

2010



Caribbean Volunteer Expeditions Newsletter

Curaçao NETHERLAND ANTILLES

The Caribbean Volunteer Expeditions conducted a site assessment of the ruins of a Dutch built battery near Lagun, Curacao, N.A. between February 1 –5, 2010. This work was conducted by a group of volunteers associated with the non-profit organization Caribbean Volunteer Expeditions (CVE). The intent of the debris removal was twofold: to better understand condition of the site and to provide better access to the students of the school group that has recently adopted the ruins as their own. Assessment of the remaining features that contributed to the battery or fortification was made in the field. It was determined that the character-defining elements have a fair degree of architectural integrity by retaining some of their original fabric and can easily be placed within the historic context of the island's early European development.

The investigation was carried out under the general supervision of Helen P. Ross, architectural historian. Ms. Ross was assisted in the field by CVE members Deborah Joy, archaeologist, Robert Hibschan, and Adrian Ross. Ms. Joy oversaw the archaeological data collection, analysis, and completion of the archaeological summary. Mr. Ross conducted the photography. Both men furnished their enthusiasm, labor and sweat to clear the cacti, etc.

The CVE group conducted four activities at the site. These included limited clearing of vegetation, photographing the ruins of the watch house, taking approximate measurements of the watch house ruins and the cleared area for mapping, and collecting eighteenth-century artifacts that had been exposed during the mechanical clearing in late 2009. The collected artifacts were delivered to the Museo Tula located at Landhuis Kenapa (Knip).

Based on the dates of the historical maps, the Fort Knip was built between 1754 and 1784 and abandoned around 1820. It is believed that the military fortifications on Curaçao were abandoned around 1820, which was shortly after free port status was obtained. Throughout that time period (ca. 1754 –1784 until ca. 1820), the fort was occupied periodically by the Dutch and English. Initially, European occupation of Curaçao began with the Spanish in the sixteenth century and continued until the Dutch took control in 1634. The Dutch held control of the island until 1800 when the English took over the island. The English occupied the island for about three years until 1803 when the Dutch returned. Then English regained control between 1807 and 1816. In 1816, the Dutch returned and Curaçao became a free port.

By: Helen Ross

Interior doorway that connected the two rooms



Surface collection of tin-glazed coarse earthenware .



EXCITING DISCOVERY AT WINGFIELD ESTATE – ST. KITTS by David Rollinson

February 1st, 2010 – For 1 week only, six volunteers from Caribbean Volunteer Expedition, Archeologist Mr. David Rollinson and staff of Wingfield Estate took to digging for history. A designated area at Wingfield Estate, Old Road was chosen because of the outline of red bricks showing in the ground. No one knew what to expect from this dig.

The dig started on January 25 through to January 29, 2010 and during this period visitors and residents were invited to participate in this unique and historic dig.

At the end of the week what was revealed in the ground was a Rum Distillery probably dating back to the 17th century. Fantastic! Beyond our wildest dreams. This remarkable find is of significant importance as it can only help to enhance the tourism product of St. Kitts. St. Kitts tourism now has another option, a new direction in which to go.

Presently, careful excavation work continues to allow for the exposure of the remaining parts of the distillery. Other archeological digs will continue at Wingfield Estate as there remain many secrets of Wingfield just waiting to be uncovered.

This historic find is available for all to see and in the near future Wingfield Estate will undergo some changes which seek to improve this tourism product. The Estate will become an orientation center explaining sugar and rum production and giving historic facts of the area, enabling visitors to have a better understanding of what took place at this very special location. This experience was shared with amazing enthusiasm by tourists, local residents, young and very old. What a unique addition to our tourism product. Imagine the excitement a visitor will feel when participating in the exposing of 17th century history.

Wingfield Estate is located in the historic town of Old Road on the edge of the Wingfield River and Rainforest.

This is 1 of 3 cooling tanks used in the production of rum. This tank was filled with water into which “the worm” (a coil) was immersed so that the vapors produced in the boiling of molasses could condense and become rum. The rum was then channeled through a copper pipe (see hole in wall at top of picture) and collected on the outside of the tank. The rum was stored in barrels for future consumption.



