

ABSTRACT

The white upper class, consisting of French and English Creoles and resident Europeans, was an undoubted elite. Though there were tensions and conflicts between them, they largely controlled the economy, and they were the leaders of 'society'. In comparison, the emerging Negro middle class was not a prosperous group. Its members won their middle class status essentially through education, for the main criterion for membership was command of European culture. At

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the bottom of the economic scale, along with the Indians, were the Negro masses. Their living conditions were harsh, and they sought relief in their cultural world, a world which contained many African forms.

Trinidadians were divided by class, which pervaded the society, and by race. Whites held certain prejudicial views about Negroes, and historical factors also shaped the white view of the Negro. In the Trinidad of the later 19th century, therefore, race, colour, and class combined to create an immensely complex pattern of human relationships.