

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

SKYTSBORG (Blackbeard's Castle)

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: SKYTSBORG (Blackbeard's Castle)

Other Name/Site Number: Fogarthy's Castle, Kjaer's Castle

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: No. 38 Dronningens Gade, King's Quarter

Not for publication:

City/Town: Charlotte Amalie

Vicinity: X

State: U.S. Virgin Islands

County: St. Thoms

Code: 030

Zip Code: 00801

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X
Public-Local:
Public-State:
Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s):
District:
Site:
Structure: X
Object:

Number of Resources within Property Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

 buildings
 sites
 structures
 objects
0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ____ Entered in the National Register _____
____ Determined eligible for the National Register _____
____ Determined not eligible for the National Register _____
____ Removed from the National Register _____
____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper_____
Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Defense

Sub: Fortification

Current: Vacant/Not In Use

Sub:

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: OTHER: Military Fortification

MATERIALS:

Foundation: Limestone, Augite Andesite or "Blue Beach", Coral

Walls: Limestone, Augite Andesite or "Blue Beach", Coral

Roof: Wood

Other: Brick (facings for entrance and gun ports)

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**DESCRIPTION**

Skytsborg, commonly referred to as Blackbeard's Castle, is situated on Government Hill (formerly called Baggaertsbjerg in the seventeenth century) overlooking Charlotte Amalie and the St. Thomas Harbor. This fortified stone tower, constructed in 1679, is slightly ovoid in ground plan and is 20 feet in diameter at the base and tapers to 17 feet 8 inches at the top of the parapet. The total height of the tower is 31 feet 6 inches.

The interior of the tower was originally divided into four levels by three wooden floors with the first floor being stone. The original levels are clearly identified by projecting stone ledges on the interior side of the tapered stone walls. The walls of the tower are constructed of masonry rubble, 53 inches thick at the base and tapering to 40 inches at the edge of the parapet. The exterior and interior surfaces of the walls were originally covered with a thin coat of lime plaster and whitewashed. Although this covering does not exist on the exterior surface, traces of this plaster exist on the interior surfaces of the tower.

The tower is entered from the north through a four foot wide, seven foot high elliptical arched entrance. The entrance has three stone steps leading into the tower and the entrance opening is faced with brick. The floor is stone. The wooden entrance door and metal fittings are modern, but are in character with the tower.

The first floor room is 9 feet high. Nine brick lined gun ports (6 inches x 9 inches) are arranged in a radial pattern around the first floor room, seven feet above the present floor level. This would indicate that there once existed a wooden platform along the inner wall to serve as a firing platform for the gun ports. The floor of the first floor room is made of stone.

The second floor room is 7 feet 2 inches high. Thirteen brick lined gun ports, similar in size to those in the first floor room, are also arranged in a radial pattern. They are 6 feet above the present floor level. There is also a larger gun port or embrasure, measuring 14 inches x 26 inches, set 45 inches above the floor level in the south face of the tower. This is probably one of two embrasures cut into the existing tower in 1688 for cannons to command Charlotte Amalie Harbor and protect the north approaches to Christiansfort. The floor of the second floor room is made of reinforced concrete.

The third floor room is 7 feet high. Thirteen brick lined gun ports repeat the radial pattern found in the second floor room. The floor of the third floor room is also made of reinforced concrete.

The fourth floor room is also 7 feet high. The tower walls are pierced by 8 gun ports. Seven gun ports measure 12 inches x 16 inches, while the eighth one is 12 inches x 30 inches. This latter gun port is on the north face of the tower and probably served by a small cannon to protect the tower from the hills above.

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Originally above the fourth floor room was an open observation and gun platform on top of the tower. In the nineteenth century it was covered with a small wooden structure with windows when the tower served as a private astronomical observatory (see Figure 9). This structure was removed in the mid-twentieth century and replaced with a wooden floor below the parapet wall to simulate the original historic appearance of the open gun platform. The floor of the observation level is made of reinforced concrete covered with wood on top. A circular metal stair, which replaced the original wooden stairs, permits access to all floors.

INTEGRITY

Skytsborg is substantially unaltered from its original construction in 1679.

The original stone masonry construction of the tower and brick facing for the entrance and gun ports of the tower are in excellent shape. None of the original wooden interior floors are extant, although stone projections on the interior walls of the tower indicate the original locations of the floor levels.

Skytsborg served as an outer defensive work in conjunction with Schmidtsbjerg tower and Fort Christian, which also contained a tower called Trygborg situated within the fort. Trygborg was torn down in the 1870s during a renovation of Fort Christian. In the 1930s, Schmidtsbjerg was substantially modified. Large windows were cut through the rubble masonry tower walls of Schmidtsbjerg and the building was physically attached to a tourist hotel. It has guest rooms on its upper floors and a gift shop on the ground floor. Only Skytsborg still retains its original shape. Skytsborg is situated within a modern hotel complex, but the buildings and structures associated with the hotel are not physically attached to the tower.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National

Register Criteria:

A X B C D

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions):

A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Theme(s):

II. EUROPEAN COLONIAL EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT**D. Other European Exploration and Settlement****1. Scandinavian (Danish)**Areas of Significance: Exploration and Settlement
Military

Period(s) of Significance: 1679-1700

Significant Dates: 1679

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Governor Jørgen Iversen

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Skytsborg, or Blackbeard's Castle, is a rubble masonry tower constructed in 1679 by the Danish colonial government as part of a network of defensive fortifications to protect St. Thomas. It is the best remaining example of seventeenth-century Danish colonial military architecture in the United States, and is the only unmodified seventeenth-century fortified tower in the Caribbean.

Historical Background to Tower Fortifications

Throughout Europe in the fifteenth century, tower fortifications underwent a major modification in both intent and design as a result of the new technology of artillery. Prior to this time tall stone towers, or keeps, often served as isolated defensive structures or observation towers able to fend off Medieval attackers armed only with bows and arrows and rudimentary siege machines. As the power of artillery grew, allowing attackers to breach the high stone walls of such towers from a distance, military engineers began to reconfigure the shape of the tower to confront this threat and to incorporate the tower into larger more complex defensive designs (Duffy 1979:2).

Instead of tall isolated stone towers, the towers became shorter, usually not more than 40 feet tall, with walls up to twenty feet thick to counter the effects of battering by artillery. These massively designed towers, often incorporated into town walls as roundels, became gun-towers, or platforms for artillery. The first appearance of these gun-towers occurred in Renaissance Italy during the latter part of the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth century when control of the Italian states was contested between the French and Spanish crowns (Duffy 1979).

However, in the instance of coastal fortifications, isolated gun-towers still had an important defensive role. As Christopher Duffy in *Fire and Stone, The Science of Fortress Warfare* notes,

"Given the peculiar circumstances of coastal fortification, there was still a place for isolated and tall towers of a kind that would have been considered decidedly old-fashioned in inland warfare" (1975:155).

The offensive function of these towers dictated their form.

The designer of coastal fortification had to bear in mind that these works were intended to deliver a heavy weight of fire rather than to offer resistance against prolonged siege. These considerations, taken together with the usual lack of space and earth in coastal sites, made for a characteristic architecture of simple traces, and high exposed walls executed in full revetment. The parapets and embrasures were nearly always of masonry, even though "it had been found by experience, that nothing disheartens troops placed behind a wall so much, as pieces of stone flying about their ears" [Duffy 1975:154-155].

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During the first half of the sixteenth century, isolated masonry gun-towers made their appearance as coastal fortifications throughout the islands of the western Mediterranean, as defense against Moorish pirates as well as European raiders (Fornals 1992:31-32). At the same time, such isolated masonry structures also solved for the Spanish problems of harbor defense in the New World at Havana, Cuba; Santo Domingo, on Hispaniola; and San Juan, Puerto Rico (Anonymous 1985:149-150, 341, 377; Torres-Reyes 1955:60-62).

These New World towers erected by the Spanish in the sixteenth century were pulled down, with the exception of those built into the walls of La Fortaleza (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960), in favor of more extensive harbor fortifications in later years (Hoyt 1943:27-36). However, a sixteenth-century Genoese fortified tower on Mortella Point on the island of Corsica so ably defended itself against two British warships in 1794 that the design was copied and numerous "Martello Towers" were constructed in England, Ireland, and the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century (Duffy 1975:155; Floyd 1991:47-56).

Due to their adaptability to coastal areas, tower fortifications also continued to play an important role in military engineering in the Baltic Sea region where, during the seventeenth century, the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden fought over control of the seaways leading into the Baltic. The two preeminent military engineers during this conflict were Gottfried Hoffmann, of Denmark, and Erik Dahlberg, of Sweden. Both of these individuals utilized low thick fortifications to protect towns in combination with outlying fortified towers to protect key defensive points (Dahl 1992:6; Duffy 1985:191).

As noted by Christopher Duffy,

The surest signs of Dahlberg's presence were, however, his idiosyncratic multi-storeyed casemated towers, which he employed variously as island batteries, hilltop forts and inner keeps [1985:195-196].

Gottfried Hoffman during the mid-seventeenth century also constructed fortresses with outlying tower works at Fredericia and Helsingborg, Denmark (Dahl 1992:6).

Throughout the troubled seventeenth century, both contenders for control of the Baltic—Denmark and Sweden—also undertook efforts to establish colonies in the New World. Sweden established a military outpost called Fort Christina (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961) in the vicinity of present day Wilmington, Delaware, where they traded for furs until the colony was captured by the English in 1664. The Danes were more successful in establishing and holding a colony in the Caribbean.

In early 1671, the rechartered West India Company was created to establish a Danish colony on the island of St. Thomas. The Company selected as the Governor of the colony Jørgen Iversen. Iversen had gone to the British Caribbean Island of St. Kitts in 1651 at the age of 13 as an indentured servant. In the next fifteen years he rose to become a full partner in a Dutch trading concern in the Caribbean, from which he learned the necessary lessons for a successful colony (Gjessing 1982:2-3).

From 1672 until 1680, when he was relieved, Iversen succeeded

...in creating a community out of the multinational and racial components of the colony and steer it towards a promise of prosperity while building Christians Fort, carrying out an interisland trade for the company and establishing plantations on St. Thomas [Gjessing 1982:3].

It was during Governor Iversen's tenure that he had constructed Fort Christian and its outlying hilltop gun and watch tower of Skytsborg (Gjessing 1982:12). According to Frederik Gjessing

An Army Lieutenant had been included amongst the Company's functionaries of the proposed colony. He was to advise Governor Iversen in all military matters and provide the technical knowledge needed for the design and construction of a fort. To insure that this was done according to the standards of the times, a copy of Admiral Freitag's treatise on the construction of forts was included among the books that Jørgen Iversen brought out to guide him in his duties as the governor. This 17th century work provides layout of fortifications, explanations of the military functions of their different parts and served as a design handbook for military engineers [1982:17].

Unfortunately, the Lieutenant died on the voyage from Denmark to the Virgin Islands. Thus, "Iversen was left to make his own decision regarding the fortification" (Gjessing 1982:18) of Fort Christian and Skytsborg using Admiral Freitag's work. This document provided information on the fortification of coasts utilizing gun towers on hilltops to support major coastal forts, as pioneered by Hoffmann and Dahlberg.

Thematic Framework

II. EUROPEAN COLONIAL EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT

D. Other European Exploration and Settlement

1. Scandinavian (Danish)

Skytsborg has its roots in the earliest history of the Danish Virgin Islands. In 1678, war having broken out between France and Denmark, the French settlers of neighboring St. Croix launched an attempt to seize St. Thomas Island. Fortunately Governor Jørgen Iversen, since his arrival in 1672, had undertaken to construct a large four-sided fort at the harbor's edge of Charlotte Amalie, the capital of St. Thomas, called Christiansfort, or Fort Christian (designated an NHL in 1977). As the attackers did not have any siege cannon, this structure was easily able to withstand the brief siege imposed by the French from St. Croix, who were then forced to retreat.

One of the main features of Christiansfort was a squat three-story high tower, called Trygborg, on the north side of the fort. Twenty-six and one half feet high and ninety feet in circumference, the tower was intended as a self-contained last ditch defensive position if an enemy carried the outer walls of Christiansfort. The first floor was a large storeroom for

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ammunition and provisions. The walls of the upper two floors were studded with embrasures for both small arms and light cannon. This was the first military tower that can be documented on St. Thomas. Trygborg and the north side of Christiansfort were torn down in the nineteenth century during renovation.

