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CHAPTER V

BRAZIL[1]

By

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Brazil was discovered in 1499 (O. S.) by Pinzon, who claimed it for Spain. In the following year Cabral touched there and claimed it for Portugal. For nearly thirty years Portuguese kings neglected the country, but their subjects continued its colonization and combated the Spanish and French who sought to occupy it. In the 1530's John III of Portugal introduced the first organized government. The colonial period lasted for approximately three centuries. During that time the ports of the colony were open only to Portuguese ships. All others were barred, for Portugal, being financially unsound, wished to secure the national resources of Brazil for herself. These consisted principally in mineral wealth, reported to exist in fabulous quantities. But Portugal being small, the Portuguese settlers were too few to fill the colony rapidly.

When the colonial period ended in 1808 the population of Brazil was only 4,000,000, an estimate made then and now considered fairly accurate by Brazilian government officials. At that time the Brazilian colony was raised to the rank of a nation and given equal rights with Portugal; the ports were opened to ships of all nations. A short time later, Brazil secured its independence from Portugal and established a constitutional empire which lasted until the revolution of 1889 and the establishment of a republic.

During the first half of the nineteenth century there was little migration to Brazil. The opening of the ports in 1808 gave no immediate impulse to the movement. The country was well known for its gold and diamonds, but because of its slight industrial expansion, Europeans were not interested.

The present period of Brazilian immigration began in the second half of the nineteenth century. The main economic incentive was found in the expansion of the coffee industry on the inland rolling

[1][See *International Migrations*, Volume I, pp. 171 ff., 209, 261 ff., 548-557.—Ed.]

plateau of the state of São Paulo. About 85 per cent of all immigrants to Brazil have gone either to the state of São Paulo or to the port of Rio de Janeiro. At Santos, the only commercial seaport of the state of São Paulo, they are received by the state authorities; at Rio de Janeiro, by federal authorities, after which this group is usually scattered widely through the east-central region.

The state of São Paulo made the coffee boom a success by stimulating immigration. Steamship passage money was refunded to those who settled there, and their transportation to any part of the state was paid. A very heavy flow of immigration to São Paulo occurred between 1889 and 1915, during which period the state paid the oversea transportation charges of 935,000 immigrants, and 614,000 more paid their own. The Federal Government refunds steamer passage money to the third-class immigrants and provides railway transportation, or coastwise steamship passage, to those among them who settle in the reserved "homestead" areas. The Federal Government and many of the states have surveyed tracts of land and opened them for sale on special terms and offer other inducements to immigrants. The plan is somewhat like the "homestead" system in the United States.

Some of the Italians and most of the Germans in southern Brazil first landed at ports near their present homes; a few Syrians and Italians have gone to the northern ports directly from their ports of embarkation. At the time of the census of 1920, the state of São Paulo had more than 800,000 foreign-born inhabitants, the largest number in any state of Brazil.

São Paulo State and the Federal Government differ in their definition of an immigrant. The São Paulo law classes a foreigner as an immigrant if he is under 60 years of age and has arrived from abroad in third-class accommodations. The Federal law is similar, but includes second-class as well as third-class passengers in its definition. Previous to 1907 it listed only third-class passengers as immigrants. Dr. Piraja de Oliveira, of the Federal Immigration Department, believes that the second-class arrivals up to 1907 probably did not exceed 5 per cent of the third-class. Federal immigration statistics are uniformly accurate in this particular, as the Federal Government maintains a station at Santos and records the second-class arrivals for São Paulo. Government figures are considered fairly accurate, especially those compiled since the Republic was established. There seems to be no doubt about the accuracy of the statistics of present immigration. Brazilian officials

admit that there may have been considerable error in the reports prepared for the early part of the nineteenth century, when immigration began. They believe it probable that some immigrants were not properly registered and so not included in the lists.

A careful study of the federal records for the first half-century of immigration arouses some suspicion of their accuracy, principally because the first record of Portuguese immigrants is as late as 1837 and reports only 120 arrivals. This seems peculiar, because Portuguese immigrants had been arriving in Brazil long before this date, sometimes, it is true, in very limited numbers. The first immigrants recorded were 1,682 Swiss who arrived in 1820.[1]

Very few immigrants were listed previous to 1850. It is probable that few arrived, but there seems to be justification for concluding that the records for that period are incomplete, owing partly to lack of care in registration because no attempt was made at accurate classification. A certain employee of the Federal Statistical Department believes that the first recorded arrivals are only those groups which secured grants from government organizations.

