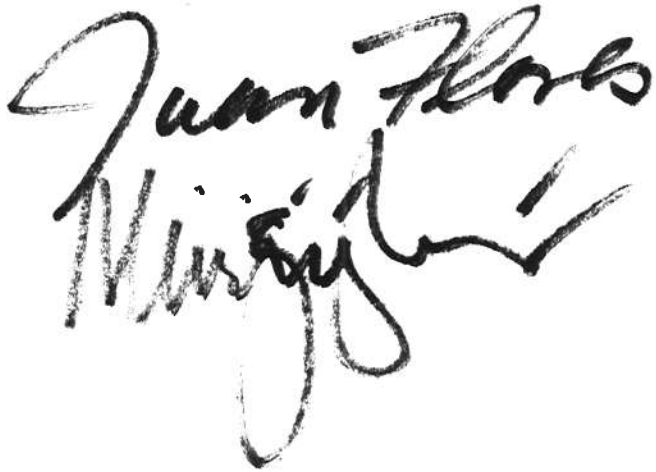
# The Afro-Latin@ Reader

## HISTORY AND CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

*Edited by Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores*

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS DURHAM AND LONDON 2010



# 11

## Arturo Alfonso Schomburg

Arturo Alfonso Schomburg was seventeen years old when he left his native Puerto Rico to join the small exile community of anti-Spanish activists in New York City. With the exception of a brief visit in 1905 Schomburg would never return to the island; indeed, until his death in 1938 his intellectual and social life would be inextricably tied to African Americans and, more generally, to African diasporic peoples. Schomburg was one of the fore-

Arturo Alfonso Schomburg and his sister Dolores (Lola), San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1905. (Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations)

most collectors and bibliophiles of the Africana experience, and he was among the earliest proponents of Black studies. Given his immense educational contribution to knowledge about the Black world, which continued to include a special interest in the Caribbean, Latin America, and Spain, Schomburg may be considered the most illustrious and self-conscious of all Afro-Latin@s in the United States, as well as the one whose aspirations and ambiguities seem the most deeply exemplary of Afro-Latin@ social experience. Schomburg's life on the color line, his direct knowledge and experience of racism in the Caribbean and the United States, and his resultant affinity with other Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans were elements paradigmatic for Afro-Latin@s through the first half of the twentieth century. Almost one hundred years after Arturo Schomburg called for the study of "Negro History" he continues to serve as a symbol of diasporic unity and as an inspiration for Afro-Latin@s seeking knowledge about their African roots.

ARTHUR A. SCHOMBURG

## *Excerpt from "Racial Integrity: A Plea for the Establishment of a Chair of Negro History in Our Schools and Colleges. Address Delivered at the Teachers' Summer Class at the Cheney Institute, Pennsylvania, July 1913"*

I am here with a sincere desire to awaken the sensibilities, to rekindle the dormant fibers in the soul, and to fire the racial patriotism by the study of Negro books. We often feel that so many things around us are warped and alienated. Let us see if we cannot agree to arrange a formula or create a basic construction, for the establishment of a substantial method of instruction for our young women and men in the material and the useful.

The object of this paper is not to revolutionize existing standards, but simply to improve them by amending them so that they will include the practical history of the Negro Race from the dawn of civilization to the present time. We are reminded that the earliest instruction was imparted orally, and that this system is still found extant in Africa and among other Oriental nations. It is useful because it trains the mind to listen and retain. The modern school with its many books, but without systematic lectures, turns out many graduates who are lacking in retentiveness and no sooner than the sound of the words has left their teachers' lips, the subject has been forgotten; and if they are called upon to explain the theme, it is reduced to an incomprehensible mass of meaningless words. The university graduate is wont to overestimate his ability, fresh from the machinery that endows him with a parchment and crowns him with knowledge, he steps into the world to meet the practical men with years of experience and mother wit. It is a contrast, the professional man with the veneer of high art, and the acquaintance with the best authors, and up to date histories demanding recognition. All these books take their proper places when applied to the white people, but when applied or measured up to the black

people, they lack the substantial and inspiring. They are like meat without salt, they bear no analogy to our own; for this reason it would be a wise plan for us to lay down a course of study in Negro History and achievements, before or after men and women have left certain schools.

It is the season for us to devote our time in kindling the torches that will inspire us to racial integrity. We need a collection or list of books written by our men and women. If they lack style, let the children of tomorrow correct the omissions of their sires. Let them build upon the crude work. Let them, because of the opportunities that colleges and universities grant, crystallize the crude work and bring it out flawless. [. . .]

There have been written many histories of our people in slavery, peace and war, each serving a purpose. These books have been useful to disseminate the fragmentary knowledge to localities where the spark of learning has awakened the soul to thirst for more and better food. . . . These have been our landmarks, our rock of ages; let us place around them the inspiring love so that the scholars of today with the vast opportunities, the splendid equipment, and the great expectations of the "survival of the fittest" will be spurred to do things by which we will be remembered, and in the coming days will be heralded for racial identity, racial preservation and racial unity.

We have reached the crucial period of our educational existence. I have shown by a few examples of the past available and useful material upon which we can base our future structure. We have chairs of almost everything, and believe we lack nothing, but we sadly need a chair of Negro history. The white institutions have their chair of history; it is the history of their people, and whenever the Negro is mentioned in the text-books it dwindles down to a footnote. The white scholar's mind and heart are fired because in the temple of learning he is told how on March 5, 1770, the Americans were able to beat the English; but to find Crispus Attucks it is necessary to go deep into special books. In the orations delivered at Bunker's Hill, Daniel Webster never mentioned the Negroes having done anything, and is silent about Peter Salem. In the account of the battle of Long Island City and around New York under Major-General Nathaniel Greene, no mention is made of the eight hundred Negro soldiers who imperiled their lives in the Revolutionary War. Cases can be shown right and left of such palpable omissions. [. . .]

Where is our historian to give us our side view and our chair of Negro history, to teach our people our own history? We are at the mercy of the "flotsam and jetsam" of the white writers. The very learned Rev. Alexander Crummell, before the American Negro Academy, stated that he heard



J. C. Calhoun say that the inferiority of the Negro was so self-evident that he would not believe him human unless he could conjugate Greek verbs; and yet it must have been evident to Calhoun that in North Carolina there were many Negroes held as slaves who could read and write Arabic.[1] In those days men like Juan Latino, Amo, Capitein, Francis Williams, Rev. J. Pennington, and others could not only conjugate the Greek and Hebrew verbs, but had shown unmistakable evidences of learning, for they had received degrees from the universities of world-famed reputation. Yet in those days there were many whites unrestrained, enjoying the opportunities of education, who could not conjugate Greek roots nor verbs of the spoken language of the land. Yet this barrier was set up to persons restrained by force from the enjoyment of the most ordinary rights.

