

The background is a teal color with a faint world map. Two large, dark teal hands are positioned at the top, palms facing each other as if holding the title. In the bottom left corner, there is a detailed compass rose. In the bottom right corner, a white airplane with a blue and yellow tail is flying. Scattered throughout the map are small icons of anchors and sailing ships.

# Centering Black Voices in Puerto Rico

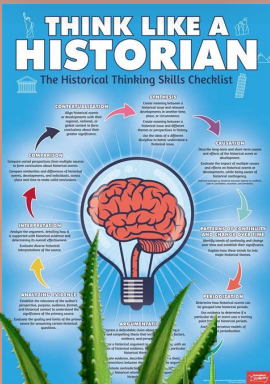
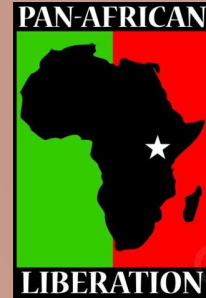
## Lesson #2

9-12 African American Studies Elective

Ms. Alford  
[asalford@fcps.edu](mailto:asalford@fcps.edu)

Af-Am	In Class (Agenda)
Special Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Opening: Do Now &amp; Attendance (15min)</li><li>-Enslaved Africans in the Caribbean: Puerto Rico</li><li>-African Resistance to Enslavement</li><li>-Independent Research: Marcos Xiorro</li><li>-Close Out: Announcements/Reflection</li></ul>

Check Schoology assignment calendar regularly!

