

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE LOVANGO OR LOANGO ISLANDS

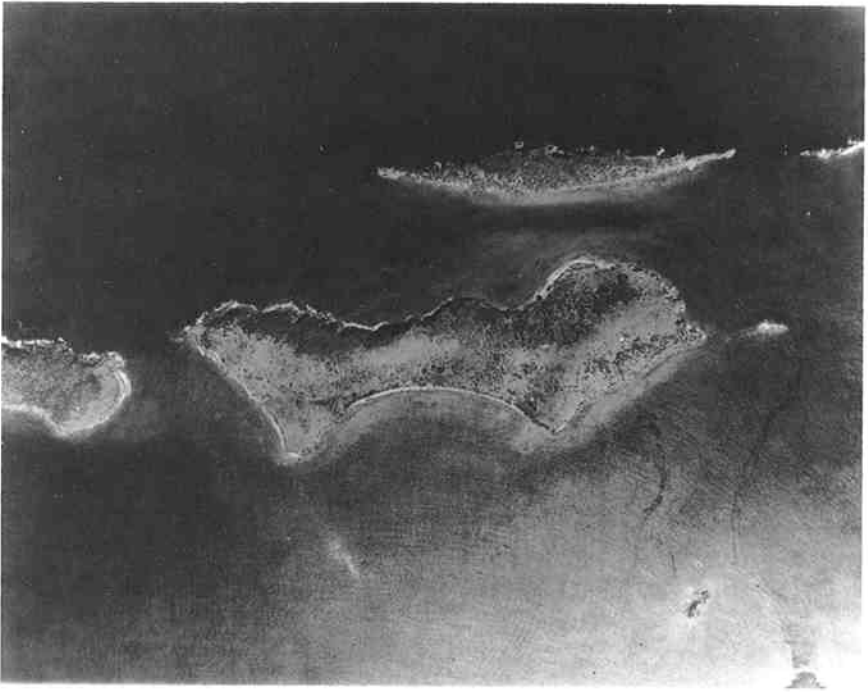
By Kenneth C. Dick

Lovango (Loango) is shown on maritime charts as a Cay. I prefer to call it an island since a Cay (Key) is a reef or low island which Lovango is not. It is 1800 yards long; 300 yards wide, comprising 117.83 acres. The highest point is at its West end: 255 feet, the east end rising to 247 feet. The Lovango Cays consist of three islands, Lovango, Congo and Mingo, Lovango being the largest of the group, all three administratively attached to Cruz Bay quarter, St. John, Virgin Islands of the United States. Lovango lies one mile northwest of Hognest Point, St. John, separated from Mingo by a shoal passage 300 yards wide (see W.J. McGuire, *Geographical Dictionary of the Virgin Islands of the United States*, Spec. bulletin 3103. U.S. Government Printing Office 1928) latitude 18° 21' 55.446". longitude 64° 48' 04.66". On Thomas Jeffery's map of 1797, Lovango appears as a large island with no designation for either Congo or Mingo islands. On an old undated map in the Museum at Fort Christian, St. Thomas, Lovango appears as 'Lavangerne', 'the islands of Lavanga'. On the Hornbeck map of 1835 it appears as Lovango, on French maps as Awango.

Mingo Cay (a decision of the U.S. Geographic Board) comprises 48.35 acres. In the *Derrotero* it is also referred to as 'Senior', 'Sinjo', 'Singo', 'Zingo'; on Spanish charts as Lovango Medio. The *Derrotero* (sailing instructions) was closely guarded by each ship's Captain lest it fall into enemy hands of competing colonizing nations. Congo island is owned by the V.I. government. Mingo Island is owned by the Creque family estate of St. Thomas.

While McGuire states that the smaller islands and cays in the Caribbean were named by buccaneers, this does not always hold true. Many of the small islands were named for, or after, sea captains, plantage owners, or, for want of better designation, after the appearance of the island shape itself, as in the case of Sail Rock, French Cap, Dutch Cap, Sombrero and Culebra.

In Hakluyt's *Collection of Voyages*, the Virgin Islands are described as being wholly uninhabited in 1596. De Rochefort in his *History of the Antilles* wrote that the Virgin Islands were all uninhabited in 1653. About 16 years after a transient visit by Sir Francis Drake in 1580, the Earl of Cumberland, commanding an expedition on his way to Puerto Rico in 1596, found the Virgin Islands uninhabited. St. Thomas was still uninhabited in 1671. When the Danes first arrived on St. Thomas in 1672 the island was still uninhabited, while Tortola had already been inhabited since 1648 by Dutch Buccaneers. Yet, Westergaard writes: The Danes were charged, during the establishment of the West India Company in 1671, with the responsibility of converting the Indians, not a dif-



Aerial Photograph of Lovango and Congo Cays VIR-53 (1945-1946) taken from 10,000 feet.

