

The Welcoming Arms

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. THOMAS HISTORICAL TRUST

May 2014



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@STT_Historical



President's Letter

Hello fellow Trusters!

A short note to let you know how things are going.

The Trust has been overflowing with guests to our museum. And the tours that we offer, the Downtown Historic Walking Tour and the Hassel Island Hiking Tour have been very popular and have been occurring frequently.

We are still in the process of submitting our Fort Christian Tour plans to DPNR and are very anxious to be able to show our visitors the interior of the Fort when on our Historic Walking tour. It has been rumored that Public Works may be in the process of starting the second phase of the Fort renovations. Hopefully these repairs will not interfere with our access to the Fort or take as long as phase one!

Speaking of the Fort, we have several Founding Members of the newly formed Fort Project. Their names can be found on page 00. These donations will go exclusively to Fort renovations and improvements that the Trust decides are needed. We thank these generous individuals for kicking off the Fort Project and hope that some more of you out there would be willing to join the effort.

The Lady in Red Art Show that took place in February was a huge success and raised a substantial amount of funds that will also go towards the Fort Project. A million thanks to Shansi Miller for the incredible amount of work that she put into this project donating her time, all the items for sale and all the sales to the Trust. Priscilla Hintz worked with Shansi to curate the show and we thank her as well. Her organization of the show was professional and enhanced Shansi's artwork to make it more successful than anticipated.

Your President,

Ronnie

Ronnie Lockhart

Our Mission Statement...

To identify, protect and preserve the history, sites and culture of St. Thomas.

A History of Fort Christian

Reprinted here with permission from Ulla Lunn.

Source: <http://den-vestindiske-arv.dk>

Researched by Ulla Lunn, George Tyson and Louise Sebro

The fort in Charlotte Amalie bears the name Fort Christian after Christian V. It was built between 1672 and 1678 on a peninsula with a rocky outcrop in the bay and is the first and largest fort in the islands.

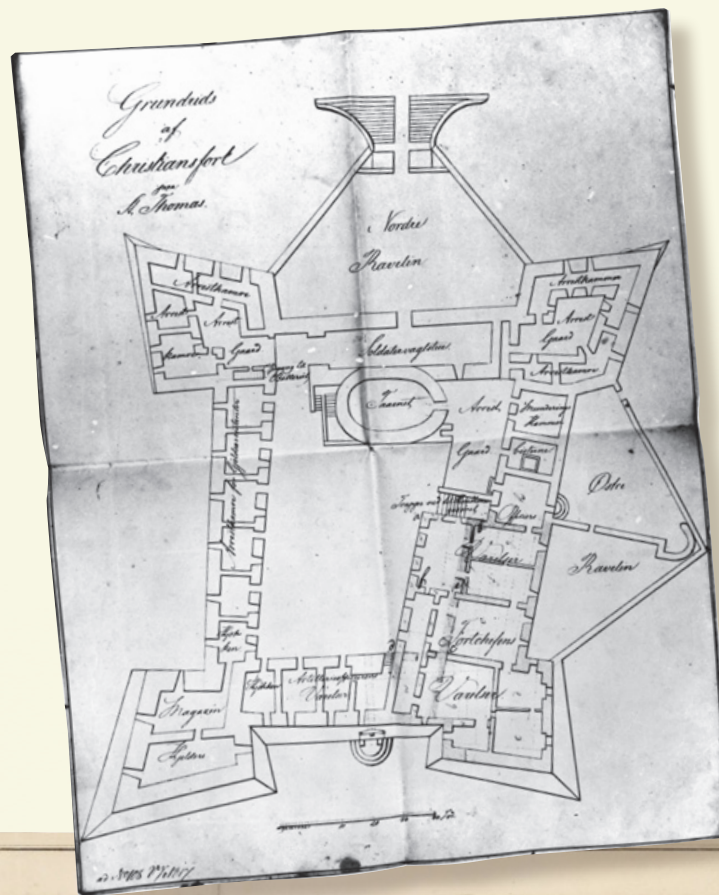
The Danes had been attempting to take over St. Thomas for some years, but in 1672 the West India and Guinea Company sent out the experienced Caribbean merchant Jørgen Iversen Dyppel to establish the colony. His account book for the first year tells us quite a bit about the construction and economy of the fort. All prices are given in barrels of sugar. The total cost amounted to 32,336 barrels of sugar, which the Company therefore had to produce on its plantations to meet the cost of construction.

