Enemy and Ally: Slave Participation
in the Anglo-Spanish Contest for the Southeast

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In the summer of 1688 Major William Dunlop entered St. Augustine, the provincial capital of Spanish Florida and Britain's imperial rival, on what he thought would be a simple diplomatic mission. Dunlop's mission was to demand financial compensation for the property destroyed by the Spanish during the razing of Edisto Island and Stuart-Town in 1686, as well as the return of property stolen during those raids, namely eleven slaves belonging to the former Governor of South Carolina, Joseph Morton. Upon his arrival in Saint Augustine, Major Dunlop was faced with a situation that awakened the deepest fears of the Carolina colony. The Spanish did indeed have eleven former slaves from the Carolina colony in their midst, but not the captured chattel of Morton; rather eleven free-willed black individuals who chose to abandon the English colony in order to join the enemy of the English in Spanish Florida. The small group of eleven slaves: eight men, two women and a three year old child, had been part of a larger exodus of slaves following the turmoil caused by the Spanish invasion of 1686 (Dunlop 1-3). However, unlike the other runaways, this group made a determined effort to reach England's enemy. The ten adults with the child banded together, appropriated a craft, and traversed nearly three hundred miles of creeks, swamps, and rivers, while avoiding a series of manned lookout posts installed by Dunlop.

When they reached St. Augustine in October 1687, the fugitive slaves shocked the Governor of Florida Don Diego de Quiraga y Lasada

by requesting the aid and protection of the Spanish Crown in order to be baptized in the "True Faith" (Olsen 64).[1] While Quiraga waited for instructions from the Crown on how to handle the unexpected request, he saw to it that the slaves received instruction in Catholicism, were baptized, legally married and integrated into the Spanish post. When Dunlop arrived the following summer he was astounded to have his demand for the return of the fugitives refused. The governor reported to the crown that he had not returned the slaves because it did not appear "to be the proper thing to return them after becoming Christians" since they would not have the benefit of the Catholic religion in South Carolina; the governor had come to terms with the English for the purchase of the slaves (Brooks 145).[2] The political actions of the fugitive Carolinian slaves were not lost on the Spanish Crown, which directed the Governor to free the slaves in 1693 so that other slaves might follow their example (Brooks 145-47).

The slaves who sought asylum in St. Augustine in 1687, therefore, provide one perspective on the agency of enslaved Africans in inter-colonial conflict. The fugitives' ability to use the political and religious customs of the Spanish in order to garner their support and ultimately gain freedom was an extraordinary feat that transformed the role of enslaved Africans from that of English chattel to active participants in the international competition for dominance in the New World. Both the English and Spanish recognized that slave allegiance could be a powerful and threatening tool in the international contest for the southeast and took actions to manipulate the slave population to their own advantage. The English recognized the threat of a rebellious slave population and sought to limit slave autonomy while continuing to exploit them for economic and, when needed, military advantage. For the Spanish, Quiraga's recognition of the escaped slaves' rights set a new precedent in imperial politics. The Spanish adopted policies to encourage slaves to abandon the English colonies, hoping to attract loyal allies while striking a crippling blow to its northern enemy. In the midst of the European struggle for dominance, the enslaved population of Carolina demonstrated that they were not shackled to the English imperial machine, but could, in a limited manner, chose to be an enemy or ally to the English cause.

Few firsthand accounts from slaves exist from the late seventeenth

and early eighteenth centuries.   Modern historians must search the archives of the English and Spanish authorities with whom they shared the colonial experience in order to give a voice to the African experience. Spanish records contain many references to the enslaved but historians tend to write on the African experience in America from an Anglo-centric point of view, leaving the Spanish records largely untouched. Despite the extent of the Spanish experience with slaves, current historiography has largely ignored the Spanish records and with them a major resource for colonial study. With the absence of primary sources for enslaved Africans and the neglect of Spanish sources, the lives of the slave population in the colonial Southeast remains largely obscured from the modern reader.

In the 1970's the study of the African American experience was infused with new life as revisionists such as John W. Blessingame, Eugene D. Genovese and Herbert G. Gutman rewrote our understanding of the slave experience in America by focusing on slavery in the Antebellum south and later decades.[3] Peter Wood's *Black Majority* (1974) was one of the first works to retrieve the African experience from the footnotes and margins of white colonial history to reveal a people who were not passive bystanders in a world made by whites, but were active in the creation of that world.[4] Twenty five years after Wood, Jane Landers bridged the chasm between the English and Spanish histories of the colonial borderlands in her work, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (1999), by being one of the first historians to work extensively with the long neglected Spanish records.[5]

The historiographical focus that began with the revisionists of the 1970's has continued to examine the microcosm of enslaved communities and reveal the myriad ways in which slaves interacted and exercised autonomy within those communities.[6] One area that has not received proper scrutiny is the ways in which slaves utilized the autonomy enjoyed in the colonial period to participate directly in imperial politics.[7]

In the fledgling Carolina colony, enslaved Africans found themselves embroiled in imperial and military conflicts between forces much larger than themselves. Although the colony was located in what one colonist labeled the "very chaps of the Spaniard" (qtd. in Crane 3), the Spanish were not the only danger the colony encountered. Numerous Native

American tribes also vied for a place on the turbulent frontier beside the English and Spanish. Spanish records show that the entire Guale, Wallie and San Jorge regions[8] were devastated in the years prior to the establishment of Charles-Towne by Native American tribes from the north. The Westoe, "a rangeing sort of people" (Crane 12) settled on the Savannah River, acquired European arms through trade with the English in Virginia and terrorized the tribes of the region with its new found power.[9] The Yamasee in the South, supplied with Spanish arms, contained the Westoe north of the St. John River while the powerful Cherokee, Creeks, Chickasaw and Choctaw nations controlled the regions to the west. The area between the Virginians and the Spanish saw mass migrations of smaller tribes as they were pushed out of their lands. In the face of such overwhelming incursions and the chronic shortage of dependable troops, the Spanish had withdrawn south to the protection of St. Augustine, leaving a wide zone free of Spanish control which the English in turn occupied. The arrival of English settlers on the Ashley River added further turmoil and animosity. Many Native American tribes abandoned the Spanish, who had failed to protect them, and sought alliances with the English instead (Crane 22-33).

Facing a constant threat of attack from the Spanish and their Indian allies, English colonists found that African slaves could often become valuable and trustworthy allies. The case of planter and Landgrave Sir John Yeaman provides a good example of such Anglo-African allegiance. In June 1672, with the threat of a sizable Spanish invasion, all the colonists were ordered by the provincial government to the fortification of Charles-Towne or other defensible positions on the frontier, except the African slaves at Yeaman's Wappoo plantation "who are there left to defend the same being an outward place" (Salley "Journal" 36). Yeaman fled, but entrusted his slaves with the defense of his plantation (Wood 23). Yeaman was one of the largest importers of slaves during the first years of the colony in establishing his "Barony." All his slaves came from Barbados and were listed in his papers by name (Wood 22). These slaves were responsible for the creation of his Barony, including both the building of his country and Charles-Town houses, while Yeaman was absent promoting the colony to prospective settlers in Barbados. The act of entrusting an

armed group of slaves with the protection of a plantation suggests a high level of trust and cooperation between slaves and masters in the early colony. The approval of the provincial government confirms that it was not only individuals that placed complete trust in at least a segment of the enslaved population but the collective body of the colony (Salley, "Journal" 81).

Many factors may account for the amount of trust placed in Yeaman's slaves. The fact that the enslaved defenders were from Barbados, and thus "seasoned" slaves, could be one determining factor.[10] Barbados had suffered from harassment and attacks from the Spanish against which slaves where frequently armed. Yeaman's slaves may have participated in the defense of Barbados and, in turn, may have harbored anti-Spanish feelings and a stronger loyalty to the English colony.[11] The slaves may have also earned the respect and trust of the colonial leadership by their independent conduct during Yeaman's absences.

Yeaman's slaves were not the only ones who worked without supervision. Establishing a successful colony upon the frontier involved significant challenges. In addition to the threat of attack, the need for agricultural self-sufficiency and economic viability with a limited labor force placed the slave in a position to exercise a great deal of freedom. The first products to be exported from the new colony were either byproducts from clearing the land – such as lumber, barrel staves, pitch, tar and firewood – or beef and pork from the rapidly expanding herds that benefitted from the mild climate of the Carolina lowcountry. None of these endeavors required the use of gang labor like the mono-crop plantations found in the West Indian sugar islands or tobacco fields of Virginia and Maryland (Wood 55-62).

