The Voyage of the Good Sloop Dolphin to Africa 1795-1796

BY BRUCE L. MOUSER

American merchants trading with West African commercial entrepôts at the end of the eighteenth century encountered many dangers and difficulties during the course of a single voyage. Dr. Ware and Bennett and Brooks have recorded the uncertainty of markets, the probability of contracting unknown diseases and fevers, and the precarious nature of dealing with Africa-based traders who occasionally absconded with cargoes or held ships and crews captive for seemingly obscure reasons. Less recorded are those voyages which met with disaster or where the vessel failed to return at all. One explanation for the sparsity of reports for the latter category is that few ship logs of such voyages survive.

The following 'Contraction of a Journal' is an account of a Warren, Rhode Island, sloop which failed to return from the West African coast. The Good Sloop Dolphin departed Warren on 23 June 1795, sailing first to St. Thomas in the Caribbean, and thence to the Windward Coast of Africa where she arrived on 9 October 1795, after a voyage of fifty-six days. Unfortunately for Dolphin and her captain, the 1795-1796 trading season was detrimental to Americans trading in West Africa. Instead of the high prices for American merchandise which characterized the 1794-1795 trading season, an inundation of American goods in search of high profits increased supply and the bar value of American products plum-

1 E. Richmond Ware, M.D., 'Health Hazards of the African Trader,' THE AMERICAN NEPTUNE, XXVII, 81-97; Enoch Richmond Ware's Voyage to West Africa,' in New England Merchants in Africa, ed. by Norman R. Bennett and George E. Brooks, Jr. (Boston, 1965), pp. 285-98, 314-17. For a more recent treatment of dangers in the African market, especially as it relates to the pre-nineteenth-century period, see Tommy T. Hamm, 'The American Slave Trade With Africa, 1820-1807' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1975). Chapter III. I am grateful to the University of Wisconsin for grant support to conduct this and related research, to Jan Larkin for typing the several drafts, and to George Brooks, Jr., A. Peter Kup and colleagues at La Crosse for their helpful suggestions and contributions.

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meted in 1795-1796. Dolphin had the additional misfortune of succumbing to physical deterioration after eleven months in African waters.

This journal is one of the few surviving records, however abbreviated, of a voyage to Africa in which a ship was lost in the process. The record traces the frustrations and observations of a captain who returned the ship's log to the sloop's owners to prove the correctness of his action on the African coast. The original of this journal is found in the Rhode Island Historical Society Library, Providence, Rhode Island. Slight corrections in punctuation, and capitalization at the beginning of sentences are made to insure clarity.

A Contraction of a Journal,

Kept on board the Good Sloop Dolphin, from Warren to St. Thomas; from thence to the coast of Africa.

Wednesday June 17th 1795

This day ship'd on board the Sloop Dolphin; nothing remarkeble this day.

Thursday 18th and Friday 19th

Imply'd in taking in the Cargo. Took on board 14 hd. lard.

Saturday 20th

Imply'd in taking in the cargo, took on board 29 hd., 3 teirse's and 5 barrels. The Amount of the cargo in all, 69 hd., 4 teirse's, and 5 half barrels of rum, 6 hd. of tobacco, 39 bundles of shingles, ½ ton of cordage, 12 boxes of sope, 3000 feet of lumber, ½ thousand of hoops.

2 George E. Brooks, Jr., Yankee Traders, Old Coasters, and African Middlemen (Boston, 1970), pp. 55-56, notes that Americans trading in West Africa in the 1794-95 season benefited by a French attack upon Sierra Leone in September 1794 and by a resulting scarcity of goods from Europe. Hamm, 'American Slave Trade,' p. 88, counted nineteen slavers outfitted for the African market in 1795, with twenty-four in 1796, during years when the United States was neutral in the war between England and France.

3 The captain of Dolphin, from this contraction, is noted only as Captain Eddy. The manuscript does not identify owner or supercargo, nor is there indication of the author of the log. Hamm noted, pp. 128-29, that among all the voyages studied for his dissertation, only one owner had sent a vessel to the West Indies on her way to Africa. Yet Dolphin first sailed to St. Thomas Island before heading eastward. Hamm also observed, pp. 199-41, that the average time for a trading venture in West Africa was six to seven months, from time of departure to return, and that owners planned voyages to coincide with the end of the rainy season on the African coast. Dolphin took fifty-six days to cross from St. Thomas, yet arrived during the month of October. Such a long period for crossing may suggest an old and foul-bottomed vessel to begin with.

4 The measures used in stocking the cargo have the following equivalences:

Hoghead equals 63 old wine gallons or 54¼ Imperial gallons.

