

Ukawsaw Gronniosaw (James Albert) and his links with the 28th Regiment of Foot

1 Introduction

This report will examine the life and narrative of Ukawsaw Gronniosaw (English name James Albert), with a particular focus on his links to the 28th Regiment of Foot and the muster rolls of that regiment. There will also be a discussion on the analysis which had already taken place in academic literature on the narrative itself, in order to examine the narrative's place as part of the foundation of the African American and black British writing tradition. Existing academic criticism and analysis of Gronniosaw's narrative is limited, as well as being conflicting at times, the reasons for which will be discussed in section 4. This report aims to pull together the strands of existing analysis to demonstrate the importance of Ukawsaw Gronniosaw among the writers of slave narratives, and to present a clearer picture and more detail of his experiences before, during, and immediately after joining the 28th Regiment of Foot.

2 The Life of Ukawsaw Gronniosaw (James Albert)

Our knowledge of the life of former slave Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, also known as James Albert (who from here on in this report will be referred to by his surname 'Gronniosaw', as he is in the majority of academic literature pertaining to him), comes almost entirely from his narrative *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince, as Related by Himself*, which was first published around 1772.

He is generally believed to have been born between 1705 and 1710 in what he refers to as 'borno', which is in present day North Eastern Nigeria.¹ His obituary in the *Chester Chronicle* of the second of October 1775 states that he had 'died, in this city, aged 70', making his year of birth look more likely to have been closer to 1705.² As with just about every aspect of Gronniosaw's life, however, his date of birth is not clear, with it being listed at different times in different publications. For example, Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson suggest he was born as late as 1712, which they may be basing on the wording in the foreword of Gronniosaw's narrative, which was written by English clergyman Walter Shirley (1725-1786) who states, 'he now appears [at the time of the publication of his narrative] to be turned of 60' (he his most likely to have been in his late sixties by that time, in fact).³

¹ M. Fuentes, (ed.), *Scarlett and Black: Slavery and Dispossession in Rutgers History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2020), p. 58.

² All newspapers referenced for this report are in appendix 1 of this report: 'Newspapers referenced'. British Newspaper Archives <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>> [accessed 29 July 2022].

³ Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson, *I was born a Slave Volume 1 (1772–1849)* (Edinburgh: Payback Press, 1999), p.2. Shirley was the first cousin of Gronniosaw's sponsor, Selena Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon in: Ryan Hanley, 'Calvinism, Proslavery and James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw', *Slavery and Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* (2020), p. 23.

Gronniosaw claimed to be the grandson of the local king, who is described in his obituary as the 'King of Zaara'.⁴ There is academic debate surrounding where 'Zaara' was situated, but it is either thought to have been Zaria, a province of Nigeria 100 miles west of Bornou, or it 'could connote Sahara, that is, the Sahara Desert region in North Africa'.⁵ After being taken from his home at around the age of 15 (in around 1720, if we are to believe his age in his obituary), he was taken to the Gold Coast - present-day Ghana - where he was sold to a Dutch captain (widely thought to be Cornelius Van Horn) and ended up eventually being bought by a Dutch 'master' who he refers to as 'Mr Freelandhouse' in around 1730.⁶ Demonstrating the movement of slaves between influential Calvinist households in America at this time, this new 'master' is likely to have been Dutch Reformed Church minister Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen who introduced Gronniosaw to Calvinist ideology and taught him to read in Dutch.⁷

Frelinghuysen died around 1747, and Gronniosaw was freed upon his master's death (he himself was around forty two years old by this point), although the loss of his master, who appears to have treated Gronniosaw with kindness, upset him very much.⁸ He continued in the service of the Frelinghuysen family for several years, first working for Frelinghuysen's wife Eva ('who was as good to me as if she has been my mother'), who died in 1750, and then working for the five Frelinghuysen sons.⁹ Here things become a little unclear timewise, because Gronniosaw states that he 'continued with them all, one after the other, till they died. They lived only four years after their parents'.¹⁰ However, it appears that the Frelinghuysen sons died in 1753 (Ferdinand and Jacobus), 1754 (John) 1757 (Henricus) and c. 1760-61 (Theodorus II who possibly died at sea, returning from Holland – see section 5).¹¹ The last two brothers to die died seven and around ten years after their mother (in 1757 and around 1760), considerably later than is claimed by Gronniosaw. This is perplexing, but is perhaps explained by the fact that the narrative was composed some years after the actual events (only twelve years, however, in the case of the death of Theodorus II), or perhaps for some reason Gronniosaw never worked for him, despite claiming he worked for all the brothers. It is strange that Gronniosaw would not mention not having worked for Theodorus II, or the reasons why he didn't, as the

⁴ British Newspaper Archives <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>> [accessed 29 July 2022].

He does not refer to 'Zaara' in his narrative, however.

⁵ Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson, *I Was born a slave*, p. 28 and William L. Andrews and Henry Louis Gates (eds.) *The Civitas Anthology of African American Slave Narratives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), p. 54.

⁶ Thomas R. Frazier, *Afro-American History: Primary Sources* (Belmont. CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1988), p. 56 and M. Fuentes, (ed.), *Scarlet and black*, p. 58. Gronniosaw James Albert Ukawsaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince, as Related by Himself* (Bath: W. GWE, 1772), p. 12.

⁷ Henry Louis Gates Jr., and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic: Five Slave narratives from the Enlightenment, 1772-1815* (Washington DC: Civitas Counterpoint, 1998), p. 6.

⁸ James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars*, p. 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

¹¹ *Founding of Queen's College (1755-1771)*, Rutgers's Physics, p. 3.

<<https://www.physics.rutgers.edu/dept/history/robbins/chapt01.pdf>>, and

<<https://www.geneagraphie.com/familygroup.php?familyID=F175901&tree=1>> [accessed 1 August 2022].

younger Theodorus lived in Albany which is not far from where his father had resided in Somerville, locally to where Gronniosaw would have potentially still have been living.¹² If Gronniosaw did work for all the brothers as he says in his narrative – including Theodorus II who died in either 1760 or 1761, depending on the source – then this window of what happened to him after they all died is much shorter than perhaps has been assumed until now.¹³ He had enlisted for the 28th Regiment of Foot by mid-1761 and in the meantime been a cook on a privateer vessel and worked for a wine merchant called ‘Dunscum’ all in the space of a year or, it would appear, even less.¹⁴

Tracing Gronniosaw’s movements during this time working for the various Frelinghuysen brothers, has, to agree with M. Fuentes, proved impossible.¹⁵ However, living under the constant threat of re-enslavement due to debts he had accumulated, Gronniosaw tells us that he worked first as cook for a privateer and that he then, harbouring a strong desire to move to England, joined the 28th regiment of Foot (who were ‘designed for Martinico’) going, ‘in Admiral Pocock’s fleet from New York’.¹⁶ It is worth noting that in between his stint as a privateer and enlisting in the 28th regiment of foot, he tells us he was taken under the protection of ‘a very worthy gentleman, a wine merchant, whose name was Dunscum’ who had the misfortune also to die (in a shipwreck), once again leaving Gronniosaw alone.¹⁷ ‘Dunscum’ the wine merchant was also researched for this report and the findings are included in section 9, regarding the names which Gronniosaw was searched for under.

After being involved in the sieges of Martinico (Martinique) and Havannah (Havana), Gronniosaw was discharged from the army, and arrived in England in around 1763, as will be examined in section 7. The route he took appears to be a somewhat convoluted one, which will also be discussed in section 7 of this report. Unfortunately, England did not turn out to be the spiritual haven he craved, and Gronniosaw was repeatedly swindled out of money and defrauded almost from the moment he arrived. He did, however, marry a white English woman called Betty around 1764/5 (when Gronniosaw was between fifty-five and sixty years old) who was a weaver, and they had five children: Mary (b. 1765), Edward (b. 1767), Samuel (b. 1771), James Jr. (b. c. 1774) and an unnamed daughter who died in infancy, who local ministers initially refused to bury as she was not baptised.¹⁸ The death of this

¹² D. G. Hackett, *The Rude Hand of Innovation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 34.

¹³ James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars*, pp. 19- 20. Gronniosaw states ‘I continued with them all, one after another, till they died; they liv’d but four years after their parents’.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.