Courtesy U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency.

ficult task, as only two or three are to be found in the entire period of the Company's existence. One Indian, 'John Indian', a large fraction of his tribe, finally was punished by the loss of a leg for his various attempts at running away."

I have been unable to find any written history, including early exploration history regarding Lovango (variously Awango, Awanga, Avango, Levango, Lewanger, Loango, Lopango, Louango, Lavango, Lowango, Luguango, Owango, Ouwango). The early Spanish explorers referred to these islands as *Lovango Grande*, *Chico* and *Medio* or 'Middle Lovango' (now Mingo) as shown on Carey & Lea's Atlas; the West India Atlas or Purdy, Dessiun and Jeffrey as well as on C. Mortimer's chart 1739.

The list of African slave names of the 18th century provided us is replete with designations whose Provenience is evident. Among the Gullah, are "basket names" used only within the family and among acquaintances'. Among the extensive collection of Negro slave names frequently used in the U.S. is the name 'Loango', Turner, Lorenzo D. *West African Survivals in the Vocabulary of Gullah*, N.Y. 1938.

Congo Cay ('Lanceolate' or 'Shuttle Island') or Cayo Congo ó Lovango Chico is referred to by Oldendorp in his *Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brüder*, (1777), as Kukelusse Cay or Cucculus, Coculus (Coculus an olivaceous fish with light blue streaks and black spots). Oxholm and other early 18th century maps shows it as 'Cam Island' and much farther to the south than on present charts. The eastern extremity of Congo is called on the Scorpion Survey 'Indian Inscription Point', a reference to the petroglyphs carved in the rock. Jeffery's map of 1797 shows Cam Island as being rather large. Cam from the Dutch 'kam' or ridge. It might be deduced therefore that Lovango, Congo and Mingo were either at one time a single island or what appeared to be a single island, since the islands, today, are very close together.

In the *Derrotero de las Antillas* (a book of marine charts and sailing directions) these three islands are referred to under early Spanish names as mentioned above.

Local historians seem to draw a blank when Lovango Cay is mentioned, yet this island must certainly have been inhabited by early European settlers if only for the reason that Lovango was frequently referred to as the place where 'Curaçao' people live (Dutch people from Curacao?) George Hjersing Høst's *History of St. Thomas* records that in 1666 St. Thomas was inhabited by Hollanders. Evidence of Indian intrusion is substantiated by the discovery of petaloid celts and other aboriginal pre-Columbian artifacts found on Lovango and now reposing in the Museum at The Battery, St. John, V.I. The fact that there are still to be seen the remains of many daub and wattle huts might indicate early negro slave or Indian habitation. The Oxholm map of 1780 (not published until 1800) shows no clearing or habitation on Lovango.

The earliest reference to Loango Cay, in the U.S. Library of Congress, Geography & Map Division, is Plate 77 titled 'Carte des Isles des Vierges' in Vol. 1 of Bellin's *Le Petit Atlas Maritime*, 1746, wherein the Cay is identified as 'I Awango'.

The Lovango Islands like the rest of the Virgin Islands are of volcanic formation, some islands being formed more recently than others, rising out of the sea from a great shelf known as the 'Virgin Bank' and extending from Puerto Rico to Anegada.

Derivation of the names of the Lovango Islands is probably of African origin. The Moravian missionary, Oldendorp, who visited the Danish West Indies in 1767 reports the names of some twenty-two tribal groups of Africa from which slaves had been drawn, among them the Loango. P. Murdock *Africa: Its Peoples and their Culture History* (1959)., identifies the area around Luanda region of the central Bantu and they include the Loango. (The probability of the dominant African antecedent of Virgin Islands Creole being one of the African languages, is one of the five culture areas, the Akan, Fon, Yoruba, Ibo and Congolese are being used. Twi, has left, by far, the most surviving words,

more than all other prestige languages put together. 'Importation of slaves continued over the greater part of three centuries in the Virgin Islands, the initial bulk coming from the Gold Coast, the more numerous being Akan slaves from West Africa. The linguistic patterns of the Twi-speaking Akan Ashanti of what is now Ghana, has most deeply affected the culture of the Virgin Islands'. Lezmore Evans Emanuel, *Surviving Africanisms in Virgin Islands Creole* (1927).