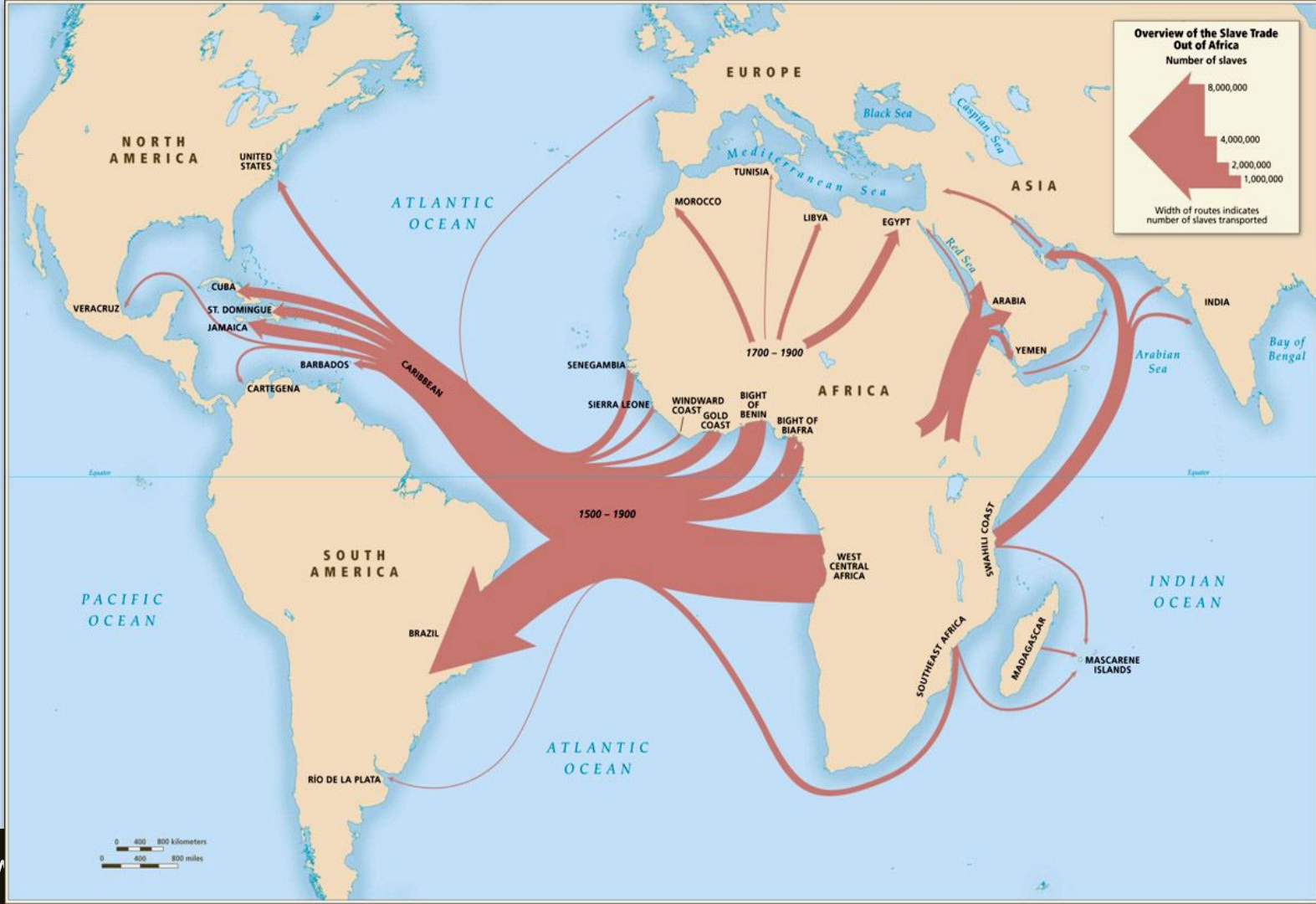


## Do Now

**SEE:** Jot down (3) observations you make from this map

**THINK:** What historical event does this map represent?

**WONDER:** What do you notice about the role of the Caribbean in this map?





# Objectives

- ❖ I can...Explain the role of Puerto Rico in the transatlantic slave trade
- ❖ I can...Describe the ways enslaved Africans resisted white supremacy and enslavement in Puerto Rico
- ❖ I can...Analyze the ways Afro-Puerto Ricans have preserved culture and created community
- ❖ I can...Explore the current barriers and points of pride in the lived experiences of Black Puerto Ricans



A close-up photograph of several green basil leaves. The leaves are vibrant green and have a slightly serrated edge. Numerous small, clear water droplets are scattered across the surface of the leaves, reflecting light. The background is dark, making the green leaves stand out.

# Enslaved Africans in the Caribbean: Puerto Rico

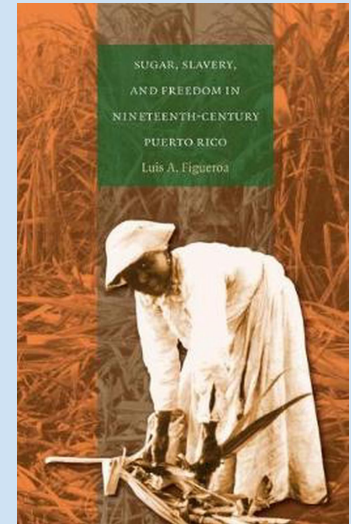
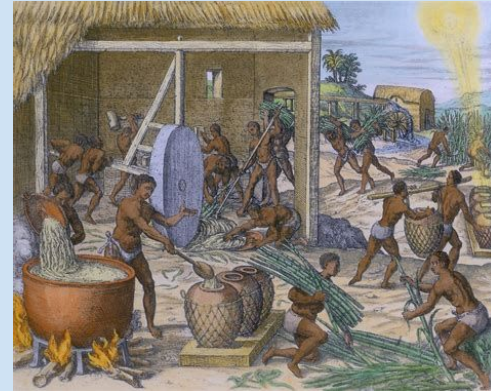


# Enslaved Africans in the Caribbean: Puerto Rico

[The Caribbean](#) is a region of islands and coastal territory in the Americas that interacts with the Caribbean Sea. The earliest interactions between Europeans and indigenous peoples in the New World took place in the Caribbean, as Christopher Columbus first made landfall in the region and sparked colonization.

In the late 15th and early 16th centuries, Europeans began to exploit the Caribbean for mineral and agricultural production. European colonizers enslaved Indigenous people's and decimated their population through war and disease.

