

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

The Constantine Collection

(Trinidad and Tobago)

Ref N° 2010-75

PART A - ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1 SUMMARY

The Constantine Collection documents both the public and private life of the late Learie Nicholas Constantine, Baron Constantine of Maraval, in Trinidad and Tobago and of Nelson, in the County Palatine of Lancaster, 1901-1971, herein after referred to as Lord Constantine. He was born in the twin-island state of Trinidad and Tobago into a renowned cricketing family. By the age of 27 he had become a valuable member of the Trinidad and Tobago and West Indies Cricket Teams and recognized as a master of the game. After 1928, he lived continuously in Lancashire, England where he played League Cricket at the Nelson Cricket Club. It is here he launched his professional career as a cricketer, revolutionizing League Cricket and becoming the “highest-paid cricketer in the world and one of the highest-paid sportsmen in Britain.”¹ His groundbreaking work in the Leagues paved the way for the West Indian cricketers to play in the United Kingdom cricket leagues after World War II. C. L. R. James noted that “league cricket today is what Constantine made it.”² Lord Constantine authored nine (9) books on cricket and amassed over four hundred (400) on the subject, including handbooks, guides and booklets. As a distinguished international cricketer he was considered “a legend in his lifetime who raised the professional cricketer and the coloured people in the British Commonwealth to a level of respect never before accepted in Britain.”³ His friend and protégé, the writer, C.L.R. James, attests to the fact, that Lord Constantine “belonged to that style of the distinguished company of men who, through cricket influenced the history of their time.”⁴

As a pioneer, Lord Constantine crafted a life unparalleled in its versatility and excellence and went beyond the boundaries of cricket, where his impact was first felt, to be a race relations and human rights advocate for minorities in Britain and other parts of the British Commonwealth. He was a Pan Africanist, Head of the League of Coloured Peoples, a politician, diplomat, broadcaster, journalist, lecturer and a respected author. He was the first person of African descent to become: a member of the House of Lords in 1969, a member of the Race Relations Board, Sports Council and Governor of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Lord Constantine’s sterling achievements are significant as they were attained at a critical era in world history, when the exclusion of people of colour in political, social and economic life was openly supported by legislation in some countries such as the oppressive apartheid system in South Africa and segregation based on colour in North America. It is said that he was the “link between black and white in a time of transition.”⁵ Lord Constantine served on the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on racial matters in England, a position which allowed him to spread his influence to other parts of the British Empire.

¹ Angus Calder, "A Man for all Cultures: the Careers of Learie Constantine." *Sport in Society*. 6.1 (2003): 19-42.

² C.L.R. James, *Cricket*, ed. Anna Grimshaw. (London: Allison & Busby, 1986) 233.

³ Nasser Khan. “Sir Learie Nicholas “Connie” Constantine (1901-1971): West Indies and Trinidad and Tobago’s First Global Superstar.” E-mail to Jasmin Simmons, 30 August 2009.

⁴ Denzil Batchelor, ed. *Great Cricketers*. (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1970) 133.

⁵ Gerald Howat, *Learie Constantine*. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975).

During the turbulence of the Second World War, Lord Constantine worked as a Welfare Officer in Liverpool, with the Ministry of Labour. He was responsible for the West Indian Technicians Volunteer Scheme ensuring the smooth absorption of people of colour, who had been invited to rebuild Britain as part of the war effort.⁶ At the end of the war, in 1945 he was awarded the Member of Order of the British Empire (M. B. E.) for his outstanding contribution to this programme. He was probably “the single best known man of African descent living in the United Kingdom in the 1950s and 1960s.”⁷ Lord Constantine’s expertise was sought widely by administrators as well as the common folk. Even after his death Lord Constantine continues to be renowned for his significant knowledge of cricket and society.

This Collection is of world significance, because it gives a unique and valuable insight into fifty (50) years of world cricket as well as British race relations, from the 1930s to 60s. The Collection also sheds light on the evolving situation of Commonwealth immigrants to Britain during and after the war and the political history of Trinidad and Tobago.

2 DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR(S)

2.1 The National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS)
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
West Indies.

2.2 ***Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated***
The Heritage Library Division, of the National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) is responsible for the preservation and conservation of this Collection which is of historical significance to national, regional and international researchers on the topics such as cricket, race relations and West Indian politics.

2.3 ***Contact person (s)***
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2. Mrs. Joan Osborne
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⁶ West Indies Calling. 1943. *You Tube*. Web.02 March 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViGwxJloI70>

⁷ Bridget Brereton, Letter to Joan Osborne, 1st February 2010. (Appendix I refers)

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3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 *Name and identification details of the items being nominated*

The Constantine Collection

3.2 *Provenance:*

Mrs. Gloria T. Valère, daughter of Lord Constantine of 202a Terrace Vale Road, Goodwood Park, Trinidad, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is the owner of all the books, papers, manuscripts, and other memorabilia relating to her father Lord Constantine. The collection was legally deposited at the Heritage Library, NALIS on 30th April, 2001 to be renewed every five (5) years. NALIS is the custodian of the collection which represents all the material that was taken from Lord Constantine's study at his home in England at the time of his death.

