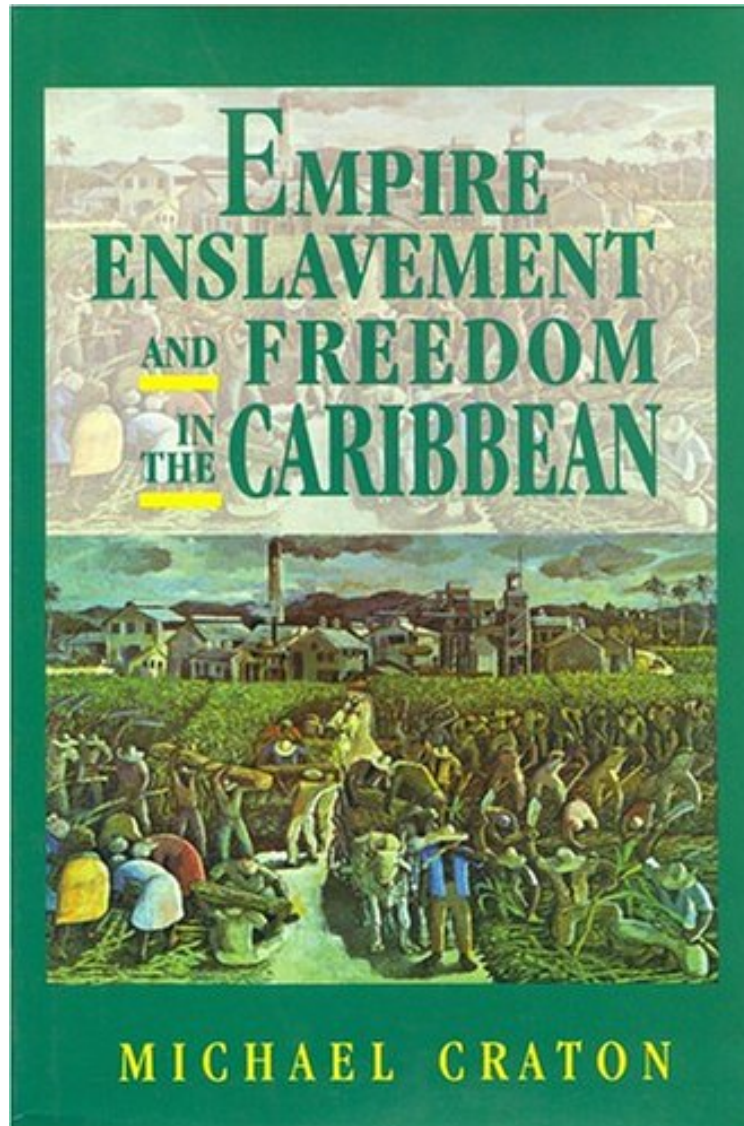


Empire Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean

Michael Craton

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island and regional identity. Craton writes well, and he makes major contributions to historiographic debates and methodology. He combines the traditional historian's care over sources with the cross-disciplinary approaches of the new social history. This is a convenient and valuable collection. Highly recommended..." -Choice

The author describes and explains the origins of West Indian slave plantations, plantocracies, and the relationship between plantocrats and Amerindians, then examines the African background of Caribbean slavery, depicts slave lives and behavior, and discusses modern perceptions of slavery and slave societies.

...wide-ranging and methodologically varied essays drawn from [Michael Craton's] prodigious work of the last quarter of a century....one discovers not simply the vagaries of one man's career, but something of the contours of the entire field of British West Indian historiography as it shifted from an Imperial focus to a Caribbean-centred one. Craton's work compellingly describes the unachieved [perhaps unachievable?] struggle for freedom in the Caribbean; his thesis remains a challenge to those who would see a more radical ideological critique smouldering within what Hilary Beckles called the 'self-liberation ethos' of enslaved Africans and their Caribbean descendants. His work has opened the way for others to elaborate more nuanced analyses of multiple peasant/proletarian identities, ideologies, and political strategies; more case-sensitive models of variations in elite and state responses in different contexts; and more processual accounts of the timing and dynamics of contested hegemony. -- Slavery Abolition 19, no. 3, Dec. 1998
Few have contributed so much as Craton to the resurgence and expansion of historical interest in the British West Indies during the last forty years. He has produced six important books.... [and] a significant number of articles and essays on many aspects of early West Indian history, and this volume contains twenty of them. Drawn from a wide variety of sources, some now difficult to access.... Providing a useful historical and critical introduction to each essay, Craton organizes them into three larger thematic sections: colonization and imperialism; the slave trade, slavery, and slave society; and transformations and continuities. No short summary can do justice to the richness and scope of this collection. Not all of Craton's conclusions and assumptions will gain universal assent.... Nevertheless, the volume is a welcome addition to the historiography of the slave societies of the British West Indies. Handsomely produced.... -- Journal of Interdisciplinary History vol. 30, no. 2, Autumn 1999
About the Author
About Michael Craton: Michael Craton, University of Waterloo, a progressive social historian, draws on thirty years of research and publication on colonialism, imperialism, slavery, and emancipation. He is author of the History of the Bahamas and five other books.