¹⁵ M. Fuentes, (ed.), *Scarlet and Black*, p.58.

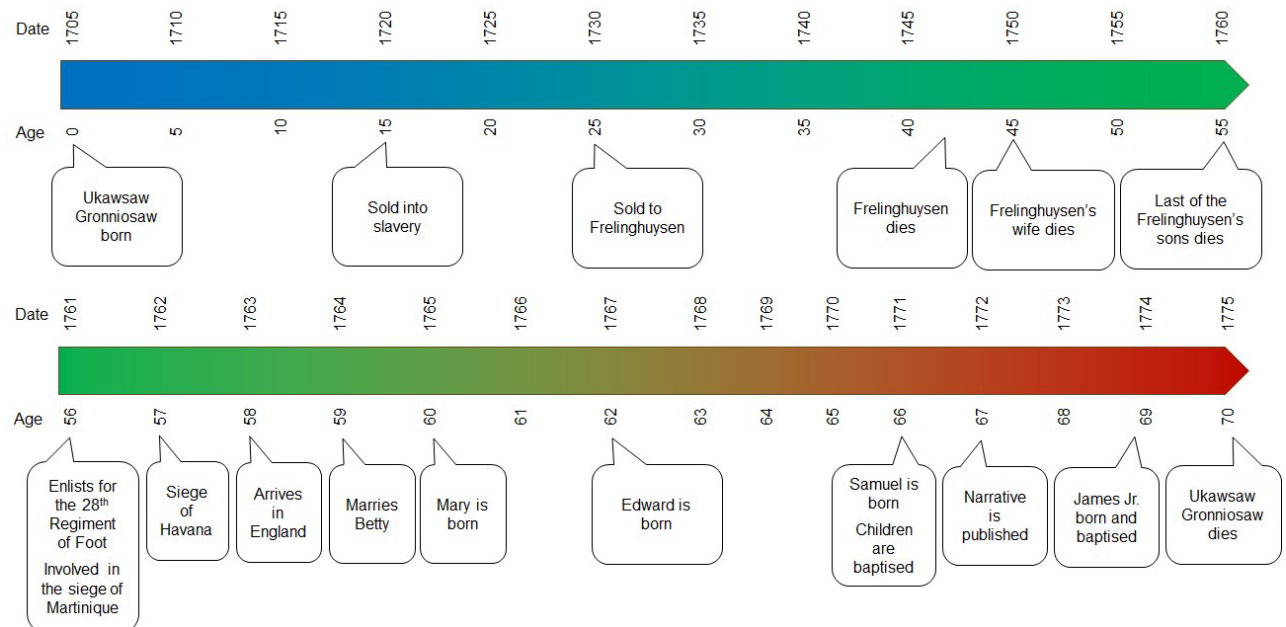
¹⁶ James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars*, p. 16. Privateering: to sail a privately owned, manned and armed vessel under government contract to act as a warship, authorised to seize the enemy’s commercial and military vessels. The line between a privateer and a pirate was often barely discernible in: Vincent Carretta, *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), p. 56.

¹⁷ James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars*, p. 16.

¹⁸ Ryan Hanley, ‘Calvinism, Proslavery and James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw’, p. 22.

daughter must have happened around 1771, as, other than James Jr, who was baptised in 1774, his other surviving children were all baptised on Christmas day of that year.¹⁹ Although all the children and Betty (Elizabeth) Albert were searched for on both the Ancestry and British Newspaper Archives sites, there has been no success in tracing what happened to them to date.

3 A timeline of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw's life



4 The narrative of Ukawsaw Gronniosaw: literary criticism, scholarship and analysis

4.1 An overview of Gronniosaw's narrative

There is little academic analysis of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw's text and the majority of what we know about him comes from his narrative.²⁰ Gronniosaw's text *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, an African Prince, as Related by Himself* is sometimes dated 1770, but most likely first appeared in Bath between 1772 and 1774 – ten to twelve years after Gronniosaw's involvement in the siege of Havana and approximately nine to eleven years after he first came to Britain.²¹ The work went through twelve editions between 1772/4 and 1880, with several academics describing it as having been published 'when he was sixty years old' although it appears he was in all probability closer to seventy.²² Upon its publication, the foreword for the work, written

¹⁹ Ryan Hanley, 'Calvinism, Proslavery and James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw', p. 22.

²⁰ Henry Louis Gates Jr. and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, p. 5.

²¹ Thomas R. Frazier, *Afro-American History: Primary Sources*, p. 19.

²² Robin Law, Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, *The Changing Worlds of Atlantic Africa*:

by Walter Shirley (as mentioned above) informed the public that it was published 'with a view to serve Albert and his distressed family, who have the sole profits arising from the sale of it'.²³ Gronniosaw's narrative was published with the help of his patron Methodist leader Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-91), who was the cousin of Shirley and also the patron of several other notable black writers of the era such as Phillis Wheatley (1753-84), John Marrant (1755-91) and Olaudah Equiano (1745-97).²⁴

Religious conversion and influence are at the forefront of the narrative and will be discussed in section 4.4. However, Gronniosaw also makes several interesting and revealing observations about his family, using the narrative to portray himself to his readers in a particular way. For example, there is much academic debate surrounding his description of his 'white' sister. Gronniosaw states 'I loved her entirely; her name was logwy'.²⁵ Davis suggests that Gronniosaw highlights her whiteness in order that he be portrayed as 'closer to Europeans' (or different to other black people) and therefore, more identifiable with as an individual to his potential readers.²⁶ Thomas Frazier opines that both Gronniosaw and Equiano describe Albino Africans 'in an effort to unsettle social dichotomies'.²⁷ It does seem likely that his sister was albino, and he comes across as very close to, protective of and worried about Logwy, as he says in his narrative that he is 'truly concerned to leave my beloved sister'.²⁸ He also describes his relationship with his mother, yet hardly mentions his father. The important relationship for him to portray to the reader here is the maternal one however, as it is his mother who he claims to be the daughter of the local king (the 'King of Zaara' as he is described in Gronniosaw's obituary).²⁹ Through his mother, Gronniosaw suggested he is descended from aristocracy, and here it is possible to see him portraying himself as a 'noble savage', a literary device often employed by the writers of slave narratives to elevate themselves in the eyes of the reader.³⁰

Despite the heavy religious overtones, it is at its heart a story of an individual who survived many trials and tribulations against the odds, and for whom Britain did not turn out to be the promised land which he dreamed of for so long when living in servitude in America. It is, as Frazier suggests, a 'Stark portrayal of grinding poverty',

Essays in Honor of Robin Law (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 348. This is the age he is described as in this volume, which, as mentioned above, is probably due to the wording in the introduction of the narrative which was written by Walter Shirley.

²³ Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson, *I was born a Slave Volume 1 (1772-1849)* (Edinburgh: Payback Press, 1999), p. xxxii.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27. Selina Hastings will be discussed in section 4.4.

²⁵ James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars*, p. 3.

²⁶ Henry Louis Gates Jr. and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, p. 5, and Vincent Carretta, *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), p. 6.

²⁷ Thomas R Frazier, *Afro-American History: Primary Sources*, p. 12.

²⁸ James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars*, p. 3.

²⁹ British Newspaper Archives <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>> [accessed 29 July 2022]. See Appendix 1.

³⁰ Thomas R. Frazier, *Afro-American History: Primary Sources*, p. 48 and Robin Law Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, *The Changing Worlds of Atlantic Africa*, p. 348.

presents a very real window into a life lived in eighteenth century Britain and is, as such, an invaluable primary source.³¹

4.2 Literary criticism and analysis of the narrative and its creation

William L. Andrews and Henry Louis Gates Jr discuss the present lack of criticism and analysis of Gronniosaw's work agree that what we know of him comes almost entirely from his narrative. Their invaluable resource *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic: Five Slave Narratives, 1772-1815* went into great depth when attempting to address this with what turned out to be an unusually detailed examination of the text, and it is referred to throughout this report. However, one feature of this volume which was consistent with most other books on the subject which were consulted was the lack of detail in, and academic attention paid to, Gronniosaw's time with the 28th Regiment of Foot and how he made his way to England. Gates suggests that Gronniosaw was 'motivated by a desire to live among the "holy" inhabitants of England' and simply describes his progress as him as having 'travelled from "St. Domingo", "Martinico" and "Havannah", to London and Holland, before he returned to marry and raise a family in England'. This was a frustratingly familiar theme, and it is hoped that sections 5 onwards of this report will shed a little more light on Gronniosaw's experience.

