

**DOCUMENTS RELATING TO  
THE QUESTION OF BOUNDARY  
BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND  
BRITISH GUAYANA, VOL. II**

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**COUNSEL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA**

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THE QUESTION OF BOUNDARY  
BETWEEN VENEZUELA AND  
BRITISH GUAYANA, VOL. II**



*U.S. Commission to investigate*

# DOCUMENTS

RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF BOUNDARY

BETWEEN

VENEZUELA AND BRITISH GUAYANA.

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SUBMITTED TO THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION  
BY THE COUNSEL OF THE GOVERN-  
MENT OF VENEZUELA.

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VOL. II.

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1895.

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**No. 5.**

(Translation.)

GENERAL ARCHIVER OF INDIES.—(SEVILLE.)

Stand 131.—Case 7.—Docket 17.

**Document No. 2.**

**1758.—Testimony in regard to two Hollanders imprisoned at the river Coyuny [Cuyuni] by the secret expedition, which went out from the City of Santo Tome de Guayana in the year 1758.**

(This document came with a letter No. 13, from the Commander of La Guayana, Don Manuel Centurion, dated on the 5th of April, 1770.)

Forming a part of the proceedings instituted in consequence of the claim made by the Minister of Holland, complaining of the conduct of the Orinoco Spaniards against the colony of Esquivo [Esequibo].

*1758.—Testimony taken in the case of the two Hollanders imprisoned at the river Cuyuni by the secret expeditionary party which left this city in the year 1758—Number 2.*

Señor DON FELIX FERRERAS,

DEAR SIR: The Caribs from the mountains having killed the captain and his companion of the Guayca Indian Station, who with their people formed there a population upon good principles and with hopes of making it a large establishment on the banks of the Supama river, within the Hauchica district, that settlement has now been lost on account of the above deaths. The Guaycas have therefore again taken to the woods, and as other folks of the said tribe there may be yet found in

the Missions of the Turuario, they are oftentimes clamorous for vengeance; but the Father of that Mission, with his usual prudence, has made me acquainted with the fact, and stopped them, explaining his very good reasons, and his fear of still worse misfortunes. I requested the Commander, Don Juan Valdes, to be kind enough to make himself available to Your Honor with his long practice and experience about these Indian affairs, in order to proceed, with proper directions, farther in the interior of the country, and investigate and discover the reason of that slaughter, and if possible to find out the names of the offenders. You have carried out the directions of the Commander and made the necessary inquiries and investigations contained in the information you rendered to me about your inquest. Having been as far as the Miamo, Carapo and Turuario Missions, and fully investigated the case about the middle of May of last year, it was found that they had carried away a wife to be sold at Esquivo. It was found out besides that the murderers were certain Caribs from the settlement of Tupuquen, who had rebelled in the year 1750, commanded by the Indian Cayarivare, who had been an Alcalde at Tupuquen and headed the ringleaders of said rebellion who were staying at the time in the interior of the Cuyuny river, at the mouth of the river Corumo, which disembogues in said river, and where a few Hollanders of the Esquivo Colony were purchasing Poytos Indians and carrying them away. The principal cause for their having killed the captain was on account of his settlement in the above mentioned site of Auchica, closing thus their way to the Usupama river, preventing their coming out without being discovered. By word of mouth as well as by letters from the Reverend Fathers, your Honor has been made acquainted with the permanence of the said Hollanders, in company with the Caribs at the mouth of the river Corumo, buying Indian slaves.

Now, by your letter of the 30th of May, your Honor kindly requests me to make an accurate statement, informing Your Honor whether the Hollanders remained at the same site or at any other parts around there, if they continue their trade in dry goods, hatchets, etc., and in what consists their means of defence; if they keep any artillery, and its caliber, so that

Your Honor, as commander *ad interim*, may send in proper time a suitable report to the Superior Government.

My answer, as well as that of all the Reverend Fathers of our Missions the nearest to the frontiers, and that of the Father Presidents of those of Miamo, Carapo, and Yuruario, will be that the Caribs of the Miamo very often have asked the Father of that place to allow them to go and arrest and kill those Hollanders at the mouth of the Corumo, who make ransoms for the purchase of Poytos, as they were informed by the Barinagotes of Yuruario. Very often they had heard that the Hollanders had threatened to set fire to the Mission settlement on account of being an obstruction in their way to Yuruario. The Caribs from Carapo reported to the Father that a negro who was at Cuyunyi went to the Mission and out of fear came back again. The Caribs have advised repeatedly that three white Hollanders and ten negroes, with many Caribs, were building houses and clearing the woods so as to establish settlements on the Cuyuni, but they do not know whether they had cannons. They have, however, large blunderbusses and many carbines. They likewise employ Aruaca Indians from Esquivo to fell very large trees, involving a great deal of work, which the Caribs avoided by running away. Of this case we have no more news than what has been conveyed to us by the Indians, such as has been represented to me by several other persons of the Mission. It is not unlikely that the Hollanders stopped their purchase of Poytos at Cuyuni, because they do not hesitate to continue doing this illicit trade in the neighborhood of the Missions. Your Honor knows well that Captain Bonalde, within a day's journey from the Missions, arrested a Hollander who used to buy Poytos or Indians, who were sold to them by the Caribs, and although he was not actually found in the Carib's house, three Indian Poytos were rescued and several machetes and bugles were found in his ranch and distributed among the Miamo Indians. We know, besides, that very often the Hollanders pass by Paraba, Caura, and the sources of the Carony. They do that every year, and there is no need to mention in particular these things, which Your Honor knows very well, after having resided for a long



