

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BY
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BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, YOUTH
AND RECREATION
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The 250th Celebration and commemoration of the town of Cruz Bay which will encompass students in the Virgin Islands attaining a historical understanding and reflection on the history of Cruz Bay through their participation in the celebration with music, history, art, and dance.

Greetings Honorable Chair, Myron Jackson, members of the Committee on Culture, Historic Preservation, Youth and Recreation, and other members of the 31th Legislature. I, Valrica Bryson, State Director, State Office of Culture Education, will present the Department of Education's testimony in response to Senator Jackson's query regarding the resolution commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the town of Cruz Bay.

We, in the Department of Education strongly believe that the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of Cruz Bay is a significant historical occurrence in the Virgin Islands. Cruz Bay is a picturesque town with a very rich history. It is imperative that the students of the Virgin Islands play an integral part in celebrating this auspicious occasion. We agree that there is a valuable lesson in our students re-enacting both Transfer Day and their participation in the commemoration of Cruz Bay.

Our students should be taught the meticulous manner in which the Danish surveyor Julius Philip Benjamin von Rohr took to accomplish building through the rugged bush, the existing Cruz Bay Plantation and the Madam's Wood plantation

It is also important to pass on the history behind the naming of the town streets of which we still have King Street, formerly known as Great King Street. As we preserve our heritage and reminisce on the most impactful times in the growth of the Virgin Islands we at the Department of Education upholds the learning and celebration of this period in our history.

The celebration of Cruz Bay 250th Anniversary not only represents the historical significance which outlines the uniqueness of the town but also in understanding the outstanding strategic importance of its harbor. It is agreed that we should celebrate the evolution of the town as it has grown over this period. To mark the celebration will bring back many traditions by those who had originally settled the town. Cruz Bay has become the focal place for our artisans, local music and dance. We are obligated to ensuring that it remains that cultural center for the people and children of the Virgin Islands.

This concludes the testimony of the Virgin Islands Department of Education. We are prepared to take your questions.