3.3 *Description*

Location:

The collection is housed in the Rare Books Room at the Heritage Library, NALIS, National Library Building of Trinidad and Tobago. There is also an exhibition room showcasing a number of items from the collection.

The Constantine Collection
Heritage Library, NALIS, National Library Building,
Cor. Hart and Abercromby Streets,
Port of Spain,
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Contents:

The Constantine Collection is divided into three (3) main categories:

- **Personal Papers:** personal and business correspondence, photographs, manuscripts, hand written notes of meetings and important events, typescripts of speeches, interviews, transcripts, and postcards. These have been catalogued and indexed in a WINISIS database.
- **Printed Materials:** mainly books written by and about Lord Constantine, handbooks newsletters, periodicals and newspapers spanning 1948-1971 from his personal library, some of which bear inscriptions to Lord Constantine and his wife Lady Norma Constantine.
- **Museum Exhibits:**
 1. Briefcase
 2. St Andrews student gown-presented to individuals being installed as Rectors of the University.
 3. Top hat - part of his formal wear as High Commissioner
 4. Twenty nine (29) silk ties representing English and West Indies county cricket clubs
 5. Typewriter
 6. West Indies cricket badge

Highlights of his Personal Papers are:

- Lord Constantine's handwritten notes for the meeting of 12th March 1950 to plan the historic march against Seretse Khama's exile in Britain.

- “Seretse Khama Protest Meeting at Dennison Hall” in the New Times and Ethiopia News.
- Correspondence between Lord Constantine and his life-long friend C.L.R. James.
- Correspondence relating to his work and activities as a cricketer, lecturer, author, critic, reviewer. Journalist and broadcaster.
- Correspondence from fans, admirers and detractors.
- Correspondence relating to the following:
 - West Indian Technicians Volunteer Scheme 1939-1945.
 - The League of Coloured Peoples in England 1947.
 - The Caribbean Labour Congress 1948.
 - Congratulatory messages on his achievement as: a Lawyer, 1954; Minister of Government, Trinidad, 1956-1961; High Commissioner, 1962-1964; Knighthood, 1962; and Member of the House of Lords, 1969.
 - The Race Relations Board of England, 1967.
 - Rector of [the University of St Andrews](#), 1967-1970.
 - Governor of the British Broadcasting Service (BBC) 1968.

Manuscripts:

Living in Britain

- “Farbige Unerwünscht”-“Coloured Unwelcome” Typescript of Chapter XII of his book *Colour Bar (1954)* which was selected to be translated into German Unpublished work on *Cricketer’s Cricket*.
- Typescript of his maiden political speech as Chairman of the People’s National Movement.
- Typescript of *Report on British Guiana* by J.W. Howieson, late Assistant to the Commissioner of Labour British Guiana 30. 12. 1941.
- Typescript of short address on the Jamaican Technicians Scheme 1939-1945.
- Judgement in the High Court of Justice King’s Bench Division Royal Court of Justice, Wednesday 25th June 1944 before Mr. Justice Birkett, Constantine V Imperial London Hotels Ltd.
- Transcripts of Lord Constantine’s British Broadcasting Programmes such as Northern Children’s Hour, Cricketing Characters- Spectators.
- “Race in the World” Rectoral Address delivered before the University of St. Andrews 17th April, 1968.
- Drafts of speeches.

Photographs:

There are approximately 5000 photographs in The Constantine Collection depicting his social and public life as a cricketer and coach, diplomat, peer, official overseas visits, and other noteworthy events. Photographs include: Lord Constantine, his family, the Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip, Sir Solomon Hochoy, war images, cricket teams and matches. Of particular significance are several photographs that depict the art of cricket. Constantine details each element of cricket which include: holding the ball, positioning of the body, catching and batting. These original pictures are irreplaceable as they reflect cricketing techniques from a master of the game.

Personal Library:

This consists of an extensive collection of his publications as well as other publications on cricket, early history of the West Indies, race relations, Pan Africanism, history, literature and philosophy. Some of the books carry inscriptions and are in excellent condition but some of the newspaper articles are brittle.

4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Is authenticity established?

After the death of her father, Mrs. Gloria Valère took legal ownership of all the books, papers,

manuscripts and other memorabilia relating to Lord Constantine. The material was previously located in his study at his house in London. NALIS began collecting material from her home at 202a Terrace Vale Road, Goodwood Park, Trinidad in 2001. The materials have never been in the possession of anyone other than Mrs. Valère.

4.2 Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?

World significance:

Lord Constantine has been described as a legend in his time. He emerged from the obscurity of a slave ancestry and a small cocoa plantation, to become one of the greatest cricketers of his generation. Lord Constantine was the first in many areas: he was knighted in 1962 and in 1968 he became the first black Rector of the St Andrews University, Scotland; the first black Governor of the BBC in 1968, and in 1969 the first life Peer of African descent. He received the title of Baron Constantine of Maraval in Trinidad and of Nelson in the County Palatine of Lancaster and his introduction into the House of Lords was a historic and grand occasion.

He was a broadcaster, a cabinet minister, a diplomat, a barrister, a journalist, a lecturer and in 1964 Chairman of the Commonwealth Prize Institute. His multidimensional career has inspired more widespread affection among all sorts and conditions of people in his homeland Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean, the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth, Europe and the United States of America. The *Nelson Leader* of Nelson, Lancashire, one of the town's newspapers hailed Constantine as one of Nelson's two men of the Millennium.

As Emissary Extraordinary of Amnesty International, Constantine took on assignments that led him to Nigeria and Ghana to negotiate for the release of political prisoners in both jurisdictions. As a member of the Race Relations Board, United Kingdom, he devoted his energies to hearing cases of racial discrimination in Britain and seeking solutions. In 2008, he was short listed by the London Blue Plaques commemorative scheme which celebrates great figures of the past and the buildings they inhabited. Constantine is also listed on the Black Achievers Wall in the International Slavery Museum, Liverpool, U.K.⁸

Lord Constantine was a remarkable man who made a positive contribution to human welfare and happiness. It is therefore not surprising that to date three (3) full length biographies have been published, the most recent being in 2008. This proves that his contributions have not been forgotten with the passage of time. The biographies are as follows:

- Giuseppe, Undine. *A Look at Learie Constantine*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1974.
- Howat, Gerald. *Learie Constantine*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975.
- Mason, Peter. *Learie Constantine: A Life*. London: Macmillan, 2008.

Lord Constantine has been the subject of many entries in several encyclopaedias including the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. His diverse careers touched many different lives across several continents. Since the collection has been deposited at the Heritage Library, NALIS, requests have been received from scholars, biographers, authors and organizations from across the globe.

Songs

The greatness of Lord Constantine has also been immortalised in song and in poetry. For over four decades calypsonians have extolled his prowess as a cricketer, creating songs such as:

1. Constantine by Lord Pretender (Aldric Farell).
2. Constantine (1928) by Lord Beginner (Egbert Moore).
3. Learie Constantine (1939) by Lord Caresser (Rufus Callender).
4. A Tribute to Learie Constantine (1962) by Black Stalin (Leroy Calliste).

⁸ National Museums Liverpool. International Slavery Museum. National Museums Liverpool. 2010. 02 March 2010. <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ism/collections/legacies/blackachieverswall/names.aspx>

5. Constantine Calypso (1966) by Cy Grant.

Constantine was as popular in England as he was in the West Indies. One fan known as “Drago Man” created a “Song for Constantine” to the tune of “Clementine” lamenting the Lancashire League club’s refusal to release Constantine for the test matches during the West Indies tour of England that year.

Poetry

A few poems have been written on the exploits of Lord Constantine, these include:

1. Cobham, Gilles. “To the Baron.” *Trinidad Evening News*, 14 July. 1971: 4,12
2. Roach, E. M. “To Learie.” *Trinidad Guardian*. 1939.
3. Blalock, Denys. “Colour.” *The Waters*. (this poem was dedicated to Learie Constantine by the authors own inscription in 1956).
4. Nelson, M.L. “Original Verse”.
5. “Masters of the Art” In Horace Harragin, *Sixty Years of Cricket: Australia vs. the West Indies a Commemoration*. Port of Spain: Paria Publishing. 1991.
6. “The Improbable Dream”. In Horace Harragin, *Sixty Years of Cricket: Australia vs. the West Indies a Commemoration*. Port of Spain: Paria Publishing. 1991.
7. Smith, Ronald H. “Baron of the Realm or On the Queen’s Honour List 1969.” 1969.

Cricket

Lord Constantine was cricket-West Indian, English League and world Cricket. His meticulous and analytical approach to Britain’s pre-eminent sport propelled him to the pinnacle of the motherland’s game. In a time of extreme racial tensions Lord Constantine used his influence as a cricketer to counteract overt racism in all its manifestations. During his career in First Class Cricket, Lord Constantine’s name was found repeatedly in most newspapers in the British Empire and the Commonwealth, in the *Wisden Cricketers’ Almanac* and in several cricket books written by others. Constantine has written nine (9) books on Cricket which have won him worldwide acclaim and can be found in libraries throughout the world today:

Cricket and I (1933)

Cricket in the Sun (1946)

Cricketers’ Carnival (1948)

Cricket Crackers (1949)

Cricketers’ Cricket (1949)

How to Play Cricket (1951)

It’s like this Cat (1963)

The Young Cricketer’s Companion: the Theory and Practice of Joyful Cricket (1964)

The Changing Face of Cricket (1966)

Lord Constantine was eagerly sought by other writers to provide support and prestige to their publications by supplying forewords. He provided the foreword for John Clarke and Brian Scovell’s book *Everything that’s Cricket- The West Indies Tour 1966*. In this first edition the inscription from Brian Scovell thanks Constantine for the “cricketing education of the past three years.” Many cricket writers like Scovell often sent Constantine the first edition of their books, their admiration of him made apparent. A.A Thomason author of at least thirteen (13) cricket texts religiously sent Constantine copies of his books. In a letter to him in 1954 he noted “when you leave England cricket will not be the same, indeed it has not been the same since you ceased playing.”⁹

Another admirer of Constantine was author C. J. Britton, whose inscription in 1944 in his book *G. L. Jessop: a Complete Record of his Performances in First-class Cricket*, stated, “To L. A. Constantine who alone can compare with the great Jessop in fielding, batting and bowling”¹⁰. This book is a collector’s item as only 500 copies were ever printed with a number of them being destroyed by

⁹ A. A. Thomason, letter to Learie Constantine, 11 May 1954.

¹⁰ C. J. Britton, *G.L. Jessop: A Complete Record of His Performances in First Class Cricket*. (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1935).

accident. He collaborated with several authors in the publication of books on cricket; this included collaboration with his very close friend C.L.R. James on the publication of his autobiography *Cricket and I*. He also worked with him on the publication of the seminal work, *Beyond a Boundary* in which three (3) chapters were devoted to Lord Constantine. Ralph Barker also included a chapter on Learie Constantine in his book *Ten Great Innings*. He commented on the cricket prowess of the then 27 year old all rounder, "It was an age of sporting heroes and that day Constantine had scaled the summit."¹¹

League Cricket

Lord Constantine has been described as the ideal League Cricketer at a time when he was the only black man involved in League Cricket. He began his professional career in cricket at Nelson in the Lancashire League and spent nine (9) seasons with the club, winning seven (7) championships in the process. He played in the Windhill Cricket Club in the Bradford League, in the Liverpool and District Leagues, in Ireland and Scotland. Cardus' tribute to Constantine (cited in Thompson 171) stated that, "his cricket was a prophesy which has gloriously come to pass, for it forecast ...the coming one day of Weekes, Worrell, of Headley, of Walcott, of Kanhai, of Sobers. All of these cricketers remain, for all their acquired culture and ordered technique, descendants of Learie, cricketers in Learie's lineage."¹² Constantine was also invited to go to India to coach and to take part in the Maharajah's Gold Cup Tournament; he coached for three (3) months in Ceylon and at Trinity College in Dublin.

The rich array of photographs, letters and memorabilia in the Constantine Collection gives insight to the far-reaching influence and impact which Lord Constantine had on world cricket. Author and cricket researcher, Nasser Khan has noted that the Collection, "undoubtedly is the largest single *personal* collection of material in any one location which has "cricket" as its central theme and is a testimony to his [Constantine] passion for reading, writing, and documenting for over 50 years from 1920-1971."¹³ (See appendix II for full review)

Human Rights Advocate

His work in the League of Coloured People gave Lord Constantine the opportunity to make representations to government authorities on behalf of coloured people. His landmark case against the Imperial Hotel for discrimination was invaluable because it made it illegal for anyone to be denied accommodation on the grounds of skin colour; he won this case and was awarded damages. This act would later be related to the future attitude of coloured people in the Empire, especially with regards to their inclusion in the war cause. It also played a part in the foundation of Britain's first Race Relations Act.

Lord Constantine was chair of the Seretse Khama Fighting Committee which championed the return of Seretse Khama, Chief designate of the Bamangwati people, and his white English wife, to his tribe in Bechuanaland (now called Botswana). Seretse Khama had been exiled from Bechuanaland to England on the instigation of South Africa (then a British Dominion). His marriage went against apartheid policy and the South African government refused to have this symbol of integration on its borders as it signalled a position of political and social strength, therefore, Khama's return was being blocked by the British Labour Government.

He was called upon by Amnesty International to negotiate with tribal troops in Nigeria who had kidnapped the Federal Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. His report to Amnesty International helped to bring widespread notice of the tragedy of human events taking place in Nigeria at that time.

His deep interest in equity and fair play and his thoughts on the colour issue were crystallised in his

¹¹Ralph Barker, *Ten Great Innings*. (Chatto and Windus, 1964.) 45.

