

Empowerment *through* Representation

50th Anniversary of the Restoration of
the Sitting of the Legislative Council in
the Virgin Islands
1950-2000

Published 20th November 2000 by The Legislative Council Commemorative Committee,
Government of the British Virgin Islands

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First publishing 2000

Legislative Council Commemorative Committees

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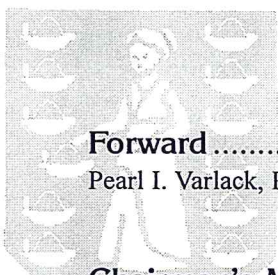
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Island Sun Newspaper
The Torch
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Section I

 Forward	2
Pearl I. Varlack, Ph.D.	
Chairman's Message	3
Kedrick Malone	
Editorial Commentary	5
Rita Frett-Georges, MBE	
Official Messages	7

50TH
ANNIVERSARY
1950 - 2000



Foreword

by Pearl I. Varlack PhD

The eighteenth century had seen English settlers in the Virgin Islands petition and receive from their sovereign the right of elected representation in their government. At no time could extending this right to emancipated slaves and their progeny have been conceived of. A changed society in the latter half of the nineteenth century, therefore, required a changed system. The ruling power decided to make structural modifications in order to ensure what could be regarded as effective government.

The adjustment consisted of spreading the wet blanket of experimental Crown Colony government over the British West Indian colonies, the weight of which fell heaviest on those islands where dwindling of the English population was most pronounced. With the exception of the Bahamas, Barbados, and Bermuda fully elected Assemblies in the West Indies had disappeared by 1880. The smaller the political entity, the better qualified it was for the loss of representation; and the more isolated the communities of a given colony, the greater the apparent neglect. The Virgin Islands topped both lists.

The importance of celebrating half a century of the re-establishment of a legislative council may seem of little significance to many who today take the rule of law and the efficacy of strong political institutions for granted. One understands the difficulty young Virgin Islanders of this century must have comprehending life without elected representation. In the 1940's it would have been equally difficult for their forebears to understand just the opposite. What a difference half a century makes!

Actually what a difference a year made! However faltering the initial results of the assertiveness of 1949, it was the taking of their destiny into their own hands that contained the seeds of what exists today and, by extension, whatever will exist in the future. Virgin Islanders should never be permitted to forget 1949. The present legislature is to be commended for making this week's celebration a memorable event; we must not, dare not, forget.

The Legislative Council Commemorative Committee deserves our appreciation for the unselfish efforts expended in preparing this document. Present and future students of our history should regard it as an indispensable tool, a reminder of how precious the inheritance of elected representation is. Whatever the hardships and frustrations encountered in its production, the satisfaction of having made available for posterity in a single volume the factual accounts of our political freedom, of the people who risked derision and imprisonment to make it all possible, and of those who have since represented us with sincerity and devotion in the legislature should be a significant reward.

Always pleased and honoured to be associated with celebrating our "finest hours," I hope that all who read this document and attend the week's planned celebratory events will develop renewed respect for an institution we hold dear and from which we expect so much as it impacts our daily lives. In saluting our lawmakers let us join these successors of the revered trailblazers in paying them the supreme tribute by seeking the divine guidance needed to be paragons of integrity, patriotism, and courage.

Table of Contents

Section I

Foreword by Pearl I. Varlack, Ph.D.	2
Chairman’s Message by Kedrick Malone	3
Editorial by Rita Frett - Georges MBE	5
Official Messages	7

Section II: Profiles of the Members of the Legislative Council

Profiles of Members of the First Legislative Council	38
The Chief Ministers 1967-2000 by Elton Georges OBE	56
Profiles of the Chief Ministers of the Government of the British Virgin Islands	61
Profiles of Opposition Leaders	109
Profile of Other Members of the Legislative Council by Lorna Smith	120
Profiles of the Members of the 14th Legislature 1999-	123
Profiles of Other Members of the Legislative Council	149
Profiles of Nominated Members	178
Profiles of Speakers	187
Profile of Attorneys General by J. S. Archibald, QC	194
Profile of Clerks of the Legislative Council by Allington Hodge	198
Profile of Commissioners, Administrators & Governors by Hon. Ralph T. O’Neal, OBE	207

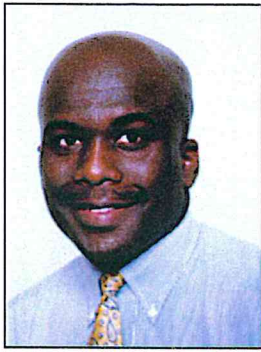
Section III: Before Restoration of the Legislative Council (Up to 1950)

A Brief History of the Virgin Islands by Vernon Pickering	214
Legislative Structures and Systems of Representation up to 1950 by Pearl I. Varlack, Ph.D.	228
The Virgin Island Character by Jennie N. Wheatley, MBE	232
Messenger by Rita Frett-Georges, MBE	235
Seeds of Discontent: Key Figures and Events in the Quest for Greater Representation	239
by Hon. Ralph T. O’Neal, OBE	
The Demonstration of 1949: Its Beginnings, Golden Jubilee and Implications	243
by Quincy F. Lettsome, Ph.D.	
The Spirit of Greatness Remembered by the children of Theodolph H. Faulkner	246
Profiles of the Leaders	
Theodolph Halburn Faulkner by Shirley Walters-Faulkner	248
Carlton Leslie E. deCastro by Iris deCastro	250
Isaac Glanville Fonseca by the Editor-in-Chief	252

Volume II

Section IV: Post-Restoration Impact of the Legislative Council

Representation at Last by Hugo Vanterpool	259
The Constitutional History of the Virgin Islands by Ermin Penn	262
Constitutional and Political Development in the Virgin Islands 1950-2000	275
by Gerard St. C Farara, QC, LLB	
British Virgin Islands Land Ownership and Development by Verna Penn-Moll, MBE	280
Twenty Five Years: A Look Backwards by McWelling Todman, CBE	284
The Standing Orders of the Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands 1950-2000 and the Relationship Between the Judiciary and the Legislative Council by Dancia Penn, OBE, QC	289
Women in the Legislature by Rita Frett-Georges, MBE	293
The Other Side of Representation by Medita Wheatley	297
Involvement of the Financial Services in the Legislative Process by Richard Peters	299
A Review of the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force by Vernon Elroy Malone, QPM, LLB, CPA	302
Development of Air Transportation in the BVI as Reflected on Local Stamps and Postal History by Dr. Giorgio Migliavacca	313
Infrastructure and Environment 1950-2000 by Bertrand Lettsome	320
A Brief Account of Educational Growth 1950-2000 by Charles Wheatley, OBE, Ph.D.	323
Social Development by Eugenie Todman-Smith, OBE	325
Cultural Activities by Hon. Eileene Parsons	330
Health at a Glance	335
Health Collage 1921-1993 by Rita Frett-Georges, MBE	337
Health Perspectives in the BVI by Dr. Irad Potter	348
Her Majesty's Prison at a Glance by Ashford Frett	359
Section V: 50th Anniversary Commemorative Activities, Pictures and Speeches	367
Schedule of Activities	435
Contributors	436
Appendices	439



Chairman's Message

by Kedrick Malone

On behalf of the Legislative Council Commemorative Committee, I wish to convey our gratitude to the members of the 14th Legislative Council for the opportunity to serve the people of the British Virgin Islands through the production of this publication and the activities scheduled to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Sitting of the Legislative Council in the Virgin Islands.

The chance to glance at the history of the British Virgin Islands as it flowed from the hearts and minds of our many contributing authors was truly a magnificent learning experience. The knowledge of our history filled me with greater pride and a stronger sense of identity, two critical ingredients in the recipe for building a nation. I have discovered, as you will from reading the pages of this book, that our history is as rich with heroes and acts of courage as any other nation's history.

It is my hope that this publication and the activities planned for the week will serve as a catalyst for encouraging even greater research into our rich history. There are many wonderful facts to discover which can provide a lifetime of inspiration for our nation's youth. It is only by unshackling the mind that we can awaken to the reality of our greater self and our God given talents. Through the education of the mind to our history we will realize that there is more that binds us together that can ever separate us politically, socially, economically or otherwise. It is in the pages of history that we learn that separation fosters slavery and unity fosters freedom. Knowledge of our history will teach us that we are one people, and our survival depends on the extent to which we understand and believe this simple fact.

I salute our many past leaders whose words and deeds grace the pages of this publication. I thank them for their contribution to the pride and identity I feel as a British Virgin Islander. I commend our present leaders for realizing the importance of this occasion and for making the provision for it to be properly commemorated.

A well deserved thank you to everyone who contributed to this publication and the activities commemorating the week of November 19th to 24th (see Schedule of Activities at back of book), especially given the limited time to produce so much. It was a marvelous demonstration of what can be done when we cooperate and work together. To the contributing writers, especially our historians, and editors (see listing at back of book), a special thank you for producing such magnificent work on such short notice. I am certain that additional thanks will be showered upon you by the many readers of this publication and future generations whose minds and hearts you would have helped to fortify.

Kudos to the Virgin Islands Studies Department of the H. Laverty Stouff Community College, under the spirited leadership of Mrs. Jennie Wheatley, for the crucial role played in producing this publication. It is my hope that this publication will become a valuable reference tool for further and more comprehensive research into our rich history. I salute the undaunted spirit of the Editor in Chief and Virgin Islands Studies staff member, Mrs. Rita Frett-Georges, for a stellar performance in piloting this publication.

I must record my heartfelt thanks to the Members of the Legislative Council Commemorative Committee and the many ex officio members, the staff of the Legislative Council Office and its many individuals and departments for their tremendous effort in producing the week of activities and this publication.

On behalf of the Legislative Council Commemorative Committee, its sub-committees and all contributors to this publication and the commemorative activities, I wish to convey our wishes for continued blessings on our leaders. May the spirit of unity fill our hearts as we venture into the millennium. God bless the British Virgin Islands.

Kedrick Malone
Chairman



Editorial Commentary

by Rita Frett-Georges, MBE, Editor-in-Chief

Eight years ago the opportunity to recollect the ‘Challenge and Change’ of the twenty-five years of Ministerial Government excited those of us who worked on the Project. As coordinator of the publication I wrote the following words in the editorial, which are even more applicable on this occasion.

“Whilst we make no apologies for what’s not done due to the time constraints under which this publication was produced, we do with some humility present this bird’s eye view of the past and present - for scrutiny, correction and completion. It is our hope that a revised version of this text - will become an invaluable resource document, and will be available in our schools to youth of this territory, in the very near future.”

That publication has become a resource document. It has not been revised - but is now also a Resource Text for Virgin Island Studies at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College and a valuable resource for the community generally.

Now as in nineteen ninety-two (1992), time was insufficient (three months for the sitting of the general committee) to do just credit to the value of the Anniversary which we are celebrating. Time was particularly of critical essence to this celebratory publication. Persons knowledgeable of Virgin Islands History needed time to respond and schedule their involvement. Looking back over fifty years also means that many of the actors have passed on. For many reasons, data is not readily available, our records and our research capabilities need to be further strengthened. Time to interview persons and cross-reference testimonies is very important.

Through this medium I make an appeal, that the circumstances impacting this and the 1992 publication should no longer obtain. Events of historical importance in our lives should be given time for justice to be done to the period under review, and for the participation of all parties who can contribute to the exercise. If it’s of value, it’s worth doing well - time is of the essence! In spite of the foregoing, the opportunity to record the past on this special occasion, and leave a record for posterity, was not to be missed.

I submit, however, that this publication should not be seen as a total definitive text of the period 1950-2000. Rather, it should be viewed as a collage which helps to give form to that period. A more technical and comprehensive exercise of review of material is recommended. This could perhaps be assigned to the Virgin Islands Studies Programme at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College with publication of a more concise historical text of the period 1950-2000, as a goal.

“Empowerment through Representation,” the theme of this publication, gave us a specific lens through which to take a look at what, if any, impact the restoration of the Legislative Council had had on our lives, and the Territory generally, through the medium of legislation enacted over the fifty-year period. The referenced appendix of Legislation passed tells its own story, and that

of the involvement and leadership of the various Legislators. Over two hundred pieces of Legislation were enacted. I find it interesting, that the catalyst which sparked the 1949 March, was a Health incident. Certainly our Health Profile has changed in the fifty-year period. Even though eighteen pieces of legislation were passed, much remains to be done.

The materials gathered highlight several other notable facts - I was struck by the intellectual abilities and stature of the men who emerged as leaders - not least of which are the Chief Ministers. From very young, they stood out, and when educational opportunities enabled their abilities to be honed; they stood, performed, and achieved commendably amongst their peers. Education was indeed the key that unlocked the future, and it remains in the form of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College, a lasting testament to the vision and zeal of that generation. Early in that period, there was no choice but to go out in search of education; today's options allow us to stay at home.

Economic realities also highlight another stark contrast. Faulkner was a fisherman, Carlton and Robbie O'Neal boat owners and captains. Lavity and others were farmers and merchants of varying levels. Many of them had gone abroad in search of a livelihood. We follow the changing scene in the legislation, and the Profiles, as we moved first out of Grant Aid to a Consolidated Fund surplus of today.

The surprise discovery for me on this exciting learning journey was to discover Hope Stevens, a Virgin Islander of immense stature. To realize that Alford Penn and also Cecil Georges worked in the Federal Administration. Penn having gone out in 1946 is a transition link between Antigua and the Virgin Islands. It was an eye opener also to know about the several noteworthy Virgin Islanders such as Todman and Harrigan who served as official and unofficial members in the early years.

Today's house reflects a larger majority of white collar professionals than ever before. The sophistication of the debates has changed, though it does not imply less earnestness and defense of the territory. The principles are the same but the issues are different. In addition to protecting public land to be held in perpetuity for the generations - there is also Social Security monies - and the Consolidated Fund; there are Women Rights and Immigration Status. For whereas before we emigrated to Santo Domingo and other countries for better opportunities for our families, today the shoe is on the other foot, and, we now represent opportunity and prosperity for others.

As was ably demonstrated by Sir Olva Georges, Mc Todman and others, service and a sense of community, looking out for the public good, were strong ethics. There was collective responsibility and sharing. Money, which was in short supply early on, was not the most valued currency. It was cooperative effort. They built houses, financed and sailed boats, hauled fish pots, and planted grounds together.

As we move on into the twenty-first century, we face new challenges, not least of which is our fractured sense of community. The Virgin Islands is now a cosmopolitan society - blending several races' ethnic groups and religions. Always 'rugged individualists' tied to the land, prosperity has freed us from cooperative dependence on each other. Money, education, and social standing compete and jostle the pecking order. Valuing of persons regardless of their status, and the crediting of the contributions of the ordinary person need to be upheld. We are at risk of losing those very real qualities which made us special as Virgin Islanders.

As we embrace diversity and all the new nuance in our midst, we much find common ground on which to pool our collective efforts - so as to cement and glue our purpose as a Nation. There is much strength to be gleaned from reviewing the past - but we cannot stand still. We must go forward and continue to build and maintain a strong and free Virgin Islands for our children and their forbears into the future.

Rita Frett-Georges, Editor-in-Chief, November 2000

Official Messages



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

8 November 2000

I congratulate the people of the British Virgin Islands, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the first sitting of the new Legislative Council. This is a significant achievement to celebrate. I wish you every success for the next fifty years and beyond.

Elizabeth R.



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**Governor's Message for the 50th Anniversary
of the Restoration of the Sitting of the Legislative Council**

The 50th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Sitting of the Legislative Council is a very notable milestone in the development to nationhood of the British Virgin Islands. It is an appropriate time to remember the first local legislators to sit in the Legislative Council, namely Howard Reynold Penn OBE, Isaac Glanville Fonseca OBE, Carlton Leslie deCastro OBE, and John Charles Brudnell-Bruce MBE. It would also be an appropriate occasion to remember and commemorate the vision and determination of Theodolph Halburn Faulkner, and his colleagues, Isaac Glanville Fonseca OBE, and Carlton deCastro OBE, who took that first step down the road to full democracy with their march in 1949, which paved the way for the restoration of the Legislative Council.

I am honoured to be the Governor in the British Virgin Islands as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of this important milestone and it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the family and friends of all these early Legislators and all their successors, who have served with distinction in the Legislative Council.

Let all of us who presently are privileged to serve the Territory, reflect on the sacrifices and hardship which these political pioneers endured to ensure that British Virgin Islanders could serve their Community at the highest level of Government. Let us respect and follow their example of selflessness and dedication, and strive to ensure that in a further 50 years time, our successors will be able to say that we successfully carried forward the dreams and aspirations of the founders of our modern Legislative Council.

F. J. Savage
Governor

9 November 2000



It is a great privilege and a distinct pleasure to send greetings and congratulations on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Restoration of the Legislative Council of the British Virgin Islands.

The publication of this brief history of the events of the last fifty years is of great historical importance and generations yet unborn will find this document very useful as they research into the history of these islands. Let me now say how grateful I am to all those persons who gave so much of their time to serve on committees to put the programme of celebrations together and to produce this publication.

Having worked as Clerk of the Legislative Council and later becoming a member of the Council I have many memories of the many persons who served in the Honourable House and worked very hard to improve conditions in the islands. Indeed the Territory had its bad times and I remember the economist Dr. Carleen O'Loughlin, after completing a survey of the Territory, suggesting that the British Virgin Islands become a bird sanctuary or efforts be made to develop the potential that was there. It was the American economist Dr. W.T. Phillips who wrote one of the shortest economic reports ever produced in the Territory advocating that select persons who had shown interest in the Territory should be given every encouragement to carry on their hotel development and he suggested that this would bring numerous benefits to the islands and eventually put them on a path of development that would benefit the people. This report was adopted by the Legislative Council and indeed members used the recommendations to the fullest.

Throughout my career in the Legislative Council I have seen the Presiding Officers change from Commissioners to Administrators and now to Speakers. I have seen many Clerks at the Table, male and female. I have seen the membership system change to the ministerial system and the number of Ministers increase from three to five. I have seen the number of elected members increase from four to thirteen. I have seen the gender change from all male to male and female. I have seen the

Nominated Members disappear and all the Official members with the exception of the Attorney General removed from membership. I have seen stormy sessions in the House and I have seen peaceful and calm sessions. I have heard speeches of over three hours and I have heard speeches lasting three minutes. I have heard passionate speakers, rowdy speakers, and I have heard speakers who threw oil on troubled waters. I have seen the transition from the laborious task of minute taking by long hand to the instantaneous verbatim recording of minutes. I have seen the transition from occasional broadcasting to a constant broadcasting and televising of every meeting of the Legislative Council. I have seen the number of meetings per year increase from about six to over twelve. All these have contributed to the traditions and customs of the House and today after fifty years we have a Legislative Council of which we can be justly proud.

When we look back and ponder over the difficulties elected members had to face to get in to Council meetings, either by boat from the sister islands, or even by horse or mule back and walking on Tortola with a small stipend of sixteen US dollars per month we must pay tribute to those former members who gave unstintingly of their time and energy to make the system work. To them we owe a great debt of gratitude.

We should embrace this opportunity to get home the message especially to our young people the need to build the nation, the need to mould our destiny, the need to foster good citizenship, to build and not to destroy, and for our people as a whole to seize and use every opportunity that the Legislative Council has made available to educate and improve our lot for throughout the fifty years of its history the Council has placed great emphasis on the educational and economic development of the Territory.

The Legislative Council has enacted several important pieces of Legislation pertaining to many aspects of development in the Territory and in reading through this publication one would get an appreciation of the various things that have been achieved. It will not be necessary to go into details here but readers will certainly be impressed with the volume of work that has been done in helping to bring the British Virgin Islands to what we now enjoy. I would hope that those who read this publication

would be convinced of the work that is done by Legislators and have a ready answer for those who continue to say that Legislators do no work.

Remember that passing Legislation is not a simple matter and Legislators must always be conscious of the fact that every piece of Legislation enacted is for the benefit of the individual and the society at large.

My thanks go to the Vestry of the St. George's Anglican Church for allowing the use of St. George's Hall as the Legislative Council Chamber during the time that there was no official Council Chamber. My thanks also go to the High Court, the Registrar and the Magistrate, for the way in which we have been able to use the same building and carry out the functions without any undue difficulties.

Again many thanks to all those who laboured in the vineyard.

Ralph J. Mead
Chief Minister



JUDGE'S CHAMBERS

P.O. Box 418
Road Town, Tortola
British Virgin Islands

MESSAGE FROM THE RESIDENT HIGH COURT JUDGES

The Resident Judges of the High Court of Justice of the Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court join with the people of the Territory of the Virgin Islands in feeling pride upon the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the restoration of the Legislative Council to the Virgin Islands. Such pride is to be derived not only from the sustenance and strength of this vital institution over the half-century of its existence, but also, more especially, from the popular impetus that led to its coming into being. Far from being accorded without plea or fanfare, the Legislative Council was publicly demanded by a people desirous of being responsible for their own destiny. The effluxion of time has since vindicated the wisdom, timeliness and maturity of those historical events of 1949. In this regard, the theme for the Commemoration of this worthy milestone – “Empowerment through Representation” – is distinctly appropriate in capturing the significance of the celebration.

While celebrating this salubrious occasion, the people of the Virgin Islands are invited to critically take stock of the achievements of the Legislative Council and evaluate the benefits that have accrued to the community as a whole.

We pray that the Legislative Council will continue to serve the people of the Virgin Islands, representing their will and reflecting their hopes and aspirations for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K.A. Benjamin'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kenneth Benjamin
High Court Judge



Office of the Deputy Governor

Government of the Virgin Islands
Road Town, Tortola

TO: The Editors, Golden Anniversary of the Restoration of the Legislative Council Publication

I have been asked for a "message" on this occasion. I can imagine there will be a large number of inspiring comments on the significance of what happened in 1950 and in the intervening half century.

I have decided to do a very brief historical note on the office which I hold, as one of the institutions that has evolved over these years in response to changing events.

First let me say, speaking generally, that the part which the public service has played in the territory's achievements over the period cannot be overstated, and it is a huge story remaining to be written. Let no one lose sight of this fact.

When the office of Governor of the Leeward Islands was abolished in 1959, and the Administrator of the Virgin Islands became responsible directly to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the need for a senior public administrator to assist the Administrator with his special responsibilities was recognised. A position first called Administrative Secretary was created and held by Mr. NEA Harrigan. The holder was an official member of the Executive and Legislative Council. The title was later changed to Secretary to Government. With the prospect of ministerial government, that post was abolished in about 1966 and a position denoted Secretary to the Administrator created. Mr. Ralph T. O'Neal held this post until it, too, was replaced in 1969 by a new position called Chief Secretary.

In a statement by the Financial Secretary to the Legislative Council on 11 September, 1969, he explained the creation of the latter post was as follows:

This post is intended to perform the functions of Chief Security Officer and Chief Establishment Officer which are becoming progressively more important as the Territory develops and the Civil Service expands.

The first holder was Mr. A. E. Penn, OBE, a Tortolian with public service experience in the BVI, the Leeward Islands, the West Indies Federal Secretariat in Trinidad, the U.S. Foreign Service and Jamaica. He held it until 1977 when, on 1st June, he was informed of his designation by Her Majesty to be Deputy Governor.

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The Virgin Islands (Constitution) Order, 1976 contains the provision:

4.1 There shall be a Deputy Governor who shall be such person as Her Majesty will designate in that behalf by instructions given through a Secretary of State.


The only constitutional role specified for the Deputy Governor, until recently, was to act in the office of Governor when the occasion demanded. Earlier this year, in response to a recommendation by the Constitutional Commissioners in 1993, provisions were included as in the Bermuda Constitution to explicitly provide for delegation by the Governor of a range of responsibilities. The Deputy Governor may now also be required to perform such other functions, not of "a ministerial nature", as the Governor in his discretion may assign to him at the request of the Chief Minister.

Mr. Penn had held the offices of Chief Secretary and Deputy Governor for a combined period of just over 13 years, with distinction. When he retired on 31 January, 1983, Mr. K. R. Bain of New Zealand, formerly (and subsequently) Financial Secretary, succeeded him for five months. The present incumbent was designated as of July, 1983.

The Administrative Secretary/Secretary to Government/Secretary to the Administrator/Chief Secretary/Deputy Governor continues to demonstrate the evolution of an institution as the Territory moved to cope with new challenges. During the Legislative Council debate in June 1996 of the Constitutional Commissioner's Report, two or three members questioned whether the post has become redundant. That question I leave for others to answer in this post-modern era of public service development. What is certain is that it is an extremely challenging and demanding position, exposed to criticism and hostility from all sides and that it has played a key role in maintaining the stability of governance as Administrators/Governors have come and gone.

As a support provider and confidential adviser, much of the work is done behind the scenes and by its nature the real story of the position can hardly ever be told.

13 November, 2000



Elton Georges
Deputy Governor



THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS



OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER
Road Town, Tortola
British Virgin Islands


It is a great privilege for any individual of a country to witness the birth, growth and maturity of its legislature. The reality is that the large majority of the Earth's 189 sovereign nations have had legislatures dating back to more than a century ago, and those who have seen the birth of such bodies have long departed this life. Because of the brevity of our legislative history - a mere fifty years, many of us in the British Virgin Islands have not only witnessed such genesis, but have also participated in the growth and development of it, and in major developments in this country.

While it is true that a legislature did exist for the British Virgin Islands up to 1902, it was not representative of the indigenous people. Because of this, we rightly refer to the year 1950 as the beginning of our legislative history.

Many of us also know that those years of growth have not been a bed of roses. Although they were free of the violence, which at that time often accompanied such struggles for greater self-determination in other lands, they were nevertheless intense. It is important to remember at all times that our battles for local representation were for the purpose of bettering the lives of the people; and indeed, much is known of the severe economic hardships we experienced at the time when agriculture was our sole income earner. For example, it was common for farmers to take their cattle all the way to the distant guts before sunrise, only to find that other farmers were already there with their cattle, competing for the same tiny pool of water, which could satisfy only a few animals. Such were the times.

Our success in improving in the standard of living and the quality of life can be linked directly to the increasing measure of control over our own affairs, which we have enjoyed up to the present time. So far we have used our God-given talents to help ourselves and to move this country forward. Now, as it is with an adolescent on the brink of adulthood, the British Virgin Islands, with a large measure of internal self-government, appears to be well on its way to nationhood; the colonial mantle, once a perfect fit, is fast becoming too small and uncomfortable as we aspire to greater self-determination.

This 50th Anniversary Celebration provides us with the perfect opportunity to look anew at the status quo in order to chart our way forward. Caution is the word; and let us remember that what seems to be the easiest way is not necessarily the best. Whatever course we take, let us continue our efforts to educate our young citizens and involve them to a greater extent in civic matters. Equally important is the need for the youth to accept the challenge that is before them, and avail themselves of every opportunity to grow, so that they can participate at the highest levels in the affairs of this country.


Reuben Vanterpool
Speaker



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS & WORKS

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Communications and Works

Government of the Virgin Islands
Central Administration Complex • No. 33 Admin Drive • Wickhams Cay I
Road Town • Tortola • British Virgin Islands



MESSAGE

*FROM HON. J. ALVIN CHRISTOPHER
DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS
ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
IN THE BVI*

It is indeed an honour and privilege to contribute towards the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Restoration of the BVI Legislature.

I must give special recognition to those persons who were first elected to office in the restored Legislative Council, namely: the late Messrs J. C. Brudenell-Bruce, Isaac "Glannie" Fonseca, Howard R. Penn and Carlton de Castro. Special recognition is also given to the late Theodolph Faulkner who started the move that led to the people's petition for a restoration of the Legislative Council. Recognition is also given to those who moved the Legislative Process a step further by becoming the first Ministers in the new Ministerial Government, namely Messrs Ivan Dawson, Terrence B. Lettsome and the late Hamilton Lavity Stoutt. Special recognition is also given to past and present Members of the Legislative Council.

To all the present Members, may we always be ever committed to uphold the dignity of this Honourable Council that the people have fought so hard to restore. May we continue to dedicate ourselves to maintain the high standards of the Legislative Council so that future Parliamentarians may aspire to continue to champion our democracy through our Parliamentary Procedures.

May God continue to give us the wisdom, courage and strength to go forward in the direction that would ensure the economical, social and spiritual growth and development of all BVI Islanders in these beautiful islands that we call home.

J. Alvin Christopher
Deputy Chief Minister,
Minister for Communications and Works,
and Representative for the Second Electoral District



GOVERNMENT OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS
ROAD TOWN, TORTOLA



HON. JULIAN FRASER AIA
MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND LABOUR

**REMARKS ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS**

It gives me great pleasure to add some words on such an important occasion. The 50th Anniversary of the restoration of the sitting of the Legislative Council in the Virgin Islands holds great significance for our people. It goes to the heart of our democracy and the right of our people to make a free choice and have their own representatives. Freedom and justice are indivisible and when one person is enslaved, all are not free.

I take this time to salute the hard work of our forefathers, Isaac Glanville Fonseca, OBE; Howard Reynold Penn, OBE; Carlton Leslie Evelyn DeCastro, OBE; and Theodolph Faulkner John Charles Brudenell Bruce, OBE; who have fought to ensure that we have a measure of internal self government. But fifty years later, the 14th Legislative Council must face the fact that we still have a long way to go to ensure that the people of the British Virgin Islands will realize the goal of self determination. We owe a lot to those who have gone before and the Legislative Councils to come, must understand that when our forefathers fought for the rights of our people to have representative government, they were signing a promissory note to which every Virgin Islander was to fall heir. It was a fight so that all of our people would be guaranteed freedom and democracy, and our 50th Anniversary celebration should remind us of the importance of honoring this sacred obligation.

This young nation has great vaults of opportunities and as a people working together we must ensure that all of our citizens benefit through the creation of jobs, economic development, easy access to education and the right of our people to reap the benefits from those who have fought to make this celebration possible.

Fifty years of representative government through the Legislative Council is not an end, but a beginning, and as we march towards another 50 years, we must make the pledge that, we shall forge ahead. We cannot turn back. I say to you today Virgin Islanders, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations we may face ahead by those who don't have our interest at heart, let us aim to uphold the torch and make this country great.


Hon. Julian Fraser
Minister of Natural Resources & Labour

Telephone (284) 494-3701 ext. 2147 Fax (284) 494-4283



Ministry of Health and Welfare

Government of the British Virgin Islands
Road Town, Tortola
British Virgin Islands



If there was ever a red letter day in the history of the British Virgin Islands, it is today when we celebrate the restoration of the Legislative Council for these islands.

Fifty years ago the Legislative Council was not adequately representing the people of these islands. There were only four elected members all of whom were from the island of Tortola. In addition to the four elected members there were nominated members, the majority of whom were officials and who had to abide by the laws set by the imperial powers rather than those set by legislators. Under such a system, elected members were not empowered and hence no meaningful changes came to the Territory.

However, as the years went by and elected members realized that the system was not working in the best interest of the Territory, they sought greater autonomy in the running of the affairs of the Territory. Their cries were heard and eventually the membership of the Legislative Council was increased.

With the advent of increased representation, the people of these islands became empowered to become involved in the social and economic changes of the Territory. Working through their elected representatives, the people had a say in the shaping of the future of the islands. New ideas were introduced, better identification of problems emerged, and moreover the citizenry grew more engaged. Our country is better off today for this as we have realized improvements in infrastructure, education, public utilities, social services, health care, and transportation.

The heightened awareness of our people and their increased participation in the affairs of the Territory has also brought about other changes in our Legislative system. Fifty years ago it would have been unheard of for women to seek elected office, but, today, two women - one elected by a district and the other territory wide - are members of the Legislative Council. This is indeed testament that the challenges facing our people and country can be solved by both men and women.

I am confident that the next fifty years will see greater and greater cultural, economic, and political growth. Our evolution as a people will continue and I am glad to be able to play my part in it.

Ethlyn Smith
Minister for Health and Welfare

Tel: (284) 494-3701 ext 2174 ❖ Fax: (284) 494-5018



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS



HON. ANDREW A. FAHIE
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

MESSAGE
ON THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION OF
THE LEGISLATURE IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

As a member of the Virgin Islands 14th Legislature, it is an honour to contribute to the 50th Anniversary booklet which commemorates the Restoration of the Legislature an important milestone in the political history of these islands.

Democracy is based on the notion that a people should be self-governing. As John Stuart Mill wrote in 1862, in a representative democracy the legislature acts as the eyes, ears, and voice of the people, the restoration of our Legislature was therefore inevitable. We should applaud the efforts of those pioneer legislators, some of whom were not afraid to stand up and demonstrate for the re-establishment of our legislature and all of whom worked tirelessly to effect the changes and pave the way for our modern day Legislative system. Special mention should be made of pioneer legislators such as Mr. Isaac "Glannie" Fonseca, Mr. Howard R. Penn, Mr. J. C. Brudenell-Bruce, Mr. Carlton deCastro and Mr. Theodolph Faulkner (now all deceased); of the late H. Lavity Stoutt, past Chief Minister and representative of the First District who is hailed as one of the greatest legislators of this territory; and of other long-serving legislators such as T. B. Lettsome, Hon. Omar Hodge and our present Chief Minister, Hon. Ralph T. O'Neal, under whose diligent leadership we continue to thrive.

Every country's political system develops and evolves according to its history and the social environment. It is my wish that the history of our political development will one day be documented in totality for posterity, so that our young people can appreciate the selfless service and sacrifices made by all past and present legislators for the betterment of our society.

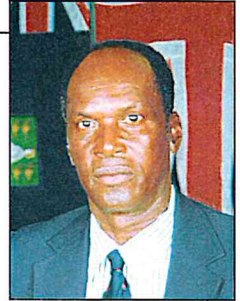
As we continue to adopt policies and make laws through the process of deliberation and collective decision-making, I trust that we will always keep in mind those policies that are in the best interest of the people whom we represent.

Congratulations and my best wishes on the 50th Anniversary of the Restoration of the Legislature to our islands. May we grow from strength to strength.

Hon. Andrew Fahie
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Youth Affairs

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
Deputy Speaker and Territorial Representative
Hon. Reeial George

Offices of the Legislative Council
Road Town, Tortola
British Virgin Islands



**MESSAGE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION OF THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Sisters and brothers it is for me a great privilege and honour to celebrate with you the Fiftieth (50th) Anniversary of the re-birth of the Legislative Council.

Let me first congratulate the Government for taking this positive step in commemorating this special milestone in our history, and for reflecting on those stalwarts who had the vision and courage to lead the people in the largest political march in recorded history in 1949; demanding political change that was to lay the foundation for the social, political and economic prosperity of these Virgin Islands.

Fifty years ago it took pain and suffering of a woman and the frustration of a husband from our sister island of Anegada deprived of medical services to ignite the flame for action that resulted in the re-introduction of the Legislative Council in 1950 that was dissolved in 1901.

Let us forever remember those first four members who served in the Legislative Council of 1950 and indeed all those persons who joined the historic march of 1949. Let us especially remember the late Theodolph Faulkner and his wife for their sacrifice, their strength and their will.

May the flame of action they ignited continue to inspire us for generations after generations of mankind.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Reeial George". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Reeial George
Deputy Speaker and
Territorial-at-Large Representative



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Our Ref

Your Ref

**MESSAGE FROM THE HON. ATTORNEY GENERAL CHERNO S. JALLOW
 ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
 THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

As the Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands celebrates fifty years of existence since its restoration, I consider it an honour to contribute a message on such an auspicious occasion. Fifty years in the life of any legislature is no mean feat, especially when those years have been characterised by political maturity and stability and continuing legislative developments. Those of us who follow political events around the world cannot fail to recognise the impotence of some legislatures in carrying out their functions as law-making institutions due largely to internal discord and lack of respect for institutional administration and the rule of law. A legislature that abdicates its responsibility to legislate for peace, order and good government abysmally fails its people.

We thank God that in the Virgin Islands the past fifty years have witnessed the continual ascendancy of responsible legislatures thereby ensuring a stable and systematic development of the people of these islands. Indeed good government is not acquired; it is developed from an embryonic stage to a level of maturity and excellence. The legislature is central to this process, in addition to an independent and impartial judiciary and a caring and unselfish executive.

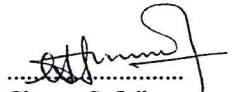
As a former Parliamentary Counsel in The Gambia and in the Virgin Islands, my assignments had mainly related to parliamentary affairs - drafting legislation and other instruments for consideration by the legislature. The interaction with legislators had helped me to appreciate the need to balance the law against political, social and cultural realities. Ultimately it must be realised that the law does not exist in a vacuum. When a law is enacted, it is for a specific purpose and that purpose must be contrasted against existing and future circumstances. Admittedly, it is not always that the ultimate desire of an enactment is met and it therefore behoves all legislators to monitor the implementation of enactments and propose amendments, repeals or revisions where these are considered necessary.

The framers of the Virgin Islands (Constitution) Order 1976 had found the wisdom of including the Attorney General as a member of the Legislative Council. The rationale is simple. The primary

function of the Council is to enact legislation and legal guidance is therefore crucial. The past fifty years are testimony to 'collective' action in the formulation and enactment of legislation for the good of Virgin Islands society. As we march forward, we (legislators and members of the public) must continue our resolve to work in harmony, strengthen our political maturity and jealously guard the public interest for generations yet to come.

May the Almighty God be the guiding spirit of the Legislative Council as it continues the task of promoting peace, order and good government.

Yours sincerely,



Cherno S. Jallow
Attorney General



THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
Road Town, Tortola
British Virgin Islands

**MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
DR. THE HON. D. ORLANDO SMITH
ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION
OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

Looking back at the past fifty years reinforces the reality that we the legislators serve at the people's pleasure, that the people of this community determine who will represent them and what form that representation will take. My comments review changes in representation, and what they mean for the progress of our society.

'No taxation without representation' may well have been the rallying cry in the 1940s when the people of the BVI really began to agitate for the restoration of the legislature in the territory.

The ability to self govern had been lost in the early 1900s through undisciplined behavior and a later apathy to the process of government, to the point where the legislative and executive bodies hardly met. But later on then as now, the people of the territory realized the need to be involved in the management of their own affairs, of having an elected body of representatives whom they could elect and remove as they choose, rather than be governed from a distance, from the head of the Principality in St. Kitts.

Finally in 1950 after demonstrations and representation from many groups and persons, including Stanford Connor, BVI organizations in the U.S. and in St. Thomas, and finally the demonstration galvanized by Theodulph Faulkner and led by himself, Glanny Fonseca and Carlton 'Facts' Decastro, the Legislative Council was restored.

The wishes of the people for representative government had been realized, and with this realization the understanding that the form of representation could be changed from time to time to better suit the needs of the community. And in fact this has been done in different ways over the years.

As the Legislative body became comprised more completely of elected persons representative government became more truly just that.

But what I would like to discuss here is the changes in the manner of election of the council, changes, which in the minds of the community would ensure better representation.

At first all the legislators were elected territorially, but after some time it was felt by the smaller communities especially those on the sister Islands that they were being neglected in favor of the larger communities, such as Road Town. These complaints led to a change in the manner of election of the council, and they were all then elected on the District basis.

The backlash from the supposed under representation of the smaller communities may have been the start of Road Town being ignored! A phenomenon, which continues to this day, despite the introduction of the mixed system six years ago.

The introduction of the mixed system of election was our latest attempt at fine-tuning a system of representative government, which we inherited. It became apparent after many years that the district system resulted in too much parochialism and patronage, and took away from the appreciation of the whole picture and representation of the entire community as a people. Have we finally found the right mix?

Only time will tell, but in the eyes of many it has certainly improved the representation.

The other aspect of more representation by the people was greater involvement of their elected persons in the determination of policy and in the management of the affairs of the country.

The Constitution has been changed over the years to facilitate this change. The major change was the introduction of the Ministerial form of government in 1967, the placement of the control of finance with one of the ministers. More recently changes to devolve some of the functions of the Governor to the Deputy Governor, and other senior officials have continued this trend, of greater self-determination.

These changes were all intended to improve the participation by the community in the management of its affairs, and one can argue that it has certainly done that, and that the results of that involvement cannot have been all bad.

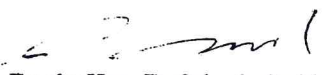
We certainly have moved from a subsistence economy to a thriving one based on solid industries facilitated by policies introduced and implemented locally, especially in the areas of tourism and international financial services. And our representatives have respected, the wish of the community in other areas, such as the abrogation of the agreement leasing Wickhams Cay and a large portion of Anegada, as a result of popular demand led by Lindy deCastro (Ras Uhuru) and Noel Lloyd the leaders of the group Positive Action.

Participation by representation also of course includes the ability to change governments in efforts to have persons whom the community believes can best manage and have the best interest of the community at heart.

Persons, who believe that they have much to contribute, offer themselves for election. Even though the constitution did not provide for party politics persons have been, from very soon after the reintroduction of the legislature, forming themselves into groups to be more effective. The United Two was one such group. Over the years more groupings of politicians have been formed. At the last election there emerged two strong parties as well as two other parties and several individuals seeking to contest the election.

Certainly in this last election our community has demonstrated its ability to change where they think change is necessary and have given strong mandates to two parties and expect good representation. Clearly our community has become more politically aware over the past several decades, and more concerned about the many continuing issues facing our country especially in the social services sector.

This can only be good for us, and can only result in better representation. And this is needed even more as we go into a new partnership with The United Kingdom, and as we take part, as we must if we are to grow, in the new global economy.



Dr. the Hon. D. Orlando Smith
Leader of the Opposition



THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

This year, 2000 in the month of November is the 50th anniversary of the restoration of our Legislative Council, an action that allowed us the unique privilege to vote for persons to represent us in the halls of Council-and what a privilege it was and is.

I salute Mr. Theodolph Faulkner who was angry enough and courageous enough to want to make a difference. I also salute the men who were willing to join with him as co-leaders in that historic movement. I must salute the working men and women from all areas of the British Virgin Islands, the farmers and housewives who took their fates in their hands to march through Road Town on that day.

Fifty years later, with all the advances made in our Territory it is interesting to note that it took 45 years (1995) before our Territory accepted, albeit grudgingly, that women could also serve as Legislators and serve well. It is even more interesting that in the outline of Territorial achievements 1895 to 1999, in the last Budget Speech, the political achievements of women received no attention or just cursory mention. I sincerely trust that over the life of this Council the issues facing women and girls will not continue to be a cause for hilarity in the halls of Council, but will be taken with the seriousness these issues deserve.

I look forward to working with all concerned to bring some measure of social joy to our community. I look forward to seeing an abatement of the steel and concrete mentality and a rise to serious cultural, medical, educational and recreational advancements in our society.

It is time for us to be men and women of Territory-wide purpose working together for the common good of the British Virgin Islands and all who dwell therein no matter from which district they hail. Is this a figment of an imagination or is it possible? I would like to believe it is not only possible but do-able. **HAPPY GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY MY COLLEAGUES - PAST AND PRESENT. WHETHER OR NOT YOU WERE SUCCESSFUL AT THE POLLS, I SALUTE YOU.**

Eileene L. Parsons, Territorial Representative
"Windsong", Manchester
Tortola, Virgin Islands
November 18, 2000

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Hon. Lloyd K. Black

Representative for the 8th District



*Offices of the Legislative Council
Road Town, Tortola
British Virgin Islands*



**Message in Commemoration of the
50th Anniversary of the Restoration of the
Legislative Council in the Virgin Islands**

On this the 50th Anniversary of the British Virgin Islands Legislature, we must look back and reflect on the events that have led us to this stage in our development thus far. The members of the first Legislative Council Messer's, Penn, Fonseca, Brudenell-Bruce and deCastro may seem like giants of their time. However, history shows that they were in fact ordinary men who had a love for their country like you and I. They firmly believed that as a country the British Virgin Islands should build its own future and identity. I guess our tourism motto of a few years ago rings true "Yes we are different".


The restoration of the Legislative Council reflected the emergence of our political awareness and that continues to evolve with constitutional advancements, new political parties being formed, and a general collective sense of being in control of our destiny.

It is therefore no accident that this feeling of self-assurance remains strong among BVI Islanders today. When our colonial masters had given up on us viz a viz "The Proudfoot Report", we prevailed, and through a combination of ingenuity, good fortune as well as the innate sense of always being heedful, we have created an Economic Environment that is the envy of our neighbors far and near.

Looking to the future, I see Constitutional advancement as being central to our continued growth. Accordingly, our role as Legislators should be one of Information Dissemination and Education. Our priorities remain the continued Education of our people, as we take our rightful place in the Global Economic Environment as well as the continued improvement of our social services, and guaranteeing that we are in a position to mitigate the effects of external pressures by ensuring we are in control of all the services essential for the continued Development of the Territory.

I join with my fellow Legislators, Constituents, friends and family in extending heartfelt congratulations on reaching this significant milestone. The people of the BVI should be rightly proud of the successes over the past fifty years. To our young people, learn from the past, for our history will be your key to the future. Opportunities for Education, participation, and a greater understanding of the British Virgin Islands, is more abundant now more than ever. Your future begins today.

May God bless you.


Hon. Lloyd K. Black
Member for the 8th District



THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Dr. the Hon. Kedrick D. Pickering
Representative for the Seventh District

MESSAGE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

As we grow and mature as a nation and a people, it is imperative that we understand, know and continually reflect from where we came.

We have come a long way in a relatively short time making it even that more important for us to safeguard the successes we have achieved. It cannot be over-emphasized the necessity to teach our children “our” history; the sense of who and what we are.

Liberation day 1949 and its historical significance, especially the events that led to the demonstration and subsequent call for the restoration of the Legislative Council should be major events to be celebrated.

It is my concerted opinion that 20th November should be celebrated as “Heroes/Liberation Day” an event that would be forever etched in the annals of our BVI history.

.....
Kedrick D. Pickering, MLC
Member for the Seventh District

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS



Hon. Ronnie W. Skelton, MLC
Territorial-at-Large Representative



MESSAGE BY THE HON. RONNIE W. SKELTON TERRITORIAL AT-LARGE MEMBER FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Fifty years ago the British Virgin Islands was an unheard of dot on the Caribbean map and it did not exist on the world map. The British Virgin Islands today are mentioned in the Parliaments of the most powerful nations in the world for its tourism products and its innovations in the financial world.

Looking back

By any measure or standard, the British Virgin Islands have made substantial progress in just about all spheres of the Territory's Social, economical, political, and infrastructural life since the restoration of the Sitting of the Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands **fifty years ago**. These achievements are impressive and highly commendable. As a people, collectively we must recognize the leadership displayed by our leaders during what were the critical and formative years of the modern era of the British Virgin Islands.

It was by no means an easy task and I extend on behalf of wife and my family our personal congratulations and sincere appreciation for the perseverance of our leaders over the last 50 years. My other colleagues and I are determined to build on the lasting legacy and solid foundation of our leaders over the last 50 years, and to successfully move this Territory for the benefit of all citizens and residents in the 21st century.

In many ways, my generation embodies the Territory's successes of the last 50 years. Our successes:

- With an 'education for all' policy;
- In building a modern and diversified service economy;
- In developing the requisite supporting physical infrastructure required in a modern country;

- In moving our people to the forefront of management and leadership in the public and private sectors.
- In the advancement of medical facilities in the Territory and the establishment of basic safety net structures and mechanisms for our people, such as social security.
- In deepening our democracy and attracting a generation of well trained and experienced leaders into the service of our country to take the baton and continue the struggle. This engenders continuity. These are indeed significant accomplishments for such a small country and in such a short time. As a people we have every right to be justly proud.

Looking towards the future

As we look towards the future and the next fifty years in the life of this Territory, we must do so focused on the many critical challenges and opportunities. As a people we must build on our past successes as we shape our future.

The strategic challenge of the last generation of the Territory's leaders was formidable. Theirs was to build a foundation on which our Territory would take shape. As the Founding Fathers they carefully molded that foundation.

In my humble opinion, the strategic challenges for my generation of leaders are no less daunting in their complexities. One of our strategic challenges will be the survival and advancement of our people, our culture, and our mental disposition for our beloved 'British Virgin Islands'.

The global environment in which we will exist over the next fifty years will be extremely challenging for a small country like the British Virgin Islands. We are already beginning to see manifestations of this new reality including the globalization of trade and the potential for the powerful nations to use their influence to attack small fledgling economies and democracies such as ours.

We see this today with The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) "harmful tax initiatives". We will continue to see such overreaching from other powerful organizations, which did not exist during the last fifty years such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). The sovereignty and freedoms of small countries will constantly be under external threat, not

necessarily from the foreign military powers as in the past but in many cases well-trained armies of bureaucrat.

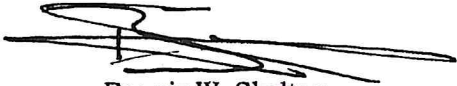
We will have to grapple with the reality of what British Citizenship will mean and evolve to be in the future. We will have to manage our relationships with our regional neighbours and how we welcome their citizens living in the Territory, and the long-term direction and implications of this residency. As a people we will also have to address how we include and involve the wider 'BVI Family' living in other countries in the region and in the United States in particular, as we continue to build our country (our Nation).

As we begin our collective journey as a people into the next fifty years in the life of the British Virgin Islands, I wish to outline a number of guideposts I believe to be very critical as we continue the development of our Territory:

- As a people we must develop a national vision for our Country. We must commence a national dialogue about the future direction of our country. This must be an ongoing dialogue and must be comprehensive in scope. The involvement of the Territory's youth in this process must be more than mere lip service. Their involvement must be real and institutionalized.
- As a people we must as the Territory's motto dictate 'Be ever watchful' of our democracy. We must be vigilant about the level of power we concentrate in the hands of Government. We must carefully monitor the level of government's intrusion in the lives of our citizens. We must ensure that more forms of 'Direct Democracy' are incorporated into our Constitution as part of our system of checks and balances.
- Over the next fifty years as a people we must make significant progress in the institutionalization of mechanisms to address and meet the social service needs of our people. We are currently weak in this area; if allowed to continue this weakness would undermine our very existence as a people.
- As the Territory continues its development, close attention must be paid to our Art, culture and values. We as citizens must become far more concerned about our quality of life. We must not take it for granted.
- The economic empowerment of our people will be critical to the level of success we achieve over the next fifty years. This empowerment will be a critical building block for nation building and eventually self-determination.

- As we move towards self-determination we must do so fully cognizant of the region in which we share a common history and abundance of cultural ties. Our long-term success will in many ways be determined by how well we manage our regional relations. We must engage regionally and globally and do so confidently from a position of strength.

These guideposts are not exhaustive, but instead they are thought provoking and serve as a barometer for measuring our future achievements over the next fifty years. **After all, if you don't know where you are going any road will get you there. And where there is no vision we know what happens to the people; they perish.**



Ronnie W. Skelton
Territorial-at-Large Representative

Hon. Mark Vanterpool, MLC

REPRESENTATIVE FOR 4TH DISTRICT
Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands
Road Town, Tortola
British Virgin Islands



MESSAGE IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESTORATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

I am honoured to be a member of the Virgin Islands Legislative Council on the 50th anniversary of its restoration. The courage and spirit of Mr. Theodore Faulkner and the others who marched on government house demanding its restoration, is very much alive in the present legislative council. The determination of a people to participate in, and manage its own affairs, is a humanitarian pillar, which must be built of stone, as we seek to improve on our forefathers' insight and will. We owe it to the advocates and members of the first Legislature to unite in the struggle for self-determination even in today's context. We must continue to seek improvement to our constitution so that we may confidently move further and further away from colonial rule, giving our future generations the opportunity to chart their own destiny.

It has only been eighteen months for me in my legislative experience, but I have already learnt from the elder statesmen in the house. I must pay tribute to those present and past who over the last fifty years have been stalwarts in moving our country forward, constitutionally, legislatively, socially, educationally, and economically. It would be remiss of me if I did not pay special tribute to one of my mentors, the late H.L. Stout who always quoted the biblical saying that 'without a vision the people would perish'. I must also express my dedication as was echoed by the late Martin Luther King through the song: "If I could help somebody ... then my living would not be in vain". It is not a favour that we give in return. God expects us to help our fellowman.

The 14th Legislature of which I am a member cannot sleep, but we must awaken to the need for reform and development. It is also incumbent upon us to ensure that this and all other generations to come, are educated to the highest level possible. In this way, our children can find their rightful places in this rapidly moving technological age and global village. The education standard for our children today must not be measured by the education standard of yesterday, but instead we must prepare our children for tomorrow's world.

So by the help of God, and with the spirit of our leaders of fifty years ago, let us move forward without fear as a people, to continue to lift our country out of our childhood stage away from the rule of 'Mother England', to full maturity, when the time comes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Mark Vanterpool". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Mark Vanterpool
Member of the Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands



Alford E. Penn, OBE, BEM

I have much pleasure in recording a few remarks on the occasion of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Restoration of the Sitting of the Legislative Council. I do so bearing in mind that I was transferred from the Public Service of the Territory in 1946 to take up a position in the Secretariat of the Leeward Islands Federation, of which the British Virgin Islands formed a part.

The Governor of the Leeward Islands exercised overall administrative control of the governmental affairs of these islands through several Federal Offices then existing, he himself paying an annual ceremonial visit during the 1940s and previously. The Federal Auditor was detailed to audit the local financial accounts at least once a year while the Federal Medical Officer and the Engineering Adviser visited to determine whether local projects and programmes were being adequately executed. The Federal Education Officer's responsibility was to examine the Elementary Schools, then run by the Churches, to assess their effectiveness as centres of learning for the youth and to invigilate over the 7th Standard school leaving examination.

Prior to my departure, I was the Clerk to the Commissioner who administered most, if not all, aspects of governmental business, he having held the posts of Medical Officer, Magistrate, Registrar and Treasurer simultaneously. All offices were housed in the area of the building now occupied by the Post Office. The total Government expenditure in 1948, spread over all departments, was only \$148, 422 and revenue \$194,881. Generally, the local recurrent budget was supplemented annually by varying amounts of Grant in Aid provided by the United Kingdom Government to enable essential services to be provided through the departmental heads of the Civil Service Establishment of which up to 1953 was a total of 44. Needless to say, on my return to the Territory in 1969, I was pleased to observe the vast progress that had been made politically and economically due to the persistent pressure for change exerted by political forces of the day.

Prior to 1950, the Executive Council of which the Commissioner was Chairman, consisted of an ex-officio member and three nominated members in an advisory capacity.

All important Government decisions affecting the welfare of the community were made at these meetings. At the Federal level, the Territory was represented by one member on the General Legislature and Federal Executive Councils at the Antigua headquarters. It was in this setting that legislation affecting the welfare of the people of the Presidency as it was then called was enacted.

This practice continued until 1950 when the Legislative Council was reconstituted

under the Leeward Islands Act No. 1 of 1950 with four elected members, this territory being regarded as a single constituency. When in 1956 the Leeward Islands Colony was defederated, the term “Commissioner” was redesignated to “Administrator”, who in 1960 became directly responsible to the Secretary of State. New letters Patent and Royal Instructions were issued to enable the Administrator to carry out his enhanced responsibilities. A local rejection in 1964 of a Colonial Office suggestion that consideration might be given to adopting a form of State Council led to the appointment in 1965 of Dr. Mary Proudfoot to examine the then existing Constitution and make recommendations for any changes thought desirable. This resulted in the issue of the Virgin Islands Constitution Order 1967 which provided for the establishment of Seven Electoral Districts and an Executive Council as policy maker. As a result of a quest for further constitutional advance by the Legislature, a Constitutional Commission was appointed in 1973 to consider constitutional evolution but its report was largely rejected by the B. V. I. Government. This was followed by a further Constitutional Commission in 1993. Most of its recommendations have been embodied in the existing Constitution which provides for an increase by four in the number of elected members in the Legislative Council and a number of other far-reaching measures all designed to enhance good governance of these islands under the leadership of a democratic, responsible and largely autonomous government.

I congratulate most heartily all those dedicated persons in political circles and others, who, over the past years, have devoted so much time and energy in enhancing the political and economic climate to a stage where the Territory now enjoys economic viability and political stability. It is most fitting also that mention be made of those political stalwarts, now passed on, whose efforts at representing the wishes of the people have contributed in some measure to the present stability and economic viability now enjoyed.



Alford Penn, OBE, BEM
Former Deputy Governor



**MESSAGE FROM DANCIA PENN, OBE, Q.C.
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS, 1992-1999**

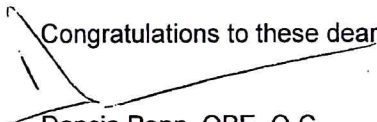
It is an honour for me to contribute a brief message in this special publication to mark The 50th Anniversary of the Restoration of The Sitting of The Legislative Council in The Virgin Islands.

We have come a long way! In the First Elected Legislative Council which existed from 1950 to 1954, (its life having been extended for one year to allow for general elections under a new Constitution), there was no named Law Officer. With the second general election in 1954, a Legal Assistant was appointed to the Legislative Council as an official member. The Virgin Islands was then a Presidency of The Colony of The Leeward Islands until its dissolution in 1956, and was represented in the General Legislative Council of The Leeward Islands by a nominated member. The Legal Assistant of The Virgin Islands was responsible to The Attorney General of the Leeward Islands who was based in Antigua. That continued to be the case for some years, until the designation of the office was changed from Legal Assistant to Crown Attorney. Still later, in about 1967, the designation of the office became Attorney General of The Virgin Islands.

My own term in office, coincided with a period of major political, social and economic changes in the country. They were challenging and exciting times for the country, and for me personally and professionally. There was the Constitutional Commission of 1993, the introduction of The Territorial District (that is the so called "At Large" system), the increase in the number of elected members of the Legislative Council to thirteen, the election of the first women to the Legislative Council, the death in office of a Chief Minister, the dramatic growth in the financial services sector, the assignment for the first time, of two full time resident High Court judges to the jurisdiction, the construction of new court buildings and much innovation in the Courts. And too, there was the enactment of several important pieces of legislation in areas such as family law, domestic violence, criminal law reform and of course a plethora of legislation in the financial services sector, as well as in law enforcement.

As we move into the future, many challenges face us. Not the least of these is who are we really, and whither do we go? My plea would be that as we move forward, those who seek public office and those who are called upon to serve must pursue and advance the legitimate and realistic expectations of our people so as to ensure that the peace, security and tranquility that have been the bedrock of our progress be sustained.

Congratulations to these dear Virgin Islands on this important milestone!


Dancia Penn, OBE, Q.C.

Section II

Profiles of the Members of the Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands (1950-2000)

Profiles of Members of the First Legislative Council	38
The Chief Ministers 1967-2000	56
Elton Georges, OBE	
Profiles of the Chief Ministers of the Government of the British Virgin Islands	61
Profiles of Opposition Leaders	109
Profile of Other Members of the Legislative Council	120
Lorna Smith	
Profiles of the Members of the 14th Legislature 1999-	123
Profiles of Other Members of the Legislative Council	149
Profiles of Nominated Members	178
Profiles of Speakers	187
Profile of Attorneys General	194
J. S. Archibald, QC	
Profile of Clerks of the Legislative Council	198
Allington Hodge	
Profile of Commissioners, Administrators & Governors	207
Hon. Ralph T. O'Neal, OBE	

Profiles

of
Members of the First Legislative Council

John Charles Brudenell-Bruce	39
Howard Reynold Penn	41
Isaac G. Fonseca	<i>refer to page 252</i>
Carlton L. de Castro	<i>refer to page 250</i>
Dr. W. T. Joseph	
A. C. Franklin	
McWelling Todman, CBE, QC	45
Benjamin A. Romney	53
Sir James Olva Georges, Kt., OBE	54

Note: Information has not become available to the editors about two of the members,
Dr. W.T. Joseph and A.C. Franklin.

John Charles Brudenell-Bruce, MBE



MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1950, 1954-1957

John Charles Brudenell-Bruce was born in London, England on 6 March 1885. On completing service in the diplomatic service he retired. In 1935 he came to the British Virgin Islands and with his \$5,000 inheritance bought 250 acres of land on Peter Island for \$250. Leo Smith contracted for 50¢ a day and assisted him to build a huge house with living room space 30 feet by 60 feet and 12 inch cast concrete walls at Little Harbour, the site of the Percy Chubb house. He also built a tobacco factory where he made cigars and cigarettes.

Some of the tobacco he used was grown and harvested here and mixed with imported tobacco from Texas. He experienced much competition from larger companies who were in operation in the islands. As a result, heavy import and export taxes were levied on his merchandise and at times he had to resort to smuggling to sell his goods. The business was taxed out of existence.

When the war came, the manager's return to Denmark precipitated closure of the factory. Brudenell-Bruce went to work at Bournefield naval base in St. Thomas. Mrs. Bruce hated the underpaid conditions in which he worked and organized to auction off the remnants of the tobacco business to facilitate their return to Peter Island where he recommenced farming and fishing.

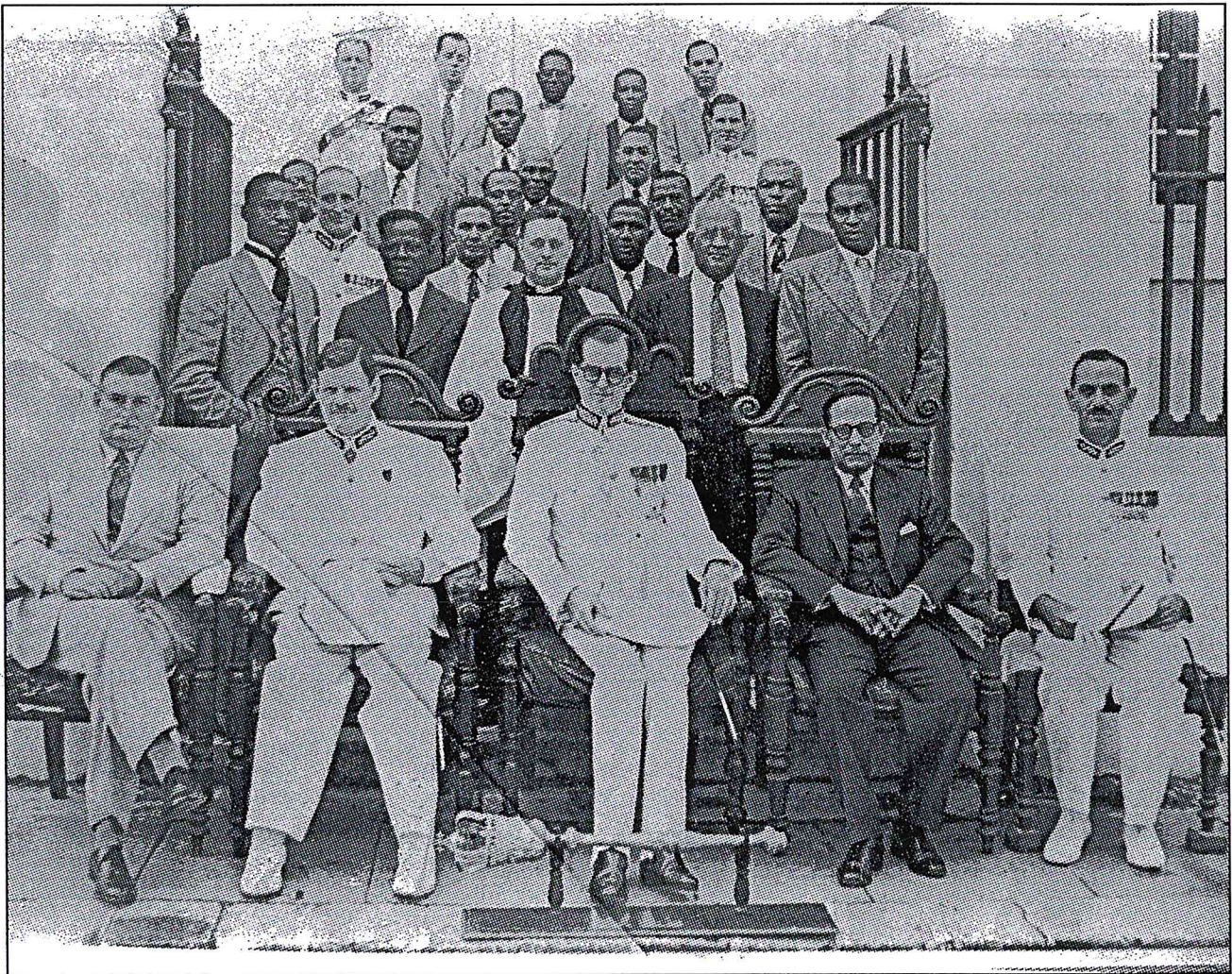
Brudenell-Bruce had sought political office in Brighton, England before emigrating but had been unsuccessful. In 1950 the electoral system was brought in. Challenged by the opportunity to serve, and encouraged by his wife, he ran for office and was elected for 1950-1954, under the at-large system. In 1954 he was defeated for District number three, Cane Garden Bay and surroundings, by Edwin Leonard. When Leonard left in August 1954 Bruce was successful in the by-election against Stanford Connor. One of Connor's campaign strategies was race to which Bruce had given the counter challenge that "a piano needs black and white keys to play." He served from 1955-1957, under the membership system. At the age of seventy-two, Bruce had no desire to seek a third term and encouraged and supported Ivan Dawson to stand for the District.

During his years as an at-large member and as a member of the 3rd district, he managed to get two bridges, one wharf built and some improvements to the roads made. In 1955 he lobbied long and hard with other members to keep the British Virgin Islands out of the West Indies Federation. In this he was successful.

His dream was that the British Virgin Islands should build its own future and identity, not to be lumped into some large group to be lost. Today, his dream lives on in the development of the British Virgin Islands by its elected members.

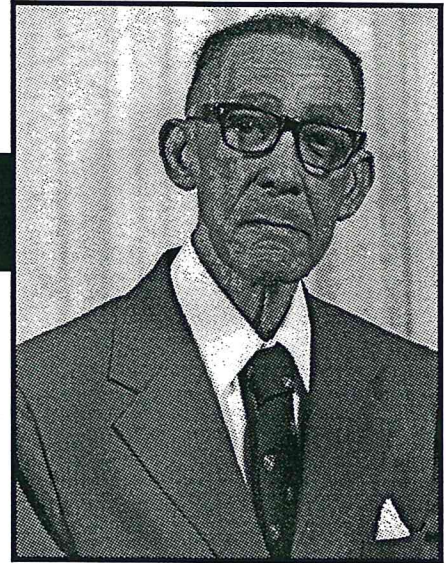
He wrote in his last newsletter, "All goals can be achieved if all sections of the community cooperate wholeheartedly and devote themselves unreservedly to the welfare of the British Virgin Islands."

Bruce was married to Sigrid Ammentorp. They had six children - three boys and three girls. He died in 1960.



Federal Legislature 1954
6th in Back row - Alford E. Penn, OBE, Clerk Federal Legislature
5th in 5th row - Howard R. Penn, OBE

Howard Reynold Penn, OBE



ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE 1950-1963

SECOND ELECTED MEMBER AT LARGE 1950-54

DISTRICT SERVED: SECOND OR CENTRAL DISTRICT 1954-1963

Howard Reynold Penn was born to Joseph Wilfred Penn and Hilda Eulalie Rymer, on the 11th of November 1903 at East End, Tortola. Mr. Penn's family were descendants of William and Benjamin Penn, sons of William Penn the Quaker. (Memoirs of H.R.Penn, 1990)

His early years were spent in East End with his parents where he attended the East End Methodist School. At the age of thirteen, Mr. Penn moved to Road Town where the name H.R. Penn became a household word. From very humble beginnings as a helper in a shop he became a leading business man.

