

DOCUMENT 1

4 November 1843

To

Mr. General Major von Scholten

Lord Chamberlain, Governor-General

I hereby have the honor of submitting a transcript of the court records, which contain the examination of a number of prisoners who have been plotting to leave the country, and who have therefore been apprehended and arrested.

The prisoners are:

1. The Sambo man George
2. The Negro Joseph – both belonging to estate renter Lucas
3. Horatio belonging to Planter O'Reilly
4. Billy –belonging to Castle Coakley Estate
5. Theodore – belonging to Merchant McCutchin
6. Andrew – belonging to Seven Hills Estate
7. Richard – belonging to Merchant Doute
8. Nicholas- belonging to Major Plaskett

George and Horatio are the ringleaders, as will appear from the examination.

George has previously been found guilty of rebellion and has therefore, according to resolution 1 June 1842 been punished with 3 times 27 lashes and six months of labor. According to the court decision of August 18, 1840, he has also previously worked in the prison for 1½ years, at that time for housebreaking and theft.

Horatio himself has admitted to being the person who was to get the boat they were to escape in, and to having taken measurement of the scuttle. During the examination he stated, however, that it was not correct, as he had given up the thought of escape, but that, of course, is not to be believed.

The Negro Joseph admits to having wanted to escape, but says that he had given it up. His owner, the estate renter Lucas, explained during the examination that he has, quite on his own initiative, revealed the plans and thereby contributed to preventing the escape, and his owner has therefore asked for a milder sentence.

Against the others there is no other proof than the statements by George and Horatio. Although those statements are not totally reliable, they are nonetheless likely in view of the explanations given.

I therefore suggest to the honorable Judge that Billy, Theodore, Andrew, Richard and Nicholas have already served their sentence because of the time already spent in prison, or that they be given a corporal punishment.

We also ask you to pardon the Negro Joseph.

As for George and Horatio's attempted escape, there is no punishment stipulated by the law. Only in King Frederick V's ordinance of Feb. 3, 1755 is there a specific punishment, which, however, has never been executed, except for the Supreme Court ruling of Jan. 1, 1771, when several Negroes who had run away were sentenced to 150 lashes under the gallows and hard labor for life.

As times have changed, and in view of the circumstances, I believe that the transgressions of the above-mentioned individuals can be punished more leniently, and I therefore submit:

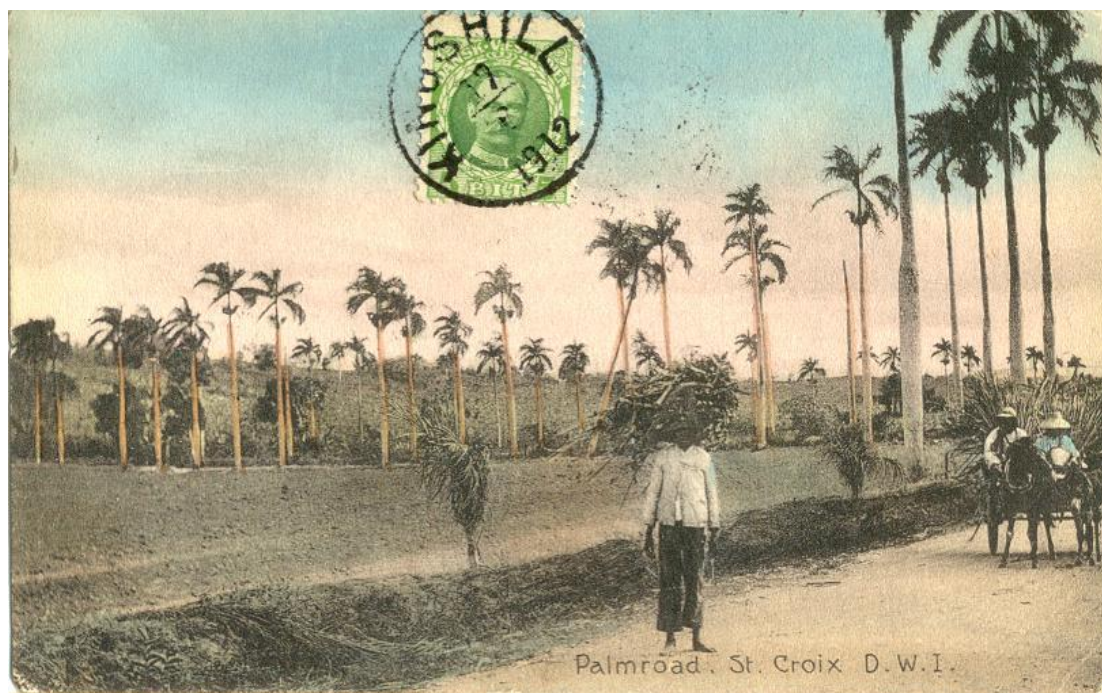
A: As for George, that he be punished with 3 times 37 lashes on three consecutive Saturdays and 12 months of labor.

