Ralph C. Lasbury, Jr. Collection:  
The Shade Tobacco Growers Agricultural Association

Finding Aid

Windsor Historical Society  
96 Palisado Avenue, Windsor, CT 06095

Creator: Lasbury, Ralph C., Jr.  
Dates: 1943-1984  
Extent: 5.5 linear feet  
Accession #: 1983.36, 1984.62

Biographical Note
Ralph C. Lasbury, Jr. was born September 4, 1906, in the Broad Brook section of East Windsor, Connecticut. He was the second child of Ralph C. Lasbury and Eloise Thrall. Lasbury Senior was one of Connecticut’s important broadleaf tobacco growers. At one point, he had 500 acres of broadleaf growing.

As a young boy, Ralph C. Lasbury, Jr. worked tobacco every summer. After high school, he went to Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. He then worked for his father at the South Windsor Tobacco Company.

In the early 1930s, Mr. Lasbury worked for Henry Trumbull in Plainville, Connecticut. He developed a type of humus for tobacco beds and received much praise from the shade tobacco growers.

In 1939, he was appointed as the first Chairman of the Connecticut Marketing Authority in Hartford. He held that position until 1978. The Connecticut Regional Market in Hartford was one of his major accomplishments.

Mr. Lasbury was appointed to the Farm Labor Committee of the State Defense Council in 1941. He and a number of tobacco men, including William S. Fuller, Albert Newfield, Lamarr Monroe, and Charles Huntington, developed a code of standards for tobacco workers. Hours, housing, and sanitary conditions were included in the unprecedented code.

On November 30, 1942, Mr. Lasbury was hired as Executive Director of the Shade Tobacco Growers Agricultural Association. The first offices were established at 148 State Street in Hartford, Connecticut.
One of his first duties was to develop a workable labor program. His program included the establishment of attractive youth camps, adult guidance proposals, and a “day-haul” system so that local teachers and students could earn extra money. Also, many corrective regulations were drawn up. These became the basis for the Farm Labor Law of 1947.

Mr. Lasbury's job as spokesman for the tobacco growers brought him to the State Legislature. He also went to Washington to participate in Congressional hearings on tobacco labor and production problems.

One of Mr. Lasbury's proficiencies was his public relations work. He and the Association produced a documentary film on shade tobacco. The film served as a teaching tool for the public and the sales people of the cigar industry.

The 1960s saw more contributions by Mr. Lasbury to the industry. He established the first state licensed hospital in the United States for migrant agricultural workers. In 1968, Senator Harrison Williams of New Jersey inspected the Windsor Labor Camp and said that the association's operation was the “most enlightened” of any employer group he had seen in the country.

In 1968, Mr. Lasbury retired. Upon Lasbury’s retirement, Gerrit Krot, president of the Shade Tobacco Growers Agricultural Association, said that “no man in contemporary American agriculture contributed more to the industry’s welfare.”

Besides his work in the Association, he had many other interests. Lasbury was the first president of the Connecticut Morgan Horse Club. He served as a director of the Connecticut Antiquarian and Landmarks Society. He was an avid trout fisherman and fox hunter and collected antique duck decoys.

Ralph C. Lasbury, Jr. died of a heart attack on March 18, 1979, in Winter Park, Florida. He was 72. When he died, he left his wife, Cecilia Chase Lasbury; two sons, Ralph C. Lasbury and Joshua C. Lasbury; and two daughters, Cecilia Johnson and Abigail Fitzgerald.

Scope and Contents
The collection documents a significant portion of the professional activities of Ralph C. Lasbury, Jr. over a period of fifty years as the head of Connecticut regional agricultural marketing and employer groups. Minutes, correspondence, reports, leases, fiscal reports, copies of state legislative activities, and newspaper articles document the establishment, opening, and operation of the Connecticut Regional Market, a venue for the sale of Connecticut agricultural commodities. It also contains minutes, correspondence, membership lists, reports, and negotiations on behalf of the British West Indies Employers’ Association. Lasbury represented the interests of tobacco growers, traveled extensively for the Association’s executive committee, and met regularly with Caribbean governmental officials.
Arrangement
Each series and folder is arranged chronologically. Folders in Series II are also marked with an earlier sequential numbering system (not listed here) that is independent of the current Box and Folder numbers.

Series I. Regional Marketing Authority and Connecticut Marketing Authority, 1943-1966
Series II. British West Indies Employers’ Association, 1951-1969
Series III. Regional Labour Board and British West Indies Employers’ Association joint meetings, 1970-1983
Series V. Photographs, 1944-1952

Box and Folder Lists
The numbering system below reflects the box and folder numbers within the series, e.g. "3.2 - Publicity on opening Nov. 16, 1952" is the second folder in box 3.

