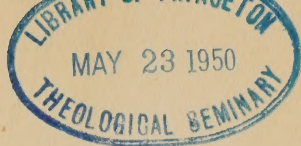


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Virgin Islands Story



Virgin Islands Story

A History of
The Lutheran State Church, Other Churches,
Slavery, Education, and Culture in the
Danish West Indies, now the Virgin Islands

by
JENS LARSEN



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To those Virgin Islanders who, reaching
back fondly with one hand to the past,
stretch the other forward confidently to-
ward their future high calling

Preface

Columbus discovered one of the Virgin Islands on Thursday, November 14, 1493, when he sighted and landed on Ay-Ay, which he named Santa Cruz (St. Croix). Later he discovered St. Thomas and St. John and other islands near by. He named the whole group The Virgin Islands for Saint Ursula and her "eleven thousand holy, martyred virgins." Later these islands were divided into two groups: the British Virgin Islands and the Danish West Indian Islands. The latter group, now called the Virgin Islands of the United States of America, comprises about half a hundred mountainous islands with a total area of 149 square miles, situated about 60 miles east of Puerto Rico and 1,440 miles southeast of New York City. Only three are much inhabited: St. Thomas, of about 32 square miles, with the capital of Charlotte Amalie, once the emporium of the Antilles and the largest slave market in the world; St. Croix, of about 82 square miles, with the towns of Christiansted and Frederiksted; and St. John, formerly called St. Jan, of about 19 square miles, with its villages at Carol Bay and Cruz Bay. The total population of the American Virgin Islands in 1940 was 24,889; that of St. Thomas being 11,265; St. Croix,

12,902; St. John, 722. With their colorful hillsides, their numerous channels and small bays, their beaches fringed with palm trees and edged with transparent multicolored waters, their tropical growth of various hues, their lovely cultivated estates, their crystal-clear air and azure skies, and their picturesque towns, they have been called the loveliest gems of the Caribbean Sea.

During the two and a half centuries of Danish rule in the Islands the Lutheran was the state church as in Denmark, after 1848 called the Folk Church. In the Danish West Indies, as well as in the mother country, the church and the government alike were affected by changing social and economic conditions and by international developments. The Lutheran Church was, in other words, the government church, and the Danish government was a Lutheran government. Their histories, therefore, are interwoven and inseparable.

It is a strange fact that writers on the beginnings of Lutheranism in the Western world make no reference at all to the Lutheran Church in the Danish West Indies, where the first congregation was established in 1666. This congregation (in St. Thomas) is not only one of the first Lutheran churches in the Western Hemisphere but also the first Christian church of continuous existence in the Virgin Islands. Only one Lutheran congregation in the Western Hemisphere has a continuous history older than that of the congregation in St. Thomas.

In his article, "The Oldest Lutheran Church in America" (published in *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, Jan-

PREFACE

uary, 1945, pp. 57-69), the Rev. Dr. Harry J. Kreider designates St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in New York City, organized in 1649 and now affiliated with the Missouri Synod, as the oldest Lutheran church in the Western Hemisphere.¹ The church in St. Thomas, second oldest Lutheran congregation in the hemisphere, hopes that church historians will cease ignoring it and other churches and will acquaint themselves with their unusual history.

Although most of the material for this study is in the archives in Denmark, the writer has been fortunate in having had access to many primary sources and to nearly all secondary material outside Denmark containing information about the Danish West Indies. Some of the primary sources have been consulted in the Lutheran parsonages in the Islands, in the library and the fort in St. Thomas, in the National Archives and the Congressional Library, Washington, D. C., and in other large libraries too numerous to mention. For although literally tons of old records—most of them written in Danish—were shipped to Denmark during the latter part of the past century and again after the transfer of the islands to the United States in 1917, many records were left behind on the Islands. Most of the remaining documents were later shipped to Washington.

Grateful acknowledgment is hereby expressed to Pastor William George Arbaugh, secretary of the Division of Latin American Missions of the Board of American Missions, for suggesting the writing of the history, for advice

¹ See also *Lutheranism in Colonial New York* by the same author, p. 14.

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and encouragement, and for reading the manuscript; to the Hon. G. C. Thiele, Knight of Dannebrog and Judge of the St. Thomas police court, for assistance in research among the old Danish Ordinance publications in Fort Christian; to Mrs. G. C. Thiele of St. Thomas and the late Carl Essmann of St. Croix for assistance in deciphering some of the Old Danish documents; and to the late George K. Gulck, M.D., for translating several Dutch, German, and Negro Dutch Creole writings.

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I

Pioneering on St. Thomas

On the thirteenth Sunday after Trinity in 1652 a young theological candidate, Kjeld Jensen Slagelse, appeared before Provst H. Ole Theugersen on the island of Falster, Denmark, and requested the privilege of preaching a trial sermon at a certain vacant Lutheran parish. The provst answered him, "Come eight days from today and you will receive your preaching-date."¹

On the following Sunday the young candidate entered Nørre Alslev Lutheran Church shortly after the service had begun and sat in a pew next to the pulpit. He was evidently perturbed to see standing at the altar not only Provst Theugersen but also another minister, Pastor Hans Staffensen, who had been invited by the congregation to preach a trial sermon that Sunday. During the last stanza of the hymn preceding the sermon, as Pastor Staffensen stepped out of the chancel to ascend the pulpit, Kjeld Jensen Slagelse unexpectedly arose and started for the

¹ This narrative is based upon testimony of witnesses at a court trial held March 22, 1653, recorded by Holger Frederik Rørdam in his article "Praestevalget i den Danske Kirke," in *Ny Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*, Ser. 2, Vol. 5, pp. 668ff.

stairway leading up to the pulpit. Consternation seized the congregation. The provst stared surprisedly at the young *studiosis*. The supply pastor halted dumfoundedly. What was the stranger about to do? The hush was unbroken until the young man reached the door at the foot of the pulpit stairway. Two peasants rose from their seats, held the door closed, and stopped him. More determined than they, he pushed through, even though the door closed on a corner of his coat. But the delay in freeing his garment was only of a moment, and he mounted the pulpit. The embarrassed supply pastor, not knowing what else to do, retraced his steps, and sat down with the provst while the congregation, shocked and bewildered, watched the stranger begin to preach.

Kjeld Jensen Slagelse did not descend immediately after finishing his sermon. He announced the next hymn and started to lead, but hearing himself singing alone he stopped during the second stanza. For a few moments there was an ominous silence, then sounded the disapproving voice of Provst Theugersen, who had arisen and stepped forward.

"Who has given you permission to preach here today?"

"You have," the preacher calmly answered.

"That you will never prove," retorted the provst; then, pointing to Pastor Staffensen, announced, "He who stands here is the one."

Slagelse said nothing but descended from the pulpit.

The provst, having added a few remarks to the congregation, said to his colleague, "Go up in Jesus' name!"

Pastor Staffensen ascended the pulpit, and the defeated young *studiosis* walked out of the church while some of the less reverent worshipers cast jocular remarks at him. That day Pastor Hans Staffensen received a call from the congregation.

In October of that year a letter was circulated by another provst, O. T. Toxotius, to all the ministers in his district forbidding Kjeld Jensen Slagelse to preach. The following February the rector of Copenhagen University summoned Slagelse to answer complaints filed against him by Bishop Lavritz Jacobsen of the island of Fyen's diocese. The case came up in court a month later. Slagelse, who meanwhile had filed a countersuit, defended his strange action on the ground that Provst Theugersen had permitted him to preach a trial sermon that Sunday. This the provst denied, insisting that Slagelse had willfully misconstrued his "Come eight days from today and you will receive your preaching-date." Final action on the case was deferred with an order forbidding Slagelse to preach until the complaint was settled.

What happened to Kjeld Jensen Slagelse immediately after that is not clear, but it is certain that twelve years later he received a strange call to a still stranger parish, and was subsequently ordained. Except for these facts the history of the Lutheran Church in the Danish West Indies would have had a much different beginning.

In the early summer of 1665 a skipper named Erik Nielsen Smidt (spelled also Schmidt) met Kjeld Jensen Slagelse in Copenhagen. The skipper told Slagelse a num-

ber of interesting things. He had made several trips to the West Indies and returned from the last one on February 25, 1663.² A few Danes and other Europeans, mostly Dutch, were living on an island in the Caribbean Sea called St. Thomas. They had probably been living there since 1653.³ Unofficial trade with the islands had for some time been carried on in conformity with a royal Danish grant issued in 1663 to a small trading company.⁴

² Waldemar Westergaard states that Skipper Smidt "is certainly found on February 25, 1663, passing through the Sound with a cargo of tobacco, ginger, etc." *The Danish West Indies*; The Macmillan Co., 1917, p. 29. This is the only work in English compiled from original records in archives in Copenhagen.

³ John P. Knox conjectures that when the Dutch and the English settled on St. Croix in 1625, or about that time, some of them might have taken up their abode on St. Thomas. At any rate, in 1647 five Frenchmen found their way from Crab Island to St. Thomas, but their later whereabouts is not known. (*A Historical Account of the Danish West India Islands, 1688-1848*; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1852, pp. 41-43.) This was for many years the only work in English on the history of the Danish islands. Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 273, remarks that "the first part of it is really a faulty translation of Høst's work (Danish), the last a loose compilation." Aside from several inaccuracies (Knox was a non-Danish-speaking Reformed Dutch minister in St. Thomas who had to rely on assistance in his research and translations of Danish records), the book is a valuable piece of work.

⁴ "In 1653 the Danish King, Frederik III, granted privileges to certain 'participants' to engage in West Indian trade. It was a grant, as the royal letter reads, 'to our subjects who have already sailed to the Caribbean islands in the West Indies in a recent year.' . . . Skipper Smidt is referred to in a memorial dated February 14, 1662, which epitomizes the state of the Danish trade in the West Indies during the troublesome years that had just passed; 'We have to thank Your Majesty most graciously and humbly for the privileges (to trade) upon the Caribbean islands, which were granted us several years ago, although by God's will we suffered great losses on the journeys undertaken during those times, in as much as Cromwell and those ruling with him took away from us two ships with cargoes, worth over 32,000 rdl. And besides one of our ships with full cargo and twenty-two persons was swept away from the land by God's weather, by the wind called hurricane, on the 11th day of August, 1657, and never has there been heard of ship and men since . . . Meantime our former privileges have expired, and we have again undertaken in the Lord's name to have our former skipper, Erik Nielsen Schmidt, navigate these islands

Smidt had just received instructions and authorization from His Majesty, King Frederik III,⁵ to seize and occupy the island of St. Thomas, and he had actually been appointed by His Majesty as royal commandant and governor of the island. Furthermore, he had been authorized to select people, including a Lutheran minister, for the proposed expedition to join those few Danes who were already on the island.⁶ Undoubtedly Skipper Smidt depicted vividly the beautiful tropical island, its romance, and its opportunities, in order to persuade Slagelse to go with him and become the first Lutheran minister to the Danes on St. Thomas.

Whatever may be the real explanation of Slagelse's strange action in Nørre Alslev Lutheran Church thirteen years before, the incident had shown that he possessed the tenacity needed by any pioneer in a West Indian island. Skipper Smidt could perhaps have chosen no better man. Slagelse, who had listened with intense interest to the skipper's account and proposition, must have felt greatly challenged. What an opportunity for him to establish the Danish Lutheran Church in the name of his majesty the king of Denmark on a tropical island far away in the

in the good hope that God Almighty will grant some share of the good things on the land by way of restitution for our former losses. We pray Your Majesty to renew the grant of our former privileges for another term of years.' " Westergaard, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 28.

⁵ May 11, 1665.

⁶ Kay Larsen, *Dansk Vestindien*, p. 16. This work, published by C. A. Reitzels Forlag, Copenhagen, in 1927, is the only Danish publication on the history of the Danish West Indies covering the whole period of the Danish occupation. Like Westergaard's work in English, it is based upon the original records in the archives in Denmark.

Caribbean Sea! Slagelse agreed to go. A contract was drawn up between them and signed June 8, 1665.

This 280-year-old document, written in the old Gothic Danish script, is preserved in the archives in Copenhagen. A copy of it, in more modern Danish handwriting, is in the Bancroft Collection in the University of California. A mistake in copying gives the year as 1655 instead of 1665. It reads:

L. S. One Mark

IN THE NAME OF JESUS

Acknowledge we, the undersigned Erik Smidt, royal Commandant-Governor of the island of St. Thomas in the West Indies, and Kjeld Jensen Slagelse, that we in the name of the Holy Trinity have reached a Christian and friendly understanding: so that I, Kjeld Jensen, according to his Royal Majesty's gracious wish (next after the grace of God) will serve the congregation which Erik Smidt intends, in the name of God and according to royal instructions given him, to move to and congregate in the said island of St. Thomas. And I, Erik Smidt, for myself, my companions and successors promise . . . to give him a cassock of cloth and a samaria (chasuble) of silk (?) and also to pay the expenses of his ordination; and hereafter from this date to give him yearly 80 rix dollars⁷ and proper board and bed and other necessities; and meanwhile to clear for him and his successors a good and reliable parsonage with proper houses, dwelling-houses, and plantation; and furthermore he shall be granted for himself and his heirs a good plantation to be carved from the best location, for himself to plant . . .; and yearly 10 pounds of good and pure sugar as a tithe from every person not connected with the Company who may be found in the country, both master and servant, nobody excepted, over 12 years old, who may need his service for their eternal salvation; but if spe-

⁷ A rix dollar was equal to about two crowns, a crown to about 27 cents.

cial services from him may be needed by anybody, each then is to pay according to the ordinances as affection and means permit.

Done in Copenhagen 8th of June, 1665

Erik Smidt Kjeld Jensen Slagelse

(L.S.) (L.S.)

Explanation: L: *Locum* (place). S: *Sigillie* (seal).⁸

Twenty-three days after the signing of this contract, on July 1, 1665, Skipper Smidt and Pastor Slagelse sailed from Copenhagen with a cargo of provisions and an unknown number of Danish settlers aboard the ship "Erik." They arrived at St. Thomas about half a year later, either at the end of 1665 or early in 1666.⁹ On February 15, 1666, Smidt sent the "Erik" back to Copenhagen under the command of Holger Frede with a cargo containing, among other things, 70,000 pounds of tobacco, 50,000 pounds of pockwood, and 20,000 pounds of sugar, some of which had been obtained on neighboring islands.¹⁰

The new Danish colonists were greeted cordially by the few Danes already on the island and by a larger group of other nationalities—Dutch, German, English, and probably French. There were as yet no Negroes. Altogether there were probably less than half a hundred souls on the island, for the census taken seven years later, when the population had increased somewhat, gave only one hundred whites. In addition, a small number of Negroes had

⁸ Words omitted in the Smidt-Slagelse contract indicate illegibility.

⁹ Charles Edwin Taylor in his *Leaflets from the Danish West Indies*, London, 1888, erroneously gives March 30 as the date for the landing. That was the date for the official possession of the island, which did not take place immediately upon their arrival.

¹⁰ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

accompanied their owners from other islands.

Pastor Slagelse soon discovered that there was more than pastoral work to be done within his small parish. Most of his time was undoubtedly devoted to supervising the clearing of the jungle for his plantation. It is probable that he did most of the work himself, despite the agreement in the contract, for labor was exceedingly scarce and there were other plantations to be built, including that of Governor Smidt. Besides, the major fortification, Fort Christian, had to be built. There was urgent need for protection against frequent visits of pirates, of whom the colonists lived in daily fear.

The first pirate visitation took place shortly after the arrival of the new colonists. Two large English privateers, with two smaller ships, on their way to the French island of St. Croix, stopped at St. Thomas. There the pirates helped themselves to provisions and gunpowder, and "borrowed" a ship in the harbor.

As to the contract's promise of "a good and reliable parsonage," Pastor Slagelse had plenty of time to reflect upon it. Some time later a few small buildings for storage and other purposes, but none for a dwelling, were erected on the plantation. Here was born the name "minister plantation" (*praesteplantagen*), later to become the Jegge plantation which a century afterward was swallowed by Charlotte Amalie town.

Governor Smidt's first task was that of organizing the colony and giving shape to his plans of colonization. On March 30, 1666, he took formal possession of the island

in the name of the king of Denmark by hoisting the Danish flag under salute. On a hill north of the harbor he built his plantation and laid the foundation for another fortification, naming it Smidtsberg, also called Fort Frederik. It was not finished, however, until 1689. It consisted of dwelling houses and a fortified tower with eleven cannon—seven four-pounders and four six-pounders. Still standing today, it is called Bluebeard's Castle. Some time before Smidtsberg and Fort Christian were finished, another fort, Skøtsberg (also called Kjaer's Tower until the end of the seventeenth century) was built. Its name was probably derived from that of Captain Peter Jacobsen Schults (also named Skøt), who in 1653 had sailed to St. Thomas with Skipper Smidt on the ship "Fortuna." Its tower stands today as Blackbeard's Castle. The names of these towers have come from an old legend which holds that they were the headquarters of two pirates, Bluebeard and Blackbeard. Thus tourists have known them for generations.¹¹ It should be noted that Fort Christian also had a fortified tower, completed probably in 1666 or 1667, and torn down during the rebuilding of the fort in 1874. During a period of about two hundred years the island thus had three fort-towers.¹²

We cannot fix the date in 1666 on which Pastor Slagelse established the Danish Lutheran congregation, or the location of the first place of worship. Fort Christian, which

¹¹ In Taylor, *op. cit.*, appears a history of Blackbeard's Castle from 1759 to 1886.

¹² Sketches of Fort Christian showing this tower appear in Kay Larsen's *Dansk Vestindien*, pp. 129, 151.

later became the first known worshipping place of both the Lutheran and the Reformed Dutch churches, was not yet finished, and the island had no public buildings.

Except for a few clearings with temporary buildings on the flat land by the shore and on hills near by, the whole island was a dense, almost impenetrable jungle. Most likely the first meeting place of the Lutheran congregation was in the home of one of the early Danish settlers. This congregation was small, consisting of a few officers, soldiers, and planters.

On June 12, 1666, about half a year after his arrival, Governor Smidt died. His death naturally was a shock to all the settlers, whose main concern was now to find a leader until another governor could be sent from Copenhagen. It did not take them long to decide that the only man among them whose personality and aggressiveness qualified him to lead them was Pastor Slagelse. Thus it was that the first Lutheran minister to the Danish West Indies became for a short time the second governor or, rather, acting governor, of St. Thomas.

Immediately Slagelse swung into action. Four days after the death of Governor Smidt he called all the colonists together at Smidtsberg to select men to rule the colony until another governor arrived. He had them all, except the English who objected and were exempted, swear allegiance to the Danish crown. Then he read and had interpreted into Dutch, and perhaps also into English and German, the regulations which he had formulated for the colony. On behalf of the Danish king he promised

loyal foreigners equal rights with the Danes. Non-Danish settlers would be permitted to engage their own ministers, if and when possible, on the condition that they leave the leadership to the Danish Lutheran minister. Slagelse furthermore proposed that four men (two Danes, one German or Dutchman, and one Englishman) have authority to rule the island with him until orders arrived from Denmark. The Danes were Jesper Høyer and Christian Hansen; the Dutchman was Jan Brønner, former governor of Tobago; the Englishman, Ralph Palmer, former commandant of St. Christopher. Høyer, a bookkeeper, became acting governor, and Hansen, a constable, became director of the work on Fort Christian.¹³

There were great difficulties connected with securing provisions since the settlers, who could devote but little time to tilling the soil because they were engaged in building the fortifications, had to depend almost entirely upon provisions imported from Denmark. In June that year, 1666, the ship "Eindracht" arrived with some provisions and a number of new Danish settlers. The rejoicing of the colonists was mingled with sadness upon learning that many of the Danes had died during the voyage. On July 3 Pastor Slagelse sent back the ship, loaded with pockwood. On it went a letter to the company in Copenhagen filled with complaints about the wants of the colonists, and containing an appeal for "many and strong people," hinting that the Danes might soon have to leave the island. The governor pro tem promised to hold out

¹³ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

another nine months, after which all resources would be used up unless new supplies arrived.

Pastor Slagelse was naturally much concerned about the growth of the Lutheran Church, to which the loss of the Danes at sea had been a reversal. Later that year the two pirate ships returned to the island and caused much trouble and loss. The Danes (and others?) ceased building the fort, and kept together at Smidtsberg, which was probably then used as a temporary meeting place for Lutheran services. The following year several English ships arrived with many people. These English, like the pirates, were considered enemies, especially by the Dutch settlers. War had broken out in 1665 between England and the Netherlands, due to colonial strife in New York and the Guinea region of West Africa. The English had just seized the islands of St. Eustatius and St. Martin, and now they had come to take possession of St. Thomas. But they did not remain long, for, "finding the island less fertile than the other two, they left, compelling the Dutch inhabitants to remove their effects and go with them."¹⁴

This disheartening experience was one of many, such as lack of supplies and increasing sickness and death, which added to the discouragement of the colonists. Slagelse himself became downhearted. Once he had been attacked by pirates, who robbed and assaulted him, and in other ways

¹⁴ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Knox's additional statement "that the island now remained uninhabited until 1671" is erroneous. This error is also made by Keller in his *Colonization*, pp. 497-508, and by other writers. We must accept as correct Larsen's statement, based upon original Danish records, that some Danes and probably also others who were non-Dutch were left behind. *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

he had shared the hardships with the other settlers. Whether the requested supplies arrived before the nine months had passed is not known, but it appears that the breaking point was reached when in 1668 Pastor Slagelse and most of the remaining Danes left St. Thomas and returned to Denmark.

Nearly four years passed before Pastor Slagelse left Denmark again. Why he remained there so long we do not know. It must have been that he was awaiting the appointment of a new governor and the completion of plans for Denmark's official occupation of St. Thomas.

It was the eleventh of March, 1671, that the newly organized Danish West Indian Company received its charter from the crown. This charter, issued by the new king, Christian V, who had acceded to the throne in 1670, conferred very broad powers. The company was authorized "to occupy and take possession of the island of St. Thomas, and also other islands thereabouts; . . . to build forts and lodges and to take proper measures for its own defense in case of attacks."¹⁵ It was also to take care of the conversion of the Carib Indians—which was easy, as there were only two or three left. They had probably come from other islands.

The company was furthermore authorized to administer justice to all in its service, to select a governor and other officials, to secure Lutheran ministers for the island, and "as many as may be needed of those who have been condemned to prison or put in irons, for use on plantations

¹⁵ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

or elsewhere; and of women, as many as may be desired, from those whose unseemly lives have brought them into prison or a house of correction." ¹⁶

In accordance with this charter the directors of the Danish West Indian Company on April 29, 1671, selected Georg Jørgen Iversen as the first official governor of St. Thomas, and Kjeld Jensen Slagelse as the Lutheran minister. Like Pastor Slagelse, Governor Iversen had been in the West Indies before. "Sixteen years before, in his early youth, he had been bound to service by the ship that left Elsinore in 1654." ¹⁷

Governor Iversen and his entourage and Pastor and Madame Slagelse left Bergen in June, 1671, on the ship "Fero," together with a strange and motley group of passengers and crew members: soldiers, clerks, serfs, and sixty-one convicts. Among the convicts, coming from Bremerholm and other places, were a number of women from a house of correction. Besides the crew, which totaled only twelve men, those who had bound themselves to service as employees of the company numbered 116. Some time after its departure the ship sprang a leak and had to return to Bergen for repairs. During the stay in Bergen several convicts escaped, "but were promptly replaced by others equally unpromising." ¹⁸ These convicts, although they had been promised their freedom for going along, were in reality slaves. Thus the first slaves

¹⁶ From par. 14 of the charter, quoted by Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 36.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Denmark brought to the Danish West Indies were white! "

The voyage was disastrous. Between the embarkation and the reaching of the warmer climate, more than eighty persons succumbed, among them the Lutheran minister. Kjeld Jensen Slagelse died April 25, 1672, and his body was thrown overboard in a sack, with two cannon balls to carry it to the bottom of the sea. His death salute was two cannon shots; only one gun was shot for a death of less importance.¹⁹

¹⁹ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

II

Plowing New Land

The joy of the St. Thomas colonists can well be imagined when on May 25, 1672, they welcomed the "Fero" as it made harbor. Then fell shock and disappointment as they learned of the death at sea of Pastor Slagelse and eighty others. With mingled hope and curiosity they received their new governor and his strange party. When the ship left on its return voyage to Denmark, carrying Pastor Slagelse's widow, it also carried a request to the West Indian Company for another Lutheran minister.

Governor Iversen at once set to work to bring about order and to unite the people of the various nationalities for work. After two months Fort Christian was ready for occupation, although it was not finished until 1680.¹ It housed the governor and later, for many years, the Lutheran minister. One of the rooms was the governor's luxurious "gilded leather-room." Another room was set aside for the use of the Lutheran congregation which was to share it for several years with the Reformed Dutch church. Sunday services were in Danish in the forenoon and in Dutch

¹ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

in the afternoon. In the absence of the minister of either denomination services were conducted by laymen.

In the Lutheran church such a layman was the clerk. His duties were then, as today in Denmark in some churches, to open and close the service with prayer, to lead the singing in the absence of a choir, to assist the minister in minor details in the church, and to substitute for him by conducting the service and reading a sermon or delivering a talk. Depending upon circumstances, he might also have charge of funerals and the upkeep of the cemetery. His duties were similar to those of the Lutheran deacons and lay readers in colonial New York.²

Governor Iversen was much interested in religion, and since during the early part of the Danish occupation it was not infrequent for the governor to take the place of the minister, or the clerk, in conducting church services, it is not improbable that Iversen did so now and then. His religious interest, which went hand in hand with a martial spirit, is well illustrated in his first orders issued on August 8, 1672, at Fort Christian.

I, Jørgen Iversen, His Majesty the King of Denmark and Norway and the West Indian Company's Governor of the island of St. Thomas, find it right and proper to proclaim this ordinance for the honor of God, and the good of the country.

1. Every person who speaks Danish is bound to attend service every Sunday in Christian's Fort when the drum beats, and on failure of doing so is to pay a fine of twenty-five pounds of tobacco.

2. Persons of all other nations are bound to attend service

² Harry Kreider, *Lutheranism in Colonial New York*, pp. 83, 84, 90.

every Sunday afternoon at the same place, under the same penalty.

3. Every householder shall encourage his servants to be pious, and have morning and evening prayers; and if he allows them to do work on Sundays which might have been done on Saturdays, or if he occupies servants of other people in his employ, he is, for every offence, to pay fifty pounds of tobacco.

.

14. Persons breaking the foregoing rules are to be summoned to the Fort, and the offence lawfully proved, and if they are sentenced to pay any fine, it is to be divided into three parts: one for the king, one for the (Lutheran) church, and one for the complainant.³

The custom of sharing court fines with the Lutheran church was continued for more than two centuries, although not always in the same proportion.

The experiment of using Danish convicts for manual labor was a failure, for they were undependable and unable to endure the hot climate. Governor Iversen referred to them as lazy, shiftless, louty vagabonds and idlers.⁴ This factor finally led the West Indian Company to import slaves from Guinea, West Africa. The first slave ship arrived in 1673 with 103 slaves.⁵ That same year Danes were permitted entrance to the French island of St. Croix

³ This ordinance is found in Høst's history of St. Thomas, p. 8, published in Danish in Copenhagen in 1791. It is quoted from Knox, *op. cit.*, pp. 47ff. Høst occupied various government positions during his stay in St. Thomas from 1769 to 1796. The ordinance was signed by Governor Jørgen Iversen, and by Rasmus Bladt, Charles Baggert, Thomas Swain, Adrian De Vos, Anthony Salomons, Hans Paulsen, A. Begaret, Christian Wadts, Joost von Campenhout.

⁴ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁵ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Westergaard in *op. cit.*, Appendix J, lists the first slave ship's arrival for May, 1687, with eighty slaves. Probably this later ship did not belong to the West Indian Company.

and between it and St. Thomas commerce was henceforth established.

The West Indian Company in Copenhagen had complied promptly with the request for another Lutheran minister. Pastor Georg Jørgen Jensen Morsing arrived at St. Thomas April 26 (23) of the next year. Hope and encouragement turned once more into catastrophe for the Danish colonists, for Pastor Morsing dropped dead as he was about to take possession of his house.⁶ His death, however, was not the Lutherans' only disappointment. Of the 67 prospective church members aboard "The Pelican," seven had died during the voyage and 52 died soon after their arrival.⁷ Thus only eight of the 67 Danes were added to the small congregation. In July of that year there were on the island of St. Thomas 98 whites, of whom only 28 were Danes. Of the others there were 31 men, 12 women, and 27 children. In addition to the whites there were 55 Negro slaves.⁸ Pastor Morsing's death and the vacancy that followed were ill omens of what was in store for the colonists in St. Thomas.

Again the Lutherans asked for a minister, and again

⁶ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 39. Kay Larsen states that Pastor Morsing left behind fourteen books, "a rarity in St. Thomas at that time"; while Emil Lose (see below) states that Morsing left 141 volumes which were sold at auction to Morsing's successor, Pastor Riisbrick.

⁷ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁸ Emil Valdemar Lose's articles, "*Om Folkekirken's tidligste Tid paa vore Vestindiske Oer.*" ("The Earliest Time of the Lutheran Church on our West Indian Islands"), in *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*, Ser. 5, Vol. 2, p. 298. Lose, a Lutheran minister on these islands (Frederiksted from 1867 to 1871, St. Thomas from 1871 to 1881, Christiansted from 1881 to 1887), has written other articles on the Lutheran Church in the Danish West Indies which are cited in this work.

the request was complied with promptly. The third appointee, Theodore (Didrik?) Christensen Riisbrick, a Schleswiger (German-Dane), who styled himself "Theodorus Christianus Helsatus" arrived June 9, 1674. He was assigned a room in Fort Christian and boarded with the governor, who also resided in the fort. Probably no Lutheran minister has equaled him in unworthiness. Riisbrick was not only a drunkard but was in every other respect a most undesirable person. During the first year he held church services very irregularly, conducting only sixteen. "He quarreled with the governor from the beginning, called him a tyrant, and insisted on preaching in German, much to the governor's disgust."⁹ On September 7, 1675, he received a severe reprimand from home both for having kicked and crippled an officer while en route to St. Thomas and for "bad and disgraceful behaviour" on the island, including neglectfulness, fighting, drunkenness, and insubordination to the governor.¹⁰ He was threatened with dishonorable dismissal, but this does not seem to have had much effect, for the next April he was convicted of having stolen a turkey. However, between November, 1676, and November, 1677, he had managed to preach fifty sermons, for which he had been paid twenty-five hundred pounds of sugar.¹¹ "In 1677 he brought a damage suit against the Company and met its counter-charge of drunkenness by explaining that such a state was

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹¹ Lose, *op. cit.*, and records at the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

easily brought about by the terrible stuff they made in the island, referring to the rum called 'Kill Devil.' "¹² His dismissal and departure having been demanded, he left the island March 28, 1678.¹³

During the fifty years that followed there was occasional trouble with the Danish Lutheran ministers, especially in regard to drinking. When it is remembered that the conditions were so bad and ministers so hard to get, it is not surprising that such trouble occurred. The record over the years, however, is a splendid one of devotion, zeal, and exemplary living.

As time passed, St. Thomas became known in Denmark as a horrible place of convicts, pirates, fevers, hunger, and death. This made it difficult for the West Indian Company to obtain Danish workmen and to secure Lutheran ministers for the island. During the vacancy after Riisbrick's departure church services were conducted by the clerk and perhaps also by Governor Iversen himself. Civil wedding ceremonies performed by the governor were of necessity instituted, and, strangely enough, continued after the arrival of the next Lutheran minister.¹⁴

During this early part of the Danish occupation the membership of the Lutheran church in St. Thomas did not increase in proportion to the increase in population.¹⁵ This

¹² Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹³ In April he reached London, whence he wrote home, apologizing and begging for mercy. Evidently he received it later, for he became minister in Lysabild on the island of Als, Denmark, in 1681. Lose, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ In 1680 the population had increased more than 50 per cent since 1673: from 98 to 156 whites, and from 55 to 175 Negroes.

was due to the continuous loss of Danes by death or departure from the island.

The early records of the Reformed Dutch church in St. Thomas were destroyed by fire. But it is likely that by this time the Reformed congregation had its own house of worship. On October 19, 1679, at any rate, a Dutchman named Pieter Jansen, who had come from the island of Curacao, had a fight with Governor Iversen "outside the Reformed Dutch Church."¹⁶

The fourth Lutheran minister, Albert Bastian Petersen, arrived at the beginning of 1681 and was assigned the room in Fort Christian. He and a lieutenant who had come out with him ate at the table of the new governor, Adolph Nesmit. Because of the small salary he received Pastor Petersen found it necessary to cultivate the "minister-plantation" himself with the help of some slaves hired from the company. A quarrel arose between him and the governor which nearly cost him his life. The governor's cruel treatment of the Danes so stirred the minister once that in his righteous indignation he threatened to kill Nesmit. He was condemned to die, but upon the plea of citizens his life was spared and he was sent back to Denmark in 1683.¹⁷

¹⁶ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 31. According to Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 137, a chart issued in 1718 by Domine Gronwold, a Reformed Dutch clergyman of St. Thomas, indicates that there was at that time a Reformed Dutch church building located near the seashore in what is now known as the Savannah district, but it is not known if this was the building referred to in the Iversen-Jansen episode. Knox also mentions Domine Olianda as probably being the first Reformed Dutch clergyman on St. Thomas. The date of his arrival is not known, but a deed was executed in his name in 1688.

¹⁷ Larsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 36ff.

Many hazards and dangers faced emigrants from Denmark to St. Thomas. Georg Jørgen Iversen Dyppel, governor of the Danish West Indies from 1672 to 1680, met an untimely death in 1682 on board the ship "Neptune" en route to St. Thomas, after an absence of two years. The ship had 200 persons on board: 100 male and 20 female Danish convicts, 50 sailors, and 15 indentured servants, the rest being officers and passengers. The captain and most of the officers were Dutch. During the voyage a fight started between the Dutch and the Danes during which the captain was shot, Governor Iversen's wife, who had given birth to a baby on board, was assaulted, and Governor Iversen and the baby were thrown overboard and drowned. Iversen's son, Iver Jørgensen, was spared. The ship never reached St. Thomas, as the Dutch mates were forced to steer the ship to the Azores where many of the people perished. The ship finally stranded on an island outside Gøteborg, Sweden. Nine of the malefactors were later executed for mutiny and murder: four of them were beheaded, five were "broken on the wheel." Six others were placed in irons for life in a prison in Copenhagen.¹⁸

After another vacancy of two and a half years, Pastor Jens Frederiksen Hofman signed a contract with the company for three years at the low salary of 100 rdl. a year. He arrived February 24, 1686, and like his predecessors resided in Fort Christian. Pastor Hofman wanted to move out of the fort because the flat roof leaked, and because a piece of canvas spread above his bed did not protect him.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Early in 1688, therefore, he moved out of the fort, for which he was fined six months' salary. He retaliated by refusing to hold church services, claiming that promises made to him at his acceptance had not been kept. He desired to leave, but since his contract had ten months more to run and since the government would not let him go, he escaped on February 27, 1689, to St. Eustatius.¹⁹

Such conditions explain the comparatively brief stay of Lutheran ministers and the frequent and long vacancies.²⁰ They explain also why the membership of the Lutheran congregation remained nearly stationary. Its small size after nearly a quarter of a century can be learned from the first official census taken in 1688.²¹ According to it there were 317 whites and 442 Negroes on the island. There were probably not more than half a hundred Danish Lutherans, a little more than one-sixth of the white population. As some of the Danes were convicts, the problem confronting the Danish Lutheran minister can easily be imagined.

Danish was never the predominant language in these islands. The Dutch in the beginning and for many generations constituted the majority of the European population. Dutch was the chief language until eclipsed by English at the end of eighteenth and beginning of nineteenth century. The Negro Dutch Creole dialect was used for

¹⁹ Lose, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

²⁰ At that time the Dutch Lutheran Church in colonial New York experienced the same difficulty in securing Lutheran ministers from Holland. For reasons see Kreider, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

²¹ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-22.

conversation between Europeans and African slaves for nearly two centuries. After the second English occupation of the islands, English gradually took the place of the Negro Dutch Creole dialect. In the Lutheran schools for Danish children, Danish, of course, was taught, but in the schools for slaves and free Negroes, the instruction was first in Creole and later in English.

For the purpose of increasing trade and encouraging the settlement of the colony, a thirty-year treaty was concluded in 1685 with the Duchy of Brandenburg, providing that a trading company of Germans would undertake settlement.²² On September 23, 1686, fifty Brandenburger workmen—German, Dutch, and Flemish—arrived. They located their factory at the east end of the town, in what became known as the Brandenburg Quarter.²³ They brought their own Lutheran minister and built a small church. At that time the colony was enlarged by a number of French Protestants, "who, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, fled from St. Christopher's to the island, fearing persecution. . . These were afterward joined by others from Europe. Together they formed a small congregation with their beloved pastor and proved valuable to the colony by their piety, frugality, and industry."²⁴ The Brandenburg Lutheran Church was discontinued, if not before, then at least by 1717, when, its treaty not having been renewed, the members of the company left the island.

²² Albert Galloway Keller, *Colonization*, New York, 1908, p. 499.

²³ Larsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-59.

²⁴ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

A handful, however, remained and attended either the Lutheran or the Reformed Dutch church services. At this time only the Lutheran and the Reformed Dutch churches were allowed to hold public services.

During the renovation and enlargement of Fort Christian in the 1680's the Lutheran congregation sometimes held services in the southwestern bastion where the cannon stood by the shuttle holes. At other times it held services in a small house about 20 feet wide and 22 feet long, with brick floor and tiled roof. This house stood in the middle of the fort yard and was used during the week for various other purposes.²⁵

On April 24, 1691, the town by the sea, hitherto nicknamed Taphus, was officially founded and improved by Danish skilled laborers sent out for the purpose. It received then the name of Charlotte Amalie, in honor of the wife of King Christian V (reigned 1670-99). On September 11, 1695, the town was further enlarged with a street along the sea, which today constitutes the principal business street of Charlotte Amalie. Pere Labét, a French Roman Catholic priest who visited the island in 1701, described the town as follows: "It consists of one long street which terminates at the Danish West Indian factory, or office of the Company. Houses, formerly huts, now built of bricks, are almost all of one story but well arranged. The pavements (on the street) are of tiles, and the interiors whitewashed as in Holland . . ." ²⁶

²⁵ Lose, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

²⁶ From *Voyage aux Isles de l'Amerique*, Vol. II, p. 285, quoted by Knox, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

There was a two-year vacancy until Pastor Jacob Andersen arrived on January 29, 1691. He, too, was assigned the room in the fort and boarded with the governor, Johan Lorentz. But as the fort was too noisy for him and the food did not suit him, he received permission to reside in a small house on the almost abandoned "minister-plantation," and was allowed 48 cents a day for food. He died the year after his arrival, on August 10, 1692. St. Thomas was gradually getting the reputation of being the white man's graveyard.

The arrival of Ephraim Monrad on June 19, 1696, brought to a close a vacancy of four years. Pastor Monrad preached alternately in Danish and High German, which fact indicates the increase of German Lutherans on the island, caused mainly by the presence of the Brandenburg Company. He was highly praised for his devotion, piety, and zeal. But on September 30, the same year, he died. After another vacancy which lasted two years he was succeeded by Pastor David Fenrich, who arrived September 3, 1698, under a three-year contract. Six months ahead of time, March 28, 1701, Pastor Fenrich left the field.

Thus from February, 1689, to September, 1698, a period of nearly ten years, the Lutheran church in St. Thomas had been supplied with ministers for a total of a year and nine months.

Untimely death was not limited to Lutheran ministers but was the common lot. Within a year after the arrival of Pastor Fenrich's ship, twenty-four soldiers and three officers from among its passengers had died. The slave

ships that arrived during the next few years lost much of their human cargo by death at sea.

