

Risks & Realities: Death & Credit in the French Tropics

1771 Margaret Strachan (Mrs. Thomas Harwood) Charles Willson Peale



How did people, especially women, in France's early modern empire seek to recover assets and livelihoods as transoceanic commercial and family networks were cut off in the wake of a family member's death?



1580s Portrait of an African Slave Woman, probably painted by Amintore Carracci

CORRESPONDENCE • SUCCESSIONS • LITIGATION • FAMILY NETWORKS

Thesis - France's early modern economy depended upon economic practices that were often mediated through legal mechanisms, especially by apparently marginal people like widows. It advances comparative scholarship on the development of capitalism and global trade (Baskes, Hoffman, Levy, Tutino) & contributes new evidence and insights to work on social networks (Pearsall, Trivellato, Ward), especially among women as important trade brokers.

FYAP Research Results

- Preliminary research based on previous early drafts and research.
- New archival research in 4 European archives, summer of 2015.



Plantation Map, AN AB XIX 3356 - 130 copy

Outcomes & Next Steps

- Article submitted, "Recovering the Debris of Fortunes between France and its Colonies in the 18th Century"
- Risks & Realities book manuscript in progress & under consideration by academic presses
- Article in progress on military desertion in the global 18th century

Laurie M. Wood, PhD

FSU History Department • lmwood@fsu.edu