

## ABSTRACT

## The History of Commercial Banking in Trinidad, 1836-1992

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This dissertation examines the history of commercial banks in Trinidad, with particular reference to banking strategy and competition. It focuses on their emergence, growth, strategic operations and performance from their origins in 1836 to 1992. Drawing on concepts derived from international business and strategic management, this study ascertains why some banking firms were more robust and better performers than others. This work maintains that the commercial banking industry in Trinidad evolved through three distinct market forms starting with monopoly and evolving to oligopoly and then, finally to monopolistic competition. In each of these market situations, competing banks were required to make some modification to their competitive strategy to fit the market form. However, to gain a competitive advantage amongst competing firms, a bank not only had to be responsive to changing market conditions but innovative, efficient, and effective at recruitment and retention of quality staff as well. This study therefore, not only charts the historical development of the commercial banking industry, but also examines the banks' contribution to the economic and financial development of Trinidad.

Keywords: Sean Ng Wai; Banking History; Commercial Banking; Strategic Management; International Business; Trinidad.