

THE PULPEROS OF CARACAS AND SAN JUAN DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY*

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The pulperos were the largest group of small, independent entrepreneurial storekeepers officially categorized and supervised in Spanish America during the colonial period and the nineteenth century. There are no studies of them. There were other small storekeepers, such as owners of bakeries or fish stores, who were far fewer in number, or artisan storekeepers, who occasionally were many in number but who were craft oriented rather than purely business oriented. What follows is a preliminary report. A final analysis and presentation must await an intensive, long-term study of the pulperos and bodegueros in Caracas, Medellín, or Buenos Aires, as circumstances permit, that will not be completed for several years.

Until we know more about the lower strata of Spanish American society, we might include the pulperos in the Venezuelan historian Federico Brito Figueroa's expansive "*pequeña burguesía* o capas medias urbanas (intelectuales, burocracia civil y militar, pequeño comercio, artesanado)."¹ However, it is important to note that most pulperos would find themselves at the very bottom of this *pequeña burguesía*, among what Brito Figueroa has called the "*blancos de orilla*."² The pulperos were independent business people, owners of property (and opportunity, in the sense of being able to control their children's lives longer than less affluent parents), yet generally not rich enough to be politically or socially significant. A comparison of the pulperos of Caracas and San Juan demonstrates at once the idiosyncratic nature of the pulperos and other storekeepers when compared by region. A mature understanding of the storekeepers generally will require many studies for Spanish America and Brazil.

As a point of departure it is worthwhile to observe that the distinguished Chilean historian, Mario Góngora, in his recent article, "Urban Social Stratification in Colonial Chile,"³ surveys the merchants down to the *tratantes*, "who were dedicated to short-distance trade in the produce of the land." These "were men of little significance—hardly greater than that of grocers and innkeepers." The "grocers," who received no further attention, are the group studied here. There may not have been storekeepers called pulperos in Peru between 1532 and

*The author wishes to thank the City University of New York Faculty Research Award Program for a generous grant that facilitated the present research.

1560, since they are not mentioned in James Lockhart's pioneering *Spanish Peru, 1532–1560*, but the *tratantes*, who in Lockhart's description seem to resemble *pulperos*, are given three paragraphs.⁴

For their descriptions of *pulperos* and *pulperías*, Venezuelans have long relied upon the travel account of F. Depons, French agent to Caracas, written during the first years of the nineteenth century:

There are also in Terra-Firma a species of shops known under the name of *bodegas*, and others under that of *pulperías*. Their commodities consist of china ware, pottery, glass, hardware tools, wines, sugar, hams, dried fruits, cheese, tafia, etc. They have an advantage over the other shops, in not being obliged to remain closed on festival days and sundays. In consequence of their great use and convenience they are allowed to remain open from day break until nine in the evening. This trade is almost exclusively in the hands of active and economical unmarried Catalonians and Canarians; and as it consists in frail and perishable articles, it is liable to damages which must be covered by the profits of its sales; there is not, therefore, an article sold at less than a hundred per cent profit, and some often double and treble that amount. It is in this painful and disgusting traffic, that the beginnings of fortunes are much more frequently laid than in any other business.⁵

There is reason to believe that Depons was referring mainly to the *bodegas* and *bodegueros*, although much of the description fits the *pulperos* and *pulperías*. Elsewhere Depons says: "Those shops in which inebriating liquors form the basis of their stock, are named *pulperías*."⁶

At the end of 1804 the Caracas Consulado won the right of jurisdiction over the *bodegueros*. It was not interested in the lowest category of storekeeper, the *pulperos*, because they dealt only in domestic items. As the Consulado itself observed, the *bodegueros* sold at retail "*los caldos, víveres y demás efectos que introduce por mayor el comercio*." These *viveres* were "muy diferentes en el concepto y estimación popular de los que aquí llaman *pulperos*."⁷ We may conclude that the *bodegueros* sold at retail both food and general items purchased from the wholesale merchants, the *comerciantes* or *mercaderes*. These would be imported goods. The *pulperos*, on the other hand, sold at retail food items and spirits of a domestic nature. This general description probably holds true during the first half of the nineteenth century in Caracas.

In San Juan the inventory requirements seem to have been more flexible. The only inventory I have found for a *pulpería* is one for a San Juan store of 1865. It shows imported items, for instance, in wine and cheese.⁸ This is a late date for this study and the *pulpería* in question also maintained a small *fonda*, an eating-house, and this may have accounted for the imported items. Yet the San Juan *pulperos* seem to have been more aggressive in investing in other businesses, their investments in their *pulperías* were often surprisingly large, and there is reason to believe that some at least involved themselves in the wholesale trade even as *pulperos*. In 1865, for instance, Marcelino and Feliciano Vicente decided to form a partnership "al por mayor y menor estableciendo una *Pulpería*, que llevará la razon de 'Marcelino Vicente y Hermano'." The two

were in the process of forming a second partnership, this one with Salvador Ledesma, for the establishment of a panadería, also in San Juan, also to deal "al por mayor y menor."⁹ Again this contract is for a slightly later date than one would prefer, but one always senses salient differences between the San Juan and Caracas pulperos.

I think it impossible to produce a definitive list of the pulperos of Caracas or San Juan for the first half of the nineteenth century. Lists for most years must be prepared from civil, military, and ecclesiastical censuses and these are clearly inaccurate. The cabildos had jurisdiction over the pulperos and thus the Caracas cabildo conducted *visitas* to check their business practices every year from 1799 through 1809.¹⁰ Other storekeepers were included in the *visitas* and the resulting records provide wonderful though not perfectly accurate information, including names and addresses. There are also the many lists of those pulperos who contributed to the various forced and voluntary loans during the early nineteenth century, but we are obliged to assume that some storekeepers managed to escape these occasionally.

Employing these various sources, I have compiled lists of the pulperos in Caracas for 1797, 1799–1809, 1812, 1818–22, and most importantly, 1816. The 1816 list was prepared by officials of the Real Hacienda and is accurate. Wills and contracts from 1800 through the middle of the century flesh out the lists. For San Juan there is the published list of the gremio of pulperos and their contributions to the forced loan for 1827, completed at the end of 1826.¹¹ This list appears to be quite accurate, although there are obvious spelling errors. Spanish law gave the cabildos the right to license the pulperos. Depons speaks of these licenses and there are references to them in the cabildo records of San Juan.¹² I have not seen licensing procedures or their results for Caracas. In 1850 the governor of Puerto Rico, not the cabildo, signed (and presumably required) licenses for all storekeepers in San Juan. The official list resulting from the licensing effort is accurate, though not complete.¹³ These two lists have been enlarged through the use of wills, contracts, and census material. Especially valuable were the censuses of 1818 and 1840.¹⁴

Yet most of these sources are not totally useful. Census takers were particularly careless and even those who compiled the *visita* lists were not terribly perspicacious when it came to reporting names. Antonio Mallo appears on one list and Antonio Mayo on another, yet other information leads us to believe they were one. When a middle name is left out the situation becomes complicated. Is José González also José María González? In this case José González, thirty in 1797, was listed as a pulpero in Caracas in 1797 and then again in 1807 and 1809. José María González was listed as a pulpero in Caracas in 1807, 1809 and again in 1839. Thus we may assume that they are different people. The more complicated the name the easier the task.

But perhaps more importantly, in Caracas especially, the administrator of the pulpería is sometimes listed for *visita* or loan purposes. That is, the owner may be listed on one *visita* or forced or voluntary loan document and the administrator, be he different as was often the case, on a later document. John C. Super has used *visita* records to judge length of *obraje* ownership in Querétero,

Mexico, between 1782 and 1809.¹⁵ This clearly cannot be done for Caracas pulperos. Furthermore, the *visita*, forced and voluntary loan, and census documents are unreliable because in both Caracas and San Juan the pulperos often had partners, both active and silent. Does one consider a silent partner a pulpero? Until it can be demonstrated that their social, economic, and political lives were different from their active partners, we should consider them pulperos. Moreover, it is not always clear when a silent partner was truly that. I am inclined to believe that some partners who do not appear as the owner of record, especially in Caracas, played some active role in the business. One would think this would be the case especially when we learn through the wills that the partner was a brother or other near relative. In this event, it is not unreasonable to assume that one relative might be listed as representing the pulpería for *visita* or loan purposes.