Facing a decreasing supply of slave-labor from Indigenous people, Europeans began to import Africans through the transatlantic slave trade. Over the course of the slave trade, enslavers delivered more than **four million Africans** to the Caribbean.

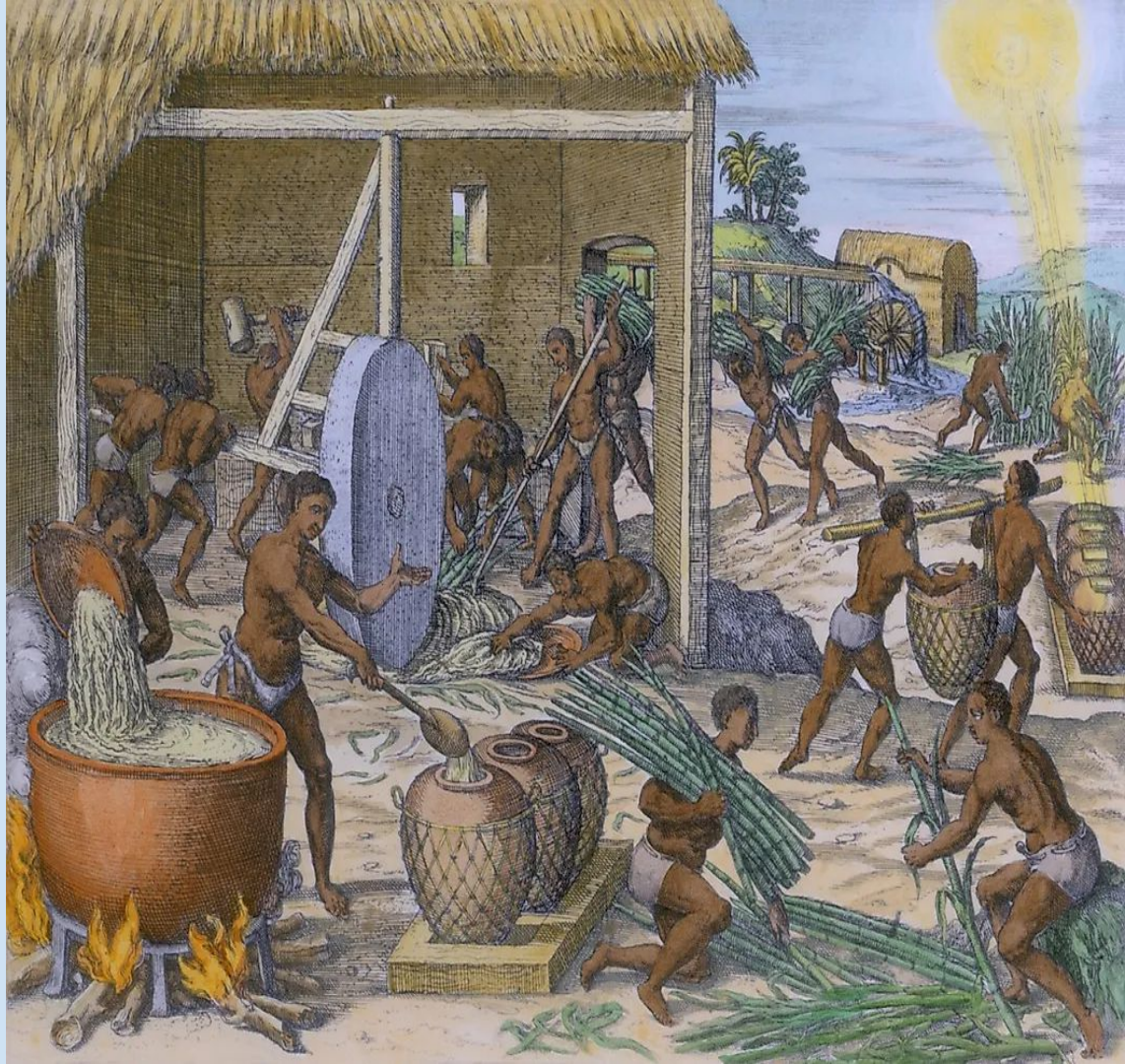


# Source Analysis #1

**Source:** [1595 engraving by Theodor de Bry with modern watercolor](#)

**Description:** *Caption, African slaves processing sugar cane on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola*

