

Government House



ST. CROIX

King Street 7-8, Christiansted
St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands



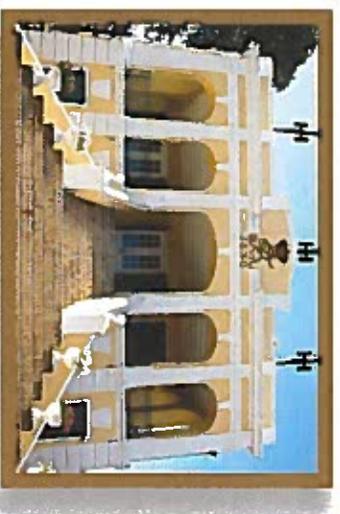
The Honorable Kenneth E. Mapp
Governor

The Honorable Osbert E. Potter
Lieutenant Governor

2015~

GOVERNMENT HOUSE **King Street 7-8, Christiansted** **St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands**

For over 180 years, Government House on the corner of King Street and Queens Cross Street has served as both a residence for governors of the Danish West Indies and the United States Virgin Islands. The large edifice, which occupies almost the entire block, is actually two houses joined by an open gallery. The largest of the two structures was built in 1749 and purchased from a prominent merchant, Johan Wilhelm Schopen, in 1771. The second house, built in 1794-97, was purchased in 1826 from the owner, Major Adam Sobolker, a merchant and army officer.



The present Government House construction can be credited to the era of Peter von Scholten, who was appointed as Governor-General by King Frederik VII in 1828. Von Scholten directed an ambitious program of remodelling the government building in Christiansted in the early 1830s. Additions included an impressive grand pyramid staircase, a pavilion bearing the crowned monogram of King Frederik VI, a ballroom on the second floor, and the gallery joining the two buildings. Although no further additions were made to Government House in the intervening years, it was repaired extensively, most notably in the mid-1860s. After the third story was destroyed by fire in 1936, extensive restoration took place in 1939 and most recently in 1995.



The Sobolker house is simpler with Neoclassical details.

Several architectural styles are reflected in the design of Government House. The Schopen house on King Street has ornate Baroque detailing characteristic of early 18th century architecture. The 1830 additions, such as the entrance pavilion and gallery linking the two buildings, reflect classical details, which are scaled to harmonize with the Schopen



When the United States purchased the Danish West Indies in 1917, the interior furnishings and fixtures were removed to Denmark. Reproductions of the original ballroom furnishings were later donated by the Kingdom of Denmark in 1952, followed by the gift of the original portrait of King Frederik VIII that had hung in the grand ballroom from 1851-1917.

An image of Peter von Scholten presides over the "regeringsvaerktset," or assembly room, which adjoins the ballroom and served as the meeting chamber for the Danish cabinet.

During the American Revolution Bicentennial in 1976, the room was refurbished with replicas of the original pieces of furniture. The furnishings were donated by the Danish Government and presented to Governor Cyril E. King and First Lady Agnes King in a ceremony by her Majesty Queen Margrethe II during her official visit to the United States Virgin Islands that same year.



In 1872, the capital of the Danish West Indies was transferred back to St. Thomas and Government House on St. Croix no longer served as the official residence of the Governor. It continued, however, to house functioning government offices.



The small, red wooden sentry box at the foot of the entrance staircase outside Government House is an authentic Danish guardhouse, as used by sentries in front of the queen's palaces and military facilities in Denmark. It was presented to Government House by the Danish West Indian Society in 1967 on the 50th anniversary of the Transfer of the Virgin Islands.

The people of the U.S. Virgin Islands began electing their own governor in 1970. Dr. Melvin Herbert Evans was distinguished as being the last governor appointed by the President of the United States and first elected governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands. His tenure as elected governor began in January 1971. Other elected governors include: Cyril Emmanuel King, Juan Francisco Luis, Alexander Anthony Farrelly, Roy Lester Schneider, Charles Wesley Turnbull, John Percy de Jongh, Jr. and Kenneth E. Mapp. Governors Luis, Farrelly, Turnbull and de Jongh each served two terms in office. Governor Kenneth E. Mapp, and Lieutenant Osbert E. Potter began their term in office on January 5, 2015.