CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

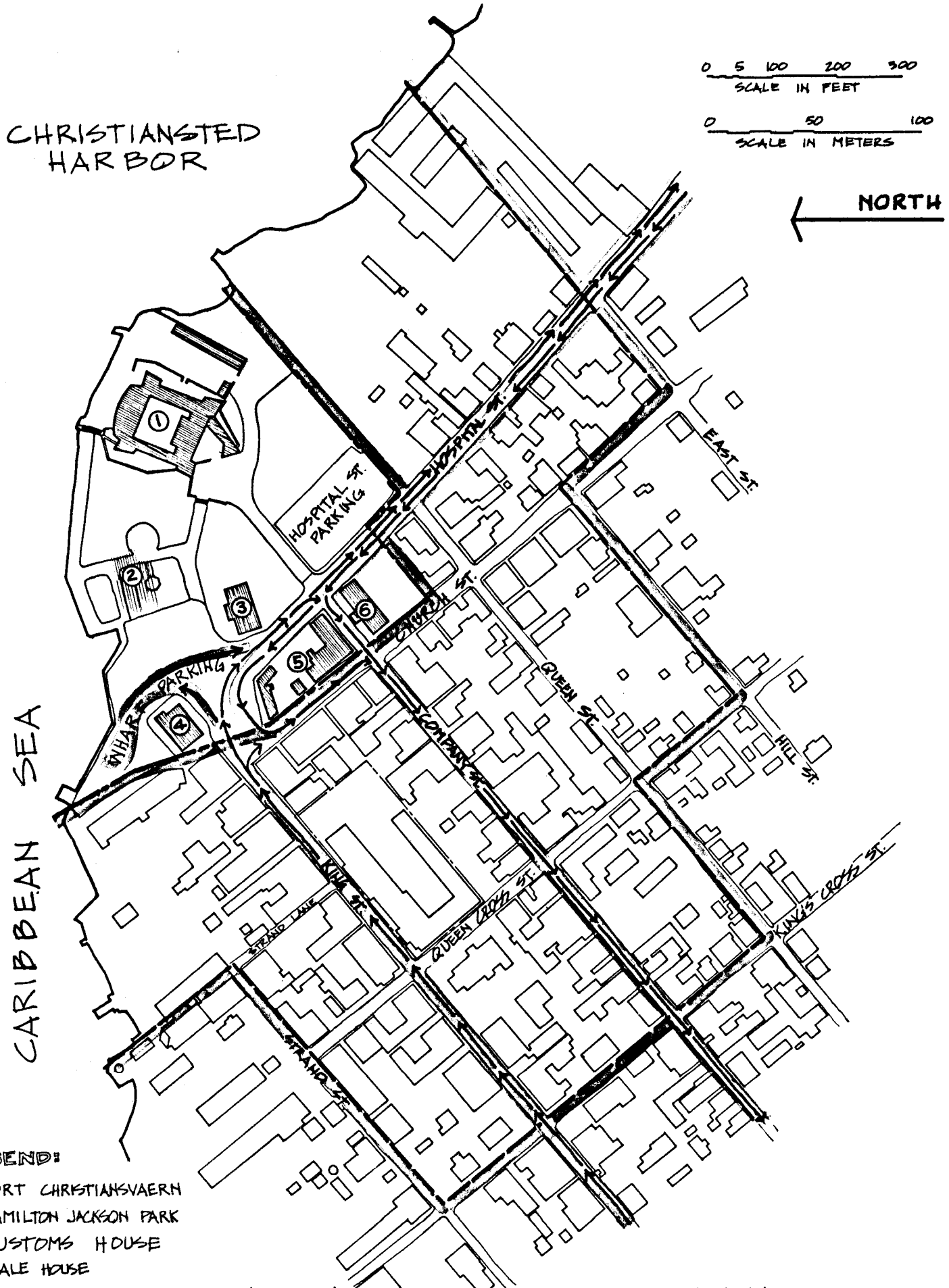
CHRISTIANSTED NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

ST. CROIX, VIRGIN ISLANDS

Robert Bradley

January 5, 1985

Approved W. Baker 3/5/86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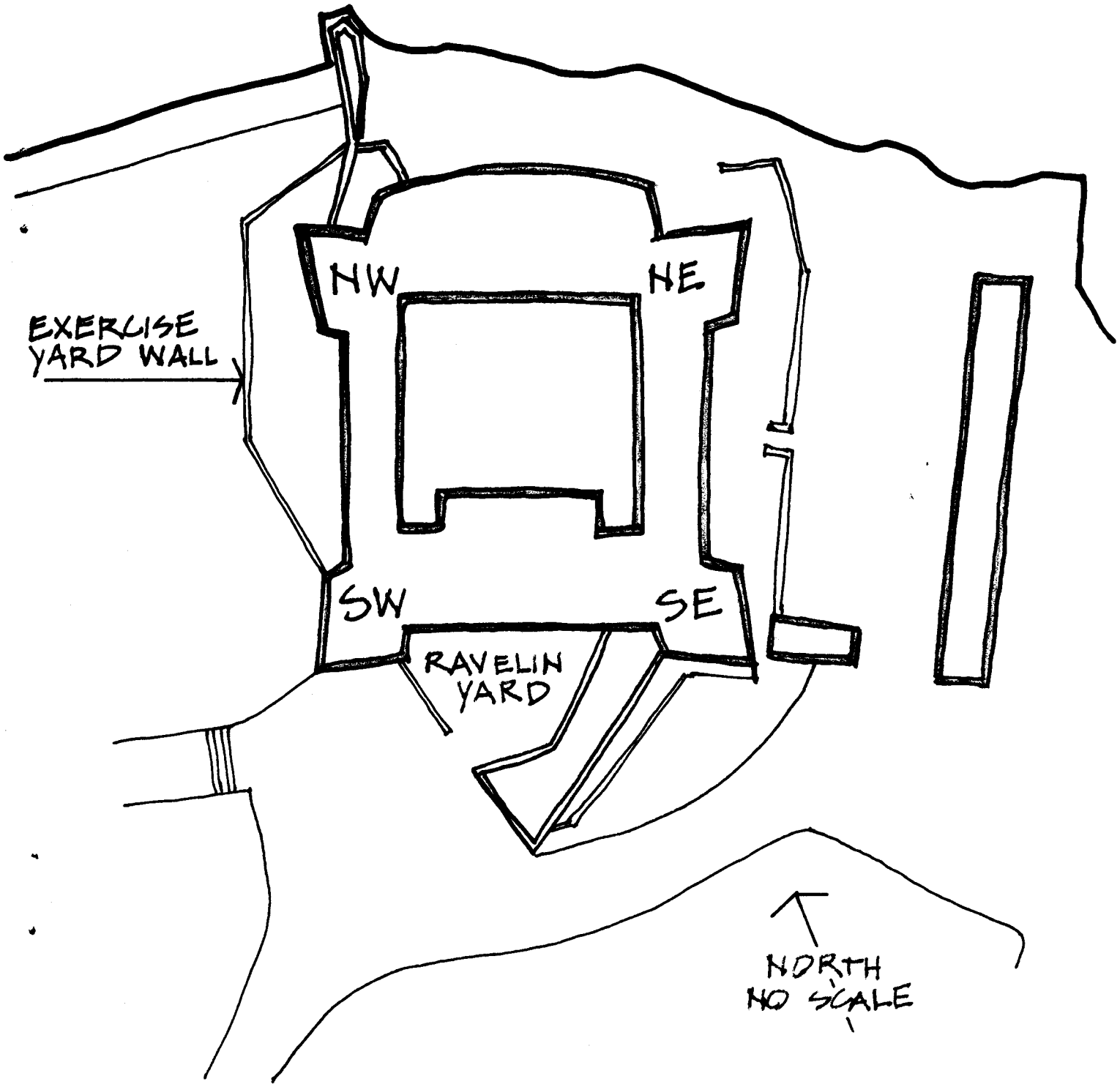
① FORT CHRISTIANSVAERN
② HAMILTON JACKSON PARK
③ CUSTOMS HOUSE
④ SCALE HOUSE



FORT CHRISTIANSVAERN

I. INTRODUCTION

This section of the Cultural Landscape Report includes materials gathered at Christiansted National Historic Site, November 5-9, 1984, materials from the Southeast Cultural Resources Preservation Center and from the library, Southeast Regional Office, obtained December 5-6, 1984. In all, very little time was available for research. The tropical storm which chose to grace us with its presence certainly hampered operations during our trip to St. Croix, and logistics have prevented all interested parties from being able to convene so that we could discuss matters which may remain a bit unclear. However, all things considered, a remarkable amount of data has been gathered in a very short time. Several people contributed significantly in the preparation of this report. The staff at Christiansted were outstanding in their cooperation and concern. Superintendent Tom Bradley, Historian Ken Barta and Park Ranger Bill Gleason were extremely helpful. Without the encyclopedic knowledge of Bill Cissel, Park Curator, I would not have known where to start. Len Brown, Southeast Regional Historian, provided the guidance to keep me on the right track. The reports of Herbert Olsen, completed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, have been invaluable. They are thorough, complete, and have definitely stood the test of time. I have found very little additional information and must admit that this report is little more than a reinterpretation of his fine work. Olsen's reports should definitely be consulted by anyone studying the sites within Christiansted National Historic Site.

The documentary data section is divided into four parts: introduction; a brief background of each structure; historical documentation (consisting of the illustrations and a discussion of each); and the conclusion which will contain a synopsis of these findings.

The period to which I confined my research is the period from approximately 1830-1917. By 1840, the buildings and surrounding area had taken on the basic configuration they retain today, with the final addition of the present Scale House in 1855-1856. In 1917, the area went from Danish to United States sovereignty. The addition of Hamilton Jackson Park and the paving of the streets are the only major changes which occur after the United States gained control. These will be discussed at the proper time.

II. HISTORIC BACKGROUND

FORT CHRISTIANSVAERN. This is the best preserved of the five remaining Danish forts in the Virgin Islands. Largely completed by 1749, the Danish army garrisoned it until 1878 when it became a police station and courthouse. The fort was built mainly of

hard yellow bricks brought from Denmark as ballast in sailing ships; and, although numerous minor additions and alterations have since been made, its appearance remains relatively unchanged. It is a prime example of seventeenth and eighteenth century Danish colonial military architecture. The fort has been restored to its 1840s appearance.

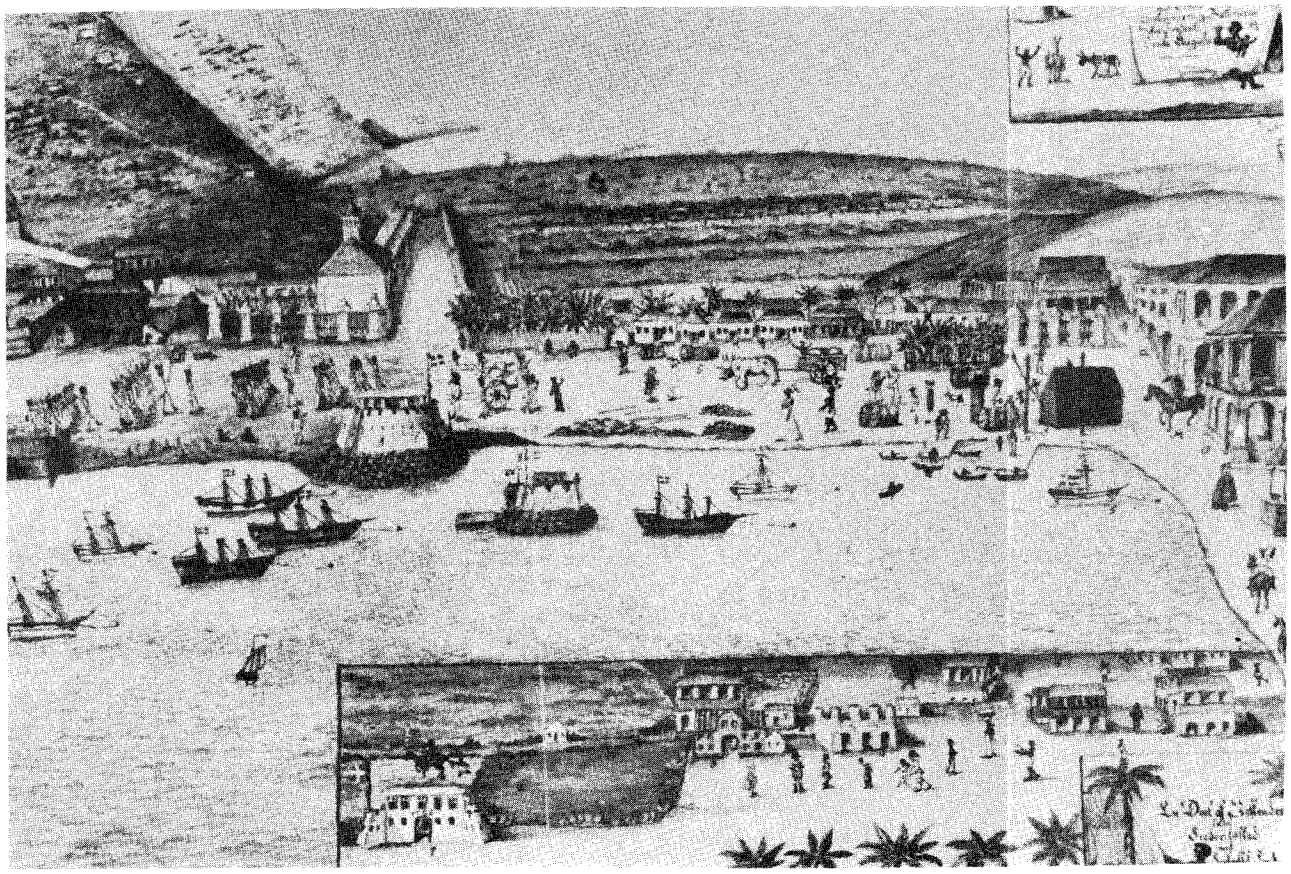
OLD DANISH CUSTOMS HOUSE. In this building the colonial government performed one of its major responsibilities collecting the customs. A part of the first floor dates to 1751, but most of the structure was completed between 1828 and 1830. Afterward, until 1927, the post office shared the building served as the library.

SCALE HOUSE. This building, housing the facilities for weighing and inspecting imports and exports, contained an office for the weighmaster and also quarters for troops attached to the Customs Service. Built in 1855-56, the structure replaced an earlier wooden building.

STEEPLE BUILDING. The Church of our Lord of Saboath, St. Croix's first Lutheran Church, was completed by 1753. The parish added the steeple about 1794. After 1831 the government used the church as a military bakery, a hospital, and a school.

The grounds immediately surrounding these four structures were the primary focus of my research. The principal purpose of which was to determine what changes had occurred and at what time. Surprisingly as the photographic and artist's conceptions will show, there seems to have been little significant change in the period 1840-1917.

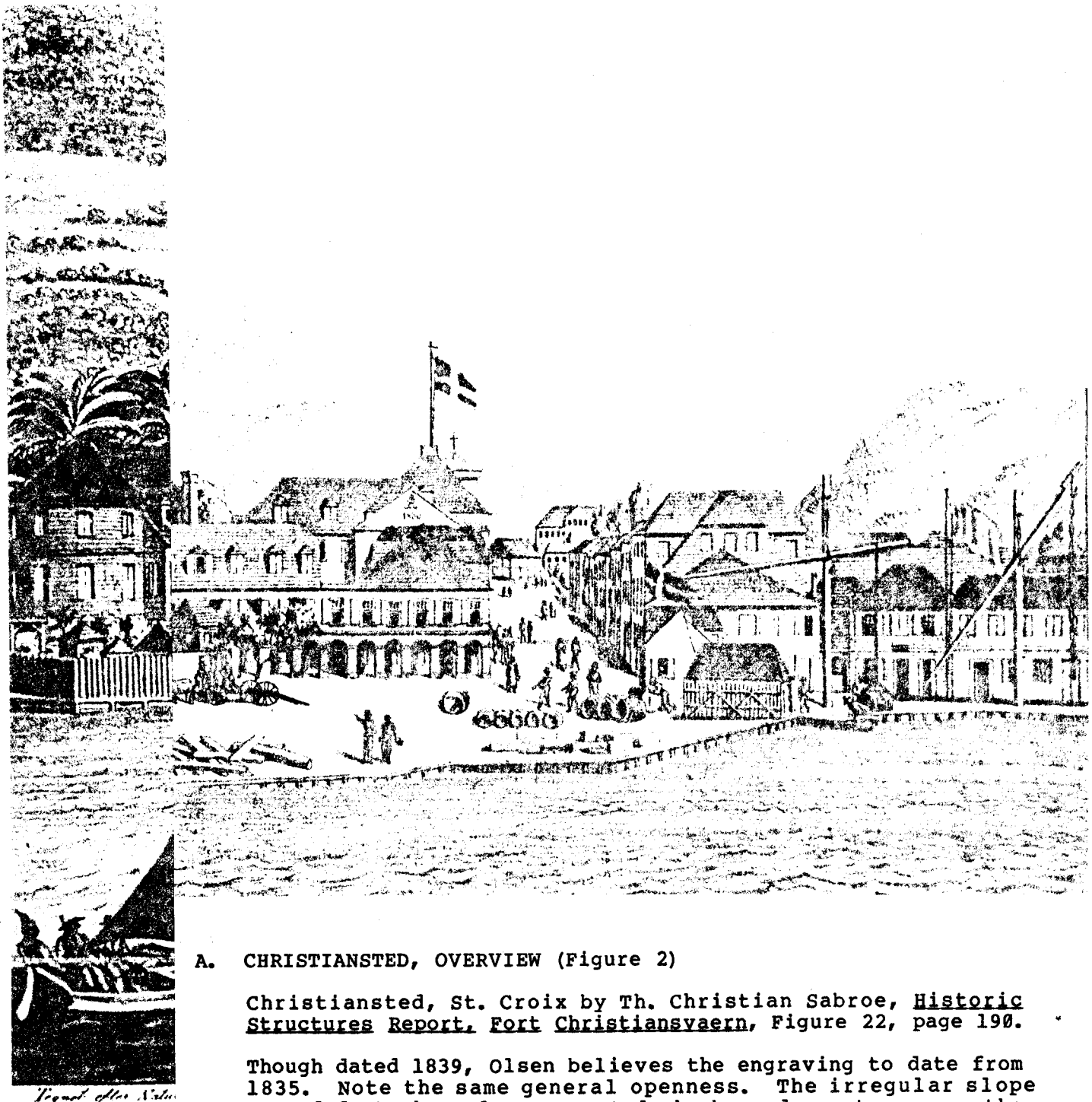
III. DOCUMENTARY MATERIALS



A. CHRISTIANSTED, OVERVIEW (Figure 1)

Sketch of Christiansted, St. Croix, by Henrik Gottfred Beenfeldt; Historic Structures Report, Fort Christiansvaern, Herbert Olsen, August 1960, Figure 17, page 185.

