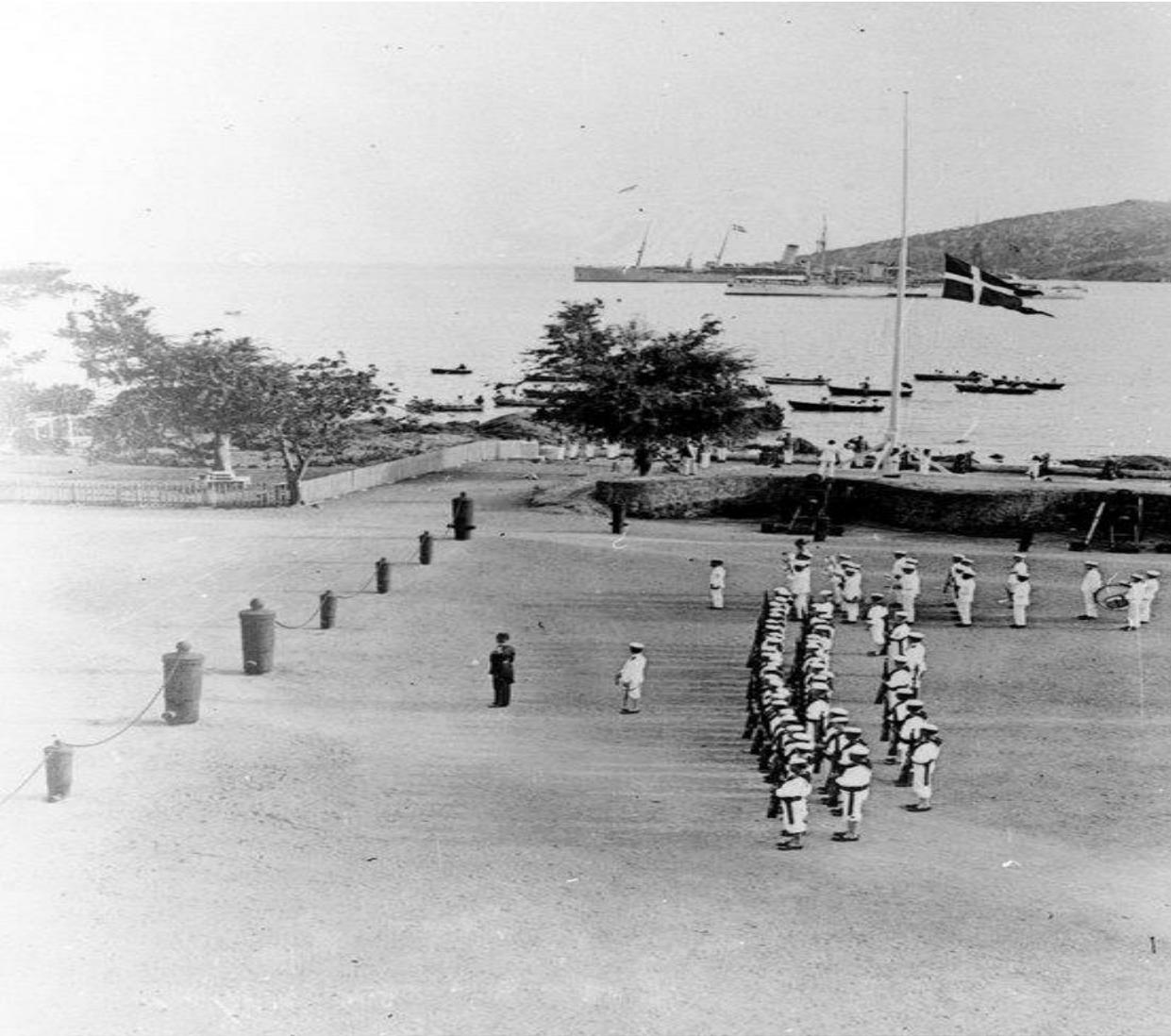


THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
TRANSFER CENTENNIAL COMMISSION LEGISLATIVE REPORT
JUNE 29, 2015



Honorable Senators, Committee Members, fellow Testifiers, and fellow Virgin Islanders:

I am pleased to be here today to give an update on the activities and status of the Virgin Islands Transfer Centennial Commission. Due to a previous appointment that conflicts with this meeting, our chairperson Mrs. Pamela Richards-Samuel is unable to attend this meeting but she sends her greetings as well as a few members of the Commission to represent her and provide a status report of our efforts to date to this committee.

The Commission met initially on March 31, 2014, got organized and established regular meetings. Due to lack of funds, we were only able to meet via telephone and discussed ideas among our group. In October and November 2014, with the assistance of Senator Myron Jackson and the 30th Legislature, we were able to conduct town hall meetings on all three islands where we gathered ideas from the community and provided an avenue for submission of written suggestions. We received many excellent ideas and have incorporated many in our tentative plans for the Centennial events and activities.