The cabildos had the right to limit the number of pulperías within their jurisdictions, yet I have not seen a specific cabildo attempt to do so. There was probably an outer limit established by the municipalities prior to the turn of the eighteenth century. At any rate, in 1816, at the time of the best census of the Caracas pulperías, there were 134 pulperías and 132 different owners. (This is on the basis of one name per store. Some may have been administrators rather than owners.) Two pulperos owned two stores each. We may say that the pulperos owned their stores in the sense of the interior properties. Most pulperos rented their stores for a few pesos per month. Ownership of the houses in which the pulperías existed was almost always held by other people, very often women, and at times such ownership became multiple and apparently a business in itself. Among the 132 Caracas pulperos in 1816, ten were women referred to as *doña*. One of the two pulperos who owned more than one pulpería was Doña María Petronila Porras, who kept one store at the corner of Calvo Street and the other at the corner of la Glorieta. Two other women pulperas were not referred to as *doña* and we may thus be confident in this case that they were *pardas*. Similarly there were eighteen *pardo* pulperos.¹⁶

Usually *pardos* are referred to as mulattoes or people of color. In Caracas they were the “lightest” free people of color. In the eighteenth century in Caracas these would be referred to as *pardos legítimos* and would be understood to be “los que resultan de blanco y negro o a lo menos de tercerón con cuarterón o quinterón, porque éstos se van acercando a los blancos mientras más se fuesen alejando de los negros.”¹⁷ In the nineteenth century they are sometimes categorized as *pardos* and other times *pardos libres*, a seeming redundancy. It is well known that many of Spanish America’s artisans of the era were *pardos*. They were clearly in the minority among the pulperos, yet more interesting is the very fact that they were indeed so well represented among these entrepreneurs. What is more, the next highest category of storekeeper, the *bodegueros*, counted a considerable number of *pardos*.

When I first began to study the small storekeepers I naturally included the *bodegueros* among them, as I am sure anyone else would have done. While they did not share anywhere near the social prestige or political and economic power of *comerciantes* or *mercaderes*, they were not small in the sense of a

lower-middle class. Wills and contracts demonstrate that they often maintained inventories of nine or ten thousand pesos. This makes them wealthy in comparison to the pulperos and by the standards of the times. (In a later study the bodegueros and pulperos will be compared specifically and at length.) In 1809 there were approximately eighty-two bodegueros in Caracas and among them ten pardos.¹⁸ That is a substantial percentage and indicative of the considerable wealth some pardos had achieved. (There is always the possibility that some storekeeping pardos managed to enter the "don" category just as the "gracias al sacar" rulings at the end of the eighteenth century permitted people of color to purchase a "whiter" classification within the broad colored category.) Even with the obvious wealth accumulated by some pardos among the artisans and storekeepers, there still were institutional restrictions for further growth placed on them and their families. For instance, while their children could easily study at lower-level schools, the University of Caracas did not provide a hospitable atmosphere.¹⁹

In 1816 Caracas had 132 pulperos and 134 pulperías, although the number of pulperos would be significantly larger if we were to consider partners at this time. The visita of 1809 shows 112 pulperos and 118 pulperías.²⁰ Other visitas and census material suggest that during the first decades of the nineteenth century Caracas supported approximately 125 pulperías. This was for a Caracas that was miniscule when compared with the modern city. Not included in early nineteenth-century Caracas are such familiar sections as del Valle, Hatillo, Barruta, Chacao, Petare, and others. Caracas then comprised the six parroquias of Catedral Poniente, Catedral Este, Altagracia, San Pablo, Santa Rosalía, and Candelaria. John Lombardi has recently rejected the older figures of forty or forty-two thousand for the population of Caracas during the first years of the nineteenth century and suggested twenty-four thousand instead.²¹ This new estimate seems decidedly more reasonable for an area serviced by so few pulperías.

It is difficult to determine the population of San Juan in the same period. The city comprised somewhat more than what today is Old San Juan, specifically the barrios of San Francisco, San Juan, Santo Domingo, Santa Bárbara, Puerta de Tierra, and La Puntilla. San Sebastián was added at mid-century. San Juan was often referred to as the Ciudad de Puerto Rico. The census of 1815 gives it a population of fourteen thousand, while the census of 1820 cites a population of 7,658.²² Obviously we have a problem here. In 1826 the gremio of pulperos listed 111 pulperías for San Juan. Six pulperos kept two stores each. Only one firm had more than one name in the listing, Sres. Otalora y Ochoteco. There were three pulperas and apparently no pardos.²³

The pulpería licensing list of January 1851 shows 102 legal pulperías;²⁴ additional licenses were granted for a dozen or so different pulperías. In 1850 San Juan also issued licenses for fourteen quincallas, one perfumería, eight panaderías, four chocolaterías, six confiterías, five fondas, two cordonerías, and so on.²⁵ According to the *Almanaque Político y de Comercio de la Ciudad de Buenos Ayres para el año de 1826*, that city had a population of some seventy thousand, with 461 pulperos (on a one name, one store basis). Several pulperos operated

more than one pulpería.²⁶ The Buenos Aires pulperos were those who sold “comestibles y bebidas por menor.”

There is interesting information to be derived from the 1826 and 1851 San Juan lists. In the latter year two pulperos seem to be pardos. In 1826 there were three pulperas and, according to the formal list of licenses with 102 names in 1851, this number declined to none. While there was only one pulpería in 1826 listed as a multiple-name firm, in 1851 there were many more obvious companies. Out of 102 listings there were twelve partnerships with such titles as D. Juan Barrio y Compañía, Sres. Caldas e hijos, Sres. Casanova y Compañía, Sres. Caldas y Sobrinos, Sres. Llampart y Borrás, and so on.

To the extent that forced loans reflected the ability of the storekeepers to pay, the 1827 loan gives us an indication of what we may consider the putative wealth of the various pulperos and the differences among them. There are many loans in the 12 to 50-peso range, but there are also many over 100 pesos, several above 150 pesos, and eight are 190 or more pesos. The pulperos were required to raise eight thousand pesos for the royal treasury for the year 1827, and we have no way of knowing how unrealistic the demand was. In previous years the pulperos were not quite forthcoming, and some coercion was required to incite the requisite patriotism. For instance, in 1824 the Intendant of Puerto Rico had to request the Captain General to dispatch a sergeant to accompany the loan collectors. The Captain General complied.²⁷ However, if indeed the peso amounts contributed by each pulpero in 1826 in any way reflected their ability to pay, we are confronted by astonishingly high figures. Thirty-five pulperos contributed one hundred or more pesos at a time when loans were often collected annually and at a time when one could have established a pulpería for less than one hundred pesos. It would have been a small store indeed but nevertheless a functioning business.

Because of faulty record keeping it is not possible to say confidently just which pulperos not listed consistently in the documents failed or elected to leave their businesses. Moreover, we do not know how many Caracas pulperos lost their stores to the earthquake of 1812 or to the political and military disturbances of the independence period, especially where Spaniards were concerned. Yet, it is possible to acknowledge the many pulperos who certainly functioned over a period of many years. Much the same could be said about San Juan.²⁸ My data suggest that few pulperos ever moved up to the next higher category of storekeeper, that of bodeguero in Caracas or keeper of a tienda de mercería in San Juan. There is the case of Pedro Guarch, a San Juan pulpero in 1826, who went on to other entrepreneurial activities, becoming a member of the Board of Directors of the Compañía de Vapores de Cataño, created in 1849 to service San Juan Bay.²⁹ There is also Manuel Apellanis (spelled Apellanes in the 1826 published list) who was a pulpero in 1826 and who went on to form a tienda de mercería in 1829 with his sons Rafael and Manuel. The firm was to be known as “Apellanis hijos” and was capitalized at 16,573 pesos. The father was the “socio comanditario,” the silent partner.³⁰ There is a strong likelihood that at least Juan Hernández García, Manuel Martínez, and Antonio Obelmejía moved up in rank in Caracas. Such upward economic mobility is interesting, but these examples

are isolated and atypical. In contrast, there is equal likelihood that Juan Luis Martínez, Gonzalo Padrón Castro, and Bartolomé de Sotomayor travelled in the opposite direction. Yet, there was clearly observable upward economic mobility among the pulperos of both cities. However, this mobility occurred normally within the broad category of pulpero ownership.

