

The State of Barbados, 15 (1684) – Excerpt

In St. Vincents [an island near Barbados] are 600 Negroes [that is, enslaved West Africans] which are come thither either out of Ships driven upon the Coast by storme, or else escaped from their Masters in (the) neighboring Colonies.

There are several other Islands within (the) limits of this [colonial] Government, which as they are either possessed by the French, or unfit for inhabitation or any other use are not taken notice of as particularly belonging to his Majesty [the king of England]; the Native Inhabitants whereof, and of all other the Caribbe Islands, bear so great hatred to the English, that as they doe continually annoy them, even in time of Peace with the Neighbouring Colonies, soe they are in time of Warr, like to be most dangerous and pernicious Enemies, in conjunction with any Forreign State.

Richard Ligon, *A True & Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, Excerpt (1657)

...it was in a time when Victuals [i.e., “food”] were scarce, and Plantins were not then so frequently planted, as to afford them [i.e., enslaved Africans] enough [to eat]. So that some of the high spirited and turbulent amongst them, began to mutinie, and had a plot, secretly to be reveng’d on their Master.... These villains, were resolved to make fire to such part of the boyling house, as they were sure would fire the rest [of the enslaver’s house] and so burn all, and yet seem ignorant of the fact, as a thing done by accident. But this plot was discovered, by some of the others [i.e., other enslaved Africans] who hated mischief, as much as they lov’d it; and so traduc’t [i.e., betrayed] them to their Master and brought in so many witnesses against them, as they were forc’t to confesse.... ...the Master gave order to the overseer that [the betrayers] should have a dayes liberty to themselves and their wives...and...a double proportion of victual [food] for three dayes, both which they refus’d: which we all wonder’d at, knowing well how much they lov’d their liberties, and their meat, having been lately pincht [i.e., restricted] of the one and not having overmuch of the other; and therefore being doubtfull what their meaning was in this, suspecting some discontent amongst them.... [They answered that] they would not accept any thing as a recompence [i.e., reward] for doing that which became them in their duties to due, nor would they have him think, it was hope of reward, that made them accuse their fellow servants, but an act of Justice, which they thought themselves bound in duty to doe, and they thought themselves sufficiently rewarded in the Act.