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National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items

X New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Beaks and Spurs: Cockfighting in Puerto Rico.

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Cockfighting in Puerto Rico, 1770-1898.

Cockfighting in Puerto Rico, 1898 – 1980.

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Juan Llanes Santos / Historian

organization Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office date May 19, 2014

street & number PO Box 9023935 telephone 787-721-3737

city or town San Juan state PR zip code 00902-3935

e-mail jllanes@prshpo.gobierno.com

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Diana López Sotomayor May 21, 2014

Signature and title of certifying official Diana López Sotomayor/SHPO | Date

Puerto Rico State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper | Date of Action

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Beaks and Spurs: Cockfighting in Puerto Rico

Introduction

Cockfighting is definitely the oldest sport practiced in Puerto Rico. Considered by many "the National Sport" its documented practice in the island dates back to the eighteenth century. However, more than likely, cockfight is contemporary with the initial European settlement of the island during the sixteenth century, as the earliest colonizers brought their leisure life-ways along with their religion, politics, and economic patterns.

Currently, there are over one hundred *galleras* (cockpits) in Puerto Rico. The government, through the Cockfighting Affairs Commission, which operates under the Department of Recreation and Sports, regulates the practice. The Commission is responsible for issuing licenses, regulating fights, and enforcing norms and standardized operating procedures for all one hundred and twenty eight (128) cockfighting rings on the island. What started as a recreational activity of the Spanish conquistadores has become an industry that generates millions of dollars annually, occupying a very significant place in the island's economy. For example, normally there are over two hundred thousand (200,000) fighting birds in any given year that required proper breeding, training, medical care, and feeding. In 2003, caring for these natural gladiators, and the eventual selling of the well-trained fighters, produced over 20,000,000 dollars. In that particular year, 191,465 fights were conducted, with an assistance of 1,264,023 people to the cockpits, and bets reaching the amount of 43,125,231 dollars.[1] Annually, over one million people attend the fights, generating over one hundred million (100,000,000) dollars in bets, admission tickets, food consumption and other expenses incurred at the *galleras*.[2]

1 Ley de gallos de Puerto Rico. Ley Núm. 98 de 31 de julio de 2007.

The existing 128 eight cockpits are distributed among sixty municipalities, out of the seventy-eight in the island (**Fig. 1**). With constructions dates ranging from the early 1930s throughout the late 1970s, these cockpits are mostly located in the countryside, outside the boundaries of the urban centers. The present location of these noisy-yelling-male dominated spaces respond to historic trends varying from new urban planning concepts to 1930s legal dispositions. Their separation from the urban nucleus, however, could also be traced to the nineteenth century practice of building the cockpits away from the regulating eyes of the Spanish government or the persecuting policies of the US authorities that prohibited the sport for over thirty years after 1898.

These cockpits, many built combining wood, concrete and steel, some with the most modern amenities, others with just the officially required equipment to practice their bloody sport, but all with their prototypical circular fighting arena, are disregarded as unimportant resources, under the criticism of their cruel game or the building's lack of architectural appeal. These assumptions could be misleading and lack the proper historic appreciation.

The *galleras* were considered at one time a very fundamental building as a relevant contributor to the municipalities' cultural, social, and economic development. As an activity open to almost every male, the sport of cockfighting and the site where it took place (*galleras*) represented a timid but persistent proposal of a democratic discourse; an incipient social construct that contradicted the economic, ethnical and class-divided rigidity of the Spanish colonial period. After 1898, the sport was prohibited by the new United States' administrators. For the next forty years, the illegal-countryside-hidden *galleras* became a dissident space, a pit of cultural resistance, opposed to the new colonial metropolis's policies. Puerto Rico's *galleras* are legitimate heirs of this significant past.

[2] Gobierno de Puerto Rico. Cámara de Representantes. 7 de diciembre de 2012. Informe Final sobre la R. de la C. 2060, 2.

Cockfighting, a brief overview

Cockfighting has a history that traces back to times before Christ. Before becoming a sport, the bird was regarded as an admirable animal, drawing respect from men of diverse cultures. In ancient times, the Syrians worshiped the fighting cock; the Greeks and the Romans associated the bird with the gods of Apollo, Mercury, and Mars; in Borneo, the bird was so sacred that it was prohibited to eat its flesh. In Ancient Sumatra, a temple was built to honor the bird and rituals were performed to honor the deity. Cockfighting occurred in the temple and the dead bird that lost the battle was presented to the gods.

Although there does not seem to be a definitive point in history as to when cockfighting became an official sport, approximately 3,000 years ago, it was already popular among the Phoenicians, Hebrews and Canaanites. Breeding gamecocks for fighting in a pit was considered an art and trading these birds was profitable. The Persians brought the pitting of cocks against each other to Greece. In the first century of our Common Era, Julius Cesar led Rome into enjoying the sport.

During the Middle Ages, the pastime spread in Europe, becoming widely practiced in France and England. In France, it was so popular that the country eventually adopted the fighting cock as the national emblem. In England, during King Henry VIII, cockfights were held at Whitehall Palace. It became so familiar that at one point even exclusive schools were required to teach students the fine details in the birds' breeding and training. At its very height of popularity, even the British clergy encouraged the practice. Churchyards and the inside of churches were used as arenas. In the seventeenth century, during Queen Victoria's reign, the sport declined in England when the Regent banned the sport with a royal decree. However, by the time it was prohibited by the Queen, the practice, enjoyed by both noble and commoner, with a profound element of gambling involved, it had already migrated with English settlers to the British New World colonies, where it found fertile ground.

In Spain, cockfighting had also a long history, arriving probably through the traveling Phoenicians or the conquering Moors. Opposite to England and France, where the sport is no longer legally practice, in Spain still popular in places like Bilbao, Oviedo, Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia. The Spanish colonist brought the pastime to Puerto Rico sometime during the sixteenth century, initiating a trend that had outlived many of the original live-ways brought by the first Europeans into the island.[3]

Cockfighting in Puerto Rico, 1770-1898.

One of the most difficult task in producing a historic narrative about a popular tradition (popular in the sense of been part of a way of life of the common folks) is the lack of proper documentation. Regular workings folks do not spend their life writing about it, but living it. The lifestyle of the common folk will not be properly documented unless that record is to be used by those in a position of power to rightfully comprehend it or to control it, to regulate it or to extract certain benefit from it. The research into the practice of cockfighting during the process of Spanish colonization confirms this statement. As long as the activity was not considered a transgression by the official powers (government, church) or there was not a calculated purpose to control it, to acquire economic benefits or to demonize it under a moralistic discourse, cockfighting will hardly show in official documents.

One of the first official mentions about the sport will show on the records when the local government attempted to institutionalize it. On April 5, 1770, governor Miguel de Muesas passed a resolution to organize the practice under the government surveillance. According to the decree, cockfights were not to be conducted unless they took place in officially designated areas. The

[3] The information provided in this section was gathered from the following sources: George Riley Scott, *History of Cockfighting*. Beech Publishing House, 2nd edition, 1983; Encyclopedia Britannica, Cockfight, 2008; Frederick Hawley, *The Moral and Conceptual Universe of Cockfighters: Symbolism and Rationalization*. Oklahoma Historic Society, 1993.

measure gave origin to the proper establishment of the building called "*gallera*". The decree stipulated that the assignment of constructing the *galleras* was to be conducted in public auctions, granted to the highest bidder. The grantee would have to build the place at his own expenses, pay a tax fee to the general government and to the municipality where it was located. The grantee will make his income through the fee collected to the players and assistants. The building, however, will remain a government property. Initially, the grantee would have management exclusiveness only for just one year. After that, the *galleras*' management was again posted on auction.[4]

The government's action reflects how strong the sport was already established among the locals. The 1770 decree could only be understood as a response to a long process on which, day by day, cockfighting became a widespread social practice among the people, and as such, subjected to a more close attention by the government authorities. The 1770 bill was the first attempt of the government in setting rules on the game.

Even before the 1770 decree, the church officials were already paying a closer moralistic attention to the popular sport. As cockfights was not listed as a banned game by the civilian authorities, the Church could not opposed to its practice, but it had enough social and political pull to modify it if seen as interfering with the accepted morality. In 1750, for example, Bishop Francisco Julian de Antolino, submitted an edict on which indicated that many men in San Juan were missing mass on Sunday, because cockfights were been scheduled at the same time. The Bishop prohibited, under harsh ecumenical repercussions, to conduct cockfights within a period that could affect mass participation.[5]

Another eighteen-century observer, however, gives us the idea that the population was not as anxious to follow the Establishment's dispositions. Fray Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra, in his 1788 history of Puerto Rico, commented:

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[4] Cayetano Coll y Toste. *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico*. Tomo III. San Juan, Puerto Rico: Tip: Cantero Fernández, 1916, 307.
[5] Ángel López Cantos. *Fiestas y juegos en Puerto Rico (Siglo XVIII)*. Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe. San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1990, 253.

