

A letter written from St. Thomas on 23rd March 1797 by John Finlay to "Messrs. Finlay J. Trothill Merchts. Philada, Schooner, Linnely, C Clark". The letter reads:

"Dear Jacob,

I arrived here this moment after a passage of 30 days with nothing else but continual gales of wind for 15 days of vessel in a leaky condition. Our pump continually going, I have been very ill, we fell to Leeward and put into the Island of Port to Rico in distress being out of wood and water, they fired on us from the fort, however, we ran in with the schooner. Little who had been up on allow of Port water for 15 days, they would not suffer us to land, but shortly, a ^{gunner} ~~gunner~~ of soldiers to conduct our Captain down to the beach, would not suffer us to get a drop of water if we should perish, but said if we did not immediately depart we should all be put into the Fort and our vessel seized. We made sail in the ^{Leviathan} I have been four days beating up, I was much surprised to meet Captain Done here who sails tomorrow for Hispaniola. He has this day wrote, by this same conveyance, the Schooner was captured landing in Tortola and he has purchased her so you will lay in your claim to the underwriters for the amount of the schooner as well as six weeks demurrage as Captain Done will not pay for the time she was laying, he has purchased her for the benefit of the underwriters concerned and has sold her deliverable in Pensacola for eighteen hundred dollars which he intends remitting home to us and the ~~amount~~ ^{amount} in coffee, which Gun the underwriter directed for and process for the remainder, this will be a surety that if we cannot recover anything more, we shall get this. He ~~has~~ ordered Mr Clarke to insure the schooner again and whether it would not be best to insure the asset of the schooner from Hispanolia ^{any} you can find you cannot recover off the underwriters. I leave you to determine ^{at any} ~~at any~~ wrote you can stop payment of our notes they hold, she sails tomorrow. I expect to leave this tomorrow if possible. I am now very unwell and think that during my life I never as much as I have this voyage, I now have not been here one hour and the Captain is waiting for my letters. Business is ^{hurly burly(?)} ~~hurly burly(?)~~ ^{it is planned} for the dollars I have seen several gentleman from Tortola. Captain D thinks we won't get anything from Marnomane shall get away from Tortola in ^{days} days or two weeks. My respects to Mrs & Miss G. S. & J. S. I shall write you further tomorrow. I now have no time.

I am with

Yours obedient,

John Finlay