Opportunities for the Few and Select: Norwegians in Guatemala (1900–1940)

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Norwegian presence in Guatemala is closely linked to two dominant and interconnected features of the country in the liberal age in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century: the coffee boom and the modernization of infrastructure. The Norwegians were, however, latecomers in the foreign immigration in Guatemala, preceded by British, North Americans, Swiss, Belgians, French, Spanish, Italians, and most importantly by the Germans. But whereas the Germans came to constitute a relatively numerous presence in Guatemala, and a most important one in economic terms, Norwegians never seem to have numbered more than twenty, not even at the peak of Norwegian presence around 1930. Why did Norwegian presence remain so limited? And why didn't Norwegian communities form to attract more Norwegians, as was the case with the Germans in Guatemala, or with the Norwegians in the United States? This chapter looks at the role the Norwegian immigrants played in Guatemala between 1900 and 1940, traces the networks that may have brought them there, and explores their place in and relationship to contemporary Guatemalan society.

Guatemala did, as did several Latin American countries, encourage European immigration in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. However, given the structure of Guatemalan society, with a small, white, economic and political ruling elite, proprietors of large extensions of land, and an almost unlimited access to cheap indigenous labor, real opportunities for immigrants were few. Mostly, they were reserved for those who had the possibilities of inserting themselves into the elite. Making a living as a farmhand or the owner of a small plot of land was virtually impossible. Thus, the typical successful immigrant in Guatemala, Norwegian or other, was he who arrived with capital to invest and contacts within the economic and political elite.¹ The occupation of the successful immigrant in

1 See for example David J. McCreery, "Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala." *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Aug., 1976), 452. There was, of course, also an extensive immigration from Mexico, Honduras and El Salvador with properties different from those of the European and North American influx.

Guatemala was generally within activities closely linked to the coffee boom, such as agriculture, commerce, banking and not least the development of new and modern infrastructure. These were also activities closely linked to transnational capitalism, as many of them were in the hands of foreigners and foreign companies.

The Norwegian Coffee Planters in Guatemala's Foreign Immigration 1900–1940

Norwegian presence in Guatemala dates at least as far back as 1886, when Ernesto Anderzon of Norwegian nationality was listed as a resident in Antigua.² He might have been the only Norwegian in Guatemala until 1901, when a British citizen of Norwegian descent, Walter Lind, arrived in Guatemala to become probably the first Norwegian to settle as a coffee planter there.³ He

- 2 Archivo General de Centro América (AGCA), Sección del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE), B6803, "Nómina de los extranjeros residentes en el departamento de Sacatepéquez, diciembre 14, 1886." Possibly this was the same man who in 1915 was listed in the commercial directory of Guatemala as "Ernesto Anderson, ingeniero, Empresa Eléctrica del Norte." Marroquín Hermanos, ed., *Directorio Oficial y Guía General de la República de Guatemala, año de 1915–1916* (Guatemala: Casa Colorada, 1916), 128 and 207. In 1903, four Norwegians and one Swedish-Norwegian appear in the Guatemalan government's index of foreigners residing in the country. However, given the union between Norway and Sweden until 1905, questions of nationality were sometimes a bit unclear around the turn of the century. Thus, the "Norwegians" Manuel Teodoro Möller, Hugo E. Nordberg, Axel Fabián Pira, and Federico Berck Thomsen, and the Swedish-Norwegian Hugo Peterson, were all Swedish-born, as confirmed by a search in the sources available through www.ancestry.com. AGCA, SRE, B5683, "Índice de Ciudadanos Extranjeros Inscritos como tales, 31 de Octubre de 1903."
- 3 Information on Walter Lind (Petersen) and Randi de Lange is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5683, "Índice de Ciudadanos Extranjeros Inscritos como tales, 31 de Octubre de 1903." www.digitalarkivet.uib.no, Bergen, «Korskirken 1885–1912, skannet residerende kapellans bok», p. 84: Confirmation of Randi de Lange, October 4, 1896; Censuses for Bergen for 1885, 1891, 1900 and 1910; "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen September 6 1921; "Kristiania, Rikshospitalet, skannet fødselsregister 1918–1918," p. 78: birth of Erik Hall Lind, July 10 1918; "Domkirken 1916–1923, skannet fødselsregister," p. 149: birth of Norman Petersen Lind, June 2, 1921. www.ancestry.com, "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837–1915, Births registered in October, November and December 1876," p. 306: Birth of Walter Oliver L. Petersen; "1891 England Census": 5 Wheathill Road, Penge Parish, London; "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837–1915, Marriages registered in October, November and December 1915," pp. 66, 266 and 342: Marriage of Randi de Lange and Walter L. Petersen/Walter P. Lind; "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1966": Deaths of Walter Petersen Lind, November 2, 1948, and Randi

was born Walter Lind Petersen in London in 1876 by Norwegian parents and grew up in England, but after a quarrel with his father he took British citizenship and removed “Petersen” from his surname. Walter Lind moved to Guatemala as a representative of Rosing Brothers & Co., one of the largest coffee importers of London, and subsequently became important British coffee planter Gordon Smith’s business partner, as well as the owner of his own company, Lind & Co. Smith and Lind bought their first property together in 1910, Finca Mocá in Santa Bárbara, and the two came to play an important role in the Guatemalan coffee industry. In 1919, Gordon Smith & Co. owned the fincas Helvetia, Tambor, Dolores, and Palimira and received financial support from Norwegians John Poulson and Harald Stange to administer them.⁴ Poulson and Stange sold their share to Christian Sonne of New York in 1927, but as we shall see, they did not withdraw from the Guatemalan coffee industry. In 1933, Finca Helvetia was among the nine largest coffee farms in the country, and Gordon Smith & Co., with seven fincas, was the third most important coffee firm in Guatemala.⁵ Such important fincas “had their own modern processing plants, ...owned export houses and were involved in banking and crop finance.”⁶ Moreover, Lind & Co. was listed among the twenty-six largest coffee exporters in Guatemala.⁷ Their coffee was sold also to the Scandinavian countries, and in the 1920s the Helvetia coffee was reported to be well known as Guatemala’s finest in Norway and Sweden.

Furthermore, Lind in many ways is representative of the classic pioneer, being the reason for several Norwegians to travel to Guatemala. He married

Lind December 8, 1949. Interview with Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold, Guatemala City, August 8, 2013; F.W. Holtermann, “Paa Reise i Guatemala. Visit paa nordmanden Walter Linds store kaffeplantage,” *Oslo Aftenavis*, July 5 1926; Marroquín Hermanos, *Directorio Oficial 1915–1916*, 167; Regina Wagner, *Historia del café de Guatemala* (Bogotá: Villegas editors, 2001), 131. This book is also published in English, as *The History of Coffee in Guatemala* (Bogotá: Villegas editors, 2001).

4 Interview with Mark Leonowens, Guatemala City, August 6, 2013; interview with Louis Leonowens, Guatemala City, August 8, 2013; Johan Tufteand, Leif Lind Pettersen and Carmen Gehrke Pettersen, *Kvalvaag. Man and Ocean*. (Stavanger: Dreyer Aksjeselskap, 1975), 17; Wagner, *Historia del Café*, 131. The spelling of their names vary, but I have chosen to use that employed in *Kvalvaag*. According to Mark and Louis Leonowens, they always lived in Norway, but their involvement in the Guatemalan coffee industry lasted until the 1960s.

5 Robert G. Williams, *States and Social Evolution. Coffee and the Rise of National Governments in Central America* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 319. See also Regina Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala 1828–1944* (Guatemala: Afanes S.A., 2007), 284–91.

6 Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 170–71.

7 Wagner, *Historia del café*, 169.

Randi de Lange from Bergen in 1915, and both their sons were born in Norway, Erik in 1918 and Norman in 1921. Despite spending a large part of their early lives between England and Norway, both brothers returned to Guatemala to live. Erik eventually married a Mexican and moved to Mexico, but Norman settled permanently in Guatemala with his Norwegian wife Berit Sverdrup after World War II.⁸

Also Mrs. Lind's sister, Hjørdis, lived in Guatemala.⁹ An adventurous and spirited woman, she traveled as their governess when she made the journey together with the Linds in 1921. While in Guatemala, she married British citizen Percy O. Davies, who lived in Retalhuleu and was a manager of one of Gordon Smith's fincas (see map 6.1). Percy and Hjørdis Davies were well settled at the time of Norwegian adventurer Edgar Kullmann's travels in Guatemala in 1924. Kullmann worked at Finca Helvetia for a few months, and in his diary he refers to almost weekly dinners at the Davieses' home.¹⁰ The couple had three sons, Edgar, Victor, and Lloyd, and around 1930, when their sons were aged around two to seven, they decided to employ a Norwegian nanny. Agnete from Bergen arrived with the family only to become the reason for its dissolution, as Mr. Davies fell for the nanny and later married her. Mrs. Davies returned to

- 8 Erik died in Mexico at the age of eighty-eight. Norman was part of the British forces during World War II and acted as liaison officer between London and the group that bombarded the heavy water plant at Rjukan, Norway. In connection with the operation he also met his future wife, Berit Sverdrup, who moved to Guatemala with him. By 1967, Norman Lind was a finca owner and Norwegian consul. He was killed in a guerrilla attack in 1985. Interview with Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold; Víctor Soto de Avila, "El Señor Norman Lind Cónsul General de Noruega," *Horizonte Revista Interamericana*, no. 173–74, abril-mayo 1977, 8–10; "Un consul entre los muertos. Cuatro víctimas al estallar avioneta," *Prensa Libre*, October 24, 1985, 8.
- 9 Information on Hjørdis de Lange and Percy Oswald Davies is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, "Nómina de los extranjeros inscritos en el Departamento de Retalhuleu, hasta el día 15 de Agosto de 1928"; B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contienen los libros Retalhuleu 1, 2, 3, 4 y 4a de la Oficina de Pasaportes, s/f"; B8872, "Pago de derechos, 23 de Noviembre, 1932." www.digitalarkivet.uib.no, Bergen, "Korskirken 1889–1899, skannet ministerialbok," p. 23; Baptism of Hjørdis de Lange, February 2, 1890; "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen September 6, 1921; "Døde i Bergen 1912–1972": Death of Hjørdis de Lange Davies, November 11, 1969. www.ancestry.com, "U.K. Outward Passenger Lists 1890–1960": Departure of *Motagua* August 16, 1929 from Avonmouth via Kingston, Jamaica, to Santa Marta, Colombia. Interview with Catharina de Lange Davies, telephone, February 7, 2014; interview with Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold; Th. Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1931, 43–46.
- 10 Diary of Edgar Kullmann, pp. 1612–1615. Kullmann describes his travels around Guatemala, Mexico, and El Salvador between January 1924 and March 1927, visiting each country several times.

MAP 6.1 *Guatemala*

Norway with her three sons in 1935, never to set foot in Guatemala again. She died in Bergen in 1969. Of her three sons, Victor settled in Norway and Lloyd in the United States, and only Edgar returned to Guatemala, where he inherited Finca Dolores from his father.