Great trust was earned by slaves in the performance of duties, which most often occurred on the fringes of the colony. Slaves often worked in small groups with limited supervision or independently upon large tracts of land in remote areas. Slaves were also responsible for the transportation of those goods to market as boatmen, boat masters and pilots upon the creeks and rivers that carried the goods and products between the distant plantations and Charles Towne (Wood 56, 201-205). Cattle and pigs roamed freely, grazing in the woodlands during the day and penned at night for protection. Slaves became the

watchmen and cattle hunters for the expanding herds on the remote fringes of the colony. This responsibility required slaves to be both armed and mounted to protect the herds from predators and Indian raiding parties (Wood 30).

The frontier life of a slave would have afforded numerous opportunities of escape. The fact that proportionally few slaves did flee confirmed the trust placed in them and illustrates the active choice of the majority of slaves to remain loyal to their European masters. The skills and knowledge garnered from their lives on the frontier also made them valuable allies in expanding and defending the Carolina colony.

Slaves were included in the corporate defense of the colony from its inception. When establishing defensive measures in October 1671, the Grand Council of South Carolina stated "that all and every person and persons now in this Collony … shall appear in armes ready fitted" and be trained in the "use of their Armes and the other exercises of military discipline in order to a due preparation against any suddaine invasion if any such should happen" (Salley, "Journal" 10-11) No differentiation as to race was mentioned. The same act referenced the nightly watch which stated that "[The Marshall of the colony] shall give notice to every person the time when he is to watch or leave a note at their house or houses or there declare the same to the Master or overseer of such person as is to Watch" (11). That notice was given to the master or overseer implies that slaves would have been included as members of the defensive forces. The specific mention of Yeaman's "negroes" a year later was most likely used as an identifier not as an exception to standard policy. His slaves were to remain at Yeaman's plantation due to their numbers and the plantation's defensible position on the Wappoo (36).

The use of slaves to defend the colony during threats of invasion continued throughout the colonial period despite growing restrictions on slaves. As their numbers grew in relation to white settlers, they became even more crucial to the colony's defense.[12] Faced with a greater threat of attack with the outbreak of The War of Spanish Succession, known as Queen Anne's War in the Colonies, the provincial government "in order … to make the assistance of our said trusty slaves more certain and regular" passed a law in 1704 that required

slave owners to appear before a commission to "show cause (if any) why their slave or slaves" should not serve in the militia during times of alarm. The law appointed a commission to draw up a list of slaves that would be "serviceable" for military duty and required slaves' masters to furnish the slaves with "a serviceable lance, hatchet or gun, with sufficient ammunition and hatchets, according to the conveniency of the said owners." If the slave failed to report or was prevented from serving, the owner was charged a fine of five pounds for each occurrence. In the case of a slave being maimed or killed in the line of duty, the law provided for compensation to the owner from the public funds (McCord 347-49).[13] The act of 1704 was not passed to initiate the use of slaves in colonial defense, but rather as a means to force the cooperation of slave owners who had grown either negligent or complacent in supplying their "trusty" slaves for the defense of the province.

By 1708, with the number of African slaves exceeding the number of whites within the province, the Grand Council officially stressed that it was "necessary" for the safety of the province "to have the assistance of our trusty slaves…against our enemies" (McCord 349). Masters were still compensated for slaves who were killed or maimed, but no longer required to provide the weapons for the slaves. If a master could not arm his slaves properly then the militia would provide him with arms from the public arsenal. The 1708 act also provided for the first time the freeing of slaves if they killed or captured one or more enemy during an invasion. Additionally, if a slave was maimed in battle he was given his freedom and supported at the public expense (McCord 349-51).

The act was undoubtedly prompted by the successful defeat of Spanish and French forces during their invasion of Charles Towne in 1706. The invasion highlighted both the merits and shortcomings of the 1704 act which made the successful defense possible. The new measures passed in 1708 swept away any remaining excuses voiced by slave owners and recognized the duty of the colony to honor the brave and valuable services of their slave allies. The act, however, notably included a provision that limited the number of slaves in the militia as to not exceed the number of whites. Governor Johnson reported in 1708 that the militia consisted of 950 whites and an equal number of slaves,

