

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED JUN 2 1976
DATE ENTERED JUL 19 1976

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
* * Hassel Island
AND/OR COMMON
Orkanshullet, Hurricanehole

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
Charlotte Amalie
STATE U.S. Virgin Islands
VICINITY OF
X
CODE 78
COUNTY St. Thomas
CODE 0900
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input 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 checked="" 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
Multiple Ownership
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Recorder of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER
No. 18 Kongens Gade
CITY, TOWN
Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas
STATE
U.S. Virgin Islands

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
U.S. Virgin Islands Inventory of Historic Places
DATE
May, 1976
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Virgin Islands Planning Office
CITY, TOWN
Charlotte Amalie, U.S.V.I.
STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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

The Garrison House

The Garrison House is a two-story hip roof rectangular pile measuring approximately 38' x 26'. The 27" thick exterior walls are constructed of rubble masonry, most of which consists of the local "blue-bitch" stone stuccoed with a projecting watertable, highly refined Georgian period molded brick cornice, and brick quoining at the corners. The front (east) facade has a large double entrance door centered in the wall, set into a recessed round arched opening which is lined with yellow brick. A flat tympanum is created above the entrance by a molded brick shelf and cornice strip which extends the full width of the arch. A vertical pair of shortened round arched windows flank the entrance. The window openings are lined with brick which extends vertically to form rectangular panels above the arches. There are projecting brick lug sills and all openings are fitted with copper clad shutters.

The end walls have a pair of similar size arched windows at the second floor level while the rear wall has three windows, all with the same brick detailing as used in the front facade.

The Garrison House is surrounded by a 10' wide by 4' deep dry moat bounded by a 27" thick rubble and brick wall. The front wall is surmounted by eight 27" x 27" brick columns which have molded bases, capital bands, crown molds and pyramidal tops, and are notched to a wood palisade fence. Sections of the rails for this fence remain. The side walls had one such column in line with the front facade, and a series of 6" square posts, the rear wall of the dry moat is set into the slope of the hill behind the house and at some points is at grade. The house is reached by an enclosed flight of ten masonry and brick steps to the level of the top of the wall and then across a fixed brick bridge to the central entrance door.

Fort Willoughby

The remains of this battery consist of a modified hornwork with gun platforms at either end, a 30' x 18' barracks and magazine with a triangular cistern attached to the south face, and the ruins of a free standing 24' x 18' cookhouse north of the barracks.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1801, 1808

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Lieut. Colonel Charles Shipley

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The southern third of Hassel Island contains well preserved military fortifications constructed by British forces when twice occupying St. Thomas during the Napoleonic Wars. The structures are of significance for they are probably the only physical monuments remaining on United States territory built by the British during this period. The first occupation occurred from April 2, 1801 and lasted until February 16, 1802. The second was for a longer period: December 25, 1807 to April 5, 1815. The British fortified and posted Hassel Island during both periods, building harbor defenses and support facilities.

The fortification of Hassel Island was ordered by Lieut. General Thomas Trigge who in a letter to the war office dated April 13, 1801 reported "As the town is considered to be particular unhealthy and the Fort is situated at one of the extremities; I have thought it necessary, as well as on this account, as to afford greater protection to the place to order the Post to be established on the Peninsula which forms the West Side of the Bay; and have directed barracks to be erected capable of containing two hundred men, to be built by contract and completed by the 28 of the next month."¹

Construction responsibility was given to Lieut. Colonel Charles Shipley who on July 16, 1801 reported the estimates for constructing the works and stated "the whole is very nearly completed..." Among Shipley's estimates for the works included: "...Five barracks to contain forty-eight men each...., Barracks calculated to contain two companies, and eight Subalterns..... Fort Shipley, including the Officers, and Men's Guard House, Store Rooms, Casemated-Magazine, Flag Staff, Palaades...Erecting a Battery on the High ground to the South of the Peninsula for Two 24 pounds heavy..."²

¹Letter: General Thomas Trigge to War Office, April 13, 1801 WO 1/90-5861
Public Record Office, London.

²Letter: Lieut. Colonel Charles Shipley to Crew, July 16, 1801, WO 55/943-5952
Public Record Office, London.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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ITEM NUMBER #3

PAGE one

The Virgin Islands Government, Department of Conservation and Cultural Affairs has initiated discussions with property owners of Hassel Island with the intention of acquiring all or part of the proposed historic district. The Government intends to establish an historic park, restore the structures and initiate a program of historic and nature interpretation.