time in these Missions, and travelled several times through these mountains. I have, however, to say that a large number of young Indians are carried every day to foreign colonies by Caribs and Hollanders. Taking into consideration that the Caribs keep an active trade for the purchase of Poytos, in exchange for iron tools, dry goods, knives, beads, looking glasses, fire-arms, and many other things, it will not be an exaggeration to estimate the yearly sale by the Caribs at more than 300 young Indians, killing the old ones, over 400, which are not salable to the Hollanders, because they run away, as we know they do, through some of the fugitives found in the Missions and recognized by the brand that a great many of them have painted on their bodies, as the Esquivo Company orders that all the Indian slaves be iron-branded, under penalty of forfeiture. I am not able to name all the tribes that are persecuted by the Caribs to be made slaves, save those that we have near our frontiers and those well known to the Barinogotos, Maomacos, Amarucotos, Camaracotos, and Añaos, Parabinas, Guaycas, etc. The Hollanders and Caribs, in order to reach these tribes, go to the Esquivo river for about 20 leagues, up to the point where there is a station. As there is a deep cataract on the way they take their boats by land, and resume the navigation up the river till they reach Rio Negro on the upper Esquivo, taking on the right side the river Aripamury, up to a place where there are a few small lagoons, after going up the Aripamury as far as possible, having to carry the boats for a distance through land for about half a league, where said lagoons form the river Mao, through which they meet Rio Negro, and going down through the latter on the left they reach the Amazonas, and going upwards enter the river Orinoco. I have made this statement so as to show that the Esquivo navigation was the way of communication of the Hollanders in their trip, both to Barinas and to Paraba at the sources of the Carony. As this is a long and tedious navigation from the Esquivo they enter Corony and Paraba, as all these rivers are in communication with the Esquivo, which receives the waters of the Coyuny, Yuruama, Supama, and Yuruario.

And this Yuruamata has many brooks by thickets of Moriche palm-trees that reach Carony. We know also that many Hollanders, besides those going up Paraba, remain to make purchases of Poytos among the tribes of Tacupo, Capi, and Paraman. These sites inland are about three and four days' journey from the last Missions. They are in the mountains and run as far as the plantations on the Esquivo, where there is no more level ground. In these places there are generally Hollanders who purchase from the Caribs the Poytos which are carried there and several horses, as was the case in the year 1749, when a large quantity of mules were purchased from them at the Esquivo, which is seldom the case, as there is no forage for keeping them around those mountains, where the purchasers have to lose them. Purchasers from the Esquivo come to these sites of Tacupo and Paraman by land, making the Indians carry, on their shoulders, the baskets containing the ransoms for Poytos, or else they go through Esquivo, Coyuny, and Corumo. This latter is a river that before joining the Coyuny carries the waters of the rivers Tucupo and Marenambo, all navigable, during the rainy season, for a short distance only, having no means of navigation to reach their sources for any longer than four or five days, enough for the enemy to penetrate conveniently through our land, and the traders in Poytos reach likewise the Tupuco tribe through the river Moruca, in which the Esquivo station is situated, or through the river Vaini, all of which come out near the mouths of the Orinoco, and follow their navigation up to the river Paraman, in which the Caribs are found in abundance at Moruca and Rainy. The traders in Poytos come likewise through the Orinoco as far as Aquire, Carapo, and although they have no fixed time to undertake their trips, they come and go always whenever they please, but it is known that for the most part of the year they keep about there, sometimes for as long as ten years, among the Caribs, keeping the trade in Poytos, and sending them to the Esquivo in charge of their agents, in quest of other ransoms to continue the purchase from the Caribs. At least they stay there from one to three years.

This trade in Poytos keeps the Caribs busy all the time, without any other attention than that of going and coming to resume the war, buy and kill the Indians of the above tribes, not only in the mountains but even those in the Missions, who can not be kept away from them. Many run away to meet them. It is easy to shut the doors to these enemies, so as to prevent their communications with the Hollanders and from joining Caribs from the Esquivo, Coyuny, Yuruario, Carony with those tribes, forming a people, which, if it can not be Spanish, ought to be of select Indians, which under ten soldiers at least keep continually at the mouth of the Corumo or the islands of Cununy, so as to close the entrance to the Turuama and Yuruario, and consequently succeed in stopping their communication and keeping them away from Corumo.

These people will command the respect of the Hollanders, preventing them from trading in Poytos at Tucupo, no matter how near it is. The Indians of said place will be soldiers, and it will be convenient to keep them away from enemies coming, through those rivers, and from the Caribs from Miamo, Curapo and Conury descending the Esquivo with Poytos. I think the Missions will be kept safe by cutting their communication with the Caribs from Conuny and Esquivo. If it is not closed, we may soon lose the pacific tribes which, if persecuted as they are now, will be carried away as slaves. It would be a sad thing to see these Indians carried away as slaves from the Yuruario. I believe the Hollanders are in earnest trying to buy Poytos. Therefore it is more difficult to convert the Caribs, while under the advice of the Hollanders, in order to avoid their staying in the place. Many go back to the mountains, and through the bad advice of the Dutch, ran away from the Missions in the year 1750, when they had four settlements rebelled, on account of having been told that if they settled in the villages the Spaniards would make them slaves, preventing them from going to war and trading with the Flemish.

I have to inform Your Honor likewise, that I have heard from Moyo N., that while he was coming from Esquivo to become a Christian here, after he was baptized, he told me that he had brought many papers from Esquivo, among them a