L'abbé Proyart in his *Histoire de Loango, Makongo et autres royaumes d'Afrique* (1776), seems to put the clincher on the name, tribe and location — Loango. 'Loango, a region of the west coast of Africa, extending north from the mouth of the Congo. In the 17th and 18th centuries it formed a kingdom of that name (also known as Brama) but after 1855 the country was divided between French Equatorial Africa, the Portuguese district of Cabinda and the Belgian Congo. The inhabitants belong to the Bantu group of Vili, a subgroup of the Kongo, formerly known as the Fiote. Loango town is an insignificant coastal place having been superseded by the port of Pointe-Noire. During the early slaving days, Loango was a major "factory" port for picking up slaves. [According to Westergaard, the Loango slaves taken to be sold on St. Thomas were among the least liked of all the blacks, they were indolent, rebellious etc. . .] The early history of Loango is unknown. During the 15th and 16th centuries Portuguese merchants visited the kingdom which appears to have belonged to the kingdom of Congo, located south of the Congo river. It achieved independence toward the end of the 16th century. The kingdom was bounded to the north by the Kongo kingdom. It was divided into four provinces. During the 17th and 18th centuries the country was an important source of slaves for the new world. Loango was visited by Portuguese and Dutch ships and later principally by French and English. Roman Catholic attempts at missionary work were unsuccessful. By the middle of the 19th century the kingdom had been reduced in influence. In 1833 the king of Loango signed a treaty placing his country under the protection of France; it became part of the Middle Congo (Moyen-Congo) territory and, since 1958, of the Republic of Congo'.

In a letter to the Directors of the West India Company in Copenhagen dated March 1787, the Company's St. Thomas officials suggest that slaves be secured from the region between Caplahoe and Cape Three Points and between Ziode Wolta (River Volta?) and Hardra, as these were better than the Loango or Angola slaves (Westergaard, 1917).

From the Uribundu is the word 'Owanga' meaning 'a charm'; the same applies to the Kongo word 'Mowanga', both tongues for this word being shortened into the Creole word 'Wanga'. One can readily see how simple it was to transpose 'Owanga' or 'Mowanga' into 'Owango', 'Lowango' or 'Lovango'. However there is an ancient African tribe and language called 'Loanga'. Bantu

influences of slaves is recorded by Oldendorp. Emanuel further states that 'wang' is attributed to Tshiluba influences as well as its use by the Kimbundu, Kongo, Mede Temme, and Uribundu speakers. The principal tongues from which came the Danish, French, Spanish and Virgin Islands Creole were: Bambara, Fulani, Gun, Hausa, Loango, Uribundu and Kongo.

Oldendorp writes that the name Loango appears in the following African tongues: Booffe, Quari, Tattu, Ena, Tanu, Fambaan, Fambueri, Nane, Hvoa, Tuni, Matummo-eil and Matuumotattu. He goes on to say that 'A Loango Negro called the highest rulers of his nation the Areffan Congo. Two kings, *Maluango* and *Macongo* are their vassals, between whom a war arose, because the latter refused to give the former a yearly tribute of a maiden.'

'Loangowini was a spirit worshipped by the Saramacca Bush negroes the name of which is derived from the early kingdom of Loango on the north coast of the mouth of the Congo River, from which many Negroes were exported to the New World'. M.T. Herskovits. *The Myth of the Negro Past*, (1941).

The concept of the *Zombi* or spirit, of the magic charm embodied in the term '*ouangan*' (*wanga*), important elements in Haitian and West African life and the importance of the *P'tit Albert*, the book of medieval European magic is so feared in Haiti that its importation is prohibited by the law of the Country.

There are other tribes in Africa with names similar to the tribe or nation of Loango:

Lango - people who live in Northern Uganda, about 276,000.

Langu - people who live in Zaire; about 1000.

Lubango - a town in the Huila district of southwestern Angola - about 32,000. In European languages there is *Loange*, a Frisian or Germanic word. *Loenga* in old French. *Lovange* is French 'to praise'.

In old Danish, according to a dictionary definition, its word *Lewang* (later *Levang*) is an early Danish maritime antiquity expression meaning 'Deck Scub'. Just how this became the word 'eel' is wholly unclear.

The name 'Congo' is of course, obvious, the name deriving from the Kingdom of Kongo near the mouth of the Congo River.