plus the governor's guard, an independent company of Huguenots, ten ten-man patrols and more than 1500 Indian allies (Salley, "Records" 203-10). Whether these numbers include the force of "cattle hunters" added to the militia reported in *the Boston News Letter* in May 1708 is unclear (Crane 187). What is clear is that not only did slaves begin to outnumber whites as an overall segment of the population by 1708, but they also equaled or surpassed whites in numbers as a trained military force. That the white slave-owning population would willingly arm and train such a large number of slaves speaks of the high level of trust extended to a large segment of the slave community. It also speaks of the high level of loyalty these slaves showed for the colony in willingly protecting the very masters who kept them enslaved. To trust the loyalty of armed slaves during times of invasion in one's own territory was one thing, but to trust the loyalty of a body of armed slaves on an expedition into enemy's territory was a true test of slave allegiance (Voelz 7). When Governor James Moore led an attack on Spanish Florida in 1702, his forces were bolstered by his Yamasee allies and African slaves (Landers, "Black Society" 25). Thirteen years later, master and slave fought and died side by side against their former ally during the Yamasee war. On Good Friday, April 15, 1715, the Yamasee slaughtered the Carolinian traders who were amongst them and swiftly destroyed the settlements around Port Royal, South Carolina. The frontier exploded in violence as the Choctaw, Lower Creeks, and various other tribes joined the Yamasee in the assault on the English. The swiftness and brutality of the attacks forced the abandonment of all plantations and settlements beyond a twenty mile radius of Charles-Towne and all women and children were sent to be protected in its walls (McCrady 533-40). Within a month of the outbreak of the war, South Carolina Governor Charles Craven reported that he had added about "two hundred stout negro men" to the militia" (Quarles 649). Faced with utter destruction, martial law was declared and the Colony's militia was reorganized into a professional army with two regiments consisting of six hundred whites and four hundred slaves to which were added one hundred and seventy Indian allies and three hundred white militiamen from North Carolina and Virginia – altogether not very impressive numbers against the estimated 8,000-10,000 warriors available to the Indians (McCrady 537).[14] Governor Craven waged an

aggressive offensive war sending numerous expeditions against the enemy in their own towns and villages. The Yamasee, supported by the Spanish, retreated into Florida in the summer of 1715 (Oatis 179).[15]

While it is difficult to ascertain the role slaves played in most actions, Dr. Francis Le Jau, an Anglican minister in Goose Creek who chronicled much of the conflict, recorded several instances with both whites and slaves serving side by side in both defensive and offensive actions (155-163). Theophilus Hastings led an excursion against the Saraws with a force of one hundred whites and another one hundred "negroes and Indians" (Crane 173). There was at least one all-slave company organized and sent into the interior to fight. Captain Stephen Ford led a company of black soldiers in an invasion of the Cherokee nation in 1715. The fighting skills of the black company so impressed the Cherokees that after the Cherokees returned to the English fold they requested that the company remain to help the Cherokees against their enemies where they would be "very seweasabell [serviceable] . . . in Roning after ye Enimy" (Willis 167).[16] Although hundreds of slaves fought alongside their masters for the colony during the Yamasee War, some owners expressed a reluctance to use them. On the question of arming their slaves during the crisis, Carolinian merchants warned "there must be great Caution used, lest our Slaves when armed might become our masters" (Oatis 170).[17] This fear of their slaves is evident in the number of slave enlistments. While the numbers of slaves in South Carolina is estimated to have doubled between 1708 and 1715, the number of slaves enlisted at the outbreak of the conflict was less than half the number used in 1708 (Le Jau 7). The reduced use of slaves during a time of drastic need may denote a shift in slave master relations in those years.

The life of many slaves changed as the Carolina colony experienced an increase in rice production during these years. The stress on slaves from the shift to mono-crop agriculture may have contributed to growing antagonism. The white colonists faced being a minority as slave numbers increased and white numbers continued to decrease.[18] Psychological stresses manifested in an increased use of inhumane punishments and control measures.[19] Two slave uprisings, one in 1711 and a second in 1714, further added to the fears of whites and demonstrated the discontent felt by some slaves. Following the 1711

uprising, a new slave code was passed which severely restricted slave mobility and autonomy and legalized mutilations and even death for slaves. Although slaves remained on the muster roles of militia companies, the Yamasee War marked the end of mass participation in conflict by armed slaves in colonial South Carolina.[20]

Even as segments of the enslaved Africans showed extraordinary levels of loyalty to their masters and actively participated in the defense and expansion of the colony, the fact remained that they were slaves. Their loyalty did not mean that they were content with being slaves. In his highly regarded book on slave rebellions, Eugene Genovese suggests that the enslaved African were the most rebellious people in history (xxii). In the Carolina lowcountry, slaves exercised various forms of rebellion, ranging from from feigning sickness to escape a day's work to organized armed revolt. Large scale revolt was a constant threat to the colony. The most successful form of rebellion, however, was escape (Wood 142-66).