They are very passionate about sedentary games; the one about cocks is very common in all America and even more in this island. A man has no embarrassment in walking the streets, looking for somebody with whom to match his cock and willing to risk all his money, confident in the courage of his bird. Two heads of families will spend all day squatting in the middle of the town square, watching their birds fight, without showing any pain for losing their money, but becoming very sensitive when their cock is kill or badly hurt, as usually happen, since an extremely sharp lancet is tied to the birds' legs and they jump cutting and slitting each other. The first to drop dead or flee loses the fight and his owner pays the bet, which usually is a considerable amount.[6]

Abbad y Lasierra arrived in the island between 1771-72, and left in 1788, which make him an eyewitness of the 1770's decree regulating the practice of cockfighting. Lasierra's statement shows the futility of the policy. Evidently, the local folks kept on playing their sport on those places allocated by the old customs and not the ones designated by the government. Lasierra's description brings also into account the lenient indulgence of the authorities in imposing the decree.

The common folk's disregard toward the government policy responded to the way that this population organized themselves to produce and reproduced their material existence. By the time Lasierra made his description, most of the island's inhabitants have lived outside the towns; disperse in the countryside, for almost three hundred years. During this long period, a free and independent peasantry developed; direct producers subsisting in agriculture and smuggling. These non-capitalist economic practices promoted the creation of an independent cultural structure that will oppose the intromission of an interfering state with its fiscal policies. It would equally opposed an intrusive church with its moral controls.

In spite of the people's preference to practice their cockfights in their selected places, slowly but surely, the government was able to establish its policies, especially within the incipient urban centers. By 1786, the following towns had official *galleras*: Río Piedras, Cangrejos (Santurce), Loíza, Fajardo, Caguas, Cayey, Guayama, Coamo, Ponce, Yauco, San Germán, Cabo Rojo, Mayaguez,

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[6] Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra. *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*. Nueva edición, anotada en la parte histórica y continuada en la estadística y económica por José Julián Acosta y Calvo. Estudio introductorio por Gervasio L. García. Ediciones Doce Calles, 2002, 500. (Translation is ours.)

Añasco, Rincón, Aguadilla, Moca, San Sebastian, Utuado, Arecibo, Toa Alta, Toa Baja, Bayamón, Guaynabo, and of course, San Juan.[7]

During the first decades of the early nineteen century, the development of the official *galleras* increased, but probably not as quickly as the ones in the countryside. These ones would be targeted by the official authorities as centers of social corruption. In 1821, for example, the mayor of the town of Naguabo, located in the southeast of the island, wrote to the central government in San Juan about the necessity of eliminating the *galleras* in the countryside, allowing only the one in town. The angry municipal official indicated the existence of more than six *galleras* out of town, stating that these were "*asylums for the slackers, the undeserved, and even for those hiding from justice*".[8] Another complain made by the mayor brings out a very interesting point. In the letter he claimed that also attending these socially perturbing places were the "*sons of good families*".[9]

In 1822, a man named Agustín Guardiola, sent a letter to the central government in San Juan from the town of Toa Baja, located few miles west of the capital. The author complained that the town's mayor ordered the shut-down of the local *gallera*. Guardiola described that the people were discontented, indicating that the sport was an "*immemorial custom*", that the *gallera*'s attendees were "*the best people in town*" and that folks from nearby Toa Alta were also regular customers.[10]

Both letters show a recurrent theme in the few official documents pertaining to cockfights during the nineteenth century. There was a shared concern among the official powers (state, church) of the socialization process that transpired within the *galleras* confinement. The practice of the sport transgressed the social boundaries established by the nineteenth century's ethnic and class-based structure. People from all walks of life were not only followers of the sport, but they were practicing it

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[7] Ángel López Cantos. *Fiestas y juegos en Puerto Rico*, 254.
[8] Archivo General de Puerto Rico (AGPR). Fondo: Gobernadores Españoles. Asuntos Fiscales. Deudas y Gastos. Caja 199. Expediente 1821. Consulta sobre establecimiento de galleras en Naguabo.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid. Expediente Hacienda 1827. Carta de Agustín Guardiola, 12 de marzo de 1822.

together. The *galleras*, the actual building itself, which construction was specifically ordered by the 1770 decree, and even more the ones operating in the countryside away from the authorities, became a laboratory where the social constraints were blurred, at least partially and momentarily. In the *galleras*, white *Peninsulares* and *Criollos* mingled with mulattos, black former slaves, and even actual slaves, in an incipient exercise in social democracy. The use and access to contained social spaces like schools, casinos, or even churches, were spatially and socially organized according to strict racial and class lines. The *galleras'* dynamic, however, challenged that status quo.

In a way, even the intrinsic nature of the sport attempted against the established powers. Winners were not determined by their social status, but by the objectively fighting skills of the cock games. Through their birds, in the arena, slaves could defeat their masters, blacks could defeat whites, *Criollos* could defeat *Peninsulares*. The traditional unwritten code among the players to honor their monetary debts at the very moment that the fight was over, created also an equalizer situation among the practitioners.[11]

On March 14, 1825, Governor Miguel de la Torre signed into effect an extensive and detailed *Reglamento de Galleras* (Cockpits' Regulation).[12] Such an extensive decree reflects the significance and the widely spread of the sport. In the decree, many aspects of the sport were addressed; some of them need to be properly discussed because of their relevance. Chapter 1, article 1, began emphasizing the economic contribution of the sport to the central and municipal governments, through the issue of licenses, permits and the leasing of the building to the galleras' operators. In article 2, it was again indicated that the galleras could only be established in towns or its immediate premises, so the authorities could keep proper supervision and prevent the "*great harms that could create the complicated reunion of people*".

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[11] That unwritten code remains today. In Puerto Rico, cockfighting is known as "*El Deporte de Caballeros*" (the Sport of Gentlemen) precisely because all the bets in the galleras are not written, but orally expressed and agreed upon by the players. Regardless of the amount (and they can go for thousands of dollars), the ones that lose pay their debts as soon the fight is over. By regulation, only the bets of the two actual owners of the cocks in the arena are displayed in a board for everyone to see.

[12] Cayetano Coll y Toste. *Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico*. Reglamento de galleras. Tomo III. San Juan, Puerto Rico. Tip. Cantero,

Article 1, in Chapter 2, made the administrators responsible in keeping the proper conduct, tranquility and good order in the galleras. Special consideration was given to this action, as the *galleras* were exposed to the "*natural danger*" created by the "*concurrence of people of different qualities and education*". In article 5 it was explicitly prohibited the presence of black slaves at the *galleras.* Accordingly, the administrators would it received a fine of four pesos the first offense, sixteen pesos for the second and sixty-four pesos on their third time violating the disposition. They would also have to compensate the slave's owners for their loss of productive time. The assistance of laborers during regular working days was also prohibited. If the supervising authorities would have founded them at the *galleras*, the administrator could have been legally charge for promoting vagrancy.

Articles 7, 8 and 9, dealt directly with the actual construction of the galleras. The arena, built in a circular shape, had to be approximately twenty one feet in diameter, with a soft, even, clean ground, so the birds would not be hurt with any undesirable materials on the ground while fighting. [13] The perimeter fence surrounding the arena was to be three feet high and covered up with a soft material. Openings around the building's roof line were required to allow direct sunlight and ventilation, but placed in such a way that the sunlight would not have a direct effect upon the fighting birds. The building's exterior walls were to be "*safe and decent*"; the interior out to be pleasant and comfortable.

Article 13, in chapter 4, addressed the need to keep the established order. The incipient discourse of social equality that permeated the *galleras* sent a worrisome message up-and-down the spinal cord of the official powers. The decree indicated that in order to keep the proper subordination of one class to the other, requirement that serves "*as the foundation to the beautiful building of the social order*", the seating arrangement should be in accord with ethnic and class lines. The

Fernández & Co., 1916, 296-307.

preferential seats should be occupied by "*those who deserved*", and the rest of the seats should go to the white persons before "*those of color*". This rule was going to be followed in order to put an end to the *galleras*' "*customary abuse of having black people perfectly seated, while the whites were standing and upset*".

