HOWARD UNIVERSITY

# Dominica's Neg Mawon: Maroonage, Diaspora, and Trans-Atlantic Networks, 1763-1814

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**Neil C. Vaz**

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## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Dr. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Ph.D.
Chairperson

Quito Swan, Ph.D.

Dr. Clement Animan Akassi, Ph.D.

Dr. Jean-Michel Mabeko-Tali, Ph.D.

Dr. Glenn Chambers, Jr., Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Michigan State University

Dr. Quito Swan, Ph.D.
Dissertation Advisor

Candidate: Neil C. Vaz
Date of Defense: April 21, 2016

# DEDICATIONS

This dissertation is dedicated to my two children,
Nayla and Osei "Kwaku" Vaz, and their mother
Brenda Fernanda Urrea

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I arrived at Howard University in August of 2009 as a graduate student in the master's program, majoring in African history. When I arrived in Washington, D.C. all I had was my car and a few bags of clothes. My first day in Washington was at the orientation the week before school started. I was not even certain that I was going to stay. My Father had a friend in Washington by the name of Evelyn Parchment who was gracious enough to allow me to stay in her home free of cost, until I got on my feet. I am forever indebted to Aunt Evelyn for her charity and kindness. After being impressed with Howard's orientation I decided to stay. I would also like to thank Jeanne Toungara, who was my initial advisor in the early days. She was the one who made me feel at home when I arrived here. Dr. Toungara was very nurturing towards me at a time when I was a new student in a strange city.

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trail through the rainforests, which was not much of a trail. We ended up getting lost and ran out of time when night time arrived. With no food, resources, or ability to communicate with outsiders, the eight of us used all of our specialties to ensure our survival that night. That night also served as an inspiration for my dissertation. We spent the night as maroons, lost in the wilderness, walking along precarious ridges, wading through rivers, slipping on their algae covered stones, sliding down hills, and tip-toeing on the edge of precipices. The next morning, we decided to retrace our steps back to Mount Qua-Qua, when we were rescued by my cousin Abayomi Clouden, his girlfriend, then later Grenada's paramilitary. We Jungle 8 maroons will forever have a bond that is indescribable. I thank you.

I want to give much thanks to J.R. Kerr-Ritchie who I was a research assistant to, and who was my advisor in my initial years in the PhD program. Dr. Kerr-Ritchie played a major role in my development as a scholar over the years. He introduced me to primary source research as his research assistance. He also encouraged me to take some French courses, which definitely helped me in my research. Working under him I really feel like I gained the experience necessary to be an effective researcher. I want to give much thanks to Quito Swan, who is my advisor. Dr. Swan pulled me aside in the spring of 2013 and gave me some critical advice, and a reading list that would change the framework of my research and writing. Dr. Swan, being from the island of Bermuda, often spoke of the spiritual aspects of Afro-descendant populations, which I could relate to, being a child of Jamaican and Grenadian parents. These metaphysical aspects of history are often ignored because they may seem unquantifiable. Dr. Swan made it cool for me to discuss these things that I used to perceive as not being academic. In other words, I now feel truly comfortable merging my true interests with my work.

There is one professor from Howard University who I am indebted to. His name is Selwyn H.H. Carrington. He retired in June 2014, but before he left Howard he had done an unmeasurable amount for me as a student. When I failed my Comprehensive Exam in the early spring of 2013, Dr. Carrington reached out to me. That entire spring and summer, before I had the opportunity to retake the exam, Dr. Carrington called me almost every morning to make sure that I was up early studying and preparing for the exam in the fall. We went to campus every day together during the summer when hardly anyone was there, and he made sure I stayed focused at a time when I seemed to have had so many distractions. Dr. Carrington is the last of a dying breed of professors, who actually took his time and energy to ensure that his students were succeeding in all of their aspirations. Without him I don't know if this dissertation would have been possible.

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my dissertation and research process. They have gone from crawling and diapers to going to school and riding bikes while I have been a PhD student. This dissertation has been so much a part of my life that my kids were both using the word “dissertation” when they were one and three, while they would pretend to type on their playschool laptops. And their mother Brenda is the reason why anything has been possible. She is amazing. She has stayed up late nights with me until the early hours of the morning while I am writing papers. She has made sure to create and maintain a work friendly environment at home by getting me office materials, so it’s easier to work at home. Brenda has sacrificed so much for me that I can’t even begin to explain how much she has done to make everything easier on me through this entire process. I am definitely forever indebted to her.

# Abstract

Maroon communities are often portrayed as renegade groups of Africans living within or on the fringes of some of the more popular slave societies such as Jamaica, Saint-Domingue (Haiti), Suriname, or Brazil, whose purpose or goals in their existence was never to strive towards universal emancipation of the African lot, and whose resistance and radicalism, if occurring during the Age of Revolution (i.e. Haiti), is often attributed to European influences during that era. This socio-cultural and political history about a lesser known group of maroons in Dominica challenges the preconceived notions of African maroonage and resistance, and is original in four ways: One, this dissertation demonstrates that the maroons of Dominica who lived in the interior of the island worked with the enslaved population on plantations on several occasions to overthrow the British colonial government in an attempt to assist their African brethren in freedom; Secondly, this work highlights the African origins of the spiritual and political philosophies, particularly the lesser credited Igbo, who comprised of a significant portion of Africans in Dominica, are what guided their anti-slavery and anti-colonial resistance; Thirdly, the maroons and enslaved populations, who demonstrated alliances with one another in Dominica during the 1790s and early nineteenth century were not influenced by French Revolutionary ideals, but were pursued for an alliance, and the former, in particular, often rejected alliances with French Revolutionary sympathizers; Lastly, this dissertation takes the maroons of Dominica outside the confines of a national history and connects it to the greater African Diaspora.

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# INTRODUCTION

The word maroon comes from the Spanish word *cimarron,* which was originally used to describe cattle that escaped farms and fled up into the mountains. It was later used in Spanish America to describe Africans who escaped enslavement in the early years of American colonization. Following Spanish domination of the early Americas, the French and British in the seventeenth century started to expand their empires in the West. As a part of this process, the French and the British surpassed the trend set by their Iberian counterparts by importing massive amounts of African captives into the region. As a result, many of these captives also escaped into the fringes of French and British colonial societies. The word *cimarron* was adopted by the French as *marron* and later by the English as "maroon."[1] Maroons lived a lifestyle that was intentionally off-the-grid and esoteric. They have often been ignored or overlooked in the mainstream histories of the Americas. Nevertheless, in more relatively recent years the maroons of Jamaica, Suriname, Brazil and Haiti have received considerable attention in the historiography of the African Diaspora. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century a phenomenal group of revolutionary African maroons thrived among the mountains of Dominica for more than fifty years. Known as *Neg Mawon* by the local French Creole speaking population, these people have received very little scholarly attention compared to their Jamaican and South American namesakes. This dissertation demonstrates that Dominica's experience should be more central to the narrative of maroon communities and resistance in the Americas.

[1] Richard Price. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. xi

Dominica is an independent Leeward island among the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean Sea. It sits north and south of two French protectorates—Martinique and Guadeloupe (Figure 1).

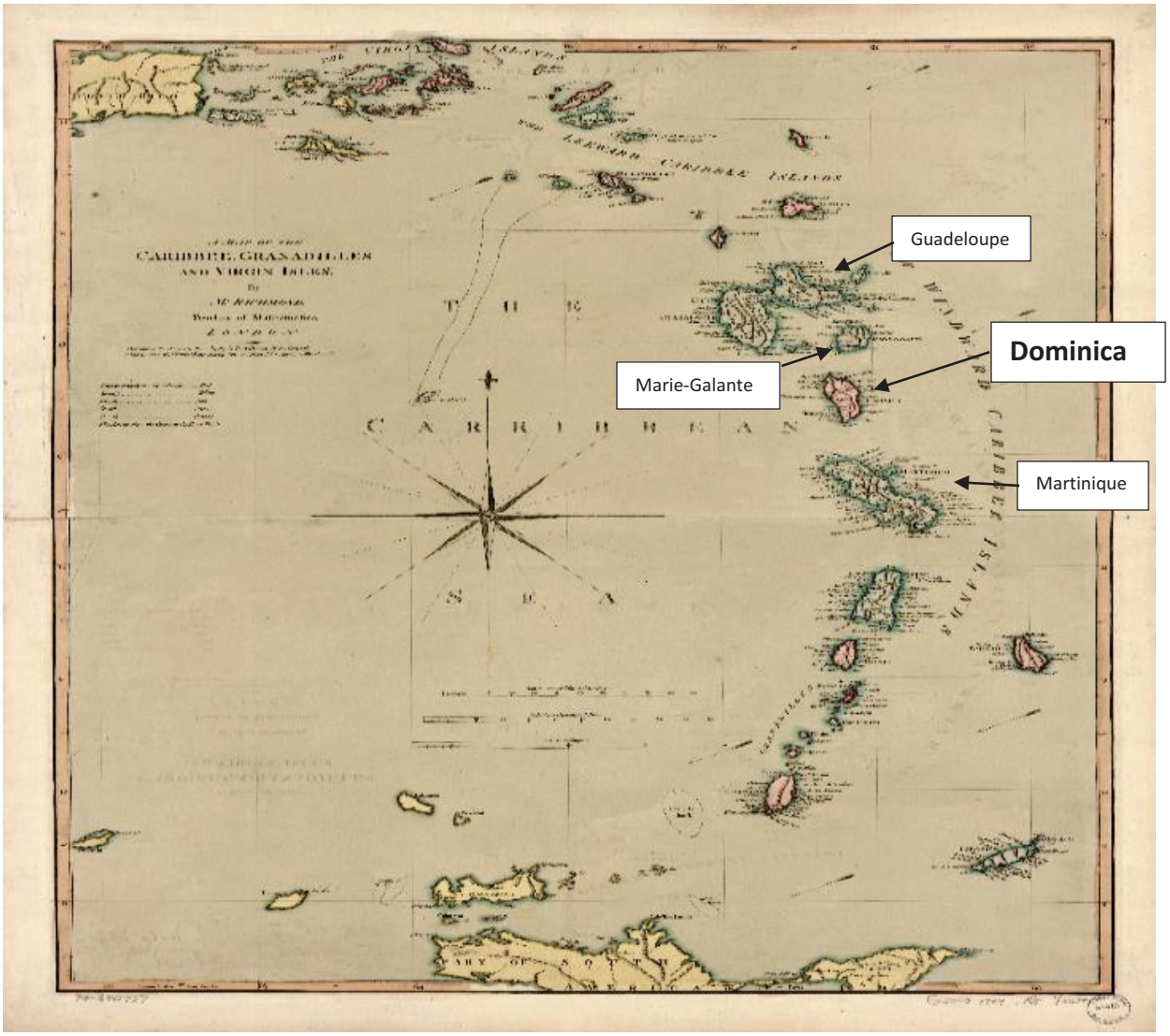


**Figure 1: Map of the Lesser Antilles with a Focus on Dominica.**[2]

[2] Richmond, M, William Faden, John Harris, and Robert Wilkinson. *A map of the Caribbee, Granadilles and Virgin Isles*. London, R. Wilkinson, W. Faden, & J. Harris, 1789. Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/74690959. (Accessed April 1, 2016.) Modified by Neil Vaz.

Just like most of the Americas, Dominica was inhabited by indigenous societies prior to the arrival of the Europeans. These persons were the Kalinago, also known as the Carib Indians. On 3 November 1493, the Spanish sighted the island, but never made a permanent settlement. In the late seventeenth century the French began to settle on the island, taking over large portions of Kalinago land. Much of the Kalinago migrated to Saint Vincent and other neighboring islands. Throughout the first two-thirds of the eighteenth century the French established settlements and plantations throughout the island. French inhabitants imported Africans from the neighboring islands through the transshipment slave trade. In 1763, after the Seven Years' War, Dominica, along with Grenada, Saint Vincent, and Tobago, were all ceded to the British through the Treaty of Paris. Prior to the Ceded Islands' cession to the British the economies of all four islands were based on coffee, cocoa, tobacco, and spices. These were controlled by predominantly French Catholic planters. Within ten years after British acquisition, the islands were transformed into sugarcane monoculture economies.[3] The British inhabitants increased their importation of enslaved Africans to the Ceded Islands, leading to further rebellion and resistance.[4]

In Dominica, the transformation in the dynamics of the economy of the island, and the subsequent culture of the island was tremendous. According to the "*Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*", prior to 1763 there were no Africans transported to Dominica directly from Africa when the French were the primary European settlers. Grenada and Tobago experienced intermittent slave revolts and Saint Vincent's Black Caribs engaged in war with the British until 1796, when they were expelled from the island. Meanwhile, Dominica's resistance to the British

[3] Bernard Marshall. *Slavery, Law and Society in the British Windward Islands, 1763-1833: A Comparative Study.* Kingston: Arawak Publications, 2007. 227

[4] Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy. *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000. 41

cession was constant, persistent, and out lasted the struggle of Saint Vincent by almost twenty years. With a combination of the enslaved who fled to the mountains at the time of transfer, and the abundance of newly imported enslaved Africans to the island reaching the thousands early after British acquisition, these maroons established an impregnable nation by 1772.[5] Governor George Ainslie referred to the Dominican maroons an "imperium in imperio," meaning a state within a state.[6] From the 1760s through the 1810s the maroons proved to be a formidable revolutionary nation amid Britain's colony. They defended the island from the British during the American War for Independence, conspired with the enslaved, and fought in two major wars against the British colonial regime in Dominica. In 1814, the maroon nation would finally meet its demise. However, this was not the end of the spirit of resistance in Dominica.

## Literature Review

This is a work on the maroons of Dominica. Dominica has not received much attention in the historiography of the African diaspora and Caribbean. However, the maroon resistance did receive scant attention in newspapers in the United States, Caribbean, and England in the 1780s during what has been termed "The First Maroon War." The first popular monograph that was written on the island was in 1791. In that year Thomas Atwood produced *The History of the Island of Dominica,* where he describes everything about the history of Dominica including climate, natural habitat, civil government, trade, laws, Dominica's conquest by the French and

[5] O'Shaughnessy. *An Empire Divided.* 41

[6] Michael Craton. *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies.* London: Cornell University Press, 1982. 143

Also from the United Kingdom National Archives at Kew Gardens. CO 71/49

restoration by the British. Atwood also spends a significant portion of the book describing the interior of Dominica and the wealth of natural resources the island possesses. Atwood discusses the maroons during the era of French occupation from 1778 to 1783 and credits the French governor of Dominica, the Marquis Duchilleau, with arming and encouraging the "Negroes" which led to the First Maroon War in the mid-1780s after the British re-occupied the island.[7] In 1815, *A Collection of Plain Authentic Documents, in Justification of the Conduct of Governor Ainslie* was published. This book is a collection of eyewitness accounts by several inhabitants of Dominica during the final war against the maroons in 1815. It alludes to the revolutionary spirit of the Africans in Dominica. The detailed accounts also indicate that there was a faction of individuals of European descent who actually saw Governor Ainslie's quelling of the maroons and their movement as too harsh, and that the enslaved were a people who some considered legitimately free.[8] This assembled collection of letters was published to demonstrate that many people in Dominica believed that the actions taken by Ainslie were warranted. These same accounts were also published in *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to Present,* in 1815, at a time when the discussion of the abolition of slavery in the West Indies was gaining popularity in Parliament.[9]

In 1969, there was Joseph A. Borome's article entitled "Dominica during French Occupation, 1778-1784", which discusses occupation of Dominica during America's War for Independence. A great deal of the author's sources came from Les Archives National d'otre Mer

[7] Thomas Atwood. *The History of Dominica.* London: Frank Crass, 1791. 147, 229

[8] *A Collection of Plain Authentic Documents, in Justification of the Conduct of Governor Ainslie: A Crisis of the Most Imminent Danger to the Lives and Properties of the Inhabitants.* London: C. Lowndes, 1815

[9] Thomas Curson Hansard. *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time. Vol. 31.* London.: T.C. Hansard, 1815. 595-606

and United Kingdom's National Archives at Kew Gardens. However, the author's only mention of the maroons during French occupation is cited from Atwood's *This History of Dominica.*

In 1975, Lennox Honychurch published *The Dominica Story: A History of the Island.* This monograph, like Atwood, delves into history, geology, and the topography of the island. It also gives the history of the many peoples who have inhabited Dominica since the beginning of human presence in the Americas. Honychurch pays considerable attention to the maroons. The middle chapters of the book illustrate the role that the maroons played in the defense of Dominica during the time the French recaptured the island from the British, and also the subsequent problems the maroons caused for the British planters for the decades that followed. However, since it is a book about the general history of Dominica, the author does not tell the story of the maroons from an African diasporic perspective. The author does not attempt to let the reader know who the maroons were and where exactly they came from. The book serves as a nationalist history limited to the confines of Dominica.

In 1982, Michael Craton devotes two detailed chapters in *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* to Dominica and the resistance to British enslavement that played out for fifty years. He does a wonderful job of placing maroonage in the context of other resistance movements by the Africans and Creoles in the British West Indies before, during, and after the Age of Revolution. Dominica is examined in the context of the four Ceded Islands, which, shortly after their arrival, the Africans put up resistance to the new British presence in the islands. Craton acknowledges the significance of the Dominican maroon resistance and makes a comparison to the notorious Jamaican maroons.[10] Yet, Craton does not analyze the ethnic background of the Africans in Dominica in the manner he does in the chapters pertaining to

[10] Michael Craton. *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies.* Ithaca: Cornell University, 1982. 143

Jamaica. He also discusses slave conspiracies, revolts, and mutinies in Dominica during the Age of Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars in a superficial and vague manner. While mentioning the Akan and Congo background of the mutineers in 1802, he does not discuss the backgrounds of the vast majority of the African population in Dominica.

In 2008, Bernard Marshall, produced an informative article on the maroons of Dominica entitled "Maroonage in Slave Plantation Societies: A Case Study of Dominica, 1785-1815." This short article specifically discusses the maroons from 1763 until 1815, and is largely focused on the maroon known as Pharcelle. The article discusses the 1785-6 Maroon War and Pharcelle's agreement he made with the British to serve as an agent to help capture the maroons in exchange for his and his families' *de jure* freedom in the 1790s. The events leading to the Second Maroon War in Dominica are also discussed. Though timely, relative, and well written, this article did not add any original or additional insight to the story of the maroons in Dominica.

Two hundred years after what has been deemed as the Second Maroons War (1813-14) and the dismemberment of what was known of the community, the discussion of the maroons in Dominica has been receiving more visibility in popular Dominican culture and in public spaces. In celebration of the bicentennial, in 2014, Lennox Honychurch wrote another book, this one solely dedicated the maroons of Dominica, entitled *Negre Mawon: The Fighting Maroons of Dominica.* This is the first monograph written and devoted to telling the story about the maroons from the years of inception in the 1760s until the final days of legal enslavement in the island. In 2015, Polly Pattullo released a book called *Your Time is Done Now: Slavery, Resistance, and Defeat: The Maroon Trials of Dominica, 1813-1814.* This publication tells the story of the maroons from their own mouths during the trials of the Second Maroon War in Dominica in the early nineteenth century.

On the other hand, maroons have been a very popular topic in African Diaspora studies for decades now. However, it is typically countries such as Jamaica, Suriname, or Brazil whose maroons numbered well into the thousands, and even tens of thousands, who receive the most attention. Most colonial records show that Dominica's maroon community ranged between 200 and 800 within their roughly fifty-year existence. However, this work argues that in the second decade of the nineteenth century, because of the close links between Africans on plantations and the maroons in the woods, the lines between the 20,000 on plantations and the 800 in the woods were blurred. The estimates of 800 by the colonial government did not represent the reality of the maroon mentality that was present amongst a great many on plantations. Nevertheless, with such a fascinating story of resistance in Dominica the attention to the maroons on that island has been minimal. In 1973, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* by Richard Price was published. The author assembled several articles by various scholars to present the history of various maroon societies throughout the Americas. Price places considerable attention on Jamaica, Brazil, and the Guyanas. To a lesser extent the various chapters discuss the maroon communities throughout the French West Indies and Spanish America. Dominica, however, is only mentioned one time in passing among other maroon communities in the Americas where "Indians were hired by colonists to track down and fight maroons…"[11] Price's lack of including Dominica's maroons came in spite of the fact that contemporaries often positioned them second to only Jamaica's maroons in the British West Indies.[12] In 1979, Eugene Genovese released *Rebellion to Revolution* which was an attempt to distinguish slave revolts and maroonage prior to

[11] Richard Price. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.9

[12] CO 71/9. Letter from Governor Orde to Lord Sydney, December 15, 1785.

the Age of Revolution with revolts and maroonage during and after the age of revolution, claiming that the former were "restorationist" or backward looking while the latter were "revolutionary" or progressive. The Haitian Revolution is given as the first example of a successful slave revolt, where the goal was universal emancipation, in which enslaved people created a modern free state in the modern world. Dominica is not mentioned in the book. Alvin O. Thompson, in his monograph *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (2006), like Prices volume more than three decades prior, is devoted to examining the several maroons throughout the Americas. Like Price, Dominica is hardly mentioned.[13]

## Purpose and aims

This present work is original in its examination of the maroons of Dominica in four ways. First, this study aims to demonstrate by using Dominica as an example that not all maroons were merely a selfish group of renegades concerned only with their own freedom and well-being. They were not simply what Genovese referred to as "restorationists", which he contrasted with revolutionaries. Genovese also claimed that the Haitian Revolution "marked the turning point" in movements of restoration to revolution. However, it was quite the contrary in Dominica. The *Neg Mawon* nation in Dominica exhibited many revolutionary qualities and attempts at overthrowing the system of enslavement. For example, they engaged in all-out-war against British planters and assisted the enslaved on plantations to overthrow the colonial government on multiple occasions. Genovese also claims slave revolts in the Americas prior to the Age of Revolution were "aimed at withdrawing from slave society in an attempt to resurrect an archaic

[13] Alvin O. Thompson. *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas*: Jamaica: University of the West Indies. 2006

social order often perceived as traditionally African…"[14] He then writes, "Until Afro-American slave revolts and maroon movements merged with the trans-Atlantic bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the late eighteenth century, they looked toward restoration of as much a traditional African way of life as could be remembered and copied."[15] The aforementioned statement by Genovese is under the assumption that African traditional societies were not models of egalitarianism and universal emancipatory societies, and that they all had elements of hierarchical or monarchical government with servile or enslaved classes of people as it is known in Europe and throughout the Western world. Genovese's statement also assumes that a collective existence of a people is progressive if modern statehood status is achieved through European recognition. Maroon existence was not predicated on European recognition or standards. Nevertheless, this work will demonstrate that the Africans' goal for the African maroon/enslaved community of Dominica, since its inception, was universal emancipation of enslaved communities throughout the island.

Furthermore, the second aim of this study is to demonstrate that many captive Africans throughout the Americas, and in Dominica specifically, came from parts of Africa where egalitarianism and representative democracy were inherent to their systems of governance and social institutions. As an extension of the second aim, this paper specifically examines the Igbo people originating from West Africa's Bight of Biafra. The Igbo are often overlooked in terms of the critical roles they played in resistance movements to enslavement, and more specifically, in Dominica. The third purpose of this study, which is closely linked with the second one, is to give the pan-African nation in Dominica its agency by demonstrating that they were a legitimate

[14] Eugene Genovese. *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979. 3

[15] Ibid., 82

nation whose strength was being vied for by the intermittently warring English and French, as well as others, and that African ideals were behind the African revolution and nationhood in Dominica. Often enough, the French revolutionaries are given credit for inciting enslaved Africans to resist on plantations. The problematic notion of black people having little desire to yearn for freedom unless encouraged to do so by outsiders, who do not share their plight, unfortunately continues to pervade the minds of scholars and their audiences alike. This dissertation helps us to understand more about the philosophical belief systems that motivated the African people in their time of struggle.

Finally, Dominican scholars such as Honychurch have written extensive histories on the maroons from largely a Dominican nationalist perspective. However, Dominica is only a modern day concept. Viewing the history of those heroic historical figures through a narrow lens limits the ability to capture the entire story. This work contextualizes the experiences of Africans in Dominica within the broader narrative of the African diaspora. It illustrates the significance of the maroons in the greater Africana world. In other words, this is a history of Africans, many who were transported straight from the continent of Africa, some were banished from neighboring islands, some were maritime maroons, and others the children of Africans born in the West, who happened to find solace and refuge in the interior parts of an island that we today call Dominica.

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guides this research is what Cedric Robinson refers to as the Black Radical Tradition or what Anthony Bogues refers to as the African Radical Intellectual

Tradition.[16] The term "Black Radical Tradition" was used by Robinson "as a way of specifying the source of opposition to slavery, Jim Crow, and various other modes of oppression born of racial capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism."[17] The concepts and theories on people of African descent throughout history cannot simply be the traditional European concepts that scholars have overused. As Cedric Robinson writes in *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition,*:

> The transport of African labor to the mines and plantations of the Caribbean and subsequently to what would be known as the Americas meant also the transfer of African ontological and cosmological systems; African presumptions of the organization and significance of social structure; African codes embodying historical consciousness and social experience; and African ideological and behavioral constructions for the resolution of the inevitable conflict between the actual and the normative.[18]

In other words, if we are going to study and attempt to understand the African people of the past, there needs to be a major paradigm shift in the theoretical framework and the methods that are used in order to do so.

Furthermore, this is an African Diasporic work. As Joseph Harris and other scholars such as Colin Palmer have made clear, African Diaspora studies "should begin with the study of Africa."[19] It is imperative, however, that the students of African Diaspora studies and African history understand that African culture is not and has never been monolithic or stagnant.

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[16] Anthony Bogues. *Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals.* New York: Routledge, 2003. 185

[17] Cedric Robinson. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983. xxv

[18] Ibid., 121-122

[19] Colin Palmer. "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora" in *The Journal of Negro History.* 85 (2000) 27-32

However, as R.D.G. Kelley and Tiffany Ruby Patterson write in "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World", "the presumption that black people worldwide share a common culture is not…a result of poor scholarship. It responded to a political imperative."[20] One should not misinterpret Ben Vinson's statement that, "Pan-Africanism was the umbrella term to encompass collective, global black activism, and etc", and that "African Diaspora was to divorce the politically charged concept."[21] That is not to say that African Diaspora, as a subject of history is not political. All "history" is political. As Kelley states, "The idea of a 'European' culture or even an 'English' culture is often taken for granted and hardly ever problematized."[22] Europe is only a peninsula of the Asian continent and somehow it has achieved the status of being its own continent. Moreover, generally speaking, people of African descent have had a common history, a common plight, and a common struggle in the modern world, which links the people together. Their historical shared experiences warrant them to be studied as a group. Joao H. Costa Vargas writes about this phenomenon in "The Liberation Imperative of Black Genocide" where he condemns the modern state as being responsible for the "genocide" of African descendant populations throughout the world, and how blacks in Brazil and the United States have realized their common struggle and have organized in the 1990s and should continue to organize on the basis of their struggles with the state.[23]

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[20] Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D.G. Kelley. "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World" in *African Studies Review.* 43 (2000) 1: 11-45

[21] Ben Vinson, III. "Introduction: African (Black) Diaspora History, Latin America History", in *The Americas,* 63 (2006): 1-18

[22] Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D.G. Kelley. "Unfinished Migrations"

[23] Joao H Costa Vargas. "The Liberation Imperative of Black Genocide" in *New Social Movements in the African: Challenging Global Apartheid,* by Leith Mullings and Manning Marable. 79-104. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009

Africans, throughout their interwoven experience as victims of European mercantile capitalism during the era of the transatlantic slave trade, found commonalities within their own culture and identities for the purpose of unity in the Americas. Africa is a very vast continent with a diversity of cultures, languages, and customs. The political imperatives of the Africans throughout the diaspora in the past and in the present would compel them to find the similarities in their philosophical belief systems. That is why the old anthropological approach of positivism, which entails materialist theories, such as ecology, cultural materialism, and sociobiology does not always work. All of the aforementioned aspects of anthropology are concerned with empirical evidence, the universality of analysis, and the use of the scientific method to observe and draw conclusions about a particular phenomenon.[24]

The newer anthropological approach is known as symbolic anthropology. This approach, such as Bogues' "African Radical Intellectual Tradition" sees African culture not only for what it is on the surface but for the deep rooted cosmological, epistemological, ontological, and metaphysical views that African people and their descendants maintained. Scholars should today, like their subjects of the past, find those commonalities, in the time of struggle, in which they found in one another.

Sterling Stuckey wrote about these deep rooted commonalities in *Slave Culture* when he wrote about the ring shout in the United States. He demonstrated how this counterclockwise circular linear movement in ceremonies was linked to several parts of Africa. These particular aspects of the ring shout could be found among the people of the Kongo, Dahomey, Mende,

[24] Brian M. Howell and Jennell Williams Paris. *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2010. 235

Temne, Akan, and relatives in the Diaspora.[25] The circular movement in this dance represents the circle of life. For Africans life is very cyclical. Therefore, there was much devotion, reverence, and respect for the other dimension—the afterlife. The Bakongo and their descendants utilized their Congo Cosmogram, also known as *Yowa,* while planting plants in the graves of the physically dead to facilitate a connection to the other world.[26] It was the Igbo episteme of the importance of not spatially or temporally dying too far away from home, which caused them to not fear death in the Caribbean and even more prone to suicide than some of the other ethnic groups.[27] In fact, Daniel Walker writes in *No More, No More* that, "The use of suicide as a means of escaping slavery and seeking a reconnection to familiar spaces was centered on the belief in transmigration—a process similar to reincarnation."[28] Nevertheless, this writer does understand the arguments made about the exaggerations and stereotypes of African ethnics by planters. This dissertation does not intend on perpetuating stereotypes, but attempt to understand this characterization of the Igbo, which apparently had some truth behind it. In addition, the Igbo comprised of a very large portion of the African imported slave labor, and, therefore, without the fear of death from a horrid condition in a horrible place, this attribute would make them some of the most fearless soldiers against slavery in Dominica.

In addition to the symbolic framework, the work also takes what Michel-Rolph Trouillot refers to as a "constructivist" approach, acknowledging the overlap between what he states is the

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[25] Sterling Stuckey. *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory & The Foundations of Black America.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 12-16

[26] Robert Farris Thompson. *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy.* New York: Vintage Books, 1984. 109

[27] Daniel E Walker. *No More, No More: Slavery and Cultural Resistance in Havana and New Orleans.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 2004. 23

[28] Daniel E. Walker. *No More, No More.*

historical process and the sociohistorical knowledge. The former pertaining to "what happened", and the later pertaining to "that which is said to have happened."[29] This work is conscious of the limitation that this is a history of African people based primarily on primary source information jotted down in colonial documents, letters, and newspapers by their European enemies, and with this consciousness avoids making absolute claims on the sociohistorical process.

Political Science also influences this study. What is most problematic of historical analyses is that the notion of the modern state is rarely ever questioned or problematized. As Palmer stated so eloquently, "Scholars of the modern diaspora must also make a methodological distinction between studying the trajectory of a people and the trajectory of the nation state in which they reside."[30] Too often scholars of African history try to mold their histories to either be included in, or be a parallel of hegemonic historical narratives. On one hand, scholars discuss the "black firsts" of history, or discuss the contributions of African peoples in creating Babylon—a Western society that has been largely destructive to indigenous and African communities. On the other hand, if the hegemonic history glorified a history of "civilized", centralized hierarchical states/empires, the counter has always been to uncover the African versions of that. But should these models be the prototype for how people of African descent are studied?

The maroons are prime examples of African communities who resisted inclusion and fought against modernity, and the despotic aspects of the modern state. Philosophically speaking, if the maroons of the past did not legitimize the existence of the European modern state, the scholars of the present should not give credence to the laws of Europe in their analysis. Genovese

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[29] Michel-Rolph Trouillot. *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1995. 2-3

[30] Colin Palmer. "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora" in *The Journal of Negro History.* 85 (2000) 27-32

alludes to the idea that the creation of modern states during the Age of Revolution by the Haitians was a signal of progress and growth.[31] Evidence shows the contrary, however. Statehood, to many indigenous peoples around the world, meant servitude. During and after the Haitian Revolution, the so-called leaders of the revolution attempted to put the vast majority of Haitians back on sugar plantations in order to continue to produce massive amounts of sugar. The Haitian state had a debt to pay to France, and the people of Haiti were the ones who were to be taxed. However, the vast majority of Haitians did not want to produce sugar. They wanted to live freely away from cities under the system of *lakou,* based on kinship networks and a production of food crops in a society that did not use money.[32] This was a replica of egalitarian societies back in Africa.[33]

This dissertation also examines the African background of Dominica's maroon political structure. This includes—an examination not only the large centralized hierarchical societies, but the acephalous, decentralized, egalitarian societies where freedom was more important than mass production. The word "civilization" is too often associated with societies who have accepted formal institutions of religion, along with slave or servile based societies that engage in mass production. To be "uncivilized" is to be "unrefined". However, if an analogy can be given on the effects of "refined" sugar versus "unrefined" sugar on the human body, the point would be clear. So called "civilization" should be problematized, but it is not. One of the reasons why the top down historical narrative of "civilization" remains the popular narrative is because the hegemon perpetuates the idea that societies which emphasize material massive productive gain over

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[31] Eugene Genovese. *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World.* 82

[32] Laurent Dubois. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History.* New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012. 107-9

[33] John Thornton. "I am Subject of the King of Congo: African Political Ideology and the Haitian Revolution" in *Journal of World History.* 4(1993)

spirituality and material freedom are somehow examples of progress and enlightenment. The popular historical—or "master"—narrative helps to inculcate the servile masses so they aspire to produce and contribute at the will of the plutocratic ruling class.

There are those who will often shun at African communities that live off the land and create free independent societies amidst an encroaching modern system that attempts to maintain total control over the manner in which people produce, as well as sustain their livelihood. However, even many European philosophers of the so-called enlightenment era, though not in practice, had their similar theories about centralized hierarchical states or monarchical governments, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. Later Thomas Paine wrote in *Common Sense* that "society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinction. The first is a patron, the last a punisher."[34] Many African decentralized societies had become absorbed by the larger predatory states of West Africa during the era of the transatlantic slave trade. And it is true, as Joseph Inikori argues, that the more centralized states that would have formed in West Africa during this era, the less slave-raiding and exporting of slaves to the Americas there would have been. Because, like any society has proven throughout world history, states do not export their own eligible labor force.[35] They protect their people from external intrusion. Nevertheless, this protection also came at a cost. And though African centralized states never dehumanized their servile class the way it was done by the Europeans during the transatlantic slave trade era,

[34] Thomas Paine. *Common Sense. UShistory.org*
http://www.ushistory.org/paine/commonsense/singlehtml.htm

[35] Joseph Inikori. "The Struggle against the Transatlantic Slave Trade: The Role of the State", in *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies,* by Sylvaine Diouf. 170-198. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003

Benjamin Franklin comes to mind when he stated, "Any society that would give up a little freedom just to gain a little security will deserve neither and lose both."[36] And it was the African maroons in the Americas, who, more than anyone, understood this and practiced this philosophy that so many only theorized about. This is why the study of what is known as the *Neg Mawon* needs to be examined in great detail. The example of conviction and fortitude these people set are not important for only people of African descent, but important for all people.

## Research and Methodological Design

This dissertation uses primary sources gathered from the national archives across Britain, Dominica, France, and the United States. It analyzes and interprets information from secondary sources as well as primary sources, and manuscript material found in various repositories in order to tell the story of the maroon community in Dominica from an "African Radical Traditional perspective." This tradition taking not from a Eurocentric left vs. right materialists paradigm, but a tradition rooted in African philosophies. There is a paucity of primary source material on the culture of the Africans that resisted enslavement and conquest. This study uses the "*Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database*, *Voyages*" to trace the possible origins of the majority of the enslaved population, and the subsequent maroon communities that ensued. However, the *Database* does not give the names of the ethnic groups in which enslaved persons belonged to, and only gives the names of the ports and regions where captives were purchased or procured.

As such, this study also uses slave records of planters that do give ethnic profiles of their enslaved from 1817 and forward, to get a general idea of demographics for the years prior. The

[36] Ann Kannings. *Benjamin Franklin: Life and Words.* Ann Kannings, 2014. No page numbers

planters' slave records can be found on Ancestry.com, as well as Public Record Office, in Kew, England. The secondary sources will be used to delineate connections between the African cultural characteristics found in the maroon communities and the African cultural practices on the continent.

The Record Office contains a myriad of official documents on the former British colonies. The majority of the scholarship on Dominica have taken much of their information from Colonial Office Papers 71/9-50 which detail African resistance in the island Dominica from the 1780s until 1815. In addition to exploring these papers, which span British concern with the maroons, this study also analyzes Colonial Office Papers 74/1-74/7. These records are council and assembly papers, which go as far back as 1767. Also, since Dominica's colonial government was centered in Grenada and under the Southern Caribbee prior to 1770, the Grenada papers, CO 101 as well as others related to the Southern Caribbee are examined.

Also, Les Archives National d'otre Mer, in Aix-en-Provence, France, also contains information on Dominica especially during French occupation from 1778 through 1783. The correspondences between the French Governor Marie-Charles Du Chilleau of Dominica and various governors in the West Indies during the time of French occupation were to verify the relationship between the maroons and the French governor that was discussed in Atwood's *The History of the Island of Dominica*. However, the discussion of maritime maroonage between Dominica and Martinique was discovered in the French repositories.

The National Archives of Dominica, and the Dominica's Documentation Centre in Roseau were also examined in the research, where Deed Books and Books of Acts from the 1760s and 70s were utilized from the former and the "Hansard of A Meeting of the House of Assembly" pertaining to the "Dread Act" of 1974 is also looked at in the conclusion.

The first chapter of this dissertation examines African political and cultural history with the transatlantic slave trade to Dominica. The chapter more specifically examines philosophy of the Igbo and some of their philosophical and spiritual connections to the other African ethnics who comprised of the enslaved populations and subsequent maroon population. Whereas chapter one examines the roots of the maroons, chapter two looks at the routes the revolutionary Africans took to end up in Dominica. Then the chapter discusses how the French occupying government during America's War of Independence used this new established maroon community to help defend the island from the British enemy internally and externally. Chapter three shows how the maroons under the leadership of Chief Balla waged war on the British in an attempt to "extirpate" them from the island after it was retroceded in 1783.

Chapter four discusses the increase in communication between the maroons and the enslaved on plantations. The chapter illustrates how Chief Pharcelle took advantage of extreme discontentment of the enslaved on the Windward side of the island after the rumor that they were supposed to get three days off per week was not realized, and conspired to "Murder all the whites" with the disenchanted slaves. This chapter challenges the notion that Chief Pharcelle and the French revolutionary sympathizer, and mulatto, Jean Louis Polinaire, from Martinique were co-conspirators in the January 1791 rebellion. There is evidence to suggest that Pharcelle opted out of the conspiracy upon Polinaire's participation. The following chapter demonstrates how the French and the British were vying for African assistance amidst their war in the 1790s, and how Pharcelle signed a treaty with the British colonial government, in opposition to the vast majority of the maroons, to defend the island against foreign and domestic enemies. The chapter discusses how the maroons declined French revolutionary Victor Hugues alliance, and how the colonial

government used Pharcelle and the Africans of the West India Regiment to neutralize the maroon population in Dominica around the turn of the nineteenth century.

Chapter Six discusses how natural disasters, which led to famine, strengthened the links between the Africans on plantations and the Africans in the woods. An underground African economy was developed which helped to sustain both parties involved. The chapter discusses the vulnerability the planters felt about the Africans' blatant acts of "insubordination" on plantations throughout the island, and how the colonial government had to heed to the principles of the Africans' spirituality and cosmology in order to finally achieve the results they desired. The conclusion relates the African experience in Dominica to the greater African resistance throughout the diaspora and the encroaching Babylonian systems that are attempting to conquer every corner of the globe.

There are some key terms that need to be noted, which are used throughout the dissertation. The term "*Neg Mawon*" means "Black Maroon" in French creole, the unofficial language of Dominica. The term "*Neg Mawon* nation" is used at times to describe the maroon community as one entity. At times the term is pluralized when necessary. To avoid using the degrading terms such as "desperados"," lawless banditti", or even "runaways", which were used by contemporary planters of the day, this dissertation uses replacement words to show more respect for the people such as *Negs Mawons,* maroons, or "self-emancipators."[37]

Also the word "woods" was used by contemporaries to describe the interior landscape of Dominica. This area is decorated with rainforests, 365 rivers, mountains, and valleys. The "woods" in this dissertation is used as the contemporaries used it—as a nearly inaccessible

[37] J.R Kerr-Ritchie. *Freedom Seekers: Essays on Comparative Emancipation.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2013. xxi

region of the island where the *Neg Mawon* established their territory. According to Atwood, this area known as the "woods" comprised of two-thirds of the entire island, which is 29 miles in length and 16 miles in width.[38]

In addition, *Negs Mawons* were at war with the British planters intermittently for 50 years. One can argue that as long as the planters were attempting to enslave the maroons, they were always at war with one another. However, this dissertation, like most works on Dominica breaks the maroons' resistance into two major wars and a major conspiracy in 1791. What has been termed as the "First Maroon War" occurred the year after the French fled Dominica in 1783. This lasted until the death of Chief Balla, and the banishing of many freedom fighters in 1786. The "Second Maroon War" begins in 1813 when Ainslie issues martial law, and lasts until November of 1814, when he departs from the island and most of the maroons were either killed, surrendered, or executed after trial.

This is not a dissertation about the entire Afro-descendant population of Dominica. This is a dissertation on the maroons and their allies—the enslaved. Despite the fact that there was a large "Free People of Color" population in Dominica, evidence does not show an alliance worth mentioning. There were cases where individual Free People of Color reached out to the maroons, which will be discussed, but there was no alliance as developed between the woods and plantation Africans. If anything the presence of the Free People of Color helped perpetuate and maintain the hierarchical colonial system by serving as a buffer class between those who absolutely had and those who absolutely had nothing. The Free People of Color often served in militias to help capture the maroons, and quell the resistance of the Africans.

[38] Thomas Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica.* 21, 5

Nevertheless, this dissertation on the maroons is important in that it brings one of the almost invisible stories of African uncompromising resistance to the light. It is significant because it connects African resistance in Dominica to the greater diaspora and "African Radical Tradition." This group outlived the uncompromising maroons of St. Vincent and Jamaica by almost twenty years, who were expelled from those islands by 1797. What makes them also stand out is that their wars were waged outside the timespan of the French revolutionary decade of the 1790s, when the islands throughout the West Indies experienced a great deal of revolt by Afro-descendant populations. This group of Africans exemplified a will to create a free and independent society where universal emancipation was the paramount goal. The *Negs Mawons* demonstrated through their struggles that the enslaved on plantations were not a part of the system, but brothers and sisters to be assisted in a nefarious world. This is not the typical story of French-African alliances during the Age of Revolution that some historians like to romanticize. This is an example of an African woods-plantation alliance that was perpetually challenged by French and British nationals, who were often looking out for their own self-interest rather than the interest of the Africans. Lastly, the reason why the dissertation is significant is that it gives credit to the Igbo and their descendants, a group that is too often overlooked in the historical narratives pertaining to African resistance.

