



Community  
Engagement & Education

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

# QUEEN NANNY

Legendary Maroon Chieftainess

a film by Roy T. Anderson

**AGAINST ALL ODDS!**

A fearless warrior queen changed the course of history.

[www.nannythemovie.com](http://www.nannythemovie.com)

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## Acknowledgements

This discussion guide was written by Paul H. Williams in collaboration with director/producer Roy T. Anderson. Williams holds a B.A. (Hons) in Mass Communication and a diploma in the teaching of history from The University of the West Indies, Mona Campus (UWI, Mona). A trained educator, he has taught communications, language and writing skills at Excelsior Community College, the Human Employment and Resource Training Trust/National Training Agency (HEART/NTA) and the University of Technology, Jamaica. He has also lectured in varied subjects such as; proofreading and editing at The Caribbean Institute of Media and Communications, and the art of public speaking at UWI, Mona (Western Jamaica Campus). He is the author of several books, including *Bludum's Fundamental of English*. This prolific author has worked as a proofreader/writer/copy editor for more than ten years at The Jamaica Gleaner, the country's leading daily newspaper. Williams' journalistic interests include, but are not limited to, indigenous culture and heritage, tourism, the environment, social and community history. He's written extensively on the Jamaican Maroons, and has participated in a variety of culturally-specific events across the country. He is the publicist for *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess*.

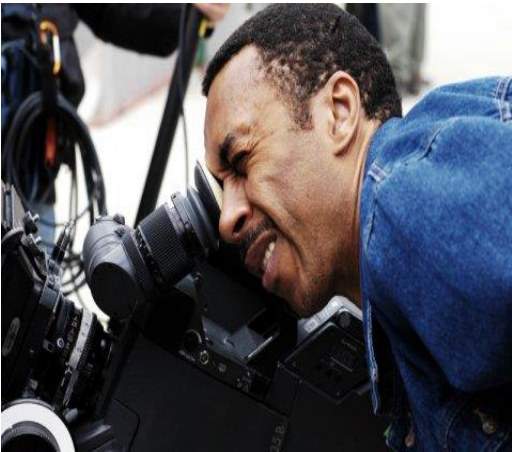
### Roy T. Anderson

Roy T. Anderson is writer, director and producer of the award-winning film *Akwantu: the Journey* (Action 4 Reel Flimworks, 2012), on the history of the Jamaican Maroons. *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess*, Roy's sophomore film, expands on the story of the New World's first successful freedom-fighters by shedding light on to one of the leading figures in that struggle. Anderson is a veteran movie and television stuntman/stunt coordinator and world record-holder. He's performed stunts for Hollywood stars like Will Smith, Denzel Washington, Jamie Foxx, and Morgan Freeman, to name a few; accumulating more than 400 production credits in the process, working on such hits as *Men in Black 3*, *The Dark Knight Rises*, *Spiderman 2*, *Bourne Ultimatum*, *American Gangster*, *Wolf of Wall Street*, and top-rated TV series such as *Blue Bloods*, *Person of Interest*, *Elementary*, and *Gotham*. While continuing his stunt work, Anderson has again flipped the script to direct his second film project; a one-hour documentary on Jamaica's only National Heroine – Queen Nanny of the Maroons.

### Harcourt T. Fuller, PhD

Harcourt T. Fuller is an Assistant Professor of History at Georgia State University and is a descendant of the Windward Maroons. He received his PhD in International History from the London School of Economics (LSE). His research interests include the international history of Africa, nation-building and nationalism in Africa, as well as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the establishment of Maroon communities in the Americas. He has previously taught at Connecticut College, Emmanuel College, Florida International University, and was a Visiting Scholar in the African American Studies Program and a Visiting Researcher in the African Studies Center at Boston University. Dr. Fuller's publications include *Building the Ghanaian Nation-State: Kwame Nkrumah's Symbolic Nationalism* (NY: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2014) and the co-edited book *Money in Africa* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 2009). He has also published articles in peer-reviewed academic journals such as *Nations and Nationalism* and *African Arts*, and is currently researching and writing several books and articles on Jamaican Maroon ethno-genesis, history and identity. Prof. Fuller is the Educational Outreach Director for *Akwantu: The Journey*, and is Producer and Co-Creator on *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess*.

## Statement from the Filmmaker



Roy T. Anderson - PHOTO/Contributed

Queen Nanny is a natural outgrowth of my first film *Akwantu: the Journey*, which looks at the general history of my ancestors, the Maroons of Jamaica. The genesis of that project was really an attempt by me to search out my roots. What started out as an innate sense of curiosity grew into a newfound sense of pride as I began to learn more and more about a people generally referred to as the New World's first successful freedom-fighters.

“Most Maroons and their descendants have lacked the agency to represent their own history and culture, at all levels of academia, both in scholarly writing, as well as on film,” says History Professor Harcourt T. Fuller, a key producing partner on *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess*. He continues; “the production of knowledge about the

Maroons has historically been the domain of European colonial officials, journalists, researchers and scholars in a variety of disciplines, who have had the requisite training, preparation, and funding to carry out such research. In a sense Maroons have largely been written out of and marginalized by history, because others have spoken on their behalf.”

Queen Nanny signals a decisive break from this trend as it expands on the story of the forging of a Maroon nation in Jamaica by shedding light onto one of its leading figures – Queen Nanny. It is my hope that by collaborating with Dr. Fuller, a scholar also of Maroon descent, we can make a significant contribution to our understanding of the dynamic history and culture of the Maroons and their contemporary descendants in Jamaican and the diaspora, and the role of Queen Nanny in this history and culture.

