

ROGERS UNEARTH'S INTERESTING DATA

Discovers Negro Was Mexican President in 1825

NEW YORK, N. Y., Nov. 23. — J. A. Rogers, the well known Negro author and journalist who has been in Europe for the past year, has unearthed some very interesting information about Vincente Guerrero, Liberator of Mexico. While in Paris he ran across a description of Guerrero in Larousse, the French encyclopedia, stating that he was "esclave mulatre," meaning "mulatto slave."

In the December number of The Messenger, a Negro monthly magazine published in New York City, Mr. Rogers tells the interesting story of this great man who would be jim-crowed if he lived in the United States today. Says Rogers:

"A singular fact about Guerrero: he could neither read nor write, but like Crispus Attucks, illiterate Negro slave and the first to strike the blow for American independence, he could feel deeply, perhaps all the more because he, too, was an escaped slave—the tyranny of Spain—a tyranny that caused her the loss of all her colonies of every single foot of the vast possessions she once held in the New World."

The writer then relates the oppression and taxation that led up to the revolt of the Mexicans against Spain and how the oppressed, led

by Guerrero and others threw off the Spanish yoke. After many internal struggles in which leaders arose and were overthrown Guerrero was elected president in 1825. Then we are told:

"Guerrero at once set about improving the condition of the masses composed largely of Indians and half-breeds. He ordered schools to be built and established free libraries. Reading had been forbidden by the Spaniards, and the inquisition had been active. Guerrero further established a coinage, regulated the gambling houses, and ordered a suspension of the death penalty. But that was not all. He had been inspired by the American constitution, but going further than that document he ordered the immediate freedom of every slave in the republic. A reading of the Mexican Constitution, much of it the work of Guerrero, shows it to be one of the most liberal in existence.

"Guerrero's emancipation proclamation passed almost unnoticed because chattel slaves were few—all except in one part of the republic where it made a tremendous stir—Texas. The Texans were Americans who had migrated into Mexico under the leadership of Stephen Austin. The land had been granted them by the Spanish viceroy, and they had sought there a haven from the agitation against slavery then going on in their own land. The slaveholders had jumped from the frying pan into the fire."

Thus, a Negro slave became the George Washington of Mexico.