

THE HISTORICAL RECORDS OF THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS:

A REPORT AND PROGRAM PLAN

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"For a creative future to emerge,
the past must be put on our list
of possessions."

George Lamming

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PREFACE

The U.S. Virgin Islands (essentially the islands of St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John) have had a rich and exciting historical experience that unfortunately has gone largely unrecorded. Five major European powers held sovereignty over the islands during the years between the arrival of Columbus in 1493 and their transfer from Denmark to the United States in 1917. In the course of the seventeenth century the Dutch, the English and the French all occupied St. Croix for short periods of time, while in 1672 Denmark successfully established a colony on St. Thomas. In 1717 the Danes extended their control to the island of St. John, and sixteen years later they acquired St. Croix from the French. Thereafter, except for two brief periods of British occupation (1801-1802 and 1807-1815), the islands remained under Danish dominion until being sold to the United States.

During the four centuries of European dominance each European sovereign recorded the history of its rule in its national language, and each deposited the most important historical documents in its national archives. Today, therefore, the historical records relating to the history of the Virgin Islands before 1917 are dispersed in several distant continental repositories, and consequently have been under utilized by local or national scholars.

More than three thousand linear shelf feet of documents pertaining to the Virgin Islands before 1917 are housed at the Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen.¹ These records, most of which are recorded in Danish gothic script, include the archives of the West Indian government which were shipped back to Denmark from the islands in 1898 and 1918. Elsewhere in Europe, manuscript material relating to the Virgin Islands is combined (often indiscriminately) with other state papers deposited in the national archives of England, France, Holland and Spain.² A smaller, though important collection of Danish West Indian records is held by the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C.³ Few

¹For a description of the West Indian records at the Rigsarkivet see pp. 15-37 below.

²For these records see pp. 44-49 below.

³For a description of these records see pp. 37-40 below. There is also a small collection of miscellaneous Danish West Indian state papers at the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley. Microfilmed copies of this material are available at the St. Thomas Public Library. The collection is described in a shelflist entitled "Documents relating to the Danish West Indies, 1655-1852".

historical records of significance are currently located in the Virgin Islands.¹ Thus, the islands continue to suffer from the legacy of colonialism, for their most important historical documents, and hence their history itself, remain almost exclusively under the control of former European rulers.

The inaccessibility of basic historical resources has had far reaching repercussions in the Virgin Islands, not the least of which is a pervasive sense of loss and alienation. "It's as if the Danes sailed off with our history, our past," lamented one Cruzan in recalling that the local archives had been shipped to Denmark.² Indeed, the past still belongs to the colonizers, not the colonized, a truth not only underscored by the present location of the historical records, but explained by the regrettable fact that to date almost every scholarly study published on the Danish West Indies (and there have been precious few overall) has been written by a Dane, in the Danish language (which is not understood locally except by a few old Danish families), for a Danish audience, with a pronounced Danish bias.³

¹The locally available records, primarily police and court records dating from the second half of the nineteenth century, are currently being inventoried by staff members of the St. Thomas Public Library. In addition, mortgage and deed records dating back to the early nineteenth century are located at the Recorder of Deeds offices in St. Thomas and St. Croix.

²Lillian (Plaskett) Denham, quoted in The Daily News (St. Thomas), August 1, 1975.

³Only one scholarly study of the Danish West Indies based on research in Danish archival material has been published in English: Waldemar Westergaard, The Danish West Indies Under Company Rule (1917), which unfortunately is out of print and, in many respects, out of date.

A pressing need exists for a genuinely indigenous historiography based on serious archival research. As Ms. Enid M. Baa, former territorial librarian and leading advocate of a local archives system, has recently asserted:¹

There is a dearth of published Danish West Indian history, and it is up to our West Indian scholars to avail themselves of the source materials and produce their own history.

However, largely due to the unavailability of basic primary source materials, local historical scholarship, programs and activities are virtually non-existent in the Virgin Islands. To date the few natives who have evinced a desire to search out and interpret their own history have been extremely reluctant to undertake serious archival research, primarily because it would necessitate spending extended periods of time in Denmark, becoming familiar with the archives there, learning Danish and the gothic script, making considerable personal and cultural adjustments and expending large sums of their own money. Thus the only local historian of note, J. Antonio Jarvis, based his work almost exclusively on secondary literature available in English, and, to a lesser extent Danish.²

¹Enid M. Baa, "Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II in the Virgin Islands: An Historical Perspective," printed in Danish West Indian Friendship Festival 1977 program, p. 48.

²Jarvis, it should be noted, was not a trained historian. His historical or ethnohistorical writings include: Brief History of the Virgin Islands (1938) and The Virgin Islands and Their People (1944). Other local amateur historians, such as Valdemar Hill Sr., Darwin Creque and D.C. Canegata, have either relied heavily upon Jarvis or available secondary literature when writing on the pre-1917 period. The textbook currently in use at the College of the Virgin Islands, Isaac Dookhan, A History of the Virgin Islands of the United States (1974), is also based on secondary sources.

Until Virgin Islanders have greater access to the records of the past, they will be condemned to a continuing dependency upon historical information and formularizations dispensed by outsiders unfamiliar with local concerns, priorities and aspirations.

The general lack of historical knowledge among Virgin Islanders also has psychological consequences of some import. It compounds a profound "identity crisis" which has been diagnosed as gripping the local community. "Our characteristics are purely imitative. We have no history." So wrote one famous and influential native son.¹ This negative attitude is common among Virgin Islanders for whom the past reeks of slavery and exploitation, degradation and non-accomplishment. Today, however, older attitudes of repudiation or indifference toward history are clashing with an intensifying quest among younger generations (whose sense of sustaining cultural values and historical traditions has been seriously fragmented by the onslaught of Americanization) for a definable and usable past. As one West Indian scholar has expressed it:²

...if we are to inform our society with that motive force which can transform the unjust system we have inherited, which divided and still divides us, if we are to become conscious to ourselves as a people, as an entity, then we must confront ourselves with origins, must lay claim to and take hold of our history.

¹Rothschild Francis in an editorial in the Emancipator (St. Thomas), August 9, 1937. This is a typically West Indian viewpoint. "West Indians are frightened and ashamed of the past," observed the noted Trinidadian novelist V.S. Naipaul, who himself asserted: "The history of the islands can never be satisfactorily told.... History is built around achievement and creation, and nothing was created in the West Indies." See The Middle Passage (1962), pp. 29, 201.

²Sylvia Wynter, Jamaica Journal, Vol. I, No. I (1968).

Virgin Islanders like other West Indians are beginning to acknowledge the need for positive historical definition. In their search for roots, for a new self concept that integrates historical reality with future aspirations, they are demanding more precise information about local history and culture generally, and about the experience of their Afro-Westindian ancestors in particular. Their demands and expectations, however, are doomed to continued frustration if the historical record is not made more available to local students, scholars and laymen.

The inaccessibility of the historical record not only impedes local efforts at self awareness and perpetuates negative or false perceptions, but it frequently inhibits public business. The territorial historical perservation program, the new territorial park system, the Bureau of Libraries, Museums and Archaeological Services, as well as the U.S. National Park Service, which operates two major facilities in the islands, all have an on-going need for factual and interpretative documentation that is simply not available at the present time.

In the area of education it has long been recognized that Virgin Island history should be studied not only in its own right, but "as a key to understanding...present social and economic problems."¹ Yet efforts to develop more locally appropriate social

¹Bertha Boschulte, quoted in The Daily News (St. Thomas), June 1-2, 1950.

studies curricula, cultural programs, textbooks and other instructional material suffer chronically because students, teachers and researchers have insufficient access to primary source materials. The opportunity for promoting academic training in historical methodology, in historical modes of inquiry, analysis and perception is likewise short-circuited.

It must be further emphasized that the value of the pre-1917 records of the Virgin Islands transcends territorial boundaries and considerations. National scholars, particularly those interested in New World colonial societies and slavery, will find the records pertaining to Danish rule especially rich and rewarding. The Danes kept extensive and meticulously detailed records, and the collections have not only survived, but are unusually comprehensive in scope and content when compared to the records of other colonial powers. The records cover every significant aspect of insular life over two and a half centuries, including settlement and colonization, economic and social development, plantations, commerce, slavery and the slave trade, emancipation, peasants, demographic trends, institutional development, immigration, labor relations, politics, religion, health, cultural traditions, race relations and international relations.

The Danish records will be of special import to students of slavery. In the opinion of Dr. S.E. Green-Pedersen, a Danish specialist on the Danish slave trade, the records on his subject

are among the most comprehensive and, therefore, among the most important in the world.¹ The same may be said of the Danish records relating to plantation slavery, which contain an extraordinary amount of quantitative data such as censuses, estate inventories, slave lists, probate and other legal records, in addition to numerous administrative reports, correspondence and topical files. Indeed, by judiciously utilizing the records dealing with Danish African settlements in conjunction with custom records and West Indian plantation records and censuses, it should be possible to trace the life histories of not a few Virgin Islands families, in the same way that Alex Haley has traced his family ancestry in Roots.

The Danish records also contain unusually detailed commercial statistics in the form of custom journals, monthly reports of imports and exports, quarterly abstracts of incoming and outgoing ships, seapass books and other pertinent records. From the mid-eighteenth century St. Thomas stood at the center of regional maritime life; and as Jean L. Willis has demonstrated in her outstanding dissertation,² the United States was a leading trading partner of the Danish islands. Important information about American colonial and national commerce can therefore be found in the Danish records. Additionally, Danish archival material contains pertinent data concerning the American interests in and acquisition of the islands.

¹Interview with the author, July 1977.

²"The Trade Between North America and the Danish West Indies, 1756-1807, With Special Reference to St. Croix," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, (1963).

From the foregoing discussion it is apparent that a dire need exists for a comprehensive program that not only will restore the historical records of the Virgin Islands to the people of the Virgin Islands through microfilming or other forms of copying, but will also utilize these copied source materials to carry out long-term, systematic historical research, translation and dissemination projects. The establishment of such a program can be justified on the following grounds:

- * It would be consonant with the growing demand for more complete and accurate information about Virgin Islands history and culture.
- * It would restore the records of the past to the people of the Virgin Islands, while making them more accessible to national scholars.
- * It would facilitate sustained historical research by local and national scholars.
- * It would service governmental agencies requiring historical research and information.
- * It would provide a source of enrichment for educational materials and curricula.
- * It would insure that records which are already in an advanced state of decomposition could be copied before they become completely unusable by researchers.
- * It would provide Virgin Islanders with new career opportunities and professional training.
- * It would function as a much needed focal point, catalyst and resource center for local, national and international activities pertaining to the history of the Virgin Islands.
- * It would serve to improve the knowledge, performance and professional skills of scholars, educators, librarians, archivists and students.

A plan for a Virgin Islands Historical Records Program has been prepared by the Island Resources Foundation of St. Thomas, under a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (see Section II). In brief, it calls for a first phase in which the program would devote its resources to establishing an administrative framework, developing and training a professional staff, surveying all state records relating to the pre-1917 history of the Virgin Islands in European and American repositories, and microfilming or otherwise copying the most significant overseas records so that at least one copy would be available in the Virgin Islands. Phase I (the developmental phase) would, therefore, create an essential infrastructural base from which specific research, translation and publication efforts, as well as further survey and copying projects, would proceed during Phase II (the implementation phase).