Gronniosaw is described by Gates as 'dictating his harrowing story to a white woman in Leominster', and indeed, he did tell his story through an amanuensis rather than penning it himself.³² It has been suggested that Gronniosaw may not have been able to read or write in English, only Dutch, and then very probably only the printed word, which may go some way to explaining why he dictated his memoirs rather than writing them down himself.³³ However, Ryan Hanley (who suggests Gronniosaw was instead a 'novice in written English') describes him writing to Countess Huntingdon in 1772, thanking her for her 'favour', which 'arrived by Mr. Newbon the student' at 'a time of great necessity'.³⁴ He also tells her he has just returned from Leominster, 'were I was shewed kindness to from my Christian friends'.³⁵ The grammar and spelling in the letter can be seen to be poor, and very different in style to his narrative, suggesting that he wrote this letter to Countess Huntingdon himself rather than dictating it. Nevertheless, this letter demonstrates a command of written English for which he is given little to no credit among many who have analysed his work. It seems likely that Gronniosaw dictated his narrative because it would have been

³¹ Thomas R. Frazier, *Afro-American History: Primary Sources*, p. 49.

³² Henry Louis Gates Jr. and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, p. vii. The Cambridge Dictionary definition of an amanuensis is 'a person whose job it is to write down what another person says or to copy what another person has written'.
<<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/amanuensis>> [accessed 2 August 2022].

³³ Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson, *I was born a Slave Volume 1*, p. 28 and Thomas R. Frazier, *Afro-American History: Primary Sources* p. 47 both suggest that Gronniosaw could not read or write English, only Dutch.

³⁴ 'James Albate to Selina Hastings, 3 Jan 1772', Westminster College, Cambridge: Cheshunt Foundation, F/1:1574. Permission has been requested to access this letter; a copy should be supplied in the next few weeks.

³⁵ 'James Albate to Selina Hastings, 3 Jan 1772', Westminster College, Cambridge: Cheshunt Foundation, F/1:1574.

quicker and easier to do so through someone fluent in written and spoken English. Speed was of the essence regarding the production of this narrative – there was a desire to disseminate Calvinist doctrine effectively, certainly, but ultimately the proceeds from the publication of the narrative were designed to help Gronniosaw's destitute family, as mentioned earlier.³⁶

Regarding the type of narrative this is, and how we should approach reading it, Conn and Bynum break down slave narratives into three clearly discernible types:

1. Authentic narratives, written directly by slaves, in their own words, during or soon after their enslavement; 2. Narratives recorded by amanuenses (people who wrote down what others dictated) during or soon after the narrator's enslavement, which were often heavily edited by the amanuenses; or 3. Narratives recorded after slavery had officially ended (in 1863), based on interviews between former slaves and government workers. Clearly, the credibility and reliability of the account varies across these 3 basic forms. Therefore, readers need to know which type of account they are reading in order to know how readily to believe the account.³⁷

It is clear from this description that Gronniosaw's narrative falls under the second category, as Shirley's foreword states, 'this account of the life and spiritual experience of James Albert was taken from his own mouth and committed to paper by the elegant pen of a young lady of the town of Leominster'.³⁸ However, in another example of the academic analysis of the work of Gronniosaw being less than straightforward to navigate, they state that in their opinion, Gronniosaw's narrative falls into the first category (that he wrote it himself) and also say that his narrative was written in America.³⁹ Meanwhile, Gary Ohkuro suggests that Gronniosaw's work is 'a biography masked as an autobiography', that it is 'curious' and says it should be categorised under 'creative non-fiction'.⁴⁰ Certainly, what is more clear it is considered a more 'benign' work when dealing with issues surrounding the enslavement of Africans, the reasons for which will be discussed in more detail in section 4.3.⁴¹

Regarding the reliance in many instances on an amanuensis in the creation of narratives as mentioned above (which could be due to a lack of education on the part of the individual), Richardson and Lee suggest that it having been dictated does not 'render the text inauthentic' but that it is necessary to be mindful of 'what is not articulated in them implicitly...and other strategies of misdirection'.⁴² There are many

³⁶ Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson, *I was born a Slave Volume 1 (1772–1849)*, p. 2.

³⁷ Bryan Conn and Tara Bynum, (3rd edn.) *Encyclopedia of African-American Writing: Five Centuries of Contribution: Trials and triumphs of Writers, Poets, Publications and Organizations* (New York: Grey House Publishing, 2018), pp. 688-9.

³⁸ James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars*, p. iii.

³⁹ Bryan Conn and Tara Bynum, (3rd edn.) *Encyclopedia of African-American Writing*, p. 689.

⁴⁰ Gary Ohkuro, *The Great American Mosaic in 4 Volumes: An Exploration of Diversity in Primary Documents* (Westport: Greenwood., 2014), p. 5.

⁴¹ Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson, *I was born a Slave Volume 1 (1772–1849)*, p. xxxii.

⁴² Alan Richardson and Debbie Lee, *Early Black British Writing: Selected Text With Introduction – Critical Essays* (Boston MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), p. 4.

instances where this is especially important when examining the work of Gronniosaw. For example, the way he plays down his experience of the middle passage (when he was transported from Africa to America – the reasons for this will be examined later) and also, more importantly from the point of view of this report, in the perhaps deliberate lack of detail he furnishes the reader with regarding his involvement in the 28th Regiment of Foot, probably harrowing involvement in the sieges of Martinique and Havana, and subsequent arduous, convoluted and probably traumatic journey to England.

4.3 The slave trade and importance of slave narratives

Estimates put the number of people taken from their homes in the African continent and sold into slavery at somewhere between ten and fifty million.⁴³ The African slave trade 'represented the largest migration of people in history up to that point', and around ten to fifteen million people being transported died on the journey from Africa in what is referred to as the infamous 'middle passage'.⁴⁴ When we consider that around another thirty percent died during the stage called 'seasoning' – when slaves were acclimatised to disease, the environment and the intensity of the work expected of them – it is clear that Gronniosaw was very lucky to survive, where millions of others perished.⁴⁵ The fact that he survived not only this experience, but being owned (or working for) several different people in America before his stint in the British Army (and fighting in two major sieges) which brought him to Britain is staggering. The number of 'black' people in Britain towards the end of the Eighteenth century, when Gronniosaw eventually made his way here, is estimated to have been between ten and fifteen thousand.⁴⁶ It is likely that alongside Gronniosaw's wish to travel to Britain due to his religious beliefs and admiration of George Whitfield (which is discussed in the next section) he felt that he would possibly be more accepted in Britain, as people of African descent in America continued (and still continue) to be referred to as 'African-American', rather than simply 'American'.⁴⁷ However, it is clear from his narrative, that Britain was not the welcoming religious haven he had expected and phrases used to describe black people at the time would have included 'moors, blackamoors, mungos or negurs', with freed blacks such as Gronniosaw often living in extreme poverty, scratching a 'living as weavers, servants, labourers, artisans, shopkeepers, maids, pedlars, street performers or sailors'.⁴⁸

Gronniosaw's narrative is all the more impressive when we consider that by 1770 only four texts are believed to have been published by black writers in European languages.⁴⁹ The only known one written in English up to this point was *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprizing Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a*

⁴³ Alan Richardson Alan and Debbie Lee, *Early Black British Writing*, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 4. The term 'black' at this time would have been used to describe people from Africa, West India and South Asia in: Stephen H. Gregg, *Empire and Identity: An Eighteenth Century Sourcebook* (London: Palgrave, 2005), p. 19.

⁴⁷ Vincent Carretta, *Unchained Voices*, p. 6.

⁴⁸ Stephen H. Gregg, *Empire and Identity*, p. 19.

⁴⁹ Henry Louis Gates Jr. and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, p. 6.

