

Jacob H. S. Lind House; now
Bethanis, Frederick Lutheran
Church Parish Hall
Nørre Gade 6
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas
Virgin Islands

HABS No. VI-15

HABS
VI
3-CHAM
6-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington Planning and Service Center
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JACOB H. S. LIND HOUSE, now BETHANIA
FREDERICK LUTHERAN CHURCH PARISH HALL

HABS No. VI-15

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Address: Nørre Gade 6, Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

Present Owner and Occupant: Frederick Church--Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Thomas

Present Use: Parish hall.

Statement of Significance: This is a typical well-preserved example of the larger town houses of Charlotte Amalie from the early nineteenth century. It has served as a parish hall for the St. Thomas Lutheran Church since 1908.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Recorded in deed books: Kings I, p. 5, and Country Register, p. 223, in the St. Thomas Recorder of Deeds Office, Kongens Gade 18, St. Thomas.

The original owner, Jacob Henrick Schmaltz Lind, an attorney and auditor, acquired the property by deed from Bert Christian Stenersen 27 April 1799. On his death, the ownership transferred to his wife, Helena B. Lind. Following her death the property passed to her daughter and her husband, Anne and Ferdinand L. von Lindemann, 30 July 1852. 12 June 1876 the title passed to George H. Blohm, merchant from Hamburg, who sold the property to the Danish Lutheran Church 10 June 1908. The Lutheran Church was an established state church under the Danish ownership of the islands and church property was technically government property. Therefore, when the United States purchased the islands from the Danes in 1917, the Government of the Danish West Indies by deed of gift on 29 March 1917 transferred the ownership of this property to the Watchful Circle of the King's Daughters of St. Thomas, an organization of the church. This organization transferred the title to the Lutheran Church of St. Thomas 29 December 1927, and the various members of the Lutheran Church transferred the title to Frederik Church--Evangelical

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Lutheran Church of St. Thomas, a Virgin Islands Corporation, on 17 November 1964. Earliest available tax records for this property go back only to 1827, in the U. S. National Archives, Washington, Virgin Islands Records, Record Group 55, St. Thomas and St. John Tax Commission, Matricula (roll or register) 1827, owner Mrs. H. B. Lind, 1196 square alen (one alen equals approximately 2 English feet, 0.627 meters), taxed 37 rigsdaller 36 skilling (one rigsdaller equalled 96 skilling, and equalled approximately one pesos or one piece-of-eight with which value the U. S. dollar was equated); matriculae for 1828 and 1831 are the same; by 1839 the house had been enlarged to 1394 square alen, taxed 43 rigsdaller 54 skilling; matriculae for 1840 and 1841 repeat these larger figures.

2. Date of erection: Built before 1827, perhaps c. 1806-17. The plan shown in the Hingelberg Map dated March 1837 is of this building, and corresponds with the assessed area of 1196 square alen in the Matriculae for 1827, 1828, 1831. The only earlier Matricula available in the U. S. National Archives is for 1823, and there is no entry for the name Lind in that year suggesting that the house may not have been built until the period 1823-27 by Mrs. Helena Lind, Jacob Lind's widow. This entire area was heavily damaged in a fire in 1826, when the church immediately to the east was gutted leaving only the masonry walls standing. Government buildings to the west of the house were entirely destroyed in this fire, and it seems unlikely that if the house were built before 1826 it would have escaped serious damage in the fire. There had also been a serious fire in Charlotte Amalie in 1806, and if this house is part of the property Mrs. Lind inherited from her husband on his death in 1817, it probably was not built before 1806.
3. Notes on known alterations and additions: Tax Records indicate that the house was enlarged, probably by the addition of service buildings in the rear, between 1831-39. Matricula for 1831 shows that the total assessed area of the buildings was 1196 square alen, which increased to 1394 square alen in 1839.

In 1908 when the church bought this property they paid \$2339.75 for it, and immediately spent \$1164.67 on

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unspecified repairs. In 1933 when the old people who had been housed in the building were moved elsewhere, the building was remodeled to accommodate the primary grades of the Sunday School. Also, in the main building, "the wooden doorway connecting a little room on the north-eastern end of the building with the hall was removed, and the beautiful arch was cut in the wall. Two of the three rooms on the western side of the large hall were used to form the present stage." [Larsen]

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with Building:

Before this building was bought by the church and named Bethania, it was used as a Post Office. Recorded names of occupants other than the owners include a Dr. Wissing, a general practitioner, and the Gordon family. After the church bought the house in 1908 the west wing was used as an old peoples' home until 1933 with Miss Eliza Wingwood as caretaker. The church has also used the building for meetings of church societies, evening services, Sunday school, bazaars, socials, etc. In 1942-43 it served as an annex to the Charlotte Amalie High School. [Larsen]

C. Sources of Information:

Primary sources:

Deed Books: Kings I, p. 5, and Country Register, p. 223, in the St. Thomas Recorder of Deeds Office.