“As for me, after coming to Road Town, I started to learn shoe repairing with a person a little older than myself, and in this way, tried to make a living. However, around 1919, a few liquor shops were being opened up in Road Town to take advantage of Prohibition in the neighbouring American Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Mr. David G. Fonseca opened such a shop and took me on to work there. I was paid \$9 a month, but was also permitted to repair shoes in a little corner of the shop when there was no business...” (Memoirs of H.R.Penn)

As a businessman, a politician and a devout Anglican H.R. Penn was actively involved in the development of the British Virgin Islands. In 1950 he was elected a member of the first Legislative Council at the time of the restoration. He was elected consecutively for four terms from 1950-1963. He was appointed the Member for Trade and Production in the Second Legislative Council, and held the Office of Speaker from 1971 to 1975.

Mr. Penn married Esmeralda Amaro of Culebra, Puerto Rico, they had five sons and three daughters. He died 12th June 1994.

Major Issues/Challenges that Arose During His Terms of Service:

The need for:

- Constitutional advancement
- Economic growth and development

- Development of the physical infrastructure
- Improvement of the educational system

Major Changes that Took Place During His Terms of Service:

- Significant constitutional advancement was realized, as evidenced by the restoration of the first elected Legislative Council since 1902 in 1950. Universal adult suffrage was also attained in 1953, and a district electoral system was implemented in 1954. In 1959, the B.V.I. was advanced to the status of a Colony with direct access to the Colonial Office in London from its previous status as a presidency of the Colony of the Leeward Islands. This constitutional advancement enabled British Virgin Islanders to play a more direct role in promoting economic growth in the Colony.
- Passage of the Hotel Incentive Ordinance in 1953 by the first Legislative Council and the subsequent leasing of the Little Dix property on Virgin Gorda paved the way for the development of the hotel industry in the tourism sector. Establishment of the Agricultural Loan Fund also helped significantly to stimulate the agricultural sector of the B.V.I. economy. The invitation of commercial banks to the B.V.I., culminating in the establishment of a local branch of the First Pennsylvania/Virgin Islands National Bank in 1961, helped to stimulate the construction industry in the Islands.
- Construction of the East End to West End road, upgrading of the Joe's Hill Trail to accommodate vehicular traffic, the introduction of electricity to Road Town and the establishment of an airfield on Beef Island all helped to stimulate the local economy.
- The report issued by the educational review committee of 1957 served for many years as the basic policy of the education department and recommended the construction of at least ten schools to avoid the necessity of classes being held in churches.

Major Contributions During His Terms of Office:

In the area of constitutional reform and advancement:

- 1947 - At the Closer Union Conference in St. Kitts, introduced and got passed a resolution for reintroduction of an elected Legislative Council in the B.V.I.
- 1949-Appointed by the Governor of the Leeward Islands to be the B.V.I. member of the General Legislative Council of the Leeward Islands, which sat in Antigua.
- 1950 – Chaired the Constitutional Committee which made the recommendations for the law setting up the first Legislative Council of the B.V.I. since 1902. Later helped to pass the law as a member of the General Legislative Council.
- 1953 – Chaired the Second Constitutional Committee at the request of Sir Kenneth

Blackburne, Governor of the Leeward Islands. The report of this Committee and the map of the five electoral districts became the basis for the Second Constitution of the B.V.I., which existed until 1957.

- 1957 – Was a member of a three-man delegation to constitutional talks in London. As Speaker of the Seventh Legislative Council, chaired a short-lived constitutional committee consisting of the whole Legislature. This committee was subsequently replaced by two constitutional commissioners sent by London.
- 1952 – Elected by B.V.I. Legislative Council to be the B.V.I. representative on the General Legislative Council until defederation in 1956.
- 1952 – Appointed to be a member of the Federal Executive Council of the Leeward Islands until defederation in 1956.

In the Area of Economic Growth and Development:

- As a delegate to a West Indian conference of the Caribbean Council, made contacts that led to the setting up of a slipper manufacturing factory on Tortola and to opportunities for B.V.I. men to work in the sugar industry in St. Kitts.
- While serving as a member for Trade and Production in the second Legislative Council, H.R. Penn recommended that crown land at Little Dix Bay, Virgin Gorda, be advertised for lease for tourism purposes. That initiative ultimately culminated in lease of the referenced land by Laurence Rockefeller and construction of the Little Dix Bay Hotel.
- During Second Legislative Council, lobbied for establishment of an agricultural bank. The Agricultural Loan Fund was established subsequently.
- While serving as chairman of the B.V.I. Tourist Board from 1960-1963, gained B.V.I. membership in the Caribbean Organisation and the American association of Travel Agents. Arranged for the S.S. Meteor, a small cruise ship, to visit the B.V.I. monthly.
- Facilitated the sale of house lots on crown land in Lower Estate and MacNamara to the British Virgin Islanders.

In the Area of Development of the Physical Infrastructure:

- During the Third Legislative Council, lobbied for improvements to the Joe's Hill Trail to make it motorable. While Member for Trade and Production during the Fourth Legislative Council, played a key role, along with the late H. Lavity Stoutt and Luther Scatliffe, in making the Joe's Hill Road motorable.

- During the Second Legislative Council, lobbied for construction of a motorable road from East End to Road Town.
- During the Fourth Legislative Council, travelled to London to help secure funding to build the West End to Road Town Road.

In the Area of Improvement to the Educational System:

- 1941- Appointed a member of the Government Board of Education, on which he served on re-appointments until 1968.
- During his tenure, the Board of Education argued successfully for provision of a high school, which came into being several years later.
- 1957 - Appointed chairman of an Educational Review Committee. That Committee's report served for many years as the basic policy of the government.

Other Areas of Service:

- 1971 – Elected Speaker of the Seventh Legislative Council.
- During his term as Speaker of the House, the first BVI/USVI Friendship Day observance was held.

Comments:

As is readily apparent from the preceding information, H.R. Penn played an extremely important role in the development of the British Virgin Islands from his membership in the Civic League in 1938 until the dissolution of the Seventh Legislative Council in 1975. Even after he formally left politics, he continued to concern himself with the development of these islands.

His interests and contributions included constitutional advancement, education, agriculture, trade, tourism and infrastructural development.

In 1947, two years before the now famous March that prompted the appointment of a constitutional committee that led to the restoration of an elected Legislative Council, H.R. Penn successfully introduced a resolution at the Closer Union Conference in St. Kitts requesting the restoration of an elected Legislative Council in the British Virgin Islands. He subsequently chaired the Constitutional Committee that made the recommendations for the law setting up the elected Legislative Council of 1950.

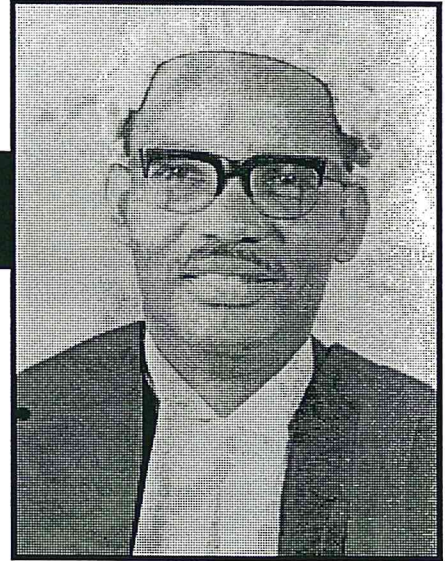
He served as Chairman of the Agricultural and Trade Committee in the First Legislative Council, and as Member for Trade and Production in the Second and Fourth Legislative Councils.

The preceding information was gleaned from the booklet "Memoirs of H.R. Penn: A Personal Account of the Politics and History of the British Virgin Islands in the 20th Century," by H. R. Penn, OBE

Dr. McWelling Todman, CBE, QC

OFFICIAL MEMBER, FIRST LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1952-1954

Born 25th December 1923. Died 7 March 1996



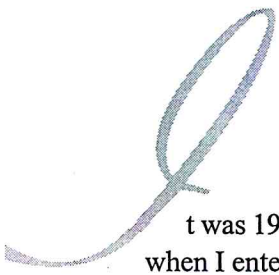
“Ministerial government has provided the framework within which government and private enterprises working together have been able to bring about a transformation of the BVI from a poor subsistence economy to a comparatively thriving one. Men and women of good will inside and outside the government have collaborated and created wealth in capital formation and in making the BVI a more congenial environment in which to live and work and rear one’s children. Given the record of success and of achievement over the last quarter of the century there is hope that the BVI will continue to find the courage, the strength of purpose and the inspiration to go forward into the future building on the past and devising ways and means of solving those social and other problems to which the Territory is not immune.”

Excerpt from the Foreword in *Challenge and Change* 1992, the publication of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Ministerial System written by McWelling Todman

McWelling Todman -

^a *Remembrance*

by Rita Frett Georges, MBE



It was 1960, the year of Hurricane Donna, which had nearly brought the residents from Anegada when I entered the British Virgin Islands High School. I had two interesting and attractive female teachers who came into the classroom. Miss Magdalene Rhymer and Miss Riisa Todman. The latter was our form room teacher and taught geography, but she was best remembered when she wasn't in class, for her impressive presence on such a very slender frame. She commanded attention in our lives, and we knew she was coming by the finesse of the click of her heels, as she walked. When she arrived, we would sit galvanized into attention, as she quietly lectured on the level of conduct expected of young ladies and gentlemen, which she called the nineteen of us, at that time.

She spoke of her brother McWelling Todman with pride and interest. He was outside the territory and had lived in Trinidad, having something to do with the Federation, and had or was going to London to study Law. It would be years, before I would see and know who he was, but his presence and his fame had preceded him, and the esteemed place in which she established him in my young mind would not ever change.

High School was out and work in Nursing as an assistant Nurse dominated my life. One day I heard that Mc Todman and his family were back, and he was opening offices in town. He was beloved, remembered, missed, and there was a happy sense of anticipation, that his presence back on the Island meant something. This is how one felt when people spoke of him.

The first opportunity to approach him would be years later. Vessilie Mathavious, Edith Pickering and I fresh out of Nursing Training School in Jamaica, became involved in some activities which would crystalize into the formation of the Nurses Association. Part of the image that Mr. Todman had already established was of helping the community. Ms Geraldine Norman advised consultation with Mc Todman who perhaps would advise us, without undue charge about the formation of the Association. Mr. Todman welcomed us with the warmth, openness and interest, which I would later recognize as characteristic of him. Regardless of the day, I have only ever entered his presence with the feeling that he had time to speak to me, and that my activities were of interest to him; he would also enquire of family.

Mr. Todman advised that the Laws of the Virgin Islands only permitted at that time, registration of the Association as a Friendly Society. The Association was duly registered and has remained thus, and Mr. Todman remained the Association's Legal Adviser. Even though it could not be said that his assistance was needed extremely much over the years, there were periods when assistance was required, whether for legal advice, talks or lectures. It was always willingly given;

and there was never any charge. The awareness that perhaps some tangible expression should be accorded to Mr. Todman for his support and interest over the years, was discussed by the Association at times, but beyond a simple thank you, did not materialize.

For more than twenty four years Mr. Todman would chair the Public Service Commission, a statutory body which advises the Governor reporting through the Deputy Governor. It is charged with, amongst other things, appointments to the Civil Service. In some ways it is also responsible for the image of that service, and influences through its work the development of the Territory. With a membership of three it was a yeoman's task, work which was often carried out at the end of a full day's activities. Mr. Todman's compensation to date, was perhaps only, the pleasure which he derived from service and making a contribution to the development of the society, by monitoring and helping to chart a course for young people who entered the public service.

Over the years it was always a pleasure to listen to Mr. Todman give addresses on various subjects. A gifted speaker, wise and knowledgeable, the community drew upon his skills and fount of knowledge, without perhaps realizing, that it had placed him in a unique role which was to identify knit and hold together, the special elements of who we have been, and who we are. When asked to speak, he would usually bring to the simplest request, special understanding, an unusual point of view, new information and knowledge. I have never understood why he seemed to take no direct interest in political office. The community did not offer I think many opportunities to remain alive within that personality, yet his interest and curiosity were unparalleled.

Spiritual growth and development have been some quests of my life... earlier, frustrated by the thirst and desire to know and understand more about life, I would chafe in church not hearing much to hold my interest and curiosity. Then one day, I realized that Mr. Todman was holding that interest, and what reached me came from a depth of understanding about life that was unusual I thought. I was thankful for what he shared, and I would listen keenly. I would go to church when he was preaching, obtaining every time, the reassurance I needed for my own changing self. Two sermons of quiet remembrance stay with me, one about children.

Only time will tell off the real contribution of Mr. Todman. The man who lived amongst us, portraying love of God and understanding, using his many gifts to help us manage. In addition to his intellectual gifts, tutorial skills and breath of knowledge, he was a man of humility and courage in the face of illness. His ability and determination whatever the circumstance, to rise and continue plodding along, never murmuring or seeming to complain in a bad way inspired us all.

Extract from an article written on Mr. Todman's death in 1995.

Tribute

to

McWelling Todman, CBE, QC

Delivered by the Honourable Attorney General Ms. Dancia Penn at a Special Sitting of the High Court of Justice of the Virgin Islands on Tuesday 12th March, 1996.

Few have had as varied and distinguished a career as our dear departed McWelling Todman, CBE, QC. Mac as we all called him was the first indigenous Virgin Islander to practice law in these islands, and he leaves a great legacy and has set a very high standard for all who come behind to follow. My Lord, I am at the Bar, and it is perhaps of Mac Todman the lawyer that I should speak. But there was so much to Mac, that I must crave your indulgence, and that of my colleagues at the Bar if I yield to the temptation to speak of a little more than Mac, the lawyer.

I do not remember a time when I did not know of Mac. In these islands one always heard about Mac. I do not quite remember the first time I met him, but I remember very clearly the occasion in 1967 when he addressed the students of the then Virgin Islands Secondary School. He had just returned from the UK to practice law here and he spoke to us students about law as a profession. I believe that the book that he brought with him was a volume from the third edition of Halsbury Laws (the green ones). Mac in that clear and commanding way in which only he spoke dispelled once and for all any notion that the law could be practiced 'ex chesto'. This, my lord, is an expression which means a lot to those of us who practiced at this Bar when Mac did. He explained that lawyers could not carry the law around in their heads, and needed to refer to books regularly.

Several years later, I was honoured to have him move the motion for my admission to practice at this Bar. I still remember and take counsel from the admonitions he gave to me then. I have since had many an opportunity to see and hear Mac at the Bar. I have been led by him, and I have appeared on the other side. At times, I was in Court just to listen to him.

I believe that the last time, I saw him appear in Court it was before you, my lord, on an occasion when he moved the motion for admission of another Virgin Islands woman to practice at this Bar. He was vintage Mac - no notes, and of course, he gave his wise admonitions, born out of experience, learnt in the school of life.

Mac came to the law, having had a distinguished career as an educator and as a public servant. He had been appointed an official member of the Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands in the 1950s and had served in the Civil Service in the Virgin Islands and in the Federal Government. He served with distinction in Antigua and Trinidad and Tobago, and it was after his service in Trinidad that he proceeded to read law in the United Kingdom. He was called to the Bar at Grey's Inn in 1967.

Mac began his practice at the Bar here in 1967, and as was to be expected, quickly distinguished himself. He was a formidable advocate and was appointed one of Her Majesty's Counsel in 1978.

Additionally, he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in recognition of his long and distinguished public and community service. He built a successful and highly respected law practice which will no doubt constitute an important institution in this country.

Even as he built a successful law practice, his public service remained unbroken. He served for some 24 years as Chairman of the Public Service Commission and therefore as a member of the Judicial and Legal Services Commission. As such, for many years he was intimately involved in the appointment of all Crown law officers, Magistrates and officers of the Courts. He also served as Chairman of the Board of Immigration for 23 years, and as a member of several Fiscal Advisory Committees. It is a significant fact which must be recognized that there was never monetary remuneration for his service on these Boards and Committees.

In addition, Mac was a pillar of the Methodist Church in these islands, and a lay preacher for many, many years. He was a long-standing member of the Rotary Club of Tortola, a member of the Board of Management of the Frederick Pickering Memorial Foundation, a body devoted to historical research and preservation of the life of these islands. He was also involved in many other community activities and organizations.

I was privileged to work with Mac on the Board of the F. Pickering Memorial Foundation, as well as a member of the Public Service Commission. Working with him on PSC up to 1992 when I resigned to assume my present duties was one of the most valuable experiences of my life. I learned a lot about justice, and fairness and fair play serving on the PSC with Mac. I was struck by his strong commitment to excellence and high standards, his knowledge of and great hopes and aspirations for these islands and their peoples. I learned the importance of listening. I saw due process in reality. I Learned the importance of taking time to consider and avoid making rash decisions, especially those that impact the lives of people and their careers.

Mac was a giver. He gave of his time, of his knowledge, of his experience. The doors of his Chambers were always open. Young lawyers knew they were welcome to use his library, to seek his advice or to just drop by to chat with him.

Even as Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel, many lawyers at the Bar today have sat at Mac's feet.. Several have either worked as associates in his firm or did their period of in-service legal training there. They will no doubt speak for themselves, but a young law student who was privileged to train in his Chambers as recently as last summer, has commented on how disciplined a man he was, how hard he worked, how much he obviously enjoyed what he did, his patience, and the fact that conversations with him were never confined to the law.

To say the least, Mac was a brilliant man. He had a clear, quick mind and possessed a profound knowledge of the principles and the practice of the law. He leaves a sound legacy. For a long time lawyers will continue to cite the case of "Sylvester v. Sylvester" in family law. We will remember how formidable he was at the criminal Bar. To hear Mac address a jury was to experience drama at its highest, and to hear him cry in mitigation for a client would virtually bring tears to one's eyes.

Nor will we forget the indelible contribution Mac has made to the law of succession in this jurisdiction and the development of the system of registered land. He worked and was intimately involved with the land adjudication process and much that followed thereon and his name and that distinct, albeit illegible signature, is part of the history of land and land law in this country.

Yes, my lord, conversations with Mac were never confined to the law. He had so much knowledge, so much to say, so much to share. And Mac talked with you - not down to you. He

was sage, and when he gave advice he sought to help - not necessarily to please. I reflect on my own days as a young lawyer, when I was briefed on matters which not only required knowledge of the law, but a great deal more. If I needed to seek counsel, it was Mac to whom I turned.

There was the time when late one rainy evening I was alone at my office on Main Street and two men turned up and demanded to see me. They had come as the emissaries of a certain murder suspect who was at large, and who had sent them to me to say that he wished to surrender to the Police, but would do so only in my custody. Certain conditions were being laid down which presented me with conflicts, not only as a lawyer, but as a citizen. I needed to rely on far more than knowledge of the law, and it was to Mac I turned.

Then there was the time when a woman in this community felt she would take no more of her husband's drug and alcohol abuse and she wished to have him committed to a mental institution. She sought my professional assistance. This was not a simple case of the rights of the individual - there was a lot more in the mortar than the pestle and once more I sought Mac's counsel.

And then there was the time when a lady - a lady very much in need - came to give me instructions to institute affiliation proceedings against one of my more successful colleagues at the Bar. This again was not a case of straight law, and once more I sought Mac's counsel.

It was not only lawyers who sought Mac's sage advice. I know Governors did, Ministers of Religion did, Ministers of Government did. In fact, anybody did. Mac always responded in sincerity and with magnanimity. And one of the important things about seeking Mac's counsel was that you could speak with him in confidence. You could speak with him and have the comfort of knowing that man of principle and high ethical standards that he was, what was discussed remained between the two of you.

Mac was a man of great dignity. Dignified in his bearing, dignified in his thinking, dignified in his manner. He brought that dignity to this honorable profession and the practice of the law. It is a part of his legacy that I trust never, never dies.

He was a fiercely independent man, and straddled the world of the old and the new Virgin Islands. He epitomized that independent Virgin Islander of whom one used to hear. Ever so often in speaking with him, he would say how 'people needed to take up their beds and walk', and he would then proceed in the way only Mac could, to give examples of people who from very little had built a lot.

Mac read widely and was always current on domestic, regional and world affairs. With all that he did, he still found time to write and he co-authored a publication on "Income Tax in the BVI". He was also a member of the BVI Government team that negotiated a Double Taxation Treaty between the USA and the BVI, and he had made a significant contribution to this country becoming the successful financial services centre that it is.

Mac was a devoted family man, and I extend my condolences and those of my family and the Government and people of the Virgin Islands, to his widow Audrey, his son Quito and his family, his daughter Cyntelia and her family as well as his siblings and extended family. I wish you strength to deal with your sad loss and I hope that the high esteem in which Mac is held by the legal fraternity and the community at large is a source of strength and comfort to you.

My lord, despite his obvious success in life, Mac remained a good and humble man and he will be so remembered.

I believe that it would be meet and right and a fitting tribute to present the Todman Family with a transcript of the proceedings of this special sitting of the Court, as soon as it becomes available, and I so request.

May His Soul Rest In Peace.

THE INDEPENDENT, LONDON
1 April 1996

McWELLING TODMAN

Islands - and most island people - do not take kindly to distinguished difference, let alone quiet eminence, from among their resident number. Caribbean island people, anyway, Put heself up an' dey will pull he down.

There can be exceptions. McWelling Todman was one. It is not often in such societies that you find a man who eschews family antagonisms and rivalries, who is trusted and listened to with respect by all political groupings and by civil servants. No one in the British Virgin Islands, or in the Caribbean as a whole, ever pull he down.

Like a few other forward-thinking BV Islanders, Todman began his adult life as a teacher in the high-noon of colonialism. It was in the classroom that he learned to assemble his material and to deliver it to his first critical listeners with clarity and persuasiveness.

If he never mapped the destiny of the life of his island people, Todman certainly helped to shape it. He was a background confidante and trusted unofficial adviser to more than one Chief Minister of the territory. >Blessed with a brilliant mind,' said a BVI Beacon editorial on 14 March, a natural humility, a charismatic personality and a massive dose of human decency, he generously used those personal gifts to help others and further advance the BVI. Conversations with him often conveyed the impression of a teacher without a classroom.'

Not so in the Road Town Methodist Church where he was a regular lay preacher who, equally regularly, filled the pews.

'Mac Todman is preaching on Sunday,' my Finance Ministry colleague and now the choirmaster would say; 'you should come'. There were times when Todman's words came shooting out from the pulpit as from a machine-gun, peppering the congregation with intellectual conviction and passion. It was not fire and brimstone stuff, though; nor judgmental evangelism. His down-to-earth realism came through on one occasion when he roasted West Indian men for their marital infidelities and irresponsibility. He pulled no punches, but did so with a smile on his face. He was a West Indian man talking about the frailties of West Indian men.

In 1967, Gray's Inn barrister-at-law Todman set up his own practice in Tortola. More than twenty have followed. But he was the first BV Islander to do so. Before that, he had varying administrative experience in the BVI and in Antigua before moving in 1957 to Barbados and then Trinidad on the founding staff of the embryonic but stillborn Federal Government of the West Indies.

In the early 1980s, the tiny British Virgin Islands embarked on the improbable task of renegotiating its on-notice double taxation treaty with the United States. Powerful forces were wheeled in at the US Treasury in Washington. David was taking on Goliath; and there were many flights to Washington. The BVI delegation was headed by Chief Minister Lavity Stoutt. The only other regular BV Islander was Todman, by now a QC. The remaining members of the delegation were white expatriates. During months of protracted negotiations, Todman's voice within the delegation was often decisive on tricky issues with local implications and significance.

Todman was an avid reader. He seemed to have a new book for each flight - from George Orwell to V S Naipaul, Salman Rushdie to Martin Luther King. Latterly, it might have been

Nelson Mandela and perhaps Colin Powell. The human condition, from a West Indian perspective, was his constant innermost preoccupation.

The 1981 Fiscal Review was a major exercise in pointing the way forward for the tax structure and economy of the territory. Tourist promotion was still in its infancy; the BVI as a significant offshore finance centre was no more than a dream; annual budgetary grant-in-aid dependence on Britain was too recent to be a comfortable memory; and foreign capital investment was spasmodic and ill-managed. There were informal moves to introduce what amounted to a capital gains tax on sales of land between non-belongers (foreigners). Todman's view, which the Committee endorsed, was that such action would be contrary to the philosophy on which the fiscal sector of the BVI economy was based and could do serious (and possibly lasting) damage to the Government's efforts to build up the BVI as a low-tax regime and an offshore base for legitimate and properly administered commercial undertakings.

Throughout the decade, there was fierce debate about the circumstances and conditions under which non-belongers should be permitted to come and work in the BVI. As always, Todman's views were clear: the interests of the BVI came first. The Government had an inalienable right, indeed obligation, to decide which non-belongers should be permitted to carry on business-, including the practice of his own law profession, in the territory.

Todman never sought authoritative power for himself - and this was the key to the trust which he engendered and enjoyed in the community. Furthermore, he never asked to be paid for his public services to governments and people.

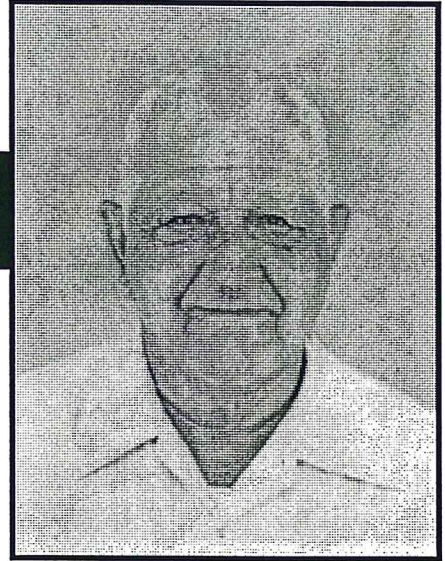
There have been tributes to Todman in the High Court and on behalf of the BVI Bar Association. Vice-President Paul Webster said, 'Mac Todman was a brilliant man and a real orator. When he addressed a jury, it was a joy to listen.'

A semi-state funeral was held in Road Town on Saturday 16 March. Chief Minister Ralph T O'Neal, himself also a member of the Road Town Methodist Church, delivered the eulogy.

Kenneth Bain

McWELLING TODMAN, lawyer and public servant; born Tortola, British Virgin Islands 25 December 1923; Chairman BVI Public Service Commission 1970C1994; OBE 1970; CBE 1988; Queen's Counsel 1980; married Audrey -Creque 1952; two sons (one deceased), one daughter; died 7 March 1996.

Benjamin A. Romney



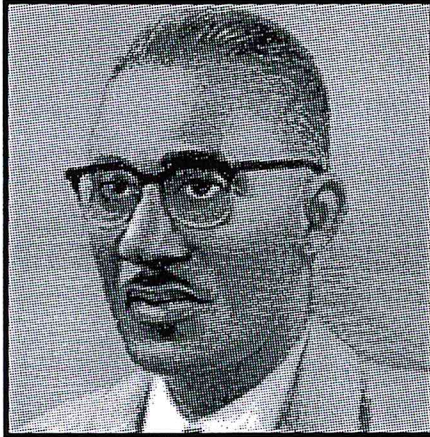
MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1950-1954

Mr. Benjamin Albert Romney was born in Tortola on 9th July 1890 and died on 23rd September 1980. He attended school in St. Kitts until the age of 18 years. After his return to the BVI, he migrated to Santo Domingo to improve his economic condition. On his return from Santo Domingo, after staying there for about ten years he worked as a farmer and boat captain. He also owned a boat by the name of YCONA.

During this same period he started a wholesale business which he conducted commercial activities until his death.

In 1920-1930 he worked as a customs officer. 1935-1946 he worked as a VAT inspector for the Agricultural Department in charge of dipping VATS from Belle Vue to West End. He also served as a member of the Agricultural Credit Fund. This Fund disbursed money to farmers on a credit basis.

He was second nominated member to the Legislative Council during its formative years 1950-1954. He was an out-spoken man who dared to criticize any issue in the presence of great and small, including Commissioner Cruickshank. He was a resourceful person and a tower of strength when persons needed advice on a wide variety of subjects. In spite of the limited means of transportation, Ben Romney was known throughout the Territory and was highly respected by the politicians and the people of the Virgin Islands. The basketball court in West End has been named in his honour.



Sir James Olva Georges, Kt, OBE

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1950-1967

James Olva Georges, second child and second son of J. E. W. Georges and his wife, Mary Amelia, was born in Road Town on 14 July 1890. He received his education at the Road Town Methodist School and the Antigua Grammar School.

On completion of his secondary education, Olva joined his father's business – a variety store – and in time took over from his father as manager of the business. His involvement in the family business did not deter him from pursuing – for a while, at least – his avid interest in sports including cricket, swimming, tennis, horseback riding and sailing. He also took part in the only rifle club in the BVI.

In 1916 Mr. Georges married the then Eunice Egberta O'Neal. They had no children of their own but they raised one of Mrs. George's' nieces and later that niece's two daughters.

Mr. Olva, as he was affectionately known by Virgin Islanders, was a humble, public spirited man who served in numerous ways. He was organist, choir master and class leader of the Road Town Methodist Church for over 50 years and Circuit Steward for 25 years.

As a statesman, Mr. Georges acted as a commissioner in 1946, 1954 and 1956 and as administrator in 1962, during absences of the Head of Government. He also served the state in various other capacities: as member of the Executive and Legislative Councils in 1967; as Chairman of the Public Service Commission; as member of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission; the Scholarships Committee; the Inter-Virgin Islands Conference; the Board of Education. He was also the BVI representative at the West Indies Federation talks in Barbados and Jamaica.

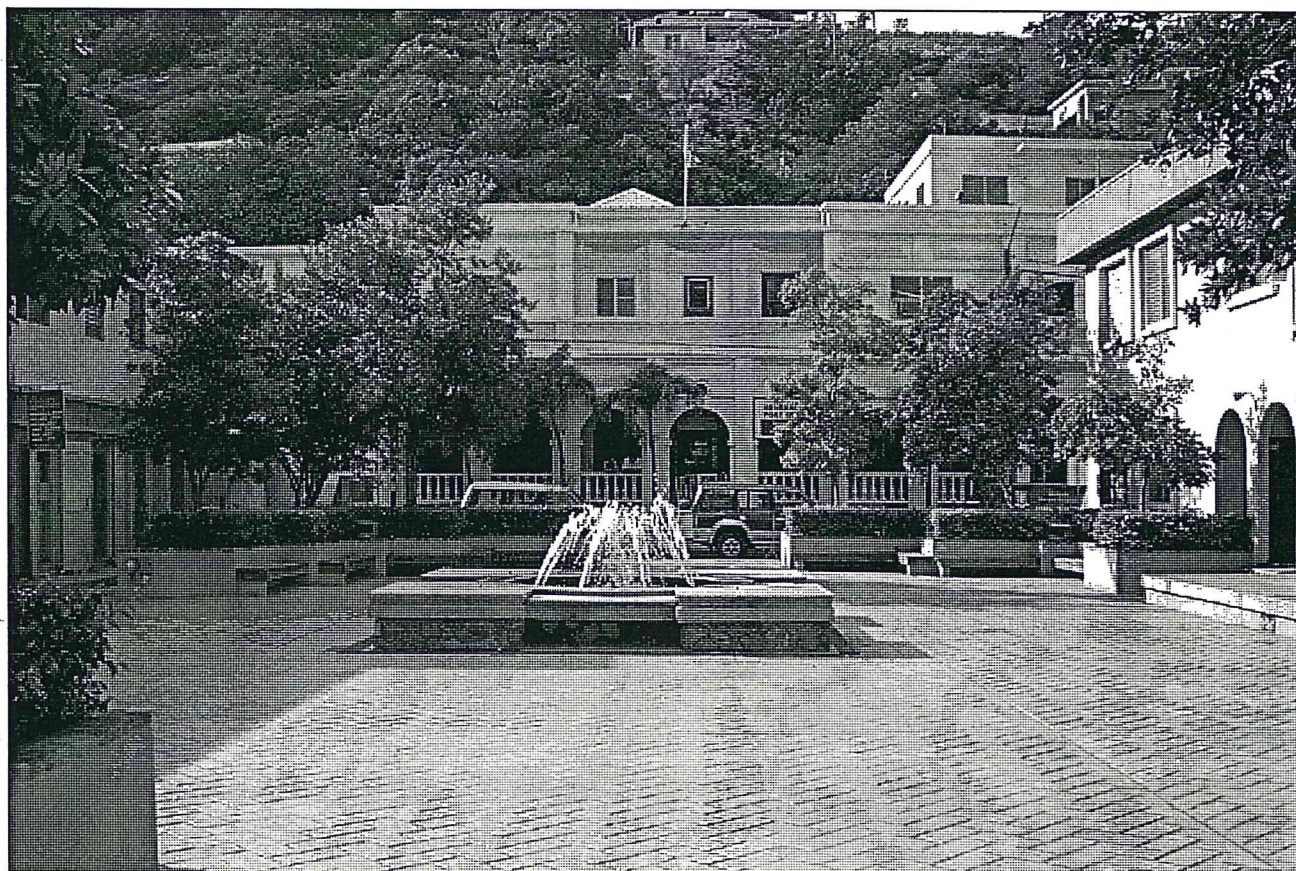
Her Majesty recognized Mr. Georges' vast contribution to the community by conferring on him the award of M.B.E., O.B.E. and finally in 1971, the honour of Knight Bachelor, an honour which has never before nor since, been awarded to any British Virgin Islander. His wife accompanied him to England to receive the award.

Sir Olva Georges served his country well as a business man, a sportsman, and in the various other capacities mentioned above.

Sir Olva died at Peebles Hospital on 27 March, 1976. In recognition of his service to the country, he was given a state funeral. The large attendance at the funeral spoke to the high esteem in which he was held by the people of the BVI. According to the late Dr. Norwell Harrigan who read the eulogy at Sir Olva's funeral ceremony, "Sir Olva was a conservative whose success was firmly

entrenched in what he did, as in what he did not do, and in that he created for these islands an image of respectability and good sense throughout the Caribbean.”

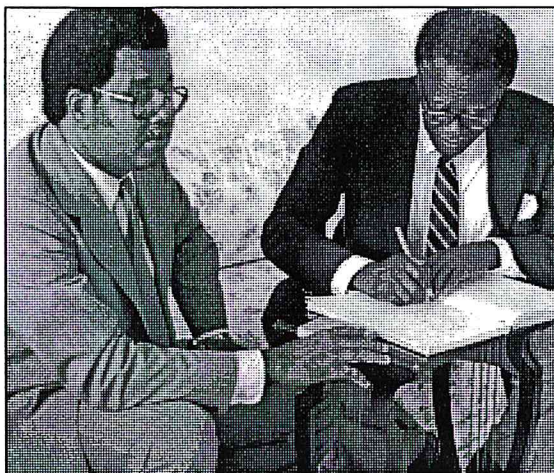
Sir Olva’s name was not allowed to die with him: the Government saw to it that his name is remembered by the naming in his honour of an area in the centre of Road Town – the Sir Olva Georges Plaza, and by establishing a scholarship fund in his name.



Sir Olva Georges Plaza - Site of Old Market Square, centre for Faulkner activities leading up to the 1949 March.

The Chief Ministers 1967-2000

by Elton Georges, O.B.E.



Mr. Elton Georges and Chief Minister Hon. H. Lavity Stoutt signing official documents relating to the appointment of Mr.

Introduction

I have been asked to 'profile' "Chief Ministers who served since Restoration 1950-2000". Profiling does not indicate any extensive discourse, which is a good thing. In the first place there is no time to do more than the briefest sketch. In the second place it is far too soon, of course, to give any proper historical perspective on the achievements and legacy of any one of the four gentlemen (for they are all male). Since the fourth, the Hon R T. O'Neal, OBE, is still in office this is all the more true in relation to him.

Hamilton Lavity Stoutt

Seventeen short but eventful years after the restoration of the Legislative Council an Order in Council was made by Her Majesty the Queen to create a new Constitution for the tiny, somewhat economically backward, Colony of the Virgin Islands. Two Parts of the Order were brought into force on 30th March, 1967 but the

important part which revolutionised the Executive by creating offices of Chief Minister and two other Ministries came into effect on 18th April, 1967. The first general election under this Constitution was held on Friday, 14th April, 1967, and by 18th April the Administrator, Mr. J. S.. Thomson, appointed the first ever Chief Minister of the Colony/Territory. It was Hamilton Lavity Stoutt.

Mr Stoutt had first been elected ten years before as a young man of twenty-eight to represent the first District. By 1967 he was already a veteran who had won three elections (1957, 1960 and 1963). In that year he came in on the ticket of the newly formed United Party (UP). The official party leader did not win his seat and there was little hesitation from Mr Thomson in coming to the conclusion that Stoutt could best command a majority in the Council. The four years in which he pioneered this new system of Government, in this new position, were turbulent ones which saw the rise of Positive Action and the Wickham's Cay and Anegada Agreement crises. Fires and noisy demonstrations shattered the normal

tranquillity of the islands. The years also saw an unprecedented economic boom with its attendant rapid immigration and social change, creating great anxiety. In education, the BVI High School opened and had severe teething problems and growing pains. Then, in 1970, economic recession set in as the reaction to the overgenerous, and now infamous, Bates Hill agreements on Wickhams Cay and Anegada shook investor confidence. The timing was not propitious for an election in 1971 which Stoutt contested with his newly formed Virgin Islands Party (VIP). He did not win a majority, and he found himself appointed the second Leader of the Opposition in the Territory's history.

Mr Stoutt mastered his disappointment and struggled to find his voice and style in this unfamiliar role. Re-elected in 1975, again with a minority, he entered a coalition with W. Wheatley and took on yet a third role, that of Deputy Chief Minister. It was in this period (1975-1979) that he championed the introduction of social security, arguably one of the most important social changes in the Territory's history, and in truth he chafed at having to play second fiddle.

His persistence and leadership skills paid off in the 1979 election when he became Chief Minister once more with a majority in a Council now enlarged to nine elected members (up from seven) by the Constitution Order of 1976. In 1980 a fourth minister was added. Independent Ralph T O'Neal who had entered a coalition with the VIP occupied that position as Minister for Social Services, thus beginning a significant association with Stoutt.

It was to prove a one-term Chief Ministership again, as the 1983 election brought about a tie between the United Party and the Virgin Islands Party, with the former forming a majority coalition with the lone Independent. H L Stoutt was once more Leader of the Opposition, but much more sure of himself on this occasion. He was able to help to nurture the growth of social security, and support the introduction of the Independent Business Companies Ordinance in 1984 which had commenced under his premiership in 1983 after loss of the US/BVI Double Taxation Treaty. He exploited divisions in the Government which eventually led to a 'premature' dissolution of the Council in September 1986. In the following election he regained the Chief Minister's post with a handsome majority, and kept it until his death (not without an anxious day or two of negotiations following the February 1995 election).

In the 1986-90 term he was able to push through a dream on which he had begun work in 1981- to establish a BVI Community College. The College officially opened in 1990 with himself as Founding Chairman – and he was its protector until his death – and in 1993 it was named in his honour. The period of the late 80's and the 90's also saw unprecedented levels of economic growth and prosperity as the financial services industry matured with Stoutt as Minister of Finance.

In private life he had successful careers in building construction, landscaping and real estate development and management. He was a Methodist lay preacher and leader of long standing. He was married to the former Hilda Smith, and they had six children.

In his later years he battled ill health but pressed on with his political career. His sudden death in May 1995 sent huge shock waves through the Virgin Islands and beyond. But he had left a solid Territory in place, in a healthy financial condition.

What will be judged to be his legacy? There is no doubt about his towering stature and therefore the giant shadow he has cast across the Territory's development for the near half-century he was involved in its politics – in education, in social security, in infrastructure development, in creating opportunities. His style was in some respects entrepreneurial: take the long view, take reasonable risks; but also share prosperity around the Territory. In his earlier years he brought benefits for the BVI by maintaining good relationships with British officials and investors. In the last years, the relationship with Her Majesty's Government deteriorated and he chafed increasingly at the colonial restraints. He was never an independence advocate, but fought for greater autonomy on the Bermuda model. In the Caribbean, he strongly supported BVI

participation in working institutions such as the University and the Caribbean Development Bank, and took the Territory into the OECS and CARICOM as an associate member. He was never a committed, vocal, dyed-in-the-wool regionalist, but saw the need for BVI's regional involvement to secure its future. In this, as in other matters, he was a pragmatist. Nearer home, he sponsored, with USVI Governor A Farrelly, a short-lived revival of the Inter Virgin Islands Conference in 1992 which petered out in 1995 when both men left office.

Willard Wheatley, MBE, LLD (Hon)

Willard Wheatley – “Teacher Willard” as he was known to scores of his students – could have been forgiven for being a surprised person on the morning of 4th June, 1971 when he was sworn in as the BVI's second Chief Minister. He had just a month before retired as Administrative Secretary to Lavity Stoutt, contested his very first election as an Independent, had defeated a very strong incumbent, T.B. Lettsome, and here he was, about to lead the Government. Holding the balance between the three seats of the Democratic Party, two of the VIP and the one UP, he formed a coalition with the Democratic Party led by Q. W. Osborne. It was a superb example of destiny in action; of being in the right place at the right time. The months that he had spent as Administrative Secretary (now styled Permanent Secretary) in the Chief Minister's Office had also, fortuitously, been preparation, for this moment; it meant that he was at home in the setting. He is so far the only person in the short history of the ministerial system to achieve the highest political office on his first attempt to enter the Council.

Mr Wheatley quickly settled into the role as if born to it. His first four years (for there was to be a second term) saw a period of slow down in economic activity which had commenced before he took office. The 1970/71 contraction in activities of the Wickhams Cay and Anegada corporations was followed by the OPEC induced oil crisis of 1973/74. Price inflation soared. These had adverse repercussions on the tourist trade and investor confidence, and the difficult situation called for steady, skillful leadership. There was also political turmoil. Mr Wheatley became the first Chief Minister to have a Minister's appointment revoked, that of Q. W. Osborne. He had him replaced by Conrad Maduro, Leader of the UP, as Minister for Natural Resources and Labour. (Maduro later championed the groundbreaking and far reaching Labour Code Ordinance, 1975).

In 1973 a three-man Constitutional Commission recommended important changes, but perhaps the most significant changes to come about were to require one to have belonger status in order to register to vote; to increase the Legislative Council from seven to nine elected members; and to delete Finance as one of the Governor's special responsibilities. The new Constitution, passed in 1976, came into force on 1st June 1977.

Meanwhile in the 1975 general election Wheatley retained his seat in spite of the economic recession and the consequent stringent situation in Government finances. (The tightness of UK control on finance during the early 70's was demonstrated by the fact that a UK Financial Adviser was attached to the Government for three years to look over the Financial Secretary's shoulder, as it were, and ensure that UK grants and even local funds were being spent properly). He also returned as Chief Minister, this time in a coalition with the former opposition, the Virgin Islands Party, with H L Stoutt as Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Natural Resources and Public Health and A. U. Anthony as Minister for Communications and Works.

This second term was marked by a number of milestones. Apart from the passage of the Social Security Bill, two stand out. The first is that Wheatley in 1977 became the first locally elected politician to become Minister of Finance (and the Financial Secretary at the same time

ceased to be a member of the Executive and Legislative Councils). Secondly, in 1978, the Territory balanced its recurrent budget and “graduated” out of grant-in-aid, thus getting a measure of control over its expenditure it had not had in decades. The Territory has not looked back since. The Consolidated Fund continues to grow.

During these terms, sustained long range economic and social development planning also came to the fore under Wheatley’s leadership and encouragement. It was the golden age of United Nations and Commonwealth experts in the Territory. The Development Bank, created in 1974, began to find its feet by 1979. He battled for localisation of the police force. The above achievements notwithstanding, this turned out to be his last term as Chief Minister. The 1979 elections, the first one contested under the Election Ordinance 1977 with nine districts and new boundaries, saw Wheatley returned to the Legislative Council for the new Eighth District, but a majority for the VIP. Wheatley, always an Independent, was not on this occasion able to fashion a majority and so, reluctantly, had to leave office and sit on the Opposition benches, a new and frustrating experience. However, he sat as Leader.

He returned to office in the election of 1983 as a member of the United Party which entered into a coalition with an Independent, C. B. Romney, to form a majority of five in a nine member Council. On this occasion Wheatley had to settle for Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Health, Education and Welfare. It must have been nearly as frustrating for him to accommodate himself to this new position as it must have been for Stoutt in 1975-79. On this occasion political turmoil led to an early dissolution of the Council and a general election in 1986 when Wheatley lost the seat he had held since 1971. He never regained it. Among the honours he received as Chief Minister was the honorary Doctor of Laws Degree (LLD) from the prestigious Pepperdine University in California.

If the style of Lavity Stoutt could be described as bold and entrepreneurial, Wheatley’s was school-masterly, steady hand on the tiller, prudent and avoiding disaster. The image is of deftly steering a ship, avoiding the shoals, and trimming the sails to suit the wind. He left the territory’s finances in much better shape than he found them.

He was married to the former Dorothy Davies, and they had four sons.

Cyril B. Romney

The third Chief Minister was, like the second, a former primary school principal and senior government administrator. Intellectually, he was somewhat of a child prodigy. As Financial Secretary he was also a member of the Executive and Legislative Councils in the period 1968-73. At the time of his first election to the Legislative Council in 1979, he was already also a successful businessman and, with a Masters Degree in Economics, had achieved the highest level of formal education among elected members up to that time.

Like Wheatley, Romney was an Independent who on 12th November, 1983 found himself in the position of determining a majority in the newly elected Council. He negotiated with the United Party to obtain the post of Chief Minister and thus achieved the highest office in just his second term in the Council as an elected member.

In the 1983-86 administration the crowning achievement was the passage in June, 1984 of the International Business Companies Ordinance drafting of which had, in fact, started before the Romney administration took office. That Ordinance launched the Territory on a new and unprecedented era of prosperity, built on the provision of international financial services. In time, this sector would rival tourism as a revenue producer. The university graduates who worked with

Romney as civil servants were delighted to work with a minister who spoke their language. He had decided views on policy matters and expressed them with the utmost clarity and style.

The coalition proved to be somewhat shaky and after just under two years a political crisis led to the “early” dissolution of the Council. In the general election of 1986 Romney retained his seat but took his place on the Opposition bench.

Romney retained his seat again in 1990 and became Leader of the Opposition, a position he resigned in 1993. In 1995, and again in 1999, he was narrowly defeated. He had held the Fifth District seat for 16 years. Of the Chief Ministers he had the shortest tenure and is unique in never having served in any other ministerial role – so far. Over recent years, he has been increasing his ownership position in tourism businesses and maintaining his interest in politics.

He is married to the former Lily Creque and they have five daughters.

Ralph T. O’Neal, OBE

The last of the four, and current Chief Minister is like the third, a former head teacher, senior official and a prominent businessman. R. T. O’Neal resigned from the public service in 1969 after holding the highest administrative offices (with exception of Financial Secretary). He had been, among other things, Clerk to the Legislative Council, Secretary to Government and Permanent Secretary, Chief Minister’s Office, acquiring vast experience in the process. On resigning, he went into business and on his second try, in 1975, was elected to the Legislative Council for the Seventh, now the Ninth District. He has held the seat for 25 years, and counting.

In only his second term he was in 1980 brought into coalition with the Virgin Islands Party as the Minister for Social Services, the new fourth minister position. In this period secondary educational services were extended to Virgin Gorda.

In 1986 he was appointed Leader of the Opposition, but resigned in March 1988 to take on the posts in the Stoutt administration vacated by Omar Hodge, those of Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour. He continued in that position until asked to resign in November 1994.

In February 1995 O’Neal retained his seat and was re-appointed Deputy Chief Minister and also Minister for Health, Education and Welfare. He was appointed Chief Minister in May of that year on the sudden death of H. L. Stoutt, and re-appointed in 1999. He has thus been Chief Minister for just over five years.

Taking over in very difficult and unusual circumstances, O’Neal has had to manoeuvre skillfully. The five years of his term have been bedevilled by disasters – hurricanes Luis and Marilyn in 1995, Bertha in 1996, Georges in 1998, Lenny in 1999. The last two years have also seen storms of the economic variety, as threats to the financial services industry by the rich countries have persisted. The Territory has so far weathered these storms in good shape under his premiership. Constitutional changes and changes in the relationship with the British Government will play important roles in shaping the future. He is presently married to the Rev. Edris O’Neal; they have one daughter. He has three daughters and one son from a previous marriage.

Postscript

All four Chief Ministers were Methodist and three of them had been lay preachers at one time or another. H. L. Stoutt was still so at the time of his death. Three had also been school teachers and civil servants.

Profiles

of

the Chief Ministers of the Government of the British Virgin Islands

H. Lavity Stoutt62
1967-1971, 1979-1983, 1986-1995	
Willard Wheatley, MBE, LLD77
1971-1979	
Cyril B. Romney85
1983-1986	
Ralph T. O'Neal99
1995-present	



H. Lavity Stoutt

CHIEF MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE 1967-1971, 1979-1983, 1986-1995

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION 1971-1975, 1983-1986

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FIRST DISTRICT 1957-1995

The Hon. Lavity Stoutt was re-elected as Chief Minister of the British Virgin Islands in general elections held in February, 1995.

Mr. Stoutt has served as the BVI Chief Minister for a total of more than sixteen years since 1967, when he became the territory's first Chief Minister. Prior to his re-election in February, 1995, he held the office of Chief Minister from 1967-71, 1979-83, 1986-90 and 1990-94.

Since 1986, he has also held the portfolio of Minister of Finance without interruption.

Mr. Stoutt has thus been responsible for leading and guiding the BVI throughout most of the period of its development as an international financial centre.

He was passionately committed to the development of educational opportunities for the people of the BVI, recognizing the importance of high education standards for the territory's development as a financial centre.

He spearheaded the development of the BVI Community College, and also pushed for overseas study in financial services and other fields for BVI students and young professionals. His contribution to education in the BVI was formally recognized in 1993, when the BVI Community College was named in his honour. It is now known as the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

Mr. Stoutt was first elected to membership of the BVI Legislative Council in 1957, and was appointed the member of Works and Communications following his re-election in 1960. He held this portfolio for seven years until the start of his service as the BVI's first Chief Minister in 1967.

He also served as Leader of the Opposition (1971-75, 1983-86) and as Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Natural Resources (1975-79).

Mr. Stoutt had a background in business with successful careers in building construction, landscaping and in the real estate sector.

He was a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Rotary Club, Methodist Men's Fellowship, and was a Steward of the Methodist Society.

He was educated at the West End Methodist School and Virgin Islands Secondary School. He was married to Hilda Smith. They had three sons, three daughters and one grandson.

Summary Accomplishments at the time of his death - courtesy of Government Information Services.

Profile of H. Lavity Stoutt

*Reprinted from Challenge and Change, 1992,
the publication of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Ministerial System.*

Hamilton Lavity, the eighth child and fifth son of Isaiah and Idalia Stoutt of Long Bay, was born on 7th March, 1929. He attended the West End Methodist School and later the then senior school (which later became the BVI. Secondary School and now the BVI High School).

After leaving school, Mr. Stoutt studied house and boat-building with Wilfred Smith. He was also engaged for fifteen years by A.D. Watts in his wholesale and retail business, first as an ordinary employee, then as foreman and finally as top manager of A.D. Watts & Co. (a food, hardware, construction and animal farming concern). In addition, he was active in the West End Society of the Methodist church where, as Sunday School Superintendent, he became closely associated with the young people of the community and their parents.

“As you deal with people”, says Mr. Stoutt, “they get to know your abilities - people have always been my business. I was asked by the people of the area to seek a seat in the Legislative Council as their representative. as I considered the matter, I received encouragement from many persons”. According to Mr. Stoutt, the late Charles Georges, A.D. Watts, Osmond Braithwaite, Claudie brown, Alfred Cameron and Walter freeman were among the persons outside of his community from whom he received the most encouragement. He also received over-whelming support and encouragement from his mother (deceased).

In 1957, Mr. Stoutt’s first effort as a candidate for the legislature as representative for the first district was a success, returning him to the Legislative council under the membership system of government. Following the general elections of 1960 and 1963 he was appointed to the executive council as member for works and communications. in 1966 he participated in the constitutional conference in London, which sought constitutional advancement to the ministerial system.

Although Mr. Stoutt participated in the constitutional talks both in the BVI and in London he credits I.G. Fonseca with moving the proposal for a ministerial system of government. He recalled that the Proudfoot Report (1965) stimulated discussions leading to the present constitutional status.

Mr. Stoutt joined the United Party, which was organized in February 1967. His party won the first election under the ministerial system, which took place in April 1967, and he was appointed as the first Chief Minister. Although he has not always been appointed as Chief Minister - in fact, he was twice on the Opposition, one time as Leader - he never failed in ten consecutive general elections, to be returned to the Legislative Council. He has held the position of Chief Minister on four occasions, including the present term, which began in 1990. Asked what he thought was the secret to his impressive success, Mr. Stoutt stated that it was from “doing the people’s business and delivering the goods; by representing the same district every time by living in the district which he represents; and by being available to his people whenever they needed him - night or day, rain or shine”.

He also gave his wife credit for the overwhelming support which she gave him over the years. His

children too were in later years able to support him due to the training given them by himself and his wife. His nephew, Elmo Stoutt has also been a source of strength.

On the two occasions on which Mr. Stoutt served on the opposition, he “kept the government on its feet. Was never afraid to speak out on any matter. I supported legislation that was in the interest of the people”.

Mr. Stoutt sees the major issues during the 25 years of ministerial government as the Wickhams Cay/Anegada problem. He noted, that, “positive action movement started ‘turning the stones’. I ‘took it on’ and proposed that London re-imburse Bates (the lessee) and get the properties back to the people. I got the support of the British government. After all, it was the Administrator who had signed the agreement with Bates”. He gave the Positive Action Movement credit for highlighting the weaknesses and unfairness of the agreements which “would change the whole composition of the islands” in favour of the lessee. Among other issues were the Business Profession and the Trade Licence Bill in 1989, which brought angry protests over changes introduced after some twenty years: and the abolition of the death penalty by the British Government.

Major changes during the last 25 years: the country took new dimensions in education, communication, transportation, private sector development by locals and expatriates; and public sector development such as Peebles Hospital expansion; clinics in all districts; increase in the number of doctors; electricity and water development; improvement and expansion of roads; ports development at the major entry points; the establishment of a fire department in road town and small units in other areas. Tourism development with offices in the United States, London and Europe; dramatic advancement in education including the community college and music in all schools among others.

Mr. Stoutt believes that ministerial government has thus far been successful. He suggests as marks of this success, “the transfer of finance from the Governor to the political directorate who is also responsible for development; offshore financial services sector; the expansion of the secondary school; the removal of the primary schools from church buildings; and the introduction of a social security scheme”, to name a few. He sees his contribution to this success as “leadership, direction and determination”.

As Mr. Stoutt contemplates the future, he says, “the day is not too far away when we have to think of independence. The removal of the death penalty by the British government is an indication that if we wish to manage our own affairs, the next step in constitutional advancement is independence”.

THE INDEPENDENT, LONDON
23 May, 1995

H. LAVITY STOUTT

On 20 February this year, the people of a small Caribbean British dependent territory went to the polls. They did so in the absence of violence, intimidation, electoral malpractice and UN observers; and in unusual circumstances. Unusual because voters exercised choice not only in the nine electoral districts; but also for the first time in respect of four at large or territorial candidates. Not one-man one vote then; but one man (or woman) five votes.

Chief Minister Lavity Stoutt had not welcomed this London-based acceptance of a Constitutional Review Commission recommendation, without prior debate in the Legislative Council of the British Virgin Islands. He set off, last year, to protest, unsuccessfully, in Whitehall.

"The at-large system was a plot," he announced at the inaugural sitting of the new, enlarged Legislative Council on 2nd March, "A plot designed to derail H. Lavity Stoutt. Well it failed. The people have had their say. Their voice has been heard."

And so indeed it had. On the afternoon of 21st February 1995, Stoutt had been sworn in as Chief Minister for the fifth time since 1967, thirty-eight unbroken years after his first election to the Legislative Council in 1957. Politics and public life in small island communities have some singular features. For leaders, insularity means inescapable proximity - to voters. Protective inaccessibility and the anonymity of big metropolitan cities and nations do not exist. Everyone knows everyone else and everyone is related to and has attitudes about almost everyone else. Family rifts lie deep; antagonisms and rivalry do not disappear with time; the balance of power relationships are constantly changing. Everyone knows everyone's background and business and personal life. Stoutt understood all this pre-eminently well. For him durability was all.

For a man with recognised limitations, the question is how did he do it? This is how it seemed to me. Lavity Stoutt was the archetypal self-made island man, notably successful in the public life of his island home, with staying power and tenacity. He was a man for all Caribbean seasons and most domestic situations. Although his service as Chief Minister was not without break, Stoutt topped the electoral poll for the First District in eleven consecutive general elections. He was never defeated and was the longest continuous serving head of government parliamentarian in the Caribbean.

Stoutt was born in March 1929, the eighth child of Isaiah and Idalia Stoutt of Long Bay, Tortola. In 1943 he became one of the pioneer pupils at the BVI secondary school at a period where a maximum of only twenty-five children could, annually, move on from primary to secondary education. He left school early, studied house and boat building and then for fifteen years made his way in and around the wholesale and retail business.

Although his lack of formal education must at times have been a handicap to him - or because of it - Lavity Stoutt long recognised the need to improve the quality and range of education for all in the BVI and to provide government-financed opportunities outside it for bright, talented young people. Hence the Community College and, before that, his support for extensive scholarship and training programmes in North America, Britain and elsewhere in the Caribbean. For these, BV Islanders, prominent today in Government the professions and in business, have cause to be

grateful. The logical corollary was Stoutt's determination to see BV Islanders at all levels of the Civil Service. The great strides that have been made in the past decade of high technological development and demand are evidence of its success. There are better-equipped minds in many key places than ever before.

Stoutt was a staunch Methodist, a former Sunday school superintendent and regular lay preacher. In the BVI, not only sport and politics mix. The church does too. Stoutt kept expatriate non-voting non-belongers at arms length; but knew how to tap the resources of BVI commerce when elections loomed and work permits were in short supply. None refused him. He could arouse himself and a crowd in seconds with short-fuse rejection of opposition or criticism; and with the earthy, staged humour of his off-the-cuff political polemics. He knew the popular appeal of pillow talk and home-grown philosophising.

Formal speeches found him less assured; often he laboured. He was not always on top of the instant cut and thrust of penetrative parliamentary questioning. Fact briefing was sometimes mislaid. With him abroad, his colleagues and staff could have their endurance, patience and performance tested to the limit. When angered, he positively erupted with rage. While always disconcerting, his choler subsided just as quickly. And he wasn't all that good with combative investigative journalists or television interviewers who could spot a weakness before even a word was spoken and the tapes were running. There is little doubt that he felt most secure behind his own desk in his own office.

The Central Administration Building in Road Town is a major accomplishment. Stoutt was the driving force behind it. Built on reclaimed land beside the sparkling waters of Road Harbour, it boasts fountains that work, air-conditioning, only the second elevator in the BVI and a tasteful staff restaurant. It is a spacious cool and well-laid out building designed with aesthetic flair and with plenty of room for internal expansion. The Chief Minister's suite of offices is sumptuous; but all are of high standard. The furnishings are superb. It all looks to the twenty-first century. Representatives of neighbouring Caribbean governments have come to cast an eye over and to learn from it. Fifteen years ago, it seemed a fanciful dream. With the Community College now in his name, he has left important visual evidence of two capital projects for which he could properly claim inspirational credit.

In 1982 Stoutt, (together with speaker Ivan Dawson) celebrated twenty-five continuous years of service as an elected Legislative Council member. In the chamber, there was a kind of self-stimulated horse-and-donkey to Cadillac réjouissance. Tributes were paid by all when the adjournment motion was put. Stoutt's response ended:

"The people have given me an opportunity to serve, but most of all the people of the First District. They have stayed behind me all the time and we as politicians should make them feel important. I don't have one enemy- I consider one enemy too many. I can walk anywhere. I have friends galore. I am the lover boy of the people of the British Virgin Islands."

It is a curious thing; but to many, he was. Politically, that is.

Kenneth Bain

H. Lavity Stoutt, politician: born 7 March 1929; Chief Minister, British Virgin Islands 1967-1971, 1979-1983, 1986-1995; married Hilda Smith (three sons, three daughters); died 14 May 1995.

It may be of passing interest to recall how the appearance of the Stoutt obituary came to be published in *The Independent*. When the newspaper was established in London in 1986, its editorial policies and appearance differed from those of its broadsheet competitors. Not least was this so in the Gazette pages which contained daily obituaries. Uncritical adulation went into the wastepaper basket, not the paper. The editor wanted fresher, more lively analytical writing without a dreary recital of career developments and dates. The more personal details the better, beside the substance. The practice of anonymous eulogies, often scrambled together by staff writers - favoured by *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* - was rejected. Specialist outside contributors were sought; and the writer's name was printed below his piece. That served to focus the mind more than somewhat, I soon found, if local public opinion and family sensitivities were to be respected.

The Stoutt obituary was the sixteenth I had done for *The Independent* since 1989. One on McWelling Todman followed a year later. But even when an obituary was commissioned and the required number of words had been determined, there was never total certainty of publication. Space was in short daily supply, while prominent figures throughout the world seemed to die with alarming frequency. There were always competing priorities for obituary recognition in the paper's pages. The fact that the Stoutt piece appeared was, I think, welcome recognition by a major London newspaper of his singularly interesting life and achievements, albeit in a small Caribbean island dependency. So far as I know, it was the only one published in London. I am glad that it is now having a second airing, this time in the BVI.

It can reasonably be argued that little more than five years after his death, there is a different Legislative Council. Different, that is, from the one Stoutt knew.

In the early 1980s, the quality of Legislative Council speeches and debates varied but, with notable exceptions, it could scarcely have been described - except perhaps by the hard of hearing - as dynamic, compelling or informative. Parochialism prevailed; and the ZBVI radio broadcasts were turn-offs rather than turn-ons. This was surprising in a part of the world where flowing debate thrives on every street corner. Taxi drivers could seem to be closer to the public pulse, more volubly lucid on key questions and sounder judges than some elected politicians and candidates at that time.

Not so today. Notwithstanding Stoutt's initial fulminations, the enlarged Legislative Council (from nine to thirteen members) has been a notable success. The quality, education and range of experience of most members has noticeably risen. Debates are no longer semi-sterile. They are televised live into every home. Two of the present members are women - the first ever to be elected to the BVI Legislature. Ministers too: unthinkable before the 1990s.

There is now a coherent, cohesive and active Opposition whose presence is felt at every sitting. There are shadow ministers who ask penetrating questions of their opposite numbers. With seven versus six, there is much to debate.

In December 1980, Stoutt as Minister of Finance introduced a 1981 Budget of 13.5 million dollars. Twenty years on, it is likely to be 170 millions. Examination of that should keep Council members busy for a week or two in late 2000.

The management of public money is easy when the sums are miniscule - less than \$200,000 in 1950. The situation in the BVI is vastly different today. With relatively huge sums being appropriated annually, transparent accountability and responsible spending are vital if public confidence and trust are to be secured. Achieving this is a combined function of the Minister of Finance, the Legislature as a whole and of all accounting officers in the public service. We wish them well.

Kenneth Bain

Financial Secretary, 1980-1985

Deputy Governor, October 1982-March 1983

Statement by the Chief Minister H. Lavity Stoutt on the BVI Community College

at the Legislative Council Chambers on 27th May 1993

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take great pride in announcing that on 15th August 1993, the BVI Community College will open the doors of its brand new campus to the people of the British Virgin Islands and usher in a new era in the development of our most important resource, our people.

When we first opened the doors to higher education in this country in January of 1990, there were many naysayers, Mr. Speaker, but we did not listen to them. Back then we had only 135 students and rented quarters right here in Road Town. Since that time 1,305 students have been beneficiaries of education received at the BVI Community College. Today, there are 307 currently enrolled and with the expanded facilities at Paraquita Bay, that number is expected to double in the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, I have always contended that education is the foundation upon which we must individually build our future and collectively, that of our country. On August 15th, every member of this honourable house and every member of this community will have the opportunity to share in this significant accomplishment. Mr. Speaker, it will be a grand celebration. It would be remiss of me not to take this opportunity to thank those who shared the vision by lending their support and perseverance - many in this honourable house, in fact. Through their efforts, the BVI Community College today offers the opportunity to reach personal goals, for all who desire. Whether you choose to work in finance, hospitality, accounting, management or other business areas, or learn a trade, or even pursue your masters degree through the extension linkages, programmes of trade, academic and life long learning have been designed to meet your needs for the future. That, Mr. Speaker, is what this government is working towards, meeting the needs of the people today, so we can all have a better tomorrow.

*Courtesy of Mrs. Eugenie Donovan-Glasgow,
Director, Learning Resource Centre, H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.*

Remarks by Chief Minister Hon. H. Lavity Stoutt on the Occasion of the First Graduation Ceremony of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College

19 June 1994

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board of Governors, Faculty, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am thrilled to extend my congratulations to this pioneer graduating class of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

This graduation ceremony is another historic moment for the British Virgin Islands. My heart leapt within me, and my faith in the people of this territory never wavered, as I envisioned this day, when you would step forward and receive your certificates in tertiary education. Indeed, the faculty has now confirmed that you have fulfilled the requirements for credentials in the areas that you have studied. On this first graduation, as you the faculty and graduates have donned caps and gowns; it is time to reflect on the "gumption" required to take that first step, the creativity it inspired, as we wrestled with the growing pains of a new institution, the tenacity displayed in the face of difficult odds, and the eternal optimism that has brought us to this stage. Ladies and gentlemen, the members of the board, faculty, staff and students all joined hands to establish a tradition of high standards leading to today's graduation exercises. We associated ourselves with regional and international tertiary education providers, so as not to have to re-invent the wheel, but more importantly to ensure that we could quickly set ourselves on the road to accreditation of a college of which not only the British Virgin Islands, but the region and indeed the world, would have confidence. As a government and as a people, we salute you graduates as you celebrate your achievement. I was very happy to see our own media recently pay tribute to your hard work and to your dedication, often in the face of strong odds. Not only is this a signal of encouragement for the growth of this institution of higher learning, but more significantly, it gives due recognition to the important role that this college must play in our economic and social development.

I have watched, I have participated and I have enjoyed the various offerings of this institution since its inception, but especially so, when we obtained the space and the atmosphere that Paraquita Bay offers. The exquisite music rendered by the college chorale and quintet at Christmas time lifted the spirits of the entire community and put us in the festive mood. The many lectures on a variety of subjects of interest to the community continues to raise consciousness and broaden the community's education. This had always been my dream of the role of a community college and it has been more than realized. I tip my hat to president Charles Wheatley in particular, and his faculty and staff for their unstinting efforts to provide a perfect mix of formal and less formal courses - to students as well as to the general public and now, a word to you our pioneer graduates: yours is the first of what we know will be a long line of graduations. You may have felt a bit like the proverbial guinea pigs, as we sought to get the right fit, for the delivery of appropriate programmes. I can see from your shining faces that we succeeded. You made many personal sacrifices. I know that your preparation for today was not a rose garden. I know that it took a major commitment out of you, as many of you worked full-time and still made it here in the evenings for classes. I know that it cost you socially as well as financially. But, graduates, this is proof that not only are you committed to your personal advancement, but that you

recognize that the country itself will advance as a result of your newly acquired skills.

