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Entry Nr. 027 Louis

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Aaron Spencer Fogleman and Robert Hanserd (eds.), *Five Hundred African Voices: A Catalog of Published Accounts by Africans Enslaved in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1586-1936* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2022).

Catalog number: **27**
Name(s) of African providing account: **Louis**
Date account recorded: 1764
Date account first published: 2019
Date of entry creation or last update: 20 September 2021

Source: Extended French-language quotations with English translations on p. 160-162 in VOICES OF THE ENSLAVED: LOVE, LABOR, AND LONGING IN FRENCH LOUISIANA by Sophie White. Copyright © 2019 by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture. Used by permission of the University of North Carolina Press. www.uncpress.org.

Sophie White Comments:

p. 160:

“The court records are sprinkled with incidental references to courtships that were lubricated by means of gift giving by men to women, often accompanied by food preparation by women for men. This connection between men offering gifts to women, who in turn offered comfort and sustenance

p. 161:

to men, is apparent in the earliest known reference to gumbo (*gombeau*) in the archival record. In 1764, the runaway Louis was asked to confirm “if the *negresse* Comba [see Catalog entry 24] had not served gumbo to him and another *negresse*, and if he had not slept with her” (*si La negresse Comba ne Luy avoit pas donné un Gombeau avec une autre Negresse, et sil navoit pas Couché avec elle*). He replied that it was false that he slept with her but acknowledged...”

Text of Account:

Original French –

p. 161:

“qu’il mangeoit chez elle du tems que son mari vivoit et avant quil ne monta aux illinois mais que depuis qu’il est dessendu il n’y a pas mis Le pied).”

English translation –

“that he ate with her from the time that her husband lived and before he had gone up to the Illinois Country, but since he has come back he has not set foot there”

Sophie White Comments:

(p. 161) “Where Louis denied having recently been to see Mama Comba, however, his companion and fellow runaway C  zar confirmed that Louis always slept at her place, adding that she had even told her overseer that “he was a *negre* from the upper area [the Illinois Country] who is of my country” (*cet un negre de La haut qui est de mon pais*). (Mama Comba was Mandinga; therefore, Louis originated there, too).”

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