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Property Owners include:

Mr. Henry Herd
c/o Mrs. Mary Herd
306A Belvue Drive
Belleville, Illinois

Isidore and Ralph Paiewonsky
P.O. Box 750
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00801

Michael Paiewonsky
P.O. Box 750
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00801

Henry Creque IX
P.O. Box 328
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00801

Virgin Islands Government
Department of Conservation and Cultural Affairs
P.O. Box 4340
St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00801

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PAGE TWO

The hornwork rests on a battered scarp which acts as the traditional curtain and extends to the sea along the east and south faces of the fort. The scarp is surrounded on two sides by a masonry rubble breastwork in the form of a low parapet wall, which in all probability originally reached the height of 3' or more and was provided with embrasures for the cannon. The breastwork terminates with a gun platform at the northeast corner where it joins the wall of the barracks, and at an elevated half bastion with gun platform at the southwest extremity where it joins the rock face of the hill to the west. The floor of the terreplein is stone.

The one story barracks and magazine is north of the hornwork and is reached by three shallow flights of stone stairs. The rubble masonry structure is divided into three rooms: a 7' 6" x 8' 4" store room; a 5' x 7' 5" magazine with a vaulted ceiling in the north section; and a 16' x 15' barracks in the southern half. Walls are masonry rubble with brick linings at door and window openings and brick quoins at the corners. The interior walls and the vaulted ceiling were stuccoed and the exterior walls left uncovered. All of the openings are segmental arches with no applied decoration. The roof is gone but there are remains of a wood structural system for a flat roof, probably brick. A triangular cistern, the top of which is slightly higher than the floor of the barracks, is attached to the south wall with stuccoed battered walls extending to the terreplein below.

The ruins of a one-story masonry rubble, with basement, flat roofed cookhouse are located approximately 30' north of the barracks. Three of the four walls remain. There are also remnants of a stone staircase leading to the sea between these two buildings.

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Cowell's Battery

Cowell's Battery is located at the top of the southern most hill on the island with a commanding view of the entrance to St. Thomas harbor. The battery is unusual in plan, being two equal circles intersecting to form a "figure 8". The battery is entered from the west by a short flight of stone stairs, to the south of which is a stone cistern. The floors of the two partial circles are composed of two concentric circles in each section, the inner circle being rubble and the outer ring paving block. The parapet wall is 5' high on the interior and slopes away from the center to grade, which varies from 10' to 15'. The parapet is masonry rubble with a brick coping and is stuccoed on the exterior face. There are no indications of embrasures cut into the wall but they may exist under the stucco, since the battery was rebuilt at least once. There is a semi-circular bastion along the south facade of the battery at the point where the two circles join. A mast and yard arm were installed in the center of the battery when the structure was used as a signal station.

There is also a mid-Gothic masonry, three-room house with hip roof and a concrete block, gabled roof rest room of recent construction. Neither of these structures is of architectural significance.

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The "Battery on the High Ground to the South of the Peninsula" was named Cowell's Battery or Fort Cowell in honor of Col. Cowell, regimental commander, who died during the occupation and was buried on Hassel Island. The battery's two 24 pounders commanded the south western approach to the harbor.

Shipley rebuilt a previously existing small Danish water battery at the harbor mouth and named it Fort Willoughly. Also constructed was Fort Shipley, a palasade and battery on the northwest extremity of the island that covered the haulover and secured the British from attack on the landward side of the peninsula.

The first occupation ended in February 1802 and the islands were re-stored to Denmark. St. Thomas was surrender again in December 1807 to a combined military and naval force commanded by Admiral Alexander Cochran and General Henry Bowyer. The British again established their base at Hassel Island. Nissen records "They left this time a whole regiment of about fifteen hundred men and to lodge these more barracks were built at Careeninghole."³ The previously constructed fortifications were restored and a Magazine (Garrison House) was constructed.

Fearful of French attack on West Indian shipping to Europe, the British assembled large convoys at St. Thomas under the shelter the guns of Fort Willoughly and Cowell's Battery. The August convoys were the largest, frequently numbering no less than four hundred merchant ships and escorts.

With the restoration of the islands to Denmark in 1815, the forts and batteries reverted to the peace time use enforcing port duties and customs. Vessels failing to pay the port duties were "brought to" by the guns of the batteries. "The gauntlet is sometimes run, however, to the no small interest and amusement of the residents upon the hills, but not for the vessel, should she ever return to St. Thomas."⁴

Cowell's Battery was converted into a government signal station with the construction of a mast and yardarm. A system of signals relying on four black spheres and flags was established to alert the town and notify pilots as to the nationality, type, point from which they are coming, of all vessels passing or entering the port. The signal stations was in operation until 1974.

³ Nissen, Carl Peter. "The Diary of Captain Carl Peter Nissen 1792-1837." Manuscript copy Pg. 2.

⁴Knox, John P. "A Historical Account of St. Thomas, W.I." New York Charles Scriber, 1852 Pg. 103.