A great deal of wishful thinking found its way into the 1825 decree, as it can be seen in the following mandates: during the fights total silence and order was to be kept; well educated manners and behavior was to be maintained at all times; mocking gestures and obscene language were prohibited.

The final chapter of Miguel de la Torre's decree detailed specific orders about the management of the fights, decision making processes, bird's management and safety, responsibilities of judges and *careadores* (cock handlers), among other points. The 1825 regulation, with other amendments and additions, remained in effect until the end of the nineteenth century.

The success of the government to institutionalize the sport it is evident in the increase of *galleras* officially established. By the early 1850s, there were cockpits in Bayamón, Palo Seco, Dorado, Guaynabo, Loíza, Río Piedras, Cangrejos, Toa Baja, Trujillo Alto, Trujillo Bajo, Río Grande and Manatí. There were galleras also in Barros (Orocovis), Ciales, Corozal, Morovis, Naranjito, Toa Alta, Vega Alta, Vega Baja, Arecibo, Camuy, Quebradillas, Hatillo, Utuado, Aguadilla, Isabela, Aguada, Lares, Moca, Pepino, Añasco and Rincón. In addition, official cockpits were built in Mayagüez, Cabo Rojo, San Germán, Sabana Grande, Guayanilla, Adjuntas, Peñuelas, Yauco, Ponce, Juana Díaz, Aibonito, Barranquitas, Coamo, Santa Isabel, Salinas, Guayama, Maunabo, Patillas, Humacao, Ceiba, Fajardo, Luquillo, Piedras, Naguabo, Yabucoa, Caguas, Aguas Buenas, Cayey, Cidra, Hato Grande, Gurabo, Juncos, Sabanas del Palmar and San Juan.[14] These numbers show the hold the sport had among the population.

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[13] The arena's diameter and fence were defined using "*varas castellanas*". One *vara castellana* equals approximately three feet.
[14] Cayetano Coll y Toste, *Boletín Histórico*, Vol. III, Tributo de las galleras y billares en toda la isla de Puerto Rico a favor del presupuesto insular del Estado en 1853, 183-184.

However, the illegal *gallera* out in the countryside remained a constant presence; a place where the sport was practiced without following the official instructions, without the social impositions and without paying the required fees and licenses. In 1861, for example, thirteen men were found and apprehended while conducting illegal cockfights. Four of them were described as laborers; the other nine were listed as members of the proprietor class.[15]

The sporadic appearance of the sport among the official documentation creates the imperative need to approach its significance through less orthodox means. One of those approaches could be through the period's literature. In Puerto Rico, during the nineteenth century, as in many other countries in Latin America, a new literary genre took hold among the recently formed petty bourgeoisie. Young male writers, mostly of Creole ascendency, educated in Europe, began "capturing" their countries social conditions and characteristics in a writing style eventually defined as *costumbrismo* (costumbrism). The genre intended to describe the common folk's types, customs, and ways of life, creating in prose a pictorial frame of the everyday-mundane social life of their subjects. In actuality, the literary genre served to emphasize the social product created within each one of the colonial countries in Latin America, very different from its European origin. In a way, the *costumbrismo* became a Nation-building-social discourse that intended to preserve and record disappearing ways of life as new modes of production generated new social relations.

The work *El Gíbaro*, by Manuel A. Alonso Pacheco (1822-1889), it is considered the premier work that initiated a truly Puerto Rican literature. Alonso was the first insular writer that made Puerto Rico his literary subject, nor just as a background where things happened, but the island as the main character. The San Juan borne author, considered one the first *costumbristas* in Latin America, left for Spain in 1842 to study medicine in Barcelona, returning to Puerto Rico in 1849. Before leaving Spain, Alonso left a manuscript at Martin Carle's printing house that was published that very same year under the title "*El Gíbaro. Cuadro de Costumbres de la Isla de Puerto Rico.*" Among the many

[15] AGPR. Fondo: Gobernadores Españoles. Asuntos Fiscales. Hospital-Moneda. Caja 218. Legajo, Relación de los individuos

types, customs and characters portrayed by the author, his comments on the *galleras* it is of particular interest:

> *"Any town in the island can go on without public shows of any kind; even without a major, a counselor, or someone running the government, but it will never make it without a big shed, cover with tiles or straw, in which center there is a circle of eight to ten steps in diameter made out of wooden planks, with surrounding bleachers, made out of the same material. When it's time to establish a new settlement, it's not strange that this building will appear even before the church. This entity that presides everywhere; this outpost in the creation of new societies in places uninhabited until then; this place that seems to be part of an idolatrous cult…is the gallera".*[16]

In his work, Alonso emphasized the customs and traditions that made-of this new social entity called "Puerto Ricans"; locally produced and different from everything that originally came from Spain. That differentiation it is made clear right from the start in the work's title: *jíbaro* (*gíbaro*), a word that had no linguistic or cultural meaning in Spain at the time, as it referred to a local social construction. Even within Alonso's possible humorist and sarcastic tone, the significance of the sport and the relevance of the place where it took place (*galleras*) cannot be deny. The passion for cockfighting was as an intertwined custom deeply rooted within the cultural frame; and the *gallera,* was as an important building within the built landscape.

Manuel Fernández Juncos (1846-1928), Asturian by birth and Puerto Rican by adoption, was a journalist, an educator, a political leader and a man of literature, whose *costumbristas* writings celebrated the local traditional customs.[17] Especially interested on the local's idiosyncrasy, Juncos portrayed characters, types, and customs in many articles in his own 19th century newspaper called

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sorprendidos por el alguacil en juego de gallos. 11 de diciembre de 1861.

[16] Manuel A. Alonso. *El jíbaro*. Edición de Félix Córdoba Iturregui. Clásicos. Ediciones Huracán: San Juan, Puerto Rico, 2001, 115. Translation is ours.

[17] Concha Meléndez, "Manuel Fernández Juncos, mentor de juventudes". *Boletín de la Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española*. San Juan, IX, 1981, 83-99.

El Buscapié. These articles were later compiled in two volumes: *Tipos y Caracteres* and *Costumbres y Tradiciones*.[18] Published thirty years after Alonso's *El Gíbaro*, among the types and customs described by Fernández Juncos, cockfighting and the *galleras* received special attention. Also highlighted was the actual figure of the *gallero (*game cocks breeders and trainers).

In *Tipos y Carácteres*, Fernández Juncos brought again the relevance of the *galleras* within the towns' built legacy, indicating that in every location of some importance, there is "*an octagonal building, which roof, in the shape of an umbrella, exceeds in height the private homes, with that air of superiority that distinguishes the public buildings*". The author indicated that among the jíbaros, the *galleras* were the best known and visited house. A place where people from different social classes, farmers and those from the high society, mix-up attracted by a common pastime. Fernández Juncos mentions that the government has contributed to the sport's development through its regulation and making sure that every town has its *galleras*, which taxes were an important income to the municipalities and the central government.[19]

Local writers and observers were not the only ones attracted by the sport. Nineteenth century foreign visitors also commented about it in their memoirs and writings, sometimes with acceptance, sometimes with hard reservations. Regardless of their point of view, these observers ratified the significance of the sport within the local cultural frame. One of those memoirs, published in early twentieth century, was written by a young US soldier that came to Puerto Rico as part of the 1898 occupation. His description of the *gallera* and the people's reaction during the fights deserves full quotation:

> *The cockfight was a great event among the Porto Ricans and the government reaped much money from that business. The pits were located in splendid theaters and every one attended. "Swelldom" in the boxes, the mulattoes and the negritos, or peons crowded around the pit where they could see the cocks. The folks in the boxes had to use opera glasses, and if they could not see the cocks they would observe*

[18] *Tipos y Caracteres* was published in 1882; *Costumbres y Tradiciones* in 1883.
[19] Manuel Fernández Juncos, *Galería Puertorriqueña. Tipos y Caracteres. Costumbres y Tradiciones*. Introducción de Concha

the actions of the peons and know how the fight was going. The peons followed the motions of their bird with eagerness, losing self-consciousness entirely. They would jump-up, swing to one side, sit suddenly, flop their arms, kick out backward, forward, sideways and with both feet at once, dive foremost, roll over, lie flat on their backs and at the climax, turn up their knees and toes or burst themselves with crowing.[20]

The "*gallera*" described by Clements departs from any other previous descriptions. More than likely, the soldier attended a very special occasion where the fights were been conducted at a non-regular *gallera*, but in an actual theater, temporarily used for the purpose, maybe as part of a specific festivity. As an Officer of the new ruling power, Clements was possibly invited to witness a cockfight done at a Casino, a building associated with the upper class' entertainment lifestyle. Still, the young captain was able to capture the ability of the sport in breaking the social rules and the strong emotions that still characterize the gamecock's practice. Coming from Kentucky, a Southern State, cockfights must have been a common scene for Clements.[21]

Another US citizen, William Dinwiddie, who came to the island when Puerto Rico was been transferred to the United States, gave a harsher perspective of the sport. Commissioned by editors Harper & Brothers to work on a book about the new possession, Dinwiddie spent two months traveling through the island. Among the twenty-four chapters that made the book, the author devoted seven to social history with titles like Home Life; Life Among the Peasants, and others. Chapter XVI is dedicated entirely to the sport of gamecocks, under the name of Cock-Fighting.[22] The *gallera*'s description provided by Dinwiddie (**Fig. 2**) is closer to the other nineteen-century observers, making Captain Clements' an unusual one:

Meléndez. Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña. San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico, 1958, 153.

