The Africans didn’t accept as “normal” their status as slaves. The desire for liberty lived in their souls, and they never missed a chance to flee to the jungle. There, they could live according to their laws and customs. The Spaniards called them *cimarrones* or maroons.

Bayano didn’t tolerate slavery for long and fled to the mountains of Panama, where he was chosen King of a community of 2,000 maroons.

He organized attacks against Spanish plantations and against convoys on the roads. The Spanish sent many expeditions against him and his people, but none were successful. Finally, Bayano was invited to negotiate a peace treaty but he was treacherously captured. He was sent to Peru, where he received honors from the Viceroy, and then was brought to Spain where he died in prison.

Yanga was born in Africa, a member of the Yanga Baru tribe of the Upper Nile region. As a youth, he was taken prisoner by an enemy tribe and sold to the slave traders who sent him to New Spain (Mexico) in 1579. Shortly after his arrival, he escaped, taking refuge in the steep mountains of Veracruz.

With other escaped slaves, they formed free towns called *palenques* where they lived according to African traditions. Yanga’s immediately became leader due to his charisma, his wisdom and his ability.

On January 26, 1609 a Spanish force was sent against the palenques, but was repelled by maroons under Yanga’s command. Later that year, Yanga founded the town of San Lorenzo de los Negros.

He was betrayed, captured and executed by the Spaniards on Easter Sunday, 1612.

Born in Cape Verde, he was brought to Spain at the age of 7 as a house servant. He learned the customs, language, ways of education and of warfare of the Spanish. These things served him well when he came to the colonies at the age of 25.

En route to Lima, Peru, he led a group of slaves in an escape from a ship off the coast of Esmeraldas in October, 1553. With his diplomatic and military skills, he won the sympathy and respect of the indigenous and the Africans alike. He created an alliance that resisted Spanish expeditions, preserving their dignity and liberty.

He refused the honor of being appointed governor of Esmeraldas because he considered the autonomy of blacks and indigenous more valuable. For nearly 200 years, the Spanish had little authority in this region of Ecuador.
ZUMBI
Leader of Palmares
1655-1695

Zumbi was born free in Palmares, a maroon nation founded at the beginning of the 16th century. At its height, Palmares had about 20,000 residents and controlled a large area in what is now Brazil.

As an infant, Zumbi was captured in a raid on Palmares and raised by a priest. At the age of 15, he returned to Palmares, and eventually became its leader.

In 1693, the Portuguese sent an army of over 6,000 mercenaries and Palmares was destroyed. Zumbi escaped, but was killed two years later. Parts of his body were put on display in Recife as a warning to those who would resist or flee from slavery.

For his bravery and ability, Zumbi is considered a national hero of Afro-Brazilians, inspiring past and present struggles for liberation.

NANNY
of the Windward Maroons
18th Century

Nanny’s origin is the Ashanti people of West Africa, but it isn’t known when she was born nor whether she was born in Africa or Jamaica. She was leader of a maroon community called Nanny Town in eastern Jamaica, known for its high degree of organization and the respect accorded to women and children.

In 1655 the English took Jamaica from Spain, and in 1730, they discovered and attacked Nanny Town. Nanny proved to be a genius at guerrilla warfare strategy and also used Ashanti magic to weaken the enemy and determine the best time for attack.

She vowed never to make peace with the English and was bitterly disappointed when her brother Cudjoe, leader of the western maroons, signed a peace treaty in 1739. But she accepted the terms and received a grant of land for her people.

TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE
Maroon Governor of Haiti
1743-1803

In 1697, Spain ceded to France the western third of the island of Hispaniola. Called St. Domingue, it became the most profitable colony in the Americas, due to brutal exploitation of slave labor. In 1791, slaves in St. Domingue rose in rebellion, destroying plantations, and driving out the French. Spain and Britain took advantage of the situation to attack, and French tried to recover its colony.

Toussaint Louverture, a former slave, emerged as leader of the rebels. A brilliant military and political strategist, he defeated Spanish and British invasions, forced the French to abolish slavery and became Governor-General of St. Domingue. But he was captured and died in exile.

