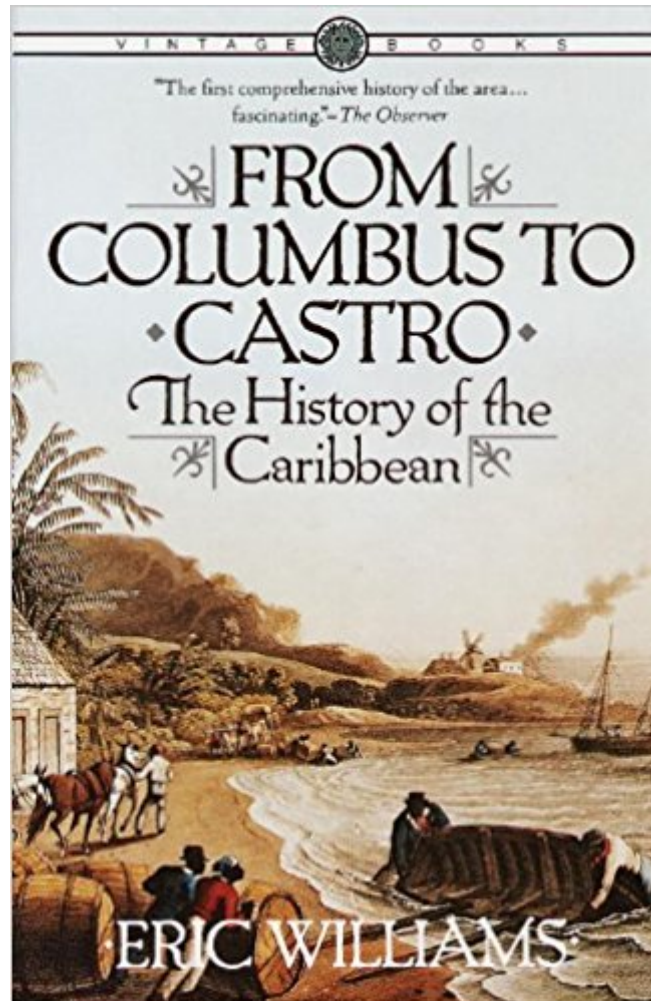


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From Columbus To Castro: The History Of The Caribbean 1492-1969



Synopsis

From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean is about 30 million people scattered across an arc of islands -- Jamaica, Haiti, Barbados, Antigua, Martinique, Trinidad, among others-separated by the languages and cultures of their colonizers, but joined together, nevertheless, by a common heritage. For whether French, English, Dutch, Spanish, Danish, or-latterly-American, the nationality of their masters has made only a notional difference to the peoples of the Caribbean. The history of the Caribbean is dominated by the history of sugar, which is inseparable from the history of slavery; which was inseparable, until recently, from the systematic degradation of labor in the region. Here, for the first time, is a definitive work about a profoundly important but neglected and misrepresented area of the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The story of how Europeans "discovered" the Caribbean, and how they governed it, is a fascinating tale of adventure, greed and cruelty. Unfortunately, this book tells it in an style that is pedantic and often uses archaic terms. Here is a typical sentence. Whatever the cogitations of Parliament on these nuances of international trade in the eighteenth century, it laid it down decisively, according to an American merchant, in the omnicompetence lauded by Blackstone, "as a fundamental that the Islands were the only useful colonies we had and that the continent was rather a nuisance." (page 223) If has a lot of data, which you will enjoy if you want to know how many hogsheads, barrels and tierces of sugar were exported from a particular island in a particular year. At times the author

provides page after page of this information, which is a bit dry for the non-economist. He also assumes that his reader knows European history in some detail. It is a tough read at times, but the fascinating story usually wins out over the style and the data. If you scan it and focus on the sections that document the human dramas, especially in regard to slavery, you will probably learn a lot and enjoy it. You may want to keep a dictionary and a historical reference book handy, however.

If you're looking for a comprehensive political and economic history of the Caribbean, look no further. I bought this book to read before and during a trip to the US Virgin Islands, and it did not disappoint. It's a little dry at times and gets bogged down in stats and figures, but overall, it's worth the effort. Williams finishes it up with a nice thesis summary in the last chapter. FYI, this book only runs through the late 60s, so don't expect to read about anything after that.

I can not put into words what this journey of the truth has done for me as a African-American Male living in the United States of America. I was introduced to this book by a man of Guyanese decent who knew I needed to read this book. I have to admit it was a difficult read because my primary education only spoke of American History and there was no mentioning of any African-Caribbean contributors from the "Middle Passage" period. Now, at thirty-nine many things are clearer to me. "Roots" and "Beloved" are historic, well-documented treasures and need to be used in educating all children no matter race, creed or color. To make sure what I read had some semblance of truth while in Puerto Rico I visited a sugar mill in Guanica and my heart just melted. If you read the book you will understand my feelings. I became angry because something as simple as not being forthwith with documented history such as this to young minds of American children lead to misunderstandings amongst the masses hailing from Africa, South America, The Caribbean, Asia, United States and Europe. Eric Williams I know I can not thank you in person because you are no longer here physically but your spirit lives on in your books and you will always be alive everytime one more person reads your book and awakes "Thank You"! For everyone else read the book it will cleanse your soul and feed your mind. Once you finish this read "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" by the same author.

This book is an extremely well written history which covers several centuries and shows how the Caribbean Islands and people have been moulded. It also gives insight into the chains of historical events and how they have impacted the region that we know today.

This book is, by far, one of the best comprehensive books on the West Indies and its inception. Mr. Williams tactfully pinpoints the disturbing but interesting truths of popular tourist rally-points such as; Barbados, Jamaica, Costa Rica, and Grand Cayman just to name a few. The slave trade and its economic value, the prominence of sugar cane, and the injustices and insurrections illicit by the former, are all mentioned without bias in this book. A great read!!!!

This is a fascinating topic, and this book does an excellent job of covering everything. The writing is quite good. Really the only sticking point is the level of detail. When this book was originally written, the technology probably wasn't there to include tables really easily, but tens of pages could be eliminated entirely if the data in this book were put into table or graphical format. I recommend the book, but be ready for a slow read.

I BOUGHT THIS BOOK JUST TO UNDERSTAND THE BACK GROUND AND HISTORY A LITTLE MORE, THIS BOOK DID THE JOB.

A handy and indepth guide to the history and economy of the Caribbean from 1492 to 1960s. He provides ample numerical data to illustrate the period. There is also, an extensive bibliography and a fine index.

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