Pulperos often started out small and grew considerably in size and wealth. José García and José Masías opened a pulpería in San Juan in 1825 with a total capital investment of ninety-five pesos. In 1831 the investment, including an eight-year-old female negro slave, was worth nearly one thousand pesos.³¹ Antonio Serra established a pulpería in 1824 and was helped in the store by his nephew Pedro Salas. For the next six years Salas received fifty pesos annually for administering the store and he shared one-half of the profits. These must have been notable since the two formed a partnership in 1832 for a pulpería (perhaps in the same place) with a capitalization of over 6,229 pesos—extraordinarily high by pulpero standards generally—with Salas contributing over 2,229 pesos. This suggests marked economic advancement.³² Several pulperos in Caracas and San Juan held more than one pulpería, and one would assume that in some instances the second was opened as a result of the successes of the first. For instance, Francisco Delgado and Miguel María Lliteres formed a partnership on 1 January 1851, to establish a pulpería in San Juan on calle de San José. The total capitalization was 4,011 pesos, with Delgado putting in 3,488 pesos. By early January 1853, the “sociedad” had done so well that they had acquired an additional store on calle San Justo.³³ Other examples will be mentioned later in the essay.

Sometimes pulperos went into additional ventures. Pedro Navarro, a bachelor from Aragón, had a pulpería in San Juan in 1841. He also had a billiard parlor.³⁴ María Petronila Philipie wrote her will in San Juan in 1832 at thirty-eight years of age. She was born in Curaçao and was married to Juan de la Cruz Esturio. They had one child, thirteen-year-old Manuela Feliciano de Jesús. Her husband brought to the marriage two slaves and a confitería. She brought three slaves and two hundred pesos in personal effects. By 1841 they had between them nine or ten slaves (whose value could have been in the thousands of pesos) a fonda, and a pulpería. James Lockhart has observed that tratantes in colonial Lima “particularly those who were married, doubled as inn and tavern keepers. From 1550 on, the city of Lima awarded tavern licenses as an act of charity to tratantes who were poor, burdened with family, lame, or wounded in war.”³⁵ For want of additional information, fonda is translated here as eating-house rather than inn or tavern, although these latter terms are equally valid.

The situation in San Juan was clearly unlike Lima when it came to fonda licenses, as shown by this couple, obviously not destitute but rather quite successful and entrepreneurial. Don José Turull was a well known pulpero in San Juan in 1826. In 1816 he had formed a partnership with María Juana Lascabes for a confitería on calle San Justo. She put up the capital of 2,300 pesos. In 1832 the two of them had a “confitería y casa de café” on calle de la Marina. It is not clear whether he still functioned as a pulpero in 1834. It is certain, however, that Lascabes put up all the capital for the confitería and casa de café, and that Turull

was required to administer it for one-half the profits. The license was to be in his name.³⁶

Manuel Barzoaín was a pulpero in San Juan during the early 1850s whose firm went under the title "Manuel Barzoaín and Company." In 1854 he formed a partnership with Antonia Rodríguez to operate a *cordonería* in San Juan. Barzoaín put up the entire capital of two thousand pesos and was the *socio comanditario*. Rodríguez was the "socio gestor" and put in "su industria y la obligación de estar al frente del establecimiento." The firm was to be known as "Rodríguez y Compañía."³⁷

Francisco Morales was a pulpero in 1818 in San Juan and he was also listed as one in 1826. Born in the Canary Islands, he married twice and was sixty years old in 1849. His first wife bore him several children and six still lived in 1849. He had no children with his second wife. Neither he nor his first wife brought any assets to their marriage nor had any at the time of her death. His second wife gave him a thousand pesos, a considerable stake. It appears that by 1849 Morales was no longer a pulpero, but he did own a *tienda de quincalla* (a hardware store), and more than one *estancia* in Rio Piedras.³⁸ There are some activities of the pulperos that elude careful evaluation. Juan Antonio de León, from Santo Domingo, was married and forty-six years old in 1832. In that year he not only had a *pulpería* in San Juan, but he owned ten slaves. Why did he have so much capital invested in slaves? They surely were of no value to him as a pulpero. Rather this seems to have been some sort of business venture.³⁹ Then there is Domingo Garrido, a bachelor from Galicia. In 1846 he owned a *pulpería* in San Juan and more than sixteen cows.⁴⁰ One wonders what commercial interest Garrido had in so many cows.

Sometimes there were great entrepreneurs among the smaller storekeepers. Bernardo López Penelas was born in Galicia and had established himself in the "Comercio" of the city of Caracas. According to his will he was a "Caballero agraciado por S.M. de la Real Orden Americana de Ysabel la Católica, condecorado con su Real escudo de fidelidad." López migrated to San Juan apparently during the independence movement. In 1828 we know that he had a wife and three children "en la impubertad." When he married in 1822 he brought forty-two thousand pesos fuerte to the relationship. In 1828 he had a *tienda de mercería* in partnership with Rafael Balbuena, located at the Plaza Mayor. Previously he had another *tienda de mercería* with the same Balbuena and in the same store. Later he had a second *tienda de mercería* with Francisco Río Peres and Ramón Andreu Peres. Like its predecessor this partnership was terminated. This is an interesting lesson about storekeepers generally. There are frequent instances in which they terminated partnerships and formed new ones, even in the same physical location, sometimes with the same partners, sometimes with different partners. This reasonable business activity seems to have occurred more frequently among the keepers of the *tiendas de mercería* in San Juan than either the pulperos of San Juan or Caracas or the *bodegueros* of Caracas.

Perhaps a partial explanation for this predilection may be found in the fact that the *tiendas de mercería*, while the next highest formal category of store above the *pulperías* in San Juan, were often far more highly capitalized than the

Caracas bodegas and they tended to deal in the wholesale as well as retail trade. The Caracas bodegueros were strictly retailers. (There were usually less than a half-dozen "bodegonos" in San Juan, but these seem to have been warehouses rather than stores.) A lesson to be learned from the frequent creation and termination of partnerships is that lists of storekeepers are often unreliable. Without further evidence we must assume that in one arrangement López may have been the active partner, or one of them, and that his name may have been recorded by the census or loan collectors, and that in another arrangement one of the other partners may have been more active or merely the one cited by the authorities. In either case they all would have been storekeepers. The termination of a partnership or a store was sometimes more apparent than real.

Bernardo López Penelas was clearly an active businessman. Not only had he been in three *tiendas de mercería* that we know of, he was also a *pulpero*. He was the keeper of a *pulpería* administered by his partner, José Metalobos. He also had another *pulpería* next to the first one, which he formed from the funds of the first one, taking out a bit over three thousand pesos. The second *pulpería* was administered by José Antonio Forte, who put in seven hundred pesos.⁴¹ One would think that the example of Bernardo López Penelas, a migrant "aristocrat," a storekeeper, and what is more, partner in two of the lowliest of stores, the *pulperías*, is strong indication that retail trade was not a social liability in the early nineteenth century. We may join Mario Góngora's sentiment that commerce "even the retail trade, apparently did not by the end of the eighteenth century involve any social stigma."⁴²

Additional confirmation comes in the activities of Simón de Ugarte, born in Spain, resident of Caracas during the late colonial period, and a man of enormous merchant wealth and considerable political influence. At the time of his marriage his capital was worth, by his own reckoning, some seventy thousand pesos. His wife brought nothing to the marriage but eventually inherited about seventeen hundred pesos. Ugarte clearly had not married into wealth. They had nine children in the marriage. Three died at an early age. After his marriage his capital had increased "considerablemente," but the wars of independence were disruptive and much of his wealth was confiscated by the patriots. He and his wife had to leave Caracas. In 1821 he and five children migrated to the Canary Islands. During these difficult times he inherited an impressive fortune from his brother, who was also his partner.

