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**Report
on the
Execrable Conspiracy
Carried Out by
the Amina Negroes
on
the Danish Island
of St. Jan
in America
1733**

by

Pierre J. Pannet

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P35
1984

**Translated and Edited
by**

Aimery P. Caron and Arnold R. Highfield

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Relation de l'Execrable Conspiration mise
en Oeuvre par les Negres, Menés en l'Isle
Danaé, l'an en Amerique 1733.

Il y avoit plus d'un mois que tous les
Negres de l'habitation de M^r. le Commandeur
Cap^t. Henry Sijm, et plusieurs autres negres
tant de la Compagnie que des Habitans aux
environs de Craalbag troys. Marons, et que
toutes les Chasses, que l'on avoit fait pour
les prendre, avoient été infructueuses. que ces
Negres faisoient des Rendous Nocturnes,
qu'ils complotoient à leur aise, sans que Per-
sonne sçût les enquestonner, et s'imaginant
que ces Assemblies tendissent à leur destruction.
Lorsque le jour fatal de l'Execution de leurs Pro-
jets, a mis au jour le horrible succès de leur
Complot. Ce malheureux jour a été le 23
North. 1733, à Trois heures de l'après-midi, les Negres
du S. Sotman, après s'être d'autres enfoncés
la porte de leurs Maîtres, qui prenoit son Repas,
leur ordonnèrent de se lever, et après l'avoir
fait entièrement depouillé, l'obligèrent à
Chanter et à Danser, ensuite luy ayant tiré
un Coup d'Armes au travers du Corps, luy ont
coupé la Tête, ouvert le Corps et se sont
lancés de son Sang, ils ont joints à cette Exécution,
la Pille du défunt Hesping Apel de Trice

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Introduction

The 250th anniversary of the St. John slave rebellion was observed on November 23, 1983, and has inspired a great deal of attention among contemporary Virgin Islanders. Discussions have been held, processions have taken place, and much has been written in the newspapers concerning those historic events. Virgin Islanders are proudly aware that those distant acts of resistance marked the beginning of their long struggle for freedom and self-determination. It is in that spirit that the present translation of the following important but little-used document is presently offered.

Although the revolt broke out on November 23, 1733, its roots reach back many months before. Droughts, which had plagued the island several times before in the 1720's, struck again in the spring of 1733, destroying crops and threatening the slaves with starvation. The gravity of the situation was compounded by a hurricane which hit the islands in July of that same year. Finally, the unfortunate island was visited by a plague of insects and by a second severe storm in early fall. Clearly, the slaves had good reason to fear for their lives. This tense state of affairs was exacerbated by a severe slave law issued by Governor Philip Gardelin on September 5, 1733.

After much planning, the revolt was executed on the morning of November 23, 1733. The fort at Coral Bay was taken and its cannons were fired to signal the beginning of the revolt to all the other slaves on the island. The plan was to take the Whites by surprise, kill them or drive them from the island, and then take control of St. John under African leadership. The leaders of the revolt apparently had designs on St. Thomas and Tortola as well, as the Pannet document indicates.

Although the initial stages of the revolt proceeded according to plan, difficulties were soon encountered. The first of these and perhaps the most damaging to the rebel cause was a lack of firearms and ammunition. Secondly, not all the slaves on the island joined the revolt. The leaders of the revolt were the so-called *Aminas* and perhaps the *Aquambos*, most of whom had been born in Africa. Creole slaves, or those born and raised in the West Indies, and slaves of other tribal backgrounds were apparently not equally willing to join the revolt. Of the 1,087 total slaves on the island, only 90-odd entered fully into the conflict. Had half the total number joined in, the revolt might well have completely succeeded, at least in the initial stage. And finally, the planters put up a spirited defense and then were relieved – first from St. Thomas, later from Tortola and St. Kitts, and finally, in April, 1734, from Martinique. Unable to obtain firearms, ammunition, powder, replacements, new recruits, or fresh provisions, the slaves found themselves in a disadvantageous position from the beginning. It is, in fact, no less than remarkable that they put up the tenacious fight they did, considering their greatly restricted circumstances.

Put up a good fight they did. Throughout November and December of 1733, they frustrated all attempts by the Danes to subdue them. In early February, 1734, they beat off an attempt by a group of Englishmen from Tortola, led by a certain Captain Tallard. And in the following month, they similarly defeated a force of sixty men from St. Kitts, led by John Maddox, who had contracted with the government at St. Thomas to hunt down the rebels. By the end of March, 1734, Governor Gardelin was at his wits' end as to what to do about the situation.

