

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 IV. Personal correspondence, 1946-1948, 1983-1984

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
- 7.14 Reception for B.W.I. officials, Oct. 13, 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
- 8.4 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., April 25-27, 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

- 8.7 William A. Bustamante, Chief Minister, visit to Connecticut, June 15, 1954
- 8.8 B.W.I. Employers' Committee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Aug. 26-27, 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
- 8.14 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., Nov. 29-30, 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
- 9.7 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., May 1-2, 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
- 9.13 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., May 3, 1959
- 9.14 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, Sept. 1, 1959
- 9.15 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., Dec. 14-15, 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
- 10.8 B.W.I. Employers' Association meeting with Asst. Sect. of Labor Holleman, Washington, D.C., Jan. 29-31, 1962
- 10.9 B.W.I. Employers' Association Executive Committee meeting with Robert Goodwin, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Washington, D.C., June 8, 1962
- 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
- 10.12 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., Dec. 6-7, 1962
- 10.13 B.W.I. Employers' Committee and Regional Labour Board meeting, Jamaica, Jan. 14-15, 1963
- 10.14 B.W.I. Employers' Committee meeting, Washington, D.C., May 27-28, 1963
- 10.15 B.W.I. Employers' Association meeting, Windsor, Connecticut, Dec. 12-13, 1963
- 10.16 B.W.I. Employers' Association meeting, Jamaica, Feb. 2-7, 1964
- 10.17 B.W.I. Employers' Association problems, 1964

- 11.1 B.W.I. Employers' Association meeting, Washington, D.C., April 13-15, 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
- 11.7 B.W.I. Employers' Association meeting, Windsor, Connecticut, Mar. 26-27, 1968
- 11.8 B.W.I. Employers' Committee bulletin regarding U.S. Employment Service vs. B.W.I. contract, 1959-1960
- 11.9 B.W.I. Employers' Association meeting, Jamaica, April 17-19, 1968 and 1969
- 11.10 B.W.I. Employers' Association meeting, Windsor, Connecticut, Dec. 13, 1968
- 11.11 B.W.I. labor news commentaries by Edward P. Morgan, American Broadcasting Network, 1958-1959
- 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. Dayes, 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
- 11.20 Party in honor of Sir Hugh Foot, Hartford, Connecticut, Sept. 29, 1954

- 12.1 Sir Stephen Luke [folder empty as of 6/2/2005]
- 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

Collection processed and finding aid compiled by Stephen E. Simon, June-July 1984.

Revised by Barbara Goodwin, June 2005