On January 1, 1804, St. Domingue declared its independence. The new nation took on the indigenous name for the island -- Haiti.
Tiger, Rabbit and the Festival
A story from Ecuador
Collected by Juan García Salazar
Translated by Chuck Kleymeyer

This is the story of Uncle Tiger and Nephew Rabbit.

Uncle Tiger and Nephew Rabbit lived out in the jungle. But seeing that between tiger and rabbit there is always a certain amount of rivalry, Rabbit lived a ways apart from Tiger.

There was a great festival approaching in the jungle, and during this festival all the animals had to get loads of food, because they had to go a whole week doing nothing but eating and inviting their friends for meals.

Rabbit had not been able to find any food for this festival. So one day, Rabbit said, “I’m going to go over to my Uncle Tiger’s place, to see if he has any food. Maybe he’ll give me a little bit. He always knows how to get a hold of some food.”

So, off he went through the jungle—walk and walk, walk and walk. By and by he arrived at Tiger’s house ...

“Uncle Tiger, Uncle ...”

“Who is it?”

“Me, Uncle. Your Nephew Rabbit.”

“I don’t have any nephew that’s a rabbit ...”

“Aye, Uncle! What’s the matter? I only came to say hello, Uncle. To see how you’re doing.”

Tiger didn’t even open the door of his house. He just got up close to a hole that he had there for a window, and he said to Rabbit, “Alright, what do you want, Nephew?”

“Aye, Uncle. I just wanted to say hello, and ... also to ask you if you have food for the festival, because I don’t have any and I wanted to ...”

“No, I don’t have a thing yet. But I already know how I’m going to get my food, and I can’t say anything to anybody.”

“Aye, Uncle, tell me how I can get just a little bit for myself for the festival ...”

“I already said I don’t know anything, and I’m not saying anything to anybody.”

So Rabbit, seeing that Tiger wasn’t saying anything, well he went on home. But from that day on, every single day, starting real early in the morning, Rabbit watched Tiger’s every move: wherever he went, there was Rabbit spying on him and on everything he did.

So, it went on like that for several days, until one fine day very early in the morning Rabbit saw that Tiger left his house with a great big basket on his back, and set off down the path towards town. Walk and walk, walk and walk, walk and walk.

Rabbit, when he saw him, he said, “Aha!” There goes my uncle with a basket. I’m sure he’s going for food. I’m going to follow him to see what he does.”

And he took off behind Tiger, walk, and walk, and walk. Tiger, he went on to town. And about two miles from town, Rabbit found a nice pretty spot under a tree, and he lay down right there and took a nap.

About three hours later, here came Uncle Tiger back down the path with a basket full of all kinds of food: rice, sugar, fish, you name it.

Rabbit, as soon as he saw him, he got up from where he was napping and he watched him carefully. “Aha! there goes my Uncle Tiger, loaded down with food. That’s the food I need for the festival.”

As soon as Tiger went past, Rabbit cut way out through the jungle, so as to get in front of Tiger, and right there in the middle of the path—wah!—he lay down dead.
Tiger came up with the huge basket—oof, oof—when all of a sudden: “Hah! Huh! A dead rabbit in the path!!”

He came closer. He stared at it. “It looks dead. It’s not moving. It’s dead!”

Right away, he put the basket down on the ground, he got up real close to Rabbit, and he looked at him carefully. “Maybe it’s not dead!” Wap! He gave it a little kick. But Rabbit—wah—dead.

Then Tiger picked up Rabbit by the ears and smelled him. “Dead. It’s not rotten, must be dead just a little while. And how do I like rabbits! But I already have a full basket of food! Oh, no, no—what do I need more food for? What a shame. I’m gonna leave it. But what a shame—food is food.”

He grabbed the basket and put it on his back, and he took off down the path; walk, and walk, and walk, and walk.

At that, Rabbit—poff—he got up and—shhhhhhhhhhhhh—he cut way out through the jungle to get in front of Tiger, and right in the middle of the path where Tiger was going to come by—wah!—he lay down dead.

Here comes Tiger—oof, oof—when all of a sudden, “Hah! Another rabbit that looks dead!”

He went closer. He stared at it. Wap! He gave it a little kick. But Rabbit—wah—dead.