# CHAPTER ONE: AFRICAN ORIGINS: ETHNICITY, SPIRITUALITY, AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE *NEG MAWON* OF DOMINICA

When the British slavers brought their enslaved captives to the Americas to be converted to dehumanized slaves many underestimated the will human beings have to live freely. As the enslavers found out, all over the Atlantic, the will for freedom was strong, and many Africans transported to the Americas, were willing to do whatever was necessary in order to secure that freedom they were born with and continued to long for. This included Dominica's maroons, where the acts of securing, and maintaining this freedom was done collectively. Throughout the fifty years of the *Neg Mawon* existence there had been several important African revolutionaries in the mountainous island's interior. Several, whose names denoted African origins such as: Balla, Jacko, Goree Greg, Mubaya, Congo Ray, Zombi, Juba, Moco George, Louis Moco, Quashie, and Ebo Vielle, as well as other popular maroon chiefs like Pharcelle, Grubois, Pangloss, Apollo, and Elephant, and their rank and file soldiers, came from a diverse African world. From this world, these Africans brought with them their own war tactics, principles on freedom, and political and spiritual philosophies. One of the governors of Dominica referred to the runaways slaves in Dominica as an "Imperium in Imperio", which is a state within a state.[39] In fact, it was a maroon nation developed out of many diverse nations from Africa, which were also culturally similar. This chapter will discuss the roots of the *Negs Mawons*, by delving into the complicated political histories of West and West Central Africa, as well as the spiritual

[39] Michael Craton. *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies.* London: Cornell University Press, 1982. 143

Also from the United Kingdom National Archives at Kew Gardens. CO 71/49

systems that came from the various regions, and how the Africans found commonalities in their philosophies in order to fight a common enemy—the European planters.

## Transformations in West Africa

Despite having diverse cultural roots and having taken different routes to reach Dominica, all of the maroons born in Africa were from a very complex world. Circa 1500, West and West Central Africa began to experience significant eco-political transformations based upon their interactions with European states. These changes were not necessarily for the better, and by 1700, West and West Central Africa had radically changed.

With the maritime technology, allowing them to navigate the Atlantic Ocean effectively, in the fifteenth century the Portuguese began to make their way down the coast of West Africa and West Central Africa. They were searching for gold, the mythical Christian Kingdom of Prester John, sea routes to India, and possible allies in the struggle against Islam, whose presence in the Mediterranean, Middle East and Central Asia made it difficult to engage in lucrative trade with the many peoples around the world.[40] Circa 1500 was the time that the European states were competing with one another "to encourage private trade and industry through state action, and to increase the wealth and power of the state through the prosperity thereby engendered."[41]

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[40] Deckard Sharae. *Paradise Discourse, Imperialism, and Globalization: Exploiting Eden.* New York: Routledge, 2010. 81-82

David Birmingham. *Trade and Conflict in Angola: The Mbundu and their Neighbours under the Influence of the Portuguese, 1483-1790.* Oxford: Claredon Press, 1966. 24

[41] Vincent Bakpetu Thompson. *The Making of the African Diaspora in the Americas, 1441-1900.* New York: Longman, 1987. 22

During this era, trade in the West Africa coastal regions was local and distant. Some ethnic groups traded locally amongst each other, while distant trade crossed states and ethnic lines along the coast.[42] However, much of the distant or foreign trade in West Africa had been a trans-Saharan driven, centered in large African empires in the Sahel region. The Arabs/Moors in the northern regions of Africa dominated the region and made it almost impossible for the European mercantilists and explorers to tap into the source of the gold they were thirsting over. However, in the 1440s the Europeans began their circumnavigation of the Islamic influenced world of North Africa and the trans-Saharan trade, and came in direct contact with gold and copper producing peoples. Put another way, trade from West African coast areas were directed toward the north where the major Western Sudanese Empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai were located. However, beginning with the arrival Portuguese, and subsequently other European nationals, the direction of trade went from a northern directed trans-Saharan trade to a southern/western coastal trade with the Europeans.[43] As a result of this change in trade routes in West Africa, societies in the coastal regions transformed drastically, economically, and politically.

Upper Guinea, a region that comprised of the Ghana, Mali, and Songhai Empires experienced the decline of the Soninke, Mandingo, Zarma, and Dendi dominated empires. The Djoloff Empire who once paid tribute to the Mali Empire would break away and experience independence. However, after the arrival of the Portuguese on the coast of Senegambia and developing an ever increasing presence in the centuries to follow, the Djoloff state would also struggle to maintain dominance in the region. The center of the empire was landlocked from the

[42] Walter Rodney. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.* Washington, D.C.: Howard University, 1982. 109

[43] Walter Rodney. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. 112

new coastal trade with the Europeans which expanded greatly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Coastal Djoloff Kingdoms such as Walo, Cayor, Baol, Sine, and Saloum, would achieve their economic independence from Djoloff and continued a lucrative trade with the Portuguese and eventually other European nations, mostly based on slave raiding and trading.[44] Societies in the region which were once based on agricultural production and trade transformed into societies of slave raiding and conquest.[45] Various well-connected groups of Wolof, Serer, Mandingo, and Fula peoples were receiving guns in exchange for the African captives they were able to provide.

Moreover, the slave trade began with the Portuguese in Guinea in 1441. In the other parts of Africa where the Europeans had come in contact with, the African people were not initially exporting people. In Akan land, a region that would be later referred to as the Gold Coast, the merchants there satisfied the initial demand the Portuguese had, and exported gold in exchange for captives and other products that the Portuguese had to offer beginning in 1471.[46] By 1483, the Portuguese had travelled as far south on the coast of Africa as West Central Africa, and encountered a vast kingdom known as the Kingdom of Kongo. In the Kingdom of Kongo they were also looking for gold, but instead found copper and an ally in the *Bakongo* (people of Kongo).

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[44] Boubacar Barry and J. Suret-Canale. "The Western Atlantic Coast to 1800" In *History of West Africa,* by Michael Crowder and J. Ajayi, 456-511. New York: Columbia University, 1974.

[45] Adama Gueye. "The Impact of the Slave Trade on Cayor and Baol: Mutations in Habitat and Land Occupancy." In *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Stategies,* by Sylvaine Anna Diouf, 51-58. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003

[46] Wilks, Ivory Wilks. *Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante.* Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993. 22-24

The Bakongo's system of government was monarchical, but not in the way it is understood in the West. The power of the king was very limited and the kingdom exhibited many of characteristics of a democracy.[47] There was no word for slavery in Kikongo, indicating that there was none.[48] There was a system, however, of tax collecting where the *ashikongo* elite in the *mbata* (city) sent the *nkulutu* around periodically to collect taxes from the *paesani* masses in the *mbanza* (village), but the ashikongo were not concerned with the local autonomy of the *paesani.*[49] In fact, nobles were considered to be witches if they abused their power. One always needs to be careful not to romanticize Africa prior to the presence of the Europeans on the coast, but the evidence by many historians point to the fact that the Kongo Kingdom was a rather functional society. However, this would all eventually change. The Portuguese at the time were seeking precious metals from the West African coast and the Kongo Kingdom partially satisfied that demand by supplying copper to the Portuguese merchants.[50] In this time of trade relations, the king of the Kongo (*manikongo*) converted himself and his kingdom to Catholicism.[51] This conversion of Africans, like the conversion to Islam in Upper Guinea, was often used as a ploy for networking relations. Nevertheless, many of the African spiritual belief systems' malleability are very open to foreign spiritual influence. For the Bakongo, they kept their traditional belief

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[47] Dubois. *Avengers of the New World.* 2004. 108-9

John Thornton. "I am Subject of the King of Congo: African Political Ideology and the Haitian Revolution" in *Journal of World History.* 4(1993)

[48] Joseph Inikori. "Slavery in Africa and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade." In *The African Diaspora,* by Alusine Jalloh and Stephen F. Maizlish, 39-72. Arlington: Texas A&M University Press, 1996

[49] John Thornton. *The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition, 1641-1718.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.38- 42

[50] Joseph Inikori. "Slavery in Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade." In *The African Diaspora,* by Alusine Jalloh and Stephen E. Maizlish, 39-72. Arlington: Texas A&M University Press, 1996.

[51] Thornton. *The Kingdom of Kongo*. xiv

systems. Like many other African peoples, it was not the image or the names of the deities that mattered most, but the spirit within the deity. Though many Bakongo may have known about Catholicism and some may have spoken the Portuguese language, the vast majority were not devoted Catholics and continued to practice their traditional beliefs.[52]

Moreover, the relationship between the Bakongo and the Portuguese would change not too long after their initial contact with one another in the early 1480s. When the Portuguese realized that the Kingdom of Kongo did not harbor gold as the Americas and the other coastal regions of Africa, their need to trade with the Bakongo dwindled. However, the Bakongo wanted to maintain trade relations with the Portuguese in that they had developed a great "thirst" for Portuguese "cloth and metal-wares."[53] After the Portuguese claimed Brazil for themselves about twenty years later, at the turn of the century, the Portuguese started to demand slaves from the Kongo Kingdom and the kingdom satisfied the demand by raiding their Mbundu neighbor to the south. After years of the Portuguese meddling in the affairs of the Bantu peoples of the West Central African coast, their alliances fell with whoever was the highest bidder. And the Kongo Kingdom descended into chaos.[54] The victims of the Kongo chaos and the subsequent civil wars were often sold into slavery. These intermittent wars lasted well into the eighteenth century.

The eighteenth century did not only become chaotic and war driven for the Bakongo and their neighbors in West Central African, but it was that way for many African peoples farther

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[52] Jason Young. *Ritual of Resistance: African Atlantic Religion in Kongo and the Lowcountry South in the Era of Slavery.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007. 58

[53] Birmingham. *Trade and Conflict in Angola.* 25

[54] Vincent Bakpetu Thompson. *The Making of the African Diaspora: In the Americas 1441-1900.* New York: Longman Group, 1987. 52

north along the coast in the Gulf of Guinea and Upper Guinea regions as well. By this time in history the politics and economics of West Africa were directly interwoven into the worlds of the European mercantile capitalists, and the Portuguese trend was followed by the British, French, Dutch, and others. As precious metals were discovered and secured in the Americas, the demand from Africa changed, and the Europeans, who previously imported gold from Africa, started to demand, and subsequently import slaves. African coastal societies went from being exporters of gold to exporters of slaves. Beginning in 1701 the Asante started to dominate the Akan region and conquer their way towards the south in order to secure direct trade routes with the Europeans on the coast. The prisoners of war who were accumulated in the process were sold to the Europeans in exchange for more guns in the eighteenth century. As a result, the Asante Empire was born. The Dahomey Kingdom was also born out of this new trade with Europeans in the coastal regions. In the 1720s, Dahomey, centered inland at Abomey, conquered two major coastal kingdoms—Allada and Hueda (Ouidah)—in 1724 and 1727 respectively.[55] By 1730, there were the Djoloff vassal states of Walo, Cayor, Baol, Sine, and Saloum that had achieved independence in the Senegambia region.

There was the growing Asante Empire. To the east of that there was the Kingdom of Dahomey, who, for a certain period of its existence paid tribute to the great Oyo Empire to the northeast of them in Yorubaland. The Kingdom of Kongo in West Central Africa was in the middle of civil war. The West African and West Central Africans societies continued to transform. As a result of the absolute chaos in the region of the Senegambia Fula Muslim victims banded together to create Caliphates throughout West Africa. These Jihad states arising

[55] Robin Law. *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving Port, 1727-1892.* Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004. 50

in the middle to the end of the eighteenth century consisted of Futa Jallon, Bundu, Futa Toro, and Sokoto Caliphate. As these states were created to defend themselves from the slave trade, some of them would become the biggest participants in the transatlantic slave trade in the second half of the eighteenth century.[56] And one more region of Africa, the Bight of Biafra, was included into the grand slave trading mix beginning in the 1730s, a region whose participation in the transatlantic slave trade prior to that point was very scant.[57]

By the second half of the eighteenth the majority of the western coastal societies south of the Sahara as far north as present day Senegal to as far south as the port of Benguela in present day Angola, were involved in the transatlantic slave trade to one degree or another. Even East Africa, where present day Mozambique is located, produced a small portion of African captives for in the transatlantic slave trade. Nevertheless, it was not only the coastal regions of Africa that were affected by the transatlantic slave trade. It was also the interior of Africa that was very affected, because it was the hinterland where many of the slaves were procured.

## The *Neg Mawon* African Background

Chief Balla, also known as, General Balla in Dominica's colonial records during the First Maroon War (1784-86), was one from the chaotic world of the Upper Guinea in the later eighteenth century. *The Public Advertiser* described Balla as being "a native of Guiney, and a Prince in his own country," who was brought to Dominica some twenty years prior.[58] During

[56] Christopher Fyee. "Peoples of the Windward Coast: A.D. 1000-1800." In *A Thousand Years of West African History*, by Ian Espie and J. Ajayi, 144-159. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1967.

[57] David Eltis et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

[58] Extract from a letter from Dominica, *The Public Advertiser,* February 21, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/34418695

that era of the transatlantic slave trade in the later eighteenth century the word "Guiney" was usually used to describe the Senegambia and Sierra Leone regions.[59] Balla or "Bala" is a Mande name, which is a nickname for Musa or Moses.[60] Though not all Mandingos are Muslim it is very likely that Balla was either Muslim or had Islamic influences since Islam had spread through the region by the eighteenth century. In fact, Mandingo was often synonymous with Muslim during the days of the transatlantic slave trade.[61] The Mandingos lived in and around Futa Jallon. The year 1751 marked the death of Karamoko Alfa, the leader of Futa Jallon, who was elected just after the inception of the state in 1726. His cousin Ibrahim Sori, who replaced him in 1751, was known for his military leadership.[62] The beginning of his rule marked the beginning of the expansion of the slave trade from the region. The 1760s through the 1780s was "the most violent phase of the conflict in Futa Jallon" which resulted in the massive increase amounting to greater than 100 percent increase in slave exports from the region.[63] The Mandingos who had once founded one of the greatest empires in the world—Mali—had now become major victims in the transatlantic slave trade. Balla, a Mandingo, had come from this world in the middle of the 1760s. The supply zones for the Mandingo captives were Senegambia, Sierra Leone, and Windward Coast regions.

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[59] Gwendolyn Hall. *Slavery and African Ethnicity in the Americas: Restoring the Links.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005. 80

[60] Peace Corps The Gambia. "The Mandinka-English Dictionary". 1995 http://www.africanculture.dk/gambia/ftp/mandinka.pdf

[61] Michael Gomez. "Muslims in Early America" in *The Journal of Southern History,* 60 (1994) 4: 671-710

[62] Elizabeth Allo Isichei. *A History of African Societies to 1870.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 301

[63] Gomez. "Muslims in Early America" in *The Journal of Southern History,* 60 (1994) 4: 671-710

On record there were nine ships between 1764 and 1767 that disembarked on Dominica directly from the aforementioned Mandingo supply zones. Six were from the Senegambia and three of them from the Windward Coast.[64] In 1764 the *Sisters* left the Windward Coast. Coming directly from Bassa en route to Dominica, it experienced a "slave insurrection." Three of them—*Charles, James,* and *Black Joke* came from the Mandingo associated Gambia in 1764. Also, there were two voyages from the port of Saint Louis in 1767, called *Worge* and *O'Hara.*[65] These transports would have been directly connected to the civil war that occurred in the Wolof Kingdom of Walo between 1766 and 1786.[66] It is no coincidence that the *O'Hara* was named after the British Governor Colonel Charles O'Hara who would later abduct 8,000 captives in an extensive manhunt for slaves during the period of the Walo civil war.[67] Balla could have been one out of the 1,503 Africans on record to arrive in Dominica on one of these vessels. It is also plausible that the Muslim Wolof from the war in Walo, and the rebellious Africans on the *Sisters* voyage—perhaps seeking their next opportunity at revolt—joined the formidable and spirited soldiers of General Balla in Dominica's struggle for freedom.

There were other Muslims from the Upper Guinea region who played a role in resistance in Dominica. Goree Greg could have arrived in Dominica as a result of these same conflicts. Goree Greg, who in records is often known as Coree Greg, is said to have passed through the slave port of Goree, however, according to shipping records there were no ships that arrived in

[64] David Eltis et al. "The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

[65] Ibid.

[66] Boubacar Barry and J. Suret-Canele. "The Western Atlantic Coast to 1800." In *History of West Africa,* by Michael Crowder and J. Ajayi, 456-511. New York: Columbia University, 1974.

[67] Ibid.

Dominica that came from Goree until 1803.[68] Goree Greg may have either: arrived in Dominica by way of transshipment; the record of the ship has never been uncovered; or this may have been a generic label placed on him because of his Senegambian background. He may have very well been from the region, and had simply been given the name of the popular port in the Upper Guinea region, along with "Greg", the name of the family who owned the plantation he lived on.[69]

There was a Mohamed who was involved in the January 1791 conspiracy to "murder the whites" and take control of the Windward side of the island. Though he did not play a major leadership role in the conspiracy his presence is an example of rank and file Africans playing their part in revolts. At the time of the revolt Mohamad was one of many escaped slaves involved in the conspiracy. He arrived in Dominica directly from Africa, and was pardoned by the colonial government after the conspiracy because he "being a New Negro", had the inability to speak English or French at the trial.[70] However, someone involved in the conspiracy must have been able to communicate with him in order to solicit his participation. Goree Greg and Mohamad, like Balla, were both likely to have been Muslims or men from Islamic influenced areas.

This chaos in the Upper Guinea, ironically helped produce a particular kind of person fit for war. African peoples in Upper Guinea established early contact with the European outsiders. Those Africans in this region also had more involvement with the Europeans than in any of the

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[68] David Eltis et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

[69] Lennox Honychurch. *Negre Mawon: The Fighting Maroons of Dominica.* Dominica: Island Heritage Initiatives, 2014. 95

[70] CO 71/20. A List of Persons of Colour Tried at the Court of S….(Trial of Mohamad, February 22, 1791) Kew Gardens National Archives. London, United Kingdom.

other coastal regions in West Africa. It became notorious for being the most troublesome place to procure slaves. Though captives from the Senegambia and Sierra Leone (Upper Guinea) only comprised of approximately 9 percent of the captives exported from Africa[71] these regions comprised of 34 percent of revolts on slave ships.[72] It was these same peoples in the early settlements of Spanish America that caused problems for the crown. There were at least five pieces of legislation by the 1540s, only after fifty years of Spanish settlement, which prohibited the entry of Muslim Africans into the colonies.[73] Another attribute that made the European slave traders fear Balla's kind was the fact that many Muslims were literate in a language that the Europeans could not understand—Arabic.[74] This facilitated communication among the Muslim population.

For Balla, it was also his background as a prince that gave him leadership qualities during the First Maroon War. Although he was from a Muslim background, that did not prevent him from connecting with the Africans who were from traditional spiritual based systems. As Sylvaine Diouf pointed out in *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas,* Francois Makandal was most likely also born in "Guinea", and a Mandingo. Makandal, a maroon leader, was involved in the biggest conspiracy in Saint-Domingue prior to the Haitian Revolution with his poisoning of whites in the colonies throughout the 1750s.[75] There was also

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[71] Eltis, David and David Richardson. *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. 15

[72] Eric Robert Taylor. *If We Must Die: Shipboard Insurrections in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006. 65

[73]Sylvaine Anna Diouf. *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas.* New York: New York University Press, 1998. 146

[74] Craton. *Testing the Chains*. 7-8

[75] Diouf, Sylvaine Anna. *Servants of Allah*. 146

Boukman in Saint-Domingue who was one of the leaders in one of the most successful slave revolts in the history of the Americas. His name "Boukman" indicates that he was a man of the book. A Muslim in West Africa would be referred to as "man of the book" in Sierra Leone particularly. Boukman galvanized a large assembly of slaves in an opening in the forest of Bois-Caïman. During this Vodun ceremony, Boukman launched the Haitian Revolution with a speech.[76]

Though they were Muslims, Balla, Boukman, and Makandal alike came from broader cultural backgrounds that appreciated the syncretic relationships between the metaphysical and physical realms. In their efforts at revolution they all invoked the spiritual phenomena in various means. Makandal and Balla used poisons in their struggle, which reflected the transformed practices of African ethnomedicine.[77] In the context of African enslavement in the Americas, these tools of spiritual and physical healing became critical weapons of war.[78] These are some possible explanations as to how Balla exhibited courage and leadership for his maroon nation during First Maroon War in Dominica.

As Balla was considered the general by his European contemporaries, there were others who were considered major threats to the colonial establishment. Congo Ray and Zombie were considered two of the many maroon chiefs during the First Maroons War in the middle 1780s, who originated from Kongo. The Kingdom of Kongo was ravaged with civil war throughout the eighteenth century. The British and French in the late eighteenth century increased their trade in

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[76] Diouf, Sylvaine Anna. *Servants of Allah*. 146

[77] Voeks, Robert. "African Medicine and Magic in the Americas." In *American Geographical Society.* 83 (1993), 66-78

[78] Clarence Maxwell. "The horrid villainy': Sarah Bassett and the poisoning conspiracies in Bermuda, 1727-30." In *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*. 21 (2000), 48-74

the region and often purchased the prisoners of this civil war. After years of Portuguese, and the subsequent British and French trade in the region, the intermittent civil wars in the Kongo continued into the second half of the eighteenth century. Congo Ray and Zombie were likely to have come from this world.

Zombie's name comes from Kikongo. It can mean a number of things depending on the inflection or emphasis on particular syllables. The word can mean anything from "darkness" to "heaven" to "hex."[79] There is also the word "*Nzambi*" which means "God."[80] If he was not from the Kingdom of Kongo, it is evident that there was a Bakongo influence in the maroon community. Congo Ray's name insinuates Kongo origin as well, but there is a possibility that he could have been from one of the former vassal states of the Kingdom of the Kongo—Loango, Ngoyo, Kakongo, Teke. It is even possible that Congo Ray could have come from West Central Africa's deep interior, seeing that this region acquired their African captives from deep into the hinterland. According to Joseph C. Miller, "…slaves from any given source, particularly the areas farthest in the interior might ultimately have reached the coast anywhere from beaches north of the Zaire (Congo River) all the way south to Benguela."[81] Sometimes Africans passing through from particular ports were given a general ethnic label based on the group that may have been the dominant group embarking from that region. However, it seems more likely that the Africans that arrived in ports Cabinda, Malembo, and Loango that were north of the Congo River in the latter half of the eighteenth century were victims from the warring Kongo Kingdom or

[79] Information received directly from a Professor of African History Jean-Michel Mabeko-Tali, a native of the Congo Republic and speaker of Bantu languages, on April 21, 2016 during the dissertation defense.

[80] Robert Farris Thompson. *Flash of the Spirit: African & Afro-American Art & Philosophy.* New York: Vintage Books, 1984. 108

[81] Joseph C Miller. *Way to Death: Merchants Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830*. Madison: University of Madison Wisconsin Press, 1988. 209

some of the kingdom's former vassal states. Also, as Jan Vansima points out, the people from West Central Africa had more of a homogenous culture than any other region throughout West Africa. Even if Congo Ray was not Bakongo, he may have spoken Kikongo or he may have spoken a mutually intelligible language with a very similar culture and history.

African ports of embarkation associated with Dominica, and the civil war in the Kingdom of Kongo, make it probable that Congo Ray and Zombie may have been victims of the civil war in the Kingdom of Kongo that occurred throughout the seventh and eighteenth centuries. This resulted from the death of King Antonio I in October of 1665. With no heir to the throne families competed to take over the kingdom. There were relative periods of peace in the end of the seventeenth century until the first couple decades of the eighteenth century. However, "a new episode of war" broke out when Pedro V attempted to seize power out of turn in the 1760s.[82] This is the time period that Congo Ray and Zombie would have been sold into slavery.

Between the years of 1764 and 1808 enslaved Africans from West Central Africa comprised of 8 percent of the total imports into Dominica. There were 27 voyages from the region between those years. Congo Ray was listed as one of the maroon chiefs in colonial records and newspapers during the First Maroon War in 1785. In the years between the British acquisition of Dominica in 1763 and the halt in the slave trade during the American Revolutionary War in 1777, West Central African imports only comprised of less than 2 percent of the total imported African enslaved population arriving directly from the continent. There were only four voyages during those years of the first cohort of imports before French reoccupation: that of the *Betsey* in 1769, the *Bee* in 1770, the *Fanny* in 1774, and the *Nelly* in

[82] John Thornton. "African Soldiers in the Haitian Revolution". In *Origins of the Black Atlantic,* by Laurent Dubois and Julius Scott, 195-213. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2010

1775.[83] Since Congo Ray and Zombie had established themselves as maroon chiefs by 1785 it is possible that they were on one of the aforementioned shipments into Dominica in the 1760s or 1770s. After the hiatus in shipments from Africa during the years of the American Revolutionary War and French reoccupation of Dominica, between 1784 and 1785, there was a sharp increase in African imports, and more specifically from the region of West Central Africa. Whereas imports from West Central Africa comprised of 2 percent of the first cohort, they comprised of 8 percent of the total imports in 1784 and 1785. The proportion of captives embarking from this region remained higher until abolition in 1807. The majority of them passed through the African ports of Ambriz, Malembo, and Congo River.

The rise in captives from West Central Africa was not unique to Dominica. The majority of the British West Indies and even the French West Indies increased their importation of slave labor from the region during the 1780s and 90s. This was the result of a civil war run amuck in the Kongo Kingdom. Kongo historian John Thornton writes, "This war went on with varying degrees of intensity, and eventually partisans of Pedro recaptured Sao Salvador around 1779, but Jose I, Alvaro XI's Kimulaza successor, drove them out in a large and bloody battle in September 1781."[84] Thornton continues, "Although a brief period of peace followed, it broke down after 1785 when Jose's brother and successor Alfonso V died under suspicious circumstances."[85] According to Thornton, the victims of the chaos that ravaged the Kongo Kingdom would have been dispersed into the Americas serving as slaves on plantations.

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[83] David Eltis. Et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

[84] John Thornton. "African Soldiers in the Haitian Revolution". In *Origins of the Black Atlantic,* by Laurent Dubois and Julius Scott, 195-213. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2010

[85] John Thornton. "African Soldiers in the Haitian Revolution". In *Origins of the Black Atlantic,* by Laurent Dubois and Julius Scott, 195-213. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2010

Colonies like Saint-Domingue, Grenada, and Dominica alike all experienced increases in African captives being imported from these regions. Interesting enough, all of these same colonies also experienced warfare between the Africans and the Europeans on the islands. South Carolina's halt in the importation of peoples from West Central Africa after the Stono Rebellion in 1739 is also a testament to the Bakongo military expertise. The people from this region had developed such a name for themselves because of their military spirit and acumen that the West India Regiment, organized by the British government in efforts to quell rebellions, decided specifically to import and conscript "Angolas" along with "Coramantee" captives because of these attributes.[86] In fact, in Dominica, in particular, the colony began to import captives in 1798 specifically for the Eight West India Regiment to defend the island.[87] Also, 25 percent of the imports during this period came from West Central Africa, a little more than half of them passing through the port of Malembo.[88] One can presume, the military expertise on the part of the Bakongo and their neighbors played a role in the choice of African imports. After the major mutiny many of these Africans were executed, but a large portion of them also fled to join the maroon nation in the early nineteenth century. In Dominica, it is likely that Congo Ray's and Zombie's status and political clout within the maroon community had risen when more runaways of their ethnic background fled to the *Neg Mawon* nation. Bakongo maroons such as Jean Zombi, possibly Mabayah, who was second in command to Balla,[89] or West India Regiment mutineers

[86] W/O 1/95 (extracts) National Archives. Murbach Research. Thanks to Markus Weise for the reference. (2011)

[87] Craton, Michael. *Testing the Chains.* Ithaca. Cornell University Press, 1982. 228

[88] David Eltis. Et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

[89] John Marshall. *Pennsylvania Packet.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), February 28, 1786. http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

like Congo Jack were from the Bantu world of Central Africa brought with them their spirit of rebellion.

Those from Akan country (Gold Coast) also played a significant role. There was Juba and Quashie, two maroon leaders from Akan country, the former, based on her name was a female military leader born on Monday. Born on Sunday, Quashie, the more notorious of the two, received his popularity in the early nineteenth century when he placed a bounty on the head of then Governor George Robert Ainslie. There was also Jacko "Jackoo" or *Jaku*, a name originating from the Ga people between the Gold Coast and the Bight of Benin whose name means "Africans."[90] These individuals also came from a world that had evolved drastically in the eighteenth century. Jacko was listed as one of the maroon chiefs by Captain John Marshall and lived in the woods for up to 46 years. Though the Gold Coast region, where the Akan and Ga people passed through during the era of the transatlantic slave trade, only produced 3 percent of the African captives sent to Dominica directly from Africa, their presence was visible.

The "Akan", "Asante", or what the British planters referred to as the "Coromantee" were arguably the most notorious for their acumen and ferocity in warfare. From 1701, when the Asante warrior conquered Denkyira state to the south of Kumasi, their empire's relentless expansion towards the coast for European trade led to an influx of prisoners of war being sold to the British at Cape Coast Castle and Anomabu, and the Dutch at Elmina. These captives were sold into slavery in British and Dutch America. What fueled these wars of expansion by the Asante was the new demand for slave labor by the Europeans rather than gold, the latter being what the Akan people were initially known for exporting. War had incentive and the Asante waged it. The wars between Akan neighbors continued into the late eighteenth century and the

[90] http://www.jakukonbit.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/IAIM-Report-09.pdf

number of captives continued to rise. Akan people filled up plantations all throughout the Americas, especially British and Dutch America in the eighteenth century. The British continued to import Akan slave labor because one of the stereotypes about them was that they were "good workers…"[91] However, paradoxically they did not bring with them much docility. They were also considered to be too "rebellious."[92] Nevertheless, trade had been established on the Gold Coast and the Akan slave labor continued to be imported significantly into the Americas.

The Jamaican maroon wars in the early eighteenth century were led by the Akan, the Tacky revolt in 1760 was Akan led, the 1736 conspiracy in Antigua, the 1811 Louisiana revolt, the maroon community in Suriname, the revolt in Demerara in 1823, and many more incidences were all led and heavily influenced by the Akan people. They too, like the "Angolas", were specifically imported to staff the West India Regiment because of their admired military attributes. Their warfare was mostly engaged in the dense forests of Akan country on the Gold Coast. Many of the colonies in which they were transported possessed similar densely forested areas. The Akan were able to transfer their military skills and knowledge of guerilla warfare to their new American societies. And the densely forested Dominica was one of those regions.

Africans from this region were transported to Dominica between the years 1767 and 1789. Many of them came from the coastal port of Anomabu. In Akan country there were many events which likely produced these captives in Dominica during these years. In 1765, the expanding Asante Empire allied themselves with the coastal Fante in order to go to war with Wassa and secure a direct path to the coast for trade. The Asante eventually wanted to invade Twifo. This made the Fante apprehensive about the Asante alliance and they pulled out, because

[91] Eric Williams. *Capitalism and Slavery.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994. 37

[92] Ibid.

they became very wary about the presence of the Asante near the coast.[93] This conflict between the Asante, Wassa, and Fante is likely to have contributed to imports from the Fante influenced port of Anomabu in 1767. There was one ship by the name of *Brew Packet*, which embarked 399 African captives, 345 of who survived the voyage.[94] Juba may have arrived in Dominica from this ship or some of the following ships in the 1770s from the Gold Coast, since she established herself as a recognized military leader during the First Maroon War in the middle 1780s. The captives continued to arrive from Akan country until the late 1780s when the Asante Empire was experiencing internal violence and the Fante clashed with Wassa from 1785 to 1787.[95] Quashie and Jacko probably ended up in Dominica through these processes. Like the Bakongo and Mandingo, the Akan and their neighbors brought Africa with them to Dominica.

## An Igbo Majority

Furthermore, though the aforementioned African ethnics have been known to have such a profound influence on slave resistance in the Americas, there is one group who comprised of a great majority of the imported population into Dominica, but has rarely been studied from the standpoint of resistance. That group is the Igbo from the Bight of Biafra. Indeed, one cannot mention the maroons or the enslaved population in Dominica without mentioning the Igbo, an ethnic group, according to planters' historical records were notorious for running away.[96]

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[93] Mary McCarthy. *Social Change and the Growth of British Power in the Gold Coast: The Fante States, 1807-1874.* New York: University Press of America, 1983. 8

[94] David Eltis. Et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

[95] Mary McCarthy. *Social Change and the Growth of British Power in the Gold Coast.* 7

[96] Gwendolyn Hall. "Excerpt From Book Manuscript *African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links*" (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming)

In the 1730s, the slave trade from the Bight of Biafra region increased drastically. Whereas, exports in slaves never amounted to more than 5,000 in any given year prior to 1730, numbers of enslaved Africans from the region skyrocketed by 1791 reaching as high as 25,000 persons. This trade was increasingly exploited by the British in the last three quarters of the eighteenth century (Figure 2).

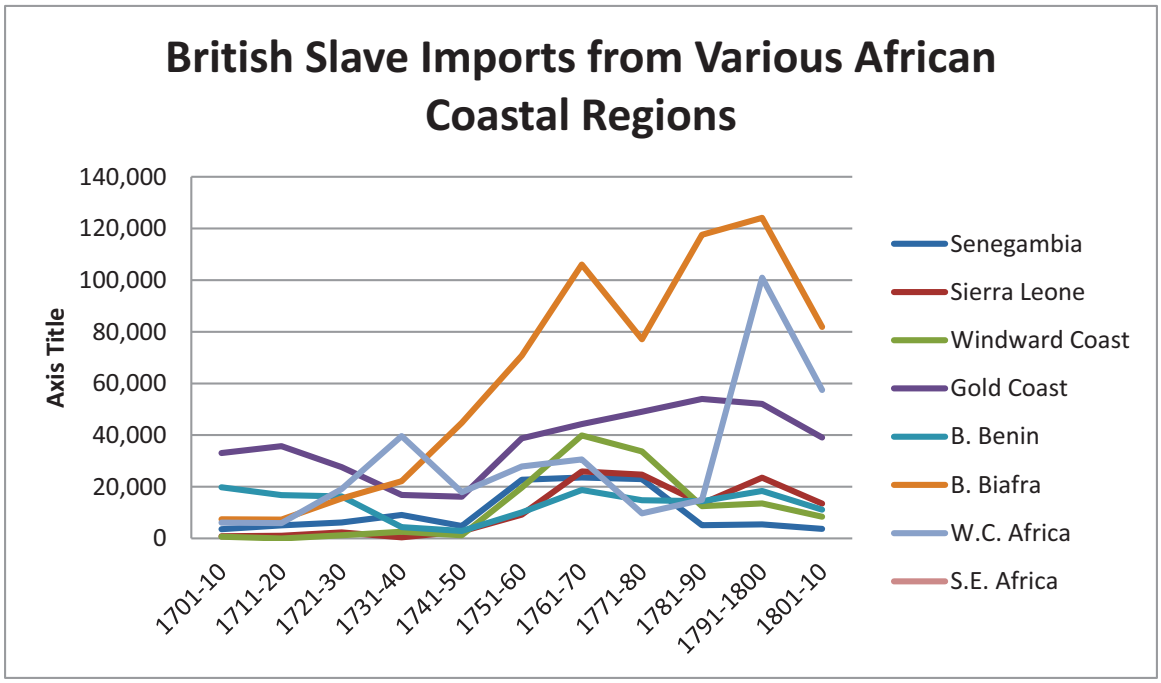


**Figure 2: Rate of British slave imports from various African coastal regions**.

The Bight of Biafra, however, consists of several ports, some of which are unrelated in terms of the peoples being trafficked through them. There was Calabar, Bonny, New Calabar, Cameroon, Cameroon River and Gabon. The former three are more specifically associated with the Igbo and to a lesser extent, Ibibio captives.[97] Nevertheless, the trend was still the same across the three ports specifically. From 1700 to 1730, European slave traders imported an average of

[97] Alogoa, E.J. "The Niger Delta States and their Neighbors, to 1800." In *The History of West Africa,* by Michael Crowder and J. Ajayi, 196-263. New York: Columbia University, 1974.

approximately 1,300 yearly from Bonny, Calabar, and New Calabar. However, from 1730 to 1800 there were approximately 7,300 Africans transported yearly to the Americas from this region with an almost steady increase into the early nineteenth century.[98] The slave trade from this region in the early years was not a popular trade. Most European merchants and planters had their reservations about capturing people for enslavement from this region. For one, its shores were raucous and difficult, discouraging the Europeans from building fortresses there. Also, the mortality rates of the captives were much greater than captives from other coastal regions. The Bight of Biafra had 18.3 percent death rates while other regions averaged 10 percent. Also, in the Americas, slavers received lower prices for their captives from this region. This was probably related to the stereotype by the enslavers that the Igbo were "despondent" and were prone to committing suicide.[99] Lastly, the African slave traders in the region acquired a much larger quantity of females than were found in any other region.[100] In addition, there might be characteristics about the societies in the region which made European and African trade relations less likely. In other words, maybe there were no products that the Europeans had to offer which compelled the African peoples in the region to engage in extensive trade initially.

Nevertheless, it is not totally clear what contributed to the rise in British interest in the region, but what is known is that the Aro merchants, who were of mixed Igbo, Ibibio, and Akpa background,[101] created an elaborate scheme in the region to procure slaves in connection with

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[98] David Eltis. Et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

[99] Eric Williams. *Capitalism and Slavery.* 38

[100] Ugo Nwokeji. *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010. 22

[101] E.J. Alogoa "The Niger Delta States and their Neighbors, to 1800." In *The History of West Africa,* by Michael Crowder and J. Ajayi, 196-263. New York: Columbia University, 1974.

centralized coastal states, while the British Empire in the West Indies started to acquire more territories. The acquisition of more territories by the British and the increased gluttony for the consumption of sugar led to an increased demand for the subsequent production of the crop in the eighteenth century. The Aro merchants established a slave trading system and the British merchants took full advantage of it. This system, however, was much different than the typical system of violence found throughout the other regions of Africa. The evidence of the system practiced in the Bight of Biafra seems to agree with the Walter Hawthorne and Andrew Hubbell thesis that decentralized states were not always militarily the victims of the so-called predatory states, and decentralized states were at times able to effectively defend themselves from imperial African states.

The predatory states at times acquired their captives not through warfare and raiding, but through agents within the targeted community, working on behalf of the slave traders.[102] These centralized states were located in the Niger Delta region: Elem Kalabari, Bonny, Nembe, and the Okrika states. These small scale states had likely established themselves in the Niger Delta as far back as between 1200 and 1400.[103] These states were highly competitive and sometimes quarreled over control of long distance trade routes. The Aro merchants, who lived in the hinterland, were a group of shrewd peoples who established an elaborate and effective trade to procure peoples from the hinterland to provide for the Eastern Niger Delta States. The majority of their target sources of captives were Igbo, and to a lesser extent Ibibio, a people who were said to be known as "Moko", "Moco", or "Mocco" in Dominican planter records.[104] It was these

[102] Martin Klein. "The Slave Trade and Decentralized Societies" in *The Journal of African History,* Cambridge University Press, 42 (2001) 49-65

[103] E.J. Alogoa. "The Niger Delta States and their Neighbors, to 1800." In *The History of West Africa,* by Michael Crowder and J. Ajayi, 196-263. New York: Columbia University, 1974.

[104] Ibid.

individuals who passed through the ports of Bonny, Calabar, and New Calabar on the coasts of the Eastern Delta States.

The Aro engaged in both business and social engineering.[105] They coordinated themselves in all aspects of Igbo and Ibibio societies. The oracles of the Igbo peoples, who was known as the *Arochukwu*, was coopted by the Aro merchants. The Aro merchants also coordinated the *Arochukwu* with the military and commercial institutions that they controlled, and as a result monopolized the markets of the Igbo and Ibibio hinterland.[106] Even the highly revered oracles in the Igbo communities were being coopted into the Aro trade network which was connected to the four Niger Delta states, and gained a monopoly on the slave trade from the hinterland as principal suppliers to the coast.[107] As the 1740s approached the ports of Bonny, Calabar, and New Calabar increased their participation in the transatlantic slave trade tremendously.

The British slave traders on the coast of Africa increased their involvement in the slave trade from this region around the same time of Aro expansion. After Dominica was ceded to the British in 1763, this would be the island's primary location of importation of Africans. According to the *"Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, Voyages*", 57 percent of the Africans imported directly to Dominica from Africa embarked from the Bight of Biafra (Figure 3).

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[105] Ugo Nwokeji. *The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra: An African Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010. 2

[106] Paul Lovejoy. *Transformation in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa, Second Edition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
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[107] Paul E Lovejoy and David Richardson. " 'This Horrid Hole': Commerce and Credit at Bonny, 1680-1840." In *The Journal of African History,* Cambridge: Cambridge Press, vol 45. 3(2004) 363-392.