First a highly qualified master mason had to be found to take charge. Dyppel bought an experienced mason, the mulatto Simon Lamar, who could gain his personal freedom if he worked for the Company for seven years.

(Source: Account books 1672 – 1680, Danish National Archives)

The tall, meter-thick walls are built partly in stone and stand as a massive extension of the bedrock, supported by large buttresses

built of brick, which was sailed over as ballast in the hulls of the ships. The fort also has walls built of the random rubble known locally as blue bit. The bricks needed were provided by 5-6 ships sailing with them as ballast. They were similar to Flensburg bricks, a smaller type widely used in



Holland, Germany and Schleswig-Holstein. Local rain-forest timber like mahogany and the dark, heavy wood lignum vitae ('wood of life') was used for lintels above doors and windows, for shutters and for other elements of the building that needed wood.

The list lacks accounts for the lime mortar used for building the walls and rendering. The lime was probably produced on the island by burning coral and shells in a lime kiln, slaking it with water and mixing it with sand. Only 1520 roof tiles are accounted for, and they would hardly have covered more than the central building, known as Tryg-borg (safe castle), in the middle of the fort. Dyppel purchased wooden laths for the roof shingles, but noted that in his view the barrel staves for coopering could also be used instead of roof shingles. Nails are a relatively large item in the accounts. At this time nails were forged by hand, and in such large quantities they had to

be imported, since local blacksmiths could not cope with the demand.

When Jørgen Iversen Dyppel sailed from Copenhagen, he had 190 people on board, 62 of them convicts. When the ships berthed at St. Thomas, 81 had died during the voyage, and another 72 died of the endemic fever within six months. Iversen's group, which had been sent to colonize St. Thomas, was now reduced to 37. However, this number was soon supplemented by incoming planters from nearby English and Dutch islands.

The main task was to build Fort Christian, which was erected between 1672 and 1678. In the same period Iversen Dyppel acquired several enslaved Africans for the Company; their number varied as a result of deaths, runaways and re-sales. In 1680 the Company had 175 enslaved Africans. Some worked on the Company plantation, but many must have worked on the construction of the fort.

In the early colonial period it was not unusual for the work force to be contracted to work for the Company and subsequently win their freedom and the opportunity to establish themselves in the colony. These people were called indentured servants. Many poor European workers came to the West Indies on such contracts. They worked on plantations, and sometimes as soldiers or sailors. West Indians of African, native or mixed ancestry could be engaged on such terms. In this pioneering era slavery was not the only source of labour, but this changed during the first half of the 1700s, when the number of indentured servs decreased while the number of slaves increased.

In April 1672 Iversen Dyppel bought a female slave called Dona. In August she was traded for the master bricklayer, Simon Lamar, who was described as a "mulatto" born on the Dutch island of St. Eustatius, from which many residents of St. Thomas came. Simon Lamar



An anonymous water color painting portrays St. Thomas sometime between 1700 to 1790. You can see the Trygborg tower in the middle of the fort.

