

# Celebrating Eric Williams



## Description

A scholar and statesman, the Honorable Dr. Eric Eustace Williams (1911-1981) led Trinidad and Tobago for over a quarter of a century. He oversaw the country's independence from Britain in 1962 and 1976 transition to a Republic. Williams served as Prime Minister until his death in 1981.

**Date Range(s):** 1930-2021

**Country(ies):** All–Caribbean

**Course Subject(s):** African and African Diaspora Studies; World History Studies; Latin American Studies

**Topic(s):** Trinidad and Tobago; Williams, Eric; Caribbean Politics

**Document Type(s):** Photographs; Documents

**Language(s):** English

## Rights Statement

**Creator(s):** Erica Williams-Connell, *Founding Curator*, Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago, and Rachel E. Winston, *Black Diaspora Archivist*, LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections

**Date Created:** 2021-04-02

**Physical Repository:** Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum, The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

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# Introduction

“...history [is] not a record of battles and politicians, dates and events, or even of the follies and foibles of mankind, but rather a record of the development of humanity, of life and of society, in all their various manifestations.”

Eric Williams, *Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister* (1969), pg. 42



A scholar and statesman, the Honorable Dr. Eric Eustace Williams (1911-1981) led Trinidad and Tobago for over a quarter of a century. He oversaw the country's independence from Britain in 1962 and 1976 transition to a Republic. Williams served as Prime Minister until his death in 1981. In addition to his distinguished record of public service, Williams authored landmark studies such as *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944),

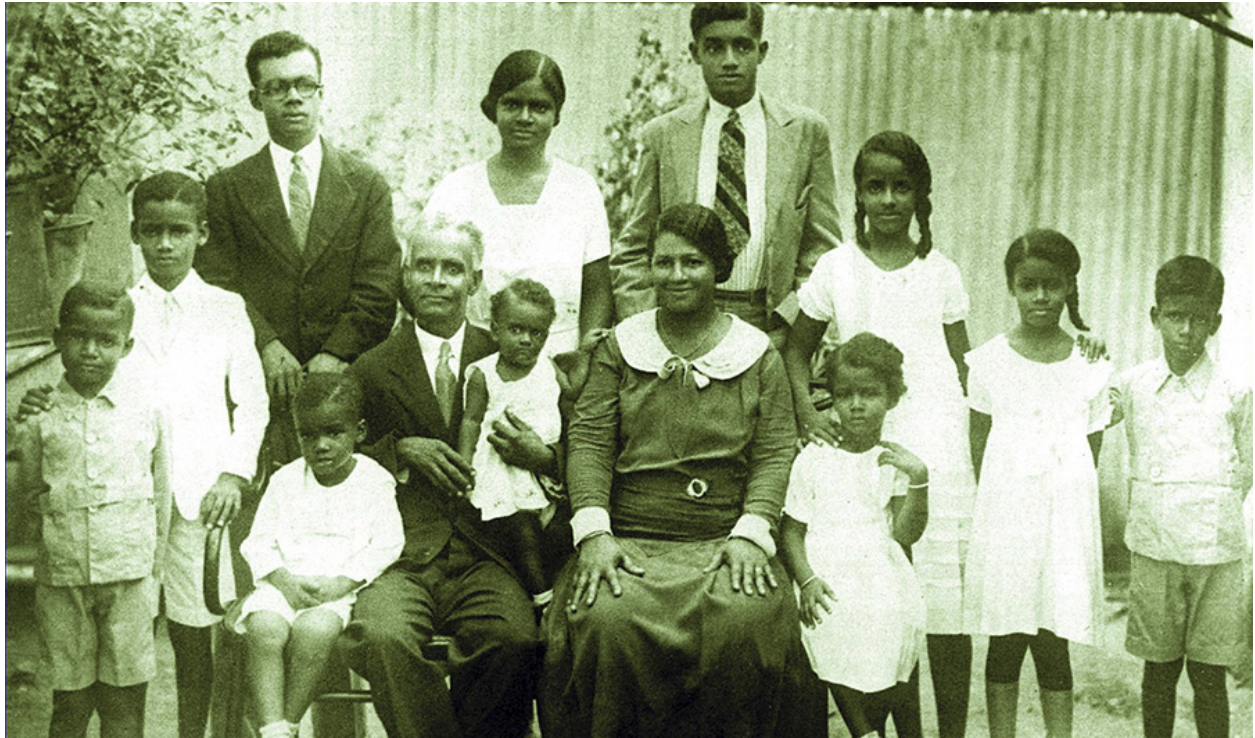
*History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (1962), and *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean, 1492-1969* (1971).

In 2021, The John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies at UT Austin became the host of the Eric Williams Memorial Lecture. Established at Florida International University (FIU) in 1999, the series honors the late Dr. Eric Williams by providing space to discuss current issues relating to the Caribbean and African Diaspora. Launched with historian Dr. John Hope Franklin as its inaugural speaker, the lecture series featured an array of guests—artists, activists, elected officials, and scholars—for nineteen years at FIU. The series now has a new home with the generous support of co-founders Erica Williams Connell and Dr. Carole Boyce-Davies in collaboration with UT Austin faculty and Warfield Center affiliates Drs. Lorraine Leu and Minkah Makalani. Daughter of the series' namesake, Williams Connell is the founding curator of the Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum at The University of the West Indies (UWI), Trinidad and Tobago. Boyce-Davies was a professor of African Diaspora Studies and English at FIU and is currently Frank H. T. Rhodes Professor of Humane Letters in the College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Africana Studies and English at Cornell University.

This exhibition is made possible by the Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum at The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago, and the staff of the Alma Jordan Library at The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.

Pictured above: Color portrait of Eric Williams, illustrated by Irénée Shaw.

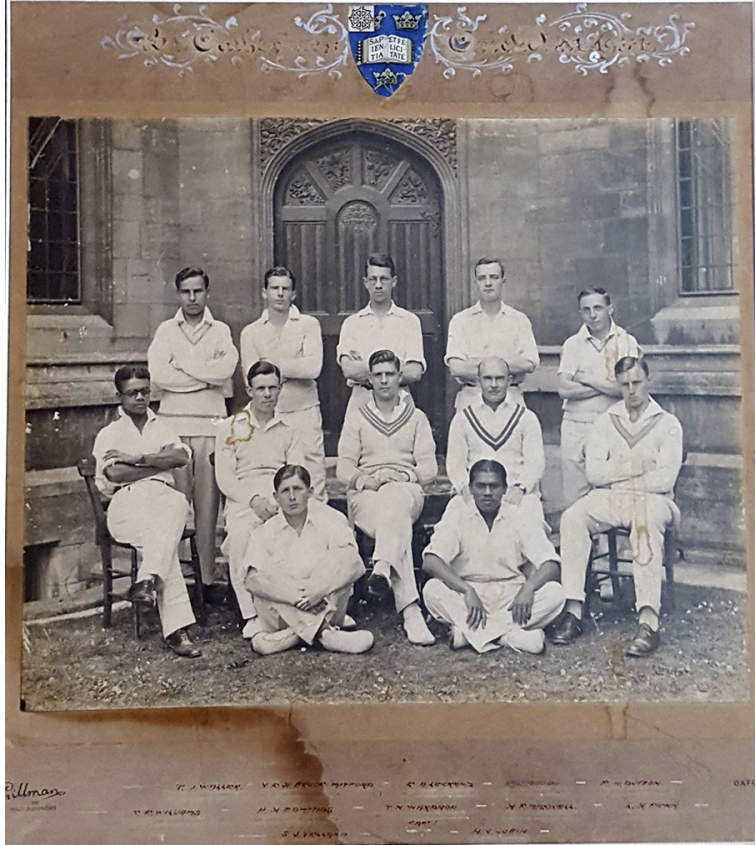
## Becoming Eric Williams



Eric Williams was born on September 25, 1911 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, to Thomas Henry Williams and Eliza Frances Boissiere. He was the eldest of twelve children. Pictured above: Henry Williams, Eliza Frances Boissiere Williams and their children. Eric Williams stands third from the left.

