

NEW FINDINGS IN THE HISTORY OF THE LEEWARD ISLANDS

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August 2025

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I. The Earliest Occupants of Saint Thomas & Santa Cruz.

The first known humans present in the Virgin Islands were small nomadic bands of Amerindian fishers and fruit gatherers. They were archaic people who lacked pottery, agriculture and sedentary life. Their remains consist primarily of seashells with some tools fashioned out of shells and stones. Their remains were first found at Krum Bay on Saint Thomas in 1917 by Theodoor De Booy and they were dated from 880 BC to 225 BC. More recently in 1972, Bruce Tilden found the same kind of remains at Magens Bay dated 1050 BC and 550 BC; they have been found also at Betty's Hope, Sainte Croix, but to date this last finding is undated and unverified. These archaic nomadic people travelled as far northwest as Eastern Puerto Rico with dates of their presence ranging from 1,060 BC to 190 AD. Then proceeding southeast, the same remains were found since 1950 on Saba with a date of 1,205 BC, on Saint Christopher with a date of 2,150 BC, on Antigua with a date of 1,775 BC, on Martinique, on Saint Vincent, and on Trinidad with dates ranging from 5,230 BC to 470 BC. Finally, the oldest (about 4,000 BC) similar remains were found on either side of the Orinoco Delta in South America. It is evident that the remains at all these sites belong to the same archaic people, who were named Ortoires by Irving Rouse, professor emeritus of anthropology at Yale University. It is also clear that the Ortoires originated in South America and slowly over the millennia migrated northward through the Lesser Antilles to reach as far north as Eastern Puerto Rico around 1,000 B.C. and they disappeared at the end of the first or second century.

Before the 1950s, and before archaic peoples' remains were found in the Lesser Antilles, archeologists mistakenly theorized, despite marked differences, that the archaic people of Krum Bay were related to the archaic people of western Hispaniola and Cuba, the Guanahatabeys, who probably originated in Florida and/or Yucatan. Unfortunately, as late as 1995 in *The Umbilical Cord* authored by Harold W.L. Willocks spreads this common mistake which is compounded by mislabeling the Guanahatabeys as Ciboneys. In fact, the Ciboneys were not archaic people, but rather a Taino subgroup, which resided in central Cuba and quickly disappeared after Columbus' arrival. This double confusion was exposed by Irving Rouse in *The Tainos* published in 1992 by Yale University Press.

Additionally, Ivan van Sertima proposed in *They Came Before Columbus*, published by Random House in 1975, that West Africans came to the New World and Saint Thomas, in particular, long before Columbus and left a significant imprint on Central American cultures. However, there is no

record of West African expeditions to the New World, and none is known to have returned to recount their experience. It is quite probable that, over the centuries, some West African fishermen might have drifted accidentally across the Atlantic to the New World, pushed by prevailing currents and tropical storms. However, the few, who might have survived the crossing in open dugouts, were unable or unwilling to return to Africa to tell their tale and they could not have made a significant impact on Amerindian cultures. Beside the lack of archeological or historical evidence, there is no scientific evidence of African genes having mixed in the historical past with the Asian genes of Amerindians. Therefore, all of Van Sertima's evidence, including the Saint John Reef Bay carvings and the two African skeletons unearthed at Hull Bay in 1974, of a strong African imprint on Amerindian cultures is purely circumstantial, speculative, coincidental and refutable.

The first West African known to have set foot on Santa Cruz is Juan Garrido, 'El Conquistador Negro', son of a West African king in trading relation with the Portuguese, who was sent to Lisbon for his education. He sailed to Hispaniola as one of Ponce de León's lieutenants and as such, from 1508 until 1511, he participated in the conquest of Puerto Rico and neighboring islands, and the repression of the revolted Puerto Rican Tainos and the Crucian Caribs. Later in 1515, Juan Garrido participated in an ill-fated punitive expedition against the Caribs of Guadeloupe in the Lesser Antilles. In the course of that expedition, his first stop had to be Santa Cruz in order to verify that it was free of Island-Caribs. Juan Garrido also participated in the conquest of Cuba and Florida, where Ponce de León was mortally wounded by Amerindians. Subsequently, he joined Hernán Cortés for the conquest of Mexico, where he is best remembered for having introduced the cultivation of wheat in the 1530s. Further details concerning the life of Juan Garrido may be found in *Juan Garrido, el Conquistador Negro en las Antillas, Florida, México y California, c. 1503-1540* authored by Ricardo E. Alegria and published in 1990 by the Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe.

More details and references may be found in *The Amerindians & their Legacy in the Virgin Islands*, by Aimery Caron, St. Thomas, 2013, and *Vying for Santa Cruz & Las Virgenes in the Lesser Antilles, 1493–1679*, by Aimery Caron, St. Thomas, 2017 & 2023.

II. The Amerindian Names of Santa Cruz & the Lesser Antilles

The Taino name of Santa Cruz appeared in print for the first time in 1545, in Alonso de Santa Cruz' atlas, "Islario general de todas las islas del mundo". He spelled the Taino name of the island as Ay-Ay, which according to the Random House Dictionary should be pronounced 'â-â', as in 'ai(r)' or '(d)a(re)', rather than 'aye-aye', as though a sailor's affirmative. Alonso de Santa Cruz gave another Amerindian name for Santa Cruz used by "others" (Caribs?) which was Cibuqueira. However, this second name was never confirmed by other Spanish sources or by any of the early French chroniclers; therefore, it is most probably incorrect and due to some misunderstanding of what was reported by the "others", whoever they might have been.

More than a century later, in 1665, a Dominican missionary named Raymond Breton, after living among the Island-Caribs of Dominica for more than five years, published a dictionary, *Dictionnaire Caraïbe-Français, Français-Caraïbe* (Auxerre, Giles Bouquet), where he recorded the names of nearly all the Lesser Antilles, as given by the Island-Caribs and as listed below. In particular, the name of Santa Cruz is recorded as Hàhi-Hai, which is pronounced by the French as 'hähi-hâ', with 'hähi' as in (T)ai(no) and with 'hâ' as in hai(r). This is close enough to the name recorded by Alonso de Santa Cruz to conclude that the two names represent the same island and that the slight difference is due to pronunciation differences by the informants, to hearing differences by the recorders and due to the difference in the recording languages. In either case, since Father Breton recorded what he was told directly by Island-Carib informants, the preferred Amerindian name for Santa Cruz should be Hàhi-Hai.

As regards the Amerindian names of the Virgin Islands, they are not known with the exception Vieques, which was recorded as Beyeque by Alonso de Santa Cruz and as Biké by Father Breton.

Amerindian Names of the Lesser Antilles As Recorded by Father Raymond Breton

Anguilla = Malioüana
Antigua = Oüli or Oüaladli
Barbados = Ichirouganaim
Barbuda = Oüahomoni
Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe = Caloucaéra
Dominica = Oüàitoucoubouli

Grande-Terre, Guadeloupe = Couchahalaoüa
Grenada = Camahogne
Les Saintes = Caaroucaéra
Marie-Galante = Aïchi
Martinique = Ioüanacaéra
Montserrat = Aliöuagana
Nevis = Huelème or Oüalichi
Redondo = Ocanamainron
Saba = Amonhana
Saint Barthélemy = Ouanalao
Saint Christopher = Liamàiga
Sainte Croix = Hàhi-Hai
Saint Eustatius = Aloï
Saint Martin = Oüalachi or Oüalichi
Saint Vincent = Iouloùmain
Santa Lucia = Ioüanacaéra
Tobago = Aloubaéra
Trinidad = Chaléibe
Vieques = Biké or Beyeque

III. The Island-Caribs or the Kalinagos

When the Spaniards first came to the Lesser Antilles, they met Amerindians, who were different from the Tainos of the Greater Antilles and who they called Caribs, although they called themselves Kalinagos. Today, to distinguish them from the South American Caribs, they are referred to as Island-Caribs. Island-Caribs were easily distinguishable from Tainos by their speech, appearance, grooming, choice of weapons and traditions. The Island-Caribs periodically raided and pillaged Taino villages in the Greater Antilles, mostly Puerto Rico, with the main purpose of capturing Taino women to be used as wives and concubines and young Taino men to be castrated and used as slaves.

It is generally believed that the Island-Caribs originated in the Guianas, as had the Tainos before them, and starting around 1000 AD, slowly migrated northwest through the Lesser Antilles. In so doing, the Island-Caribs were conquering islands from the Tainos who would die in battle, find refuge elsewhere, or remain hidden in the mountains. These hidden remaining Tainos were referred to as Igneris by the Island-Caribs. Irving Rouse in *The Tainos, Rise & Decline of the People Who Greeted Columbus* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1992), believed that, by 1493, the Island-Caribs had reached no further north than Guadeloupe and that the Leeward Islands were occupied by “Eastern Tainos”—a subgroup of the Classic Tainos. Rouse’s beliefs are based mostly upon pre-Columbian archeological evidence.

In the Windward Islands (including Guadeloupe), the archeological evidence consists of the appearance from ca. 1000 AD until ca. 1450 AD of the Suazoïd pottery style (shape, color, decoration and composition), which Irving Rouse and many others have associated with the Island-Caribs. By contrast, on Saint Christopher (Saint Kitts) and Antigua, from ca. 500 AD until ca. 1500 AD, the pottery was of a different style—the Elenan Ostionoid style. In the Virgin Islands, Sainte-Croix and Eastern Puerto Rico, from ca. 500 AD until ca. 1200 AD, the pottery was also of the Elenan Ostionoid style, but from ca. 1200 AD until Columbus’ arrival the pottery style changed to the Chican Ostionoid style.

On the other hand, according to Rodrigo de Figueroa, who undertook in 1518 a two-year careful study of the ethnicity of each Caribbean island, at the time of Columbus’ arrival, the Island-Caribs occupied all of the Lesser Antilles, with the exception of Barbados and Trinidad. Also, Alonso de Santa Cruz wrote, in 1545, that the Island-Caribs were present in the Virgin Islands and Sainte Croix in Columbus’ time. Additionally, according to the

French chroniclers in the early 1600s, the Island-Caribs occupied and frequented Saint Christopher and Antigua, respectively. The Island-Caribs were great navigators with war pirogues (dugouts) that could hold as many as 60 warriors. Up wind, they were faster than European vessels and could reach any island in record time. Every year, they travelled up to 500 miles back to the Guianas to trade and reconnect with their cousins, the Galibis.

Furthermore, it is well established that, on his second voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus, under the guidance of five Taino interpreters returning to Hispaniola, took a more southerly course across the Atlantic with the specific intent of meeting the Island-Caribs and exploring their islands in the Lesser Antilles. His second landing in 1493 was at Salt River on Sainte Croix, and there, as he had earlier in Guadeloupe, he met five or six Taino women and some castrated Taino boys kidnapped by Island-Caribs wanting to be returned to Puerto Rico. On this occasion, unlike Guadeloupe, Columbus' men did have an armed encounter with Island-Caribs—four men, two women and a boy in a pirogue, who, after discharging their bows (the favored warring and hunting weapon of Island-Caribs), were able to flee on land, with the exception of one wounded man, who was executed by the Spaniards. From all contemporary written Spanish and oral Taino accounts, the Sainte Croix Caribs and the Windward Islands Caribs were the same people.