“The Maroon nation of Jamaica was born out of a struggle for freedom in the crucible of slavery, rebellion and political reconciliation,” Dr. Fuller points out for emphasis. Poorly armed and outgunned, the Maroons faced down the mighty British Empire for more than 80 years, led by such brave warriors as Queen Nanny and Captain Kojo. Hostilities between the British forces and the Maroons ended in 1738/39, resulting in the signing of two peace treaties that established Maroon self-government on the Leeward and Windward parts of the island, led by Captain Kojo and Queen Nanny, respectively.

Nowhere else in the New World had Africans attained such a degree of autonomy, coming almost 60 years before the Haitian Revolution (1791), having occurred before the American, and French revolutions, and almost 100 years before the abolition of the slave trade (1834) in the former British colonies. Yet, the story of the Jamaican Maroons has not received the treatment that it deserves, especially on film.

In the telling of the story of Nanny of the Maroons, we highlight the significance of territory and the natural stage on which her story and the history of her people unfolded, namely, one of the Caribbean's highest mountain ranges, the Blue and John Crow Mountains, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This documentary also sheds light on to the historical and mystical persona of Nanny of the Maroons by placing her into the larger context of other women who fought for freedom in Africa and the Americas.

Interviews were conducted with leading scholars to contextualize the role that other African women played in terms of political leadership and exercise of power in western Africa, which will provide greater insights into the rise of Queen Nanny as leader of the Windward Maroons. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade flourished in the 17th and 18th centuries in West Africa. African citizens were captured in the northern interior, then forcibly marched to the coast where they were imprisoned in coastal dungeons such as Elmina and Cape Coast 'castles', while waiting to be transported across the Atlantic Ocean. Those who survived this treacherous voyage carried with them customs and traditions that not only comforted them in a foreign land, but successfully aided them in the fight for freedom. In the case of the Jamaican Maroons, they were well prepared.

During this period in Africa, especially in the former Gold Coast which was divided into relatively small kingdoms, the way in which wars were conducted was radically transformed. Prior to that, warfare was waged by a relatively small group of professional soldiers who had high levels of skills in fencing and hand-to-hand combat. This was now replaced with musketry and broadly recruited militias. In essence, a large chunk of the population was now involved in military affairs.

And they developed tactics and weapons use that was appropriate to this new way of fighting. And, as a result of the wars that came out of that period thousands of people were exported to the Americas. Along the way slave ships brought literally whole units of one or another Akan army to Jamaica. "It's inevitable," says Dr. John Thornton, professor of history at Boston University, "people fight a war, the captives who are on the losing side; they're probably captured in one part of the battlefield ... So when they get to the other side of the ocean as they escape slavery, they are able to utilize that same tactical approach to warfare similar to that of the Gold Coast". Out of this group emerged a supreme leader, Nanny of the Maroons, who led her people in vigorously resisting slavery and ensuring that they remained independent from the aggression of the British forces.

The overwhelming view among scholars, Maroon, and non-Maroon alike, is that Queen Nanny was born in the area formerly known as the Gold Coast (modern-day Ghana) circa 1686. The narrative is that she came to Jamaica as a free person to spread the message of hope and encourage her fellow Africans to resist a system that treated them as less than humans.

As I viewed the mountainous terrain from the cockpit of a Jamaica Defence Force helicopter while the group hiked the grueling 12-mile journey below, I was awestruck. I swelled up with pride at the thought of what my ancestors were able to achieve in these mountains some hundreds of years ago. And when I stepped off the helicopter and walked in the very same physical environment where they fought, lived, and died; just like my visit to the slave dungeons in Ghana while filming *Akwantu*, I was overcome by emotions I could not describe. Those cherished moments validated to me that I am on the right track – this bringing to light the triumphs and struggles of a proud and resilient people to worldwide audiences through film and other media. *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess* is my second film chronicling the Maroon experience in the New World. There are many more stories to be told.

**Roy T. Anderson**, Director/Producer



PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

REMARKS BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY E. COURTENAY RATTRAY**  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE WORLD PREMIERE OF THE FILM**  
**QUEEN NANNY: LEGENDARY MAROON CHIEFTAINESS**

**ECOSOC CHAMBER, UN HEADQUARTERS**  
**NEW YORK**  
**19 OCTOBER 2015**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, Jamaicans at home and abroad are celebrating National Heroes' Day. It is a day that culminates National Heritage Week, when we as a people pause to reflect on our past, the things that have made us the nation we are today, and also to celebrate the memory of those who preceded us, particularly in the fight against slavery and colonialism. The title National Hero was created shortly after Jamaica gained independence and, to date, only 7 individuals have been bestowed the nation's highest honour. Among them is one woman – Queen Nanny of the Maroons.

Jamaica's first National Hero, the Rt Excellent Marcus Garvey once exhorted his countrymen by stating, "Up you mighty race, you can accomplish what you will". I imagine that his mind must have harked back to the accomplishments of our earliest National Hero, the Rt. Excellent Nanny of the Maroons. Nanny, said to be a woman of small frame but with sterling will and determination, "lit the flame of freedom in the hearts of earlier Jamaicans" when she led her people in resistance to the mighty British Army.

This is the same colossal British Army which enforced the rule of the British Empire whose writ spanned across the globe; the same British Army that would, decades later, battle the American Revolutionaries and over a century later engage King Shaka in Southern Africa. I say this to emphasize that well before it was deemed possible, this woman envisioned that no battle was too large when the right to freedom was at stake. So much so was her agitation and that of her Maroons, that the British were forced to agree to a Peace Treaty with the Maroons, and to grant to Nanny and her people "the land on which they resided" through a land patent issued in 1741.

