

PEGGY & MARIA



Maria of Mrs. Heegaard aka Anna Maria Louisa Williams

Creole, born enslaved to Catharina Mary Elizabeth De Luy (ca. 1797-1872) on St. Croix ca. 1808 and baptized in the Anglican Church. The name of her father is unknown. Her mother may have been Nancy Williams, born in Africa in the 1780s, who was gifted to Catharina Mary Elizabeth De Luy by her grandmother Catharina De Luy in 1798, and who is recorded as living continuously with Maria between 1809 and 1846. In 1813, Catharina Mary Elizabeth De Luy married Ernst Friderich Heegaard and moved in with him at 50 B Queen Street. He died in 1817 and she never remarried.

In 1824, when the thefts occurred, Maria was living with Mrs. Heegaard at 4 King Cross St. In 1829, she gave birth to a son who was baptized Peter Adolph in the Christiansted Lutheran Church. In 1833, she gave birth to a daughter who was baptized Anna Louisa in the same church. In 1835, still enslaved to Mrs. Heegaard, she was living with her children and Nancy (who had purchased her own freedom from Mrs. Heegaard earlier in the year) at 16 Queen St. In the census of that year, she was listed as 27 years of age, belonging to the Anglican Church, unmarried, employed as a washer and having a "good" character. In the census of 1841 she was enslaved to Mrs. Heegaard, living with her two children and Nancy at 13 Company Street, unmarried, employed as a servant with a "good" character. In 1846 she married Frederick Williams, a 37 year old free colored blacksmith born in Christiansted. Two months after the marriage, Maria gave birth to their child Henry Lewis Williams, who was baptized in the Christiansted Lutheran Church. In the

census of that year she was listed as being enslaved to Mrs. Heegaard with whom she was living with her husband, 6 children and Nancy at 36-37 Company Street. She was not listed among the slaves belonging to Mrs. Heegaard who were freed by the general emancipation of 3 July 1848. Nor could she be found with in the 1850 census or any subsequent census. Her son Henry Lewis died in Christiansted in 1850. Since no death record could be found for her or her husband, a likely scenario is that Frederick bought Maria and Henry Lewis free before July 1848 and that the couple had left the island before October 1850 when the census of that year was made. In 1850, her daughter Louisa and son Peter were living with Nancy Williams at 45 Company Street. Nancy Williams died in 1853. Louisa, who was afflicted with leprosy, died in 1870.

Peggy daughter of Lucy, enslaved to Free Negro Isaac

A Creole, born enslaved on St. Croix ca. 1807 and baptized in the Anglican Church. Her father is unknown. Her mother was Lucy. In 1808, Lucy and Peggy were purchased from the estate of deceased William McKahan for Ps. 550 by James and Margaret McKahan, who lived at 2 B Western Suburb in Christiansted. In 1810, the McKahan's sold Lucy and Peggy to Charles Cuttore who lived at 49 B East Street with his family. In 1816, Cuttore sold one of them to an unknown person. Peggy's story goes cold at this point. In 1824, it is known from the police records that she belonged to free Negro Isaac. In that year, free Negro Isaac Turnbull owned 19 B Market Street in Christiansted, while Henry Stridiron was co-owner of 19 A Market Street. Even though neither of the two men are listed as paying taxes on any slaves, it is likely that Peggy and Lucy belonged to one and/or the other them in that year. Thereafter, nothing can be certain. It is interesting that F. C. Billenstein purchased a woman named Peggy from P. Francis at auction in 1825, and that he freed a woman of the same name in 1839. In the census of 1841, the only Peggy corresponding to the Peggy in the police case was free Creole woman Peggy Conrad, 39 years of age, born on St. Croix an Anglican, who lived on Buck Island and a housekeeper, presumably to Christopher Love, a 49 year old fisherman from Denmark, who was renting the island from the colonial government. Among the six other inhabitants of Buck Island was a 49 year old African cook named Lucy, enslaved to the St. Croix Land Treasury, whose character was deemed "none too good" and had been punished, or was being punished, for some crime. Neither Peggy Conrad, nor African Lucy could be found in the 1846 or any subsequent census. One is only left to wonder if there is any connection between their disappearance from St. Croix and the death, reportedly under mysterious circumstances, of Christopher Love in November 1843.

Frederik Christian Billenstein

A Dane, born in Copenhagen ca. 1798 and died on St. Croix in 1840. He came to St. Croix around 1820, when he is reported to be a police officer (bailiff) living at 53-54 Queen Street, Christiansted. In 1824, at the time of the police case, he lived at 6 King Cross St., which he rented. About that time, he formed a relationship with free castice woman Eliza de la Motta, with whom he would have at least eight children between 1825 and 1840. In 1833, he purchased Estates Seven Hills and All For the Better, but continued living in Christiansted where he earned a living as a managing

clerk (fuldmægtig). In the census of 1835, he, his family and several enslaved domestics are listed as residing at 14 Company Street. He died and was buried in Christiansted in December 1840.