Whereas Walter Lind and the de Lange sisters were connected to the British-owned part of the coffee industry, another Norwegian who arrived around the same time as Lind, in 1903, became part of the German segment. Henrik Thomsen Blanc was born in Bergen in 1874 and left Norway for Germany in 1892.¹¹ Eleven years later, he set sail for New York to continue onwards to

11 Information on Henrik Thomsen Blanc is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6805, “Cuadro que demuestra las inscripciones de extranjeros efectuadas en la jefatura política del departamento de Sololá, 1928”; B6839, “Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro No. 1 Puerto de Champerico de la oficina de Pasaportes”, s/f; B8872 “Pago de derechos, 23 de Noviembre, 1932”; AGCA, Defunciones Marzo 1931. Archive of the

Guatemala. In 1911, he declared his intention to work at Finca El Zapote, which then was owned by the German company Hanseatische Plantagen-Gesellschaft Guatemala-Hamburg. By the 1920s, he was known as Enrique Blanc and was reported to own a small coffee plantation in the Sololá area. It is, however, more probable that Blanc was employed as an administrator of a finca, because at his death he left only a small and simple house in the village of Sololá and nothing else of any value. Although his fellow countrymen in Guatemala knew of him, he does not seem to have had any contact either with them or with the Norwegian consulate. Edgar Kullmann, for instance, stayed in the Sololá area at Swede Axel Fabián Pira's Finca Chichavác in October–November 1925, but makes no mention of Blanc in his diary.

Blanc was single when he died from uremia related to prostate cancer at the age of fifty-seven at the Hospital General in Guatemala City on March 15, 1931. The following day,

he was buried...in the Cementerio General at 11:50, and the religious ceremony was conducted by the German Protestant pastor. The grave is situated in the plot belonging to the German colony. Mr. A.J. Gundersen represented the consulate, and there were a number of the German colony present, besides some natives.¹²

The Norwegian consulate, represented by the consul Arthur Henry Gehrke, rather reluctantly assumed the task of sorting out the deceased's estate in Sololá, a location that Gehrke considered to be quite distant. The only Norwegian connection he could find to notify of Blanc's death was curiously Finn de Lange, brother of Randi and Hjørdis and also a friend of Gehrke himself. De Lange then notified Blanc's relative and only heir, his sister and famous

Norwegian Legation in Mexico, Department of Foreign Affairs, Norway: File regarding "Henrik Thomsen Blanc, Sololá, Guatemala, avg. ved døden i Guatemala 15. mars 1931". www.digitalarkivet.uib.no, "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen March 29, 1892; "Domkirken 1869–1876, skannet klokkebok," p. 89: birth of Henrik Thomsen Blanc, May 27, 1874. www.ancestry.com, "Hamburg Passenger Lists 1850–1934": departure of the s.s. *Moltke* from Hamburg August 20, 1903; "New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957": arrival of the s.s. *Moltke* at Port of New York, 1903; "New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957": arrival of the s.s. *President Lincoln* at Port of New York, November 2, 1911. Diary of Edgar Kullmann, pp. 1641–1643; Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama"; "Nordmænd Jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1925, 543.

12 A.H. Gehrke to N. Fossum, March 16, 1931. Archive of the Norwegian Legation in Mexico, Department of Foreign Affairs, Norway.

actress Magda Blanc Jordan.¹³ However, alleged heirs also appeared in Guatemala, as a number of women presented claims on behalf of their children, supposedly all Blanc's illegitimate offspring, though seemingly without being able to produce satisfactory proof of paternity.

At the time Lind and Blanc arrived just after the turn of the century, the Guatemalan government, as many contemporary Latin American governments, worked to promote foreign immigration. As early as 1834, a law was passed to encourage colonization, promising a series of favorable conditions to those tempted to settle in certain areas of the country. Various applications to form colonies were submitted to the Guatemalan government shortly after the publication of the law, but the first attempts failed.¹⁴ One of these was nevertheless of importance, namely the Santo Tomás colonization in the 1840s, which constitutes the real start of the significant German immigration to Guatemala.

Further legislation to encourage foreign immigration was passed in 1868, 1873, 1879, and 1893.¹⁵ In 1877, an immigration society, the Sociedad de Inmigración, was established, with agents in Guatemala and abroad, and in 1895, an immigrants' guide to Guatemala was published.¹⁶ It gave detailed

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- 13 His parents were dead, but he also had a brother, Birger Blanc. He, however, was mentally ill and by 1931 he had been in a mental hospital for thirty years. "Rapport avgitt til politimesteren i Bergen av politikonstabel Th. Molland ang. Henrik Thomsen Blanc som døde 15/3-31 i Guatemala", May 11, 1931. Archive of the Norwegian Legation in Mexico, Department of Foreign Affairs, Norway.
 - 14 Wagner, *Los alemanes in Guatemala*, 17-54. The Archivo General de Centro América contains ample documentation regarding the establishment and failure of the Santo Tomás colony, see for example AGCA, SRE, B7557. It also contains documentation of other attempts, as abundant applications to establish colonies were submitted to the Guatemalan authorities at least until 1934. The applications originated from initiatives in countries as diverse as the United States, Sweden, Lithuania, and Spain, but applications were either declined or the attempts failed. See, e.g., AGCA, SRE, B 7555 and 7556. On Italian immigration attempts, see McCreery, "Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala," 453-55.
 - 15 Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 72-73; Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 165. The whole 1893-law is printed in Víctor Sánchez O. and Emilio Gómez Flores, *Primer Directorio de la Capital y Guía General de la República de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía Sánchez y De Guise, 1894), 33-46. It was still valid in 1915, see Marroquín Hermanos, *Directorio Oficial 1915-1916*, 94-99. The laws granted, among other rights, freedom of religion, and the fact that most of the immigrants were Protestants in a Catholic country does, surprisingly, not seem to have been an issue at all, neither for the immigrants themselves nor for the Guatemalan authorities.
 - 16 J. Méndez, *Guía del Inmigrante en la República de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía y Encuadernación Nacional, 1895).

information on subjects such as legislation, infrastructure, climate, agricultural opportunities, facilities and businesses, and lists of ambassadors and consuls. From 1896 onwards, however, the government started restricting immigration on the bases of origin and age, introducing various measures to control the entry and presence of foreigners in the country.¹⁷

In the 1920s and 1930s, approving accounts of Guatemala as a country for traveling and living were given by contributors to Norwegian newspapers and *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, the monthly magazine of the Association of Norwegians Abroad that was read by emigrants and their Old World relatives alike. Accounts from both 1926 and 1939 describe the climate in the Guatemalan capital as wonderful and living costs and tax levels as very low.¹⁸ Guatemala City was in the mid-1920s reported to have 110,000 inhabitants and to be a modern city with large hotels, clubs, and banks. Fruit, vegetables, and poultry were offered in abundance at the markets, although fish was, not surprisingly, scarce. Guatemala City had lovely parks with tropical vegetation, and the older houses all in Spanish style. Both accounts also stated that the Guatemalan government did not put any obstacles in the way for immigrants wishing to enter into the Guatemalan agricultural business, as it considered that foreigners could contribute favorably to agricultural development in the country. Others, however, did not have such a positive impression, but nor did they have such an extensive audience for their complaints. Edgar Kullmann confessed to his diary during his 1925 stay in Guatemala that “the longer I stay in this country, the less tolerance I have for the rabble that lives here.”¹⁹

There is no doubt that the Germans constituted the most important group of foreigners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to European groups and North Americans, numerous Mexicans, Salvadorans, and Hondurans also settled in Guatemala, but although significant in numbers, their importance was far exceeded by the Germans in terms of economic power and influence. In 1897, close to a thousand Germans lived in Guatemala.²⁰ In the decade after World War I, the number was around three thousand, but this fell to two thousand by the end of the 1930s because of remigration spurred

17 Marroquín Hermanos, *Directorio Oficial 1915–1916*, 99–101; Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 265–66. A 1927-law specified persons of Turkish, Palestine, Arabic, Libyan and Syrian origin. Restrictions also applied to the Chinese. None of the measures affected Northern Europeans, though.

18 Holtermann, “Paa Reise i Guatemala”; Th. Lea, “Her er det evig vår,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1940, 112–14. The article was written in 1939, but was published in 1940.

19 Diary of Edgar Kullmann, p. 1642.

20 Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 112 and 244. In her book, Wagner gives a very good account of the Germans’ activities and influence.

by better living conditions in Germany.²¹ The Germans practically monopolized commerce, setting up importing and exporting businesses all over the country, most with representatives also in Europe. According to a 1926 report in a Norwegian newspaper,

they are highly respected for their laboriousness, adherence to the law, and order. The Germans in Central America have an ability to adapt that their competitors from the United States completely lack. The Germans immediately learn the language (Spanish), mingle with the natives, marry their women, and in other words blend completely in. This, an American cannot do. Or will not.²²

As late as 1939, the Germans were reported to control most of Guatemala's small market for imported goods with their closely knit commercial networks.²³

However, at least one Norwegian managed to offer the Germans some competition in this field. Bjarne Thorsen Ness, born in Bergen in 1899, arrived in Guatemala around 1927.²⁴ By then, he had lived about ten years in the United

21 Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 294. For the relationship between the Guatemalan authorities and the German Empire and immigrants during World War I, see pp. 252–64.

22 Holtermann, "Paa Reise i Guatemala."

23 Lea, «Her er det evig vår». This was to change during World War II, when merchants and coffee planters alike saw their property embargoed by the Guatemalan government, which considerably reduced German influence in the country. As much as 75 percent of German coffee farms and other assets were expropriated and not returned after the war. Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 171. See also J. Fred Rippy, "German Investments in Guatemala." *The Journal of Business of the University of Chicago*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Oct., 1947), 212–19.

24 Information on Bjarne Thorsen Ness is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G2 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934"; B5688, "Inscripción de extranjera de Brunhilde de Ness, 11 de Junio de 1928"; B6734, "La Secretaría de Gobernación y Justicia al Secretario de Estado en el Despacho de Relaciones Exteriores," December 9, 1932. www.digitalarkivet.uib.no, Censuses for Bergen, 1900, and Vik in Sogn, 1910; "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen September 4, 1918. Interview with Einar William Klanderud, Guatemala City, August 7, 2013. *Memoria de las Labores del Ejecutivo en el ramo de Relaciones Exteriores durante el año de 1932, presentada a la asamblea legislativa en sus sesiones ordinarias de 1933* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1933), 43; Th. Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1931, 43–46; Kr. Fivelstad, "På farten i tropene," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1939, 209–10; José A. Quiñonez, *Directorio General de la República de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1930), 226. In 1900, Ness lived with his parents and baby

States, held US citizenship, and was married to Czech-born Brunhilde Hindermann.²⁵ In 1932, he was granted Guatemalan citizenship. He set up a successful business in Guatemala City, Ness & Co. Representaciones, and among other products sold office equipment and Japanese china in his large store. Bjarne and Brunhilde had four children, Leif, Dagmar, Sølvi, and Dag, all four of whom were born and lived in Guatemala, and Leif continued the business after his father's retirement and death.