We need in the coming dawn the man who will give us the background for our future; it matters not whether he comes from the cloisters of the university or from the rank and file of the fields.

The Anglo-Saxon is effusive in his praises to the Saxon shepherds who lived on the banks of the river Elbe, to whom he pays blind allegiance. We need the historian and philosopher to give us with trenchant pen the story of our forefathers and let our soul and body, with phosphorescent light, brighten the chasm that separates us. When the fact has been put down in the scroll of time, that the Negroes of Africa smelted iron and tempered bronzes at the time Europe was wielding stone implements, that the use of letters was introduced among the savages of Europe about 1500 BC and the European carried them to America about the fifteenth century after the Christian era, that Phoenicia and Palestine will live forever in the memory of mankind since America as well as Europe has received letters from the one and religion from the other,[2] we will feel prouder of the achievements of our sires. We must research diligently the annals of time and bring back from obscurity the dormant example of agriculture, industry, and commerce, upon these the arts and sciences and make common the battleground of our heritage.

## Notes

1. See W. B. Hodgson, *The Gospels in the Negro Patois* (New York: Cornell University Library, 1857).
2. Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1910).

JESSE HOFFNUNG-GARSKOF

# The World of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg

The migrations of Arturo Alfonso Schomburg offer unique insights into the complicated question of racial identity for Afro-Latin@s in the United States. Born in Puerto Rico in 1874, to a mother of Danish West Indian origin and a father of German ancestry, Schomburg moved to New York in 1891. There he joined a community of independence activists from Cuba and Puerto Rico. He was the recording secretary for the political club Las Dos Antillas, which as part of the larger Cuban Revolutionary Party (PRC) sought to liberate the two islands from Spanish rule and establish a progressive social order in new Antillean republics. Although hardly free of racial tensions, the movement was unusual, perhaps unique, in the Americas in the 1890s for its open call for fraternity between Blacks and Whites. Party leader José Martí disavowed the reigning international scientific consensus about Black inferiority and proclaimed racial division and inequality to be a product of social prejudice. In the coming Cuban republic, Martí predicted, there would be no Blacks and Whites, "only Cubans." For Schomburg and other Puerto Rican people of color who moved to New York to join the movement, this commitment to color-blind nationalism was a great attraction.

Yet even as Schomburg participated in the multiracial coalitions of the Antillean exile community, he began to build social ties with people of African descent born in the United States and the West Indies. Many of these new friends articulated a different kind of politics that focused on international racial unity rather than on nationalism or coalitions with Whites. After the United States took possession of Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1898, the multiracial independence movement in New York dissolved. Schomburg shifted his considerable energies into Negro scholarly organizations, to use the language of the day. At the same time he helped recruit English speakers into his Spanish-speaking Masonic lodge, Sol de Cuba. Within a decade lodge business was conducted in English and the lodge was renamed for Prince Hall, the free West Indian man who founded the Negro branch of the Masonic movement known as the Prince Hall Masons. Schomburg rose to leadership in the Prince Hall hierarchy, an important institution of the emerging African American middle class in New York.[1]

As he moved among communities of color from Puerto Rico, Cuba, the United States, and the West Indies, Schomburg dedicated himself to the collection of books and historical documents about people of African descent around the world. Negroes should emulate the Jews, he argued, by maintaining their feeling of kinship despite being scattered among nations who despise them. He held that the project of international Black unity required an international network of intellectuals and collectors who could provide firm historical footing for racial pride and unity. To that end he helped found the Negro Society for Historical Research (1911) and spent his own time and money searching out books and documents. "We need a collection or list of books written by our men and women," Schomburg wrote in 1913. "We need the historian and philosopher to give us, with trenchant pen, the story of our forefathers and let our soul and body, with phosphorescent light, brighten the chasm that separates us."[2] Documenting Negro contributions to world civilization through the science of history, he argued, would inspire the racial patriotism necessary for building an international Negro alliance across the gaps created by national boundaries and provincialism.

Schomburg's idea of history, shared with his allies in the Cuban and Puerto Rican independence movement and with his colleagues in the Negro Society for Historical Research, emerged in dialogue with dominant ideas about race and nation. White historians of the day justified colonialism and segregation by arguing that Africans and their descendants were incapable of civilization. Schomburg did not question basic assumptions about the universality of civilization, but he committed himself to the revolutionary act of disproving contemporary theories of Black inferiority. Schomburg set out to prove racist historians wrong by collecting evidence of Black poets, philosophers, composers, military heroes, novelists, and painters. Schomburg's personal collection made him an invaluable resource for the leading Black scholars of the day, including W. E. B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, and Charles S. Johnson. They published his essays and, more frequently, relied on his assistance in their own research. Then in 1926 he sold his collection to the New York Public Library. After retiring from his job as a clerk for a Wall Street firm, he took over as cura-

tor of the collection at the 135th St. Branch of the Public Library until his death in 1938. The Schomburg Center remains the premier archive for the study of Black culture and history in the United States and the world.

Although Schomburg's intellectual accomplishments were considerable, what has especially piqued public interest in him over the past decade are his migrations and his shifting racial and ethnic identities and their relationship to his intellectual projects. Schomburg was both Negro and Puerto Rican. He made a dramatic transition from nationalist politics, which saw possibilities for racial advancement through the Cuban and Puerto Rican struggle, to an explicitly racial politics on the model of an idealized Jewish diaspora. As a migrant who traveled through various societies in the aftermath of racial slavery, he engaged in a process of comparison and mutual self-recognition in conversation with the people of color he encountered. As a colonial subject, excluded from the prevailing narratives of race, nationhood, and history, he experienced a sense of dislocation and alienation that allowed him to imagine alternate forms of belonging either as an *Antillano* or as part of an international community of Black people. His story helps to show that the African diaspora was not a fixed or obvious set of relationships but rather a sense of belonging and displacement that emerged from the modern experience of Atlantic slavery, colonialism, emancipation, and migrations.

