



Black American Heritage 1999



Black Seminoles

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PREFACE

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SCOPE

The Topical Research Intern Program provides the opportunity for servicemembers and DoD civilian employees to work on diversity/equal opportunity projects while on a 30-day tour of duty at the Institute. During their tour, the interns use a variety of primary and secondary source materials to prepare a report pertaining to an issue of importance to equal opportunity (EO) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) specialists, supervisors, and other leaders throughout the Services. The resulting publications (such as this one) are intended as resources and educational materials and do not represent official policy statements or endorsements of the DoD or any of its agencies. The publications are distributed to EO/EEO personnel and selected senior officials to aid them in their duties.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the longest unwritten chapters in the history of the United States is that treating of the relations of Negroes and the Indians. The Indians were already here when the white men came and the Negroes brought soon after ... found among the Indians one of their means of escape. Carter G. Woodson, *Journal of Negro History*, 1920.

This is a two-part series that highlights people of African and Native American descent and some of their long overlooked contributions to the formation of the United States of America.¹ Through historical misinformation (intentional and accidental), prejudice, racism, and political and social disenfranchisement, the authentic stories of these people and their role in establishing this country is little known and not often told. The goal of this publication is to provide a modest correction and appropriate recognition to this largely overlooked, but fundamental portion of our history.

The first part of the publication, “The Indigenous and the Enslaved,” focuses on the relationship between African and Native Americans as colonial empires were being established in the New World during the 1500s to the mid-1700s. Specific attention is directed toward the geographic area now encompassing the southeastern United States which was inhabited by (among others) the Creek or Muskogee Indian Nation. They were called “Creek” because they lived along waterways, but were also known as the “Muskogees.” (1:292)

The second part, “Black Indians,” addresses some of the results of that interaction as it evolved into a new community of “Black Indians.” Black Indians are individuals, subgroups or autonomous Indian nations whose members were originally pure Native American and pure African and who now are different combinations of African, Native American, and/or Caucasian bloodlines. Specific emphasis will be placed on the formation of the Seminole Indian Nation in the 1700s and 1800s and its Black Seminole Indian subdivision.

Part I: THE INDIGENOUS AND THE ENSLAVED

This snapshot of history will concentrate on Africans in the southeastern United States, to include the Creek and Seminole Nations. In her book, *As Various as Their Land*, Stephanie Grauman Wolf provides two maps (Appendices 1 and 2) which detail, “British Colonial America:

¹ According to Stan Steiner, the principles embodied in the U.S. Constitution were modeled after the Five Iroquois Nations Constitution drawn up by the Mohawk, Seneca, Onondaga, Oneida, and Cayuga tribes around the year 1500. Their agreement guaranteed freedom for all individuals, and provided each tribe with equal representation at a grand council which decided on general policy for the Five Iroquois Nations. Benjamin Franklin was aware of the Indian constitution [Iroquois Confederacy] and advised sending delegates from the Albany Congress to study the Iroquois system. (4:8-9)

1700” and the “United States of America: 1800.” (26:31-32) A review of these maps will provide a geographic reference point.

The European presence made a permanent impression on the North American scene in many ways, but in no more profound manner than by the introduction of the practice of slavery for life. While Native Americans and Africans enslaved captives taken in battle, (8:5) the English, Spanish, and French brought a new system to this continent.

BACKGROUND

In 1492, Pedro Alonso Nino, a free black man, was a member of Christopher Columbus’ crew. (4:67; 3:2, 24:26) He was probably the first free man of African descent to accompany Europeans to North America, but probably not the first free man of African descent to land in the Americas.² “In the century following Columbus’s landing, millions of Native Americans died from a combination of European diseases, harsh treatment, and murder. Africans took their place in the mines and fields of the New World. The 80 million Native Americans alive in 1492 became only 10 million... a century later... [T]he 10,000 Africans working in the Americas in 1527, had by the end of the century become 90,000...” (11:29)

When Europeans met Native Americans in the New World, black people were also present. People of African descent (free and enslaved) were with Columbus, Balboa when he arrived at the Pacific Ocean in 1513 (3:5), Cortez in Mexico in 1519 (3:5), the Navaez expedition to Florida and the Mississippi region of the present U.S. in 1527 (3:5), English slave trader William Hawkins in Brazil in 1530 and Guinea in 1562 (3:5), and Pizzaro in Peru in 1532. (3:5)

The initial group of Africans³ introduced to North America by English-speaking persons at Jamestown, Virginia in 1619 were ‘indentured servants’, not slaves. (2:441) As “indentured servants,” today they would be characterized as “conditionally free people.”⁴ But three centuries ago, that status did not pertain to those who followed them to North America. First consider that, “[i]n the beginning of the 14th century, Europeans, with their all-persuasive firearms, began searching Africa for gold, salt, and other natural resources. They claimed land, destroyed old trade routes, and brought manufactured goods which destroyed the market for native products...

2 Author Ivan Van Sertima argues the theory that Africans were present in North America prior to the visits by Christopher Columbus. His argument is based on the, “Scores of cultural analogies found no where else except in America and Africa” (23: dust cover). Some of the clues include languages, plants, cloth, animals, sculptures, Arabic documents, charts, maps, recorded tales, and analyses of skeletal remains. See *The African Presence in Ancient America: They Came Before Columbus*.

³ They arrived after they were pirated by the crew of a “Dutch Man of War” from a Spanish vessel “bound for the West Indies.” (2:29)

⁴ “The first Africans brought to the New World by European slavers probably arrived in April 1502 aboard the ship that brought the new governor of Hispaniola, Nicolas de Ovando. Soon after they landed, some of the Africans escaped to the woods and found a home among the Native Americans. Later that year Governor Ovando sent a request to King Ferdinand that no more Africans be sent to the Americas. His reason was simple: They fled amongst the Indians and taught them bad customs, and never could be captured.” (11:28)

Disorganized and demoralized, colonized Africans became increasingly vulnerable as a source of cheap labor...” (13:54)

Second,

Since labor was in short supply in British America, the earliest colonists enslaved first Indians and then Africans...[at this point in history] unending bondage did not exist in English law. The type of ‘indenture’ initially practiced in the British colonies lasted for approximately seven years. ‘Indentured servants’ of any color could be mistreated while in service, have their personal life regulated, and have their time extended by a scheming master... In the 1630s the rules [of slavery and indenture] began to change... The change began on the English-ruled island of Barbados when the Governor announced ‘that Negroes and Indians...should serve for life, unless a contract was made to the contrary. (11:101)

From 1636 on, only whites received contracts as ‘indentured servants.’ In 1636, a Massachusetts Indian became the first victim of legal slavery in North America. By 1661 Indian and African slavery was legal in all of the British colonies. (11:102) But Indians, unlike the Africans in North America, were on home territory and could escape to friendly locations and often received armed assistance from local forces in response to their plight.⁵

Third, it must be remembered that during the 1600s and 1700s the North American continent was in the throes of varying degrees of economic and military combat involving different combinations of European colonists and Indian allies. Additionally, different European sovereigns and their agents who dislodged the Native Indians from their traditional homelands were repeatedly subjecting the territory that was home to the different Indian nations to claims and treaties.