Until the transfer of the West Indian Company to the Danish crown the company continued, in co-operation with the primate of the Danish Lutheran Church, to secure Lutheran ministers for the island. In the charter granted by King Christian V (September 28, 1697) the company still enjoyed this privilege both for St. Thomas and for the Danish Colony in Guinea, West Africa. Section 14 of that charter reads as follows:

The directors may themselves select God-fearing, decent and learned persons as ministers, who shall teach the pure Lutheran doctrine on the island and in the forts of the Company in Africa and America (West Indies) as well as on its ships, and who shall serve the people in matters affecting their souls' welfare. Whenever they have been named and called by the directors, we shall confirm them in their office, and if they show themselves to be well instructed and of proper behavior, we shall in due time, on the application of the directors, give them preference to others in the matter of securing positions as ministers in these our realms and lands.²⁷

The Lutheran congregation held services either in the house in the courtyard or under the bastion of Fort Christian until 1706, when a regular church building was erected within the fort. Its framework was built of fir; its roof was curved like an arch and covered with red tiles, while its floor was of brick. It was 72 feet long and 55 feet wide, and had twenty glass windows. When, in the course of

²⁷ From *Registrant over Vestindiske Sager, 1671-99*, quoted by Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

two decades, the framework began to decay, the north and south sides were replaced by concrete walls.²⁸ After 1730 this first Lutheran church building in St. Thomas was called Christ Church (*Kristi Kirke*). Knox wrote in 1852: "Two tombstones still lie near the former church's entrance, forming a part of the present pavement of the courtyard. The inscriptions of both of them are obliterated. One of them is unknown, but the other is that of General J. H. von Holten, vice governor of St. Thomas from 1706 to 1708 and who was buried beneath it in 1708."²⁹ These tombstones with their obliterated inscriptions can still be seen at the entrance to the present police court. The Lutheran congregation worshiped in this church until 1754, when another building was erected outside the fort. Eighteen years later this new building was destroyed by a hurricane, and the congregation was compelled to move back into the fort.

Pastor Andreas Chorne arrived October 17, 1701, and remained six and a half years at a salary of 6 rdl. per month plus room and board. During that time he boarded with three governors in the fort: Johan Lorentz, Claus Hansen, and Joachim von Holten. During his ministry the Lutherans of St. Thomas sent a gift of about three hundred dollars to the struggling Lutheran church in New York.³⁰

Chorne's successor, Pastor Andreas Peter Samsing, arrived March 11, 1708. He officiated at the first funeral

²⁸ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

²⁹ Knox., *op. cit.*, p. 134.

³⁰ Kreider, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

ever held in Christ Church—that of the vice governor, General von Holten.³¹

Samsing's successor, Pastor Christian Fischer, who also boarded with the governor, neglected his duties because of excessive drinking. His death after a three years' stay was therefore not much deplored.³² Nevertheless to him goes the credit for the first baptism of a Negro slave in the Danish West Indies (1713?). This indicates that forty-four years before the Danish Lutheran missionaries and nineteen years before the German Moravians arrived to work among the slaves, Christianization of the slaves had begun, though on a very small scale. During the four years' vacancy that followed Fischer's death, the governor again performed weddings and other religious and civil rites.³³

In 1715 a delegation of planters left for Copenhagen to present complaints and make several requests of the West Indian Company on behalf of the planters on St. Thomas. Among the requests was one that members of the Reformed churches henceforth be permitted to call their own ministers. This request was granted. There were then two Reformed churches on St. Thomas, the

³¹ From Vice Governor Holten's two daughters two renowned families descended. Maria became the mother of the Beverhoudts, who rose to great prominence on the island; Jacoba became the mother of the Castenskjolds, who belonged to the Danish nobility. (Lose, *op. cit.*, p. 307.) George Carstensen, Jacoba's son, was one of the three prominent delegates sent to Copenhagen in 1715 and "became the founder of a distinguished line of Danish nobility, the Castenskjolds." Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 189, footnote.

³² In June, 1712, the Lutheran church was closed because of a disgraceful episode involving Fischer's intoxication. Lose, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

³³ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

Reformed Dutch and the French Huguenot, the latter located on Frenchman Hill. The Dutch congregation, therefore, called its next minister from Holland in 1716, and the French congregation called its minister, Jean Francois Tissot, from France on July 18, 1717. Both ministers received royal confirmation. Later, when the French congregation was discontinued, its members joined the Reformed Dutch church.

Pastor Cort Simonsen Riise arrived January 7, 1717, but died forty-seven days later. Before his death, however, he complained to the West Indian Company in Copenhagen about his small salary and poor living conditions, emphasizing the facts that while the two Reformed Dutch ministers on the island received each 600 rdl. annually, his salary was only 198 rdl. a year; and while each enjoyed the use of a fine parsonage, he had to live in the damp, clammy room in Fort Christian. His complaint resulted in a slight increase in salary and an improvement in living conditions for his successors.³⁴

When in 1717 the island of St. John was annexed to Denmark and joined with St. Thomas as one unit for government administrative purposes, the Lutheran parish of St. Thomas likewise was extended to that island. Henceforth the St. Thomas parish became known as the parish of St. Thomas and St. John.

³⁴ The salaries of Danish Lutheran ministers remained small for many years, but were increased considerably during the eighteenth century.

III

The Occupation of St. John

Prior to the annexation of St. John, Denmark had frequently made claims to that island, and a few Danes had now and then settled there, but under very unsatisfactory conditions. On March 25, 1717, Governor Erik Bredal, with a lieutenant, five soldiers, twenty planters, and sixteen Negro slaves, arrived at Coral Bay on St. John in a ship loaded with guns, ammunition, and provisions.¹ Having planted the Danish flag, fired a salute, and drunk the health of the king of Denmark and the West Indian Company, he brought up nine four-pounders on a hill on which the fort was to be built, and started clearing the forest for gardens and sugar plantations. Frederiksvaern was the name given the fort when it was completed in 1723. It was 100 by 100 feet in outside measurement, had several cannon, and was manned by twelve men.²

"The early inhabitants came entirely from St. Thomas and were equally varied in their nationality. Nine of them were Danes, five were French Huguenot refugees or of

¹ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

² Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

refugee stock, and nearly all the rest were Dutch.”³ The colony increased rapidly. In 1728 there were eighty-seven plantations with a population of 123 whites and 677 Negro slaves, and all the land had been parceled out except at the fort and the West Indian Company’s plantation at the place later called Carolina. Probably no more than one-fifth of the whites were Danes.

Because no Lutheran minister resided on St. John, no large-scale Lutheran work was carried on there. Quarterly or monthly visits were made to constitute the directing work. During the year after the occupation, work was begun by Pastor Hans Christian Brandt, who arrived at St. Thomas July 3, 1718. He baptized a few Negroes in St. Thomas, the second recorded baptism of slaves in the Danish West Indies.⁴ He died after a ministry of two years and four months.

Brandt’s successor, Pastor Jacob Tamdrup, arrived June 26, 1721,⁵ bringing a silver chalice and paten for the Lutheran church on St. John.⁶ These communion vessels, bearing the inscription 1721, are still in use in the Lutheran church on that island. With Tamdrup and his wife came a soldier named Arendt Nygaard and his wife and child. Since the soldier was a *studiosis*, a graduate of Copenhagen University, he was appointed for part-time work as a catechist and church clerk on St. John. Both he and

³ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁴ Records in the Lutheran parsonage (archives), St. Thomas.

⁵ With him came two physicians, two lieutenants, a sergeant, a corporal, thirty soldiers, seven clerks, and ten copyists. Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁶ Lose, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

Pastor Tamdrup drank excessively and soon Nygaard was dishonorably dismissed. A warning was sent to Pastor Tamdrup from Copenhagen that unless he changed his ways, he too would be dishonorably dismissed, but it did not reach St. Thomas until after his death. Tamdrup died a year and a half after his arrival, whereupon Nygaard was again installed as clerk on St. John. His later fate is unknown.

Pastor Philip Adam Dietrichs arrived April 30, 1724, bringing a lay assistant, Hofman, for St. John. Hofman had been appointed as teacher of the Danish school on St. John and clerk and assistant to the Lutheran minister. To relieve the pastor on St. Thomas, the West Indian Company appointed Hofman to preach to the Danes on St. John.

Pastor Dietrichs proved to be a zealous, devout, and highly esteemed minister. He conducted the first "hurricane intercessory service" July 25, 1726, and on an unknown date later that year the first "hurricane thanksgiving service," in Christ Church within the fort.⁷ He also became influential in building the first Lutheran parsonage on St. Thomas. It was located outside Fort Christian on lot No. 10 on Nørregade.⁸

Pastor Dietrichs left St. Thomas March 11, 1732. Nine days later Pastor Andreas Thambesen Tams arrived. He

⁷ Later, July 25 and October 25 were made stationary dates for those services. They are still celebrated in the churches on the islands.

⁸ The neighboring lot No. 9 Nørregade, west of it, was bought in 1730 for a residence for the Danish Lutheran clerk and was used also for the Danish Lutheran school. That year the parsonage was still the easternmost building on the island, and in 1714 only three houses were built east of it. It was finally sold in 1754. Lose, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

was the last Lutheran minister to preach both in Danish and German, which indicates the decrease of Germans living on St. Thomas. During his ministry the old "minister-plantation" was sold. Tams died a year and a half after his arrival.

After the death of Tams, Lens Blath, a chaplain on one of the Danish East India Company's ships, supplied the St. Thomas and St. John parish for a year and two months, while the ship lay in the harbor. It was during his ministry that the slave insurrection on St. John occurred.

During the ministry of Nicolai Frederik Bang (1735-36) the government purchased several slaves as servants in the St. Thomas parsonage. They lived at the parsonage and were called "church Negroes," and sometimes "royal Negroes" because they belonged to the government.

According to Kay Larsen, the Lutheran congregation on St. John had its own place of worship in 1736,⁹ but according to Pastor Lose it did not have its own place of worship until 1844.¹⁰ It is probable that the first place of worship referred to by Kay Larsen was the Reformed Dutch church, which was built during the eighteenth century and was destroyed by a hurricane August 13, 1793. It was not rebuilt. The place mentioned by Lose was probably the fort. Kay Larsen states that the Lutherans on St. John worshiped in the Dutch church previous to its de-

⁹ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁰ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt over den danske Lutherske Missions Historie paa St. Croix, St. Thomas, og San Jan*" ("Brief Outline of the Danish Lutheran Mission History on St. Croix, etc." in *Nordisk Missionstidsskrift*, I), Kjøbenhavn, 1891, p. 11. Cited henceforth as Lose's "*Kort Udsigt*."

struction, and thereafter in Fort Frederiksvaern.¹¹

The vacancies that followed the death of Pastor Bang June 14, 1736, were not caused so often by the difficulty of securing pastors for the islands as by the frequent deaths of ministers. Pastor Gunder Thomas Synderman, who came to Christiansted as the first Lutheran minister of St. Croix, died eleven days after his arrival during a visit to Pastor Bang in St. Thomas. The next day Syndermann's wife, who had accompanied him, died. The following year Pastor Jacob Hofmann arrived at St. Thomas in May, was married in September, and died in December. Pastor Mogens Valdemarsen Walberg lost his wife shortly after their arrival, and he became so violent with grief that he died twenty-six days later. Søren Ulrich Heldt died September 14, 1740, a few days after his arrival.¹² As a consequence of those frequent and untimely deaths the West Indian Company considered securing Lutheran ministers from North America. This, however, was never carried out.¹³ The cause of these numerous deaths was probably various kinds of plagues. Today, however, these islands are a health resort.

Svend Bjergboe (August 13, 1741, to September 25, 1747) was highly esteemed and "became known for copying the island's old church records in beautiful handwriting, by which much interesting information from the colony's

¹¹ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

¹² Records in the Lutheran parsonage (archives), St. Thomas, state that Pastor Ulrich died as the result of a trip to St. John.

¹³ Lose "*Tidligste Tid*."

oldest time has been preserved.”¹⁴ During his pastorate another Danish soldier was appointed to serve as clerk for the Danish Lutheran church on St. John.

“After an unprecedentedly short voyage of seven weeks and three days,” Rudolph Burenaeus Frick arrived on August 1, 1749, with his wife. She died shortly after their arrival. He was the island’s most learned minister.¹⁵ On July 25, 1750, he installed his successor, Hans Aereboe. Aereboe died November 7. A few months prior to this Pastor Andreas Bjergboe from St. Croix died on St. Thomas while visiting Frick and Aereboe. Frick remained until his death in 1754. St. Thomas was still living up to its reputation of being the Lutheran ministers’ graveyard.

It was during Aereboe’s ministry that two attempts were made at building a Lutheran church outside Fort Christian. The old Christ Church within the fort was by this time in such poor condition that its roof threatened to collapse. Besides, the fort was very crowded and in need of more space. The many uses of the fort and the various activities going on within its walls at that time were incredible. The batteries were armed with sixteen cannon, and beneath the arches were rooms for gunpowder and other defense material. The fort contained the governor’s room, the church auditorium, lieutenant’s quarters, guardhouse,

¹⁴ Holger Frederik Rørdam’s article, “*Kirkelige Forholde paa St. Croix 1741 og danske Praester paa de vestindiske Øer i Midten af det 18de Aarhundrede.*” (“Church Conditions on St. Croix 1741 and Danish ministers on the West Indian Islands in the middle of the 18th century”), in *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*, Ser. 4, V. II. Kjøbenhavn, 1891, pp. 55-100. Cited henceforth at Rørdam’s “*Kirkelige Forholde.*”

¹⁵ Records, Lutheran parsonage (archives), St. Thomas.

apothecary, physicians' office and bedrooms, hospital, room for the barber, the constable's store and dwelling place, room for noncommissioned officers with bedroom, rooms for the guard and tambour, soldier's hall and quarters, blacksmith shop, cistern, rifle chamber, kitchen, clerk's office, courtrooms, a jail for whites and another for Negroes, various workshops, a bakery, and in the front yard a whipping post and a wooden horse for punishment.¹⁶ At the end of 1742 work had been started gathering material for a church "about 150 yards north-east of the Fort,"¹⁷ but the cornerstone was not laid until 1750. The building was never finished. The walls had been erected when Pastor Aereboe died and the work was stopped. His body was interred within the unfinished building.

"This (unfinished) property was sold shortly afterward and a private residence erected on the old foundation. About a hundred years afterward, on enlarging the ground rooms of the edifice, the bones of the pastor were discovered. The bones caused much speculation, since the abandoned church had been forgotten. It was only when the records of the Lutheran church had been consulted that the truth came to light."¹⁸

After orders had come from Copenhagen in 1753 to enlarge the fort, Christ Church was torn down and the Lutherans once more worshiped in one of the rooms in

¹⁶ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 109. Its site is the present location of the English cable office. The Reformed Dutch congregation built a church in town shortly before the middle of the century.

¹⁸ Quoted from Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 134. These facts are also mentioned in the records of the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

the fort. On February 1 of that year, Pastor Frick laid the cornerstone for still another church on lots 41 and 42 on Nørregade. The church was under construction for a long time. Nearly 16,000 rdl. were spent on it. Later nearly 6,000 rdl. were spent rebuilding the roof. This was at first flat, made of bricks. Because of fear that it might be used for an attack on the fort, a sloping roof made of tile was substituted.¹⁹ The congregation worshiped in this structure for some time before it was finished. When it was destroyed by a hurricane in 1772, the congregation once more moved back into Fort Christian for worship. Several bodies had been interred in the Nørregade structure, among them those of Pastor Frick (October 20, 1754), Pastor Salling (1765), and Pastor Aalholm (1768). It was not rebuilt.

¹⁹ Lose, "*Tidligste Tid.*"

IV

Pioneer Work on St. Croix

When in 1493 Columbus discovered the island of Ay-Ay, so called by its Carib Indian inhabitants, he named it Santa Cruz (St. Croix). In the course of time Spanish settlers drove away the Indians. In 1625 Dutch and English settlers, presently joined by French refugees from St. Christopher (St. Kitts), drove away the Spaniards. Shortly before 1650 a civil war ensued and the English dispelled the Dutch and the French. "In August of that year, a Spanish expedition from Puerto Rico drove off the English.

The Spaniards had scarcely established themselves there before de Poincy, the Lieutenant general of all the French islands in America, sent a force of about 160 men from St. Christopher" and ousted the Spaniards.¹ The French occupied St. Croix from 1651 to 1695, when at the request of the French king, 147 whites and 623 Negro slaves were embarked against their will for Santo Domingo. Cattle and sheep and a few freemen were left behind but nearly all the houses were set on fire.² For thirty-eight

¹ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

² Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

years, until 1734 when the island was purchased by Denmark, it was "neglected and masterless."³

In 1726 Frederik Moth, governor of St. Thomas and St. John, in a letter to the directors of the West Indian Company suggested that if St. Croix "belonged to the Danes, or could be secured by them, the Company would in time become powerful."⁴ This and the fact that France needed money for its war against Poland, finally resulted in the treaty with France, concluded at Copenhagen June 15, 1733, and ratified by King Louis XV thirteen days later, providing for the purchase of St. Croix by the Danish West Indian Company for the sum of 750,000 livres (141,926 rdl.). On November 16, 1733, instructions from the company (which did not arrive until June 11, 1734) named Frederik Moth as the first Danish governor of the island. "On August 31, 1734, the Lutheran and Reformed ministers in St. Thomas held services in their respective churches for the benefit of the pioneer band that was to leave on the following day."⁵ Sailing for St. Croix on two ships, the party was accompanied by Pastor Andreas Thambesen Tams from St. Thomas. On September 6, 1734, after a clearing for the fort had been made on the northern side of the island, near Bassin, later called Christiansted, he delivered a sermon and offered prayer. *Dannebrog*, the Danish flag, was hoisted and the king's commission to the new governor was solemnly read. The cannon fired a

³ Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 498.

⁴ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

salute and St. Croix became a Danish possession,⁶ awaiting the formal transfer a few months later.

Governor Moth at once began clearing around the old buildings that had lain in ruins for nearly half a century. On the foundations of the French Roman Catholic church the Danes proceeded to build a Lutheran church. Early in 1735 colonists from St. Thomas and St. John settled on St. Croix, some at Christiansted, also called Bassin, and others at Frederiksted, also called West End. A year later many rich and influential English persons from St. Eustatius, Virgin Gorda, and Tortola purchased estates on the island.⁷ This occasioned the establishing of the Church of England (Anglican) which later became the largest denomination on the island.

In 1736 the first Danish Lutheran minister for St. Croix, Gunder Thomas Syndermann, arrived. He held services in a room in the nearly completed for Christiansvaern at Christiansted, where the Lutheran congregation was to worship until 1753. Pastor Syndermann's stay was pathetically short, probably no longer than half a year; he and his wife died during a visit to St. Thomas. At that time attempts were made to secure a Lutheran minister, Pastor Knoll, from New York, but negotiations were given up.

The second Lutheran minister, Hans Jacob Ottesen Stoud, became the most popular minister on St. Croix in the eighteenth century. He landed first on St. Thomas for a visit July 28, 1740. Finding Pastor Heldt seriously ill,

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁷ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

Stoud supplied for him, remaining until Heldt's death September 14. He made a brief trip to St. Croix before Heldt's death, for he preached his first sermon in Christiansted on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity that year. Later he was appointed interim pastor for all three islands. During his nine years' stay on St. Croix he found many occasions to supply at St. Thomas and St. John. In the beginning he lived in the fort in Christiansted, but when it became too crowded for him he built a house in town.⁸ His intense interest in social and racial conditions on the island and his zeal and fearless nature are indicated in the following extracts from a letter written by him to Carl Adolph von Plessen.⁹ They illustrate also the deplorable conditions existing on St. Croix at that time:

St. Croix, Jan. 11, 1741

"To His Excellency, the high and worshipful Over-Chamberlain and Privy Counsellor, and the honorable noble and wise President and Directors of the Royal Danish West India and Guinea Company: The grace of the Lord be with you all!"

After this respectful introduction Stoud expressed thanks to God that while "all those Danes except one, the second engineer," who came out with him had died after three or four or eight days, he himself had been spared and had been able to spend alternately four weeks on St. Thomas, and one week on St. John. It can easily be seen, he writes, how dangerous travels are "among such unruly and lawless people who care neither for the government nor for religion"; especially the three hundred or more Englishmen on St. Croix who "must rather be looked upon as traitors and rebels than subjects and inhabitants of this country.

⁸ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁹ This letter appears in Rørdam, "*Kirkelige Forholde.*" Excepting two quotations which are translated from the same source by Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 224, the translations and transpositions are by the author.

. . They dare, indeed, to threaten the lives of us Danes if they cannot get what they want, for they know that we are but a handful, sixty persons in all, as compared to their great power."

If Pastor Stoud complained of the English residents on St. Croix, he attacked with equal indignation the Danish authorities on that island for their indifference toward the deplorable conditions. Regretting deeply the heathen conditions in which children must be brought up, the lack of proper houses and provisions, he suggested that more ships be secured to bring provisions and lumber, etc., and good people to make good citizens. "If this is not done, it is like sending out people to the island to be killed," for he found sick people everywhere living with well people and dying from want of proper food. "As I can testify to be true, our own people are lying on sick beds unable to get food even for money. Yes, I have known of some who have lain on their deathbeds and cried in vain for food for four days without getting any. You high lords": his pen exclaimed indignantly, "I heard much whining and complaining while at home because of the small profit which this land yields, but may God have mercy upon you and save this country and all of us from curse and disaster because of the many souls who have so innocently lost their lives in such a fashion!"¹⁰

He complained about his small salary. In fact, if it had not been for the kind assistance of a Reformed Dutch couple, Mr. Adrian von Beverhoudt and his fiancée, he could not possibly have subsisted. "But as God knows, I

¹⁰ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

have not sought out you high lords to ask for bread: I have not come here for that, nor is it merely for bread I pray, but for souls." Yet he feels that he must inform them that he has written to his bishop that unless his salary is increased he must ask for royal permission to leave. "You high and respected lords, perhaps some of you will conclude that I am a disgruntled person. I beg your pardon, I am not, but I must speak the truth. For what will it profit *you* when most of those sent here must die because of want?"

Pastor Stoud proceeds by proposing that a church, a school, a parsonage, and a hospital be built on each island and suggesting that the hospitals be built on the plan of a certain hospital at Friederichsborg in Denmark. They could be connected with the church and school buildings, if desired, and modified with a large storage room, and a hall for the boarding of the poor. He even offers to take the initiative himself in erecting these buildings, proposing to make loans from the St. Thomas Lutheran Church fund, the St. Thomas poor fund, and the St. Thomas hospital fund, each of which, he figures, has a balance respectively of 1,744, 2,210, and 2,369 rdl. His last appeal is made in behalf of the church and his private school for slaves. He asks for respectable people, especially ministers, teachers, and students, to assist him in teaching the fifty or more slaves he instructs in the evenings. He requests three hundred textbooks, three hundred catechisms, preferably in Dutch, from twenty to thirty Bibles, a new chasuble, a surplice, and an altar cloth, as he is "ashamed to use the

present ragged ones (which used to belong to the church in St. Thomas) since strangers often drop in at church services."

He concludes his long letter with wishes for God's blessing, adding,

"This is the prayer and New Year's wish which I, your faithful intercessor, bring to God for His Excellency and for all the honorable, noble, wise and high lords."

Your most humble and dutiful servant

(Signed) H. J. O. Stoud

Conditions on St. Croix did not improve much during Pastor Stoud's time, but on St. Thomas, "as a result of Stoud's vigorous representation of local needs, ground for a hospital was actually bought in 1743. The present hospital on that island, which stands on the site then selected, thus owes its origin to Stoud's energetic measures."¹¹

It is not known if Pastor Stoud received the requested vestments and altar book, but in 1742, upon a later request, he received a beautiful silver chalice and a silver paten for the Christiansted church.¹² These are still the proud possession of that congregation. His appeal for assistants was also granted, although late. In 1746 three university students arrived as government scribes and part-time assistants to Pastor Stoud in the church and in his school for slaves.¹³

In 1743 Stoud was appointed to the privy council on

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Rørdam, "*Kirkelige Forholde*."

¹³ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

St. Croix. His vigorous influence was at once evident in the actions taken by that body. The style and fearless denunciation of the complaints which the council addressed to the company were typical of Stoud. In a communication to the directors of the West Indian Company, dated February 3, 1748, the council requested the company not to send out any more "servants who are half-rotten from passion before they arrive."¹⁴ In another letter written the same year the council laments that "if conditions in the country continue as they are, it would have been better that we had never known of the Company, nor served it. People have left. Produce cannot be shipped away, since they can be shipped only in the Company's vessels, and the Company sends no ships. We in the privy council will soon be the only ones left. There are no clerks, no sheriff; only one useless officer who is here because of bad conduct."¹⁵

In the midst of such conditions Pastor Stoud died. Toward the end he was very weak and often absent from church services. On New Year's Day, 1749, the last day he officiated in the church, he fainted twice. He died April 9, 1749. His wife, who died twenty years later, erected a tombstone over his grave in Christiansted cemetery. Today it is preserved as a tablet in the Lutheran church there.¹⁶

¹⁴ Rørørdam, "*Kirkelige Forholde*."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Translation of the Latin inscription:

"Here lies one who never ceased from propagating the gospel since he became a man, and who was ardently occupied in advancing the cause of

VIRGIN ISLANDS STORY

During five of the following seven years the Lutheran church on St. Croix was without a shepherd. The ministry of Andreas Bjergboe lasted a little more than a year. His successor, Søren Augaard Paludau, was one of the very few unworthy Lutheran ministers to serve on St. Croix. He was discharged because of bad conduct after a nine-month ministry. The pastorate of Johan Bøtzau, who also worked as a missionary among the slaves lasted less than half a year.

During this period of frequent vacancies many Lutherans in St. Croix occasionally traveled the forty miles to St. Thomas to partake of the Holy Communion.

In spite of this and other difficulties, however, the hearts of the people were lifted by the acquisition of the first

religion; one who could have lived a more pleasant life in his native country and have acquired more wealth; and one who could have spent a quiet existence: the most reverend and saintly Dr. Johan Jacob Stoud; who pursuing the gospel for nine years was superintendent of the Lutheran church on the island of St. Croix and all these years wore patiently the cross; who was carried off in his forty-second year of his life in this Sardinia of the new world when he was freed from the trammels of the body."

Translation of the Danish inscription:

"Ask, Reader, of Sjaelland, St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John, if in holy zeal man can find his equal! If you, countryman, want to know more of this blessed servant of the Gospel, then he was born in Christiansand in Norway the 27th of September at 4 o'clock, 1707. His father was the late reverend and scholarly Mr. Ludvig Stoud, A.M., Bishop of Christiansand diocese in Norway. His mother (was) Madame Ingeborg Beerman, only daughter of the late noble and wise Hans Jacob Beerman, Royal Majesty's sheriff in Christiansand, who with her son, Mr. Ludvig Stoud, pastor at Kjaeldby, Møen, the only brother of the deceased, are the only survivors. He was brought up and educated in the royal school in Frideriksborg, Sjaelland, until the year of 1728, when he entered the royal university of Copenhagen where he remained and finished his studies until 1740, when he volunteered to go to St. Croix. Here he entered into a loving union in marriage with the virtuous matron Madame Magdalena Hall, who has caused this tombstone to be erected to the memory of her blessed husband. He died blissfully after a long illness on April 9th, 1749. She followed him on August 25th, 1769."



Ewing Galloway

FORT CHRISTIAN—Early headquarters for Danish governors and Lutheran pastors. The flat roof leaked . . .



PIONEERS—Pastors Larsen, Petersen, Olsen, Faber, Kastrup,
and one of their PRODUCTS—Frederick Lutheran Church



PIONEER WORK ON ST. CROIX

Lutheran church building in Christiansted, a former French Roman Catholic church.¹⁷ It was consecrated May 27, 1753, by Pastor Frick of St. Thomas, as The Lord of Zebaoth's Church, or The Lutheran Church of the Lord of Zebaoth. It was abandoned for the present church building, a former Reformed Dutch church built probably in 1744, which was consecrated as a Lutheran church July 25, 1834. The abandoned church building was later used for some time as a military depot and a bakery.¹⁸ Pastor Emil Valdemar Lose's history and description of this oldest landmark in the Virgin Islands follows:¹⁹

"The church in Christiansted had stood there even before we Danes took it over. Where Christiansted now stands there stood in the time of the French a town (I do not know its name), and as the French colony was forcefully destroyed by the French King himself in 1695, it is easily explained why the abandoned (French) church was not in good condition in 1734 (the island having been practically deserted until then). That it stood there and that our ministers now and then used it as a burial place, is proved by our church records.²⁰ However, the claim that it was the same building which we restored and con-

¹⁷ For the labors of the Roman Catholic priests in this ancient church before the Danish occupation, see Knox, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁸ Rørdam, "*Kirkelige Forholde*."

¹⁹ Translation is by the author from Lose's account quoted by Rørdam in his "*Kirkelige Forholde*," pp. 73-74. Parenthetical remarks are also by the author.

²⁰ Among others the following were buried in The Steeple: Henrik Kroll, Adolph von Plessen's inspector of plantations on St. Croix, September 18, 1742; and Peter Claussen, governor general, June 26, 1784 (died June 24).

separated in 1753 is not incontestably established; but while nothing speaks against it, everything speaks for it. The town during the time of the French was very small and could not (therefore) have had more than one church. . . Nor has there at any other place been found a foundation which could be pointed out as that of the old French Church. (Furthermore) our church was 87 ft. long and 29 ft. wide, outside (Danish) measurements,²¹ and was extraordinarily plain (which facts correspond to the old ruins). What also goes to show that it was the old ruin we used is the fact that 40 years after we had started to use the church, the walls of it required extensive repairs lasting two years, and after the elapse of another 22 years the walls were again in a poor condition. A baptismal font was installed in 1760, glass windows in 1782, and a tower in 1796. The church bell, which was not hung in the tower, was added in 1793. Until that time the signal bell in the fort had been used to announce church services . . . (the fact that there is no mention of the laying of a cornerstone for it also indicates that it was the old French church) . . . ”²²

A new age was ushered in for the Danish West Indies when Denmark purchased the West Indian Company in 1754. The shortsightedness and greed of the company

²¹ The Danish foot is slightly longer than the English.

²² In 1909, on September 19, after a thorough renovation costing nearly two thousand dollars, The Steeple was again taken over by the Lutheran church to be used as a parish hall until 1916, when it was acquired by the Danish municipality for use as an emergency hospital after the hurricane October 11 that year. At the transfer in 1917 the municipality failed to return it to the Lutheran church. At present it is used as a municipal schoolhouse.

resulted in such terrible conditions that King Frederik V was forced to take this important step. All the company's forts, buildings, stores, goods, and slaves on the three islands; and all its ships, houses, and warehouses in Copenhagen were bought for the price of 2,200,000 pieces of eight (\$1,418,000). Involved in the transfer were 400 slaves and 211 Danish employees of the company.²³

Whatever the company's faults might have been, it should be stated to its credit that it had always co-operated wholeheartedly with the government and the church in furnishing its Danish employees and the rest of the Danes on the islands with ministers. The religious interest of the company is also indicated by the fact that "it concluded the purchase in the name of the Holy Trinity, and decided to give the Lutheran ministers in Copenhagen and at St. Olai Church, Elsinore, every new year six rdl. to pray for the safe (lucky) sailings of its ships and for the success of the negotiations."²⁴ It also tried to keep a Lutheran minister in Guinea, West Africa, and on board its slave ships for the spiritual comfort of the slaves. The latter may today appear hypocritical, but at that time it may have been well meant.

²³ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

²⁴ Herman Carl Johannes Lawaetz, *Brødremenighedens Missionshistorie* ("History of the Brethren's Church"), Copenhagen, 1902, Wroblevski; footnote on p. 7. This work is based mainly upon diaries and correspondence of Moravian missionaries from 1769 to 1848, some of which were then (prior to 1902) available in the Danish West Indies, but most of which are now in the Moravian archives in Herrnhut, Germany, and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Lawaetz is still remembered in St. Croix, where he was pastor of the Lutheran church at Christiansted from 1889 to 1903. While there he wrote this book.

By the crown's purchase the Lutheran Church in Denmark assumed direct and complete control of the Lutheran Church and its ministers on the islands, and freedom to begin on a larger scale the work of educating and Christianizing the Negroes, something that could scarcely have been expected of a business corporation like the Danish West Indian Company.

The Lutheran church on St. Croix soon felt the stimulation which the transfer occasioned. In 1755 two Lutheran ministers were sent out from Denmark together, the first time such a thing had happened. Their coming was heralded by a letter sent from Copenhagen to the government on St. Croix, October 17, 1755: "On the freighter 'Vesuvius' have sailed Mr. Peder Gutfeld and Mr. Hans Schousboe, graciously appointed to be curate and assistant on His Majesty's islands in America, on the same conditions as those of Mr. Bøtzau, each receiving an annual salary of 200 rdl." ²⁵

Peder Gutfeld, mentioned as an exceedingly bright person, and Hans Schousboe, the assistant pastor, sent to Bishop Harboe in Copenhagen a plan for their work and some suggestions for improvements. On Christmas Eve, 1756, a royal ordinance was issued adopting and confirming most of their ideas. This was replaced by another royal ordinance issued December 8, 1758. The new decree was the result of the diminishing of the Christiansted congregation, caused by the return of many Danes to Denmark and the removal of Pastor Gutfeld to a parish in Denmark.

²⁵ Documents, archives of the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

It reveals the control of minute details which the Lutheran State Church exercised over its ministers at that time. The royal ordinance, for example, ordered the discontinuation of Wednesday and Friday evening services already instituted by the pastors in Christiansted, and substituted for them the catechization of children on those evenings.²⁶

During the ministry of Gutfeld and Schousboe the first Danish missionaries arrived to begin systematic work among the slaves. Schousboe also held occasional services for the Danes at Frederiksted. The date of the establishment of the Frederiksted Lutheran church is not known. In 1766 a wooden building was erected. This first church was replaced by the present substantial building which was dedicated on January 15, 1792, by Pastor Martin Peter Ohm of Christiansted.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century several churches besides the Lutheran and Moravian were established at Christiansted. The Reformed Dutch church had been built probably in 1744. There was a Jewish synagogue located at the corner of Kongens Tvaergade and Compagniegade, with a cemetery located between Østergade and Bjerregade. The Quakers held meetings, first in the country, presumably at Grange, Work and Rest estates, later in town. There was a large Presbyterian church, built about 1753, located at Watergut, Prinsensgade.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Slavery in the Danish West Indies

Slavery and the slave traffic are ancient evils. Slavery existed among the Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Hebrews, Persians, Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans; in Europe, India, China, Africa. Jews and Gentiles, whites and Negroes, Europeans and Asiatics and Africans alike, at one period or another, have been slaveholders and have been themselves enslaved. Slavery and the slave trade were continued in medieval times, quite extensively by Mohammedans and occasionally, though not commonly, by Christians.

Portugal was the first Christian nation to engage in the modern African slave trade. Just before 1450 "Portuguese explorers in Africa were given several Negro slaves in ransom for Moors whom they had captured."¹ For half a century Portugal monopolized the slave traffic until Spain, which already had American Indian slaves in its colonies, entered the African slave trade in 1517. Subsequently England, Holland, France, Sweden, Denmark, and the United States became involved in the African slave trade.

¹ *The World Book of Encyclopedia*, pp. 6639ff.

Denmark entered on the traffic shortly after 1659 when a Danish African Company was established. The forts of Frederiksborg and Christiansborg were built on the Gold Coast of Africa more than a decade before the importation of slaves began in the Danish West Indies.²

The failure of the experiment of using Danish convicts for manual labor led the West Indian Company to import African slaves to St. Thomas. The first slave ship, which was probably not the company's, arrived in 1673 with 103 slaves.³ In 1688 the company owned 153 slaves; more were owned by individual whites on the island.⁴ In 1690 there were 426 slaves on St. Thomas, a number which grew steadily until the peak of 4,490 was reached in 1725. There were, besides, several hundred on St. John. Many of the imported slaves were sold into other parts of the world, and thus St. Thomas was for many years the world's largest slave market.⁵

The great majority of the imported Africans had already been slaves in Africa and were sold to the traders by their African owners. Among the small minority captured

² Slavery in the American colonies was first recognized legally in Massachusetts in 1641, then in Connecticut in 1650, in Virginia in 1666, and later in other colonies. Cf. *The World Book of Encyclopedia*.

³ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 27. According to Westergaard's list of cargoes arriving in the Danish West Indies, compiled from the company's records, the first slave ship of the company arrived in May, 1687, with eighty slaves. Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

⁴ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁵ Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, footnote on page 118, states that "there was a custom of bringing slaves intended for the United States first to the West Indies for a few years, where they were made accustomed to their new life by the older West Indian slaves . . . The proportion of West Indian slaves brought to the United States did not become significant until the nineteenth century."

directly by the traders there were many persons who had belonged to African tribal aristocracies. The abject humiliation they experienced can easily be imagined. At the auction blocks of the various slave markets both male and female slaves were exhibited stark naked for the examination of traders and spectators. A life of bondage followed. Oldendorp, the Moravian historian who visited St. Thomas in 1767, mentions a Negro woman who, coming from a noble family in Africa, refused the demand of her mistress for work. "I was greater in Guinea than you are," she said. "I had many more slaves than you have. Now you expect me to be your slave; I would rather starve to death." She carried out this determination, completely indifferent to harshness or leniency, and died a lingering death.⁶ There were of course not many cases like hers. Africans who had been slaves in Africa harbored less resentment against their new form of slavery.⁷

In Africa the Negroes were divided into three social groups: aristocrats, serfs, and slaves. In the Danish West Indies they were divided into occupational groups. Oldendorp lists four: the house servants, skilled craftsmen, warehouse workers, and field laborers. To this should be added a fifth, the fort Negroes. The house servants, the skilled craftsmen, and the fort Negroes enjoyed the most favored

⁶ T. S. A. Oldendorp, *Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brüder auf den caribbischen Inseln St. Thomas, St. Croix und St. Jan*, Barby, 1777; I and II (1,068 pages).

⁷ Lawaetz, *op. cit.*, p. 135, tells of an incident that occurred in 1758 when a group of slaves used their savings to purchase a slave woman they presented as a gift to the wife of a Moravian missionary, to assist her during her illness.

positions, and many of them became freemen long before the emancipation. Division of labor was strictly adhered to. "A house slave would not do field work, and a seamstress would not scrub floors." ⁸

Many of the house servants were mulattoes and were often given special privileges. Since a household held a number of slaves, in some cases as many as twenty, it seems that they were not overworked. On the contrary they were often "lazy, spoiled and pampered," and were much less subject to discipline than other kinds of slaves.

The skilled craftsmen, such as masons, blacksmiths, carpenters, coopers, tailors, shoemakers, and barbers, increased greatly in number under the training of the Danish craftmasters and the Moravian missionaries. At times these slaves were not assigned any given work but were allowed to find their own employment, the income from which they turned over in part to their owners.⁹

Fort Negroes on St. Thomas and St. Croix assisted the Danish soldiers in guarding and defending the forts from attacks by pirates and other enemies, and in keeping order on the islands. As a sort of militia, they enjoyed great prestige. On St. Thomas from 1721 to 1765 they were headed by the famous Negro, Mingo Tamarin, who gained his freedom and rose to the rank of Captain of the Negro Militia. He was selected by Governor Bredal in 1721 as a

⁸ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt over den Danske Lutherske Missions Historie paa St. Croix, St. Thomas og St. Jan,*" in *Nordisk Missions Tidende*, Vol. I, Copenhagen, 1890; pp. 1-37.

⁹ Albert A. Campbell, *The St. Thomas Negroes*, Northwestern, Evanston, Ill., 1943, p. 6.

useful and dependable man,¹⁰ and distinguished himself as a great leader and loyal officer during three slave uprisings. He died in 1765 greatly honored and bearing the proud title of Royal Free Negro Captain. He was succeeded by his son Peter who in many ways walked in his father's footsteps.