Queen Nanny, a pioneer of the legendary resistance of the Maroon people, stands out as a pioneer of the abolition struggle, who numbers among the first exponent of the tactics of guerrilla warfare. She did this long before the elaboration of gender equality and the empowerment of women emerged and became fashionable. She set the pace for the indisputable and quintessential national traits which today distinguish the indomitable will present in the Jamaican psyche and national character. Bob Marley would later urge all oppressed people, and we are honoured that his wife Rita is here with us tonight, to "Get up, Stand up, stand up for your rights, don't give up the fight". As we view this film tonight, let us not only honour Queen Nanny and those who fought against slavery, but heed that call and keep the fight alive to defeat indignity, subjugation, racial prejudice and slavery wherever it exists today.

I thank Action 4 Reel, the DPI and the Mission of Trinidad and Tobago for partnering with us to present this world premiere this evening and hope that you will both enjoy and be edified by this latest artistic, historical and educational work of the Director/Producer, Roy Anderson, a proud son of Jamaica.

I thank you.

## FILM SYNOPSIS

She was a queen captured in her homeland, and forcibly transported across the Atlantic Ocean in the belly of a slave ship. In the New World, she would eventually rise up to become the leader of a new nation – of free Africans. However, not many people outside of Jamaica know of the legendary ‘Nanny’, warrior chieftainess of the Jamaican Maroons, one of the most celebrated, but least recognized heroines in the resistance history of the New World.

Queen Nanny is the only female among Jamaica’s seven national heroes. Her likeness appears on the country’s \$500 bill. Yet, not much is known about this mystical person, who led a band of former enslaved Africans in the rugged and remote interiors of Jamaica in their improbable victory over the mighty British army during the early to mid-eighteenth century.

Most of what we do know about Queen Nanny comes through Maroon oral history and folklore, and very little is written about her in historical texts. So, who was this herbal healer, prophetess, and African warrior queen? Conceived by award-winning Jamaican-born, American filmmaker Roy T. Anderson, and History Professor, Harcourt T. Fuller, this landmark one-hour documentary film, *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess*, unearths and examines this mysterious figure that is Queen Nanny of the Maroons.

Around the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, runaway enslaved Africans in the Americas and the Caribbean were generally referred to as *Cimarrones* or Maroons. In Jamaica, this group waged a protracted 80-year military campaign that resulted in the defeat of the formidable British Army. As a result, two peace treaties were signed in 1738/39 granting the Maroons territorial sovereignty in their remote mountainous strongholds, including what is now the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015.

*Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess* documents the struggle for freedom by the Jamaican Maroons, led by the indomitable military genius, ‘Grandy’ Nanny. A spiritual leader, skilled in the use of herbs and ‘guerilla warfare’ tactics, from her mountain stronghold at the source of the Stony River in the Blue Mountains, she directed the warfare that effectively neutralized the vaunted British firepower.

Queen Nanny symbolizes the pride of today’s Caribbean women. In fact, Jamaica’s first female and former Prime Minister, the Most Honorable Portia Simpson Miller, paid homage to Queen Nanny in her January 2012 inauguration speech, and continues to do so at every opportunity. And although Maroons, who all proudly proclaim to be Grandy Nanny’s ‘*pickibo*’ (children), are appreciative that she was named National Hero in 1976, to them her historical importance is such that she is seen as a powerful, living, breathing presence for almost three centuries.



Queen Nanny, Windward Maroon Leader - Illustration by Frank Lumsden



Shot in Jamaica, Ghana, Canada, and the United States over the course of two years, the film features interviews and conversations with world-renowned scholars and present-day Maroons. We also engage a select group of women to explore Queen Nanny's impact on their lives, and how she has influenced them in their own pioneering work.

One of the highlights of the film is a historic 35-person expedition to the rugged hills of Old Nanny Town in the majestic Blue Mountain. Legend has it that only the bravest Maroons, or those "free of bad deeds," can safely venture up to this sacred spot where Nanny's powerful spirit still inhabits. As we seek to uncover the history and legacy of Queen Nanny, her intriguing story is also told through songs, performances, poetry, narration, and a series of re-enactments.

Following on the heels of *Akwantu: the Journey* (2012), Anderson's award-winning film on the history of the Jamaican Maroons, *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess* expands on the story of the New World's first successful freedom-fighters by shedding light on to one of the leading figures in that struggle. This documentary also serves as a prelude to the dramatic telling of the epic story of this larger-than-life iconic persona.

## HOW TO USE THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

This discussion guide was designed to foster greater understanding and give a better insight into the story of Queen Nanny of the Maroons, and to promote discussions about the origin, persona, achievements, and legacy of this indomitable African warrior who led her people to freedom in the Blue and John Crow Mountains of Jamaica in the early to mid-eighteenth century.