The development and implementation of such a large scale historical records program is an extremely complex and expensive undertaking. Phase I would involve a four to five year effort, with a total direct cost budget of approximately \$335,000.00. Five full or part time staff members must be recruited from the Virgin Islands and Denmark. Institutional cooperation and funding support must be sought from various organizations in the Virgin Islands, the United States and Denmark.

It is proposed that the government of the Virgin Islands assume full administrative responsibility and partial financial responsibility for establishing Phase I of the V.I. Historical Records Program. It is further recommended that the V.I. government give serious consideration to contracting with a qualified, independent, territorial organization, such as the Island Resources Foundation, to act on its behalf in implementing Phase I. Phase II of the proposed Program would be directly administered and supported by the government of the Virgin Islands.

In adopting a V.I. Historical Records Program the Virgin Islands would be following precedents established by other state governments, such as North Carolina, West Virginia and Wyoming, which have created state funded historical agencies to carry out the work of surveying, collecting, copying, researching, translating and publishing official and private manuscripts pertaining to state history.¹ Moreover, the proposed Program would constitute a direct response to Resolution No. 864 (Bill No. 7419) adopted by the Twelfth Legislature of the U.S. Virgin Islands on March 28, 1977, in which the Legislature resolved:

To Authorize and Request the Governor to Undertake An Archives Translation Program With Respect to the Multitude of Danish Records Housed in the Royal Archives and Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark, Covering the Entire Period of Danish Occupation of the Virgin Islands.

As suggested by the above Resolution the proposed V.I. Histor-

¹For a survey of these and other types of state historical and archival agencies see Ernst Posner, American State Archives (1964).

ical Records Program could be incorporated into a territorial archives program as authorized on March 14, 1967, by Act. No. 1880 of the Seventh Legislature of the Virgin Islands.

A plan for a V.I. Historical Records is presented in Section II of this report. However, as the plan is based to a considerable extent on the nature and volume of the records involved, it is necessary first to review and describe the pre-1917 state records of the Virgin Islands in Section I.

SECTION I:

REPORT on PRE-1917 STATE

RECORDS OF THE

VIRGIN ISLANDS

The official or state records relating to the pre-1917 history of the U.S. Virgin Islands can be broken down into two broad categories: 1) the state records of the Danish West Indies; and 2) the state records of other European colonizers. Because the Danish West Indian records are by far the most voluminous, important and concentrated, they have been surveyed preparatory to this report. In the pages that follow the various collections of these Danish records are identified, their provenance noted, their contents described (as far as space permits) and appropriate finding aids cited. In addition, collection size is specified as accurately as possible, and the amount of material sufficiently important to warrant microfilming is estimated.¹

The state records in other European repositories were not surveyed, and are therefore only cursorily discussed.

¹It must be stressed that the volume of material designated for microfilming is approximate and has been estimated primarily for the purpose of establishing the minimum number of records that should be copied, so as to determine a time schedule and budget requirements for Phase I of the proposed V.I. Historical Records Program, as set forth in the next section. The figures are collated and summarized on page 34 below. The following criteria have been used in selecting material for microfilming: a) significance of information; b) relevance to Virgin Islands history as opposed to strictly Danish colonial or administrative history; c) originality; d) legibility and general condition; e) research value compared to volume; and f) incidence of use by researchers.

The State Records of the Danish West Indies

Danish West Indian state records are located in two major repositories: the Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen, and the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C.¹ Nearly all of this material is recorded in Danish, and is handwritten in the Gothic script which was in use until about 1875.

Considered first will be the records at the Rigsarkivet. They run in excess of three thousand linear shelf feet, comprise over 13,500 bound volumes or packets, and are far and away the most important of the two collections.

The Danish West Indian Records at the Rigsarkivet

There are two main groups of West Indian records at the Rigsarkivet: 1) the records of the government in the West Indies, hereafter referred to as the West Indian Local Archives; and 2) the records of the various Danish state offices or organizations responsible for administration of colonial affairs, henceforth termed the Danish Central Administration Records.

¹There is also a small collection of miscellaneous Danish West Indian state papers at the Bancroft Library of the University of California at Berkeley.

The West India Local Archives

The West India local archives consist of those records retained in the islands from the time the Danish government assumed direct administrative control from the Danish West India and Guinea Company (1754) until about the time the islands were sold to the United States. For the most part, these records, compiled by various colonial officials in the daily exercise of their offices, illuminate in microscopic detail the local history of the islands. To some extent they contain copies of correspondence, statistics and documents sent to, and received from, Denmark, the originals of which material can be found in the Danish Central Administration Records. But most of the documents, particularly the police and court records and various case or subject dossiers (*sager*), are not duplicated elsewhere.

Whereas most of these documents date from 1754, the collection includes some material from the earlier period of Company rule, which unfortunately is unavailable to the public because of its poor condition. Indeed, the overall condition of the collection leaves something to be desired. The material is haphazardly stored, and loose papers, or volumes with

deteriorated bindings, are not boxed or otherwise protected. Certain of the documents have been severely ravaged by tropical climate and insects, and their paper is in an advanced state of decay.¹ Nevertheless, most of the records are still legible, are available for use by researchers, and can be microfilmed.

Unfortunately, the value of this enormously important collection is limited by the fact that it has not been systematically surveyed or inventoried.²

The records, which cover virtually every aspect of local administration, can be subdivided into the following categories:

- * Records of the Governor General's Office, which include incoming and outgoing correspondence with officials in Denmark, local colonial officials and residents, officials in foreign West Indies; documents and subject dossiers relating to the above correspondence; protocol books, journals, registers, extractbooks, copybooks and drafts for

¹For an equally negative assessment by two Danish historians, see the article "Study of West Indian History" in the Daily News (St. Thomas) May 28, 1976, which was written by two Danish historians, Ove Hornby and Ole Justesen.

²A very general shelflist can be found in Rigsarkivet Afdeling Generalregistratur (1974).

the above correspondence; Privy Council deliberations and cases; placard and order books; burgher oaths; medical records of the state physician, hospitals and private doctors; correspondence and accounts of the state bookkeeper; correspondence and accounts of the custom officials; warehouse accounts; dossiers on various topics.

- * Upper Court Records, which include records of cases heard in the Upper or State Court; ship certificates; records of the West Indian Debt Liquidation Commission; legal and business records relating to state properties.
- * Records of the Magistrate's Office, which include police journals; criminal case records; sentence books; town court proceedings; reconciling court proceedings; mortgage and loan records; auction books; probate cases; fee books; records of births, baptisms, marriages and deaths; wills; estate inventories and evaluations.
- * Records of the Upper Guardians, which include correspondence, inventories, legal documents, business accounts relating to properties which were placed under the temporary stewardship of the upper guardians or public trustees.

- * Burgher Council Records, which include minutes of proceedings, cases, documents and accounts.
- * St. Thomas Government Records, which include incoming and outgoing correspondence with Denmark, the Governor General's Office, local colonial officials and residents, and foreign West Indian authorities; documents relating to the above correspondence; protocol books, registers, journals, copybooks, drafts for the above correspondence; dossiers on special subjects.
- * Military Records, which include correspondence and papers relating to forts, barracks, recruits and military matters generally.
- * Gendarme Records, which include correspondence, papers, accounts relating to the local Gendarmes.
- * Miscellaneous, unorganized records and dossiers pertaining to a wide variety of special subjects and/or cases.

The West India Local Archives comprise about 8066 bound volumes or packets, plus loose papers, running to 2228 linear shelf feet. Of this amount, an estimated 5200 bound volumes or packets, totaling 1440 linear shelf feet, appear to be of sufficient value to warrant microfilming by the Virgin

Island Historical Record Program. However, an exact figure cannot be assigned until a more systematic survey of these records has been carried out. Such a survey would not only lead to the publication in English and Danish of a descriptive register to the collection, but would also enable us to determine:

- 1) to what extent these records duplicate each other;
- 2) to what extent they duplicate the West Indian records of the Danish central administration; 3) to what extent they duplicate the Danish West Indian records at the U.S. National Archives; and 4) their physical condition and legibility.

The Danish Central Administration Records

In addition to the Local West India Archives, the Rigsarkivet holds the records of the several different administrative bodies in Copenhagen which held responsibility for governing the Danish West Indies during the years 1672-1917.

During the period of Danish sovereignty (1672-1917) several different administrative entities in Copenhagen governed the Danish West Indies. The first superintending authority was the Danish West

India and Guinea Company, a joint-stock company chartered in 1670. Empowered by the King of Denmark to officially manage all colonies it settled on his behalf in the Caribbean, the Company ruled over the islands between 1672 and 1754.¹

In 1754 the Danish central government assumed direct control over St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John. From that year until 1917 various departments within the Danish central government were assigned primary responsibility for colonial administration.

Initially the West Indies were placed under the direction of a special office, the *Vestindisk-guineisk Renteskriverkontor*, within the Department of Finance. The *Renteskriverkontor's* jurisdiction lasted only six years, for in 1760 administrative responsibility for colonial affairs passed to a newly created General Finance and Customs Office (*Generaltoldkammeret*). Except for a short period of unsuccessful reorganization in 1771-1773, the West Indies remained under the direction of this office until 1848.

With the advent of parliamentary rule in Denmark in 1848 colonial administration was centralized

¹For an account in English see Waldemar Westergaard, The Danish West Indies Under Company Rule 1671-1754 (1917).

and placed in the hands of a distinct Colonial Office (*Kolonieres Centralbestyrelse*) established within the Department of Finance. This new office exercised control over the islands until they were ceded to the United States in 1917.¹

After 1848 all correspondence and documents originating in the colonies went first to the Colonial Office, which then passed it on to the appropriate ministry within the Danish government. This procedure contrasted with previous practice whereby colonial officials often corresponded directly with relevant governmental departments in Copenhagen. Thus, many pre-1848 documents relating to West Indian affairs are scattered throughout the records of various Danish departments; whereas after that date most, but not all, of the records, or copies thereof, are located in the records of the central Colonial Office.

The records relating to Danish colonial administration between 1672 and 1917 are organized into four main collections reflecting the administrative pattern outlined above: The Danish West India and Guinea Company Records (1671-1754); the

¹An excellent administrative history of the Colonial Office is printed in Danish at the beginning of *Kolonieres Centralbestyrelse* (Rigsarkivet, Vejledende Arkivregistraturer XX, 1975).

Vestindisk-guineisk Renteskriverkonter records (1754-1760); the *Generaltoldkammeret* records (1760-1848); and the *Kolonieres Centralbestyrelse* records (1848-1917).

1. The West India and Guinea Company Records

The Company records, for which there is an excellent printed register,¹ contain records originating in Denmark and the West Indies which have been combined into one single collection. They include correspondence and accounts concerning Company business in Denmark and Europe; correspondence between the Company directors and their officials in the West Indies; deliberations of the West Indian Privy Councils; West Indian subject dossiers; orders and instructions; West Indian memorials; annual journals of daily events in the West Indies written by the governors; West Indian legal cases and documents; West Indian accounts, journals and custom records; West Indian landlists, property inventories and estate evaluations.