The lot of the field laborers was the hardest. These constituted nine-tenths of the slave population and occupied a position at the bottom of the social ladder. In the beginning they lived on the plantations in huts built like those in Africa and often grouped together fifty or sixty in a row. Later they had long, narrow frame or concrete houses with many small rooms, one family in each room. A few such concrete dwellings are still standing on St. Croix. Their working day began at daybreak and usually ended at sundown, with half an hour's rest for breakfast in the forenoon and an intermission from twelve noon to half-past one.¹¹ Each family was allotted a piece of land by its owner, from which it was supposed to raise most of its food, being allowed to sell surplus products.

The slaves developed among themselves several groups of social differentiation. At least three were recognized: that between the occupational groups; that between the natives and the newly arrived Africans; and that between the slaves and the free Negroes or Free Colored.¹² Skin color was often an important factor in determining in-

¹⁰ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

¹¹ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

¹² Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

dividual classification. Later, when the importation of slaves ceased, there were two main classifications, the free and the unfree.

The legal status of the slaves in the Danish West Indies was determined by laws that were enacted from time to time. The early laws had much in common with those of the English and French American colonies with respect to both their severity and their beneficence. While they gave the slaves such rights as private property, marriage, free time, private gardening, lighter labor for the women during pregnancy and after childbirth, they permitted, under certain circumstances, such cruel punishments as branding, mutilation, and chaining. Because of constant danger or uprising due to the high ratio of slaves to whites (in 1725 there were in St. Thomas eight full-grown slaves to one white adult) insubordination and assault on a white person were punished most severely, sometimes by death. And because the owner's existence depended upon slave labor, the running away of a slave sometimes resulted in severe punishment, even by mutilation. Except during rebellions the severe slave laws were seldom enforced, because no owner could afford to mistreat or lose a slave. "Many people in St. Thomas did not even know that such severe laws for punishing the slaves existed."¹³

Cruelty toward slaves in the Danish West Indies was not at all common except in the case of rebellions and even then was similar to that inflicted in Europe upon offenders

¹³ West, *Beytrage zur Beschreibung von St. Croix*, Chapter 3, Kjøbenhavn, 1794.

against criminal laws. Many historians agree that the slaves were better treated in the Danish West Indies than elsewhere. Lose is of the opinion that on the whole their lot was even better than that of the serfs in Europe at that time.¹⁴ Examples of unusually kind and humane treatment of slaves during this period were not uncommon. Ludvig Ernst von Schimmelmann, the great Danish nobleman and owner of the two large estates on St. Croix, La Princesse and La Grange, was a leader in this respect. He forbade the drivers on his estates to punish the slaves, and ordered that the offending slaves be tried instead by a council consisting of managers and slaves who had distinguished themselves by Christian virtues. He also practiced giving all profit above a certain amount to his slaves.¹⁵

Most of the acts of violence during the slave rebellions on St. John, 1733, and on St. Croix, 1848, were classified as military crimes and were punished accordingly. The St. John uprising—during which cruelty was displayed on both sides—was probably caused in part by Governor Gardelin's mandate of severe punishment for disobedient slaves and in part by the European planters, but it should be emphasized that the major factor was the recent arrival on the island of a large number of Negroes from savage tribes in Africa, such as the Elminas, whose male members hated field work as woman's task, and the warlike Akvambos, many of whom had been sold to the new plantations

¹⁴ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 6.

¹⁵ Lawaetz, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

at Coral Bay.¹⁶

Later the slave laws were made much milder. When the Danish crown took over the West Indian Company in 1754 many people in government circles in Denmark expressed the opinion that the time was ripe for improving conditions for the slaves. The result was the royal ordinance of February 3, 1755, issued by King Frederik V, a humane and God-fearing ruler. Some of the ordinance's forty-five paragraphs¹⁷ will be referred to briefly here.

The first three paragraphs concern mainly the rights of the slaves: God's Word shall be preached to them; they shall be instructed in the Christian religion; and their children shall be baptized like other people's children. On holidays the slaves shall be free, and the owners shall suffer "strong and exemplary" punishment if they place the least hindrance in the way of the slaves' appropriation of their religion. If an owner has illicit relations with a female slave and has children by her, he must pay a fine of two thousand pounds of sugar and the female slave and her children shall be taken away from him. This last clause was later annulled. Paragraph 9 states that Christian slaves shall be buried according to Christian customs. Paragraph 39 stipulates that married slaves must not be separated by sale, nor children not of age be taken away

¹⁶ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

¹⁷ Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, p. 126. This is a biography in Danish of the last governor general of the Danish West Indies, covering forty-four hectic years of his life in the Danish West Indies, published in Copenhagen in 1940 (during the Nazi occupation of Denmark). It contains a wealth of information about social and racial conditions in the islands during the first half of the nineteenth century.

from their parents. The owners must give the slaves a certain amount of food to eat and two sets of clothing annually. They must treat them humanely, and cruel treatment shall be severely punished.

Further provisions restrict the slaves. They may not carry any gun or large stick, or congregate at lonely places, or sell sugar canes or other things without their owners' consent. Punishment for their misdeeds is far less rigorous than that outlined in earlier laws. However, the paragraph safeguarding the white man's inviolability, that "he who smites his master, or his master's wife, or children, shall be severely punished or put to death," was not yet changed. It was retained likewise in the other slave codes of that time.

VI

Moravian Missions

At the coronation of King Christian VI in 1731, Count Nicolai Louis von Zinzendorf, founder of the Moravian Church, made the acquaintance of a Danish Lutheran nobleman from St. Thomas, Count Ferdinand Danneskjold Laurvig. The record shows that Count Laurvig's slave, Anton Ulrich, told Zinzendorf a heart-rending tale of the conditions under which the slaves lived in the Danish West Indies.¹ Several weeks later Zinzendorf had Anton tell his story to the Lutherans and Moravians at Herrnhut in Germany. The result was a decision to begin mission work in the Danish West Indies.

Zinzendorf had long desired to start foreign mission work. Ever since he, a Lutheran nobleman, had allowed the Moravian Brethren to resettle on his estate in Saxony, he had been profoundly influenced by their deep piety and warm evangelical fervor. He was fully persuaded that the Brethren were essentially as Lutheran as he was and he became influential among them in the organization of their church life, identifying himself heartily with them

¹ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

in their activities.² A man of broad culture and vision, Count Zinzendorf was not content to see the Brethren hide their light under a bushel. He pressed them to extend their Christian influence as true witnesses of Christ.

In spite of the deep and favorable impression made by Ulrich at Herrnhut it took Zinzendorf a full year to persuade the Brethren to accept this new idea of missionary work among a strange people across the sea. The decision was finally made through the quaint Moravian practice of drawing lots. By that same method Leonard Dober, a Lutheran layman and potter from Wurttemberg, was chosen as the first missionary. David Nitschmann, a Moravian carpenter, was to go with Dober as a temporary companion.³

The Danish West Indian Company was opposed to the plan, and it might not have succeeded but for "the support of the Danish Princess, Charlotte Amalie, Court Chaplains Rens and Blum, and a few other royal Lutheran personages in Copenhagen."⁴ But it did succeed. The two missionaries sailed from Copenhagen in a Dutch ship, August 21, 1732.⁵ The new missionaries arrived at St. Thomas December 13. A Danish Lutheran planter, Lorentzen,

² So definitely did Zinzendorf identify himself with the Moravian Brethren that in the American colonies he was in constant conflict with recognized Lutheran leaders. For all practical purposes he ceased being a Lutheran and became a Moravian. Cf. Abdel Ross Wentz, *The Lutheran Church in American History*; Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1933; pp. 60, 68f.

³ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Lawaetz, *Brod. Mis.* Kay Larsen and Knox give October 8 as the date.



Eving Galloway

BLACKBEARD'S CASTLE—An old legend about pirates
from the early days of Danish colonization



Ewing Galloway

CHARLOTTE AMALIE—Named after a Danish queen, one of
the most historic towns in the Islands, founded 1691

housed them until they could get established in their own trades. Nitschmann left the next April. Dober found no employment as a potter, so he became a steward in Governor Gardelin's home, where he was treated with great kindness. When he found that this work interfered with his missionary labors he resigned, to earn a scanty subsistence as watchman on certain estates.⁶

Practically all the early Moravian missionaries were tradesmen—that was the way they were expected to make their living. As time went on, they developed into master craftsmen who taught the slaves their trades, especially blacksmithing and shoemaking. These two crafts had been recommended by Oldendorp, in preference to bricklaying and carpentry, which often required the missionaries to be absent from their stations, or—worse inconvenience—forced them to use the slaves given them for assistance at the plantations.⁷ It was not possible, however, for the Brethren to avoid using slaves, and they even became owners of slaves.

Shortly before Dober's departure on June 11, 1734, fourteen Brethren arrived. The following year six more Brethren and eleven "sisters" came to begin mission work on St. Croix, which had just been annexed to Denmark. Partly to gain a foothold and partly to secure their subsistence, these missionaries became overseers on the plantations just purchased by Chamberlain Carl Adolph von Plessen. But this poor and hasty plan soon failed, after

⁶ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁷ Lawaetz, *Brod. Mis.*, p. 144.

the murderous climate had, before the end of 1736, killed nineteen of the thirty-nine missionaries.⁸

A really orderly mission program was first begun by Friederich Martin, who became director (1736-50) of the work on all three islands. On St. Thomas he supervised a school at New Herrnhut, which had been acquired August 30, 1737. He went to St. Croix in 1740.

The Brethren met much opposition in the beginning—not from the government, but from the planters. Once Martin and one of his co-workers were imprisoned; but, notwithstanding statements made to the contrary, this was not due to any direct antagonism from the planters. The reason was that Martin had married his co-worker, Freundlich, to a free mulatto. Such an act contravened the law at that time and strengthened the whites in their opinion that the Brethren were not only fanatical visionaries but were also seriously planning to carry through a social revolution.⁹ Moreover, the validity of Martin's ordination was questionable, since he had been ordained through written authority by Bishop Nitschmann, Dober's companion missionary who became bishop in 1735. For Freundlich the sentence was life imprisonment at Bremerholm, the prison in Denmark. Lawaetz' opinion that "there can be no doubt that the sentence would never have been carried out" is sustained by the fact that the case was dropped on Zinzendorf's visit, January 29, 1739.¹⁰

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 148, gives a different version of the case: "An

During this visit Count Zinzendorf was to experience for himself the strange ways of life in St. Thomas. One night an armed mob of whites attacked him and the slaves accompanying him, and destroyed all the furniture at the mission station. Zinzendorf, who by no means otherwise lacked tact and worldly wisdom, had presumably been somewhat careless in the intricate conditions unknown to him. That anyone of his type could associate with slaves in the way he did was at that time considered almost insane behaviour. Since many found it difficult to believe that the count could act in such a manner, the rumor went around on St. Thomas that it was not Count Zinzendorf himself but an impostor who had come.

The attitude of the planters toward the Brethren at that time and their fear of the possible effect of their work on the slaves are illustrated by a memorandum in Dutch sent to Governor Moth on February 23, 1739, shortly after Zinzendorf's departure. In it the planters expressed their convictions that "when the Moravians got permission to spread their harmful doctrine" it was to be feared "that

individual named Fredler, who had been sent out as one of the colony to St. Croix by the Brethren, and who had, after withdrawing himself from the mission there, returned to St. Thomas to commence business, was charged with stealing various articles belonging to the estates of the Lord Chamberlain de Pless (von Plessen) and imprisoned. Martin Freundlich and his wife were suspected of having some knowledge of this robbery, and being summoned to give evidence upon oath relative to the transaction, which their religious principles precluded, they were fined thirty-six dollars. Being unable to pay the sum, they were thrown into the fort, October, 1738, and remained as prisoners until the end of January, 1739. Count Zinzendorf arrived at St. Thomas on a visit to the mission about this time, and obtained from the governor immediate liberation of the missionaries." There is not necessarily a contradiction in the two accounts. That of Knox may be regarded as supplementing the Lawaetz narrative.

our slaves might revolt against us and murder us." ¹¹

That the government in Copenhagen did not heed the planters' opposition is shown by several royal ordinances issued in the Brethren's favor. For example, permission was given to Missionary Feder to work with Martin on the condition "that he does not interfere with followers of other confessions but confines his work to those Negroes who of their own free will will be instructed by him." The government on St. Thomas was ordered to protect both him and Martin "as long as they do not exceed the already designated royal limits." ¹² The Brethren's rights were from the beginning limited to a royal license for Martin personally to administer church rites, after which the same permission was given to five others in case of necessity. This permission was later considerably extended. ¹³

That not all the planters were antagonistic to the Brethren is shown by the example of Chamberlain and Privy Councillor Carl Adolph von Plessen who, soon after the transfer of St. Croix to Denmark, secured several plantations on that island. In a communication written from Førslev, Denmark, January 27, 1741, "relative to the let-

¹¹ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, pp. 22, 23.

¹² Records, Lutheran parsonage (archives), St. Thomas.

¹³ Lawaetz, *Brod. Mis.*, p. 30, mentions the following royal rescripts pertaining to the Moravians: August 3, 1743; May 22, 1744; July 28, 1744; the charter issued by Carl von Plessen for the Brethren on St. Croix, October 18, 1733; Governor Moth's twelve conditions to Count Zinzen-dorf, on which permission to the Brethren depended. The author has unearthed also the following from the Lutheran archives, St. Thomas: August 9, 1739; November 20, 1744; August 7, 1747. There were probably others.

ter sent December 30, 1740, on behalf of the Bohemian Brethren, Christian Gottlieb Israel and Georg Weber and his wife Maria Elizabeth," the Danish statesman grants them permission to live on his estates "on the condition that they conduct themselves orderly and peacefully, and that they do not attract the Negroes in such a way that they seek their freedom and leave their owners' work on the pretext of going to school and becoming Christians." He promises them that they will receive "the requested Dutch school books with this ship, and that upon request they can receive other spiritual books from home." He furthermore offers that "as many Moravian Brethren who wish may be established on St. Croix . . . and that I offer four of them to become schoolmasters . . . with an annual salary of 72 rdl.; on condition that they promise in writing that they will not teach or do anything contrary to the pure Evangelical Lutheran Augsburg Confession." ¹⁴

Despite the early opposition encountered and because of the friendly assistance received from the Danish government and other sources, and particularly because of the zeal and devotion of the Brethren themselves, their work grew rapidly. In St. Thomas the first two Moravian baptisms of slaves were performed by August Gottlieb Spangenberg, a former Lutheran, during his visitation in 1736 (?), only a few years after the arrival of the first missionaries, and the work continued to flourish, especially after 1740 under Israel's, and later, Weber's leadership. ¹⁵

¹⁴ Rørdom, "*Kirkelige Forholde*."

¹⁵ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 23.

On St. John the Moravian work did not prosper at first, due to the slave uprising in 1733, but it was fully established in 1741, and in 1754 the Bethany Mission station was acquired. On St. Croix a really systematic work was not begun until after the arrival of Friederich Martin. In 1744 the first slaves were baptized on that island. The year 1749 is remembered for the visitation by Watteville, which brought about many changes and improvements in the work, among others the introduction of a new system of instruction by classes. Georg Weber, who was now the only remaining missionary of the fourteen who had come in 1734, did outstanding work. During his time, in 1755, the plantation in St. Thomas, later called Nisky, was bought. During the first fifty years of Moravian work on the islands, 8,833 adult Negroes and 2,974 children were baptized by the Moravian missionaries.¹⁶ A brief outline of some of the Moravian church practices follows.¹⁷

The secret of the success of the Moravian work in the Danish West Indies, as elsewhere,¹⁸ lay not only in the zeal, devotion, and self-sacrifice of the missionaries but also in their organization and method of work. Each member of the congregation had his special place within three so-called choirs, or classes: communicant members, baptized members who were not yet communicant members, and candidates for baptism. For each of these was added a subclass for members who were temporarily under church

¹⁶ Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁷ Based almost entirely upon presentation by Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*

¹⁸ Moravian missions were begun at Jamaica in 1754, Antigua in 1756, and Barbados in 1765.

discipline.¹⁹ Conversation with each class was conducted "in the evenings, often late into the nights because many of the slaves could not leave until the supervisors had gone to sleep." For each class an annual feast, the Love Feast, was held.

The Brethren's practice of baptizing adult slaves was comparatively simple. All that was required was a willingness which could prove its sincerity by turning from the heathen ways, and a right conception of salvation. Infant baptism could be practiced only where there was a guarantee that the children would receive a Christian upbringing. At Watteville's visitation in 1749 it was generally decided that an infant of baptized parents could be baptized, but at Lorenz' visitation in 1841 "the presently practiced unconditional baptism of infants was established; namely the requirement that only one of the parents belong or had belonged—whether under discipline or not—to the Brethren Church."²⁰ This last change, it should be noticed, was made at the beginning of the compulsory Christian education for the slaves on the presumption that it would make possible a Christian upbringing of the slave children.

In 1860 the restriction of baptizing only legitimate children was introduced. Since this caused parents of illegitimate children to go to other churches to have their children baptized the restriction was eventually rescinded and the regulation of 1848 was restored, but only "after

¹⁹ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.* Class division was begun in 1749 but was improved, 1762-84, by Martin Mack.

²⁰ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*

a fight of twenty years during which the Brethren lost nearly half of their membership.”²¹ In the other churches in the Danish West Indies the rules with regard to infant baptism were similar to those adopted by the Moravians in 1841.

The drawing of lots, based upon Acts 1:26, was an early Moravian custom which was abolished in 1889. It was first used to establish the office or position of missionaries, but later its use was extended to include decisions on all sorts of questions pertaining either to the congregation or to the individual. Thus at the Synod of Barby in 1775 “the lot was made obligatory on all really important questions, such as baptism of the heathen, their reception into membership, confirmation, their first communion, discipline and restoration, marriages, acceptance of helpers and . . . a number of ridiculous and unimportant matters.”²² An interesting phenomenon was the securing of a wife by the lot. If the mission board or the superintendent was in doubt as to the advisability of a marriage or the selection of a missionary wife or if the missionary himself was in doubt—the lot was resorted to for a decision.²³

The Brethren at first, like the Lutherans, were hampered by legal restrictions on the marriage of slaves. The law

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 226.

²³ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 227, cites a letter from a planter on St. Croix, the former Danish Lutheran missionary Nicolai Bruckner, in which he requests the Brethren to send him, by the lot, a wife “who would not object to attending Holy Communion in the Lutheran Church” and who would possess other good virtues. This letter, written June 25, 1744, is in the archives at Herrnhut, Germany.

forbade the marriage of slaves likely to become separated through separate sales. Many a couple lived faithfully together as man and wife but could not secure permission to marry. Both the Moravians and the Lutherans deemed it wise to accept such a relationship as marriage and admitted such persons to communicant membership.

During the early period of slavery, likewise, the churches were often faced with the problem of polygamy. Should a polygamous slave who had been converted be baptized? Lutherans, Moravians and Reformed Dutch, with slight differences, took the stand that a man should be baptized and be expected to keep the polygamous marriage obligations he had entered.²⁴ After polygamy became illegal this problem disappeared, but it has left an indelible impression upon social life and is responsible to a great extent for the present high proportion of illegitimacy and promiscuous living on the islands.

²⁴ Lawaetz, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

VII

Lutheran Missions

When the Lutheran Church in Denmark undertook missionary work among the Negroes of the Danish West Indies in 1757, it was begun with a half century of experience in missions among the heathen. Denmark had been the very first Protestant nation to engage in such an activity, King Frederik IV personally initiating the enterprise and arranging for the sending of Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau as Lutheran missionaries to Tranquebar in South India in 1705.¹

Prior to the actual Lutheran missionary undertaking in the Danish West Indies there was a growing concern in Denmark over the conditions of the Negro slaves in the colony.² This concern was fostered by Pietism, a fervent spiritual revival originating in Germany and dominating

¹ It should be noted that during this same period Danish Lutheran pastors in the employ of the Danish West Indian and Guinea Company did some missionary work at slave embarkation points on the Gold Coast of Africa. Rørdam, *op. cit.*

² In 1739 the Royal College of Missions, organized in Copenhagen in 1714, made inquiry regarding the desirability of beginning missionary work among the slaves in the Danish West Indies, receiving a favorable reply from the government on St. Thomas.

the religious life of Denmark at the time. After the purchase of the Danish West Indian Company by the Danish crown in 1754 there was a rapid crystallization of the sentiment favoring the opening of a mission among the slaves in the colony. On January 13, 1755, there were submitted to the king some proposed new regulations for ecclesiastical and civil affairs in the colony, including recommendations that a mission be started among the slaves. The eventual result was the sending of ten Lutheran missionaries, six of whom were theological candidates called catechists, the other four being university students called undercatechists. The first of them, Jørgen Borsch, was dispatched in 1750, arriving in St. Croix December 24 of that year.³

The remaining nine men received their instructions December 28, 1756, and sailed from Copenhagen in the beginning of 1757 on the ship "Kronberg Slot." One of them, Ivar Steen, a theological candidate, died during the voyage. The rest landed in Christiansted, July 10, 1757. According to plans already made in Copenhagen they were assigned to the three islands as follows:

St. Thomas: Johannes Christian Kingo, theological candidate, who remained for twenty-five years. Jørgen Jensen Berg, undercatechist, who could not agree with Pastor Samuel Baar and was therefore sent home two years later.

St. John: Claus Møller, theological candidate, who died after twenty-one months' stay.

St. Croix: Christiansted town: Jørgen Borsch, already

³ Koch, article: "*Den Danske Mission i Vestindien*," in *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*, Ser. 5, Vol. 3; Copenhagen, 1905, pp. 144-81. Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," pp. 1-37.

referred to.⁴ Niels Bie, who had suffered much on the voyage and was ill when he arrived. The humane Governor Prøck took him into his home, where he died the same year. *Frederiksted district*: Christoffer Frederik Høy, undercatechist, who was stationed on the La Grange estate outside Frederiksted, but due to poverty preferred to receive higher pay as a soldier in the artillery, which he joined, dying shortly afterwards. *The country district*: Hans Olivarius Mesler, theological candidate, who was stationed at Prindsen's Quarter and was loved by all for his zeal and devotion. Being sickly, he was taken into the home of Governor Prøck, also. He died in 1762. Thue Ole Ravn, theological candidate, who was stationed on the Høgensborg estate and remained for five years. Nicolai Jørgen Brøchner, or Bruckner, undercatechist, who was stationed on the Hemmer estate called Judith's Fancy, and remained three years. No missionaries were stationed in Frederiksted town since it had just been founded in 1751 and was very small.

The catechists were to receive 200 rdl. in salary annually and were to serve six years; the undercatechists were to receive 150 rdl. annually and serve eight years. The West Indian Company, besides furnishing houses for church services and schools, was to provide free board for the missionaries.⁵ The missionaries of each group were promised

⁴ About six months after his arrival Borsch offered himself as pastor of the vacant parish in St. Thomas and was accepted. He went to Denmark for ordination, returning to St. Thomas the next year. Like other missionary catechists who were later ordained he was titled, from that time on, "Missionarius Ordinatus."

⁵ Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 147. This promise was seldom kept.

positions later as ministers and clerks respectively. As they were to work among the slaves and slave children, and as ministerial acts for the slaves were to be performed by the Danish ministers on the islands, ordination was not considered necessary.

The work of the first missionaries, entirely distinct and different from that of the regular Danish ministers, was very difficult. First of all, the time was one of extreme hardships and calamities for the islands. During the Seven Years' War (1756-63) the islands were cut off from North America, their main source of supplies. In June, 1757, a month after the missionaries' arrival, there was no bread to be bought. The next year was worse as half of the population of the islands was ill because of hunger, and many deaths occurred on account of starvation. The year 1759 was still worse: Many slaves then died from hunger, and "every second slave became (of necessity) a thief." Half a pail of water cost, on St. Croix in April 2 crowns and 40 Ører (about 60 cents). That same year there was an earthquake "during which the Moravian Church in Frederiksted sank a yard." There were also epidemics and failures of crops, and on December 3 there was discovered on St. Croix a conspiracy among some of the slaves "who had agreed to kill all whites except six" on the island.⁶ This uprising was quelled under the leadership of the famous Negro captain, Mingo Tamarin. Through 1760 failures of crops, hunger, and drought continued until July, 1761. In 1765 there was a hurricane which destroyed a church

⁶ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 11.

(probably the Reformed Dutch) on St. John, while another church on St. Thomas was saved "by tying it to a tree with ropes." In 1766 there were sudden torrents of rain and landslides, and in 1767 there were again epidemics and hunger.⁷

The work of the missionaries was made difficult likewise by instructions given them, which were cumbersome and impractical for the climate and the social conditions on the islands. The missionaries were to travel from one estate to another to instruct the slaves in the Christian religion. Once a week, an hour each day, each missionary was to be on each plantation assigned to him. As there were no highways the missionaries had to walk. When a slave was to be baptized, the missionary was to inform both the owner and the Danish Lutheran minister, and the latter was then to arrange with the consent of the government for the catechetical instruction preparatory to baptism. The children of slave parents were to be instructed in reading, writing, religion, and Danish, for an hour at a time. To carry out all of these instructions on St. Thomas, for example, would have meant that each missionary would have to spend twenty-two out of the twenty-four hours each day; ten hours to and from the towns, six hours to and from each plantation, and six hours for the catechetical instruction. In 1764, these impractical instructions were declared useless by the government.

There was one definite and strange reason for these instructions, namely, to prepare the converted Negroes to

⁷ *Ibid.*

become members of the Danish congregations, turning them over to the Danish Lutheran ministers for catechization in the Danish language. Since a Negro could "only with great difficulty pass an examination, it was no wonder that they turned their backs on this form of mission work. The Moravians never had such burdens placed on the already heavily laden shoulders of the slaves, but provided meeting places for them and simply said to them: 'Come, for all things are now ready.' " ⁸ The system might have been effective with universally established country schools, but such did not exist until years later.

Still another difficulty facing the Lutheran missionaries was the language problem. The instruction in the four R's—reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion—was conducted orally both in Danish, a language practically unknown to the slaves, and in Creole, a dialect totally unknown to the Danish missionaries. Like the Moravian missionaries, they had to get along the best they could until the printed Creole became available.

Finally, there were the spiritual hardships. What Lawaetz says about the Moravian missionaries⁹ applies also to the Lutheran missionaries: "The corrupt, immoral environments under which they constantly had to live could scarcely fail to produce a slackening influence. To see people sold as animals, naked like animals, and treated like animals, and to witness other forms of immorality associated with slavery" strained the emotions in an unusual degree.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁹ Lawaetz, *Brod. Mis.*, p. 81.

Two years after the arrival of the ten missionaries there were only three left. In 1759 two were sent out to take the place of those who had died or left. They were Catechist Frantz Sørensen, who was stationed on St. Thomas, where he died five years later; and Undercatechist Johannes Laurentii Schow, stationed in Christiansted, who died the year after his arrival. In 1767, eight years after the arrival of the first group, because of sickness, death, and departures there were only two missionaries left on the islands: Johannes Christian Kingo on St. Thomas, and Thue Ole Ravn who was highly praised for his devotion and zeal, on St. Croix. The following year Ravn requested leave, but received instead his dismissal because he had taken a much-needed vacation trip to St. John without permission. Two other missionaries had already left the work. One of them to "become a policeman in order to receive higher salary, and the other because he quarrelled with the pastor and was therefore sent home."¹⁰

On April 11, 1766, six new missionaries, all of them theological candidates, left Copenhagen. *On St. Croix* were placed Peder Lillelund, who died the following year; Jens Bondorph, who remained for six years; Andreas Faith,¹¹ who remained for eight years; and Holger Tryde, who died the year he arrived. *To St. Thomas* went Hans Salling, who remained for five years.¹² *To St. John*: Erik

¹⁰ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

¹¹ Andreas Faith acted as reviser of Creole translations until he became minister in the Slagville parish, Denmark.

¹² Hans Salling was the brother of Matthias Salling, who with his wife had come to St. Thomas the previous year. Two months after the couple's arrival, the wife died and Matthias himself died two days afterwards. (Archives, Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.)

Røring Wold, who remained there for six years and distinguished himself as an assistant to Joachum Melchior Magens, the Danish linguist, in translating important works into Creole. St. Croix received more missionaries than St. Thomas, because it was progressing much faster at that time. From 1755 to 1789 St. Croix increased in population from 10,200 to 25,300. In 1766 Christiansted was supposed to be four times larger than Charlotte Amalie. Later the population increased in Charlotte Amalie faster than in Christiansted, but it declined in the country district of St. Thomas.

The itinerary method of the Lutheran mission work proved a complete failure. On St. Thomas there were but meager results; and on St. John no Lutheran mission work was done between 1759 and 1766, while the Moravians made rapid gains there. On St. Croix during the first five years no slaves were turned over to the Danish Lutheran ministers for baptism.

Two other large churches were established in the Danish West Indies during this period. Because of the presence of a large number of English people on St. Croix, the Church of England (Anglican) was established in Christiansted in 1760. The Roman Catholic Church was established in St. Thomas in 1767 and years later in St. Croix (year unknown, since its St. Croix records were destroyed in the fire of 1878).

The first rector of the Anglican church at Christiansted was the Rev. Cecil Wray Goodchild, who came to the parish in 1760, when the first wooden church building was

erected. It was destroyed by the hurricane in 1772 and was replaced by a stone building on the same site. The present St. John Anglican church there was built in 1849.

The Roman Catholic church on St. Thomas owes its beginning to a strange incident connected with slavery on the one hand, and, on the other hand, with a rather broad application of the religious freedom which the Danish Lutheran government had granted it in 1754;¹³ at which time, however, it was not yet established on the island. The statement made by Nissen¹⁴ that the first Roman Catholic church on St. Thomas was built in 1746 is incorrect. When slaves escaped from St. Thomas to Puerto Rico, which occurred frequently then, "they were immediately baptized by the Roman Catholic church there, which thereafter, when requests were made by the Danish government (for their extradition), refused to let them return on the ground that St. Thomas offered them no church of their newly adopted faith."¹⁵ In 1767, therefore, an agreement was made between Denmark and Spain according to which the escaped slaves were to be released and turned over to the Danish authorities in St. Thomas as

¹³ Royal ordinance of September 20, 1754, granted permission to the Roman Catholics on the three islands "freely to exercise their religion." The cause of this grant was a petition by one Nicholas Svite who had immigrated from the island of Montserrat to St. Croix, where he had purchased estates and land and settled with his family and a large number of people, both white and colored, nearly all of whom were of the Roman Catholic faith. Permission was granted all Roman Catholics, except the Jesuits, who by the same ordinance were ordered to leave, to build churches and call priests and other ecclesiastics but not to hold any office under the government.

¹⁴ J. P. Nissen, "Reminiscences," manuscript, 1838, covering a period of forty-five years; copy in archives, Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

¹⁵ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 22.

soon as a Roman Catholic church could be established there. To effect the speedy return of the slaves the Danish (Lutheran) government called a Roman Catholic priest to the island and furnished him a room in which to conduct church services. In 1775 the government went a step further, doing for this church what it had not done for the Lutheran church; making the community pay for the rent of the church room. Still another similar action was taken in 1778, when a Danish royal advocate compelled the Roman Catholics on the island to support their priest, and instituted a public subscription for both a church building and a parsonage.

This unusual concession to the Roman Catholic church, however, was granted only with certain restrictions. The priest was forbidden to proselytize and was ordered to confine his work to the escaped and newly baptized slaves and to immigrants. Missionary Kingo complained that this regulation was not kept and that the priest baptized many persons from other churches, promising mothers of illegitimate children not to report their transgressions of the regulation regarding copulation outside marriage, reports on which were supposed to be made to the government at that time. This proselytizing occasioned the royal rescript of April 30, 1777, which further defined and restricted the activities of the Roman Catholic church.¹⁶

¹⁶ This rescript, issued to the Danish West Indian government, gives the following orders to the Roman Catholic priests on the islands: They must return such Negroes who had joined the Roman Catholic Church to the church(es) of their baptism; they must not make converts of white persons born Protestants; they must not accept any Negroes, slaves or free, for baptism without first certifying that they do not belong to a Protestant

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Because of its few missionaries, its lack of mission stations and meeting places, and its meager support, the Lutheran mission work proved to be less effective than the large Moravian mission with its numerous missionaries and well-established stations. The Moravians progressed rapidly. By 1769, 138 Moravian missionaries of both sexes had come to the islands.¹⁷ Nevertheless the very existence of the Moravian mission was threatened at that time by the sponsors of the Lutheran mission in Copenhagen. For a long time Martin Mack, the distinguished Moravian leader (1762-84), felt that "something was rotten in Denmark." He wondered if the fact that the expected renewal of permission for the Brethren to carry on their work had not been forthcoming since the death of King Frederik V had something to do with the threatening clouds on the horizon. At length he learned the truth from Governor Peter Claussen, a friend of the Moravians.¹⁸ Claussen informed him frankly that the College of Church Inspection in Copenhagen and the Bishop of Sjaelland, Ludving Harboe, were planning to unite the Moravian mission in the islands with the Lutheran mission. They had requested the two newly arrived Lutheran missionaries (Svend Egeroed on St. Croix and Christian Bølle Rørdam

congregation; no Roman Catholic slave owner may prevent any of his slaves from attending the Protestant churches if they so wish; the priests must keep church records of all ministerial acts for the government's information and must file with the government certified letters of their appointment. (Archives, Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.)

¹⁷ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 24.

¹⁸ Peter Claussen was governor general from May 13, 1766, to his death June 24, 1784, except for a two-year interruption.

on St. Thomas, who arrived December 1, 1769) to suggest a plan by which the scheme could be worked out.¹⁹

Critical and uncertain days followed for the Moravians. The fate of their future work in the Danish West Indies hung in the balance. But fortunately for them Pastor Egeroed refused to have anything to do with the proposed plan, as "he considered the Brethren's mission to be in good hands." Pastor Bølle Rørdam, however, was in favor of the proposition. The lack of agreement between the two Lutheran ministers occasioned the royal ordinance of December 23, 1771, which reached St. Thomas in September the following year. According to it "the Brethren's mission should not be under any other inspection than that of its own bishops."²⁰ In 1774 the long-awaited royal confirmation of the Brethren's rights arrived.²¹

The relation between the local government and the Moravians and between the Moravians and the Lutherans during this period was rather strange. The local government favored the Brethren because, being Germans, they were careful not to offend the government, but held the Danish Lutheran missionaries in disfavor because they often offended by causing various ordinances to be issued in Copenhagen on behalf of the slaves, and because they were more daring and outspoken than the Brethren in their endeavors to uplift the slaves. While there was no

¹⁹ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 31.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Royal ordinance of June 27, 1774, which modified and enlarged the ordinance of August 16, 1747.

strife, neither was there any co-operation between the Moravians and the Lutherans. With the exception of a few complaints by Kingo against the Brethren, chiefly that some of his Negroes had been lured to the Moravian Church because "he required them to know Luther's Small Catechism well, while the Brethren were satisfied with much less," everything was peaceful between the two groups. But the Moravian missionary work was never mentioned in the Danish Lutheran mission reports, nor was the Lutheran missionary work ever mentioned in the Moravians' reports.²²

²² Koch, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-58.

VIII

Education and Evangelization

Denmark finally came to understand that the Negroes in the Danish West Indies would always be foreign in religion as well as in language unless a change were made in the missionary policy. This realization was brought about by reports that Negroes converted and baptized in the Lutheran churches grew indifferent because they did not understand the Danish language used at church services. The mission policy was therefore changed—officially in 1771 but actually before then, as the work of translation into the Creole dialect had already begun before 1771. Itinerary mission work was given up for centralized educational and evangelistic work. The Creole dialect was adopted instead of Danish, and church services for Negroes, which hitherto had been conducted in Danish, with Danish liturgy and forms, were changed to meet the needs of Negro converts. While the Danish ministers on the islands continued to act as directors, an ordained minister was appointed to supervise the mission work.

In compliance with an order received from the Bishop of Sjaelland, Pastor Svend Egeroed in Christiansted, as-

sisted by Pastor Christian Bølle Rørdam of St. Thomas, ordained missionary Johannes Christian Kingo for the office of missionary pastor in Christiansted in 1771. This was the first and only ordination in the Danish West Indies, and Kingo was the first minister for the Negroes on St. Thomas. With respect to the changes made in the Negro church services, the College of Church Inspection in Copenhagen, by its orders of September 14, 1771, decreed the following: Neither choir robes nor chasubles nor the regular ministers' vestments (including the traditional Danish Lutheran ruffle), but only a short gown with a small collar, should be used at services of the Negro congregations. Changes were to be made also in the formulas of the confessional, the absolution, church discipline, regular Sunday and holiday texts, and the chants. Exorcism (by which was probably meant making the sign of the cross, with which the Negroes had associated certain superstitions) should not be practiced at baptisms in the newly established Negro congregations. The mission, furthermore, was to be exempted, at least until further notice, from "having anything to do with the marriage relations of the slaves, either to betroth or marry them," even though this was "a departure from the regulations already established by law, ritual and decree."¹ The reason why the college evaded the question of the Negroes' marriage relations was probably that they thought the time was not yet ripe for a solution of this problem. Later, however, the Lutheran Church adopted a definite stand on

¹ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," pp. 21-23.

this question and also changed the mentioned restrictions regarding usages in the mission congregations.²

Kingo, the first missionary pastor and the most notable of all Lutheran missionaries in the Danish West Indies, deserves special mention. His main characteristic was a militant and undaunted spirit which he always exercised for the defense of his Creole Negro congregations against both the local government and the planters and, at times also, against Danish Lutheran ministers. In 1769 he tried unsuccessfully to have a proposal accepted for an administration of the mission entirely independent of the local Danish church which was often a thorn in his flesh. He never hesitated to let the headquarters in Denmark know when he was dissatisfied. In 1772 he wrote home stating that the mission was now getting along very well. Only one thing had been wrong with it in the past: It had been like a pregnant woman who could not be delivered because of the presence of too many midwives who could not agree

² At that time there were four main problems in the Negroes' marriage relations: 1. A man and a woman living faithfully together as husband and wife without legal marriage, which was accepted by both the Moravian and the Lutheran churches. 2. Concubinage between a white man and a colored, or Negro, woman, which was tolerated but not approved by either society, the law, or the church. 3. Polygamy, which was rare and was not illegal among the slaves. 4. Promiscuity (disorderly or indiscriminate living together of persons of opposite sex). Light is thrown upon the moral conditions on the islands at that time by the account of a custom followed in the Lutheran church in St. Thomas, according to which married couples before partaking of the Holy Communion had to declare before the minister their intention of continuing to live faithfully together. In 1789, when Pastor Thorkild Lund called his thirty-four adult Negro and colored catechumens together for the purpose of ascertaining how many of them lived with mates outside wedlock, "there were found among the women not two who had not been living with a man, and among the men not one who had not been living with a woman, outside wedlock." Koch, p. 175.

upon the best method of delivery. In 1781 he accused the College of Church Inspection in Copenhagen of being partial to one of the Danish Lutheran congregations which "with its 40 communicant members was nothing in comparison with the (large) mission congregation."³ The new missionary methods were beginning to produce results.

In 1775 he sought an appointment to the vacant parish of St. Thomas and St. John, but the college would not give it to him, partly because it needed him to continue his successful mission work, and partly because the local government was opposed to him. While the government respected him highly for his zeal and ability, it disapproved of his frank and straightforward attacks on officialdom. Kingo had constantly blamed the local government for not having provided any houses and rooms for the missionaries and their schools. In 1777 he wrote indignantly about the local government: "There is none righteous among them, no not one; they are all corrupt in their ways."⁴ "Yet," writes Koch, "his intractability and willfulness are the only things of which his antagonists ever accused him, and it is a question whether these characteristics were faults or virtues. Certain it is that he became the founder of the present English Lutheran congregations on the islands."⁵

That the College of Church Inspection was very well satisfied with his labors is evident from its report to the Royal Chancellery in 1776, in which it stated that since

³ Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

Kingo was ordained in 1771 the Lutheran mission had progressed very well. The Creole congregations on the three islands, each with an efficient supervisor, had increased their membership to a thousand souls. There was such "a run" to the Creole services and catechizations that many had to stand outside the churches for lack of space.⁶ Kingo left in 1782 at the close of twenty-five years of able missionary service.

