

ABSTRACT

A Collective Biography of Seven British West Indian Colonial Governors of the Era
1846-1946

Dane Morton-Gittens

This dissertation examines seven British governors who governed in two islands, Trinidad and Barbados, in two contrasting colonial systems in the century between 1846 and 1946. Governors of Trinidad enjoyed relative autonomy under the Crown Colony system, as they answered only to their direct superiors and the Colonial Office, whereas governors of Barbados under the Representative system faced all the associated difficulties of sharing power with elected members of the legislature. We are well informed about the economic and political policies of these British Caribbean governors, but not their personal lives which also influenced all aspects of development, defined their “Essence of Authority” and determined their success. Chapters one to seven detail the biography of each governor while the conclusion compares and contrasts the seven men. The truly important point about the governors is that they made a lasting impression, not only on the people, but on many institutions within the colonies. They left legacies that the people of today have inherited. It is therefore important to know about their lives and how, if at all, each influenced the island under his authority because of his peculiar personality. My methodology was based primarily on primary sources, supported by secondary sources.

Keywords: Biography, Colonial Governor, British Caribbean, Colonial Systems, Crown Colony, Representative System, Lord Harris (George Francis Robert), Sir Arthur Charles Hamilton-Gordon, Sir William Robinson, Sir Arthur George Murchison Fletcher, Sir William Macbean Colebrooke, Sir Rawson William Rawson, Sir Henry Grattan Bushe.