

The Welcoming Arms

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. THOMAS HISTORICAL TRUST

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of Office & Museum:

Roosevelt Park West

St. Thomas

U.S. Virgin Islands



Members of the Board Tour Fort Christian

The Trust has been actively trying to assist in the reopening of one of St. Thomas' most important historical landmarks. Fort Christian has been under renovations since 2005 and has been mired in a dispute between the Virgin Islands Government and the contractor, Tip Top Construction. A majority of the renovations have taken place as was evident on a special tour that the Trust took in February. But there is much that needs to be done in order to get it reopen for the public to visit.

The Trust has been working with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to try and at least remove the outdated signage (stating that it will reopen in 2006) and the fencing that surrounds the perimeter. Meetings have taken place with Public Works, the Governor, SHPO and the contractor in an effort to move along the stalled negotiations. Funding is available to finish the renovations once the dispute has been settled.

Our Mission Statement...

To identify, protect & preserve the historical identity, structures and sites & cultural heritage of St. Thomas through education, advocacy and promotion.



Letter from the President

Dear Fellow Trust Members:

I am always happy to report as to what has been going on in the Trust. Things are moving along rather nicely these days.

Our Hassel Island project has been moving ahead under the direction of Charles Consolvo and his great committee. A vegetation plan for the Railway is in progress with an intern we have teamed up with the National Park Service to work on the plan.

Our Step Street project is well on the way with several tours being done, steps adopted and work beginning. Trevor Milner has done a great job with this committee.

We now have a Fort Christian Task Force to “Free the Fort”. New board member Steve Bornn is on top of all activity and he assures us he will do all that is needed to get it reopened.

The museum/store is now opened on a regular basis thanks to the leadership of Vice President Bernice Turnbull. As usual she always is in need for more volunteers.

Once again, thanks for your support!!

Ronnie
Ronnie Lockhart
President



Many Thanks

All of us who are involved with the St Thomas Historical Trust, pause to say “many thanks” to Trevor Milner who is leaving our shores, but hopes to be back. Trevor has played an active role in the development of the “Trust”. He has been one of the directors; an organizer and volunteer for the museum; and chairperson of the Step Street committee. We wish him well in his future endeavors and look forward to working with him when he returns to St Thomas.



Kongens Quarter Step Streets Tour

January 16th, 2011

A group of about 68 people took the tour organized by The Trust. With Myron Jackson as their guide the group walked along Hospital Gade where they took the steps next to J Antonio Jarvis School. They moved on through a free gang to Dronningens Gade and up to the Blackbeards Hill area. Sean Krigger talked about the streets at the top of the hill and Phillip Sturm came to talk about the area around Haagensen House. He was involved in its recent renovation by Michael Ball. John Woods met the group at the bottom of 99 steps to discuss his project at Quarters B. The tour then went to see the First Lady's Garden and for a surprise visit to see the Governor's office. It was a great tour!



Virgin Island Artists Lecture

January 30th, 2011

VI Artists including Shansi Miller, Greg Samuels, John Chinery, & Ray Miles came to the VI Council of the Arts to discuss their artwork of historic scenes. 38 people attended the lecture on the Sunday afternoon.

Photos by Damon Rumsch



Learning More About Past Living Habits - *Artifacts from Hassel Island*

Written by Charles Consolvo

One of the primary means of understanding the lives of the various groups that at different times have occupied Hassel Island is through an interpretation of the artifacts they left behind, primarily fragments of ceramics and pottery, glass, metal and faunal remains. The ceramics and pottery can provide information on cooking and dining customs. The glass artifacts reveal information about beverage consumption, the metal can reflect building methods, attire (buttons), and sometimes activities related to occupations. Finally, the faunal remains can provide information about dietary habits. All but the faunal artifacts can also help to define a range of dates for their use, as many of them can be assigned to specific dates of production.

The collection, plotting, cleaning, identifying and cataloging of these artifacts is a time-consuming but essential process if we are to gain an understanding of the lives of the occupants, an understanding that is rarely available from any documentary sources. This is one of the major reasons that we ask visitors to Hassel Island to never pick up any of the artifacts scattered around the island. Their loss or even re-positioning them can lead to gaps in our understanding, in addition to being a violation of the law.

To date, the Virgin Islands National Park Service has collected, cleaned, identified, and catalogued thousands of artifacts from Hassel Island, from an Arawak/Taino zemi, to World War II era brass cartridges. They represent a veritable gold mine of information waiting to be interpreted, and for some of them, displayed in a museum that we hope will eventually be constructed on the island.

