The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/20999 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

**Author:** Sheptak, Russell Nicholas  
**Title:** Colonial Masca in motion: tactics of persistence of a Honduran indigenous community  
**Issue Date:** 2013-06-19
Chapter 7: Candelaria and Fort Omoa

Once securely established in its final location, the pueblo de indios of Candelaria was drawn into rapidly emerging social fields that burgeoned around the city of San Pedro Sula and Omoa, a newly founded Fort and town on the coast. Under the pressure of the demand to defend the coast against the British and their allies, the free Miskito of eastern Honduras, these cities elevated the importance of the previously established coastal watch. Service in the watch in turn engaged the people of the pueblos de indios in more direct and ongoing relations with people of other groups, and even of other colonial powers.

The Fortaleza de San Fernando de Omoa called for regular levies of labor (tequios in Spanish) from the two closest pueblos de indios, Candelaria and Ticamaya. These labor assignments in Omoa provided opportunities for men from the community to find wives from outside their communities. While we have no further petitions from Candelaria, we can trace the engagement of people from the community in the wider networks that formed in the eighteenth century, and assess how these relationships contributed to the persistence of the community into the early nineteenth century, from a variety of other documents, including legal cases that, like petitions, can be analyzed as dialogues, reading against the grain.

The Town and Fort of Omoa, 1745 – 1821

Candelaria and other towns in the Ulúa valley moved location in the late seventeenth century because of repeated attacks by privateers and pirates along the north coast of Honduras. The English settlements in the Black River (Rio Tinto) and in Walis (Belize) raised Spanish concern for the safety of its shipping along the Atlantic coast of Honduras. Spanish authorities also wished to control the flow of contraband merchandise from the English and French colonies in the Caribbean into the Spanish colonies. To that end, Spain decided to build a new Fort at a port along the north coast of Honduras, somewhere to the west of Trujillo.

Spain had been interested in securing a defensible port along the north coast since the sixteenth century. The original idea can be credited to Andres de Cereceda in the 1540s. The first study by Spain, undertaken in 1556-1570 examined building an overland connection from the Pacific to Puerto Caballos (Payne 2009). A second study in 1590 involved sending an Italian engineer, Juan Bautista Antonelli, to Honduras to survey the coast and estimate what it would take to bring cargo across Honduras from the
Pacific coast to the Caribbean coast at Puerto Caballos, which he rejected, suggesting instead the location originally occupied by a by-then abandoned pueblo de indios, Omoa (1590 AGI Patronato 183 N. 1 R. 16). Antonelli was the first in a long line of consultants to conclude that along this stretch of coast, only the bay at Omoa could be made defensible. By estimating the high cost of such a project, Antonelli left it to the Spanish Crown to conclude that it was too expensive to build a cross isthmus connection from the Gulf of Fonseca to Omoa, given the difficulty of the Honduran mountainous terrain and the width and depth of its rivers. Spain continued, off and on, to consider fortifying Omoa, but didn't act until the middle of the eighteenth century, shortly after expelling an English settlement in the bay of Omoa in 1722 (1722 AGCA A1.15 Legajo 58 Expediente 716).

Once Spain determined to build a fort on the north coast of Honduras west of Trujillo, it fell to Luis Diaz de Navarro to choose the exact site of the fort. He did so during an expedition to the bay in 1743 (Calderon Quijano 1942, 1943; Cruz Reyes 1985; Rubío Sanchez 1900; Zapatero 1953, 1997). By 1745 there were already people living and working in Omoa, including some Indians from Candelaria and mulatos from San Pedro as part of the coastal watch (1745 AGCA A1.20 Legajo 83 Expediente 972). By 1750, the Indian communities of western Honduras were being required to send residents to Omoa to help with the logistics and construction. These tequios were unpopular with the highland Lenca communities in western Honduras. Some petitioned for relief from the work requirement as early as 1752. Work began to clear the site and level the site in 1752, and by 1756 the small fortified structure of El Real, adjacent to the site chosen for the Fort of San Fernando de Omoa, was finished (Zapatero 1997). Construction of the fort itself began in 1756 and finished around 1775.