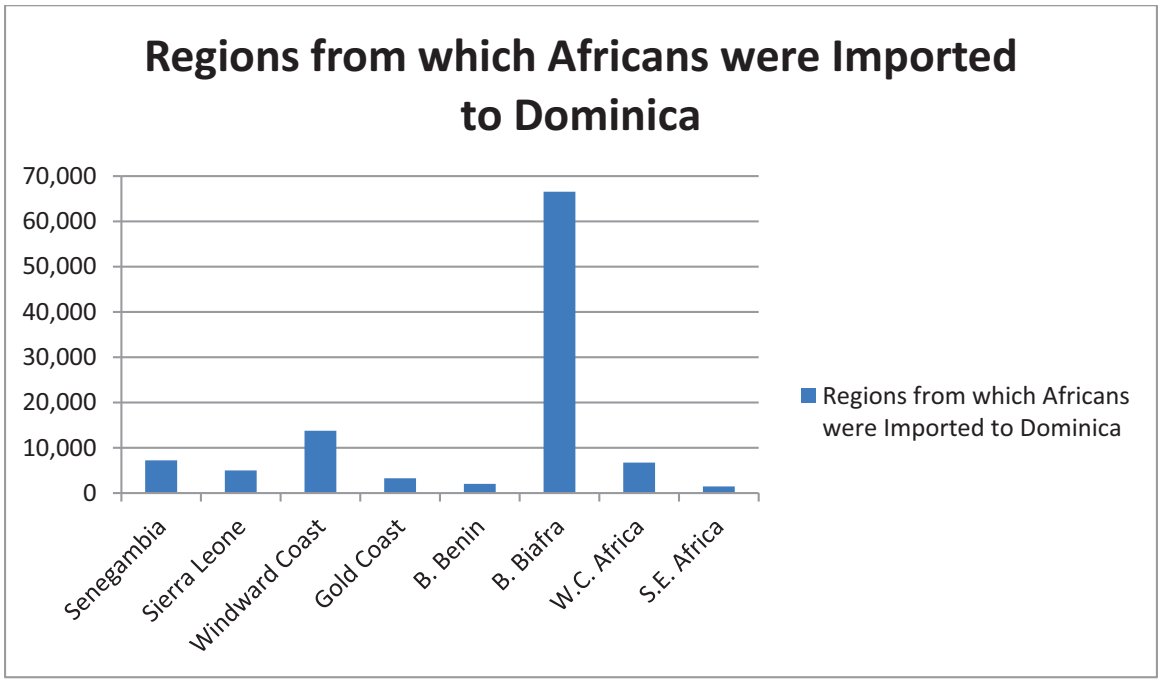


**Figure 3: Coastal African regions from which Dominica's Africans were imported.**

Of the 57 percent of the African captives who came from the Bight of Biafra region, 86 percent of them came specifically through the ports of Bonny, Calabar, and New Calabar, ports that were directly connected to the Delta States and the Aro merchants. This means 49 percent of the total population of enslaved Africans transported into Dominica directly from the continent arrived through those three popular Bight of Biafra ports, and 26 percent more specifically passed through the port of Bonny.[108]

The culture of the enslaved Africans in Dominica and the maroons who grew out of this intended slave labor cannot be discussed without understanding the Igbo culture and the culture of their close neighbors who passed through these ports. In addition to the sheer number of

[108] David Eltis. Et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

imports directly from African to Dominica representing a high portion of Bight of Biafrans, the planter records also show a large portion of the enslaved population of Dominica had "Ibbo" or "Ebo" listed as their ethnicity. Also, not only were Igbo imported into Dominica in large number, but other large British Caribbean islands also had a large share of imported Igbo peoples in the second half of the eighteenth century. Jamaica, along with their Coromantee population, had many, and roughly 35 percent of Grenada's imports between 1763 and 1808 were also from the Bight of Biafra region. So the idea of transshipments from neighboring British islands would also support the idea of a large Igbo population. In addition to the aforesaid, "between 1750 and 1783, more than 86 percent of the imported captives were retained" in the colonies.[109] Interesting enough, 47.2 percent of the captives until 1783 (one year prior to the First Maroon War) passed through Bonny, Calabar, and New Calabar, the popular Igbo routes into the transatlantic slave trade. Dominica, nevertheless, would become a great re-exporter of enslaved African imports from 1784 until the end of the 1790s.[110] This trend was reversed prior to the Second Maroon War in the 1810s, in which the colony imported 75 percent of its captives from Calabar and Bonny alone, and retained 80 to 90 percent of them.[111] Also, yams, which was and is a known Igbo staple, and they have a festival for in Nigeria every year, was significant for the maroon diet according to a British soldier's account.[112]

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[109] Selwyn H.H. Carrington. *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of Slave Trade, 1775-1810.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002. 192

[110] Ibid., 192-5

[111] CO 71/38. "Account of Negroes Imported and Exported from 1788 to December 1804." December 27, 1804

Carrington. H.H. *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of Slave Trade.* 193

[112] Lennox Honychurch. *Negre Mawon: The Fighting Maroons of Dominica.* Dominica: Paramount Printers, 2014. 28

Because of their large rate of importation, overrepresentation in the 1817 census of Dominica, the first year an official detailed census was implemented, as well as yams as a maroon staple it is safe to conclude that Igbo culture laid the foundation for the African culture in Dominica. The Igbo people were from decentralized stateless societies. They lived in autonomous villages without a central government. Toyin Falola states, "The Igbo characteristic decentralized society seems to have been a deliberate departure from the earlier traditions of Nri; monarchical institutions in such outlying cities as Asaba, Onitsha, and Aboh probably arose through the influence of the kingdoms of Igala and Benin."[113] According to Falola, it seems that even on the African continent the Igbo exhibited the spirit of freedom and independence by breaking away from the influence of the Nri Kingdom. Igbo society was structured so there would be no tyranny exerted over the people. Make no mistake, their arrival on the plantations of Dominica in the latter part of the eighteenth century did not change their understandings of society. The Igbo did not believe in being ruled and also did not believe in being the ruler of others. It would be a discredit to the Igbo and the various Africans nationals in Dominica to assume that their quest for freedom was based on European literature during the Age of Revolution and Enlightenment. The French Revolution and the American Revolution during the late eighteenth century would be credited for taking an innovative and more egalitarian representative position opposing centralized hierarchical monarchical states during the era. However, both revolutions in theory were attempting to break away from centralized government to form a modern state with checks and balances. In essence, it was an attempt by the Western

[113] Toyin O Falola. "The Federal Republic of Nigeria" Encyclopedia Britannica. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/414840/Nigeria/55313/Igboland-and-the-delta-city-states

so-called revolutionary governments to recreate a decentralized form of government that mirrored what had been practice in West Africa for centuries.

For example, Igbo societies were considered acephalous societies, or what Ifi Amadiume refers to as anti-state decentralized societies, a term which better denotes a conscious anti-state organizational stance rather than a society that is simply lacking something.[114] They were a society without a ruler, and without hierarchy and social stratification. Society in Igboland allotted power in a very local sense. According to Don C. Ohadike,

> First, a person belonged to the smallest social unit known as *uno,* or house. This was a natural family, consisting of a man, his wife or wives, and their children. The second group was the *umunna,* or lineage, composed of a number of related houses. Finally, a group of lineages formed a compact village or town, *obodo.* This was the highest territorially defined authority of the Igbo.[115]

With each lineage within a given village being semi-autonomous, the Igbo also had what is known as "Cross Cutting Ties", such as age groups (*ogbo* or *out*), womens groups, secret societies, councils of chiefs, and councils of elders (*ndisi* or indichie) in order to serve the various interests of the diverse groups in the communities. The Cross Cutting groups made the Igbo communities extremely democratic, in that any person can belong to a particular group whose voices would be heard in the village and in the subsequent rule of the land. There was no one executive of the entire society. This Cross Cutting system was a system of checks and balances.

African societies that served as models for democratic forms of government were not only limited to the acephalous Igbo. The Ibibio, who were known as Moco in the planters'

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[114] Ifi Amadiume. *Reinventing Africa: Matriarchy, Religion, and Culture.* London: Zeb Books Ltd, 1997. 16

[115] Don C. Ohadike "Igbo Culture and History" in *Things Fall Apart,* by Chinua Achebe

records and passed through the same ports of the Bight of Biafra also came from decentralized societies.[116] Even the Bakongo, such as Congo Ray and others in Dominica, despite being from a vast "kingdom", were a people who were intolerant of abusive kings. Their kingdom was not how monarchies are perceived in the West. Their society was very democratic.[117] Also, "the nobles were not concerned with local autonomy at all."[118] There was no slavery practiced in the Kongo prior to the European presence, so it was not part of the culture. Also, as mentioned before, kings who abused their power, were considered witches by the masses.[119] Those who lived in the *mbanza* lived in semi-autonomous villages away from the *mbata* and the former's affairs were rarely interrupted by the latter. Also, there was the Asante Empire, where Quashie derived from, was an expansive empire, but practiced rapid integration of the servile class into their society.[120] In the Futa Jallon region where Balla was born, the people there were also intolerant of abuse and formed the various caliphates as a result. Nevertheless, the Africans who were brought to Dominica, especially the majority population from Igboland, were from societies that were in essence highly egalitarian, lacked severe social stratification, and in their core could have served as models for nations aspiring to become representative democracies, though many of the societies had fallen into chaos. However, much of the chaos was a result of people having the courage not to back down from the European collaborating cancers running rampant in their societies transforming them. These same Africans in their home countries had already

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[116] E.J. Alogoa. "The Niger Delta States and their Neighbors, to 1800." In *The History of West Africa,* by Michael Crowder and J. Ajayi, 196-263. New York: Columbia University, 1974.

[117] Dubois. *Avengers of the New World.* 108-9

[118] Thornton. *Civil War and Transition, 1641-1718.* 42

[119] Thornton. " I am the Subject of the King of Congo: African Political Ideology and the Haitian Revolution"

[120] Inikori. "Slavery in Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade" 39-72

demonstrated their quest for a free society, and continued to demonstrate this same quest in Caribbean.

Aside from the ideas of societal structure that the Igbo brought with them to Dominica, they also brought their cosmological ideals. Their interpretation of the universe cannot be separated from their quest for freedom in Dominica. Like many African peoples, the Igbo were very conscious of the metaphysical realm of the universe. There was a very thin line between the world of the spirits and the physical world. The Igbo showed great reverence for the dead as they understood that life was one great cycle. Those who were deceased would soon be reborn as progeny. Their belief in reincarnation spawned suicides among the Africans in the Middle Passage and upon their arrival in the Americas in the belief that their souls would "transmigrate" back to Africa. [121] The Africans who committed suicide were considered to have had the ability of transmigration back to Africa and were considered "Flying Africans." Then, of course, there is the example of "The Igbo Landing" when a large group of Igbos walked singing into Dunbar Creek near the coast of Georgia.[122] There was also the example of nineteenth century Cuba, the entire plantations of enslaved Igbo hanged themselves from trees simultaneously.[123] Furthermore, though some of the planters' records give conflicting reports about the nature of Igbo behavior, it was "a truism in the historical literature that Igbo, especially the males were not at all appreciated in the Americas, mainly because of their propensity to run away and/or commit

[121] Daniel Walker. E. *No More, No More: Slavery and Cultural Resistance in Havana and New Orleans.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004. 23-4

[122] Lorna McDaniel. "The Flying Africans: Extent and Strength of the Myth in the Americas" in *New West Indian Guide* 64 (1990): 28-40

[123] Gwendolyn Hall. *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992. 255

suicide."[124] Planters mostly misinterpreted the spirit of the Igbo and characterized them as being a "despondent" group.[125] In Sir Henry Hesketh Joudou Bell's 1889 book on "witchcraft" in Grenada entitled, *Obeah: Witchcraft In The West Indies,* he wrote of the Igbo, contrasting them with the "Koromantyn" and the Joloffa and Foolah negroes", that they were "pusillanimous, and presented a more degraded type of negro."[126] However, the idea that they may have seemed "despondent" and "pusillanimous" does not necessarily conflict with the notions of their spiritual belief systems, nor their notoriety for escaping plantations. Planters may have characterized their suicides as an indication of depression and despondency, when in actually it indicated a high-spiritedness and an unwillingness to be ruled.

Moreover, in Igbo society in Africa, to commit suicide is one of the lowest and most despicable acts a person can do. People who commit these wicked acts against themselves have their bodies disposed of in the "evil bush", as the Igbo call the forested areas where evil spirits can be found. One might see the acts of suicide and escaping into the "bush" in Dominica as a contradiction between Igbo behavior in Africa and Igbo behavior in the west.[127] However, this is not a contradiction at all. This discrepancy is a testament to the egregiousness of plantation slavery in the West Indies. In their homeland of Igboland, the evil spirits can be found in the woods. In Dominica, the evil was on the coastal regions living in the plantation homes, and had white skin. The means in which to escape that wickedness was inverted in a backwards world.

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[124] Gwendolyn Hall. "The Igbo: Excerpt From Book Manuscript *African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links.*" (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, forthcoming)

[125] Williams. *Capitalism and Slavery.* 38

[126] Henry Hesketh Joudou Bell. *Obeah: Witchcraft In The West Indies-Primary Source Edition.* London: Sampson Low, 1889. 150

[127] Don C. Ohadike. "Igbo Culture and History" in *Things Fall Apart,* by Chinua Achebe

Furthermore, the forests had many beneficial qualities for the Igbo and other Africans. The Igbo belief system was called *Odinani,* which meant "customs of the land."[128] The Igbo people, like other Africans, were a people who believed in living in harmony with the land. *Chukwu* was the supreme God, but the spirit of *Chukwu* could be found anywhere.[129] The forests, in particular, were where an abundance of herbs for spiritual medicines could be found.[130] Whereas the common Igbo had fear of the forests, the Igbo spiritual priests could go to the forests unharmed. The forest is the location the Igbo priests would find the particular source of herbs and medicines to help ward off evil.[131] This would make the forests of Dominica a very convenient location for the majority Igbo runaways who fled evil slavery. Also, according to Igbo cosmology water has positive spiritual significance. According to Ohadike:

> Rivers, streams, lakes, and rain had life-sustaining qualities, and symbolized purity, cleanliness, coolness, freshness, fertility, and longevity. The waters spirits were important deities. With water, the Igbo washed away evil and uncleanliness. Important cleansing rituals were performed near, or in, rivers and streams.[132]

Rivers and streams were what Igbo land in the Niger Delta region had plenty of, and it is what they found and abundance of in Dominica with the islands 365 rivers—one for every day of the year. On the other hand, there was fire, known as *oku,* which were

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[128] Nicholas De Mattos Frisvold. *Obeah: A Sorcerous Ossuary.* Great Britain: Hadean Press, 2013. 18

[129] Don C. Ohadike. "Igbo Culture and History" in *Things Fall Apart,* by Chinua Achebe

[130] De Mattos Frisvold. *Obeah*. 16

[131] Jared Green. "Preserving Nigeria's Forests" in *The Dirt: Uniting the Built and Natural Environments.* http://dirt.asla.org/2013/05/22/preserving-nigerias-evil-forests/

[132] Don C. Ohadike. "Igbo Culture and History" in *Things Fall Apart,* by Chinua Achebe

associated with the "dreaded spirits."[133] And it was fire that the *Negs Mawons* often used in their fight against the British.

## Merging of African Philosophies

The Igbo, like other African ethnics, quest for freedom was very much associated with their spirituality. The spiritual medicine of the Igbo was called *obia.*[134] The ethno-medicinal and spiritual practice known as "obeah" in the British West Indies was likely to have been named after the Igbo *obia* and/or the Akan's *obayi*, the trade practiced by the *obayifo,* who is a spiritual priest of the negative spirits. Africans from the Bight of Biafra and the Gold Coast were often imported and placed on plantations together throughout the British West Indies. These groups ended up finding similarities and their spiritual systems and in their languages and this is possibly how the word obeah came about.[135] Obeah rituals were practiced amongst the maroons during warfare.[136] It is known that obeah practitioners also received their power from the forests.[137]

The similarities in culture and cosmologies were not only limited to the Akan and the Igbo. The Bakongo, like the Igbo, had reverence for water. For the Bakongo, beneath the water was considered to be the world of the dead or the *Kalunga*.[138] The *Yowa,* also known as the

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[133] Don C. Ohadike. "Igbo Culture and History" in *Things Fall Apart,* by Chinua Achebe

[134] De Mattos Frisvold. *Obeah*. 18

[135] Ibid., 18-19

[136] *The Royal Gazette* March 18, 1786

[137] De Mattos Frisvold. *Obeah*. 7

[138] Thompson. *Flash of the Spirit*. 109

Congo Cosmogram, represented the circle of life. It is a crucifix shaped symbol with arrows point in a circular counterclockwise motion. The *Yowa* represents the circle of life with the eastern point of the cross representing the point of birth and the western point of the cross representing the point of death.[139] Sterling Stuckey writes about the similarities and subsequent meshing of various African cultures in the American South during the slavery, and discusses the practice of the "ring shout", which, like the *Yowa* was also a counterclockwise circular linear movement in ceremonies. It was linked to several parts of Africa. As mentioned in the introduction, these particular aspects of the ring shout could be found in the peoples of the Kongo, Dahomey, Mende, Temne, Akan, and the other various relatives of the Diaspora.[140] This same meshing of African spiritual culture perhaps occurred in the maroon community in Dominica.

In a world mixed with the majority Igbo and to a lesser extent Ibibio, along with the cultural influence from the Bakongo, Mandingo, and Akan, the culture of the Africans was able to mix to create the formidable maroon nation in Dominica. Each maroon brought with them strengths that brought about the success of the nation amidst the adversity they faced. Balla was a prince in the region of Futa Jallon and had leadership qualities which brought him to the rankings of a general during the first maroon war. Balla was also from a land where there were many rivers and it is likely that he may have had knowledge of how to navigate the waters. Congo Ray, Zombie, and others from the Kingdom of Kongo during that time period were war veterans and skilled in their ability to fight in forested regions, like those of West Central Africa. Quashie, too, was from the very forested region of the Asante Empire during a time of elevated

[139] Thompson. *Flash of the Spirit*. 109

[140] Sterling Stuckey. *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory & Foundations of Black America.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. 12-16

warfare. He too would have brought with him the skill of guerilla warfare tactics found in Akanland, in which he could transfer to the forests of Dominica. The Igbo and Ibibio of the Bight of Biafra, like Balla, were also from a land of many rivers. Not only were their many rivers in Igboland, but it was also a place of tropical rainforests, and contained topographical features that were similar to Dominica. It is very likely that many of them brought over to Dominica utilized this skill in their navigation of the island. The Igbo, with their belief in transmigration, did not fear death when the other choice was to live amid wickedness. They would make perfect soldiers in their belief in death before dishonor.

Though the foundation of the maroon community in Dominica was African, this does not take away from the creole individuals who played a role in the success of the maroon community in Dominica. However, during this time, creole populations may have been first or second generation Americans, and still maintained a significant amount of African cultural influences from their forebears and their newly arrived African neighbors during the final decades of the eighteenth and the early years of the nineteenth century. The cohort of Africans who fled or were released by their former French Catholic masters after Dominica was ceded to the British in 1763 were not Africans who were directly imported from the continent. They may have been creoles, or some may have been born in Africa, but their arrival in Dominica was a result of transshipments through neighboring islands. Furthermore, the ethnic makeup of the Africans prior to 1763 may have been completely different from the African ethnic makeup post 1763. There may have been more of an Aja-Ewe-Fon influence, being that the French purchased many of their enslaved Africans from the Bight of Benin region west of the Niger Delta. Whatever the case was, the maroons of Dominica were not only limited to the aforementioned African names. There was Pharcelle and Grubois who played major roles spanning several decades in the woods.

There was Jupiter, Greg, Sandy, Nico, Elephant, Apollo, Noel, Diano, Nicholas, and Robin just to name a few, who were all major players in the revolutionary maroon society in Dominica.[141]

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the maroon community of Dominica comprised of multiple ethnic groups who disembarked from a variety of regions through West and West Central Africa. Balla, Goree Greg, Mubaya, Congo Ray, Zombie, Moco George, Juba, Quashie, and Jacko were some of the African leaders with African names. In addition to them were Pangloss, Grubois, and especially Pharcelle, who played pivotal roles in the maroon community. The home in which the various African ethnics derived had their pronounced differences. However, on the other hand they had many similarities. Many of the coastal African regions, along with the immediate hinterland, had been gravely affected by the Europe's mercantile capitalist quests. As a result of this the African societies drastically transformed from what they had been prior to Europe's exploration in America and trade with Africa. African societies that were once productive transformed into societies ridden with war, only to feed the demand of labor brought about by the Europeans. Guns were imported into the African continent at an increasing rate throughout the eighteenth century. The various African ethnics arriving in Dominica from the African continent brought with them their military acumen and the knowledge of gun use. Furthermore, not only did they bring the knowledge of warfare but they also brought with them a shared African political philosophy, a philosophy that was staunchly against a hierarchical system of government where power was abused by a small few and freedom was non-existent. They also brought with them

[141] Craton. *Testing the Chains.* 144 and 231

from the African continent similar cosmological beliefs. The Africans were able to submerge the petty differences in their language, specific land of origin, and culture and come together on an immaterial basis, where the world of the spirits played a predominant role in the everyday decisions that were made by the African maroons.

The Igbo, Ibibio, Asante, Mandingo, and Bakongo all had a visible presence in the maroon activities. The Igbo in particular stood out because of their sheer numbers in planters' records and because of the large percentage of Africans embarking from the ports of Bonny, Calabar, and New Calabar. The Igbo cultural influence on the maroon community of Dominica cannot be overlooked in the loose federation of the decentralized community and by some of the actions taken in war by the maroons. In the last third of the eighteenth century, the various African ethnics would come together and establish a nation in the rainforest and hilltops of Dominica. This was truly a society created from nothing. As European and Euro-American theorists were starting to learn and write about democracy, the Africans came from societies which were truly democratic and egalitarian that understood the horrors of centralized governments. For the rest of the eighteenth century into the nineteenth century the Africans in Dominica would prove themselves to be a formidable group in defending their democratic ideals. In the midst of tyranny, the *Neg Mawon* nation caused hiccups in the relations between the imperial powers including Britain and France, and were to be taken seriously in the process. The maroons were players and not merely pawns. They were valiant pacesetters and not followers. And it was their African ideals, not the influence from the French and British, which was the driving force behind the creation, spirit, and success of the maroons in the decades that followed.

# CHAPTER TWO: A MARITIME MAROON NETWORK, BANISHED REBELS, AND THE ROUTES TO DOMINICA

The Africans who arrived in Dominica established a conspicuous and very formidable nation in the interior of the island by the 1770s. However, the establishment of this maroon nation was neither coincidence nor inevitable. There were several factors that contributed to the creation of this African community in the Lesser Antilles. This work, not so much being a nationalist history of Dominica is a narrative of peoples of African descent who happened to land, through a variety of routes, in an island now known as Dominica. As such, it finds it imperative not only to discuss the African roots of Dominica's maroon nation but also the routes that were taken once those Africans arrived in the various West Indian colonies. This chapter will discuss the historical, geographical, political, and economic circumstances which led to the development of the *Neg Mawon* nation. It discusses the attractiveness of Dominica's interior by a maritime maroon network, the banishment of African revolutionaries from various islands into Dominica, and the subsequent establishment of a community by the 1770s whose strength and formidability was initially vied by France in its intermittent wars with the British.

The Caribs, also known as the Kalinago, inhabited Dominica at the time of Spain's initial encounter with the island in 1493. Upon the arrival of the French in the island in the seventeenth century many of the Kalinago inhabitants fled, died, or were relegated to the northeastern corner of the island. They also played a role in being paid to capture self-emancipated Africans at times as well.[142] However, this role was minimal compared to the role that black troops would later play in pursuing the maroons. Prior to the cession of Dominica to the British in 1763 the island

[142] Richard Price. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. 9

was considered a neutral island. Spain, France, and Great Britain all made claims to the island, but it did not officially become British until the Treaty of Paris in 1763.[143] Though the island was neutral the dominant white population was of French background. The enslaved population and plantation culture was very minimal pre-1763 compared to post 1763. Dominica, specifically, in 1763 only had 1,718 whites and 5,872 enslaved Africans, which was a ratio of only 1 to 3.[144] Nine years later by 1772 the white population of Dominica had decreased to 1,212 and the African enslaved population of Dominica had grown to 14,214, a ratio which was about 1 to 14.[145] The enslaved population almost grew by two and a half times in only nine years. And as a result, the maroon population grew as well.

## A Maritime Maroon Network

However, though scant, the maroon population prior to 1763 did exist. It is likely that many of these maroons were "maritime maroons." These are maroons who escaped their islands of enslavement by sea and found refuge in neighboring islands. Africans from various parts of the continent brought with them the ability to create and navigate watercrafts. Thornton talks about the Africans from the Upper Guinea and Gulf of Guinea regions of West Africa being adept in the navigation of canoes and larger watercrafts for warfare in the rivers as well as the sea between the Bight of Benin and the Gold Coast.[146] Africa also had a long tradition of ship

[143] Thomas Atwood. *The History of Dominica.* 2

[144] Basil E Cracknell. *Dominica.* Harrisburg: Stackpole Books, 1973. 68

[145] CO 71/13. Census of Dominica for the years 1772, 1780, and 1788. United Kingdom National Archives at Kew Gardens. London, United Kingdom.

[146] John Thornton. *Warfare in Atlantic Africa, 1500-1800.* New York: Millersville University, 2005. 47-8, 75

building. Ivan Van Sertima discusses how in the fourteenth century the Mali Empire sent a fleet of ships across the Atlantic Ocean.[147] In writing about maritime maroonage, N.A.T. Hall describes how the maroons in the Danish West Indies did not have the advantages of escaping in their own islands into a mountainous and forested interior, which had been cleared intentionally by the colonizers. As such their option of grand-maroonage often came in the form of maritime maroonage in efforts to seek neighboring islands conducive to maroon formations.[148] The British government felt that the Southern Caribbee's (Ceded Islands) close proximity of Spanish colonial government like "Porto Rico" encouraged and protected frequent traffic of maritime maroons. In 1765, with the new acquisition of Grenada and Tobago there was also a concern that those new colonies could "be exposed to the same inconveniences unless proper measures [were] taken to induce the Court of Spain to prohibit the Governors of such of their Settlements, to which Slaves in the British Islands may desert…"[149].

Maritime maroons travelled back and forth between islands, possibly scoping out likely locations to see which ones were best suitable for their survival. In the early 1790s there is evidence of maroon Chief Pharcelle travelling back and forth between Dominica and Guadeloupe.[150] There was also a steady tradition of Africans escaping from neighboring French islands during the reign of Dominica's maroons and after the disintegration of the nation.[151] The

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[147] Ivan Van Sertima. *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America.* New York: Random House Trade Paperback, 1976, 2003. 47-50

[148] N.A.T Hall and B.W. Higman. *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies: St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix.* Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 1999. 125

[149] CO 152/ 47. To The Lord of Hillsborough at Whitehall. March 1, 1765.

[150] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde. January 18, 1791. National Archives at Kew Gardens London, UK.

[151] CO 71/9 Letter from Governor John Orde to Lord Sydney. CO 71/10 Letter from Governor Orde to Lord Sydney, April 16, 1786. CO 71/57 through CO 71/60

maritime maroon tradition at times also worked in reverse. In 1777 there seemed to be a problem for the Governor Bouille with Africans from Dominica escaping Dominican plantations and fleeing to Martinique to live among their maroon populations as well.[152]

Nevertheless, if there was a trans-island maroon network which evidence seems to point towards, Dominica would have made an ideal residence for maroons from various islands prior to and during the British occupation of the coastal regions. For one, the island was filled with an abundance of water. Thomas Atwood writes, "The rivers and rivulets are plentifully stocked with excellent fist; the principal of which are, mullets, crocoes, pike, eels, suck-fish, and cray-fish…"[153] Atwood continues discussing wild yams, as well as iguanas, wild goat and hogs, which used to be in the woods as a result of "being let free on the plantations."[154] Not only were these mountainous and forested areas of the island that were filled with potential natural food stuffs desirable to the maritime maroons, but it was also desirable by the enslaved on the island. In a letter to The Earl of Laverport it was stated in reference to Dominica that there was not:

> another spot on the Globe where stupendous mountains awful precipices, and almost impenetrable woods are so continent to render a country difficult as in the interior of this island which at the same time, being abundantly supplied with Water and food/both animal and vegetable/offers great…station to unruly and indolent Negroes to abscond from the estates and take shelter in, where, instead of being any longer subject to labor, had almost a life of indolence and in very considerable security, the more daring of them occasionally coming down upon the estates, plundering them of cattle and even carrying away with them into the woods other Negroes.[155]

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[152] 211MIOM/59. FR ANOM COL $C^{8A}$ 76 $F^{o}$ 140. Correspondence between Governor Thomas Shirley of Dominica and Governor Bouille of Martinique. Les Archives Nationales d'outre Mer. Aix-en-Provence, France.

[153] Thomas Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica.* 35-6

[154] Ibid., 21, 47, 51

[155] CO 71/46. A letter to the Earl of Laverport on February 5, 1811.

## The British Arrive, 1763

After the Seven Years' War, Dominica, Grenada, Tobago, Saint Vincent, and the Grenadines were all formerly ceded to the British. Immediately upon the arrival of the British in Dominica there were a group of Catholic Jesuits who sold their enslaved to the newly arrived British planters. These enslaved persons exploited this transition period of the British occupation of the island's coastal regions by escaping into the woods in large numbers. Atwood writes, "Many of the negros so purchased from the Jesuits, either from their attachment to them, or dislike to their new masters, soon after betook themselves to the woods with their wives and children, where they joined from time to time, by others from different estates."[156] Along with this transition came the massive importation of Africans captives into the Ceded Islands. The newly acquired islands were to "settled and developed as sugar colonies" which was a labor intensive crop.[157] On record, there were only 4,254 African captives transported to the four Ceded Islands from the late fifteenth century all the way until British formal acquisition in 1763. In the years 1764 and 1765 alone the four islands were responsible for the transportation of 5,358 Africans, a number greater than the more than two and a half centuries combined. This trend only became more severe. By the end of the decade in 1770 there had been 47,992 Africans transported from the time of the cession of the Ceded Islands. Thirty-eight percent of whom passed directly through the ports of Bonny, Calabar, and New Calabar, and most likely would have been Igbo or Ibibio.[158]

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[156] Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica*., 226

[157] Carrington. *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775-1833*. 6

[158] David Eltis et al. "The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces

The Ceded Islands—or, Southern Caribbee was governed from Grenada. From 1763 to 1770 there was no formal colonial government in Dominica.[159] In fact, prior to the cession of the islands, Dominica and Saint Vincent had no formal European government then either. Dominica had a small detachment of troops while Saint Vincent had no detachment at all in 1763.[160] The island was new and sparsely inhabited in the early years, and seemed to be sort of a dump land for unwanted Africans who were either charged with being rebellious in any sort of way. The planters of Dominica were so concerned with the maroons to the point that by 1768 proprietors were already discussing the issue "to ship off and sell Runaway or Criminal Slaves…"[161]. One year later the inhabitants of Dominica proposed a bill to the Southern Caribbee government entitled "An Act to prevent the Importation of slaves in who have been convicted or known to have been guilty of Murder or attempt to murder or poison, insurrection or other Capital offences."[162] This Act by Dominica came as a result of an initiative to put a halt to receiving "banished rebels" from the insurrections that were prevailing throughout the newly acquired British Islands and neighboring colonies as well.

## African Revolutions in the Lesser Antilles: Banishing Rebels to Dominica

These imported Africans who were guilty of insurrection, murder, poisoning, and other capital offences could have come from a number of neighboring islands. In 1768, in Montserrat

[159] CO 101/2. Letter from Hillsborough to The Earl of Shelburne at Whitehall on February 2, 1768.

[160] CO 101/1 Letter from William Rufane(?) To the Right Honorable the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations. Martinique. May 2, 1763.

[161] Deed Book XI, June 21, 1766 to July 29, 1769. Correspondence from Hillary Rowe Jurr to Barbados on September 20, 1768. Roseau, Dominica.

[162] CO 73/1. The Council and Assembly of the Southern Caribbee Islands of Grenada, the Grenadines, Dominica, Saint Vincent, and Tobago. June 29th 1769.

there was a conspiracy among the enslaved population there. After the failure of the revolt on that island Vice Admiral Pye wrote, "Nine of the ringleaders, have been executed & upward of thirty of the conspirators are in confinement, to be sent off the island the first opportunity."[163]

However, the biggest resistance and most notorious revolutionaries in the Lesser Antilles in the 1760s notably came from Grenada. Governor Robert Melville of Grenada wrote of his island in September of 1765 that, "The Runaway slaves, of whom have there has always been 2 or 3 hundred sheltered in the woody Mountains of this island and subsisting themselves chiefly by Depredations on the cattle & Ground Provisions of the nearest Estates, became, soon after the Establishment of Civil Government, more than ordinarily audacious…"[164] Melville's maroon problem was one that stuck with him for almost a decade in the island. Grenada was supposed to be a promising acquisition by the British. In Grenada, the British established an economy that was only second to Jamaica.

In the period cession of the new islands in 1763 and America's War for Independence in 1775 Grenada became the dominant Ceded Island. The island contained 334 plantations. Sugar estates occupied 32,011 acres; coffee, 12,796; indigo, 742; and cacao, 712.[165] Between the years of 1763 and 1776 Grenada's exports in sugar went from 71 cwt to 232 cwt.[166] Between the years of 1769 and 1779 Grenada was the British West Indies' greatest exporter of cotton, cocoa, and

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[163] CO 152/48. Extract of a Letter from Vice Admiral Pye, Commander in Chief of this May ship at the Leeward Islands, to Mr. Stephan dated 16th May 1768.

[164] CO 101/1. Correspondence between Robert Melville to The Lord Commissioners for Trade & Plantations, on September 13, 1765.

[165] Richard B Sheridan. *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973. 458

[166] Quintanilla Mark. "The World of Alexander Campbell: An Eighteenth-Century Grenadian Planter." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies.* North American Conference on British Studies. Vol. 35 2(2003) 229-256

coffee to Britain. From 1769 to 1775, coffee exports from Grenada almost doubled, from 12,443 hundredweight to 24,423. Cocoa exports from Grenada to England increased fivefold, from around 1,000 hundredweight in 1764 to greater than 5,000 in 1771. Grenada, after Jamaica, was also the second greatest exporter of sugar and rum to Britain as well.[167] However, with the maroon takeover of the interior these successes in Grenada would not have been possible.

After Melville's letter of concern about the maroons, the Southern Caribbee government spent the next few years trying to quell the revolutionary movement of the Africans. In September 1765 Melville wrote of maroons in Grenada who killed an estate manager, "…several of the most criminal of those Desperados have been lately taken & brought to exemplary punishment…"[168] Perhaps many of those involved in the murder of Farrel who were not executed were banished to the rugged Dominica. Though the Grenada maroons during the end of 1765 had weakened and become dispersed they would soon resurface causing more problems for the colonial government. Melville writes a little more than a year later in January of 1767, "The Maroons Slaves have lately committed some outrages but they are again dispersed…"[169] Later on that year maroons by the name of Pompey, Bartholemy, Jack, Sulpice, L'Amour, and St. Vincent were accused of killing two carpenters named Dennis Bray and Matthew Brown after two slaves were wrongly accused and executed. However, as the colonial government made gains, the maroons continued to push back. In December 1770, in the parish of Saint Andrew, the maroons had increased and continued to harass planters on the various plantations.[170] Also, in the

[167] Carrington. *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775-1810.* 17-18

[168] CO 101/1. Correspondence between Robert Melville to The Lord Commissioners for Trade & Plantations, on September 13, 1765.

[169] CO 101/2. Copy of a Correspondence from Robert Melville to The Earl of Shelburne, January 16, 1767.

[170] CO 101/4. Correspondence from Robert Melville to The Earl of Hillsborough, December 16, 1770.

parish of Saint David there was speculation of intercourse being carried out between the enslaved on the plantations and the maroons, in which an all-out "general insurrection" was to take place on Christmas day "if very speedy methods" were not "taken to suppress it."[171] However, by January 1771 Melville wrote, "the Marooners" have "received a very severe check on their late incursions."[172] The maroons in Grenada did not cause as much of a fuss for the colonial government in the years following.

Nevertheless, as the movement of Grenada's revolutionaries was being quelled, insurrections were simultaneously sprouting up in the neighboring islands of Tobago and Carriacou. Troops were being rotated all over the Southern Caribbee in efforts to put an end to the African revolutionary movements.[173] However, as the focus of warfare was being placed in Montserrat, Grenada, Tobago, and Carriacou, there were two islands whose rebel populations were growing and becoming more formidable—Dominica, the land of the maritime maroons, domestic maroons, and banished rebels from neighboring islands, and Saint Vincent, the home of the Black Caribs (Garifuna). Circa 1770 Saint Vincent began to receive attention in relation to its rebel population. On 5 July 1769, Jo Graham of Grenada wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough, "The late Charibbs at St. Vincent has made it necessary to have all the 32 Regiment there…".[174] In December 1770, Melville made mention of the "companies which had been withdrawn from Dominica to St. Vincent on the occasion of the Charraibbe opposing the Sales of their Lands by

[171] CO 101/4. Extract from a Letter from W. Macintosh to Robert Melville, on December 11, 1770.

[172] CO 101/4. Letter from Robert Melville, January 20, 1771.

[173] CO 101/4. Letter from Robert Melville to The Earl of Hillsborough, December 3, 1770.

[174] CO 101 3. Letter from Jo Graham to The Earl of Hillsborough. Grenada, July 5, 1769.

the Commissioners", but makes it clear that there was a necessity for "4 companies of the 32nd Regiment" in Dominica.[175]

As mentioned above, while Montserrat, Tobago, Carriacou, and especially Grenada in the late 1760s and early 1770s were banishing African conspirators from their islands, Dominica was importing them. The Preamble of the 1769 Act proposed by the inhabitants of Dominica states:

> Whereas many Evils have already happened and still continue to happen to Numbers of the Inhabitants of this Island, by being put in great danger of their lives and properties from being attacked in their Houses as well as on the Highways by Gangs of runaway Negroes, headed and encouraged by other Slaves imported from Neighbouring Islands, who were there convicted, or known to have been guilty of Crimes which through Lenity or having been secured by their Owner or others have escaped punishment And whereas if an immediate stop is not put to such evils by preventing the importation of such Offenders into this island the Inhabitants will still remain under great terror and apprehension and may in the end be attended with fatal consequences to their Lives and properties as well as the means of retarding the settlement of this Infant Colony.[176]

The planters of Dominica obviously believed that there was a problem with the importation of Africans from the neighboring colonies. With the massive importation of Africans into the newly ceded British West Indies came the spirit of revolution among the Africans. And by the early years of the 1770s Dominica's maroon community, by neglect of the British colonial government, and by careful vision, planning, and fervor of the Africans became the new location in Lesser Antilles that housed the eighteenth and nineteenth century pan-African movement. Whereas Dominica lacked an official local British colonial government prior to the 1770s, by the early 1770s a colonial government as well as an African maroon government had been

[175] CO 101 4. Letter from Robert Melville to The Earl of Hillsborough, Grenada. December 3, 1770.

[176] CO 73/1. The Council and Assembly of the Southern Caribbee Islands of Grenada, the Grenadines, Dominica, Saint Vincent, and Tobago. June 29th 1769.

established, both competing for space in the island. Thomas Atwood wrote of this organized nation:

> "There they secreted themselves for a number of years, formed companies under different chiefs, built good houses, and planted gardens in the woods, where they raised poultry, hogs, and other small stock, which, with what the sea, rivers, and woods afforded, and what they got from the negros they had intercourse with on the plantations, they lived very comfortably, and were seldom disturbed in their haunts."[177]

Dominica was no longer being governed from Grenada under the Southern Caribbee Islands government. Whereas the island known as Dominica lacked an official local British colonial government prior to the 1770, by the early 1770s there were two governments aside from the native population in the northeastern corner of the island competing for space—the *Neg Mawon* and the British colonial government. Sir William Young arrived in the arrived in Dominica as the new colonial governor on 22 April 1771.[178]

The government by the early 1770s was concerned with prohibiting the importation of felonious slaves and "suppressing the runaways."[179] By 1773 Dominica passed an Act for:

> …suppressing of Runaway Slaves and for the Better Government of Slaves and for Preventing slaves being Fraudulently carried off the island and for enabling the Commander in Chief, or President of the Council for the time being to and out Detachments of Free Mulattoes, Free Negroes and other Persons being Male descendants of Negroes in Pursuit of the Run-away Slaves.[180]

In the first clause of the new colonial government's Act, it was clear that they wanted to deter maroonage. In reference to maroons who had absented "their owner, renter or employer's

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[177] Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica.* 227

[178] CO 73/1. "An Act for Confirming the Several Grants and Leases of Lands.." signed by William Stuart and recorded and Examined August 23, 1773.

[179] CO 73/5. His Majesty's Council in Dominica. By James Ashley Hall.

[180] Book of Acts, 1772-1778. An Act for Suppressing Runaway Slaves…", August 24, 1773. National Archives of Roseau, Dominica. Also in CO 73/6. "An Act for Suppressing Runaway Slaves…", August 23, 1773. Kew, London.

service" for one year or "at several times within the space of two years Amounting in all to six months, all and every such slave or slaves" were to be "adjudged Guilty of Felony and shall suffer Death…"[181].

However, the punishment of "Death" did not deter the Africans from absconding. As Colonial Governor Ainslie during the Second Maroon War in 1814 would realize later, they had to do more than simply kill the Africans as a punishment for escaping in order to deter them. The cosmological beliefs of the Igbo, who comprised a significant portion of the enslaved population of Dominica, believed in transmigration back to the African continent after death. To live free or die trying was the value system of the Igbo. Igbo captives were often stereotyped as being very "despondent" and predisposed to suicide. However, this characterization of the Igbo shows a lack of understanding their philosophy for many European planters. Nevertheless, the philosophies of the Igbo had their similarities with the other African ethnics throughout the plantations. The groups found their philosophical similarities and came together on that basis. Moreover, as various laws, which were enacted, failed to deter the Africans population from fleeing plantations, the colonial government would find out later that they had to understand the philosophies of the Africans in order to truly subdue them.

## A Nation Established

By the 1770s the maroons in Dominica had become a formidable group. Africans continued to flee their plantations to seek refuge in the woods. The future Governor George Ainslie would later write about the maroons that "People are ignorant of the state of Dominica,

[181] Book of Acts, 1772-1778. "An Act to Suppress the Runaways…" August 24, 1773. National Archives of Roseau, Dominica.

erroneously believe, that the Runaways are slaves, who to avoid punishment for some venial or menial offence, from a harsh master, run to the woods for a short time and then return to their duty a few unfortunate, persecuted isolated beings without concert, whose only inheritance is slavery whose condition demands our pity."[182] And as was mentioned previously, the Governor continues by describing the nature of the maroons as an "imperium in imperio", which had "been established above thirty years."[183] The accounts of various colonists including Atwood and Ainslie make it clear the extent to which this maroon community was a threat to what they wanted to be the order of a plantations society in the island. History best demonstrates that it was only a matter of time before the strength of a formidable maroon community would be vied for by warring European nations throughout the region.

As the maroons were organizing into decentralized villages with chiefs and sub-chiefs throughout the interior of Dominica in the early to mid-1770s, the year 1776 would mark the year of North American colonies' declaration of independence. The so-called "American Revolution" as well as the French Revolution came as result of many things. Both of these revolutions had much to do with the philosophical discussions that were floating around Europe at the time. The writings of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Roseau all influenced the Western European world and their various colonies. The move away from the old traditional monarchical centralized governments, where the power was vested in a small few was being challenged by the "enlightened" peoples who started to question the relationship between an individual and the state. However, while the philosophies of all men are created equal were being spread throughout

[182] CO 71/49. Letter from Governor George Ainslie to Lord Bathurst, March 21, 1814.

Polly Pattullo. *Your Time is Done Now.* London: Papillote Press, 2015. 4

[183] CO 71/49. Letter from Ainslie to Bathurst, March 21, 1814.

Europe, the colonies, and the newly declared independent United States continued to practice chattel slavery—the antithesis of freedom. The French monarchical government and later France's First Republic continued to practice slavery until the Africans in Saint-Domingue rose up and forced France to make the Africans' freedom official.

## French Occupation

` Furthermore, this war between the North American colonies and Great Britain had its effects all throughout the West Indies. Benjamin Franklin engaged in skillful diplomacy with France, which sought revenge for the loss of many colonies during the Seven Years' War, and was able to get them involved in America's War for Independence fighting on the side of the American colonists.[184] France desired to take back some of the strategic islands in the Lesser Antilles, including Dominica. Dominica is located south of Guadeloupe and north of Martinique. It was in a vulnerable position during the Independence War. Governor Bouille of Martinique assigned Marie-Charles du Chilleau as governor of the occupied Dominica.

Du Chilleau was born in France. He served in the French military for several years before being given a post as a general in the French army. Because of his astuteness and high ranking status as a general he was thought of as equipped to serve as governor of Dominica in 1778. Du Chilleau was also influenced from the European enlightenment and even was indirectly part of an operation to free the thirteen colonies in North America from British tyranny in order to establish an egalitarian society there. However, after serving as Governor of Dominica he became the governor of Saint-Domingue, arguably the most draconian and largest sugar

[184] Joseph A Barome. "Dominica during French Occupation, 1778-1784" in *The English Historical Review.* Oxford University Press. Vol. 84 330(1969) 36-58

producing colony in the West Indies at the time. At the time of Du Chilleau's governance in Saint-Domingue the colony was importing 30,000 Africans yearly.[185] The average lifespan on the plantation in Saint-Domingue was 5-10 years. Du Chilleau was not a lover of Africans. However, he hated the British, and the presence of sovereign Africans in the interior of the island of Dominica was so powerful that Du Chilleau realized he had to respect and acknowledge their existence.

