

PH0502499

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED AUG 15 1977

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Venus Hill

AND/OR COMMON

Mafolie Observatory, Venus Pillar

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

No. 24B Estate Mafolie

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Charlotte Amalie

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1

STATE

U.S. Virgin Islands

CODE
78

COUNTY

St. Thomas

CODE

0900

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Arthur Witty

STREET & NUMBER

No 24B Mafolie

CITY, TOWN

Charlotte Amalie

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virgin Islands

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Government House

CITY, TOWN

Charlotte Amalie

STATE

Virgin Islands

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Virgin Islands Inventory

DATE

June 1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Virgin Islands Planning Office

CITY, TOWN

St. Thomas

STATE

U.S. Virgin Islands

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A geodetic monument marks the exact site of the 1882 St. Thomas observations of the transit of Venus. The monument is a 13.5' high obelisk with a pyramid cap constructed of rubble masonry covered with a fine sand stucco. The original instrument station, a 31" x 29.5" marble tablet with four stabilizing holes, has been placed on the north face of the obelisk and contains the following inscriptions:

Passagem de Venus
Dezembro 6 the 1882
Commissao Brazileria
Barao the Teffe
Calheiros da Graca
Indio do Brazil
Late 18° - 21' - 3" n
Longe 21° - 45' - 37" 0
 (Rio de Janeiro)
JAH Schlesinger
St. Thomas, D.W.I.

The original site, a cleared eminence was modified during World War I to accommodate a gun mount. Later the site was incorporated into the south terrace of a residence. The obelisk is well maintained, in excellent condition with the exception of a few small Portland cement patches.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The site is significant as the location of a major astronomical station used during the 1882 international observations of the transit of Venus. A transit of Venus occurs when the planet passes in front of the sun's disk and is visible as a small dark spot in front of the sun. Transits of Venus occurred in 1761, 1769, 1874, and 1882. The next transits of Venus will occur in 2004 and 2012. Transits of Venus have been used to fix geographic positions and in attempts to determine solar parallax or what is equivalent the mean distance between the earth and the sun.

The 1882 Brazilian expedition to St. Thomas was one of a coordinated international effort that had begun during the 1872 transit. The Brazilians established their station of the heights above Charlotte Amalie with an exceptional field of view. Observations and calculations were accomplished by Barao de Tefte, Captain Francisco Calheiros da Graca, and Lieutenant Arthur Indio do Brasil. A definite report of the expedition and its results was compiled and published by the Imperial Observatory of Rio do Janeiro in 1887. Because of its importance the specific site of the observation was marked by a masonry obelisk.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Annales de l'Observatoire Imperial de Rio de Janeiro, Tom 3
(Rio de Janeiro: 1887) pp 35-180.
2. McGuire, James William, Geographic Dictionary of the Virgin Islands of the United States, USC & GS Special Publication No. 103, (Washington: 1925 p. 193.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

18° 21' 12" North Latitude

65° 55' 46" West Longitude

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The site is located at the above referenced coordinate on a small eminence 807 feet high, immediately north of Charlotte Amalie in Estate Mafolie on what is now the south terrace of a residence. The overall site is 20' x 2-' square.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N/A			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Virgin Islands Hitoric Survey

Annie Hillary, Jane Mrmion, Thomas W. Richards

ORGANIZATION

Virgin Islands Planning Office

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 2606

TELEPHONE
(809) 774-1730

CITY OR TOWN

St. Thomas

STATE

Virgin Islands

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL XX

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Thomas R. Blabe

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director of Planning

DATE 5 August 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Robert B. Rettig

DATE 2/17/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGIST AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles...

DATE 2.8.78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER