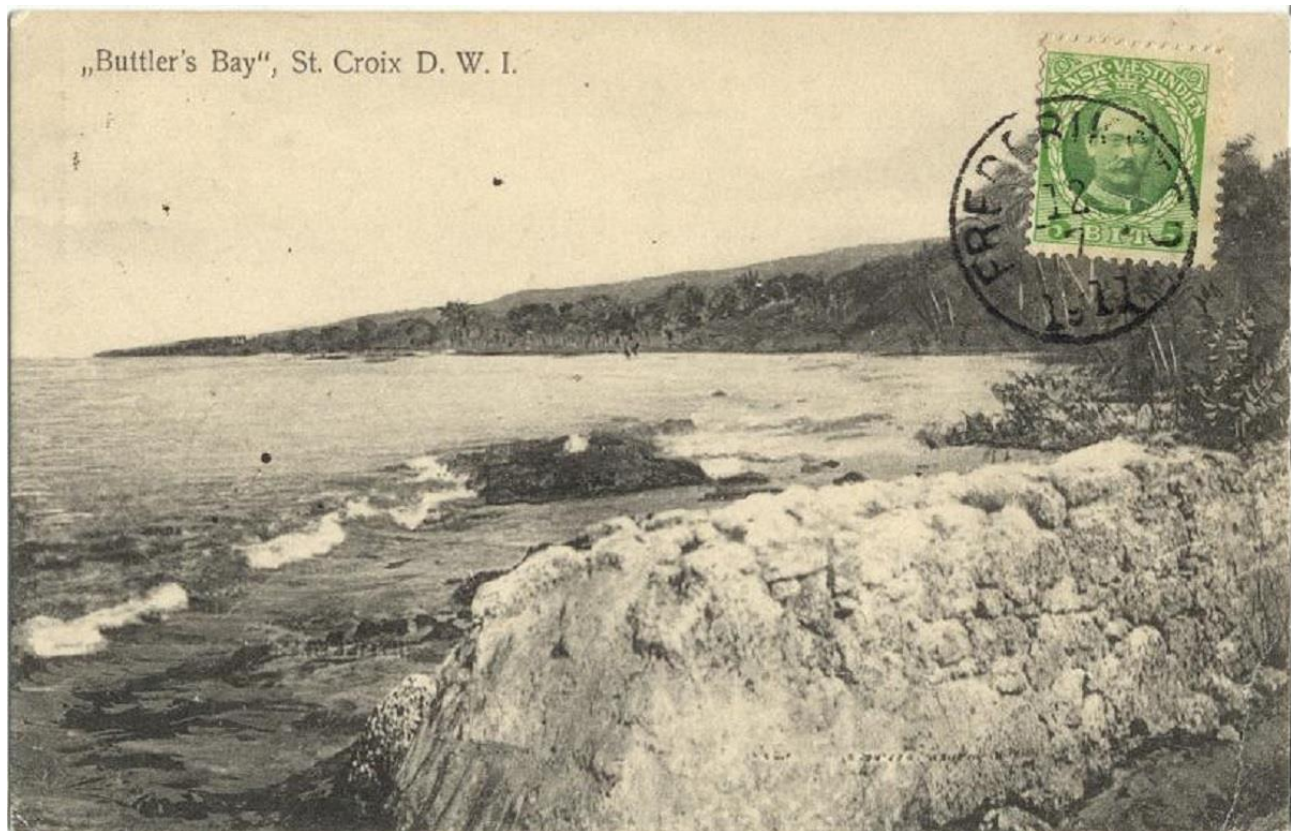


**BUTLERS BAY CASE 1844**

Source: Rigsarkivet, West Indian Local Archives, #2.28.101, No. 244/1844



**DOCUMENT 1**

Frederiksted Police Office, May 13, 1844

To His Excellency, Governor General Major, v. Scholten,

Lord Chamberlain, Knight of Order of the Dannebrog, Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor, Commander of the Order of Guelph, Knight of the Order pour le Merité Militaire, Governor-Genera

I hereby have the honor of submitting a report on the interrogation, as ordered by Your Excellency, of the Negro William belonging to Butlers Bay, in connection with said Negro's improper behavior towards both the Manager Culvin personally, on the estate, and towards Your Excellency by not complying with your order.