For the Norwegian immigrant Thomas Washington Lea, on the other hand, German competition became too fierce, and his small business importing and selling Norwegian tiles, concrete, paper, and cod liver oil did not last long.²⁶ Lea was born in Bergen in 1889 and had lived both in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, working as a bookkeeper, before moving to Venezuela to work for an oil company. When he was laid off there, he traveled overland to Barranquilla in Colombia and from there on a German ship to Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, where he arrived in 1930. He originally intended only to transit, but set up the above mentioned business. After six years in the country, having learned to know both the Spanish language and the Guatemalan culture well, he bought land and entered into the agricultural business. By 1939, he wanted to buy more of the beautiful properties for sale, but was looking for a Norwegian business companion with capital and connections, with whom he could invest. Lea was still single in 1930, and it is not known what happened to him after 1939.²⁷

sister in Bergen. By the 1910 census, he lived with his grandparents at their farm in Vik in Sogn where he still lived at the time of his emigration. In most Norwegian sources, his surname is spelled Nesse, but in Guatemala he used Ness.

- 25 Czechoslovakia did not exist until 1918, when Brunhilde Hindermann was 16 years old, but is nevertheless given as her place of birth on the registration form she filled out in Guatemala. AGCA, SRE, B5688, "Inscripción de extranjera de Brunhilde de Ness, 11 de Junio de 1928."
- 26 Information on Thomas Washington Lea is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5402, "Declaración de Thomas Washington Lea, Barranquilla, 17 de octubre de 1930"; B 6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G53 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934"; B9131, "Manifiesto General de las mercaderías embarcadas Oslo, 2/7 1935, a bordo del vapor m.s. Granville de la línea Norway Pacific Line." HULA: CEMLA, "Listado de pasajeros e inmigrantes noruegos llegados al puerto de Buenos Aires entre 1882 y 1950": arrivals August 19, 1924. Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama"; Lea, "Her er det evig vår"; "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1933, 60; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1938, 61; Fivelstad, "På farten i tropene"; M.A. Pilon, ed., *Commercial, Industrial and Professional Directory of the Republic of Guatemala* (Guatemala: 1935), 57–58.
- 27 None of the descendants of Norwegians interviewed have heard of him.

German presence was spurred by the good relations between Guatemala and Germany, and the German immigrants' position was favored by trade treaties.²⁸ Relations between Guatemala and Norway, however, were by no means as close as those between Guatemala and Germany. Although Norway did not have an embassy in Guatemala until 1976, Norwegian consular representation in Guatemala dates at least as far back as the early 1880s. German and British citizens held the position as Norwegian consul general in Guatemala – and at times also vice-consul in Puerto Barrios – between the 1880s and the early 1940s.²⁹ Two exceptions were Norwegians Michael Strøm Lie in 1915–16 and Lars Gravem in 1918–20.³⁰ In 1928, Englishman Arthur H. Gehrke was appointed Norwegian consul in Guatemala, a position he held until the early 1940s, when his Norwegian son-in-law Leif Lind Pettersen took over.³¹ Conversely, Guatemalan consular representation in Norway was established in Kristiania around 1900 with mainly Norwegians being appointed consuls, and by 1924 there was a Guatemalan consulate in Bergen, too.

The infrequent consular correspondence seems to have been mainly polite notes of no substantial content, as well as information about consuls' whereabouts, appointments, and renouncements. There are, however, a couple of notable exceptions, such as in 1911 when Norwegian companies asked about the possibilities of hunting whale in Guatemalan waters, an inquiry that does not seem to have been followed up.³² In 1912, a project to establish a direct route between Norway and Guatemala once the Panama Canal had opened

- 28 E.g., the *Tratado de Amistad, Comercio y Navegación*, valid from 1887 to 1915, and the *Convención de Comercio*, valid between 1925 and 1935. Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 243 and 268–72.
- 29 Various documents in AGCA, SRE, B4166, B4168, B6839, B8640, B8790, B8797, B8930, B9131 and B9384 deal with the consular service. The *Directorios* published in 1894, 1908, 1916 and 1930 also have lists of consuls.
- 30 The former was Norwegian ambassador to Mexico 1910–21, and only visited Guatemala briefly in 1912. See Michael Lie, *Fra mit liv som diplomat* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1929), 188–91. Gravem had come to Guatemala as a representative of the San Francisco-based Otis McAllister & Co., and was appointed consul in 1919. In 1920, the Guatemalan Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a note to the Guatemalan consul in Oslo, Christian Edward Sontum, making clear that there was much to be desired in the conduct of Consul Gravem. The Norwegian authorities relieved Gravem of his duties at the same time as he returned to California in 1920. Various documents in AGCA, SRE, B4168. See also AGCA, SRE, B8640, 8790 and 9384.
- 31 “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1942, 282; Kristian Fivelstad, “Norske Interesser i Mellem-Amerika. Idag og i Fremtiden,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1943, 115–17.
- 32 AGCA, SRE, B8640, Michael Lie to Luis Toledo Herrarte, December 5, 1911 and January 20, 1912.

was mentioned in a letter from the Guatemalan foreign minister to the Guatemalan consul in Norway.³³ This project did not materialize at the time, but Norwegian ships did travel relatively frequently to Guatemala via other ports and countries.³⁴

Trade between Guatemala and Norway was of a small volume, but nevertheless established in the period under investigation. Norwegian imports from Central America were almost exclusively coffee, cocoa, and bananas, and, as mentioned above, Guatemalan coffee was well known in Norway in the 1920s.³⁵ Norwegian products promoted in Guatemala included hydrogenated oils, canned fish, cod liver oil, paper, concrete, and dried cod (*bacalao*). But many agreed that there was potential to increase trade, that Norwegian interests in Central America should be an issue of priority for Norwegian authorities, and that one should work thoroughly and systematically to enter into business. In 1929, Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann, a Norwegian businessman based in Cuba, fiercely criticized the Norwegian consular system in Central America, practically putting all the blame for the scarce Norwegian business interests in the region on corrupt and inefficient consuls.³⁶ The same Holtermann also contended that the region's living standards, business morale, and financial systems were of a kind that they invited foreign interest and investment. Whether as a consequence of the criticism or for other reasons, several changes were made to the official representation in Central America in 1937–39.³⁷ Kristian

33 AGCA, SRE, B4166, Luis Toledo Herrarte to T. Chauvin, Guatemala, [illegible] 5, 1912.

34 Among consular papers in AGCA, SRE, B9131, there is evidence of this traffic, such as the bills of health given to the various ships leaving Oslo to stop by Puerto Barrios or Puerto San José. Between August 1932 and March 1934, the average was a little more than one ship a month.

35 AGCA, SRE, B9131, various documents concerning export tolls paid to the Guatemalan consulate in Oslo in 1935–1936; Holtermann, "Paa Reise i Guatemala"; Fivelstad, "Norske Interesser i Mellem-Amerika"; "Gode muligheter for øket eksport til Mellem-Amerika," *Tidens Tegn*, December 1936.

36 «Skandaløse norske konsulatforhold i latin-Amerika," *Morgenavisen*, January 26, 1929; "Er det bare spilt tid for forretningsfolk å søke hjelp i konsulatene?" *Oslo Aftenavis*, January 23, 1929; "Våre konsulter i Syd-Amerika," *Tidens Tegn*, January 1929; "Vaar diplomatiske og konsulære representasjon i Syd- og Central-Amerika," *Morgenbladet*, April 15, 1929. Th. Lea, on the other hand, in 1933 expressed his gratitude for the excellent help he had been given by the Norwegian consulate in Guatemala. "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1933, 60.

37 Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire «Nordmenn jorden rundt," filled out by Kristian Fivelstad on October 15, 1935; "Decreto número 2355, 30 de Marzo de 1939," en Rosendo P. Méndez, *Recopilación de las Leyes de la República de Guatemala* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1941), 22–23; "Gode muligheter for øket eksport til Mellem-Amerika"; Fivelstad, «Norske Interesser i Mellem-Amerika»; «På farten i tropene,"

Fivelstad was appointed Norwegian trading representative for the region in 1937 and was one of two Norwegian representatives who signed a trade agreement with Guatemala in 1938. Also in 1938, new diplomats were appointed to both Mexico and El Salvador.

Not only foreign immigration was well under way when Walter Lind and Henrik T. Blanc arrived in Guatemala just after the turn of the century, but also the coffee boom, where the Germans again were heavily involved (See Table 6.1). As with the other four Central American countries, coffee dominated economy and politics in Guatemala in the second half of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century, and the Guatemalan coffee-growing elite had near absolute political and economic power.³⁸ The commercial growing of coffee began in Guatemala in the 1840s, but it was to take three decades and the liberals' victory over the conservatives before coffee really became an important agricultural product. The liberals introduced a banking and credits system as well as tax reforms, all measures which made it easier to assume long-term investments such as the cultivation of coffee required, and liberal governments thus spurred the commercial development of coffee.³⁹ In addition, the increased importance of coffee coincided with the invention of synthetic dyes and the decline in cochineal production in the 1850s and 1860s.⁴⁰

Nordmanns-Forbundet 1939, 209–10; “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet* 1938, 61 and 308; “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1939, 187. Hans T. Fay became Norwegian ambassador in Mexico and was also made Norwegian representative in San Salvador, San José, and Guatemala. Thorleif Thoresen was appointed Norwegian consul in El Salvador.

- 38 Honduras being the slight exception as it entered into the coffee industry much later than the other four countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica). For accounts and analyses of the importance of coffee and the coffee elites in Central America, see Jeffrey M. Paige, *Coffee and Power. Revolution and the Rise of Democracy in Central America* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1997). See pp. 53–95 for a comparison of the coffee elites of Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. On the characteristics of the Guatemalan elite, its relation to political power and the lack of democratization, see pp. 86–87. Also see McCreery, “Coffee and Class: The Structure of Development in Liberal Guatemala,” for a good account of how liberal politics in the second half of the 19th century encouraged coffee production and the modernization of infrastructure while preserving the traditional class and economic structure. On coffee in Guatemala, see also Williams, *States and Social Revolution*, and Ralph Lee Woodward Jr., *Central America. A Nation Divided* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University press, 1999), 149–76.

39 Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 165.

40 In 1857, cochineal constituted 77 percent of Guatemala's export and coffee 0 percent; in 1871, the cochineal exports only made up 32 percent of the country's exports whereas coffee had increased to 49 percent. See Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 68; and Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 167.