Finally, the governor appealed to the friendly French government at Martinique to send assistance. Desirous of courting Danish favor regarding their Baltic policies, the French agreed to send the requested help. On April 23, 1734, two French ships arrived at Coral Bay, St. John, carrying 200-plus armed men un-

der the command of Monsieur de Longueville. French operations against the rebels began on April 28 and continued through May 25, 1734. The constant harassment by the fresh French troops, coupled with the rebels' lack of weapons and supplies, broke the back of the revolt by mid-May. One group of eleven rebels apparently took their own lives on or around May 4 while another, larger group of 25 did likewise sometime around May 13-15, 1734. Others were captured and tried. Some of these were executed summarily; others, more unfortunate, were tortured to death. Still others apparently remained undetected and free to roam the island until after the French departure on May 26, 1734. In this manner, the revolt came to an end. It is significant to note, however, that this was one of the more successful slave revolts in the history of the West Indies. For a little over six months, a relatively small band of determined African men and women, poorly equipped and provisioned, fought bravely against overwhelming odds and nearly toppled colonial rule on the island of St. John.

The sources on the St. John slave revolt can be divided into two general categories. First, there are the primary sources, which were generated at the time of the revolt or shortly thereafter. Second, there are certain secondary sources – that is to say, writings by authors who used the primary sources, in whole or in part, to produce later accounts of the revolt.

The most important of the primary sources are the official records and documents of the Danish West India and Guinea Company, central among which are the papers of Governor Philip Gardelin (serving from 1733 to 1736), including his official papers and correspondence. These documents, or copies of them, are found in the Royal Archives in Copenhagen and in the Bancroft Collection at the University of California at Berkeley. The only scholar who has made extensive use of these materials is Waldemar Westergaard, and for that reason, his account is the most reliable (see below). A second important primary source is the cor-

responsedence between Gardelin in St. Thomas and the French authorities in Martinique. Added to these are the reports sent by Monsieur de Longueville, leader of the French expedition, back to his superiors in the French islands; these may be found in the French National Archives. Most of these documents have been translated from the French and published by Aimery P. Caron and Arnold R. Highfield in *The French Intervention in the St. John Slave Revolt of 1733-34* (Occasional Paper No. 8, St. Thomas, USVI: Bureau of Libraries, Museums and Archaeological Services, 1981, 58 pp.). The third important primary source is the present document by Pierre Pannet, which was written in December, 1733, on the Danish island of St. Thomas. More will be said about this document below.

One of the earliest of the secondary accounts to deal with the revolt is the well-known Martfeldt manuscript, entitled *Samlinger om de Danske Vestindiske Øer St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. Jan*. Of the six quarto folio volumes of the collection, written as the result of Christian Martfeldt's visit to the islands in 1765-68, Volume I, according to Westergaard, contains orders of the various governors in the period 1733-1767 and Volume III contains a report on the revolt, written possibly with the aid of eyewitnesses, entitled, "Om Rebellionen paa St. John."

C.G.A. Oldendorp, in his *Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brüder auf den caribischen Inseln S. Thomas, S. Croix, und S. Jan* (Barby: Brossart, 1777, 2 vols.), gives an account of the revolt, adding nothing major to our knowledge, even though he may have spoken with eyewitnesses to the event during his visit to the islands in the 1760's. In addition to supplying a great deal of information on Blacks both in Africa and the West Indies, Oldendorp devotes one entire chapter to the question of maronage and rebellion (Book IV, Section 6). Not long after, Georg Høst published his *Efterretninger om Den Sanct Thomas og dens Gouverneur, optegnede der paa Landet fra 1769 indtil 1776* (Copenhagen: Nicolaus Møller og Søn,