This guide is divided into four modules, which correspond with the major themes of the film: Queen Nanny's origin; Queen Nanny, the legendary Maroon chieftainess; the historic filmed expedition to Old Nanny Town; and Queen Nanny's legacy to all women. Below is the sequence of chapters in DVD for *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess*:

1. Opening title sequence
2. Queen Nanny – not a simple woman
3. Queen Nanny's origins
4. African female warriors
5. The slave trade / repercussions
6. An unbelievable tale
7. Old Nanny Town
8. A historic trek
9. Maroon creativity and resilience
10. Queen Nanny – a formidable leader
11. The trek continues
12. Queen Nanny was real
13. Queen Nanny's influence
14. Queen Nanny – an outstanding heroine
15. End credits

At the end of each module, there is a list of related questions, some of which are designed to test your knowledge of the material and others that require critical thinking and debate. Additional sources for further research are listed at the end of the final module. The film and this guide will assist, teachers, instructors, tutors, group leaders, etc., in presenting lectures, workshops, seminars and discussions on Queen Nanny in formal educational settings including colleges, universities, and high schools.

The film can also be used in community centers, cultural spaces, public libraries, churches, and with general audiences to foster discussions around the Transatlantic Slave Trade, resistance, heroism, empowerment, tolerance, peace, reconciliation, etc. Here are some suggestions on how to effectively use the film with this discussion guide:

### STEP I: Preparation before viewing

1. Before watching *Queen Nanny*, instructors are advised to read this discussion guide in its entirety to be apprised of the four main themes of the film.
2. Divide the participants into four groups, each focusing on a different theme.
3. Decide what format the discussions will take.
4. Brief the group(s) beforehand while discussing expectations.

### STEP II: Delivering the presentation(s) and facilitating discussions

1. Show *Queen Nanny* in its entirety, desired chapters or sections, bearing in mind the individual themes.
2. For group work, divide the class into groups with a manageable number of participants.
3. Assemble students in their respective group.
4. Have each group (or group leaders) give brief summaries of their presentations.
5. End the session by summarizing the main arguments and points brought out in the film (or film clips) and the discussions, stressing the major takeaways and overall developments.

### STEP III: Assignments and further research

1. Instructors may give assignments to participants to do further research on some of the issues discussed in each module.
2. Participants may formulate their own research topics based on the contents of the modules and the discussion questions.
3. The sources listed at the end of Module 4 may be used to help students with further research and to help construct papers.

Please visit the film's website, [www.nannythemovie.com](http://www.nannythemovie.com), which provides more useful information on conducting successful screenings and facilitating engaging discussions.

## Scheduling Screenings & Discussions with *Queen Nanny* Facilitator



Post screening discussion - PHOTO/Steve Donaldson

Educational and community organizations, or other interested groups or individuals may also want to screen *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess* for a class, seminar, panel discussion, or other events, with the film's Director, Roy T. Anderson or another *Queen Nanny* facilitator present for a post-screening Q & A or panel discussion. For more information on availability, scheduling and fees, please contact:

Action 4 Reel Flimworks

Alison Gail, Co-Producer

*Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess*

Email: [info@nannythemovie.com](mailto:info@nannythemovie.com)

## Module 1

### Queen Nanny's Origins

For over 300 years, Africans were taken from their native homeland through the Transatlantic Slave Trade to work on plantations owned by Europeans in the Americas. The trade itself was a brutal system in which these forced laborers existed in subhuman conditions. Many died during the Middle Passage (from Africa to the New World), and many more perished on the plantations.

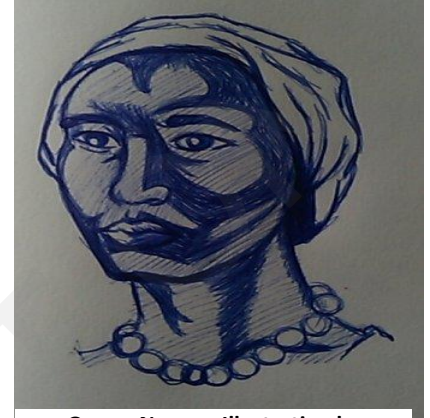


Reenactment - PHOTO/MACPRI

Yet, there were those who fled servitude to set up their own villages in remote places in the rugged and mountainous interior. Some coexisted with the Tainos, the indigenous inhabitants who had deserted the villages established by the Spaniards, and together they were called *Cimarrones*, from which the word Maroon was derived. The Maroons resisted attempts by the English to recapture them, and themselves waged spirited battles with the former captors, who oftentimes were assisted by local militia and regular Army soldiers, referred to as 'Red Coats'.

According to documented and oral accounts Queen Nanny was a Maroon leader who lived in what is now called the Blue and John Crow Mountains. This was where she fought the English, and drove fear into their hearts. But, some people believe Queen

Nanny, this indomitable chieftainess, did not exist, a myth they call her. This is mainly because not much has been written about her in the historical texts. Her name appears in the national archives only four times, so most of what we do know comes from oral tales and legends.



Queen Nanny - Illustration by  
Rodganya Mendez

According to University of the West Indies (UWI) lecturer, K'adamwe K'nife, Nanny was real, and is regarded as a mythical figure because some people cannot understand some of the things we (as a people) can do, especially in adverse situations. Also, he says the British would not want to write about the fact that their army, the most powerful in the world at the time, was defeated by a group of Africans led by a woman.

Professor Verene Shepherd, social historian and lecturer at the UWI, Mona regards the mythical view of Queen Nanny as sexist, saying that if Nanny's feat were done by men they would not be regarded as mythical. She says the English invaders could not believe that an African woman could be a military leader.

But who really was Queen Nanny? Though many believe she was captured in Africa and came to Jamaica to be enslaved, there is a school of thought that says not so. They say Queen Nanny was already a fearless Akan warrior, who lived in what was called the Gold Coast (modern-day Ghana), and had come

to Jamaica to see what was happening to her people.