During the construction, the people working on the fort needed to live somewhere. A town began to grow around the construction site, with houses, stores, warehouses, boarding houses, a hospital, everything but a church. The Spanish Crown sent 611 African slaves to work on the construction of the fort, and they required their own living facilities (Cáceres 2008). After 1760 the Indians of western Honduras ceased to be required to come down to work at the fort (unpublished mss. dated 1760 accompanying the ejido title of Caiquin, in its municipal archives; paleography provided by Libny Ventura, 2010). In 1777 the fort commander, Joseph Gonzalez Fermin, a Catalan engineer, reported a population of 1343 for the town. Thus, Omoa became the geographical site of a field of labor and commerce, in addition to a field of power as constituted by the military contingent itself.
Omoa came to administrative prominence after 1760, when a new road between Omoa and Guatemala, that traversed the Sula and Quimistan valleys, was completed (Davidson 2006:157). Built by the Indians of western Honduras, this road connected Omoa with the colonial capital of Guatemala through Chiquimula, bypassing Comayagua and San Pedro. It gave the Audiencia in Guatemala more direct control over this part of the north coast of Honduras. Building of the road also contributed to the repopulation of the Quimistan and Sula valleys, previously abandoned in the sixteenth century, with specific industries designed to support the Fort and resupply ships docking in Omoa. In the 1770s these valleys even saw the redevelopment of the gold mines in Quimistan (Joyce 2008).

The establishment of Omoa, and the construction of this road, caused a reduction in the importance of San Pedro in the day-to-day lives of the remaining pueblos de indios in the region. With the establishment of Omoa, the residents of Candelaria and the neighboring pueblo de indios, Ticamaya, became integrated into the jurisdiction of Omoa, which in turn provided them with new opportunities to redefine their identities in terms of citizenship and casta. The traces of the tactical exploitation of these possibilities are the topic of the rest of this chapter.

**Candelaria in the Jurisdiction of Omoa**

Compared to earlier periods, there are a fairly large number of documents available during the late Colonial period that concerns Candelaria. A document called a donativo (a record of a special collection of payments ordered by the Crown) completed in 1783 provides demographic information about the community and its inhabitants. This, in turn, was followed up with an 1809 padron (1809 AEC Padrones Caja No. 1), an ecclesiastical census that was probably created to guide collection of church fees for communion. Both kinds of documents give us windows into who lived in Candelaria, and what their families were like. The donativo lets us know not just the names but also the ages of residents, and for the first time, systematically employs the concept of casta, the racial classification of someone through appearance, speech, and possessions, whose imposition in the late eighteenth century resulted from an increasing anxiety in Spain about "miscegenation" in the colonies. The recentering of the coastal watch from San Pedro Sula to Omoa in the late 18th century is represented through administrative documents beginning about 1745 and covering the rest of the eighteenth century.
For the first time in the documentary record, the late 18th century provides us with not just the names of a few community leaders, or a number of tributaries, but the names, marital status, in some cases ages, and other aspects of the identities of what previously was covered only by the phrase "los demas": all the people in the pueblo de indios of Candelaria.

In August of 1780, Carlos III of Spain ordered a special collection from all of his subjects in the colonies to defray his costs for the on-going war with Britain. The donativo ordered adult males from the colony, including Indians, to pay. The amount was set at 1 peso each, except that those identified as Spaniards or of the nobility (denoted by the use of the title "don") should pay 2 pesos. It took until 1783 for the ordered collection to be fully executed in the jurisdiction of Omoa. The Commander of the Fort collected the donativo for a region that included the ranchos (cattle ranches) newly developed in the valleys of Quimistan and Sula, and also the city of San Pedro and ranches around it (1783 AGCA A3.1 legajo 1305 Expediente 22217).

