

**JORGE JUAN y SANTACILIA (1713–1773) AND ANTONIO DE
ULLOA (1716–1795)
A VOYAGE TO SOUTH AMERICA (1748)**

IV. Of the Inhabitants of Cartagena

To the above circumstantial description of the city of Cartagena, it may not be amiss to add a short account of its inhabitants, which may be divided into different castes or tribes, who derive their origin from a coalition of whites, negroes and Indians.

The whites may be divided into two classes, the Europeans and Creoles, or whites born in the country. The former, are commonly called Chapetones, but are not numerous, most of them either return into Spain after acquiring a competent fortune, or remove up into inland provinces in order to increase it. Those who are settled at Cartagena, carry on the whole trade of that place, and live in opulence; whilst the other inhabitants are indigent and reduced to have recourse to mean and hard labour for subsistence. The families of the white Creoles compose the landed interest; some of them have large estates, and are highly respected, because their ancestors came into the country invested with honourable posts, bringing their families with them when they settled here. Some of these families in order to keep up their original dignity, have either married their children to their equals in the country, or sent them as officers on board the galleons; but others have greatly declined. Besides these there are other whites, in mean circumstances, and either owe their origin to Indian families, or at least to an intermarriage with them, so that there is some mixture in their blood; but when this is not discoverable by their colour, the conceit of being whites, alleviates the pressure of every other calamity.

Among the other tribes which are derived from an intermarriage of the whites with the negroes, the first are the Mulattos, so well known, that there is no necessity for saying anything farther on this head. Next to these are the Tercerones, produced from a white and a Mulatto, with some approximation to the former, but not so near as to obliterate their origin. After these follow the Quarterones, proceeding from a white and a Tercercon. The last are the Quinterones, who owe their origin to a White and a Quarteron. This is the last gradation, there being no visible difference between them and the Whites, either in colour or features; nay they are often even fairer than the Spaniards themselves. The children of a White and Quinteron are also called Spaniards, and consider themselves as free from all taint of the Negro race. Every person is so jealous of the order of their tribe or Caste, that if through inadvertence, without the least intention to affront, you call them by a degree lower than what they actually are, they are highly offended, never suffering themselves to be deprived of so valuable a gift of fortune.

These are the most known and common tribes or Castas; there are indeed several others proceeding from their intermarriages; but being so various even they themselves cannot easily distinguish them; and these are the only people one sees in the city . . .

The class of Negroes is not the least numerous, and is divided into two parts; the free and the slaves. These are again subdivided into Creoles and Bozares, part of which are employed in the cultivation of the Haciendas [landed estates], or Estancias [ranches].

Taken from Jorge Juan y Santacilia and Antonio de Ulloa, *Voyage to South America: Describing at Large the Spanish Cities, Towns, Provinces, &c. on that Extensive Continent*, trans. Davis and C. Reymers (London: L. Davis and C. Reymers, 1758), 30–33.