Fourth, in fear of a red-black alliance, the English, French, and Spanish (to a lesser degree) regularly pitted the two groups against each other. Natives were employed as slave catchers of enslaved Africans by the English, and the French and English sent armed slaves into battle against Native American armies. One example was the Yamasee (or Yemassee) War of 1715, where Africans served with the Natchez Indians and on the other side as well in the South Carolinian ranks. (11:106) However, many Africans who served on both sides were probably not there of their own free will.

The African, the European, and Eastern Creek Nation: Yesterday and Today

Many of the high school textbooks which address 16th – 18th century history are written from a Eurocentric perspective and non-white or non-European people are mentioned only infrequently. In the United States and in the North American colonies, this history is fixated on the period of English rule as seen through English eyes. Multiple references cite the significant

⁵ “The first full-scale battle between Native Americans and British colonists took place in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1622.” According to James H. Johnstone ‘the Indians murdered every white but saved the Negroes.’ (11:103)

beginning of this period as, “Roanoke Island, established in 1587, and claimed by our public school history texts to be ‘the first English settlement’ ... [and] Captain John Smith’s Jamestown, [Virginia,] founded in 1607.”^{6 7} (10:141)

The Significance of San Miguel de Gualdape

What is not often reported is the settlement of San Miguel de Gualdape founded in 1526. San Miguel de Gualdape was established by a Spanish official, Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, “at or near the mouth of the Pedee River” (10:142) in present day eastern South Carolina, 60 years before Roanoke Island, 80 years before Jamestown and over a century before the Pilgrims landed in Massachusetts. (11:22) De Ayllon’s colony originally consisted of approximately 500 Spaniards and 100 enslaved black Africans. (10:142) Little effort has been made to publicize San Miguel de Gualdape’s existence, “[P]erhaps, because most North Americans prefer to believe their heritage began with the arrival of English-speaking people governed by British law, not Mediterranean types and black Africans (10:142)... [or perhaps] the settlement is neglected because of its unusual fate and the subsequent history of its black survivors...”(10:142)

From the onset, the San Miguel de Gualdape colony, “suffered from strategic and portentous blunders.” (10:142)

A captain ... sent to survey the landing site and build friendly relations with the native inhabitants teamed up instead with a notorious slave-trader. Abandoning his mission ... the captain sailed back to Santo Domingo with his disreputable cohorts and about 70 Native Americans they had seized as slaves... [A] royal commission [later] free[ed] the captives, but they were not returned home for years, if ever...[T]o make amends with the decimated native society, Ayllon again sent off the [same] fellow [to north America and] retained one captive, Francisco Chicora, for his personal use and trained him as his guide... In June 1526 [Ayllon] set sail with three large vessels bearing his potpourri of colonists, slaves, supplies, physicians, three Dominican missionaries and about 80 to 100 horses...they landed on the wrong coast and Chicora deserted the voyagers [who] eventually reached their destination [,] a low marshy area [where Ayllon] initiated [resident] black slavery in the United States with his command that the Africans begin building the settlement homes... Illness and starvation wiped out the Spanish like flies, and

⁶ An archaeological, anthropological, and historical case for arrival and/or settlement and trade in the Americas by people of African descent is documented long before slaves came ashore in present day Virginia and South Carolina. See Footnote 2. These artifacts and legends support the presence of Africans who were technologically advanced. They included miners, smelterers, forgers, and metal sculptors (of 60 ton busts). African world travelers and traders were in the Americas long before many acknowledge.

⁷ New studies of the area around Roanoke and Jamestown report the English arrived in Virginia during a drought. Using tree growth rings the “estimate for drought during that period is that there was a very severe one... the years 1570 to 1589 marked the most extreme drought of any comparable period during the entire 800 years of the tree ring history.” (7:1) All the settlers in Roanoke disappeared and 4800 of 6000 died in Jamestown between 1607 and 1625.

those who lived fell into bitter disputes. Compounding the problems, an icy winter blew in before everyone could be housed... Native Americans viewed the quarrelsome foreigners with suspicion and disdain. These were the people who had carried off their relatives in chains, and now they returned with Africans in chains... By October, less than six months after he founded San Miguel, Ayllon succumbed to disease... [T]he Spanish then divided into warring factions, while the Africans ... committed acts of sabotage aided by Native Americans. In November... the Africans rebelled and fled to the natives in the woods. The surviving 150 Spaniards... packed up and shipped out for Santo Domingo. (10:142-143)

This early interaction of the indigenous and the enslaved is evidence of the establishment of an informal social contract hinging on the desire for freedom and self-determination in the face of common threats. Those threats, including enslavement and disenfranchisement, have proved to be a force that even today can be a cause for re-examination of our life in the United States. This was evident during President Clinton's spring 1998 trip to Africa. While there, the President's frank acknowledgment that current anthropological science places the birth of modern man on the African continent caused a commotion here at home. During that same trip a well-known American political commentator was reprimanded in the national media because his comments could be interpreted to mean African Americans were better off as a result of their ancestors "middle passage"⁸ and involuntary servitude. These events took place as the backdrop of an ongoing debate in the U.S. about whether the President, as the country's Chief Executive, should apologize to in excess of 13 million current American citizens of African ancestry for the past sin of slavery.