The document recording the donativo of 1780-1783 consists of 34 pages of text written on papel sellado stamped for 1780 and 1781, and two pages of plain paper that form the cover pages. This cover indicates that the donativo originally was bound with other documents as a notebook containing the entire register of collections made under the administration of Omoa. This notebook was also used for documenting other types of activities at Omoa. The donativo records begin on numbered page 6 of the notebook, and continue through page 33. The pages are not assembled in chronological order, implying they originated as a series of separate registers documenting different collections in different locations on different dates and were later bound together.

The first collection by date, found about halfway through the register, is from the pueblos de indios of Ticamaya and Candelaria. This collection, made on the 14th and 15th of December, 1781, was performed by Lieutenant Francisco Davila Galindo of San Pedro. The next collection, on August 9, 1782, also collected by Davila Galindo, was from the residents of San Pedro Sula and surrounding ranches. An undated collection by Andres Medrano, simply described as "en dicha valle" (in the said valley), probably followed next. Medrano gives his title as Comisario, a military title for an administrative officer, or in the case of the Navy, a purser. While the valley is unnamed, it is likely the countryside around San Pedro Sula, otherwise not indicated in any of the collections. The unmarked quality of this location only makes sense if it is from the place where Medrano normally was
located. Much less likely, but possible, is that it referred to the countryside inland from Omoa itself.

On December 10, 1782, Felix Santiago Arguelles, also listed as a Comisario collected the donativo from the valleys of Quimistan and Sula. On August 18, 1783, the commander of the Fort of Omoa, Colonel Felix Dominguez, collected the donativo from the residents of Omoa itself. He also separately lists amounts he collected from residents of San Pedro Sula and Candelaria who were living in Omoa at the time. Finally, there is a receipt, dated December 31, 1783, for the collections by Francisco Galindo Davila and Andres Medrano being added to the Royal treasury in Omoa, along with the register sheets that document those collections.

The donativo provides a window into the two remaining pueblos de indios north of San Pedro Sula: Candelaria and Ticamaya. Unlike registers of payments of the donativo for other localities, which list only adult males, the records for Ticamaya and Candelaria list complete households, in the genre of the town census or padron.

What the Spanish called padrones are essentially accounting records for the collection of tribute, fees, or other payments from a specific community. The AGCA contains documents described as padrones from as early as the late sixteenth century, probably produced to address specific moments in the transfer of tribute obligations to new encomenderos, or when petitions were made to reduce tribute. Beginning in the late seventeenth century there seems to have been a systematic governmen t effort to collect padrones from across Honduras.

While no padron from this effort has been identified from pueblos de indios in the Ulúa valley itself, a number come from towns along the middle Ulúa valley, in the Department of Santa Barbara to the southwest. Some of these record people temporarily relocated in towns in the communities in the lower Ulúa valley, or spouses originating there (for example, 1722 AGCA A3.16.3 Legajo 514 Expediente 5402). This includes out marriage from the town of Jaitique to Candelaria in 1722 (1722 AGCA A3.16 Legajo 514 Expediente 5398). The padrones from Santa Barbara that we have studied state that they were created in response to orders from the governor of Honduras, in the case of a series dating to the first decade of the eighteenth century, explicitly specified as responding to a request from the Audiencia of Guatemala (1703 AGCA A3.16 Legajo 511 Expediente 5328). Many of those we have examined have evidence of revisits in subsequent years, sometimes indicated by annotations of the original records, or even incorporate copies noted as made in Guatemala to be sent to the pueblo de indios at its request (1722 AGCA A3.16 Legajo 514 Expediente 5398; 1722
AGCA A3.16.3 Legajo 514 Expediente 5402). From this point forward, there is a regular and repeated practice of recording the populations in pueblos de indios across Honduras, but records for towns in the San Pedro district are systematically lacking in these secular archives.