Tierre equals 48 old wine gallons or 3½ pipe.

Barrel equals 36 gallons of beer, 32 gallons of ale, or 31-40 gallons of liquor.

Pipe equals 186 old wine gallons, 2 hogheads, 4 barrels of 3½ gallons of rum each, or ½ tun.

Tun equals 252 old wine gallons.

A league equals about three nautical miles at 6,080 feet each or 18,440 feet.
VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SLOOP DOLPHIN

Sunday 21st  Imply'd at Church.
Tuesday 25th  At 2 P.M. got under way at Warren and sail'd for N[ew]p[ort]. At 10 do. came too at pine hill.
Wensday 24th  At 4 A.M. got under way. At 3 P.M. came too at New Port. So ends this day, rainy wind at South.
Remarks on First part. Clear Wr. At 2 P.M. unbent the cables and stoe'd them away. At 4 P.M. Block Island bore NW by W, Distance 6 or 7 Leagues, from Which wee take our Departure being in Latt. 41 15N and Long 71 37W. Imply'd in making a top gallant sail.
Saturday 29th  Clear weather. At 9 P.M. saw a ship standing to th Norward and Eastward. Sat up top mast shrod.
Wensday July 1st  Clear weather. At 4 P.M. the Ship Sally's boat of Baltimore from Lamemk. Capt. John Hutchison came on board for a supply of water and provisions.⁶ We let them have 1 hogsh.d of water, 15G.⁵ of rum, 5 Gall of Molasses, 1 bushel of meal, 1 bucket of bread, 1 Shane of twine. She was full of fresh passengers and Short of provisions; parted with the ship at half past 2 A.M.
Monday July 6th  At 1 P.M. saw the land, the S.W. part. Bore S.E. distance 5 leagues which we find to be Burmudas. At 4 do the SW part N.E. distance 4 leagues from which we take a new departer.
Tuesday 14th  Small breeses. Saw a sail to windard. Standing to Northard at 10 a.M. spoke a brig from Suranam Commanded by Allen Jacobs bound to Rhodeisland.⁶ So end this day.
Friday 17th  At 10 A.M. saw the land bareing from SSE to SW distance 5 leagues. Sound. 21 days out.
Saturday 18th  We found the land we saw yesterday to be Porto Rico and hauled on a wind to beat up. St. Johns bareing SW by W Distance 4 leagues. At 12 saw a sail.
July 20th  At half past 9 A.M. spoke a brig from St. Thomas who inform'd us St. Thomas bore SE by S distance 2 leagues. Bent the cables at 9 P.M. Sprung the jib boom.
July 21st  At 8 A.M. came too with our best bow anchor in St. Thomas harbour. At 9 do out boat and Capt Eddy went on shoare with Capt Usher.⁷ A passage of 25 day.

⁵ Unidentified.
⁶ Unidentified.
⁷ Usher, captain of the sloop Cato of Bristol, was in Providence harbor on 22 May 1795. The Providence Gazette, 23 May 1795. Mark Anthony DeWolfe Howe, Bristol, Rhode Island (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), pp. 44-45, calls Samuel Usher a slaver.
July 25th        This day we sent home some letters to our friends by Capt. Jackson.  
                All hands went up to Black beards castle.
July 30th       This day all hands was ship'd on board the Sloop Rising-Sun.  
                Nothing more remarkable.
 Remarks on board the Sloop Rising Sun.
Friday August 14th   First part. Clear weather. At 7 A.M. waid anchor and stood for sea. At  
            11 do spoke a French Ship of 18 guns to St. Thomas bore SE and sail rock South. Got the top sail yard athwart. So end these 24 hours. Wind calm.
Saturday August 15th  At 1 P.M. St. Thomas bore ESE Distance 6 leagues from which we take our departure in Latitude 18 22, Long. 64 46. At 6 do saw a ship to the westward. She fire'd 4 shot and we hove too. She stood to the Southward and we sill'd away. Again at 10 do we saw the Ship under our lee. She fire'd several shot which whittle'd among our riging and order'd us to heave too under[f] his lee. He sent his boat on board after Capt Eddy and his papers. Aftre examoning and searching the Chests and Vesel and Theatning to carry him into Martinics, they brought him on board and let us go. Nothing more remarkable. 1 day out.
Remarks on Wensday August 26th   Clear weather. At 6 A.M. saw 3 sail to the Northward and Eastward standing to the Southward and Eastward. So ends this day. 11 days out.
Remarks on Sunday August 30th   Leading gales and pleasant Weather. At 4 P.M. spoke a Brig from St. Thomas bound to Glasco in Long 60 30.  
                Slight breeses. At 3 P.M. got out the Small boat and try'd the current and found it setting NNE 1 knot per hour and then took in the boat and stood on. At 6 A.M. struck a devil fish and lost the harpoon. Nothing more remarkable. 16 Days out.

