

## Caño Amarillo

### The XIX century romantic spirit in a cultural landscape's Caracas:

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#### Abstract:

The place's spirit extends to the changes of his tangible morphology. This situation is present in Caño Amarillo, a territory of Caracas that represents the urban scheme's first expansion, transgressing the norm imposed by the colonial system. It incarnates the introduction of the spirit of the Romanticism like bucolic, spontaneous, picturesque and artisan reaction front to the neoclassicism.

At present, the site conserves great part of this atmosphere, but it has been overcrowded. The absence of criteria for its valuation, control of its evolutionary continuity and the population growth, has brought like consequence a progressive deterioration.

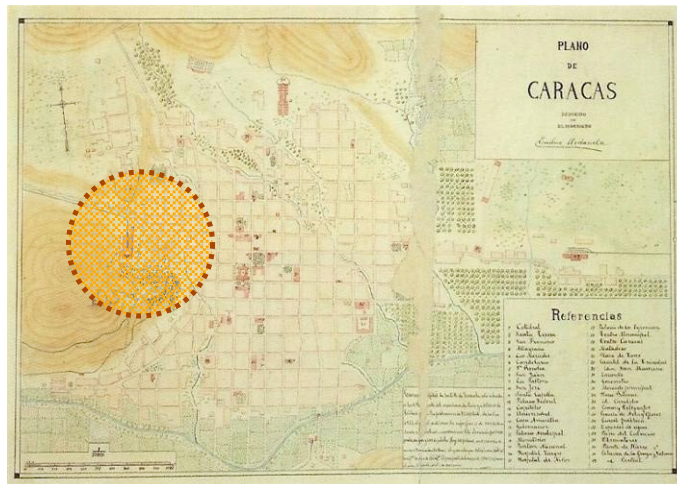
Recently actions for their recovery like cultural and tourist nucleus have been undertaken, based on their natural and cultural potentialities. A pilot experience has been conformed by community, institutions and technicians to achieve the rescue the values place and its life quality.



Reference: Zawisza, Leszek. (1989: 218). *Architecture and Public Works in Venezuela, XIX Century, V. 3*. Caracas: Editions of the Presidency of the Republic.

The spirit of a place transcends to the changes of its tangible morphology, so much more when the place is a cultural landscape that has amalgamated a singular natural scenario, conformed by the topography, the hydric average, the vegetation of the place that then left carving, enriching with inserts of cultural order. This generic situation is present in a privileged territory of Caracas; the place of Yellow Pipe so much from the scenic and environmental point of view, as cultural, where they sink and they reconcile with an idyllic atmosphere, a group of constructions product of the historicismo and eclecticism decimonónicos and of its temporary tally, the architecture of the iron, joined to a heterogeneity of manifestations and

traditions cultural product of becoming historical local, bound to the process of growth of the Caracas finisecular of the XIX one.



Reference: Urdaneta, Eudoro. (1896) *Plane of Caracas*. Caracas: National Library, Plane Collection of the Ministry of Public Works.

Caño Amarillo represents in the process of growth of Caracas, the first expansion of the urban plan, transgressing the regulatory scheme imposed by the colonial grid. It constitutes the rupture with the coordinate systems, and it embodies the tangible inclusion of the spirit of the Romanticism in the Caracas of the XIX century final, between the governments of Joaquín Crespo and Cipriano Castro like cultural reactionary movement based on the bucolic, spontaneous, picturesque and craftsman work in front of the tendency of the french landscape design dominated by the neoclassicism. In front of the composition axes and the urban type of the boulevard that it tried to insert the government of Guzmán Blanco on the colonial grid in their first government between 1870 and 1877, they are propitiated the visual ones now casual and picturesque of the natural landscape, carved by the man's hand by means of the insert of roads, infrastructure works and historic buildings of stiles neo-renaissance, neo-barroco, neo-gothic, Art Nouveau and the architecture of the iron cohabit with the topography, the course of the river Caroata and the leafy vegetation to configure an idyllic cultural landscape of spirit romanticist.

With the construction in 1873 of the pond of the aqueduct to store the waters of the River Macarao with the purpose of supplying to the city of Caracas, on the hill of The Calvary a sharp elevation located to the west of the colonial city that divides in two throats the valley of Caracas, decreed under Antonio Guzmán Blanco liberal government begins becoming of the place.