¹²L. O. Thompson, "How Cricket is West Indian Cricket? Class, racial and color conflict." *Liberation Cricket: West Indies Cricket Culture*. ed. Hilary McD. Beckles and Brain Stoddart. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995). 165-178

¹³Nasser Khan. "Sir Learie Nicholas "Connie" Constantine (1901-1971): West Indies and Trinidad and Tobago's First Global Superstar." Email to Jasmin Simmons. 30 August 2009.

book the *Colour Bar* (1954). It was written to give the African in the Diaspora a view of the black and white problem. He felt strongly that although the “United Nations had proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948; mankind had not recognized the inherent dignity and equal inalienable rights of all members of the human family.”¹⁴ The book paid considerable attention to affairs in South Africa and the United States, the appeal of communism to depressed coloured people and related the decline of Christianity to the failure of churches to take an uncompromising attitude to racial discrimination. *Colour Bar* can be found in one hundred (100) libraries throughout the world today. Chapter XII has been translated into German.

The books and correspondence in the collection attest to Constantine’s commitment to fight racism wherever found. Among his collection was a book presented to him by the Aborigines Advancement League titled, *Adams and Atoms* by William Grayden. The book told the story of the plight of the Warburton Aborigines in Western Australia. Another important book in the collection is Ursula Sharma’s, *Rampaul and His Family- Story of an Immigrant*, Collins, 1971. The book was forwarded to Constantine in the same year he died by the Publicity Manager, at Collins Publishers, Eric Major who was considered to be a “publisher of distinction on both sides of the Atlantic”¹⁵. Major thought that the book was “breaking new ground in understanding race relations”¹⁶ and knew that Constantine would appreciate an early copy of the book, especially as he was now a member of the Race Relations Board in England.

West Indian Politics:

By 1956, two years after returning to Trinidad and Tobago Constantine was invited by Dr. Eric Williams to be the Chairman of the newly formed People’s National Movement (P.N.M). Dr. Eric Williams was a formidable scholar, historian, and a close friend of Lord Constantine and his family, who spent his vacation with the Constantines’ while he was studying in Oxford.

Lord Constantine contested the Tunapuna seat in the 1956 Legislative Council Elections and was victorious. Later he became the Minister of Communications, Works and Public Utilities in the P.N.M’s first government. He was of inestimable service to the P.N.M at a crucial time in Trinidad and Tobago’s history. His immense popularity as a West Indian figure certainly contributed to the enormous success of the P.N.M and this in turn, inaugurated quite clearly a new period in the country’s history. On account of his connections in England he was named as the first High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago in 1961 and he was able to work closely with the committee for the granting of Independence in 1962. However it was his passion for fairness and his distaste for discriminatory practices which resulted in his resignation as High Commissioner. His help was sought in a racial discrimination matter involving a Jamaican citizen who wanted to be hired in the bus service in Bristol. He got involved and did resolve the matter favourably for all, but this brought him in conflict with his own government, which held the view that he should not have intervened. His resignation permitted him to continue the fight for all West Indians in racial discrimination issues. In 1967, he was appointed a member of the newly created Race Relations Board, in England.

There is no doubt that Lord Constantine is renowned worldwide. His contributions as a cricketer, human rights advocate, broadcaster, journalist and politician have had an impact throughout the Caribbean, Great Britain and the Commonwealth, Europe, Asia and the United States of America. He was passionately opposed to injustice and discrimination, and used his fame and success as a cricketer and in other spheres to help others and to perpetuate the need for human tolerance of all persons.

Uniqueness and Irreplaceability

The Constantine Collection consists mainly of original documents. Many of the typescripts of speeches, and scripts have annotations in his handwriting, which make them invaluable primary documents. The Collection is a significant treasure for historians, sociologists, researchers and

¹⁴ Gerald Howat, *Learie Constantine*. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975)152-3.

¹⁵ Ion Trewin, “Eric Majors.” *The Independent*.17 January 2006, 18 March 2010

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/eric-major-523300.html>

¹⁶ Eric Major, letter to Learie Constantine, 26 May 1971.

postgraduate students and will be an insurmountable loss if it is not safeguarded.

4.1 Is one or more of the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style (f) social, spiritual and community significance satisfied? (see 4.2.5) Provide an explanation against each criterion selected. Attach separate statement if space insufficient.

(a) The Constantine Collection has satisfied the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) Social, spiritual and community significance.

(b) Time:

The Constantine Collection comprises documents that span approximately fifty-one (51) years from 1920 to 1971. This period in contemporary world history represents the crumbling of the colonial empire; shifts in the balance of world power with the advent of the Second World War; the quest for sovereignty against colonialism; the rise of nationalism and Independence of island states; Pan Africanism and the Black Power Movement. The Collection is excellent source material for the study of the history of cricket in the West Indies, England and the Commonwealth and the role of cricket as an agent of social mobility. It also highlights the theme of immigration from the Commonwealth in the 1950s and 1960s focussing on India and the West Indies. The Collection presents an excellent window into race relations and the treatment of immigrants in Britain in this critical aspect of British History. In 1965 the Race Relations Act was passed by the Wilson Government “making it a criminal offence to stir up hatred on grounds of race or colour. It became the duty of the newly created Race Relations Board to investigate alleged offences under the Act, and to achieve reconciliation between offended and offending parties.”¹⁷ Lord Constantine was a member of this first Race Relations Board and was an integral part of guiding this social transformation.