However, Guatemala differed from its Central American neighbors in that it had abundant access to an indigenous labor force that in many cases was forced to work on the coffee estates.⁴¹ This almost unlimited access to virtually free labor gave little incentive to rationalize through the use of machines, and the rationalization that actually took place was almost exclusively among German planters. Also, in terms of coffee variety, fertilization, and planting density, Guatemala had a much less modern production system than El Salvador and Costa Rica.⁴² Moreover, comparing Guatemala to El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, Guatemala was exceptional in that almost all coffee was produced on large estates.⁴³ This meant, too, that a decentralized system of processing plants was possible. In addition, it was necessary: coffee is delicate and must be processed quickly after harvesting if it is not to be ruined, and because of the poor infrastructure in Guatemala and the need to transport the harvested coffee berries on mules or even human bearers, the distance from field to processing plant had to be short.

The Guatemalan coffee-growing elite may have been extremely traditionalist, but it was by no means static. The fluctuating coffee prices, the numerous economic crises in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and not least the global crisis sparked off by the Wall Street Crash of 1929 affected its members gravely.⁴⁴ Fincas changed hands due to their owners' financial problems, and one consequence was the increase of German power. Many a

41 For a description of the labor systems used, see Paige, *Coffee and Power*, 69–70 and 80; Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 112–23. On the labor system in Guatemala in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in general, see, e.g. Arturo Taracena Arriola, *Etnicidad, estado y nación en Guatemala, 1808–1944. Volumen I*. (Antigua Guatemala: CIRMA, 2009), 267–339. For an interesting case study on how the coffee economy affected indigenous living and working conditions, see Michaela Schmölz-Häberlein, “Continuity and Change in a Guatemalan Indian Community: San Cristobal-Verapaz, 1870–1940.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (May, 1996), 227–48.

42 Paige, *Coffee and Power*, 71.

43 On the distribution of land in Guatemala in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see, e.g., Taracena Arriola, *Etnicidad, Estado y Nación*, 341–90. For the process that led to the restructuring of the possession of land in Guatemala during the Barrios government (1892–1898), see also Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 59–69. He also describes the size of Guatemalan coffee plantations, as does Paige, *Coffee and Power*, 66–67. For a description of the process in San Cristóbal, Alta Verapaz, see Schmölz-Häberlein, “Continuity and Change in a Guatemalan Indian Community: San Cristobal-Verapaz, 1870–1940,” 230–37.

44 For an overview of coffee prices 1832–1986, see Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 265–73. For the effects of the crisis of 1929 on the Guatemalan coffee industry, see, e.g., Wagner, *Historia del café*, 163–68. On the increase of German power, see Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 156, 244–51 and 267, and Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 166 and 169–70.

TABLE 6.1 *Foreigners in the Guatemalan coffee industry (1913)*^a

Nationality	No. of fincas	Area <i>caballerías</i> ^b	% of total production
Total	2076	7904	100
Guatemalans	1657	4158	50,21
Foreigners	419	3746	49,78
Foreigners			
Germans	170	2118	34,26
Spaniards	84	546	5,48
North Americans	16	114	0,02
British	20	269	1,47
Swiss	9	66	1,35
French	21	116	1,20
Mexicans	29	81	1,15
Mixed nationality firms	6	14	1,13
Others	64	414	1,78

a Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 168. See also Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 170.

b In Guatemala, 1 *caballería* was the equivalent of a little over 45 hectares or 451 256, 54 m². Quiñonez, *Directorio General de la República de Guatemala*, 389–393.

finquero was forced to see his finca fall into the hands of his German creditors when finding himself unable to pay his debts; indeed, Williams notes that “by 1932–33, five of the top eight coffee producers in Guatemala were of German origin.”⁴⁵ However, the Germans, too, were of course affected by the fluctuating coffee prices, and also in the German segment of the coffee-growing elite changes occurred.

One example is the acquisition of the German-owned fincas El Zapote and El Trapiche by the Norwegian Leif Lind Pettersen.⁴⁶ Pettersen was born at

45 Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 170.

46 The Hanseatische Plantagen-Gesellschaft Guatemala-Hamburg was founded in Hamburg in 1889 and received the authorization to operate in Guatemala in 1892 with the fincas Las Viñas, Los Diamantes, and El Zapote, of seventy-three *caballerías*. By 1897, the fincas were up and running. Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 149–51, and Wagner, *Historia del café*, 126–27. As for the Trapiche Grande, of an immense 1.200 *caballerías*, this had been one of the first coffee fincas in the country while property of José Tomás Larraondo, but by 1897 it belonged to *El Consorcio de Hamburgo*. Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 159; Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 53. Curiously, Finca El Zapote was the same one

Stolmen just South of Bergen in 1899, and was the son of Walter Lind's cousin.⁴⁷ In 1919, he traveled from Bergen to Guatemala, ostensibly for business and pleasure, but in reality (according to his own memoirs) because of a certain Carmen Dorotea Gehrke. She was the daughter of the aforementioned Arthur H. Gehrke, British citizen and later Norwegian consul, and the Guatemalan Magdalena de Márias y Hoffmann, and met Pettersen at Walter Lind's holiday home in England when they were both visiting there. While in Guatemala, Pettersen's first business transaction in the country was to buy five hundred sacks of coffee, by which he was introduced to the coffee industry. Pettersen stayed in Guatemala for a year and then traveled to Norway to settle his affairs before returning to Guatemala to live in 1923. There, he was to become the most constant and perhaps the most successful Norwegian presence in all of Central America for more than five decades until his death in 1977.

While gravely ill from malaria, Pettersen married Carmen in 1925, during the peak years for coffee prices from 1924 to 1928.⁴⁸ By then, Pettersen was the owner of the Finca La Colonia near El Tumbador, where he grew what was, according to himself, the only desirable and sensible product to grow in those days: coffee. However, Pettersen was to acquire several more fincas. In 1928 he also bought the large Finca El Zapote y Anexos in Escuintla through his company Overseas Estates Ltd., which he owned together with Lind and Smith's old business partners Stange and Poulsen. In due course, Overseas Estates Ltd. acquired other fincas, too, among them the immense El Trapiche in Cuyotenango. In 1930, Finca El Zapote produced 263 tons of coffee and 136 tons of sugar cane as well as brown

where Blanc came to work in 1911, but by the time Pettersen bought the property, Blanc had moved on to Sololá.

47 Information on Leif Lind Pettersen is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5326, "Declaración de Leif Lind Pettersen," New York, September 19, 1932; B8466, "Departamento de Escuintla, Detalle de extranjeros residentes en este Municipio, Diciembre 28 de 1931"; B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G23 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934"; AGCA, SF, B22452, "Año de 1938: Leon Lind Pettersen, Permiso para usar explosivos en trabajos de caminos en su finca 'El Zapote', jurisdicción de Escuintla." www.digitalarkivet.no, "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departure from Bergen October 15, 1919; interviews with Mark and Louis Leonowens; Nordmenn jorden rundt, *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1946, 253–54; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1961, 124; Jerman, Gunnar, "Norsk kinin og kaffe. Leif Lind Pettersens finca i Guatemala," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1967, 63–64; Quiñonez, *Directorio General de la República de Guatemala*, 156 and 196; Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*, 5–21 and 138–60.

48 For an account of these excellent years for coffee producers, see, e.g., Wagner, *Historia del café*, 154–58.

sugar, cattle, and corn, and in 1933 Overseas Estates Ltd. was listed among the twenty-six largest coffee exporters in Guatemala.⁴⁹

By 1946, coffee production at Pettersen's fincas was almost doubled, but the unstable coffee prices had still led Pettersen to diversify. At different times he produced pine, rubber, cotton, rice, corn, sugar, beef, mahogany, and cardamom, but his most successful product was no doubt quinine, which fetched very high prices during World War II and in the decades after.⁵⁰ Because quinine production required major investments, competition was scarce. Another advantage was that it was less labor-intensive than the growing of coffee. By the mid-1970s, Pettersen had one million cinchona trees at Finca El Zapote, estimated enough to keep the production going for a hundred years.

Pettersen had an extensive social and commercial network including both Guatemalans and foreigners, and was highly appreciated by his friends and business relations. Nevertheless, he was not very favorably described by Edgar Kullmann, who perceived him as arrogant and conceited during Pettersen's visit to the Davieses' home in April 1924.⁵¹ Still, a sign of his privileged position in Guatemalan society is the fact that he was awarded the Order of the Quetzal in 1960 for his personal qualities and his efforts to promote the production of coffee and rubber.⁵²

Although Kullmann was not on good terms with Pettersen, other Norwegians benefitted from his success and network, and one of them was Albert Johan

49 Wagner, *Historia del café*, 169.

50 The idea to start growing the cinchona tree, from which one can extract quinine, arose shortly before World War II, when it was feared that Indonesia, the world's largest producer of cinchona, would fall under Japanese control, thus cutting short the United States' access to the product. Walter Lind, Gordon Smith, Leif Lind Pettersen, and one or two other Guatemalan *finqueros* were given the option by the US government to start growing cinchona in Guatemala, and seeds were duly smuggled out from Indonesia and sowed in Guatemala. The product became a huge success, and both the US and British armed forces depended on the Guatemalan supply of cinchona bark for the extraction of quinine. Pettersen later sold his bark to the German pharmaceutical company Buckler, with which his descendants still do business and to whom they sell the cinchona bark still produced at El Zapote. Interviews with Louis and Mark Leonowens; Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*, 160.

51 Diary of Edgar Kullmann, pp. 1612–13.

52 "Decreto de 18 de enero de 1960," in Roberto Azurdia Alfaro, *Recopilación de las Leyes de la República de Guatemala 1959–1960* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1962), 824–25. Percy O. Davies was also given the Order of the Quetzal on the same occasion, also for his contribution to the coffee industry. Anecdotal material on Pettersen's varied involvement with the Guatemalan elite abound, such as the story of how he was persecuted by President Ubico, who had decided that he wanted Finca El Zapote as a birthday present. Interviews with Louis and Mark Leonowens.

Gundersen.⁵³ He was born in Bergen in 1900 but grew up in Espevær. After receiving an education in Bergen and living in London for a time, he traveled to Guatemala in 1928, where he obtained a position on one of Arthur Gehrke's coffee fincas in Mexico. For seven years he worked for Gehrke and Pettersen at their fincas in Mexico and Guatemala, and only until after 1935 did Gundersen start his own business buying and selling coffee all over the world. The company was based in Tapachula on Mexico's Pacific coast, and he still maintained close contact with nearby Guatemala, but his main office was in Mexico City, where he also lived. By 1945, his firm had grown to become – according to Gundersen himself – one of the largest of its kind in Mexico. Gundersen was also involved in the Norwegian and British consular service and was director of a shipping company in Mexico City. He married the Mexican Marta Catalina Reid and they had two girls, Jenny Lyra (b. 1937) and Ingrid Lucy (b. 1939). Gundersen died in Oslo in 1974.

