

ABSTRACT

The Development of Education in Barbados 1640-1834

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The development of Caribbean slave society had as its genesis the exploitation of human resources. This thesis seeks to explore the several ways in which these human resources were utilized to meet the needs of Caribbean slave society.

The scope of this study examines the formal and non-formal educational processes that characterized Barbadian slave society. It seeks to detail the conflicts, contradictions and human triumphs which brought together from Europe and Africa peoples of divergent cultures and traditions. Special emphasis is therefore placed throughout the study on the racial relationships that existed between whites, blacks and coloureds; the role of religion as a critical input in the mobilization of these human resources; the cultural accommodation between the different races; and finally the extent to which efforts at education were initiated by whites and missionaries to satisfy, not the national interest, but their own individual pursuits.

Although much effort was devoted to the spread of religions and moral education from the late 18th century it was very clear that at the end of the slavery period the Barbadian Society was still generally uneducated and that schooling had still not reached the level of a governmental commitment that guaranteed the fruits of education for all.

The study attempts to show that blacks coming from Africa during the period of slavery were not the sub-human creatures that have been portrayed by European scholars such as David Hume, Edward Long and Anthony Trollope, but that they were able to contribute to the formation of Caribbean Society in terms of their labouring skills and their culture. Their contribution was no less important than that of the Europeans.

The thesis therefore challenges the archaic view that whatever elements of civilization developed in Barbados and the Caribbean, it must be solely attributed to the Europeans. While the latter, generally, came to the Caribbean as free persons and the blacks in chains, both races have each contributed to the development of the physical and cultural landscape of the Caribbean.

This study differs from other theses on the development of Caribbean educational systems since it devotes some attention to the non-formal component of that development. The study identifies this area as very critical if there is to be a realistic understanding of the African contribution to Caribbean Society.

It is hoped that this investigation helps to further enlighten and broaden our knowledge of those cultural, racist and denominational forces which helped in the formation of Caribbean Society.