The name 'Mingo' is more problematical though possibly the name of an old West African tribe or Chieftain. Moravian Parson Fleming, one of the largest cotton and cane planters of the early West Indian period, in his will, gave freedom to one of his faithful slaves, Mingo. In Spanish the word describes an elaborately dressed person. Mingo Cay is sometimes shown as Santos Mingo on early charts (Saint Mingo?). The Creole Negro 'Mingo', a convert to Moravian religion, also served as a musical entertainer in social festivities, later becoming a faithful and resourceful assistant to the Moravian missionaries on St. Thomas. When the last Moravian minister, sent from Amsterdam, left St. Thomas in 1812, the St. Thomas church became affiliated with the Reformed Church in

America in 1827. After a fire had destroyed the Dutch Church, in 1806, the congregation worshipped together in the Lutheran Church. During the 19th century the Church included some of the most influential and wealthy individuals of the island. Toward the end of the century the Church was forced to sell much of its property to survive, the Recorder of Deeds office, St. Thomas, lists the Dutch Reformed Church as having been owners of Lovango Cay in 1823. Local Reverend White believes the church records were destroyed in a flood during 1823. Further inquiries to the Rector of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, to which the Dutch Reformed Church records were transferred, shed no further light on the subject.

John L. Anderson, author of the book *Night of the Silent Drums*, in personal correspondence, disagrees with the idea that the Loango Island names are of African origin. He wrote to me as follows:

In the records of the Recorder of Deeds Office, St. Thomas, the following is a list of deed transferences and ownership of Lovango (Loango). It should be noted that changes of ownership, deeds and titles do not run sequentially in the Deed Registers, nor are name spellings consistent. There are a number of instances in the Registers which read: 'Comments should be made, but not made'; too, reference to parcel numbers are either vague or cryptic. The earliest recording is Werlin (1797) continuing on for 168 years to the last entry in 1965. The earliest entries are simply listed as former owners and the date:

Werlin - 1797.

Bevehoudt - 1797.

Dutch Reform Church - 1823

H. Fitzimmons-1839

H.P. Knevels and P. Vlierden - 1846

Deed from P.V. Vlierden to Wilhelmine de Niefeldt - Jan 3, 1867.

Wilhelmine de Niefeldt to Theodore Gudet Heyliger - Jan 17, 1921.

Parcel #21, other former owners:

'No matter how African the names of the islands in that chain may sound, the names have nothing to do with any African tribe or word. *Lewanger* is an old Danish word with an unclear meaning. Carstens, the 18th century St. Thomas planter, in his report to the king gives the only explanation of it I have ever seen. It is the plural of *lewang*, and Carstens says of *lewanger* that they (my own deciphering of the manuscript and fairly loose translation thereof) "are half an ell long, and as big around as your arm, and plump right up to the rump, as if chopped off. Their skin is dark-gray, and wrinkled and warty all over, like a toad's. They stay always in the bays around the shore under big rocks. The French like to eat them when they are skinned. Commander Horn's brother who once ate one at a Frenchman's house, died of horror when they told what he had eaten." I suppose (but your guess is as good as mine) that he is talking about the conger eel. Anyhow, Lovango is a slight corruption of *Lewanger*. Congo is out-and-out Conger, pronounced the Virgin Islands way. Mingo is Santo Domingo (you'll find it so named on an old map.'

James Hassell - 1804
A. Helm - 1805
G. White - 1816
James Haley - 1817
 his heirs - 1819
Henry Harlack (probably Varlack) - 1866
A. Anduze - 1855
F. Calinte - 1855
Henry Clen (probably Klein) - 1889

'The Island Lovango alias Loango'

1804 - Transfer date Nov. 22, 1805 from James Hassell, Junr, to James Hanley
Dec. 12, 1804 from the Auction Director.

1812 - Abraham Helm to John Anduze April 7, 1812 for 1000 Spanish dollars
or 1562 Pieces of Eight.

1813 - 'The Western part of the island—Luguango, Levango' bought by
Abraham Helm from G. Hazell and Joseph D. Sewer Aug. 16, 1813 and sold to
John Anduze.

1885 - On November 5, 1885 the following document was read in St. John
Court:

#1

Christian Ludvig Schellerup

Sheriff Auction, Judg. etc., on the island of St. John in America. *Do Testify*: that on
March 18, 1885, 1 P.M. Auction was held over the island Loango, in Cruzbay Quarter,
belonging to the estate of Henry Varlack, said auction requested by the St. Thomas*
dealings court after previous publication in the St. Thomas *Tidende*, with posters in
Cruz Bay and Coralbay, St. John . . .