(c) Place:

When the British Empire still ruled the world, with wealth drawn from its far-flung colonies there came from Trinidad and Tobago a black Cricketer -Learie Constantine who captured the imagination of the Empire. As a professional cricketer and coach, Lord Constantine was known in every country where the sport of cricket was played, “not only on but off the field this all-rounder made his mark. He is to be placed as an ambassador with Lord Hawke, Pelham Warner and Sir Frank Worrell. They travelled far and travelled wide and where they passed the blossoms and flowers of cricket bloomed or sprouted,”¹⁸ in the Caribbean, England, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Scotland, Ireland, Ceylon, Sri Lanka and Africa. In the Borough of Nelson where he had made his home he was made an Honorary Freeman the “sixth Freeman in the seventy-four years since the town was incorporated as a Borough.”¹⁹ Where Lord Constantine had not travelled physically his thoughts and philosophies on cricket were carried worldwide through his books, newspaper and magazine articles and BBC broadcasts.

In Willesden, London at the Learie Constantine Centre, lies a *bronze bust* of Lord Constantine by renowned Irish sculptor, Mary Quinn, known for her finely sculpted portrait busts and figures in bronze. In Trinidad and Tobago, are two landmarks locations, the *Learie Constantine Stand* at the Queen’s Park Oval, Port of Spain and the *Constantine Park*, Tunapuna both of which were named in his honour.

(d) People

The Constantine Collection is significant because of the unparalleled accomplishments of the man, on whom the highest honour has been placed both in his homeland and in the United Kingdom. Although Lord Constantine did not attend secondary school he was able to use his skills to become one of the world’s greatest cricketers, respected authority on cricket, author and lawyer. He was the recipient of several awards including: Wisden Cricketer of the year 1940; Member of the Order of the British

¹⁷ Gerald Howat, *Learie Constantine*. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1975).

¹⁸ C.L.R. James, *Cricket*, ed. Anna Grimshaw. (London: Allison and Busby, 1986) 244.

¹⁹ Undine Giuseppe, *A Look at Learie Constantine*. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1974) 11.

Empire, 1945. Lord Constantine qualified as a lawyer in 1954 and was called to the Bar (UK) in 1955 and in Trinidad and Tobago. He became Sir Learie Constantine in 1962 and was made Honorary Master of the Bench 1963. In the same year he was featured on popular BBC TV series-‘This is your Life’. In 1969, he was made lifetime member of the House of Lords and installed as Baron. In his country Trinidad and Tobago, he was featured on the Trinidad and Tobago postage stamp 1988. “Twenty-nine years after his death, the *Nelson Leader* hailed Constantine as one of Nelson's two men of the millennium.”²⁰ Posthumously he was awarded the Trinity Cross, Trinidad and Tobago’s highest honour in 1971, and was inducted into the West Indian Tobacco Sports Foundation Hall of Fame in 1984.

As a human rights and race relations advocate he was respected by people of all walks of life across continents. His selection as a Rector of St. Andrews University, the most ancient Scottish University, and the third oldest in Britain after Oxford and Cambridge is testimony to the positive impact he had in academia. Constantine was able to break the colour bar and contribute to the fair treatment of many people of colour in the British Empire.

During his distinguished career, Lord Constantine was invited to conduct public lectures to a wide cross-section of individual and groups in every sphere of economic, social and political activity, in Britain, the Caribbean, North America, Europe and Africa. As an accomplished politician he contributed to the attainment of the Independence of Republic of Trinidad and Tobago serving as a member of the team which drafted the Trinidad and Tobago Independence Constitution. The Collection details his early friendship with Dr. Eric Williams and gives insight to the mind of the man who would become the country’s first Prime Minister. Of significant interest is a first edition copy of the book *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* by Dr. Eric Williams, published by the People’s National Movement (P.N.M.) in 1962. The book bears the following inscription “to Learie and Norma the first ambassadors of our nation, two of the principal representations of the true spirit of independence.”²¹ The inscription is dated August 31st 1962. Coupled with this is a photograph of Constantine and Dr Williams in a private capacity, highlighting their close association. The Collection also highlights key areas in the development of the People’s National Movement, (P.N.M.) and those who worked with the party. Lord Constantine shared a common philosophy with his contemporaries Kwame Nkrumah, George Padmore and C. L. R. James to name a few, with whom he collaborated on issues such as Pan Africanism, race relation, nationalism and anti-colonialism. James has credited Lord Constantine as being a “central figure in his political development in relation to his racial awareness, anti-colonial sensibility and views on West Indian nationalism.”²² Typescripts and letters giving insight to this close relationship between C. L. R. James and Lord Constantine can be found in the Constantine Collection. **The C. L. R. James collection was inscribed on the Memory of the World International Register in 2005.**

(e) Subject and theme:

Lord Constantine published and authored nine (9) seminal works covering all aspects of the game of cricket including, coaching, bowling, batting and fielding. Additionally, the burning issues of racial discrimination in cricket and other sport and social injustice were of great concern to Lord Constantine. These issues are reflected in the various books and pamphlets in his Collection. Many of these items were forwarded to him as President of the League of coloured People in 1947.

