

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Findings Of Archaeological Investigations At Estate Bethlehem Old Works To Be Presented Thursday

Community Center / **Published On July 10, 2017 11:51 AM /**

Staff **July 10, 2017**



ST. CROIX -- A lecture to divulge the findings of archaeological investigations at the Estate Bethlehem Old Works, a sugar plantation which operated from the early Danish colonial period until the factory closed in 1966, will be presented on Thursday at 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Christiansted National Historic Site, the National Park Service announced today. The lecture will be presented by Dr. Steve Lenik.

In 2002, archaeologists from the Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office recorded a "lost" enslaved African cemetery and laborer village in the National Guard armory at Bethlehem, revealing evidence of mortuary practices and daily life of the enslaved in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Returning to the site in 2017,

professors and students from St. Mary's College of Maryland continued archaeological and historical research, and interviewed people who lived and worked this plantation, toward making it more accessible to the public. Archaeology at Bethlehem broadens our understandings of the laborer experience at this important Crucian cultural site and aids in the effective management.

Steve Lenik is an historical archaeologist of the African diaspora whose has done fieldwork at plantations, missions, and military installations throughout the Caribbean, including St. Croix, St. John, St. Thomas, Dominica, and Jamaica. He received his M.A. from the University of South Carolina in 2004, with a thesis titled "Archaeological Investigations of Afro-Cruzan Identity at Estate Bethlehem, St. Croix, U. S. Virgin Islands," and a PhD from Syracuse University in 2010 with a study of a French Jesuit mission in the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Currently, he teaches in the Anthropology Department at St. Mary's College of Maryland, having previously held the post of Lecturer in the Department of History and Archaeology at the University of the West Indies, Mona. Among his publications are articles in *Journal of Social Archaeology*, *Ethnohistory*, *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, and *Historical Archaeology*, and he is co-editor of the 2017 Routledge volume *Material Cultures of Slavery and Abolition in the British Caribbean*.

The Fort parking lot will be open until 7:00 p.m.

Feature Image: Sugar farmers in Bethlehem, St. Croix in the 1940s. (Credit: Wikipedia)