B: As for Horatio, that he likewise be punished with 3 times 37 lashes and 12 months of labor.

Christiansted Police Department, Nov. 4, 1843

I remain your obedient servant

Frederich



DOCUMENT 2

Transcript Of Christiansted Court Records

On Oct. 10, 1843 the court was set in Christiansted in the presence of the Police Sergeant and Police Officer Halvorsen, and a new case was presented.

Nr. 40/1843 Police examination into the plot of some prisoners to escape the country.

The Police Chief observed that estate renter Lucas yesterday had reported that his slave, the Negro Joseph, had told him that the Sambo man George had tried to get Joseph and a number of others to flee the country in a fishing boat, the others being: Andrew, belonging to Seven Hills Estate, Billy, belonging to Castle Coakley Estate, and Horatio, belonging to Planter O'Reilly – all have been arrested, as has the Merchant McCutchin's Negro Theodore, who was arrested yesterday afternoon.

The Negro Joseph explained to the court as follows:

About 3 weeks ago George came to me and said that Horatio, who belongs to Planter O'Reilly, had told him that it was possible to get a fishing boat from this town which could take them to Tortola. He asked if I wanted to come when they were ready, and I told them I would. George said that Horatio had asked him to get others who wanted to join, and that he and they were to get together as much money as possible. And that he had asked Billy from Castle Coakley Estate, and that he had also asked Andrew and Richard from Seven Hills Estate, and Theodore, who belongs to Mr. McCutchin, and they had all said yes. After this nothing happened until last Sunday the 8th of this month, when Horatio came to Work and Rest Estate and asked the witness, who at this time was in the sick house, if George was in. When the witness answered no, Horatio said that he would be back, because he did not want George to come to Clifton Hill Estate, where he was staying. The next morning when the witness left the sick house, George told him that Horatio had come to his house later in the night and told him that he had been into town to take the measurement of the so-called "scuttle" to make one like it at Clifton Hill. Horatio stayed there the rest of the night. The witness also explained that George had said that they had agreed to be ready in about two weeks. Nothing further happened other than that the witness revealed their plan to Manager John Lucas. When he did not react, the witness was at a loss what to do and therefore decided to tell the story to estate renter Lucas.¹

This is all the witness explained.

Next appeared George, who belongs to Estate renter Lucas, and on being confronted with Joseph's explanation, he said as follows:

It is correct that Horatio, when he was hired out to Mr. Lucas a couple of months ago, suggested to him that they flee the country in a boat from this town. The boat is owned by the fisherman John Charles, and George has spent some days fishing with him. He therefore knew how much ballast etc. was needed with the boat and a few other bits and pieces. George had answered him that he had recently been punished at the prison in a similar case and that he had therefore given up the thought of it. He denies having said this

¹ John Lucas was overseer on Estate Work & Rest, which was being rented by his brother Charles Lucas.

to either Joseph or anybody else. If Horatio has said anything to Joseph or anybody else, he does not know about it.

Nothing further happened in the matter until about 3 weeks ago when Horatio came to Work and Rest Estate on a Sunday night at 9 o'clock and told him he had been into town to take measurement of the so-called scuttle for John Charles's boat. He wanted to make a copy of it and asked him if he had any money. To this he answered 'No'.

Horatio also said that Theodore, who belongs to Mr. McCutchin had said that he wanted to join and had promised to get some things for the journey. Now, however, he had changed his mind and wanted out.

On being questioned further, George now admitted that he talked to Joseph about the planned project and asked him to join him and Horatio. He said 'Yes'. He also admits that Horatio said that Andrew and Richard from Seven Hills Estate were also coming. Further George says that he met the Negro Nicholas, who belongs to Major Plaskett, on his way down to West End a couple of months ago, and that he asked him if Horatio had seen or spoken with George. To this he answered 'Yes', but nothing else happened, and George supposed that Nicholas had been asking about their planned journey.