In the 1600s the various combinations of native people of the Eastern Creek Nation lived in an area that ranged from present-day Mississippi to Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and the

⁸ "... [T]he European slave trade ... began in 1444 and continued for more than 400 years. During this period Africa lost an estimated 40 million people. Some 20 million of these men and women came to the New World. Millions more died in Africa during and after their capture or on to ships and plantations." (2:29)

"It is not possible to give an exact number of how many Negroes came to America. Robert R. Kucznski, the world-known authority on migration statistics, estimated that a minimum of 15 million slaves landed alive. Because of the brutal treatment on transport and the conditions of crossing, the total number of people of which the African continent was depleted amounted in any case to several times more. Carter G. Woodson, in *Negro in Our History*, estimated the total at 50 million, while W. E. Du Bois, in *The Negro*, gives the figure at 60 million." (3:2)

"Children are torn from their distracted parents; parents from their screaming children; wives from their frantic husbands; husbands from their violated wives; brothers from their loving sisters; sisters from their affectionate brothers. See them collected in flocks, and like a herd of swine, driven to the ships. They cry, they struggle, they resist; but all in vain. No eye pities, no hand helps." (11:27) -- Thomas Branagan, Irish slave ship seaman describing the slave ship boarding scene.

"The Africans were chained to each other hand and foot, and stowed so close that they were not allowed above a foot and a half for each in breadth. Thus rammed together like herrings in a barrel, they contracted putrid and fatal disorders, so that they who came to inspect them in the morning had to pick dead Africans out of their rows, and to unchain their carcasses from the bodies of their wretched fellow sufferers to whom they were fastened." *History of Slavery and Serfdom*, London, 1895, p. 152. (13:54)

Carolinas. Of the European presence in the southeast on the western front, the French were dominant; in the mid-south it was the English (Carolina included present day Georgia until 1733); and the Spanish occupied Florida.

The first contact between Europeans and the people known as Creeks came through trade. At first, the Yamasees and other Indians near the coast were the source of trade for the Carolinians. But because they soon developed an active trade in Indian slaves, [captives from battle with other Indian nations (16:6)] the English quickly made their way into the interior... While the English were expanding their trade, the Spanish in Florida made counter advances. In coastal areas, the English roused the local Indians against the Spanish [allied] Indians, and between 1684 and 1703 there was a general exodus of the Guale Indians to Florida. Farther inland, the Apalachee towns in north central Florida served as the base for Spanish activities among the Creeks and along the Gulf coast west to Pensacola. By 1700, Apalachee [towns were] essential to the support of not only the Spanish but also the French in their struggle against the English. (16:5)

This first English and Creek contact was also the first contact between the English-enslaved Africans and these southeastern natives. And like the San Miguel de Gualdape experience, some Africans escaped and joined the Indians. (16:8)

English Colonial Society

The goal of the English presence in the New World was enrichment through exportation of natural resources, trade with the native inhabitants, and trade in human cargo. Initially the major English trade item was Indian slaves taken from the encampments of those Indians allied with England's enemies, the Spanish, and the French. (16:6) As a result of a changing economy, by the early 1700s the numbers of Indian slaves held by the British decreased and the number of African slaves increased because agriculture, rice farming in particular, was moving to the forefront. (16:9) Thus, Africans began to replace Indians in the fields of plantations and farms.

“In 1707 the total population of South Carolina was 9,580, including 4,100 black slaves and 1,400 Indian slaves... In 1720 there were an estimated 11,828 slaves [total population 20,828], and by 1724 that number had increased to an estimated 32,000 [total population 46,000]. (16:9) These numbers heightened the level of white fear of insurrection in the English colonies and “the increase in the number of slaves made attempted escapes more frequent, and [thereby made] Creek-African contact more likely.” (16:9)

During the 18th century, in part due to European versus European wars, European versus Native American wars, and Native American versus Native American wars, the Creek population splintered. Divided loyalties surfaced not only over the question of enslaved Africans, but over European domination -- a phenomenon the colonies to the north would soon experience. A key event in the split was the Yamasee (or Yemassee) War against the English in 1715-1716. (16:6-8) The Yamasee, members of the Creek nation, lost the war. As a result, many of the losing Yamasee “were sold into slavery in Jamaica and New England, and their towns were moved to [areas near] the Guale [Indians] and [to] Florida.” (16:6) The Guale, the Yamasee, different

Creeks, and other anti-English Native Americans who were concerned over retaliation for the Yamasee War and changes in the English governance of what is now southern Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia were all collocated in or near Spanish Florida, Britain's colonial enemy. Eventually, these groups, other Native Americans, and runaway Africans grouped together to become known as the Seminole Indian Nation.

SPANISH FLORIDA

“Except for twenty years of British rule just before and during the American Revolution, Florida [was] under Spanish authority...” (17:4) Enslaved Africans were now the majority inhabitants in the English territories, and as such, the English feared African insurrection more than Spain. That fear was almost a reality in 1709 when “many slaves joined the Yamasee Indian War against the British, and almost succeeded in exterminating the badly outnumbered whites. Inhabitants of the colonies were executed during seven alleged and actual plots between 1701-1738.”⁹ A larger insurrection did not occur until 1739. Indians loyal to the British helped defeat the Yamasee who, in defeat with their black allies, headed for St. Augustine [Florida].” (14:11-12) St. Augustine is now a major Florida tourist attraction on Interstate Highway 95 (I-95), a major north/south roadway on the U.S. east coast. The main I-95 exit sign to St. Augustine states, “St. Augustine: Nation's Oldest City.”

Creek contact with Africans increased after the Yamasee War under “The Treaty of 1717.” The weakened Creeks who bordered the English colonies and other Indian Nations agreed to capture and deliver to the whites any runaway slaves that they caught or who fled to them.¹⁰ Now more than ever, “[i]n slave huts and beyond British settlements along the coast, African and Native American women and men shared their sorrows and hopes, their luck and courage. They did not always know where to run to, but they knew where to run from.” (12:103) In Spanish Florida, the land destined to be the home of the Seminoles, there was a different policy than in Georgia and Carolina, which were controlled by the English. The first runaway Africans are recorded as having arrived in 1687. (14:10) “Eight men, two women, and a three-year-old nursing child” (14:10) escaped to St. Augustine. “[T]hey requested baptism into the ‘True Faith,’ and on that basis [the Spanish governor] refused to return them to the British delegation that came to St. Augustine [headquarters of the Spanish governor] to reclaim them.” (14:10) Their acceptance of and refusal to return these runaways was possibly one of the earliest grants of “political asylum” in the Western Hemisphere. “On November 7, 1693, Charles II [of Spain] issued an official position on the runaways, ‘giving liberty to all ... the men as well as the women [who were escaping English enslavement]... so that by their example and by my liberality others will do the same.’ ” (14:11) “In 1699, the Spanish issued a royal decree promising protection to all slaves who fled to St. Augustine and became Catholics.” [emphasis added] (16:11)

This decree was repeated during the next several decades. After the Yamasee War, blacks were encouraged to run away by the Yamasses, who were then near St. Augustine. From

⁹ “[S]lave revolts erupted in 1711 and 1714.” (14:11).