Christiansfort provided a strong defense for St. Thomas against an attacking force from the sea. However, Governor Iversen realized that an attacking force could have pounded Christiansfort into submission by erecting an artillery battery on the high ground behind and north of the fort. For this reason, in 1679, Iversen ordered a tower fortification erected on Baggaertsbjerg, a hill top north of Christiansfort, similar to Trygborg. Such a tower would serve not only to deny the high ground to an attacking force, but could also serve as a watchtower providing a vantage point high enough to peer over Hassel Island to scan the open ocean; thereby providing early warning of an approaching enemy.

The success of the 1678 defense of St. Thomas convinced Iversen of the usefulness of stone towers for defense. Iversen's letter of February 2, 1680 to the directors of the Danish West India Company indicated that Skytsborg had been erected at Baggaertsbjerg by that date. In it he wrote "Since I had the Watchtower erected at Baggaertsbjerg I did not fear a hasty attack so much." A 1687 English map of St. Thomas harbor depicts and describes a "small white tower" on Baggaertsbjerg Hill to the north of Christiansfort. The relationship between the tower on Baggaertsbjerg Hill and Christiansfort is also shown on an undated late seventeenth century map (See Figures 3 and 4).

It is possible that Iversen used the Company stone mason, Simon Lamare, who had worked on Fort Christian and Trygborg tower to construct Skytsborg in 1679. According to Frederik Gjessing,

In August, 1674, Jørgen Iversen acquired for the Company a mulatto slave by the name of Simon Lamare. He was a mason and was to serve as the clerk of the works, for the construction of the fort [Fort Christian]. The phrasing in the account book of this transaction is of interest. It states "brought Simon Lamare to serve the Company for seven years" [1674-1681], implying some sort of contractual agreement with Simon Lamare for his manumission after an agreed upon period of service [1982:20].

In 1688, another crisis occurred when, in response to dynastic wars in Europe, the Spanish from Puerto Rico occupied Crab Island (Vieques) and Anguilla, thereby surrounding St. Thomas. This made the Danes in St. Thomas concerned as the Spanish had never abandoned their claim, by right of discovery, to the Virgin Islands. Governor Christopher Heins, who had replaced Iversen, undertook a program of upgrading the fortifications of Christiansfort and Skytsborg. He had embrasures cut in the walls of Skytsborg for two large cannon capable of covering the harbor. In addition, he erected a third tower to the east on Schmidtsbjerg. The erection of this last tower in 1689 completed the seventeenth-century defenses of St. Thomas (Gjessing and Gardner 1958:1-3).

In peacetime no soldiers were stationed at Skytsborg or Schmidtsbjerg, while a skeleton force was maintained at Christiansfort. If an attack by other colonial forces or a slave rebellion was anticipated, an alarm was sounded by firing a predetermined number of cannon at

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Christiansfort. This signal would call out all able-bodied whites and free blacks to take up arms and report to one of the three fortifications. A militia sergeant and eight men were posted in Skytsborg in emergencies. Such an alarm occurred in May of 1694 when a slave insurrection was anticipated from the newly established plantations in New Quarter, present day Tutu (a suburb of Charlotte Amalie).

Throughout the eighteenth century, Denmark maintained a policy of strict neutrality in all European wars. This policy proved more of an economic boon to the Danish West Indies than the planting of sugar cane because of the commerce it attracted to the island of St. Thomas to transact business. As a neutral Caribbean port of trade, all European traders respected that neutrality, and to a certain extent encouraged its prosperity, as it provided a means of trade between otherwise belligerent European powers. As the warehouses and trading houses of Charlotte Amalie expanded to meet this trade, the need for fortifications languished.

At this time, numerous European traders noted on maps the fortifications of St. Thomas. Van Keulen's 1719 map of St. Thomas, drafted for Governor Erik Bredal, in referring to Skytsborg noted, "De klyne Tooren es omgevallen" (the small tower is deteriorated) (See Figure 5). Similarly, a 1730 map of St. Thomas noted Skytsborg as a "gammellt fefalden Taarn" (an old collapsing tower) (See Figure 6). Oxholm's map of 1779 labelled Skytsborg as "et gammellt taarn" (an old tower).

During the early eighteenth century, Skytsborg passed out of government ownership to a planter named Johannes Jahnsen de Windt. De Windt's plantation lands, called Catarinabjerg after his wife Catherine, were willed to the Dutch Reform Church in 1759. The pastor, Reverend Francis Verboom, purchased the plantation and Skytsborg for 38,000 rigsdollars, subdivided the land, and sold off individual building lots.

By 1800, an Irish immigrant, Thim Fogarthy, acquired Skytsborg from Verboom. Fogarthy used the tower as his private residence. The first floor was used for storage, the second as a parlor and dining room, and the third floor as a bedroom. During the first three decades of the nineteenth century Skytsborg was commonly known as Fogarthy's Castle and it was noted on a map drawn by A. von Meley in 1807 (See Figure 7).

For most of the rest of the nineteenth century Skytsborg was called Kjaer's Castle after Thomas A. Kjaer who acquired the tower in 1826 and whose family owned the property until 1886. A view of St. Thomas harbor in ca. 1860 shows Skytsborg during the period of Kjaer's ownership (See Figure 8). Kjaer's interest in astronomy saw him convert the tower into an astronomical observatory by placing a telescope on the roof and putting a wooden structure on the top of the tower (See Figure 9). When Kjaer's heirs sold Skytsborg in 1886, the stone walls were solid but the wooden interior floors had to be replaced by the new owner, A. R. Raven, with concrete floors and a circular metal staircase.

In the mid-twentieth century, the area was acquired and converted into a hotel complex. At this time, the wooden observatory was removed and a wooden floor placed on the observation level of the tower. One-story hotel structures were constructed to the east and

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west of the tower, and a swimming pool was added to the cliff face south of, and just below, the tower. None of these modern structures touch the tower or are within the landmark boundary.

Skytsborg became associated with three distinct but erroneous legends during the nineteenth century. The first was that the tower was built by seventeenth-century buccaneers and later used by Captain Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard the Pirate. Blackbeard was never known to have visited St. Thomas. The second legend was that the tower was built by the first Danish colonization attempt (1665-1666). However, there is ample historical evidence that it was constructed in the second Danish colonization effort after Governor Jørgen Iversen arrived in 1672. The last legend had a Dutch settler, Carl Baggaert, building the tower in the 1670s on the high ground, then known as Baggaertsbjerg, north of Christiansfort as part of a dispute with Governor Iversen. However, there is no evidence that Baggaert erected this tower.

Skytsborg may be considered the oldest unaltered structure on St. Thomas. Although Christiansfort predates Skytsborg, extensive alterations of the fort in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries modified its seventeenth century appearance. Schmidtsbjerg tower has also been extensively renovated in the 1930s obscuring its earlier appearance. No other seventeenth-century structures survive in the Virgin Islands.

The three tower defensive network of Skytsborg, Schmidtsbjerg, and Trygborg (part of Christiansfort), although Medieval in appearance, admirably suited the defensive needs of St. Thomas in the seventeenth century. The principle danger at that time was not well-equipped professional armies, but was plundering raids, such as the French attack on St. Thomas in 1678, or slave rebellions. A small Danish force, supplemented with militia, could easily defend itself against such attacking forces. Nowhere else in the Caribbean were fortified towers constructed in the seventeenth century.

By the early eighteenth century, the development of accurate large calibre cannon necessitated a shift from outmoded and exposed medieval fortified towers to the lower profile Vauban-style of rectangular forts with protruding bastions at the corners.

The eighteenth century also brought large, well-equipped professional armies and navies from Europe to the Caribbean. The concentration of the Danish on St. Thomas on trade precluded the construction of new defensive works. The inadequacy of the tower network to defend the island was demonstrated in 1801 when the British forced a bloodless surrender of the island to keep it from being used by French naval forces during the Napoleonic Wars.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Hoyt, Edward A.

1943 *A History of the Harbor Defenses of San Juan P.R., Under Spain, 1509-1898*. Prepared at the Puerto Rico Coast Artillery Command.

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National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office, Atlanta.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☒ Previously Listed in the National Register. [1992]
- ☐ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- ☐ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office: **VIRGIN ISLANDS**
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other (Specify Repository): **Blackbeard's Castle, P.O. Box 6041, St. Thomas, USVI 00801**

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 0.01 acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
A 20 296050 2029400

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is the stone tower located at the peak of Government Hill, No. 39 Dronningens Gade, Kings Quarter, in Charlotte Amalie. The boundary is a circle 25 feet in diameter centered upon the axis of the tower located at the UTM reference point of 20 296050 2029400.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary for Skytsborg is intended to include just the tower area, which is the historic resource and which maintains its historic integrity. It does not include any modern structures located next to the tower at No. 39 Dronningens Gade.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Mark R. Barnes, Ph.D, Senior Archeologist
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National Park Service, SERO
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Telephone: 404/331-2638

Date: December 9, 1993

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Figure 3. Enlargement of a 1687 map of St. Thomas by the Englishman John Jenifer, showing Skytsborg tower, and Christians Fort (from Brønsted 1952:65).

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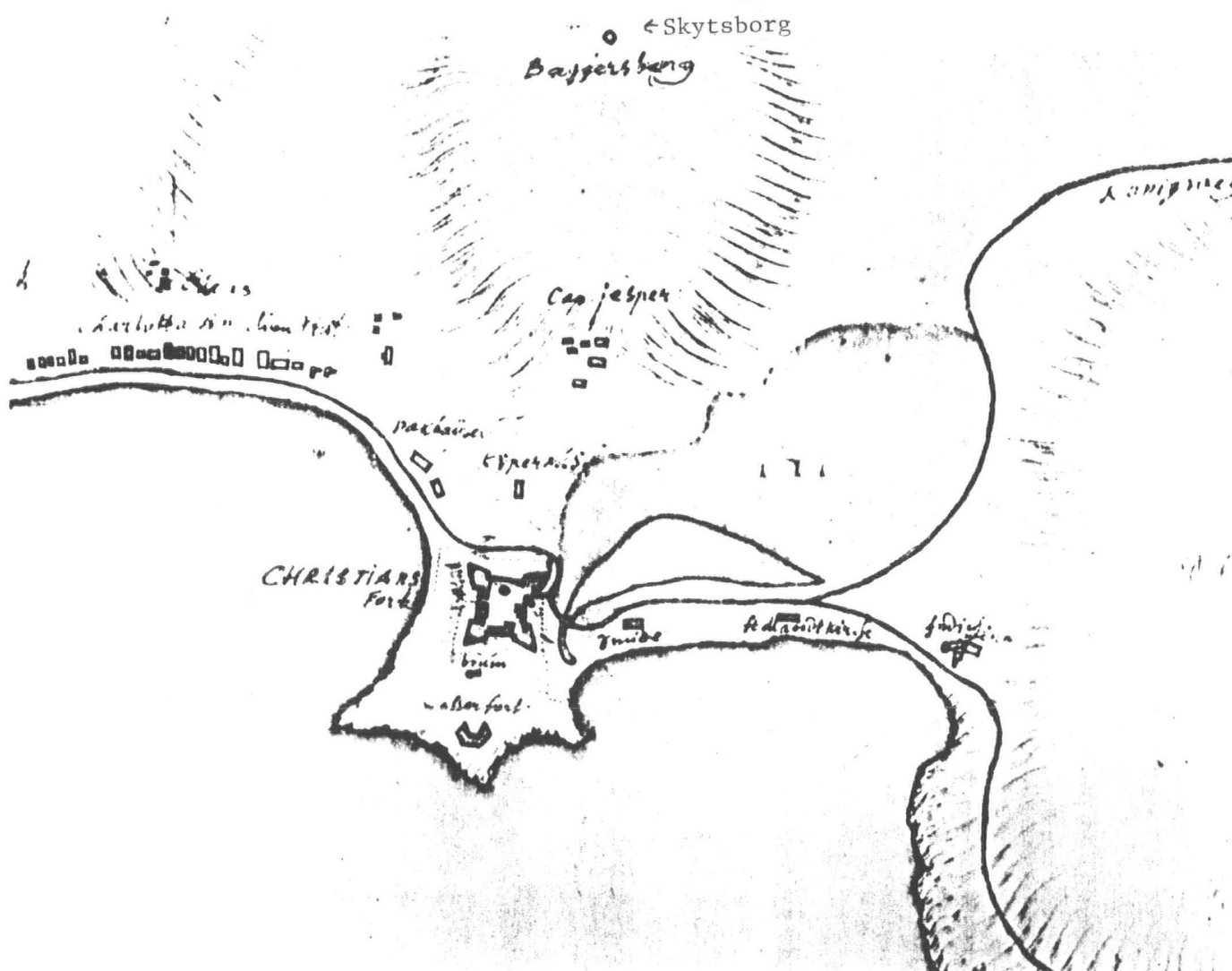


Figure 4. Late seventeenth century map showing the relationship between Skytsborg tower and Christians Fort (from Gjessing and Garnder 1958:17).