[20] J. Reginald Clements (Capt). *History of Louisville's Soldiers from the War with Spain until the dissolution of the Artillery K.S.G.*, 1907, 53-54.

[21] Jon Griffin Donlon, *Bayou Country Bloodsport. The Culture of Cockfighting in Southern Louisiana*. Jefferson, North Carolina. McFarland & Company, Inc, 2014. Mostly concentrated in Louisiana, the book comments on the Southern affection for the sport.

[22] William Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico. Its Conditions and Possibilities*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1899.

> *Every town in Puerto Rico has at least one cock-pit, built and owned by some thrifty lover of the mains. They differ little in construction, consisting of an earth-floored ring some eighteen feet in diameter, surrounded by an outwardly-inclined, closely-boarded fence, with half a dozen hinged entrance gates, which may be closed fast when a fight is on. Back of this fence, board seats are built, sometimes rising three deep like circus benches, and in the ultra-fashionable places they are divided into numbered and reserved seats. Covering the ring is a square, open-sided, roofed shed, with a railed balcony having a row of benches some eight feet above the ring level. Outside of all is a high fence, built of clapboards from the great royal palm, which prevents intrusive glances.*[23]

The American observer recalls the social mingling process involved in the sport when he indicates that the practitioners were not only the poorer element, laborers and peons, but the more opulent townsmen also. For Dinwiddie, the bloody sport was barbaric, blaming the locals' affection for it, on hundreds of years of dehumanizing and despotic Spanish colonial government:

> *It is a brutal sport, this baiting of birds against one another, that fight with blinded, bloody eyes, not seeing their enemy at the finish, but striking wildly, unflinchingly, at the superior force as they die; but is the one, the only amusement which these people could afford, the only one offered them by a nation which has crushed out human hearts and dwarfed human minds by three centuries of malicious officialism…That the amusement was brutal and of low order seemed not to occur to anyone. They had been taught this form of pastime, and conscience did not trouble them."*[24]

Dinwiddie's comments reflect more on the incoming United States political, economic and cultural discourse towards the island, that in the sport itself. After 1898, the many "shortcomings" in education, lack of autonomous political experience and the so called cultural backwardness found and exposed by the new ruling groups, were used to justify the need to impose a policy of tutelage over every important aspect in Puerto Rico.

[23] Ibid., 175-176.

Cockfighting in Puerto Rico, 1898-1980

Cockfighting, 1898-1934

The insertion of Puerto Rico under the United States' influence created new political arrangements, new complex social patterns, a re-orientation of the productive forces and ways of production, and social confrontations/negotiations as the new capitalistic values were push into the island. Changes occurred in the high structures where politics and policies are made. New power brokers came to administer the unincorporated territory; local political parties were organized to deal with the new Northern power-center; the island was inserted within the United States commercial and fiscal policies.

The new conditions had an enormous repercussion in the structures of everyday life. A new currency was introduced to carried out the financial exchanges. New religious denominations came to challenge the Catholic Church's four hundred years monopoly. A new education system was built from the ground up with the specific mission of teaching not only the ABC, but also the American values.

In many ways, the paradigm created for the new Caribbean possession rested in the discursively assumption that the people in the island needed to be rescued, not only from their colonial past, but also from themselves. In certain instances, that process of salvation could only be accomplished through the codification of the native's differences as transgressions. In order to create an effective colonial policy, many cultural practices were categorized as sinful, backward or immoral, as compared to the dominating cultural trends on the Mainland. The legal apparatus became an effective means to impose the new policies. Cockfighting was among the first cultural practices immediately defined as illegal under the new Metropolis' capitalist morality.

From 1898, until the establishment of the civil government in April 1900, Puerto Rico was ruled by military decrees imposed without arguments or public consultations. General Guy Vernor Henry,

[24] Ibid., 178-179

Medal of Honor awardee, Indian fighter, who accompanied General Nelson A. Miles during the 1898 campaign in Puerto Rico, served as the second military governor of the island from December 6, 1898, until May 8, 1899.

On May 6, 1899, a law signed by Henry preventing cruelty to animals was published in the Official Gazette. Article 14 of the mentioned law prohibited the centenary practice of cockfighting:

> *Cockfights are likewise absolutely forbidden, whether in public places or rings, or in private premises. Violator of this provision, if owner or owners of the public or private building where the fight takes place, shall be fined one hundred (100) pesos; each person present five (5) pesos, and each of the coleadores (those who direct the fight) twenty five (25) pesos. A repetition of the offence shall be punished with double fine and imprisonment of from one to five days.*[25]

On March 10, 1904, the law was again re-formulated to include other provisions and punishments. Section Five, the clause related to cockfights, indicated that any person that initiates, incites, promotes, play a match, serves as a judge, or helps in any way to conduct a cockfight, was going to be penalized with a fine not to exceed fifty dollars, or prison time not to exceed thirty days, or both.[26]

As such, from the close of the nineteenth century until mid-1930s, the building identified as the *gallera* "disappeared" from the officially permitted buildings in the landscape. The practice, however, went into hidden, defying its legal status as a banned activity. Cockfighting was relegated to those opaque, displaced spaces, where the subaltern subjects elusively operate in opposition to the established powers and the accepted normative.

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[25] Military Orders having the force of law promulgated by the Commanding General. Department of Porto Rico. From October 18th, 1898 to April 30th, 1900. Vol. II., 117.
[26] Las Leyes y Resoluciones de la Segunda Sesión de la Segunda Asamblea Legislativa de Puerto Rico. San Juan, Puerto Rico. Tip. "El País", 1904, 2-3.

The clandestine practice moved mostly into the countryside, away from the urban centers and the authorities. The central, mountainous region of the island became a refuge to the sport's followers. Practitioners, through social grapevines and word of mouth, will congregate in hidden

designated areas to conduct informal fights with few attendees or massive meetings with hundreds of participants.

In Ciales, a town located in the central mountain region, the local police records provide evidence of such gatherings. The *Libros de Novedades*, rarely used reports where the local police officers kept the daily incidents at their jurisdictions, has proven to be an excellent source to document those popular illegalities, like cockfighting, gambling and bootlegging. For example, on December 12, 1926, the police officer on-duty in Barrio Toro Negro (Ciales) informed breaking a match in a *gallera* property of Ramón Losas, with two other people acting as *coleadores* (handlers).[27] On January 15, 1928, at 5:30 pm., Chief Lopez and the police officer José Rivera indicated in their book having intervened with a clandestine match conducted again at the Ramón Losas' gallera. This time, however, it was reported the presence of over three hundred people and over twenty motor vehicles in the premises. The report indicates the presence of players from surrounding municipalities, besides Ciales, like Manatí, Jayuya, Villalba and Ponce.[28] On Sunday, April 22, 1928, Officer Rafael Concepción indicated catching unaware a cock match at the house of Antonio Olivieri, with over three hundred people present.[29] On Sunday, January 18, 1930, the very same police officer (Concepcion) reported breaking a match at the very same place (Olivieri's house) with over three hundred people. The officer mentioned, that after stopping the match, he overheard among the crowd that they were moving to Guayabal, a rural neighborhood on the municipality of Juana Diaz.[30]

[27] AGPR. Fondo: Policía de Puerto Rico. Serie: Libro de Novedades. Libro 23. Legajo 98. Tarea 61-62. Ciales, 1926-1928. Caja 5.
[28] Ibid., Libro 26, Legajo 230.
[29] Ibid. Libro 27, Legajo 68.

Same pattern is found in other municipalities. On January 23, 1921, in Loiza, a town in the northern coast, police officers reported breaking a fight with twenty-five observers, arresting one of the *coleadores* and confiscating one of the birds.[31] On March 7, 1926, it was reported the breaking of a fight in the farm of Andrés Flores, where an old *gallera* belonging to Francisco Castro was standing.[32] On April 10, 1927, the police officers in the town of Barceloneta intervened an illegal fight but did not make any arrests as the "*criminals*" disappeared with their birds "*into the surrounding wooded area*".[33]

Court records are also a good source to find the continuous popular challenge throw at the rules of the new Anglo Saxon metropolis and their local counterparts. On January 21, 1910, in Guanajibo, a rural barrio in Mayaguez, over fifty men were accused of animal cruelty for "*voluntarily and maliciously*" conducting illegal cockfights.[34] On November 28, 1911, several men were charged for playing their gamecocks at Borinquén, a rural barrio in Caguas.[35] On December 1, 1914, nine people were arrested for illegal cockfights at barrio Boca Velazquez in Santa Isabel.[36]

The situation described above was the normative during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The sport was practice by people of all sorts, in hidden, improvised cockpits. Many times, the selected places will just be a house backyard; the still standing officially abandoned building of an old rural *gallera*; or just a poorly accessible field in the countryside. In a way, these clandestine *galleras* were an arena where not only fighting cocks faced each other, but where opposite cultural views clashed. The illegal practice allowed for the creation of a dissident discourse, which contravened the official one, imposed by the new Northern metropolis.

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[30] AGPR. Fondo: Policia de Puerto Rico. Serie: Libro de Novedades. Libro 30. Legajo 2. Tarea 61-62, 1930-1931. Caja 7
[31] AGPR. Fondo: Policia de Puerto Rico. Serie: Libro de Novedades. Tarea 61-62. Cuartel, Loiza. Caja 1. Libro 6, Legajo 50.
[32] Ibid. Caja 1. Libro (Unidentified), Legajo 51.
[33] Ibid. Cuartel: Barceloneta, 1925-1929. Caja 1. Libro 2, Legajo 8.
[34] Tribunal Supremo de Puerto Rico. El Pueblo v. Del Moral et al., 16 D.P.R. 653 (1910).
[35] Ibid. El Pueblo v. Ramirez et al., 18 D.P.R. 271 (1912).
[36] Ibid. El Pueblo v. Torres et al., 23 D.P.R. 378 (1916).

Moral culpability is a socially variable, historically determined and an extremely contested ideological representation. Many of the so-called criminal/delinquent actions of the common folks are changing interpretations of real and contradictory practices, power relations, and social conditions. By the end of the 1920s, a trend towards the sport legalization became more militant. The presence of diverse power groups (proprietors, businessmen, merchants, politicians) among the sport practitioners, the evident legal futility in prohibiting the cultural practice, and a more open frame of mind by the government, facilitated a change in the legal situation of the sport. Its legalization, however, did not come easily.

In 1927, the American governor, Horace Mann Towner, vetoed an approved act authorizing cockfighting.[37] In March 1931, the local Legislature attempted again in legalizing the sport. The American governor at the time, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., received numerous requests from different groups opposing the law. Masonic lodges, workers associations, Baptists churches, and private individuals requested and obtained the governor's veto against the project.[38] Their basic arguments rested in exalting the detrimental social consequences that the sport legalization would have among the poor and the workers. In early 1933, a similar law project was again approved by the Legislature and again vetoed by the outgoing governor, James R. Beverly.[39]

Just after vetoing the law project, Beverly was replaced by Robert Hayes Gore, who was in office for less than a year. In his inaugural speech, among other things, Gore indicated his interest in making the island an attractive place for the American tourist explaining:

> *"It is not sufficient to have surf washed shores and sun bathed gardens, nor yet the lovely mountains that look out upon two seas. We must have recreation to satisfy the spirit that is ever seeking the something new. And to gratify that, you can offer the oldest sport known to original man—a sport that I participated in as a boy in my Kentucky home. You can have legalized cock fighting, so regulated that it will not be*

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[37] Porto Rico Progress. April 6, 1933, 4.
[38] AGPR. Fondo: Oficina del Gobernador. Tarea 96-20. Cartapacio Enero 1927-1931. Caja 199. There are letters from groups like Iglesia Bautista de Caguas, Logia Amparo Num. 9559 from Caguas, Unión de Carpinteros from Mayaguez, and private individuals.
[39] Op. Cit.

objectionable, and you should advertise annually a great carnival of horse and cock fighting. I promise you that I will sign a bill authorizing this if properly drawn and passed by your legislature".[40]

The bill presented to Gore was the very same one previously rejected by Beverly. Authored by the most powerful local politician of his time and a passionate follower of the sport, Senate President Rafael Martinez Nadal, the law proposal was ratified by twelve senators and twenty-seven members of the House of Representatives. On August 12, 1933, in the presence of Martinez Nadal and using a feather of *Justicia*, Nadal's favorite fighting bird, Hayes Gore signed the bill authorizing the sport once again (**Fig. 3**).[41] After thirty-four years underground, cockfighting regained its legality.

Cockfighting, 1934-1980

A cultural activity freely practiced by its followers for many years against the government and its moral acolytes, after been legalized the sport found itself increasingly controlled by its previous pursuers. Between 1933-1960, it became strongly regulated as the government took over the sport's institutionalization. As part of the compromise for its legalization, and reflecting Gore's comments in been "*so regulated that it will not be objectionable*", the 1933 bill initiated a trend of policies that affected all aspect of the sport: cockpits fees and licenses, construction permits, betting rules, quality and fairness control measures, certification of personnel, fighting rules, health policies, among many others.

The stipulations had significant effects on the galleras itself. The 1933 law indicated that the cockpits could not be located within the urban zones, but in those places in the rural area where the shouting may cause the least annoyance to the neighborhoods. If it needed to be close to town, the *galleras* had to be built within a lowly populated area. The territorial jurisdiction of the government of the Capital was exempted from this provision, so cockpits may be established within San Juan's

[40] Porto Rico Progress. July 6, 1933, 5.
[41] El Imparcial. 15 de Agosto de 1933, 1. In 1934, Martinez Nadal built what was considered for many years the finest *gallera* in the island. The building, no longer extant, was located in the municipality of Guaynabo. See Figure 4, in Additional Information.

urban zone. As a whole however, combined with three decades of hidden practice, this requirement contributed in displacing the *galleras* out of the urban landscape and determining its present association in the collective memory as buildings "always" located in the country side or "*fuera del pueblo*" (out of town).

The 1933 bill initiated the government's taming of the *galleras*, a historically defying space. Differently from nineteenth century policies, the new law established that ownership and construction of the cockpits were a private concern. However, the 1933 bill made clear that the sport was going to be regulated by a government agency initially identified as the Athletic Commission of Puerto Rico, or the Public Amusements and Sports Commission, as created by law. This agency was to receive the applications for the establishment of cockpits and decide upon, taking into considerations the circumstances of time, place, building plans and other conditions necessary to make the place as adequate as possible.

Also included in the 1933 law, and valid until present time, was the prohibition of cockfights/cockpits outside those duly authorize by virtue of the act.[42] Any person holding an illegal cockfight, or taking part in holding it, as a cock owner, handler, judge, or spectator, was charged with a misdemeanor.[43]

After its legalization in 1933, the establishment of cockpits had a slow development. The depression years and the slowly-but-surely fall of the sugar industry did not left much on people's pocket (not on the lower echelons) to bet on their fighting birds, at least, not on the entrance-ticket paying *galleras*. In 1942, the bill was amended, authorizing the *galleras* to operate throughout the entire year. Traditionally, cockfight season started on November 30 (Saint Andrew's Day) and ended

[42] Ibid.
[43] The current legal disposition indicates that persons incurring in illegal cockfights could pay a fine of no less than $500, not to exceed $5,000; or jail time for a maximum period of six months; or both. See, *Ley de Gallos de Puerto Rico del Nuevo Milenio.* Ley Núm. 98

July 30 the following year. The months of August, September and October were used to provide the birds a well-deserved rest and allow young birds to grow into mature gladiators. Operating the entire year was conceived as an economical measure providing more active days. The amendment included also the creation of a new category, the rural *gallera.* This gallera, with a very low fee government permit, was seen as an antidote against the clandestine fights, more frequent in the countryside. [44]

By the end of the 1940s, the numbers of *galleras* increased. In 1947-48, ninety-six *galleras* operated, contributing approximately $12,024 to the local treasury by concepts of cockpits fees and officers licenses. The operating galleras averaged twelve fights per week, during the twenty-five weeks fighting season, demanding the participation of over 60,000 birds and a possible investment of $200,000.[45] During the 1962 fighting season, 103 *galleras* operated, conducting 74,800 fights, with an assistance of 636,551 fans, amounting to a total of $2,071,773 in *postas* and an estimated $11,837,185 in bets.[46] Six years later, 1968, 124 cockpits functioned with 6,230 active days, 109,668 fights were conducted with an assistance of 919,784 fans. Additionally, the 1968 season brought $4,839,792 in *postas* and an estimated $36,728,585 in bets.[47]

The increase in galleras after the late 1940s, with the increase in volume of fights and money involved brought with it an increase in the government's intervention with the cockfights. In 1933,

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de 31 de Julio de 2007.