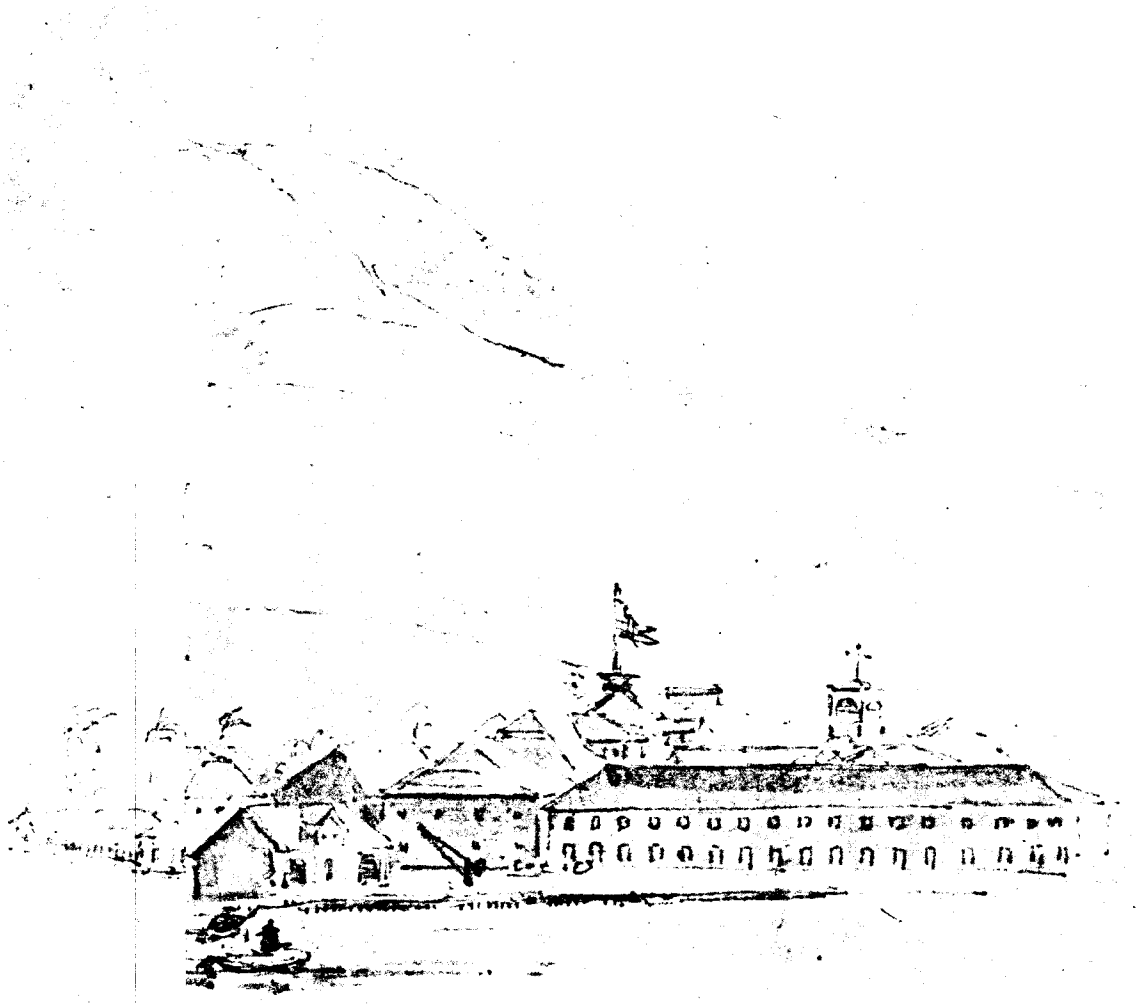
The companion piece to this drawing is dated 1815, but Beenfeldt was serving with the Army on St. Croix from 1790-1796. Consequently, the drawing was apparently done 20 years after the fact from memory. It is considered to be inaccurate, but does illustrate the openness around the fort and waterfront area.



A. CHRISTIANSTED, OVERVIEW (Figure 2)

Christiansted, St. Croix by Th. Christian Sabroe, Historic Structures Report. Fort Christiansvaern, Figure 22, page 190.

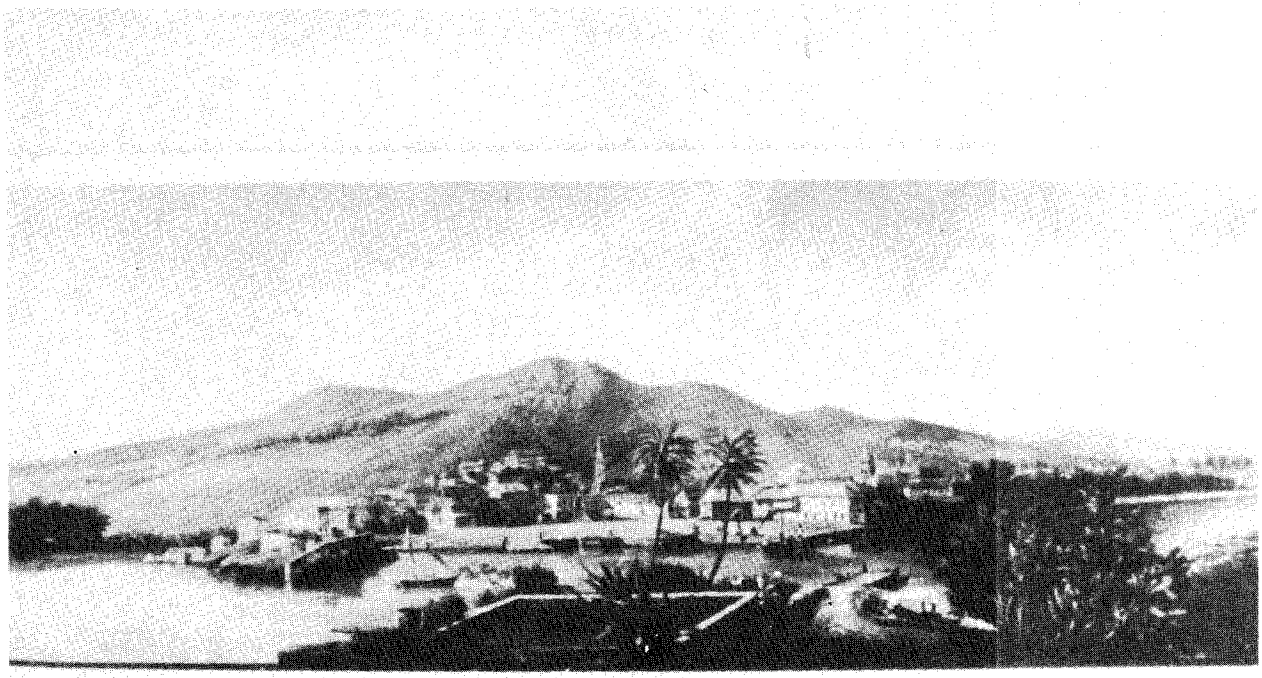
Though dated 1839, Olsen believes the engraving to date from 1835. Note the same general openness. The irregular slope around fort shows low grass and shrubs and one tree near the northeast bastion. Palms are in the area immediately around the Customs House. Bulkhead construction is also apparently underway on the waterfront.



A. CHRISTIANSTED, OVERVIEW (Figure 3)

Christiansted St. Croix, by Henry Jackson Morton, 1844. Danish West India Sketchbook and Diary, 1843-44. Publishers Dansk Vestindish Selskab and St. Croix Landmark Society, 1975.

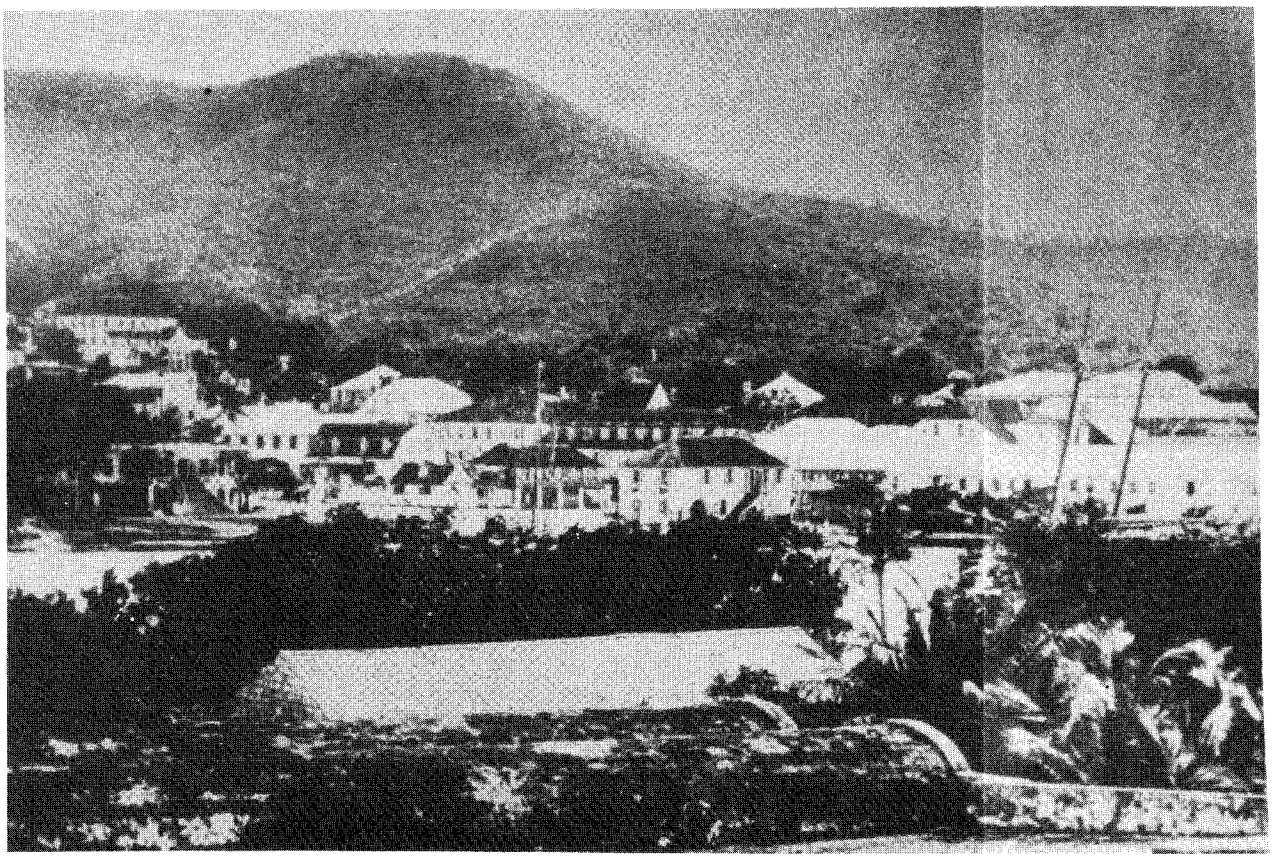
The same general openness around the fort and waterfront area is evident. Palms are again shown in the area around the Customs House. A tree near the northeast bastion of the fort is shown again. There appears to be a grouping of shrubs near the southwest bastion of the fort. The bulkhead appears complete by this time.



A. CHRISTIANSTED OVERVIEW (Figure 4)

Christiansted, St. Croix, ca. 1866. Fr. Visby, Historic Structures Report, Fort Christiansvaern, Figure 28, page 196.

The same general openness is again evident. The palms near the Customs House have disappeared and have been replaced by a flamboyant tree. Three cannon buried muzzle up are evident in this drawing. They are located along the bulkhead, two are vertical and one leans at an angle. These cannon remain in place today and were apparently put in place between 1844 and 1866, thus they are a part of this historic landscape. They will appear in later illustrations and will be used as points of reference.



A. CHRISTIANSTED, OVERVIEW (Figure 5)

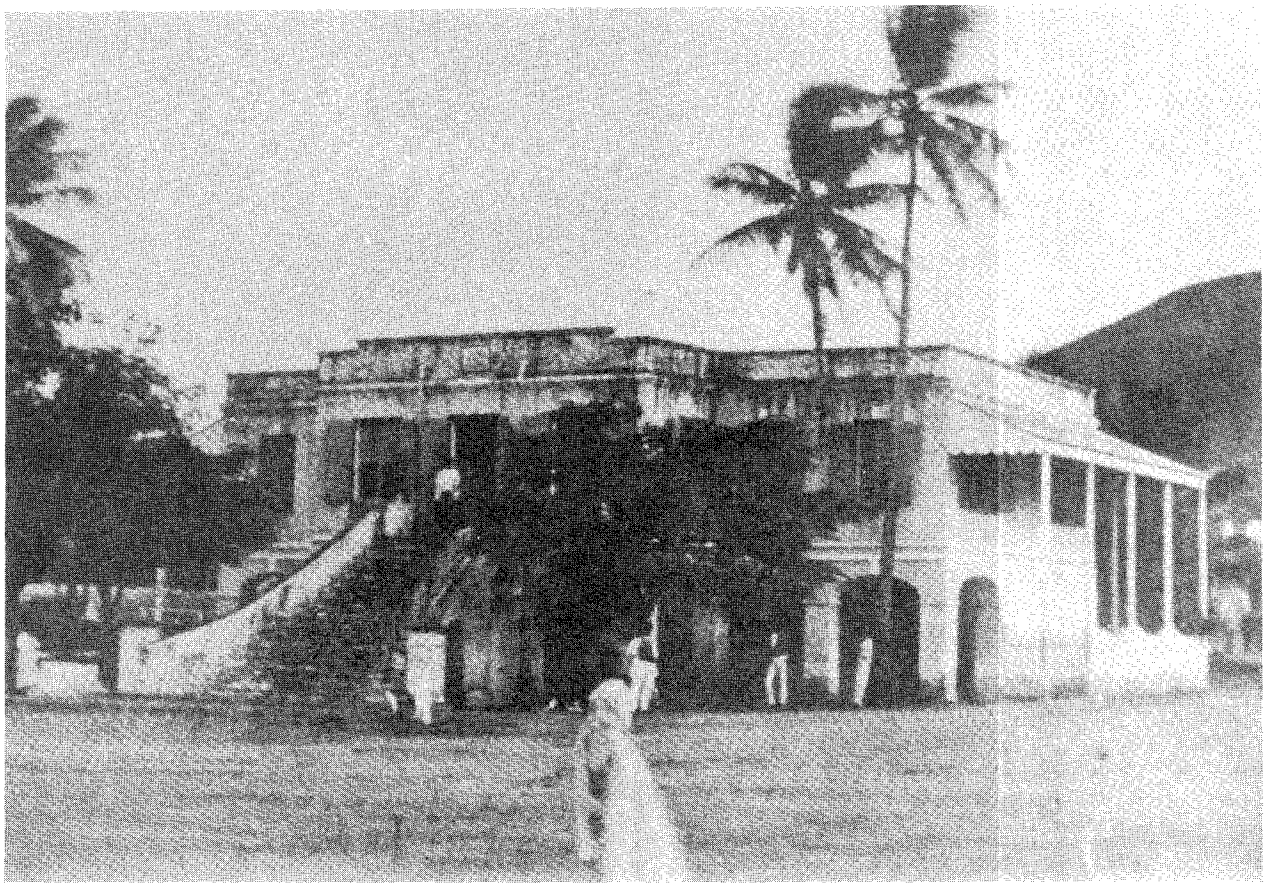
Christiansted, St. Croix, Photograph by Axel Ovesen, ca. 1902 from a post card. Historic Structures Report, Library Building, Christiansted National Historic Site, Herbert Olsen, August 1961, page 102.

This illustration once again shows the open area between the Customs House and Scale House. One palm and a flamboyant tree are evident to the right of the Customs House stairs. Flamboyants are seen to the left.

HOUSE (Figure 6)

d Customs House, 1843-1844, by Henry Jackson Morton, Vest India Sketchbook and Diary, 1843-44.

