

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Archaeological Findings Of Danish Medical Practices And Plantation Hospitals Of The 1700-1800s To Be Revealed On Thursday

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ST. CROIX -- On Thursday evening, Meredith Reifschneider, a PhD candidate in Archaeology at Stanford University in California, will present to the public her ongoing findings around her archaeological survey and excavation of a plantation hospital at Estate Cane Garden, which dates from the late 18th century to the beginning of the 20th century, the National Park Service announced via press release this morning.

The talk will examine the archaeological research conducted at Cane Garden during the summer as well as provide an initial interpretation of the archaeological materials

recovered from the site.

Because of the unique historical circumstances of the island, and the wealth of archaeological data available, St. Croix provides a stirring and productive locale for investigating the ways in which enslaved communities lived during the 18th and 19th centuries. Furthermore, archaeology provides an exciting venue for observing the everyday lives of marginalized communities who are commonly excluded from documentary and historical record.

Ms. Reifschneider's archaeology-based dissertation research is focused on the Danish colonial period here. After 1803, a series of medical hospitals were constructed in order to provide medical services to enslaved individuals in an effort to ameliorate the physical effects of slavery and safeguard the workforce of the sugar economy.

The goal of this research project is to understand how Danish medical policies were implemented, contested, or received by various individuals, to include Danish colonial doctors and nurses, plantation health care providers, and enslaved individuals. The broader goals of this project are to understand how enslaved individuals may have developed alternative practices and understandings of health and healthcare apart from that of the colonial government.

The lecture will be held from 5:30-6:30 p.m. in the Danish Guinea West India Company Warehouse/ Slave Market Building. The Christiansted National Historic Site parking lot will be free and open for this event until 7:00 p.m.

'The Friends of the St. Croix National Parks' will meet from 4:30-5:30 p.m. just before the lecture in the same location.

Ms. Reifschneider attended the University of Arizona where she received her Master's degree in Anthropology. She has worked in Greece, Albania, the Southwestern United States, and currently is conducting archaeological fieldwork here.

Feature Image: Ms Reifschneider, center, with field assistants Dr. Shane Miller and Brittany Higgs.