George denies having talked to Billy from Castle Coakley Estate or anybody else other than those already mentioned. He was returned to custody.

Next appeared the Mulatto Horatio, who belongs to Planter O'Reilly.

On being questioned he explains that about 3 months ago, when he was rented out to Estate renter Lucas and worked at Work and Rest Estate, George approached him (he couldn't say exactly when) and asked him and called him 'a fool' for not wanting to leave this country when his owner treats him so badly. To this Horatio answered that if that was possible, he would not mind, but he did not know how and he was afraid of being arrested.

George said that if he could get a boat, he would show him that it could be done, as he was a sailor and used to the sea and could handle the boat – without specifying where the boat was to take them.

The next day Joseph approached him and made the same suggestion, and he answered him as above. After some days George and Joseph came back to him and talked about leaving the island. To this he answered that he knew where there was a boat they could take, as he had been out fishing in it a couple of times.

Nothing else happened until 2 or 3 weeks ago when George came to Clifton Hill Estate, where he is now, to look for him. When he was not at home, George left again, and they did not see each other until last Sunday when Horatio on his way home from town went to Work and Rest Estate and spent the night at George's. He told him that he had the measurements for the scuttle of the above-mentioned boat. However, Horatio has given up the thought of escape as he is now alright with Mr. O'Reilly.

Horatio further admits that some time ago he had a conversation with Theodore, who belongs to Mr. McCutchin. Horatio belonged to Scott and had run away. He approached Theodore to get something to eat (which he got), and on this occasion Theodore had said that Horatio was 'a fool' for not trying to escape, which Theodore had intended, but now he had changed his mind.

Horatio says that he also told George that Andrew from Senhills Estate (: Seven Hills) several months ago had looked him up at Mount Welcome to suggest that they escape the country together. He said nothing about how that was to happen, and he had not asked him. Andrew, who belongs to Merchant Doute, had suggested the same to Horatio. So nothing happened between them and since then Horatio has neither seen nor spoken with Andrew.

On being asked when or where Richard made the suggestion, Horatio answers that it happened about 12 months ago when he worked at Golden Grove Estate, where Richard had a wife. Horatio had met him at the estate and took him to his wife's house, where Richard had asked him if he wanted to come with him to Tortola. He said that they could easily get away in a sloop as he knew some of the sailors and they used to come to him in Merchant Doute's yard in West End. Horatio wanted to join and Richard spoke two or three times with him about it – but nothing came of it.

This is all that Horatio told George, except for Richard's suggestion about the above-mentioned Tortola sloop, but only that Andrew and Richard wanted to escape. If George or Joseph have seen or spoken with them, he does not know.



George reappeared before the court.

On having heard Horatio's explanation, George first denied having talked about leaving. As a matter of fact he claims that it was Horatio who was the first person to suggest such a thing. He said that Horatio had told him that there were several boats they could get hold of –among those Potter's and John Charles', but that the latter would be the best and the easiest to get hold of. Other than that he concurred with Horatio's explanation, but maintained that it was Horatio who made the suggestion first. They could not reach an agreement on the chain of events and they were taken back to their cells in the prison.

Next the Negro Theodore appeared before the court.

He belongs to the Merchant McCutchin. On being confronted with Horatio's testimony, he admits that Horatio came to his house several months ago – he did not remember precisely when. Horatio had asked for something to eat, which he got. When Horatio was there, he asked Theodore if he wanted to escape with him, to which he answered 'No', and then he tried to get rid of Horatio. Theodore had told him that he had work to do and went up to the house.

Nothing further happened until 8 or 9 days later when Horatio came to his master's yard and repeated his question about running away. Theodore did not want to do that as he was now all right and had his mother and other family members here. Then Horatio left and Theodore has not seen him since.

He insisted that this was what happened between him and Theodore, and he has not spoken to anybody else about it.

Horatio appeared again and was confronted with Theodore's explanation.

Horatio stuck to his testimony, and no agreement on the chain of events was to be had, whereupon they were both returned to custody.

Next the Negro Andrew appeared before the court.

He belongs to Captain Dahl. On hearing Horatio's explanation, he told the court that some months ago (he could not say precisely when, but believes in was in March) when he was on his way into town with a cart, he met Horatio at Mount Welcome. Horatio told him that he wanted to speak to him about something. To this he answered that if he had anything to say he could do so now, for he did not have much time on his hands.