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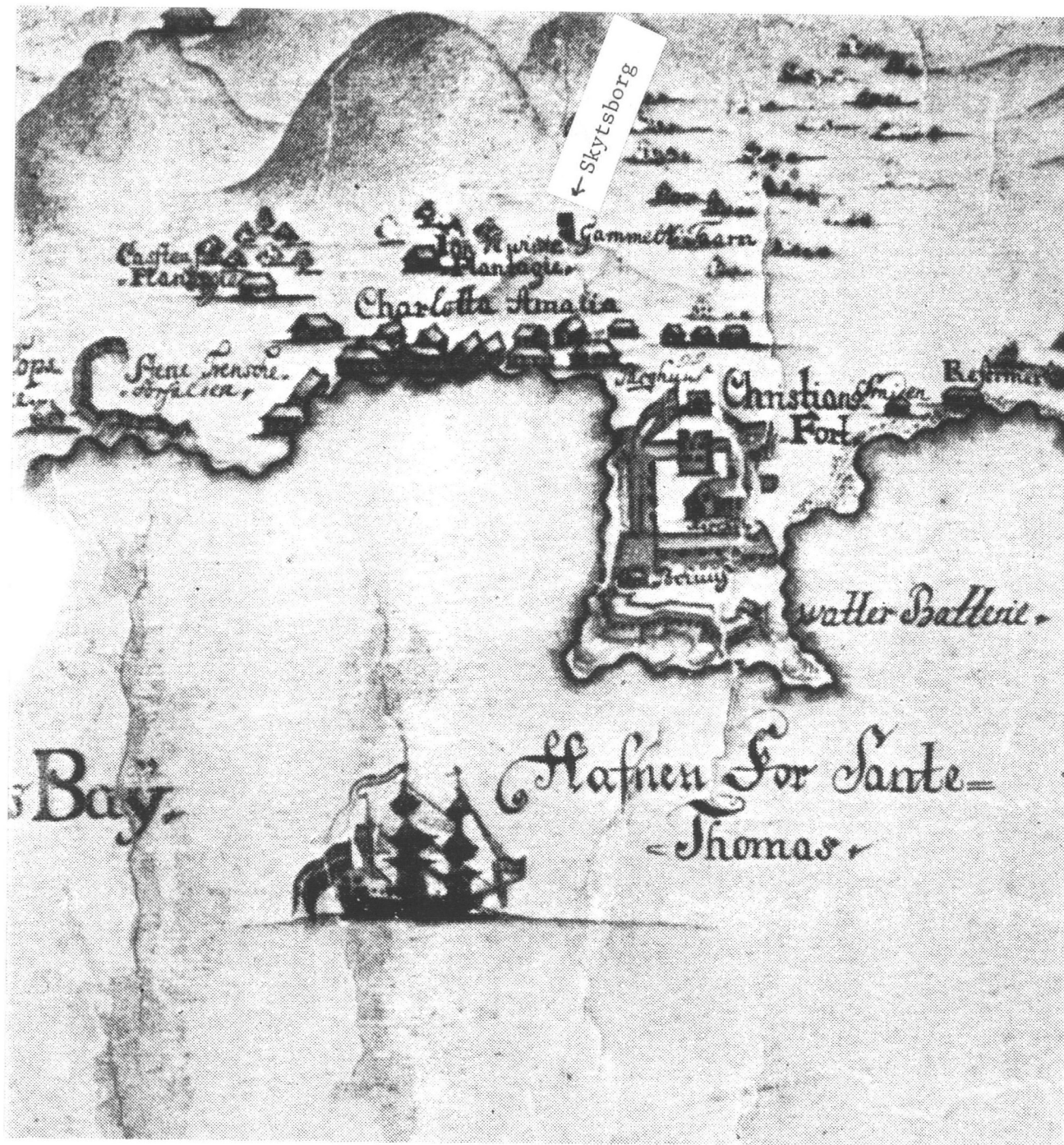


Figure 6. Enlargement of a 1730 of St. Thomas showing Skytsborg tower (from Brønsted 1952:99).

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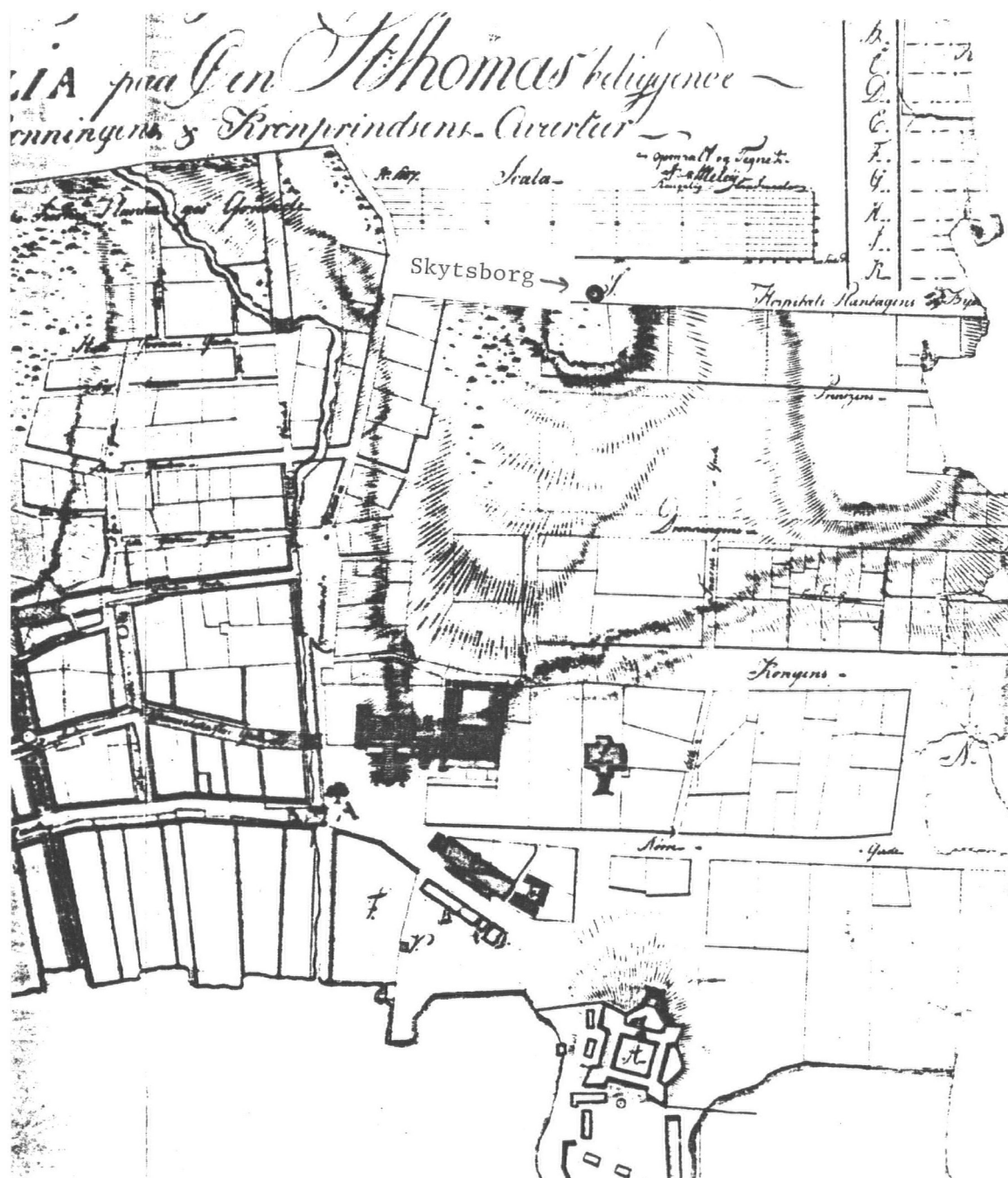


Figure 7. A. von Meley's 1807 map of St. Thomas showing Skytsborg tower (from Gjessing and MacLean 1987:26).

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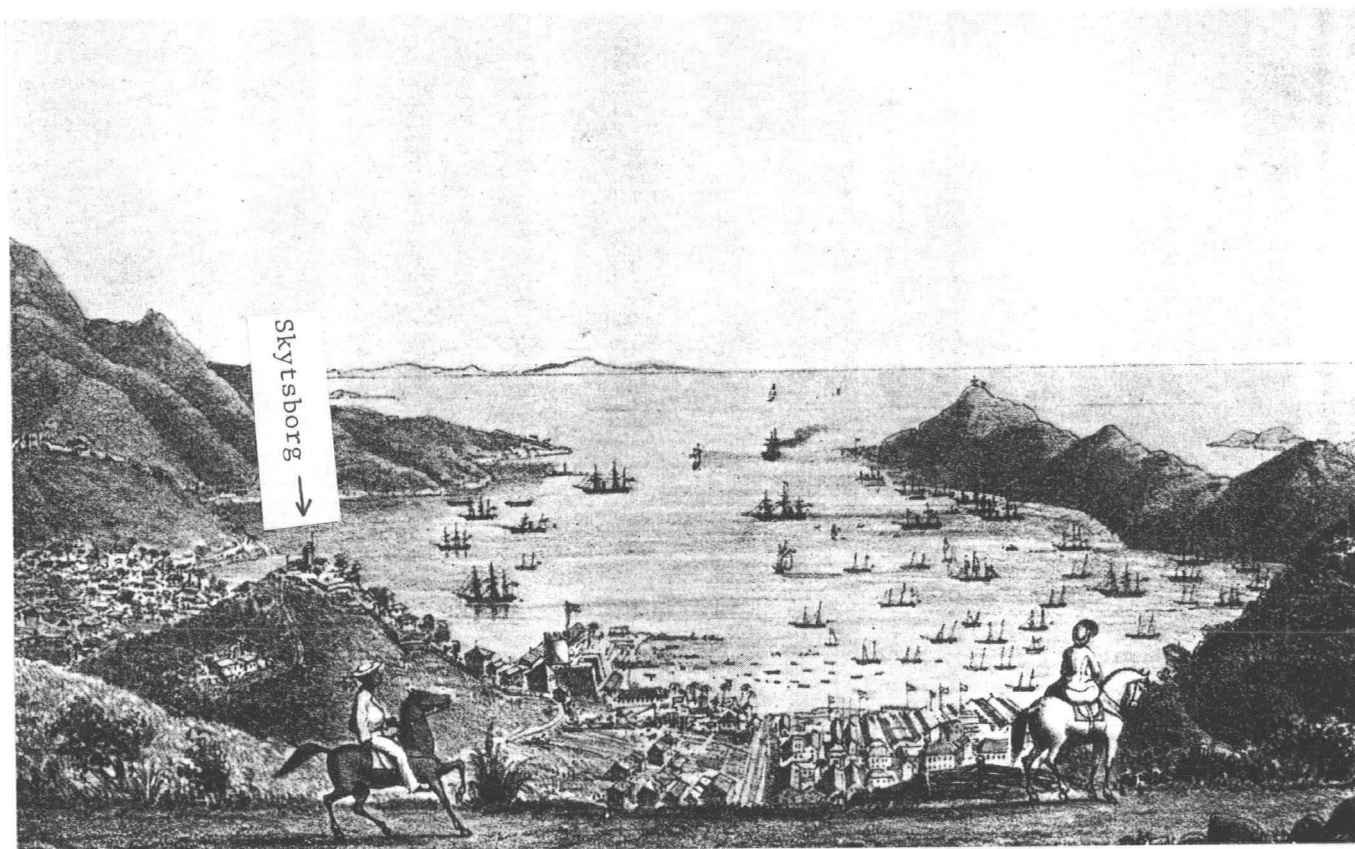


Figure 8. Overview of St. Thomas harbor (ca. 1860) showing Skytsborg tower (from Brønsted 1952:417).