8 Unidentified.
9 The sloop Rising Sun, owned by Hammett of Baltimore, arrived at Providence on 21 August 1795. The Providence Gazette, 22 August 1795.
10 By August 1795, France and Britain were at war, and American vessels were liable for board­ing. French policy relative to American neutrality, however, was uncertain in mid-1795, and this may account for the fact that Dolphin was not boarded. See Anna C. Clauder, American Commerce as affected by the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon (Philadelphia, 1932), pp. 34-44.
12 Unidentified.
VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SLOOP DOLPHIN

Remarks on Thursday, Oct. 15th
Cloudy with rain. At 1 P.M. picked up a large stump of Spanish Cedar. At 9 A.M. saw a sail to the Southward. Standing to the Eastward, 24 days out.

Remarks on Friday, Oct. 21st
Fresh gales and thick weather. At 4 p.m. saw the land bear ing E1/2N Distance 10 leagues which we suppose to be Ferro one of the Canary Islands, from which we take our new departure, it being in 2nd Latt 27° 48 N, Long 17° 45 W. So ends 49 days out, all well.

Remarks on Wednesday, Oct. 22nd
At 2 P.M. saw the land bear ing from SSE to East. Jibe'd Ship and got the anchors on the bows and bent the cables. At 5 A.M. saw cape De Verd bear ing ESE. 55 days out from St. Thomas.

Friday, Oct. 23rd
At 6 P.M. came too with the small bower at Goree. At 7 do, Capt Eddy went on Shore.

Remarks on Sunday, Oct. 24th
Light winds and clear. At 7 P.M. waid anchor and sat all sail. Lost 1 rig. 58 days Out.

Remarks on Wednesday, Oct. 30th
Clear weather. At 2 P.M. saw a turtle, hove out the Small boat. At ½ past 2 the boat return'd without any. At 11 A.M. saw a number of turtle. Got out the boat and caught two. So ends this 24th with cathing a fish which gave us all a fine dinner. 61 Days out.

Thursday, Oct. 31st
At 2 P.M. caught another turtle at 5 in boat and turn'd up the long boat to put in the turtle. Squally with rain. Killed 1 turtle.

Remarks on Wednesday, Nov. 6th
At 7 A.M. saw the land which we suppose'd to be the Royal Pungs. At 12 Spoke a boat from Royal Unus bound to the Isles Delos. So ends this 24 hours with a number of whale in sight. 68 Days out from St. Thomas.

Thursday, Nov. 7th
At 2 A.M. hove out the small boat and Capt Eddy went onboard the Schoner for information. At 3 return'd. At 4 saw the Isles Delos as we suppose'd but the weather makes the land appear odd. There being no people on board the Schoner but blacks except one molattor. We like'd not there company. At 6 we loaded our guns not knowing what they might do. So ends 69 days out. All well on board.

In 1797 Joseph Hawkins 'of New York' published an account of a voyage to this section of the coast, made in 1795. Hawkins claimed to have visited the Isles de Los, and the rivers Pongo and Nunez. Details regarding coastal groups, however, vary significantly with other sources; this weakens the reliability of this account as it relates to African peoples. His description of trading practiced by Europeans is corroborated by other sources. Hawkins described a vibrant merchant community of French and English merchants on the Iles de Los. Hawkins noted that these islands were ideal for slave trading, for slaves were permitted to roam freely with no avenue of escape to the coast. He claimed that ships could anchor with safety at the islands, protected against storms. The latter observation was in error. During storms, captains took their vessels outside the ring of islands, where they could better weather storms should they lose their mooring. Joseph Hawkins, A History of a Voyage to the Coast of Africa (Troy: Luther Pratt, 1797), pp. 14-15. For development of the commercial communities in the Nunez and Pongo rivers, see the author's 'Trade, Coasters, and Conflict in the Rio Pongo from 1790 to 1808,' Journal of African History, XIV, 45-64.

