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Documenting Resistance: *Igbo Fugitives in Colonial Jamaica*

By Idenze Ezeme

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FEATURE
IMAGE

**A young Igbo woman from Onicha
Olona, or surrounding settlement, c.
1912-13.**

Article image · caption retained from the published Ozikoro article

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DOCUMENTING RESISTANCE

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2 August 1793

Cornwall Chronicle

St. James

Ran away, from Leyden Estate the 12th of March last, KENT, an Eboe Negro, short and squat made, about 5 ft. 2 in. high, yellow complexion, speaks pretty good English, aged about 35 or 40, is very artful, and well known about Montego Bay, being formerly a Wain-man [waiting-man]. Also, from the same Estate, about the 8th of May, BRITAIN, an Eboe, with the Bruchee cut on his forehead; about the same height as Kent, but slender and black, about 26 or 28 years old, and talks tolerable English; had on when he went away, a pair of striped, dark coloured, thickset breeches, and an oznaburg frock. Two Half-Joes reward will be given for apprehending Kent, and one for Britain. ROBERT KERR.

University of Florida Digital

An 18th-century Jamaican newspaper advertisement offers a reward for capturing escaped enslaved people, preserved in a historical compilation of such notices (Rucker, 2013). This document lists over 100 individuals identified as Igbo (recorded as “Eboe”), providing valuable evidence of resistance among enslaved communities, especially that of the Igbo.

29 June 1754

Weekly Jamaica Courant

Run away, the 10th of January from Mr. JOHN PEACE in Spanish Town, a Negro woman named FANNY, formerly the property of CHARLES PRESCOTT. She is of the Eboe country, speaks good English, marked on the right shoulder, has been run away about three months. Whoever shall secure her in any of the gaols of Kingston, Port Royal or Spanish Town, or deliver her, shall have a Pistole reward.

University of Florida Digital

The advertisement explains the brutal system of colonial slavery, where enslavers publicly sought the return of freedom-seekers through paid notices. The high number of Igbo individuals listed suggests a significant Igbo presence in Jamaica and their active resistance to enslavement.

Rucker, W. (2013). Jamaican runaway advertisements, 18th century [Digital collection]. University of Florida Digital Collections.
<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00021144/00001/pdf>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Idenze Ezeme

Nze is an Igbo history and culture enthusiast with an in-depth passion for exploring the rich cultural heritage, traditions, and historical narratives of the Igbo people. His works is mostly focused on pre-colonial Igbo societies, traditional belief systems, leadership systems, and the impact of European colonialism.



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