The Company records relating to the West Indies comprise 879 bound volumes or packets

¹J.O. Bro-Jørgensen and Og AA. Rasch, *Asiatiske vestindiske og guineiske handelskompagnier* (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer XIV, 1974), pp. 159-257.

running to 198 linear shelf feet. Of this amount, 524 bound volumes or packets, totaling about 118 linear shelf feet, can be assigned highest priority for microfilming.

2. The Records of the Vestnisk-guineisk Renteskriverkontor, the Generaltoldkammeret and the Kolonieres Centralbestyrelse

The records of each of these three departments contain essentially the same type of material, e.g., outgoing orders, resolutions, decrees, instructions and letters to West Indian governors and officials; incoming correspondence and documents from West Indian officials; protocol books, journals, registers, indexes, copy-books and drafts for the above incoming and outgoing correspondence; various West Indian subject dossiers; West Indian laws; West Indian accounts; West Indian memorials; reports from various Commissions on West Indian affairs; West Indian military affairs and accounts.

In addition the *Generaltoldkammeret* records contain considerable material relating specifically to the abolition of the slave trade and slave emancipation in the West Indies, as well as several volumes dealing with the British occupations

of 1801-1802 and 1807-1815. In the *Kolonieres Centralbestyrelse* records can be found volumes pertaining to local organizations and offices, such as the Brand Corps, the Gendarmes, the telegraph and post offices, the land and building surveyors, in addition to information about Danish efforts to sell the islands.

The *Vestindisk-guineisk Renteskriverkontor* records, for which there is a useful register,¹ comprise 69 bound volumes or packets, running to 20 linear shelf feet. Of this amount, 33 bound volumes or packets, totaling about 10 linear shelf feet, can be assigned highest priority for micro-filming.

The *Generalaltoldkammeret* records are the only group of West Indian records within the Danish Central Administration Records that have not been systematically registered, although a superficial, out of date register has been printed.²

¹Jens Holmgaard, *Rentekammeret I* (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer XII, 1969), pp. 93-5.

²J. Block, *Rentekammeret, Generalaltoldkammeret og Kommercekollegiet 1660-1848* (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer II, 1892), pp. 293-99.

This collection requires the preparation of an updated register before it can be properly utilized by researchers, or its contents and size can be accurately determined. Together with the West India records of the *Dansk Kammer*, which briefly administered the colonies during 1771-1773,¹ the *Generaltoldkammeret* records comprise approximately 700 bound volumes or packets, running to about 280 linear shelf feet. Of this amount, a total of about 600 bound volumes or packets, totaling about 240 linear shelf feet, can be assigned highest priority for microfilming.

The *Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse* records, for which an excellent register has been printed,² comprise 1444 volumes or packets, running to 323 linear shelf feet. Of this amount, 1312 bound volumes or packets, totalling about 288 linear shelf feet can be assigned highest priority for microfilming.

¹Jens Holmgaard, *Rentekammeret I* (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer XII, 1969), p. 97.

²*Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse* (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer XX, 1975).

Miscellaneous West Indian Records at the Rigsarkivet

Besides the Local West Indian Archives and the records of the Danish central administration there are several other collections of West Indian records at the Rigsarkivet. These records are here subsumed and described under the heading of "Miscellaneous West Indian Records".

1. The West India Revised Accounts

Between 1755 and 1917 the financial accounts of most Danish administrative offices in the West Indies were sent home to be reviewed and audited. Copies of these accounts were made and kept in Denmark (these are the West India Revised Accounts) and the originals were returned to the islands. Thus, material in the Revised Accounts duplicates that found in the West India Local Archives. The duplication, however, is not always exact, as the Revised Accounts often synthesized and/or summarized the most pertinent information in the original records. Nevertheless, although the Revised Accounts are not always as detailed as the originals, they are in much better condition, and are sometimes more complete. Moreover, there are some accounts in the Revised Accounts which are not duplicated in the Local Archives. And included among the

Revised Accounts are letters and reports explaining alterations in fee or tax schedules, collection methods, and other annual changes. For these reasons the Revised Accounts should be assigned high priority for microfilming.

Included in the Revised Accounts are the accounts of the state bookkeepers in St. Croix and St. Thomas (479 volumes); St. Thomas and St. Croix Casebooks (444 volumes); Upper Guardian accounts; St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix matriculs or tax lists (300 volumes or packets); $\frac{1}{4}\%$ tax accounts (97 volumes); magistrate office fee books (159 volumes) and accounts (30 volumes); landkasse accounts (16 volumes); church accounts (18 volumes); weigh and post office accounts (139 volumes); military accounts (75 volumes); custom accounts (130 volumes); harbor master and pilot accounts (18 volumes); state plantation accounts (30 volumes); auction protocols (25 volumes); miscellaneous papers (41 volumes).

The Revised Accounts, for which there is a superficial shelflist,¹ comprise 2095 bound

¹Rigsarkivet Afdeling Generalregistratur (1974).

volumes, running to about 475 linear shelf feet. Of this amount an estimated 1000 bound volumes, running to about 235 linear shelf feet, would appear to be of sufficient importance to warrant microfilming. However, an exact figure cannot be assigned until the contents of this collection can be compared more closely with the contents and condition of the original material in the West India Local Archives.

2. The West India Debt Liquidation Commission
Records 1786-1875

Between 1768 and 1785 the planters in the Danish West Indies borrowed heavily from Dutch creditors to finance the development of their plantations and the acquisition of slaves.¹ In 1786, with the debt amounting to nearly ten million rigsdalers, the Danish government took over the debt from the Dutch creditors and established a commission in the islands to oversee its collection. The records of this commission contain valuable information about the economic history of nearly every plantation in the Danish West Indies, and for this reason should be microfilmed.

¹Some records relating to these Dutch loans and their collection by local agents are in the West India Local Archives.

The Debt Commission records, for which adequate descriptive registers have been printed,¹ comprise 328 bound volumes or packets, running to about 53 linear shelf feet. Of this amount, 261 bound volumes, running to about 42 linear shelf feet, can be assigned high priority for microfilming.

3. The West India Censuses 1841-1911

Detailed censuses were taken in the Danish West Indies in 1841, 1846, 1850, 1855, 1857, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1901, and 1911. These records, containing incredibly rich demographic and cultural information about the islands and their people, comprise 67 packets and run to about 20 linear shelf feet. They all have been microfilmed, and copies should be obtained by the V.I. Historical Records Program.

4. West India Trading Company Records 1778-1824

In May 1778 a private trading company, having the Danish King and many governmental officials as stockholders, was established in Denmark for the purpose of taking advantage of Denmark's neutral position during the War of American

¹J. Block, *Finansarkiverne 1660-1848. Generalpostdirektionens Arkiv 1711-1848* (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer III, 1900), pp. 95-8, 171-72.

Independence.¹ Headquartered in Copenhagen, the Company had a branch office in St. Thomas to handle its West Indian business. During the nearly half century of its existence the Company assumed responsibility for carrying on a significant proportion of the trade between the islands and Denmark, and its records therefore provide important information about the mercantile life of the Danish islands during the most prosperous period of their history. However, inasmuch as the Trading Company records are more appropriately considered private rather than state records, relating more to overall Danish commercial enterprise in the Caribbean than specifically to the Danish West Indies, they should not be considered as having high priority for microfilming at this time.

The West India Trading Company records, for which there is an excellent printed register,² comprise 531 bound volumes or packets, running to 76 linear shelf feet. Of this amount, about 157 bound volumes, totaling about 23 linear shelf feet should eventually be microfilmed.

¹For a history of this Company see P.P. Sveistrup, "Det Kongelige Danske Octroyered Vestindiske Handelsselskab 1778-1785," Historisk Tidsskrift, VI (4 Hefte, 1943), pp. 385-427.

²J.O. Bro-Jørgensen and Og. AA. Rasch, Asiatiske, vestindiske og guineiske handelskompagnier (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer XIV, 1969), pp. 299-331.

5. Records in Danish State Offices

In this category are records pertaining to the West Indies that are scattered throughout the archives of various Danish governmental offices. For example, in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs material on the acquisition of St. Croix from the French and on the British occupations of 1801-1802 and 1807-1815 is included in those papers dealing with Denmark's diplomatic relations with France and England respectively. There are also records concerning Danish negotiations to sell the islands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Included in the Danish Chancery Archives are various West Indian files (1671-1771, 1773-1799, 1817-1848), West Indian testaments and commissions (1699-1771, 1773-1799, 1802-1807, 1817-1848), letterbooks on West Indian affairs (1815-1848), representations and inter-departmental letters and papers, and accounts on the royal plantations in St. Croix in the 1730's.

Records concerning Danish West Indian commerce during the 1760's and 1770's, plus representations on West Indian matters (1784-1815)

are included in the Finance Ministry Archives.

West Indian material can also be found in the archives of the Danish Army and Navy.

A more systematic search is required before the extent of these scattered West Indian records can be accurately assessed, and a determination made as to how far they duplicate records in the more specific West Indian collections. Some of these records (a rough estimate would be around 250 bound volumes) should probably be microfilmed.

6. Maps and Prints

The Rigsarkivet holds a substantial collection of original maps and prints on the Danish West Indies. These important graphics have not been systematically registered. A comprehensive descriptive register should be made, and all the material photographed.¹ Because of the great benefits that would derive from direct access to the originals, discussions pursuant to their transfer to the islands should be opened with the Rigsarkivet.

¹The U.S. National Park Service in the Virgin Islands has had some of these graphics copied.

TABLE I: SUMMARY OF RECORDS IN THE RIGSARKIVET

<u>Name of Collection</u>	<u>Total No. of Items</u>	<u>Items to be Microcopied</u>
West India Local Archives 1755-1917	8066 approx.	5200 approx.
Danish West India and Guinea Company 1670-1754	879	524
Rentekammeret 1755-1760	69	33
Generaltoldkammeret (includes Dansk Kammer) 1760-1848	700 approx.	600 approx.
Kolonieres Central- bestyrelse 1848-1917	1444	1312 approx.
West India Revised Accounts 1755-1917	2095	1000 approx.
West India Debt Liquidation Commission 1786-1875	328	261
West Indian Censuses 1841-1911	67	67
Records in Various Danish State Offices	<u>?</u>	<u>250</u>
TOTALS:	13648 approx.	9247 approx.

7. Private Archives

The Rigsarkivet houses several collections of private manuscripts which touch directly on West Indian affairs. Among the most important of these collections are: the Schimmelmann Family Papers, which contain vital information about the abolition of the Danish slave trade, as well as about the family plantations on St. Croix; the Papers of Gabriel Milan, which contain papers and correspondence relating to his governorship of St. Thomas 1684-1686; the Papers of O. Rubner-Petersen, Director of the Christiansted schools, which touch on the educational system of the islands, the general strike of 1916 and other local matters; the Papers of Philip Peder Rosenstand, which include letters and papers pertaining to the labor insurrection on St. Croix in 1878. Other relevant private papers include: the Louis Rothe Papers; the Johan Friedrich Heinrich Papers; the Hans Henrik Berg Papers; the Niels Falck Glørsent Papers; the Michael Liebenberg Papers; the William Schwartzkopff Papers; the Christian Albrecht Neve Papers, the Niels Knudsen Papers; the

Frederik E. Elbering Papers; the Svend R. Haagensen Diary; the Johannes W. Mouritzen Papers.

