

Ollivierre, Charles Augustus (1876-1949), cricketer, was born on 20th July 1876 in Kingstown, St. Vincent, where as a young man he worked as a clerk. He was part of a cricketing family - two of his brothers, Helon and Richard, went on to represent the West Indies - on an island that until their advent had shown scant evidence of a cricket culture. His debut first-class game was for Trinidad against a touring English team in 1895 and he continued to play for Trinidad and his home island throughout the 1890s.

In 1900 he was selected in the first West Indian team to tour England. The tour was a pioneering enterprise in that it was a mixed race team at a time when non-white cricketers were excluded from representing most of the teams in inter-colonial cricket in the Caribbean. Promoted by the West India Committee and patronised by the leading cricketing Anglo-West Indians Lord Harris and Pelham Warner, the tour had the aim of fostering sporting relations between the Caribbean and the metropole, as well as publicising the West Indian colonies as politically and socially ordered spaces ripe for federation along Australian lines. The tour was not a sporting success for the West Indians, with only 5 wins in 17 matches, and while there was a wealth of publicity for the team when it arrived in England interest tailed off as the tour progressed. Ollivierre, however, was the star batsman, scoring 883 runs and topping the averages at 32.70. This included a century against Leicestershire, where he scored 159 runs of an opening partnership of 208 with Pelham Warner, a performance that prompted Vincentians back home to send him a five pound five shilling cheque and a telegram of congratulation. Clearly Ollivierre impressed the British sporting

public; the cricketing 'Bible' *Wisden* commented that his style was reminiscent of the great Indian batsman, Ranjitsinhji.

At the end of the tour Ollivierre was persuaded to remain in England by one of the benefactors of Derbyshire County Cricket Club, Samuel Hill-Wood. Hill-Wood, former captain of Derbyshire and a major figure in the cotton industry, found a job for Ollivierre as a clerk in Glossop, enabling him to play for the local club for two years while he qualified to play County cricket as an amateur. He made his first-class debut for Derbyshire in 1901 having played some non-Championship matches for them, including two against the South African tourists in 1901. This made him the first Afro-Caribbean to play for an English county team and thus the founder of a great tradition of West Indians making their name in the County Championship. Ollivierre specialized as an opening batsman, whose trademark shots were the late cut and the pull from outside off-stump.

In his debut season he established himself in the team with an score of 167 against Warwickshire but his most memorable innings came in 1904 when he was the star of a match that *The Times* of London described as, 'The most astonishing victory in the history of cricket.' Batting first Essex hit 597 runs, including 343 for their star batsman Percy Perrin. In reply Derbyshire made 548, with Ollivierre scoring 229 in 225 minutes, a remarkably rapid rate. With Essex collapsing to 97 in their second innings Ollivierre led Derbyshire to victory with a score of 92 not out, made on his birthday. He played 110 matches in total for Derbyshire before being forced to retire with eye problems. After retirement in 1907 he played club cricket in Yorkshire and worked as a clerk in various colliery

offices. From 1924 to 1939 he went once a year to Holland to coach schoolboys. He never returned to the West Indies and died in Pontefract, West Yorkshire in 1949.

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