Over the next 21 years, the Spaniards conducted several armed retaliatory raids against the Caribs of the Leeward Islands where they killed, captured, or chased out all the Amerindians they could find. However, more than a century later, numerous Spanish, French, English witness accounts have verified that, as late as 1625, the Island-Caribs were still present in the Leeward Islands on at least Saint Christopher, although they had been eradicated twice in the 1500s by the Spaniards. In 1493, the Island-Caribs were so well established on Sainte Croix that their rule over the island must have started at least 20 years previously, while they must have held sway over Saint Christopher, Nevis, Montserrat and Antigua, for at least 50 years before.

In pre-Columbian times, the lack of pottery of a style specific to the Island-Caribs in the Leeward Islands, including Sainte Croix, can be rationalized as follows:

1. Pottery making was the task of women and since Island-Carib men had a predilection to capture and enslave Taino women to serve as wives and concubines, the pottery they made in the Leeward Islands was necessarily in the contemporary Taino style;

2. The Island-Caribs of Sainte Croix frequently raided and pillaged Taino settlements in Eastern Puerto Rico and they brought back not only women but pottery and other booty as well.

More details and references may be found in *The Amerindians their Legacy in the Virgin Islands* by Aimery Caron, Saint Thomas, 2013; also *Vying for Santa Cruz & Las Virgenes in the Lesser Antilles, 1493–1679* by Aimery Caron, Saint Thomas, 2017 & 2023.

IV. The Amerindian Cultural Legacy in the Leeward Islands

After the extermination and the flight of the Amerindians on Santa Cruz in 1514, the Island-Caribs of Saint Christopher were the last Amerindians to reside in the Leeward Islands until their extermination by the English and the French in 1626, after a co-existence of no more than five years. In the Windward Islands, unlike the French, the English did not share any island with the Island-Caribs until 1763, when they won Saint Vincent, Saint Lucia and Dominica at the Treaty of Paris. Additionally, only the French sent Catholic missionaries to evangelize the Island-Caribs. Thus, there is no early witness account in English of the ways of the Island-Caribs and the same may be said about the Danes. How then could the Amerindians have left a cultural legacy in the Leeward Islands—the Virgin Islands and Santa Cruz in particular?

The cultural influences of the Amerindians on the French, the English and the Dutch started in the 16th century through trading contacts with the Tupi-Guaranis of the Amazon delta, the Galibis of the Guianas, the Island-Caribs of the Windward Islands, and second hand with the Spaniards in the Greater Antilles, who were heavily influenced by the Tainos during a century of contacts before the start of the first European settlements in the Lesser Antilles. These influences were exerted in a number of areas:

- The production of subsistence crops, such as cassava, sweet potato and hot peppers, as well as trade crops, such as tobacco and cotton;
- The selection and preparation of foods, such as mabi, cassava bread, land crab, pepper sauce and barbecued meat and fish;
- The use of local herbs as remedies, such as arrowroot plaster for poisoned arrow wounds and *lignum vitæ* decoctions for syphilis;
- The making of tools, such as the cassava grater, press and griddle;
- The construction of cabins and pirogues using certain local trees;
- The fishing technics, using a certain toxic vegetable juice, a throw-net or a fish trap; and hunting technics, using a bow and arrow, glue or snares to catch birds;
- And about one hundred names of local fruits, plants, trees, animals and geographical locations adopted by the English Creole of the Virgin Islands, either directly from Amerindian languages or indirectly from French Creole or Spanish Creole:

Animals: agouti, caret, iguana, manatee, etc..

Fish: balahoo, barracuda, carang, cavali, etc..

Fruits: avocado, cacao, cashew, genip, guava, mammee, papaya, etc..

Implements: canary, canoe, fish trap, hammock, pirogue, etc..

Plant: annatto, roucou, tobacco, etc..

Roots: batata, cassava, potato, yautia, yucca, etc..

Trees: mahogany, mahot, maubi, mampoo, etc..

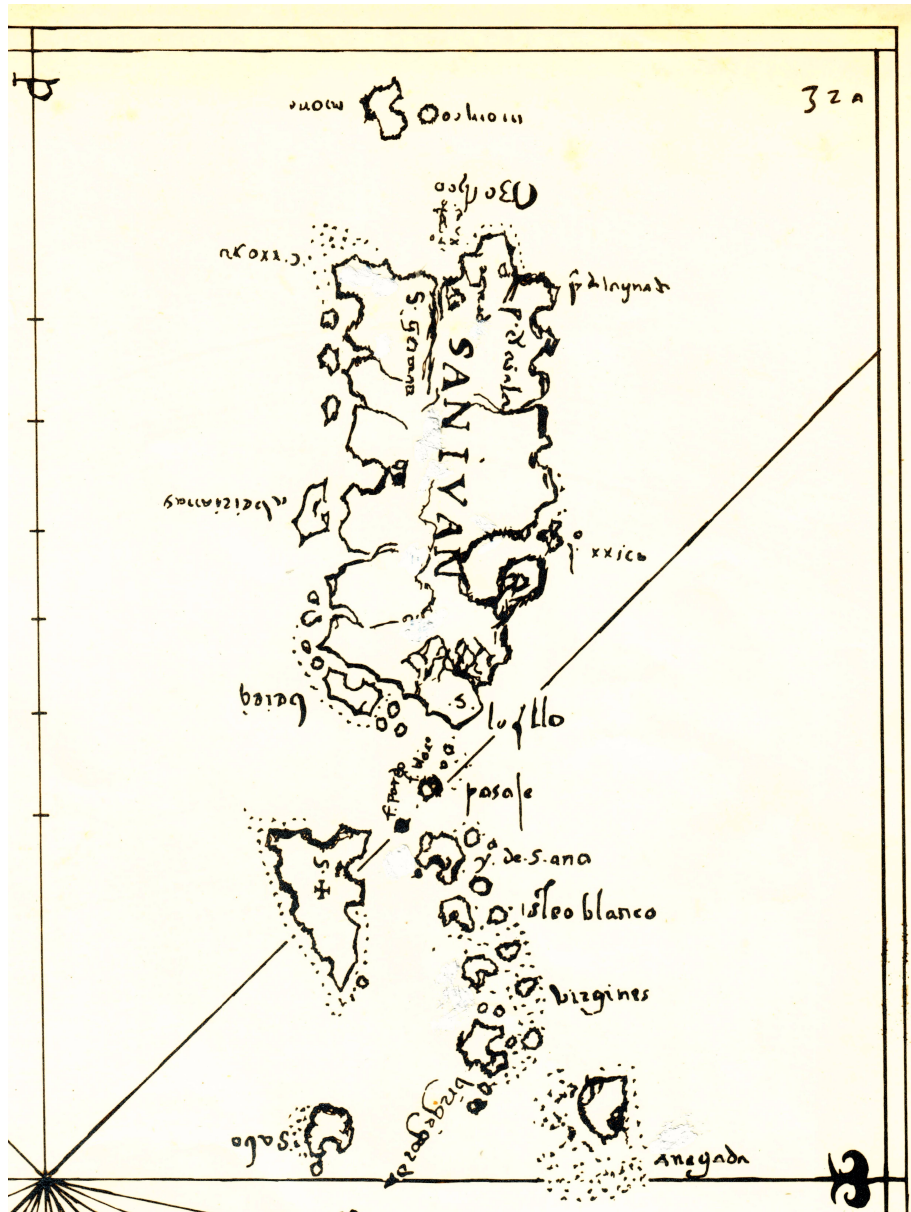
In addition, a number of Island-Carib customs were passed on to the Europeans and Africans in the Lesser Antilles. Such customs include the calling upon friends and neighbors to help with the construction of a cabin or a boat and making sure that everyone was well supplied with food and the local beer—*mabi* and *ouicou*. This custom has endured to this day throughout the Lesser Antilles, particularly after devastations caused by hurricanes.

Another Island-Carib custom adopted by the Europeans and Africans in the Lesser Antilles is the welcoming of strangers by offering them a pineapple (now widely used as a welcoming symbol) for refreshment, with food and the use of a hammock for an overnight stay. This Island-Carib custom contradicts the widely spread false notion that the Island-Caribs were aggressively unfriendly toward all strangers. Several French chroniclers have testified to their generosity as hosts. In particular, there is an old forgotten account—published recently in 1990 by Jean-Pierre Moreau (*Un flibustier français dans la mer des Antilles en 1618/1620*, Paris: Edition Seghers)—of a wrecked French privateering ship beached in Martinique sixteen years before the island was colonized, where the whole crew was sheltered and fed for nine months by the local Island-Caribs, while building a new boat to return to France. Much later, but before the advent of tourism, there have been numerous accounts testifying to the generosity of European and African hosts in the Antilles.

The British and the U.S. Virgin Islands were settled from the beginning primarily by Dutch, English and French Creoles from the Lesser Antilles. These Antillean settlers carried a strong Amerindian, mostly Island-Carib, cultural baggage that, undeniably, left on the culture of the Virgin Islands an indelible mark, which has endured to this day.

V. The Early Spanish Names of the Virgin Islands

Alonso de Santa Cruz in his *Islario general de todas las islas del mundo* published in 1545 presents the first known map of the Lesser Antilles with the names of the larger Virgin Islands (map insert below).



With Santa Cruz ('holy cross') to the south, the Virgins included the low and flat Anegada ('drowned') to the north-east, Virgin Gorda ('fat or pregnant virgin') to the east, and proceeding west came Las Virgines, Isleo Blanco, Santa Ana and finally Pasaje, next to San Juan Batista (modern Puerto Rico),

marking the start of the passage due north for the sailing return to Spain. Today, Pasaje is known as Culebra ('snake'); while Isleo Blanco with its white beaches is known as Tortola ('turtle dove'), and Virgines stands for Ginger Island, Cooper Island, Salt Island, Peter Island, Normand Island, Saint John and Jost Van Dyke. Finally, Santa Ana (modern Saint Thomas), the western most and largest Virgin Island, was named for the mother of Virgin Marie and the grandmother of Jesus Christ; she is highly revered in Catholic countries, Spain in particular. Alonso de Santa Cruz further identifies Santa Ana by describing its unique harbor in the shape of a lock (*serradura*) with its relatively narrow entrance channel oriented north/south leading to several protected bays in a perpendicular orientation. Over time, the popular Spanish name of Santa Ana became corrupted to Santana, which appears as late as 1601-1615 in a map published by Antonio Herrera y Tordesillas in *Historia general de los hechos castellanos en las islas y tierra firme del mar océano*. Then, 30 or 40 years later, on Dutch maps Santana became Santoma and finally Saint Thomas. Obviously, this was an error in transcription caused by the small size of the island on a map and the consequential small lettering of its name; also, the error must have been committed by Protestant cartographers, who had no knowledge and appreciation for Santa Ana. This transcription error was originally reported in the Daily News of February 28, 1983 (pp. 3 & 14).