A surface collection of artifacts was made around the barracks area of the soldiers stationed on Hassel Island during the British occupation from 1801 to 1815. The types of artifacts collected are shown here.



Hassel Island Survey done by Danish Authorities

ARTIFACTS FROM HASSEL ISLAND BARRACKS SITE

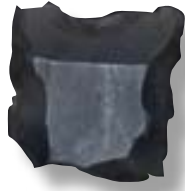
	Number	% of Total
CERAMIC	151	50%
GLASS	84	38%
FAUNAL	39	13%
METAL	10	3%
PIPE	12	4%
LITHIC	2	1%
SHELL	2	1%
TOTAL	300	

Some of these artifacts are illustrated and described here. The first is a brass buckle, probably from a military uniform, possibly for a cartridge belt.



FS8/23 Brass buckle. Author's photograph

Hopefully in the near future, additional analysis will be undertaken to further understand the lives of the peoples that lived and worked on Hassel Island.



FS3/12. Gun flint, K. Donohue Photograph

The next is a gun flint. It has a groove in the leading edge, indicating that it may have been used as a fire starter. It would not be suitable for use in a musket, as a reasonably smooth striking edge is required to produce good sparking action against the steel of a flintlock. It is of an approximate size (27mm) to have been issued for the “Brown Bess” musket. Although it is not possible to determine the pattern of the musket, it would most likely be the so-called India Pattern musket accepted by the Board of Ordnance in 1795. Apparently more than 3 million of these muskets were produced.



FS30/1 Probable case bottle lip. Author's photograph

Another fragment, a bottle lip, FS30/1 above, is probably from a small “case gin bottle” which was produced from the early 18th century until the middle of the 19th century, although it did not necessarily contain only gin



FS36/1 Scalloped shell edge plate fragment with barley border. Author's photograph

Shown above is a fragment of a pearlware plate in what was known as the shell edge pattern. By 1800, pearlware, which was introduced by Wedgwood in 1780, with a molded shell edge pattern in blue or green, had become the most popular pattern in the British army.

Clay pipe fragments are common on colonial sites, and can frequently be dated by their stem hole size and maker's marks. The one shown below dates to the early 19th century, and unusually for an English site, has what is probably a Dutch mark. The pipes reflect an indulgence in tobacco smoking as a leisure activity, probably while enjoying some “demon rum”.



FS38/4 Heel mark of probable Dutch clay pipe. Author's photograph

The pipe below was found near the Leprosarium on the north-west end of Hassel Island.



The remarkably preserved raised designs on the bowl represent a paddle wheel steamship on one side and an early steam locomotive on the other. The locomotive design is about 1815 or later,



FS34/1, Base of teapot, marked “Spodes New Fayence” on bottom. Author's photograph

Finally, there is the base of a teapot. Tea drinking was almost as popular as rum with the British Army, and many of the ceramic fragments found around the barracks area can be identified as parts of teacups.

Hassel Island

COWELL'S BATTERY/SIGNAL
STATION

PRINCE FREDRIK'S
BATTERY

BARRACKS AREA

(site where artifacts were collected)

DOCK

OFFICER'S
QUARTERS/SMITHY

SHIPLEY'S
BATTERY

ROYAL MAIL
STEAM PACKET
COMPANY
HEADQUARTERS

CREQUE MARINE
RAILWAY



Hassel Island Task Force Report

Much progress has been made since our last report in December.

- Funded by the St. Thomas Historical Trust, the Virgin Islands National Park Service (VINPS) has hired an intern through the Student Conservation Association. Sarah Dylla, with extensive experience in modeling historical sites, is busy working on the cultural landscape plan for Creque Marine Railway which we hope to have completed by June. We are also hoping she can fit in the development of a trail plan for Hassel Island.
- The containers to shelter the Bobcat and other equipment, donated by the Friends of the National Park, are in place and will shortly have electrical service connected.
- The equipment and materials for beginning the preservation of the old steam machinery are on hand, and the first efforts should start by the end of March.
- The old WAPA transformers have been removed, and the asbestos removal is waiting on final contract approval by VINPS.
- The interpretive signs for Creque Marine Railway have been received, and will be put in place when the landscaping is begun.
- At long last, we are ready to move the vernacular Frenchtown house donated to the Trust to Hassel Island in March.
- The new trail to Shipley's Battery is completed, and the brush has been treated.
- The iron cistern behind the Head House has been repaired, thanks to the efforts of Alan Wentworth of Sea Tow, and a contract to place a roof on it will be let shortly. We will have water for irrigation and cleaning all the way to the machinery area.

