



Louis E Brown, Sr. was born on August 22, 1919. Brown was born two years after the 1917 Transfer of the Danish West Indies to the possession of the United States Virgin Islands. Brown grew up in an uncertain time when the Virgin Islands conscious was awakening, and residents were calling for equitable treatment and citizenship under the U.S. Flag. Brown spent his life aiding in the progression of these islands.

Louis E Brown grew up in Frederiksted town and attended the St. Patricks's School. Brown served in the U.S. Army as a sergeant major from 1944 -1946 in the 872nd Port Company. Following his discharge, Brown returned to St. Croix.

Along with several notable Virgin Islanders, Brown noted that they had experienced racism and bigotry while serving in World War 2 by fellow service members. To combat his frustrations, Brown mobilized his energies towards equality for people of color along with Walter I.M Hodge, Darwin Creque, and others in forming the Progressive Guide Party, which grew out of the Liberty Party and became the Republican Party of the Virgin Islands.

Brown's children Velma (Stepdaughter), Louis Jr, Madga, Raymond, Ariel (deceased), and Marjorie, recall growing up in a home with both Democratic and Republican values as his wife, Sylvia Brown, was a staunch Democrat.

While expressing and developing his ideas in grassroots organizations, Brown worked at the Virgin Islands National Bank. In 1947, Brown accepted his first position with the V.I. government.

Brown served in many official capacities. He served as Assistant Director of Civil Defense and advanced to the position of Commissioner of Labor and Agriculture when the department was a single entity. Under his leadership, the Labor and Agriculture Department implemented a Co-op program giving farmers more access to consumers. Brown also established agricultural relationships with surrounding Caribbean islands and imported several types of mango and banana trees planted on the Lower Love Fairgrounds.

Moreover, as commissioner, Brown was charged with several beautification projects. The projects included the Limpricht Park revitalization project along with the highly successful five corners beautification project, which unfortunately is de-funded.

Brown also spearheaded the Frederiksted Pool Recreational Center project as Commissioner of Labor and Agriculture. There was a plaque bestowed on the property honoring him. The recreation center is now called the Vincent Mason Coral Resort

Likewise, Brown, along with Agriculture and Labor staffers as well as Administrators, was the driving force behind developing Cramer's Park as a premier beach recreational site. Brown recognized the unique position of the Virgin Islands and worked tirelessly to assist in the economic progress of St. Croix as well as ensure that residents are treated equitably.

As a member of the Virgin Islands Housing Board for several years, Brown fought diligently along with others to provide affordable housing for both lower and middle-income families in the territory. Brown himself grew up in a modest home in Frederiksted to Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Brown. Brown would often speak to his party members and close friends about his ideas to provide more robust economic growth and opportunities for residents. As an adult, Brown was often called the Mayor of

Frederiksted. Brown's great-niece, Claire Roker, has taken over the title and is a notable influencer in the Frederiksted District.

I grew up in Christiansted, and I would often walk the routes between one grandmother home to the other. My maternal grandmother Sylvia Todman-Brown was a very sharp dresser. I would often look thru our family's photo albums and view photos of her and her sister growing up in Free Gut.

Speaking with my aunt Velma Farrelly, my grandmother's first child, I came upon lots of information that I never knew. My aunt informed me that she was quite close to Sylvia's grandmother, Rosalyn Levy. I had never heard the name before our conversation. Rosalyn lived with her daughter Constantia Bushbee and her children Sylvia and Kathlene and Bobby Todmann in a home directly behind what is now Balters Restaurant. Aunt Vel recalled that the entire neighborhood looked out for one another's children. If she wandered far from home, a neighbor always scolded her and demanded that she stay closer to her house. Aunt Vel said that people were involved in one another's daily lives even if persons liked it or not.

Three blocks up my paternal family were raising a huge family that consisted of many girls. One of my family members who was a librarian and genealogy enthusiasts documented a lot of the families history. In 1875 we find that a John Joseph Cartier confirmed in the Lord God of Sabbath Lutheran Church in Christiansted after previously being a Roman Catholic. Two weeks later he married Anna Maria that supposedly came from the Belgian Congo and was brought to the Virgin Islands to work for a French family.

The couple had five children, which included Valdemor Christian Cartier. John Joseph Cartier bought #21 Queen Cross Street on August 18th, 1883 and #16 Queen Cross Street on August 2nd, 1888. I think about the great accomplishment John had by purchasing two properties as a person of color at that time, but John wasn't the only one. The Free Gut community was made up of free blacks buying property in the area. One hundred and thirty-six years later, the property is still in the Cartier- Phaire family.

Valdemore Christian was my grandmother, Violet Cartier's, father and my father, Stephen Cartier-Brown's grandfather.

Violet and some of her sisters moved to New York in the 1950s. Many Virgin Islanders relocated to New York in the 1920s throughout the 1960s. My father was born in New York, but he came home every summer as a teenager. My father and my grandmother Violet eventually moved back

home and was the last persons to reside at #21 Queen Cross street until it tragically burnt down in the late 90s. I spent a lot of time in the home as a child.

