

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## Centenial 2017: DPNR To Host Gothic Handwriting Workshops

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The Department of Planning and Natural Resources recently announced that the Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums, which is part of D.P.N.R., will be hosting Gothic handwriting workshops -- a USVI/DK Archives joint Centennial project -- through a collaboration with the Territorial Archives from January 30 through February 10.

The joint collaboration with the Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet) Centennial Project will provide training to researchers, historians, students, scholars and genealogists on deciphering and understanding Danish Gothic handwriting and historical records created during the Danish West Indian era (1671-1917), according to the release.

On Transfer Day, March 31, 2017, the Danish National Archives will officially release online for free access over 5,000,000 images of digitized historical records of the Danish West Indies. Many of these documents are written in 19th century Danish Gothic handwriting that is difficult to transcribe or translate.

Virgin Islanders will be provided tools and strategies for meaningful research and interpretation. A team of qualified researchers will be trained in each district in order that others might be locally trained and guided in these skills through a five-session course on:

- 1.) Basic techniques to decipher and transcribe Danish Gothic handwriting;
- 2.) Basic Danish language instruction with an emphasis on terminology used in Danish West Indian era documents;
- 3.) An introduction to Danish National Archives online and
- 4.) other finding aids, web sites, and search techniques for Danish West Indian research.

Archivist Niklas Thode Jensen, Ph.D., from the Danish National Archives, will conduct the five-day workshops. Funding and workshop locations are entirely underwritten by the Danish National Archives, D.P.N.R., and the Virgin Islands Next Generation Network, according to the release. There is no cost to participants.

A small group of local researchers, retirees, students, educators and librarians territory-wide have been identified to participate in the two "pilot" workshops in the St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John district January 30 – February 10. The Territorial Archives is also exploring with the Danish National Archives the possibility of opening the anticipated high interest workshops at a later date in 2017.

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