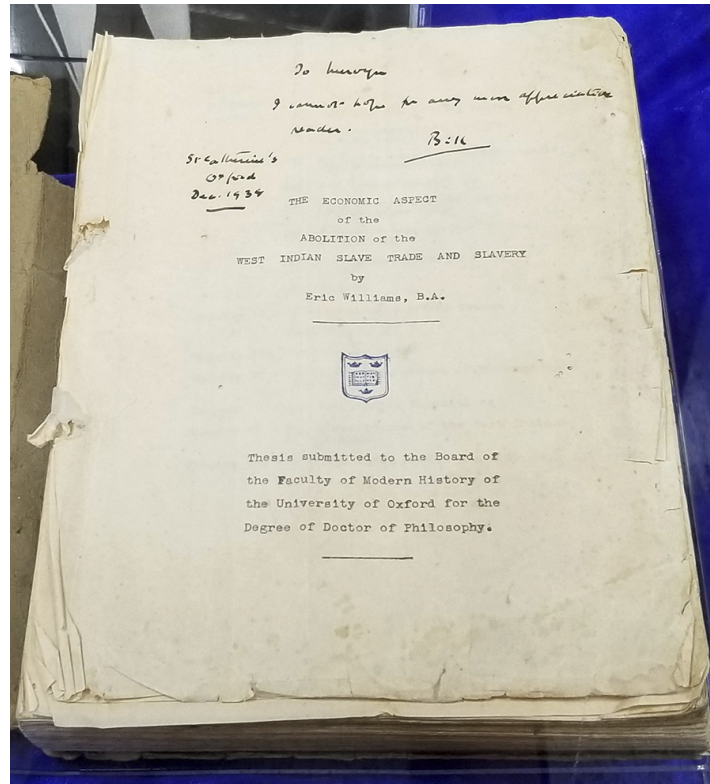


## Oxford University and Howard University



(Left) Eric Williams graduated with honors from Oxford University in 1935 with a degree in modern history. He went on to earn his doctorate from Oxford in 1938.

(Right) Oxford University Cricket Team, 1933-1936. Eric Williams seated second row left and his roommate L.A.V. Gobin seated first row right.



Eric Williams's doctoral thesis, *The Economic Aspect of the Abolition of the Slave Trade and West Indian Slavery*, would later be published as *Capitalism and Slavery*.

As a young student, Williams attended high school at Queen's Royal College in Trinidad. In 1931, on his third and final try, he received the prestigious Island Scholarship to Oxford University in the United Kingdom. While there, he played on the cricket team.

"[My father's] wish was that I should study medicine or law, preferably the former. He wanted me to have 'independence,' as he put it. From a very early age, my view diverged from his. I was determined to be a teacher. . . He was accordingly very angry with me. He protested and remonstrated, argued and sneered, cajoled and persuaded. It was all in vain; I had made up my mind. He gave in with poor grace. When I saw him in 1944, after twelve years, having got not only the bachelor's degree but the doctorate in philosophy, he greeted me with: 'So you are a doctor after all!'"

Eric Williams, *Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister* (1969), pg. 39

Williams placed first with a First Class Honors degree in Modern History in 1935. He went on to earn his doctorate from Oxford in 1938. His doctoral thesis, *The Economic Aspect of the Abolition of the West Indian Slave Trade and Slavery*, would later be published as *Capitalism and Slavery*. After completing his studies at Oxford, Williams

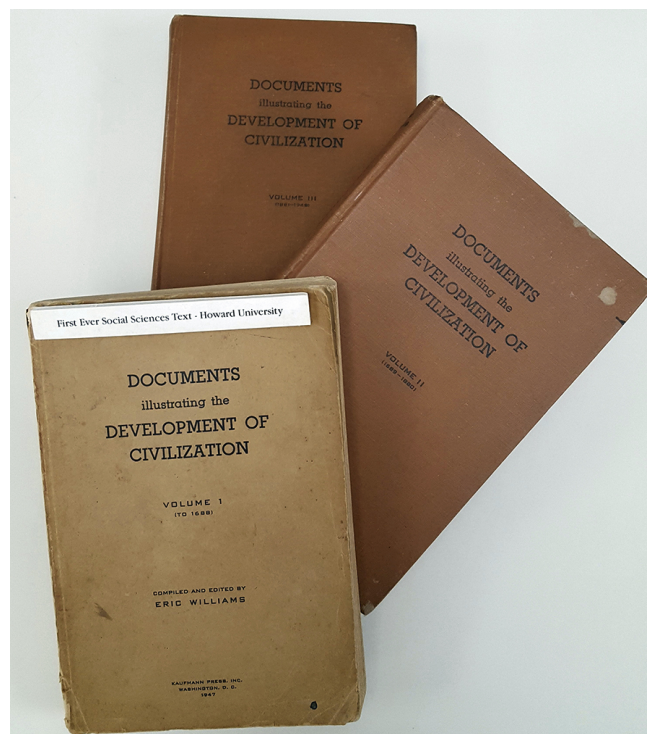


joined the faculty of Howard University in Washington, D.C. In *Capitalism and Slavery Fifty Years Later: Eric Eustace Williams – A Reassessment of the Man and His Work* (2000), historian John Hope Franklin recalls:

“When Eric Williams, fresh from Oxford University, where he earned a Double First in the Honor School of Modern History and a D. Phil. degree, arrived in the United States in 1939, he was most enthusiastic about his new position at Howard University. He had received an appointment as an assistant professor of political and social science, with the special responsibility of planning and teaching a social science introductory course that was compulsory for all freshmen students. This was, he felt, a wonderful way to begin his career at the "Negro Oxford", as he was to dub Howard University . . . he was able to introduce new and exciting materials that could not be found in similar introductory courses elsewhere and to make the course more attractive to students by including materials and topics in which they would have a special interest, not excluding sex and race. This would be one of the most important contributions that Williams made to the intellectual and educational life of Howard University, for it touched many hundreds of students while it set an example to his colleagues of how it was possible to be creative at an institution that was, in so many ways, stultifying to the creative impulse. His big survey course in the social sciences was a great success, and he was popular with his students who usually surrounded him asking questions following each meeting of the class.”