Some scholars have pointed out that Queen Nanny held no ordinary woman's positions among the Windward Maroons. Her position as their leader can be traced to the tradition of Queen Mother, women like Yaa Asantewaa, of Akan/Asante societies of the former Gold Coast. German anthropologist Werner Zips writes in *Nanny's Asafo Warriors: The Jamaican Maroon's African Experience* that "the Jamaican Maroons formed their laws and politics from the importance of law and state authority of the Asante kingdom. It would seem logical that their leadership followed the same Asante model of the Queen Mother."

University of Ghana's Distinguished Professor Kofi Opuku, who is quite knowledgeable about the Maroons, says; "The indomitable spirit they exhibited in Jamaica came straight from Ghana. It is the real Akan spirit." Nanny is believed to have descended from the Akan people, which is a matrifocal society. The identity of the Akan people comes from the maternal side of the family, and women are usually heads of families. This feminine principle is strong in Akan society, Opuku says. Thus Queen Nanny is compared to fellow-Akan warrior, Nana Yaa Asantewaa (c 1840-1921), who fought the British in the 1900 War of the Golden Stool.

Nana Yaa Asantewaa was born in the Asante city of Ejisu (c.1840). She was the mother of, and main advisor to her son, Nana Afrane Kuma, ruler of Ejisu. Asante leadership came into the hands of Nana Yaa Asantewaa after the exile of her son and the Asante King, Prempeh I in 1896. The Asante continued to fight under Nana Yaa Asantewaa's leadership until they were finally defeated in September of 1900.

Nana Yaa Asantewaa evaded the British for a short amount of time until she was captured and sent into exile in The Seychelles with her son. She died in exile

in 1921, but her rebellion resulted in improved treatment of the Asante people by the British;



Wax of Nana Yaa Asantewaa - PHOTO/  
Manhyia Palace Museum / Chester  
Higgins

the same way in which Queen Nanny's resistance to the British resulted in her getting land for herself and her people. But, unlike Nana Yaa Asantewaa, she was never captured; she was instead invited to sign a treaty of peace and friendship, which she refused to do.

In 1976, Queen Nanny of the Maroons, who is said to have lived between 1685 and 1755, was conferred by the Jamaican Parliament, led by then Prime Minister Michael Manley, with the honor of National Hero, after a motion in the Senate by Colin L G Harris, former Senator and Colonel of Moore Town; and much research by poet and historian, Professor Kamau Brathwaite of the University of the West Indies, and noted researcher Lucille Mathurin. Bev Carey, Maroon descendant and historian was a consultant to the Government, providing much historical material. Queen Nanny remains Jamaica's only female National Hero.

Kenneth M. Bilby, writes in *True-Born Maroons* that "the choice of Nanny was not without complication; for one thing this legendary figure was almost entirely absent from the written sources, and not all historians were prepared to accept that she existed other than in a myth".



Monument to Queen Nanny/Bump Grave - PHOTO/MACPRI

“Brathwaite’s work in particular, explicitly designed to satisfy the need for ‘proof’ of Nanny’s actual existence, represented an impressive attempt to

weigh and reconcile written and oral sources, and left little doubt that the woman known to present-day Maroons as Grandy Nanny was not only an authentic historical personage, but one who occupied a place of special importance as well; a significant force among the Windward Maroons during the time leading up to the treaty,” Bilby continues.

A significant part of the evidence presented to prove that Nanny was real was the Land Patent to Nanny in 1740 (Patents Vol 22 Folio 15 B), which specifically mentions “Nanny and the people residing with her and other heirs”. It was entered on April 20, 1741. She was granted 500 acres at the place now known as Moore Town in Portland, sometimes referred to as New Nanny Town. On October 10, 1977, a monument, erected in honor of Queen Nanny, was unveiled at Bump Grave in Moore Town, Portland.

### Discussion questions:

1. What was the journey of enslaved Africans from their former homeland to the Americas called?
2. Can you elaborate on the origins of the word - Maroon?
3. What is the term most often used to refer to British soldiers?
4. Why was Queen Nanny regarded a myth?
5. Why did Professor Shepherd say the mythical view of Queen Nanny is sexist?
6. What evidence is available that confirms her existence?
7. Who were the main researchers that substantiated Queen Nanny’s heroism?
8. Which African country do most people believe that Queen Nanny originated from, and what was her purpose in coming to Jamaica?
9. According to historians, to which African tribe did Queen Nanny belong?
10. Which Akan warrior is Queen Nanny most often compared to?
11. When was Queen Nanny conferred as a National Hero, and who was Prime Minister at the time?

## Module 2

### Queen Nanny, Legendary Maroon Chieftainess

The Maroons used their knowledge of the geography of the rugged mountainous landscape to wage guerrilla warfare on the British, who were accustomed to fighting face-to-face in big open spaces. Even the so-called ‘black shots’, enslaved Africans sent by the British to fight the Maroons, were no match for the Maroons’ superior guerrilla fighting techniques.



Maroon dressed in ambush - PHOTO/  
Jahsen Levy

One of their strategies was to camouflage themselves with the vines of a certain cacao plant, and ambush the British soldiers. Other ways of outfoxing the British, it is said, was to walk backwards to create footprints that would confuse their enemies; luring British soldiers to precipices and

narrow passageways; making fire in wetlands; using goats to test water for poison; banning of goats whose bleats would betray their locations; and the rolling of logs and boulders down hills on to advancing soldiers. They used the abeng, a side-blown wind instrument made with a cattle’s horn, to communicate over long distances. They perfected the art of cooking the meat of the wild hogs underground (jerking), which they had learnt from the Tainos. This was to prevent smoke from escaping and identifying their settlements.