Schomburg's experience as a Puerto Rican of African descent who socialized with Black people from other parts of the world and who constructed a public identity as an American Negro runs counter to the classic accounts of how Puerto Ricans of color expressed their belonging in New York's racially segregated society and in the broader context of the Atlantic. In one of the first scholarly studies of racial prejudice in Puerto Rico, Tomás Blanco laid the foundations of this concept by describing a "natural" tendency among Puerto Ricans of African descent "to refuse, as much as possible, to be classified together with [black people from the United States,] a class of people which suffers such a high level of injustice and derision."[3] He argued that Puerto Ricans of color suffered little or no prejudice at the hands of fellow Puerto Ricans and therefore stuck together with their ethnic brethren. Few scholars still contend that Puerto Rican society is free of racism. Still, according to the prevailing view Puerto Ricans of color first naturally clung to the multiracial spaces and identities they shared with White Puerto Ricans, despite the pervasive racism practiced in those spaces. Only in response to the Black Civil Rights Movement, the thinking goes, did Puerto Ricans begin to seek an alliance with African American neighbors. In this light Schomburg seems an exceptional Puerto Rican. Indeed, recent analyses that compare Schomburg to other Puerto Rican intellectuals of color in New York in the 1920s conclude that his explicit racial politics made him a "Puerto Rican political aberration."[4]

Yet by reconstructing the world in which Schomburg lived during his early years in New York, a world that included other people of color from Puerto Rico and Cuba, we can reframe his life and its relation to a broader history of Afro-Latin@s in migration. The world of Arturo Schomburg—and of most Afro-Latin@s in New York between 1880 and 1920—was one of overlapping engagements and alliances. Men and women of color from Puerto Rico and Cuba engaged with the multiracial projects of exile nationalism while integrating into multiethnic Black neighborhoods and social institutions. Cross-racial unity of Hispanic Caribbeans in New York, while often attractive to Afro-Latin@s like Schomburg, was hardly a natural starting point from which Afro-Latin@s later diverged. These alliances emerged through the efforts of dedicated organizers in New York and always contained tensions within them. And for Latin@s with recognizable African ancestry, national or ethnic alliances as Latin@s always operated in tension with the power of local institutions to segregate by color and with the pull of social and political bonds forged around shared color.

## Cuban Cigar Makers and the Prince Hall Masons

Sometime in the decade after Schomburg arrived in New York, he joined a Masonic lodge called Sol de Cuba. The founders of Sol de Cuba were cigar makers of African descent who migrated from Cuba to New York in the 1870s. They left Cuba at a moment when insurgents—White, mulatto, and Black—waged an armed struggle that sought to abolish slavery and gain independence from Spain. During this struggle, known as the Ten Years' War, underground Masonic lodges on the island served as a clandestine network of communication and conspiracy. While official Freemasonry in Cuba, under the aegis of the Gran Logia de Colón, prohibited the admission of "*pardos y morenos*," these irregular Masonic groups were open to men of color—a term that included men with varying degrees of African ancestry. The mixed-race lodges spread outward from the island as Cuban tobacco merchants eager to escape the insurrection and to take advantage of new U.S. tariff laws set up cigar factories in New York, Philadelphia, and South Florida. Cigar manufacturers brought with them the skilled workforce of cigar makers who, together with their bosses, made the irregular Masonic movement from the island into a form of immigrant mutual

aid society with nationalist undertones. It is in this context, in June of 1880, that Manuel Coronado, Sixto Pozo, Abraham Seino, and Lafayette Marcus founded Sol de Cuba in Brooklyn. Significantly, they did not join the already existing Cuban Masonic hierarchy in New York but applied instead to affiliate with the Prince Hall Masons, an institution composed of and run by African Americans.[5]

These events are not meant to imply that the existing Masonic lodge in New York was openly segregationist. Only a few years earlier, in 1878, a Cuban physician named Ramón Ylla and a group of cigar makers in Manhattan founded the Logia Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, in honor of the founder and first symbolic leader of the Cuban insurrection. As a plantation owner Céspedes had emancipated his slaves so that they might fight in the cause of a free Cuba. He was therefore a symbol of the link between the project of independence and the project of abolition. The lodge adhered to the hierarchy of the Orden Caballeros de la Luz, which was founded some years earlier by Cuban cigar manufacturers in Philadelphia.[6] A "liturgy" published in 1879 by the Caballeros de la Luz expresses a rhetorical commitment not only to abolition but also to the project of racial and social equality. Race and class, the document instructed, were not to be taken into consideration when vetting potential brothers. The lodge Patriarch was to enforce this rule each time a new membership committee was formed, and he was to "advise" newly formed committees "that our Order recognizes equality of rights and responsibility of all men." At each meeting the lodge Patriarch raised a ritual object and told the brothers that it represented the equality of all men, White and Black, rich and poor. He then pronounced that learning, science, and morality would gradually abolish all forms of social prejudice and that "all inequality that is not based on merit is against justice."[7]

Yet if the men in the Caballeros de la Luz lodges appeared to absorb the most progressive messages of the independence movement, they did so at a moment when the movement saw itself fractured by racial and class division. In 1878 the insurrection faltered in Cuba. The White leadership surrendered to Spain, in large part because they feared the increasing power of their Black and mulatto allies. Black and mulatto leaders such as General Antonio Maceo, along with some White allies, refused to accept the truce and returned to battle in the Guerra Chiquita of 1879 and 1880. The tensions over the war and its racial politics were evident in the activities of the exile lodges. One aspirant to the lodge in Philadelphia, Manuel Suárez, renounced his candidacy in 1879 to protest the avowal of "universal fraternity" in the lodge rites. The Logia Carlos Manuel de Céspedes in New



York renamed itself Logia El Progreso, thereby distancing itself from the symbol of Cuban nationalism and abolition. For this reason the Brooklyn cigar workers who formed their own lodge in 1880 might have had good reason to expect a lukewarm welcome, if not official segregationism, in El Progreso lodge.[8]

Furthermore, a rhetorical commitment to class and racial equality did not necessarily mean that working-class men of color could actually expect to be accepted or treated equally. As Black and mulatto participants in the struggle in Cuba learned, White allies frequently held them to a higher standard on any ostensibly neutral qualities of "merit." Their supposed lack of civilization, learning, or morality could be used to exclude individuals from positions of prestige.[9] As the independence movement in Cuba split over White fears of Black insurgency, the Caballeros de la Luz membership in Philadelphia was at odds about how to deal with the tobacco workers, White and Black, who wished to join. Some brothers proposed to use lodge funds to support night classes for the instruction and intellectual uplift of poorer émigrés. This resonated with the artisan *casinos* or clubs and the anarchist popular education projects in Cuba at the time. It also paralleled institutions that Cuban intellectuals of color, notably Rafael Serra and Juan Gualberto Gómez, created in those years to uplift and incorporate the growing class of freedmen and freedwomen as Spain gradually abolished slavery. The Caballeros de la Luz, however, still led by factory owners, rejected the proposal in its preference for a more exclusive lodge and individual acts of charity toward the less fortunate. According to one member, they objected to the efforts to transform the lodge into "a *mesalina* that dedicates itself to gathering up the sons of all classes and all colors."[10] *Mesalina* here has the meaning not only of a dissolute woman but, specifically, of an upper-class woman who prostitutes herself for the benefit of lower-class clients.