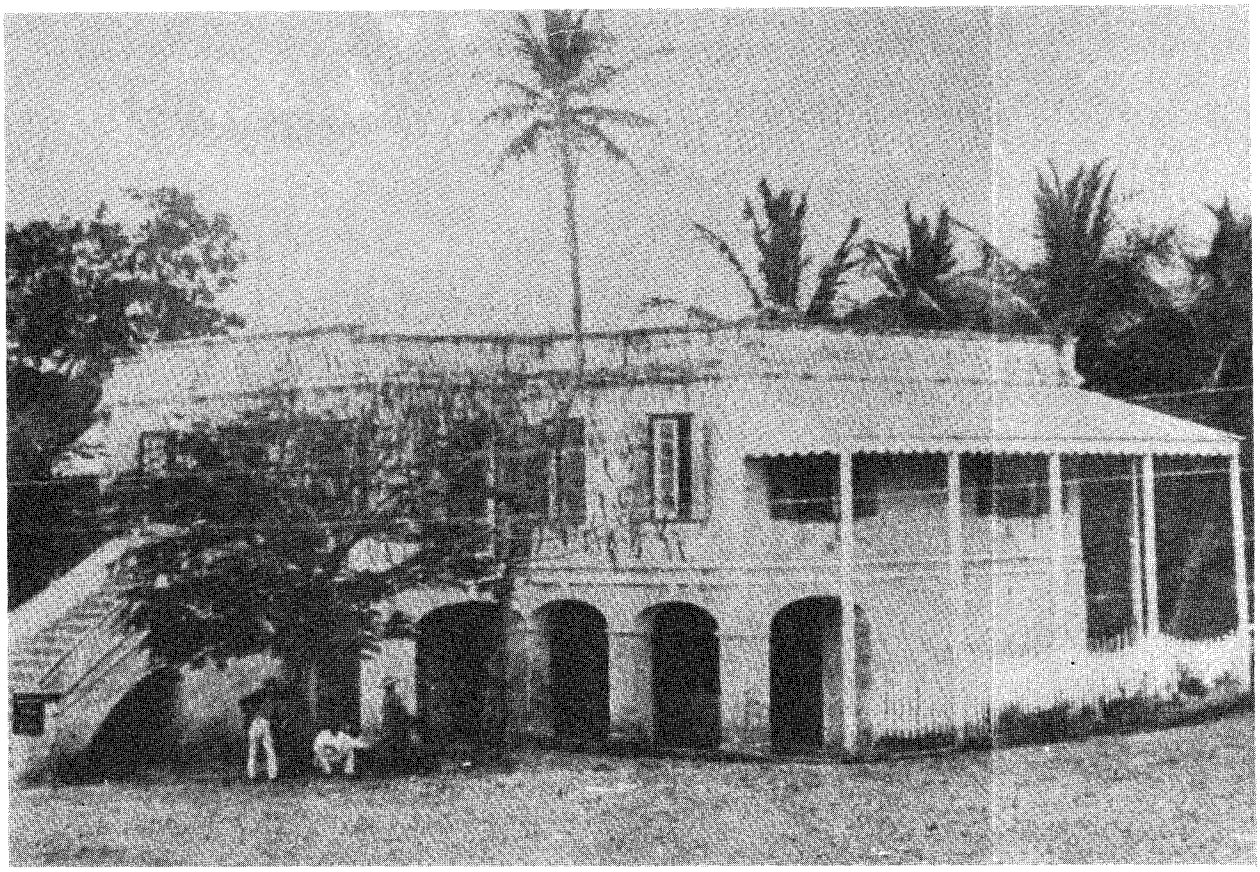
ms shown in Morton's previous view (Figure 3) are vident in the immediate area around the front of the House. The top of a flamboyant is seen on extreme The irregular slope is again shown in the area around t and the tops of two flamboyants are seen above the e yard wall. Other than trees, the area seems to lack ınd cover. Considering the amount of foot and vehicle : which is shown in the illustration and is :ally known to have occurred, this is not surprising.



B. CUSTOMS HOUSE (Figure 7)

Danish Post Office (Customs House), Christiansted, St. Croix, Photograph by Edwin A. Scholfield, ca. 1881-82. Historic Structures Report. Library Building, page 100.

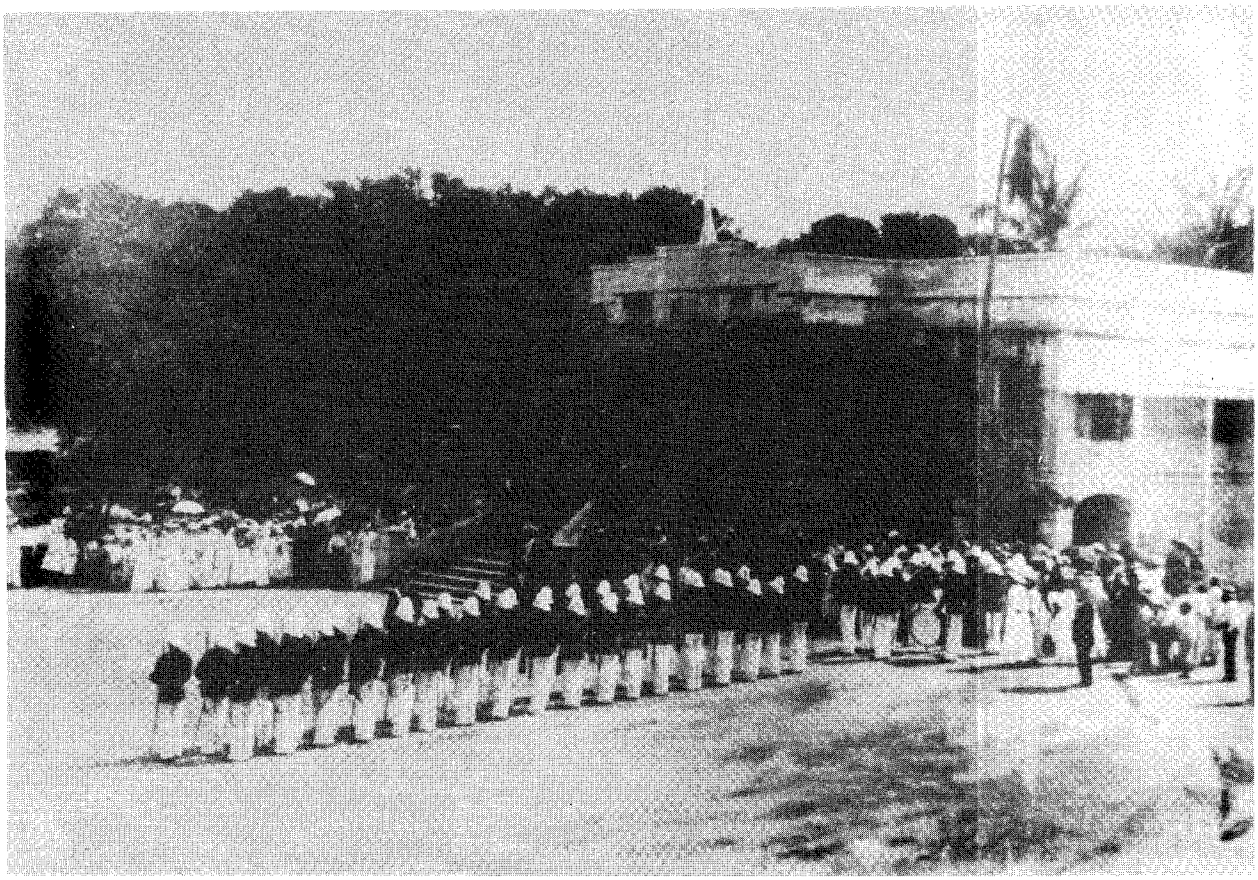
Two palms are shown on the right side of the front of the Customs House. A flamboyant is on each side of the Customs House steps. Of particular note is the palm on the left. In this and the next two photographs, the rate of growth of this tree can be traced over a 36-year period. The palm has a noticeable bend, that is approximately level with the coping running beneath the parapet of the Customs House. This bend remains constant while the tree continues to grow taller. The rate of growth appears to be remarkably slow, giving at least a general idea of the age of the tree and how long it may have been in this location. The surrounding area appears to be hard-packed earth.



B. CUSTOMS HOUSE (Figure 8)

Danish Post Office, Christiansted, St. Croix, ca. 1900. Historic Structures Report, Library Building, page 101.

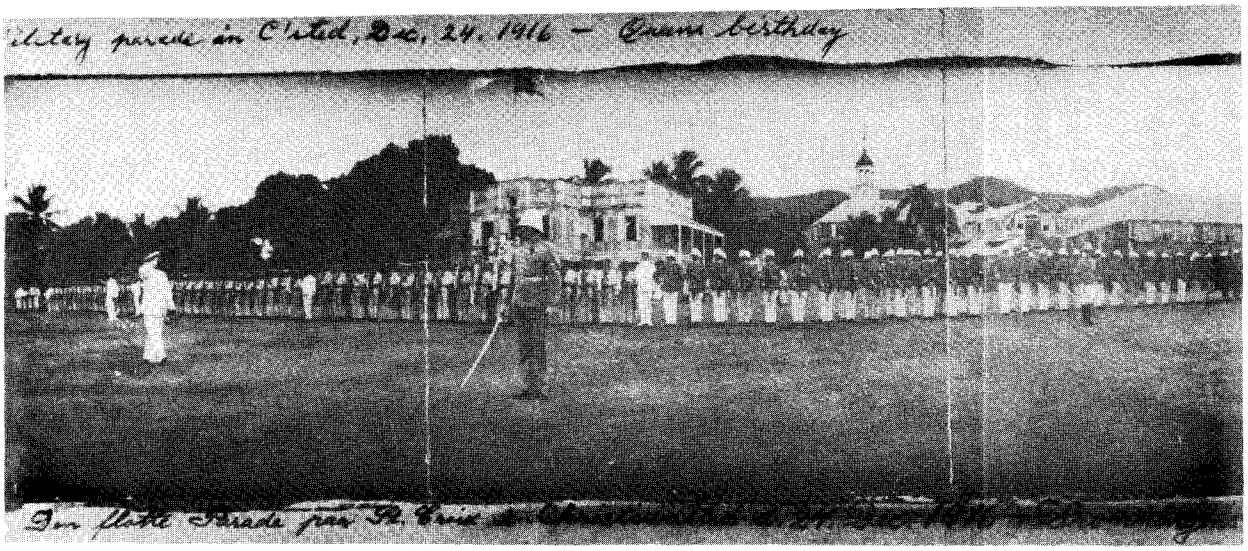
As Herbert Olsen states in his report, "Landscaping seems to be unaltered from 1881-82 conditions, although one of the coconut trees to the west of the extension must have blown down in the hurricane of 1899." Note the rate of growth of the previously mentioned palm and the increased height of the palms at the rear of the structure.



B. CUSTOMS HOUSE (Figure 9)

Ceremonies in observance of the death of King Christian IX, Christiansted, St. Croix, 1906. Historic Structures Report, Library Building, page 103.

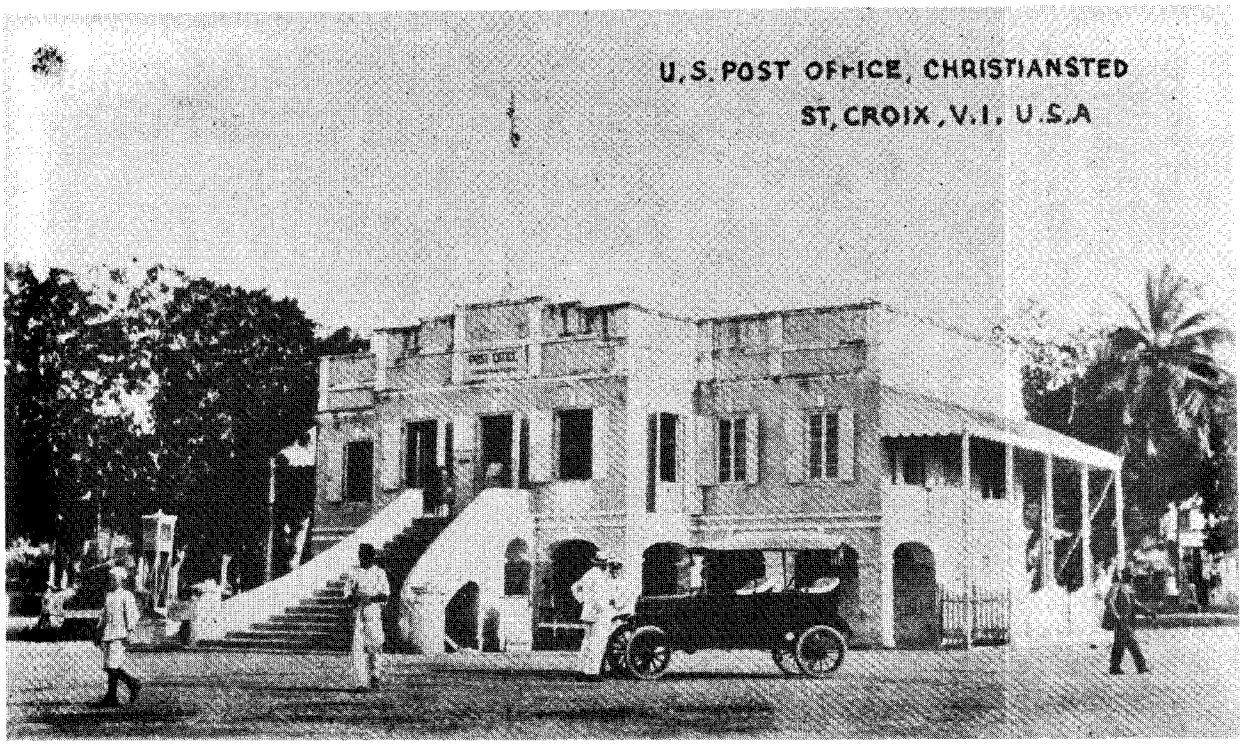
The palm has grown little since 1900 and appears a bit sickly. The second coping and increase in the level of the parapet occurred in 1902-03. The flamboyant to the right of the stairs appears to be doing well.



B. CUSTOMS HOUSE (Figure 10)

Military Parade in Christiansted, December 24, 1916, Queens Birthday, William F. Cissel Collection, St. Croix, Virgin Islands.

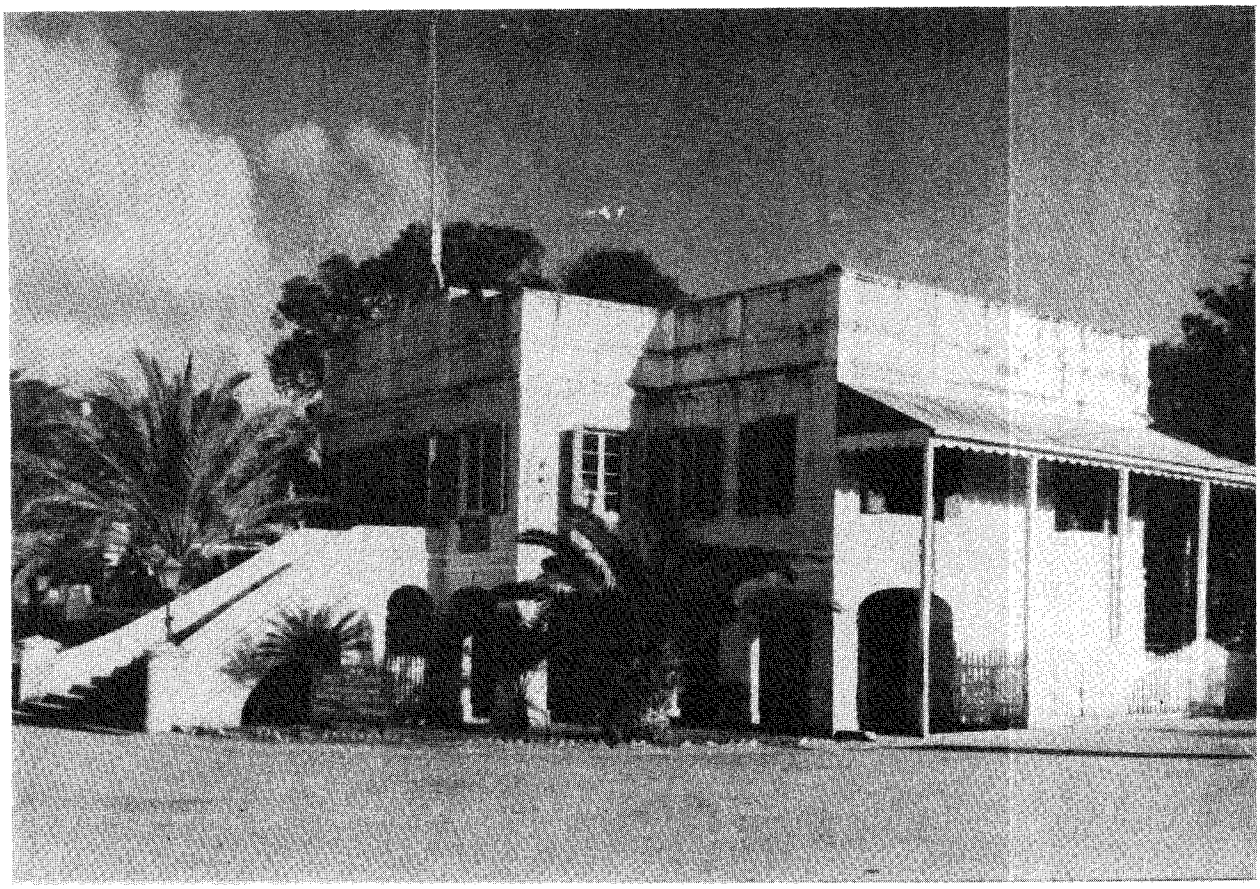
By this time, the flamboyant and palm are gone. Possibly the victims of the 1916 hurricane. This photo vividly illustrates the open area between the waterfront and the Customs House, and between Customs House and the Scale House (out of the picture to the extreme right). The area between the Customs House and the fort (out of the picture to the extreme left) is well populated by flamboyants and a few palms. Those in the background could also be in the area leading from Hospital Street to the entrance to the fort.



B. CUSTOMS HOUSE (Figure 11)

United States Post Office, Christiansted, St. Croix, ca. 1917. William F. Cissel Collection.