A general register to the Private Archives has been published,¹ but it only lists the collections alphabetically and not by subject. A systematic search of the unpublished registers for each private collection would undoubtedly disclose additional West Indian related manuscripts. Since these are private as opposed to state papers, microfilming is not contemplated at this time. However, like the records of the West India Trading Company, they should be filmed at a later date.

8. Other Danish Repositories

Although the scope of this report extends only to the Danish West India records located at the Rigsarkivet in Copenhagen, it should be noted that West Indian material can also be found at other Danish repositories. For example, records relating to the Lutheran Church in the islands are deposited in the Landsarkivet for the island of Zeeland, which is also in Copenhagen.

¹Oversight over Private Personarkiver I. (Rigsarkivet Forehøbbige Arkivregistraturer, Ny Serie, Nr. 3, 1969).

The Royal Library in Copenhagen has some private papers relating to the West Indies; while the Copenhagen University Library possesses many old West Indian newspapers (most of which have been microfilmed by the St. Thomas Public Library). Some of the material now in the West Indian Local Archives at the Rigsarkivet came via the provincial archives, and there is a distinct possibility that additional records, both official and public, are deposited in archives outside of Copenhagen.

Danish West Indian Records at the U.S. National Archives

The Danish West Indian records at the U.S. National Archives (which form part of Record Group #55) were formerly part of the West Indian government records located in the islands.¹ Left behind by the Danes, they were collected and transferred to the National Archives

¹These records are briefly described in George S. Ulibarri and John P. Harrison, Guide to Materials on Latin America in the National Archives of the United States (1974), pp. 404-5 and Harold Larson, "The Danish West Indies Records in the U.S. National Archives," Studies in Virgin Islands Librarianship, No. 12 (1976).

in 1937 by Dr. Harold Larsen and a local staff. Like the material at the Rigsarkivet, most of these records are in Danish and written in the gothic script. However, a surprising volume of documents, notably the Colonial or Burgher Council proceedings, the papers of the various municipal committees and commissions and the Debt Liquidation Commission, are in English. Although many of the records are badly deteriorated, in most cases their decomposition has been arrested by preservation processes employed by the National Archives.

These records, which comprise 2483 boxes or bound volumes, running to 928 linear shelf feet, are similar in arrangement and content to those of the West India Local Archives at the Rigsarkivet. They include incoming and outgoing letters, with documents, of the Governor General's and Vice-Governor's offices; legislative records and proceedings (including proceedings in English dating as far back as 1767); judicial and police records; records of the upper guardians; probate records; colonial accounts; matriculs; economic and social statistics (including the 1890 census, most of which is missing from the Rigsarkivet); military records; municipal records; custom house records; records of the Debt Liquidation Commission; records of various local commissions

and committees concerned with education, hospitals, poor relief, fire protection, sanitation, roads, building construction and surveys, and taxes, as well as investigations into the insurrections of 1848 and 1878.

In addition, there is also a large collection of material (running to 165 linear shelf feet) containing West Indian newspapers dating from the nineteenth century and the papers of the "Law Library of the Virgin Islands", consisting of 93 boxes of Danish laws, decrees and other legal documents dating from 1660.

For the most part the Danish records at the U.S. National Archives complement those in the West India Local Archives (to which they originally belonged) at the Rigsarkivet. However, an accurate comparison of the West Indian records at the National Archives with those at the Rigsarkivet will have to await the compilation of more accurate surveys and registers for the two collections. Although an adequate tool for most researchers, the present shelflist for the records at the National Archives is often inaccurate and fails to provide sufficiently detailed information about all of the material in the collection.¹ From our preliminary

¹"Records of the Danish Government of the Virgin Islands 1672-1917," (1961), which was compiled by H. Donn Hooker and his wife. For a more detailed critique of this shelflist see p.43 below.

survey, however, it is clear that a significant percentage of the records at the National Archives is not duplicated at the Rigsarkivet. A rough estimate is that between 50-60% of these records are unduplicated elsewhere, 25-30% are duplicated at the Rigsarkivet, with the remainder being uncertain.

Generally speaking, much of the material dating from 1865 to 1917 in the National Archives appears to be unique. Records at the National Archives apparently not duplicated in Denmark include: journals and registers to incoming and outgoing correspondence of the Governor General's office; incoming letters (many in English) from island residents to local colonial officials or agencies; many of the subject dossiers (*sager*), which the National Archives' shelflist mislabels as "miscellaneous"; most of the papers, accounts and correspondence of the Burgher or municipal councils and their various committees and commissions; many of the Colonial Council proceedings; many of the records relating to the island of St. John.

Finding Aids to Danish West Indian Records

With the notable exception of the West India Local Archives, all of the major West Indian collections at the Rigsarkivet are described in printed registers which give the volume number, title and dates. The registers are keyed to a general register which shows shelf location. A very general shelflist for the West India Local Archives and the West India Revised Accounts is printed in Rigsarkivet Afdeling Generalregistraturer (København, 1974). A more systematic descriptive register to this material is imperative.

The West India and Guinea Company Records (1671-1754), together with the West India Trading Company Records (1778-1824) are registered in J.O. Bro-Jørgensen and Og. AA. Rasch, Asiatiske, vestindiske og guineiske handelskompagnier (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer XIV, København, 1969).

The records of the Vestindisk guineiske Renteskriverkontor (1754-1773) are adequately registered in Jens Holmgaard, Rentekammeret I (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer XII, København, 1969), pp. 93-5, 97, 99.

The records of the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse

(1848-1875) are excellently registered in Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer XX, København, 1975).

The West India Debt Liquidation Commission records (1786-1875) are adequately registered in J. Block, Finansarkiverne 1660-1848. Generalpostdirektionens Arkiv 1711-1848 (Rigsarkivet Vejledende Arkivregistraturer III, København, 1900), pp. 95-8, 171-2.

The holdings of the Private Archives are listed alphabetically by name of collection in Oversight over Private Personarkiver I (Rigsarkivet Forehøbbige Arkivregistraturer, Ny Serie, Nr. 3, København, 1969), which in turn refers the reader to a more detailed inventory to each collection in the Catalog Room.

In addition to the published registers, the Rigsarkivet has other finding aids which are located in the Catalog Room off the main reading room, specifically: catalog drawer #87, entitled "Vestindisk og guineiske regnskaber," which contains detailed register cards to some of the material in the West India Revised Accounts; catalog drawer #96, which contains detailed register cards to a small part of the West India Local Archives; three unlabeled drawers containing names of persons

(arranged alphabetically) in St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John appearing in various kinds of probate documents found in the West India Local Archives; two drawers, entitled "*Vestindisk Dressel og Personahistorik Samling*", which contains an alphabetical listing of persons, primarily colonial officials on St. Croix, whose names appear in various legal documents in the West India Local Archives.

For the Danish West Indian Government records at the U.S. National Archives the only finding aid is a shelflist entitled "Records of the Danish Government of the Virgin Islands 1672-1917" (prepared by H. Donn Hooker in 1961), which is available on request at the search room of the Natural Resources Branch of the Civil Archives Division or in the Central Search Room at the National Archives. It shows the title, dates, number and footage of the bound volumes and boxes, together with the row and section where they are located. A useful index has recently been added to the shelflist.

Although the shelflist is probably an adequate guide to the records for most researchers, it nevertheless has a number of drawbacks which limit its usefulness. To be specific, dates are sometimes inaccurately stated and gaps are not noted; box or volume numbers are sometimes inaccurate or not given; English translations are not always provided; some of the records cited appeared

to be missing or misfiled; large groups of records (for example boxes 157-347) are not described in detail; titles are not always specific (for example, it is seldom specified whether correspondence is incoming or outgoing); there are many spelling or typographical errors. The "Introduction" notes "that the identification of records, series as well as individual items, is tentative and not final," and primarily for this reason the National Archives does not permit the copying or external circulation of the shelflist.

The shelflist definitely needs to be revised and updated to make it more accurate and detailed and, therefore, more serviceable to serious researchers.

State Records of the Virgin Islands in European Repositories

The national repositories of Spain, Holland, England and France house many valuable documents relating to the pre-1917 history of the Virgin Islands. Although the volume

of this material is small in comparison to that of the Danish records, the documents have a special importance in that they illuminate the years between 1493 and 1734 when all of the above nations either controlled or laid claim to the Virgin Islands.

To date no comprehensive survey or inventory has been made for this Virgin Island manuscript material. Moreover, there are few specific references to it in relevant bibliographical guides to American manuscripts in European Archives, most of which were compiled before the United States took possession of the islands.¹

The location, arrangement and content of these records in the respective archives is largely determined by the degree and nature of control exercised by the nation in question. Thus, Spain, which made no serious effort to colonize

¹The following guides make little or no mention of material relating to the Virgin Islands: William R. Shepherd, Guide to Materials for the History of the United States in Spanish Archives (1907); Carl Russell Fish, Guide to the Materials for American History in Roman and Other Italian Archives (1911); Marion D. Learned, Guide to the Manuscript Materials relating to American History in the German State Archives (1912); Charles M. Andrews, Guide to the Materials for American History, to 1783, in the Public Record Office of Great Britain, 2 vols. (1912-1914); Charles O. Paullin and Frederick L. Paxson, Guide to the Materials in London Archives for the History of the United States Since 1783 (1914); B.R. Crick and Miriam Alman, A Guide to Manuscripts Relating to America in Great Britain and Ireland (1961).

the islands, possesses no distinct collection of Virgin Islands records. Rather, relevant documents are scattered throughout various record groups in the Archives of the Indies at Seville and, to a far lesser extent, other Spanish archives.¹ When located, these manuscripts should provide considerable information about Amerindian inhabitants, about Spanish colonial policy and activities in the islands and about early European settlements which the Spanish endeavored to suppress.