As the interrogation will show, the aforesaid Negro did not only, against all orders and without the Manager's permission, on Monday last use the Manager's saddle and bridle to ride to the neighboring

plantation for some nails. That same night, when, because of his self-willed behavior, the Manager wanted to arrest him in the sick house, he was also rude to him at his house. And when William later went into the yard, he touched the Manager and exhibited threatening behavior using his axe, which was there, against whoever attempted to arrest him. He subsequently left the estate and reported to Your Excellency, by whom he was sent home and ordered to apologize to Manager Culvin and to promise improved behavior in the future. This he has failed to do.

So one thing is clear: the William in question is guilty of flagrant insubordination and has demonstrated an example of a bad – albeit not dangerous – disposition; I therefore humbly ask permission of Your Excellency to have him punished by forced labor at the jail or, alternatively, by a sound thrashing.

Humbly

A. J. Andreson

## **DOCUMENT 2**

Andreas J. Andreson, Counselor

Knight of the Order of Dannebrog, Royal Appointee, Police Chief and Police Secretary in Frederiksted police district on St. Croix, America

Makes it known: that

On Friday 10, May 1844 in the morning at 11 a.m. Frederiksted Police Court was in session at house No. 54 in Dronningens Gade [Queens Street] of this town, and signed in the presence of the police inspector and the officer Dollman.

Upon which occasion a new case was brought before the court:

Nr. 8/1844 the Police vs. the Negro William belonging to Butlers Bay Estate.

The police chief produced His Excellency the Governor General's order and the enclosed letter from the administrator of the above-mentioned estate, W. Beech – and announced: that the Negro William belonging to Butlers Bay Estate had been sent here last night and, by request, moved to the Fort.

The produced order reads as follows:

To Court Counselor, Knight, Andreson, Chief of Police

When the Negro William belonging to Butlers Bay Estate a couple of days ago came to me and asked me to intervene on his behalf, I gave him a note and instructed him to apologize to the Manager and to behave. But as, according to the enclosed letter from the administrator of the estate [see Document 5 below], I have to presume that he did not in fact obey this injunction, I officially ask the court **counselor** in regard to

this matter to question the aforesaid William, who is accompanied by the slave Christian, and to subsequently inform me of the result and offer a recommendation.

Government House, St. Croix, May 9, 1844

P. v. Scholten

Frederiksted Police Court, May 10, 1844: Nr. 8/1844

Now the aforementioned Negro William was brought before the court. He is estimated to be around 26 years old. He explains that the Manager on Monday sent him to [Estate] Spratt Hall to borrow some nails, but when the Manager there could not spare any, the Manager of the accused ordered him to go to the plantations Northside or The Williams. The Manager was busy handing out allowances when he gave that order. When the accused asked if he could take a pony to get back quickly, the Manager did not answer him. The accused therefore took one and saddled it in view of the Manager and the Manager's assistant without either of those saying anything to him. However, he did not get any nails and rode back to the estate. When the accused came back the workers had already had lunch and had left to go to the fields, but the Manager was at home. He did not, however, say anything to the accused. But in the evening after work the Manager sent the Negro George to arrest the accused in the sick house, and as the accused did not know what he had done wrong, he went to the Manager's house and asked him why he was to be arrested. When the Manager said that it was because he had taken his saddle and bridle, the accused told him that he had asked him if he could take a pony, and that both he and the Manager's assistant had seen the accused saddle the horse. However, the Manager insisted that the accused was to be arrested on the estate, which the accused refused, demanding to be sent to the police station. And when the Manager ordered George to take hold of the accused and arrest him, the accused took an axe, which was lying on the workbench and threw it, at the same time telling George to beware "be aware of yourself", and then he ran off.

