

# National Archives News

The Newsletter of the Archives and Records Management Unit

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## Hear Ye! Hear Ye! The Archives Act, 2010 is Passed

Yes, you read it right. Archives and Records Management Unit (ARMU) is now the National Archives and Records Management Department—well, once the Act's proclamation has been made and gazetted. The

House of Assembly passed the Act on 22nd July, 2010, and it was Assented to by Her Excellency the Acting Governor on 12th August, 2010.

The Act has 47 provisions which deal with Preliminaries- Title and Interpretation, Establishment of the Archives, its functions, powers and the Director and other staff, Establishment of the Advisory Board and its functions, Responsibilities for managing records and archives, Register and guides relating to archives, Access to public records, Objects of archival significance, Legal provisions, and Miscellaneous provisions.

Many readers are confused regarding the definition of a record. The Act defines a record as: recorded information regardless of form or medium created, received and maintained by a public office or individual in the pursuance of its or his or her legal obligations, such as an original or a copy of a manuscript, paper, letter, register, report, book, magazine, map, chart, plan, drawing, picture, photograph or machine-readable record or a part of it either handwritten, drawn, printed or produced in any other way on paper or on any other material except granite, and officially produced or prepared, or received, in an office in the course of its official functions; and cinematograph, film, microfilm, recording, tape, all other audio visual materials, disc, computer or ma-

chine readable records including all electronic records received or made in a public office.

Whew!! That's a mouth full. Basically, a record is information in any form, created or received, in performing official duties. So yes, that private email you sent using your work email account is a record.

There are three types of records defined by the Act: private, public and Virgin Islands records. Private records are just that: records held by custodians or private owners. Public records are the opposite.: They are the records held by ARMU prior to the Act, and records created, received, and maintained by public officers, ministers, courts within the Virgin Islands jurisdiction, or any designated individual. Virgin Islands records are records that are the property of the Virgin Islands, including public and private records, records declared by an Order made under this Act to be a Virgin Islands record, or records of a public office.

Some records as defined above are archives even at creation, but generally when the majority of records are thirty years old or older, they become public archives; and are transferred to the Archives Repository for permanent preservation.

So come on down to the 'department' and see what we are all about. We are the newest department on the scene, but the location is ...still the same!

-National Archives Act, 2010.;Verna Penn Moll with contributions from K. Jackson-George

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### Today in VI History – September

**September 1, 1961**— The Tourist Advisory Board was established for a period of nine months. - Source: *Tortola Times* 16/9/1961

**1975**— On this date, the first annual wooden boat regatta was held at Jost Van Dyke, B.V.I. It was sponsored by Foxy's Tamarind Bar. -Source: *Public Library Almanac*

**September 2, 1964**— George Elwin Ulric Dawson was appointed as Labour Commissioner. -Source: *Public Library Almanac*

**September 3, 1786**— The American Ship "Cruger" which was sailing from Philadelphia to St. Croix under Captain William, was wrecked on Horseshoe Reef Anegada. -Source: *Public Library Almanac*.

**September 4, 1961** — During the storm which swept chaos on Anegada, a baby girl was born to an Anegadian family just after their house roof was blown off. The baby was named "Donna" after the hurricane. - Source: *Tortola Times*, September 10, 1961

**September 5, 1948**— The Carrot Bay Infant School was opened by Hon. J. O. Georges and was dedicated by Rev. C. E. Hardy. - Source: *Torch*, October 1948

## DGO History Award—Biography: Recording VI History

In February of this year, the Deputy Governor announced that the theme for the DGO's History Research Award, 2010 is: 'Researching and Writing Biography.'

Mrs. Verna Penn Moll, the Chief Records Manager Officer, wants readers to be reminded that a biography is a written account of the series of events that make up a person's life. These events will include the locale and will lend the reader knowledge about a country, its customs, its traditions, the economic and health situations, and the issues within the community during that period of time.

A biography is the story of one's life—the history of a person. Biographical writing is just one genre of writing and one type of writing history. Researching and writing are therefore researching and writing history. Biographies can be just a few pages long or fill an entire book or two.