Sold to the highest bidder Plantation owner, A. Anduze of St. Thomas for the purchase
sum of \$600 and the court cost of \$79.74 and inasmuch as Mr. Anduze has agreed to the
purchase sum, and the auction conditions have been fulfilled, do I hereby in my capacity
as Auction Judge deed and transfer to the beforementioned A. Anduze the said Island
Loango as his lawful property with the same right and obligation as it had been held by
the previous owner . . .

#2

Whereas Mr. Francois Calistro has paid over to me the amount of \$679 and 74/100
dollars being the amount for which the island Loango was . . . to me at auction on March
18, 1885, I Antoine Anduze do hereby transfer and convey into the estate of Mr. Fran-
cois Calistro, the island Loango with buildings and apurtenances . . .

[This document was translated from Danish by Gudny M. Pedersen, translator].

*The Dealings Court investigated the circumstances of all deceased persons, and saw that Wills were properly ex-
ecuted, administered to the affairs of all who died intestate, and took charge of all assets in cases of bankruptcy in
behalf of creditors.

TRANSLATION

Deed dated November 20, 1866 from James Guirets Auction attorney for Martha Haley from Isaac De Toy married with Anna R. Vlaun and Charles E. Vanterpool as attorney for Elizabeth George born Vlaun to Henry Varlack on the island Loango the sum \$600. Paid cash.

1907 - Auction Deed to Louis Delinois, Aug. 8, 1907, for taxes.

1909 - Deed from L. Delinois of 'one half' to Henry Smith, Oct. 14, 1909.

1910 - Deed from H. Smith to Elsie Povline Andersen on Eastern half of Blackrock - May 12, 1910.

1921 - Deed transfer from M.E. Grepuk as attorney to Theodore Godet Heyliger, July 23, 1921.

1922 - Deed transfer from George Bentley Heyliger to Charles Wesselhoft, Julius E. Sprauve and Victor Jurgen on Gluckborg* estate, July 31, 1922.

1929 - Deed for the 'other half' from L. Delinois to H. Smith, Oct. 23, 1929.

Adjudication, estate of Charles Valdemar Wesselhoft (probate) to decents undivided 20 acres to Cardinal Ignatius Wesselhoft, Edna Wilhelmina Wesselhoft, Henriquette Wesselhoft, Jewel Evangeline Wesselhoft, Geraldine Wesselhoft, James Francis Wesselhoft, Claudia Ewadne Wesselhoft, Moten Wesselhoft and Lucien Anthony Wesselhoft, share and share alike.

1925 - Judgment for plaintiff in case of A.H. Lockhart vs Henry Smith in the amount of \$268.66, May 7, 1925.

1926 - Warranty Deed from Elsa P. Andersen on one half of Eastern half of Loango, October 6, 1926.

1938 - Adjudication in the estate of Henry Smith, deceased, as title for widow Alice Smith to the North Western part of Loango Island, Jan. 17, 1938:

Parcel #1 of Loango from Alice Smith to Richard and Virginia Joyce, his wife.

Parcel #2 from Alice Smith to Robert S. Minsker and Adele Blasco.

Parcel #3 from Alice Smith to Edwin S. Hofmann.

Parcel #4 from Alice Smith to Alan B. And Inga Christiansen.

Parcel #5 one acre to Louise Hoenvold, now called "The Isle" Gluckborg (Gluck's City) see asterisk* above re: Gluchsborg.

Parcel #6 from Alice Smith to Reid C. Perkins.

Parcel #7 from Alice Smith and Reid Perkins sold to Jorgen and Miriam Bald.

* Author's note: Glucksborg was a city in Schleswig-Holstein, two former duchies of Denmark. Glucksborg was also a large estate near Hamburg. The Danes wanting to rival Hamburg set up a new city called Glucksborg, a name that perhaps translates freely into 'Happy Town', 'Happy Castle' or 'Happy Hill' or even 'Lucky Town'. Glucksberg Estate in Cruz Bay quarter was historically connected with Grunnold, the Dutch Reformed Minister killed during the St. John insurrection in 1733. The African slave trading company, Gluckstadt was absorbed into the West India Company. See adjudication under year 1938.