Tiger put his basket down on the ground. He picked up Rabbit by the ears and smelled him. He shook him, and he tossed him on the ground—flah!—dead.

“Wow! What’s going on round here? The rabbits are dying. One back there. Another one here. What’s happening to the rabbits? Must be some sort of a plague.

“Wow, as much as I like rabbits, but I have a heck of a lot of food here. What a shame. But no, I’m not going to take it with me.” And he put the basket back on his back and took off down the path: walk, and walk, and walk.

Well, immediately, Rabbit—poff—he jumped up, and he took off way out through the jungle, and in the middle of the road where Tiger would have to come past—wah!—he lay down dead.

And here comes Tiger—oof, oof—when all of a sudden, “Hah! Another dead rabbit. What’s happening with all the rabbits? There must be some kind of rabbit fever going on. Oh no! And the way I like rabbits!”

He put his basket down on the ground. He picked up Rabbit by the ears. He shook him. He smelled him. He threw him on the ground—flah!—dead.

Wow! One dead rabbit. Two dead rabbits. Three dead rabbits! They’re dropping dead all over the place. What am I going to hunt, if they all die?

“Geez, usually rabbits are very difficult to hunt, but the way it looks now, there’s nothing to do but pick them up. The whole jungle must be full of dead rabbits. All I’d have to do is carry them home and store them for later. I can smoke them, put them in salt, and dry the meat. That way I can store them.

“Imagine. Three rabbits. Now that’s food. No, no—I can’t pass this up! I’ve gonna pick up all three of them: one here; one back there; and way back there, another one.”

With that, Tiger picked up the dead rabbit and put it on top of his basket of food, and he went back for the other rabbits he had left back down the path: walk, and walk, and walk, and walk ...

“Hmm, seems like it was here that there was a dead rabbit... well, maybe a little bit further down.”

Tiger kept on walking: walk, and walk, and walk, and walk.

“Hmm... I’m sure that it was here where there was a dead rabbit. Maybe down there a piece. Yeah, maybe just a little bit further down.” And he kept on walking: walk, and walk, and walk, and walk.

“I’m sure it was right around. I know I was here. Wow. Hmm. Maybe further down! No?”

Walk, and walk, and walk, and walk ... walk, and walk ... and walk.

All of a sudden, he was almost to town, and no rabbits.

“Oh! Ah-aw. Rabbit! My food!!”

SSSSSSSSUUUUUUSH—Tiger took off running, back down the path.

By then there was no basket!! No Rabbit!!!
Tigre, Conejo y la Fiesta

Un cuento del Ecuador

Coleccionado por Juan García Salazar

Esta es el cuento del Tío Tigre y Sobrino Conejo.

Tío Tigre y Sobrino Conejo vivian en la montaña, pero como entre tigre y conejo siempre hay una cierta rivalidad, el conejo vivía un poco alejado del Tigre.

Venía una gran fiesta en la selva, y durante esa fiesta todos los animales tienen que buscar mucha comida porque hay que pasar toda una semana solamente comiendo e invitando a los amigos a comer.


Entonces, se fue por la selva—camina y andar, camina y andar. Ya llegó a la casa del Tigre...

“Tío Tigre, Tío...”

“¿Quién es?”

“Yo, Tío, su Sobrino Conejo.”

“Yo no tengo ningún sobrino que sea conejo...”

¡Ay, Tío! ¿Qué pasa? Sólo vengo a saludarlo, Tío. Para ver como está.”

El Tigre ni siquiera abrió la puerta de la casa, sino que por un hueco que tenía como ventana se asomó y le dijo al conejo, “Buena, ¿que quiere, Sobrino?”

“Ay, Tío. Yo solo quería saludarlo, y... también preguntarle si usted tiene comida para la fiesta, porque yo no tengo y quería...”

“No, yo no tengo nada todavía. Pero yo ya sé como voy a conseguir mi comida, y no le puedo decir nada a nadie.”

“Ay, Tío, dígame cómo yo puedo conseguir un poquito para pasar mi fiesta...”

“Ya dije que no sé nada, y no voy a decir nada a nadie.”

