

AFD Ep 331 Links and Notes - Gaspar Yanga and the 16th/17th Century Maroon Colony in Veracruz [Bill/Nate, Nov 1]

- Pronunciation note: It is “Gaspar Nyanga/Ñanga” but commonly written as “Yanga”
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaspar_Yanga
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yanga,_Veracruz
 - To this day, the area still grows sugarcane. The region is filled with or surrounded by tropical forest (less now than in the past) and mountainous terrain. Veracruz was the base of operations for Cortes to conquer the Aztecs a century before.
- <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27654749> "El Primer Libertador de las Americas"/The First Liberator of the Americas: The Editor's Notes - Callaloo, Vol. 31, No. 1, Yanga, Mata Clara and Nearby Villages: Africa in Contemporary Mexico / Yanga, Mata Clara y Pueblos Cercanos: África en México Contemporánea (Winter, 2008), pp. 1-11 (11 pages)
 - Citations from the JSTOR article out to other sources:
 - *during the peak years of Mexican slavery, from 1521 to 1639, the colony [Kingdom of New Spain] ranked high among the leading New World importers, receiving roughly half of all slaves entering the Indies. Total slave imports for the period amounted to over 110,525 persons.*
 - *In 1640, the year the Portuguese slave trade to Spanish America ended, the Kingdom of New Spain (colonial Mexico) contained the second-largest [after Brazil] population of enslaved Africans and the greatest number of free blacks in the Americas*
 - *In 1570 [51 years after Cortes arrived], Gaspar Yanga led a bloody rebellion of slaves in the sugar fields of Veracruz Yanga led the rebels into the mountains, where they found an inaccessible place where they could settle and could found a small town of approximately 500 people. To ensure supplies, Yanga ambushed the Spanish caravans that were bringing goods to Veracruz. Yanga established relations with neighboring slaves and Indians. During more than thirty years, Yanga and his followers lived free. – from Perez de Ribas's Corónica y historia religiosa (1842)*
 - *In 1608 Viceroy Luis de Velasco decided to negotiate with the cimarrones, sending Padre Alonso de Benvides, a Franciscan friar, and Captain Manuel Carrillo, a regidor of Veracruz, to negotiate a treaty with Yanga, the palenque's leader. Padre Benavides and Captain Carrillo successfully established a truce by the end of 1608 with Yanga, a Bran from the Senegambia region of Northwestern Africa, who had been a runaway for nearly 30 years and claimed to be a descendant of African royalty. – Frank “Trey” Proctor” [Important note: This may not be precisely correct, or if the truce here refers to something more short-lived, as other timelines involve Captain Carrillo leading a force of Spanish troops into the mountains as late as 1609 to try to destroy Yanga's settlement, which the maroon forces simply abandoned to continue guerilla warfare until the Spanish expedition collapsed so completely that they were forced to accept Yanga's demands]*
 - *Gaspar Yanga, for whom the municipality was named, is a symbol however unacknowledged, for all of the Americas: During the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Yanga and his fellow freedom fighters successfully fought against and eluded Spanish soldiers, and later negotiated with official representatives of the Spanish Crown for land and for certain human and civil rights. Using tactics of their own devising and negotiating strategies of their own*

making, these African freedom fighters in colonial Mexico founded and developed the first free town in the Americas, and their fearless leader, Gaspar Yanga, would, in the twentieth century, come to be dubbed the "Primer Libertador de America" [first liberator of the Americas] by the people of Yanga