¹⁰ They were caught, but seldom returned.

there, joined by some recalcitrant Lower Creeks [those that lived in Florida or close to the Florida border] and runaway blacks, they launched slave-stealing raids into Carolina, while Creeks loyal to the English launched raids against the Yamasees. In 1722 the English warned the Spanish to end the Yamasse raids and demanded return of their runaway slaves, and in 1725 protested the harboring of [English] slaves in St. Augustine. In 1731, the Spanish Council of the Indies said that runaways were not to be returned or paid for. In the wake of that decision, the Decree of 1699 was repeated in 1733 [the founding year of the then, slavery prohibiting, Georgia Colony¹¹] and in 1736. From then until the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Spanish territory remained a haven for runaway slaves. Thus for several decades blacks' attention turned more to Florida [rather] than to the [English allied] Creek country... (16:11)¹²

The insurrection plots and the 1739 event, the “Stono uprising of 1739,”¹³ (16:13) were blamed on St. Augustine. The rebellious Africans of Stono were in fact attempting to escape to Florida (16:13) and Spain began to use these circumstances to its advantage. To weaken the English and add to their own defenses, the Spanish governor in St. Augustine promised runaways and the free Africans already present in the region “a place where they could cultivate crops.” What followed was the settlement called Mose (or Moosa) at the head of Mosa Creek, a tributary to the North River. It was here that Spanish, Indian, and black forces successfully repelled Oglethorpe's [Georgian/English forces] in 1740.¹⁴ (16:14)

Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose (Fort Mose)

In Florida, the enslaved African could escape to St. Augustine, the Yamasse, or Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose (Fort Mose), which was established in 1738. In her book, *Fort Mose, Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose: A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida*, Jane Landers said,

Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, hereafter referred to as Mose, was born of the initiative and determination of blacks who, at great risk, manipulated the Anglo-Spanish contest for control of the Southeast to their advantage and thereby won their freedom. The settlement was composed of former slaves, many of West African origin, who had escaped from British plantations and received religious sanctuary in Spanish Florida. Although relatively few in number (the community maintained a fairly stable size of about 100 people during the quarter-century between 1738 and 1763, while St. Augustine's population grew from approximately 1,500 people in the 1730s to approximately 3,000 by

¹¹ “Oglethorpe founds Savannah in Georgia, the last of the 13 colonies to be settled.” Ogelthorpe's colony is a defense against the Spanish in Florida and French in Louisiana ...” (21:109-110)

¹² “[The new colony of] Georgia [formally] repealed its prohibition against African slavery in 1750.” (16:11).

¹³ The escaping Africans killed twenty English, settlers but all were caught and killed before reaching St. Augustine. (14:18).

¹⁴ Blacks, Indians, and Spaniards also repelled a British attacks in 1726, 1743, and 1786. (21:114 and 14:13)

1763), these freedman and women were of great contemporary significance. By their ‘theft of self,’ they were a financial loss to their former owners, often a serious one. Moreover, their flight was a political action, sometimes effected through violence, that offered an example to other bondsmen and challenged the precarious political order and social order of the British colonies. The runaways were also important to the Spanish colony for the valuable knowledge and skills they brought with them and for the labor and military services they performed.... These free blacks are also historically significant; an exploration of their lives sheds light on questions long debated by scholars, such as the relative severity of slave systems, the varieties of slave experiences, slaves resistance, the formation of a Creole culture, the nature of black family structures, the impact of Christianity and religious syncretism on African-American societies, and African American influences on the “New World.” (14:5-6)

Despite repeated petitions for release and loyal military service, runaways that arrived between 1687 and March 15, 1738 were not given complete freedom. Most remained in St. Augustine in a mixed state ranging from enslaved persons to indenture servants.¹⁵ Some were apparently resold into slavery in Havana by St. Augustine’s Governor Benavides.¹⁶

Several of the reenslaved men were veterans of the Yamassee War in Carolina, and one of these, Francisco Menedez, was appointed by the Governor Benavides to command a slave militia in 1726... Led by Captain Menendez of the slave militia, the blacks persisted in attempts to secure complete freedom... When Manuel de Montiano became governor in 1737, their fortunes changed. Captain Menendez once more solicited his freedom, and this time his petition was supported by... a Yamassee caciqu¹⁷ named Jorge. Jorge related how Menendez and three others had fought bravely for three years in the Yamassee rebellion, only to be sold back into slavery in Florida by a ‘heathen’ [probably a non-Catholic] named Mad Dog. Jorge condemned this betrayal of the blacks whom he stated had been patient and ‘more than loyal,’ but he did not blame Mad Dog, for he was an ‘infidel’ who knew no better. Rather, he held culpable the Spaniards who had purchased these loyal allies. (14:13-15)

After an investigation of Jorge’s charges, the Menendez petitioners were freed. These freedmen and women were given land two miles north of St. Augustine and established, Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, Fort Mose, ‘A Free Black Town in Spanish Colonial Florida.’