“The hill of the (sic) The Calvary forms the limit west of the Valley of Caracas. The singular position of this topographical obstacle influenced powerfully in the configuration of the colonial and republican city that extended in its address in form of two arms: one to the North, toward The Teque and the Door of Caracas, another to the Southwest, along the one in route to Antímamo. Outside of these, the only possible expansion was toward East. In consequence, The Calvary was able to stay until today, as a green rampart amid the compact urban fabric that surrounded it of three sides.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zawisza, Leszek. 1989. *Arquitectura y Obras Públicas en Venezuela, Siglo XIX*, Caracas: Ediciones de la Presidencia de la República. Tomo 3:201.



Reference: Urdaneta, Luciano & Urdaneta, Eudoro. (1896). *Proyecto de transformación del Paseo Independencia. Plano de conjunto, esc. 1: 1250*. Caracas: Biblioteca Nacional, Colección Planos del Ministerio de Obras Públicas.

This work of service anchored to the progressive and sanitaries ideas of the Illustration, was the ignition point to configure the romantic character of this area, located in the vicinities of the west of the colonial city. Connected to the works of service he/she is linked the project of gestation of the first urban park of Caracas, topic of design infaltable in all city of the XIX one, on the aforementioned hill, locus in quo is rehearsed compositivamente the tendency of the English garden. The park baptized as Walk Guzmán Blanco, but it takes I Walk Independence it was projected by the Engineer Luciano Urdaneta in 1875. Starting from these works the environment begins to experience a without end of transformations that come to take advantage of the existent barren space, and its exceptional scenic conditions.



Caño Amarillo seen toward the East  
Source: S/A. (1904) *Entrance to Caracas for the Avenue Castro*. [Photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://www.viejasfotosactuales.org/>



Caño Amarillo seen toward the West  
Source: S/A. *Avenida de la Estación y Escuela Militar. Caracas*. [Photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/laguaira.msnw?>

The sector, a rural-urban transition place, what transformed it into obliged access of the city, so much from the Southwest, The Teques, as of the Northwest, the coast of La Guaira. In consequence, it becomes the appropriate point for the installation in 1883 of the terminal Station of the Railroad coming from the coast, Caracas- La Guaira, to which sinks that of the Great Railroad of Venezuela coming from the interior of the Republic. It begins this way to amalgamate to a complex geomorphology, species of natural corner, dominated by the bends of the gulch of Caroata, Caño Amarillo and the arboreal slopes of the base of the Hill El Calvario and



Monte de Piedad, the cultural concretion of the first and only existent railroad stations in Caracas toward the West. The modern images of the machines, of the rails of the railroad and of the platforms they will still be intertwined with the leafy landscape of the place.

The insert of these, favorable the continuity of new works, some extremely significant ones since will represent the adjournment of the seat of the government power toward this place of the city, abandoning the environment to the biggest Square, invariable in all Latin American city of colonial foundation.



Villa Santa Inés

Reference: *Venezuela Santa Inés Oficina del Gran Ferrocarril de Venezuela*. [Photograph]. In Schael, Guillermo José. (1968:85). *Caracas The city that doesn't return*. Caracas: Armitano Editores, C.A., 5ª Edición.



Miraflores Palace

Reference: Schael, Guillermo José. (1968:85). *Caracas The city that doesn't return*. Caracas: Armitano Editores, C.A., 5ª Edición.

The first work comes given by the construction of the Villa Santa Inés, a particular residence that orders to build the President Joaquín Crespo in 1884, to the southeast of the railroad station. It is projected initially in style neoclassicist by the Architect Juan Hurtado Manrique, to which are carried out important reformatations and amplifications between 1892 and 1894, according to project and technical address of the artist Juan Bautista Sales and the architect Luis Llach, both of Catalan origin. Crespo, influenced by their visit to the Universal Exhibition of Barcelona in 1888, knew to Sales in the City of Lima where he was working and he decided to hire them for their projects. These they print him a particular stylistic eclecticism that conjugates elements neo-barrocos like the exedra and the open court of oval plant with influence of the Catalan Modernism in the ornamental use of the brick, decorations of garlands, fringes and crowns. The residence served of presidential office between 1894 and 1896, during the second command of Crespo.

The second are another residence, much more ambitious, the Miraflores Palace, also begun in 1884 by initiative of Crespo President in some lands that formed the property of La Trilla, to the northeast of Pagüita, and that at the present time it is the seat of the executive power. It is a palatine construction of central patio with corridors that it agglutinates the french neoclassicist's features with roofs in mansarda, with a neopaladianism of the italian villages, projected by the Engineer and Count of italian origin Orsi of Montbello, in which the artist Juan Bautista Sales would also participate.