In the cases of Holland and Great Britain documents pertaining to the Virgin Islands will also be found interspersed with other state papers rather than forming discrete collections. The Dutch records will shed light on the unsuccessful efforts of Hollanders to colonize St. Croix and St. Thomas in the seventeenth century. Most of the relevant documents in Holland will be found in the records

¹For documents pertaining to the Virgin Islands in Spanish Archives see Lino G. Conedo, Los Archivos de la historia de America: Periodo colonial español, 2 vols. (1961); F.M. Padron, "Archival Material on the Lesser Antilles located in the Archives of the Indies, Seville (Spain)," in Report of the Caribbean Archives Conference (1965), pp. 131-52; Guía de Fuentes Para la Historia de Ibero-America Conservado en España, 2 vols. (1969).

of the First and Second Dutch West Indian Companies, 1621-1791 and other official government collections which are in the General State Archives at the Hague. Additional records are deposited at the Town Archives of Amsterdam, including correspondence from the preachers Fortius Verburgh and Jacob van Calverlagen on the island of St. John, 1748-49, 1751, and the Heylinger Family papers from St. Croix dating from the 1760's and 1770's. Relevant seventeenth and eighteenth century material can also be found at the Netherlands Economic History Archives in the Hague.¹

In Great Britain, documents concerning British settlements and interests in St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John, Anglo-Danish relations during the many colonial wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and affairs generally in the Danish West Indies are scattered throughout the Colonial Office papers, particularly the C.O. 152 series (Leeward Islands) and the Admiralty papers, which are in the

¹The West Indian records in Holland are surveyed in several excellent publications: M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, "A Survey of the Archives in the Netherlands pertaining to the History of the Netherlands Antilles, *De West-Indische Gids*, vol. 35 (1955), pp. 1-38; Johanna F. Kraal, "Libraries and Archives for Research in West Indian History,..." *De West-Indische Gids*, Vol. 37 (1957); M.P.H. Roessingh, *Guide to the Sources in the Netherlands for the History of Latin America* (1968); Margaretha E. van Opstall, "Archival Resources in the Netherlands," in *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Societies*, ed. by Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden (Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 292, 1977), pp. 501-09.

London Public Records Office. Discrete collections concerning the British conquests and occupation of the Danish West Indies (1801-1802, 1807-1815) can be found in C.O. 244 (St. Croix 1808-1815, 10 volumes, C.O. 259 (St. Thomas, 1808-1815, 6 volumes), as well as several volumes in the C.O. 318 series, the War Office papers and the Admiralty papers. Additional documents can be found in the private papers of various British statesmen, military officers and plantation owners involved in West Indian affairs.¹

Records bearing on various French settlements on St. Croix between 1640 and 1734 can be found in discrete collections or interspersed among different records groups, such

¹Finding aids which identify some of the documents relating to the Virgin Islands at the Public Records Office in London and other British repositories are: H.C. Bell, D.W. Parker, et. al., Guide to British West Indian Archive Materials in London and the Islands for the History of the United States (1926); Penny Payne, "A Survey of Manuscript Materials relating to the British Occupations of the Danish West Indies 1801-1815," (Island Resources Foundation Mss. 1972); Peter Walne, A Guide to Manuscript Sources for the History of Latin America and the Caribbean in the British Isles (1973); George F. Tyson, Jr. and Carolyn Tyson, Preliminary Report on Manuscript Materials in British Archives Relating to the American Revolution in the West Indian Islands (1974). The Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, provides a valuable index to Colonial Office documents from the years 1661-1741 which pertain to St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.

as those on St. Kitts or Guadeloupe, which are located in the Archives Nationales, The Archives des Affaires Étrangères, the Archives de la Marine and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.¹

Microfilms

A small percentage of the West Indian records at the Rigsarkivet and the U.S. National Archives has been micro-filmed to date.

At the Rigsarkivet some 262 film reels of West Indian documents have been made. Much of this filming has been done by the Rigsarkivet for the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City. Some films

¹ For documents in French archives relating to the Virgin Islands see Jacques de Dampierre, Essai sur les Sources de l'histoire des Antilles françaises, 1492-1662 (1904); Waldo G. Leland, et. al., Guide to Materials for American History in the Libraries and Archives of Paris, 2 vols. (1932, 1943); Lowell J. Ragatz, "Early French West Indian Records in the Archives Nationales," Inter-American Bibliographical Review, Vol. I, No. 3 (1941), pp. 1-35; Etienne Taillemite, "The Early Records of the French Colonies in the French National Archives," in Report of the Caribbean Archives Conference (1965), pp. 422-44; Andre Chapman, "English Resume of Documents relating to St. Croix in Archives des Affaires Étrangères," (St. Croix Landmarks Society Mss., n.d.); Madeline Astorquia, et. al., Guide des sources de l'histoire des États-Unis dans les archives françaises (1976).

from various central administrative offices in Denmark, such as the Danish Chancery, the Board of Finance and the *General-toldkammeret*, have been made for the "Security" program.¹ Nineteen reels of materials from the Danish West India Company records were made for the U.S. National Archives. Another forty-five reels of mortgage registers, passport lists, burgher oaths and arriving and departing persons, all taken from the records of the West India Local Archives, were made for the government of the Virgin Islands.

These microfilms have been made haphazardly over a long period of years. They have not been systematically registered,² and the quality of reproduction is sometimes very poor. Nevertheless, some of these films, such as those of the West Indian censuses between 1841 and 1911, might be incorporated directly into the proposed microfilm collection of the V.I. Historical Records Program after first being carefully reviewed, and appropriate registers prepared.

¹The "Security" program was established by the Danish government in the 1940's to microfilm all official records in the state archives.

²Microfilms of Danish West Indian archival material held by the St. Thomas Public Library in St. Thomas are itemized in Catalog of Microfilms available in the Von Scholten Collection of the St. Thomas Public Library, (3rd. edition, St. Thomas, 1970). The U.S. National Archives has made twenty-two microfilm reels of the custom journals from its Danish West Indian Government records. In addition, microfilms are available for some documents relating to St. Croix at the Archives Nationales in Paris. The Danish West Indian records at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley have also been microfilmed.

It should also be noted that the government of Ghana is currently having some records of the Danish West India and Guinea Company filmed by the Rigsarkivet. The filming is selective, primarily confined to records relating to Danish settlements on the African coast. However, some material concerning the slave trade to the West Indies, and the West Indian settlements will probably be filmed. As the filming has just commenced, and the selection of records still underway, it is not possible to specify at this time what records will in fact be copied. The Rigsarkivet has agreed to provide a complete list once the selection process is finished. Mr. Confidence Gadzekpo, the Ghanaian archivist responsible for selecting the records to be filmed, is also preparing a descriptive register for the films. The films which touch directly on the slave trade and the West Indies probably could be incorporated into the proposed Virgin Islands microfilm collection. And, because of the intimate economic and cultural linkages between the islands and Africa, it would be desirable for the V.I. Historical Records Program to obtain copies of all the films made by the government of Ghana.

SECTION II:

PLAN FOR A VIRGIN ISLANDS HISTORICAL RECORDS PROGRAM

Program Components: An Overview

A plan for a coordinated, comprehensive Virgin Islands Historical Records Program (hereafter VIHRP) is set forth in the following pages. The proposed Program would encompass the surveying and photoduplication of most historical documents relating to the history of the Virgin Islands which are currently located in European and American repositories, as well as the development of a selective translation and publication component based in the Virgin Islands and staffed by qualified translators and professional historians.

The VIHRP would initially concentrate on records which pre-date the transfer of the islands to the United States in 1917. While the post-1917 records are certainly of equal importance, they are nevertheless concentrated in a few repositories in the continental United States, are reasonably well surveyed in English¹ and the originals, or copies thereof, are readily available and understandable to local and national scholars and residents. Because the pre-1917 records are widely dispersed in overseas repositories, are recorded in foreign languages, are poorly surveyed, and are

¹Most of these records are at the U.S. National Archives. See H. Donn Hooker, Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States (1960) and George S. Ulibarri and John P. Harrison, Guide to Materials on Latin America in the National Archives of the United States (1974).

consequently relatively inaccessible, they pose a special set of problems, the solution of which requires considerable planning, coordination, skills and high initial costs. Ultimately, a comprehensive VIHRP will incorporate all historical records within its purview. However, at its inception it should address itself to the myriad difficulties posed by the pre-1917 records.

In general terms, the following critical components are essential to a comprehensive VIHRP:

Archival Surveys

As noted in Section I, official and private papers relating to the pre-1917 history of the Virgin Islands are widely dispersed in European and American archives. Currently very little is known about the location, scope or content of these records. This lack of knowledge is one reason why so little scholarly interest in, or research on, V.I. history has been manifested on this side of the Atlantic. The first priority of the VIHRP is to conduct surveys that will locate, inventory, describe and prepare for publication in English detailed bibliographical guides to these scattered historical manuscripts. The purpose of such surveys would be threefold: 1) to identify and accurately describe relevant

historical records; 2) to provide for the first time in English essential finding aids to these largely unknown historical records; 3) to facilitate the overall development of the VIHRP and to define its programatic needs more accurately.

Priority should be given to preparing finding aids as necessary (or translating existing finding aids into English), to state papers in the Rigsarkivet, the U.S. National Archives and the national archives of Spain, France, Holland and England.

Surveys of pre-1917 manuscripts in private collections and church records in U.S. and European repositories should be undertaken at a later time, and, where appropriate, finding aids prepared. These collections, such as the Markoe Family Papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania or the records of the Moravian Church in East Germany and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, are of considerable significance for our understanding of local social, economic, political and cultural history. Surveys of both official and private manuscripts located in the Virgin Islands should also be undertaken, inventories prepared and appropriate findings aids printed.

Microfilming and Photocopying

Currently, microfilming or other forms of photoduplication constitute the most feasible method of insuring Virgin Islanders and national scholars increased access to the far-flung historical records of the Virgin Islands. While there is a possibility that some of the records at the Rigsarkivet and the U.S. National Archives might someday be transferred to the islands if a proper archival facility were available to house them, both Dr. Hvidfeldt of the Rigsarkivet and Dr. Rhoads of the U.S. National Archives insist that such transferal cannot take place until the records in their archives have first been microcopied. Microfilming is therefore an imperative first step in making the historical records more accessible. It also serves to preserve dilapidated records, and microfilm requires a smaller, less controlled storage area than do original manuscripts.

The value of microfilming as a means of making historical documents more available to Caribbean peoples and scholars was clearly acknowledged by the participants at the First Caribbean Archives Conference held in 1965, who strongly recommended:¹

¹Report of the Caribbean Archives Conference (1965), p. 67.

That, where feasible, some effort should in future be directed to the reproduction, for local use, of Caribbean archival material in overseas repositories and that funds should be sought by governments to carry out this work in co-operation with each other and with interested institutions.

The major record collections relating to the Virgin Islands before 1917 should be microfilmed, with at least one copy of each roll being deposited in the Virgin Islands. Detailed roll descriptions should be prepared in English, and guides prepared and printed to the microfilm collection as a whole.

Priority should be given to microfilming the most significant West Indian records at the Rigsarkivet, since they constitute the largest and most important collection. Danish West Indian records at the U.S. National Archives which do not duplicate those in Denmark, or which are in better condition than duplicates in Denmark should also be filmed. Relevant documents identified by the surveys of the state archives of Spain, France, Holland and England should either be microfilmed or photocopied, whichever is most feasible and least expensive.

At a later date microfilms or photocopies should be made of relevant documents in private collections and church archives in European and American repositories.

Translation

Most of the pre-1917 historical records are recorded in languages other than English, a fact which compounds the problem of accessibility. From the outset the VIHRP should contain a built-in language training and translation component involving Virgin Islanders who would become the nucleus of a permanent program staff. Unless the VIHRP can assure itself of a cadre of competent translators, the copies of historic documents will be of little practical use locally.

