

The Virgin Islands Consortium

America, USVI, Marvel At Solar Eclipse

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ST. CROIX -- In a world so filled with trouble, it was no surprise that Americans -- both in the USVI and on the mainland -- made it a date on Monday to witness the solar eclipse that spanned the east to west coast in the U.S., and gave Virgin Islanders something to remember as well.

But the excitement that swept through the territory, whose residents did not witness the full thing but were blessed with momentary wonder as the moon partially blocked the sun's surface, and America itself, whose citizens were left in awe by the jaw-dropping, once-in-a-lifetime spectacle -- could not have been easily predicted.

In the territory, residents spread themselves through the islands, determined to be part of history. They could be found at the University of the Virgin Islands in both districts, Point Udall in St. Croix, some high points on St. Thomas, in their backyards, on the beach, in their cars parked in lonely fields given life through the momentous occasion. Those who did not have protective glasses and wisely decided not to look directly at the sun, caught a glimpse of the action, though fleeting, on The Consortium's livestream.



On the U.S. mainland, the eclipse came in totality. The last such phenomenon to occur in the U.S. was in 1979, which did not cross such a wide swath of the continent. Some were so determined not to miss the rarity that they attempted, unsuccessfully, to travel state to state (the eclipse passed through 14 states) to behold every moment.

The skies were mostly free of clouds on the mainland, as some scientists had gambled, which turned out to be a win-win situation, as the clear skies boded well for their research into the corona -- a mysterious, rare and gaseous envelope of the sun and other stars -- as it did for those only wanting to enjoy the wonderment.



Colbert-Williams family with their shoe boxes that were turned into eclipse-watching devices.

A local family even sent The Consortium some pictures of their experience. Not to be deterred by the lack of solar eclipse glasses, they made their own makeshift watching devices with shoe boxes.

"The Colbert-Williams family take a break to safely watch the solar eclipse with homemade shoebox viewers," reads the caption that accompanied the pictures. "Enjoying family time."

The family's experience, in more ways than one, mirrored what happened throughout the territory as well as the mainland U.S. The historic occasion did not only present a time for mankind to marvel at the universe that the human race knows so little about, but also an opportunity to step away from the oftentimes chaotic cycle of life, if but for a moment.

Feature Image: Member of the Colbert-Williams family gaze in awe at solar eclipse on St. Croix. (Colbert-Williams Family)