[44] In 1947, graduate students of anthropology from the University of Illinois conducted a study intended to analyze the ways of life of certain selected segments or sub cultural groups of the Puerto Rican population. The most frequent pattern of recreational activities found among workers and farmers were drinking, playing dice or cards, and watching a cockfight behind somebody's barn. One of the ways of this population to raise some extra money was breeding fighting cocks. See, Julian H. Steward, ed., *The People of Puerto Rico. A Study in Social Anthropology*. University of Illinois Press. 1956. The illegal galleras still an attractive option. As recently as March 23, 2014, fifteen people were arrested in Orocovis, a town located in the central mountain region, in a clandestine cockpit. El Vocero, 23 de marzo de 2014.

[45] El Mundo. 22 de agosto de 1948, 2.

[46] El Mundo. 23 de agosto de 1962, 21. There is a difference between the terms *postas* and bets in cockfights. The *postas* are the bets directly placed by the owners on their individual birds. The *postas* are publicly display in a board. When the birds are getting ready to fight, the cash posta is given to the *Juez de Valla* (referee), who in turn, gives the money to the declared winner when the fight is over. The bets, however, are the ones conducted among the fans. The *postas* are officially entered in the *galleras*' records. The total amount generated by the bets is estimated, as all exchange of money is arranged verbally within the betting players themselves.

[47] El Mundo. 8 de noviembre de 1968, 30.

when it became legal, the Athletic Commission, established in 1927, was the government agency responsible to watch over the practice. By 1936, it was overseen by the *Comisión de Recreo y Deportes Públicos*; which in 1942, change to *Servicio de Parques y Recreo*. In 1947, the *Comisión de Parques y Recreo Públicos* was established, performing until the 1950' formation of the *Administración de Parques y Recreo Públicos* (APRP), with an administrator designated directly by the governor. For thirty years, the APRP's regulated everything pertaining the sport and the galleras, until 1980, when it was replaced by the current *Departamento de Recreación y Deportes*.

Laws, amendments, and regulations were passed through all those years to formalize a sport that, by the 1950s, was definitely a business. Some of those laws and regulations had a direct impact upon the galleras' physical location, size, spatial arrangement, and category.

As previously stated, the 1933 bill indicated that not more than four cockpits could be established in the large municipalities, and not more than two in the smaller towns. With the exception of San Juan, in every other town the *gallera* had to be placed outside the urban zone. It demanded also that all cocks engaged to fight should be exhibited to the public in pairs, in cages protected against any tampering. This created the need to have an exhibition area with cages available so the fans could see the gamecocks, but could not have direct access to it. The new cockpits were required to provide sanitary installations for the public use, according to the Department of Health. The cockpits' floors where the fights were held had to be covered with a carpet of coconut fiber or similar material, or in any manner proper for the purpose. The barrier around the ring was required to be padded and covered with leather, hide, or a similar material. The position of the ring should it be such as to insure the spectators a perfect view of the fights. [48] All these requirements added to the building's layout complexity.

By 1954, with the passing of Law 98, the *galleras* were authorized once again to be built within the urban zone. The cockpits were divided in categories depending on their daily volume of fights,

[48] Acts and Resolutions of the First Special Session of the Thirteenth Legislature of Puerto Rico, 1933. San Juan, P.R. Bureau of

fans capacity, facilities, arena's sizes, and *postas* limits. Those identify in the first category paid an annual license fee of $1,000.00; second category, $700.00; third, $500.00; fourth, $300.00; fifth, $100.00; and sixth category, $50.00.[49] By this time, the expenditure of food and alcohol was authorized within the galleras, promoting a new spatial distribution within the building.

Early in the 1970s, a new category was added, the "*gallera turística*" (touristic cockpit) (**Fig. 5**). Thought out to be developed within San Juan's tourist area, the new category was conceived as a building with the most modern facilities: larger sitting facilities, air condition, soundproof walls, restaurant, bar, a mechanical system to bring the feathered gladiators into an expanded arena, an area to house visiting birds from other countries when conducting international cockfights, and other amenities.[50]

The 1984 regulation, besides formerly including the *gallera turística* as the new category, specified operating hours for diurnal and nocturnal fights, Department of Health and Fire Department operation permits, owners deed certifications, *postas* and entrance fees limits, fighting schedules, amount of fights allowed during daytime/nighttime operational hours, among other things. It specifically required a physical space in the galleras to be designated as the "*armadero*", adding another functionally determined area within the building.[51]

The presence of permanent personnel assigned by law created also the need to add critical spaces to the galleras. Starting with the 1933 bill, until the most recent regulations, regardless of their category, every *gallera* has to have a Barrier Judge (Juez de Valla), barrier judge assistant, an

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Supplies, Printing and Transportation, 1933, 2-15.

[49] Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico. Ley Núm. 98. Nueva Ley de Gallos. Departamento de Recreación y Deportes. Aprobada el 30 de junio de 1954 y según enmendada por la Ley 37 del 9 de junio de 1956 y Ley 5 del 29 de abril de 1966.

[50] El Mundo. 22 de abril de 1971, 7-C. The first *gallera turística* was inaugurated in 1972 under the name Coliseo Gallístico Puerto Rico in the tourist area of Isla Verde, San Juan, near the International Airport. The construction was an enterprise of private investors, headed by banker Rafael Durand Manzanal, former director of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company (PRIDCO). Architect Horacio Diaz was responsible for the design. At a cost of $500,000, it was considered the most modern *gallera* in the world.

[51] Reglamento Administrativo y de Lidia de gallos en Puerto Rico. 22 de octubre de 1984. The *armadero* is the place where the artificial spurs are attached to the birds. This process is done by authorized/trained personnel certified by the Departamento de

Inscription Judge (Juez de Inscripción), inscription judge assistant and certified handlers (coleadores). Also required are the *armadores* (responsible for "arming" the birds with the spurs), cleaning technicians (responsible for washing and cleaning the birds, also for detecting any illegal materials or substance apply to the cocks by unscrupulous owners) and personnel trained to dispose of the dead or badly incapacitated birds. Each one of these activities takes place within a properly designated area in the *galleras*.

Today, although not all actives, there are one hundred and twenty eight registered galleras in Puerto Rico, divided in four categories. In the *gallera turística* fights could be conducted seven days a week with a maximum of thirty-five fights a day; there are no limits in *postas* and the entrance fee for ringside is $25.00. The category defined as *primera especial* operates the entire week with rules similar to the *turística*, with an entrance fee to ringside of $15.00. It follows the *primera categoría*, which can conduct four days of fights per week in a calendar approved by the Cockfighting Affairs Commission; there are no limits in the postas and ringside seats are $12.00. The last one is the *segunda categoría* with three fighting days a week and $8.00 for ringside seats.

Conclusion

Criticize by some and illegal in every part of the United States, cockfighting is a tradition deeply rooted within the Puerto Rican cultural network. The oldest surviving sport brought into the island by the Spanish colonists, it is a link to our cultural past. What started as a pleasure hobby among the European settlers in the sixteenth century, is currently the most significant contributor to the local treasury among the organized sports in the island, moving millions of dollars annually in fees, licenses, permits, bets, and direct and indirect jobs.

The *gallera*, the physical place where the sport is conducted, have had a complex history through time. Initially, more than likely, the sport was conducted in open pits, with people just

Recreación y Deportes.

standing around the fighting cocks (**Fig. 6**). The 1770 decree ordered the construction of a building to be used with such purpose, given origin to a new physical property and even adding a new term (*gallera*) to the Spanish language. The resource became significant among the developing landscape from the start and identified by many contemporaries as a fundamental resource within the towns' foundations.