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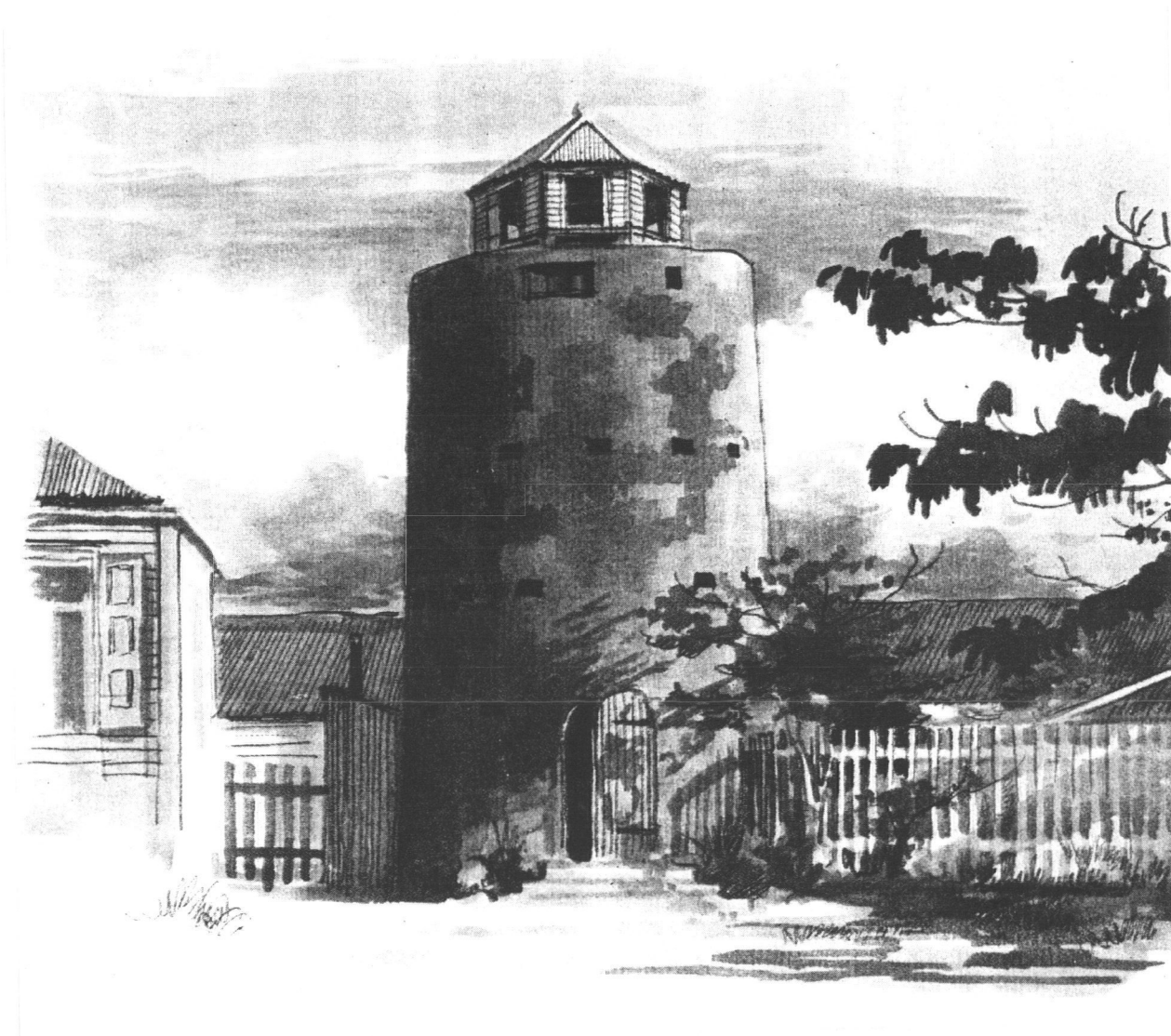
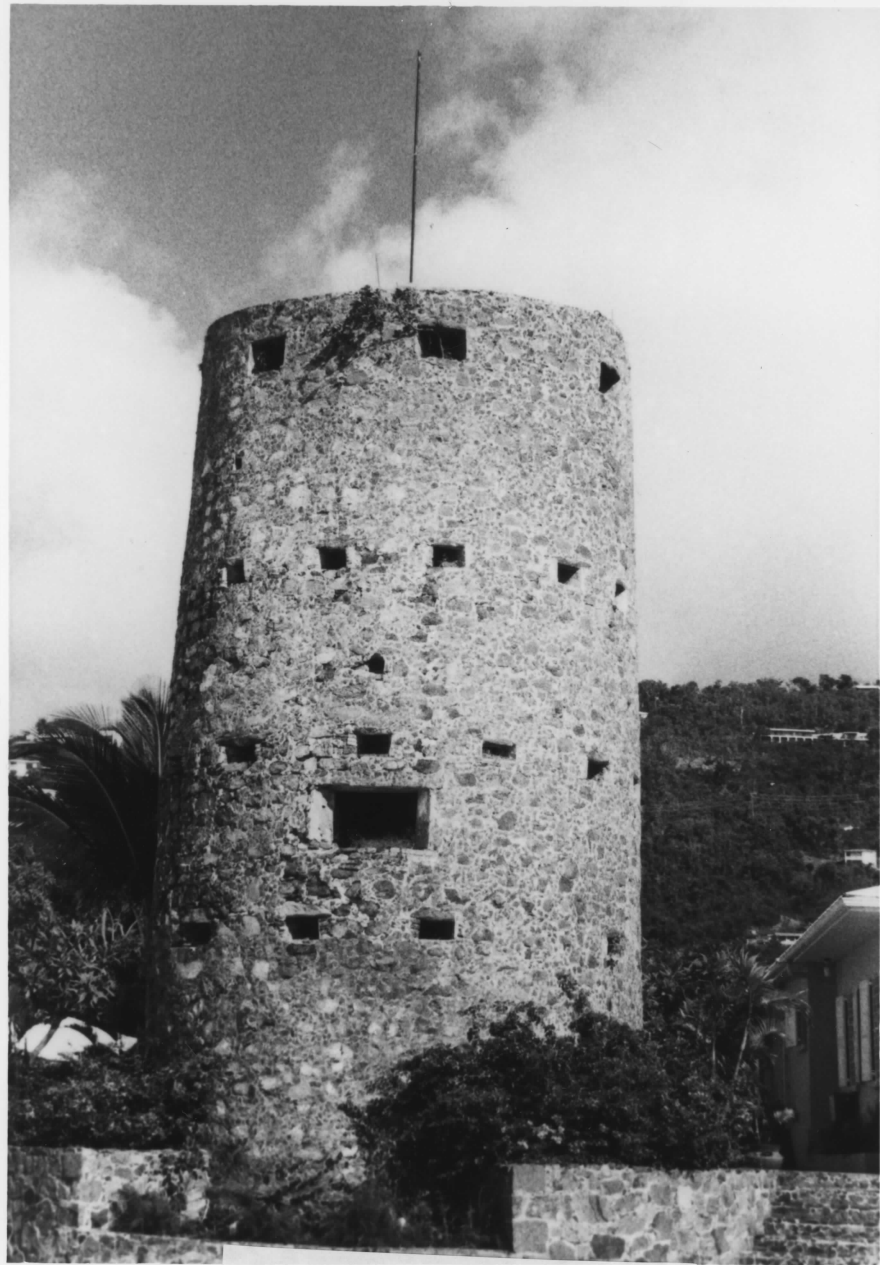


Figure 9. Drawing of Skytsborg in the mid-twentieth century showing the wooden observatory built by Kjaer (from Brønsted 1952:67).



SKYTSBORG (Blackbeard's Castle)
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas,
U.S. Virgin Islands
Southern face of tower
Photo: Mark Barnes, January 1992



SKYTSBORG (Blackbeard's Castle)
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas,
U.S. Virgin Islands
Northern face of tower
Photo: Mark Barnes, January 1992



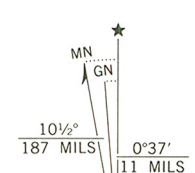
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
in cooperation with Office of Territories,
U. S. Department of the Interior

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, USCE, and U. S. Dept. of Public Roads
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1954. Field checked 1954-1955

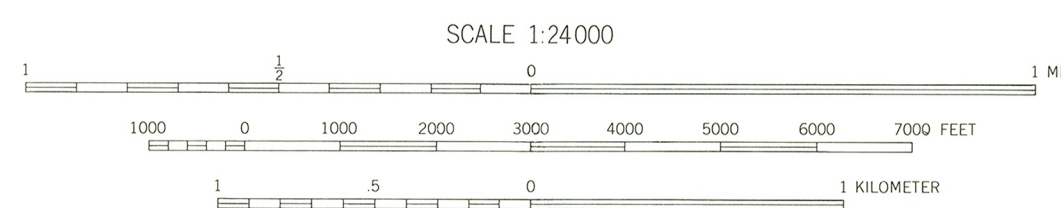
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS chart 905 (1952)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes

Polycyclic projection. Puerto Rican Datum, 1940 adjustment
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Puerto Rican coordinate system,
Virgin Islands extension. 1000-meter Universal Transverse
Mercator grid, zone 20

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries
of the National or State reservations shown on this map



UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 20-FOOT CONTOURS

DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET-DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 0.8 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
Insular Route ———

CENTRAL ST. THOMAS, V. I.
18064-CB-TF-024

1955
PHOTOREVISED 1982
DMA 1622 IV SW-SERIES E836

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from aerial
photographs taken 1977-1978 and other sources. This
information not field checked. Map edited 1982
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

DRAFT
for corrections

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

SKYTSBORG (BLACKBEARD'S CASTLE)

Page 1

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1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle)

Other Name/Site Number: Fogarthy's Castle, Kjaer's Castle

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: No. 38 Dronningens Gade, King's Quarter Not for publication:___

City/Town: Charlotte Amalie

Vicinity: X

State: US Virgin Island County: St. Thomas Code: 030 Zip Code: 00801

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-local:___

Public-State:___

Public-Federal:___

Category of Property

Building(s):___

District:___

Site:___

Structure: X

Object:___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of related multiple property listing: ~~Charlotte Amalie Historic District~~

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register _____
____ Determined eligible for the _____
____ National Register _____
____ Determined not eligible for the _____
____ National Register _____
____ Removed from the National Register _____
____ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper_____
Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USEHistoric: **Defense**Sub: **Fortification**Current: **Vacant/Not in Use**Sub: **N/A****7. DESCRIPTION**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: *other: military fortification*
Colonial - ~~Danish colonial~~ ~~No style~~**MATERIALS:**

Foundation: **Limestone, Augite Andesite or "Blue Beach", Coral and Brick**
Walls: **Limestone, Augite Andesite or "Blue Beach", Coral and Brick**
Roof: ~~Concrete~~ **Wood**
Other: **N/A Brick** (facings for ^{entrance} ~~door~~ and gun ^{ports} ~~ports~~)

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Description: Skytsborg, commonly referred to as Blackbeard's Castle, is situated on Government Hill (formerly called Baggaertsbjerg in the seventeenth century) overlooking Charlotte Amalie and the St. Thomas Harbor. This fortified stone tower, constructed in 1679, is slightly ovoid in ground plan, ^{and is} 20 feet in diameter at the base and tapering to 17 feet 8 inches at the top of the parapet. The total height of the tower is 31 feet 6 inches (~~See Figures 1 and 2~~).

The interior of the tower was originally divided into four levels by three wooden floors, with the first floor being stone. The original levels are clearly identified by projecting stone ledges on the interior side of the tapered stone walls. The walls of the tower are constructed of masonry rubble, 53 inches thick at the base and tapering to 40 inches at the edge of the parapet. The exterior and interior surfaces of the walls were originally covered with a thin coat of lime plaster and whitewashed. Traces of this plaster exist on the interior surfaces of the tower. Although this covering does not exist on the exterior surface,

The tower is entered from the north, through a four foot wide, seven foot high elliptical arched entrance. The entrance has three stone steps leading into the tower and the entrance opening is faced with brick. The floor is stone. The wooden entrance door and metal fittings are modern, but are in character with the tower (~~See Figure 2~~).

