

**Estate Golden Grove- riot**

Rigsarkivet, West Indian Local Archives, General Government, #2.28.6, Nr.26/1822

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**DOCUMENT 1**

2 August 1822

Estate Golden Grove

Chairman A. Babcock

To

Honorable Judge Andreson

Sir!

*In consequence of the whole gang of Negroes on this Estate, being in a state of Mutiny, I think it my duty as a Manager to inform you of it, also the cause, & in what manner it broke out. The Negroes have long been accustomed to indulgence, and to be left to themselves, these indulgences have rather increased, than diminished, such as giving them longer noon, more beverages & Rum, but I have attended to them, and directed what work they were to Do, and have not left them entirely to the charge of the driver, who this Morning directly refused his assistance to quell the uproar among the Gang; when I told him to stop the noise, he answered, he did not carry Needles and thread to sew up their Mouthes, and behaved most insolently to me, in the presence of the whole Gang, who had thrown up their Hoes, refusing to work & Still keeping a noise, I then laid hold of the Driver & tied his Hands behind his back, & sent him in to town to your Office, as this Mutiny is without a shadow of cause it would be much for the advantage of the Estate your examining the Negroes and punishing the Ringleaders.*

*I am Sir*

*Est: Golden Grove*

*Most respectfully*

*2 August, 1822*

*your obedient and humble Servant*

*Charles O'Reilley*

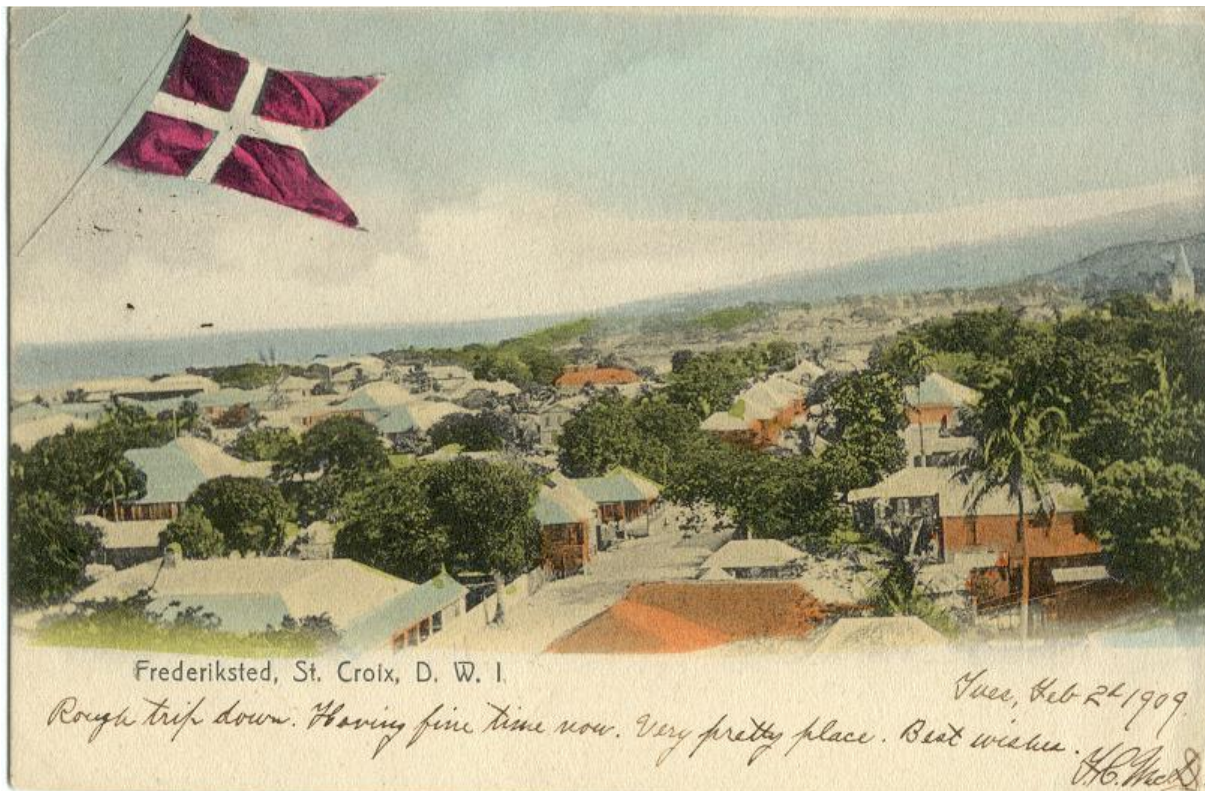
*PS: The disturbance herein mentioned began from my ordering the Driver to give a man a few lashes of a Tamarand Whip for neglecting to do as I ordered & shewed him.*