On Tuesday, the accused went to His Excellency the Governor General, who sent him home with a message to the Manager, which said that he was to apologize to the Manager. When the accused came home to Butlers Bay, he gave the message to the Manager. When the latter asked the accused whom it was from, he said that it was from the Governor General, and that he (the accused) was sorry that he had had to leave the estate, and that he hoped it would not happen again. "I am very sorry I had to leave the Estate and I hope it shall never happen again". When the Manager said he could not read the message, the accused said that it would be better to send for the assistant Manager, and then he left without saying anything more.

Yesterday the accused was sent to His Excellency the Governor General, who sent him to this police station with a note that he should be arrested here in Frederiksted because the accused had not obeyed his order. There was no other saddle at the plantation other the Manager's and the assistant Manager's, and the accused did not want to take the latter's saddle believing that the assistant Manager needed it. He offers no reason why he took the axe from the bench and threw it when the Manager ordered George to arrest him, and he says that he meant nothing by it. He further says that he is sorry about what has happened and asks for forgiveness and promises that it shall never happen again. Dismissed and remanded at the Fort.

The questioning was postponed and the court adjourned

Certified by

A. J. Andreson

**DOCUMENT 3**

On May 11, 1844, at 10 a.m. Frederiksted Police Court was in session, administered as above in the presence of the police inspector and the officer [Keisersteen].

Upon which occasion the ongoing interrogations were continued.

Now appeared before the court, having been summoned, one Owen Culvin, Manager at Butlers Bay Estate. He was informed of William's explanation, to which he answers as follows: It is not entirely true. The witness, first of all, did not see William saddle the pony. William entered the witness' house on Monday night greatly agitated and asked the witness who was to take him into town, and when the witness told him that he did not intend to send him into town but would have him arrested on the estate, he swore that he would not let himself be arrested. He made such a noise that the witness had to order him to leave the house. He then went to the workshop, got his axe from the bench, and swung it in the air, threatening both the witness and the person who came to take him away. Then he ran away. When William brought him the note from His Excellency the Governor General, he only said, as far as the witness remembers, that it was from the General. When the witness said that he could not read it, he [William] said that the witness had better send for the Assistant Manager, and then he left. Dismissed.

The Negro William belonging to Butlers Bay Estate now appeared before the court again. He was informed of Culvin's explanation, which he acknowledged. He does say, however, that he thought that the Manager had seen him saddle the horse, as he stood in the doorway to the cellar. He also says that he did speak to the Manager in the manner explained by the witness when he brought him the note from His Excellency. Finally he noted the following: He did indeed have the axe in his hand, as explained by the Manager, but he had no intention of using it. Dismissed and remanded at the Fort. The interrogation was postponed due to other urgent business, and the court was adjourned.

Certified by

A. J. Andreson

**DOCUMENT 4**

On Monday, May 15, 1844, at 8 o'clock in the morning the Police Court was in session at Butlers Bay Estate, supervised by the undersigned in the presence of the police inspector and the officer [Keisersteen], upon which occasion the interrogations in question were continued.

Before the court appeared Manager O. Culvin. He explains as follows: He could not read the note from His Excellency the Governor General as it was written in Danish, a language the witness does not understand. The Assistant Manager, however, understands it as he was born in Denmark. When William produced the note in question the Negress Sally Gates was present, but if she heard what he said, the witness does not know. Nobody else saw William swinging the axe other than the witness and George, nor was there anybody there on Monday night when William came into the house of the witness who heard what he said at that time. It is not customary, when a Negro is sent on an errand to a neighboring plantation, that he saddles the horse. He usually rides without a saddle, which William also ought to have done, particularly as he knew perfectly well that the witness had no other saddle. Dismissed.