Arch of the Federation

Reference: Karpatti, Jorge (2007). *Arch of the Federation*. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://travel.webshots.com/photo/1282797196033582113bfkflR>

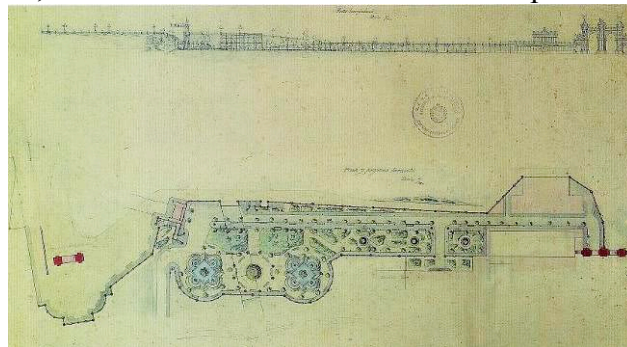


Unconcluded arch of *Santa Inés*

Reference: Pérez Gallego, Francisco. (2007). Caracas.

Accompanying these performances sinks works of public ornament that today represents pioneer works inside the landscape design from Caracas. The Park Guzmán Blanco is reformed and it consolidates becoming Paseo Independence, incorporating commemorative arches and allegorical statuary to mythological topics and of the native victories.

It highlights inside these inserts the Arch of the Federation (1895), a victorious arch to commemorate the Federal War that would be accompanied to the other side of the hill of a homologous to commemorate to the wars of Independence. Inside these works it is also undertaken the project of the Boulevard Santa Inés, to the south of the homonymous village whose access would be framed by a double arch of brick and ornaments of artificial stone projected by Juan Bautista Sales. This arch would be also unconcluded, still when a lot but advanced that the previous one.



Reference: Sales, Juan B. (1895 c.). *Boulevard Santa Inés*. See longitudinal, plants, wall detail and sketch of the source. Group plane and longitudinal profile, esc. s/esc. Caracas: National Library, Plane Collection of the Ministry of Public Works.

To these emblematic works of thematic residential and government, sink others of ecclesiastical order, for which the neo-Gothic style comes to be the ideal. They are erected this way, in 1884 the Chapel El Calvario, on the Hill of Pagüita, another hill of smaller height faced to the Northeast of that of The Calvary to recoup the hermitage demolished in the summit of the park for the construction of the pond, and enter 1885 and 1886 the Chapel of Lourdes in the same hill of The Calvary, crowning the north side of the sharp summit of the Park. Both were also projected by the Architect Juan Hurtado Manrique.

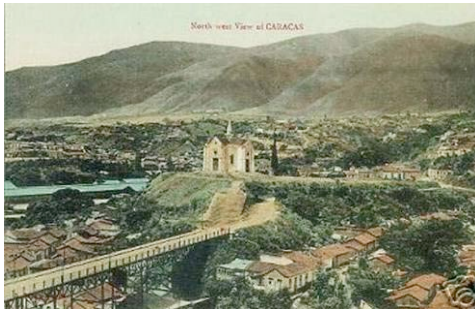


Chapel of The Calvary on the Hill of Pagüita. Then called Chapel of Pagüita (1930 c.)  
Reference: Collection Fajardo K., Arturo J. *La Capilla de Pagüita, Caracas, Venezuela*. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: [groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES](http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES).



Chapel of Lourdes, on the Hill of of The Calvary. (1930 c.)  
Reference: Collection Fajardo K., Arturo J. *La Capilla del Calvario, Caracas, Venezuela*. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/iglesiasdeccs.msnw?>

And to favor the pedestrian communications, saving the distances between both and the abrupt differences, it is ordered in 1886 to build a viaduct of steel armors, another work of industrial character that comes to consolidate the eclectic character of the place, when juxtaposing constructions of picturesque quality to others of industrial image. This work was projected by the engineer Henry Rudloff and the pieces were cared of United States of North America.



Chapel of Pagüita  
Reference: S/A. Collection of ebay (1900 c.) *"North west View of Caracas" La Capilla del Calvario, Caracas, Venezuela*. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/areasdecarcas.msnw?>



Chapel of Pagüita  
Reference: Edición B. Pujol. Collection of Foundation for the Urban Memory. (1909) *"Capilla del Calvario - CARACAS"*. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/areasdecarcas.msnw?>

The beginnings of the XX century, favor the continuity of new constructions that attracted by the government dynamics and of the station of the train they will leave seating in the environment, taking advantage of the hillsides of the mount, conforming bent roads that they go filling with houses of one or two floors. This way in some cases they incorporate in way modest prefabric revivall ornaments in form of cornices, crests and balustrades, but also in other houses industry rise, with structures and covered metallic that come to ratify that character mutant of the time, among tradition and modernity, craft and industry, architecture and engineering, helping all to conform an heterogeneous landscape,



morphologically organic and spontaneous, appropriate to the irregularities of the site.