With time, the prospect of belonging to the same lodges as their employers began to wear thin for many working-class Cuban exiles. Cuban cigar workers, increasingly influenced by Spanish anarchism as well as Masonic ideologies of learning, sought rather to create institutions of class solidarity and popular education.[11] By the early 1880s, the Afro-Cuban revolutionary leader Rafael Serra had brought this idea to New York. A result of this was the creation of La Liga Antillana, a night school for immigrant workers very much like the one proposed and rejected in the Caballeros de la Luz lodge in Philadelphia. Serra denounced charity, which he called "an insult," in favor of education and uplift based on full equality. La Liga Antillana was consciously multiracial and international

in its membership, including "Cubans and Puerto Ricans, whites and blacks, artisans and those who are not artisans, rich and poor."[12] Serra was a believer in cross-racial unity, though, as he would later write, not in the sense of a "discriminatory and unequal unity of jockey and steed."[13] Although Serra, a man of humble origins but growing intellectual reputation, might have eventually been accepted in a lodge like El Progreso, in order to assert leadership in an organization and shape its project he chose to create his own. This may explain why the founders of Schomburg's lodge, Sol de Cuba, decided to create their own lodge rather than seek entry into Caballeros de la Luz. To express claims to full citizenship or to vindicate Black identity within the broader Masonic construct of universal "progress," these cigar makers of African descent created an independent social space that they could lead and shape to their own purposes.[14]

To do so, they sought out the institutional backing of the English-speaking African Americans in the Prince Hall Masons. While the creation of a separate Black lodge reflected a general trend toward independent organizing within Cuban society, it must also be understood in the context of a diasporic encounter particular to émigrés of color in New York. For when they left behind the cigar factories and immigrant social clubs that bound them to each other as Cubans and cigar makers, these men lived in a city divided by a color line. As a result, they had frequent and sometimes very close contact with people of color of varied backgrounds and rarely lived among Cubans identified as White. Two of Sol de Cuba's founders, Abraham Seino and Lafayette Marcus, along with at least five other lodge members married English-speaking African American women before creating the lodge. Indeed, for the men in the Sol de Cuba lodge it was far more common to marry a Black woman from the United States than a Cuban woman. None of them married White women of any nationality. Those lodge members who did not marry generally lived in rooming houses, in apartment buildings, and on blocks inhabited by Black people. Few lodge members lived in spaces mostly reserved for Whites. Even Juan Beato, the only lodge member identified by U.S. census enumerators as White, lived in an otherwise all-Black building.

In other words, whatever the state of their alliances inside the factories and clubs of the émigré community, Latin@s of color in New York parted company with White Latin@s when they returned to their homes. There they enjoyed considerable social contact with English speakers and shared experiences of the evolving color line. These men seem to have found the space for independent social organizing through an alliance with African American organizations in the United States to be a welcome alternative



to the ways color constrained their membership in the Cuban community. This social and residential contact between Black Cubans and African Americans helps explain how Marcus and Coronado made their first contacts with the Prince Hall Masons. They likely had in-laws and neighbors who were in the Mt. Olive and Celestial Lodges of the Prince Hall Masons. They joined these lodges, and when their initiation was complete they applied for permission to form their own lodge. It is important to note that while Marcus and Coronado did not, or perhaps could not, affiliate with the Caballeros de la Luz, they did not simply fold into the growing Negro population among whom they lived. Neither did they abandon the project of a free and equal Cuba. Rather, they turned to a United States Negro institutional authority to form a lodge for Cuban men of color. The creation of a distinct Cuban lodge within the Prince Hall Masons may have been a gesture of separation from the broader English-speaking context in which they lived (from their brothers-in-law and fathers-in-law) as much as it was a gesture of independence as men of color within the Cuban context.[15]

Schomburg thus arrived in New York to find an already established lodge where Masonic ideologies of progress, civilization, and morality overlapped with Cuban nationalism and independent racial politics. He joined a lodge where men of color gathered to socialize in Spanish before scattering to homes in Black districts, where English, often inflected by strong southern and Caribbean accents, was the language of their wives and children. Schomburg was an example of this experience. At the age of twenty-one he married Elizabeth Hatcher, an African American woman from Virginia. The couple lived with their three sons on West 62nd St. in the Black neighborhood known as San Juan Hill. Hatcher, who died in 1900, and his two subsequent wives (also United States African Americans) brought Schomburg into close contact with North American Negro music, dance, jokes, and folklore, as well as kinship and social networks. He learned to eat new foods and apparently developed a considerable fondness for them; at one stage of his life he proposed to research and write a cookbook and social history of Negro cooking. Judging from his highly personal descriptions of "the hearty egg breads and sugar baked apples of Virginia to brains in brown butter and batter cakes with borders of crisp black embroidery in the Blue Grass, on down to rice calas and the ineffable steeped coffee, cinnamon flavored chocolate and hot toddies served in the early hours behind the sun-streaked jalousies of the Vieux Carre in New Orleans," he must have dedicated hours of loving research, in the company of family and friends, to the study of Negro culinary achieve-

Arturo Schomburg at the funeral of his mentor, John "Grit" Bruce, New York, 1924. Other mourners include Marcus Garvey (to the right of Schomburg) and members of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge. Bruce and Schomburg cofounded the Negro Society for Historical Research in 1911. (Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations)

**The Literary Event of the Year!**

The Records of a Race in Literature
History, Art and Science

**GRAND OPENING**

OF THE

**Department of Negro History Literature and Art**

IN THE

**135th Street Branch of the N. Y. Public Library**
103 West 135th Street

**Friday, May 7th,** At 8:30 P. M.

***Speakers:***

Dr. Hubert Harrison, staff lecturer, New York Board of Education.

Dr. Alain Locke, of Howard University.

Dr. E. H. Anderson, director of the New York Public Library and others.

SINGING OF NEGRO SPIRITUALS

Large loan collection of Negro literature by:
Mr. Arthur Schomburg Dr. Charles Martin
Dr. Hubert Harrison and others

***ALL ARE WELCOME***

Auspices of Negro Literary and Historical Society and the New York Public Library

The New York Age Press

Program announcing the opening of the Department of Negro History, Literature and Art at the 135th Street Branch, New York Public Library, 1926. The new department consisted primarily of Schomburg's personal library. (Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations)

ment.[16] Institutional ties between the Sol de Cuba lodge and the Prince Hall Masons also introduced him to a community of African American intellectuals, including John E. Bruce, who would later invite him to share in their evolving Pan-Africanist projects.

