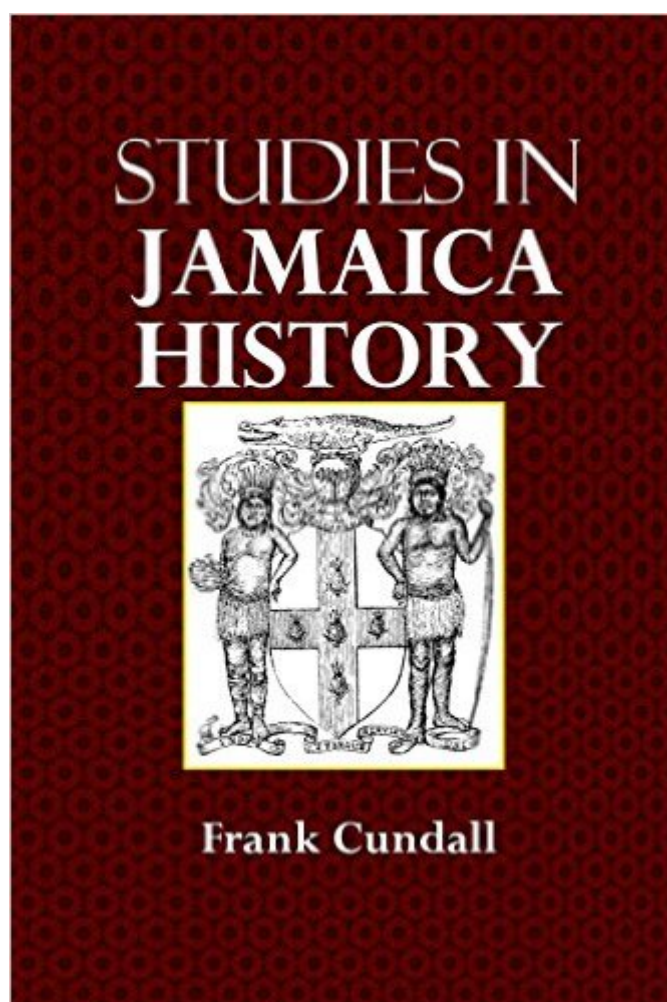


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Studies In Jamaica History



Synopsis

From the beginning of the first chapter: ON the 12th of September, 1492, Columbus, after opposition and difficulties which would have deterred all but very resolute men, was the first European to set foot in the New World â" landing on that day at Guanahani (Watling Island) in the Bahamas. Cuba and Hispaniola (Haiti) were discovered on his homeward voyage. On the 4th of May, 1494, while on his second voyage of discovery, he was the first European to land in Jamaica, running his lateen-rigged caravel the Nina and her two consorts into Dry Harbour Bay, on the north side of the island. On the 24th of April, Columbus had left his new-founded city of Isabella, in Hispaniola, and started on a further voyage of discovery. He sailed westward along the north coast of Hispaniola, and, leaving the point we now call Cape St. Nicholas, stood across to Cuba. He anchored in a harbour (Guantanamo) to which he gave the name of Puerto Grande. Leaving on the 1st of May, he coasted along the southern shore, admiring the beauty of the landscape, noting the rivers, and receiving visits from numerous Indians in their canoes, with whom he exchanged beads and hawks' bells for cassava bread, fish and fresh water. But soon, on the advice of his Guanahani guide, whom he had taken to Spain on returning from his first voyage, he stood due south in order to visit a large island of which the natives spoke. As he neared the island, a number of carved and painted canoes, one nearly ninety feet in length, crowded with Indians, came out to meet him a league's length from the shore. After giving them presents, Columbus sailed on and dropped anchor in a place which he named Santa Gloria, on account of its extreme beauty. Passing the night there, he sailed westward to find a closed port in which he might careen and caulk up his vessels. About four leagues farther on, he found a very singular port, to use the words of Bernaldez (or, as Fernando Colombo describes it, resembling a horseshoe in shape), which he named Puerto Bueno. Here two canoes full of Indians met him, but after six or seven of the natives had been wounded by bolts from the Spaniards' cross-bows, they retreated. On anchoring, Columbus saw "so many Indians that the earth was covered with them," all painted, chiefly in black, wearing nothing but plumes on their heads and aprons of leaves round their waists. Wishing to assert his authority and instil a fear for the arms of Castile into the hearts of the natives, Columbus, as the caravels could not reach the shore owing to the shallowness of the water, sent three boat-loads of men, who, aided by the pioneer of those hounds which afterwards did fearful execution amongst the poor Indians, drove them off, so that there was not a man or woman left in the neighbourhood. On the following day six Indians came as ambassadors from the caciques, or chiefs, begging Columbus not to go away; and later on the caciques themselves and many followers came and brought provisions, which probably consisted of cassava, arrowroot, guavas, naseberries, cocoa-plums and star-apples.

During the time they were there the Spaniards had everything in abundance, and the Indians were very pleased with the things (hawks' bells, beads, and the like) which the admiral gave them. When the vessels had been repaired and the crews were rested, Columbus left Puerto Bueno after a three days' stay, and skirted the northern shore, being visited from each village by canoes full of Indians, who exchanged native products for hawks' bells and beads, till he came to Point Negril, which he named "Cabo del Buen Tiempo."

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This book is one dimensional and biased as to the history of Jamaica's beginnings and inhabitants

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