When the wartime situation in Venezuela stabilized with the patriots ascendant, Ugarte returned to Caracas and bought a cacao and coffee hacienda for slightly more than 40,800 pesos. But he also bought a *bodega*, that is, a small retail store! The partnership included his brother-in-law, Juan José Sánchez, and his son-in-law, Francisco Bárbara. Ugarte, through the management of his son, José Félix, invested 1,500 pesos; Sánchez invested another 1,500 pesos; and Bárbara, charged with the "principal trabajo y dirección" of the store, invested an additional 1,000 pesos.⁴³ This was truly a family operation. We see that a *bodega*, important enough to be under the jurisdiction of the *Consulado*, could be established for four thousand pesos. We also see that a rich *hacendado*, formerly an important merchant, would invest in a small store with his brother-

in-law and son-in-law and would involve his son in it. What is more, this was an extremely small bodega. Surely Ugarte would not have involved his family in such a minor business venture if it meant jeopardizing their social standing.

Other pulperos were also active in more than one venture. Domingo González was born in the town of San Diego, Venezuela, but had become a resident of Caracas. His parents were from the Canary Islands; they were, as the Venezuelans said, *isleños*. González was a bachelor, but he had four illegitimate children with four women. He recognized them all. He had a pulpería in San Diego that was administered by his partner, Maximiliano Revete. Each had put in two hundred pesos in either 1836 or 1837. The house in which the pulpería existed belonged to González and a rental was traded off against Revete's labor so that they each were to share 50 percent of the profits. In its first two years and three months its capital "ha aumentado considerablemente." González also had a coffee grove with five thousand trees. In Caracas he had a house and a pulpería, whose value was fourteen hundred pesos.⁴⁴

The previously mentioned Vicente brothers were pulperos in San Juan who invested in a panadería in 1865.⁴⁵ Their pulpería was dedicated both to the wholesale as well as retail trade. This means that after mid-century at least the San Juan pulperías were sometimes wholesale operations. There is no indication that this was the case earlier in San Juan or at any time in Caracas. The only other pulpero who invested in a panadería that I have seen was José María Padrón. Padrón was a twenty-nine-year-old pulpero in Caracas in 1797 and was listed also in 1799. He does not appear among the pulperos during the first years of the nineteenth century, although he may well have been a partner of one of the several Padrón pulperos. In 1805 he formed a partnership with Marcos Gomila to establish a panadería in Caracas. Padrón put up the entire cash capital of two hundred silver pesos. Gomila contributed his "trabajo personal" and two slaves.⁴⁶

Perhaps the most interesting feature of pulpero business life, something that does not seem to be mentioned in the historical literature, is that some pulpero socios entered into partnership without any other investment than their own "industry" in return for a percentage of the profits.⁴⁷ These were not the "dependientes" of the larger commercial stores who sometimes went on to merchant status themselves. Juan de la Cruz Sefi formed a "compañía ó Sociedad mercantil" to establish a pulpería in San Juan in 1831 with Manuel Marza. The partnership was authorized for two years and might be renewed if the principals so chose. Sefi was required to deliver to Marza a pulpería already in operation in San Juan and presently valued at 408 pesos. Marza was required to administer the store. His investment was "su industria, con la cual y su personal trabajo procurara darle al dicho Capital, todo el aumento posible." They were to share equally in all gains and losses.⁴⁸ We have observed earlier that José García had entered into a pulpería partnership with José Masías without putting in any capital. I am sure that further investigation will prove this a widespread practice.

Others were able to become administrators of pulperías for a share in the profits and sometimes losses too. As such we might consider them uninvested partners. Antonio Medina, an *isleño* bachelor, had a pulpería in Caracas in 1800

that was valued at 753 pesos and administered by Antonio Negrón for one-third of the "ganancias, ó perdidas, por pago de su administración."⁴⁹ Ramón Pérez Calanche was a Caracas bachelor whose pulpería was valued at some 1,064 pesos. By 1838, when he wrote his will, he had given the pulpería over to Rito Flores for a half-share in the profits.⁵⁰ Diego de Aguirre was a San Juan pulpero. Before he died in 1833, he gave his pulpería, valued officially at the extraordinary figure of 8,329 pesos, to his nephew Ysidro de Arana. Arana was to receive one-half the profits in return for administering the store. The remaining profits were to go to Aguirre's heirs.⁵¹ Josefa Matilde Yanes was the legitimate daughter of two Caracas residents. She herself remained unmarried but bore four hijos naturales. In 1838 she purchased a pulpería in Caracas valued at 335 pesos. She turned it over to Julián Martínez, who was to administer it for one-third of the profits.⁵² Pedro Salas worked in his uncle's San Juan pulpería. When his uncle, Antonio Serra, wrote his will in 1828 he divided his estate equally between his sister and his nephew.⁵³ Thus we see another route into the pulpero ranks.

There was obviously a subculture of workers who became businessmen and owners of businesses about whom we know practically nothing. How richer our knowledge of Spanish America's socioeconomic history would be if we did. Not only did many people move into the ranks of the pulperos without any financial investment, many joined pulperia operations with modest investments when compared to the total value of the store. For instance, Andrés Juan Alvarez and José Benito Dorado formed a partnership to establish a pulpería in San Juan in 1848. The name of the company was to be "Andrés J. Alvarez y Compañía." Alvarez was required to put in 2,073 pesos and Dorado was to put in 434 pesos. Profits were to be divided equally.⁵⁴ Dorado could have opened his own pulpería with 434 pesos, but he chose to invest in a larger firm. Since his investment was modest when compared to Alvarez's, it might be assumed that he was required to do most of the work. Dorado's contribution would be lost in any official list of pulperos. In fact, the company is listed in 1851, but Dorado's name is not. There are other examples of modest investments.⁵⁵

Many pulperos could have opened their own stores. Rather they chose to join much larger businesses than they could have financed themselves. Between those who invested nothing and those who invested minor amounts we see a group of people finding economic opportunity and upward mobility at a stratum of society generally invisible when one peers down from the top. Indeed, there was a wide range of pulpero wealth. Following is a table of pulperia valuations for Caracas and San Juan given in wholesale figures. From this table one sees that pulperías were often capitalized under two thousand pesos and that it was possible to enter the ranks of the pulperos with only a few hundred pesos. Given the pulpero predilection to enter into partnerships, the amount of capital required was even more modest. To keep this capitalization in perspective one should bear in mind that the Caracas bodegas and the San Juan tiendas de mercería were usually capitalized at much higher figures. I have mentioned that the bodegas were often valued at nine or ten thousand pesos. The tiendas de mercería were often capitalized at between seven and ten thousand pesos, but at times the figures run two, three, and four times as much as that.