It was crucial to have access to both capital and networks in order to have success in the Guatemalan coffee-growing industry. In the case of the Germans, by the late nineteenth century the vast majority arrived in Guatemala through already established contacts with *finqueros* or proprietors of commercial houses.⁵⁴ Such was the case of the many very young Germans with whom Thomas W. Lea traveled from Puerto Colombia to Puerto Barrios in 1930.⁵⁵ Almost all had contracts to work on German coffee fincas. The managers of the fincas were always German,

53 Information on Albert Johan Gundersen is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G45 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934"; B8290, "Oficina de Malacatán, Departamento de San Marcos, movimiento de pasajeros del día 3 de febrero de 1940 y del día 9 de febrero de 1940"; B8291, "Oficina de Malacatán, Movimiento de viajeros del 13 de Marzo de 1943"; B8872, Ferdinand Berg-Olsen to Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de Guatemala, February 26, 1929. A.H. Gehrke to N. Fossum, March 16, 1931; File regarding "Henrik Thomsen Blanc, Sololá, Guatemala, avg. ved døden i Guatemala 15. mars 1931.", Archive of the Norwegian Legation in Mexico, Department of Foreign Affairs, Norway. HULA: Archivo General de la Nación (México), Galería 5, Departamento de Migraciones, Varias Nacionalidades, caja 7, expediente 101: "Nordmenn registrert i mexicansk utlendingskontroll (1930–1940)," June 12, 1931, June 22, 1931 and September 9, 1933. Interviews with Mark and Louis Leonowens and with Einar William Klanderud. www.ancestry.com, "Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1903–1945": Arrival of s.s. *Honduran Morazán*, June 19, 1940; and "UK Incoming Passenger Lists 1878–1960": arrival at Southampton of s.s. *United States*, July 3, 1957; and "New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957": arrival of S.S. *Stavangerfjord*, October 1, 1946. www.disnorge.no, "Gravminner i Norge": Death of Albert Johan Gundersen, Oslo, November 21, 1974; "De norske i Mexico gjorde sin innsats," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1945, 354–55; Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama"; Fivelstad, "På farten i tropene"; "Sett på strøket," *Aftenposten*, October 21, 1947.

54 See Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 119–215.

55 Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama."

and so, too, were normally those in charge of the different subdivisions of the production, as well as bookkeepers and technicians working with the machinery used in the production of coffee as well as sugar.

The Norwegians, however, do not seem to have been too keen on attracting fellow countrymen. Thus, they differed not only from the Germans in Guatemala, but also from other migrant groups of seemingly similar qualities, such as for instance the Danes in Argentina.⁵⁶ There are of course scattered examples, given that also the Norwegians employed both Norwegian and foreign foremen.⁵⁷ But in general, Norwegians stressed the difficulties in settling in Guatemala. Pettersen warned his countrymen in 1925 that it was nearly impossible to make it in Guatemala without capital to invest and good connections.⁵⁸ Holtermann put forward some of the same points in 1926, and Lea gave a similar warning as late as 1939.⁵⁹ According to all three, opportunities for Norwegian immigrants were few. A living as an agricultural worker was impossible, as a Norwegian never could compete with a native Guatemalan in a tropical climate. As the Guatemalan production systems were 100 percent manual, mainly because of the access to the extremely cheap indigenous labor force, the variety of jobs on offer in agriculture was limited. Other careers were also difficult, as the Germans by the mid-1920s had monopolized a large part of the coffee, engineering, and trading businesses. In addition, according to Holtermann, the Germans operated so cheaply that a Norwegian would not be content with that kind of earning. Pettersen calculated that if Guatemalan coffee harvesters were to earn the same as a North American farmhand, finca owners would have to sell their coffee at \$8 per kilo, which no consumer would pay. Thus, it was crucial to keep salaries low and at a traditional level.⁶⁰

In 1937, the Honduras-based Andreas H. Lindelie joined those who warned Norwegians against coming to Central America, claiming that there were only three possible ways to make money: gold, cassava, or arrowroot (*yuquilla*). A fourth would be the growing of bananas on land close to the railway, but by the mid-1930s, all the land was taken, and if it was for sale, it was extremely

56 Maria Bjerg, "The Danes in the Argentine Pampa: The Role of Ethnic Leader in the Creation of an Ethnic Community." In *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America* ed. Samuel Baily and Eduardo Míguez (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 147–66.

57 Interview with Louis and Mark Leonowens. Examples are the aforementioned Albert Johan Gundersen and Reidar Halfdan Iversen, who headed for El Zapote in 1934. AGCA, SRE, B5331, "Hoja de identidad de Reidar Halfdan Iversen," June 20, 1934.

58 "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1925, 543. See also "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1926, 481–82.

59 Holtermann, "Paa Reise i Guatemala"; Lea, "Her er det evig vår."

60 Jerman, "Norsk kinin og kaffe".

expensive.⁶¹ Holtermann, Lea, Pettersen, and Lindelie all agreed that a good knowledge of Spanish and of the local culture was absolutely essential to be able to conduct business in the region. Nevertheless, this was not always sufficient. In 1930, an example was given of two young, unnamed Norwegians, experienced plantation workers from Guatemala and Mexico, who arrived in Nicaragua to seek work on the rumored new canal to be built through the country.⁶² Despite their knowledge of Spanish and experience from the region, they were unable to find work, and yet another warning was issued to Norwegians who might plan to try their luck in Central America.

The five young men from the Norwegian town of Hokksund who arrived in Guatemala looking for opportunities in 1926 certainly experienced that such opportunities were not too easy to find.⁶³ The group consisted of Thorvald Torgersen (22), Ole Peder Fagerli (24), Karl Akre Dahl (23), Hans Edvardsen

61 A.H. Lindelie, "Dit og dat fra Honduras," *Decorah-Posten*, April 9, 1937. Lindelie is an interesting person who lived in the United States, Cuba, and Honduras, and was involved in the attempt to establish a Norwegian agricultural colony at Baracoa in Cuba between 1906 and 1919. See Helge Stenersen, *Det norske Cuba-eventyret. Koloniserings-idéen som spilte fallitt* (Jaren: Vigga-Trykk bok- og aksidenstrykkeri, 1999).

62 "Ogsaa i Nicaragua -!", *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1930, 370–71.

63 Information on the five is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B8290, "Copia del Libro de pasajeros que salieron de este país con destino a territorio mexicano durante el mes de agosto de 1926"; B5431, "Declaración de Ole P. Fagerli, Consulado de Guatemala en Tapachula, 28 de Noviembre de 1929" and "Declaración de Hans E. Hansen, Consulado de Guatemala en Tapachula, 28 de Noviembre de 1929"; B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro Retalhuleu 5 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, s/f." www.digitalarkivet.no, "Skannet klokkebok for Eiker prestegjeld, Haug sokn 1903–1914," p. 23: Baptism of Torvald Torgersen, October 2, 1904; and p. 46: Baptism of Hans Edvardsen Hansen, July 8, 1906; and p. 50: Baptism of Per Eugen Laurud, September 30, 1906; "Skannet ministerialbok for Eiker prestegjeld, Haug sokn 1908–1928" p. 60: Confirmation of Ole Peder Fagerli, 9 April 9, 1916; and p. 78: Confirmation of Karl Akre Dahl, October 6, 1918; and p. 85: Confirmation of Thorvald Olsen, October 12, 1919; and p. 90: Confirmation of Hans Hansen, October 10, 1920; and p. 101: Confirmation of Per Eugen Laurud, October 1, 1922; "Skannet klokkebok for Ofoten/Narvik 1902–1909," p. 19: Baptism of Karl Akre Dahl, July 19, 1903; "Skannet klokkebok for Eiker prestegjeld, Haug sokn 1925–1934," p. 211: Death of Karl Akre Dahl, April 2, 1927; "Gravminner i Norge": Death of Ole Peder Fagerli, Skedsmo, December 8, 1956; "Emigranter fra Oslo 1867–1930": departure June 11 and June 12, 1926. www.ancestry.com, "U.K. Outward Passenger Lists 1890–1960": *Orita* departing from Liverpool for Valparaiso on June 17, 1926 (The five were planning to disembark at Colon and from there go on to Guatemala.). "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1926, 481–82; Lea, "Her er det evig vår"; Bent Ek, "Minner fra Gamle-Hokksund" in *Årbok for Øvre Eiker 1990*, 44–46. "<http://www.eiker.org/Arkiv-Oe/Litteratur/Tidsskrift/Aarbok-OE/1990/Aarbok-1990-s44-46.pdf>". Accessed October 21, 2015. The names are spelled in different ways in different sources. Thus, Torgersen appears both as Thorvald Torgersen (his mother's last name) and Thorvald Olsen (his father's last name). Laugerud

Hansen (20), and Per Eugen Laugerud (20). Whereas the latter became a prominent member of Guatemalan society, the others have been more difficult to trace. Dahl's Guatemalan experience lasted only a few months, and in April 1927 he died from tuberculosis back in Hokksund. Both Fagerli and Torgersen eventually returned to Norway, although not immediately. They first tried their luck in Tapachula, Mexico, working as a farmer and mechanic, respectively, and in 1929 they both headed for Nicaragua. Torgersen lived in Retalhuleu around 1934, probably working on a finca. Hansen's fate is not known.

Per Eugen Laugerud, however, ascended quickly and spectacularly in the Guatemalan social hierarchy, and only ten years after his arrival in the country he was reported to be a popular and very well-known man in the capital.⁶⁴ In 1936, he applied for and was granted a Guatemalan citizenship. He started his career in Guatemala working on a finca, but after a couple of years moved on to work at the office of the Guatemalan Railway in the capital. By 1931, he was room clerk and assistant manager at the city's finest hotel, Palace Hotel, where he continued to work until 1952, when he moved to Honduras. For over two decades he lived there, in San Pedro Sula, as Guatemala's consul general.

Pedro Eugenio Laugerud, as he came to be called in Guatemala, married the Guatemalan Catalina García in 1929. They had three children: Kjell, Hans, and Silvia. The most famous of the three was to be Kjell, who was Guatemala's president between 1974 and 1978, and consequently Pedro and Catalina's fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1979 was a huge social event in Guatemala City.

Another Norwegian to briefly try his luck in Guatemala at this time, apparently without much capital nor much of a network, was Lauritz Martin Nærbø, born in Stavanger in 1875.⁶⁵ In 1890, he traveled to the United States for the first

appears as Laurud in several Norwegian sources. I have used the spelling as it is in the sources related to Guatemala.

64 Information on Per Eugen Laugerud is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G13 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934"; interview with Einar William Klanderud. "Don Pedro Eugenio Laugerud B. y Su Distinguida Esposa Celebraron Sus Bodas de Oro Matrimoniales," *Diario de Centro América*, April 24, 1979, 4–5; *Memoria de las Labores del Ejecutivo en el ramo de Relaciones Exteriores durante el año de 1936, presentada a la asamblea legislativa en sus sesiones ordinarias de 1937* (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1937) 99; Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama"; "Skattegraveren fra Copan," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1936, 365–66; "Meddelelser fra Nordmanns-Forbundet," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1942, 81; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1972, 209; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1974, 73 and 97; "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1978, 74.