Horatio said that he was to get a boat and that Andrew should be smart enough to go with him. He did not say where, nor did he say what boat he could get, and Andrew did not ask him. He only answered that he felt no need to leave the country as he was now all right and was treated well by Captain Dahl. Horatio told him that he was 'a big fool' for not wanting to come, and that he was no better than Richard, who belongs to Mr. Doute, and who wanted to come. Andrew repeated that he did not want to come and walked away.

Since then Andrew has not talked to Horatio or anybody else until last Sunday the 15th when Nicholas, who belongs to Major Plaskett, met him in this town. Nicholas asked him if he has spoken with Horatio, which he confirmed, and went on to say that he could not speak any more as he was going home. This he did immediately afterwards.

Andrew had nothing further to add, but repeats that none of the other accused, nor, indeed, anybody else has talked to him about anything that has not already been said.

Horatio appeared again.

He was confronted with Andrew's testimony and denied it, but stuck to his previous testimony. He added that one day 4 or 5 days later he went to Seven Hills Estate to look for Andrew, on which occasion Andrew

had repeated his suggestion as explained, and that he had met Andrew on a different occasion on the road outside town. Andrew had called him and said:

“Captain Dahl has bought Richard from Mr. Doute, and he is now at Seven Hills Estate”. As a carpenter by the name of Nørager who works at Seven Hills came riding by on horse at the same time, nothing further happened and they went their separate ways.

Andrew appeared again before the court.

He was confronted with Horatio’s testimony, but stuck to his earlier explanation. He does admit, however, that Horatio came to Seven Hills Estate, as stated, but they did not have a chance to speak together as there were other people present. Both stuck to their previous testimonies, whereupon they were returned to custody.

It being late the 9 examinations were postponed for now and the court was adjourned.

Friderichsen

Oct. 21, 1843, at 10 o’clock in the morning Christiansted Police Court was in session in the presence of the Police Sergeant and the Police Officer Halvorsen. The case was continued.

Nr. 40/1843 Police examination into the plot of some slaves to escape the country.

The Negro Billy appeared before the court.

He belongs to Castle Coakley Estate and was admonished to tell the truth.

On being questioned, he explains that he and George had met each other a few year ago when they had been arrested and released. Since then George had occasionally –but not very often – come to Castle Coakley Estate to visit him. They had not, however, talked about the case in question, and lately George had stopped coming to the estate, and he does not know why.

As, as stated above, they had not talked or seen each other for some time, Billy was very surprised when very late last Sunday George had come to Castle Coakley. He had awoken Billy, who got up and opened his door to let George into the house. Billy asked why he had come so late and George had answered that he came from his brother in town. He had a small basket with sugar, which George now asked Billy if he wanted to buy, but when he had no money, George offered to let him have the sugar on credit – without specifying a price, however.

When George complained about being hungry, Billy gave him something to eat, and before George left, he gave Billy about 3 yards of red cloth, which he said he had had from Mr. Lucas. Then George left and Billy has not seen him or spoken to him since. He denies knowing anything about the accusations, and denies having spoken to either George or anybody else on such matters.

George appeared again before the court.

When confronted with Billy’s testimony concerning the above-mentioned sugar, he answered that he had not been given it by his brother, but had stolen it on the Sunday in question from the curing house at Work

and Rest Estate by moving a round ² and through the hole in it gained access to the curing house. Joseph, who was on watch duty that night, knew that George was in the curing house and had stolen sugar. He had tried the same in the morning, which he has later confessed. He also admits having taken the sugar to Billy's house and offered it to him, as previously explained.

Joseph appeared again before the court.