Howard University, Washington, D.C., 1944. Eric Williams joined the faculty of Howard University in 1939. He was promoted from assistant professor to full professor in 1945.



Eric Williams compiled and edited Howard University's first social sciences textbook, *Documents Illustrating the Development of Civilization*.

In 1943, Williams organized "The Economic Future of the Caribbean" conference, which brought together an international group of scholars, diplomats, and the top leaders of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission to Howard University to discuss the important issues of the region. This conference led to Williams' appointment as a consultant to the Commission. The Commission was founded in 1942 to oversee the impact of World War II on the Caribbean, and improve the economic and social conditions of the region. The conference proceedings were published as *The Economic Future of the Caribbean*, edited by Eric Williams and E. Franklin Frazier.



Portrait of Eric Williams speaking at a political rally.



## The “University” of Woodford Square

"To someone like myself, who was a teenager in Trinidad when Eric Williams burst onto the public scene there around 1955, certain of these pieces have an emotional power far beyond their considerable force as political analysis and argument. Single-handedly and single-mindedly, Eric Williams transformed our lives. He swept away the old and inaugurated the new. He made us proud to be who we were, and optimistic, as never before, about what we were going to be, or could be."

Arnold Rampersad, Sara Hart Kimball Professor in the Humanities, Stanford University



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*"The University of Woodford Square" - 1956*

Illustrated image of Eric Williams speaking at the 'University' of Woodford Square.

In 1948, Williams assumed leadership of the Research Branch of the Caribbean Commission in Trinidad and Tobago. He stepped down from his position at Howard University, and in 1955, began delivering public lectures in Woodford Square, a plaza in the center of Port of Spain. During these popular speeches, Williams would address important political, educational, and social issues of Trinidad and Tobago. Williams

would deliver over 150 lectures at what he re-named the “University” of Woodford Square to crowds as large as 20,000 people. During this time, Williams also delivered speeches in Guyana, France, United Kingdom, Jamaica, Barbados and Grenada.

Sir Norman Costar, the first British High Commissioner in Trinidad and Tobago, was an outspoken opponent of the “University,” declaring that Williams’ “public outbursts in Woodford Square arouse interest as theatrical performances. There is no live theatre in Port of Spain and Dr. Williams’ speeches are rated high as entertainment, by those for whose benefit they are uttered.” He was not alone, as British official R. L. Baxter proclaimed the Chief Minister’s speeches to be “a queer mixture of scholarly exposition and demagogic invective, ending with a parody of the New Testament that smells unpleasantly of Africa.”

To that, Williams countered:

“The “University” of Woodford Square is a centre of free university education for the masses, of political analysis and training in self government, for parallels of which we must go back to the city state of ancient Athens. The lectures have been university dishes served with political sauce. They have given the people of Trinidad and Tobago a vision and a perspective...they have reinforced their own aspirations...for human freedom and for colonial emancipation. They have taught the people what one French writer of the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw as the greatest danger, that they have a mind.”

Eric Williams *Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister* (1969), pg. 133



## Family Life



In 1951, Eric Williams married his second wife Evelyn Soy Moyou (1924-1953), whom he considered the love of his life. Pictured below: Eric Williams's daughter, Erica Williams Connell (left), and Evelyn Soy Moyou (right).

In a draft of his autobiography, *Inward Hunger: The Education of a Prime Minister*, Williams writes of Moyou: "She had a native intelligence, unspoiled by a university education."





Eric Williams and Soy Moyou's daughter, Erica Williams Connell, would go on to become the founding curator of the Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum at The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago.



Jan. 29, 1996

About Eric  
Eustace Williams

author Erin  
S.W. Connell

Dr. Eric Eustace lived in Trinidad, as Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Dr. Eric was born in 1911 September, 25. He was so so so great. He settled fights in all the country. He lived in the Prime Minister's Residence. He loved to smoke his pipe. Mr. and Mrs. Erica and Tim Connell have some of Eric's Williams pipes, because Erica Williams is Mr. Eric's daughter. Mr. Eric had friends all over Trinidad. One of Mr. Eric's favorite songs was Schubert. Dr. Eric had to have a hearing aid, because he couldn't hear in his right ear. Dr. Eric loved to read books. These are some of the fruits he loved: mango, pineapple, guava and pawpaw. His favorite ice cream was coconut ice cream. People in Trinidad and Tobago loved Dr. Eric. Dr. Eric Eustace Williams died on March 29, 1981. Dr. Eric Eustace Williams was an incredible and fantastic man.

The End

Biographical essay about Eric Williams written by his nine-year-old granddaughter, Erin S.W. Connell.

## Leader and Statesman

"The measure of a political leader should not be his or her personal idiosyncrasies but rather the capacity to imagine a different and better future for a people and the possession of the will to challenge and lead them to achieve their possibilities. Seen in this light, Eric Williams's central place in the history of the modern Caribbean is secure" Colin Palmer, *Eric Williams and the Making of the Modern Caribbean* (2006), pg. 308

### People's National Movement (PNM)



Portrait of Eric Williams standing at a PNM podium.



Photograph of a dog in a field carrying a sign that reads "Vote PNM Please."

Eric Williams was the founder and Political Leader of the People's National Movement (PNM), Trinidad and Tobago's first modern political party.



## For Catholic Voters

1. Recently a spokesman on a P.N.M. platform stated that the P.N.M. fulfilled all the guarantees required by His Grace the Archbishop of Port-of-Spain. This is not true.

2. In the Catholic News of the 25th August 1956, in paragraph 5 of the 8th Official Statement on Politics by His Grace, the following was stated; "Because these rights are conferred by God, no Government or Legislature can abrogate them. Any Candidate or 'Party' that will not make a clear and unequivocal statement in regard to the recognition and defence of these rights is by the very fact, according to the law of the Catholic Church 'suspect' and, therefore, unworthy of support by Catholic voters.

3. Included in these rights as laid down in the same statement by His Grace, are: "THE RIGHT TO MARRY AND MAINTAIN AN INDEPENDENT FAMILY LIFE. To prevent marriage of persons not forbidden to marry by the law of God; to attempt, or assume authority, to break the marriage bond; to give facilities for divorce, which, supposedly does break the bond; to promote artificial limitation of birth, that is, by the use of unnatural means or violation of personal integrity: these are crimes which invite the anger of God upon a people and are a threat to the stability of the State itself."

"The right to educate children in accordance with the law of God and the parents' religious convictions, and to receive a due share of the funds set aside for education by the Legislature.

To deprive parents of this right, or to deny them aid to exercise it, is tyranny. Government may have its own schools for those who

wish to use them; but complete secularization of schools the exclusive establishment of undenominational inter-denominational or neutral schools, and, or compulsion of parents to send their children to such schools, is an abusive exercise of Legislative power."

4. Dr. Eric Williams, the Political Leader of the P.N.M., has expressed himself very strongly as being in favour of the provision of birth control facilities and of not assisting denominational schools from public funds, both of which are against these chief basic human rights laid down by His Grace.