The impact that runaways had on those left behind was considerable. For the owners, the financial loss was often substantial. African slaves were valued much more than indentured servants. They not only held the prospect of life-long servitude, compared to the short term contracts of indentured servants, but were frequently more adept at the labor needed for frontier life. In addition, African slaves proved to be better suited to the subtropical climate of the Carolina Lowcountry and did not suffer the illnesses that the Europeans did. As such, the initial costs of purchasing African slaves were much higher than that of contracted indentured servants. Not only was the financial loss seen in the cost of the slave, but also in the loss of profit from the labor that a slave produced. A further burden was placed on the owner in order to replace the fugitive slave with another slave of equal quality, which often was difficult due to the lack of slaves imported into the early colony (Wood 48-55).[21]

Any slave who separated himself from the bonds of servitude had a financial impact on his or her former owner, but, more substantially, their actions challenged the authority of slave owners in general and of the entire colonial establishment – and served as an inspiration to other slaves to do likewise. Some slaves temporarily freed themselves from their masters, yet chose to remain in the English colony; some

endeavored to form independent Maroon communities; and yet others chose to ally themselves with the bitterest enemies of their former masters.

Countless numbers of slaves who stole themselves from their masters joined independent Maroon communities in the swamps, forests and mountains of the Southeast. Many of these communities functioned for decades outside of the knowledge or control of whites. The best known group lived in the Great Dismal Swamp, between North Carolina and Virginia, where a community of up to two thousand fugitive slaves lived, raised families, built houses, farmed, and raised cattle with little contact with whites (Aptheker 152). On a much smaller scale, South Carolina swamps, rarely visited by whites, also provided a refuge for Maroon communities ranging from small migratory groups of up to ten individuals to palisaded villages with over one hundred.

Other Maroon groups intentionally engaged the white community, robbing travelers and raiding small farms. In October 1710, a group of Maroons under the leadership of Sebastian, "the Spanish Negro," went beyond simple thievery to wage a quasi-guerilla war against the whites. As the group's reign of terror continued, their activities grew bolder; the colony was helpless as the group robbed travelers and burnt at least one family out of their farm. Unable to end the band's activities, the colonial government offered 50£ to a group of Native American slave hunters to bring Sebastian in dead or alive. After nearly a year of eluding authorities, he was killed in June 1711. Following Sebastian, Maroon groups who became bothersome were quickly suppressed by Indian slave hunters and the militia. Although other Maroon groups rose to terrorize the colony, none reached the organization or were as active as Sebastian and his followers.[22]

Instead of becoming members of independent Maroon communities or organizing into local resistance, some slaves chose to join the enemies of the English. Indian tribes welcomed fugitive slaves into their communities. Many slaves were multi-lingual having worked alongside Indians as slave laborers on plantations or as translators for white traders. Slaves benefited their new allies as warriors and with skills learned from the English or brought from Africa. After leading a difficult but ultimately successful campaign against the Tuscarora

Indians in 1711, Colonel John Barnwell praised the defensive works of the Indian Chief King Hancock:

> I never saw such subtill contrivances for Defence. [The fort's defenses were] well by situation on the river's bank as Workmanship, having a large Earthen Trench thrown up against the puncheons with 2 teer of port holes; the lower teer they could stop at pleasure with plugs, & large limbs of trees lay confuisedly about it to make the approach intricate, and all about much with large reeds & canes to run into people's legs. The Earthern work was so high that it signified nothing to burn the puncheons, & it had 4 round Bastions or Flankers. (qtd. in Barnwell 44-45)

The elaborate defenses of the fort were engineered by a runaway slave named Henry, who had agreed to fight with the Tuscarora against the English (54).

