

CARIBBEAN HISTORY- CORE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

THE ECONOMIC REVOLUTION

CSEC Caribbean History: A Glossary of Core terms, people and events of the Caribbean Past

The CSEC Caribbean History syllabus consists of a Core of *ten topics* and *nine* Themes that cover the extent of Caribbean history from the arrival and settlement of the region by the indigenous people, to the formation and establishment of Independent Caribbean nation-states that arose from centuries of European colonisation and oppressive systems of labour.

The Core topics include the following:

- ❖ The Indigenous Peoples of the Americas
- ❖ The Europeans
- ❖ The Economic Revolution and the coming of enslaved Africans
- ❖ Slave Resistance
- ❖ Emancipation and Apprenticeship
- ❖ The coming of the Chinese, Europeans (Madeirans, Germans, French), Indians and Africans
- ❖ The Establishment of the Peasantry, 1838 to 1900
- ❖ The United States' influence in the Caribbean
- ❖ Popular Protests in the 1930s
- ❖ Movements towards Independence *and Regional Integration* up to 1985.

The Themes are arranged in Sections from **A to C** and include the following:

- ❖ Section A
 - The Indigenous People and the Coming of the Europeans
 - Caribbean Economy and Slavery
 - Resistance and Revolt
- ❖ Section B
 - Metropolitan Movements Towards Emancipation
 - Adjustments to Emancipation, 1838-1876
 - Caribbean Economy, 1875-1985
- ❖ Section C

- United States in the Caribbean, 1776-1985
- Caribbean Political
- Caribbean Society 190

THEME 3: THE ECONOMIC REVOLUTION AND THE COMING OF THE AFRICANS

- Overview of West African societies in the 15th century: economic, religious and political organisation and social relations.
- Reasons for the change from tobacco to sugar and from logwood to mahogany.
- Social, economic and political changes accompanying the transitions.
- *Trade in enslaved Africans: procurement, transportation and sale in the Caribbean.*
- Plantation Society - social, economic and political organisation.

KEY TERMS

- **Absentee planter** – These were wealthy and powerful planters who owned plantation(s) in the West Indies but lived in Europe e.g. England. They were quite powerful in England and played a key role in politics and banking businesses.
- **Agent** – usually a merchant in Europe who was responsible for finding a market for the West Indian sugar. He was also responsible for selling it, taking care of the shipping costs, insurance coverage, customs duties and warehousing costs on behalf of the planter in the West Indies. The agent was paid a commission from the proceeds of sales.
- **Amalgamation** – combining of tobacco plantations to form large sugar estates during the 17th century sugar revolution of the British West Indies.
- **Anansi** – originally based on the spider hero of the Akan peoples. Anansi stories were told to the plantation children. Anansi is considered the god of all knowledge of the stories and takes on the role of a trickster. He is also one of the most important characters of West African, African American and Caribbean folklore. The stories became known to other African groups as well and were given a West Indian setting (and were accommodated/acclimatized into the West Indian setting).
- **Artisan** – skilled enslaved African on a typical sugar plantation in the British West Indies e.g. craftsmen like carpenters, wheelwrights, barrel makers etc. An artisan was

the most privileged among the enslaved and could be hired out to other estates which demanded his skills.

KEY TERMS

- **Attorney/manager** – the one responsible for running the affairs of the sugar estate in the British West Indies in the absence of the owner who lived in Europe e.g. Great Britain.
- **Belair/bélé** – a traditional dance in French influenced islands of Trinidad, St. Lucia and Grenada. The word also meant the calypso-like satirical word that was sung as part of the Belair dance.
- **Berber** – European term meaning ‘barbarian’ used to describe nomadic North Africans.
- **Bagasse** – the dry pulpy fibrous residue that remains after sugarcane stalks are crushed to extract the juice.
- **Barracoon** – derived from the Spanish word which means “tent”. Barracoons were coastal warehouses where enslaved Africans were kept until ships came to take them to the West Indies.
- **Boiling house** – the second stage in the manufacturing of sugar was boiling. Here, the juice was boiled to become sugar crystals. In the boiling house, the juice was first heated (not boiled) with white lime to remove impurities. The purified juice was then boiled in another copper tank, passing through four boilers, each getting progressively hotter with the liquid decreased/decreasing in quantity and became quicker/ moving increasingly faster. The juice passing through the boiler was constantly stirred by a skilled slave.
- **Bondservants** – poor white emigrants who under the indenture system were given contracts (usually five years) to work on a plantation in the British West Indies. Bond servants increased the European population in Barbados from 6000 to 36,000 between 1636 and 1645 and on St. Kitts to over 20,000 between 1629 and 1643.
- **Bookkeeper** – one/the individual responsible for checking the stock of tools, equipment and animals on a plantation. The bookkeeper also ensured that the slaves got to the fields on time and carried out the day’s work set by the overseer.
- **Boubou** – creole for a foolish person.