Accordingly, translator-trainees must be selected who have a demonstrated ability in one or more foreign languages, as well as a good background and interest in local history and culture. Once designated they would receive a special course of instruction in Denmark in the Danish language, the Danish gothic script, as well as in Virgin Islands and Danish history, photoduplication techniques and archival practices. Classroom work would be supplemented by on-the-job training, so that language and other skills could be sharpened and focused. The trainees would be actively involved in microfilming and registering the records at the Rigsarkivet, and after completing their assignment in Denmark, they would return to the Virgin Islands to continue their work as translators and researchers with the VIHRP.

Publication

A long-range publication program, designed to publish key translated documents in a systematic manner, should be an integral part of the VIHRP. Such a publication program would give direction to the translation of selected historical documents and would make significant documents easily available and understandable to Virgin Islanders and interested researchers. "The publication...of select state documents," observes the state archivist of Trinidad-Tobago, "is one way of helping solve the problem of accessibility."¹ And the value of carefully edited, properly introduced and annotated documentary publications as teaching tools is clear - they not only contain hard to locate factual information, but also show students how to evaluate evidence, and foster a finer appreciation of history by allowing the reader to share in the excitement of personally discovering and interpreting the past.

The VIHRP should procede in two phases. Phase I, the developmental phase, would focus on surveying and microfilming all significant pre-1917 state records in European and American archives. Detailed roll descriptions to all microfilms would be prepared and published

¹Enos Sewlal, "Problems of Making State Archival Material Available (For Research and Other Purposes) In the Caribbean Countries," in Report of the Caribbean Archives Conference (1965), p. 113.

in a guide, and a general bibliographical guide to all state papers would also be published in English. During this phase an administrative framework would be established and a qualified staff selected and trained.

Phase II, the implementation phase, would involve systematic utilization of the historical materials gathered during Phase I. Professional historians and translators fluent in Danish and other necessary languages would select, translate, annotate and index significant documents for publication. Examples of documents that might be translated and published are the journals and report books of daily events compiled by various governors between 1680-1742 which are in the Danish West India and Guinea Company Records, or the correspondence of Governor Peter von Scholten, or, more topically, documents relating to slavery and emancipation. In addition to publication projects, program staff would continue to carry out archival surveys and selected copying of relevant private papers of church records. And they would be available to carry out special projects in cooperation with various territorial agencies and organizations.

The specific projects to be undertaken during Phase II will come into clearer focus as Phase I develops.

For this reason the remainder of the paper will be devoted to delineating Phase I, which is the crucial foundation upon which an on-going VIHRP must be built.

Program Development

Outline

The foremost objective of Phase I will be to microfilm between seven and eight thousand volumes or packets of West Indian manuscripts at the Rigsarkivet (see Table I, p. 34 for a breakdown). An appropriate descriptive guide to the microfilm collection, plus a general bibliographical guide to relevant official manuscripts in European and American state archives, will also be prepared and published.

To accomplish the microfilming, it is proposed to assemble a team consisting of two processors from the Virgin Islands and one Danish historian/archivist to serve as project coordinator. In addition, a program director and a part-time administrative secretary from the Virgin Islands will be employed to handle general administrative

responsibilities and to carry out special assignments.

It is estimated that the microfilm project and the archival surveys can be completed within four years from date of commencement. Taking the "Security" microfilm project at the Rigsarkivet as a model¹, it is estimated that approximately 2,000 volumes or packets of 250 pages each can be processed annually by the above mentioned team, using its own camera and processing equipment, and assisted on a part-time basis by a qualified microphotography technician.

A preliminary archival survey carried out by the Island Resources Foundation in the summer of 1977 has identified approximately 9247 volumes or packets in various West Indian collections at the Rigsarkivet which appear to be significant enough to warrant microfilming (see p. 34). However, it is known that there are many duplicates included in that figure. The extent of the duplications cannot be accurately measured until the West India Local Archive collection at the Rigsarkivet

¹According to figures supplied by Dr. Sune Dalgaard and the staff of the microfilm unit at the Rigsarkivet, the "Security" program is processing between 400,000 and 500,000 exposures per annum, using one camera, one camera operator and one photographer, plus processing equipment.

(a total of 5200 of the 9247 volumes or packets) has been systematically surveyed and inventoried. Such a systematic survey is therefore a necessary first step before any full scale mass microfilming effort can begin.

The Rigsarkivet has tentatively offered to assign one of its archivists to direct the survey; the Virgin Islands Historical Records Program will undertake to provide two additional specialists, one Dane and one Virgin Islander, to assist him. It is estimated that the survey can be completed in six months. The end result would be twofold: 1) an accurate measurement and complete selection of records to be microfilmed; and 2) the preparation of a detailed finding aid to the records of the West India Local Archive collection.

While the archival survey is being carried out, the Virgin Island processor-trainees will be assigned to Copenhagen (presumably under the aegis of an international exchange program) in order to receive intensive instruction in the Danish language, the gothic script, Danish and Danish West Indian history, microphotography and manuscript preparation techniques.

Filming will commence on a part-time basis three months after the arrival of the trainees and will start

on a full-time basis three months later. It is estimated that in the first year between 1000 and 1250 volumes or packets will be processed with appropriate roll notes. Thereafter, about 2000 volumes or packets will be processed annually until the filming is completed.

While the microfilming is underway, surveys of Danish West Indian records in the state archives of France, England, Spain, Holland and the United States will also be undertaken, inventories prepared and copies made of relevant documents. The resultant inventories, together with the registers to the West Indian collections at the Rigsarkivet, will be compiled into a single guide which will be published in English.

Archival Surveys

During Phase I several surveys will be conducted to locate, inventory and describe historical records in European and American archives.

The initial objective will be to survey the records in the West India Local Archives at the Rigsarkivet. This survey will be carried out during the first nine months of Phase I under the direction of an archivist assigned to the project by the Rigsarkivet. Two qualified

VIHRP staff members will participate in this survey. They will evaluate the records in terms of physical condition and content and will determine to what extent they duplicate West Indian records in other collections. They will also conduct a small-scale survey of the West Indian record group in the *Generaltoldkammeret*. Upon completion of these surveys, finding aids will be prepared in English and Danish, and a final selection made of records to be microfilmed.

During the first two years of Phase I record surveys will also be undertaken by VIHRP staff in the state archives of England, France, Holland and Spain. Relevant records at each repository will be identified, inventoried and copied (either by microfilming or Xerox reproduction). Additionally, a qualified Danish archivist will survey and inventory the Danish West Indian records at the U.S. National Archives.

Upon completion of all surveys, a "Guide to State Papers Relating to the pre-1917 History of the U.S. Virgin Islands in the National Archives of Denmark, England, France, Holland, Spain and the United States" will be compiled by the program director. This guide will consist of: 1) English translations of printed registers to West Indian records at the Rigsarkivet; 2) the new

inventories of records in the West India Local Archives and the *Generaltoldkammeret*; 3) calendars of records in English, French, Dutch and Spanish national archives; and 4) the new inventory of Danish West Indian records at the U.S. National Archives. If a commercial academic publisher cannot be located for this guide, it could be printed by the VIHRP in a low cost offset, soft-cover edition.

Microfilming

All mass microfilming of records at the Rigsarkivet must be carried out by the VIHRP using its own equipment. The Rigsarkivet cannot undertake this microfilming effort on the scale necessary to complete proposed work within the four year period because it possesses only two microfilm cameras. One of these cameras is assigned full-time to the "Security" program; the other is used for small-scale filming of outside orders or for special in-house filming. The VIHRP, therefore, will have to provide its own filming equipment and staff, but will then have the added advantage of being able to provide greater control over the pace and quality of filming. The Rigsarkivet has indicated that it will try to provide space for the microfilm unit.

During Phase I microfilming will be limited to the voluminous records at the Rigsarkivet. Filming of the records at the U.S. National Archives (which would be done by the U.S. National Archives), while desirable, is not contemplated in Phase I, as these records are more accessible to Americans and Virgin Islanders, and the cost would be considerable.¹

Mass microfilming should begin six months after Phase I has started. The West India and Guinea Company Records would be filmed first as these records are not duplicated elsewhere in the Rigsarkivet. The records of other central administration offices would be filmed next, followed by the Revised Accounts since, with few exceptions, these records are in far better condition than any duplicates in the West India Local Archives. The records in the West India Local Archives which do not duplicate records in other Danish collections will be filmed last. This will allow program staff sufficient time to check the records of the West India Local Archives against other Rigsarkivet records, as well as against those in the U.S. National Archives, for duplication and relative physical condition.

The standard reduction ratio of 12:1 should be adhered to as far as possible to insure sharpness and clarity of image essential for easy viewing. Clarity of image is particularly important because of the special problems associated with deciphering the Danish gothic script.

¹An arrangement might be worked out with the U.S. National Archives

Program staff, assisted by a microphotography specialist, will be responsible for inspecting and testing each roll of processed negative film to check on completeness, proper arrangement, legibility, resolution, density, and to note where retakes (which will be spliced in place) are necessary. In addition, arrangements will be made with the Kodak Company in Copenhagen to periodically inspect the film.

Equipment

Dr. Sune Dalgaard of the Landsarkivet for Sjaelland, Mr. Joseph LaHood of the Library of Congress and Mr. Robert Moron, microfilm specialist at the St. Thomas Public Library, have strongly recommended that the VIHRP use microfilm equipment manufactured by Kodak, as it is generally considered to be of the highest quality and because a Kodak distributor is located in Copenhagen.

The following list of essential microfilm equipment is taken from the Danish Kodak catalog dated August 22, 1977.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Catalog #</u>
1 Micro-file Machine MRD-2 M/Film Unit	#190 4010
1 Electric Counter Kit for above	#199 1165
1 Column Extension Kit model 2 for above	#143 6328

<u>Item</u>	<u>Catalog #</u>
1 Prostar Film Processor HDVR	#300 0817
1 Processed Film Inspection Kit	#199 0274
1 35mm Self-Threader (3 stk.)	#199 1009
1 Prostar Tape and Dispenser	#199 0977
1 Chemical Replenisher Kit	#146 3678
1 qt. Microfilm Developer Starter	#193 6715
40 gl. Microfilm Developer Repl.	#158 3574
5 gl. Microfilm Fixer (20 gl.)	#141 8243
Prostar Kemikalier: 3,8 1 Developer	#329 2471
Prostar Kemikalier: 3,8 1 Fixer	#329 2489
12 gl. Developer System Cleaner	#155 5929
2½ gl. Fixer System Cleaner	#187 0054
1¼ oz. Lens Cleaner	#176 7136
16 oz. Lens Cleaner	#146 3728

The Carlesberg Foundation in Denmark has agreed to consider a proposal from the VIHRP, whereby the Foundation would provide the above equipment to the VIHRP on a temporary basis, until mass microfilming at the Rigsarkivet has been completed.

It is anticipated that the Rigsarkivet will allow the VIHRP access to certain types of accessory equipment, such as a film duplicator, a densitometer and other testing equipment.