## The Cuban Revolutionary Party and the Club Las Dos Antillas

When Schomburg arrived in New York in 1891 he found a community of cigar workers that, after the disillusionment of the 1880s, was again filled with excitement for the Cuban and Puerto Rican nationalist cause. During Antonio Maceo's ten years in exile in Jamaica, Central America, and New Orleans, the general had grown into an international symbol of Black resistance. By the early 1890s, Maceo shared leadership in the Cuban struggle with José Martí, a renowned journalist and poet living in New York who taught classes in Serra's Liga Antillana and attracted the loyalty of the workers who gathered there, Black as well as White. If Maceo was a symbol of heroic Black leadership, Martí was a symbol of enlightened White leadership. As most White intellectuals in the Atlantic world increasingly adopted the principles of scientific racism, Martí, like the liberal Masonic groups of the 1870s, argued that racial inequality was the result of unjust social prejudice, and that justice and morality demanded that men be judged only on their merit. In a free Cuba, he promised, there would be no Blacks or Whites, only Cubans. In a decade when nationalists in the United States and other parts of the Americas increasingly relied on race "science" to conclude that Black people were unsuited for citizenship or self-rule, Martí defended "the right of the black man to maintain and prove that his color does not deprive him of any of the abilities or rights of the human species."[17]

Martí's views of race and civilization, like those of the earlier Masonic groups, could have the effect of restricting independent Black politics. Indeed, sensitive to the Spanish accusation that a war for independence would lead to a race war, Martí opposed the formation of independent racial organizations. "The white [man] who isolates himself isolates the black [man]," he wrote. "The black [man] who isolates himself provokes the white [man] to isolate himself."[18] However, Martí's idea of a Cuba with no Blacks or Whites could also hide persistent racism and racial inequality behind a mask of race blindness. When people of color protested racial injustice, some Whites in the movement argued that the topic of race was divisive and contrary to the spirit of the Cuban cause. Martí's success at bringing elite exiles and working-class radicals together in the

movement also brought a return to some of the tensions over leadership that had surfaced among the Luz de Caballeros a decade earlier. The party incorporated working-class membership, including many working-class people of color, through dozens of political clubs in New York, South Florida, and elsewhere. The artisans and self-taught intellectuals who led the revolutionary clubs engaged in a constant battle of wills to prevent elite exiles from operating independently of their influence, from expressing what one club leader called "ignorance or disdain for the will of the majority."[19]

Cubans of color in the movement, including Rafael Serra and Juan Gualberto Gómez, befriended Martí and became avid defenders of his project of racial fraternity by using the association he made between antiracism and Cuban national identity to defend their own politics of racial advancement and citizenship. They saw support for his leadership as crucial to preserving their own role in the movement. Cubans of color participated actively in the revolutionary clubs that formed the base of the party, though few were elected to leadership positions in those clubs. A few, such as Rafael Serra, also created and sustained their own institutions. Serra presided over La Liga, a literary and educational center for Cubans and Puerto Ricans of all colors, which gave him a platform for leadership in the broader movement. Likewise, Manuel Coronado, one of the founders of Sol de Cuba, presided over the social club La Igualdad (Equality). It is not clear whether this club had a multiracial membership or was composed only of men of color, but its name suggests that Coronado, like Serra, created a social institution in which he could assert leadership and push the movement to live up to its own expressed ideals of racial and social equality.[20]

Puerto Ricans in the movement were similarly divided between elites who controlled the Puerto Rican Section of the Cuban Revolutionary Party (founded in 1895), and working-class exiles who joined the party by forming political clubs. Cuban and Puerto Ricans of color in particular were prominent in the leadership of these clubs. In 1891 the journalist Sotero Figueroa and the poet Francisco Gonzalo ("Pachín") Marín split from the Autonomista Party to join in the independence struggle. Both were men of color. In 1892, Figueroa and Marín founded the Club Borinquen, a constituent club of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, and became president and secretary, respectively. Soon thereafter Rosendo Rodríguez, a Puerto Rican cigar maker of African descent, founded Schomburg's club, Las Dos Antillas. All of the officers in Las Dos Antillas had African ancestry: Schomburg was recording secretary; and two Cubans of color, both



cigar makers, became the club's treasurer and first speaker. It is not clear whether the membership of Las Dos Antillas was exclusively composed of Cubans and Puerto Ricans of color or whether this was an instance of a mixed-race club that remarkably elected only Black and mulatto officers. In either case it is clear that the social and political world Schomburg participated in was one that attracted a cohort of Puerto Ricans of color, who found space not only as members of the revolutionary clubs but also as leaders.[21]

It seems likely furthermore that their ideas about race, and commitment to racial equality, played a significant role in the decision by these Puerto Ricans to leave the Autonomistas behind and to join the Cuban movement, though they did not say so publicly.[22] Yet the party's commitment to racial and class equality was not assured. After Martí left for Cuba in 1895, the leadership of the party increasingly excluded men like Serra and Figueroa from decision making and from editorial input in *Patria*.[23] Figueroa and Serra joined forces to create their own newspaper, *La Doctrina de Martí*, in which they argued that Martí's legacy was one of unity and equality. The role of workers and of men of color in the movement was very much on the minds of the members of Borinquen and Las Dos Antillas when they met at Military Hall in October 1895, four months after Martí perished in the fighting in Cuba. A *compañero* named Agramonte spoke in rousing celebration of the contributions of artisans to the national cause. Then members began talking openly about race in much the same way that José Martí advocated, and in much the same way that Schomburg would for the rest of his life.

First a Colombian visitor named Haníbal Castro, on his way to join the Mambí army in Cuba, rose to speak to the crowd. Spain, he told the audience, had appealed to racist sentiments in its attempts to damage the Cuban cause. But in Colombia and Venezuela "the black race is the privileged race, which triumphed in the battles of Ayacucho and Carabobo." He continued by stating that "the black race, generous, virile, and valiant, had its cradle in Egypt, the motherland of the Negro." Black Egypt was the birthplace of civilization and progress, he told the audience. The colossal pyramids constructed by Black Egyptians had never been duplicated, even by the most intelligent of modern minds. The assembled audience began to respond heartily. "In the line of the Spanish Kings," Castro said, "there was Negro blood." "Bravo!" the crowd answered. "And today a black man is the premier Cuban." "Bravo!" they interrupted. "Maceo," Castro concluded. "¡Viva Maceo!" a voice shouted, and the crowd responded with an emphatic "¡Viva!"[24]

Castro ended by promising to risk his life to follow the Black general, and the crowd responded enthusiastically. "You could say," Schomburg wrote in his capacity as recording secretary, "that applause rained down and nearly drowned out the eloquent words of the son of Colombia."[25] The audience was comprised largely of Puerto Ricans and Cubans of color who had joined the movement chiefly because of the promise of racial advancement, as symbolized by Maceo. Beside them were working-class White allies who saw prejudices based on class and race as injustices. It is no wonder they responded enthusiastically to these words. After Castro, Sotero Figueroa spoke on the history of Puerto Rico's involvement in the struggle to abolish slavery and gain independence, which he indicated were one and the same struggle. He ended by paying homage to Juan Gualberto Gómez, the Cuban abolitionist intellectual, journalist, and independence leader and a prominent figure of the *sociedades de color* on the island. "Puerto Ricans and Cubans," Figueroa told the audience, "(there we have) this Negro, this intellect, the great Cuban Gualberto Gómez."[26]

Schomburg and the men of Las Dos Antillas cheered the idea that the Black race was a central participant in their independence movement and in that grand narrative of civilization and progress they held so dear. In so doing they articulated arguments identical to the ones that Schomburg would spend the rest of his life seeking to uphold. At the end of the meeting Schomburg looked up from taking notes and called for a final cheer for the fallen apostle José Martí. Martí, though wary of independent racial organizing, had founded a movement that accepted clubs like Las Dos Antillas, had used his influence to preserve a space for men of color to participate in the movement, and had defended the right of Black men to disprove racist theories with evidence of Black contributions to civilization. The crowd answered him with a final "¡Viva!"