The tower or 'safe castle' is where the Governor, the pastor and the staff could seek protection during attacks.



had to work for seven years on the fort for the Company. This fact suggests that he was meant to return to his former owner when the building was finished. The owner may have been a Frenchman, Robert Lamar, who had settled on St. Thomas. In the late 1680s the primary sources show that Simon Lamar owned a

plantation and a slave. He had a wife called Ebbonetie Bokollj, probably born on Nevis, a British Caribbean island, and they both belonged to the Reformed Church. Nevertheless, on 19th July 1691 a boy named Martin, the son of Simon Lamar and “Epe Nejns”, was baptized in the Lutheran church. Whether he had

a second wife or this was a changed form of her name is not known, but by that time Simon Lamar’s family was living as freed Afro Caribbeans. On his departure from the islands in 1680, Jørgen Iversen Dyppel reported that the fort had been finished. It consisted of four high bastions in a star shape with a tall tower in the middle called Trygborg, ‘the safe castle’, where the Governor, the pastor and the staff could seek protection during attacks. Around the fort a palisade of cactus had been planted to make it more impregnable. In 1678 the fort was threatened by the French from St. Croix, but it was not taken. In the fort there were a chapel, a kitchen, guardrooms, a central office and prison cells. The pantry, the stores, the clerks’ offices and the soldiers’ dormitories show that the fort was a small community in itself, where all the functions

were covered. Homes for high and low, and work functions of many kinds were gathered within the walls. Storehouses were important – not only because of the risk of siege, but because many foods were imported from Europe and would keep in the cool rooms.

The core of the fortifications of Charlotte Amalie was Fort Christian, but they also included watchtowers and armoured outposts on the hills and points around the natural harbour. The fort was also there as protection against pirates, who had previously had a safe natural harbour in the bay.