The first floor room is 9 feet high. Nine brick lined gun ports (6 inches x 9 inches) are arranged in a radial pattern ~~throughout~~ ^{around} the first floor room, seven feet above the present floor level (~~See Figures 1 and 2~~). This would indicate that there once existed a wooden platform along the inner wall to serve as a firing platform for the gun ports. The floor of the first floor room is made of stone.

The second floor room is 7 feet 2 inches high. Thirteen brick lined gun ports, similar in size to those in the first floor room, are arranged in a radial pattern (~~See Figures 1 and 2~~). They are 6 feet above the present floor level. There is also a larger gun port or embrasure, measuring 14 inches x 26 inches, set 45 inches above the floor level in the south face of the tower (~~See Figure 1~~). This is probably one of two embrasures cut into the existing tower in 1688 for cannons to command Charlotte Amalie Harbor and protect the north approaches to Christiansfort. The floor of the second floor room is made of reinforced concrete.

The third floor room is 7 feet high. Thirteen brick lined gun ports repeat the radial pattern found on the second floor room (~~See Figures 1 and 2~~). The floor of the third floor room is ^{also} made of reinforced concrete.

The fourth floor room is ^{also} 7 feet high. The tower walls are pierced by 8 gun ports (~~See Figures 1 and 2~~). Seven gun ports measure 12 inches x 16 inches, while the eighth one is 12 inches

SKYTSBORG (BLACKBEARD'S CASTLE)**Page 5**

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x 30 inches. This latter gun port (~~See Figure 2~~) is on the north face of the tower and probably served a small cannon to protect the tower from the hills above. ^{by}

Originally above the fourth floor room was an open observation and gun platform on top of the tower. [↑] It was covered with a small wooden structure with windows. In the nineteenth century when the tower served as a private astronomical observatory (see Figure 9). This structure was removed in the mid-twentieth century and replaced with a wooden floor below the parapet wall to simulate the original historic appearance of the open gun platform. The floor of the observation level is made of reinforced concrete covered with wood on top. A circular metal stair permits access to all floors.

[→] ~~The original stone masonry construction of the tower and brick facing for the entrance and gun ports of the tower are in excellent shape. None of the original wooden interior floors are extant, although stone projections on the interior walls of the tower indicate the original locations of the floor levels.~~

~~The original stairs were also replaced with the metal stair platform. All wooden floors and stairs were replaced with reinforced concrete and a circular metal staircase in the late nineteenth century. In the mid-twentieth century a wooden floor was placed on top of the concrete floor of the observation level.~~

Integrity: ~~With the exceptions noted above of having the wooden floors replaced by concrete floors in the late nineteenth century and a wooden floor installed in the mid-twentieth century on the observation level, Skytsborg is substantially unaltered from its original construction in 1679.~~

[→] Skytsborg served as an outer defensive work in conjunction with Schmidtsbjerg tower and Fort Christian, which also contained a tower called Trygborg, situated within the fort. Trygborg was torn down in the 1870s during a renovation of Fort Christian. In the 1930s, Schmidtsbjerg was substantially modified. Large windows were cut through the rubble masonry tower walls of Schmidtsbjerg and the building was physically attached to a tourist hotel. It has guest rooms on its upper floors and a gift shop on the ground floor. Only Skytsborg still retains its original shape. Skytsborg is situated within a modern hotel complex, but the buildings and structures associated with the hotel are not physically attached to the tower.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National

Register Criteria:

A X B C D

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions):

A B C D E F G

NHL Criteria:

Criteria 1

NHL Theme(s):

II. EUROPEAN COLONIAL EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT**D. Other European Exploration and Settlement****1. Scandinavian (Danish)**

Areas of Significance:

Exploration and Settlement

Period(s) of Significance:

Military
1679 - mid-19th century

Significant Dates:

1679

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

~~Danish Colonial~~

Architect/Builder:

Governor Jørgen Iversen

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary Statement of Significance: Skytsborg, or Blackbeard's Castle, is a rubble masonry tower constructed in 1679 by the Danish colonial government as part of a network of defensive fortifications to protect St. Thomas. It is the best remaining example of seventeenth-century Danish colonial military architecture in the United States, and is the only unmodified seventeenth-century fortified tower in the Caribbean.

Historical Background to Tower Fortifications

Throughout Europe in the fifteenth century, tower fortifications underwent a major modification in both intent and design as a result of the new technology of artillery. Prior to this time tall stone towers, or keeps, often served as isolated defensive structures or observation towers able to fend off Medieval attackers armed only with bows and arrows and rudimentary siege machines. As the power of artillery grew, allowing attackers to ~~stand off and breach the high stone walls~~ of such towers, ^{from a distance} military engineers began to reconfigure the shape of the tower to confront this threat and incorporate the tower into larger more complex defensive designs (Duffy 1979:2).

Instead of tall isolated stone towers, the towers became shorter, usually not more than 40 feet tall, with walls up to twenty feet thick to counter the effects of battering by artillery. These massively designed towers, often incorporated into town walls as roundels, became gun-towers, or platforms for artillery. The first appearance of these gun-towers occurred in Renaissance Italy during the latter part of the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth century when control of the Italian states was contested between the French and Spanish crowns (Duffy 1979).

However, in the instance of coastal fortifications, isolated gun-towers still had an important defensive role. As Christopher Duffy in Fire and Stone, The Science of Fortress Warfare, notes, "Given the peculiar circumstances of coastal fortification, there was still a place for isolated and tall towers of a kind that would have been considered decidedly old-fashioned in inland warfare" (1975:155). The offensive function of these towers dictated their form.

The designer of coastal fortification had to bear in mind that these works were intended to deliver a heavy weight of fire rather than to offer resistance against prolonged siege. These considerations, taken together with the usual lack of space and earth in coastal sites, made for a characteristic architecture of simple traces, and high exposed walls executed in full revetment. The parapets and embrasures were nearly always of masonry, even though "it had been found by experience, that nothing disheartens troops placed behind a wall so much, as pieces of stone flying about their ears" [Duffy 1975:154-155].

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During the first half of the sixteenth century, isolated masonry gun-towers made their appearance as coastal fortifications throughout the islands of the western Mediterranean, as defense against Moorish pirates and well as European raiders (Fornals 1992:31-32). At the same time, such isolated masonry structures also solved for the Spanish problems of harbor defense in the New World at Havana, Cuba; Santo Domingo, ^{Cornwall} on Hispaniola; and San Juan, Puerto Rico (Anonymous 1985:149-150, 341, 377; Torres-Reyes 1955:60-62).

These New World towers erected by the Spanish in the sixteenth century were pulled down, with the exception of those built into the walls of La Fortaleza (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960), in favor of more extensive harbor fortifications in later years (Hoyt 1943:27-36). However, a sixteenth-century Genoese fortified tower on Mortella Point on the island of Corsica so ably defended itself, in 1794, against two British warships that the design was copied and numerous "Martello Towers" were constructed in England, Ireland, and the United States during the first half of the nineteenth century (Duffy 1975:155; Floyd 1991:47-56).

Due to their adaptability to coastal areas, tower fortifications also continued to play an important role in military engineering in the Baltic Sea region, where, during the seventeenth century, the kingdoms of Denmark and Sweden fought over control of the sealanes leading into the Baltic. The two preeminent military engineers during this conflict were Gottfried Hoffmann, of Denmark, and Erik Dahlberg, of Sweden. Both of these individuals utilized low thick fortifications to protect towns in combination with outlying fortified towers to protect key defensive points (Dahl 1992:6; Duffy 1985:191).

As noted by Christopher Duffy,

The surest signs of Dahlberg's presence were, however, his idiosyncratic multi-storeyed casemated towers, which he employed variously as island batteries, hilltop forts and inner keeps [1985:195-196].

Gottfried Hoffman, during the mid-seventeenth century, also constructed fortresses with outlying tower works at Fredericia and Helsingborg, Denmark (Dahl 1992:6).

Throughout the troubled seventeenth century, both contenders for control of the Baltic - Denmark and Sweden - also undertook efforts to establish colonies in the New World. Sweden established a military outpost called Fort Christina (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1961) in the vicinity of present day Wilmington, Delaware, where they traded for furs until the colony was captured by the English in 1664. The Danes were more successful in establishing and holding a colony in the Caribbean.

In early 1671, the rechartered West India Company was created to establish a Danish colony on the island of St. Thomas. The Company selected as the Governor of the colony Jørgen Iversen.

Iversen had gone to the British Caribbean Island of St. Kitts at the age of 13 as an indentured servant in 1651. In the next fifteen years he rose to become a full partner in a Dutch trading concern in the Caribbean, from which he learned the necessary lessons for a successful colony (Gjessing 1982:2-3).

^{From} Between 1672 until 1680, when he was relieved, Iversen succeeded

. . . in creating a community out of the multinational and racial components of the colony and steer it towards a promise of prosperity while building Christians Fort, carrying out an interisland trade for the company and establishing plantations on St. Thomas [Gjessing 1982:3].

It was during Governor Iversen's tenure that he had constructed Fort Christian and its outlying hilltop gun and watch tower of Skytsborg (Gjessing 1982:12). According to Frederik Gjessing

An Army Lieutenant had been included amongst the Company's functionaries of the proposed colony. He was to advise Governor Iversen in all military matters and provide the technical knowledge needed for the design and construction of a fort. To insure that this was done according to the standards of the times, a copy of Admiral Freitag's treatise on the construction of forts was included among the books that Jørgen Iversen brought out to guide him in his duties as the governor. This 17th century work provides layout of fortifications, explanations of the military functions of their different parts and served as a design handbook for military engineers [1982:17].

Unfortunately, the (new sentence) Lieutenant died on the voyage from Denmark to the Virgin Islands, ^{this} so "Iversen was left to make his own decision regarding the fortification" (Gjessing 1982:18) of Fort Christian and Skytsborg using Admiral Freitag's work, ^{this document} which provided information on the fortification of coasts utilizing gun towers on hilltops to support major coastal forts, as pioneered by Hoffmann and Dahlberg.

Thematic Framework

II. EUROPEAN COLONIAL EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT

D. Other European Exploration and Settlement

1. Scandinavian (Danish)

Skytsborg has its roots in the earliest history of the Danish Virgin Islands. In 1678, war having broken out between France and Denmark, the French settlers of neighboring St. Croix launched an attempt to seize St. Thomas Island. Fortunately, Governor Jorgen Iversen, since ^{his} arrival in 1672, ^{had} undertaken to construct a large four-sided fort at the harbor's edge of Charlotte Amalie, the capital of St. Thomas, called

(note addition of apostrophe)

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Christiansfort, or Fort Christian (designated an NHL in 1977). As the attackers did not have any siege cannon, this structure was easily able to withstand the brief siege imposed by the French from St. Croix, who were forced to retreat. ←

One of the main features of Christiansfort was a squat three-story high tower, called Trygborg, on the north side of the fort. Twenty-six and one half feet high and 90 feet in circumference, the tower was intended as a self-contained last ditch defensive position if an enemy carried the outer walls of Christiansfort. The first floor was a large storeroom for ammunition and provisions. The walls of the upper two floors were studded with embrasures for both small arms and light cannon. This was the first military tower that can be documented on St. Thomas. Trygborg and the north side of Christiansfort were torn down in the nineteenth century during renovation. ←

Christiansfort provided a strong defense for St. Thomas against an attacking force from the sea. However, Governor Iversen realized that an attacking force could have pounded Christiansfort into submission by erecting an artillery battery on the high ground behind and north of the fort. For this reason, Iversen ordered a tower fortification erected on Baggaertsbjerg, a hill top north of Christiansfort, in 1679, similar to Trygborg. Such a tower would serve not only to deny the high ground to an attacking force, but could also serve as a watchtower providing a vantage point high enough to peer over Hassel Island to scan the open ocean; thereby providing early warning of an approaching enemy. ←

The success of the 1678 defense of St. Thomas convinced Iversen of the usefulness of stone towers for defense. Iversen's letter of February 2, 1680 to the directors of the Danish West India Company indicated that Skytsborg had been erected at Baggaertsbjerg by that date. In it he wrote "Since I had the Watchtower erected at Baggaertsbjerg I did not fear a hasty attack so much." A 1687 English map of St. Thomas harbor depicts and describes a "small white tower" on Baggaertsbjerg Hill to the north of Christiansfort. The relationship between the tower on Baggaertsbjerg Hill and Christiansfort is also shown on an undated late seventeenth century map (See Figures 3 and 4).

