





## PLACES OF INTEREST

an important coaling station.

As the dark clouds of World War I gathered on the horizon, in order to counter any attempted incursion by Germany, the United States re-instituted negotiations that had begun with Denmark a half century earlier. The United States soon bought the Virgin Islands for \$25 million. That works out to approximately \$300 an acre. On March 31, 1917 the Stars and Stripes were raised over Government House as the Virgin Islands became a U.S. Territory. The U.S. Navy governed the U.S.V.I. through 1937. With all previous governors having been appointed by the President of the United States, in 1971 the islands' first elected governor was voted into office by the people. Virgin Islanders have had full U.S. citizenship since 1927 and have a non-voting Representative in Congress.

### CHARLOTTE AMALIE PLACES OF INTEREST

**1 Fort Christian** was built by the Danes beginning in 1666. On a strategic point guarding the narrow harbor entrance the fort is the oldest building in St Thomas. The fort was built to

defend the harbor and town from potential attack by the French, Spanish and English. It was also a place of refuge for white and free black settlers during slave revolts and hurricanes. Today the fort is a museum that relates through photographs and artifacts, the history of the Virgin Islands.

**2 The Frederick Lutheran Church** is a beautiful building that was constructed in the late 1700s. It was built on the site of two earlier churches, the first of which the Danish congregation built in 1666. Both of the earlier churches were apparently wooden structures that were lost to fire. The church is a popular site for weddings and its congregation continues to hold worship services after more than two centuries.

**3 The Legislature Building** is located on the waterfront overlooking the harbor. The building was constructed in the 1870s. It was here, in 1917, that the official transfer ceremonies took place between Denmark and the United States.

**4 The Grand Hotel** has seen better days however the 1839 structure is a wonderful example of the architecture of the period. The third story of the building was apparently lost to a

hurricane in the late 1800's. The building is now home to cafes and shops.

**5 The Hotel 1829** was originally built as a private residence for a French sea captain in the year from which it takes its name. With great views overlooking the harbor the home was renovated into a hotel in the early 1900s. Many of the original features of the home have been carefully preserved.

**6 Blackbeard's Castle** is a hilltop lookout that was built by Danish troops in 1679 to provide advance warning to Fort Christian of the approach of hostile ships. How and when it was named for the infamous pirate Edward Teach is still a matter of speculation. Seeing that there is absolutely no evidence that the infamous Blackbeard ever stepped foot on St. Thomas. The authentic (but not too catchy) name of the bastion is in fact "Skytsborg Tower". None the less, as the oldest unaltered structure on the island Skytsborg Tower is an interesting site and justifiably listed on the US National Historic Registry.

**7 The St. Thomas Skyride** takes visitors by cable car up to Paradise Point, 700 feet above the town and harbor. The view is fantastic. Atop the point there are shops and a snack bar.

### Beyond Charlotte Amalie

**Magens Bay** is consistently rated as one of the top ten beaches in the world. It is located a short distance over the mountains from Charlotte Amalie. The drive alone is worth the trip. There are all the usual beach rentals available as well a beach-side snack bar to grab a cool drink and something to eat. There is a small fee to enter the beach but if you want a fun day in the sun on white sand that meets the calm clear turquoise waters of the Caribbean...it is well worth it.

**Drake's Seat** is the mountainside location from which the renowned 1500s English vice-admiral, Sir Francis Drake, "reputedly" stationed lookouts whose orders were to raise the alert upon spotting ships of the Spanish "Treasure Fleets". Drake himself never landed on St Thomas. The Spanish ships were loaded with plundered gold, silver and precious jewels from the New World. Needless to say, to Spain's King Philip II, Sir Francis Drake was little more than a pirate who was attempting to steal treasure from Spain...treasure that the Spanish had just looted from others. England's Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Francis Drake loved the poetic justice of it all.

**SHORE EXCURSIONS** To make the most of your visit to Charlotte Amalie and surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For more information, please consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

**SHOPPING** St. Thomas has been a duty-free port for centuries. The main shopping district is along the waterfront of Charlotte Amalie. The converted stone and wood warehouses

are hundreds of years old and make for one of the most interesting shopping areas visitors will ever see.

The Havensight Mall has cafes, restaurants and over 100 stores that offer the same duty-free shopping as found in downtown Charlotte Amalie.

**LOCAL CUSTOMS** Bargaining: Prices are fixed in restaurants and most stores. Bargaining at open-air markets is common. Major credit cards are widely accepted.

Tipping: A 10-15 % tip is customary at restaurants.

**Local Cuisine:** The days of the pirate's fare of hard tack, barely edible salt pork and sour kraut (to ward off scurvy) are thankfully long past. Today Caribbean cooking is primarily a combination of European and West African. Curry has been a popular addition since slavery was abolished and indentured workers from India came to the region. While you are here in the Virgin Islands you should try some of the favorite traditional dishes that have been passed down for generations. Fish is understandably popular and always fresh. Bonito, yellowtail and kingfish are common. They are usually grilled or boiled in a lime based sauce with onions, peppers, and tomatoes. Fungi are dumplings made from cornmeal. A fresh vegetable such as okra (ochroe) is often added to the dough. Okra is very popular throughout the islands. It is often fried in butter or with bacon and then having tomatoes, garlic, peppers and onions added. Seasoned Rice is prepared with most meals. Pork, onion, tomatoes and garlic are the usual additions. Conch Creole is a rich stew made with local fresh conch, salt pork, garlic, onions and hot peppers. Goat Curry is fresh goat meat that has marinated in a mixture of lime juice, salt and pepper, thyme, garlic and onions then cubed and slowly stewed with curry and sugar and a few potatoes added. Meat Pate is a baked pastry filled with a mixture of cooked beef or pork and sweet pepper, chopped celery, parsley, tomato paste, garlic and onion.

**Drink Specialties:** Rum has been produced in the Virgin Islands for three centuries. The famous "Cruzan Rum" has been distilled on the neighboring island of St Croix by the same family since the 1750s. If you are not a rum drinker and you decide to try a fresh fruit rum punch...be warned...the rum is smooth and the fruit will disguise the 75 proof alcohol.

**LOCAL CURRENCY** The U.S. dollar is the official currency in the Virgin Islands. However, pillaged or plundered Spanish pieces-of-eight, silver bullion, doubloons, large saltwater pearls, jewel encrusted solid gold necklaces or an authentic pirate's buried treasure map may be negotiable.

**POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES** There is a postal facility located close to the Cruise Ship Pier at 8168 Crown Bay Marina. There is also a U. S. Post Office downtown at 3000 Veterans Drive.

Dial the following access numbers to use a personal calling card