This photograph of a post card also appears on page 104 of Olsen's report on the Customs House, where he also notes the loss of trees possibly the result of the October 1916, hurricane. The foreground shows hard-packed earth, a palm is seen at right rear and flamboyants at left.



B. CUSTOMS HOUSE (Figure 12)

Facade and west end of the Public Library, Christiansted, St. Croix. Photo by Jack Boucher, Historic Structures Report, Library Building, page 105.

At some point between 1917 and 1960, the landscaped plot and yellow bricks set diagonally on edge were added. To the left of the stairs, the balustraded terrace and landscaping of Hamilton Jackson Park are evident. Changes in the area surrounding the Customs House appear to have been quite subtle in the period from 1844-1916. After the transfer from Danish to United States authority, changes are more noticeable, particularly with the addition of Hamilton Jackson Park in 1945.

In the Historic Structures Report, Library Building (Old Danish Customs House and Post Office) author Herbert Olsen specifically addressed a chapter to landscaping. This chapter is reproduced here in its entirety.

LANDSCAPING

"Documentary sources contain no references to landscaping of the grounds around the building, and reliance must therefore be placed solely on illustrative materials which show the building and its grounds.

The earliest known illustration which sheds light on the subject is a painting of Christiansted of about 1825 which shows a number of coconut trees in front of the Customs House and Warehouse. Sabroe also shows a number of coconut trees in front of the building around 1835. Meanwhile, it is doubtful that there were any trees or shrubs planted behind the building, at least not until all the outbuildings were removed from the yard of the Customs House in 1840-41.

Pictorial evidence is subsequently lacking until about 1866, at which time no coconut trees are visible in front of the building, but some are seen behind it; some indistinguishable trees are also visible in the open area between the fort and the Customs House. Coconut trees are visible behind the building as late as 1917, but most of them were apparently blown down by the hurricane of October 1916.

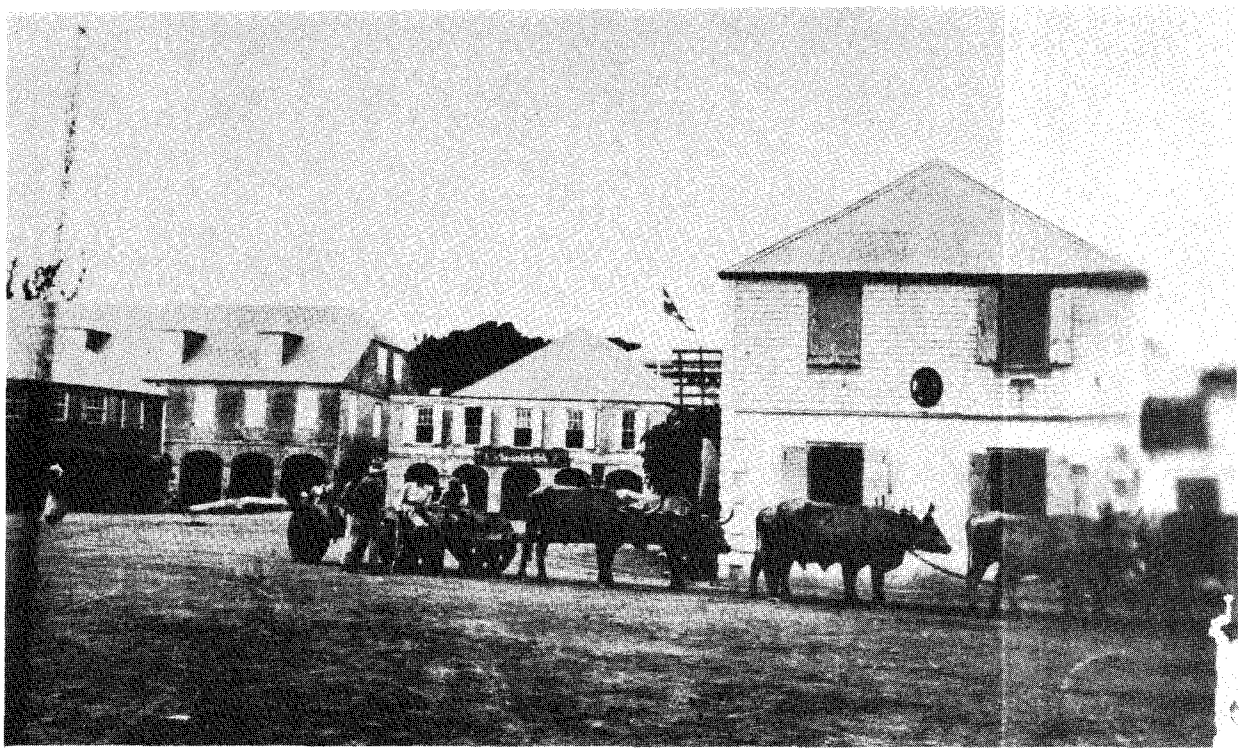
As for landscaping in front of the building, most of the coconut trees must have been blown down or taken out by 1881-82, since only two coconut trees are visible at the northwest corner of the Customs House or Post Office. What appears to be flamboyant trees have been planted on either side of the main stairway sometime prior to this date. One of the two remaining coconut trees apparently did not survive the hurricane of 1899, and the hurricane of 1916 seems to have uprooted all the trees which stood in front of the building.

Still surviving in 1917, however, was a large mahogany tree on the east side of the building, as well as several smaller mahogany trees behind and at the southwest corner of the building. These mahogany trees still stand today.

A number of palm trees have been planted in front of the Library Building in modern times, and more recently an effort has been made to grow hibiscus in the grounds on either side of the stairway."

I agree entirely with Olsen's findings and have examined the illustrations on which he based his statements. Many of the illustrations I have used are from this report. The only illustrations I have added are Morton's 1843-44 sketches which had not been located at the time of Olsen's report and do show palms in front of the Customs House and the photographs from the William F. Cissel Collection.

(Figures 14, 15 and 20 were later added to this report to aid in the reader's visual understanding of the historic site.)



C. SCALE HOUSE/WHARF AREA (Figure 13)

Wharf area, Scale House at right, ca. 1913. William F. Cissel Collection.

In all previous illustrations, the area between the Customs House and the Scale House has appeared open and without any vegetative cover. Considering again, the amount of activity and commerce going on in the general area, this is not surprising. The following two illustrations show this vividly.

In this photograph the well-packed earth, marked with the tracks of many vehicles, is quite evident. There has been some speculation that the surface level may be higher now (especially due to paving) than during the period of historic use. Field investigations at the site (November 1984) led to an interesting discovery. On the left hand corner of the building with wood shingling, 11 quoins (square masonry corner blocks) can be counted. The same holds true of the existing structure today.

Figure 14

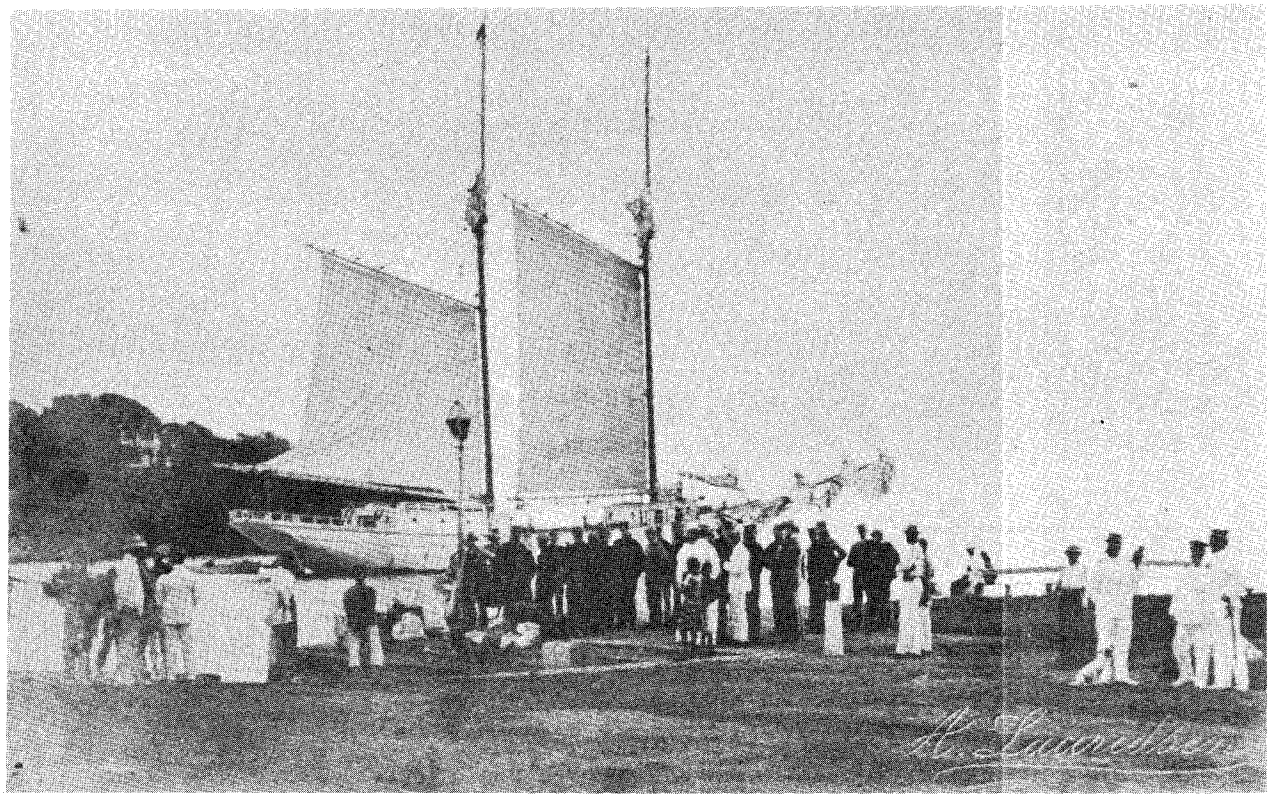
Figure 15

C. SCALE HOUSE/WHARF AREA (November 1984)

C. SCALE HOUSE/WHARF AREA (Figure 16)

Wharf area, Scale House, extreme left, ca. 1913. William F. Cissel Collection.

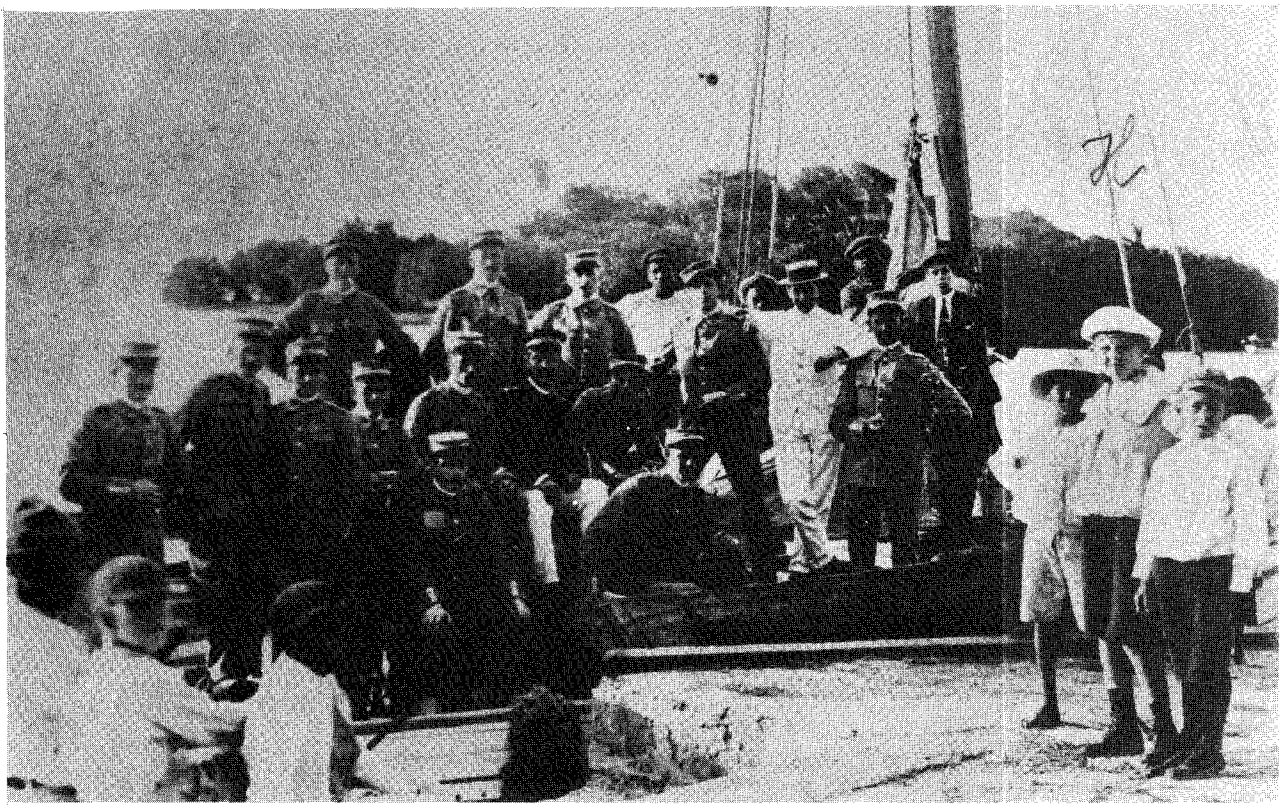
The 11 quoins at the corner of the building can still be counted. The hard-packed earth leading to the Wharf area is also shown. The three cannon shown in the 1866 view (Figure 4) are also visible (located by looking left to right from the crane first locating the person seated on the bulkhead, next the lamppost, then the vertical cannon having a light bottom dark muzzle swell. Next proceeding right to the individual standing and then to the cannon with a man beside it. Finally right to the cannon leaning at angle). These three cannon and the lamppost were still in these positions in November 1984. They serve as good landmarks for noting alterations and extentions to the Wharf area and are part of the historic scene.



C. SCALE HOUSE/WHARF AREA (Figure 17)

Wharf area, Protestant Cay in background left, ca. 1907. William F. Cissel Collection.

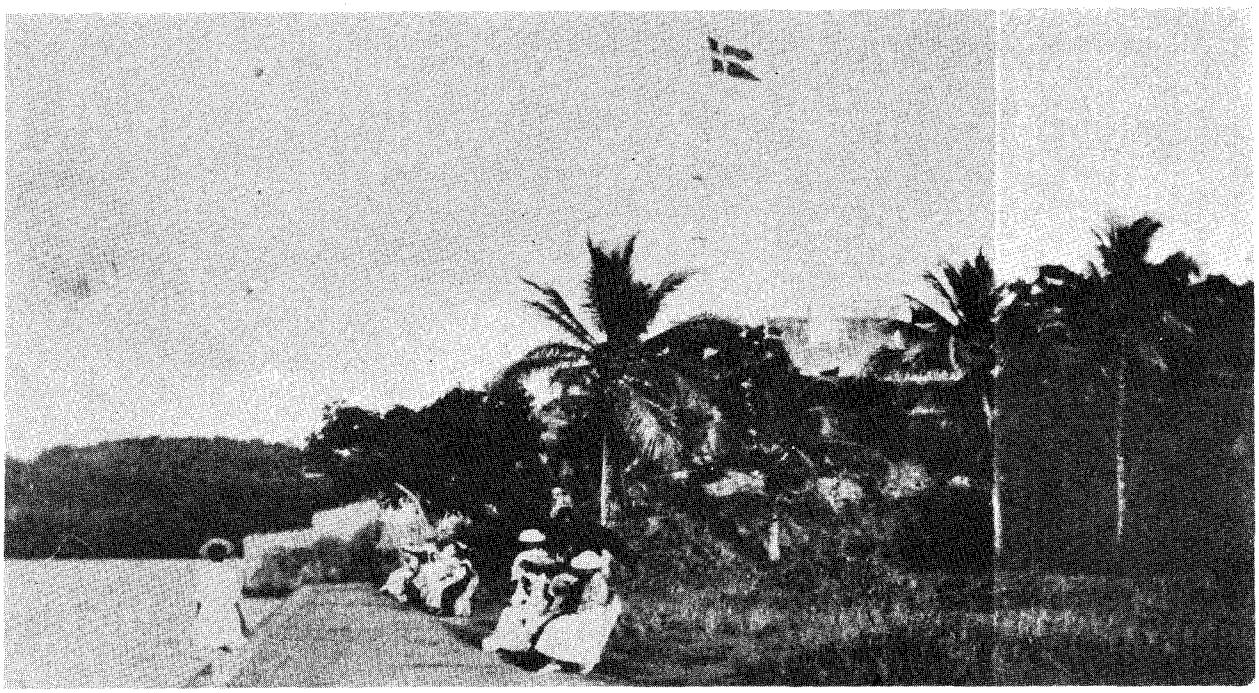
In this photograph the hard-packed earth in the foreground is evident while construction details of the wharf and bulkhead remain vague. The landmarks are again evident. The cannon on the left is partly obscured by an individual leaning against it. The lamppost and cannon to the right are clearly visible. The cannon (which leans and contains some type of container in its muzzle as it does today) can be seen over the left shoulder of the third officer to the left. Middle right, shows grass.



C. SCALE HOUSE/WHARF AREA (Figure 18)

Post card, Wharf at Christiansvaern, St. Croix, with Protestant Cay in background, 1915. William F. Cissel Collection.

