

In Dr. Bernard Moitt's book *WOMEN AND SLAVERY IN THE FRENCH ANTILLES 1835-1848* he shares an excerpt of the dangers women faced working in the sugar cane grinding process:

Fraught with danger the grinding process was a continuous operation during the harvest period when labor was particularly intensive and slaves were taxed to their limit. Apart from miscarriages and other misfortune, which women alone experienced female slaves suffered numerous accidents at the mill site and often resulted, in infirmity, and or death.

The danger of being crushed by the rollers was ever present and for as soon as Cane or fingers touched the edge of the rollers, they were drawn rapidly into the machinery. . . . Graphic, though it may be, the description of accidents that resulted in the death of millers is a stark & dreadful reminder of the perils of slave women as work faced long ago & is worse siding here.

EXCERPT:

“The accidents are certainly frequent among female slaves, particularly at night and exhausted by hard labor during the daytime and full of slumber they fall asleep while passing the canes dragged towards the machinery in which they follow involuntarily still clutching the cane in their hands they thus become caught in it and crush it before they can be rescued. This is particularly the case when the mill is water-driven for the moment so rapidly that it's physically impossible to stop it in time to save the lives of those whose fingers are already drawn in. on such occasions.

The quickest remedy is to probably sever the arm with a bill, which is why it makes sense to always keep one without the curve tip on the head on the table sharp and ready to use if needed it's better to cut off the arm than to see a person passing through the rollers of the mill. The precautions have been very useful to us at FOND Saint Jacques estate we're one of our women's slaves was drawn into the mill. Fortunately, for her, a male slave was able to stop the mill in time to allow us to sever half the mangled arm, and thus save the rest of the Body.”

“A woman slave belonging to the Jesuits was not as fortunate. In attempting to pass something to the woman on the other side of the mill her shirt sleeves became caught in the clogs & her arm, followed by the rest of her body was drawn into the machinery in an instant before she could be helped. Only the head does not pass. It separates from the neck and falls to the side where the body entered.”