The Negress Sally Gates, belonging to this estate, appeared before the court. She explains that she was present when William brought the note from His Excellency the Governor General on Wednesday morning. She heard him say that it was from the General, and when he said that he could not read it, William said that the Manager had better send for the assistant Manager, and then he left without saying anything more, as explained by William. Dismissed, as she knows nothing more of relevance to the case.

The Negro George, belonging to this estate, appeared before the court. He explained that on Monday night he was ordered by the Assistant Manager to arrest William in the sick house. When the witness told William this, he asked him why. To this the witness answered that he did not know. William asked the witness to let him go home to his house first, which the witness allowed without following him. William first went to his house, and when he came back, the witness saw him enter the Manager's house and he heard them speaking rather loudly. However, he did not hear what they said, other than that he heard the Manager order William to leave his house, which William did. He ran to the workbench, took his axe, which lay there, and when the Manager ordered the witness to take hold of him, he swung the axe in a threatening manner at the witness saying: "No, by God. Nobody will arrest me here tonight", whereupon he left with the axe in his hand. The witness was afraid of him and let him go. Dismissed.

Whereupon the inquiry was closed and the report to be sent to His Excellency the Governor General, and the court was adjourned.

Certified by

A. J. Andreson

In accordance with Frederiksted Jurisdiction Police Register and the produced document confirmed by hand and seal.