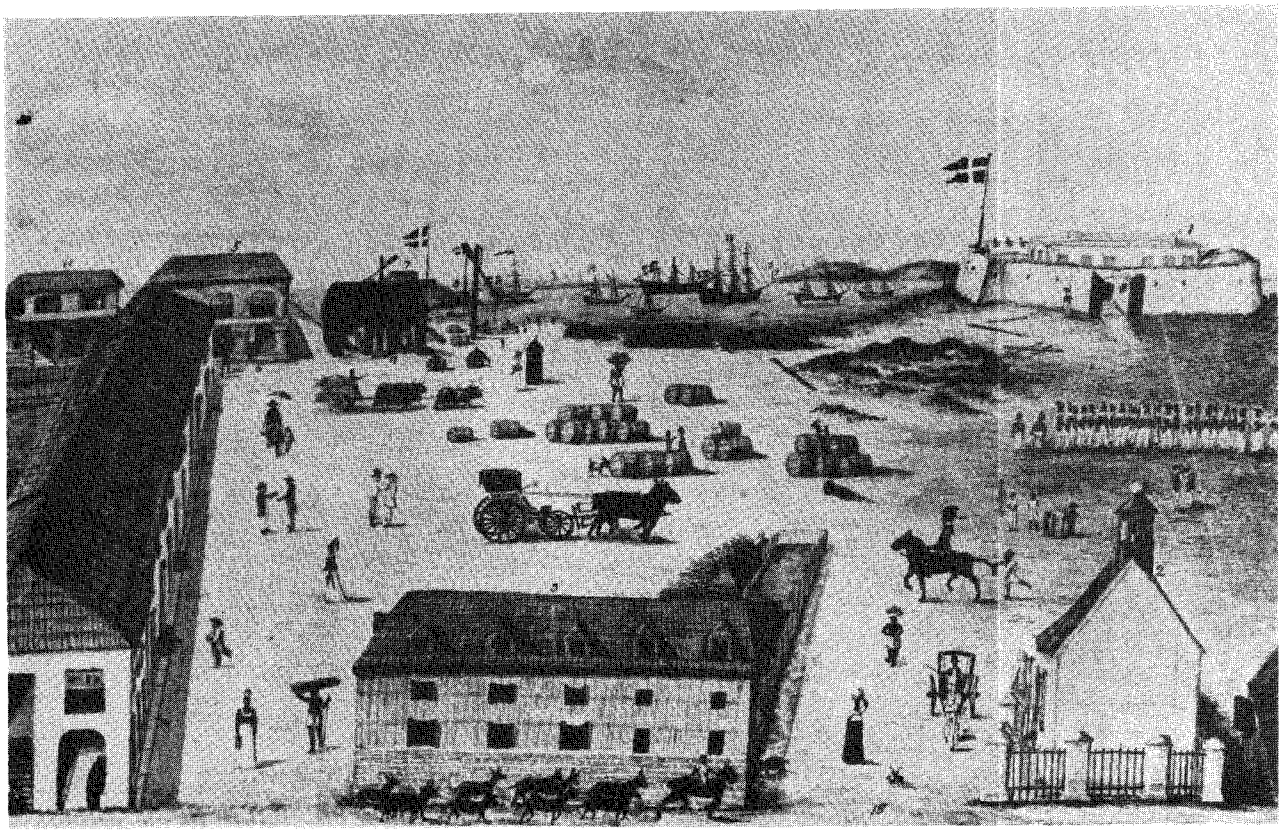
Construction details of the Wharf area are more clearly shown in this photograph. The top step (lower center of photo) is obviously brick. Irregularly poured concrete is evident just above the step and the top rim of the wooden bulkhead is shown. The top edge of a bulkhead is evident here. A wooden bulkhead is documented as early as 1835 (Figure 2).



D. FORT CHRISTIANSVAERN (Figure 19 - Figure 20 [November 1984])

Wharf area, northwest bastion of fort in background, ca. 1910-17. William F. Cissel Collection.

This promenade which extended to the docking facilities shown in Figures 16 and 17 is apparently made of concrete. The modern promenade extends to the wing wall of the fort shown in the left center of the photo. Note the grass extending up to the fort and the flamboyant and palms on the irregular slope surrounding the fort.

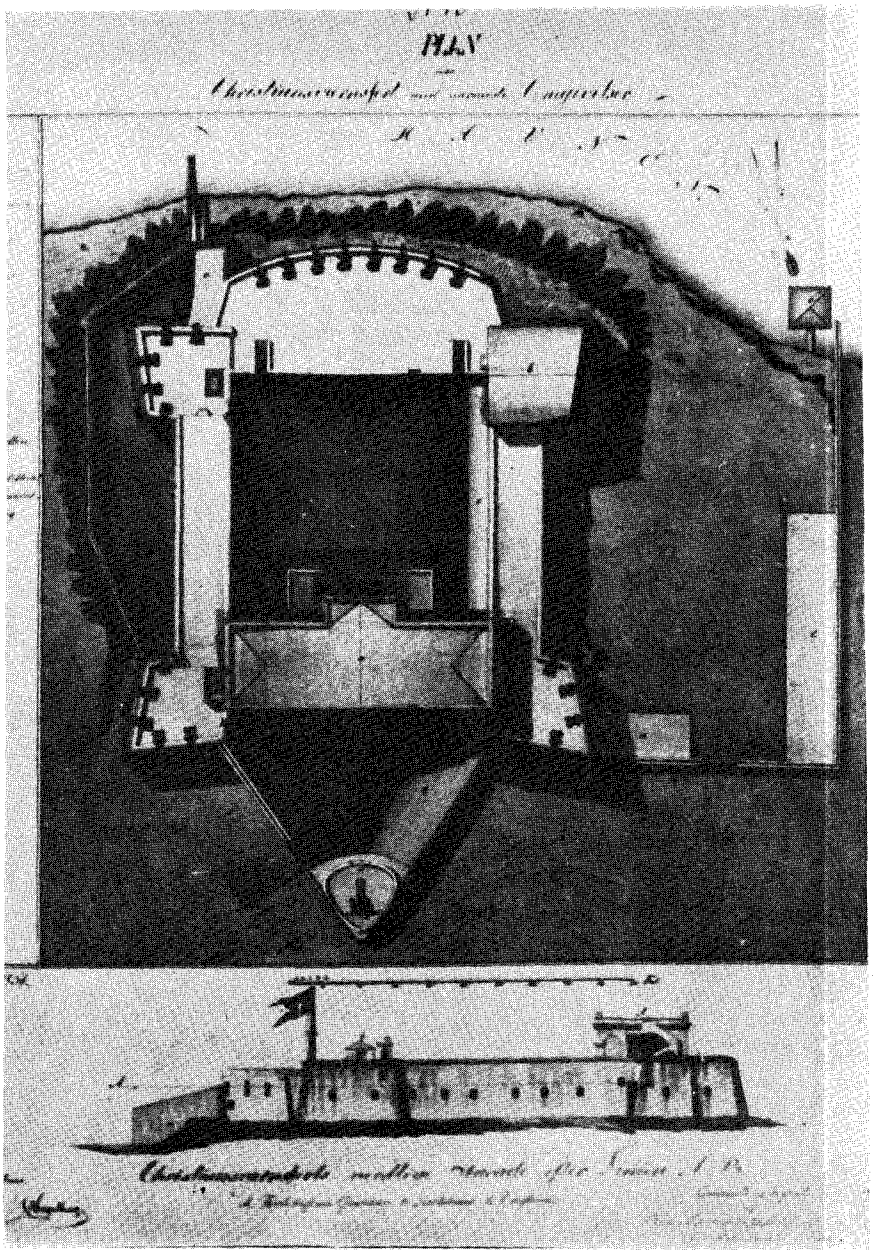


D. FORT CHRISTIANSVAERN (Figure 21)

Historic Structures Report, Fort Christiansvaern, Figure 18, page 186.

The fort went through many exterior alterations which would have a cause and effect relationship on the exterior landscaping. In addition, changes in military purpose and in the fort's primary function also affected how the grounds around the fort would be maintained.

This is the companion piece to Figure 1 and was, as stated previously, done from memory and is considered generally inaccurate. However, it does show the irregular slope around the fort and illustrates the general openness between the fort and other structures of the period.



D. FORT CHRISTIANSVAERN (Figure 22)

Plan of Fort Christiansvaern and cross sectional view of the west side of the fort. Drawn by Lieutenants Gjellerup and Friis, March 1836. Historic Structures Report, Fort Christiansvaern, page 192, Figure 24.

This vividly illustrates the irregular slope surrounding the fort. In Olsen's report on the fort, he states that the west wall of the fort was built in 1835 and had an average height of 12-1/2 feet. This was checked (November 1984) and found to still be true. The stable yard wall was completed in June 1836, and was 9-1/2 feet high. This, too, remains true. This gives specifications of a level to be maintained on the exterior portions of these two walls and gives the highest point from which to begin the slope of the earth embankment along the west wall between the southwest and northwest bastions. Particular attention needs to be given to the ramp extending from the gate of the ravelin.

The following information is from Olsen's report pertaining to the ramp and paving. Historic Structures Report, Fort Christiansvaern, Pages 94-95.

Pavements and Retaining Wall -- Eighteenth century records shed no light on this question except for Oxholm's plan which shows a small paved area just outside the ravelin gate and a narrow path from the gate to the sally port steps. Apparently the rest of the grounds inside the ravelin walls were simply hard-packed earth in 1779, but at a level considerably below the existing level.

An area measuring 36 feet by 8 feet wide was paved in front of the ravelin gate with bricks laid on edge in 1815, and the area "from the ravelin up to the fort" was laid "with bricks where necessary."

In 1817 it was recommended that the old pavement in the ravelin should be torn up and that the entire ravelin up to the shed should be repaved with bricks laid flat. As far as is known, this proposal was carried out during the rehabilitation of the fort in 1817-18.

Repavement of the narrow area or path leading from the gate to the sally port was necessary in 1834-35, and the bricks were laid on edge in contrast to the pavement of 1817-18.

The plans of 1836 clearly show a paved area about 20 feet by 8 feet outside the ravelin gate. Inside the ravelin there is definitely a paved area from a line from the left of the sally port steps and ravelin gate over to the shed. The area to the left of the demarcation line on the left side of the ravelin is differently shaded than the area to the right, but this does not necessarily mean that this area was unpaved. Indeed, there is no evidence to indicate that the flat brick pavement laid in this area in 1817-18 was torn up in 1834-35.

As for the retaining wall, there is no evidence that the wall was erected on the west side of the newly edgewise-paved path in 1834-35 as a termination for the path. On the contrary, physical evidence indicates that the path was separated from the adjacent flat-paved areas by a row of bricks laid on edge at a 45-degree angle between the two. Even more conclusive is the fact that documentary sources for this era and the next decade are so comprehensive as to virtually preclude the erection of the wall until after 1847.

While the hypothesis cannot be proved or disproved at the present time, it is probable that the retaining wall was not erected until after the fort became a police station and courthouse in 1878.

Investigations at the site, November 1984, disclosed a few bricks laid on edge in place at the ravelin gate. These covered an area 8-feet wide (the approximate width of the ravelin gate). The following illustrations will show a ramp at the ravelin gate and will be discussed at that time. Olsen also discusses the retaining wall and earth fill inside the ravelin yard to the left upon entering. I concur that this definitely does not date from the period of military usage. This is quite obvious, when one takes into consideration that the earth fill totally negates the use of the artillery embrasure and the rifle ports in this portion of the ravelin yard wall. A large tree growing in this area has already caused considerable damage to the paved portion of the ravelin yard. It was to be our recommendation that an archeological survey be conducted of this area to determine if it had indeed been paved.

In my trip to the Southeast Regional Office, I found that the library copy of Olsen's report on Fort Christiansvaern also contained the original and extra copy of a report entitled Archeological Data by Jean C. Harrington, Regional Chief of Interpretation, June 1960. Investigations of the fill within the ravelin yard were conducted on April 25-27, 1960, and did reveal paving in this area. This report is not contained within the files at Christiansted National Historic Site. It is copied here in its entirety so that all the findings of the 1960 investigation might be given consideration.

ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA

a. Purpose of Excavation

Minor archeological explorations were carried out at Fort Christiansvaern on April 25-27, 1960, for the following purposes:

(1) To determine date of fills in various areas within the fort so as to arrive at grades to be re-established in the fort's restoration.

(2) To determine nature and quantity of these fills so as to be able to program the removal operation, if earth removal should be required, and to estimate cost of such removal.

(3) To determine nature of artifact content of these fills so as to (a) decide on method of removal, if removal is rquired, and (b) establish the most productive source of objects, if they should be needed for museum exhibits.

Although the explorations furnished some new architectural information, this was not an objective of the project. Nor was it designed to secure artifact material, but rather to determine likely sources for such material.

b. Time and Cost Data for Explorations

The work was supervised by Regional Chief of Interpretation, J. C. Harrington, at no cost to the restoration project, other than a portion of his travel expense. Two laborers were used for approximately 3 days. Total expense charged against this project was $310. Work began on April 25, and all backfilling was completed on April 27.

c. Previous Archeological Reports

No previous archeological excavating has ever been carried on at Fort Christiansvaern.

d. Further Archeological Research Needed

The only additional archeological work called for is that incident to the detailed architectural study for the purpose of examining footings and structural conditions below present grades, and for possible recovery of objects suitable for museum exhibits (see later recommendations).

e. Report on Explorations

Five exploratory trenches, each 3 feet wide, were dug in three areas, as shown elsewhere in this report: two (Trenches "A" and "B") in the area between the main fort and the outer wall along the west and northwest sides of the fort; one (Trench "C") behind the stableyard retaining wall on the east side of the fort; and two (Trenches "D" and "E") in the ravelin. It was decided in conference with Messrs. Olsen and Gjessing that no exploration was necessary in the courtyard. In all but one instance (Trench "E") the trenches were excavated down to bedrock.

Excavating was carried down in 6-inch levels, the earth being screened or carefully trowelled. Artifact material was later consolidated for each trench from those fills determined to have been made at one time. Conditions encountered in each trench are shown in the attached drawings and photographs (Figures 1 through 5).

Conclusions

1. Area on west side (Trenches "A" and "B")

Documentary studies show that the outer wall was built in 1835 and that there were probably no changes here until 1903 when the area concerned was developed for use as a jail yard (Section 6, p. 38). At that time the entrance through the wall and some of the loopholes were blocked up. The excavations in both test trenches show that most of the fill in this area apparently was made in 1903 to level the space for its new use. Prior to that, the bed rock was exposed except for a small accumulation at the toe of the main fort wall and a space along the outer wall, which had been filled with broken rock and construction debris to form a flat surface for the soldiers to stand on. This loose fill material would have taken care of the rain water, which finally drained out through square drains, or "weep holes." This prepared platform was 3' - 7" below the bottom of the loop holes at both trenches.

No objects were found in the main fill that would date it as late as 1903, but that it was made at this time is the only reasonable conclusion. No cultural material came from the original platform fill, other than a few pieces of roofing tile. It was clear that the main fill, presumably made in 1903, was brought to the site from some other part of the town, and that it would not yield artifacts that would be of value as museum exhibits dealing with the fort. It consists almost entirely of small fragments of ceramics and glass of the 18th and 19th centuries.

It is recommended that in restoring the fort this fill be removed down to bedrock and the "gun platform." The work

can be done in the cheapest and most feasible manner without consideration for contents of the earth, although a watch should be kept for any unusual objects or structural remains. The estimated quantity of fill to be removed is 50 cubic yards. A more accurate estimate could be secured, if necessary, by checking depths to bedrock at other points in the area.

2. Area on east side behind stableyard retaining wall (Trench "C")

According to documentary evidence, this retaining wall was constructed in 1840-41 (Section 6, p. 32). The very rough, unfinished condition of the inner surface of the wall clearly shows that it was never intended that this face be left exposed, or stuccoed. Obviously the space behind the wall was filled to its present grade very soon after the wall was built. The fill from Trench "C" produced much more artifact material than "A" and "B", including, in addition to a good selection of ceramic fragments, one whole glass bottle and other glass fragments, a small brass padlock, an iron cannon ball, clay tobacco pipe fragments, and numerous iron nails and spikes. A careful study of this material by a specialist might confirm the conclusion that the fill was made in 1841, but no objects of recent date were recognized by the writer.

In restoring the fort, it is recommended that this area behind the retaining wall be left at its present level. Careful excavation of a portion of the area would almost cetainly yield material suitable for museum exhibits of pre-1841 date, but it would not be proper to represent them as having come from the fort or used by the garrison at the fort.

3. Area in ravelin (Trenches "D" and "E")

Documentary research shows that the ravelin walls were built in 1749, but that the area inside went through several structural stages. In 1817-18 it was paved throughout with bricks laid flat. Then in 1834-35 a narrower section leading from the sallyport to the gate was relaid with bricks on edge. There is no documentary information on the low wall running from the present steps to the gate.

Trench "D" was extended down to bedrock and revealed a condition resembling that along the outer wall in "A" and "B". However, the prepared earth platform along the ravelin wall was packed very hard. Drainage did not have to be taken care of here, since the entire area sloped southward toward the point of the ravelin. The bottom of the loop hole at Trench "D" is 4'-2 1/2" above this hard-packed floor, or "gun platform."

There are two zones of fill above this original platform ("a" and "b" on drawing). No recent material was found in "a", and it was not possible to determine its terminal date. On superficial inspection of the washed material, it did appear to be later than that from zone "b".

The situation in Trench "E" throws some light on the two zones in "D", and confirms the documentary evidence as to an earlier paving. This trench was carried down only to the bed of the brick paving. So little of this paving was left in the area excavated that no firm conclusion can be drawn as to its exact original elevation or method of construction. At least it is evident that there had been a brick pavement here, with bricks laid flatwise. There was a definite suggestion of two courses, representing two distinct paving levels, but this needs to be checked further. A few scattered bricks were found at this same level in Trench "D", but no conclusive evidence that the early flat brick paving extended to the ravelin wall. The extent of this early paving is only of academic interest, since it is probable that the restoration will go back to the 1834-35 edge-wise brick paving.