The only known census of Mose, from 1759, recorded twenty-two households with a population of sixty-seven individuals... Almost a quarter of its population consisted of

¹⁵ Four more years of loyal indentured service were decreed to establish freedom, starting October 29, 1733. (14:13)

¹⁶ The governor apparently had personal profit in mind. (14:13)

¹⁷ A local chief or political boss.

children under the age of fifteen. Thirteen of the twenty-two households belonged to nuclear or near nuclear extended families, ...75 percent of the total population, lived with immediate members of their families. There were no female-headed households... and nine households were composed solely of males... The people of Mose were remarkably adaptable. They spoke several European and Indian languages, in addition to their own [most were from the Congo region of Africa (14:20-25)], and were exposed to a variety of subsistence techniques, craft and artistic traditions, labor patterns, and food ways. (14:30-31)

The price of freedom meant living directly in the path of an overland British attack on St. Augustine. They were the first line of defense, for the “Nation’s Oldest City.” The second line of defense to an overland attack was the nearby Indian town. (14:14) The role of the Black and Indian allies, “in defense of the Spanish colony has not yet been appreciated. They were cavalry units that served in frontier reconnaissance and as guerrilla fighters.” (14:21) Today they might be compared to Army Rangers, Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance, Navy SEALs, or Air Force Special Operations units. “They had their own officers and patrolled independently...” they were St. Augustine’s “special operations forces.” (14:21) Their military and political leader was the same Signior Capitano Francisco Menendez who petitioned for their collective freedom. (14:19-23) “Menendez was a man of unusual capabilities.” (14:23) He apparently spoke several languages, wrote in Spanish (14:20), and was the senior administrator of Fort Mose (14:21), and “exploited the political leverage” of Mose as it stood in the gap between Spain and England for the benefit of its inhabitants. Captured at sea by the British in 1741, and recognized as the Black commander from the assault that retook Fort Mose, he was taken to New Providence, Bahamas. There Menendez was tied to a cannon, subjected to a mock castration, given “200 lashes,” “pickled” after the whipping, and “according to the Laws of the Plantation,” ordered sold into slavery. (14:23) However, by 1752 he had returned to Florida and was back in command of Fort Mose. (14:22-23)

Today, a display regarding Ft. Mose is located at the National Park Service site, Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, in St. Augustine. The display reads, “Fort Mose--First Black settlement, only site of its kind in the U.S.” (22) Together with Indian and Spanish forces Mose’s residents continually fought for Spain and their own freedom against English troops and their allies. At one time they abandoned and retook Fort Mose,¹⁸ on other occasions they traveled to Georgia to attack the English in their cities, plantations, and the towns of England’s Indian allies. Examples of their efforts are the successful retaking of Fort Mose, (the battle was called Fatal Mose) and the Spanish loss at the Battle of Bloody Marsh on Saint Simon’s Island in 1742 near present day Brunswick, Georgia. Over time the free blacks of Mose were more than just allies to the Yamasse, and other Indians of the region; they became family.

¹⁸ The defenders of Mose vowed, “to be ‘the most cruel enemies of the English’ and risk their lives and spill their ‘last drop of blood in defense of the Great Crown of Spain and the Holy Faith’.” The British called their defeat at Mose, as “Bloody Mose” or “Fatal Mose.” (14:19) No one is given responsibility, but in British reports two of their wounded prisoners who could not travel were allegedly castrated and decapitated by the victorious Spanish forces. “Both Spanish and British authorities routinely paid their Indian allies for enemy scalps, and at least one scalp was taken at ‘Moosa,’ according to British reports.” (14:19)

Parish registers reflect the great ethnic and racial diversity in Spanish Florida in these years [late 1730s through the 1760s]. Because there were fewer female runaways, the males of that group [Ft. Mose and original escapees] were forced to look to the local possibilities for marriage partners -- either Indian women from the two outlying villages of Nustra Senora de la Leche and Nuestra Senora de Tholomato, or free and slave women from St. Augustine. (14:24)

One result of this intermingling of red and black was the “Black Seminole” descendants of those free blacks and natives of Fort Mose and St. Augustine, who remained in Florida when it became a United States possession.

In 1763 Spain evacuated the town and garrison in St. Augustine to Cuba. Mose and Indian Town residents also left their Spanish protectorate areas. Some went to Cuba and some into the native population.

“The story of Fort Mose provides an important lesson that African-American history was more than a slave experience. The men and women of Mose won their liberty through bravery and effort, and made an important contribution to the history of the Americas.” (22)

Part 2: BLACK INDIANS

A complicating factor in the crazy quilt pattern of American amalgamation is the large-scale intermixture of [B]lack and Indian genes. American [B]lacks, Melville J. Herskovits wrote, ‘have mingled with the American Indian on a scale hitherto unrealized.’ [John Hugo] Johnston said, ‘The Indian has not disappeared from the land, but is now a part of the Negro population of the United States’.¹⁹ (2:321)

Television cast him as a salt-and-pepper-headed comic. Malcolm X called him, “Chicago Red... the funniest dishwasher on the earth.” (4:15) His family tree included Africans and Native Americans. His real name was John Elroy Sanford. We knew him as “Redd Foxx.” Her family named her, Loretta Mary Aiken; “[b]orn of mixed Black, Cherokee, and Irish” (4:16) stock; we labeled her African American. “Moms” Mabley said, “I wasn’t raised to be black or white. God made us all equal and died for all of us.” (4:1) Also of red and black heritage was Italian sculptress, Edmonia Lewis, named “Wildfire” by her Black and Chippewa parents, and Black Seminole leader, John Horse, who was the last former enslaved person to sit in the U.S. Congress (1897 - 1901). “He was the first to introduce a Federal anti-lynching bill.” (20:2-3)

¹⁹ Bennett states, “The material in this chapter [of *Before the Mayflower*] on amalgamation during the slavery period is based largely on John Hugo Johnston’s doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago, ‘Race relations in Virginia and Miscegenation in the South, 1776-1860.’” Carter Woodson’s article, “The Beginnings of the Miscegenation of the Whites and Blacks” and A. W. Calhoun’s study, *A Social History of the American Family*, can be found in the *Journal of Negro History*.

[I]n the 1920s the anthropologist Melville J. Herskovits... concluded that between a quarter and a third of African Americans had at least one Native American ancestor. Today that figure is closer to 95 percent. Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, Jr., Leana Horne, Alex Haley, Jesse Jackson, Alice Walker, Langston Hughes, and LL Cool J are just a few of the African Americans who have acknowledged their Indian ancestry. (12:32)

If they had lived just one generation earlier they may have been described as Indians, or Black Indians.