Film

The VIHRP should use film that meets the minimum standards for permanent record film established by the American National Standards Institute in New York City. Specifically, the film should be safety,

unperforated microfilm in the standard 35mm. widths and 100 foot lengths, which is capable of accommodating 1000 to 1200 exposures per roll.¹ The film should be fine-grained, high contrast, silver halide panchromatic microfilm with an emulsion capable of high resolution. To prevent scratching and rusting the film should be on plastic spools, bound with paper with string ties and stored in appropriately labelled cardboard boxes.

About one thousand rolls of negative film will be needed annually, assuming that 2000 volumes or packets, averaging 250 pages each, will be processed each year.

Manuscript Arrangement and Preparation

The arrangement and preparation of manuscripts for microfilming is an important preliminary step. The procedures to be followed should be those set

¹A new polyester-based film, 140 feet in length, might also be considered. Each roll of this film would contain 2200-2300 images (about twice as many as the 100 foot acetate-based film), but would only cost about 60 percent more than a roll of acetate-based film. Polyester is also stronger than acetate.

forth in Frank B. Evans, The Selection and Preparation of Records for Publication on Microfilm (Staff Information Paper 19, U.S. National Archives and Records Service, 1975).¹

To summarize briefly, once the records have been selected,² they must then be put in order, with appropriate target and insert pages, before filming begins.³ Each volume must be carefully checked for completeness and notes must be made of all missing material, mutilations and irregularities. Whenever possible, missing material will be located and inserted in its proper place. All extraneous material must be removed, folded documents will be unfolded and flattened. Duplicates will be noted so that they will not be filmed. Where necessary, minimal repairs will be made and bindings may have to be temporarily loosened and removed. Careful attention will be given to determining roll breaks.

¹See also "A Guide for Microfilm Documentary Publication Projects Conducted Under Grants From the National Historical Publications Commission," (1964), which is available from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in Washington, D.C.

²Most of the material to be microfilmed will be pre-selected. Except in the case of damaged material, most records will be excluded on a group basis rather than by individual volume, packet or document. All individual omissions from the microfilm publication will be noted on explanatory insert pages.

³Manuscripts selected for filming will generally be arranged in accordance with existent collection arrangement, except that manuscript indexes or registers will be filmed before the documents themselves, and enclosures will be filmed immediately after letters of transmittal.

Preparation of necessary descriptive information will be an integral part of prefilming arrangement work. General introductory material, roll notes, targets, notes on series arrangements will all be prepared by program staff and inserted where necessary.

Guide to the Microfilm Collection

A descriptive guide to all material microfilmed at the Rigsarkivet will be prepared in English and published separately. It will include a brief introductory history of the Danish West Indies, describe the microfilm collection as a whole, provide a short historical background to the individual collections, delineate the arrangement and filming methodology, give a breakdown by rolls, summarize related material not filmed, identify appropriate finding aids and contain a general index. The guide will be typed in camera ready copy by project staff and will be an offset publication for low cost distribution.

Paper Conservation

A small percentage of the material at the Rigsarkivet, particularly in the West India Local Archives, is known to be too badly deteriorated to permit photo-duplication at this time. A precise assessment of these damaged records will have to await the systematic survey of the West Indian Local Archives. At present, it is not advisable from the Program's viewpoint that these badly deteriorated records should be repaired in order to permit microfilming. The cost would be high, and the work time consuming. However, as some of these records are known to be of considerable importance, it is likely that at some future date, when appropriate paper conservation has been effected, the V.I. Historical Records Program will want to add them to its microfilm collection. For this reason the Program should work closely with the Rigsarkivet to secure funding to help salvage these records.

Index

It is not recommended that systematic indexing of the microfilmed material be carried out during Phase I. Indexing is a laborious, time-consuming

task which could better be carried out during Phase II. However, to insure that comprehensive or selective indexing can be undertaken by VIHRP at a later date, all filming will be carried out with every exposure numbered by an automatic numbering device attached to the camera.

Because a comprehensive index is one means of alleviating the language problem inherent in the Danish records, serious consideration should be given to preparing a computerized key word index to the entire microfilm collection. In that case, a program code would have to be developed in advance to insure that every page filmed would contain a code number which could later be computerized.

Staff

The three full-time staff members of the microfilm team in Denmark will consist of one project coordinator and two processors.

The project coordinator will be in charge of all phases of the microfilm project at the Rigsarkivet, including supervision of the processors. Specific responsibilities will be to prepare and arrange all material

to be microfilmed, to prepare all targets and roll notes, to supervise the filming and testing of all processed film, and to prepare a register to all microfilm material. During the first year of Phase I, the project coordinator will assist in the survey of the West India Local Archives, will help select records for microfilming, will help instruct the processor-trainees and will help translate into English the printed registers to the West Indian records at the Rigsarkivet.

The project coordinator should be a Dane with a university degree. He/she will have a working knowledge of Danish West Indian history, the Danish West Indian records at the Rigsarkivet and the Danish gothic script. He/she will be paid in accordance with existent Danish pay scales.

The processors will alternate as camera operators and as assistants to the project coordinator in preparation and arrangement of pre-filmed records, in the inspection and testing of processed microfilm, and in the preparation of roll notes and the printed guide to all microfilmed material.

Every effort will be made to recruit two qualified Virgin Islanders as processors. Candidates will be sought at the College of the Virgin Islands, mainland universities

and colleges, and from the community at large. Minimum requirements will be an undergraduate degree in social studies, history or a foreign language, a basic knowledge of Virgin Islands history and a demonstrated proficiency in at least one foreign language. During their first year with the Program they will be classified as "trainees" and will, upon arrival in Denmark, embark upon a concentrated course of studies in Virgin Islands and Danish history, in the Danish language and the Danish gothic script, and in microphotography techniques. Historical and language studies will be arranged through the University of Copenhagen (Dr. Ole Justesen and Dr. Ove Hornby of that University have indicated that they would assist in these arrangements), while microphotography instruction will be given by a part-time microphotography specialist.

After their first six months of training in Denmark, the processors will commence work on a full-time basis (i.e., a forty hour work week) and will be granted an annual two week paid holiday (which would include two paid round-trip airfares between Copenhagen and the Virgin Islands for each processor during Phase I).

The processors should be paid in accordance with salary scales in the Virgin Islands, with yearly increases.

In order to insure program continuity the processor-trainees would be required on entering the Program to sign a contract in which they agree to work with the Program for at least four years in Denmark.

Should time permit, the processor-trainees might receive preliminary instruction in Danish and in microphotography before leaving the Virgin Islands for Denmark.

In addition to the three full-time members of the microfilm team, the VIHRP will have two part-time administrative staff: a program director and an administrative secretary.

The program director should be a professional archivist or historian with a graduate degree, a good knowledge of Virgin Islands history and a working knowledge of at least one European language, preferably Danish. The program director's responsibilities will include establishing, coordinating and administering all activities of the VIHRP, monitoring the microfilm project, determining budgetary requirements, fund raising and proposal preparation, and overall program development. In addition, the program director will carry out specific assignments, as follows:

During the first year of Phase I the program director will arrange, coordinate and participate in the training program for the processors, will set up the

microfilm unit and select records for filming, will establish guidelines and procedures, and supervise manuscript preparation and arrangement, will participate in the survey of the West India Local Archives and other collections at the Rigsarkivet, will survey and inventory records in other European archives.

During the second year the program director will continue to survey and inventory records in European archives and will assist in surveying the Danish West India records at the U.S. National Archives.

During the third year the program director will compile and prepare for publication a bibliographical guide to pre-1917 state papers relating to the U.S. Virgin Islands in European and American state archives.

During the fourth year the program director will help establish priorities, programs and proposals for Phase II of the VIHRP; will help in the final phases of the Danish microfilm project and will help prepare a guide to the microfilmed material.

The administrative secretary will perform all program typing (including manuscript preparation) and bookkeeping, will prepare program reports as necessary and will assist the program director in handling routine administrative matters.

Institutional Cooperation and Support

Several local, national and international organizations have expressed interest in cooperating with and supporting the proposed VIHRP.

In the Virgin Islands three agencies of the local government - the Planning Office (which administers the territorial historical preservation program), the Department of Conservation and Cultural Affairs, and a division within that department, the Bureau of Libraries, Museums and Archaeological Services - have indicated that they would consider extending some assistance to the VIHRP, as have the territorial Advisory Board for the National Historical Records and Publications Commission, the Virgin Islands National Park and the West India Company.

In the United States, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the Council on Library Resources, Inc., the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation are willing to consider specific proposals submitted by the VIHRP. The Library of Congress has agreed to lend technical assistance and is prepared to

consider purchase of one microfilm set of the records filmed at the Rigsarkivet. The U.S. National Archives is interested in purchasing selected microfilm rolls and has agreed to consider providing funds to secure the services of a Danish archivist to inventory the Danish West Indian records held in Record Group 55.

In Denmark, the Rigsarkivet is extremely interested in assisting the VIHRP. It has agreed to consider assigning one archivist to direct the survey of the West India Local Archives, to provide space for the microfilm unit and to provide access to some support equipment and personnel. The Carlesberg Foundation has agreed to consider a proposal for the necessary microfilm equipment, while two other private organizations - the Danish West Indian Society and the Legatet af Maj 1956 - have expressed interest in providing some financial assistance.

None of the above organizations have made any firm commitment to provide financial support to the VIHRP. In most cases, such support is contingent upon the adoption of this plan or an equivalent plan and upon the submission and approval of formal proposals. Nevertheless, there is reason to assume that with determination and resourcefulness sufficient support will be forthcoming from several of these organizations to fund Phase I

of the proposed VIHRP. Should that prove the case, some, perhaps all, program costs not covered by outright grants might be recovered by the sale of microfilm sets to interested or participating institutions. According to Dr. James Broderick of the Library of Congress, this approach has proven successful in other projects involving mass microfilming of historical records in European archives.

Budget

All budgetary costs for Phase I must necessarily be tentative at this time. Preliminary budgets for the absolutely necessary annual direct costs of Phase I appear in Appendix I. Based on the assumption that Phase I will be completed in four years, these annual budgets indicate a total direct cost for Phase I of approximately \$334,931.00. Indirect costs, which are extremely difficult to calculate at this time, will increase this figure substantially.

It must be emphasized that this estimate reflects only the minimal essential expenses/needs of Phase I. Moreover, as the figures employed are based on salary schedules, travel costs and other rates in effect as of October 31, 1977, it can be expected that some costs will

increase over the duration of Phase I due to inflation.

The budgetary requirements of Phase I are within the range of available financial resources. Approximately \$140,000 might be forthcoming from federal agencies, such as the National Endowment for the Humanities or the National Historical Records and Publications Commission; approximately \$100,000 might be forthcoming from private foundations, such as the Rockefeller Foundation; as much as \$85,000 could come from Danish and other sources; and the sale of processed microfilm to the Library of Congress and/or other archival institutions could generate as much as \$100,000 to \$150,000.

In order to meet basic budgetary needs fund raising must be an integral part of Phase I. Funding support from sources already identified must be actively sought before and during Phase I. Alternative funding sources must be explored. Sophisticated proposals will have to be prepared and submitted. Prospective purchasers of processed microfilm will have to be located. In-kind services must be solicited from cooperating institutions.