Du Chilleau enacted all kinds of limitations on the freedom of the British inhabitants throughout Dominica including "forbidding the assembling together of the English inhabitants more than two in a place."[186] The Governor also made it clear that, "no lights were to be seen in their houses after nine o'clock at night" and "that no English person was to be out after that hour, in the streets, without a candle and lanthorn (sic) or lighted pipe in his mouth…"[187] Moreover, despite that fact that the "Articles of Capitulation" in reference to the British inhabitants of Dominica stated, "The inhabitants shall keep their arms" and "Granted, on condition that they serve not against the King of France"[188] the Marquis Du Chilleau "thought proper to break the eighteenth Article of Capitulation, by disarming them, and distributing their arms among the runaway negros, with whom he actually entered into a treaty for assistance."[189] It is clear based on France and the United States' position on enslavement that the philosophies of equality were only theories and never put into practice. The case of Du Chilleau arming the maroons may have

[185] David Eltis et al. "The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/search

[186] Atwood. *The History of Dominica.* 147

[187] Ibid.

[188] Atwood. *The History of Dominica.* 132

[189] Atwood. *The History of Dominica.* 145

only emboldened them because of the extra support and weaponry. However, Africans throughout the west had been fighting for their freedom since their arrival in the Americas. These maroon communities were the first independent polities to free themselves from colonial rule.[190] Their philosophies on egalitarian democratic societies were found through various parts of Africa as was mentioned before. Du Chilleau did not create these maroons. He simply assisted them, not for their gain but through self-interest for his own protection from British invaders and inhabitants during the war. In other words, the additional arms to the maroons was only strategic.

In the late 1770s and early 1780s, not only were the maroons formidable but now they possessed an increased number of firearms. In addition, the transition of colonial authority and the restrictions placed on the British planters, likely further developed the culture of running away, similar to the way it did during the transition of 1763. There are no exact numbers on the increase of the maroon population during this time. However, what is evident is that whereas the documented enslaved population between 1763 and 1772 had grown significantly by 8,342, the enslaved population between 1772 and 1780 had declined by 1,501.[191]

Participants in the First Maroon War such as Stephan and Augustine were part of the cohort of Africans who escaped slavery during the war years.[192] There was also Bruce, who went by the name of Chief Grubois, along with Liverpool, who both escaped during this time and rose to the ranks of chiefs among their respective clans within the maroon community.[193] Nevertheless, with the British inhabitants demoralized and the Africans in the interior

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[190] Thompson. *Flight to Freedom*. 13

[191] CO 71/13. Census of Dominica's population for 1772, 1780, and 1788.

[192] *The Public Advertiser,* March 9, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/34419294

[193] CO 71/32. Minutes from "a Meeting of His Majesty's Privy Council" on February 22, 1800 and a letter from Governor Andrew Cochrane Johnstone. October 7, 1800.

strengthened, the latter did more than just assist Governor Du Chilleau as intended. The Africans continued to terrorize the British planters. However, as Atwood would point out in reference to the maroons during French occupation, "The runaways, at first, only robbed the English plantations of ground provisions, plantains, bananas, and small stock; but at last they had the audacity to kill and carry away the cattle, and to plunder and set fire to the buildings and estates."[194]

Another factor that led to the increased maroonage and rebelliousness of the enslaved population during the time of French occupation were hurricanes. Whereas natural disasters could at times contribute to the downfall of maroons, sometimes it worked in their favor. In Jamaica, the colonial troops during the First Maroon War in the early eighteenth century were frequently deterred in their efforts to fight the maroons in the mountainous interior of the island because of the frequent rainfall that was accompanied by the hurricane season.[195] In addition, Genovese writes, "Economic distress provoked many big slave revolts in the hemisphere, especially in the Caribbean, where war and inadequate local provisions often resulted in desperate food shortages and outright starvation."[196] Moreover, those devastating hurricanes influence the course of history at various moments throughout the history of Dominica's maroons. According to President of the Council Alex Stewart in 1786 there was one other factor that contributed to the rebelliousness of the enslaved population during the time of French occupation, and that was the hurricanes of 1779 and 1780. Stewart writes that the "two dreadfull hurricanes in 1779 and 1780 and a Feri that consumed the Town of Roseau in 1781 added to the

[194] Atwood. *The History of Dominica.* 228

[195] Mildred M Chang. "The Jamaican Accompong Maroons: Continuities and Transformations" Dissertation submitted to the State University of New York at Albany, 2007. 72

[196] Genovese. *Rebellion to Revolution.* 12

Rebellion of our slaves which at this moment exists…"[197] The hurricane of 1780 was the most notorious and was said to have killed more than 20,000 people that season between the islands of Dominica, Barbados, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Santo Domingo, Turks and Caicos, Bahamas, and Florida before dissipating in Canada.[198]

With the chaos that ensued between the transitioning of European colonial governments, the disarming and demoralizing of the British inhabitants, and the hurricanes of 1779 and 1780 the maroons, who had started their campaigns against British planters since the 1760s continued to grow and became more bold. Atwood gives the accounts of the maroons in 1781 and their actions against the planters in his 1791 book, describing how the maroons went from robbing plantations at night to bold daytime robbery and murder. Atwood writes of the time during French occupation, "The first instance of their committing murder happened on a plantation, where a Mr. Hugh Gould was the manager."[199] They went to the plantation to rob the manager, but were driven away by him. The maroons returned to the plantation days later looking for Mr. Gould "with the determination to kill him", but instead came across a "Mr. Grahame, who resided with the manager as a companion" and murdered him instead.[200] After the maroons stripped the house of everything of value they inflicted the evil spirits by setting *oku* or fire to the house.

After Mr. Grahame was murdered the unarmed British inhabitants in the island were scared for their lives. They appealed to Governor Du Chilleau "for protection, to grant them

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[197] CO 71/10. The Humble Address and Petition of the Council and Assembly, by Alex Stewart. 1786.

[198] Wind: National Geographic Education. http://education.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/wind/ accessed on December 24, 2015

[199] Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica.* 229

[200] Ibid.

arms, with liberty to defend themselves, and to apprehend the runaways who had murdered a white man." However, Du Chilleau made it clear that he did not want any of the British inhabitants taking any vigilante action towards the maroons. According to Atwood, he made it clear that, "if they dared attempt any thing against those people he would imprison them, or send them off the island."[201] The British inhabitants decided at that point to appeal to the Governor De Bouille in Martinique to put an end to the "depredations" of the maroons on the plantations. De Bouille commanded Du Chilleau to adhere to the request of the British inhabitants and he did. It was not before long that the British inhabitants, many of whom were forced to leave their plantations in the interior and seek refuge in Roseau, were able to return armed and ready to defend themselves from the maroons. According to Atwood, "These orders of the Marquis were accordingly put into execution; and though attended with no material service, in point of reducing the runaways, yet were the means of preventing, in a great measure, their further depredations, till after the island was restored to the English."[202]

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the maroon nation that became known as *Neg Mawon*, who inhabited the interior parts of Dominica during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, developed as a result of convenience, circumstance, and spirit. As was mentioned at the beginning of the chapter the creation of this formidable maroon community was neither coincidence nor inevitable. To understand the maroons in the island that we happen to know as Dominica it is important to follow the trajectory of their existence. These are people who started out on various parts of the

[201] Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica.* 230

[202] Ibid., 232

African continent. Many of them were shipped directly to Dominica, while others were shipped to the various surrounding islands. Because of Dominica's terrain, after the Seven Years' War when the British acquired the Ceded Islands and attempted to turn them into sugar producing colonies, the island was a dumping land for revolutionary Africans from various islands. Montserrat, Tobago, Carriacou, and Grenada were some of the neighboring islands that experienced insurrections in the late 1760s and early 1770s. It was Dominica that was receiving the bulk of the rebellious slaves from the neighboring islands during that time period. There was also a maritime maroon culture, and perhaps communication between maroons of the various islands. This also led many Africans from various islands to gravitate towards Dominica, an island that was administratively neglected by the Southern Caribbee government. Dominica was a safe-haven for Africans.

This establishment of a burgeoning maroon nation in Dominica came at a perfect time when the French retook the island. Du Chilleau, a man whose record on slavery did not prove to be so progressive, needed the maroons in order to help defend the island from a British uprising from within, or a British attack from the outside. Under the French administration of the island during the late 1770s and early 1780s the maroons acquired arms and continued the depredations they had been committing on plantation throughout the island. The maroons went from simply raiding plantations to murdering a planter. The actions of the maroons were condoned by Governor Du Chilleau despite the fact that they raided plantations and murdered a white man. This had put even more fear in the British planters than they already had at that point. Nevertheless, by the end of the war between Britain and the now former North American colonies it was negotiated that France would cede the island of Dominica back to the British. However, there was one group that was virtually left out of this agreement, and that was the *Neg*

*Mawon* nation in the interior. As the British officially recaptured the island, the maroons would make it clear that their treaties and laws had no value in their world. After the French government exited the island, the Africans decided that the British government, as well as the British and French slave holding planter class had to go as well.

# CHAPTER THREE: GENERAL BALLA, OBEAH, AND WAR

This chapter demonstrates how the African Radical Traditions that the maroons brought with them to Dominica from the various parts of Africa manifested themselves during the First Maroon War. In doing so, this chapter will problematize the term "restorationist", a term used to describe maroon communities and slave revolts prior to the Haitian Revolution, and explained with negative connotations as to being less "revolutionary" in that they established "archaic" systems of government amidst the Age of Enlightenment and Revolution. As was demonstrated in the first chapter, the societies that the Africans attempted to replicate as much as possible were the free and egalitarian forms of government found in Africa, which specifically the Igbo and Ibibio practiced, as well as the democratic principles found among the Bakongo. As we will see in this chapter, the so-called "restorationists" were Dominica's real revolutionaries. Furthermore, this chapter is going to show that before the Haitian Revolution, this group of Africans coalesced with the enslaved on plantations, attempted to take control of the entire island of Dominica and aimed to extirpate every single British inhabitant. The Africans rightfully and righteously believed that the island belonged to them. They fought as if they were entitled to it. Lastly, this chapter will demonstrate that African spirituality was intertwined with the war process, and it was believed by some colonial officials that the taking of Africans' sacred apparatuses would lead to the loss of confidence. This First Maroon War was the beginning of Dominican colonial officials attempting to understand African cosmology in attempts to defeat them.

The year 1783 marked a year of major change in the Americas. The thirteen North American mainland colonies ended the war establishing their freedom against the British Empire, and the British took back the Ceded Islands from the French occupants. Though the Treaty of Versailles was signed in 1783 establishing the right of the British to reoccupy the

island of Dominica, the third party maroons, who established a formidable presence in the interior of the island, and who also were now armed, were never considered in the treaty. Some may consider the French inhabitants of the island to have been instigators of the maroon intrepidness. However, it is clear that after the French Governor Marquis Du Chilleau departed from the island with his battalion, the *Neg Mawon* African nation took the initiative to extirpate the British from the island. The five years prior served as a catalyst for the revolution that would ensue. During that time there was evidence of the maroons aiming their terror at all white plantation owners, French and British planters alike. The tactic is understandable. If the French were to maintain the conquest of the island the French inhabitants would be just like the French plantation owners of Saint-Domingue, Guadeloupe, and Martinique—a slave holding class with an ill-treated enslaved population. They would also have reflected the planter class of Dominica prior to the cession of the island to the British in 1763.

Furthermore, for the maroons to attack the French as well as the British demonstrates that they acknowledged that white slave owners, despite whatever nationality they claimed, were their enemy. However, after 1783, it was clear to the Africans that since the French government fled the island and the French inhabitants returned to being an underclass to the British the maroons were able to direct all of their warfare towards all British inhabitants and French slave owning inhabitants. The Africans would give a pass to some French non-slave holding inhabitants in their relentless attempt to rid the island of slavery.

## Prelude to War: An Organized Offense

In 1784 an influx of people were disembarked in Dominica. On one side, there were the 600 Loyalists who had recently been defeated in America's War for Independence.[203] There was also the recommencement of the slave trade to Dominica, which between 10 January 1784 and 10 January 1785 resulted in the transportation of 5,000 enslaved Africans from the continent, and an additional 171 "Negroes" transshipped from various British West Indian Islands.[204] The arrival of British Loyalists and the arrival of African prisoners of war into the island during that year would result in a situation where both vanquished parties were looking for the right opportunity to redeem themselves. In that year, the time would come for both to prove themselves.

By 1784, the maroon community in the interior of Dominica was a loosely organized federation of villages, consisting of men, women, and children. Each village, which was referred to as a "camp" by the contemporaries consisted of military leadership or "chiefs" with bands of rank-and-file soldiers. The loose federation of villages working in cohesion for their common defense of their freedom had a seemingly Igbo foundation. One can argue that because the Igbo were from a society that did not promote leadership positions, there were no openly Igbo individuals listed as chiefs. By 1784 the chiefs consisted of Balla, Pharcelle, Congo Ray, Mubayah, Grubois, Pangloss,[205] Jacko, Mabrie, Colligree, Jack,[206] Zombie, Jupiter, Juba,

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[203] Honychurch. *Negre Mawon: The Fighting Maroons of Dominica.* 104

[204] CO 71/9 "Port of Roseau, Dominica. An Account of Goods imported into the Island between 10th January 1784 and the 10th January 1785.

[205] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 6, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/#34418100

[206] John Marshall. *Pennsylvania Packet.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), February 28, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39535074

Cicero, and Hall.[207] There was much speculation as to exactly how many maroons were in the island prior to the start of the First Maroon War. The *Public Advertiser* claimed that there were a total of four camps with above three hundred maroons. According to a report three weeks later in the *Pennsylvania Packet,* however, there were as much as "500 negroes in the woods…"[208] It is possible that the maroon population had grown between that time by about two hundred, but more likely that Europeans were uncertain about the extent of the maroon presence in the island.

There were more than four maroon camps spread throughout the interior of the island. Chief Grubois' camp was located on the Heights of Castle Bruce in Saint David's in the eastern region of the island. Chief Pangloss was stationed between Saint George and Saint Patrick's parishes in the south central part of the island. Chief Pharcelle was stationed at Morne Diablotins, the 4,747 foot mountain and highest point in Dominica, between Calihaut and Saint Andrew's in the northern part of the island. In the "Heights between Layon (sic) and Rosalie" there was another maroon camp with six maroon chiefs: Congo Ray, Jacko, Mabrie, Colligree, Jack, and Balla.[209] Political power was spread out within many chiefs in this camp, however, according to the contemporary newspapers, there was only one general during the First Maroon War, the Muslim and Mandingo prince from Africa, Balla. His second in command was Mubaya (Figure 4).[210]

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[207] Craton. *Testing the Chains.* 144

[208] *Pennsylvania Packet.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), February 28, 1786. http://www.newpaper.com/image/39535074

[209] Marshall, John. *Pennsylvania Packet.* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), February 28, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39535074

[210] Ibid.


**Figure 4: Map of Dominica and Important Locations.**[211]

[211] United States Central Intelligence Agency. *Dominica*. [Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1990] Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/2005631606. (Accessed April 1, 2016.) Modified by Neil Vaz

In 1784, these maroons were prepared to engage in all-out war against the British system, which they felt was a threat to their African way of existence. Just as the Igbo from the Niger Delta region escaped the yoke of the Nri Kingdom, and the Bakongo were intolerant of rulers who abused their power, the maroons of Dominica brought the same mentality of liberty to the island. They were prepared to do whatever was necessary to secure that liberty in which they were accustomed to back home in Africa.

## The First Maroon War Begins

After the exiting of the French government, the maroon movement towards extirpation of all British inhabitants and French slave owners began in August of 1784 on Daniel Ross's Plantation. In the days leading up to war the maroons seemed to have engaged in taunting tactics towards the planters. There were thirty maroons who descended on the plantations acting in what was described as a "highly insolent and threatening" manner towards Ross and James Roach McGrath. This incident alone sparked controversy in the House of Assembly and managed to stir up enough attention to advocate the immediate "suppression of the runaways." However, little did the colonial government know that this was only the beginning. Over the next month or so, the maroons continued to escalate the violence in defense of their land. In September the British reported that, "Runaway slaves who from time to time have made frequent attacks upon different inhabitants, plundered them of effects and in some cases gone so far as to commit the horrid crime of murder on white persons as well as blacks and in one or more instances of the later attended with uncommon circumstance of cruelty."[212]

[212] CO 71/9 20th September 1784.

Some of these killings took place during a raid on the Eden Estate in the northeastern parish of Saint Andrew. It occurred nearest to Pharcelle's camp in the northern region of the island, and it is likely that these were his troops who were sent to find provisions that September day. In the raid the Africans "fired on the negroes" that stood in their way. In the process they acquired plantains and other provisions.[213] On Saturday night, 25 September, in search of more plantains the maroons raided the Jennings Plantation. It was reported by the manager of Mr. Jennings' plantation that 60 maroons descended on the plantation and "made depredations" on the estate.[214] By not knowing what else to do, and not having the patience to wait on the colonial government of Dominica, Mr. Jennings decided to arm nine of his slaves and send them into the woods. These slaves were able to trace the maroons near their camp. According to the account of Mr. Jennings' manager they were afraid to go any closer. However, it is possible that the enslaved persons simply did not want to sell-out the maroons and were waiting to see which way the balance of power was going to tilt.

In October, the maroon killings of planters continued. This time the assailed was a Frenchman. A man by the name of Monsieur Generaud, a resident of Marigot and a carpenter, went into the woods of Saint Andrew's on the morning of 19 October to hunt game.[215] Since Generaud was a white man with a rifle in the woods it was probably believed by the maroons that he was avenging some of the other planters of Saint Andrew's who had experienced several maroon attacks. As a result of his obtuse decision to hunt game in maroon territory, he was killed. It was a clear objective on the part of the maroons to establish their territorial boundaries.

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[213] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 6, 1786.

[214] CO 71/9 Letter at the Assembly Meeting from September 27, 1784.

[215] CO 71/9 Letter from John Trotter on October 20, 1784

John Trotter, the manager of Generaud's plantation, was informed by the "wench" of Generaud that until about 2 o'clock that afternoon when Trotter "went as usual to examine the works."[216] At that point there was no serious alarm on the part of Trotter, because on many occasions Generaud would stay out late hunting game. It was not until the sun went down that Trotter started to worry about his boss. Nevertheless, by that time in the evening it was too dark and the forest was too treacherous to send people out looking for Generaud. The next morning Trotter sent out four people in two different directions. Generaud was found "stripped of everything but his shorts" in a location in the middle of the woods that had been cleared.

At that point Trotter's fear for his life was evident in the letter he sent to the House of Assembly. He stated "All a single man can do in the defense of my employer's property you may be assured shall be done but unfortunately I have not one with me that can handle a Musquet even if I could depend on the courage and fidelity."[217] At the time the extent to which the enslaved were in concert with the maroons was unknown by the planters. Even if their enslaved population did know how to shoot muskets, which some of them probably did because of their prior knowledge from Africa, the trust in the enslaved by the whites was not there. What made it even more difficult for Trotter was that the British Army reserved all of their troops for foreign affairs and the government of Dominica was expected to raise funds and create their own militia in order to defend themselves against the maroons.[218] William Stuart from the Rosalie Estate on

[216] CO 71/9. Letter from John Trotter on October 20, 1784.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Honychurch. *Negre Mawon.* 108

the southeast side of the island sent his manager from his plantation along with "another white man and several stout Negroes armed" to assist Trotter in pursuing the killers of Generaud.[219]

For the House of Assembly the most "alarming" aspect of the murder was that they believed that it was "unprovoked." They felt that it needed to immediately be avenged. For the maroons, however, the mere presence of the white planter class on the island seemed like a sufficient threat to their freedom. The attacks by the maroons on the plantations continued into December of that year. They assaulted various planters in the Heights of Calihaut. This attack, too, because of its location is likely to have been a product of Pharcelle's camp. The attacks on the plantations were so serious during this time that it compelled some of the planters in the area to abandon their plantations.[220]

By December 1784, the maroons located in the northern region of the island, led by Pharcelle, had become a grave concern for the white planters. This was especially the case for the British. Captured maroons refused to disclose any information.[221] The discussions in the House of Assembly meetings in the fall of 1784 were devoted to the maroons. The Minutes of the House of Assembly reference avenging the death of Monsieur Generaud:

> "Whereupon the Board unanimously concurred with his Excellency that it would be expedient to issue proclamation offering to whoever should bring the murder or murderers to communication if a free person reward of fifty (Johanson's) and if a slave reward of one hundred pounds and Recommendation to the Legislature for his freedom and His Excellency by the Advice of the Board desired that such a proclamation should be drawn up by Mr. Attorney General."[222]

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[219] CO 71/9 Letter from Mr. Stuart on Wednesday 20, 1784.

[220] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 6, 1786.

[221] CO 71/9 December 1784

[222] CO 71/9 House of Assembly Minutes

In that same month the House of Assembly introduced a bill pertaining to the establishment of a "militia." There was concern by the planters about having their maroon problem unsettled while the House adjourned for the Christmas holiday. The colonial government had every reason for concern. It was typical throughout slave societies for enslaved populations to revolt when the white planters were engaging in their festivities for the holidays. Though, at this point, there was not much evidence that the maroons had been interacting with the enslaved populations, the colonial government knew that they could never be too safe. The Minutes from the House on 17 December reads, "…His Excellency also proposed to the Board that he wished for their opinion whether any steps could be taken by His Excellency towards preserving the public Tranquility during the approaching season of Festivity and towards strengthening the hands of the Magistrates as there is now no Militia established in this island…"[223]

In 1791, Thomas Atwood wrote that after the British recaptured the island that the maroons "re-commenced their depredations, notwithstanding several proclamations were issued by the Legislature of the island offering a pardon to all that would surrender themselves, except such as had been guilty of murder."[224] Governor Orde wrote to London that year proposing to possibly convert the maroons into a force that would fight for the British monarch similar to the Jamaican Leeward maroons in the treaty in 1739. However, it was believed that the "expenses attending their security, their clothing and maintenance, would more than counterbalance the advantage that the public would derive from their services…"[225] However, the House of Assembly continued to push for a "Militia Bill" to be passed, where they would obtain the

[223] CO 71/9 House of Assembly Minutes from December 17, 1784.

[224] Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica.* 236-7

[225] CO 71/9 Letter to Governor Orde June 2, 1785

monies, and who this fighting force would contain. It was not until 15 March 1785 that the "Militia Act" was passed.[226] At that point the act was passed, but nothing concrete had been brought into fruition that would halt the incursions of the maroons.

The propositions offered to the Dominican white population for the "suppression of the runaways" were rendered "ineffectual" by the summer of 1785. The maroons continued to raise havoc and instill fear into the Dominican planters throughout the first half of the year. In addition, the militia was a disorganized unit of volunteers in which the rewards for participation were not worth the risks. The Minutes at the Council Chamber in Roseau of "the committee appointed to prepare resolutions respecting the more effectual Suppression of the Runaways Slaves" stated that, "The Rewards could be no inducement to the remote Settler, whose Insecurity has been such to make it prudent for them to act on the defensive, rather than offensively." Those who were able in the areas of Dominica away from Pharcelle's northern polity did not have adequate incentive to be on the offensive against the well-organized African maroons. The forces of the colony that had been attempting to quell the African maroon movement up to that point were very disorganized and needed to be put under "proper discipline & subordination".[227]

By the middle of 1785, the African maroons of the central and southern portions of Dominica began to attack the planters in the central part of the island. As opposed to the north, where maroon leaders donned European originating names such as Pharcelle and Grubois, southern maroons were led by individuals who retained their African names and exhibited African cultural practices during the First Maroon War. This is not to suggest that Pharcelle and

[226] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 6, 1786.

[227] CO 71/9 Council Chamber Roseau August 3, 1785

Grubois were creoles, or were less African than those in the south. They actually exhibited characteristics during their time as chiefs to suggest that they probably were not creoles. This might actually say more about their followers. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the maroon camps from the north, central, and southern regions of the island collaborated on some of the raids on plantations. Their network was elaborate.

In the "higher reaches of Layou" there was Goree Greg of Senegambia and Jacko likely to be of the Ga, along with Sandy. In the southern camps there was Congo Ray and Zombie from Kongo, Juba from the Asante Empire, and Balla, a Mandingo from the interior of the Upper Guinea region of Africa.[228] As mentioned before, the fabric of the maroon and enslaved society of Dominica, however, was Igbo. By the summer of 1785 the Council of the House of Assembly had "reason to believe that the slaves" were in "correspondence with the runaways…"[229] The maroons seemed to be intolerant of enslaved Africans who they felt may have been apprehensive about what side they were fighting on. These African maroons in the south engaged in attacks on what they may have perceived to be perfidious enslaved blacks almost as frequent as they had attacked the white planters of the island. While dealing with the plantation Africans who refused to side with their cause, the African maroons of the southern region also began to stockpile in preparation for all-out-war.[230]

In addition, the Africans were also very spiritual. There in the forests of Dominica where 365 rivers flowed, the African maroons felt a close spiritual connection to the spirits of the water

[228] Honychurch. *Negre Mawon.* 107

[229] CO 71/ 9 The Council August 24, 1785.

[230] CO 71/9 August 17, 1785, and *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 6, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/#34418100

which aided them in their endeavors of freedom. The forest, also, was vital for the obeah practitioners such as Balla in that the forests were closely associated with spirit work and herbalism. For the Igbo, the water washed away the evil that was being perpetrated on the people by the white planters. For the Bakongo, like Congo Ray and Zombie, the water also represented the close connection to their ancestral spirits who lived underneath the water in the form of "white clay" or *mpemba.* This begs the question as to whether the abundance of water in Dominica had positive spiritual significance for the maroons. Was this abundance of rivers used by the Africans to wash away the evil that was being imposed by their whiter planter enemies?

For the Igbo, fire, or *oku,* was associated with "the most dreaded spirits."[231] In July 1785 the Africans took to the plantations in the central western region of the island near Layou to generate *oku* on their enemies. On Saturday 16 July, about 40 maroons descended on Mr. Miller's Saint Joseph's plantation, Cassada Gardens. They brought with them "muskets and some cutlasses" and robbed the plantation of its "guns and a keg of powder."[232] In the process of stockpiling, the maroons shot and wounded the manager, Mr. Barnes, in his shoulder, and continued to seize booty.[233] On 25 July they again attacked the Cassada Gardens Estate and burned down the huts of the enslaved. It is possible that the maroons were informed by enslaved persons on Cassada Gardens about those blacks who did not support them. Perhaps this is what led to the attack on their huts.

The maroons later went to Francis Vidal's estate and made an attempt to destroy it. Six of them were captured. Five were banished and one of them was sentenced to be hanged. The

[231] Ohadike. "Igbo Culture and History" in *Things Fall Apart,* by Chinua Achebe.

[232] CO 71/9 July 1785. (Get more of the details from the Camera)

[233] CO 71/9 August 17, 1785

maroon who was sentenced to be hanged was later pardoned under the condition that he served as a "guide" to locate Pharcelle, who he claimed to be a soldier under.[234] The guide agreed and later went on a mission with a detachment coalesced by the colonial government. According to The *Public Advertiser*, "A detachment, equipped under the act then in force, went on the expedition; the guide actually led them to the enemy, an engagement ensued in the night, the runaways fled without loss on their part, after killing the guide and another of the party, and wounding several, who with the rest, returned defeated and dispirited to Roseau."[235] This incident infuriated the maroons and incited them to eventually seek revenge.

For the maroons, however, this was only the beginning of the ultimate goal—the extirpation of, what the maroons referred to as, the "British Dogs" from the island. Though some Frenchmen's lives were spared by certain maroons, it is evident that the elimination of whites was not only limited to the British.[236] Vidal and Generaud, too, were victims of the maroons, the latter because he entered into their territory and the former because he was part of the system of massive enslavement and exploitation of African people. Nonetheless, the maroons must have been in high spirits during that time due to their successes. On the other hand, the colonial government and white planter population were feeling very insecure. The incidents at Cassada Gardens and Vidal's estate were major blows to the colonial government.

With white people dying, and fleeing their estates, the colonial government on 18 August agreed to the resolution presented by the House of Assembly earlier that year in February to grant "the sum of Five Hundred Pounds be paid into the Hands of the Commanding Officer of

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[234] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 6, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/#34418100

[235] Ibid.

[236] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 6, 1786.

the Garrison." This money was "to be divided amongst His Majesty's Officers of the 30th Regiment and the Detachment of the Royal Artillery and as the Board have reason to believe that there may be money in the Treasure sufficient to answer that purpose."[237] This resolution was the beginning of what would turn into total war between the *Negs Mawons* and the white colonial government.

However, as the House of Assembly was discussing the matter of deploying the Thirtieth Regiment to take action against the maroons, on that same day the Africans continued their attacks by taking revenge and returning to Vidal's plantation for the attempted ambush with the maroon guide. There were more than fifty armed maroons who descended on the Vidal plantation. In this attack the maroons continued to spread *oku* as they "burnt all his negro huts and out-houses, rifled his dwelling-house…"[238] The maroons also shot at the house where Vidal's brother was hiding. However, he was able to escape out the back window. Francis Vidal and his family hid inside of a cellar. The maroons found them, and the family was "ill-treated."[239] Even still this group of maroons seemed to be more concerned with gathering supplies for war rather than killing. Though the maroons had the Vidal family trapped in a cellar they continued to plunder their estate. He and his family eventually escaped the dwelling house. Vidal abandoned his estate in fear for his life.[240] It was evident that he had been singled out as a target.

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[237] CO 71/9. The Honor the President of the Council to Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Assembly. August 18, 1785

[238] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 6, 1786.

[239] CO 71/9 August 17, 1785

[240] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 6, 1786.

In the following month the attacks with *oku* continued. In September 1785 the maroons attacked Mr. Coolet's estate at Mount George in Saint Andrew's parish. Once again they shot at the enslaved and burned down their huts, killed the cattle, and damaged everything in their power. These similar acts of warfare continued into early November on Mr. Haddoc's estate in Farrau, and in Langston at Dixon's estate. In both of those locations the maroons spread *oku* throughout the aforementioned plantations. The huts of the enslaved and the dwelling of the Johnson Henderson at the Dixon estate were burnt to the ground. Several of the enslaved were killed. The maroons attempted to kill Johnson Henderson. However, he escaped with severe wounds.[241] They also threatened to return and "murder" Mr. Curry, the Magistrate, but shot at the manager and Mr. Curry's nephews. Mr. Curry's nephews escaped out of the window. [242] The plantation manager's life, on the other hand, was spared because he claimed to be a Frenchmen.[243]

While spreading *oku* in the summer and fall 1785 to their enemies, the maroons were able to continue the stockpiling of "many fire-arms, ammunition, and sixty compleat (sic) suits of negroe clothing."[244] As the *Neg Mawon* nation was loading up and preparing for all-out war, so was the colonial government. On 23 September 1785 the bill to "Suppress the Runaways" passed the House unanimously.[245] Up to this point the "Free People of Colour" had been the go-to group during their colonial government disorganized efforts to quell the maroon attacks. The colonial

[241] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England) February 6, 1786

[242] CO 71/9 August 31, 1785.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Ibid.

[245] CO 71/9. September 23, 1785. Government House.

government decided to "defer" using them until the official detachments were organized and ready. By November, as a result of the Tax Act, which was designed to raise funds for the organized militia for the "Suppression of the Runaways" there was 2,500 pounds in the Treasury.[246] And by the last week of November the colonial government had finally organized a militia to combat the African forces. On 23 November 1785 it was official:

> An Act of the Legislature of the Island of Dominica for the more effectually suppressing the Runaway Slaves by obliging the Proprietors Reuters or Employers of all Slaves belonging to or employed on the several Plantations and Lands in this Island to furnish a proportion of their Slaves to be sent into the Woods after and in Search of the Runaways to provide Officers for such parties by engaging such proper White Persons and People of Colour as may be disposed to be employed and for granting further encouragement for the apprehending or destroying of any of the Runaways And to impower (sic) Magistrates to issue Warrants for the searching and examining of any Boats or Pettiagress which may be at anchor in any of the Bays or hovering on the coasts of this Island suspected of holding communication with the Runaway Slaves.[247]

Written into the Act were clauses of delineating the compensation to slave owners for the conscription of their slaves. It was to be a "reasonable portion of slaves to be sent by each inhabitant as herein after mentioned not exceeding the rate of two in the Hundred against the Runaways", in which slave masters would be compensated "the sum of one Hundred Pounds Currency." Planters were penalized for not offering "healthy Male" slaves. While they were in close proximity to any given plantation while in battle with the maroons, the colonial troops were given the discretion to conscript one-eighth of the enslaved from the neighboring plantations. There were also monetary award incentives for the deployed troops, white and black alike, for capturing any "Captain or Chief of a Camp of the Runaway Slaves." Obviously whites were to

[246] CO 71/9. November 22, 1785. House of Assembly.

[247] CO 71/10. "An Act of the Legislature of the Island of Dominica for.." November 14, 1785.

receive larger rewards. Deterrents in the "Act" were designed to discourage enslaved persons from "Mutiny", "Cowardice", or deserting. Offenders of the aforesaid acts of insubordination by the enslaved Africans were "to be put to death in such a manner as the officers may think proper…"[248]

Aside from enslaved persons being used in the war, this militia, much of which comprised of Loyalists from America's War of Independence, by 26 November was finally organized. These "Loyalists" were employed in Dominica to do the same thing that they were conscripted to do in the North American mainland, to quell a rebellion. However, the only difference between the maroons in Dominica and the colonists in the thirteen North American colonies was that the maroons were looking to obliterate the European economic and political system and any remains of it. As many of the maroons were defeated war veterans who arrived in Dominica itching for redemption, the Loyalists would face these maroons also looking for redemption after the defeat by the North American colonists. There were three separate "Legions" located on three separate parts of the island. The first Legion was deployed and "stationed at the head of the Layon (sic) River," at the "centre of the island." The second Legion was stationed the head of the Battiboo River. The third Legion was located in the "Meyembry Mountains."[249] John Marshall was one of the Loyalists who fled the United States with his family after the war and received payment and other benefits.[250] He was designated as Captain of the Thirtieth Regiment under the First Legion. John Egan was Lieutenant and second in command to Captain Marshall.

[248] CO 71/10. "An Act of the Legislature of the Island of Dominica for.." November 14, 1785.

[249] CO 71/9 .November 26, 1785

[250] CO 71/9 Page 276

There was a long list of auxiliary forces which comprised of: Samuel Paynton from the Royal Artillery, who was third in command; a surgeon by the name of Aurther Reed; one sergeant, one corporal, and 12 privates serving under the Thirtieth Regiment; one Bombardier, five acting sergeants; five Corporals; and one volunteer guide. In addition, there were "free people of Colour all completely armed and cloathed."[251] Not only were the free people of color used to participate against the maroons but those who were considered "negro" were also enlisted to participate in the warfare against the British enemies. There were five "Negro" guides and 50 black rangers. The other two Legions were very similar in their make-up. In addition to the three Legions there were also two detachments of the Thirtieth Regiment. One detachment was located at Point Jacko, which amounted to 16 soldiers and the other detachment of the Thirtieth Regiment was stationed at Castle Bruce and Reshmond with 14 soldiers. There was also a detachment of "irregulars" in Saint David's parish with 11 soldiers. Between the three Legions and three detachments there were a total of 348 participants involved in fighting on behalf of the Dominican colonial government.[252]

Despite the fact that the colonial government of Dominica was organizing and preparing for war, the African maroon nation demonstrated in the early days of December that they too meant serious business and demonstrated no fear in increasing the barrage of attacks on their English rivals and their supporters. As August 1784 marked the beginning maroon attacks on the planters of Dominica, and July 1785 exemplified the escalation of these attacks. December 1785 would be considered pivotal point of the second escalation of maroon attacks and dissemination of *oku* since the attempted return of a stable British colonial government in Dominica after dual

[251] *The Public Advertiser* (London, England). February 7, 1786.

[252] Ibid.

French and pan-African occupation during the years of America's War of Independence. This second escalation which Orde described as "a degree of violence and Barbarity which they never did before…", [253] all began on Saturday, 3 December, at night between the hours of eight and nine o'clock. On that night approximately 100 maroons descended on the estate of Thomas Hadlock at Tarrou in Saint Joseph's parish.[254]

The maroons plundered "the stores of a quantity of liquor and provisions, burned the dwelling house, boiling house, curing house, and still house, together with the negro houses, except for three or four." The maroons shot and wounded several of the enslaved Africans who were on the Hadlock estate. Some of the enslaved who were present that day did not belong to Thomas Hadlock, but belonged to John Greg. After the maroons were finished with their attack on the estate they went to the Layou River, and announced that "the French settlers need be under no apprehension from them, as their vengeance were directed solely against the English, whom they wished to extirpate from the country."[255] The immediate retreat to the Layou River after spreading *oku* on their enemies was convenient location for the maroons to inform the Frenchmen, who sided with them that they did not have to worry. Perhaps they went to the river since the deities of good fortune could be found in watery locations.

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[253] The *Public Advertiser* (London, England) February 7, 1786.

[254] *The Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. February 28, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39535074

[255] *The Public Advertiser,* February 6, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/#34418100

## General Balla the Mandingo Prince

Three days later on 6 December the maroon attacks continued. This time they occurred at the opposite side of the island in the east, headed by the Mandingo prince, Balla.[256] This was in retaliation for kidnapping and punishing one of their members. The former colonial Governor of Dominica William Stuart was the primary culprit.[257] This angered Balla, and he decided to seek revenge as well as retrieve the kidnapped maroon.[258] At around 7:00 on that December evening the manager of the Rosalie Estate, Mr. Gamble, was at the house drinking a bottle of Madeira wine. His enslaved persons were in the field probably finishing up their day's duties. Mr. Gamble sent one black woman Catherine to light a candle in the kitchen in a separate dwelling. On her way to do so, she was shot in her arm. Because of the perpetual hysteria surrounding maroon attacks on plantations, Catherine immediately knew what was happening. She ran back to Mr. Gamble and informed him that she was shot by the "runaways." Immediately Mr. Gamble ran down to the steps of his door and "called down to the negroes at the works to come up." While Mr. Gamble was informing the slaves in the field to come up he was shot in the breast.[259]

General Balla and his troops, numbering at about 200, according to some eyewitness accounts, came down the hills.[260] The maroons "blocked the Chemin L'Etang above Grand Fond with large trees, and guards had been set to warn" the rest of the maroons about the whereabouts

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[256] *The Public Advertiser,* February 21, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/34418695

[257] Honychurch. *Negre Mawon.* 110

[258] CO 71/9. Government House Dominica. Letter from Governor John Orde to Lord Sydney. December 15, 1785. UK National Archives, Kew Gardens, London, England.

[259] *The Pennsylvania Packet* February 28, 1786. http://www.newspapers.com/image/39535074

[260] *The Pennsylvania Packet* February 28, 1786.

of the Legion.[261] They "carried their usual attendants, fire and devastation" to the estate. After Mr. Gamble called upon the slaves to come inside, some of them came while others were able to escape where they would eventually make it into the city. Catherine fled to a nearby dwelling to hide with her family. Only Augustine and Robert attempted to run back to the house, through the crowd of maroons that were between the field and the house, but Robert was killed in his attempt. Augustine, who is referred to as "faithful slave" in the *Pennsylvania* came to Mr. Gamble's aid. Mr. Gamble then reached for his musket and shot and "took down one of the maroons." Then "with a second piece" he shot and killed another who was the son of Chief Congo Ray. At the moment there were three white men who were employed on the estate, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Harton, and Mr. Lisle, who went into the house to look for more ammunition. Mr. Gamble then sent one of his slaves to the kitchen for a "brand of fire", promising that he would reward him. The slave tried to run to the kitchen, but after being shot at he had to run and hide in the bushes. He eventually fled the premise.[262]

The three white men that were searching for the ammunition eventually were left with no choice but to escape out the window. Mr. Armstrong, who first jumped out of the window, was shot. After he was shot one of the maroons went up to him and put the bayonet through his throat. After that Mr. Hatton tried to escape through the window. He received a shot through the head. Next Mr. Lisle was shot while he was standing at the window preparing to jump through.[263] The majority of the maroons' enemies on the estate were now either dead or had

[261] Honychurch. *The Negre Mawons.* 110

[262] *The Pennsylvania Packet* February 28, 1786. http://www.newspapers.com/image/39535074

[263] *The Pennsylvania Packet* February 28, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39535074

already fled. Mr. Gamble was still alive, but knew that these were his last moments. *The Pennsylvania Packet* wrote,

> The faithful Augustine now proposed to Mr. Gamble, who knew himself approaching towards his last moments, to suffer him to remove him to a place, where he might breathe his last in peace, and his corpse not be subjected to the barbarity, and indecent insult of these barbarians;--but he replied, that 'since it was to be his fate to die by dogs, he would face death on the spot!'[264]

The article then highlights the faithfulness of Augustine to Mr. Gamble, and what would be traitorous to the pan-African cause on the island, when Mr. Gamble asked "Augustine will you leave me?" Augustine replied, "…we will die together."[265] This was when the maroons rushed into the house and shot Mr. Gamble once again. Mr. Gamble fell to his bed and Congo Ray busted in the room and said to him, "That is what I wanted, you are now in your grave—now my boys set fire." Before the maroons set the fire to the room Congo Ray cut a lock of Mr. Gamble's hair, and then *oku* was spread.

After this, Congo Ray left the room and went down by the bay to "spread fire and desolation". It was at this time that they found Catherine hiding "in a house with her mother, and both her sisters."[266] Congo Ray showed Mr. Gamble's lock of hair that he cut to Catherine and said, "See there your manager's hair—go look at him now…" The maroons then continued to spread *oku* by burning down more of the buildings on the Rosalie Estate.[267]

On the night of 6 December the maroons managed to kill off all of the livestock on the Rosalie Estate, they killed some of the enslaved, forced many of them to flee, burnt down most

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[264] *The Pennsylvania Packet* February 28, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39535074

[265] Ibid.

[266] Ibid.

[267] *The Pennsylvania Packet* February 28, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39535074

of the buildings and killed off the manager, the overseer, and two other white employees. After this was accomplished, the maroons started beating their drums, firing their guns, and drinking. Furthermore, after another victorious battle and the conquest of another estate, Balla felt the need to put on one of the suits that he found in one of the dwellings. This was a "uniform coat, with gold epaulets."[268] Balla, as a man who was a prince in his own country in the Upper Guinea region of West Africa, and a general and chief among hundreds of maroons in Dominica probably felt the regality in wearing the uniform coat of a soldier who he just conquered. Balla took this coat back to his camp in the mountains and Congo Ray took the lock of Mr. Gamble's hair.[269]

After the attack on Stuart's plantation, the maroons laid low in their camps. For the next couple of days, the colonial troops proceeded to the interior of the island in search of Balla's camp. On 8 December Captain Marshall and his troops headed for Balla's camp. As they marched towards the camp they "came to a Mountain near four hundred feet high."[270] The colonial troops used vines to aid themselves in ascending and descending down the mountain that was in their way. It was typical for maroons throughout the Americas to establish their villages in almost impregnable locations away from the colonial establishment. What the colonial officials referred to as Balla's "camp", though it was domicile with women and children, was no different.

