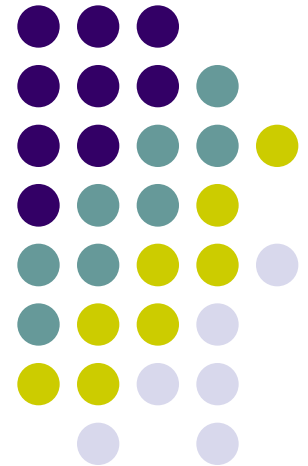


**Between two oceans: Economy, Society and Intervention in Vieques
1942-1948**

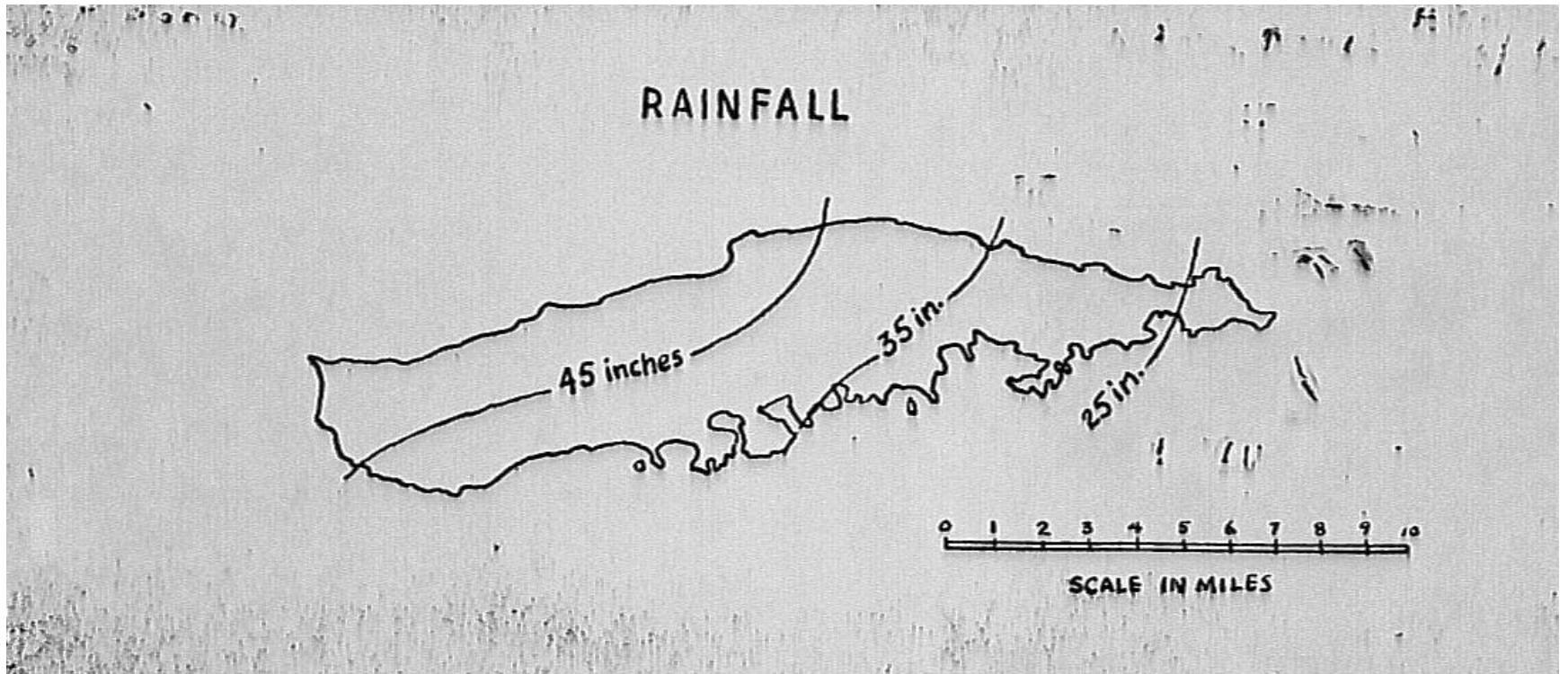
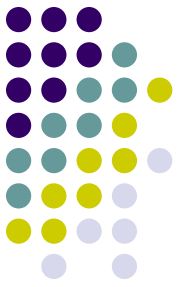
José L. Bolívar, Universidad de
Puerto Rico