- ❖ When & where was the source created?
- ❖ Who is the creator of this source?
- ❖ Purpose - why do you think this was created?
- ❖ Intended audience - who is this created for?
- ❖ What activities are occurring in this source?
- ❖ How does the creator portray these activities? What feelings or attitudes are portrayed in this source?





## Source Analysis #2

**Source:** ["Puerto Rican Planter with House Slave, ca. 1808"; Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora](#)

**Description:** Caption, *A Spanish planter in Porto Rico, luxuriating in his hammock. Waller, a surgeon in the British Navy, briefly visited Puerto Rico in May 1808.*

- ❖ When & where was the source created?
- ❖ Who is the creator of this source?
- ❖ Purpose - why do you think this was created?
- ❖ Intended audience - who is this created for?
- ❖ What activities are occurring in this source?
- ❖ How does the creator portray these activities? What feelings or attitudes are portrayed in this source?





A close-up photograph of several green basil leaves. The leaves are vibrant green and have a slightly serrated edge. Numerous small, clear water droplets are scattered across the surface of the leaves, reflecting light. The background is dark, making the green leaves stand out.

# African Resistance to Enslavement

## African Resistance to Enslavement

When Guillermo A. Baralt published the original Spanish-language version of *“Slave Revolts in Puerto Rico: Conspiracies and Uprisings, 1795-1873,”* there was a strong reaction. To research the book, Baralt combed through municipal archives and old news reports to find documentation of over 20 revolts by enslaved Africans and a high incidence of self-liberated (escaping) Blacks in Puerto Rico before slavery officially ended on the island in March of 1873.

*“Up until the book’s publication, the conventional wisdom was that slaves in Puerto Rico were docile, had no reason to rebel, and were generally treated well. Nevertheless, researching the municipal records of many towns on the island, during the period between 1796 and 1848, revealed a radically different story.”*

→What common misconceptions did people believe about slavery in Puerto Rico?

→What did Guillermo Baralt’s research uncover?

# Slave Revolts in Puerto Rico



Winner of the Puerto Rico PEN Club Award

Guillermo A. Baralt



Students, write your response!



## African Resistance to Enslavement

Many Puerto Ricans will insist that Puerto Rican culture traditionally has very little racism. Often the underlying belief is that racial prejudice has never been practiced on the island—and that if it was, it is certainly different than the Black/white racism in the United States. It's important for people to understand that Puerto Rico also enslaved people of African descent and slavery in Puerto Rico was not kinder or better for enslaved Africans than it was anywhere else in the Americas or the world.

Wealthy Puerto Rican landowners used enslaved Africans to produce their crops, maintain their businesses, and profit. They were often cruel to the people they owned, and Puerto Rico's slave owners were frightened of their "slaves". They believed the successful African revolt in Haiti (Haitian Revolution) would have a terrible effect on all of the Caribbean colonies. This fear was confirmed by later African uprisings in Guadeloupe, Saint Lucia, Cuba and Venezuela.

# Slave Revolts in Puerto Rico



→What historical understanding does Baralt's research give people about slavery in Puerto Rico?

→What motivated Puerto Rican enslavers to fear the African people they "owned"?

**Guillermo A. Baralt**



Students, write your response!

## African Resistance to Enslavement

Baralt writes about the increase of the slave population in Puerto Rico and the resulting rise in revolts.

After the Haitian Revolution, the need for more Puerto Rican sugarcane plantations increased. Haiti had been the source of 40% of the sugar consumed in the world, and after the successful African revolution, other Caribbean islands tried to fill that role. As Puerto Rico increased its population of enslaved Africans, the recently arrived Africans, known as “bozales,” were often unwilling to accept that the rest of their lives would be lived in slavery.

