9 years amounts to more than 25 per cent of the total, according to the 1940 Census. The vital statistics records indicate the same thing in general, but they cannot be considered accurate. Most of the lower-class people who are supposed to have the highest birth rate, do not yet have the habit of registering their children. The results are that in two successive years, 1937 and 1938 the crude birth rate was 33 and 13 per thousand inhabitants respectively.

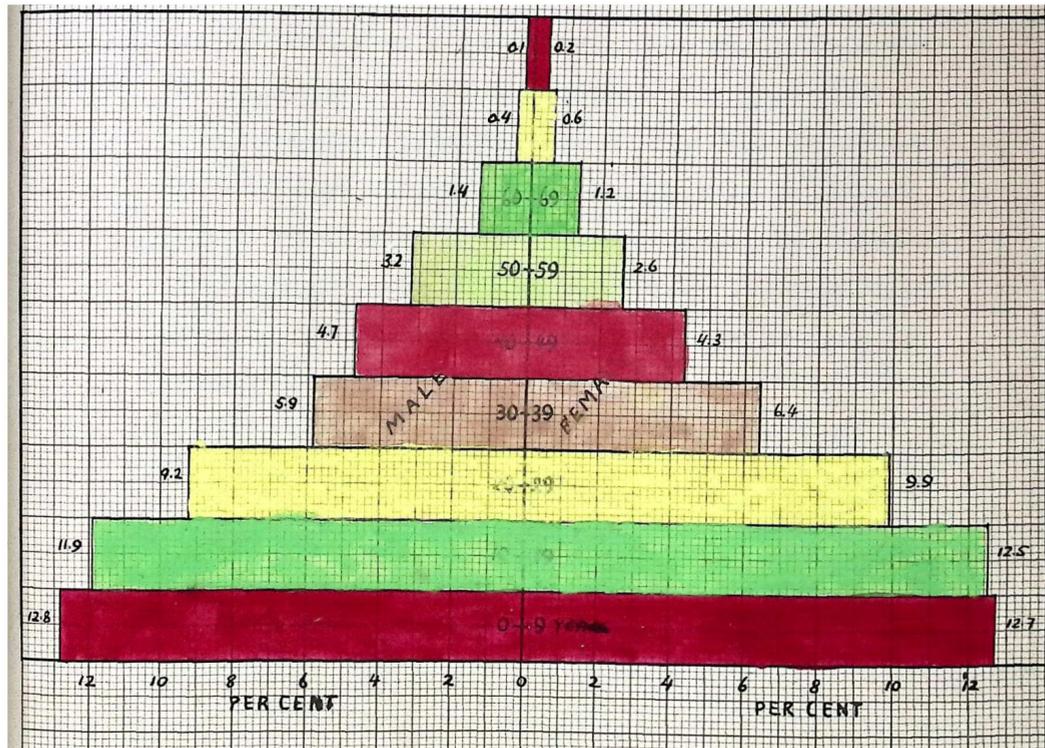


Figure 07. The Population Pyramid

As far as the mortality rate is concerned the figures are more adequate since registration of deaths has been legally obligatory for a long time. The infant mortality is quite variable. In 1937 it was 48 per thousand births while in the next year it rose to 138. The number of deaths in 1937 reached 1,704 which gave a crude death rate of 18 per thousand inhabitants. In 1938 these figures rose to 1,990 or 22 per thousand. The most common causes of death were malaria and tuberculosis. The accompanying table gives the number of deaths in Manaus, during the 1936-1939 period, classified according to the major diseases:<sup>5</sup>

<b>Cause</b>	<b>1936</b>	<b>1937</b>
<i>Tuberculosis</i>	294	257
<i>Malaria</i>	466	375
<i>Diarrhea and Enteritis</i>	105	169
<i>Influenza, Pneumonia and other diseases of the respiration system</i>	225	160
<i>Diseases of the Digestive system</i>	169	150
<i>Diseases of the circulatory system</i>	48	153
<i>Diseases of the urogenital sustem</i>	126	51
<i>Early Infancy and malformation</i>	77	100
<i>Leprosy</i>	67	57
<i>Other causes</i>	325	232
<i>Total</i>	1,902	1,704
<i>Death rate per thousand</i>	21.06	18.66

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Another analysis of the Manaus population shows that it is a melting-pot, which has been a characteristic of the city since the early colonial days. It began with only Portuguese

and Indians. By 1965 the mixed-blood population comprised 23 per cent of the total. In general they were the result of the amalgamation of the Whites with the Indians. Negroes by that time constituted only 2.7 per cent, Indians 33.6 per cent, and the Whites 40.79 per cent.

The 1872 Census, more accurate than the preceeding, shows mestigos as 68.8 per cent; mulattoes, 10.3 per cent; Negroes, 4.5 per cent; and Whites, 16.4 per cent.<sup>6</sup> The predominance of mestizos in Manaus' population at that time reflects relative absence of race discrimination or color prejudice in the city. The 1940 Census reports a rather marked increase in the White quota as seen in the following table:

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<u>Color</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White	38,585	36.25
Negro	2,732	2.6
Yellow	86	0.09
Dark (Mestizos and Mulattoes	64,824	60.9
Color (non-declared)	<u>172</u>	<u>0.16</u>
Total	106,399	100.00

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Source: Serviço Nacional de Recenseamento, courtesy of Prof. Carneiro Felipe, Chairman of the S.N.R.

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The foreign population is insignificant as compared with the native and has become decreasingly important in recent decades. It declined from 8,848 in 1920 to 3,971 in the last Census as a result of the depression.

The following table gives the distribution of the predominant nationalities in the city:

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<u>Nationality</u>	<u>Number</u>
<i>Portuguese</i>	<i>2,519</i>
<i>Spanish</i>	<i>281</i>
<i>Peruvian</i>	<i>257</i>
<i>Italian</i>	<i>241</i>
<i>Syrian</i>	<i>234</i>
<i>Colombian</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>Chinese and Japanese</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>All other foreigners</i>	<i><u>275</u></i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,971</i>

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Up to 1940 the Census did not provide specific data about the urban, suburban and rural population of Manaus. For this reason we have had to consider the Municipio as a whole, in order to make possible a comparison of data over the whole period.

The Municipio of Manaus comprises three districts: Airao, Careiro, and Manaus. The first two are mainly rural-farm and rural non-farm areas, the third is mainly urban and suburban. The following table gives specific figures for the Municipio's population according to these Districts and the distribution of the people by their general ecological environments:

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<i>Municipio and Districts</i>	<i>Total Number</i>	<i>Urban</i>	
		<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>MANAOS* . . . .</i>	<i>106,399</i>	<i>47,401</i>	<i>44.5</i>
<i>1. Manaus</i>	<i>75,765</i>	<i>47,055</i>	<i>62.1</i>
<i>2. Airão</i>	<i>2,685</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>3.4</i>
<i>3. Careiro</i>	<i>27,949</i>	<i>255</i>	<i>0.9</i>

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Source: 1940 Goernment Census Bureau. Courtesy of Prof. Carneiro Felipe.

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\* The Municipie de Manaus has an area of 53,574 Km2.

The occupational distribution of the population is given somewhat more adequately for 1940 than for earlier Censuses. The figures, however, are available only for the whole Municipio. In the city itself, of course, there are few of the first two categories. If they were omitted, the percentage in the more characteristically urban employments would be higher. The 1940 Census data are presented in the following table:

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<u>Occupation</u>	<u>1</u>
<i>Agriculture and allied occupations</i>	
<i>Extractive industries</i>	
<i>Manufacturing</i>	
<i>Trading</i>	
<i>Transportation and communication</i>	
<i>Social and Personal Services</i>	
<i>Public service</i>	
<i>Army, Police forces</i>	
<i>Domestic service, school Activities</i>	
<i>Inactives, occupation non-declared and others</i>	
<hr/>	
<i>Total</i>	
<hr/>	
<i>Population under 10 years old not classified</i>	
<hr/>	

## Occupation

1



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Source: Serviço Nacional do Recenseamento. Courtesy of Prof. Carneiro Felipe

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Even though the census materials on occupations are not strictly comparable between 1940 and earlier counts, still it is possible to observe one important change in the distribution of employed persons in the major occupations between 1920 and 1940. In the former year, 20.6 per cent of the inhabitants of the Município were earning their living from agriculture and allied occupations. By 1940 this figure dropped to 13.3 per cent. This is an indication of increasing urbanization. The following table shows the percentage of change during the period:

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>1920</u>
<i>Agriculture and allied occupation</i>	20.06
<i>Extractive, mining Industries and Manufacturing</i>	9.0
<i>Trading</i>	7.2

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>1920</u>
<i>Transportation and communication</i>	4.3
<i>Army, Police Forces</i>	1.4
<i>Public service</i>	2.1
<i>Professional service</i>	1.7
<i>Domestic service, students, inactives, non-declared occupations and others*</i>	53.7
	100.0

\* The 1920 Census did not separated students from the inactives, non-declared or without occupation. The 1940 Census data available se far separated Domestic service from inactives, non-declared, or without occupation, but retained students in the same class with domestic service. Hence, for the purpose of comparing the data of both Censuses we have grouped them together. Population under ten years old not computed.

## **B. Topographical Setting.**

Manaos forms a general rectangular pattern divided into sections by five small rivers or igarapes:<sup>7</sup> Igarapé da Cachoeira Grande, Igarapé de Manaos, Igarapé Bittencourt, Igarapé do Mestre Choice, and Igarapé da Cachoeirinha. The Igarapé da Cachoeira Grande and the Igarapé da Cachoeirinha limit the main urban area on the west and east respectively, separating the city from the working-class suburbs of S. Raimundo and Educandos or

Constantinopolis. The igarapes de Manaos, Bittencourt, and Do Mestre Chico are crossed by bridges at the points they are intersected by Avenida Sete de Setembro, the main west-east street of the town. These so-called igarapes are deeply affected by the fluctuations of the Rio Negro. During the months of highwater, i.e. from January to June, the Rio Negro raises the level of these igarapes and floods the margins. Then barges, ferry-boats and small ships can navigate the streams. The main direction of these creeks is north-south toward the Rio Negro into which they empty. The accompanying Map (Figure 8) shows how the layout of the Manaos' streets follows roughly the course of these igarapes. They are the main features affecting the city's plan.

