



DOCUMENT A: The Akan Oathing Ceremony

The Akan Oathing Ceremony was common practice in preparation for revolt throughout the British slave colonies in the 18th century. Akan speakers were the dominant culture of the enslaved in many British colonies at this time, and other primary sources in other colonies describe these ceremonies in more detail. These ceremonies committed the participants to revolt and helped to make sure that the revolt planning remained secret. For example, government officials in colonial Jamaica routinely warned slavers to be on the lookout for certain practices, such as collecting grave dirt and mixing this with rum or water, or any kind of blood mixing rituals. They did this because it was a sure sign that a revolt was going to occur. Below is a report in the Boston Weekly Newsletter on the Akan Oathing Ceremony.

On April 7th, 1712, the *Boston Weekly Newsletter* reported that on the first of January a number of enslaved people met and “tying themselves to secrecy by Sucking ye blood of each Others hand,” planned the 1712 Revolt.

Source: Boston Weekly Newsletter, April 7-12, 1712.