65 Information on Lauritz Martin Nærbø is drawn from the following sources: www.digitalarkivet.no, "Emigranter over Stavanger 1903–1928": departures August 4, 1905.

time, and by the time of his stay in Guatemala around 1925 he had lived for decades in the United States, although he had also visited Latin America before. Both Pettersen and Kullmann mention him, the latter reporting that he had a job cutting kerosene cans in half. In 1926 he returned to the United States, and died in Michigan in 1965.

Norwegian Engineers and the Modernization of Guatemalan Infrastructure 1900–1940

Important advancements were made to Guatemalan infrastructure during the coffee boom. Pre-1871 conservative governments paid little attention to improving the country's infrastructure, and when the liberals came to power in 1871, it still mainly consisted of mule trails and footpaths, many of which could not be used during the rainy season. An exception was the road between Guatemala City and the Pacific port of Iztapa/San José, used for exporting cochineal, which also benefitted the coffee growers of Escuintla. In 1871, the Ministerio de Fomento was established "with a budget to build roads and ports and to promote coffee and other commercial ventures." One of the first projects was "the improvement of the port facilities at Champerico, which would serve the expanding coffee economy of Retalhuleu and Suchitepéquez."⁶⁶ From 1873, the modernization of infrastructure took off with the construction of roads, ports, and railways. Foreign companies and investors were in charge, but huge capital requirements as well as difficult weather and geographical conditions made the work difficult. By 1912, the principal ports were linked to the most important coffee zones of Guatemala through railroad lines. During the 1920s and 1930s, the network of roads was also expanded, although Pettersen reported

www.ancestry.com, "UK Outward Passenger Lists 1890–1960": departure of *Anchoria* from Glasgow, March 20, 1890; and departure of s.s. *Baltic*, August 9, 1905; "New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957": arrival of s.s. *Baltic*, August 18, 1905; "California Passenger and Crew Lists 1882–1957": arrival of *Mexico* at San Francisco, January 15, 1922; "Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1903–1945": arrival of s.s. *Suriname*, December 29, 1926; and "Michigan Deaths and Burials, 1800–1995." Diary of Edgar Kullmann p. 1612; "Nordmænd Jordan Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1925, p. 543.

- 66 Williams, *States and Social Evolution*, 57. See also pp. 54–55 and 59. On the development of infrastructure in Guatemala in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, see Delmer G. Ross, "The Construction of the Inter-oceanic Railroad of Guatemala." *The Americas*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Jan., 1977), 430–56. also Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 67–74, 217–42, 281–82.

in 1925 that still the only possible way of transporting coffee from his Finca La Colonia was on mule.⁶⁷

The Ferrocarril del Norte between Guatemala City and Puerto Barrios was built half-finished with Guatemalan funds between 1884 and 1897, but in 1898 the lack of funds made the government sell the contract to finish the line to a foreign company. Initially, the wish was to contract German capital, but as this proved impossible, the contract was eventually signed with the US-based United Fruit Company in 1904. The line was opened in 1908, after which the company also acquired the lines of the Ferrocarril de Occidente and the Ferrocarril de Ocós, both owned mainly by Germans. Thus, the whole railway network along the southern coast passed to North American ownership. In April 1912, the ownership of the different lines was gathered in the International Railways of Central America (IRCA).⁶⁸

IRCA sought qualified labor outside Guatemala, and in 1927, young Fritz William Klanderud, recently arrived from Bergen to Canada, saw an advertisement in a Canadian newspaper and decided to try his luck.⁶⁹ Klanderud was born in Tønsberg in 1902, but had moved with his family to Bergen and had finished his engineering studies at Bergen Tekniske Skole in 1924. He arrived at Puerto San José on the Guatemalan Pacific coast in September 1927 and continued by train to Guatemala City. Within a month he was working for IRCA, where he held several positions in the following ten years.⁷⁰ A couple of years after arriving in Guatemala, Klanderud went to Norway to complete his pilot's training with the Royal Norwegian Air Force, and upon returning to Guatemala

67 Nordmænd Jorden Rundt, *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1925, p. 543. On road construction during Ubico's government (1931–1944), see Carlos Sabino, *Tiempos de Jorge Ubico en Guatemala y el mundo* (Guatemala: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2013), 170–78.

68 Wagner, *Los alemanes en Guatemala*, 231–33 and 246–48.

69 Information on Fritz William and Aage Klanderud is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5397, “Declaración de Fritz William Klanderud, Consulado de Guatemala en Bergen,” October 10, 1929 and “Declaración de Aage Klanderud, Consulado de Guatemala en Bergen,” October 10, 1929; B6839, “Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G47 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934”; AGCA, Defunciones Octubre 1937. Statsarkivet i Bergen, Book of registration for Bergen Tekniske Skole 1923–1924. www.digitalarkivet.no, “Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930”: departures November 4, 1926. Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” filled out by Fritz William Klanderud on July 14, 1935. Interviews with Einar William Klanderud and Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold; Lea, “Rundt omkring Panama”; “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1938, 61.

70 Slightly varying accounts of his career in IRCA are found in his obituary in *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1938, 61; and Leif Eskedal, *BTS-matrikkelen. Ingeniører uteksaminert ved Bergen Tekniske Skole 1875–1975* (Bergen: A.s John Grieg, 1975), 100.

in 1929, he brought his younger brother Aage (b. 1912) with him. He, too, was employed by IRCA, but in the drawing department.

Fritz married Emilia Cáceres in 1934, and their son Einar William was born in 1935. Only two years later, in October 1937, Fritz died unexpectedly, leaving behind his wife and child as well as his younger brother.⁷¹ Aage traveled to Norway with his widowed sister-in-law and nephew in April 1938 and the three stayed for six months. He later married the Guatemalan Chita Hurtado Marroquín and had three children, Eric Eduardo, Astrid, and Harold, all three of whom settled in Guatemala. Einar William became an engineer like his father, making a career in the Guatemalan oil industry.

Another Norwegian to be employed by IRCA was Sigurd Leif Møklebust, born in Bergen in 1905, who by 1939 held a position as an engineer.⁷² He traveled from Bergen in November 1929, a month later than the Klanderud brothers. Møklebust married a Guatemalan nicknamed Chúa, and they had two sons, Sigurd, who became an engineer, and Norman, who became a lawyer, both of whom settled in Guatemala.

But IRCA was not the only foreign company to seek qualified labor abroad. The US company in charge of repairs to the Puerto San José pier sent the Norwegian Thor O. Walle from New York to supervise the works in 1931.⁷³ Walle was born in Oslo in 1894, and emigrated to the United States at the age of sixteen. He briefly returned to Norway, but in 1916 settled permanently in New

71 Although his death certificate states peritonitis as the cause of death, his son tells that he had eaten a can of bad Spanish chorizo far from any hospital and that he probably died from botulism.

72 Information on Sigurd Leif Møklebust is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5397, "Declaración de Sigurd Leif Møklebust, Consulado de Guatemala en Bergen," November 11, 1929; B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contienen los libros G57 y G58 (dos libros en un solo volumen) de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934." www.digitalarkivet.no, "Emigranter fra Bergen 1874–1930": departures November 21, 1929. Interview with Einar William Klanderud.

73 Information on Thor O. Walle is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6840, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro con inscripciones de varias localidades (Alta Verapaz, Suchitepéquez, Izabál, Retalhuleu, Escuintla) de la Oficina de Pasaportes, s/f"; B6808, Correspondence regarding the payment of taxes for foreigners in 1931. www.ancestry.com, "Petitions for Naturalization of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, 1865–1937": Certificate of arrival of Thor Walle, April 16, 1935; Oath of allegiance of Thor Walle; Declaration of Intention of Louise Walle, April 20, 1934; Certificate of arrival of Louise Walle, March 22, 1934; Petition of Naturalization of Louise Walle, November 20, 1936; Petition of Naturalization of Thor Walle, September 13, 1937; "New Orleans Passenger Lists 1813–1945": arrival of the s.s. *Montana* on November 15, 1926; "U.S. Social Security Death Index, 1935–Current": Death of Thor Walle, Florida, July 1976. Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama."

York with his first wife and, in due course, three sons. He worked in construction around the Caribbean basin, and in 1930 worked in Panama, where he married his second wife, French citizen Louise Le Lann. It seems like the Walles spent some three years in Guatemala before returning to live in the United States. Thor Walle died in Florida in 1976.

Walle's assistant in San José, Holm Sørum, was also Norwegian, born in Kråkstad in 1906.⁷⁴ He had an interesting history as participant in the failed Norwegian expedition to Galápagos and later as a construction worker on the Ecuadorian coast. By 1937, Sørum lived in Panama, working as a dragline operator.

Norwegian Travelers in Guatemala 1900–1940

As opposed to the other Norwegians mentioned above, Walle and Sørum arrived in Guatemala with a work contract for a limited period of time and never had the intention to settle in the country. In a way, they belonged to the group of Norwegians in Guatemala in the period under investigation who passed through the country on their travels and on some occasions shared their impressions and adventures. The three most prominent members of this group have all already been mentioned: Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann, Kristian Fivelstad, and Edgar Kullmann. Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann, born in Bergen in 1887, traveled to Mexico as a young man without much in his pocket, and took a variety of employments before finding a way into the business world.⁷⁵ While living in Mexico, he visited Guatemala, vividly describing his entrance to the country and claiming that about the only accurate information in his traveler's guide was that "travelers have to rough it considerably."⁷⁶ Later, he moved to Cuba and

74 Information on Holm Sørum is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B6839, "Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contiene el libro G51 de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14, 1934." www.digitalarkivet.no, "Folketelling 1910 for Kråkstad herred"; "Ministerialbok for Kråkstad prestegjeld, Kråkstad sokn 1893–1931," p. 49: Baptism of Holm Sørum, April 15, 1906; "Emigranter over Kristiania 1867–1927, tilleggsliste": departures September 2, 1926. www.ancestry.com, "UK Outward Passenger Lists 1890–1960": departure of *Cavina* from Avonmouth, August 9, 1934; and "New York Passenger Lists 1820–1957": arrival of s.s. *Calamares*, June 16, 1937; Lea, "Rundt omkring Panama."

75 Information on Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann is drawn from the following sources: AGCA, SRE, B5413, "Declaración de Fredrik W. Holtermann, Embajada de Guatemala en México D.F.," October 31, 1929. www.digitalarkivet.no, "Døde i Domkirken sokn i Bergen 1912–1980": Death of Fredrik Wilhelm Holtermann, resident of San José, Costa Rica, in Santos, Brazil, March 31, 1947. HULA, "Norske pass utskrevet i Lima 1931–1940", 1926 and May 12, 1935. "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1931, 21.

