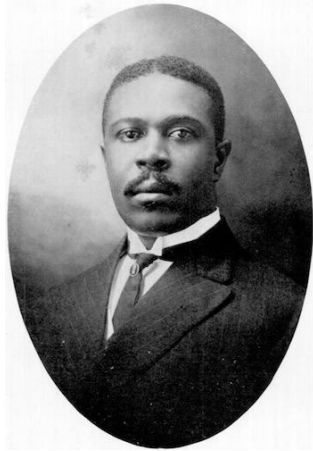


DAVID HAMILTON JACKSON (1884 – 1946)



EARLY LIFE

David Hamilton Jackson was born on September 28, 1884, at Estate East Hill in Christiansted, St. Croix, when the islands were known as the Danish West Indies. He was raised in a family that valued education and social responsibility. His father was a teacher, and Jackson later became a teacher himself.

Jackson also traveled to the United States, where he pursued legal studies and trained in law. Although he did not follow a traditional or widely documented law school pathway by modern standards, he gained legal knowledge through study and exposure to the American legal system.

From an early age, Jackson recognized the social and economic inequalities faced by working-class people in the territory, which inspired him to become an advocate for change and dedicate his life to improving conditions for Virgin Islanders.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Successfully petitioned the Danish government to repeal laws restricting freedom of the press in the Danish West Indies.
- Founded The Herald newspaper in 1915, the first independent newspaper in the Danish West Indies.
- Organized the St. Croix Labor Union, the first labor union in the territory.
- Led the 1916 labor strike that resulted in higher wages, a shorter workday, and improved working conditions for workers.
- Advocated for U.S. citizenship and greater political representation for Virgin Islanders after the transfer of the islands to the United States in 1917.
- Served as a judge, lawyer, member of the Colonial Council, and member of the Municipal Council of St. Croix.

CHALLENGES FACED

Jackson faced strong opposition from plantation owners and colonial officials who viewed his activism as a threat to the existing social order. He lost jobs because of his outspoken criticism of government policies and social conditions. He was often labeled a troublemaker for organizing workers and demanding political reforms. Despite these obstacles, he remained committed to improving the lives of Virgin Islanders.

LASTING IMPACT ON THE VIRGIN ISLANDS AND BEYOND

David Hamilton Jackson transformed the Virgin Islands by giving ordinary people a voice. His fight for freedom of the press opened the door for independent journalism and greater civic participation. His leadership in the labor movement improved wages and working conditions for

workers across the territory. His advocacy also helped shape future laws and democratic institutions in the Virgin Islands, including the development of the Organic Act.

Today, his legacy is honored each year on November 1, known as Liberty Day or D. Hamilton Jackson Day, a public holiday that celebrates freedom of expression and workers' rights in the U.S. Virgin Islands.