

The National Archives Education Service

Resistance and Rebellion in the Caribbean

Preparation materials for videoconference/virtual classroom (KS3)



This Plan represents 1000 acres of Land in the Parish of Saint James in the Island of Jamaica granted to the Maroons of Trelawny Town in the year 1794, circumscribed with red Lines, also a part of the circumjacent Country with the several Positions taken by the Troops under the Command of The Right Honble EARL of BALCARRES, on the 9th of August 1795.

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Surveyor General*

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Teacher's notes

This pack of documents and transcripts will allow you to prepare your students for the videoconference/virtual classroom session. It is vital that all students complete the preparatory work beforehand, so that they are fully prepared for the session.

This session will investigate resistance and rebellion in the Caribbean. Through close analysis of the documents held at The National Archives, students will identify different types of resistance and their impact on both the enslaved Africans and the system of slavery itself.

Teacher Preparation

In preparation for this session, students will need to read through Document 1 (CO 116/143) and answer the following questions:

1. What type of document is it, and when was it produced?
2. Can you work out any of the words/ headings on the document?
3. Who created it and why?

Additional teacher's notes for Videoconference ONLY:

In preparation for your videoconference, please divide the class into three groups. During the session, the Education Officer will ask each group to begin analysing a document (from documents 2-4). Please distribute the following documents to each group during the videoconference:

- Group 1: Runaways. Document 2 (CO 7/1)
- Group 2: The Maroons. Document 3 (CO700/Jamaica 24)
- Group 3: Plots and Rebellion. Document 4 (CO 1/53 f 266)

To help students analyse the documents, questions are provided on the Videoconference Document Analysis worksheet in this pack.

Background Information

Resistance and Rebellion in the Caribbean

In the Caribbean, the enslaved workers resisted their conditions by finding ways to keep a sense of identity that helped them to survive the slavery system. They also continually struggled for their rights and liberties against the colonial authorities, developing strategies of resistance and survival as a response to the conditions they faced. Historians have discovered that resistance took place from the 17th century until emancipation in 1838, which means there was hardly a generation of enslaved people that did not confront their enslavers, often in armed struggle in their pursuit for freedom.

Resistance took many different forms. There was day to day resistance, not designed to overthrow the slavery system but to make it less efficient. Examples of this would be killing livestock or pretending to be ill so work took longer to be completed. Another form was cultural resistance- maintaining one's cultural identity by rejecting the European cultural practices and practicing African ones in secret. Enslaved workers would practice obeah, a belief system that involved practices that were African in its origins. Some enslaved workers maintained the languages of the regions of Africa from which they came, which was passed down and spoken in secret. Many enslaved workers committed suicide rather than lived as slaves. Armed revolt, plots of armed revolt and marronage was the most serious form of resistance. Marronage involved large numbers of enslaved workers escaping plantations and forming communities in colonies with forested and mountainous areas. Maroons were a massive concern to the colonial authorities, unable to find them or to remove them, they made a number of treaties with them not to disturb the plantations or encourage more fugitives to join them.

Rebellions happened for different reasons. Firstly, enslaved workers were driven to rebel because of the extremely cruel laws established by the colonial authorities to keep them under control, and the brutal punishments they meted out when these laws were broken. Secondly, when the authorities did not appear to be in control, the enslaved workers would take advantage. The rebellion in St Dominque, which eventually led to the establishment of Haiti, the first black republic outside of Africa, is an example of this. The enslaved workers there took advantage of the infighting among the planters over whether the coloured (mixed heritage) population should have equal rights under the new laws of the French Republic. Thirdly the frustration of slave expectations led to three of the most serious rebellions in the British Caribbean – Barbados in 1816; Demerara in 1823 and Jamaica in 1831-32. All three of these uprisings occurred in part because of the enslaved awareness of abolitionist pressure and policies created by the government in London to improve the conditions of the enslaved. In each case, there was an assumption that emancipation had been granted and was being withheld by the colonial authorities. It was decided that if freedom would not be given, then it would be taken.