- 1946 - Adjudication in the estate of Louis Andersen as title for Elsa and Linea Andersen's share in Loango, sept. 18, 1946.
- 1946 - Auction to quiet title, estate Glucksborg, plaintiff in case of A.H. Lockhart, Sept. 18, 1946.
- 1960 - Parcel #1 Warranty Deed, Sept. 12, 1960 from Alice Smith to Richard W. Joyce and Virginia Joyce, his wife.
- 1961 - Parcel #2 Warranty Deed from Alice Smith to Robert S. Minsker and Adele Blasco, Feb. 10, 1961.
- 1961 - Parcel #3 Warranty Deed from Alice Smith to Edwin J. Hofman, July 24, 1961.
- 1962 - Parcel #6 Warranty Deed from Alice Smith to Reid C. Perkins in fee simple, Sept. 16, 1962.
- 1963 - Parcel #7 Warranty Deed from Alice Smith to Jorgen Bald and Miriam Bald as tenants by the entirety, Jan. 12, 1963.
- 1965 - Lien, attachment from Danball of the Mun. Court to Cardinal Wesselhoft for taxes of \$38.56, Dec. 30, 1965.

Title Continued:

1. Southern part is quieted to Julius Sprauve.
2. Parcel #9 quieted to heirs at law and next of kin of the estate of Victor Christian Jergen deceased.
3. Parcel #10 quieted in the heirs at law and next of kin of the estate of Charles Wesselhoft deceased.
4. Parcel #1 to M.V. Mantley from Julius Sprauve.
5. Parcel #2 to John R. Botham from Julius Sprauve.
6. Parcel #3 to Alvin C. Schlenker from Julius Sprauve.
7. Parcel #4 to Wolfgang and Marney Doman from Julius Sprauve. 1961 - Parcel #4 .53 acres Warranty Deed 10/17/61 from Alice Smith
8. Parcel #5 to Cogan Hart from Julius Sprauve.
9. Parcel #1-A to Bruce Wood and Elizabeth Geen from Julius Sprauve.

Historian, authoress, Mrs. Florence Lewisohn, in an article appearing in the *St. John Drum* of Nov. 21, 1975 writes: 'Eight persons live on Lovango instead of the some 150 who were there during the first 20 years or so of this century. Now there are a half dozen houses where there used to be homes scattered all over the island.'

In the same local paper of July 12, 1974, Janet Boyte wrote: 'Approximately a half century ago, Lovango boasted 150 residents. In 1920 the only residents of Lovango were the De Windts, Linea Andersen Wells, her husband Ernest Wells, and Earl Smith. The original settlers were Alice and Henry Smith and the Andersens. Today the inhabitants consist of Henry Smith, Rudolph and Elsa De Windt, Peter, Dorothy and Raffy Muilenberg and Earl Smith . . .' so reported Ms. Boyte. In 1925 McGuire reported 20 residents. In 1908 there were 18 residents.

On November 6, 1979 I interviewed on Loango, Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph De Windt. They live in a small house set back about fifteen feet from the beach at the southeast end of the island, without electricity having but a few of the amenities of ordinary life. The approach to their short dock is hampered in approach from the southeast by a large protruding rock which natives refer to as 'Murder Rock' (derivation of name unknown). The De Windts, Rudolph and his wife Elsa are the only persons living on Loango with the exception of one other family, Mr. Herman Smith, his wife Susie and their young daughter Nefertiti. Rudy De Windt, born on St. Thomas is now 66 years old, his wife, the former Elsa Andersen now 72 years of age is the only person known to have been born on Henley Cay. Henley Cay, 300 yards in diameter, largest of the Durloe's Cays in the northeast entrance to Pillsbury Sound, between Loango and Hognest Point, was rented for a time by Elsa Andersen's father, when bought in 1955 by Rockefeller interests it consisted of 11 acres, a caretaker's house, a 10,000 gallon cistern and a 60 foot dock; also included were Ram Goat Cay and Rita Cay. The island was purchased from Kenneth Parker of the Parker Pen Company who in turn had bought it from Roger Humphrey who had acquired it from Caneel Bay Plantation. Both De Windts have failing eyesight to the extent that they are unable to read. Their only daily contact with the world is through three battery operated portable radios which Rudy keeps tuned into. Formerly he did commercial fishing and took out sport fishing charters for Mr. Laurence Rockefeller, catering to Caneel Bay Plantation's V.I.P.'s, politicians, hotel guests of means; after which employment Rudy had worked 6½ years for the National Park Service on St. John. When his eyesight failed he voluntarily retired from the Park Service. Presently he spends much of his time gazing out to sea and napping. His wife, Elsa, still alert for her years, refers to Rudy as a 'joker' but in an endearing way. They have one daughter, Kathleen, living in New York; six grandchildren and ten great grandchildren.