Submitted to Frederiksted Police Court on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1822 in case nr. 26/1822

A. I. Andreson

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### DOCUMENT 2

By request 6 Negroes were fetched from the field to this house who, according to the Manager, are presumed to be guilty of the disturbance mentioned in the complaint, those being:

**The Negro Phillipe** of this estate appeared. He was born in Guadeloupe, does not know his age, but is believed to be in his early twenties, is Roman Catholic, and has been on this estate about 8 years.

He explains on being questioned that the Negro gang in the field, among those himself, this morning when the Manager had the driver flog the Negro Benjamin this morning, started saying aloud that the Manager probably would do that to all of them, and he states as a reason for this that the Manager at the same time said that he would show them a different tune if they did not do their work. But the witness now adds that the Manager's words were brought about by the fact that they spoke out when he had the driver tied up. As for the driver's offence, the witness explains that when the Manager instructed him to make the Negroes be quiet, he answered that he could not do that as he was not close to them, but at the time was busy punishing Benjamin, who, explains the witness, got about half a dozen lashes of a tamarind whip, because, as stated by the Manager, he did not do his job the way he was ordered to. The witness further explains that he did not hear the driver say to the Manager that he was not close to them. He also admits that, when the Manager had the driver tied up, he and the others said that he, the Manager, would do the same to all of them, admitting, however, that the Manager had not threatened them. He denies having refused to work and rebelled, as stated in the complaint, and says that he neither heard nor saw any of the others do any such thing.

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However, he does admit on being questioned that he was one of those who, when they returned from the field for lunch, together sought out Administrator Dorr at this house and said that they would not accept the treatment that Manager Reilly gave them. The witness says, however, that he himself has not been punished, but that some of the others have, namely with lashes of the tamarind whip. He does admit that nobody has been punished without having done something wrong, and that they all receive enough clothes and food. Dismissed.

**The Negro Hector** of this estate appeared. Born in Anguilla, does not know his age, but is believed to be 18 years old, is Anglican.

He was questioned based on the submitted complaint, but denies that he or the others made any noise or disturbance out of the ordinary in connection with the Negro Benjamin being punished or in connection with the driver being tied up and led into town; he denies having heard the driver use the above-mentioned expressions, and states that he only heard him say that he could not control the Negroes or the gang (i.e. the field workers), and punish Benjamin at the same time. However, he did hear the Manager say that he heard some of the Negroes speak when Benjamin got the above-mentioned beating. The witness has not himself been punished other than yesterday when he was beaten 3 or 4 times on his shoulders by the driver by order of the Manager, because, as stated by the Manager, he did not do his work properly in the field where they were having a bit of fun. He also says that the Manager drives the Negroes harder than the previous Manager, but does admit that they get sufficient food and clothes. He also admits that he was among those who called upon Dorr this morning at lunch, and states as his reason for doing so that the present Manager treats them harshly by forcing them to work harder than they are used to. Dismissed.