Document: CO 116/143

Extract from a Punishment Record Book, Vryheid Plantation, Guyana, 1826-27


Date of Entry	Name of Slave	Nature of Offence	Time and Place of punishment	By whose authority	By whom inflicted	Witnesses	Nature & extent of punishment of a female	Extent of punishment of a male
Nov 8	Hendrick	Turning out too late	At night in Hospital	Manager				12 hours with stocks
Nov 10	Hlaab	Refusing to be a Watchman	At night in Hospital	Manager				10 hours in Stocks
Nov 15	Arriva	Not cleaning the house	At night in Hospital	Manager				
	Baroness	Quantity of Coffee at the desk of the						
	Sand	Woman Gang						
	Dutchess							
	Angela							
	Mary							
	Elizabeth							
Nov 25	Baron	Stealing a particular kind of Rumour	At night and day in Hospital	Manager				Whores in the Restocks
Nov 27	Abba	Stealing 10 lbs of Coffee	at night and day in Hospital	Manager			One month during the night of that month the evening hours with the stocks	25 strokes
Dec 11	Sinner	Leaving the Estate without a pass for consequence of not being a Watchman and not to the Restocks	6 O'clock AM at Hospital	Manager	Samuel (Driver)	W. M. King		12 hours with the stocks
Dec 5	Frank (Driver)	Not looking the Woman Elvira in the stocks when over	At night in Hospital	Manager				15 hours in the Restocks
Dec 8	Abigail & Withelmia	Leaving the place upon hour before 11 O'clock	At night in Hospital	Manager				14 hours with the stocks
Dec 10	Christina	Assault to Capt. Giffes	at night in Hospital	Manager				
Dec 27	Senah and Maryanne	Turning out too late	At night in Hospital	Manager				

Document: CO 7/1

Advert from The Barbados Mercury, looking for Billy a runaway slave, 2 December 1786

THE subscribers are now landing
out of the schooner Gaspee,
Robt. Goodwill, master, from GASPEE.
A parcel of CHOICE COD FISH in
hogheads, new pickled salmon in tierces,
half tierces and barrels, and pickled
sturgeon in barrels, which they will
sell reasonable.

THOMSON and SEED.



RUNAWAY from the
subscriber, a mulatto
man named BILLY FOR-
STER, a carpenter by trade,
well known about the count-
ry, and is supposed to be
harboured in the parish of
Saint Lucy, any person harbouring of
concealing him will be prosecuted with
rigour; a reward of FIVE POUNDS
will be given for bringing him to his
owner. SARAH BRADFORD.