The Constantine Collection highlights themes such as the colour bar in the world, nationalism politics in Britain, and Trinidad and Tobago. In his book *The Colour Bar* (1954), Constantine summed up his experience of Britain and the British thus:

“Almost the entire population in Britain really expects the coloured man to live in an inferior area devoted to coloured people...Most British people would be quite unwilling for a black man to

²⁰ Sriram Veera, “Learie Constantine: Lord and Master” All Rounder No 17. **Cricinfo Magazine**, 16 March 2007, 19 March 2010. <http://www.cricinfo.com/allrounder/content/story/285429.html>

²¹ Eric Williams, *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*. (PNM Pub. 1962).

²² John Peter Sugden, Alan Tomlinson, *Power games: a critical sociology of sport*. (New York. Routledge, 2002).

*enter their homes, nor would they wish to work with one as a colleague, nor stand shoulder to shoulder with one at a factory bench. Hardly any Englishwomen and not more than a small proportion of Englishmen would sit at a restaurant table with a coloured man or woman, and inter-racial marriage is considered almost universally to be out of the question.”*²³

Lord Constantine kept many pieces of disparaging correspondence in his collection that reflect the social attitude of certain elements in the community. He played a critical role in resolving problems and has earned a place in race relations and cricket history in Britain in the 20th Century. His works are also significant to the understanding of other themes such as Africans in the Diaspora, migration, the social conditions of West Indians and their role in the Second World War in Britain.

(f) Social, spiritual and community significance

The personal papers and correspondence in The Constantine Collection document Lord Constantine’s enduring value as a role model, not only for people of African descent but all people. The Colonial society into which Lord Constantine was born was structured on the basis of colour, race, ethnicity and class. Such societies were uncomfortable for those who were forced to live a life of subservience with few avenues available for social mobility. Cricket was the medium which allowed Lord Constantine’s role model, his father Le Brun Constantine to penetrate the colour bar. Similarly, it was cricket which allowed Lord Constantine to make a significant contribution to West Indian society. “Neville Cardus, quite rightly, called him the ‘spiritual father’ of all the great West Indian cricketers who came after him.”²⁴ Lord Constantine represented the spirit of hope for people of colour at a critical time in the development of territories in the British Commonwealth. “He propelled West Indian cricket into the hands of the black majority.”²⁵ He was seen as a champion not only by those in the West Indies but also by individuals in Africa, Asia, United States of America and in the Commonwealth. He was one of the most influential cricketers of colour “to dent the credibility of the class-ridden amateur-dominated English first class game, which he helped to undermine in much the same way he helped to undercut the white, class-ridden and amateur-dominated West Indies hierarchy.”²⁶

His work as a Welfare Officer allowed him to deal directly with the social issues of race and other social problems facing immigrants in Britain at the time. His career as a journalist and broadcaster gave Lord Constantine the much needed voice to express opinions on pressing social and political issues of racial discrimination. Peter Mason summed up quite succinctly Lord Constantine’s contribution to British Society in the twentieth century. He indicated that, “his solutions were centred on moderation and peace. Wisden called him, a ‘compassionate radical’. His approach to the social problems caused by race relations was different from his more radical contemporaries. He felt he could show by dignified, friendly and personal example that black people deserved an equal place in British society and the world. As a result, Lord Constantine spoke to the white majority more than the black minority; deliberately so, for he believed this was how significant attitudinal change could be brought about. John Arlott argued that ‘he sustained his own position and that of all coloured people, with dignity and an absence of rancour rarely equalled by his reactionary opponents’. Thus he laid the ground for others to follow. He was a great man, the extent and depth of Constantine’s popularity was extraordinary.”²⁷

4.2 Are there issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management that relate to this nomination?

Rarity:

This Collection consists of personal papers/speeches, and manuscripts such as his unpublished autobiography, and his book *Cricketers Cricket*, hand written notes, extensive correspondence as an international cricketer, diplomat, race relations advocate, politician, journalist, broadcaster, and radio transcripts penned by and or acquired by Lord Constantine. By its content it represents a rare example of a firsthand account of the evolution of and concerns about cricket worldwide as well as social changes that were occurring in this crucial colonial period. **There is no other parallel collection of**

²³ Peter Mason, *Learie Constantine*. (Oxford. MacMillan Educational, 2008) 119.

²⁴ Peter Mason, *Learie Constantine*, (Oxford. MacMillan Educational. 2008) 184.