Queen Nanny was a brilliant strategist who led her men over hills and through valleys, as they fought the British. One story goes that she would catch bullets with her posterior and fire them back in rapid succession at the British soldiers.

In *True-Born Maroon*, Kenneth M. Bilby argues that Kamau Brathwaite, the trailblazing researcher who authenticated Queen Nanny’s existence; believed Inspector Herbert Thomas, a British colonial police officer and author who made an expedition to Nanny Town in 1890, might have invented this story, which was then adopted by Maroons who came into contact with him and his book about the expedition.

“Notwithstanding the offence that this oral tradition might cause to some, “Bilby states, “a number of feminist writers have embraced it and re-interpreted it in their own terms.” Some scholars argue that this prominent Maroon oral tradition is probably based in African-derived concepts of spiritual warfare (which Bilby shows in his book were shared by Maroons in the Guianas and elsewhere, and were critical to the Maroons’ success in their struggle for survival). Bilby suggests that “...Nanny’s culturally specific ‘gesture’ also symbolizes the Maroons’ defiance in the face of British military might and arrogance (as Brathwaite himself emphasizes).”

Another legend is that Queen Nanny lured the English soldiers to stare into a boiling pot, which hypnotized them. Many researchers believe however that this “Nanny’s Pot” was actually a seething pool at the foot of a high waterfall, which formed part of the natural defense in the region.

But it was not only her military skills that Queen Nanny used to keep her people safe. With her superior knowledge of the use of herbal remedies, and spiritual practices she was able to keep her people



nourished and healthy for quite a number of years. And this knowledge has been passed down to her descendants.

Still another legend recounts that when the Maroons experienced food shortage, Queen Nanny went to a place called Pumpkin Hill where she meditated and prayed, and connected with her ancestral spirits. Afterwards she found pumpkin seeds in her pockets. Within a week the seeds which she planted had borne enough pumpkins to feed her people thus warding off starvation.

The English captured Old Nanny Town in 1734 and remained there, on and off, until 1739. But their armed forces were constantly under surprise attacks from the Maroons, who had set up settlements at strategic points along the route to their former stronghold. They disrupted the English supplies of food and ammunition. This wore down the resolve of the men in red, who also fell victim to the rugged and unfamiliar terrains.

Queen Nanny's own exploits and the legendary stories about her have created doubts in the minds of

many historians and researchers about her existence. She was said to be a tough negotiator who did not sign the 1739 Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the British because she suspected they would not honor the agreement; and signing it would be an act of betrayal.

Various clauses of the treaty state that the Maroons should help to put down future slave rebellions, return runaway slaves, and support the English in their fight against foreign enemies. And though Queen Nanny did not sign the treaty, which was signed by her head man Captain Quao, she was given a Land Grant for 500 acres in 1740 in an area called the New Nanny Town, or what is known today as Moore Town in Portland, located in the northeastern section of the island.

Despite her National Hero status, Queen Nanny still remains a mystery to many people. Nobody knows what she actually looked like. The image of her that people are most familiar with is an impression of her that was created in 1976.

### *Windward Maroon Treaty*

IV. *That he said Captain Quao, and his people, shall be ready on all commands the governor, or the commander in chief for the time being, shall send him, to suppress and destroy all other party or parties of rebellious negroes, that now are or from time to time gather together to settle in any part of this island, and shall bring in such other negroes as shall from time to time run away from their respective owners, from the date of these articles.*

Excerpts from the Windward Maroon Treaty - Courtesy/Jamaica Archives

### Discussion questions:

1. Describe the type of warfare that the Maroons waged with the English?
2. What gave them such a significant advantage over the more sophisticated British Army?
3. What plant did the Maroons use to camouflage themselves?
4. What is an abeng, and why was it so important to the Maroons?
5. Describe the conditions that made it ideal to establish free communities for runaway slaves?
6. Why was jerking of meat an important way of cooking?
7. Name one way in which Queen Nanny kept her people healthy?
8. What happened on Pumpkin Hill, according to legend?
9. When did the English capture Old Nanny Town?
10. According to researchers, why did Queen Nanny not sign the 1739 treaty with the British?
11. Why is it important for the Maroons to maintain self-governance?
12. What arguments can be used to justify the Maroons' agreeing to return runaway slaves?
13. What do you think of the notion of Queen Nanny performing supernatural deeds?
14. How many acres of land was Nanny granted, and where were they located?
15. Why do you think Queen Nanny was honored as a National Hero of Jamaica?

## Module 3



Trek to Old Nanny Town - PHOTO/Jahsen Levy

### Old Nanny Town Expedition

The Maroons – Taino and Africans together – lived in Old Nanny Town, in the Blue and John Crow Mountains, and though the town has been abandoned for centuries, it is still considered a sacred place by the Maroons. Ancestral spirits dwell there, and it is advisable not to venture there without participating in a ritual of spiritual protection. There are points along the way where people stop to invoke and appease ancestral spirits.

The first known official expedition to the town, was led by a police inspector and author named Herbert Thomas, in 1890. In 1967 Maroon researcher Alan Teulon led an exploration to ‘Stonewall’ in Old Nanny Town. In 1973, he arranged another expedition involving military personnel, led by Lt. Hartley Nott. Another expedition, led by then University of the West Indies lecturer in history and archaeology, Kofi Agorsah, took place in 1993. Then, stone, metal and ceramic artefacts were unearthed.