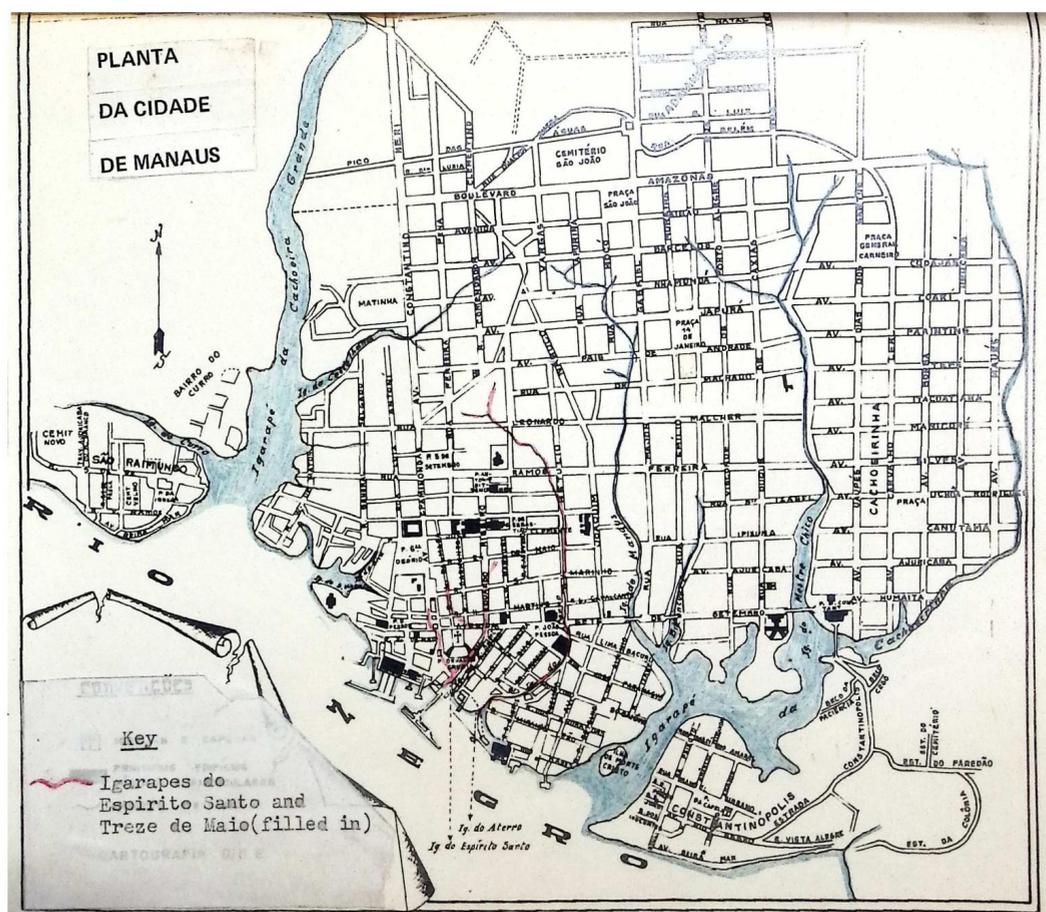


Figure 08. Layout of the streets of Manaus ← voltar

As we can see by this map, the city can be considered as forming three irregular rectangular blocks, longer than they are wide. The first block, where the downtown center is located, is wider than the others. One side strings along the water front of the Rio Negro for about two kilometers. The other side extends for approximately two and a half kilometers along the Igarape da Cachoeira Grande and Igarape de Manaus. The second block is limited by the Igarape de Manaus and Igarape do Mestre Chico, crossed in the middle by a smaller creek, Igarape de Bittencourt. It measures roughly half a kilometer along the Igarape da Cachoeirinha and two and a half kilometers along the margins of the Igarapé do Mestre Chico. The third rectangular block is bounded at one end by the Igarape da Cachoeirinha, where it has one kilometer of frontage. From here it extends northward between the Igarape do Mestre Chico and Igarape da Cachoeirinha. These three blocks are linked by the three bridges along Avenida Sete de Setembro. This avenue carries practically all of the transportation between the suburbs and the downtown center. If one takes the street-car, "Cachoeirinha-Circular," one can travel the whole city's perimeter in less than an hour. The total area, including the urban and the suburban areas, covers 5,449,250 square meters.

The accompanying map in Figure 9 is intended to show the historical growth of the city. The first area occupied was near the

water-front of the Rio Negro, from S. Vicente up to the mouth of the Igarape do Espirito Santo. In it was located the old Forte de São Jose do Rio Negro, near the actual Praca Nove de Novembro and Praca Dom Pedro II. It will be recalled that the village of Barra grew up around the Fort in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At that time the Igarapé do Espirito Santo, later on filled in, limited the small settlement on the west.

The next step in expansion was toward the former Igarape de Aterro, where today Avenida Treze de Maio runs. The town thus reached the Igarape de Manaos which limited the urban area up to 1898. In present-day Manaos this second area of



The street pattern of the district reflects the growing-to-gether of the nucleus of the early settlement and the somewhat later Cidade da Barra. The blocks are not uniform, although we can see some scattered patches of symmetrically arranged streets. It seems that the general pattern of the downtown streets was laid down around the triangular central plaza, or Praça da Matriz. Here the Cathedral was built on the hilly center of the plaza where it held topographical command over the adjacent streets, perhaps to show the spiritual command of religion upon the folk soul. Four streets branch out from each side of the plaza.



Figure 10. The Cathedral and the Matris Plaza ← [voltar](#)

From south to north the streets gain altitude beginning with 99 feet above the sea level at the water-front streets, around the harbor and the Matriz Plaza, they rise to 165 feet at the end of Avenida Eduardo Ribeiro, near the Opera House. They continue to ascend

up to approximately 330 feet at Villa Municipal or Adrianopolis.<sup>8</sup>

The irregular topography not only affected the form and direction of city growth, but has always created difficulties for intra-city transportation.

### C. Ecological Order.

The Main Urban Area. The forms of spatial distribution of people and institutions are not accidental. They are the result of definite social, economic, geographical, and psychological forces. These forces operate in Manaus, as they do in all cities, creating an essential orderliness of things. But the specific factors functioning in Manaus have been unique to some degree and, hence, have given rise to certain patterns that are distinctive.

The ecological arrangement in the early days was simple. Even in its simplicity, however, can be discerned one important distributional pattern that only in recent years is beginning to be modified. Alexandre Rodrigues Ferreira, who visited Barra in 1786 gives this description:<sup>9</sup>

The fortress is built in front of a small hamlet of Indians and some White residents. It is divided into two bairros along the boreal margin. In the first bairro there are more people, and it is divided into three rows of houses. In the first row I counted ten houses; in the second, I counted eleven; and the third, fourteen. The Church is situated in the middle of the first row between the residences of the Vicar and of the Commandant. To the White residents belong eight houses, of which there are four in the first row and four in

the second row. The beet houses are owned by the White residents Manoel Thome Gomes, Manoel Pinto Catalao, Ignacio Lindoza, and Magdalena Vasconcelos. The Indians live in thirty-six thatched houses of which only nineteen are well conserved.

The Whites had better houses and, it goes without saying, superior social status. They occupied the first two rows, nearest the fort and the church the major institutions. The Indians with poorer houses and lower status lived farther away from the core around which the community was built in row three of the first bairro<sup>10</sup> and in the second bairro.

As the settlement grew, this relationship persisted. Miscegenation tended to erase the line between conquering Whites and conquered Indians, but in terms of class the pattern kept on. The well-to-do, those with prestige, the upper-class resided near the center of Manaus. Persons of lower status lived farther out. This was the situation, not in Manaus alone, but in all Latin American cities until recent times.<sup>11</sup>

But before we take up the matter of where different kinds of people live, we shall examine some other aspects of ecology notable the distribution of business institutions which are increasingly the dominant institutions of the community.

The early business district was located near the Fort, the Governor's palace, and the first church in proximity to the former Praca da Republica (today Pedro II.) As the community expanded, the topography which had

limited the area of the original settlement was modified. Two igarapes were filled in and transformed into wide boulevards. The business district slowly moved toward these new streets, mainly Marechal Deodoro, Guilherme Moreira, and Avenida Eduardo Ribeiro. Here today are concentrated the alto comercio big business of Manaus

The need for more space and proximity of the harbor, ware-houses, tramcars, and other facilities stimulated this gradual shifting. Real estate in the new area became more and more valuable. Some residences in the locality were converted into commercial offices, and the former inhabitants moved away to pleasanter and more attractive places.

In the meantime, a secondary business district, performing a distinctive function in the trade, mushroomed around the Market Place which was situated along the water-front of the Rio Negro. This Market Place, as we can see by the picture in Figure 11, was always a meeting place for the native people, caboclos and mestizos, who came down from their nearby homes to sell their small crops of vegetables, fruits, manioc flour, charcoal, woodfuel, and the like and to buy in return clothes, books, medicines, etc. This sub-center is dominated by the Syrian traders. Not far from the Market they established their community.

In the vicinity of the main business section lies the shopping district. It converges, as the accompanying Map in Figure 13 shows, on the intersection of the Avenidas Eduardo Ribeiro and Sete de Setembro. This is the focal point for the intra-city

transportation system which experiences rush hours at eleven o'clock in the morning and at six in the afternoon. Here are found the retail merchandising shops, establishments that supply personal services, articles of food, and clothing: apothecary shops, bookstores, tailorshops, barbershops, jewelry stores, restaurants, and beauty parlors. This is also the central point for recreation and amusement: moving picture theatres, billiard parlors, bars, and cafes. Doctors and lawyers offices, hotels, cleaning and pressing establishments, printing and newspaper buildings, and taxi stands are found nearby. It is the nerve center, the spot where "better elements" meet and communicate, in evening promenading, in week-end sprees, and casual visits. Here goes on the town gossip and politicians' interminable confabulations.



Figure 11. Manaus Market Place ← voltar

Recently the central business district has been expanding due to the shortage of space and the real estate boom in the congested commercial zone. We can observe now some invasion of the adjacent residential streets by stores and offices.

One block from the central shopping section is found the "red-light district." It has taken over former businesses and residences whose inhabitants have moved elsewhere. As in the majority of the Latin American or Brazilian cities prostitution flourishes as a "necessray evil" in accord with the general attitude of the community. Recently the Police tried to shut down these houses, attempting to force the brothels into a suburban area. All the town newspapers fought the project and, as a consequence, the cluster remained in the downtown section.

Although the central business district carries on the preponderance of Manaus' wholesale and retail merchandising activities, satellite shopping centers are found at practically every street corner in the city. These street corners are a fairly typical example of the domination of the grocery establishments owned by Portuguese upon the residents of the area. In fact, there is a considerable degree of reciprocal dependance between the residents of a street and the Portuguese-owned neighborhood store. As most of the shopping is made under a deferred payment plan, often a middle-class family is kept very much tied to these satellite

commercial sub-centers. The picture below shows one of these Portuguese-owned groceries in a dominant position on a residential street.



Figure 12. A Street corner showing a Portuguese owned grocery ← voltar

In the early days of Manaos, there tended to be little specialization of land-use between business and residence. People often lived in or near to their business houses. Only as population increased and as a growing proportion of people were employed in establishments owned by others did a separation begin to grow up.

Even so, there was a traditional preference for residing near the center of the city. People often competed with business for the privilege of living there. This seems odd to one who is used to the flight to suburbs characteristic of contemporary United States cities. A little further examination of the

factors involved will make the traditional Manaus preference appear less strange.

Wealth, concentrated in the hands of the government and of the well-to-do foreign and native merchants, served to draw a distinctive line between the downtown center of the city and the suburbs. When improvements were made it was natural for them to be made in the area which the dominant class occupied. Streets were paved, tramcar lines were laid down, and telephone lines established. The central area became equipped with urban conveniences, which the outlying parts lacked. Anyone who could afford to do so chose to reside there. After many such choices, it was traditional.

During the rubber boom, as increased revenues became available, urban improvements were extended. The igarape do Espirito Santo and the igarape de Treze de Maio, which formerly ran



14. Still the improvements tended to be concentric and to be limited by the igarapé de Manaos.

Figure 14. The picture shows where the channel used to be Igarape do Espirito Santo which was filled in to make the Avenida Eduardo Ribeiro, leading into the center of the city. ← [voltar](#)

About 1900 a new step was taken. Avenida Sete de Setembro was made wide, straight, and well-paved from the oldest section to the most distant suburb, bridging two major and one minor igarapés.

These bridges are so important for the suburban and the city people that the igarapes they crossed over soon lost their own official toponymics to acquire, in the language of the man-in-the-street, the denomination of the numerical order of the bridges: First, Second, and Third Bridge Igarapés. More important, canoes lost their importance in transportation between suburbs and city. The geographical accident of living beyond the igarapes imposed less isolation. The political organization of the community followed the Avenue and the bridges. In 1911 and 1913 the corporate boundaries of the city were extended across the second and third bridges respectively, as shown already in Figure 9.

Subsequently other streets were improved, especially toward the north. These steps laid the basis for decentralization. Twenty or thirty years ago, the government started moving its main administrative offices out

along the avenue. The Governor's residence was changed from the old section to a sumptuous palace beyond the Igarapé de Manaus. Other State buildings have followed the same tendency more recently, spreading out into residential areas toward the north and east.

Some better-class residences have been built in the new areas. Not long ago the Cemetery Da Saudade, which was located at the edge of the earlier urban area, was moved to the outskirts of the city. In its place is a square, now surrounded by modern bungalows and nice upper-class houses. It is considered by many as the most desirable and fashionable place in which to live.

However, there still exists among large numbers to those who inhabit downtown and near-downtown homes the feeling that those who reside very far out are not city people.

Nevertheless, the traditional pattern that the only appropriate place for an upper-class person to live is near the business district is being broken down. The Downtown tends to be looked upon more as a business, shopping and recreational center.

