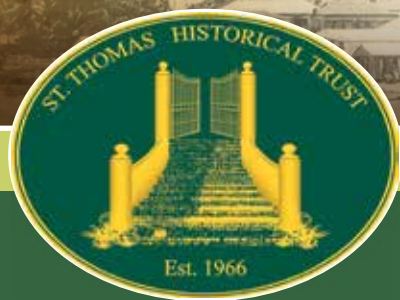


The Welcoming Arms

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. THOMAS HISTORICAL TRUST

March 2018



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Malcolm Schweizer
President

To our valued Trust Members & Friends,

After our island's the two catastrophic hurricanes, we hope each of you, and the places you love here, stood strong and fared well.

We at the St. Thomas Historical Trust share your commitment and concern for the resilience of our island. And while the devastation here was extensive, there's good news to be able to report to our membership, too.

First — we have re-opened the doors to our small museum in town, after a massive clean-up effort from the mud- and seawater-flooding. We're proud to say that our museum is the only non-retail downtown "activity/attraction" open for island visitors since November 10, the day the first cruiseship returned to St. Thomas!

We have started up a new series of monthly, Sunday afternoon guided walking tours of Charlotte Amalie. Downtown's many historic buildings — ranging from the Fort (circa 1625) to the churches, meeting halls, homes, parks and alleyways — are centuries-old testaments of the island's ambitious, diverse settlement and vibrant culture.

We share your interest and concern in these buildings' survival and well-being. How did these fare in our recent Category-5 hurricanes? To find out, join our next free town tour led by preservation expert Felipe Ayala, (*see more, page 3*).

You can also learn the condition of many of downtown's significant structures from a capsule report (*see pages 4 and 5*) to our membership.

After seeing many of you at our recent fundraiser on March 2, I can say with confidence that the Trust is already participating in the restoration of the island's legacy of renewal, and sharing our membership's positive and energetic spirit -- after these last, challenging months!

Best regards,

Malcolm Schweitzer and the Board of Trustees



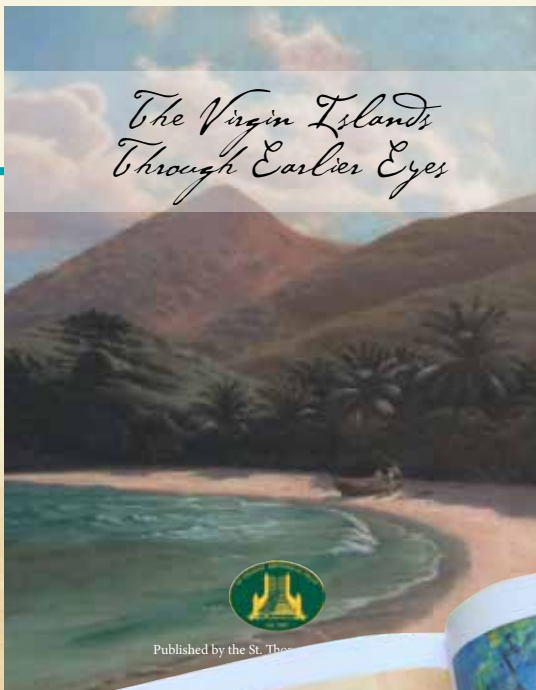
Our Mission Statement...

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

Our First Fundraiser of the Year was called “Exceptional... extraordinary!”

On Friday evening, March 2, Trust Board member Felipe Ayala opened his home to Trust members. On view – for the first time to the public – was his extensive private collection of West Indian and Caribbean antique wood furnishings. “Breathtaking,” was the comment most-often heard, as guests explored the beautifully furnished house. Felipe’s eye for beauty and provenance extends to art also, and his collection includes countless original Caribbean and regional artworks; their vibrant images animate every wall of his stately home.

Over 50 Trust members attended the gala fundraising evening. Spirits were high as wine flowed, a banquet of food was served, and a full moon rose over the lantern-lit gardens. A festive evening indeed!



A Brand-new “Window to the Past.”

Our March 2nd evening fundraiser at the Ayala house was also the launch of the Trust’s newest publication, “The Virgin Islands Through Earlier Eyes.”

Responding to popular request, this commemorative booklet documents the Trust’s ‘pop-up’ art exhibition (2 days only) held in January last year.

For all who loved the exhibit (or missed it!) the book captures the many vibrant original artworks – dating from mid-1700’s to mid-1900’s, and all privately held -- showing VI places and people over the past 3 centuries.

Included also: research on the long-ago artists who saw these sights, and made these enduring images.

\$25 member price. \$30 non-members. Sold at Trust Museum.
340-775-5541.



News you can use.

Grab walking shoes, shades and water – and join us for a Sunday afternoon each month, at 2pm. Bring a friend! These events are free to all!!

Sunday, Feb 18, 2pm

Re-introduction to the Downtown Historic District, Post-Hurricanes

Walking tour route: Main Street, primarily. From Roosevelt Park to the Catholic Cathedral.
Topic: Impacts to the historic structures, and a look at what's needed for restoration.

Sunday, March 18, 2pm

Introduction to Dronningens [Residential] Quarter, Post-Hurricanes

Walking tour route: Garden Street, Commandant Gade, Nye Gade. Meet at Emancipation Park.
Topic: Assessment of neighborhood resilience, and of storm impact, as above.
Tour Guide: Felipe Ayala, of the STT Historical Commission.