The low wall cutting across the ravelin was laid on remnants of the early brick paving, and would appear to have formed a termination for the edgewise paving of later date. This can be checked further during detailed architectural study, at which time a section of the present brick paving will likely be removed.

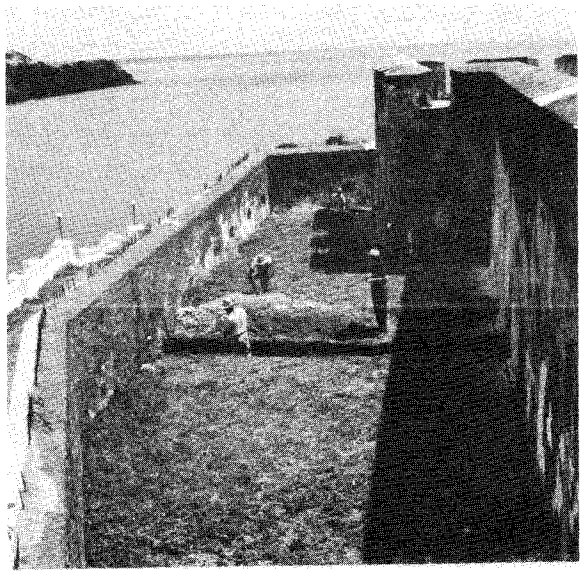
The condition in Trench "E" suggests that zone "a" in Trench "D" dates from the period of fill after the low wall was built. Whether it is removed in restoring the fort depends upon final determination of the date of the wall and its relation to the edgewise paving. Zone "b" is almost certainly pre-1817-18 (date of flatwise paving) and its excavation would presumably yield cultural material of an earlier date than that from behind the stableyard retaining wall. In view of the dates involved, however, and the unknown source of the fill, excavation here for the sole purpose of securing exhibitable objects would hardly seem worthwhile.

f. Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

Archeological evidence supports the conclusion drawn from documentary studies and inspection of the site that the fort was built on an outcropping rocky knoll. Intentional fills of the 19th century almost certainly were made with material brought in from some other area in the town. Refuse from the fort must have been thrown into the ocean or carried away from the site. None of the filled areas, therefore, can be excavated with the expectation of finding objects for possible on-site exhibits dealing with the fort, since none

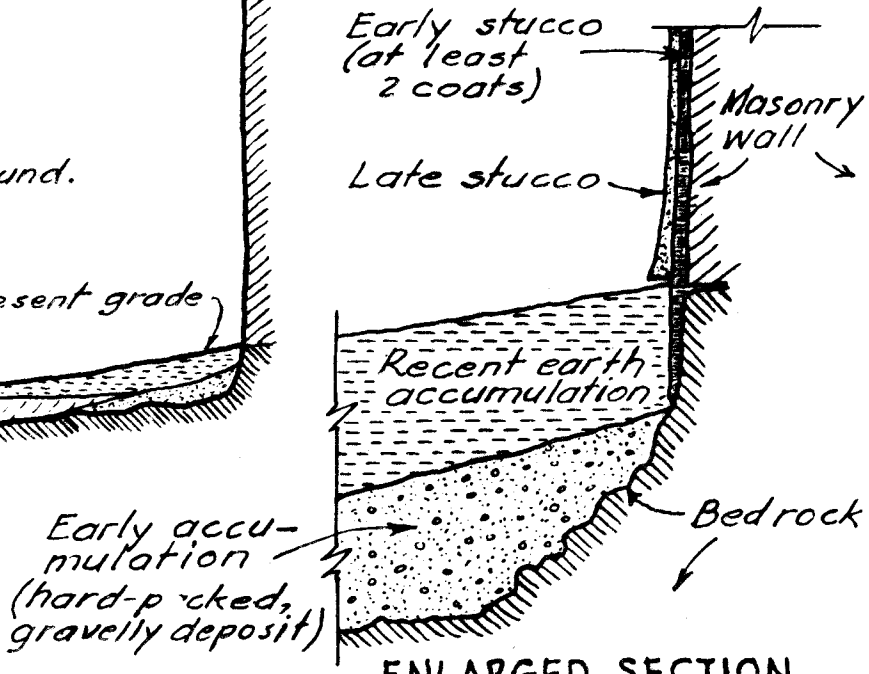
since none of the objects could be claimed as having direct association with the fort, unless they were of strictly military nature. Even then, their associatin would be only inferential.

In addition to the obvious recent developments outside the fort, the only fill recommended for removal in connection with restoration is that in the "jailyard" on the west and northwest sides. No additional archeological excavating is recommended, other than that incident to architectural studies, unless objects dating from before 1841 are desired for purely comparative purposes, or for general exhibit use, rather than for exhibits dealing specifically with life at the fort.



Looking northwest; "outer wall" on left, showing Trench "A" during excavation; Trench "B" in background.

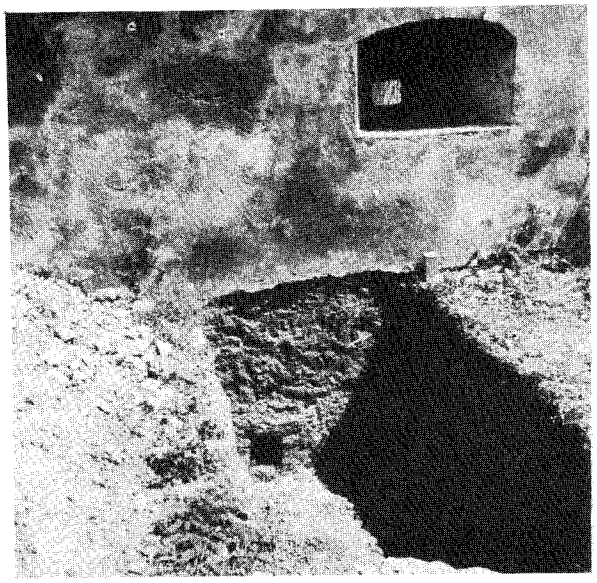
PROFILE ON NORTH SIDE OF TRENCH "A"
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



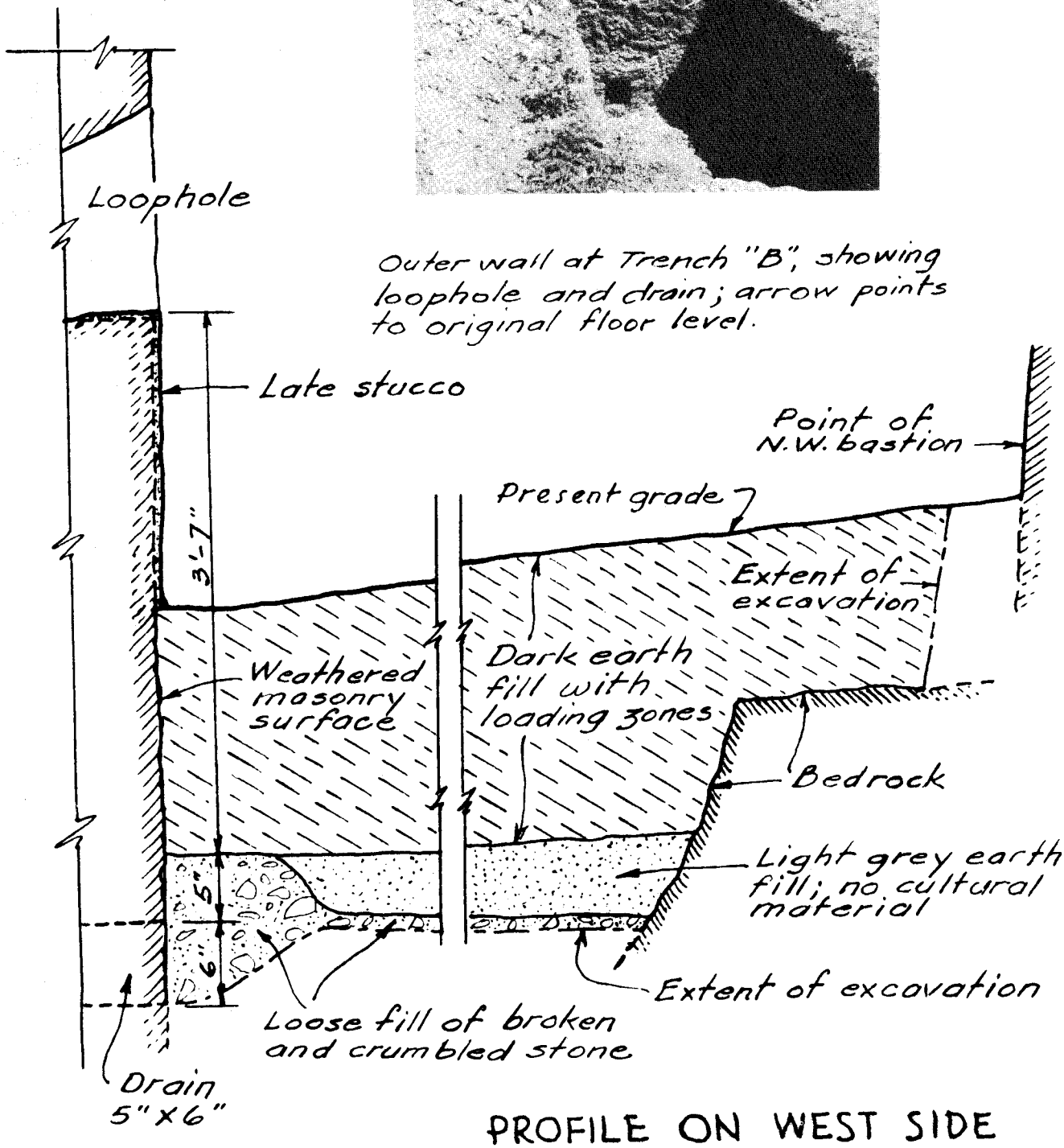
ENLARGED SECTION AT TOE OF MAIN WALL
SCALE - 1/8" = 1"

RECOMMENDED RESTORATION LEVEL

(1)



Outer wall at Trench "B", showing loophole and drain; arrow points to original floor level.



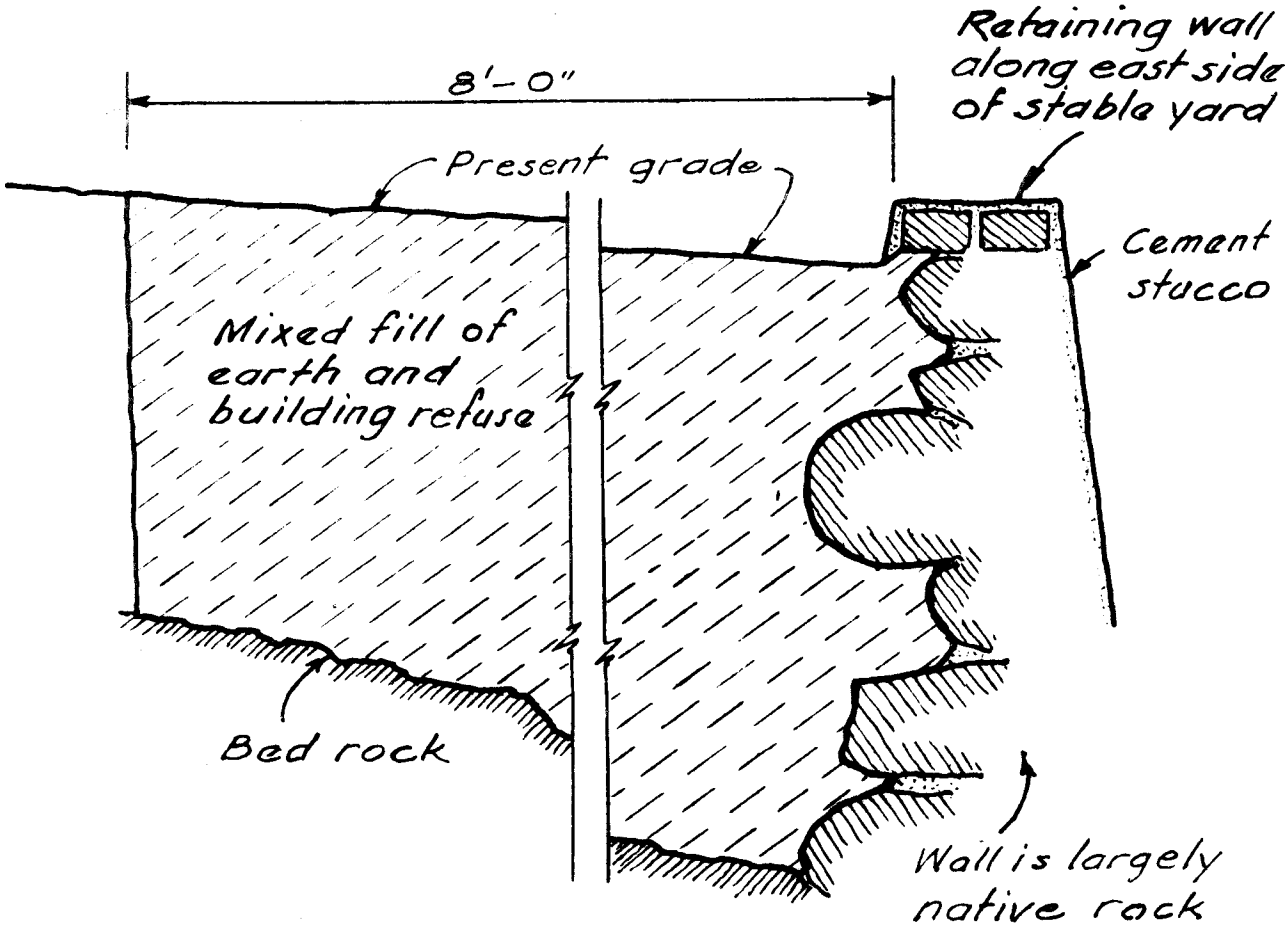
RECOMMENDED RESTOR'N LEVEL

PROFILE ON WEST SIDE OF TRENCH "C"

SCALE - 1" = 1'-0"

(2)

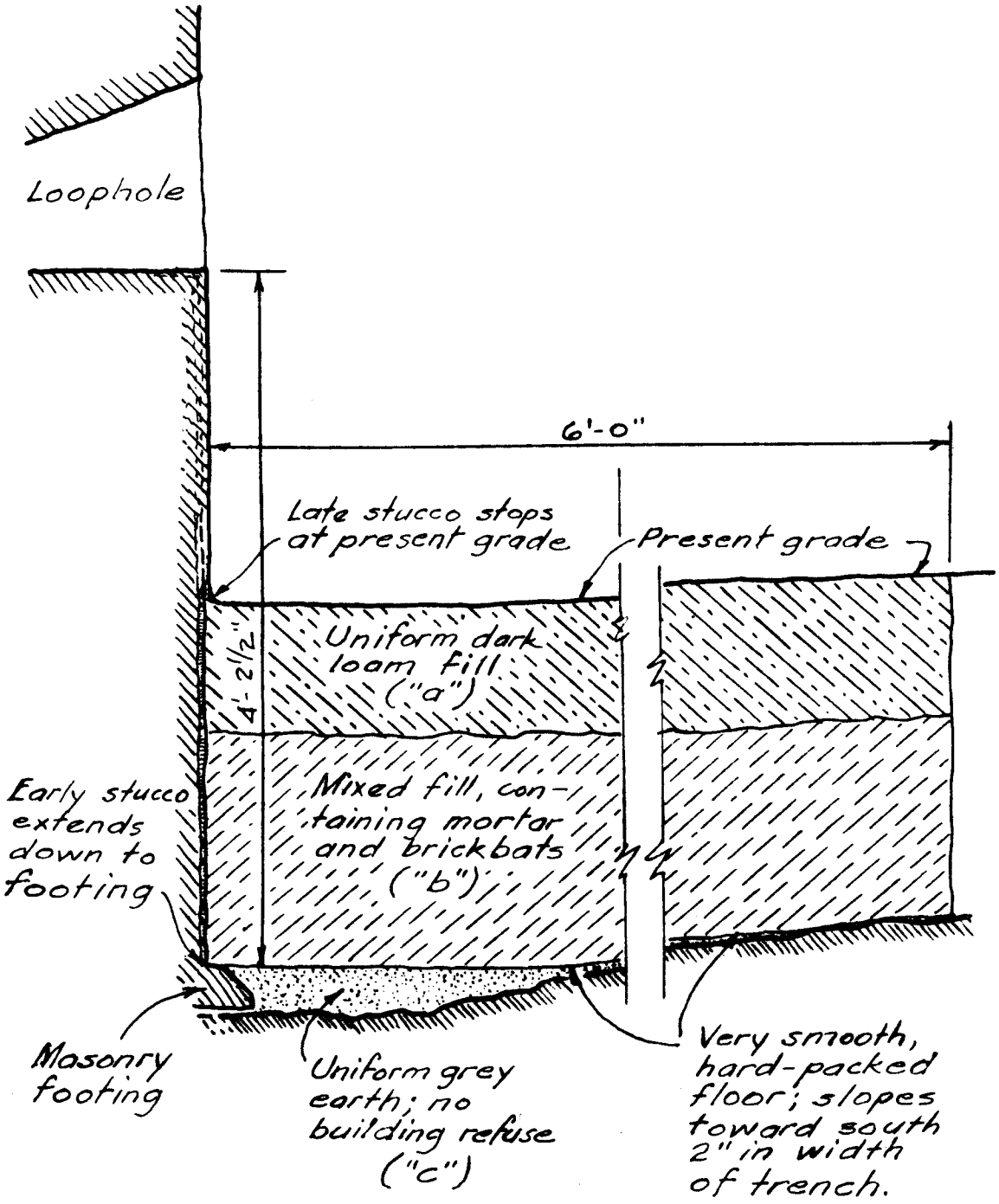
Trench "C", showing rough, unfinished inner face of Stable Yard retaining wall.