- The town of Yanga, established after the 1609 [or 1617? 1618?] peace settlement between Gaspar Yanga's maroon colony forces and the Spanish colonial government, was near where the maroon base had been but was down out of the mountains, which was better land. The Spanish also built a military base nearby to keep an eye on them.
 - During the decades-long period of rebellion from the mountains, Gaspar Yanga delegated military command to another escaped African slave (reportedly from Angola) and dealt with most of the governance matters himself, at least according to a Mexican history a little over two centuries later (so who knows if that's accurate)
 - According to the Jane Landers translation of Yanga's treaty:
 - The conditions that the black maroons of this region ask for:
 1. *That all those who fled before last September will be free and those who flee after that will be returned to their owners*
 2. *That they must have a chief judge who shall not be a mestizo nor criollo nor a letrado but rather be [?] a warrior*
 3. *That no Spaniard will have a house in or stay within the town excepting during the markets they will have in their town on Mondays and Thursdays*
 4. *That they must have councilmen and a town council*
 5. *That the Captain Ñanga, who is their leader, must be governor and after him his sons and descendants*
 6. *That they who obligate themselves to return to their owners the blacks who flee to them from the ports, and for their work the blacks who track and return the runaways will be paid twelve pesos, until they return the runaways, they will provide [the owners] with others of their own who will serve them, and if they do not return them they will pay [the owners] their value*
 7. *And within a year and a half they must be given a charter confirmed by Your Majesty and if not they will return to their original state*
 8. *That their town must be founded between the Rio Blanco and the estates of Ribadeneira where they indicate*
 9. *That they will pay tribute to Your Majesty like all the rest of the free blacks and mulattos of the Indies*
 10. *The last condition they request is that Franciscan friars and no others minister to them and that the costs of ornaments for the church be paid for by Your Majesty*
 11. *They will present themselves with their arms every time Your Majesty has need of them to defend the land*
 - Interest within Mexican historiography on Gaspar Yanga was promoted in the late 19th century by the descendants of two early Mexican presidents who were of African heritage, presumably to help place them within a national tradition of Black liberation
- <https://thesource.com/2020/04/16/d-smoke-uncle-snoop-gaspar-yanga/>
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Gaspar-Yanga>
 - Yanga escaped slavery around 1570 and reached a settlement with colonial authorities around half a century later. [rest of this is paywalled]
- <https://www.pvamu.edu/tiphc/research-projects/afro-mexicans-afromestizos/gaspar-yanga/>

- *Gaspar Yanga escaped from slavery shortly after being brought to New Spain (Mexico) by Spaniards to work in the silver mines. It is thought that Yanga was a member of royalty from what is now Nigeria, though other accounts say he was from Gabon or what is now Ghana.*
 - *By the 1560s, amid increasing revolts near the port city of Veracruz, the main entry point for both cargo and humans on Mexico's Eastern coast, Yanga emerged as a leader for many of the uprisings and created a safe haven for runaway slaves – called cimarrones or maroons – in a settlement (a palenque) in the nearby lush but rugged and almost inaccessible mountain jungles. There were numerous palenques, but Yanga's was the most prominent and active and considered the most dangerous. The mobile community thrived for more than 30 years, its inhabitants, which included both Africans and Indians, farmed and grew cotton, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and raised small herds of cattle. However, some of the Yanganistas (Yanguicos) were also warriors who raided nearby towns and plantations, destroying property, securing provisions, and freeing slaves, who then joined the Yanga group.*
 - *Their activities made travel between Mexico City and Veracruz perilous. In 1606, the Viceroy of New Spain dispatched troops to capture Yanga and his men and destroy their settlement, but the foray was unsuccessful.*
 - *Three years later, 350 troops were sent from Puebla. [...] The 1609 confrontation produced heavy casualties for both the Spanish troops and Yanga's men, but led to offers of a truce from the Spaniards. However, Yanga and his men retreated deeper into the jungles. Later, Yanga and the Spaniards did settle on a truce, with Yanga agreeing to stop his raids as well as ceasing to help*
 - *slaves escape. In return, he and his followers were granted their freedom and land, which in 1617 was chartered as a free town – the first free settlement for Africans in the Americas – with Yanga as governor.*
 - *Seven decades later, Spanish policy in Florida was to actively encourage slaves from the British colonies to the north to run away to Spanish Florida, with the King of Spain officially welcoming escaped slaves as long as they pledged to serve as an armed defense force for St. Augustine for four years and converted to Catholicism. In the late 1730s, as the conflict between the Spanish and British was heating up, nearby Fort Mosé became the first specifically "maroon" settlement established there for runaways under the command of escaped African slave Captain Francisco Menéndez and was probably the first officially slavery-free community in North America since Gaspar Yanga's town in Mexico over a century before. Fort Mosé played a key role in the War of Jenkins' Ear that Kelley & Bill discussed in episode 329, two weeks ago, and may have inspired the Stono Rebellion slave uprising in South Carolina – which is part of the paranoia in 1741 New York City about a possible slave uprising. The Fort Mosé and St. Augustine freedmen communities (eventually several thousand) in Spanish Florida had to be evacuated to Cuba to build a new maroon settlement after the French and Spanish defeat in the French & Indian War in the 1760s.*
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Mose_Historic_State_Park
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Seminole
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Men%C3%A9ndez_\(black_soldier\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Men%C3%A9ndez_(black_soldier))
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stono_Rebellion [This is a topic for a future episode]
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1733_slave_insurrection_on_St._John
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slave_Rebellion_of_December_25,_1522
 - *Panama also has an extensive history of slave rebellions going back to the 16th century. Slaves were brought to the isthmus from many regions in Africa, including the modern day countries of the Congo, Senegal, Guinea, and Mozambique. Immediately before their arrival*