I therefore challenge you graduates to chart your own very clear direction, define your goals and move toward their attainment in a systematic fashion.

I throw out the challenge to you employers to not only adequately ensure the right level of compensation for this ambitious and jubilant group, but to permit them every opportunity to move to the next level of training and management challenges. Indeed you and government share the common objective of establishing a workforce that can compete in all areas, not only in the British Virgin Islands, but world-wide.

Graduates as you move on and up, I am aware that some of you are already pursuing full degrees at international institutions. Maintain the same level of discipline and curiosity as you have in the past. As one of your broader goals, give the highest priority to leadership, always remembering that it is a journey and never a destination. This is your future.

*Courtesy of Mrs. Eugenie Donovan-Glasgow
Director, Learning Resource Centre, H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.*

THE WAY FORWARD

By Hon. Lavity Stoutt

*Reprinted from Challenge and Change, 1992,
the publication of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Ministerial System.*

The Territory of the British Virgin Islands has made significant strides forward since the Ministerial System of Government came into being twenty-five years ago, but there still remains a great deal to be done. The Government cannot sit back on past accomplishments, the Territory must move ahead with development in all areas, some of which are listed below:-

POLITICAL

The political status for most of our Caribbean neighbours have evolved from Ministerial Government to Associated Statehood to independence. The British Government is no longer granting that middle status-Associated Statehood- and so the next step for the BVI must be Independence. There is no getting away from this and we must therefore start now to set the "bedrock" on which this future political advancement will be laid. I look forward to having the opportunity to help set that bedrock for the future political advancement of the country.

The chief concern in setting the tone for success at the next stage is that our people be prepared to meet the challenges which independence will generate. When we move into independence, it means we will be embracing a role that is going to be our own responsibility, and we must be ready to assume that role. It is for this reason that I am so keen on the development of tertiary education, and the increase and improvement in the training of our people. We must therefore be thinking seriously about forward planning so that we will be ready for the next stage of our political development.

ECONOMICS

Political advancement by itself means nothing. The Territory must be economically sound. Therefore we are keenly interested in seeking ways and means of developing such natural resources as we have. For example, in the ocean bed of these islands, there is a very large amount of sand sufficient to support a very good industry. This will be pursued.

Some years ago an attempt was made in the area of exploration for oil and gas. We do not really know what natural resources sit in the seabed or on land. We must therefore give great consideration to finding out. There are signs that copper exists. That too will be investigated. Then there are our natural resources of sun, sea and sand. We have put a lot into Tourism and so far, it has given good returns. It is a fragile industry and we must continue to move forward with improvement in this area, so that it continues to be one of the main stays of the economy.

The Off-shore Financial Industry is another, which we must continue to develop. It has served us well so far, and as long as it continues to be run in a very good, legal manner, it will be

something that will bring us further benefits. Diversification is important. The development of small industries to complement tourism and the other areas mentioned above is of vital importance. Shell work and straw work are some areas of small industry development worthy of attention. Our cultural heritage must not be overlooked. Cultural development in a more profitable manner is an area which could complement tourism in a meaningful way. All these areas, properly developed, well organized and well managed can set the tone for our future economic goal and this is where all of us, repeat, all of us in the BVI must put our heads together to find the ways and means for our future economic development.

There will be a price on the future political development we are thinking about. We do not wish to overtax our people, but they will have to be educated to understand that the money must come from somewhere and that we cannot rely on anyone else to give it to us. But if all of us will work together to support the economic development proposed, there will be no need to place heavy tax burdens on the people.

HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE

Social Development is vital to the survival of any country. Some inroads have been made in this area but we still have a long way to go to get the social fabric of the Territory properly harnessed. The development of our youth is very vital and social development has a big role to play in helping to improve the social fabric of the community. There will need to be an on-going programme in order to foster better on-going development.

Community Development is another very important area. We are well on our way with the construction of community centres in all areas so as to provide meeting places where our youth can pursue activities which will be beneficial to their growth and development. These centres will also serve our senior citizens, as well as other groups within the communities.

Sports as an outlet for the energies of our youth is of critical importance. We have done quite a lot in this area so far but we will continue development of sports.

I have touched on education before, but I would like to re-iterate the importance of education, which is a big item in social development. The people must be properly educated in order for them to play their role in any future development. Primary and secondary education are the feeders for the Community College, and with this in mind we have already made a start in improving these areas as the foundation for tertiary education at Community College level and beyond. This should in the long run produce a well supported College which, if well directed, should, as the years go on, turn out more sons and daughters with a higher calibre of education so that in the long run it would be less necessary to recruit personnel from overseas to fill the void that now exists in the BVI labour market.

Another vitally important area of social development is Public Health. It is expensive and calls for much planning, but if our country is going to go forward, the public health system has got to be well planned and well executed. A poor Public Health Service would mean an unhealthy population who will not be able to assist in the future development and the country at large will be at a disadvantage. We have, however, made great inroads into public health development, and we will continue to move ahead.

INFRASTRUCTURAL

Here again, we have made tremendous strides in the last twenty-five years, but we cannot stop there. We are now thinking about further developments in many areas of our infrastructure. For example, our airport. A person has recently been appointed to carry out a study of the proposed run-way extension. This study should be concluded in mid-1993 and hopefully by 1994; work could get underway. Airport development should enhance expansion in the hotel and off-shore financial industries. A traveller wants to board there and arrive here. This is what we will be striving for.

Other areas of infrastructural development intended include road expansion on the north side of Tortola from Josiah's Bay to Cane Garden Bay; on Jost Van Dyke, a ridge road leading from East End to White Bay, and road improvement and expansion on Anegada and Virgin Gorda. Road expansion will open up land for development. We also look forward, in due course, to a road on Tortola from Zion Hill to Sage Mountain. Existing roads are very narrow and a programme of work to widen them has already begun. This will continue.

Electricity is another item which will be given attention. It must keep pace with other development taking place in the Territory. But not only must it keep pace with development, but other developments must be put in place, so as to increase the demand for electricity thereby making it a more variable venture.

Other works in the pipeline for the not too distant future include port development. West End in particular, will be extended and improved, as a support for tourism; water development, which is already on its way will continue. When in due course the Electricity Corporation sets up its own distillation plant, we hope to feed inexpensive water along the Ridge Road for home and agricultural development in the hill areas. We must also pay keen attention to the further development of the sewage system in order to avoid pollution. Environmental preservation and improvement will continue to be given attention. To this end efforts will be made to develop a fine beach with suitable amenities at Brandywine Bay and a park at Belmont, so that people who live at the western end of the island, as well as tourists will not need to come to Road Town for the kind of relaxation which a park provides.

Space does not allow me to state all that we hope to accomplish in the years ahead. Moreover, as circumstances change, the changes will dictate other areas of development. I would like to repeat, however, that the way forward will require all of us working together if the country is to move ahead as an independent nation.

The Late Honourable H. Lavity Stoutt

Excerpt from a profile by Peggy Stoutt (daughter).

Lavity had an eye for real beauty, when in 1956 he married the lovely Hilda Smith of Carrot Bay. This union produced six children. His love, devotion, caring attitude and calm yet firm approach were indicative of the model father and husband he had been.

H Lavity Stoutt's interest in his people did not stop with the social, physical and intellectual aspects of life, the moral and spiritual development of his fellow men were as much a concern to him. He maintained a good relationship with people; he displayed thoughtfulness concern and consideration for his people. He gave personal assistance to people in their daily struggle to survive and deflated situations of conflict where he could. (That was Lavity). He gave much love where there was so much hate. He was guided by Romans 12:21 "Be not overcome by evil. but overcome evil with good."

He had a knack for making people feel at ease and happy or simply good about themselves. He was a true community leader. A man who lived for others. the young and the aged were on his mind. For him youth was to education as age was to preservation. each related to the other. His solutions - founded the B.V.I. College, which bears his name, and he established a Social Security and other related programmes for senior citizens.

H. Lavity Stoutt had a profound faith in himself and the British Virgin Islands.

I always heard my father say, "a country without vision shall perish. I have a vision for my country and people. I thank God I live to see my vision, large schools, a college, roads and large buildings, best of all a college that my people will meet world wide standards of education. because we are in competition education-wise at that level. I hope someday my people will enjoy the benefits I have provided for them. I love my people and my country. I have a heart".

He became our own "BVI 'Visionary Plenipotentiary'" throughout his entire thirty-eight years of public service to his people; let us pledge to honor his memory by our commitment to personally become visionaries ourselves for our homeland.

"Where there is no vision the people perish."

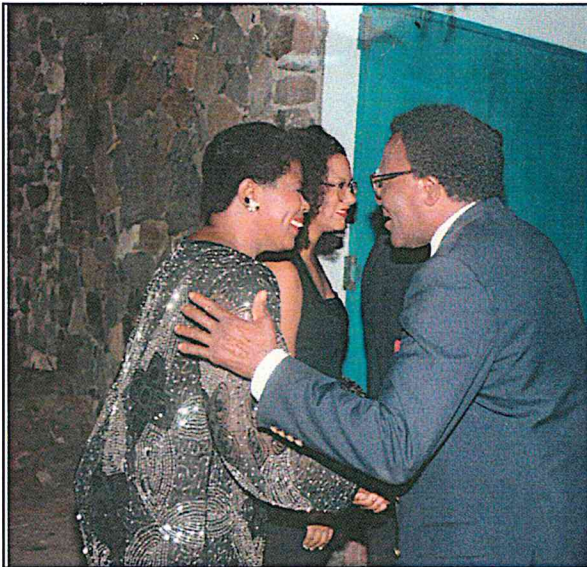
*Courtesy of Mrs. Eugenie Donovan-Glasgow
Director, Learning Resource Centre, H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.*



The Honourable H. Lavity Stoutt and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, March 1993.



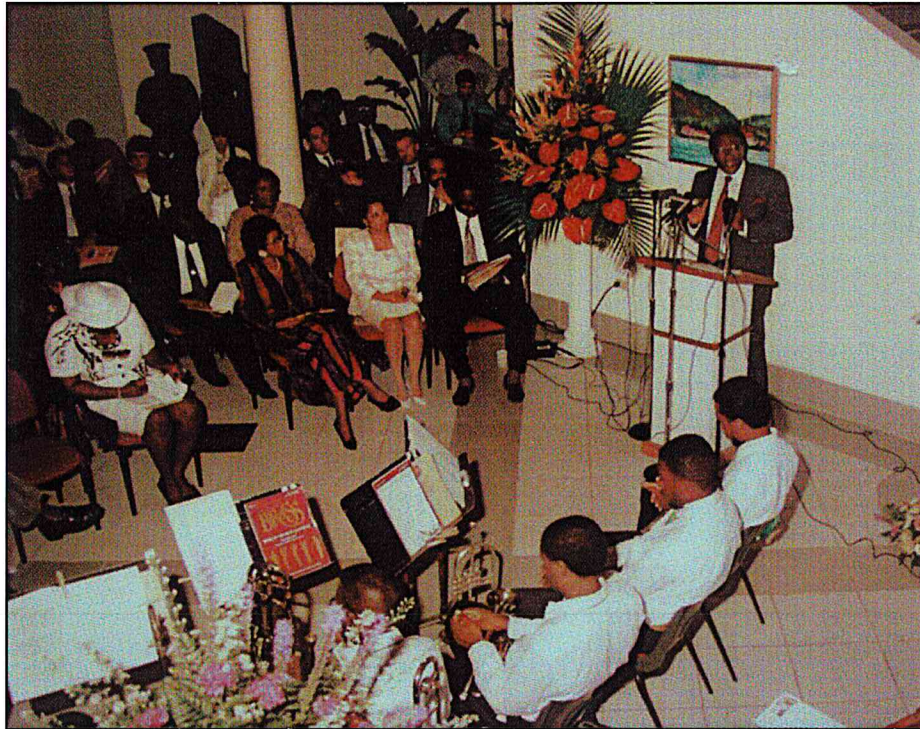
Chief Minister H. Lavity Stoutt speaking at the Opening of the Central Administration Complex.



Last social function of 12th May 1995 - Nurses Association Recognition Dinner for Rita Frett-Georges at the Moorings.



Signing of contract - Social Security Building.



Honourable H. Lavity Stoutt at Opening of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College.

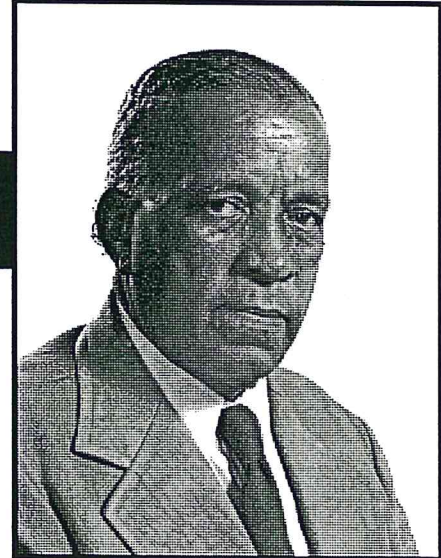


Ground Breaking for the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College with members of the Board of Governors, 14th January 1990.



Contractor James Frett supervising excavation for HLSCC.

Willard Wheatley, MBE, LLD



MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1971 - 1986

CHIEF MINISTER 1971 - 1979

MINISTER OF FINANCE 1976 - 1979

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION 1979 - 1983

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER AND MINISTER OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE 1983 - 1986

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SIXTH DISTRICT

Willard Wheatley was born on 16 July, 1915 at James Young (East End), Tortola. He was the son of Charles and Cornelia Wheatley. He grew to manhood in an area which produced in the British Virgin Islands economic and social conditions which were daunting to the feeble-hearted but rich in opportunity for men of valour, men with the capacity to mould and fashion those elements of the human spirit on which civilisations survive, and on which our territory stands today. Men with the capacity and willingness to lead. Willard Wheatley was such a man.

His training for leadership began in his youth at the East End Methodist Church and Sunday School, and at the East End Methodist School where he excelled as a student. At the age of fifteen, he was appointed as a pupil teacher. He began his teaching career under the strong leadership of the then head teacher Mr Harold Roberts who saw that there was something good in this young boy and took him under his wing as a fowl does with her chickens. He taught during the day, took lessons from the head teacher in the afternoons, and worked on assignments at night in preparation for examinations.

Within five years he had passed four teacher's examinations and, at the tender age of twenty three, he was appointed headmaster of the Long Look School - then an infant school with a roll of 75. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed as headmaster of a full primary school in West End - then a remote village reachable by sailboat, horseback or foot. Three years later he returned to his home at East End as the headmaster of the East End Methodist School, and it was there that his career as an educator came into full flower. While at West End he had passed the highest teachers' examination offered in the Leeward Islands and he now applied himself with vigour to the task of imprinting on his students - pupils and pupil teachers alike - the same desire for excellence that motivated him.

His ambition for himself became his ambition for his students and, in time, the impact of his work at this school was to be felt throughout the territory, even as the light from a beacon illuminates the shadows far from its source.

If there was ever a time in the history of education in the British Virgin Islands when it could be said that the system rested on the shoulders of a giant it would be in that period spanning the

years 1964, 1965 and 1966 when ten of the territory's schools were headed by former pupils of the East End School of Willard Wheatley's day.

Verna Penn-Moll was at the school in Anegada, Obed Malone at North Sound, Virgin Gorda, Elihu Rhymer at St Mary's in the Valley, Charles Wheatley at Road Town, Lucia Potter-Walters at Long Look, Pearl Smith at Belle Vue, Stanley Gordon at West End, Quincy Lettsome at Cane Garden Bay, Mackel Chalwell at Jost Van Dyke and Jenny Smith-Wheatley at St Phillips in Baughers Bay. During his tenure as headmaster at the East End School he was never absent for very long. In 1949, for a period of one year, he attended the Teachers' Training College in Trinidad where he earned a Teacher's Certificate. In 1955, for a period of one year, he substituted for the late Dr. Norwell Harrigan as Supervising teacher, based in Road Town. In 1964, for a period of one year, he attended Nottingham University's School of Education in Great Britain and there he earned the Certificate in Education. His thesis entitled "Primary Education (with special reference to the British Virgin Islands -Early events and present status and the way forward)" was a seminal work.

On his return, he remained in Education until 1967 when he was transferred to the civil service and to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Public Health, no doubt, to help in strengthening the service during the transition to and the introduction of the semi-ministerial system. He remained there until his retirement from government service in 1971.

Later that same year, he threw his hat into the political ring as an independent candidate contesting the seat in the 6th Electoral District of East End/Long Look. He was successful and, as no party had gained an absolute legislative majority, he was invited by the Leader of the Democratic Party to join with them in a Coalition Government and offered the position of Chief Minister.

It may have appeared unusual for a newly elected member of the Legislative Council to go straight to the top as the territory's Chief Minister. But not so in the case of Willard Wheatley. His training for leadership was just as applicable in the political office, as it was in the school. His unusual intellect and ambition for excellence brought a new dimension to politics and he was the perfect choice at the time for leadership that provided direction, structure and stability, all elements vital to the consolidation of government under the newly advanced status of the ministerial system.

He was also a perfect choice for another reason. When he assumed the chief ministership in 1971, economic activity in the private sector was virtually at a standstill and the public coffers were in the red. In other words, there was a very large deficit and, among other indicators of the economic slow down, unemployment was high and rising and bank closures were up. That sad state of affairs had come about as a result of the cessation of activities on the Wickhams Cay Reclamation Scheme and the Anegada Project, consequent upon the government's decision to acquire the Bates-Hill assets for the people of the BVI. Understandably, this led to a loss of investor confidence in some quarters.

Chief Minister Wheatley had his work cut out for him and everyone realized that the task required a herculean effort and, fortunately for the country, the right man was on the job. Both by temperament and training, Wheatley was up to the task and, along with his ministerial colleagues and others, set about the task with true grit and gusto, and determined not to be sidetracked.

Their initial brief was to jump start the economy, restore investor confidence, balance the government's budget and eliminate British grant-in-aid. It would not be appropriate to give an exhaustive list of the initiatives that were launched or of the proposals that were discussed or the legislation that was introduced. However, for anyone who wishes to have such detailed information they may refer to the official budget addresses, the Throne Speeches containing the government's legislative agenda and the Hansard with the proceedings of the Legislative Council. Only a few, therefore, will be mentioned. They were able to convince the British Government to

extend indefinitely the grace period for the repayment of the Wickhams Cay and Anegada Loan; to send a two man team to Bermuda to study its tax haven business with the hope of introducing such businesses to the territory, the streamlining and rationalizing of government's expenditure, instituting more efficient revenue collection methods, establishing a local development bank, localizing the public service, ensuring that local persons were recruited into the police force, some of whom did their initial training in Britain and a constitutional commission, the Deverell Commission, recommended major constitutional changes.

After a long and arduous fight that lasted the entire four year life of the Council, things began to improve: The investors began to return, government revenues began to pick up and, in general, the level of economic activity increased. In fact, for each of those four years whenever Chief Minister Wheatley delivered his budget address or made one of his quarterly territorial addresses, he always stated that there was light at the end of the tunnel and that the ship would soon be coming to port.

Despite the optimism of Chief Minister Wheatley, those years were very turbulent ones for the government and people of the territory. The Leader of the Democratic party and Minister for Health and Welfare was dismissed by the Chief Minister and a member of the Opposition put in his place. In the House, the Government held a majority of only one and this made it potentially more difficult for the government to implement its legislative agenda. The Opposition itself, apart from being very knowledgeable and effective, was also very rabid and one witnessed some of the best in the cut and thrust in debates. There were two major demonstrations in Road Town to protest the governors' actions in the commutation of two death sentences. As a result of these demonstrations, there were petitions for the recall of both governors and a demand for constitutional change that would reduce their perceived power. The territory experienced an upsurge in lawlessness, probably associated with the depressed economic state. It also witnessed the first judicial execution by hanging for many years, which many believed (erroneously, as it turned out) would have been a deterrent to further crime. In spite of these distractions, Chief Minister Wheatley soldiered on undaunted.

A departing governor in 1974 talked about the foundations that had been laid during this period and the consolidation that had taken place and predicted that they would be the backdrop for future advancement and development.

In the general elections of 1975, Wheatley retained his seat as representative for the 6th district. Once again, no party had secured an absolute legislative majority and the jockeying and horse trading lasted for several days, as an anxious population and electorate awaited the outcome. When it did occur, Wheatley had been able to secure the post of Chief Minister for the second consecutive time to continue the work he had started in 1971. This time though he was paired up with the Virgin Islands Party in a Coalition Government.

By the time his second term started, he was beginning to see the fruits of his labour and the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel was now a beacon. Things were better generally and were continuing to improve, but as Chief Minister he continued to be relentless in his efforts because he had a long term goal of the elimination of British grant-in-aid and the balancing of the territory's budget. For persons who may not have been familiar with the constraints placed on the "independence" of the local government in financial matters, the draft budget had to be approved by London which maintained a firm grip on all matters relating to financial and fiscal matters. Generally, all British funds, whether from grant-in-aid or development aid had to be spent in Britain, usually through the Crown Agents. That explains, for example, why all government vehicles were of British origin. Not until the BVI got out of grant-in-aid, was the territory free to spend its money as it pleased and where ever it pleased. He thus kept up the pressure maintaining

his conservative stance in financial and fiscal matters and he would always boast in his budget addresses and other official addresses that it was his effective house keeping and good husbandry that were accounting for his level of success.

Again, giving a litany of the achievements during this period would not be practical and so we shall simply highlight the major events. A major constitutional advance took place in 1976 which resulted in the greatest degree of autonomy that was at that time commensurate with the status of dependency and made the BVI one of the most constitutionally advanced of the dependencies. A Ministry of Finance was created which removed the subject from under the Governor and placed it squarely in the hands of the Minister. Wheatley became the first Minister of Finance. The number of electoral districts was increased by two and correspondingly the number of legislative seats was increased to nine. Provision was also made for an extra ministry and the Mercy Committee was reconstituted. In the field of Education, a teachers' week was re-instituted and there was a significant expansion of the physical facilities in Anegada, Cane Garden Bay, Meyers and Long Look. In-Inter Virgin Islands Affairs, Friendship Day celebrations were instituted to commemorate the kinship and other ties between the peoples of the British and US Virgin Islands.

Wheatley's hard work and financial and fiscal responsibility paid off handsomely in 1978 when the territory emerged from grant-in-aid with a surplus of 1.5 million dollars. By the end of 1979, the surplus had grown to over 2 million dollars. The territory was now indeed financially sound, economically and socially stable and poised for further healthy growth.

Things had come full circle. Wheatley had inherited a deficit of almost 2 million dollars from the Stoutt Administration in 1971. By the end of 1979, he had succeeded in turning that deficit into a surplus of over 2 million dollars. Ironically, Wheatley lost the chief ministership to H.L. Stoutt who then inherited the surplus! Wheatley, however, did not lose his seat (in fact, he was returned unopposed) and continued to represent the 6th district (which under the new constitution only comprised East End, the Long Look section having become the new 7th district). Wheatley was appointed Leader of the Opposition in the 10th Legislature and served with distinction, as he was wont to do, until 1983.

In the General Election of 1983, he was returned unopposed in the 6th district and served in a coalition government with Cyril Romney as Chief Minister. He himself became the Deputy Chief and Minister for Health, Education and Welfare. His most noteworthy achievements during this period were in Education. He endorsed the University of Hull Extension Programme which allowed some thirty teachers to earn either the Certificate in Education or the Bachelor of Education degree while still on the job. He also initiated a comprehensive review of the educational needs of the territory by UNESCO that was to serve as the basis for improvements well into the nineties, but when he tried to implement some of its recommendations, his efforts were met with stiff resistance, including a petition that sought to prevent the appointment of an off-island principal for the BVI High School. It has been said by some that it was the fall out from that confrontation that caused him to lose at the next and subsequent general elections. Whether that is so or not, many of those who had been involved or associated with the protest and petition later confided in him that they had acted impulsively. As Minister of Health, he sought to improve the care of the elderly by, among other things, opening up the Adina Donovan Home.

The Romney Government ended prematurely in 1986 and general elections were called before they were constitutionally due. Wheatley lost his seat at that election and although he contested two other elections (two district and one territorial), he was never again elected to the Legislature. He, however, continued to maintain a keen and lively interest in his community and was always willing to serve whenever his services were required.

Throughout his life, Willard Wheatley was guided by honesty and integrity and ardent desire

to serve. These were the qualities which were vital to success in the profession of his choice, and went hand in hand with the duties of the local preacher and Sunday School teacher which were also the responsibilities of the headmaster. In addition to everything else, he also served as organist and choir master and writer of deeds and wills.

In recognition of his outstanding service and achievements as churchman, educator, civil servant, politician and statesman, Willard Wheatley, who has been described as one of the territory's most illustrious sons, received many honours. Among these were the MBE for his service to education, the key to the city of Shreveport, Louisiana, and an Honorary Doctor of Laws from Pepperdine University of California. He is listed in the 1976 edition of Men of Achievement published by Melrose Press of Cambridge, England. In addition, the Willard Wheatley School at Major Bay was named in his honour.

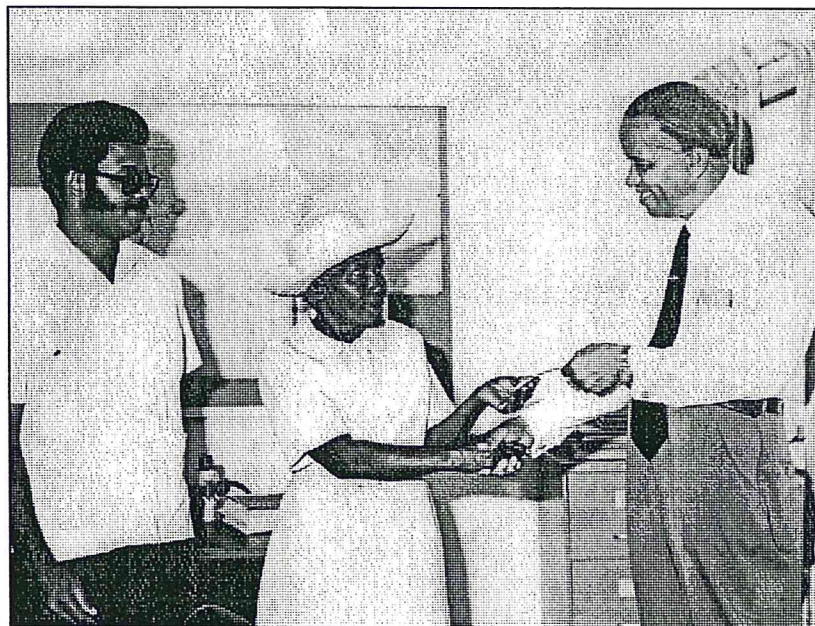
For all that he did and for all the accolades that he received, he remained a very humble man who always believed that he was an instrument through whom God worked to help his people. He has also acknowledged that his accomplishments were made possible because others believed in him and were prepared to assist him. To all such persons he has always felt a deep debt of gratitude.

Likewise, to his wife and children who made untold sacrifices and had to endure many hardships, he was especially appreciative. He regarded his success, therefore, as a peoples success.

There remained, however, one disquieting event in his life which persisted to the very end. For the mammoth tasks which he performed as Chief Minister during the turbulent years of the seventies, he felt that neither the Foreign and Commonwealth Office nor the local government gave him the recognition he had so rightfully deserved. This lack of recognition was also carried over into his death when he was not accorded a full state funeral. Anywhere else in the world, one so illustrious as he, would have been the recipient of such an honour. It is perhaps not too late for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the local government to correct a gross injustice.

Willard Wheatley was married to the former Dorothy N Davies of East End. They were the proud parents of five sons and three daughters and numerous grand and great grand children. Willard was taken away on 22 January, 1997.

Prepared by Douglas D. Wheatley - 10 November 2000.



From left to right:
Permanent Secretary Elton
Georges, Blanche Fahie
Chief Minister Willard Wheatley

MESSAGE BY FORMER CHIEF MINISTER
Mr. Willard Wheatley, MBE, LLD

It is with distinct pleasure that I am writing this message on this auspicious occasion.

Since 1967 the year when the government and people of the British Virgin Islands chose the ministerial system we have become a society which has moved, as it were, next door to the world with its technological advancements and its social evils as well.

In the 1970's, especially, which were the golden years of the period in question, the government of the British Virgin islands under the capable guidance of my pragmatic chief-ministership, came to the realisation of our new status and started to prepare its citizens through various means, to become contributing members of a society that has become economically strong and socially stable.

For eight consecutive years as Chief Minister from 1971 - 1979, for four years -1979 - 1983 - as Leader of the Opposition, for three years - 1983-1986 - as Deputy Chief Minister, for eleven years - 1971-79 and 1983-86 - as Minister of Education, my political and educational ambition and drive led the British Virgin islands from a huge deficit in 1971 into a healthy economic situation, and created an atmosphere which culminated in the elimination of grant-in-aid in the year 1978. This was a most important event in the history of the British Virgin Islands; so much so that I was made the first Minister of Finance, taking over a responsibility, which formerly belonged to the Governor.

My administration during those years laid the foundation for an economically and socially viable community worthy to supervise the growth of another generation.

I wish to pay tribute to my ministerial colleagues, Hon. H. L. Stoutt and Hon. C. B. Romney, who, as Chief Ministers, have served during this twenty-five year period as captains of the ship of state, in their own special way.

I believe that these two men, during their terms in office, braved the storms, utilized their strength, and gave of themselves without fear and have contributed to the successes or failures of the period in question.

I wish also to express my appreciation of all other politicians, Speakers of the House and our Foreign and Commonwealth Office counterparts who have also given of their untiring efforts in keeping the Territory moving forward.

From the Ministerial Government's inception until today, in spite of its many shortcomings, the British Virgin Islands, from a political, social and economic standpoint, has been very outstanding in the Caribbean- in spite of today's "squandermania."

Thank you very much. God bless the British Virgin Islands and may the ministerial system of government continue to prosper.

*Reprinted from Challenge and Change, 1992,
the publication of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Ministerial System.*



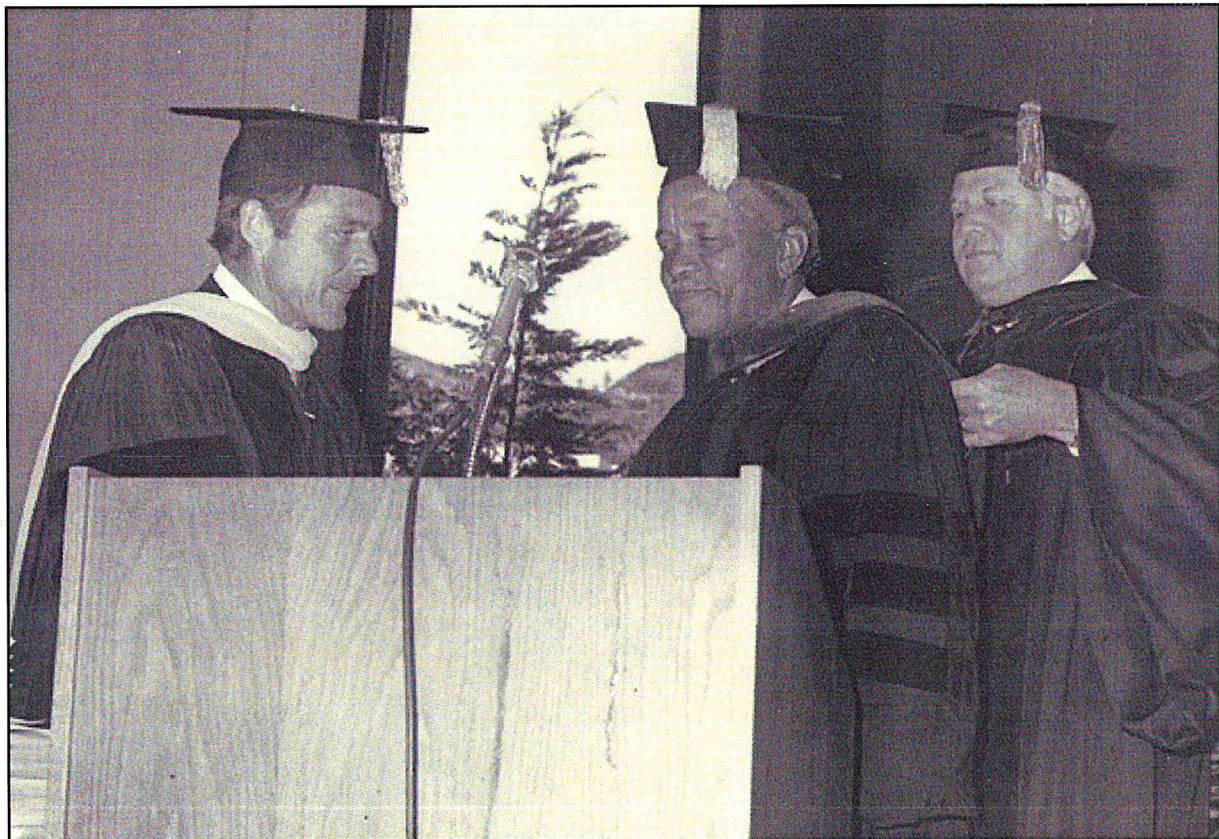
Honourable Willard Wheatley at a tourism function with (1st row, left to right) Elihu Rhymer, Elton Georges and Ginny Cary of the Moorings.



Mr. and Mrs. Willard Wheatley at the British Virgin Islands Spring Regatta.

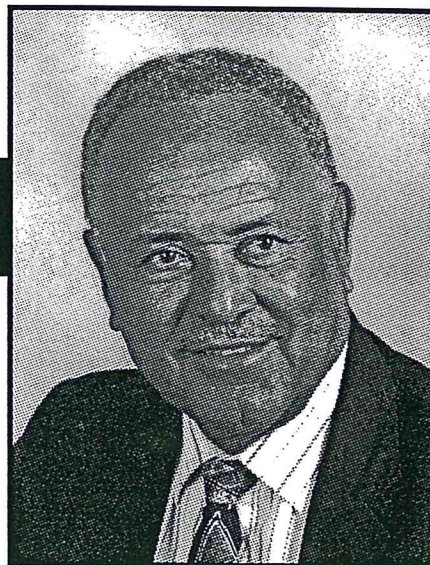


Honourable Willard Wheatley and Financial Secretary Douglas Wheatley with Mayor Bradley of Los Angeles.



Honourable Willard Wheatley receiving Doctor of Law from Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA.

Cyril B. Romney



FINANCIAL SECRETARY/EX OFFICIO MEMBER
OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1969-1973

CHIEF MINISTER 1983-1986

ELECTED MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1979-1995

DISTRICT SERVED: FIFTH DISTRICT, 1979-1995

Mr. Cyril B. Romney was born to Benjamin and Miriam Romney of Tortola, British Virgin Islands on March 1, 1931. He obtained his primary education locally and completed his Secondary Schooling at the St. Kitts-Nevis Grammar School in St. Kitts, British West Indies, from which he graduated with the overseas Cambridge University Senior School Certificate in December 1947. He later attended the Erdiston Teachers Training College in Barbados and Graduated at the head of his class with the Barbados Board of Education First Class Teachers Certificate in 1956. Mr. Romney also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Political Science from Syracuse University, New York.

Mr. Romney entered the local teaching service as a pupil teacher at the tender age of thirteen years. In 1945 at the age of fourteen years he was sent to the St. Kitts Grammar School on a British Development and Welfare Training Scholarship for Teachers. He returned in 1947 after spending two years and eight months, to take up the position of Assistant Teacher at the Road Town Elementary School, then headed by Mc Wellington Todman.

In August 1949 at the age of eighteen years Mr. Romney was appointed Head Teacher of the West End School of one hundred and forty six students. Several of the five teachers were older than he was. The previous years he had obtained his Second Class Teacher's Certificate, the highest Certification available at that time; he was the youngest qualified teacher in the territory at that time.

After five years at West End School in 1954, he left for Erdiston Training College in Barbados. On his return in 1956 he was appointed principal of the Road Town School which had an enrollment of about five hundred pupils. In 1960 Mr. Romney was brought into the Civil Service to conduct the census in place of Norwell Harrigan who had gone on sabbatical. Mr. Romney was to remain with the Civil Service. He assumed a middle management position of Secretary to the Member of Works and Communications (Glanville Fonseca).

To equip himself for the challenges of this second career, Mr. Romney sought and was granted leave and scholarship (USAID) to read Economics at Inter American University in Puerto Rico.

He received advanced standing on his past academic record, and in two years, with some hard work, he had satisfied the requirements to receive his Degree, majoring in Economics with a minor in Business. He took a further challenge to pursue a Masters Programme in Economics and Political Science at Syracuse, New York. With a full year remaining on his four-year scholarship, he graduated from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Administration. His decision to write his thesis on Tourism which he thought would be of greatest benefit had been frustrated by lack of official support, from the Virgin Islands.

The year 1966 saw him back in the Virgin Islands in the position of Administrative Secretary (Permanent Secretary) to the Member for Works and Communications - Terrance Lettsome. He was later transferred to the Chief Minister's Office. One year later he was offered the position of Financial Secretary becoming, on 1st January 1969, the first local appointee to that position which he held for four and a half years, retiring in June 1973, after twenty-seven years in the Public Service.

In 1975 Mr. Romney ventured into the political arena as an independent candidate in the First District against Lavity Stoutt. He lost that bid, but was elected in 1979 as the representative for the Fifth District and became a member of the Opposition.

He served his second term 1983 to 1986 as Chief Minister of the Coalition Government - with the United Party led by Willard Wheatley. That Government ended in 1986, but Mr. Romney was re-elected and served on the Opposition for a further two terms. He also served as Opposition Leader and was the principal speaker on Tourism and Finance. In 1995 and 1999 he was unsuccessful in being returned to the Fifth District. He is a Permanent Justice of the Peace, a founding member of the Rotary Club of Tortola, and a Member of the BVI Chamber of Commerce and the Hotel Association.

At age 69, Mr. Romney remains actively involved in commercial and residential real estate development. However his passion is tourism, in which field he features prominently in the promotion and servicing of cruise calls to the BVI.

Mr. Romney's keen interest in infrastructure development in tourism has led to his involvement in a number of successful ventures which include a travel agency - Travel Plan opened in 1969; a taxi service and rentals in 1979, safari vehicles and cruise tourism.

There was reluctance in the Community and Government to support cruise tourism, but his tenure as Chief Minister provided the opportunity for further study and eventually a cruise pier was built and has been since expanded. His latest venture has taken him into the hospitality industry as owner of the territory's largest resort, the one hundred and thirty seven room and suites, three hundred capacity Prospect Reef Hotel. This project involves a full fleet of transportation infrastructure vehicles, boats and taxi operators - glass boat services etc.

He was for many years a very active member of the Tourism Board and initiated several strategies for promotion of the Virgin Islands.

Mr. Romney is an avid sportsman and in his earlier years achieved prominence in tennis, cricket, football and track and field athletics. Currently retired from these activities, he remains actively committed to physical fitness and follows a strict regimen of daily walks and workouts in his fitness centre.

Mr. Romney's philosophy of life is rooted in the christian teachings of the Methodist Church, to which he remains faithful and where he worships regularly as a communicant member. He professes a lifelong exposure to this influence which is reflected in his morality of tolerance and a genuine concern for the less fortunate members of the community in which he lives. He is generous by nature and contributes freely to charity and other worthy causes.

Mr. Romney and his wife, Lily have been married for over forty years and they have successfully raised a family of five daughters, all completing their formal education with business degrees from Universities in the United States.

Major Issues/Challenges that Arose During His Terms of Service:

Action by the Opposition, with the support of two serving ministers, to bring a vote of "no confidence" against the Chief Minister was stymied by the dissolution of Council by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister, thereby necessitating an early election in which one of the defecting ministers lost his seat and the other held on to his by a single controversial vote. Abolition of capital punishment – an issue that angered the population especially in view of a number of reprieves from execution sentencings for heinous murders perpetrated on British Virgin Islanders by outsiders.

Major Changes that Took Place During His Terms of Service:

Emergence of the country from British Grant-in-Aid status; extension of electricity service throughout the Territory; introduction of modern telecommunication services Territory-wide; development of surfaced roads throughout the Territory with the concomitant increase in vehicular population; establishment of tertiary education in the Territory; change of title from "Administrator" to "Governor"; establishment of the social security system and the Development Bank of the Virgin Islands; localisation of the top ranks of the civil service; increase in the size and composition of Council; the emergence of a distinct business and professional class within the resident population.

Major Contributions During His Terms of Service:

Introduction of the International Business Companies Act; negotiating the return of Wickham's and Anegada to the public domain; negotiating associate membership of the BVI in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States; leading the BVI to membership in the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; leading the BVI to membership in the Caribbean Basin Initiative. Extension of the provisions of the Aliens Land Holding Regulation Act to all but Belongers of the BVI.

Comments:

Historical documents provide rare but sometimes vivid glimpses of the past and it is a matter of record that the former representative Legislature of the Virgin Islands ceased to exist when one of my forebears, Joseph Benjamin Romney, in a tiff with the president of the Council, gathered his papers and stormed out of the last meeting, thereby leaving that august body without a quorum, since others before him, for one reason or another, had consistently denied a presence at meetings. This single act left the Colony devoid of local representation and in its place a veritable one-man regime, caricatured by Walter Watson in his satirical verses of "His Honour the Commissioner". The Virgin Islands lapsed into an administrative malaise for the next fifty years and it took the humorous musings of Theodolph Faulkner to bring to the fore any thought of returning to representative government.

The events of 1949 are well documented and in December 1950 a Council of elected, official and nominated members met for the first time, among them, one Benjamin Albert Romney, son of the aforementioned character of 50 years earlier. Another Romney made an appearance in 1969 as Financial Secretary and served as an ex officio member until 1973 and then again as an elected member from 1979-1995. This newcomer, yours truly, Cyril Brandtford Romney, who also did a short stint as Chief Minister, is the great grandson of the original forebear. A direct descendant great, great grandson, Andrew Fahie - currently occupies a seat in the Legislative Council as minister. The legacy continues, and so it should. Those who care about their fellowmen should ever seek to serve them. I believe in the collective strength of the extended family and I am proud to have been a part of that family-chain of service to the community.

Other families can claim similar, if not consistent, chains of legislative service. The Stutt brothers, Prince and the illustrious H. Lavity, easily come to mind as do the O'Neal brothers - Ralph Telford and Waldo and their cousins, Hubert Robinson and Joseph Reynold O'Neal. Nor can I omit the Penn siblings - Attorney General Dancia and brother Andre with earlier cousin, Howard Reynold Penn. The Smith family has a place as well with the presence at different times of Leopold and nephews, Wilfred and Orlando; and by any measure spectacular, was the presence, together and apart, for consecutive terms, of three grandsons of Hogarth "Garty" Maduro - Conrad of same surname and his cousins, Omar Hodge and Walwyn Brewley.

Important as the Legislature is, with the attendant glamour and fanfare accorded elected membership, it is important to acknowledge the glue that holds it all together - the money it spends and the people who manage it. The last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed unprecedented growth in the Territory's economic well-being with BVI per capita income, fuelled by a buoyant tourist trade and the meteoric rise of offshore financial activity, rising to be among the highest in the Caribbean, all the while this growth being matched by a virtual explosion of the civil service rolls and the education to higher levels of the rank and file to service it. Indeed the superlatives used to describe it would place the education profile of the country with university graduates per capita, again among the highest in the Caribbean.

And, playing a significant role in all this is the flood of imported labour at all levels necessary to service and sustain the burgeoning economy which some view as unhealthy, some with xenophobic reserve, yet others with guarded ambivalence. This migrant and immigrant inflow of labour, not only replaces earlier waves of emigrant Virgin Islanders, but accounts in no small measure to the tripling of the population in a single generation.

Population and economic growth within a finite and restricted area would appear always to be accompanied by a parallel increase in the level of crime and the BVI offers no exception to this social phenomenon. This is not to say that criminal activity is rampant. On the contrary, it is still

comparatively low by any standard, but, especially in a country where the judicial “white gloves” ceremony prevailed in successive years on the occasion of the assizes, its growth by any index must be addressed and serious efforts employed to suppress and eliminate it. The scourge of the times is narcotics trafficking, leading inevitably to drug use and addiction locally, notwithstanding the foreign basis of the traffic. Resources sensibly employed to combat this and other criminal activity, including proactive intervention will be resources well spent.

One of the paradoxes of economic growth is that it creates some special social problems. In the drive toward a bigger pie and a more abundant vessel, it is important not to forget that inevitably some get left behind, as, for various reasons, they seem to miss the boat. For these persons there is only one reasonable course of action: a firm commitment at the national level to employ the collective wealth of the state to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves - the sick, the aged, the handicapped and the needy.

In this, the first year of the much touted new millennium, may I close my commentary with an appeal to my erstwhile colleagues - the current leaders of this land of ours - to occupy the moral high ground and make this their foremost resolution for the coming new year. It is the right course for it is God’s way.

May God bless you all, Councillors!

Cyril B. Romney
3rd November 2000

EVOLUTION OF THE MINISTERIAL SYSTEM

The Quest for Greater Autonomy

By Cyril B. Romney ©

Reprinted from Challenge and Change, 1992, the publication of the 25th Anniversary of the Ministerial System.

ENTERING POLITICS

The slow emergence of greater autonomy in the British Virgin Islands resulted, as elsewhere in the Caribbean, from the fortuitous conjunction of external and internal forces, the latter both economic and political in nature. The first and most significant stirring of local political reform came in 1949 with the great freedom which resulted in the restoration of the Constitution and the Legislative Council of 1950. In 1952 a "Committee System" had been introduced to place some emphasis on economic development and by 1954 some constitutional advance was made with the election of members of the Legislature to the Executive Council. The Committee System was upgraded and became the "Membership System" (colloquially referred to as the baby ministerial system) which meant more independence on policy-making by the elected members.

Indeed, these changes reflected a new degree of political awareness by the average British Virgin Islander. This was fuelled by the emergence of greater changes in the nearby USVI, the introduction of a ministerial system in Antigua and St Kitts, and the advance towards complete self-government in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad. The demand for further advancement in the BVI was kept alive by a number of political activists but when a hard decision had to be made the BVI remained aloof. Once more, external events projected a long shadow on the BVI; in fact, greater powers to BVI legislators, together with a wider scope of law-making, came about as a result of the 1956 defederation of the Leeward Islands Colony. In an effort to protect their newly acquired powers and in view of the fact that it was openly believed that the B. V. I's destiny had a "westward" direction which "insulated them to some extent from the ferment of constitutional speculation"⁽¹⁾ pervading the Caribbean, the Colony opted out of the Federation of the West Indies (1958-1962).

Britain had hoped that with the collapse of the Federation of the West Indies the smaller colonial appendages would find their way to independence. By contrast, some of the smaller colonies, including BVI, struggled to keep their umbilical cord attached to the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, local legislators such as H.R. Penn and I.G. Fonseca remained actively involved in urging some form of extension of home rule, in the same fashion that had developed in the USVI. The electorate became apathetic to political developments and this was reflected in the decreasing number of registered voters who bothered to go to the polls. The Road Town politicians (often referred to as the "Road Town elite") dominated the scene and demand for an increase in the number of districts made itself felt. On the other hand, Britain was, and has always been, reluctant to increase the number of electoral districts. The local economy was in the doldrums with subsistence farming still playing a major role; nevertheless the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had doubled between 1957 and 1962 (from an estimated \$1 million in 1957, to \$2,161,000 in 1962) ⁽²⁾ This was mainly due to increased public sector spending which in turn reflected on the private sector where the construction business was witnessing a positive phase. The word "development" was beginning to become a household term with tourism seen as the only way out from an otherwise aid-dependent and dormant economy.

POLITICAL EVOLUTION

Party politics had not yet made an impact, mostly because the constitutional model, borrowed verbatim from Montserrat, did not envisage such dynamics. But despite criticism to the contrary, some local activists displayed vision; in 1950, influenced by what was going on in St. Thomas (USVI), local politicians had formed the Progressive League, thus indicating high aspirations.

Throughout the 1950s, politics had remained “a sort of learning experience”⁽³⁾, yet attempts at forming political parties such as the “United Three” and “United Two” were made before the inception of the Ministerial System, largely, no doubt because of the exposure of the leader of one and then the other to political organisation in St Kitts where he attended grammar school, or elsewhere in the Caribbean while attending conferences of some sort. The administrative and constitutional limitations were too overbearing and even a Constitutional Commissioner in 1965 candidly admitted that “government is largely out of touch with the public which is, I believe, one of the main reasons for the present discontents.”⁽⁴⁾ The fact that all decisions were taken by the quasi-ministerial Executive Council and the rest was mere routine and “rubber stamping”⁽⁵⁾ (including a virtually powerless Opposition), was the subject of debate. Public opinion regarded the two elected members working on the Executive Council “as having gone over to the government side, and as being, in consequence, ‘against’ the people.”⁽⁶⁾ Here it must be understood that even at this stage “government” connoted officialdom by hook or by crook responsible to or imposed by London.

Victimized by the prevailing circumstances, accused of favouring Road Town and glossing over the real issues although still very much attached to their influential position, the political “elite” found in the UK a friendly ally willing to grant more power than the establishment could handle. In 1964 the Colonial Office suggested a State Council model with legislative and executive functions, but this was coldly received by the elected members of the Legislature where the presence of the “Country Boys” (Lettsome, Stoutt, and Dawson) was beginning to make itself felt.

THE PROUDFOOT BUBBLE

Following the rejection of the State Council model, on 1st January, 1965, the Colonial Office proceeded to the appointment of Constitutional Commissioner Dr. Mary Proudfoot of Somerville College. This was for the purpose of enquiring into the working of the Constitution and to make recommendations “for any change thought desirable.” The country boys proposed the increase of the number of districts from five to seven and the election of a Chief Minister “by a majority vote of the seven elected members”; the Executive Council, however was to remain ‘The principal instrument of policy.’⁽⁷⁾ The ‘Town Boys’ (“United Three”: Fonseca, Scatliffe, and Osborne, a popular Montserratian doctor then only a recent resident of the Colony) favoured the election of a Chief Minister under the at large format while keeping the electoral districts at the same number of five. Both sides of the House agreed that a successful no-confidence vote would suffice for the removal of the Chief Minister but its implementation showed the ‘Town Boys’ proposal to be politically astute. In fact Lettsome-Stoutt-Dawson suggested a simple no-confidence vote while Fonseca- Scatliffe-Osborne required a unanimous vote (with the exception of the Chief Minister himself) to unsaddle the chief executive. The first proposal did not address the course of action “after the fact” while the town troika was a bit more articulate. It suggested that “In the event of the Chief Minister losing his seat in office by vote in Council, an election at large throughout the Colony to be held where he could again be candidate. Any other member of Council may at that

stage resign and contest the seat for Chief Minister, and such member's seat may be contested in a by-election at the same time." (8)

The Fonseca-Scatliffe-Osborne proposal went further by envisaging a full ministerial system with ministers appointed by the Administrator from among elected members of the Legislative Council. This would be on the recommendation of the Chief Minister and inserting the all too important proviso that the "Legislative Council not be prorogued or dissolved by the Administrator except after consultation with Chief Minister." A footnote to the memorandum indicated that former legislator (1954-1963) Leslie F. Malone endorsed the town troika's proposals.

It all boiled down to the speculation that an at large elected Chief Minister would symbolize greater stability and would not succumb to district pressure. A debate on these grounds is still underway to this date, although the Constitutional Commissioner had already figured out the most probable vista when she stated that "if several members ran for this (Chief Minister) office (at large), the man in fact elected would get in with a minority of the votes cast." (9) In any event, the crucial argument against the election of a Chief Minister at large was that "It might so easily turn out to be the blue print for one man rule, since a Chief Minister elected in this manner would inevitably tower above his colleagues." (10)

In her report, Dr Proudfoot also rejected the State Council model, but 25 years later a native political scientist still held the view that the proposal deserved greater consideration (11). Conversely, Dr. Proudfoot recommended a miniaturised form of ministerial system with three unofficial Ministers in the Executive Council. This would also contain the Crown Attorney, the Financial Secretary and be presided over by the Administrator who would retain the usual reserved powers. The Legislative Council would consist of the two 'ex officio' members of the Executive Council, one Nominated Member and seven elected members from district constituencies. And, as proposed by the town troika, the Speaker would be elected by the Legislative Council from outside its membership, and the life of the Legislature increased from three to four years.

A NEW PARLIAMENTARY PATH

Historians have diverging views on this crucial period in BVI history. A seasoned top civil servant and educator who distinguished himself as the first native to receive a Ph.D. degree from the University of Pittsburgh, wrote in his co-authored history of the islands that "the picture that emerged from this enquiry was a gloomy one — a community that was politically immature and totally unprepared for the responsibilities of self-government which was literally being forced upon it by an administering power ready and anxious to get out. These people saw nothing but chaos ahead." (12) A distinguished historian was, however, of the opinion that the whole process was positive "evidence of greater political awareness and maturity of British Virgin Islanders acquired largely through the operation of the Legislative Council." (13) Finally, a younger native historian observed that "the New Constitution was welcomed by everybody; the increase in the number of constituencies provided a better representation of the various districts, and the full ministerial system was designed to give B V Islanders the right to administer their own internal affairs." (14)

The backdrop to this scenario was marred with the 1963-1964 semi-official talks between the UK and the USA centering on a merger of the BVI with the US Virgin Islands. This in turn engendered a greater apathy and suspicion about constitutional changes, both at the grassroots and political levels. The whole exercise of a constitutional review was seen as a unilateral endeavour. Nevertheless, the Constitutional Commissioner noted that despite prevailing "negative attitudes"

there was “an underlying desire to move cautiously towards greater participation by the people in running their own affairs.”⁽¹⁵⁾

Politicians, grassroots, activists and the intelligentsia felt that the Proudfoot proposals were not sufficiently progressive. The Opposition became very vocal and when, following local pressure, a BVI delegation was invited to London to discuss constitutional reform it included equal representation of both sides of the House. The Conference began on 4 October 1966 and resulted in what is widely known as the New Constitution. It largely embodied the Proudfoot blueprint: a ministerial system, seven electoral districts and an Executive Council as policy-maker. The Administrator (Governor) held special responsibility for external affairs (including armed forces), internal security (including the Police Force), the civil service, judiciary and finance.

The New Constitution came into effect in April 1967. Legislators were now operating under the Westminster model which offered some advantages but was labelled by the intelligentsia as too large a hat for the local politicians. The major plus was to be found in the fact that the Westminster Model (as opposed to the Congressional system) prevents the gridlock, but on the other hand “crossing of the floor” is a skill in which West Indian politicians are well versed.

In the event, three political parties were formed and contested the elections; the outcome is well known. H. Lavity Stoutt was appointed by the Administrator as the first Chief Minister of the Colony.

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT MOVES FORWARD

The quest for constitutional advance was not over; at the London Conference it was agreed that a review of the New Constitution would be carried out at the beginning of the new decade. As a result of “politicking”, in May 1972, the Legislative Council passed a resolution establishing a Constitutional Committee of the Legislative Council for the purpose of constitutional reform. The move found the general public unresponsive, but the atmosphere changed in 1973 when the local population became incensed with the governor’s decision to commute a death sentence in a murder case.

Mounting pressure resulted in a resolution requesting the appointment of a Constitutional Commission. A territory-wide survey was carried out in November 1973 by Constitutional Commissioners Sir Colville Deverell and Mr Harvey daCosta. The principal recommendations of the Commission envisaged some needed changes; Deverell-daCosta advised Britain to remove Finance from the list of special responsibilities entrusted to the Governor; “the Chief Minister should become responsible for Finance and be designated Chief Minister and Minister of Finance. He and his elected supporters would then be seen by the electorate clearly to have a major say in the determination and execution of policy.”⁽¹⁶⁾ The Commissioners’ report suggested other areas needing closer consideration.

The report was placed on the shelf and collected dust for quite a while. At last, in 1977, some constitutional changes came into effect: the responsibility for Finance was transferred to the Chief Minister; the electoral districts were increased to nine; the voting age was lowered to 18; the Governor would appoint an Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy.

In retrospect it should be pointed out that indeed the Ministerial System has provided a true “learning experience” for both politicians and electorate. Despite some major crises such as the Bates- Hill affair, two petitions for the removal of the Governor and a snap election, there has been no real test of the Ministerial System. And although the Westminster model works best with the formation of political parties, it has become apparent that the strategy is not conducive to party structure as seen in bigger countries. On the whole, philosophical gaps, schisms and class-

consciousness are not socio-political elements in the BVI. For these very reasons, parties routinely live an ephemeral life at election time and are soon forgotten. Looking ahead it is evident that the new generation of politicians is so far unseasoned for the task, in no small measure due to the ineffectiveness of political parties in enrolling "new blood".

Among the positive aspects of the Ministerial System it ought to be recognized that it has narrowed the distance between decision-makers and the populace, thereby producing responsible representation throughout the various districts. This has resulted in an enhanced advocacy for greater social and economic development on a broader base. All in all, the Ministerial System has performed quite well with room for substantive improvement. Both the electorate and the politicians have demonstrated greater awareness and maturity. In fact, general elections held during the past two decades have witnessed a significantly higher percentage of registered voters doing their duty on election day.

SHAPING OUR DESTINY

In concluding this bird's-eye view of the Ministerial System, it seems only natural that we ask the perennial question -- "from here to where?" In our vigilant quest for greater autonomy we are faced with difficult decisions. At a personal level we have matured from the viewpoint of favouring at large election to the more safe canon of the present system. Nevertheless, owing to the flaws inherent within the present system of selecting the Chief Minister, the introduction of some form of at large voting may become necessary in the near future. The increase in the number of districts for administrative rather than political reasons is a possibility, keeping in mind that landmass should never be the guiding criterion.

The biggest question mark of who should be the Territory's Governor still remains. We have been told in no uncertain terms that as long as these islands remain under Britain the status quo will be maintained. This leads to the very complex question of independence; in this respect we are not yet fully in charge of our future. In shaping our destiny the question of timing is of the essence: sooner or later Britain will want to sever its colonial appendages and we, as a people, should take a stand at this time, especially in view of the restrictions Britain continuously imposes or threatens to impose on us. If we do not prepare ourselves now, independence may come to us unexpectedly, and with disastrous results. As C.L.R. James wrote some thirty years ago: "We live in a tremendously disturbed world. We are a very small and significant part of it. But there is much that we can be and do at a national and even on an international scale. What that is or can be, we shall never be able even to find out, far less carry out, unless the people are politically organised. Even when they elect the government of their choice they have to remain politically alert, and make it clear that they are not to be bamboozled, trifled with or pushed around."⁽¹⁷⁾

(1) Deverell, Sir Colville - daCosta, Harvey Lloyd: "British Virgin Islands - Report on Constitutional Advance" (London, 1973) see page 5, sub para 23

(2) O'Loughlin, Carleen: "A Survey of Economic Potential, Fiscal Structure and Capital Requirements of the British Virgin Islands." (University of the W.I. Jamaica, September 1962) see page 14.

(3) Harrigan, Norwell: "Power by Accident: The Making of the Chief Minister" - "The Island Sun" April 7, 1990

- (4) Proudfoot, Mary: "Report on British Virgin Islands Constitution" (Administrator's Office, Tortola 27th July, 1965)
--see sub para 10
- (5) Proudfoot -- see sub para 10 (b)
- (6) Proudfoot -- see sub para 10 (a)
- (7) Proudfoot -- see Appendix F (i)
- (8) Proudfoot -- see Appendix F(ii)
- (9) Proudfoot -- see Ch VI, sub para 24. (b)
- (10) Proudfoot -- see Ch VI, sub para 24. (e)
- (11) Harrigan - op.cit. "The Island Sun" April 14, 1990 L (12) Harrigan, Norwell and Varlack, Pearl: "The Virgin Islands Story" Essex, UK: Caribbean Universities Press, 1975 -- F see page 169
- (13) Dookhan, Isaac: "A History of the British Virgin Islands"
- Essex, UK: Bowker Publishing Co. 1974 -- see page 225
- (14) Pickering, Vernon: "A Concise History of the British Virgin Islands-from the Amerindians to 1986' - Falcon Publications International (New York-Milan) 1987 - ISBN 0-934139-05-9-- see page 81
- (15) Proudfoot -- see sub para 10.(d)
- (16) Deverell-daCosta op. cit. - see page 16
- (17) James, CLR: "Party Politics in the West Indies" - Inprint Caribbean Ltd. Trinidad (1962) 1984

The Legislative Council of the British Virgin Islands

Excerpted from the message of Cyril B. Romney, Leader of the Opposition in Challenge and Change, 1992, the publication of the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Ministerial System

“On the political front, there remains much to be done. The achievement of ministerial government is not enough: it is merely the beginning of the long and rocky road to full self-determination which can only be achieved with eventual political independence. It is unfortunate that our limited experience of the global movement from colonialism to self-determination infers a questionable connotation of this ultimate state - so graphically highlighted by the communications - media but I am afraid that I recognize no other ultimate alternative and would advocate, therefore, the focus of national thought in this direction.

In the meantime, the immediate problems of the here and now must be addressed and it is important that the political directorate recognize the impending threat to the general welfare of the British Virgin Islander whose birthright is constantly subjected to stressful impact by outsiders concerned with naught else but their own agendas. There is the need for serious coordinated efforts to protect the natural rights of the native people against business incursions from abroad, for it is in the arena of business that lie the best opportunities for permanently entrenching a strong local presence.”



Chief Minister Cyril B. Romney (1985) in Jamaica with Edward Seaga (in Prime Minister's Office)



Honourable Cyril B. Romney at OECS Meeting in 1984 with John Osbourne, Chief Minister of Monsterrat, and Ben Jones, Minister of Grenada.



Honourable H. Lavity Stoutt and Honourable Cyril B. Romney at Tourism Promotion in Atlanta, 1989.



Honourable Cyril B. Romney with Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II, representing the British Virgin Islands at Marlborough House, 1993.



Honourable Cyril B. Romney with Betty Boothroyd, Speaker of the House of Commons, at a CPA Conference, 1993.

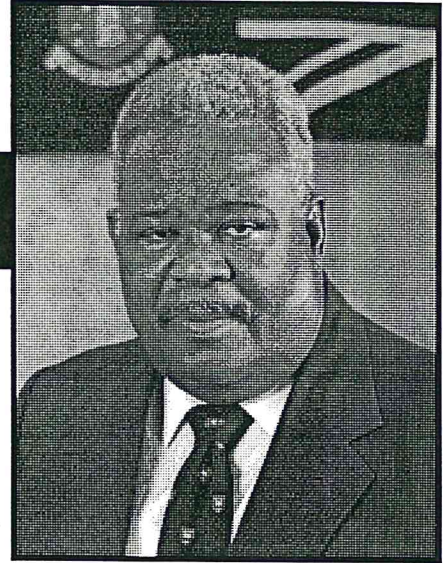


Honourable Cyril B. Romney shaking hands with John Major, Prime Minister.



Honourable Cyril B. Romney with Ex Prime Minister at a CPA Conference in London.

Hon. Ralph T. O’Neal, OBE



MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1975-PRESENT

DISTRICTS SERVED:

SEVENTH DISTRICT (VIRGIN GORDA, PETER ISLAND AND SALT ISLAND)
1975-1979

NINTH DISTRICT (VIRGIN GORDA AND ANEGADA) 1979-PRESENT

MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES 1979 -1983

MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND LABOUR AND DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER 1988-1994

CHIEF MINISTER 1995-PRESENT

Hon. Ralph T. O’Neal, one of several sons of Otto and Esther O’Neal, was born on 15 December, 1933 on Virgin Gorda. He received his education at St., Mary’s School, Virgin Gorda, the St. Kitts Grammar School and Oxford University in England where he read public administration.

Mr. O’Neal entered the teaching service of the British Virgin Islands at the age of eighteen and began his long and illustrious public service career as a primary school teacher. He taught at the Road Town and East End Primary schools, and was Principal of the North Sound School for some four years; but his teaching career was short-lived. He entered the civil service and became the second clerk of the Legislative Council in 1958, succeeding Henry O. Creque. He served for four years. He also held the various positions of secretary to the Administrator, secretary to the Member for Trade and Production, H. R. Penn, and administrative secretary to the Chief Minister, H. L. Stoutt during his civil service career, before he resigned to enter the private sector.

Mr. O’Neal entered the political arena in 1975 and was successful in being elected as the representative for the 7th district, Virgin Gorda. By 1979 there was a shuffling of districts and Virgin Gorda together with Anegada became the ninth district. Mr. O’Neal was returned to the Legislative Council as representative for the ninth district in 1979, and in the succeeding general elections of 1983, 1986, 1990, 1995 and 2000. He served as Minister for Social Services from 1979 to 1983 and as Minister for Natural Resources and Labour and Deputy Chief Minister from 1988 to October 1994 when he resigned. In February of 1995 following the general election, Mr. O’Neal was appointed as Minister for Health, Education and Welfare and Deputy Chief Minister, and served in that position until the death of Chief Minister Lavity Stoutt on 14th May 1995 at which time he assumed the position of Chief Minister and leadership of the Virgin Islands Party.

Major Issues/Challenges that Arose During His Terms of Service:

- July 1977: Challenged the Chief Minister's statement on the Government grant of a licence to mine sand in Anegada and forced a debate on the subject which resulted in a cancellation of the Licence.
- July 1979: Second and Third Reading and passing of the Social Security Ordinance. An historic occasion in the Legislative Council when some members of the Government side deserted the mover of the Bill but the Opposition joined forces with him and the Bill was passed into law.
- December 1979: Constitution was amended to provide for a fourth Minister. Appointed Minister for Social Services.
- September 1986: The then Chief Minister forced to recommend to the Governor the dissolution of the Council.
- April 1988: Appointed Minister of Natural Resources and Labour and Deputy Chief Minister.
- November 1990: Appointed Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour.
- October 1994: Resigned as Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour.
- February 1995: Appointed Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Health, Education and Welfare.
- May 1995: Death of Chief Minister and Leader of the Virgin Islands Party. May 1995: Assumed leadership of the Virgin Islands Party and appointed Chief Minister and Minister of Finance.
- February 1997: Revocation of appointment as Minister of Health, Education and Welfare,
- May 1999: Led the Virgin Islands Party to victory at the Polls. Appointed Chief Minister and Minister of Finance.
- July 2000: Revocation of appointment of Minister of Health, Education and Welfare. Revision of Constitution to allow for a Fifth Minister. Formation of Ministry of Health & Welfare and Ministry of Education and Culture.

