



ENGLISH VERSION OF

Dansk Vestindisk Selskab

# MAGASINET

**DIGESTED  
VERSION  
MARCH  
2020  
VOLUME 55  
NO. 2**

**PETER  
VON SCHOLTEN  
OWNED 9 PAINTINGS  
OF NATIVE  
AMERICANS.**

**SEE PAGE 6.**



## TO OUR USVI READERS

Danish Westindian Society has decided to give our non-Danish speaking friends in USVI the opportunity to familiarize themselves with some of the contents of Magasinet, the 5-annually circular of DWIS. This is the first edition, which will purely be digital. The contents will be direct translations of some, and not all, articles of the Danish version of the actual month. Of articles from the March 2020 issue of Magasinet, which you will not find in this English version, are “Slave trade – a poor business case”, an article by historian Kaare Lauring, covering 9 pages and to be continued in the June

issue of Magasinet. Further the article titled “Cock-fighting in USVI banned” is not available in English – 2 pages, and neither is the article titled “Satire”. This leaves 3 articles from the March issue, which we hope, that you will enjoy reading.

May this initiative contribute to maintain good relations between Denmark and USVI, and please do not hesitate to contact me, the editor, with proposals and/or complaints.

*Michael Keldsen*

*Editor*

*mkel@gorrissenfederspiel.com*

## QUEEN MARGRETHE

**Protector of DWIS will be 80 on April 16, 2020.**

DWIS, members and board, congratulate our Queen on her 80th birthday. DWIS further thanks Her Majesty for undertaking the protection of our Society.

Queen Margrethe has during her reign (since 1972) been a worthy representative for our nation.. Whether visiting all parts of the Realm, or when Her Majesty has represented Denmark on journeys abroad.

It has been of great importance to our Society to have the Queen as our protector, as it has vested legitimacy towards the public in our efforts to make the history of our former dependencies in the Caribbean known, preserve historical artefacts and tales from the islands. At the same time communicate present day facts and history, and arrange friendship meetings between Denmark and USVI.

On behalf of DWIS

*Lars Hven Troelsen*

*hven@oncable.dk*

## WORSE THAN IRMA

**This is the way many inhabitants of the British island, Anguilla, talk about Brexit. 31st of January 2020 the island as well as other British islands in the Caribbean lost as a consequence of Brexit the advantages they have enjoyed from the membership of the EU. Whether those advantages will eventually completely disappear, depend on the agreements EU and UK can reach as per 31st December 2020.**

The islanders of Anguilla have had no influence on the decision about Brexit.

The referendum about the continued relationship between EU and UK was not held in the British overseas territories, including Anguilla, as those territories are not member of EU, but solely submitted to EU rules as a consequence of their status as an overseas British territory.

But Brexit may have a considerably important impact on the future of the island. The islanders themselves point to the close proximity of the neighbouring French/Dutch island of Sint Maarten/St. Martin, which has always been important for both islands, as well occupational, family wise as economically. It is feared that a part of the Anguillan population of 16.000 will move to the neighbouring island or other Caribbean islands, which are associated with EU.

Anguilla's economy is dependent on tourism and fishery. The latter will be influenced negatively, if Anguillan fishermen in the future can only fish in Anguillan waters and they will start paying tariffs for export of fish to countries connected to the EU. Tourism

will be threatened by many factors. Anguilla does not have an Atlantic airport. Tourists to Anguilla come via the airport of Sint Maarten/St. Martin. Brexit may be an obstacle for the easy access of tourists to Anguilla from the Dutch/French area; Anguilla imports 90 per cent of its goods from the neighbouring island, and is therefore at risk of having to pay tariffs, which could influence the number of tourists negatively, since Anguilla already today has a very high level of living costs. Tourism may also be influenced by stiffened immigration rules for workers from EU associated countries.

After the hurricane Irma Anguilla is environmentally impacted by the extreme damages. The annual contribution from EU of 14 mill. EUR to environmental damage control will disappear and it is the view among ordinary people, that UK will not increase its contribution to the island. Areas, which are important for tourism, may therefore not be rescued from the damages and destructions that came with Irma. First, the turtle colony has been harmed by Irma.

The islanders venture frustration over the situation, partly because the consequences for the future existence of the island are feared, partly because it is felt, that the British people and the British government have shown typical colonial thinking in connection with Brexit and are not really interested in the problems of the British overseas territories.