U. S. National Archives, Washington, Virgin Islands Records, Records Group 55, St. Thomas and St. John Tax Commission, Matriculae (rolls or registers) for 1827, 1828, 1831, 1839, 1840, 1841. A dimensioned plan of the house is included in the Map of Charlotte Amalie, measured, drawn and annotated by Frederick Christian Peter Hingelberg (1796-1850) between 1833-37. This portion dated 1837. Photocopies in the St. Thomas Public Library and the Virgin Islands National Park Headquarters, St. Thomas.

Secondary sources:

Larsen, Jens, editor and principal author, 150th Anniversary of the Dedication of Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church. Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands: 1943. ("A History of Bet[h]ania" by Adine M. Kean, pp. 58-59).

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
August 1965.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: Unusual and well-preserved building exhibiting well-executed characteristics of the typical Charlotte Amalie masonry house. The exterior has retained its original character and design. The interior shows evidence of changes but many details and design elements have been preserved.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition and is well maintained. There is some termite infestation of the interior woodwork, but it appears to have been arrested.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Size: The building has two stories. The U-shaped main building is 66 x 42 feet, with a wing on the west side of the lot 17 x 74 feet.
2. Foundations: Rubble masonry and brick.
3. Wall construction: Rubble masonry with brick lining of corners and all wall openings. All exposed surfaces are stuccoed and lime washed (yellow with white trim).
4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance to the building is through an arched gateway in the center of the ground floor which leads to a passageway and the court on the north side of the building. The ground floor rooms (2) can be entered through identical arched door openings directly from the street (2) or from the above-mentioned passageway. They have shutter doors of double board construction. The second floor has four entrances: one is in the center of the west gable reached by a masonry staircase from a small walled-in court opening to the street; the three other entrances to the second floor are on the court or north side of the building (one is centered in the building and is reached by a symmetrical double staircase in masonry

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with a center and two side landings and supported on arches over the central, first-floor passageway; the other two are in the slightly projecting wings). All door openings on the second floor have flat heads with slightly projecting surrounds and keystones, and shutter doors with panels towards the interior and interior paneled and louvered doors. The wing on the west side of the lot, which consists of three adjoining structures has 11 openings towards the court, of which 9 are doors. Except for one modern door, they are all shutter doors of double board construction.

- b. Windows: Window openings throughout are flat headed with flat projecting surrounds and keystones. On the south, east, and west sides of the building the keystones have molded faces. All openings have outside shutters, plain on the exterior and paneled on the interior, and interior jalousie sash.
5. Roof:
- a. Shape and covering: All roofs are hipped with corrugated metal roofing and wooden framing.
 - b. Eaves, cornice: The roof has only slightly projecting eaves, except on the wing towards the north lot line, where it is extended into a shed roof covering the gallery. The shed roof is supported on wooden and pipe columns, and has a pie-crust fascia board. The main wing has a flat belt course on the level of the second floor towards the street, projecting corner boards and a molded cornice approximately 1'-6" below the eaves along the west, south, and east sides of the building.
6. Chimneys: The end structure of the west wing (north end) is a Cook House and has a chimney over an open hearth.
7. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: In addition to the previously mentioned staircases, the building has two terraces flanking the central courtyard, built against the lot lines and on the level of the second floor. The terraces have paneled masonry railings and meet the

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first and lowest of the four levels of the rear section of the lot. The terrace to the west serves as an open gallery for the west wing and is partially roofed as mentioned above.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plan: The ground floor has a central passageway from front to back and two flanking rooms. The second floor of the main wing is occupied for two-thirds of its length by an assembly hall. Two small rooms are located in the projecting wings towards the court and two more towards the west. The west wing has six rooms in a row, all accessible from the gallery.
2. Stairways: There are no interior stairways.
3. Flooring: The ground floor has flagstone and brick pavements. Staircases and second floor terraces have brick and clay tile pavements. The main wing has wooden flooring. The west wing has wooden flooring, brick, and concrete pavements.
4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Masonry walls throughout the interior are plastered and painted. The ground floor and west wing have wooden ceilings and exposed beams on rafters. The second floor of the main wing has sheathed wooden ceilings.
5. Doorways and doors: The interior doors on the second floor (none on the first floor) are either double doors with three panels for each wing or single eight-paneled doors.
6. Trim: Windows and doors have molded or fluted casings and in two cases arched overheads. The stage in the west end of the assembly hall is raised approximately 36" and has a paneled front. The trim is otherwise limited to baseboards, cornice, and ceiling moldings.
7. Hardware: Most of the hardware appears to be of recent date. The wrought-iron strap hinges, however, have been preserved throughout and there are box locks, H and L hinges on three doors.

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8. Lighting: The building has been wired for electricity.
- D. Site: The building is situated on the north side of Nørre Gade. It is built to the street line on a lot that slopes steeply up to the north; it is located between the front yard of the Frederick's Lutheran Church to the east and a two-story building to the west in the downtown section of Charlotte Amalie. The lot extends through the block between Nørre Gade to the south and Kongens Gade to the north. Above the court to the rear of the building on the same level as the street, the lot rises in four levels retained by masonry walls and connected by staircases. The court has a raised cistern on its north side with a vaulted roof and a well in its center. All roof gutters are connected to the cistern.

Prepared by Frederik C. Gjessing, Architect
National Park Service
December 1960.