On October 20, 1773, two new missionaries (schoolmasters) arrived: Peter Grum for St. Croix and Niels Olufsen Salling for St. Thomas. Grum died the same year but Salling remained for seven years and did splendid work on St. Thomas where his school for slaves soon became a very flourishing institution. The new method, which had done away with itinerary educational work, was succeeding very well but, with only two teachers on the three islands, work had to be given up at all places except in the towns where the missionaries lived.

As already indicated by Kingo's complaint, no adequate place was provided for the mission school or for Negro church services. The first meeting place for the Creole congregation on St. Thomas was the house which had been given to Kingo and Salling in 1767 but had never been used by them. In 1780 Kingo removed the partitions and turned it into a church. But when missionary August Krejdahl arrived in 1781, the government took the house away from Kingo, restored the partitions, and gave the house to Krejdahl for use as a school and home.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

This saved him the payment of rent. Later, however, Krejdahl repeated Kingo's action and re-established the church in the house. He rented another house for his home and school for 720 crowns (about \$180), paying the difference between that amount and his salary and rent allowance (520 crowns: about \$130) out of his own pocket. This illustrates Krejdahl's love for the natives and his work. He was much praised by the government. All were amazed at his confirmation examinations in Creole, which "could not have been better in the most enlightened European congregations."⁷

A mission pastor was not immediately appointed to take the place of Kingo when he left in 1782. The work on St. Croix consequently suffered. On St. Thomas, however, the work flourished because of the presence of Krejdahl, who created a friendly relation between the mission and the government. The College of Church Inspection, in appreciation of this, raised his salary and promised him promotion to the office of missionary pastor. The opportunity came when Pastor Gloersen of St. Thomas died November 2, 1785. Krejdahl sought appointment to his parish. He received the appointment the following year and went home in 1787 to be ordained. He returned to St. Thomas, February 13, 1788, but continued to care for the mission work among the slaves during his office as Danish minister. Because of his acquired knowledge of Creole and because he was the only minister qualified, he

⁷ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," pp. 23, 26.

was appointed director of mission work on the islands.⁸ He was now minister of the Danish congregation on St. Thomas, missionary among the Negroes, and director of missions. The last position was not a laborious one, since there was then only one lonely schoolteacher on St. Croix.

Despite the cordial relations that Krejdahl had personally with the government, there was some opposition to his work from both the government and the planters, because he, like other Lutheran missionaries, championed the cause of the slaves and tried to make their life easier. For example, Governor Waldendorph rejected, with a minor concession, his request that, when Christian slaves were being punished for offenses, they be not publicly whipped as in the case of other slave offenders. The governor decided that he could not free the Christian slaves from public whipping simply because they were Christians, but that he would order that no dishonest Negro would administer the whipping. This concession was accepted by Krejdahl and pleased the Christian Negroes as this constituted one of their main objections to being publicly whipped.⁹

During Krejdahl's ministry on St. Thomas and St. John, and Hans Wandal's ministry on St. Croix, the Lutheran mission passed through a very critical period. The royal commission appointed in 1783 to work out a new law for the Negroes on the islands declared that conditions could not be much improved as long as the slave traffic

⁸ Archives, Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

⁹ Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

existed, and suggested that meanwhile steps should be taken to educate all Negroes on the islands. To this end it recommended that, since the Lutheran mission was very small in comparison with the Moravian mission, the latter should be requested to undertake this new task; that the annual budget of the Lutheran mission (1,800 rdl.) should be turned over to the Moravian mission as a subsidy for the new work, and that the office of missionary pastor should be discontinued.¹⁰

The College of Church Inspection strenuously opposed the recommendations. In its communication of September 18, 1784, it logically and clearly stated the problem. The recommendations could not be carried out without dissolving the Lutheran mission work, which could not be carried on without a missionary pastor, because none of the Danish ministers could preach or conduct ministerial acts in Creole.¹¹ The chamber, to which the commission had submitted its recommendations, gave up the idea of transferring the Lutheran mission budget to the Moravians.

The Lutheran mission was small only in comparison to the Moravian work. On St. Thomas there were then a flourishing Lutheran Creole school and congregation. In 1785 the latter had 208 confirmed members, and it continued to grow until at the end of the century it totaled a thousand members. But "how much larger could it not have been but for all the mistakes made during the years of mission history."¹² On St. Croix the work was also

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Lose, "*Kort Udsigt.*"

growing rapidly. The mission congregation in Christiansted was then nearly as large as that on St. Thomas. In Frederiksted in 1788 there were forty members in the newly established Negro congregation, despite the fact that there was no missionary placed there and that the minister from Christiansted could seldom be present because he had to travel the sixteen miles at his own expense. At that time the Danish Lutheran congregation in Frederiksted town seldom assembled when the minister could not be present, but the Negro Creole congregation met regularly, being led by the clerk, Michael Samuelsen, himself a slave.

In 1783 the members of the Danish congregation in Frederiksted began the erection of a stone building to take the place of the wooden building which had been built in 1766. They began their work on faith and with only 600 rdl., about one-tenth of the amount needed, hoping to be able to raise the balance through loans or otherwise. Their hopes were not fulfilled and the work was temporarily stopped, but during the period between 1787 and 1791 they collected three times the original amount and hoped to be able to raise the balance through a requested collection in Denmark. Bishop Balle, however, refused their request on the ground that there were so many poor churches in Denmark in need of financial help.¹³ The problem was at length solved when a loan was secured from the Christiansted parish sufficiently large to finish the church building which is still in use. It was dedicated

¹³ Koch, *op. cit.*

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January 15, 1792. Pastor Martin Ohm, the minister at Christiansted, officiated. The Frederiksted parish continued to be supplied until 1858 by ministers residing in Christiansted.

The comparative strength of the various denominations on the islands at that time is partly indicated by Lose's list of church buildings in 1784:

<i>St. Thomas</i>	<i>St. Croix</i>
1 Lutheran (Danish)	2 Lutheran (Danish)
1 Lutheran (Creole)	1 Lutheran (Creole)
2 Moravian	3 Episcopalian
1 Reformed Dutch	2 Moravian
1 Roman Catholic	2 Roman Catholic
<i>St. John</i>	1 Reformed Dutch
2 Moravian	1 Scotch Presbyterian
1 Reformed Dutch	1 Quaker
(Lutherans had no church building)	1 Jewish

Not all of these were church buildings in the proper sense of the word. The Danish Lutheran churches on St. Croix were real church buildings but that on St. Thomas was a room in the fort. On St. John the Danish congregation used the home of one of the Danish planters, and the Creole congregation there worshiped in the Reformed Dutch church building until it was destroyed by a hurricane in 1793. After that, Creole Lutheran services were held in the room of the captain of the garrison. Probably the Danish congregation also worshiped there for some time. The buildings of the Roman Catholic churches, as well as those of the Presbyterians, the Quakers, and the

Jews, were unpretentious dwelling houses. The Moravians had real church buildings at that time.

On June 24, 1784, Lieutenant General Peter Claussen died at Christiansted. He was buried two days later in the Lutheran Church with pomp suitable to the occasion. Governor Claussen's funeral cost \$670.00. His corpse was embalmed at the cost of \$650.00, and not fewer than 152 mourners received each a golden finger ring in memory of the deceased. Years later his skeleton was moved into the present Lutheran church at Christiansted and his tablets placed on the wall and floor over his new grave.

Ludvig Ernst von Schimmelmann became Claussen's successor. He advocated compulsory baptism for all slave children regardless of their church affiliation. This had already been decreed, but had never been carried out. Neither von Schimmelmann's proposal, nor the earlier ordinance of April 6, 1731, decreeing compulsory baptism for all *Lutheran* children, ever got further than in print.¹⁴

In 1787 Denmark made the first attempt in history at introducing public schools for slaves. This was to be done under the supervision of and in co-operation with the Lutheran Church. The royal ordinance of December 21, 1787, issued through the College of Church Inspection to the Lutheran Church in the Danish West Indies, stipulated that the Lutheran Church "must select four school-managers from the most well-behaved and capable Free Negroes, who at the same time shall be church clerks and funeral managers for the mission congregations; to receive

¹⁴ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 206.

in salary whatever is collected in pew rent at Negroes' church services at each place, if such is adequate; if not, the remainder to be taken from the mission's income." In 1789 there were two such schools in Christiansted (besides several private schools for lighter-colored children, the one conducted by a mulatto, the other by a Negro). By 1790 one of them had an enrollment of forty-seven children.¹⁵ There were two other such schools on the islands, one probably in Frederiksted, the other on St. Thomas.

An attempt to prevent serious membership losses during vacancies in the Lutheran parishes, and evidence of the friendly relations between the Danish Lutheran and Reformed Dutch churches, are indicated in the royal ordinance of January 18, 1788. This decree permitted Lutherans to partake of the Holy Communion in the Reformed Dutch churches and similarly permitted members of the Reformed Dutch churches to receive the sacrament in the Lutheran churches. The following conditions, however, were stipulated: That the minister of the communicant's church was not available; that he who in such an emergency requested the sacrament could receive it without any conscientious scruples from a minister not of his faith, and that the Reformed as well as the Lutheran minister in such a case absolutely refrain from interpreting the meaning of the words of the institution according to the doctrine of either church.¹⁶ A similar attempt had already been made at solving the problem of Christian upbringing of children

¹⁵ Document, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

¹⁶ Document, archives, Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

of a mixed marriage, by royal decrees of September 7, 1736, and January 31, 1772.¹⁷

On June 18, 1788, two new missionaries arrived: Pastor Hans Tjellesen for St. Croix, and Pastor Torkild Lund for St. Thomas and St. John. They brought with them new instructions, according to which they were to introduce and follow a system similar to that of the Moravians employing Negro elders, readers, and helpers as assistants in the mission work. Besides doing evangelistic work, each of the missionaries was to supervise the newly established mission (and government) schools conducted by colored teachers. In Christiansted, Hans Tjellesen had in his catechetical class in 1789 ten catechumens. The colored teachers had done very good work, having taught the catechumens to say the five parts of Luther's Small Catechism by heart in Creole.¹⁸

In January, 1790, August Krejdahl, beloved missionary at St. Thomas, died, and Thorkild Lund became his successor. Krejdahl had laid the cornerstone of the new church building for the St. Thomas congregations July 9, 1789, on the same spot where the little wooden mission house with its chapel and school had stood. The West Indian Company had offered its warehouse for the use of the Creole congregation until the new church was fin-

¹⁷ These two ordinances declared that when two persons of the Reformed Dutch and the Lutheran churches married, they were permitted to decide between them in which church their children should be baptized and brought up. In case of no agreement, boys were to belong to the father's, and girls to their mother's religion. This was restated in the ordinance of December 16, 1791.

¹⁸ Lose's "*Kort Udsigt*."

ished. The Danish congregation, meanwhile, had used a room in Fort Christian. Both congregations moved into the new church July 14, 1793, when it was dedicated by Pastor Thorkild Lund. There were now two congregations with the same church building and minister and with the same government to control them, but each holding separate services because of the different languages used. Henceforth, each Negro Lutheran congregation on the islands was called a mission congregation, which name was retained until the transfer in 1917.

The following were the places of worship of the Lutheran congregations on St. Thomas:

1666-71, presumably a plantation house, and probably also Smidtsberg, the present Bluebeard's Castle.

1671-1706, the southwestern bastion in Fort Christian, as well as a building (20 ft. x 22 ft.) in the yard of Fort Christian.

1706-53, Christ Church, a separate building within Fort Christian.

1753-72, two finished buildings outside the fort, and a room in Fort Christian.

The Creole Mission congregation used a wooden house from 1780 to 1789, and a warehouse belonging to the West Indian Company from 1789 to 1793.

1793-today, present church building. (It was destroyed by fire in 1826 and rebuilt in 1827; it was destroyed by a hurricane in 1870, rebuilt the same year, and rededicated December 4.)

The completion of the St. Thomas church would have

been delayed but for an unusual act of generosity and love of a Lutheran Negro. Jean Reneaus, a Free Negro, confidently loaned the Lutheran church the sum of 7,500 crowns (about \$1,875) and for sixteen years refrained from collecting any interest on the loan. This fact was brought to light after his death in 1819.¹⁹ That many other Negro Lutherans had a similar deep love for their church and for Denmark at that time is illustrated in another way. In 1796, when a public collection for funds was made in the Danish West Indies for victims of the great fire in Copenhagen, the members of the Negro Lutheran congregation in St. Thomas, most of whom were poor, collected voluntarily three times as much money as was collected by the Danes, and three times more than was collected from wealthy Dutch merchants on the island.²⁰

For such and many other reasons it is to be greatly wondered why the Danish government did so little for its mission work in the Danish West Indies; why, for example, it assisted in the erection of no less than six Moravian church buildings before it furnished the Lutherans on St. Thomas with their first church; and why, in 1805, it bought grounds for the seventh Moravian church building, and erected at official expense three Moravian school buildings on St. John, while it never bought any ground or erected any church or school building for the Lutheran Church on that island.²¹

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Lose, "*Tidligste Tid*," pp. 315-316.

IX

The Negro Dutch Creole Dialect

Creole is a word with many meanings, whether used in reference to persons or employed to denote a dialect. More commonly its reference is to persons. Especially is this true of the references in dictionaries and encyclopedias which, when they refer to Creole as a language or dialect, usually mention only French and Spanish Creole and ignore altogether the Negro Dutch Creole of the former Danish West Indies.

Used to describe persons, the meaning of Creole will vary according to the country or region of its use and, sometimes, according to the time or period. Thus in Louisiana the Creoles were ordinarily the French-speaking families of French or Spanish origin or both, while in Mexico the term Creole is applied only to Mexican-born whites of Spanish descent. In the Danish West Indies the word Creole was used to designate not only the descendants of Europeans but also the Negroes born on the islands, although at first they were usually known as Negro Creoles.

With regard to Creole as a speech the *Encyclopedia Britannica* states: "The many patois founded on French

and Spanish and used chiefly by Creole Negroes are spoken of as Creole languages, a term extended by some writers to include similar dialects spoken in countries where the word Creole is rarely used.”¹ Dictionaries generally define Creole as a mixture or a degenerate form of French or Spanish.

That this attitude may be rather contrary to fact in certain instances may be seen in consulting writers familiar with the languages in question. For example, with regard to the French Creole of Louisiana, Alcee Fortier states: “Creole spoken by the Negroes in Lower Louisiana and known to philologists as the (French) Creole dialect . . . is not merely a corruption of French, that is to say, French badly spoken; it is a real idiom with a morphology and grammar of its own. It is curious to see how the ignorant African slave transformed his master’s language into a speech concise and simple, and at the same time soft and musical.”² And: “It is quite interesting to note how the ignorant and simple Africans have formed an idiom entirely by the sound, and we can understand, by studying the translation of the French into the Creole dialect, the process by which Latin, spoken by the uncivilized Gauls, became our French. However ridiculous the Creole dialect may appear, it is of importance to the student of philology.”³

¹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th ed.; article on Creole.

² Alcee Fortier, *A History of Louisiana*, Goupil and Co.; Paris, 1904. See also his *Louisiana Folk Tales*, Houghton Mifflin Co.; New York, 1895. Mr. Fortier was professor of romance languages at Tulane University in Louisiana.

³ Fortier, *Louisianan Studies*, Hansell and Brothers; New Orleans, 1894.

The Negro Dutch Creole dialect originated on St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies. It has often been supposed that it was an importation and adaptation from Dutch colonies in the Caribbean such as Curacao and the even nearer Dutch possessions in the Leeward Islands. Such, however, is not the case. Hessling states emphatically that these Negro Dutch Creole dialects were not like the Negro Dutch Creole spoken in the Danish West Indies.⁴ Undoubtedly the latter had its origin in the very beginning of the Danish colonization of St. Thomas though it underwent changes through the years. It spread, especially through the slaves, first to St. John and later to St. Croix. It was used not only among the slaves and as the medium of communication between the planters and the slaves but it was also taught in the schools.

The groups of slaves that first came to St. Thomas spoke different languages because they came from many different tribes and regions on the west coast of Africa. For that reason need for developing a language understandable by all the slaves, as well as by their owners, arose. Consequently the slave owners, the majority of whom at that time were Dutch, began to teach their slaves Dutch. They were assisted in this by the slaves brought to St. Thomas by their Dutch owners from other Dutch islands—slaves

⁴ Dirk Christian Hesseling, *Het Negerhollands der Deense Antilles (Bijdrage tot de Geschiedenis Der Nederlandse Taal in America)*, Uitgegeven vanwege de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde Te Leiden, 1905; 290 pp. Practically half of this volume comprises quotations from the Danish Lutheran and German Moravian translations of the New Testament into Creole, along with several Creole conversations reproduced from Erik Pontoppidan.

who already knew some Dutch words and expressions. Thus the new ones arriving from Africa learned the Dutch patois both from their owners and from some of their fellow slaves. In this way, as time passed, the Dutch jargon became modified not by African words, since they were different in each African language represented, but by the Negroes' idiomatic African way of speaking and by European languages other than Dutch spoken on the island. The fact that the Danes, Germans, French, Spanish, and Portuguese mixed a few words of their own languages with Dutch, when speaking to the slaves, accounts for the presence of such foreign words in the Negro Dutch Creole dialect; but since Dutch was the dominant language at that time, the dialect became Dutch in characteristics.⁵

This newly formed pidgin Dutch dialect underwent constant modifications as the slave owners improved upon it here and there, and as the slaves continued to give it their African touch in sentence construction. The white children learned this broken dialect from their Negro nurses, but they spoke a more articulate Creole than the Negroes. This was only natural, since Dutch Creole was basically European in vocabulary.

Thus improvements went on and on. When the Danish Lutheran and the German Moravian linguists translated their words into this dialect, they further improved upon it—yes, well-nigh perfected it—before submitting it to

⁵ Oldendorp, *op. cit.*, states that in his time there were so many languages spoken in the Danish West Indies that one had to know more than one language. Many people, therefore, spoke several without speaking one well.

print. This improvement was analogous to that of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into a vigorous and improved German language.

As already mentioned, Negro Dutch Creole was spoken by both Negroes and Europeans in the Danish West Indies; but since it was primarily the language of the Negroes, it was called *Negro Dutch Creole*. Because it was Dutch in derivation, due to the fact that Dutch was the dominant language when it originated, it was called *Negro Dutch Creole*. And because it was not an original but a secondary language derived from another, or others, and because it was spoken by descendants of foreigners, white or Negro, born in the islands and called Creoles, it was known as *Negro Dutch Creole*.⁶

⁶ For the preservation of the Negro Dutch Creole of the Danish West Indies perhaps the most important works are these of Jan Petrus Benjamin de Josseling de Jong: *Het Neger-hollandsche van St. Thomas en St. Jan*, published by K. Nederlandsche Akedemie van Westenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde, Amsterdam, Mededeelingen, 57: 1-17, 1924; a philological study. Also by the same author *Het Huidige Negerhollandsch (texten en woordenlijst)*; "Uitgave van de Koninklijke Nederlandsche Akademis van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde," Amsterdam, 1926, 123 pp. These works are the result of the research of the Danish-Dutch Archeological Expedition to The Antilles, 1922-23. In the latter work, besides the introduction there are three pages devoted to the spelling of Negro Dutch Creole; thirty-nine pages of dictionary; fifty-eight pages containing 103 stories, proverbs, tales, and fables of Dutch Creole, eighty-one of which are given also in English. The 103 stories, etc., were obtained from a number of the oldest natives on St. Thomas and St. John: William Anthony Joshua, Nisky; Prince, Nisky; Emil Francis, Smiths Bay; and the following from St. John: John Abraham Testamark, Robert George, Anna Catharina Testamark, Ludwig Joseph, Albert Christian, and William Henry Roberts. The following less important works are listed for students of the Negro Dutch Creole dialect.

Grammatik der Creolischen Sprachen in West-Indien, kopie van dit geschrift door D. C. Hesseling.

Zum Negerhollandschen van St. Thomas, C. Schuchardt; met naschrift van D. C. Hesseling, Tijdschrift van Nederlandsche Taal-en Letterkunde, XXXIII, 123 vil.

Many of the characteristics of Negro Dutch Creole are like those of other Creole dialects. Two such characteristics are:⁷ First, there is the throwing out of parts of speech not absolutely necessary to the meaning of the sentence. A typical example from Negro Dutch Creole is the compound sentence: "The crocodile is not afraid of the snake, the snake is not afraid of the crocodile," translated into Creole, as *Croc no bang slang, slang no bang croc*, that is, "Crocodile not afraid snake, snake not afraid crocodile." Thus in Dutch Creole fewer words are used. Then there is the use of idiomatic expressions, often closely related to proverbs, as in the following: "I am hungry and thirsty," "Hunger, thirst catch me" (*Honger, Dorst le vat mi*); "I have overslept," "Sleep has stolen from me" (*Slaan a dief me*); "I need help," "One finger cannot catch lice" (*Een vinger no kan vang loes*); "The poor shall not mingle with the rich," "The roach doesn't belong (has no right) in chicken house" (*Kakerlak no hat recht na hoenerkot*).⁸

⁷ Hesseling lists these other characteristics of Negro Dutch Creole: (1) The verb takes a predominant place in the sentence, while tenses, etc., take secondary place. (2) A tendency to use vowels. (3) The "r's" become labials (uttered with closed lips; as "b," "p," "m"); or labiodentals (uttered with the help of lips and teeth; as "f," "v"). Oldendorp, *op. cit.*, adds the following characteristics: (1) only one gender: "Die" for all nouns in singular and plural; and (2) plural is formed either by the word *sender*, or the syllable *en*, or the letter *s*, as, for example: *boom*: tree; *boom sender*: trees. *Heer*: master; *beeren*: masters. *Neger*: Negro; *Negers*: Negroes.

⁸ Addison Van Name, librarian of Yale University: *Contributions to Creole Grammar*, from the translation of the American Philological Association, 1869-70. Van Name gives the following examples of conjugation:

Pres.: *mi lo val*: I am falling.
 Impf.: *mi a lo val*: I was falling.
 Pres.: *mi a la val*: I fell.
 Perf.: *mi ka val*: I have fallen.
 Plupf.: *mi a ka val*: I had fallen.

The question of the comparative influence exerted upon Creole by European languages other than Dutch is one that greatly interested Hesseling. The following paragraphs are based on his observations. With regard to German and Danish vocabulary he remarks: "It is not clear to what extent the German language has influenced the Negro Dutch vocabulary . . . Unquestionably there are words of German similarity . . . but one cannot make out what might be errors or modifications of the translators and what might really have been spoken by the Negro Creoles. The same concerns the *Danish*, or danicized, words of the printed texts . . . The similarity between some German and Dutch words, between some Dutch and Low German words, as well as between some Danish and Dutch words, also often makes it difficult to decide if a word is of Dutch, Low German, or Danish origin, especially in the printed dialect." ⁹

With regard to French influence Hesseling states: "The few *French* words appearing in Dutch Creole are there not because of any influence of the French language spoken in St. Thomas, but because of the corrupt French language spoken by Dutch colonists in the southwest Netherlands and brought to St. Thomas by the colonists from the Netherlands." ¹⁰ This statement may be qualified somewhat by Van Name's observation that French Creole was spoken

⁹ Hesseling, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Dirk Christian Hesseling: *Het Negerhollands der Deense Antilles*. Practically half of this volume comprises quotations from the Danish Lutheran and the German Moravian translations of the New Testament in Creole and several conversations in Creole quoted from Erik Pontoppidan's book cited below.

by some of the French inhabitants on St. Thomas.¹¹

It is possible that the few *English* words appearing in the conversations gathered and published by the Danish linguist, Erik Pontoppidan,¹² (such as *dig*; *jump*; *krop*, or *crop*; *trubel*, or *trouble*; *vens*, or *fence*) are later interpolations. This is the opinion of Hesseling,¹³ based upon the fact that the English colonists on St. Thomas, and later on St. Croix, seldom learned Creole but insisted upon using their own language. Oldendorp states that when he visited the islands (1767) "the English mostly learned no Creole and in this the slaves had to adjust themselves accordingly . . . In the Danish islands all whites except English spoke Creole and taught their children the dialect . . ." ¹⁴ Many of the English planters and their slaves who came to St. Croix from the British islands spoke not correct English but a sort of Creole English.¹⁵ The English words mentioned by Hesseling as later interpolations probably came from this English Creole dialect. It is referred to also by Hans Tjellesen, the Lutheran minister in Christiansted, in 1789. Newly arrived Negroes from Africa, he stated, who came to English slave owners on St. Croix, would learn

¹¹ Van Name, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

¹² Erik Pontoppidan: *Einige Notizen Über die Kreolansprache der Danisch-Westindischen Inseln. Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*; Berlin 1881. This important work contains numerous samples of the Creole speech under such topics as: proverbs and manners of speech; texts illustrating both the Danish and the German translations into Creole; various conversations, such as between two slaves, two different persons, a father and a son, a brother and a sister, a man and a slave, a mistress and a maid-slave, etc.

¹³ Hesseling, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Oldendorp, p. 263.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

within three years to understand and speak not pure English but English Creole.¹⁶

"More numerous than the English," writes Hesseling, "are the *Spanish* words in the Negro Dutch dialect, chiefly due to the spreading of Negro-Spanish from other islands, such as Curacao."¹⁷ He gives the following examples: *adios*, good-by; *cabrita*, goat; *kaba*, complete; *kawai*, horse; *koerri*, open; *no*, not; *pat-tat*, duck; *parri*, create; *savan*, field.¹⁸

"Less numerous are words of definite *Portuguese* origin. This is rather peculiar, as the Jews exiled from Brazil to St. Thomas, as well as their fellow believers in Surinam, remained for a long time faithful to their mother tongue (Portuguese)."¹⁹ "The Israelites on St. Thomas and surrounding islands seem to have given up the Portuguese probably under the influence of their Spanish-speaking fellow believers on Curacao." Hesseling gives the following examples: *maski*; *na*, in; *bussaal*, a Negro born in Africa; *traval*, trouble, pain. He believes that "the few Portuguese words have probably been brought to St. Thomas by the language of the seamen and slaves prevalent on the Gold Coast."²⁰

There are surprisingly few words of *African* origin in the Dutch Creole dialect, although "there were slight variations of the dialect according to location and because of

¹⁶ Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

¹⁷ Hesseling, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

the different races represented on the various plantations in the island.”²¹ Oldendorp mentions twenty-six different dialects found among the slaves on St. Thomas, most of whom had come from the hinterland of West Africa,²² the emigration harbor being in the latter time chiefly Loanda.²³ The few words of African origin “are taken chiefly from the names of products of the vegetable and animal kingdoms”; as for example: *geambo*, fruit; *jekke*, guinea fowl; *karang*, name of a fish; *kingamboe*, okra; *kukkuba*; *makaku*; *mapua*; *tschikki*, jigger, a ground flea which buries itself under the toenail.²⁴

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

²² Oldendorp, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

²³ Hesseling, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

X

Translations and Publications

The credit for the translations into the Negro Dutch Creole dialect and for publishing most of them goes, on the one hand, to the Danish Lutherans and, on the other hand, to the German Moravians. The Danish Lutheran translations into Creole had their beginning with Johannes Christian Kingo, first missionary to St. Thomas, who spent much of his time, especially at the beginning, in language study and translations. Soon after his arrival he finished a *Dictionary* which, though rudimentary and never readied for publication, served him as good practice for his later work. In 1764 he translated Luther's Small Catechism, which was sent to Copenhagen the same year and pigeon-holed there until 1770. In 1765 he translated The Gospel of St. Matthew, which was never printed, likely because of a later publication of the New Testament. He also wrote in Creole an A-B-C Book, a primer, which was published in 1770.¹

In 1769 the Bishop of Sjaelland, who even then, like the missionaries, foresaw the coming change in policy on

¹ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 18.

the West Indian mission field, sent Kingo's translation of Luther's Small Catechism to Pastor Niels Schow, the mission director on St. Croix, to be revised by him. Schow, declaring that he did not know enough Creole to do the work, sent it to the Danish linguist and Lutheran layman, *Statshauptmand* J. M. Magens, who had already begun his remarkable work of translations into Creole and who was henceforth to play an important part also in other phases of the Lutheran mission work, with the request that he do the revision. Magens was a Dane born on St. Thomas and educated in Copenhagen University.² He belonged to a prominent St. Thomas family and held important government positions on St. Thomas and St. John. He was the father of an equally prominent son after whom Magens Bay was named.³ The elder Magens undertook the assignment with enthusiasm. Missionary Wold, who had been the tutor of Magens' children and lived in his home, worked with him for many years on Creole translations. They foresaw that the converted slaves soon would no longer be prepared in Danish but in Creole for church membership, and they labored zealously on various works in addition to the one mentioned.

Magens assisted Wold in the preparation of an A-B-C

² R. Andersen in his *Den Evangeliske Lutherske Kirke's Historie i Amerika*, p. 295, states that Magens was born on St. Thomas, March 4, 1715; that he lived for some time in New York, where he translated into English and published forty sermons by the Danish Provst P. S. Nakskov, and that he was thrice married, the last two times to American wives. He died on St. Thomas, August 18, 1783.

³ Joachim Melchior Magens, Jr., served with distinction in the government 1792-1845; became warden of the Lutheran church, St. Thomas, August 10, 1827.

book and a hymnal, and they collaborated on the translation of the New Testament. Mogens also prepared a grammar of the Creole Language for the use of missionaries studying the language. By 1770 the following translations had been published in Copenhagen:

Kingo's *Luther's Small Catechism in Creole*

Kingo's *A-B-C Book in Creole*

Wold's *Hymnal in Creole*

Wold's *A-B-C Book in Creole*

Mogens' *Grammar of the Creole Language*

It is not known why two A-B-C books were printed. Possibly one was more advanced than the other.

Mogens' grammar deserves special mention. It was published under the Danish title *Grammatik over det Creolske Sprog som bruges paa de tvende Danske Eilande, St. Croix, St. Thomas og St. Jan i Amerika, sammenskrevet og opsat af en paa St. Thomas indfødt Mand. Trykt udi det Kongelige Waysenhusets Bogtrykkerie af Gerhard Giese Salikath*, Copenhagen, 1770. 80 pp. ("Grammar of the Creole language as used in the two Danish Islands, St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John in America, written and compiled by a native-born man on St. Thomas.—Printed in the Royal Waysenhuset's Printery," etc.). Hesseling comments on it as follows: "Mogens undertook this work to render a service to the Danish Mission in the West Indian Islands. In the preface he states . . . that in forming the idea of the Negroes' pronunciation of Creole one would be apt to make the mistake of not pronouncing and mostly omitting the guttural letters and not pronouncing the

consonants where two of them come together . . . and that in order to avoid making his work 'irregular,' he has followed the pronunciation of Creole as spoken by the white inhabitants, in the hope that all right thinking people would admit that this was the best and surest manner in which to formulate rules of grammar for . . . the language, which could be serviceable on all the three islands." ⁴

In 1772, after Hans Salling had left the mission, Pastor Rørdam on St. Thomas requested Wold to come and assist him. Magens was much provoked by this request and declared that unless Wold remained on St. John he would have no more to do with the Lutheran mission. Wold died that year but Magens nevertheless withdrew his help from the mission and kept aloof from it for several years. It is very probable, however, that he kept the work in his heart and that he labored as zealously on the Creole translations as before, for during the years of his withdrawal he circulated among the missionaries the newly finished manuscript of the New Testament translated into Creole.⁵ It is also possible that during this period, after he had finished the New Testament, he began his greatest task, that of translating the Old Testament into Creole.

Magens' return to active participation in the mission work in 1777 was brought about by a request from the College of Church Inspection that he send them the translation of the New Testament for publication. They wanted also a revision of the hymns that had already been pub-

⁴ Hesselning, p. 36.

⁵ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 23.

lished, and suggested that Kingo revise them and Magens edit them. Magens, his interest revived, replied that he would rather prepare an entirely new translation of the New Testament, and that the revision of the hymns be done not by Kingo but rather Missionary Niels Salling, who had succeeded Wold on St. John, and had already of his own accord translated, or revised, a hundred hymns. In September, 1778, the requested revision of the hymnal was finished and likewise the first part of the New Testament, both of which were forwarded to the college. Before May, 1779, the other part of the New Testament was sent to Copenhagen. In 1781, Magens' superb accomplishment, the translation of the Old Testament, was finished and sent to Copenhagen. For reasons unknown to us this great work was never published, but the New Testament was issued that year. That it was published so quickly was due to Hans Salling, who because of ill health had returned to Denmark and in Copenhagen had assisted and pushed the preparations for its publication.

The New Testament in Creole was published under the following title: *Die Nywe Testament vans ons Heer Jesus Christus ka set over in die Creolse Tael en ka giev die Ligt tot dienst van Deen Mission in Amerika, gedrykt in Copenhagen 1781, bie die Erfgenamen van Godiche* ("The New Testament of our Lord Jesus translated into the Creole language for use for services at the Danish Mission in America, printed in Copenhagen 1781, by the heirs of van Godiche"). Its size was 7½ x 4½ x 2½ inches, and it sold for 14 crowns (about \$3.50) a volume. Many copies

were shipped both for sale and for use in the Lutheran mission congregations and schools in the Danish West Indies. Kingo himself sold 179 copies in 1783.⁶

Hesseling comments on it: "Magens, who was born on St. Thomas and had studied in Copenhagen, had apparently made his translation from the Danish version of the New Testament. The execution and appearance of the book are excellent. The paper is strong, the print clear, and the binding exhibits the gold stamp of the initials of King Christian VII. Printing errors are few: about ten are mentioned in the corrigenda. In 1818 there appeared in Copenhagen, printed by the 'heirs of van Schultz,' a second edition of this translation. One may well call it a popular edition. The paper and print are much cheaper, the binding is plain. Ten old printing errors are repeated and a hundred new ones added."⁷

In the preface, "To the Reader by the Translator," Magens states (in Creole): "I have followed the Creole manner of speech throughout, but I have not used vulgar words as idioms because they do not suit spiritual matters." In other words, he endeavored to raise the linguistic standards here and there by using Dutch words where the Creole words were not suitable. The translation was dedicated to the Danish king.

There is a probability, according to Hesseling, that this New Testament was first published in 1779 and rejected because it was considered too Dutch, and that afterward,

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Hesseling, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

upon the realization that it was nearly impossible to express religious and ecclesiastical terms in typical Creole without "Dutchizing" them, it was republished in 1781 in virtually the original form. This probability he bases upon a notation in a copy of this New Testament in Copenhagen. Hesseling writes: "An annotation written on a piece of paper pasted on the first draft of the Danish Creole New Testament states, 'This is the first edition, but the version was rejected because it was excessively Dutch and thus nothing further was printed.' " "Two copies of this condemned edition," Hesseling continues, "are in the Copenhagen Library. I consulted them at Leiden. It appears to me, however, that the text is entirely identical with the edition published in 1781, even the same errors of printing are found in both editions. If the first draft really was printed in 1779 and was then condemned, one must assume that after a later examination the language was considered acceptable and therefore the work was republished without any changes . . . Apparently it was realized later that it was well-nigh impossible to express the exalted ideas as found in the Gospel, especially in the Epistles of St. Paul, if one would carefully follow the thought modes of the Negroes in their Creole vocabulary." ⁸

Oldendorp agrees with this last statement: "This [Creole] language is not rich for public speaking, especially for religious discourses . . . One must be satisfied to be able to express the most essential in a somewhat clear manner. Its limitation is shown especially in the trans-

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

lation of Holy Scripture and . . . hymns. As the religion of Jesus Christ had not been preached in this language before, the missionaries in the beginning found a great lack of the expressions necessary for preaching, expressions which they then introduced from the Dutch and German languages." ⁹

Magens received no remuneration for his great work of translation. "When he went bankrupt there was talk about assisting him financially, but it is not known if anything was done." ¹⁰ Wold and Salling, however, each received 100 rdl. for their work on translations.

In 1798 Thorkild Lund, who had left St. Thomas the year before, published during his stay in Copenhagen a Creole Reader under the title, *Leerboek na die Evangeliskristelig Relisie tot betryk yoor die Kooninglik Deen Missionskirk sender na Amerika* ("Reader of the Evangelical Christian Religion printed for the Royal Danish Missions in America"). It was used for many years in the various Lutheran government and mission schools in the islands.

In 1799 Andreas Yoachim Brandt, pastor of the Lutheran church in Christiansted from 1792 to 1802, published his *Creole Hymnal with the Litany*. This took the place of Wold's Creole hymnal published in 1770.

In 1822 Jorgen N. Oxholm, pastor of the Lutheran church in Christiansted published his Creole *Bible for Kinders* ("Bible for Children"), which also was used in the Lutheran government and mission schools.¹¹

⁹ Oldendorp, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

¹⁰ Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

¹¹ Lose's "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 37.

In 1823 an unknown author published his *Creole Psalm-Buk af een vergaeding van ouwe en nywe Psalmen na Creol-Sprach* ("Creole Hymnal with a collection of old and new hymns in the Creole Language"). It contained 111 hymns translated from Danish, and it replaced Brandt's hymnal. A copy is in the St. Thomas Library.

A *Creole Altar Book* was published by an unknown author at an unknown date, probably after the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The last two Danish Lutheran translations into Creole were issued in 1827 by Johannes Jacob Praetorius, pastor of the Lutheran church in St. Thomas: *Dr. Martin Luther sie Klein Katechismus ka set ower na die Creol Tael, van J. J. Praetorius, Missionarius ordinatus na St. Thomas en St. Jan in Amerika. Kjøbenhavn 1827. Ka prent bie C. Graebe* ("Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism translated into the Creole language . . . printed by C. Graebe"); *Evangelis-kristelik Leering-Buk tot Gebryk na die Onderwies van die Katechechesean sender na die Deen Mission in Amerika, ka skriev van J. J. Praetorius, Kjøbenhavn 1827. Ka prent bie C. Graebe* ("Evangelical-Christian Reader for the use of the catechists of the Danish Mission in America . . ."). In 1834 these two works by Praetorius were published in one volume. The former replaced Kingo's translation of Luther's Small Catechism and the latter Thorkild Lund's reader.

In 1761, twenty-nine years after their arrival, the Moravian missionaries published their first translation into Creole, a hymnal with prayers, under the title *Liturgie, de*

formulieren van doop en avondmeal en sommige liederen ("Liturgy, Formulas for Baptism and Holy Communion, and Some Hymns"), by an unknown author. It is mentioned by Oldendorp as being the first work printed in the Negro Dutch Creole dialect.¹² Lewaetz remarks that "it was an awkward edition," and that it was revised often.¹³ It was first revised and republished in 1765 under the title, *Gebeden en Liederen voor die swart Broedergemeenten van St. Thomas* ("Prayers and Hymns for the Black Brethren Church on St. Thomas"). As it was still in need of revision, Johan Auerbach, who came to the Danish West Indies together with Oldendorp in 1767, revised it again, after which it was published in 1774 under the title, *Psalm Boek voor die tot die Evangelische Broer-Kerk Behoorende Neger-Gemeentet na St. Croix, St. Thomas en St. Jan. Barby 1774* ("Hymnal for the Evangelical Brethren's Church of the Negro Congregation on St. Croix . . .").