Bueno, el Conejo, al ver que Tigre no le decía nada, se fue para su casa. Pero apartir de ese día, todos los días desde muy temprano en la mañana, conejo miraba todo lo que el Tigre hacía: donde él iba, allí lo estaba espiando y así todo lo que hacía.

Bueno, así pasaron varios días, hasta que un buen día muy temprano en la mañana el Conejo vio que Tigre salió de la casa con un gran canasto puesto en la espalda, tomó el camino, y se fue al pueblo. Camina y andar, camina y andar, camina y andar.

Conejo, cuando lo vio, dijo, “¡Aja! Allí va mi tío con un canasto. Seguro que se va a buscar la comida. Voy a seguirlo para ver que hace.”

Y se fue detrás del tigre, camina, camina, camina. El Tigre se fue al pueblo. Y faltando unos tres kilómetros para llegar al pueblo, el Conejo buscó un arbol bien bonito y se acostó a dormir allí.

Después de como tres horas, ya venía el Tigre de regreso con el canasto lleno de todo tipo de comida: arroz, azucar, pescado, de todo.

El Conejo, cuando ya lo vio, se levantó de donde estaba durmiendo y se puso a mirarlo.

“¡Aja!” Allí va mi Tío Tigre, cargado de comida. Esa es la comida que yo necesito para la fiesta”. Cuando Tigre pasó, Conejo dió una gran vuelta por la selva, para adelantarse al Tigre, y en la mitad del camino, ¡juas! se acostó, muerto.

El Tigre venía con el gran canasto—huh, huh—cuando de pronto, “¡HAH! ¡HUH! Un conejo muerto en el camino!!!”


Entonces el Tigre lo cogió de las orejas y lo olió.

“Muerto. No está podrido. Recién está muerto. ¡Con lo que me gustan los conejos! Pero, ya tengo un canasto lleno de comida! Oh, no, no—más comida para qué? ¡Que pena! Yo lo dejo. Pero que pena, comida es comida.”
Cogió el canasto y lo puso en la espalda y siguió. Camina, camina, camina, camina.

Con eso, el Conejo—¡piiiit!—se levantó y—shhhhhhhuuuuu—dijo una gran vuelta por la selva, y en la mitad del camino por donde tenía que pasar el Tigre—¡juas!—se acostó muerto.

Tigre venía—huh, huh—cuando de pronto, “¡Jaa! Otro conejo que parece muerto!” Se acercó, lo miró—¡paat!—le dió una patada. Conejo—guas—muerto.

Tigre puso el canasto en el suelo. Lo cojió al Conejo de las orejas, y lo olió. Lo sacudió y lo tiró al piso—¡plas!—muerto.

“¡Caramba! ¿Qué está pasando? Los conejos se están muriendo. Allá uno. Aquí otro. ¿Qué pasará con los conejos? ¡Probablemente una peste!

“Caramba, tanto que me gustan los conejos, pero aquí tengo mucha comida. Que pena. Pero no, no lo voy a llevar.” Y puso el canasto en la espalda y siguió su camino—camina, camina, camina.

Bueno, enseguida, Conejo—¡piiiit!—se levantó y dió una gran vuelta por la selva, y en la mitad del camino por donde tenía que pasar el Tigre—¡juas!—se acostó, muerto.

El Tigre venía—huh, huh—cuando de pronto, “¡Jaa! Otro conejo muerto. ¿Qué está pasando con los conejos? Seguramente hay una peste de conejos. ¡Oh, no! Con lo que me gustan los conejos.”

Puso el canasto en el suelo, cojió al Conejo por las orejas, lo sacudió, lo olió, lo tiró al piso—¡plas!—muerto.

“¡Caramba! Un conejo muerto. Dos conejos muertos. Tres conejos muertos. Están muriéndose por cantidades. ¿Qué voy a cazar yo si todos se mueren?

“Chuta, normalmente los conejos son muy difíciles de cazar, pero aquí están que no hay que hacer nada sino solo recogerlos. Seguramente la selva está llena de conejos muertos, solo tendría que llevarlos y guardarlos para otro día. Puedo ahumarlos, ponerlos en sal, y secar la carne. Guardarla.