Negro Man by Briton Hammon which was published in 1760.⁵⁰ Andrews and Gates describe the authors of these narratives as 'writing and railing against their enslavement'.⁵¹ Taylor and Johnson concur, saying that the writing of these works was 'an act of liberation, turning themselves from victims into agents of resistance'.⁵²

Narratives such as Gronniosaw's are vitally important primary sources which reveal so much about the people themselves, their experiences, and also the times they were created in. Around six thousand individuals had told their story either orally or in written form by the time the last former slave died in the 1970s.⁵³ Most were written to be immediately impactful rather than to have long-term influence.⁵⁴ Unlike some which followed it, which ultimately became more widely-known, Gronniosaw's narrative had less of a focus on the injustices of slavery, for example his depiction of 'feeling a bit sea sick' as his summarisation of his experience of the middle passage is not in line with most other narratives.⁵⁵ It can be seen that the tone of narratives changed from 1787 with the publication of Ottobah Cugoano's *Narrative of the Enslavement of Ottobah Cugoano, a Native of Africa; Published by Himself in the Year 1787*, 'which evolves into a treatise...for the universal abolition of slavery'.⁵⁶ However, Gronniosaw's early narrative was vital in helping to found a literary tradition.⁵⁷ These early narratives laid the groundwork for the beginnings of antislavery campaigning which began to gain traction into the nineteenth century, and the writers and abolitionists that followed such as Frederick Douglass (1818-1895).⁵⁸ One of the aspects of Gronniosaw's enslavement which he alludes to in the early part of his narrative – being sold into slavery by a coastal king, with individuals being sold in return for items such as tobacco, rum, guns, iron copper and brass and cloth - is an aspect of the slave trade which Douglass wrote about bitterly and extensively.⁵⁹ Narratives such as those discussed here by Gronniosaw and Cugoano, and the later more extensive writings by Douglass, contain the voices of those which would have otherwise been lost to 'traditional' history, recorded by more 'traditional' methods.⁶⁰

4.4 The influence of Christianity on Gronniosaw and his writing

Gronniosaw's narrative is recognisable as a piece of Calvinist propaganda, which is confirmed by examining those involved in helping to produce it. As has already been

⁵⁰ Henry Louis Gates Jr. and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, p. 6.

⁵¹ William L. Andrews and Henry Louis Gates (eds.) *The Civitas Anthology of African American Slave Narratives*, p. ix.

⁵² Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson, *I was born a Slave Volume 1 (1772–1849)*, p. xv and Henry Louis Gates Jr., and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, p. 4.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

⁵⁵ Ryan Hanley, 'Calvinism, Proslavery and James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw', p. 361.

⁵⁶ Henry Louis Gates Jr., and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, p. vii.

⁵⁷ William L. Andrews, and Henry Louis Gates (eds.) *The Civitas Anthology of African American Slave Narratives* p. ix.

⁵⁸ Henry Louis Gates Jr. and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, p. xi.

⁵⁹ William L. Andrews and Henry Louis Gates (eds.) *The Civitas Anthology of African American Slave Narrative*,s p. vii and Frazier, Thomas R, *Afro-American History: Primary Sources*, p. 2.

⁶⁰ Bryan Conn and Tara Bynum, (3rd edn.), *Encyclopedia of African-American Writing*, p.688.

discussed, Selina Hastings was his sponsor, and the narrative is dedicated to her.⁶¹ It was this link to the 'social network' of Calvinism which ultimately dictated the way slavery was depicted in the narrative.⁶² Gronniosaw was influenced - and much affected by the sermons of - Anglican evangelist George Whitfield (1714-1770) which inspired his decision to make his way to Britain.⁶³ Hastings was an influential supporter and correspondent of Whitfield, from whom she inherited 100 slaves.⁶⁴ Calvinists believed that 'enslaving non-Christian Africans was beneficial, as it brought them closer to God' and when we consider that this was the prevailing school of thought amongst those helping Gronniosaw to write and publish his narrative, it is clear to see how the tone of the work was affected.⁶⁵

Gronniosaw describes his 'pagan'-sounding religion and upbringing in Africa, yet the area he is believed to have originated from would have been largely Muslim at this time.⁶⁶ Ultimately, Taylor and Johnson suggest that the transformation from 'pagan' to 'Christian' which happens to Gronniosaw throughout his narrative would have, as well as being the message of the text from a Calvinist perspective, been another device which he used to make himself more identifiable with his British Christian readership.⁶⁷ They describe his depiction of 'sin, conversion and rebirth' as a common one among early slave narratives.⁶⁸ Eventually, however, Gronniosaw was welcomed into the religious community in Britain, helped on several of occasions by Quakers and members of the Church, and also benefitting financially from sales of his Calvinist ideology-laden narrative.⁶⁹

5 The 28th Regiment of Foot and their involvement with the siege of Martinique

One feature of the academic sources consulted for this report was the scant attention paid to Gronniosaw joining the British Army. Thomas R. Frazier's *Afro-American Primary Sources* is a typical example of this, mentioning only in passing his 'enlisting in a British infantry regiment' yet offering detailed analysis of other areas of the narrative.⁷⁰ Even Gates and Andrews who are mentioned earlier in this report, although they have written extensively on Gronniosaw and slave narratives generally and offer detailed insights into other areas of Gronniosaw's life, skip frustratingly over his time in the British Army.⁷¹

⁶¹ Ryan Hanley, 'Calvinism, Proslavery and James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw', p. 362.

⁶² Ibid., P. 362.

⁶³ Robin Law, Toyin Falola and Matt D. Childs, *The Changing Worlds of Atlantic Africa*, p. 349 and p. 362. In another local link, George Whitfield was born in Gloucester and attended Crypt School.

⁶⁴ Ryan Hanley, 'Calvinism, Proslavery and James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw', p. 362.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 362.

⁶⁶ H. Woodward, *African-British Writings in the Eighteenth Century: The Politics of Race and Reason* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 32.

⁶⁷ Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson, *I was born a Slave Volume 1 (1772-1849)*, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

⁶⁹ Alan Richardson and Debbie Lee, *Early Black British Writing*, p.8 and Yuval Taylor and Charles Johnson, *I was born a Slave Volume 1 (1772-1849)*, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Thomas R. Frazier, *Afro-American Primary Sources*, p. 48.

⁷¹ Henry Louis Gates Jr. and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic* p. 6 as mentioned above,

The regiment which Gronniosaw describes joining in New York was the 28th Regiment of Foot. Formed in 1694, it was at first called Gibson's Regiment of Foot and was commanded by John Gibson.⁷² They became known as the 28th Regiment of Foot from 1742, when regiments were numbered according to seniority.⁷³ In September 1760 they were on Garrison duty in recently captured Montreal in Canada when, as will be discussed in this section, they received orders to join 'a force of eight thousand under General Monckton' and sail for Martinique'.⁷⁴ When regiments were eventually linked with counties for recruiting purposes, the 28th became the 28th or North Gloucestershire Regiment and the 61st Regiment of Foot became the 61st or South Gloucestershire regiment, with the two regiments combining as the First and Second Battalions, the Gloucester Regiment in further army reforms in 1881.⁷⁵

The sieges in which Gronniosaw was involved with the 28th Regiment of Foot – Martinique and Havana – were battles which took place during the Seven Years' War. The battles of the Seven Years' War (1756 – 1763) ranged from the Hapsburgs attempting to win back Silesia from Prussia, to France and Britain battling for control of North America and India.⁷⁶ As well as the sieges of Martinique and Havana, other battles fought in the Seven Years' War include Minden, Emsdorf, Warburg, Kloster Kamp, Vellinghausen, Wilhelmstahl and Manila.⁷⁷ Britain emerged as a world power after the seven Years' War.⁷⁸ The Treaty of Paris which ended the war saw the French lose the majority of their land in North America as well as their trade in India. In 1761 war was declared on Spain, with Spain's strength in the Caribbean greatly reduced by losses of vital strongholds such as Havana.⁷⁹

The 28th Regiment of Foot's involvement in Britain's battle for supremacy in the Caribbean came when Field Marshall Jeffrey Amherst (1717-1797) received orders in early 1761 that a number of the troops currently unemployed in North America (of which there was a considerable number after the conquest of Canada, and which included the 28th Regiment) would be required later that year to be involved in the taking of Dominica, St Lucia and Martinique.⁸⁰ Two thousand men were sent immediately, for the conquest of the first two of these islands, with six thousand (among them the 28th Regiment) to be sent in the Autumn for the siege on Martinique.⁸¹ J. W. Fortesque writes that 'the regiments employed in Martinique,

Gronniosaw's progress to Britain via Havana etc. is mentioned, but only in passing and without context.