Fugitive slaves may have had tremendous political impact on Native Americans. Carolinian negotiators met with the Cherokees in October 1715, hoping to persuade them to leave the confederacy of Indian nations and join the English as allies against the Creeks, but two runaway slaves convinced the Cherokees to remain enemies. When the Cherokee did join the English in 1716, they negotiated a reduction in prices on trade goods with the English and the promise of military support against the Cherokee's enemies. During the years that followed, Carolinians repeatedly reminded the Cherokees that they would have benefitted sooner if not for the "parcel of lies" told by the runaways (Willis 166). In 1715, fugitive slaves were also among the Creeks and Yamasee, serving as interpreters, fighting as warriors, and colluding with the Spanish and French (Porter 70-73). Four runaway slaves from Carolina had joined the Yamasee under Chief Jorge; they became important war leaders and fought bravely for several years until the Yamasee were defeated and fled to Spanish Florida (Landers, "Black Society" 28).

Possibly no group benefitted more from the reception of runaway slaves than the Spanish. The eleven runaway slaves that William Dunlop encountered in St. Augustine were credited by Crane in his classic work *The Southern Frontier* as the first known African runaway slaves

(33). (However, two other runaway slaves are mentioned in connection to the Dunlop mission, which preceded the St. Augustine group by a year.) The St. Augustine fugitives could have fled to anywhere in the Spanish controlled region, but they purposefully went to St. Augustine, the political and military capital of Florida. Their choice suggests an understanding of the differences between the English and Spanish legal status of slaves. The Spanish had a long history of using Africans as slaves. They had battled for centuries with the Moors with Africans serving on both sides in the military and as slave laborers. The Spanish system of slavery, codified by King Alfonso the Learned in the thirteenth century and still used in the New World, acknowledged that slavery was contrary to the natural rights of man, only tolerated as a necessary evil. As such, both master and slave had rights and duties. The master had paternalistic responsibilities to provide proper food, clothing and shelter for his slave and was not to abuse them. If an owner neglected or abused his slave, then the slave could legally change owners. Slaves could also legally change masters in order to marry. Additionally, slaves had the right to accumulate wealth, own property and bequest assets to family. Above all, slaves had the right to seek manumission (Olsen 55). The appearance of Spanish names among the group (Mingo, Grand Domingo, Jacque) may imply that the slaves had come from Spanish possessions and thus already had an understanding of Spanish customs and laws which lead to their decision to flee to St. Augustine (Landers, "Black Society" 24).

The slaves that joined the Spanish at St. Augustine were not running to freedom, but were exchanging the Carolinian form of slavery for the Spanish. In the Spanish colonial capital, they were extended the rights of all slaves in Spanish colonies. Each was given wages for the work they performed and housed among the citizenry in St. Augustine. They received instruction in Catholicism before being baptized, after which several received the sacrament of marriage. The two women were given work in the governor's household and the eight men worked as metal smiths and stone workers on the Castillo de San Marcos, strengthening the Spanish defenses – and, by extension, their own – against the English (Landers, "Free Black" 340). The paternal responsibilities were assumed by the Governor whose protection was also extended into legal representation. One of the slaves, Mingo,

who had escaped with his wife and baby, was accused of committing murder in order to gain freedom by the English. Governor Quiraga informed Dunlop that if the charges were proven then Mingo would be punished accordingly, but he would not be returned to Carolina (Landers, "Black Society" 25).

Between 1688 and 1693, at least three other groups of runaways of varying sizes successfully reached St. Augustine. After years of ambiguity, the Spanish crown responded to Florida's repeated requests to clarify the legal status of the runaways. On November 7, 1693 the King of Spain, Charles II, issued the official policy towards those runaways who had requested religious sanctuary. In a directive to Quiraga the King instructed:

> As a reward for having come to these provinces to live under
> the laws of the Gospel and become Catholics, I order that
> immediately upon receipt of this, you give them all their liberty
> in my name, giving each one, males and females, a document to
> that effect, so that seeing their example others may do likewise
> (Brooks 146).

The impact of the proclamation on the frontier was immediate, sparking widespread fear of a possible slave exodus in Carolina. Indeed Carolinians complained of slaves fleeing daily to St. Augustine and at least four groups of runaways reached St. Augustine in search of religious asylum before 1715 (Landers, "Free Black" 340). No other group requesting religious asylum was recorded in the Spanish documents between 1715 and 1724. The records, however, may only indicate those groups who formally requested religious asylum and do not depict an accurate picture of the number of runaways entering St. Augustine or who fled into Spanish held territories (Landers, "Black Society" 27-28).[23]