The Suburban Area. In the last forty years the population of Manaus has doubled. The depressions after 1914 and during some years in the decades of the 1920's and 1930's, brought to Manaus a considerable number of people from the rubber camps and other points in the interior of the State. This new population as a rule was compounded of lower-class people, impoverished caboclos and cearenses who came down to Manaus to look for

any kind of job they could obtain. As they were unable to pay the rents demanded for dwellings within the center of the city, they settled on the outskirts where they built thatched houses with their own labor. The suburbs, which up to that influx were mainly small semi-rural settlements, became important suburban residential areas. In 1940 their inhabitants numbered 38 per cent of the total population of Manaus.

Four main suburbs or bairros exist in present-day Manaus: Educandos,<sup>12</sup> Cachoeirinha, São Raimundo, Cachoerinha, and Adrianopolis. The first is the most important and populous. It is located beyond the igarape da Cachoeirinha. For a long time a saw mill located near it has provided employment. Recently its growth has been further stimulated by other developments. In 1941 Panair do Brasil S/A, a subsidiary of the Pan American Airways System, located its airport nearby. A rubber washing factory and a nut peeling plant, owned by Mr. I.B. Sabba, a progressive young industrialist were built. A bridge was constructed to link the suburb with the city. Three years ago Panair do Brasil in cooperation with the Rubber Development Corporation, an agency of the United States Government during the war, laid down a good highway. The Americans also established not far from the bairro an air-base which is now used by commercial airplanes.

All of these improvements have resulted in changing the cultural landscape of the bairro and its ecological aspects. It is becoming increasingly an industrial suburb. Residents

of the bairro now can earn their livelihood in or near their own community. The immediate result will probably be a lower rate of daily commuting to and from the city than in the case of residents of other suburbs.

A new Catholic Church, a moving picture theatre, and an elementary school provide religious, recreational, and educational facilities. Thus Educandos is being developed into a well-integrated community. The two pictures in Figure 15 show two rows of thatched houses in a working-class residential street of Educandos and illustrate how the landscape has been transformed by the introduction of the new industrial features.

Figure 15. A Working-Class residential street at Educandos ← [voltar](#)

Another interesting development in Educandos has been observed of late. Cearenses who came in during the war and who preferred to stay in the city, instead of going farther to labor in the rubber camps, tended to select this suburb for residence. Most of them had run away from the Immigration Camp located nearby at Ponta Pelada in order to work in the industries or at the Airport of Panair do Brasil. In doing this they competed with the native old-timers and sometimes succeeded in displacing them. This created a situation of antagonism and some actual conflict. The old families who had settled in the neighborhood more than twenty or thirty years before felt

jeopardized by these new outside people. Gangs of the bairro met gangs of the newcomers and bloody fights often occurred. The bairro police had its hands full.

As a result of this process of invasion the community, which had always been proud of having excluded outsiders, was divided into two factions. Some spatial accommodation took place. The recent arrivals built their thatched houses near the high-way constructed by Panair, and they now control practically all the shopping establishments along the road. Groceries, cafes, soft drinks and liquor establishments, and a little market-place are now in their hands. The old people of the bairro remained in their own section of the top of the hill, which they referred to proudly as Educandos. Although the highway is vital to the bairro, they do not call it Educandos highway, as it should be, but Constantinopolis highway or sometimes Arigó highway<sup>13</sup> arigó being a depreciatory local idiom for cearense in-migrants.

However, some social interaction is going on between the residents of these two sections of the bairro. The Church, the school, the factory, and the moving picture theatre, located in the heart of the older section, function as contact points. As a result of this experience with an outside group the community, which previously kept itself apart from the city people and from residents of other sections to such a degree that no boy of any outside group was allowed to date a girl of the bairro, is increasingly giving up its narrow local exclusiveness.

In contrast to Educandos which is becoming an industrial suburb, São Raimundo and Cachoeirinha function more as "suburbs of consumption." Their inhabitants commute daily to and from the city where they are employed or where they go for shopping or amusement. São Raimundo is the oldest suburb in the town and has its own distinctive flavor. It functions as a well-integrated group, with its cemetery, parish, and satellite shopping centers. São Raimundo is not a boom suburb like Educandos. On the contrary, it seems to be a stagnant or decadent area with its old clay houses, and its narrow unpaved irregular streets. This bairro in the early days was greatly influenced by the city since it is located just on the other side of the igarape da Cachoeira Grande, not too far from São Vicente where Manaus originated.

The closeness of the Bairro da Cachoeirinha to the main urban area and the downtown center, the transportation facilities assured by the tramcars, and the layout of the streets according to an urban plan operate as powerful factors in the process of decentralization. Perhaps in the near future it will become a middle class residential district. So far it still constitutes a typical working-class neighborhood with a fair degree of homogeneity in the status and housing of its inhabitants. However, recently a fair number of families from the city have selected this bairro for their own residences especially near the terminus of the Avenida Sete de Setembro. High rents and a shortage of

houses are driving some middle-class people away from the downtown center. Nevertheless, there still exists a fixation on this section of town. Many families feel that they must live near the main avenues of the center in order to maintain their high status.

The Bairro de Adrianopolis, in the northeastern part of the city, seems to attract more middle-class and upper-class people than any other suburb. Some time ago a humanitarian doctor, Dr. Adriano Jorge,<sup>14</sup> and a few Englishmen established their residence there. Recently these pioneers have been followed by others in their attempt to open a "better" residential area on the outskirts of the town. Suburban homes are now becoming quite fashionable. More conservative well-to-do people follow the style by maintaining two residences one in the center, where they live with their families during the week, and another in some bairro like Cachoerinha, Adrianopolis, or Flores<sup>15</sup> where they go for week-ends and holidays. By this means they compromise the tradition which persists in recognizing the center as the most desirable place to live and the new tendency to reside in a quiet suburb.

As more suburban streets are paved and the suburbs are provided with transportation facilities, increasing numbers of people will probably move out from the center of the city. The process will be speeded, if Manaus continues to grow, by the expansion of the business district beyond its present limits. Speculation in the downtown properties will

raise real estate prices to the point where residential use cannot compete with business use.

This change will serve in the future to diminish the social and spatial distances between the center and the suburbs, which have been emphasized since the days of the rubber boom. Suburban projections will dispose the well-to-do and the middle-class people who have always assembled together within the nuclear area of the city.

Differing results seem likely to occur in the existing bairros. Educandos and São Raimundo will remain proletarian areas. City people are still prejudiced against these suburbs which are too congested already with thatched and clay houses. Further, the increasing industrialization of Educandos will check any attempt at residential invasion by the "better" classes. Cachoeirinha more and more will become a middle-class residential section. Adrianopolis appears destined to be the preferred place for well-to-do persons to live. Flores now is only a pleasant place to spend a week-end, swimming in creeks or in the Municipal Swimming Pool located there. But it may eventually be transformed into a high-class suburb.

This recent ecological trend toward urban decentralization in Manaus will go on as long as the pressure upon the downtown business center and adjacent areas continues. Rising real estate values propel the population toward the periphery of the city. The greater the pressure, the more marked will be this suburban migration. The process, here noted

for Manaus, is very widespread. It seems to be a characteristic of all modern commercial and industrial cities.

#### **D. Status and Class.**

The earliest status arrangements were very simple. Portuguese conquered the Indians and established control over them. The two were hardly classes at this stage. They were distinct peoples, different in culture and in race, one of which had achieved a superordinate position through force.

This initial separateness did not last long as they lived together, interacted and interbred. Most of the unions between Portuguese and Indians were informal in the beginning. However, the scarcity of Portuguese women contributed to the acceptance of legal marriage. Guilherme Valente took the first step when he married an Indian princess of the nation Manao, resulting in an alliance which brought peace to the community. Later, the Decree of April 4, 1758, already alluded, legalized and encouraged the intermarriage of Indians and Whites. Thereafter marriage with a Portuguese, raised the social status of an Indian woman while, at the same time, her white husband increase his own political status.

To the native man, conversion to christianity was a means of gaining social recognition in the community. It meant that as a Christian he was supposed to have the same treatment and religious benediction as Whites.

It opened the opportunity to serve a White man and to have his children baptized with Portuguese names. If he also succeeded in having a Portuguese stand as godfather to the child, then the child's status was even more assured.

Herndom, visiting Barra in the year 1850, wrote:

The Indians of the neighborhood come in to take service with the Whites; and nearly all bring their children in to be baptized. Their reason for this is not that they care about the ceremony but they can generally persuade some good-natured White man to stand as godfather which secures the payment of the Church fee, a bottle of spirits to the father and a yard or two of cotton cloth to the mother. Antonii tells me he is compadre (godfather) with half the tribe. <sup>16</sup>

This quotation underestimates the social importance of baptismus. A Portuguese godfather helped a godchild in making his living, often giving him some job as a servant or as a paddler and even arranging his marriage when he was grown up. Sometimes the godchild could live in the same or a nearby house. Through the Portuguese godfather he might even succeed in obtaining a good job as a merchant clerk or a craftsman. But, in the majority of cases Indians remained at the bottom of the class structure, as servants, soldiers, paddlers, and cultivators.

The process by which statue relations among Whites, mixed bloods, and Indians was worked out was not always peaceful. In the beginning the Mura tribe opposed violently as long as they could, any form of catechesis or

submission to the priest or the sertanista. And the rebellion of the Manao tribe and its allies under the leadership of Ajuricaba threatened Portuguese domination for a time. These efforts at resistance were quelled by vigorous military action and the Indians settled into a peace of subjection.

Much later, in 1836, the class system that had developed was threatened by the War of Cabanaos. The Cabanos<sup>17</sup> even succeeded in seizing Manaos. This revolt was headed by a few turbulent caboclos and Indians. Although the ostensible cause was dissatisfaction with the provincial government it appears that the real cause was hatred of the Portuguese. Hence, it was both a political revolution and a race and class war. For a time, the rebels seemed on the verge of gaining power. Europeans and descendents of Europeans, the dominant social and political class, were virtual prisoners for awhile.

Rev. James Fletcher and Rev. D.P. Kidder, who visited Manaos in 1862, some twenty years after those bloody days of the Cabanos uprising said that the natives occupied "every station in society, and may be seen as merchants, tradesmen, sailors, soldiers, priests and slaves."<sup>18</sup> It may be that this insurrection, although it was put down, opened the way for mestizos to improve their status in the town. As a rule, however, the highest status in the community continued to be held by Portuguese, their descendents, or other foreigners who functioned mainly as merchants, importing the foodstuffs necessary to keep production going and exporting the regional

products. The caboclos and Indians kept on for the most part as cultivators, fishermen, and woodcutters. The situation had many aspects of a caste system.

Perhaps the basic factor in the events which have modified this more or less stable class arrangement was the rubber trade. The first source of capital for the development of rubber production was the wealth concentrated in the hands of foreigners, mainly Portuguese and Englishmen. The British built the harbor and the power plant, laid down the tran lines, brought steam-ships, and the like. The Portuguese built commercial houses, handling the export and import trade. Syrians stood in this social frame as retail-men, itinerant traders and peddlers.

Very few native sons succeeded in establishing their own businesses. Their economic and social status was low and their main function in the community was as workers, merchant clerks, and government employees. Native mestiza women were employed as domestics in the Whites' residences or in some cheap bars and restaurants, when they were not prostitutes as most of them used to be.

The arrival of the cearense served to complicate the old status arrangement since, as ambitious and hard-working men, they looked forward to standing on their own feet. They had to struggle hard against the elite business-men already well established. Sometimes they succeeded in improving their economic position, and so climbed to the top of the social and political scale. Sometimes, as seringalistas (owners of rubber land) they

engaged in politics and influenced the political parties in the capital in the choosing of candidates. People called them "coroneis de barranco"<sup>19</sup>. They also participated actively as the main figures in the War of Acre, when the seringueiros headed by Placido de Castro, agaicho,<sup>20</sup> succeeded in defeating the Bolivians. In other instances, when these landowners came to settle in Manaus, they started to compete with the foreigner merchants, breaking down the exclusive foreign domination of the downtown business district. Most of them improved the position of their children even further by sending them to Europe, Lisbon, Paris, and London to be educated in the European fashion.