Sample Pulpería Valuations

Name	City	Date	Value (pesos) ^a
1. Francisco Montero	Caracas	1838	1,600
2. Josefa Matilde Yanes	Caracas	1838	335
3. Antonio Medina	Caracas	1800	753
4. Ramón Pérez Calanche	Caracas	1839	1,064
5. Sefi and Marza	San Juan	1831	408
6. Jayme Julián	San Juan	1834	300
7. Miguel García	San Juan	1865	2,430 ^b
8. Diego de Aguirre	San Juan	1833	8,328
9. Juan Cabañas	San Juan	1830	5,000 ^c
10. Delgado and Lliteres	San Juan	1851	4,011 ^d
11. Alvarez and Dorado	San Juan	1848	2,507 ^e
12. Lamas and Vila	San Juan	1845	693
13. Vicente bros.	San Juan	1865	9,500 ^f
14. Hidalgo and León	San Juan	1832	1,030 ^g
15. Goenaga, Pesquera y Cía.	San Juan	1851	1,983
16. Alejandro Pérez	San Juan	1849	400
17. Melchor Alsina	San Juan	1846	1,211
18. Dolores Bárbara	San Juan	1831	1,247
19. Francisco Suárez	San Juan	1845	2,078

Sources: For Caracas: *Protocolos*, 1839 (Alvarado), ff. 1–15, in *Registro Principal*, hereafter cited as RP; *Protocolos*, 1839 (Alvarado), f. 8, RP; *Escribanías* (the *Escribanías* become *Protocolos* during 1835), 1800 (Aramburu), ff. 59–61, RP; *Protocolos*, 1839 (Alvarado), ff. 11–13, RP. For San Juan: All citations are from *Protocolos Notariales*, which are housed in the *Archivo General de Puerto Rico*. Caja 446 (1831), ff. 114–115; Caja 483 (1834) ff. 282–284; Caja 204 (1865), ff. 1010–1014; Caja 36 (1833), ff. 732–737; Caja 445 (1830), ff. 54–58; Caja 532 (1853); ff. 2–4; Caja 453 (1848), folio numbers eaten away; Caja 450 (1845), f. 101; Caja 204 (1865), ff. 1286–1292; Caja 480 (1832), ff. 469–471; Caja 531 (1849), ff. 21–23; Caja 504 (1849), ff. 29–30; Caja 451 (1846), f. 161; Caja 446 (1831), ff. 303–304; Caja 450 (1845), f. 209.

^aAll figures are rounded off to nearest peso. The figures in lines 8, 11, 12, 15, 17, and 19 are in “macuquina” money, worth slightly less than the traditional peso.

^bThis figure was given originally in escudos. In 1865, one escudo equalled two pesos.

^cIncludes also a warehouse established to supply the pulpería.

^dThis was the original investment.

^eSee note 54.

^fThe original figure was in escudos.

^gThis figure includes six hundred pesos in cash. Valuations typically included cash on hand. This was a rather large amount and may have been due to the liquidation of inventory or the sale of slaves.

Not only could men and women of relatively limited means, and others with even less financial resources but with certain initiative, find room among the pulperos, there were profits to be had for their efforts. Depons, when speaking of bodegas and pulperías in Caracas, asserted that since "frail and perishable articles" were sold, profits were one hundred percent and often "double and treble that amount." If this were so for the pulperías, great fortunes would have been amassed. While I am inclined to think that sizable profits were frequently made and some relatively modest fortunes acquired, the Depons estimation seems unrealistic. If the pulperos averaged only 20 percent profit on sales there is reason to believe they would have been quite successful. We have already seen that some pulperos owned more than one store and that some purchased the second with the profits from the first. We have observed that a few at least moved into a higher category of storekeeping. We also have some hard data concerning profits, as seen for the pulpería José García had in partnership with José Masías in San Juan. The original 1825 capitalization was 95 pesos and the worth of the store in 1831 was 957 pesos, including an eight-year-old slave girl. One would assume the girl worked in the store and must be included in its final value. A slave girl of that age would have sold at the time for anywhere between sixty and one hundred pesos. Counting a full seven years of operation there was a yearly profit of some 123 pesos, that is, well over 100 percent profit annually on the original investment (perhaps even more since the child was García's). Most of the items in a pulpería inventory were not perishable. Alcoholic beverages, rice, beans, nuts, cheese, and probably flour could be stored for great lengths of time. Fruit was of course perishable. This means that in climates such as Caracas and San Juan the items stocked could remain in active inventory for lengthy periods. The pulpería inventory was unusually active and it was not necessary to invest much capital in goods that had to be stored away for periods of time. Working in conjunction with this retail advantage was the presence of many wholesalers in easy proximity. In fact, with most items a pulpero would not have had to stock much of a supply at all except in times of expected scarcity. One would think that when it came to rum, wine, liquors, beans, and rice, the pulpero would require only a few "back-up" items in reserve. What is more, a bag of beans or rice in a small store would not have to be backed-up perhaps for days or weeks. This means that practically the entire capital investment went for an inventory that was on the shelves rather than in a storeroom. Which is to speculate that the pulpería inventory must have turned over frequently. The question is how often and at what profit?

The large American food chain stores that announce profits on sales of only slightly more than 2 percent turn over their inventories every two or three weeks. An official with the second largest chain of food stores in Puerto Rico indicated that his stores turn over their entire inventory every two weeks and with the warehouse included, every three weeks. This means that if one had an inventory worth \$100,000 and earned only 2 percent profit on sales there would still be a sizable net income. That is, two thousand dollars would be earned on capital invested in inventory every two or three weeks, returning finally an enormous percentage profit. In August 1976 I asked two small grocers on calle la

Luna in Old San Juan about their inventories. These grocers stocked many of the items the pulperos stocked, including alcoholic beverages, beans, and rice. The main question asked was how often the grocers turned over their inventory during the course of a year. Both thought this a remarkable question, something they had never before considered. The first store was rather small and the owner estimated an inventory of about \$6,000 (dollars). Upon reflection he thought that he turned the inventory over some twelve to fifteen times a year. Thus, if he grossed on average 35 percent profit on the sale of inventory, his gross income would be some \$25,000. Subtract rental of the store, interest payments, and salaries and there still appears to be an impressive net profit on capital investment. The second store was at least three times larger in size and visible inventory. The owner thought, again upon reflection, that he turned over his inventory some twenty or twenty-five times a year. This would mean phenomenal profits. Even being extremely skeptical of these estimates, this is provocative information.⁵⁶

By way of speculation, we may tentatively presume that the pulperos grossed two or three times the value of their inventory. If they turned over their inventory only eight times a year and made on average 25 percent of sales they would have netted great profits. A five hundred-peso inventory sold at 25 percent profit would produce 125 pesos gross profit eight times a year. This is a thousand-peso gross profit. Expenses were not terribly high. In a pulpería capitalized under five hundred pesos there probably were no paid employees (a very critical point if one were considering child-rearing habits). Even so, Pedro Salas received fifty pesos per year for administering his uncle's pulpería in San Juan from 1824 to 1830.⁵⁷ It is clear that some administrators were permitted no salary, except perhaps food for themselves and their families. In San Juan the active partners of the *tiendas de mercería* were often permitted to withdraw between fifty and one hundred pesos from cash receipts for personal expenses, but this would be deducted from the partner's final profits. It is likely that the total expense incurred in operating a pulpería capitalized at under five hundred pesos, not counting the owner's labor, was at most three hundred pesos, and probably notably less. (Strangely, I have seen no indication of inventory building through credit.) That is, on an investment of five hundred pesos a pulpero would have seen a net profit of at least seven hundred pesos, and this would have placed him easily in what nineteenth-century independent Spanish Americans often pointedly referred to as the "active citizenry."

While it is clear that some pulperos must have done poorly and failed in their businesses, and that others were not considered affluent, in fact were sometimes listed in the forced loans as "pobre,"⁵⁸ many others surely did exceptionally well. Perhaps some moved to other regions or other businesses, perhaps some bought land and entered the agrarian life, although there seems to be little evidence of this. What is certain is that many people purchased functioning pulpero operations. Lamas and Vilay, partners in a San Juan pulpería, sold their store to Nicolás Dorado for 693 pesos.⁵⁹ Lucas Hidalgo, in jail at the time, sold his 50-percent share in a San Juan pulpería to his partner Juan Antonio de León for 516 pesos in 1832.⁶⁰ In 1852, Goenaga, Pesquera y Compañía sold their San

Juan pulpería to Francisca Feyjoo for 1,983 pesos.⁶¹ The sellers had themselves purchased the store only the year before. In accordance with the commercial code, Doña Francisca, married and over twenty-five, had to receive prior permission from her husband to make the purchase. In 1846 Melchor Alsina sold his San Juan pulpería to Cecilio García for 1,211 pesos.⁶² Dolores Bárbara, widow, sold her San Juan pulpería to Juan Rodríguez in 1831 for 1,247 pesos.⁶³ Francisco Suárez sold his San Juan pulpería and almacén to José María Goenaga and Francisco Molina in 1845 for 2,708 pesos.⁶⁴ Josefa Matilde Yanes purchased her Caracas pulpería in 1839 for 335 pesos.⁶⁵

Not only were there sales, but the sellers made the financial arrangements particularly attractive. Typical was the Goenaga, Pesquera and Compañía sale to Feyjoo. Doña Francisca was required to put down 500 pesos and then pay out the remaining 1,483 pesos in 100-peso monthly installments. The Bárbara-Rodríguez sale required only a 300-peso down payment, the remaining 947 pesos to be paid out in 50-peso monthly installments. One senses a vibrancy of economic activity even at this low stratum of society. It would be interesting to know how many people became pulperos by purchasing going, presumably successful concerns, during the course of the nineteenth century. It would be fascinating to know what the sellers did after giving up their pulperías, especially those who no longer appear on pulpero lists.