1791, 203 pp.), the sources for which apparently came from government records. Although Høst had access to the records of the Company and to government documents, he nevertheless made a number of factual errors which were passed along to subsequent writers. As an example, he incorrectly stated that the revolt broke out on November 13, 1733. Moreover, he exaggerated the number of Frenchmen involved in the military action on St. John (400), as well as the number of slaves who took their own lives at the end of the revolt (300). John P. Knox, who was a minister on St. Thomas some 60 years later, wrote one of the first accounts of the Danish islands in English: *A Historical Account of St. Thomas, W.I.* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1852, 271 pp.). It was based heavily on Høst, however, and he passed along the latter's account of the revolt, errors included. In addition, Knox is the first secondary source to note that a tradition existed at that time which had it that the 300 rebels cast themselves from "a high precipice onto the rocks below." Four years later, a certain Bernhard v. Petersen translated the Knox work nearly word for word into Danish, in a book entitled *En Historisk Beretning om de dansk-vestindiske Øer St. Croix, St. Thomas og St. Jan* (Copenhagen: C. W. Stinck, 1855, 285 pp.). In this way, the original Høst account of the revolt was reintroduced to the Danish public, but by way of the Knox translation.

Not much attention was given to the revolt by scholars and writers over the following forty years, but in 1894 Capt. D. F. Paludan published a popular article entitled "Blade af de dansk-vestindiske Øers Historie," (*Museum* [1894], pp. 341-366), based on unpublished materials taken from the St. Thomas archives before they were transferred to Denmark. In 1917, Waldemar Westergaard published his *The Danish West Indies Under Company Rule: 1671-1754* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1917, 359 pp.), containing a chapter on the revolt written from the original Danish sources, which the author examined in great

detail. His work remains the most serious on the subject to date. More than a decade later, in 1928, Kay Larsen brought out his *Dansk Vestindien 1666-1917* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 1928, 397 pp.), which contained an entire chapter dedicated to the "Oprør paa St. Jan." Although Larsen's work is not generally held in high regard by Danish scholars, it remains a fact that he gives a readable, relatively correct account of the revolt, though he does not systematically cite his sources.

In recent years, most accounts of the revolt have appeared in the popular literature [e.g., Knud Kanestad's "Negeroprør i Dansk Vestindien," in *Hjemmet*, nr. 6. (1943)]. In English, John Anderson has written a fictionalized account of the event, entitled *Night of the Silent Drums* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975, 406 pp.). Although his work is not history in the strictest sense of the word, Anderson has remained surprisingly faithful to the historical sources, which he has evidently studied very closely and in great detail. Finally, the work cited above, by Aimery P. Caron and Arnold R. Highfield (*The French Intervention in the St. John Slave Revolt of 1733-34*), represents the most recent work done on the subject. In addition to translations of the principal French documents, it also contains a general introduction, a chronology of events, and a bibliography. It should be noted, however, that this work is not systematic and comprehensive. Much research and analysis remains to be done on this important historical event.

Who was Pierre Pannet and why did he write his report of the St. John revolt? A French planter who owned estate Dorothea on the north side of St. Thomas, Pannet followed the revolt closely after it broke out. His attempt to chronicle the subsequent events of the conflict suggests that he may have had more than a passing interest in St. John. But after the revolt, we hear little of him. He appears a short time later in the pages of history, in St. Croix, where he acted as a French interpreter when the island was transferred

by the French to the Danish West India Company. Thereafter nothing is heard of him.

Pannet's report itself is rather short but concise, covering the period from November 23 to December 4, 1733. The changes in handwriting and in style indicate that it was apparently written on several different occasions under varying circumstances. The cramped writing and relatively unclear style near the end would tend to support the idea that it was finished in haste. Similarly, nothing is known of Pannet's reason for breaking off his report when he did. Perhaps he had intended to send it to a party or parties in Denmark. The critical comments about Governor Gardelin and the state of commerce and trade on the island, as well as the fact that the report itself ended up in the archives in Denmark, lead one to speculate that the document may well have been written for the eyes of the directors of the Danish West India and Guinea Company in Copenhagen. For the time being, however, that must remain nothing more than speculation.

All the same, Pannet's comments give the modern reader some interesting and useful insights. Since some of these remarks were not emphasized by Westergaard and since the Pannet document has not been thoroughly investigated by other historians, some important facts concerning the revolt have been omitted from subsequent accounts. First and foremost is the amount of advance planning on the part of the Africans. The leaders were Aminas, though Pannet does not give their individual names; those came later, after some of the rebels had been interrogated and tried. They were African-born and could not or would not accommodate themselves to slavery. Their leaders planned the revolt in strategic detail and provided for the division of the spoils among their king, queen, and other outstanding leaders, whom they had selected from among themselves. Their confidence in winning was such that at the outset they deliberately avoided damaging useful buildings and structures, which they planned to operate for their own advantage after the