In January 1640, Captain Juan López from Puerto Rico wrote a report on having wiped out a European settlement (presumably Dutch) from Santa Ana, which was unexplainably claimed to be Tortola by Thomas G. Mathews ("The Spanish Domination of Saint Martin, 1633–1648", *Caribbean Studies*, vol. 9 (1969), pp. 3–23). Unfortunately, this island misidentification was repeated with no supporting evidence by a number of Tortola historians, including Drs. Norwell Harrigan and Pearl Valack, as well as Vernon W. Pickering in his *Early History of the British Virgin Islands* (Falcon Publications International, 1983). It is not credible that Captain Juan López could have mistaken Santa Ana for Tortola. Santa Ana is the first major Virgin Island sailing from Porto Rico and it has a uniquely shaped harbor with a narrow entrance channel oriented due north. By comparison, Tortola is a smaller island in the middle of the Virgins with, instead of a harbor, a wide-open roadstead oriented in a northwesterly direction. Finally, how credible is it that the Spanish might have given two very different Spanish names—Santa Ana and Tortola—to the same island and leave Saint Thomas with no Spanish name?

For more details and references see *Vying for Santa Cruz & Las Virgenes in the Lesser Antilles, 1493–1679*.

VI. The First European Settlements in the Leeward Islands

Christopher Columbus discovered the Leeward Islands in November 1493 with the guidance of Taino Indians returning to Hispaniola. He anchored briefly at Salt River on Santa Cruz, where he did not land settlers. For the next 130 or so years, the Spanish, French, English and Dutch sailors stopped at all the Leeward Islands for wood, water and turtles, but never to start a settlement. The two favorite stops were Saint Christopher (St. Kitts) and Santa Cruz.

Many of the early North European settlers came to the Virgin Islands and Sainte Croix from Saint Christopher, Saint Eustatius and Saint Martin. It is therefore of interest to establish who and when these islands were first colonized.

Jean-Pierre Moreau published in 1992 in *Les Petites Antilles de Christophe Colomb à Richelieu* the revelation that the very first European settlers in the Leeward Islands were about 20 Huguenots under the leadership of Jean Levasseur, Henri Chantail and Jean Scye. They came to Saint Christophe in 1621–1622 to grow tobacco in the area of Pointe de Sable (Sandy Point). About a year later, Captain Thomas Warner, his wife, his son and some 26 Englishmen came to grow tobacco in the Old Road area, just east of Pointe de Sable. Finally, a third group of tobacco growers came to Saint Christophe in 1625 and settled further east in the Basseterre area. They were Catholic Frenchmen under the leadership of privateer Captain Belain d'Esnambuc and his partner, Captain Urbain DuRoissey, who did not wish to associate themselves with the Huguenots. The last two groups of European settlers received the support of the King of England in 1626 through the Company of the West Indies and of the King of France in 1627 through the Compagnie de Saint Christophe. In addition, Saint Christopher included a fourth ethnic group, the Island-Caribs, whose village held about 400 men, women and children headed by chief Tegramund, who was alarmed by the fast growing European presence. It is theorized that the Island-Carib village was situated where today's village of Conarie is located, opposite Basseterre on the Atlantic coast. This is based on the assumptions that the name Conarie is an alternate spelling of the French creole word *kannari*, meaning a large cast iron stew or soup pot and that it is a corruption of the Island-Carib word *canàlli*, where 'l' and the 'r' sounds of the Island-Caribs were indistinguishable. A *canàlli* was a large pottery jar used for the preparation of *ouicou*, a cassava beer, which was liberally consumed during their fêtes, called *vins* or *caouynages*.

Moreau's findings are important because they refute the heretofore universal belief that Thomas Warner and his English group were the first European settlers on Saint Christopher and in the Leeward Islands. His findings also refute the widespread French notion that Belain d'Esnambuc and his group were the first French settlers in the Antilles. Finally, Moreau's findings provide the first logical explanation for the creation on Saint Christophe of two separate noncontiguous French sectors separated by an English sector in the middle of the island. Eventually in 1640, the second French governor, Philippe de Lonvilliers de Poincy, did acquire the sector of Pointe de Sable (Sandy Point) by paying half of the resettlement cost of the Huguenots on the island of Tortuga, off the northwest shore of Hispaniola.

Greater details are given in *Vying for Santa Cruz & Las Virgenes in the Lesser Antilles, 1493–1679*.

VII. First European Settlements on Santa Cruz

In 1493, Christopher Columbus found Hàhi Hai to be occupied by Island-Caribs who were massacred and extirpated by 1515 after having joined the Taino revolt in Borinquen¹. Subsequently, the island was frequented by Porto Rican fishermen in search of turtles and by Island-Caribs from the Windward Islands conducting raids on Porto Rico until ca. 1620².

Early North European Visits & Colonization Attempts

Starting in the late 16th century French, English and Dutch privateering and trading captains on their way to the Greater Antilles, Central and North America or Europe used Santa Cruz as a convenient layover to take on water, wood, ballast and turtles. The first recorded North European layover is that of Captain John White who, in 1585, while on his way to Roanoke, Virginia, sojourned on Santa Cruz for about ten days to build a pinnace and take on supplies³.

The first recorded North European attempt to settle on Santa Cruz did not occur until 1631, rather than 1625, as first published by Bryan Edwards in his *History, Civil & Colonial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (London, 1794). Additionally, early in 1629, after spending nearly two years on Saint Eustache, Monsieur de Cussac, general of the naval army of France, set sail for the western Caribbean. He stopped on Santa Cruz to take on water and reported that the island was “uninhabited”.⁴ That year, 1631, ‘starving time’ on Barbados, one of Governor Hawley’s brother led a small band of English settlers to Santa Cruz to grow tobacco and subsistence crops—maize, sweet potatoes and melons. Unfortunately, within four months, their presence became known to the Governor of Porto Rico, who ordered their capture and the uprooting of their crops. The Spaniards returned to Porto Rico with many prisoners, leaving Santa Cruz vacant again. The Governor reported to his King that in only four months the Englishmen had already constructed a large building—perhaps a fortification—and that he feared that others of their nation would soon join the initial group due to “the infertility of the soil of Barbados.” Their presence on Santa Cruz, the Governor explained, threatened access to the

¹ Jean-Pierre Moreau, *Les Petites Antilles de Christophe Colomb à Richelieu*, (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1992), p.34.

² Ibid., pp. 64-72.

³ Ibid., p. 103.

⁴ *Archives des Affaires Étrangères*, Fonds Amérique, n°4, folio 69.

beaches rich in turtles, which supplied the people of Porto Rico with fresh meat. Finally, he observed that English control of Santa Cruz imperiled trade between Porto Rico and “Cumana, Margarita and Spain itself.”⁵

The second known attempt to colonize Santa Cruz occurred in early 1634, when a small group (about 40) of Huguenot and a few Dutch tobacco planters came from Saint Christophe. Within a few months, upon receiving intelligence of their presence, the vigilant Governor Enriquez de Sotomayor once again ordered that the island be cleared, this time by a small force of 40 men in a frigate. The Spaniards killed ten Frenchmen, captured six and proceeded to burn their crops and dwellings, while losing only two men⁶.

A year later in early 1635, a large group (about 100) of English tobacco planters, woodsmen and freebooters, who had escaped a Spanish attack on Tortuga, Hispaniola, sought to settle on Santa Cruz. Again, about a year later, in February 1636, Governor Iñigo de la Mota Sarmiento of Porto Rico, mustered an armed force aboard three frigates and assaulted the new English intruders. During some fierce fighting 40 Englishmen were killed and many others were captured⁷.

Then, in 1637, Governor Sarmiento wrote that a group of some “200 enemies” (probably Englishmen) from Saint Christopher occupied the western end of Santa Cruz.⁸ He immediately dispatched Sergeant Major Domingo Rodriguez with a force of 50 men from Porto Rico to put the intruders to flight. This mission was accomplished in short order, killing 40 men and making 23 prisoners, who had been at work on the construction of a fort. Rodriguez destroyed the fortification and returned to San Juan with his prisoners, along with one of the two pinnaces that he had found anchored in the roadstead⁹. Santa Cruz was once again seemingly free of intruders but not for long.

⁵ Alfredo E. Figueredo, “The Early European Colonization of St. Croix (1621-1642)”, *Journal of the Virgin Islands Archaeological Society* 6 (1978), pp. 59-64; Hilary Beckles, *A History of Barbados: from Amerindian Settlement to Nation-State*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 7-12. *Archivo General de Indias (A.G.I.)*, 136, Governor Enriquez de Sotomayor to the King, 12 February 1632.

⁶ *A.G.I.* 136, Governor Enriquez de Sotomayor to the King, 20 February 1635.

⁷ *A.G.I.* 156, Governor Iñigo de Mota Sarmiento to the King, 2 March 1636.

⁸ *A.G.I.*, 172, Governor Iñigo de Mota Sarmiento to the King, 12 August 1637.

⁹ Salvador Brau, *Historia de Puerto Rico* (New York: Appleton and Company, 1904), p. 135; also *A.G.I.*, V, S.D. 156.

A Dutch Settlement

Two years earlier in 1635, Jan Snouck, a Dutch seaman and man of commerce from Flushing, Netherlands, had obtained a license from the Dutch West Indies Company (DWIC) to plant a colony on any uninhabited island in the Leeward Islands. Snouck enlisted the services and financial support of two other prominent Flushing merchants: Abraham van Pere, Sr. and Pieter van Rhee. Together they acquired a vessel for the expedition, recruited 50 settlers and hired Pieter van Corselles, the founder of the Dutch colony of Tobago, to act as its commander. In June or July 1637, they proceeded first to Santa Cruz, but were kept away, most probably, by Sergeant Major Domingo Rodriguez with his San Juan force in the process of extirpating English settlers from the island¹⁰. They therefore chose to disembark and temporarily stay on nearby Sint Eustatius, which had become the Dutch base for the colonization of the Leeward Islands.

After visiting several uninhabited Leeward Islands, in late 1637 or early 1638, some 40 Zeelanders chose to return to Santa Cruz and, finding it vacant, they settled permanently on that island, which they renamed New Zeeland. To gain more support from the DWIC, Jan Snouck claimed loudly that “good tobacco could be planted there and vast profits could be reaped.”¹¹ Jan Snouck appointed Louis Capoen to be the commander of this new group of settlers, as he had gained previous experience on Tortola. He established his headquarters at Salt River where he soon built a fort at the western point of the estuary.

Shortly thereafter, in late 1638, the Zeelanders were joined by a group of about 100 French “deserters” from Saint Christophe, who were willing to trade exclusively with the Dutch and to pledge allegiance to Louis Capoen¹². This was confirmed in spring 1639 when Governor Don Iñigo de la Mota Sarmiento of Porto Rico learned from a group of shipwrecked Frenchmen that some of their countrymen had joined forces with the 40 Zeelanders on Santa Cruz. According to the same Spanish report, the two groups had already cleared some land and were beginning to construct buildings and a fort on the remains of a previous fortification—presumably, in proximity to the present town of Christiansted and the Salt River. Additionally, from the fort they had cut a road into the island that was “wide enough to accommodate carts”¹³.

