

**FIRST ORDERS OF
GOVERNOR IVERSEN
1672**

SOURCE: John P. Knox, A Historical Account of St. Thomas, W.I. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1852, reprint, St. Thomas: College of the Virgin Islands, 1966).

I, Jorgen Iversen, His Majesty the King of Denmark and Norway, and the West India Company's Governor of the Island of St. Thomas, find it right and proper to proclaim this ordinance for the honor of God, and the good of the country.

1. Every person who speaks Danish is bound to attend service every Sunday in Christian's fort when the drum beats, and on failure of doing so is to pay a fine of *twenty-five pounds of tobacco*.

2. Persons of all other nations are bound to attend service every Sunday afternoon at the same place, under the same penalty.

3. Every householder shall encourage his servants to be pious, and have morning and evening prayers; and if he allows them to do work on Sunday which might have been done on Saturday, or if he occupies servants of other people in his employ, he is, for every offence, to pay fifty pounds of tobacco.

4. For the defence and good of the country, every householder shall keep in his house for himself and every man in his service, a sword with belt, and a gun with sufficient powder and ball; and also each householder shall have two pounds of powder, or more if he pleases. Every person neglecting this duty shall pay one hundred pounds of tobacco.

5. When the drum beats (save on Sunday for service), every man shall let his neighbor know it, and all shall hold themselves in readiness to be at the fort with their arms, when a gun is fired at the flag-staff.

6. If (and God forbid it) an enemy should come unexpectedly, then the person who first observes it (if in the day) is to fire three shots, and inform his neighbor; who, in his turn, is to inform his neighbor, and so in succession, as quickly as possible. If at night, he is to fire one shot, and his neighbors are to do the same, and keep themselves ready for defence.

7. No person shall fire a gun after sunset, or make any noise, unless he observes some treachery from enemies, in which case all must attend armed at the fort. If in the day-time the drum is beaten, three shots fired, and the flag hoisted, it is the signal of alarm; if at night, and the owner of an estate fires a gun, it shall be an alarm; and if at night three shots are fired at the fort, every honorable warrior must go to the fort, armed, and there assist with life and blood.

8. Every Saturday afternoon when the drum beats, all persons who can use a gun shall meet at the parade ground fully armed. Any person absent, in favorable weather, shall forfeit every time twenty-five pounds of tobacco, which is to be paid at the end of the year for the benefit of those who meet regularly.

9. No person shall leave the island without permission from the governor, under penalty of five hundred pounds of tobacco; and the person who aids another to leave, shall pay one thousand pounds, and be responsible for the debts and other liabilities of the party leaving.

10. No man nor any in his house shall purchase of, or negotiate with, the people or white servants of any other person, without his permission, under a penalty of five hundred pounds of tobacco. And any one concealing the servant of another, is to pay one hundred pounds of tobacco for every twenty-four hours.

11. If any servant leaves his master, he shall not be harbored by any person; and if such servant is taken, he shall serve his master a day extra for each week of his absence, and a week for each month, and a month for each year, and a year for every seven years; and if it is his custom to run away, his master may put him in irons until he is broken of his bad habits.

12. Every man who enters the estate of another, and does any damage, shall pay for the first offence ten pounds of tobacco; for the second offence, twenty pounds; and for every subsequent offence, a double quantity.

13. No man must let his negro leave the estate after sunset, without good cause, that he may not go to his neighbor's estate, and do injury; and whoever at night observes a strange negro on his estate, shall catch him, and carry him in the morning to the fort, where he shall be punished.

14. Persons breaking the foregoing rules, are to be summoned to the fort, and the offence lawfully proved, and, if he is sentenced to pay any fine, it is to be divided into three parts, one for the king, one for the church, and one for the complainant.

Signed by Jorgen Iversen, governor, Erasmus Bladt, Charles Baggaert, Thomas Swain, Adrian De Vos, Anthony Salomons, Hans Paulsen, A. Begaret, Christian Wadts, and Joost von Campenhout.