There is an indication that not all pulperos were sophisticated businessmen. Inventories were typically not taken frequently, not even annually. Pulpería partnership contracts were often of two years' duration and stipulated that an inventory would be taken at the end of that time. If the duration of the contract was four years an inventory would be taken at that time. This was surely for liquidation or reevaluation purposes, and perhaps more frequent inventories were taken. But this was not the case with Guillermo Ramón and Barlomomé Font. Ramón was a bachelor from Mallorca who had entered into partnership with Font for the establishment of a pulpería in San Juan in 1823. When Ramón wrote his will in 1831 the partnership was unaware of the value of their pulpería, "por que nunca hemos hecho inventarios ni abaluos, por considerarlos innecarios."⁶⁶ One wonders how pervasive were such attitudes.

There is also the case of Domingo Garrido, a bachelor from Galicia. When he wrote his will in 1846 in addition to owning a pulpería in San Juan, he had sixteen cows kept for him by a resident of Trugillo, whose name he could not remember. This might not be unusual for a man on his deathbed, but he knew where the cows could be found since he knew the man's slaves, Julian and Concha. He owed money to Cecilio García, but could not remember how much. And he owed several others additional money but he could not remember their names or the amounts owed.⁶⁷ We may conclude that Garrido did not keep books since many other pulperos could not remember exactly who owed them money or whom they owed, but they always said that their books would clarify the matter. One wonders if Garrido's example was an aberration from general pulpero practice.

While it appears that pulperos did not undertake frequent inventories, we must not assume that they did not keep careful books. They had to keep

detailed current accounts of items they bought or sold on credit. The inventory taken in 1865 for the San Juan pulpería previously mentioned listed approximately 226 separate entries. Sometimes the items were very close in nature but were different enough to require separate entries. The variety of items stocked is striking. There are various kinds of alcoholic beverages, of rice, cheese, fish, fruit, oil, nuts, potatoes, chocolate, butter, beans, salt, ham, pasta, onions, and so on. Even without a formal inventory, the pulpero had to know more or less what his stock was in each item so that he might reorder. This pulpería also had a fonda and perhaps did some wholesaling, since some items were stocked in seemingly large quantity. The fonda, however, had its own inventory and most, if not all, of the items stocked by the pulpería probably were sold in the store itself, with additional quantities kept on hand for the fonda. And this was not one of the largest pulperías; the total wholesale valuation of the inventory was 1,658 pesos.⁶⁸ If pulperos generally did not overstock, then even the smaller establishments might well have kept a hundred or two hundred items on hand. This means a considerable facility with figures and an impressive ability to maintain a large and complicated inventory. We cannot yet judge the pulperos as capitalists, but we may conclude that more than a rudimentary knowledge of business techniques was required for success.

Another area of pulpero life that may prove the most interesting and important is the social life of these small storekeepers. Depons was correct: most of the Caracas bodegueros and pulperos were unmarried Catalonians and Canarians. The same could be said for those in San Juan. An example is the barrio of Santa Bárbara in San Juan. In 1840, twenty-one pulperos lived there: seventeen were from Spain, one from Havana, one from Costa Firme, and two from Puerto Rico. (Their ages ran from 21 to 52 and manifested a seemingly normal distribution.)⁶⁹ One sees nearly similar results in other censuses. At any given moment the majority appear to be from the Canary Islands, but the Catalonians may have edged them out from time to time. In most years during the first half of the nineteenth century, probably at least half the pulperos of San Juan were born in Spain. Perhaps a majority were bachelors. After independence the percentage seems significantly lower for Caracas. One constantly notes the continuous replenishing of pulpero lifeblood and energy in San Juan: At a time when the independence movement was making Caracas politically undesirable for many Spaniards and economically impracticable for Spanish immigrants, San Juan continued to receive dynamic and successful contributors to the economy.

Whatever else the imperial system did for the colonies, it sent over people who were valuable for the economic development of Caracas and San Juan. Sometimes they found their way into the pulpero ranks in unusual ways. Thus Jayme Julián, from Mallorca, had a pulpería in San Juan that was worth three hundred pesos in 1834. Julián arrived in San Juan in 1823 as a soldier in the *Compañía de Cazadores del segundo batallón del Regimiento de Granada*.⁷⁰ Obviously he left the army and somewhere along the line became a small pulpero. He married a Canarian in 1833 and died the following year at forty-four years of age. Juan Canobas was another Mallorcan who arrived in San Juan in 1823, this time as *cabo primero de la sexta compañía del segundo batallón del*

Regimiento de Granada.⁷¹ As did Julián, he married a Canarian. He wrote a will in 1827 in which he said he had a pulperia "cuyo valor podra ascender a quinientos pesos."⁷² At the time he was married but had no children. He wrote another will in 1834. Now he had two pulperías and three children.⁷³

The Spanish-born pulperos seem to have been a relatively tight social group. In will after will one sees that the executors and witnesses are other pulperos, usually from Spain and more particularly from the same region in Spain. José Marsín, a bachelor from Catalonia, had a pulperia in San Juan. When he wrote his will in 1841 he named his partner José Estrella his only heir.⁷⁴ That same year Estrella, also a bachelor from Spain, returned the favor.⁷⁵ This is either testimony to their isolation from the rest of the community or the intensity of their personal friendship. Sometimes bachelor pulperos from Spain left their pulperías to a father or mother back home from whom they had not heard in years. In the event that the heir was deceased the store would then go to the pulpero's partner.

As would be expected, pulpero families were sometimes tied through marriage. Antonia Vega y Falcón, from the Canary Islands, married Antonio Hernández, also a Canarian, and both migrated to Puerto Rico in 1818. By 1828 the husband had died and Doña Antonia had five living children (three others had died in infancy). Sons José and Antonio had established a pulperia with capital they had put together themselves. Doña Antonia and her husband had suffered economic reverses and could not help their children financially. Daughter María married Matías Margenal, who owned two pulperías. Daughter Francisca married Juan Canobas, also soon to own two pulperías.⁷⁶ That is, this family controlled five San Juan pulperías.

There are some aspects of pulpero life that will not be treated here but would be fruitful and potentially important areas for pulpero research. Pulperos were members of *cofradías* and the militia (although they were not always required to serve) and their activities in these organizations are of interest. Pulperos may also have been politically active in both Caracas and San Juan, especially over the question of paper money. Many Venezuelan historians have written about the supposed role of the *isleño* pulperos during the Monteverde period, 1812–13.⁷⁷

Regarding family history, there are hard data on seven pulpero families for Caracas and fifteen pulpero families for San Juan.⁷⁸ Briefly, I would note only that the seven Caracas families had a total of twenty-four living children at the time records were taken, including eight who were illegitimate. The San Juan pulperos (including Antonio Vega y Falcón who was thoroughly enmeshed in pulpero life) had a total of forty-eight living children, including eleven illegitimate children.

It would be worthwhile also to study the children of the pulperos. If Depons is correct that the *bodegueros* and pulperos were permitted to keep their stores open seven days a week and from daybreak until nine in the evening, then we might well assume that many pulperos used their children to work along with them or even relieve them in their stores. Otherwise we are confronted by the picture of young children possibly being raised in households

lacking the presence of a male figurehead. Were the pulpero children to have received no other education the values of upward socioeconomic mobility could have been instilled directly within the family setting. The data suggest that many pulperos remained in business long enough to have exposed their children to what we may refer to as the pulpero way of life. One way of determining whether mobility values were instilled, albeit an unsophisticated way, would be to follow the pulpero children through their lives. What did they do and how far did they go? As more pulpero studies are undertaken we will have the names of hundreds and then thousands of pulpero children and we will be able to trace them through later life. If pulpero children moved up from the lower strata of society one would be impressed with an irony of Spanish imperial history. Spain sent over many hard working and effective people who sometimes became pulperos. They certainly made an important contribution to the economic development of Spanish America. But many and perhaps most of those Spaniards who became pulperos remained bachelors throughout life and sired no families. Their greatest contribution might have been to produce children and inculcate achievement values within them. But this we shall know only after much more research is carried out.

NOTES

1. Federico Brito Figueroa, *Historia Económica y Social de Venezuela*, 2 vols. (Caracas, 1966), 1: 271–72.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 169. With a view toward exploring child-rearing modalities and achievement values it would be instructive to refer to most pulperos as a lower-middle class. Frank Safford recently suggested that “if there was a middle sector in the nineteenth century, it consisted not of the mercantile or intellectual-professional elements, but of artisans and small tradesmen” (Richard Graham and Peter H. Smith, eds., *New Approaches to Latin American History* [Austin, 1974], p. 80). Ordinarily, I would agree, but when one enters the realm of emotional upbringing and development, the term “lower-middle class” becomes more accurate and illuminating. See especially the provocative suggestions in David G. McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (New York, 1967), pp. 46, 104, 212–13, 253, 333–35, 342, 345, 359, 363, 377, 457–58.
3. Mario Góngora, “Urban Social Stratification in Colonial Chile,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (August 1975): 421–48.
4. James Lockhart, *Spanish Peru, 1532–1560* (Madison, 1968), pp. 84–85. Frederick P. Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524–1650* (Stanford, 1974), has noted the presence of pulperías in Peru during the period he studied and he has devoted several paragraphs to the relationship between Negroes and pulperías. Since the pulperos formed a gremio, they are mentioned several times, especially for the seventeenth century, in Héctor Humberto Sampayoa Guevara, *Los Gremios De Artesanos En La Ciudad De Guatemala (1524–1821)* (Guatemala City, 1962).
5. F. Depons, *Travels in South America*, 2 vols. (London, 1807; reprint edition, 1970), 2: 74. This is an accurate translation of the French version.
6. Depons, *Travels* 2:116. Bowser has characterized the pulpería in Peru as “something of a small combined grocery store, delicatessen, and tavern” (*The African Slave*, pp. 108–9.)
7. “Representación del Prior y Cónsules para que el Tribunal del Consulado se le conserve la jurisdicción. . .,” reprinted in Mercedes M. Alvarez, *El Tribunal Del Real Consulado De Caracas*, 2 vols. (Caracas, 1967), 1: 307–12. Also see her brief description of bodegueros and pulperos in *Comercio y Comerciantes* (Caracas, 1963), pp. 50–51.

8. "Ynventario y Tasacion pasado á la Pulpería y Anexa la Fonda de Dn Gregorio Fernandez . . . ," in *Protocolos Notariales* (hereafter cited as *PN*), San Juan, Caja 529 (1845), *Archivo General de Puerto Rico* (hereafter cited as *AGPR*). The inventory is for 1865 and should have been filed in a different caja.
9. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 204 (1845), ff. 1286–92, *AGPR*.
10. "Visitas De Tiendas, Bodegas, Pulperías y Platerías, 1799–1809," in *Archivo del Consejo Municipal* (Caracas) (hereafter cited as *ACM*).
11. *Gazeta del Gobierno De Puerto Rico*, 6 de enero de 1827.
12. Depons, *Travels* 2:116; *Actas Del Cabildo De San Juan Bautista De Puerto Rico, 1798–1803* (San Juan, 1968), p. 371. The tiendas de raya or pulperías on the landed estates in such areas as Mexico probably were not under cabildo jurisdiction and not licensed. The term "pulpería" may have been used casually in describing these company stores.
13. "Nota formada para la renovación de las licencias de los Establecimientos que existe en esta Ciudad," Puerto Rico, Enero 30 de 1851, in *Documentos de los Gobernadores de Puerto Rico* (hereafter cited as *DGPR*), *AGPR*; "Tiendas (Licencias), 1809–52," Caja 186, *AGPR*.
14. The 1818 census is in "Municipalidades, San Juan , 1816–20," Caja 561, *AGPR*. The 1840 census is in a separate volume entitled "Año de 1840-Padrón." The MS census material within the volume is for 1841 also.
15. John C. Super, "Querétero Obrajes: Industry and Society in Provincial Mexico, 1600–1810," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 56, no. 2 (May 1976): 197–216.
16. "Real Hacienda de Pulperías," vol. 2423, año 1816, *Colección Real Hacienda, Archivo General de la Nación* (Caracas). Bowser, *The African Slave*, has noted that "many blacks and mulattoes also operated or owned pulperías," and that "free coloreds operated both inns and pulperías throughout the period" (pp. 108–9, 319).
17. Ildefonso Leal, *Historia De La Universidad De Caracas (1721–1827)* (Caracas, 1963), p. 316. See also John V. Lombardi, *People and Places in Colonial Venezuela* (Bloomington, 1976), pp. 43–44. Article 203 of the Federal Constitution of 1811 of Venezuela said: "Del mismo modo, quedan revocadas y anuladas en todas sus partes las leyes antiguas que imponían degradación civil a una parte de la población libre de Venezuela conocida hasta ahora bajo la denominación de *pardos*; éstos quedan en posesión de su estimación natural y civil y restituidos a los imprescriptibles derechos que les corresponden como a los demás ciudadanos."
18. Visita of 1809, *ACM*.
19. See Leal, *Historia*, 323–33.
20. Visita of 1809, *ACM*.
21. Lombardi, *People*, p. 62.
22. "Censos y Riquezas, 1801–20," Caja 11, *DGPR*, *AGPR*.
23. *Gazeta del Gobierno De Puerto Rico*, 6 de enero de 1827.
24. "Nota formada para la renovación de las licencias . . . ," *DGPR*, *AGPR*. There is a visita of 1824 for the island in general that gives wonderful information about population and pulperías in the various towns. However, I have not been able to find any references to San Juan (Caja 224, *DGPR*, *AGPR*).
25. "Nota formada para la renovación de las licencias . . . ," *DGPR*, *AGPR*; Lawrence Anderson, *The Art of the Silversmiths in Mexico, 1519–1936*, 2 vols. (New York, 1941) 1: 222.
26. *Almanaque Politico y de Comercio Para 1826* (Buenos Aires, 1968), pp. 12, 181–98.
27. "Intendencia de Puerto Rico, 9 abril 1824," Caja 225, *DGPR*, *AGPR*.
28. In Caracas, Agustín Armas, at thirty, was a pulpero in 1797 and he was still one in 1809. Miguel Amaral was a pulpero in 1797 and also in 1818, at sixty years of age. José Ascanio was one in 1809 and still a pulpero in 1818 at sixty. Miguel Alfonso was a pulpero in 1808 and 1821. José Figueroa continued as a pulpero from 1803 to 1816. Nicolás González was a pulpero in 1797 at thirty-one and continued to be one at least until 1816. There are many others with similar histories. In San Juan, Gabriel Cabrera was a pulpero at twenty-five in 1818 and he was a pulpero in 1826, perhaps thereafter