That the German Moravian translators of Creole were faced with the same problem with respect to the lack of Creole in expressing religious ideas as were the Danish Lutheran translators is evident from remarks by both Hesseling and Addison Van Name. Hesseling, in discussing this Moravian Creole hymnal says, that it was a translation of hymns from a German hymnal, and that "in no single text is the deviation from the spoken Creole language so great as in this translation. As far as linguistic

¹² Oldendorp, *op. cit.*, p. 914. Hesseling points out (p. 43) the error of Oldendorp's statement that it was published in 1765 instead of 1761. The library in Herrnhut, Germany, does not possess this book.

¹³ Lawaetz, *ibid.*, p. 204.

knowledge is concerned this book does not yield much, except that words occur in it that were not formerly in the vocabulary.”¹⁴ Van Name says of it and of the Moravian edition of the New Testament, published later : “That the language of the New Testament and Hymn-Book is in a great measure artificial, and no fair representation of the spoken language, one who has studied the other Creole dialects would easily discover, even without Oldendorp’s statement that the missionaries were compelled to borrow from Dutch and (Low) German, not only many words for the expression of ideas wanting in the Creole, but also a passive conjugation.”¹⁵

Once more this hymnal was revised and enlarged; it was republished in 1784. “Its improvements consisted mainly of additional words . . . It was more Dutch than the former edition,”¹⁶ remarks Hesseling.

Three minor Moravian translations into Creole were published before the New Testament appeared. *Taal-proeven* (“Samples of Conversation”), by an unknown author, was published at an unknown date; but since it is mentioned by Oldendorp,¹⁷ it must have been written before the publication of his history in 1777. It also contains several proverbs and Luther’s Small Catechism.

In 1785 a book was published in Barbary titled, *Die Hoofd-Inhoud van die Leering van Jesus Christus voor die Negermeente van die Broerkerk* (“The Main Contents

¹⁴ Hesseling, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁵ Van Name, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

¹⁶ Hesseling, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁷ Oldendorp, *op. cit.*, pp. 432-36.

of the Teachings of Jesus Christ for the Negro Congregation of the Brethren Church"). The author is unknown. "The contents of this book," writes Hesselings, "compare a great deal with *Taalproeven* mentioned above. The language is less genuine Creole."

In 1800 an *A-B-C Book for Negro Children* was published at Barby. The author is unknown.

The principal Moravian translation, that of the New Testament, was more than half a century in preparation. Johan Bøhmer, a prominent Moravian missionary who came to the Danish West Indies in 1742 and remained there for forty-three years, worked all his life on the translation of the Bible into Creole, but, Lawaetz writes, "not with sufficient success . . . Toward the end of his life he succeeded in finishing the New Testament and most of the Old. One can doubt the value of his translation, and yet because of his accurate knowledge of the linguistic expressions of the Negro his work became the foundation for a later more perfect translation by another hand."¹⁸ That other hand was Thomas de Malleville, Danish governor of St. Thomas and St. John from 1773 to 1796, and of St. Croix from 1796 to 1798. He was born on St. Thomas and was the only non-Lutheran governor in the history of the Danish West Indies. Having been baptized and brought up in the Reformed Dutch Church, he applied (because of his fondness for the Moravian teachings and methods) in 1773 for membership in that denomination. "He became a member, but was probably not publicly

¹⁸ Lawaetz, *Brod. Mis.*, p. 42.

received, as it was against the regulations for the Moravians in the Danish West Indies to receive whites in their denomination.”¹⁹ He had the reputation of being the best commandant St. Thomas had ever had, and it was during his regime that the prestige of the Moravians, sometimes at the expense of the Lutherans, reached its zenith. He revised Bøhmer’s translation of the New Testament, which was published in 1802 under the title, *Die Nieuwe Testament na Creol Taal* (“The New Testament in the Creole Language”).

Hesseling, who evidently did not know that this New Testament translation had been revised by Governor Malleville, a Dane who also knew Dutch, comments about it as follows: “This version lends itself best to the Danish text . . . We have already stated that the Danes held themselves more faithfully to the common language of the people. There are, however, places in this translation . . . where the Germans (Moravians) are more accurate in translation . . . This improvement was probably due partly to the consultation of the Danish version of the Creole New Testament which had been on hand for thirty years.” [Twenty-one is correct.] “The execution of the book is good,” continues Hesseling, “but less good than that of the first Danish edition. The printer’s errors and improvements occupy eight pages. It seems that irregularities in spelling have been improved to a great extent.”²⁰

This concludes the account of known Moravian publica-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

²⁰ Hesseling, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

tions in Negro Dutch Creole, except for a small tract issued in New York in 1823 by the American Tract Society. Hesselning reports that the library at Herrnhut has an unpublished manuscript of a Creole grammar, comprising 104 pages. It is a more comprehensive grammar than that of Magens which had already appeared and which was consulted by the anonymous author, as he acknowledges in his preface. It is assumed that the author was a Moravian.²¹

There was probably no other place in the world at that time where so high a proportion of the slaves could read, as in the Danish West Indies. This was due to the comparatively enlightened government, the Christian zeal of the Danish royal family and many other people in Denmark, the consecrated enterprise of the Moravian and Lutheran missionaries, and the extensive Christian literature that was published in the language that the slaves used.

As an illustration of the difference between the Lutheran and the Moravian Creole translations, the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:1-9) is given below, with Danish and German Creole versions.

(1) The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. (2) And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. (3) And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; (4) And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up; (5) Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith sprung up, because

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

they had no deepness of earth; (6) And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. (7) And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: (8) But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. (9) Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Negro Dutch Creole—Danish Lutheran Version

(1) Naer na die selve Dag Jesus ha loop yt die Hus, en ha set sie neer da die See. (2) En veel Volk ha vergaeden na hem, soo dat hem ha loop na binne een Skip, en ha sit; en die Volk almael ha staen na die Seekant. (3) En hem ha praet gu na sender door Gliknissen, en ha seg: een Saejer ha loop yt for saej. (4) En dietit hem ha saej som ha val na die Pad; en die Voglrn ha kom, en ha jeet die op. (5) Maer som ha val na steenagtig Land, die no hab mussie Grond; en die ha gruej gu gaw, diemaek die no hab diep Grond. (6) Maar dietit die Son ka hoppo, die ha skruej wej: en die-maek die no hab Wortel, die ha droog wej. (7) Maer som ha val tyssen die Doornen; en die Doornen ha gruej op, en ha tjook die, dat die hat doot. (8) Maer som ha val na gued Land, en ha draeg Vrygt, som hondred vound, maer som sestig vound, maer som sertig vound. (9) Die hab Oor for hoor, hem hoor.²²

Negro Dutch Creole—German Moravian Version

(1) Na dieselvde Dag Jesus a loop ut van die Hoes, en a set neer na Sie van die See. (2) En moeschi Volk a kom malkander na Em, soo dat Em a stap nabinne een Skip, en a set; en allemaal Volk a staan na die Wal. (3) En Em a spreek na sender veel en meenig Dingen door Gliknissen, en a see: Kik, een Saayer a loop ut vor saay. (4) En toen Em a saay, da som (van die Saad) a vall na die Pad, en die Vogels a kom, en a jeet die op. (5) Som a vall na die Steen-Grond, maar die no a hab veel Aarde; en a kom gauw op, voordaarom, dat die no a hab Diepte van Aarde. (6) Maar toen die Son a kom op, soo die a bran, en derwil die no hab Wolter, soo die a droog wee. (7) Som a vall tuschen die

²² From the second edition, 1818.

Doornen; en die Doornen a groey op, en a verstik die. (8) Som a vall na een goeje Grond, en a breng Vrucht, som hondertvoudig, som sestigvoudig, en som dertigvoudig. (9) Wi hab Ooren voor hoor, die hoor.²³

Some of the Negro Dutch Creole publications are not in existence any more, and the rest are exceedingly rare, particularly outside the archives in Copenhagen, Denmark; Herrnhut, Germany; and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Only a few of the leading libraries in Europe (and probably none in America) own one or more copies of either the Danish or the German translation of the New Testament. In the St. Thomas Library there is only one copy of each of the Danish and the German versions of the *Creole New Testament*, and one copy of the Danish Creole hymnal. Strangely enough, in the Netherlands (where the Dutch language is so similar to the Negro Dutch Creole dialect, or vice versa) only two copies of these old Creole publications are found: a copy of the second edition of the Danish translation of the *Creole New Testament*, and a copy of the first edition of the *German Moravian Creole Hymnal*. The former is in the library of the Netherlands Bible Society, the latter in the library at Leyden. In Paris, France, is found only one copy of the Danish translation of the New Testament.²⁴

It is impossible to measure the influence of the Negro Dutch Creole literature produced by missionaries for use by slaves in this former Danish colony. Its greatest influence was no doubt moral and spiritual. How much good

²³ Quoted by Hesseling, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-64.

²⁴ Hesseling, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

it did for the souls of men and how many persons, because of it, were enabled to enter into the joy of their Lord, only God knows. Undoubtedly these books exerted a remarkable cultural influence as well. The Negro slaves in these islands found out that their tongue was true book learning and not mere jargon. It gave them a new sense of dignity both as Negroes and as members of the human race, and helped to mold them from a number of diverse groups into a homogeneous people. It placed the slave on the same level as his master. It is a unique phenomenon that numerous Negroes in these islands, through the medium of this literature, learned to read and write and sing in their adopted language three-quarters of a century before emancipation was decreed.

XI

The Slave Traffic Ordinance

The first step toward the abolition of slavery was the abolition of the world slave traffic. Denmark was the first slave-owning nation to take this step, a royal ordinance of March 16, 1792, prohibiting the importation and exportation, though not the selling, of slaves. The local sale of slaves in the Danish West Indies continued until slavery itself ended in 1848. The sale of slaves to other islands, however, ceased in 1793, the year after the decree was issued.

The fact of this royal ordinance is well known. Altogether ignored are the reforms which the ordinance specified for the benefit of the slaves in the Danish West Indies. Likewise unknown is the fact that the Lutheran and Moravian missions were to carry out the provisions for these reforms.¹

It is interesting to note that the man in Denmark who labored more than anyone else to put an end to the slave

¹C. A. Trier, article "*Det Dansk-Vestindiske Negerindførselsforbud*" of 1792, published in *Historisk Tidsskrift*, Ser. 7, Vol. 5. Except where other sources are cited this chapter is based on Trier's excellent account of the prohibition of the slave traffic in 1792.

traffic in the Danish West Indies was Heinrich Ludvig Ernst von Schimmelmann, vice governor general of St. Croix between 1784 and 1787, himself a former director in a slave-trading enterprise, a humane owner of slaves on large plantations in St. Croix, a devout Christian and staunch Lutheran, and a warm friend of the Moravians as well as of the slaves. In Denmark he was deeply influenced by the developments in England and he caused investigations to be made into the conditions of the slaves in the Danish islands, through Hans West, a Danish school-master, rector of the Lutheran government school at Christiansted. When the commission was appointed in 1791 to submit proposals for improvements in the slave traffic on the Danish West Indian Islands and the Guinea coast of West Africa, von Schimmelmann was one of its members. The other members were high Danish noblemen.²

This commission was greatly influenced by the plan proposed by Hans West. According to his plan a plantation on St. Croix, subsidized by an adequate royal loan, was to be transformed into a school for his experimentation on the treatment of Negro slaves; and another school was to be started in the middle of St. Croix for the education of children and adults "regarding their duties toward God, the King, the government, their masters and their fellow men."³ The objects of this experiment were: to

² Trier, *op. cit.*, p. 423. The other members of the commission were: Secretary of State Jørgen Erik Skeel, Fr. Carl Trant, Niels Tønderlund, and Ernst Philip Kirstein (all members of the ministry of finance), President of the Chancellory Christian Brandt, and Carl Wendt.

³ Trier, *op. cit.*, p. 426.

improve the marriage relation among the Negroes and furnish them better living conditions; to furnish larger garden lots to Negro families; and to provide freedom and more comfort to old and feeble Negroes and mothers who had given birth to five or six children. Toward the last objective a premium was to be given for childbearing in order to check the common practice of abortion. The moral problem was to be solved without recourse to law.⁴

The plan of the commission, a document of 102 pages, was ready within five months. Out of this developed the final ordinance. The proposals of the commission can be divided into three parts: 1. Prohibition of the exportation of slaves from Danish Guinea in Africa and the importation of Negro slaves to the Danish West Indies after the beginning of 1803, with the view toward the final abolition of slavery itself. Furthermore, all Danish subjects were forbidden to engage in any such commerce. The clause relating to the final abolition of slavery, however, was concealed from the planters for fear of their opposition. 2. Means by which to assure a sufficiently large number of Negroes on the islands. The commission realized that without importation of slaves there would not be enough Negroes on the islands to carry on the work in the future unless measures were adopted toward increasing their number. Hence the importation of slaves in the interim was to be made as easy as possible, and not only Denmark but also foreign countries were to be permitted meanwhile to carry on the slave trade. 3. Plans by which

⁴ *Ibid.*

to prevent a decrease in the Negro population after the importation of slaves had stopped. Export of Negroes from the islands was prohibited; and the unusually large number of house Negroes was to be limited by levying taxes on them, the income from which was to be applied to benefit those slave owners who promoted the welfare of their slaves. This and other similar proposals, such as a decrease in the labor of women during and after pregnancy, better care of children, better food and clothing, and so on, were based upon the assumption that if the Negroes were more humanely treated they would multiply faster and thus perhaps cover the reduction in population brought about by prohibiting further importation of slaves from Africa.⁵

Perhaps the most important statement made by the commission, from the point of view of this study, was that the gross immorality which slavery caused and which more than anything else hindered the contemplated reforms should be checked by preaching the gospel. The slaves were to be instructed in the Christian religion, baptism of their children was to be encouraged, and lawful marriages were to be introduced. The last point was a very difficult one because slave owners had the right to separate married couples, even though they had entered into a Christian marriage. The commission therefore boldly opposed the slave owners in its recommendation that married couples belonging to the same master must under no circumstances be separated.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

With the observation that Denmark would set Europe and the rest of the world a beautiful example by instituting the proposed reforms, the commission submitted its plan to King Frederik VI, who approved it by the royal resolution of February 24, 1792, and referred it to the Ministry of Finance. A few weeks later practically all the proposals of the commission were adopted and included in the historic ordinance of March 16, 1792.⁶

There was great joy in Denmark over this ordinance. Newspapers which had championed the cause of the Negroes in the Danish West Indies eulogized the act. The newspaper *Borgervennen* commented: "God be praised! The time seems to be near when our dark brothers, if not yet given their entire freedom from slavery, shall at least enjoy an alleviation in their present conditions."⁷ The ordinance also created much interest in England where the question of the cessation of the slave traffic once more came up in Parliament. It would have passed had it not been for the provision, copied from the Danish ordinance, that the traffic should cease "gradually."⁸

Unfortunately, however, most of the proposed reforms were not carried out until years later. The time was not ripe for some of them, and for others the economic factor stood in the way. With regard to the proposed changes in the marriage relation among the Negroes, the Danish government dared not then force the issue for fear of the

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 446.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 448.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 456.

reaction of the planters. The proposed compulsory education did not materialize, mainly because the Danish government was not willing to pay for it, and instead brought up for the second time the proposal that the Moravians supervise the work, and that the annual budget of the Lutheran mission be applied toward the cost. The commission argued along these lines: The Lutheran mission could not undertake this work without a greatly increased budget for additional missionaries, etc., but the Moravians had a sufficient number of missionaries needed for the purpose; and while the Lutheran mission was practically confined to the towns in the islands, the Moravian mission worked extensively among the slaves in the country, where most of the proposed educational work would have to be done.

There was in Denmark only one prominent opponent of this plan to transfer the work to the Moravians. He was Royal Chancellor A. Bartholin, secretary of the College of Church Inspection. He wrote in protest: "I have always considered the West Indian mission a highly useful institution, expressing perhaps our Danish Lutheran only manifest benefaction to the unfortunate Negro race; yes, as an honor also to the fatherland and its rulers, which was my thought when I wrote the preface to the Creole New Testament, and from which according to my conviction I do not believe I should yield." ⁹

He asked the pertinent question: "Why did it appear

⁹ Koch, *op. cit.*, 178, quoting from "*Vestindiske Missionssager*," July 20, 1892.

that the Lutheran mission had not answered its purpose?" He answered his own question by stating that the mission had not received proper assistance because of the contradictions and hindrances it had suffered, and because of the meager financial support it had received. "Yet," he continued, "it has, especially in later years, been an eloquent proof of the beneficent influence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the ignorant Negroes." And he concluded, "It should not be thought strange if I, who so often have been moved to see how the mission—this beneficent plant which according to its age ought already to have attained to the size of a cedar—has been thwarted in its growth, and from lack of sufficient nourishment has often nearly died out, now feel so much more moved by the thought that perhaps it will soon be plucked up by its roots." ¹⁰

This eloquent appeal, however, did not change the state of affairs very much. That the plan to have the Moravians supervise the proposed compulsory education did not materialize was due instead to the inability of the Moravians to accept it in view of the limited budget of the Lutheran mission (1,800 rdl.), and there was no definite promise of any increase. Moreover, the proposed school system required instruction in subjects other than religion, for which the Moravians did not consider themselves ready or qualified.¹¹

Although these plans for reform were not immediately put into effect, they prepared the ground for future im-

¹⁰ Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

provements in the conditions of the slaves and paved the way for the free and compulsory education of slaves in 1841. The ordinance as a whole encouraged England's act prohibiting the slave traffic, which became law on March 25, 1807.

An unfortunate result of this ordinance, on the other hand, was the discontinuance of the Lutheran mission as such by assigning its work to the pastors of the Danish Lutheran congregations. This happened officially when the affairs of the College of Church Inspection were transferred to the Ministry of Finance April 18, 1798. Even before that time it had been decided to send no more missionaries to the islands.

The last Lutheran missionary on St. Thomas and St. John was Thorkild Lund, who acted also as Danish minister for five years following the departure of Pastor Krejdahl in 1790. Lund, who was as zealous and beloved as Kingo and Krejdahl, was much interested in the plans for improving the conditions of the slaves formulated in connection with the ordinance prohibiting the slave trade. In 1796 he sent a proposal to the government for a new court for Negroes with colored as well as white personnel under the supervision of the governor general and other whites—which should adjudge all cases concerning the Negroes. The proposal was rejected.¹² Pastor Volkersen relieved Thorkild Lund as minister of the Danish congregation, but upon Lund's departure two years later Volkersen had

¹² Trier, *op. cit.*, pp. 485-86.

charge of both congregations. He was a rationalist and almost had "to be driven by his Negro assistants to perform his minimum duties as a missionary."¹³

The last Lutheran missionary on St. Croix was Hans J. Mackeprang, who arrived after a three-year vacancy during which the Danish minister, Andreas Yoachim Brandt, had supervised the mission work.

At the close of the eighteenth century the mission congregation on St. Thomas numbered about one thousand—half slaves, half Free Colored or Free Negroes. At the same time there were 186 Roman Catholic and 1,156 Moravian baptized slaves.¹⁴

Although the Danish government in 1798 had decreed that the offices of the missionaries and ministers should be combined, and only one pastor was allotted to each of the two largest islands, the mission work was continued, and during the following decades Denmark sent out catechists now and then to assist the pastors who were called "missionary pastors" until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The new policy, however, caused more vacancies, overwork for pastors, and a minimum of pastoral care for the congregations. Pastor Lose states that only the deep love of the Lutheran Negroes for their church and for Denmark can explain why the Lutheran mission congregations did not decrease, but on the contrary continued to increase greatly during those years.¹⁵

¹³ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 30.

¹⁴ Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

¹⁵ Lose, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

XII

Time of Transition

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were two Lutheran congregations in each parish, both with the same minister, the same church building, and the same government to control them. The Danish Lutheran "missionary pastor" conducted services in both congregations, and performed baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals, both in Danish and Creole. He also supervised the school conducted by the Danish clerk for Danish children, and the Creole school conducted by native teachers, and taught religion in these schools. The enrollment of children in the Lutheran government schools was quite large during this period.¹

Due both to the zealous work of the Lutheran ministers and to the steady increase in the population of the islands, the membership of the Creole congregations on St. Thomas and St. Croix increased rapidly during this period.² In

¹ The inventory of Frederick Church in St. Thomas lists for 1809, besides many Creole New Testaments and hymnals, 507 Creole readers. The 1813 inventory lists 50 Creole New Testaments and 700 other Creole religious books. In 1832 there were 293 Creole New Testaments in the church.

² The total population in the islands increased from about 30,000 in Governor Høst's time (1767-1776) to 43,178 (3,723 whites and 39,445 non-whites) in 1835, the year of the largest population in the Virgin Islands.

the Creole congregation in Christiansted the largest-attended annual Holy Communion service increased from 87 in 1819 to 280 in 1834.³ In the Creole congregation on St. Thomas baptisms averaged 70 (37 free and 33 unfree or slave) children a year, between 1829 and 1837.⁴ The Creole congregation in Frederiksted was also growing fast, although it was much smaller than the other congregations mentioned. The Creole congregation on St. John was very small, due partly to the absence of a Lutheran resident minister and partly to the very extensive work done there by the Moravians.

The great increase in the number of Free Colored during the first half of the nineteenth century was felt strongly in all the Lutheran churches located in the towns, but less in the Moravian churches in the country districts. In the Lutheran Creole congregations on St. Thomas and St. Croix the Free Colored, who then outnumbered the unfree (the name "unfree" took the place of "slave" during this period), rented the same pews that were used by prominent Danes in the Danish congregations. The unfree sat on stools either on the main floors or in the galleries. In 1824, eighty-two pews were rented to Free Colored members in the Creole congregation on St. Thomas. The rent was eight dollars for a whole pew and four dollars for a half pew. The system of pew rent, which changed during vari-

³ Church records in the National Archives, Washington, D. C.

⁴ The baptismal records of the Lutheran church in St. Thomas for the period 1829 to 1837 divide the baptized children into five groups: mulatto, Negro, sambo (the offspring of a Negro and a mulatto), mestee (the offspring of a white person and a quadroon), and white.

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ous periods, continued in both the Danish and the mission congregations until a few years before the transfer in 1917.

The Lutheran Church in the Danish West Indies was a state church. This means that the government in Denmark, at times directly, but more commonly through the local government, exercised complete jurisdiction over the Church in the islands in its administrative affairs. Doctrinal, religious, and spiritual matters were left entirely to the ministers. The Word of God was never "bound" in the Danish West Indies, or in Denmark for that matter, because of the state church system.

During most of the nineteenth century the local government was the royal council. There was one on each of the two largest islands. The council was composed of the governor, or commandant, as president and two or more Danes of high rank. The many items of church business it transacted, the painstaking manner in which it went into the smallest details, and the elegant and gracious style of its correspondence are evident from thousands of documents preserved in the archives in Copenhagen, Washington, and in the Lutheran parishes in the Virgin Islands.⁵

Next in importance to the royal council were the wardens of the Lutheran Church. They were Danes of high rank and served both the Danish and the mission congregations. They took care of all the church's correspondence, financial matters, reports, and maintenance of

⁵ Typical of the flowery (Danish *kancelli*) style of that period is such an expression as, "The Royal Council would hereby obligingly request the declaration of the gentlemen the wardens of the Lutheran Church regarding . . ." (then may follow the important or unimportant request).

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the buildings. The upkeep of the cemeteries, except the Hebrew and the Moravian, was directly supervised by the Lutheran Church. The relation of the Lutheran minister to the royal council was more consultative than active and direct contacts in person or writing were infrequent. His relations with the wardens were co-operative. Despite the fact that he did not participate actively in administrative affairs, his high office and education made him highly respected both by the members of the royal council and by the wardens. He also enjoyed great prestige in the community. In St. Thomas and Christiansted the Lutheran parsonages were pretentious buildings, that in St. Thomas standing next to the governor's residence.

The Lutheran minister and the church clerk, on the other hand, were very closely connected. At first there was a clerk for each congregation, Danish and mission; later one was appointed for both.⁶

In 1800 Denmark became involved in war with England. On March 28, 1801, an English fleet of twenty-three warships with four thousand soldiers aboard appeared at St. Thomas and demanded the island's surrender. With such a superior force against him, the commandant, Colonel C. W. Scholten, agreed to capitulate. Governor General Lindemann on St. Croix was similarly obliged to surrender that island. Thus began the first English occupation of the islands. It lasted ten months only. A second occupation, occasioned also by world events far from the

⁶ In the Lutheran church in St. Thomas Andreas Nicolai Wulff was appointed the first clerk for both congregations on Nov. 2, 1843. Larsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-72.

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Caribbean area, began on Christmas Day, 1807, and lasted until April, 1814.

The relations between the English and the Danes during these occupations were far from hostile. Danish civil officers were retained at their posts. The disarmed Danish soldiers remained under the supervision of their officers who were free on their word of honor. The most serious result of the occupations, and of the state of war that brought them about, was the disruption of the islands' commerce with Denmark and elsewhere.

Between the Lutheran ministers and the English government officials there even existed at times a very friendly relationship. Thus when Pastors Hans J. Mackeprang of Christiansted desired to return to Denmark in 1812, the English General Hartcourt on St. Croix assisted him in securing passage through war-torn Europe via England, Norway, and Sweden. Likewise when the ground which had been purchased for the new cemetery in Christiansted was dedicated by the Lutheran pastor, J. N. Oxholm, on May 17, 1814, the English general and his officers were present in their full gala attire, and the English military paraded the grounds. One incident, however, marred the friendly relations. On August 20, 1813, General McLean suspended the Lutheran minister in St. Thomas, A. W. Volkersen, "because of nefarious conduct."⁷ On November 4, having three times been given twenty-four hours' notice to leave, he was exiled. Nissen states that "his dispute with the general arose from his coming too late to

⁷ Records, the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

the funeral of an English officer who died at the general's house, and that the general did not even allow him to follow the funeral procession, but ordered him to be off the island within twenty-four hours."⁸ Later a Danish ecclesiastical court found him not guilty and entitled him to reinstatement, but this did not take place until 1817 after the occupation. During his suspension the Lutheran Church in St. Thomas was supplied by Pastor Jørgen N. Oxholm of the Christiansted parish.⁹

After the second occupation the English planters and other residents, who had hitherto been small groups, became the most numerous; next came the French, then the Danes, and finally the Dutch. This does not indicate that there were fewer Danes on the islands than before, but rather that there were more of the other nationalities. With respect to the Dutch, however, it was different. "It is a matter of astonishment," wrote Nissen in 1837, "to see how the Dutch families have almost entirely disappeared from the island (of St. Thomas). Eighty years before they were by far the largest proportion of the inhabitants."

At no other time have the Danish islands been so cosmopolitan in character as during the first half of the nineteenth century. The English occupations did not cause but accentuated this condition. The first phase of this cosmopolitan status began in 1792 when, because of Den-

⁸ Nissen, *op. cit.*, 1813.

⁹ In 1814 Pastor Oxholm confirmed forty-eight in St. Thomas. In 1815 he made nine visits and held three Holy Communion services for the Creole and two for the Danish congregation. In 1816 he made six visits to St. Thomas and confirmed sixty-two. Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 33.

mark's neutrality during the European wars, St. Thomas became the only market in the West Indies for the products raised in the various colonies, and the only channel through which they could be conveyed to the countries in Europe.¹⁰ During the first half of the nineteenth century, the golden age of the Danish islands, St. Thomas became the commercial emporium of the Antilles and one of the great ports of the world. A brief glance at the social life at that time will reveal this cosmopolitan character and furnish us with an illuminating background for an understanding of this period.

Taylor's statement in 1888 was even more appropriate for this earlier period: "The St. Thomian shakes hands with the universe every day. Vessels of all nations come into his port annually, and people of all nationalities are his visitors."¹¹ Its port attracted trade from every part of the world. It was a rendezvous for all sorts of vessels transacting all sorts of business: selling of prizes from privateering, planning of piracies, procuring all sorts of supplies, a stopping place for men-of-war of all nations, and so on. "Had it belonged to the United States, France, Germany, or England, it is quite certain no such prosperity would have been possible. In proof of which, on both occasions when the island was occupied by the British, there was a scarcity of all the German, French, Spanish and Italian commodities, and a general stagnation in business."¹²

¹⁰ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

¹¹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹² *Ibid.*

The Danish commercial treaties of this period¹³ and other favorable events and conditions brought many prominent visitors of all nationalities. Military men, especially English, on their way to join the armies of insurrection in South America, rubbed elbows on streets with the crews of merchant vessels attracted to the free port of Charlotte Amalie. Every week there were festivities in the governor's mansion¹⁴ for officers of foreign men-of-war. On such occasions tact and wisdom, subtleness and authority, were often needed to avoid trouble, especially when ships of many nations lay in the harbor at the same time. "The stylish, fashionable Danish officials and officers contributed to the resulting elegance at such social functions."¹⁵

The islands, particularly St. Thomas, were a paradise for fortune hunters of all kinds. Merchants and professional men made great fortunes. In 1837 there were eight Danish physicians in St. Thomas whose fees were seldom less than \$100 for each visit to a wealthy family or for going aboard a vessel. One of them, named Otto, was able to return to Copenhagen after a stay of seven years with about \$300,000.¹⁶

On the country estates of St. Thomas and St. Croix, and in a less degree on St. John, the planters were not behind

¹³ Treaties were made with the United States April 28, 1826; with Mexico July 18, 1827; with Brazil April 26, 1828; with Venezuela March 26, 1838. Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

¹⁴ The present governor's residence on King Street, Charlotte Amalie, was bought by the government, May 12, 1832, from Peter von Scholten. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

their fellow citizens in the towns in social elegance. Their magnificent estates were outfitted with every luxury. "Many ate only from silver dishes and drank from crystal glasses . . . Large and massive mahogany furniture, gilded mirrors, etc., and valuable clothing and precious jewels . . . and with respect to teams of horses, carriages, rare and costly wines, the planters were not behind the greatest lords in Denmark." ¹⁷ In Frederiksted there was less pomp than in Christiansted and St. Thomas, but that town made up for it with its cock fights attended by whites and Free Colored from all over the island.¹⁸

Privateers and pirates, most of whom came from South America, had well-informed agents in St. Thomas, Christiansted, and Frederiksted, who passed on valuable information regarding the location and sailings of Danish warships. Despite the pirate attacks, the frequent hurricanes, and the dread epidemics, a sense of security pervaded the islands.

¹⁷ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

XIII

Calamities and Blessings

A fire broke out in Charlotte Amalie the night of November 22, 1804, in which nearly twelve hundred buildings, including the Roman Catholic and Reformed Dutch churches and the Jewish synagogue, were destroyed. The damage amounted to eleven million dollars. The Lutheran church opened its doors to those who had lost their properties. Two years afterward two more extensive fires occurred. During the first of these the newly built Reformed Dutch church went up in flames.

A decade, then yellow fever. Hundreds of people, mostly mariners, died during the epidemic in 1817. Then there was a visitation by hurricane. It struck St. Thomas September 22, 1819, smashing seventy-five vessels in the harbor and many homes on the island. In 1825 came a triple catastrophe. A hurricane of great fury struck the Islands; an earthquake destroyed many properties, and fire again devastated Charlotte Amalie, once more razing some twelve hundred houses.

The following year still another fire broke out, this time destroying sixty buildings, including the Lutheran church.

About this conflagration Nissen writes: "In the night of July 13th we had a dreadful fire at the house No. 48 *Nørre Gade* belonging to the carpenter, John Wright. This lot was occupied by the cashier Haxthausen and the school-master Clark. A Negro woman living in the yard had lost her child. Lighting a candle to get out some clothes to dress the dead, which was lying at another place, she forgot the light on a cane chair near the bed, shut up the house and went away. When the light burned down and the bed caught fire, it burnt with such rapidity that in a very few moments the large house and the small ones were at once in flames."¹ The Lutherans were still indebted to the local government poor fund for a loan made thirty-three years before when the church was built.² Johannes Søbøtker issued a friendly appeal for contributions to all the churches and inhabitants of the three islands. The very generous response received showed not only the great prestige which the Danish government and the Lutheran Church enjoyed at that time, but also the unusually friendly relation that existed between them and the other churches on the islands. There were 631 contributions, totaling 17,935 rdl., among them a donation of 2,000 rdl. from the Reformed Dutch church on St. Thomas, which then had neither a church building nor a minister.³ The 23,863

¹ Nissen, *op. cit.*, 1826.

² In 1820 the indebtedness of the church to the Poor Fund was 13,345.67 rdl. The Lutheran Church supported the poor of the island through legacies, special offerings, and gifts. In 1809, for example, the church on St. Thomas paid monthly pensions to sixty-one needy Lutherans.

³ Twenty-nine carpenters gave, in all, 215 days' work; eight other men, contributed forty-two days' labor. Also donated were 140 barrels of lime and 50 barrels of water.

rdl. still needed was borrowed from the government's unusually large poor fund, and within a year the Lutheran church was rebuilt. On July 8, 1827, it was rededicated by Pastor Søren Risbjerg Ortved of Christiansted in the absence of the local pastor, Johannes Praetorius.

After the fire of 1806 the Reformed Dutch congregation worshiped in the Lutheran church for about five years until the end of the ministry of the Rev. F. Verboom⁴ in 1812. Although the membership of that church had already begun to decline, it had 850 members at that time. During the following fifteen years, when the church was without a minister, some of its members worshiped with the Lutheran Creole congregation, others at the Moravian church, and still others at the Episcopal church. Later the Reformed Dutch church increased its 1826 donation of 2,000 rdl. to 5,000 rdl. on the condition that it be permitted to use the Lutheran church again for church service Sunday afternoons.⁵ The Reformed Dutch Pastor Abra-

⁴ Verboom became a rich man due to a questionable speculation in real estate. In 1792 he had bought for himself the estate, Catherineburg, willed to the Reformed Dutch church by Catherine de Windt in 1759, for \$38,000—the estate on which was located the famous Blackbeard's Castle. Verboom parceled out and sold part of the estate for town lots, by which transaction he earned \$100,000. St. Thomas was then in a real-estate boom due to the immigration of many French people because of the French Revolution. Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

⁵ The conditions were stated in a letter to the wardens, "that in case the Reformed Dutch church should obtain a clergyman, or in default of such a one, the present English clergyman as long as we approve of him, or until we obtain one of our own church, he or they shall have the use of the said Danish Lutheran church, without paying any remuneration under whatever denomination for the same, as was formerly done. Except that in case the said church should require repairs, they are willing to agree to pay a just proportion of the amount of said repairs, provided that the said Reformed Dutch church shall be allowed to judge, and an opportunity thereto shall be granted them, whether such repairs are really unavoidably

ham Labagh, who arrived January 3, 1828, was succeeded in 1842, by Pastor Philip M. Brett, who also used the Lutheran church for services and (from June, 1843) for Sunday school, until his new church building was ready. The cornerstone of the Reformed Dutch church was laid September 18, 1844, and it was dedicated February 8, 1846.

The Reformed Dutch church in Christiansted, St. Croix, stood empty a long time after the second English occupation, mainly because of the departure of most of its members. By that time the congregation had decreased to such an extent that it could not continue to defray its expenses. As a consequence the church building was purchased by the Lutherans, renovated and improved with new polished mahogany doors, windows, chancel, altar and pulpit; and occupied July 24, 1834.⁶

For some time the Anglicans on St. Thomas also used the Lutheran church for services. The origin of the Anglican congregation dates back to the English occupations during which time many English merchants, planters, and others came to the islands, particularly to St. Thomas. The establishment of the Anglican church on St. Thomas, however, was not effected until the Rev. Nicholas McLaughlin, formerly chaplain of the British forces at St. Eustatius and Tortola, took up residence in 1820. "As the Reformed

required and whether the sum thereto allotted should not be exorbitant or too highly rated." The letter was signed by: W. Wood; A. F. Z. Wierden; and Huyle. The letter is in the archives of the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas. From 1830 the Reformed Dutch church was freed from sharing in the expenses of the church's maintenance.

⁶ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 247; and records, the Lutheran parsonage, Christiansted.

Dutch church was then without a pastor, many of its members united with the Episcopalians and induced Mr. McLaughlin to hold services in the Lutheran church.”⁷ After McLaughlin’s death in 1838 the congregation engaged the services of the Anglican clergyman residing at Tortola, and he also preached to the Episcopalians in the Lutheran church. Meanwhile, by the royal resolution of September 30, 1844, the Episcopalians on St. Thomas were permitted “to collect means for the erection of a church.” In 1847 the Rev. J. J. Brandige arrived from the United States for a visit and entered into an arrangement with the Episcopalians on St. Thomas “to hold public worship as their minister, and, if possible, regularly organize the congregation.”⁸

Thus the Lutheran church was again used by the Anglicans, this time until November 21, 1848, when they moved into their new church built under the indefatigable leadership of Pastor Brandige. He continued his ministerial labors until June, 1850, when, on account of failing health, he returned to the United States. He was succeeded by the Rev. G. D. Gittens of Barbados who, also because of failing health, was obliged to resign the following year. The Rev. Edmond Richard became the minister in the beginning of 1852. He died ten months later.

Due to French, Spanish, and Italian immigrations during this period, the Roman Catholic church in St. Thomas grew faster in membership than any other church on the

⁷ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁸ *Ibid.*

island. As their church building became too small, the Roman Catholics requested and received permission to pull it down and build another.⁹ The present church was built in 1844.

In 1685 Denmark had proclaimed religious tolerance to the Jews on St. Thomas, allowing them, as well as the Roman Catholics, to hold private religious services. There is no information of such private religious services being held by the Jews until after 1781, when, after the sacking of St. Eustatius, the greater part of the Jews there came to St. Thomas. In 1796 the Jews "formed a congregation and built a synagogue under the appellation of 'Blessing of Peace.' In 1801, according to a statement furnished to Mr. Nissen, the Jews numbered only nine families."¹⁰ In 1804 fire swept their synagogue. It was replaced by a smaller building in 1812. By the historic royal ordinance of March 29, 1814, Denmark became the first nation in the world to pass laws for the protection and liberation of the Jews; and by the royal decree of August 4, 1835, the Jews were given freedom to intermarry with Gentiles. In 1812, when the Jewish cemetery on St. Thomas became too small for the growing Jewish community, a new one was opened. In 1822 there were sixty Jewish families on that island. The old synagogue was torn down, and a new one was built in 1823, but it fell prey to flames in 1831. Another synagogue was built in 1833.¹¹

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹¹ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

CALAMITIES AND BLESSINGS

The following statistics¹² throw light upon the membership of the various churches in St. Thomas during this period.

Baptisms on St. Thomas

(Figures for the Hebrews indicate births)

	<i>Luth.</i>	<i>R. C.</i>	<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Epis.</i>	<i>Mor.</i>	<i>Heb.</i>
1828	70	206	?	33	25	9
1829	72	264	12	41	18	21
1830	78	301	15	33	65	12
1831	73	326	17	38	50	76
1832	55	243	23	33	78	4
1833	67	309	27	36	81	3
1834	81	238	16	37	28	4
1835	54	318	15	30	74	2
1836	81	214	34	30	41	?
1837	136	256	31	27	29	?

That the Lutheran Creole congregation on St. John united with the Danish congregation sometime prior to 1852 is evident from a letter written in 1852 by the government in Denmark to the royal council in St. Thomas, in which the congregation is referred to as "the mission congregation in St. John to which the Danes belong."¹³

The last known heathen in the Danish West Indies was baptized in the Lutheran church in Christiansted (St. Thomas?) on November 15, 1840. From the standpoint of marriage, however, most of the Negroes were still heathen, which was not so much their fault as that of slavery. According to the census of 1835 there were 662 married couples in St. Thomas, but Nissen says, "I think this number is too large. Of the inhabitants here about

¹² Nissen, "Reminiscences," 1837.

¹³ Archives, the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

100 couples of whites, 60 couples of Jews, and 100 couples of free colored persons were married, making a total of 260 married couples."