Captain Marshall and his clan continued in pursuit of Balla. As they approached his abode, several maroons fled the premise. Marshall and his troops fired at the maroons as the

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[268] *The Pennsylvania Packet* February 28, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39535074

[269] *The Royal Gazette* March 18, 1786. A copy of a letter from Mr. Colin to Governor Orde. http://cdm152.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/ajaxhelper/?CISOROOT=BermudaNP02&CISO...

[270] CO 71/9. Letter from John Marshall to Governor Orde. December 9, 1785.

maroons exchanged shots as well. A small boy around the age of three years was found, along with a woman who had been shot. During this skirmish there was some booty discovered by Green Rangers including a Militia Jacket, some other blue jackets, and a few pounds of gun powder. However, they did not capture Balla, or any of his soldiers. The African maroon soldiers who were doing the shooting at the Marshall's Green Rangers were able to escape. They had several impenetrable locations throughout the mountainous interior of the island where they were able to reside. Some locations were likely military camps, while domiciles for families. If Captain Marshall wanted a victory against the maroons he needed to do more than capture an injured woman and a child. He needed to capture multiple soldiers with intel. This is what the colonial militia set out to do two weeks later.

On 23 December, at 9:00am the Thirtieth Regiment led by Marshall finally came upon what they perceived as Balla's camp high up in the mountains. Captain Marshall was later joined by Captain Garret, one Lieutenant, and 26 North Rangers. Marshall had also "sent a detachment to find the track the run-aways had taken."[271] As they were looking for the maroons' tracks, one of the maroon guards of the camp started shooting. The detachment immediately started shooting back. The detachment shot two of the maroons and took one of them as prisoner. Marshall's detachment eventually captured a couple more maroons, Gabriel, Stephen, and Augustine. Prior to their freedom as maroons, Gabriel and Stephen were enslaved by Vance. Augustine was enslaved on Mr. Lorain's plantation. Stephan and Augustine both escaped slavery six years prior in 1779, and were part of the cohort of "runaways" who arrived under the recent French occupation of the island.

[271] *The Pennsylvania Packet* February 28, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39535074

The maroon prisoners were taken back to Captain Marshall. This group of maroons who may have been creole, and if not creole, were not as loyal to the African cause as others may have been, were willing to give up confidential intel on the whereabouts of their General Balla. Gabriel, who suffered burns from the time of his capture, was going to serve as Marshall's guide to the maroons. Gabriel also informed Marshall that Balla executed one of his troops who had been missing for some time. The details were listed in a Bermudan newspaper called The *Royal Gazette*:

> The mode of executing sentences of death when pronounced by Balla, as it is curious we shall give some account of: it is simply thus: --The victim is fixed at a convenient distance by way of a target, at which each man in the encampment tries his hand, in order to improve himself as a good shot. This was inflicted on Charles, and his body exhibited the appearance of a mere honeycomb.[272]

Throughout history, however, there have always been those who would become traitors to a cause in exchange for their own self-preservation. Though the prisoners disclosed the names of some of the leaders of the maroons, it is not for certain if they had intentions of disclosing the exact location of them. Captain Marshall and his troops were led by the prisoner's information to an abandoned encampment four days later on 27 December, after Gabriel, Stephen, and Augustine's capture.[273] It is possible that the former maroons turned prisoners and colonial government informants had every intention of exposing the locations of the maroons, but Balla knew and did not totally trust them in the first place. Balla, like most leaders, would have realized that Stephen and Augustine were both enslaved under the British system and only escaped slavery six years prior. On the other hand, maroons like Balla, had never been acclimated to, or inculcated under the British system of slavery.

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[272] *The Royal Gazette* (Bermuda) Dominica. March 11, 1786.

[273] *The Public Advertiser,* March 9, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/34419294

Balla, like many maroons in the maroon community throughout the Americas, usually comprised of African individuals who escaped capture immediately upon their arrival in the Americas. Balla may have had certain hideouts and classified information for various maroons depending on the clearances they qualified for. As Stephen and Augustine had obviously lived with the enemy for so many years, they would not receive the same clearance as an African who escaped enslavement immediately upon arrival to Dominica. The formerly enslaved creole would not be privy to the same classified information about secondary or tertiary hideouts to which others may have been privy.

Captain Marshall and his troops were able to ascend on the abandoned camp on the late December day, and based on their observations realized that "The negroes seem very scarce of provisions, having none but what is brought in by their scouts." This assessment by Marshall was considerably different from what colonial Governor John Orde described to Secretary of State of the Colonies Lord Sydney a couple of weeks prior. Orde writes, "In the first place it is the strongest Country that ever was formed—of course abounding with Fastnesses, places for concealment and various kinds of Game—furnished in every acre with a Rivulet of Water and producing the greatest plenty of Ground Provisions in all its parts."[274] The maroon presence in the interior of the island was so vast, reaching from the northern regions to the southern regions. It is not clear exactly which maroon village Orde was describing, but Captain Marshall was describing one of Balla's many camps. One can infer that because of the contrary descriptions about the maroon community they may have been a united group with their agenda but varied in their spectrum.

[274] CO 71/9. Government House Dominica. Letter from Governor John Orde to Lord Sydney. December 15, 1785. UK National Archives. Kew Gardens, London, England.

Balla must have known that Captain Marshall and his troops were on his tail. He was able to escape to one of his other hideouts. Though Pharcelle had contributed to a lot of the chaos for the planters in the northern and central regions of the island, Balla was the primary concern for the colonial government at the time since he was particularly targeting the plantations of the British government officials. It is clear that at the end of the year in 1785, that the Mandingo warrior prince Balla was causing the most trouble for the white planters. However, in the month of January 1786 the tables would turn.

Once again another traitorous maroon by the name of Frank was used.[275] Seven blacks and seven whites, in which three of them were part of the Thirtieth Regiment, headed by Mr. John Richardson from one of the Rosalie estates, went into the surrounding woods in search of Balla and his troops. After searching for a distance of four miles, which lasted seven hours, Richardson and his troops heard children crying. They realized that this was possibly Balla's location. This residence was "very high" and there was "no passage to it but one, which was found, a cut point in very high steps, no more than four inches broad from the precipice, so that it was with great difficulty a man could pass with his musket."[276] The almost "inaccessible" and inhospitable" route to the residence was very typical for maroon communities.[277] Balla and his maroon followers lived this precarious lifestyle from day to day over the past few months. This was the price they were willing to pay to free all the Africans of Dominica from enslavement by the white planters. However, for Balla, his mission would soon come to an end.

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[275] Colin, *The Royal Gazette.* March 18, 1786. http://cdm15212.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/ajaxhelper/?CISOROOT=BermudaNP02&CISO...

[276] *The Royal Gazette* March 18, 1786.

[277] Price. *Maroon Communities*. 5

As John Richardson and his troops finally ascended on Balla's "camp", there was complete silence. All of a sudden the maroons immediately jumped out. Balla ran dropping his hat in the process. The colonial troops "pursued Balla as far as they thought prudent."[278] Corporal Hammond immediately picked up Balla's hat and put it on top of the other hat he was wearing. Guerrilla tactics were then employed by the maroons. Shots were fired at Hammond coming from the hill above. He received a flesh wound shot in his left arm. Another shot went through the rim of both of the hats on his head. Richardson's men then separated to surround any locations where the dispersed maroons might be hiding. Balla then appeared on top of a hill and he yelled out in French, "O you thieves, you come like thieves, that's not fair."[279] At the point Richardson tried to give incentive for Balla's troops to surrender stating if the "boys come in" they will "have their pardon."[280] According to Bermuda's *Royal Gazette*, Balla responded "in terms of indecency and brutality not fit to mention in a newspaper."[281] Richardson tried to continue the conversation with Balla from a distance so he would hold still and would enable Captain Marshall to get an accurate shot. However, Balla immediately realized and then ran.[282]

Things were not looking good for Balla and his followers. This was one of the first major victories for the colonial regime. On that January day, Richardson, Marshall, and members of the Thirtieth Regiment and the Green Rangers were able to force the maroons to flee what seemed to be one of their primary places of residence. They were able to kidnap five maroon children, three

[278] *The Royal Gazette* March 18, 1786

[279] Ibid.

[280] Ibid.

[281] Ibid.

[282] *The Royal Gazette* March 18, 1786

boys and two girls. One of the boys was the son of Mubaya, the second in command to Balla. While Marshall's team looted the residence of the maroons, they discovered the spiritual influence of Balla and his followers. They discovered Balla's "…Obeah, or charm, which as he would persuade his followers, was to promote his constant success."[283]

*Obeah* is a sorcerous art by one who possesses the Obi. There is conflicting but explanatory explanations about origin of the term "obeah" in the British West Indies. The British received the majority of their enslaved Africans from the Gold Coast and the Bight of Biafra. The Asante/Akan and the Igbo, respectively, comprised of a large portion of the Africans who wound up on British West Indian plantations in the eighteenth century. The term *Obia* in Igbo refers to the spiritual medicine practiced by the *Ndi Obia.* In Akan country there was the *Okomfo,* who was the spiritual priest associated with the positive spirits, and there was the *Obayifo,* who was the spiritualists who was connected with the negative spirits. Their trade was known as *Obayi.*[284] The Akan and the Igbo were very significant in the ethnic makeup of the enslaved and maroon populations in the British West Indies. Their spirituality was also omnipresent. The terms *Obia* and *Obayi* were often used to describe what the Europeans referred to as witchcraft. As a result, the generic term "Obeah" was used to describe all African spiritual practices in the British West Indies, by Africans and Europeans alike.

Balla was a Muslim Mandingo from the Upper Guinea region of West Africa, but he, too, was a practitioner of Obeah in the same way that Makandal and Boukman, two African Muslim leaders in Saint-Domingue, were practitioners of "voodoo." The spiritual systems throughout

[283] *The Royal Gazette* March 18, 1786

[284] De Mattos Frisvold, Nicholaj. *Obeah: A Sorcerous Ossuary.* London: Hadean Press, 2013. 19-20

Africa were very similar in that they were not rigid, but malleable, and always inviting of new influences.

What was referred to in the British West Indies as Obeah was just that. Obeah is not an organized religious institution, and every obeah practitioner has their own independent pact with spirits who assist them in the manipulation of fate. Obeah, like other spiritual arts, also takes its power from the woods.[285] It is associated with the "…acknowledgment of the supernatural and involving aspects of witchcraft, sorcery, magic, spells, and healing."[286] Balla's "obeah apparatus" that was discovered by Marshall consisted of "some human hair (a white's) bound up in a kind of scalp, with clotter blood…"[287] This lock of hair with blood attached was believed to have been Mr. Gamble's hair, which was cut from his head after he was killed by Congo Ray and his troops.

## Balla's Days Are Numbered

The pillaging of Balla's residence and the stealing of his "obeah apparatus" by the colonial officers would have the maroons feeling rather insecure. Whether this connection was metaphysical or simply psychological is not certain. However, it was acknowledged by the enemy of the maroons that "Mr. Richardson, and his party have, however, baffled the power of his (Balla) incantations, and the spell being broken, Mr. Balla's fortune seems rather on the

[285] De Mattos Frisvold. *Obeah: A Sorcerous Ossuary.* 7

[286] Margarite Fernandez Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert. *Sacred Possessions: Vodou, Santeria, Obeah, and the Caribbean.* New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1999. 6

[287] *The Royal Gazette* March 18, 1786

decline."[288] The taking of Balla's obeah concoction was the beginning of the rapid decline of Balla. By February of 1786, Balla's residence had been totally dispersed. Some were kidnapped, while others were on the run to safety. The Mandingo Prince had "lost all of his guns", he had "parted with all the Chiefs", and has escaped to "Grand Bay quarter."[289] Chief Congo Ray, on the other hand, escaped with some of his followers but this would soon change by the beginning of February. According to Captain Marshall, he and the Legion "fell in with Congoree and his Company" and "they consisted of himself and four more negroes." The *Royal Gazette* reported, "one of them we have taken, the rest escaped by throwing themselves down a precipice." Congo Ray survived, but the fate of the others is not certain. However, this act of precarious escape off of the precipice demonstrates the will and the means in which the maroons were willing to be free. The launching of oneself off of the precipice may have meant the end of the physical life for some, but it also meant a metaphysical return back to Africa for the Igbo influenced maroons.[290] The maroon that was captured was named *Maley.* Captain Marshall picked up ten pounds of powder that was left behind by the "flying" maroons.

Between December and February the Colonial Militia had killed or taken between 30 and 40 maroons. In February, Governor Orde was under the impression that the maroons were "in general dispersed and under the greatest distress for provisions", because they had "destroyed many of their camps and have taken army ammunition & clothing in great quantities."[291]

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[288] *The Royal Gazette* March 18, 1786.

[289] Marshall, John. *The Royal Gazette.* March 25, 1786. http://cdm15212.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/getprintimage/collection/BermudaNP02/id/305/s...

[290] Lorne McDaniel. "The Flying Africans: Extent and Strength of the Myth in the Americas" in *New West Indian Guide.* (1990), 28-40.

[291] CO 71/10. Correspondence from Governor Orde to Lord Sydney on February 6, 1786. UK National Archives at Kew Gardens. London, United Kingdom.

However, there were still some very powerful maroon chiefs surviving in the woods. During the Council Chamber meeting on 7 March, a discussion surrounded placing a bounty on Pharcelle, Congo Ray, Mubaya, and Balla to give planters and slaves alike an incentive for kidnapping the Chiefs.[292] Nevertheless, Balla was still the main focus. However, the colonial troops could not seem to track him down. On Friday 17 March there were three maroons that the colonial troops tried to capture around the Layou and Kachibona (also Cachibona/Toulaman) rivers. These maroons went back to their residence in between Pharcelle and Grubois territory, within close proximity to the encounter, with the colonial troops and informed village of their presence. The maroon village between Layou and Kachibona immediately took action and relocated their women, children, and other baggage to a reserved location. The men stayed behind to defend their territory.[293]

On Saturday 18 March a detachment of colonial troops, led by a one of the guides and headed Captain Marshall and Lieutenant Brock, went searching for maroon camps between Layou and Kachibona. As they approached two hills the guide told the colonial officers that he believes Chief Grubois' camp along with "eight runaways" is on the other side. However, given the altitudinous location of the maroons, and the difficulty of arriving at their location, they are able to see any trespassers approaching their residence. When Grubois and his soldiers saw signs of Captain Marshall and his troops, the men escaped to their hideout in close proximity to their residence, but behind the trees in a location conducive to their guerilla tactics. The maroons were waiting and they were ready to fire. Marshall's troops split up. Some marched towards the top of one of the hills while the others remained at the bottom. When they ambushed the encampment

[292] CO 71/10. Minutes at a Meeting of His Majesty's Council Chamber on March 7, 1786.

[293] CO 71/10. Letter from P. Garret at Hatton Garden Estate to Governor Orde on March 22, 1786.

there was only one maroon by the name of Fortune present guarding the entrance. Fortune was captured by the detachment. The colonial forces were observing the elaborateness of the maroon residence. There were several huts. There were pits, pickets, and pikes all used to trap any trespassers. As the colonial troops were taking extra precaution of the traps, shots were fired at them from the trees. The guerilla tactics of the maroons were at work. One sergeant and two privates were wounded by the shots. A soldier of the Thirtieth Regiment, a corporal, and two privates were wounded by the pickets. The colonial forces were forced to retreat as a result of the elaborate guerilla tactics of the Africans.[294]

By March 1786, the maroons of Dominica had created great devastation throughout the island. At first it was Pharcelle's company doing most of the damage. However, by the latter half of 1785 Balla's camp, residing in the "Heights" between Rosalie and the Layou River, began an unprecedented level of terrorizing to the English planters and their property. Balla, by using his experience as a Mandingo leader in the land of his origin, galvanized hundreds of men and women to fight and extirpate the "British dogs" from the island of Dominica. As a leader he had to deal with treachery within his own group. Without the help of guides who were former maroons, the British would never have captured the maroons when they did. The former maroons who served as guides led to the start of the downfall of his camp. The looting of one of his obeah apparatuses was the second blow. As Balla was cornered he left with the option only to flee. By March 1786, Balla was living in isolation with a woman and two children, one of whom was his son. Balla was able to acquire some guns again at some point. However, on 19 March 1786, the day after Captain Marshall's failed attack on the maroon encampment between Layou and Kachibona, the colonial regiment would once again encounter the Mandingo leader Balla.

[294] CO 71/10. Letter from P. Garret at Hatton Garden Estate to Governor Orde on March 22, 1786.

Marshall and his legion, under the Command of Lieutenant Egan "surprised" Chief Balla. The intention of the colonial regime was not to kill Balla on the spot, but elicit information from the leader. However, Balla would not allow himself to be taken alive.[295] Balla was shot four times above the groin. The woman, Balla's son, and the other child were kidnapped by the Marshall's troops. The shots to Balla's groin caused an "effusion" of blood.[296] This was the end for the Mandingo warrior.

At the time of him being shot and his subsequent capture, the Mandingo warrior remained uncompromising. According to Governor Orde in his correspondence with Lord Sydney, he refused to answer any questions. He told his captors that repeatedly to "cut off his head", and if they did, he still "would not die." The cosmological underpinning of the African Balla was apparent. One could physically kill Balla, but his spirit would live forever. The only things that Balla expressed concern about in his last moments were his son and his obeah charm.[297]

There is an account in the *Pennsylvania Packet* by Lieutenant John Egan which may seem contradictory to the account by Governor Orde before Balla bled to death. According to Lieutenant Egan, he gave him the whereabouts of Congo Ray, Mubaya, Goree Greg, and Pharcelle. However, the locations did not necessarily match up with what contemporary historians would learn about their whereabouts. Balla informed Egan that Pharcelle was in "Troix Pittons", also known as Morne Trois Pitons, in the central/southern portion of the island in the southern part of Saint Paul's parish. However, Pharcelle's residence was actually located

[295] CO 71/10. Letter from Governor John Orde to Lord Sydney on April 16, 1786.

[296] Egan, John. *The Pennsylvania Packet.* June 17, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39536188

[297] CO 71/10. Letter from Governor John Orde to Lord Sydney on April 16, 1786.

in the northern part of the island between Saint Peter's, Saint Joseph's, and Saint Andrew's parishes. Also, Pharcelle continued to fight the British colonials on the island for almost another decade or so. In addition, a dying Balla would have nothing to gain for giving up the whereabouts of his maroon comrades. It was the Mandingo chief's intention to mislead the British colonial pillagers, and Governor Orde understood that.

When Balla died, his body was taken to Roseau on the west side of the island. He was decapitated and his head placed on a pole. The *Pennsylvania Packet* article from June 17, 1786 reads, "The day was exhibited, on a pole, in the Market Place of this town, the head of the notorious run-away chief Balla…"[298] The death of Balla was considered by many the end of the war. Many of the British colonists were under the impression that the deposing of Balla led to the breakdown of the entire maroon communal organization. However, the system of government within the maroon community did not concentrate power in the hands of one. Power was allotted to the many. The maroons were a loosely federated society which was in unison for a common defense of the island. He was also loaded with guns. Atwood wrote in his 1791 book almost five years after the death of Balla that, "The runaway negros have since then, been seldom heard of in Dominica; for those that were under another chief, named Farcel, it is imagined have quitted the island, and have retired among the French settlements, or among the Carribbees at Saint Vincent's."[299] However, there is an asterisk after "Farcel", because in the very same year that Atwood's book was published it was found out that the maroons under Pharcelle would coalesce with slaves on plantations in a conspiracy to overthrow the planters.

[298] Egan, John. *The Pennsylvania Packet.* June 17, 1786. http://www.newspaper.com/image/39536188

[299] Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica.* 250

## Conclusion

Moreover, this First Maroon War between the African *Negs Mawons* and the British colonial government of Dominica demonstrated that the former had every intention of taking over the entire island for themselves and the enslaved Africans, who believed in the freedom they were fighting for. Black traitors, British, and French planters alike were all killed in the name of freedom. The moment the British and the French governments signed the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, excluding the ever so present Africans, the latter realized the only thing to be done at that point was to take matters into their own hands, and defend their freedom at all cost. The African maroons comprising of Mandingos, Asante, Bakongo, Ibibio, Igbo and others were guided by their philosophical beliefs about existence, and the importance of freedom. Their spirituality could not be detached from their politics. The forests, water, *oku,* and obeah were all essential to the success they achieved in the First Maroon War. However, it was some maroons who escaped enslavement at a convenient time during French occupation in the late 1770s, who sold out their African born brothers when kidnapped by colonial forces. The subsequent looting of Balla's residence, including his "obeah apparatus" dispirited the group according to the colonial officials. Balla's physical good fortune would run out. Some of his followers went the metaphysical route and took flight off of a mountain to return back home to Africa, to maintain their spirit amongst their loved ones, before what would have been their conversion into a physical tool in the diabolical world of the British colonists.

On the surface the First Maroon War may appear to have been a victory for the British colonial regime of Dominica. However, it was estimated that up to 150 maroons of the more than 300 were either captured, banished, fled to neighboring islands, or physically died during the

conflicts.[300] There are other estimates that say there were only between 60 or 70 maroons remaining in the woods by June 1786.[301] The number is not definitive, but it is safe to presume that a reasonably small fraction of these numbers were actually re-enslaved. It would be unwise for planters to put former maroons on plantations with the enslaved. The latter would be liable to become inspired by the former. A good portion of the maroons were able to engage in warfare with the planters, and remain maroons, or simply chose to spiritually fly back home. That was success for the Africans in itself. There was success in the economic blow that the maroons caused the British planters during that two-year period of terror. The monetary cost was more than 50,000 pounds.[302] The emotional damage and insecurity it caused the whites on the island was immeasurable. This war also influenced "An Act for the encouragement, protection and better treatment of the Slaves" in December of 1788.[303] This war also served as a war of redemption. It was redemption for the Loyalists such as Captain John Marshall who had just lost a war to the North American Colonists during America's War for Independence, and it was redemption for the various Africans, particularly the Bakongo, who had arrived in Dominica as a result of civil war in the Kingdom of Kongo. It was a victory for the Bakongo who remained in the woods.

From 1784 to 1786, Dominica demonstrated that the Africans, who controlled the interior territory, were a group to be taken seriously. They had proven that they, too, held political clout in the game of international politics. The Africans, in the 1760s and 70s, took the initiative and

[300] Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica.* 250-1

[301] CO 71/10. Correspondence from Governor Orde to Lord Sydney on June 13, 1786.

[302] Atwood. *The History of the Island of Dominica.* 250-1

[303] Honychurch. *Negre Mawon.* 120

liberated themselves creating a formidable community. When the French returned to the island during war in the late 1770s they realized it was imperative to make an ally of the maroons, so they armed them to help defend the island from the British. When the French government was ousted by the British from island, the maroons began to engage a war against all slave holders. The maroons operated through elaborate networks through the enslaved on plantations, and there was even speculation that their network extended to the neighboring French islands, where it was believed that they were receiving supplies through Point Jacko on the northeastern side of the island.[304] Pharcelle, whose camp was in close proximity, was reported to have been "in the quarter of Pointe Jacko" in April of 1786.[305] They had proven their existence, and as the years would go by the French and British colonialists, both, in the West Indies realized they could not operate colonies in the Lesser Antilles without making an ally out of the militarily adept and fortitudinous Africans. This non-compromising position of the maroons would continue. Though their overt activity against the planters was halted for a few years, the maroons continued to communicate with the enslaved on plantations, and there were those involved in the colonial government that knew this, and understood the importance of keeping troops deployed in crucial ports to prevent communication, importation, and/or immigration into the island that would revitalize the *Neg Mawon* nation.[306] But this would not be easy. In addition, three years after the death of Balla in 1789 the French Revolution would bring a whole new dynamic to the relations between the pan-Africans, the British, and the French.

[304] CO 71/10. Correspondence from Governor Orde to Lord Sydney, June 13, 1786.

[305] CO 71/11. Minutes at a Meeting of His Majesty's Privy Council in April 1786.

[306] CO 71/10. Correspondence from Governor Orde to Lord Sydney on May 1, 1786.

# CHAPTER FOUR: THE 1791 CONSPIRACY: MAROONS, MULATTOES, AND ENSLAVED REBELS

Balla was assassinated by the Dominican colonial regime on 19 March 1786. While the attacks on the planters ceased for an extended period of time, this chapter demonstrates that the quest for freedom among Dominica's African maroons had not ceased. In fact, their determination only seemed to increase in fervor while they pragmatically looked for the right opportunity to take over the entire island. Such agency culminated in a massive conspiracy of January 1791 to "murder the whites" of Dominica. This conspiracy also involved the mulatto Jean Louis Polinaire and his French Revolutionary sympathizers, who have largely been credited for the uprising. However, this chapter demonstrates that it was the *Neg Mawon*—led by Pharcelle—and Dominica's enslaved population that initially orchestrated the revolt.

## Origins of the Conspiracy

There were two main factors surrounding the massive rebellion of 1791. The first involved the growing relationship that existed between the maroons and Africans enslaved on Dominica's plantations. By the First Maroon War, the *Negs Mawons* gained much notoriety for being a formidable group, within and beyond Dominica. Pharcelle, Pangloss, and Grubois remained in the woods, attempting to reinvigorate the African freedom movement among their people. They enhanced their communication networks with the enslaved, whose admiration for the maroons continued to grow. This fueled the growth and reinvigoration of the maroons, whose population dwindled from more than three hundred to perhaps less than one hundred between 1785 and 1786.

The reputation of the *Neg Mawon* nation for proficiency in combat was perhaps second only to Jamaica's maroon communities. Unlike Jamaica, however, Dominica was part of an archipelago that geographically placed it in close proximity to African and European communities among neighboring islands. The African enemies of slavery in the neighboring islands, as well as the French, were aware of the revolutionary potential of the *Neg Mawon.* This included the *Gens du Couleur* from Martinique. The Afro-French revolutionary refugees in Dominica viewed the island as a viable location to spread further revolution. This was the second factor surrounding the 1791 conspiracy. As the ideals of the French Revolution spread to the colonies throughout the French West Indies, Polinaire and other mixed race revolutionary sympathizers sought to ally themselves with the cause of Pharcelle and the maroons in 1791. However, as Pharcelle remained skeptical of Polinaire and Mulattoes in general, he eventually withdrew from the movement.

Though Pharcelle's party was reported to have been "dispersed" and "distressed" by June 1786, Governor Orde and colonial officials still had their reservations and fears about the possible reinvigoration of the Africans in the woods. During the first war, the maroons had proven themselves to be so skillful even with a lack of resources that, though the colonial government had qualms about arming enslaved Africans to fight against the maroons, they were left with little choice but to do so anyway. The *Negs Mawons* not only exhibited the spirit of freedom, but they also displayed greatness in warfare. Marquis Marie-Charles Du Chilleau and his French occupying government took their chances and supplied the maroons with arms to help defend the island from the British during the war. As the maroons were acting as their own autonomous nation independent of French influence, the British colonial government found it imperative to neutralize the situation. The colonial government recognized the proficiency of

maroon warfare as far back as March 1785. The Council of Assembly suggested that Orde "confiscate a certain description of those deluded wretches" for the "kings use" in defense of the island. The idea was originally turned down by Orde because at the time he did not think it would be worth it to "maintain" them.[307] This was before the escalation of the First Maroon War in December 1785. By the end of that year, conscripting enslaved blacks (the next best thing) to fight the Africans, was imperative. In mid-April, about a month after the death of General Balla, the discussion of the importance of using blacks continued. Orde informed Lord Sydney that "regular troops are perfectly unfit, actively to serve in the woods against these Banditti." He continued, "The Black Troops at Grenada, naturally struck your Lordship as more likely to be useful to us." While he noticed their proficiency "to run over this rocky country, they feared the "disorderly disposition" of the Black troops from Grenada.[308]

In the 1780s French and British officials began to vie for maroon alliances. The British seemed apprehensive about using the maroons in the same way they used Captain Cudjoe's group in Jamaica, as troops fighting for the crown. As we will see later the French will be divided between pro-slavery and pro-revolution. This competition escalated in the 1790s when the British felt more threatened by the French revolutionary sympathizers dispersed throughout the Caribbean. Dominica's maroons took advantage of such opportunities.

Between the end of the First Maroon War, 1786, and the start of the French Revolution, 1789 the maroons regrouped. As noted their reputation had spread across the Caribbean and Africans throughout the region wanted to join them. Newly enslaved Africans continued to escape from their plantations. Maritime maroons from neighboring islands also contributed to the

[307] CO 71/9. Correspondence from Governor Orde to Lord Sydney on March 6, 17865. UK National Archives at Kew Gardens. London, United Kingdom.

[308] CO 71/10. Correspondence from Governor Orde to Lord Sydney on April 16, 1786.

growth of the maroon community. In April 1786, Orde informed Sydney of the resiliency of the maroon community, stating, "It is not only our deserting slaves that we have to guard against, but also those that come from other islands." There were reports of canoes coming from the neighboring islands of Montserrat and Marie-Galante in which the maritime maroons were seen welcomed and taken into the woods by Dominica's *Negs Mawons*.[309]

As mentioned in the chapter two, natural disasters also played a role in reinvigorating Dominica's maroons. Hence, in August of 1787 there were three devastating hurricanes in Dominica, which may have contributed to deserting enslaved populations, and strengthened the ties between maroons and the plantation Africans. Letters were written by planters about the destruction of their plantation provisions as a result of the hurricanes.[310] In September of 1787 Governor wrote to Lord Sydney concerned about the scarcity of "Negroe ground provisions" and a need to figure out ways to promote the importation of goods to "avert the calamity of famine and even of material want."[311]

## Amelioration Rumors

By February of 1788 the discussion of the maroons made it back into the colonial government's Privy Council Meeting. According to the Minutes, "…small parties of these people were still appearing and holding considerable correspondence with the estates…"[312] The Governor added to the conversation stating that, "it appears that some small bodies of these

[309] CO 71/10. Letter from Orde to Lord Sydney. April 16, 1786.

[310] CO 71/12. Letter from September 1787.

[311] CO 71/12. Correspondence from John Orde to Lord Sydney on September 23, 1787.

[312] CO 71/15. Minutes at a Privy Council Meeting in Roseau, Dominica on February 22, 1788.

Bandetti, still continue together and that they receive supplies from and have considerable correspondence with the different plantations."[313] The newly arrived enslaved Africans continued to escape into the woods of Dominica and recreate their traditional African societies.

The contradictions and brutalities of plantation life continued to garner support for the maroons among the enslaved. For example, it was falsely rumored that Orde "had given orders that the planters should give to their Negroes THREE DAYS in the WEEK" for themselves.[314] This idea came about as a result of the 1788 Amelioration Act in the island, which had been implemented as a result of the First Maroon War in an attempt to assuage the conditions of slavery. In 1799, the Speaker of the House Thomas Beech believed that the interpretation of the law was "perverted" by the soon to be rebels and that the "Legislature" might have been "liable" for the "alarming" 1791 "insurrection."[315]

In finding out the "three days off" was not true many of the enslaved Africans and creoles only became more focused on securing freedom for themselves. Their disbelief in the system of supposed amelioration coincided with the French Revolution's spread throughout the French Caribbean. Over December 1790, many refused to work and some even absconded.[316] Up until the last day of the year, this uprising was disorganized. All of this changed on New Year's night, 1 January 1791, where a plan was laid out by Pharcelle for the rebels to follow.[317]

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[313] CO 71/15. Minutes at a Privy Council Meeting in Roseau on February 29, 1788.

[314] CO 71/20. "The Examination of Polinaire: A Free Mulatto Man." February 7, 1791.

[315] CO 71/31. Minutes of the House of Assembly Meeting. Thomas Beech. July 18, 1799

[316] Craton. *Testing the Chains.* 225

[317] CO 71/19. "Examination of Charles the Driver, Jack Sailor, New Tim, John Baptiste…Rosaly Estate by Alex. January 18, 1791.

## Maroon Pharcelle Organizes Plantation Africans

Pharcelle and the maroons were well aware of the "three days" rumor, which was a popular discussion across the island. However, Pharcelle believed that the fight should not be for three days, but should be for total freedom.[318] He prioritized forging alliances with other black rebels from the region, as part of an effort to take the island from the white planters. In December 1790, colonial administrators reported that "Farcelle & part of his gang" arrived back in Dominica in a vessel that had left Guadeloupe.[319] Pharcelle, who maintained connection with the neighboring French islands, was seen shortly afterwards coming from the hills armed with weapons. He had been spotted by one Janvier, who was enslaved by a Monsieur La Ronde.[320]

Pharcelle's network of rebels stretched deep into Dominica's enslaved population. His initial liaison to the plantations was an enslaved person by the name of Edward who belonged to Charles Bertrand of Saint Patrick's parish.[321] Some of his other cohorts on Bertrand's plantations were Negro Ned, Billy, Bobadil, Apollo, and Charles. Bertrand's brother, Anthony Bertrand, owned two slaves, Jappa and Renault, who would play notable roles in the conspiracy. Richard, Jernel, Hippolite, and Julian were enslaved on the father and son Sorhaindo plantation. Monsieur La Ronde had Janvier, Michel, and Paul enslaved on their plantations. And Charles the Driver, John Baptiste, Jack Sailor, and New Tim belonged to the Rosalie Estate. While there were others involved in the plot, these plantations possessed the main players in the conspiracy.

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[318] CO 71/19. "Examination of Charles the Driver, Jack Sailor, New Tim, John Baptiste…Rosaly Estate by Alex. January 18, 1791

[319] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to John Orde. January 18, 1791.

[320] CO 71/20. "Examination of Jean Louis Polinaire", February 7, 1791.

[321] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to John Orde. January 18, 1791.

On Saturday night while the blacks, as well as the whites, were celebrating the New Year, Pharcelle and his followers went to work by spreading the word of the uprising. According to Jack Sailor, three of Pharcelle's armed men went to Mr. Sorhaindo's house while he was at supper and brought some rum. An enslaved Igbo man on the plantation informed Jack Sailor that those were Pharcelle's men.[322] Also Bobadil, who, like Edward was enslaved on Charles Bertrand's plantation also delivered "rum in a calabash."[323] As the rum was being delivered, the word about the plans for the conspiracy was also spread. Edward, Pharcelle's spokesperson, informed Charles the Driver of Rosalie that, "the Negroes intended to rise" and that "they were not satisfied in having the three days that were talked of to be allowed them, but would have their full liberty."[324]

The following week Pharcelle sent more rum to the enslaved African men of the Rosalie Estate to let them "know that he was not yet dead, but still alive in the woods."[325] According to New Tim, on 9 January "Edward was in the "slaves" houses letting everyone know that Pharcelle said that "the Negroes must not trust to the white people giving them three days" and that they would only make them work more during the rest of the week.[326] On the Rosalie Estate, Edward spread the word that the plan was to kill "all the white people."[327]

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[322] CO 71/19. "Examination of Charles the Driver, Jack Sailor, New Tim, John Baptiste…Rosaly Estate by Alex. January 18, 1791. Examination of Jack Sailor.

[323] CO 71/19. "Examination of Charles the Driver, Jack Sailor, New Tim, John Baptiste…Rosaly Estate by Alex. January 18, 1791. Examination of Little Tim.

[324] CO 71/9. "Examination of Charles the Driver", January 18, 1791.

[325] CO 71/19. "Examination of New Tim, January 18, 1791.

[326] CO 71/19. Examination of New Tim. January 18, 1791.

[327] CO 71/19. Examination of New Tim. January 18, 1791.

Pharcelle also had the news spread across the Petit and Grove plantations, as well as to the slaves of Madame Chateau Giron in the week between New Year's and 9 January. One Primus escaped with six other persons who belonged to Mr. Renault, and went to various plantations to hear the word about the plans for the revolt. These sites included the Petit and Grove plantations. On the latter plantation enslaved persons carried names such as Cudjoe (an Akan name), Toussaint, and Louisson. Narcisso, who belonged to Chateau Giron, had "intelligence" from "the Negroes in the Quarter of Boery that they were ready to rise" and "that Farcelle was to be the commander in chief."[328] Also, on the same Sunday in which Narcisso was informing the slaves about Pharcelle's plan, Edward continued by visiting many of the "slave houses" on the Rosalie Estate. It was there that Edward spread the word that the plan was to kill "all the white people."[329]

During this period Pharcelle and his gang frequented the French Quarters. They were often supplied with resources by the slaves on the plantations, particular D. Hirriart's, Monsieur Sorhaindo, and Monsieur La Ronde's enslaved persons. As the word got around, the blacks continued to abscond from their plantations. By 13 January, the Government House was particularly concerned about the enslaved on the Windward side of the island, where "disaffection" prevailed among its "Gangs of Negroes on this side of the island…"[330]

Not all of the Africans in the woods were concerned with the taking over the island. Some simply wanted to left alone. On Friday 14 January, there was a report of an enslaved person from the Hartford Estate going out to collect gum from the "Gommier" tree in the quarter

[328] CO 71/19. Examination of Primus taken on January 15, 1791.

[329] CO 71/19. Examination of New Tim. January 18, 1791.

[330] CO 71/19. Government House to Governor Orde. January 13, 1791.

of Mahaut for the purpose of constructing a canoe for his master. The slave, whose name was not reported, came across eight "runaways" one of them a "French mulatto." The other seven were "Guinea Negroes", or African born maroons, armed with guns and cutlasses. The eight of them interrogated the slave in French, which he spoke as well as English, and asked if he belonged to a French or English master. The slave thought it wise to answer that he belonged to a Frenchmen. According to the account of the slave, the group said "they did not trouble or rob the white people and chose to keep the woods to themselves."[331] Nevertheless, though not necessarily in unison with Pharcelle's plan to kill all the whites, it was still obvious they were still adamant about defending the wooded mountainous interior for themselves. They allowed the enslaved person to go about his way after taking his pickings.[332]

By mid-January, Edward had organized the enslaved rebels into chiefs and sub-chiefs. Pharcelle was considered to be the conspiracy's commander in chief. Edward was considered "ringleader" among the enslaved and the liaison between the maroons and the plantations.[333] Each plantation was designated a sub-chief. Jappa was the sub-chief on Anthony Bertrand's plantation, Paul on La Ronde's, Richard on Sorhaindo's, Driver from Gally's, and Edward served as Chief on Charles Bertrand's property, and the leader of the enslaved on the Rosalie Estate.[334]

However, on 15 January, the colonial government finally received leads about the planned uprising. Primus, who "belonged" to Renault was captured and interviewed by

[331] CO 71/19. Letter from Thomas Jemmith from the Hartford Estate to Governor Orde. January 17, 1791.

[332] Ibid.

[333] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde. January 18, 1791.

[334] CO 71/19. Examination of Polinaire. February 7, 1791.

Christopher Robert Esquire. He informed Robert of his whereabouts on the various plantations in the recent days. He surprised the colonial authorities in stating that the enslaved Toussaint "expected intelligence from Farcelle."[335]

## *Gens du Couleur* Want In: Polinaire in, Pharcelle out

The spirit of revolution was omnipresent in the early 1790s. The French inhabitants throughout the West Indies had all been affected by the French Revolution. Revolution also hit the shores of nearby Martinique. Facing racial discrimination, its *Gens du Couleur* were inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution. These mulatto men and women understood the hypocrisy in France's status as a revolutionary republic. In the "mother country" the ideals of freedom were loudly proclaimed. Yet, in the French colonies, the black sons and daughters of white men remained an underclass in a white power structure based on the enslavement of African people. The *Gens du Couleur* felt it necessary to take what they believed was rightfully theirs. However, this struggle for equality in Martinique and the role of the *Gens du Couleur* was a complicated issue.

The *Grand Blancs* and the governor-general of Martinique, the comte de Viomenil, were against the French Revolution. Many of the *Gens du Couleur* had been allies of the royalist government in Martinique, and played a major role in quelling a slave insurrection in Martinique earlier that year. Historian William Cormack states, "Royal administrators valued free men of color as defenders of the colonial security and the slave system, and *grands Blancs* welcomed them as allies against *petit Blanc* patriots and even against metropolitan revolutionary

[335] CO 71/19. Examination of Primus conducted by Christopher Robert, January 15, 1791

authority."[336] With the revolutionary violence that erupted in Martinique in September of 1789, the *Gens du Couleur* were divided. Many of them supported the colonial order and fought to perpetuate the system of slavery, while other free people of color fought in support of the French Revolutionary principles and mutinied.[337]

The revolutionary violence erupted in Saint-Pierre, Martinique in 1790. As rampant violence broke out, the British and the French who had traditionally been enemies came together for the cause of white supremacy. Many whites fled Martinique seeking protection. However, the white power structure that had been established by French and British planters would be broken so quickly. It was not long before the French colonial troops suppressed the uprising. The rebels of Martinique fled the island. In June 1790 Martinique's Viscount De Damas warned Dominican Lieutenant Governor James Bruce that the rebels were reaching the shores of Dominica.[338]

One of these "Mulatto" rebels was Jean Louis Polinaire, simply known as Polinaire. He was known as a French Revolutionary sympathizer in Martinique and was living in Dominica with family including his wife, child, and father-in-law. While Polinaire does not appear to have initiated Dominica's 1791 conspiracy, he would certainly be implicated in its efforts. On 15 January 1791, Paul, the sub-chief from the La Ronde Estate was sent to Charles Bertrand's plantation to meet with Edward. Along with another rebel from the Rosalie Estate, they were to "take twenty-four muskets, as the battle was to begin on the Monday" 17 January.[339] Paul,

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[336] William S. Cormack. "Revolution and Free-Colored Equality in the *Iles du Vent* (Lesser Antilles), 1789-1794" Michigan Publishing. 39 (2011): 155-165. http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/p/pod/dod-idx/revolution-and-free-colored-equality-in-the-iles-du-vent.pdf?c=wsfh;idno=0642292.0039.015

[337] Craton. *Testing the Chains.* 180

[338] CO 71/17. Copy of a Letter from Visc. De Damas to Lt. Governor Bruce. June 15, 1790 and the response letter from Bruce to Visc. De Damas, June 16, 1790

[339] CO 71/20. "Examination of Polinaire." February 7, 1791.

however, would not go to the Saturday meeting without Polinaire. This is the first evidence of Polinaire's actual participation in the conspiracy.

The next night, on Sunday, a dance at the Bertrand Estate brought many of the conspirators together to finalize the plans for revolt. Pharcelle and Edward the initial organizers, were also both present. One group that was notably absent from the dance was the Rosalie revolutionaries. Moreover, according to one Joseph "all the Negroes present said that war would very soon break out & that they would Murder all the White people at Rosaly & take away the guns." At the party Pharcelle "told all the French Negroes that they must musty up as many of the Home Negroes as possible from them." He continued that, "That he would then bring his people to join them."[340] However, at some moment during the weekend, Polinaire went from being a non-factor in the revolt to securing a leadership position among the plantation rebels.