⁷² David Scott Daniell, *Cap of Honour: The Story of the Gloucestershire Regiment (28th/61st of Foot) 1694 – 1950* (London: George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., 1951), p. 15.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65 and p. 191.

⁷⁶ Encyclopaedia Britannica <<https://www.britannica.com/event/Seven-Years-War/The-course-of-the-Seven-Years-War>> [accessed 21 August 2022].

⁷⁷ <BritishBattles.com> [accessed 22 August 2022].

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ David Scott Daniell, *Cap of Honour* and J. W. Fortesque, *The History of the British Army Volume 1* (Basingstoke: Macmillan and Co., 2018), p. 536.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.537.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 537.

complete or in detachments, were the 4th, 15th, 17th, 22nd, 27th, 28th, 35th, 38th, 40th, 42nd, 43rd, 48th, 60th, 65th, 69th, Rufane's (two battalions), Montgomery's Highlanders, Vaughan's, Gray's, Stuart's, Campbell's, two companies of American Rangers [and] ten companies of Barbados Volunteers.⁸² These troops arrived on Martinique on Christmas Eve, 1761, and on the third of February 1762 Martinique surrendered with what were claimed to be much lower casualties than would occur in Havana.⁸³ The *Maryland Gazette* of the first of April 1762, when reporting on the capitulation of Martinico, suggested that loss of British troops 'does not exceed 500 men'.⁸⁴

However, in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* on the 6th of May 1762 there was a detailed account of the taking of Martinique, which helps to present a picture of what the experience must have actually been like for Gronniosaw, and demonstrates the valour shown by the troops which included him in their number. The report states that 'every individual corps distinguished itself this day' and then goes on to graphically describe the difficult terrain and heavy fire which the men had to endure.⁸⁵ The *Pennsylvania Gazette* of the tenth of June 1762 carried a report on the conquest of Martinique written by General Robert Monckton (1726-1782). He recounts that on the island everything had been against his troops and on side of enemy, who throughout the battle were 'possessed of every advantage'.⁸⁶ He agreed that troops had shown true valour and persevering ardour' as well as exhibiting 'a noble example of British spirit', and describes the conflict as lasting between the tenth of January and the fifth of February 1762.⁸⁷

The *Pennsylvania Gazette* of the twenty-second of April 1762 carried the 'Articles of Capitulation for Island of Martinico'. Included among them is article IX outlining plans for the freeing of prisoners of war, which suggested 'all free negroes and mulattoes made prisoners of war shall be treated as such and restored to their liberty as the other prisoners are'.⁸⁸ The answer to article IX directly below it however, states 'all negroes taken with arms in their hands shall be reputed slaves – the rest is granted'. What a very difficult and traumatic time this must have been for Gronniosaw, who would have, simply due to his colour and in addition to the other stresses of warfare, been viewed and treated very differently to his fellow soldiers.

At this point it is worth examining Gronniosaw's role in the siege of Martinique and the time leading up to him joining the British army. As mentioned in section two, there was potentially only a small window of time between the deaths of the last Frelinghuysen sons and Gronniosaw's enrolment with the 28th Regiment of Foot if we examine their dates of death. The last two Frelinghuysen sons to die were Henricus and Theodorus II who died in 1757 and around 1760/1 respectively. Going

⁸² J. W. Fortesque, *The History of the British Army Volume 1* (Basingstoke: Macmillan and Co., 2018), p. 539.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 539 and 541.

⁸⁴ <Newspapers.com> [accessed 5 July 2022] - see 'Newspapers referenced', appendix 1.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

by these dates, as has been mentioned, and what Gronniosaw records as happening between the deaths of the brothers and enlisting in the 28th regiment of Foot (working as a cook for a privateer and also working for 'Dunscum'), it is probably prudent to assume that he in all likelihood worked for Henricus (and before that, Frelinghuysen's wife and sons Ferdinand, Jacobus and John) but the question is whether he did in fact ever work for Theodorus II, as Theodorus died around 1760/1. The actual fate of Theodorus II is unclear, as is his definitive date of death. The New York State museum says the following:

In 1759, Theodorus Frelinghuysen, Jr. sought to return to Holland – presumably for a visit. He sailed from New York in October 1759. Several scenarios have been offered but he never returned and his fate still has not been definitively determined. His replacement arrived in Albany in October 1760.⁸⁹

The official history of the Founding of Queen's College records the following as Theodorus II's fate:

It was not until 1759 that Theodorus (Theodore) Frelinghuysen was able to obtain release from his congregation in Albany and sail to Holland to seek support for the proposed college. Frelinghuysen spent two years in Holland, apparently without any significant success, although he appears to have raised some money there for the new college. In 1761 he returned to America, but died before reaching home, possibly having been drowned in the waters of New York Bay.⁹⁰

From the above source, it appears Theodorus II could have died as late as 1761.

Gronniosaw's stint as a cook with a privateer *and* his time with Dunscum would have spanned around a year, as he enlisted in the 28th Regiment of Foot in mid-1761 to take part in the conquering of Martinique. The period from 1760-61 appears to have been one of great change and upheaval for Gronniosaw, and it was regretful that nothing could be found out about the privateer he served for (his name is omitted from the narrative) and very little discovered about 'Dunscum', as it would have been beneficial to have shored up this part of the timeline regarding Gronniosaw's actual movements in the lead up to him joining the army. In order to attempt this, several searches were carried out. As well as the search for the mysterious wine merchant 'Dunscum' which is outlined in section 8, both newspaper archives were searched under a multitude of search terms for any reference to him being recruited at this time or the recruitment campaign. Search terms including 'Recruiting', 'Recruitment', 'Army Recruitment' 'Martinico Recruitment' and 'join the army' 'enlist/inlist' were applied among others, as well as 'Privateer/ing', and the letters of Jeffrey Amherst were also studied in order to determine any references to recruiting at that time, all of which revealed nothing.

⁸⁹ New York State Museum: <Theodorus Frelinghuysen, Jr. (nysed.gov)> [accessed 6 July 2022].

⁹⁰ Rutger's Physics, the *Founding of Queen's College* Microsoft Word – CHAPTER1.DOC (rutgers.edu), p. 3. [accessed 6 July 2022].

As in the case of the search for detail surrounding Gronniosaw's discharge from the army and arrival in Britain which is discussed in section seven, the newspaper archives were searched in order to attempt to pinpoint with more accuracy where Gronniosaw and the regiment would have been in 1761. Newspapers from the time did provide a small amount of detail of the regiment's (and by extension Gronniosaw's) location then, and have been included in this report to provide detail regarding his experience, and present a picture of what army - and Gronniosaw's - life must have been like during this period. The newspapers were accessed through the British Newspaper Archive and also Newspapers.com by Ancestry, which gave access to digitised American publications.

One of the earliest references to the 28th Regiment of Foot, which definitively places them in the right place at the right time as far as Gronniosaw enlisting for them in New York is concerned, also gives a vivid description of where they were and their immediate plans. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* dated the thirteenth of August 1761 contains a letter from the camp informs us that 'we have had the following regular regiments. I give them as they arrived here from Canada, viz, The 40th Regiment, 42nd or Royal Highlanders, 2 Battalions, 15th, 35th, 28th, 48th, 43rd, 3d Battalion of Royal Americans expected, but not arrived; the 27th, who are garrisoned here, and as far down as lake George. Each Regiment remains here about 3 weeks or a month. The 40th, 1st and 2nd Battalions of Royal Highlanders, and the 15th have marched to New York, in the same order they came; the rest expected to follow successively. [...] the plan of the fort is so large that it can scarcely be completed this year'.⁹¹

The *Caledonian Mercury* from the thirtieth of November 1761 featured a letter from New York to a merchant in Glasgow, dated the 7th of October, which states 'there are eleven battalions encamped in the island of Staten, within ten miles of this place; which little army is divided into three brigades. The first consists of the 15th and 28th regiments, and the two battalions of the 42nd. The second consists of the 35th, 40th and 48th, and the 3rd battalion of the Royal Americans. The third brigade is made up of the 17th, 27th and 43rd regiments. The transports are now arrived from England; and the officers have orders forthwith to provide themselves with fresh provisions for the voyage. The artillery is embarking; and General Amherst has ordered four more regiments immediately to join the expedition, which, tis believed, is against Martinico. There are five men of war here for a convoy'.⁹²

Finally, an edition of the *Maryland Gazette* dated the third of December 1761 carries a report from the twelfth of November which describes troops readying to embark and leaving the Staten Island Camp 'on the expedition under...General Monckton (consisting of above 100 sail)'. It discusses their 'glory in the conquest of Canada' and hopes that the expedition 'will be crowned with success'. On November the sixth they report that General Monckton embarked with 'a fair wind, under convoy of the Devonshire, the Alcide, the Norwich, the Penzance and the Prince Edward' and that

⁹¹ <Newspapers.com> [accessed 5 July 2022] - see 'Newspapers referenced', appendix 1. For details of Crown Point Fort, where the 28th Regiment (and Gronniosaw) were based, also see appendix 1.

