

El Callao – a forgotten Trinidadian exclave in Venezuelan Guayana

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The field trip to the forgotten Trinidadian exclave El Callao in Eastern Venezuela is a project of the Department of History at The University of the West Indies, St Augustine Campus. From the 1850s on, Trinidadians and other Caribbean islanders migrated to the legendary “El Dorado”, the land of gold, in the footsteps of notorious Sir Walter Raleigh. Most of them came to the region of gold and diamonds on illegal paths, like Dr. Michael Toussaint described in his dissertation.¹ In the following decades, the Caribbean settlers intermingled with the indigenous and maroon groups of the region and a new Creole culture arosed. Nevertheless, Trinidadian cultural elements dominated the coexistence in El Callao: calypso and carnival became very popular in the town, whose inhabitants are still celebrating carnival in the style of the late 1930s when the last West Indian migrants were arriving this forgotten area.



The project, initiated by our Principal Prof. Dr. Clement Sankat and Dr. Christian Cwik, Lecturer at the Department of History, in cooperation with Vice-Rector Prof. Dr. Reginaldo Gomes de Oliveira from the Federal University of Roraima in Brazil, would like to strengthen the academic and cultural ties between Brazil, Venezuela, Suriname, Guiana and Trinidad and Tobago in a sustainable way.

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¹ Toussaint Michael F., Afro-West Indians in search of the Spanish Main: the Trinidad-Venezuela referent in the nineteenth century. Diss. UWI, St. Augustine 2000.