

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR RUNAWAYS JOHN MCKAY AND JIM OF ESTATE SHOYS AND WILLIAM OF ESTATE BEESTON HILL 1843

Estate Shoys

Claimed ca. 1740, estate Shoys consisted of about 167 acres of land stretching over East End A Quarter Nos. 44, 45, 46 and 58. It was worked as a cotton estate before being converted to sugar cultivation in the late 1790s. In 1843, it was jointly owned by William Rogers Isaacs, a planter resident in Tortola, British Virgin Islands and William H. Woods, a Creole, born in St. Croix in 1801. Woods lived with his family at 56 Company Street in Christiansted, while estate Shoys, with 149 acres of sugar cane and 83 enslaved laborers (40 males and 43 females), was being administered by resident manager Robert Brumwell born in England.



1. John McKay of Estate Shoys

John McKay was born on Estate Shoys ca. 1808 and baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. His parents are unknown. From 1818 onward he is listed as a field laborer. He ran away in 1821, but was quickly caught and returned to the estate. In 1825, he had an appraised value of Ps. 500. By 1838, his value had fallen to Ps. 350. The 1841 census lists him as unmarried, belonging to the big gang and having an “indifferent” character. In the census of 1846, he was listed as an unmarried member of the big gang. He was arrested and punished for constant maroonage in 1846 and again

in 1847. He was freed on estate Shoys by the general emancipation of 3 July 1848 and that is the last record for him in the Database. He seems to have fled the island had soon as he became free.

2. Jim aka Jim Ludwig aka Little Jim of Estate Shoys

Jim Ludwig was born in St. Croix ca. 1810 and baptized in the Lutheran Church. His parents and original owner are unknown. He was brought onto estate Shoys between 1825 and 1838. In the latter year he had an appraised value of Ps. 350. In the 1841 census he is listed as an unmarried member of the big gang with an “indifferent” character. In 1846, he was still an unmarried member of the big gang. In 1847, he was arrested, whipped and imprisoned for being a runaway. Freed on estate Shoys by the general emancipation of 3 July 1848, he was still there in 1850, working as a field laborer. In 1851, he moved to estate Diamond-Keturah in Company Quarter, where he was listed as James Shoys, a 2nd class laborer in the census of 1855. In 1860, he was employed as a 2nd class laborer on Estate Munster in East End A Quarter. Thereafter, he cannot be traced with certainty.

3. William Andersen of Estate Beeston Hill

The background of William Andersen cannot be established with certainty. No William with that surname or a criminal record is listed as being enslaved on Estate Beeston Hill in either the 1841 or 1846 censuses. Of the two Williams enslaved on Beeston Hill in the 1841 census, the most likely candidate, is a 42 year-old Creole born on St. Croix, belonging to the Anglican Church, unmarried, member of the big gang and having a “tolerable” character, but with no criminal record. Neither this William, nor any William with a criminal record was listed on Beeston Hill in the 1846 census. Nor can he be located with certainty in that or any subsequent census.