

ABSTRACT

Land Settlement in Jamaica, 1890 - 1980

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This thesis examines Government's land settlement policy in Jamaica from the late nineteenth century with the aim to study why there has been a persistent disparity in the ownership and distribution of farmland, in spite of large scale redistribution of land to the peasantry at different times between 1890 and 1980.

Through periodization an investigation of official land policies since the late nineteenth century was conducted. Based largely on data provided by the land titles for selected land settlement schemes, the oral accounts of beneficiaries under the land settlement programme in the twentieth century, interviews of persons administering land settlement and other aspects of official land policies, political debates of land related issues, official publications and the petitions of land-hungry small cultivators, the conclusion is drawn that, for most of the period studied the government did not intend to fundamentally alter the pattern of land

tenure.

Basic to the study of land settlement is the awareness that measures that could result in peasant farming becoming more economically viable clashed with the overpowering need to settle as many people on the land as possible. This explains why land settlement has largely been an expedient that has contributed insignificantly to the expansion of small scale farming.