It is possible that Iversen used the Company stone mason, Simon Lamare, who had worked on Fort Christian and Trygborg tower to construct Skytsborg in 1679. According to Frederik Gjessing ←

In August, 1674, Jørgen Iversen acquired for the Company a mulatto slave by the name of Simon Lamare. He was a mason and was to serve as the clerk of the works, for the construction of the fort [Fort Christian]. The phrasing in the account book of this transaction is of interest. It states "brought Simon Lamare to serve the Company for seven years" [1674-1681], implying some sort of contractual agreement with Simon Lamare for his manumission after an agreed upon period of service [1982:20].

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→ In 1688, another crisis occurred when, in response to dynastic wars ← in Europe, the Spanish from Puerto Rico occupied Crab Island (Vieques) and Anguilla, thereby surrounding St. Thomas. This made the Danes in St. Thomas concerned as the Spanish had never abandoned their claim, by right of discovery, to the Virgin Islands. Governor Christopher Heins, who had replaced Iversen, undertook a program of upgrading the fortifications of Christiansfort and Skytsborg. He had embrasures cut in the walls of Skytsborg for two large cannon capable of covering the harbor. In addition, he erected a third tower to the east on Schmidtsbjerg. The erection of this last tower in 1689 completed the seventeenth-century defenses of St. Thomas (Gjessing and Gardner 1958:1-3).

In peacetime no soldiers were stationed at Skytsborg or Schmidtsbjerg, while a skeleton force was maintained at Christiansfort. If an attack by other colonial forces or a slave rebellion was anticipated, an alarm was sounded by firing a predetermined number of cannon at Christiansfort. This signal would call out all able-bodied whites and free blacks to take up arms and report to one of the three fortifications. A militia sergeant and eight men were posted in Skytsborg in emergencies. Such an alarm occurred in May of 1694 when a slave insurrection was anticipated from the newly established plantations in New Quarter, present day Tutu (a suburb of Charlotte Amalie).

→ Throughout the eighteenth century, Denmark maintained a policy of strict neutrality in all European wars. This policy proved more of an economic boon to the Danish West Indies than the planting of sugar cane because of the commerce it attracted to the island to transact business. As a neutral Caribbean port of trade, all European traders respected the neutrality of St. Thomas, and to a certain extent encouraged its prosperity, as it provided a means of trade between otherwise belligerent European powers. As the warehouses and trading houses of Charlotte Amalie expanded to meet this trade, the need for fortifications languished.

→ ^{At this time} During the ~~eighteenth century~~, numerous European traders noted on maps the fortifications of St. Thomas. Van Keulen's 1719 map of St. Thomas, drafted for Governor Erik Bredal, ^{in reference to} Skytsborg noted, "De klyne Tooren es omgevallen" (the small tower is deteriorated) (See Figure 5). Similarly, a 1730 map of St. Thomas noted Skytsborg as a "gammellt fefalden Taarn" (an old collapsing tower) (See Figure 6). Oxholm's map of 1779 labelled Skytsborg as "et gammellt taarn" (an old tower).

→ During the early eighteenth century, Skytsborg passed out of government ownership to a planter named Johannes Jahnsen de Windt. De Windt's plantation lands, called Catarinabjerg after his wife Catherine, were willed to the Dutch Reform Church in 1759. The pastor, Reverend Francis Verboom, purchased the plantation and Skytsborg for 38,000 rigsdollars, subdivided the land, and sold off individual building lots.

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→ By 1800, an Irish immigrant, Thim Fogarthy, acquired Skytsborg from Verboom. Fogarthy used the tower as his private residence. The first floor was used for storage, the second as a parlor and dining room, and the third floor as a bedroom. During the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Skytsborg was commonly known as Fogarthy's Castle and it was noted on a map drawn by A. von Meley in 1807 (See Figure 7).

For most of the ^{rest of the} nineteenth century Skytsborg was called Kjaer's Castle, after Thomas A. Kjaer, who acquired the tower in 1826, and whose family owned the property until 1886. Kjaer's interest in astronomy saw him convert the tower into an astronomical observatory by placing a telescope on the roof, and putting a wooden structure on the top of the tower (See Figure 9). A view of St. Thomas harbor in ca. 1860 shows Skytsborg during the period of Kjaer's ownership (See Figure 8). When Kjaer's heirs sold Skytsborg in 1886, the stone walls were solid but the wooden interior floors had to be replaced by the new owner, A. R. Raven, in the late nineteenth century with concrete floors and a circular metal staircase.

→ In the mid-twentieth century, the area was acquired and converted into a hotel complex. At this time point, the wooden observatory was removed and a wooden floor placed on ^{the} observation level of the tower. One-story hotel structures were constructed to the east and west of the tower, and a swimming pool was added to ^{the} cliff face south of, and just below, the tower. None of these modern structures touch the tower or are ^{within} part of the landmark boundary.

During the nineteenth century, Skytsborg became associated with three distinct but erroneous legends. The first was that the tower was built by seventeenth-century buccaneers, and later used by Captain Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard the Pirate. Blackbeard was never known to have visited St. Thomas. The second legend was that the tower was built by the first Danish colonization attempt (1665-1666). However, there is ample historical evidence that it was constructed in the second Danish colonization effort ^{after} when Governor Jorgen Iversen arrived in 1672. The last legend had a Dutch settler, Carl Baggaert, building the tower in the 1670s on the high ground, north of Christiansfort, then known as Baggaertsbjerg, as part of a dispute with Governor Iversen. However, there is no evidence ^{that} Baggaert erected this tower.

Skytsborg may be considered the oldest unaltered structure on St. Thomas. Although Christiansfort predates Skytsborg, extensive alterations of the ^{tower} former in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries modified its seventeenth century appearance. Schmidtsbjerg tower has also been extensively renovated in the 1930s obscuring its earlier appearance. No other seventeenth-century structures survive in the Virgin Islands.

The three tower defensive network of Skytsborg, Schmidtsbjerg, and Trygborg (part of Christiansfort), although Medieval in appearance, admirably suited the defensive needs of St. Thomas in

SKYTSBORG (BLACKBEARD'S CASTLE)**Page 20**

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the seventeenth century. The principle danger^{was} at that time^{was} ~~were~~ not well-equipped professional armies, but rather plundering raids, such as the French attack on St. Thomas in 1678^{was} or slave rebellions. A small Danish force, supplemented with militia, could easily defend itself against such attacking forces. Nowhere else in the Caribbean were fortified towers constructed in the seventeenth century.

By the early eighteenth century, the development of accurate large calibre cannon necessitated a shift from outmoded and exposed medieval fortified towers to the lower profile Vauban-style of rectangular forts with protruding bastions at the corners.

The eighteenth century also brought large, well-equipped professional armies and navies from Europe to the Caribbean. The concentration of the Danish on St. Thomas on trade precluded the construction of new defensive works. The inadequacy of the tower network to defend the island was demonstrated in 1801 when the British forced a bloodless surrender of the island to keep it from being used by French naval forces during the Napoleonic Wars.

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- 1987 Historic Buildings of St. Thomas and St. John.
Macmillian Publishers, Limited.

Gjessing, Frederik C. and Philip E. Gardner

- 1958 Historic Architecture of the Virgin Islands. Sections
from the Historic American Building Survey, Number 1.
On file with the National Park Service, Southeast
Regional Office, Atlanta.

Hoyt, Edward A.

- 1943 A History of the Harbor Defenses of San Juan P.R.,
Under Spain, 1509-1898. Prepared at the Puerto Rico
Coast Artillery Command.

SKYTSBORG (BLACKBEARD'S CASTLE)**Page 22**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Torres-Reyes, Ricardo

1955 The Harbor Defenses of San Juan in the Sixteenth
Century. Manuscript on file National Park Service,
Southeast Regional Office, Atlanta.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☒ Previously Listed in the National Register. **1992**
- ☐ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- ☐ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # _____
- ☐ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office **Virgin Islands**
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other(Specify Repository): **Blackbeard's Castle, P.O. Box 6041, St. Thomas, USVI 00801**

SKYTSBORG (BLACKBEARD'S CASTLE)**Page 23**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 0.01 acre

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

A 20 296050 2029400

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is the stone tower located at the peak of Government Hill, No. 38 Dronningens Gade, Kings Quarter, in Charlotte Amalie. The boundary is a circle 25 feet in diameter centered upon the axis of the tower located at the UTM reference point of 20 296050 2029400.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary for Skytsborg is intended to include just the tower area. It does not include any modern structures located next to the tower at No. 39 Dronningens Gade.

which is the historic resource and which maintains its historic integrity.

SKYTSBORG (BLACKBEARD'S CASTLE)**Page 24**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: **Mark R. Barnes, Ph.D, Senior Archeologist
National Register Programs Division**

Org.: **National Park Service, SERO**

Street/#: **75 Spring Street, S.W.**

City/Town: **Atlanta**

State: **Georgia**

ZIP: **30303**

Telephone: **(404) 331-2638**

Date: **December 9, 1993**

H 3415(418)

Memorandum

To: Maritime Historian Foster

From: Senior Historian Levy

Subject: Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle) -- Referral of NR nomination
Form for Evaluation of NHL Potential

I believe we may have in this form a potential NHL. Structures of the 17th century are rare enough in the U.S. generally, but this structure is of a special type, rarely, if ever, seen in the U.S. according to the form. It also appears intact except for its interior floors which have been replaced by reinforced concrete.

Can you confirm these assertions for me? Can you suggest specialists who might be able to lend support to these claims? You'll need to check the "yellow books," the original theme studies for this period and the index to the minutes of the Adv. Bd to see what has been designated in this field, if anything. It is possible that the Board turned this down at one time; check this out.

this analysis is not as urgent as the New Bedford plan reviews and ~~get~~ you need not respond before COB May 13, 1992.

Attachment

cc: Bearss

Levy

Henry

418 Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle) OSC

U.S. Virgin Islands



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127



MAY 13 1992

H3415(418)

Memorandum

To: Maritime Historian Foster
From: Senior Historian Levy *Ben*
Subject: Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle), VI

The attached critique is excellent. Please incorporate it as an enclosure to a letter I'd like you to draft to the SHPO informing him that the property would make a creditable NHL nomination. Offer our assistance in strengthening the text and cite yourself as the staff historian to contact. Copy the letter to Carol Shull and Marilyn Harper.

That letter will be standard form and I will usually expect to see that draft letter or memo with the evaluation. I help you with this standard stuff.

Good job, Kevin.

Attachment

cc: Bearss
Levy
418 NHL Pending
Henry



October 6, 1992

Ms. Claudette Lewis
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Nisky Center
St. Thomas, VI 00802

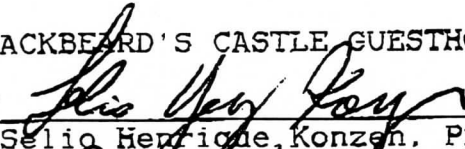
Dear Ms. Lewis,

We the undersigned officers and stockholders of Blackbeard's Castle Guesthouse, Inc. owner of Skytsborg (commonly known as Blackbeard's Castle), endorse the nomination of this property for Landmark designation.

Sincerely,

BLACKBEARD'S CASTLE GUESTHOUSE, INC.

BY


Selio Henriques Konzen, President


Robert T. Harrington, V. President

P.O. BOX 6041

ST. THOMAS U.S. V.I. 00801

809-776-1234



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

NISKY CENTER, SUITE 231
NO. 45A ESTATE NISKY
CHARLOTTE AMALIE, ST. THOMAS, V.I. 00802

October 9, 1992

Mr. Edwin Bearss
Chief Historian
National Park Service
P. O. Box 37127
Washington, D. C. 20013-7127

Dear Mr. Bearss:

We want to thank the Southeast Regional Office and your Office for the support of Skytsborg/Bluebeard Castle for landmark designation.