²⁵ Ibid.185

²⁶ Ibid.185

²⁷ Ibid 190-91

Constantine papers anywhere in the world. This unique collection is an important primary source that is central to any investigation of Lord Constantine's work, his contribution to cricket and to the life of coloured people in Britain during this period.

Integrity:

The collection is a comprehensive compilation of Lord Constantine's correspondence, personal monographs, newspaper articles, manuscripts, photographs and ephemeral material.

Threat:

Some of the material is brittle and therefore in a fragile state. These however are stored in a secured environment to prevent any further deterioration.

Management:

The collection is secure as the materials have been sorted, analysed, re-housed, catalogued and indexed and will be digitized in 2010. The collection is regularly monitored and cleaned.

5 *LEGAL INFORMATION*

5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Gloria T. Valère
202 A Terrace Vale Road
Goodwood Park
Pt Cumana
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
West Indies.

The deposit is renewable by contract every five (5) years.

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)

National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS)
Corner Hart and Abercromby Streets
Port of Spain
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago
West Indies.
Telephone: (868) 624-2266 (ext 2432)
Fax: (868) 625-6096
Website:[http\\www.nalis.gov.tt](http://www.nalis.gov.tt)

5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership

NALIS is the exclusive custodian of The Constantine Collection.

(b) Accessibility

The Collection is available for research by NALIS research staff, post graduate students, other bona fide researchers, local, regional and international and any other person whom the Executive Director in her discretion may permit to have access, subject to NALIS' existing rules and regulations governing access to the collection. There is a special collections room designated for this purpose and a permanent exhibition room highlighting the collection.

(c) Copyright Status

The copyright of all materials in The Collection rests with Mrs Gloria T. Valère owner of the collection. NALIS does not possess copyright of the material.

(d) Responsible administration

Heritage Library Division
National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS)
2nd Cor. Hart and Abercromby Streets
Port of Spain
Trinidad and Tobago

(e) Other factors

Three (3) Referees who know about the collection

Mr Peter Mason

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Email: khans@mail.tt

6 MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage?

Summary of Management Plan

The Constantine Collection is housed in the Rare Books Room in the Heritage Library Division of the National Library of Trinidad and Tobago. The collection has been thoroughly fumigated and stored in archival materials. Materials used include, pamphlet and heirloom boxes, envelopes, newspaper boxes, and albums. Future plans include the de-acidification of individual paper based items, and digitization for items at risk for the purposes of preservation and access.

The Rare Books Room is fully air conditioned and maintained at a constant 21 degrees C with relative humidity between 45-55%. This is to ensure the continued preservation of the material. The windows have been tinted and blinds have been installed to ensure protection against UV light. The Rare Books Room is equipped with a halon fire suppression system and is monitored by a 24 hour camera surveillance system.

All 19, 000 physical items to date have been catalogued and indexed in a WINISIS database which is

available for research on a designated computer. In-house researchers must first browse the database to locate items before any item is brought out of storage. The researcher is brought to a secure special collections room for consultation and is supplied with relevant protective gear such as cotton gloves, dusk masks, pencils and paper (laptop may be used if necessary). All requests for copies must be made to the Executive Director NALIS who will then forward the request to the owner for approval.

To mark the fortieth anniversary of Lord Constantine's death (1st July 1971), in 2011, the Heritage Library Division NALIS plans to pay tribute to him with the publication of two documents. The first will be a compilation of **Famous Quotations by and About Lord Constantine** which will be drawn from the rich collection of correspondence and books in The Constantine Collection. The second will be the publication of **A Guide to the Constantine Collection**. These publications are expected to be completed by June 2011.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with:

(a) **The owner** of the heritage Mrs Gloria T. Valère has agreed to the nomination of The Constantine Collection.

(b) **The custodian**
NALIS is the Custodian

(c) **Your national or regional *Memory of the World* committee**
The Trinidad and Tobago Memory of the World Committee has agreed that the nomination of The Constantine Collection be put forward after having viewed and commented on the completed nomination form. A copy of the nomination of The Constantine Collection will be sent to the Regional and International Committee.

PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8 ASSESSMENT OF RISK

8.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to this documentary heritage (see 5.5)

Much of the paper based materials have fallen prey to embrittlement because of age and previous housing. Parts of the collection are crumbling daily and becoming irretrievably lost. The absence of an overhead scanner due to budgetary constraints, to digitize this heritage material means the Constantine Collection is at risk. Further, despite all internal security efforts, the risk factors are still high when considering acts of nature such as hurricanes, storms and earthquakes.

9 ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION

9.1 Detail the preservation context of the documentary heritage (see 3.3)

NALIS is currently equipping a conservation laboratory under the direction of a trained Library Conservator. In addition, there are staff members who are qualified with the Masters in Library Science Degree, specialising in preservation. The Library plans to digitize parts of the Collection that are at risk by 2011 for the purpose of preservation and access.