This circumstance was common along the coast. Coasters, those with trading establishments among the rivers, often were Africans or Africans of mixed descent. Crews were composed of local seamen.
VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SLOOP DOLPHIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, Oct. 23rd</td>
<td>Light winds. At 8 P.M. came to anchor at the Isles Delos, where there was two English Ships lying. I scent her boat on board after Capt Eddy. At 9 hove out the small boat and carried them the log book. So ends 70 days out. Baugh 21 slaves at the Isles Delos and got some water. Nothing Remarkable, 12 days at here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wensday November 4th</td>
<td>Employ'd clearing decks. At 4 P.M. in boats. At 5 waid and stood out S by E. At 8 SSE, the Isleunnds bearing N by W and the Main Land SE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 9th</td>
<td>Light winds. At P.M. came too in 6 fathoms of water at the Bonnas Island. Got out the Yaul. At 8 A.M. Capt Eddy went on shore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 12th</td>
<td>Clear weather. Employ'd in landing the cargo and ventures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 20th</td>
<td>Squaly. At 2 A.M. we had a heavy trinado which caused us to drag our anchor, and let go the big one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 21st</td>
<td>At 6 A.M. we hove up an anchor of 600 weight on the bight of our big cable. We hear this day from the Ship Liberty Lying at Surilona belonging to Providence. She had made some trade at Goree, and on her passage down from thence the Slave killed Capt Potter who commanded the Ship and cut 1 man very bad. But the rest, with killing one Slave, drove the rest overboard which was but 6 in number. They took the Ship again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 26th</td>
<td>Haul'd on shore and graved one side of the Sloop, and mended the Sheathing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27th</td>
<td>Graved the othe side and hauld of in the road and came too. Bought some pumkins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 28th</td>
<td>Imploy'd in mooring the vessel. Cetch some fish. So ends with all hands well on board. Nothing happend remarkable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 8th Tuesday 1795</td>
<td>Good weather. This day Wm Clevland went for the river Sher- borouh and is to return so that we shall be ready to sail the first day of January. We are to have our Slaves at 120 barrs per head with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 Unidentified.
16 The ship Liberty entered Savannah harbor in April 1796 after a reported venture at Sierra Leone. The master was Thom Prentis, with Amasa Smith and Abijah Potter listed as owners. Hamm, 'American Slave Trade,' p. 401.
17 There is no other reference to this event. The Potters of Bristol, Rhode Island, had traded along the African coast for many years, and Howe, Bristol, p. 31, a distant relative, called the patriarch, Simeon Potter, a rogue, slaver, and privateer. Simeon Potter died, however, in the 1780's. Whether the Captain Potter mentioned as killed in this account is the same as Abijah Potter, owner of Liberty, is uncertain.
18 William Cleveland was the son of John Cleveland and successor to his uncle's business on Bananas Island after his uncle's death in 1791. William had received an education abroad in England. Lieutenant J. Matthews described the Cleveland operation at Bananas in glowing terms. C. B. Wadstrom, An Essay on Colonization (London, 1796), paragraphs 454 and 455, noted that
VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SLOOP DOLPHIN

our wood water cask and fresh provision all found; and a demurage of 20 barrs per day if detain'd after the first day of January.\(^\text{19}\)

Friday
11
Went over to the Main and got a boat load of Oysters. Had a heavy tanador with rain and thunder, lightning.\(^\text{20}\) Return'd the next day with a boat load of fine oysters.

Monday
14
Captain Eddy went on board a brig from New York. The Capt inform'd him of the sickness in that Citty which rage'd to a great height.\(^\text{21}\)

Friday
25
Good weather. This day being Christmas no work done on board.

Drouth
So ends.

Thursday
The boat went over to the main after Oysters and returnd the next day with a load. Capt Eddy went on board of a Ship from Providence Commanded by Capt Sterry who informed him of some verrry melancholy deaths.\(^\text{22}\) Got some onions and potatoes.

Sunday
24
Capt Cook\(^\text{23}\) arived here from Rhodisland from which we got information of Capt Edward Gardner at Goree.\(^\text{24}\)

Cleveland advanced goods freely but demanded payment on time. Those who failed to pay fast enough were seized by an army raised by Cleveland and sold to American slavers visiting the coast.

According to M. Knutsford, Life and Letters of Zachary Macaulay (London: Edward Arnold, 1900), pp. 93-94. Cleveland's center of operation in the Sherbro area was at Jenkins, a town on the north shore of Sherbro island, protected by Chief William Ado. William Cleveland died in 1797.

\(^{19}\) The 'bar trade' was a system of commerce used for centuries on the African coast. Originally copper or iron bars were sought by Africans in exchange for African products. Over the years, however, all goods acquired a 'bar' value, vis-a-vis supply and demand of African and European products. For example, if Americans flooded the coast with trade merchandise, such goods would have low bar value and therefore it would require more such goods to purchase African slaves. Even so, 120 bars per slave does seem expensive for late 1795. See Lars Lunstrom, The Trade of Guinea (Uppsala, 1965), pp. 70-75, and Brooks, Yankee Traders~ pp. 53-55, for conditions of the period.