⁹² Ibid.

all troops finally set sail on the twenty-third of November, with ships laden with provisions will follow.⁹³ Gronniosaw would, of course, have been amongst their number. This report points towards the twenty-third of November 1761 as being the last day on which James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw set foot on American soil.

When examining Gronniosaw's enrolment in the 28th Regiment of Foot and what this experience may have been like for him, M. A. Bottellino has written extensively on the role of black soldiers in the British empire, and suggests that British officers were much more likely to employ black men in their regiments than their American counterparts.⁹⁴ The sheer scale of the war meant that mass recruitment was required for the forces stationed in North America which were destined to fight in the Caribbean. So, along with regiments such as the 28th Regiment of Foot taking on black recruits, there were also what Bottellino describes as 'multiracial provincial companies' which were formed in the US, which included in their ranks both freed and enslaved men.⁹⁵

It has to be acknowledged that these commanders saw black men as a desirable addition to the regiments headed for the Caribbean as they were seen as being less susceptible to disease, with stronger constitutions.⁹⁶ It is likely that this thinking among recruiters made it more straightforward for Gronniosaw to enlist, and may, in combination with a shortage of men willing to fight overseas at this time, have helped authorities overlook his age, which would have been between fifty-one and fifty-six years of age in 1761. However, when individual sieges such as the ones on Martinique and Havana were over, this would have been an uncertain and potentially dangerous time for black soldiers, freed men or otherwise, and many deserted for fear of their fate after the war. Many slaves were returned to their owners, with soldiers of African descent rounded up by the British who now controlled the various islands.⁹⁷ Many more had fallen ill or died or been taken prisoner by the Spanish. Bottellino does not mention any black troops making their way to England – no books or journals consulted for this report suggested this as an outcome for black soldiers. Gronniosaw, it appears, was very fortunate and very unusual as a man over fifty years old, to survive his experience fighting with the 28th Regiment of Foot, as he probably feared for his life on several fronts and in different ways, particularly in the aftermath of the war.

6 The campaign of 1762 – Havana

At the beginning of February 1761 Fort Royal on Martinique surrendered, but very quickly General Monckton's troops received orders that they were required in Cuba. All regiments in the West Indies were gathered up and by the sixth of February

⁹³ <Newspapers.com> [accessed 5 July 2022] - see 'Newspapers referenced', appendix 1.

⁹⁴ M. A. Bottellino, 'Of Equal or More Service': Black Soldiers and the British Empire in the Mid-Eighteenth Century Caribbean' *Slavery and Abolition* V38 (2017), p. 526.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 513.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 519.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 526.

Monckton's men were in sight of Havana.⁹⁸ It was agreed that the Siege had to reach a conclusion as quickly as possible due to the threat of tropical disease.⁹⁹

The port of Havana was a vital one, and to take it would greatly weaken Spain's influence in America.¹⁰⁰ It was imperative to wrestle control of Havana from the Spanish, but with troops spread so thinly and fighting on so many fronts, not to mention the toll taken on the men through tropical disease, more help was called for in terms of numbers of enlisted troops.¹⁰¹ More men – a 'brigade of Americans' – were therefore recruited in New York.¹⁰² On the third of January 1762, Jeffrey Amherst was sent orders to recruit and despatch, with the utmost urgency, a further 4,000 men made up of regulars and provincials.¹⁰³ Unfortunately, these orders did not reach Amherst until the first of April, having been lost en-route.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, men proved less than keen to sign up when they realised they would be serving overseas.¹⁰⁵ It was not until mid-June that enough men had enrolled.¹⁰⁶ These troops did not make land on Cuba until 20th July and were therefore only involved in the last few weeks of the siege.¹⁰⁷ This put an incredible burden on the increasingly sickly and fatigued troops who were already involved with the fighting – among whom would have been Gronniosaw – who were expecting to have their number reinforced by the American troops daily.

Havana capitulated in August, as described by Professor David Syrett, who has written extensively about the siege. He writes, 'on 14 August British troops occupied La Punta, entered the city through La Punta and the Land Gates, and at noon relieved the Spanish guard and officially took possession of Havana'.¹⁰⁸ Another aspect which Syrett describes in his volume, and is the only one to do so, is that he mentions troops being taken to Spain. They are extremely likely to have had Gronniosaw travelling with them, with Syrett stating 'the Spanish soldiers and sailors were accorded the honours of war and were to be repatriated to Spain in British ships'.¹⁰⁹ This very much appears to corroborate, or certainly fit with Gronniosaw's claim that he had 'gone with the prisoners to Spain' particularly as Syrett specifies that they would have been transported in British ships, which would have had British troops to man them.

⁹⁸ J. W. Fortesque, *The History of the British Army Volume 1*, p. 541.

⁹⁹ David Syrett, *The Siege and Capture of Havana, 1762: Publications of the Navy Records Society* (London: Routledge 2019), p. xiv.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

¹⁰² David Syrett, 'American Provincials and the Havana Campaign' *New York History* Vol. 49, Issue 4, (Oct 1, 1968), p. 376.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 376 – 381.

¹⁰⁷ Roswell Park (foreword by Julian Park), *Journal of the Expedition Against Cuba by Roswell Park* ArchiveGrid : Roswell Park, A journal of the expedition against Cuba, 1762, (oclc.org) [accessed 1 August 2022].

¹⁰⁸ David Syrett, *The Siege and Capture of Havana, 1762*, p. xxxiii.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xxxiii.

George Pocock's detailed account of the siege of Havana was printed in the *Derby Mercury* on the first of October 1762, which was around the time that the British public began to learn for the first time of its successful capture.¹¹⁰ Details of other aspects of the siege and the experience of the troops involved also began to trickle through, with *Pope's Bath Chronicle* dated the eleventh of November 1762 telling its readers that the 'Marlborough Man of War is arrived at Portsmouth from the Havannah and brings an account that Sir G Pocock was on his passage homewards', as well as alluding to the terrible sickness suffered by the troops, by explaining that the Spanish ships captured by the British were unable to be sailed home due to a lack of men as they were too sickly'.¹¹¹

Several paintings of conquest by Dominic Serres are held at Royal Museums Greenwich and can be seen on British battles.com. Serres had experience of Havana as a former sea captain himself, and the paintings were based on 'a series of prints published by an officer of the expedition'.¹¹² They provide a fascinating insight into the kind of views and scenes which Gronniosaw would have seen of Havana himself.

7 Troops and prisoners returning to Portsmouth: the possible route by which James Albert could have arrived in England

There was nothing discovered in any correspondence or any other files which pertained to rank-and-file prisoners or soldiers returning to England after the siege of Havana among the documents at the national archives – the problem was finding any mention of troops returning, as sometimes individual officers were mentioned, but not lower ranks. Something may exist in Portsmouth archives, but that is an avenue which would have to be pursued in further research and an initial search of their catalogue did not reveal anything relevant. From what Gronniosaw suggests in his narrative about accompanying prisoners however, this route to England would appear to fit with what the protocols would have been at the time, or as Potkay and Burr phrase it 'Gronniosaw's trajectory from Havana to Old Spain with different groups of war prisoners accords with formal military procedure'.¹¹³ Gregg concurs that Gronniosaw's statement 'I went...English prisoners' refers to 'presumably an exchange of prisoners between Spain and England'.¹¹⁴ The key would be to find a list of prisoner or troop returns, which the National Archives did not hold and may be at Portsmouth, but don't appear to be something which has survived from initial searches.

