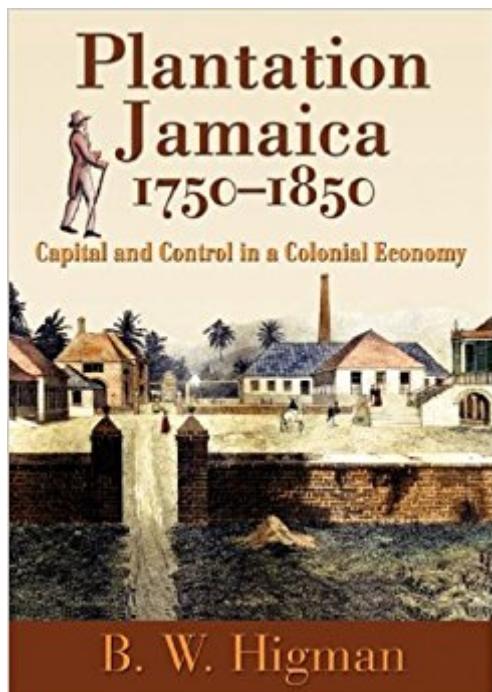


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Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850: Capital And Control In A Colonial Economy



Synopsis

Plantation Jamaica analyses the important but neglected role of the attorneys who managed estates, chiefly for absentee proprietors, and assesses their efficiency and impact on Jamaica during slavery and freedom. Meticulous research based on a variety of sources, including the attorneys' letters, plantation papers and slave registration records, provides rich quantitative and literary data describing the attorneys' role, status, range of activities and demographic characteristics. Higman charts both the extent of absentee ownership and the complex structure of the managerial hierarchy that stretched across the Atlantic. Detailed case studies compare the attorney Simon Taylor's management of Golden Grove Estate in the decade before the American Revolution and Isaac Jackson's control of Montpelier in the years immediately following the abolition of slavery. These examples provide a wealth of information about plantation life and labour, technology, trade, investments and profits. Higman also makes a unique contribution by investigating and describing several topics previously neglected, including the postal service, the history of accounting and the role of attorneys in the British I

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Customer Reviews

"A sustained tour de force of superb scholarship that deals with an extremely important and hitherto lightly examined topic in Jamaican history in a way that will shape academic discourse on plantation Jamaica for a generation."

B.W. Higman is William Keith Hancock Professor of History, Australian National University, and a

Fellow of the Royal Historical Society and the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia. His award-winning publications include *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834*, which won the Bancroft Prize in American History; *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834*, which won the Elsa Goveia Prize of the Association of Caribbean Historians; and *Montpelier, Jamaica: A Plantation Community in Slavery and Freedom, 1739-1912*, which also won an Elsa Goveia Prize and an award from the Jamaica National Heritage Trust.

The title doesn't quite convey the essence of the work. Higman's monograph is an encyclopedically detailed study of plantation management in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Jamaica, focusing in particular on the role of "planting attorneys," who stood in for absentee proprietors. He draws some parallels to estate management in England, Ireland, and the U.S. South, and readers knowledgeable about those regions will find this work interesting. The second half of the book includes lengthy biographical sketches of two Jamaican planting attorneys, one who was active in the mid to late 18c, and one who was active in the early 19c. The book is well-written and concise, but its abstruse subject matter will daunt most general readers; it's really a book for scholars.

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