¡No, no! Yo voy a recojerlos a los tres—aquí uno, allá otro, más allá otro.”

Enseguida Tigre cojió al conejo muerto y lo puso encima de la comida, y fue a recojer los conejos que había dejado atrás. Camina, camina, camina, camina, camina, camina...

“Jum—parece que era aquí que estaba el conejo muerto... Bueno, tal vez un poco más allá.”

Siguió caminando—camina, camina, camina, camina.

“Jum... estoy seguro que aquí es que estaba muerto el conejo. Tal vez más allá. Si, tal vez un poquito más allá todavía.”

Siguió caminando—camina, camina, camina, camina.

“Estoy seguro que era por acá. Yo estuve aquí! Caramba. ¡Jum! Tal vez más allá! No?”

Camina, camina, camina, camina... camina, camina... camina.

De pronto, ya estaba cerca del pueblo, y nada de conejos.

“¡Oh! Ah, ah. ¡Conejo!!! ¡Mi comida!”

SSSSSSSSSSUSH—el Tigre se regresó corriendo.

¡Ya no había canasto! ¡Ni conejo!!!
Bibliography

Books and Articles


*Information on maroon societies in Cuba, Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil and the Guianas.*


**Audio-Visual**

*The African Presence in Latin America*. A selection of slides taken by Juan García Salazar, with text, illustrating the history, culture and contemporary situation of Afro-Ecuadorian communities. Available for $25+$5 shipping from NECA.


*Cimarrones*. (1983). This docudrama explores the little known situation of African slaves in Latin America in the 19th century, depicting life in runaway slave communities. The film recreates an attack by cimarrones on a Spanish caravan. Directed by Carlos Ferrand, Spanish dialogue with English subtitles and narration. 16mm film or video, 24 minutes. Available for rent or purchase from The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, New York NY 10019, 1-800-723-5522.

*La presencia africana en Hispanoamérica*. This three-part program presents an overview of the history, current world and culture of the peoples of African descent in Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. In Spanish without subtitles. Video, 30 minutes. International Film Bureau, Inc., 332 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 60604, 312-427-4545.

**Sources and Organizations**

*Africa World Press*, P.O. Box 1892, Trenton, NJ 08608, 609-695-3766. A comprehensive source of literature on African and African American issues.

*Arawak Books*, International Mall, 1401 University Blvd., Langley Park MD 20783, 301-434-2573. A good source of books on Africa, the African presence in the Americas, and the Caribbean.

*Centro Cultural Afro-Ecuatoriano (CCA)*, Calle Sucre (Catedral), Casilla 08-01-0065, Esmeraldas, Ecuador, Telephone: 710-603. Offices also in Quito and Guayaquil.

*Coalition of African American and Latino Unity (CAALú)*, P.O. Box 45918, Washington DC 20009. A community organization formed in 1990 to improve the relationship among African-American and Latino individuals and organizations and to support community empowerment.

*Enfo Publicaciones*, Casilla 6432 C.C.I., Quito, Ecuador. Publications on Afro-Ecuadorian culture including *Cuadernos afro-ecuatorianos* and *Boletín informativo afro-ecuatoriano*.

*Network of Educators on the Americas (NECA)*, PO Box 73038, Washington DC 20056-3038. An organization of K-12 teachers, parents and community members with local affiliates in various parts of the country. NECA works with school communities to develop and promote pedagogy, resources and cross-cultural understanding for social and economic justice in the Americas. A catalog of publications and resources is available.

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**Volunteer Opportunity**

Work with Juan García Salazar in Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador, assisting in the transcription and analysis of tapes of oral histories.

Requirements: Fluency in Spanish, minimum three-month commitment, ability to cover own expenses.

Send resume and letter of interest to:

**Teaching For Change**

PO Box 73038
Washington, DC 20056-3038

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Study Guide: Collective Memory 16
Our work begins with the collective memory of my people, the Blacks of Ecuador... Despite the constant pressure to strip us of our culture, including almost 400 years of slavery in other regions of the country, our people have maintained in their traditions and in their legends, images of the past.

* Juan Garcia Salazar