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Entry Nr. 028 Essom

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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: **28**
Name(s) of African providing account: **Essom**
Date account recorded: 1765
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Source: Brief French-language quotation printed with English translation on p. 190 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. 190)

“Speaking in 1765 about his capture after eight days as a runaway, Essom, an African-born runaway, explained his motives through a female interpreter who understood Essom’s “Nago language” (one associated with the Yoruba language group and the Bight of Benin). Translating his words into French for the court, she reported that he had run away...”

Text of Account:

p. 190 :

Original French –

“parceque son maître luy a osté sa femme: qu’il luy avoit donné, pour faire Son Boire et Son mang.”

English translation –

“because his master took away the woman / wife he had given him to prepare his drink and food”

Sophie White Comments:

“Essom and his French master seem to have held a shared notion that forming a partnership with a woman was not only about love, sex, procreation, and companionship; rather, they both recognized that women also served important functions in their interlocking roles as wives, mothers, and purveyors of meals.”

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