We are enclosing a letter of endorsement from the property owner for its landmark designation.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Claudette C. Lewis
Claudette C. Lewis
Assistant Director

CL/djl-1896

c: Honorable Roy E. Adams, Commissioner/SHPO
Mr. Cecil McKithan, S. E. Regional Office
Honorable Ron deLugo, Delegate to Congress

OCT 19 1992
ms



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

75 Spring Street, S.W.

Atlanta, Georgia 30303



MAR 11 1993

Memorandum

To: Chief Historian, History Division, NPS, WASO

From: Chief, National Register Programs Division, SERO

Subject: Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle) National Historic
Landmark (NHL) Study

In July of 1992, this office provided the History Division with a draft NHL Study for Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle), a property located within Charlotte Amalie, on St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. Also provided was a hard copy of the study, a diskette encoded with the text, an original USGS Map, and photographs and slides of this property.

At that time we were given to understand that the History Division staff would be able to complete the NHL Study within a few months. Since then the property has been individually listed on the National Register and the Virgin Islands staff has requested information on the state of progress for the development of the study.

If your staff is unable to complete the study we request that you return it and the items noted above to this office. We have recently identified some original documentation on this the earliest structure (1679) in the Virgin Islands, and could complete the NHL Study fairly promptly.

Cecil H. McElroy



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

75 Spring Street, S.W.

Atlanta, Georgia 30303



JUL 06 1993

Memorandum

To: Chief Historian, History Division, NPS, WASO

From: Chief, National Register Programs Division, SERO

Subject: National Historic Landmark Presentations for Los Adaes, Louisiana and Caguana Site, Puerto Rico; and Retrieval of Documentation for Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle) US Virgin Islands

This memo is to confirm Dr. Mark Barnes' attendance at the History Areas Committee on July 13, 1993, in Washington, D.C., to make a presentation for Los Adaes, Louisiana and the Caguana Site, Puerto Rico. Text of a narrative and slides for these properties will be left with your office following the July 13th presentation.

We would also like to use this trip to retrieve NHL documentation for Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle), in the US Virgin Islands, originally sent to your office. We have previously requested this be return to this office (see attached). Please arrange to have this material given to Mark during his visit.

If you have any questions please call me at (404) 331-2643.

Cecil H. Mytall



November 18, 1993

Mr. Cecil N. McKithan, Chief
National Register Programs Division
National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office
75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Mr. McKithan:

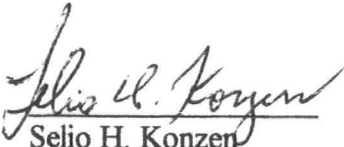
We have reviewed the draft text of the National Historic Landmark Study for Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle) and found it to be very thorough and illuminating. The historical facts, as stated, agree with the information we have in our files. We were not aware of the historical architectural significance of Skytsborg and very much appreciate receiving this additional information for our files.

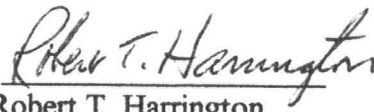
The only error we noted was on page one, section 2. Location, where the Street & Number should read No. 38 Dronningens Gade instead of "39 Dronnigens Gade".

As the owners of the nominated property, Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle), we have no objection to the proposed National Landmark designation.

Again, thank you for this detailed and informative study.

Sincerely,


Selio H. Konzen
Co-owner


Robert T. Harrington
Co-owner

RECEIVED

NOV 22 1993

P.O. Box 6041 - Emancipation Garden

St. Thomas, U. S. V. I. 00804

(809) 776-1234 - (800) 344-5771

DEC 3 1993

Mr. Cecil N. McKithan, Chief
National Register Programs Division
Southeast Regional Office
National Park Service
75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Cecil:

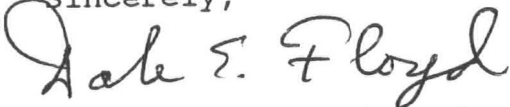
As requested, I've reviewed the Skytsborg National Historic Landmark Study. I agree that the models for Skytsborg were the numerous Mediterranean (European) towers. Finding the specific relationship between the Danes, Gottfried Hoffmann and Erik Dahlberg, the Baltic Region, Freitag's manual, and the fortifications of St. Thomas, adequately ties the whole story together.

I have only a few suggestions. First, on page 7, under "Historical Background . . .," first paragraph, mention should be made that besides the towers' use as defensive structures to fend off invaders, they sometimes served as observation towers (early warning devices) to spot invaders or raiders and then warn the local inhabitants by a bell, a fire, or some other method.

Also, I would suggest that someone consult some of David Buisseret's writings such as "A Brief Assessment of the Chief Military Monuments of: Grenada, Saint Vincent, Saint Lucia, Antigua." Caribbean Quarterly, XVI (March 1970), 58-67, and "The Elusive Deodand: A Study of the Fortified Refuges of the Lesser Antilles." Journal of Caribbean History [Barbados], VI (1973), 43-80. Buisseret does a good job of examining the West Indian Islands as a general group and discussing their defenses, providing a great deal of comparison and contrast. His insights might help firm up some statements in the NHL study.

Although I am 99% sure that you have already done this, just in case you haven't, I would suggest that someone run spell check and generally look for typos in the manuscript because I found quite a few in the draft. I enjoyed reviewing the manuscript and offer any further assistance that I can possibly provide you.

Sincerely,



Dale E. Floyd, Historian
American Battlefield Protection Program
Interagency Resources Division
National Park Service



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

75 Spring Street, S.W.

Atlanta, Georgia 30303



DEC 09 1993

Memorandum

To: Chief, History Division, NPS, WASO

From: Chief, National Register Programs Division, SERO

Subject: Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle), Virgin Islands National Historic Landmark (NHL) Study

Enclosed is a NHL Study for Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle), located in Charlotte Amalie, on St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. Skytsborg is the earliest unaltered Danish colonial fortification in the Virgin Islands, and represents a type of tower fortification used in the seventeenth century in the dynastic wars between Sweden and Denmark. This property was identified as potentially nationally significant in a historic site survey developed by this office.

Please note that we are enclosing a letter from the owners of Skytsborg granting permission for NHL designation. Also enclosed is a review letter from Dale Floyd regarding the significance of the Skytsborg property.

A copy of the enclosed has already been sent to your office by e-Mail. If you have any questions regarding this study please contact me at (404) 331-2643.

Cecil N. McKell

Enclosures

n:

Skytsborg NHL Nomination

I have read the attached correspondence and nomination form and believe the form is tremendously improved from the first one submitted. The form now amply demonstrates the substantial significance of the structure in the history of the Caribbean and in military architecture. It should be presented for board review after consideration of the comments noted on the form. The only substantial omission is noted on page 16 -- there is no description of the recent history and present integrity (particularly setting and feeling). I believe that this question can be answered satisfactorily, but it must be addressed rather than being avoided.

Kevin
1/4/94

Kevin:

Please find attached the correspondence and nomination form with map and photos for Skytsborg. I will need your critique of this document before I can make a decision as to whether it should be scheduled for board review.

I have made a copy of the correspondence but not the nomination form.

Ben
1/4/94



United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H3415(418)

JAN 25 1994

Memorandum

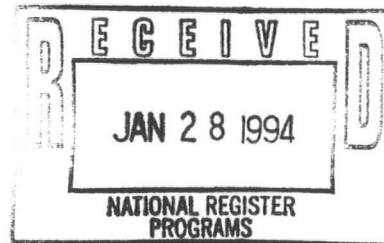
To: Chief, National Register Programs Division, SERO
From: Senior Historian Levy *Ben*
Subject: Skytsborg, VI

We have completed staff review of the subject nomination form and return it to you herewith complete with photos, map and illustrative data.

Please note that the staff comments attached find the form to be substantially improved over the previous draft, but ask that certain issues be addressed to successfully complete this nomination.

We have tentatively scheduled this property for the summer round of Board reviews. If this is to be possible we will require fairly immediate attention to the staff commentary. We await the emended form.

cc: Bearss
Henry
Foster
Mendez
Charleton





IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

75 Spring Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303



JAN 31 1994

Memorandum

To: Chief Historian, National Park Service, WASO

From: Chief, National Register Programs Division, SERO

Subject: Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle), USVI National Historic Landmark Study

As per the attached memorandum this office has completed revising the Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle), USVI National Historic Landmark (NHL) Study as per the comments of the History Division reviewer (see enclosed). A copy of the revised study has already been sent to your office by e-mail.

This office is, as will be the Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office, pleased that the enclosed NHL Study will be presented to the History Areas Committee for the summer round of reviews. This is probably one of the fastest reviews of a NHL Study to date.

As your office may have noticed the National Register Programs Division has recently submitted a number of NHL Studies from Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. These cultural resources were identified in a Historic Sites Survey undertaken by this office for properties in the Southeast Region believed to possess potential national significance. The properties in the Caribbean, however, are singular in that their significance is frequently linked to international as opposed to American history. We would like to encourage visitation by the History Division staff to these areas to acquaint themselves with these resources. The Puerto Rican and Virgin Islands State Offices strongly support the NHL programs and would assist your staff during any visitations.

If you have any questions on the enclosed please contact me at (404) 331-2643.

Cecil H. Meyer

FEB 4 1994
MS

for
B. Levy 6/8/94

R. B. Bowers
6/8/94

9 JUN 1994

H3415(418)

Honorable Ron de Lugo
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Delegate de Lugo:

We are pleased to inform you that the National Park Service has completed the study of the property identified on the enclosed sheet for the purpose of nominating it for possible designation as a National Historic Landmark. We enclose a copy of the study report. The National Park System Advisory Board will consider the nomination during its next meeting, at the time and place indicated on the enclosure. The Board will make its recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior based upon the criteria of the National Historic Landmarks Program.

You have 60 days to submit your views in writing, if you so desire. After the 60-day period, we will submit the nomination and your comments to the National Park System Advisory Board's History Areas Committee, which will then inform the full Advisory Board of the Committee's recommendations at the Board's meeting. The Secretary of the Interior will then be informed of the Board's recommendations for his final action.

To assist you in considering this matter, we have enclosed a copy of the regulations governing the National Historic Landmarks Program. They describe the criteria for designation (Sec. 65.4), the effects of designation (Sec. 65.2), and specify how you may comment on a proposed designation (Sec. 65.5(d)(4-5)). Should you wish to comment, please send your comments to Mr. Edwin C. Bearss, Chief Historian, National Park Service, History Division (418), P.O. Box 37127, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

Sincerely,

/s/ Rowland T. Bowers

for
Jerry L. Rogers
Associate Director,
Cultural Resources

Enclosures

**PROPERTY STUDIED FOR
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION**

**SKYTSBORG
(Blackbeard's Castle)**

CHARLOTTE AMALIE, ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

In commenting on the possible designation of the property identified above, you may find guidance in Section 65.5(d)(4) of the enclosed regulations.

The History Areas Committee of the Secretary of the Interior's National Park System Advisory Board will evaluate this property at a meeting to be held on Friday, August 12, 1994, at 9:00 a.m. in Conference Room 7000 of the Main Interior Building at 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC. The History Areas Committee evaluates the studies of historic properties being nominated for National Historic Landmark designation in order to advise the full National Park System Advisory Board at their meeting on Monday, August 15, 1994, in Washington, DC, and will recommend to the full Board those properties that the Committee finds meet the criteria of the National Historic Landmarks Program.

Should you wish to obtain information about these meetings, or about the National Historic Landmarks Program, please contact Senior Historian Benjamin Levy at the National Park Service, History Division (418), P.O. Box 37127, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20013-7127; or by telephone at (202) 343-8164.

If you have questions concerning the study prepared by Dr. Mark R. Barnes, Senior Archeologist, National Register Programs Division, National Park Service, Southeast Region, 75 Spring Street, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30303, you may contact Dr. Barnes at the address given above or by telephone at (404) 331-2638.

cc: 5000 (SERO) C. McKithan
5000 (SERO) M. Barnes
001 RF
190 CL
400 RF
418 SKYTSBORG (Blackbeard's Castle) (NHL Pending)

PHenry:mg:6/1/94
CHANGO MAÑOSO RCD #2\94-SUM\NL2\SKYTS-2D.LTR

YCC
Blery 6/8/94
Hew 4/10

JUN 13 1994

H3415(418)

Mr. Selio H. Konzen
Blackbeard's Castle
P.O. Box 6041
Emancipation Garden
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00804

Dear Mr. Konzen:

We are pleased to inform you that the National Park Service has completed the study of the property identified on the enclosed sheet for the purpose of nominating it for possible designation as a National Historic Landmark. We enclose a copy of the study report. The National Park System Advisory Board will consider the nomination during its next meeting, at the time and place indicated on the enclosure. The Board will make its recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior based upon the criteria of the National Historic Landmarks Program.