The building, however, became more than just another physical resource. Throughout the nineteenth century, it became a social laboratory where people from all walks of life mingled in a manner worrisome for the official powers. While other designated spaces like the schools, city halls, casinos, and even churches, were rigidly defined by the ethnical and class-based structures of the time, the *galleras*, rural and urban, became a socially open space. In the *gallera*, members of the local elite (Creoles) faced their *Peninsulares* counterparts; poor white farmers challenged the high-class proprietors; black slaves sat on the front row and played their gamecocks against their white oppressors.

After 1898, the *gallera* acquired another significant social meaning. Prohibited by the United States' authorities as early as 1899, the building disappeared from the annals of the officially accepted built landscape. However, from the countryside, the mountain region, and the abandoned cockpits, the illegal *galleras* became a focal of cultural resistance; a dissident space where the locals challenged the impositions of the new metropolis, even before any politically organized resistance. The common folks and the non-so common, attended the clandestine galleras massively and constantly, indicating with their presence the opposition to the imposed cultural policies. Through the struggle, the *galleras* contributed in constructing a discourse of Nationhood.[52]

After its legalization in 1933, the story of the *galleras* revolved around the process of its conversion into a large business and the government's increasing control of the practice. Today, cockfight is probably the most regulated organized sport in the island. These regulations have had a

[52] It should not be a surprised, that the strongest political party that advocates the independence for Puerto Rico, *Partido*

significant impact upon the *galleras* physical disposition: from specifics upon the arenas, to spatial additions for designated purposes, to services areas. The *galleras* have been divided among categories that reflect upon their sizes and facilities. This division reflects also upon the social and economic standing of its practitioners.

In the most recent law, *Ley de Gallos de Puerto Rico del Nuevo Milenio*, it is decreed that the celebration of cockfights is a cultural right of every Puerto Rican, as defined by the 1948 United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[53] As legitimate heirs of a significant past, today's *galleras* retain their ability to connect us to the tumultuous periods when precisely that entity called "*Puerto Rican*" was in the process of construction.

F. Associated Property Types

The property types defined in this Multiple Property Submission cover document are the product of a preliminary reconnaissance survey that identified different individual properties, which associate attributes, tied them to the historic context presented in this cover document. All these properties derived significance from their association with a pattern of historic events, that have made the sport of cockfighting and the physical space where it is conducted, the galleras, important to the social, cultural and economic development of Puerto Rico. Criterion A is the principal National Register Criterion applied in this Multiple Property Submission cover document. Although not emphasized in this effort, Criterion C could also be referenced when applicable.

The preliminary survey intended to identify those properties capable of transmit the associative attributes of the historic context developed in this cover document. The survey was not conducted to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, nor was there an evaluation of properties referencing the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Although no specific property is properly nominated through this cover document, nonetheless, this survey verified the existence and

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Independentista Puertorriqueño, was officially established in *Las Tres Palmas*, a *gallera* in Bayamon, on October 20, 1946.

location of **one hundred and twenty eight properties with interpretative potential**. This selection does not preclude the registration of any remaining properties identified in future efforts.

This Multiple Property Submission is organized using two Associated Historic Contexts: *Cockfighting in Puerto Rico, 1770-1898* and *Cockfighting in Puerto Rico, 1898-1980*. One major property type was identified as a reflection of the historic pattern of events detailed in the developed contexts: the *gallera* (cockpit).

I. Name of Property Type: *Gallera*

Description

Although the *galleras* have different appearances, due to design, sizes, construction materials and categories, each are alike as that they have the same purpose: sites where cockfights are conducted. The property is not determined by aesthetically approaches or considerations, but by functionality. As such, all the *galleras* share common features that can only be understood through the cockfight organization process.

In a regular fighting day, owners of the birds arrived at a very specific hour, depending if the fights are diurnal or nocturnal. The *Juez de Inscripción* and assistants receive the birds and owners. The owner's name and address, are registered in a logbook or index cards, along with the birds' name, age, color, and weight. The birds go through a weigh-in process through which the *Juez de Inscripción* selects two roosters of equal weight and equal age as adversaries. The owners of the two roosters must be in agreement with the pairing. Once all cocks are match, each pair is assigned a number. The fights' order is determined randomly through a simple lottery of the assigned numbers. **Every gallera has a designated receiving area to conduct this initial process, usually located nearby the main entrance (Fig. 7).** [54]

[53] Ley de Gallos de Puerto Rico del Nuevo Milenio. Ley Núm. 98 de 31 de Julio de 2007.
[54] The receiving area could change depending in the galleras category. The smaller galleras sometimes use the *armadero* as the receiving area.

After the roosters are paired for a fight, they are placed in numbered exhibition cages, where the fans can see them, but cannot reach or touch them. As any gallera may put a maximum of thirty-five fights per day, there are usually seventy wooden or metal cages. The material use depends on the galleras' category. **Every gallera has a designated exhibition area** (**Fig. 8**).

Before its turn to fight, the owner is called to the *armadero*, where they "arm" their roosters by putting on the spurs. The spurs are provided by the galleras itself. Owners cannot use their own artificial spurs. The *Juez de Inscripción* and his assistant supervise the entire process of arming the birds. Once the rooster is armed, the cleaning technician cleans the feathers, feet and spurs to ensure that the owners have not applied any kind of substance that could give their warriors an advantage. **Every gallera has a designated *armadero***, where this process is conducted (**Fig. 9**).

From the armadero, the *coleadores* take the roosters to the ring, the arena where they fight. At the arena, the roosters are presented to the *Juez de Valla*, the maximum authority in charge of refereeing the fights and supervising the bets between the owners. The *coleadores* place the roosters in two plastic crates (**Fig. 10**), at which time the spectators have two minutes to make their initial bets. At the end of that time, a mechanical or manual system raises the crates, leaving the birds at the arena's center facing each other, ready to commence their violent encounter. At that precise time, the entire gallera goes into in a deafening-ear-piercing explosion of roaring males (and some unfrequently females) yelling their bets and encouraging their selected warriors.

The arena is definitely the most significant character-defining feature of any gallera. The entire building evolves, literally, around this singular element. Its circular sizes vary, depending on the galleras category, going from an average of eighteen feet in diameter, up to the thirty feet arena found at the *galleras turísticas*. The prominence of this element is such, that the size and location of every other dependency (receiving areas, exhibition rooms, *armaderos*, etc.) are determined by the arena. The average *gallera* has a square or rectangular layout, with the circular arena as the centerpiece. The service and dependencies areas are placed perpendicular to the pit. In some

instances, especially those of larger sizes and category, the galleras have the circular/ coliseum type shape, recreating the roundness of the fighting pit, with their services areas distributed in circular galleries around the arena. Regardless of the building's shape and size, the sitting stands are obviously located around the arena in concentric circles, to allow for maximum visibility. **Been a very significant character defining feature, every *gallera* has a circular arena (Fig. 11).**

II. Significance

The properties associated with this Multiple Property Submission cover document (forming this property type) are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for their association with patterns of historic events of statewide significance. These properties are functional private facilities in urban and rural settings that have undergone varying degrees of reasonable changes due to their commercial orientation and the requirements force upon them by the government's laws and regulations. The properties must be evaluated in light of their historic significance and contributions to the social, cultural, and economic development of Puerto Rico.

III. Registration Requirement

To qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, the property must have functioned as a *gallera*. It must retain enough of its appearance and functionality to properly represent the property type described in this cover document.

G. Geographical Data

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The information included in this Multiple Property Documentation Form was gathered from several primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included documents at the Puerto Rico General Archives, police records, court records, and memoirs, newspapers from the studied period,

and federal and local government's reports and publications. In addition, several secondary sources were reviewed: history books, thesis, and partial investigations on the subject.

A windshield survey of several galleras was conducted and photographically documented to identify potential properties for future nomination efforts.

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Additional Information

Figures

Figure 1. Distribution of the 128 galleras in Puerto Rico.

Legend : Colored municipalities have one or more galleras.

Figure 2. An 1899 drawing of a gallera in Caguas. (William Dinwiddie, *Porto Rico, Its Conditions and Possibilities*)

Figure 3. Governor Gore (left) and Rafael Martinez Nadal signing the 1933 law, legalizing cockfights in Puerto Rico, while using a feather from Martinez Nadal's favorite cockgame, *Justicia*. (Photo, *El Imparcial*, 15 de agosto de 1933, 1.)

Figure 4. Martínez Nadal's gallera *Borinquen,* (Photo, Album de Oro de Puerto Rico, 1937, 155).

Figure 5. Club Gallístico de Puerto Rico, Isla Verde, San Juan.

Figure 6. Early twentieth century postcard depicting a cockfight at the ward of Santurce, San Juan. People standing around the fighting cocks was the most natural arrangement, previous to the galleras' formal construction.