Major Changes that Took Place During His Terms of Service:

- The continued steady growth in the Financial Services Sector resulting in the establishment of a Financial Services Department and a Commercial Registry separate from the High Court Registry.
- Responsibility for Finance assumed by an elected representative, i.e. the Chief Minister.
- A greater recognition of the needs of the sister islands by the Central Government.
- Graduation of the Territory from Grant in Aid from the U.K. Government, and the growth of revenue. For example in 1963 there was a one million dollar budget and in 1996 one hundred million dollars and in 1999 one hundred and fifty million.
- Establishment of Statutory Bodies — Electricity Corporation, Social Security Board, Port Authority, Tourist Board, Establishment of the Development Bank.
- Construction of a Central Administration Building in Road Town, and Administration buildings on Anegada, Virgin Gorda and Jost Van Dyke.
- Construction of a High Court of Justice and the appointment of two resident Judges in the Territory.
- Addition to the B.V.I. High School, the Bregado Flax Educational Centre and Anegada Secondary Division, and the upgrading of primary schools throughout the Territory.
- Naming of schools and other public buildings in the Territory in honour of deserving citizens.
- Improved port facilities and increased cruise ship visits. Steady growth in the number of day and overnight visitors to the Territory.
- Grant of titles to land to the people in Anegada and the supply of electricity throughout Tortola, Anegada, Virgin Gorda and Jost Van Dyke.
- Establishment of the B.V.I. Community College.
- Development of a first class telecommunication system both internal and external and massive road improvement.
- Extension to the Airport and its renaming of airport in honour of Mr. T.B. Lettsome.
- Construction of a new bridge between Tortola and Beef Island. Increase in number of elected members of the Legislative Council from nine to thirteen including four members elected at large and in 1995 the first two women elected to the Legislature.

- The establishment of a Consultative Council for the Overseas Territories, where Leaders of Government Business meet with Foreign and Commonwealth Office Officials and Officials of the Ministry for Development Aid once a year to have discussions on matters that affect the Territories.
- The establishment of a Women's Desk to focus on issues that affect gender.
- The establishment of an Office of Disaster Preparedness and the vital role it plays in preparing people to be ready for disasters.
- Improved health facilities and the constitution of new clinics in different parts of the Territory. There are now two resident doctors serving Virgin Gorda and regular visits are paid to the other islands.

Major Contributions During His Term of Service:

- From the time he assumed office as an elected member, his aim was to promote stability in the Territory and to help to create confidence in the Government of the day for he realises that without these ingredients it would be difficult for the Territory to develop.
- Secondly he endeavoured to improve the quality of life of our people especially our senior citizens and the young people by seeking venues for tertiary education and avenues for employment. The establishment of Community Centres and programmes for the Senior Citizens gives them the opportunity to interact with each other and Senior Citizens month has become an institution in the Territory which many of our elders look forward to.
- The encouragement of the Non Government Organisations and the part they are playing in the development of the Society — e.g. Rotary, Lions, Red Cross, Family Support Network, etc.
- The all-round development of people comprising their economic, social, political, cultural and spiritual development must all blend together.

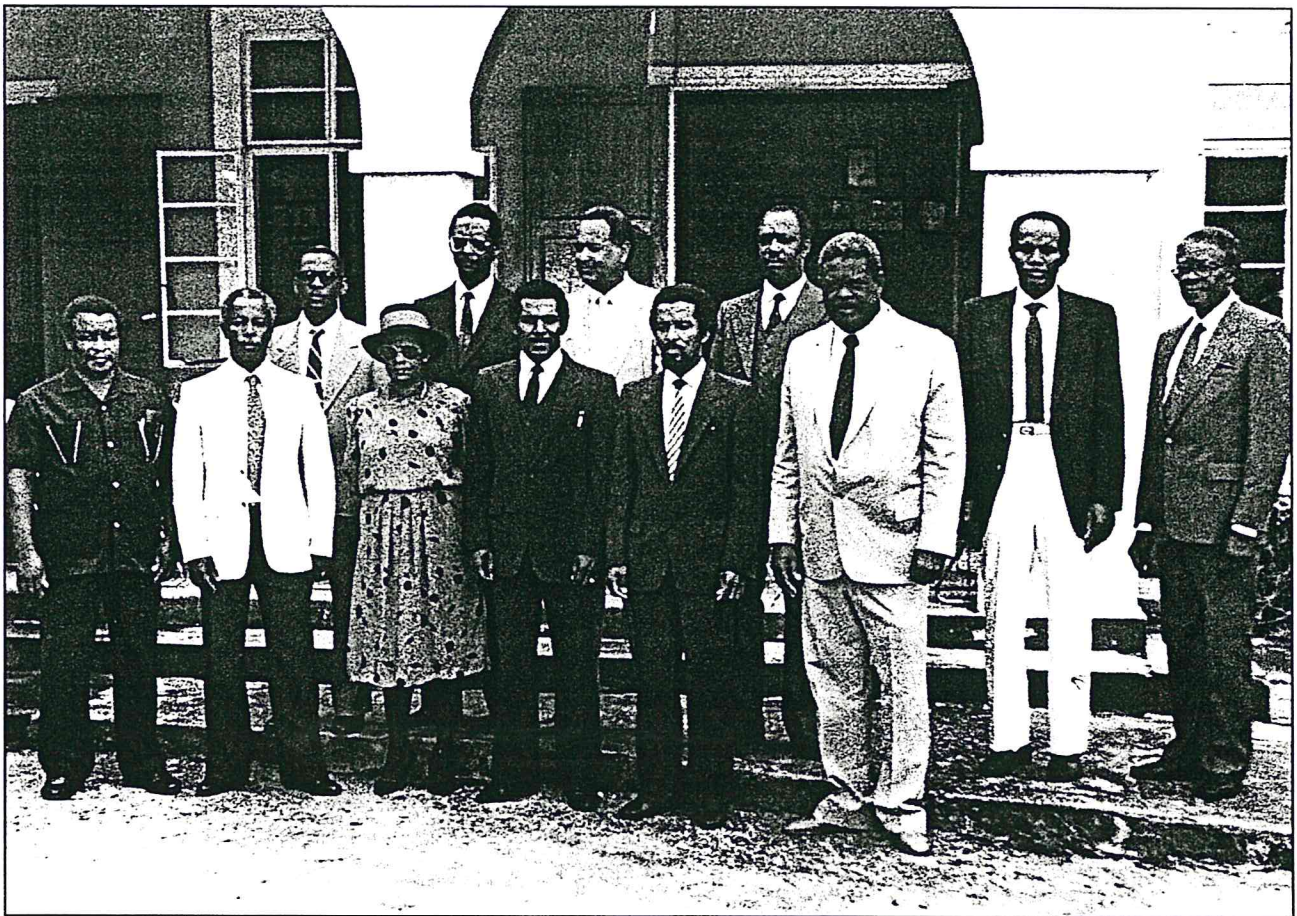
COMMENTS:

Despite the progress made there are still certain questions to be dealt with.

- The unwillingness of the United Kingdom Government to grant the Territory internal self-government without the undertaking to seek independence within two years.
- The unwillingness of the United Kingdom Government to agree that there should be

some form of consultation between the Elected Government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office before a Governor is appointed.

The great need to examine the archaic methods of appointments of senior Civil Servants to meet the needs of a changing society.



The Eleventh Legislative Council

Front, left to right: Conrad Maduro, Lewis Walters, Margaret Borde, Walwyn Brewley, Keith Flax and Ralph O'Neal

Back row, right to left: H. Lavity Stoutt, Omar Hodge, Oliver Cills, Cyril Romney, Carl Atterbury and Terrence Lettsome

Address by Hon. Ralph T. O'Neal at the Opening of Education Week

Sunday, 7 March 1982 at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellency & Mrs. Barwick, Hon. Chief Minister and Mrs. Stoutt, Teachers, Parents, Students, Ladies & Gentlemen:

I am very glad to be here this afternoon. In early 1957 when the then Governor took the oath of office in Road Town, Tortola before the Legislative Council, the Member for the First District in making his address drew His Excellency's attention to a vacant chair amongst the seats of the Councillors. The seat was the one for the Representative for the then Fifth District — Anegada and Virgin Gorda and he said that his absence was due to the lack of proper communications and transportation between the islands and it could be said with some justification that some of the islands were almost forgotten. Mr. Chief Education Officer, I am glad to see that you have made such a break through and that this afternoon, you have gathered here representatives from all the public schools in the Territory except one. Making this breakthrough I believe was no easy task and I can see this is the foretaste of better things to come, and I would hope soon to see the private schools participating fully in Education Week.

I would like to say especially to the children what one of the greatest statesmen of our times in the Western Hemisphere said in St. John, one of the United States Virgin Islands, in the early sixties. I refer to no one other than the late Governor of Puerto Rico, Munos Marin, when addressing a gathering in St. John, U.S.V.I. He said and I quote "I see here in St. John what I did not see in Puerto Rico in the early forties and that is hope". I say today to the children and young people of this Territory there is hope, and no one is too young or too small to understand that we must translate that hope into action.

It is no longer necessary to have to leave these islands just to find a job, it is no longer necessary to leave the island to complete High School. In order that this hope could be translated into action we all together must have trust and confidence in our country and be proud of it, and cherish it and be prepared to protect it against anyone who would even speak evil of our land; and be prepared at all times to get from our midst those who by their actions would seek to destroy what we are trying to preserve, and to make no apology for doing so. So I would like you to take this message back to those who could not come and in your schools and amongst yourselves begin to talk and plan about what you will be doing to make our islands better.

Our theme this week is Education for all in a changing community. We have not only accepted change, we are making the change and as I pondered about what I would say this afternoon, in keeping with the theme, I looked at a few places where changes were made, not by the people but by those who went in and made the changes to suit themselves and for their own pockets. Today, those places are in chaos and confusion, and several factions have sprung up to protest the changes. It is important therefore that we set the pace of change.

No country has ever stood still. Changes were made. In some countries it took 200 years to develop to what they are today; the U.S. took 100 years, Germany 60, Japan only 40. So changes can be slow or could be rapid depending on the skill, technology and other factors being available.

We in the B.V.I. are making changes too. There have been great changes in the Civil Service because of localisation. There have been changes in some areas of private industry because of the Government's policy of localisation. Many people hail these as changes for the better.

However when the present Government went a bit further and advocated that in the contracting and construction field there must be localisation and insisted that B.V. Islanders get preference, to some this was not good. We were branded as corrupt and it was said that all sorts of things were happening. Now, it is all right to have our own civil servants and professionals, it is all right to have our own people in the banks and other institutions but it becomes wrong to have our own contractors working — well if this is corruption then Mr. Chairman, I will remain corrupt —and bearing in mind the ability of people to misunderstand and put out of context what is said especially on occasions like these I will repeat it — that if it is corrupt to insist that B.V.I. contractors and builders get the first preference in that area of activity then I will remain corrupt because we will continue to insist on that.

When changes occur in the community as it is happening now especially in the areas of economic activity, we have got to ensure that we do not become hewers of stone and drawers of water, by this I mean we must not become degraded in our own community — and become dependent on public housing, food stamps, the dole etc, but we must ensure that we are able to make our own contribution to the changes and benefit thereby. Initiative must be encouraged, talents developed and skills recognized and utilised.

Sometimes we run the risk of harping back too much on the past. I have often heard it remarked that a Mr. Parker alone ran this place so well some years ago. It would be a waste of time to even make a contrast of the B.V.I. in 1982 with the B.V.I. in 1942, 1952 or even 1962; but just in passing I would like to see Mr. Parker dealing with just one days shipping at Port Purcell. Now I am not hitting Mr. Parker or whoever, because I do believe that he was an efficient and competent civil servant and conscientious too.

We must also be very careful that in trying to preserve some of the noble traditions and values of the past, we hinder progress that would be a benefit to the majority of the people and improve the quality of life. For example, we boast about the B.V.I. having the finest seamen and of course they were excellent, but have we ever bothered to investigate the conditions under which they worked and how they had to struggle for existence. We talked about one time being the bread basket for the U.S. Virgin Islands but have any of us had to undergo the back breaking experience of working with a mattock or hoe pick every day? Oh! how our forefathers longed for and wished for a better way of making a living.

The developed countries with the exception of New Zealand underwent an industrial revolution to reach where they are today. Let no one fool you — changes must be made if we are to break the vicious cycle of poverty and obtain a better standard of living. The Government stands committed to changes that will bring greater benefits to all the people of these islands. There are a number of light industries and other services being encouraged and for these there must be trained personnel — although, Mr. Chairman, the rumour factory seems to be beating us to it.

We are not only saying we are committed to change, we are taking the necessary steps. Construction of the Community College will begin this year and the first courses should be offered during 1983. In the meantime the evening classes at the B.V.I. High School have been expanded. In Anegada there is a programme for taking the Post Primary Students to CXC Level and in Virgin Gorda the new Junior High School under construction should be ready for occupancy by May. In the meantime classes have been started in the existing buildings. Specialist teachers have been appointed in the Education Department to help to upgrade the teaching skills. Delicate discussions are taking place regarding the restructuring of the University of the West Indies with a view to making it better

suiting to prepare the youth of today for the many changes taking place in the region.

The number of scholarships have been increased and we have been able to get more assistance from international sources and from friendly governments to help us with the training programme so vitally needed to fit and prepare our people for the changes, for we firmly believe that intellectual aid and gifts of useful knowledge are of the greatest importance. It was the Chinese who said "Give a man a fish and you are helping him a little bit for a very short while, teach him the art of fishing and he can help himself all his life." But I must sound a note of warning here. Those who are fortunate to receive scholarships and aid in one form or the other should not or must not regard it as a passport to privilege. While some exert their right to receive assistance there are several others who still need help because it is a continuing process. What did our Honourable Chief Minister say —leadership is not a destination, it is a journey.

Earlier I referred to the rumour factory and one can appreciate a lot more why James in his Epistle was so outspoken about the tongue. I am convinced that in our efforts to improve the quality of life we must also assist in the development of the arts. No education system is complete without this and we have suffered too many years and perhaps this is why the rumour factory has so many employees. We are determined to cause unemployment in this field and already a music programme for schools and community has been introduced and you have seen and heard the evidence of that.

I have requested the Chief Education Officer to let me have with the least possible delay estimates of the cost of introducing an art and physical education programme in the school; and we had an adviser in the territory recently who has made recommendations regarding the cultural development and the Ministry is now examining the proposals to submit to Cabinet very soon.

Mr. Chairman, I said at the beginning that I am very pleased to be here and, if I may, let me again congratulate you and your staff on this fine effort here this afternoon. I would like to assure you that your untiring efforts and the hard work and the professionalism you have put into the department since you assumed the post have not gone unnoticed. I am also conscious of the fact you have never ceased to reveal the weaknesses of the system and at the same time suggested the many alternatives for remedies.

I would, however, be failing miserably if I did not pay tribute to the quiet, unassuming, conscientious and competent Miss Ivy George, the Health Education Officer, whom I understand has been the spark plug behind the programme for the class of 72 that is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. I would hope that this would serve as an inspiration to all the other graduating classes. This is positive action rather than idle talk and this is helping to bring home to the community and others that there is a high school in the territory and many of the graduates of this institution have distinguished themselves not only at home but also abroad. Long may it continue.

Let me now, Mr. Chairman, end by thanking all those who are helping us with Education Week and that we will always remember the theme — Education for all in a changing community and that our efforts will not end this afternoon, this week, this month, this year but we will continue the process of preparing all our people for the various situations thus will arise.



Meeting of Overseas Territories, Bermuda, 1999. Back left: Bennet Smith, Eileene parsons, Dancia Penn. Front second from left: Ralph T. O'Neal.



Visit of Her Majesty the Queen, 1966.



Left to right: Ralph T. O'Neal, Mrs. Jimmy Carter, President Jimmy Carter and Mrs. Edris O'Neal at the Governor's House, Tortola, 1985.



Chief Minister Ralph T. O'Neal with Governor Rosello of Puerto Rico.



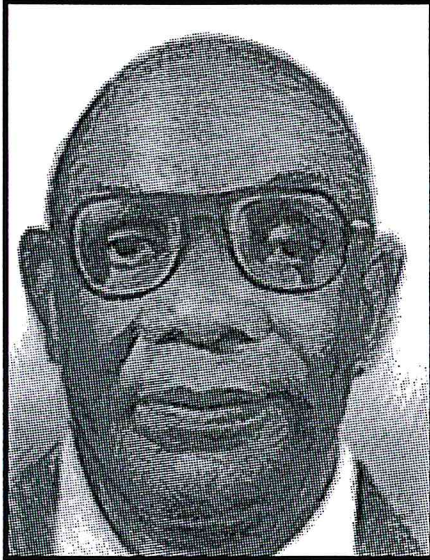
CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting, 1998.



BVI - USVI Friendship Day, May 2000. Left to right: USVI Governor Charles Turnbull, Chief Minister Ralph T. O'Neal and Delegate to Congress Donna Green Christensen with husband.

Profiles of Opposition Leaders

Dr. Q. W. Osborne110 1967-1971	Willard Wheatleyrefer to page 77 1979-1983
Ralp T. O'Nealrefer to page 99 1971-1975	Conrad Maduro114 1986-1990
Austin Henley112 1975-1977	Cyril Romneyrefer to page 85 1990-1995
Oliver Cills113 1977-1979	E. Walwyn Brewley116 1995-1999
H. Lavity Stouttrefer to page 62 1971-1975, 1983-1986	Dr. Orlando Smith118 1999-present



Q. W. Osborne, OBE, MD

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1963 - 1979

REPRESENTATIVE FOR ANEGADA AND VIRGIN GORDA 1963 - 1967

REPRESENTATIVE FOR ROAD TOWN AND BAUGHERS BAY 1967 - 1975

MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND LABOUR

Qwamirer William Osborne was born in Montserrat on 5th November, 1923, the twelfth and last child of James William Governor Osborne and his wife Frances Ann nee Mack. He came to the British Virgin Islands as a medical officer on 31st December, 1955. He became interested in politics and entered the political arena in 1963, representing Anegada and Virgin Gorda from 1963 to 1967 and Road Town and Baughers Bay from 1967 to 1975. Dr. Osborne also served as Minister of Natural Resources and Public Health and as Leader of the Opposition. He was a member of the 1966 Delegation to London for Constitutional talks that led to the formation of the Ministerial System.

Prior to this conference Dr. Osborne participated in the famous debate in the Legislative Council Chamber in Road Town in 1965 on the Report of the Constitutional Commissioner, Mrs. Mary Proudfoot. The Legislative Council and the country anticipated a great debate, particularly between Osborne and Fonseca who were outstanding orators. They expressed radically new ideas which persuaded the entire Council to formulate new policies for this country for succeeding generations.

It is now a fact of history that as a consequence of that debate successive legislators and governments have emphasized economics and education over constitutionalism and politics. It is upon this foundation, hammered and chiseled by wise legislators, that structures could be built for the emergence of the British Virgin Islands from a poor virgin country without modern facilities in the 1960's, to one of the leading economic countries in the Caribbean. Q. William Osborne's role in such a Territorial emergence is therefore a matter of immense historical significance.

Dr. Osborne, a man who loved the land, actively engaged in agriculture. His congeniality won him friends in every strata of society. His marriage to Norma Penn produced one son. He passed away on 16th September, 1999.

Excerpt from Eulogy of the Life and Work of Dr. Q. William Osborne, OBE, MD

by friend, Joseph S. Archibald, Q.C.

The Funeral Service, New Life Baptist Church Duffs Bottom, Tortola, British Virgin Islands

Wednesday 22nd September 1999

Dr Osborne held the position of Government Medical Officer in the British Virgin Islands for eight years. He relinquished that position in 1963, and in that same year was elected to the Legislative Council of the British Virgin Islands.

I believe that history will record that Dr Osborne, the servant, travelled throughout Tortola by horse, by donkey, by mule and by the very few motor vehicles in Tortola in the 50's and early 60's. I believe that history will record that Dr Osborne, the servant, travelled from Anegada to Jost Van Dyke by rowboat, by sailboat, by outboard motor boat and by ferryboat. Whenever duty called, Doc answered. Wherever there was a medical need, Doc went. Dr Osborne's widow Norma reflects on his service in the early years:

“When he came to the BVI he was the only resident doctor in these islands for some years. He had to do everything including all the hospital work, hospital surgery, house calls and delivery of babies. He took care of all this work night and day and never failed to answer a call. In those days it was very rough. It was not an easy life.”

Mrs Osborne's reflection can be corroborated by countless pieces of evidence, but I choose this: When Doc's beloved mother died in Montserrat in 1958 he was faced with making the unenviable choice of whether to attend his mother's funeral or to remain in the British Virgin Islands as the only resident physician. He made the difficult decision to remain in the British Virgin Islands with his patients whose love for him gave him the freedom to express his grief in the open shedding of tears. This act in Doc's life, in my view, gives poignant context to the poetic lines:

“Words are but breath
But where great deeds are done
A power abides
Transferred from sire to son.”

As has by now become obvious Doc lived a life of absolute devotion to his calling as a physician carrying on the private practice of medicine until just weeks before he was hospitalised in August this year. He will, I believe, have left an abiding influence on the lives of his colleagues, but particularly on the life of his physician and dear friend who followed Doc's steps into medicine and politics, Dr the Honourable D Orlando Smith, OBE, FRCS.

While medicine was Doc's life-long calling he managed successfully to engage in a number of extra-curricular activities - chiefly politics and business.



Austin Henley

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1971-1977

Alfred Austin Henley, son of Alice Henley nee Martin of Jost Van Dyke and Charles Henley, was born in Cane Garden Bay, Tortola on January 1935 and died 17th October 1977.

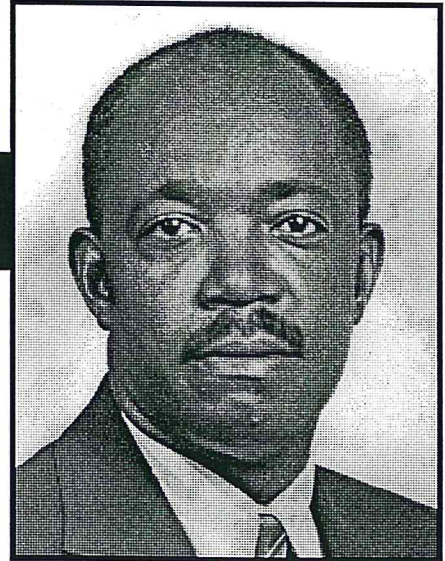
Austin attended the Cane Garden Bay Methodist School and after school worked in the Blue Beard Hotel on St. Thomas and the Caneel Bay Hotel on St. John. He was a very well beloved person in his village and was encouraged by his friends to be their representative when Ivan Dawson retired in 1971. He entered the political arena in 1971 and was elected as a member of the Democratic Party and served as a government backbencher for four years.

Mr. Henley was instrumental in changing the attire of the Legislative Council when he moved the motion which permitted the jac-shirt to be worn during sittings. A keen fisherman, Mr. Henley also argued for the exemption of local fishermen from the payment of the Cruising Permit Ordinance.

Re-elected in 1975, Mr. Henley became the Opposition leader, a position he held until his death after a short illness in 1977.

Mr. Henley was laid to rest on 21st October 1977 in his home village, Cane Garden Bay.

Oliver Cills



MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1971-1983, 1986-1999

REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE THIRD ELECTORAL DISTRICT

MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS 1971-1975, 1986-1990

MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND LABOUR 1990-1994

DEPUTY SPEAKER 1990-1994

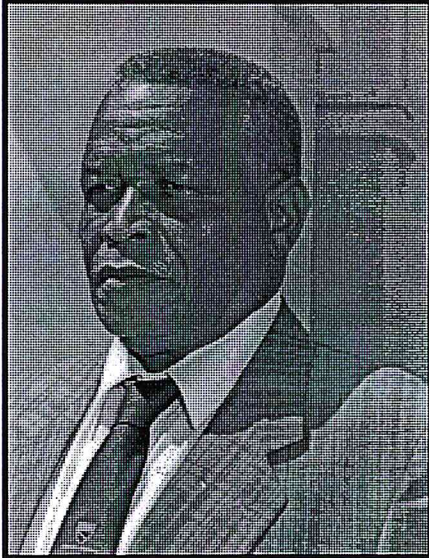
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION 1976-1981

Oliver Cills, the son of Frances and Alexander Cills was born on Tortola on September 12, 1941. He first came to the Legislative Council in 1971 as the representative for the Third Electoral District. He was elected for consecutive terms in 1975 and 1979. After a break, he was returned to office in 1986, 1990, and again in 1994.

During Mr. Cills's tenure of twenty-five years he served in various positions. From 1971 to 1975 he was the Minister for Communications and Works and from 1977 to 1979, Leader of the Opposition. In 1986 he was again appointed Minister for communication and Works. Mr. Cills retired from active politics in 1999. At that time he was Minister for Natural Resources and Labour and Deputy Chief Minister.

He thoroughly enjoyed his twenty-five years of service to his country and looks back with great pride on his involvement with the infrastructural development, particularly several road projects. These include the Doty to Windy Hill road, the Chalwell to Sea Cow's Bay road and the Bountry to Sea Cow's Bay road. During his tenure as Minister for Communications and Works in the mid-seventies he was instrumental in the acquisition of a steel frame from Bates Hill which was used in the construction of the first airport terminal building. This achievement, though seemingly small, is among the many fond memories that Mr. Cills holds in connection with his service to the Territory.

He now manages his own business. Mr. Cills enjoys singing and is a member of his church choir. He lives in Sea Cows Bay with his wife Rita and family.



Conrad Maduro

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1971-1979, 1983-1990 AND 1995-1999

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FIFTH AND SECOND DISTRICTS AND TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Conrad Maduro, son of Antonio and Alexandrina Maduro of Baughers Bay, was born on December, 1935. He received his education at the St. George's School in Road Town, the St. Phillips at Baughers Bay, the Road Town primary school and the B. V. I. Secondary School.

After leaving school in 1955, Mr. Maduro pursued various employment activities including sailing (for a short period) between the British and the U.S. Virgin Islands, teaching at several schools within the Territory. Following the completion of a course in diesel mechanics at Cayey Vocational School in Puerto Rico, he found employment as a diesel mechanic in the Electricity Department,;Taylor Woodrow (overseas) in the construction of the Little Dix Bay hotel, Virgin Gorda; and later with the hotel as supervisor of the diesel electric and distillation plants. He also lived and worked in the U. S. Virgin Islands for many years..

Mr. Maduro's political activities commenced on 1966 when he became instrumental in a movement which climaxed in the formation and launching of the United Party on 10th February, 1967.

Mr. Maduro was elected as the president of the party which selected seven candidates to contest the 1967 election in the first Legislative Council under the ministerial system. Although he was not elected, the party won the majority of seats and was able to form the first ministerial government in the British Virgin Islands.

Mr. Maduro is devoted to the idea that a political party system plays an important role in giving the people a voice in the affairs of their country. To this end, he has struggled over the years to keep the party alive and in subsequent years has put forward a slate of candidates from the party to contest each general election.

In 1971, Mr. Maduro won a seat on the Legislative Council, as a representative for the Fifth District. But as his party did not gain sufficient seats to form the government, he served as a member of the Opposition. However, he was later invited by the Chief Minister to replace Dr. Q. W. Osborne as Minister for Natural Resources and Public Health when the latter's appointment to that position was abruptly terminated in 1972. He was again elected in 1983 (this time as Representative for the 2nd district) and appointed as Minister for Natural Resources, Public Health and Labour. Mr. Maduro



Dr. D. Orlando Smith, OBE

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION 1999-PRESENT

TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATIVE 1999-PRESENT

Orlando Smith is the third son of Joshua and Eldra Smith neé Davies, was born on 28 August 1944. Leadership comes very naturally to Dr Honourable D. Orlando Smith, Leader of the Opposition and President of the National Democratic Party. Indeed he has filled this role for most of his life.

Dr Smith knew from an early age that he would be a doctor. Accordingly upon completion of his education at the Virgin Islands Secondary School it was only a question of where he prepare himself for this role, having received acceptance from several prestigious institutions including the University of the West Indies and Howard without difficulty. It was his Principal, Mr. P.C. Scott, a guiding force to his students that made the choice for him

At U.W.I. Orlando soon learned that the B.V.I. produced as good students academically as the larger islands, but that in the area of sports there were some shortcomings. The three-time local school table tennis champion was no match for his peers at U.W.I. But he discovered a new sport, volleyball in which he represented the university and became vice president of the U.W.I. Association. But this was but one more leadership position for Orlando, having been House Captain at Secondary School, Captain of the school cricket team, and having also assumed many leadership positions in his local church.

From 1963-1969 he attended the University Hospital of the West Indies. Upon graduation he interned at Princess Margaret Hospital Nassau, Bahamas 1967/1970.

In 1971 Dr. Smith lost no time in commencing postgraduate studies in surgery in the United Kingdom to become a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (F.R.C.S.) - the highest possible professional qualification attainable. In pursuit of this qualification he covered as wide an area of surgical training as he could knowing that he would be the only surgeon at the hospital when he returned home.

Indeed on his return he was the general consultant in all areas as well as in surgery. His training served him well and he was able to bring to the British Virgin Islands several surgical techniques, which were not previously practiced here. His task was made simpler as the community developed trust and confidence in this National.

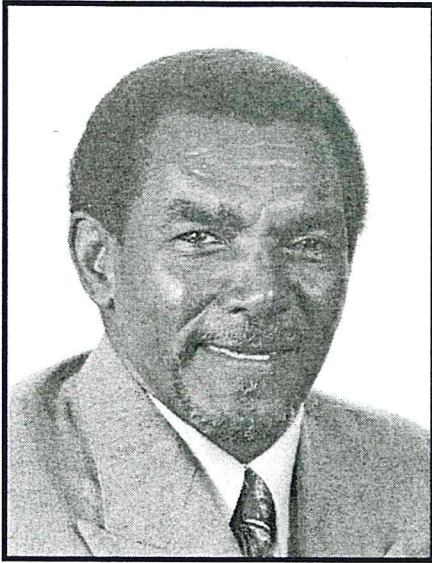
It was only natural that he would be selected chairman of the newly formed Medical and Dental

In 1983 he was elected as a member of the 10th Legislature and served as the Minister for Communication and Works. From 1986 to 1999 he remained a member of the Legislative Council, and also served as Leader of Opposition. As a parliamentarian he has represented the B.V.I. at numerous Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (C.P.A) Conferences both regionally and Internationally.

When Walwyn ventured into the sport of softball in 1958 as a player, the International Softball Federation (ISF) was in its formative years, and the ISF Hall of Fame was not even on the horizon. In fact the sport of soft ball, as an Olympic sport, was just a figment in the imagination of softball pioneers like President Don Porter and Clovis Lodewicks.

He has served with distinction as a player, official scorer, statistician, play by play announcer and sportscaster (radio and television), sportswriter, treasurer, vice president and president and has dedicated countless hours to the advancement of the sport of softball Territory wide. He has served as president of the BVI Amateur Softball Association for the past nineteen years and is the longest serving president of Amateur Softball in the English speaking Caribbean. Mr. Brewley ranks among the longest serving presidents of softball in Central American and Caribbean Softball Confederation (CONCACAS) and Pan America Confederation of Amateur Softball (CONPASA).

E. Walwyn Brewley has attended and participated in practically every CONCACAS and CONPASA Congress since 1969 as chief delegate. During that time he has served as chief delegate to every National Softball Team that the BVI Amateur Softball Association has sent abroad. He served as vice president of CONCACAS for the Caribbean area from 1997 to 1998. Mr. Brewley attended all International Softball Federation (ISF) congresses since 1985 and has been appointed to serve on several commissions. He has given liberally of his time and expertise to the sport of softball over the years. He was elected to the Soft Ball Hall of Fame in 1999.
Dominican Republic.



E. Walwyn Brewley

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1983-1999

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FOURTH DISTRICT

Walwyn is the third child of the late Ernest and Joyce Maduro Brewley. He was born on 24 September 1941. His formal education began at Mrs. Alexandrina Maduro Private School at Baugher's Bay, the then Road Town Primary School (now Althea Scatliffe). After being successful at the Common Entrance Examination he went on to the Virgin Islands Secondary School where he graduated with a Cambridge Overseas School Certificate at the age of sixteen. He then spent another two years in a pioneer sixth form where he was successful in passing the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (now known as A levels). In 1959 he was Victor Ludorum in Athletics at the Annual School Sports meet.

Upon leaving school he worked for the BVI Government at the Treasury and Customs Department as a Junior Clerk. In 1964 at the completion of the luxurious Little Dix Bay Hotel on Virgin Gorda, he took up employment there as a night auditor and an unofficial night manager for two years until the hotel closed in the summer of 1966 when he returned to Tortola.

Walwyn worked as an accountant in the accounting firm of Dickenson, Rawlinson & Hunter which later became Pannell Fitzpatrick and is now known as Insinger Trust (B.V.I. Ltd). In 1969 during tenure with the above firm he spent some time in the United States at an affiliate firm of Mc. Lintock, Main & Lafrentz where he received valuable on the job training in accountancy. He worked as an accountant with the Central Purchasing Agency, a food purchasing firm owned and operated by a group of local businessmen. He also worked as an accountant at Air B.V.I. Ltd. the first local airline to serve the people of the British Virgin Islands.

In 1977 he was offered the job as General Manager at ZBVI Radio Station, which made him the first B.V. Islander to manage a radio station. His Saturday Night Programme which was heard as far down as Grenada made him a popular radio personality where he was given the famous name "The GM" which is still with him today. As a result of this radio popularity he has on many occasions been the MC for numerous events such as Queen Pageants, the Annual Fungi Fiesta, Christmas Steelband Extravaganza, Rice and Peas Contest, etc.

He was a member of the first organized Karate & Body Building Club, a founding member and vocalist of the "Trends's' Orchestra, a popular dance band in the 1960's and 1970's. He was also a founding member of the Little League Organizing Committee.

was re-elected as a territorial candidate in the new at-large system in 1995, but he and all the candidates of his United Party were defeated in the re-election bid in 1999.

Mr. Maduro's interest and commitment to the BVI is well known. Among his contributions were the development of a policy for improved agriculture; the enactment of the labour code; and the initiation of action which led to the Social Security Act.

Mr. Maduro is married to the former Evaline Fahie. They have a family of three boys and three girls.

Association. In that capacity he was instrumental in the development of the Annual B.V.I. Medical Conference, an excellent continuing medical education opportunity for local doctors who annually can interface with some of the biggest names in the medical profession. That Conference now draws well over a hundred doctors to our shores and has put this territory on the medical map.

Dr. Smith loves his profession, and his desire to see that the people of his community get the best attention that is available drives him to give his best service to all at whatever time of day or night that it is needed - whether it can be afforded or not.

He has always aspired to a position in the profession where he could bring the most positive influence to bear on the delivery of health care in this territory. From thence began the inexorable drive, first to be Chief Medical Officer and eventually Legislator. During his tenure as Chief Medical Officer (1979-1996) he was instrumental in the development of a five year health plan for the B.V.I., the first five year health plan to be developed in the Eastern Caribbean, and the review of the Medical Act, an apparent mammoth undertaking that took over twelve years to be completed. This Act was eventually passed by the Legislative Council since Dr. Smith has been a Legislator. Needless to say he feels a special pride in this achievement.

In 1980 a major and much needed renovation was undertaken to the structure of the hospital. Unfortunately there was no money available for its furnishing - either locally or from Her Majesty's Government. Dr. Smith with the blessing of the late Chief Minister led a fund raising campaign, which raised over 300,000 dollars to equip the renovated and expanded hospital.

It is said that if one wishes to have something done, then give it to a busy person. And so as well as being C.M.O. and Surgeon at Peebles Hospital, Dr. Smith took on the role of Chairman of the National Drug Advisory Council, a body charged with the responsibility to develop programs and to oversee activities to limit the abuse of illegal drugs. A master plan was soon developed, with one of its significant recommendations being the development of the Sandilane drug rehabilitation centre. The development of this centre is without doubt the major achievement of the Council.

A growing dissatisfaction with the direction of this territory led to encouragement by many members of this Community for Dr Smith to become involved politically. In 1998 therefore, Dr. Smith responded by becoming one of the founding members of the National Democratic Party, and was elected its first leader. Under the guidance of its Chairman, Leader, and other members of the Executive, the Party contested the 1999 election and made history by winning five of thirteen seats in its first bid to change the Government. He was elected Leader of the Opposition. The National Democratic Party continues to provide many challenges to the Government and it is fair to say that it is no longer business as usual in the House.

As leader of the N.D.P., the party with the greatest number of seats in the opposition, Dr. Smith chairs the Public Accounts Committee. That body has sent to the Executive Council the first ever report on an investigation held to review the expenditure of the public purse on any project.

Dr. Smith's overriding concern has been the lack of proper management capability, and especially the lack of any comprehensive approach to planning for the future of the B.V.I. He is however optimistic that the people of this territory are now ready for the requisite leadership to take the country to the next level of its development, which the National Democratic Party has established that it can provide.

Profile

of

Other Members of the Legislative Council

by Lorna Smith



Coming of Age

I am pleased to have been invited to make a contribution to this Publication, which has as its theme, "Empowerment through Representation." Through the eyes of veteran Parliamentarian, Honourable Omar Hodge I will reflect on his and several of his colleagues' strengths and, yes, perhaps their perceived weaknesses, but more importantly on their contribution to this glorious process of democracy.

(I have excluded comments on Chief Ministers at the request of the Publications Committee - a pity as having worked for extended periods with three of these I would have equally enjoyed the challenge of discussing their contributions singly and collectively.)

Twenty-one years ago, Omar Wallace Hodge was first elected by a mere majority of twenty votes over the "Labour Code Man", Honourable Conrad Maduro. As Mr Hodge describes it, it was outright war - both men had strong family ties in the district for which they

were vying, but the introduction of that important piece of Legislation that Mr Maduro had recently piloted through the house was a tough act to follow.

Since that first election however, Mr Hodge has occupied a 'safe seat'. I asked him to what does he credit his comfort level. "To carrying out the people's business," he responds. "If you do not work with the people, they let the ballot box tell you next time where to get off" he continued. Mr Hodge's use of the conjunction 'with', instead of 'for' the people is significant and truly captures his unique brand of democracy.

Speaking of democracy, it is Mr Hodge's firm view that this has been considerably enhanced over the years in the British Virgin Islands. He ascribes this to the introduction of the 'mixed' system of representation, which he has always considered as a necessity in ensuring that all views are represented.

Mr Hodge also has a simple but effective formula for ensuring that his seat is secure: every day he makes it his business to solve a problem for at least two persons. Multiply that

by three hundred and sixty five, you solve the problems of seven hundred and thirty persons, times four and there you have the real secret of his success at the polls.

He counts among his achievements establishing a blue ribbon committee to examine the Immigration and Passport Ordinance 1977 and to recommend changes thereto, the findings of which were published locally in 1985. That Report made many practical recommendations in respect of persons who had resided in the territory for a long period of time and would have brought significant relief to the feeling of helplessness and homelessness experienced by thousands of BVI residents. Mr Hodge is confident, however, that this matter will be satisfactorily resolved. His greatest regret is that it has taken so long to rectify the status of these people who have "contributed to the development of this country by bringing it out of the mud," as he so graphically puts it.

It is perhaps no accident that Mr Hodge is so passionate about this issue as at least 40% of his constituency is comprised of persons of non BVI descent. He feels that the recent amendment of the Constitution that seeks to clearly define 'Belonger Status' is still too open ended, and is relieved that a letter has subsequently been prepared in respect of children born in the territory of non believer parents or those born in the US, that will allow for the conferring of believer status on them.

But then Mr Hodge is passionate about many things: as Minister for Natural Resources and Labour in the 80's, he led the way in the resolution of the Anegada lands issue, a problem that had been outstanding for over 150 years, and was able to ensure that BVI Islanders everywhere could afford to purchase property for residential purposes in scenic areas such as Horsepath and McNamara.

Mr Hodge is a true friend to all residents of this territory because of his generosity of spirit and his ability to do good in all persons. I recall the great outpouring of happiness when he got married the second time around, to the extent that the wedding reception had to be held in the largest location in the territory – the Sir Rupert Briercliffe Hall.

He is a great believer in justice and fair play for all and is perhaps best known for throwing the Mace, the ultimate symbol of democracy outside in 1998, and breaking it when in his view, there was evidence that the House was not adhering to these principles. It mattered little to him that there were serious sanctions attached to this act.

But let us look at some of the other personalities with whom Mr Hodge rubbed shoulders during his robust twenty one years in the House. This publication is not only intended to mark fifty years of democracy in the BVI but to be a record for posterity. In short, to appreciate what follows, one really has to know Omar Hodge. Not only is he blessed with an uncanny perceptiveness, but he calls the game as he sees it - always. He is also often controversial and often a case of 'been there, done that' only increases his candour. So that in reading what follows, I would ask that what occasionally might look like a criticism be looked at again as Mr Hodge's honest opinion, with the purest of intentions.

Mr Hodge and I talked about Speakers of the House and elected representatives alike. For example Mr Ivan Dawson was a most humble and honourable man who administered 'justice' evenly to both sides, even at the risk of his placing his seat in jeopardy. He was therefore most deserving of all the honours bestowed upon him including the award of the CBE for outstanding public and community service. On the other hand, Mr Flax knew the rules inside out, but was at times aloof and unable to recognize that members of the House were sometimes deeply frustrated.

In response to my question about the impact of the advent of women to the House for the first time in 1995, Mr Hodge responded that he has a great respect for both women. They are both articulate and have no difficulty in making themselves heard. In the case of Miss Smith, he felt

that had health been in her favour she would do even more for her district. Notwithstanding all the odds, she represents her people very effectively. Mrs Parsons is also a good representative for whom the sky is the limit in terms of her ambitions.

And what of the representative he unseated? Mr Maduro was perhaps the member of the House during the period who was most knowledgeable about the Constitution and indeed about Parliamentary procedures. Later, when he was reelected and appointed Leader of the Opposition, he kept the Government side 'on its toes'. Mr Maduro was a good politician obviously, given that he was reelected five times, beginning in 1971. His error may have been that he did not always read his constituents well and sometimes treated their views as inconsequential.

Mr Walwyn Brewley served as a legislator from 1983 to 1999 without a break in service. Mr Hodge feels that he was good to the people of this territory, if somewhat laid back at times. He had a tendency to be very critical of Ministers thereby giving the impression that he had a lesser responsibility to serve those who elected him. Mr Brewley always did his homework, however, and was well prepared for all debates, especially during the annual budget. He was very active in sports and is richly deserving of his recent appointment to the Softball Hall of Fame.

Another Parliamentarian who impresses Mr Hodge is Mr Reeial George who was first elected to the House in 1971 and served for four years. He was thereafter reelected in 1995 as one of four at-large territorial representatives, polling more votes than any other candidate and again in 1999 although he lost that top spot to Dr Orlando Smith. Mr George is according to Mr Hodge 'a humanitarian', fiercely loyal, highly principled and perhaps the most 'solid' member of the Virgin Islands Party. He was careful to stress his commitment to 'party' as opposed to 'personality'.

Mr J. Alvin Christopher? During the 13th Legislature as a freshman he was excellent. He continues to represent his district well but he should spend more time really understanding the vision for the territory.

In discussing the first timers, Mr Hodge is impressed with Mr Andrew Fahie who he considers to be sharp and an excellent representative of his people and of young people in particular.

Turning to the opposition bench, Mr Hodge saw them all as holding great promise: Ronnie Skelton is very knowledgeable about both the public and private sector but has to 'curb his temper'. Mark Vanterpool brings an excellent business perspective to the House and is deeply committed to the development of the territory. He is taking the correct posture by staying close to the Chief Minister to ensure that projects for the Fourth District are executed. He does become frustrated at times, especially when there is not enough funding for the Fourth District that he represents. Mr Lloyd Black is soft spoken and sensible; whereas Dr Kedrick Pickering is 'fiery'. He is however very knowledgeable and sound.

And surprise, surprise: I asked him about the Leader of the Opposition, Dr D. Orlando Smith. According to Mr Hodge, he is the glue that keeps them all together. A perfect 'match-up' for the Chief Minister. Tongue in cheek, there was some comparison between waging guerilla warfare and using the strategy of Nelson Mandela. I could not be sure who resorted to which tactics, but we would all agree that both strategies worked well in freeing a nation!

Profiles of

the Members of the 14th Legislative Council 1999 -

Reuben W. Vanterpool . . .refer to page 193

Ralph T. O’Nealrefer to page 99

J. Alvin Christopher124

Julian Fraser127

Ethlyn E. Smith128

Andrew A. Fahie130

Reeial George131

Cherno Gallow132

Dr. Orlando Smithrefer to page 118

Omar Hodge136

Lloyd K. Black138

Eileene L. Parsons139

Dr. Kedrick Pickering142

Ronnie W. Skelton144

Mark H. Vanterpool148



Hon. Alvin Christopher

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1995-PRESENT

REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISTRICT 2

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND WORKS 1995-PRESENT

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER AUGUST 2000

J. Alvin Christopher is the eleventh and last child of the late George Christopher and Miriam Dawson Christopher. He grew up in Anderson Hill, Brewers Bay. His childhood was one steeped in religion and adherence to traditional values. Hon. Christopher attributes his positive self concept and his strong convictions to the influence of his late father. He recalls his father's avid interest and participation in the political arena back in the days when political service was desperately needed to develop the fledgling B.V.I economy. It is this early example that has fostered an unswerving ability to stay focused when faced with conflicting views.

For those who know him well, Christopher's rise to political service seemed like a natural progression to another level of service. Upon leaving school, he started the Alvin Christopher Construction Company, embarking upon a remarkable career which was characterized by in design and construction. An avid reader and an excellent conversationalist, he has always sought ways of enhancing his formal education through completion of various International Correspondence School (ICS) courses. In an effort to improve his craft, he temporarily relocated to the United States Virgin Islands where he gained valuable experiences.

The determined fervor with which he embarked upon his construction business is testament to his strong commitment to success. As the years passed, Hon. Christopher's desire to share his expertise in the development of his beloved islands, led to his involvement in several government projects. He submitted several successful bids on a number of key territorial projects, while at the same time managing his private firm. His signature work may be observed in the following quality projects: Brewers Bay Community Centre, the Cane Garden Ba Bridge and the Mill 1 Mall. Hon. Christopher's civic participation includes membership with the Rotary Club of Tortola a former member and sponsor of the Royals Softball Club, past President and founding member of TBS Progressive Association, former Vice President and member of Full Gospel Businessmen's Association.

Christopher has long been a political activist, quietly effecting change without "tooting his own horn". When the Mt. Healthy Mill was sold, Christopher quickly realized that the historical site should belong to the people of the British Virgin Islands. He and his brother, Mr. Robert

Christopher appealed to the then government and persuaded them to acquire the said windmill. This historical site is now a protected national park. As president of the Ivan Dawson Elementary School's Parent Teachers Association (PTA), he spearheaded a protest march to improve the physical conditions of the school. This effort resulted in the complete redesigning and modernization of the school.

Christopher began his political career February 1995 when he won his first bid for elector office in the second district, having run a independent. He was later a p pointed Minister Communications, Works and Industry. This initiated his formal association with the Virgin Islands Party. He was re-appointed Minister of Communications and Works in 1999 and on 25th August 2000 he was appointed Deputy Chief Minister.

Over the past five years, Christopher has been instrumental in spearheading various projects and sponsoring and voting on key legislation. Following is a partial listing of key projects which have been successfully implemented during his tenure:

1. Construction of the Ballast Bay Bridge
2. Acquisition of land at Diamond [state for fire station and mini Sports Complex
3. Airport Improvement Expansion
4. Cruise Dock Expansion
5. Road widening and Improvement throughout the territory
6. Dual Carriageway
7. Expansion of water system to most parts of the B.V.I.
8. B.V.I. Electricity Corporation Expansion Project
9. Acquisition of National Wildlife Sanctuary at Shark Bay
10. Acts Supported/Initiated during 1995-2000
 - Drugs (Prevention of Misuse) (Amendment) Act, 1995
 - Income Tax (Amendment) Act, 1995
 - Mutual Funds Act, 1996
 - Magistrate's Code of Procedure (Amendment) Act, 1996
 - Pensions (Increase) Act, 1996
 - The Mutual Funds (Amendment) Act, 1997
 - Non-Belongers Land Holding Regulations (Amendment) Act, 1998
 - Elections (Amendment) Act, 1998
 - British Virgin Islands College Fund (Amendment) Act, 1998
 - Drug Trafficking Offenses (Amendment) Act, 2000
 - Domestic Violence Act, 1996
 - Noise control abatement Act, 1996

Christopher is not the typical politician, one given to lengthy speeches and self promotion. He is the man of strong humility and gentle character, one who is adept at identifying problems within the community and quick to formulate an action plan. In the tradition of his late father, George, he communicates sincerity in his dealings with others and is especially drawn to those who are often overlooked in our community: the poor and elderly and youth. This quality has made him special to the people of the second district. Most would agree that he is easily approachable and always makes himself accessible to his people. Possibly, his greatest strength is that he is not a career politician; then he came to the political arena, he'd already hieved great success in his chosen vocation.

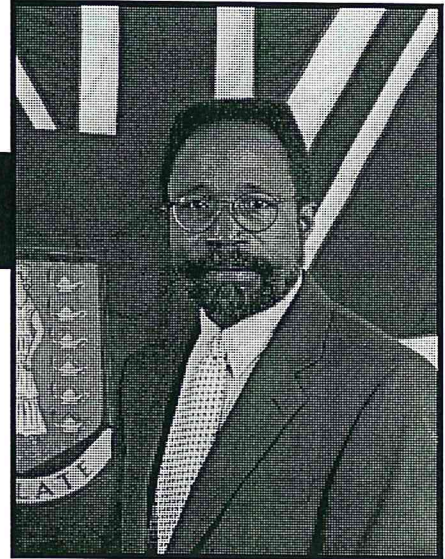
His years as a politician has reinforced his motto, "I am the people's servant." As a result, he's a voice that people can relate to; he understands their struggles in a way that only a man "who's walked the walk" could. Today we salute the Hon. Christopher, a man for all seasons, loving father, caring brother, loyal friend, dedicated leader.

Profile from Honouring the Man , 19th August 2000

Hon. Julian Fraser

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1999 – PRESENT

MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND LABOUR



Julian Fraser is a native of the British Virgin Islands, born to Frances Ann and Andrew Hardicanute E. Fraser of Sea Cows Bay on 5 July 1950 and is currently the representative of the third electoral district. He is the husband of Kharid, the Accountant General of the BVI, with whom he has fathered a son, Jamil.

Upon graduating from the Virgin Islands Secondary School, Julian worked in the BVI for one year. He then migrated to the United States, where he pursued a career in Architecture. In this pursuit, he obtained an associate degree, and a five year Certificate in Architecture from the Institute of Design and Construction. He continued on to the New York Institute of Technology, where he received a Bachelor of Science (Magna Cum Laude) and a Bachelor of Architecture (Cum Laude). He is a registered Architect in the State of New York, and a member of the American Institute of Architects.

Fraser practiced in the profession in the City of New York for 22 years, where he had the pleasure of working on projects for world famous Architects like Michael Graves and Caesar Pelli. His most prized accomplishment was to serve as project architect on the World Financial Center, in New York City, headquarters for Merrill Lynch, American Express and Dow Jones.

In 1999, Fraser was nominated as a candidate for the Virgin Islands Party to contest the seat for the third Electoral District, by the sitting Representative and Minister for Natural Resources and Labour, the Hon. Oliver Cills. He successfully contested the election on May 17th, 1999, thus winning a seat in the fourteenth Legislature, later appointed as Minister for Natural Resources and Labour.

Mr. Fraser is a strong believer in principle. His philosophy is that one must first be loyal to God, then to his country and then to his family.

Mr. Fraser succeeds Oliver Cills, a first cousin, who was briefly interrupted in his service in the early eighties by Earl P. Fraser, brother of Julian, who defeated Cills in a General Election. Minister Fraser is proud to be the third of three children of James T. and Isabella Cills grandchildren to represent the third district, without outside interruption for the last three decades.

Julian Fraser extends his sincerest thanks to the people of the third district for according him and his family the distinct honour to serve them in this capacity.



Hon. Ethlyn Smith

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1995 - PRESENT

MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE 2000

REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE FIFTH DISTRICT

Ms. Ethlyn Eugenie Smith, the fifth of nine children, was born to the late Ernest and Gladys Smith of Huntums Ghut, Tortola on 23rd April 1940.

Ms. Smith received her primary and secondary education in the Territory, and in 1968 graduated with an Associate of Arts Degree in Accounting from the College (now University) of the Virgin Islands.

She pursued higher education at Wandsworth Technical College, London and the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, from which she graduated in 1970 with a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in Accounting. In 1983 she became a Hubert Humphrey Fellow and attended Pennsylvania State University for one year. While there she took courses in the Masters Degree Programme in Public Administration and received the Diploma in Public Administration. She holds a Certificate in Management for Change from the Manitoba Institute of Management which she received in 1987, and a Certificate in Real Estate Management from Caldwell Bankers in 1992.

Ms Smith began a civil service career in 1960 as a clerical trainee, and rose to the level of Permanent Secretary. In 1970 she was appointed to the position of Accountant General, the first woman to hold that post. Her appointment as Permanent Secretary was made in May 1976 to the Ministry of Communications and Works. In 1989 she was transferred to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Labour from which she retired in 1992.

Ms. Smith has travelled extensively throughout the Caribbean and on the four continents. She delights in meeting people and likes travelling, gardening, reading, sports, and singing.

Much of Ms. Smith's time has been given to community pursuits with organisations such as the Community Singers, Beautification Committee, BVI Festival Committee, the Girl Guides, cricket and netball leagues, and the Boys Brigade.

In 1995 Ms. Smith entered the realm of politics and became the first woman to be elected in the February 1995 election. She sat as the Member for the Fifth Electoral District and as a Member of the Opposition in the Thirteenth Legislative Council. As a legislator, Ms. Smith has had the

opportunity to attend the 41st, 42nd and 43rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conferences in Sri Lanka 1995, Malaysia 1996, and Mauritius 1997. She has also attended a Regional Conference in the Turks and Caicos Islands and made parliamentary visits to the Channel Islands, Jersey, Guernsey, and Gibraltar.

In 1999 Ms. Smith again contested the May 1999 General Elections and was victorious at the polls, thus making her the Member for the Fifth Electoral District for the second time. Again she sat as a member of the Opposition until July 2000, when she became Minister for Health and Welfare. Ms. Smith was the only member of the Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM) to gain a seat in the Fourteenth Legislative Council.



Hon. Andrew Fahie, MLC

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1999 – PRESENT

REPRESENTATIVE FOR FIRST ELECTORAL DISTRICT

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION 2000

Mr. Andrew Fahie, who will be remembered as one of the youngest ministers in BVI politics, was born on the 7th August 1970 to Ernest and Iris Fahie. He was educated at the British Virgin Islands High School, the University of the Virgin Islands, and Florida A&M University. Mr. Fahie first served his country as an educator when he taught Mathematics at the B.V.I. High School, then went on to become Assistant Principal of the same school. He was also an instructor at the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College and an Assistant Educational Officer during 1991.

His tenure in the Legislative Council began on 17th May, 1999 when he was elected to represent the First Electoral District. In the same year he was appointed as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister for Health, Education and Welfare. Mr. Fahie was at the centre of history when he became the person to head the fifth ministry. This event, in his view, is the most significant change that took place during his term of office. The revision of the Education Ordinance, and the formation of the Department of Youth and Sports were two of the major challenges which have arisen during the period he has been in the Legislative Council.

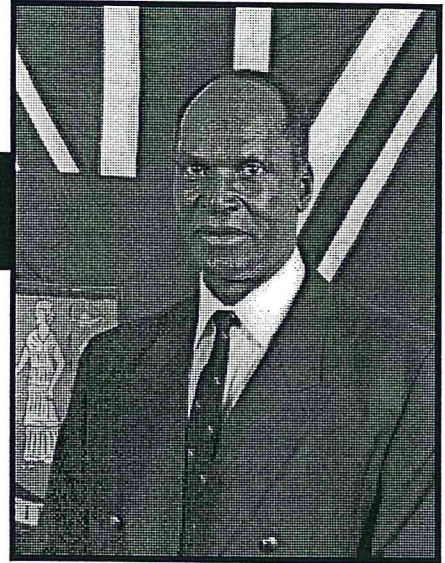
Mr. Fahie is active in his community in many areas. His many roles include piano instructor, coach for Junior and Senior basketball and softball teams in his district, Choir Director of various choirs, organist for the Zion Hill Methodist Church, Member of First District Disaster Committee, Member of Caribbean Youth Federation, member of the Recreation Trust, the Scholarship Trust Fund Board, Committee to Re-define Belongers Status and a member of Special Needs Committee. Mr. Fahie is married and has one child.

Hon. Reeial George

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1971-1975, 1995-2000

TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Reeial George of North Sound, Virgin Gorda, Virgin Gorda, was born in the British Virgin Islands on 17th September 1938. He was educated in Virgin Gorda and after leaving school continued to work in the area. In 1960 Reeial George joined the Antigua, Montserrat Virgin Islands Police Force. He was the first Virgin Islander to have joined the force to serve locally. He also holds a Diploma from the North American School of Drafting and is a member of the recently formed Architects and Engineers Association. George was a founding member of the Virgin Gorda Lions Club in 1974. He is now the Deputy District Governor Representative for the club from Dominica to the Virgin Islands.



Mr. George was elected to serve the Seventh District in 1971. While he had the interest of the Territory at heart, he was particularly keen on securing the advancement of his own district. The upgrading of the road system, the availability of more jobs for his people and the improvement of schools and health facilities were among his many contributions. He was elected again in 1995 and 1999 as one of four Territorial members, introduced following the 1993 Constitutional review.

Mr. George considers major changes which occurred during his term of service to include the participation of women in the Legislative Council; the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18 years; expansion of the Legislative and Executive Councils, expansion of the Education and the establishment of the Hamilton Lavity Stoutt Community College; the expansion of the road network; the construction of the Beef Island Bridge and Airport projects; and the development of ports, electricity and water. He thinks that his major contribution has affected these changes.



Hon. Cherno Jallow

ATTORNEY GENERAL
EX OFFICIO MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

NAME: Cherno Sulayman Jallow

DATE OF BIRTH: 15th November, 1962

NATIONALITY: Gambian

MARITAL STATUS: Married with two children

LANGUAGES:

Fulani
Mandinka
Wollof
English

EDUCATION:

- 1975 – 1980 Attended Armitage High School and qualified with a School Leaving Certificate GCE O'Level.
- 1980 – 1982 Attended St. Augustine's High School and qualified with a School Leaving Certificate GCE A'Level.
- 1984 – 1988 Attended International Islamic University, Malaysia and graduated with LL.B (Hons) degree (Second Class Upper).
- 1988 – 1989 Attended training programme at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados and qualified with a Certificate in Legislative Drafting.
- 1992 – 1994 Attended University of the West Indies and graduated with LL.M degree in Legislative Drafting and Public Law.

LEGAL CERTIFICATION: Admitted and enrolled as Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of The Gambia on October 21, 1988.

WORKING EXPERIENCE:

1982 – 1984

Appointed teacher at Sukuta secondary Technical School, Sukuta, The Gambia.

1 August, 1988 – November, 1990

Appointed and served as State Counsel, with focus on criminal prosecution, in the Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Justice, Banjul, The Gambia.

1 December, 1990 – December, 1991

Promoted to the post of Assistant Legal Draftsman responsible generally for drafting legislation (as well as undertaking criminal prosecution and civil litigation) in the Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Justice, Banjul, The Gambia.

1 January, 1992 – 30 April, 1992

Appointed Acting Legal Draftsman in the Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Justice, Banjul, The Gambia, while at the same time engaging in criminal prosecution and civil litigation.

1 May, 1992 – 31 January, 1994

Confirmed and appointed Legal Draftsman in the Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Justice, while continuing criminal prosecution and civil litigation.

1 February, 1994 – 30 April, 1994

Appointed Acting Parliamentary Counsel in the Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Justice, Banjul, The Gambia, with limited duties of criminal prosecution and civil litigation.

1 May, 1994 – 30 September, 1995

Confirmed and appointed Parliamentary Counsel and head of the Legislative Drafting Division in the Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Justice, Banjul, The Gambia.

1 October, 1995 – 30 October, 1999

Appointed on contract as Parliamentary Counsel in the Attorney General's Chambers, Government of the British Virgin Islands, with responsibilities of

- (a) drafting legislation and advising on legislative matters;
- (b) providing legal advice and legal opinions to Government Ministries and Departments;
- (c) attending meetings of the Legislative Council to render assistance. (on the instructions of the Attorney General) on legislative measures before the Council; and

- (d) holding conferences (on request) to discuss wide ranging issues pertaining. to the law, especially as they relate to institutional formulation of policy.

1 November, 1999 to 21 February, 2000

Appointed Acting Attorney General of the British Virgin Islands.

22nd February, 2000

Confirmed Attorney General of the to date British Virgin Islands

ASSOCIATIONS:

Member, Gambia Bar Association and Commonwealth Association of Parliamentary Counsel .

GENERAL:

- (a) At the national (Gambian) level I have participated in missions to negotiate financial agreements with the European Investment Bank and the Agricultural Development Bank.
- (b) I have also co-ordinated consultancies on matters relating to the conservation and protection of the marine environment and pesticides management .
- (c) I have conducted studies, reviews and drafting of legislation on varying subjects of interest –
fisheries, environment, land and physical planning, criminal law, education, social welfare, maritime administration, financial services, customs, consumer protection, money laundering, business and commerce, etc.
- (d) Secretary of the General Legal Council from 1992 to 1995 and became a Member of the Council in 1995. This body is responsible for the enrolment and discipline of lawyers in The Gambia.
- (e) In 1995, Member and Chairman of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Formulation of Legislation on Liquefied Petroleum Gas.
- (f) From 1992 to 1995, Member and Legal Adviser of the Nurses and Midwives council.
- (g) From 1990 to 1994, Member of the Committee on Performance Contracts of Public Enterprises.
- (h) In 1995, Member and Legal Draftsman of the Electoral Laws Review Committee established to prepare new election laws for The Gambia for the transition to constitutional rule.
- (i) Current Member of the BVI Financial Services Legislation Advisory Committee.
- (j) Chairman, BVI Human Rights

Reporting Co-ordinating Committee.

CONSULTANCIES:

- (a) I have undertaken local (Gambian consultancies on rangeland and livestock management, communal land ownership, use and management and the organization of local farmers into viable corporate institutions .
- (b) With Justice A.N.E.Amissah and Prof . Dr . A. K . Fiadj oe, co-authored the drafting of legislation on Business Organizations (Companies and Partnership) and Business Transactions (Negotiable Instruments, Sale of Goods, Contract, Hire-Purchase and Finance Leasing and Carriage of Goods by Sea) for The Gambia.



Hon. Omar Hodge

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1979-PRESENT

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER 1986-1988

Deputy Speaker 1979-1983

MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION 1983-1986

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER AND
MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES & LABOUR, 1ST OCTOBER 1986-1988

MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION 1988-95

Mr. Omar Wallace Hodge the seventh of seven children was born on 2nd February 1942 to Lucy Ann Augusta-Maduro of Baughers Bay and Amos Hodge of Free Bottom, Tortola. He received his education in the Territory and later worked at the Department of Agriculture. His love for the land has influenced many of the bold decisions which he made during his political career. Mr. Hodge has had a varied and challenging career as a businessman which has included restaurant and supermarket ownership, landscaping and real estate development.

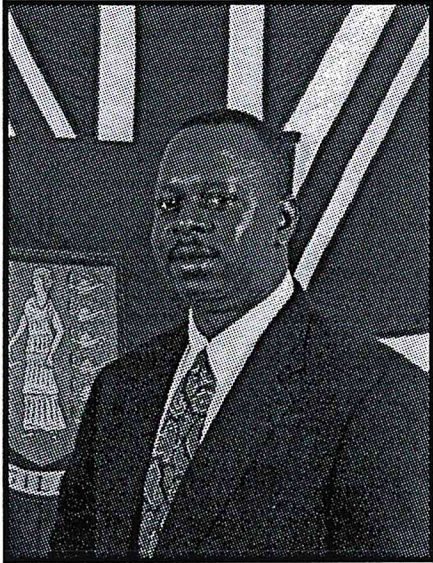
On 22nd September 1979, the Island Sun newspaper printed the words of an introductory speech presented by a man who would later enter into a rich and eventful political career. It was a speech that obviously emanated from a pure, humble, yet immensely convicted sense of honour. Omar Hodge spoke of the coming together of the peoples of the Territory; the need to focus on economic stability through unity, and the eradication of social negatives that threaten the fulfilment of our progress as a nation.

Omar Hodge served as an invoker to a one hundred and twenty eight year old issue and brought a victorious end to what seemed an interminable struggle.

The Anegada lands disputes were finally resolved. The minister had appointed the Anegada lands commission which with his support and the people's trust had been able to bring about an agreeable settlement. He along with his appointed ad hoc advisory committee were also able to accomplish similar goals regarding horse path property in making it available to the local people.

Omar Hodge has championed the expatriate's right to the comfort and peace of mind of Belonger status, after they have worked and lived in the British Virgin Islands for many years. He has

spoken against their being sexually harassed while trying to obtain a work permit and also about pregnant expatriate women being sent out of the country to bear their children. After challenging religious ministers to help take a stand against certain immigration regulations made, he was successful in bringing about certain effectual changes. His breaking of the mace during the 10th Sitting of the Legislative Council clearly demonstrated his zeal and uncompromising attitude towards his quest for justice, the right to speak out for good, and the right to live. Mr. Hodge has given 21 years of dedicated service to the political development and public life of this community.



Hon. Lloyd Black

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1999 - PRESENT

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EIGHT ELECTORAL DISTRICT

Lloyd Keithley Black was born on 9th December 1961. Son of Joseph C. Black and the late Christalita Black. Grandson of the late Dennis

Potter and Eva Frett-Potter.

Graduate British Virgin Islands High School Class of 1978, Caribbean Aviation Training Institute, City of London Polytechnic.

Commercial Airline Pilot- Air BVI Limited, Atlantic Air BVI;

Commercial Banker - Scotiabank (British Virgin Islands) Limited. Member and Past President Rotary Club of Tortola, Member Long Look Methodist Church. Political affiliation - National Democratic Party. Married to Margarita Freeman. 1 son.

Strong advocate for community based programmes involving our young people. In the process of developing a multi-faceted youth-oriented programme with specific emphasis on work skills, job placement, sports, recreation, education and spiritual enrichment.

Believes that British Virgin Islanders, in spite of their strong presence in the international financial arena, should not lose sight of their past and their culture that has made them the people they are today.

‘Our ascent from lean and hard times was not so long ago. We must bring civics and local history back into our schools. A great black civil rights leader once said. “Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it.”’ Let us not forget our past.

Hon. Eileene Parsons



MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1995 - PRESENT

TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Mrs. Eileene L.S. Parsons was born on Tortola to Virginia Parrott Fahie of Cooten Bay and James Elmore Stevens of Long Look, British Virgin Islands. She was enrolled at Infant Primary School at Zion Hill, West End where she lived with her Aunt Constancia Parrott. She recalls that both herself and compatriot Cyril Romney were enrolled on the same day. Later she was sent to Road Town, and after a short while migrated with her Aunt Constancia to St. Thomas where she completed her high school education at the Charlotte Amalie High School.