The ecclesiastical archives of the bishopric of Comayagua also contain padrones from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These include examples from towns in the Ulúa valley, including Candelaria and Ticamaya. These church padrones, presumably made to collect fees charged to adult males over the age of 16, also list women and children in the towns, grouping them into households. A notable feature of padrones in the last half of the eighteenth century, whether civil or secular, is that they commonly list the *casta* assignment of individuals.

The records for Candelaria and Ticamaya used to record collection of the 1780 donativo by the commander of Fort Omoa are, like the 1809 ecclesiastical document, padrones. The common pattern in both is to list the name of adult male, female, or both, followed by a reference to children (if there were any). In many instances, names were linked by a bracket, implying that each is a domestic group, a household. Additional information is included, such as ages, or references to specific community members being absent from the pueblo due to the conflict with the British.

The use of this format for the pueblos de indios distinguishes the residents of these places from all the others who are recorded as paying the donativo in 1781-1783. While only adult males are charged the amount, from the Spanish perspective the unit of administration in the pueblo de indios remains the household, while in the Spanish communities, each man is treated as an autonomous legal subject. The donativo padrones describe the residents of Ticamaya and Candelaria with a variety of terms for ancestry, classifying some residents as indios, and others as Ladinos, mulatos and españoles. Whether these identifications were a result of self-identification or ascription by the tribute collector, Francisco Davila Galindo, is an open question.

The first set of households in each of the pueblos de indios are listed under a heading "indios". Following that, either a heading "Ladinos", or specific identity terms in the margin mark people who, while living in the community, were somehow different from those identified as indios. In Candelaria, twenty households were listed, half headed by women. This included examples where the male spouse was listed as “in the enemy prison (en el enemigo prision)” or simply as “absent (ausente)”. Eight men from Candelaria, listed in the complete padron of the town, paid their donativo at Omoa. They were presumably there fulfilling a labor requirement. The
periodic absence from the pueblo of groups of men working at Omoa would have greatly increased the proportion of the town population made up of women-headed households, even if temporarily.

One couple at Candelaria included a man explicitly labeled "mulato". As we will see below, the integration of Candelaria in the field of labor centered on Omoa provided an opportunity for the town to incorporate new people as spouses, simultaneously enhancing the survival of the town and complicating its identity in the Spanish colonial order, at a time when racialized identity became a focus of concern.

Residents of Ticamaya, the second pueblo de indios included in the donativo records from Omoa, appear by the 1780s to have begun to intermarry with the families of neighboring Candelaria. One Spanish surname was shared between the two indigenous communities in 1781. Ximenez or Jimenez occurs once in Ticamaya (Josef Jimenez), and three times in Candelaria (Figenia Jimenez, Antonia Ximenez, both widows, and Pedro Ximenez, a married male). Two families with indigenous names, in past generations associated with town leadership, still were represented in the record for Candelaria and Ticamaya. In Candelaria a married male, Pasqual Chavacan, bears a name held by people from Masca throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. In Ticamaya, the padron made for the donativo records a married woman, Anna Maria Chavacan, who might well have been from Candelaria originally. Juana Chi, a single woman, was listed as living in Candelaria in 1781. Chi was previously present among the people of Masca as an indigenous last name, possibly carried originally by people who came to Masca from Yucatan.

These were both small pueblos de indios, with Ticamaya having a population of about 23 and Candelaria 25 persons. Candelaria had 15 households described as indio, with an average household size of 1.39 persons. Households ranged in size from 1 to 4 persons, but most were made up of 1 or 2 people. This remarkably small average household size reflects the presence of six households composed of a widow (5) or widower (1). Ticamaya, on the other hand, had only six households identified as indio, with an average household size of 3.83 persons. There were no widows or widowers recorded there. Household sizes ranged from 2-5 persons, with 4 and 5 person households most common. The larger household sizes are due primarily to larger numbers of children.