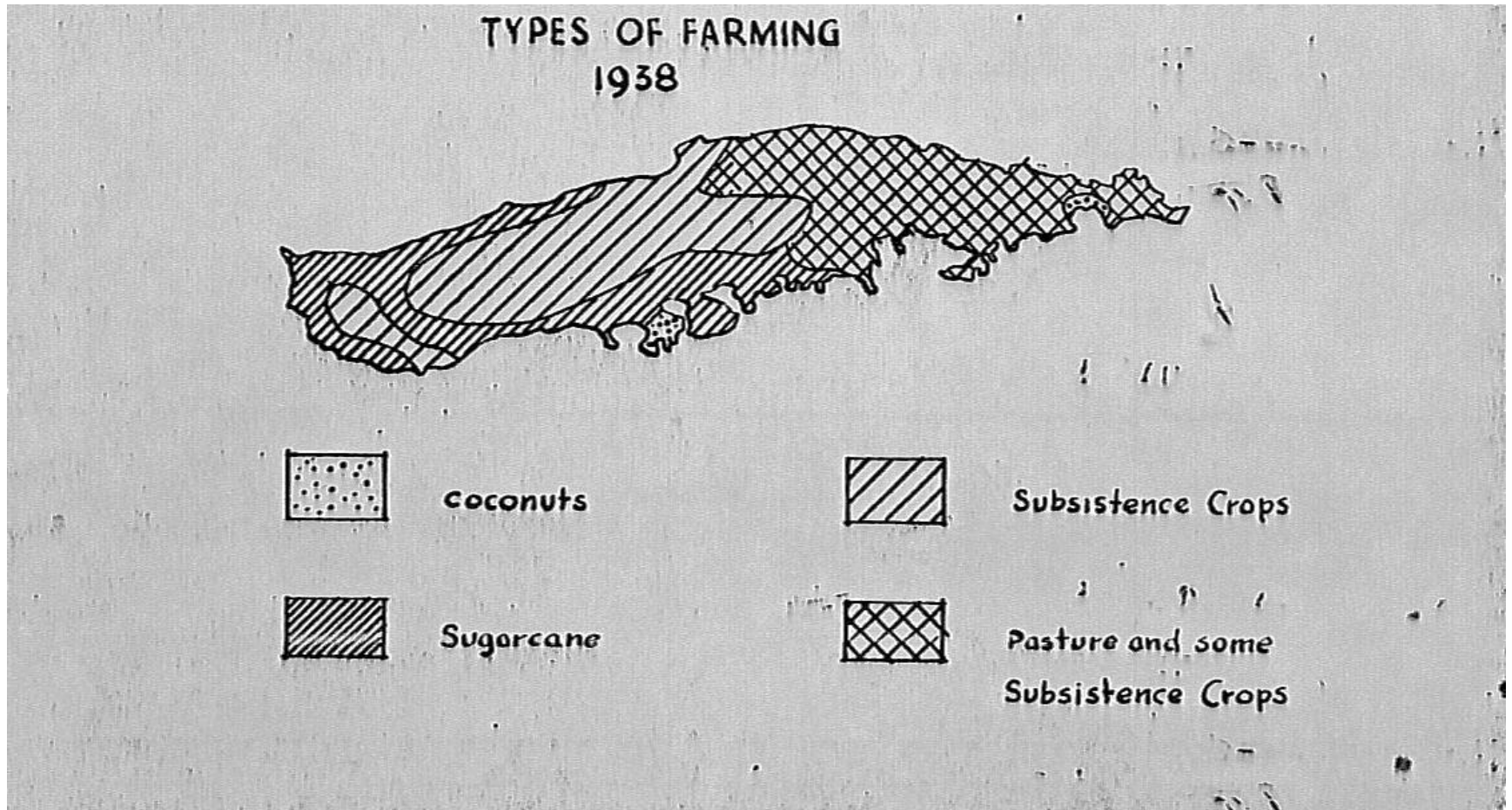
Esperanza, Vieques 1968



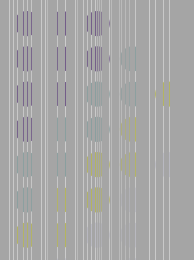
Rainfall



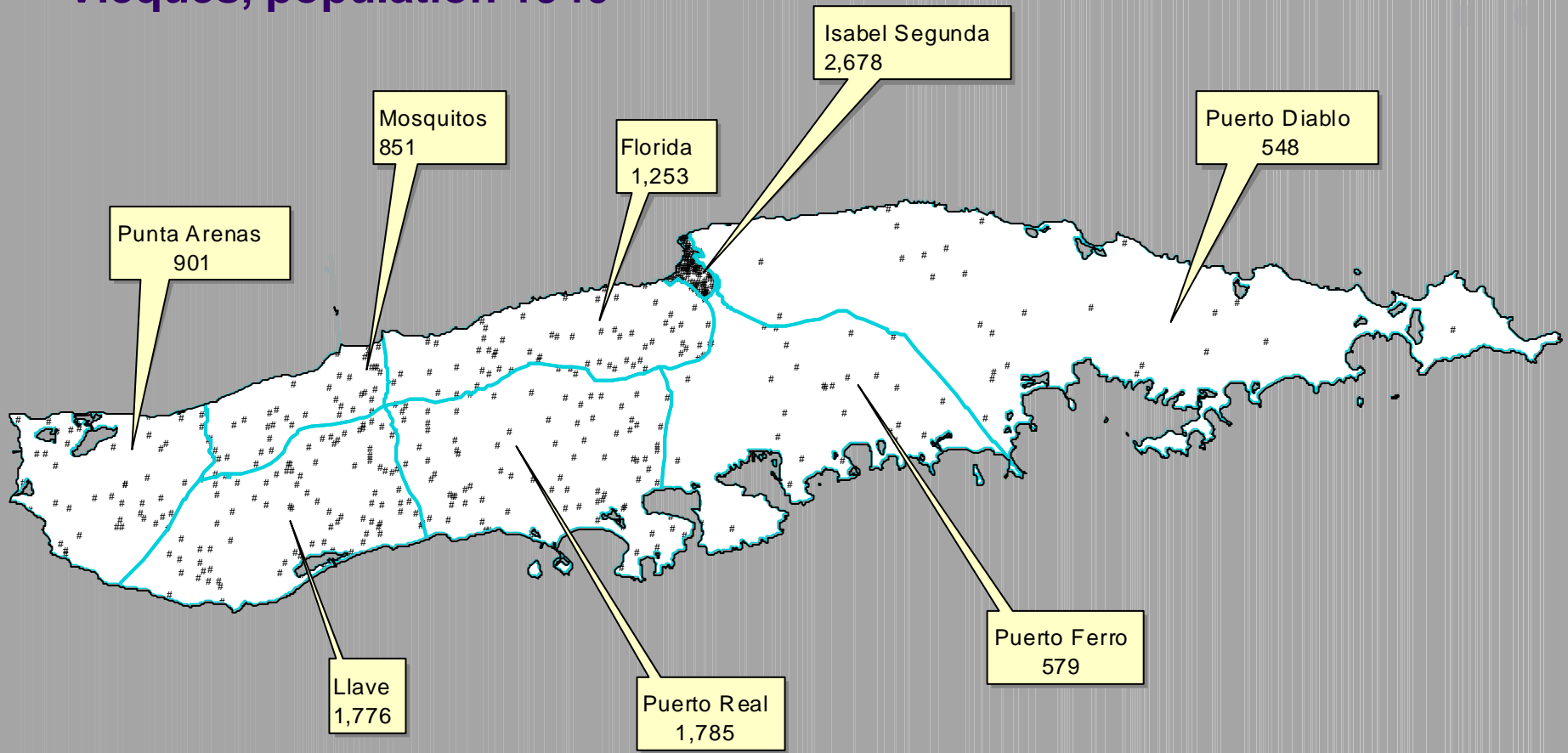
Types of Farming



Vieques, Población por Barrio, 1940

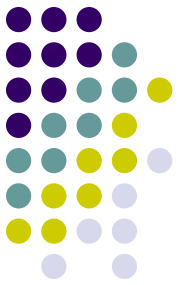


Vieques, population 1940



Población por Barrio
1 Dot = 20

Thesis



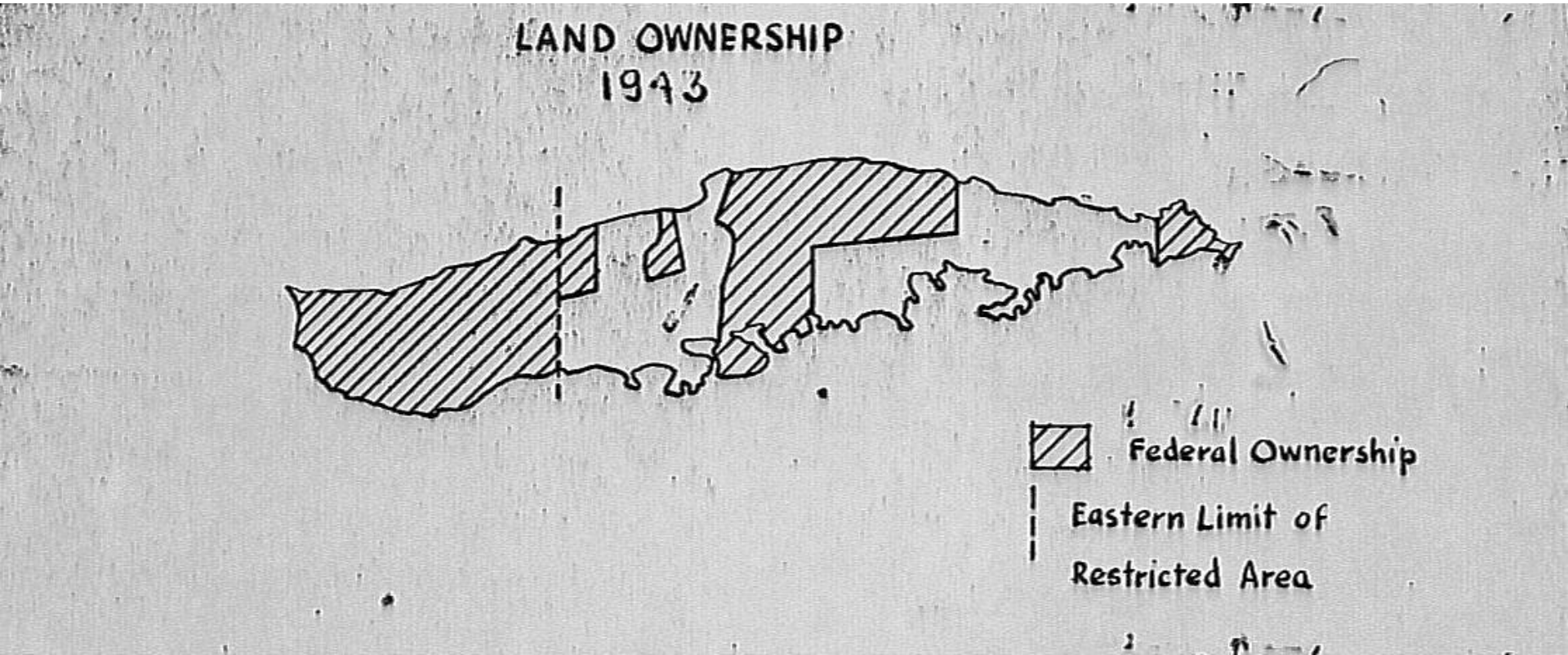
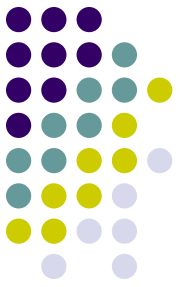
- Between 1942 and 1948, the economy of Vieques went through three distinct phases:
- a prosperous phase :1942-1943
