

The Virgin Islands Cultural Education Notebook

D. Hamilton Jackson Day/
Liberty Day/
Bull and Bread Day

Edition 2



David Hamilton Jackson Day/ Liberty Day/ Bull and Bread Day



On November 1st, the Virgin Islands celebrates the contributions of D. Hamilton Jackson. The holiday is also called Liberty Day or Bull and Bread Day. Each title pays reverence to the many accomplishments Jackson fought for. Jackson was an advocate of the free press in the Virgin Islands of the United States. Along with supporters, Jackson started the first independent newspaper in the Virgin Islands; he also served the Virgin Islands as a labor leader, educator, lawyer, and judge.



Liberty. Equality. Fraternity

Explore

Free Press
The Herald

Labor Unions
St. Croix Labor Union

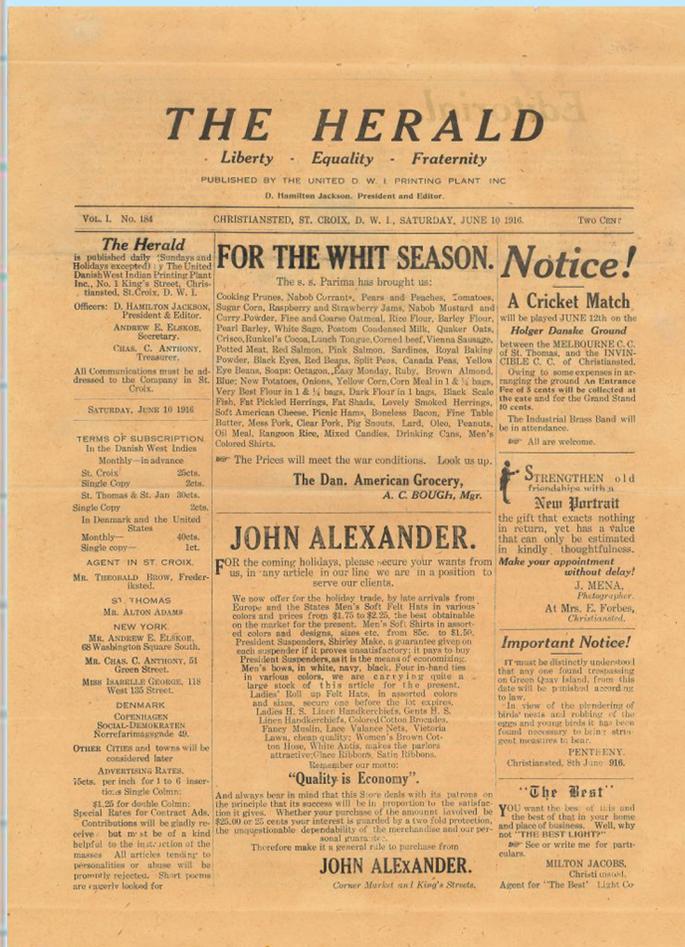
Insular Cases
1917 Transfer



The Herald

1915 - 1925

The Importance of a Free Press



The Herald Newspaper was the first government unsubsidized privately ran newspaper in the Danish West Indies.

Like many countries, Denmark once enforced censorship of the press. European powers subjected India and Caribbean colonies to the act which brought all the newspapers under the Government scrutiny before each was published.

Jackson traveled to Denmark and successfully petitioned the King of Denmark for the removal of this law. When Jackson returned home in the summer of 1915, he organized the first free press newspaper in the Danish West Indies.



Labor Unions

Before D. Hamilton Jackson traveled to Denmark in 1916 to advocate for a free press in the Virgin Islands as well as an equitable relationship between the people of the Danish West Indies and the Danish Empire, Jackson was documented as having lectures around the island of St. Croix.

Jackson implored the working class to demand better living conditions and better pay. According to regional historians, in 1915, the St. Croix Labor Union was the first legally organized and legally recognized association of working people in the Caribbean region. David Hamilton Jackson, Theobald Brow, Charles Reubel and Ralph de Chabert are credited as the figures that established the union.

Although Jackson resided in St. Croix, his labor rights advocacy resounded in St. Thomas. In 1916 a labor union with a reported twenty-seven hundred members led by George A. Moorehead staged a strike demanding better wages and working conditions.



Queen Coziah, on Sept. 12, 1892, had already led 700 hundred laborers in a coal workers strike demanding to be paid in Danish currency rather than Mexican silver, which was not as valuable.



