

must now give your Lordships an account of a bloody conspiracy of some of the slaves of this place, to destroy as many of the inhabitants as they could....when they had resolved to revenge themselves, for some hard usage they apprehended to have received from their masters (for I can find no other cause) they agreed to meet in the orchard of Mr. Crook in the middle of the town, some provided with fire arms, some with swords and others with knives and hatchets. This was the sixth day of April, the time of the meeting was about twelve or one clock in the night, when about three and twenty of them were got together. One...slave to one Vantilburgh set fire to [a shed] of his masters, and then repairing to his place where the rest were, they all sallyed out together with their arms and marched to the fire. By this time, the noise of the fire spreading through the town, the people began to flock to it. Upon the approach of several, the slaves fired and killed them. The noise of the guns gave the alarm, and some escaping, their shot soon published the cause of the fire, which was the reason that nine Christians were killed, and about five or six wounded. Upon the first notice, which was very against them, but the slaves made their retreat into the woods, by the favour of the night. Having ordered the day following, the militia of this town and the country of West Chester to drive [to] the Island, and by this means and strict searches in the town, we found all that put the design in execution, six of these having first laid violent hands upon themselves [committed suicide], the rest were forthwith brought to their tryal before ye Justices of this place....In that court were twenty seven condemned, whereof twenty one were executed, one being a woman with a child, her execution by than means suspended. Some were burnt, others hanged, one broke on the wheel, and one hung alive in chains in the town, so that there has been the most exemplary punishment inflicted that could be possibly thought of.

SOURCE | Governor Robert Hunter to the Lords of Trade, 23 June 1712; in E.B. Callaghan, ed. Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, vol. V. (1885), 341-342.

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