- an economic disastrous phase : 1943-1946
- a partial recovery phase :1946-1948

Background



- **November 1941-1942** – American government expropriates 22,000 acres – 65% of the island - for use by the Navy.
- The municipality of Vieques loses 40% of its income.
- Agricultural workers are expelled from their land.

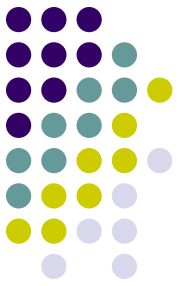
Land Ownership



First Phase



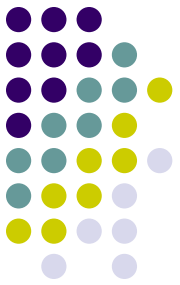
- **1942- summer,1943** - Vieques experiences an economic boom due to the construction of the military base in Mosquitos.
- 1,700 islanders – 61% of the labor force –were employed.
- Salaries – averaging \$2.25/day -- were 40% more than those paid by the sugar industry; work was available year round.
- The Central Playa Grande continued working.



Pico commission

- **March, 1943** – Puerto Rican Government Commission forecasts outcome of the closing of the base, planned within 3 to 4 months.
- 1,475 of the 1,700 workers would lose their jobs.
- Commission recommended the return of 13,000 acres expropriated and of no use to the Navy.