Like the decision to form Sol de Cuba as a space apart from the established Cuban lodges, these meetings and conversations took place in the context of tense racial coalitions within the movement as well as in the context of a segregated city. Like the members of the Sol de Cuba lodge, the leaders of Las Dos Antillas settled among people of African descent from other parts of the Caribbean and United States. According to the 1900 federal census, for example, Rosendo Rodríguez lived in a building on Third Avenue occupied by Black families from the South. Silvestre Pivaló, the treasurer of Las Dos Antillas, lived in 1900 on a block where he and his wife Pilar were the only family enumerated as Black. But by 1910 they had moved to an all "mulatto" block where they were the only Spanish speakers. In 1900, Schomburg lived on West 62nd Street among mostly



Black neighbors. Another Las Dos Antillas officer, Francisco Araúz, lived with his wife, a Cuban woman of color, in a building on Third Avenue occupied almost entirely by African Americans. It seems that Schomburg was no more unusual in his relations with African Americans among his comrades in the Antillano independence club than among his brothers in the Sol de Cuba Masonic lodge.[27]

Indeed, when they settled in Black neighborhoods Schomburg and the other men of Las Dos Antillas were typical of most Puerto Ricans of color who lived in New York before 1920. As Jesús Colón remembered, "In those days the few Puerto Ricans around lived in the heart of the Negro neighborhood together with the Negro people in the same buildings; many times as roomers in their homes."[28] According to census data, it seems accurate to say that in those days the few Puerto Ricans of color around, about 10 percent of the total Puerto Rico–born population in the city, lived together with other people of color from the United States, Cuba, and the West Indies. Persons born in Puerto Rico and living in New York and enumerated as Black or mulatto on the United States census were more likely to marry English-speaking Black and mulatto persons than other Puerto Ricans. They frequently lodged with Blacks from the United States, Cuba, or the West Indies and almost never formed families with Puerto Ricans identified as White on the census. Practically the only exceptions to this rule were the Puerto Ricans of color who lived as servants in the homes of wealthy White Puerto Ricans.[29]

The apparent absence of any other residential contact between White and Black Puerto Ricans in New York may be explained, in part, by the problem of relying on census returns. Rather than recording the color and racial identities of these early settlers as they perceived themselves, census enumeration reflected shifting national ideas about race, codified by the color categories that Congress included in the forms: White, Black, and mulatto. The census results reflected the subjective assessment of each census taker, a judgment that was based on the physical appearance of the individual but probably also influenced by other factors such as dress, speech, family members, and neighborhood. Census takers may have been reluctant to acknowledge multiracial families and therefore may have enumerated Puerto Rican husbands and wives together in one category or the other. They may also have tended to enumerate Puerto Ricans with ambiguous features in Black neighborhoods as Black and in White neighborhoods as White. Indeed, while it is often presumed that the United States had a more rigid system of racial categories than Puerto Rico, following the "one drop rule," "White" was actually a rather fluid category

in New York in the first decade of the twentieth century. Enumerators counted most of the city's foreign-born working classes as White, even though the city's elite saw them as racial inferiors. Yet it seems unlikely that context wholly trumped physical characteristics when census takers enumerated Puerto Ricans. If some Puerto Ricans had features that allowed placement in different categories according to neighborhood, some others would surely have been recognized as Black even in White neighborhoods. Furthermore, even if the census data do not identify Puerto Ricans of African descent living in White neighborhoods who may have been counted as White, they still show that of the 10 percent of Puerto Ricans in New York in this period identified as non-White, the majority formed households with people of color from other parts of the Americas (including the United States, Cuba, and the West Indies) and nearly all lived in Black-inhabited buildings and neighborhoods.

The racial politics that Schomburg and his Puerto Rican and Cuban comrades expressed in their pro-independence activism also reflected their own personal ties to the city's multiethnic Black world. Those relationships, in turn, were reflective of a broader experience of Caribbean people of color in New York before 1920. Schomburg may have been unique in his rapid rise to prominence in Negro intellectual and social circles. But he was hardly unique among his generation in his diasporic racial politics, his commitment to writing Black people into narratives of civilization and progress, or his profound social contact with African Americans from the United States.

## From Sol de Cuba to Prince Hall

Schomburg's path into leadership positions in African American institutions after the breakup of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and its Puerto Rican wing set him apart from his comrades in Las Dos Antillas. Although it was common for Puerto Ricans of color of his generation to live among other Black people, none rose to such prominence in African American public life. Understanding this path requires a return to the Sol de Cuba lodge and its ties to Prince Hall Masonry.[30] According to lodge historians, after 1898 membership declined because many Cuban exiles moved back to the island. By 1911 Schomburg and other remaining lodge members decided to boost lodge membership by attracting English speakers. In essence they voted to invite their neighbors and brothers-in-law to join, and they accommodated them by switching to English in lodge meetings. Within a few years the lodge changed its name from Sol de Cuba to Prince Hall Lodge No. 38. Schomburg translated the lodge records. The men who led the shift to English were Schomburg, a Puerto Rican with Danish West Indian heritage, and Cladius Emanuel Cyril, born in Costa Rica of Jamaican parents. The migrations of their parents within the Caribbean perhaps disposed these men to reach out to English-speaking neighbors. Still it is worth remembering that the first ties between the Sol de Cuba brothers and English-speaking neighbors had been forged in the 1870s, before Schomburg arrived in New York and before Cyril was even born.

By helping to preserve the lodge Schomburg created the conditions for his own rise to leadership within it as well as within the broader Prince Hall Masonic movement. In important ways Prince Hall No. 38 reproduced the world from which Schomburg came. In the Cuban and Puerto Rican movement, self-taught intellectuals—Black, White, and mulatto—also created their own social institutions, literary clubs, casinos, night schools, and lodges. These clubs and lodges were built around the willing adoption of norms of civilized behavior and public morals that mirrored elite institutions. Inside them cigar makers and other artisans of all colors sought to construct alternate histories of Cuba and Puerto Rico, in which they, and people like them, figured as national heroes, major literary figures, and great thinkers. In the wake of 1898, some of these comrades moved to Cuba to seek the rewards for their revolutionary sacrifices, and an outlet for their ideals, in public employment in the new republic. Greater numbers turned toward increasing labor radicalism by becoming socialists and union activists. Schomburg himself shared the humble origins of the cigar workers, but his personal and intellectual aspirations led him toward middle-class institutions and not socialism. In the Prince Hall Masons he found a community that shared his desire to disprove the theory that he was incapable of civilized behavior. Indeed, he found the space to become a leader in that community.