In 1837 there were on St. Thomas 1,832 white persons divided as follows: 250 Danes and Germans; 250 English, Scotch, Irish, and Americans; 350 French and Italians; 450 Creoles (native-born whites); 400 Jews; and 132 of other nations.¹⁴

Despite Denmark's policy not to introduce measures which, though appropriate for the homeland, were not applicable to the Islands, it happened occasionally that the local government received an impractical instruction. If such was not entirely impossible of execution the government tried its best to carry it out. Thus in 1833 a royal instruction circulated among the churches in Denmark was received, ordering "the instruction of children's singing in the churches on Sundays." The royal council in St. Thomas turned the order over to the Lutheran wardens. They handed it on to Pastor Andreas Brøndsted, who, because there were not enough Danish children to make a start worth while, shelved it in the parsonage. Four years later, however, Royal Chancellor Hoskjaer, one of the wardens of the Danish Lutheran Church, offered to recruit a number of colored and Negro boys who "could sing harmoniously at church services." His offer was accepted on September 15, 1837, which became the date of the organization of the first choir in St. Thomas—a Lutheran

¹⁴ Nissen, "Reminiscences," 1837.

colored boys' choir!¹⁵

Vacancies were so frequent during this period that for the twenty-six years after 1817 there were only twelve years in which there was more than one Lutheran minister in the Danish West Indies at any one time. During the other fourteen years one minister had the care of the four Danish and the four Creole mission congregations on the three islands. In view of this condition it is remarkable that the Lutheran Church grew so steadily. Lose remarks bitterly about the situation in St. Thomas at that time: "Strange that a congregation thus mistreated could be kept alive . . . It was kept alive, but it could have been much larger . . . But during its eleventh hour a pastor came to build it up." He was Julius Ferdinand Tolderlund, who arrived in 1843. Although he suffered from asthma, which finally caused him to leave in 1850, he was very active and most successful in upbuilding the neglected mission congregation. He was the mission's renewer, "a minister unusually gifted as a shepherd for the individuals, as an organizer and a leader, and as a defender against the encroachment of governor Scholten on the prerogatives of the Lutheran Church . . . He did away with old useless customs and red tape . . . His eyes were watchful. His hand was felt everywhere."¹⁶ Later, when the Creole dialect was discontinued, he introduced hymns to be sung in English, and urged the freedom of the Lutheran "church Negroes." "He left a flourishing and well-organized con-

¹⁵ Archives, the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

¹⁶ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 34.

gregation with a firm discipline, a zealous staff of elders, readers and helpers, and a Sunday school with an enrollment of from 300 to 400 children.”¹⁷ The Sunday school he had organized himself, probably on March 7, 1846.¹⁸ The Lutheran Sunday school in Christiansted was organized on July 27, 1851, that in Frederiksted, September 7, 1851.

It would be difficult to find a more cosmopolitan community than the Danish West Indies during the first half of the nineteenth century. This was particularly the case with St. Thomas. Its geographical location and excellent harbor made it a principal center of the world's commerce in the Western Hemisphere at that time. Many Europeans settled there, as well as on St. Croix and on St. John, bringing with them their own languages: Danish, Dutch, Flemish, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, Norwegian, etc. The result was that the Danish West Indies in general and St. Thomas in particular became a veritable babel of tongues.

Gradually English replaced Creole as the dominant language on the island and eventually eliminated this confusion of tongues. This change began much earlier on St. Croix than on St. Thomas, and still later on St. John. On St. Croix the Creole dialect had never been universally

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ The exact date of the organization of the Lutheran Sunday school in St. Thomas is not certain. In a letter written on Sunday, February 22, 1846, to the wardens of the Lutheran Church, Pastor Tolderlund informed them that he intended to use the church building for Sunday school “for the first time” that afternoon. If the Sunday school was not organized on that day, it probably was on Sunday, February 29. However, for several decades it was assumed that it was organized on the first Sunday of March, 1846.

spoken because of the large number of Englishmen dwelling there. The first mention of the use of English on St. Croix was by the Danish government in an English word-book published in 1761 for the use of the English-speaking members of the militia.¹⁹ In 1772 the Lutheran pastor, Egeroed, entered his financial statements in the church record at Christiansted in English.²⁰ In 1789 Missionary Hans Tjellesen of the same parish stated that the English colonists would under no circumstances hear any other language than their own, and that the Dutch Creole was being crowded out.²¹ It was therefore necessary for the Lutheran and Moravian missionaries to make use of the English language which the Negroes understood but could not speak. The Negro Dutch Creole was thus supplemented by English.

Mainly due to the presence of thousands of soldiers and to the immigration of hundreds of English merchants and other English people during the British occupations, the English language became increasingly spoken both in the towns and in the country districts. After the occupations "the English planters did everything possible to anglicize the Danish islands . . . Through their overseers, or drivers, who were generally from their own English islands, they compelled the Negroes to speak English."²² Creole thus began to lose its prestige. The Negroes were ashamed to speak and read it, and used it only when they could not use

¹⁹ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

²⁰ Document in the National Archives, Washington, D. C.

²¹ Koch, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

²² Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 64.

another language. Too them Creole then "was the Negro language and nothing else . . . and the Negroes would rather speak as the whites. In Creole there were only memories of disgraceful chains of bondage forced upon them in a foreign land." ²³

The Moravians found it easier than the Lutherans to adopt English because some of their missionaries came from England. They were the first to substitute it for Creole. As early as 1819 the superintendent of the Moravian mission had proposed the adoption of English as the ecclesiastical language, but Governor General Bentzon had advised against it with the remark that it would only "make the Negroes worse." ²⁴ In 1839, however, the Moravians adopted English instead of Creole, although some of the older Brethren continued to preach in that dialect, partly for personal reasons and partly for the sake of the many Negroes who did not understand English. ²⁵ There were more such persons in the Moravian than in the Lutheran churches, since the latter were located in the towns where Creole was less spoken than in the country, and where English first obtained a strong foothold. But the Lutheran Church was slower to change.

Although in 1837 Denmark realized that Creole was no longer suitable, permission was not obtained until 1841 to replace it with English. During the last part of the Creole period the situation was such in the Lutheran Church, "that

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²⁴ Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, p. 150.

²⁵ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 121.

many catechumens had to learn Creole as a foreign language.”²⁶ One account has it that at Lutheran confirmation services during the end of the Creole period people would sometimes gather at the entrance to the church “to be amused at hearing the queer sounds of the archaic Creole dialect spoken” by confirmands during their public examination preceding the confirmation rite. For the first few years following the adoption of English there were no Lutheran hymnals available in the English language. The congregation therefore sang in Creole, while the minister chanted and preached—the best he could—in English!

The change from Creole to English was most painful in the Lutheran Church because English had to be used *instead of*, and could not be used *in addition to*, another language. In the Episcopal Church the change created no problem at all, for it had used English from the beginning. In the Roman Catholic Church the problem was slight since, while the church added English for the Negroes, it continued to use French and Spanish for its other members. Besides, French- and Spanish-speaking priests could easily be secured from French and Spanish islands near by. Furthermore, Roman Catholic Frenchmen and Spaniards continued to immigrate to the islands, especially to St. Thomas, during this period.²⁷ The Reformed Dutch Church abandoned Dutch in 1827 and sent to America for an English-speaking minister, instead of to Amsterdam, Holland, as

²⁶ Lose, “*Kort Udsigt*,” p. 35.

²⁷ Larsen points out that many wealthy Spaniards who had fled from South America during the colonies’ resistance against Spain, 1805-25, came to St. Thomas about 1819.

formerly. At the same time, it transferred its connection with the Amsterdam consistory to the Dutch Reformed Church in the United States.

The change from Creole to English was deplored later by several German, Danish, and Dutch linguists. They were right for their time, but they could not foresee in the change the providence of God in preparing the Danish West Indies for their future transfer to the English-speaking United States of America.



Efter en Kullegning af Høyer

Tilh. Grevinde Adelgunde Trampe

PETER VON SCHOLTEN—Against a background of social upheaval and shifting racial patterns, the emancipator



Ewing Galloway

MARKET PLACE—Buying a "sour sap"—a delicious tropical fruit that grows on the hills of St. Thomas

XIV

Peter von Scholten

The dramatic life of the amazing Peter Carl Frederik von Scholten is seen against a background of social upheaval and shifting racial patterns in the population of the Danish West Indies. Coming to the colony from Denmark at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when he was a lad of twenty, he spent over two score years in a colorful political career, the latter half of the time as Governor General, but all the years dedicated to improving the lot of the Negro and colored population. He was the emancipator, the Abraham Lincoln, of the Virgin Islands.

In the early eighteenth century there were only two classes, only two races. There were slaveholders who were white, and slaves who were Negroes. There was no intermediate racial group with intermediate standards of culture, wealth, and privilege. By the early part of the nineteenth century this situation had radically changed. As early as 1773 when the total population on St. Thomas was 4,371,¹

¹ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

there were 336 Free Colored² in the town of Charlotte Amalie and perhaps five hundred in all the island, over 10 per cent of all persons. In 1835 the census reported a population of 43,178 for the Danish West Indies.³ At that same time there were 13,000 Free Colored in all the islands, the Negro population being 27,000. In other words, the Free Colored comprised about a third of the total population of the colony.⁴

These Free Colored persons ranged from full-blooded Negroes (very few) to persons with very little Negro ancestry. A very interesting terminology developed in order to identify people racially. In the Danish West Indies the term *Negro* was reserved for persons of full African ancestry and was never applied to persons of mixed race who were known as colored or mulattoes.⁵ The term *colored* was seldom used to include Negroes except in the combined form of *Free Colored*.

Quite naturally the Free Colored became the middle class in the colony's economy. Some of them attained con-

² Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 139. Larsen also gives the number of Free Colored in Charlotte Amalie as 391 in 1772, classified as follows: 29 sailors, 13 fishermen, 12 carpenters, 11 masons, 11 tailors, 10 boatmen, 5 shoemakers, 2 planters, 1 cigarmaker, 1 goldsmith, and 1 musician. There were 31 widows and married women with 65 children, and 83 unmarried women with 106 children. This information, similarly taken from Peter Tamarin's census, is also given by Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 7.

³ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

⁴ Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, pp. 123-153, gives a full discussion of the Free Colored.

⁵ A *mulatto* is a person of equal white and African descent but the term is often used loosely to refer to any person of both white and African ancestry. A *mestee* is a cross between a white and a quadroon. A *sambo* is a cross between an American Indian and a Negro. *Quadroon*, *quintoon*, and *octeroon* denote colored persons of 1/4, 1/5 and 1/8 Negro descent. These terms occur in some of the old Lutheran baptismal records.

siderable wealth. As early as 1776 they owned ninety slaves.⁶ They engaged in commerce and found employment in the government, and some of them achieved real prominence in the community as a whole.

The height to which the Free Colored attained socially, as well as the government's attempt at keeping their status within limits, is illustrated by the ordinance of February 13, 1786 (issued by von Schimmelmann), which forbade the freed slaves "to deliver the dead to the graves with many of the traditional and useless and harmful expenses; such as the firing of minute shots and distribution of rings (as presents) to the funeral procession." "Another ordinance, of May 26, 1786, forbade them to carry gold, silver, and precious stones, laces and silk stockings."⁷

The benevolent policy of Denmark in the matter of the slaves' education had, as might have been expected, whetted their desire for better conditions and ultimate emancipation. The remarkable growth of the Free Colored class had about exhausted the available employment for middle-class persons and there was a growing unrest in the class under the restrictions imposed by the relatively small group of whites, both through the government and through economic and social pressure. By the beginning of the nineteenth century there was considerable social ferment both among the Negro slaves and the Free Colored, and a man of unusual vision and ability was sorely needed in the Danish administration of its West Indies Islands.

⁶ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 7.

⁷ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mss.*, p. 120.

The man who came to meet that need in a brilliant way was Peter von Scholten. Born in Copenhagen May 17, 1784, his father was Captain Cassimir Wilhelm von Scholten of the Danish army. His mother was the former Catherine Elizabeth de Moltrup. Peter married Anna Thortsen, daughter of a captain in the Danish merchant marine. The second of four brothers, Peter was given a military education. During these years, and especially during his later schooling, the boy saw little of his father because of the latter's army service. The elder von Scholten was sent to the West Indies, was given the rank of lieutenant colonel, and in 1799 was made commandant of the garrison on St. Thomas. It was he who surrendered the island to overwhelmingly superior British forces in 1801. In 1803 Colonel von Scholten visited Peter at military school and counseled with him as to his future. In 1804 Peter graduated, received an army appointment, and August 13 of that year arrived in St. Thomas as a first lieutenant of the Danish army.⁸

In St. Thomas young Peter von Scholten advanced from position to position, until he became governor general in 1827. There was always a luster over his name during the nearly half century he served in the Danish West Indies. No man in the islands ever made so many friends and enemies as he. "Beloved, hated, feared like no one else, he ruled with a strong hand, until one night his life was threatened; and marked as a traitor, despised, bewailed, and missed, he had to leave his palace, the beautiful

⁸ Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, pp. 11-12.

'Bulow's Minde' in St. Croix, and as a fugitive disguised as an old woman, steal aboard an American ship." ⁹

Von Scholten's appointment as governor general came in 1827. Twenty-three years of life in the Danish West Indies, years lived among gifted companions in the bracing atmosphere of this crossroads of the seas, made him ready for the great problems that faced him. It was his conviction that the best policy was to co-operate with progress, not oppose it. He dedicated his life to this threefold purpose: 1) to improve the social and economic status of both the slaves and the free in the islands, 2) to educate the slaves for freedom, and 3) to emancipate the slaves.

His occupancy of the governorship brought interesting results in official circles. He installed many Free Colored in government service as clerks, copyists, etc. For the first time cultured colored people were invited to the governor's table for dinner as well as to occasional society balls. These innovations provoked the planters to protest but von Scholten could ignore such protests. He knew that the government in Denmark, like many of his own Danish officials, supported him.¹⁰

No fewer than thirty-two ordinances, decrees, and resolutions pertaining to the Free Colored were issued between 1747 and 1837. Two of them merit brief consideration. According to the provisions of the royal ordinance of April 10, 1830, certain new privileges were granted to the Free Colored who, for the purpose were divided into classes.

⁹ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 161.

¹⁰ Larsen, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-33.

The first class, with three divisions, was to be composed of Negroes and colored of culture and excellent behavior. Those of the first division were entitled to receive *Burgher-briefs*, licenses to engage in trade. Persons in the other two divisions were to receive, each, a certificate signed by the governor general. All members of the entire class were eligible to receive and wear the "free-token," a silver cockade, as a sign of distinction and membership.¹¹ A variant source states that the cockade was red and white.¹² The privilege of belonging to this class was to be forfeited by bad conduct. Opportunity to enter the class would be extended to other Free Colored who by good behavior and cultural attainment would come to merit it.¹³ The members of the second class were to receive no silver cockades but, instead, certificates of identity signed by the governor general's secretary.

It was emphasized in this ordinance that when the Free Colored of both sexes approached the whites in color, and when by culture and good behavior they showed themselves worthy of equality with the whites, the difference which the color usually made ought to cease. When von Scholten returned from Denmark, by which time this ordinance had already become law, he announced that His Majesty was convinced that the time was now ripe for the wrong conceptions, prejudices, and hindrances, which hitherto had set a sharp separating barrier between

¹¹ Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, p. 144.

¹² Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 7.

¹³ Lawaetz, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

the whites and the Free Colored, to be removed.¹⁴

Still another development with respect to improvement in the status of the Free Colored was occasioned by another visit by von Scholten to Denmark, resulting in the royal rescript of February 7, 1832, requesting von Scholten to submit additional proposals toward further extension of the status of the Free Colored. He submitted his ideas on the matter to the West Indian government for its consideration with the remark that "many of the free colored now stand on the same cultural level as the middle class of Europe, wherefore the old colonial decisions regarding difference based upon color now ought legally to be abolished for all those who were free by April 10, 1830."¹⁵

The last step in these developments was the royal ordinance of April 18, 1834, which canceled all previous decisions and proclaimed full equality from that date between whites and such Free Colored as were in legal possession of their freedom. For those who were to become free after the date of the ordinance there was to be an apprenticeship, or waiting period, of three years.¹⁶

The number of Free Colored was largest in St. Thomas, where many of them, having advanced from positions as managers of white men's businesses, learned by thrift and activity to utilize the commercial opportunities. Their deep gratitude for their advancement was shown by sending the king a laudatory communication signed by them with the

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

proposal that a medal commemorating the last ordinance be issued. The king acknowledged the writing and let five copies of his letter be stamped in gold, one of which he gave to Peter von Scholten.¹⁷

¹⁷ Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, p. 147.

XV

Education for Freedom

In most countries in Europe state education for all classes did not begin until early in the nineteenth century, and in the United States the free public school system was not fully established until the middle of that century. Prior to the nineteenth century education in Europe and America had been conducted by the Church for a limited number of privileged children. Compulsory primary education was introduced for all classes in Denmark as early as 1739, although for some time this was not strictly enforced. Compulsory education for white children in the Danish West Indies was decreed September 20, 1788, although schools for white children in the islands were established long before that.

Education of the Negroes, as has been explained, began in a modest way in 1787 when four public schools, independent of the Moravian and Lutheran mission schools, were opened on the islands, three on St. Croix and one on St. Thomas. These schools, called variously Danish schools, Lutheran schools, and government schools, were under joint government and (Lutheran) church direction. Until

free, compulsory, universal education was established under Governor Peter von Scholten, five additional schools were established from time to time.

By the royal rescript of September 10, 1819, some of the fines collected in the police courts in the islands were to be applied to education. The school budget remained indefinite until 1832, when the royal decree of July 31 established an annual budget of 6,700 rdl. for education in the islands, a very substantial amount for that time.¹

The year 1829 saw the establishment of the first department of physical education on the Danish islands when, due to Governor General Peter von Scholten's initiative, gymnastics was introduced in all the schools and garrisons of the islands. Several gymnasts were sent out from Denmark to train the pupils in the schools and the soldiers at the garrisons.²

Fired by his great ambition to emancipate the slaves, Governor von Scholten conceived the unique idea that, both for their own good and for the good of the islands, they should be prepared for freedom by education. Because he realized that his program would have no chance of being accepted in Copenhagen if it involved Lutheran supervision with the heavy expense of bringing many additional teachers from Denmark, von Scholten revived the old idea of Moravian direction. Convinced that the former objections raised by the Moravians to their undertaking the direction of public education of slaves, no longer

¹ Archives in Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

² Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

were valid, he set out to woo the Moravians.³

In December, 1830, von Scholten decreed that Negro converts from heathenism join only the Moravian or the Lutheran Church. By the resolution of January 27, 1841, he furnished free travel between the islands for Moravian missionaries. And to please the Brethren, who had taught their Negro members to regard Good Friday as the greatest holy day of the year, he declared it a legal holiday.⁴

The English act, of August 28, 1833, emancipating the slaves, incited von Scholten to hasten the execution of his plans, wherefore he went to Denmark in 1834. Not much came of this visit except that it paved the way for what resulted from another visit in 1838—the historic ordinance of June 4, 1839, providing for country schools in the Danish West Indies. According to it, compulsory public education was to be instituted in the Danish West Indies. The schools were to be under Moravian direction, permission for which von Scholten had secured from the Moravian Church authorities in Herrnhut, Germany, during a visit there in 1838.⁵

The arrangement for Moravian instead of Lutheran direction of the schools was not accomplished without opposition. The Lutheran ministers protested both to von Scholten and to the king, but in vain.⁶ Today it seems clear, however, that the arrangement was not based upon

³ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 162.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁶ Lose, "*Kort Udsigt*," p. 30.

any favoritism on von Scholten's part but rather upon expediency. Moravian direction eliminated the expensive and laborious procedure of bringing numerous additional teachers from Denmark and initiating them into the new and strange conditions prevailing in the islands. There were at that time forty Moravian missionaries on the islands, who already knew the people and the conditions well and who required only a small remuneration in addition to their salaries.

However, there was to be Lutheran supervision. The Moravian direction was to be supervised by a school commission on each island composed of the Lutheran minister as the chairman, the Danish (Lutheran) chief of police, a member of the burgher council, and another member appointed by the governor general. The provision for religious instruction, likewise, was based upon an inter-confessional catechism prepared by the Danish Lutheran minister, Jens Klint Bagger. This catechism, unique in church history, was submitted to and approved by the various clergymen of the churches in the Danish West Indies and their bishops, and was published in English in 1840.⁷ For many years it continued to be used in the schools on the islands.

This famed ordinance (of June 4, 1839), providing free and compulsory education in the Danish West Indies for slaves as well as for the free, a unique document in that it deals with the subject of government education for slaves, underwent a few modifications because of changing

⁷ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

conditions during the first few years.

The act,⁸ as amended September 6, 1863, provided: All children living in the country who had attained the age of six were to attend school each weekday except Saturday until they were ten years old, when they were to be promoted into the Saturday schools for older children in which they were to remain until the age of thirteen. On St. Thomas, however, the already prevailing system of having younger children attend school three times a week—the older, twice a week, was to be continued. The daily school periods of all schools were to be four hours, from eight to twelve noon, except that in the schools for older children on St. Thomas the period was two hours on each school day. Vacation was granted fourteen days in September after the public examinations, from December 24 to January 7, and from the Wednesday before to the Tuesday after Easter.

The managers of the various estates had to submit the names and ages of all children between six and thirteen, together with such other information as dates of birth, names of mothers, and vaccination reports, to the chief of police, who was to inform the school director. If any manager of an estate delayed such information he was to be fined one dollar for each day. Parents and guardians were to be fined eight cents for each day a child was absent from school, sickness being the only accepted excuse. The manager of an estate was responsible, with the assistance of a dependable messenger, to gather the children together

⁸ Archives, St. Thomas police court.

and bring them to school. A planter who was the cause of the continuous absence of a child from school was to be fined; first time from 4 to 8 rdl., second time from 8 to 16 rdl., third time from 16 rdl. to 32 rdl., and so on.

The teachers were required daily to record absences, reasons for same, and other infringements of the school regulations in the school journals which were to be inspected regularly by the school director. The instruction was to consist of catechism, singing of hymns, reading, and arithmetic, with special emphasis placed on reading. Instruction in writing and sewing was to be given only to those children who could pay for it. In the religious instruction based upon Bagger's catechism, care was to be taken that "nothing is taught which might detract the children's minds from the church in which they have been baptized." The school commission, and especially its chairman, the Lutheran minister, had to be diligent in supervising the schools and especially to see that this paragraph concerning religious instruction was carried out.

Once a year, in September, the children, especially those who were to be promoted or dismissed, were to be publicly examined. Older children (not more than one from each estate) could be retained to assist the teachers for the smaller children as monitors, according to the Lancasterian plan. Children were to be sent to school dressed in clean clothes. Teachers were warned to use corporal punishment with discretion; on children under ten years of age a thin rod, on older children a thin rattan (*rotting*); but misuse of this prerogative by the teacher could be corrected upon

complaint made. It was recommended to reward children who had distinguished themselves with diligence and moral behavior.

The Moravian school director was to guide the teachers regarding methods of teaching and to hold regular meetings with them. He was expected upon examination of the journal to report neglect, absenteeism, etc., to the school commission, and he was especially to see that "the decisions relative to religious instruction were carried out implicitly." The school commission had the right to suspend or dismiss a teacher found lacking in qualifications; and in the case of disagreement with the school director in such a matter, the case was to be decided by the governor.

The Lutheran minister, as the chairman of the school commission, was to receive and answer all communications and was to record all decisions of the commission in a protocol and he was responsible for their execution. He was also expected to visit the schools frequently in order to acquaint himself with the instruction and the progress of the children. Any minister of an accepted church, however, was entitled to attend the meetings held by the school commission and to have a vote in the transactions.

The plan for this free and compulsory education was first set in motion on St. Croix, where between 1839 and 1841 eight schools were erected. The Moravian minister, J. Gardin, who had had educational experience in the British West Indies, became the first school director on St. Croix. He arrived in 1840 with assistants to supervise the

interior furnishing of the schools.⁹ The eight schools on St. Croix were opened as follows: Big Princess, January 12, 1841; Diamond and Two Williams, February 6, 1841; Mount Victory, March 25, 1841; Peter's Rest, April 1, 1841; Kingshill, September 11, 1841; Green Key (East Hill), November 8, 1841; La Valle, January 27, 1842.

"The education at this time had a definitely religious background. Spelling, for instance, aimed principally at teaching only such words as were found in the Bible, and to parallel this the subject matter of reading consisted of biblical sentences. Lessons were also given on incidents described in the Bible, and the morals implied by them were explained to the children in such a way as to influence their conduct in daily life. The motive behind the whole system of teaching was first and foremost to improve moral character and religious life."¹⁰ Due to the lack of funds and shortage of teachers, the schools on St. Thomas and St. John were not opened until a few years later.

These new country schools did not affect the schools already established in the towns, which continued as before with new ones being opened and improvements made in various ways. Some of the town schools were conducted as private schools, others as parochial schools; and the rest were the so-called Danish schools for white and colored children, conducted by the government in conjunction with

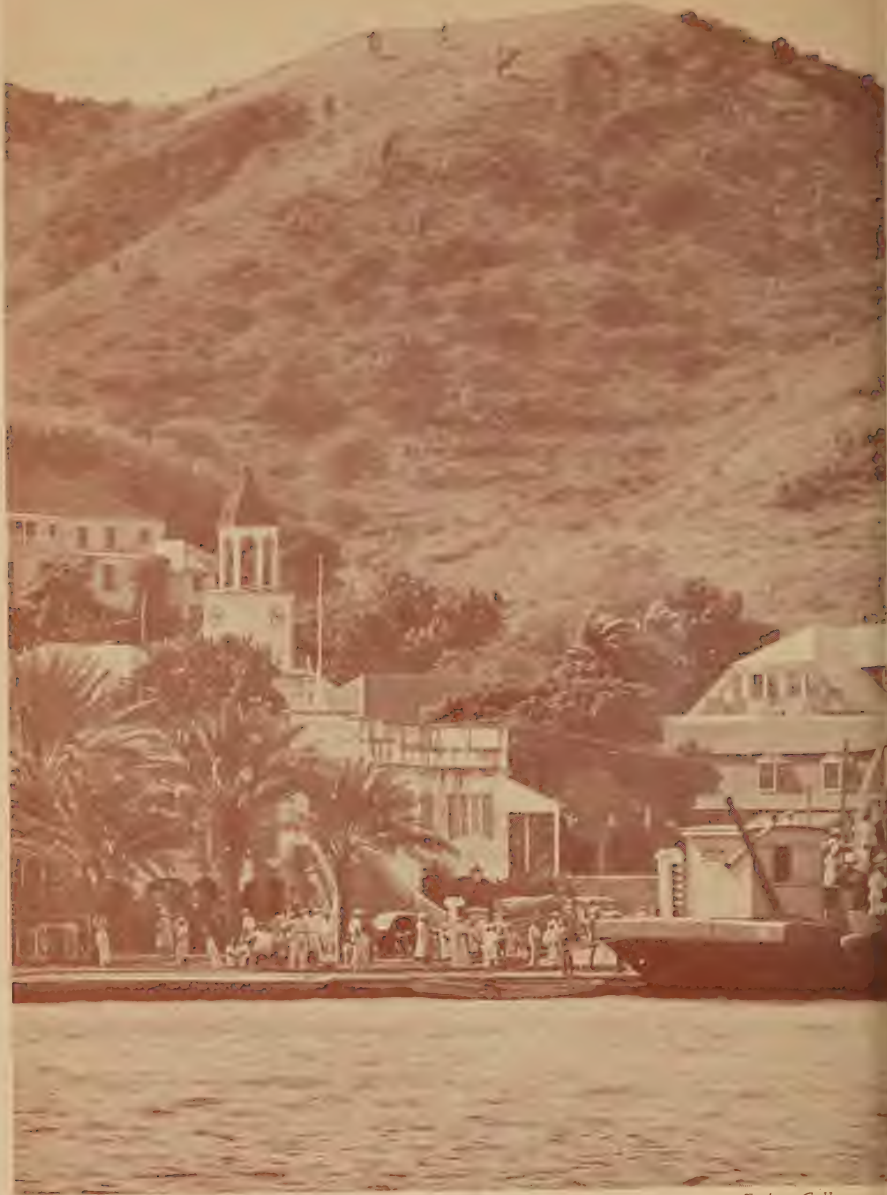
⁹ R. C. Forster, *The Story of Education in St. Croix, 1841-1941*, a brief narrative in the published program of the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of free and compulsory education in St. Croix, held at Big Princess School May 16, 1941; based on records in the Moravian parsonage, Friedensfeld, St. Croix.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*



Jarvis

SCHOOL CHILDREN—Their forefathers were slaves;
they are learning to be useful citizens



Ewing Galloway

CHRISTIANSTED—Getting ready to celebrate the anniversary of
the transfer of the Islands to the United States

the Lutheran Church.

The Moravians continued to supervise the country education of St. Croix until 1872 under the same ordinance, though it underwent a slight revision in 1862. An entirely new school ordinance for St. Croix was adopted November 9, 1875, and still another for St. Thomas and St. John February 11, 1876.

XVI

The End of Slavery

Spurred on by the English act of emancipation of August 28, 1833,¹ Peter von Scholten went to Denmark in the beginning of 1834 to press for a new slave law for which he carried an outline along. During his stay in Denmark his plan was submitted to a committee consisting of Attorney General Orsted, three members of the cabinet, and von Scholten himself. The committee, appointed October 16, soon reached an agreement which resulted in the royal ordinance of November 22, 1834.²

This ordinance established, among other things—that each slave had the right to purchase his freedom, even against his owner's wish, by paying his designated full value. To avoid doubt and misuse in this respect, von Scholten later fixed the prices of slaves. The scale began at 400 rdl. for those between 20 and 24 years of age, decreasing according to age to 50 rdl. at 60 years. The ordinance

¹ The slaves in the English colonies were freed after an apprenticeship, or period of waiting, of three years. On Antigua, however, the period was reduced to one year and passed without disorder, because, in Lawaetz's opinion, of the influence exerted on the slaves by the churches, especially the Moravian.

² Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, p. 150.

also provided that if a slave was mistreated, the governor general could arrange to have him transferred to another owner; and that a slave had the right to possession of anything he got by working in his own time, by gifts, by purchase, or by inheritance. Finally, there was a paragraph with a promise of additional reform on the basis of von Scholten's proposals with respect to labor in the case of slaves on the plantations, and, last but not least, the erection of schools for educating the slaves. Practically all of these promised reforms were carried out before the emancipation in 1848.

Because of the growing sentiment against slavery, both in Denmark and in the islands, antislavery agitation was renewed in Denmark, where the newspaper *Dansk Folkeblad* took up the fight for abolition in its issues of November 19 and December 24, 1841. In the Danish West Indies the sentiment against slavery at that time developed even among some of the slave owners. This is illustrated by baptismal records, according to which some slave owners requested that certain slave children be baptized as free. The following two examples are copied from the baptismal record of the Lutheran church on St. Thomas:

I do hereby request the baptism of a child as free, accompanying this, to be admitted as a member of the Mission Church. To be named Johanne Elizabeth, born 10th October 1846. Father's name: Jacob Bermers; Mother's name: Charlotte Massais.

St. Thomas, 20' Febr., 1847

Witness: Jacob Levy

Catherine Massais, Owner

This girl, Sally, belonging to Ann Eliza Williams, has permis-

sion to baptize her infant child as free by the name of Ann Eliza England, born 12' Dec., 1845.

St. Thomas, 4' July 1846

Ann Eliza Williams, Owner.

The first adult slaves to be set free publicly in the Danish West Indies were "church Negroes," belonging to both the Moravian and the Lutheran churches. They were freed four and three years respectively before the official emancipation.

In 1825 the Moravians on the three islands owned no fewer than 171 slaves distributed among several mission stations.³ Vigorous protests against the Moravians for owning slaves had often been made in England.⁴ The Unity Elder Conference held at Betheldorps early objected to slavery in connection with the missions in the West Indies; and in the course of time ordered that no more slaves be purchased, and that those held in bondage not be sold. In 1843 the conference decided that all Moravian slaves should be set free. The government on St. Croix, then presided over by General Peter von Scholten, surprisingly enough raised objections to the measure, but it was carried out and completed by the close of 1844.⁵

The slaves belonging to the Lutheran church in St. Thomas were called both church Negroes, and royal Negroes. The church's inventory of 1816, which lists these Negroes with the church's property ends as follows:

³ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 155.

⁴ For example, Samuel Laining in his correspondence with the secretary of the Edinburgh Assn. in Aid of the United Brethren's Mission (Edinburgh, V. Forrester), 1844, p. 24.

⁵ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

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Church Negroes:

Rosetta, 70 years, no value	
Anna Juliana, 35 years.....	350 rdl.
Anna Maria, 30 years.....	400 rdl.
Jacoba, 26 years.....	350 rdl.
Anna Martha, 11 years.....	300 rdl.
Henrietta Christian, 10 years.....	300 rdl.
Catherine Moody (a new Negress), 30 years, purchased with her 4 children (baptized)	
Simon Petrus, 6 years.....	150 rdl.
John Paulus, 4 years.....	150 rdl.
Maria Theresa, 3 years.....	150 rdl.
Anna Susanna, baby.....	50 rdl.

Until 1840 the Lutheran church Negroes were not put to work in the church but worked exclusively for the Danish Lutheran ministers in the Lutheran parsonage where they lived. That they were very well cared for, especially when they became old and feeble, is evident from the following facts. The garrison surgeon was engaged by the government to treat them for 12½ rdl. per person a year. In 1823, July 17, the royal council recommended that Rosetta, then seventy-seven, receive a pension from the poor fund. In 1837 Pastor Brønsted proposed to the royal council that Anna Juliana, age sixty-one, because of her age and physical condition be given her freedom with a pension about which the royal council requested "the declaration of the gentlemen the wardens." They replied that in their opinion the old lady should not be given her freedom, as such a thing had never been done before and would not benefit her, but she should be excused from doing any work and be properly cared for by

the minister as a retired servant. Likewise, on March 26, 1840, the royal council spent considerable time in settling a dispute between Catherine Moody and a free woman, Eliana Petersen, and decided finally in the former's favor. Three years later the garrison surgeon recommended that the same Catherine Moody "do no more work because of her fever, pain and rheumatism." ⁶

The desire for emancipation of the slaves in the Danish West Indies at that time went hand in hand with the opinion that slave owners should be compensated for their financial loss sustained through emancipation. This sentiment is well illustrated in the developments that led to the emancipation of the Lutheran church Negroes in St. Thomas. In 1843 the royal council decided to grant them the privilege of collecting charitable gifts by which to purchase their freedom, setting the time limit until September of that year. The understanding was that if they were unable to raise the necessary amount before that time, they would be sold.

For the guidance of each party involved in the proposed sales transaction, the royal council requested the royal auditor, Anders Kjellerup, to submit an estimate of the value of each Lutheran church Negro. To make it easy for the slaves to obtain the amounts needed to secure their freedom, Kjellerup submitted a list with very low figures.⁷

⁶ Facts relative to the Lutheran "church Negroes" are based upon various documents in the Lutheran parsonage archives, St. Thomas.

⁷ Anders Kjellerup's list of Lutheran church Negroes and their estimated value (1843) is in the Lutheran parsonage archives, St. Thomas.

1 Christian Tømmermand	\$180
2 Simon Petersen (sickly)	100

Despite this fact these Lutheran church Negroes did not succeed in raising the money within the time, and they would have been sold but for an earnest appeal made by the newly arrived Lutheran minister, Julius Ferdinand Tolderlund. With a warm heart, a clear head, and an undaunted courage he protested in a letter to the royal council against the sale of the servants, and pleaded for their emancipation instead. His attitude on the question of slavery is typical of that of other clergymen in the Danish West Indies at that time. Extracts of his long and fervent letter follow:⁸

Whereas the time limit which was granted to the Church Negroes to obtain their liberty by collecting charitable gifts, or otherwise, now very shortly will expire, so that they must be sold; and as I know none of them has been able to raise the necessary money—Now, therefore, to prevent an action so closely connected with the spiritual interests of the congregation which I have been called to lead, I hereby take the liberty to request the Council to change the decision which orders the sale of the Negroes and, if recommendations to this effect must be made at home, to postpone the sale until later.

My office as minister of the Danish Lutheran church and as

3	Johannes Petersen	100
4	Catherine Moody	50
5.	Johanne (infirm)	
6	Anna Maria (old)	50
7	Maria	125
8	Emmanuel (8 years)	50
9	Peter (6 years).....	40
10	Paul (3 years).....	25
11	Anna Susanna (child).....	100
12	Wilhelmina (4 months).....	16
13	Frederike Paulsen (8-9 years).....	50

\$886

⁸ Translated by Mrs. G. C. Thiele, St. Thomas, V. I.

confessor for several of the individuals who will be sold if the decision is carried out, exhorts me to speak. Even if the sale of human beings is still allowed and the law can have no objection to the sale of these Church Negroes, it must be admitted that this will never conform to the spirit of a Christian community.

... It would be a sad example of the Christian spirit in the 19th century if a Church should sell its brothers. It would show a deplorable step backward from the time when the church's silver and gold were used to redeem slaves and prisoners of war. I presume that this matter has been treated as any other business matter, and therefore the obnoxiousness and indecency connected with it has been withheld from the Christian community.

We must also consider the time in which we live. We do not now have the same opinion on the selling of human beings as they had half a century ago. From the time the predecessors of our most gracious King, whose exalted memory is still with us, limited the sale of the Negroes, from that time the idea that has been lying dormant in our age—the freedom of the slaves—has been fully expressed until complete emancipation has become the main question . . . The shame of selling these Church Negroes for the (financial) benefit of the Danish Lutheran church on St. Thomas would be laid open for the whole world.

A reasonable regard for these people's position must also be considered. They have been unaccustomed to work and most of them have grown up in idleness. It would be callous for us to place them in a position for which their former slave condition has made them unfit . . . And with respect to selling the old and sick among them who cannot provide for themselves, assuming that their new masters will take care of them, I think it would be far better if they were given their freedom with the others and were then taken care of by the congregation.

If it is objected that the church is in need of this income (acquiring from selling the Negroes), let me reply that the church will get over this loss . . . in time to come. I for one do not doubt that if this matter were placed before His Majesty the King, who has shown that it is his wish to further the emancipation of the unfree, he would graciously order that the slaves of the Lutheran

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congregation should be set free and that the State Treasury should assist the church with some of the obligations that rest on it in this matter.

St. Thomas the 17th of August
1843

Respectfully
(Signed) *Tolderlund*

The whole matter of the Lutheran church Negroes was presented to the Chancellery in Copenhagen. This august body made several decisions at various times, as follows: The sale of the church Negroes should be postponed, and it should be left to the wardens of the Lutheran church to arrange for their future according to their best interest and to that of the church; an immediate sum of twenty-four dollars should be allowed and a monthly sum of two dollars for rent should be granted each of the three eldest church Negroes, Anna Juliana Johanne, Anna Maria, and Catherine Moody; and in case the Lutheran wardens decided to give the church Negroes their freedom, an annual amount of 187 rdl. should be granted the Lutheran minister for servants' allowance.⁹

The Lutheran church wardens decided to give the Negroes their freedom. On December 18, 1845, the royal council therefore issued seven identical letters of manumission to the seven adult slaves and five slave children belonging to the Lutheran Church.

*Letter of Manumission*¹⁰

Whereas the Royal Danish Privy Council in its letter of 22nd

⁹ Archives, Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

¹⁰ Translated by Mrs. G. C. Thiele, from a copy in the archives of the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

of August a.c. did grant to the undersigned wardens of the Lutheran church authority to free the following "Unfree Persons" belonging to the Lutheran church of this place, now by virtue of the aforesaid authority and in our aforesaid capacity do we grant to: 1. Anna Juliana Johanne, 2. Anna Maria, 3. Catherine Moody, 4. Christian Henrich, 5. Maria Franciska, 6. Anna Susanna, 7. Johannes Alex Petersen, 8. Andreas Emanuel la Cruz, 9. Frederike Pauline, 10. Peter Carl, 11. Paulus Augustus, and 12. Wilhelmine F. la Cruz, their (his/her) freedom.