Biographies may:

- Analyze and interpret the events of a person's life
- Try to find connections and to explain circumstances
- Usually about famous people, but those about 'ordinary' people can tell us a lot about a particular time and place
- Usually about historical figures, but sometimes about people who are still alive
- Are written in chronological order
- Grouped by time periods or specific topics or accomplishments
- Short and tell the basic facts of someone's life and its importance
- Long and include basic information with more detail and explain circumstances

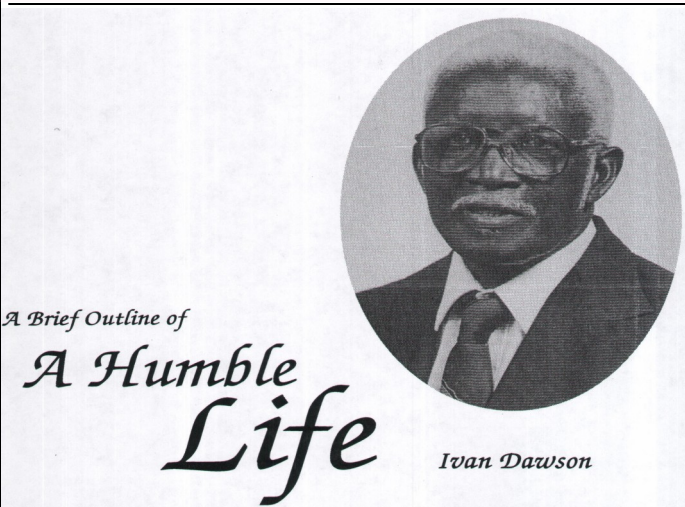
**To start writing a biography:**

1. Select a person you are interested in
2. Find out the basic facts of the person's life. Start with the encyclopedia and almanac.
3. Think about what else you would like to know about the person, and what parts of the life you want to write most about. Some questions you might want to think about include:
  - What makes this person special or interesting?
  - What kind of effect did he or she have on the world? other people?
  - What are the adjectives you would most use to describe the person?
  - What examples from their life illustrate those qualities?
  - What events shaped or changed this person's life?
  - Did he or she overcome obstacles? Take risks? Get lucky?
  - Would the world be better or worse if this person hadn't lived? How and why?
4. Do additional research at the library or on the Internet to find information that helps you answer these questions and tell an interesting story.

When researching your subject, ensure that you utilize primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are letters, diaries, first-hand accounts (interviews, ect), or newspapers. Secondary sources include other biographies, reference books, or histories that provide

Why should you be a part of this year's theme? Well who better to write the Virgin Islands history than Virgin Islanders themselves? If you agree with us, then do not let this opportunity slip by. Participate in this year's theme and become a part of the history.

Verna Penn Moll with contributions from K. Jackson-George



Reading history is good for all of us; if you know history, you know that there is no such thing as a self-made man or woman. We are shaped by people we have met. Yes, reading history will make you a better citizen and more appreciative of the law, and of freedom, and of how the economy works or doesn't work, but it is also an immense pleasure- the way art is, or music is, or poetry is. And it's never stale. (David C. McCullough Author b. 1933)

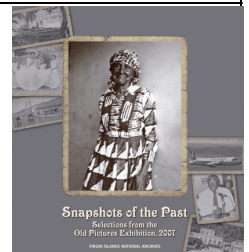
### 'Biography' Quotes

***Biography is the only true history.*** (Thomas Carlyle , Scottish Historian and Essayist, 1795-1881)

***There is properly no history; only biography.*** (Ralph Waldo Emerson, Poet, Lecturer, and Essayist, 1803-1882).

***The best biographies leave their readers with a sense of having all but entered into a second life and of having come to know another human being in some ways better than he knew himself.*** (Leon Edel)

***"Snapshots of the Past":  
A piece of local history . Get  
your copy today!!!***



## Records Management Tips

### Cleaning Moulding Files (Techniques and Chemicals), Part II (continued from the last issue)

#### 4. Test for reaction to paper or ink.

Before using any of the following techniques and chemicals, perform a test on a small portion of the document to check the reaction to paper or ink. If ink runs, stop the procedure.