5. Dr. Williams' Party, the P.N.M., has failed to make a clear and unequivocal statement in regard to these two rights. In fact, over the question of birth control, the P.N.M. manifesto is completely evasive and misleading. It states under the heading "Code of Public Morality" that "P.N.M. considers the question of birth control a private and religious matter."

It does not make a clear and unequivocal statement on the matter, but, on the contrary, misleads the electorate by stating that birth control is a private matter. The provision of birth control facilities, whether out of Public funds or otherwise, is a Public matter.

6. The P.N.M.'s statement on the question of support for the denominational system in education is equally evasive and misleading.

7. There can be no doubt whatsoever that the P.N.M.'s failure to give a clear and unequivocal statement in regard to these two important basic human rights makes it a "suspect" Party, and one for whose candidates no Catholic should vote.

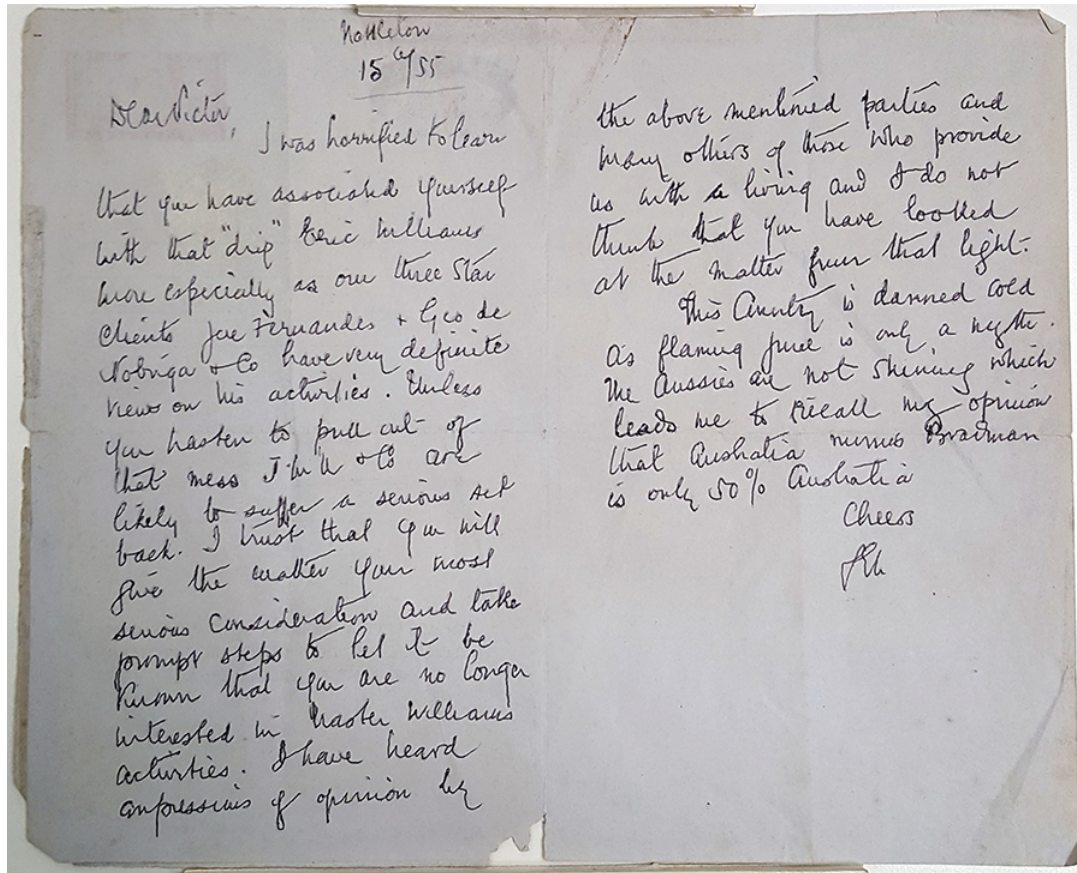
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N B. The above statements are not the opinion of the printers.

Printed by Ben Durham Printing Works for Mr Stephen J.C. Scott of 170 Frederick St., P.O.S.

*Victor Stollmeyer*

Image of a bulletin published by the Catholic Church of Trinidad and Tobago urging against a vote for Eric Williams.



Letter from Joe Kelshall to Victor Stollmeyer. July 15, 1955.

With no prior political experience, Williams faced significant opposition in the 1956 election. The Catholic Church of Trinidad and Tobago was another outspoken opponent, encouraging parishioners to vote against Williams. Williams also received hostile resistance from the French Creole and European-descended business class of Trinidad and Tobago. Victor Stollmeyer was a popular cricket player in Trinidad and Tobago, and an early supporter of Williams. Learning of his support for Williams, Stollmeyer's colleague Joe Kelshall admonished him, saying:

"Dear Victor, I was horrified to learn that you have associated yourself with that "drip" Eric Williams. More especially as our three star clients, Joe Fernandes and Geo. de Nobriga & Co., have very definite views on his activities. Unless you hasten to pull out of that mess, T.M. Kelshall & Co., are likely to suffer a serious setback. I trust that you will give the matter your most serious consideration and take prompt steps to let it be known that you are no longer interested in Master Williams' activities..."





Photograph of Eric Williams speaking at Woodford Square at the start of the "March in the Rain," standing next to a sign reading "Uncle Sam we want back our land."

The PNM was successful in the country's 1956 national election, making Williams the first Chief Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. In 1959, Eric Williams became the country's Premier and launched a campaign for the return of Trinidad's northwestern peninsula, Chaguaramas. In 1941, the British had negotiated a 99-year lease with the U.S. without obtaining ratification by the legislature of Trinidad and Tobago. On April 22, 1960, Williams led what is known as the 60,000 strong "March in the Rain" from Woodford Square to the U.S. Consulate. As they marched, the crowd sang the refrain from *We Want Back Chaguaramas*, by calypso artist Nap Hepburn, chanting "Uncle Sam, we want back we land."

With Independence in 1962, Williams became the country's first Prime Minister. He would hold this position until his death in 1981.