There was, however, a small amount of information to be gained from within the newspaper archives regarding prisoners from this conflict, and all newspaper articles have also been attached to this report in appendix 1, with the relevant articles

¹¹⁰ British Newspaper Archive <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>> [accessed 29 July 2022] – see appendix 1.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² <Britishbattles.com.> [accessed 30 July 2022].

¹¹³ Adam Potkay and Sandra Burr (eds.), *Black Atlantic Writers of the Eighteenth Century: Living the New Exodus in England and the Americas* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), p. 61.

¹¹⁴ Stephen H. Gregg, *Empire and Identity: An Eighteenth Century Sourcebook* (London: Palgrave, 2005), p. 109.

highlighted. For example, the *Leeds Intelligencer* dated the twenty-third of November 1762 says that 'Fourteen sail of transports with Spanish prisoners from the Havannah to Cadiz under the convoy of the Sutherland and Dover men of war, were spoke with the first of September by the Dundee, Capt. Wauchape, from Jamaica to London, all well'.¹¹⁵ This appears to point towards the destination that prisoners were being transported to in 'Old Spain' being Cadiz, and there is the potential for Gronniosaw having been amongst them. Meanwhile, The *Ipswich Journal* of the eighth of January 1763 says that on the twenty-fourth of November, fourteen English ships 'which arrived here [Cadiz] from the Havannah with Spanish prisoners, were sailed from thence to the several ports of their destination'.¹¹⁶

Jackson's Oxford Journal from the twelfth of March 1763 discusses articles included in the treaty of Paris including the fifth one, regarding prisoners of war. The report says that all ranks are to be released and that exchanging prisoners of war 'shall proceed within 15 days after the signing of the Treaty'.¹¹⁷ The treaty was signed on the third of November 1762, eventually going into effect on the tenth of February 1763.¹¹⁸ Based on these dates, the prisoner releases and exchanges should have started around mid-November, if the agreed passage of time of fifteen days was adhered to (this would fit with Gronniosaw arriving in England in 1763 which is the year that he is widely believed to have done so).

The article in the *Caledonian Mercury* from the twenty-fourth of January 1763 is a sobering read, and also an important one if we are to gain an understanding the type of ordeal that Gronniosaw is likely to have endured in his quest to get to England at the end of the war. It contains harrowing reports of the voyage back from 'Havannah' from a Lieutenant on the Marlborough. He writes in detail of the boat leaking, being battered about by storms and men literally dying at the pumps trying to save her.¹¹⁹

The *Leeds Intelligencer* of the sixteenth of August 1763 carries a report from the thirteenth of August. It says that the Trent man of War has arrived in Portsmouth, and 'brings advice' that Havannah was evacuated by the English on the seventh of July. The report then discusses some other transports which have foundered or are leaking on their voyages, and finishes with the following announcement:

We are authorised to assure the publick (sic) that, although the British prisoners of war, which were taken by the French just before the conclusion of peace, are not yet arrived in England, that measures were immediately taken to fetch them home, on receipt of the first authentic accounts of their being

¹¹⁵ British Newspaper Archive: <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>> [accessed 1 July 2022] - see appendix 1.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1750-1775/treaty-of-paris#:~:text=The%20Treaty%20of%20Paris%20of,to%20the%20British%20colonies%20there.> [accessed 1 August 2022].

¹¹⁹ British Newspaper Archive: <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>> [accessed 1 July 2022] - see appendix 1.

confined at Bayonne and a vessel sent thither for that purpose, the return of which is daily expected'.¹²⁰

The only update on the eventual arrival of any of these prisoners appears in the *Leeds Intelligencer* on the thirteenth of September 1763. It does mention (very briefly) a vessel called the Reeves tender, which it describes as having sailed from Bayonne and which 'is arrived at Plymouth, with 150 prisoners on board'.¹²¹ Could Gronniosaw have accompanied this group of prisoners on his circuitous route to England? Ultimately, the soldiers held in France appear to have been transported to Plymouth rather than Portsmouth, so perhaps this was not the group that Gronniosaw travelled with, if he was accurate in his narrative about landing in Portsmouth.

Finally, the *Salisbury Journal* dated the twenty-ninth of August 1763 includes a report from the twenty-second of August as arriving at 'Spithead' (the area of the Solent near Portsmouth): The Orford, Alcide, Emerald and Hawke (English ships) and the Conquistador and three other Spanish prizes from 'the Havannah'. George Keppel (1724-1772) arrived with them, came onto the shore and headed for London with four waggon loads of money.¹²² There are several ship names in this report which could potentially be researched further, which arrived into the right area of England at about the right time to have potentially had Gronniosaw on board. Further research which could come from information gleaned from the newspaper reports in this section could also include following up English prisoners being held in Cadiz (Cadiz itself may hold records of prisoners which were taken there) – similarly, research could be conducted in Bayonne as English prisoners were also held there.

8 Analysis of the 28th Regiment of foot muster rolls from October 1761 – October 1762: the search for James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw

The muster rolls for the 28th Regiment of Foot are held at the National Archives in Kew and were scanned for the relevant time period during the summer of 2022. They appeared at first glance to be from 1763, but upon closer inspection there were rolls dated 1761 and also 1762. The scans which were taken of all the muster rolls are attached to this report – see appendix 2. The dates of the scans which have been analysed run from October 1761 (by this time Gronniosaw should have enlisted with the 28th Regiment of Foot for the 'Martinico' campaign) right through to October 1763. As well as the actual scans of the muster rolls, there is also attached to this report a word document which contains a transcription which I have carried out (to the best of my ability) of all the rank-and-file troops contained within the muster rolls of the 28th regiment of Foot from 1761-1763 – see appendix 3.¹²³

¹²⁰ British Newspaper Archive: <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>> [accessed 1 July 2022] - see appendix 1.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ The transcription is laid out on the page in the same way as the Muster rolls themselves as far as was possible.

The following names were used to search for Gronniosaw in the muster rolls:

- James Albert/Albate Ukawsaw Gronniosaw and all variations/permutations of this¹²⁴
- Frelinghuysen and variations on this – in case he used his master's surname
- Dunscum, and variations on this name – the wine merchant he appeared to have worked for before enlisting, for the same reason as above
- Prince – as he refers to himself as an African prince
- Jacobus Albrecht – the Dutch translation of James Albert, as he may well have seen himself as Dutch/he had long worked for a Dutch family, also Jacobus, the Dutch version of James, is very commonplace in the Frelinghuysen family
- Dutch-looking names generally

Unfortunately, there were no matches for any of the names listed above, but there was a Dutch/unusual-looking name which will be discussed shortly.

The surname 'Dunscum' is also unusual, and it was felt that attempting to locate or discover this individual may be helpful for not only searching the muster rolls, but also for tracing Gronniosaw's movements in the time after he worked for a privateer and before he enlisted in the 28th regiment of foot (around 1760/61). To this end, and bearing in mind how approximate some of the other name spellings are in Gronniosaw's narrative (Freelandhouse for Frelinghuysen for example) the two newspaper archives mentioned earlier were searched for the following version of the wine merchant's name and variations thereof, plus similar ones:

Dunscum	Dunscombe	Dunsham	Dunsten	Dansen	Duncan
Dutton	Dixon	Davidson	Dawson	Dudgeon	Dugan
Duggan	Duhon	Duncanson	Dunham	Dunnam	Dustin

The one name which appeared repeatedly in newspaper advertisements at this time was an individual called Captain Duncan, who appeared to be an importer of mixed goods, but who certainly included Madeira wine among them. There are 'Captain Duncan' advertisements attached to this report which featured in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of both the twenty-ninth of January 1759 and the thirteenth of March 1760.¹²⁵ They show him to be a merchant importing wine and other goods into the area during the time period that it is thought that Gronniosaw would have been living there. Gronniosaw notes in his narrative that 'Dunscum' 'died at sea' so it doesn't feel too far removed that there is a possibility that 'Dunscum' could have been 'Duncan' (his advertisements did not go much beyond this time either, which ties in in terms of years).

Names which appear on the muster rolls which could be a permutation of or are similar at all to Dunscum, and the pages of the transcriptions Word document on

¹²⁴ 'James Albate to Selina Hastings, 3 Jan 1772', Westminster College, Cambridge: Cheshunt Foundation, F/1:1574.

