

National parks. Virgin Islands.

# Virgin Islands

NATIONAL PARK

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VERTICAL FILM

ST. JOHN ISLAND, V.I.

# Virgin Islands

## NATIONAL PARK

**T**HIS PARK, the Nation's 29th, embraces about three-fourths of the Island of St. John, the smallest of the three principal islands in the United States Virgin Islands group in the Caribbean. The larger Island of St. Thomas, seat of the insular government, is only 4 miles away. Forty miles to the south lies the Island of St. Croix.

Congress authorized establishment of Virgin Islands National Park on August 2, 1956, specifying that the area should not exceed 9,485 acres on St. John and nearby rocks and cays, and 15 acres for administrative headquarters on St. Thomas.

The park was formally established and dedicated on December 1, 1956. On that date Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc., of which Laurance S. Rockefeller is president, presented more than 5,000 acres of park land to the Federal Government as a gift to the American people.

St. John is about 1,435 miles south and east of New York, 991 miles east and south of Miami, and 75 miles east of San Juan, Puerto Rico. The island has an area of about 19 square miles. It is 9 miles long, has an extreme width of nearly 5 miles, and rises abruptly to an elevation of 1,277 feet at the top of Bordeaux Mountain. Fewer than 750 persons live on the island. Most of them have settled around the Cruz Bay and Coral Bay areas outside the park.

This colorful, tropical island is rich in historic, scientific, and recreational interests.

### HISTORY

Columbus discovered the Virgin Islands on his second voyage in 1493 and named the group in honor of Saint Ursula and her 11,000 virgins.

The National Park System, of which this park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

Indians occupied St. Croix when that island was discovered by Columbus. It cannot be determined whether Indians also occupied St. John and St. Thomas at that time; however, remains of village sites and stone picture writings (petroglyphs) on St. John show that Indians had lived there before the islands were discovered. In any event, shortly after Columbus arrived, the Indians of the Virgin Islands became extinct.

After 1493, Dutch, English, Spanish, French, and Danish adventurers came to the Virgin Islands. The Danes first came to the islands in the 1670's, but did not settle on St. John until 1717. By 1726 all available land on St. John was taken by new settlers for plantations and the island flourished. Many slaves were imported by the settlers. These slaves revolted in 1733 and some of the planters took refuge at Peter Durlieu's Estate, now known as Caneel Bay Plantation. The rebellion was finally quelled by soldiers from the French island of Martinique who heeded the call for help. After the great outbreak of 1733, the fires of revolt continued to smolder among the slave population until slavery was abolished in 1848. This act was an economic blow to the planters and contributed to the end of the great estates. When the planters left, the island returned to bush.

As early as 1867 the United States manifested interest in that part of the Virgin Island group owned by Denmark. After a series of unsuccessful negotiations, the United States finally purchased the Danish Islands in 1917 for \$25 million. A governor, appointed by the President of the United States, now heads the government.

#### SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL INTERESTS

St. John is the most beautiful and undisturbed of the three largest United States-owned Virgin Islands. Eighty-five percent or more of the acreage is covered with tropical vegetation and second-growth trees. Its setting in the colorful and calm channels of the island archipelago and its different and unusual scenic quality, plantlife, and history are quite unlike any other reserve now included in our National Park System. Plants and animals of island and sea are of exceptional interest and educational value.

The island is famous for scenic mountain trails, lush woodlands, and quiet coves. The richness of history can be seen in the bush-covered remains of the 18th-century forts and batteries and palatial estates.

Swimming, fishing, snorkeling, and underwater photography are fast-growing sports. Equipment can be rented, serviced, or purchased on St. Thomas. Sailboats and other small craft can be rented also.

*Island Paradise. Courtesy, Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc.*





*Schooner entering Cruz Bay harbor.*

Roads on the island are few and rough, but a number of jeeps are available for hire. Royal Road (Centerline Road), extending from Cruz Bay on the west to Coral Bay on the east, meanders generally along the high, central backbone of the island and gives access to many points of interest. The tropical forest has an unusually diversified flora for such a small area.

