

Spain. With the discovery of the trade winds to Asia, Havana became a major port for international trade for nearly two hundred years.

By the 1570s, Havana took measures for the defense of the city. French pirate Jacques de Sores attacked and burnt the Fuerza Castle when he seized Havana in 1555. Subsequently rebuilt in stone to a renaissance design, it is the oldest European fortification in the western hemisphere (1558–1577). In 1762, the English conquered Havana and held it for eleven months before Charles III of Spain traded Florida for the return of Havana. Once in the hands of the Spanish, Havana started the construction of more fortification including the Artarés, El Principe and the largest fortress in the Americas, San Carlos de La Cabaña.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, Havana was the third largest city in the New World, after Mexico and Lima. As the city's wealth increased, merchants began building magnificent three-story town houses, and the city started to expand. The Spanish governor, the Marques de la Torre constructed the Alameda de Paula, the first boulevard outside of the city walls. He also constructed great warehouses along the waterfront. In 1863, the city had grown to a point where boulevards were constructed west of the city beyond the walls of the old city.

Through the late nineteenth century tensions rose between the Peninsulares (native Spaniards) and the Criollo (Cuban born) inhabitants, including the wealthy white Criollo patrician families. These tensions ultimately led to the wars of independence but also led to competition in the construction of public edifices. This legacy includes the neo-classical El Templete (1828), the Teatro Tacón, and the remodeling of the Paseo de Carlos III, both completed between 1834 and 1838. In 1880, the Cuban hero, José

9.5 View across Havana.

