

Appendix C

Governor Robert Hunter of New York to the Lords of Trade, June 23, 1712, on the New York Slave Revolt of 1712

. . . I 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, It was put in execution in this manner, 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 meeting was about twelve or one o'clock in the night, when about three and twenty of them were got together. One coffee and negroe slave to one Vantilburgh set fire to a an out house of his Masters, and then repairing to the place where the rest were they all sallyed out together with their arm's and marched to the fire, by this time, the noise of fire spreading through the town, the people began to flock to it upon the approach of severall the slaves fired and killed them, the noise of the guns gave the allarm, and some escaping their shot soon published the cause of the fire, which was the reason, that not above nine Christians were killed, and about five or six wounded, upon the first notice which was very soon after the mischeif was begun, I order'd a detachment from the fort under a proper officer to march against them, but the slaves made their retreat into the woods, by the favour of the night, having ordered centries the next day in the most proper places on the Island to prevent their escape, I caused the day following the Militia of this town and of 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, the rest were forthwith brought to their tryal before the Justices of this place who are authorized by Act of Assembly, to hold a Court in such cases. In that Court were twenty seven condemned whereof twenty one were executed, one being a woman with child, her execution by that meanes suspended, some were burnt others hanged, one broke on the wheele, and one hung alive in chains in the town, so that there has been the most exemplary punishment inflicted that could possibly be thought of. . . .