Mrs. Parsons' quest for higher education took her to the Escuela Vocational School in Puerto Rico, and the Oswego State Teachers College where she studied Dressmaking and Industrial Arts, respectively. She also attended the Leeward Islands Teachers Training College, earned an Associate Degree in Secretarial Science at the College (University) of the Virgin Islands, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Tourism Promotion at Florida International University.

Mrs. Parsons' career has spanned the fields of Education, Secretarial Science and Politics. Mrs. Parsons taught in the public schools in the British and US Virgin Islands from 1959-65. She held notable secretarial positions during the period 1965-95 including Secretary to the Commissioner of Education USVI, and the Dean of the College (now University) of the Virgin Islands; Secretary, BVI Tourist Board, and the Board of Governors of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College. Mrs. Parsons served as Cultural Officer from 1984-1989 and as Registrar/Bursar of the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College from 1990-1995.

A keen interest in culture and sports has dominated Mrs. Parsons' extra curricular activities. She has been indefatigable in her pursuits, designed to stimulate and encourage development in the cultural life of the community. She is the founder of the (now dormant) Community Singers (1974-1986) and the BVI Heritage Dance Company 1979. Mrs. Parsons has also written extensively for publication in the local newspapers and co-authored the book "18 34-1984- One Hundred and Fifty years of Achievement and Development through the Performing Arts. She also chaired the BVI's Festival Committee from 1975-83. In sports she has been secretary/treasurer of the Blue Wings softball club since 1975; Secretary-General, BVI Olympic Committee 1976; a past vice-president of softball in the Caribbean and Latin America, 1981-83, and secretary/treasurer, BVI Softball Association, 1975-1989.

In 1983 Mrs. Parsons entered the arena of politics as a candidate for district five. She contested

the seat unsuccessfully in the 1986 and 1990 elections. In 1995 as an Independent candidate, she was elected number one from a field of 24 candidates, with the highest number of votes cast to date in the territory; thus becoming one of the first two women elected to political office.

Mrs. Parsons served as a member of the Opposition from 6 March -31 May, 1995, and as a member of the Government back bench from 1 June, 1995 -24 February, 1997. On 25 February, 1997 she was appointed Minister of Health, Education and Welfare, becoming the first female Minister in 30 years of Ministerial Government. Mrs. Parsons retained her seat in the fourteenth Legislature, polling the fourth highest number of votes as Territorial candidate in the general election of May 17th, 1999. On May 21st, 1999 she was appointed as Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Health, Education and Welfare in the Virgin Islands Party Government. That appointment was revoked on July 20th, 2000.

Mrs. Parsons has travelled extensively in the Caribbean, Continental U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, United Kingdom, Mexico and Asia. Her hobbies are reading, needle work, sports (especially softball and horse racing), music, travelling for relaxation and education and the "holding together" of the BVI Heritage Dancers who are the Territory's cultural ambassadors. Mrs. Parsons was a mother of two, until recently when she lost her daughter. She now has one son and four grandchildren.

Major Issues/Challenges that Arose During Her Terms of Service:

- Women were elected to the halls of Council and attained high positions in spite of resistance to gender.

Major Changes that Took Place During Her Terms of Service:

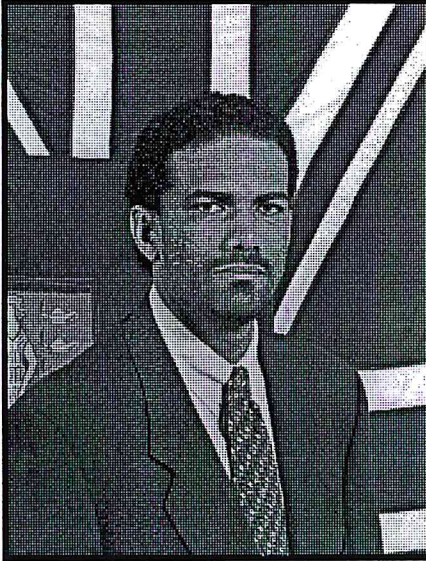
- The scholarships at H. Lavity Stoutt Community College were increased tremendously.
- With women in the House, there was a change in decorum, debate and overall a higher level of interaction in the House. It is a bit unfortunate that there is still a certain level of resistance to the participation of women, while in many instances it is not totally open, the hostility to their presence is felt.
- Overseas Scholarships were brought under stricter control with grades being more accountable in relation to financing

Major Contributions During Her Terms of Service:

- There were vast improvements in the area of sports; the race track and the recreation grounds
- There were increases in the nursing staff and arrangements were put in place to

upgrade the hospital

- There was upgrading of the schools when possible during the short time
- Efforts were made not only upgrade the race track, but two young men were sent for professional training as jockeys to Barbados and obtained professional certification.



Hon. Kedrick Pickering

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1999 - PRESENT

REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE SEVENTH DISTRICT

Dr. Kedrick D. Pickering was born to Vincent and Irene Frett Pickering of Fat Hogs Bay, Tortola on 8th April, 1958. He is married to the former Alice Marie Henry. He is the father of four children.

He received his education at the Willard Wheatley Primary School, the, B.V.I. High School, the University of the West Indies and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He is a fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. He is also the President of the BVI Branch of the U.W.I Alumni.

During his medical studies in 1985-1986 at the University Hospital of the West Indies and on completion of his studies served the Government of the B.V.I. as Medical Officer from 1986-1988 and as Consultant Obstetrician/Gynaecologist from 1992-1999 when he resigned from the Public Service to contest a seat in the 1999 General Elections as a member of the National Democratic Party. He was successful and now serves on the Opposition as his Party's "shadow minister" for Natural Resources and Labour.

Dr. Pickering describes himself as a physician with a social conscience and an awareness that helped to propel him into the field of politics. He names social issues such as domestic violence, sexual abuse and molestation, challenges to the Financial Services, OECD and harmful tax initiatives as major issues and challenges that have arisen during his term of service.

Major changes that took place during his term to date include the challenge and raising of the level of debates in the house without being confrontational. He contributed to the heightening of public awareness of the role of Parliament and Parliamentary procedures, resulting in more focus on legislative issues which he thinks is critical for a growing democracy and therefore the future of the B.V.I.

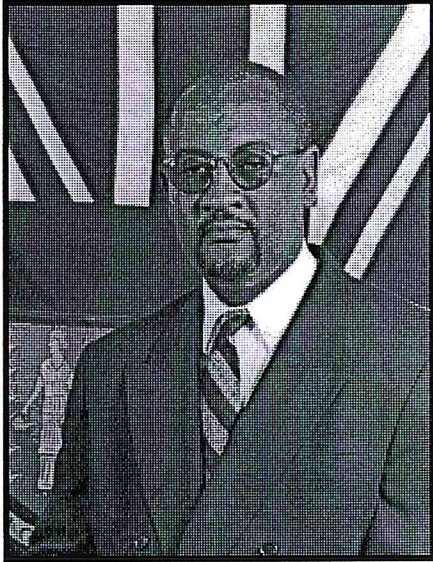
He comments as follows:

"As we grow and mature as a nation and as a people, it is imperative that we understand, know and continually reflect on where we came from. We have come a long way in a relatively short time making it even more important for us to safeguard the successes we have achieved. It cannot be overemphasised the necessity to teach our children "one" history; the sense of who and what we are".

“Liberation day 1949 and it’s historical significance, especially the events that led to the demonstration and subsequent call for the restoration of the Legislative Council should be major events to be celebrated”.

“It is my considered opinion that the 20th November should be celebrated as “Heroes/Liberation day” an event that would be forever etched in the annals of the B.V.I. history”.

Dr. Pickering has served as a member of the B.V.I National parks Trust and is very committed to the youth of the B.V.I. He coached the last national basketball Team and speaks regularly at various youth and church organizations. He operates a private practice as a gynaecologist and obstetrician.



Hon. Ronnie Skelton

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 199 - PRESENT

TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Ronnie W. Skelton is the sixth child of the late Ellis A. Skelton and Ellen L. Skelton of Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands. He is married to former Janice Mercer and they have two children.

After completing his primary and secondary education at the BVI High School, Ronnie went on to Tuskegee University in Alabama where he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering, graduating with High Honours.

After completing one year of graduate school, he returned to the BVI in 1981 and assumed the position of Distribution Engineer at the BVI Electricity Corporation.

Skelton spent seventeen years with the BVI Electricity Corporation, eleven years in the capacity of General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation: a position in which he has made a sterling and long lasting contribution to modern development of the British Virgin Islands.

Skelton has a passion and commitment to serve the British Virgin Islands. He has served and continues to serve the community at various levels including;

- involvement in the early development of basketball in the Territory as a player and coach on the national team,
- founding Member and First President of the Rotary Club of Road Town,
- Chairman of a committee appointed by the Chief Minister in 1993 to investigate the economic climate of the BVI and to make recommendations to improve the same.
- Chairman of the Land Development Control Authority,
- Also served as member of a number of various Beautification Committees and other non-profit organizations.

Skelton is a founding member of the National Democratic Party and in May of 1999 he was elected as a Territorial At-Large Representative to the 14th Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands.

The late Chief Minister, H. L. Stoutt back in the late 1980's, nurtured Skelton's interest in politics. He firmly believes that a clear vision is critical to the continued development of the Territory in the highly competitive global economy in which the Territory earns its livelihood.

Retrospectively Speaking

By any measure, the British Virgin Islands have made substantial progress in just about all spheres of the Territory's life since the restoration of the Sitting of the Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands some fifty years ago. These achievements are impressive and highly commendable. As a people, collectively we must recognize the leadership displayed by our leaders during what were the critical formative years of the modern era of our beloved British Virgin Islands.

It was by no means an easy task and I personally extend my personal congratulations and sincere appreciation for the perseverance of our leaders over the 50 years. My other colleagues and I are determined to build on the lasting legacy of our leaders over the last 50 years, and to successfully move this Territory in the 21st century.

In many ways, my generation embodies the Territory's successes of the last 50 years. Our successes:

- With an 'education for all' policy;
- In building a modern and diversified service economy;
- In developing the requisite supporting physical infrastructure required in a modern country;
- In moving our people to the forefront of management and leadership in the public and private sectors.
- In the advancement of medical facilities in the Territory and the establishment of basic safety net structures and mechanisms for our people, such as social security.
- In deepening our democracy and attracting a generation of well trained and experienced leaders into the service of our country to take the baton and continue the struggle. This engenders continuity. These are indeed significant accomplishments for such a small country and in such a short time. As a people we have every right to be justly proud.

Looking towards the future

As we look towards the future and the next fifty years in the life of this Territory, we must do so focused on the many critical challenges and opportunities. As a people we must build on our past successes as we shape our future.

The strategic challenge of the last generation of the Territory's leaders was formidable. Theirs was to build a foundation on which our Territory would take shape. As the Founding Fathers they carefully moulded that foundation.

In my humble opinion, the strategic challenges for my generation of leaders are no less daunting in their complexities. One of our strategic challenges will be the survival and advancement of our people, our culture, and our mental disposition for our beloved British Virgin Islands.

The global environment in which we will exist over the next fifty years will be extremely challenging for a small country like the British Virgin Islands. We are already beginning to see manifestations of this new reality including the globalization of trade and the potential for the powerful nations to use their influence to attack small fledgling economies and democracies such as ours.

We see this today with The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 'harmful tax initiatives'. We will continue to see such overreaching from other powerful organizations, which did not exist during the last fifty years such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). The sovereignty and freedoms of small countries will constantly be under external threat, not necessarily from the foreign military powers as in the past but in many cases well-trained armies of bureaucrats.

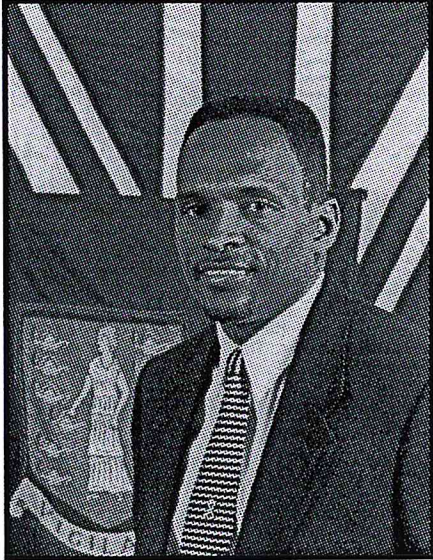
We will have to grapple with the reality of what British Citizenship will mean and evolve to be in the future. We will have to manage our relationships with our regional neighbours and how we welcome their citizens living in the Territory, and the long-term direction and implications of this residency. As a people we will also have to address how we include and involve the wider 'BVI Family' living in other countries in the region and in the United States in particular, as we continue to build our country (our Nation).

As we begin our collective journey as a people into the next fifty years in the life of the British Virgin Islands, I wish to outline a number of guideposts I believe to be very critical as we continue the development of our Territory:

- As a people we must develop a national vision for our country. We must commence a national dialogue about the future direction of our country. This must be an ongoing dialogue and must be comprehensive in scope. The involvement of the Territory's youth in this process must be more than mere lip service. Their involvement must be real and institutionalized.
- As a people we must as the Territory's motto dictates 'Be ever watchful' of our democracy. We must be vigilant about the level of power we concentrate in the hands of government. We must carefully monitor the level of government's intrusion in the lives of our citizens. We must ensure that more forms of 'direct democracy' are incorporated into our Constitution as part of our system of checks and balances.
- Over the next fifty years as a people we must make significant progress in the institutionalization of mechanisms to address and meet the social service needs of our people. We are currently weak in this area; if allowed to continue this weakness would undermine our very existence as a people.

- As the Territory continues its development, close attention must be paid to our Art, culture and values. We as citizens must become far more concerned about our quality of life. We must not take it for granted.
- The economic empowerment of our people will be critical to the level of success we achieve over the next fifty years. This empowerment will be a critical building block for nation building and eventually self-determination.
- As we move towards self-determination we must do so fully cognizant of the region in which we share a common history and abundance of cultural ties. Our long-term success will in many ways be determined by how well we manage our regional relations. We must engage regionally and globally and do so confidently from a position of strength.

These guideposts are not exhaustive, but instead they are thought provoking and serve as a barometer for measuring our future achievements over the next fifty years. After all, if you don't know where you are going any road will get you there. And where there is no vision we know what happens to the people; they perish.



Hon. Mark Vanterpool

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1999 - PRESENT

MEMBER FOR THE FOURTH DISTRICT

Mark Vanterpool was born on July 3, 1956. He is married to Judith E. Christopher, with two sons, Deon age 22 and Dalan age 14. He is a proud product of the BVI elementary school system and a 1972 graduate of the BVI High School. Mr. Vanterpool worked for a short period as an office clerk with J.R. O'Neal Ltd. In 1972, and later spent a year as a trainee Elementary school teacher at the Road Town Primary School (now Althea Scatliffe Primary).

In 1974, he joined Barclays Bank PLC where he received extensive management training and experience in all facets of banking through their locations in the British Virgin Islands, New York, the United Kingdom, Barbados and Anguilla.

In 1988, he resigned from Barclays Bank to take up his new role as Chief Executive Officer of his family food business known as K-Mark's Foods, which has approximately one hundred and twenty employees today. Over the past five years he has embarked on studies with the H.L. Stoutt Community College and Wright State University.

On May 17, 1999 Mr. Vanterpool was elected to the Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands to represent the people of the Fourth Electoral District, the capital, Road Town and its surroundings. He has served the community through several boards and associations; some of which are listed below:

- BVI Electricity Corporation Board – Former Vice Chairman
- BVI Social Security Board – Former Board Member
- BVI High School Parent Teacher's Association - Former President
- BVI Olympic Committee – Former President
- BVI Amateur Basketball Association

He is the recipient of the BVI Business Person of the year award in 1994.

Profiles

of
Other Members of the Legislative Council

Alban U. Anthony	150	H. Robinson O’Neal	165
E. Walwyn Brewley	<i>refer to page</i> 116	Waldo E. O’Neal	166
Oliver Cills	<i>refer to page</i> 113	André Penn	167
Ivan Dawson, CBE	152	Arnando Scatliffe	170
Earl P. Fraser	155	Angel Smith	171
Alred Frett	156	Leopold Smith	173
Edwin H. Leonard	158	Wilfred W. Smith	174
Terrence B. Lettsome	159	Prince Stoutt	175
Conrad A. Maduro	<i>refer to page</i> 114	Cyril Lewis Walters, MBE	176
Leslie Malone	161		



Alban U. Anthony

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1975 - 1983

MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS, WORKS & INDUSTRY 1975 - 1979

DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER 1979 - 1983

The son of Ann Elizabeth (nee Smith) and Nathaniel Anthony, Alban Anthony was born on 9th November, 1922 in Tortola BVI. He was elected to the Legislative Council in 1975 and 1979 and served as the representative for the Fourth District until 1983.

During his term there were many institutional amendments. A new minister was added which led to the redistribution of subjects held by ministers and making for more efficiency in the running of the government.

With respect to the theme "Empowerment through Representation" I hereby endeavour to present a more detailed outline of my activities during my term in office 1975-1983.

As already indicated in my submission for the period 1975-1983, I was appointed to the post of Minister for Communications, Works and Industry, a position which caused me to think clearly on the immediate requirements of my people; without delay I saw the need for improvement at the beef island airport runway - at that time we were barred from aircraft traffic into and out of the BVI after dark - a much needed revenue earner and a hindrance to the travelling efforts of our people. Having being a civil servant previously, I was able to use the appropriate submission to convince the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and thereby achieved approval of funds to install much needed runway lights, a project which took just nine months to complete.

Following that project, I noticed that Road Town was frequently flooded during heavy rains within each year. Immediately I approached Foreign and Commonwealth Office again and received funds to correct that situation.

Our roads throughout the Territory were in very bad shape and the department of public works was short of equipment to repair them. With the assistance of our Minister of Finance, the honourable Willard Wheatley, I was able to convince the officials at the foreign and commonwealth office to purchase heavy duty vehicles and light equipment for public works department.

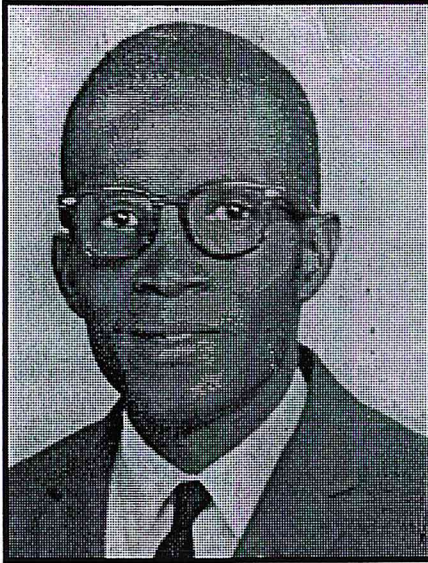
I summarise my achievements as follows:

- Recommended by Executive Council a new minister was added to the ministerial staff

- Over forty pieces of legislation were passed during the period 1975-1983
- Many new schools were built during the period 1975-1983. Extension and improvement to Peebles Hospital was carried out;
- The police force was upgraded;
- During the period 1979-1983 I was appointed Deputy Chief Minister;
- The first phase of the Electricity Corporation at Long Bush was approved;
- The Fisheries Department was approved and put in place; and
- The Department of Agriculture was upgraded, farmers were encouraged to plant more and varied types of grains; poultry interest was raised among farmers and up-to-date slaughter facility was provided.

Mr. Anthony sees having served his people as a worthwhile experience, where he learned to cope with problems, and to respect other people's views. In retirement he is making a great contribution to the economic progress of his country.

Mr. Anthony is married to the former Clover Penn and is the father of seven children and sixteen grand children.



Ivan Dawson, CBE

DISTRICT SERVED: the Third District (renamed the Second District in 1967)

1957 - 1971 Elected Member

1971 - 1975 Nominated Member and Deputy Speaker

1975 - 1983 Speaker

Ivan Dawson was born on the 1st march 1914 to Rebecca (nee Rhymer) and John James Dawson. He was raised in Cane Garden Bay and attended school there as well as in St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands. At that time few opportunities existed for employment except in the areas of agriculture, boat building and some construction, an industry in which he had a keen interest. Shoe making was an art he mastered and consequently became quite popular as a craft in his village.

As a staunch Methodist he became a local preacher during his youthful years, retiring in recent times because of failing health. He reflected on the times he travelled by horse and sometimes boat, in order to attend meetings in Road Town, the capital.

"The times were rough, but we carried the torch," said Mr. Dawson.

His involvement in public life began in 1957 when he was elected member for the Third District a position he held until 1967 when he became the Second District representative in the sixth Legislative Council, and Minister for Natural Resources and Public Health under the new Ministerial System.

Mr. Dawson reflected on the challenges this new system brought as they focused on major development projects. Some of these challenges he recalled was very personal to him, notably the arrival of the cable ship at Brewers Bay (his district) after the communications franchise was granted to Cable & Wireless. He credited a number of his successes as a legislator to his one on one meetings with many of his constituents.

During 1971 there was a change in Government and he became a nominated member in the seventh Legislature. During this period he served in the capacity of Deputy Speaker. In 1975 he was elected to the higher office as Speaker, a position he held until 1983 when he retired.

With his vast prior experience in the House and a senior member at that time he encountered no problems in commanding the respect of both sides of the House, a memory he dearly cherishes. Mr. Dawson recalls his pledge on election as Speaker "to avoid any unbiased attitude that would otherwise compromise this most high office." He faced many challenges in this role but he felt well prepared having come up through the ranks.

He represented the British Virgin Islands branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in many countries travelling as far away as Mauritius and London, Bermuda and Jamaica among others.

His outstanding service earned him Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire and later Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. conferred by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Citation from Honour Ceremony, Methodist Church, 17th May 1985

Ivan Dawson, Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, a Methodist local preacher, comes from the small north coast Tortola village of Ballast Bay but belongs to the entire British Virgin Islands.

As a young man nearly forty years ago, he took upon himself the unenviable task of riding over the hills and valleys of Tortola nearly every Sunday, in fair weather and in foul, to carry the message of the Church to the people. From the outset those with whom he came into contact recognized his sincerity of purpose and his deep christian faith. He early gained the respect not only of the members of the Methodist societies to whom he ministered, but also of the wider British Virgin Islands community that has come to recognize him as friend and counsellor.

He has displayed and developed a talent for leadership, and an ability to be a friend while being a fellow-worker. He has demonstrated to us and for us the true role of a christian's relationship to his community through participation in civic activities — as an elected representative and member of the Legislature for his district, as Speaker of the House, and as a Minister of Government, to name only a few. Within the Church he has served in many offices and capacities including Sunday School teacher , class leader, lay delegate to synod and as a member of many committees.

Brother Ivan Dawson has worked unceasingly through decades for the good of the Church. And we the members of the Methodist Church in the British Virgin Islands Circuit are now proud to honour him by presenting to him this plaque as a symbol of our deep appreciation and gratitude for a life of dedication and service to the Methodist Church and to the people of the British Virgin Islands.

Major Issues/Challenges that Arose During His Terms of Service:

- Electricity to the areas beyond Road Town
- Telephone Communication
- The Ministerial form of Government

- Transportation for students in the country to The B. V. I. High School
- Building of public Primary Schools and Health Clinics in different areas in Tortola and neighbouring islands

Major Changes that Took Place During His Terms of Service

- Erection of The Legislative Council Chamber to debate the affairs of the Territory. This was formerly held in a school room.
- Cane Garden Bay Beach Project
- Motorable road from Road Town to Cane Garden Bay and Joe's Hill
- A Chief Education Officer to represent The B.V.I.. in educational matters at home and abroad
- Implementation of the Social Security System

Major Contributions During His Terms of Service:

- Negotiating with land owners for the land to build a public Primary School in Cane Garden Bay
- Negotiating with land holders to get their permission for installation of cables on their properties for world-wide communication
- A member of the Delegation that went to London in 1966 to discuss the possibility of a Ministerial form of Government

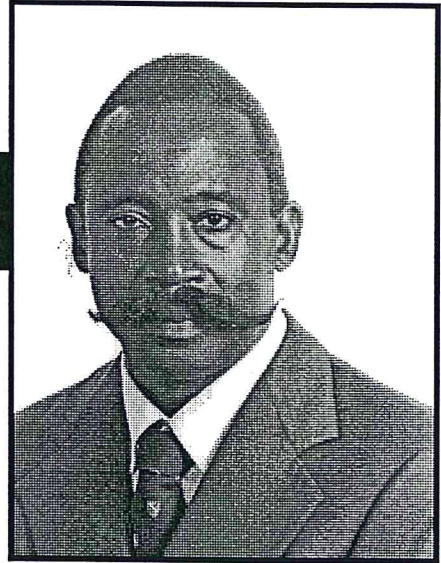
Comments:

As an aged citizen, it is indeed a pleasure to reminisce and see how much our beautiful British Virgin Islands have achieved in 50 years. Our legislators and the electorates are more educated and informed. They have access to more tools and resources than they did in 1950. Theodolph Faulkner's vision of local representation has been beneficial. The British Virgin Islands have produced sons and daughters who have proven that they are ready for the social, political, cultural, and educational challenges in an ever changing global economy. British Virgin Islanders, continue to advance with God's speed!

Earl P. Fraser

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1983-1986

Earl Patric Fraser was born to Frances Ann and Andrew Hardicanute E. Fraser of Sea Cows Bay on 11th April, 1943 in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, where he grew up and received his early education. Fraser served in the Legislative Council as a member for the Third District from 1983 to 1986. That particular government did not serve a full term.

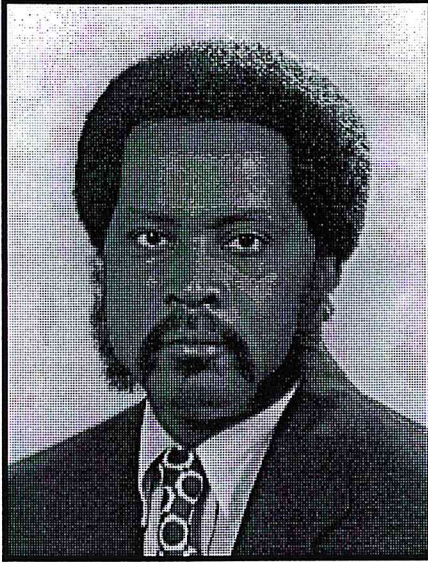


One major issue to which he directed his attention was casino Gambling, an issue that struck at the religious and moral fibre of the community. The subject was aborted before it gained full fruition. Fraser was also instrumental in piloting a private members bill through the legislature on behalf of the Seventh -Day Adventist Church.

Fraser is a businessman and is married to Beverly Christopher and they have two children.

Mr. Fraser was also the Deputy Speaker of the House for the 11th Legislature. During his Government tenure the famous Business Company Act was passed which is credited for the creation and development of the Financial Services Sector. Mr. Fraser was one of its strongest supporters. As the only backbencher at the time in a 5/4 government, Mr. Fraser takes great pride for keeping the Government together as long as it lasted (2 years 10 months). He held the 'balance of power.'

Mr. Fraser won a seat after defeating his cousin the Hon. Oliver Cills who had served three consecutive terms. Despite limited funds Hon. Fraser completed a number of small projects in the 3rd District including the paving of the Nibbs Estate Road now used by all as access to the Little A Race Track. Mr. Fraser also had a keen interest in the Fishing Sector, and discussed with his colleagues ways of moving this industry forward.



Alred Frett

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL - 1995-1999

TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Mr Alred Frett was born on a stormy Thursday, December 04, 1947 to Alice (nee Turnbull) and Alvanley Frett. He was the sixth child, first boy of ten children and is the father of three children. He is married to Dr. Joyce Brewley.

Mr. Frett attended school at the East End Methodist School and the Road Town Secondary School. His tertiary level Education took place at the Cable and Wireless Training Centre in Barbados, UWI Hospital School of Radiography in Jamaica and the College of Arts Science & Technology - Jamaica.

He was one of the first trained local telephone technicians and one of the first trained local Radiographers.

A lover of music, Mr. Frett helped form an All-Brothers Musical Group which was popularly known as the "Bad Ones". He always finds time for playing music at community functions. Currently he plays in a AOne-man Band@. (Several instruments)

With his wife, Mr. Frett was the first to establish a fully contained Medical Complex, providing quality and affordable health care for all. B & F, as it is popularly known, has as its motto:

"Where your Health Comes First And People Really Care... We See All Patients No One Is Turned Away."

Mr. Frett who saves as his motto "fairness and justice for all", was elected as Territorial Representative in 1995, and served in the 13th Legislature. He was Minister of Health, Education & Welfare for the period 1995 - 1997.

Among the major challenges that arose during his term of office was his great concern for:

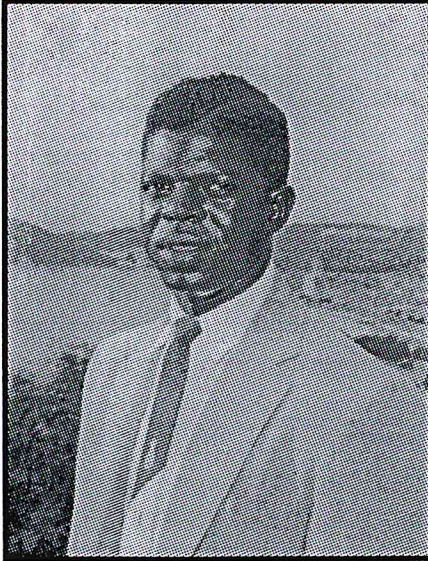
- the deep rooted secrecy of the operations and functions of Government
- the unproductive sale of local real estate to external interests.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS DURING HIS TERM IN OFFICE

- Advocated for a new modern main hospital and improved clinics for Anegada and Virgin Gorda
- Improvement of Educational and Recreational infrastructure including new classrooms, teacher training, wage increases, increased scholarships (both local and international)
- Improvement of Recreational Facilities from Anegada to Jost Van Dyke
- Construction of a new inter-island Tortola to Beef Island Bridge
- The procurement of lands for the greater public interest

Mr. Frett also sponsored Bills and Motions in relation to the following:

- Access to Child support without parental imprisonment
- Making social security more considerate and responsible
- A BVI Local Heroes/Labour Day
- Subsidized Health Care and reduce Insurance Abuse
- Providing free education up to College Level
- Reduction of Electrical Power and Water Connection Fees
- Tenants/Landlord rental Relations
- Protection for BVI Land/Property Owners
- A BVI National Airline



Edwin Harris Leonard

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1954

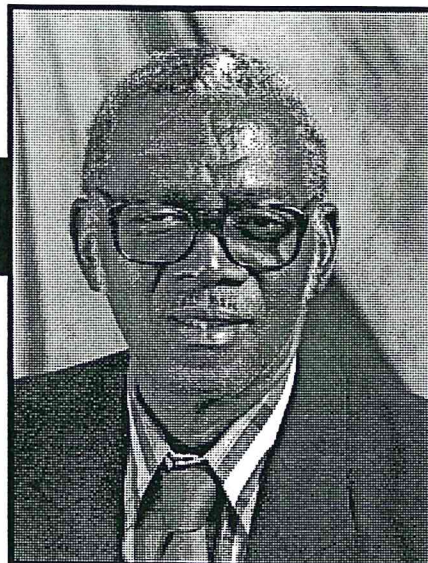
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE THIRD ELECTORAL DISTRICT

Edwin Harris Leonard, second son of Hugo and Almena Leonard of Todman's Estate, was born on 19 March, 1928. He commenced his checkered career as a pupil teacher in the education service of the British Virgin Islands. During 1953-54 he abandoned the prospects of a teaching career in order to accept the challenge to oppose two other candidates for the seat in the Third Electoral District. As a son of the soil, Mr. Leonard was proud to rise to this challenge since the other two candidates were not British Virgin Islanders.

Mr. Leonard won the seat but his legislative tour was short-lived, lasting only for a few months. He became disillusioned when he found himself powerless to prevent a law from being passed without being given the benefit of three readings, and also because of the rejection by Government of an important self-help project proposal by the people of Cane Garden Bay. In Mr. Leonard's view, this was his major involvement during his term of office. This project aimed to establish a cattle dip at Cane Garden Bay for the benefit of the farmers in that area.

With the opportunity to migrate to the United States, Mr. Leonard nipped his political career in the bud. He worked in the United States Virgin Islands for a while as a night auditor in the hotel industry and later as a construction worker in the United States mainland. He lived in *the United States for many years and returned to the British Virgin Islands approximately ten years ago following a premature retirement on account of illness.

Terrence B. Lettsome



MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1963-1999

REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE SEVENTH ELECTORAL DISTRICT

Terrence Lettsome was born on 11th March 1935 in Long Look to Francis H. Lettsome and Frances Lettsome neé Thomas. He was the ninth of eleven children and is the father of four children. He is married to the former Claudia S.R. Frett.

Lettsome received his early education at the Long Look Infant School and the East End Methodist School. He answered God's call in 1955 and has been a faithful Methodist local preacher since 1956.

After school Lettsome worked as a fisherman, farmer, contractor and entrepreneur, locally and overseas.

Mr. Lettsome was first elected to the Legislative Council on 4th November 1963 during which term the United Party was formed with Lavity Stoutt and Ivan Dawson as members.

On 14th April 1967, he was re-elected to the Legislature under the Ministerial System, and appointed as the first Minister of Communications and Works and Utilities, a position he retained when re-elected in 1979.

Re-elections in 1983 and 1986 saw him in the role of Opposition Member, Deputy Speaker and Government backbencher, respectively. On re-election on 12th November 1990 Lettsome was appointed Minister of Communications and Works a position he held until 1995. He served another term as backbencher and retired in 1999, after thirty-six years of committed, dedicated and uninterrupted service to the 7th District.

Among the major challenges that arose during his very long term of office are:

- The crisis of the Wickham's Cay/Anegada Agreements.
- The late H. Lavity Stoutt's dream of a Local College.

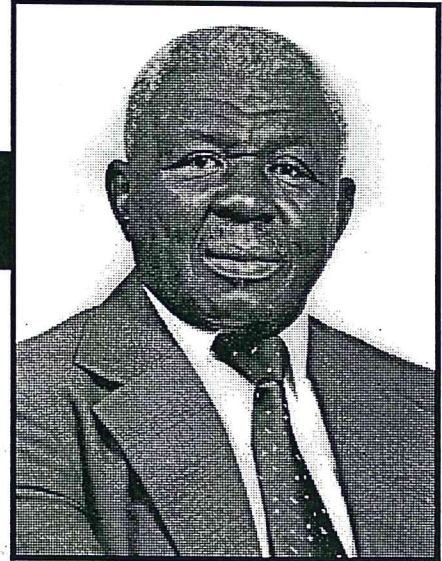
Major changes that took place during his term of office included:

- The provision of multipurpose Community Centres.
- Establishment of police stations on all major islands.

- Provision of electricity and portable water.
- The development of ports at West End, Port Purcell and Road Town.
- Completion of the Central Administration Building.
- Sea defence work on Drake's Highway.

Lettsome's commitment to the improvement of the standard of living for all indigenous Virgin Islanders was evident to the end. As a tribute to his outstanding record of service it was announced by the Legislative Council that the Beef Island Airport, the main airport, will carry his name. His final words are, "although I am now retired from public service, I'll never retire from God's service until death."

Leslie Malone



MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1954 – 1963

REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE FOURTH ELECTORAL DISTRICT

Leslie Franklin Malone was born in Tortola on 4th April 1917. He was the son of William Hamilton Malone who had taken Clarita Belvianna Pickering as his wife. Leslie was the second of twelve children, seven boys and five girls, born to William and Clarita. He grew up at Fat Hog's Bay and attended the East End Methodist School.

Mr. Malone is the father of four children. At 84 he is a widower. He was married to Golda Lettsome who died a few years ago.

A man of many talents, Mr. Malone had been farmer, fisherman, sailor and builder. Subsequent to his tenure in the Legislature he performed the duties of Building Inspector at the Public Works Department and gained experience in the field of architectural design and blue print. He also performed the duties of Farm Manager at the Paraquita Bay Stock Farm.

Mr. Malone could have been a member of the Council elected in 1950, but he chose to postpone his bid for election until 1954 when he was elected as the representative for the fourth district. He was re-elected in 1957 and appointed as Member for Trade and Production.

During his second and third terms when he served in the Executive Council, Mr. Malone's fearless defence of the rights of the people, was the catalyst that drove to completion many of the measures that laid the foundation for the prosperity which the Islands enjoy today.

Mr. Malone will be remembered for the part he played in the government's acquisition of land for the Beef Island Airport and the Paraquita Bay Stock Farm, the part he played in encouraging the Little Dix Bay development by Lawrence Rockefeller; the part he played in drafting legislation which is known as the Aliens Land Holding Regulation Act 1960; the part he played in securing from her Majesty's Government, permission for the British Virgin Islands to remain outside of the West Indies Federation and to use the U.S. dollar as legal tender. All these feature prominently in his reflections.

Other accomplishments with which he is associated are the division of the McNamara Estate into plots which were bought by local people, the establishment of the Virgin Islands National Bank, and constitutional advancement to a ministerial form of government.

A personal accomplishment of which he is very proud is the setting up of a transportation service for school children, which operated between East End/Long Look and Road Town. This service facilitated attendance at the Virgin Islands Secondary School by students from the eastern end of Tortola.

Reflections

by Leslie Franklin Malone

On Sunday 6th November 2000 Leslie Malone, now 84 years old, reflected on his tenure as a member of the Legislative Council. Among the highlights he noted:-

“We did not get the Constitution until 1950 and, I decided that I would run,, not really having the full understanding of what the whole thing was about. But when the different groups were split up I found myself annexed to Mr. Stanford Conor. I didn’t think he was the person to be my running mate. So that first Legislative Council I had no part in. But I made note of all that was going on and I was in a position then to enter the race with the second Council as a man at large. I was successful in being elected as the most wanted man.

During that time when I was elected, the people from East End came to me and decided that I must go and work with Mr. Howard Penn in the Legislative Council, because he was from East End too. So I went and annexed myself to him. He was the Member for Trade and Production.

It happened so that the very next Legislature I became Member for Trade and Production, because I kept my mouth shut and I used my head. I annexed myself to the Hon. Fonseca and he became Member for Works and Communications.

At that time, the Birdseye Company came here offering to buy land from East End to West End for \$25.00 per acre, and people from East End to West End were anxious to get rid of it because money was hard in the British Virgin Islands. I protested against it, and the Birdseye Company had one way of looking after me. And when they came to me as Member for Trade and Production, those people decided that they would buy me out. One day they opened a big bag of money - money that I had never seen in my life. They gave a certain amount of money. They didn’t count it. One said “I think this will take care of youyou are our agent”.

When I got that money in my hand, according to the behaviour of the people, I decided that this money was mine and I didn’t have to go and ask anybody anything about land. I said that I could never sit down and be an enemy to the people who elected me to the Legislative Council and sell out the British Virgin Islands to this company for that kind of money. I wouldn’t sell out the country at all because this is where I and my children have to stay.

I went to Antigua. Mr. Fonseca was my running mate and when I told him the whole thing I asked that we go to Antigua. I got the legislation drafted in Antigua and came home that same afternoon after one o’clock, and called an emergency meeting of the Council.

We didn’t get that Bill passed till twelve o’clock in the night to prohibit the sale of land in the British Virgin Islands. We told the Clerk of the Council to write to the Middle East and tell them that the Government prohibited the sale of land in the British Virgin Islands.

Shortly after that Mr. Rockefeller came here to set up a resort, and he wanted to do it on Beef Island. Most of the people in the British Virgin Islands were in favour of it, because they understood that he would open work and all the rest of it.

But I told them I didn't think Beef Island was the right place, because it is next to the main land. So I made the suggestion that Virgin Gorda, a place you call Little Dix Bay would be a nice place, because I was associated with that place as a young man going to Virgin Gorda. The Council decided to go see what it looked like, because Mr. Rockefeller was here present at the time.

We went to Virgin Gorda, and when we got there anchored the boat. There was no wharf or anything and they got in the dinghy. They were wondering about getting on the shore. So I took off my pants, and I stayed in my brief, and I told Mr. Rockefeller "you get on my back". And I put him safe ashore.

That was the beginning of a happy day in Virgin Gorda, when Mr. Rockefeller landed there on my back. And I feel from my experience of the Legislative Council and the thing that the place in Virgin Gorda that it was worth carrying him on my back.

Now the most important thing, with the exception of Virgin Gorda, that I saw happen here in the British Virgin Islands. The talk came up about an airport. The Legislative Council, went all about to Cappaons Bay, Sea Cows Bay, Josiah's Bay and all these places talking about an airport.

I told them we only have one place here, if we would have an airport at all, Beef Island. They said "Lets go see what Malone is talking about". And I carried them up to Mr. Ward's Bay, and landed some (individuals) there. There the boat went round the Bluff and came around over by Marina Cay. I told them that from Ward's Bay (to) over here you can have an airport.

The question is that the land belongs to the people and we don't know if the people would sell the land. When we decided that we would have the airport, we talked to the people. Then the acquisition of the land came up, because some of the people said that (would) touch their land. We had to acquire the land, and that's how we got the airport in Beef Island.

One of the other experiences I had in the Legislative Council is the acquisition of Paraquita Bay Estate (which was my portfolio) for agricultural purposes. We had to go to the High Court, and we had to do this and that, because Mr. Watts would not consent as with the people up in Beef Island. We were successful in having Paraquita Bay.

In my time another great experience I had is the Cleaning Hole and the McNamara Estate. Mr. Jack Smith was living right there where Malone the Commissioner of Police Office is, in a little wooden house, and he had his children there. When Mr. Cobham came to the British Virgin Islands, he came with one idea. To buy out the Cleaning Hole and the point of the reef. From other experiences that I had of Mr. Cobham I said, "I don't think you could allow Mr. Cobham to run monkey race over a place like that".

The little children of Smith used to careen down there in the Cleaning Hole then. It happened so that me and Mr. Cobham got at it. We nearly fought one another. But I'm glad to see today, that the same one of the sons of Jack Smith, was able to develop the Cleaning Hole to what it is today.

And then this other company came in below there. But if Mr. Cobham had got it... He aint do anything here. Just bought a lot of land over the place for monkey to make track to run over. Those experiences I have, and I will live with them.

I went to London with a delegation about making the U.S. dollar legal tender in the British Virgin Islands. Her Majesty's Government was not against making the US dollar legal tender, but we had to go to Washington to get clearance. The trip to Washington was made, and today the US dollar is legal tender in the British Virgin Islands.

Another experience I had was The (West Indies) Federation. We had a lot of people in the Council from the big countries talking about the Federation which we didn't have much understanding about. But I was connected to Mr. Bruce, and he was a man who had some understanding. He was from Denmark. He gave me a hint of what the whole thing was about, and I objected, and that's why we were not in the Federation.

I'm happy and I'm proud to know that I'm a British Virgin Islander, and that I was a legislator, and I had dealings with so many of these important factors. There's nothing much more that I can say, because it was the time. Just like a man going to build a house, he has to sit down, and count his cost and gather his materials. I was in that time. I had to make decisions and good decisions that the British Virgin Islands is benefitting from today.

Note: Leslie, a grandchild of Thomas Andrew Pickering of Josiah's Bay, is encouraged by the fact that several of the great grandchildren of Thomas Andrew and Mary Ann Pickering are today also making contributions to the Legislature. Two were in the Thirteenth Legislature and three are in the Fourteenth Legislature.

H. Robinson O'Neal

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1967-1971

Robinson O'Neal, was the son of Hubert and Anester O'Neal of Virgin Gorda. He was a businessman, a seaman and a legislator.



As a businessman, Mr. O'Neal owned and operated businesses in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands and on Virgin Gorda, British Virgin islands.

As a seaman, Mr. O'Neal owned and operated a number of cargo vessels that plied the waters of the U.S. and British Virgin Islands. His boats carried such names as the Anegada, the Virgin Gorda, the Tortola, and the Gorda peak.

Mr. O'Neal is best remembered as a legislator. In 1967 he was elected to the first legislative council under the ministerial system of government. As the elected member from Virgin Gorda, Mr. O'Neal was instrumental in bridging the gap between North Sound and the Valley by helping to push through the connecting road, on occasions even using his own money and equipment to see the project through.

Mr. O'Neal sought to improve the standard of education on the island. He was successful in having the government build a primary school at north sound and it was through a public service act of transporting the furniture for the said school that Mr. O'Neal met his tragic death in an auto accident on 10th January 1971.

The Robinson O'Neal memorial school named in his memory was the first public building in the Territory to bear the name of a native British Virgin Islander, a gregarious people centered person Mr. O'Neal was beloved of the people of Virgin Gorda.

Mr. O'Neal was married to Muriel Hodge and they had three sons and two daughters.



Waldo E. O'Neal

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1957-1960
Representative for the Fifth Electoral District

Waldo Emerson O'Neal was born on Virgin Gorda on 13th January, 1916 to Otto and Esther O'Neal. He attended St. Mary's Anglican Church on Virgin Gorda and spent many years working in St. Thomas before returning to make his contribution to his homeland.

Mr. O'Neal was elected to represent the Fifth District (Anegada and Virgin Gorda) from 1957 to 1960. He considers the negotiating of the purchase of Little Dix Bay (Virgin Gorda) as one of the major accomplishments of his time. It was indeed a landmark in the development of the tourist industry in the British Virgin Islands.

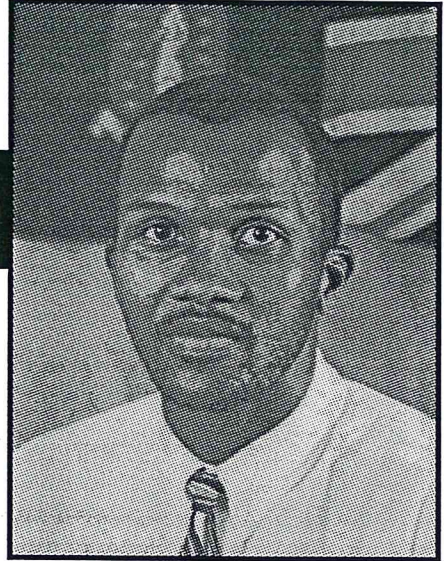
He was instrumental in bringing certain services to his district. Among these were the re-establishment of postal services in Virgin Gorda and the stationing of a nurse in Anegada. A major district development was the paving of Anegada's roads.

Mr. O'Neal's main desire is that the infrastructural development of the British Virgin Islands is planned so that the increased population can be more adequately catered to, thereby enhancing the standard of living. In this fiftieth anniversary year he is pleased with the development of the Territory but hopes that the current leaders and all the people of the Territory are cognizant of the many problems that development sometimes brings. It is Mr. O'Neal's wish that special attention is paid to the problems that the youth face in this time of rapid growth in the British Virgin Islands.

Mr. O'Neal is an avid reader and a sports enthusiast, his favourite sport being cricket. He is delighted to witness the revival of a national interest in this sport, particularly among the Territory's young people.

He has one son, Ettiene.

André Penn



MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1995 - 1999

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EIGHTH ELECTORAL DISTRICT

André Eric Penn, is the last of six children born to Lawrence Gerwin and Una Amethyst Davies Penn of East End, Tortola. He was educated at the Virgin Islands High School, the Iowa State University and l' 'Universite' de Paris VIII where he specialized in Languages. He taught at the B.V.I. High School and the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College. He works in the Trust Services.

In 1995 Mr. Penn a member of the United Party, contested a seat in the Legislative Council as Representative for the 8th District. His effort was successful and he served on the Thirteenth legislative Council as a member of the Opposition. He enjoys masonry and travel.

The following is a speech made by Mr. Penn at the end of during his membership of the Thirteenth Legislative Council.

“Mr. Speaker, Sir...

As a member of the Thirteenth Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands, I sought to work with fellow Council members, the Civil Service and the community in general toward the betterment of the lives of those who call these islands home. The social well being of our people occupied a great deal of my interest.

Of extreme concern to me was the need to more efficiently employ resources; human, monetary and otherwise, throughout our education system, at our primary and secondary levels in particular. I keenly supported the long-standing pleadings for the development of functional schools dedicated to the technical/vocational curriculum, an area of studies for which many of our students have a natural penchant and God-given talent. These facilities would train those interested in this area to make their living while ensuring that the community is supplied with a solid tech/voc labour force. While applauding the contributions of our tertiary level institution, the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College, I emphasized the importance of having a fair percentage of our young scholars study at foreign institutions to benefit from the wealth of cultural, educational and technological exposure offered. Many of them would be able to learn second languages, a vital tool in the tourism industry and in the development of foreign trade.

Adequate provision of and ready access to quality health facilities and services accounted for an area of interest to which I exerted much energy. As a citizen and certainly as a parliamentarian I felt that we owe it to our people and visitors to provide inexpensive, trustworthy medical care, with sound emphasis on preventive medicine. I endorsed the allocation of whatever resources were to be deemed necessary to ensure realization of this mandate.

Perhaps though, my fondest pursuit was in advocating for diversification of our Territory's economy. I lamented the unacceptable reality that we have by no means begun to exploit the vast potential of Agriculture and Fishing as viable industries. I envisaged and agitated for the development of concentrated agriculture where farmers would specialise in certain crops. Government would work with farmers to create cooperatives and with the private sector to create and maintain depots, providing for ready markets for the produce. As concentrated farming gives high yield, a wide range of by-products could be developed. I envisaged further the enhancement of our traditional fishing techniques, while introducing and exploiting newer avenues such as fish farming. I avidly encouraged that the BVI Fishing Complex be revitalized and kept in Government's control. I spoke too of the dire need to foster and promote cottage industries. We constantly sit idly by as most of our fruit for example goes to waste. Yet on a daily basis we purchase imported fruit syrup in the supermarkets, a perfect example that we too could have thriving cottage industries were we more industrious. I implored Government to take the lead in promoting this potentially rewarding sector, and to expand the opportunities offered through the Development Bank of the Virgin Islands, while negotiating with commercial banks to facilitate the granting of loans for these purposes. All these "economically dormant" industries not only serve to preserve our heritage and culture, but indeed they can and should be made to offer business opportunities to the large sector of our society who is so inclined. With proper management and monitoring these industries will eventually become other pillars of our economy. With Government's blessings, budgetary allocation was made for the start-up of Hope Estate, East End, Long Look Industrial Compound (HEELIC), a project aimed at the development of cottage industries in these communities. For various reasons the project did not get off the ground, but it is hoped that the idea may be kept alive and some day made a reality.

Above all, I encouraged the acceptance and appreciation of and endeavored to explain the relevance of manufacturing to not only our nation's economy, moreover to our national pride and ultimate survival. The Virgin Islands import practically 100% of all goods consumed. This translates into a wholesale exportation of an alarmingly large portion of the income generated in the Territory. Small-scale production of many of these commodities would go a long way in reversing this. Negative practice. Manufacturing would automatically generate business and job opportunities. Well planned development and growth of our manufacturing sector will in time allow us to offer goods for export, a welcome weight in balancing the scales of trade.

As a parliamentarian, I strongly urged discussion, the exchange of views and the submission of alternative viable suggestions and solutions. I honestly felt that very often the most effective idea or solution, "le juste milieu" as it is referred to, was the one coming out of two opposing ideas or solutions. As a member of the Opposition, I was privileged to readily assent to proposals and initiatives on the part of the Government that I viewed as being in the best interest of our people. I questioned, deliberated on and offered alternative avenues when I felt that the need was there. A great part of these suggestions stemmed from observations and discussions I had made or had on Parliamentary trips or in my general travel and experience. Many of my initiatives, ideas, suggestions and the like found favour with the Government of the day, a fact that was always a great source of encouragement, and one that exemplified what was in my view the general approach of the thirteen members of the Thirteenth Legislative Council — an endeavour to work together. Even at times when the outcome did not prevail in our "favour", we the Members of the Opposition knew that our voices had been heard, our concerns noted, our suggestions appreciated.

The Thirteenth Legislative Council by its share composition, the additional of the Territorial Representatives, would naturally require a period of adjustment. Added to that, the life of the Council was beset by unsettling moments. Despite it all the Council accomplished a lot. Further

progress was made concerning the recommendations of the Constitutional Commissioners Report and on our overall relationship vis-à-vis the United Kingdom. Extensive legislation was passed relative to the Financial Services Sector. Landmark pieces of Social legislation were also passed. Government and Opposition collaborated admirably to ensure this. The Government of the day embarked on many costly physical infrastructural projects, several of which were the centre of considerable scrutiny and lively legislative debate. Through it all the thirteen members battled, compromised and worked untiringly together. I was privileged and proud to be a part of it all. I say without reservation that the Thirteenth Legislative Council was able to achieve all it achieved due to the commitment of all members to work together for the good of our people, irrespective of party affiliation or legislative position.

My humble hope is that the Fourteenth Legislative Council continues to work together and that all future Councils do the same. The political system we follow dictates that there be a Government and an Opposition, and that Government as it were control the day-to-day operations of the Territory. It is imperative that the community understands this and that parliamentarians in particular understand and respect this. It is within these parameters, arguably desirable, arguably undesirable, that parliamentarians are to make their meaningful contributions to the further development and overall well-being of Nature's Little Secrets — Our Home — The Virgin Islands".



Arnando Scatliffe

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1963-1967

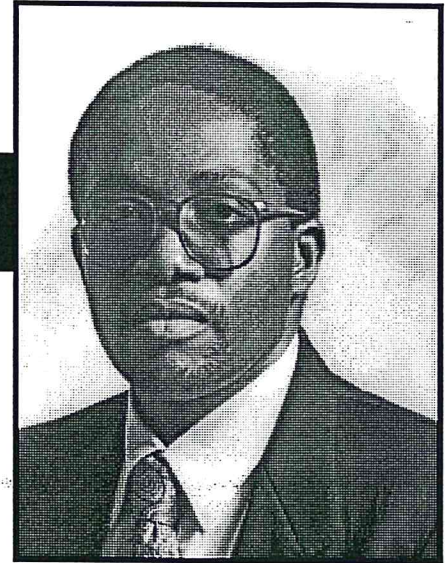
Arnando Scatliffe the son of the late Antonio and Evelina Hodge Scatliffe was born in Road Town on the 10th June, 1932. He was elected to the Legislative Council in 1963 and served as the second member for the Road Town area.

Mr. Scatliffe was not successful in securing a seat in the Legislative Council during the ministerial system of Government, but was involved in the pre-ministerial debates. He supported the motion that brought about the participation of two members of the Opposition in the 1966 Constitutional Conference in England. During his term in the Legislative Council he also supported the Pioneer Service and Enterprises Ordinance 1966.

Mr. Scatliffe is remembered as a Business man • Legislator • Volunteer Fireman • Community Worker • Chairman of the Prisons Visiting Justices Committee • Former President of Rotary Club of Tortola • Justice of the Peace • Member of the Community Band • Congregational Steward of the Road Town Methodist Church • and founding member of the all Male Choir, "The Old Timers".

He was the husband of Sylvia Turner-Scatliffe and the father of five children.

Angel Smith



MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL - 1995-1999

Angel Smith was born in Tortola, 14 th April 1961 to Clarence and Mariel Smith. He attended the Cane Garden Bay Primary School and the British Virgin Islands High School.

On leaving school he worked as a bank teller for a short period, then joined the teaching profession. He attended Teachers Training College in Antigua, and received a Bachelors Degree, and a Masters Degree, from Hull University in England. Mr. Smith worked as a teacher for many years, before becoming a Guidance Officer in the Primary School System.

In 1995, following the death of the H. Lavity Stoutt, Mr. Smith was elected to the Legislative Council in a bi-election. He did not contest the seat in the next election. In 1999 he was appointed to the position of Chief Education Officer.

Mr. Smith is a local preacher in the Methodist Church, a lover of local history and an ardent storyteller. He and his wife Grethel (nee) Barry have four children.

Major Issues/Challenges that Arose During His Term of Service:

- Role and function of the Speaker of the House
- Salary of Legislators
- Domestic Violence
- Noise Abatement
- Constitutional Review

Major Changes that Took Place During His Term of Service

- Regular and frequent meetings of the House
- Wider participation by Members (questions, motions)
- Improved office facilities
- Improved services to Members

Major Contributions During His Term of Service

Motions proposed:-

- Old Age Pension Scheme – No. 3 of 1998
- Rights of the Disabled – No. 8 of 1997

According to Mr. Smith, the 13th Legislative Council was the most active to date. There was wide participation from both sides of the House.

Leopold Smith

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1967-1971

NOMINATED MEMBER 1975-1979

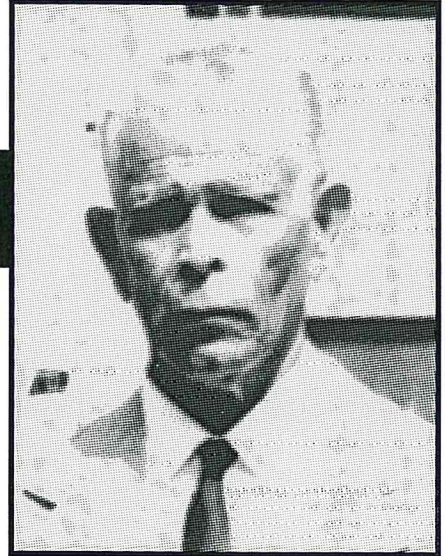
Mr. Leopold Smith was born in the British Virgin Islands on February 24, 1904. He was a prominent carpenter and shipwright at a time when those skills were dearly needed in the Territory.

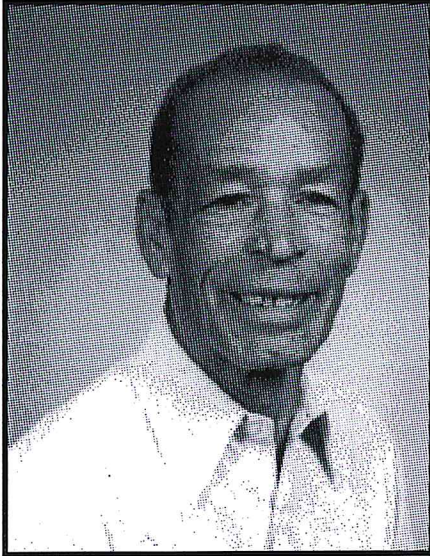
In 1945 he was the revenue officer at West End.

Leopold Smith was a nominated member of the Executive Council during the pre-legislative period. He was an elected member of the Legislative Council representing the Third District 1967-1971. Leopold was again a nominated member and Deputy Speaker of the Eighth Legislative Council 1975-1979.

His belief in upholding proper standards of excellence prompted him to scrutinize all bills to ensure accuracy and appropriateness of content. He adamantly opposed large pensions and salaries for legislators, lest politicians be lured to positions because of lucrative salaries, rather than an interest in doing the people's business.

Leopold Smith is married to Enell Charles. They have three children.





Wilfred Wilson Smith

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1954-1957

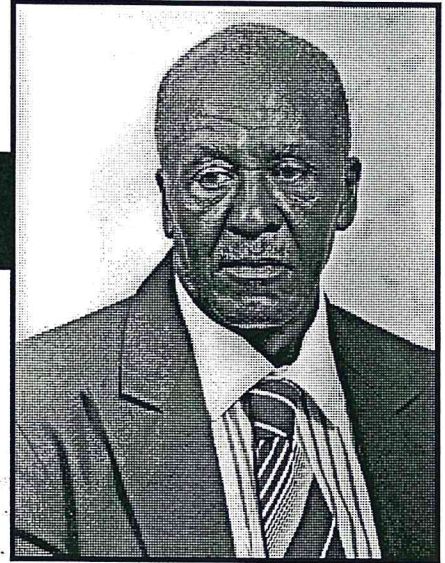
Mr. Wilfred Smith was born in the British Virgin Islands on 1 March 1915. He was engaged in a range of activities - farming, horse breeding, carpentry and manager of the shipyard at Cleaning Hole.

Wilfred Smith represented the first district from 1954-1957. He made notable contributions to the Territory. The first motorable road to west end was built during his term of office. This benefited the entire Territory and specifically the people of West End, Carrot Bay and Cane Garden Bay. Two bridges were built at Carrot Bay and the wooded wharf at West End was upgraded to a concrete wharf.

The jetty at the Towers was also constructed at this time. It was Mr. Smith who introduced the resolution to change the name of the then cottage hospital to its present designation Peebles Hospital. He was also responsible for seeing to the architectural survey which resulted in the start of a second story to the Administration Building during those years with the help of J.R. O'Neal and Mr. Perkins (government's treasurer) Wilfred Smith fought for the abolition of a tax on boats going to St. Thomas.

Wilfred is married to Cheddena Nibbs. They have seven children.

Prince Stoutt



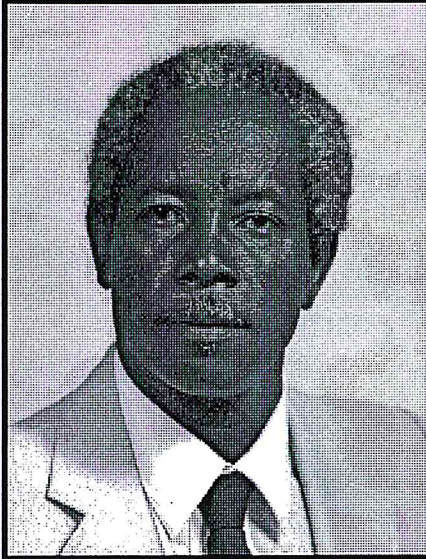
Prince MacDonald Stoutt was born in 1921 to Idalia and Isaiah Stoutt of Long Bay, Tortola. After attending the West End Primary School where he completed seventh standard, he entered the field of building construction while at the same time involving himself in farming activities. In 1940 he went to St Thomas, where he worked for a short period in the construction industry. Mr Stoutt and his wife, Esmie, parented ten children, in addition to two which were born to him before that marriage.

Mr. Stoutt entered the political arena in 1971, and was first elected to the Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands in 1977, as the Member for the Second Electoral District. At that time, as a member of the Virgin Islands Party, and as the successful candidate in the by-election following the decease of the incumbent Mr. Austin Henley, he served for half a term. He was re-elected in 1979, and as a member of the Ninth Legislature he again served as a government backbencher.

His major focus was on infrastructure development, particularly roads in the Second District, and he paid much attention to improving them for public convenience and safety. Improvements to roads at Soldier's Hill, Brewers Bay, Cane Garden Bay, Ballast Bay, Windy Hill and others were done during his tenure of office. The Windy Hill-to Cane Garden Bay road was one of his greater achievements, for on this project his expertise as a builder/contractor was fully utilized. In order to complete it with all its challenges due to a heavy rainy season coupled with shortfalls in funding, it was necessary to organize a large team of men on a self-help basis. He still remembers one particular incident during work on this project, where he, along with a few men, rescued a Public Works bulldozer which had been stuck away in the mud.

Mr. Stoutt also gave his attention to destitute members of his District, particularly those who were in need of a decent dwelling place, and was able to assist in providing homes for a number of them. He highly commends the Development Department for its good work during that time.

Mr. Stoutt continues to be an active member of this community, and maintains a keen interest in the development of the British Virgin Islands, and improving the quality of life for its people.



Cyril Lewis Walters, MBE

MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL 1986-1994

Cyril Lewis Walters was born in Tortola on October 17, 1934 to Ilva Walters neé Williams and Edgar Walters. Mr. Walters attended the Teachers' Training College in Antigua, and taught and lived for many years in Virgin Gorda, Tortola, Jost Van Dyke and Anegada. Thirty four years were spent as an Educator fifteen of which he was Principal and managed various Primary Schools. In 1975 he was transferred to Administration. He became an Administrative Officer in the Chief Minister's Office and rose to the rank of Permanent Secretary.

In 1986 Mr. Walters successfully contested a seat on the Virgin Islands Party ticket for the 8th District which comprised East End and Hope.

He was re-elected as the representative for the 8th District in 1990 and he held the position of Minister for Health Education and Welfare during the two successive terms. Mr. Walters was unsuccessful in his bid for re-election in 1995, by a count of one vote. Delays in communication negated a possible recount.

Mr. Walters is an active member of the Lions Club and the East End Methodist Church. He and his wife Lucia (nee) Potter have two children.

Major Issues/Challenges that Arose During His Term of Service:

- Review of the Education System in the Virgin Islands including pre-school education (studies undertaken and programmes produced)
- Tertiary education issues
- Extension of Community Development and involvement in social issues
- Review of the health system

Major Changes that Took Place During His Term of Service

- Galvanizing of community through the use of community centres and initiation of community programmes
- Introduction of Territorial District concept

Major Contributions During His Terms of Service

- Encouraged that priority be given to the review of the Health and the Education System
- Ensured funding for the necessary infrastructure

Reflection on the Last 50 Years by Cyril Lewis Walters, MBE

We have grown – we have changed – we have maintained our stability – we have enjoyed a better way of life. But yet we must reflect on the real objectives of politics and democracy.

When I reflect seriously on this, some other concerns emerge. Have we obtained some semblance of national cohesiveness? Or have we been content with natural survival, selfish ambitions or mediocre community pride. Our past legislators and political advocates proved their resilience in plucking us from the dependence and dominance of the then Leeward Islands administration. Our halos to all of them.

Once our own Legislative Council was meeting here again (and we are proud to say composed of indigenous Virgin Islanders) what then have been some of the main objectives of uniting and educating our people into nation building, and that cohesiveness which is the hallmark of a small developing country such as ours?

Is it that we have somewhat sacrificed these essentials for selfish ambitions, the more mundane things of life, and tendency towards the saying “I’m OK Jack”? We have survived as a people and country and enjoyed a quality of life, which most admire due in large part to the fact that Virgin Islanders are survivors – Virgin Islanders have been industrious and hard working - they own their own land. Virgin Islanders have been a people, (at least in the past) who were community minded, cooperative, unified and Christian minded. They assisted each other when necessary and in short were a closely-knit, ethnic group stretching from Anegada to Jost Van Dyke.

It must be said though that the majority of Virgin Islanders looked upon the new local Legislative Council as an avenue through which individual needs were to be addressed, grievances heard and re-dress achieved. In the midst of this and in spite of these reflections there were advantages stemming from the fact that our indigenous people, having been the leaders and proponents of legislation, took a genuine interest in making it creditable to its people.

The population seldom intervened in the politics and decisions of Government. They simply accepted matters that they viewed as enhancing their individual lives. I venture to say that reactionary provisions and corrective situations seem to have worked well in the enhancement of life in these islands. This worked well for legislators too and they were seldom harassed or targeted on many matters. Legislators sailed through their terms of office without much challenge or opposition because of the passiveness of our people. Leadership was rarely challenged and where challenges through the ballot box were evident, it was simply to infer “a let me do it, you have had enough”.

I have never been able to predict what was a better solution. However, the Virgin Islands over the past fifty years made considerable progress, but the 21st century and beyond should see us consolidating our gain and putting our country on a formidable course of development – socially, politically, infrastructurally and strategically. Our proactive forces must be at work. Our people need to be more civic and politically aware of what it takes to create a great community – a nation. A political awakening of where each of us fits into our development, and participation in making our policies work, are essential.

I look forward to a great society for our future generations.

Profiles of *Nominated Members*

Emogene Creque179

Cecil E. Georges181

Sir James Olva Georges . .refer to page 54

Norwell Harrigan182

Joseph Reynold O'Neal . .refer to page 184

Ralph T. O'Neal refer to page 99

Wilfred W. Smith refer to page 174

Emogene Creque



Emogene Augusta Creque was born in Road Town, Tortola to Frederick Pickering, the first local Commissioner of Tortola and Anita Nibbs, a homemaker, on 29th July 1919. She married the late Henry Osmond Creque OBE in 1942. Their union produced seven children and she is now the grandparent of thirteen children.