- also. José Estrella was a pulpero in 1841 and still one in 1851. Domingo Garrido was a pulpero in 1826 and continued as such until at least 1846. Agustín Mancebo was a pulpero in 1818 at twenty-five and was a pulpero in 1826. Domingo Peraza's known dates as pulpero run from 1818, when he was twenty-three, to 1826. Francisco Suárez was a pulpero in 1826 and nearly two decades later also. There were others. I am taking a very conservative view of the reliability of the various pulpero lists for Caracas and San Juan. My intuitive guess is that many more pulperos lasted in business longer than four or five years than I am willing to assert at this point.
29. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 530, ff. 286–91, *AGPR*. Although there are many errors, Estela Cifre De Loubriel's *La formación del pueblo puertorriqueño: La contribución de los catalanes, baleáricos y valencianos* (San Juan, 1975), is still an excellent source of information. All students of Puerto Rican social history are in her debt.
 30. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 530, f. 65, *AGPR*.
 31. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 446, ff. 466–68, *AGPR*. All monetary figures in this essay have been rounded off.
 32. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 481, ff. 632–34, *AGPR*.
 33. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 532, ff. 2–4, *AGPR*.
 34. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 528, ff. 115–17, *AGPR*.
 35. Lockhart, *Spanish Peru*, p. 85.
 36. Incidentally, Lascabes was a natural rather than a legitimate child (from Haiti) and she bore Turull eight natural children (*hijos naturales*). *PN*, San Juan, Caja 527, ff. 797–99, *AGPR*; *PN*, San Juan, Caja 480, ff. 974–78, *AGPR*.
 37. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 547, ff. 492–93, *AGPR*.
 38. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 504, ff. 131–32, *AGPR*.
 39. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 480, ff. 508–10, *AGPR*.
 40. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 451, ff. 169–70, *AGPR*.
 41. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 443, ff. 287–96, *AGPR*.
 42. Mario Góngora, *Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America* (Cambridge, Eng., 1975), p. 160.
 43. *Escribanías*, Caracas, 1835 (Felipe Hernández Guerra), ff. 251–56, *Registro Principal* (Caracas) (hereafter cited as *RP*).
 44. *Protocolos*, Caracas, 1839, ff. 4–6, *RP*. During 1835 the *Escribanías* become *Protocolos* and come under the direction of the Registrador.
 45. See pp. 66–67 above.
 46. *Escribanías*, Caracas, 1805 (Ascanio), ff. 274–75, *RP*.
 47. Perhaps Jonathan C. Brown ("Dynamics and Autonomy of a Traditional Marketing System: Buenos Aires, 1810–1860," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 56, no. 4 [November, 1976]:605–29) has found a similar phenomenon in Buenos Aires: "Others [wealthier merchants] put up the capital to establish general stores and bakeries in the city. Usually, business associations involved a financier who provided the cash needed for a commercial project and a working partner who undertook all the management."
 48. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 446, ff. 114–15, *AGPR*.
 49. *Escribanías*, Caracas, 1800 (Aramburu), ff. 59–61, *RP*.
 50. *Protocolos*, Caracas, 1839, ff. 11–13, *RP*.
 51. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 36, ff. 732–37, *AGPR*.
 52. *Protocolos*, Caracas, 1839, f. 8, *RP*.
 53. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 443, ff. 140–42, *AGPR*.
 54. *PN*, San Juan, Caja 453, folio numbers eaten away. Part of the contract has been destroyed, but the remaining information leaves little doubt that it was a pulpería.
 55. Francisco Delgado and Miguel María Llitesres formed a private partnership, not officially recorded in 1851, to operate a pulpería in San Juan. (Such informality was permitted by the *Código de Comercio*, Libro Segundo, Título 1. The *Código* is not well known to Latin Americanists since it was promulgated in 1829 and applied during a period of several years to the few remaining Spanish colonies. It was sanctioned for Puerto Rico in 1832.) The capitalization of the operation was 4,000 pesos. Llitesres put

- in only 523 pesos. The business thrived, and by 1853 the two had acquired an additional store. In the latter year they decided to legalize their venture officially. In the event of liquidation, one-half the value of the stores would be divided according to the partners' investment and the remaining half would be divided equally between the two (PN, San Juan, Caja 532, ff. 2–4, AGPR). For this advantage, Lliteses surely was responsible for administering the stores. José Antonio de Castro and Antonio Padrón were residents of San Juan in 1828 when they decided to open a pulpería in Bayamón. The store was capitalized at 1,400 pesos. Padrón was the administrator of the store and he put in only 100 pesos. Profits were to be divided one-third to Castro and two-thirds to Padrón (PN, San Juan, Caja 443, ff. 138–39, AGPR).
56. I am not giving false names and addresses of the individuals interviewed since this was all done informally and the information obtained was used in a very preliminary manner.
 57. PN, San Juan, Caja 481, ff. 632–34, AGPR.
 58. As in the 1820 Caracas forced loan list. "Capitulares," vol. 1, MS in ACM.
 59. PN, San Juan, Caja 450, f. 101, AGPR.
 60. PN, San Juan, Caja 480, ff. 469–71, AGPR.
 61. PN, San Juan, Caja 531, ff. 21–23, AGPR.
 62. PN, San Juan, Caja 451, f. 161, AGPR.
 63. PN, San Juan, Caja 446, ff. 303–4, AGPR.
 64. PN, San Juan, Caja 450, f. 209, AGPR.
 65. *Protocolos*, Caracas, 1839, f. 8, RP.
 66. PN, San Juan, Caja 446, ff. 74–76, AGPR.
 67. PN, San Juan, Caja 451, ff. 169–70, AGPR.
 68. PN, San Juan, Caja 529, AGPR.
 69. "Padron de Santa Barbara, " in "Año de 1840- Padrón," a separate volume of MS material in AGPR. Pulpero men married at all ages, but many of the Spaniards were often some twenty years older than their wives, sometimes having their first child from their middle to their late forties.
 70. PN, San Juan, Caja 483, ff. 282–84, AGPR. Cifre de Loubriel, *Formación*, p. 363.
 71. Cifre de Loubriel, *Formación*, p. 339.
 72. PN, San Juan, Caja 442, folios illegible, AGPR.
 73. PN, San Juan, Caja 483, ff. 347–49, AGPR.
 74. PN, San Juan, Caja 528, ff. 300–301, AGPR.
 75. PN, San Juan, Caja 528, ff. 51–52, AGPR.
 76. PN, San Juan, Caja 443, ff. 376–78, AGPR.
 77. Monteverde was himself an isleño and his compatriots are supposed to have risen to positions of political power. While many isleño pulperos were surely royalist, I believe that those Caracas storekeepers who found political power or influence were above the category of pulpero. The best overview of the topic is Caracciolo Parra-Pérez, *Historia De La Primero República De Venezuela*, 2 vols. (2nd ed.; Caracas, 1959), especially pp. 487–520. Less useful is the well known Rafael María Baraly y Ramón Díaz, *Resumen De La Historia De Venezuela*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1939). For a fast-paced account with some interesting thoughts, see Juan Uslar Pietri, *Historia de la rebelión popular de 1814* (Caracas, 1962).
 78. *Protocolos*, Caracas, 1839, ff. 4–6, RP; *Protocolos*, Caracas, 1839, f. 8, RP; *Escribanías*, Caracas, 1800 (Texada), ff. 29–32, RP; *Escribanías*, Caracas, 1800 (José Domingo de Barcena, vol. 2, #287), ff. 200–202, RP; *Escribanías*, Caracas, 1805 (Ascanio), pp. 164–66, RP; *Escribanías*, Caracas, 1800 (Aramburu), ff. 174–78, RP; *Escribanías*, Caracas, 1835 (Correa), ff. 178–80, RP; *Escribanías*, Caracas, 1805 (Ascanio), ff. 184–86, RP. The San Juan data are from wills already mentioned and the cited censuses of 1818 and 1840. I am not counting López Penelas, with three children, as a pulpero or keeper of a tienda de mercería, since he was both. Atlántico Vargas, a fifty-year-old pardo, married to Juana Benitez, a forty-year-old parda, had four children in 1818: Josef Casimero, 5; Ana, 7; Marcelino, 24; Manuel, 2. I believe they were legitimate.