

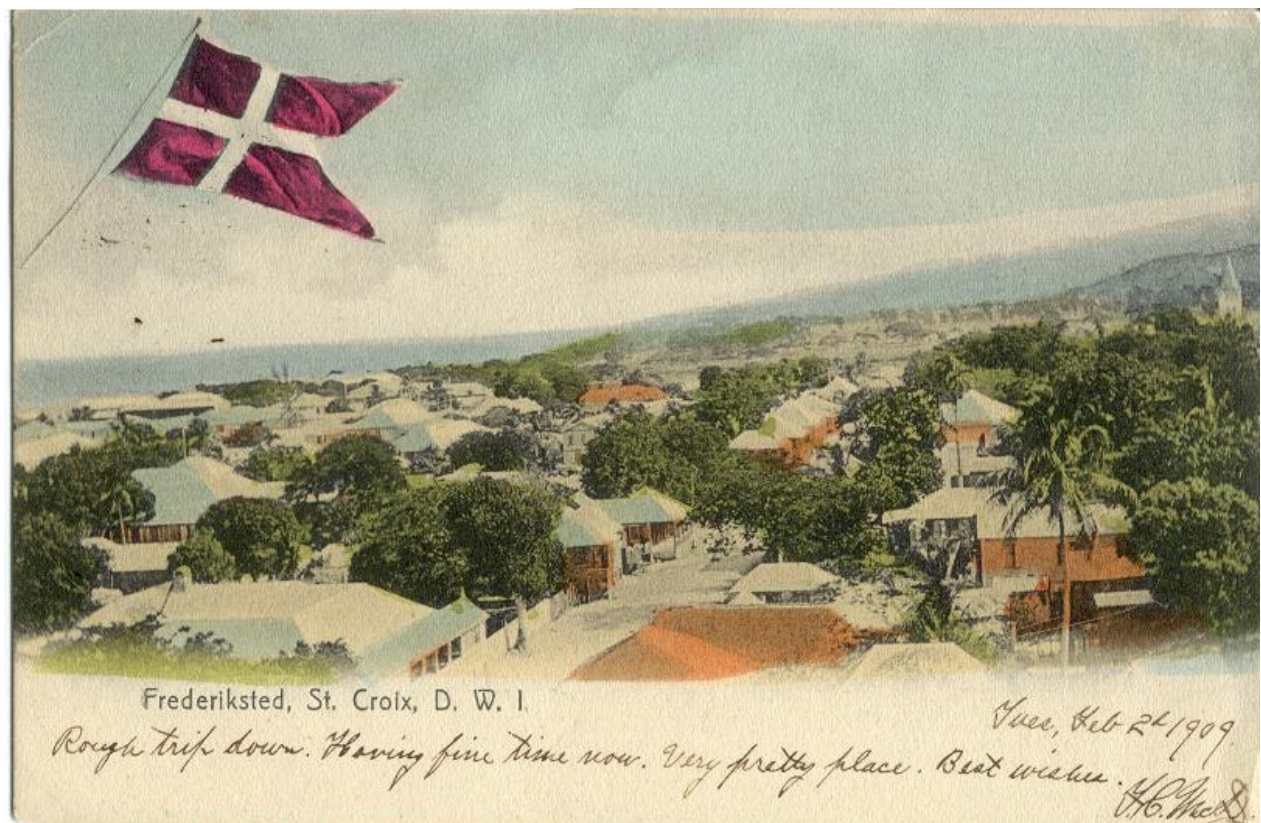
GOLDEN GROVE DISTURBANCE 1822

Estate Golden Grove

In 1822, Estate Golden Grove encompassed 262.5 Danish acres that extended over four plantation grounds in Prince Quarter. It was established and developed into a sugar plantation during the 1750s by Lorentz Nissen, an employee of the Danish West India and Guinea Company. Subsequent owners included John Irwin, John Irwin Jr., William Armstrong, and Johannes Sobotker.

The owner in 1822 was Andrew Ritchie, a North American merchant involved in the rum trade, who bought Golden Grove from Johannes Sobotker in 1818. A resident of Boston, he left the plantation under the supervision of attorneys like Edward Dorr and manager Charles O'Reilly. In 1822, there were 181 acres of sugar cane under cultivation and 116 enslaved laborers (53 males and 63 females).

It is noteworthy that several of the individuals involved in this case, including manager O'Reilly and the driver Prince, were newcomers to the plantation. Some, including Prince, had been moved to Golden Grove from estate Bugby Hole in 1821. Others had come in 1818 from estate Richmond. O'Reilly had only just arrived in 1822.



Enslaved Protagonists – Biographical Information compiled from the St. Croix Population Database 1734-1917

1. Phillpe

Creole, born in Guadeloupe ca. 1805 and baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. He was brought onto Estate Golden Grove ca. 1814. In the census of 1835, he is listed as a member of the big gang with a “good” character. He does not appear in the census of 1841 or any other record after 1835 – presumably he died sometime between 1836 and 1841.

2. Benjamin

African, born in the 1770s, he first appeared on Estate Golden Grove in 1787 with an appraised value of Ps. 350. In 1804, he was a field laborer valued at Ps. 800. In the census of 1835, he is listed as a Moravian (baptized in 1810), married, working in the big gang with a “very good” character. He died and was buried on estate Golden Grove on 20 June 1838.

