

ABSTRACT

GENESIS OF A JAMAICAN TEAM:

Culture, Identity, and Integration in Jamaican Cricket,

1880 - 1918

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This dissertation examines the issues of culture, identity, and integration in the cricket sphere in Jamaica between 1880 and 1918. Specifically, it examines the extent to which a Jamaican identity had emerged within the cricket sphere by 1918, and asks whether the national cricket team had become a vehicle of Jamaican nationalism by this time.

This thesis posits that the development of cricket in Jamaica was influenced by the game's place within Victorian culture, the dissemination of which was an integral feature of British imperialism in Jamaica in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. British imperial agencies, aided by white, coloured and black cultural elites, attempted to re-order the Jamaican society around Victorian middle-class values. Cricket represented these values and was used in disseminating ideology that was geared towards supporting the *status quo* in which these imperial agencies and elite groups were dominant. The development of the game was thus influenced by the response to elite dominance and to cultural proselytism. It is also argued that the social and economic inequity

inherently linked to this elite domination, was an important factor in the development of cricket in Jamaica.

By 1918, middle- and lower-class coloureds and blacks were participating at all levels of cricket. Creolisation was evident within the cricket culture and elements of Jamaican cultural identity began to emerge. However, Victorian values remained dominant, and although the coloured and black middle and lower classes participated in the cricket sphere, for the most part they occupied subordinate positions. This period saw the evolution of varied Jamaican nationalist sentiments within different social groups in the arena of the Jamaican cricket team, but up until 1918 the effects of British imperialism as well as race and class differences within the Jamaican society prevented the development of a coherent Jamaican nationalism within the cricket sphere.

Keywords: cricket, culture, identity, integration, Jamaica, sport

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2003

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