BLACK PEOPLE WERE THERE DURING THE AGE OF EXPLORATION

ONE WAS JUAN GARRIDO, A FREE AFRICAN CONQUISTADOR WHO SETTLED IN MEXICO CITY.

HE IS CREDITED IN HISTORICAL RECORDS WITH BEING THE FIRST PERSON TO SUCCESSFULLY GROW WHEAT IN NEW SPAIN.

Juan Garrido

Africans were present during the Spanish conquest of Mexico, including free Black conquistadors who traveled with Spanish expeditions and later settled in New Spain.



Black MEXICO

The Black history you probably weren’t taught

Black History 101

THEN CAME A MUCH LARGER AFRICAN POPULATION

As New Spain expanded, thousands of enslaved Africans were brought through ports including Veracruz, Campeche and Acapulco.

They worked in silver mines, sugar production and other industries across colonial Mexico.

Black History 101

SOME FOUGHT FOR THEIR FREEDOM

Black History 101

Enslaved Africans also resisted.
One of the most famous was Gaspar Yanga, who led a Maroon community in Veracruz that resisted Spanish attempts to bring it under colonial control.

In “African-Mexican Communities: Excluded from the Mexican Nation” (2025), Paulette A. Ramsay describes Yanga’s community fighting for self-government and land ownership before negotiations eventually secured land and privileges for San Lorenzo de los Negros.

The community was later renamed Yanga.

They didn’t simply escape slavery. They built a community on their own terms.

Vicente Guerrero.

José María Morelos

BLACK MEXICANS Helped Free Mexico

By the beginning of Mexico's independence struggle in 1810, just over 10% of New Spain's population was Afro-Mexican, according to the Spanish census discussed by historian Ted Vincent.

In "The Blacks Who Freed Mexico" (1994), Ted Vincent argues that Afro-Mexicans had a "special incentive to fight" because independence leaders connected the struggle against Spain with opposition to slavery and the racial caste system.

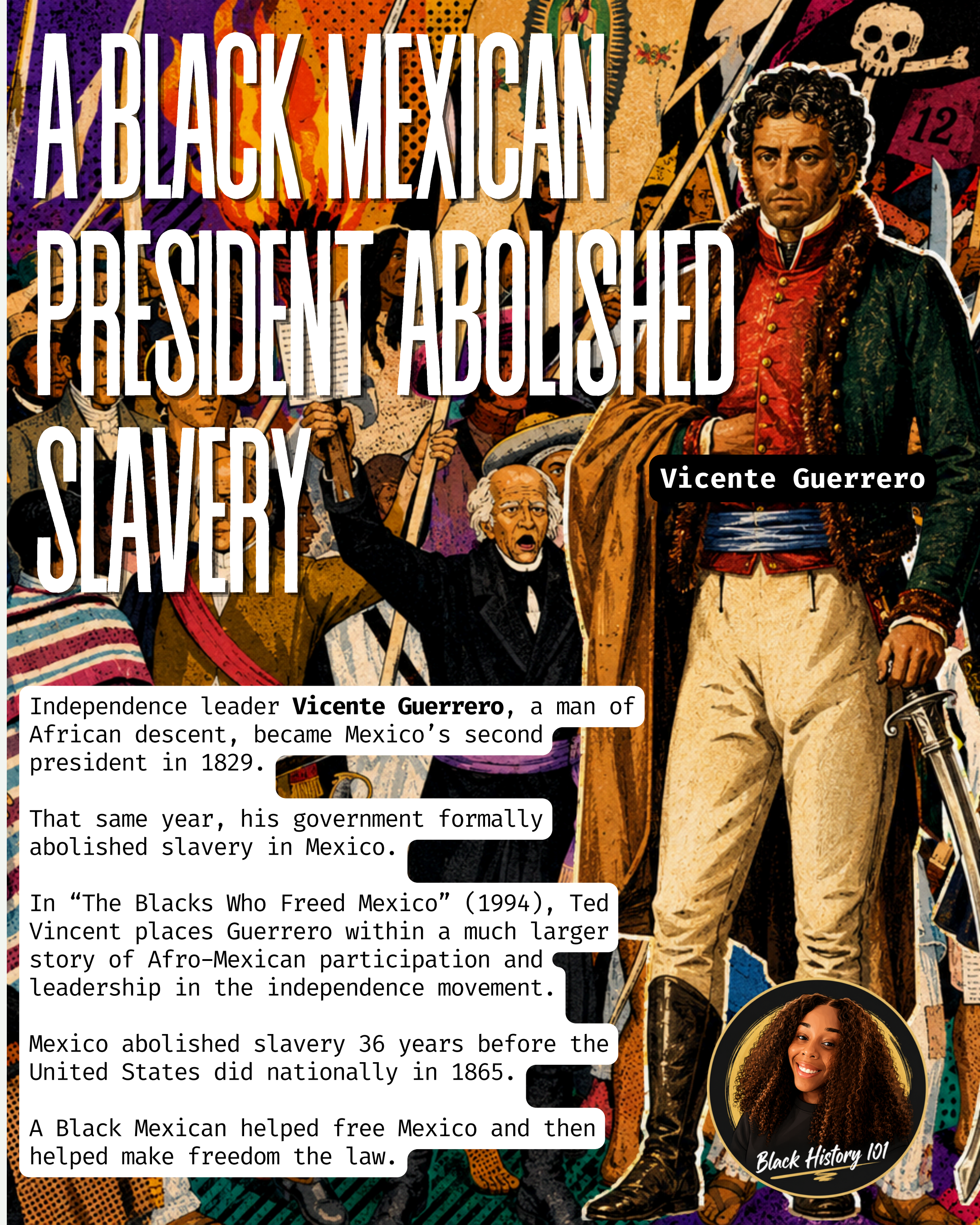
Afro-Mexicans fought as ordinary soldiers and rose to leadership.

Two of the most important were **José María Morelos** and **Vicente Guerrero, men of African descent.**

Black Mexicans didn't just witness Mexican independence. They helped win it.



A BLACK MEXICAN PRESIDENT ABOLISHED SLAVERY



Independence leader **Vicente Guerrero**, a man of African descent, became Mexico's second president in 1829.

That same year, his government formally abolished slavery in Mexico.

In "The Blacks Who Freed Mexico" (1994), Ted Vincent places Guerrero within a much larger story of Afro-Mexican participation and leadership in the independence movement.

Mexico abolished slavery 36 years before the United States did nationally in 1865.

A Black Mexican helped free Mexico and then helped make freedom the law.

Black History 101

BLACK MEXICO NEVER DISAPPERED

After independence, Mexico increasingly emphasized a national mestizo identity, which could obscure the country's distinct African ancestry.

In "African Mexicans in Spanish Slave Societies in America: A Critical Location of Sources" (2010), Debra D. Green reviews scholarship documenting Afro-Mexican communities and African cultural continuities across Mexico.

And in "African-Mexican Communities: Excluded from the Mexican Nation" (2025), Paulette A. Ramsay argues that Afro-Mexicans continued preserving cultural traditions while fighting for recognition within the Mexican nation.

In **2019**, Mexico amended its Constitution to formally recognize its Black population.

BLACK MEXICANS WERE NEVER MISSING.

They were written out of a story they helped create.







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