revolt. Moreover, they intended to use Africans from other nations as their workers and slaves on the newly-obtained plantations. This same strong tribal or national identity probably explains why the Amina leaders were willing to strike a deal with Vessup, "exchanging 10 Negroes for 10 barrels of powder." In all probability, the 10 Negroes were non-Aminas. Most surprising of all, though, is the fact that the Amina leaders had nourished plans for the capture of St. Thomas and Tortola. Apparently, the St. John Aminas had been able to maintain contact of some kind with their fellow Aminas on the other island, some of whom were maroons. This possibility of extending the revolt to the other islands was very real and caused the Whites no little consternation.

Information in the Pannet document concerning the counterattack from St. Thomas likewise provides some interesting insights. First, it is rather clear that from the beginning the Africans split into two groups: one to move along the north shore of St. John, harrying the planters and eventually cornering them at Durlo's plantation near Hogsness Bay on the west end, and a second to remain in the main encampment on the Suhm plantation near Coral Bay, while holding the fort, which was located nearby.

Pannet indicates that Governor Gardelin displayed some reluctance in sending a relief force to St. John, as well as providing suitable provisions. After some wrangling with former commandant Frederick Moth, however, a small relief force under William Barens was sent to the Durlo plantation on the night of November 23, to help meet the onslaught that was to come the following morning.

A second relief force, this one under the command of Thomas Magens, arrived at Coral Bay on Thursday, November 25, in order to attack the rebels on the other flank. This group of 18 men managed to retake the fort immediately, spike its cannons, drive the rebels from the Suhm plantation into the woods, and then begin to take some prisoners.

It is at this point that the Pannet report abruptly breaks off. As brief as it is, however, it does provide an interesting glimpse of the opening events of the revolt, albeit exclusively from the European and planter point of view. Whatever its limitations, it deserves a much closer study by historians. It is in this spirit that the present translation has been made.

Aimery P. Caron
St. Thomas

Arnold R. Highfield
St. Croix

December 1983

This is a detailed map of the island of St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands. The map shows the island's coastline with numerous bays, coves, and settlements. Key locations include Waterbury, St. John's, and various smaller towns and bays. The map is labeled with names such as Waterbury, St. John's, and various smaller towns and bays. The map is labeled with names such as Waterbury, St. John's, and various smaller towns and bays.

Report on the Execrable Conspiracy Carried Out by the Amina Negroes on the Danish Island of St. Jan¹ in America, 1733

For more than a month, all the Negroes of Captain Henry Suhm's plantation and several other Negroes from the Company, as well as plantations in the vicinity of Coral Bay, have become maroons and all the hunts undertaken to recapture them had been unsuccessful.² The Negroes were meeting at night to plot at their ease, without anyone being able to stop them or to imagine that these meetings would lead to their total ruin, until the fatal day of the execution of their plans would reveal the horrible success of their plotting.

That unhappy day was the 23rd of November, 1733, at three in the morning. Mr. Soetman's Negroes, assisted by others, broke down their master's door, while he was sleeping, ordered him to get up, and, after having stripped him naked, forced him to sing and dance.³ Then, after having run a sword through his body, they cut off his head, cut open his body, and washed themselves in his blood. To this execution, they added that of his daughter Hissing, thirteen years old, by slaughtering her on top of her stepfather's body. Soetman's spouse escaped a similar fate by having gone to St. Thomas several weeks earlier.

At four in the morning, the Company Negroes involved in the same conspiracy climbed to the fort,⁴ each with a load of wood to be used by the garrison, which consisted of six men. In their bundles they had hidden weapons. When they arrived near the entrance to the fort, the sentry called out: "Werdae?"⁵ They answered: "Company Negroes with wood." As this

answer allowed them to enter, they unloaded their wood and after taking up their weapons, they slaughtered the five soldiers by various cruel means. Seeing this in time, the sentry fled to avoid the same fate.⁶ Then, the rebels, being masters of the fort, raised the flag and sounded the alarm with cannons to draw the planters to the fort in order to lead them into ambushes, which the rebels had laid along the way. However, several were warned by loyal Negroes, who saved them from this treachery.