In one uprising, for example, enslaved Africans in the southern district of Guayama, where their numbers had increased dramatically, secretly made plans for a “*Republic of Boricua*.” The plan was to have as many enslaved Afro-Puerto Ricans as possible rise up, kill their enslavers, and “*then go into town on the eve of the feast of St. Michael. The ultimate goal was to end up being the rulers of the country.*” The plan was discovered and the rebellion suppressed.

# Slave Revolts in Puerto Rico



→How did the Haitian Revolution impact the island of Puerto Rico? Provide two key details

Winner of the Puerto Rico PEN Club Award

Guillermo A. Baralt



Students, write your response!



## African Resistance to Enslavement

As the revolts grew and the number of enslaved Afro-Puerto Ricans increased, Puerto Rico's governor, General Juan Prim y Prats, put forth a law to corral local Blacks in May of 1848.

### Baralt writes:

"[Prim] issued the Bando Contra La Raza Negra [Decree Against the African Race]. This was a repressive and punitive decree that made no distinction between free Africans and slaves. According to **Article I**, any offense by a member of the African race, free or enslaved, would be tried and punished by a military court. **Article II** reaffirmed the legal superiority of a white person over a Black person in Puerto Rico when it stated that any African taking up arms against whites 'even if the aggression was justified,' would, if he were a slave, be executed and if a free person, would have his right hand cut off.

Africans and their descendants would always be guilty. **Article III** made it clear that if a Black person verbally insulted, roughly handled or threatened someone with a stick, stones or in any other manner, he would be sentenced to six years in jail if he were a slave. If he were a free man he would be given a form of punishment. **Article V** authorized masters to kill any slave who rose up in such an act." (p. 105)

# Slave Revolts in Puerto Rico



→Describe the purpose and significance of the Decree Against the African Race?

→How did this decree impact Black communities in Puerto Rico?

Guillermo A. Baralt



Students, write your response!

## African Resistance to Enslavement

These new laws were meant to keep the threat of slave revolts down. The laws became part of the official slave code in Puerto Rico and were meant to act as an additional scare tactic about the brutal punishments and even executions that awaited Afro-Puerto Ricans if they were caught conspiring to fight for their freedom.

And yet, Black Puerto Ricans continued with attempts to free themselves from slavery on the island: Ponce, the 2nd largest city in Puerto Rico, would go on to see another uprising attempt in July of 1848; and the district of Vega Baja saw a planned revolt in August 1848. In these last attempts, enslaved Afro-Puerto Ricans sought to free themselves and take over the island. After 1848, Afro-Puerto Rican uprisings were less concerned with taking over the island and more concerned with exacting revenge upon their enslavers.

Baralt's "Slave Revolts in Puerto Rico" demonstrates that

- Afro-Puerto Ricans waged war for their freedom
- Slavery was not less brutal in Puerto Rico
- and Black Puerto Ricans were not complacent about being denied their freedom

# Slave Revolts in Puerto Rico



→How did African resistance in Puerto Rico change after 1848?

Winner of the Puerto Rico PEN Club Award

Guillermo A. Baralt



Students, write your response!