At the dance the plan was laid out. On Monday night the plantation slaves turned revolutionaries from the Rosalie Estate were to march to the Charles Bertrand Estate, where Edward, Bobadil, Negro Ned, and Apollo were located. Here, the killing of the whites was to begin. The revolutionaries from Rosalie were to join with nine conspirators from Bertrand's and then sojourn to the Sorhaindo plantation while the whites were at supper. After gathering the enslaved at Sorhaindo's, they were to proceed to the Boetica River. According to Charles Bertrand, the slaves were to "proceed to join Sorhaindo's & others at the River Boetica, to return in a Body headed by the Mulattoes at Point Mullatre."[341] Bertrand did not specifically state that Polinaire was one of the Mulattoes, but later testimonies of conspirators did identify him as such.

[340] CO 71/19. Examination of Charles the Driver, Jack Sailor, New Tim, John Baptiste Etc. Joseph's exam. Joseph on January 18, 1791.

[341] CO 71/19. Letter from Charles Bertrand to Alex Ross. January 18, 1791.

Bertrand claimed that the group was to "seize on some Gun Powder I have got and afterward on your Fire Arms and make one general slaughter from Gachets estate to Richmond, the Runaways from the others side of the island are also expected."[342]

As the dance came to an end on that Sunday night, the preparations for war were being made. However, Primus's examination from the day before, had given the Dominican colonists vital information as to the intent of the maroons and enslaved population to join together and kill the whites. This led to further investigation. Early Monday morning, on the day in which the revolt was to take place, Negro Ned from Charles Bertrand's plantation was detained and questioned. Asked by the examiner if he knew of any "Mulatos or Negros in the Plot," he responded, "Yes the Free Mulato Polinaire" and "two of Mr. Sorhaindo's Mulattos." When he was asked if he had "any intelligence with runaway Negros?" his response was "Not myself nor any Negro of this Estate but Paul and Navier told me that a great number of Negros in the woods would come down and join us."[343] The reference to "runaways" was very consistent with the many accounts of the other conspirators. However, Edward was from the same estate as Negro Ned. That fact that he said no one from his estate had any contact with "runaways" is inconsistent with the majority of testimonies.

Later on that day in the afternoon the conspirators from Rosalie—Charles the Driver, Jack Sailor, New Tim, and John Baptiste—were detained and examined. The Rosalie freedom seekers all told their stories, and there were some conflicting aspects to their stories. However, the one consistency between the four of them was that none of them mentioned Polinaire or any

[342] CO 71/19. Letter from Charles Bertrand to Alex Ross. January 18, 1791.

[343] CO 71/19. Examination of Nedd a Negro of Mr. Charles Bertrand at Sabiry. January 17th, 1791 at 8:00am.

of the Mulattoes. They only mentioned Pharcelle and his gang as leaders in the conspiracy.[344] However, recall that the Rosalie conspirators were in extensive contact with Edward since New Year's, but were not present at the dance on the day that Polinaire was introduced to the rest of the group. The night of the dance seems to have been when Polinaire was propelled to a leadership position. After the Rosalie conspirators were interviewed, Edward was detained. Based on his and other conspirators' interviews he was connected with both the Mulattoes and the maroons.[345] The revolt obviously could not take place in the way that it was planned on designated night with some of the primary conspirators captured and examined that Monday.

This intervention by the colonial government did not stop the rebellion. On 18 January, the following day Edward escaped capture from his master's place. It was reported that Bobadil released him. The conspirators, armed and now led by Polinaire, began to run the whites out of the French Quarters. Within days, planters began to abandon their plantations out of fear. In the cover of night Bertrand and his two sons fled to Alex Ross.[346] One planter, William Oliver, wrote to Orde on 20 January,

> I beg leave to respect the requests I made to my note to you Yesterday with regard to making application to the Governor for a party to this part. Seven or Eight of the French Gentlemen from Windward who were obliged to Quit their estates and leave have last night…[347]

[344] CO 71/19. "The following is the purport of the examination of Charles the Driver, Jack Sailor, New Tim…" January 18, 1791.

[345] CO 71/19. Copy of a letter from Charles Bertrand. January 18, 1791.

[346] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde. January 22, 1791.

[347] CO 71/19. Letter from William Oliver to Governor Orde. January 20, 1791.

By the end of the day on Thursday, 20 January, the entire French Quarter had been abandoned and the conspirators took possession of Charles Bertrand's home.[348] The revolt had finally begun.

On 20 January an account by Henry Constable estimated that Polinaire's party "did not exceed fifty."[349] Some of Polinaire's higher ranking troops were Jean Baptiste from Guadeloupe, Paul and Michel from La Ronde's estate, and Cocque from Laseuillee's estate.[350] Paul, now considered third in Command and Jean Baptiste, another Mulatto from Guadeloupe had thirty followers at the height of the revolt.[351] Richard, sub-chief from the Sorhaindo plantation, had thirty followers as well.[352] On the other hand, Alex Ross assessed that Paul was actually ranked second after Polinaire, and Edward was third.[353] Nevertheless, it was estimated that in total there were about two hundred fifty conspirators.[354] Polinaire and some of the conspirators took over Charles Bertrand's home that Thursday night, after the latter had fled.

According to Henry Constable, on that first night Polinaire and his party "killed a beast at Mr. Bertrand's" and "provided supper for Farcelle and Panglos who were expected there."[355] Polinaire and his gang expected three hundred muskets from Pharcelle and two hundred from

[348] CO 71/19. Letter to Governor Orde "10 at night", January 20, 1791

[349] CO 71/19. Letter from Henry Constable to Governor Orde. January 21, 1791.

[350] CO 71/19. Council Chamber. At a Meeting of His Majesty's Council. January 24, 1791.

[351] CO 71/19. Letter from Captain John Marshall to Governor Orde from the Hirriart Plantation January 23, 1791.

[352] CO 71/20. Examination of Jean Louis Polinaire. February 7, 1791.

[353] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde. January 22, 1791.

[354] Ibid.

[355] CO 71/19. Letter from Henry Constable to Governor Orde. January 21, 1791.

Pangloss.[356] However, Pharcelle and Pangloss did not show up.[357] Until the night of the dance earlier that week Pharcelle had been the critical organizer of the conspiracy. One can only speculate what occurred at that dance that Sunday night. Pharcelle went from being a primary organizer behind the conspiracy to a no-show. Polinaire went from being an invite of Paul to a meeting one day before the dance, to running the show. Pharcelle was an ex-slave turned black maroon who had lived in the woods for an extended period of time. Polinaire was a French Mulattoe from Martinique where the ideals of the French Revolution resonated with his people and their social predicament, but many of his ilk were known supporters of slave system in that island. These two came from different worlds, but had a struggle against the same system. One can only speculate if issues of class, complexion, and/or culture played a role in Polinaire's rise to leadership, and Pharcelle's subsequent abrogation of the plan with the plantation rebels to "murder the whites."

Even though Pharcelle did not show up at Bertrand's house that night, the colonial government was still under the impression he was still the leader of the revolt. In a 20 January "Proclamation" Governor Orde stated that, "there is great reason to believe they are commanded by the notorious offender Pharsale." A bounty of "Five Hundred Pounds" was placed on Pharcelle, and one hundred thirty pounds "for bringing in the head of the said Pharsale."[358] Based on the previous evidence given by the testimonies of the many conspirators they had no reason to believe so anymore. Poliniare was the one that the colonial government should have been more concerned about at that point.

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[356] CO 71/20. "Examination of Polinaire" on February 7, 1791

[357] CO 71/19. Letter from Henry Constable to Governor Orde. January 21, 1791.

[358] CO 71/19. A Proclamation by Governor John Orde, January 20, 1791.

There were various groups being dispatched to defeat the rebellion. This included Captain John Marshall's Thirtieth regiment, who ensured that the maroons did not take over Dominica five years prior. The second in command to Captain Marshall was Captain Urquhart. They were supported by a "strong detachment of the 15th" under the command of Captain Combe."[359] The Thirtieth Regiment was dispatched towards the Windward side of the island where the revolts were occurring. These troops approached Bertrand's house on the same night that it had been captured. They noticed a light on inside between 10 and 11 o'clock at night. Believing it to be Polinaire and his troops, the colonial soldiers were ordered "not to fire" but to surround the house "to make them prisoners." However, after the colonial troops saw the movement of blacks in the house they suspected it was Polinaire. George Metcalf, a notable planter and government official at the forefront of the troops, "ordered the soldiers to fire." However, the blacks inside of the house were, in fact, not Polinaire and his band. They had escaped earlier that night. In fact, the colonial government's own enslaved soldiers were fired upon. A mulatto colonial soldier and three blacks were killed. Three more were wounded.[360] One of whom eventually died as well. Polinaire's gang had taken booty and had been drinking liquor and rum before they fled upon the arrival of the colonial troops.[361]

By 21 January the House of Assembly learned the truth about who was at the head of the conspirators:

> Resolved that this House will make good any sum not exceeding the sum of two hundred pounds currency to provide for the reward that may be offered by His Excellency the Governor to any white person or Free Person of colour or to

[359] CO 71/19. Minutes of the Council Chamber Meeting. January 25, 1791.

[360] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde. January 22, 1791.

[361] CO 71/19. Letter from Governor Orde to Mr. Gunar( not legible). January 22, 1791.

> purchase the Freedom of any Slave who may apprehend or kill the Mulatto Man named Paulinaire, now at the head of a Party of Rebellious Slaves.[362]

Captain Marshall had the troops watch Bertrand's house that day. On the following morning Anthony Bertrand and "a detachment of French White people" were sent out "against the runaways." These whites were all killed. A rumor lingered that if the timid slaves did not join the revolutionaries in their quest for freedom, they would be murdered too.[363] This proclamation must have given the conspirators some incentive, because they had become increasingly emboldened. The next day one official hoped "that the spirit of revolt will not extend itself…"[364] Another lamented "all the Negroes in the French Quarters have joined."[365]

Polinaire and the newly liberated black conspirators engaged in all out warfare with the Thirtieth Regiment all day Saturday, 22 January. Polinaire was spotted at "height" above the North Estate of Sorhaindo, shooting at Marshall and his troops.[366] Marshall recalled, "this morning the Detachment of the 30th Reg under my Command has been exchanging shots with the Runaways from that moment to the present one."[367] This battle of shots fired back and forth between Marshall and Polinaire went on until sunset.

As Polinaire and his army made headway, and the planters and the colonial troops were having problems figuring out exactly how to defeat them. Many of the conspirators fled in and out of the woods while engaging the colonial troops. One strategy proposed by the colonialists

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[362] CO 71/19. House of Assembly. Thomas Rainy, Speaker Pro Tempore. January 21, 1791

[363] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde. Saturday, January 22, 1791.

[364] CO 71/19. Letter from Chris Robert to Governor Orde. Point Michel on January 22, 1791.

[365] CO 71/19. Letter from James Bruce to John Orde. January 24, 1791 at one o'clock in the morning.

[366] CO 71/19. Letter from M. Urquhart to John Orde. January 24, 1791.

[367] CO 71/19. Letter from John Marshall to John Orde. January 22, 1791.

was to force the conspirators back into the woods and have it surrounded. One James Bruce hoped of the conspirators that after "hearing the arrival of the troops" the rebels would "be so intimidated as to make off at least a great part of them to Martinico." Those that would not leave to Martinique would "undoubtedly go in a body into the woods" where Bruce believed the insurrection could be attacked and stopped."[368]

That day Captain Urquhart sent a white man by the name of Francois from Rosalie to lie in the woods near Bertrand's estate to collect intelligence. In the early dark hours of the next morning, Sunday at 2:00am, Urquhart marched towards Bertrand's estate from Rosalie with Ross and others. Urquhart learned through his intelligence that the Black conspirators believed that there were only six men coming from Rosalie. However, Urquhart had more in reserve. Urquhart "therefore sent forward a Party of a Corporal and Five men to be just within call of us and as it might be an inducement for the Runaways to attack them, then immediately on their firing could rush up with the Company."[369] They searched all of Bertrand's estate searching for any of the conspirators who may have been hiding there. After they left Bertrand's estate they then proceeded to La Ronde's estate in the rain. They did not receive any intelligence there, however.[370]

The plan of action to encircle the woods near Bertrand's and La Ronde's estates did not work. According to Ross "Poliniere was more attentive" than they hoped. Urquhart, Ross, and the detachment then marched towards what they believed to be Polinaire's house. Ross sent "six or eight of his people" to the house. Some of Polinaire's men were spotted going to the woods,

[368] CO 71/19. Letter from James Bruce to John Orde. January 22, 1791.

[369] CO 71/19. Letter from Captain M. Urquhart to Governor Orde. January 24, 1791.

[370] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde. January 25, 1791.

while some of his men including himself stayed behind in the house. Polinaire, again, started to shoot at the colonial regiment. This led them to temporarily back off. Ross advised Urquhart to proceed to Sorhaindo's house on the other side of the ridge. Urquhart received reinforcements to "scour" the ridge between the Sorhaindo's and Polinaire's home. The next morning, Monday, 24 January, "Scouting Parties" were dispatched "to the sides of the woods to make observation which way the Runaways had gone." That morning seven more of the conspirators had surrendered.[371]

The colonial forces wanted to ensure that they had all their bases covered in reference to capturing Polinaire and the self-emancipators. They believed that these "runaways," not to be confused with the long-time established African "runaways" in the woods, were incapable of surviving in the woods. One official, James Laing, wrote, "These people cannot live as Common Runaways do on the production of the interior parts of the island." Because of this assertion Laing believed that through desperation to survive the conspirators would "plunder the plantations and being already proscribed will not hesitate to murder every description of men and destroy buildings."[372] The colonial forces also suspected that the conspirators would possibly try to escape the island by sea. A letter from Ross to Orde on 25 January discussed how to prevent the rebels from escaping the island by canoe.[373] However, Marshall informed Orde that it was "impossible" for the "runaways" to escape, and as they cannot "procure provisions from the Estates" it was "not probable" they would "hold out much longer."[374]

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[371] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde. January 25, 1791.

[372] CO 71/19. Letter from James Laing to John Orde. January 27, 1791.

[373] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde. January 25, 1791.

[374] CO 71/19. Letter from Captain John Marshall to Governor Orde at 10:00am. January 25, 1791.

After 24 January, things began to really unravel for Polinaire. By Tuesday, 25 January, a Council Chamber's "Proclamation", pardoned all those who turned themselves into the colonial forces.[375] This essentially sped up the process of capitulation among Polinaire's followers. Two of Charles Bertrand's slaves surrendered themselves that morning.[376] On the same day, the Minutes at the Council Chamber Meeting read that a "Great number of Negroes" appeared "to have been with the Revolters from Necessity, others from choice…"[377] Furthermore, one of the most important capitulations of them all, aside from the surrendering of Captain Polinaire himself, was the capitulation of Polinaire's wife and child. Marshall hoped to obtain vital information from his other half about the series of events that took place. In addition, he hoped that once Polinaire found out that his wife and child were captured to the colonial forces they could use them "as the last decoy for him."[378]

The following morning, on Wednesday, 26 January, Jean Baptiste, the second in command surrendered himself. The following day, Polinaire made his way toward Grand Bay in the south to find a "small vessel or canoe" to escape to Martinique.[379] He must have realized, as Alex Machlachlan mentioned in his letter to Orde , that "all canoes…will be so secured" and that Polinaire could not "possibly escape from this part of the island."[380] The captain of the diminishing "runaways" then "changed his route" and went north instead on Saturday the

[375] CO 71/19. Minutes of the Council Chamber Meeting. January 25, 1791.

[376] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Ross to Governor Orde at 1:00pm on January 25, 1791.

[377] CO 71/19. Minutes from Council Chamber Meeting on January 25, 1791.

[378] CO 71/19. Letter from Captain John Marshall to Governor John Orde. January 25, 1791.

[379] CO 71/19. Letter from Anthony Bertrand to John Orde. Thursday 26th January, 1791. 3'o'clock. (the day does not match with the date.)

[380] CO 71/19. Letter from Alex Maclachlan to Governor Orde. January 28, 1791 at one o'clock.

twenty-ninth.[381] The colonial forces were then concerned that he might make his escape north to "Marie Galante where he has Friends and Relations."[382]

By 31 January, Captain Polinaire was practically alone in the woods. Most of the chiefs of the revolt had either surrendered or had been captured.[383] One African by the name of Mahomed, a "New Negro," remained with Polinaire in his final days. Mahomed, who was born in Africa, escaped the Robertson plantation and was described as a "daring fellow".[384] The following day Poliniare was captured and detained. Mahomed escaped capture. Two days later troops sought out Mahomed. They felt that if he was captured in the mountains they would have to be very cautious, as Mahomed "would probably attempt to throw "himself down with those who might have hold of his chains."[385] Mohamed was eventually captured, but "discharged by order of the court." This was due to the fact that he could not speak "neither English or French." He was sent back to the Gally plantation.[386]

Six days after being detained, Polinaire was put on trial for being at the head of the revolt. Between February 4-22, nineteen other conspirators were condemned and executed for their participation in the revolt. A week after Cyrus, Hannibal, and Renault were executed, on 1 March 1791, Polinaire was condemned and executed. [387] The two maroon chiefs, Pharcelle and

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[381] CO 71/19. Letter from Al(can't read it) to Governor Orde. January 29, 1791.

[382] CO 71/19. Letter from Henry Constable to Governor Orde. January 31, 1791.

[383] CO 71/19. Letter from the House to John Orde. January 31, 1791.

[384] CO 71/19. Letter from James Bruce to John Orde. February 3, 1791.

[385] CO 71/19. Letter from James Bruce to John Orde. February 3, 1791.

[386] CO 71/20. "A list of Persons of Colour Tried at the Court of ….", February 22, 1791.

[387] CO 71/38. "A list of all convictions had…commenced against defaulters to An Act of the Legislature of Dominica passed in December 1788…" December 31, 1803.

Pangloss, who were supposed to participate in the rebellion, were never captured during this period. Pharcelle remained in the woods for another few years. Pangloss, on the other hand, had his camp raided in the middle of February. Three of the twelve maroons in that camp were kidnapped. Pangloss and the others escaped capture, and went "over" a cliff. The colonial troops did not believe the maroons could survive such leap stating that the cliff that they went over was "impracticable."

## Conclusion

Polinaire took action as a leader in the 1791 revolt in Dominica. He and his troops were responsible for the death of several white men in the process. As a half French and half African man from Martinique, he believed that something was wrong with the system in which he lived, and was inspired by the French Revolution. Scholars have often generalized the great conspiracy which necessitated collaboration between the enslaved population, maroons, and mixed race French revolutionary sympathizers, as being instigated by Polinaire. They have done so without deciphering the origin and uneven development of the plot, and the factions that existed with the group.

In contrast, this chapter has examined such details, revealing that while Polinaire was at the head of the recent "runaways" he never led the African maroon nation of the island's mountainous interior. In fact, the idea of "revolt" was not even hatched by the Mulatto revolutionary. It was the enslaved population themselves who actually initiated the resistance in late December 1790. However, they were not organized and they did not have a concrete plan. The enslaved, including people like Charles the Driver, Jennet, or New Tim, displayed resistance

by simply not going to work. This was due to the disappointment faced by the enslaved when they realized that the rumored "three days" free were not actually going to be granted to them.

This discontentment emerged at a time when Pharcelle, the long-time established maroon, had been building his network among the enslaved population. This occurred as a result of a series of events, including hurricanes and hunger, since the end of the First Maroon War in 1786. The issue with the "three days" was in fact the proverbial straw for the camel, particularly for the overwhelming majority of enslaved individuals on the plantations. As such, Pharcelle was able to draw on this righteous discontent, and encourage an all-out massacre of all the whites in the Windward side of the island. This plan by Pharcelle was a mere extension of what had been started during the French occupation in the late 1770s, and the First Maroon War.

Polinaire, who offered a European perspective of revolution as the right of man, only joined in the pre-conspired revolution after the fact. The first time there is actually any record of Polinaire having anything to do with the conspiracy is on Saturday, 15 January, 1791. Up until that point Pharcelle had planned the massacre through his networks in the plantations—Edward, from the Charles Bertrand plantation. However, something occurred during the night of the dance on the following day, which transformed the conspiracy from being a maroon-led to French Mulatto-led. Did Pharcelle and Polinaire have some kind of disagreement? And why were the enslaved so easily persuaded to follow Polinaire?

Polinaire still attempted to reach out to Pharcelle during the revolt. Because of that it actually seems more likely that Pharcelle opted out of the relationship upon the arrival and influence of Polinaire in the conspiracy. Pharcelle may have been distrusting of Polinaire and his influence and leadership. Pharcelle had been living an African based lifestyle in the mountainous rain forest of Dominica. Perhaps Polinaire had come from a completely different world with a

completely different look, one that resembled the appearance of Pharcelle's westernized slave holding enemies—the British and French planters. Polinaire also came from Martinique, a world where the *Gens du Couleur* participated in the maintaining the slave system and colonial order. With Pharcelle's trans-island network, he certainly knew of the politics of the neighboring islands.

But the idea that Pharcelle opted out of the conspiracy because of Polinaire's participation is speculation. What is clear is that Pharcelle and Pangloss did not show up and provide the hundreds of muskets that were initially promised to the enslaved conspirators, while he had been a supporter of total revolution from the beginning. Strikes and requests for days off from laboring for white masters was not enough for Pharcelle. He was interested in the absolute murder of white masters. As the next chapter details Pharcelle would shift his emphasis once the political dynamics of the Caribbean drastically shifted during the 1790s.

Lastly, the notion of "flying Africans" discussed by historians, and the philosophical African traditional underpinnings associated with it was demonstrated by the maroons. Aside from the maroons' apparent unwillingness to mesh their cause with the French Revolution, the maroon Pangloss and eight people from his camp expressed their staunch unwillingness to be re-enslaved, as many had done after the First Maroon War, by leaping off a cliff to freedom. The colonial officials also expressed concern that the African rebel Mohamed could do the same. Many of the Africans lived by basic principles that the colonial officials, throughout the years, may have become more conscious of. It is safe to assume that the colonial officials at this point realized that the colonial laws to deter the enslaved persons from resisting slavery proved to be ineffective in many instances. The culture of maroonage was paramount in Dominica, and many were willing to die for this culture.

# CHAPTER FIVE: AFRICAN ALLIANCES VIED FOR BY EUROPEAN NATIONS

In January 1791, Pharcelle initiated a ruckus in Dominica that caused fear in the planters throughout the island. However, this revolt of African and mixed raced people was only the beginning of a long series of insurrections and wars that took place throughout the 1790s in the West Indies. These uprisings of enslaved peoples throughout the West Indies coincided with the 1789 French Revolution. In Saint-Domingue, the colony that would later adopt the name of Haiti after independence, the Africans rose up and defeated the French, British and Spanish. The Haitian Revolution commenced on August 14, 1791 with a Vodun ceremony led by Boukman in the woods of Bois Caïman.[388] The news of the insurrection of the Africans in Saint-Domingue reached far and wide throughout the Atlantic world. Planters in the various colonies across the Americas feared the possibility that their land could turn into a Saint-Domingue. For white planters throughout the Americas, Saint-Domingue in the 1790s was a scary thought. For Africans in the Americas it was an inspiration.

Dominica's African population, like the other islands in the West Indies, caused great concern for planters. Dominica's case was particularly disconcerting as the island had just come off of a massively conspired and partly executed black revolt between the maroons, the enslaved, and French mulattoes. Though the insurrection was quelled by February 1791, the maroons remained at large occupying large territories in the interior of the island. This chapter discusses British colonial fears of losing the colony of Dominica to the Africans in the same way as Saint-Domingue. It highlights how the British and the French Republican governments both vied for the support of Dominica's African *Neg Mawon* nation for their own strategic survival in the

[388] Franklin Knight. "The Haitian Revolution" in *The American Historical Review.* Oxford University Press, Vol. 105. 1(2000) 103-115.

West Indies. It also details how Pharcelle, who at once seemed very uncompromising in his stance against the whites, broke off from the revolutionary intransigent maroon cause in which the general values for revolution could not be compromised, and became an agent who was virtually exploited by the Europeans.

## African Resistance in Saint-Domingue: Dominica Response

After the cession of the Ceded Islands to the British, the importation of African captives increased tremendously in the British West Indies. As a result, British sugar production increased. As the British West Indies increased their importation of African captives, so did the French colony of Saint-Domingue. The period between 1764 and 1776 marked the first sharp increase, and the period after America's War for Independence marked an even more drastic increase. According to the *Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, Voyages* from 1731 to 1740 there were 13,981 Africans imported to Saint-Domingue. In the 1740s there were 22,649, in the 1750s there were 23,566, in the 1770s there were 71,995, and from 1781 to 1790 there were 111,710 Africans imported in to the rich colony (Figures 5 and 6).[389]

In the year 1790 alone, the year before the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution, the number of enslaved Africans imported into Saint-Domingue amounted to 46,993. This number doubled the importation of Africans in the entire 1750s.[390] The African coastal region which produced the majority of the captives for Saint-Domingue was the Bight of Benin, also known as

[389] David Eltis. Et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/guzvA3Qq

[390] Ibid.

the Slave Coast. After the 1750s West Central Africa became Saint-Domingue's major slave producing region. Bakongo people and their Bantu speaking neighbors comprised the vast majority of the enslaved population in Saint-Domingue at the time of rebellion.

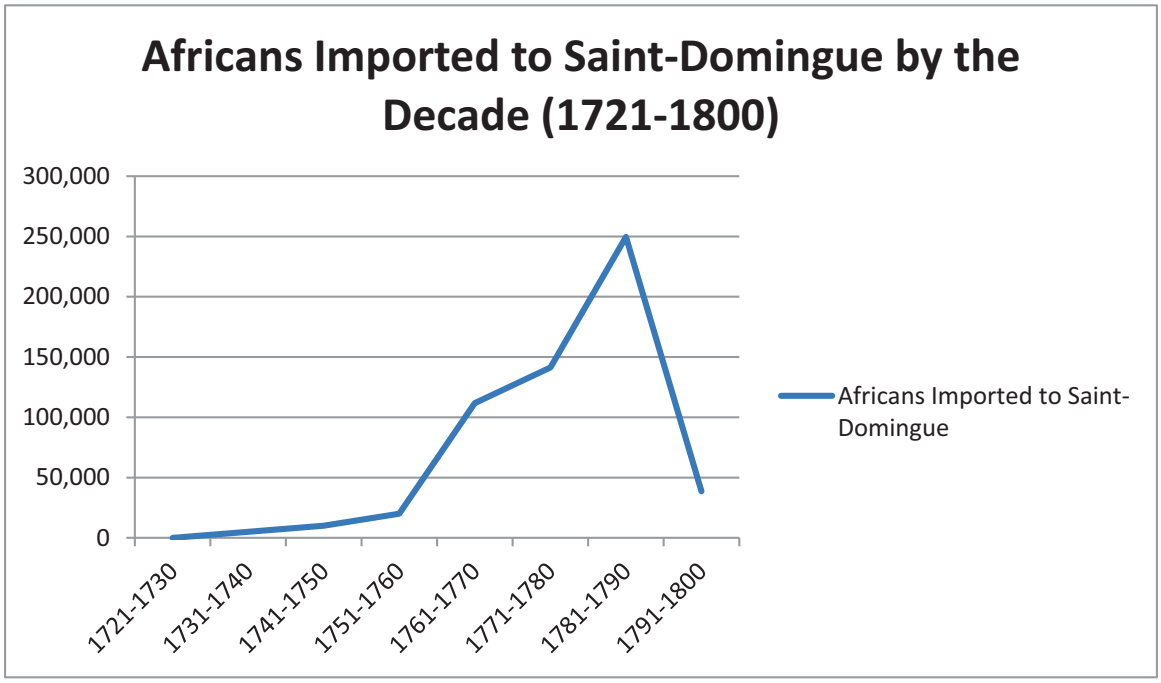


**Figure 5: Rate of Africans imported to Saint-Domingue between 1721-1800.**

This group from this region was known for their military expertise. In addition, 90 percent (500,000) of the population was enslaved in 1791.[391] Of that 90 percent two-thirds were born in Africa.[392] There was also the accounted for maroon population that played a role in the revolution.[393]

[391] Franklin Knight. "The Haitian Revolution" in *The American Historical Review.* Oxford University Press. Vol. 105. 1(2000) 103-115.

[392] Carolyn Fick. *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1990. 26

[393] Dubois. *Avengers of the New World.* 54-7

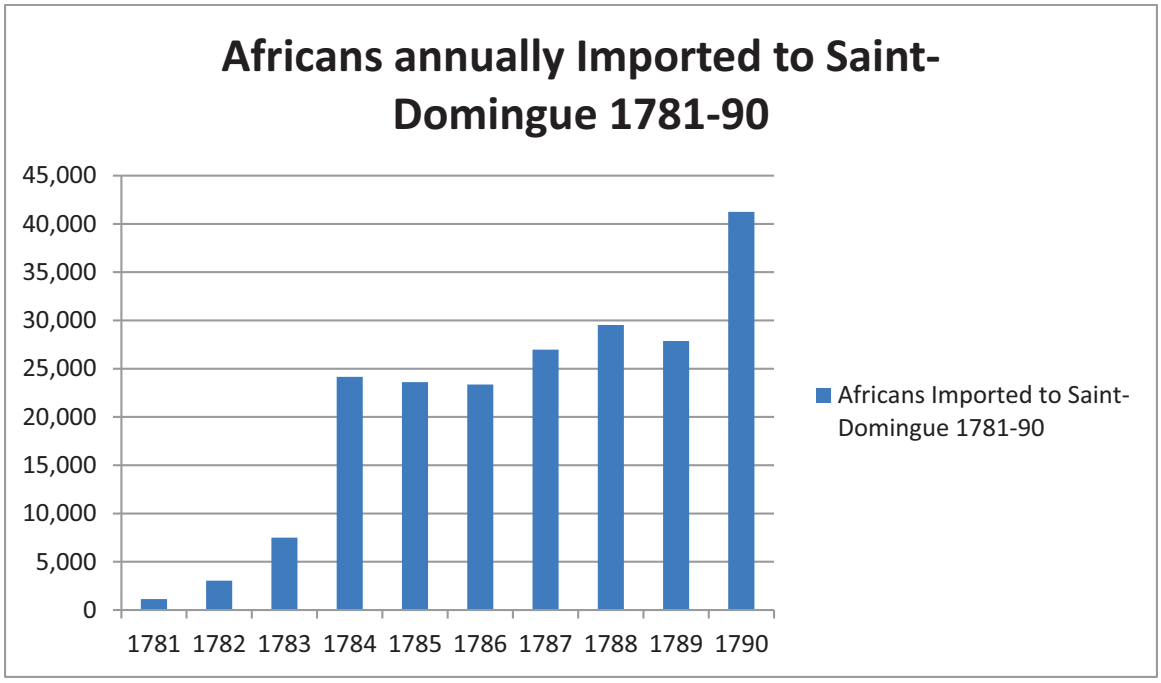


**Figure 6: Africans annually imported to Saint-Domingue, 1781-90.**

Months after having quelled the massive insurrection of early 1791, Governor Orde of Dominica seemed pleased with the tranquility and "termination of the insurrection of the Negroes."[394] However, the calm would soon change with the outbreak of the revolt in Saint-Domingue and unrest in the neighboring French islands. In November 7, 1791, Governor Orde's tone changed, "Our accounts from St. Domingo continue to be of the most alarming nature."[395] In December he wrote, "Our accounts from St. Domingo… find that island to be still in a deplorable situation, they confirm those we had before mentioning the burning of Port au Prince" and that "in the islands immediately contiguous to this, all has been quiet since I last wrote, except at Martinico where some irregularities were committed by a Body of Blacks headed by a

[394] CO 71/21. Letter from Governor Orde, May 6, 1791.

[395] CO 71/21. Letter from Governor Orde to Henry Dundas. November 7, 1791.

Mulattoe…"[396] Despite the fact that the government had quelled the recent rebellion in Dominica, the situation in Saint-Domingue and Martinique forced the colonial government to alter their understanding and subsequent approach to the Africans. Orde writes:

> As from the unhappy disturbance which prevail amongst the slaves in St. Domingo and Martinico and which it is but too possible may soon extend to the other Foreign islands in our Neighbourhood, it is more than likely a number of vagrant and disorderly persons and slaves may pass over here, and as it is of the utmost importance that the Laws should be put in force against all such, and that all slaves of the above description should immediately be secured and prevented from improper communication with the Negroes in this island.[397]

In the same letter Orde advocated destroying of "Plantains and other Negroe Provisions" on "abandoned Estates" in secret to avoid causing any "suspicion or marking impolitic apprehension."[398] The maroons during this time were laying low. Orde did not want to do anything to put the Africans on the offensive. In May 1792 he wrote, "It is much to be wished under present circumstances that every means may be taken to prevent the Negroes from being led into violence…"[399]

## Pharcelle Seizes Opportunities

Nevertheless, by February 1793 the colonial government's greatest worries began to manifest. France declared war on Great Britain[400] and within a month a group of twenty enslaved blacks had escaped John Greg's plantation. They formed a camp in the Heights of Layou near

[396] CO 71/22. Letter from Governor Orde to Secretary of State Henry Dundas, January 2, 1792.

[397] CO 71/22. Correspondence from Governor Orde to the Government House. December 21, 1791.

[398] Ibid.

[399] CO 71/23. Letter from Governor Orde to the Magistrates of different Parishes. May 24, 1792.

[400] Dumas Malone. *The Jefferson Ordeal.* Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1962. 64

the Mount George plantation.[401] Pharcelle, who may have been privy to this knowledge, decided to take advantage on Orde's fears of Dominica becoming another Saint-Domingue or Martinique. In March 1793, Pharcelle made a proposal to colonial government officials, one which proved difficult for the fearful British planters to pass up during this tumultuous time. The minutes of His Majesty's Privy Council from March 27, 1793 read:

> His Honor the Commander in Chief communicated to the Board information that he had received concerning the Negroe Chief Pharsaille and other runaway Slaves; and requested the opinion of the Board whether it would not be proper to comply with the Proposal of the said Pharsaille in granting him His Majesty's Pardon and his Freedom in his surrendering himself with other runaway slaves and in consideration of his offer to serve the colony by taking and bringing in other runaway slaves…[402]

Pharcelle, who was described as a "black man",[403] was once part of the movement to extirpate all white people from the island. He had once demonstrated reluctance to join in with a French revolutionary mulatto, and at this point was willing to compromise with the very enemy. There is no evidence that points directly to why Pharcelle abruptly decided to propose this offer to the government at this time. One can deduce from this that his decision may have had something to do with the colonial government's vulnerable situation. He quite possibly heard rumors of what was being discussed in government meetings in Roseau, and knew that if there was any time to propose a compromise, to a vulnerable colony, which might favor him, it would be then in 1793. Nevertheless, the colonial government held off on any agreements with Pharcelle in 1793.

By the summer of 1793 the fear of an uprising in Dominica became more intense. In June 1793 the Council passed "An Act to establish a Company of Rangers for apprehending and

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[401] CO 71/25. Correspondence between James Bruce and Alexander Stewart Esquire., February 22, 1793. And CO 71/25. The Minutes of His Majesty's Privy Council, February 22, 1793.

[402] CO 71/24. Minutes at a Meeting of His Majesty's Privy Council., March 27, 1793

[403] CO 71/27. Minutes at the House of Assembly Meeting, October 15, 1794

suppressing of Runaways Slaves."[404] The following month in Saint-Domingue, the self-liberating Africans had gained so much leverage in the quagmire that their revolt forced the French Republican commissioner Léger Félicité Sonthonax to extend the rights of freedom and equality to all slaves and their family members who fought on the side of the French Republic. This was a strategic ploy, anticipating that France may lose the colony. On 29 August Sonthonax announced the extension of freedom to all slaves Northern Province of Saint-Domingue.[405] Thousands of Africans, whose acts of revolution resulted in their freedom by 1793, had sent a message that planters across the West Indies did not want to reach their slaves.

In August, the worst had come to fruition for the British planters of Dominica. Just two days before Sonthonax's declaration of freedom in Saint-Domingue, "50 armed Men on the Windward of this island [Dominica], at a Bay called Battibou in the Night and went to the Nearest estate Hampstead plundered and the House of every thing and carried off nineteen Negroes, the rest of the Gang escaped to the woods."[406] By the 1790s the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution had more or less merged with a preexisting revolutionary movement which had existed Dominica since 1760s. The spirit of revolution, now reaching the shores of Dominica in the form of non-African French Republican men, was contributing to the increasing size of the maroon population in Dominica. In February of 1794, the French National Assembly extended the emancipation, which was fought for by the Africans in Saint-Domingue, to the

[404] CO 71/25. Assembly Papers, June 10, 1793, by Griffin Curtis.

[405] Dubois. *Avengers of the New World.* 162-3

[406] CO 71/25. Letter from James Bruce to Henry Dundas, September 2, 1793.

entire French West Indies.[407] The act of emancipation on the part of the French was monumental. No other European nation at that point had agreed to disband the egregious system.

After the French National Convention announced the strategic act of emancipation throughout the French Empire, British troops invaded and occupied Saint Lucia, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, by that spring of 1794.[408] As a result, many French Republicans and their allies fled to Dominica. Rumors arose of Pharcelle's incipient communication with the French Republicans. In a 27 May letter, planter John Trotter wrote "A respectable French planter" that received "intelligence" from "three of his Negroes" that while "they were working in a piece of new cleared land close to the Woods, nine French Mulattoes passed them armed with Muskets Pistols and cutlasses, and that on the day following upwards of sixty passed in the same place, and armed in the same manner…"[409] He further claimed that armed men "made particular enquiry about their masters, and whether he was a good man" and that "they were going to encamp at the Head of the Grand Indian River, and that they expected to be joined by Farcelle who they called General…"[410]

If Pharcelle was pegged to be the general of a group of French Mulattoes, this was a quite a change from his earlier days of refusing to work with Polinaire. However, in 1791, Pharcelle was looking to lead his maroons and all of the slaves on the Windward side of Dominica into an all-out revolt and a massacre of the whites. Much of the enslaved population at the time was of

[407] Dubois. *Avengers of the New World.* 167

[408] James R Lehning. *European Colonialism Since 1700.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 79 (Lehning 2013)

[409] CO 71/26. A letter from John Trotter to Lieutenant Governor Bruce, May 27, 1794

[410] Ibid.

mixed creole and African born. The many creoles involved in the conspiracy may have put more faith in Polinaire's leadership over Pharcelle's.

In this case, in 1794, the Mulattoes referred to Pharcelle as the "General," a term that Polinaire never openly used in any of his interviews. One theory is that Pharcelle may have been only willing to accept participation with the Mulattoes if they were going to follow his lead. Also, Pharcelle in 1794, with the progression of the French and Haitian Revolutions, and the subsequent abolition of slavery in the French Empire, likely developed a different attitude towards the French and their struggle for equality. The fight for freedom may have actually seemed genuine to Pharcelle at that point in the National Convention's declaration of freedom that February. These developments were enough for Pharcelle to rescind his proposal he made to the British in the year prior. Moreover, Trotter mentioned that the French planters' slaves also noted that Pharcelle and the French mulattoes "waited the arrival of a French Fleet, and then they would put every Englishman in the island to the Sword."[411] Putting the "Englishmen of the island to the sword" was an act that Pharcelle and the maroons had been engaging in for decades.

The alliance of Pharcelle and the French Mulatto Republicans also begs the question as to why the French Republicans fled the British occupied islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe to escape to the supposedly British Dominica. Many decided to flee to Dominica, despite the fact that it was British *de jure.* However, based on their actions to flee British occupied islands only to arrive in the supposedly "British" Dominica speaks volumes to the lack of control that the British actually had of the interior of the island. In other words, the Africans controlled Dominica *de facto.* Trotter's letter states that there were, "many reports of numbers of People of

[411] CO 71/26. A letter from John Trotter to Lieutenant Governor Bruce. May 27, 1794

Colour having effected their escape from the French islands landing to the Windward, particularly about Point Jacko and taking to the woods."[412]

The "woods" were its own land with its own rule of law. By fall 1794 the movement between Pharcelle and the mulattoes started to merge. For example, a letter written by French Republican Joseph Durand to Pharcelle was intercepted by colonial authorities. The letter written in French made it clear to tell Pharcelle that it was the "Republique" who "abolished slavery in all the colonies" and gave "Compliments to all the citizens" of Pharcelle's "camp."[413] Durand feared that the letter could be intercepted. He was also supposed to deliver a subsequent letter to Pharcelle in person, as he could not trust anyone with it.[414]

A "Negro" by the name of Belfast delivered the letter to authorities as opposed to Pharcelle. Durand was then apprehended by Samuel Gray under the orders of the Lieutenant Governor. The letter to Pharcelle was presented at the House of Assembly meeting on 9 October 1794. This created a grave concern for the colonial government. Six days later, after the examination of Durand and others involved in the Pharcelle-Republican union, on 15 October, the House of Assembly reconsidered Pharcelle's original proposal from more than a year and a half earlier. Pressed to put an end to the African Maroon-Republican alliance in Dominica, the Resolution read:

> Resolved, that the commander in chief be and his is hereby authorized to employ proper persons to treat with Farcelle, a black man, supposed to be at the Head of the Runaway slaves in the woods, for the purpose of making him and such other runaways as many be agreed upon with him free persons, under an Act of the Legislature to be passed….if such treaty shall take effect, the Board and House recommend to His Honor to grant to the said Farcelle and his party, so to be made

[412] CO 71/26. A letter from John Trotter to Lieutenant Governor Bruce. May 27, 1794

[413] CO 71/27. Minutes of His Majesty's Privy Council Presented a letter from Joseph Durand to Pharcelle on October 9, 1794.

[414] Ibid.

> free, or to put them in possession of Lands belonging to the Crown in convenient situations in the woods, to cultivate and improve and constantly reside therein and, not themselves, the whole our condition that the said Farcelle and his party…shall consent faithfully to employ themselves for ever hereafter in searching for and apprehending all such slaves as may desire the service of their owners and retire to the Woods, the said Farcelle and all Party to be allowed and paid proper rewards for such runaway slaves in their delivery to the Provost Marshal of this Island.[415]

This compelled Pharcelle to shift his alliance, at least openly, from the French Republicans and the greater African maroon movement to the British colonial government. Two months later, on 9 December the legislatures of Dominica invited Pharcelle to the government meeting to discuss the terms of the treaty. The agreement stated:

> That the said Farcelle and his two wives named Martan and Angelique and the following Negro Men on number six named Jaime, Guillaume, Andre, Valentine, Lunb, and Francois together with their wives named Justine, Creole Agatha, Betsey, Fitiate, Scholas Reque and Justin Ebbo…[416]

This treaty set Pharcelle and fourteen other maroons "legally" free. The number of maroons in the woods at that time is unknown. However, the recorded estimates of maroons from the 1780s to 1810s had never been under 50 or 60, and the number of maroons was likely to be much larger than this at this time. Fourteen maroons whose freedom was to be legally recognized by the colonial government was a small number compared to other maroon societies in the West Indies who had signed treaties with European colonialists. Their service was to complement the service of the other armed forces used against the maroons. Nevertheless, one important note here is that Pharcelle made a decision to sign a treaty with the British colonial government. His actions were not representative of the entire maroon population. He and his fourteen associates involved in the agreement were the minority. The vast majority of the maroons from various ethnic backgrounds including: Asante, Aja, Wolof, Mandingo, Bakongo, Ibibio, and especially Igbo

[415] CO 71/27. Minutes from the House of Assembly Meeting. October 15, 1794.