Figure 7. At the designated receiving area at gallera *La Campesina*, in the municipality of Camuy, owners and birds are logged in by the *Juez de Inscripción*. (Photo: Oscar Nieves, 2014)

Figure 8. *La Providencia*'s exhibition area, *gallera* located in the municipality of Patillas (Photo: Juan Llanes, 2014).

Figure 9. *La Providencia*'s armadero, Patillas (Photo: Juan Llanes, 2014)

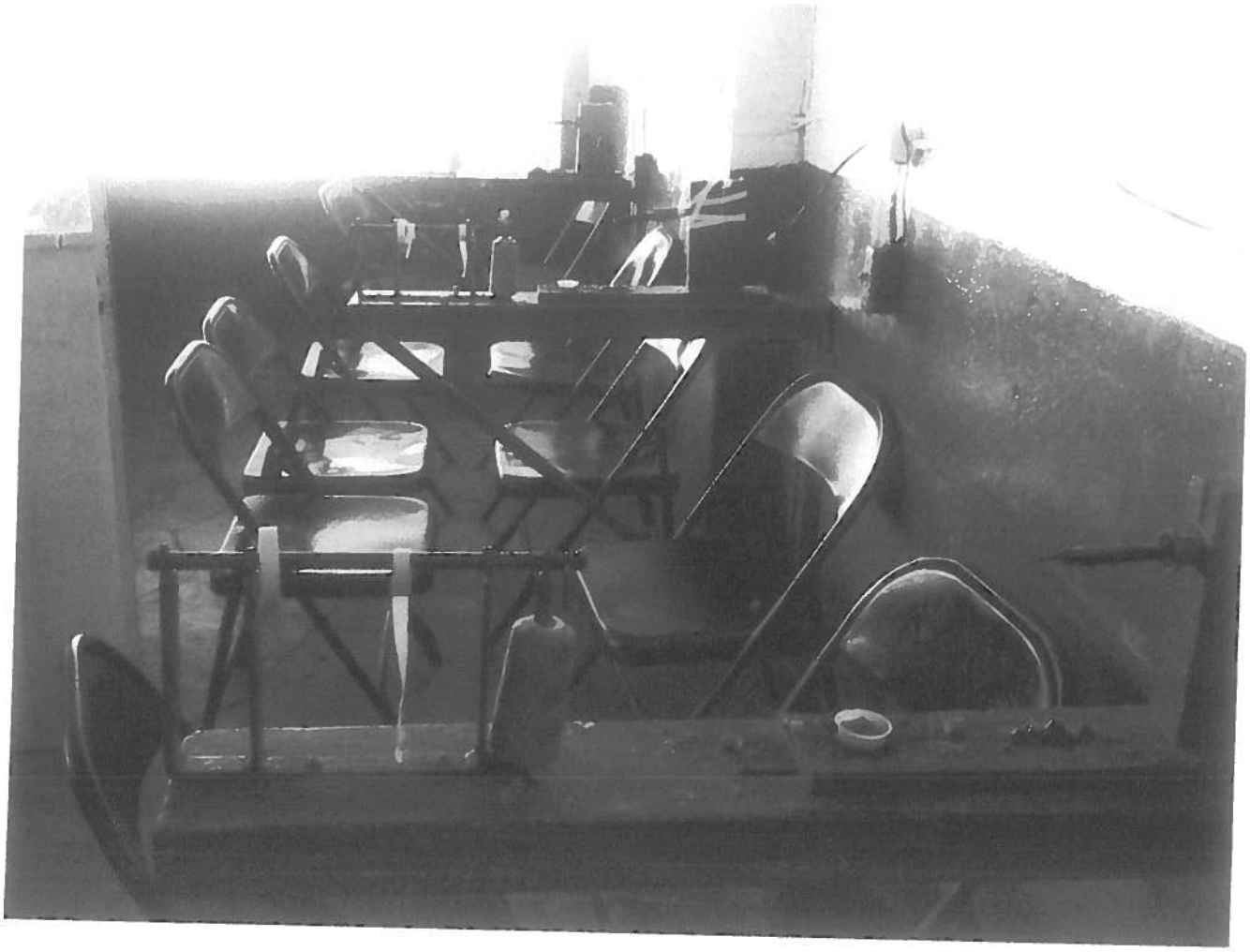
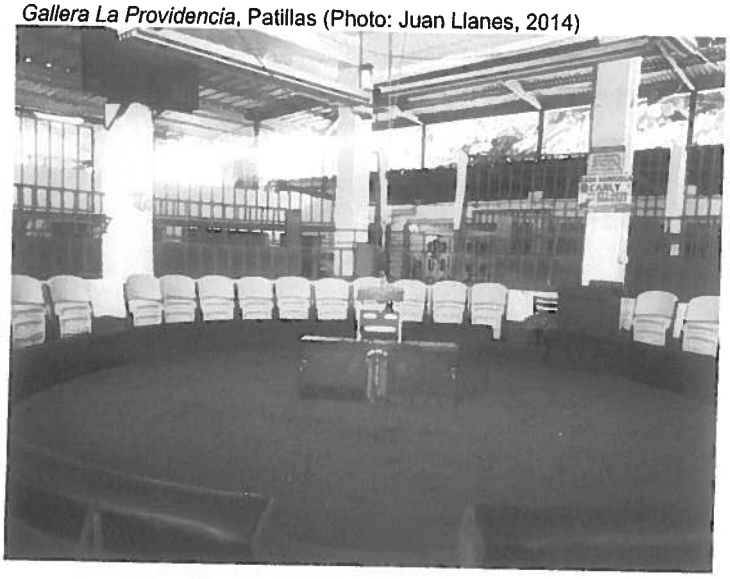
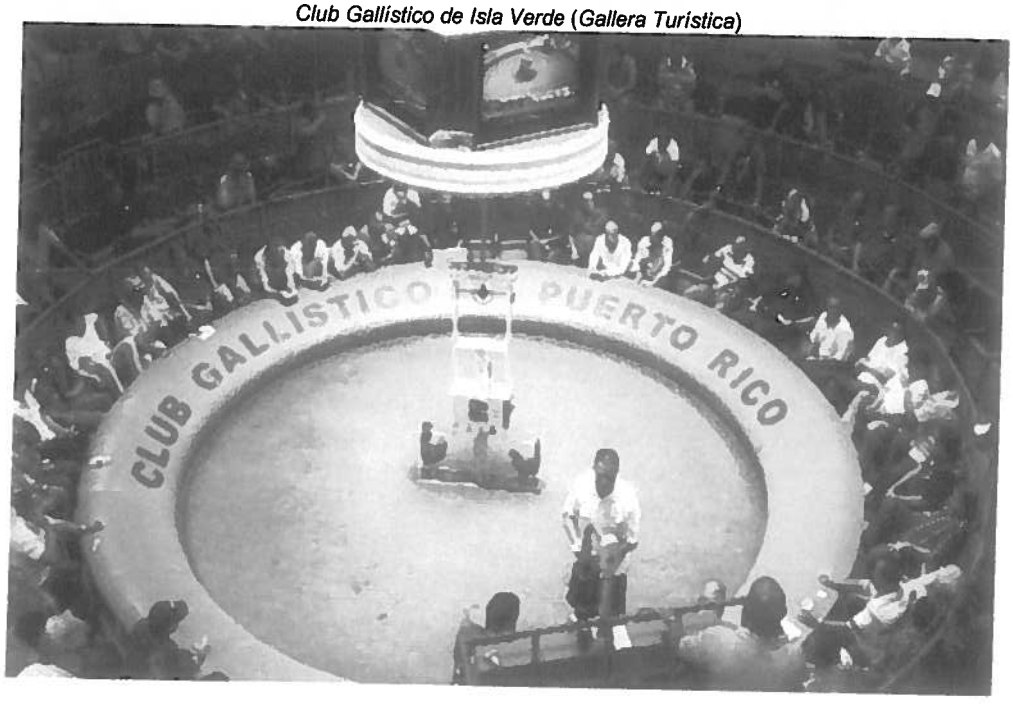


Figure 10. Fighting cocks in the plastic crates, just about to start the fight. Board announces the owners' names, ammount of the *posta* and the bird's weight. (Photo: Oscar Nieves, *Gallera La Campesina*, Camuy, 2014)

Figure 11. Fighting arenas at various *galleras*.

Gallera La Campesina, Camuy (Photo: Oscar Nieves, 2014)

Gallera La Providencia, Patillas (Photo: Juan Llanes, 2014)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