

PDA-2015 REPORT

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My fall 2015 PDA granted me valuable time to formally start the research for my book project, “Manhood and Masculinity: The War of the Thousand Days in Colombia, 1898-1902.” This bloody confrontation still lingers in the collective imagination and has been blamed for the endemic political violence that still plagues the country. Historians focusing on the role played by Liberals and Conservatives have explained the war as a political and military event. The historiography of the war hasn’t paid attention to those men who fought wearing *alpargatas* (flip flops) and rags instead of uniforms. My book will scrutinize the war from a unique viewpoint: I will focus on the intimacy of the war and men in their relation to women. Women did not have a massive presence on the battlefield, but their influence was felt through the unusual gender relations triggered by that war. With these ideas in mind I traveled to Bogota to start my work in the archives.

Research Conducted

My stay in Bogota extended from August to November 2015. My main objectives were:

1. To cover the primary materials (books, pamphlets, collections of military war reports, personal correspondence)—not available through interlibrary loan— on the origins of and regional participation in the war, the profiles of the main political actors, and the general history of the period. Most of the primary sources available in Bogota are located in two places: 1. The Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia. 2. The Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Sección Libros Raros y Manuscritos. (Rare Books and Manuscripts Books).
August and weekends were spent researching these materials.
2. To collect war documents located in the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) the National Archives of Colombia. The NA is open daily from 8 am to 5 am. Monday to Friday, and I think I didn’t miss a day, during September, October and the first week of November. I had two main repositories to cover.
 - 2.1. The Collection of Documents (300 boxes) of Próspero Pinzón, Commander in Chief of the National Army from 1898-1901, that contains:
 - A. Personal correspondence (Wife, friends, political allies, ecclesiastical authorities, priests from various parish villages and cities, etc.).
 - B. War Reports (Daily informs from military actions in diverse places of the country; Everyday administrative activities of the battalions).
 - C. Political correspondence with civilian and ecclesiastical authorities.
 - D. Correspondence with high ranking military figures of his own political party and also with ‘rebel’ military generals.
This Repository will be very useful for my project. It provides data on: the local and national everyday politics; the intimate communication between high-ranking military figures and the common folk; everyday life on the battlefield; the many faces of improvisation, which was the central feature

of military encounters between the national forces and the ‘rebels’; the lack of minimal material resources (arms, rations, blankets, uniforms, boots, etc.) to fight the war; and the close connection and mutual help between the conservative forces and the Catholic Church. In reference to my main research concern, this source is a vantage point to analyze the formation of a hegemonic masculinity represented by the “Gentlemen of War” and the underpinnings of class and race in the different masculinities the war produced.

- 2.2. Collection of letters (23,700) by War Veterans petitioning state compensation. In 1937, thirty-five year after the war, the Colombian National Congress endorsed Law 65 to compensate the soldiers who fought in the war. The petitions provide rich information about race, social status, social and geographical mobility of war participants and about women, homes, and families, and their relationship with soldiers. Most of the petitioning letters provide detailed information about the conditions under which the drafting occurred. Unemployed men took arms voluntarily as a solution of their problems, but many were forced to join the army. The letters show how the army was also a great avenue for social mobility. Some ascended from the lowest to the highest military ranking regardless of humble origin. Soldiers turned into ‘males’ and the links of fraternity became more important than being husbands or fathers. The army allowed men to travel outside the confines of their villages and gave them the opportunity to know parts of the country they didn’t know existed. Their vision of the political game also changed. The letters show how fighting consolidated their political affiliation and gave them a new sense of their fatherland and their role as citizens of an imagined nation.

Since my return to the University I have been in the process of organizing the massive amount of documents collected in Bogota. I am classifying the readable material, and transcribing those letters and documents that I will be using. The richness of the information has opened new topics of study linked to masculinity, such as intimacy in war and the everyday life of soldiers.

My goals are to finish the classification of the archival material during the summer months and to write a tentative outline of the book. During the Fall I will dedicate one third of my time to write one chapter of the book.

I will integrate knowledge acquired in my research in my course on Modern Latin America.