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Entry Nr. 203 John Davis

Aaron Spencer Fogleman
Northern Illinois University, aaronfogleman@niu.edu

Robert Hanserd

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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:	203
Name(s) of African providing account:	John Davis
Date account recorded:	1830
Date account first published:	1832
Date of entry creation:	16 September 2021

Source: His autobiographical deposition printed on p. 156-157 in [Class B] *Correspondence with Foreign Powers relative to Slave Trade 1831, Presented to both Houses of Parliament, by command of his Majesty, 1832 in Great Britain, House of Lords, The Sessional Papers, 1801-1833*, vol. 313 (1831-1832). London: Printed by R. G. Clarke, at the London Gazette Office, Cannon Row, Westminster, 1832.

Comments:

Sub-Enclosure (D.) in No.111.

Deposition of a liberated African Boy, named John Davis, found on board the Brigantine “La Caroline,” commanded by John Antonio Daniel, when that Vessel was boarded by the Boats of His Britannick Majesty’s Brig “Conflict”, on the 15th of December, 1830, in Latitude 9°15’ N., Longitude 14° 25’ W. Taken before His Honour John William Jeffcott, Chief Justice of Sierra Leone.

Text of Account:

p. 156:

“JOHN DAVIS sworn, states – that he is a King’s boy, or liberated African; lived at Sierra Leone for 6 years; was apprenticed to a man named Tom Black, who lived in the Kissy Town-road, near the wharf where a large ship had been wrecked, or broken-up. Before he went to reside with Tom Black, deponent had lived with a countryman of his called “Josiah” who got into some “palaver,” and was sent to goal, after which deponent went to live with Tom Black; resided with him for some years, when one day he was told by him to go with a Mandingo man to buy rice. Black told him he would be absent for 3 days, and that he would return by way of the River Sierra Leone.

He went with the Mandingo man, who embarked him in a canoe, in which were 6 others; they kept along the coast for 5 days; when they came to the country of a Mandingo man deponent lived with the Mandingo man in his house (a grass house) one moon (month); he was then transferred to “Jack Ormond’s” town, in the Rio Pongos, where the Mandingo men sold him to Jack Ormond. Jack Ormond, in receiving him, put him in prison (or in confinement). Deponent told Jack Ormond that he was a “Sierra Leone boy,” a “King boy,” to which he replied, “my good boy, I cannot help it – If I let you out of chains you will run away.” He was kept in chains for 6 days, and then sold to Monsieur Daniel, Captain of the French brigantine “La Caroline,” in which he was found, when the boats of the “Conflict” boarded her. Captain Daniel lived at the Rio Pongos, in the house of a Mandingo man, named Brama Noba. Deponent was employed by Daniel to clean knives and forks; told Captain Daniel said “it was no matter, if English man-of-war saw him, she could not touch him, he was a Frenchman.”

Deponent knows a man named Joseph, or Jonsiffe, at the Rio Pongos. Joseph is an Englishman; was sold so by one of his slaves who ran away. Joseph has plenty of slaves, he sold 5 to Captain Daniel, one of whom ran away. The boy who ran away was a Sierra Leone boy. Captain Daniel and Joseph were very intimate—they used to eat and drink, and live together. They did not occupy the same house, but used to visit each other in canoes, as they lived at some distance apart. Amongst the slaves in the “Caroline” was one who had been sold by Joseph to Monsieur, his name is George – Joseph is a short man in stature, a white man.

There were 50 slaves shipped on board the “Caroline”, including witness; she left the Rio Pongos on the 12th instant. They were all put in irons, with the exception of deponent, whom the Captain ordered to act as cook to his companions.

Captain Daniel allowed the slaves but one meal a day each. The day’s provision for the 50 slaves consisted of 15 small calabashes of rice, the calabash containing about half-a-pint English, thus allowing to each

p. 157:

man about a wine-glass full of rice for his daily and only meal. Deponent, as cook, had to send it out. Captain told him to put plenty of water to each portion of rice, that the slaves remonstrated, Captain Daniel said, “when they got to the West Indies they would get plenty to eat, but that he had no room to stow provisions in his vessel.” He also said, “that is they eat too much, they would get sick.”

There were 5 women amongst the slaves, 4 slept below among the men, and one slept with the Captain! When the Captain saw the boats of the man-of-war “Conflict” coming, he sent the slaves down below, put a cloth over them, said, “they must not talk, and if they did, he would flog them.” The slaves were greatly annoyed at the Captain’s conduct to them, and would have thrown him overboard, if they had not been ironed.

(Signed) His John X Davis,

Mark

The above deposition was taken and sworn to on board H. M. brig "Conflict" of Sierra Leone, this 17th day of December, 1830, before me,

(Signed) J. W. JEFFCOTT,
Chief Justice of Sierra Leone
Present, George Smithers, Lieutenant and Commander."