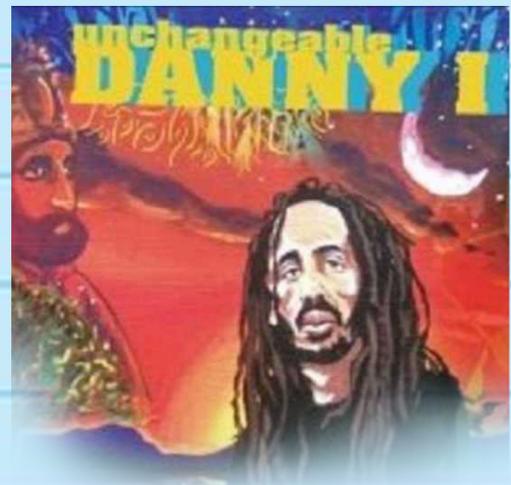
Labor Unions

Fast forward to 1916, many men and women still toiled and carried heavy coal loads to fuel ships at the St. Thomas port. The laborers were paid very little. The West Indian Company lost revenue during the strike and gave into the coal workers' demands even though the Danish Empire deployed the warship, the Valkyrie, in an attempt to quell the strikers.

Farm Laborers on St. Croix were also demanding higher wages. The St. Croix Labor Union with Jackson as the president were successful in increases wages and working conditions. After 2 months of striking, the St. Croix Labor Union entered into an agreement with the Planters' Society. Daily wages for workers rose from a maximum of 25 cents to a minimum of 35 cents from 10 to 20 cents a day.



S Life is just a state of mind,
within a state of mind
within an endless space of time
O You got to try get yours
Try get mines
N We got to help each other by
g Or you wont make it life, I wont make it in life
I wont make it in life, You won't make it in life
Unchangeable... ever since the days of old.





1917 Transfer

D. Hamilton Jackson visited Denmark in 1916 with monies raised by community members. Jackson lobbied for a free press in the Danish West Indies and was successful. However, Jackson was frustrated with the empty rhetoric to foster better living conditions promised by Danish officials. The working conditions for sugar production workers were extraordinarily harsh, and poor living conditions attributed to the high mortality rates of workers and their children. Jackson reportedly was in favor of the Danish West Indies' transfer to the possession of the United States.

Further, in 1916 the Danish West Indies experienced an economic blow when a hurricane passed thru the Caribbean and devastated several islands, including the Virgin Islands. Coupled with growing military tension in the Caribbean between warring European nations, the United States, who already expressed interest in acquiring the islands in two treaties, was given a formal transfer of the islands. The transfer occurred on March 31, 1917, along with a U.S. payment to Denmark of \$25,000,000 in gold coin.

↪ Pseudo Citizenship?

The U.S. Virgin Islands did not gain American citizenship right away. The territory remained under U.S. Navy rule from 1917 to 1931. U.S. citizenship to all residents born in the U.S. Virgin Islands was extended in 1932. Jackson pursued a law degree between 1917 and 1921 at Howard University in Washington DC. He later served on several councils advocating for full U.S. citizenship for Virgin Islanders.

*Crowd In St Thomas welcomes Jackson
back from 1915 Danish trip*

ASK MR. JACKSON

**from Zoop, Zoop, Zoop: Traditional
Music and Folklore of St. Croix,
Thomas and St. John sound recording
Recorded on 8/10/1979
Evelyn Gordon, St. Croix.**



Excerpt:

“David Hamilton Jackson (1884-1949) was a teacher who was very active in helping to organize the field laborers. In 1915, after workers had raised money for his passage, he went to Denmark to plead the workers' cases for better working and living conditions and a free press before the Danish king. Jackson returned with authorization to found the first newspaper free of government control. Later he became an attorney and a judge. Today he is respected as a hero in the history of the Virgin Islands, although some controversy surrounded his activities and inspired this cariso song in which the singer, addressing the general public (gel), makes ironic remarks about Jackson's educational background.”

Cariso Lyrics: “Ask Mr. Jackson”

*Oh, gel, ask Mr. Jackson, gel a which part he get he learnin'.
He say "Ah na ya for garlin and a pelican a for sprat
Me father was a minister, me grandfather was a teacher,
Me mother went to college, so I bound to get me learnin."*

*Oh, le' he 'lone, oh, all you, le' he 'lone. Then you better let
Mr Jackson 'lone, All you no been know he. I talkin' to a Crucian, gel,
And not no `nother nation. Jackson wouldn't land in St.Thomas,
wa hey 'fraid they been paralyze he.*

Oh, le' he 'lone, oh, all you, le' he 'lone.

*Then you better let D. Hamilton Jackson 'lone, All you no been know
he.*

1917 Transfer continued

Today, American citizens in the U.S. Virgin Islands as well as those in the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands—still cannot elect voting members to Congress or vote for the president of the United States.

