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# **The Remembrance Papers, Volume III**

The Myth of the Foreigner:  
Rewriting the Story of Black  
Presence and Belonging

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PERSPECTIVE METAPHYSICS PUBLISHING LLC

# The Remembrance Papers, Volume III

## The Myth of the Foreigner: Rewriting the Story of Black Presence and Belonging

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### Abstract

The narrative of Black Americans as perpetual outsiders has been a persistent feature of historical, political, and cultural discourse in the United States. This volume interrogates the systemic misclassification of Black Americans as foreigners—both figuratively and legally—despite their deep, often ancient, roots in the Americas. Drawing from early colonial records, cultural history, and oral testimony, this paper challenges the archetype of the Black "immigrant" and restores the rightful narrative of belonging, contribution, and origin.

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### Introduction: The Power of Myth

The framing of Black people in the Americas as outsiders, newcomers, or inherently foreign is not accidental—it is *architected*. This perception, repeated through textbooks, media, and laws, has denied Black Americans the social and spiritual right to call the land they built their own. Yet from early African navigators and pre-colonial settlements to the sweat equity of enslaved labor and post-emancipation resilience, the presence of Black people in the Americas is not recent—it is foundational.

This paper reclaims that foundation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Reclamation, in this context, is not simply a historical correction but a spiritual necessity. When a people's origin story is stolen, so too is their power to self-locate. Reclaiming that origin is an act of sovereignty, of anchoring oneself in time, place, and divine order.

## Section I: Before 1619 – The Presence That Predated Slavery

Contrary to dominant narratives, Africans arrived in the Americas long before 1619. This includes:

- **Estevanico the Moor (1528):** A Moroccan explorer enslaved by Spaniards who became one of the first non-Native persons to explore the American Southwest.
- **African seafarers and traders:** Evidence from West African maritime cultures and possible transatlantic voyages, notably discussed in the works of Ivan Van Sertima.
- **Maroons and Free Settlements:** Communities of free Black people existed in parts of the Caribbean, South America, and North America well before formal colonization.

These historical facts complicate the timeline and demand a broader context for Black belonging.

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## Section II: The Manufacturing of Foreignness

From the inception of slavery through the early 20th century, legal and cultural institutions framed Black identity as antithetical to "American." Strategies included:

- **Denial of citizenship** (Dred Scott v. Sandford, 1857)
- **Exclusion from land ownership and homesteading rights**
- **Redlining, segregation, and geographic containment**
- **Textbook erasure of Black contributions pre-Civil War**

Together, these systems reinforced the myth that Black Americans were always just guests—or worse, intruders—in the national narrative.

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## Section III: Stateless at Home – The Identity Trap

Black Americans often exist in a liminal space: too diasporic to be Indigenous, too native to be immigrant, too erased to be sovereign. This section explores:

- **Lack of a formal “homeland”** narrative recognized by the state
- **Cultural appropriation without inclusion**
- **Disconnection from tribal enrollment and land inheritance**

Yet in every cultural sense—language, food, architecture, rhythm, resistance—Black Americans have been and remain architects of American identity.

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## Section IV: Case Studies of Enduring Belonging

- **The Gullah Geechee Nation:** A distinct Afro-Indigenous culture rooted in the coastal South, preserving ancestral language, foodways, and communal land traditions despite centuries of colonial disruption.
- **Afro-Seminole:** Formed through the fusion of escaped African maroons and Indigenous Seminole nations, this community actively resisted U.S. militarism, preserving cultural sovereignty well into the 20th century.
- **The Washitaw Nation<sup>2</sup>:** Declared as an ancient imperial presence, the Washitaw de Dugdahmoundyah trace continuous Black occupancy of the land now known as Louisiana and its surrounding territories. Empress Verdiacee Tiari Washitaw Turner Goston El-Bey, the spiritual and political leader of the Washitaw, successfully challenged U.S. territorial claims in international forums, affirming land patents and sovereignty rights rooted in pre-colonial legacy.<sup>1</sup>
- **Urban Strongholds:** From Harlem to New Orleans, Detroit to Oakland, Black communities have not merely “survived” in cities — they have redefined urban America. Through music, governance, innovation, and resistance, these strongholds testify to a legacy of cultural stewardship and political ingenuity.

These examples demonstrate that Black belonging is not metaphorical—it is geographic, cultural, and ancestral.

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## Section V: The Washitaw Nation: Between Courtroom and Cosmos

The Washitaw de Dugdahmoundyah, under the guidance of **Empress Verdiacee Tiari Washitaw Turner Goston El-Bey**, asserted ancestral land claims rooted in pre-Louisiana

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<sup>2</sup> Empress Verdiacee’s assertion of Washitaw sovereignty, including her legal filings and international recognition, are part of a growing body of Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous legal challenges to colonial land occupation. See *Washitaw Nation v. United States et al.*, 1993.

Purchase land titles. Their legal efforts symbolized an attempt to restore a sovereign lineage believed to predate European contact.

In **Washitaw Nation v. United States et al.**, filed around **1993**, documentation and correspondence were presented in various venues, including the **United Nations**, challenging U.S. jurisdiction over Washitaw territory. However, when brought into U.S. courts—such as the 2010 federal case (*Washitaw Nation v. United States*, No. 2:10-cv-02217, W.D. Tenn.)—the case was dismissed for **lack of standing and jurisdiction**, with the claims deemed "**frivolous**" by legal standards.

Subsequent rulings (e.g., *United States v. Henley*, 6th Cir., 2002) reinforced that the **Washitaw Nation is not federally recognized**, and therefore cannot assert tribal sovereignty under U.S. law.

But to dismiss this movement as merely "fictional" is to ignore its deeper purpose. The Washitaw declaration was more than a legal maneuver—it was a spiritual signal. A calling back. A ceremonial reminder of the spiritual jurisdiction embedded in land, lineage, and memory.

The filing failed in court, but it succeeded in awakening thousands to begin remembering who they were before the names were changed.

## **Conclusion: The Exile Ends With Remembrance**

To remember is to return.

The myth of the foreigner was never about law—it was about forgetting. Legal rulings, like those faced by the Washitaw, sought to define truth through the narrow lens of colonial codes. But our truths—ancestral, spiritual, sovereign—are not confined to the pages of court opinions.

Yes, the Washitaw Nation's legal claim was dismissed. But its **spiritual message** endures:

**Sovereignty is not something granted. It is remembered.**

This remembrance is not for the faint-hearted. It requires courage to stand in the face of legal erasure and proclaim presence. It requires humility to restore ancient alliances between bloodlines that colonizers tried to divide.

And above all, it requires love—love for the land, for the ancestors, for the future yet to come.

We close not with finality, but with continuation. The exile ends not with a gavel, but with a **drumbeat**, a **feather**, a **declaration**:

We were always here.  
We are still here.  
And the land remembers us.

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## Suggested Readings

- Ivan Van Sertima, *They Came Before Columbus*
- Nikole Hannah-Jones, *The 1619 Project*
- Sylvia Wynter, *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being*
- John Henrik Clarke, *Christopher Columbus and the Afrikan Holocaust*
- William Loren Katz, *Black Indians: A Hidden Heritage*

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