¹⁰ *Oude West-Indische Compagnie* 22, “Resolutions of the Zeeland Chamber, 27 December 1635,” Algemeen Rijksarchief, Eerste Afdeling, ‘s-Gravenhage, ..

¹¹ Goslinga, pp. 261–262.

¹² DuTertre, vol.1, pp. 272-273.

¹³ *A.G.I.*, SD 156, Governor Iñigo Mota Sarmiento to the King, 6 April 1639.

More than a year later in London, William Caverly obtained the governorship of Santa Cruz from the Earl of Carlisle, who had previously received a patent to the “Caribby Islands” from King Charles I. In late 1640, Caverly then sailed to Saint Christopher where Governor Thomas Warner helped him recruit an experienced leader—Mr. Brainsby—and a small group of about 40 settlers to re-establish an English colony on Santa Cruz. They arrived sometime in 1641, or four years after the Spaniards had dislodged the last English settlement from Santa Cruz¹⁴. The Dutch welcomed Brainsby and his men as long as they were willing to settle in the vacant west end of Santa Cruz and to abide by the same conditions followed by the French. Brainsby had no alternative but to agree to these conditions in view of the disparity between the English and the combined Franco-Dutch forces¹⁵.

During the ensuing four years under the Dutch leadership, while the Franco-Dutch and the English populations grew by about 50 and 150, respectively, the three groups lived at peace with each other, although the English grew increasingly dissatisfied with the Dutch control of their trade since they were not allowed to trade with their English sponsors. The armed Anglo-Dutch dispute on Santa Cruz started in June 1645,¹⁶ when the Dutch discovered that two or three English planters were falsifying their tobacco rolls.¹⁷ Louis Capoen immediately ordered that the culprits be jailed. The English reacted angrily at the treatment meted to their compatriots and rushed to deliver them from jail by the force of arms. Capoen shocked by “the audacity and temerity of the English”, sent his deputy, Captain Denis, to retrieve the prisoners and to warn the English that worse would come to

¹⁴ *Archief Collectie States General*, Algemeen Rijksarchief, ‘s-Gravenhage, the Netherlands, Copie van Inv. No. 6911, To the Right Honorable Committee for Foreign Affairs, the humble petition of Elizabeth Teresa, wife of Colonel William Caverly Esquier Governor of the island of Sct. Cruse in the behalf of her said husband, hee being infirme and beyond the seas. A second petition was filed in London after the first one failed: *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, 1574-1660* (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Robert, 1860) vol. 11, N° 47, 14 April 1652, p.377.

¹⁵ Pacifique de Provins, *Missionnaires capucins et carmes aux Antilles*, Edition critique de B. Grunberg, B. Roux & J. Grunberg, (Paris: L’Harmatan, 2013), p. 37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*; and DuTertre, vol. 1, p. 273. The dispute did not start in 1642, as claimed by the Caverly widow.

¹⁷ In the 17th century, when shipping to Europe, tobacco leaves were twisted to form a long 50 pound rope, which was wound on a four foot long stick, with a 1.5 inch diameter, and which weighed no more than 2 pounds. There were several ways of falsifying these tobacco rolls: the hidden part of the tobacco roll could be poor quality tobacco leaves, or the diameter of the stick could be larger in the inside.

them if they did not submit to Dutch authority. Instead of complying, the English seized and imprisoned Captain Denis.¹⁸

At this news, Capoen became enraged and decided to call upon the French planters to help free Captain Denis and force the English into submission, even though the English group had grown into a force superior to the combined Franco-Dutch force: about 200 versus 150 armed men. The English, informed of Capoen's impending attack, armed themselves and waited for an assault at some strategic location at the west end. They also brought in their midst Captain Denis in chains to serve as a human shield. The Franco-Dutch group made a furious assault, which immediately killed eight Englishmen, including Brainsby, and wounded more. However, Capoen was mortally wounded while his lieutenant was killed on the spot. The attack continued until the English fled and abandoned the fort with Captain Denis, but not before wounding him severely. The Franco-Dutch group then returned to their headquarters at Salt River to care for their dying governor and to elect Captain Denis, who was recovering from his wounds, as the new governor¹⁹.

In the meantime, the English were starting to fortify their west-end strategic location, instead of showing signs of submission to the Dutch. A few days later, while still healing his wounds, Captain Denis and his men went back to the west-end to confront the English, and to force them to surrender their weapons, as well as to remove the remnant of some fortification. At that time, the English promised that, in the future, they would accept the authority of the Dutch and live at peace with them.²⁰

This was just a ploy to gain time, as peace lasted barely a month. During that time the English completed building an earthwork and fascine fort around their governor's compound and called for the help of the English governor of a Virgin Island (probably St. Thomas), a militia captain from Saint Christopher, probably Major Reynoulds, and the Earl of Marlborough from England with three or four privateering vessels.²¹ They brought with them more than 300 or 400 men, who increased the total number of armed Englishmen at the west end to 500 or 600 men. Once assembled, the enlarged English force proceeded to Salt River where they confronted Captain Denis and forced him to order the French to leave Santa Cruz. The Franco-Dutch force comprised somewhat less than 200 men or about a third

¹⁸ *Pacifique de Provins*, pp. 37-38.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

²¹ *Ibid.*

of the English force. In the face of such an overwhelming English force, Captain Denis had no alternative but to comply with the English order. The French numbering 50 to 60 men elected to move to Guadeloupe, where they knew they would be welcomed²².

In the meantime, as soon as the French departed, the English overwhelmed the Dutch at Salt River, killed Captain Denis and evicted the Zeelanders. Most of them boarded the ship, *Nieuwe Walcheren*, that transported them back to Flushing, Netherlands, where they made port on September 18, 1645.²³ On October 5, the DWIC appointed a successor to Captain Denis—Claes Jochumsen—as the new commander²⁴. However, the DWIC was not able or willing to commit the necessary naval force, at least a thousand troops, to re-conquer the island.²⁵ Thus, the Dutch had lost Santa Cruz for good and the English became the sole occupants of the island.

The English Settlement

After having expelled the French and the Dutch, the English gave every indication that they intended to develop Santa Cruz in earnest. By the end of the first year, there were about 1,000 persons on the island, with at least 300 of them capable of bearing arms. The Spanish map drawn in ca. 1647, known as the Spanish Spy map,²⁶ shows the same three connected settlement areas in existence under the Dutch administration (Map 1).

The principal of these settlements was situated on both banks of the estuary of Salt River. The entrance to the estuary was well defended by a triangular fort armed with 9 cannons originally built by the Dutch in the late 1630s (Map 1). However, a 1667 report on needed island defenses prepared by the Royal Engineer François Blondel describes the entrance to the Salt River estuary as having become obstructed in the late 1640s to such an extent that it no longer required any defense²⁷.

The second largest settlement was at the west end at the present site of Frederiksted. It was centered on a large square, earthwork and fascine fort, named Fort Santiago (Fort Saint James) on the Spanish map and located on

²² Ibid.; DuTertre, vol. 1, pp. 272-275.

²³ *Staten-Generaal* 5758^{II}, Petition from the *Patrons* of Sint Cruis to the Zeeland Chamber, 25 October 1646.

²⁴ *Oude West-Indisch Compagnie*, 26, Resolutions of the Zeeland Chamber, 1645.

²⁵ *Staten-Generaal* 4845, fol. 213.

²⁶ Figueredo, "St. Croix Mystery...", pp. 1–2.

²⁷ *Archives Nationales Outre-Mer*, Dépôt des Fortifications des Colonies, Mémoires generux, Amérique méridionale et Antilles françaises, Carton n°1, n°6, Blondel et Cloduré, "Mémoire sur l'Isle de Sainte Croix".

the same site as the present Fort Frederik. Inside it were a courtyard and one large structure. It was armed with two cannons. This fort was built in July 1645, when the English were preparing to take over the island from the Dutch.

The third settlement was located where Christiansted is today. The harbor was defended by a small battery of two cannons originally built in the early 1640s by the Zelanders and/or the French at the entrance to the harbor. Later, in summer 1650, on top of the hill above the battery, the Spaniards built Fort San Juan which became Fort Louise Augusta under Danish rule. The settlement included a church or chapel located where the Steeple Building is today. Zelanders originally built it around 1638-1640; it measured 20 by 70 feet and was built entirely out of wood—posts, sidings and thatch roof. In 1650, when the French captured Santa Cruz from the Spaniards, they found that the church was usable and Jesuit Father Jacques de LaValière, its first parish priest, named it Notre Dame. The same church building appears on a French map of the Christiansted harbor drawn in 1682 by Germain Payen and, 53 years later in Danish times, on a map drawn by Lieutenant Peter Lorentzen Stibolt, when it became a Lutheran church. Over the years of the French era, three more churches or chapels were built: Marie Madelaine at the Dominican convent above the western side of Salt River; Sainte Croix to the south in the area of Clifton Hill; and Pointe de Sable in the area of Sandy Point. However, none of these three wooden church buildings was in existence when the Danish Company took over in 1734.

The main cash crop was tobacco, as noted by George Downing in 1645.²⁸ Additionally, some small amount of sugar must have been produced since the French Blondel map of 1667 identifies an English sugar factory (*Sucrerie des Anglais*) located just to the west of the island's center, perhaps close to the later Saint Georges and Plessen estates.²⁹

²⁸ "Sir George Downing to John Winthrop, Jr.: To His Cousin John Winthrop Esquire in these New England," *Winthrop Papers*, (The Massachusetts Historical Society, 1945}, vol.5, pp. 43–44.

²⁹ Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Section des cartes. This English sugar factory probably belonged to the governor since he had a Brazilian servant and, in those early days, Brazilians were nearly the only ones skilled in the art of making sugar.