NOT MUCH TO SEE



WORK IN PROGRESS What is all this? Really



At the end of digging on Friday 29th January, 2010 our reward was seeing all that had been uncovered, knowing that we had found a rum distillery probably dating back to the 17th century. Everyone should see this. The ingenuity people that built this is truly remarkable.

And the dig is not over yet!!



NEVIS VOLUNTEER PROJECT

Sandy Gage

When we heard of the CVE option for a 'custom-designed volunteer project' on Nevis, we knew this was a golden opportunity, not to be missed. We signed up with the Nevis Historic and Conservation Society (NHCS) for seven days of work in February 2010 (and added nine days to play).

We got our feet wet by helping with the set-up for the Annual Jumble Sale.

Kim's main task was in the Society's archives. She set up procedures for processing and describing documents in the NHCS collection, then she began with Box Number One! This oldest part of the archives included papers of Thomas Cottle, a sugar plantation owner, from the 1700s.

Sandy worked primarily in the Trott House, replacing floorboards, unraveling the aging electrical fuse box and performing general clean-up in this 19th century wooden structure, adjacent to the Alexander Hamilton museum in Charlestown. The NHCS has acquired this building so that all their exhibits can be concentrated in the same area.

After two weeks on the island, we agreed that our vision of a different kind of winter vacation had been richly rewarded. We met people and saw aspects of Nevis that most tourists would never experience.

Sandy Gage is an experienced 'traveling volunteer', who has participated in projects with Earth Watch and University Research Expeditions. His background is in Social Sciences and environmental concerns. Kim Short's education is in Languages and Library Science, and she spent part of her career in archival work. Sandy & Kim live near Huntsville, Ontario, Canada.

ST. EUSTATIUS JANUARY 2010

Exploritas Volunteers worked for St. Eustatius Center for Archaeological Research (SECAR) on two projects. One, clearing a plantation Great House to reveal historic walls and two, measuring and a drawing vernacular wood house .



Summary of Recent Projects

2007

Falmouth, Jamaica Jewish Cemetery Inventory

BVI Historic Site Inventory *

St. John Preservation *

St. Croix Historic Preservation for Landmarks Society*

St. Kitts Historic Cemetery Inventory *

Lunenburg Preservation

Brimstone Hill Restoration *

2008

Wingfield Archeology*

St. Kitts Cemetery Inventory *

Brimstone Hill Restoration *

Hunts Bay Jamaica, Jewish Cemetery Inventory

St. John Preservation *

St. Eustatius Wattle and Daub construction

San Salvador Archeology *

2009

Hunts Bay and Orange Street Kingston Jamaica

Brimstone Hill St. Kitts*

St. Kitts Cemetery Inventory*

San Pedro de Macoris Historic Buildings Survey Dominican Republic

San Salvador, Bahamas: Archeology Project

2010

Curacao Fort Knip Site Assessment

San Juan Historic Site Perseveration

Archeology in St.Eustatius

St. Kitts cemetery Inventory

Wingfield Archeology ,St. Kitts

*Projects with Exploritas Volunteers

Winter 2011 Projects

Exploritas Projects

Archaeology in San Salvador March 3, 2011

Archaeology in St. Eustatius January 16,2011

Historic Cemetery Inventory January 23,2011

CVE Projects

Archaeology at Fort Knip Curacao 16 to 21 January,2011

Wingfield Archaeology St. Kitts 30 January to 6 February,2011

Orange Street Historic Jewish Cemetery 23 to 29 January,2011

Nevis Historical and Conservation Society

Dates are flexible

Old San Juan Historic Site

Dates to be announced

National Park St John– Documentation of historic ruins–

Dates to be announced

www.cvexp.org



SAN JUAN PUERTO RICO PROJECT: January 2010

CVE Volunteers worked with National Park Service maintenance crew on painting walls of historic structures at the San Juan Historic Site.

CVE Mission Statement:

Throughout the Caribbean, historic structures representing each island's rich and unique heritage suffer due to natural and man made threats ranging from tropical storms to tourism-related development. Caribbean Volunteer Expeditions' mission is to support local efforts to preserve historic and architecturally valuable resources. We recruit volunteers from the US and Canada to work on preservation projects with local Caribbean agencies. We seek to contribute to the broader base of information about Caribbean styles, influences, history, and architecture, and to help preserve the region's architectural and cultural heritage.

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