As was usual in the early days in the Caribbean, it was the religious orders which provided education and she received her early education at the Road Town Methodist School. She later trained as a nurse at the Cottage Hospital, today known as Peebles Hospital. It was not until 1939 that her career as a nurse officially began. At that time and in the immediate years following, the profession presented difficult challenges as the impact of the war was manifest. There were severe shortages of basic supplies, to the extent that even bandages had to be recycled! With the arduous working conditions in the 30 bed facility, it was with a keen sense of duty, vigour and determination that Emogene pursued her nursing career. Those who came into contact with her could not but take note of the empathy with which she cared for her patients. In the event, her caring attitude earned her many god-children and long-life friends.

In the early 1940's, Emogene Creque was received as a member of the Road Town Methodist Church. Apart from being a member of the Church Choir, she also served for many years as a Sunday School teacher. Her association with the church has to this day remained a lifelong commitment.

When she married Henry O. Creque, as was customary in those days, she gave up working outside the home. However, she later assumed the dual role of a homemaker and entrepreneur a twinning of roles which today's woman now accepts as commonplace. Emogene Creque fifty-two years ago, become the first woman to start and own an individual business on Tortola, which specialized in the sale of dry goods and groceries. This meant, among other things, that she had to travel to St. Thomas by sailing boat to meet sales agents from whom she made purchases. Indeed her activity can truly be described as pioneering.

The difficulties she faced not only entailed the physical stress of travel, but also homemaking and managing the finances. Her husband encouraged her to abandon what he thought was a difficult venture, one that was onerous, one which could well turn out to be unprofitable.

These efforts to dissuade her were firmly resisted by Emogene Creque. With her strong will and courage, she persevered, ultimately succeeding in establishing her business, serving the community and simultaneously providing her with a measure of financial independence. Her business continues today as one of the longest established businesses in the Territory.

On another level, Emogene Creque assisted many persons including teachers in achieving their career goals by providing them with extended credit. Thus, her attitude to business was not simply one of personal gain. Even in those early years she had a commitment to the development of these islands.

Emogene displayed an interest in the community by serving on the B.V.I. Festival Committee during its inception. In the early years, financial assistance from the Government was unheard of.

She vividly recalls how the members became actively involved in raising much needed funds to generate working capital for the Festival Committee in the days when the island's economic climate was not as vibrant as it is today.

She also served as a member of the first Tortola Ladies Club. She fondly remembers how she worked with other members like Mrs. Leona Harney, the Chairperson of the Club, Mrs. Marie O'Neal and Mrs. Esmie Dowling-DeCastro, now deceased, in an effort to achieve the goals of the Club. Among those goals were the fostering of the basket weaving industry, and the beautification of the environment which were not receiving Government's priority at that time.

In 1965, Mrs. Creque was privileged to become the first woman to sit in the Legislative Council as a nominated member. This was the Fifth B.V.I. Legislature. The circumstances under which she was requested to serve arose when a nominated member, the Hon. J.R. O'Neal, had to be away on a short leave of absence. Emogene Creque was then asked by the Administrator at the time, Mr. Staveley, whether she would serve. She accepted the challenge willingly. Her nomination also coincided with her husband's tenure as an official member of the Council. Thus, as her husband has stated, "We both had the rare honour of sitting in the Council together on the government official side."

During her short tenure, Emogene recalls the discussions which involved issues such as the Pension (Increase) Bill, 1965 which sought to bring the B.V.I. Pension scheme in line with those then in effect in Anguilla, Antigua, Montserrat and St. Kitts/Nevis. She recalls that under the membership system of government the Legislative Council focused its attention on road improvement, water supply and general economic development within the limited resources then available. She regards this period as transitional since proposals for a new constitution were already in motion. In January 1965, Dr. Mary Proudfoot was appointed Constitutional Commissioner to review the existing constitution setting the stage for the introduction of a full ministerial system in 1967.

Mrs. Creque always had a keen interest in the public and political affairs of her country. She was a member of one of the early fledging political parties in the Territory. She was desirous of becoming a candidate for the Second District, but another candidate indicated an interest for the area and she withdrew.

Another first for Emogene Creque was her appointment in 1967 as a member of the Public Service Commission. Previously no woman had served on this august body in the B.V.I. She served for a period of two years under the chairmanship of Sir Olva Georges, alongside members including Messrs. Rowan Roy and Christopher Hammersley. She embraced the opportunity to serve to the extent that on occasions her business had to be closed in order for her to attend sittings of the Commission.

Emogene Creque in her time, made a small but important contribution towards advancing the role of women in her community. She worked assiduously and steadfastly away from the limelight. The multifaceted, yet reserved woman, pursued her interest and goals with a strong sense of purpose, dignity, and an unwavering belief in her own ability and in God. Emogene Creque remained undaunted by the fact that she may have been marching to the tune of an unknown drummer, setting a precedent in an era in which women's place was indisputably in the home. She made her contribution to her country without fanfare, in quiet dedication, with humility, without counting the sacrifice and without asking credit in return.

Reprinted from Women in the Legislature 1997 - Women's Desk - written by a family member.

Cecil E. Georges

Acting Nominated unofficial member of the Legislative Council-May to August 1961.

Cecil Edgar Georges the eleventh child and sixth son of JEW Georges and Mary Amelia Georges nee Hill and JEW Georges was born in Road Town, on the 26th October 1906. He received his education at the Road Town Methodist School and the Antigua Grammar School.

On completion of his secondary education, Cecil's first job in 1925 was that of clerk to Thomas F. Tomlinson, a contractor from a Trinidad firm, to build the present Government House, Commissioner's Office (Old Administration Building) and the main public wharf.

In 1929 Mr. Georges joined the BVI Civil Service as an Assistant Clerk in the Treasury but his duties were very varied-statistician, Customs Officer, Post Office Clerk and Clerk to the Magistrate's Court.

In December 1939 Mr. Georges was transferred to the Customs Department in Antigua. In 1941 he was seconded to the secretariat to work with the administrator and in 1944 was transferred back to the Treasury as an accountant. Mr. Georges served with distinction in the Public Service from 1929-1956. He retired from the Public Service in Antigua in 1956, and after a long Vacation in the U.S.A returned to reside in the B.V.I.

In 1938 he married the then Elaine Pickering. They have no children.



Norwell Harrigan

Norwell Elton Harrigan was born on 15th March 1918 in Road Town, Tortola, the oldest child of Alan Harrigan of Anegada and Althea Petersen Harrigan of Anguilla. He married the former Beatrice Donovan on June 21, 1941. Together they raised three children to whom he gave and from whom he expected the best.

He received his early education in Tortola, later earned his Leeward Islands Teacher's Certificate, and attended Glen Community College in St. Vincent for training as a specialist teacher in agriculture. Education became a life-long commitment and his credentials and achievements in this field are well known. He served in the British Colonial Service in education and government before retiring in 1966 as Secretary to Government and Senior Member of the Executive Council. He joined the University of the Virgin Islands in 1968 and retired as Director of the Caribbean Research Institute in 1984.

The not-so-well-known facts about him were his participation in other activities such as the Boy Scouts, where he served as Commissioner, and his active involvement in the church. He was interested in the arts; he loved poetry and music, and organized pageants and plays promoting the culture of his homeland that he loved so well. He also enjoyed gardening, reading, playing the piano and playing tennis. Blessed with a great sense of humour, he was always able to see the funny side of things. He was listed in Men of Achievement in 1971, but he will always be remembered for his integrity, his candour and his perseverance.

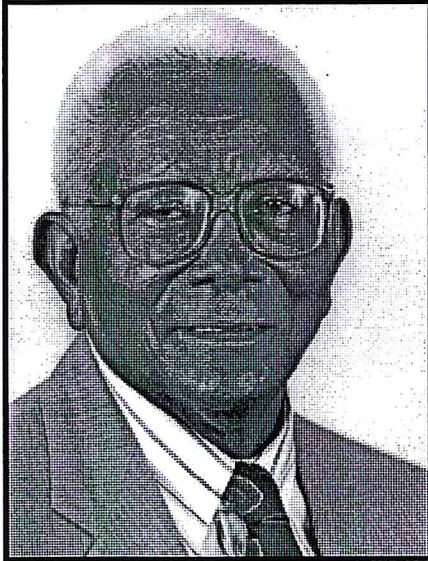
Dr. Harrigan died on the 19th July 1990. Up to the time of his death he was still active on the International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET), serving as Vice President for the Caribbean. In 1987, Dr. Harrigan was selected by then USVI Governor Alexander Farrelly to serve on his transition team.

Dr. Harrigan's survivors are his wife Beatrice Harrigan; daughter Peta Harrigan; sons Nowell ("Tony") and Philip Harrigan and grandchildren Nadja Harrigan and Derek Harrigan.

The International Register of Profiles records Dr. Harrigan's life and work in the following excerpt.

"Norwell Elton Harrigan, Research Administrator and University Lecturer, received his early education in the Islands where he wrote the London University Matriculation. He earned Leeward Islands Teachers Certificate, 1938, attended Keble College, Oxford University, UK, 1958, London School of Economics and Political Science (Diploma in Social & Economic Administration), 1963,

Graduate of School of Public and International Affairs (Masters Degree in Public Administration), 1967, School of Education (PhD in Higher Education expanded with History and Political Science) 1972 University of Pittsburgh, USA, the first BV Islander to earn a PhD. He is the author of: "The Inter-Virgin Islands Conference: A Story of a Microstate International Organization", 1980; Coauthor of "The Virgin Islands Story", 1975; "The Virgin Islands: A Descriptive & Historical Profile", 1977. Also, several articles in United States and Caribbean professional journals. Teacher and Principal in Primary & Secondary Schools, 1939-52; Administrative Secretary, Social Services and Supervisor of Education, 1953 -56; Administrative Secretary and Chief Education Officer, 1957; Secretary to Government (serving on occasions as Governor's Deputy) and Member of Legislative & Executive Councils, 1961 -66; Project Manager, 1968; Director, 1972, Caribbean Research Institute, College of the Virgin Islands. Norwell Harrigan is a member of the International Council on Education for Teaching; American Academy of Political & Social Sciences; Caribbean Historical Association; the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History Inc. He has visited the entire Caribbean, North America, Mexico, Venezuela, Western and Eastern Europe, North Africa, The Middle and Far East. His leisure activities include gardening and columnist and commentator on local events in the Virgin Islands. In 1956 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace; Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) for public service, 1963. Norwell Harrigan's biography appears in: "Personalities of the Caribbean", 2nd Edition, 1965; "Dictionary of International Biography", 5th Edition, 1968; "Men of Achievement", Volume 8, 1981 and "International Register of Profiles", 7th Edition, 1983. He is organizer of the Social Welfare Council which, in the absence of a local newspaper, publishes a mimeographed monthly, "The Torch"; Foundation Member of the Virgin Islands Teachers Association; Cofounder of the Civil Service Association; Patrol Leader of first Scout Troop rising to become Chief Commissioner, Boy Scouts Association. He has contributed to the concept of Microstates and edits the periodical "Microstate Studies" published by the Caribbean Research Institute, College of the Virgin Islands."



Joseph Reynold O'Neal

Joseph was born in Virgin Gorda, the third son of the late Joseph Benjamin O'Neal and his wife Alma nee Flax. He lived in Cuba until age 11, when he returned to the Virgin Islands with his father, who worked in the Sugar Industry.

When he returned from Cuba, he attended St. George's Primary school in Road Town. His secondary education was at the Antigua Grammar School 1928-1931 followed by a stint in St. Kitts Cunningham Hospital 1934-1936 where he obtained a Certificate in Pharmacy Studies and was licensed to practice as a chemist in the Leeward Islands Colony under the provisions of the *Medical Act 1937*. Upon his return to the Virgin Islands, the Government briefly employed him until he opened his own pharmacy. He also did photography and functioned as a dentist.

Mr. O'Neal expanded his business to include hardware supplies and building materials. He was the distributor for Esso fuels and collaborated with the Government of the Territory in the dredging of the harbour, which created what is now Port Purcell.

He served as Chairman of the building Authority and Electricity Board. As chairman of the National Parks Trust 1961-present, he spearheaded the reforestation of Sage Mountain.

J.R. O' Neal has devoted his life to the conservation and protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the British Virgin Islands. He has been a spearhead for environmental action for over 35 years and is largely responsible for the important progress made in that field by the British Virgin Islands. In 1953, Mr. O'Neal initiated Arbour Day to stimulate a respect for the importance of reforestation. Arbour Day continues to be an important tradition in the BVI, which has been taken to every school district and resulted in the planting of thousands of trees. In 1962 he became the Chairman of the National Parks Trust, and remains so to this day. In the early days, Mr. O'Neal ran the Trust almost singlehandedly, and through a strong sense of community spirit and considerable self-sacrifice has seen its growth into an important organization responsible for the management of thirteen protected areas. He has lobbied for the formation of parks and protected areas and has been instrumental in the development of a system that now encompasses fifteen protected areas. He has been active in the field of reforestation, reforesting areas degraded or denuded by past agriculture. He is a founding member of the Caribbean Conservation Association, the major conservation organization in the region.

In recognition of his work on behalf of the Trust the Botanical Gardens in Road Town were named in his honour in 1988. In 1999 Mr. O'Neal became a member of the Global 500, the honour roll of the world's leading environmentalists as compiled by the United Nations Environmental

Protection Agency.

Married in 1946 to the late Marie Shervington, the union produced five children - Macheel, Reynold, Colin, Charmaine and Barbara.

Mr. O'Neal has also served as a member of St. Georges Vestry - the School Board - and as a trustee of the Cripps Foundation.

CURRICULUM VITAE

BUSINESS CAREER

Established pharmacy in Road Town as pharmacist—proprietor (16th January 1937)

Supplied electricity to clients in Road Town from privately— owned generating plant, pre—dating public supply (1940's)

Commercial photographer weddings, passport photographs, etc. 1940's — 1950's)

Expanded business (pharmacy) to include importation of hardware and building supplies (1948)

Built twenty-ton wooden. cargo boat (in partnership with Capt. Evermond Rabsatt), “The New Idea”, powered by sail and diesel engine, making weekly trips between the British Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico (1950)

Manufacturer of concrete blocks - first block-making plant in the B.V. I. first stone—crushing plant in the BVI for production of aggregate (1950's-1960's)

Built fifty-ton diesel-powered wooden. cargo boat (in partnership with Capt. Evermond M/V “Charmaine” plying between the BVI and Puerto Rico (1958)

Fuel importer/distributor:

- importation of fuel in drums (1950's)
- first BVI installation of bulk fuel tanks at Baughers Bay, Tortola (cc. 1963)

Built 100—ton,, diesel-powered wooden cargo boat (in partner-ship with Capt. Robinson O'Neal) M/V “Virgin Gorda” (1961)

Built fifty—ton, diesel—powered, wooden cargo boat (in partner— hip with Capt. Robinson O'Neal). M/V “Anegada” (1962)

Motor vehicle dealership, J. R. O'Neal – G. A. Cobham Ltd. (1964)

Expanded business into separate facilities for pharmacy, hardware/houseware, and building materials respectively (1966)

Constructed first multi-storey commercial office building (1966)

Opened furniture and electrical appliance store (1966)

Purchased 250-ton diesel—powered steel cargo vessel in partnership with Capt. Evermond Rabsatt), M/V “Charmaine II”, making weekly trips between the BVI and Puerto Rico (1968),

Land reclamation (12 acres) at Purcell for development of industrial park (1969)

Joint venture with BVI Government in land reclamation (6 acres) and development of deep-water port facilities (600ft bulkhead, 24 ft depth alongside) (1969)

Construction of warehouse facilities at Purcell industrial park site (1969 - present)

Member, board of directors, several BVI companies, including:

- J. R. O’Neal Ltd. (Managing Director)
- Caribbean Carriers Ltd.
- Road, Town Wholesale Ltd.
- O’Neal and Mundy Shipping Co. Ltd.
- Development Corporation of the British Virgin Islands Ltd.
- Dominions Trust

PUBLIC CAREER

Appeared before The Royal Commission under Lord Moyne as member—representative of citizens’ group, The BVI Civic League, seeking:

- reestablishment of the Legislative Council (abolished 1901) (1901)
- institution of economic the colony development programs for (1938)

Government Pharmacist., Peebles Hospital, part—time. (1938 - 1941)

By amendment of the Medical Act of 1937 (Colony of the Leeward Islands) was permitted to perform dental extractions when physician or dentist unavailable (1938 — 1948)

Nominated to Executive Council under Commissioner J. A. C. Cruickshank (1948 — 1949)

Served as Nominated Member in Legislative Council (1950 — 1971)

Membership on numerous statutory commissions, including:

- Board of Health

Profile of Speakers

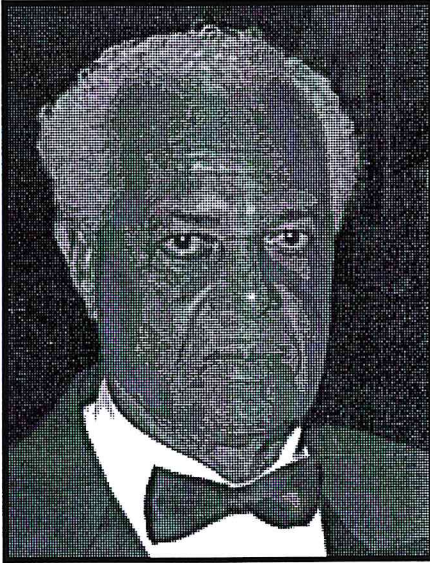
Henry O. Creque188

Howard Penn*refer to page 41*

Ivan Dawson*refer to page 152*

Keith Flax191

Reuben Vanterpool*refer to page 193*



Henry Osmond Creque, OBE

SPEAKER 1967 – 1971

Mr. Henry Osmond Creque was born on Anegada and spent the early portion of his youth in the Dominican Republic with his aunt, where he also received his early education.

A distinguished career civil servant, he served in many departments of Government including Agriculture, Customs, Registry of Births and Deaths, Supreme Court as well as Clerk of the Legislative Council. He held the distinction of serving as a nominated member of the Legislative Council during the same time as his wife both on the Government side of the House.

With the introduction of the Ministerial System of Government in 1967 he became the first person to be elected to the office of Speaker which he held for one term.

He is credited as being the architect of the pension scheme for legislative service as well as many contributions to the Standing Orders of the Legislative Council.

His contributions also included the membership system which preceded the ministerial systems. His serving on many statutory bodies, was as a result of his vast knowledge of the workings of Government, as well as his prolific knowledge in fields such as economics, politics and areas of technical expertise.

His civic duties to his country was as a Member and Past President of the Rotary Club of Tortola and a staunch Methodist serving as Sunday School Superintendent for 16 years.

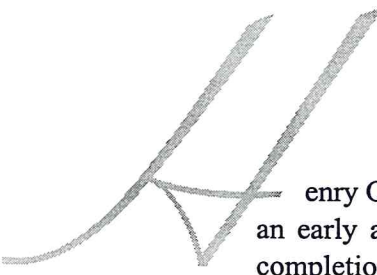
His contributions to this society are many but he is known to have cherished his service in the Legislative Council especially the period in which he served with his wife. He was made an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his service to the Territory.

Henry Osmond Creque died on 24th February 1996.

Tribute

to

Henry Osmond Creque



Henry Osmond Creque, OBE, was born on the island of Anegada on April 8, 1915. At an early age he migrated to Santo Domingo where he received his education; upon completion he returned home to seek employment.

Indeed he demonstrated strong leadership qualities and a clear sense of direction. In 1937 at the age of twenty one Henry Creque was appointed as Head Clerk of the Agricultural Department, thus marking the beginning of a long and distinguished career in the Civil Service.

As was customary in those days, and like many of his contemporaries, Henry's post-secondary education was acquired largely through experience. He worked assiduously at the tasks that were presented to him, and developed a strong work ethic which was characterized by an unwavering dedication, selflessness, integrity and honesty. He further expanded his knowledge through extensive and copious reading in fields as varied as religion, history, law, politics, economics and astronomy. Surprisingly, given his limited access at the time, Henry, also had an immense love and appreciation for the arts.

Henry steadily climbed the Civil Service hierarchy with his wife's support, but despite the many long hours dedicated to the service, he was throughout his life a true family man: he was the embodiment of sincerity, lovingness; generosity and loyalty. Because of his immense dedication towards his family, Henry declined the opportunity to pursue a legal career in the U.K., for fear that this would place his family in a financially precarious position.

In 1945, Henry Creque, was appointed as Registrar of the Supreme Court, a mere eight years after entering the service. Upon the restoration of the Legislative Council in 1950, he was appointed as the first Clerk of the Legislative Council. Without the assistance of legally trained personnel, he braced himself to undertake perhaps one of the most challenging assignments of his civil service career. he prepared the rules and standing orders for the Council, which remained in effect until their revision in 1979.

For varying periods between 1957 and 1965 Henry Creque served as a nominated member of the Legislative Council. In 1965 his wife Emogene became the first woman to sit in the Legislative Council, when she substituted for a brief period for acting member Joseph Reynold O'Neal. Her acting period coincided with her husband's tenure as an official member of the Council.

He was later appointed Administrative Secretary, a post he occupied until 1963. His tenure was characterized by contributions in a wide range of areas such as: the Beef Island Airport, the Beef Island Bridge, the raising of the first electricity loan, the establishment of the Virgin Islands National Bank, and the purchase and development of Sage Mountain as a National Park. He also played a pivotal role in the development of Little Dix Bay, as a major resort in the territory.

In January 1964, shortly before his retirement from the Civil Service in 1967, he was appointed as Treasurer, (now known as the Financial Secretary) and managed Finance, Customs and Postal services. Henry was undaunted by the challenge and worked tirelessly in order to effectively manage these departments.

With the introduction of the Ministerial System of government, in 1967, Henry Creque was elected as the Territory's first Speaker of the House. He held this position until 1971, and carried it with great dignity and humility, earning the respect of all his colleagues. He is remembered as being a highly knowledgeable and skillful, negotiator, who had the ability to retain his composure under pressure.

Because of Henry Creque's love for his country and for the public service, it could be said that he never truly retired. Long after his formal retirement, he held several directorships and trusteeships. In addition he served on various boards and committees, within the community, given freely of his time and knowledge without seeking remuneration.

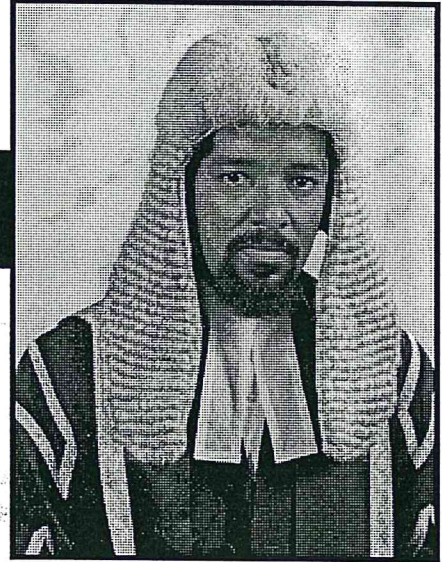
He served as Chairman of the Long Look Lands Commission for over twenty years, greatly contributing to the subdivision of the land, including the cutting of the roads, which enabled the issuing of crown grants to the residents of the district people. Henry Creque also served on the Public Service Commission, the Air Transport Licensing Authority, and the Advisory Fiscal Review Committee. He held the office as Chairman of the Teaching Service Commission, for fourteen years. Additionally he was appointed as Chairman of the BVI Electricity Corporation for a period of eight years. During his tenure as Chairman of the Corporation, he was credited with helping to building the foundation upon which the Corporation now firmly stands.

Henry Creque felt it was his bounden duty to extend his generosity and selflessness towards young people, and the underprivileged in the community. He was able to accomplish this through the sixteen years which he rendered as superintendent of the Methodist Sunday School and as a member of the Rotary Club of Tortola of which he was a founding member and past president for two terms. He and was awarded the prestigious Paul Harris medal for outstanding community service.

Henry Creque's long and meritorious career in the Civil Service and in public life earned him the trust and stature of a true elder statesman. Through his foresight and tireless efforts, he made significant contributions, in a quiet and unassuming manner, towards the improvement of the quality of life in these islands. Indeed the adage "To serve and not count the cost, to labour and ask for any reward," could be fittingly attributed to this gentleman for his long and dedicated service, to his country and to his fellowmen.

Written by a family member.

Keith Lancelot Flax



Speaker 1983 – 1996

Keith Lancelot Flax, son of Malvin and Eda Flax neé Varlack, was born on the 29th October 1946 on Virgin Gorda where he attended the St. Mary's Elementary School. Upon leaving primary school he worked as an apprentice carpenter/joiner with Taylor Woodrow (Overseas) Ltd. during the construction of Little Dix Bay Hotel. At vacation times he worked as an apprentice surveyor when exploratory mining was being carried out at the Virgin Gorda Copper Mine.

Upon completion of his apprenticeship, he left for Jamaica where he attended Kingston Technical School and later the College of Arts Science and Technology, where he graduated as a Building Engineering Technician, with a minor concentration in land surveying.

He returned home and worked as Draughtsman in the Town & Country Planning Departments as well as the Public Works Department where he was frequently called upon to undertake engineering surveys. Mr. Flax later served as Building Inspector for a period of ten years.

In 1979 Mr. Flax entered the private sector as General Manager for Marine Archaeological Ventures, involved in marine salvage operations, where he remained until 1983.

He confessed about his burning desire as a boy to become a pilot and in 1971 and 1977 respectively attended Burnside Ott Aviation Training Center, Miami, Florida where he qualified as a Commercial Pilot with multi-engine and instrumental ratings. He now enjoys flying as a hobby.

He attended Rosenthal School of Jewellery Design and later received further training from a U.N. Expert, Akira Kuroki, recruited by the government of the day. He subsequently opened his own jewellery manufacturing business which he later incorporated as a Limited Liability Company.

In his words "I had no serious interest in politics but got involved quite unexpectedly in 1983." He was elected Speaker of the 10th Legislature in 1983, and has also served as Speaker of the 11th, 12th and 13th Legislative Council until 1996.

During his tenure as Speaker he represented the BVI branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in countries such as London, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Jamaica, Barbados, Dominica, St. Lucia, Canada, The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, Washington, D.C., Grenada, Kenya, Tanzania and India.

A highlight in his career as Speaker was attendance at the Commonwealth Speakers Conferences in Jamaica and Papua New Guinea and as a member of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in India.

“Serving my country in the noble position of Speaker was quite an honour for me.” Even though challenging at times he is convinced that he has experienced it all as Presiding Officer having had the mace broken by an irate member.

Mr. Flax contends that “Parliament and the office of Speaker is an ancient and honourable office with rules and traditions no one should be prepared to compromise. There, however, is a very thin line separating impartiality and favouring one side over the other.”

Other cherished memories of his tenure are the lasting friendships he has made with other Presiding Officers, Clerks and Parliamentarians throughout the Commonwealth, especially in London and in Washington D.C. an invitation from Her Majesty the Queen to Buckingham Palace, meeting former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher at 10 Downing Street as well as Presidents Reagan and Bush.

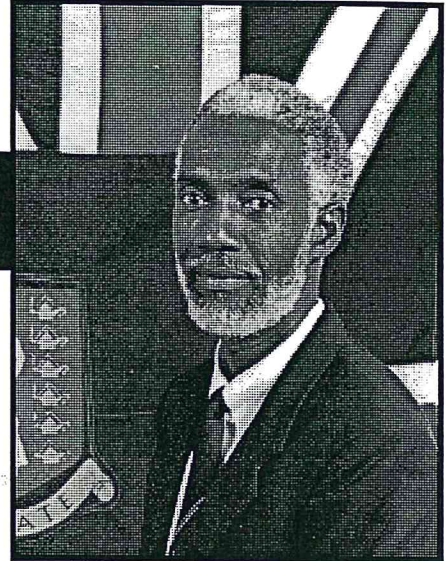
Mr. Flax’s assistance to Anguilla in becoming a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is yet another proud accomplishment in his life.

Having become very familiar with the inner workings of the Legislative system and Government, his love for politics increased prompting him to contest a seat as an independent candidate in the 1999 general elections. Though unsuccessful he vows to try again.

A staunch Methodist, he enjoys stamp and coin collecting as well as serving as a member of the Lions Club of Tortola of which he is a past president and a Melvin Jones Fellow. He is a member of the Ecumenical Chorale, (formerly Community Singers) and served formerly as a non-commissioned officer of the Boy’s Brigade.

Mr. Flax recently celebrated his thirtieth wedding anniversary, having married the former Rosemarie Chalwell, a union that produced three daughters Annjel Xiomara, Allison Chevaunne and Aasha-marie.

Reuben W. Vanterpool



Reuben Wailling Vanterpool began his service as Speaker of the Legislative Council in September 1996. He replaced former Speaker Keith Lancelot Flax, whose tenure of office was interrupted during the Thirteenth Legislature. He was re-elected to the Fourteenth Legislature, and continues to serve up to the present time.

Mr. Vanterpool came to the Legislature, following his retirement from a career in Education. Over a period of thirty years he worked as a class teacher, a Head of the Art Department at the BVI High School, Primary School Principal, and Education Officer. After retirement, he expanded his small art enterprise to include a multi-media production studio at Great Mountain, and an Art Gallery/Art School in Road Town. As an artist and Art Consultant, he also organized courses for a number of agencies within the community.

He was born on 2nd July 1946 to Alpha Augusta (nee) Thomas and Hugo Osmond Vanterpool in Tortola, where he received his primary and secondary education. He attended the Leeward Islands Teachers Training College, Leeds University, and the University of Exeter, and holds a Bachelor Degree in Education, other certificates and diplomas in Education, and Certificate in Art. Since joining the Legislature, he has attended a number of parliamentary seminars, and conferences in England, Australia and the Caribbean. He is married to Olive Elizabeth (formerly Donovan) who is also an educator, presently serving as a Guidance Counsellor. They have three children.

Improving the functioning of the Legislature is one of his strong interests, and to this end he has advocated that this body be made to function independently of the executive arm of Government in terms of material and human resources. Like other Members of the Fourteenth Legislature, he views the present dependence of that body on Government's Personnel Services for staffing as non-progressive. He notes, however, that progress is now being made in this respect.

Mr. Vanterpool also has a deep interest in the involvement of young people in the legislative process, and generally in civic matters of our community. He sees succession planning as essential to progress, and maintains that the youth must be adequately prepared to fill future leadership roles.

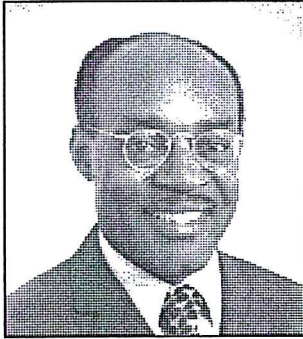
Some of his other efforts are related to the improvement of working conditions for Members, including good library and research facilities, efficient and timesaving recording and reporting facilities, and other conditions which would make possible a higher level of representation and service to the people of the British Virgin Islands community.

Profile

of

Attorneys General

by J. S. Archibald, QC



The Role of the Attorney General in the UK Overseas Territory of the BVI

The Office of Attorney General generally known as the AG is an ancient and great office of State. In his Memoirs published 1964 entitled *Political Adventure* the Earl of Kilmuir, a former Solicitor General and Lord Chancellor of England, wrote at page 67 as follows:

“As the legal offices of State are a mystery to most laymen, perhaps I may be forgiven if I say a word about the history of the Law Officers of the Crown. If you look at old lists, you will find that the first Attorney-General is listed as holding office in 1277 or 1278. However, further research in Holdsworth’s History of English Law (which you are extremely unlikely to undertake) will inform you that from the time of Edward I until nearly Henry VIII the monarch had a number of Attornati Regis who did his work in the courts. About the beginning of the sixteenth century they merged into one Attorney-General.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General were not only the Crown’s leading legal advisers but

the legal buttresses of both Houses of Parliament, members of the Ministry and, by that time, almost always Members of the House of Commons.”

In the Virgin Islands (the BVI) since the restoration of the Legislative Council in 1950 the AG has been variously called the Crown Attorney and the AG.

The AG is the principal law officer of the Crown, and up to the present time the AG in the BVI is a civil servant appointed by the Governor after consultation with the Judicial and Legal Services Commission of the BVI (comprising of the Chief Justice, a resident High Court Judge and the Chairman of the BVI Public Service Commission). In more politically advanced Commonwealth countries the AG is a lawyer-politician appointed as a Cabinet Minister, and like any other Minister ceases to hold office when his political party goes out of office or if he falls out of favour with the Prime Minister.

Until the creation of the post of Deputy Governor in the Constitution of the BVI in

1976, the AG was usually appointed to act or deputise as Her Majesty's Representative in the BVI during the temporary overseas absence of the Governor (previously styled the Commissioner and later the Administrator). There can be no doubt as to the prestige, authority and responsibility of the AG. I recall the thrill it gave me to be appointed to serve as the AG of St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla in 1963 and of the BVI from 1964 to 1965, during which later years I was twice appointed under the Public Seal to be the Administrator's Deputy during the temporary overseas absence of Her Majesty's Representative (the Administrator).

The office of AG is established in the Constitution, and also in the Letters Patent and Royal Instructions issued by Her Majesty to Governors through the appropriate UK Secretary of State from time to time.

The AG is an ex-officio and voting member of the Executive Council and a non-voting ex-officio member of Legislative Council. The AG's Department in the BVI has grown from one law officer and one clerk in 1956, to the present size of the AG and eight lawyers with support staff of seven administrative and clerical officers.

The AG is principally responsible for the drafting of legislation; the presentation of legislative Bills to the Executive Council with Memoranda of Objects and Reasons; and is obliged to monitor, if not steer, each Bill through all its readings and stages in the Legislative Council until it is passed and signed by the Clerk of Legislative Council. Thereafter it is imperative for the AG to sign a Legal Report to the Governor stating that, in his opinion, the Governor may properly give his Assent to the Bill in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty to make it the law of the BVI (usually upon publication in the BVI Official Gazette); and the AG is also expected to keep in view the exercise or the non-exercise of the power of disallowance of the Bill by Her Majesty conveyed through the appropriate UK Secretary of State for due publication in the BVI Official Gazette.

All legislative drafting is the direct responsibility of the AG both as regards the substance and the form; and the AG cannot be heard to say that a subordinate is responsible for any error or misjudgment in relation to any aspect of legislation.

The AG must always bear in mind that the Legislature is constituted of Her Majesty and the Legislative Council, as distinct from the Legislative Council alone.

By virtue of combined provisions in the Constitution, the Criminal Procedure Act and the Indictments Act, the AG is exclusively responsible for the signing of indictments charging persons or corporations with serious crimes for trial by jury, and is constitutionally empowered to commence, continue, intervene in or to end any criminal case whatsoever, whether commenced or undertaken by a private individual or corporation or otherwise. In pursuit of this criminal jurisdiction responsibility the AG is not subject or subordinate or answerable to any authority including the Governor, the Judiciary, the Executive Council, the Legislative Council or otherwise.

For example, the AG may enter a *Nolle Prosequi*, that is, an Instrument signed by the AG which brings a criminal prosecution in the High Court or the Court of Appeal or the Privy Council to an end forthwith upon its filing at any time without any explanation whatsoever, and the court of trial or hearing must thereupon without question discharge the accused absolutely. In countries where the AG is a politician, this criminal jurisdiction responsibility is exercised by a civil servant appointed to the entrenched office of Director of Public Prosecutions by the Head of State on the advice of the relevant Judicial and Legal Services Commission.

In civil court actions for the vindication of a public right, an individual or private corporation cannot seek remedy in court unless by relation of the AG, that is to say, unless the individual first obtains the written consent of the AG to seek such remedy at law or unless the individual could legitimately claim personal damage by the public wrong.

By the BVI Constitution the AG is a Member of the Advisory Committee on the Prerogative

of Mercy; and the AG's actual participation in the Committee is imperative to validate any meeting which has the duty of advising the Governor on the exercise of the Royal prerogative of mercy or pardon.

In the absence of a continuing Law Reform Commission, the AG is expected to advise Government from time to time as to how the laws may be kept up to date to meet modern developmental needs, for example, in matters of land law, banking law and financial services; but upon the creation of a permanent Law Reform Commission which is now about to take place in the BVI, the Commission will report to the AG who may advance the reported recommendations to the Executive Council and ultimately to the Legislative Council.

An AG must be careful not to have open or unnecessary conflict with Her Majesty's Representative in the BVI who relies heavily upon the AG's opinion and advice on a day-to-day basis. The ultimate sanction for such disharmony was demonstrated in the BVI in 1979 when the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs exercised the pleasure of Her Majesty under the Colonial Regulations (which still govern all Civil Servants) to dismiss the AG of the BVI summarily. Indeed, all servants of the Crown, political or civil, including the Governor and the AG, hold office at pleasure of the Crown, and are dismissible at pleasure of the Crown without legal remedy in Her Majesty's courts of law. Only the highest Judicial servants of the Crown who are Judges of the Supreme Court are not dismissible at pleasure of the Crown in the BVI, because they have security of tenure buttressed by UK Imperial legislation applicable to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States including the BVI known as the Courts Order 1967.

The AG is responsible for advising the Government in all matters of Government contracts, and his Department is responsible for advising all Government Ministers and Ministries, and for interpreting the laws for Government Departments.

By virtue of the Crown Proceedings Act, the Crown or any Department of the central Government may sue or be sued in the name of the AG, without resort to the old procedure of Petition of Right. For example, if a Public Works Department truck driven unlawfully knocks down a pedestrian, the claim is made against the AG; and if a bank unlawfully breaches a loan contract with the Government, the AG may sue the bank.

The AG is also the Queen's Proctor who represents the Crown in Probate, Divorce and Admiralty matters, with right to intervene in any court action of these kinds where the AG considers that a party or parties may be seeking to secure, or may have obtained, some legal remedy by fraudulent or other unlawful means.

Quite often the AG is asked by a Judge to intervene in a case or he may himself volunteer to intervene in a case of any kind, particularly a constitutional case, or private litigation relating to minors, in his capacity as *amicus curiae* (friend of the court).

The AG is the titular head of the Bar whether or not the AG is a member of the Bar Association; and by virtue of this status the AG is given priority of hearing in all the courts of law.

There are other aspects of the functions and responsibilities of the AG which I will not mention. It is sufficient to say that the AG, like a Judge, must be a person of the highest integrity, balance and professional ability. Outstanding AGs have often been elevated to the high office of Judge of the Supreme Court and beyond, if they choose to remain in public service.

The AG must necessarily be circumspect and extremely careful in private, financial and social life if the office of AG is to maintain its reputation for integrity, independence, impartiality and strength.

Centuries ago the AG was known as the Lion under the Throne. The AG may not always roar but must always have the capacity, at critical moments, to act decisively, or to give opinion and advice on the basis of what he perceives to be right and not what he thinks the recipient of his

opinion or advice would like to hear, regardless of the personal consequences to the AG. Such moments include cases of riot or treason; or where it is necessary to advise the Governor in sensitive constitutional matters affecting Ministers of the Crown or Members of the Legislative Council; or where the Governor seeks the AG's opinion and advice before exercising his reserve powers under the Constitution, including a Declaration of Emergency.

Until the Defederation of the Colony of the Leeward Islands comprising Antigua and Barbuda, St Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Montserrat and the BVI on 1 July 1956, the AG of the Leeward Islands resident at the Federal Headquarters in Antigua served as the de facto AG and chief law officer of the BVI. It may be useful to record here the names of the 22 resident chief law officers of the the BVI from 1956 to the present time as follows:

1956- 1958	Herman Alexander Besson
1958- 1959	Oliver Miller Browne
1959- 1962	George Anthony Redhead
1962- 1964	John Douglas Barrymore Renwick (later, QC)
1964	Leo Irving Austin
1964- 1965	Joseph Samuel Archibald (later, QC)
1965- 1968	Lionel Wentworth Barker
1968- 1970	William L Macintyre
1970	Edgar Allen Caradoc Hewlett (Acting)
1970- 1972	Nolan Jacobs
1972- 1977	Paula Frances Beaubrun
1977	Jack Smith-Hughes, OBE (Acting)
1977	Clare Linnington Roberts
1977- 1978	Michael John Bradley
1978- 1979	Velma Louise Hylton-Gayle
1979- 1982	Sandra Marakkla Herbert Desilva
1982- 1986	Lewis Stephenson Hunte
1986- 1990	Karl Sinclair Atterbury
1990- 1992	Donald Ashley Bevil Trotman
1992- 1993	Davidson Kelvin Baptiste (Acting)
1992- 1999	Ruth Dancia Penn, QC
1999-	Cherno Jallow

The AG must always bear in mind the final and paramount provision of the Constitution: "There is reserved to Her Majesty full power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Virgin Islands". It is the AG on whom Her Majesty through the Governor invariably relies for opinion and advice to achieve this overriding constitutional objective.

Profile

of

Clerks of the Legislative Council

by Allington Hodge

The Legislative Council was abolished in 1901 and thereafter the territory was governed as a part of the Leeward Islands Federation. In 1938 the Secretary of State for the Colonies was petitioned to grant the British Virgin Islands an elected Legislative Council but such request was denied. Subsequently another petition was made and granted in 1947. Consequently, the first elections was held on 20th November 1950 and the first sitting of the Legislative Council took place in December 1950.

To assist the Legislative Council in its function it was necessary to appoint a Clerk. During the 50-year period that followed, eleven persons filled the position, two of whom served at two different times.

Duties of the Clerk

The Standing Orders of the Legislative Council dictate that the Clerk is responsible for keeping minutes of proceedings of the Council and the Committee of the Whole Council and to record:

- a) the names of Members attending
- b) all decisions taken
- c) details of a vote taken on a Bill or Motion to determine which way a Member votes

It is also the Clerk's duty to circulate the minutes of the proceedings of each sitting to the Members of the Council. He also prepares from day to day an Order Book showing all business appointed for any future day. He serves notice of a sitting and prepares an Order Paper containing the business of the sitting. After a sitting the Clerk keeps the votes, records, Bills and other documents laid before the Council.

CLERKS WHO SERVED

Name	Period Served
Mr. Henry Osmond Creque (<i>refer to page 188</i>)	1950-1957
Mr. Ralph Telford O'Neal	1958-1962
Mr. Julian Maurice Clarke	1963-1964
Mr. Selwyn Lorenzo Vanterpool	1964
Mr. Marvin Edison Flax	1965-1968
Miss Margaret Genevieve Rymer	1968
Mr. Joshua Joseph Smith	1969
Miss Victoreen Romney	1969-1970
Mrs Victoreen Romney-Varlack	1971-1972
Mrs. Margaret Genevieve Borde	1973-1987
Mr. Hugh Allington Hodge	1987-1998
Mrs. Julia Leonard-Massicott	1998-1999
Mrs. Oleanvine Pickering-Maynard (Acting)	1999-present

Ralph Telford O' Neal **1958-1962**

Ralph Telford O'Neal, the second Clerk of the Council, served from 1958-1962.

At the tender age of 18 Mr. O'Neal began his long and illustrious public service as a primary school teacher. His teaching career was short-lived as he entered the civil service five years later.

Mr. O'Neal, although only the second Clerk of the Legislative Council was able to see some improvements to the Territory albeit on a very small scale when compared to the British Virgin Islands today. He recalls some of the pieces of legislation passed during his watch at the Legislature as:

- Title by Registration (Amendment) Act
- Virgin Islands Constitution and Election (Amendment) Ordinance
- Motor Vehicles Insurance (Third Party Risk) Ordinance
- Land Acquisition (Amendment) Ordinance

Mr. O'Neal's interest in the development of the territory led him to run successfully for political office in 1975 and he has been re-elected in each successive election since. As an elected representative, he served in several capacities including Minister of Natural Resources and Labour, Minister for Health Education and Welfare, Leader of the Opposition. He succeeded the former Chief Minister H. Lavity Stoutt who died in 1995.

Upon Mr. O'Neal's re-election in 1999 he was again sworn in as Chief Minister, a position he currently holds.

Julian Maurice Clarke **1963-1964**

Julian Maurice Clarke's civil service career spanned the period 1953-1966. Apart from this appointment as Clerk of the Legislative Council for a two-year period, other positions filled included Magistrate's Clerk, Clerk of the Attorney General's Office and Audit Officer.

The end of his public service in 1966 heralded the birth of his theological career when he entered a seminary in Puerto Rico.

Upon completion of his studies, he was ordained as a Deacon in the St. Georges Church in Road Town in 1969 and as a Priest in the Cathedral Church of all Saints in St. Thomas one year later.

Father Clarke returned to the BVI for the period 1993-1998 as Rector of St. George. During that time he chaired the Public Service Commission 1994-1998 and was instrumental in placing the Family Support Network (FSN) under the umbrella of the Christian Council.

Today Father Julian Clarke is Vicar of Saint Paul's Episcopal Church in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

Selwyn Lorenzo Vanterpool **1964**

The fourth Clerk of the Council, Selwyn Lorenzo Vanterpool filled the position only briefly in 1964. After his graduation from the then Virgin Islands Secondary School in 1960, he immediately entered the civil service where he held several positions.

During Mr. Vanterpool's years in secondary school he developed a keen interest in mission work. This led him to serve as a youth leader and local preacher in the Methodist Church from 1960 to 1967, after which he was accepted as a ministerial candidate of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas.

When Rev. Vanterpool graduated from the United Theological College of the West Indies he served the Methodist Church in several Caribbean countries and held numerous positions in the Leeward Islands District.

At present, Rev. Vanterpool is the Superintendent Minister in the St. Croix Circuit. He also holds the distinguished position of Leeward Islands District President.

Marvin Edison Flax 1965-1968

Marvin Edison Flax, like most young people of his day, entered the world of work after graduating from the Virgin Islands Secondary School. He worked as a clerk in the Crown Attorney's Office and in 1965 succeeded Selwyn Vanterpool as Clerk of the Legislative Council. In 1967 he saw the advent of the Ministerial System, becoming the first Clerk to serve under a Speaker, who at the time was Mr. Henry O. Creque.

During his tenure, Mr. Flax vividly recalls the discussions and approval of the Bates Hill Agreement under the chairmanship of the then Administrator, Martin Stavely who presided over the Legislative Council.

He attended a Regional Conference in the Cayman Islands, the only form of external training for officers of the Council at that time.

Mr. Flax, determined to pursue his dream, left the territory in 1968 to begin studies in dentistry. He is now the dental surgeon in the Health Department.

Margaret Genevieve Borde nee Rymer 1968, 1973-1987

Prior to her appointment as Clerk-at-the-Table, Margaret Borde:

- a. Joined the Public Service in 1966 as cashier at the Treasury; worked at the Electricity Department in 1967 as a Clerical Officer; became the first Executive Officer in the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- b. Became the first female Clerk of the Legislative Council in October 1968 and worked there until December 1968.
- c. Was appointed as Clerk of the Legislative Council in September, 1972 while continuing to carry out the duties of a Social Worker. In addition to these duties, dealt with subjects from the Deputy Governor's Office.

Period served as Clerk-at-the-Table

The period served as Clerk-at-the-Table was from October 1968 to December 1968, and from September 1972 to December 1987.

Highlights during tenure

- a. Major pieces of legislation passed:
 - (i) British Virgin Islands Electricity Corporation Ordinance, 1978.
 - (ii) Cruising Permit Ordinance, 1976
 - (iii) Customs Duties Ordinance, 1974
 - (iv) International Business Companies Ordinance, 1984.
 - (v) Interpretation Act, 1985
 - (vi) Labour Code Ordinance, 1975
 - (vii) Legislative Council (Privileges, Immunities, etc) Ordinance, 1968.
 - (viii) Legislative Council (Validation) Ordinance, 1984
 - (ix) Public Health Ordinance, 1976
 - (x) Retiring Allowances (Legislative Service) Ordinance, 1980.
 - (xi) Social Security Ordinance, 1979
 - (xii) Sewerage (Rates and Charges) Ordinance, 1980.

- b. Incidents
 - (i) The mace is a heavy club placed directly in front of the Clerk of the Legislative Council symbolizing the Speaker's authority in the House. It is a formal atmosphere when the Member MUST stand and address the Speaker as "Mr. Speaker". When Council is in Committee Stage, the mace is lowered and an informal atmosphere exists where members are allowed to sit and address the Speaker as "Mr. Chairman".

 - (ii) Hon. Omar Hodge was suspended from the Legislative Council on 14th March 1986 for breaking the mace. The events leading up to this were his comments on the Immigration Laws of the country which banned Rastafarians from the country and sent home expatriate women in their late stages; the Speaker interrupted him more than once on the use of his unparliamentary language. The member then proceeded to threaten to remove the mace if he was not allowed to speak in the House. He removed the mace and broke it into two parts and the Sitting was immediately suspended.

- c. Physical Improvements: Initiated the move of the offices of the Speaker and Clerk to more spacious accommodation in the Iris de Castro Building on Wickham's Cay. Each member of the Legislative Council was given an office therein.

The Legislative Council Chamber was improved from its previous state.

- d. Legislative Advancement: The Virgin Islands Constitution Order (1976 No. 2145) increased the number of elected members of the Legislative Council from 7 to 9. This was facilitated by the removal of membership held by the Financial Secretary and the Nominated Member.

- e. Financial Advancement: In 1977 under this new Constitution, the Chief Minister became the first Minister of Finance.

f. Historical Dates and Facts

- (i) 1972 — The first BVI/USVI Friendship Day was held in Tortola, BVI in October, under the chairmanship of the then Speaker, H.R. Penn.
- (ii) 1978 — A motion brought to the Legislative Council by the Member for the Seventh District for the recall of the Governor by the United Kingdom Government was unanimously approved in the House. The motion cited as one of the reasons for this, the Governor's action in the exercise of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy on the 5th July 1978. The Resolution was forwarded to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in London.
- (iii) 1979 — The members of the Opposition helped the Minister for Natural Resources and Labour to pass the "Social Security Ordinance, 1979" as the other ministers of Government had absented themselves from the meeting.
- (iv) 1986 - On the advice of the Chief Minister, the Governor dissolved the Legislative Council one year before the life of the Council ended.

Joshua Joseph Smith
1969

Joshua Joseph Smith, while still a very young man, entered the civil service in 1960. Although it was only for a very brief stint, he served admirably as Clerk of the Council in 1969.

Mr. Smith commanded numerous positions in the service but is best remembered for his 1980 appointment as the first Director of the Social Security Board, a position he held up to the time of his death in 1989.

Victoreen Romney-Varlack
1969-1970, 1971-1972

During her term as Clerk, Victoreen Romney-Varlack saw numerous pieces of legislation passed. Of particular interest were the annual Appropriation Acts. On 30th December 1969, the Council passed the Appropriation (1970) Ordinance 1969 in the unprecedented sum of \$8,320,419! Of that sum \$3,217,552 was to cover the Territory's Recurrent Budget, and \$5,102,867 for the Capital Budget.

The total Budget for 1971 which was passed on 5th February 1971 was \$7,692,017. The total Recurrent Budget was \$4,032,866 while the Capital Budget was \$3,659,151.

The 1972 Budget passed on 14th April 1972 was \$6,165,854 of which \$4,497,236 was the Recurrent Budget and \$1,668,618 was the Capital Budget. It is quite evident that budgets for the period were on the decrease. By comparison with present times, budgets are significantly increasing annually.

Historical Dates and Facts:

- a. On 10th January 1971, The Honourable H. Robinson O'Neal met his accidental

death while transporting furniture to North Sound Primary School. The School was subsequently named in his honour as the Robinson O'Neal Memorial School. Following the untimely death of the Member for the Seventh District, the funeral service was held in the St. Mary's Church in Virgin Gorda. The funeral was attended by The Speaker and all other elected Members, other Government officials and a huge crowd of BVI Islanders. It was not a 'state funeral' as would be done today; however the casket was draped in the Union Flag and just before burial, folded and presented to the Widow by The Clerk of the Legislative Council. I felt honoured to perform this duty as the Member was a personal friend.

At the next Sitting of the Council and subsequent Sittings just prior to the next General Election, the seat of The Honourable H. Robinson O'Neal was draped in black, indicating his absence from the House. As the General Election was imminent, a bi-election was not held to replace the Representative.

- b. In 1992 HRH Princess Margaret visited the Territory for the first time and was received in the Legislative Council Chambers.
- c. The late Honourable H R Penn was elected Speaker of the Legislative Council in 1971, after the General Election which saw a change of Government with the late Honourable Willard Wheatley as Chief Minister.

Hugh Allington Hodge 1987-1998

Hugh Allington Hodge embarked upon his public service career in 1964 and moved up the ranks over the next 33 years. His career included, but was not limited to work in the Judicial Department, acting as Registrar of the Supreme Court on numerous occasions, Lands Officer (a first in the territory), Registrar of Lands, and finally, Clerk of the Legislative Council from 1987 to the time of his retirement in 1998.

During his tenure as Clerk of the Legislative Council Mr. Hodge witnessed many significant changes in the life of the Council, several of which he was instrumental in initiating, including:

- new and expanded offices for staff and all elected Members (with the exception of the Ministers)
- renovation and expansion of the Legislative Council Chambers and live television broadcast of Council Meetings
- the expansion of the Legislative Council from 9 to 13 Members, and the introduction of the At-Large System
- display of photographs of all past and present Speakers, Members and Clerks of the Legislative Council

production of verbatim reports by the Court Reporting Unit.

Mr. Hodge claims that invaluable first-hand experience, helping to equip him for the job, was gained during a 3-month attachment to the House of Commons in London and the Manx Parliament on the Isle of Man. Also proving beneficial was his attendance at numerous conferences and seminars organized by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in such countries as Sri Lanka, Bermuda, St. Lucia, India, Australia and Cyprus.

Currently, Mr. Hodge is employed by the British Virgin Islands Government on a contract basis.

Julia A. Leonard-Massicott 1998-1999

Immediately after graduating from the British Virgin Islands High School, Miss Leonard joined the medical profession as a trainee nurse at Peebles Hospital. But she soon realized that such was not her calling and decided to pursue a legal career instead.

After qualifying as a Barrister-at-Law, Mrs. Leonard-Massicott returned to the Territory and was employed at several law firms for brief periods at a time. In 1998 she was appointed Clerk of the Legislative Council where she remained for the next two years. In order to enhance her performance, Mrs. Leonard-Massicott completed a two-week attachment to the Barbados Parliament. She also attended Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences in Jamaica, Cayman Islands, New Zealand and South Africa.

At present Mrs. Leonard-Massicott is continuing her studies.

Mrs. Oleanvine Pickering-Maynard 1999- present

Mrs. Oleanvine Pickering-Maynard, beginning in 1979, held various positions in both the public and private sectors, including a short period in St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands. Her work experience with the British Virgin Islands Government includes assignments in the Chief Minister's Office, Police Department, Finance Department, to name a few. She also held the position of Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Council on two separate occasions - from February, 1995 to January, 1996 and again from March, 1998 to December 1999.

Mrs. Pickering-Maynard was appointed as Acting Clerk of the Legislative Council from December 1999.

In order to heighten her awareness of parliamentary procedure Mrs. Pickering-Maynard attended many Commonwealth Parliamentary Association seminars and conferences in countries such as the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, Australia, Canada and Bahamas.

In addition to her regular duties as Acting Clerk of the Legislative Council, Mrs. Pickering-Maynard is currently pursuing a Regional Executive Diploma Course in Management with the University of the West Indies.

Profile of

Commissioners, Administrators & Governors Who Served During the Fifty Years of the Legislative Council

by Hon. Ralph T. O'Neal, OBE

In a previous chapter it is stated that the British Virgin Islands was a Presidency of the Leeward Islands Colony and the Governor resided in Antigua. For a short period after the restoration of the Legislative Council there was a Commissioner in the Presidency and also a Governor in the Colony. This arrangement ceased after January 31, 1959 when the Leeward Islands finally was dissolved and the four Presidencies became separate Colonies. I should mention the process of dissolution started on the 1st of May, 1956. The Earl Baldwin of Bewdley was one of the Governors of the Leeward Islands. He did not spend a very long time for he was considered too radical. He is remembered in the Territory for buying Deadman's Chest Island and presenting it as a gift to the people of the Virgin Islands.

I remember when he paid his first visit to the island of St. Kitts and he was expected to land in his white Colonial Office Uniform and there was a guard of honour awaiting his arrival on the dock. The Governor landed dressed in a lounge suit and a wearing a pair of sneakers. This was a big shock to all the persons gathered at the waterfront that morning.

One of his requests was that when he died his ashes should be buried in Antigua and a head stone made from the granite rock at Beef Island be used

to mark the spot. The stone was shipped from Beef Island but I do not know of anyone who has checked the spot.

His term came to an end in early 1950 and Sir Kenneth William Blackbourne, KCMG, OBE replaced him.

As stated earlier Sir Kenneth was one of the most enlightened Governors to work in the Leeward Islands. He arrived at the time the great March of 1949 was still fresh in everybody's mind and the petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for a Legislative Council was going through the process. It was Sir Kenneth who pushed this through and saw to it that the restoration was in fact achieved.

When he visited the Territory he did not stay in the Capital but he went around the countryside and also visited the sister islands in order to get acquainted with the people of the territory and to see at first hand what was happening and what was needed most. He was not welcomed at first to every Presidency and this is recorded in his book "Lasting Legacy", in the chapter headed "Boos and Booze". In that chapter he tells of his experience when he first visited St. Kitts, when crowds of people lined the road leading from the airport to Basseterre because Mr. Robert Bradshaw and himself did not see eye to

eye on certain matters. The demonstration continued the next morning when he was to be sworn in at the Legislative Council Chambers and as soon as Sir Kenneth stood up to take the oath of office Mr. Robert Bradshaw and his Labour Party colleagues walked out of the Chamber. It was a most humiliating experience but Sir Kenneth carried out his duties and before he left Mr. Robert Bradshaw kept one of the biggest parties ever seen in Basseterre up to that time because of the understanding that had developed between them.

One instance of Sir Kenneth's determination was when he decided to introduce the District system in St. Kitts. The Labour Party officials were against that as they were using the At Large system and the suspicion was that the District system might well adversely affect them at election time. Sir Kenneth pointed out that this need not be necessarily so and tried to convince them that the District system would give the electors a greater feeling of representation as the elected representative for the District could be held responsible for performance on behalf of the electors.

Despite the misgivings to the proposals Sir Kenneth proceeded to pass the legislation over the heads of the elected representatives in St. Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla and before his term ended there was a total acceptance of the District system which has remained in force until this day.

In the British Virgin Islands Sir Kenneth set up a committee under the chairmanship of Mr. H.R. Penn to consider the possibility of dividing the Territory into electoral districts because when the Legislative Council was restored in 1950 the voting was on the at large system, each elector having four votes. The Committee recommended that the voting system should be changed from the at-large system to the district system. The territory was divided into five districts, namely — West End, Carrot Bay and Jost Van Dyke (District 1), Cane Garden Bay, Brewers Bay, Meyers & Soldiers Hill (District 2), Sea Cows Bay, Road Town, Joe's Hill, Leonards, Harrigans, Purcell, Free Bottom, Baughers Bay, Belle Vue, Fahie Hill & Huntums Ghut (District 3), Hope, Long Look, East End (District 4), Virgin Gorda and Anegada (District 5). The 1954 elections were contested on that basis. Sir Kenneth and Mr. Penn will long be remembered for introducing the district system in the British Virgin Islands.

Sir Kenneth was also instrumental in assisting farmers and fishermen in obtaining loans to develop agriculture and fishing without having to mortgage their property. This was a special concession made to the Virgin Islanders based on their good character and as he said in his book *Lasting Legacy* he never had to write off one of the loans for failure of the men to pay.

During his tenure of office the Federal Government of the United States was expressing concerns about the importation of cattle to the U.S. Virgin Islands from the British Virgin Islands. The proposal was to stop the importation and this was bad news for the farmers and at that time cattle and livestock exports to St. Thomas in particular was one of the main activities in the island. Sir Kenneth promptly led a delegation to Washington DC, comprising of Mr. H.R. Penn, a Senior Administrative Officer and the Superintendent of Agriculture, and spared no effort in conveying to the American authorities the havoc this would cause in the B.V.I. They were able to agree on a plan, which would permit the continued export of cattle and livestock to St. Thomas. This was a famous victory for Sir Kenneth and Mr. Penn.

Working with Sir Kenneth was a pleasure, members of the Legislative Council said and also Senior Government officers. He was very keen on promoting representation for the people and after the 1954 elections, he introduced the "Membership System". This system was an embryonic ministerial system where the members of Legislative Council voted for two elected members to serve on the Executive Council, one responsible for Trade and Production and one responsible for Works and Communications. One disadvantage of this was that unlike Antigua and St. Kitts/Nevis/Anguilla, there was not a third member for Social Services. The two men elected were — Mr. H.R. Penn for Trade and Production and Mr. Wilfred W. Smith for Works and Communications.

With the departure of Sir Kenneth Mr. Alexander Thomas Williams, who was to be the last Governor of the Presidencies was sworn into office. What a contrast to Sir Kenneth! Mr. Williams was more of the school teacher type and he is not remembered in the B.V.I. for many things. He did obtain his knighthood

on attaining the Governor ship of the Presidencies of what was then the Leeward Island Colony. He is remembered for the time he served as Governor there was a controversy over the construction of the Beef Island airfield and the Legislative Council had conducted an investigation into the expenditure of funds. This came about because the then Administrator, Mr. G.P. Allsebrook was personally responsible for getting the money each Friday and taking it over to the Project Manager, Mr. Valdek Wagner and this caused a great deal of questioning and debate among the Members of Council. At an informal meeting of the Legislative Council, Sir Alexander shouted at Mr. IG. Fonseca and told him to shut up as he did not want to hear anything more from him. There was a hush in the Council Chamber but Mr. Fonseca did not reply. Mr. Leslie Malone got to his feet and appeared to be walking out of the Chamber, but he went right up to Sir Alexander, pointed his finger right in his face and told him, "Mr. Williams, you tell Glannie to shut up but I want you to know you cannot tell me to shut up in my Council Chamber, otherwise the two of us will have to go out today". Sir Williams watched Mr. Malone, and he watched him and then said, "Mr. Malone, I did not mean you, and I am prepared to listen to what you have to say". In Malone's style, he did not fail to tell him what he thought about him and how he was trying to defend his Administrator. Shortly afterwards Mr. Allsebrook left the Territory and at the end of 1959, Mr. Williams demitted office. The Leeward Islands Colony came to an end and the four Presidencies became separate Colonies, dealing directly with the Commonwealth Office, three of them were preparing to go into the West Indies Federation. The B.V.I. elected to remain aloof from that.

COMMISSIONERS FROM 1950 ONWARDS

Mr. J.A.C. Cruikshank - By the year 1950 Mr. Cruikshank had already done four years as Commissioner. He survived the great demonstration of 1949. It is reported that when the investigators came out from the Colonial Office to inquire into the causes of the demonstration, one of the organisers patted Mr. Cruikshank on his back and said "Crooky, you are not a bad old boy and you can stay with us a little longer". It might have had some weight in making the decision for the Commissioner to remain here because he remained for another three years and left in 1953. One significant change in the Commissioner was that he came here as a Bachelor and left as a married man. Much has been said about him in the previous chapter and there is not much more to add but with the restoration of the Legislative Council, he became a more careful man and began to show more interest in the affairs of the Territory as he now had to reckon with four Elected Members and two Nominated Members.

Mr. E.A. Evelyn, ISO - Mr. Evelyn hailed from the island of Nevis where he had risen to the rank of Warden of Nevis, responsible to the Administrator of the Presidency in St. Kitts. He acted from 1953 until 1954 when Colonel Howard arrived to serve as Commissioner. Mr. Evelyn was a quiet, soft spoken meticulous person who believed in setting deadlines to have a task completed. One of his most used phrases was, "Always make assurance doubly sure". He would warn the civil servants that before making decisions to check carefully whatever documents were before them and to ensure that discussions were held with those concerned and a written record was made of the discussions.

He loved sailing and in his spare time he would be seen in Road Harbour in his little yacht enjoying the cool and fresh breeze and relaxing in the tranquility of the Virgin Islands waters. He was well liked and even though he was here for only a short time he was able to visit all the inhabited islands, visit the schools and meet with the people. When he left here he retired to St. Kitts where he spent the last years of his life.

Lt. Col. H.A.C. Howard - Commissioner Howard arrived in 1954 from Kenya where he had served as a District Commissioner. In his book, *Kenya, the land of Conflicts*, he wrote about his experience there with the Mau Mau and it appeared as if he was glad to be in this hemisphere.

Colonel Howard was a family man and when he came to the B.V.I. he had five daughters. He was well known for his bush jacket and broad rimmed hat with his walking cane. He too traveled up and down the country and to the sister islands learning about them and getting to know the people. He displayed a very keen interest in school children and would try to meet those who did the most outstanding work in their schools.

He developed a great interest in the rain forest at Sage Mountain in Tortola and he encouraged Mr. L.S. Rockefeller to visit Tortola and persuaded him that one of the organisations in the United States that is concerned with the preservation of the environment should be encouraged to purchase the lands at Sage Mountain and present them to the people of the British Virgin Islands as the Jackson Hole Preserve had done in St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands where Mr. Rockefeller had an interest.

Colonel Howard also helped to strengthen the links between the British and the U.S. Virgin Islands. As a result of this there was greater co-operation between the various Government departments in both Territories.

He served the B.V.I. until 1956 when he was transferred as Administrator of St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla.

Mr. Geoffery Pole Allsebrook - The bachelor, Mr. Allsebrook arrived in the Territory in mid 1956 from Tanyanika where he was a District Officer. He was a keen tennis player and encouraged many people to play at the courts at Government House.

It was during his term of office that the Colonial Development and Welfare Organisation approved the first grant often thousand pounds to begin the construction of the airstrip on Beef Island. Shortly after he came to the Territory it was necessary for the Legislature to enact the Land Acquisition No. 4 of 1957 in order to acquire the land at Beef Island for the airstrip. This was quite a landmark decision as it was for many years that the Government had not acquired compulsorily land for a public purpose.

He was the last Commissioner and the first Administrator but as an officer administering the Government he was not a ball of fire. Elections were held in 1957 and two new faces were returned to the Executive Council. Mr. L.F. Malone for Trade and Production and Mr. I.G. Fonseca for Works and Communications. These two men did not see eye to eye with Mr. Allsebrook and the result was a constant bickering until he left in 1959.

Captain Gerald Jackson Bryan - This small bodied gentleman arrived in late 1959 with his wife Wendy and three children, two girls and one boy, from Mauritius where had served as principal Establishment Officer. During World War II he had served with the, British Commandos and had seen action in the Middle East where he lost one of his legs.

He was a tough but fair man and he endeavoured to bring discipline into the Civil Service. He had a great measure of success for he was a no nonsense Administrator. He took a great delight in having something accomplished, something done. His firmness came to the test when the Treasurer, who was a member of Executive Council, was accused of sexual harassment and Captain Bryan wasted no time in dismissing him from the service and making sure he left the island within twenty-four hours.