St. Augustine was primarily a military post and it was in military matters that the runaway slaves contributed most effectively to their new community. With detailed knowledge of the Carolina colony's defenses and locations of the scattered plantations, they proved useful as informants and guides. Some of the runaways were veteran warriors, having fought with the Yamasee against the English. Governor Benavides was so impressed with the abilities of the runaways as

fighting men that he established a militia in 1726 consisting of only runaway English slaves, appointing one of the runaways who had fought with the Yamasee against the English, Francisco Menendez, as captain. The slave militia, under Menendez, led numerous raids against Carolina. In 1727, a Carolinian reported a raid by "Ten Negroes and fourteen Indians Commanded by those of their own Colour, without any Spaniards in company with them" (qtd. in Landers, "Black Society" 27). The notion of black soldiers under their own command terrified white slave owners. Acting Governor Arthur Middleton complained,

> They [the Spanish] have found a New way of sending our own slaves against us, to Rob and Plunder us… They are continually fitting out Partys of Indians from St Augustine to Murder our White people, Rob our Plantations and carry off our slaves…so that We are not only at a vast expence in Guarding our Southern Frontiers, but the inhabitants are continually Allarmed, and have no leisure to looke after theire Crops…The Indians they send against us are sent out in small Partys…and sometimes joined wth Negroes, and all the Mischeife they doe, is on a sudden and by suprise (qtd. in Wood 305).

Much of the plunder gathered by the militia were other slaves, either by coercion or inspiration (Landers, "Black Society" 27). The slave militia became an effective tool for the Spanish, draining slaves from the Carolinian planters. Such large numbers of slaves were disappearing, either by running away or by "liberation" that many planters chose to relocate their slaves to the North or abandon the region entirely (Oatis 277).[24] In a counter offensive against the Spanish, the English attacked St. Augustine in 1728. In the city's defense, the slave militia earned a commendation for their bravery from the Spanish Crown (Landers "Black Society" 27).

The Spanish produced a new proclamation in 1733 promising freedom to runaway slaves after serving four years, indentured; however, even after years of service, the militia men remained enslaved. Led by Captain Menendez, the slaves fought against their condition as slaves within the legal system of the Spanish government. They presented numerous petitions seeking freedom for loyalty and service to each new governor over a ten year period and even to the

auxiliary Bishop of Cuba during his 1735 tour of the providence, all without success. When Manuel de Montiano became governor in 1737, Captain Menendez presented him with a new petition listing thirty-one individuals still enslaved who had faithfully served the Spanish crown. The captain's petition included the testimony of a Yamesee chief who attested to the Militia's service and loyalty.

Governor Montiano's subsequent investigation led him to grant unconditional freedom to all runaway slaves from Carolina on March 15, 1738. After complaints from the slave owners, Montiano's actions were reviewed by the crown, which upheld his actions and issued a new Cedula extending freedom to not only those fugitive slaves in the province, but to "all those who in the future come as fugitives from the English colonies" (Landers, "Black Society" 28). Through his actions, Florida became a land of freedom for all runaway slaves and an even greater threat to South Carolina. The newly freed militia swore "that on every occasion we shall be the most cruel enemies of the English, and that we will risk our lives in the service of Your Majesty until our last drop of blood is shed in defense of the great Crown of Spain and the Holy Faith… We are all your loyal servants for life" (qtd. in Olsen 67).

The newly freed militia established a new town two miles north of St. Augustine, *Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose*, with thirty-eight men and their families. Captain Francisco Menendez served as governor of the town, the first free black settlement in North America. The former slaves continued as a fighting force for the Spanish in their own fortified town. Francisco Menendez's patient pursuit of justice not only freed himself and his men, but offered a promise of freedom to all slaves who could escape to Florida. Word spread quickly of the freedom of the slaves and the Fort that they had built. In November 1738, at least sixty nine slaves deserted the English in Carolina and twenty three slaves from Port Royal reached St. Augustine where, after being granted their freedom, they joined the new settlement (Landers, "Black Society" 33).[25] Lieutenant-Governor William Bull relayed to the Duke of Newcastle that the planters in South Carolina were irate "to find their property now become so very precarious and uncertain, and that their Negroes which were their chief support may in little time become their enemies, if not their masters, and that [the] government

is unable to withstand or prevent it" (Bull 9) In an expedition against St. Augustine in 1740, the English targeted "Fort Mose" which was described as being "four square with a flanker at each corner, banked with earth, having a ditch without on all sides lined round with prickly royal and had a well and house within, and a look-out" (qtd. in Landers, "Garcia" 17-18). The Fort was destroyed in the 1740 invasion but was eventually rebuilt and was continuously occupied by freed slaves until the Spanish ceded Florida to England in 1763.

