

ABSTRACT

Some Aspects of the History of Education

in Barbados, 1850-1938

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This thesis covers an area on which little research has been done, in contrast to the more substantial work done on Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. The research indicates that gender, class and colour were important factors influencing and shaping educational policy over the period under review.

The hierarchical classification of Barbadian society in both the pre- and post-emancipation periods had a direct influence on the kind and quality of education provided for each class, ranging from the white elite to the black masses. For a long time education for whites was to train them to maintain their dominance over the main political, economic and social institutions of the colony. That for the blacks was to equip them to become better manual labourers. However, pressures from more enlightened elements within the society led gradually to greater opportunities for black (and coloured) students, though it is arguable that by the end of the period with which this study is concerned whites still had greater opportunities for social advancement than blacks.

Special attention is devoted to the education of girls. The researcher is fully

convinced that the role of women in the society is closely linked to the education they receive as girls. The view that prevailed for a long time among the white male elite that "their" women should be educated to become good housewives determined to a large extent the type of education which they received, especially in the period up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Throughout the period fewer opportunities were available for the education of girls at secondary (and tertiary) levels.

This thesis is focused mainly on education at the elementary and secondary levels. Some attention has been paid to teacher education and to educational opportunities provided by institutions which are not normally considered part of the formal educational system. The limited university-level education provided by Codrington College has not been discussed though reference has been made to it.