

Document #1728-07-08-03 – Biron Goes *Marron*

K4BL Abstract: In 1726, a Bambara man named Biron arrived in Louisiana from Senegambia on the slave ship Aurora. For the next two years, he frequently resisted his enslavement. When he ran away in 1728, he was pursued by his enslaver, Jean Sougaine, who almost killed him while trying to recapture him.

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Year 1728

July 8

LHC Abstract: Declaration of Sieur Soubaigne against Biron, his fugitive slave, relating the manner of his flight and capture.

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Names: White - Soubaigne, M.; Soubaigne, Jean

Names: Native - n/a

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Doc Selector - Olivia Barnard

Bias Set Reviewer - Leila Blackbird

Doc Transcribers - Olivia Barnard, Chenise Calhoun, Leila Blackbird

Doc Translators - Leila Blackbird, Olivia Barnard, Chenise Calhoun, Holly Nelson, Maya Hogarth

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Transcription (French, diplomatic)	Translation (English, modern)
<p>[feuille 1 recto] [digital 2]</p> <p>[Marginalia:] 8 Juillet 1728</p> <p>Declaration et Plainte par Le S.^r Soubaigne Contre Biron negre</p> <p>[Corps:]</p> <p>N.^o 327</p> <p>Est Comparu au greffe du Conseil Superieur De la province de la LouiSianne S.^rJean Soubaigne hab.[^]t dem.[^]t a Chantilly lequelnous a dis et declaré qu'ill at'un negre nommé Biron provenant de la cargraiSon du V[^]au L'aurore,¹ lequel a fait plusieurs fais lemaron et entre autre hyer a midy Il____ SabSenta, etledeclarant ayant été avertis par____ Ses autres negres decet abSence, Il courut apres et la'yant rincontré presque a moitié chemin de cette rille aSsis dansles Cannes, et l'ayant apercus jl Sen fuit dans la profondeur dubois, etlayant appellé plusieurs fois n'ayant pas Voulue renir aluy il luy tira acoupperdû un coupde fuSsil</p>	<p>[page # 1] [digital 2]</p> <p>[Marginal note:] July 8, 1728</p> <p>Declaration and Complaint by The <i>Sieur</i> Soubaigne Against Biron, <i>nègre</i></p> <p>[Body:]</p> <p>No. 327</p> <p>Having appeared before the notary of the Superior Council of the Province of Louisiana, <i>Sieur</i> Jean Soubaigne, <i>habitant</i> living at Gentilly,² said and declared to us that he has a <i>nègre</i> named Biron, obtained from the cargo of the ship, the Aurora, who has often gone maroon, among them yesterday at midday. He [Biron] was absent, and the declarant, being warned by his other <i>nègres</i> of this absence, he ran after [him], and having met him almost halfway to this city sitting in the canefield, and after seeing him, he [Biron] fled deep into the woods, and after calling him several times, [and him] not wanting to come [return]</p>

¹ According to the Slave Voyages Database, the ship *l'Aurore* left the coast of Senegambia in December 1725 and arrived in Louisiana on February 28, 1726.

² Chantilly is the present-day neighborhood of Gentilly, nearest Bayou St. John (St. Jean). Before European intrusion, Bayou St. John was called Bayou Choupik, the Choctaw word for catfish. In modern Louisiana Creole and in Cajun French, the word is retained as *choupique*, meaning mudfish.

pour létonner Seulement et lo'bliger aS^erendr^e
ce quil neVoulu faire, aucontraire jl courut ____
encore plus fort, le declarant ayant fait un ____
circuit dans lebois letrouva par terre etlorsqu'il
lapercut jl Sesauva encore et encourant jl ____
trouva vne Canne qui lefis tomberparterre,
ledeclarant pour le'mpescher deSerelever
leCoucha enjouë et luy dis queS'jl remuoit
qu'il eStoit mort cela obligea le^d Negre
de SeRendre avec luy ala maiSon, ety'etant
ledeclarant appella un Negre pour metre
lemaron aux fers jl Sauta sur son fuSS'il ____
Duque Il SeRendit lemaitre, ledeclarant

~

[f. 1 verso] [dig.3]

tenant Saisir Son fusjl et le negre, en attendant
leSecour deSes autres negres jl luy osta de
crainte qu'il netira Surluy dont et de quoy
Il fait la presente declaration fait a
La N^lle orleanr le huitieme Juillet mil
Sept CentVingt huit, et a Signé

[Signé:] Soubaigne

to him, he [Soubaigne] fired a shot at him [Biron],
just to shock him and force him to surrender,
which he did not want to do. On the contrary, he
[Biron] ran
again even faster. The declarant, after having made
a lap around the woods, found him on the ground,
and when he [Biron]
saw him, he ran away again, and while running he
found a reed [with his foot] that made him fall to
the ground [again].
The declarant, to prevent him from getting up,
took aim at him and told him that if he moved
again he was dead. That obliged the said *nègre*
to return with him to the house, and while there
the declarant called a[nother] *nègre* to put
the maroon in irons. He [Biron] moved quickly at
his [Soubaigne's] gun [grabbing it]
at which [time] he [Biron] made himself [his]
master. The declarant,

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[p. # 2] [dig.3]

holding his gun at the *nègre*, while waiting
for help from his other *nègres*, left from him
lest he shoot him [Biron], of whom and of what
he [Soubaigne] makes the present declaration. [It
was] done at
New Orleans [on] July 8th, one thousand
seven hundred twenty-eight, and signed

[Signed:] [Jean] Soubaigne