In the meantime, another group of Negroes, after having massacred Mr. Suhm's officer as well as the officer of the Company, crossed over to the northwest side of the island and killed Peter Kroyer,⁷ his wife and young child without mercy, along with the wife and two children of Mr. Castan;⁸ the latter, however, miraculously escaped this calamity by fleeing into a cottonfield. Mr. Gabriel van Stell⁹ and his wife and children also suffered from the rebels' barbarism, as did the manager of Mr. Moth's plantation along with his family, not to mention many others about whom we have no exact information.¹⁰ Mr. Froeling,¹¹ Commandant of St. John, who was at that time on his plantation, was warned that the Negroes were coming to inflict on him the same fate. Along with his Negro, he went immediately to his boat by the seaside and pushed off with a certain Mr. Minnebeck.¹² Mackiel Hendricks¹³ fled to Tortola. Seeing from his cottonfield a fishing boat from the same Tortola, Castan signaled to it and escaped by that means. Finally, having reached Lieven van Stell's plantation¹⁴ to repeat the same tragedy, the rebels were asked by one of the loyal Negroes what they wanted. They answered that they had come to kill his master, to which the Negro answered that he had already taken care of it, as if he had been a member of the plot. He then pretended to fall in with them, but as soon as he found the opportunity, he returned to warn his master, who was ill, and helped him and his family to flee to this island in his boat.¹⁵ It is through him that we have

learned the first news of this revolt.

Through the capture of the fort, the massacre of several planters, and the plunder of the houses of those whom terror had forced into flight, the rebels had armed themselves with guns, swords, sabers, gunpowder, and lead, in addition to the cutlasses they had made out of iron hoops, and other weapons made of bills and axes.¹⁶ Thus armed, they went to the plantation of Miss Jansen, who fortunately was on St. Thomas.¹⁷ There, they wanted to enlist the widow's Negroes into their group, but these Negroes, who had armed themselves defensively, received the rebels with indescribable courage. They held out a rather long time and cut down several of their adversaries, but seeing one of their men wounded and the number of rebels increasing, they retired to Mr. Pieter Durlo's plantation.¹⁸ That is where all the Whites had retreated with their captain, Mr. Johannes van Beverhout,¹⁹ to defend themselves against this horde of more than 300 rebels; there might have been 27 Whites and 20 Negroes who appeared loyal to them.

They had taken the precaution of sending their wives and their children to the islets²⁰ in order to fight with more determination and less hindrance; but what could they do, such a small number, against such a formidable force, which was growing every minute. God has visibly protected them. The rebels halted to eat at Widow Jansen's whence they departed to attack the Whites in their encampment, after setting a canefield on fire. The small number of defenders was paralyzed with horror when they saw this multitude of assassins moving resolutely down the mountain. Since, however, Durlo's plantation is armed with a few four-pounders, they loaded them with iron shot and used them effectively. This strategy stole the resolution from the rebels, who then sought shelter in the woods to fight behind cover. They harassed our men continuously until night, without inflicting any damage other than killing poor Reverend Groenwold, whom they intercepted as he was on his way to our

camp. Later they retired to rest, promising to return in the morning to bring to completion the destruction of all the planters.

However, we did not hear of this awful desolation until 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The governor had the alarm sounded from the fort in order to apprise us of the news.²¹ Everyone was in the same state of consternation: a wife trembled for her husband, others cried for their children or feared for their parents; all were in tears, and concerned about what help could be supplied. Nor was the Governor able to provide it. He blamed the causes of this calamity on our disunity and exhorted us as Christians to look among ourselves for the means to a solution. The confusion among the bourgeoisie,²² who had for a long time now been without a leader capable of wise counsel and who lacked arms and ammunition, made it impossible for them to provide prompt relief. We were without food supplies, yet such was necessary to support our poor afflicted brothers, as well as those who would be sent over to relieve them. Trade, which had been purposely ruined on this island, did not provide any vessel for the transport of those whom we would have wanted to send. In a word, our indigence did not allow us to offer more than goodwill and a sincere empathy for the sufferings of our brothers whom we felt were very close to their ruin. We were simply suffering from the little care taken for the lives and the property of these poor people.