¹²⁵ <Newspapers.com> [accessed 3 August 2022] – see appendix 1.

which they appear, are: p. 1 John Dunkin, p. 4 John Dunlap (who is also on p. 7, p. 9 and p. 12), p. 5 John Douglas and John Duffy (who is also on p. 11), p. 8 William Douglass, and p. 12, S. Douglas.

Another name which was found in the muster rolls which was intriguing was the name Luck/Luke Elloin/Ellion which appears with a variety of spellings, is first seen in 1761 (on page 3 of the transcription Word document – see appendix 3), and then appears in several other entries on pages 6, 9 and 12. On the first occasion it occurs it is spelled ‘Luck Elloin’. Some research was carried out into the surname Elloin which, while found occasionally in the US it is most prevalent and found in the highest density in Ghana, where it is thought that at the moment there are over 400 people with the surname.¹²⁶ The spelling variation Elion is also found in this area of Africa, as well as parts of Europe.¹²⁷ Another variation, Elian, is a rare Dutch surname.¹²⁸ Variations on the name Luke include the variations Luuk (the Dutch), Luuc, Luk, and Luc - Luuk is a fairly common Dutch first name and there certainly appears to be some confusion as to its spelling if we note the variations listed in the muster rolls, potentially due to the accent of the person saying the name, or the name itself being an unfamiliar one to write down.¹²⁹ The newspaper archives were searched for variations on this name with no success.

One oddity which did come to light, and it seems prudent to include it within this report, is a name which cropped up in some other muster rolls which were viewed at the National Archives. They were from 1762 they are the muster rolls for ‘Colonel Hoare’s Regiment of Massachusetts Bay Troops’, who were provincials. It is clearly not the regiment which Gronniosaw claims to have joined up with, but did exist and was enlisting at around/just after the time he appears to have joined up. It is an intriguing document, as one of the names on these rolls reads, ‘Prince: Negro’ who is described as ‘inlinsting’ on the thirteenth of March 1762.¹³⁰ The involvement of the Massachusetts provincials is detailed by Fred Anderson in his book *A People’s Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years’ War*, and again, this could be an avenue of further research.¹³¹

Other than the names mentioned above, nothing really revealed itself in the muster rolls, unfortunately. Interestingly, and frustratingly, slave narrative scholar Vincent Carretta also states that he found no plausible variation on Gronniosaw’s names in the musters of the 28th which he says are held on Staten Island from before the regiment set out for Martinique, but he suggests that the records are not complete, and did not contain information from time in Caribbean.¹³² He does not go into detail regarding what is actually kept on the 28th Regiment of Foot among the records of

¹²⁶ <<https://forebears.io/surnames/elloin>> [accessed 13 August 2022].

¹²⁷ <<https://www.names.org/n/elion/about#regional-popularity>> [accessed 13 August 2022].

¹²⁸ <<https://www.behindthename.com/name/elian>> [accessed 13 August 2022].

¹²⁹ <<https://charlies->

[names.com/en/luuk/#:~:text=Luuk%20is%20a%20Dutch%20variant,of%20Greek%20and%20Latin%20origin](https://charlies-names.com/en/luuk/#:~:text=Luuk%20is%20a%20Dutch%20variant,of%20Greek%20and%20Latin%20origin). And <https://www.behindthename.com/name/luke>> [accessed 13 August 2022].

¹³⁰ See the Massachusetts muster rolls in appendix 4.

¹³¹ Fred Anderson, *A People’s Army*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

¹³² Vincent Carretta, *Unchained Voices*, p. 56.

Staten Island however, and it could be the case that searching them for some of the other names which I have suggested in the course of this report (such as the Dutch permutations of his name, or variations on Duncum and Elloin) would have the potential to yield some results.

9 Conclusions

The search for James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, and his link to the 28th Regiment of Foot has been a frustrating one. Ultimately, he has, for the duration of the research, felt 'just out of reach'. Search terms which were used to try and trace him in the archives and newspapers included amongst others: 28th Regiment of Foot, James Albert/Albate Ukawsaw Gronniosaw (and all variations of this), General Monckton, Jeffrey Amherst, Martinique/Martinico, Army recruitment, enlisting, Admiral Rodney, Prison ships Portsmouth, English prisoners of war, Portsmouth Havannah, Portsmouth prisoners, Cadiz, Bayonne, Jacobus Albrecht, Luc/Luuc/Luke Elloin/Eloin/Ellion/Elion, variations of Duncum, wine merchant, and Frelinghuysen.

One aspect which remains very puzzling indeed is the amount of money Gronniosaw claimed to have had at the end of the conflict: 'I was then worth 30 pounds – didn't want to tarry to receive my prize money lest I should lose my chance of going to England'.¹³³ In his book *England in the Seven Years' War*, Corbett describes privates in the army at this time receiving around £4 in prize money, and it proved impossible to determine how Gronniosaw may have come to have been in possession of an amount of money such as this.¹³⁴ Perhaps it was another thing which he could say positively about himself to his readers, which would reflect well upon him, in the same way that having a white sister, being descended from aristocracy or having undergone a religious conversion would have done. Alternatively, there was a considerable amount of prize money given out after the siege of Havana and perhaps it came about as a result of this.

Gates and Andrews, as well as Ryan Hanley, commend Gronniosaw for the skills he acquired in life and his many achievements. Gates and Andrews point out that he devoted 45 years of his life acquiring the skills to tell his story effectively.¹³⁵ Meanwhile Vincent Caretta lists Gronniosaw's achievements by the age of sixty: 'Knowledge about Calvinist Christianity, eloquently discoursing 'before 38 ministers every Thursday', being fluent in Dutch and English and the husband of a white English woman and father to her baby and their joint children'.¹³⁶ I would add to this impressive list the ability (albeit at perhaps a basic level) to write in English, as discussed in section 4.2. These are not inconsiderable achievements for a man sold into slavery as a young boy, who had lived a life of servitude and frequent trauma. Despite all he had been through, Walter Shirley writes that Gronniosaw 'a good natural understanding' knowledge of the scriptures and 'an amiable and tender

¹³³ Stephen H. Gregg, *Empire and Identity*, p. 109.

¹³⁴ Julian S. Corbett, *England in the Seven Years' War Volume 2* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), p. 283.

¹³⁵ Henry Louis Gates Jr. and William L. Andrews, *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic*, p. 10.

¹³⁶ Vincent Caretta, *Unchained Voices*, p. 9.

disposition' and his obituary states that 'his last moments exhibited a cheerful serenity'.¹³⁷

It can only be hoped that James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, who is still an elusive figure, has been at least partially glimpsed as a result of this report, or that it is at least possible now to have placed him more definitively in the places he mentions in the narrative and have more of an understanding about those places and what these experiences may have been like for him. Indeed, it is possible that he is 'Luke Elloin' from the muster rolls. It is hoped that some of the ideas for further research mentioned here will help others in the future. For example, there seems to be a big question mark over when he stopped working for the Frelinghuysen brothers as the times do not quite add up here. Maybe accessing any Staten Island records and searching under some of the alternative names which have been suggested in this report may reveal more about him, as may a search of the records at Portsmouth, perhaps with the names of the ships arrived at Spithead discussed in section 7 (although, again, none seem to be obviously in existence). Cadiz may also hold records of troops which went there after the war, but inevitably they would be much more likely to have records of Spanish rather than English soldiers and sailors. Finally, there is the mystery of the individual listed as 'Prince: Negro' in the Massachusetts muster rolls which may be worthy of further attention. Ultimately, Gronniosaw remains an obscure figure. The over-riding conclusion gained during the course of this research is that it is perhaps in America, and more specifically the area and archives in and around New York, that more information may be found on him, particularly surrounding his initial enlistment with the 28th Regiment of Foot (and the name he enlisted under). The question is whether any of the records have survived.

¹³⁷ James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, *A Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars*, p. v.

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Appendix 1 – Newspapers referenced



Newspapers
referenced.zip

Appendix 2 – Muster roll scans



Muster roll scans.zip

Appendix 3 – Transcription of muster rolls



Transcription of 28th
Foot muster rolls - rar

Appendix 4 – Massachusetts muster rolls



Massachusetts
Muster Rolls.pdf