One of the drawbacks in interviewing elderly people who have little or no interest in past history, is that they have a short attention span, a difficult time recollecting and a tendency to drift away from the question. For example, when I asked Mrs. De Windt when the school, which her father had built in Loango so that his own children and the children of the workers could receive some

education, had closed down for the last time—she could not recall the year except through vague association that it had closed when she had reached the fifth grade. Assuming she was then 11 or 12 years old this would mean the school had closed in the early 1920's. The school was opened in 1915, a one room affair in the Andersen home. Later a small schoolhouse was built in the hillside east of the family home. Actually the school closed down in 1922 when a public school was built in Cruz Bay. The foundation and cistern of the Loango school are still to be seen at the eastern end of the island. The teacher in the original one classroom school of about 16 pupils was Sylvania Sewer who commuted each day from St. John. This information coincides with data I obtained in an interview with Earl Smith on November 6, 1979. Earl, son of Henry and Alice Smith was born in 1915 and attended school on Loango. His father, Henry, now deceased, born on Thatch Cay, bought with Louis Dane Andersen, the Island of Loango. Henry Smith had the West end and Louis Andersen the East End. Henry, who had married his first cousin, Alice bought the island from Charles De Linois, a Haitian. De Linois' home on St. Thomas was the building later sold to the Danes for the Danish Consul. De Linois was the son of a Haitian creole family that had migrated to St. Thomas around 1850. At one time his properties included Beverhoudtsberg, Klein Caneel Bay, Big Cruz Bay, Chocolate Hole, Sussanaberg, Trunk Bay and Herman's Bay.

Earl Smith's mother, Alice, born on Thatch Cay, died in 1964 on Loango as a result of a fire when her kerosene refrigerator burst into flames while Earl was refilling it. The charred house is now occupied by Earl's cousin Herman Smith, his wife and daughter, the only other residents on the island other than Rudy and Elsa De Windt. Earl became heir to the western half of Loango and now resides on St. John. Elsa De Windt's sister, Linea Andersen, became Mrs. Josephine Bell.

On July 16, 1980 I interviewed Mr. Desir Monsanto of Mahogany Estates, St. Thomas, whose family owned Thatch Cay (240 acres). Thatch was formerly known as Hope Cay or Esperanza Cay.

Mr. Monsanto told me that years ago on what the locals referred to as Sugar Loaf Mountain, on Thatch, traces of gold were found, mine shafts were dug, platforms erected, but the small findings were not commercially practical for full scale mining.

Silver was discovered in small amounts on Mingo Cay, along with zinc and copper showings.

In the very early days Loango was a 'perfect pastureland', according to Rudy, for goats, sheep, beef cattle, chickens, ducks and geese, raised not only for their own consumption but also for provisioning in a small way, St. Thomas, St. John and Puerto Rico. At one time, the De Windts tried raising domesticated turkeys for food but this became a hassle trying to keep the birds fenced, rounding them up with a whip or even trying to catch them for slaughtering. 'The birds would

peck, claw, flap their big wings, making such a fuss that they gave up raising turkeys.' In the late 20's there were still about 50 head of cattle on Loango along with a half dozen horses. Some vegetables and fruit was grown and they made a lot of cassava bread. Not far from the house is a lime grove. Elsa still makes guavaberry preserves from her favorite recipe.

Some of the dividing walls on the island are still intact. Fishing, in the early days, was a major source of income, bringing in a thousand dollars for two or three days work by one good fisherman like Rudy. Lobster was plentiful, as were sea turtles and crab. In later years the island, as now, reverted to cactus, thornbush and various species of spiny ground cover. The De Windts did manage to grow some fruit trees like cherry, mango and lime. When the De Windts first took over Loango there were no wild fruit bearing trees, plants or vines. The only wild edible growth was wild cucumber. 'We ate bushel upon bushel of delicious wild cucumber', said Elsa, who calculated the cucumber seeds had been air borne or dropped by birds. Her father, Louis Andersen is referred to by author Mrs. Florence Lewisohn as having been a Gendarme in Denmark. But according to Elsa, her father was the son of a Dane who had made the family fortune in the florist business in Denmark, and after military service located in St. Thomas, Henley Cay, Loango Cay becoming a fisherman in these waters. Upon his demise he left his estate to Elsa and her sister Linea. Beside owning the larger portion of Loango, they also own Coki Point. Today the De Windts subsist on staples brought from St. John or St. Thomas except for fish which they sun dry and cure with salt, and meat from the goats they raise.

