

The Virgin Islands Public Library System



Elaine Ione Sprauve *Library and Museum of the Cultural Arts*

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The building was one of the first substantial buildings of its kind on St. John. Most early buildings on the island were wooden structures and smaller dwellings. According to a map drawn in 1790 by Peter Oxholm, John Wood was the earliest recorded owner of the Enighed Estate. Although no specific documentation exists, it is believed that the Wood family acquired the Estate some time between 1750 and 1757. A gravestone located in the cemetery next to the library/museum indicates that William Wood died at Enighed Estate, St. John, on April 9, 1751. The estate remained in the family until 1791 when it was deeded to George Hassel (or Hazzel) and Co. During the time these two families owned the estate, it became a major source of sugar production in St. John.

During the 1800s, the estate changed owners several times. However, it never realized the degree of agriculture success the original owners enjoyed and by 1899 Judge Jorgensen purchased Enighed from

After a fire destroyed the buildings at the beginning of the twentieth century, Enighed, a burnt-out ruin, remained uninhabited. In 1918, Captain Alfred White purchased the estate from Judge Jorgensen and began to sell off parcels of land. By 1941, White sold the remaining land and buildings to Alice Maude Nielsen. Three years later, Alice Nielsen sold the property to the Municipality of St. Thomas and St. John. The government divested itself of most of the land, but retained ownership of .60 acre on which the old burnt-out ruin remained. The property remained untouched until the 1970s.

On July 1, 1976, the Enighed site was admitted to the National Register of Historic Places. Island Resources Foundation was awarded a contract for historical documentation of the Enighed ruins. A contract was drawn between Design Collaborative, Inc. and the Department of Conversation and Cultural Affairs in May of 1977 for the restoration work. At a public forum the community was informed that the building would be too small for the original intended use as a community center. Because a library facility was desperately needed, the building was designated as a combined library and museum.

By June of 1979 building materials had begun to arrive at the site, and by September the exterior of the building had undergone an extraordinary transformation. One year later the entire building was accepted significantly complete.

On February 7, 1980, the Thirteenth Legislature of the Virgin Islands honored Miss Elaine Ione Sprauve for her service to the government and her outstanding contributions to the people of the Virgin Islands with Act Number 4404, renaming the Enighed Estate House, the Elaine Ione Sprauve Library and Museum of Cultural Arts.