

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Archaeological Society Receives 2,000-Year-Old Amerindian Artifacts Of St. Croix

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ST. CROIX -- The St. Croix Archaeological Society was recently given a collection of 54 pre-Columbian artifacts, according to a press release the Society issued on Sunday.

Most of these artifacts were found on St. Croix in the 1940s and 1950s by Dick Richards of Frederiksted. His family had stored the artifacts away in 1986 and recently decided to donate them for the education of residents and the Society's visitors.

Some of the pieces date back 2,000 years to the early clay workers of the island, the Saladoid culture. Some date back to the culture of the Taino tribe when Columbus sailed by Salt River.

Richards found many of these pieces in the then-sugar cane fields of Lower Bethlehem, Negro Bay, Fair Plain and Golden Grove. He became fascinated by the artifacts and their history, as little was known then about the early inhabitants of St. Croix.

Richards also collected pieces during his travels around the Caribbean, Central and South America.

His family remembers parts of his collection going to the St. Croix Landmarks Society and the Fort Frederik Museum. The collector said he always wanted his material to be available in a museum to promote education and tourism on St. Croix.

The Society will place Richards' collection on display at the St. Croix Archaeological Museum at #6 Company Street, Christiansted, and will continue to work with the National Park Service towards opening a permanent museum at Salt River.

Under the VI Antiquities Act of 1998, artifacts found are the property of the landowner. However, excavation of archaeological sites must be done by a trained archaeologist licensed by the State Historic Preservation Office in the Department of Planning and Natural Resources.