

Highfield to sign copies of his new book on VI people, culture, language

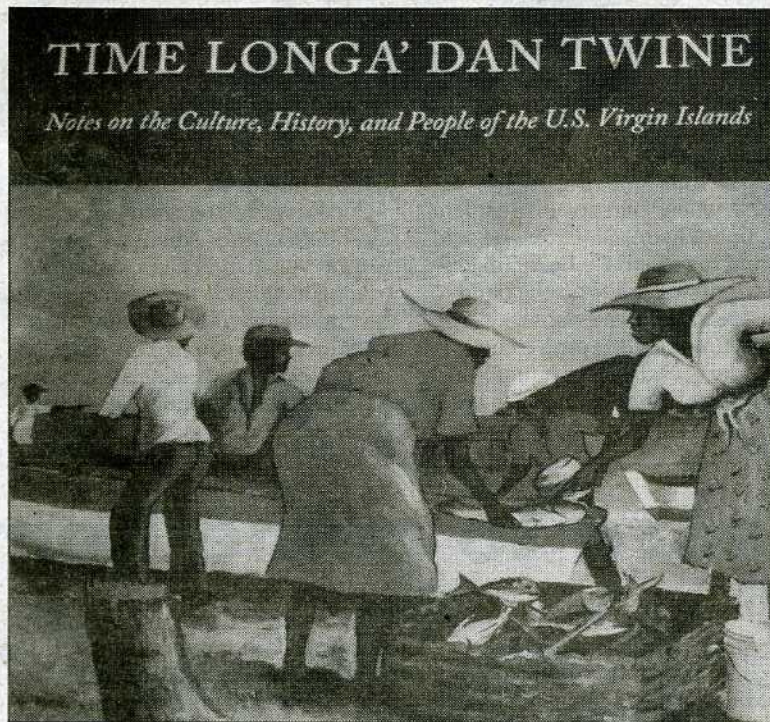
SUSAN ELLIS

ST. CROIX — Professor emeritus, historian and writer Arnold Highfield will sign copies of his new book, "Time Longa' Dan Twine — Notes on the Culture, History and People of the U.S. Virgin Islands," Thursday from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Undercover Books in Gallows Bay.

The book's 41 chapters depict the history, the people and the language of the Virgin Islands. The chapters were articles previously written for various publications and newspapers, Highfield said. Most chapters contain meticulously researched history and a few are personal accounts and experiences.

The chapters about the countries that controlled and influenced St. Croix contain material Highfield researched thoroughly. By reading a few pages, a reader can learn about the Dutch, French, English and Danish histories on St. Croix as well as the history of the Irish, Moravian missionaries and the Knights of Malta.

Several chapters deal with little known histories about the West Indian slave trade. Highfield has written about the myths of slavery under Denmark, personal stories



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of slaves and the wreck of the slave ship, the "General Abercrombie," that sank near Buck Island.

"It is not a history per se. It has

a number of personal things, friends who made an impression, travels," he said.

The book is "a foretaste" of a

comprehensive history of the island that Highfield is in the process of writing.

Some of the people Highfield writes about are familiar names like Hubert Harrison and Ambassador Terence Todman. Less familiar stories include those of C.G.A. Oldendorp, a Moravian inspector who wrote one of the first historical accounts of the missionary efforts on St. Croix; Rebekka Frenudlich Protten, a Moravian missionary; and Ole Vinding, a Dane who ran the deli in Sunny Isle Shopping Center for many years.

The personal chapters of Highfield's book contain his vivid memories of Hurricanes Hugo and Marilyn. From his personal experiences he has written about the evolution of the Crucian Christmas Festival and language on St. Croix.

True to his nature and background as a university scholar, the chapters of Highfield's book are filled with well researched historical information, even the personal chapters about hurricanes and those that are semi-political like the chapters on reparations or the need for a Virgin Islands constitution.

"What I write comes from my own perspective. I don't try to write for anyone else," Highfield said.

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