Series I. Regional Marketing Authority and Connecticut Marketing Authority, 1943-1966 (File E)
1.1 1943-1945
1.2 1946
1.3 1947
1.4 1948
1.5 1948 cont’d
1.6 1948 cont’d
2.1 1949
2.2 1949 cont’d
2.3 1950
2.4 1950 cont’d
2.5 1950 cont’d
3.1 1951
3.2 Publicity on opening Nov. 16, 1952
3.3 1952
3.4 1953
4.1 1954
4.2 1955
4.3 1956
4.4 1957
4.5 1958
4.6 1959-1960
5.1  1961
5.2  1962
5.3  1963
5.4  1964
5.5  1965-1966

Series II. British West Indies Employers’ Association, 1951-1969 (File D)
6.1  B.W.I. Employers’ Association, membership list, 1958 and 1963
6.2  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, miscellaneous correspondence to and from members, 1951-1952
6.3  B.W.I. Central Labour Organisation, correspondence to and from Harry Edwards
6.4  Jamaican trip, R.C.L. work papers and expense account, Feb.-Mar. 1951
6.5  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, miscellaneous correspondence, 1951-1960
6.6  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, William Meranda, Transportation Representative
6.7  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, minutes of the organizational meeting, Nov. 5, 1951
6.8  Meeting of Employers of B.W.I. workers, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, Sept. 14-15, 1951

7.1  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, R.C.L. work folder and meeting, Jamaica, Dec. 1951
7.2  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, publicity for meeting in Jamaica [1951]
7.3  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, 2nd regular meeting material, Feb. 4-8, 1952
7.4  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, 3rd regular meeting material, list of members and Negotiating Committee, April 20-22, 1952
7.5  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, R.C.L. work folder, Feb. 1952
7.6  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, 4th regular meeting, Sept. 8-9, 1952
7.7  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, meeting expenses and bills, 1952
7.8  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, Jamaica, Nov. 29, 1952
7.9  Resort Airlines, Inc., miscellaneous letters to Civil Aeronautics Board, 1952
7.10 B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, 5th meeting, Jan. 1953
7.11 B.W.I. material, 1953
7.12 B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, 6th meeting, Washington, D.C., April 9-10, 1953
7.13 B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, Aug. 25-29, 1953
7.15 B.W.I. Employers’ Committee, meeting, Washington, D.C., Nov. 23-24, 1953
7.16 Jamaican Gleaner (Royal Supplement): Queen Elizabeth’s visit, Dec. 1953

8.1  B.W.I. Regional Labour Board and Employers’ Committee meeting, Barbados, Feb. 22, 1954
8.2  B.W.I. trip, miscellaneous materials, Feb. 1954
8.3  R.C.L. work folder, B.W.I. Work agreement, 1954
8.5  Predesignated workers – argument with Jamaica, April 1954
8.6  B.W.I. Employers’ Committee conference with Hon. Bustamante, New York, June 10, 1954

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8.7 William A. Bustamante, Chief Minister, visit to Connecticut, June 15, 1954
8.9 B.W.I. Regional Labour Board meeting, Washington, D.C., Nov. 15, 1954 and
    Kingston, Jamaica, Jan. 10-12, 1955
8.10 Proposed B.W.I. agreement: Florida Fruit and Vegetable Growers and Shade
    Tobacco Growers Agricultural Association, Inc., 1955
8.11 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., April 13-14, 1955
8.12 Party to meet: Hon. Florizel A. Glasspole, Charles Greaves Hill, Harry F.
    Edwards, April 30, 1955
8.13 B.W.I. Employers' meeting, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, Sept. 1, 1955
8.15 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1955-1959
8.16 Miscellaneous material from Jamaican trip, Jan. 6-14, 1956
8.17 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., April 24-25, 1956
8.18 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Aug. 22-24, 1956
8.19 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Jamaica, Jan. 1956 [out of date
    sequence]
8.20 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., Dec. 6-7, 1956

9.1 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Jamaica, Jan. 6, 1957
9.2 Thank you notes for Regional Labour Board meeting, 1957
9.3 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., April 24-25, 1957
9.4 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Sept. 12-13, 1957
9.5 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., Dec. 9, 1957
9.6 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Jamaica, Jan. 1958
9.8 Luncheon for guests from the Caribbean, Sept. 11, 1958
9.9 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Wisconsin, Sept. 25-26, 1958
9.10 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., Dec. 3-4, 1958
9.11 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Jamaica, Jan. 1-11, 1959
9.12 John S. Mordecai, C.M.G., visit with R.C.L., Mar. 17, 1959
9.14 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, Sept. 1, 1959
9.16 50% Transportation Payment for Jamaican workers
9.17 Jamaican trip, Jan. 9-17, 1960
9.18 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1960

10.1 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Sept. 8-9, 1960
10.2 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., Dec. 5-6, 1960
10.3 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Regional Labour Board trip, West Indies,
    Jan. 1961
10.4 Norman Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica, visit to Washington, April 1961
10.5 B.W.I. Employers' Association meeting, Washington, D.C., June 5-6, 1961
10.6 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting (cancelled), Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, Aug.
    1961
10.7 B.W.I. Employers’ Association meeting, Washington, D.C., Dec. 6-7, 1961
10.10 B.W.I. Employers’ Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., Jan. 8, 1962
10.11 Dinner for Sir Alexander Bustamante, Premier of Jamaica, Washington, D.C., June 27, 1962
10.13 B.W.I. Employers’ Committee and Regional Labour Board meeting, Jamaica, Jan. 14-15, 1963
10.16 B.W.I. Employers’ Association meeting, Jamaica, Feb. 2-7, 1964
10.17 B.W.I. Employers’ Association problems, 1964