The federal law governing immigration prohibits the entry of cripples and persons having incurable or contagious diseases. These restrictions were made in 1921 and 1924. No educational test has ever been required of immigrants. Much importance is to be attached to permitting the entry of illiterates, as a great many of the immigrants have been unable to read and write. For the three nations sending most immigrants, it is reliably estimated that about 80 per cent of the Portuguese and between 70 and 75 per cent of the Italians and Spanish have been illiterate.

The Bureau of Immigration, in the Department of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, reports that 4,167,000 immigrants landed at Brazilian ports between 1820 and the close of 1926. Of that number 1,462,000 were Italians, 1,219,000 were Portuguese, and 565,000 were Spanish, these three Latin countries supplying 78 per cent of all immigrants. This is one of the chief causes of Brazil's serious educational problem. The same department stated that 75.5 per cent of the total population was illiterate, the figures being based on the federal census of 1920.

A direct economic outcome has been an excessive supply of unskilled labor, which at first was of little concern to the investors of capital in industry, as slavery was not abolished until 1888. Up to that time the labor market was glutted with cheap man-power,

[1][See Volume I, p. 549.—Ed.]

and there was small demand for intelligent and trained men. Immigrants from southern Europe had been pouring rapidly into São Paulo for a number of years preceding the abolition of slavery.

The unskilled labor market has been precipitated into an industrial crisis by the Federal Government imposing a very high tariff on manufactured articles, so that capitalists have been enabled to use unskilled labor in competition with the more efficient labor of foreign countries. By this policy Brazil has absorbed these uneducated immigrants, and at the same time has unnaturally shortened the initial economic period of farming and stock raising. Excess production is unknown in these pursuits, except in the cases of coffee and sugar where it is a critical question merely because the regional farmers have not protected themselves by diversified agriculture.

[A long table furnished by Mr. Naylor reproduces figures already printed in Volume I. But as the tables there do not include results for years later than 1924 Mr Naylor's figures for 1925 and 1926 have been introduced here as Table 57.—Ed.]

TABLE 57.

IMMIGRATION INTO BRAZIL BY PEOPLES, 1925 AND 1926, AND 1820–1926

Peoples	1925	1926	1820–1926	Peoples	1925	1926	1820–1926
Albanian	.....	2	6	Lithuanian	112	6,026	8,149
Argentinian	529	602	7,119	Luxemburger	5	10	84
Armenian	148	79	273	Lybian	.....	428	428
Australian	2	.....	10	Mexican	76	7	175
Austrian	2,781	1,078	88,568	Montenegrin	.....	.....	2
Belgian	88	119	6,042	Moroccan	5	8	57
Bolivian	13	13	390	Netherlander	121	127	4,223
Brazilian	2,336	2,883	41,469	Nicaraguan	.....	1	1
Bulgarian	17	29	139	North American	176	172	4,301
Chilian	61	33	563	Norwegian	10	22	198
Chinese	52	106	831	Palestinian	.....	91	91
Colombian	8	17	55	Panamanian	1	.....	9
Costa Rican	7	5	25	Paraguayan	6	9	46
Cuban	.....	5	28	Persian	7	26	68
Czechoslovak	459	424	2,652	Peruvian	59	43	557
Danziger	4	9	17	Polish	1,819	3,210	10,127
Danish	61	141	1,006	Portuguese	21,508	38,791	1,219,189
Egyptian	55	54	368	Rumanian	5,561	15,829	32,374
English	578	596	22,776	Russian	756	751	110,118
Ecuadorian	11	3	41	Serbian	.....	.....	287
Estonian	1,669	439	2,288	Spanish	10,062	8,882	565,238
Finnish	15	16	108	Swedish	21	29	5,743
French	631	525	34,260	Swiss	256	334	14,305
German	7,175	7,674	189,665	Syrian	1,987	3,369	5,356
Greek	72	147	2,682	Transvaalian	.....	.....	6
Guatemalian	3	1	7	Turco-Arabian	1,952	3,370	77,324
Haitian	.....	1	3	Ukrainian	64	398	1,319
Hindu	6	9	106	Uruguayan	242	251	2,807
Hungarian	784	563	5,263	Venezuelan	5	1	233
Italian	9,846	11,977	1,462,443	Yugoslav	6,286	3,128	18,208
Japanese	6,330	8,407	49,676	Others	24	.....	167,206
Latvian	21	289	331				
				Totals	84,883	121,569	4,167,439