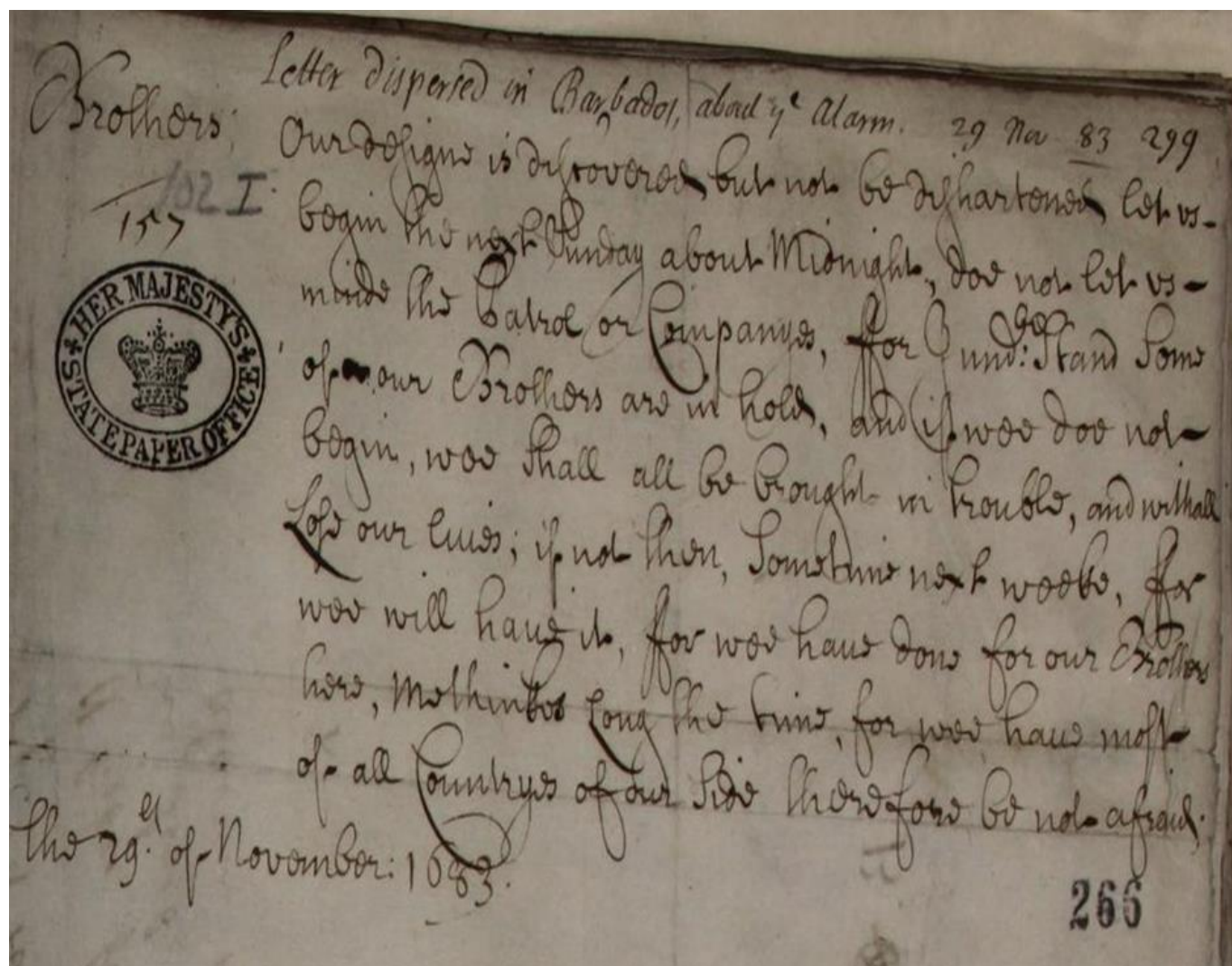
Document: CO 116/143

Map showing 1500 acres of Jamaica, given to the Maroons in 1739.



Document: CO 1/53 f 266

Letter found in a Bush in Barbados, 1683



Transcript

"Brothers; Our design is discovered but not be disheartened. Let us begin the next Sunday about Midnight, doe not let us minde the Patrol or Companies, for I understand Some of our Brothers are in hold, and if wee doe not begin we Shall all be brought in trouble, and withall Lose our lives; if not then, Sometime next weeke, for wee will have it for wee have done for our Brothers here, Methinkes long the time, for wee have most of all Countreys of our Side Therefore be not afraid"

29th November 1683

Worksheet: Videoconference Document Analysis

In your groups, examine your document and answer the following questions:

Group 1: Runaways

Advert from The Barbados Mercury, looking for Billy a runaway slave, 2 December 1786 (CO 7/1)

1. For what reason/reasons do you think Billy has run away?
2. Some runaways tried to pass themselves off as free people, Underline two reasons why Billy might have an advantage compared to other runaways?
3. Five pounds is a high reward. Why do you think Sarah Bradford cares if he is returned?
4. What do you think Billy's punishment might be if he is found?
5. Why was running away an important form of resistance?

Group 2: Maroons

Map showing 1500 acres of Jamaica, given to the Maroons in 1739 (CO700/Jamaica 24)

1. Circle the area of land inside the red line. Why do you think the Maroons have chosen to settle in this area?
2. The land has been given to the Maroons as part of a deal with the British. What do you think the Maroons have promised in return?
3. What do you think happened to the Maroons who broke the deal?
4. Jamaica had the biggest number of slave revolts of all the Caribbean Islands, look at the map why do you think this was?
5. Why was joining the Maroons an important form of resistance?

Group 3: Plots and rebellion

Letter found in a Bush in Barbados, 1683 (CO 1/53 f 266)

1. We don't know who wrote this letter but there are clues. What can you learn from the letter about the person who wrote it?
2. What do you think the author of the letter and his 'brothers' are plotting?
3. Underline three reasons why this plot might not be successful?
4. There were many plots to rebel throughout the slavery but most of them were crushed before they had even begun. Why do you think it was so difficult for enslaved people to rebel?
5. Why was rebellion an important method of resistance?

Did you know?

The National Archives Education Service also offers free taught sessions onsite in Kew and online.

You can book a free [Virtual Classroom](#) session, an online lesson where students can use individual computers to interact with our Education Officers and explore original documents without needing to travel to The National Archives. You will need computers or tablets for your students to work on either individually or in pairs.

A free [Video Conference](#) session allows our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone to set up this web-chat with us.

Our [Onsite Workshops](#) are available for free here at The National Archives and allow students to experience genuine original documents reflecting over 1000 years of history. From Elizabeth I's signature to the telegrams of the sinking Titanic, students love the wow-factor of being able to see real history on the desk in front of them.

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