

Slave ship creole



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Captain Robert Ensure was named as the ship's commanding officer. His crew consisted of four officers, eight sailors, and three slave overseers (William Merritt, John Howell).

Ensures wife, child and niece were also said to have been on board the ship. All steward and a free black man. The cargo on board the Creole was very valuable. It consisted of \$50, 000 worth of manufactured tobacco, which was ready for sale upon arrival In New Orleans. Even more valuable were the one hundred and fifty slaves bound for a somewhat similar fate, the slave market In New Orleans.

The slaves on the Creole were said to have come from Virginian plantations where their lives were said to be fairly stable until their owners were indebted to others or died. They then became a means to an end and were sold to one of two slave dealers. Robert Limpkin owned approximately 90 slaves and Thomas Macro owned approximately 9 slaves on board the New Orleans bound slave ship the Creole. Slaves at that time networked with each other and were familiar with other slaves that were able to obtain their freedom.

One such example given was the American slave ship Hermosa that was wrecked In Abaca in 1840. The wreckers took the slaves on board this ship to Nassau where they were set free.

As a result of this knowledge the slaves on the Creole made plans to fight for their freedom. Slaves were able to roam freely on the ship during the day, but were kept locked in hatches separately (male and female) at night. Their

attack was strategically planned. On the night of November 7, 1841 Madison Washington a slave purposely went in the female slaves quarters.

Another slave named Elijah Morris told the Creole's chief mate Cephalic Gifford of Washington's whereabouts.

Gifford seemed to trust Morris and as a result he opened the hatch to the male quarters to talk to him and subsequently left it open to were trying to capture Washington, he called out to his fellow male slaves to fight for their freedom. The slaves on the Creole were able to commandeer tools earlier, which they made into weapons. With these weapons they were able to take over the ship within an hour.

After all was said and done Captain Ensure had been badly wounded, an overseer was killed, and all other wounded, captives and passengers were put under lock and key by the leaders of the revolt. According to the article the I OFF Blacksmith, Doctor Ruffian, Peter Smallwood, Warner Smith, Walter Brown, Adam Carney, George Grungy, and William Jenkins.

A few of these leaders wanted to go to Liberia, but were persuaded otherwise by the slave overseer Merritt. His reasoning was that there were not enough supplies for them to survive such a distance.

Washington was instrumental in keeping the peace while the Creole made its Journey to Nassau. The slave ship Creole sailed to Nassau on November 9, 1841. From the onset local black Bohemians aided the ship. Even the spot that they choose to place the ship would aid in helping free the slaves on board.

West Indian soldiers hired by the Governor thwarted attempts on freeing the American slaves on board the Creole. The American consul John F. Bacon and Governor Cookbook were at odds from the beginning as to how to handle the situation on the Creole.

Governor Cookbook along with the council of Nassau decided to imprison those who played a part in the revolt and free the other slaves. Bacon on the other hand wanted the ship returned to the United States so those involved would be tried on their soil. Although the ship seemingly under the control of the British, American soldiers attempted to commandeer it in an effort to take it back to Florida on November 12, 1841.

They were unsuccessful in their attempt. The Bohemians on the shore of Hog Island were keeping a close eye on the events taking place on and around the ship.

After this attempt on the Creole by the Americans it set the Bohemians on high alert. Wanting to make sure that these slaves were treated fairly and set free, they no longer seemed willing to sit idly by and do nothing. The pilot who had guided the Creole into Nassau weapons small boats, and surrounded the ship.

Upon seeing this Attorney General Anderson grew fearful that there might be more bloodshed. He wanted to prevent any further violent actions so he allowed the white and black freed Bohemians there to take the ex-slaves ashore. He took the nineteen men who were instrumental in the revolt into custody.

Bohemians celebrated through the streets of downtown Nassau.

After the freed slaves were registered in Nassau due to different reasons a number of them sailed to Jamaica and others settled right here in Nassau. Events surrounding the whereabouts of where the revolt leaders were held, their treatment while incarcerated, and where they went after being freed February 14, 1842 are unknown. Tensions rose between the American and British governments as a result of this incident. Lost in the discussions of this revolt are the key players and the contributions they made toward the abolition of slavery.

One of Edward Den's conclusions came at the beginning of this article when he stated that, " The slave revolt aboard the Creole is well known to American historians, but the role of ordinary Bohemians in freeing the American slaves, and the future experiences of those slaves after they became free, are unknown or poorly understood.

" At the end of the article he further states that, " The men and women who planned and led this revolt made an important contribution to the fight against slavery in the United States.

Not wanting the action of the revolt leaders, the Bohemians whether black or white who played a part in helping to free the American slaves to go undocumented he makes a plea in this very Journal. One cited in the Journal itself, which reads as follows, " I hope that further sources will be discovered in the Bahamas that might help us to tell their story. " Another in the appendix of this Journal, which reads, as might provide about these people or

their families. Even after writing this article he is in search for sources that may reveal a more accurate story.

This seems to be an action off true historian.

Eden showcases an instance in this article where he states that written information in American newspapers may have been incorrect in what they reported based on written documentation sited in this Journal as well as notes collected as evidence. The Journal reads as follows, " American Newspapers charged that the revolt had been planned by a Reverend George Bourn or Bourne, a white Baptist preacher from Richmond. According to the New Orleans papers, Bourne was " an Englishman, about forty years old, who had resided at Nassau and then absconded, leaving his family.

Eden goes on to say that this statement was ' unfounded' because people who lived in Richmond knew no one with that name. He concludes, " It is more likely that the revolt was planned by these leaders, especially the first four, either during their stay in the slave warehouses in Richmond or during their voyage toward the Bahamas.

" Based on interviews with revolt leaders they heard of the release of the Hermosa slaves, perhaps through their connection with Robert Limpkin. This information could also have been incorrect but Eden seemed to pick the more credible of the two.