

# College Press

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VERNON E. ANDREWS

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One of the industries established during the early years of Caribbean Training College (now University of the Southern Caribbean) was the printing industry. Professor R. S. J. Hamilton started the operation in 1930 in what was called the Print Shop (the Press), which was located in a section of the women's dormitory.

The Press was responsible for the printing of "The Caribbean Union Gleanings," a publication of the Caribbean Union Conference, and an insert, "The College Tidings." "The print shop also expanded its operations and during June 1934, printed the College's first newsletter, Our College Tidings, as a supplement to the Union paper."<sup>1</sup>

In 1945, the Press moved to a new location on campus – a separate, larger structure that housed more presses and printing equipment. It remained in that location until 1978. Between 1945-1978, linotype, offset, web and cylindrical presses, and book-binding equipment was acquired. "The College Press, from its simple beginning in the basement of the girls' dorm in 1945, had produced sales of \$15,000"<sup>2</sup>

The Press's superintendent of the middle-late 40s was I. W. Baerg. Under his leadership, the Press continued to expand. The "Superintendent" title was changed to "Manager" by the time Mr. Walter Kennedy assumed leadership of the Press. However, I. W. Baerg's contributions to this institution should not be underestimated:

The press moved to its new location on the campus' industrial row and new equipment began arriving by June, 1949. The automatic Miehle vertical press, donated by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, and capable of printing between 3,000 and 5,000 impressions per hour was the first to arrive. By September, 1949, there were three platen presses, two automatic presses, a ruling machine, and two stitches employing [37] students under manager, I.W. Baerg.<sup>3</sup>

With the astute guidance of the president of Caribbean Training College, P. W. Manuel, Kennedy contributed to the growth and expansion of the Press. It became one of the leading presses in Trinidad and Tobago, serving denominational needs and satisfying many needs in the commercial and business sector. The Press even undertook the responsibility of printing two newspapers for "The People's National Movement," the political party which formed the government in 1956. The party's newspapers were "The PNM Weekly" and "The Nation." The Press became a major source of income for the college. After Mr. Kennedy's departure in 1957, replacing the leadership under which the Press had thrived for 25 years proved difficult.

A new era dawned when Rodney Mark became the manager in 1971. This was unquestionably the high point in the College Press's history. Glenn Phillips describes him as "a highly experienced and qualified printing expert and photographer."<sup>4</sup> This progressive move is described by Eric John Murray:

In 1971 the college took a forward step in the area of printing when Rodney Mark, a graphic arts specialist, was appointed managing director of College Press.

It had become evident to the Institution's controlling board during the late [60s] that the College Press needed a new type of management in order to meet the Church's educational and vocational objectives and at the same time bring profitable returns to the institution. With his professional training and managerial experience Brother Mark was seen as the ideal person to provide the required leadership.

An expansion programme of technical and vocational training was soon undertaken. Included in the programme were the construction of a new building to house the main plant, a school of printing, a warehouse, a cafeteria, and two apartments, and the installation of a commercial web press.<sup>5</sup>

Eric J. Murray explained the evolution of the printing establishment from the "Watchman Press" in 1906 to the 1981 loan arrangement as follows:

The first Seventh-day Adventist printing plant established in Trinidad was the Watchman Press. It was started in Port of Spain in 1906. The first printing establishment in the Caribbean to install a commercial web press was Caribbean Union College Press, situated in Trinidad's Maracas Valley. Installation of the five-unit, high capacity press, purchased with part of a Trinidad and Tobago Government loan, was completed in May 1981. Managing director of the establishment was Rodney F. Mark.<sup>6</sup>

The College Press in 1980-1985 printed several important books and journals, including: "Forged from the Love of Liberty: Selected Speeches" by Dr. Eric Williams in 1981; "The Telecommunications Services of Trinidad and Tobago (TSTT) Telephone Directory"; "The Sabbath-School Quarterlies," and "The Gleanings."

Unfortunately, after about 10 years of unprecedented progress, problems with leadership and management set in, which eventually led to the demise of the College Press and, eventually, its ceasing of operations and closing.

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## SOURCES

Murray, Eric John. *A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Trinidad and Tobago: 1891-1981*. Trinidad: The College Press, 1982.

Phillips, Glenn O. I. *The Making of a Christian College: Caribbean Union College: 1927-1977*. Trinidad: The College Press, 1977.

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## NOTES

1. Glenn O. I. Phillips, *The Making of a Christian College: Caribbean Union College: 1927-1977* (Trinidad: The College Press, 1977), 30.
  2. Ibid., 46.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Ibid., 63.
  5. Eric John Murray, *A History of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Trinidad and Tobago: 1891-1981* (Trinidad: The College Press, 1982), 143-146.
  6. Ibid., 174.
  7. Vernon Andrews, phone interview by Clive Dottin, July 6, 2020.
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