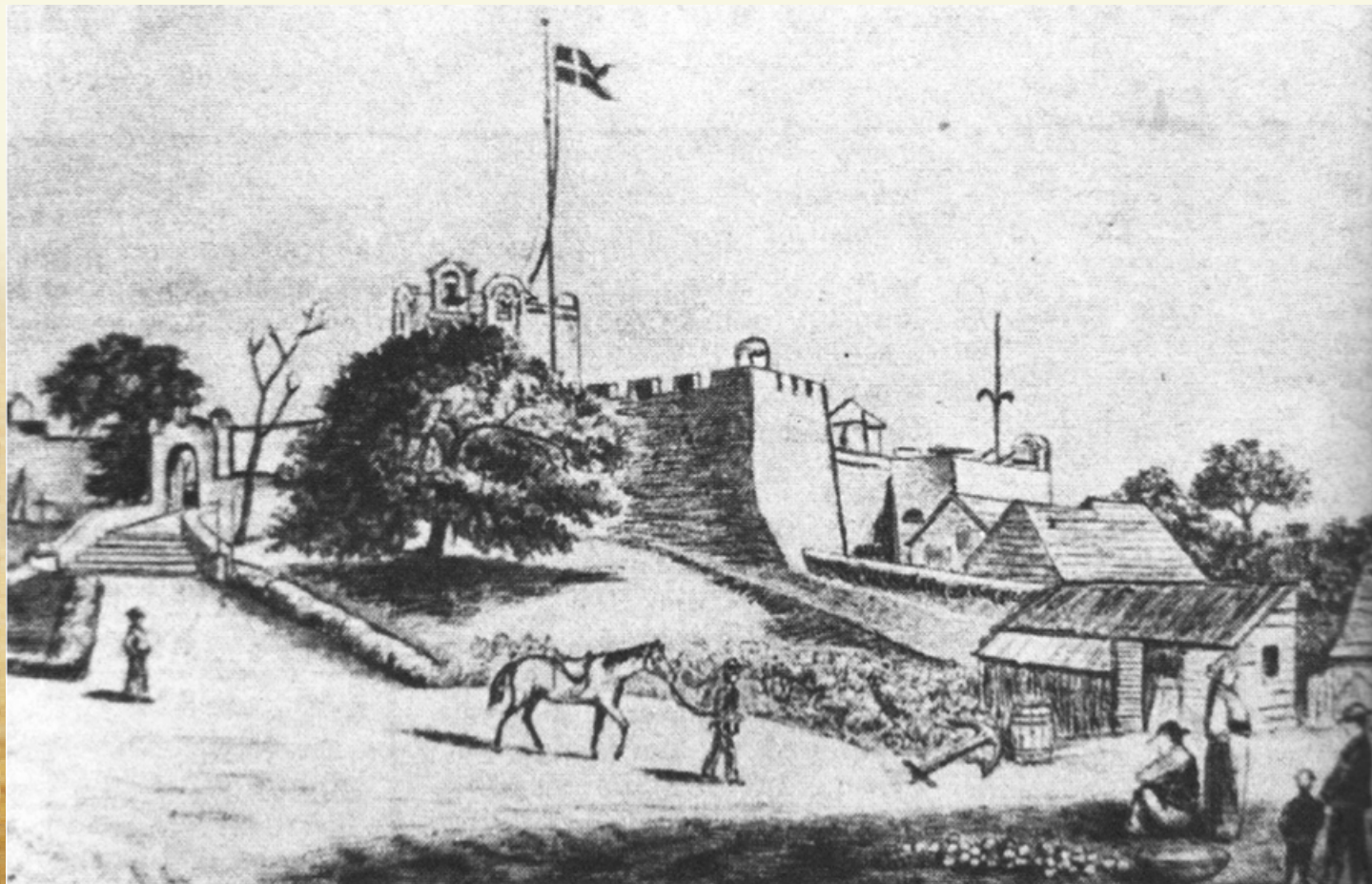
Dyppel’s fate

As the first Governor, Jørgen Iversen Dyppel was responsible for the foundation of the colony, including the work force, construction, the parcelling-out of plantations and the production of goods to be sent home to Denmark. He was also responsible for justice and the enforcement of strict laws and punishments, as well as the religious education of the planter community and the enslaved Africans. Many of the helpers sent out there died, so Dyppel was even in charge of the church services and more. He was a harsh, at times even a sadistic man, something he regrets in letters and reports. In time he too fell ill and wanted to be relieved from the service. In 1680 he went home to Denmark to recuperate and be with his wife and children.

Nicolai Esmi, who took over after Iversen Dyppel, had 30 years’ experience of the West Indies, including Jamaica and Tortola. In Iversen Dyppel’s account books it is indicated that supplies were purchased by Esmi, who presumably lived on St.

Thank You to Our FOUNDING FRIENDS OF THE FORT

- Martin Stokes
- Tom and Kris Brunt
- Joanne Bozzuto
- Christopher Curreri
- F. D. Apple
- Ginger & James Martin
- Michael and Susan Hancock
- Alliance Aviation Fuels, Michael Hancock
- Michael Kempen
- Deborah Murphy, Seattle Wa.



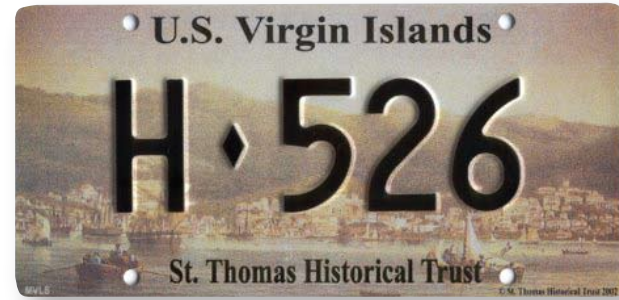
Thomas during Dyppel’s tenure. However, Esmi did not meet the Company’s requirements and expectations. After a few years the Company persuaded Dyppel to go back to the West Indies, an offer he accepted. His ship was struck by rough weather and the crew had to live on starvation rations. After a few months the voyage ended in a disastrous mutiny. Dyppel was thrown overboard and the mutineers headed home, but the ship ran aground and sank at Carlstad in Sweden. All aboard were rescued,

but the mutineers were taken before a judge and executed. The wreck of the ship Havmanden (The Mermaid) has been investigated by Bohuslän Museum. It was found on the sea bed still loaded with 10,000 Flensburg bricks, neatly stacked as ballast.



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.

COMPLETE THIS FORM AND MAIL WITH YOUR CHECK OR MONEY ORDER

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.