PROFILE ON NORTH SIDE OF TRENCH "C"

SCALE — 1" = 1'-0"

(3)

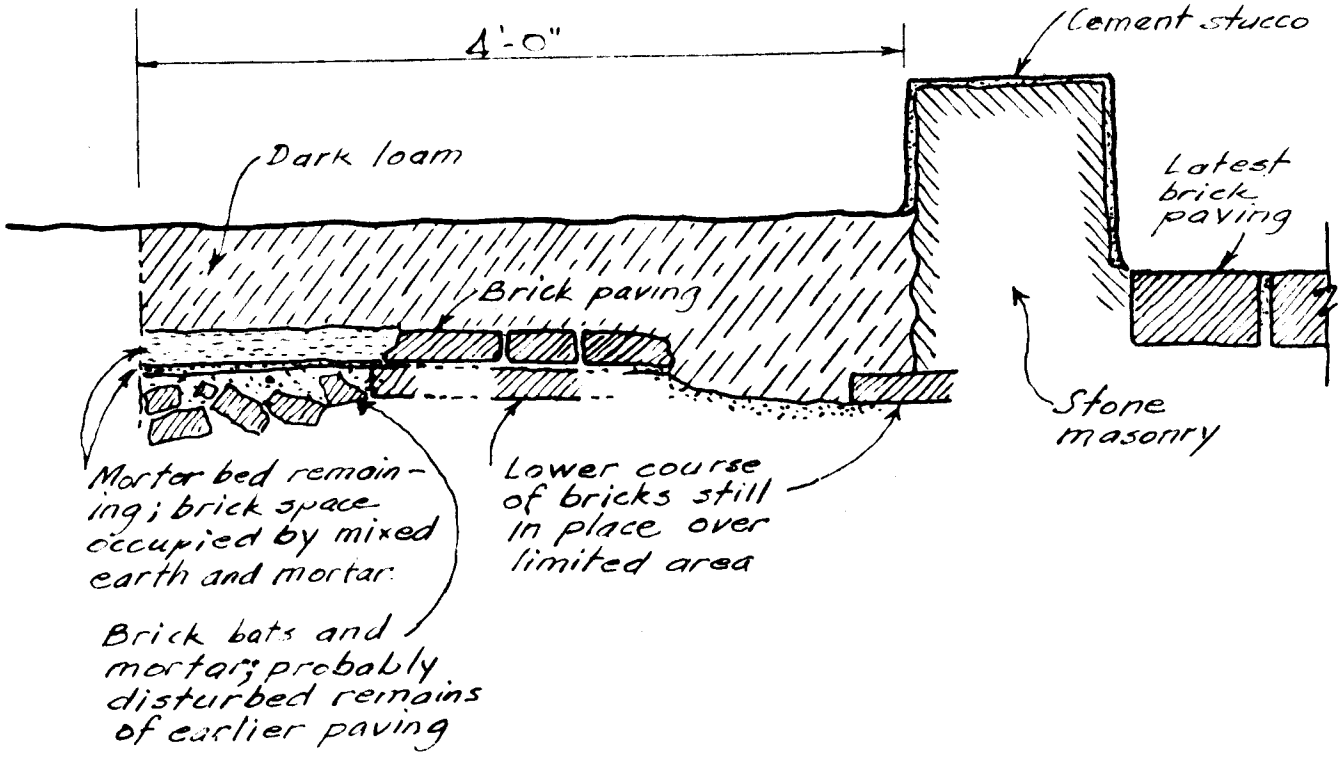


PROFILE ON NORTH SIDE OF TRENCH "D"

SCALE - 1" = 1'-0"

(4)

Trench "E" in ravelin, showing remnants of early brick paving below later wall and fill.



SECTION THRU TRENCH "E"

SCALE - 1" = 1'-0"

(5)

:y Jackson

1836 plan.
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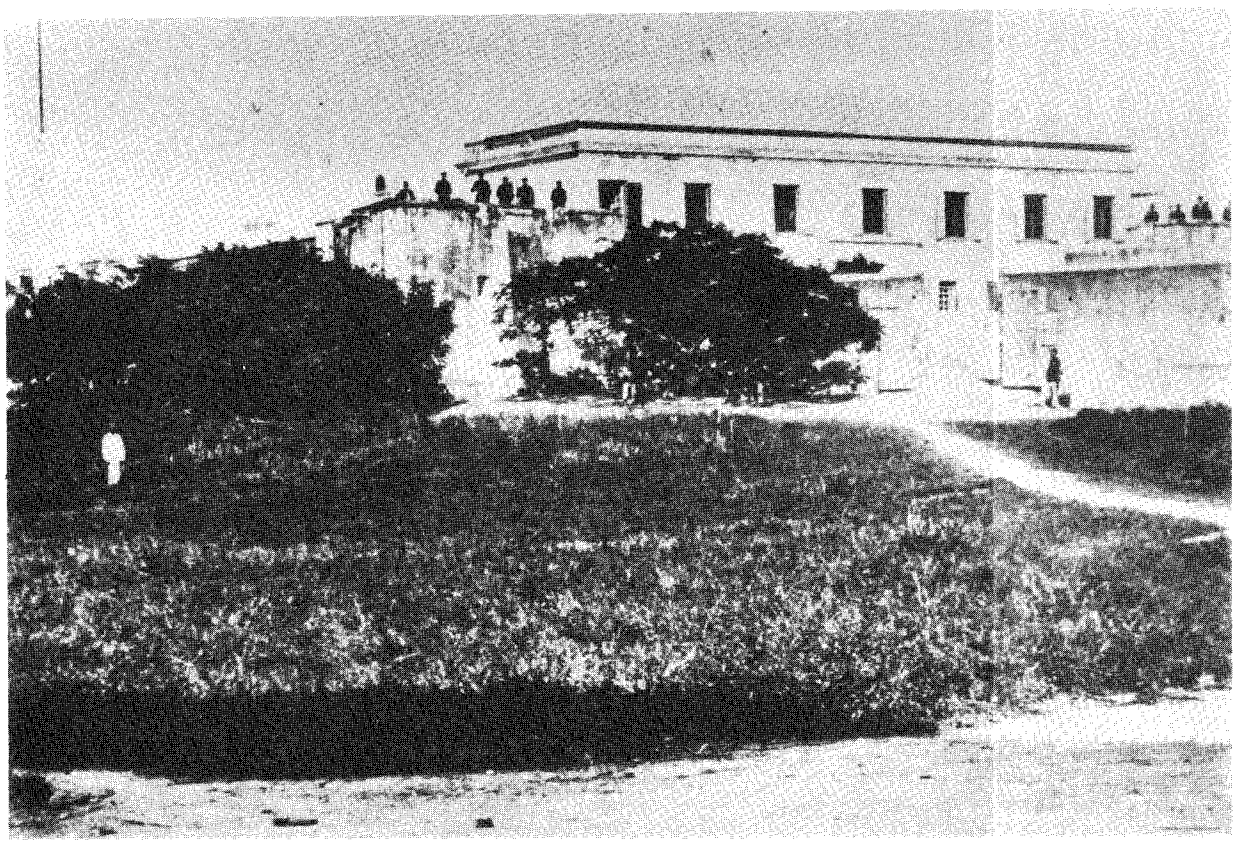
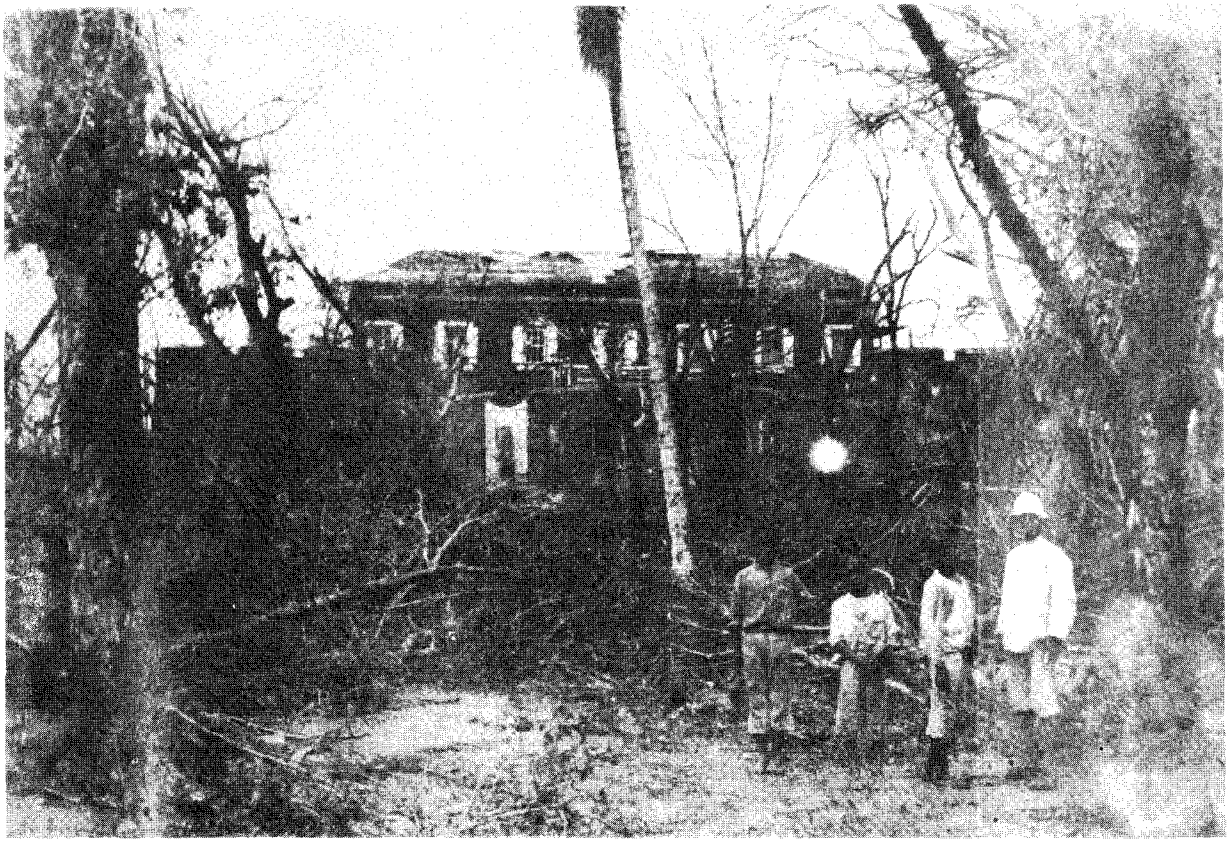


D. FORT CHRISTIANSVAERN (Figure 24)

Fort Christiansvaern, by Edwin A. Scholfield, 1880-81. Historic Structures Report, Fort Christiansvaern, page 20, plate 1.

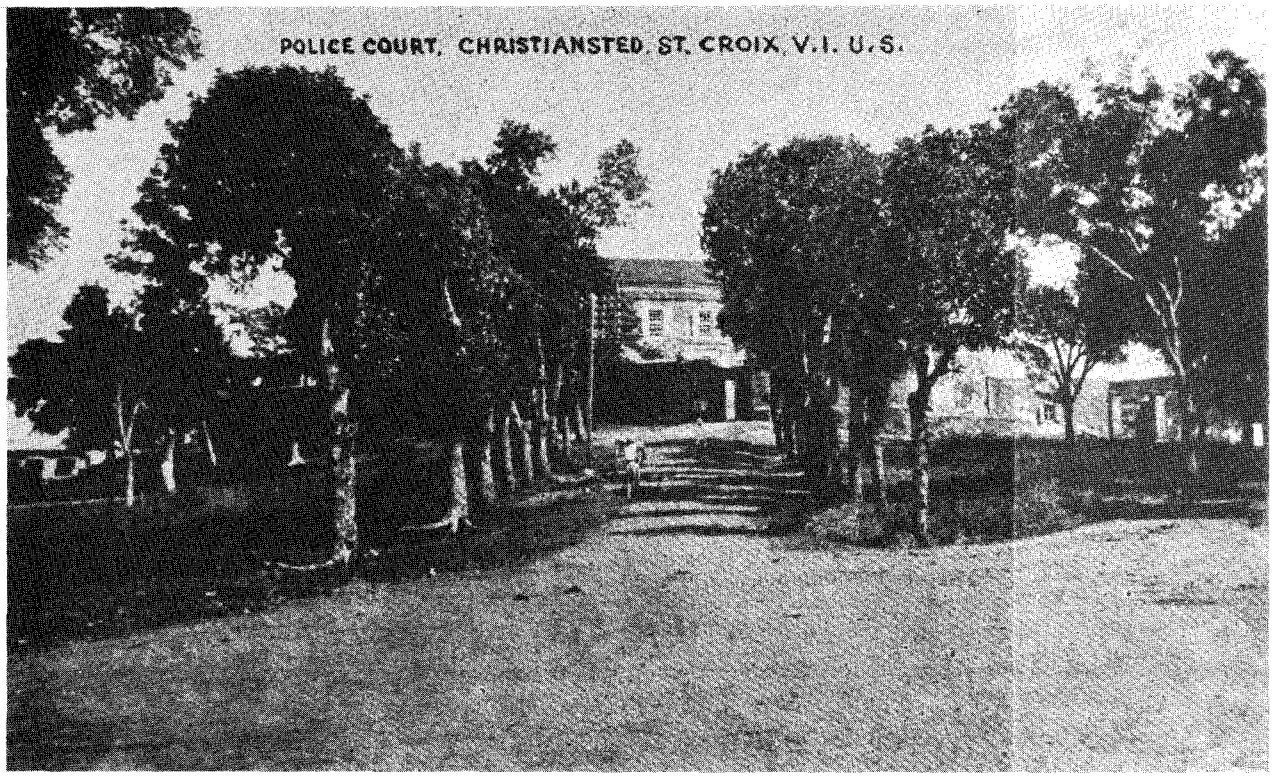
For the first time grass is shown in the area around the fort and large flamboyants are obvious. Note the ramp leading to the ravelin gate. Also a sentry box is directly visible behind the soldier to the right of the ravelin gate. Hard-packed earth is in the foreground.



D. FORT CHRISTIANSVAERN (Figure 25)

Fort Christiansvaern after the hurricane of October 1916, Photographer unknown, Historic Structures Report, Fort Christiansvaern, page 203, plate 111.

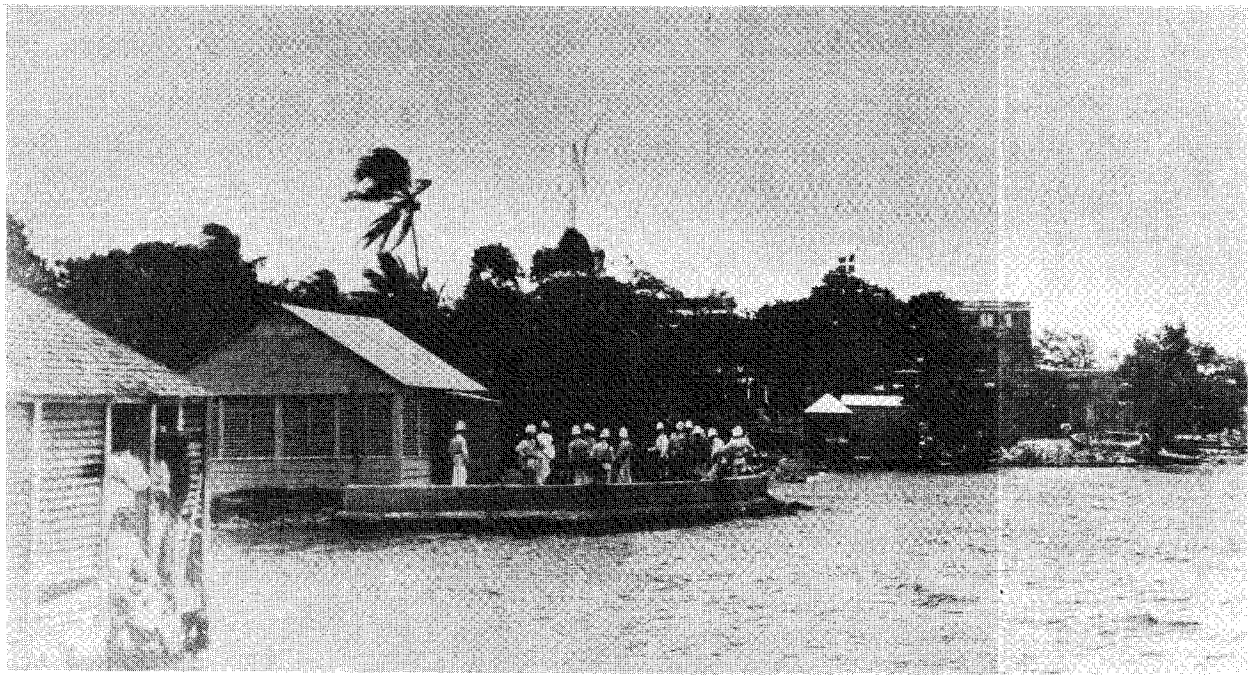
This view, taken much farther to the right of Figure 24, shows that a large number of trees were in this area prior to the 1916 hurricane.