- Vinegar is a good cleaning agent in fighting the battle of getting rid of mould. It may smell strong when you use it, but that smell goes away in no time, leaving a bacteria-free, mould-free, mildew-free, water stain-free surface behind. It's perfectly natural and biodegradable.
- Hydrogen Peroxide can get rid of **toxic mould**. Clean with hydrogen peroxide when your house becomes a bio-hazard after it has been invaded by toxic mould, such as those with water damage. It is safe, natural and works within 30 seconds. The hydrogen peroxide reacts to the mould by attacking the mould spores and also depriving them of all the essentials they need to reproduce.

#### 5. Mould contaminated books

- The treatment of mould-infected books requires that they be taken to a well-ventilated area with electric fans to increase air movement. Rapidly moving air will dry out the moisture and desiccate the mould spores, rendering them inactive.
- If necessary, take the books outdoors and place them in the sun and a mild breeze for a short time, and if possible, remove the mould outdoors. Ultraviolet rays from the sun will kill mould.
- When the books are dry, a HEPA filter vacuum cleaner should be used to remove as much of the inactive mould as possible from the covers of the books. If you do not have a HEPA filter vacuum, activated dusters (dusters with an electrostatic charge, or containing a mild adhesive) can be used. The dusters should be laid over the infected area and the mould spores will be gently picked up. This procedure prevents mould spores from being released into the air.

When the soft mould has been removed, the outside of book covers should be wiped with a solution of ethyl alcohol. This acts as a mild solvent to remove some of the outer staining. Care must be taken not to wet the area too much. The inside of the books may then be examined. In many cases, mould stains will be seen on the inside of the binding, near the joints and at the head and tail. The stains can be gently swabbed with ethyl alcohol, but it is unlikely that they will be completely removed. -Source: Library Preservation and Conservation

#### Today in VI History - September

**September 6, 1959** — It was reported that \$350, 000 was allocated for crown land development. The public invited to bid for lease of crown lands, namely, Little St. Eustatia, Prickly Pear Islands and Saba Rock. The bids were awarded to the International Development Corporation of New York. The lease was for 99 years to commence after the five years' undertaking period. - **Source: Tortola Times , September 5, 1959**

**September 6, 1972**— The new Police Headquarters was officially opened .The building provided the main offices, space for technical functions of the department and living barracks for about 50 officers of various ratings. The building was constructed by the BVI Construction Company and financed by the British Development Division in the Caribbean at a cost of a little more than \$110, 000.-**Source: Public Library Almanac**

**September 10, 1813**— Mr. R.G. Isaacs, agent on Tortola, announced the sale at auction of cargo saved from the wreck of Portuguese ship "Flood War."-**Source: Public Library Almanac**

**September 13, 1966**— Cable & Wireless (WI) Ltd., formally announced the inauguration of its Tortola- Bermuda Submarine Cable. The inaugural call was made by the RT. Hon. Lord Martonmere, Governor of Bermuda, who spoke to Hon. M. Staveley, Administrator of the B.V.I. - **Source: Island Sun , September 10, 196166**

## Professional Press

## Social Media

## Library of Congress to Archive Tweet



People have been ‘tweeting’ since March 21, 200 and the Library of Congress has announced it will archive every public tweet posted to the social networking site; from the first post to the one you just submitted.

Google has committed to making the entire Twitter archive searchable on the web: historical tweets about President Obama’s campaign, celebrities’ tweets, and the not-so-famous tweeters. The search engine already enables users to “zoom to any point in time and ‘replay’ what people were saying publicly about a topic on Twitter.”

“Tweets and other short form updates create a history of commentary that can provide valuable insights into what’s happened and how people have reacted,” said Dylan Casey, Google’s product manager for real-time search, in a blog post. “We want to give you a way to search across this information and make it useful.”

Roughly a decade ago, the Library of Congress created a web capture project that collects web pages, online news, and documents related significant event such as presidential elections and has already stored 167 terabytes of digital material— an amount

greater than the text of the 21 million books in the library’s collection.

The *Times* reported that Twitter users currently send out more than 55 million messages each day, each containing 140 character or less.

-Source: Information Management, Volume 44, Number 4, Issue 156, June 2010, Library of Congress to Archive Tweet

## Government Records

## Recordkeeping Errors Affect UK Organ Donors

Families of deceased loved ones in the UK may be living a nightmare due to recordkeeping mistakes by the UK’s National Health Services.