In witness whereof we have issued this letter of manumission in the presence of the witnesses hereto subscribing.

St. Thomas, 19 December 1845

The emancipation proclamation of 1848 affected a much smaller number of the African population in the Danish West Indies than has been supposed, since many of the slaves and practically all Africans with mixed blood had already gained their freedom. In the Creole Lutheran congregation on St. Thomas, for example, in several years prior to the emancipation, only about one-sixth of the children baptized were unfree.¹¹

Several royal ordinances and resolutions pertaining to the improvement in the conditions of the slaves, now called the unfree, appeared before the so-called "preliminary

¹¹ According to the baptismal records of the Lutheran church in St. Thomas, during the two years preceding the emancipation the baptisms were as follows: 12 Danes, 108 free, 25 unfree. According to records of the Lutheran church in Christiansted, St. Croix, confirmations during the five years 1841-45 were as follows:

1841:	28	free:	14	unfree
1842:	16	free:	17	unfree
1843:	19	free:	23	unfree
1844:	14	free:	16	unfree
1845:	38	free:	38	unfree

115 free: 108 unfree

emancipation proclamation" was issued on the queen's birthday, July 28, 1847. It contained King Christian VIII's long-considered decision that "the right of possession by the owners of the unfree . . . shall cease after twelve years from date of this proclamation, and henceforth, from date, all children shall be born free." The ordinance provided for the establishment of a commission for the execution of the act.

Peter von Scholten was opposed to the ordinance. He believed the twelve-year period of waiting to be much too long and he thought it likely that slave parents would be provoked by the discrimination shown between them and their children, and would say, "What! Shall we continue to be slaves and our children be set free?" The owners, moreover, could ask to be free from any responsibility for the freed children.¹² Time proved von Scholten to be right. The Negroes, instead of being pleased, showed much displeasure. "There was tumult in some churches when the proclamation was read."¹³

On St. Croix many of the unfree planned a revolt, plotting with great secrecy. Few if any of the planters suspected that trouble was brewing although government officers had received warnings written from Tortola.¹⁴ Sunday afternoon, July 2, von Scholten returned to St. Croix from a trip to St. Thomas. His ship, the "Ørnen," having put in at Christiansted, the governor general went at once to his country estate, Bulow's Minde, some two

¹² Lawaetz, *Peter von Scholten*, p. 150.

¹³ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mss.*, p. 172.

¹⁴ Knox, p. 111.

miles from that town. That night, July 3, about one o'clock, the riot broke out at Frederiksted where the slaves from many estates gathered and milled about clamoring for freedom. Word of the riot reached von Scholten who, after taking counsel in Christiansted, gave orders for certain defense measures to be taken by the military but made no attempt to use the armed forces to quell the revolt.

Summoned to Frederiksted by the seriousness of the situation there, von Scholten arrived at four o'clock in the afternoon, July 3. Proceeding at once to the fort, on his own responsibility and contrary to the provision of the royal ordinance for a twelve-year waiting period, the governor general issued a brief proclamation of unconditional emancipation. The document reads as follows:¹⁵

(1) All unfree on the Danish islands are today free.

(2) The estate Negroes retain for three months from date the use of the houses and provision grounds of which they have thitherto been possessed.

(3) Labor is in the future to be paid for by agreement, but allowance of food to cease.

(4) The maintenance of the old and infirm, who are not able to work, is, until further determined, to be furnished by the late owners.

The General Government of the Danish West India Islands.

St. Croix, the 3rd July, 1848

P. V. Scholten

Surprising results followed. The Negroes, misinterpret-

¹⁵ Quoted by Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

ing the absence of armed resistance, together with the suddenly issued proclamation, as evidence of weakness on the part of the government, decided to conquer the whole island. They set out to kill or drive out all the whites who, stricken with terror, had fled for safety to the towns and the ships in the harbors.¹⁶ Estates were plundered and buildings burned all over the island except in Christiansted town. These developments were a grievous disappointment to von Scholten and caused his complete breakdown. After six days the riot was finally quelled but von Scholten was forced to yield the government to a hastily formed commission. He left the island July 13 for Denmark.¹⁷

Not all the Negroes had participated in this insurrection. "On many of the estates the Negroes had remained faithful and had even fought desperately against the rioters to protect their masters' property"; and none of the Free Colored or free Negroes took part in the riot. Even the leader of the insurrection, Buddhoe, or General Bourdeaux, a Negro from the La Grange estate, was commended for having "done the island good service by preventing the Negroes from committing more excesses than they did." He saved the life of the Danish Major Gyllich, who, having promised him that no harm should come to him, did not desert him when he was handed over as a prisoner to the Danish authorities in Christiansted. It is said that Gyllich,

¹⁶ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 172.

¹⁷ The rumor that von Scholten fled disguised as a woman is noted both by Larsen, p. 265, and Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 161. Writing at a later date, however, Lawaetz rejects his former views and dismisses the rumor as without adequate support. *Peter von Scholten*, p. 191.

to keep his word, shared Buddhoe's imprisonment for a few days. For those reasons Buddhoe was not shot as a traitor, but was placed aboard the "Ørnen" with instructions from Governor General Hansen, von Scholten's successor, to the captain, that he land him anywhere he saw fit on any of the other West Indian Islands. "Dressed as a gentleman, Buddhoe went on board well provided with clothes and other necessities, only to have them taken from him as soon as the vessel was out of port, and to be put to work among the crew. He was landed at Port of Spain, Trinidad, where Captain Irminger told him that if he ever went back to the Danish West Indies, he would forfeit his life. He is said to have been seen in Curacao afterward, whence he proceeded to the United States of America."¹⁸

Von Scholten was accused by some of neglecting to have taken proper precaution for the safety of the free inhabitants of St. Croix; by others, of having made use of the rebellion, or having permitted its continuation, as an opportunity to hasten the fulfillment of his life's ambition, the emancipation of the slaves. Still others have been of the opinion that he was absolutely sincere and that he checked the riot considerably by refraining from resorting to armed resistance. According to many writers,¹⁹ the restraint shown by the unfree in general was due to the moral influence of the churches on the island. "We can only account for this," writes Knox,²⁰ "and take pleasure

¹⁸ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

¹⁹ Lawaetz, Kay Larsen, Taylor, Knox, and others.

²⁰ *Op cit.*, p. 120.

in recording it as our deliberate opinion, that it was mainly through that power which Christianity had exerted through the labours of the Moravian, Episcopal and Lutheran clergymen, aided by many pious and energetic inhabitants of both sexes in behalf of the slaves, imbuing their minds with the great principles of the Gospel, and leading planters and other owners to treat their slaves with greater kindness than in any other of the West Indian Islands."

Since von Scholten had been so close to the Moravians, they were accused of having had something to do with the riot. The Anglican minister in Christiansted spread rumors that the Brethren's Negroes had played an important role in the riot. This was denied by the Brethren. That they were right is evident from the examination of the protocol in which were recorded the details of the riot. According to it only twenty-four of the thousands of arrested rioters were Moravians, which was a very small proportion when one considers the fact that most of the six thousand Moravian Negroes were country slaves, and that the total population of St. Croix at the time of the riot was about twenty-four thousand.²¹

Upon returning to Denmark, von Scholten was tried before a commission and condemned for dereliction of duty as governor general. Appealing to the Supreme Court against this decision, he was later honorably acquitted.²²

Things did not go as well as expected for the Negroes after their emancipation. Most of them were not ready

²¹ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 174.

²² Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 143; also Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 226.

to make proper use of their freedom, and a cry of anguish went up from the former slave-owners whose "property" had suddenly been taken from them. Many of both classes desired the return of von Scholten. But confidence was soon restored by Peter Hansen, the new governor general, who introduced the Labor Act, "the provisions of which cannot be too much commended for their wisdom and adaptation to the existing circumstances."²³

²³ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

XVII

Facing New Problems

The problem of language was becoming increasingly acute. Creole continued to be used on the islands even for some years after the Danish government had officially adopted English (in addition to Danish) for use in local communications, announcements, and reports. Years after English was introduced in the Lutheran mission congregations Creole continued in its wake. In the Lutheran church on St. Thomas Creole was still in use in 1854 when the royal council permitted "the old Creole hymnals and New Testaments to be distributed at the English services on the condition that they remain in the church."¹ Apparently the Lutheran Church, proud of its achievement in creating most of the Creole literature, clung to Creole as long as possible.

One reason why the Lutheran Church clung to Creole as long as it did was the lack of proper liturgical literature in the English language. In 1850 the mission congregations obtained an English hymnal prepared by Pastor Jens Klint Bagger. But it had no liturgy, lessons, collects, or

¹ Document, archives of the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

other guides to worship. Sometimes, therefore, "the minister at the altar used his own translations—not always satisfactory—of collects and rituals, recorded in his own handwritten altar book. Sometimes . . . the congregation thought the pastor was chanting and speaking Latin instead of English! Especially in the case of a pastor newly arrived from Denmark, the worshipers, lacking every means by which to follow him, had great difficulty in understanding him." ² In 1857 an American Lutheran hymnal with a very limited liturgy was introduced in the English congregations, but it was not until August, 1872, that an English Lutheran hymnal with all the liturgical features was provided. This *Lutheran Manual*, prepared by Pastor Lose, was used in the English congregations until their transfer to the Church in America.

The Danish Lutheran ministers, like anyone else trying to learn another language, experienced great difficulty in speaking English fluently enough to compare favorably with the English-born ministers on the island. "Often they would wait for months before they would venture into the pulpit in the English congregation for fear of being ridiculed." And often their first attempts turned out to be complete failures. They did not have the opportunity which most missionaries enjoy when going to a foreign field for the first time, that of spending an initial period in the study of the language in which they are to teach and preach. "Being conscious of his lack of linguistic

² Emil Valdemar Lose; "*Folkekirken paa St. Thomas*," in *Kalkar's Theologisk Tidsskrift*. Copenhagen, 1878, pp. 265-97.

qualification, the recently arrived Lutheran pastor would perhaps start on Monday to write the first draft of his sermon in Danish, and spend the rest of the week in translating it into English and correcting it again and again. And even so, on the next Sunday, he might fail to satisfy the more fastidious listeners of the congregation. And in his pastoral work, for which he had less opportunity to prepare himself, he might fare even worse.”³ It stands to reason that, however distinguished and dignified and well-educated he might be, unless he was a linguist he could not compare favorably as a preacher with the other ministers on the island.

Some have wondered why the Lutheran Church authorities in Copenhagen did not attempt to overcome this difficulty by securing English-speaking Lutheran ministers from America during the period of transition. It is doubtful that such a step would have proved helpful. In the United States at that time Lutheran worship was conducted usually in languages other than English, and the comparatively few Lutheran ministers and churches using English were so Americanized that they regarded with grave suspicion the liturgical worship of the “old Lutherans.”

The substitution of English for Creole, therefore, created a very serious situation, and became one of several definite factors which caused the Lutheran mission congregations to lose many of their members, both actual and potential. This was true despite the fact that the membership of the mission congregations increased considerably during the

³ Lose, “*Folkekirken*,” pp. 273-74.

latter half of the nineteenth century.

The membership of the Lutheran mission congregations on the islands reached its highest point during the period of 1840-80. This was due mainly to the increase in population, especially on St. Thomas. This increase in membership, however, was less, proportionately, in the Lutheran Church than in the other churches on the islands. In 1850 the baptized membership of the various churches on St. Croix was:

Lutherans	4,016
Moravians	5,669
Episcopal	7,219
Roman Catholics	6,653

In 1851 on St. Thomas the membership was:

Roman Catholics	5,340
Moravians	2,537
Lutherans (Danish 331— English 1950)	2,281
Episcopal	1,365
Reformed Dutch	711
Others	824
Jews	372
	13,430

The membership of the Danish Lutheran congregations naturally was limited since it was determined by the number of Danes, or other European Lutherans, residing on the islands. During this period a considerable number of Schleswigers, Holsteiners, and Germans attended the Danish Lutheran services, especially on St. Thomas, and it was not uncommon for such nationals to visit St. Thomas

from other islands to have weddings and baptisms performed in the Lutheran church.⁴

The social and religious conditions in the islands at that time are well illustrated by letters appearing in the biography of the late Charles Porterfield Krauth, renowned Lutheran scholar and professor in the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Krauth, accompanied by Mrs. Krauth, arrived at St. Thomas November 17, 1852. The trip was made in the interest of her health. They had planned to proceed at once to St. Croix and make a longer stay at St. Thomas on the return trip, but their plans were changed by a remarkable providence. The steamer in which Dr. and Mrs. Krauth arrived brought news of the sudden death of Mrs. Knox, the wife of the minister of the Reformed Dutch church. (Pastor Knox's history of the Danish West Indies is often referred to in this volume.) This made it necessary for Pastor Knox to sail immediately for the United States. The elders of the Reformed Dutch congregation, therefore, hearing of Dr. Krauth's presence on the island, at once requested him to stay with them until their minister returned. Dr. Krauth accepted the invitation and remained in St. Thomas for two months. The following excerpts are from Dr. Krauth's letters written at St. Thomas:

We are in the midst of scenes of poetic loveliness. The harbour lies beneath us, belted with hills, except to the south, where it is open and permits the mountains of Santa Cruz to rise before the

⁴ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

eye, in clear weather as distinctly as if but a few, instead of forty, miles distant. The shipping of many nations displays, gently waving side by side, the flags under which the thunders of battle and the wail of death have so often been poured forth. Over the fort the red bidented war flag of Denmark flings its white cross. The white, red, and blue of France; the "meteor flag of England," the eagles of the European powers; and the "Stars and Stripes" of the land blessed and beloved above all lands, cast their shadows on the same tranquil water. The sound of singing is always coming up from the sailors. Poor fellows, many of them have been swept away by tropical fevers. At eight o'clock in the evening a cannon is discharged at the fort, and the report is followed by the roll of the drums and the sweet chiming of the bells from all the vessels . . .

The vegetation here presents to our northern eyes a great many wonders. The coconut, the orange, lemon and lime, the pomegranate, cactuses twenty and thirty feet high, and flowers and shrubbery of every kind, meet us at every turn . . .

Any native of the island, of whatever color, is called Creole; and the language which originated here, and which is a jargon composed of all the languages of Europe, engrafted on a stock of Dutch, is also called Creole.

. . . Jews, Gentiles, and sects of various names, are very amicable. Great good feeling prevails. The Americans perhaps, more than any other, are clannish, as they are republicans, and all the rest are monarchists . . . There is a great deal of liberality in this place. Thousands of dollars can be readily raised for any object of general charity . . . Every prominent merchant speaks several languages. The traffic with the various islands, and the commercial connection with Europe, make this necessary. English, Spanish, Danish, French are most useful . . .

I need hardly tell you that this engagement in no way affected my position as a Lutheran clergyman . . . I have the distinction of being the first Lutheran minister from "the States" who has visited these islands . . . Religion in St. Thomas has had vast

obstacles through which to struggle; but all agree that there has been an immense advance on its former condition.

It seems a strange dream-like leaf in my history that I have been in actual ministerial service in the tropics, visiting the sick, burying the dead, and preaching that precious Gospel whose power is dependent on nothing that difference of race or climate can affect. It is one proof of the unity of the great brotherhood of man that the Gospel brings forth the same fruits among all its families.

The Lutheran Church is a large building of stone, tiled, and with avenues of coconuts and palms before it. It is the church of the officers of the government, of the military, and of a large part of the citizens. Mr. Tidemand, the Lutheran clergyman, is an excellent man, very pious and devoted as a minister. He has some of the best people in his church I have ever met. How quickly our common faith in the Lord Jesus makes us feel at home among strangers . . . I find these Lutherans of our Danish Church exhibiting the same spirit as our own people. They have a flourishing Sunday-school with an infant department. The Bible—and tract—operations are carried on here as with us.

I preached last Sunday in the Lutheran Church, wore the gown and all that, and found that it left me just as much inclined as ever to preach the Gospel. The formality had not time to strike in; perhaps if I had done the chanting, I should have been done for; as it was, I escaped with very little injury! The old forms are kept up, and in their transfer to our anglicized condition there has been no change except in language.⁵

Inasmuch as Dr. Krauth was the one man most instrumental years later in bringing "American Lutherans" back to the vestments and liturgical forms of European Lutheranism, one may legitimately wonder to what extent his experience on St. Thomas and St. Croix was a factor in

⁵ A. Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, Vol. I, New York, 1898, pp. 214-60.

his revival of conservative Lutheranism in the United States. That his own interest in Lutheran worship in the islands was more than casual, is evident not only from his letters from the islands, but also from his excellent translation of Grundtvig's lovely Christmas hymn—one of Denmark's most popular—"The happy Christmas comes once more." It is not improbable that he heard this carol for the first time while attending the Danish Christmas service on St. Thomas in 1852, and that the Danish Pastor Tide-
mand gave him the literal translation of it from which he may have made his poetic translation in 1866.⁶

The necessity of having two congregations, an English colored and a Danish white, created at times a misunderstanding which was difficult to explain to non-Lutherans of the community. It was sometimes embarrassing to hear it said that "the Lutheran church has services at 9:00 A.M. for the rich and the white, and at 12:00 noon for the poor and the colored."⁷ This was an untrue accusation, however, since there were found both colored and poor in the Danish congregations, and both white and rich in the English congregations. Such questions were often asked as: "Why is it that the Lutheran Church in the Danish West Indies is the only church with two congregations?" "Why do they not unite?" "Is it because of class distinction?" "Or is it because the Danish governor and the government officials think so highly of themselves that they do not want

⁶ The author is indebted to William G. Arbaugh for the suggestions made in this paragraph.

⁷ Lose's "*Folkekirken*," p. 269.

to worship with the natives?" Furthermore, by contrasting the Lutheran church with other churches some would emphasize the desirable commingling of classes in mixed congregations, as did Dr. Krauth, for example, when he stated about the Reformed Dutch church on St. Thomas: "All classes sit together in church, though not generally in the same pew; approach the Lord's table together; and, in short, mingle in various ways socially and religiously of which we see no example at home."⁸

Attempts at uniting the Danish and the English congregations were made, but failed. Pastor Tolderlund of St. Thomas, a pious and devout man of high ideals, was deeply concerned about the questions of race and class. He had not been on the island many months before he began to wonder why the Lutheran church, with its prestige as the government church on the islands, was not larger than he found it. He concluded that one evident reason was the division of the church into two congregations. On October 7, 1843, therefore, he proposed to the royal council the complete merger of the Danish and the English congregations on St. Thomas.⁹

Seven years elapsed before the final reply to the proposal arrived, three days before the departure of Pastor Tolderlund. It is not known why the delay was so long. It is probable that the government in Copenhagen was awaiting the outcome of some of the revolutionary changes taking place during those days.

⁸ Spaeth, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁹ Documents, archives of the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

In the reply the government in Copenhagen admitted that the existence of two congregations in the Lutheran church on the islands created an embarrassing situation, and that union was a desirable goal; but it doubted that the time was ripe for such a change, mainly because of the problem of church discipline and the language question. Because the majority of the members of the English congregation were just beginning, after their emancipation, to rise toward the higher moral standard of the people in Denmark, it was not possible for some time to submit both congregations to the same church discipline. Nor could the government see how the proposed merger could take place without the discontinuance of the use of Danish, from which no good would result and which would not be permitted in any case.

The attitude of the Danes on the islands can be assumed to have been unfavorable. Why should they give up the enjoyment of singing in Danish and listening to sermons preached beautifully in their mother tongue, for singing in a language far less familiar and listening to sermons delivered in imperfect English?

The discipline in the English Lutheran congregations was less strict than in the Danish congregations as well as in the other churches on the islands. "All the other religious bodies administer church discipline that is often very strong. A Roman Catholic can be excommunicated for having attended the funeral of his Protestant mother, and a Moravian can be ordered to stay at home and keep his window

shutters closed during horse races.”¹⁰

Promiscuity and illegitimacy—evils handed down from slavery—exerted a great influence on the baptismal discipline of the various churches. The Reformed and Moravian churches refused to baptize illegitimate children, “the former because of doctrine, the latter in order to force marriage,”¹¹ and many of those children came to the Lutheran church to be baptized. But as neither the Reformed nor the Moravian congregation declined to receive such children into their Sunday schools for confirmation classes, the Lutheran church often lost them after baptism. As the English congregation grew and became further removed from the slavery period, the discipline improved somewhat. Only with respect to baptism did discipline continue to be lax, because of the old state church policy of baptizing children regardless of their parents’ Christian and moral living. This policy is still followed in all the large churches in the Virgin Islands. The problem will require years of re-education, continued leniency, tact for final solution.

In all this discussion of the proposal to merge the two congregations of each parish at that period we can sense a tendency to argue the matter as though it involved only ethical problems. It would seem now that the matter was a very practical one and that the ethical considerations were exaggerated. After all, the authorities in Denmark pointed out, the language difference required two distinct series of services for two dissimilar groups of worshipers,

¹⁰ Lose, “*Folkekirken*,” p. 293.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

and in the handling of the internal affairs of the two groups different norms were necessary in order not to lay too great a burden of discipline on the Creole group. In spite of these distinctions the two congregations were essentially one—in their spiritual loyalties and in many matters involving practical co-operation—and the members of each were welcome at the services of the other. They had a true unity in Christ Jesus, the head of the Church, whom they both sincerely glorified.

There is another consideration that would appear to provide ample justification for the policy that was pursued. The two separate congregational programs allowed the English congregations to develop resources of personality and talent among their members that might otherwise have remained undiscovered. The English congregations thereby achieved personality and an ability to stand on their own feet after the transfer, when the Danish congregations virtually ceased to exist as such. The pastors that have come to the islands from the United States have been favorably impressed by the quality of the lay leadership in the parishes. That leadership might be much weaker if it had been obliged to develop in competition with Danish talent.

The period that we have been reviewing was one of progress and growth for the Lutheran churches in the Danish West Indies. Nevertheless, the church work would have been still more fruitful but for the old problem of the long pastoral vacancies.¹² Souls were not won that should

¹² Upon the request by Pastor W. A. Tidemand in 1854 the Moravian

have been won, and a surprisingly large number of members drifted away, some to other churches and some to lives of religious indifference. We are encouraged, however, by the fact that the churches actually grew and that their members, by and large, remained steadfast and true. One must admire such staunchness and loyalty.

missionaries were authorized to supply in the Lutheran congregations during vacancies. How often this authorization was made use of is not known, but it is certain that a Moravian minister, presumably Pastor Klose, upon permission by the Danish government, served the English Lutheran congregation on St. Thomas for a period of nine months (between 1856 and 1857). Records, the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas; and "*Banebrydere for Kirken i Amerika*," Pastor R. Andersen, 1923.

XVIII

Progress under Difficulties

The Moravian supervision of the government country schools came to an end in 1872. While on St. Croix these schools continued uninterruptedly, on St. Thomas and St. John they were discontinued, and for several years there were no government public schools on these islands. On St. John and in the country area of St. Thomas the only schools during those years were those of the Moravian missions. In the city of Charlotte Amalie there were in 1872 twenty-four private and parochial schools with from 20 to 130 pupils in each.¹ Among the parochial schools, most of which were Roman Catholic and Anglican, was that of the Lutheran church, located at No. 2 Dronningensgade, King's Quarter.

Mainly at the initiative of Governor Janus August Garde (1872-76), public education on St. Thomas and St. John was reinstated by the school ordinance of November 9, 1875, and formally introduced on February 11, 1876. There were to be established three public schools in Charlotte Amalie, one in each of the old school districts, and a

¹ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

number of smaller schools in the country on both St. Thomas and St. John. O. F. Bache, the efficient school director of the public school in Christiansted, St. Croix, became the director of these schools.²

The Roman Catholics were opposed to certain features of the new school ordinance, and the colonial council of St. Thomas and St. John was dissatisfied with its financial provisions.³ While the difficulties were being straightened out, Bache purchased a beautiful building on Government Hill and arranged it as an advanced school under the name of St. Thomas College, the first of its kind on the island. It was opened July 2, 1876, under the inspection of Bache and a staff of able teachers.⁴ The main problem for the city schools in St. Thomas was a lack of buildings. It was finally solved by a prominent citizen, an apothecary, Albert H. Riise, K.D., and his wife, who defrayed the expenses (\$6,000) of procuring buildings—Bjergegade, Krystalgade, and Vestergade. Each building housed a boys' and a girls' school.

Riise, the most important Lutheran layman of this period, was for some time a member of the royal council and a warden of the Lutheran church. In May, 1861, he was knighted by the king, and on February 19, 1864, he was appointed by the burgher council to supervise the cemeteries on St. Thomas. Back in 1838 the government had granted him the monopoly for the dispensing and

² *Ibid.*, p. 303.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

⁴ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

sale of medicine, on the condition that he always keep on hand a double supply in two separate locations, one of which was to be well protected against fire; and that he furnish free of charge prescriptions ordered by physicians for the poor.⁵ His name and that of his son are still known in connection with the famous bay rum and the Apothecary Hall on St. Thomas.

When the public schools in St. Thomas opened on June 3, 1878, only a small number of children appeared, because many of the parents had their children working for others or for themselves. On the approval of the governor, the school director, Bache, introduced a system of fines which collected several hundred dollars during the year, caused two parents to pay off the fines in jail, and tripled the attendance by the end of the year.⁶ The same regulations were applied also to the private and parochial schools. On May 1, 1878, the government took over the Reformed Dutch school and the Lutheran school on Dronningensgade.

St. Thomas College became a highly accredited school during its short existence. The emphasis laid on natural science is evident from the collections that were gathered: a large collection of shells and a smaller one of reptiles and amphibia, donated by Riise; a fine collection of minerals donated by Professor Johnstrup; and a large collection of insects, shells, and geological specimens donated by Mr. Dahl, one of the teachers. March 31, 1883, unfor-

⁵ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

⁶ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

tunately saw the closing of this fine institution. Beyond a few subsidies to encourage private schools, nothing was put in its place.⁷

So efficient was the school system on St. Thomas at that time that educational experts from neighboring islands (including Jamaica, which later became famous for its school system) visited the island to study the Danish system of education. Meanwhile a new public school system for St. Croix was introduced by the royal ordinance of May 7, 1884. School director Bache on St. Thomas was appointed supervisor of education on St. Croix, replacing school director J. Quin who stepped aside and worked loyally as vice-director.⁸ Religious instruction was practically abolished by this new school law, and clergymen were not allowed to influence the school curriculum. In 1902 Lawaetz remarked that this threw "suspicion on the loyal work done by the Moravians, and we now reap the bitter fruits of it in the form of a growing godless and lawless youth."⁹ Some of the private and public schools had been closed. The new law enlarged the public schools in the towns, provided efficient teachers and modern equipment, and renovated and reopened all the schools that had been closed. The public school at Frederiksted opened in 1884 with 193 pupils and increased at the end of the year to 310, while the public school in Christiansted opened with 374 pupils and increased at the end of the year to

⁷ Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 40.

⁸ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

⁹ Lawaetz, *Brød. Mis.*, p. 166.

606, of whom 240 had never before attended school.¹⁰

The difference between Christiansted and Frederiksted was then in many respects pronounced. Christiansted was predominantly a Lutheran town, Frederiksted mainly Roman Catholic. In Frederiksted the large Roman Catholic St. Patrick's School was much stronger than the Danish schools.

While Bache, with the governor's approval, let the Moravians take care of the education of the youth in the country of St. Thomas and St. John as they had done before, he secured financial support from the government for the public schools in the country district of St. Croix, where nearly all the schools which had been established in 1841 were still open in the eighties: La Princess, Peter's Rest, Friedensfeld, Diamond, East Hill, and Two Williams. At each rural school there was a teacher, a seamstress, and a woman teacher for the smaller children. There were three classes with more than one grade to a class. Older boys and girls were kept separate, and attendance was compulsory until the age of thirteen.¹¹

"The school report for St. Thomas of 1899 showed over 90 per cent attendance with 556 children in the public schools, 655 in private schools, and 51 at home with private teachers. While there was no definite segregation on the basis of color, the private schools tended to be made up of the white and light-skinned children. The dark-skinned parents were found for the most part among the

¹⁰ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

economically underprivileged, and their children necessarily went to the communal [public] schools." ¹²

The last of the instructors appointed by the Danish government was the popular O. Rubner Petersen. He made an attempt at breaking away from the strong English tradition in education on the islands, making the curriculum both more Danish and more American at the same time. For the American touch he introduced manual training and gardening for the boys and housework for the girls, on the pattern of the system he had observed on visits at Hampton and Tuskegee institutes in the United States. The lack of funds prevented him from carrying out all his plans.

After 1850 there was an increasing discontent among the rich as well as among the poor in the three islands, based almost entirely upon the economic decline which had begun in the first half of the nineteenth century but reached its lowest point toward the end of the century. The decline characterized every phase of life except education and enlightenment among the lower class. Commerce, industry, agriculture, cultural and social life among the upper class were affected. The year 1824 has been regarded by some historians as the height of St. Thomas' prosperity. ¹³

The principal cause of this trend was the rise of modern transportation facilities which rendered the free neutral harbor of St. Thomas of less importance than before. ¹⁴ St.

¹² Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹³ Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 507.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Thomas slowly ceased to be the commercial emporium of the Antilles.¹⁵ "Only as a coaling place does St. Thomas manage to attract the attention as the century closes."¹⁶ This condition reacted on St. Croix and St. John, whose agricultural economy was closely associated with the commercial status of St. Thomas.

Another factor in the decline was the decrease in sugar and cotton production on the islands. Sugar was affected by a change in the world market, due mainly to the development of the process discovered by the Berlin chemist, Achard, of making sugar from beets.¹⁷ Cotton cultivation went steadily downhill despite the introduction of the plow and other machinery, especially after the emancipation when rising labor costs forced the mechanization of agriculture. "In 1796 there were on St. Thomas 5 windmills and 67 treadmills; on St. Croix: 114 windmills and 144 treadmills . . . By 1852 there were 40 steam propelled sugar mills on St. Croix. In 1908 there was but a single sugar mill upon each of the islands of St. Thomas and St. John, and only the St. John mill was in operation."¹⁸

The long distance between Denmark and the Danish West Indies was also a factor in the eagerness on the part of many to have the islands transferred to the United States.

¹⁵ In the 1820's an average of ten sailships a day visited St. Thomas. During the 30's the number of ships dropped to eight a day (partly because of the arrival of the first steamships). In the 40's the number was six a day. The decrease continued. At first the total tonnage was not affected but before long it began to decline.

¹⁶ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

During emergencies, such as hurricanes and plagues, the local government of course did its utmost to help the people but its facilities were often too limited. No wonder that during such trying times the stricken population would often look wistfully toward the northwest with the thought: "We love old Denmark, but it is so far away—the United States of America is much closer, bigger, and richer!"

The cultural decline in the upper class is well illustrated by the history of the Athanaeum Society, which flourished in St. Thomas during this period. It began in 1824 as a Danish reading or book club for men. Because of lack of interest it was discontinued after a short time, but was revived again in 1839, and became "an institution highly credited to the literary taste of the citizens."¹⁹ It was supervised by government officials. After its reorganization in 1839 it owned a library of 593 books and numerous newspapers and periodicals in many languages. Twelve years later the society possessed a library and reading room, the former containing five thousand volumes in various languages. Often the room was used for public lectures and discussions. In the 1870's this institution began to decline, and by 1899 "the library was without a librarian and the reading room was seldom used."²⁰

That the Negroes showed a willingness to give up primitive African customs for the new culture of civilization is seen in the disappearance of the famous bamboula dance

¹⁹ Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

²⁰ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

which had been brought by the slaves from West Africa. This dance had become immensely popular not only among the Negroes but also among the European colonists all over the West Indies. In 1801 it formed a part of the religious ceremonies in Spanish colonies, where Spaniards "danced it in church as well as in their processions; and the nuns danced it on Christmas night on a platform . . . elevated in the yard of their convent, in front of the grating (grille) which was kept open for the people to see them."²¹ This dance, because of its association with the jungle, became less and less popular among the Negroes in the Danish West Indies toward the end of the century. Although it is today performed in a modified form on special holidays, it has lost its attraction and is now looked upon as a practice associated with the bondage of the past.

Many changes occurred during this period. In 1850 the title of governor general was discontinued and with it much of the pomp belonging to past generations. A new colonial law was introduced on March 26, 1852, and another on April 1, 1865. A new colonial council was organized on February 2, 1854. The cornerstone to the present government house in St. Thomas was laid on April 8, 1865, and it was finished in September, 1867, at the cost of \$33,605.79. The latter part of the century was characterized by many improvements and inventions. On November 6, 1865, the Lutheran church in St. Thomas sold a part of its western cemetery ground (#47 A Kronprinsensgade) to the newly organized St. Thomas Gas and Light Com-

²¹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

pany, and there was a great festival in the city when the streets were first illuminated with gaslight.

According to the census of 1880, the Lutheran Church had increased to a total membership of 4,600 on the three islands, while the Episcopalians numbered 11,344, the Roman Catholics 10,025, and the Moravians 5,881. But the total population on the islands had decreased: St. Thomas had 14,389 inhabitants, all of whom, except a thousand, lived in the city of Charlotte Amalie. St. Croix had 18,430 inhabitants, and St. John 944, a total for all the islands of 33,761. On St. Croix 10,011 lived in the country, 4,931 in Christiansted, and 3,480 in Frederiksted. There were 4,000 more women than men. Only one-third of the adult population was married. There were 1,845 men occupied as fishermen and sailors, 2,847 in business, and 10,010 earning their living from the soil.²²

The missionary spirit which had been so closely associated with the Creole period continued to prevail in the English Lutheran congregations even after the name "mission congregation" was changed to "the Evangelical Lutheran congregation." The title "missionary pastor" was discontinued in 1859, the year when Frederiksted became a separate parish. The first minister appointed for the Frederiksted parish was Daniel Christjern Vater (1859-65). The second was the church historian, Emil Valdemar Lose, whose works are frequently quoted in his study. He served the Frederiksted parish from 1867 to 1871, St. Thomas and St. John parish from 1871 to 1881, and the

²² Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

Christiansted parish from 1881 to 1887, a total of twenty years.²³

The British Methodist Church is the last of the five largest churches to be established in the Virgin Islands. Since the latter part of the eighteenth century Methodism had been firmly established in the neighboring British Virgin Islands, claiming the majority of the inhabitants as members and adherents. Many of these Methodists came to St. Thomas in search of employment. They were anxious to have their own church and, therefore, spasmodic attempts were made to establish work under the West Indian Conference of the British Wesleyan Church. These came to nothing for lack of permission from the Danish government. In the absence of a Methodist church most of the immigrants attached themselves to one or another of the Moravian churches.

In 1877 the African Methodist Episcopal Church organized a congregation. The charter was signed April 23 of that year by eighteen persons on St. Thomas as a branch of the British Methodist Episcopal Church in Chatham, Province of Ontario, founded in 1856. The Rev. Enos M. J. Harper was appointed as the first pastor of the mission June 9, 1857, by Bishop R. R. Disney. A building was erected for worship. Several attempts were made during the next fourteen years to obtain recognition of this congregation by the Danish government, but they all proved unsuccessful. Meanwhile some of the Methodists who had previously attached themselves to the Moravian

²³ Records, the Lutheran parsonage, St. Thomas.

Church now linked themselves with the African Methodist Episcopal congregation, and new immigrants from the British Islands also joined this group. A number of difficulties and disagreements arose, which culminated in the dismissal of the Rev. Herbert F. Miller, March 14, 1891.²⁴

Prior to this a petition had been sent by the congregation to the West Indian Conference of the British Wesleyan Church asking that body to assume responsibility for the work in St. Thomas. The conference acceded to this request, and on the removal of Rev. Mr. Miller sent the Rev. J. Barnett Foster, an Englishman, as minister and continued to use the A. M. E. building. Very soon, however, a dispute arose regarding the rights of the building, it being contended by the authorities of the A. M. E. Church that the local congregation had no right to take over the property. When it appeared that a lawsuit would be filed the West Indian Conference instructed the Rev. Mr. Foster to withdraw and to organize a separate Wesleyan congregation. The majority of the Methodists left the A. M. E. Church and worshiped for many years in a building belonging to the Moravians. The residue of the A. M. E. congregation dwindled away and in a few years the work ceased entirely. Meanwhile the British Wesleyan Church obtained recognition from the Danish government, the work grew steadily, and plans were made for the erection of a church. The cornerstone was laid on October 5, 1910, and the building was consecrated on Christmas Day, 1912.

²⁴ Documents in the National Archives, Washington, D. C.

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Since then the congregation has grown steadily. In 1932 when Methodist Union was consummated in Great Britain the name Wesleyan was changed to Methodist.²⁵

²⁵ Information supplied by the Rev. Clifford E. Hardy, Methodist pastor in St. Thomas.

XIX

Attempts at Transfer

The economic decline of the Danish West Indies gave rise to a favorable attitude, both on the islands and in Denmark itself, toward the idea of selling the islands to the United States of America. Five unsuccessful attempts were made to effect such a sale.

The first attempt, in 1867, involved only St. Thomas and St. John. By the treaty negotiated with France in 1733, Denmark had bound itself not to sell St. Croix without the consent of the French king, and such consent could not be obtained due to the strained relation between the United States and Emperor Napoleon III of France. In October, 1867, a treaty was signed between the United States and Denmark for the purchase of the two islands for \$7,500,000. Both houses of the Danish diet gave their consent, and on October 25 King Christian IX proclaimed the sale, and "all prepared to obey his Most Gracious Majesty's wish, though not without a feeling in their hearts that, with all its faults, the rule of dear old Denmark had been in the main, marked by humanity, wisdom

and justice.”¹ Everything was ready for the plebiscite, but the consent of the U.S. Senate was not asked until later.

Since the year 1867 had witnessed the greatest of all disasters in the history of the Danish West Indies, it was a most favorable time for promoting the sale. A tropical plague had ravaged the islands during the earlier months. In October came a destructive hurricane which “surpassed anything in magnitude and destructiveness recorded in history.” Over three hundred lives were lost, and seventy-seven vessels stranded or wrecked. This was followed a month later, on November 18, by the disastrous earthquake and tidal wave, felt most severely in Frederiksted, St. Croix. The sea receded long enough to expose its bare bed, strewn with many sunken wrecks, then “gathering itself up into one mighty ocean-wall, it came toppling over in immense rollers, carrying all before it. Schooners, brigs, boats and skiffs, and even a large American war steamer, the ‘Monongahela,’ were washed ashore.”²

Due to those disasters the election in the Danish West Indies, which had been set for the latter part of the year, was postponed until January 9, 1868. There was no universal suffrage then; “the right to vote was limited to males of unblemished character of over 25 years who were either born there or who had resided for two years or more, and who had not been deprived of the management of their property.”³ The results of the voting were: *St.*

¹ Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 147.

³ Pastor Edward Lewis' article, "The Transfer of 1867," in *The Virgin*

Thomas: For, 1,039; against, 22. *St. John*: For, 205; against, 0. But politics shelved the treaty in Washington, and the sale never took place.

That the almost unanimous vote for the sale was not at all an indication of any hostility to Denmark is clearly seen in the way the votes were cast. Although *St. Thomas* recorded twenty-two votes against the sale, hundreds of Danes there, not to mention also friends of Denmark, voted for the sale. On *St. John* all the Danes and friends of Denmark, voted for the sale, none against it. This election clearly indicates the nature of the discontent prevalent in the islands during this and the following period.

Between the first and the second attempts at selling the islands came the labor riot on *St. Croix* in 1878, thirty years after the emancipation. It might not have taken place, and it would no doubt have been checked, if the native militia corps of *St. Croix* had not been disbanded a quarter of a century before. The Danish militia in *Christiansted* was limited to only sixty soldiers, and the whole island outside *Christiansted* was left practically defenseless. The rioters took due advantage of this condition. An underlying cause of the uprising was dissatisfaction with the Labor Act which, admirable and well adapted as it was to the time of the emancipation, was now in great need of revision. Another cause was the laborers' misunderstanding that the Labor Act would expire October 1, that year, when wages would be substantially increased.