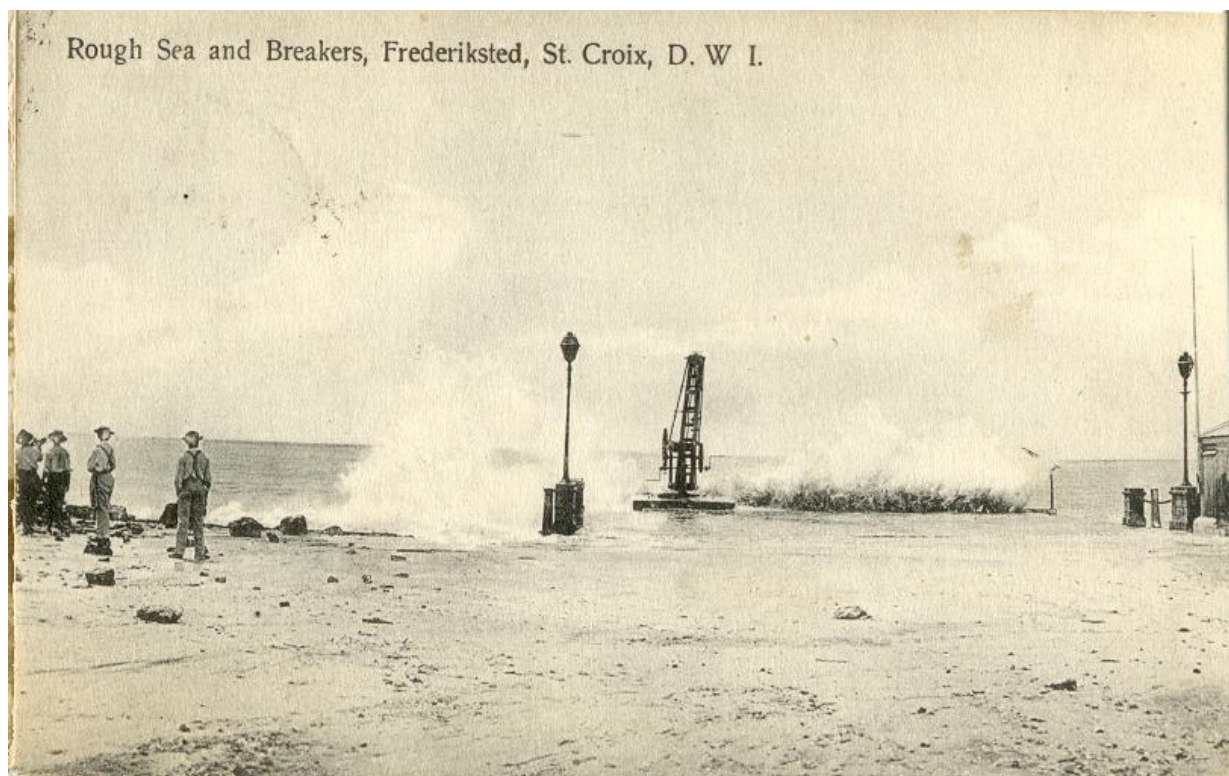
Because of Billy and George's denial, as explained above, and Billy's denial that George had asked him to run away with him, Joseph was called again and confronted with those statements. Joseph insisted that George has said that Billy was to come with him. ³

George was called again and confronted with Joseph's repeated explanation etc. about Billy. He denied having said anything like that to Joseph, and stated that he only assumes that because he knows that George and Billy are acquaintances.

No agreement on the chain of events could be reached, whereupon they were returned to custody and the interrogation postponed in order to call estate renter Lucas.

The court was adjourned.

Friderichsen



² The Danish word is 'ronde' unknown to any dictionary.

³ Unclear, the text may be corrupted

Oct. 24, 1843, at 12 o'clock Christiansted Police Court was in session in the presence of the Police Sergeant and the Police Officer Andersen, and examinations proceeded.

Nr. 40/1843 Police examination into the plot of some slaves to escape the country.

Estate renter Lucas appeared before the court

On being questioned he gave the following testimony:

Joseph, who was arrested on Oct. 18th in connection with this examination, had already been reported to the police station by estate renter John Lucas 8 or 10 days before when he had tried to involve the driver in a plot to flee the country together with several of the accused. The driver had told estate renter John Lucas about it, and he had decided to let some days pass to be sure of the facts and to obtain more details of the plans.

But when on Monday morning Oct. 16th it was discovered that on the previous night sugar had been stolen from the curing house, and that Joseph had been on watch that night, he was asked about this but denied having seen anything at all. The case was not cleared until the next day when a small boy saw Joseph try to crawl through the same hole which George had used to get into the house. On being questioned Joseph said that he just wanted to see if it was possible for a grown-up person to get through the hole, but estate renter Lucas believes that Joseph himself intended to steal some sugar if it was possible. Joseph then pointed to George as the person who had been in the curing house on the previous Sunday night. On being questioned George admitted to that, whereupon estate renter Lucas had them both arrested and punished on the following morning. George with 12 of the tamp and Joseph with 6 of the tamp. George claimed to be ill as the reason why he couldn't work. Estate renter Lucas did not believe him and therefore placed him under arrest in the sick house. He considered it the best thing to do already on the same day to report to the police what had happened.

