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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION



Since this book's first publication in 2006, it has been a pleasure to have spoken with many readers who have provided valuable feedback on the book. In that time, there have been many significant developments in the region and much new research on the Caribbean. This has been reflected in numerous new publications. This new edition takes these into account; it has also responded to specific requests from readers for updating and expanding some of the chapters in the book. The publisher has also asked several anonymous readers for their views on a new edition, and I am grateful to them for their suggestions.

As a result, this new edition has considerably more information on the indigenous populations of the Caribbean. It also devotes more attention to the modern Caribbean. In addition, the Suggestions for Further Reading have been updated and there is now an accompanying website. This website provides additional material which should be particularly helpful for teachers and students.

PREFACE

This book sets out to examine the history of the Caribbean, from its earliest inhabitants to cultural and political developments in the recent past. In a format which is designed to be brief, however, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive coverage of the region's history. As a result, I have chosen to concentrate on the social history of the Caribbean.

My own research has centred on slave and post-emancipation societies in the Caribbean. More specifically, I have worked on the social structure of slave societies, the free people of colour and the nature of resistance during slavery and after emancipation. These topics are explored in this book as well as more recent developments, such as the impact of Marcus Garvey, the growth of the Rastafarian movement and the role of the United States in the region, especially in the twentieth century. *The Caribbean* also explores the Cuban Revolution and the wider revolutionary movements and deals with current issues, such as emigration, the environment, race relations and the cultures of the Caribbean.

In light of the debate on the region itself, it is important to highlight what is meant by the Caribbean. In this book, the Caribbean refers to the islands of the region, from Cuba to Trinidad, as well as the mainland territories of the Guianas (Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana) and Belize in central America. The islands vary enormously in size: some are tiny such as Bequia in the Grenadines, with its 7 square miles and a population of around 5,000 people. At the other end of the spectrum, Cuba's population is well over 11 million, and the island has more than 44,000 square miles. Geographically, the larger islands – Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic (sharing the island of Hispaniola) and Puerto Rico – comprise the Greater Antilles, while the islands to the east of Puerto Rico down to Grenada form the Lesser Antilles. Most of the islands are volcanic in origin and often mountainous,

although several islands, such as Barbados, Anguilla and Antigua, are formed from coral limestone and have far less rugged terrain. All these territories have experienced similar histories of slavery, colonialism and exploitation and share a common history, despite their linguistic, cultural and geographic differences. Finally, although the Caribbean has been one of the most colonized places in the world, this book is more interested in exploring how the people of the Caribbean have reacted to the colonial presence than with the structures of imperial authority.

CHAPTER ONE

The Amerindians and European patterns of settlement

When Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean in 1492, he encountered a world entirely different from his own. The population and its way of life resembled nothing he had experienced in late fifteenth-century Europe. Although Columbus believed he had discovered the Orient, he had instead stumbled on a world of Amerindians whose ancestors had migrated from South America to the Caribbean region, beginning around 2500 BC.

Yet the first Amerindians had arrived in the Caribbean several thousand years earlier. Travelling from South America, they settled in Trinidad roughly 7,000 years ago. Their trek was made easier because Trinidad was then still part of the mainland of South America. Gradually, over several thousand years, the descendants of these early migrants inhabited the eastern Caribbean as far north as Puerto Rico including the eastern-most island of Barbados.

About 1,000 years later, beginning around 4000 BC, there was a separate migration from Central America to the Caribbean. These people travelled from the Yucatan in present-day eastern Mexico to the western part of Cuba. Subsequently, their descendants occupied the rest of Cuba and moved eastwards to Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic and Haiti) and to Puerto Rico. Like the Amerindians who emanated from South America, these