Second Phase



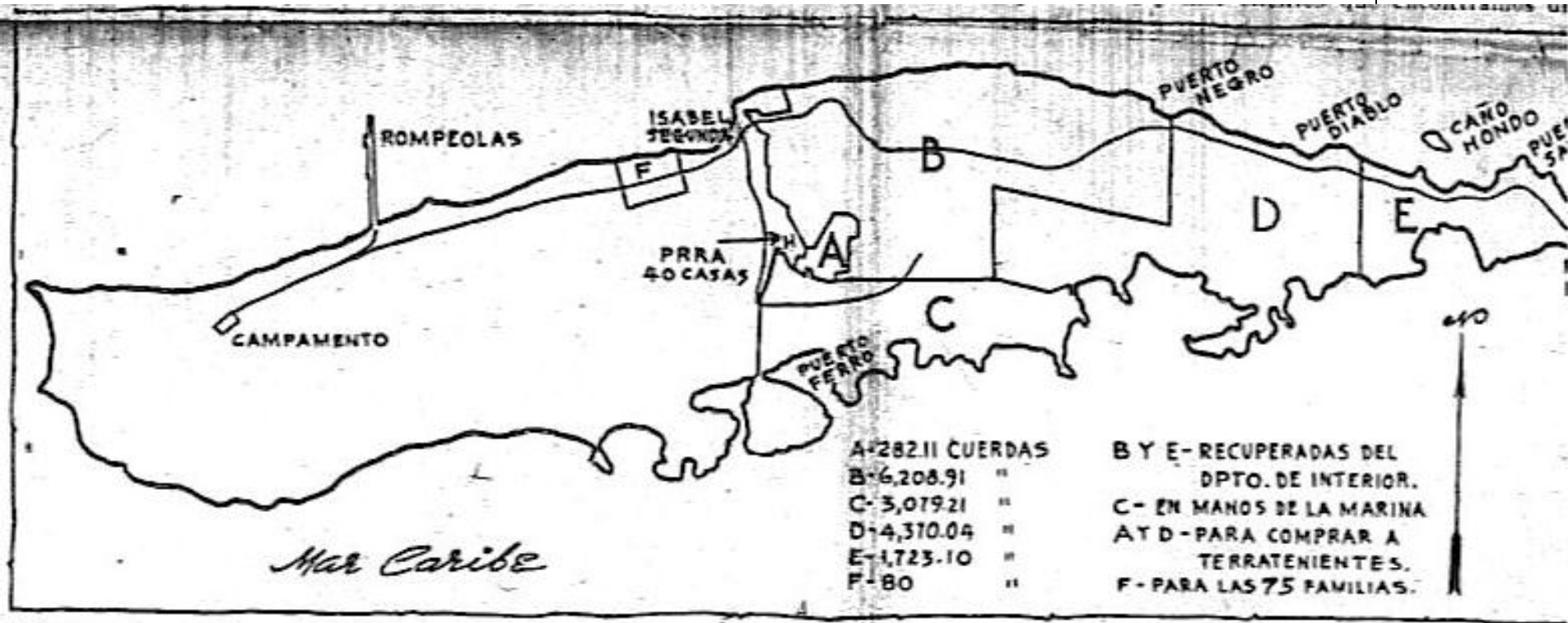
- **May, 1943** - Central Playa Grande closes.
- **Summer, 1943** - Base construction is halted; extreme hardship begins.
- **March, 1944** – PR government assigns \$2,000,000 in emergency funds which were never utilized.
- **April, 1945** – Puerto Rico Agricultural Corporation (PRACO) is created and funded with \$12,233,000.



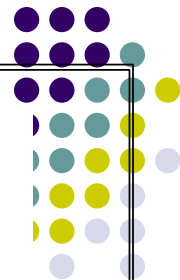
Third Phase: PRACO

- **Beginning of 1946 – January, 1948.** Partial recovery; intervention by PRACO.
- PRACO becomes the largest landholder and biggest employer in Vieques.