**The Negro Francois** of this estate appeared. Born in Guadeloupe, does not know his age, but is estimated to be about 30 years of age, is Roman Catholic. He is the Negro who about 3 months ago injured himself in his left hand (which is why he is still shackled)

He explains that together with the others this morning at around 7, he was working in the field, as he says, without any of them being noisy or speaking in connection with Benjamin being punished, but that the Manager nonetheless, once the driver had finished flogging Benjamin, had ordered him to control the Negroes, some of whom he had presumably heard speaking, and that the driver answered that he could not control the Negroes and punish Benjamin at the same time; the witness did not hear the driver say more than that, but even so the Manager had him tied up and brought into town; the witness denies that he or anybody else made any kind of noise or disturbance when the Manager tied the driver's hands, or before that, until they stopped work and went home at lunch time and they all came to this house to call upon Dorr, in order, the witness explains, to ask him whom he would leave in charge of the estate when he leaves for America as planned, and the reason for this being that the present Manager Reilly treats them too harshly during work by using the tamarind whip on one or two of them when they do not do the work the way he wants.

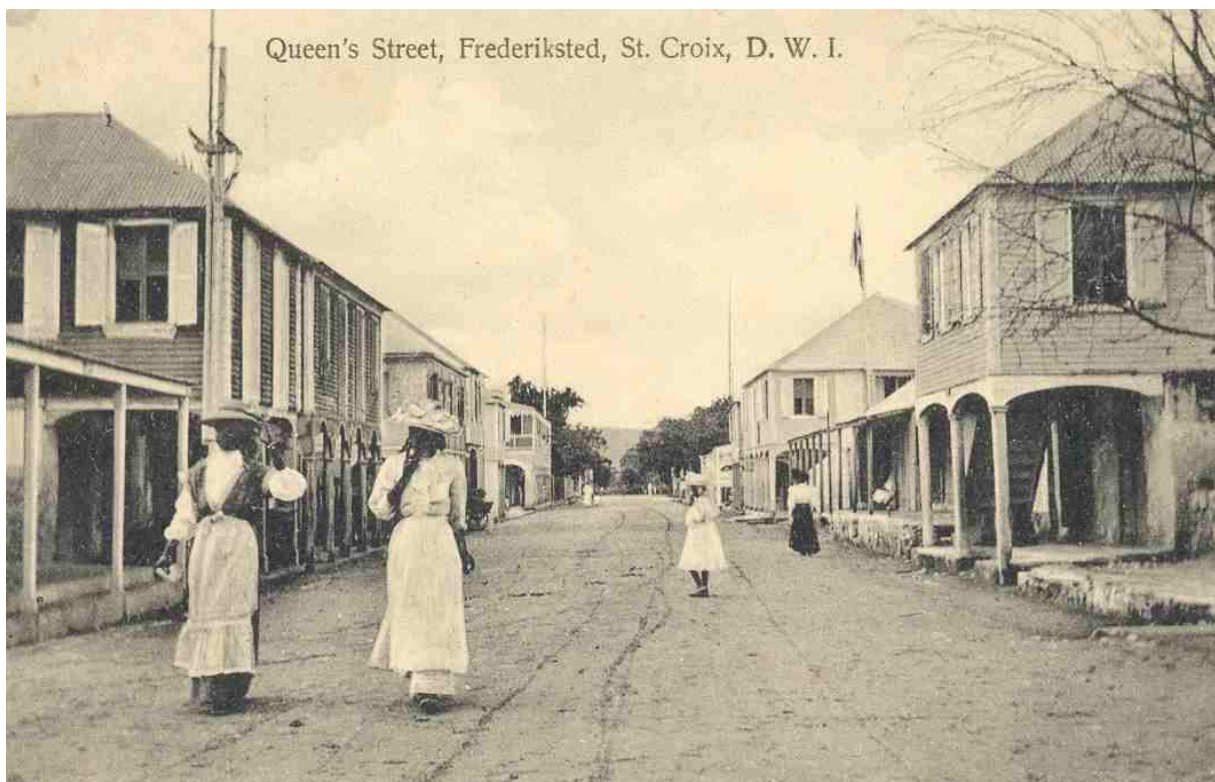
The witness has not himself been punished and like the others he suffers no lack of clothes or food, but he says that Reilly is more bossy than the previous Manager. Dismissed.

**The Negress Louisa** appeared. Born in this country, does not know her age, but is estimated to be about 25 years old, and is Moravian.