Another test of his firmness came when the Government had finalised negotiations with Mr. L.S. Rockefeller to build a hotel at Little Dix Bay, Virgin Gorda. Members of Executive Council and the Legislative Council travelled to St. John to tie up the loose ends of the Agreement. Captain Bryan was being pressured to get Mr. Rockefeller to begin his development but Mr. Rockefeller's chief adviser Mr. Alston Boyer, did not want to hear about that and argued that all the studies were not completed. The argument went

on for about almost an hour and Captain Bryan and his team remained firm. He then said he was not prepared to leave St. John until he got some assurance that work would begin before the close of the year 1960. Again Mr. Boyer raised objections but Mr. Rockefeller asked to speak for a few minutes, and he said, "Captain Bryan, I appreciate very much the way you and your Government have dealt with me since I became interested in the Territory. I know that the people of Virgin Gorda want to see some work begin. You can leave St. John now with my word that work will start on the 1st of October, even if I have to hire men to throw rocks in the sea and then to take them out again. Mr. Boyer would you please make the necessary arrangements for work to begin as stated". That was the end of the story and true to his word work started on the 1st October 1960. It was a great triumph for Captain Bryan and members of the B.V.I. Executive and Legislative Council.

It was during Captain Bryan's tenure that the first commercial Bank opened in the Territory. The negotiations with the First Pennsylvania Bank were not easy but here again Captain Bryan showed his tact and diplomacy and he along with Mr. H.R. Penn, who had become the Member for Trade and Production and Mr. H.L. Stoutt, who had become the Member for Works and Communications in the 1960 elections convinced them to open up for business.

There were other accomplishments during Captain Bryan's tenure of office and it was sad to see him leave but he was promoted to become Administrator of St. Lucia off he went in 1962. Before he left however, he was able to sign the lease between the Crown and Mr. Rockefeller for three hundred and sixty-five acres of Crown land in Virgin Gorda for the development of a first class hotel. This development heralded the ushering in of the British Virgin Islands in the tourist industry.

Martin Samuel Staveley - Mr. Staveley arrived in 1962 after the West Indies Federation had been dissolved. He had worked as Private Secretary to the Governor General of the West Indies, Lord Hailes. By religion he was a Quaker and a very quiet but determined man. He was hard working and was prepared to spend long hours and even public holidays in office.

He was surprised to see the low level of British investment in the Territory and he worked very hard to correct this. Mr. Staveley encouraged Cable and Wireless to establish an operation in the Territory in preference to a non-British territory and this resulted in the development of a first class telecommunication system in the British Virgin Islands.

When an Englishman named Kenneth William Bates became interested in buying out an American investor named Norman Fowler, this was given every encouragement by Mr. Staveley and the end result was an agreement for the development of Wickhams Cay and the greater part of Anegada. The Wickhams Cay and Anegada agreement did not survive and eventually a Commission of Inquiry was set up to carry out an investigation into the agreements. The Commission recommended that Mr. Bates be paid out and Wickhams Cay and Anegada revert to the Crown.

Mr. Staveley was the last President of the Legislative Council, for in 1964 Mrs. Mary Proudfoot sat as a one person Constitutional Commission and her recommendations included, inter alia, that a Speaker should be elected from outside the Legislative Council, the Ministerial system should be introduced and the Nominated members of the Council reduced from two to one.

In 1966 a Constitutional Conference was held in London and the Territory was represented by Mr. I.G. Fonseca, Mr. Ivan Dawson, Mr. H.L. Stoutt, Dr. Q.W. Osborne, Mr. L.W. Barker and the Administrator. The Conference accepted the recommendations of the report and it was agreed that these would be implemented in the 1967 elections as the Legislative term was increased from three to four years and elections were last held in 1963.

In February 1967 Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II made a tour of the West Indies from Guyana in the South to Jamaica in the North, and the British Virgin Islands were included. This was the first time that

a reigning monarch visited the Territory although it was a British Territory since 1672. This was a grand occasion and the Territory went all out to ensure that Her Majesty and Prince Phillip received a warm and gracious welcome.

John Sutherland Thomson - Mr. Thomson came in 1967 from Fiji, where he had worked for many years. His wife was Fijian and he had eight sons and one daughter. He was a very quiet and homely man and he saw his job here to restore confidence in the Government because there had been some ruffles with the Wickhams Cay and Anegada matters.

Mr. Thomson really a peace maker but he did irritate the population when he used his power of pardon and would not allow to have its course in a heinous murder conviction but commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment.

He left the B.V.I. in 1971 and eventually got his knighthood and is now in retirement.

Derek George Cudmore - Mr. Cudmore took office in 1971 but shortly after his arrival he was indisposed because of a bad back that had bothered him years before and now started up again. It was so terrible that he wanted to give up the post and return home but his wife Vrai encouraged him and eventually persuaded him to remain.

He was a very kind and sympathetic man and approached his job very seriously. The Cudmores had no children and Mrs. Cudmore spent a great deal of her time in voluntary work. It was during his time that the school for the handicapped children was opened.

He was the last Administrator and the first Governor of the Territory. During his tenure there was another heinous murder and although he was against capital punishment he allowed the law to have its course.

He ended his term peacefully and returned to the Territory on two occasions but he did not last too long after his retirement.

Walter W. Wallace - One gets the impression that Mr. Wallace came with an agenda to aggravate the people of the British Virgin Islands to seek Independence. Listening carefully to his speeches, there were the many references to be able to make your own decisions. He appeared to be friendly but this was only on the surface and it was questionable if he really had the interest of the British Virgin Islanders at heart.

Mr. Wallace seemed never to be sure of what action to take and he consulted the Foreign and Commonwealth Office very often and carried out their advice. It was during his time that Finance was given to a Minister and the Chief Minister became the Minister of Finance.

In 1977 Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh paid a second visit to the Territory and again the visit was most welcomed. A year after the Royal Visit, Mr. Wallace was called back for service in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and it was most surprising when he was appointed Constitutional Adviser for the Overseas Territories, which included the British Virgin Islands. He visited the Territory several times after that and one time as Chairman of the 1993 Constitutional Commission.

James Alfred Davidson - Mr. Davidson came to the Territory from the oil rich state of Brunei. He was a seasoned diplomat and he had the job of rebuilding confidence and a good relationship between the British Virgin Islands Government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This he did admirably.

He had some rather unpleasant duties to perform but he did not flinch from doing so. The Magistrate, a Mr. Derek Hugh of Jamaica, had behaved in a manner unbecoming of a senior public officer and pressure

was brought to bear on Mr. Davidson to have him removed from Office. Shortly after that the Attorney General, again from Jamaica, had to be relieved from the Post.

Mr. Davidson had become known as the Governor who took a walk each afternoon through the town meeting and talking with people and as it is said locally giving the good time of the day to everyone. This endeared him to many people they were sad to see him leave in 1981.

David Robert Barwick - Mr. Barwick who had been sent to be Attorney General during Mr. Davidson's tenure hailed from New Zealand. The Ministers of Government had refused to work with him as Attorney General and he did not stay in the Territory but the Foreign and Commonwealth Office had their way when he was appointed as Governor. It must be remembered that the local Government has no say whatsoever in the appointment of a Governor and this was a matter raised at the two Consultative Council Meetings held in 1999 and 2000. It is a big bone of contention between the Overseas Territories and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The Governor's wife, Mrs. Margaret Barwick, was a keen gardener and she restored Government House gardens and established the Botanical Gardens, now named the J.R. O'Neal Botanical Gardens.

He left in 1986 and his tenure could be described as quiet and it was the only time since the Legislative Council was restored that a Government did not complete its full term.

John Mark Herdman - Mr. Herdman came to the Territory in 1986 and looking over the list of Governors; he had a five-year tour of duty, the second officer administering the Government after the restoration of the Legislative Council.

Mr. Herdman was a Governor who wanted to have the job done and had no time to waste in idle talk or to spend unproductively.

In 1989 Hurricane Hugo hit the Territory and caused immense damage to Agriculture, Fishing and buildings. It was so many years since the last severe hurricane that people had become complacent. The Office of Disaster Preparedness was established and had proven its worth but the hurricane named Hugo had taught the Territory some lessons. Mr. Herdman went to work and with the assistance of the Ministers began building the Office of Disaster Preparedness into what it is today.

He left the Territory in 1991 and is now in retirement in England.

Peter A. Penfold - Mr. Penfold came as a divorcee in 1991. At first sight he appeared to be a shy man but it was soon discovered that he travelled around incognito. He also established a practice of having one on one dinner and in that way he was able to obtain information, which he may have, used in drawing certain conclusions.

It was he who established the Police Advisory Committee and he was very keen on seeing the force becoming an efficient and competent one. Mr. Penfold also appointed the first local man as Commissioner of Police and also the first local person as Attorney General.

Like a long time predecessor of his, Mr. Cruikshank, he was married in the British Virgin Islands to a Trinidadian whom he met while she was employed by the World Bank.

It was during his tenure that the then Chief Minister, H.L. Stoutt died and the Territory had its First State Funeral.

Mr. Penfold was fond of playing the guitar and he would often entertain the Guides and Scouts at Government House.

He left in 1995 and returned to the United Kingdom.

David P.R. Mackilligin - In 1995 the British High Commissioner in Belize was appointed as Governor of the Virgin Islands and when Mr. Mackilligin arrived, he was not keen on wearing his white Colonial uniform when he was being sworn in, and received dispensation to wear a dark suit.

His wife, Gill, was a nutritionist and had done useful work in Belize with the Diabetic Association there. She was keen to make her contribution in this Territory.

Shortly after his arrival the Governor took sick and it is claimed that the mosquito carrying dengue was responsible. He got over his illness and tried to settle down to a work routine. It was soon discovered by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that the house in which he lived and which former Commissioners, Administrators and Governors and their families had occupied was unfit for habitation and he was given instructions to vacate the premises and find other suitable accommodation.

During his three years in the Territory, there was a hurricane every year. In one year there were three. It can be safely said that Mr. Mackilligin had a turbulent three-year spell in the Virgin Islands.

Francis Joseph Savage - Mr. Savage came in 1998 from Montserrat where he was served during the difficult years of the volcanic eruption. He had spent a week in the Virgin Islands before taking up his appointment in Montserrat and was therefore not a stranger to the Territory.

While here he was still haunted by the Volcano experience, because he had to return to Montserrat to give evidence. His experience in Montserrat made him aware of the need to be well prepared for disasters and it is a lesson he continues to preach.

He is keen on the development of youth, the training of the Civil Service, the upgrading of the Police Force and like other Governors before him he is concerned for drug trafficking and money laundering.

He will be serving during the celebrations of the fifty years of the restoration of the Legislative Council.

Section III

Before Restoration *of the* Legislative Council (Up to 1950)

A Brief History of the Virgin Islands214
Vernon Pickering

Legislative Structures and Systems of Representation up to 1950228
Pearl I. Varlack, Ph.D.

The Virgin Island Character232
Jennie N. Wheatley, MBE

Messenger235
Rita Frett-Georges, MBE

**Seeds of Discontent:
Key Figures and Events in the Quest for Greater Representation**239
Hon. Ralph T. O'Neal, OBE

**The Demonstration of 1949:
Its Beginnings, Golden Jubilee and Implications**243
Quincy F. Lettsome, Ph.D.

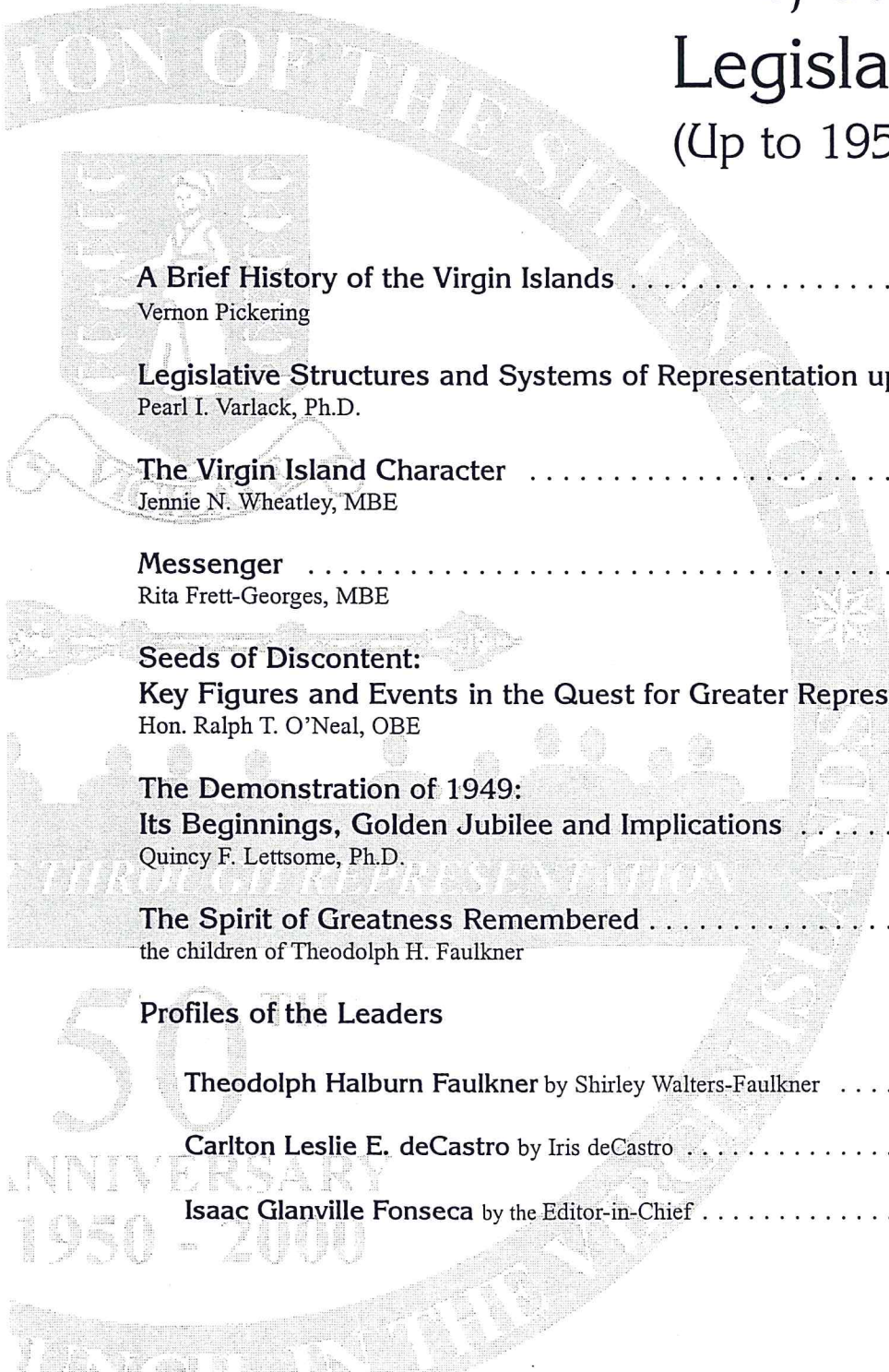
The Spirit of Greatness Remembered246
the children of Theodolph H. Faulkner

Profiles of the Leaders

Theodolph Halburn Faulkner by Shirley Walters-Faulkner248

Carlton Leslie E. deCastro by Iris deCastro250

Isaac Glanville Fonseca by the Editor-in-Chief252



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

From Amerindians to the Restoration of Constitutional Rule

By Vernon Pickering ©

The history of the British Virgin Islands defies a simple description, as in fact, the BVI is not only the repository of "Nature's Little Secrets" but also that of "History's More Significant Secrets". Compared with neighbouring islands, the chronology of the Virgin Islands is not the conventional one of a small colony, with the usual quiet procession of events unfolding, but as with its landscape too, the smallest undulations tend to perhaps relieve its cultural monotony. It is exactly for this reason that the Virgin Islands is a most interesting laboratory for the study of human response to landscape, geography and history — all prime ingredients of a people's culture.

THE FIRST ISLANDERS

More and more archaeological evidence is surfacing suggesting that as early as 1000 BC Amerindians "stone people," also known as Ciboney, reached the Virgin Islands and were later overthrown by the Taino Arawaks at about 200 AD. Recent finds have confirmed that the Arawaks had settlements throughout the archipelago, that later became known as the Virgin Islands. Sometime before the arrival of Europeans the Caribs, another Amerindian tribe, took over the control of the area and enslaved the indigenous population.

Although physical evidence of the Arawak presence seems confined to archaeological findings, we are actually surrounded by the effects of their way of life and traditions of agriculture. Many plants and vegetables that we consider indigenous to the Virgin Islands were actually imported here by the Arawaks. Among the fruits they introduced here are: pineapple, papaya, cashew, soursop, avocado, sugar apple, cocoa, genip and guava. Whilst vegetables include: cassava, sweet potato,

peanut, red pepper, string beans, calabash, cotton, and also tobacco.

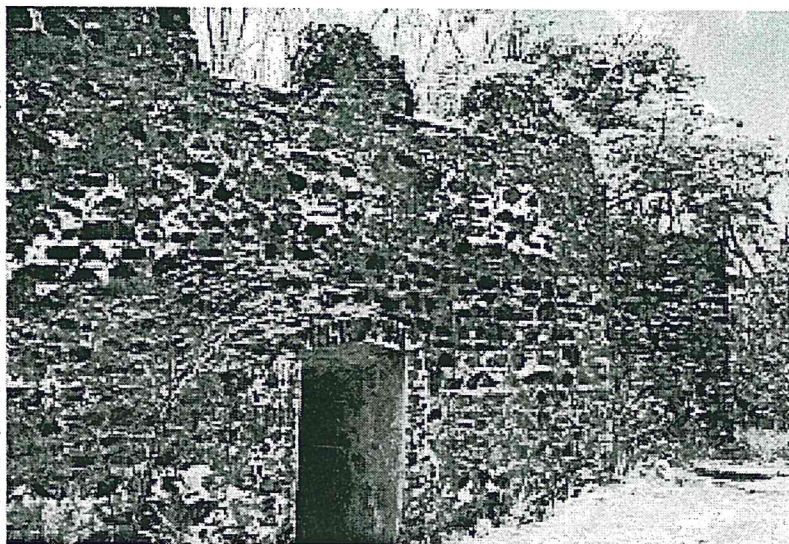


The earliest known portrait of Christopher Columbus, engraved in 1575 by Tobias Stimmer

DISCOVERY OF THE ISLANDS

On the 16th November 1493, the Italian Admiral, Christopher Columbus, commanding a Spanish fleet of three large galleons and fourteen caravels, was en route to Puerto Rico with an expedition financed by the Spanish Treasury and some Genoese bankers. It was during this voyage that Virgin Gorda and the neighbouring islands were discovered, and the entire archipelago was named "Santa Ursula y Las Once Mil Virgenes" (St Ursula and 11,000 Virgins). Columbus was told by some Amerindian women he was using as guides that the islands were not inhabited. But on sending a caravel to inspect one of the islets some fishermen's huts were sighted.

The arrival of the Spanish meant very little for the Virgin Islands at the time except for the fact that many of the islands came out of anonymity by getting their own names: Anegada, Virgin Gorda, Santa Ana (Tortola) and San Pedro (St Peter, later abbreviated as Peter Island). Actually, the origin of the name Tortola has fuelled a number of theories. Some suggest the name Tortola is derived from the Spanish word for the turtle dove, whilst others prefer to believe that the island was called "Thertolen" by the Dutch (whence its anglicized version). There is also the possibility that



The Dungeon, Pockwood Pond, Tortola: said to be one of the oldest military structures on Tortola it was built in the 1740s-50s by the Royal Engineers on the ruins of a pre-existing fort erected by the Dutch. (Photo by Marge Doran, copyright)

Tortola owes its name to an accidental misreading or erroneous transcript of a Spanish map. Since Columbus named the entire group "St. Ursula" it is possible that due to the peculiar calligraphy of the time the maps bore an inscription of this kind: "fT urfula" -- a misreading of which could easily produce Tartala or Turtula.

Although the Spanish attributed no value to the Virgin Islands as such, their location placed them on one of the most strategic sea highways, and in 1517 Sir Sebastian Cabot and Sir Thomas Pert passed through the islands on their way home from exploring Brazilian waters. Sir Sebastian was the son of John Cabot, a Venetian explorer who had made his fortune and fame in England.

John Hawkins, an English seaman trading African slaves, came to the Caribbean in 1542 and also passed by the Virgin Islands. Following upon this some forty-three years later in 1585, Sir Richard Grenville was to pass by the islands on a voyage to Puerto Rico. Also by this time, a twenty-year war between Spain and England had erupted. Later that same year, Sir Francis Drake sailed through the Virgins with a cargo of gold.

On his last voyage to the West Indies (1595) Drake, in the company of Sir John Hawkins, moored his fleet of 27 ships and 2500 men at Gorda Sound. In 1597, the Earl of Cumberland commanding a fleet to besiege Puerto Rico, described the island group as a "knot of little islands, wholly uninhabited, sandy, barren and craggy." Eventually the

BVI's major seaway, which became known as "Freebooters Gangway", changed its name to "Sir Francis Drake Channel" because of its recurrent use by the famous British explorer.

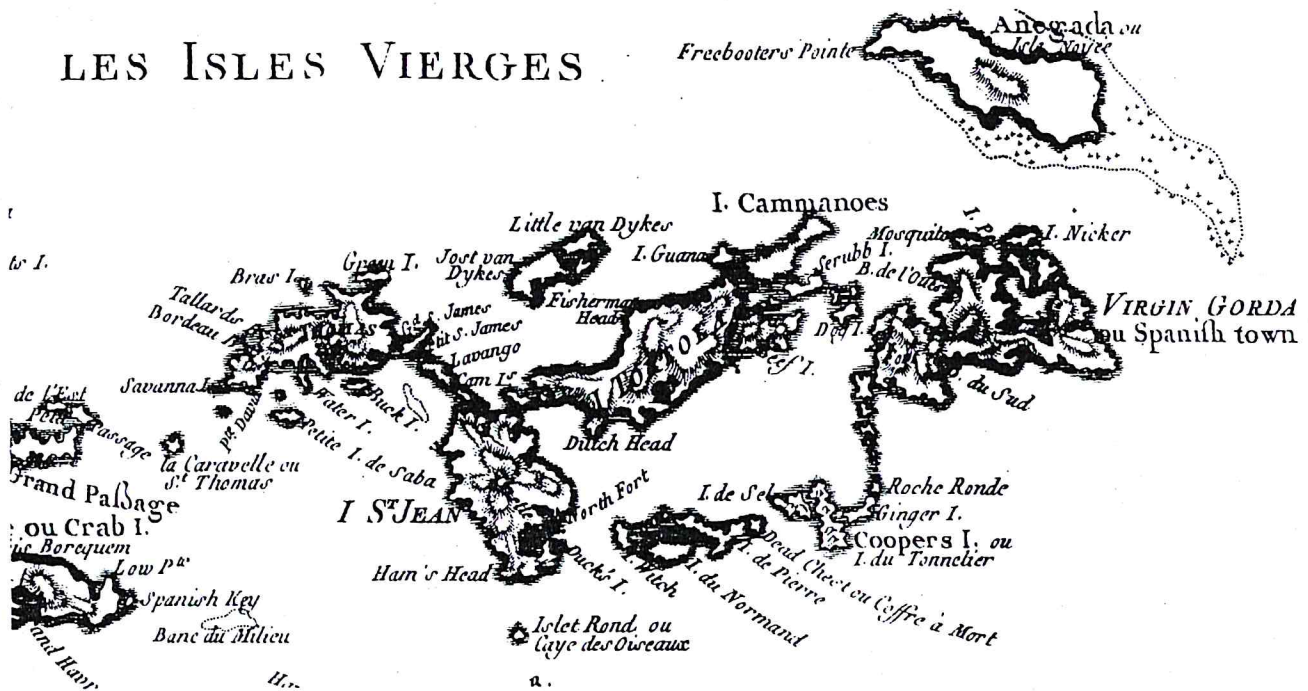
The Dutch were the first Europeans to make a permanent settlement in Tortola, and their presence dates back to 1621 when the islands were used as a base to pillage and harass the Spanish settlements in the bigger islands. Thus a small number of clever buccaneers, pirates and, later on, privateers and planters too, settled in the Virgin Islands.

SETTLERS OF THE 17TH AND EARLY 18TH CENTURY

At the end of the sixteenth century, Spanish convoys were still passing through the Virgin Islands, but the Spanish monopoly in the Caribbean was tending to lose its grip. Tortola, at this time, was called by the name of Santa Ana.

Ships of French and English merchants and privateers outnumbered the Spanish fleet, with Holland alone sending up to 150 ships each year to the Caribbean to buy salt. This commodity was needed for their main trade in salt-fish. Supplies of salt used to be imported from Portugal, but when this was prevented by Spain, the Dutch turned to the Caribbean. They also had another lucrative incentive, and

LES ISLES VIERGES



The Virgin Islands as depicted in a 1778 map by French Royal Navy cartographer, Bonne

this was for Dutch ships to call first in Africa and pick up a cargo of slaves, to be later sold in the West Indies.

By 1602 Dutch ships in the Caribbean outnumbered the Spanish by five to one. The Dutch were the first Europeans to make use of Tortola, and their presence in the islands is well documented. They built a small fort on Santa Ana (Tortola) and decided to remain as the Virgin Islands provided them a perfect base, easy to defend and easy to evacuate. The islands proved to be ideal for their cat and mouse game with the Spaniards.

Apparently Spain never effectively occupied the Virgin Islands, which was noticed by her rivals who were looking for new bases and colonies in the Caribbean. Furthermore the Spanish were totally absorbed in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) which was then devastating Europe.

English merchants had already invested huge amounts of money in their ventures in the Caribbean and demanded reassurance and protection from the British Crown. This came in 1625 in the form of a royal charter given to a very influential court politician, James Hay, the first Earl of Carlisle. The charter authorized him to colonize St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat and Barbados.

In 1627 this royal charter was extended to other islands in the region, and definitely

included the island of Anegada. In 1628 a new charter made the Earl of Carlisle Lord Proprietor of all the Lesser Antilles which included all the Virgin Islands.

Spain could not remain indifferent to these developments, and on the 7th September 1629 a Spanish fleet of over thirty large ships, commanded by Admiral Fadrique de Toledo passed through the Sir Francis Drake Channel on its way to Mexico. Suddenly, new orders reached the Spanish Admiral and the fleet turned in the direction of St. Kitts and Nevis where the Spaniards carried out raids on British settlements. They destroyed buildings, burnt crops, and sunk several ships anchored there.

During these years the Dutch had managed to establish extensive settlements in Brazil, but their success lasted only a few years, and by 1640 they were driven out. The Dutch then fled to the West Indies, and a few of them probably came to Tortola where they had a small settlement.

The Spaniards attacked the Dutch in Tortola in January, 1640, when Captain Juan Lopez from Puerto Rico wiped out the settlement and destroyed a small fort. After this raid the Dutch disappeared, although not for too long. By 1646 they were back, and once more, another Spanish Captain, this time Francisco Vincente Duran, attacked Tortola

and killed several Dutchmen.

The many salt ponds at Beef Island, Tortola and Salt Island were irresistible to the Dutch who chose both legal and illegal means to try and claim rights on the Virgin Islands. Meanwhile the Spanish monopoly over the Caribbean was disintegrating and as early as 1604, Spain acknowledged the right of Britain to trade in the West Indies. By 1648 the Thirty Years' War had ended with Spain being on the



losing side, and as a result of the Treaty of Munster the Dutch were granted those colonies that they had previously

occupied in the Caribbean, including neighbouring Saint Maarten. The Virgin Islands fell into the category of ill-defined areas with both the British and Dutch making claims on them, and these conflicts over jurisdiction generated a state of anarchy and lawlessness for which the islands became infamous.

In 1647 Carlisle's patents were leased to Lord Willoughby, but this had little consequence on the Virgin Islands since the British had not yet taken possession of Tortola or other islands in the group.

The Virgin Islands with their coves and bays attracted pirates and other sea dogs, who threatened the Dutch presence. Pirates and filibusters first settled in Anegada and then in Tortola and Virgin Gorda (known at the time as Spanish Town). Dutch buccaneers involved in a variety of trafficking were already occupying Tortola, and their rights were somehow sanctioned in 1648 by the Treaty of Munster by which Spain had to recognize the existence of Dutch colonies in the West Indies.

The Dutch established themselves at the western end of Tortola at Sopers Hole, where they built a small settlement and a fort. Their

Tombstone at Towers, Tortola inscribed with the following words - "Here lieth the Body of John Soper son of McCuthbert Soper, who departed this life the 4th Day of January 1749 aged 7 years...." - This family gave the name to a West End harbour called Soper's Hole, often misspelled by uninformed people as Sopher (Photo by Marge Doran, copyright)

intention was to make this settlement a small town. Slowly dried and cured strips of meat, called "boucan" (whence the name "buccaneer") were produced locally, and in time sold to a number of visiting ships. This together with other illegal trade attracted more buccaneers to the islands. "Zee-roovers", as the Dutch called filibusters and pirates, were regular visitors to the islands and provided a welcome stimulus to the early local economy. With so many islands in the Lesser Antilles occupied by the English, French and Dutch, Spain was forced to take security measures and change the route of her fleet. By 1650 the Spanish convoy system would make its first Caribbean landfall in the vicinity of the Virgin Islands and then go on to Puerto Rico and Hispaniola.

The treaty with Spain gave some reassurance to the Dutchmen in Tortola and this enabled them to continue their contraband activities and to introduce the cultivation of sugar cane. In 1665 Tortola was attacked by John Wentworth, an English sea captain commanding an armed merchant vessel. Upon hearing of the outbreak of a war between England and Holland, Wentworth attacked

Tortola and captured a ship in the harbour. Most Dutchmen and some sixty-seven slaves were subsequently sent to Bermuda.

In 1666 many of the remaining Dutch were driven from Tortola by a band of British privateers and adventurers. A few months later however, the Dutch were back again, but by this time they had become openly hostile to the Danish, who had recently settled in St. Thomas. During the winter of 1667, the Tortolian Dutch organized a raid on St. Thomas where they plundered everything in sight, including guns and ammunition.

Signs of a more effective occupation of the Virgin Islands had begun around the middle part of the seventeenth century (1640-1650) when a handful of English settlers with their families came from Anguilla and Barbados and made permanent settlements in Tortola and Virgin Gorda. The cultivation of sugar cane and cotton had also begun, and sugar cane cuttings were introduced into St. Thomas from Tortola in 1672.

ANGLO-DUTCH CONTROVERSY

Apart from the strategic interest, early English designs on the islands are not too clear. In 1672 William Stapleton captured Tortola from a small group of Dutch settlers (about twelve families), seriously damaged their fort, seized their guns, and took away about 80 subjects, including Irish, English, and Welsh. They were removed to the more important island of St. Christopher, and the Virgin Islands were annexed to the Leeward Islands' government by King Charles II of England. The second Anglo-Dutch Treaty was signed at Westminster on 6th March, 1674 for the restoration of all territories taken during the war, but the Dutch did not resettle in Tortola. A Dutch entrepreneur by the name of William Hunthum and his associates had in the past claimed Tortola as their property. Diplomatic representation was duly made by the Dutch who insisted that Tortola had only been handed over to Stapleton for safekeeping for the duration of the 1672 war. By 1680 another wave of English planters from Anguilla settled on Tortola and Virgin Gorda.

A Council of six members and a Deputy Governor by the name of Thomas Bisse were appointed from among these settlers. In 1684, the Dutch Ambassador demanded the return of the island and argued that Tortola was not a conquest of Stapleton's, but was only placed in his care by Dutch proprietors because of the 1672 war. Whatever the rights or wrongs might have been, nothing appears to have come of these discussions. It is presumed that Stapleton's death might have contributed to the inconclusive end of the talks. Still not effectively settled by the British, Tortola and her neighbouring islands were, in a way, anybody's apple. One of the oldest place names on Tortola is Hunthum's Ghut, and additional vestiges of the Dutch occupation include Jost Van Dyke, the fourth largest island in the archipelago named after a Dutch planter.

The isolation of the area started again to attract a number of sea dogs and other pirates of different European nationalities. These diverse inhabitants clearly lived on contraband and other illegal activities. Disturbed by the presence of these people, in 1685 the Spaniards based in Puerto Rico sent a ship to fire upon the islands. The following year, 1686, the Spanish carried out another raid, this time with the help of a renegade English doctor. Several plantations were pillaged and many slaves were seized. Shortly afterwards, Virgin Gorda was attacked by the Spaniards. Not being able to defend themselves against these attacks, the inhabitants abandoned the islands, and between 1685 and 1690, only two strong minded persons continued to live on Virgin Gorda.

Although in 1686 the governor of the Leeward Islands had received specific instructions to restore Tortola to the Dutch he did not act upon it.

In 1694, however, the governor of the Leeward Islands was put in a position to assert British rights over the territories of the Virgin Islands.

By the turn of the century a number of Caribbean islands had changed hands among European powers, and although Tortola and the Virgin Islands had played host to a variety of Europeans, the British presence had become predominant. The stage was now set for the British settlers to enter a new phase,

one in which the Virgin Islands moved from pioneering colonialism to substantial and organized profit taking from the sugar trade.

PIRACY, POVERTY AND LAWLESSNESS

What made Tortola very attractive to British eyes was timber; Tortola was, at the time, the only source of timber for the British colonies in the Leeward Islands. As mentioned earlier, between 1685 and 1690 the islands were totally deserted except for two persons, Jonathan Turner and his wife, who lived in Tortola, and also for a while, in Virgin Gorda.

Virgin Gorda was then called Paneston, and must have looked more attractive than Tortola to early settlers. By 1690 there were fourteen men, a few women, and a few slaves on the island. They cultivated cotton which was sold in St. Thomas or exchanged for linen and slaves, and by 1696, the population had increased to fifty men and their families, and about eighty slaves.

Around this time, the appointment of separate deputy-governors for Tortola and Virgin Gorda was instituted: however, the office lacked real power and was only a symbol of English authority. In 1700 another group of English settlers came from Anguilla and established themselves in Tortola. The following year, Pere Labat, a French missionary on his way to St. Thomas, remarked that the English settlers in Virgin Gorda cultivated indigo, tobacco, cotton, and peas, and were very poor.

The European super powers who had been using pirates and buccaneers to harass and pillage the merchant fleets of their rivals, had themselves become entangled in such operations. By the later part of the 1600s buccaneers were seen as a nuisance and a threat to England's commercial and foreign policy goals. Beef Island and Anegada by this time had become the last outpost of buccaneers and privateers. Captain William Kidd, a Scot turned pirate, had familiarised himself with the Virgin Islands and fully appreciated their potential as a base for smuggling stolen goods. Hunted by the Royal Navy in 1699, Kidd landed in Anguilla and



In 1801, an Act was passed by the local Legislature to stamp, or countermark, silver and copper coins in order to create a local coinage. Tortola, circa 1801-1805; cut Half Dollar segment of Charles IV, Mexico mint, 8 Reales countermarked TIRTILA (KM 20; Pridmore 12, countermark type III); 13.6 grams; pictured here larger than actual size to show detail. Notice that the King's profile is still clearly visible

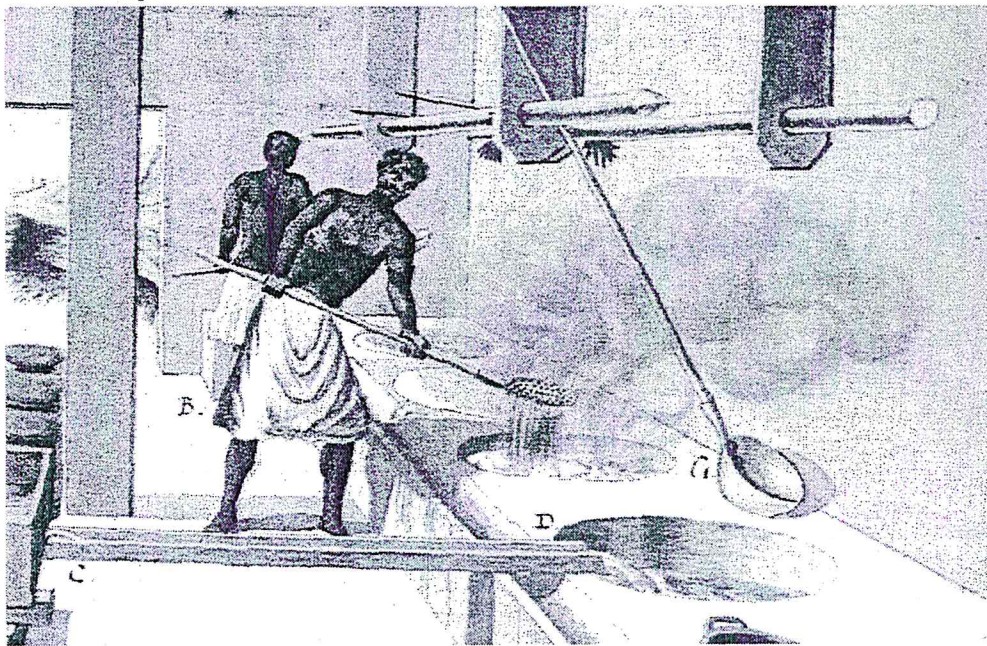
[Vernon Pickering © Collection; formerly Witte Museum Collection]

offered the governor a large sum to be allowed to stay. He was refused and moved on to St. Thomas to sell his booty. After a long tour of the Caribbean he sailed to New York where he was jailed and sent to London. By confessing that he had a treasure buried in some unnamed West Indian island he spurred a frantic search in the area. At this time the H.M.S. Speedwell called at Beef Island to contact a shady character named Hamm who was said to have been trafficking with Captain Kidd.

The names of many of the smaller islands around Tortola are reminiscent of the pirate days: "Norman Island", "Deadman's Chest", "Prickly Pear", and "Fallen Jerusalem", are typical. Considering the reasons why white people left the larger islands to settle in the Virgin Islands, Sir Alan Burns wrote "that in the larger islands the poorer whites could not make a living and there must, moreover, have been a number of men who disliked even the limited order established in the settled islands and sought a freer life away from all the restrictions either of law or of morality, and, perhaps more important, of taxation."

Most of the information referring to this period clearly suggests that these early settlers were joined by men of a very low social level such as pirates, and the likes. Focusing on this outlaw stratum of the society, Governor Parke reported in 1709, that they "lived like wild

people without order or government and have neither divine nor lawyers amongst them, they take each other's word in marriage, they think themselves Christians because they are descended from such." Lawlessness was rampant and this stemmed from the fact that Britain had not yet officially asserted its right to the larger islands of Virgin Gorda and Tortola. Deputy governors were typically the captains of visiting vessels, since it was often difficult to select a suitable individual from among the band of early settlers. The office of deputy governor lacked a salary and specific executive powers.



Sugar Mill slaves as depicted in a French print of 1725

Poverty was typical among the early immigrants, however, those who could manage, brought slaves and cattle with them. In the course of preparing terrain for their plantations, a "great part of the woods, which shaded the lofty mountains, were soon leveled to the ground, and of the stupendous rocks which perhaps had remained from the creation, were blown up and tumbled into the valleys beneath," and, "In a few years, from the incessant toil of these people, cotton and sugar cane.... (were) seen flourishing on the sides of the mountains and in the lowlands, ginger was cultivated and indigo works appeared."

CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

Such a dramatic change was made possible by the labour of a constantly increasing number of slaves from Africa. They worked from 5 o'clock in the morning till 8 p.m. under the supervision of a white overseer and a bomba (a slave armed with a whip).

During the 1730s a number of Quaker missionaries visited the islands proselytizing a large number of planters and their African slaves. When the seat of power was transferred from Virgin Gorda, John Pickering, a wealthy planter and leader of the Quaker community, became the first Lieutenant Governor of Tortola in 1741. He resigned a few months later because his religious philosophy prevented him from using firearms. Prominent local Quakers included the founder of the London Medical Society, John Coakley Lettson, and Dr. William Thornton, the architect of the U.S. Capitol Building and the Octagon

(Washington D.C.).

In 1773 the islands were granted a constitutional government with a fully elected House of Assembly and a partly elected, partly nominated Legislative Council in return for an impost of 4.1/2 percent. The first attempt to establish Courts of Justice was unsuccessful. A well orchestrated conspiracy headed by Lieutenant Governor Nugent and a number of affluent planters frustrated any attempt made by the newly appointed Chief of Justice, George Suckling. It was only a decade later that constitutional rule started to be implemented and, ironically enough, the first efforts of the legislators were to establish rigorous punishments for slaves and to settle

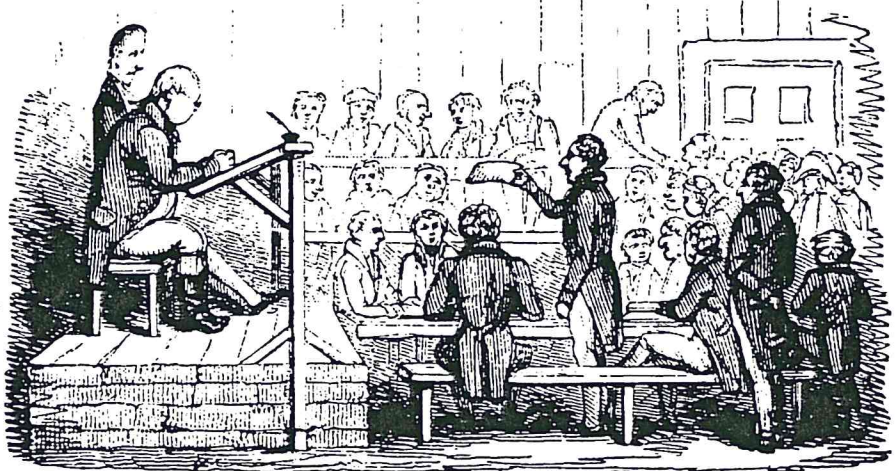
ongoing land disputes.

The first post office was opened in Tortola in 1787, and concurrently a packet boat service began to call at Tortola once a month to bring in and collect mails. That same year the first ever Royal Visit to the BVI took place when William IV (then Prince William Henry) sailed to the islands in the "Pegasus" frigate escorted by Captain Horatio Nelson of the "Boreas" and Captain Holloway of the "Solebay".

Following the American Revolution of 1776, the United States and France entered into an alliance; the French scheming, with the aid of Spain, to capture the West Indies. Things got even more complicated with the advent of the French Revolution (1789) and the ensuing Napoleonic Wars. The threat was real and

between 1760 and 1801, a number of fortifications were built and older fort houses were enlarged and reinforced. During the second part of the Eighteenth century, Fort Burt, Fort Hodge, Fort Recovery, Fort George, Fort Shirley, and the Dungeon (or Pockwood Pond Fort) were built. Fort Hodge was named after Governor Thomas Hodge Dowille who came to prominence in 1779 for capturing St Martin. Fort Burt and Fort Shirley were named after the governors of the Leeward Islands of the time. Fort Burt was built in 1776 on a site erroneously believed to have had an earlier and smaller Dutch fortification on it. Sir Thomas Shirley, governor of the Leeward Islands, visited Tortola early in 1783, and after staying in the island for three weeks he took the "Argo," a frigate carrying 52 guns, to cruise in the surrounding waters. As he reached the sea off Sombrero Island he was confronted by two French frigates during a bad storm, which prevented the "Argo" from opening her lower tier of guns. Although the French suffered 32 casualties and heavy damage, by night time they were able to seize the "Argo". But as the weather moderated, vessels from the British Navy in Tortola headed by the "Invincible" came to Shirley's rescue, whilst the French favoured by the darkness found an easy escape.

Throughout the 1700s the plantation system had been the backbone of the local economy, and the black population largely outnumbered the white settlers. Slave labour provided a cheap and cruel way of extracting wealth from the islands.



The Virgin Islands' "Hall of Justice", Road Town, as seen by a visitor of the early 1830s ©

SLAVERY IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

One of the most important aspects of the history of the Virgin Islands is slavery. The institution of slavery, which has existed throughout the ages in one form or another among peoples of all races, reached unprecedented dimensions following the penetration of Africa by Europeans in the fifteenth century. The Europeans' enslavement of Africans was indispensable for conquering and resettling the New World.

Liverpool was the principal port from where ships would leave for the African west coast and thousands of Africans were loaded like cattle to be traded in the New World.

The earliest records referring to the presence of slaves in the British Virgin Islands begin in 1665, when Tortola was attacked by John Wentworth who removed the Dutch settlers and a group of 67 slaves to Bermuda. By the end of the 1600s, Tortola had about 100 slaves, but the subsequent surge of immigrants from Anguilla and other West Indian islands was responsible for a further increase in their numbers. Additionally the

slave market in St. Thomas provided a reliable source of supply.

In 1734, when Governor Mathew attempted to establish a legislature in the Virgin Islands, the first of its laws concerned the punishment of runaway slaves.

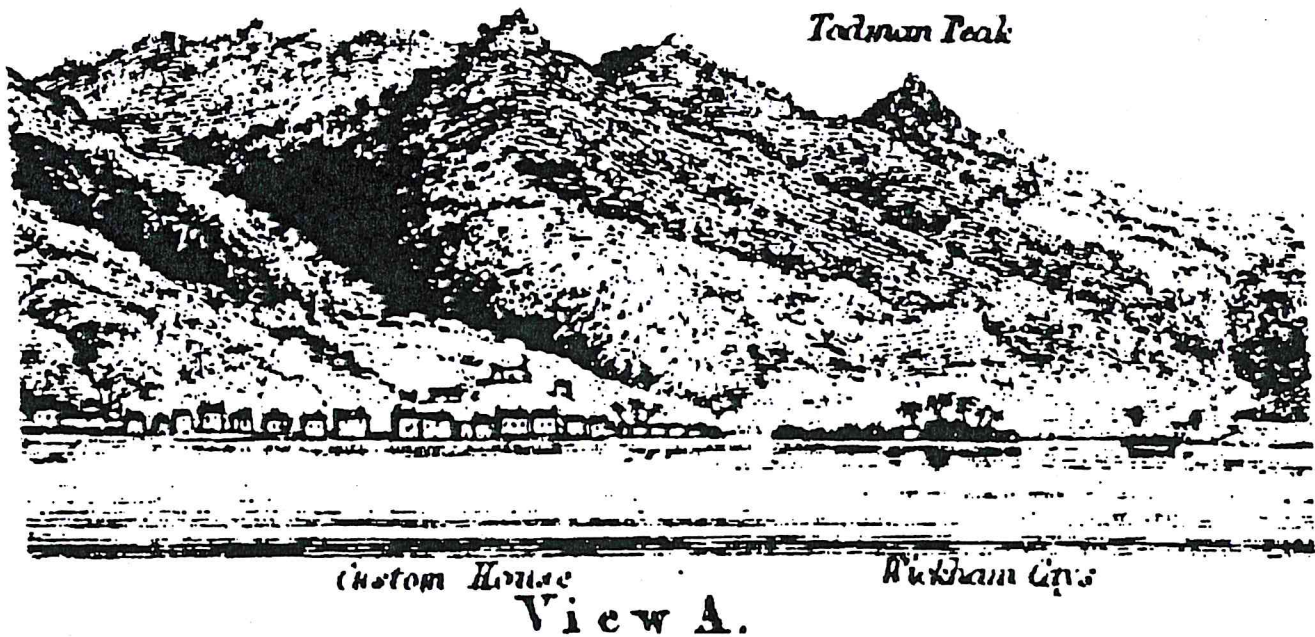
Throughout the 1700s the cultivation of sugar cane was expanding, and as a consequence, the demand for slave labour escalated. Many of the slaves imported into the Virgin Islands were from Benin and Nigeria, and African slaves in general were mainly taken from the following tribes: Angolans, Congolese, Mocoos, Eboes, Pawpaws, Senegalese and Mandingos.

Planters ensured discipline by inflicting severe punishments on rebellious slaves; the most common of these being whipping. From time to time, a few slaves escaped and sought freedom in Puerto Rico. The reoccurrence of these runaway cases became a source of concern among planters who sent regular petitions to London. To limit the problem of runaway slaves, Road Town was patrolled at night by guards, and slaves circulating in the public street after 9 p.m. without written permission from their master were imprisoned and punished with twenty lashes at the market place. Slaves running to Puerto Rico became such a problem for the planters that in 1787 an Act was passed obliging all those concerned to keep a white watchman on every boat or

coble afloat. In 1790, slaves heard a rumour that their freedom had been granted by England, but the planters were holding back from applying it. The disappointed slaves went on the rampage, causing damage to many estates, especially that of Isaac Pickering. Afterwards several slaves were sentenced to death.

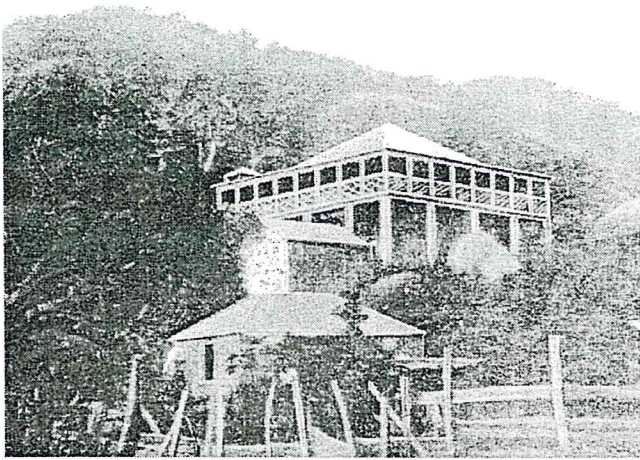
SLAVE REBELLIONS AND THE STRUGGLE TO END THE SLAVE TRADE

Throughout the 1700s the plantation system had been the backbone of the local economy, with slave labour proving a cheap and cruel way of extracting wealth from the islands. Slave rebellions became more common, and in 1789 slaves on the Pickering Estate at Josiah's Bay, Tortola, attacked Colonel Thomason and the overseers. The siege on the great house continued for hours until help came from other estates. Several slaves were tried and two were sentenced to death and executed. In 1819, shortly after a dreadful hurricane, another slave rebellion took place on the same estate, this time the Royal Navy was called in, but the overseer's fear of retaliation and the intervention of one legislator brought things back to normality. In



Detail from a map published by the Admiralty in 1848-1850. View A includes Road Town Waterfront, Customs House and Wickhams Cay I and II - [copyright]

ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE AND THE EMANCIPATION ACT OF 1834



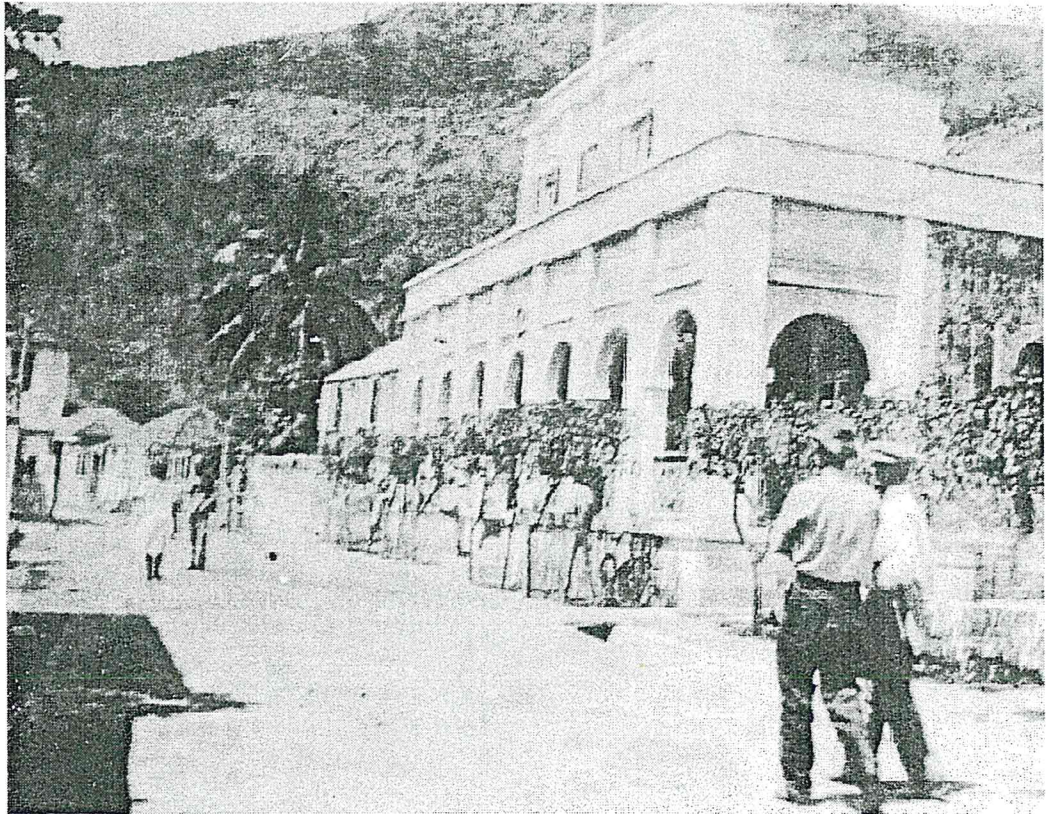
1910, Britannic Hall, Main Street *(copyright)*

1821, a dungeon was erected on the estate but it was immediately destroyed by the slaves, although later on it was rebuilt and demolished twice.

In 1823, as Isaac Pickering the proprietor was planning to remove all of his slaves to Trinidad, the slaves attacked the overseer and the watchman and threatened them with death. A squadron of hunters brought the rebellion to an end, with all the rebellious slaves being removed to other islands.

In 1827, an insurrection flared up on the estate of George Nibbs, and a few years later, in 1830, another uprising took place on the Lettsom Estate at Cane Garden Bay, Mt. Healthy and Lower Estate. The following year, 1831, a plan contemplating the murder of all white males in Tortola was discovered.

The President of the Virgin Islands succeeded in getting a Danish warship from St. Thomas to prevent a general uprising.



1920s, view of the Treasury Building on Main Street *(copyright)*

Some of the richest plantation owners lived in England and only rarely visited Tortola, and on such occasions normally resided at their great houses. Slaves were divided into two main categories: field slaves, and domestic slaves. Some slaves were very skilled in making baskets, wicker chairs and plaited shoes. African traditions were kept alive by the slaves who believed strongly in *Obeah*. Among them there were some *Obeah men* who were knowledgeable in herbal medicine.

Samuel and Mary Nottingham had a fairly large estate at Long Look, and in 1776, after they left Tortola to go to live in New York, the Nottinghams manumitted 25 slaves and gave them fifty acres of land at Long Look. The Nottinghams sent a written deed declaring that each slave had legally purchased freedom. When the Nottinghams freed their slaves they established a *unique* precedent by actually emancipating them with the donation of land

and tools to cultivate it.

By 1787, a Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was established in London. Most members of the Committee were Quakers, whilst other political groups and religious societies started to manifest their disapproval with the slave trade. In the spring of 1807 the English Parliament approved a law abolishing the slave trade.

British warships were sent to hunt down captains who ignored the law, and they also stopped the ships of any nation at war with England and freed their slave cargo.

The Abolition Act was certainly a great achievement, but it did not stop planters from continuing to inflict cruel punishments on the slaves. In 1811, Arthur Hodge, a slave-owner in Tortola, was tried for murdering one of his slaves, and according to contemporary allegations he had killed as many as 60 of them.

He was found guilty, but the majority of the jurors recommended the prisoner mercy. Chief Justice Robertson, however decided he should be hanged, and the Governor declared martial law and called in a British warship to keep order among the planters while the sentence was carried out. This was the first case where a white man was proven guilty for the murder of a black man and sentenced to death. Hodge's case echoed in London, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and throughout the Caribbean. Detailed reports on the trial were published in *The Times* of London and in *The Globe*, *The Christian Observer*, and *The Gentleman's Magazine*. Additionally a book entitled *The Trial of Arthur Hodge* had no less than three editions - two in Britain and one in the United States.

The local economy had received a fatal blow with the abolition of the slave trade. As the white planters returned to England a number of free blacks began to buy land and this pattern continued throughout the century.

In the meantime the British Navy had seized a number of ships with illegal slave cargoes in Virgin Islands waters. Over 1,000 Liberated Africans were assigned to masters whose job was to see them through a number of years of apprenticeship. On the 1st August, 1834 the Emancipation Proclamation brought freedom for 5,133 slaves. A few days later, William Roger Isaacs, President of the Virgin

Islands, informed London that the proclamation day "passed off very quietly and the Negroes throughout the island have, contrary to the expectations which were entertained, with a very few exceptions, commenced their labour under the new system in an orderly and peaceable manner."

(Copies of the Emancipation Proclamation donated by Vernon Pickering can be viewed at St. George's Episcopal Church, the Road Town Methodist Church and the St William's Roman Catholic Church - all on Main Street, Road Town- another copy can be viewed at the Legislative Council Chambers).

LAND OWNERSHIP

In 1773, Britain granted the Virgin Islands the right to have their own elected legislature consisting of a Council and Assembly, in exchange for a 4½ percent duty on all produce of the Virgin Islands. One of the first bills to be submitted for approval concerned the confirmation of land ownership.

The legislators of the time who were white planters engaged in filibuster with the bill and wasted time on the issue. It was not until 1783 that a draft submitted by London was passed by the local legislators: as a result Britain had to waive rights to all lands settled without grant.

It may come as a surprise to many readers that in 1823, slaves owned 41 percent of the lands. After the emancipation proclamation the depreciation of the value of property made it easier for the former slaves to purchase land, but at the same time a number of families in Tortola, Jost Van Dyke and Virgin Gorda occupied plots of land to which they had no title. Drastic measures were adopted to prevent this, and the result was negative and "immense tracts of land" remained uncultivated.

Finally, in 1864, land-transfer forms were made available at a reasonable price and the paperwork involved was simplified. Encumbered estates totalling some 780 acres were sold at a price local farmers could afford. The result of all of this is what we can still see nowadays: Virgin Islanders owning most of the

land in the territory, small holders being the most prevalent.

The situation in Anegada, however, was totally different. The soil there was not ideal for cultivation and therefore land never became an issue until 1859 when the Government of the day — for the sake of taxation — made it an issue. The dispute, as we know, has never been completely settled.

Government neither implemented the 1839 Act empowering justices to exercise summary jurisdiction for the removal of persons who acquired possession of land without title in Anegada, nor executed the 1840 Act aimed at impeding acquisition of land by imposing a twenty-shilling per acre tax. These Acts applied to the whole territory but were never enforced in Anegada.

The expense of recording deeds, without which titles could not be confirmed, was astronomical and out of reach of all Virgin Islanders. This was corrected, as we have seen, in 1864, but by then the controversy over land ownership in Anegada had already sparked.

Disputes over land ownership allocated to Liberated Africans at Kingstown and to the ante-litteram emancipated slaves of the Nottingham Estate at Long Look are known to date back to the 1840s and 1850s. The Long Look dispute was settled a few years ago when some 80 acres of land were given to the Long Look people. As mentioned earlier, in 1776 the Nottinghams had donated 50 acres to their slaves.

The pattern of land distribution and the security of land tenure have had profound influences on the history of our social and economic development.

POST-EMANCIPATION AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE ECONOMY

After the 1834 emancipation the downward trend of the economy was accelerated by the total neglect by the few remaining planters. Revenue had severely

dropped and the government resorted to oppressive taxation. In 1853 a tax on cattle sparked a peasant insurrection: the riot had a devastating effect and practically all the buildings in Road Town were burnt down.

The following year, 1854, the representative system of government was abolished and supplanted by a unicameral legislature as opposed to the pre-existing bicameral system of Council and Assembly. In 1867 the elections were abolished and the Council consisted of nominated members only. Finally, in 1901 the legislature surrendered the last vestiges of its constituent powers.

During the last thirty years of the 19th century the economy touched bottom, and to save on expenditure and salaries the President also acted as magistrate and treasurer. In 1884, former postmaster and president's clerk, Fredrick Augustus Pickering became the first coloured British Virgin Islander to act as President.

These years were characterised by unrest, and in 1887, an attempt at armed rebellion was discovered and prevented by the arrival of military assistance from Antigua. But in 1890, the Commissioner had to seek refuge in St Thomas when Christopher Fleming led hundreds in a march from Long Look to Road Town to protest the seizure of a boat used by local smugglers.

During the early years of the 20th century the economic depression forced many Virgin Islanders to emigrate. The islands barely survived on the local produce, some of which was exported to neighbouring St Thomas in exchange for other provisions. In an attempt to revamp agriculture, some cotton and tobacco plantations were experimented but with limited success. During the 1930s and 1940s the main produce of the islands were livestock and vegetables, with fishing also being a well developed industry. Export trade in cattle and fish came to be a determining factor in the economic survival of the islands.

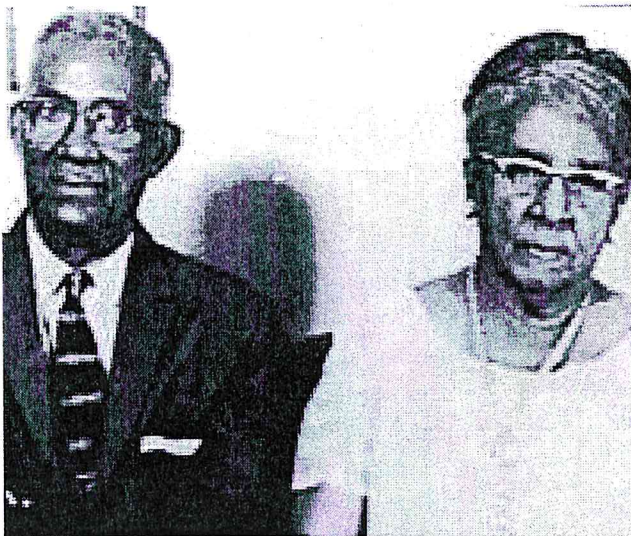
A NEW ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORDER

One peculiar aspect of the history of the post-emancipation years was the inability of Britain to supply enough manpower for the bureaucracy and the professions. This persistent deficiency coupled with the innate desire of the average Virgin Islander for higher education provided the opportunity for upward mobility.

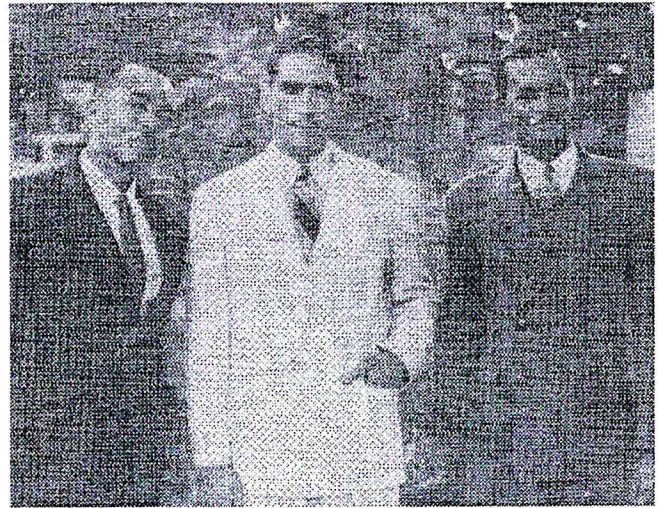
Busy with more glorious and valuable colonial possessions, Britain became disenchanted with the West Indies, and the Virgin Islands were the quintessential example of such a posture.

The one-hundred years between 1838 and 1938 saw quiet, subtle changes that ultimately led to the ongoing quest for greater autonomy witnessed during the last two generations.

Throughout the second half of the 19th century Virgin Islanders materialised their



Sir Olva Georges and Lady Georges. Throughout the 1940s Olva Georges was a nominated member of the General Legislative Council of the Leeward Islands, and on many occasions he acted as Commissioner and as Administrator during times when the substantive holders of those posts were absent from the Virgin Islands. Olva Georges was a prominent figure also at a regional level, and in 1971 became the first British Virgin Islander to be knighted. The well-known square facing the General Post Office in Road Town is named after him. *(copyright photo)*



The leaders of the 1949 March, (left to right): Carlton deCastro, I.G. Fonseca, and Theodolph Faulkner *(copyright)*

drive for upward mobility by acquiring land; and this simple but mature move enabled them to create a new economic and social order. A reflection of this singular situation came, as we have already mentioned, in 1884, when J. Spencer Churchill had no hesitation in recommending Fredrick Augustus Pickering to the post of Acting President of the Virgin Islands.

In 1938, Hope R. Stevens, a Tortolian who had become a qualified lawyer in New York returned home on a visit and formed a group called the Civic League. As a result, a petition for the restoration of constitutional rule signed by many Virgin Islanders was forwarded to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The document was accompanied by an endorsing petition signed by Virgin Islanders living in New York who had grouped themselves under the banner of the BVI Pro-Legislative Committee of America. The effort produced no immediate and tangible result but was not completely fruitless. The interaction with St. Thomas and the Virgin Islands community in New York had generated a wave of progressive ideas that were soon to show their effects.

In 1942 the Virgin Islands Welfare Committee led by H.A. Abbott, H.R. Penn, D.G. Fonseca and Rufus L. deCastro circulated a petition signed by 800 islanders which re-iterated old and new grievances.

Many noteworthy developments took place

Legislative Structures *and* Systems of Representation *up to 1950**

BY PEARL I. VARLACK, PH.D.

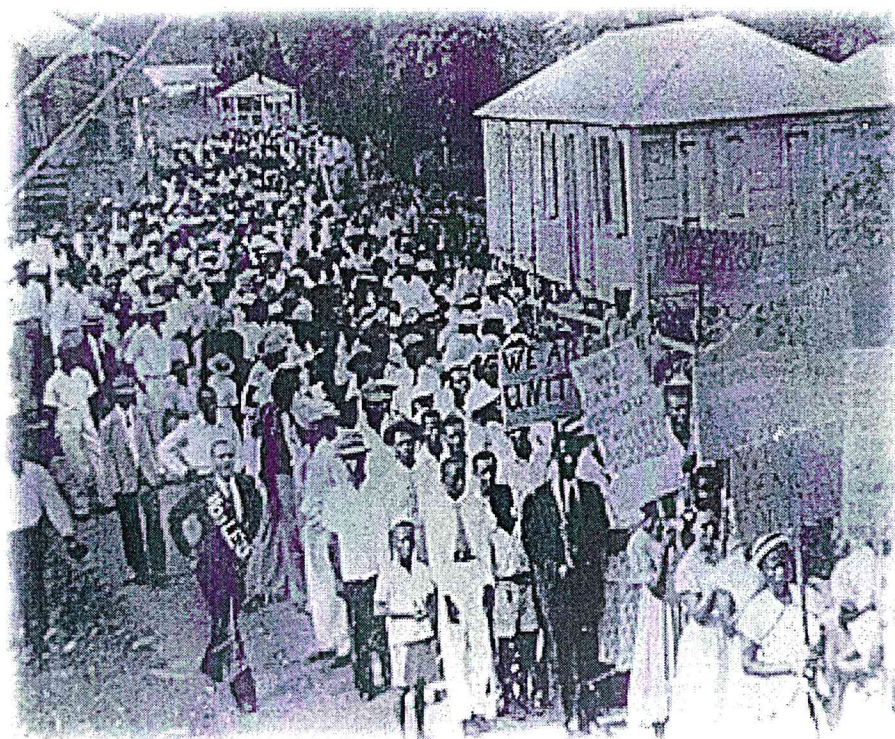
WHEN THE FIRST LEGISLATURE WAS SWORN IN AT ROAD TOWN ON JANUARY 27, 1774, the Virgin Islands formally became part of the Leeward Islands, an “administrative junction” whose centre was Antigua.