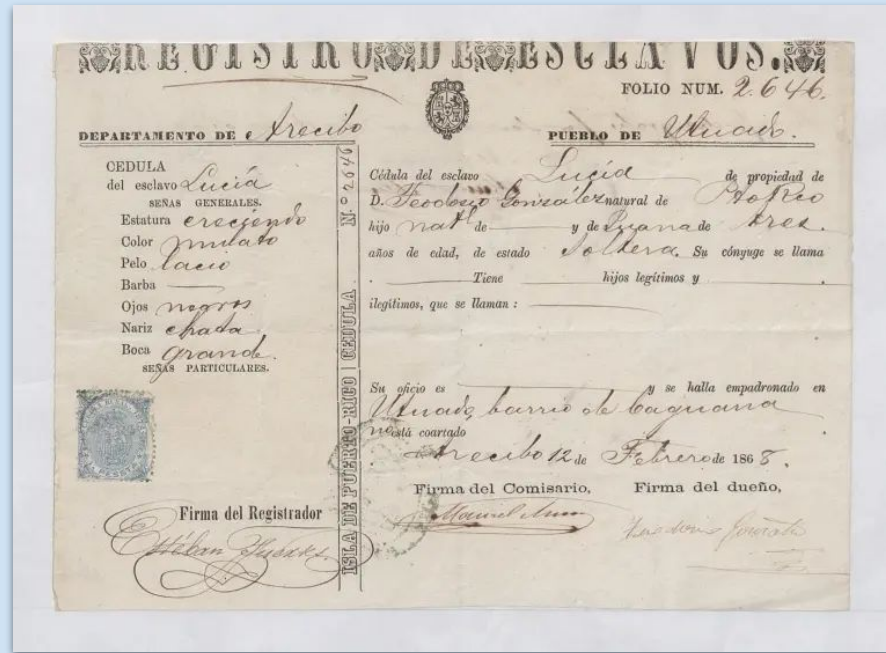


# Slavery Abolished

By 1867, Puerto Rico had 656,328 inhabitants. Its recorded population consisted of 346,437 white people and 309,891 people of color who were categorized as Black, mulatto, and Mestizos. In 1873 the Spanish National Assembly abolished slavery in Puerto Rico.


However, the end of slavery came with devastating conditions:

- Owners of enslaved people were compensated with *35 million pesetas* per slave
- Enslaved Africans were required to continue working for their former owners for three additional years



The Schomburg Center in New York houses the [Puerto Rican Slave Documents Collection](#).

These documents (like the one above) contain the names of enslaved people, details about their appearances, and names of those who purchased them.



Brochure: Marcos  
Xiorro Resistance  
in Puerto Rico

# Brochure: Marcos Xiorro Resistance in Puerto Rico

Step 1 Research the story of Marcos Xiorro

Step 2 Create an informational brochure based on the following questions:

- ❖ Marcos Xiorro's origin story - find background information about his life
- ❖ How did Marcos Xiorro resist enslavement? What was Marcos' plan?
- ❖ What was the result of his plan?
- ❖ Why did Puerto Rico's Governor pass the Bando Contra La Raza Negra [Decree Against the African Race] in 1848?
- ❖ What was the purpose of this document? How did it impact Africans trying to resist enslavement?
- ❖ Reflection: Why is it important to highlight Black history and Black resistance to slavery in Puerto Rico?



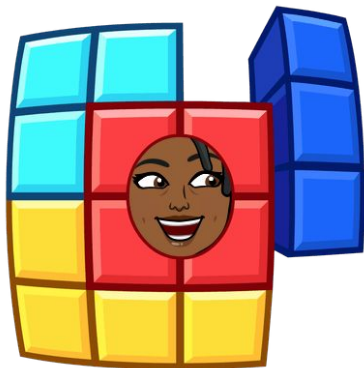
The Schomburg Center in New York houses the [Puerto Rican Slave Documents Collection](#).

These documents (like the one above) contain the names of enslaved people, details about their appearances, and names of those who purchased them.



## Answer (1) Reflection Question

What is one thing you learned in this lesson?



One question that crossed your mind during today's lesson?



### Reminders!

- Bring your laptop & charger EACH DAY!
- Bell Schedule [THIS LINK](#)
- Sign up for Remind messages using [CLASS CODES](#)

### Have Questions?

#### Ms. Alford's Office Hours:

- After School Mondays 4:30-5:30pm (Virtual & In Person)
- SOAR 4 Rotations 9:40-11:00am (Virtual & In Person)
- By Appointment

*\*Message via Schoology or Email [asalford@fcps.edu](mailto:asalford@fcps.edu)*

Students, write your response!