1947 map from El Mundo

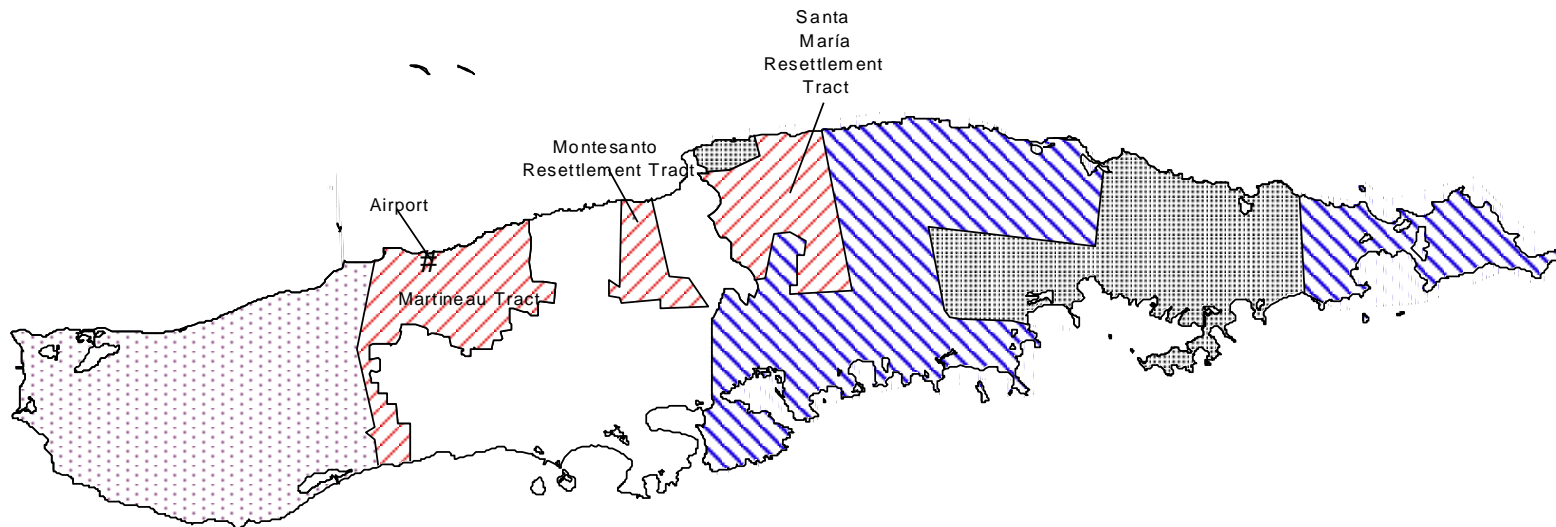



La línea gruesa en el mapa de Vieques, ilustrado en este grabado, revela la ruta que nuestro compañero Benjamín Santana, y los oficiales de la Marina siguieron por los terrenos que se han de utilizar en aquella isla en la construcción de una base militar. Obsérvese el rompeolas, una especie de carretera pavimentada sobre el mar, de casi dos millas de largo, comenzada durante la guerra en un esfuerzo por conectar aquella isla con la de Puerto Rico. FUENTE: El Mundo, noviembre 23, 1947, Pág. 5





Vieques
U.S. Navy Historical Land Tenure Patterns


PRACO holdings and 1950 expropriations




 Excessed in 1944. Assigned by War Assets Administration to the Department of Interior for disposal. Licenced to Government of Puerto Rico by Federal Works Administration. Santa María Resettlement Tract Recalled and Use Permit Revoked in 1947. Montesanto Resettlement Tract and Martineau Tract also recalled but temporary revocable licence in 1944 remained in effect. Martineau Tract used by Puerto Rico Agricultural Company.

 Occupied Pending Acquisition as of 1947-48: Acquired 1950

 Non-Navy Owned Land.

 Temporary Grants to the Department of Interior issued July 1944 and January 1946 and revoked September 1947.

 Acquired from 1941-1943.

SOURCE: Department of the Navy, 1979. Continued Use of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility Inner Range (Vieques); Draft Environmental Impact Statement. N.p., Tippetts-Abbett-McCarthy-Stratton: Ecology and Environment.

PRACO – Intervention in Vieques



- **January, 1946** - 13,000 acres are transferred from the Department of the Interior, to the Government of Puerto Rico for use by PRACO.
- Federal government retained titles to the land.
- PRACO employed 1,113 “viequenses” – 40% of the 2,800 labor force.
- **Between 1946 and 1947** - PRACO accumulated losses of almost \$1,000,000.
- PRACO invested \$1,900,000, purchased 3,873 additional acres, and became the largest landholder - controlling 51% of the island.

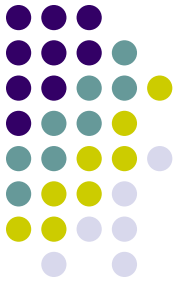
El Mundo 1947 Caricature



The second expropriations



- **January, 1948** - Navy retook lands ; PRACO losses \$1,900,000 invested in land improvements.
- Vieques scheduled to be used as target practice.
- Additional lands identified for expropriation.
- Vieques lost the possibility for agricultural development.



Vieques, Population in 1950