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She explains that when the Manager had Benjamin punished in the morning, she and the others talked to each other during work, and talked about what he might have done; but, the witness states, without meaning any harm, and when the Manager nonetheless ordered the driver to keep them quiet and subsequently tied the driver's hands, the witness did not hear say anything, they also talked about looking up Dorr at lunch time to ask him whom he was going to leave with them on his departure, as the Manager is very strict and controlling with them and punishes those whose work he faults. She denies any noise or disorder, as stated in the complaint, or having refused to work. The witness herself has not been punished and, like the others, she explains that they are properly fed and clothed etc. Dismissed.



**The Negress Frederica** appeared. Born in this country, does not know her age, but is estimated to be about 20 years old, and is Moravian.

She states that she did not speak during Benjamin's punishment, but when the Manager nonetheless forbade them to speak or make noise, she said that there was nothing wrong with talking as long as they also did their work; when the Manager ordered the driver to punish their talking, she heard the latter say that he could not punish Benjamin and watch the others at the same time. She did not hear the driver say more than that. As for the other accusations in the complaint, that some of them had refused to work or created an uproar other than as admitted by the witness, she denies those. She and the others looked up Dorr at lunch time to ask him whom he intended to leave them with when he travelled to America, as the Manager orders them to work too early in the morning, which she says is before they can see the work. The witness has no further complaints. Dismissed.

**The Negress Bess** appeared. Born in Africa, does not know her age but is estimated to be about 22 years old, and is Anglican.

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She denies that she or any of the others spoke or made an uproar as stated in the complaint. Not when Benjamin was punished, nor when the driver's hands were tied, and she heard the Manager order the driver to make the Negroes quiet, and she heard the driver answer that he could not forbid them to talk or mouth off. She heard no more, but admits that at lunch, together with the others, she looked up Dorr to get to know if he intended to let Manager Reilly stay on the estate when he left, because, she states, Reilly wakes them up too early in the morning before sunrise, which they are not used to, and those who arrive later than they have been ordered to, are punished, maybe with some lashes of the tamarind, if they have overslept or something after the driver has ordered them to come out. Dismissed.

As Administrator Edward Dorr was not present, the examination was postponed and the court adjourned.-

Certified by

A. I. Andreson

**On August 3, 1822**, at 10 o'clock in the morning the examination was continued at the Police Station in the presence of the Police Sergeant and Police Officer Boldt.

**Edward Dorr** appeared before the court and was shown the submitted complaint, to which he answered that he had not been present in the field himself or been a witness to what the Negroes did, but the contents of the complaint are in accordance with what Reilly had told the witness verbally about the driver and the Negroes' behaviour.

At lunch time all the field Negroes came to the house where the witness lives and mumbled and complained about the Manager, and said that he called them to work too early in the morning and punished them. The witness asked them if they were called before dawn, to which they answered no, and if any of them had marks from mistreatment or lashes, to which they likewise answered no – Then the witness dismissed them and they left. When the bell rang, they returned to their work. – The witness is convinced that the present Manager Reilly, who has been on the plantation since the 21<sup>st</sup> of last month, on the whole treats the Negroes well, and that none of them have any reason to complain, nor, indeed, have they complained before, as mentioned earlier. – But the thing is that the Negroes have been neglected and have been left too much to themselves under the previous Manager Babcock, in whose time the witness also lived part time on the estate, whereas the present Manager Reilly is trying to bring them to order and work proper hours. He further presumes that the reason for their insubordination yesterday is due to the driver Prince, who has not been properly supervised and has condoned laziness.

Dismissed.- after adding that he has not noticed anyone in the Negro gang as being instigators of the disorder and therefore believes that they made common cause.

**From the Fort the Negro Prince** was brought unshackled, driver at Golden Groove Estate, born in this country, does not know his age, but is estimated to be 45 years old, is Anglican.