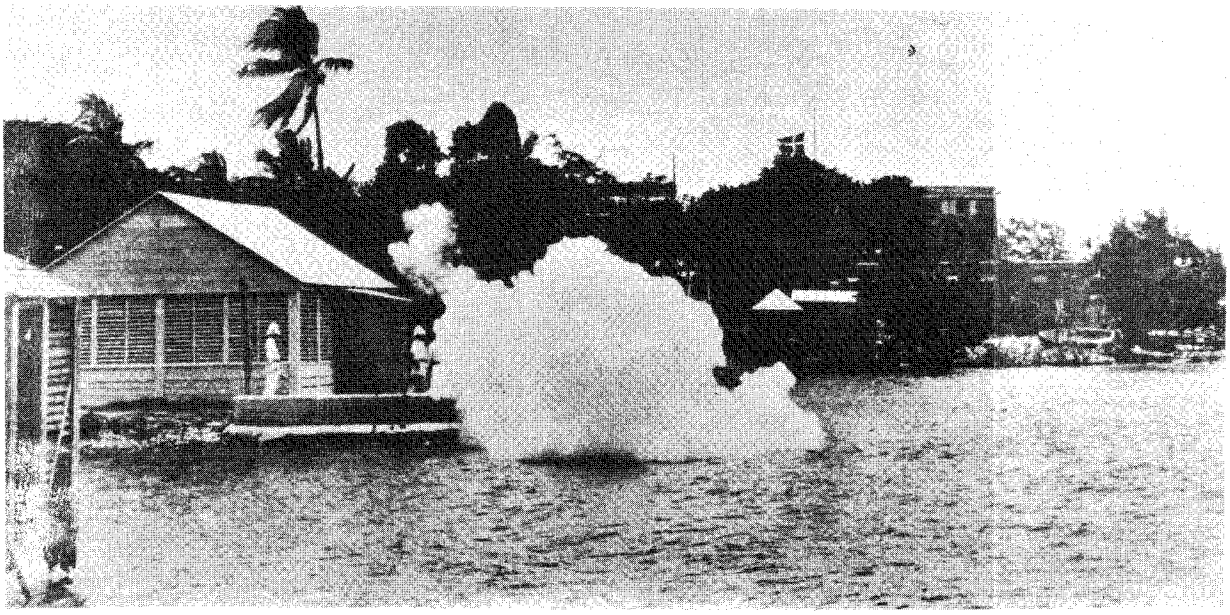


D. FORT CHRISTIANSVAERN (Figure 26)

Looking northeast, Fort Christiansvaern in background. Post card, ca. 1920. William F. Cissel Collection.

The hard-packed earth street and path to the fort are clearly seen. The grassy slope of the fort and large trees are seen to the left. At extreme center left is what appears to be a bandstand or gazebo.





D. FT. CHRISTIANSVAERN (Figures 27 A & B)

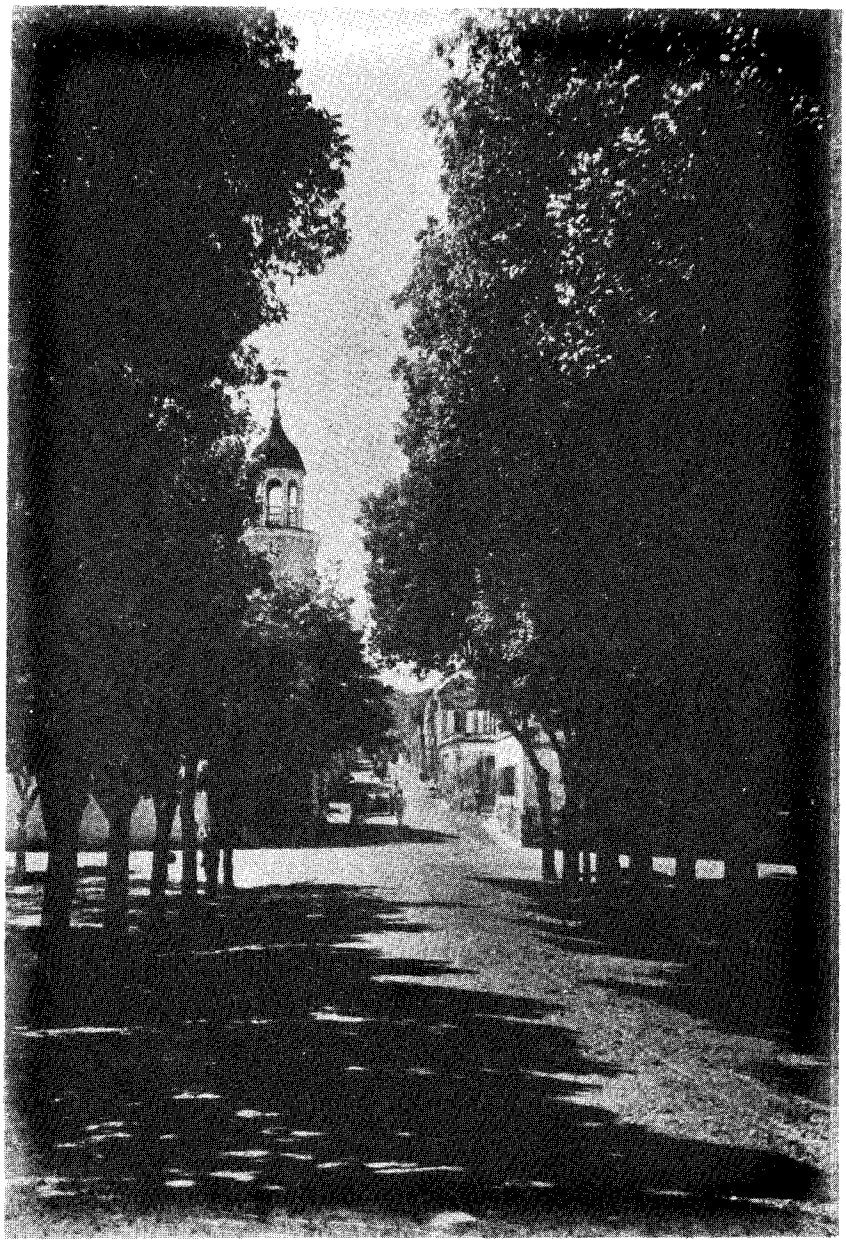
Ceremony on the date of burial of Frederick VIII, of Denmark. Water battery east of the fort. post card, dated May 24, 1912. William F. Cissel Collection. St. Croix, V.I.

Both views show the stable yard and waterfront of the fort, left center. The water battery and common room atop the northeast bastion are clearly visible. A few flamboyants are visible in front of the fort.

E. STEEPLE BUILDING (Figure 28)

Company Street, looking west. Post card, postmarked 1904. William F. Cissel Collection.

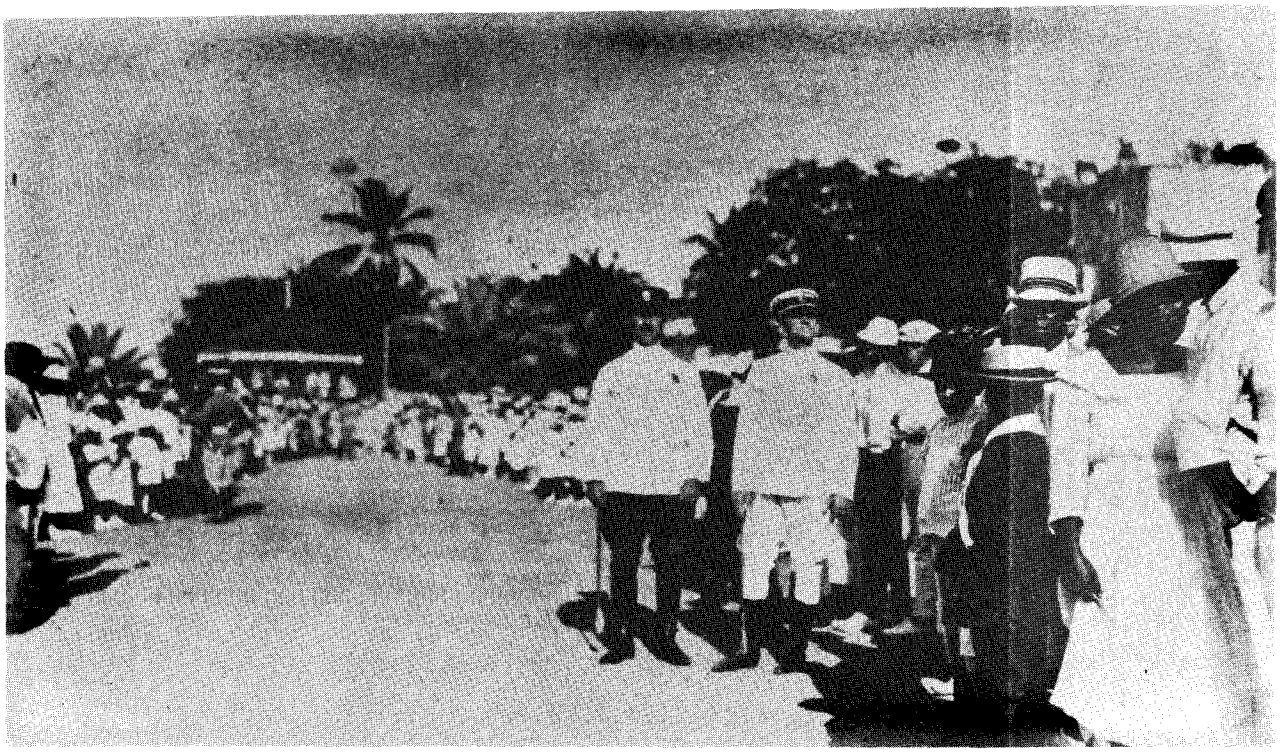
The Steeple Building is at the extreme left behind the woman with her hands behind her back. Note the cannon buried muzzle down on the street corner over her left shoulder. A cannon buried in this fashion is seen near the Steeple Building in Morton's 1843-44 view (Figure 23). Streets are hard-packed earth.



E. STEEPLE BUILDING (Figure 29)

Looking west, toward Company Street, 1913. William F. Cissel Collection.

The cupola of the Steeple Building is visible center left, above the trees. The path leading up to the fort is in the foreground and is hard-packed earth. Many of the trees remain today. The cannon seen in Figure 28 is visible just beyond the base of the Steeple Building.

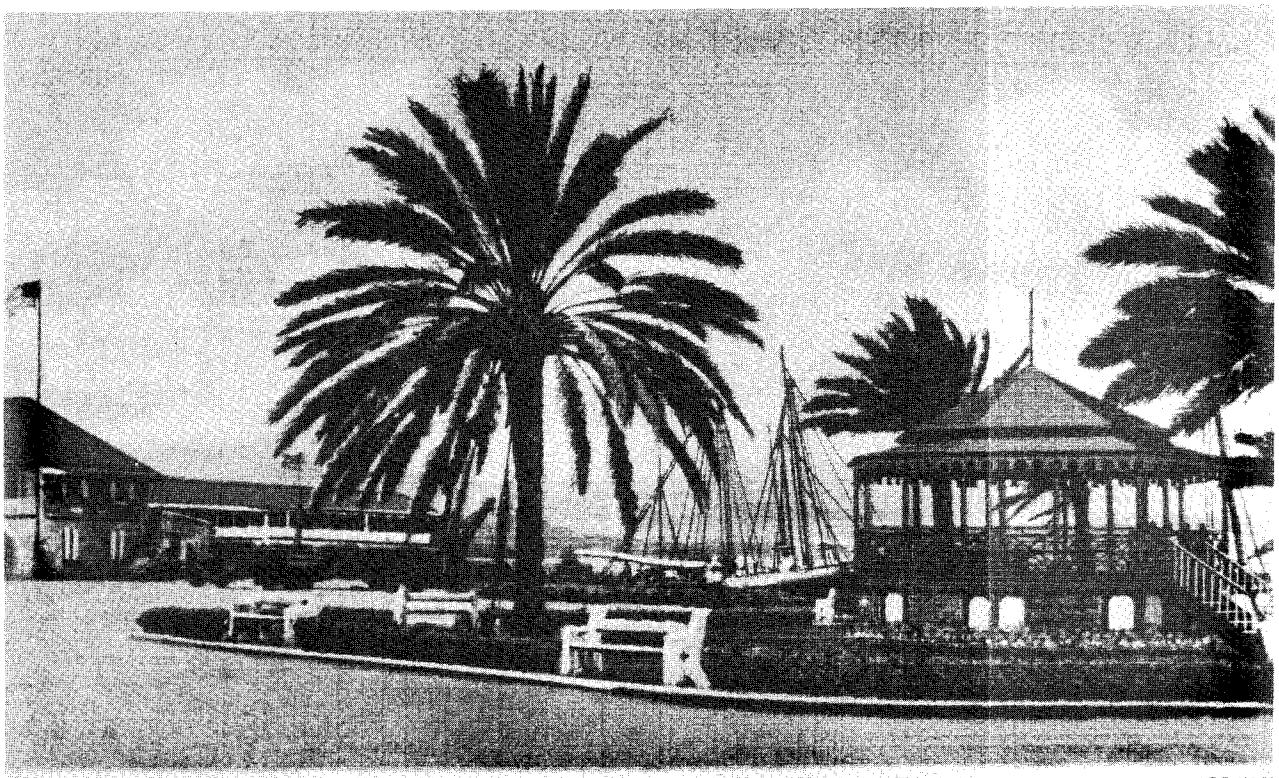


F. HAMILTON JACKSON PARK (Figure 30)

Hamilton Jackson Park was developed in the early 1940s. In the Historic Structures Report on Fort Christiansvaern, Olsen states that the balustraded terrace outside the west wall (of the fort) was constructed in 1945. Until this time the area between the Customs House and fort seems to have remained open with a gradual growth of palms and flamboyants filling in the area. The 1899 and 1916 hurricanes most certainly caused some alterations in this pattern.

Wharf area, looking east-northeast toward fort, ca. 1918. Postmarked December 5, 1922. William F. Cissel Collection.

Hard-packed earth is shown in the foreground, the Customs House is to the right. The trees in the background are in the general area of Hamilton Jackson Park. The bandstand appears at left, center.



Bandstand, Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands

F. HAMILTON JACKSON PARK (Figure 31)

Bandstand, Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands. Post card ca. late 1940s, early 1950s, William F. Cissel Collection.

The park was completed in 1945. According to Norman R. Cissel, who arrived at St. Croix in 1936, the area remained hard-packed earth and gravel until the early 1940s when it was first paved.

IV. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the documentary materials examined and presented here, several observations can be made. From the 1830s-1916, the area now included within Christiansted National Historic Site remained relatively open, especially in the waterfront area between the fort and the Scale House. Some flamboyant trees are noted near the fort walls as early as 1835. Palms are noted in the area immediately around the present Customs House as early as 1843-44, and at least one remained until 1916. Flamboyants were planted on either side of the Customs House and are evident as early as 1880 or 1881, and from their size had been there for some time prior to that date. All streets and areas around the buildings remain hard-packed earth. By 1880-1881, grass was growing in the area around the fort. Formal efforts to stabilize the water front area are noted as early as 1835, and three cannon had been buried at least half of their length, muzzle up, at the loading dock area, as early as 1866. The practice of burying cannon in upright positions on street corners dates at least as far back as 1843-44. Plans show a ramp approximately 8 feet by 20 feet at the entrance to the ravelin yard of the fort in 1836, and it is noted again in 1843-44. This remained in place until at least 1881-82. Olsen notes in the Historic Structures Report on Fort Christiansvaern that a sentry box was located outside the entrance to the ravelin to the right as early as 1779. New ones were made in 1800 and in 1827, and repairs were made in 1831, 1835 and 1836. A new one was built in 1839 on a brick platform. A sentry box was still in place in 1880-81. A new one was made "for the pavement outside the ravelin gate" in 1896.

The slope around the fort appears irregular in all illustations. The earth fill in the ravelin yard and the present flamboyant tree are nonhistoric. The primary intrusions on the site are the paved parking areas. Though this does allow the general openness to remain, the vehicles parked in the area do not. This was vividly illustrated during our field investigations when an attempt was made to take photographs of the structures, so that we might compare them with historic photographs. At no time were we able to do so due to the intrusion created by parked vehicles.

Hamilton Jackson Park is also an intrusion on the historic scene. The park is now 40 years old and is in need of improved landscaping. The bandstand is in need of repair.

Sufficient documentation now exists to study the feasibility of the following:

1. Maintain the exterior slope around outer walls of Fort Christiansvaern.

2. Remove tree and fill from the ravelin yard.

3. Reconstruct brick ramp leading to ravelin yard entrance and remove asphalt paving around the fort.

4. Construct appropriate paving from the ramp outside the ravelin yard to Hospital Street. A gate should be placed at the street to prevent general access, but permit emergency vehicles.

5. Retain and preserve in place, all cannon half buried in various locations. This applies to the lamppost in the dock area also. This could be cleaned, preserved, and returned to use (adapted to electricity). Cannon should be removed only when sufficient documentation exists to prove that the rarity of the piece dictates that its preservation as a museum object overshadows its historic location, or if it is needed to re-create a historically accurate scene within the fort.

6. Restrict parking or relocate parking areas to less intrusive locations.

7. Selective planting or removal of trees based on historic documentation and preservation of historic structures. Large trees which are not desired could be allowed to live out their natural life span and simply not be replaced once they expire.

8. Removal or relandscaping of Hamilton Jackson Park. Removal should be accompanied by landscaping of the area based on specific documentation. Considering the sensitivity of the issue, relandscaping would probably be a more viable alternative. This should be done to create more of a transitional area from the Customs House to the fort, rather than maintaining a "city park" type atmosphere.

Christiansted National Historic Site is a unique resource containing a tremendous amount of original fabric. Landscaping of the area should enhance the original remains as a whole allowing them to speak for themselves, while retaining the unique flavor of the area. In addition, maintenance of any planted areas should not jeopardize preservation or physical appearance of any historic structures. Grasses which require extensive watering should not be chosen. Lessons on this can be learned from several landscaped forts within the Southeast Region where the amount of moisture required to maintain the grass has caused severe damage to the structures.