Ticamaya appears to have been more internally diversified, with a separate section in the 1781 padron setting apart Ladinos from indios. A minority of the total of sixteen households recorded there were identified as households of indios: a total of six, including the household of Pedro
Ximenez, which consisted of only himself (absent at the time “taken by the English [se lo llebo el Yngles]”) and his wife. The other ten households listed as ladino were primarily headed by single women, either unmarried or widowed, with four single male households listed. Among the ladino males was one further specified as “Spanish”. Another ladino male had one child living with him. In the only ladino household with a couple, the husband was listed as forastero (a person from outside the community, owing his tribute elsewhere).

The padrones of these two pueblos de indios demonstrate that the notionally closed pueblo de indios was no longer-- if it had ever been-- entirely self-contained. Men from the pueblos were engaged in labor at Omoa, and in occupations that put them at risk of being captured and carried away by the enemy. Some of these experiences provided opportunities for men to marry outside the pueblo de indios, bringing back to the town women who came from different cultural backgrounds. Within Ticamaya, at least, there was also a stratum of the population recognized as of ambiguous identity, through the use of the term ladino. Even while the Spanish government was attempting to limit people's actions based on identity, the vecinos of these pueblos de indios were tactically exploiting the multiple fields of identity being deployed, taking up positions in novel ways evident both in documents, and in other material traces of action discussed in the next chapter.

Personal Identity: Casta, Race, Ethnicity, and Kinship

Casta ("caste", or racialized identity group), a lineage or race based classification system for individuals, developed in the eighteenth century in Spain, arising out of a concern about "miscegenation" presumed prevalent in the colonies. Casta vocabulary was most developed in the Spanish colonies of México and Peru, where an elaborated vocabulary of sixteen terms was expressed (Carrera 2003; Katzew 2006). These terms, in their orthodox usage, represented the degree of admixture of African, Spanish, and Indian blood, out to three generations. Casta classification proceeded by identifying these three razas (races) and looking at all the possible intermarriages between individuals of what were represented as fixed groups, to the third generation.

Casta terms are rarely used in eighteenth century Honduras, and when they are, are not used as the idealized Spanish system would require. Terms come and go either depending on who is doing the classifying, or the self-expression of identities. The full vocabulary of casta that we have recorded
in documents from northern Honduras includes the terms “blanco”, “indio”, “mestizo”, “pardo”, “mulato”, and “negro”, signalling a lack of conformity with the most elaborate version of casta classification.

In the official casta logic, an "indio" would have had to be the child of two Indians; "mestizo" was someone who was the child of an Indian and a Spanish person; "mulato" meant one parent was African and the other Indian; "pardo" distinguished the child of one Spanish and one African parent; and "negro", like "indio", implied that both parents were of the same group, in this case African. "Blanco" was not, strictly speaking, a casta term, but rather served as an unmarked norm. It was used in Honduras to designate someone who was Spanish, either Peninsular (from Spain) or criollo (Spanish but born in the colonies). The most notable thing about casta terminology in Honduras is that in its reduced casta vocabulary, there are only terms for the three basic razas, and for the offspring in the first generation of marriages between individuals from these three groups. As we will see, even these terms were not used in ways consistent with the official logic.

The vocabulary for African descendant people used in Honduras is more complex than that used for any other group, but not systematic; for example, “pardo” and “mulato” are only infrequently used in the same document, and each seems to mark children of marriages between African descendants and other groups, rather than systematically discriminating marriages with Spanish and with indigenous partners. More important in the Honduran documents is the civil status of African descendant peoples, with many being described either as "esclavos", slaves, (without an added casta term) and others as "negros libres", free blacks. Individuals who would belong in the category “blanco” or “español” are often not marked with any casta term, for example, in listings of people from San Pedro Sula in the donativo. In Omoa, a place where the majority of the population was African-descendant, censuses made by Honduran authorities did include an explicit category of blancos, who there were not the norm.