Map 1. *Spanish Spy Map of Santa Cruz, 1647.*

- Legend:
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Principal fortification | I. Sandy Point |
| B. House of the governor | K. Sweet water river |
| C. House of the Earl | L. Sweet water river |
| D. House of God | M. Spanish Point |
| E. Gun battery | N. Turtle Bay |
| F. Fort Santiago | O. House of God |
| G. Cane Bay | P. Crossroad |
| H. Mosquito Bay | Q. East Point |

Santa Cruz Changes Hands Again

In San Juan, the Spanish Governor Fernando de la Riva continued to assess the new English enterprise on Santa Cruz with particular suspicion. Through the testimony of an escaped Brazilian servant, who had been working for the English governor of Santa Cruz, and by means of other reconnaissance, Governor de la Riva was well informed of the English build up. In April 1647, four Spanish vessels—two frigates and two pinnaces—set an easterly course from Porto Rico to Las Vírgenes. They carried approximately 150 armed men, under the command of the governor's nephew, Captain Don Fernando de la Riva Agüero. Their object was twofold: first, expel the small colony of Frenchmen on Santa Ana; and second to proceed to Santa Cruz in order to eradicate the English.³⁰

The original plan was to land near the principal settlement at Salt River and to attack the fort, as well as the governor's residence. However, a miscalculation by the guide, compounded by the darkness of the night,

³⁰ *A.G.I.*, SD 156, Captain Don Fernando de la Riva Agüero to His Majesty, 9 June 1647.

caused them to miss the intended landing site and then drift to the west of Salt River. As the sun rose the next morning, the captain decided to attack the settlement of some 400 persons and its stronghold of “earthworks and fascine”, Fort Saint James, at the west end. Being taken by surprise, the defenders put up only a weak resistance, firing their two pieces of artillery only twice, according to the Spanish report of the incident, before “fleeing into the hills.” Some of the Englishmen were killed as they fled, two others were captured and “three Negroes” were seized, along with some booty.³¹

Having missed the opportunity to strike at the primary English settlement toward the center of the island, the Spanish attack of 1647 failed in its main objective, namely the complete eradication of the English from the island. All the same, the English colony fared badly after the attack. The number of settlers diminished rapidly, due in part to persistent sickness and fevers. In fact, a deadly plague decimated the population of all the English islands from 1647 to 1649; some thought that it might have originated at Santa Cruz. George Gardiner de Peckham, visiting the islands at about that time, wrote: “It [Santa Cruz] is in the hands of the English but few live there, the plague that being soe hot in these islands begun att this as men reporte, although the other hath bin since as sickly as men report.”³²

The plague not only reduced the existing population on the island, but it also served to inhibit the immigration of new settlers. Additionally, the general disruption of shipping and trade caused by the renewed fighting in the Civil War in England posed yet another troublesome disruption. This was all in addition to the constant threat of attack from Porto Rico. It is little wonder then that there were rumors of English preparations to abandon Santa Cruz even before the final blow fell.

As one of his final acts as governor of Porto Rico, Don Fernando de la Riva Agüero, on July 12, 1650, sent four frigates, each with infantry on board, to Santa Cruz with orders to dislodge the English. Having inflicted “some damage” on their enemies and captured a Dutch vessel, the attacking force returned directly to Porto Rico.³³ A short time later, perhaps on August 10 as Father DuTertre relates, the new governor of Porto Rico, Don Diego de Aguilera, received word that the remnant of the English settlement was preparing to abandon the island. He immediately ordered “two ships, a frigate and other small craft” to proceed there, under the command of the

³¹ Ibid.

³² George Gardiner de Peckham, *The General Description of America or the New World*, edited by Arnold R. Highfield and Alfredo E. Figueredo (St. Croix: Antilles Press, 1993), p. 20. The original is found in the *Calendar of State Papers* (1661–1668), p. 350.

³³ *A.G.I.*, SD 156, Governor Don Diego de Aguilera to His Majesty, 22 January 1651.

durable Captain Francisco Vicente Duran. The Spanish force “landed without resistance, captured the fortifications, seized nineteen pieces of artillery, destroyed dwellings and killed over a hundred of the inhabitants, including the last English governor of the island, Captain Nicholas Phillip.”³⁴ The survivors of the furious attack fled into the woods and saved themselves by hiding.

Santa Cruz Becomes Sainte Croix

It is known that the Dutch were the first to learn that the English no longer held Santa Cruz and attempted to return to the island but were prevented by the Spanish garrison left at Fort San Juan. In late August 1650, the French made another attempt to seize the island under the orders of Governor-general de Poincy. They successfully convinced the Spanish garrison to sail back to San Juan with arms and baggage, thereby avoiding a costly fight. . Thus Santa Cruz became French Sainte Croix for the next 83 years.

Conclusion

More details on the Anglo-Dutch rivalry may be found in *Vying for Santa Cruz & Las Virgenes in the Lesser Antilles, 1493–1679*. It is based primarily on the account of a rediscovered French chronicler: Carmelite Father Pacifique de Provins (*Brève relation du voyage des îles de l’Amérique*; Paris, 1646). In his account, it is clear that the Dutch were the first to have a settlement lasting more than a year on Santa Cruz, that the French were the first to join them, that the English joined them last after an absence of four years, and that the English originally agreed to accept Dutch authority. In addition, Pacifique de Provins is the only chronicler who explains how the conflict started, what was the reason for the English revolt against the Dutch authority, and what was the detailed sequence of events leading to the expulsion in 1645 of the French and the Dutch from Santa Cruz.

The discovery of the Spanish Spy Map of Santa Cruz and associated Spanish reports by Alfredo E. Figueredo³⁵ gives new information about Santa Cruz under English administration from 1645 to 1650. They reveal that Santa Cruz had at least one sugar plantation with African slaves on the western part of the island, probably belonging to the governor. Also, Santa Cruz had three fortification: a small battery with three cannon at the entrance

³⁴ Ibid.; also Milton, p. 545.

³⁵ Alfredo E. Figueredo, “St. Croix Mystery Map Solved,” *Information* 11:1(1986): 1-2.

to Christiansted Harbor where the Spanish later built Fort San Juan, the main fort with 9 cannons at the entrance to Salt River (first built by the Flemish in the late 1630s) and a palisaded battery with two cannon named Fort Santiago or Fort St. James at the west end. Also, it is learned through English reports that, in 1647-1649, the English colony suffered greatly from an epidemic of some tropical fever. Finally, a long lost report on the needed defenses for Sainte Croix prepared by Royal Engineer François Blondel in 1667 states that the Salt River Fort was originally built by the Flemish in the late 1630s and that since the estuary became obstructed in the late 1640s the fort no longer needed to be armed (see ref. 27).

VIII First European Settlements in the Virgin Islands

In the fall of 1493, Christopher Columbus was the first European to sail through Las Virgenes, which appeared to be vacant. The Spaniards never settled the archipelago, but they did put a name on the largest islands, thereby indicating that these islands were visited by the Spaniards, in particular by fishermen from San Juan Batista (modern Puerto Rico) in search of turtles, which abounded.

The first recorded North-European layover in Las Virgenes was in 1596 by the Earl of Cumberland at the head of 18 ships and 1,000 men in order to train his men before attacking and capturing Porto Rico³⁶. Also in 1607, Christopher Newport, on his way to Virginia, sailed by Saba and San Estacio and, finally to Las Virgenes, where he anchored in a great bay that could hold a hundred vessels but had no water or people³⁷. (Could this be North Sound in Virgin Gorda?).

In 1621, the Spanish authorities, were concerned by the presence of enemy(?) freebooters in the Leeward Islands. In February, Francisco Venegas, the governor of Cuba, wrote that he was arming a vessel to attack freebooters on Virgin Gorda and Nevis where they had been passing the hurricane season in wait for Spanish ships with valuable cargos in the months ahead.³⁸

Early in 1629, after spending nearly two years on Saint Eustache, Monsieur de Cussac, general of the naval army of France, set sail for the western Caribbean. After a day's sail, he stopped at Santa Cruz to take on water and noted that: "... before reaching this island [Santa Cruz], one passes to the north the isles of Les Vierges, which number about 80 or 100, as many large as small. They are also uninhabited³⁹..." This report and others reveal conclusively that Las Virgenes were not the site of a permanent Island-Carib or European settlement in the 1620s; second, that Las Virgenes were visited on occasion by French and English seamen in search of ballast, timber, turtles and fresh water; and third, that both the French and the English were well acquainted with these islands and esteemed them for their resources and their strategic location to attack Spanish vessels or ports long before they made any serious attempt to settle them.

³⁶ Jean-Pierre Moreau, *Les Petites Antilles de Christophe Colomb à Richelieu*, (Paris: Edition Karthala, 1992), p. 102.

³⁷ Moreau, *Les Petites Antilles* ..., p. 149.

³⁸ *Archivo General de Indias* (Hereinafter referred to as *A.G.I.*), SD100, Governor Francisco Venegas to the King, 21 February 1621.

³⁹ *Archives des Affaires Étrangères*, Fonds Amérique, n° 4, fol. 69.

Much confusion exists on the history of the early European settlements in the Virgin Islands. There are several reasons for the confusion:

- Most of the early European settlements lasted no more than a few months and therefore were not well documented;
- The first European settlers in the Virgin Islands came in small numbers, unofficially, with little or no documentation and primarily from other islands rather than Europe;
- The French settlers were never sponsored by the French Company; on Tortola and Virgin Gorda, the Dutch settlers gained the protection of the Dutch West Indies Company only in 1648, while the English settlers gained the recognition of the Crown even later in 1672;
- In the early years, the Virgin Islands were often settled by two different nations at the same time;
- Spanish reports concerning the activities of North Europeans in the Virgin Islands would often refer to them as “the enemies”, without specifying to which nation they belong;
- The early name of Santa Ana has been incorrectly assigned to Tortola, when it belonged to Saint Thomas;⁴⁰

The Settlements on Santa Ana (Saint Thomas)

Since English settlers were the first to come to Santa Cruz in 1631 and 1635 and since a presumably English group and their small fort were wiped out of Santa Ana (Saint Thomas) in January 1640 by a Spanish force led by Captain Juan López en route to supply the garrison of Fort Amsterdam on San Martín,⁴¹ it is tempting to assume that the English were the first to settle on Santa Ana in the 1630s. It is known that the English returned to Santa Ana in the early 1640s since, in August 1645, their commander led an armed

⁴⁰ Unexplainably Thomas G. Mathews has claimed in “The Spanish Domination of Saint Martin, 1633–1648” (*Caribbean Studies*, vol. 9 (1969), pp.3–23) that Santa Ana was the old name of present day Tortola. Unfortunately, this island misidentification was repeated by some BVI historians, including Drs. Norwell Harrigan and Pearl Varlack, as well as Vernon W. Pickering. It is not credible that Captain Juan López could have mistaken Saint Thomas for Tortola. Saint Thomas is the first major Virgin Island sailing from Porto Rico and it has a uniquely shaped harbor with a narrow entrance oriented due north leading to sheltered perpendicular bays oriented east/west. By contrast, Tortola is a smaller island in the middle of the Virgins with, instead of a harbor, a wide-open roadstead oriented in north westerly direction.

⁴¹ *A.G.I.*, V, SD 171, 1640.

force to Santa Cruz to help their compatriots wrench the island from the Dutch.⁴² However in the fall of 1646, the same English group was wiped out of Santa Ana by Spanish Captain Francisco Vincente Duràn from Porto Rico.⁴³

The next Spanish attack on Santa Ana occurred in April 1647 against a small French settlement on the east end of the island. Maybe these were some of the Frenchmen that were ordered out of Santa Cruz in summer 1645 by the English. They were promptly wiped out by Captain Don Fernando de la Riva Agüero, the nephew of the governor of Porto Rico, at the head of 150 armed men on two frigates and two pinnaces. This superior Spanish force went next to Santa Cruz where it was to destroy the much larger English colony.⁴⁴ Six months later, five French political exiles from Saint Christopher spent five days on Santa Ana and found it to be vacant but with vestiges of prior European occupation—bananas, figs, limes, oranges, lemons and guavas⁴⁵. These fruit trees and plants could have been planted in the 1630s by English planters.

With the eradication of the English from Santa Cruz by the Spaniards in 1650, it is quite likely that some Englishmen sought refuge on vacant Santa Ana (Saint Thomas). In any event, Santa Ana was in English hands from July 1652 to March 1653, when Prince Rupert moored in the Saint Thomas harbor⁴⁶, although it seems to have been vacant after his departure.

