



Jamaican Maroons

Resource 2a

How successful were they in resisting enslavement?

Task 1

Read through the story.

For each paragraph, you need to create a **'title'** and a **short summary** (two bullet points maximum).

Story

The Jamaican Maroons – Self-emancipating Africans

After the colonisation of Jamaica by the Spanish in 1509, slavery was established on the island. When the British invaded in 1655, many of the 558 enslaved Africans living there – both men and women - fled to the mountains, making it more difficult for them to be pursued while also offering them the resources needed for survival. They eventually established two separate factions: the Leeward and the Windward Maroons. The Maroon population reached 1,288 by 1796. While different to each other in many ways, both suffered persecution at the hands of the British.

Title

Summary

By the early 1700s, the Maroons controlled much of the eastern part of the island. The British were displeased with this and so launched the First Maroon War in 1728. The Maroon forces comprised both men and women, and were led by a man named Cudjoe and a woman named Nanny – who was reputed to be a powerful obeah woman. They were highly adaptable fighters and took advantage of local environments to launch guerrilla attacks on the British – which they were fully unprepared for. After just over a decade of bloody combat, the British recognised Maroon autonomy by signing a treaty with them in 1739. They would be left alone – as long as they supported the British in preventing further runaways from joining them.

Title

Summary

The peace lasted several decades – until 1795 when a new Governor of Jamaica arrested several Maroon leaders over minor breaches of the peace. This angered the Maroons, and it led to a 5 month battle – The Second Maroon War under leadership of Leonard Parkinson. 300 Maroons resisted 4500 British troops. The British eventually offered another peace treaty. When it was signed, they instead arrested the Maroons and shipped them to Nova Scotia and then on to Sierra Leone. Despite this, several Maroon societies still thrive in Jamaica today.

Title

Summary



Jamaican Maroons

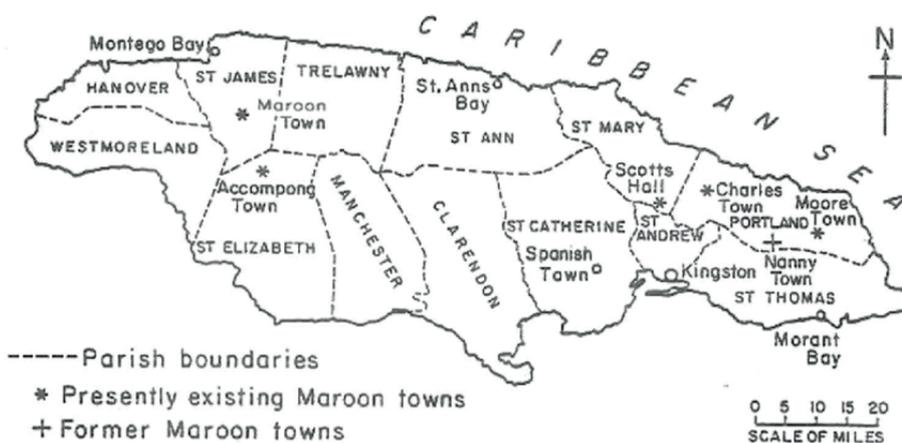
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Task 2

Look at Sources A, B & C – Explain what you can learn about the self emancipating Africans. Provide specific details in your answer.

Source A



Map showing former and present-day Maroon settlements.
Bilby, 1992

Source B



Jamaican Maroons using guerrilla tactics against the British soldiers in one of the Maroon wars. Image created in 1834 for a history book, Historical Cabinet.

Source C

“

We are not in a condition to defend ourselves, the terror of them spreads itself everywhere and the ravages and barbarities they commit, have determined several planters to abandoned their settlements, the evil is daily increasing and their success has had such influence on our slaves that they are continually deserting to them in great numbers and the insolent behaviour of others gives but too much cause to fear a general defection...”

Source C: Governor of Jamaica outlining the impact of maroons in an address to the King, 1734



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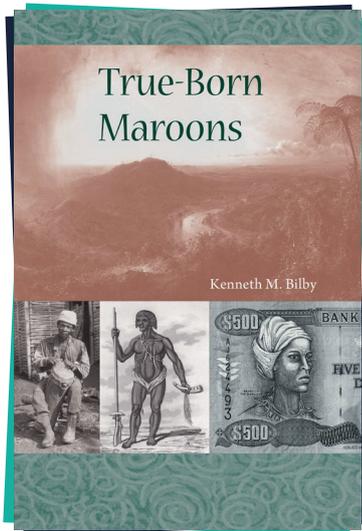
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Task 3

Read through the scholarship and **highlight the opinions about the success of self emancipation** as a way to resist enslavement.

Then: **How do these views conflict with each other? Which do you agree with? Why?**

Scholarship



“

The British colonial government in Jamaica ... began a deportation campaign to eradicate the Maroons in 1795... Remarkably, this and later efforts to destroy the group failed, and today the Maroon settlements on Jamaica still consider themselves an independent nation...”

‘True-born Maroons’ *Kenneth Bilby*

“

Maroons did whatever it took to maintain their existence - which includes liberating, kidnapping, punishing, and assimilating Africans, as well as working with the British to capture runaways and stop rebellions”

‘The Jamaican Maroons of the 17th and 18th Centuries: Survivalists of the New World’ *Lance J. Parker Jnr*