76 Holtermann, "Paa Reise i Guatemala."

established an import business for Norwegian goods such as fish, cod liver oil, canned foods, and paper. The company grew to include a larger variety of Norwegian goods and came to supply large parts of Central and South America as well as the Caribbean. He himself traveled most of the continent, introducing and promoting Norwegian products and maintaining and expanding his Norwegian network in Latin America. This was also what Kristian Fivelstad did through his job as Norwegian trading representative from 1937, and he, too, left valuable evidence of his travels in various newspapers and magazines.⁷⁷

Whereas both Holtermann and Fivelstad conveyed their experiences and opinions through media readily accessible to a large audience, Edgar Kullmann confined his thoughts to his diary. In general, his observations are negative. Neither people nor climate nor food seem to have agreed much with him, and he felt unjustly treated for most of the time. Nevertheless, he traveled around Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador for several years. When in Guatemala in 1924, he contacted Gordon Smith to ask for work, which he was initially given for six months. Kullmann did not like the work itself, the place, or the people, though, and after only three and a half months he left for Mexico. Still, he did return to Guatemala several times.

Other Norwegian travelers also left evidence – albeit scarce – of their presence in Guatemala. Some, like Christopher Magnus and Bjarne Skarbøvik, were well settled in Mexico, and their visits to Guatemala, as evidenced by the border records, help confirm that contact and networks existed across the Mexican-Guatemalan border.⁷⁸ Some were also listed as residents, although the lack of data on their presence in Guatemala rather suggests that they were passing through.⁷⁹ The 1934 census of foreigners lists some six thousand names, all men,

77 See, e.g., Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire “Nordmenn jorden rundt,” filled out by Kristian Fivelstad on October 15, 1935; “Gode muligheter for øket eksport til Mellem-Amerika”; Fivelstad, “Norske Interesser i Mellem-Amerika”; “På farten i tropene”.

78 AGCA, SRE, B8290, “Salidas de pasajeros durante el mes de julio de 1926, Ayutla, Julio 31 del 1926”: Bjarne Skarbøvik; and “Copia del Movimiento de Entradas de Pasajeros correspondiente al mes de la fecha, Ayutla, 31 de Diciembre de 1926”: Christopher Magnus. Magnus was from Bergen and arrived in Mexico in 1924. By 1931, he was the assistant manager of a Chiapas plantation. Skarbøvik, an electrical engineer from NTH in Trondheim, worked for the Mexican Light and Power Company from the early 1920s and until his retirement in the early 1960s. Lea, “Rundt omkring Panama”; “Hjem efter 40 år i Mexico for å studentjubilere,” *Aftenposten*, August 14, 1964.

79 This is the case of Hans Tudal, Axel Cappelen, Johan Arnt Wold, and Thor Gundersen, all listed as being resident in Guatemala in a 1934 census of foreigners. AGCA, SRE, B6839, “Lista de las inscripciones de hombres que contienen los libros G17, G43, G47 y G53

and is a good example of how official documentation makes it considerably easier to track men than women. For instance, A. Loynaz del Castillo, Cuban consul in Guatemala in 1927, was married to a Norwegian woman, but proof of her presence is hard to find.⁸⁰ This is also the case of Sigurd Leif Møklebust's sister Maria, who was brought to Guatemala by her brother, and of the Davieses' nanny Agnete.⁸¹ However, it is probable that the number of Norwegian women in Guatemala in the period under investigation was very low. The importance of women as the creators of networks and communities has been the focus of recent studies in migration history, and it is possible that the lack of Norwegian female immigrants might have decisively hindered a strong Norwegian community from forming in Guatemala between 1900 and 1940.⁸²

Common Characteristics of the Norwegian Immigrants, Their Networks and the Lack of a Norwegian Community in Guatemala 1900–1940

After now having made the acquaintance of the entire small group of Norwegians present in Guatemala between 1900 and 1940, some common characteristics can be identified. First, it was a very international group in its experience, relations, and networks. Before arriving in Guatemala, many had lived outside Norway, whether in Germany, Britain, the United States, or in other Latin American countries. Once in Guatemala, they related to people of a whole variety of nationalities rather than working to form a close-knit Norwegian community. The Linds, the Davieses, the Pettersens, and the Gundersens were well embedded among the British coffee planters, and Blanc among the German ones. All five Norwegians working in the engineering business related to a North American ambience. Moreover, half of those included in Table 6.2 had non-Norwegian

de la Oficina de Pasaportes, Junio 14–1934.” Albert Johan Gundersen had a younger brother named T(h)or. It is not unlikely that the one in the Guatemalan census is he. www.digitalarkivet.no, 1910-census for Finnaas.

80 AGCA, SRE, B9131, C.E. Sontum to Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de Guatemala, Oslo, January 20, 1927. She was the daughter of Annie Mercer Holmboe and Johan Henrik Holmboe.

81 Interviews with Einar William Klanderud and Catahrina de Lange Davies.

82 Caroline B. Brettell gives a good overview of works dealing with the topic in the field of anthropology in Caroline B. Brettell, “Theorizing Migration in Anthropology. The Social Construction of Networks, Identities, Communities, and Globalscapes.” In *Migration Theory. Talking Across Disciplines*, ed. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield (New York: Routledge, 2008), 126–31.

TABLE 6.2 *Norwegian immigrants in Guatemala 1900–1940^a*

Name	Born Place/year	Father's occupation	Arrival in Guatemala
Walter Lind	London/1876	Merchant	1901 ^b
Randi de Lange	Bergen/1879	Soda manufacturer and auditor	1919
Hjørdis de Lange	Bergen/1890	Soda manufacturer and auditor	1921
Henrik T. Blanc	Bergen/1874	Head bookkeeper at <i>Kreditbanken</i>	1903
Bjarne T. Ness	Bergen (Vik)/1899	Office clerk	Approx. 1927
Thomas W. Lea	Bergen/1889	Private teacher and translator	1930
Leif Lind Pettersen	Bergen (Austevoll)/1899	Merchant	1919/1923
Albert J. Gundersen	Bergen (Espevær)/1900	Merchant	1928
Thorvald Torgersen	Hokksund/1904	Employed in the paper industry	1926
Ole Peder Fagerli	Drammen/1902	Fishmonger and bicycle repairman	1926
Karl Akre Dahl	Narvik/1903	Pharmacist	1926
Hans E. Hansen	Hokksund/1906	Fisherman	1926
Per E. Laugerud	Hokksund/1906	Saw mill and paper-worker	1926
Fritz W. Klanderud	Tønsberg/1902	Plumber	1927
Aage Klanderud	Oslo/1912	Plumber	1929
Sigurd Leif Møklebust	Bergen/1905	Salesman in a textile store	1929

Last residence before arrival in Guatemala	Occupation in Guatemala	Nationality of spouse	Left Guatemala when/why
Bergen	Coffee planter	Norwegian	1948/died
Bergen	Wife of coffee planter	Norwegian/ British	1949/died
Bergen	Wife of coffee planter	British	1935/divorced
Germany	Coffee planter	Not married	1931/died
U.S.	Merchant	Czech	?/died
Venezuela	Merchant/coffee planter	?	?
Bergen	Coffee planter	Guatemalan	1977/died
Norway (Bergen?)	Merchant/coffee planter	Mexican	?/return to Norway (from Mexico)
Hokksund	Farmer	?	?/return to Norway
Hokksund	Farmer and mechanic	?	?/return to Norway
Hokksund	–	Not married	1926 or 1927/ return to Norway
Hokksund	?	?	?
Hokksund	Hotel manager	Guatemalan	?/died
Canada	Engineer	Guatemalan	1937/died
Bergen	Engineer	Guatemalan	?/died
Bergen	Engineer	Guatemalan	?/died

a Here, I do not include Walle and Sørum, employed by a U.S. Company and stationed in Guatemala for a limited time, nor the three travelers mentioned, i.e. Holtermann, Fivelstad and Kullmann, as these were also only in the country for a limited time. I also exclude Lauritz Martin Nærbø due to his short stay in Guatemala.

b Although Lind had emigrated to Guatemala in 1901, he lived in England for some time around 1911 and until his marriage with Randi de Lange in 1915. The family then seems to have divided their time between Guatemala, England and Norway in the years between 1915 and 1921. Various records available through www.ancestry.com such as censuses and emigration/immigration registers, make it possible to trace their movements. In the Emigrants' register for Bergen for September 6, 1921, a note by Mr. and Mrs. Lind's names reveal that they had been home to visit.

spouses, many Guatemalan. This was probably a decisive reason why seventeen of twenty-one known children settled in Guatemala.⁸³

The fact that they were international does not mean, however, that Norway and their Norwegian roots were not important. Walter and Randi Lind, for example, lived six months of the year in Guatemala and six months in Norway. Their boys were sent to British boarding schools at the age of seven and spent all their summer holidays in Norway. Leif Lind Pettersen, too, maintained a strong link to Norway, never giving up his Norwegian citizenship and on several occasions visiting Norway and his native village of Kvalvaag at Stolmen. He even had a book written about Kvalvaag for his only daughter and six grandchildren, in order for them to become more familiar with their Norwegian roots.⁸⁴

A clear expression of the link to Norway was the names that some of the Norwegian immigrants in Guatemala chose for their children. It is curious that they decided on names such as Kjell, Hans, Einar, Astrid, and Sigurd, some of which are virtually impossible to pronounce in Spanish. In the case of Bjarne Ness, not only did he choose common Norwegian names for his children (Leif, Dagmar, Sølvi, and Dag), but he even lived in a Norwegian-style wooden house most atypical for Guatemala City.⁸⁵

Through the Association of Norwegians Abroad (*Nordmanns-Forbundet*), many found a way to keep in touch with and up to date on Norwegian issues. Both Laugerud and Pettersen served as the association's contact in Guatemala.⁸⁶ Moreover, both the association's newsletter and its questionnaires provided opportunities to share impressions and express opinions. For instance, both Fivelstad and Pettersen expressed concern for the socialist political development in Norway,⁸⁷ whereas Fritz Klanderud considered Norway the best place on earth, was proud to be a Norwegian and hoped to one day return to Norway.⁸⁸ With the outbreak of World War II, Norwegians welcomed a new opportunity to show their patriotism, and both Pettersen and Gundersen made

83 Two of the ones who did not settle there were Gundersen's daughters, who were born and raised in Mexico.

84 Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*.

85 Interview with Einar William Klanderud.

86 See, e.g., "Meddelelser fra Nordmanns-Forbundet," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1942, 81; and "Meddelelser fra Nordmanns-Forbundet," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1942, 81.

87 Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire "Nordmenn jorden rundt," filled out by Kristian Fivelstad on October 15, 1935. Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*, 14. See also p. 20.

88 Archive of the Norwegian Emigrant Museum, Questionnaire "Nordmenn jorden rundt," filled out by Fritz William Klanderud on July 14, 1935.

generous contributions to Camp Little Norway, the Norwegian military base in Canada.⁸⁹

The immigrants' strong links to their native country are also expressed in the descriptions of the celebration of May 17, Norwegian Constitution Day, although in Guatemala an annual celebration was only established after 1940.⁹⁰ In 1937, Laugerud reported that for the first time since his arrival in Guatemala, Norwegians had come together to celebrate May 17.⁹¹ The party was held at Aage Klanderud's office, and only some of the Norwegians resident in the country at the time attended, namely Aage Klanderud himself, Sigurd Møklebust, Per Laugerud and wife, Bjarne Ness and wife, and a couple of ladies invited by the bachelors. The menu was "practically Norwegian," and there was both violin music and music on the radio to dance to until the wee hours.