Estate renter Lucas believes that Joseph for no reason or cause has approached John Lucas and talked to him about the imminent plot to escape. Therefore he wants Joseph's punishment for his part in the plot to escape to be lenient. He also assumes that Joseph would hardly have had the courage to go through with the plan as he is a timid individual and prone to pilfering.

Estate renter Lucas believes that by revealing the plans Joseph has wanted to put himself in a better light with estate renter Lucas.

The above is all that Estate renter Lucas can contribute with and the examination was discontinued because Richard from Seven Hills Estate still had not arrived at the court. The court was adjourned.

Friderichsen

Oct. 24, 1843 at 10 o'clock in the morning Christiansted Police Court was in session in the presence of the Police Sergeant and Police Officer Halvorsen, and the examination was continued.

The Negro Richard appeared before the court

The Police Chief observed that the above-mentioned Negro Richard, who belongs to Merchant Doute, was yesterday evening sent here from Seven Hills Estate, where he presently works.

Richard was admonished to tell the truth and was then asked about Horatio's explanation of his suggestion to him during their stay at Golden Grove Estate. To this he answered:

He had talked to Horatio at the above-mentioned estate and taken him to Richard's wife, Sophia's, house, but he denies having talked to Horatio about a Tortola sloop or any other way of fleeing the country. Richard therefore does not understand how he can say what he has stated. Richard also says that he has not seen or spoken to Horatio since they met at Golden Grove Estate about a year ago. He knows nothing of the submitted plans, nor has any other person told or suggested such a thing to Richard.

Horatio appeared before the court

Horatio was confronted with Richard's testimony, but he insisted that his own testimony was correct and did not know why Richard had told him about the plans.

Richard, who had heard Horatio's explanation, stuck with his denial, and said that Horatio must have made up the story about him to hurt him.

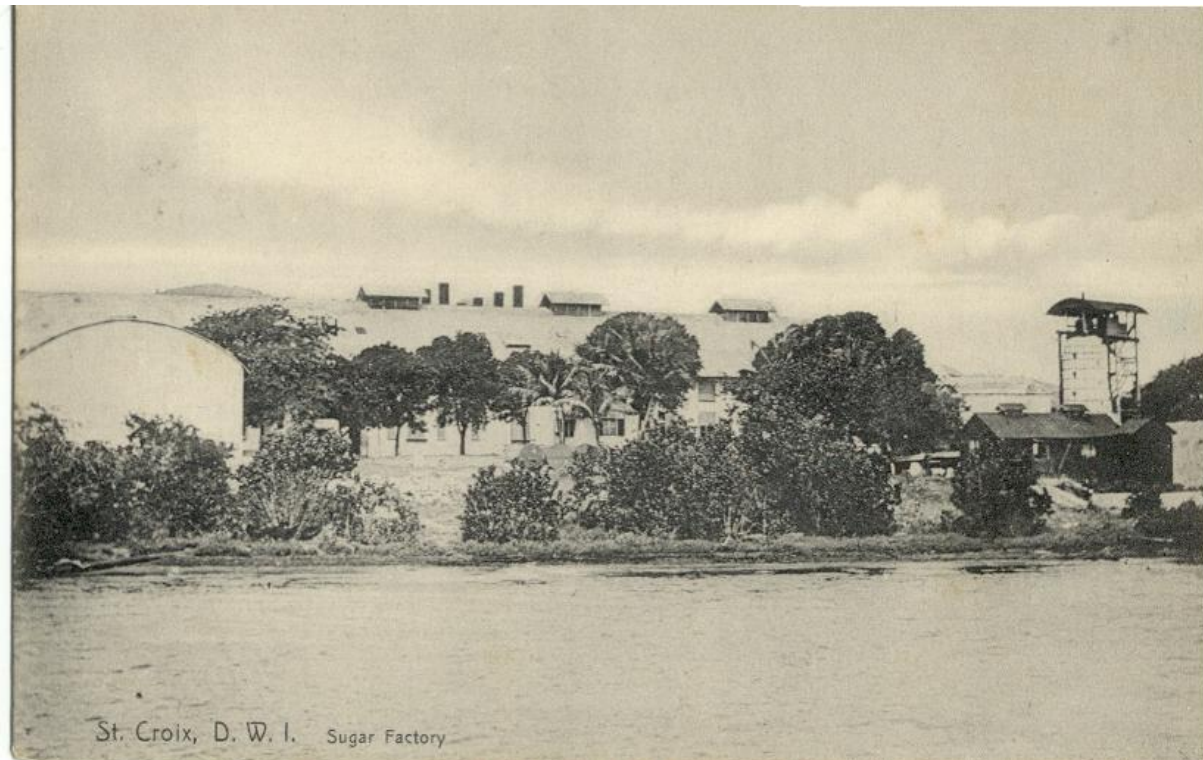
No agreement on the chain of events could be reached, and so Horatio adds that Richard also said that if he believed it was possible without being discovered or stopped, Richard would take his wife with him. Horatio adds that Richard's wife was not present when this was said.