Federal statistics show that an important number of skilled farmers and factory laborers have emigrated from central and northern Europe. Next in point of numbers after the immigrants from Italy, Portugal, and Spain into Brazil were the Germans, about 190,000 for the period 1820–1926. The Austrians totaled 89,000, the Yugoslavs 18,000 and the Poles 10,000. These groups have settled chiefly in the three southern states of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catharina, and Paraná. Southern Brazil has long been known as the Germanic area. The Germans and Austrians prefer this section because of its cool climate. They have engaged in farming on the alluvial plains near the coast and have spread up the principal river valleys into the interior. These peoples have bought small farms and built houses in the style of their native lands.

Italians make up the majority of the immigrants employed on the São Paulo coffee plantations. Unlike the Germans to the south, they did not buy small farms. The coffee industry was started with enormous plantations, each requiring hundreds of laborers to cultivate the soil, gather the berries, and prepare the crop for market. These laborers, or colonos, were permanent residents on the fazendas. They lived in blocks of huts, usually made of sun-dried mud plastered on a framework of poles. Their wages were small, but their economic situation was a decided improvement over that of their previous life in Italy and they were satisfied. Their huts cost them nothing and they were given small plots of ground for growing vegetables. Credit was extended at the fazenda store where the proprietor sold necessities at exorbitant prices and later deducted their price from the annual wages of the laborers. Often there was no balance due them at the close of the season, and sometimes they had to remain for years in order to pay their debts.

The coffee boom grew rapidly and quickly stimulated an Italian immigration that became a steady current during the last third of the nineteenth century. The average yearly immigration from Italy in each of the last four decades has been 540, 6 003, 29 506, and 67 876, respectively. The peak was reached with 132,326 in 1891. Coffee-growing became very profitable and the colonos began to seek better wages; even the plantation owners sent out representatives in search of discontented laborers on adjoining plantations. Under this high labor market the Italian immigrants became floaters, and could not be depended upon to stay more than one season on a plantation. The state government was even forced

to organize a department to fiscalize the contracts between laborers and the plantation owners, in order to protect both parties.

In 1902 the Italian government passed a law restricting emigration to Brazil, and Italian immigration then declined quickly. In 1903 only 13,000 Italians arrived while at least 33,000 departed, and since then the former high peaks have not been equalled. The annual number of Italian arrivals in Brazil since 1903 has varied roughly between 1,000 and 32,000.[1]

São Paulo coffee production later reached approximately the limit of consumption. That situation marked the beginning of a new period, now in process of development, characterized by a movement toward smaller plantations and independent ownership of small farms. A railway has been built northwestward into virgin land, and the São Paulo Northwest is now being settled by immigrants who are growing cotton as well as coffee.

Of the Portuguese immigrants a large percentage have settled in Rio de Janeiro, performing much of the unskilled labor of the capital city. They invariably improve their financial status by emigrating to Brazil, as many are close and very shrewd and have a very simple standard of living.

Many of the Spanish go to São Paulo coffee plantations as laborers. It is said that as a rule they do not show much desire or promise of becoming plantation owners.

During the period 1820–1926 the Brazilian government recorded the arrival of 110 000 Russians, 77 000 Turks, 50 000 Japanese, 34 000 French, 32 000 Rumanians, and 23 000 British.

Turks are found as itinerant merchants and owners of small stores in nearly all parts of Brazil. The majority of the Russians are in southern Brazil, with the Germans and Austrians. Many of the Rumanians have settled in the city of São Paulo. The French have preferred to remain in the cities, usually as clerks; and many of the British are working in textile factories.

Japanese immigration has been most variable, beginning with 830 arrivals in 1908[2] and reaching the highest point of 8,407 arrivals in 1926. The yearly average is about 3,000. Upon the question of Japanese immigration Brazilian public sentiment is divided. The Japanese laborer's standard of living is higher than that of the average Brazilian farm laborer, and Japanese immigrants are better educated than the immigrants from Italy, Portugal, and

[1][See Volume I, pp. 550 ff, and p. 555, Table VI.—Ed.]
[2][Compare, however, this volume Chapter XX.—Ed.]

Spain. These two factors seem to have prevented any noticeable spread of anti-Japanese sentiment, to have curbed its growth and minimized its influence. Japanese settlers are nearly all laborers on truck farms near São Paulo or on coffee plantations, but some cultivate rice on small farms. Many have purchased their holdings.

The immigration records classify no other large or important groups. Except for 14,000 Swiss, no nation not already mentioned has sent more than 10,000 emigrants to Brazil. From 1820 to 1926 there were 12,000 arrivals from other South American countries; the largest number 7,000 from Argentina, and the second largest 3,000 from Uruguay. From the United States came 4,000.

The grand total of 4,167,000 contains two more items of importance. The first is 167,000 unclassified immigrants, this number including during the latter half of the nineteenth century, many annual totals as large as 4,000. These immigrants are said to have been principally Italians and Portuguese not correctly registered, the statistical department being in doubt about their nationality. The second is 41,000 Brazilian nationals who have entered a Brazilian port as second- or third-class passengers from a foreign port. The Brazilian government has kept no records of foreign-born immigrants entering Brazil more than once. Such arrivals are not subtracted from the movement for the year, nor from the grand total. Portuguese and Spanish are the immigrants most involved in this movement. Dr. de Oliveira believes that about 60 per cent of the Portuguese immigrants make one visit to Portugal, returning to Brazil third class, and therefore being registered a second time as immigrants. He believes that not more than 10 per cent visit Portugal more than once; and about 30 per cent of the Italians have returned temporarily to Italy. A much smaller proportion of Italians also have visited Italy more than once, and therefore have been registered as immigrants more than twice.

Immigration authorities admit that there have been a small number of foreigners who have entered Brazil by routes not covered in the statistical service. These have come in across the borders of the contiguous countries (Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Peru) and have become farmers and cattle ranchers. Cowboys drift across the border during seasons when there is a demand for extra labor. Unregistered arrivals have been very few from Colombia on the northwest, and from Venezuela and the three Guianas on the north, owing to the barrier of forests and mountains. It is possible to reach Brazil from the west coast by crossing the Andes

and descending the Amazon, but entries by this route have been few.

The World War greatly influenced the current of European emigrants to Brazil. The principal streams dropped abruptly. The Italian immigrants declined from 31,000 in 1913 to 1,000 in 1918, the Portuguese from 77,000 in 1913 to 7,000 in 1917, and the Spanish from 41,000 in 1913 to 4,000 in 1918.

The most significant phase of post-war emigration is the failure of Italy, Portugal, and Spain to regain their pre-war rate to Brazil. In no year from the beginning of the war to the close of 1926 have the arrivals from any of these three nations been so numerous as during 1913. Both the Italian and Spanish inflows have remained in the neighborhood of 10,000 a year since the beginning of 1920. Portuguese emigration has recovered more rapidly, jumping to 34,000 in 1920 and to 39,000 in 1926, its annual volume is now as great as it was for some years of the decade preceding the war.

The total alien immigration to Brazil in 1913 amounted to 190,000 and in 1926 to 120,000. Round numbers for 1921 to 1926 have been 58,000, 65,000, 85,000, 96,000, 83,000 and 120,000, showing a steady return toward the pre-war rate.

Emigrants going to Brazil face certain economic risks and cases of tragic failure, possible in all countries where a vast, undeveloped hinterland is being opened for settlement, have not been wanting. Railway transportation continues to be inadequate, and quick, cheap means of hauling crops to market are lacking.

Factory labor is paid much less than in many of the industrially well-developed countries, and the scale of living is much below that of countries like Germany. The economic risk is reduced, however, because skilled labor is in demand, and a common workman of ordinary skill entering a factory in Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo can soon become a foreman.

As a rule, the immigrants go out with their families. There are, however, many exceptions among the Portuguese. A large proportion of the men do not have sufficient funds to pay steamship passage for their entire families, who are therefore left with relatives until the husbands save enough money to bring their families across the ocean. As there is no economic or social bar between Brazilians and the three Latin groups many of those immigrants intermarry with natives. There have been numerous marriages between Japanese immigrants and Brazilians. Germans have been more isolated in their southern settlements.