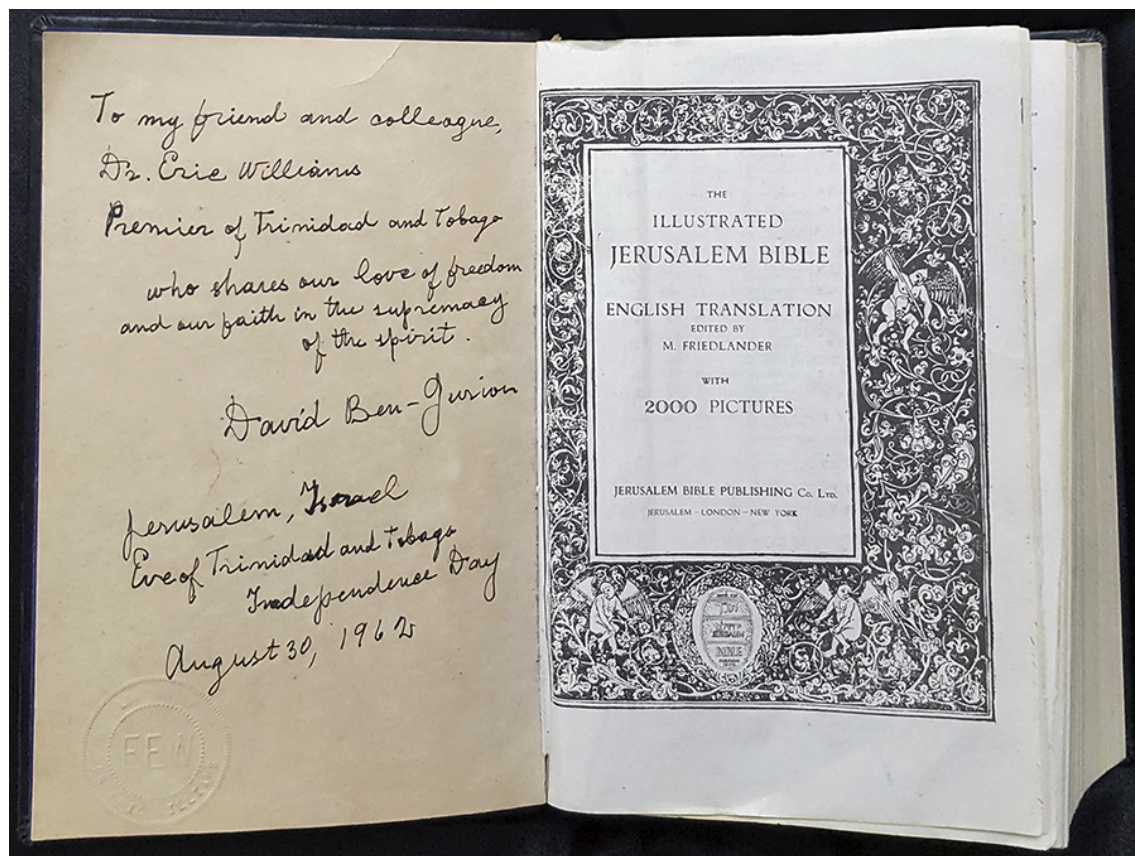
## Independence



Photograph of the Union Jack flag being lowered for the last time and the flag of Trinidad and Tobago being raised, August 30, 1962.

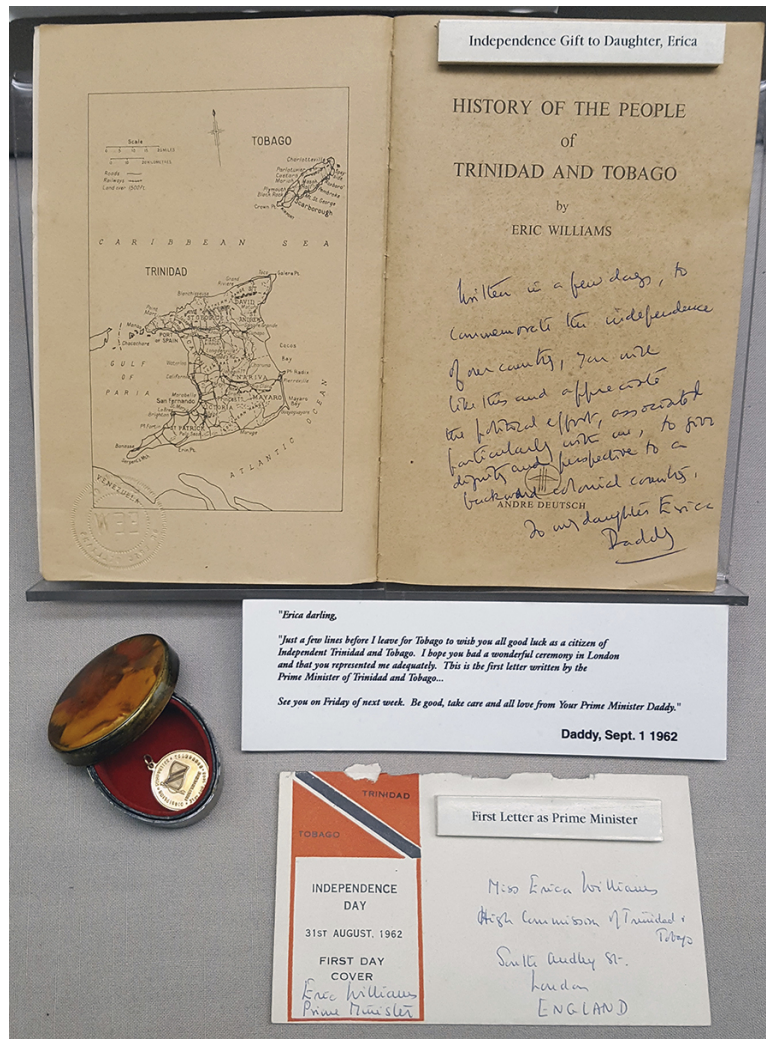
Trinidad and Tobago gained Independence from Britain on August 31, 1962. To mark the occasion, at midnight on August 30, 1962, bells rang throughout the country as the Union Jack flag was lowered for the last time and the flag of Trinidad and Tobago was raised.





Independence gift from David Ben Gurion of Israel. Illustrated Jerusalem Bible with inscription that reads: "To my friend and colleague Dr. Eric Williams, Premier of Trinidad and Tobago who shares our love of freedom and our faith in the supremacy of the spirit. David Ben-Gurion, Jerusalem, Israel, eve of Trinidad and Tobago Independence Day, August 30, 1962."





Independence gifts from Eric Williams to his eleven-year-old daughter Erica with a note that reads: "Erica darling, Just a few lines before I leave for Tobago to wish you all good luck as a citizen of Independent Trinidad and Tobago. I hope you had a wonderful ceremony in London and that you represented me adequately. This is the first letter written by the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago... See you on Friday of next week. Be good, take care and all love from Your Prime Minister Daddy."

"Together, the various groups in Trinidad and Tobago have suffered, together they have aspired, together they have achieved. Only together can they succeed. And only together can they build a society, can they build a nation, can they build a homeland. There can be no Mother India, for those whose ancestors came from India...there can be no Mother Africa, for those of African origin. There can be no Mother England and no dual loyalties...There can be no Mother China, even if one could agree as to which

China is the Mother; and there can be no Mother Syria and no Mother Lebanon. A nation, like an individual, can have only one Mother. The only Mother we recognize is Mother Trinidad and Tobago, and Mother cannot discriminate between her children." Eric Williams, *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (1962), p. 279.

"On August 31, 1962, a country will be free, a miniature state will be established, but a Society and a nation will not have been formed. After August 31, 1962, the people of Trinidad and Tobago will face the fiercest test in their history--whether they can invest with flesh and blood the bare skeleton of their National Anthem, 'Here, every creed and race find an equal place'. That is their challenge. They may fail....But merely to make the attempt, merely to determine to succeed, would be an enormous tribute to their capacity, a powerful inspiration to frustrated humanity." Eric Williams, *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (1962), p. 282.

## Educating Youth



Photograph of Eric Williams surrounded by children in Trinidad and Tobago.