Such children on their return gained immediate recognition and prestige in the society, being able to compete with the old families who held the high government offices by a sort of natural right.<sup>21</sup> This Europeanization definitely tended to equalize their status with that possessed by the well-to-do Portuguese. The great prestige-value of Europe is noticed even in the style of the public buildings constructed in Manaus about that time. The Opera House and the Court House were styled after the Parisienne and Renaissance fashion.

The foundation of the University of Manaus in 1910 brought a new opportunity for people of the city to acquire higher education. It resulted later on in transferring superior education and the main political functions in the city from the hands of the old

Europeanized aristocracy into the hands of anybody who could attain distinction through scholarship. It gave an opportunity to the townspeople to improve their status, no matter what class, family or color they belonged to, through the title of doutor or bacharel.<sup>22</sup>

Another source of prestige is contact with Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo. These big cities exercised a tremendous influence upon the people of Manaus. Their attraction made so powerful an appeal to well-to-do people, as well as to students, clerks, and government employees that many migrated there. Journeys to Rio or São Paulo are highly acclaimed at the present time and constitute one way of gaining recognition and social and political advantage. Politicians and businessmen often seek to maintain or improve their status by making one or more trips to Rio every year.

The result of all these changes has been to make the Manauense<sup>23</sup> society increasingly mobile and heterogeneous. The depression following 1914, breaking many well-to-do business men Portuguese, Syrians, Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans, as well as cearenses and native traders caused status to become more competitive and uncertain. The lack of economic stability has made Manaus a kind of easy-come easy-go society. People joked about foreigners and cearenses by saying that before coming to Manaus they leave their consciences hanging in the Island of Marapata, an island in the mouth of the Rio Negro. People here work hard for high status.

Nevertheless, many evidences of the former stable situation are still observable. To belong to some of the old traditional families (really early rubber-boon families) means something very important and improves the one's chances of succeeding in a political career. Before looking for a government job, it is wise to have a "pistolão"<sup>24</sup> from some important local family which is of definite advantage in securing such a post. The political parties dispute for the support of the descendants of the traditional families as a means of attracting more votes at the polls.

But the influence of the old aristocracy does not go unchallenged. The arrivista,<sup>25</sup> the newcomer, in many instances succeeds in winning an election or in getting governmental office.

This has given rise to an interesting factionalism in Amazonian politics. Some years ago certain of the traditional families headed a movement to protect themselves against the arrivista. They sought the support of the long-established lower-class, the native sons, or filhos de terra as we call them. This movement, which had some political aspects, was christened "glebarismo."<sup>26</sup> It was patronized by the town's newspapers, and once in a while it is recalled when the social or political position of some important local family, or important glebario, is jeopardized.<sup>27</sup> The movement was revived recently when thousands of cearenses, who had contracted to work in the rubber camps settled in Manaus instead. The people nicknamed them

"Arigós" birds of prey, placeless, according to the language used in the town newspapers which was recently extended to include all foreigners and arrivistas.

This nicknaming custom in the city is suggestive. It illustrates some of the rivalries that are going on between the people of Manaus and the outside people. For instance, the people of Manaus called the people of Belem, or the paraense in general by the nickname of "Jacaré," i.e. "crocodilo," which according to rumors brought to Manaus is a special dish of the Belenense. On the other hand, the people of Belem, in retaliation, call the manauense, "Jaaraquí," i.e., a kind of thorny fish that the poor people of Manaus eat.<sup>28</sup>

The Church in Manaus plays an important role in status. Nobody who wants a political position or hopes to attain consideration and recognition can discount it. The Bishop has one of the highest positions in the social scale, His name is praised in the newspaper and over the radio. To challenge his prestige is the same as committing social or political suicide. This influence is typical not only in Manaus but all over the country. Recently a Catholic League was organized throughout the country to watch the prospective candidates to the key-positions in the Congress. It suggested names, and the candidates appointed by the political parties had to endorse some key-points of the Catholic policy. It seems that this system worked effectively in Manaus, as well as in other cities of the country,

since no comunist in Manaus succeeded in being elected to the Senate or to the House.

Another social high category is constituted by the military officers of the garrison. Manaus has a Federal Battalion, whose commander enjoys a social status similar to that occupied by the Bishop, the Governor, and the Justices of the State Supreme Court.

The business men, merchants, exporters, importers, and aviadores share a common status level. However, a special reference is made to the alto comerciante (big businessman) who as a rule has his office located at the Marechal Deodoro and Guilherme Moreira Street, the focal point of the commercial and financial district in the downtown center. The Chamber of Commerce stands by him and works for the benefit of the business class and in the interest of the region as they see it. The Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce enjoys great prestige and power in politics as well as in business. He is consulted by the Governor and has a voice in every problem connected with the economic situation of the State.

A new class of business man has made its appearance recently. It is constituted of young industrialists who are trying to introduce some new industries in the city--rubber washing factories, Brazil nut peeling plants, saw mills, tanning planta, pottery factories, and rosewood oil distilleries. Many of these plants are owned by foreigners and by outside Brazilians: Portuguese, Englishmen, Jews, Paraenses, and Cearenses. They are distrustfully regarded by tradition-minded

people when they start a project. It is widely believed that the only thing that can flourish in Manaus is trade, but as soon as they succeed in their enterprises they climb high in the social scale, maybe even above the more common merchant, commercial agent or import-export trader. There are persons conservative professionals and members of the intelligentsia who are prejudiced against businessmen and who do not rate them very high. But through philanthropy and by patronizing charitable works sponsored by the Church, businessmen are improving their position and gaining increasing sympathy.

The students have their place in this social system. Manaus University, one of the first in the country, has lost most of its colleges little by little. Recently the Federal Government withheld its support and recognition from the School of Pharmacy, Odontology and Agronomy. Now, the only establishment of superior education in the town is the School of Law. Four high schools, three business schools, one school of education, and one school of industrial arts of professional level function in the city. Students enjoy an important position. They participate actively in the town politics, both at public meetings and in civic movements. During the war they were the main figures in the Anti-Fascist Campaign and helped in the shaping of public opinion to support the Brazilian participation in the war. They led the attack against speculation, inflation and the black market. Many of them succeeded in being elected as Representatives

to the state Congress during the last election.

The social life of Manaus, centers around its principal clubs: Ideal, Rio Negro, Nacional, and Olimpico. The membership in these clubs reflects to some extent the status of people in the community. The Ideal is a conservative, upper-class club. Its members are judges, successful businessmen, leading foreigners. The Rio Negro is considered the club of politicians, physicians, and liberal professionals. It is an upper middle class and is rather progressive. The Nacional and the Olimpico are liberal in their attitudes and definitely less exclusive, admitting members regardless of class, color, or status. Except for the Ideal, each club has a foot-ball team, and all of them give a lot of parties during Carnival. Deep rivalry and competition go on among them: Rio Negro versus Nacional and Olimpico, Ideal versus Rio Negro, etc. To join one of them is something important that does not pass unnoticed in the town. It means that one is looking, not only for fun, but also toward participating in the social life of the community. Not joining a club in Manaus certainly gives one a handicap and makes more difficult the problem of gaining prestige and status.

Present-day Manaus is a society in which social nobility and heterogeneity, brought about since the days of the rubber boom is being adjusted to and modified the traditional, rather stable status arrangements. Thus, the new impetus of the arrivista finds a counteraction in the

opposition of the bairristas and glebarios. The mulatto and mestizo serve as intermediaries to check racial conflict which might develop between Whites and Negroes or Whites and Indians. Class discrimination, therefore, is more likely to occur than race discrimination. The cearense after some years of residence in the city finds ways of getting along with the native people and finally becomes a native.

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1. Sources: Tavares Bastos, op.cit. - [voltar](#)
  2. Municipio, roughly equivalent for county. - [voltar](#)
  3. The Territory of Acre was separated from the State of Amazonas in the year 1903 according to the Treaty of Petropolis. For the purpose of comparing the data of the Censuses we have considered the State and the Territory as a demographic unit. - [voltar](#)
  4. Cf. Gist and Halbert, Urban Society, p. 271. - [voltar](#)
  5. Sinopse Estatistica do Estado do Amazonas, pp. 24-25 - [voltar](#)
  6. Data from the 1872 Cesus of the Paroquia da Nossa Senhora da Conceição de Manaos which refers only to that parish. Courtesy of Prof. Carneiro Felipe. - [voltar](#)
  7. Igarape is an Indian name for a small river or creek, and means literally "canoe-path" (igarape). Two more igarapes, Espirito Santo and Igarape 13 de Maio, which formerly crossed the downtown center, have been filled in. - [voltar](#)
  8. Alfredo da Mata, Geographia e Topographia Medica de Manaos, p. 10. - [voltar](#)
  9. Rodrigues Ferreira, quoted by A. Reis, Manaos e Outras Villas, p. 46-47. Translated by the author. - [voltar](#)
  10. Bairro, Portuguese word for quarter, section, or neighborhood. Today it also connotes a suburb. - [voltar](#)

11. Recently Dr. A.T. Hansen studying the ecology of a Latin American city Merida, Yucatan found a very interesting ecological order which to some extent resembles that of Manaus. As happens in Manaus, he noticed this initial distinction between the center and the bairros in Merida. His study seems to be the first serious attempt to understand the ecology of a Latin American city. Cf. "Ecology of a Latin American City" in Race and Culture Contacts, New York, 1934. - [voltar](#)
12. The name Educandos comes from an early educational establishment of the same name located in the center of the bairro a long time ago. Today its building is occupied by an elementary school. This bairro is also called Constantinopolis after the former Governor Constantino Nery. - [voltar](#)
13. Most of the establishment situated in this road have arigo names: Bar Fortaleza, Barbearia Parahiba, Café Ceará, etc, suggestive of the place of origin of the owners. - [voltar](#)
14. Adrianopolis was christened after him two years ago. Its former name was Villa Municipal. - [voltar](#)
15. Flores is a resort some distance outside of the city toward the north. - [voltar](#)
16. Herndon, op.cit., p. 278 - [voltar](#)
17. Cabanos, literally means the inhabitants of Cabins, and was the name chosen for the rebels. - [voltar](#)
18. Fletcher, Brazil and the Brazilians, p. 543. The abolition of Indian slavery was achieved in the year of 1755 by an Act of Mendonca Furtado. The abolition of Negro slavery is dated as of July 10, 1884 in the State of Amazonas. Fletcher's reference may have been to Negroes or only a misunderstanding of Indian and mestizo peonage. - [voltar](#)
19. Coroneis de barranco, literally means "riverbank colonels." Similarly coronelismo in the language of Manaus is a word intended to characterise a kind of politics or government based upon the dominance of the coroneis, mostly "fake" colonels who purchased their commission for the title. Slightly reminiscent of Kentucky colonels." - [voltar](#)
20. Gaúcho, popular name given to a native of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. When Placido de Castro defeated the Bolivians he proclaimed the Acre, an independent Republic. However, later on it was incorporated into Brazil as a Federal Territory. - [voltar](#)

21. "Ce qui est vrai, c'est qu'on pratique a Manaus une politique étroite et que la possession du pouvoir est l'objet d'intrigues assez fréquents. La Présidence de l'Etat semble être le fief de quelques familles locales." Paul Walle, op.cit., p. 419. - [voltar](#)
22. Doctor or bachelor. Not only in Manaus but also in Pernambuco and other States of Brazil, as Gilberto Freyre pointed out, the diploma of Bacharel (Bachelor of law) was a means of overcoming the handicap of color or class. Many mulattoes and mestizos succeeded in gaining social recognition, even marrying well-to-do girl, "bacharelizando-re." Cf. "O Bacharel no Brazil", Samuel Benchimol, Manaus, 1946. - [voltar](#)
23. Manauense, native of Manaus, or something that belongs to it. - [voltar](#)
24. Pistolão, idiom for "pull." - [voltar](#)
25. Arrivista, is the manauense idiomatic expression to characterize the outside people in the city, who are eager to climb the social or political pyramid without going through the usual steps set up by the consensus of opinion in society. It also connotes adventurer, foreigner, whose philosophy is "easy-come, easy-go." - [voltar](#)
26. Glebarismo, comes from gleba, i.e. land, country. The English word closest to glebarismo would be nativism or regionalism. Other people name it barrismo, from bairro, to denote a very narrow-minded attitude of a person who continually boasts about this city, making invidious remarks against other towns, especially Belem do Para, the rival city of Manaus since the earliest days. - [voltar](#)
27. In the last election held in Manaus in January, 1947 when two candidates disputed the Governorship of the State this point was raised in the public meetings in behalf of the native candidate, who finally succeeded in winning the election. One former Senator, with long political experience, failed to be reelected for the same reason. This last election was a typical victory for the glebaristas. The town newspapers participated actively in the political campaign, shaping public opinion in favor of the native candidates. - [voltar](#)
28. Samuel Benchimol, op.cit., p. 68-79. - [voltar](#)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FLOW OF LIFE

To understand the people who live in Manaus and their ways of life, you need to do more than be familiar with the history of the city and the economy of the region. Neither a deep study of the geographical setting nor clever research on the psychological or racial make-up of the people is enough to get a full comprehension of the ways of life and thought of the manauense. Really to know you must have intimate association with him and his culture live in his house, sleep in a hammock hung between two walls, dance at his parties and fiestas during carnival time, work at his job, breathe the same air that he breathes, eat the same kind of foods that he eats, and even love the girls that he loves.

Moreover, you need to pray in his Church, go to his school, perspire in that hot and damp weather which is never higher than 96 and never lower than 65 degrees. It might be a good idea to catch cold during the rainy season when there are 25 rainy days a month and the average humidity is almost 90 per cent. A daily walk through the downtown shopping center, past the fashionable stores of the Avenidas Eduardo Ribeiro and Sete de Setembro; a glance into the Market Place where the poor people trade; a sight-seeing tour around the main public buildings; two hours attending a foot-ball game between Rio Negro and Nacional; a week-end swimming party in the clear, cool creeks and igarapes of Flores

could help you understand the manauenses and to catch the different aspects of his mood. But even after a year of such persistent study you might still find it difficult to write a complete paper about the people and their city.

This attempt to describe the flow of life of the people of Manaus, written by a manauense, does not follow the usual routine in papers of this nature. Instead of going down there to see, the author is turning his eyes upon his memory. In a sense, he sees more of his city in retrospect and from a distance than when he was in it. Many things that were too close to be seen can be observed from this point of vantage.

Let us start by discussing what the Manauense eats. The Market place on the waterfront of the Rio Negro during the low-water season has plenty of food, mainly fish. All kinds of fish are displayed there: tambaquí, pirarucú, pescada, branquinha, curimatã, sardinha, tucunaré, jaraquí. There are "low-class" fish to kill the hunger of the people of São Raimundo, Educandos, and Cachoeirinha. A bunch of jaraquís can be bought for a few pennies. On the other hand, there are "upper-class" fish, peixe de gente rica, to fill the mouths of the sophisticated and the will-to-do of the city. This distinction between fish for the poor and fish for the rich is so common in the language of the people that a man's status in the community can be recognized by the kind of fish he eats. For instance, when some low- or middle-class person is trying to "pass" as an important upper-class his behavior may

evoke a barbed remark: "Ele comeu jaraqui e agora esta arrotando pescada," ("He ate jaraqui and now is belching pescada").

During these from July to December, fish constitute the basis of the culinary complex. All kinds of fish are cooked in a great variety of regional dishes: peixe seco, salgado, cozido, moqueado, frito, e em agua grande.<sup>1</sup> But, whatever the economic status, manioc flour is an ingredient obligatory of many favorite every-day dishes. Beijú, caribé, mingáu de farinha, carimã, and tapioca are typical Amazonian specialties in which manioc is the substitute for wheat flour.

These months of abundance when the river is low will be over soon. The caboclo knows that very well. He looks to the Rio Negro and tries to forecast how many feet it will rise in the months to come. Maybe twenty, twenty-five, or perhaps thirty feet above the December mark. He will probably recall the big flood of 1922 which invaded the Market Place and the waterfront street. However, he does not seem to worry too much about it. If he lives near the river, in the Avenida Beira Mar at Educandos, his house is constructed well above the normal flood mark as illustrated by the picture below. But sometimes the river catches



Figure 16. A typical riverine house in the outskirts of Manaus

Him unawares. This spells disaster. He probably will move to the top of the river bank or raise the floor of his house several feet. However, as far as food is concerned, it is always against him, for flood means lack of fish, of manioc flour, of milk, of vegetables, of everything.

He can measure practically the flood by the prices in the market place. When he sees that the vendors are charging more for fish and other foods he knows that the river is rising steadily. This rise will continue for at least the next four or five months. Every day fewer and fewer canoes come to the Market or anchor at the beach. The riverine producers located in the vicinity are obviously affected by the high water. Their livestock must be put on a floating corral if they are to be kept alive for the next season. Milk becomes scarce; as

the flood season continues its price becomes higher and higher until only the well-to-do can buy it at all. The cost of things, it is said, reach the "hora da morte" (literally, "the death hour").

The months of the high-water level, January to July, change the food habits and introduce different ways of life. The pictures below depict some of the changes.

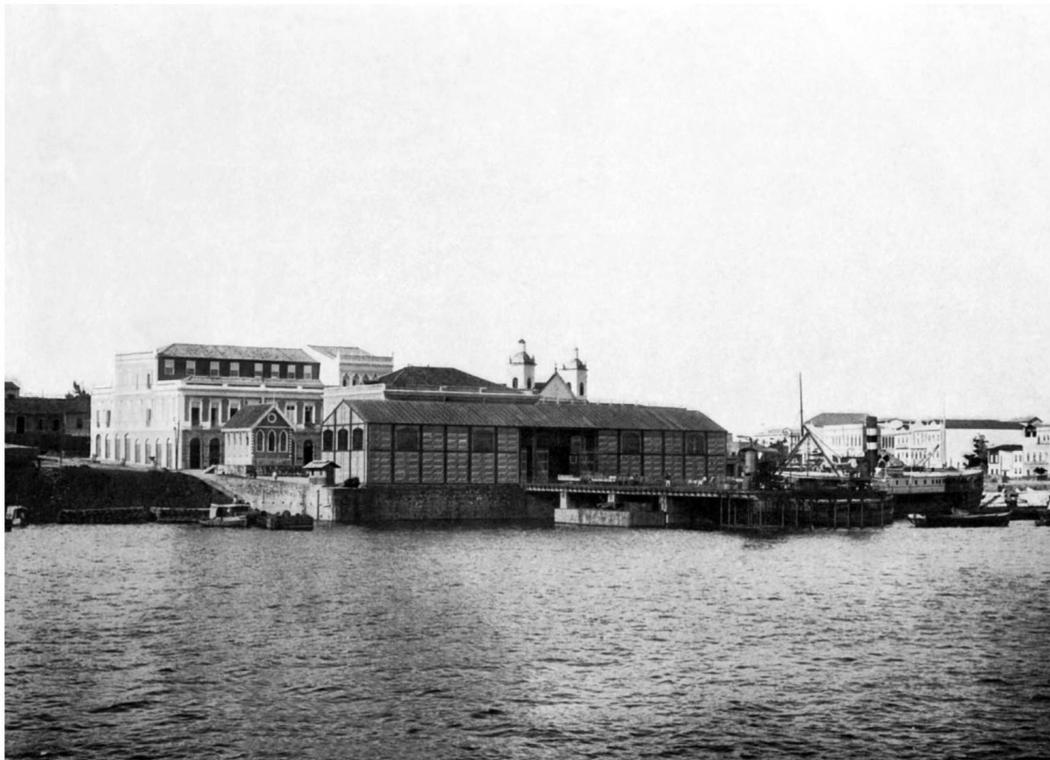




Figure 17. Suggestive views of the low-water and high-water landscape in Manaus ← [voltar](#)

To some the flood brings joy. Beef is available now, The high water makes it possible to transport cattle from Rio Branco, since this is the only time of the year when ships and barges can traverse the rapids of that stream. Even so, beef is only for the well-to-do. The poor can afford it merely as an occasional luxury. Many are forced to appeal to the Portuguese grocer or the Syrian merchant for some beans, rice, and farinha d'agua.<sup>2</sup> After all, the curumins<sup>3</sup> can not go hungry until the next large fish crop reappears in the Market Place or is sold again in the streets by the peddlers after manauense fashion.

Figure 18, 19, and 20 illustrate how the rise and fall of the river affects the regional production of milk, fish, and beef. For instance, in September, 1943, the Market

Place registered an entrance of 80,000 kilos of first-class fish. In April it was only 5,000 roughly. The milk production starts to increase since August until April when it reaches the peak.<sup>4</sup> One can see in the graph the sudden fall of the curve between April and July (1943). As far as beef is concerned the lowest figure for cattle slaughtered was 250 heads in November, the month of the lowest water, while the highest number slaughtered was 1,350 heads in August, still a flood month.