Schomburg's attraction to middle-class social institutions reflected his employment status. In his first years in New York Schomburg found work as a porter, but he hoped to rise to professional status by studying after work to pass the necessary exams to become a lawyer. In 1906, however, his attempts to receive a law certificate were thwarted when he could not produce evidence of sufficient schooling and the state refused to let him take the exam.[31] He instead settled in as a white-collar employee in the mailroom at Bankers Trust Company. A mailroom job would hardly be prestigious employment by today's standards, and surely it fell far short of Schomburg's ambitions. But in 1906 it was also far removed from the working-class world of the cigar factories or print shops of San Juan. While

cigar workers on the islands, and in New York, faced increasing pressure from mechanization in the early decades of the century, Schomburg observed sympathetically from the relative comfort and stability of a white-collar job. While they turned from the imperfect multiracial alliances of revolutionary nationalism to the imperfect racial alliances of labor radicalism, he helped Sol de Cuba become a space for racial nationalism among middle-class Blacks of varied linguistic and ethnic backgrounds.[32]

In Prince Hall Lodge No. 38, Schomburg surrounded himself with men who shared his professional status and middle-class values. Prince Hall lodges in Brooklyn were institutions of the lower stratum of the Black middle class, a group whose class status as respectable Black men was defined by a rigid code of public behavior rather than professional achievements.[33] Like the Caballeros de la Luz, lodges selected members based on shared notions of morality, civilization, and masculinity. But while these standards allowed elites in the Caballeros de la Luz lodges to regulate the behavior of men with less education and prestige, the brothers in the Prince Hall lodges used the same ideology to glorify the image of the "self-made man."[34] Schomburg, who often suffered slights at the hands of leading Black intellectuals, pointedly expressed in his 1913 speech his Masonic attitude toward Black elites: "The university graduate is wont to overestimate his ability, fresh from the machinery that endows him with a parchment and crowns him with knowledge, he steps out into the world to meet the practical men with years of experience and mother wit."[35] It was among these men of "mother wit" that Schomburg established his class and ethnic identity in Negro New York.

Indeed, the intellectual organizations that Schomburg helped to establish with fellow Masons also helped satisfy his higher ambitions and his subversive desire to excel as a leader and an intellectual despite the racism of White society and the snobbery of the Black elite. If lodge membership secured respectability for Black men in the uncomfortable lower echelons of the middle class, becoming an officer, and then rising in the Masonic hierarchy, was an avenue for becoming a Negro notable, or a "race leader."[36] After first serving as secretary and master of the Sol de Cuba lodge, Schomburg rose quickly through the ranks of the order to become, in 1918, Grand Secretary of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of New York State and associate editor of the *Masonic Quarterly Review*. The mentorship of John Bruce, another man of "mother wit," and Schomburg's own remarkable accomplishments as a collector, gradually increased his reputation in academic circles as well, bringing Schomburg no small satisfaction. In 1914, after Bruce helped with his election to the American Negro Academy, Schomburg wrote, "I have been elected an Academician!!! That's higher than a co-editor [Bruce had just been made co-editor emeritus of *Who's Who in Negro America*]. Thanks for your good letter of recommendation to the Academy."[37] Two years later, when he was admitted to the American Bibliographer's Society, Schomburg wrote Bruce again: "I thank you for adding more weight to my head . . . by having used your good will in electing me to membership in such an exclusive society."[38]

## Conclusion

Schomburg's migrations were the product of a specific moment of overlapping diasporas in the Atlantic world, particularly the interplay in nineteenth-century New York between the multiracial world of Antillean nationalism and the multiethnic world of Black neighborhoods and organizations. When Cubans of color sought to create their own social space within the broader émigré community, they found support from the Prince Hall Masons. When Puerto Ricans and Cubans of color left the meetings of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in New York, they went home to rooming houses, apartment buildings, and even households shared with African Americans. Participating in a movement with an official rhetoric of race blindness did not mean actually being blind to racial injustice or to the bonds of solidarity that might link people of African descent across national boundaries.

Thus when the independence movement in New York broke apart in 1898, and the anti-racist alliances there vanished, Schomburg did not reach out to Black North Americans as an oppressed Puerto Rican seeking allies. He reached out to Black North Americans as a "Negro" born in Puerto Rico. He was accepted in North American Pan-Africanist circles, not because all Puerto Ricans were seen as natural allies, but because, according to the racial philosophy espoused there, foreign *Negroes* were family—related by blood. He became a respected race leader not because he immediately became an assimilated North American Negro, but because in being fluent in Spanish and competent in French Schomburg was able to serve as a correspondent and translator between North American Blacks and a network of Black intellectuals that grew within the new imperial order in the Atlantic basin. He gained prestige in the institutions of Negro New York precisely because he was something between a foreigner and a Black North American. He gained prestige among Blacks in

the Caribbean by becoming a race leader at the center of the wealthiest and most powerful Black middle class in the world.

Few Cubans and even fewer Puerto Ricans lived in New York in the period when Schomburg migrated and settled in the city. Afro-Latin@s who came in later years negotiated the complications of where they belonged in contexts different from the ones that he faced, including growing Latin@ neighborhoods and evolving racial discrimination against working-class Puerto Ricans of all colors. After the Second World War racial thinking in the United States ceased to define Hebrews, Celts, and Italians as distinct "races"—White but not quite White—but preserved that status for Latin@s. While important differences remained between the reception offered to White Latin@s and Latin@s of color, that contrast was not the same as it had been in the first decades of the century.

Still, if Schomburg's life were a product of the bygone world in which he lived, it nevertheless offers key lessons for understanding the broader experience of Afro-Latin@s in the United States. Although they frequently face the presumption that one is *either* Black or Latin@, Afro-Latin@s can have experiences and social contacts that link them to *both* communities. They negotiate parallel, if differently configured, exclusions as they move between Latin American and United States societies. And like Schomburg they can find spaces to exert leadership in struggles to make Latin@ communities live up to expressed ideals of racial and class harmony, in community-wide struggles constructed around ideas of Latin@ unity, and in struggles against racism constructed around ideas of unity among people of African descent from distinct backgrounds.

