

ABSTRACT

The Jamaica tourist industry was founded during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The year 1914 marked the termination of the foundation phase partly because of the outbreak of World War I but, more specifically, because it was anticipated that the local tourist industry would assume new and greater dimensions following the completion and opening of the Panama Canal.

The early tourist industry was in part an outgrowth of the banana trade. To some extent, also, it reflected the competitiveness of the latter in as much as some of the major hotels in the island were managed and owned by banana Companies.

At the very outset tourism in Jamaica was associated with attempts to encourage white settlement and foreign investment in the island during a period of economic stagnation. But at the same time there was evidence among certain sections of the population of an intense skepticism and hostility regarding the industry. This underlying conflict was to a large extent a manifestation of the diverse opinions as to what the ideal form and organisation of Jamaican society ought to be.

So far the conflict is still unresolved.