



Cienfuegos Architecture

Art of Cuba

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In loving memory of my mother, Elizabeth Maxine Hinson

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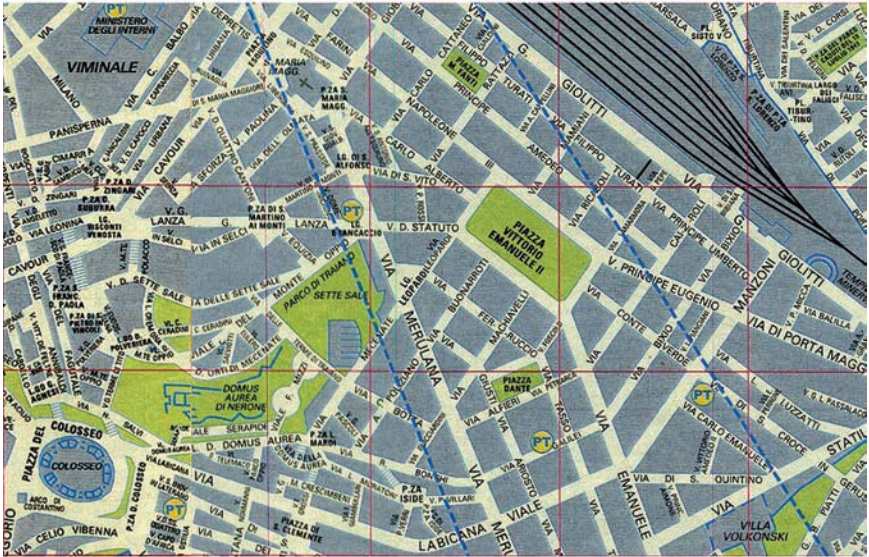
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On the southern central coast of Cuba lies the city of Cienfuegos. The Spanish colonial town was created in the styles of the Romans, the French, and the Moors.



Juan Luis Lorenzo De Clouet founded Fernandina de Jagua in 1819. The first colonists were French. They were soon joined by immigrants from Spain, Venezuela, and the United States.



City planning in a grid pattern first began in ancient Rome. The Romans also placed large public buildings in a central plaza.



De Clouet and other colonists purchased field slaves and began planting sugar cane, tobacco, and coffee. After a hurricane destroyed the colony, the colonists rebuilt, renaming the town Cienfuegos.



By the 1830s, Cuba had 1,500 sugar mills for processing sugar and was the world's largest sugar producer and richest colony. Slavery remained the harsh reality for most sugar workers.



Following the classical tradition of ancient Rome, wealthy Cienfuegos planters and traders created grand public buildings on the central plaza of their park.



The Government Palace has a red vaulted dome topped by a cupola.



The cathedral has two large bell towers, three arched entrances, and French stained glass windows.



The former lyceum was designed for elegant dances with orchestral music and casino games.



Allegorical figures of trade, industry, agriculture, science, and the arts flank the Cienfuegos shield on the San Lorenzo School pediment.



Venezuelan Tomas Terry was a trader in sugar and slaves. He built the Tomas Terry Theatre, where world-class actors and singers performed.