Resources

View: Honorable Stacey Plasket, Delegate to Congress, USVI

Congresswoman Stacey E. Plaskett on the Passage of HR 1 -
The For the People Act of 2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9G8JYOm0r2U>

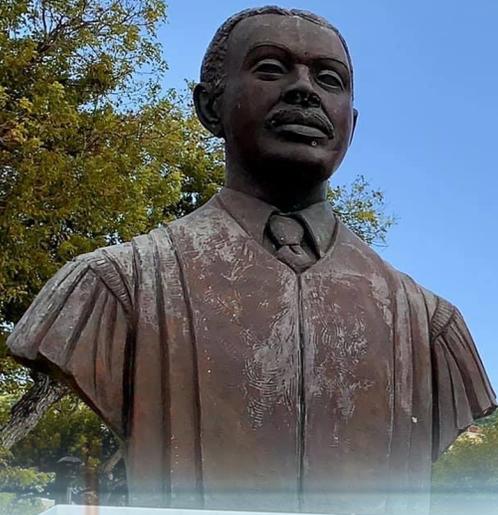
View: Honorable Albert Bryan Jr., Governor of the Virgin Islands of the
United States

2020 Transfer Day Remarks

<https://www.vi.gov/governor-bryan-issues-statement-commemorating-103rd-anniversary-of-transfer-day/>



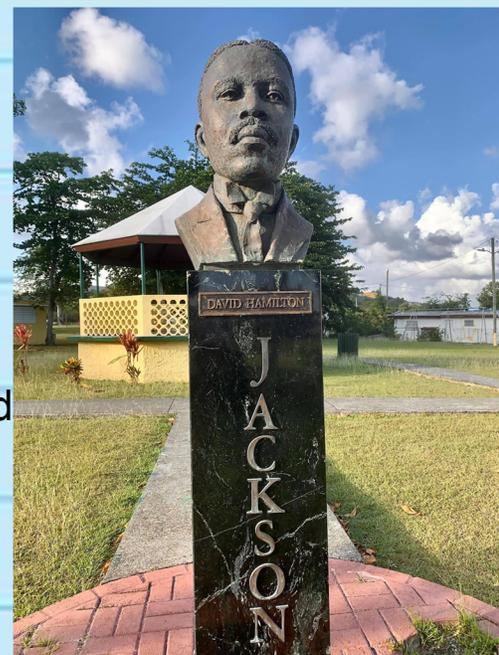
View: WTJX Channel 12: The League of Women Voters presents:
Political Status Decisions For The USVI



D. Hamilton Jackson's Legacy "Black Moses" 🖐️

Jackson has two monuments standing on the island of St. Croix. One of the monuments stand at the D. Hamilton Jackson Park within the Virgin Islands National Park Service in downtown Christiansted near the building that once housed the journalists free press newspaper, the Herald.

A D. Hamilton Jackson Park and monument also resides in Estate Grove Place. Annually on November 1st, Jackson's contributions to the Virgin Islands community is celebrated at "Bull and Bread Day" held in Grove. The celebration upholds the partaking of beef and bread distributed to the residents that gathered to commemorate the first publishing of the Herald newspaper in 1915.



THE HERALD

Liberty - Equality - Fraternity

PUBLISHED BY THE UNITED D. W. I. PRINTING PLANT, INC.

D. Hamilton Jackson, President and Editor.

FREE ISSUE.

CHRISTIANSTED, ST. CROIX, D. W. I., FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29th 1915.

FREE ISSUE.

The Herald

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Officers: D. HAMILTON JACKSON,
President & Editor.
ANDREW E. ELSKOE,
Secretary.
CHAS. C. ANTHONY,
Treasurer.

All Communications must be addressed to the Company in St. Croix.

FRIDAY, OCT. 29 1915.

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AGENTS IN ST. CROIX.

MR. CHAS. C. REUREL, Christiansted.
MR. THEOBALD BROW, Frederiksted.

ST. THOMAS
MR. ALTON ADAMS

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MR. ANDREW E. ELSKOE,
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MR. CHAS. C. ANTHONY, 51
Green Street.
MISS ISABELLE GEORGE, 118
West 135 Street.

DENMARK

COPENHAGEN
SOCIAL-DEMOKRATEN
Nørretorvegsgade 49.

OTHER CITIES and towns will be considered later.

ADVERTISING RATES.

7cts. per inch for 1 to 6 insertions Single Column;
\$1.25 for double Column;

Special Rates for Contract Ads.

Contributions will be gladly received, but must be of a kind helpful to the instruction of the masses. All articles tending to personalities or abuse will be promptly rejected. Short poems are eagerly looked for.

Editorial Columns.

With many apologies we today send forth our first little printed sheet, with the hope that its readers will find in it what was long wanted—a paper for the people. It is not our intention to antagonize any existing paper or journal, but we certainly are in the field to defend the darker races from attacks by the papers, journals or journalists opposed to their progress—the march toward their heritage.