Since both De Windts have lost their sight they have become captives on their own land. Should a medical emergency arise there is no way for them to take themselves to a hospital or even summon help.

Though Rudy is rather philosophically content with his way of life, nevertheless he bristles when he talks about the lack of social services for him and his wife. Perhaps it is because he owns property. True, the land has monetary value but one can't eat land nor pay for medical needs, nor afford to pay \$76 for a tankful of propane gas delivered to the island when one's income from a small pension is a mere \$56 per month. When I asked Elsa why they did not sell off part of their land to derive an income, she, like most West Indians hark back to the advice of their parents and grandparents, never to sell the land but to hold onto it as long as humanly possible so that all descendants might have a start in life. The De Windt half of the island comprises 46½ acres of which Elsa wishes to set aside 4½ acres for her daughter and grandchildren. The rest of the acreage they refuse to split up but might possibly consider selling as a single parcel for around \$15,000 per acre.

Today, Rudy, having lived 45 years in Loango, now spends most of his time sitting under the shade of a mampoo tree looking out over his small outboard motor tied permanently to his dock because he is no longer able to run the boat.

He told me that he is fascinated with the idea of trying to raise a banana shoot from a banana seed, certain that at one time banana plants had to have started from seed. Rudy now bemoans the fact that 'local Fish and Wildlife Service is so dominated by Frenchie fishermen that laws pertaining to preservation of certain size lobsters, and sea turtles of all sizes, are laughed at'. Rudy maintains that 'the local fishermen are out very early in the morning and late evening when no one is watching, spearing sea turtles, setting underwater nets to entrap them and taking lobster from finger size on up, besides stealing bird eggs . . . anything goes.' Intruders have been making off with his goats and he has to keep vigilant by listening for odd sounds.

As for the fauna of Loango, today there are rats, mice, a few mongoose, wild birds and white, non-poisonous snakes. The Red-footed land tortoise *Geochelone* or *Testudo carbonaria*, a South American species introduced into most all the West Indian islands either by aborigines or by visitors taking the tortoises for pets. The burning of brush and dry grass also helped to decimate this species.

As for the buildings on the island there are, the present dwellings of the De Windts—their cottage by the sea and the old home up on the hill built by Elsa's father and where he and his wife, the former St. Thomian Roselyn Smith lie buried in a tiny graveyard. The old, main house is in a state of disrepair which the De Windts use only as a refuge from flood water and hurricane winds: two small weekend cottages at the western end built by Reid Perkins, now living in France, and another small dwelling owned though unoccupied by Elsa's sister, making a total of five so-called modern dwellings on the entire island. There are, however, four foundation remains of early colonial dwellings but whether built by the Dutch, French, Danes or English has not yet been determined. These foundation remains are mainly at the west end and north central parts of the island. There is also a burial ground with grave markers at the west end. I was unable to site these landmarks because of impenetrable brush.

There are no fresh water ponds or streams on the island, although there is a spring on the northside which still gushes good, cool, fresh water. Louis Andersen had had a well dug some 30 feet deep and though fairly close to the sea its water was not brackish. Hillside water run-off and dislodged boulders have caused the well to come into disuse. Mr. Andersen also had several large cisterns built.

Rudy told me there is still evidence of Indian fish kraals, if that is the correct terminology, to be seen on the northside of the island. These kraals served the aborigines as a depository for keeping fish and sea tortoises alive and fresh. Mr. Richard Joyce, onetime resident on Loango and now living on St. John verifies this, saying there is a large underwater enclosure along the shore lagoon on the northside at the western end where Indians kept fish alive, hemmed in by a fence of woven brush. Several other former residents of Loango told me that

Henry Smith and Louis Andersen had divided the island in half with a boundary stone wall, but Rudy De Windt says this is not so, that the wall had been built by slaves prior to the coming of Smith and Andersen.

As for aboriginal artifacts, Rudy did find a small broken petaloid celt and a slightly larger celt on Loango which celts are now on display in the Museum at The Battery, St. John, V.I.

At one time there probably were good beaches on both north and south sides but through storm and tidal action the beaches are largely strewn with rock, coral and debris. The waters around the island are crystal clear although the bay bottoms are strewn with litter from visiting boaters.

Through the many discussions I have had with more than 150 old-time residents having some connection with Loango Island, I have the impression that the island is not only rich in aboriginal deposits but also early colonial historic building remains, all of which should be investigated at length. But it will require a number of stalwart bushwhackers to cut pathways through the thornbush before any detailed field survey can be attempted.