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- 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

Application Date: _____

Payment Date: _____ Check # _____ Amt _____
 Cash

ST. THOMAS HISTORICAL TRUST, P.O. Box 6707, St. Thomas, VI 00804

Telephone : (340) 774-5541 • (340) 642-4074 • Fax (340) 774-0180 • Email: Secretary@StThomasHistoricalTrust.org

- 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.

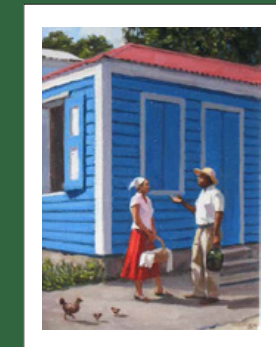
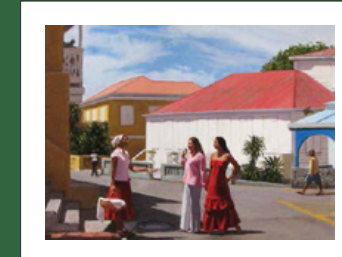
- Send me a set of Plates with a number between 1-10. Total: \$1000.

1st Choice: _____

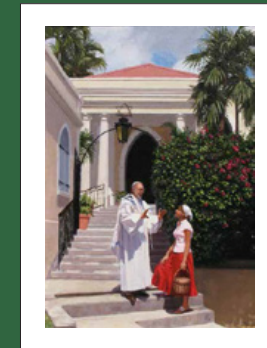
2nd Choice: _____

3rd Choice: _____

Help Support the St. Thomas Historical Trust by Purchasing our Note Cards



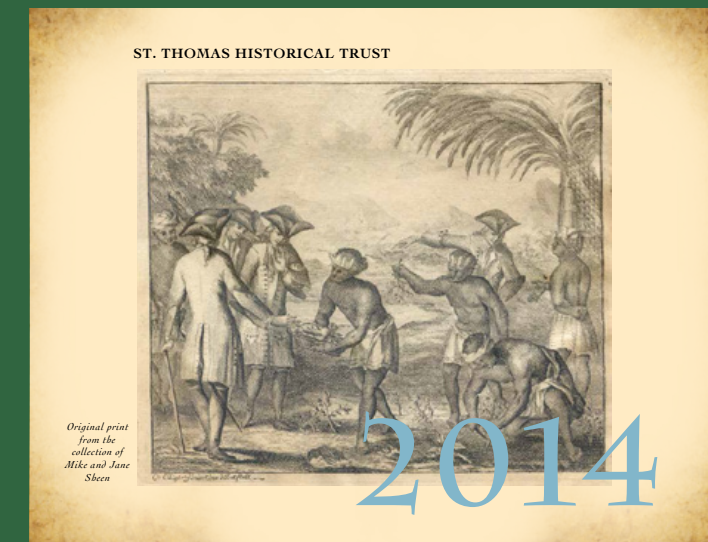
"Lady in Red" painting series images donated by Shansi Miller



and 2014 Calendars

Note Cards
\$15

Calendars
\$10



Call the Trust Office at 774-5541



Adelita Cancryn students go on the Hassel Island Tour.



Doc leading the Adelita Cancryn Students on a Hassel Island Tour.



Historic walking tour led by Michael and Fuller Campbell



The Lady In Red Art Show - February 2014



Masons working on Prince Frederiks Battery to cap walls and replace missing bricks and mortar.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
Please consider lending us a helping hand.

Upcoming Events:
**Hassel Island Tours
 & Historical Walking Tours**
 Call the Trust Office at 774-5541 for next tour date.

Saturday, May 24th
2nd Annual Coal Pot Cook Of
 on the Lawn of Fort Christian
 Noon until 4pm
 Dishes will be judged - Winners announced at 3:30pm

Every Saturday, June 14th - August 16th
Chair Caning Class Series
 Learn the art of chair caning. Supplies will be provided.
 Call the Trust to sign up for the series.

Saturday, June 7th
Hassel Island Clean Up
 Have a chance to see Hassel Island while helping in our clean up effort. Snacks and drinks will be provided.