He explains that yesterday morning at around 7 o'clock he gave the Negro Benjamin, who made a mistake measuring land and made one furrow broader than the other, a lashing with the tamarind whip as ordered by Manager Reilly. - The witness had hardly finished this when the Manager turned to the gang of Negroes who were working, and asked him if he had heard any of them talk or grumble. Immediately afterwards the



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Manager turned to the witness and asked him why he did not control the Negroes. When the witness said that he could not know or hear who it was that grumbled, as he was punishing Benjamin and had his full attention on him, the Manager took hold of the witness, tied his hands, and sent him to the estate prison, but after having talked to Dorr, he brought him to the Police Station. – But the witness denies having answered the Manager in any other way than admitted. He particularly denies having used the phrases stated in the complaint, and he also denies that he has heard the Negroes grumble or speak when Benjamin was punished or the witness' hands were tied by the Manager. The witness did not see them stop their work, nor did he see them raise their hoes etc., as mentioned in the complaint, and he added that the Manager, who was watching them, must know better what they were doing. – The witness was in the prison when the group of Negroes came to Mr Dorr's house, and did not notice what happened or who was there. He does not know who might be the instigator of their complaint. –

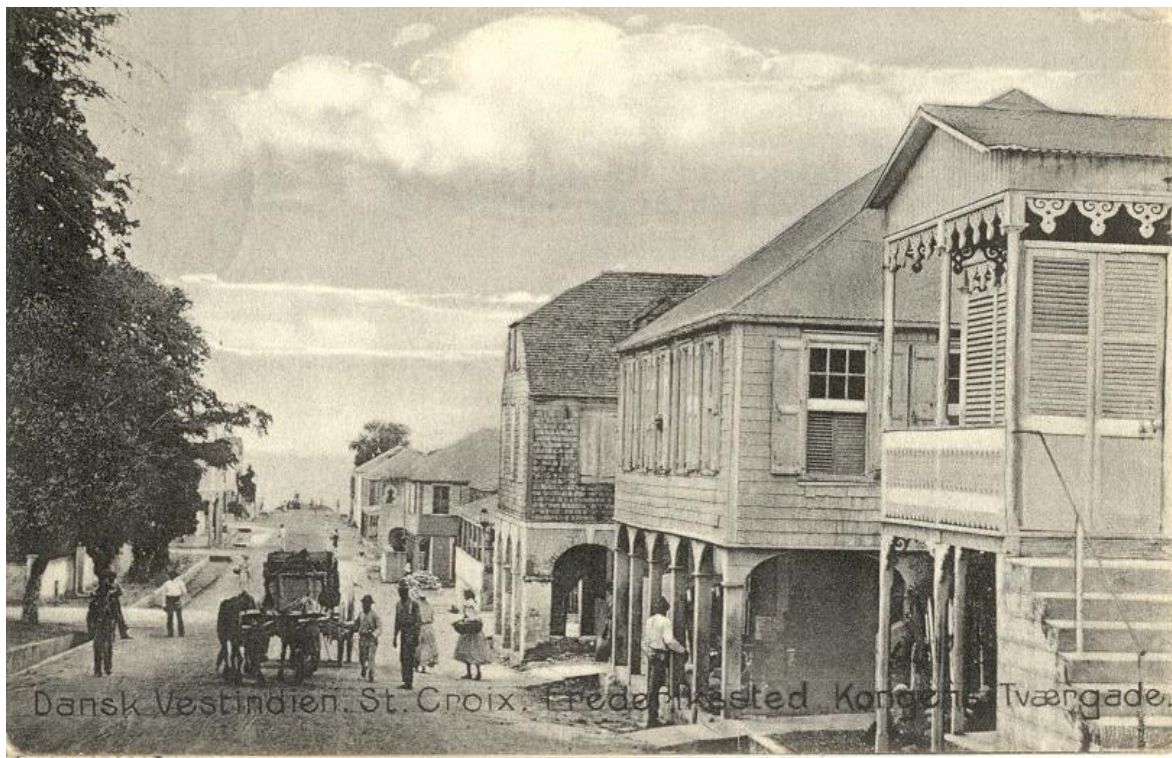
On being questioned, the witness explains that Manager Reilly has not mistreated the Negroes or refused any of them their rights, food etc.; but the witness stated that Reilly has only been there for a short time, and that the Negroes would probably let it be known if he was to mistreat them, by which the witness means, as stated by him, that they would complain to the Police Office if such was the case.