Black-Indian mixtures began in the colonial period when both groups were held as indentured servants and slaves. In the absence of legal prohibitions [which came later], squaws took black husbands and braves took black wives. As the black population increased, whole Indian tribes, ... 'became untraceable lost in the Negro population of the South.' (2:321-322)

The Seminole Indian experience is one of the most striking examples of the red and black mix. During the 1700s, these red and black people evolved into a dominant force in what was then called Spanish Florida. Over 200 years of European diseases, conflict with colonial rivals, lose of the Yamasse War, Creek Indian civil war, migration, integration of runaway African slaves, and various military alliances produced the Seminole Nation. (18:1) According to researcher Darrell Riley, "[t]he word 'Seminole' is an English derivation of the Spanish word 'cimarron,' which means wild one or wild people, possibly a reference to the remoteness of the Seminoles from the Creeks." (18:2) Author Kenneth W. Porter says, separated from the main body of Lower Creeks, they were sometimes known as "Seminoles," or "secedes." (17:5) A definition of *Seminole* found on an Internet site at the University of Florida, describes them as, "one who has camped out from regular towns" or "runaway."

By the mid-1700s, the area of present-day Tallahassee to St. Augustine and south to the rolling hills northeast of Tampa Bay slowly was transformed into the land of the Seminoles. The heart of this nation lay in the great Alachua savanna (Paynes Prairie)... in present-day Marion, Sumter, and Citrus Counties [Florida]. (18:2)

When Britain gained Florida from Spain after the French and Indian Wars in 1763, the Florida natives were completely separated from their Creek counterparts to the north. When James Grant, the first British governor of East Florida (present day northeast and central Florida), called the Creek leaders together for a meeting... Cowkeeper [the lower Creek/Florida Creek leader] did not attend. He paid a personal visit to Grant a month later, and as result, the British government began treating the Florida tribes as a separate group, calling them the Seminoles. (18:2)

Before 1763, offers of freedom from the Spanish and with safety promised by a Spanish and Indian alliance, enslaved Africans made Spanish Florida the runaway's destination of choice. Some early escapees even ventured back to "fetch" more family from Georgia and Alabama. (11:49)

It is important to remember that enslaved Africans still outnumbered freedmen and that many native communities gradually adopted enslavement of Africans. To escape English and later, American enslavement, enslaved Africans walked, ran, paddled, and hid while traveling hundreds of miles across bridgeless rivers, through roadless forests, and in jungle swamps, or in marshland filled with alligators, snakes, and groups of hostile whites and Indians. Freedom with the Indians could result in being re-enslaved by new Indian masters, but this enslavement did not usually include return of runaways to the harsher conditions of their former masters. Instead runaways became free. More likely they became enslaved beside the Africans the Indians²⁰ had earlier taken from whites in raids on their northern plantations, purchased or taken in trade.

Evidence of great ethnic and racial diversity and the intermarriage of Indians, Africans, and whites is prominent in Spanish Florida.

Parish registers [in St. Augustine] reflect the great ethnic and racial diversity in Spanish Florida in these years [1740s, 1750s and 1760s]. Because there were fewer female runaways, the [escaped] males were forced to look to the local possibilities for marriage partners -- Indian women from the two outlying [Indian] villages... Interracial relationships were common, and families were restructured frequently when death struck and widowed men and women remarried. (2:24)

Of note during this time is that white [Spanish loyalists] and African marriages in what is now the city of Jacksonville, and Nassau, Duval, and St. Johns Counties in Florida included some of the wealthiest and most dominant plantation owners of the 1700s and early 1800s.²¹ (15:137) Of particular note was the union of Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr.,²² and his former enslaved African wife, Anna Magigine Jai (Anta Majigeen Ndiaye) Kingsley.²³ At the peak of their wealth, the Kingsley family owned multiple plantation sites (in the United States and Haiti), hundreds of enslaved Africans, including a plantation on present-day Fort George Island, north of the current

²⁰ Children of an enslaved African and free native were born free in Indian towns.

²¹ “Other African wives and mistresses of white men also lived nearby. Molly Erwin was the wife of James Erwin, who worked fifty slaves on his rice plantation on the St. Marys River. The two African wives of George Clarke, an important official with the Spanish government of East Florida... Francis Richard, Francisco Xavier Sanchez and several other prominent men in Florida also had black wives and raised their interracial children in familial bonds.” (15:137)

²² Kingsley was then 43 years old. His two daughters by Anna married, “prosperous Scotsmen from the north ... Martha married Oran Baxter, a ship builder and planter, and Mary wed John S. Sammis, a planter, sawmill owner, and merchant... Martha Baxter a widow... was one of the five wealthiest persons living in Duval County in 1860. Mary and John Sammis were even more affluent.” (15:146 and 149). He had “other slave mistresses who also gave birth to his children.” (15:138)

²³ Anna, who Kingsley impregnated sometime before her arrival in Florida, was 13 or 14 when she had her first of three children by him, and was 18 on March 4, 1811 when he freed her and the children. The children were then, “George, about 3 years 9 months, Martha, 20 months old, and Mary, one month old.” (15:138-139) A second son, John, was born November 22, 1824. (15:143)

U.S. Naval Station at Mayport, Florida and south to present day Orange Park, Florida. At the Fort George Island location the main house, barns, cooks' house, Anna's separate quarters, and slave row housing are now a U.S. Department of the Interior managed site open to the public free of charge. Many of the Kingsley furnishings are presently at the site. And today the main east-west roadway in Orange Park, just south of Jacksonville is Kingsley Avenue, an area near the former Kingsley plantation fields.

As a result of their conversion to Catholicism, church records document intermarriage among the three races. It is ironic that a new nation was engaged in a struggle for freedom from England while its citizens were simultaneously enslaving Africans and trying or planning to eradicate Native Americans. A prominent commentator on one aspect of the struggle was Thomas Jefferson, a future President, Secretary of State, and the owner of enslaved Africans and the alleged father of one enslaved African mulatto child. (9) In his original draft of the Declaration of Independence (5:34-40), submitted for approval to the Continental Congress June 28, 1776, Jefferson wrote a paradox to his life and his new country's future actions in the following words that included the famous line "... all men are created equal..." He wrote,

He [the British King] has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of liberty in the persons of a distant people, who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN [original emphasis] should be brought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to restrain the execrable commerce; and that this assemblage of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them: thus, paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with the crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.