Twelve years later in 1665, with the sponsorship of King Christian, Captain Erik Nielsen Schmidt and a small group of Danish settlers landed at vacant Saint Thomas with the intent of establishing a trading port and of cultivating tropical products. However, after the death of Captain Schmidt, a devastating hurricane, a tropical fever epidemic, the lack of food and two devastating English raids, all within nineteen months, the few surviving Danes abandoned the island and returned to Copenhagen via Saint Christopher. In their wake, some Dutchmen from Tortola removed whatever the Danes had left behind, including some guns and ammunition.

Shortly thereafter Saint Thomas was occupied by an unauthorized group of English settlers from Saint Christopher and/or neighboring

⁴² Pacifique de Provins, *Missionnaires capuchins...*, p. 39.

⁴³ *A.G.I.*, V, SD 156.

⁴⁴ *A.G.I.*, V, SD 156, "Don Fernando de la Riva Agüero to His Majesty, 9 June 1647."

⁴⁵ Jean-Baptiste DuTertre, *Histoire générale des Antilles habitées par les Français*, (Paris, 1667-1671), Vol. I, pp. 400-407.

⁴⁶ *Arch. Nat., Col.*, F3-58, fol. 205.

islands⁴⁷. As reported by Governor François DuBois, they remained on Saint Thomas no later than July 1671, when they were attacked and chased away by French privateers, who burned the roof of their storehouse upon departing⁴⁸. Finally, in May 1672, there arrived on Saint Thomas a second and larger group of Danes, who did find the island unoccupied. They were sponsored by the newly established West India & Guinea Company and led by Captain Jørgen Iversen of the *Ferö*. Thanks to timely Company reinforcements, starting with the *Pelican* in March 1673, liberal tax and land concession policies, as well as the help of mostly Dutch with some French, German, English and Jewish settlers from neighboring islands, the Danish colony quickly became sustainable and lasted until 1917, when it was sold, together with Saint John and Sainte Croix, to the United States of America⁴⁹.

The Settlements on Tortola

It may be surmised that, sometime in the late 1630s, the Dutch from Saint Eustatius made the first attempt to colonize Tortola, as well as perhaps Virgin Gorda.⁵⁰ The Dutch group probably left, or was extirpated from Tortola by the Spaniards, around 1637, if under the leadership of Louis Capoen, since he was chosen at that time to lead a group of settlers on Santa Cruz.

Ten years later, in August and September 1647, the Spaniards eradicated from Tortola successively an English settlement and a group of 60 French political exiles, who had recently arrived from Saint Christophe⁵¹. Then, in 1648, under the protection of the Dutch Company and the Peace Treaty of Westphalia with Spain, the Dutch returned to Tortola and Virgin Gorda. They seemingly prospered with a group of about 80 unsanctioned Englishmen from Saint Christopher until 1672—the start of the Franco-Dutch War—when the Dutch Governor Huntum sought the protection of the English. Thus, Colonel William Stapleton of Antigua took over both

⁴⁷ Isaac Dookhan, *History of the British Virgin Islands, 1672 to 1970*, (Essex: Bowker Publishing Company, 1975), p. 40.

⁴⁸ *Arch. Nat., Col.*, F3-58, fol. 205.

⁴⁹ Dookhan, *History of the Virgin Islands...*, pp. 37-40. Also, Westergaard, *The Danish West Indies...*, pp. 31-44.

⁵⁰ The Dutch most likely were the first to come to Tortola, and perhaps Virgin Gorda as well, after being removed from Sint Maarten by the Spaniards in 1633 and around 1634 when they settled on Saint Eustatius. The Dutch left vestiges of their early presence in the Virgin Islands: the name of Jost van Dyke for a lesser Virgin; and on Tortola a small brick fort, as well as the names of Cappoon (Capeon) attached to a west end bay on the north side and of Huntum attached to a Road Town gut.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Tortola and Virgin Gorda with a tacit agreement that, at the end of the war, the islands would be returned to the Dutch. However, the English never returned to the Dutch the islands, now named the (British) Virgin Islands, which they claimed to have captured by the force of arms⁵².

The above sequence of attempts to colonize the Virgin Islands between the arrival of the English and the Dutch in the 1630s, and the arrival of the Danes on Saint Thomas followed by the English takeover of Tortola and Virgin Gorda in 1672 is given in greater detail in *Vying for Santa Cruz & Las Virgenes in the Lesser Antilles, 1493–1679*.

⁵² Isaac Dookhan, *History of the British Virgin Islands, 1672 to 1970*, (Essex: Bowker Publishing Company, 1975), p. 3.

IX. Sainte Croix under Maltese Administration

In 1639, following his death in 1637. Belain d'Esnambuc, Governor of Saint Christophe, the Compagnie des Isles de l'Amérique appointed as Lieutenant-general of the French Antilles at Saint Christophe, Monsieur Philippe de Lonvilliers de Poincy, Knight of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. At 54 years of age, Poincy was a visionary entrepreneur with a penchant for imperious ways. He invested heavily in the infrastructure of Saint Christophe and, more importantly, he was the first French producer of sugar on a commercial scale, as a substitute for tobacco, which had a saturated and falling market. He built at Cayonne the first water mill in the Lesser Antilles. In addition, he built sugar works with oxen mills at La Fontaine on Saint Christophe and on Sainte Croix. He financed his large investments in the Saint Christophe infrastructure, in his enterprises and in his extravagant life style by ruthless and questionable means at the expense of the Company, his business associates and the planters. As a result, the Company was unable to collect any revenue and, in 1645, in utter exasperation, the Company decided to replace Monsieur de Poincy with Monsieur de Thoisy, the Queen's *protégé*. However, Poincy refused to step down or even allow Thoisy to land on Saint Christophe. For two years, by the force of arms, Thoisy attempted to gain his seat and failed. In the end, Poincy shipped Thoisy back to France. Thus, the Company felt powerless to dislodge Poincy and, in the meantime, it was incurring heavy financial losses. Finally, the Compagnie decided to cut its losses short and sell the French islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Saint Christophe and their dependencies to their respective governors, who were the ones reaping the profits. At the same time, in 1647, Governor de Poincy was taken to court in Paris by Thoisy to recoup his losses. Fearing a seizure of his assets by the court, Poincy prevailed upon the Order of Malta to purchase in his stead Saint Christophe and dependencies, including Sainte Croix. Thus, on May 25, 1651, the Order of Malta purchased Saint Christophe and dependencies from the Compagnie des Isles de l'Amérique for the fair price of 120,000 livres. The sale contract was confirmed by Louis XIV, but in return the Order was to pay homage to the King at each royal succession in the form of a gold crown worth 1,000 écus; moreover, the Order could not dispose of the islands or appoint any but French knights as governor with the King's consent.

Although Saint Christophe and dependencies were 'owned' by the Order of Malta from 1651 until 1665, the governance remained the same as before. Poincy's appointment was confirmed and he was given the new title

of bailiff in recompense for his services to the Order. For the purpose of protecting its new assets, the Order sent a knight to quietly monitor Poincy.

As concerns the governance of Sainte Croix, for eight years Poincy was unable to find someone to serve as governor and conditions—economic, fiscal, spiritual and sanitary—were so bad that nearly all the original settlers had died of some tropical fever or had abandoned the island. It was at this critical time that Poincy turned to his friend, Bailiff de Souvré, Ambassador of the Order of Malta at Versailles, who recommended Monsieur François DuBois. He was not a Knight of Malta, but he was an officer of the royal guard, who had been banished from France from killing his superior officer in a duel. In 1659, Poincy offered the position to DuBois, who accepted under four conditions: lowering of taxes, removal of trade restrictions, sending 400 new settlers and contracting an ecclesiastical order for a permanent presence of priests.

With these conditions fulfilled, in spite of many vicissitudes, DuBois was able to bring some measure of prosperity to Sainte Croix by attracting new settlers, thereby increasing the production of tobacco, and by contracting the Dominican Order to have two priests tend to the spiritual needs of the community, as well as develop a sugar plantation with its own refinery upon receipt of a loan from the Order of Malta. Upon the death of Governor de Poincy in 1660, Commander de Sales, a member of the Order of Malta, who had been sent earlier for such an eventuality, took over the governance of Saint Christophe with its dependencies and confirmed the appointment of Monsieur François DuBois as governor of Sainte Croix. With new free trade policies, which allowed for the acceleration of the growth of the sugar industry, Commander de Sales quickly brought the islands into an economic golden age.

The Dutch merchants, who financed and supplied the French sugar planters, and who purchased most of their sugar, reaped most of the profits. Some of the profits of course went to the Order of Malta, the sugar planters and a few French merchants, but none went to the Crown. This disparity did not go unnoticed by the new French finance minister, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, always in search of new revenues. Accordingly, he decided to create the Compagnie des Indes Occidentales, with full monopolistic and exclusivist powers over the islands, whose mission it was to supplant and exclude the Dutch and even the French merchants. Accordingly, in August 1665, Louis XIV compelled the Order to sell Saint Christophe and dependencies for 500,000 livres, instead of 1.2 million livres it was requesting. Thus ended the brief economic boom the Order of Malta had fostered with a minimal presence in the French Leeward Islands.

Nine years later, upon the death of Governor François DuBois in 1674, Louis XIV appointed as governor—Chevalier Antoine DuBois—François DuBois' brother and the only knight of Malta to become directly involved with the administration of Sainte Croix. Unfortunately, after being in office for only two years, he was removed by his own militia officers, charged with treason and returned to France in disgrace.

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X. The Saint Thomas Economy in the 19th Century & the 1892 Coaling Strike

With the advent of steam ships, Saint Thomas became an important bunkering port, which was involved in the manual coaling of ships by mostly women. At that time, the currency used to pay the harbor workers was the Mexican silver peso, which slowly lost its value until 1892 when the coaling workers demanded to be paid in Danish currency; this led to a two-day strike, which was successful. There remains to elucidate who planned, initiated and led the strike through the use of Police Court reports heretofore inaccessible.

The Steam Packet Companies & Bunkering

Saint Thomas was never a significant producer of tropical agricultural products. Instead, in the early 19th century, after the second British occupation (1807-1815), it became the trading center of the Caribbean Basin where tropical products were exchanged for European goods, thereby avoiding export/import taxes. The resulting economic boom slowly reached a plateau around 1830–1840, as European and American ships found it more profitable to trade directly with the sources of tropical products, instead of using Saint Thomas as an intermediary. This situation came about as plantations became larger and concentrated on cultivating a single product. Also, as many Spanish colonies and Haïti gained their independence they were able to lower their onerous export/import taxes. Additionally, Spain followed suit with its remaining colonies of Puerto Rico and Cuba.