on shore, or very soon after, many enslaved Africans revolted against their captors or participated in mass **maroonage** or desertion. The freed Africans founded communities in the forests and mountains, organized **guerrilla** bands known as **Cimarrones**. They began a long guerrilla war against the **Spanish Conquistadores**, sometimes in conjunction with nearby indigenous communities like the **Kuna** and the **Guaymí**. Despite massacres by the Spanish, the rebels fought until the Spanish crown was forced to concede to treaties that granted the Africans a life without Spanish violence and incursions. The leaders of the guerrilla revolts included **Felipillo**, **Bayano**, **Juan de Dioso**, **Domingo Congo**, **Antón Mandinga**, and **Luis de Mozambique**.

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felipillo_of_Panama
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bayano>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miguel_de_Bur%C3%ADa
 - Maroon/escaped slave from san juan becomes king of state in Venezuela
- In **French Guiana** and **Suriname** (where maroons account for about 15% of the population),^[53] escaped enslaved people, or **Bushinengues**, fled to the interior and joined with indigenous peoples and created several independent tribes, among them the **Saramaka**, the **Paramaka**, the **Ndyuka** (Aukan), the **Kwinti**, the **Aluku (Boni)**, and the **Matawai**. The **Ndyuka** were the first to sign a peace treaty offering them territorial autonomy in 1760.^[54] In the 1770s, the **Aluku** also desired a peace treaty, however the **Society of Suriname**, started a war against them,^[55] resulting in an flight into French Guiana.^[56] The other tribes signed peace treaties with the Surinamese government, the **Kwinti** being the last in 1887.^[57] On 25 May 1891 the **Aluku** officially became French citizens.^[58]
- By the 1980s the **Bushinengues** in Suriname had begun to fight for their land rights.^[59] Between 1986 and 1992,^[60] the **Surinamese Interior War** was waged by the **Jungle Commando**, a **guerrilla** group fighting for the rights of the maroon minority, against the military dictatorship of **Dési Bouterse**.^[61] In 2005, following a ruling by the **Inter-American Court of Human Rights**, the Suriname government agreed to compensate survivors of the 1986 **Moiwana** village massacre, in which soldiers had slaughtered 39 unarmed **Ndyuka** people, mainly women and children.^[53] On 13 June 2020, **Ronnie Brunswijk** was elected **Vice President of Suriname** by acclamation in an **uncontested election**.^[62] He was inaugurated on 16 July^[63] as the first Maroon in Suriname to serve as vice president.^[64]
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronnie_Brunswijk