CONCLUSION

There is a growing need to make the historical records of the Virgin Islands more accessible to the people of the Virgin Islands, as well as to national scholars generally.

Accomplishment of this worthwhile goal requires a closely focused, tightly coordinated, comprehensive program involving individuals and organizations from the Virgin Islands, the United States, Denmark and other European nations.

As the task is an enormous one, it is imperative that the limited resources available be marshalled and concentrated on the development and implementation of an integrated, systematic Virgin Islands Historical Records Program. Piecemeal efforts to deal with the matter of increased historical documentation can only be inefficient and wasteful.

The plan set forth in this paper provides a comprehensive and feasible framework for a Virgin Islands Historical Records Program. Although a considerable amount of financial support is required to make the proposed program operative, if the financial resources identified during this planning study are adroitly tapped and managed, then the goal is indeed realizable.

Time, however, is a critical factor. One consequence of the planning study carried out by the Island Resources Foundation is

that considerable local, national and international interest has been aroused in the establishment of a Virgin Islands Historical Records Program. To insure that momentum already gathered not be lost, it is important that the VIHRP commence no later than summer 1978, a date agreeable with the schedules of most potential funding organizations and with the Rigsarkivet.

It is urged, therefore, that the proposed VIHRP be speedily adopted and supported by the government of the Virgin Islands, which has a decided interest and responsibility in its establishment.

Ideally the VIHRP should become an integral part of a territorial archives program, as authorized by Act. No. 1880, approved March 14, 1967 by the Seventh Legislature of the Virgin Islands of the United States. Unfortunately, a territorial archives program does not yet exist, although its establishment is currently under consideration by government. In the absence of an operative territorial archives, the VIHRP could be temporarily attached to an appropriate governmental department, such as the Department of Conservation and Cultural Affairs.

Whatever the Virgin Islands government elects to do in this regard, it is strongly recommended that it give serious consideration to contracting with a professionally qualified, local, non-governmental organization, such as the Island Resources Foundation, to implement, coordinate and administer Phase I. Such a non-governmental organization would possess the experience,

staff and, most importantly, the flexibility essential to choreograph the diverse organizations, tasks and personnel required to accomplish Phase I. In addition, its participation would help reduce initial program expenditures by facilitating part-time or short-term staff employment, would provide immediate space, equipment and supporting services at reduced cost and would assist materially in raising program funds, and in sharing program costs.

IN SUMMARY, THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE STRONGLY URGED:

- 1) That the government of the Virgin Islands adopt and support the comprehensive, coordinated historical records program set forth in this plan.
- 2) That that records program undertake archival surveys, record copying, selected translation and publication activities and historical research on a long-term, systematic basis.
- 3) That the records program concentrate initially on surveying and copying official state papers relating to the Virgin Islands in the national archives of Denmark, England, France, Holland, Spain and the United States.
- 4) That at least one copy of all copied documents be deposited in the Virgin Islands with an appropriate governmental agency.
- 5) That the government of the Virgin Islands contract with a qualified non-governmental territorial organization to help implement Phase I of the records program.

The moment for constructive action has arrived. A realistic historical records program plan has been formulated and awaits implementation. Requisite legislation is on the books. Qualified staff are available. Several organizations have indicated their willingness to provide assistance. It remains for the government of the Virgin Islands to seize the present opportunity, and thus, to seize the Past.

"For a creative future to emerge,
the past must be put on our list
of possessions."

George Lamming

APPENDIX

PHASE I BUDGET ESTIMATES (Direct Costs only)

Year I

Salaries

1 Program Director, 12 mos. @\$16,800/year	\$16,800.	
1 Administrative Secretary, 3 mos. @\$1,000/month	3,000.	
1 Microfilm Project Coordinator, 12 mos. @\$12,000/yr	12,000. ¹	
2 Processor-Trainees, 12 mos. ea. @\$8,000/year	16,000.	
Fringe Benefits, 15% of above salaries	7,170.	
1 Danish Archivist, 9 mos. @\$18,000/year	13,500. ²	
1 Microcopy specialist, 300 hrs. at \$10/hour	3,000.	
Sub-Total		\$71,470.00

Travel and Per Diem

2 one-way airfares, St. Thomas-Copenhagen(proc.-train.)	1,300. ³	
1 RT airfare, St. Thomas-Copenhagen (prog. dir.)	1,300. ³	
1 RT airfare, Copenhagen-London-Paris (prog. dir.)	460. ³	
Per diem-Program Director's travel 15 days @\$35/day	525.	
Sub-total		3,585.00

Equipment and Supplies

1 set microcopy camera, processor, accessories, etc.	17,050. ⁴	
750 rolls raw microfilm @\$5.00 per roll	3,750.	
Sub-Total		20,800.00

Miscellaneous

Communications	400.
Postage	400.
Electric Typewriter	275.
Office Supplies	400.
Xerox and Photocopy	1,000

¹Based on official Danish salary scale for university graduates.

²To be donated by Rigsarkivet.

³Based on high season economy fare in effect October 31, 1977, plus surface trans.

⁴Based on prices in Kodak Danish catalogue dated August 22, 1977.

Year I (cont.)

Oversea cost of living allowance for Program Director, \$125/mo. for four months	\$500.	
Contingencies	1,500.	
Consultants	<u>1,000.</u>	
Sub-Total		5,475.00
TOTAL DIRECT COST		\$101,330.00

Year II - BUDGET ESTIMATES (Direct Costs only)

Salaries

1 Program Director, 6 mos. @\$16,800/year	\$ 18,400.	
1 Administrative Secretary, 3 mos @\$1,000/month	3,000.	
1 Microfilm Project Coordinator, 12 mos. @\$15,000/yr.	15,000.	
2 Processors, 12 mos. each @\$8,500/year	17,000.	
Fringe Benefits, 15% of above salaries	6,510.	
1 Records Specialist (Spanish Archives) 3 mos. @\$1400/mo.	4,200.	
1 Records Specialist (Dutch Archives) 2 mos. @\$1400/mo.	2,800.	
1 Records Specialist (US. Nat. Archives) 6 mos. @\$18K/yr.	9,000.	
1 Microcopy Specialist, 250 hrs. @\$10/hour	2,500.	
Sub-Total		\$68,410.00

Travel and Per Diem

2 RT airfares, Copenhagen-St. Thomas (Processors)	1,560. ¹	
1 RT airfare St. Thomas-Copenhagen (Program Director)	780. ²	
Per Diem for Program Director's travel-30 days @\$35/day	1,050.	
1 RT airfare, St. Thomas-Seville (Records Specialist)	930. ²	
Per Diem for Records Spec. in Spain, 7 days @\$35/day	245.	
1 RT airfare, Copenhagen-Washington, D.C. (Danish Arc.)	930. ²	
Per Diem for Records Spec. in Wash. D.C. 3 days @\$30/day	90.	
1 RT airfare, St. Thomas-Wash.D.C.-N.Y.) Prog. Dir.	250. ¹	
Per Diem for Prog. Director in Wash. D.C. 20 days @\$30/day	600.	
Sub-Total		6,435.00

¹Based on low season excursion fare in effect on October 31, 1977, plus surface transportation.

²Based on high season economy fare in effect on October 31, 1977, plus surface transportation.

Year II (cont.)

Supplies and Miscellaneous

1000 rolls raw microfilm at \$5.00 per roll	\$ 5,000.	
Chemicals	200.	
Communications	500.	
Postage	400.	
Office Supplies	400.	
Xerox and Photocopy	750.	
Overseas cost of living allowance for Records Specialist in France, \$125/mo. for three months	375.	
Overseas cost of living allowance for Records Specialist in Spain, \$125/mo. for three months	375.	
Contingencies	<u>1,500.</u>	
Sub-Total		9,500.00
TOTAL DIRECT COST		<u>\$84,345.00</u>

Year III - BUDGET ESTIMATES (Direct Costs only)

Salaries

1 Program Director, 6 mos. @\$18,000/yr.	\$ 9,000.	
1 Administrative Secretary, 4 mos. @\$12,960/yr.	4,320.	
1 Microfilm Project Coordinator, 12 mos. @\$15,000/yr.	15,000.	
2 Processors, 12 mos. each @\$9,500/yr.	19,000.	
Fringe Benefits, 15% of above salaries	7,098.	
1 Microcopy Specialist, 200 hrs. @\$10/hour	<u>2,000.</u>	
Sub-Total		\$56,418.00

Travel and Per Diem

2 RT airfares Copenhagen-St. Thomas (Processors)	1,560. ¹	
1 RT airfare St. Thomas-Copenhagen (Program Director)	780. ¹	
Per Diem for Prog. Director's travel, 30 days @\$35/day	1,050.	
1 RT airfare St. Thomas-Washing, D.C.-New York	250. ¹	
Per Diem for Prog. Director's travel, 12 days @\$30/day	<u>360.</u>	
Sub-Total		4,000.00

Supplies and Miscellaneous

1000 rolls raw microfilm at \$5.00 per roll	5,000.	
Chemicals	200.	
Communications	500.	
Postage	400.	
Office Supplies	400.	
Xerox and Photocopy	200.	
Contingencies	<u>1,500.</u>	
Sub-Total		8,200.00

Publications

1000 copies, "Guide to Records" - 8.5" x 11", 400 pp. (estimate) offset, soft-cover		6,000.00
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TOTAL DIRECT COST	\$74,618.00
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¹Based on low season excursion fare in effect on October 31, 1977, plus surface transportation.

Year IV - BUDGET ESTIMATES (Direct Costs only)

Salaries

1 Program Director, 6 mos. @\$18,000/yr.	\$ 9,000.	
1 Administrative Secretary, 4 mos. @\$12,960./yr.	4,320.	
1 Microfilm Project Coordinator, 12 mos. @\$15,000/yr.	15,000.	
2 Processors, 12 mos. each @\$10,000/yr.	20,000.	
Fringe Benefits, 15% of above salaries	7,248.	
1 Microfilm Specialist, 125 hrs. @\$10/hour	<u>1,250.</u>	
Sub-Total		\$56,818.00

Travel and Per Diem

2 one way airfares Copenhagen-St. Thomas (Processors)	1,300. ²	
1 RT St. Thomas-Copenhagen (Program Director)	860. ²	
Per Diem for Program Director's travel, 30 days @\$35/day	1,050.	
1 RT St. Thomas-Washington-New York (Program Director)	250. ¹	
Per Diem for Program Director's travel, 12 days @\$30/day	<u>360.</u>	
Sub-Total		3,820.00

Supplies and Miscellaneous

1000 rolls raw microfilm at \$5.00 per roll	5,000.	
Chemicals	200.	
Communications	500.	
Postage	400.	
Office Supplies	200.	
Xerox and Photocopy	200.	
Contingencies	<u>1,500.</u>	
Sub-Total		8,000.00

Publications

1000 copies "Microfilm Guide", 8.5" x 11" offset, soft-cover, 400 pp. (est.)		6,000.00
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TOTAL DIRECT COST		<u>\$74,638.00</u>
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¹Based on low season excursion fare in effect October 31, 1977, plus surface transportation.

²Based on high season economy fare in effect October 31, 1977, plus surface transportation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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