My maternal grandmother married Louis E. Brown, a Frederiksted man. The paradise community off of the Melvin Evans Highway is his namesake. As it has been told, the relationship was filled with gossip because women from Christiansted rarely married men from Frederiksted and vice versa. Sylvia and Louis Brown resided in Christiansted in around the Free Gut throughout their lives. My mother, grandmother, brother as well as myself, lived on Strand Street until I was a teenager.

The passage in this book, "Forgotten Lands" Edition 1 made me go back and question many of my relatives, some whom I've even become distant. I learned a lot of new things about myself, and the challenges as well as the wins the people of Free Gut experienced. I believe persons must have an understanding as well as an appreciation of the past. The Virgin Islands is a beautiful place with many stories.





Forgotten Lands Art Collective is at St. Croix USVI.



5 hrs · Christiansted · 🌐

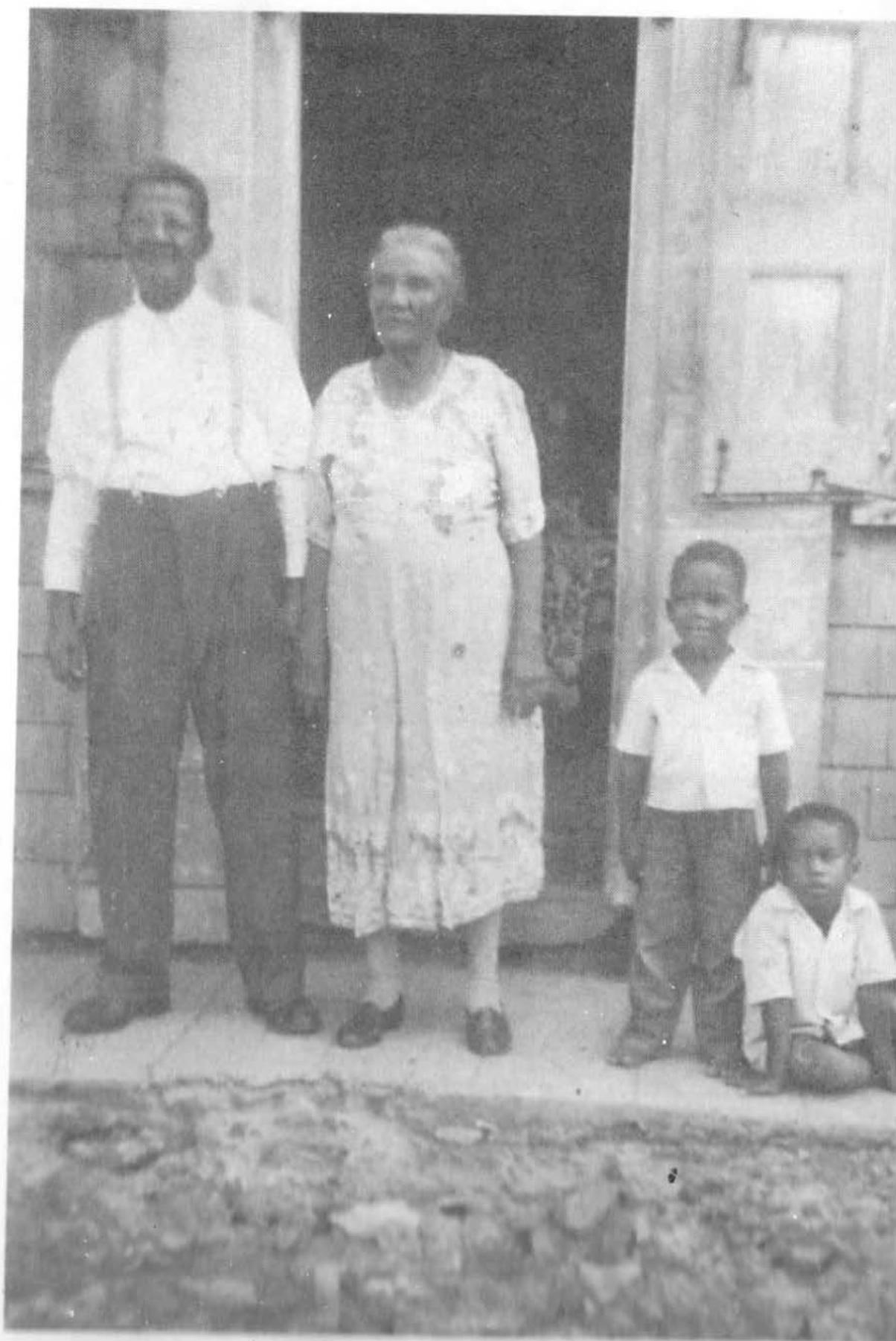
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"Free Gut" by Chalana Brown (@chalana_vi) for Volume 2

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**Valdemar Cartier, Eugenie Phaire,
Francois Petersen, Irvin Henry, Jr.**