Isaac James Gatewood  
*St. Thomas, V.I.*  
Chemist

Isaac G. James did with the locally grown licorice what could be compared to the experiments of George Washington Carver with the peanut. He experimented with this fruit which grew abundantly on his island home of St. Croix, extracted its juice and found that it could be most useful. In his research and analysis of the juice he found that it could be made into wines, brandy or rum.

This interest in chemistry was nurtured and strengthened when as a young adult he traveled to Denmark seeking opportunities to widen his horizons. His years in Denmark resulted in him being trained as a chemist, a sugar-boiler and a copper-smith. In addition, he mastered Danish with such proficiency that he communicated rather fluently within his community.

Upon his return to St. Croix he was given the position of chief sugar-boiler at the La Grange Concer, one of the islands largest sugar plantation factories for six other estates on St. Croix. Years later he moved to the Dominican Republic where he served as a chemist and sugar-boiler. New York City was his next sojourn and he lived there for many years but finally returned to St. Croix and resumed employment again with the La Grange Concern. He remained with the project until its closing in 1940.

A shrewd business-minded man, he later established his own business and as a merchant, was credited with introducing canned juices and served as a distributor of this product on St. Croix. As a farmer he earned the recognition of introducing grafted mangoes to the islands.

The son of Lucas and Roxcelina James, he was born on April 4, 1893 at Estate Mount Pellier, Frederiksted and as a youngster he received his early education under the Danish system. A man of many talents, he experimented with metals and used copper to create kettles, mugs and other kitchen utensils which he sold locally and for which he also established a market in Denmark.

In recognition of his services to his community, the Fourteenth Legislature of the Virgin Islands designated the Thibet Grove Park located in Frederiksted, St. Croix as the Isaac Gatewood James Park in his honor. He died on December 12, 1978.