You have 60 days to submit your views in writing, if you so desire. After the 60-day period, we will submit the nomination and your comments to the National Park System Advisory Board's History Areas Committee, which will then inform the full Advisory Board of the Committee's recommendations at the Board's meeting. The Secretary of the Interior will then be informed of the Board's recommendations for his final action.

To assist you in considering this matter, we have enclosed a copy of the regulations governing the National Historic Landmarks Program. They describe the criteria for designation (Sec. 65.4), the effects of designation (Sec. 65.2), and specify how you may comment on a proposed designation (Sec. 65.5(d)(4-5)). Should you wish to comment, please send your comments to me, at the National Park Service, History Division (418), P.O. Box 37127, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

Sincerely,

~~s/ Edwin C. Bearss~~

Edwin C. Bearss
Chief Historian

Enclosures

**PROPERTY STUDIED FOR
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION**

**SKYTSBORG
(Blackbeard's Castle)**

CHARLOTTE AMALIE, ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS

As a private owner in the property identified above, you may concur in or object to its designation. Your comments may govern whether or not the property will be designated. You can find guidance for your comments in Section 65.5(d)(4-5) of the enclosed regulations.

The History Areas Committee of the Secretary of the Interior's National Park System Advisory Board will evaluate this property at a meeting to be held on Friday, August 12, 1994, at 9:00 a.m. in Conference Room 7000 of the Main Interior Building at 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC. The History Areas Committee evaluates the studies of historic properties being nominated for National Historic Landmark designation in order to advise the full National Park System Advisory Board at their meeting on Monday, August 15, 1994, in Washington, DC, and will recommend to the full Board those properties that the Committee finds meet the criteria of the National Historic Landmarks Program.

Should you wish to obtain information about these meetings, or about the National Historic Landmarks Program, please contact Senior Historian Benjamin Levy at the National Park Service, History Division (418), P.O. Box 37127, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20013-7127; or by telephone at (202) 343-8164.

If you have questions concerning the study prepared by Dr. Mark R. Barnes, Senior Archeologist, National Register Programs Division, National Park Service, Southeast Region, 75 Spring Street, SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30303, you may contact Dr. Barnes at the address given above or by telephone at (404) 331-2638.

SIMILAR LETTERS SENT TO:

OWN: Mr. Selio H. Konzen
Blackbeard's Castle
P.O. Box 6041
Emancipation Garden
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00804

Mr. Robert T. Harrington
Blackbeard's Castle
P.O. Box 6041
Emancipation Garden
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00804

HEO: Honorable Alexander Farrelly
Governor, U.S. Virgin Islands
Government House
Kongens Gade
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00801

SHPO: Mr. Roy E. Adams, SHPO
Commissioner
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Suite 231, Nisky Center
No. 45A Estate Nisky
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00802

cc: Ms. Claudette Lewis
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Suite 231, Nisky Center
No. 45A Estate Nisky
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00802

Mr. Frederik C. Gjessing
P.O. Box 1844
Veteran's Drive Station
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00802

bcc: 5000 (SERO) C. McKithan
5000 (SERO) M. Barnes
001 RF
400 RF
413 D. Floyd
418 Foster
418 SKYTSEBORG (Blackbeard's Castle) (NHL Pending)

PHenry:mg:6/1/94
CHANGO MANOSO RCD #2\94-SUM\NL2\SKYTS-2B.LTR

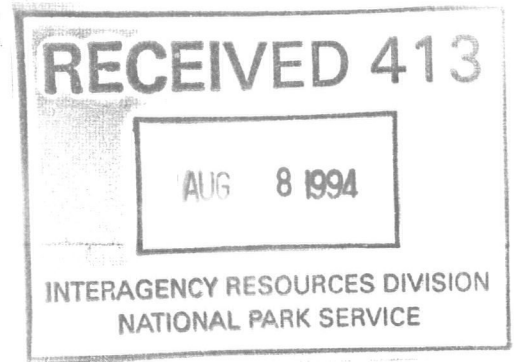


THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Charlotte Amalie, V.I. 00802
809-774-0001

August 2, 1994



Mr. Edwin C. Bearss
Chief Historian
National Park Service
History Division (418)
P. O. Box 37127 - Suite 310
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Mr. Bearss:

Thank you for your invitation to endorse the designation of Blackbeard's Castle on St. Thomas, Virgin Islands as a National Historic Landmark. It is very much both: historic, and a landmark.

Built in 1679, it still dominates the skyline from the hill over which its occupants could rule Charlotte Amalie harbor. Many modern-day tourists climb 99 steps past my office, beckoned by this unusual tower with its promising view.

Skytsborg (commonly known as Blackbeard's Castle) is the oldest, freestanding, unimproved structure in the Virgin Islands, and the only unmodified seventeenth-century fortified tower in the Caribbean. It is about forty miles from the site on St. Croix where Columbus set foot on what is now United States soil.

It is a pleasure to recommend to the National Park System Advisory Board's History Areas Committee that St. Thomas' Blackbeard's Castle be included on the Register of National Historic Landmarks.

Cordially,


Alexander A. Farrelly
Governor



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. Box 37127

Washington, D.C. 20013-7127



MEMORANDUM

SEP 8 1994

To: Secretary

Through: George T. Frampton, Jr.
Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

George T. Frampton, Jr.

SEP 19 1994

From: *[Signature]*
Roger G. Kennedy
Director

Subject: Designation of Thirteen Properties as National Historic Landmarks:
Request for Secretarial Action

At a meeting on August 15, 1994, the National Park System Advisory Board recommended designation of the following 13 properties as National Historic Landmarks:

ARCHITECTURE

1. CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
2. THE BREAKERS, NEWPORT, NEWPORT COUNTY, RHODE ISLAND

ARCHEOLOGY

3. KIJIK ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT, LAKE CLARK NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE, ALASKA

MARITIME HISTORY

4. EMMA C. BERRY, MYSTIC, NEW LONDON COUNTY, CONNECTICUT
5. MAPLE LEAF, JACKSONVILLE, DUVAL COUNTY, FLORIDA

POLITICAL HISTORY

6. JOSEPH TAYLOR ROBINSON HOUSE, LITTLE ROCK, PULASKI COUNTY, ARKANSAS

HISTORY OF GEOLOGY

7. ROCK MAGNETICS LABORATORY, MENLO PARK, SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
8. HADROSAURUS FOULKII LEIDY SITE, HADDONFIELD, CAMDEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
9. J. PETER LESLEY HOUSE, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA
10. POCAHONTAS EXHIBITION COAL MINE, POCAHONTAS, TAZEWELL COUNTY, VIRGINIA

PREPARED BY: Patty Henry/TELEPHONE: 202/343-8163

COLONIAL EXPLORATION & SETTLEMENT

11. **SKYTSBORG (Blackbeard's Castle),
CHARLOTTE AMALIE, ST. THOMAS, U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS**

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD THEME STUDY

12. **FORT MOSE SITE, ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

13. **TWELFTH STREET YMCA BUILDING, WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

In accordance with National Historic Landmarks Program regulations, the Board reviewed the studies nominating these properties for Landmark status and found that the properties meet National Historic Landmarks Program criteria. The Board, therefore, voted to recommend that they be designated as National Historic Landmarks.

I recommend that you approve the Board's recommendations and designate as National Historic Landmarks the 13 properties listed above.

APPROVE: 

OCT 12 1994

DISAPPROVE: _____

DATE: _____

DATE: _____

ATTACHMENT

11/29/94

H3417(418)

NOV 29 1994

Messrs. Selio H. Konzen & Robert T. Harrington
Blackbeard's Castle
P.O. Box 6041
Emancipation Garden
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00804

Dear Messrs. Konzen & Harrington:

I am pleased to inform you that Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle) in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, has been found to possess national significance in the history of the United States. As a result, the Secretary of the Interior designated it a National Historic Landmark on October 12, 1994.

The purpose of landmark designation is to identify and recognize nationally significant sites and to encourage their owners to preserve them. Landmarks are chosen after careful study by the National Park Service. They are evaluated by the National Park System Advisory Board and designated by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Designation as a National Historic Landmark automatically places a property in the National Register of Historic Places, if it is not already so listed, and extends to it the safeguards and benefits provided by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and other Federal laws protecting historic properties.

You are eligible to receive a bronze plaque to commemorate the designation of this property. Copies of the plaque application form are enclosed. Please complete the form in triplicate and return two copies to the National Historic Landmarks Coordinator identified on the form. You may retain the third copy for your records.

Unless you specify otherwise, the plaque will bear the name of the property as it appears above. The plaque has a standard text, except for the name of the property (a maximum of two lines) and the year of designation. If you have questions about the plaque, such as the precise text to appear, please contact the National Historic Landmarks Coordinator identified on the form.

The National Park Service will be pleased to assist you if you wish to arrange a ceremony for the presentation of the plaque. Such a ceremony should be scheduled a minimum of several months after notice of designation to provide time to cast the plaque and to arrange the participation of appropriate officials in the ceremony.

We are pleased to include Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle) on the roll of National Historic Landmarks as a significant representative of our Nation's heritage.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Levy
Acting Chief Historian

s/Ben Levy
Acting Chief Historian

Enclosures

SIMILAR LETTERS SENT TO:

OWN: Messrs. Selio H. Konzen & Robert T. Harrington
Blackbeard's Castle
P.O. Box 6041
Emancipation Garden
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00804

HEO: Honorable Alexander Farrelly
Governor, U.S. Virgin Islands
Government House
Kongens Gade
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00801

SHPO: Mr. Roy E. Adams, SHPO
Commissioner
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Suite 231, Nisky Center
No. 45A Estate Nisky
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00802

cc: Ms. Claudette Lewis
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Suite 231, Nisky Center
No. 45A Estate Nisky
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00802

Mr. Frederik C. Gjessing
P.O. Box 1844
Veteran's Drive Station
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
United States Virgin Islands 00802

bcc: 5000 (SERO) C. McKithan 5000 (SERO) M. Barnes
001 RF 400 RF 418 Foster
418 SKYTSBORG (Blackbeard's Castle) (NHL)

FNP:PHenry:mg:11/18/94 CHANGO MAÑOSO RCD #2\94-WIN\NL3\SKYT-3B.LTR

H3417(418)

Honorable Ron de Lugo
Delegate to the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

DEC 9 1994

Dear Mr. De Lugo:

I am pleased to inform you that Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle) in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, has been found to possess national significance in the history of the United States. As a result, the Secretary of the Interior designated it a National Historic Landmark on October 12, 1994. We are notifying the owner of their property's designation.

The purpose of landmark designation is to identify and recognize nationally significant sites and to encourage their owners to preserve them. Landmarks are chosen after careful study by the National Park Service. They are evaluated by the National Park System Advisory Board and designated by the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Designation as a National Historic Landmark automatically places a property in the National Register of Historic Places, if it is not already so listed, and extends to it the safeguards and benefits provided by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and other Federal laws protecting historic properties.

The owner of a Landmark, upon application, will be awarded a bronze plaque. We are providing the owners with the appropriate application forms.

We are pleased to include Skytsborg (Blackbeard's Castle) on the roll of National Historic Landmarks as a significant representative of our Nation's heritage.

Sincerely,

Roger G. Kennedy

Roger G. Kennedy
Director

cc: 5000 (SERO) C. McKithan
5000 (SERO) M. Barnes
001 RF
190 CL
400 RF
418 SKYTSBORG (Blackbeard's Castle) (NHL)

FNP:PHenry:mg:
CHANGO MANOSO RCD #2\94-WIN\NL3\SKYT-3D.LTR

LM 11/21/94
PH 11/29/94
Blary 11/29/94
RT Bowen
11/30/94
12/2
Branch 12/2
F. R. H. (170) 12/6
F. R. H. 12/8
12/08/94