In June/July 2014 History Professor Harcourt T. Fuller, and filmmaker Roy T. Anderson (both are Maroons), led a group of over thirty-five people to Old Nanny Town to add authenticity and currency to this film. Among the participants were Maroons from Scotts Hall in the parish of St Mary, and Charles Town and Moore Town in Portland. It was a personal quest for these Maroons to visit the place where their ancestors lived, fought and died.

The night before the departure, there were traditional Maroon singing, drumming, dancing and other rituals. Maroon elder and master abeng blower, Isaac Bernard, gave words of caution and wished the group well. There were a few guides in the group, the most experienced of whom was Ewart ‘Wooly’ West. People were advised to exercise extreme caution and to be very wary of

their surroundings, owing to the remoteness and complexities of the terrain, it is very easy to get lost.



The group at Base Camp - PHOTO/Action 4 Reel

It was an amazing four-day, three-night expedition; which first took us to our base camp late in the evening that first day. The journey was a long and arduous one, from the tiny village of Windsor in Portland. The trekkers travelled over unbelievably rugged terrains, up and down ridges, on precipices, through thickets and overgrowth, down ravines and up very steep mountain sides; overrun by rivers and streams. It was hard to imagine how the Maroons could have survived in such a naturally beautiful, but brutally rugged environment.

For Dr. Fuller, a Maroon historian and an assistant professor at Georgia State University, whose father was born in Portland's Rio Grande Valley, this historic expedition was special. He said he had always wanted to take the trek ever since his father told him he was Maroon, to understand their plight and their victories. He had to walk in their footprints. For Joel Bernard, Moore Town Maroon, it was an opportunity to have a conversation with his ancestors which he had wanted to do for a long while.

On day two, the journey from base camp to Old Nanny Town took approximately two hours. The main feature of the site is a crude rectangular stone structure. As they arrived the trekkers blew the abeng and sprinkled rum as they basked in their triumphant achievement of making it to their 'holy grail'. "Just to be here, it's been a lifelong dream, and as challenging and difficult as it was to get to this site, it was worth it ... I am doing this for everyone who was not able to make it here ... to thank them, especially Queen Nanny ... for fighting for our freedom," Professor Fuller says.



Stone structure at Old Nanny Town - PHOTO/Jahsen Levy

When the expedition team left base camp to return home it was with a feeling of grand accomplishment. The vision of director Roy T. Anderson to go where the story of Queen Nanny evolved into what it is today had borne fruit. This certainly would not have been possible without the involvement of key partners such as the Jamaica Defence Force, which provided a helicopter to transport personnel and supplies into the rugged mountains; as well several members of their force provided much needed logistical and other support.

### Discussion questions:

1. Where is Old Nanny Town located?
2. How did the geography affect the development of Old Nanny Town?
3. What was unearthed at this location in 1993?
4. When was the most recent expedition to Old Nanny Town and what was its main purpose?
5. Which Maroon groups were represented on this expedition?
6. Who is Isaac Bernard?
7. Why were the expedition participants advised to be careful?
8. Why is Old Nanny Town considered a sacred place?
9. Who are generally the most experienced guides in this region, and why is that the case?
10. What were Dr. Fuller's expectations for the historic journey to Old Nanny Town?
11. In your opinion what was the significance of this trek to Old Nanny Town?
12. Given the chance, would you have participated in such an expedition? Explain.

## Module 4

### Queen Nanny's Legacy



Gloria Simms as Queen Nanny - PHOTO/Action 4 Reel

The story of Queen Nanny, legendary Maroon chieftainess, real or mythical, is an inspirational one, and since it is now known that Queen Nanny was a living, breathing, larger-than-life persona, the impact that it has on women across the African diaspora is even more indelible and meaningful.

Queen Nanny has left a legacy of determination and hope, not for Jamaican women only, but for women all over the world. It is a story that speaks of a woman who led her people under hazardous conditions against an army of men, regarded the world's best at the time. She wore down their resolve to the point where they decided to join her in a treaty of peace and friendship.

In the face of great adversity, women can recall what Nanny and her people had been through, learn from it and use it to redeem and liberate themselves, because Queen Nanny's story is also one of self-determination, one that people emulate, and will continue to.

In the film, the element of Nanny's legacy is woven throughout by many prominent women, some of

whom may as well be direct descendants. They articulate very well what Queen Nanny means to them, but Anderson, is also on point when he sums her up, thus: "She is the quintessential role model, not only for today's Jamaican women, but for all others around the world ... Queen Nanny symbolizes the pride of today's Caribbean women." They are proud because Queen Nanny showed them the way.

Una Clarke, former New York City councilwoman, compares Nanny to US civil rights activist, Sojourner Truth. Her daughter, Yvette Clarke, a United States Congresswoman, in calling Queen Nanny a general, equates her with Harriet Tubman, who helped hundreds of enslaved Africans in the United States to escape through what is popularly called the Underground Railroad. "Nanny sort of set the bar for all of us in terms of understanding the freedom of the human spirit, and the ability to govern oneself," Congresswoman Clarke says.

UWI lecturer, Dr. K'adamwe K'nife, says the Jamaican women who from day to day eke out a living from meagre means represent an energy that we cannot lose and Nanny of the Maroons encapsulated that energy.

"When I look at every Jamaican woman I see Nanny in that woman because ... she represents strength ... unifying force ... fierceness ... passion. This spirit of Nanny is with us," long-time Member of Parliament, Olivia 'Babsy' Grange proudly posits.