Amongst the global powers of England and Spain, as they battled for control of Southeastern North America, enslaved Africans exercised political knowledge and power to manipulate the world and their roles in it. They were not just "chattel" who mindlessly followed the directives of white masters, but rather active agents who worked and lived with great levels of autonomy and political power. The available documents show that slaves were aware of religious and ideological differences between the competing groups, allied themselves accordingly, and broadly influenced the policies of the European powers.

Notes

[1] See also Landers, "Black Society," and Wright .

[2] See also Wright.

[3] In addition to Blessingame, Genovese, and Gutman, see Claudia Dale Goldin, Leslie H. Owens, and Steven B. Oates.

[4] In addition to Peter H. Wood see Mullin and Morgan. For more on Historiography see Kolchin.

[5] See also TePaske , Olsen and Hann.

[6] See Fox-Genovese. , Annette Gordon Reed's two works on Sally Hemings, Miles, and Berlin.

[7] In a short article in 1948 Kenneth W. Porter examined the role African slaved played in the international conflict between South Carolina and Spanish Florida. For a broader view of the impact of African slaves on the Americas see Voelz.

[8] The area south of Virginia was all part of La Florida which the Spanish divided into districts. St. Jorge was an area roughly encompassing central South Carolina north of Port Royal. Guale encompassed the majority of modern Georgia (Crane 3-21).

[9] See also Collection of South Carolina Historical Society V. 166-168, 194.

[10] "Seasoned" slaves were slaves who had spent some time in Barbados being acclimated to slavery under British rule (Wood 43-46).

[11] For more on the arming of slaves in the defense of Barbados, see Voelz (111-12).

[12] The first Slave code in South Carolina was passed in 1690. For more on the legal status of slaves and limitations on slave movements see Little (86-101); for the use of slaves in colonial defense See Porter (53-78); for population see Wood (151).

[13] See also Quarles.

[14] See also Pennington.

[15] A South Carolina expedition captured a Yamasee chief "Yoa King" near St. Augustine in 1716 with thirty warriors. See also Le Jau.

[16] Crane lists the commander of the Black company as Captain John Pight (181-83).

[17] See also Voelz.

[18] The population of South Carolina was estimated to be 6250 whites and 10,500 slaves in 1715 (Le Jau 7). Governor Craven indicated that there was "not above 1500" white males fit to bear arms in 1715 (Quarles 649).

[19] Francis Le Jau complained in 1713 that slave owners "are more Cruel Some of them of late Dayes than before, They hamstring main and unlimb those poor creatures for small faults" (129). For descriptions of punishments inflicted on slaves see La Jau (108, 121, 129-30, and 143).

[20] In 1740 General Oglethorpe proposed the addition of eight hundred slave pioneers and two hundred slave combatants to his expedition against St. Augustine but with the heightened fears following the Stono Rebellion his proposal was rejected. In 1760 a proposal to raise a troop of five hundred slaves to go against the Cherokee was defeated by one vote (Quarles 650).

[21] A yellow fever epidemic spread through Charles Towne in 1699. In its wake 125 English, 37 French, and 16 Indians died while only one death was reported amongst the slaves (Wood 81). In his 1682 "An Account of the Province of Carolina" Samuel Wilson wrote, "Negros by reason of the mildness of the winter thrive and stand much better,

than in the Northern Collonys, and require less clothes, which is a great charge sav'd" (qtd. in Salley, "Narratives" 172).

[22] In 1735 the Militia was sent against a Maroon community in the swamp at the head of the Wando River that had "committed many Outrages and Robberies"; The Notchee Indians who aided in capturing the remnants of the Stono Rebellion rebels in 1739 were used to subjugate a Maroon community in 1744 (Lockley 10-13).

[23] At least four fugitive slaves are known to have come to St. Augustine prior to 1724 with the Yamasee. After fighting beside the Yamasee for several years the four were betrayed and sold into slavery one of which was Francisco Menendez. Even though they became Catholic they were not identified as runaway English slaves until much later; subsequently, they were not given freedom along with those who came under the auspices of religious asylum. For maroon communities in North Central Florida see Mulroy.

[24] See also Landers "Spanish Sanctuary."

[25] See also Olsen and Wood.

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