#### *CLIMATE*

The climate of St. John is mildly tropical, equable, and exceedingly healthful. Rainfall averages about 50 inches a year, mostly in brief showers at night, and the humidity is comparatively low. The northeast trade winds blow in from the ocean and temper the heat of the sun, making the days delightfully pleasant and the nights cool. The average annual temperature is about 79°, with a difference of only about 6° between winter and summer. The lowest recorded temperature is 65° and the highest 91°.

#### *CLOTHING NEEDS*

Social activities on the islands are very informal so that casual sport clothes of lightweight materials provide an adequate wardrobe. Bathing suits are a "must." Lightweight jackets are advisable for cool evenings, and some hotels require jackets at dinner.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations on St. John are extremely limited. Largest of the guest facilities is the newly developed Caneel Bay Plantation. It is operated by Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc., a nonprofit conservation and education organization established by the Rockefeller family. The plantation has a total of 43 double rooms in beachfront units and cottages with a maximum capacity of about 100 persons.

The picturesque capital city of Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas is well equipped with a wide variety of hotels, guest cottages, restaurants, shops, and other facilities. Rates are lower between April and December than during the winter season.

You should contact your travel agent for detailed information about rates and accommodations on St. John and St. Thomas. Or you can write to Department of Tourism and Trade, P. O. Box 806, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, V. I., U. S. A.; or to Virgin Islands Tourist Information Office, 122 East 42d Street, New York 17, N. Y. It is advisable to arrange reservations well in advance.

### PARK DEVELOPMENT

The development of campgrounds, trails, sanitary facilities, interpretive services, and other visitor conveniences is planned for this new park. They are now nonexistent and only limited funds are available for park improvement at the present. Park rangers are on duty to assist you.

### TRANSPORTATION

Regularly scheduled air and steamship lines provide service to St. Thomas. The Virgin Islands are 6½ hours from New York and 4½ hours from Miami via Eastern or Pan American Airlines to San Juan where connections are made with Caribbean Atlantic Airlines to St. Thomas. Delta-C & S Air Lines operate regularly between New Orleans and San Juan. Aircraft do not land on St. John.

There is regular 4½-day steamship service between New York and San Juan. The Delta Line operates steamships from New Orleans direct to St. Thomas. The Alcoa Steamship Lines provides passenger service from New York to St. Thomas. Waterman Steamship Co., Bull Lines, Lykes Lines, and others operate freighters with limited passenger accom-

*Eastern end of St. John Island from Bordeaux Mountain with Tortola Island (British) in the background.*