Birte Timm, a Maroon researcher of European ancestry states, "Nanny has brought me closer to my own ancestry. She and her history and actually my whole engagement with Maroon history and spirituality has really made me think differently about my ancestry and traditions that run in my family."

Former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Portia Simpson-Miller, who claims to be a descendant of Nanny, in speaking about Queen Nanny's status as National Heroine, says, "For me that is very significant, and important to have one woman that could have mobilized several men, waged a war and freed her people, and I am proud that we have a national heroine ... Her work gave to me the strength and determination that is needed to lead a nation."

To Rita Marley, reggae icon, and widow of the late Bob Marley, "Nanny has a certain amount of substance in her that gives us hope ... as Jamaican women", while to Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, multiple World and Olympic gold medalist, Nanny is an inspiration. She says, "...for her to be part of the collection of heroes that we have here in Jamaica is a huge

thing for us as females, and it shows that not because we are feminine ... there is still some toughness inside."

To Archeologist Dorrick Gray, who participated in the 1993 expedition to Old Nanny Town, "she is what we called in world heritage terms a person of outstanding universal value ... She is for the entire world".

Queen Nanny has bequeathed her strength and indomitable fighting spirit to the world. She has inspired thousands of women all over, and that is the broader picture, and the essence of the film, *Queen Nanny: Legendary Maroon Chieftainess*.



Image of Queen Nanny on the Jamaican \$500 bill

### Discussion questions:

1. Do you agree with Anderson that “Nanny symbolizes the pride of today’s Caribbean women”? Please elaborate.
2. Whom did Yvette Clarke compare Queen Nanny to?
3. What did Olivia ‘Babsy’ Grange say Queen Nanny represents?
4. Why is Queen Nanny’s status as National Heroine significant and important to former Prime Minister, Portia Simpson-Miller?
5. Why is reggae icon Rita Marley regarded a modern-day Queen Nanny?
6. How has the study of the Maroons affected Birte Timm?
7. Why did Dorrick Gray say “Nanny is a person of universal value”?
8. What does Queen Nanny mean to Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce?
9. How has Queen Nanny contributed to the advancement of women in our society?
10. How would you describe Queen Nanny’s lasting legacy?



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## TIMELINE OF JAMAICAN MAROON HISTORY

(Re-printed from *Akwantu: the Journey* Discussion Guide)

- **1655:** The British capture the island of Xaymaca from the Spanish. In their flight, the Spanish free a number of slaves who settle in the frontier zones and form a guerrilla resistance force. These escaped slaves were dubbed “Maroons” in reference to the Spanish word *Cimarron*, which was initially used to refer to feral cattle in the hills of Caribbean islands.
- **1655-1739:** Period of continuous conflicts with the British.
- **1720-1739:** The general period of the First Maroon War. During this time, the Maroons are led in two distinct groups; the Windward by Queen Nanny and the Leeward by Captain Kojo.
- **1733:** Quao emerges as one of the main leaders of the Windward Maroons.
- **January 6, 1738:** Captain Kojo leads the Maroons to a rout of British forces, slaughtering all but one soldier.
- **March 1, 1738-39:** Leeward Maroon leader, Captain Kojo meets with British military envoys, who negotiate the First Maroon Treaty and an end of armed conflict between the warring parties. The Treaty includes a provision that Maroons must return runaway slaves to their masters.
- **June 23, 1739:** Treaty signed with the Windward Maroons. Nanny protests the Treaty and refuses to sign it. This results in a split between the Windward Maroons; Nanny and her followers formed New Nanny Town (today Moore Town), while Quao went on to form Charles Town.
- **1740:** Nanny's name appears on a land grant.
- **1750s:** Nanny is believed to have died.
- **1795:** The appointment of a new British governor reignites tensions with Maroons. This leads to the start of the Second Maroon War.
- **1796 – 1798:** As a result of the Second Maroon War, nearly 600 Maroons from Trelawny Town are exiled to Nova Scotia by the British colonial government, despite an agreement to the contrary.
- **1800:** The Trelawny Town Maroons are transported to Freetown in Sierra Leone. Some will remain in Africa, while others return to Jamaica.
- **1807:** The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade is abolished by the British Parliament
- **Christmas, 1831:** The Baptist War, a large-scale slave revolt that began as a peaceful protest led by Baptist preacher Samuel Sharpe. Brutal reprisal by British follows. This accelerates the movement toward full emancipation.
- **1838:** Slavery itself is abolished throughout the entire British Empire.
- **October 1865:** The Morant Bay Rebellion; disenfranchised blacks, led by a Baptist Deacon Paul Bogle (who was subsequently made a Jamaican National Hero), take up arms against the British for greater rights. Paul Bogle was executed.
- **1866:** The Jamaican legislature relinquishes powers, and the island becomes a British Crown Colony.
- **1944:** First election held under universal adult suffrage.
- **August 6, 1962:** Jamaica gains full independence nearly 225 years following the First Maroon Treaty.
- **1976:** Queen Nanny named National Hero of Jamaica. Her image is henceforth used on the Jamaican \$500 bill.
- **2007:** Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807
- **2013/14:** The Jamaican Maroons commemorate the 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the Peace Treaties with the British in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- **2015:** The Blue and John Crow Mountains inscribed as a UNESCO World heritage Site.

## HOW TO BUY THE FILM

To purchase the home-use and educational DVD; and for additional information, please visit the film's website: [www.nannythemovie.com](http://www.nannythemovie.com).

*Queen Nanny* is also available online for digital download at [www.vimeo.com/ondemand/queennanny](http://www.vimeo.com/ondemand/queennanny)

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