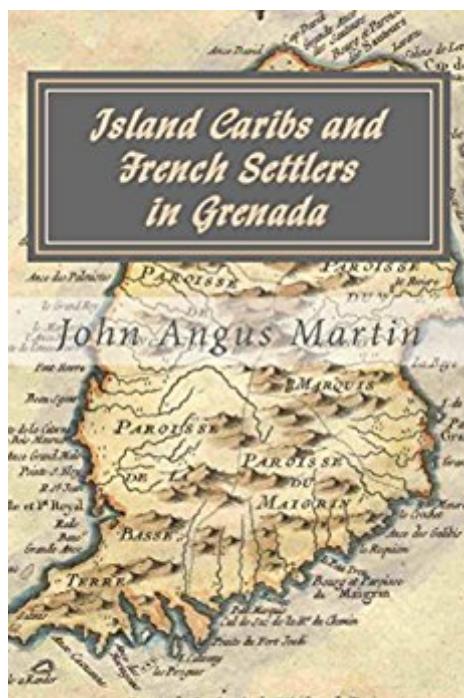


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Island Caribs And French Settlers In Grenada, 1498-1763



Synopsis

Island Caribs and French Settlers in Grenada, 1498-1763 is the first detailed look at the early modern history of Grenada and the Grenadines. Like the history after 1763, this period is quite intriguing and offers fascinating insights into many aspects of Caribbean history in general. Island Caribs and French Settlers in Grenada looks at the native Amerindian populations and their reactions to Spanish invasion of the region after 1498, the early European colonization of Grenada with the failed British attempt in 1609 and the successful French settlement in 1649, and the wars of subjugation and ultimately extermination of the native populations. It also chronicles the privateering and colonial wars among the Europeans, the trials of colonial development, the establishment of plantation agriculture, and the creation and growth of African chattel slavery and the impact on economic and social institutions. The 113 years of French colonization is analyzed and discussed in great detail. It is a testament to the French and the foundation that they built between 1649 and 1763 that the British were able to create a prosperous colonial economy in the decades after Grenadaâ™s cession in 1763.

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Customer Reviews

John Angus Martin's original research on the early days of the island of Grenada in the West Indies is the first history of its kind in one volume, retold with the Grenadian scholar's thoroughly enjoyable narrative. "Island Caribs and French Settlers in Grenada" takes the reader from the time of the Island Caribs, to the settling by the French, and on to the Treaty of Paris in 1763 when Grenada was ceded to the British. From the early naming of the island, the sighting of Grenada on Columbus' third voyage to the West Indies, and the Spanish conflicts with island Caribs, the history moves from the 1600s through the 1700s when "English and French colonists poured like flies upon the rotting carcass of Spain's empire in the Caribbean." The French were on the island of Grenada for about 117 years with one final census listing 300 plantations and 15,000 slaves. All French landholdings came under British rule in 1763 and despite official restrictions on the French citizenry; the French were permitted to remain. The French who stayed on Grenada brought benefit to the country as parts of French culture merged with the British, resulting in a richly melded heritage. One outstanding feature of the author's knowledge is his background in biological sciences and agricultural studies and experience. The gifts from the lands in Grenada in those early days - annatto, cocoa, coffee, cotton, ginger, indigo, sugar cane, tobacco and subsistence crops from the garden - are explained from their origin, location and conditions, planting with seeds, to the processing of the final product, import-export restrictions, taxes, and marketing. Common practices of everyday life are not ignored - disposal of "night soil" and sanitary conditions are not forgotten, for example. Academically, Martin not only has done research in French and British archives, but has listed resources for readers and scholars to pursue additional information, along with extensive notes and bibliographies, as well as maps, charts and illustrations. The handsome 500-page paperbound book, with its strong binding, is an enduring volume, the second publication from The Grenada National Museum Press. Early colonial histories, the Atlantic Slave Trade, St. Domingue of Hispaniola are examples of topics that together with "Island Caribs and French Settlers in Grenada" inform the reader of the context of the times. These subjects are among those discussed in newer publications like "The Shaping of America: a geographical perspective on 500 years of history - Volume 1, Atlantic-America, 1492-1800" by D.W. Meinig and Alan Taylor's "American Colonies, the settling of North America," covering aspects of early West Indian history. Nonetheless, "Island Caribs and French Settlers in Grenada" highlights the island of Grenada, fits right in and is not to be missed. Recommended for those with Grenadian heritage, including youth; for those trying to get an overview of their ancestors and obtain a genealogical orientation; for libraries and academic institutions, and for those who love history.

In Island Caribs and French Settlers in Grenada, Martin delivers a compelling and captivating narrative primarily supported by its thorough and careful research and illustrations (maps, plans and drawings) and takes the reader on the historical and literary journey of his/her life. Historical wrongs are analysed and corrected and centuries-old inaccuracies, sponsored by euro-centric biases and prejudices, are peremptorily (and convincingly) silenced. It easily delves into several hundred years of history and distinctly gives life to Island Caribs and French Settlers, without fail. Theirs is a story merely united by wars and ultimate conquest and colonization. Martin portrays the dynamic culture and civilization of the Island Caribs, their ultimate self-sacrifice and their present-day memorialisation. And he accounts for the early French Settlement (like no other text does) and the plantation economy and slave society they created easily laying the foundation for the British who followed in their wake. This scholarly work is of great historical significance and adds value to the literature/historiography on Grenada and will continue to do so as it is read across the wider Caribbean and diaspora. Martin undeniably delivers and I highly recommend his book!

Another outstanding work by Mr. Martin, "Island Caribs and French Settlers" is an essential read for anyone eager to learn the early history of Grenada. No previous text so effectively utilizes the core French documents nor the archaeological record as presented here. Likewise, by consulting a wide range of sources, John Angus Martin is able to correct popular misconceptions and construct a convincing, pragmatic picture of what life was like just before and after European contact and colonization. In so doing, he has created an indispensable light on a dark void in the historical literature. This is the book to start with. Afterwards, you can go on to Brizan's "Island of Conflict" or Steele's "Grenada: A History of its People" for the British period and beyond.

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