\(^{20}\) Rain and tornadoes at this time of year would have been most unusual.

\(^{21}\) Bayrd Still, Mirror for Gotham (New York: New York University Press, 1956), pp. 57-58, noted that in the mid-1790's, the cleanliness of New York began to decline. Cows and pigs roamed freely, and foreign visitors complained that no one bothered to remove dead cats, dogs, and rats from the streets. In the 1790's, yellow fever periodically ravaged the city's population.

\(^{22}\) Dr. Everson. See footnote number 30 below.

\(^{23}\) Cyprian Sterry of Providence owned many ships which transported slaves to North America. In 1796-97 four of his vessels entered Savannah harbor alone. General Greene (Captain John Stanton) brought eighty-eight slaves from the Iles de Les on 8 May 1796; James (Edward Boss) arrived with ninety-eight on 12 August 1796; Polly (Joshua Smith), forty, on 14 September 1796; and Louisa (Elijah Briggs) with ninety-two on 6 May 1797. Elizabeth Donnan, Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), IV, 633. Afzelius, Journal, pp. 44-50, noted that the ship Mary of Providence, Captain Steady, landed at Freetown on 11 January 1796. Steady claimed to be an old hand on the coast, having shipped there twice before. On 16 January Afzelius claimed that he purchased a slave. Both accounts are confused, however, because an abbreviated log of Mary, Captain Nathan Henry, shows anchoring at Freetown on 11 January 1796. That both Afzelius and the author of Dolphin's log mistook the captain for Sterry may represent an attempt to cover slaving activities, for some reason. See Donnan, Documents, III, 360-78.

\(^{24}\) Donnan, Documents, III, 365. Log of Ship Mary, observed that the brig Captain Cooke had left Goree for the Leeward Coast of Africa on 21 December 1795.

\(^{25}\) Ibid., 362. On 29 December 1795, Captain Gardner of the schooner Captain Greene arrived at Goree.
Drouth

We in this early youthful age,
Can ease our minds to think of home;
It often makes us for to rage
To think we are abliege to roam. 26

Thursday

Sold Capt Walker the anchor that we caught for 1 barrel of beef,
1 barrel of pork, 2 Gall of rum, 16 lb of tobacco. 27
At night Capt Eddy
with 4 hands went in the long boat for the river Sherborough to see
Win Cleavlend.

Tuesday

These 24 hours good weather. At 10 A.M. Capt Harris arived her
from Warren and brings news of our relation. 28

Wednesday

At 5 P.M. the long boat returned from the river and left Capt. Eddy
in the river.

Friday 26th

At 6 A.M. Capt Harris sail'd from here to the leeward. William
Cole taken very ill and Ezekiel Layton 3 days afterwards with a
fever. 29

Sunday 6th

At 10 o'clock this day Dr. Everson was buried who had been on this
Island 7 years and was agoing off passenger with us. 30

Friday 13th

Arived here a Schooner from Providence the Captain of which died
in the river Gambia. 31

Saturday 9th

At 6 A.M. Capt Eddy came on board sick from the river In a Bents
[Banana] Island Schoner where he had been sick 10 or 12 days with a
fever.

It was and is customary practice to begin a new year with verse inserted into the ship's log.

Two Walkers along this coast could have purchased the anchor. Dr. Walker, a European trader located near Kacundy on the Rio Nunez, had been active on the Windward Coast since mid-century. Before settling on the coast, he had served as a surgeon aboard a slaver and had had dealings with John Ormond of the Rio Pongo. After settling in the Nunez, Walker quickly rose in the river trade and became a supporter of the Mandiale branch of the Landuman royal family which ruled from Kacundy. Walker employed African assistants in the distant hinterland where they directed trade coastward to his commercial establishment. He owned several seaworthy vessels and traded frequently with merchants at the Iles de Los, Bissau, and Sierra Leone. Walker died in December 1795. Since the journal entry for the sale of the anchor is dated 18 February 1796, it is possible that Walker's successor, John Pearce (c. 1775-1818) a Eurafrican, purchased the anchor. James Watt, 'Journal of Mr. James Watt, in his Expedition to and from Tzembo in the Year 1794' (Rhodes House Library, Oxford, MSS. Africa S. 22), pp. 5-6, 9; Carl Bernhard Wadstrom, An Essay on Colonization (London, 1794), p. 379; Colonial Office 270/2, pp. 123-25, Public Record Office, London; Afzelius, Journal, p. 47. The more likely buyer, however, was Captain Beau Walker, observed passing Freetown on 19 June 1796. Macaulay claimed that Walker had arrived on the coast with several slavers assigned to him and that he had already filled cargoes for some for the Atlantic Passage. Slaves on one of his vessels were reported to have rebelled, killed the captain and escaped ashore. A year later, in October 1797, Captain Walker was killed near the Iles de Los by a member of his crew. Knutsford, Life and Letters, pp. 141, 176-77.