3. Hector

Creole, born on the island of Anguilla, ca. 1804, and presumably baptized into the Anglican Church. His parents and original owner are unknown. He was brought onto Estate Golden Grove between 1819 and 1824. In 1832, he was punished, along with several other enslaved males on Golden Grove, with 100 lashes and sentenced to wear a chain for participating in some sort “criminal” activity. In the census of 1835 he is listed as belonging to no church, unmarried, working in the big gang with a “disorderly” character. He does not appear in the census of 1841 or any other record after 1835 – presumably he died sometime between late 1835 and 1841.

4. Francois aka Franswa

Creole, born in Guadeloupe ca. 1796 and baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. He was probably brought onto Estate Golden Grove along with Phillipe ca. 1814. In the censuses of 1835 and 1841 he is listed as a member of the big gang, with a “good” character. In the 1846 census he is listed as belonging to the small gang with a “tolerable” character. He died of a fever on 16 October 1846, shortly after the census had been completed.

5. Louisa aka Johanna Louisa aka Johanna Hendricks

Creole, born enslaved on Estate Bugby Hole in 1794. Her parents are unknown. She lived on Estate Bugby Hole until 1818, when she was transferred along with 23 other to Estate Golden Grove. In 1811, her appraised value was Ps. 800. In 1826 she was baptized in the Friedensfeld Moravian Church with the name Johanna Louisa. The following year her child Eliza, fathered by Dennis of Estate Castle Bourke, was baptized in the Friedensfeld Moravian Eliza, who is Louisa’s

only recorded child, died in 1832. In the censuses of 1835 and 1841, she was listed as a member of the big gang with a “good” character. In the 1846 census she is listed as belonging to the small gang with a “tolerable” character. She was freed on Estate Golden Grove on 3 July 1848 and was still there as a field laborer in 1851, when she married, in the Moravian Church, Denmark aka Heinrich of Estate Golden Grove (see below), with whom she had been living in “natural marriage” since the 1830s. Louisa is recorded as living on Golden Grove with Denmark, and working as a field laborer in the census of 1850, 1855, 1857 and 1860. In the 1857 census she was recorded as suffering from the disease elephantiasis. She died and was buried on estate Golden Grove on 19 April 1861.

6. Denmark aka Heinrich

African, born ca. 1795. Neither the date of his arrival on St. Croix, nor his original owner can be established. He was brought enslaved to Golden Grove in 1803 or 1804. In 1805-06, he was classified as a field laborer and had an appraised value of 600 Ps. He was baptized as an adult with the name Heinrich at Friedensfeld Moravian Church in 1821. In the censuses of 1835 and 1841 he was listed as working in the big gang with a “very good” character. In the 1846 census he is listed as working in the small gang with a “tolerable” character. He was freed on estate Golden Grove in 1848, but he continued working there as a watchman until his death on 20 October 1860. In 1851, he married in the Moravian Church Louisa aka Johanna Louisa, with whom he had been living in “natural marriage” since the 1830s.

7. Frederica

Creole, born enslaved on Estate Bugby Hole in Company Quarter 1794. The names of her parents are unknown. She lived and worked on Estate Bugby Hole until 1818, when she was transferred along with 23 others to Estate Golden Grove. Her appraised value in 1811 was Ps. 500. She joined the Friedensfeld Moravian Church in 1821. In the census of 1835 she was listed as a member of the big gang with a “good” character. She died on estate Golden Grove on 5 January 1836.

8. Bezo

No woman with this name could be found in the estate Golden Grove records. The closest approximation with respect to name and age was a woman named Bess, born ca. 1805, who was among those who were transferred from estate Bugby Hole to Golden Grove in 1818. However, this young woman was not an African, but a Creole born on estate Bugby Hole. In 1824 she was said to be 25 years of age. She is not listed on the plantation in the 1835 census or any subsequent census or document.

9. Prince

Creole, born enslaved ca. on Estate Bugby Hole in Company Quarter and baptized in the Anglican Church. The names of his parents cannot be determined. Employed in the cane fields, he had risen to the position of Driver by 1803, when he had an appraised value of Ps. 1000. In 1811, he

was still a driver with an appraised value was Ps. 1250. In 1818, he was among 24 enslaved workers transferred by Johannes Sobotker from Estate Bugby Hole to Estate Golden Grove, where retained his position as head driver. He is last listed on Estate Golden Grove in 1824. He cannot be found anywhere in the census of 1835, presumably because he had died by then.

10. Guillon aka Gideon

Creole, born enslaved on St. Croix ca. 1795. Name of parents and original owner could not be determined. Brought onto estate Golden Grove in 1803 or 1804. In 1804, his appraised value was Ps. 350. He was employed as a domestic in 1807; but was moved to the cane fields in 1808, where he would work the rest of his life. He was received into the Friedensthal Moravian Church in

11. Charles O'Reilly

Born in Ireland ca. 1797 and baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, O'Reilly is an example of the several Irishmen who started out as plantation supervisors and rose to the ranks of the plantocracy. He arrived in St. Croix in 1813 during the British occupation. In 1815, he was an overseer at estate Brook Hill in West End Quarter. By 1817, he had become a manager in which capacity he was employed at several sugar plantations, including estates Brook Hill, Lower Bethlehem and Annaly. In 1835, he became part-owner of estate Little La Grange in West End Quarter. Three years later, he purchased estate Clifton Hill in Kings Quarter, where he lived until his death in 1845 or 1846.