Another common characteristic of the Norwegian immigrants in Guatemala at the time is the fact that the vast majority were from the middle or upper layers of Norwegian society. These were not the average emigrants from Norway to the United States.⁹² They were people with an education and with access to at least some capital, and thus perhaps people who were in a position to consider a wider range of opportunities in life. In Guatemala, almost all became part of an upper layer of society and had a high degree of professional success.

89 Pettersen donated coffee, sugar, quinine, and about \$40,000, leading the Norwegian authorities to decorate him after the war. Gundersen led the Norwegian Committee in Mexico during the war, and he, too, donated a large sum to Camp Little Norway together with his Mexican business associate. "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1942, 46–47, 188 and 282. Tufteland, *Kvalvaag*, 21.

90 According to Ingrid Lind Sverdrup de Herold, a tradition to celebrate May 17 was established sometime after World War II. For descriptions of other celebrations, see, e.g., "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1930, 231–32; and "Nordmenn jorden rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1943, 155.

91 "Nordmænd Jorden Rundt," *Nordmanns-Forbundet*, 1937, 319–20. The article explicitly mentions that those who missed the celebration were Fritz Klanderud and wife, who were in El Salvador on business, Leif Lind Pettersen and wife, who were busy with work on the finca, and Gustav Strømsvik, who was busy with excavations in Copán, Honduras. Strømsvik lived in Honduras for several years in the 1930s, participating in the excavations of the Mayan ruins at Copán. For an account of Strømsvik's activities in Central America, see "Skattegraveren fra Copan."

92 See Odd Lovoll, *Det løfterike landet. En norskamerikansk historie*. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1997), f.ex. pp. 23–24, for characteristics of the Norwegian emigrants to the United States. The book has also been published in English as *The Promise of America. A History of the Norwegian-American People*. (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

Moreover, given that the emigrants came from only a few geographical zones in Norway, it is probable that the families knew or knew of each other.

The importance of networks and the spread of information in migration processes are well studied, and their importance is irrefutable. In the case of Norwegians emigrating to the United States, both Odd Lovoll and Jon Gjerde have demonstrated the importance of the flow of information from those already in the United States to those thinking of going there.⁹³ As for the Norwegians in Guatemala, it might be useful to draw upon Mark Granovetter's and Margaret Grieco's theoretical frameworks, even though these were initially applied to employment processes.⁹⁴ The two scholars each stress the importance of different types of ties, Granovetter's weak ones versus Grieco's strong ones. Whereas the former are relations between acquaintances or friends of friends, the latter are relations between persons who know each other well, such as family or close friends.

The migration process from Norway to Guatemala between 1900 and 1940 shows examples of both kinds of ties. Some are clearly strong ones, such as the relation between the de Lange sisters or the Klanderud brothers. Others are equally clearly weak relationships, such as that between Lind and Pettersen, who were cousins once removed. Another example is that between Gundersen and Pettersen: only one year separated the two in age, and both were sons of important merchants on islands in the same area south of Bergen. It is thus likely that they were acquainted before meeting in Guatemala although there is no evidence that they were close friends.

Granovetter observes that those in an insecure situation in life are more likely to rely upon strong ties.⁹⁵ This would be the case of most of the Norwegians who went to the United States, who were mainly from a lower socio-economic position and who very often had a close relative, intimate friend, or next-door neighbor who had already been through the migration process and could advise them and help them upon arrival in the United

93 Jon Gjerde, *From Peasants to Farmers. The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 116–17 and 128–34; Lovoll, *Det løfterike landet*, 19–22.

94 Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 78, No. 6 (May, 1973), pp. 1360–80; and "The Strength of Weak Ties. A Network Theory Revisited." *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 1 (1983), pp. 201–33. Margaret Grieco, *Keeping it in the Family. Social networks and employment chance* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1987).

95 Granovetter refers to several studies on the subject in "A Network Theory Revisited," 212–13.

States.⁹⁶ Those who went to Guatemala, on the other hand, were, as we have seen, from a relatively privileged position in Norwegian society, and were thus in a position to consider a wider range of options for their lives. Rumors or information from acquaintances or the friends of friends, people to whom they would only have weak ties, could therefore have been of importance.

There is, for instance the case of Møklebust and the Klanderuds. Møklebust did not travel together with them, but it is quite unlikely that three young men from Bergen would have traveled to Guatemala to be employed by IRCA at almost exactly the same time without Møklebust and the Klanderud family at least having known of each other. So where is the link? Growing up, Møklebust and the Klanderud brothers did not live particularly close to each other, although they both lived in or near the center of Bergen, and their heads of family were in different lines of business.⁹⁷ The three were not the same age, and would not have gone to school together. However, Bergen was a relatively small town of around ninety thousand inhabitants in 1921 and with a geographically concentrated urban center.⁹⁸ In addition, Møklebust is registered as a pilot in the emigration records, and Fritz W. Klanderud had been home to finish his pilot's training. It is not unlikely that they came to know each other through activities related to flying.

Another case is that of the Blanc and de Lange families, who did live relatively close to each other in Bergen.⁹⁹ They were both members of high society in Bergen and surely must have been at least acquaintances, a supposition that is confirmed by the fact that information relating to Finn de Lange was found at Blanc's home in Sololá. Only five years separated Henrik T. Blanc from Randi and Finn de Lange, who were twins, and Magda Blanc was the same age as the two. It is also probable that they would have transplanted their contact to Guatemala and that they would have been part of a network of ties there, whether weak or strong. However, given the difficult infrastructure and the fact that they lived in different parts of the country, contact was most likely quite rare.

96 See Lovoll, *Det løfterike landet*, 23–25.

97 The Møklebusts lived in Skottvegaten 28, both in the 1910 census for Bergen and in *Bergens Adressebok 1920*, both available through www.digitalarkivet.no. The Klanderuds appear only in the 1920 directory, and then lived in Årstad Barak in Solheimsviken.

98 In 1890, Bergen had 57,703 inhabitants. By 1920 the number had grown to 91,443. Det Statistiske Centralbyrå, *Folketellingen i Norge i desember 1920. Første hefte. Folkemengde og areal i Rikets forskjellige deler. Hussamlinger på landet* (Kristiania: H. Aschehoug & Co., 1922), 15*.

99 In the 1912 census for Bergen, the de Langes lived in Kong Oscarsgate 2, whereas the Blancs lived in Kaigaden 22. The 1912 census is available at Statsarkivet in Bergen.

The small group of Norwegians all knew of each other, though, and some close friendships emerged, in Guatemala if not before.¹⁰⁰ The Klanderuds were on greeting terms with the Laugeruds when they coincided at church, for instance, and the Pettersens greeted both the Klanderuds and the Nesses whenever they met. Aage Klanderud became a good friend of Norman Lind's wife, Berit Sverdrup, and Hjørdis de Lange Davies maintained a close friendship with Carmen Pettersen. Still, being Norwegian or connected to the Norwegian group through marriage was not a sufficient basis for forming strong ties that again might have led to the establishment of a proper Norwegian community.

What about the rest of those born in Bergen, that is, Ness, Lea, and Holtermann? Bjarne Ness grew up in Vik in Sogn, a fair bit north of Bergen, with his grandparents, and thus his family was not part of the same socio-economic stratum in Bergen as were the other families. As for Thomas W. Lea, despite being another case of no evident links, it is probable that his family would know of the Blancs and the de Langes. Both the Lea and the Blanc families lived in Domkirken parish, and the de Lange family also lived close by.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, Lea was only a year older than Hjørdis de Lange. Moreover, by the time Lea arrived in Guatemala, Pettersen's success there would probably be well known by his relatives, owners of the exclusive department store Kløverhuset and no doubt spreaders of information among Bergen's elite. As for Holtermann, although he was not an immigrant in Guatemala and was only there for business for short periods of time, he surely drew upon connections from Bergen when there. His family, too, lived in the center of Bergen, and through his father's position as a ship broker they would have formed part of Bergen's elite.¹⁰² Moreover, Holtermann was born in 1887, and was thus between the de Lange twins and Lea in age.

As for the five young men from Hokksund who arrived in 1926, they were evidently a group of friends from a small village that in 1920 had around a thousand inhabitants.¹⁰³ These friends were roughly the same age, all were confirmed at the same church between 1916 and 1922, and they made the journey to Guatemala together. How they came to make the decision to go there, however, is not known. With the exception of Laugerud, the group had much less economic success in Guatemala than most of the others mentioned, possibly due to a humbler socio-economic background and the lack of contacts in Guatemala.

100 This is confirmed by all of those interviewed.

101 In the 1912 census for Bergen, the Lea family lived in Haakonsgate 28a.

102 In the 1912 census for Bergen, the Holtermann family lived in Sydneshaugen 21.

103 Det Statistiske Centralbyrå, *Folketellingen i Norge i desember 1920*, 18*.

From 1900 to 1940, Guatemala, with its coffee boom, expanding infrastructure, and mostly favorable immigration policies, should have made for an attractive receptor country, despite its sometimes unstable political conditions, changing legislation, and fluctuating economy. Moreover, as seen above, there was an evident network both between Norway and Guatemala and among Norwegians in Guatemala. So why didn't Norwegian immigration take off? Some of the first Norwegian immigrants in Guatemala did to a certain extent have the function of bearers of information and creators of networks. But as we have seen, opportunities were for a few, well-educated, and well-prepared men with access to capital and contacts. This was a piece of information Norwegians already in Guatemala took great care to disseminate, along with the necessity of knowing both a language not common in Norway and a quite foreign culture. There was in general no room for poor farmhands in Guatemala, given the structure of land tenure and the abundant access to cheap indigenous labor. The coffee industry was already in the hands of local as well as German and some British owners. Gaining access required large amounts of capital and an already established network. The modernization of infrastructure needed competent labor and thus created opportunities for engineers, of whom Norway had a surplus, but there was a limit to how many were needed, and they had to compete with engineers of other nationalities for the jobs. As for commerce, that, too, was a field largely occupied by other foreigners.

The few Norwegians who did settle in Guatemala from 1900 to 1940 never formed a close-knit Norwegian community. They all knew of each other, and some close relations between family and friends existed. But poor infrastructure and the fact that they settled all over Southern Guatemala allowed little contact and thus made it difficult to form communities. Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, other groups of foreigners offered the functions a Norwegian community could have fulfilled, and there was thus no great need to form one.

This brings us to a final, but important, point, which is that the Norwegian immigrants were highly integrated into other groups of foreign immigrants, and also into Guatemalan society. They related to German and British coffee networks and North American companies dedicated to the construction of ports and railroads. In other words, they were closely linked to transnational capitalism. And those who married Guatemalans or even took Guatemalan citizenship soon became part of Guatemalan society. Thus, even though Guatemala had offered them good opportunities in life, they neither needed nor wished to attract fellow Norwegians there.