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Hassel Island is named for the Hazzel family whose long ownership and association with the island can be traced from September 22, 1806 when James Hazzel Sr. and James Hazzel Jr. agreed that the "...Careening whaft with bridge shall belong to both of them with equal shares." James Hazzel Sr. deeded his interest in the "Hurricane Hole" to his son James Jr. on January 29, 1817. Hazzel decendents retained interests or rights on the island until March 24, 1943 when the widow of a later James Hazzel and other heirs sold their interest to Issac Paiewonsky.

Hassel Island's other historic names are Careeninghole, Orcanshullet, Orkan Island and Hurricanehole.

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PAGE six

Nissen, Carl Peter The Diary of Captain, Carl Peter Nissen 1792-1837.
Manuscript copy Public Library, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, U.S.
Virgin Islands.

Letter: General Thomas Trigge to War Office, April 13, 1807, WO 1/90-
5861, Public Record Office, London.

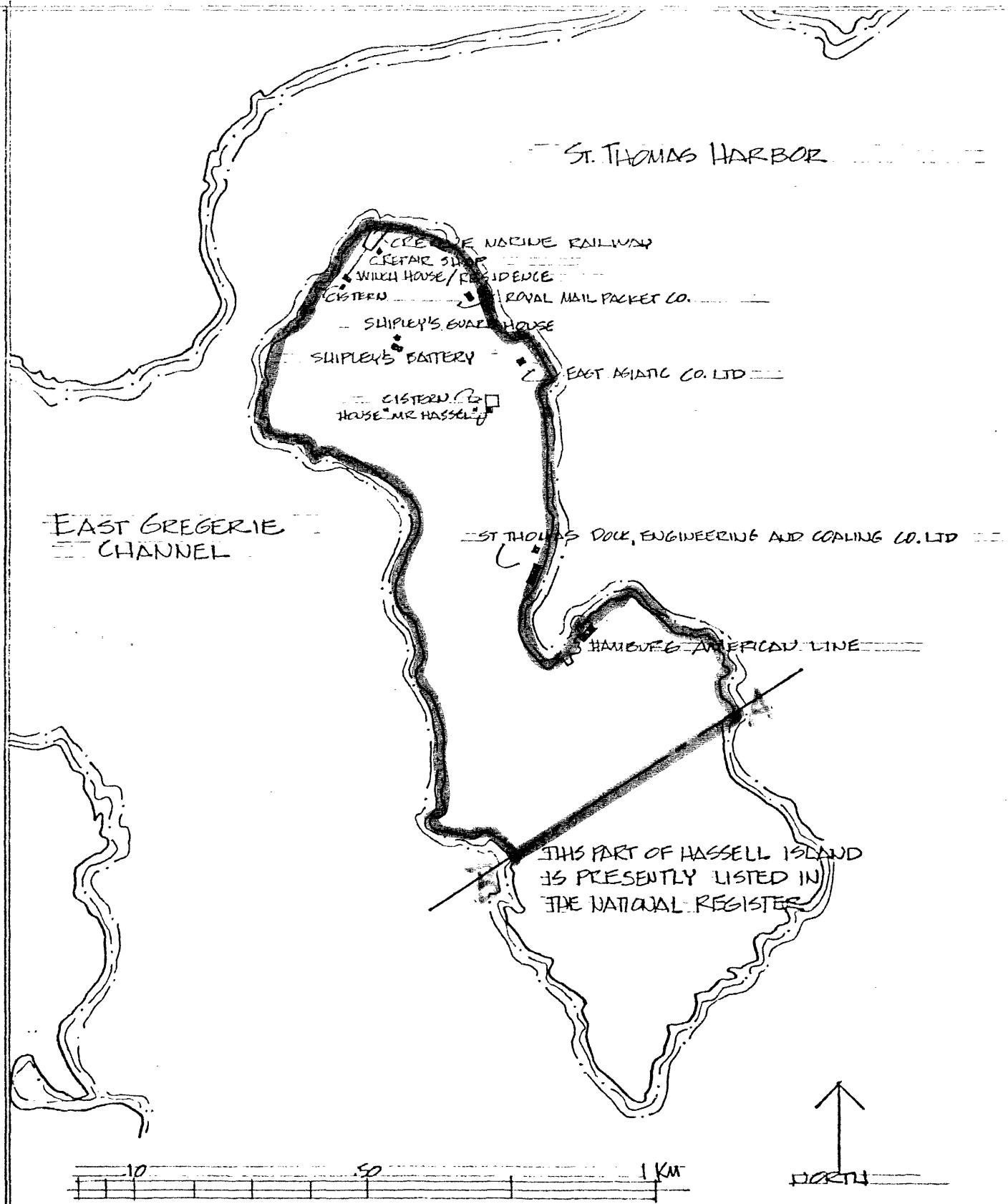
Letter: Lieut. Colonel Charles Shipley to Crew, July 16, 1801, WO
55/943-5952, Public Record Office, London.