The presence of one person described as "español" in Ticamaya has already been noted. What this designation means must be understood in terms of the local dialogue of identity, rather than any external rigid structure. The contrast being drawn in the padrones of Ticamaya and Candelaria made for the donativo is less about "race" and more about local origins, marking people who would be vecinos of other communities, not members of the community with rights in the pueblo de indios. This is the way español is used, and is also the case with the term forastero, used repeatedly to identify someone who had moved away from his or her natal
community. Forasteros would still be counted as a vecino of the pueblo de indios where they were born, and did not have the same status as local naturales (native born residents). The use of forastero to identify some residents of the pueblos de indios draws attention to the increased mobility of people, on the individual level, during the eighteenth century, including members of the pueblos de indios.

Most important for understanding the late history of Candelaria, however, is the term ladino. "Ladino" refers to someone who speaks Spanish well, and dresses as Spaniards do, uses Spanish goods, eats Spanish foods, and so on. It is applied in Central America to people who might have been described as "mestizo" in the casta system, but changed their status by moving out of indigenous communities and adopting Spanish dress and language. Jordana Dym (2006) has shown that in Guatemala, the term also was applied to some Afrodescendent people. In the 1780 Padron of Candelaria and Ticamaya, ladino is used to label people living in the pueblos de indios who are not identified as, or do not identify as, indio. The prominence of the term in description of the two pueblos de indios in the jurisdiction of Omoa points to changes in the way that indios were taking up positions in fields, literally, through dialogue with other members of the community, with those who came to record padrones, and with officials.

The outcome of these processes is evident thirty years later, when in 1809, Jose Manuel Troncoso recorded a padron of Ticamaya and Candelaria for the purpose of collecting the amount the residents of these pueblos de indios owed the church (1809 AEC Padrones Caja No. 1). Troncoso combined both communities together into one list but made subheadings for each community. Everyone listed is, by definition, indio, as it is described as a “padron de indios”. Yet like the padron of 1781, the way that the people of these towns are described raises questions about identification and self-identification of the people who by 1809 were part of towns growing in population.

Changing Population Composition in the Pueblos de Indios, 1781 -- 1809

Like the 1781 padrones, the 1809 listing includes specific information about households, including the presence of children. There were twenty households in Candelaria, up from 15 in 1781, for a total population of 54. Ages were listed for most people, except for those described as wives. Widows were named along with their deceased husbands.

Many of the people named in 1781 were still present in the community in 1809. Pedro Ximenez, described as in the English prison in
1781, was listed as in English prison again or still in 1809. His family now included three children, ages 21, 14, and 12, all of them born long after Ximenez was initially imprisoned.

The increase in population from 1781, to an average of 2.7 people per household, is due to the large number of children present, including some fostered by people other than their parents. One single woman was listed as having two children. Jacoba de los Santos, a widow, was caring for a 15 year old orphan (“un huerfano en cargo”). Two other orphans were listed separately, without a family, as “brothers, orphans in the care of the community (huerfanos hermanos a cargo de la comunidad)”. These notations suggest that members of the community were actively working together to maintain the population.

The growing population of Candelaria contrasts with the neighboring pueblo de indios, Ticamaya. In 1809 Ticamaya had a total population of 21 individuals. While this is slightly fewer people than in 1781, the number of households of indios had risen, from six to ten. None of the Ladinos listed in 1781 were named in the 1809 padron of Ticamaya. They may have moved away from Ticamaya in the interim, and been living elsewhere in 1809, which would imply a continuation and perhaps intensification of the mobility in and out of pueblos de indios implied by the presence of forasteros in the padrones of 1781. It is possible that Ladinos previously noted were still living in Ticamaya, but not listed in the padron. This possibility is less likely, however. Another padron from the same source, while undated, has a similar format, and comes from Tehuma, formerly a pueblo de indios south of Candaleria on the Ulúa River (n.d. AEC Padron de Tuina [Tiuma]). It includes people of all casta categories, showing that the ecclesiastical officials who produced these records were prepared to record mixed populations.