A. J. Andreson

**DOCUMENT 5**

La Grange, Wednesday Evening, 8 May 1844

To His Excellency Governor General von Scholten

Dear Sir

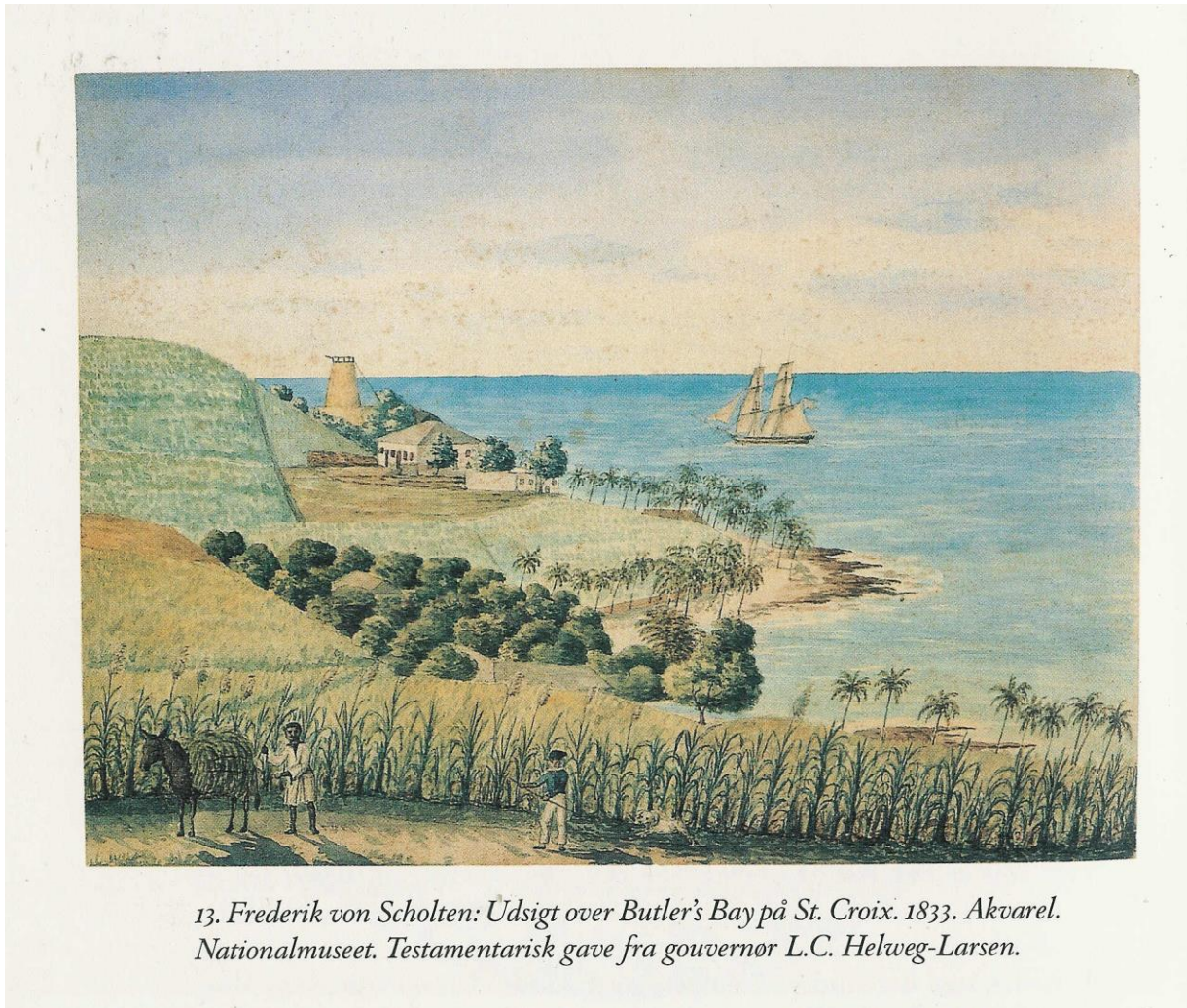
The Manager of Butlers Bay, having reported to me the conduct of the carpenter named Willy, and having informed me that your Excellency had directed that he should be sent up to you tomorrow, I take the liberty to write a few lines, respecting this man's behavior of late, and his character generally. Before the death of Major Sempill it was a rule established by him, and continued since, that the Tradesmen who did not throw grass should every morning early remove the fishing boat from its place of security down to the sea, and at sundown, or a little before, to haul it up again and secure it. This duty Willy has repeatedly neglected doing since the death of the Major, and after several warnings, the manager one evening ordered him locked up. I was on the Estate, and he came to me. I told him the manager must be obeyed; that he had neglected his duty, and he deserved punishment, but that I was sure if he begged, and promised to do better he would forgive him this time. He went from me and was forgiven. In many little ways he has shown himself indifferent about doing as he was directed, and no notice taken of it. He is addicted to drink, and when drunk is very insolent. When ordered to be locked up for presuming to take the manager's saddle & bridle ....., which was very much wanted at the time. Instead of begging or acknowledging himself to be wrong, he came down most insolently to the manager's house, and asked who was to go to the Fort with him, for no man should lock him up at the sick house. The manager ordered him out of his house, and he then took up his hatchet, and in a menacing manner declared no man should catch him to lock him up. At that time there was no one near ..., and the manager waited till the driver should come who he was expecting, but in the meantime Willy ran off & went up to your Excellency. When sober he is ordinarily civil, though at all times conceited, but, when at all in liquor, which happens now very often, he is overbearing and is just the man who will try how far he dare go with those put over him, and if unpunished will soon become unruly himself and will induce others to be bad too. Mr. Culvin is just a young man, but very cool, steady and attentive to his business, and as far as I can judge, kind and just to the people, and I feel confident will not commit himself. Willy since his return from Bassin has not offered the slightest apology, and I have no doubt believes that your Excellency has placed a severe censure on Mr. Culvin – his having recourse to a hatchet to defend himself from arrest I am sure your Excellency will regard as a serious and grave impropriety.

With much respect, I have the honor to be

Your Excellency's Obedient Servant

W. Beech





13. Frederik von Scholten: Udsigt over Butler's Bay på St. Croix. 1833. Akvarel.  
Nationalmuseet. Testamentarisk gave fra gouvernør L.C. Helweg-Larsen.