



MANUELA SÁENZ (1797-1856) WAS BORN INTO REBELLION. THE DAUGHTER OF A WEALTHY ECUADORIAN MERCHANT, SHE BECAME A REBEL AND SPY FOR SIMÓN BOLÍVAR DURING THE WARS FOR LATIN AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. BUT SHE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT HER ENSLAVED COMPANIONS JONOTAS AND NATAN, ABOUT WHOM WE KNOW LITTLE.

MANUELA SÁENZ WAS BORN IN SPANISH-RULED ECUADOR. HER FATHER WAS A MERCHANT, BUT SHE WAS AN *HIJO ESPURIO*, A CHILD OUT OF WEDLOCK. BECAUSE OF HER STATUS, MANUELA WAS NOT WELL TREATED, AND THIS TREATMENT HELPED TO PUT HER ON A PATH TOWARDS REBELLION.

MANUELA WAS SENT TO A CONVENT WHEN SHE WAS SEVENTEEN, AND IT WAS HOPED THE STRICT RULES WOULD GIVE HER DISCIPLINE. HOWEVER, SHE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE PRIVACY OF THE CONVENT TO STUDY REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS OF FREEDOM, CITIZENSHIP, AND CONSTITUTIONAL LAW. EVENTUALLY, SHE WAS EXPELLED.

MANUELA'S REBELLION WAS SUPPORTED BY HER COMPANIONS, JONOTAS AND NATAN, TWO ENSLAVED PEOPLE 'GIVEN' TO MANUELA WHEN SHE WAS A CHILD. WE KNOW LITTLE ABOUT THEM, BECAUSE FEW RECORDS WERE KEPT OF ENSLAVED PEOPLE.

TOGETHER, THESE THREE BECAME REVOLUTIONARIES AND SPIES. AFTER BEING FORCED TO MARRY AN ENGLISH MERCHANT, MANUELA ABANDONED HIM TO JOIN THE MAN SHE LOVED, SIMÓN BOLÍVAR.

AT THE BATTLE OF AYACUCHO IN 1824, MANUELA CUT THE UPPER LIP AND MOUSTACHE OFF A SLAIN SPANISH SOLDIER AND KEPT IT AS A TROPHY.

BUT HER REAL GIFT IN WARTIME WAS HER ABILITY AS A SPY. SHE, JONOTAS, AND NATAN WERE SO GOOD AT GAINING INFORMATION ON SPANISH PLANS THAT THEY SIGNIFICANTLY HELPED BOLÍVAR'S FORCES.

AFTER BOLÍVAR'S DEATH IN 1830, MANUELA WAS DRIVEN INTO EXILE IN JAMAICA. HOWEVER, SHE AT LEAST RECEIVED RECOGNITION FOR HER ACTIONS, INCLUDING THE ORDER OF THE SUN, PERU'S HIGHEST HONORS. JONOTAS AND NATAN RECEIVED NO AWARDS.

TOGETHER, THEY HAD TESTED THE LIMITS BOTH OF SPANISH RESPECTABILITY AND LIBERATION IN THE AGE OF REVOLUTION, BUT IN SOME WAYS THOSE LIMITS REMAINED IN PLACE.



WORLD HISTORY PROJECT
BIOGRAPHIES

MANUELA SÁENZ, JONOTAS, AND NATAN