In contrast, in the 1809 padron, only two people at Ticamaya were listed with any distinctive casta terminology. Both were married women described as “mulata”. One of the two had previously been included in the 1781 padron. At that time, Eugenia Gertrudis, a resident of Ticamaya, had been included in the unmarked list of indios, married to Santiago Ferrera. She had 3 children in 1781, ages unknown, and one of them was a boy. In 1809, a woman named Gertrudis Andara was listed as the widow of Santiago Ferrera, a “tribute paying Indian (indio tributario)”. She was described as having an Indian son, Juan Lazaro, single, age 24.

Having a son whose casta status was indio should have required both parents to be indio, if the casta system were being followed here. Andara's own record in 1809 identifies her as mulata, where in 1781 she was simply
included among the list of indios. The change in casta status could have been the result of a difference in perception between Galindo (in 1781) and Troncoso (in 1809). It is also possible that Eugenia Gertrudis Andara promoted her own re-identification as mulata.

There is indirect evidence that suggests Andara was of African descent. Andara is a name identified by Rina Cáceres (personal communication, 2008) as typical of people of African origin at Omoa. The Omoa census of 1776-1777 lists five people named Andara, one described as pardo and the rest described as negros libres (1777 AGCA A3.29 Legajo 1749 Expediente 28130). Eugenia Gertrudis Andara may have been a spouse who came originally from Omoa, and could have identified herself as mulata in 1809, which would have changed her tribute status as a widow and autonomous agent.

The 1809 population summary lists another mulata, Francisca Gomes, also married to an indio, whose child is also identified as indio. Normative models of casta would have led us to expect both women to have been consistently identified with a mixed casta designation, and their children to occupy a mixed casta status as well, as casta rules linked racial identifications to the mothers’ status (see Newson 1986: 195). Instead, what we see in these two surveys of the population of the pueblos de indios associated with the Fort of Omoa are new ways of taking up positions in social fields that are tactical uses of the new attention to casta identity. Andara's changing identification reveals that even the apparently monologic genre of the padron was actually dialogic. The descriptive labels given individuals were responses to evolving understandings of identity in the late eighteenth century, and took shape with a "sideways glance" toward official pronouncements (in the case of the donativo, being formed quite literally as a response to a Real Cédula).

Participants in the process of recording identities of community members would also have responded dialogically to actions. In the 1780s, the way some people spoke Spanish, and presumably dressed, led to their being identified as Ladinos. Between 1781 and 1809, Eugenia Gertrudis Andara's speech (statements), appearance, or actions opened up the possibility of her being identified as mulata.

Such claims of identity and assignments were not just made on the formal occasions when populations were recorded for administrative purposes. They went on everyday, as people interacted with each other. We catch glimpses of these practice-based assessments and claims of identity tangentially, when people subjected to demands for tribute or labor based on their residence in pueblos de indios petition to be recognized as exempt,
based on other statuses exemplified in the actions they carried out. For example, in 1784, Juan Vargas and his brothers, from Mejicapa, asked to be exempt from tequios, labor demands. Their claim was that others recognized them as Ladinos, based on having served in the milicia in Omoa (1784 AGCA A3.12 Legajo 509 Expediente 5302).

In late colonial Honduras, native born residents of pueblos de indios could move from their town of birth to marry, and were often required to travel long distances to carry out labor obligations. In-marrying spouses in pueblos de indios could come from other indigenous communities or from the nominally Spanish towns whose populations were descended from African, European, and indigenous ancestors. This fluidity created a context in which even the most small scale and intimate of daily practices might be a scene of identity reformation. In the next chapter, drawing on archaeological and documentary sources, we will see how this broad cosmopolitan participation in colonial social settings articulated with everyday life in the resilient and persistent pueblos de indios.
Plate V: Traditional wattle and daub house in northern Ulua Valley, near the Rio Bijao where Masca relocated around 1684.

Plate VI: Group of traditional wattle and daub houses forming a small community, near Rio Bijao.