(See scanned images below.)

them. Mr. Jones, after great difficulty, succeeded in recovering 3 out of the 4 before stated, the other, boy, having made his escape, and found his way to one of the merchant's factories, but who has since been sent here to point out the person who sold him. I enclose Mr. Jones's report to me for your perusal, by which you will see that 2 out of the 4 liberated Africans, thus redeemed a second time from slavery, had been sold upwards of 2 years ago; this is a clear proof that the practice of kidnapping and selling the liberated Africans of this colony, has been going on to a great extent, for a long time back.

Sub-Enclosure (D.) in No. 111.

Deposition of a liberated African Boy, named John Davis, found on board the Brigantine "La Caroline," commanded by John Antonio Daniel, when that Vessel was boarded by the Boats of His Britannick Majesty's Brig "Conflict," on the 15th of December, 1830, in Latitude 3° 15' N., Longitude 14° 25' W. Taken before His Honour John William Jeffcott, Chief Justice of Sierra Leone.

JOHN DAVIS sworn, states—that he is a King's boy, or liberated African; lived at Sierra Leone for 6 years; was apprenticed to a man named Tom Black, who lived in the Kissy Town-road, near the wharf where a large ship had been wrecked, or broken-up. Before he went to reside with Tom Black, deponent had lived with a countryman of his called "Josiah," who got into some "palaver," and was sent to goal, after which deponent went to live with Tom Black; resided with him for some years, when one day he was told by him to go with a Mandingo man to buy rice. Black told him he would be absent for 3 days, and that he would return by way of the River Sierra Leone.

He went with the Mandingo man, who embarked him in a canoe, in which were 6 others; they kept along the coast for 5 days; when they came to the country of the Mandingo man deponent lived with the Mandingo man in his house (a grass house) one moon (month); he was then transferred to "Jack Ormond's" town, in the Rio Pongos, where the Mandingo men sold him to Jack Ormond. Jack Ormond, in receiving him, put him in prison (or in confinement). Deponent told Jack Ormond that he was a "Sierra Leone boy," a "King boy," to which he replied, "my good boy, I cannot help it—if I let you out of chains you will run away." He was kept in chains for 6 days, and then sold to Monsieur Daniel, Captain of the French brigantine "La Caroline," in which he was found, when the boats of the "Conflict" boarded her. Captain Daniel lived at the Rio Pongos, in the house of a Mandingo man, named Brama Noba. Deponent was employed by Daniel to clean knives and forks; told Captain Daniel he was a "Sierra Leone boy," a "King George's boy." Captain Daniel said "it was no matter, if English man-of-war saw him, she could not touch him, he was a Frenchman."

Deponent knows a man named Joseph, or Jonsiffe, at the Rio Pongos. Joseph is an Englishman; was told so by one of his slaves who ran away. Joseph has plenty of slaves, he sold 5 to Captain Daniel, one of whom ran away. The boy who ran away was a Sierra Leone boy. Captain Daniel and Joseph were very intimate—they used to eat and drink, and live together. They did not occupy the same house, but used to visit each other in canoes, as they lived at some distance apart. Amongst the slaves in the "Caroline" was one who had been sold by Joseph to Monsieur Daniel, his name is George—Joseph is a short man in stature, a white man.

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Captain Daniel allowed the slaves but one meal a day each. The day's provision for the 50 slaves consisted of 15 small calabashes of rice, the zalabash containing about half-a-pint English measure, thus allowing to each

man about a wine-glass full of rice for his daily and only meal. Deponent, as cook, had to send it out. Captain told him to put plenty of water to each portion of rice, that the slaves might suppose it was greater in quantity from being swollen. When the slaves remonstrated, Captain Daniel said, "when they got to the West Indies they would get plenty to eat, but that he had no room to stow provisions in his vessel." He also said, "that if they eat too much, they would get sick."

There were 5 women amongst the slaves, 4 slept below among the men, *and one slept with the Captain!* When the Captain saw the boats of the man-of-war "Conflict" coming, he sent the slaves down below, put a cloth over them, said, "they must not talk, and if they did, he would flog them." The slaves were greatly annoyed at the Captain's conduct to them, and would have thrown him overboard, if they had not been ironed.

(Signed) His
JOHN × DAVIS,
Mark

The above deposition was taken and sworn to on board H. M. brig "Conflict" of Sierra Leone, this 17th day of December, 1830, before me,
(Signed) J. W. JEFFCOTT,

Chief Justice of Sierra Leone.

Present, GEORGE SMITHERS,
Lieutenant and Commander.