Captain Charles Harris of the ship Charleston was observed in West Africa in mid-1797, trading at Goree and in the Gambia.

Cole and Layton were members of the crew.

According to Afzelius, Journal, pp. 9, 146, Dr. Everson lived on Bananas Island with William Cleveland, and he died sometime before 23 April 1796. See Knutsford, Life and Letters, p. 80, for Everson of Bananas.

Unidentified. Note that Dolphin has been on the coast approximately six months.
This morning we had a little girl died who had been sick a long time, which we buried on the Island.

Arived here a Liverpool Ship. Parted the small cable and lost the anchor. Mended the yawl and sold her to Capt Croutson for 1 barrel of beef. So ends this day rainy.

Capt Eddy, having got much better, sets out for the river Sher­borough in one of the craft to see Wm Cleveland.

At 6 A.M. parted the Small cable and the next day swep cetch the anchor and bent the main sail in order to get the North Side of the Island. Went round and moored in 7 fathoms of water.

Got some hoops of a Sloop Belonging to Holy and Blew of Providence, Capt Peters. Imploy sweeping for a fine Liverpool Sloop's anchor and caught a small anchor of 200 Lb with no ring.

Had a heavy tornados which caused us to drag and in heaving up we parted our small cable. We swep and cetch it again with much trouble.

Parted the small cable and the next day by sweeping we cetch it again with a small kedg.

Bent the small cable and hove on the big one to weigh it, and parted the cable. Swep and caught the big anchor. Cut off 10 fathoms and bent the cable.

Throughout these 24 hours hard gales and rainy attened with heavy thunder. At 8 A.M. parted the small cable. At 2 P.M. parted the big cable. Made sail and stood to the Northward and Westward with the wind WSW. Under two reef mains and Jib.

The wind still continuing to blow a gale with rain and our vessel's bottom being so fowl that she will not work to windward and the sea running bad. We run under the lee of the Island and lay off and

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82 Unidentified.
83 Captain Croutson, alias Croutsen, Crowthen, and Crowtsen, was a slaver who traded at Freetown in 1795-96 and who was reprimanded for selling slaves to Captain Steady (Sterry). Alexander Peter Kup, in his notes to the Afzelius text, identified Croutson as a Nova Scotian Methodist. Afzelius, Journal, pp. 47, 50, 95n.
84 On 28 April 1796, the sloop Betsy, commanded by Captain James Peters arrived at Freetown harbor. Zachary Macaulay, in Knutsford, Life and Letters, pp. 133-34, called Peters, 'one of the worst and most profligate wretches I have ever seen in this country.' Afzelius, Journal, p. 153, reported that Peters was anchored so near to Freetown that some feared that he might raid that city for slaves. The Providence Gazette reported that Betsy cleared port on 27 November 1795, bound for Africa.
85 Unidentified.
86 June and July are the height of the rainy season. Tornadoes are quite common in this area.
on until the tide made against us. Then we stood to Northward. At 9
calm, and we are closet under the main. We came too with a small
anchor [to] which we had fixt a hook of a ring.

Saturday
9th

Next morning a small breeze from Cost. We run over to the
Bann's and came too. The kedg as that was all that save us
from going a shore. At 9 swept and caught the big anchor. At 5 swept
and caught the small anchor. So ends this day rainy.

Monday
July
11th

At 8 A.M. waid and run round to the SE part of the Island and
came too. Got a mooring chain from the shore and bent it to the best
bow anchor and rove the small cable through the ring of the chain
and took both ends of the cable a board and moored with the small
anchor in 4 fathoms of water. So ends.

We have heard of a brig from New York, last from St. Croix, as
she was at Sheebar not far from Capt Mount. There came on board
three canoes on pretence that they were after rum to trade for him.
They seize[d] the Captain whose name was Moor and lash'd him to
a 40 lb. gun and hove him overboard and massacred the whole crew.57

Thursday
28

This day it being calm and smooth. We hove up to the chain
and found the cable in good order, let it go again. We lay here in
suspence of getting our slaves which is very discourageing. As for the
weather, it rains almost constantly. The wind from South to West.
No tornados. Our living is nice: beef and water with some that we
geth. We still have some hopes.