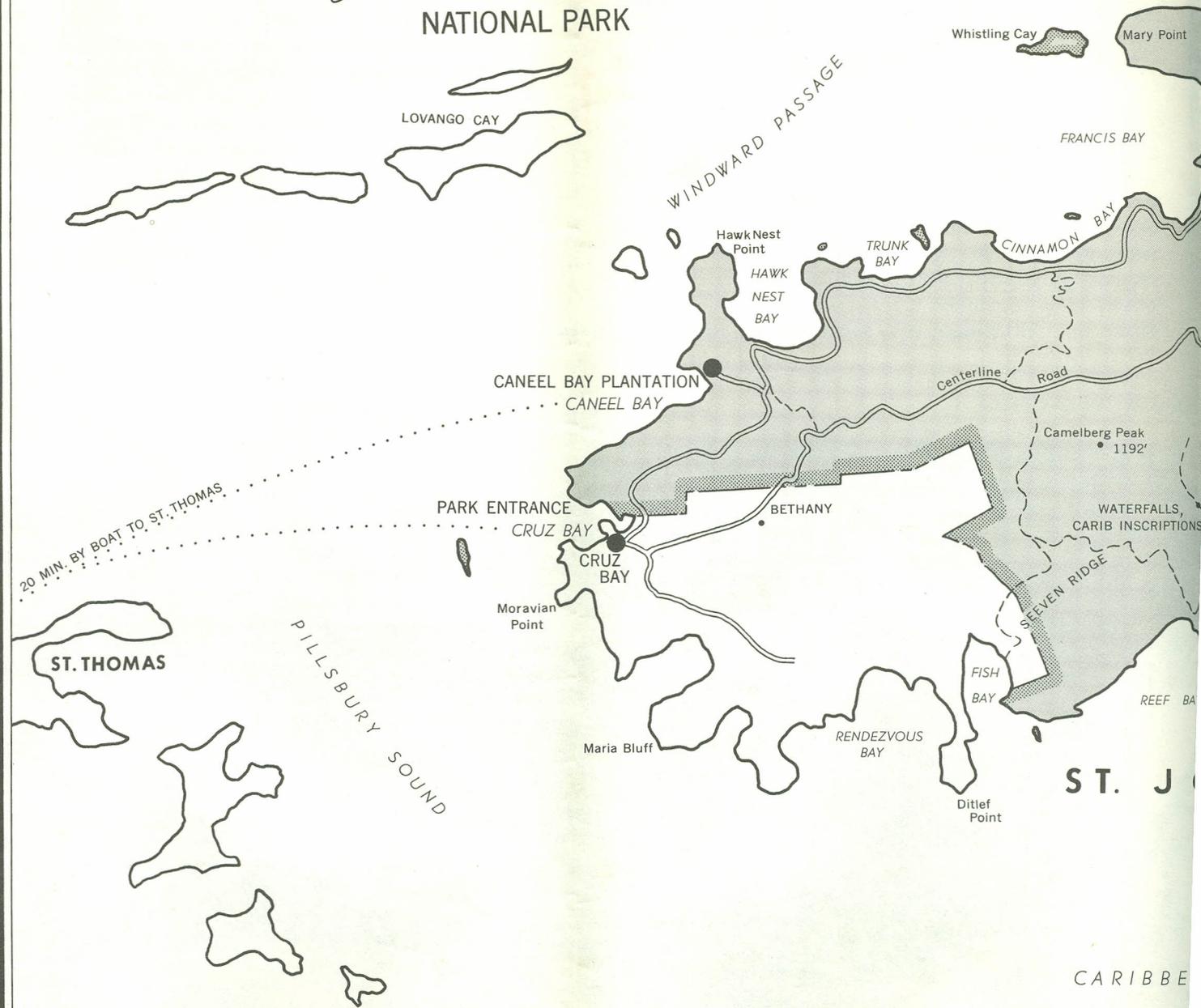


ST. JOHN

# Virgin Islands

NATIONAL PARK

ATLANTIC



Whistling Cay Mary Point

LOVANGO CAY

WINDWARD PASSAGE

FRANCIS BAY

Hawk Nest Point  
HAWK NEST BAY

TRUNK BAY

CINNAMON BAY

CANEEL BAY PLANTATION  
CANEEL BAY

Centerline Road

Camelberg Peak  
1192'

