

ABSTRACT

The Entrepreneurship of the Portuguese
of Georgetown, British Guiana
1840-1940

Joanne Collins-Gonsalves

This dissertation examines the entrepreneurial ventures by the Portuguese during the period 1840-1940 as well the expansion and diversification into new enterprises. A study of the evolution of the types of partnerships in the 19th and 20th centuries was undertaken. The many challenges their businesses faced and their coping strategies are indispensable aspects of this thesis. A case for the re-categorization of the Portuguese shopkeepers as merchants is presented and a comparative analysis of the 'Cent bread' and 'Angel Gabriel' riots is undertaken. The riots were addressed in a revisionist light with respect to the changing attitudes towards the Portuguese business community as well as an in-depth research on the fires of 1864 and 1867, the role of the Portuguese business persons and cases of arson. In the arena of politics, their non-participation for the majority of the 19th century and entry in the 20th century has been explored. The constitutional changes of the 19th and 20th centuries are analysed and the resulting hindrances of literacy requirements and nationality in light of the franchise examined. The use of petitioning to plead their cases is explored. A gender dimension has been included as an integral focus of the analysis. The emergence of Portuguese women as entrepreneurs and the economic impact of marriages and intermarriages are explored. This thesis therefore focuses on the extent of the entrepreneurial ventures of the Portuguese in a changing community into the 20th century.

Keywords: Joanne Collins-Gonsalves; Portuguese Guyana; Portuguese entrepreneurship; Portuguese women in business; Guyana 19th and 20th centuries; migration from Madeira, Cape Verde Islands, Azores and Portugal.