## Notes

1. For further biographical detail see Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, *Arthur Alfonso Schomburg, Black Bibliophile and Collector: A Biography* (New York: New York Public Library; Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1989); Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1998), 193–231; and Jesse Hoffnung-Garskof, "The Migrations of Arturo Schomburg: On Being Antillano, Negro, and Puerto Rican in New York, 1891–1917," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21, no. 1 (2001): 3–49.
2. Arthur A. Schomburg, "Racial Integrity: A Plea for the Establishment of a Chair of Negro History in Our Schools and Colleges. Address Delivered at the Teachers' Summer Class at the Cheney Institute, Pennsylvania, July 1913," Negro Society for Historical Research, Occasional Papers No. 3 (Yonkers, N.Y.: August Valentine Bernier, 1913), 7, 19.
3. Tomás Blanco, *El prejuicio racial en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, P.R.: Ediciones Huracán, 1985 [1942]), 103. See also Lawrence Chenault, *The Puerto Rican Migrant in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938); and W. A. Domingo, "Gift of the Black Tropics," in *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, edited by Alain Locke (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), 342.
4. James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 198.
5. Petition for a warrant for a new lodge to be named "Sol de Cuba," submitted to "the M.W. Grand Master of the H.F. of F.A.M. for the State of New York," in New York, June 26, 1880, Harry A. Williamson Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (hereafter Williamson, SCRBC). See Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, "Los cuerpos masónicos cubanos durante el siglo XIX," and Manuel Hernández González, "La Orden Cubana de los Caballeros de la Luz en el exilio norteamericano," both in *Masonería Española y Américana* (Zaragoza, Spain: Centro de Estudios Históricos de la Masonería Española, 1993). "The History of Prince Hall Lodge No. 38." Published by the Prince Hall Lodge No. 38 F. & A. M., P. H., included in a "Souvenir Program—75th Anniversary," New York, November 4, 1956, Williamson, SCRBC.
6. "Libro de Actas—Gran Logia Luz de Caballero," April 11, 1878. Logia Luz de Caballero, Manuscript Collection, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia (hereafter Logia Luz, PHA).
7. "Liturgia Orden Caballeros de la Luz," 1879, Logia Luz, PHA.
8. "Libro de Actas," February 9, 1879, March 7, 1879, Logia Luz, PHA. See also Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 70–89.
9. Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba*, esp. 170–94.
10. "Libro de Actas," March 21, 1879, Logia Luz, PHA. On the deterioration of class relations in the immigration, see Gerald Poyo, *With All and for the Good of All: The Emergence of Popular Nationalism in the Cuban Communities of the United States, 1848–1898* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1989), 65–73.
11. "Libro de Actas," Logia Luz, PHA. See also Manuel Hernández González, "La Orden Cubana de los Caballeros de la Luz en el exilio norteamericano," in *Masonería Española y Américana* (Zaragoza, Spain, 1993).
12. For Serra's discussion of charity and La Liga, see his speech at the April 17, 1892, meeting of the PRC at Harman Hall, which was published in *Patria*, Suplemento 7, April 23, 1892.
13. Rafael Serra's "Nuestra Labor" was first published in *La Doctrina de Martí*; later it was reprinted in *Ensayos Políticos* (New York: Imprenta de P. J. Díaz, 1896), 133–34.
14. In Sol de Cuba the membership as well as the leadership seems to have been composed entirely of men of color. In this it may have been akin to the Sociedades de Color, which appeared on the island in the 1880s with the project of racial uplift and advancement. See Aline Helg, *Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886–1912* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), esp. 30–41.
15. The information in these paragraphs comes from a comparison of Sol de Cuba lodge membership lists with U.S. federal census returns for 1880 and 1900. The lodge lists are from Williamson, SCRBC.
16. See Schomburg's undated prospectus for a cookbook and social history of Negro cooking in Schomburg Papers, SCRBC.

17. Martí, "Mi Raza," *Patria*, 1893.
18. Ibid.
19. Figueroa launched this criticism of the lawyer Enrique José Varona, who led an effort by White professional exiles to draft laws for the future Cuban republic without consulting the base of the party. See *Doctrina de Martí*, January 30, 1897, cited in Josefina Toledo, *Sotero Figueroa, Editor de Patria: Apuntes para una biografía* (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1985), 89.
20. A list of political and social clubs and the leadership was included in each issue of *Patria*. The evidence in this paragraph comes from a comparison of those leaders with the U.S. federal census returns for 1880 and 1900.
21. The evidence in this paragraph comes from a comparison between Club Borinquen and Las Dos Antillas membership lists and the U.S. federal census for 1880 and 1900. Membership information comes from early issues of *Patria*, Antillas, SCRBC. Another member of the Borinquen leadership, Rafael Delgado, was also a man of color. He founded and led an independent club as well, called "La Equidad." This club seemingly resembles La Igualdad and may well have been a Sociedad de Color.
22. The explanation that Figueroa and Marín published for why they left the Autonomista Party for the Cuban Revolutionary Party did not discuss the question of racial equality directly. "Del Club Borinquen al Pueblo Puertorriqueño," *Patria*, March 19, 1892.
23. Toledo *Sotero Figueroa*, 80.
24. Antillas, SCRBC. For the events and speeches at the Special General Assembly in "Military Hall," see Minutes from October 6, 1895.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. These data come from a comparison of club membership with U.S. federal census returns for 1900 and 1910, consulted on Ancestry.com.
28. Jesús Colón, *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches* (New York: Mainstream Publishers, 1961), 44.
29. This data for persons born in Puerto Rico and living in New York was compiled through Ancestry.com indexes of the 1900 and 1910 federal census returns.
30. Report of the Sol de Cuba Lodge, No. 38, Williamson, SCRBC.
31. Des Verney Sinnette, *Arthur Alfonso Schomburg*, 35.
32. Schomburg told Ira de A. Reid that "the Cuban Negro, who laid the foundation of the great tobacco industries in the United States . . . [has] been made useless and forced out, being substituted in a large measure by the whites and modern machinery" (Schomburg to Ira de A. Reid, July 18, 1935, Schomburg Papers, SCRBC).
33. Martin Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents: The Black Middle Class and the Transformation of Masculinity, 1900–1930* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 25–65; William A. Muraskin, *Middle-Class Blacks in a White Society: Prince Hall Freemasonry in America* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1975), 25–42.
34. See Des Verney Sinnette, *Arthur Alfonso Schomburg*, 41, 190; and Summers, *Manliness and Its Discontents*.
35. Schomburg, "Racial Integrity," 5–6.
36. For an analysis of the importance of social clubs, dances, and elected offices in determining the status of African Americans in the 1920s and 1930s see the sociological work by St. Claire Drake and Horace Cayton in *Black Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), 669–70, 688–715.
37. Schomburg to Bruce, May, 1914, Bruce Papers, SCRBC.
38. Schomburg to Bruce, September 5, 1916, Bruce Papers, SCRBC. Schomburg was also an active member and sometime officer of the Urban League, the YMCA, the Negro Society for Historical Research, the Association of Trade and Commerce, the Business and Professional Men's Forum, the Harlem Citizens League for Fair Play, the NAACP, and several fraternal organizations including Kappa Alpha Psi. See Victoria Ortiz, "Arthur A. Schomburg: A Biographical Essay," in *The Legacy of Arthur A. Schomburg: A Celebration of the Past, A Vision for the Future* (New York: New York Public Library, 1986), 63.