Organs may have been removed from deceased persons without their consent, while those who have consented may have never had their organs used, thanks to a data-handling error, NHS official said. It is against the law in the UK to take organs from deceased individuals without their prior consent or the consent of their family after death.

In addition, more than 800,000 people on the UK donor registry may have their wishes about donating their organs recorded incorrectly. The *Sunday Telegraph* reported that 45 of those individuals on the donor list have died, and 20 families have let organs of relatives be taken based on incorrectly stored data.

NHS Blood and Transplant said it is “urgently investigating.” the problem can be traced to 1999,

when details about many donors; preferences were accidentally deleted. It was not detected until 2009, when NHS Blood and Transplant wrote to donors, restating which organs they agreed to donate. Many wrote back saying the information from NHS was incorrect, according to BBC News.

NHS Blood and Transplant said it has corrected 400,000 flawed records—but hundreds of thousands of people must be contacted to confirm which organs may be taken. Until consent is given from those affected, NHS said no organs will be removed.

Joyce Robbins of patient-rights organizations Patient Concern told *Telegraph*: “This government has got an absolutely dreadful record when it comes to data, but it is horrific that such sensitive details were handled in such a careless way.”

-Source: Information Management, Volume 44, Number 4, Issue 156, June 2010, Recordkeeping Errors Affects UK Organ Donors

## NARA Posts Federal Records Schedules Online

The National Archives and Records (NARA) has launched a new portal on its website that provides access to scanned images of federal agency records schedules since 1985. For the first time, these records can be viewed via NARA’s Records Control Schedule website: [www.Archives.gov/records-mgmt/rcs](http://www.Archives.gov/records-mgmt/rcs).

By statute, the U.S. archivist grants federal agencies the legal authority to carry out disposition actions against their records. These authorities are proposed by federal agencies, approved by archivist, and documented for action through a Standard Form 115 Request for Records Disposition Authority (SF115), also referred to as “records schedule.”

The SF115 contains descriptions of record series (a grouping of related records) or systems and the disposition instruction for each which specify when the series is to be cut-off, when eligible records are to be moved to offsite storage, when eligible temporary records must be destroyed or deleted, and when permanent records to be transferred to the National Archives.

Currently, the website has PDF Formatted SF115s submitted from 1985. Older ones will be available soon and newer ones are added weekly.

-Source: Information Management, Volume 44, Number 4, Issue 156, June 2010, NARA Posts Federal Records Schedules Online

## Illinois Birth Records Go Digital



How would it feel to get your child’s birth certificate before you are discharged from the hospital? Well Illinois hopes to move in that direction soon.

Births in Illinois hospitals will now be recorded electronically rather than on paper.

The Illinois Department of Public Health Director Damon Arnold, M.D., said there are about 500 births every day in Illinois and “the efficiency of the new electronic systems should help us get birth certificates into the hands of parents.”

The department says it anticipates the Electronic Birth Registrations System within the Division of Vital Records will speed the filing of birth records. Officials say the time frame for hospitals and local registrars to file information has not changed.

-Source: Information Management, Volume 44, Number 4, Issue 156, June 2010, Illinois Birth Records Go Digital

## Today in VI History—September

**September 16, 1973**— On this date, the Seventh Day Adventist Primary School at Carrot Bay was officially dedicated. -Source: Public Library Almanac

**September 23, 1973**— On this date, the formal dedication of the Ebenezer Thomas School at Sea Cow’s Bay, took place. -Source: Public Library Almanac

## September 28 is International Right to Know Day

**International Right to Know Day** was established by 'access to information' advocates from around the globe. It was first celebrated on 28 September, eight years ago.

The aim of Right to Know Day is to raise awareness of every individual's right of access to government-held information: the right to know how elected officials are exercising power and how the tax-payers' money is being spent.

Under its mandate to promote the historical, cultural and literary value of Virgin Islands records and archives through exhibitions, outreach services and other dissemination activities, the National Archives observed "Right To Know Day" by unveiling a framed copy of the preamble to the Virgin Islands Constitution, so that it may be readily accessible to visitors who wish to read it. The preamble is the introductory section of the Constitution and it is a succinct statement of 'national identity.'

Additionally, visitors on that day will receive free copies of the preamble of the Constitution, which could be framed and hung in their homes or offices. Other handouts will include the Summary Chapters, Fundamental rights and Freedoms of the Individual and the definition of a Virgin Islander, which is found in Chapter 2 of the Constitution.