Dismissed and returned to the Fort, after having denied that he in any way has encouraged the Negroes to disobedience or disorderly conduct.

Whereupon the examination was postponed and the court adjourned.

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A. I. Andreson



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**On August 6, 1822**, at noon the police court was in session and as usual in the presence of the Police Officer.

Nr. 26/1822. Police examination into the alleged insubordination of field Negroes and the driver on Golden Grove Estate. –

### **Manager Charles Reilly was present**

On being summoned the Negro Benjamin, belonging to Golden Grove Estate, appeared. He admits on being questioned that he made a mistake when measuring the land in the field, and that the Manager for that reason had him punished by the driver, but other than that he has nothing to add. He explains that after his punishment, he lay down on the ground for a moment and did not notice if the Negroes spoke in an inappropriate or noisy manner, when the witness was punished or when the Manager took hold of the driver. Nor did he hear what the driver said to the Manager, and he declares himself ignorant of any instigators to disorderly conduct among the Negroes or insubordination towards the Manager. As for conditions, the witness has no complaints, and he adds that no one is punished without having done something wrong, and that they are not awoken before dawn, but that some of the Negroes have complained of this because they have not been used to being called so early before this Manager's time. Dismissed.

**The Negro Guillon**, belonging to Golden Grove Estate, appeared before the court.

He explains that he was present in the field on the morning in question, and on being asked, he explains that he heard the Negroes mumble during work because of Benjamin being punished, saying amongst themselves that the Manager had started punishing too early, and some of them stopped working; whereupon the witness heard the Manager order the driver Prince to control the field workers, and the driver answered that he could not at the same time punish Benjamin and control the other Negroes.

The witness did not hear what the driver said, but he says that he had finished punishing when the Manager ordered him to keep the Negroes quiet.- The witness also heard that the Negroes were noisy when the Manager tied the driver's hands, and also observed that some stopped working, but other than that he did not notice anything special, as he kept working and was at one end of the line during the work.

As for working hours and the frequency of punishment etc. as claimed by the above-mentioned witnesses, the witness says that those claims are false and that no one is punished without a reason, and that they are not called to work before dawn.

**The Negro Danmark**, belonging to Golden Grove Estate, appeared.

He explains on being questioned that he heard the Negroes grumble and talk in the field on the morning in question, but he did not notice anyone in particular as he was busy with his work: and as for the behavior of the driver Prince, the witness was not so close to him and the Manager that he could hear what passed between them. He explains that the Negroes are called to work at dawn, but that the Manager himself rises at the same time and goes into the field. He does not know of any reason to complain about too much punishment. He does not know who is the instigator of the inappropriate behavior towards the Manager. Dismissed.

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**Present Manager Reilly**

He explains that he has not, since he came to the estate, he has not punished Negroes other than Benjamin, with the exception of 2 or 3 Negroes who one morning were late for work, and who each received a few lashes from the driver as ordered by the witness, but on the outside of their clothes. The witness also explains on being asked that among the six persons pointed out by him, the Negro Hector was the rudest, and secondly the Negro Francois, and among the Negresses, the Negress Frederika.

Since the day in question nothing noteworthy has happened among the Negroes of the estate. The witness states, however, that overall they have shown all kinds of unwillingness and negligence in terms of their work and his wishes, although no particular or special situations have arisen or given rise to disturbances or disorder. Dismissed.

The examination was closed and the court adjourned.

Certified by

A. I. Andreson

In accordance with the court report of Frederichsted Police

Jurisdiction, and the submitted document

confirmed by hand and seal.

The Negro Prince is to be punished with 100 lashes at the Pillar of Justice and forced street work for two months, and it is to be announced to the field Negroes that he is considered unworthy of being a driver.

Hector and Francois are to be punished with 80 lashes each and Frederika with 60 lashes at the Pillar of Justice.

The Manager O'Reilly is given a warning as suggested by the Police Chief.