

A Rich Heritage
Sugar cane harvest on St. Croix



During the time that Sugar was King on St. Croix (1750 – 1790) it came to dominate everything on the island. Between 1750 and 1800, St. Croix became the fourth largest grower of sugar in the Americas and the biggest of the Lesser Antilles. By 1800 there were more than 200 Sugar Estates on the island and 25,000 enslaved Africans.

Sugar Factory, St. Croix, 1905



The following resources were consulted in compiling this brochure:

- St. Croix, Virgin Islands: Facts and History.
- <http://www.vihumanities.org/WTPMAR/CHinsertflyerfinal%20-%20htm.htm>
- Virgin Islands Army National Guard Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan FY 2007 – FY 2011.

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**VIRGIN ISLANDS ARMY
NATIONAL GUARD (VIARNG)**

**INTEGRATED CULTURAL
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM**



What are cultural resources?

Cultural Resources are the physical remains of the people who lived here before us. They cover the time from when the first human set foot on the Virgin Islands, thousands of years ago, to what happened yesterday. Cultural resources can be as small as a pin or as large as a complete plantation or town. They are documents, pre-Columbian artifacts, the artifacts of the enslaved Africans and the plantation owners, the remains of the homes people lived in and the cemeteries they were buried in. Cultural Resources on VIARNG's installations include ruins, buildings and machines.

The historic Lighthouse located at the VIARNG Hams Bluff Military Regional Training Institute on the Northwestern portion of St. Croix, Virgin Islands



"HISTORY"

The U.S. Virgin Islands is a former Danish colony purchased by the U.S. in 1917. Shortly before this change in sovereignty, Denmark had built two lighthouses in the colony. Of these two lighthouses, only one still exists. The lighthouse is among the most endangered of all U.S. lighthouses today. The lighthouse overlooks several beautiful islands in the Caribbean. It once played a critical role in St. Croix's commercial navigation. Where, from its vantage point on Hams Bluff cliff, the lighthouse towers over the Fredericksted port and was the sole beacon of light over the Caribbean Sea. Ham's Bluff Lighthouse is no longer in use, a reminder of the progress we have made with naval navigation. Using GPS navigation, lighthouses are no longer necessary.

VIARNG has a complete list of goals and actions to consider for the protection, preservation, and restoration of this historic lighthouse at the Hams Bluff Facility and for the management and maintenance of this historic property. VIARNG has developed a comprehensive five-year management plan for this site that includes yearly goals, milestones, and general budgets for restoration, protection, and preservation of the lighthouse.

Line of post holes and a burial site found in 2002 (Lenik, 2004) at the Estate Bethlehem Military Compound. Post-holes were probably used to delineate the boundary of the enslaved village and the cemetery.

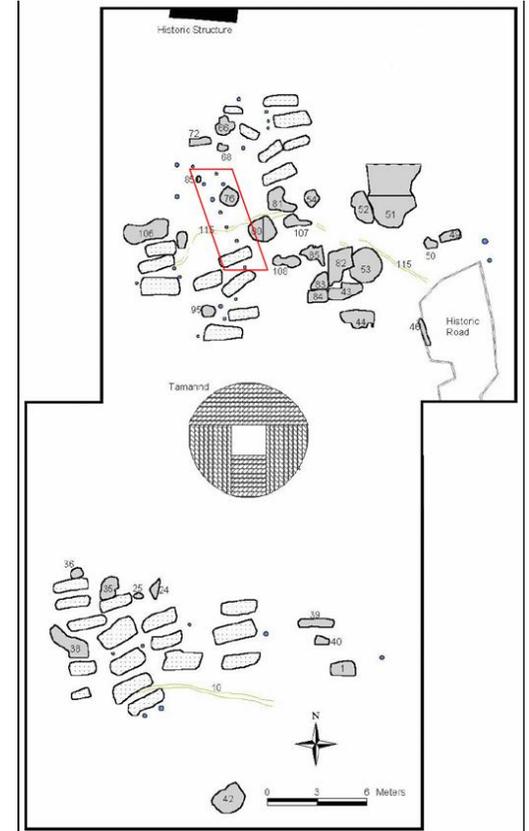


Cultural resources on VIARNG's installations include this line of post holes (above) that was discovered at the Estate Bethlehem Military Compound. It is speculated that this fence was used to delineate the boundary of the "Lost Cemetery of Estate Bethlehem" from the enslaved living quarters. The photograph below shows approximately where a large prehistoric village lies within the vicinity of the Sprat Hall Facility. The village site is a combination of two sites which are considered to be of the same time period and cultural affiliation. The site is roughly located between the main facility and the chain-link fence of the facility.

General location of a Prehistoric Archaeological site at VIARNG Estate Sprat Hall Facility.



18th century enslaved African graveyard in the village of Estate Bethlehem, St. Croix (Courtesy Stephan Lenik, Gary Bourdon, and VISHPO.).



St. Croix History of the Slavery Era

For some time St. Croix was one of the wealthiest islands in the Caribbean. This prosperity was due greatly to sugar cultivation, rum production, and slave labor. During this period of gluttony, the island exported five commodities; sugar, rum, cotton, molasses, and hard woods.

Much is just being discovered about the slave era and African influence on St. Croix. The ruins in the village of Estate Bethlehem are yielding more information. Many graves of enslaved and free blacks were discovered during excavation by the Virgin Islands National Guard to build a helicopter landing pad.