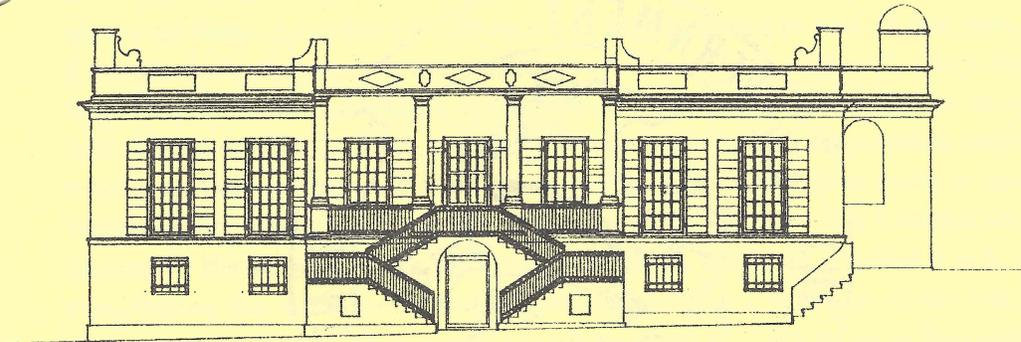


CATHARINEBERG

DENMARK HILL



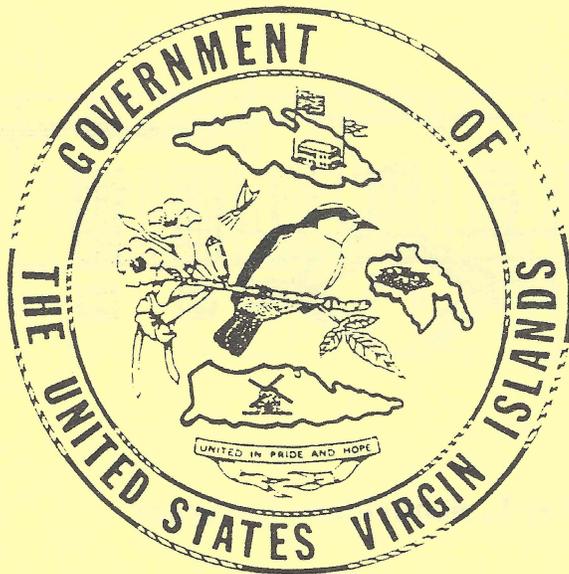
Roy L. Schneider - Governor

Kenneth E. Mapp - Lieutenant Governor

Inaugural Open House

January 2, 1995

5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.



HISTORIC CONTEXT

Catharineberg is a large country house, built on a hill overlooking Charlotte Amalie in the early nineteenth century. Built as the home of Governor Berg, it has always been considered one of the finest houses in the Virgin Islands. Catharineberg, situated on Denmark Hill, was built in 1830 by Hans Henrik Berg, a landowner and prominent public official for over 50 years. At the time of construction, the property served as a plantation on the outskirts of Charlotte Amalie. Only four out of the 170 acres were cultivated. Berg and his family of four retained a staff of 13 servants and an overseer to manage the property. Berg also had four other plantations on St John: Annaberg, Leinster Bay, Mary Point and Jossie Gut with a total of 392 slaves on these. Berg became Governor in 1862 and died in April of that year.

Catharineberg was sold by the executors of his estate to William C. Carpenter on March 24, 1864. Measurements of the property and a plan of the area are recorded with the bill of sale. In 1864, the Government of the Danish West Indies proposed buying Catharineberg as the old government house which was badly in need of replacement. It was offered to the government for \$12,000. The Colonial Council discussed the Government's proposal on April 18, 1864, but rejected it in favor of demolishing the old Government House and building a new one on the old site. Catharineberg was sold at auction on December 27, 1875 to Jose Bregaro and Enrique Bregaro for \$9,000. The estate later became the property of Jean Joseph Clitour Delinois who bequeathed it to Louis Delinois on March 23, 1898. By deed of gift, the property passed from Louise August Jean Joseph p. Delinois and Christine Anna Marie Delinois to the Roman Catholic congregation of St. Thomas in September of 1913 in order that it be used as a hospital. The estate, however, was returned to widow Anna Marie Delinois on November 13, 1916 because the Church could not afford to operate a hospital at that time.

The property passed from Widow Anna Marie Delinois (L.H. Van Allen, attorney for Mrs. Delinois) to the West Indian Company, the present owners, by deed of December 24, 1917 recorded January 7, 1918.

