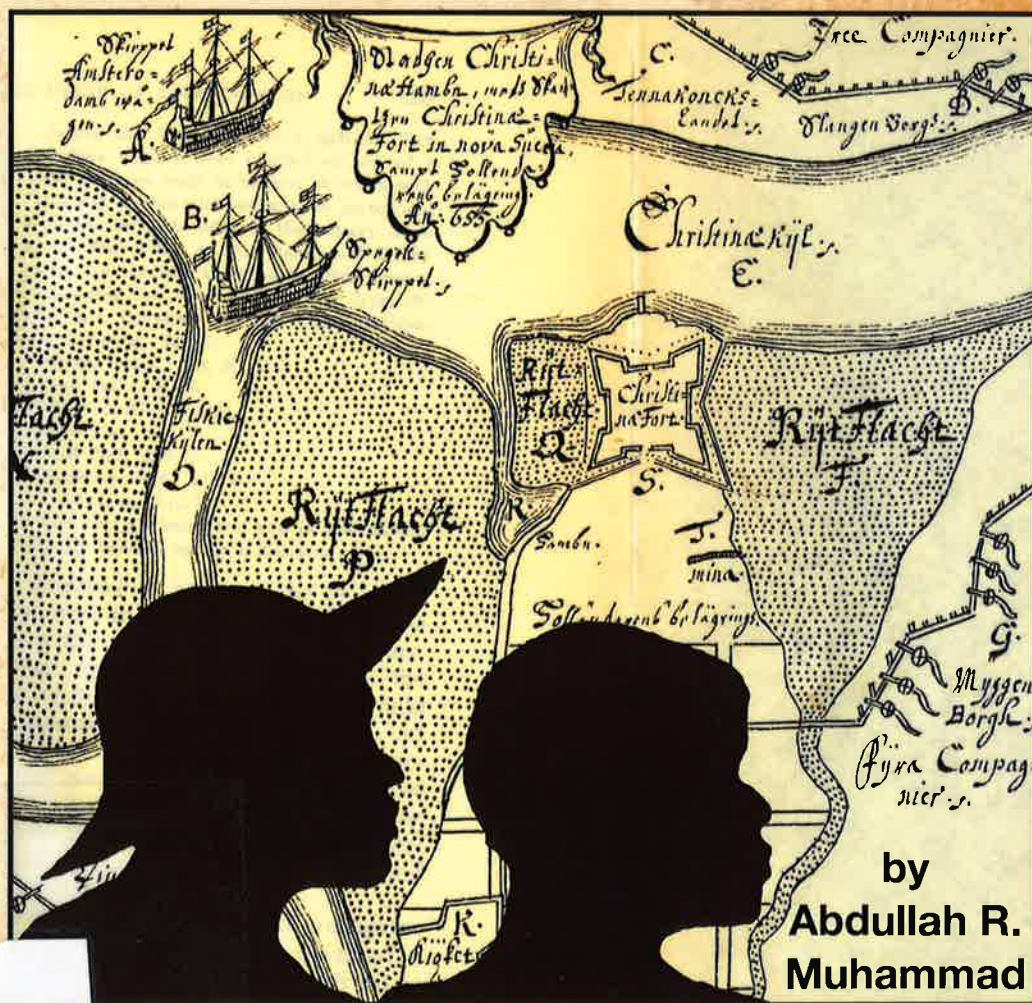


AFRICANS in New Sweden



by
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THE UNTOLD STORY

cans that is the focus of this book. More precisely, it is the social and economic relationship that existed between the Swedes and those who lived in their settlements—commoners, soldiers, farmers, traders, aristocracy, Company men, indentured servants—and free, as well as enslaved Africans, that this research shall attempt to uncover.

For it was within the Swedish colony that the first distinction of a colonist of African origins received any acknowledgement of his presence and his contributions to that community. His name was Antoni Swart, known more commonly as “Black Anthony.” The circumstances of his arrival and his life in the Swedish colony gave impetus to this research and the optimistic hope of finding out more about his life and the lives of others like him who existed just below the radar and attentive eye of those charged with recording the people and events of that time.

The most agonizing part of my research has been the acceptance that most of the pertinent records of that time period, particularly those written in Swedish, have been lost to time—the result of battles fought, those in authority choosing to hide certain truths, and ships’ logs lost at sea. Nevertheless, records kept by the Dutch and those salvaged by the first conquering English forces under the command of Colonel Richard Nicholls have somehow survived through deliberate acts of preservation and ironic good fortunes of coincidental finds. Furthermore, only a few of our contemporary historians and other authors of historical readings have chosen to sift through the hard-to-read and very boring detailed reports of Colony and Company administrators charged with the task of reporting on life in the colony, to bring overlooked details to light. A few of these historians who did do more digging to find and report on the facts that did not reach the general public and to broaden the view of historic events were Peter Craig, C. A. Weslager, William H. Williams, and John A. Munroe. Without their insightful and scholarly work, much of what I have been able to write would be hollow and very speculative. In fact, one of Delaware’s fore-

most historians, John Munroe, said, “Any work like this history,... is bound to be based in great part on secondary sources—that is, on what has been written previously. Unfortunately, in Delaware historiography, as in the Arabian Desert, there are ‘empty quarters,’ areas that have hardly been explored. Perhaps this presentation... will stimulate new studies, particularly in areas previously unexamined. Such, at least, is the hope of the author.”¹ My sentiments exactly! It was as if he wrote those words specifically for me at this time, not thirty-one years ago as the preface to his book, *History of Delaware*.

Given the enormity of my task, yet the scarcity of recorded facts for that period and for this community of people, I have focused my efforts on the period of 1626–1700, in order to incorporate some important facts relating to the first established Dutch settlement. Much of what I have written about Africans during this period will be the first time a mainstream historical text has revealed such facts and circumstances. With that being said, I have diligently and responsibly noted credible sources to validate my observations and statements of fact. I have taken obvious facts and made logical inferences in order to show a continuum of possible events and circumstances that help explain some missing historical connections.

The commentary that I share in this book is fully sustained by the observations and notations made by others. These comments are necessary in order to show the connection between events that happened and reports that never detailed those events, or reports that did, but were never recovered. I have been careful not to use 21st-century judgment to critique or weigh the merits, good or bad, of the social system that existed during that time period. Just as a person from that period could not possibly understand or accept our social order of today, we cannot be judgmental of theirs. Were there practices during that period that we would find abhorrent? Of course there were. Are they being highlighted in this text for that purpose? Not in the least. What I do highlight is the man-