This House of Assembly had been constituted by proclamation of the Governor two months before, as Harrigan and Varlack (1975) indicate, “in obedience to His Majesty’s command.” This grant of civil government had come about after years of frustration on the part of English settlers who were both aware of their right to self-government and accustomed to stable government and the rule of law. In a state of literal lawlessness and consequent absence of local courts of justice, civic life during the preceding period had been downright chaotic. The settlers had, time and again, petitioned the governor for support in their application to the king for permission to elect from among themselves an Assembly of their own. Success of the 1773 petition is credited to their pledging to pay in coin to the

British Government a tax of 4½ percent on all their local produce, a practice not uncommon in other Leeward Islands.

According to the proclamation the Legislature was to be comprised of a House of Assembly and a Board of Council, modeled on Westminster. In this governmental structure the governor was equated to the king, the elected House of Assembly was the counterpart of the House of Commons, and the nominated Board of Council (or executive council) the counterpart of the House of Lords. The Virgin Islands House of Assembly would consist of eleven (11) elected planters and freeholders as representatives. The twelve (12) member Board of Council would be selected, as was the custom in other West Indian possessions, from among the most prominent settlers and

*For more detail on this subject see Norwell Harrigan & Pearl Varlack (1975). *The Virgin Islands Story*. Essex: Caribbean Universities Press. For background see W.L. Burn (1951). *The British West Indies*. London: Hutchinson’s University Library; Sir Alan Burns (1965). *History of the British West Indies*. London: George Allen and Unwin.



The 1949 March

during the 1940s and mention must be made that in 1940, Anegadians living in New York and the USA formed the Anegada Progressive League Inc., a benevolent organisation headed by president Herbert L. Potter. In 1941, a Public Works Department was established in the Virgin Islands, and in 1943 the first Public Library opened its doors, whilst secondary education in the form of a Senior School was introduced. And in 1947 Ashford Waters became the first president of the newly formed Virgin Gorda Mutual Society Inc., a New York-based benevolent organisation. The following year, the Social Inn in Road Town opened its doors to tourists.

RESTORATION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

In 1947 the islands expressed their desire to stay out of both the proposed Federation of the Windward and Leeward Islands, and, later, the Federation of the West Indies (1958-1962).

The political progress made in the U.S. Virgin Islands was closely monitored by



islanders decided to vent their anti-government feelings. On 24 November, 1949, a demonstration march of over 1,500 persons from all over the islands asked for the removal of Commissioner J.A.C. Cruickshank and closer association with the United States Virgin Islands. The leaders of the demonstration, Theodolph Faulkner, Isaac G. Fonseca and Carlton deCastro presented a petition expressing widespread grievances and demanding freedom and democracy.

In July 1950, the General Legislative Council of the Federation of the Leeward Islands reconstituted the Legislative Council of the BVI which consisted of four members elected by a single - territory-wide - constituency. Candidates were required to have income and property qualifications, and a literacy qualification was also required of voters. Two of the elected members served on the newly reorganised Executive Council, which however was solely advisory.

The restored Legislative Council was inaugurated 5 December 1950; the elected members being: I.G. Fonseca, H.R. Penn, Carlton deCastro, and C. Brudenell-Bruce.

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appointed by the governor. The function of this Council, or “upper house” of the Legislature, would be both to advise the resident lieutenant-governor (governor’s deputy) in administrative matters and to act as a court of appeal.

Candidates for election to the Assembly had to be at least twenty-one (21) years old and resident in the constituency for which representation was being sought. The three constituencies would be represented as follows: Jost Van Dyke one representative, Virgin Gorda two, Tortola eight. Eligibility to stand for office was also based on property ownership; if a candidate did not himself own forty (40) acres of land or a house worth at least £40, he had to be an heir apparent of someone in possession of eighty (80) acres or a house worth at least £80. The franchise was extended to all male, white, protestant subjects of the British Crown who owned at least ten (10) acres of land or a house and land worth at least £10; residence in the constituency in which the voter resided was also required.

With a familiar structure in place it was reasonable to expect the passage of needed laws for good government including the establishment of courts of justice. More than structure was required, however, to get rid of the confusion which had hitherto existed. At its first meeting on February 1st, 1774 the House of Assembly did make good on its promise to pay the 4¹/₂ percent tax and passed legislation to appoint an agent to represent the islands in England. But the planter-legislators, though anxious to have their land titles settled, were unclear as to whether any court they created would take away their holdings (some was said to have been acquired by questionable means). They did not immediately establish courts and land was not included in the terms of reference of a provisional court appointed by the governor.

By refusal to attend meetings many legislators incurred suspension; and by failure to pay the Chief Justice appointed from Britain they demonstrated very early how an uncooperative Legislature could stymie the best efforts of distant leaders who appeared to be meddling in local matters. The reputation for recalcitrance and tempestuousness was therefore earned early and was to continue throughout the ensuing decades. Actually, conflict between House of Assembly and Governor was common in the West Indies, primarily because of differing loyalties. Not until 1781 did an era of relative political calm begin when legislation was finally enacted, freeing land titles from interference or question and establishing various courts for the administration of justice.

Within the first few years of its existence the House of Assembly passed legislation increasing its size to fifteen (15) and the number of constituencies to six. Tortola was divided into three constituencies: Eastern, Road, and Western Divisions, each of which would elect three members, Road Town having its own additional representative. Virgin Gorda was divided into Valley and Sound Divisions with one member each and an additional representative for Spanish Town. The single constituency of Jost Van Dyke would have two members. Elections were to be held every three years and the requirement of residence in a district was discontinued for candidates. Imposition of a fine of £100 on any elected member failing to serve out his term was written into law; this was necessary to avoid undue political turmoil and the creation of constitutional crises. Virgin Gorda had at one time, for example, refused to elect any representatives until certain concerns were met regarding allocation of taxes collected there.

Ways and means were sought by the British Government to make constitutional arrangements workable within the framework of a highly centralized government where the power effectively resided in the governor. At one time (1816) attempts at creating more manageable units led to the Virgin Islands being grouped, along with some other small islands, with St Kitts which became one of two administrative hubs within the wider Leewards. When it was recognized that the problems were not solved by smaller groupings, the Leewards were reunited under a common governorship in 1833.

LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURES

Over the years, changing economic times in the islands led to a gradual decrease in the numbers of available resident English candidates for elected office in the Virgin Islands. Population decline combined with general apathy to make voter turnout abysmally low. Adjustments had to be made to numbers both of the Assembly (a reduction to nine members in 1837) and the Council (as early as 1778 the governor had had difficulty finding sufficient propertied persons who could be nominated to serve).

Free blacks, in search of a piece of the political action, had earlier asserted themselves (1815) by memorializing the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations for civil rights. Legislation had been duly passed within three years to allow them to elect their own white freeholder to the Assembly. And the propertied among them could become candidates for elected office after 1831 when they were granted full rights as British subjects. This grant had the consequence of increasing the pool of eligible candidates for election, albeit creating unwelcome diversity. Indeed, the Assembly became biracial in 1837 when two "coloured" candidates, W. A. O'Neal and A. C. Hill Smith were elected from Virgin Gorda Sound and Jost Van Dyke constituencies respectively.

Of O'Neal the records say nothing beyond his election. But Smith, owner of Green Bank and a few estates around Cane Garden Bay, had been a virtual thorn in the side of government for years. As one of fifteen (15) legislators this London-educated activist found a made-to-order place in the turbulent relationship between Assembly and president (governor's deputy). The period up to 1850 was one during which the Assembly, reduced after the 1837 election to nine members, was constantly being dissolved by a president who thought little of the candidates returned and about whose high-handedness complaints to the governor proved futile. Smith was elected several times during this period and in 1855 became Speaker of the House. The period also saw other "coloureds" elected to the Assembly from time to time, for example, Henry and Thomas Buntin, John Davies, and George and Lewis Martin.

Insofar as an elected Assembly was concerned, some post-emancipation problems were very evident: the numbers of Englishmen continued to dwindle; pigmentation among the ranks of eligible candidates for election was no longer avoidable; and the pool of electors could not be broadened without, as Burn put it, "enfranchising a mass of illiterate negroes." This was the case throughout the West Indies but was so pronounced in the Virgin Islands that the British invention of "Crown Colony" government, a structure designed to offset just these perceived negatives, took its first step here. A single-chamber House was instituted in 1854, one year after the Tortola riot which had caused an exodus of most of the English population. The intention was to have a majority of nominated members presided over by the governor or his deputy. It was the creation of what Burn calls a "patriarchal government by officials," which Lord Carnarvon had defined as "that direct protection by the Crown of the unrepresented classes, which takes the place of representation."

Somehow the Act which the Virgin Islands House of Assembly passed to vote itself out of existence created a body consisting of six elected and three nominated members. Not until 1859 did the president succeed in correcting this unintended proportion by having the legislature reduce its number of elected members to four. Qualifications for candidates were discontinued but, for obvious reasons, some property qualifications for electors were retained.

By 1867 the Executive Council was made up of three officials: colonial secretary, colonial treasurer (both headquartered in Antigua), and president. These, together with three resident non-officials appointed by the governor on recommendation of the president, comprised the new unicameral Crown Colony Council. When the offices of colonial secretary and colonial treasurer were consolidated or abolished within a few years, any official enjoying the governor's confidence would be appointed. The situation was such that, as Harrigan and Varlack put it, "the islands now

possessed political machinery which would maintain the status quo. For although members of the black population had been enfranchised, . . . they could no longer hope for political advancement.”

Upon restoration in 1871 of the Leeward Islands Federation, a General Legislature which was reconstituted comprised of official and elected members from island councils; the Virgin Islands representative would be a nominated unofficial. Within each presidency Legislative and executive Councils were to retain responsibility for only a few subjects not specifically entrusted to this body, incompatibility of local and federal laws not being permitted.

Reduction in the number of available officials, together with the consequent inability to hold regular or valid meetings during the last five years of the century, created much official discussion about abolishing the local Council altogether. Actually the body decided to surrender many of its rights, finally (1901) relinquishing its constituent powers. In 1902 it was abolished by the General Legislature. The Virgin Islands were now without both a federal representative and a legislative body of its own.

The fact was that representation as the Virgin Islands had known it, having entered a period of accelerated expiration since 1867, was now quite dead and buried under the autocratic rule of the Leeward Islands governor who became the sole legislative authority. His resident deputy, a “commissioner,” buoyed up by a reconstituted Executive Council, would now hold sway. The impressive composition of this body notwithstanding (the governor and two high-level federal officials plus local nominees), its existence was irrelevant; it sometimes did not meet for years for want of a quorum. For half a century the power of the commissioner (he sometimes doubled as the only resident medical practitioner) grew exponentially as he carried out his principal duties of maintaining law and order and collecting taxes from, according to Harrigan and Varlack, “miserably poor people.”

In this situation disillusionment, resignation and apathy were evident. Dissatisfaction with general conditions was inexorably smouldering beneath widespread fear. Two years after a St Thomas editorial (1947) predicted that improvement would not occur “unless someone rises up among them who is heedless of reprisals to give vigorous battle to the existing state of affairs” Disraeli’s observation that “man is only truly great when he acts from the passions” became manifest. The fearlessness of Theodolph Faulkner fuelled a virtual groundswell which led to the celebrated public demonstration in Road Town. This movement occasioned resurrection of elected representation from its tomb: re-establishment of a legislative council (1950). The political wheel had turned full circle; empowerment through representation would now begin—again.

The Virgin Island Character

BY JENNIE N. WHEATLEY, MBE

THE TITLE THE VIRGIN ISLAND CHARACTER begs the writer to define who is a Virgin Islander, an issue that can only be resolved in terms of geography using location as a site for cultural growth.

To do otherwise is to indulge in the political confusion that our sister Islands experienced some years ago, when they tried to define a Virgin Islander. Here is a brief look at the Virgin Islander, as his attributes are recorded through examples.

Is the character of the Virgin Islander different from any other Islander anywhere in the world? The Virgin Islander's reaction may be different, because of cultural background and experiences, but mankind's response to struggle and essential growth is the same — fight or withdraw and recoup. Most Virgin Islanders, like sensible people everywhere, know when to stand up, fight and defend a cause, and when to leave the opposing side beating the air, while they recoup, regroup and come out stronger.

Anyone listening to the tone of the B.V.I. Chief Minister Ralph O'Neal's voice, and that of Chief Minister Fleming of Anguilla giving

their response to the British Government on the BBC on 21st September, 2000, on the subject of Gay Rights, could hear distinctly, the voice of reasoning fighters. Their shots, though small were convincing. They voiced the views of partner not those of little children, to be corrected by their father.

What Ralph T. O'Neal articulated then in the position stated, is similar to the stand Christopher Flemming and others of Long Look took in 1890, when they marched to Road Town and demanded the release of Jacob Gordon's boat, The Village Belle, an event which caused the President to run to St. Thomas for refuge. Essentially, the Virgin Islander, like the rest of the free world, will stand up for what he believes.

Standing up demands a certain fortitude tempered with resilience and flexibility. The history of political, educational and economical growth of the Virgin Islands, are filled with

examples of these attributes.

A people who plied the waters of the Caribbean in rowing boats, open boats, decked boats, schooners with and without engines, with minimum loss of life, must be hardy and resilient yet flexible. On Ralph T. O'Neal and Pearl Varlack's first trip to St. Kitts in the Octavia C to attend high school, Captain Milford Chalwell called for prayer for wind; and everyone, except the eighteen head of cattle on board, prayed for wind. It came, and after three days of calm weather outside Virgin Gorda, a good breeze took them into St. Martin. Effective prayer? Whether the reader considers such a result faith or fate, who can really fight the wind or the lack thereof?

On September 1932 a village and an island were torn by tragedy, when the Perseverance was lost carrying thirteen souls from Fat Hogs Bay, Tortola to St. Thomas. Most of them: Long Look men, from the same Tomaw family. To feed the children who were left, must have been traumatic. No surviving relative could flee the situation; Captain James Osmond Thomas (Bim), the oldest uncle left, had to use every weapon in his arsenal to save the situation. His greatest weapon, the same sea route, on which his brothers Samuel and George, and his nephews had perished.

In the struggle to survive, the migration flight was necessary and rewarding. Migration to the United States, mainly to New York in the early part of the century, meant that Virgin Islanders received a level of education and world experience in several fields; and the U. S. dollar remittances that were sent back home to help parents, siblings and children, could buy the Tortola of that time. Migration to the Dominican Republic to work on the sugar cane fields, to Aruba and Curacao to work in the oil refineries, tested the work skills of the people, who only knew small scale farming and fishing, and carpentry. Wherever they went, Virgin Islanders learned well; and those who returned passed on the skills they learned.

Another wave of migration that is sometimes seen as economically driven was the wave to the U.S. Virgin Islands in the fifties and sixties. Education, in my opinion, was the impetus that created that wave. The children of persons who had migrated earlier, had begun to go to colleges and universities. Ruth Thomas, for example, who later became a principal of Charlotte Amalie School, a St. Thomian born to two Tortolian parents, attended college in the forties. Her working mother in New York, could not get time off to attend her graduation in Nashville, Tennessee. When word of Ruth's graduation filtered through to the family on Tortola, there was something new to aspire to.

But, that word was also reaching a B.V. I. community which was just beginning a secondary programme in 1943, which did not reach out to the masses, until 1968. A secondary school system, that did not grow over the years, in a system responsible for chasing many Virgin Island parents to the U.S. Virgin Islands. They lived in places in the U.S. Virgin Islands, far below the standard of the houses they had left in the Virgin Islands. They sacrificed, for their children's sake.

To begin to understand the Virgin Island character is to enter into the struggle of the women in the society, and the genuine contributions they made to its total life. In an age when women are working in offices in the public and private sector, when women choose to work beside men in outdoor activities, in the Electricity Department and in conservation; the question is often asked, what did women do? The answer is everything. They did their household chores; burned charcoal, farmed, and above all stretched the dollar that was brought in by the men, until it was close to bursting point; and still proverbially, "cut the garment to suit the cloth" they had in hand. It is always touching to hear Ralph O'Neal speak about a father who died in 1947, and a mother who could not find \$10.00 for his boarding in Road Town. How could she spend \$10.00 on Ralph, when there were other mouths to feed? Her stark choice was between education for one, and deprivation for the others. Naturally Ralph stayed on Virgin Gorda, until circumstances improved, and he could teach for \$8.00 in Road Town, and later earn a scholarship to St. Kitts.

THE VIRGIN ISLAND CHARACTER

So often it is said that, "behind every successful man there is a successful woman." The B.V.I. woman, like women all over the world, stood behind only insofar as the time and circumstances warranted it. They were in fact catalysts in a male dominated society, receiving very little credit, while doing mammoth tasks.

In the field of teaching, for example, even if a woman was more capable, the head teacher was generally a man. Women like Florence Thomas (Fuentes) of East End, trained in Spring Gardens, Antigua in the early part of the century, must have been an outstanding woman of the day. Alexandrina Maduro and others who opened dame schools in their small homes to educate children, did a job very few men would have dared to try.

The women of the Eastern End of Tortola brought in more money in the fifties and sixties covering bottles for the bay rum company in St. Thomas, than most men could have collected from their work on Guana Island or Marina Cay; or from most of the new jobs, that were coming on stream. The barter system of the Virgin Islands was also built on the heads of women and children. While the men cultivated and tilled, women and children travelled for miles, walking over stony roads to barter and sell goods. Hope, Belle Vue, Long Trench and Fahie Hill, brought ground provisions to East End. East End provided fresh fish, corned fish and sea food in abundance to these areas. Women on the northern side of Tortola, Cane Garden Bay, Carrot Bay, Brewers Bay and across the hills, Meyers, Harrigan and Chalwell, demand a special respect.

When I went to teach in Cane Garden Bay School in 1961, I found a female society, except for the very old men and the very young. The entire male working force was employed at Caneel Bay Plantation on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands where they went on Sunday afternoon, and returned on Friday afternoon, leaving one day, Saturday to do heavy work on the farms, and help to counsel the children. Others were working on a month to month basis on St. Thomas. Fish was so scarce that I, coming from a fishing community in East End, wondered if I was really in the Virgin Islands. Of course fishing was the one skill that most women did not learn in those days, hence the scarcity.

The Virgin Islands character is, therefore, a typical world character. His patriotism may not be voiced in anthems, but he loves the land and he loves to possess land wherever he may travel. He has the strength and courage to rise to occasions, yet he has the sense to stoop to conquer. When it comes to family relationships, he says, "Don't get between the bark and the tree or you'll get squeezed." He has firm views on work ethics and he voices them. The Virgin Islander is not an Islander separate, insular, different. A Virgin Islander is very much a part of the global community.

Messenger



BY RITA FRETT-GEORGES, MBE

Who was Hope Stevens?

Hope Reynold Stevens was born on Tortola on fourth February 1905, to Eleanora Penn Stevens of East End, and Henry Brooks Stevens of St. Kitts.

As a child growing up in East End, I recall many instances of hearing my father Edward speak of one or other of the Stevens brothers who was back home visiting for some time. The name was associated always with land, but was of no direct significance to me. That memory faded, and did not surface even when years later I met members of the Stevens family who were nurses. I never met Hope Stevens.

As the materials for this publication took shape, we realized that there was a missing link, for we had no information about a name that surfaced time and again - Hope Stevens? Time does not permit a full profile of this Virgin Islander, but there is no doubt that he deserves a place of recognition and honour in our celebrations, for the catalytic role which he played in stimulating political thought and action in the region; as well as the

empowerment of our political pioneers here at home.

His life and work as a lawyer and political activist here in the Virgin Islands, in the Caribbean, and internationally, illuminated a place for him as a humanitarian of stature. Hope Stevens died on 24th June 1982, in New York where he had lived and worked. A six hour Memorial Service held on 9th July 1982 in New York recorded the tributes from many luminaries from the legal, civil rights, political and business fields.

The words spoken and the profile which emerges from the writers quoted, tell their own story.

F.A. Hoyos- in *Grantley Adams and the Social Revolution*, the story of the movement that changed the pattern of West Indian society- writes in 1974 as follows:

MESSENGER

“The man who brought the progressives to the point of forming an organization was Hope R. Stevens, a native of Tortola , then resident in New York. As a law student, he had organized the St. Kitts Workers Committee which raised funds to defend those who had been arrested and charged for the part they had allegedly played in the disturbances of St. Kitts in 1935. His work with that committee made him aware of the general situation then prevailing in the West Indies and it was through Crawford’s Observer that he came to learn specifically of the struggle that was being carried on in Barbados on behalf of the masses of the population.

At a meeting held on the 31st March 1938, Stevens met six men and it was decided that a Barbados Labour Party be formed . The six men were C.A. Brathwaite, JA Martineau, Dr. H.G. Cummins , Dr. Phillip Payne, W.A. Crawford and C.E. Talma. Stevens was the only legally trained man present at the meeting. Adams was at that time engaged in a libel case in St Lucia and he helped to draft the aims and the objects of the new party.

Those aims and objects were clearly set out, as the minutes of the meeting record.

In the history of the Barbados Workers Union Dr. Francis Mark, Ph. D noted that the public launching of the Barbados Progressive League took place at a “Monster mass meeting” at Queen’s Park in Bridgetown on July 14th 1938; it was estimated that 4,700 people attended. The league had been founded at the instigation of Hope Stevens, who had been introduced by N.A. Crawford to a group of “Progressives” meeting at the home of JA Martineau.”

Mr. Stevens seems to have made an impact in the Caribbean that year (1938) for our own H.R. Penn (deceased) stated in his personal account of the politics and history of the British Virgin Islands in the 20th Century:

“In 1938 , Mr. Hope Stevens, a native of Tortola, returned from the USA where he had become a lawyer. When he saw the depressed condition of the islands, both economically and politically, he decided to do something about it. One night he and David C. Fonseca, together with Charles Georges and Jose O’Neal came in to my shop. Mr. Stevens told me that he had proposed to start an organization called the Civic League, which would send a petition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies asking for an elected Legislative Council for the Virgin Islands. Mr. Stevens asked if I would like to join them, but on that occasion I declined, saying that it was economic improvement of the British Virgin Islands, not politics, that interested me. However they returned the following night, and Hope said to me, “Penn, I have been thinking over what you said to me last night, that your desire is for economic improvement for this country, and I say to you, that if we can get a Legislative Council, then economic improvement will follow from that”. I replied that if he really believed that was so I would join them.

Another local politician- the late I.G. Fonseca - paid tribute to this noble son of the soil.

“Mr. Stevens, a native of East End, Tortola, and a resident of New York, was one of the founding members of the Barbados Labour Party. Through that means, he was in contact with most of the leading figures in the CLC and the Caribbean political arena. Mr. Stevens was also

in contact with current thinking of the time of the democratic movement and of the organizational and other efforts being made to improve the lot of underprivileged West Indians.”

The Barbados Advocate News of Friday 9th February in a commentary entitled “Tortolian Looks back on his Part in the formation of BLP” noted as follows::

“It was too early in 1938 when Barbados was still reviving from the devastating effects of the riots of the previous year, that an earnest Tortola-born young man huddled with seven equally committed Barbadians around the dining table in the Bay Street house of a Bridgetown businessman.

This historic earful was the spawning of the Barbados Progressive League (later to become the Barbados Labour Party) the political, economic, social and cultural transfiguration for many years. The outsider was Mr. Hope R. Stevens who in his own handwriting helped to draw up the constitution for the Barbados Progressive League on leaves torn from the back of an exercise book.

Before this, Mr. Stevens had been in Barbados for a day, while travelling aboard a ship on his way from New York to Nevis where he grew up, to visit his mother. It was his first visit, for although living in New York, Mr. Stevens, who became a member of the New York Bar in 1937, still maintained active political association with events in the West Indies.

Mr. Stevens is a successful New York attorney and is married to Allie, a Florida born former school teacher.

As a candidate for the American Labour Party in 1942, Mr. Stevens was the first black man to be nominated for election to the New York State Senate. His efforts were not successful and he is no longer involved in politics.

He is a member of the board of directors of the Off-Track Betting Corporation of the City of New York; a member of the executive committee of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York and is a member of the committee on character and ethics of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of the state of New York Law Department.

It is obvious from Hoyos’ writings that he was greatly affected by Hope Stevens.

*Hoyos returned to Stevens in his autobiography *The Quiet Revolutionary* (1990). He said in what one might call an obituary: “There were three men in Harlem of whom I ought to make special mention. These were Reginald (Reggie) Pierrepont, Richard B. Moore and Hope Stevens. It was also due to Reggie’s influence that I met Hope Stevens, an attorney and Harlemiter of pronounced liberal views. As a result of Reggie’s constant urging, the West Indies Defense Committee had turned its attention from words of exhortation in the USA to positive action in the Caribbean itself. It was in this new spirit that they sent out Stevens in 1938 to stimulate the formation of working class organizations in the*

MESSENGER

West Indies. In due course Stevens came to Barbados and it was largely due to his initiative and guidance that the Barbados Progressive League, later known as the Barbados Labour Party, was formed with a clearly outlined working class programme.

To me Hope Stevens was a historic person and I was grateful for the opportunity to meet him. The last time I was with him was in Brooklyn more than thirty years later and the passing of the years had done nothing to impair his deep knowledge or narrow his wide sympathies. I had been invited to deliver the key note address at a meeting in the Mahalia Jackson school in Brooklyn. It was an honour to be the main speaker on that occasion, but I felt it was an even greater honour to be on the same platform as Hope Stevens.

That was in September 1981 and Stevens died in June the following year. I was then back at the Advocate, now the Advocate News, as leader writer on a part-time basis, and I welcomed the opportunity to write an editorial obituary on the great West Indian. For Hope Stevens was one of the men who played a significant part in a crucial period in modern history.

It was a time, as I wrote in the newspaper, when the winds of change were blowing up and West Indian society seemed to be threatened with irretrievable ruin. Would the West Indian People slip and slide down the path that leads to revolution? Would they be provided, instead, with the kind of leadership that would enable them to participate in the development of democratic institutions? Would they thus be permitted to help in promoting the political, social and economic improvement of the sadly neglected territories of the region? I concluded in the editorial that it was due, in no small measure, to Hope Stevens that Barbados followed a wise policy in the time of crisis and during the parlous years that followed.”

Hope Stevens was a son of the British Virgin Islands who made a name for himself and left us the richer for who he was. His legacy is our legacy also.

Eugenie Todman Smith was a contributor to this article. Original research was done by Jack Husbands, a lawyer from Barbados, with contributions by Marguerite Kirwan, a family member.

Seeds of Discontent: Key Figures and Events *in the* Quest *for* Greater Representation

BY HON. RALPH T. O'NEAL, OBE

IN THE HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE B.V.I. TO 1950 Mr. Vernon Pickering has dealt with the establishment of the Leeward Islands Federation of which the British Virgin Islands was a Presidency.

It would be seen that the Legislative Assembly in the Virgin Islands was abolished in 1902. This was done as a deliberate act by those members, and the Presidency was legislated for by the General Legislative Council of the Leeward Islands of which Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla, and Montserrat were also Presidencies with the Governor residing at St. John's, Antigua.

In the British Virgin Islands, there was a Commissioner who represented His Excellency the Governor. He was assisted by some officials chiefly from the other Presidencies who, were sent here not on promotion, for it was a Presidency in which there was not much to attract people to, at that time. The population was more concerned about the struggle for existence, or as some may say, to eke out a living; the people did not really pay much attention, to what was happening at the Governmental level. In fact,

Government was regarded as an institution that wanted to take as much money from the people for taxes as possible; but as to what was done with the tax money, no one really was accountable to the people.

To compound the problem, in many instances the Commissioner was also the Medical Officer and the Magistrate. As time went on, he assumed other positions such as Treasurer, Registrar of Births and Deaths, and Superintendent of Public Works, for what little Public works there were. It would be seen then, that he was a powerful figure, and a most feared or respected man. The house in which the Commissioner lived was called Olympus, and the poet E.L. Bacon, in one of his poems telling of the power and authority of the Commissioner said that

*"Should Gabriel's great
trumpet sound over these isles
its notes of dread, as told in*

SEEDS OF DISCONTENT

ancient prophecy, calling the living and the dead, the dead might rise, but first they'd say, "only with your permission, Sir," awaiting final word from him, his Honour the Commissioner".

Now and again there was a little fluttering of the feathers, but as it is said locally, it was an eight-day talk and a nine-day wonder — meaning that it would not last for any time. Many of our people migrated to Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) and Cuba to work in the sugar and construction industries in those islands. Later on, they went to Aruba and Curacao and some ventured to go to the mainland United States.

St. Thomas was like going to town and one could describe it as a safety valve; for the people of the B.V.I. migrated there in search of work, and later for a high school education. Not many people went further than elementary or primary school, and most of the Principals of Elementary Schools came from the other Presidencies of the Leeward Islands Colony. A few parents were able to send their children to the Grammar School at Antigua or St. Kitts. In the 1930's one young man qualified as a lawyer but he remained in Santo Domingo. Later on one qualified as a lawyer in the United States, and of course he set up practice there. There was one young man who qualified as a medical practitioner, but he remained in the U.S. Virgin Islands; and later one from the British Virgin Islands qualified in medicine. He did a short stint at home, but then he left for Guyana. So there were not many people living in the Islands, who had an education beyond Primary School.

One of the incidents that occurred and caused some concern was the case of a lady who took sick in Virgin Gorda, and the Medical Officer did not go when he was called to see her. The head teacher at the Valley, Virgin Gorda wrote directly to the Governor in Antigua on behalf of the family, and the Governor on his annual visit to the Presidency, stopped in at Virgin Gorda and carried out his own investigation, and then came to Road Town. A few weeks later the news was released that the doctor had resigned.

As was said earlier, the people were concerned about eking out a living, and went about their business doing just that. The days of the estate had gone and people were individualists working their plots of land, raising their cattle, building boats and sailing. The words "peasant proprietor" would be found in several of the old documents and of course, if one was classified as a peasant proprietor, one was qualified to be a special juror. There were neither trade unions nor organisation of workers as in the other West Indian islands, and therefore there was no movement to agitate for either increased wages or political reform.

When the Moyne Commission headed by Lord Moyne visited the West Indies in the late thirties to carry out an investigation into the cause of the riots in many of the West Indian islands, the Commission did pay a visit to Tortola, and heard representations from a group of men who met occasionally to discuss matters of general interest. One of the men who appeared before the Commission was Mr. N.E.A. Harrigan (later PhD). He was the youngest person to appear before the Commission in all its sittings in the West Indies. This visit by the Commission was an eye opener and those men who appeared before the Commission started to meet regularly, but World War II intervened and nothing much was achieved.

During the thirties, there was a Commissioner named Mr. Donald Percival Wailing and from all accounts he really was the Commissioner. In the early forties, there was a huge project in neighbouring St. Thomas and hundreds of the young men were glad of the opportunity to migrate to St. Thomas whether legally or illegally to work there. The United States was building a military base in St. Thomas at Bournefield and "going through the window" was quite a common occurrence. In fact many a boat owner who engaged in that trade made some handsome rewards. But this came to an end even before World War II ended, and seeds of dissatisfaction began to be

sown in the B.V.I. The Immigration authorities in St. Thomas brought in some border patrols, and they were very busy seeking out illegal immigrants and sending them back home. The St. Thomas authorities started a large project to build a waterfront, and Mr. Ben Bayne commenced the building of the largest hotel at that time in St. Thomas.

Having been accustomed to the weekly pay cheque men began to wonder what to do and this became a talking point not only in Road Town but also in the villages. The Commissioner was concerned, but his tenure soon came to an end and a Commissioner named Mr. John Augustus Cockburn Cruickshank succeeded him.

Some sectors of the population advocated that concessions should be given to attract hotels and other industries in the British Virgin Islands but not much action was taken.

The United States educated lawyer, Mr. Hope Stevens, visited the Territory and assisted in trying to get people motivated to seek for a Legislative Council, and in this he joined with Mr. H.R. Penn who had been selected to serve on an Executive Council, to assist the Commissioner in the administration of the Presidency. Mr. Penn was all for reform, but his approach was to have dialogue with the Governor and to enlist the help of the members of the General Legislative Council there, especially Mr. V.C. Bird of Antigua and Mr. Robert L. Bradshaw of St. Kitts. It was not long before one of the most enlightened Governors of the Leeward Islands Colony came on the scene, Sir Kenneth William Blackburne. He had served with the Colonial Development and Welfare Organisation in Barbados, and also in what was called Palestine in the Middle East.

Mr. Cruickshank adopted a different style from Dr. Wailing and looking back one could refer to him as “the Devil’s Advocate” for he went around from village to village, island to island and tried to get the people to work together and to be united. He would meet the people in the villages, in the shops on the bay side, and have talks with them. In this way he got to know a lot of people and had an idea of what the people wanted or needed. But of course the constraint was money and Mr. Cruickshank is credited for putting the Presidency in “Grant in Aid”, meaning that the United Kingdom Government would appropriate a sum of money each year to help operate the Government and provide some services for the people. It was possible in the mid forties to erect a reservoir and a catchment and to have a limited supply of water, but Mr. Cruickshank decided, the supply would be used at the Hospital and Government House only. The people did not like this. This did not cause any disturbance or protest, but the people remembered that.

There was disagreement over whether there should be a secondary school and the subjects to be taught in it. It was settled by having a senior school established, but again there was dissatisfaction, and an Englishman named Thomas Dixon Green, who was Supervisor of Education, eventually had to leave the Territory. In the heat of the discussions one night, at the St. George’s Parish Hall, the Methodist Minister, Rev. Donald S. Ching, asked the people to stand up to sing the National Anthem, when the Commissioner arrived at the meeting and they bluntly refused. This was a sure sign that the seeds of discontent were getting ready to germinate. A monthly publication called “The Torch” was published by the Social Welfare Council, of which Mr. N.E.A. Harrigan (later PhD) was a member. His passion for political, social and economic reform was well known. The Torch proved to be a good avenue, through which people could express their views, and very good use was made of it.

There was also widespread discontent with the way a Trinidadian, Mr. A.C. Franklin was managing the small Public Works Department, that had been established by that time. As it was said, money was being spent but not many results could be seen. Mr. Franklin came in for a hammering and had to leave, but again this went no further at the time, but the people remembered. One of the members of the Executive Council, a young prominent businessman, Mr. J.R. O’Neal, educated at the Antigua Grammar School, resigned in 1947 in protest at what was

SEEDS OF DISCONTENT

happening. He violently disagreed that half of the public water should be supplied to Government House. He must have seen the gathering storm.

In 1949 one Mr. Theodolph Halburn Faulkner, who had spent a few years working at the Refinery in Curacao, was then living with his family in Anegada. He had returned in 1945 from Curacao. In Curacao he had seen the workers in the Refinery getting together and protesting for better terms and conditions, and many times they won their cases. Mr. Faulkner had a complaint against the Medical Officer. In those years, the Medical Officer visited the sister islands once a month and sometimes when the government launch was unavailable because of engine trouble, it would be three or four months before a doctor would visit the island. When Mr. Faulkner came to Road Town on this occasion to get the Medical Officer to visit his wife, the doctor did not want to go, and despite Mr. Faulkner's pleadings, the doctor would not budge.

Poor Dolph, (or Champagne as he was called). Who cared whether the doctor saw his wife or not? What should he do? He was not well known in Road Town, and it must be remembered, that there was no telephone communications or regular transport between the islands. So Mr. Faulkner pondered, and he pondered, and wondered what he could do. He met and talked with people he knew. He knew Mr. Carlton deCastro very well. Carlton's mother was from Anegada, and therefore there was a bond between them. Mr. DeCastro was a well known seaman and merchant, who was educated at the Antigua Grammar School. He was introduced to Mr. I. Glanville Fonseca, whose mother was also an Anegadian, but there was no apparent interest in stirring up any protest.

Mr. Fonseca, who was educated at the St. Kitts Grammar School, operated a radio shop at a place called "The Point" in Road Town. He had been chosen to represent the Virgin Islands at the West Indies Closer Association Conference in Jamaica in 1947, where he met most of the leading politicians from the West Indies. He had a good deal of charisma and could get and keep the attention of a crowd, for a good while.

Mr. Faulkner did not give up. He continued to talk about the treatment and the people he talked to suggested to him that something should be done about it. But what should he do? He thought that he should call a public meeting in the Market Square which at that time was just in front of the Post Office and make his dissatisfaction known, but he had a fear of the police. He feared that the Commissioner would send the police to break up the meeting and he would be ridiculed; and worst of all, be locked up for disturbing the peace. After much thought he decided to call a meeting in the public market.

A few people attended and spoke of their dissatisfaction, and this motivated him to continue the nightly meetings. Each night the crowd grew bigger and bigger. When Mr. DeCastro and Mr. Fonseca were convinced that there would be positive action, and no possibility of being locked up, they threw in forces with Mr. Faulkner and became the "United Three". Leader No. 1, Mr. I.G. Fonseca, Leader No. 2, Mr. Carlton L. deCastro and Leader No. 3, Mr. Theodolph Faulkner.

The Demonstration of 1949: *It's* Beginnings, Golden Jubilee *and* Implications

BY QUINCY F. LETTSOME, PH.D.

Faulkner at the Front

THE 24TH OF NOVEMBER 1999, was the 50th anniversary of the historic Demonstration which took place in Road Town, Tortola, B.V.I.

This huge march, even by today's standards, is of great significance in the annals of the history of this community of islands. In process of time, it was the flame that lit the path to constitutional, political, economical and social development during the latter half of the twentieth century.

In order to better understand the extensive ramifications of this Demonstration of 1949, it is important to place this historic milestone in proper perspective.

The Legislative Council of the B.V.I. was abolished in 1902. The Presidency was then administered by the Commissioner, who was assisted by the Executive Council. The cottage hospital now known as Peebles Hospital was opened in Road Town in 1922. The cotton industry collapsed in 1923 and the colony was severely struck by the 'gale' (hurricane) of 1924. By the 1930's and 1940's agriculture and fishing were thriving

industries. The Civic League which was initiated by a Tortolian, Hope Stevens, was organized and this group drew up a petition, which requested the Secretary of State to restore the Legislative Council. Unfortunately, this request was not granted.

Matters came to a head from the most unlikely source. One Theodolph H. Faulkner, a fisherman from Anegada came to Road Town with his wife. She was expecting a child at Peebles Hospital and some disagreement rose between Mr. Faulker and the physician. In frustration he spoke against the Government in the market place, where he articulated many of the social ills and discontent. There were the embryonic beginnings of a movement, which was supported by Virgin Islanders in the United States Virgin Islands and the U.S.A.

At this time (1940's) there was no news in the B.V.I. but the St. Thomas Daily News expressed the happenings in October 1949.

THE DEMONSTRATION OF 1949

“A rambling sound is coming out of the British Virgin Islands which may soon attract the attention of No. 10 Downing Street.”

Harrigan, Norwell and Varlack, Pearl (The Virgin Islands Story) p. 158

Thus the stage was set and the curtain was being drawn for the historic Demonstration, sometimes referred to as simply the March of 1949. This huge Demonstration took place on 24th November, 1949, when some 1,500 person from all over the archipelago of the B.V.I. gathered together in Road Town. This sleepy seaside capital echoed with the marching feet of demonstrators and the instructions shouted by the organizers. The leaders were Theodolph H. Faulkner, Isaac G. Fonseca and Carlton L. De Castro. (See Pickering, Vernon A. Concise History of the British Virgin Islands p.72.)

The demonstrators marched through the street to the Commissioner’s office and presented a petition, which indicated their grievances against the political system and the manner in which the Presidency was being administered. The first portion of the document read:

“We, the people of the British Virgin Islands, theoretically a free people by reasons of the fact that we are supposed to be British subjects and citizens of the British Empire, are today in numbers assembled as a Demonstration of Protest against certain conditions under which we have hitherto to been forced to live. ...One of the purposes of this Demonstration today is for us to achieve a measure of political freedom for ourselves and the generation of the future.”

(Harrigan and Varlack, The Virgin Island Story) p.158.

The Demonstration of 1949 is indeed one of the most significant milestones in the history of the B.V.I., during this 20th Century. The tramp and shouts of the demonstration will echo forever down the ages in the destiny of this Archipelago Territory.

“In forty-nine, some challenged this decree: With placards they boldly marched through Road Town. They wanted the fruits of democracy! They demanded the spoils of real freedom for themselves and their own children to come.”

(Virgin Verses III, Sunlit Voices of Our Destiny, Political Pioneers, Lettsome Quincy) p.5.

History will do justice to recall that the mass Demonstration of 1949, proved to be the catalyst which set in train a series of political and constitutional developments which still has impact on the B.V.I. These include the Elections of 1950, which resulted in the restoration of the Legislative Council in 1950, and subsequent General Elections, including of course that which was held as recently as May, 1999. This mass gathering also set the stage for monumental political decisions, such as *the B.V.I. to remain outside the West Indian Federation* in 1958 and the introduction of the Ministerial System of Government in 1967. Such political advances also resulted in general progress, economically and socially.

The late Theodolph Faulker could be regarded as the ‘Father of Modern Politics in the B.V.I.’ How ironical though! This writer vividly recalled many years ago, Mr. Faulker sitting unnoticed in the Sir Olva Georges Plaza amidst adults, students and children. How sad and unbelievable that they did not recognize this political pioneer who was among them. Maybe they were not aware of his sterling contributions to B.V.I. politics. However, this writer will never forget this ‘scene of obliviousness’: For the last twenty five years and more, this author has reiterated time again the

importance of history. The latter contributes such aspects as national consciousness, civic pride, cultural awareness and patriotism to a people.

It is anticipated that B.V. Islanders will commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the mass Demonstration of 24th November, 1999, in grand style, as it befits such an auspicious occasion. This could be done in many ways, such as speeches by legislators, issuing of stamps and interviews by surviving pioneer demonstrators and a re-enactment of the March.

In historical perspective, the Demonstration of 1949 and the Election which followed in 1950 are so crucial to the history and development of the B.V.I., that both events should be made more permanent and visible. These events are rather closely related as could be discerned. It was the Demonstration that brought about the first Election of the 20th Century. For example, the street leading to the Legislative Building could be named *Demonstration Street* while the area surrounding the same building could be termed *Restoration Plaza*. It is most crucial also that the true significance of this Demonstration is clearly understood, appreciated and forever etched in the consciousness of British Virgin Islanders.



Left: Capt. Carlton Leslie E. deCastro, OBE
10th July 1915 - 1st August 1991

Middle: Isaac Glanville Fonseca, OBE
23rd July 1923 - 17th May 1995

Right: Theodoph Halburn Faulkner
18th August 1914 - 30th July 1989

The Spirit
of Greatness
Remembered

*“The evil that men do lives after them.
The good is oft interred with their bones”*

- Julius Caesar
Shakespeare

Theodolph Halburn Faulkner

The late Theodolph Halburn Faulkner, a man of indomitable spirit, a giant, a man who dared to dream of a better way of life for the Virgin Islands and its people, engaged all of his energy in so doing.

As the first elected official to represent Anegada he served through eight stormy years seeking redress for his people on that remote island.

Faulkner, perceiving the need to create a government of the people and for the people staged a demonstration with the able support of his colleagues G. Fonseca, C. De Castro and the people of the Virgin Islands who came from near and far to stand behind him on that memorable morning of November 24, 1949. Consequently, the Legislative Council and a stable government was returned to the Island.

Assigning a physician to the island of Anegada and selecting a nurse to be trained was of paramount importance to Faulkner. Nurse Norman later rose to the position of head nurse at Peebles Hospital.

Traveling far from his homeland, he gleaned many worthwhile ideas and implemented them in his efforts to create a better life for himself and the people of Anegada. He built the first cistern (water catchment) and his home of cement and later designed and constructed a 'tank boat' that would transport live fish over long distances to market. The paved roads on Anegada were built out of the monies he fought for while representing the Island. Erecting a fountain to the memory of his friend and colleague the late Sir Olva Georges was initiated by Faulkner and now stands in the center of the Sir Olva Georges Plaza in Road Town.

Moreover, over the years, never tiring in his quest to serve his people, he was actively engaged in seeking positive changes. Prior to his death on July 30, 1989, he spent most of his time dictating letters to the Hon. Chief Minister bringing to attention the need to protect the fishing grounds of these islands. They were systematically being depleted by outsiders. Fishing was at one time the lifeblood of all Virgin islanders and is still that of the Anegadian. He further requested that a Police Patrol be put in place to patrol our waters.

Several months before his death, a backhoe, a gift to Anegada by the Canadian Government, was finally delivered to its destination through his persistent efforts.

In short Theodolph Halburn Faulkner gave of himself to his country and its people – the greatest gift anyone can give – but received no accolades nor laurels in his lifetime. However, Government over the years saw fit to honour many less deserving. The time has come for the Government of the Virgin Islands to rectify this oversight, by rising to the occasion and inscribing the name of Theodolph Halburn Faulkner on the first Government building to be erected on Anegada, his home and birth place.

BVI Beacon December 21st, 1998 Pg. 17

Respectfully submitted by the Children of Theodolph Faulkner.

Profiles of the Leaders

Theodolph Halburn Faulkner

by Shirley Walters-Faulkner

THEODOLPH HALBURN FAULKNER was born August 18, 1914 on the island of Anegada to Withmore and Marie Faulkner

Theodolph was a vociferous reader, aggressive, bold and courageous. Most often he could be found engaged in heated discussions over conditions in his island home. He had a gift for debate and used it well.

Education on the island had remained in a state of upheaval due to the inadequate travelling facilities. Medical service to the outer islands was a visit by the Doctor for the administration of inoculations against communicable diseases once a year. This was the practice since 1850, placing Anegada on the bottom rung of the ladder— a place she would occupy for many years to come. But Anegada from 1780 onwards through her exports of cotton had once played a very productive and prominent role in the era of prosperity in these islands.

Her shark industry had been forced to close down in 1929 due to the absence of managerial skills and Faulkner and several other Anegadians, left with no other recourse,

decided to go abroad in search of employment. In 1935 they left for the Netherlands Antilles to work at the Largo oil refinery in Aruba.

At the onset of the Second World War, the men were sent home. Faulkner, however, went to Curacao and then on to the Dominican Republic. He returned years later and found conditions on Anegada had remained unchanged.

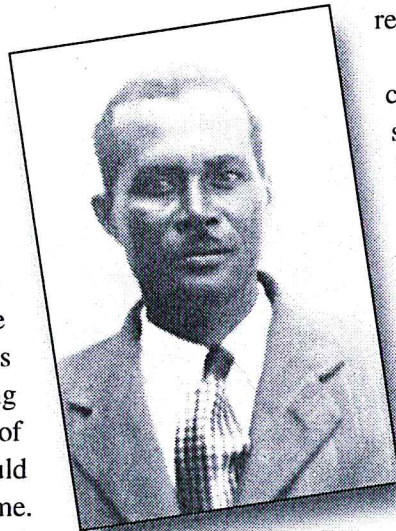
What would trigger a degree of change in the economy and create some positive growth in the Island's social development?

Demands for reform had been initiated when the Royal Commissioner (Moyne) was sent to investigate British West Indian conditions in 1938.

The outbreak of the war had created jobs for people everywhere. Tortola's livestock industry flourished and her economy experienced a turning point. This spurt of economic growth however, did not affect Anegada. She remained to the north contemplating her fate.

Observing the situation, Faulkner dispatched letters to the Government but they were ignored.

Nevertheless, fate - the innocent bystander - dealt a hand. An incident (impinging on a



delicate situation in Faulkner's family which was perceived as an inhuman act by the Commissioner), led him to initiate a series of events catapulting the British Virgin Islands into politics that over time, would set these islands on a path to self-government.

Perceiving that the catalyst for change lay in awareness of the value of political action in the solution of problems, he launched a series of meetings giving voice to the many issues not addressed by Government. Alluding to policies that were not on the drawing board, he asked the people of the Virgin Islands to awaken, and stand together demanding changes in Government.

The people answered the call and came from the countryside in great numbers; some astride their donkeys, others on mules—the only transportation available. Most of them were living in thatched houses; they too felt that change was critical.

Glanville Fonseca and Carlton de Castro after sitting for many nights near the steps of Benjamin O'Neal's building on Main Street waiting to see if Faulkner would be arrested, joined him; each consecutive night the crowd doubled.

As the meetings gathered momentum, Commissioner Cruickshank feeling threatened, issued an ultimatum—no more meetings were to be held under the Bungalow or anywhere else on the island, and anyone found in violation, would be remanded to Her Majesty's Prison. This was the first threat levelled at the leaders of the Virgin Islands' Political Movement.

There were no laws on the books prohibiting the right to assemble. However, any repercussions that could have developed were stemmed by divine intervention in the person of Father Chiron William Forsythe who invited the three men to hold their meetings in the St. George's Schoolhouse. The idea although met with reluctance at first, was

finally agreed upon. The market place fell into silence, never again to be disturbed by Faulkner's "My People", de Castro's "Ladies and Gentlemen, these are true facts," and Fonseca's "My Friends".

Faulkner's courage, determination and a sense of humour won the respect of the people. On November 24, 1949 beginning with a religious service conducted at the Old Recreation Grounds 1,500 residents of Tortola bearing banners assembled and moved down main street, stopping at the Bungalow (where Faulkner had stood alone at dusk with his lantern, voicing the many grievances against the lack of Government policies) and on to Government House.

His tremendous contribution, however, was to have made the people aware that their destiny lay in their hands; only they could make those decisions that would affect their

Faulkner's **courage,**
determination and a
sense of humour won the
respect of the people.

lives. He raised the people's consciousness to the level whereby the Government of Britain was persuaded to give them a Constitution.

Faulkner initiating the first political movement—the main thrust for reform in the British Virgin Islands, had opened a portfolio of ideas—unleashing a number of aspirants who would over the years pursue their political ambition with zeal.

On 20th November 1950, the first Legislative Council of the Virgin Islands sat. Two years later Glanville Fonseca a member of the Council was elected to represent the Virgin Islands in the General Legislative Council in the Leeward Islands.

In 1954 at the close of the second election, after four long years in his struggle. Theodolph

PROFILES OF THE LEADERS

Halburn Faulkner was elected as representative to the Fifth District. He would serve eight stormy years, seeking redress for the people of Anegada. His dauntless spirit had established

that change can be wrought if we have the will and courage to do so.

Capt. Carlton Leslie E. deCastro, OBE

Member of the Legislative Council 1950-1954

by Iris deCastro

CARLTON LESLIE E. deCASTRO the first child of Rufus de Castro of St. Thomas and Frances Willard deCastro of Anegada, was born in Tortola, British Virgin Islands on 10th July, 1915. He died on 1st August, 1991. Among his many contributions were his significant input with respect to the economic progress of his country as a boat captain and to its social life as a sportsman and civic leader.

Mr. deCastro who began his early education on Tortola was a graduate of the Antigua Grammar School.

On return to the Virgin Islands from Antigua, his long romance with boats and the sea began, and for fifty years he would plough the seas of the Virgin Islands and the Eastern Caribbean, rendering an invaluable service to the people. Notable crafts owned by Captain deCastro were the *Car*, *Daisy D*, *Bells of St. Mary*, *Tropic Star*, *Tinly Lou*, *Pall of Mine*, *Lake St. John*, *Anna Marie* and *Baby Yvette*.

He was instrumental in the placement of a flashing beacon on Ginger Island as well as the erection of another on Road Reef in Road Town Harbour to aid sailors as they navigated the Virgin Islands waters at night.

Mr. deCastro, an avid cricketer, was exposed to the game of cricket whilst at grammar school in Antigua. On his return to the Virgin Islands, he contributed to the survival of cricket over the years. On many occasions, he transported team members to other islands in the region to allow them to become exposed to the sport as well as to participate in exhibition games.

Carlton de Castro is also remembered for his role as a Boy Scout leader, and is credited too with having introduced the Scout Movement to the Virgin Islands upon his return home from grammar school in Antigua. He was a very serious scout-master who took great pleasure in training youngsters to become good scouts. On several occasions he rewarded the youths for their efforts by taking them on expeditions "down island." This change gave them an opportunity to experience another island and a chance to meet and interact with other young men.

Carlton de Castro worked tirelessly to keep the traditional August festival alive in the Virgin Islands for many years.

There is no doubt that Mr. de Castro's greatest contribution - an act that has left an



indelible mark on his country - was the vital part he played in the 1949 Protest demonstrations which led to greater local representation through the re-sitting in the Virgin Islands of the Legislative Council in 1950. He served in the Council from 1950 to 1954.

When asked why he became involved, Mr. de Castro often explained that in the early years (1940's) the Virgin Islands was a member of the

for fifty years
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to the people

Leeward Islands Federation which comprised Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla and Montserrat. The Federation had its seat in Antigua and was led by a Governor who resided on that island. A Commissioner, appointed by the British Government, handled the affairs of the Virgin Islands and that representative resided at Government House, Tortola.

However, it was the general belief that under the existing administration little or no progress was seen for Virgin Islanders, and the country as a whole. In fact, due to prevailing economic conditions, many residents were forced to travel to neighbouring islands and, in some cases,

further afield to seek employment. With only a few industries, the economy worsened. As a result, B. V. Islanders became disgruntled with their living conditions and cried out.

Mr. de Castro became a co-leader with Messrs. Faulkner and Fonseca of a demonstration, the first of its kind, against the then Commissioner, Cruickshank, demanding change. Hundreds of residents from throughout

the British Virgin Islands marched on Government House and stood up for change. While it was an orderly march, it was one that sent a strong message,

thus, changing the course of the Virgin Islands. What followed was the re-institution (in 1950) of the Constitution which was abolished in 1902. That tremendous move was just the start of things to come, as is evidenced by what we celebrate today.

Carlton de Castro, a true leader, a pioneer of change and, most importantly, a humanitarian and a loving father, with a great love for his fellowman and his country was married to Anna Louise Schouten of Anguilla. He will always be remembered for his contributions to the place he called home - the Virgin Islands.

I. Glanville Fonseca

Member of the Legislative Council 1950 – 1971

by the Editor-in-Chief

MR. ISAAC GLANVILLE FONSECA was born on 23rd July, 1923 in Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands.

He was the third of four children and the only son of Florence Creque Fonseca and David Fonseca of Road Town.

He attended grammar school in St. Kitts, and after school he spent some time in St. Thomas at Bournefield.

Inspired by his father the late David Fonseca, I. G. Fonseca became interested in Politics at an early age. In 1949 he joined Theodolph Faulkner and Carlton deCastro and became one of the Leaders of the 1949 protest and mass demonstration, which influenced the re-establishment of the Sitting of the Legislative Council in the Virgin Islands.

I.G. Fonseca was an articulate and able speaker, who eventually emerged as chief spokesperson of the Leadership coalition during the prelude to the demonstration and subsequent election, which followed in 1950.

The political records list Mr. Fonseca as a member of the Legislative Council for five consecutive terms. He was first elected in 1950 when

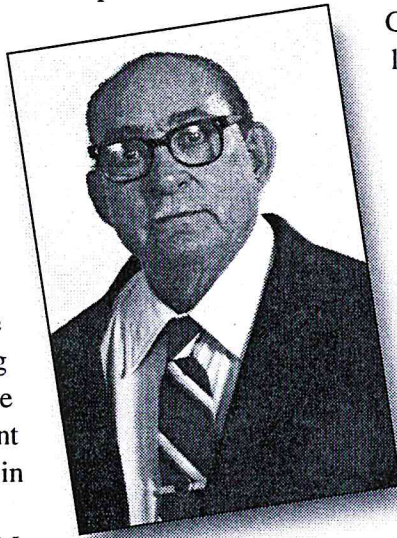
representative government was restored and finally in 1967 at the inception of the Ministerial System. During 1954-1963 he served the Fourth District, the Second District from 1963-1967 and the Fifth District from 1967-1971. A total of twenty-one (21) years were spent in service to the people of the Territory.

An outspoken and dedicated politician, I. G. Fonseca was a champion of many causes for his people. He was chosen as a member of the Constitutional Conference Delegations to England in 1959 and again in 1966. He strongly supported the Constitutional advancement, which led to the Ministerial System.

In addition to his work as a politician, Glannie, as he was affectionately called, operated a radio repair shop in Road Town, for many years.

He often started his political campaign with the popular song "Dear Hearts and Gentle People. I love those dear hearts and gentle people who live in my hometown. I know those dear hearts and gentle people will never, ever let me down".

Mr. Fonseca died on 17th May, 1995. He was married to Myrna Gonsalves of Antigua and had they eight (8) children.



Reflections of I. Glanville Fonseca

By I. Glanville Fonseca, OBE

Breaking the Ground

MY POLITICAL CAREER might be said to have begun when I had the good fortune to have been chosen from among my fellow countrymen in Tortola to be the delegate from the BVI to attend the Caribbean Labour Congress in Kingston, Jamaica in September 1947. Mr. Chaldwell was acting on behalf of the BVI Pro-Legislative Committee in New York with its founder, Mr. Hope R. Stevens. The meeting of the CLC was to be held immediately before the official Conference, to which the Secretary of State for the Colonies,

Marryshow of Grenada. I also met some of the other principal figures in the labour movement, such as V.C. Bird of Antigua and R. Bradshaw of St. Kitts.

The overwhelming reason for the meeting of the CLC comprising the Caribbean Labour Leaders was to consult among themselves and to consider and formulate proposals which would be put forward at the West Indian conference called by the Secretary of State. When I returned to Tortola, after the CLC meeting, I was filled with new ideas and enthusiastic about doing something which would move the BVI forward politically. The political path seemed the only way to bring about changes and improvements, although I was fully aware during my stay in Jamaica that constitutional reform alone could not bring

I was filled with **new ideas** and enthusiastic about **doing something** which would **move** the BVI forward politically

Creech Jones, had invited Caribbean political leaders to attend and at which they would consider the question of whether a Federation of the British West Indies should be formed with the ultimate goal of Dominion status within the British Empire. Mr. Stevens, a native of East End, Tortola and a resident of New York City, was one of the founding members of the Barbados Labour Party. Through that means, he was in contact with most of the leading figures in the CLC and the Caribbean political arena. Mr. Stevens was also in contact with current thinking of the time on the democratic movement and aware of the organizational and other efforts being made to improve the lot of under-privileged West Indians.

At the meeting of CLC which was held in Kingston, Jamaica, I met many of the leading West Indian politicians, including Norman Manley of Jamaica, Grantley Adams of Barbados, Albert Gomes of Trinidad and Albert

economic benefits. I became aware that from as early as 1945, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Oliver Stanley, had re-affirmed that the basic aim of the British policy was to quicken the progress of all colonial people towards the ultimate goal of self-government. The policy statement was in the Atlantic Charter signed in 1941 by Roosevelt and Churchill. These aims and ideas were not idle words, but were now being translated into action in various ways; and there was much talk among the delegates from individual territories about constitutional reform and the democratization of the electoral process, quite apart from the parallel idea of West Indian Federation.

In 1947, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech Jones called the West Indian conference of leading political figures in the Caribbean to consider how best to formulate a federal constitution. In the meanwhile, he allowed for the individual

PROFILES OF THE LEADERS

territories to pursue their own particular progress towards self government.

The conclusions of the West Indian conference were, in effect, that a Standing Closer Association Committee should be set up to prepare the detailed planning for a Federation of the West Indian colonies and an economic committee to deal with planning of regional economic affairs.

Among the resolutions accepted at the conference held in Kingston was that each unit territory, on entering the Federation or otherwise, would have the right to pursue its own goals for constitutional reform and self-determination. The Standing Closer Association Committee later interpreted that the acceptance of this principle also applied to island territories not entering the Federation. The British Virgin Islands, though not one of the territories which entered or even intended to enter the Federation, was, nevertheless, one of the beneficiaries from the expansion of this principle.

The Foundation is Laid

In 1954 the Territory was divided into districts. In 1958, I proposed a ministerial form of government and a constitutional delegation went to London in 1959 to discuss my proposals on a ministerial form of government. The delegation consisted of Administrator Allsebrooke, I.G. Fonseca, Leslie Malone and H.R. Penn.

In 1964 I again proposed the ministerial form of government. The British Government appointed a Constitutional Commissioner in the

person of Mary Proudfoot. After she submitted her report, a delegation went to London in 1966. The delegation consisted of Administrator Staveley, I.G. Fonseca, Dr. Osborne, Lavity Stoutt and Ivan Dawson. The delegation was led by the Administrator. It should be noted that I was a member on both delegations.

In 1967, the ministerial form of government became a reality. A Legislative Council Chamber was built, giving the members the opportunity to debate affairs of the territory in a Council Chamber instead of a school room.

One of my major contributions to the ministerial system was in the area of finance. When I requested that the Chief Minister insist that the Administrator empower him to read the Budget Speech and pilot the annual budget through the House, this was the first step towards the Chief Minister becoming Minister of Finance.

I have great praise for our present Chief Minister, the Ministers of Government and members of the Legislative Council for the excellent and successful way in which they have operated the ministerial system of government over the past twenty-five years and the considerable economic growth and development which has taken place in the Territory, which is largely as a result of good and stable government and wise leadership.

*Reprinted from Challenge and Change, 1992,
the publication of the Twenty Fifth Anniversary
of the Ministerial System*

Commentary on Isaac Glanville Fonseca

Mr. I.G. Fonseca, an accomplished campaigner, served in the BVI Legislature from 1951 to 1971. During this time he held the position of Member for Communications, 1957 to 1960, and in 1967 became the first Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Fonseca was educated at the St. Georges School in Road Town, and then went on to St. Kitts Grammar School. He captained a passenger boat in Trinidad and Tobago. In the mid 1940's he returned to the BVI and took over the family business in lower Road Town.

Mr. Fonseca was influenced by the Atlantic Charter which was signed by President Roosevelt and Sir Winston Churchill. His political activism led him into demonstrations with others. One such demonstration was to oppose the closing of the Senior School in 1946. In 1947, he attended the Caribbean Labour Congress in Kingston, Jamaica and there met with such West Indian greats as Norman Manley, Grantley Adams, Albert Gomes, Maury Show, V. C. Bird and Robert L. Bradshaw.

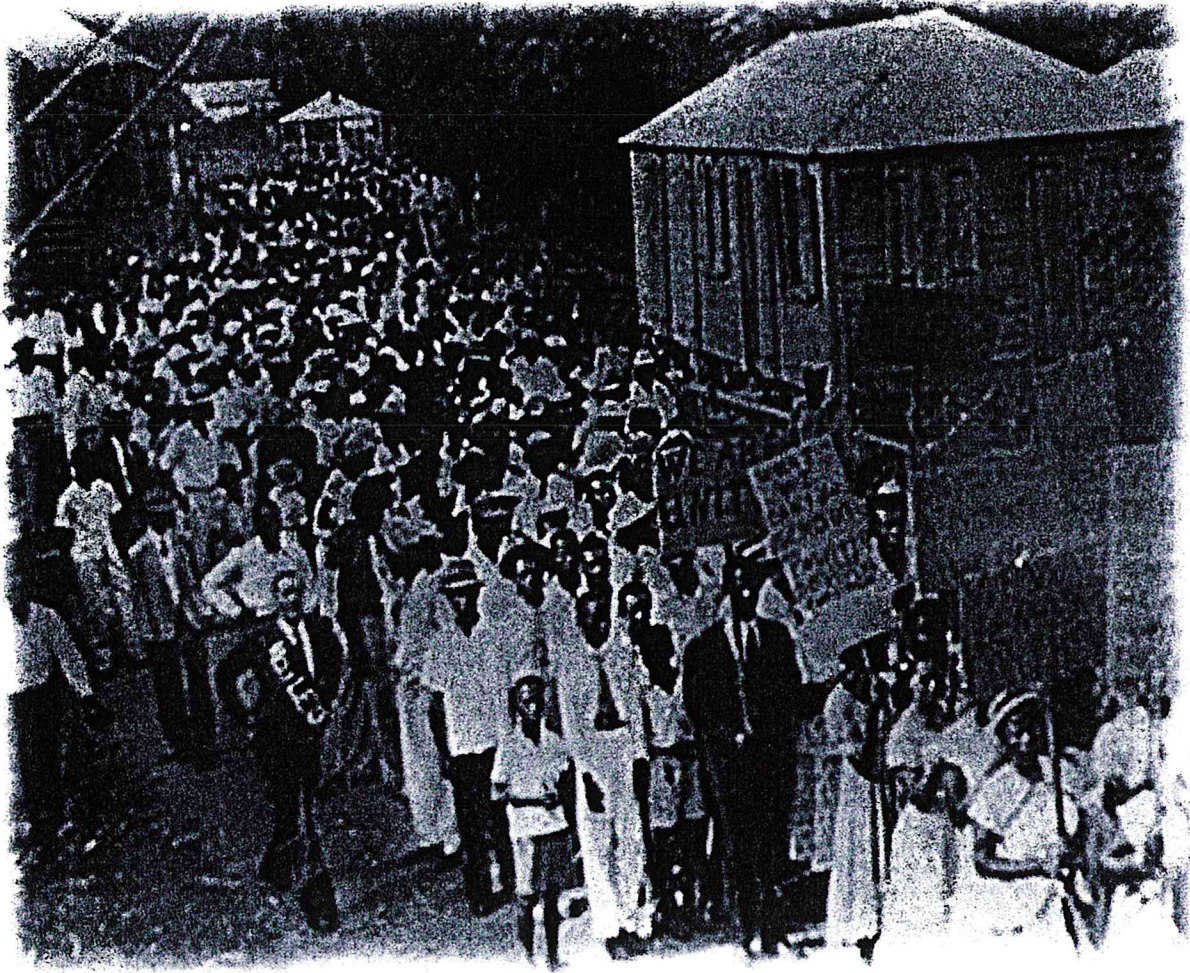
In 1949 at the tender age of 26 he along with Carlton de Castro and others joined with Mr. Theodore Faulkner to organize the demonstration that brought constitutional change in the form of the restoration of local representation. The demonstration followed a series of political meetings and it involved not only bringing citizens from all over the country but it also brought in news reporters from outside the territory.

Mr. Fonseca met with the Chairman of the Caribbean Commission to discuss a closer union between the British and United States Virgin Islands.

He ran for and won a seat in the first Legislative Council thus beginning his long career as a public figure. In 1951 he was appointed visiting Justice of the Prisons and Justice of the Peace. In 1958 he proposed the Ministerial form of Government for these islands.

Mr. Fonseca's total period of political life pointed towards organisation. At the start he teamed up with de Castro and Penn and formed the Progressive League. Later he worked with Mr. Arnando Scatliffe as the United Two; they were later joined by Dr. Q.W. Osborne to form the United Three. This later grew into the Peoples Own Party (POP) which coined the glorious phrase 'Pop on Top.' As the leader of the POP he became the first Leader of the Opposition. The high point of the People's Own Party was a National Convention at the Carib Cinema at which officers were elected and Mr. Fonseca was formally elected leader.

*by Louis Potter, Chief Physical Planning Officer and Chairman
221 of the Public Service Association, was an ardent fan of Mr. Fonseca.*



1949 March