Photograph of Eric Williams and Ivan John.

"You, the children, yours is the great responsibility to educate your parents, teach them to live together in harmony...To your tender and loving hands, the future of the Nation is entrusted. In your innocent hearts, the pride of the Nation is enshrined. On your scholastic development, the salvation of the Nation is dependent...you carry the future of Trinidad and Tobago in your school bags."

Eric Williams, speaking at an Independence youth rally on August 30, 1962

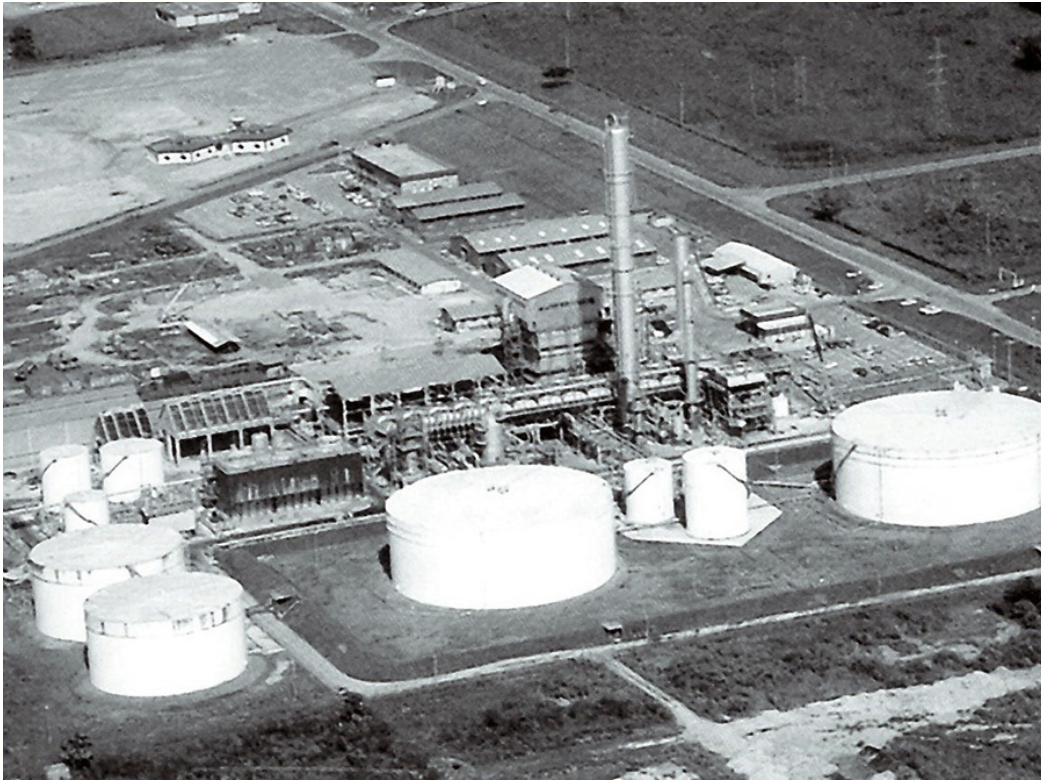
Education remained a top priority for Eric Williams, as he believed "to educate is to emancipate." During his time in office, Williams inspired generations of young people, Ivan John being one of them:

"Ivan never forgot his meeting with the Prime Minister. On a student dare, the boy skipped school to see him in person. As Dr. Williams alighted from his car during a Port of Spain Meet-the-Manufacturers Tour, Ivan rushed to him and Williams engaged him in

conversation about his educational plans. Ivan, soon to sit the Common Entrance Examination for high school entry, confidently proclaimed that Fatima College (one of Trinidad and Tobago's most renowned secondary schools) was his preference, though he was not worried, he had two chances to succeed. Williams told the youth words he would remember all his life: "No! It must be first time, first choice". Ivan graduated from both Columbia and Cornell Universities with degrees in Law and Medicine. When asked to submit a photograph for the yearbook that best represented his inspiration to achieve, he chose this one."

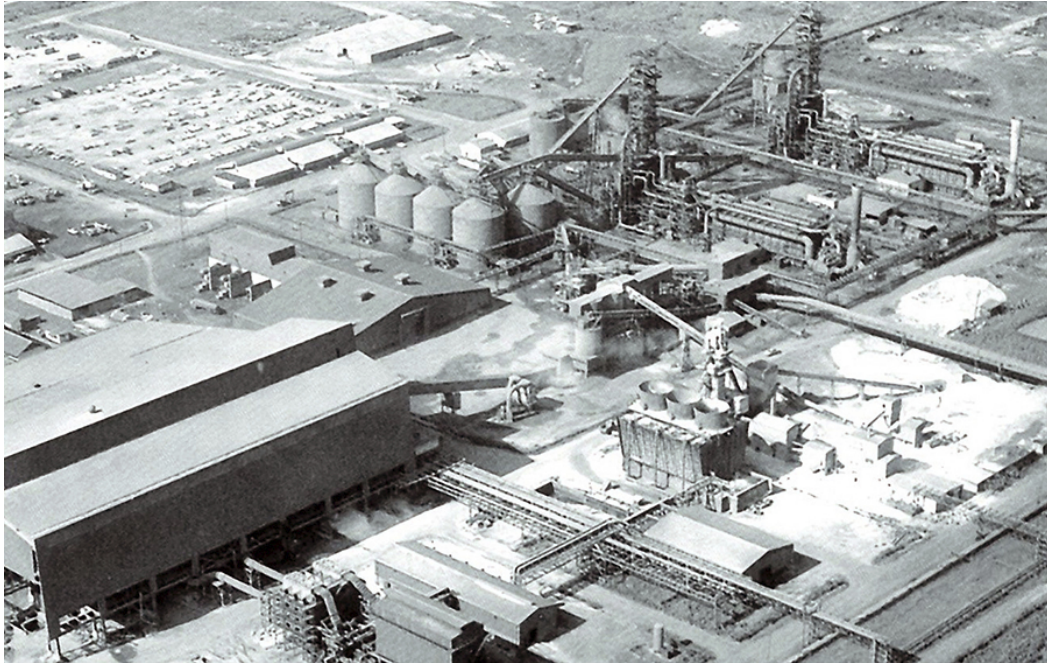
Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum at The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

