

**JOSEPH ANTONIO NAVARRO**  
***THE FOUNDATION OF NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE DE***  
***LOS MORENOS DE AMAPA (1769)***

In order to trace the beginnings of runaway Negro slaves in the high mountains of Mazateopam whose consolidation into a town was the principal reason for the founding of this new parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Amapa, it is necessary to recall that Negro slaves were brought to this kingdom shortly after the Conquest.

Disaffected with life in the mines, haciendas, and sugar mills, many slaves deserted their masters, forming small settlements in the mountains . . . presently in the jurisdiction of the illustrious Villa de Córdoba and Veracruz. They assaulted travelers, robbing them of their belongings. Under existing conditions they could not be contained or captured.

Various measures were attempted to dislodge and subjugate the cimarrones. Since force alone proved inadequate, a policy of forbearance was applied with the thought that by winning the affection of the cimarrones the difficulties could be more easily overcome . . .

In the years 1725 and 1735 there were slave revolts in the above mentioned sugar mills of the Villa de Córdoba. . . . A large number of slaves fled; some were captured; others escaped deep into the mountains of Mazateopam where they joined the long-established cimarrones . . . In 1735 the region was menaced by a nearly general uprising.

In 1748 two punitive expeditions into the mountains of Mazateopam were attempted by the militia. . . . Both efforts failed miserably. In 1750 two more expeditions were undertaken with the same result.

From 1750 to 1760 the region experienced various incursions at the expense of the mill owners and travelers. Meanwhile the Negroes had divided into two groups. Some, who were less distrustful, joined the party seeking the formation of a town; others continued to oppose the Spanish proposal.

In 1762 . . . the cimarrones went down to the plaza of Veracruz where they . . . offered to serve the viceroyalty in the current war with Great Britain and requested that he grant them their freedom in exchange . . .

The proposal for founding the town was formalized in a written document . . . The decree further granted them the power to found a town in the appointed location and obligated them to destroy completely the runaway bands of Mazateopam; to take up arms in the service of king and country whenever called; to capture henceforth those Negro slaves who fled from their masters with a reward of twenty-five pesos each; to prevent the formation of other marauding bands; to go into the mountains every two months to verify that no bands had formed . . .

On December 5 possession of the land was finalized and boundary markers were set out. The Negroes are extremely happy in their town; the countryside is free from the outrages they perpetuated as vagabonds; the plantation slaves are more secure in their servitude. . .

**Taken from Joseph Antonio Navarro, "The Foundation of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Morenos de Amapa," in *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History*, eds. Kenneth Mills, William B. Taylor, and Sandra Lauderdale Graham (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2002), 322–326.**