Letter: Lieut. Colonel Charles Shipley to Lieut. General Morse, July 22,
1801, WO 55/943-5952, Public Record Office, London.

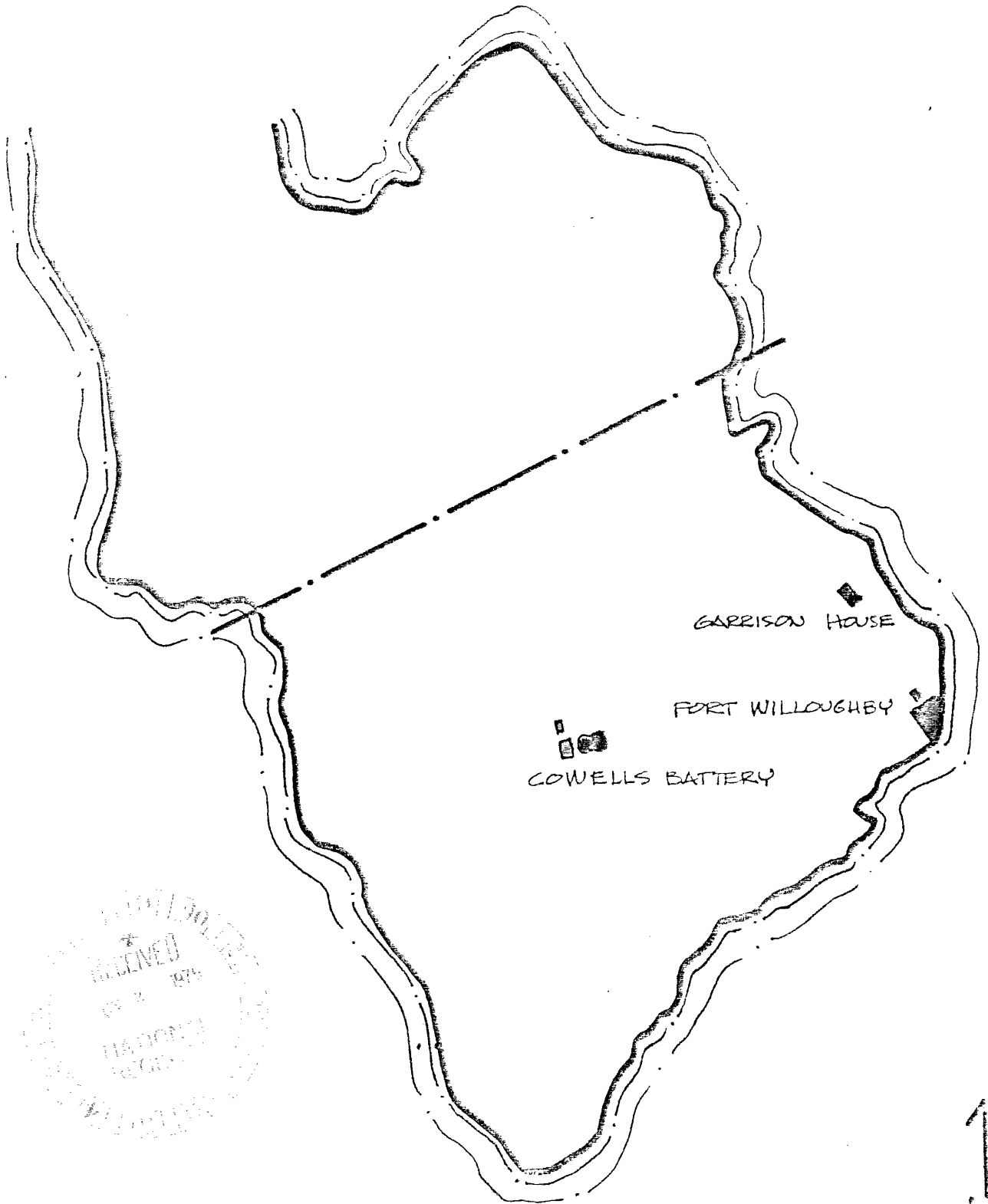
Letter: General Bowyer to Lord Viscount Castelereagh, December 27, 1807,
CO 318/31-7524, Public Record Office, London.

Hassel Island Deed File, Recorder of Deeds, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas,
U.S. Virgin Islands.

JUL 12 1978



NORTHERN HASSELL ISLAND - ST. THOMAS, U.S.V.I. - VIRGIN ISLANDS PLANNING OFFICE



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APR 2 1974
NATIONAL ARCHIVES

HASSEL ISLAND SITE PLAN