[416] CO 71/29. Memorandum in the Council Chamber. December 9, 1794

remained free and uncompromising in the woods. Nevertheless, by 10 December Pharcelle had begun capturing and bringing in maroons to the colonial officials. The kidnapped maroons informed the colonial officials that there were two French planters at Pointe Michel by the names of Jean Sionne and Jacques Mercier who were "suspected of using improper language" to the detained maroons. However, the officials ruled the accusations to be "unfounded."[417]

## Victor Hugues and Merging Revolutions: A *Neg Mawon* Independent Movement

Earlier in the year, French Republican Commissioner Victor Hugues had been sent to the West Indies to ensure the emancipation of the slaves' decree was granted by France's National Assembly. Hugues was a mulatto planter who was born in Marseille, France. As a child his family moved to Saint-Domingue where they had a bakery business. At the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution he returned to France[418] where he joined the revolutionary Jacobins. After the February 1794 declaration of freedom to all the enslaved people throughout the French Empire, Hugues was sent to British occupied Guadeloupe in June.[419] By December 1794, Hugues' forces, consisting of Free People of Color and former enslaved Africans, forced the British to flee to Martinique. It was from Guadeloupe where Hugues operated his dissemination of "revolution".[420]

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[417] CO 71/27. At a Meeting of His Majesty's Privy Council, on December 10, 1794.

[418] Antoine-Vincent Arnault. *Biographie Nouvelle des Contemporains (1787-1820).* De L'imprimerie de Plassan, 1827. 272

[419] Laurent Dubois. "The Price of Liberty: Victor Hugues and the Administration of Freedom in Guadeloupe, 1794-1798. In *The William and Mary Quarterly.* 56 (1999) 2: 363-392

[420] Richard Gott. *Britain's Empire: Resistance, Repression and Revolt.* New York: Verso, 2012. 110

African people in the Americas possessed a long standing tradition of resisting enslavement. However, with the arrival of Victor Hugues and other French commissioners throughout the West Indies Africans, mulattoes, and the French underclass in the various islands joined together to rise up against the British planters. Grenada was one of the islands that experienced a major rebellion less than a year after the arrival of Hugues in Guadeloupe. On 3 March 1795 at midnight, Julien Fédon, who was a French Mulatto planter, freed his slaves and galvanized them to assist in the overthrowing of the British colonial regime in Grenada at the time.[421] That island, like many of the other British West Indian islands, had an influx of Africans being imported at that time. A large portion of them were Bakongo and their Bantu speaking neighbors from the West Central African ports of Cabinda, Malembo, Loango and Congo River, a people known for their military prowess, an importation pattern similar to Saint-Domingue. There were more than 7,000 enslaved persons involved in the sixteen month rebellion. The Africans, consisting of a great number of Igbo, Asante, and Bakongo peoples, along with French Republicans took over the entire island of Grenada except for a small enclave in the capital city of Saint George's.[422]

In Saint Vincent a similar scenario occurred. Hugues sent troops into the colony to assist in the Black Carib takeover of the island, and was able to win them over as allies. The Black Caribs (Garifuna) were a result of a slave ship wreck that occurred in the Grenadines in the seventeenth century. The escapees from the slave ship landed in Saint Vincent and intermarried with the indigenous Caribs to form the mixed African and indigenous culture. By 1763 when the

[421] Edward Cox. *Free Coloreds in the Slave Societies of St. Kitts and Grenada, 1763-1833.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 1984. 76

[422] Craton. *Testing the Chains.* 183-9

British took over the island there were between two thousand and six thousand Black Caribs in the island. In 1773, after years of warfare with the British invaders, they signed a treaty with the British.[423] However, they were always waiting for the right opportunity to take the island back. During America's War for Independence the British colonial government was temporarily removed from the island. After the island was ceded back to the British in 1783, the Caribs continued to seek French assistance. The perfect opportunity came after the outbreak of war between France and Britain in 1793. The outbreak of rebellion in Grenada on 3 March 1795, led by Fédon, was the impetus for the Second Carib War. Word of Grenada's insurrection arrived in Saint Vincent which caused the colonial governor James Seton to declare martial law. The declaration of martial law was a cause for war. On 8 March began their attacks on British plantations.[424] However, it was the 20,000 enslaved persons on plantations who, because of animosity with the Black Caribs, did not want to support them.[425] This war between the Black Caribs and the British lasted between 1795 to 1797 until they were exiled.

In addition to providing support for the two major wars in Grenada and Saint Vincent, Hugues also provided support for the African slaves, French settlers, and a French Republican officer by the name of Captain Lacroix in Saint Lucia against British encroachment.[426] According to Michael Craton, it might even be possible that Hugues and the French Republicans stirred up conflict between the Jamaican maroons and the British colonial government. With rebellions and warfare being carried out throughout the West Indies the colonial government of

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[423] O'Shaughnessy. *An Empire Divided.* 41

[424] Craton. *Testing the Chains.* 190-1

[425] Paul Christopher Johnson. *Diaspora Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. 76

[426] Richard Gott. *Britain's Empire.* 118

Jamaica, like Saint Vincent, started to clamp down on the freedom of maroon activity in Jamaica. This, along with a series of subsequent events, also led to an all-out war between the maroons and the British colonial government.[427]

Hugues also tried to spread his revolution to Dominica. The alliance between the Francophone Mulattoes from Guadeloupe and Martinique, who looked for refuge in Dominica's maroon lands with Pharcelle, occurred prior to Hugues' arrival in Guadeloupe in June 1794. Also, this communication between Pharcelle and the Revolutionary Republic was maintained after Hugues arrived. However, with Pharcelle's new agreement with the British colonial government to align his allegiances to the cause of the British planters rather than the Africans or the French, Hugues was unable to co-opt an alliance with the maroons of Dominica. In May 1795 Hugues was able to foment a smaller version of the Fédon rebellion in Colihaut in the parish of Saint Peter with French planters and enslaved Africans, but the rebellion was unsuccessful.[428]

Though Pharcelle seemed to have formulated his own agenda, by the mid-1790s the tradition of the maroons was typically uncompromising. Despite the fact that many different African revolutionary movements were merging with those of the French revolutionary movements in the 1790s, the maroons of Dominica stayed loyal to their cause and their cause only—the universal emancipation of African people without compromise. Pharcelle may have been won over at one point by the French National Assembly's declaration of freedom to all slaves in the French world, but the vast majority of the maroons seemed to be okay with taking their chances running and leading their own independent revolution from the mountains and

[427] Craton. *Testing the Chains.* 212-3

[428] Ibid., 227

valleys of Dominica. And the maroons may not have been wrong for having these apprehensions towards an alliance with Hugues and his followers. According to Laurent Dubois, in Guadeloupe, Hugues "developed new forms of governance that combined an antiracist and emancipatory agenda with forms of labor coercion and racial exclusion." He further states that, "these regimes helped shaped Republican racism that was central to the functioning of the French empire of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in which the promise of political assimilation was routinely deferred because the colonized were incapable of exercising the rights of citizens."[429] In addition:

> Hugues confronted the problem posed by the transition from slave to citizen, and from slave labor, through a combination of liberation and repression. He limited the rights of ex-slaves, invoking the needs of the endangered nation to argue that, since exslaves were incapable of being full citizens, it was their responsibility to serve the nation according to their particular, and limited capabilities.[430]

That is not the type of society that the democratically principled Africans were willing to integrate with. The African maroons were unwilling to commit to an alliance with individuals they did not believe they can trust, but would rather, commit themselves to a relationship with those Africans on plantations. In the second half of the 1790s the relationship between the maroons and the enslaved on the plantations strengthened.

The revolution continued in Dominica without Hugues and his Republicans, nor Pharcelle. After the French Republicans were driven off the coast of Pagua Bay on the east side of Dominica and other French Republican conspirators in the island were captured and imprisoned, the British colonial government knew that they still had an internal threat. The year 1795 was a very tumultuous time for the British in the West Indies. With the African and French

[429] Laurent Dubois. "The Price of Liberty: Victor Hugues and the Administration of Freedom in Guadeloupe, 1794-1798. In *The William and Mary Quarterly.* 56 (1999) 2: 363-392

[430] Ibid.

being galvanized throughout the region, the British antagonists at that time were left with no other option but to recruit African war veterans to fight the militarily adept and formidable Africans throughout the Caribbean. In 1795 the British government made the controversial decision to defend its West Indian possessions with regiments of enslaved persons—initially Creoles but subsequently and predominantly blacks born in Africa.[431]

## Planters Desperate to Thwart Revolution

The Africans were primarily recruited from the Gold Coast and West Central African, because according to the British "The Coramantees reckoned amongst the most intrepid and hardy, being trained from their infancy, to war. The Fantees and Angolas are also esteemed a spirit and active race of people."[432] The "Coramantees", also known as the Akan, consisted of the Asante and other Twi speaking peoples. The "Angolas" was the generic term for Bakongo and their close neighbors. One-third of the troops fighting on behalf of the British in the mid to late 1790s were from the Kongo.[433]

The purchase of Africans from slave ships for the defense of the colonies was a decision that originated in London. In reality, the colonists wanted protection, but the purchase of Africans for the West India Regiment would result in the decrease in the number of captives used for harvesting.[434] In Dominica, with the uncompromising maroons and the increasing alliances

[431] Roger Buckley. *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiment, 1795-1815.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. viii

[432] WO 1/95 (Extracts) UK National Archives. Murbach Research. Thanks to Markus Weise for the reference.

[433] Dubois. *Avengers of the New World.* 216

[434] Buckley. *Slaves in Red Coats.* 39

developing between the Africans on plantations those Africans in the woods, it was necessary for the British to use Africans to fight Africans. They were limited in their options. In 1795, Dominica's colonial government imported their first cohort of Africans to serve in the West India Regiment.[435]

In January 1796, a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Johnstone to Secretary Dundas stated that "…the Estates are daily decreasing in value, by the Desertion of the Negroes belonging to the Estates, and other causes."[436] The following year, by 1797, after a couple years of fighting, the British forces with the assistance of the imported Africans had defeated the maroons in Jamaica and the Black Caribs in Saint Vincent. The former was initially exiled to Nova Scotia then Sierra Leone, while the latter was exiled to Central America.[437] With all of the manpower that was vested in those colonies, in 1798, the British who had been trying to capture Saint-Domingue were run out of that island.[438]

Because of the revolution which had ensued throughout the West Indies, the British government found that it would be more profitable to assuage the laws to govern the enslaved. Claudius Fergus highlights the reality of revolutionary spirit of Africans throughout the Caribbean and how the British colonial government responded to revolts with "Amelioration" in order to pacify, but maintain control and production from the enslaved.[439] According to Edward

[435] Honeychurch. *Negre Mawon.* 182

[436] CO 71/28. "Extract of a Letter from Lt. Colonel Johnstone to Secretary Dundas. January 23, 1796

[437] Craton. *Testing the Chains.* 222, 206

[438] Dubois. *Avengers of the New World.* 215

[439] Claudius Fergus. *Revolutionary Emancipation: Slavery and Abolitionism in the British West Indies.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013. 5

Long, it was the massive Tacky Rebellion in Jamaica launched British colonial reform of the enslaved in the British West Indies.[440]

Laws prohibited the entry of certain African groups in the Americas had existed since the beginning the transatlantic slave trade era in the sixteenth century. This fear of certain African born slaves was omnipresent, and as such, not new in the eighteenth century. However, more than in any other century African born slaves were increasing in regions tremendously. Tacky's was an enslaved Akan from Asante country. His rebellion sparked a discussion of creolizing the enslaved population in the British West Indies.

Discussion on abolishing the transatlantic slave trade had made headway in the late 1780s. By 1786 the Sons of Africa abolition society had been founded in England. It consisted of the former enslaved Africans Olaudah Equiano from Igboland, and Ottobah Cugoano from Fante country. One year later the Society for Effecting the Gradual Abolition of the Slave Trade was established[441] Thomas Clarkson was one of the original members of the society.[442] James Ramsey, who was closely linked with Clarkson, advocated for "amelioration" as imperial policy and argued how it was more economically sound to have a better governed home-grown creole enslaved population without the importation of intransigent Africans.[443]

A 1792 resolution was proposed to gradually abolish the transatlantic slaves trade, with the goal to abolish by 1796. However, with the Africans, (with temporary French allies) at war with the British planters all throughout the West Indies, the British suspended the 1796 projected

[440] Fergus. *Revolutionary Emancipation*. 2

[441] Ibid., 2

[442] Ibid., 55

[443] Ibid., 41-3

date of abolition in order to import African captives for military use.[444] The British government also hoped to capture Saint-Domingue and maintain it as their own lucrative sugar colony. This plan included continuing the importation of Africans to work the sugar plantations.[445] Nevertheless, the British lost Saint-Domingue in 1798. By 1807 the British government legally abolished the transatlantic slave trade.

Several islands in the 1780s adopted "amelioration" type acts in efforts to prevent slave resistance. With the increasing flight of enslaved Africans from Dominican plantations and increasing correspondence between the maroons and the enslaved, the British colonial government adopted their own "amelioration" act. This occurred in 1788 after the First Maroon War's end in 1786. In July 1799 there was a renewed act entitled "An Act for the Encouragement, Protection, and better Government of Slaves".[446] The first clause of this act stated that:

> Every Owner, Renter, Manager, or Overseer shall feed or cause to be fed all such slaves or slave as shall be under his her or their care with a sufficient quantity of good and wholesome food, and shall give them good and sufficient Cloathing and shall be provided dry and comfortable lodging for them, and in case of sickness of any of the said slaves or slaves, the said Owner, Renter, Manager, Overseer, shall provide for the said Slave or Slaves proper Medical Assistance and Advice, and the said Owners shall provide boundary of his her or their Plantation or Lot of Land, come Lodging, wholesome food and medical assistance all and every old infirm and distempered Slave or Slaves.[447]

[444] Fergus. *Revolutionary Emancipation.,* 71-6

[445] Buckley. *Slaves in Red Coats.* 57

[446] CO 71/31. "An Act of the Legislature of the Island of Dominica Intitled 'An Act for the Encouragement, Protection, and better Government of Slaves.'" 1799.

[447] CO 71/31. "An Act of the Legislature of the Island of Dominica Intitled 'An Act for the Encouragement, Protection, and better Government of Slaves.'" 1799.

The objective of the act was for "increasing the population of the Negroes, and thereby gradually diminishing and ultimately rendering the further importation of them unnecessary…",[448] as well as deterring the escape of the Africans on plantations through pacification. Medical care, comfortable lodging, and producing wholesome food were all things that the Africans knew how to do on their own. These benevolent acts by the government for the Africans were only to maintain control over the people and their production.

The Africans on plantations seemed to be privy to the scheme. Two months after the amelioration act was reconsidered by the legislature the House of Assembly reported that "a very considerable Number of Slaves [had] absented themselves from their Owners and have formed themselves into Parties lurking in the Woods and frequently [appeared] in numbers upon different plantations and along the coast."[449] These new camps comprised of formerly enslaved persons escaping from the Layou River region of Dominica. The report further stated that,

> Acts of violence have been committed on Persons and Properties of Individuals. Arms and Ammunition are, it is said in the possession of the runaway Negroes and they possess large Tracts of cultivated Grounds affording abundance of Provisions to the Camps and hold out inticing Invitations to others to join and render the Parties still more formidable.[450]

The balance of power on the island was shifting in favor of the African maroons. The maroons had a legitimate operation going on in the woods, and collectively demonstrated (except for Pharcelle) that they were uncompromising. The extensive acres of ground provisions in the woods were abundant, and the ability of the maroons to produce despite adversity was clear. For the maroons, having their land was the basis of their independence, and it was with this land that

[448] CO 71/31. Letter to President of the Council Matson. August 1799.

[449] CO 71/32. House of Assembly September 6th, 1799.

[450] CO 71/32. Letter from Portland to Governor Cochrane Johnstone, November 25, 1799.

the maroons grew their crops and favorable leverage with the enslaved community. By the end of 1799 there was discussion of the colonial government exiling the maroons of Dominica in the same way they exiled those of St. Vincent and Jamaica.[451] With the British imperial government abandoning Saint-Domingue in 1798, this freed up more resources to be used in Dominica in the following years. The colonial government knew how problematic their presence was becoming right around the turn of the century. Their very existence, coupled with the simultaneous revolution in Saint-Domingue, was a threat to the social order of the plantocracy. Their survival called into question the white supremacist doctrines that promoted blacks inherent dependence on whites for their survival.

## British Make Gains

In February 1800 while the number of maroons continued to increase, the troops who were employed to track down and capture them made headway. With the offering of a pardon, very prominent maroons surrendered themselves that year. This included the clan of Chief Grubois, one of the major maroon chiefs who had been in the woods for more than twenty years. Grubois and thirteen others surrendered themselves to Alexander McGinneis Esquire under a previous promise of pardon…" [452] Among them were Grubois' two wives Grace and Cloe the former who escaped the Londonderry plantation with her toddler son George in the late 1780s when the maroons were rebuilding after the First Maroon War. Cloe had fled the same plantation in 1793. Grubois had four children including fourteen-year old Louis, who was born in the

[451] CO 71/32. Letter from Portland to Governor Cochrane Johnstone. November 25, 1799.

[452] CO 71/32. Minutes at a Meeting of His Majesty's Privy Council. February 22, 1800.

woods during the First Maroon War. Little Peggy, was eight or ten, Nero, six or seven years old, and Jean Pierre, five years old. Little Peggy, Nero, and Jean Pierre were all born to the same woman. There was also Capola, Kitty, Peggy, Panto, and a pregnant Marie, who had all been in the woods for between six months and four years.[453]

With the capitulation of Grubois, the pardon offered by the colonial government proved to eventuate in results. Colonial Governor Johnstone wrote in September 1800 that, "Before commencing hostilities against them (maroons), issued with the advice of the Privy Council a Proclamation offering Pardon and forgiveness to all such as surrendered themselves within these weeks from the date of the Proclamation…"[454] Governor Johnstone also, hoped to destroy the "Provision Grounds" hoping that starvation would force the majority of the maroons to surrender. However, there were "above 300 acres of cleared land fully stocked with all kinds of Provisions" according to the colonial governor, that were discovered by a detachment of the Ninth West India Regiment. There is no telling how many more provisions grounds the maroons had in the very concealed and treacherous interior. Nevertheless, Maroon Chiefs Liverpool, who had fled to freedom during French "occupation" 20 years prior, and Dick, were captured within a few weeks after the discovery of the provision grounds.[455] On 11 November Chief Johnson, of another "Runaway Camp", was executed.[456]

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[453] CO 71/32. Minutes at a Meeting of His Majesty's Privy Council. February 22, 1800.

[454] CO 71/32. Letter from Andrew Cochrane Johnstone to The Duke of Portland. September 4, 1800

[455] CO 71/32. Correspondence between Andrew Cochrane Johnstone and The Duke of Portland. October 7, 1800 CO 71/33. Minutes of His Majesty's Council on October 3, 1800.

[456] CO 71/38. "A list of all convictions had …" by the Acting Register on December 31, 1803.

By December 1800, colonial governor Johnstone wrote to the House of Assembly describing the progress that had been made in the past year in the war with the "Runaways." The governor wrote:

> By the vigorous and unremitting exertions of the 9th West India Regiment a termination has been put to the runaway war, the camps are in one possession, the provision Grounds have been destroyed, four of the runaways Chiefs with a great part of their followers are in confinement, and from the numbers who daily surrender, we may venture to hope that within a very limited period there will not be perhaps a single runaway in the Woods.[457]

By the end of 1800, the colonial government felt very confident about its headway made against the maroons. It discussed the possibility of banishing all of the runaways, and not surrendering any of them to plantations, reasoning that it may be "presumed" that the self-emancipating Africans may have "contracted such habits" in their absence from enslavement which would "disqualify them from being ever again intrusted (sic) on the estates of their masters."[458]

In December 1800 Pharcelle was jailed due to his supposed "insolent" conduct and "highly suspicious" demeanor."[459] The records only reveal that Pharcelle had captured and turned maroons in for the crown. One can only speculate as to what actually ensued between Pharcelle and the colonial government. However, what is stated in the colonial records is that at one point Pharcelle was capturing maroons, and years later he was accused of "suspicious" behavior as "he so misbehaved whilst on service…"[460] This is a curious issue. Why did Pharcelle

[457] CO 71/33. Minutes read and approved at the House of Assembly Meeting on December 16, 1800.

[458] Ibid.

[459] CO 71/33. Minutes read and approved at the House of Assembly Meeting on December 16, 1800.

[460] CO 73/2. (An Act for banishing a sundry of runaways…) December 9, 1800.

agree to sign a treaty with the British colonial government only a few years after he displayed such uncompromising characteristics in the First Maroon War and in the 1791 conspiracy? Why did the colonial government after seven years of his service figure that he was no longer fit to be a guide for the colonial government? One can presume that the disposing of Pharcelle may have had a lot to do with the fact that the colonial government was receiving newly transported African recruits to fight the Africans in the woods, and by December of that year was confident that the use of the imported Africans had succeeded. This would mean that there was no longer any use for Pharcelle and his clan in the capturing of maroons. Pharcelle, just like the rest of the captured and surrendered maroons who were imprisoned in December of 1800, were all going to be banished from the island. Pharcelle being described as being "suspicious" and "insolent" may have been their justification for reneging on the treaty.

The colonial government now had the Chiefs Pharcelle, Liverpool, Grubois, Johnson and Dick confined to jail and ready to be banished from the island or executed. Provision grounds were destroyed, and many other Africans had been captured or either surrendered. From the colonial government's perspective, things seemed rather tranquil in Dominica. This left the West India Regiments in times of peace as virtual laborers for the colonial government. They were used in battle, when conflict and insurrections arose, but for a great amount of time the soldiers were used to do "tedious and monotonous garrison duties."[461] This was common throughout the West Indies, and Dominica was no different. After the colonial government expressed that they felt confident that they had control over the maroon situation, soldiers on the island were used to drain a swamp at Prince Ruperts on the northwest side of the island.[462] This expression of

[461] Buckley. *Slaves in Red Coats.* 107

[462] CO 71/34. A letter from Governor Cochrane to Lord Hobart on April 4, 1802.

confidence was premature, because the next decade and a half would prove to be the arguably one of the most tumultuous times between the African population and the planter class.

In 1800, the Second Battalion of the Sixty-eighth Regiment "were quartered at Prince Ruperts" to drain the swamp in the bay area, and suffered from "immense mortality" as a result of an "unhealthy situation" that the soldiers could not bear.[463] Prince Rupert's Head, according to a report by the Dominican colonial government was considered "as one of the most unhealthy spots in the West Indies." It had "always proved remarkably so to the British Troops stationed there, an endemic Fever from marsh exhalations generally prevailing more or less at all seasons, attended with great fatality."[464] One Governor stated that the area was "by no means proper for White Troops" and that "immediately" after his arrival he "garrison'd it with Blacks."[465] However, between 1800 and 1802, there were fifteen deaths among the Eighth and Ninth West India Regiments. Three or four of the deaths of the Eighth West India Regiment were white "non commissioned officers."[466] By April 1802, the Eighth West India Regiment was the garrison at Prince Rupert's Head engaging in the draining of the swamp, many of these individuals being African recruits.[467]

The Eighth West India Regiment was originally comprised of mostly enslaved creoles and was organized by Governor Johnstone out of the Loyal Dominican Rangers in 1795.

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[463] CO 71/34. A letter from Governor Cochrane to Lord Hobart on April 4, 1802.

[464] CO 71/34.Return of the number of deaths in the Black Corps stationed at Prince Ruperts Head in the island of Dominica, by C. Williamson (June 20, 1800 to March 20, 1802).

[465] CO 71/34. A letter from Governor Cochrane to Lord Hobart on April 4, 1802.

[466] CO 71/34.Return of the number of deaths in the Black Corps stationed at Prince Ruperts Head in the island of Dominica, by C. Williamson (June 20, 1800 to March 20, 1802).

[467] CO 71/34. A letter from Governor Cochrane to Lord Hobart on April 4, 1802.

However, by 1798 the colonial governor "persuaded the imperial government" to supplement the Eighth West India Regiment with a larger group of African recruits.[468] In April 1802, African recruits who were dissatisfied with the arduous labor and felt they were not being properly compensated, mutinied. These African soldiers seemed to have intentionally left out the creole soldiers from the plot. Governor Cochrane wrote of the mutineers that "It appears that the whole mutiny originated and was confined solely and entirely to the new Negroes, not one creole negro appears upon examination to have been implicated in the mutiny, and from the languages of the two classes being different, their purposes were concealed from the Creoles."[469]

The revolt comprised of upward of one hundred men and lasted 9-15 April. The Regiment had mutinied, murdered their officers, and several individuals attacked the Garrison and kept possession of the Cabrites having fired upon His Majesty's ship Magnificent at Anchor in Prince Ruperts Bay."[470] Shortly thereafter, martial law was declared. Some of the mutineers escaped into the woods to live amongst the maroons. According to Roger Buckley, it was common for deserters of the West India Regiments to escape to the maroons across the West Indies. One Hypolite, who deserted the Fourth West India Regiment and was found among the maroons in March 1814. Sometimes even whites were found amongst the maroons who deserted their duties.[471] The Africans involved in the mutiny fled to an African safe haven in the woods, as many had done in the past. Many continued to do in the nineteenth century. Some of the conspirators involved were Manby, Lively, Genus, Cuffy, and Congo Jack.[472]

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[468] Craton. *Testing the Chains.* 228

[469] CO 71/34. Letter from Governor Johnstone to Sir Frigge Lieutenant General on April 22, 1802.

[470] CO 71/34. Letter from Governor Johnstone to Lord Hobart. April 17, 1802

[471] Buckley. *Slaves in Red Coats.* 110

[472] CO 71/34. "At a General Court Martial held at Prince Ruperts Dominica…." April 26, 1802

## Conclusion

The African nation in the interior of Dominica had several intermittent battles with the British colonial government. Victories were taken on both sides. At times the maroon population increased significantly and other times the colonial government's excursions led to a decrease in maroon populations. In the 1790s that maroon population was growing and strengthening. However, because of the Haitian Revolution, the French Revolution, and the many African revolutions erupting throughout the Caribbean, the colonial government acted on their fears of the free Africans in the island's interior. Maroon Chief Pharcelle understood the dynamics of the political situation transpiring throughout the Atlantic world due to his connections to rebels in neighboring islands. He made a proposal to the colonial government after the outbreak of war between France and Britain in early 1793, offering his and his fellow maroons' service to the crown in defense of the island. This offer was considered, but initially ignored.

However, after the war between Britain and France had progressed, it was obvious that it was revolutionary France's plan to make allies of the Africans in the West Indies. Many black leaders throughout the Caribbean were approached by French Republicans and made agreements to fight alongside French revolutionary sympathizers against a common British enemy. Pharcelle was also approached. Africans in Saint-Domingue had forced the French government to abolish slavery in 1794 throughout the French world, and the French Republicans used this as a selling point to get Pharcelle on board. When it seemed he was going to join the French revolutionaries to conspire against the British, the British colonial government finally took Pharcelle up on his proposal. While Pharcelle and a very limited number of followers broke away from the *Negs Mawons* to fight for the British, the core of the maroons stayed loyal to their cause.

Many enslaved Africans continued to flee the plantations in the mid to late 1790s. The French revolutionaries attempted to get the maroon population on their side, but they demonstrated an unwillingness to collaborate with Republicans, likely due to distrust. The general maroon population proved themselves to be an uncompromising group, and the British planters knew this. The colonial government realized the only way to defeat the Africans was by recruiting other Africans off of the slave ships. At the turn of the century the colonial government pooled their resources to defeat the maroons in the interior who had been a problem for the plantocracy since 1760s. In 1802, the maroon population had decreased because of the success that resulted from the British sponsored Africans who were fighting the free and independent Africans sponsored by principle. However, the *Neg Mawon*, also known as the "Imperium in Imperio", remained an attractive refuge for those who lived in a world of repression and wanted to escape. The Africans of the Eighth West India Regiment who were employed to drain a swamp were fed up with work conditions and revolted. Some of these rebels fled to the diasporic African nation in the interior. This was the beginning of another rebuilding of the nation. This represented the burgeoning of another resilient comeback. As the next chapter will illustrate, the Africans, who demonstrated an attempt to "extirpate" the British from the island, and who had proven an unwillingness to compromise with French Republicans and their sympathizers, were very eager to work, trade, and conspire with enslaved Africans on plantations in a way that the wedge between the enslaved and the maroons had virtually disappeared.

# CHAPTER SIX: WE ARE ALL MAROONS: Maroon-Enslaved Alliances During the Second War

The year 1802 represented the beginning of another rebuilding for the *Negs Mawons* in the interior of Dominica. This nation of diasporic Africans had proven itself to be an uncompromising entity, with the military tenacity, cultural values, and political intelligence to survive in the midst of constant political, environmental, and social adversity. This chapter discusses the transatlantic events that led to the Second Maroon War and the subsequent conquering of the *Negs Mawons* by 1815. In doing so, it details how maroons and enslaved blacks developed intensified networks of communication. It argues that the wedge between the notions of "maroon" and "slave" virtually disappeared in the quest of the *Negs Mawons* to take over the entire island. In response, colonial Governor George Ainslie discovered that the only way to defeat the Africans was to heed to the principles of African cosmology.

## Before the Second Maroon War

As war between Britain and France emerged in 1793, the importation of enslaved Africans had dwindled significantly in Dominica. According to the *Transatlantic Slave Trade Database,* there were no imports of Africans from the continent in 1794-5. In 1796 only 610 captives were disembarked. These numbers picked up slightly in the following decade, prior to the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. This was presumably because of efforts of Europeans to secure as many enslaved persons as possible before the ban was put in place. These

numbers prior to abolition, however, paled in comparison to the amount of African imports into Dominica in the early 1770s or middle 1780s.[473]

However, the number of re-exports in the 1770s and 1780s was much higher than it was in the 1800s. The re-exports of Africans ranged from 50 to 80 percent in the 1770s and 80s.[474] As such, in a year where there were 7,000 Africans imported, it was possible that only 2,400 Africans would remain on the island. However, between 1803 and 1807 the re-exports only comprised of a very small portion of the limited imported Africans. In 1803, there were 1,043 Africans imported into Dominica with only 67 exported, amounting to a 6 percent re-export rate. In 1804 there were 1,386 Africans imported and only 8 were exported.[475] The number of re-exports in 1805 was only 16.7 percent.[476]

Put another way, as Dominica's enslaved population increased, the numbers of maroons did so as well. As stated previously, in 1800 the colonial government believed that it had subdued and captured the vast majority of the maroons. However, in 1804 it was estimated by the colonial government, based on planters' reports on census records, that there were 152 male and 58 female "Runaway" slaves in the woods.[477] This number was still relatively small, but would tremendously increase in the years to come.

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[473] David Eltis et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/search

[474] Carrington. *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of Slave Trade.* 196

[475] CO 71/38. "Account of Negroes Imported and Exported from 1788 to December 1804." December 27, 1804

[476] Carrington. *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of Slave Trade.* 193

[477] CO 71/38. "The most particular statement which can be obtained of the Population of the Colony of Dominica…" by Robert Metcalfe.

Concerned with the developments, the colonial government moved against the *Negs Mawons.* In April 1803, it sent three detachments across the island to kidnap maroons. The Ninth West India Regiment "discovered six or eight Huts which had been previously abandoned" that month. The Fourth West India Regiment was informed by one of its captives that there were 22 huts in the Heights above the "Batary Rivers." The colonial troops "fired upon" the huts, but the maroons responded with the tactics of guerilla warfare. They did not initially fight back, but dispersed as their huts were destroyed. The following day the maroons attacked the colonial troops while they were "in a deep Ravine." The sides of the ravine were too steep for the colonial troops to get a good footing to fight back. The lieutenant of the detachment was severely wounded from the maroon attack.[478]

The year 1806 was pivotal moment in the changing of events relating the relationship between the enslaved, planters, and maroons. In February of 1806 George Metcalfe wrote of, "several excursions…against the Runaway Negroes by three detachments from the 8th West India Regiment and five Parties from the inhabitants of the Parishes of St. Paul, St. Andrew, St. Patrick, St. David, and St. Joseph."[479] Metcalfe was disappointed about the mission by stating that the "expedition had not been very brilliant, having taken only four Negroes and killed one…"[480] Once again the colonial troops found and destroyed more camps and provision grounds.

[478] CO 71/35. Report of Detachment, by George Provost on April 19, 1803.

[479] CO 71/40. Letter from George Metcalfe to the Government House on February 16, 1806.

[480] Ibid.

## A Secret Network: *Neg Mawon* Expansion

On 10 September 1806, "a most dreadful hurricane" hit the island, wielding a great deal of damage to the colonial government. Buildings were destroyed, a large barrack at Prince Ruperts Head was obliterated, sea vessels were lost, sugar and coffee works ruined, and ground provisions wiped away.[481] An earthquake followed in the same month. As these two major events produced wide spread famine, many enslaved Africans also died from disease. Metcalfe noted that, "A many Negroes leave and of want, and others have contracted from it incurable diseases."[482]

Some of the enslaved escaped and opted to live free and independent, residing amongst the *Negs Mawons.* According to the 1814 Speaker of the House of Assembly, William Anderson, the maroons and enslaved Africans on plantations were in communication with one another for several years and that they bartered "salt provisions, clothes, arms, and ammunition" to the point that the Africans on the plantations almost "totally neglected the cultivation of their provision grounds on the estates."[483]

Africans throughout Dominica were visibly attracted to the *Negs Mawons.* Many wanted to become a part of it or contribute to the nation's success. The 1806 natural disasters of the island stimulated the creation of new maroon settlements. The colonial troops continued to be sent into the woods to conquer the growing maroon community. In February of 1808, there were

[481] CO 71/40. Letter from George Metcalfe to William Windsore on October 8, 1806.

[482] CO 71/41. Letter from George Metcalfe to Lord Castlereagh on June 17, 1807.

[483] CO 71/50. A deposition "Before the Honorable Archibald Gloster Chief Judge…" on October 12, 1814.

six more huts that were taken by the Black colonial troops.[484] In 1810 a manager on the Dubois Estate, "a free Man of Color" stated that,

> …Twelve of his Negroes returned in a body to the Woods to join the Runaway's (sic) alledging (sic) the Manager's Cruelty as their excuse but that some time afterwards they returned from the Woods Armed and dressed like Runaway's (sic) Threatening their Masters unless he discharged his Manager…[485]

By 1810, Dominica was the only British colony in which "The Kings Troops" were "employed in the pursuit of Runaway Negroes in the Woods."[486] Governor Edward Barnes was informed that a local militia was supposed to be used to capture runaways. The king's troops were used against the maroon communities of the 1790s in Jamaica and St. Vincent, because they were considered serious threats. Dominica, too, was considered a major threat to the planters that lived in the island. In 1811, the situation in Dominica was once again compared to the situations of Haiti, Jamaica, and St. Vincent. A letter to the Lord of Bathurst read:

> Bearing constantly in mind the occurrences which took place in Jamaica and St. Vincent some years ago, as well as the more dreadful events of St. Domingo. I considered it as Primary object of my duty to use every exertion to suppress the Marrons of this island, but in the course of time they should become as formidable as those of Jamaica were, or as the Caribs of St. Vincent or the Negroes generally in French St. Domingo. I…sent some parties of troops into the Woods with an intention to continue there until the service was effectually completed.[487]

This was a concern to colonial administrators. The threat of the Africans in the island was becoming more serious in 1811. In January of the aforesaid year Governor Edward Barnes stated

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[484] CO 71/43. "Extract of a Letter from the Representative Officers of the Ordinance of Dominica to the Principal Officers…." On February 20, 1808.

[485] CO 71/49. A deposition of "John Baptiste a free Man of Color and Manager of Mr. Dubois' Estate…" on June 21, 1814.

[486] CO 71/46. Letter from George Beckwith to Governor Barnes on September 5, 1810.

[487] CO 71/46. Letter to Lord Bathurst on February 5, 1811.

that the Forty-Sixth Regiment discovered another "large settlement of Twenty one huts."[488] Despite the fact that the troops, according to Governor Edward, "were almost daily discovering new settlements…" the colonial troops failed to take any prisoners.[489]

Dominica's maroons continued to have transatlantic implications. In 1811, Andre Rigaud, the proclaimed President of South Haiti, made contact with the Free People of Color in Dominica.[490] Born in Aux Cayes, Saint-Domingue, Rigaud was a Mulatto and a Republican soldier who had fought against the invading British and Spanish forces in Saint-Domingue in the 1790s. He rose high in the rankings of the military during the Haitian Revolution and represented the Mulattoes in the revolt. Rigaud was recognized as the ruler of the southern portion of Saint-Domingue after the British left the colony in 1798. Rigaud, and Toussaint L'ouverture, the black revolutionary leader who controlled the northern regions of Saint-Domingue, eventually went to war with one another. Napoleon considered Rigaud to be just as much of a threat to France as L'ouverture was. Napoleon eventually jailed Rigaud, but he later escaped back to an independent Haiti in an attempt to usurp power from the President Alexandre Petion in the South in 1810.[491]

Rigaud considered Petion weak perhaps due to the latter's policies of land redistribution in rural Haiti. In Petion's Haiti, where a great number of people in the country, who were born in Africa and used to African customs, the President redistributed land to the masses. This enabled

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[488] CO 71/46. Letter from Governor Barnes to the President and Board of Council on January 2, 1811.

[489] Ibid.

[490] Rebecca J Scott, and Jean Michel Hebrard. "Rosalie of the Polourd Nation: Freedom, Law, and Dignity in the Era of the Haitian Revolution, in *Biography and the Black Atlantic* by Lisa A. Lindsey and John Wood Sweet. 148-266. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

CO 71/46. Deposition of Gabriel Rocques on March 23, 1811.

[491] Avril Prosper. *From Glory to Disgrace: The Haitian Army, 1804-1994.* USA: Universal Publishers, 1999. 46

the masses to continue the agricultural practices they had once done in Africa, rather than being wage laborers working on sugar plantations, as was the policy implemented in the north. With the land that the African masses possessed they "developed a set of social and cultural practices intended to secure this land ownership over time and to guarantee every rural resident a measure of autonomy." One of the more known systems was the system of *lakou.* This was a very organized social system of people independent of the government. Laurent Dubois in *The Aftershocks of History* states that "The antithesis of *lakou*-based autonomy was salaried work, which represented a surrender to the demands of another individual. [492]

In 1810, Rigaud, who attempted to depose Alexandre Petion—an ally of African autonomous settlements, was now trying to capture the attention of the Africans in Dominica upon his return from France. In November 1810, Rigaud became the President of South Haiti.[493] In March 1811 he sought an alliance with a free "Man of Color," Joseph Ducray. According to Gabriel Rocques' deposition in the court records, Ducray "was in correspondence with Rigot (Rigaud) of St. Domingo and that he expected soon another Letter from him and that on the receipt of that letter the plot would be ripe."[494] According to Rocques this plot included the "run-away Negroes" who "were informed of the business and had agreed to come down and join, and set fire to the Town of Roseau…"[495] The deponent later goes on to state that "a great number of the respectable Planters in the secret…had engaged in the conspiracy and that there were fourteen hundred Negroes ready to take arms and that he expected the whole of the Negroes

[492] Laurent Dubois. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History.* New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012. 107

[493] Prosper. *From Glory to Disgrace*. 46

[494] CO 71/46. Deposition of Gabriel Rocques on March 23, 1811.

[495] Ibid.

would join." The objective was "to declare total emancipation and to make this island similar to St. Domingo."[496]

This is curious, given Rigaud's record on his relationship to the masses in Haiti. Rigaud seemed not only to be concerned with universal emancipation of the enslaved population, but he also seemed quite power hungry. These were characteristics that did not necessarily sit well with the *Negs Mawons* of Dominica. The Igbo intolerance of being ruled would perhaps have decidedly clashed with Rigaud's type of government, especially if one presumes that his disdain for Alexandre Petion was based on his policy towards the so-called African peasantry of Haiti. In addition, the maroons of Dominica have consistently demonstrated their lack of want or need for support from outside "mulattoes" in their quest for freedom. What is clear is that, if there were maroons that agreed to assist Rigaud in his plans, they did not get a chance to act as the plot was disclosed before the plans were brought into fruition. This also speaks volumes about the potential power and political clout the maroons of Dominica possessed in not only that island, but in the entire Caribbean. Furthermore, Rigaud also could have been aware of the monumental role that Haiti's maroons played in the Haitian Revolution.[497] Perhaps he viewed the *Negs Mawons* in a similar vein.

In the early months of 1811, it was reported that there were 400 maroons in the island, a number was up from the estimates of the previous decade and "far from being an exaggerated one."[498] For that year the census showed that there were 1,325 white people on the island, 2,988

[496] CO 71/46. Deposition of Gabriel Rocques on March 23, 1811.

[497] Dubois. *Avengers of the New World.* 54-5

[498] CO 71/46. Letter to The Earl of Laverport on February 5, 1811.

"Free People of Color", and 21,728 enslaved individuals. There is no telling at this point exactly what percentage of that 21,728 were engaging with the 400 maroons.

The year 1812 brought more change to the island. The visible divisions between the maroon population and the enslaved population were becoming more blended. Enslaved persons would often steal away to the woods for extended periods of time, and maroons were often seen on plantations. Their collective underground network of trade aided the enslaved with foodstuffs in their meager times, and the maroons received weapons and materials necessary for defense. *Negs Mawons* in 1812 were arguably more formidable than they had ever been, because of its support from among 20,000 enslaved persons. Obviously, there were those who did not support the maroon cause, either because of fear, or loyalties to masters. Nevertheless, one can presume that even those who did not project a maroon philosophy were maroons in the mind and spirit. The energy of the island's enslaved population had been completely influenced by the presence of the maroons. The enslaved persons who may have demonstrated loyalty to their masters and the plantation system, had become disillusioned with the colonial government and plantation system. Even they were looking towards the maroons for security, health, and refuge.

Also of importance, 75 percent of the 6,633 Africans, in other words (close to 5,000 persons) imported into Dominica on record between the years of 1800 and 1807 came from only two ports—Bonny and New Calabar. [499] As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, the overwhelming majority of Africans who were imported from Africa were retained in the island during that time. Bonny and New Calabar were dominated by the human trafficking of Igbo peoples and their Ibibio neighbors. The Igbo culture during this time pervaded the plantations of

[499] David Eltis et al., The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database: Voyages, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/search

Dominica in 1812. The disdain for being ruled was apparent throughout Dominica, and the maroons knew and possibly took advantage of this.

There were several estates from which enslaved Africans and those who escaped contributed to the rise in the maroon-plantation alliance. This included Canefield Estate, Hillsborough Estate, Belfast Estate, Woodford Hill Estate, Woodbridge Hill Estate and Castle Bruce. There were also the escaped slaves who were the legal property of Bruno Marceau, Joshua Powell, Pierre Courche and Victorie Roger.[500] Except for Castle Bruce, all of these were in the parish of Saint Andrew on the northeast side of island. Castle Bruce is located in the next parish to the south in Saint David's. Saint George's and Saint Patrick's were two other regions in which the enslaved population was active in the conspiracy.[501] Established maroon chiefs involved in this time period included Quashie, Elephant, Noel, Apollo, Louis Moco, Moco George, Diana, Macho, Sambo, and Jacko, who had been a maroon since the 1760s.[502]

In January 1812 there was another report indicating that "the number of runaway negroes [had] increased…"[503] John Laidlaw of Dominica also wrote that "In the beginning of 1812 a great majority of His Gang of Negroes belonging to Woodbridge Hill Estate retired into the woods for some weeks…and several never returned."[504] Furthermore, "upwards of sixty Negroes belonging to Castle Bruce behaved in the same manner and did not return to their duty until

[500] CO 71/49-51. Various documents.

[501] The National Archives of the UK; Kew, Surrey, England; Collection: *Office of Registry of Colonial Slaves and Slave Compensation Commission: Records*; Class: *T 71*; Piece Number: *336-354*

[502] Polly Pottullo. *Your Time is Done Now.* 152-5 and CO 71/49. "Proclamation" by Governor Ainslie on February 25, 1814.

[503] CO 71/27. Letter from James Stewart Westminster on January 11, 1812.

[504] CO 71/50. Letter from John Laidlaw to Governor Ainslie on June 20, 1814.

compelled by a Strong Armed Force…after several weeks absence."[505] According to the attorney of the proprietors of Castle Bruce James Clark Esquire, those that did not abscond from the plantation during those weeks "were in such a state of insubordination as to have refused to obey the managers orders and to have it in contemplation to join those already absent."[506] By July of that year it was estimated by colonial officials that the number of maroons had increased to "upward of eight hundred."[507] The numbers were daily increasing according to the colonial officials.

In 1814 many planters wrote to Archibald Bishop during the Second Maroon War to describe what their experiences were like on plantations prior to the 1813 arrival of Governor George Ainslie. Alexander Robinson was a planter of the parish of Saint David. He stated that "the Maroon Negroes from their frequent Communications with the Slaves upon the several Estates, had caused such a spirit of insubordination…"[508] The Deposition proceeds to state that "one of their Chief with a Gang of Freebooters had actually approached the Town within the distance of a Mile threatening the people whom they had plundered with Death…"[509]

A surgeon by the name of Dr. John Greenway stated that, since 1810 "the Negroes…forming an intercourse with the Maroon Negroes have frequently absented themselves some for years and afterwards returned to the Estate of their own accord." In many cases he claimed to have pardoned the petite maroons. Greenway also stated that there were other occasions when he would severely punish them. No matter what policy he used towards the

[505] CO 71/50. Letter from John Laidlaw to Governor Ainslie on June 20, 1814.

[506] CO 71/49. Letter from William Bruce to the Government House on July 10, 1812.

[507] Ibid.

[508] CO 71/49. Deposition of Alexander Robinson on June 7, 1814.

[509] Ibid.

Africans on the plantation, "they still preserved in their association with the maroons…"[510] For Greenway:

> …seeing a Neglect of Military Force being sent in pursuit of them for a length of time past availed themselves inattention to reduce them to a sense of their duty the desertion from a great many Estates increased and those who examined for the most part became very insubordinate and it appeared as if the Overseers were intimidated from enforcing their obedience…[511]

The domino effect of this rebellious spirit spread like wildfire. The maroon-enslaved alliance was becoming increasingly audacious. Whereas much of the open rebellion was being initiated in the east, Roseau, on the west side of the island experienced maroon activity. In January 1813 George Anderson, a planter in Roseau, reported that the cellar in his urban tavern "was broke open and robbed" of money and other goods by maroons in the middle of town. Armed with cutlasses, they were led by a Chief Elephant, who had actually escaped Anderson's plantation. This act of out-right boldness in the capital city put fear in many of the whites on the island. Immediately after Chief Elephant and his twenty-three followers descended on the town of Roseau that night, Governor Edwards declared martial law for a month until 16 February 1813.[512] The fact that the rebellion of the Africans was spreading to all parts of the island including the capital city, was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Chief Elephant was very well connected with the plantation rebels. One of the people in his camp was Veille Ebo, whose slave name was Marie Claire. Veille Ebo had lived in the woods since 1804 and was suspected of being an African spiritualist. Others included Joseph, Sans Souci (Carefree), Paynard, and Paul. Some of the plantation affiliates included Victor, from the

[510] CO 71/49. Deposition of Alexander Robinson on June 7, 1814.

[511] Ibid.

[512] CO 71/49. Letter from Governor Ainslie to the Secretary of State. January 26, 1814.

Girandel plantation, and Joe from the Cubbin estate.[513] All of these individuals were considered major threats to the British colonial order in the island.

## The Second Maroon War Begins

In the following month of March more Blacks continued to escape from the Hillsborough Estate and the Marceau plantation in Saint Andrew's. This included Charles from the latter, and John and Cuffy from the former.[514] The next month Major General Governor George Ainslie arrived on the island to take over the governorship of colonial Dominica. Ainslie, a man who had served as vice-governor of Grenada before taking the job in Dominica, was known for his rigorous governing. In the year prior he issued a proclamation in Grenada "directing all free persons of colour in the island to appear before him, and take the oath of allegiance under pain of being sent away." According to a report by the House of Commons, despite taking the "oath", one Jean Mitchell was taken by Ainslie and his troops. He was imprisoned, flogged, kept in a black hole, and treated as a slave. Even Lord Bathurst wrote Ainslie in "reprobation." However, while the Mitchell was still seeking recognition as a free man, Ainslie was given a new position as governor of Dominica in 1813.[515]

Shortly after his arrival on the island Ainslie announced the first proclamation on 10 May 1813:

> Whereas several Negroes have under different pretenses absented themselves from their masters' service and whereas if a free and unconditional pardon were

[513] CO 71/50. "An Account of Slaves tried by courts…" and Polly Pattullo. *Your Time is Done Now.,* 63

[514] Pattullo. *Your Time is Done Now.*29

[515] Thomas Curson Hansard. *The Parliamentary Debates from the Year 1803 to the Present Time.* London: T.C. Hansard., 597-8

> offered to such runaway slaves might return to their duty I do therefore by this my proclamation offer a free and unconditional pardon to all such runaways who return to their duty and deliver themselves up to the magistrates of this colony or surrender themselves up to Government House in the town of Roseau on or before the 4th day of June next, where their grievances will meet with every proper consideration. And I do further declare that all such runaways that shall be taken after the 4th day of June shall be treated with the utmost vigour of military execution, their places of refuge and harbours destroyed, their provision grounds laid waste and the punishment of death inflicted on those who are found in arms.[516]

This proclamation for the most part fell on deaf ears and the Africans continued with their disregard for the white man's laws. Just four days after the proclamation was announced, an enslaved person by the name of Guillaume "struck" his overseer, Thomas Carter, in the face with a cutlass, "giving him a cut across his nose…"[517] After 4 June many of the Africans continued to disregard the proclamation.

On 23 July there was a devastating hurricane that hit the island. Another massive storm struck on 25 August. Both of these destroyed provision grounds and caused great mortality.[518] Several maroons, about as many as two hundred, mostly women and children, surrendered themselves or were taken between the July hurricane and an October proclamation. In response, several historians such as Michael Craton and Lennox Honychurch have made the assertion that the storms of 1813 led to the demise of the maroons, because it devastated their provision grounds, exposed their hideouts, and violently destroyed their communities and livelihoods.[519]

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[516] CO 71/49. Dominica Proclamations by Governor Ainslie on May 10, 1813
Pattullo. *Your Time is Done Now.* 20

[517] Pattullo. *Your Time is Done Now*. 22

[518] CO 71/52. "General Return of the Slave Population of this Island, agreeable to the Census…." By James Cortes on August 9, 1814.

[519] Honychurch, *Negre Mawon.* 226
Craton, *Testing the Chains.* 232

These devastating storms absolutely had an effect on the maroons and many of the new maroons may have surrendered as a result. However, the assertion that the hurricane's devastation led to their demise—even more than it hurt the planters and their system of slavery—conveniently overlooks a critical aspect of Dominica's history. For example, the three hurricanes of 1787 did not destroy the maroons. In fact, as this dissertation has demonstrated, natural disasters also often led to an increase in maroon populations. Hurricanes generally emboldened the spirit and ties between African maroons and Africans on plantations. Coastal regions were more affected by storms and floods than the mountainous interior. With the three hundred and sixty-five rivers, coastal locations experienced mudslides and floods.

Hurricanes devastated plantations, often leaving enslaved persons without sufficient food. This included the 1780 "Great Hurricane," which along with the French occupation contributed to a larger and emboldened maroon population who participated in the First Maroon War. The hurricane and earthquake of 1806 produced so much famine on plantations among enslaved Africans. These 1806 catastrophes perhaps stimulated the greatest union between the maroons and the enslaved Africans in the history of Dominica, and produced the "insubordination" of the enslaved during the era that has been termed the Second Maroon War. The hurricane of July 1813 was no different. In 1814, Dominican attorney William Anderson specifically stated that:

> a very general intercourse & barter of Salt Provisions, Clothes, Arms, and Ammunition have been kept up by the Negroes on the Estates with them, for the Ground Provisions which they had cultivated in such large quantities in the Fertile Valleys of the interior.[520]

He further remarked that "Negroes had almost totally neglected the Cultivation of their Provision Grounds on the estates…(trusting evidently to any supply from the Maroons)" and that they had

[520] CO 71/50. "Deposition of William Anderson" on October 12, 1814.

"more particularly done so since the Hurricane of last year."[521] He is specifically speaking of the hurricane of 1813.

As such, Dominica's Black population continued to protest. In October 1813, Governor Ainslie introduced an extreme proclamation extending the date of pardon:

> Whereas detachments of His Majesty's Troops have been sent into the Woods and have discovered the tracks of the Runaway Camps and whereas I am desirous of affording the misguided slaves who have absented themselves from the employ of their owners on opportunity of returning to their duty before I proceed to extremities, I do by this my proclamation at Gov. House in the Town of Roseau on or before the 24 day of this Month of October and I do further declare the utmost rigour of Military execution shall be put in force against all those Runaway Slaves…[522]

By November, according to William Brenner, the Governor Ainslie started to make significant progress in his quest to conquer the maroons. While many maroons surrendered or were captured, "the principal and most bloody chiefs, vizt.,, Apollo, Noel, and Louis Moco, continued to hold out."[523] Many maroons and plantation Africans continued to resist and work together against the colonial government, which led Governor Ainslie to change his approach to the way he was going to defeat the Africans.

An example of this is Pierre from the Mt. Eolus Estate in Saint John's parish on the Northwest side of the island. In November 1813, Pierre was asked by plantation management to seek out several of the plantation's enslaved peoples who had absconded, and inform them that they would be pardoned if they returned. According to court records, however, Pierre returned to the plantation telling the authority that the escaped individuals refused to return. The court also

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[521] CO 71/50. "Deposition of William Anderson" on October 12, 1814.

[522] CO 71/49. Proclamation "By His Excellency Geo R. Ainslie Governor & Commander in Chief" on October 3, 1813.

[523] Pattullo. *Your Time is Done Now.* 32

claimed that he also encouraged them to go farther away because the colonial troops were going to hunt them down.[524] Pierre denied the claims that he had steered the others away from the plantation. Nevertheless, if the testimonies of his peers hold true, Pierre is the one who attempted to maintain the colonial chaos and disrupt the plantation system of slavery. He was later found guilty and sentenced to 100 lashes.[525]

Chief Elephant continued to resist and establish connections with the persons on the plantations. This included Victor from the Giraudel plantation, and Joe from the Cubbin estate. Victor supplied Sans Souci of Elephant's camp with "gunpowder, saltfish, and tobacco." Elephant's camp would melt down spoons to serve as bullets.[526] In addition to Elephant's active camp in the woods, there were the likes of Jenny who escaped enslavement in December because of a sore leg. She was initially given a pass to Roseau to have her leg cured, but on her way back to the plantation to have her pass renewed she was approached by a maroon who claimed he could have her leg cured. He took her into the woods where she remained for three months.[527]

In January 1814 Africans who escaped from the Hillsborough estate contributed greatly to the maroon population. On 5 January, approximately twenty of the enslaved Africans left the Hillsborough plantation to complain to Governor Ainslie about the flogging of one of the slaves to death by a plantation manager by the name of Mr. Venn. Ainslie immediately inquired and learned that Mr. Venn was "incapable of such an act" and that the slave who died had reportedly seen the doctor earlier in reference to a sickness. However, the group never returned to the

[524] Pattullo. *Your Time is Done Now.*, 59

[525] Ibid.

[526] Pattullo, *Your Time is Done Now*. 64

[527] Pattullo. *Your Time is Done Now.* 75

plantation. One Peter, also of Hillsborough, was sent to find the twenty escapees, but took the colonial authorities on a wild goose hunt, with no intentions of allowing them to know where the absconders had gone. When questioned he repeatedly answered, "Your time is done now."[528]

## They Don't Fear Death

Peter was later discovered to have been at the head of the conspirators on the Hillsborough plantation and had provided the recent escapees with provisions while they had been gone. He seemed to not have a fear of death whatsoever. Before being charged and sentenced to be death by hanging, Peter reportedly stated that, "nothing but his head would come in and his body left in the woods." This meant that the colonialist could kill his body but not his spirit.[529] On 15 January 1814 Peter was sentenced and hung. His head was cut off and put on a pole, a sentencing that Peter seemed to be at peace with.[530] Peter's last words may have struck a nerve with colonial authorities. The following day Ainslie declared Martial Law.[531]

February 1814, can be viewed as the beginning of a pivotal change in the Second Maroon War. In January, a Captain Hiriart attacked and burnt Elephant's camp.[532] Reports claim that they "had so repeatedly annoyed the runaways that Elephant declared that he would have his head and set fire to his father (sic) estate in revenge."[533] It was believed that Chief Elephant

[528] Pattullo. *Your Time Is Done Now.* 49

[529] Ibid.

[530] CO 71/50. "An Account of Slaves tried by courts martial …." Between May 10, 1813 and November 22, 1814.

[531] CO 71/49. Letter from Governor Ainslie to the Secretary of State on January 26, 1814.

[532] Pattullo. *Your Time Is Done Now.* 57

[533] CO 71/49. Deposition of James Alexander Labadie on June 16, 1814.

declared that he would "put his threat into execution" if the colonial troops did not strike first. On 7 February W. Gabriel Beauchamp, a manage from the Edenbro estate shot and killed Chief Elephant in a militia raid on his camp on the slopes of Morne Anglais.[534] Elephant was "hanged & his head stuck up in Roseau."[535]

Then 25 February 1814, Governor Ainslie declared once again that he would fully pardon all maroons who surrendered "themselves either to the Commissioners of Parishes, to their Masters or who appear at Government House Roseau before Monday the 21st day of March with the exception of the Chief of the Camp…" For those that were "still in the woods" rangers were given "orders to take no prisoners, but to put to death men, women and children."[536] Chiefs Jacko Noel, Macho, Apollo, Moco George, Sambo, and Diane in the Layou District had their camps destroyed on the same day as the declaration.[537] Two days later, the colonial governor implemented a strategy that would change the course of events in Dominica. He realized that simply killing the Africans would not deter them. The policy on runaways had been written in to "An Act for suppressing of Runaway Slaves and for the better Government of Slaves…" One clause stated that:

> …if any slave or slaves having been or that shall be on this island for the space of one year shall absent withdraw or run away from his her or their Owner, Renter, or Employer's Service at several times within the space of two years amounting in all to six months, all and every such slave or slaves shall be and is and are hereby adjudged Guilty of Felony and shall suffer death as a Felon or such other Punishment as the Justice from the Circumstances of the Case shall judge proper…[538]

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[534] Ibid., 153 and Pattullo, *Your Time Is Done Now.* 153

[535] CO 71/49. "Proclamation" by Governor Ainslie on February 25, 1814.

[536] CO 71/49. "Proclamation" by Governor Ainslie on February 25, 1814.

[537] CO 71/49. "Proclamation" by Governor Ainslie on February 25, 1814.

[538] CO 73/6. "An Act for suppressing of suppressing of Runaways.." August 17, 1773.

Death was the punishment for runaways. The punishment for the rebellious Africans had been banishment, lashes, or death with their heads "cut off and put on a pole" as an example to deter others from engaging in the same means of protest. However, Ainslie changed these policies, stating that he,

> ordered the bodies on some occasion to be taken from the Gibbet, after it had hung an hour, the head to be cut off & the body burned on the beach, because the Negroes of several especially the Ebos, Mandingos & [?] that after death unless the body is cut to pieces or burned they return to their own country…[539]

Ainslie stated that "this was done to stop suicide," which the Igbo were considered notorious for in the West Indies. This same tactic of mutilating the bodies was also done in nineteenth century Cuba to prevent entire plantations of Igbos from committing suicide.[540] The philosophical beliefs of Dominica's Igbo majority—that one's soul would transmigrate back to Igboland to be amongst friends and family after death, *as long as the body remained in-tact*, is what made the Igbo the most effective soldiers and resisters to enslavement. They were willing to live free or die trying. The sight of a head on a pike or a pole did not deter these Africans. The body was a sort of vehicle for the spirit, even in death. But when that was destroyed after death, the soul was also destroyed.[541] Charles, an enslaved individual who was charged with running away from Mr. Bourgeau's plantation for seventeen months, according to his testimony in late January 1814, claimed that Chief Jacko threatened to not only "kill him", but to "cut him to

[539] CO 71/50. Letter from Governor Ainslie on September 5, 1815

[540] Hall. *Africans in Colonial Louisiana.* 255

[541] T.J. Desch Obi. *Fighting for Honor: The African Martial Art Tradition in the Atlantic World.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008. 139

pieces" as a punishment.[542] Coupled with Peter's heroic words in the same month, Ainslie perhaps finally figured it out.

## Ainslie Orders Bodies Burned: Preventing a Metaphysical Return

In February 1814, he began to make examples of those who resisted and might be prone to "suicide missions." On15 January 1814 two Black conspirators, Jean Pierre and Peter, were the last to be punished by death *without* burning.[543] On 26 February, Ainslie implemented his tactic of burning the bodies of offenders. It was conducted until May to deter other Africans in the future from embarking on suicidal like battles against the colonial troops.

The burning of the African's bodies started with one Victor on 27 February, who belonged to Mr. Gerandel and was charged with "supplying the runaways with gunpowder, saltfish" and other foods. He was hanged, his head cut off and put on a pole, and his body separately burned. On 6 March one Joe was accused of "harbouring and supplying the runaways." He was given the same treatment as Victor. Also in March, escapees Hoster, Francois, and Adelaide all suffered the same.[544]

The burning of bodies by the colonial government continued into April, when three women from Bruno's Marceau's plantation in Saint Andrew's parish were executed. Also, there was Vielle Ebo. She had joined Elephant's camp as far back as 1804. Rebecca and Zabeth (Zabet) escaped Marceau's plantation. The latter joined Jacko's camp. All three of the women

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[542] Pottullo. *Your Time is Done Now.* 62

[543] CO 71/50. "An Account of Slaves tried by courts Martial and Court of Special Sessions…. 10th Day of May 1813, and the 22nd Day of November 1814."

[544] CO 71/50. "An Account of Slaves tried by Courts Martial and Court of Special Sessions…10th of May 1813, and 22nd Day of November 1814." On August 24, 1815.

were charged with being "taken in a camp." They were decapitated and their bodies burned. Vielle Ebo was also charged with practicing "witchcraft." As an Igbo "obeah" practitioner or being a *ndi obia,* she might have been very influential among Igbo who adhered to the principles of *odinani.* The woods and abundance of water in the interior of Dominica would have had much spiritual significance for these practitioners. The woods were where Igbo priest and priestesses went in search of the antidote to combat wickedness. Vielle Ebo's escape to the woods was perhaps in part for these spiritual reasons. Someone of her spiritual magnitude was a threat to the colonial establishment and was imperative that those of that ilk be burnt.[545]

In May the burning of the African revolutionaries continued. This included Michel and Quashie. One record shows that one Mills was also executed and burned with them, while the other states that he was only flogged. Quashie was charged with having social intercourse with the maroons of Apollo's camp.[546] On 7 June 1814, just over two weeks after the three month long series of burnings, one planter, John Merchant remarked:

> since the declaration of Martial Law and the subsequent measures of Governor Ainslie that they (the enslaved) are reduced to complete order and subjection and that he can now without any dread of their absconding themselves inflict the necessary punishments on any of them.[547]

In June, Balthazar Blanc, planter and a Commissioner in Saint Paul's Parish, stated that prior to Ainslie's declaration of martial law the "Negroes in the Woods were in such a state of insubordination that no manager or owner on any of the estates of the whole parish dared to

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[545] CO 71/50. "An Account of Slaves tried by Courts Martial and Court of Special Sessions…10th of May 1813, and 22nd Day of November 1814." On August 24, 1815.

[546] Ibid. ("An Account of Slaves tried by Courts Martial and Court of Special Session…10th of May 1813, and 22nd day of November" in CO 71/50 states that Mills was burnt after he was hanged, while the "Proceedings of the Court Martial…" in CO 71/50 states that he was "to be flogged".

[547] CO 71/49. Deposition of John Charrurier on June 7, 1814.

inflict the slightest punishment on the most daring offender." He believed that Ainslie's "vigorous measures" had "reduced there (sic) deluded people to obedience and a sense of their duty…"[548]

Many others supported Ainslie's measures, which demoralized those Africans whom maintained their deeply held indigenous cosmological beliefs. Without the assistance of many of the enslaved Africans from plantations, who had reportedly become "obedient," the maroons lost their plantation allies. The trade between the *Negs Mawons* and plantation Africans were mutually beneficial to both parties. However, the plantation Africans, many of whom initially engaged in this trade for survival purposes, were being deterred from pursuing their relations with the maroons. Also, whether or not the Africans on the plantations and in the woods were truly spiritually affected by Ainslie's "burning" punishments, Ainslie's justification of his actions demonstrate his heeding to what many believed were the African philosophical principles.

The maroons were also greatly affected by Governor Ainslie's other strategy that was simultaneously being carried out in the woods to complement the burning strategy. Governor Ainslie in a letter to the "branches of Legislature on March 2, 1814 wrote:

> The operations carried on against the Maroons, since Martial Law was proclaimed have been successful-fourteen settlements, or camps, burnt, the provisions grounds, which at one place alone, presented to the eye an extent of four miles of the finest plants, given up to the public and, or entirely destroyed, the alternative alone remaining to the runaway, of perishing from Hunger in the woods, or taking advantage of my proclamation to give themselves up—already above 50 of these misguided wretches have returned to their masters and a considerable number have paid the forfeit of their lives exclusive of those who perished from want, which must have been great, when we reflect upon the large amount of men,

[548] CO 71/49. Deposition of Balthazar Blanc on June 19, 1814.

> women, and children deprived of every means subsistence except the precarious supply of wild vegetables.[549]

Many of the maroons who may not have believed in the transmigration of the soul also returned themselves to their enslavers instead of facing starvation. On the other hand, "a considerable number" perished because of their staunch unwillingness to return to slavery. The uprooting of miles worth of maroon provisions in conjunction with the burning the Africans bodies, placed those on plantations and in the woods in a difficult situation. Many of the Africans in the woods certainly would have heard about Ainslie's policy to burn bodies after death, which may have been the reason why some returned to the plantations. However, the destruction of their crops may have been just as compelling. These actions changed the direction of the war. Henceforth, the *Negs Mawons* would never be the same.

## The Final Months of War

Maroon chiefs under martial law were being eliminated one by one, beginning in April with the assassination of an Ibibio chief, Moco George. On 22 May, Mills, Quashie, and Beauty, the latter who was one of Chief Apollo's wives, were plantation Africans who were charged with being in correspondence with the maroons.[550] Their testimonies determined that Apollo was well connected to various plantations. The pursuit of Apollo became one of the main priorities for the colonial government during that final stretch. However, in the process of searching for Apollo, Chief Jacko's camp located on the ridge of the Layou River was raided in July. Jacko had been

[549] CO 71/49. "Extract of an Address from His Excellency Governor Ainslie to the branches of the Legislature of Dominica. March 2, 1814.

[550] Pottullo. *Your Time is Done Now.* 90-94

in the woods for forty-six years. He was shot in the head "at his Grand Camp" after he killed two rangers and wounded a third.[551]

Between June and July, forty-two maroons were taken from their forests homes. Many remained incarcerated in jail for an extensive period of time while others were pardoned and re-enslaved. Belinda, one of Apollo's other wives, was one of the forty-two maroons who was captured and jailed in July.[552] With the capturing of two of Apollo's wives the colonial government believed they were closing in on the chief. In August Ainslie wrote, "…I trust that the capture of the Chief Apollo an event at no great distance, who only escaped by a wonderful exertion of strength lately, when his wife and others were taken…"[553]

In August there were only three known maroon chiefs that remained free in the woods—Louis Moco, Chief Noel, and Chief Apollo. By the end of the year Louis Moco, an Ibibio chief, was killed. His camp was raided earlier that year in March, and had been on the run. Apollo surrendered to authorities before the end of the year. He became a guide to hunt maroons around the same time Ainslie was removed from the island for what the British Parliament considered to be excessive crimes against the maroons.

On 9 December 1814 Chief Noel was the last known chief to be killed near his former camp near the heights of Layou after he was surrounded and pulled out his cutlass in an attempt to attack. According to William Brenner, he was considered the "most bloody" chief.[554]

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[551] Pattullo. *Your Time Is Done Now.* 152-3

[552] CO 71/49. "List of Runaways committed to Goal from 14th June to 31st of July 1814."

[553] CO 71/49. Letter from Governor Ainslie to Earl Bathurst on August 4, 1814.

[554] Pottullo. *Your Time is Done Now.,* 93,154

## Conclusion

By the end of 1814, the colonial government finally accomplished what they had set out to do since 1763, and that was rid the island of the *Negs Mawons*. Described as an "Imperium in Imperio," this maroon nation had become a serious threat for the colonial government. Plantations, especially those in the northeastern parish of Saint Andrew, were crucial for providing the maroons with military intelligence and tools for self-defense. Though colonial authorities estimated that the maroon population was around 800 or so, these estimates did not take into consideration the large numbers of Africans who were working to support the maroons from various plantations in an island in which the slave population amounted to more than 20,000.[555]

Between May of 1813 and November of 1814, there had been 678 maroons either captured or killed, many of who "had been from 10 to 35 years in the woods."[556] It was estimated that there were probably 100 maroons who "surrendered to their masters" without being captured by the colonial authorities. "These were not tallied."[557] According to records, 615 of the maroons were returned to plantations.[558] A relatively small portion was actually killed during the Second Maroon War. Though the official report of "Returns of Maroons, Executed…" states that there were a total of nine Africans hanged and 12 killed in action, the records indicate there were

[555] CO 71/52. "General Return of the Slave Population of this island, agreeable to the Census taken by the Commissions under the Census Act for the following Years."

[556] CO 71/50. "Returns of Maroons, Executed, killed in the woods, and pardoned by Governor since his first Proclamation in May 1813 until he left the colony in November 22, 1814."

[557] CO 71/49. "Out of Maroons killed & Pardoned since the commencement of the operations against them exerted." October 18, 1814.

[558] CO 71/50. "Returns of Maroons, Executed……in May 1813 until he left the colony in November 22, 1814."

actually more than that. The colonial government, however, was careful to prevent the suicide and suicide missions of the maroons in the island.

There was speculation coming from London that the measures taken against the maroons were a simple ploy to capture Africans at a time when the trans-Atlantic slave trade had been recently abolished, and at a time when the enslaved population of Dominica was decreasing year after year. From 1807 to 1813 there was a decrease in enslaved Africans in Dominica. The losses of enslaved Africans only increased, however, after the arrival of Governor Ainslie. In 1813 the enslaved population decreased by eight. In the following year it decreased by 401, and then in 1815 decreased by 1,566, and in 1816 by 505.[559]

Governor Ainslie was accused by a "Law Officer of the Crown of distinguished eminence in his profession" in the House of Commons that he "had reduced free Men to slavery, and deprived nearly seven hundred Negroes of their freedom." It was suggested that this "War against these people was nothing more than a pretext, for recruiting the slave gangs, since they could no longer be supplied by importation."[560]

Many planters came to Governor Ainslie's defense after his removal from the governorship. They claimed that his actions were justified in that the maroons and enslaved all over the island had conspired to overthrow the British colonial government and turn the island into a Haiti. The maroons of Dominica exhibited signs of taking over the entire island and creating a free nation for Africans. They had attempted to extirpate their enemies from the island for decades, but a long line of British governors failed to conquer them. Prior to Ainslie, they attempted to deal with the maroons as they would any other foreign enemy. However, it is safe to

[559] CO 71/52. "General Returns of the Slave Population of this island…" January 1816.

[560] CO 71/50. Letter from President Archibald Gloster to Secretary of State Earl Bathurst on August 16, 1815.

say that this nation was different than many of the foreign nations that British troops had dealt with up to that point.

These Africans, many of who were African born, brought with them their own cosmological and political belief systems from the continent. Many of them, especially in the years leading up to abolition of the transatlantic slave came from Igboland. As mentioned, they were notorious throughout the Americas for committing suicide as a way to resist enslavement. These "flying Africans" had the ability to transmigrate back to their homeland in Africa. These were the characteristics of the soldiers that Ainslie faced in the early nineteenth century. They were soldiers who had no fear of death. The records alluded that they preferred suicide to capture, and leapt off of precipices rather than being re-enslaved by the colonial troops.

Ainslie acknowledged that the Igbo and Mandingo believed in the transmigration back to the African continent after death. However, he learned that according to their beliefs that the souls of an individual would not and cannot survive if the body of the individual was destroyed. Whether one believes in the philosophies that the Igbo and other Africans lived by, or even whether one believes that the Africans themselves believed this, Ainslie appears to have recognized the value of heeding to what he perceived as African cosmology. The revolutionary movement of Africans on the island, who could not be totally understood if one divides the plantation Africans from the Africans in the woods, demonstrated that their spirituality and/or their cosmological belief systems were an integral part of their politics and their struggle for freedom. Ainslie demonstrated that it was also a critical part in quelling their movement. This was a reality that was understood then, and it is a reality that should be understood now.

# CONCLUSION

Dominica, from 1763 to the early nineteenth century, was in a unique situation. War was virtually perennial between the French and the British during the latter eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The island of Dominica, being a British island *de jure*, surrounded by French controlled islands disposed it to conflict. In addition to the island being surrounded by French, the island itself, like the other Ceded Islands, retained a large French inhabitant population. These ingredients alone made the Dominican predicament a recipe for disaster. However, in addition to the above mentioned circumstances, not only were the French and British in perpetual conflict with one another, but many of the Africans they enslaved were also in a perpetual state of resistance.

Today historians will implicitly discuss the role that Africans played in compromise. The compromising narrative will illustrate that the Africans signed treaties with European states to capture or quell the rebellion of other Africans, as in the case of the Jamaican maroons. The compromising narrative will demonstrate that Africans were led or inspired to fight alongside French revolutionaries during the French Revolution, as in the case of the enslaved Africans in Grenada's Fédon Rebellion. These narratives will also show that Africans in the Americas possessed an attraction to Western modernity, as in the case of "leaders" of the Haitian Revolution. These rather trite narratives do not fit the lesser known *Neg Mawon* nation.

Dominica's *Negs Mawons* ideology was generally an uncompromising pan-African one. They fought against their British enemies intermittently for fifty years. Their nation comprised of a combination of African imported captives, maritime maroons, and banished revolutionaries from neighboring islands. Many of the leaders' names indicated an African origin. They were described by contemporaries as having an abundance of provision grounds, huts, and protective

compounds enclosed with booby traps in impregnable locations in the interior of the island. They exhibited an uncompromising fervor for freedom that was not matched by many. By the late 1770s the *Negs Mawons* had become so formidable that the French occupying government armed them to help defend the island from their British enemies. However, the *Negs Mawons* demonstrated then, and for the remainder of their existence, that their commitment was a pan-African cause. Their commitment was to themselves, and the enslaved Africans on plantations.

In the mid-1780s, after the French government fled, the maroons fought relentlessly to rid the island of the British in what has been termed the First Maroon War. They were led by maroons including Balla, Pharcelle, Congo Ray, Jacko, Pangloss, Grubois, and Mubaya. For the maroons, the British were the face of the dominating planter class, but all planters who adhered to the principles of the enslavement of Africans, were the enemies to these maroons. French and British planters, alike, fell victim to the *Negs Mawons.* In 1786, however, the maroons were quieted, but not defeated by the British colonial government.

In the late 1780s, a combination of discussions of British "Amelioration" coupled with the outbreak of the French Revolution created an atmosphere that facilitated the revolutionary movement of the *Negs Mawons.* The uncompromising cause remained consistent. Pharcelle and Pangloss were among chiefs that survived the First Maroon War. They continued to communicate with the enslaved Africans on plantations. They wanted to help the enslaved Africans in their struggle for freedom in January 1791. However, history indicates that the general maroon population did not want to integrate with any other non-African based movements. In January 1791, Pharcelle and Pangloss demonstrated that they yearned to assist in freeing the enslaved Africans on the plantations of the windward side of the island by murdering all of the whites. Once the movement began to mix with the French revolutionary movement of

the Mulatto class, the maroons opted out. There is also the case of Victor Hughes, another French Revolutionary mulatto who took it upon himself to spread the emancipation and French Revolutionary ideals to the West Indies during the war between France and Britain. He too, received no response from maroons when he requested assistance in his war efforts in May 1795.

There was also President Andre Rigaud of South Haiti who attempted to create an ally out of the *Negs Mawons* in 1811. As a critic of Haitian autonomous *lakou* communities, which were essentially maroon communities within the modern state, Rigaud reached out to the "Free People of Color" population to assist them in their takeover of Dominica. The goal, like that of the *Negs Mawons*, was "total emancipation." Though the sources indicate that the maroons agreed to assist in the "St. Domingo" type of takeover of Dominica, once again, what seemed to be a unified plot was never brought into fruition. The plot was discovered by colonial officials in advance.

On the other hand, the *Negs Mawons* demonstrated action when it came to conspiring and fighting alongside their African brethren on plantations. The *Neg Mawon* nation and the plantation Africans established an elaborate trading network. The network benefited them both. Through this maroon-plantation African alliance, they took action in fighting the British slave establishment. Though the revolution was eventually quelled, many of the Africans exemplified commitment to the cause until death.

All of the maroons, however, were not always in complete unison with one another. Chief Pharcelle, who had exemplified an unwavering stance against slavery in his earlier years as a leader, altered his position after the Haitian Revolution and the outbreak of war between Britain in France. One thing that this work attempted to illustrate was the chronological order of events in which Pharcelle's evident decisions were based on. Whereas past histories of

Dominica's maroons have painted Pharcelle as a "double agent" or a man "full of contradictions", this history aligned his decisions with the geo-political circumstances transpiring at the time. Pharcelle approached the British colonial government of Dominica to assist them in defense of the island when war broke out between France and Britain in February 1793. Pharcelle certainly knew of the uprising of the Africans in Saint-Domingue, and recognized Britain's vulnerable state. However, Dominica's colonial government did not respond to Pharcelle. Nevertheless, after France recognized the abolition of slavery at the National Convention in February 1794, and later reached out to Pharcelle for an alliance to fight slavery, the maroon chief evidently shifted his affiliation to the French Republic. When Dominica's colonial government discovered that Pharcelle was corresponding with French Republicans they quickly derailed that communication by finally accepting Pharcelle's offer from the year before.

Pharcelle's treaty only recognized the freedom of Pharcelle, his two wives, and twelve other followers. Pharcelle was used to assist in the defense of Dominica from internal and external threats. He assisted in the capturing of maroons for years. However, after the assembling of the West India Regiment, and their successes against slave resistance in Dominica and throughout the West Indies, Pharcelle was accused of "insolence" and later jailed. He was later banished from the island.

Nevertheless, the *Neg Mawon* nation's core values were rooted in divergent African diasporic culture. It was not the so-called Age of Revolution that guided these Africans in their quest for freedom. This African nation within a nation brought with them their own philosophies, which navigated them through their wars with the enslavers. Environment was one of the critical aspects that influenced the Africans in a physical and metaphysical way. The physical way in which environment influenced the maroons was in the way natural disasters seemed to have

strengthened their movement. The Great Hurricane of 1780, the three hurricanes of 1787, the hurricane and earthquake of 1806, and the hurricane and massive storm of 1813, all contributed to a rise in maroonage. Dominica's mountainous terrain and large rainforest also made the interior difficult to penetrate.

The metaphysical aspects of the environment were also very significant for the Africans. The abundance of rivers had its significance for various African ethnics, including the Bakongo and the Igbo. What is known as the *kalunga* for the Bakongo is where the ancestors rest. It is these ancestors that perhaps assisted maroons including Congo Ray and Zombie in their wars against the Europeans. These forests were where Igbo priests and priestesses could go in search of the antidote to fight evil. Maroons such as Vielle Ebo, who was an Igbo spiritualists fled the plantation to join the *Neg Mawon* nation in the years leading up to the Second Maroon War.

Whether the colonial officials believed in the African philosophies or spiritual systems, it was apparent that they had to acknowledge them. During the First Maroon War, the colonial officials acknowledged that Chief Balla, as an obeah practitioner, and his "obeah apparatus" were essential to galvanizing the troops during warfare. The colonial officials also had to adhere to the idea of the transmigrating African—the one who takes flight by leaping off of a precipice rather than be captured. At the end of the First Maroons War there were several who took flight. After the insurrection of 1791, Pangloss and his entire camp who escaped capture took flight. The colonial officials believed that the African born Muslim Mohamed, Polinaire's comrade, would also take flight and bring his captors with him. The colonial officials were sure to notify the colonial troops about the possibilities.

The "Suppression of Runaways Slaves" Act, which dates back to the early 1770s, was showing itself to be useless. The stipulations in the Act simply punished the Africans with death

for absconding plantations for extended periods of time. These laws evidently did not affect the *Neg Mawon* nation. These laws did not affect the newly imported enslaved Africans who were constantly joining the African nation in Dominica either. Many these people were Igbo, who were notorious for suicide throughout the Americas. There were the likes of Balla in the 1786 and Peter in 1814, who both asserted that they did not fear death before their executions, and that they would live forever.

It was not until Governor George Ainslie in 1814 acknowledged that particularly the Mandingo, and the Igbo, who comprised of the largest ethnic group in Dominica, were prone to suicide. He believed that the only way to defeat them in war was by making examples of those who believed in transmigration of the soul. Ainslie burned the bodies of ten African revolutionaries between February and May of 1814. The mutilation of the body prevented an African return. This was a strategy that was applied in other parts of the Americas as well. And after Ainslie engaged in the burning, coupled with the destroying of provisions grounds, the colonial government for the first time was able to achieve the outcome they desired against the *Neg Mawon* nation.

The burning of the bodies was absolutely critical to the British colonial government's victory in Dominica in the final maroon war. The maroon community would never be the same after that. However, Africans throughout the world continued to resist the encroaching presence of Babylon. Dominica was the location where illegally imported Africans from French islands would make their escape in 1819. One thing the British and the French were able to agree on was that they did not want their institution of slavery to be subverted. Despite that fact that the British

rendered the transatlantic slave trade illegal, they sent free Africans back to the respective French islands from where they escaped enslavement.[561]

Also, in the post-*Neg Mawon* years, Dominica experienced much famine as a result of natural disasters.[562] The planters demonstrated that they could not take care of the enslaved peoples. Many of Dominica's enslaved peoples were sold to more prosperous and developing islands throughout the West Indies. Trinidad and Demerara received the vast majority of those. Between 1808 and 1821 there were 2,975 enslaved individuals exported from Dominica. Of this number 1,177 (39 percent) disembarked in Demerara.[563] Perhaps some of these Dominicans influenced the great slave revolt in Demerara in 1823, which has been argued by scholars including Gelien Andrews, helped push the legal abolition of slavery in the British West Indies.[564]

One of the reasons that it is important to distinguish between the legal abolition of slavery *de jure,* and the abolition of slavery *de facto* is because the *Negs Mawons* and others throughout the slave world had in fact abolished slavery on their own volition. They created truly free spaces for themselves and lived full lives despite adversity, and without stipulations. Studying the *Negs Mawons* and other maroon communities is very important because it brings to the forefront the overlooked and invalidated people. By their very nature they did not seek validation or recognition by what they believed to be an evil society. Most of the time history is examined by solely acknowledging the *de jure* dates, which tend to paint a picture of moral

[561] CO 71/57. Letter to the Earl Bathurst KG, on April 25, 1820.

[562] CO 71/56. Letter from James' Place in London to The Earl Bathurst, on October 7, 1819.

[563] CO 71/58. "A Return of the Number of Slaves Exported since 1st January 1808…" on September 30, 1821.

[564] Gelien Andrews. *Caribbean Slave Revolts and British Abolition Movements.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006. 27

progress in the modern world. As Europeans began to recognize the so-called freedom of people of Africans descent in the west, the same forces started enslave and colonize the African people on the continent. If one studying history solely examines the abolition dates to determine a societies moral progress, they absolutely miss the point. By highlighting resistance by Africans since the beginning of enslavement and the subsequent establishment of these free societies known as maroon communities gives the African people agency in their own abolition movements.

The *Negs Mawons* were not concerned with gaining a European alliance. They proved to be concerned with the abolition of slavery for their African brethren. This subterranean narrative of people of African descent establishing surreptitious networks with those who are in similar predicaments is likely to be the case throughout the world. However, these stories are not always told in public spaces. Despite that fact that the *Negs Mawons* were quelled and Dominica remained a British colony until 1978, the people maintained an independent communal society. The Babylonian British government even attempted to persecute, with the "Unlawful Societies and Associations Act" those in the mid-1970s who wore "dread locks" and associated themselves with Rastafarians. Even the colonial government understood that the local police of Dominica maintained what the reports called a "hush, hush" attitude to avoid the incrimination their fellow Dominicans of African descent.[565]

Despite the fact that Dominica remained a British colony until the late 1970s, and the official language is English, the culture of resistance is evident in the French Creole language spoken by the people there until this day. The stories of the *Negs Mawons* have also been passed down from generation to generation through oral histories in private settings. However, it has not

[565] "Hansard of a Meeting (Emergency) of the House of Assembly" on December 6, 1974 in National Archives Documentation Centre First Floor in Roseau, Dominica.

been until more recent times that the *Negs Mawons* have received considerable public attention commemorating the 200 years since the end of the Second Maroon War in 2014. In very recent years a statue of the maroon Jacko was erected in the middle of Roseau. There was the first annual maroon festival in 2014. Also, there was the publication of two books by Lennox Honychurch and Polly Pattullo. Lastly, there was Polly Pattullo's 2015 play re-enacting the trials of the maroons during the Second Maroon War.

In closing, this story of heroic Africans, who, by happenstance, wound up in the interior lands of Dominica, proved themselves to be independent, principled, and steadfast in their cause. The uncompromising maroon community outlived their Jamaican and St. Vincent counterparts, who were both quelled by 1797, by almost 20 years. Their maroon wars were waged outside of the timespan of the French Revolutionary emancipation decade of the 1790s, when many of the African peoples in the neighboring islands were in a state of revolt. Their cause was total emancipation of African people in Dominica, and they proved that they did not desire any outside assistance in this cause. Their worldviews were African. On the continent many had proven themselves to be anti-state, and in Dominica they were anti-slavery. Freedom was the ultimate goal. The *Negs Mawons* were willing to do whatever was necessary to maintain that freedom.

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