Viaduct Union seen toward the Chapel and Hill of *Pagiita*

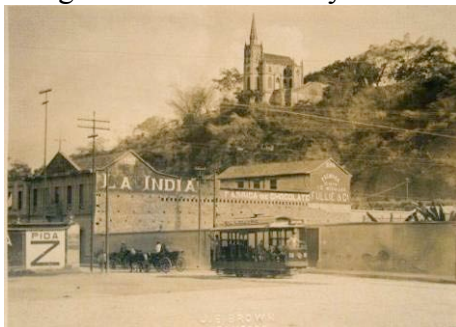
Reference: S/A. *Viaducto Union sobre la Avenida Castro* [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/lagrancaracas.msnw?>



Viaduct Union seen toward the Chapel of Lourdes and the Hill of *El Calvario*.

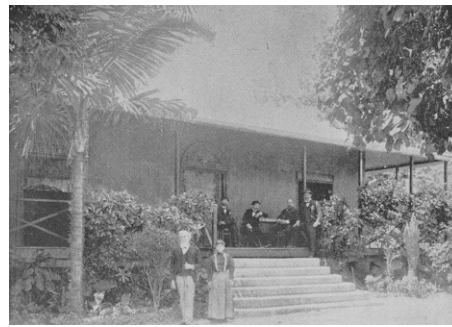
Reference: *Capilla de Nuestra Señora de Lourdes, Caracas, Venezuela S.A.* [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/iglesiasdeccs.msnw?>

The continuity will come to favor the insert of other constructions and institutions that expose the character of the time, the spirit and the fashions that reigned in that moment and in that place like a harmonic symbiosis: The House of *Bathrooms of Caño Amarillo* for the hydrotherapies bathrooms, factories like that of Chocolates *La India* to provide to the living rooms of coffee, sawmills like *The Tunnel*, warehouses and given inns the vicinity to the station of the railroad.



Caño Amarillo. In first plane the factory of Chocolates The India.

Reference: Brown, J. E. Stawford. (s/f) *Caño Amarillo*. Collection of ebay. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/iglesiasdeccs.msnw?>

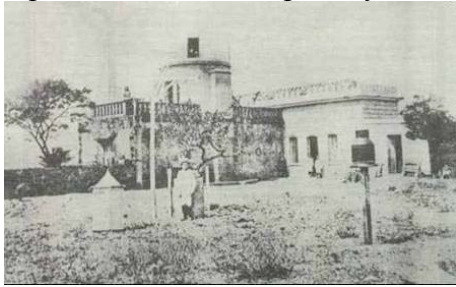


Hydrotherapy Bathrooms of Caño Amarillo.  
Reference: S/A. (1898, November 15:787). *Hidrotherapy Bathrooms – Caracas*. [Photograph]. In *El Cojo Ilustrado*. Caracas: El Cojo Ilustrado.

Owed to the exceptional scenic conditions, the place is privileged with the rising of strategic scientific and military constructions. The sector serves from location to the Astronomical and Meteorological Observatory of Caracas, created in 1888 by ordinance of the President Juan Pablo Rojas Paúl, being installed in the hill Cagigal (before hill Quintana), to the Southwest of the Hill of The Calvary, like part of the political performances inspired by the positivism of the XIX.

But without a doubt some none will be more exemplary like image that the construction that it enters between 1903 and 1910 is erected by competition to harbor the first headquarters of the Military Academy of Venezuela in style “Florentine neo renaissance”, projected and directed by

the architect Alejandro Chataing. This would come to crown the perspective, when being summoned in the esplanade of La Planicie, as backdrop of the place, taking advantage of their good ones visual, from a point of view of military strategy. In this work the picturesque character, between medieval castle and military strength of the renaissance, located in the hill is intertwined with the use of a profuse tropical color, in a cultural context where the consolidation and safeguard of the institutions of the republican state were priority.



Astronomical observatory

Reference: Armada de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela. Dirección de Hidrografía y Navegación. *Observatorio Naval Juan Manuel Cagigal*. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web : <http://www.dhn.mil.ve/Observatorio/observatorio.html>



Military academy of La Planicie.

Reference: S/A. *Saludo de Venezuela. Academia Militar*. S/F (1910 CA.) In Schael, Guillermo José. (1968:88). *Caracas La Ciudad que no vuelve*. [Photograph]. Caracas: Armitano Editores, C.A., 5ª Edición.