When the governor,²³ Mr. Moth, moved by our sincere zeal, began to apply himself generously to the task, he objected sharply to Governor Gardelin that it was shameful to abandon in this manner the interests of his government's children to the barbarism of their disloyal slaves, and that he was the one responsible for all these events. Gardelin then answered him: "What do you want me to do? If you have any remedies for the situation, then act. I authorize you to do so." That same night, he dispatched a small French boat with 16 soldiers, consisting of the fort's garrison, as well as

a number of volunteers under the command of Mr. William Barens, and a Dutch boat with six guns, to support the landing. Also sent were some scant military supplies and food. The guard at the fort was replaced with its assistants,²⁴ the sailors of a vessel from the Indies, which is in the harbor, and a group of the bourgeoisie, numbering 40 to 60 men. This was the first succor and saving assistance extended to these poor people.

In the morning, as they had promised, the St. Jan rebels went to the camp of the Whites, who were fatigued from the night vigil, from defense preparations and from thirst, nearly incapable of defending themselves, as several men were ill; however, they maintained their composure even as they saw themselves surrounded by a horde which had cut off their water supply. The defenders had burned and cut down everything around them that might have facilitated any ambushes. Nevertheless, they would have been defeated had the attackers acted as courageously as their great numbers should have allowed; but the arrival of this relief comforted our men and forced the withdrawal of the attackers.

The day was spent resting and taking necessary measures. The boat was sent back to St. Thomas in order to bring back both supplies and more support. Governor Gardelin sent a few barrels of biscuits and several of salted Irish mutton, which stank; he said that there was no other meat to be had, although in fact the island was well supplied with good beef. They objected to him in vain that under such circumstances only the very best would do; he did not relent. They had to take those provisions along, though even the Negroes would not take a bite of it.

Then Mr. Thomas Magens²⁵ left with a relief force of 40 men, followed by another one of 20, which carried along a cask of saltfish. They arrived at St. Jan on Thursday and immediately formed a corps of 18 men, consisting of as many Whites as Negroes, to retake the fort. Mr. Magens was left to guard the camp

with 25 men. The fort was immediately taken by assault with the loss of two Whites and two Negroes. The rebel losses were not known, as they fled into the woods over the dry walls surrounding the fort.²⁶ Our people satisfied themselves with spiking the cannons and retiring to their encampment on Mr. Suhm's plantation.²⁷

It was there that lived the king, the queen, and the chief officers they had elected; when a detachment of our people went to look for them there, they withdrew between the two hills completely covered with woods behind the same plantation. Eight to ten prisoners were taken. They were brought to this island on the 28th of this month by our boats which were transporting some of our men for a rest, which they enjoyed for the entire day before returning. Upon their arrival, they found that the English had sent help from the island of Tortola. They, together with our men, gave chase to the rebels, among whom a few more prisoners were taken. On the 30th, two of these accomplices were executed, and presently the trial of others is being prepared. These rebels had plotted to retain the island and they had divided the plantations among themselves, according to the rank and position which each was to hold. The Negroes from other nations were to be provided to them to do their labors and were to belong to them as slaves. This is the reason why they preserved all the sugar factories and other buildings.

They had additionally resolved that, after succeeding with the St. Jean revolt, they, in concert with the Amina Negroes²⁸ of this island, would have brought about our complete ruin and would have then worked on that of Tortola. It is easy to see how grand was the design of these wretches and to understand how much more wretched are those who are unable to do without their labor and their help, the instruments of their suffering and of their captivity. If one has a slave, how much more of a slave is he than the one he purchased! He must be fed, clothed, and screamed and

cursed at to make him do his task. And finally, one has to sleep always with the fear that domestic enemies will slit one's throat at night to end our days as thanks for the care you have taken to sustain them[sic].

Today, on the 4th of December, 8 prisoners arrived from St. Jean. We learn that the rebels are assembled at Kroyer's and are beginning to lack ammunition. They offered to Captain Vessup 10 Negroes for 10 kegs of powder.²⁹ Two from among those who were present were willing to recognize him as their leader should he be willing to help them, with Robinson,³⁰ to conquer St. Jean and St. Thomas. They made a good impression and received the Negroes on account and sent them here. A general attack against the said Negroes is planned for tomorrow, if only they can be surprised in their encampment. We learn that Mr. Soetman was not massacred until after the surrender of the fort, as he was in the process of responding to the alarm. Mr. Barens just arrived to seek relief and food supplies.

