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National Library of Jamaica

ROBERTS, Walter Adolphe

Walter Adolphe Roberts was born in Kingston, Jamaica in October 1886. He was the son of Adolphus S. Roberts, a clergyman and penkeeper and Josephine Napier.

At the age of 16 he became a reporter on the "Daily Gleaner". He went to New York shortly before he was eighteen and did newspaper work for several years both in New York and in San Francisco.

Early in 1914 he went to Paris and was correspondent in France for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle until 1917 when he was recalled to the United States to become assistant foreign editor of that paper.

After the war he was editor of Ainslee's Magazine (1918-21), Hearst International (1922), Metropolitan Magazine (1923), The American Parade (1925) and various other New York magazines.

He started writing seriously in 1930, adopting as his special field, history, politics and literature of the Caribbean region. Mr. Roberts concerned himself also with the history of the French in Louisiana.

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In 1941 he was awarded a silver Musgrave medal of the Institute of Jamaica in recognition of his achievement in literature. In 1950 he received the Carlos Manuel de Clopedes Order of Merit from the Cuban government in connection with his works, "The Single Star" and "The Caribbean".

A Gold Musgrave Medal, the highest award which can be made by the Institute of Jamaica - was given to Mr. Roberts in 1954 in recognition of his "notable contributions in the field of History and Literature." Finally in 1961 he received the Order of the British Empire.

In 1936 he founded the Jamaica Progressive League of New York, to work for self-government for Jamaica and established the League in Kingston in 1937.

He returned to reside permanently in Kingston, Jamaica in 1949, where he lectured for the Extra-Mural Department of the University, and was general editor of the Pioneer Press.

He died in London on September 13, 1962, at the age of 76. At his death he had 25 published titles to his credit and had been working on his autobiography "These many years", and an anthology of the poetry of the English-speaking Caribbean. He wrote novels, biographies, travel books and poetry. His book "Sir Henry Morgan" - bucaneer governor 1933 is well known as is his narrative history "The Caribbean: the story of our sea of destiny" (1940) Some other publications are:-

"Pierrot wounded and other poems"	1919
"The Moralists"	1931
"The French in the West Indies"	1942
"Jamaica the portrait of an island"	1955
"Semmes of the Alabamas"	1938
"Brave Mardi Gras"	1946