Sunday, May 6, 2pm

Panel Discussion on Rebuilding the Historic District, Post- Hurricanes

Location: Trust Museum, at corner of Raadets Gade and Waterfront, downtown.
Speakers: Panel to be announced, including architect/s, preservationist/s, government rep/s.

Sunday April 8, 2pm

Annual Meeting is for all Trust Members.

A chance to address the Board and share your ideas and observations.
Location: Trust Museum, at corner of Raadets Gade and Waterfront, downtown.

“CALL FOR ENTRIES” for a May 2018 Exhibition of local art.

Do you have original art (no photo submissions, please, this time!) on your walls showing Virgin Islands people or places from 1900 to the millennium? Consider being a private art-work lender to this show. Please send us a photo of your art-work pieces for consideration to include in our exhibition!
Note: we provide insurance.

*For more information, contact:
Frannie Newbold
by text at 340-690-9666
or email: frannie@newbold.com*



A Brief Overview of our Town's Historic Buildings, Post-Storms

With credit and our thanks to Felipe Ayala, Chairman, VI Historic Preservation Commission, for original research.

Many of the town's oldest surviving buildings have already withstood earthquakes, fires and hurricanes. Their secrets to longevity: thick stone walls, sturdy wood shutters with vented windows inside, and hip roofs with no overhangs for the wind to catch and lift. We sincerely hope their hardiness continues for countless years to come!

In the hills above downtown, these significant historic properties had minimal damage or fared well:

- **Louisenhoj Castle** (at top crest of Magens Bay Road; on foundation of old Magens estate house)...
- **Crown House** (former Governor Peter Von Sholten's house, above the 99 Steps)...
- **Catherineberg** (Governor's mansion)...
- **Government House** (Governor's Offices on Govt Hill Street; rear addition damaged, however)...
- **The Lutheran Parsonage** (next door on same street)...
- **Blackbeard's and Bluebeard's "Castles"** (specifically the towers)...
- **Villa Fairview** (on Upper Garden Street)...
- **Kean House** (next door on Garden Street; lost a pillar and some balcony elements).

These buildings just above town were badly damaged:

- **Haagenson House** (located on the 99 Steps; servants quarters at rear collapsed)...
- **Petersen-McDougall property** (also along the 99 Steps; vernacular cottage collapsed)...
- **Hotel 1829** (cottage ruined/lost roof; hotel itself okay)...
- **Day Adult Education Building** (corner of Garden Street & Crystal Gade; interior flooding)
- **Sprauve House** (corner of Garden Street & Commandant Gade; extensive damage).

Sprauve House, below and the Moravian School to the right.



East of Main Street, these Kings Quarter historic buildings had minimal damage or fared well:

- **Fort Christian** (though the adjacent old stables/fire station damaged)...
- **Lutheran Church** (on Norre Gade; interior damage).

These historic buildings on East Main Street/Norre Gade fared badly:

- **Moravian School Building** (east side of Roosevelt Park; lost much of its roof)...
- **Law offices of Marshall Bell** (east side of Roosevelt Park; roof damage)...
- **Baptiste Home/old “Squirrel Cage”** vernacular building (across from the police station; lost roof, etc.).

Along the waterfront and Main Street:

Most historic stone warehouse and shop buildings stood up to the storm but had massive mud-and water-flooding, and extensive roof-leak damage. Many major stores are currently closed and being remodeled.

Along Main Street’s north side, the second-story “additions” (where merchants lived above their warehouses) suffered water and wind damage to roofs and balconies.

- **Post Office Building** (Post Office Square; water damage only)...
- **Christensen property** (Guttets Gade near waterfront; a rare architectural-style example on-island; destroyed).
- **Chalet D’Or Building** (Main Street; lost roofing, architectural & balcony sections)...
- **Barenzon House** (Snegle Gade; lost shutters & roofing).

Just west of Town/Savan area:

- **Enid Baa Library**, Market Square, Methodist Church, Catholic Cathedral fared well.

Savan neighborhood itself fared well, although an area at the base of Fireburn Hill suffered an apparent twister, with many lost roofs on Vester Gade and Nordsidevej Gade. Additionally, some Savan buildings collapsed that were already considered derelict.



St. Thomas Historical Trust Museum

Open each weekday, our 1-year-old museum at Raadets Gade and the waterfront attracts visitors from all over the world. With a collection of Virgin Islands antique maps, artifacts, and furnishings, we're rated as 'excellent' on Trip Advisor! *Note: Admission is free for members.*

Melia Cook, our energetic Executive Director, has been busy – organizing events, meeting with community members, greeting guests, and selling (among other things) our 'historic' license plates, (numbered \$56, personalized \$106; *Trust members receive 10% discount*).

Available now, until...

Collector's Item

USVI 100-Year T-Shirts

Our tasteful and colorful tee combines Danish, US and historic elements honoring the USVI's 100th Anniversary. Great gift to bring dinner hosts, & for birthdays, family members, friends, and VI ex-pats. \$20, all sizes (S thru XL).



**Want to renew your Membership?
Or become a Member?**

Renew or join by phone (774-5541)

Or you can fill out the form online
at www.stthomashistoricaltrust.org

or you can **print out the form and mail it** to us at
P.O. Box 6707, St. Thomas, VI 00804
or **email to:**

execdirector@stthomashistoricaltrust.org

Alert: REQUEST FOR MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS!

Do you have a weekday or two to welcome guests, and share your interest in history with them? We're looking for a few wonderful volunteers!

Please call Melia Cook, the Trust's Executive Director, at 774-5541 to learn more about this friendly opportunity.