Maybe a similar feeling, which was felt in the Danish West Indies, when the Danish government in 1917 sold the islands and its population without even asking the same about their position of such a sale. It will be interesting to see, if the British Caribbean islands look to other nations for their future relationship, or they may even consider independence.

*Michael Keldsen*  
*Editor*

## CARL LAWAETZ – THE FOUNDER OF A DYNASTY

**DWIS recently in cooperation with Little La Grange House Corporation and with a grant from the SOLAR Trust of DKK 25.000,- launched scanning of a very large collection of photos, which is located in Carl and Marie Lawaetz Museum on the property Little La Grange near Frederikssted in St. Croix. Most people with an interest in the former Danish West Indies will have heard about the Lawaetz family and may even have visited Little La Grange, which previously served as residence for the family.**

**The history of the Lawaetz family in St. Croix takes its beginning with the young Carl Lawaetz. Elizabeth Rezende, who is in charge of the scanning project, and is an anthropologist, has written an article about Carl Lawaetz and the family. The following is a digested and edited extract from the article.**

*By Michael Keldsen*

Carl Augustus Heinrich Lawaetz (1866-1947) came as a young farmer to St. Croix in 1891. His motive for moving to the West Indies was a desire to start cattle breeding, and also encouragement from his cousin, pastor Herman Lawaetz, who was parson in Christianssted Lutheran Church.

Carl Lawaetz' first position was at Estate Sion Farm, where he was, until his appointment as manager in 1894 of Estate Boetzborg, which farm was purely engaged in cattle farming. When the owner, Bromley Nelthrop died, his widow offered Carl Lawaetz to take over

also the 2 other farms of the family, Grenard and Cane Garden. In these two farms sugar caning was also part of the activities, so now he was engaged in cattle, crops and sugar canes – and this during a period of a global crisis for the sugar cane industry, i.a. because of the sugar beet competition. And specifically for St. Croix, because of poor soil caused by exploitation for many years of the disposable areas, which had substantially reduced the yield from crops and sugar cane.

In 1896 Carl Lawaetz acquired 2 farms on the North East side of St. Croix, Jolly Hill and Little La Grange. Those acquisitions took place during a time of general merging of farms and concentration of ownership with the purpose of making the industry more efficient and thus maintain sugar production on the island. The total acreage of Carl Lawaetz' properties was 450, and at a point of time he concluded that his farms were too small for sugarcane farming, and that the future was in cattle breeding. Consequently he finally (in 1924) ceased sugarcane production. However, the production of vegetables, which he had started some years earlier, continued.

After for 10 years having not travelled outside of St. Croix, he went to Denmark in 1901, where he met Marie Nyeberg (1871-1964). Marie had been educated as an arts teacher and taught in a school in Denmark. She went with Carl to St. Croix, where they were married in September 1902. During the period 1904-17 they had the 7 children Anna, Else, Asta, Fritz, Kai, Erik and Inger. Marie was actively involved in the upbringing and education of her children. They went to the Danish school in Bell House, Strandgade



*The Lawaetz family in 1916, from l. Carl, Marie, Anna, Else, Frits, Kai and Erik.*

in Frederikssted, but were also taught by Marie, mainly in Danish. Several of the children were at a point of time sent to boarding school in Denmark for their higher education. Further Marie was busy running the domestic parts of the estates. From time to time Little La Grange and Jolly Hill had between 75 and 40 people "on board".

As mentioned, Carl Lawaetz put increased focus on cattle breeding, which after a long and intensive effort, which had been started by Bromley Nelthropp, in 1918 led to the presentation of the so called Senepol cattle. This breed was created on the basis of N'Dama bulls from Senegal in Africa and Red Pol cows from St. Croix (however, originally an English breed). As of today the Senepol cattle is thriving well, and reference is made to Nina Yorks article in Magasinet no. 5 – November 2018, page 8, where the



*Little La Grange photographed from one of the adjacent hills after the hurricane in 1899.*

story of Carl and Maries grandchild Hans Lawaetz, who is engaged in the Senepol cattle farm, Annaly, is told.

Carl Lawaetz was in opposition to the sale in 1917 of the Danish-West Indies to USA, and it is suggested in Elizabeth Rezendes article, that the Lawaetz boys were not permitted to participate in the Transfer ceremonies. The parents did not want the boys to be upset over seeing the Danish flag being taken down, and the Stars and Stripes being raised. However, two of the girls were allowed to take part in the ceremony.