In every stage of these oppressions "we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms." Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant unfit to be ruler of a people who mean to be free. Future ages will scarce believe that the hardiness of one man adventured, with the short compass of twelve years only, to lay a foundation, so broad and undisguised, for tyranny over a people fostered and fixed in principles of freedom. (5:34-35)²⁴

²⁴ "The petition of A great Number of Blacks detained in a State of Slavery in the Bowels of a free & Christian Country Humbly sheweth that your Petitioners apprehend that they have in common with all other men a Natural and Unaliable Right to that freedom which the Great Parent of the [Universe] hath Bestowed equally on all menkind and which they have never forfeited by any Compact or agreement whatever... They cannot but express their Astonishment that It has [Never Been Considered] that Every Principle from which America has Acted in the Cours of their unhappy Difficulties with Great Briton Pleads Stronger than A thousand arguments in favours of your petitioners. MASSACHUSETTS SLAVE PETITION, 1777." [original spelling repeated] (2:55)

In 1808, after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, and following the presidencies of George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, Congress prohibited the importation of enslaved Africans. (21:166) In that year James Madison was also elected President of the United States. Madison became a force diametrically opposed to the mixed red, black, and white Florida way of life and the vast land area that they occupied. Madison, and his Secretary of State, James Monroe, sought to expand the United States and to do so they, “[i]nstigated and covertly financed” the “Patriot Rebellion” in 1812. (17:4-12) The authority of this incursion into Spanish East Florida was secretly authorized by the U.S. Congress on January 15, 1811. (17: 3) The “Rebellion” was the first shot in a series of conflicts between the United States and the Seminole Nation. On other fronts,, the U.S. and Indian allies were at war with Britain and her Indian allies in the War of 1812. The Creeks were involved in a religious/political civil war (1:292), and Creek land became a base for “U.S. defense of the southern territories... [which] led to [a new] wave of Creek immigrants into Florida” (18:3), another foundation of the Seminole Nation. (18:3)

One of the major points of contention between the Seminoles and the Americans was runaway slaves joining the tribes. These Black Seminoles as they became known, “included descendants of those free blacks and natives who established Fort Mose near St. Augustine... and more recent runaways from plantation slavery in South Carolina and Georgia.” (18:3) “One of the main reasons behind Georgians’ frequent invasions of Florida and their attempts to overthrow the Spanish government [Patriots Rebellion] was their hope of re-enslaving the Black Seminoles.” (18:3)

In *Black Seminoles*, Kenneth W. Porter begins recounting the moves in 1811 to annex Florida. The actions of the so called “Patriots” were actually Georgia plantation owners attempting to carry out the secret Congressional authority for their own profit with the support of the U.S. military ‘advisors’ (15:140) and a naval blockade. (17:4)²⁵ In addition to the valuable land the Spanish and Indians possessed there was the opportunity to capture runaway enslaved Africans or their descendants who lived in the area.

Anna Kingsley and her family were in the center of this storm. For her actions against the Patriot forces, the governor in St. Augustine awarded her a 350-acre land grant. (15:141)²⁶ Anna, other free blacks like her, and the Black Seminoles had more to fear than loss of land.

²⁵ Some may consider this action similar to activities of recent wars.

²⁶ “In November 1813 Colonel Samuel Alexander, a notorious plunderer and slave catcher from Georgia led the feared attack on Anna’s farm [her separate property in what is now the Mandarin section of Jacksonville]. Crewman on the Spanish gunboats on the [St. Johns River] saw the rebels as they approached but were unable to stop their march. Instead, the gunboat commander met briefly with Anna in her poultry yard surrounded by her [three] children and twelve slaves. [S]he emptied the houses ... and carried the furnishings to a hiding spot... placed the children in the care of her slaves and hid them in the woods by the shoreline.”

“Before joining her children, Anna lit a torch and burned her home and the cabins of her slaves. She then ran through the woods to her family and led them to the gunboat. The gunboat returned to its command post at San Nicolas, [now near the St. Nicolas neighborhood of Jacksonville] just down river from the ferry crossing at Cowford [downtown Jacksonville, in back of the present City Hall Annex Building on Bay Street].” (15:141)

Their freedom, or the relaxed version of slavery for those Africans enslaved by the Seminoles or the Spanish, was at stake.

The contrast between the Black Seminoles' situation and Southern slavery was striking. Their everyday life was idyllic compared to that of plantation slaves. They built houses in their own villages, Indian style, with palmetto planks [and]... Black Seminoles were not bound to the hoe. They spent part of their time hunting and fishing. During war, men and youths armed themselves and assembled under their own captains. Their leader, in turn, obeyed the Seminole chief to whom the blacks owned allegiance. (17:6-7)

Several factors increased pressure on black and red populations in the Florida panhandle. One was the Creek Civil War and the simultaneous war with U.S. forces, including the combined Red Stick Creek and black force victories at Burnt Corn Creek (Mississippi), July 27, 1813 and Fort Mims (north of Mobile, Alabama) over U.S. forces and their Indian allies. The victorious red and black force of Fort Mims spared only the lives of the enslaved Africans inside the fort. This proved to be a rallying point for both sides. The decisive points were first, the U.S. and Creek battle between the Red Sticks and U.S. forces led by Major General Andrew Jackson at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, Alabama, in 1814 (the Red Sticks were defeated); second, the U.S. victory at the Battle of New Orleans (forces also under General Jackson's command); third, the black combatants' loss at "Fort Negro," to U.S. troops in 1816 (the fort was targeted pursuant to General Jackson's orders); and fourth, the loss of substantive British support after the War of 1812.

Fort Negro (or Negro Fort) was originally a British fort called, "British Post," and was located at Prospect Bluff, approximately 150 miles east of Pensacola, Florida on the Apalachicola River. (17:15) At the conclusion of the War of 1812, the British abandoned the fort and its supplies, which included muskets, cannons, and ammunition, to their Creek and black allies. Prior to this, approximately "three thousand Indians and three hundred blacks" (17:15) had been trained at the fort. "Eventually, the tribespeople drifted eastward... to establish their own villages. But the blacks stayed behind....". (17:16)

The Negro Fort, as it became known, was a beacon that drew restless slaves from miles around. At that time there were reportedly about a thousand runaways in Florida. Welcomed by the blacks at the post, they settled under the protection of its ramparts. Eventually, their fields and pastures extended fifty miles along the Apalachicola River.

