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Entry Nr. 459 Laiguandai

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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: **459**
Name(s) of African providing account: **Laiguandai = Peter Wilson**
Date account recorded: 1860
Date account first published: 1860
Date of entry creation: 6 October 2021

Source: His account told in Eliza Wilson, *A Brief Memoir of the late Peter Wilson, Member of Kissy Road Church. By His Wife Eliza*. Freetown, Sierra Leone: [*sine nomine*], 1860.

Comments:

Laiguandai's account is discernible within that of his wife's perspective of his life.

Text of Account:

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“Peter Wilson, the subject of this Memoir departed this life on Tuesday the 8th day of November 1859; at his residence in Fisher Street, Freetown, in the Colony of Sierra Leone aged 46 years. He was a native of the Aku Tribe, born in the Town of Owu; and was early sold into slavery to Portuguese slave dealers. His country name Lai-guau-dai, signifying, his being deprived of his father during infancy, may in some measure have led to his so easily falling a prey into the hands of the slave hunters. By the good Providence of God, he was however rescued from the holds of a Portuguese Brig called the ‘Anizo’ which was captured while on her destination for the Brazils, by H.M. S. Maidstone, Comodore Charles Buller, on the 26th of September 1824; and after a lengthened passage of 43 day, he, together with his fellow captives were safely landed and emancipated in the Colony, on the 8th November: ‘most remarkable in its becoming the very month and day of his death.’ From a peculiar assiduity natural to Mr. Wilson he had endeavoured to gain and collect the facts of the events above related even the minutes particulars respecting his liberation from the bondage of slavery. He had carefully kept memorandum of them, together with a sketch of the slaver (a Brigantine) in which he was captured, and the number of slaves in her at the time of her seizing; which were 465; and that out of this number 43 died on the passage; and 424 landed in the Colony, comprising 222 men 102 women, 66 boys and 34 girls. He was then about 13 years of age at the period of his arrival; and after having completed the

accustomed years of Apprenticeship, under the care of a Liberated African of his Tribe or nation; he subsequently entered the Service of M. L. Melville Esquire, then Registrar of the Mixed Commission Court of this Colony;

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in this place he remained for several years as a domestic-servant; and his general deportment obtained from him, most excellent and high commendation, both from the gentleman and his lady, above every flattering eulogiums his friends could here bestow on his past memory - It affords his friends great cause of satisfaction while endeavouring to fulfil the obligations of a family, in doing justice, without any exaggeration to the merits of their deceased relation; by presenting a few out of many testimonials of the character of deceased a subordinate situation in the Office of his master; who afterward gave him the following recommendation dated Sierra Leone 6th June 1818. This is to certify that Peter Wilson Messenger in the Registry of the M. Commission, which situation he has filled with satisfaction to his superiors for Eleven years, is a most obliging person - he is in fact far beyond the generality of his country people in all these qualities as well as superior to them in intelligence. I have known him for 16 years and place the utmost confidence in his veracity and integrity' M L. Melville. Whoever regarding the studious habit of deceased, and the state of intellectual culture at this period, this piece of encomium could not be considered of too strong a colour.

About the year 1833 Mr. Wilson entered into Matrimonial engagements with his wife on 17th March at the village of Kissy; by which marriage he had a son whom he christened after his own name Peter. He was baptized and admitted a full member of the Church Missionary Connexion in that village in the year 1839 on the 24th February. Of his consistency in his religious profession, we would refer our friends to a Publication entitled 'Letters from Sierra Leone,' written by a Lady; which work gives a faithful but concise account and character of deceased; whom this lady thus describes *another pleasing feature in his early career what we find noticed by persons of high respectability is, that he was not different to religion and further adds his spare time always given to reading the Bible; his regular attendance at church, and constant sobriety and steadiness, convince his principles not always to be found amid even the most influential members of the Liberated African community.* Mr. Wilson served also in the Sierra Leone Militia corps, where he rose to the rank of Sergeant - His wife having died about the twelfth year of their marriage, deceased took a second wife in 1845; with whom he was married on the 2nd June, in the same village

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Sometime after, he was employed at the Cape Light House; and not long he removed with his family to Freetown. - His health being found after the lapse of a few years, to be affected by the peculiar nature of the employment; he obtained a temporary leave of absence for the recruiting of his health - about the year 1854: and during this interval he turned his attention in a small line of Trading speculation, as soon as he was advised to resign his post; With the view of extending the business of his Trade, Mr. Wilson undertook a voyage to Lagos in January 1859; to re-visit again those scenes of his childhood days; from whence he was barbarously torn away from his father-

land and relation by the cruel hands of the Slave Masters. He remained about 7 months down the Coast, and returned in August; and no long after his health seemed gradually to fail; which soon confined him in-doors, and latterly to his bed. Our friend Wilson evinced in his last hours of dissolution the same tranquil and consistent spirit which always characterised the man, as he daily became more and more conscious of his approaching end. His hope was built on that Rock from whence he obtained both Help and Consolation.- During the time he was confined in bed; when suffering from pain, he was overheard to make use of this Prayer ‘I thank thee O Lord and Heavenly Father than thou hast not taken me away by a sudden death, but hast laid me down upon the bed of affliction; Have mercy upon my soul: this is the time now, that Thou hast made thy Sure Promise; Do Lord look upon me & c.’

On another occasion he thus prayed ‘Almighty God assist me true and true for I am know going unto the throne of my Father; O Lord save my soul, Oh Blessed Saviour, save my soul and Pardon all my sin!’

As his physical strength and frame was gradually yielding to the hand of Time his view of an eternity seemed in no way obscured; his mind was entirely divested of all those anxious concerns which is so often displayed at the death-bed scenes of persons of his calling and business; as he been a tender father; kind and affectionate husband and master, an honest and upright citizen he had no scruples to embitter his last moments; friends, wife, children and servants grieved at his sudden fate; yet not a murmur escaped his lips; he displayed in the last hours of his illness that degree of resignation to the will of Providence, which only the Hope of a crucified Saviour can impart to a dying sinner; *who has faith in God; and who looketh for a habitation not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.*”

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