With the onset of the 2014 elections; the subsequent change of Administration; installation of a new Senate; and our severe economic downturn, we were unable to obtain funding to conduct the business of this Commission.

All Commission members are volunteers and with the large complex scope of work needed to make this a successful venture, we are in dire need of an Executive Director and support staff. We recently met with Governor Mapp and requested some funding which he promised to provide assistance in securing these monies to address this problem. We are scheduled to meet with the Governor in the next few days and we are hopeful that some funding will be forthcoming.

I would like to emphasize that the Virgin Islands Transfer Centennial Commission is poised and ready to do the people's business that we were appointed to do as soon as we receive some mobilization funding.

The following are some of the tentative plans that we have discussed and will need some additional public meetings to record and receive community consent on all of these ideas to finalize our plans.

THE CENTENNIAL:

The Virgin Islands Transfer Centennial Commission will be a territory wide multi-year, multi-event observation with programs and activities taking place beginning from September 2015 through December 2017. The Centennial will be marketed to local, national and international visitors, and will generate both short and long term positive impact to the territory's economy, stature and global reputation. In fact, the Centennial should be a time to build or reinforce our local, state, national and global connections.

The Commission will facilitate programs that educate, entertain and enrich our community to remember our rich historical and cultural past, to reflect on our present conditions, and to contemplate the exciting challenges that will likely redefine our quality of life during the Territory's second century. Through partnerships with institutions, organizations and individuals, the Commission desires to encourage our citizens to experience the unique and diverse tapestry of the U.S. Virgin Islands' natural, cultural and social history: encouraging all of us to preserve our social, cultural, economic and natural resources upon which a sustainable future depends. We seek projects and activities that will have a positive impact and help influence a rigorous and thoughtful discussion across the Territory that both commemorates the Transfer Centennial and life as we know it in the United States Virgin Islands.

While we recognize that the Centennial cannot be all things to all people, we are confident that through our community fora, we assure the community plays an important role in being engaged in this overall planning process. Additionally, organizations that normally have major activities throughout the year such as the triathlon, cultural events and celebrations, are encouraged to merge, collaborate, tailor or otherwise coordinate their events with the 2017 Centennial activities.

As the Commission wishes to call attention to the World its record of achievements that have been accomplished by the Virgin Islands of the United States in the last 100 years, it is important to note that our Centennial planning comes in the midst of extraordinary times. Not unlike 100 years ago, the Virgin Islands face immense challenges and opportunities. However, the Transfer

Centennial is not only about putting on events and recording history, it is especially about the people: who we are today and who we wish to become. We appreciate that we are a people enriched by diversity, bonded in unity and knowledgeable about what holds us together which is truly what distinguishes us.

The Transfer Centennial provides us an opportunity to laud the many accomplishments of the last 100 years. The naturalization of the residents of the former Danish West Indies; the establishment of an Organic Act which marked the end of Navy Rule initiating some home rule; the revised Organic Act of 1954 which gave Virgin Islanders more autonomy and established our own Legislature; the ability to elect our own Governor and write our own Constitution; the ability to elect a Delegate to the United States Congress are but a few of the benchmarks that occurred in the 100 years since the Transfer from Danish to American rule.

OFFICIAL CENTENNIAL EVENTS

The Transfer Centennial Commission has determined its official events and will take the leadership role in creating, managing and implementing these projects. In addition, the Commission assumes responsibility for raising additional funds, or create a revenue stream to support each of the official events including grants, sponsorship opportunities and recognition for privately contributed dollars by individual, corporations and foundations.

Official events range from major celebrations to exhibitions, lectures and festivals featuring art, dance and food to parades and historical events to major multicultural celebrations to professional and collegiate events to plays, concerts and all forms of performing arts.

CENTENNIAL TRIMESTER PROJECT

Our activities have been sub-divided into themed trimester projects so that we may better highlight the continuum of historical events relevant to these unique islands. Community interest and cooperation has been shown in every phase of our centennial trimesters. We look forward to successful completion of these plans.

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2015

VIRGIN ISLANDS PRE-COLUMBIAN PERIOD

JANUARY - APRIL 2016
INDIGENOUS VIRGIN ISLANDS INHABITANTS

MAY - AUGUST 2016
COLUMBUS AND EARLY EUROPEAN ARRIVAL

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER 2016
DANISH WEST INDIES-FORCED AFRICAN MIGRATION

JANUARY - APRIL 2017
EVENTS LEADING UP TO TRANSFER

MAY TO AUGUST 2017
VIRGIN ISLANDS UNDER AMERICAN RULE

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2017
A LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE
(PROGRESS TOWARD EQUAL CITIZENSHIP OR SELF-DETERMINATION)