**The structure of a cadastral list**

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To understand the structure of slave society on St Croix, you need to take a look at how each plantation was organised. Here, the cadastral lists are an invaluable aid to understanding the conditions on the plantations. The land registers had several different purposes, they were primarily used to keep track of how many slaves there were on a plantation. This was because taxes had to be paid on the slaves and because the administration on the island always feared another rebellion. The rebellion on St John in 1733 had left its mark, so it was important to keep track of the number of slaves on the island.

Matriculation lists were usually handwritten (there are a few that are printed), and the quality of them varies greatly, from the handwriting to their condition. However, there are some common characteristics of the lists that can be used to better understand them. The language is almost always in English, although there are a few cases with Danish plantation owners and German plantation owners where the language is in Danish or German.

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The top column at the top of the list will usually contain the name of the plantation, the district and the number of the plantation in the district and the name of the plantation owner. Sometimes one of these pieces of information is missing, but then you can check the back or front page to find the missing information.

In the leftmost column, you will usually find a column reserved for the white people on the plantation. The owners, plantation managers and families, etc.

Then you will find the able-bodied slaves, usually the men are described first, after which the next column will be the women. These are the full-grown and those who are "Capable" or able to work in the fields. It may say "Field" instead of Capable.

After the adults, you'll find the children. Often, you'll find the "halfgrown" category, which covers ages 10 -16 years, and the names will be divided by gender, with boys and girls.

Then there is the category for "children under 10 years old", which can be from 12 years old,

It varies from plantation to plantation, and again, they are divided by gender.

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Then usually comes the category of ‘House slaves’ or ‘Tradesmen’. In addition to the slaves working in the fields harvesting sugar, each plantation had several house slaves to take care of domestic chores, from childcare, cooking, to hauling firewood and water. The medium to large plantations always had a few craftsmen who were all you needed for a large production with carpenters, masons, blacksmiths and coopers. All different trades that were used to varying degrees on the plantations.

Life on the plantations was hard, so there were many places where many slaves died each year. Therefore, in almost all the lists, you can find a category for both the dead slaves, but also for all the newborn slaves and all the newly purchased slaves for the year. It should be noted that both the newborns and the new slaves had a different status legally, as they were exempt from tax for the first year on the plantation, as the mortality rate was so high that the plantation owners would otherwise suffer great losses due to the head tax on the slaves.

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Finally, there is the conclusion, all lists had a conclusion/summary explaining how many there were of each category. It will almost always be in English, but often you will find an even shorter summary, presumably from an official who sat on St Croix and counted all the slaves to make sure there was no cheating. This explanation will always be in Danish, and it only counts the taxable slaves, i.e. it does not include the newborn or newly arrived slaves in the count.

Because the search function searches everywhere, you sometimes end up with the problem that it can make the following errors, e.g. Sampson when you search for Sam. This is not optimal, which is why I have attached the 10 most-used names ranked by frequency in the cadastral lists.

Overview of the 10 most common names for men on the island  
John:        355 hits

Peter:       228 hits

William:  213 hits

George:   195 hits

James:      190 hits

Thomas:  153 hits

Jacob:      145 hits

Sam:        143 hits

Jack:        137 hits

Tom:       126 hits

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Oversigt over de 10 mest udbredte navne til kvinder på øen.  
Mary:         317 hits

Maria:        211 hits

Sarah:        159 hits

Nancy:       148 hits  
Elizabeth:  141 hits

Sally:          140 hits  
Betty:         121 hits

Jenny:        102 hits

Peggy:        98  hits  
Anna:          93  hits