It is of prime importance that citizens know what the Constitution says and what rights they have under it; what government information they have a right to know and what government information they have no right to know; and that the contents of the Constitution become engraved on the minds of the people.

Right to Know Day is also an excellent opportunity for teachers around the Territory to begin to engage their students at various levels in appropriate activities surrounding the Constitution, to ensure that they know what the Constitution says, what it allows and what it does not allow, so that the words and meaning may become engrained in the lives of students.

## Put Your Name in the Annals of History

Do you have an old Virgin Islands book, map, postcard or any other publication about the Virgin Islands that you would like to donate to The Archives? Please contact us! All donors will receive an acknowledgement from the Deputy Governor, free copies of our Newsletter, a chance to become a registered friend, your name inscribed in a book plate to be pasted in your donation, forever, and your name inscribed in the National Archives Donations Register.



### Today in VI History—September

**September 26, 1968**— On Friday 11.00 am September, 27<sup>th</sup> 1968, the British Virgin Islands High School which replaced the Virgin Islands Secondary School, was officially opened. It was described as 'a major significant step in education.' There was an impressive ceremony to mark the occasion, which was witnessed by a large gathering including government officials, ministers, teachers, parents and students. The main speaker was Mr. William Bell, Regional Representative of the British Overseas Development in the Caribbean. -Source: **Public Library Almanac**

**September 30, 1780**— On this date, a letter liberating the Nottingham estate slaves and donating the estate (to them was written by their former master, a Quaker. -Source: **Public Library Almanac**

### Today in VI History— October

**October 1, 1963**—A bill to amend the Jury Act to enable woman to be eligible for jury services in the British Virgin Islands was passed by unanimous vote at the Legislative Council meeting. - Source: **Island Sun 5/10/1963**

**1977**—Road Town Whole Sale (1975) changed its name to Rite Way Market..— Source: **Island Sun, 24/9/1977**

**October 4, 1981**— Judicial history was made when Miss Dancia Penn and Miss Janice George were admitted to the British Virgin Islands Bar. They were the first native females of the British Virgin Islands to have been so honored. The two young ladies were then recently graduated from the Norman Manley Law School, Council of Legal Education in Jamaica. — Source: **Island Sun, 10/10/1977**

**October 7, 1960** — It was announced that instructions had been issued by the publisher of the 'Tortola Times,' which was first published in 1959, that the publication would discontinue because it was not making a profit. - Source: **Public Library Almanac**

**October 9, 1960**—A severe hurricane hit the British Virgin Islands causing many deaths and destroying a large number of buildings on every island. - Source: **Public Library Almanac**

**October 19, 1966**— Packages for Virgin Gorda residents could for the first time be collected at the Branch Post Office instead of Road Town as was the practice. - Source: **GIS News Release 140/1966**

**October 31, 1966**—Hon. Dr. Q.W. Osborne resigned his seat in the Executive Council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1964. - Source: **Island Sun 31/10/1964**

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## Vision Statement

Inspired by the need of all Virgin Islanders to appreciate the vital role of records in a democratic society, the National Archives and Records Management Unit seeks to use traditional and modern technologies, along with cooperative partnerships between the Government, private sector and wider community, to lead and transform information management so that the history, heritage and culture of the Virgin Islands come alive and grow in importance, relevance and accessibility for present and future generations.

### ***Friends are Invaluable - Become a Friend of the Archives today!***

Are you part of an Organisation which could help us obtain funding to assist the building of the Archives Repository and Records Centre? Or do you know of any funding agency which can assist the building project? We need all the help we could get. Become a Friend today!

Why not enroll now? The objective of the Friends is: ***To provide support for the National Archives as required.***

**Contact:**

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Friends of the National Archives  
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### Win a National Archives Prize!

Tell us the story surrounding the date of any important event which occurred in the Virgin Islands before 1975. If it is not already in our Today in Virgin Islands History database it will be entered for the Today in Virgin Islands History radio programme, and you will win a National Archives prize, which will be announced in the media. Call us today at telephone 468-3701 ext 3044, 2562, 2365, or 3092 or email your story to [infoarchives@gov.vg](mailto:infoarchives@gov.vg).