## Economic Development

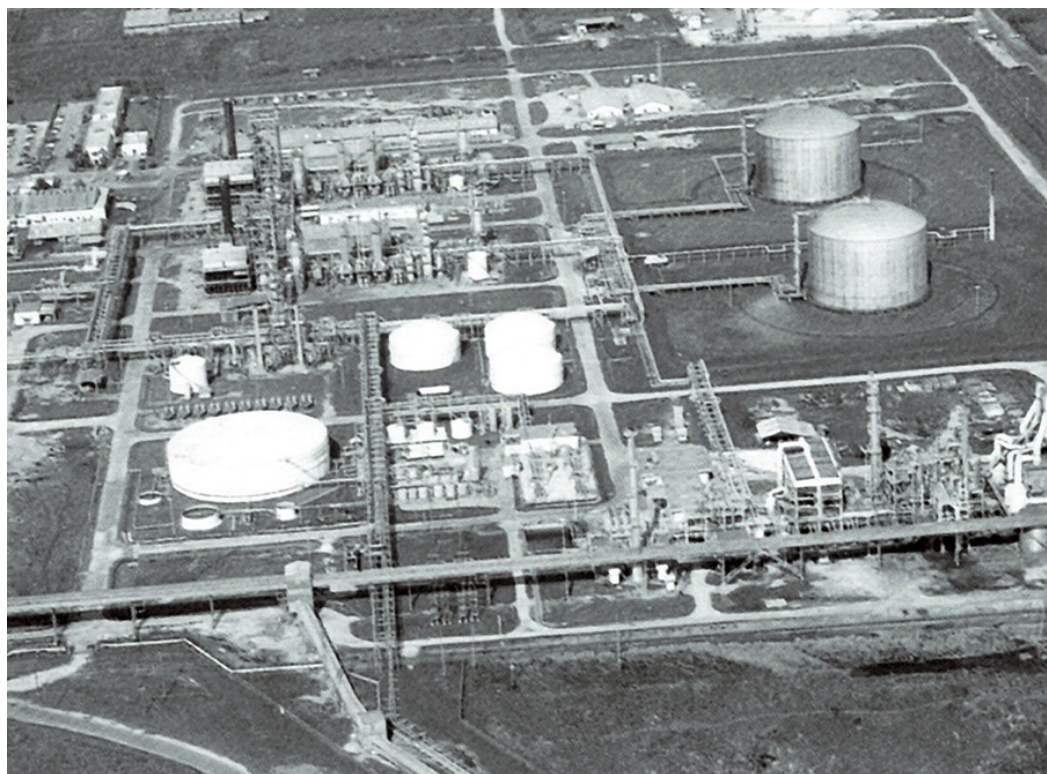


Photograph of Pt. Lisas methanol plant.





Photograph of iron and steel plant.



Photograph of ammonia and urea complex.

When elected in 1956, Eric Williams' industrialization proposals were mocked and described as a plan to can "topi tambo" (a local vegetable). However, under his leadership, Trinidad and Tobago moved from a colonial dependency to a country with one of the highest levels of foreign direct investment per capita in all of Latin America and the Caribbean.

At one time, Trinidad and Tobago was the leading provider of natural gas to the U.S., and supplied approximately 70% of its annual needs. The country was also the fifth largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporter in the world, and was home to the largest LNG facility in the Western Hemisphere. The foundation for this success was established during the energy crisis of the 1970s. Williams was not interested in simply exporting the country's natural gas, and stated that Trinidad and Tobago gas would not be used to keep the people of Chicago warm—referring to a proposition made by Amoco Oil in Chicago, IL. Thus, Trinidad and Tobago became the premiere exporter of methanol and nitrogenous fertilizers and earned the New York Times economic moniker "A Tiger in a Sea of Pussy Cats."

Speaking to Eric Williams's commitment to both the economic success and the people of the region, Dr. Compton Bourne, Principal at The University of the West Indies, recalled at the 1998 Inauguration of the Eric Williams Memorial Collection that "Williams was always mindful that 'Development has a face - and that is the face of man. Development must, therefore, cater for the total needs of that man.'"

## International Statesman

“That great West Indian historian and Prime Minister”

Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa, 2005

“He was the greatest Trinidadian of the 20th century...a friend of India.” Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Vice President of India, 2006



Eric Williams with Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States, at the Alliance for Progress Economic Summit with Latin American and Caribbean Leaders.  
April 1967, Punta del Este, Uruguay.





Eric Williams with Mao Tse Tung, Chairman of the People's Republic of China.  
1974, China.



Eric Williams with Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom.



Eric Williams with Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India. June 1961, India.



Eric Williams with Sir Grantley Adams of Barbados and Norman Manley of Jamaica.



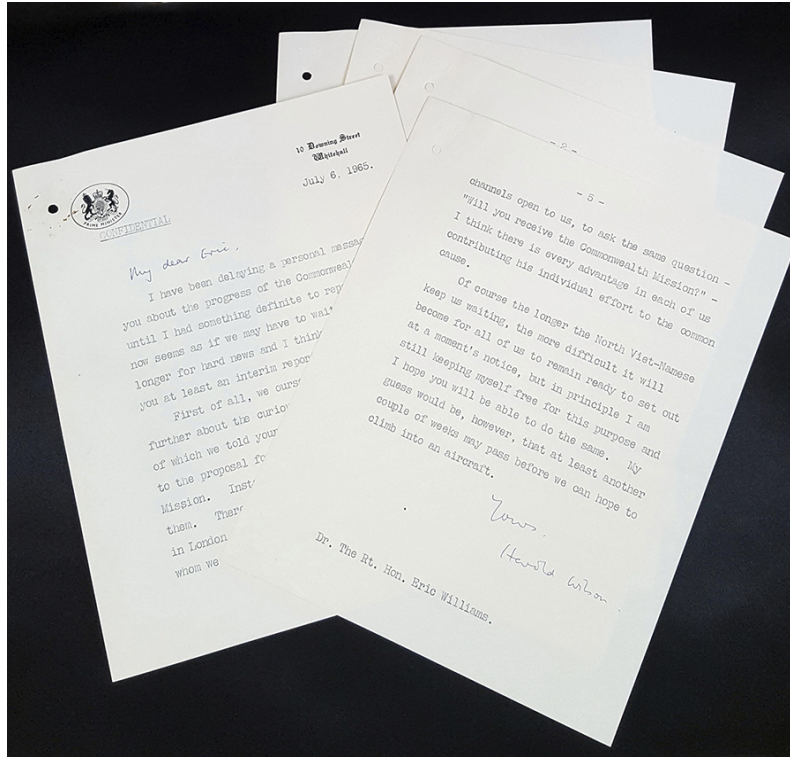


Eric Williams with Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, and Governor General Sir Solomon Hochoy of Trinidad and Tobago. April 18, 1966, Trinidad.

Throughout his 25 years of service, Eric Williams ably represented Trinidad and Tobago on the global stage. During the 1970s, Williams was one of the founding members of the Governing Council of the United Nations University, headquartered in Japan. He was the only Head of Government appointed to the Council.

Although it never materialized, in 1965, Williams was one of only four Commonwealth leaders invited by British Prime Minister Harold Wilson to form a delegation to negotiate the end of the Vietnam War.





Invitation from British Prime Minister Harold Wilson to form a delegation to negotiate the end of the Vietnam War.

Eric Williams was one of the 73 world leaders invited to write a goodwill message to be placed on the moon by the astronauts of Apollo 11.



*"The Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago acclaim this historic triumph of science and the human will. It is our earnest hope for mankind that while we gain the moon, we shall not lose the world."*

These messages were etched on a 1.5 inch silicone disk and left on the surface of the moon.

## End of an Era

"[B]uild the nation of Trinidad and Tobago, bringing in all the races; acknowledging all their contributions, elevating lowly castes, dignifying despised colours, achieving a syncretism here and a new autonomy there, raising up the poor and the lowly and giving them a positive stake in our society."