Horatio's last statement was firmly denied by Richard, and no agreement could be reached, whereupon Richard was led back to prison.

In consequence of both George's and Andrew's remarks during the interrogation about the Negro Nicholas belonging to Major Plaskett, Horatio was asked about that. He answered:

Immediately after Horatio and George had spoken together about absconding, he one day met Nicholas on the road. He told him what had happened, and Nicholas answered that he would like to be in on the escape plans, to which Horatio had answered that he would talk to George about it. Horatio also says that he had told Nicholas about all those who wanted to be part of the escape. That was probably why Nicholas, as stated by Andrew, wanted to speak with him.

Horatio also says that he has not told George or Andrew that Nicholas wanted to be part of the escape, and he did not know that Nicholas had talked to them before now.



George and Andrew appeared again and were confronted with Horatio's testimony regarding Nicholas.

George answered that one day on Work and Rest Estate Horatio had told him that he had talked to Nicholas about their plans and that he wanted in.

Andrew says that Horatio had not talked to him about Nicholas, but only about Richard, as already explained.

Horatio was confronted with that, and he answered that he did not remember having said anything to George.

No agreement was to be had on the chain of events, and they were all returned to custody.

As it was estimated that nothing new could be brought to light, the examination was discontinued and the court adjourned.

Friderichsen

On Oct. 31, 1843, at 10 o'clock in the morning Christiansted Police Court was in session in the presence of the Police Sergeant and the Police Officer Whitehead, and the examination was continued.

Nr. 40/1843 Police examination into the plot of some slaves to escape the country.

The Negro Nichlas appeared before the court

The Police Chief observed that the Negro Nichlas, belonging to Major Plaskett, was yesterday sent here from Grange Estate, where he was [caught] stealing coconuts, and the Police Chief therefore considered it best to have his testimony on his part in the plans to escape.

He heard the testimonies of the arrestees George and Andrew as given above, and answered that he had met Andrew in this town Sunday morning, and he admits that they spoke together as stated by Andrew. However, he had not asked George, contrary to what he claims. He does admit, however, having met George on the road one day. Here George had told him that he was on his way to West End, and Nichlas had asked him how he was. They had talked of nothing else.

On being asked what had made Nichlas ask Andrew, he says that Horatio some months ago (he did not remember precisely when) came to the estate Grove Place one night it also happened that Nichlas ... (text missing) about the crook driver, who has a wife on Clifton Estate... (text missing)

On the way to their Negro houses Horatio asked Nichlas if he wanted to participate in an escape attempt... (text missing) and that he had got Andrew from Seven Hills to join, but he did not mention anybody else.

Nichlas refused to join, and when they came to the crook driver's house, Nichlas went to his post, whereupon Horatio came up to him and told him goodnight and left. Nichlas has not seen him until 3 or 4 weeks ago when he was on his way here with somebody else and met Horatio at Kingshill. On that occasion there was no talk of the escape plans, and Nichlas only heard of those last week when it was mentioned by several of the arrestees.

Horatio again appeared before the court

He was confronted with Nichlas' testimony as given above, but denied having talked to Nichlas about the plans at Grove Place. He referred to his previous explanation and added that he did, indeed, meet Nichlas some weeks ago on a Saturday or a Sunday at Kingshill, and Nichlas had asked him about the plans to escape and if Horatio had given up those plans. Horatio answered that he did not have enough clothes for that, and that he did not want to be bothered further.

Nichlas denied that last statement and stuck to his explanation.

No agreement could be had and they were returned to custody.

The interrogation ended and the court was adjourned.

Friderichsen

The accuracy of the transcript is certified by

Friderichsen