



**GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES**

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**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**DPNR CELEBRATES HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH AND  
LA COLECCIÓN HISPANA  
@ THE FLORENCE WILLIAMS PUBLIC LIBRARY**

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Commissioner Dawn L. Henry, Esq. of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources is pleased to announce that the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums in partnership with the Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Committee (VIPR) celebrates **HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**.

During NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH (September 15 to October 15) we recognize and celebrate the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH, whose roots go back to 1968, begins each year on September 15, the anniversary of the independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico, Chile and Belize also celebrate their independence days during this period.

Locally, Virgin Islands Puerto Rico Friendship Day is Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup>. *"Puerto Ricans have been a significant part of U.S. Virgin Islands and especially St. Croix society for well over a century"*, said Commissioner Henry.

The Florence Williams' COLECCIÓN HISPANA is a continuous labor of love, a necessary collaborative effort that has been in existence since 2012. *"Over the years, the Virgin Islands Puerto Rico Friendship Committee (VIPR) collaboration has enabled the Spanish collection to significantly develop,"* said Ingrid Bough, Territorial Director of Libraries, Archives and Museums.

The Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Committee embarked on starting this project in 2006

in acquiring space in the Florence Williams Public Library for the Collection. In 2007, under the leadership of Ms. Zoraida Jacobs, a dedication took place at the library. That was the stepping stone towards another phase of the project.

In 2009, the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums acquired some Spanish books through the Library of Congress Free Surplus Books Program. The books, though on island, were shelved unavailable to be circulated due to the challenge of the need for cataloging by a bilingual professional librarian. The VIPR Committee held two Arroz con Pollo fund raising festivals for a bilingual professional librarian/cataloguer. With the proceeds from the very successful festivals, the VIPR committee hired the services of Mrs. Margaret Colón, Library Automation Consultant from Puerto Rico. Ms. Colon and the public library personnel on St. Croix and St. Thomas worked as a team through a very lengthy process to make this realization a success.

In early 2011, to supplement the collection, the Division ordered approximately 400 Spanish books with the review and selection by the VI-PR committee. In addition, the library's website has many electronic resources under the online tab Biblioteca En Espanol.

*"The collaborative efforts to enhance and provide library service to our Hispanic community are a demonstration of dedication and diligence in an effort to make a shared vision a reality! So far, in 2016, we have added 150 new titles to the more than 800 books showcased in Spanish which is an asset and service to the community",* said Ingrid Bough, Territorial Director of Libraries, Archives and Museums.

For more information, contact Ingrid Bough, Territorial Director of Libraries, Archives and Museums at 773-5715 or Domitila Vargas, VIPR Chairperson at 277-4228 or visit the Virgin Islands Public Libraries website at [www.virginislandspubliclibraries.org](http://www.virginislandspubliclibraries.org)

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