# PEIXE ENTRADO NO MERCADO PÚBLICO EM MANAUS

1943

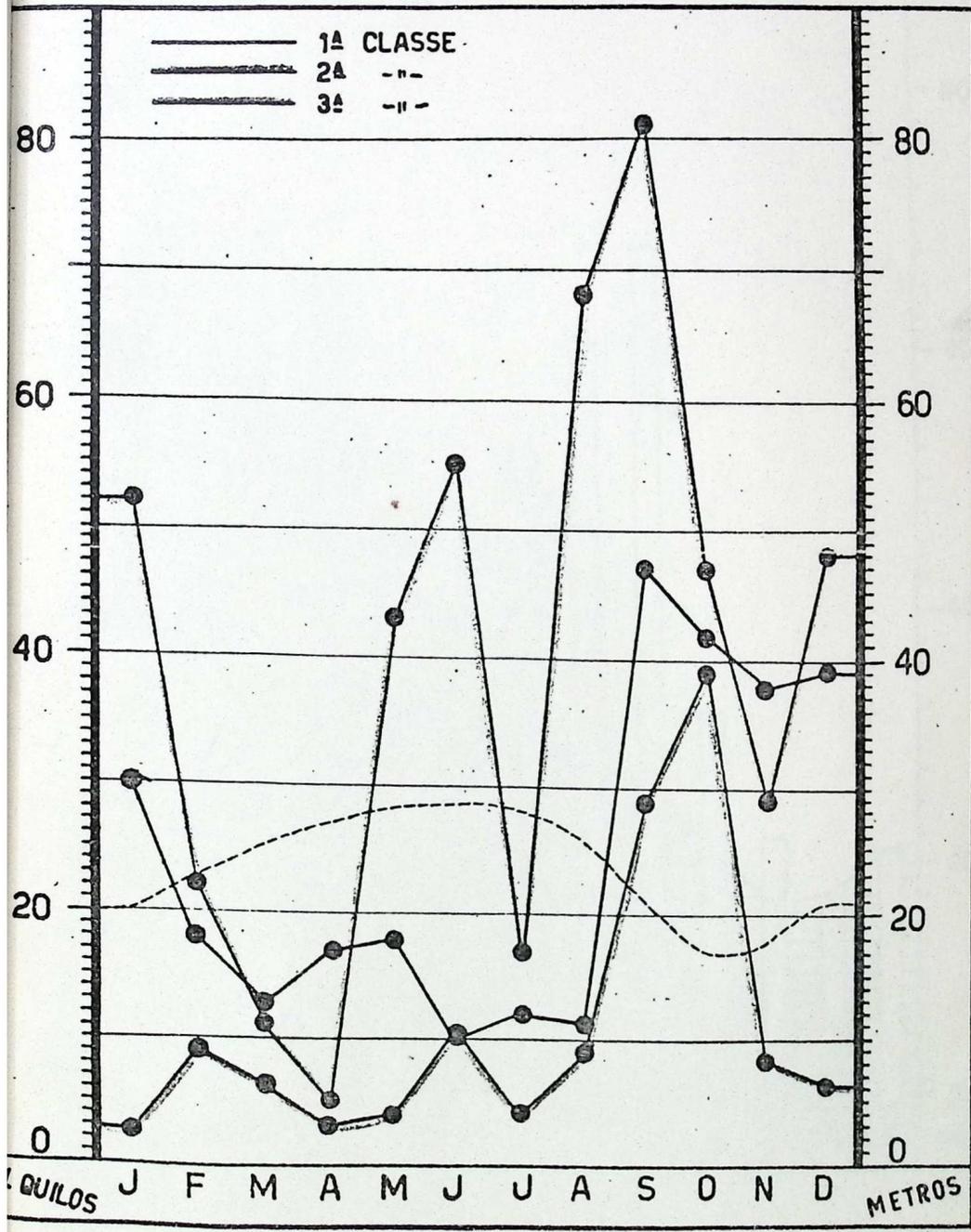


Figure 18. Monthly fish supplies to Manaus Market, 1943. ← voltar

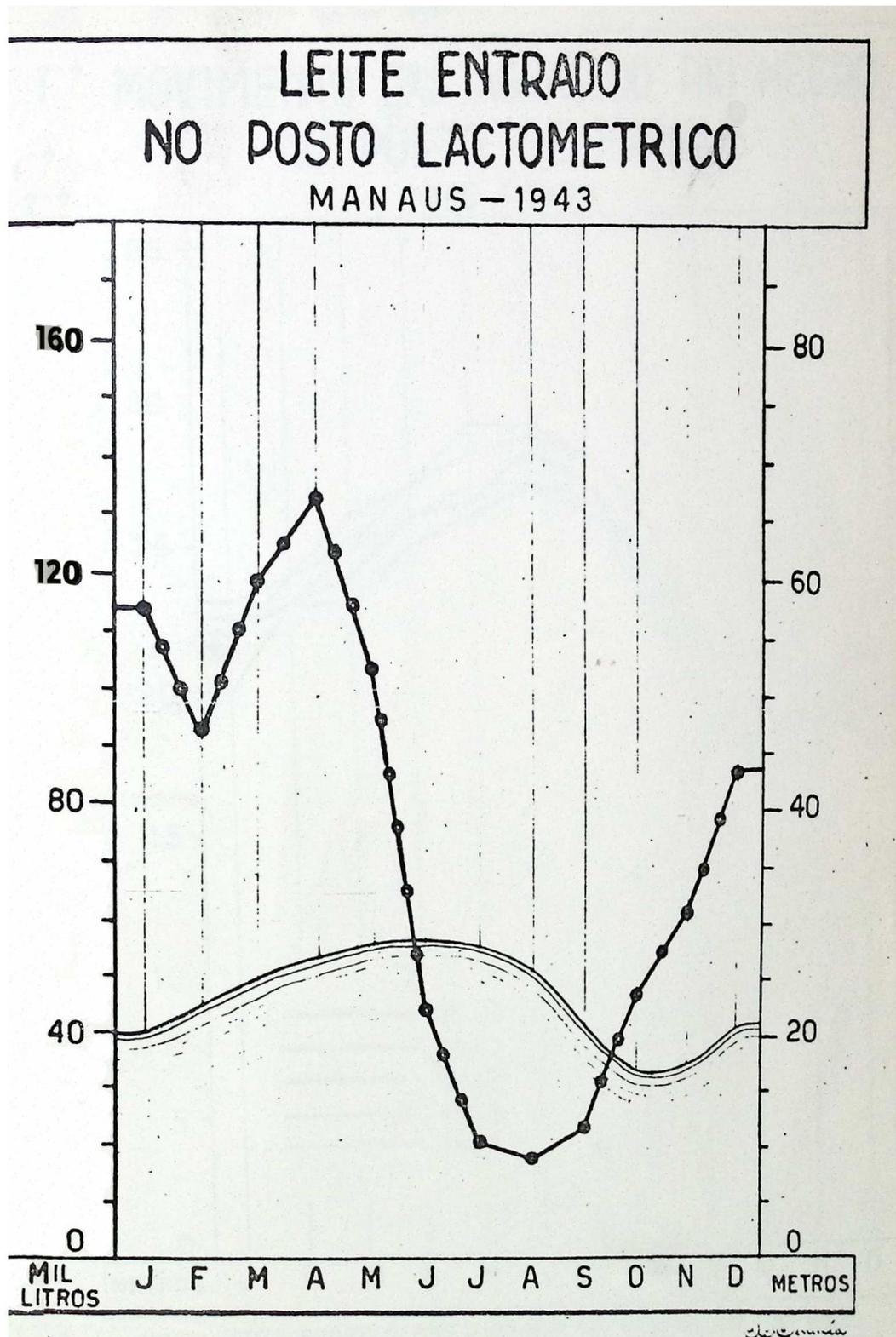


Figure 19. Monthly milk supplies to Manaus Market, 1943. ← voltar

# GADO ABATIDO NO MATADOURO

MANAUS

1943

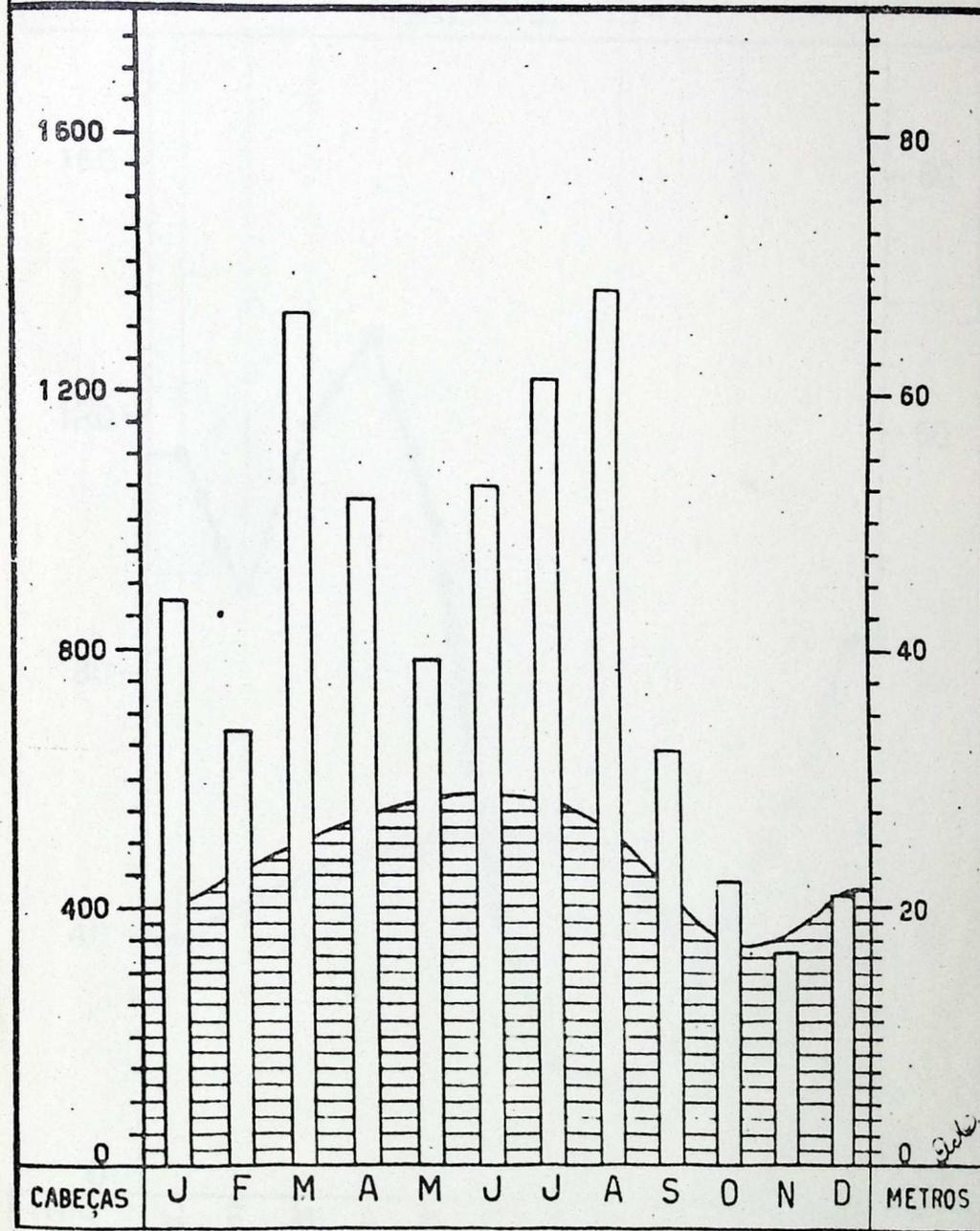


Figure 20. Monthly cattle killed in the slaughter house, 1943. ← voltar

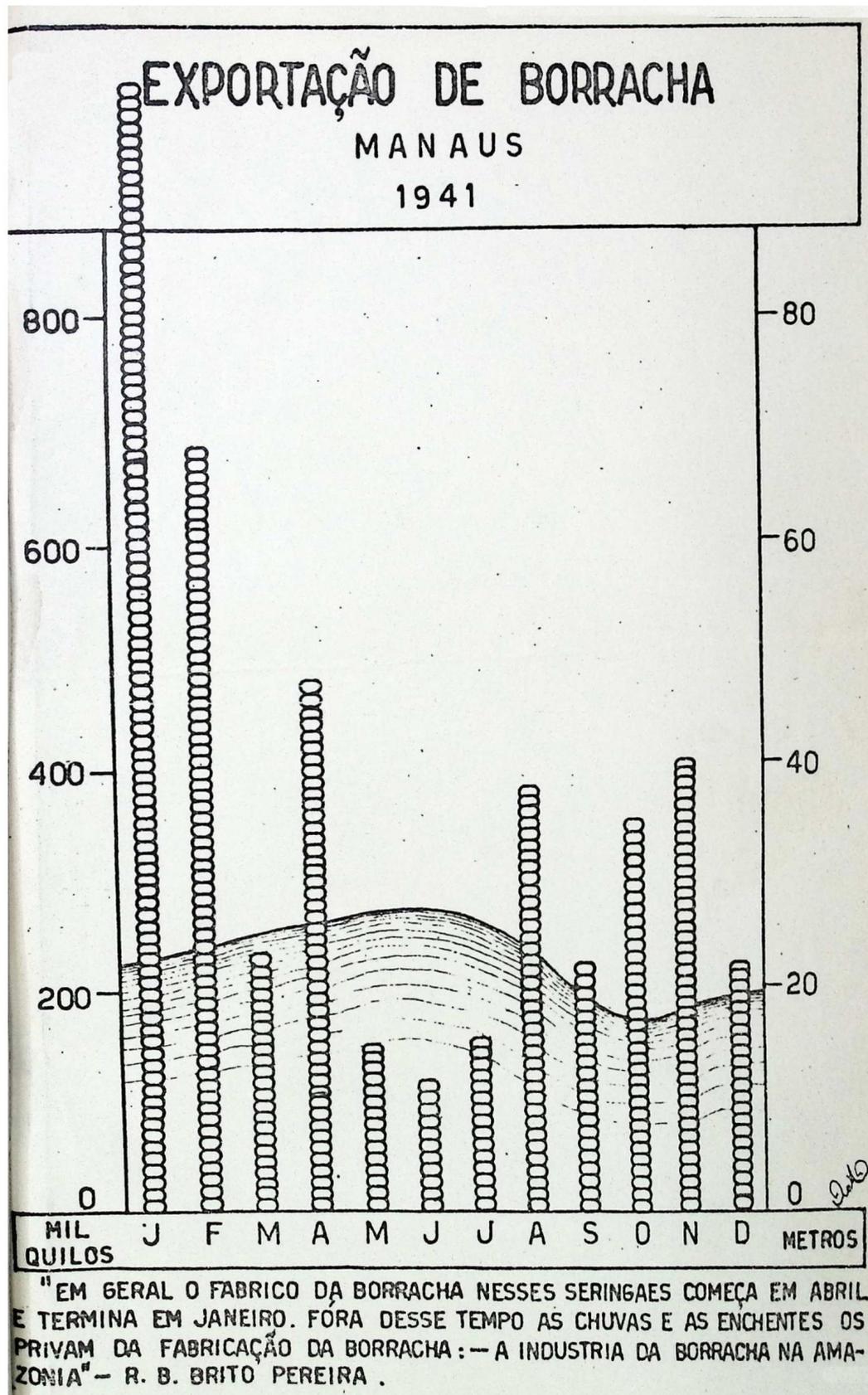


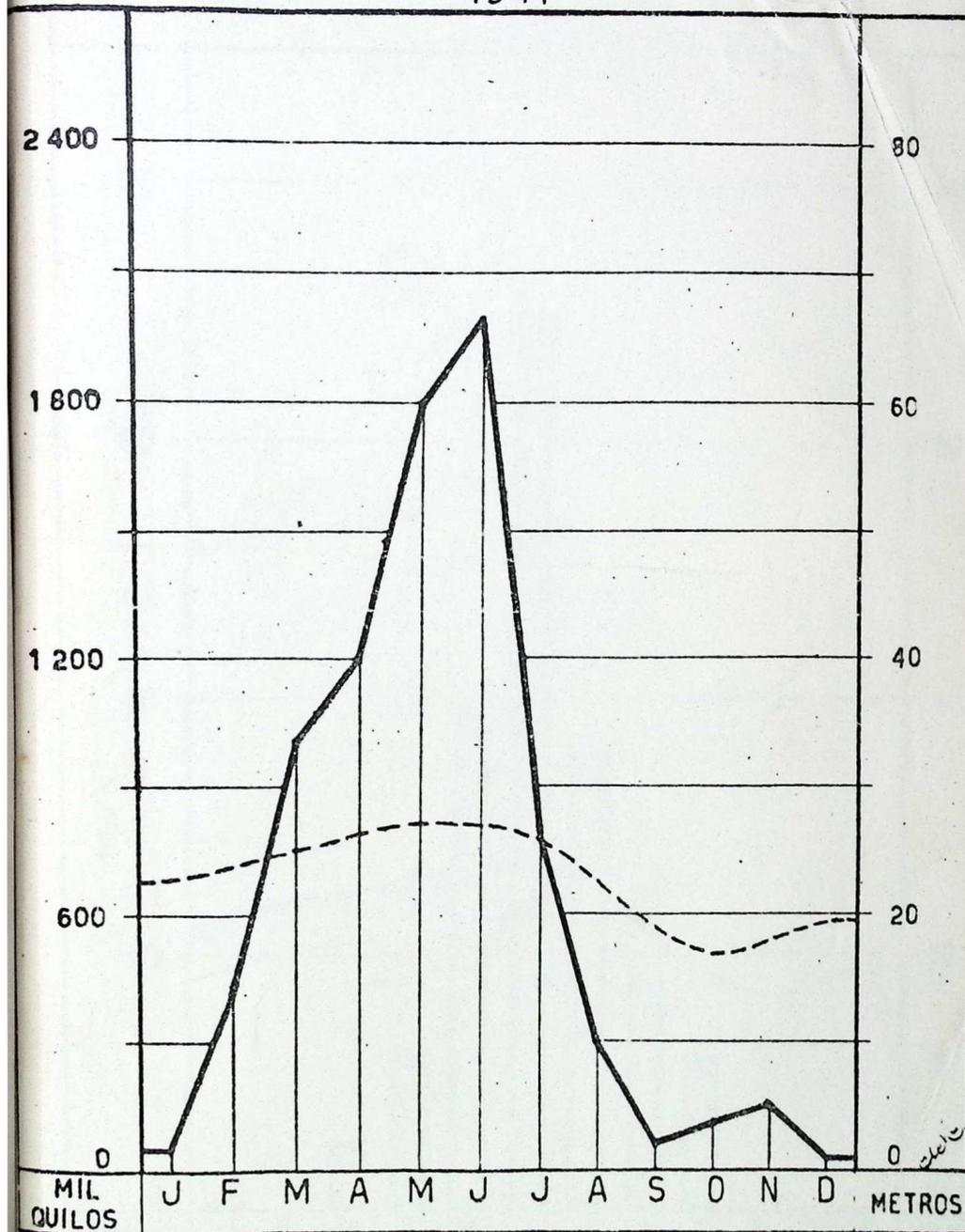
Figure 21. Monthly Rubber Export, 1941. ← [voltar](#)

Fluctuations of the river affect not only the food supply but almost every economic activity as well. The accompanying graphs on the following pages give an idea how regional production, which supports the trade of Manaus, follows the rise or fall of the water level of the rivers.<sup>5</sup> The graph in figure 21 shows the monthly rubber export. In 1941 the peak of this export was reached in January, and the lowest point in June. The graph in figure 22 gives the monthly export of Brazil nuts for the same year. This product is collected in just the opposite season to that of rubber. While rubber has to be collected during the dry season, nuts are gathered during the rainy season. These two main staples of the Amazonian economy together maintain year-round employment in Manaus and in the interior. The production of jute, a crop, recently introduced by the Japanese, in the lower Amazon near Parintins, follows the flood's seasonal pattern. (Figure 23). Other staples also depend on the river's fluctuations. Crocodiles, a great source of wealth, are hunted during the month of low-water, in the Solimoes, Rio Negro, and in the lakes of the interior. Lumber has to be brought during the flood to the town's saw mills. If it fails to arrive the city is certain to be short of timber for construction and export.

# EXPORTAÇÃO DE CASTANHA

MANAUS

1941



"LIMITA-SE A COLHER NO TEMPO PROPIO, MARÇO ABRIL, MAIO, O SEU FRUCTO, NO QUE CORRE-RISCO DE LEVAR SOBRE A CABEÇA COM ALGUM CURIO QUANDO HA VENTO"...:-RELATORIO SOBRE OS PRODUTOS AGRICOLAS DO ALTO AMAZONAS - SILVA COUTINHO, 1861-VOL. II - RELATORIOS P. 776.

Figure 22. Monthly Brazil Nut Export, 1941. ← voltar

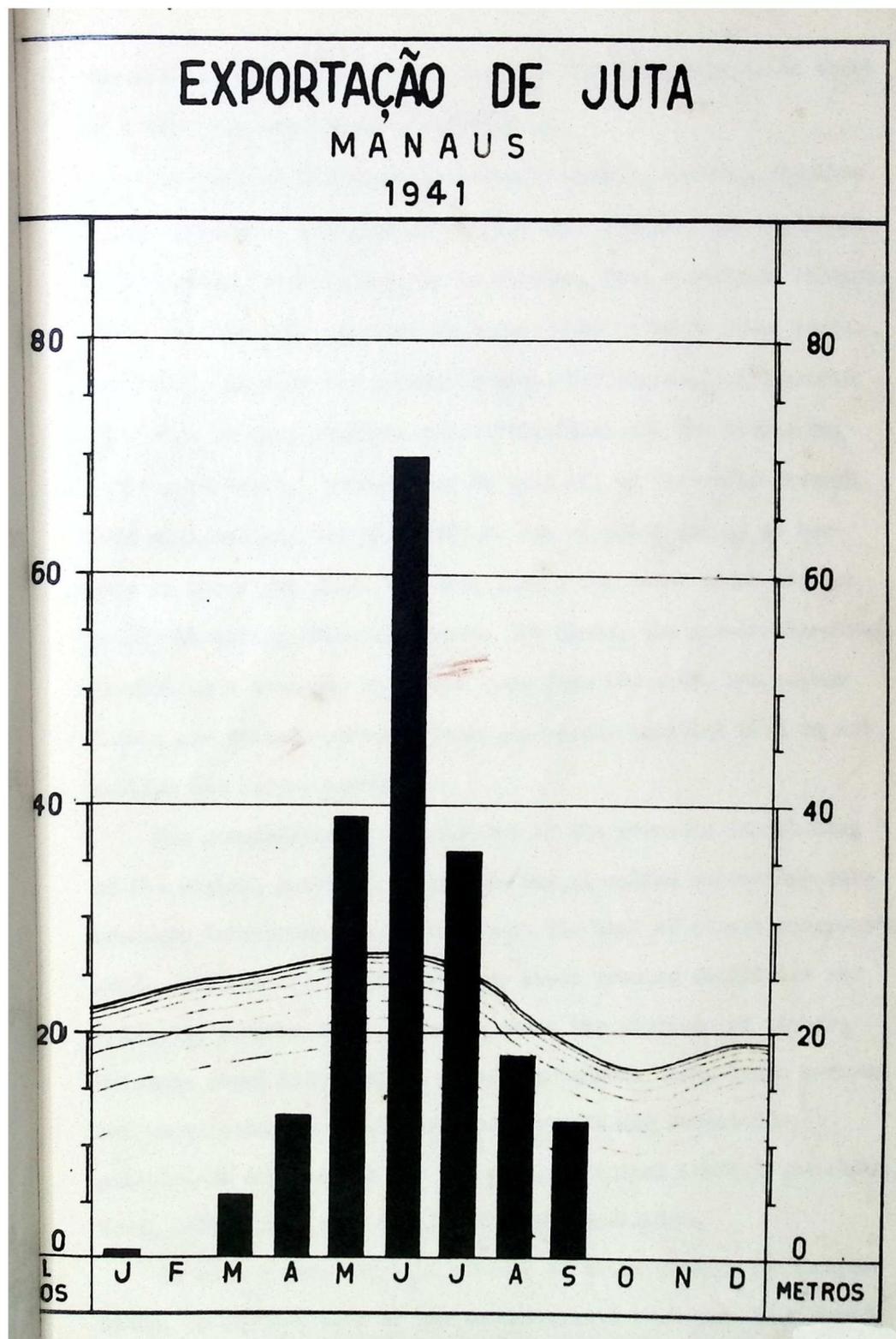


Figure 23. Monthly Jute Export, 1941. [← voltar](#)

The complex interrelations between imports, exports, supplies to the interior, and

production from the interior, all dependant on the water level in one way or another, form a delicate balance. Civic and economic planning in Manaus must go on in these terms. Failure to provide the necessary steps for regional adjustments give rise to many problems and difficulties for the people and their government. Workers may be laid off by factories through some dislocation; the housewife is out of water supply at her home if the river falls too low; should the power plant neglect to lay in enough wood-fuel during the flood, the man-in-the-street is without a tram-car to go and come from the city, and rubber plants are without power. These are merely examples that do not mention the larger problems.

