

APPENDIX B
L'ESPERANCE HISTORIC DISTRICT

DESCRIPTION

L'Esperance plantation is located on the high ridge land of St. John 1/4 mile south of Centerline Road on the east border of Cruz Bay Quarter. It was a choice site for agricultural purposes for its soil conditions, permanent spring and relatively high precipitation. As a plantation site, it is a small compact unit with fairly large buildings, that include two horsemills, a factory, a free standing cistern, a storage building, a great house, a cook house, a service building, a cemetery, a stone bridge as well as retaining walls, staircases and stone fencing.

It was developed early in the 18th century and has retained features of design and construction in its standing remains of interest for their age and for their variance from the generally accepted layout of plantation sites. The tight grouping of the different units that comprise L'Esperance centered around the Great House is exceptional and predates the pattern that characterizes the normal layout. Architecturally it is notable for, the high quality of workmanship observable in the Great House and Service buildings masonry as well as the use of volcanic sandstone as a building material. This exotic material to the Virgin Islands was probably imported from the Leeward Islands. The masonry remains of the Great House, the south Horsemill and the Service Building are in a fair state of preservation. All other structures are badly deteriorated.

L'Esperance produced sugar in the early 1830's but in the 1840ties discontinued cultivation of cane.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

L'Esperance Historic District is significant for its unusual layout as a sugar plantation and for its association with Governor Eric Bredal, who in the 1720ties owned the plantation and who in 1719 affected the Danish colonization of St. John in the face of British opposition.

	Latitude	Longitude
Acreage 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ acres	18 ^o 20' 32"	64 ^o 45' 32"

There is no UTM references on any published maps of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

L'Esperance Historic District is bounded to the West by the trail that from Centerline Road leads to Sieben plantation starting at a point on the trail 250 feet northwest of the storm bridge across Fish Bay Gut and ending 450 feet due

JUL 23 1981

south of the same bridge, then in an easterly direction for 300 feet across the gut to the bed of the intermittent stream on the east side of the site then following the stream bed in an north and easterly direction for about 700 feet to a point about 225 feet northeast of the oxpound and then westerly to the starting point on the Centerline-Sieben trail. The boundaries include all parts of the historic resource and enclose a natural topographical area between the two streambeds to the west and east of the district.

CLASSIFIED STRUCTURE FIELD INVENTORY REPORT

NPS ORGANIZATION

REGION Southeast PARK/AREA NAME Virgin Islands Nat'l Park CODE NO. 5360

STRUCTURE NAME New Horsemill, L'Esperance Plantation STRUCTURE NO. H-5.1

ORDER OF SIGNIFICANCE: National State Local

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: On the L'Esperance trail to Mollendal, 1/4 mile south of Centerline Road

UTM REFERENCE: A CLASS VI LAND ACREAGE (if not part of a complex or district: _____ acres.
Zone Easting Northing

STRUCTURE: Type of, and composition: Circular raised earthfill platform retained by rubble masonry walls.

Physical Description: The circular horsemill has a diameter of 65'. It is located on the south and downhill side of the site. Approached from the north at grade level, the horsemill platform is supported and defined by retaining walls that on the south side reached heights of 20'. These walls have partially failed towards the south and west, but are still in evidence. Fragments of the foundations of the grinding mechanism are still apparent.

L'Esperance Plantation was brought under cultivation early and was a well-developed sugar plantation by the 1780s. As a plantation site, it is a small compact unit with fairly large building remains. The new horsemill probably dates from the early 19th century

Latitude 18°20'33" Longitude 64°45'32"

(continue on reverse if necessary)

PRESENT CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated
Ruins Unaltered Altered Original Site Moved