Fortunately, Saint Thomas was able to adapt to the new business conditions, as steam ships were replacing sailing ships and the British Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSPC) chose to locate its wharf on Hassel Island and offices at the present Riise Mall in 1839-1843. Packet ships transported both passengers and cargo along interisland and intercontinental routes. They signaled a new economic activity based upon servicing steam ships by providing repair services and supplying coal, water, and food. This new activity was increased when two other packet companies chose to join the RMSPC at Saint Thomas: in 1862, the French Compagnie Générale Transatlantique (CGT) with its wharf at Havensight and offices at the present Finance Department building on Main Street; and, in 1874, the Hamburg-American Packet Line Company (HAPAG) with its wharf on Hassel Island and offices at the 75 Corner building, the present V.I. Inspector General building on Main Street. Also, in 1863, two major

maritime lines chose Saint Thomas as their main port-of-call: the North American-Brazil Line and the Liverpool Line. Additionally, in 1885, the Brønsted Coaling Company came into being with its wharf on Hassel Island and offices at the present VI Lottery building on Main Street, across from the Market Square. Also, on Hassel Island, Marine repair capabilities were enhanced in 1843-1844 by the addition of the Saint Thomas Marine Repairing Slip for smaller ships, up to 100 feet long; and in 1862, a floating dry dock capable of servicing ships up to 300 feet long and weighing 3,000 tons. It was badly damaged by the 1867 hurricane but refloated in 1875 and functioned satisfactorily for about ten years. Finally, around 1870 Alfred T. Wharam established in Krum Bay a marine salvage yard.

After the Emancipation of 1848, the Saint Thomas economy saw a plateau in the 1850s and started to decline in the 1860s, until it saw a brief upturn during the American Civil War, followed, after the catastrophic 1867 hurricane, by a deep downturn, which lasted until World War II. With the economic decline came a reduced sailing frequency, which, in 1885, caused the RMSPC to decide to relocate all its operations at Bridgetown, Barbados, and sell its Hassel Island facilities to the HAPAG. By contrast, the HAPAG was experiencing a spectacular growth all along until 1914, when World War I started. However, this growth was artificial and strictly due to political factors rather than increasing revenues. It has been shown elsewhere that the HAPAG was heavily subsidized by Kaiser Wilhelm II and was nothing other than an appendage to the German navy, which ambited to control and take over Saint Thomas during WWI. In 1887, two years after the RMSPC departure, because of the general decline in economic activity, the CGT moved its headquarters at Fort-de-France, Martinique, but continued to use Saint Thomas as a port-of-call to bunker steam ships.

Saint Thomas was not the only Caribbean harbor able to service steam ships. The main competing harbors were Saint George's in Grenada, Castries in Saint Lucia, and San Juan in Puerto Rico. Clearly, this was a very competitive business but Saint Thomas had a slight advantage with of its central location and it was a free port with special tax rebates for steam packet companies. Until the 1910s, loading and unloading coal was done manually exclusively, with the use of straw baskets holding on average 80 pounds of coal. It is estimated that, in 1890, about 90,000 tons of coal were imported and exported: this required filling 2.25 million coal baskets twice. A typical shipload of 300 tons of coal was delivered with 7,500 baskets of coal by employing 75 women carrying each 100 baskets.

Since the coal was imported from England and America at the prevailing world market price, the coaling companies had no control over

the price of coal. Thus, the only significant way of keeping the price of coaling ships competitive was by keeping the wages of the coal carriers as low as possible. To keep labor costs at a minimum, the coaling companies found it profitable to hire only part time employees for loading and unloading coal, as and when needed, depending upon the arrival time of a ship and its tonnage. In this fashion, the coaling companies avoided paying full-time salaries and fringe benefits, when there was no ship in need of coal. However, this was contingent upon offering a relatively attractive salary and upon having a large pool of underemployed laborers.

In the latter half of the 19th century, the depressed economy caused men to seek employment elsewhere—on ships, in the Greater Antilles, in Panama and in America. On the other hand, employment opportunities abroad for women were far fewer, which left a large pool of unemployed and underemployed women in the Danish West Indies and the British Virgin Islands, available to carry coal on Saint Thomas as and when needed. Thus, an army of women was always available to bunker a ship in record time, day and night, on work days, on Sundays and holidays; while only three or four men, the trimmers, per gang of women per ship were needed to fill the baskets and lift them on the women's head. According to the censuses of 1880 and 1900, it is estimated that, in 1890, there were about 120 declared coaling women. To this number should be added at least 50 women listed as laborers. Thus, at any time about 200 coal carrying women were available to be employed as needed.

The Mexican Silver Peso Crisis

It had become a standard practice for the coaling companies to pay the coalers with Mexican silver pesos, or dollars, as it was popularly referred to. Perhaps this practice started in 1858 when General Santa Anna came to settle on Saint Thomas during his third exile with at least 2 million Mexican pesos. Since 1864, the coaling women were paid one centavo or one cent in Mexican silver currency, less one third of a cent for the trimmers, per 80-pound basket of coal. Paying the coalers in Mexican silver currency was advantageous to the coaling companies because the Mexican peso could be purchased at a small discount with gold backed currencies (Danish rigsdollar, American dollar, French franc, etc...). Through its West India & Panama Telegraph Co. Ltd., Saint Thomas was kept informed daily of the value of the Mexican silver peso in New York. Initially, the discount was only one or two cents on the dollar, but as time went on and the world's silver supply kept growing, so did the silver discount. By 1880, one silver peso or dollar was worth only about 90 cents in gold. In February 1887, the Saint Thomas

Savings Bank announced that interest on Mexican peso deposits made after 1st January 1879 would be paid in the same currency. By 1890, the Mexican peso had fallen to 80 cents in gold; by 1891, it was worth about 77 cents; and by August 1892, it had reached a low of 65 cents in New York. At that point, the Saint Thomas Savings Bank announced that it would no longer accept deposits in Mexican silver. This continuous fall in the value of the Mexican silver dollar could not be absorbed by the Saint Thomas merchants, who were forced to keep raising the price of their merchandise.

There was another factor aggravating this financial crisis. For change in Mexican currency, only three coins were available: 75, 50 and 25 centavos. For smaller change, the coaling companies issued tally coins worth one cent (really one centavo) stamped with their company name and redeemable only by the company that issued them. The coaling women were paid one tally coin on the spot by the tallyman after emptying each basket. Later, when the coaling process was completed each coaling woman would exchange her tallies less one-third for Mexican silver pesos. In this fashion, through their employees, the coaling companies put so much Mexican silver pesos in circulation on Saint Thomas that it became the main currency and the merchants were forced to accept the Mexican peso. For small change, not wanting to use Danish currency, which would have been a losing proposition, they petitioned the King to be authorized to issue their own coins. Authorization was granted and at least 22 merchants issued their own tokens worth 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10 cents (really centavos) redeemable only at the store where issued. This made it very inconvenient for the bunkering workers. Inevitably, some merchants abused the system by issuing more coins than they were able to redeem, thereby hoping to save their failing business. In particular, at the same time that the value of the Mexican dollar was falling precipitously in 1891, two important stores went into bankruptcy, leaving many customers with unredeemable tokens. Finally, upon many complaints, the government published an order that, as of 15 September 1892, merchants would no longer be allowed to issue and use their tokens. The reaction of the merchants was immediate: on 6 September, 22 merchants voted that they would no longer accept Mexican pesos or dollars after 12 September. A few merchants gave notice that, beyond the 12th, they would accept Mexican dollars, but only at their current New York value in gold. This financial crisis was hard on the Saint Thomas merchants but it hit hardest the poor coalers, dock laborers, stevedores and boatmen, since their real income had been eroded slowly over a period of about 30 years until its purchasing power was reduced by more than 40%.

Additionally, they had to carry worthless or soon to be worthless tokens for each store they had been catering.

The Coaling Strike

Consequently, it is not surprising that, four days after the notice given by 22 merchants and only two days before the deadline of 12 September, the coalers decided to refuse to work unless paid in full in Danish currency, instead of Mexican silver pesos. According to the Police Court reports, on Saturday morning the 10th of September 1892, two full teams of coalers reported at the CGT Havensight wharf and at the HAPAG Hassel Island wharf, but they refused to work unless paid the same salary in Danish currency, instead of Mexican dollars. The packet companies did not accede to the coalers' demand and so no work was performed.

On Sunday the 11th of September 1892, the strike was suspended: one ship was bunkered at the HAPAG dock. Some coaling women, such as Dorothea Scatliffe, demanded to be paid 40 cents in Danish currency for 60 baskets of coal; but others, such as Mary Andrew, accepted to be paid 25 Mexican centavos plus 15 Danish cents for the same 60 baskets and thereby be cheated of about 10 Danish cents.

On Monday morning, the 12th of September, at the CGT wharf, French Consul and Agent Lucetti offered to pay the strikers 75% in Danish currency and 25% in Mexican currency, which would have cheated the strikers by about 16%. This unsatisfactory offer only angered the strikers all the more and led them to demonstrate in town to attract additional followers and to pressure the Danish administration to intervene in their favor. Meanwhile, at the HAPAG wharf, all the coalers present, without exception, insisted that they would not work unless fully paid in Danish currency. They were angered that, on the previous day, the German company had broken the resolve of some strikers and was able to pay them only partly in Danish currency. Nevertheless, the German company agent, Captain Becher, refused to accede fully to the strikers demand, so they decided to go join the CGT strikers in town and demonstrate.

Thus in town, there were two protesting striker groups; they were kept apart by the police and armed soldiers. One group was confined at the present Roosevelt Park, the other at the Market Square. Both groups became enormous, vociferous and threatening, as many were armed with sticks and stones. However, neither side resorted to violence against persons or property. Still, it was effective since, early that afternoon, Italian Consul and Brønsted Agent Edouardo Moron formed a committee involving himself, the Policemaster and Judge H. M. W. Fisher, CGT Agent and

French Consul Lucetti and a deputation of 6 coalers (3 men and 3 women) to negotiate the strikers' demand away from the crowd in the Brønsted Company offices near the Market Square. Soon E. Moron emerged and announced loudly to the awaiting crowd that the coaling companies agreed to the strikers demand. Upon this good news some coalers went back to work, while others partied until a heavy rain dispersed them. Thus ended the strike and the demonstration.

The Investigation of the Strike

Subsequently, Policemaster and Judge H. M. W. Fisher conducted a thorough investigation to determine who were the leaders of the strike and whether the strike was related in any way to the 1878 'fireburn' on Sainte Croix, which caused great loss of life and property. The investigation lasted 13 days during which 9 coaling demonstrators—4 trimmers and 5 coaling women—were interrogated, some on several days, and some stood accused of criminal behavior by 9 police officers. The four trimmers were:

- Alfred Civil who on 14 September testified that all he wanted was to be paid in Danish currency and that he had become irate when the CGT Manager Camps told him that when he got hungry he would come back and accept 75 Danish cents for one Mexican dollar; he was released and was not interrogated further.
- Moritz de Nully who, on 14 September, denied that he ever threatened to commit arson or encouraged others to do so; he was released and not interrogated further.
- James Petersen who, on 14 September, denied that he ever threatened to commit arson or encourage others to do so; on 29 September, coaling woman Clothilde Simonet testified that he had given her the flag she was holding on the 12th. On 1 October, he denied carrying a flag and giving it to Clothilde Simonet; also, he denied threatening coaling women who were willing to accept part of their pay in Mexican currency; he was released and not interrogated further;
- Thomas Philips who, on 14 September, denied threatening the military with a stick and encouraging the striking women to break through a military cordon; that same evening he was arrested and sentenced to 12 days in jail for his defiant attitude and for resisting arrest. On 1 October, he was accused of wearing a headband, as a sign of rebellion, but he answered that it was to keep coal dust out of his hair and eyes. On 4 October, he testified that on the 12th of September he was wearing a hat; he was sent back to jail. On 13 October, he maintained that all he wanted was that his salary be paid

entirely in Danish currency; that same day, he was released after having served a total of 21 days in jail.

The five coaling women were:

- Catherine Benjamin who, on 14 September, emphatically denied to have threatened with arson and to have encouraged others to do so; she was released and not interrogated further;
- Dorothea Scatliffe who, on 14 September, stood accused of being one of the most conspicuously agitated and defiant woman in the mob with a large stone in her hand; the stone was taken out of her hand just as she was about to throw it at the Police; she denied intending to do so and claimed she had taken it from Margaret Andrew to prevent her harming anyone; she was summoned again on 1 October when she was accused of carrying a short thick stick, of having tucked her skirt at her knees and of wearing a head tie in the fashion of a 'fireburn' queen; in spite of her denials, she was jailed at the Fort. On 4 October, in court she admitted carrying a thick stick just like many others, but her head tie was not meant to be a sign of rebellion; all she wanted was to be paid in Danish currency. On 13 October back in court she admitted insulting officer Cruise and apologized; she claimed she had no other intention but to get her rightful wages; the same day, she was finally released after having served 12 days in jail;
- Elizabeth Sylvester who on 14 September joined others in emphatically denying to have threatened with arson and to have encouraged others to do so; she only admitted to being in the tumultuous crowd from which it was not easy to get away;
- Clothilde Simonet, 21 years old, born on Saint Thomas, who on 26 September was summoned in court; she had been punished many times in the past for prostitution; on 12 September, she was one of the noisiest in the crowd of strikers by the Park, screaming, shouting and gesticulating; she admitted that she held a flag which was taken from her by the Police, who attempted to arrest her, but she was able to pull away and lose herself in the crowd; on that same day, she was rearrested and jailed at the Fort. Back in court on 29 September, she recounted how the strike started on the French wharf on Monday the 12th when the trimmers refused to work unless paid in full with Danish currency; the flag she held had been given to her by James Petersen; she denied that she or any other striker was intoxicated on that day; at the end of her testimony she was returned to jail; in court again on 4 October she testified that, like the other strikers, all she ever wanted was to get her wages in Danish currency without resorting to violence;

she and the others intended to tell French Agent Luchetti that if he didn't pay them with Danish currency that he could keep the Mexican silver; that same day, she was returned to jail. On 13 October, in court again she said that she regretted having participated in the demonstration, that she was only following the example of the other strikers and did not want them to shame her for not participating; on the same day, she together with Dorothea Scatliffe and Thomas Philips was finally released after having served 17 days in jail.

- Mary Andrew who on 10 October was summoned in court; she testified that she worked at the German wharf on Sunday the 11th of September and was satisfied being paid 25 Mexican cents plus 15 Danish cents for carrying 40 baskets of coal; on Monday morning the 12th, she went back to work at the German wharf and found the trimmers not working and not doing the preparation work before the coaling women could start carrying baskets of coal; a short time later the German Agent Becher came and, without any discussion on the mode of payment, gave notice to the strikers that if they did not intend to work, they would have to leave; they then all went to town and joined the strikers from the French wharf; when she and Dorothea Scatliffe were told by the Police to disperse, they followed the order and went walking up and down town; she admitted that, as she saw strikers around her with sticks or stones in their hand, she too took up a stone, but Merchant Lockhart took it from her; afterwards neither she nor her friend Dorothea Scatliffe carried any weapon; subsequently, she was released and she was not interrogated further.

Additionally, three sympathizers were questioned and jailed for noisy and unruly behavior, as well as carrying a stick; they provided no further information concerning the strike or the strikers:

- Philip Dogharty, 15 or 16 years old was jailed on 17 September and released on 20 September;
- Syranus de Graff, 19 years old was jailed on 17 September and released on 20 September;
- Octavia Hall, 21 years old maid was jailed on 26 September and released on 28 September.

Policemaster and Judge H. M. W. Fischer also deposed eight members of the bourgeoisie (merchants, shopkeepers and professionals), who were not part of the tumultuous mob, hoping that they might have some information concerning the strike and the strikers, which they did not:

- Merchant Levin and Trade Commissioner Titley were interrogated on 15 September and denied having urged the mob to refuse Mexican silver.
- Sailmaker Albert Baa who on 16 September denied inciting the mob and encouraging the coalers to refuse Mexican silver.
- Edouardo Moron, Italian Consul and Agent for Brønsted & Co. who on 14 September plead not guilty to the charge that he had loudly insulted the strikers thereby agitating them further; he did admit using foul language and was fined for it; when Policemaster and Judge Fischer came on the scene, he changed his attitude toward the strikers and organized negotiations with the coaling companies and the strikers, whose demand was met.
- Sostènes Luchetti, French Consul and Agent for the CGT, was at first opposed to the strikers' demand, but as part of the negotiation team he changed his mind and he acceded to the strikers' demand.
- Rumshop owners Henry Meyer and W. Nesbitt who, on 19 September, denied in Police Court having incited the strikers by selling them some rum when forbidden to do so; they did not think that the strikers had a leader.
- Accountant Adolph Sixto who on 1 October denied knowing anything about the flags that he used to advertise a comedy at the Apollo theatre and testified that he was unaware that Clothilde Simonet had used one of the flags.
- Pharmacist Valdemar Riise who on 9 November denied having made efforts to abolish the Mexican currency and to have encouraged the strikers; he did admit to clapping his hands with the strikers after the coaling companies decided to pay the coalers only in Danish currency; also, he admitted informing Policemaster and Judge Fischer that on 17 September that the main cause of the noisy demonstration was Edouardo Moron loudly insulting the strikers.

Queen Coziah

- J. Antonio Jarvis, when writing *Brief History of the Virgin Islands*, did not have access to the court reports of Policemaster and Judge Fischer; all he was able to use was the *Sanct Thomæ Titende* and the local lore. When writing about the 1892 coal strike, Jarvis conjured up the stage name 'Queen Coziah' in the following context: "[In the coaling strike demonstration,] the men were sullen and dangerous, but they were in the minority and to a large extent followed the leadership

of ‘Queen Coziah’, a bamboula dancer. Since more women than men had always worked at coaling ships, it was natural for a woman to lead a labor riot”. This leads to the following comments: Jarvis is the first to put in writing the stage name ‘Queen Coziah’ in his *Brief History* published in 1938. However, he gives no surname, nor does he give the source and origin of this stage name, which does not appear in the Danish archives, in travel accounts or in histories of Saint Thomas written before 1938. The exotic name Coziah, can only be found in Romania where there are a famous medieval monastery and a national park named Cozia. Was this name chosen because Jarvis meant her to be an allegorical, or typical figure representing more than one coaling woman?

- The coaling women at work were a popular sight and an important tourist attraction, as they chanted in unison while working and, sometimes after work, they would perform the bamboula dance for the cruising passengers for monetary rewards and even for the sailors with whom they entertained friendly relations. Thus, most, if not all, coaling women could dance the bamboula and identifying a coaling woman as a bamboula dancer does not point to a particular coaling woman.
- The traditional song associated with the bamboula dance has the refrain: ‘Roll, Isabella, roll’. Presumably, Isabella must have referred to a popular bamboula dancer. Could it refer to Clothilde Simonet, whose tomb shows ‘I.’ as middle initial? (Private communication by Mrs. Nadine Marchena Kean).

Conclusion

- Although the strike occurred on two days, September 10 and 12, a demonstration in town occurred only on the morning and early afternoon of the 12th of September.
- The strikers’ demonstration was tumultuous and therefore not peaceful, but neither did it involve violence with loss of life or property, nor was it connected in any way to the 1878 ‘fireburn’ on Sainte Croix. Thus, it never was a riot, only a loud and threatening protest or demonstration.
- Policemaster and Judge Fischer seemed to believe that there was more than a single strike leader. It is not known who were the six coalers involved in the negotiation, but the fact that six were chosen implies that there was more than one strike leader.

- In the demonstration, the coaling women were generally shrieking and gesticulating boisterously more so than the trimmers, but this does not necessarily mean that the women were the leaders at the exclusion of the men, as the lore would have it.
- The strike was a concerted, but almost spontaneous, action that occurred simultaneously on two separate French and German wharves on two days, the 10th and the 12th of September 1892. Presumably, on both mornings the strikers, or at least the trimmers, met before reporting to work and agreed not to work unless fully paid in Danish currency. This is surmised by the fact that the Police was informed that James Petersen threatened anyone accepting anything less.
- The coaling men—the trimmers—were the ones who initiated and instigated the strike, since they came to work early, but refused to do the preparation work necessary to enable the coaling women to do their work. There were far fewer trimmers, as they made up only about one seventh of the workforce; thus, it was easier for the men to organize themselves just before the appointed work time. Also, since the men were better paid than the women, they had more at stake in the strike and they would naturally be more determined to have their demand met.
- Beside initiating the strike, the men seemingly instigated and orchestrated the demonstrations, as they appear to be the ones who handed a flag to a coaling woman—Clothilde Simonet, who urged the women to break through the military cordon, who urged the women to threaten with arson, and who threatened those women who might be willing to accept some Mexican silver for a part of their pay. To some extent, the trimmers were hiding their instigating and orchestrating role behind the coaling women, who, they knew, would be treated with greater leniency than the men by Policemaster and Judge Fisher. Thus, the leaders of the strike must have included trimmers, as well as coaling women.
- The coalers' negotiating team involved three men and three women, thereby showing that the men were given a negotiating power equal to that of the women. Significantly, the Policemaster and Judge Fischer deposed four coaling men and five coaling women; of these, Fisher gave the longest jail terms to those he felt were the main leaders of the strike—one man and two women: 21 days to Thomas Philips, 17 days to Clothilde Simonet and 12 days to Dorothea Scatliffe. Two other trimmers—James Petersen and Moritz de Nully— seem to have had a

leading role too, but Fischer did not send them to jail because he could not prove to his satisfaction that Petersen had threatened those coalers who might accept some Mexican currency and that Moritz de Nully had urged the women to resort to arson. Also, three additional coaling women may have had a leading role in the strike: Catherine Benjamin, Elizabeth Sylvester and Mary Andrew. They were interrogated by Fischer because of their conspicuous and threatening behavior in the demonstration, but they were not jailed.

- The demonstration attracted many sympathizers and three among them were sent to jail for a few days for carrying sticks and being too boisterous. These depositions clearly show that, except for the three coaling companies, the business community was eager to do away with Mexican currency, and was therefore in sympathy with the strikers, but they did not want Policemaster and Judge Fischer to think that they had encouraged them. Thus, when the coaling companies saw that practically the whole community was in favor of the strikers, they had no alternative but to accede to the strikers' demand.

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