WATERFALLS,  
CARIB INSCRIPTIONS

PARK ENTRANCE  
CRUZ BAY

BETHANY

SEVEN RIDGE

20 MIN. BY BOAT TO ST. THOMAS

Moravian Point

ST. THOMAS

PILLSBURY SOUND

Maria Bluff

RENDEZVOUS BAY

FISH BAY

REEF BA

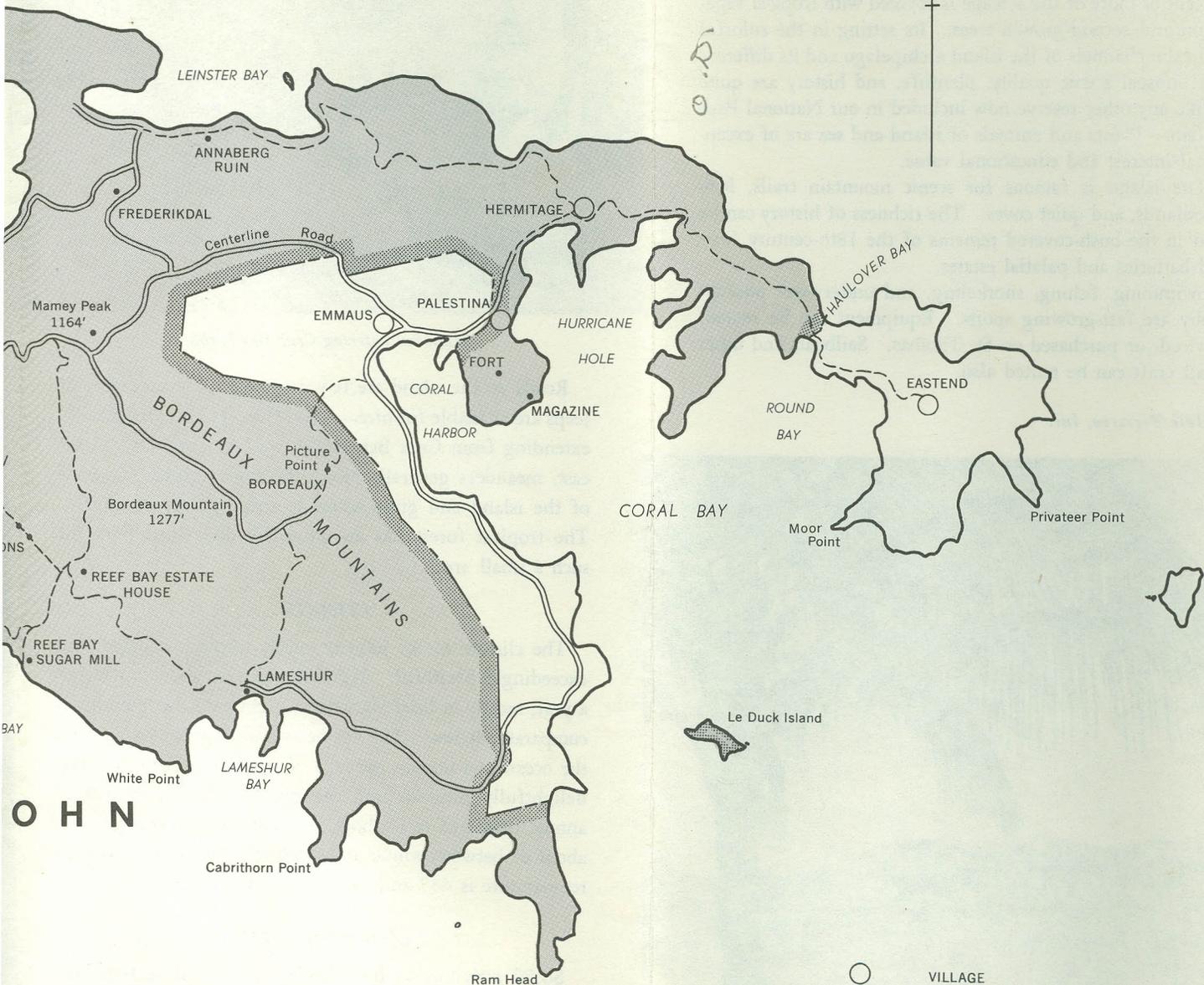
ST. J

Ditlef Point

CARIBBE

C OCEAN

THE NARROWS



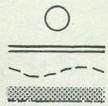
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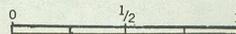
NS

BAY

JOHN

SEAN SEA


 VILLAGE  
 JEEP ROAD  
 TRAIL  
 PARK BOUNDARY

  
 SCALE IN MILES

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modations from several United States ports to St. Thomas.

Once on St. Thomas, you can take a taxicab from the port city of Charlotte Amalie to Red Hook Landing, about 9 miles away, where scheduled commercial boats are available for the 30-minute passage to the park entrance at Cruz Bay.

### REGULATIONS AND PRIVILEGES

The Virgin Islands constitute the only United States "free port" resort offering shopping free of United States customs duties. However, you must make customs declaration on your return to a United States port of entry, including San Juan, Puerto Rico.

1. No passports, visas, or health certificates are needed for United States and Canadian citizens.

2. During any 6-month period, residents of the United States may bring merchandise from the Virgin Islands into the United States, duty free, on the following schedule: If absent more than 48 hours from Puerto Rico or continental United States, \$200 worth of merchandise; if absent more than 12 days, \$500 worth.

3. Postal rates and currency are exactly the same as in the United States. Regular mail to and from the United States may take 2 weeks. Airmail to the eastern seaboard usually takes 36 hours.

4. Driving in the Virgin Islands is on the left side of the road as in England. The Police Department in Charlotte Amalie will issue a courtesy driver's permit upon presentation of your stateside license.

### ADMINISTRATION

Virgin Islands National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, with headquarters at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, V. I., is in immediate charge.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fred A. Seaton, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Conrad L. Wirth, *Director*

