



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**J. R. Casimir papers**

1919-1981

Sc MG 110

## Summary

**Creator:** Casimir, J. R. Ralph

**Title:** J. R. Casimir papers

**Date:** 1919-1981

**Size:** .6 linear feet

**Source:** Purchase, J. R. Ralph Casimir, 05/24/88

**Abstract:** The papers consist of correspondence, legal documents and printed matter relating to Casimir's writing and deal with social and political issues affecting the island of Dominica, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and the black nationalist movement worldwide, during the 1920s and 1930s. Significant correspondents include: Marcus Garvey, founder of the UNIA; Casely Hayford, Gold Coast (Ghana) editor and author of "Ethiopia Unbound;" Malaku Bayen, of the Ethiopian World Federation; Sylvia Pankhurst, editor of the "New Times" and "Ethiopia News;" John E. Bruce, African-American journalist; Monroe Work, editor of the "Negro Year Book;" Langston Hughes, W. E. B. Du Bois, Roy Wilkins, and other staff of "Crisis" magazine; Thomas L. G. Oxley, editor of "The Poets' Journal"; Victor L. Gray of the "Chicago Bee" and Cyril V. Briggs, founder of the African Blood Brotherhood.

**Access:** Advance notice required.

**Preferred citation:** J. R. Casimir papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

## Creator History

Poet; editor; founding member and secretary of the Roseau, Dominica Division of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA); organizer of the Dominica Taxpayers Reform Association. Casimir was born in St. Joseph, Dominica, West Indies on September 26, 1898. He taught school for several years before resigning to pursue other interests. In 1919 he helped found a Division of the UNIA in Roseau and travelled throughout the island to organize other branches; he served as secretary of the Roseau branch until its dissolution in 1923. Casimir also acted as the Dominican agent for the "Negro World" the official organ of the UNIA, as well as for other black periodicals published in the United

States.

Casimir's interest in politics continued long after his UNIA activities. He was organizer and Assistant Secretary of the Dominica Taxpayers Reform Association and was Assistant Secretary of the Dominica Conference of 1932, a forerunner of the Federation of the West Indies which advocated democratization of the English-speaking colonies as a first step towards self-government. He was also active in politics at the local community level.

His interest in writing, especially in poetry resulted in the publication of several booklets of his verse and four anthologies of Dominican verse. Over the years he contributed articles and poems to African, American and Caribbean magazines and newspapers and was a correspondent for the "Pittsburgh Courier" (New York Edition) from 1950-1952. Casimir resides in Roseau, Dominica where he is engaged in the bookbinding business.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The papers consist of correspondence, legal documents and printed matter relating to Casimir's writing and deal with social and political issues affecting the island of Dominica, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and the black nationalist movement worldwide, during the 1920s and 1930s. Significant correspondents include: Marcus Garvey, founder of the UNIA; Casely Hayford, Gold Coast (Ghana) editor and author of "Ethiopia Unbound;" Malaku Bayen, of the Ethiopian World Federation; Sylvia Pankhurst, editor of the "New Times" and "Ethiopia News;" John E. Bruce, African-American journalist; Monroe Work, editor of the "Negro Year Book;" Langston Hughes, W. E. B. Du Bois, Roy Wilkins, and other staff of "Crisis" magazine; Thomas L. G. Oxley, editor of "The Poets' Journal"; Victor L. Gray of the "Chicago Bee" and Cyril V. Briggs, founder of the African Blood Brotherhood. The dispute between the UNIA, the African Blood Brotherhood and "The Emancipator" magazine in 1920 are well documented in the correspondence between Cyril V. Briggs, Casimir and Anthony Crawford, president of the Inter-Colonial Steamship and Trading Company of New York. Other correspondence files relate to Casimir's activities as an agent of the Black Star Line and the "Negro World." Rare publications include "The Black Man," "The Brownies' Book," "The Challenge," "The Comet," as well as scattered issues of "The Messenger" and a complete run of "The Crusader," September 1918 to August 1921. Also in the collection is the membership register and certificates of the Dominica Division of the UNIA. Casimir's writings span from 1919 to 1981 and consist of typewritten and published poems as well as several holograph poems written on the verso of letters.

**Arrangement:** Organized into two series: I Writings; and II Civic and Political Activities

### **Key Terms**

#### **Subjects**

Authors, Dominican  
Authors, West Indian -- Dominica  
Black nationalism -- Caribbean Area  
Black nationalism -- United States  
Harlem Renaissance  
Poets, Black -- Dominica

#### **Titles**

Black man  
Brownies' book  
Challenge (New York, N.Y. : 1918)  
Comet (Lagos, Nigeria)  
Crusader (New York, N.Y. : 1942)  
Favorite magazine  
Messenger (New York, N.Y.)  
Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

### **Geographic Names**

Dominica -- Politics and government  
Dominica -- Social conditions

### **Names**

Casimir, J. R. Ralph  
Bayen, Malaku E  
Briggs, Cyril V. (Cyril Valentine), 1888-1966  
Bruce, John Edward  
Du Bois, W. E. B. (William Edward Burghardt), 1868-1963  
Garvey, Amy Jacques  
Garvey, Marcus, 1887-1940  
Gray, Victor L  
Hayford, J. E. Casely (Joseph Ephraim Casely), 1866-1930  
Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967  
Oxley, Thomas L. G  
Pankhurst, E. Sylvia (Estelle Sylvia), 1882-1960  
Wilkins, Roy, 1901-  
Work, Monroe Nathan  
African Blood Brotherhood  
Black Star Line, Inc.  
Dominica Taxpayers Reform Association  
Inter-Colonial Steamship and Trading Company of New York  
Universal Negro Improvement Association