Caspar Holstein
St. Croix, V.I.
Noted Philanthropist

Caspar Holstein in his life-time amassed a large fortune and surprisingly, donated large amounts to charity or to assist young people, especially men, to complete a college education.

Born in Christiansted, St. Croix on December 6, 1876 he left the islands at a rather young age and migrated to New York City. Through the years while establishing himself in the big city he also kept in touch with the affairs of his island home. He returned home to witness the transfer of the Danish West Indies to the United States of America. Never losing contact with his home base he was aware of the problems confronting Virgin Islanders as they suffered from delusions of a Great life under the stars and stripes.

As the situation at home grew almost unbearable especially under naval administration, the picture seemed even more dismal as the islands were not represented by a congressional voice. Caspar Holstein sensing the need for a delegate to Congress used his influence and was successful in having Halvor Berg named Delegate to Congress for the territory. Following closely on the success of this representation he later paid the Washington Post three thousand dollars for a full page rotogravure spread of the Virgin Islands. This technique which was an advanced stage of printing then and now, was used by big presses and was especially effective in depicting scenery, buildings, events, etc. The process was considered the right one to provide mainlanders especially higher-ups in Washington with a vivid picture of the conditions in the territory under naval rule.

In addition to his financial resources Holstein used public media as avenues to spread the discontent with the manner or attitude of the United States to the islands. In 1924 prior to the visit of a Congressional investigation committee, he used a local newspaper, The Emancipator, as his vehicle. In a stirring article written to prove why the naval administration should be superseded by a civil form of government, he urged the leaders to assert themselves and to apprise Congressmen of the economic consequences of prohibition, of tariff restrictions, of hardships posed on the people and other problems experienced by the citizenry.

Considered a friend of the islands he not only manifested his interest through political advancement but he considered the basic needs of the poor as a great importance and at the Christmas season he sent food, clothing and money to help those in need, enjoy the holidays. He also did more for education than any single person. Through all of this he shunned publicity while working quietly to achieve his goals. In 1924 the islands experienced a most devastating hurricane. Caspar Holstein established a Hurricane Relief Fund and contributed thousands of dollars to aid the suffering.

In 1935 Holstein visited the islands and established three branches of the Congressional Council, a powerful organization of New Yorkers with special interest in the islands.

Caspar Holstein died in New York City at the age of sixty-seven on April 5, 1944. His death was a loss to thousands of people. He was eulogized by newspapers on the local and national level.