Accompanying this process of emblematic institutional buildings is also continued lifted in way spontaneous immovables of residence use, of diverse architectural typology that will traffic from embedded houses of central patio and continuous facade, toward new types of isolated houses with gardens in its perimeters and new constructive materials that they will go zipping the place progressively and evolving toward the consolidation of their urban character, without losing their romantic spirit.

But added to all these tangible manifestations, the place will go rocking a profuse wealth of immaterial manifestations that they are popular cultural part of its imaginary one, linked to the history and memory of the train and to the noble buildings of its environment, such as Carlos Gardel's arrival to Caracas, the stories of the fashion for the Hydrotherapies Bathrooms, the clinic of the Dr. Acosta Ortiz, the celebration of the Cruz of May, among others.

The place at the present time preserve great part of this built and immaterial heritage, but it has been overcrowded, maintaining the spontaneous occupation pattern and free of their origins. The romantic spirit, mixture of craft and past that it sculpted it are still present, but the absence of approaches to determine limits to that evolutionary continuity of the place, and population growth where families of their origins still cohabit, it has resulted in a progressive deterioration and so much alteration of the natural and cultural environmental context.

The indiscriminate insert of constructions of improvised character, some taking advantage of bases of primitive structures, growing empirically in height in a gradual way, without appropriate endowment of services and the absence during decades of approaches valoratives and support that



allowed to channel their residents in the works of continuing carving that landscape in a controlled way, has resulted in accumulation and contradictorily even more isolation of the foundational area of the city. To this it also sinks the insert of contemporary works of high impact, inside which it highlights the layout of its lines of the Subway of Caracas and the Station Caño Amarillo that it is superficial in this sector and that without denying their functional reasons they contributed to the transformation of this landscape, and to make worse the condition of the place like a corner walled by the hills that frame it physically. The arbitrary occupation of lands joined to the morphological heterogeneity has propitiated the appearance of multiple residual spaces that they favor the proliferation of spaces for the mendicancy and the poverty.



Caño Amarillo in 1910

Reference: *Military Academy and Village Monte de Piedad*. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOS/ACTUALES/lagrancaracas.msnw?>



Caño Amarillo in 2007

Reference: Karpatti, Jorge. (2007) *Caño Amarillo*. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://travel.webshots.com/photo/1094334707033582113QLfoiN>

However not all the elements are threats to the place. The presence and permanency in the environment of headquarters of important such government, educational and cultural institutions politician as the Miraflores Palace, the offices of the Subway of Caracas, the Postal Institute (Ipostel), the Institute of Plastic Arts Armando Reverón, the Institute of the Cultural Heritage, they are a strength that appropriately channeled they favor the dynamics of the place and they link it during the day with the rest of the city.

Some intent to recover the sector began in 1991 with the elaboration of the Special Plan of Caño Amarillo hired by the Ministry of Urban Development (Mindur) to the University Institute of Superior Studies of Plastic Arts Armando Reverón.

With the purpose of assisting the rescue and preservation of the sector, in 2003 the neighboring communities conformed the *Nucleus Endogenous Tourist Axis The Calvary*. This entity conformed by citizens of the place conjointly with the technical and financial support of the state and the existent institutions, have undertaken different specific projects of restoration and rehabilitation of the emblematic constructions. The initiative is to achieve a recovery and sustainable development of the place by means of diverse economic activities sustained in the singularity of the place through the creation of tourist routes, the aided visit to the constructions and monuments, the sale of craft and gastronomic products elaborated by their neighbors, among others.



Caño Amarillo in 1928

Source: S/A. (1928 C.) *Union Viaduct, Federation Arch and Lourdes Chapel* [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://groups.msn.com/VIEJASFOTOSACTUALES/lagrancaracas.msnw?>



Caño Amarillo in 2007

Source: Karpatti, Jorge. (2007) *El Calvario*. [photograph]. Consulted the day January 3 2007 of the World Wide web: <http://travel.webshots.com/photo/2410506040033582113FBBGsA>

At this time they are in development projects and works for the recovery of some of the representative constructions, such as the building of the old Military Academy that maintains the military use with an eye toward a functional opening of support toward the neighboring communities, the ruins of the Almacén Santa Inés that it will be consolidated and incorporate as front for the project of a handmade tourist market, joined to the recovery project and rehabilitation of the Park El Calvario like fundamental axis of the whole place. All these they are proposed to recover and to return to the city, this sector so central and in turn so distant and stranger for many of their citizens. In definitive it's a case to try to rescue and to revitalize the excluded romantic spirit of this spectacular place of yesterday's Caracas that was configured among the XIX and XX centuries. They are clear manifestation of the kindness and cultural, technical and social contradictions of the time of their genesis and their later one to become.

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