St. Thomas, on the 4th of December, 1733
Pierre Joseph Pannet



Text Notes

1. The Danish name for St. John, presently one of the United States Virgin Islands. The author also uses the French name, St. Jean, alternatively throughout the text. Both designations have been preserved in the translation.
2. Henry Suhm was governor of St. Thomas and St. John from May 1727 to February 1733; previously, he had served as governor at Fort Christiansborg in Danish Guinea. After his arrival in the Danish Islands, he obtained plantation number 74 in the Coral Bay Quarter near Hurricane Hole, called Orcan-Hullet Bay by the Danes. See Kay Larsen, *Guvernører: Residenter, Kommandanter og Chefer samt Enkelte Andre Fremtrædende Personer i De Tidligere Danske Tropekolonier* (København: Arthur Jensens Forlag, 1940), p. 133.
3. John Reimert Soedtmann was the ranking magistrate on St. John. His plantation was located at Coral Bay very near the fort (Larsen, p. 110)
4. Fortsberg in Coral Bay.
5. "Who is there?" or "Who goes there?" in Dutch Creole.
6. According to Waldemar Westergaard, it was not the sentry who escaped but rather another soldier, John Gabriel by name, who saved his own life by hiding under a bed in the bunkhouse and later fleeing. See *The Danish West Indies Under Company Rule 1671-1755* (New York: MacMillan Co., 1917), p. 168.

7. Peter Kroyer owned a plantation in Brynes or Brown's Bay.
8. Pierre Castan was a French Huguenot who owned a plantation in Hurricane Hole.
9. Gabriel van Stell's plantation was located in Brynes or Brown's Bay.
10. Frederick Moth, interim commandant of St. Thomas from April 1724 until May 1727, was the first governor of St. Croix, serving from June 1734 until February 1736 in that post, becoming later the governor-general of all the Danish West Indian islands from February 1736 until April 1744 (Larsen, pp. 33-34 and 93).
11. Lieutenant Froeling owned a plantation in Water Bay.
12. Minnebeck owned a plantation on the east end of St. John.
13. Possibly Michael Hendrickson, who owned a plantation on the east end of St. John.
14. Lieven van Stell owned a plantation near Francis Bay.
15. From this passage, it is clear that the author of this text was recounting these events from Tappus (present-day Charlotte Amalie), St. Thomas, located about 15 miles west of St. John.
16. Westergaard (pp. 168-169) estimates that the rebels were armed with only 40 flintlocks or pistols; a bill is a short cutlass used throughout the West Indies for cutting cane.

17. The widow of John Jansen, who owned a cotton plantation in Caneel or Cinnamon Bay.
18. Peter Deurloo, or Durlo, owned a plantation near Hogsness or Hawksnest Bay.
19. John von Beverhoudt (also appears as Bewerhoudt) was a militia captain who owned a plantation near Susannaberg and the Centerline Road.
20. The women and children were rowed in small boats to Frauen Cay or the larger of the Deurloo Cays, a few hundred yards west of Hawksnest Point.
21. Philip Gardelin had risen from the posts of book-keeper and merchant for the Company at St. Thomas to the position of governor, which he held from February 1733 until February 1736. His concern for keeping expenses to a minimum in the repression of the revolt may well be a result of his accounting background (Larsen, pp. 33-34 and p. 67). The fort referred to is Fort Christian in Tappus, St. Thomas.
22. By "bourgeoisie," the author was referring to the plantation owners and merchants on St. Thomas. This is a metropolitan rather than a West Indian term.
23. Pannet is probably referring here to Moth's previous position as interim commandant of St. Thomas (see note 10).
24. By "fort assistants," the author must have meant the support staff (i.e., cooks, servants, valets, workers, etc.).
25. Thomas Magens was one of the guardians of Joachim Melchior Magens, who owned plantation number 7 on St. John (Larsen, p. 89).

26. It is not altogether clear whether the author meant here an uncemented stone wall or a wall not surrounded by water.
27. The author must have been referring at this point to the camp of the rebels rather than to that of the relief force.
28. For something more on the background of these Amina Negroes taken from a firsthand contemporary source, see C.G.A. Oldendorp, *Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brüder auf den caribischen Inseln S. Thomas, S. Croix und S. Jan* (Barby: J. J. Bossart, 1777), Part 1, Book 3, Section 4, pp. 270-292.
29. William Vessup was a St. John planter who had murdered a neighbor some months previously and whom the Danish authorities had failed to apprehend. He was given to understand that his assistance in the slave hunt would be welcomed by the government (see Westergaard, p. 171).
30. Robinson was apparently Vessup's companion; nothing else is known about him.