Islands Magazine, March 31, 1941, commemorative edition of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the transfer, published by Oriel Melchior, editor of *St. Thomas Daily News*.

This deplorable riot, with its arson, destruction, plunder, and murder, lasted several days.⁴ Its results were numerous. It brought an end to the Labor Act and introduced new regulations between the planters and the Negroes. It caused many planters to leave St. Croix and several estates to be taken over by Irish farmers. It renewed the desire, both on the part of Denmark and of the local population, for the sale of the islands. Probably it also paved the way for the beginning of the squatter system by the parceling out of one of the royal plantations, Work and Rest, on St. Croix during Governor Arendrup's term of office. That seven-hundred-acre plantation was divided among thirty-seven Negro squatters who had been foremen on various estates.⁵

The second attempt to sell the islands was made during President Harrison's administration (1889-93), "but the attempt was not pressed because of fear that the incoming Cleveland administration might repudiate the transaction before it had been completed."⁶

The third attempt was made during Cleveland's second administration (1893-97), "but the administration that refused to consider the annexation of Hawaii could not be expected to purchase the Danish islands."⁷

The fourth attempt came during Theodore Roosevelt's

⁴ For a description in English of this riot, see Taylor, *Leaflets from the Danish West Indies*, pp. 151-66; for a description in Danish, see Larsen, *Dansk Vestindien*, pp. 304-11.

⁵ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

⁶ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

⁷ *Ibid.*

administration. The treaty providing for the purchase of the islands—including St. Croix because the former hindrance had been removed—was negotiated in January, 1902, but was not ratified because of a tie vote in the Danish *Landsting*.

The fifth attempt occurred in 1911-12. "The reasons for the bungling that took place . . . have not fully come to light. Through the injudicious actions of certain private individuals, diplomats found themselves obliged to defer formal action to a more opportune time."⁸ That time was to come in 1916-17.

Denmark's attitude toward the Danish West Indian Islands at the end of the century was one of duty, obligation, and beneficence. She had long since relinquished her colonial ambitions. Denmark's prestige as an international power had long since waned; she was now concentrating on scientific, economic, and social developments within her own kingdom.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

Pre-Transfer Developments

The unsuccessful attempt to sell the islands in 1902 resulted in the appointment of a commission that same year to study the economic, social, and racial conditions on the islands, with a view toward reform. The commission, composed of some of Denmark's foremost statesmen, economists, and scientists, held twenty-three meetings in Copenhagen before it departed for the West Indies. Having visited several islands in the Caribbean and held many conferences on the way, it arrived at St. Thomas on February 2, 1903, and landed the next day at Christiansted, St. Croix, where it established its headquarters. It held fifty meetings in Christiansted, four in Frederiksted, and sixteen in St. Thomas; a visit was made to St. John. Individuals of every branch of society were interviewed and all institutions, barracks, factories, as well as many plantations, were inspected. When the commission departed April 6, it carried a vast amount of information¹

The result of this visit and study was a series of proposals for reform, some of which were carried out, and some of

¹ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

which—because of lack of funds and the ever-present expectation that some time the islands might be transferred to the United States—were shelved.² Among the proposals carried out were: improved sanitation and mosquito control; stimulation of individual business enterprises; experimentation in the production of various fruits, cocoa, tobacco, cotton, lemons, and bay oil; the establishment of the Danish gendarmes (123 men) and a native militia (120 men) with compulsory service; a new colonial law; the establishment of a leper colony on St. Croix; and the beginning of a fight against infant mortality.³

The establishment of the leper colony was accomplished chiefly through the efforts of Professor Ehlers, one of the members of the commission. With the assistance of the local physicians he had discovered eighty-six cases of leprosy on St. Croix, nineteen on St. Thomas, and one on St. John. Upon his return to Denmark, and after a second visit in 1909, he secured the interest and financial support of the Danish Order of Odd Fellows for the building of the colony at Richmond. The cornerstone for this institution was laid April 26, 1909.⁴

The fight against infant mortality was begun and continued in co-operation with the Danish Lutheran Church both in Denmark and on the islands. The Queen Louise

² Among the plans that were not carried out was that of building a railroad from Christiansted to Frederiksted. Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 331.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 327-39.

⁴ In 1935 Pastor Eugene Kreider, Lutheran minister at Frederiksted, organized the St. Croix Mission to Lepers, whose objective was to provide physical, mental, and spiritual comfort for the patients. The society is generously supported by the residents of the island.

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Society in Denmark took an active part in this work. Plans were first made for Red Cross nurses to be sent out from Denmark to begin child-welfare work at the three municipal hospitals in Charlotte Amalie, Christiansted, and Frederiksted; and for Lutheran deaconesses to be sent out from the motherhouse and hospital in Copenhagen to begin child-welfare work among the native people of St. Croix. However, upon the advice of the local Lutheran ministers, it was decided to confine the work to the establishment of nursing homes for sick and neglected children in need of special care and medical treatment on St. Croix. This work of mercy, under Lutheran direction, was to benefit children of all denominations, without any attempt to proselytize. On September 4, 1904, the first two Lutheran deaconesses, Sisters Necoline Krogh and Henricha Degencholf, arrived from Copenhagen. On December 13 the first child, found by one of the sisters in a dead mother's arms, was received in the new Queen Louise Home in Frederiksted. Four years later, November 10, 1908, the Ebenezer Lutheran Orphanage, a home for children of kindergarten age, with a day nursery, was established at Frederiksted, with Miss Johanna Sivertsen and Sister Emma Francis in charge. Miss Sivertsen was matron until 1918, Sister Emma Francis succeeding her in that position. Eighty children came daily to this home, where they received three meals a day; much voluntary service was rendered there by local women from the various churches. Ebenezer Orphanage was supported by the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society in Copenhagen until the transfer of the

Lutheran congregations on the island to the Lutheran Church in America in 1918.

In 1906 the first Lutheran nurse arrived at Frederiksted. During 1907 another property in Christiansted was renovated and prepared by the Queen Louise Society in Denmark, and was ready to receive children the following year. On January 7, 1908, two more deaconesses, Sisters Annie Thomsen and Maren Knudsen, were commissioned and sent out jointly by the Queen Louise Society and the Lutheran Deaconess Home in Copenhagen. They arrived at St. Croix the following month and were stationed at Frederiksted.⁵ Shortly afterward still another deaconess arrived, and on March 8, 1908, the Queen Louise Home in Christiansted was opened and received its first children. As in Frederiksted, a kindergarten and a day nursery were also established in this institution. The following women also served in the Lutheran work of mercy on St. Croix: Sister Caroline, Sister Ingeborg, Miss Johanne Goutier, and Sister Edith Prince.⁶

The outstanding Lutheran clergyman of this century in the Danish West Indies was Laurits Johannes Angelo Petersen, the first provst in the Danish West Indies. He

⁵ Sister Maren Knudsen labored thirty-nine years on St. Croix, returning to the Copenhagen Motherhouse in January, 1947, because of failing strength. She has been helpful in supplying information about the work of mercy on St. Croix.

⁶ After the transfer, with the work of mercy carried on by the United Lutheran Church in America, five American deaconesses served on St. Croix: Sisters Nanca Schoen, Carrie Gig, Clara Smyre, Alma Hartwig, and Florence Bechtold. The Ebenezer Orphanage has been discontinued and the two Queen Louise Homes have been merged into a single institution with an expanded program.

was sent out by the "Committee on West Indies Church Work" in Copenhagen and was installed as vicar in 1905. He became provst in 1908 and was assisted by Pastor Johannes Henrik Faber, who in 1909 had been appointed secretary of the St. Thomas Y.M.C.A. In 1913 Provst Petersen was assisted by Pastor Peter Henrik Edward Kastrup, who had also been secretary of the St. Thomas Y.M.C.A. In his capacity as provst, Pastor Petersen traveled frequently to St. Croix and to St. John. Being much interested and always active in some form of welfare work, he was instrumental in acquiring the Queen Louise Home in St. Thomas, which was fashioned into a boarding school for respectable young girls. Elementary subjects were taught in the school under the leadership of Miss Kay Hade. Provst Petersen also arranged for the purchase of the present Nazareth Lutheran Chapel at Cruz Bay, St. John, and the Bethania Lutheran Mission House in Charlotte Amalie.⁷ He was a great singer and readily lent his operatic voice for the promotion of any good cause in the church and in the community. He returned to Denmark in 1915, being succeeded by Pastor Kastrup.

Co-operation between the Danish and the English Lutheran congregations on the islands reached its highest point during this period. A step toward still closer union

⁷ The government did not assist financially toward purchasing Bethania. A loan of \$1,500 was made from the bank, and the balance of \$839.75 was raised by contributions from members of the local Church Society and by five annual donations of 1,000 kroner (\$270) each from Lutheran friends in Denmark. The debt was paid within seven years. It was purchased March 2, 1908, from its owner, Georg A. Blohm of Hamburg, Germany, and was dedicated July 19, 1908, by Provst Petersen. Prior to purchase it was used first as a private dwelling, then as post office.

in St. Thomas was taken at a meeting March 6, 1908, at which 149 persons, representing the two congregations, were present. Government Secretary L. C. Helweg Larsen presided. Several resolutions were adopted, one of which recommended the establishment of a governing body consisting of five members: the pastor, the two wardens, and one member from each of the Danish and the English divisions of the Church. Upon the recommendation of Provst Petersen, Government Secretary Larsen was unanimously elected for the Danish group and Orville Sidney Kean for the English group. The two church wardens were Valdemar Riise, son of the famous apothecary, A. H. Riise, and Carl A. Smidt, post office clerk. This was the first really democratic organization of the Lutheran church in St. Thomas.⁸

Orville Sidney Kean was born in St. Thomas June 2, 1871, and was for many years until his death the auditor of the National Bank of the Danish West Indies (the Danish predecessor of the Virgin Islands National Bank), as well as of other prominent business corporations on the island. He was highly esteemed for his intelligence, culture, and spiritual and temperate habits. He filled such church positions as deacon, warden, auditor, and member of the joint committee referred to above. Over the years ten pastors sought his advice on various matters in complete confidence.

⁸ It was decided that thenceforth the two wardens should be chosen not as hitherto from the Danish-speaking group, but one from each of the two language groups.

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Since 1892 Amos Rudolph Benjamin, a native of St. Thomas, born in 1876, has without a single break been active in the work of the Lutheran church there. In this more than half a century he has been Sunday-school superintendent for ten years, Sunday-school teacher for fifteen years, and a member of the choir for forty-seven years. In 1918 he succeeded C. L. I. Baerendtsen as clerk of the church, holding the office until it was discontinued some time after the transfer. Eighteen Lutheran pastors associated with him in his mature life have often had occasion to say, "I must see Amos Benjamin about this."

That same year the Bethania Mission House was acquired in St. Thomas and the Lutheran parish hall, Bethesda, was built in Frederiksted and dedicated by Pastor Niels N. Westergaard. Like Bethania it has been used not only for church but also for community purposes. In Christiansted The Steeple was reopened as a Lutheran mission hall September 20, 1909. It was used until the time of the transfer, when the local government acquired it. These Lutheran parish halls are similar to the "mission houses" in Denmark which are connected with either the Inner Mission or the Grundtvigian Society. Both of these movements have left a lasting impression upon the Lutheran Church in the Virgin Islands.

On St. John, despite the great decrease in population (in 1901 the inhabitants were only 925), the Lutheran work took on new life in the beginning of the century. A Sunday school was organized at Cruz Bay September 2, 1904. On October 1, 1910, a building was purchased for

the use of the Sunday school,⁹ and after a thorough renovation it was dedicated on April 9, 1911, by Provst Petersen under the name of Nazareth Lutheran Chapel. On March 9, 1915, an empty lot adjoining the property was purchased,¹⁰ and on March 12 another adjoining lot was donated to the Sunday school.¹¹ J. E. Lindquist, a Dane, was clerk for the congregation until his retirement March 31, 1915, when he was succeeded by Carl Emanuel Francis, a Negro. Both conducted services during the periods between the pastor's monthly visits. Since the death of Carl Francis in 1936, Mr. Henry Samuel has been the clerk.

According to the 1911 census, the various churches on the islands had decreased a great deal in membership during the preceding generation. In that year there were on the islands 3,206 Lutherans, 9,050 Anglicans, 7,359 Roman Catholics, and 5,543 Moravians. Of the population 8 per cent were white, 12 per cent mixed, the rest Negroes. Of the whites, 373 were born in Denmark, 82 in the United States. A little more than 1,200 poor persons received financial assistance from the government.¹²

In order to bring complaints and requests directly before the government in Copenhagen, the colored population on St. Croix twice sent Hans Bishop, prominent Lutheran Negro of Christiansted, to Denmark as their deputy. Hans Bishop was cordially received by C. E. Brandes, Danish

⁹ Purchased from Mrs. Olivia Lucas of St. John.

¹⁰ Purchased from Mrs. Martha Bastian of St. John.

¹¹ Donated by L. Delinaris.

¹² Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

minister of finance, and through Mrs. Hjort Lorentzen, wife of a former Danish West Indian government official, he was introduced to the king. The result was not only a better understanding of the social and economic conditions of the colored population in the Danish islands, with improvements along certain lines, but also the development of a remarkable friendship between Hans Bishop and their majesties the king and the queen and other members of the Danish royal house.¹³

New Lutheran work was begun at Kingshill, St. Croix, when Pastor Richard H. E. Thomsen was stationed there August 19, 1908. He was succeeded by Pastor E. V. K. T. Olsen in 1912. In September of that year the cornerstone was laid for the Kingshill Lutheran Church by Governor L. C. Helweg Larsen and Pastors Olsen and Faber, the latter of Frederiksted. The church was consecrated June 8, 1913, during Pastor Olsen's ministry. Through the initiative of Mr. Fowler Andersen, manager of Bethlehem sugar factory, the grounds around the Kingshill church were improved and acquired the reputation of being the most beautiful spot on the island of St. Croix. After Pastor Olsen's departure in 1916, Kingshill Lutheran Church became part of the Frederiksted parish.

Pastor Olsen worked eagerly for a better understanding between the white and the native population on St. Croix. He tried to arouse interest in sports all over the island. On December 1, 1912, he succeeded in consecrating a

¹³ Hans Bishop was the proud possessor of a large collection of cards, letters, cablegrams, etc., from members of the Danish royalty.

sports ground at Christiansted, naming it the Holger Danske ground. By and by, as a result of his endeavors, various football and cricket clubs were organized on the island, and numerous sport contests took place at Fredriksted, Bethlehem, Christiansted, and Enfield Green.¹⁴

In Christiansted the Lutheran old people's home, Pleasant Grove, was dedicated February 22, 1914. The main building was also used for some time as residence for the pastor.

The sixth and finally successful attempt at selling the islands, when disclosed to the Danish public by the Zahle ministry in 1916, met with vigorous and determined opposition. However, "when the matter came before the Danish people for their decision in December, 1916, the vote in favor of the ministerial plan for the sale stood 283,694 to 157,596."¹⁵ The islands were sold for \$25,000,000. They passed under the sovereignty of the United States January 17, 1917, when Secretary Lansing of the United States of America and Danish Minister Brun exchanged ratifications of the treaty of purchase. But the islands were not formally turned over until March 31, 1917, on which day ceremonies took place on both St. Thomas and St. Croix.

"The popular municipal physician, Dr. V. Christensen, suggested that since these islands belonged to the group named by Christopher Columbus as the Virgin Islands, they be henceforth known as The Virgin Islands of the

¹⁴ Larsen, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

¹⁵ Westergaard, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

United States. This met with the approval of the Government . . ." ¹⁶

The status of Denmark at the time of the transfer was fittingly described in a sermon by the Rev. A. H. Leslie, minister of the Reformed Dutch church on St. Thomas, preached in his church February 21, 1917, at a community celebration to mark the approaching event. Distinguished Danish and United States guests, government officers and officials, members of the colonial council, and other prominent persons were present at the service. A quotation from that sermon follows:

"Of what are our thoughts now that the end is reached? Of oppression and misrule? Exploited sources? A people crippled with taxes to enrich others? Education systematically neglected? Religion set at naught, or interpreted with narrow bigotry? Officials as a class and caste apart? The rule of the few over the many? Justice sold to the highest bidder? Racial antagonism living or active? Government without heart or sympathy for the poor? The experience of every man and woman here makes the answer to the question, NO!"

¹⁶ Quotations cited from the article, "Recollections from the Transfer," by Louis M. Monsanto, in *The Virgin Islands Magazine*, a commemorative edition of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the transfer.

XXI

Post-Transfer Adjustments

Naturally, the only church in the Danish West Indies to be seriously and adversely affected by the transfer of the islands to the United States of America was the Lutheran. But the Church survived! By reason of its missionary labors which had brought the large native congregations into being, worshiping first in the Creole language and then in English, the Lutheran Church was in a position to take the transfer in its stride and continue its work confident of the future.

On March 4, 1917, a Danish American Lutheran pastor, A. C. Kildegaard, from New York City, visited St. Thomas and presented greetings from the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America, which had sent him to investigate conditions on the islands with the view to taking over the Lutheran work. Being solicitous for the future welfare of the church, the Danish government contributed \$1,000 to defray the expenses of sending three delegates to the convention of the General Council to complete plans for joining that body. At a meeting held at Frederiksted June 19, 1917, Pastor Axel

Bergh of St. Thomas, Pastor Paul Helweg Larsen of Christiansted, and Reginald McFarlane of Frederiksted were elected as the delegates.

The lay delegate, Mr. McFarlane, was a teacher of manual arts in the Frederiksted public schools and clerk at Frederiksted Lutheran Church. In April, 1908, through the influence of Pastor Niels N. Westergaard, Danish Lutheran minister at Frederiksted, Mr. McFarlane was elected a delegate of the Frederiksted Branch of the Danish Blue Cross Temperance Society to its annual convention held that year in Horsens, Denmark. There and elsewhere in Denmark he was received with open arms as an honored guest. The fact that he was a Negro delegate from the Danish West Indies and spoke Danish fluently gave him great popularity among the rich as well as the poor. Hjort Lorentzen, former government official in the islands, held a reception in his honor; and Provst H. Hoffmeyer, who had visited the islands in 1904 on behalf of Bishop Bølle Rørdam, the bishop of Sjaelland See, arranged for him an audience with Her Majesty Queen Louise of Denmark, who, as already indicated, had a warm heart for the people of the Danish West Indies. During the summer of 1909 he traveled extensively throughout Denmark, and returned to the islands in the fall. On April 19, 1915, he was appointed clerk of the two congregations (Danish and English) at Frederiksted.

In July, 1917, as a result of the transfer, about one hundred Danes, mostly prominent persons, left on S. S. "St. Thomas" for Denmark. On September 7 an "elders' meet-

ing" was held on St. Thomas for the purpose of instructing the delegates to the General Council. Only one was present but the results of the meeting were reported to the other delegates on St. Croix. Pastor Bergh died suddenly October 8, and J. H. Kastrup was chosen in his place.

The three delegates were cordially received by the convention at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 24-29, 1917. The first plan in connection with taking over the Lutheran work on the islands had been to assign it to the Foreign Mission Board of the General Council, but upon the objection of the delegates, who argued that the people in the Virgin Islands were not heathen or foreigners, the provisional committee recommended the creation of a new board and the convention adopted the recommendation, creating the Mission Board of the Virgin Islands.¹ Other matters were taken up for discussion and decision, and when the convention was over, the delegates, successful in their endeavors and happy over the plans agreed upon, returned to the Virgin Islands.²

The Americanization of the Lutheran Church in the Virgin Islands was the main achievement of the post-transfer period. It was accomplished in each congregation slowly and cautiously, first by introducing an American Lutheran hymnal and Sunday-school literature; later by organizing the congregations, the church councils, and

¹ *Minutes of the General Council*; Philadelphia, 1917; pp. 94-104, 112, 339.

² The foregoing information in this chapter is based chiefly on St. Thomas and Frederiksted parish records and on the personal notes of Mr. MacFarlane, the lay delegate.

various societies after the American pattern.

Due to the long distance between Denmark and the West Indies, no Danish bishop ever made an official visit to the islands, but in the early 1920's Rev. Harold Ostfeld, bishop of Sjaelland See and primate of Denmark, stopping over on St. Thomas, attended the church service. This happened on a Sunday when the pastor was conducting services on St. John and the clerk, Amos R. Benjamin, was conducting services on St. Thomas. Thus a colored Lutheran layman had the rare privilege of preaching the gospel to the archbishop of that nation and church which had done so much in Christianizing his people.

When thousands of colored people left the islands after the transfer and settled in New York City, the West Indies Mission Board of the United Lutheran Church in America organized a mission among them in Harlem. The Rev. Dr. Zenan M. Corbe, executive secretary of the board, became the first pastor of the new congregation which took the name of the Church of the Transfiguration. Paul E. West, a native of Christiansted, assisted the pastor while studying theology. After his ordination to the Lutheran ministry the Rev. Mr. West became the second pastor of the congregation. Today the Lutheran Church of the Transfiguration, and other churches later organized in the United States, stand alongside the churches of the Virgin Islands as living and growing monuments to Kjeld Jensen Slagelse and the many pastors, priests, missionaries, catechists, clerks, and others who followed him and labored with the various peoples and problems of the Virgin Islands.

Appendix A

Lutheran Ministers and Missionaries in the Virgin Islands

†*Pastor died in or en route to one of the islands*

**Pastor supplied*

ST. THOMAS and ST. JOHN

Ministers

Residing in Charlotte Amalie

†Kjeld Jensen Slagelse: Jan. ? 1666-68; 1671; died at sea April 25, 1672

†Georg Jørgen Jensen Morsing: April 26 (23?), 1673; died the day he arrived

Theodore Christensen Helsatus Riisbrick: June 9, 1674 to March 28, 1678

Albert Bastian Petersen: Jan. ? 1681 to April ? 1863

Jens Frederiksen Hofman: Feb. 24, 1686 to Feb. 27, 1689

†Jacob Andersen: Jan. 29, 1691 to Aug. 10, 1692

†Ephraim Monrad: June 19 to Sept. 30, 1696

David Fenrich: Sept. 3, 1698 to March 28, 1701

Andreas Chorne: Oct. 17, 1701 to May, 1708

Andreas Peter Samsing: March 11, 1708 to May 22, 1712

†Christian Fischer: Oct. 18, 1711 to Dec. 10, 1714

†Cort Simonsen Riise: Jan. 7 to Feb. 23, 1717

†Hans Christian Brandt: July 3, 1718 to Nov. 5, 1720

†Jacob Tamdrup: June 26, 1721 to Jan. 19, 1723

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- Philip Adam Dietrichs: April 30, 1724 to March 11, 1732
 †Andreas Thambesen Tams: March 20, 1732 to Nov. 1, 1733
 Lens Blath, Navy chaplain: 1733-34
 †Nicolai Frederik Bang: Jan. 13, 1735 to June 14, 1736
 †Jacob Hofmann: May 30 to Dec. 3, 1737
 †Mogens Valdemarsen Walberg: April 29 to Aug. 4, 1739
 †Søren Ulrich Heldt: ? to Sept. 14, 1740
 *Hans Jacob Ottesen Stoud: appointed for St. Croix but supplied
 at St. Thomas frequently from July 28, 1740 to Aug. 13, 1741
 Svend Bjergboe: Aug. 13, 1741 to Sept. 25, 1747
 †Rudolph Burenaeus Frick: Nov. 7, 1750 to Oct. 20, 1754
 †Hans Aereboe: July 25 to Nov. 7, 1750
 Samuel Baar: July 25, 1754 to April 22, 1759
 Jorgen Borch: April 22, 1759 to July 20, 1765 (previously
 missionary on St. Croix)
 †Matthias Salling: June 16 to Aug. 7, 1765
 *Niels Schow: pastor on St. Croix, but supplied at St. Thomas
 from Aug. 7, 1765 to Aug. 17, 1766
 Matthias Aalholm: Aug. 17, 1766 to Dec. 25, 1768
 *Niels Schow: supplied again from Dec. 25, 1768 to Dec. 1769
 Christian Bølle Rørdam: Dec. 20, 1769 to Oct. 22, 1775
 Martin Peter Ohm: Oct. 22, 1775 to July 21, 1779; became
 pastor on St. Croix
 †Niels Falck Gloersen: April 16, 1780 to Nov. 2, 1785
 *Martin Peter Ohm: supplied from Nov. 2, 1785 to Feb. 13, 1788
 †August Krejdahl: Feb. 13, 1788 to Jan. 27, 1790 (previously
 missionary on St. Thomas)
 Thorkild Lund: Jan. 27, 1790 to July 15, 1795 (missionary on
 St. Thomas from 1788 to 1797)
 Adam Wilhad Volkersen: July 15, 1795 to Nov. 1, 1813 (sus-
 pended by English governor during the English occupation)
 Jørgen Nicolai Oxholm: Jan. 1, 1813 to April 23, 1817; pre-
 viously minister on St. Croix
 †Adam Wilhad Volkersen: April 23, 1817 to July 18, 1819
 *Jørgen Nicolai Oxholm: supplied from St. Croix, July 27, 1819
 to Nov. 21, 1820

APPENDIX A

- Jens Peter Karmach: Nov. 21, 1820 to Feb. 13, 1821
- *Søren Risbjerg Ortved: supplied from St. Croix, Aug. 1, 1826 to Dec., 1827
- Johannes Jacob Praetorius: May 1, 1828 to Jan., 1830
- *Jens Klint Bagger: supplied from St. Croix, Jan. 8, 1830 to Jan. 15, 1832
- Andreas Christian Brøndsted: Jan. 15, 1832 to June 20, 1840 (supplied in St. Croix from March 7, 1838 to Dec. 15, 1839)
- *Jens Klint Bagger: supplied from St. Croix from June 2, 1840 to July 2, 1843
- Julius Ferdinand Tolderlund: July 2, 1843 to June 22, 1850 (supplied on St. Croix from May 5 to end of June 1845)
- Wilhelm August Tidemand: June 22, 1850 to June 1, 1854
- †Hans Martin Colbjørnesen Hesselberg: March 4 to July 5, 1855
- *Alexander Brandt: supplied from St. Croix from July, 1855 to Feb., 1857; previously catechist, then minister, on St. Croix
- †Peter Anton Frederik Baumann: Feb. 1 to Aug. 12, 1857
- *August Frederik Christian Ussing: supplied from St. Croix from Nov. 1, 1857 to Jan. 27, 1858
- †Louis Armand Emanuel Septimanie du Plessis de Richelieu: Jan. 27, 1858 to June 18, 1859
- *August Frederik Christian Ussing and Daniel Christjern Vater, both of St. Croix, supplied alternately from June 29, 1859 to June 22, 1860
- Johan Christian Peter Clausen: June 22, 1860 to July 15, 1866
- *Joachim Godsche Willemoes: supplied from St. Croix from July 17, 1866 to Aug., 1867
- Johan Christian Peter Clausen: Aug. 30, 1867 to Aug. 15, 1870
- *Joachim Godsche Willemoes and Emil Valdemar Lose: supplied from St. Croix alternately from Aug. 15, 1870 to Oct. 11, 1871
- Emil Valdemar Lose: Oct. 14, 1871 to April 16, 1874; again from Nov. 28, 1874 to April 23, 1877; and again from Nov. 27, 1877 to Oct., 1881
- *Pastors J. G. Willemoes and Thomas Johannes A. Engholm from St. Croix supplied during vacancies

VIRGIN ISLANDS STORY

- *Jens Christian Fejlberg: from Frederiksted, supplied from Sept. 29, 1878 to May 6, 1880
- †Ernst Christian Teisner: Nov. 1, 1881 to Feb. 7, 1884; died at Ponce, Puerto Rico, Feb. 18, 1884
- Hans Johansen: April 18, 1885 to April 24, 1890
- *H. C. Johannes Lawaetz, from Christiansted, and Johan Gotfred Heje, from Frederiksted: supplied from April 24, 1890 to Dec., 1890
- Hans Johansen: Dec., 1890 to Aug. 18, 1897
- Christian Kragh: Oct. 6, 1897 to 1904 (left New York for Denmark, March 22, 1905)
- *Niels Peder Nygaard and Niels Nielsen Westergaard of Frederiksted: supplied from the fall of 1904 to March 22, 1906
- Laurits Johannes Angelo Petersen: Dec. 17, 1905, vicar; July 30, 1906, minister; Aug. 19, 1908, provst. Furlough from April 10, 1911 to Jan., 1912
- Johannes Henrik Faber: secretary of the Y.M.C.A. of St. Thomas and assistant to Provst Petersen from 1909 to 1910; ordained Dec. 14, 1910; became pastor at Frederiksted Jan. 14, 1912
- Peter Henrik Edward Kastrup: secretary of Y.M.C.A. of St. Thomas and assistant to Provst Petersen from Jan. 5, 1913 to April 26, 1915, when he became pastor
- †Axel Bergh: June 18, 1916 to Oct. 8, 1917
- Peter Henrik Kastrup: see above—left Oct. 18, 1920
- J. P. Christensen: May 23, 1920 to May 14, 1923; became pastor of Christiansted Sept. 9, 1923
- *Alfred Ostrom: supplied from June 9, 1923 to Sept. 30, 1923
- *Jens Christian Pedersen: supplied from Sept. 30, 1923 to Oct. 21, 1923
- *Alfred Ostrom: supplied from Nov. 17, 1923 to Jan. 7, 1924
- *Jens Christian Pedersen: supplied from Jan. 7, 1924 to July 13, 1924
- N. Toftdahl Nesgaard: July 13, 1924 to Nov. 28, 1927
- *Jens Christian Pedersen: supplied from Dec. 10, 1927 to April 30, 1930
- *Alfred Ostrom: supplied from May 1, 1930 to Sept. 28, 1930

APPENDIX A

Herman David Whitteker: Sept. 28, 1930 to May 27, 1939; died
Aug. 23, 1939

*Leopold Caban: supplied from May 27, 1939 to Feb. 11, 1940

Dana H. Johnson: Feb. 11, 1940 to Oct., 1941

*Paul John Kirsch: supplied Oct. to Dec., 1941

*William George Arbaugh: supplied Dec., 1941 to April, 1942

J. Roy Strock: April 12, 1942 to Aug. 15, 1942

Jens Peter Mouritz Larsen: Sept. 1, 1942 to May, 1944

*Hugh Paton: supplied Feb. 1, 1944 to Aug., 1944

*George Gordon Parker: supplied Aug., 1944 to Nov. 27, 1944

Jens Peter Mouritz Larsen: Nov. 27, 1944 to June 28, 1947

*Frank O. Vavrin: supplied from June 28, 1947 to Oct. 1, 1947

Jens Peter Mouritz Larsen: Oct. 1, 1947 to —

Missionaries

Jorgen Jensen Berg: 1757 to 1759

†Ivar Sten: 1757; died at sea

Johannes Christian Kingo: 1757 to 1782

Claus Møller: 1757 to 1759 (on St. John only)

Frantz Sørensen: 1759 to 1764

Hans Salling: 1766 to 1771

Erik Røring Wold: 1766 to 1771 (on St. John only)

Niels Olufsen Salling: 1773 to 1780

August Krejdahl: 1781 to 1786

Torkild Lund: 1788 to 1797, minister, 1790-95

ST. CROIX

Ministers

Residing in Christiansted

†Gunder Thomas Syndermann: arrived 1736 died that same year

†Hans Jacob Ottesen Stoud: 1740-49

†Andreas Bjergboe: 1750

Soren A. Paludau: 1752

†Johan Bøtzau: 1755

Peder Gutfeld: 1756-59

VIRGIN ISLANDS STORY

- Hans Schousboe: 1756-62
Niels Schow: 1762-69
Svend Egeroed: 1769-80
Martin Peter Ohm: 1780-92
†Andreas Yoachim Brandt: 1792-1802
Hans J. Mackeprang: 1803-12
Jorgen Nicolai Oxholm: 1813-22
Søren Risbjerg Ortved: 1824-28
Jens Klint Bagger: 1829-45
†Hother A. S. Hanschell: 1846-53
Alexander Brandt: 1853-57
August Frederik Christian Ussing: 1857-63
Joachim Godsche Willmoes: 1864-77
Thomas Johannes A. Engholm: 1878-80
Emil Valdemar Lose: 1881-87
H. C. Johannes Lawaetz: 1889-1903
Niels Peder Nygaard: 1904-09
J. R. Johannes Jensen (vicar): 1907-08
Paul Helweg Larsen (provst): 1910-19
*Charles H. Hemsath: Apr. 13, 1919 to June 2, 1919
George W. Critchlow: July 20, 1919 to June 18, 1922
Anton E. Jensen: July 16, 1922 to Apr. 27, 1923
J. P. Christensen: Sept. 9, 1923 to Aug. 30, 1924
Daniel E. Rupley: Oct. 19, 1924 to Sept. 7, 1926
*Alfred Ostrom: Sept. 19, 1926 to July 15, 1928
Ivar O. Iverson: Dec. 2, 1928 to Apr. 2, 1934
Viggo J. A. C. Mengers: Dec. 16, 1934 to July 31, 1938
Hans Naether: Sept. 12, 1938 to Aug. 5, 1940
Elmer H. Ganskopp: Sept. 8, 1940 to May 6, 1945
Ralph E. LaFontaine: Sept. 16, 1945 to Aug. 31, 1947
Leo S. LaFontaine: Sept. 1, 1947 to —

Residing in Frederiksted

- Daniel Christjern Vater: 1858-65
Emil Valdemar Lose: 1867-71
Thomas Johannes A. Engholm: 1872-78

APPENDIX A

†Jens Christian Fejlberg: 1878-88
Johan Gotfred Heje: 1889-97
Niels Peder Nygaard: 1897-1904
Niels Nielsen Westergaard: 1905-10
Richard Heinrick Eusebius Thomsen: 1911
Johannes Henrik Faber: 1912-18
Jens Christian Pedersen: 1918-23
Louis G. Gray: June 30, 1928 to June 28, 1930
Eugene G. Kreider: Oct. 5, 1930 to July 18, 1935
Jens Larsen: Dec. 9, 1935 to Aug. 31, 1942
Everett J. Jensen: Nov. 6, 1943 to April 23, 1944
G. Gordon Parker: Nov. 30, 1944 to July 14, 1946
Everett P. Buck: July 14, 1946 to June 30, 1948
Merle G. Franke: July 1, 1948 to —

Residing at Kingshill

Richard Heinrick Eusebius Thomsen: 1908-11
E. V. K. T. Olsen: 1912-16

Curates

Wilhelm August Tidemand (in Christiansted): 1845-50
Hother Aug. Sabine Hanschell (in Frederiksted): 1843-46
Alexander Brandt (in Frederiksted): 1848-53

Missionaries

Hans O. Messler: 1757-62
Jørgen Borsch: 1757-58
Thue Ole Ravn: 1757-76
†Christoffer Høy: 1757-
†Niels Bie: 1757-
Nic. J. Brøchner: 1757-60
†Johannes L. Schow: 1759-60
Jens Bondorph: 1766-72
Peder Lillelund: 1766-67
Andreas Faith: 1766-74
Holger Tryde: 1766-

VIRGIN ISLANDS STORY

Peter Grum: 1773-

Hans Wandal: 1781-87

Hans Tjellesen: 1788-95

Hans J. Mackeprang: 1799-1803

The lists are compiled from records in the various parsonages on the islands. The list of Lutheran clergymen on St. Thomas given by Knox, *op. cit.*, p. 261, is both incorrect and incomplete.

Appendix B

Important Dates

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1665, June 5 | Skipper Erik Smidt and Kjeld Jensen Slagelse, Lutheran minister, sign contract for service on St. Thomas. |
| 1665, Dec. | (Or Jan., 1666) Smidt and Slagelse arrive at St. Thomas, establish Lutheran church. |
| 1671, March 11 | Newly organized Danish West Indian Company receives royal charter with power to select governors and Lutheran ministers for the Danish West Indies. |
| 1671, April 29 | Danish West Indian Company selects Georg Jørgen Iversen as governor of the Danish West Indies and Slagelse as Lutheran minister. |
| 1672, April 25 | Lutheran minister, Kjeld Jensen Slagelse, dies and is buried at sea. |
| 1685 | Denmark proclaims religious tolerance to Jews and Roman Catholics, permitting them to hold private church services. |
| 1706 | Christ Church, first Lutheran church building on St. Thomas erected. |
| 1717, March 25 | The island of St. Jan (John) occupied by Denmark. |
| 1732, Dec. 31 | First Moravian missionaries arrive on St. Thomas. |

VIRGIN ISLANDS STORY

1733, June 15	French island of St. Croix purchased by Denmark from France.
1734, Sept. 6	Denmark officially takes over the French island of St. Croix.
1735 or 1736	First Danish Lutheran minister arrives on St. Croix.
1753, May 27	The Steeple, former French Roman Catholic church at Christiansted, St. Croix, consecrated as The Lutheran Church of the Lord of Zebaoth (abandoned 1834).
1754, Aug. 30	The West Indian Company purchased by the Danish crown.
1754, Sept. 20	Danish royal ordinance grants complete religious freedom to Roman Catholics in the Danish West Indies.
1757, July 10	First Lutheran missionaries arrive in Danish West Indies.
1766	First Lutheran church built at Frederiksted, St. Croix.
1770	First literature published in Creole.
1772, Aug. 31	Severe hurricane on St. Croix, the vivid description of which by Alexander Hamilton (Sept. 6, 1772) won him an education at King's College, New York, which started him on his great career. Hurricane also destroyed the Episcopal (Anglican) church in Christiansted.
1787, Dec. 24	Public schools decreed for slaves.
1792, Jan. 15	Dedication of the present Lutheran church building at Frederiksted, St. Croix.
1792, March 16	Abolition of importation of slaves decreed.
1793, July 14	Dedication of the present Lutheran church at St. Thomas by Pastor Thorkild Lund.

APPENDIX B

1814, March 29	Danish royal ordinance decreeing protection and liberation of the Jews (first of its kind in history).
1833, Aug. 28	Great Britain emancipates its slaves.
1834, April 18	Full equality between whites and Free Colored in the Danish West Indies proclaimed.
1834, July 24	Reformed Dutch church in Christiansted, St. Croix (built in 1744), dedicated as a Lutheran church.
1839, June 4	Royal Danish ordinance decrees free compulsory education in the Danish West Indies.
1840, Nov. 15	The last "heathen" in the Danish West Indies baptized by the Lutheran church on St. Croix.
1841, Jan. 12	Opening of the first school under the decree of June 4, 1839, at Big Princess, St. Croix.
1847, July 28	Preliminary emancipation proclaimed.
1848, July 3	Slave rebellion on St. Croix and emancipation proclamation by Governor General Peter von Scholten.
1858, April 1	Frederiksted Lutheran Church became a separate parish.
1868, Jan. 9	First attempt to sell the Danish West Indian islands to the United States.
1878, Oct. 1	Labor riot in St. Croix.
1908, July 17	Bethania Lutheran Mission Hall dedicated at St. Thomas.
1908	Bethesda Lutheran Mission Hall dedicated at Frederiksted.
1908, Nov. 10	Ebenezer Lutheran Orphanage Asylum established at Frederiksted.
1913, June 8	Consecration of Kingshill Lutheran Church, St. Croix.
1914, Feb. 22	Dedication of Pleasant Grove, Lutheran old people's home at Christiansted.

VIRGIN ISLANDS STORY

- 1917, March 31 Danish West Indian Islands officially transferred to the United States.
- 1917, Oct. 26 Lutheran churches of the Virgin Islands accepted by the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America.
- 1918, Nov. 14 General Council merged into the United Lutheran Church in America.

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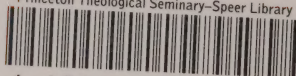
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