If we were to tell the truth in its fullness about the present condition of the island then we should unhesitatingly lay the blame to the inactivity of the Press. Let us go back to the time when the common people in Denmark had no paper or organ of their own, and what do we find there? Oppression and semi-slavery. Today, in every little hamlet you can find the newspaper—the people's newspaper; the paper that tells the farmer all he wants to know; the paper that makes the peasant laugh around the fireside at evening; in short the paper that speaks to the people in the people's own language, and expresses the unnumbered thoughts of the sinews and bone of the nation. It is through the spread of newspaper literature that Denmark has become the most free nation in the world. Freedom of speech and liberty of the press are the two things boasted of by the Danish people. In this connection we want our readers to understand that not only in Denmark proper is this freedom existing; it exists here also, and we are going to use it to the best of our ability in bringing about better conditions—social, political and economical—than have hitherto existed.—We know our efforts will meet with opposition, and that our motives may be mistaken and misrepresented, but as long as we are able to accomplish one little particle of good, as long as we can succeed in making one dreary life pleasanter and happier, we shall feel that we are doing our duty and be inspired to nobler and more strenuous efforts. We will not mind the voice of envy and malice—they always sound to us like strange vibrations from the pit of all evil. And why should we pay attention to them! One cannot prevent the dogs barking nor the river flowing.

We want our readers to feel that we shall always do our best to serve them, and we shall be

always ready to open our columns to them. Here is to be found a training school for native talent, a starting ground for the ambitious and issues in our common life. We are antagonistic to none, but friendly to all. Our aim shall be, first and foremost to preserve the public from outrages and to see that justice is administered with equality, and to crush the tyrant wherever found. We shall endeavor to promote a better feeling between the two factions, and hope finally to create a United Santa Cruz and a new people, bonded in love and union.

A certain great writer once said "Give to the people what they want, and there shall be no discontent."—We want our people to have all they are entitled to as citizens; we want them to enjoy the inalienable rights that are due to every free man, to the end that the people shall rule and not be ruled by a few selected bosses from the schools of tyranny and injustice. Let us look forward, from today, to the time when it shall be said with pride by every patriotic Danish West Indian: "We have fought and conquered and now we shall have a land that is to be a heritage for our children, and a resting place for our departed selves. May liberty, equality and brotherhood reign."

The founders of the United Danish West Indian Printing Plant Incorporated

We think it fit and proper to let the public know something about the founders of this institution. While the idea originated from us, we had neither the funds nor the opportunity to put our plans into execution here. In Denmark, the idea struck us that we could raise some money by selling coupons towards the assistance of a printing press in St. Croix. The scheme was submitted to several Socialist parties, who asked us to speak at open air meetings, and was readily endorsed and accepted. We made the tickets so low in price (10 Ore-3 1/2 cts) that the poorest could find the way to help in the West Indian cause; and they readily did.

This is how it was done: At the conclusion of each speech the Division Chairman of the party would announce to the people our intention, and would pass over the coupons to the juvenile mem-

bers of the Socialist party. The idea did not occur to us before the latter part of our stay in Copenhagen, hence we did not have the opportunity to sell more than Kr. 150 (841.65) worth of coupons. This sum was but a mite in the great scheme in question, and would have been enough to discourage any ordinary man who had planned such a scheme. But we looked at that small amount, as we always look at the small things, as a beginning toward the accomplishment of our plans. We left Copenhagen on the 22nd July, and in our locked cabin, we perfected our plans in this connection, and when we landed in New York, there was no time for delay. After resting a few days in Cambridgeport, we proceeded to New York and started in to business; and here begins the founding of the present Joint Stock Company. We consulted our friends and co-workers Messrs. A. Elskoe, C. T. Fawcett, C. Anthony, and Miss Isabelle George and her helpers as to the possibility of floating shares in New York. It was decided to make the certificates at \$1.00 each, and had actually floated a few when a friend and well wisher (Mr. A. Irvine) who is partner in just such a corporation, informed us that we could not float shares for \$1 in New York. It was against the law of the State. He therefore advised that we see his lawyer (Mr. Alex. Karlin, 320 Broadway) and have the matter incorporated. We took his advice, and, getting the other three directors with us, we went up to the lawyer's office, where, in the presence of a notary public we made our declaration. A certificate of incorporation was then duly filed in the County Clerk's Office, and we held our first meeting on the 31st August, and made our by-laws. It may therefore be proper for us to make mention some of the names of the founders of this Corporation and others connected with the establishment of this printing plant.

The Editor of this paper,

from whom the idea originated,

Mr. C. Crowe, whose untiring energy and faithfulness to his race has gone far in making the present reform movement a success.

Mr. G. Lange. This gentleman has had much to pay for his having connection with the author of the reform scheme.