Eric Williams, *Caribbean Man Speech* delivered at the 21st PNM Annual Convention, September 29, 1979

"The humblest antecedents are not inconsistent with greatness of soul."

Eric Williams, *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago* (1962) p. 282

Eric Williams died in office on March 29, 1981, at the age of 69. A period of national mourning was declared in Trinidad and Tobago from March 30 to April 17, 1981.





Eric Williams lying in state following his death on March 29, 1981.

“There is a sharp distinction between the very good and the truly great, between the man of talent and the man of genius. The man of talent is the marksman who hits the mark the others cannot hit. The man of genius is the marksman who hits the mark they cannot even see.”

Ian McDonald, Guyanese author on the death of Eric Williams, paraphrased from Arthur Schopenhauer

Upon learning of Eric Williams's death, the son of Helen Oscar Winfield wrote to Erica Williams Connell. Though he had never met Williams or his daughter, as a young man in New York City, NY he was deeply impacted by his study of *Capitalism and Slavery*. His note of condolence included the poem, *Nothing is Lost*, written by his mother and shared in memory of the late statesman:

*Nothing is lost.  
The cheery smile  
The charming voice  
In memory's clear recall  
Are ever fresh, ever near  
Envisioned in mind's eye  
He has not gone at all.*

*What dies? A body tired and worn  
Not what he was  
Or said or did.  
These thoughts and acts,  
Your heritage,  
Belong to life. They are not hid*

*By passing time, not left  
By wayside  
Lost, unclaimed,  
But safe within your  
heart remain  
To bless and heal and hold  
A bright, unfaltering flame.*

—Helen Oscar Winfield

# Global Legacy

## Capitalism and Slavery



Display of translated copies of *Capitalism and Slavery*.

“Eric Williams managed to produce a work that now has to be considered central in the historiography of slavery and abolition.”

Dr. William Darity, Duke University, Callaloo, Vol. 20, No. 4. 1998.

More than 75 years after its initial publication, *Capitalism and Slavery* has never been out of print. What was termed by *The Nation* in 1956 as “a minor classic in the field of race relations” continues to inform international scholarship and study. *Capitalism and Slavery* has been translated in nine languages, including Turkish, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Italian, French, Portuguese, and Spanish. The first Dutch translation is currently in progress.

## Eric Williams Memorial Collection



Eric Williams Memorial Collection logo.

**“Eric Williams’ legacy cannot be contained within four walls or behind glass. It must be lived!”**

Andrew O’Shaughnessy, Vice President, Thomas Jefferson Foundation and Saunders Director, Robert H. Smith International Center for Jefferson Studies, 2021



Inauguration of the Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives and Museum. Left to right: Prime Minister Basdeo Panday, Erica Williams Connell, Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell



ANNOUNCEMENT

*Winner of the Eric Williams "School Bags" Essay Competition*



*The Journal of African American History* is pleased to announce the winner of the Eric Williams "School Bags" Essay Competition, Omari Joseph (pictured above). Formerly of Queens College, Guyana, Omari currently attends the University of the West Indies and is majoring in international tourism management, with a minor in marketing. Excelling as an athlete, as well as in his studies, he represented the university at the International Labour Organization's Summer Academy in Turin. The Eric Williams "School Bags" Essay Competition has been offered to all lower and upper sixth form (CAPE or equivalent) students in Anguilla, Antigua, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos. The contest is sponsored annually by the Eric Williams Memorial Collection, Research Library, Archives, and Museum in Miami, under the directorship of Erica Williams Connell.

Image of the 2016 "School Bags" Essay Competition winner, Omari Joseph. The announcement was published by the Journal of African American History.

"[Those] who labored in the organizational, financial and other vineyards to create the Collection, have provided a unique intellectual gift, not just to Trinidad and Tobago, but to the entire region."

Ivelaw Griffith, Dean, Florida International University, Honors College, 2005

"Keep this signature. I have been inspired to accomplish even greater heights for T & T and the Caribbean."

Keisha Lewis, first year UWI student, 1999

"Thank you for treasuring what is really ours."

Kimberley Correia, Trinidad and Tobago high school student, 2002

The Eric Williams Memorial Collection, Research Library, Archives & Museum (EWMC) at The University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago. The EWMC contains the

books, papers and memorabilia of Dr. Eric Williams. It includes approximately 7,000 books, journals, and papers—personal, historical, and governmental. The EWMC was inaugurated on March 22, 1998, by General Colin Powell, U.S. Secretary of State from 2001-2005. Powell heralded Williams, “No one was a greater fighter for justice and equality. No one was a greater leader.” In 1999, the EWMC was named to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

The EWMC is the largest research collection at The University of the West Indies. The first of its kind in the English-speaking Caribbean, it has served as a model for cultural heritage institutions across the Caribbean, including the museums of the Trinidad and Tobago Central Bank, the College of the Bahamas, and the H. Lavity Stoutt Community College in the British Virgin Islands.

In addition to the repository, the EWMC has established an Oral History Project, an annual Caribbean Examination Council CAPE Prize in History, and in 2007, the Eric Williams 'School Bags' Essay Competition. The Competition is open to students from 17 English-speaking Caribbean countries, in 178 schools. Its first winner, Dr. Dexnell Peters from Trinidad and Tobago, is now the Bennett Boskey Fellow in Atlantic studies at Oxford University. The EWMC is currently working on an anti-teen pregnancy pilot project, the *Baby Think It Over Program*, among several other initiatives.

# 2021 Eric Williams Memorial Lecture Series

Friday, April 9th- Living the Legacy from Trinidad and Tobago and Beyond: A conversation with Erica Williams Connell and Dr. Arnold Rampersad, moderated by Dr. Lorraine Leu

<https://youtu.be/qA-b-o4hIJ0>

Friday, April 16th- Bridging Community Knowledge and Scholarship: Dr. Carole Boyce Davies on the Genesis of the Eric Williams Memorial Lecture, moderated by Dr. Jennifer Wilks

<https://youtu.be/kkxRrB-YWng>

Friday, April 23rd- Apex of Change: Intersecting the Academic, Historic and Political: A conversation with Sir Hilary Beckles on the international effect of Eric Williams's work, moderated by Dr. Minkah Makalani

[https://youtu.be/ucean\\_FawI8](https://youtu.be/ucean_FawI8)

Friday, April 30th- Calypso as an Art Form of Resistance: A conversation between calypsonian Drs. Hollis "Chalkdust" Liverpool and Meagan Sylvester

<https://youtu.be/xA5WboInKDY>



## Additional Resources

African & African Diaspora Studies Program, Florida International University. "Eric Williams Memorial Lecture Series (1999-2017)" <https://africana.fiu.edu/lecture-series/>

African American Intellectual History Society. "Capitalism and Slavery Forum (2020)" <https://www.aaihs.org/tag/capitalismandslavery/>

Digital Library of the Caribbean. "Eric Eustace Williams" <https://dloc.com/EEW>

The Eric Williams Memorial Collection Research Library, Archives & Museum at The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago  
<https://libraries.sta.uwi.edu/ericwilliams/ericwilliams.html>