Whereas most Danish families returned to Denmark, the Lawaetz family stayed, and took active part – until this day – in the community life of the islands as well economically, culturally and politically.

## SHOW ME, WHAT YOU HAVE ON YOUR WALLS, AND...

**I know who you are – maybe!**

**Jens Villumsen, one of our members, who is researching the history of Peter von Scholten, has made a full transcript of the protocol from the Copenhagen Probate Court from 1854-56 concerning the estate of deceased Peter von Scholten and his wife Anna Elisabeth, nee Thortsen.**

**The protocol is, as was normal in those days, full of details, which give us an opportunity to add another piece to the puzzle of the life of the deceased. What did the interior of their apartment in Copenhagen look like? What was hanging on the walls? In this article we look at some paintings of American natives.**

Peter von Scholten died on January 26, 1854 in Altona in Holstein (present days Germany), where he spent some time with his son in law, chamberlain Du Platt. Anna Elisabeth had died some years before. After winding up the estate as per May 27, 1856 the total of assets was RDL 95.114 and the proceeds of the estate RDL 42.020; that means an estate of some value, probably in todays money USD 1.2 mill.

This short article will touch upon a small part of the estate, what we could call the cultural part; that means book- and art collection. Peter and Anna Elisabeth von Scholtens book collection was in many respects broadly based. The family has read literature in the original languages of Danish, German, English and French, with an excess of books in the German language, as well fiction as



*Keokuk, Sauk chief, equipped with headdress of coloured animal hair.*



*Chou-Man-i-Case (Prairie Wolf), Oto Chief, equipped with headdress of bison horn. Pictured exhibited in Ethnographic Collection.*



*Hayne Hudjihini (Eagle of Delight), Oto. One of the 5 wives of Chou-Man-i-Case; in a European dress. Exhibited in Ethnographic Collection.*

non-fiction. Rousseau, Dumas, Goethe, Schiller and Dickens were on the shelves. Also Danish poets such as Baggesen, Oehlenschläger, Holberg and Goldschmidt were to be found there. And then a lot of non-fiction literature, which reflects the interest in the family of military, slavery, Nordic mythology, royalty, governance, politics and philosophy as well as geography with emphasis on the Americas (the Caribbean). Most interesting is the presence of Harriet Becher Stowes Uncle Toms Cabin, a book written and published the year before Peter von Scholtens death. He had bought this through an agent in London for the lavish sum of 7 RDL and 48 shilling. Slavery as an institution has had his interest until the end of his life.

The collection of paintings are roughly divided into three categories; the royal part with paintings of Danish kings, incl. King Frederik 6th, often mentioned as the patron of Peter von Scholten; paintings with motives from cities and landscapes (bed pieces!) and then – strangely – 9 portraits of American native chiefs, which according to the protocol “...were painted in natura”. The protocol estimates a value of RDL 200, which was one of the highest valued items among the von Scholten artefacts.

The pictures, which are illustrating this article, were painted by the American Charles Bird King in the 1820'ies on request from the Bureau of Indian Affairs in connection with their invitation to negotiations in Washington of a number of Indian chiefs. In total King painted 147 portraits of those visiting native



*Choncape, deputy chief of Oto, armed with club of the type “gunstock”.*



*Petaleshario (Generous Chief), Pawnee chief, headdress of eagle feathers.*



*Peskelechaco, Pawnee chief, wearing painted bison cape.*

Indians, of which 9 paintings were in Peter von Scholtens possession. Why and how they had been acquired by Peter von Scholten is not known. In comparison with other art and paintings in the von Scholten home, they do not fit in. F.inst. there are no other ethnographic paintings, nor literature on the book shelves, which support the idea, that von Scholten had an interest in ethnography.

The 9 paintings were sold by the estate at an auction to “The Royal Ethnographic Museum”, which was later turned into the “Ethnographic Collection of the Danish National Museum” in Copenhagen. Two of the paintings are today on exhibition there.



*Monchousia (White Plume), Kansa Chief. In the protocols of the museum it is quoted, that “he visited Washington in 1825 and caused a lot of attention due to his savageness and absolute lack of civilization.”*



*Young-Corn-Planter, Seneca Indian of mixed race, probably farmer.*



*Sharitarish (Wicked Chief), Pawnee chief, dressed in roach of coloured animal hair with eagle feathers.*