Sunday
August 7th
17th

This morning Capt Eddy arived here from the river. Brings no
Slaves. Mr. Cleveland informs him that he Shall sail in September.
So ends this day, being clear.

Wensday

This day Mr. Ormsbee set out for Seralon in one of the craft to
get some riging and other nessesiary things for the Slopes use. And no
signs of our sailing soon. Imploy'd calking.

Sunday
21st

Mr. Ormsbee return'd from Seralon with Some provision but
could get no riging nor cable.

Thursday
25th

Imploy'd at taring down the riging and calking the decks and
waist.

September
1st

This day haul'd the Sloop on shore to grave, but we find her very
much eat by the worms.58 Put the small Slaves on shore.

Friday
2nd

This day we had a jury upon her of all the white men upon the
Island and condemn her, being unfit for sea.

57 Unidentified.

58 Hamm, 'American Slave Trade,' pp. 63, 143, notes that hull damage of this type was relatively
common on the African coast. Vessels had to be caulked with pitch and tar, with special attention
given to vessels during the hamattan season when wood might dry out and open fissures. To retard
hull damage caused by marine borers, owners sheathed bottoms with copper, especially those liable
for extended ventures to Africa. There is no evidence from this log that Dolphin was outfitted
with a copper bottom.
Saturday 3rd

Striped the running riging and got it into the hold and then move'd our chests and beds up into a house and take that for our occupation.

Sunday 4

This morning we brought our man Slave from the Sloope and [his wife], being on the Island, came to visists him and along with her fetch some poison. Their intention was to put it into some rice that was on the fire. Whether they perform'd it or not it is uncertain but was over heard by some that was in the house who infrom'd us of it. We then chain them both up. Whipt them severly.

September 27th

Mr. Ormsbee taken sick with a fever.

Wednesday October 5

This day Samuel Hill and myself put our chests and beds on board a Seralon Sloop and set of for Seralong. Wind W.N.W. A light breeze.

October 6 Thursday

Arrived at Seralon this night and the next morning went on board the Sloop Fame, Capt Benson, and agreed to work our passage to Boston. Saturday night we got under way with the Sloop and Sunday we arrived at Bense [Bance] Island.

Friday 14th

Haul'd on shore and grave'd 1 side. Saturday grave'd the other and haul'd off on the road. Imploy'd at painting and taring down the riging: taking in ballast and camwood.

Friday 21st

This night we got under way at Bense Island and the next morning we arrived at the settlement at Seralon. Come too and moord.

Tuesday 25

Wrote a letter to William Cole at the Bannans and put it on board a Bense Island Cutter bound to the Bannanes.

Sunday October 30th 1796 10 leagues, from which we take our departure.

Sunday November 6

Calms and light winds throughout this last week.

89 Every slaver told a tale of mutiny, rebellion, and treachery by slaves. Perhaps such stories were necessary to guarantee vigilance on the part of the slaver and his crew. To be sure, the more successful rebellions would occur closest to the African coast.

40 Unidentified.

41 Captain Martin Benson sailed for the firm of Brown, Benson, and Ives. Benson had spent several weeks in February 1795 at Freetown and although Afzelius, p. 73, called him 'our old friend,' he noted, p. 78, that Benson had been in partnership with John Ormond in the Rio Pongo. Macaulay, in Knutsford, Life and Letters, p. 152, recorded his presence at Freetown on 8 September 1796. See Brooks, Yankee Traders, pp. 28-29, 54-55, and 'The Providence African Society's Sierra Leone Emigration Scheme, 1794-1796: Prologue to the African Colonization Movement,' International Journal of African Historical Studies, VII, 192-95, for reports of Benson's trade in West Africa.