The estate originally contained 170 acres. As the town grew, it was subdivided for residential purposes. Catharineberg was acquired by the Government of the Virgin Islands on June 30, 1993 with the purchase of the West Indian Company Dock.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Catharineberg is situated high above the town and faces east. It is a plastered masonry structure, U-shaped in plan. It is a two story structure of approximately 7000 square feet. In true West Indian style, the ground floor, often referred to as the cellar or basement, is of secondary importance, and contained storage and a stable. It is architecturally plain and is treated as a base for the second or main floor. The building is made of brick and stone rubble masonry with lime plaster patched with cement, all painted. Originally, the main access road led up from the east to the impressive double staircase and columned portico that fronts the three center bays of the building. A widely projecting and elaborately molded cornice is crowned by a paneled parapet wall that at the corners support acroteria of an unusual design. There is a masonry base projecting about 2" beyond the wall and painted in russet red. The details are classical revival in character and their execution and application are skillful. Although a large building, it is only seven bays wide by five bays deep; the generous scale of its architectural features gives Catharineberg a grander quality than that generally found in Virgin Islands architecture. Catharineberg has been the residence of the director of the Danish West India Company and has not usually been open to the public. The main floor with its high ceilings has a living room, center parlor, and a large bedroom and bath across the east side. The hall runs the entire length of the house on the west wings: with a bedroom to the south and bedroom with alcove and bath to the north. The ground floor houses the dining room to the northeast (this used to be a stable); laundry, maid's room, bath, kitchen, guestroom, bath and storage.

The property has two outbuildings. There are servant's quarters with three rooms and a cookhouse to the northwest, with details similar to but simpler than those of the house. There is a small wooden frame open-air pavilion east of the house over a portion of the terrace; it has Tuscan columns as does the portico of the main house. To the east of the house under the terrace built into the hill is a large single room with masonry walls, round brick vault, large heavy doubleplank French doors, and a slit window on each side of the door. Its purpose is unknown. It was probably used for storage or keeping animals. There are also two recent one-car garages flanking the transverse axis west of the house.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Division for Archaeology and Historic Preservation sees this as an opportune time to do some comprehensive planning for the rehabilitation of the Virgin Islands Government's historic structures. With the Government of the Virgin Islands' acquisition of Catherineberg on Denmark Hill, the following recommendations have been made by DPNR: Given the condition of Government House, it has been recommended that the Governor's residence be moved from the third floor of Government House to Catherineberg, Denmark Hill permanently. In this way, the historic structure, Catherineberg will retain its original use. The property Catherineberg should remain intact with its surrounding acreage, since this property is the only "open space" within the town area that is well maintained. To divide up the property would be to create a situation similar to that which now exists at the present Government House; no privacy, security or area to have large open functions. Then, the third floor of Government can be rehabilitated. Upon completion of the rehabilitation, the Governor's administrative offices can utilize all of Government House. The lobby and other portions of the first and second floor of Government House can then be utilized as a public hall and exhibition space.

References:

Information and photographs for this paper were taken from Historic American Buildings Survey prepared by Frederick C. Gjessing, Architect and Phillip E. Gardner, Architect for the National Park Service Summer 1958; Historic Buildings of St. Thomas and St. John by William P. Maclean and Frederick C. Gjessing, 1987; and the Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey drawing collection, provided by Frederick Gjessing. Special acknowledgements also to The Department of Planning and Natural Resources, Division for Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

ENTERTAINMENT

**Damelia Correa
Yolandita Jackson
R. C. and Company**

**Gylchrist Sprauve
Seventh Day Adventist
Steel Orchestra**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Judith Watson - Chair
Lori Anderson - Co-Chair
Lorraine Cranston - Co-Chair
Corrine Smith
Virginia Danet
Leon Danet
Andrea Callwood
Agnes Blaize
LaVerne Issac
Angel Boschulte
Ingerborg Marrero
Petal-Lee Grant
Joy Garee
Alicia Boatwright
D. Rhymer
Elise Moore**

**Sanya Harrigan
Karen Hodge
Charlene White-Hewitt
Madia Haynes
Jonetta Darden-Vincent
Juanita Joseph
Elma Brathwaite
Erma Brathwaite
Maribel Okiye
Arlene Collins
Marisa Turnbull
Roan Creque
Ruth Christian
Felipe Ayala Jr.
Colleen Benjamin
Aben Marrero**

TOUR GUIDES (YOUTHS)

**Johnpin Wilson
Ray Chesterfield
Jakela Lambert
Jade Garee**

**Teen Strive
Ife Richards
Inesha Rabsatt
Jenelle Challenger
Kisha James**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

St. Thomas / St. John Chamber of Commerce

A Catered Affair

Inaugural Transportation Committee

Inaugural Decoration Committee