

Document #1739-02-14-02 – A Child, Cesar, Vandalizes Property

K4BL Abstract:

Cesar, an enslaved child of African descent, walked to the back room of a boat he labored on and threw a bag belonging to a sailor into the river. A Jesuit chaplain witnessed Cesar's act and recorded the event.

<https://lacolonialdocs.org/document/4024>

LHC Card: Document 11275. Year 1739. February 14.

LHC Abstract: Certificate of Jesuit Priest to the effect that he saw a small negro slave of Mr. de Coustilhas, deceased, throw overboard a sack of clothes belonging to Simar, patron, who had deposited it in the rear cabin of a certain boat. (Signed) Vitry, Jesuit.

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LHQ - n/a

Names: Black - "a small negro slave," "negre," "Cesar Negrillon"

(de Coustilhas), Unidentified Male(s)

Names: White - Pierre Vitry; Maturin Simar(d); Jacques de Coustillas

Names: Native - n/a

Keywords - Catholicism, resistance, witness, religion, Indian wars, childhood

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Transcription (French, diplomatic)	Translation (English, modern)
<p>[feuille 1 recto] [digital 2] (11275.)</p> <p>je soussigné declare qu'en ma presence, Cesar negrillon de feu Mr. de Coustillas, a fait tomber a L'eau dans le fleuve sur la Route, un sac dans Lequel etoit des chemises et des hardes appartenant au n^{[omm]é} Simar patronⁱ qui les avoit déposées sur la</p>	<p>[page # 1] [digital 2] (11275.)</p> <p>I the undersigned declare that in my presence, Cesar, <i>négrillon</i> of the late Mr De Coustillas, has dropped in the water of the river on the way a bag in which there were shirts and clothes belonging</p>

<p>chambre de derriere de son bateau: en foy de quoi jai delivré au dit Simar le Present Certificat pour lui Servir aux fins que de raison: au fort de l'entrepas dans la Riviere S^t. francois ce 14. fev. 1739</p> <p>[Signé:] Vitry jesuite</p> <p>[f. 1 verso] [dig. 3] (11276.)</p> <p>6 chemises a 5[#] [livres] ... 30[#] [livres] 1 paire culotte de drap 10 1 paire bas de 5 45[#] [livres]</p> <p>Vu le present certificat que M Salmon ma renvoye [pour que] je requiere pour le roy et [pour] obtenir que led[it] Simar soit payé de la succession de la de la somme de quarante cinq livres pour la valeur des hardes par luy perdues a leffet de quoy il mettra son opposition pour y etre fait droit a la N^{[ouve]lle} orleans le six^[ième] mars 1739</p> <p>[Signé:] fleuriau</p>	<p>to the named Simar patronⁱ who had deposited them in the back room of the boat: in witness whereof, I delivered to the said Simar the present statement to serve him for all intents and purposes: at the fort of the warehouse in the St. Francis Riverⁱⁱ this February 14th, 1739</p> <p>[Signed:] [Pierre] Vitry, Jesuitⁱⁱⁱ</p> <p>[p. # 2] [dig. 3] (11276.)</p> <p>6 shirts at 5 <i>livres</i>... 30 <i>livres</i> 1 pair of wool breeches... 10 1 pair of stockings of ... 5 ... 45 <i>livres</i></p> <p>seeing the present certificate that Mr. Salmon sent me back [in order] for me to request the King [in order] to obtain that the aforementioned Simar will be paid from the estate of the sum of forty five <i>livres</i> for the value of the clothes lost by him, to the effect of what he will put his opposition to be granted; at New Orleans the 6th of march 1739</p> <p>[Signed:] [François] Fleuriau</p>
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Please note that what appear to be typos (missing spaces, abbreviations, misspellings, strikeouts, superscript) appear in the original manuscript, but are corrected in the more modernized translation. For more on our editorial practices see <https://docs.k4bl.org/bestpractices>.

i. When Mathurin Simar married Anne Vignode in New Orleans in 1725, the priest identified Simar as a sailor for the Company of the Indies. See July 24, 1725 in Saint Louis Cathedral Marriages, 1720-1730, Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. By the time Cesar dumped Mathurin Simar(d)'s things into the river in 1739, Simar described himself as the "Patron des Bateaux du Roy." When he returned to New Orleans after the war, Simard petitioned the estate of the recently deceased enslaver of Cesar, a man named Jacques de Coustillas. Simard demanded four hundred *livres* for the clothing that Cesar dumped into the river. To see that record, view manuscript page 11339 on March 2, 1739: <https://lacolonialdocs.org/document/4041>.

ii. France waged a second campaign against the Chickasaw Nation in 1739 after losing disastrously in battle in 1736. They built two forts, Fort St. Francis and Fort Assumption. Fort St. Francis was located where the St. Francis River met the Mississippi River in present day Arkansas. A few months later, they moved their forces to the Fourth Chickasaw Bluff, in present-day Memphis, Tennessee and named that site Fort Assumption.

iii. During this second campaign, Pierre Vitry kept a diary recording his daily experiences. Many of these entries note the presence of Africans and their descendents in the 1739 war campaign. For an English translation of

this journal, see “Journal of Father Vitry of the Society of Jesus, Army Chaplain during the War Against the Chickasaw,” *Mid-America* 28, no. 1 (January 1946), 30-59.