42 See footnote 29 above. Cole was a member of Dolphin's crew. Perhaps he became a clerk at Cleveland's factory. See Hawkins for an attempt by local merchants to recruit his services.
VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SLOOP DOLPHIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 11</td>
<td>Had a very strong wind from the N.E. which cause'd us to carry a two reef mainsail and bonnet off the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 12th</td>
<td>The wind still continuing to blow hard, and we find we are to the leeward of the Cape de verd Islands, and can not well get up. We keep away West.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 20th</td>
<td>A pleasant breeze from N.E. but squaly. We sail 7 and 8 knots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday Dec. 5th</td>
<td>This 4 days past. Calm and light variable breezes. This morning a leading gale from N.E. saw 3 Sail standing to the Northward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 18th</td>
<td>Almost a continual gale of wind from S.W. to N.W. which has obleige'd us to lay too the gratest part of the week past. We now shall make our way to the first port that we can on account of bad weather and contrary winds and Shortness of provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 25</td>
<td>This day being Christmast and we are not far from Bermudas. Making the best of our way to Charleston.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wensday 11</td>
<td>A calm or a gale of wind for this week past. We suppose ourselves to be not far from the land and tried for soundings and found none. Parted the lead line and lost it with the lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 12</td>
<td>Got the log line and small lead and sounded in 20 fathom of water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 13</td>
<td>At 12 made the land to the southward of Charlstown. At 8 P.M. made the Charlstown light house. Hove too. At 12 come to anchor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 14</td>
<td>At 6 A.M. got under way and lay off and on for a while. At 4 P.M. a pilot come on board. Very foggy. Come too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Got under way this morning with a small breeze and at 4 P.M. arrived at the town after a passage of 11 weeks from Serralon on the Coast of Africa and living upon red rice and salt beef only during the whole passage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 22</td>
<td>This day walk'd about the town. Wensday and Thursday worked on board a Schooner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 29</td>
<td>No imployment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday Feb. 3rd</td>
<td>This day work'd and engaged on board the Schooner William of Boston bound to Boston.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 5th</td>
<td>Walked up to the race ground and saw the race horses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 11</td>
<td>Got under way with the Schooner and came too at Sulvans Island.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44 Unidentified.
46 Unidentified.
| Sunday 12 | Got under way in the morning being calm at night. Came too. Got under way in the morning and[d] at 12 arrived at Georgetown. Discarg'd the ballast. |
| Thursday 16 | Took in 140 cask of rice and next morning hove on our Sheet cable and parted it. Got a kidge from the town. Bent it to the cable. |
| Friday 24 | This day we have completed in loading the Schooner having the hold full of rice and 100 barrel of pitch on deck. So ends this day. |
| Saturday 25 | Got under way at Georgetown. Went down and came too just above the bar. |
| Sunday 26 | Got under way and stood for sea, having on board a freight for New York. |
| Tuesday 28 | Had a severe gale of wind which caused us [to] heave too under a sore sail, with the bonnet off, and lay untill friday. |
| Sunday March 5 | Had a gale of wind which caused us heave too and lay 3 days. Thursday made the land. |
| Saturday 11 | This evening arrived at the town of New York and came a long side of the wharf after a passage of 16 day from Gorgetown. |
| Wensday 15 | Finished unloading and wash'd out the hold. |
| Wednesday 15 | Thursday lifted the riging on the Foremasthead. |
| Saturday 18 | This day all hands was discharged from on board the Schooner William and paid off. |
| Saturday 25 | This week worked on board the Schooner William. Saturday went on board a Sloop bound to Newport. |

Bruce Lee Mouser, Associate Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, received his Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1971. Dr. Mouser has focused his research on the period of transition from slave to legitimate commerce on Africa's west coast from 1790 to 1860. His articles have appeared in Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N., Journal of African History, International Journal of African Historical Studies, and Bulletin des Séances, Académie royale des sciences d'outre-mer.
The Early Florida Salvage Industry

BY MICHAEL G. SCHENE

COINCIDENT with the Spanish exploration of Florida in the sixteenth century was the discovery of a more efficacious route between the New World and Europe. The most treacherous part of this passage was the area around the Straits of Florida—a narrow corridor lined by a chain of keys and a number of slightly submerged reefs. Mariners also had to confront numerous sandbars, shoals, and barrier rocks which were rendered even more impassable by swirling currents and unpredictable winds. So it is not surprising that many ships came to grief off the coast of Florida and were often rescued by a 'wrecker' looking for a distressed vessel.

The first wreckers were aboriginal Indians who lived in small settlements throughout the keys. Most wrecked property was of little use to them, and it was only saved because it might be traded later for a more valuable item. While lost cargoes were naturally upsetting to the Spanish—who passed through the keys on their way home from New Spain with native gold—it was the Indian practice of torture and execution that they despised and feared the most. The Spanish repeatedly tried to end these practices, both by negotiation and threat of warfare, but only the slow decimation of the Indian population finally proved effective.¹

After most of the remaining red men in the keys left with the departing Spanish in 1763, a number of Bahamians began to patrol the Florida reef—supplementing this work with considerable fishing and turtling. The Bahamians did not use East Florida courts and instead transported salvaged property back to Nassau. British maritime law was in force there and ensured that all interests would be protected.²

The Bahamians established stations or points of rendezvous on several of the keys. The location of these incipient communities was determined