By 1815 General Jackson, military commander of the region, had a fortress full of armed blacks, with British, Spanish, and Indian allegiances on the southern border of slaveholding U.S. states. After receiving no action on his complaints to the Spanish (in whose territory the fort existed), General Jackson "ordered General Edmund P. Gaines to destroy the stronghold and return the blacks to their owners." (17:16) In July 1816, Gaines, Lieutenant Colonel Duncan Clinch, Captain (Chief) William McIntosh,²⁷ slave hunting Creeks, and two U.S. gunboats attacked Fort Negro.

²⁷ Born about 1775, he was a mixed blood (white Scottish father and Creek mother) plantation owner and first cousin of Georgia Governor George Troup. After fighting for the U.S., McIntosh signed a treaty that sold off the

Each side fired off cannonballs that landed harmlessly in the mud or shallow water. Eight times U.S. ships fired and eight times no one inside Fort Negro was hit. A ninth cannonball, heated red hot in a ship's furnace, landed with miraculous accuracy inside the fort's ammunition dump. In an instant Fort Negro was a roar of flames as hundreds of barrels of gunpowder exploded.

In the smoking ruins the U.S. invaders found 270 dead, three uninjured and sixty-four wounded, some fatally. Garcia, [the black commander] found alive was executed and the surviving men, women and children marched back to slavery in Georgia.

The U.S. public heard nothing about this massacre for twenty years. In 1837 Congressman William Jay broke the story. (11:55)

After the "lucky cannon shot" natives and Blacks fled to safer Seminole lands in the eastern and central parts of present day Florida, some settling near the Flint and Suwannee Rivers. General Jackson's troops subsequently captured Pensacola and gained effective control of western Florida.

SEMINOLE WARS

Over the next four decades the Seminoles fought the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marines to a stand off in three wars that cost the United States more than fifteen hundred soldiers and \$40 million. At one point the Seminoles managed to tie up **half the U.S. Army** [emphasis added]. "This, you may be assured," said [General] Thomas Jesup in 1837, "is a Negro, not an Indian war." In reality it was both. (3:34)

The Seminoles [of the 1800s] located in present-day Marion County were increasingly affected by the conflicts between whites and natives farther to the north. The near constant violence that characterized Florida during the opening decades of the 19th century culminated in the First Seminole War in 1818.

Troops later attacked two Seminole villages near the Flint and Suwannee Rivers. In one engagement, a few hundred Black Seminoles and a number of Indians fought a delaying retreat on the western side of the Suwannee River against a force several times their size (5500) while their families and the families of the Black Seminole towns escaped to the eastern side. "The main drift of the Americans is to destroy the black population of Swany [after]... [General] Andrew Jackson... marched, largely unopposed through much of East Florida." (17: 21, 26) "In 1819 the U.S. paid Spain \$5 million for Florida [and released claims to Texas], making Jackson's seizure appear to be a real estate purchase. Now the authorities turned to the "Seminole problem." (11: 56) Jackson, territorial Governor, soon departed and was succeeded by William Pope DuVal.

Creek lands in Georgia (the Treaty of 1825). His fellow Creeks later killed him as a traitor and burned down his plantation in Carroll County, Georgia. (6)

The Seminoles were ultimately driven into southern Florida and forced to live on reservations or plantation style and adopt the southern United States version of African enslavement. They and the Black Seminoles in their midst resisted this pressure for over 40 years with force.

CONCLUSION

The alliance fought on for red and black freedom in Florida, the western territories, and Mexico for decades to follow. According to Porter,

The [Negroes], who dwell among these people as their slaves, are intelligent, speak the English language,... and... have a great influence over... the Indians... They fear being made slaves, under the American government, and will omit nothing to increase and keep alive mistrust among Indians, whom they in fact govern. If it should be necessary to use force with them, it is to be feared the Indians would [side with the blacks]... It will, however, be necessary to remove from Florida this group of lawless freebooters, among whom runaways [Negro's] will always find refuge. (17:27)

Through the Second and Third Seminole Wars, the American Civil War, and the Western Indian Campaigns, the allies changed, but a fight for black and red freedom continued. Their leaders would be red Seminole Chief Bowlegs, King Philip, Chief Micanopy Wild Cat, and Chief Osceola, among others. Black Seminole leaders were Nero, Abraham, John Caesar, John Horse, Snake Warrior, and Jim Lane. Seminoles and Black Seminoles collectively and separately fought the U.S. military for four decades, and after the American Civil War the Black Seminoles became part of the U.S. Army as the Black Seminole Scouts. But through it all,

Florida proved unique in U.S. history -- a location where large communities of ex-slaves could live hidden from enemy eyes. Escaped slaves living as maroons [or among the natives] became [some of] Florida's first settlers. Dense jungles, high grass, deadly reptiles, alligators, hoards of insects, and tropical diseases waited for all who entered.

These conditions also protected Africans from European invading forces. Historian Joseph Opala has written, [For many years] Florida was in the hands of its new inhabitants. That it was colored Spanish on the map was largely for the amusement of white men.

Generations before Thomas Jefferson sat down to write the Declaration of Independence, Florida's dark runaways [and the Indian allies] wrote their own. It used no paper or ink and was constructed of spears, arrows, and captured muskets. But it issued a warning of 'keep out!' and 'leave us alone, or else die.' It said 'give me liberty or death.' (11:49-50)

Their statement through action fits squarely in the fabric of American history. Were the issues for which they fought any different than those fought for in the American Revolution or American Civil War? For these red and black people of early America, for these red and Black Seminoles, for the combatants of the Negro Fort, and for the people of Fort Mose, we must

reexamine and reevaluate United States history with a rainbow lens. The old versions do not focus on the full picture. Our founding fathers of color fought and died for our legacy and for their place in American history. They fought and died for the same principles the signers of the Declaration of Independence sought, self-governance, “freedom, a safe home, family happiness and a piece of one’s own land.” (11: dust cover) These principles were defended on this soil by a red, black, mixed race, and sometimes those of the white alliance years before, and years after the colonies revolted. These red, black, white, and mixed race people contributed blood, sweat, and tears to their American Dream and its parallel nightmare. Their fight was the first defense of individual freedom on these shores. Their efforts laid the foundation and espoused the bedrock principles for all future struggles toward representative democracy in the land that would become the United States of America. Perhaps it is time to recognize this largely overlooked, but fundamental portion of our history?

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