Contracts have been awarded for the engineering study of Prince Frederik's Battery and the underwater survey, and the research on the Battery and the British ship involved in the battle have been completed, all funded by the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service. The Trust has conducted several tours on Hassel Island: for local high school students from the Seventh Day Adventist School; for members of the Sunrise Rotary (who collected and removed more than 30 bags of trash from the shoreline around Creque Marine Railway); for some major donors; and most recently for the Director of the National Park Service, Mr. Jonathon Jarvis, from Washington, D.C..

If you are interested in a tour, please contact the Trust's executive director, Debbie Avery at 774-5541. Cost is \$6 per person for transportation plus \$50 as a contribution to the Hassel Island Fund.



On February 11, the Trust hosted a tour of Hassel Island for some supporters. The tour included Creque Marine Railway, Careening Cove and the Garrison House and Prince Frederik's Battery on the southeastern point of Hassel Island.

*from left to right:
Steve Morton, Carla Cox, Felippo Casinelli and Jean Kim*

Show your support for historical preservation in the Virgin Islands with

ST. THOMAS HISTORICAL TRUST LICENSE PLATES



These attractive plates are based on Fritz Melby's 1850 painting of St. Thomas harbor. Through your contribution, and every time you drive your car, you'll show your support for the Trust. Profits from the sale of these license plates will allow the St. Thomas Historical Trust to pursue its mission:

To identify, protect and preserve the historical identity, structures and sites, and cultural heritage of St. Thomas through education, advocacy and promotion.

Please complete this form and mail, email, fax or bring by the Trust Office along with your check or credit card information.

Plates can be legally registered at the VI Motor Vehicle Bureau.

The MVB will charge a one-time \$10 plate transfer fee for Numbered Series Plates and a yearly \$30 fee for Personalized Plates.

Allow 3-6 weeks for delivery. Please use one order form for each set of plates. *Make check or money order payable to St. Thomas Historical Trust.*

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE/ZIP _____

DAY PHONE: _____ EVENING: _____

EMAIL: _____

- I will register my plates in the Virgin Islands
- I am purchasing these plates as souvenirs
- I am a MEMBER I am a NON-MEMBER
- I want to become a member of the St. Thomas Historical Trust.** Fill out information on form and send with check or money order payable to: St. Thomas Historical Trust.

Membership Fees are (check one):

- Student (under 21) \$10.00 Individual \$25.00 Family \$50.00
- Business \$75.00 Sponsor \$100 Benefactor \$250 Patron \$500.00

Payment Date: _____ Check # _____ Amt _____
 Cash

Credit Card: Mastercard Visa Discover Card

Number: _____ Exp: _____ Sec: _____

- Send me a set of Numbered Series Plates. Numbered plates commence with H for Historical. \$45 for Trust members and \$50 for non-members, plus \$6.00 for shipping and handling.

Total: \$51 for members or \$56 for non-members

- Send me a set of Personalized Plates. Select up to seven (7) characters and numbers only. No symbols allowed except for a dash ("-"). No offensive wording is allowed. Leave a blank to indicate a space. \$90 for Trust members or \$100 for non-members, plus \$6.00 for shipping and handling.

Total: \$96 for members or \$106 for non-members.

- Send me a set of Plates with a number between 1-10. Total: \$1000.

1st Choice: _____
2nd Choice: _____
3rd Choice: _____

St. Thomas Historical Trust 2011 Upcoming Events

April 10th

Lecture by Betsey Rezende
 The Early Years of the 20th Century
 VI Council on the Arts Gallery
 Norre Gade in the old François Building
 across from Atty Bornn's Office
 at 3pm. Donations appreciated.

April 17th

Kronprindsens Quarter Step Street Tour
 Meet at 2:30 pm
 to leave by 3pm for a tour into Savan,
 There is parking near the USO
 Call the Trust office at 774-5541 to RSVP.
 Donations will be accepted.

May 26th

Chamber of Commerce After Hours
 hosted by the St Thomas Historical Trust
 and co-sponsored by Atty's Moore, Dodson
 & Russell PPC and Atty Paul Hoffman.
 There will be "old time" music
 and good food.
 5:30pm in Roosevelt Park.

May 2011

Lecture: The Sprauve's
 Elroy & Gilbert Sprauve

June 2011

Lecture: Virgin Islands Music
 Adams Navy Band
 Milo & The Kings
 Jeppesen & his Band of Renown

July 2011

Lecture: Frenchtown
 Anne Marie Danet, Mr. Richardson
 Valerie Danet

November 2011

Lecture: Architectural Restoration
 John Woods AIA, Sean Krigger SHPO, Robert
 DeJongh AIA

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