

floor. Now, however, the second floor is a museum, and the couple live on the first. Barbara is an accomplished painter, and she enjoys meeting interesting people.

Nearly all of the furniture is from Barbados; a few pieces come from Haiti, and the bed is from the VI. The Royal Copenhagen porcelain is from Barbara's parents.

From the second floor you can see a nightblooming cactus on a structure which used to be the servants' quarters for the house next door. Watch for the iguanas which have trained Philbert to feed them hibiscus flowers from the lovely small garden below.

Be sure to check out the comments in the guest book and add your own. Admission is \$7. It's open Mon. to Sat. from 10 AM–4 PM and on Sat. and Sun. from noon–4 PM. Knock for admission. To get here, pass Government House, then Moron House, and then turn L at the Lt. Governor's office. The entrance is a short walk up the step street to the L.

99 STEPS AND BLACKBEARD'S TOWER: The step street perpendicular to Blackbeard's Tower is the 99 Steps, most famous of the town's step streets. As you climb, count to see how many there actually are. Note the multicolored bricks: they arrived here as ship's ballast; the yellow ones are from Denmark, the reds come from England, France and Spain.

SYNAGOGUE OF BERACHA VESHALOM VEGIMULTH HASIDIM: This house of worship is on Crystal Gade. Take the stairs up to the entrance. Rebuilt in 1833 on the site of previous synagogues, this building was constructed in a mixture of Gothic Revival styles. The congregation was founded in 1796 by settlers arriving from Curacao and St. Eustatius.

Still in use today, it's the oldest synagogue on the island and the second oldest in the Western Hemisphere. All furnishings date from 1833. Its six Torahs (Old Testament parchment scrolls hand-lettered in Hebrew) remain hidden behind the mahogany ark's doors, but you can see the Spanish 11th-C menorah (candelabra used in the celebration of Chanukah).

There are two explanations for the sand on its floors. One is that it commemorates the exodus of the Jews from Egypt. The other is more complex. During the Spanish Inquisition, Spanish Sephardic Jews were compelled to practice in secret. Sand muffled the sound of their prayers and other movements; this custom was brought with them when they emigrated to the Caribbean, and similar sand floors may be found in other Caribbean synagogues. Today, its 300 members is largely composed of recent immigrants. This congregation celebrated its 200th anniversary in 1996 and was named a National Historic Landmark in 1997. The synagogue is open Mon. through Fri. from 9:30 AM–4 PM. Worship services are held on Fri. evenings.

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MARKET SQUARE: The site of what was once the largest slave market in the Caribbean, **Market Square** is located along Kronprindsens Gade near the library. Here, locals sell a vast variety of fruit and vegetables ranging from tannia to okra to cassava. There's even a dreadlocked dude who offers up fresh squeezed sugarcane juice; a pair of "Black Jews" bear witness against imposters in Israel. The market's unique curved roof was imported from Europe. It has been recently refurbished.

ALTON AUGUSTUS ADAMS MUSIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE: The Alton

Augustus Adams Music Research Institute (☎ 774-6707), 1-B Kongens Gade, is a branch of the Black Music Research at Columbia College in Chicago. This resource center containing computerized archival material on Virgin Islands and Caribbean music opened in 2003. The institute is housed in the ancestral abode of Alton Augustus Adams (1889–1987) who was the first black bandmaster in the US Navy as well as the composer of the Virgin Islands march. The institute is attempting to revive interest in forms of traditional music such as *quelbe*, the official music of the Virgin Islands. It's open Tues. through Fri. from 9 AM–3PM.

<http://www.cbmr.org>

PARADISE POINT: Set atop Flag Hill and overlooking town, this shopping area, restaurant, and bar can be reached by road.

The **St. Thomas Skyride** (☎ 774-9809) is open daily. It takes visitors from opposite the Havensight Mall up to this 700-ft. look-out point. This is best experienced if you've never taken a chairlift before; otherwise, it's not all that remarkable for the premium price of transport (\$19 adults, \$9.50 children 6–12). This is a cruise-ship-passenger tailored attraction if there ever was one! A small collection of shops and a restaurant is set at the top; they've also added the Skyjump (9 AM–5 PM), a safer version of bungee jumping, and offer a rental apartment and cottage as well as wedding and other packages. (It is generally closed when cruise ships are not in port).

BUTTERFLY FARM: One of a chain of such operations, the Butterfly Farm at Havensight Mall by the Cruise Ship Dock shows visitors the life cycle of the butterfly.

<http://www.thebutterflyfarm.com>

Frenchtown

Town within a town, this small community in the SW part of Charlotte Amalie is home to one of the smallest but most conspicuous ethnic groups in the Virgin Islands — descendants of the French Huguenots. Also known as “Careenage” because old sailing boats careened here for repairs, the brightly painted houses have immaculate, packed-dirt yards. These days Frenchtown is visited mainly by patrons of its fine restaurants.

HISTORY: Centuries ago, Protestant French Huguenots, fleeing religious persecution in Catholic France, were among the earliest settlers in the Caribbean. They arrived on several islands, including miniscule St. Barths (St. Bartolemy). In 1848, two members of the La Place family migrated to the site of Frenchtown and to sleepy Hull Bay along the N coast. Emigration began in force between 1863–1875, when economic conditions on St. Barths worsened and many sought to flee that tiny, rocky wart of an island.

THE PEOPLE: Some 1,500 strong, the “Frenchie” are a tough people renowned for their fishing abilities. The two French communities speak different dialects of archaic West Indian French and retain their cultural distinctions; there has been intermarriage and sociability between them.

Traditional dress was unique and resembled that found in their native Brittany. Women's heads were adorned with the *caleche*, the traditional shoulder-length headdress; men wore black and calico shirts, had their denim trousers rolled halfway up their legs, and went barefoot. Retaining this style of dress after arrival caused the locals to poke fun of them. In return, the vitriolic French spat out “cha cha” which means “go to the devil.”

Ironically, the locals began to refer to the community as “Cha Cha Town,” a name