The possibility of a breakdown of the economic functioning of the region, based as it is upon the so-called extractive-destructive industries, seems to lie at the back of almost everyone's mind. Doctors and hospitals worry about crowded facilities and epidemic; construction engineers about the shortage of timber; salesmen about the dropping of sales; bankers about loans overdue and uncollectable; merchants about overstocked foodstuffs; politicians about taxes and revenues, municipal authorities about beef, milk, fish, and the like for the population.

To have a more complete picture of these unhappy preoccupations, we may add some of the controversies that have been ventilated in the town newspaper, year after year. They constitute the so-called chronic problems of the city: the fear of a crack in the rubber

price, the possible withdrawal of the foreign market demand for the Brazil nut, the lack of ships to export the products, the congestion of the harbor and the warehouses when all the imports arrive at the same time, the fear of a flood big enough to starve the people or make them homeless, the roads made impassible by the rainy season, the growth of tuberculosis and malaria, the poor living conditions of the people in the suburbs, the housing shortages and rent speculation, the lack of needed educational facilities, and even the prospects for the next election. These are the headlines of the Manaus newspaper and the topics of conversation in the street, cafes, clubs, and at home. They constitute also matters for discussion in the Chamber of Commerce, in the State Congress, at the public meeting, and in academic lectures.

On the other hand, we can catch the people in their optimistic mood. The picture then is different. If it is Carnival time, probably they talk about parties, festas, cordões carnavalescos, sambas, choros, marchas,<sup>6</sup> and the most popular hit songs of the month. Upper or middle-class persons may plan to go dancing at Ideal, Rio Negro, Olimpico or Nacional. Poor workers think of attending parties provided by their unions. But rich and poor alike go to the Avenida Eduardo Ribeiro to walk up and down, to see the carnival parade of decorated cars, and to play with confetti and serpentine during the three last days of the Carnival: Domingo, Segunda and Terça-Feira Gorda.<sup>7</sup> The following day the girls will be in the Church confessing and purifying their

souls from the sins accumulated during the Carnival time. The men are less concerned about such things.

