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An Enslaved Community, Imperial Warfare,
and the 1746 Invasion of Saint-Barthélemy

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This article reconstructs the 1746 invasion of the tiny French colony of Saint-Barthélemy by two British privateers and the abduction of nearly its entire Black population. Placing British court proceedings in conversations with French baptismal records, it reconstructs Saint-Barthélemy's enslaved community and follows an enslaved family—Jacques, Thérèse, and their three sons: François, Michel, and Jean François—along their likely path into renewed bondage on Antigua's sugar plantations. Examining how jurisdictional, political, and confessional boundaries shaped the working, family, and religious lives of enslaved people reorients histories of imperial warfare around captives who appear only fleetingly in colonial records. This piece underscores the centrality of Caribbean conflict in the formation of the African diaspora and shows how maritime raiding replicated the logics and tactics of the transatlantic slave trade. Highlighting the diasporic insecurity that shaped enslaved people's lives in the Atlantic world reveals how the cyclical violence of imperial rivalry created a cruel counterpoint to their ceaseless efforts to build and sustain families and communities.