11.2 B.W.I. Employers’ Association meeting, Washington, D.C., Nov. 16-17, 1964
11.3 B.W.I. Employers’ Association and Regional Labour Board meeting, Jamaica, Feb. 15-16, 1965
11.4 B.W.I. Employers’ Association meeting at Jamaican Industrial Development Corp., New York, June 28, 1965
11.5 B.W.I. Employers’ Association and Regional Labour Board meeting, Jamaica, Jan. 24, 1966
11.6 B.W.I. Employers’ Association meeting, Barbados, Jan. 22, 1967
11.9 B.W.I. Employers’ Association meeting, Jamaica, April 17-19, 1968 and 1969
11.12 Sir Alex Bustamante, correspondence, 1965-1967
11.13 Regional Labour Board, correspondence with members, 1951-1965
11.14 Regional Labour Board, copies of contracts and corrections, undated
11.15 Harold O. A. Deyes, correspondence, 1955
11.16 Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, correspondence regarding exchange of B.W.I. workers, 1958
11.17 Regional Labour Board, correspondence with Sir Hugh Foot, Governor of Jamaica, 1951-1957
11.18 Lady Sylvia Foot (Mrs. Hugh), correspondence, 1952-1959
11.19 Hurricane Janet, British West Indies, correspondence, 1956

12.2 Herbert G. MacDonald, correspondence, 1952-1967
12.3 Miscellaneous correspondence, 1962-1967
12.4 Hon. Norman Manley, correspondence, 1955-1957
12.5 Meranda Company, miscellaneous materials, 1961-1963
12.6 Arthur Pickwood, correspondence, 1954-1955
12.7 Donald Sangster, correspondence, 1956
12.8 George Scott, correspondence, 1951
12.9 Beryl Scott (Mrs. George), correspondence, 1952

Series III. Regional Labour Board and British West Indies Employers’ Association joint meetings, 1970-1983 (File F)
12.10 33rd meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, April 20-22, 1970
12.11 34th meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, April 26-28, 1971
12.12 35th meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, Jan 31-Feb. 2, 1972
12.13 36th meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, May 2-4, 1973
12.14 37th meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, April 22-25, 1974
12.15 38th meeting, Barbados, April 14-18, 1975
12.16 39th meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, April 5-9, 1976
12.17 40th meeting, Kingston, Jamaica, August 24-25, 1976
12.18 41st meeting, St. Mary, Jamaica, Mar 28-April 1, 1977
12.19 42nd meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, April 3-9, 1978
12.20 43rd meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, Jan. 15-19, 1979
12.21 44th (Special) meeting, Kingston, Jamaica, May 24-25, 1979
12.22 45th meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, April 14-18, 1980
12.23 47th meeting, St. Lucia, Jan. 19-23, 1981
12.24 48th meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, April 19-23, 1982
12.25 49th meeting, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, Jan. 17-20, 1983

Series IV. Personal correspondence, 1946-1948; 1983-1984
12.26 Correspondence, 1946, 1948; list of Shade Tobacco Growers Association members mid 1940s
12.27 Correspondence (photocopies) regarding donation of the collection to Windsor Historical Society and processing of the collection; original 1984 version of the finding aid

Series V. Photographs, 1944-1952
12.28 Photographs of Ralph C. Lasbury, 1944, 1945, 1952

Custodial history
When the Lasbury Collection was donated to the Windsor Historical Society in 1983, it also included 23 scrapbooks and a photo album. These scrapbooks were compiled by Mr. Lasbury’s secretary Doris Rockwell from 1941-1968. They contain newspaper clippings, photographs, and correspondence relating to the Shade Tobacco Growers Agricultural Association’s labor programs and the tobacco-growing and cigar-making industries in Connecticut. The photo album contains images of the processing of tobacco in warehouses. In 1997 the scrapbooks and photo album were transferred to
the Luddy/Taylor Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum in Windsor, Connecticut on long
term loan.

Related Materials
Subject files: Businesses -- Tobacco
Scrapbooks and photo album at the Luddy/Taylor Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum
in Windsor, Connecticut.

Subject Terms
Tobacco industry – Connecticut
Migrant agricultural laborers -- Connecticut
Shade Tobacco Growers Agricultural Association, Inc.
British West Indies Employer’s Association
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association
Regional Labour Board of the Caribbean
Lasbury, Ralph C., Jr., 1906-1979
Bustamante, Alexander, Sir, 1884-1977
Caradon, Hugh Foot, Baron, 1907-
Manley, Norman Washington, 1893-1969
Mordecai, John, Sir, 1903-

Administrative history
Revised by Barbara Goodwin, June 2005