Religion is important in the life of the manauense. Nossa Senhora da Conceição, as the patron saint of the city, is venerated annually by a big procession through the main streets. Kermesses, novenas and popular religious parties are held by the Church to amuse the people in Villa Municipal, Praca da Matriz, and Praca São Sebastião several times a year. Nive-five percent of the people are Catholic. There are very few protestants and Jews.<sup>8</sup> Atheism is a thing almost taboo. In the 1940 Census only 130 persons declared themselves to be atheists.

On São Joao's Eve, June 24, the manauense gather around bonfires in the yard over which couples and good friends link themselves into some sort of mistic kinship. The family grows in size at this time with cousins, nephews, godfathers, godmothers, godsons, goddaughters all relatives through the bonfire. The girls tell fortunes with wax candles, a basin of water and other devices. The children play with firecrackers and other pyrotechnic tricks. The ancient tradition of the Boi-Bumbá, a popular dramatic ballet with a number of stock-characters, is performed in all its native color. Almost every suburb of Manaus has its Boi. Minha de Ouro, Tira-Prosa, Mina de Prata, Bois from Cachoeirinha, Educandos, and São Raimundo form a procession and cone downtown to sing and to dance in the street and squares for the people. Parties, caipira style, (caipira, Hillbilly) are held in the

principal clubs, with all the food specialties of the epoch: canjica, mugunzá, bolo de milho, pamonha, tacacá.

All this gay mood is broken on All Soul's Day, November 2. The people now go to the Cemetery to pray for the souls of their dead. It is a day of sorrow, longing and nostalgia.

- 
1. Jerked, salted, boiled, and fried fish. Peixe moqueado is a kind of process of preparing fish by reasting it over the coals and upon a gridiron. Peixe em agua grande is preparing it by boiling in plenty of water. - [voltar](#)
  2. Farinha, manioc flour. We have two kinds of farinha: farinha dagua and farinha seca. The first is more popular in Amazonia, the second in the Northeastern States. See the manufacturing process in Gilberto Freyre, The Master and the Slaves, pp. 126-127. - [voltar](#)
  3. Curumins, Indian name for children. - [voltar](#)
  4. April is in the flood period but just before the highest water comes in May, June, and July. Just why milk deliveries were so abundant this late in this particular year the writer does not know. - [voltar](#)
  5. The water level given in these graphs was that of the Rio Negro because it is the only data available which is recorded with precision and regularity. A more accurate graph should have the water level variation of the Purus, Madeira, Acre, etc. where most of the regional production to be exported comes from. The Rio Negro floods two or three months before the southern tributaries begin their rise. - [voltar](#)
  6. Sambas, choros, marchas: different kinds of folk dances. - [voltar](#)
  7. Literally: "Fat" Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday - [voltar](#)
  8. 2,017 Protestants and 418 Jews according to 1940 Census. - [voltar](#)

## CHAPTER V

### TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

After two hundred and seventy-eight years Manaos seems to hold the key-position in the trade and transportation of the Uppar-Amazon Valley. It is the connecting link between the interior and the outside world. Goods and merchandise imported for the riverine towns of the State, and products exported to the world market, must pass through it. Thus, Manaos became the shipping and the landing port of the State of Amazonas and for the Federal Territories of the frontier, Acre, Guaporé, and Rio Branco. The neighboring Republics of Peru and Bolivia, are dependent on Manaos for their exports and imports to a considerable extent, since their Amazonian territories are completely separated from the Pacific Coast by the Andes.

In the first two hundred years Manaos functioned as an advance stake on the western political frontier, landmarking the Portuguese, and later on, the Brazilian, conquest of the Uppar-Amazon. In the last seventy years it assisted the expansion of the economic frontier when the Amazon Valley found itself in possession of the world monopoly of wild rubber. The urgent demand for it stimulated the opening of the jungle and the former Town of Barra, enriched and enlarged by its trade, became Cidade de Manaos, the rubber capital of the world.

The introduction of the steamship in 1853, and the construction of the harbor in 1903,

assured the dominance of Manaus in the region. As it is the last port of call for ocean-going vessels it is also naturally the obligatory port of anchorage of small ships, ferry boats, barges, and launches which link the rubber camps to the city. This break in transportation functioned as an important factor in further development. Foreign and national vessels bringing imports have to transfer their loads to these small vessels in Manaus. On their return these small ships carry the regional products to be loaded at Manaus for the world markets of New York, Liverpool, Hamburg, Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. This landing and shipping movement keeps the harbor and the business organization going, and makes Manaus the most important commercial city in the Amazon Valley, ranking after Belem do Para in volume of trade.

A glance at the figures on exports dramatizes the growth of the city. In 1850 the volume of the export trade handled by Manaus was CR\$22.975.00 (u\$1 1,100,00) roughly). In 1883 it went up to CR\$11.277.275,80 (\$563.000,00) and in 1903 the export trade reached the unprecedented peak of CR\$112.889.915,00 (\$5.563.000,00), almost a five thousand-fold increase over the 1850 figure.<sup>1</sup>

By 1914 the growth of the city was checked by the depression brought about by the loss of control of the rubber market which was taken over by the Malasia plantation production. Since then, Manaus has passed through a long period of doldrums. Even so, it was kept alive by a stream of jungle wealth: timber, nuts,

hides, rosewood essence, oleagionous seed, and tropical fibers which have provided an economic readjustment.

Recently the city has experienced a new boom. Since 1938, after the world depression of 1930's, the city started to recover its regional importance and to perform its former function in the Valley. The Brazilian-American rubber industries in São Paulo created a national demand for rubber which now consumes more than fifty percent of the Amazonian production. The war in Asia, checking the Malasia rubber supply to the United States, gave Manaus another chance. It recovered for a few years the monopoly of the natural rubber and the price rose enough to attract many people to work again in the rubber camps.

Imports and exports brought to life the commerce of Manaus. In 1943 the value of the merchandise imported went up to CR\$259.892.951,20 (\$13,000,000.00) and exports reached to CR\$166,256.588,70 (\$8,300,000.00) These figures have been rising ever since. Likewise the revenue of the State which in 1930 was a little above three-hundred and fifty thousand dollars went up to approximately two million dollars in 1946. The harbor is now frequented by as many foreign ships as in the good old days. In 1941 the port registered the movement of entrances and exits of around four thousand ships of all kinds.

The Rubber is still important but other regional staples have been exported at the same time. Rosewood essence, crocodile skins, hides, lumber, and jute stand almost in the

same important category as rubber or Brazil nuts, which formerly were the only source of the export trade.

Transportation, which was always a dominant factor in the city's growth, continues to be an outstanding factor in the development of present day Manaus. In addition to water transportation, the airplane of recent introduction, is playing an increasing role. Since 1933 the Panair do Brazil S/A; has operated air service between Belem and Manaus. Later, this line was extended up to Porto Velho, the present day capital of the Federal Territory of Guapore. Now Panair planes fly up to Iquitos, a Peruvian city located in the Upper-Amazon, 1,216 miles distant from Manaus. Another aviation company, the "Cruzeiro do Sul", a Brazilian owned and managed enterprise, in 1945 inaugurated a line linking Manaus directly to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, via Porto Velho and Corumba. This line was recently extended to Boa Vista do Rio Branco, capital of the Federal Territory of Rio Branco, connected also by air with Caracas, Venequela as illustrated in the accompanying chart in figure 24. Pan American Airways now plans to link Manaus directly with Miami, Florida. This route was already in operation during the war. If they succeed in bringing this project into effect the distance between Miami and Rio de Janeiro will be very much shortened since Manaus is located in the route of a straight line between these two cities.

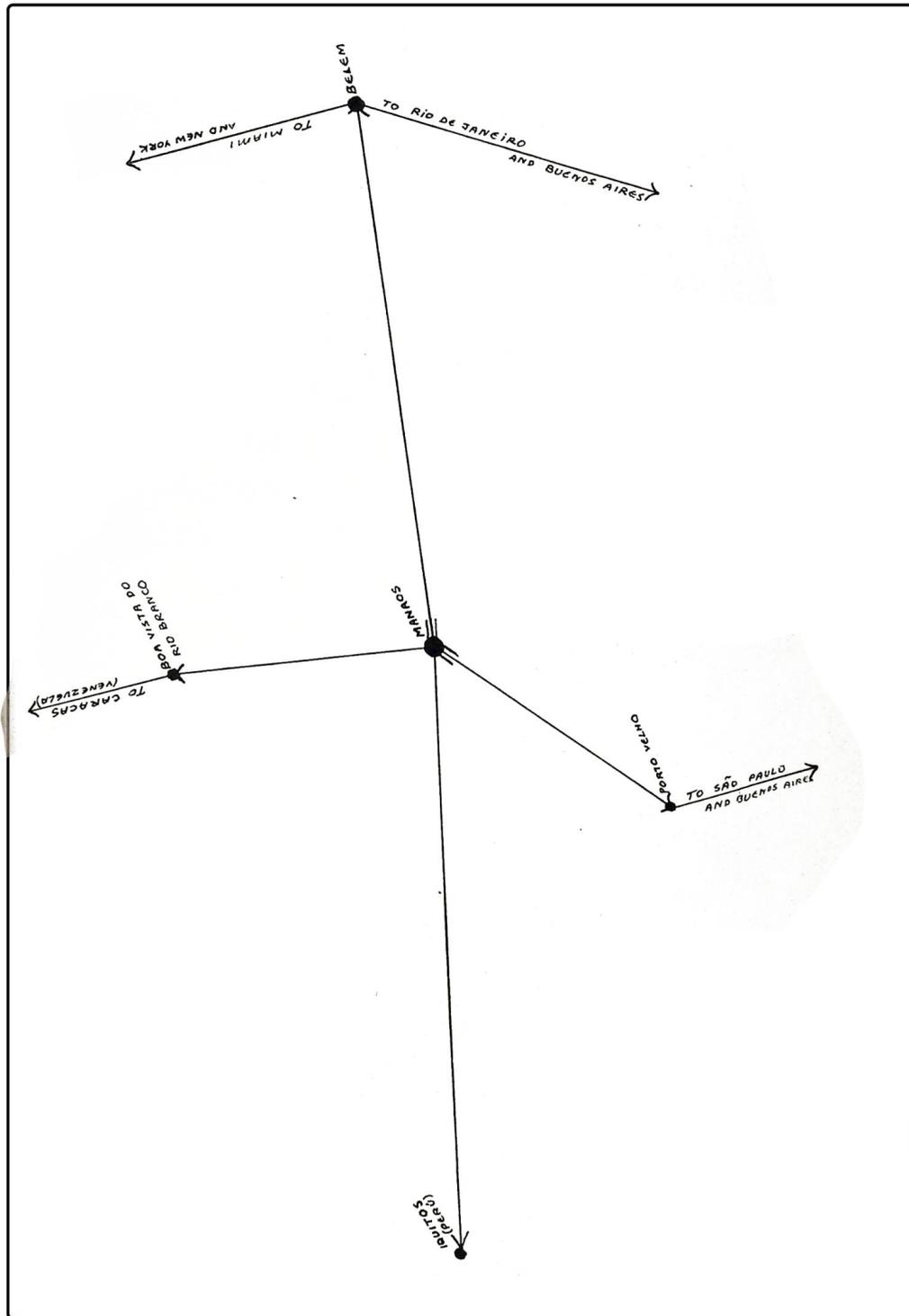


Figure 24. Airway Lines Chart, Manaus ← voltar

Thus, Manaus is becoming at the present time not only a wabor-transportation center but also an airway center of great

significance, for Brazil in particular and for the neighboring South American Republics in general. Most of the bordering Republics of Venezuela, Colombia, Perú, and Bolivia are bound in the future to depend on the Manaus route for airway transportation of passenger, express, and mail destined for Miami and New York.

The last step will be toward industrialization. For a long time small manufacturers have been operating in Manaus. However, the huge potentialities of the Amazon Valley afford a good basis for predicting that the city is likely to be industrialized on a larger scale, mainly along the lines of rubber and lumber. Perhaps it will be a long and slow process, which of course involves nation-wide and world wide consideration. But it seems to be a sure prospect.

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1. The figures in dollars were calculated on the foreign exchange ratio of today and hence are not accurate by any means. - [volar](#)

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# AMAZONAS

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E-mail: [acervodigitalsec@gmail.com](mailto:acervodigitalsec@gmail.com)