- **Branding** – the act of placing a mark of identification on enslaved Africans to distinguish ownership. For example, Africans bought by the Royal African Company was branded *DY* which stood for Duke of York. Enslaved Africans were branded with a branding iron on their shoulders, buttocks or cheek.

KEY TERMS

- **Cape Coast Castle** – Cape Coast Castle is one of about forty "slave castles", or large commercial forts, built on the Gold Coast of West Africa by European traders. It was originally a Portuguese "feitoria" or trading post, established in 1555. However, in 1653 the Swedish Africa Company constructed a timber fort there. It became the English Royal Adventurers of 1663 main station in Africa. It became the main station of the English Royal Adventurers of 1663 in Africa. In its first four years, the company made over 100 000 pounds on enslaved persons, and twice as much on gold. The company then ran into problems with debt collection and was eventually replaced in 1672.
- **Calypso** – a musical form mainly associated with Trinidad and Tobago. Some theories state that calypso comes from the Hausa word 'Kaiso' which means 'bravo' or 'well done'. Other sources claim that it originates from the Carib 'cariso' which means the "war song of the Caribs". It is believed that the *chantuelle* (the leader of the song or chant) was the first calypsonian.
- **Chattel slavery** – in law, *chattel* is a possession or a piece of property, thus a person owned as a piece of property who could be legally bought and sold.
- **Coffle** – a long line of enslaved persons forked or tied together. This practice was typically used to transport captured Africans from the interior to the coast where they were made to await transportation to the West Indies.
- **Coopers** – skilled, enslaved individuals who were usually given the task of making wooden barrels, tools, troughs or other equipment needed for the plantation.
- **Copper boilers/kettles** – large clarifiers used to boil the juice of the sugar in the boiling house. The purified juice passed through four boilers of which the smallest and last was called a 'teache'.
- **Creole language** – dialect developed by enslaved Africans from the European language. Elements of the language was based on actual African words from the Yoruba, Ewe, Twi and many other. In most cases the African word was replaced by English, Spanish or French equivalent.

- **Crop season/in-crop season** – the period between November to July when the cutting of cane, to be taken to the mill took place. It was important that transportation of the cane to the mill take place within 48 hrs of cutting the cane.

KEY TERMS

- **Curing house** – the place where the sugar crystals mixed with molasses was taken to cure (drain and dry). In the curing house, the mixture was placed in smaller barrels with holes in the bottom where the molasses drained off very slowly for about 3-4 weeks.
- **Coromantee/Koromoantin** – slaves from the Gold Coast. It was not a tribal name but was derived from the port Cormantine, from where many of them were exported. Their fierce and rebellious nature became so notorious among European slave traders in the 18th century that an Act was proposed to ban the importation of people from the Gold Coast, despite their reputation as strong workers.
- **Dahomey** – a West African state which arose out of two smaller kingdoms inhabited by Fon-speaking people. It was centred on the inland town of Abomey nearly 200 miles (320km) to the west of Ife. It was initially a tributary of the kingdom of Oyo.
- **Dashiki** – colourful West African dress worn by both men and women.
- **Distillery** – or still house was where the molasses which was drained off from the sugar crystals was taken and converted into rum.
- **Doctoress** – An enslaved female who used her skills with knowledge of herbal medicine to attend to the sick.
- **Domestics** – enslaved persons who worked in the great house on the plantation. These were usually women who were coloured and born locally (creole). The more affluent planters also employed males in this category as butlers or coach men. These were held in a higher status than field slaves. However, a form of punishment could see one being sent back to the field.
- **Domestic slavery** – that branch of enslavement that involved working in the great house. Domestic slavery was no less demanding than working in the fields. The enslaved working in the plantation houses escaped the worst of the weather and the most extreme physical labour, but they were under the close watch of their owners.

- **Dropsy** – a disease that is characterised by the abnormal bloating and swelling of the body, particularly that of the feet. Many enslaved Africans died of this disease.
- **Elmina Castle** – Portuguese Slave trading fort in West Africa. It was built along the Gold Coast 20 miles to the east of the mouth of the River Pra in 1483. Although it was built to handle the trade in gold it became the largest slave-trading station in West Africa.

KEY TERMS

- **Factor** – a member of the ship's crew who was responsible for purchasing enslaved Africans from their African counterparts. They often kept them in barracoons until delivery to ship captains. They were also responsible for overseeing a large complex credit system that accompanied the trans-atlantic trade in humans.
- **Fallow** – the process by which the sugar plantation was left dormant for a period (about a year) in order to regain its nutrients. Cattle would be allowed to graze on it so that the dung could fertilize the field.
- **First Gang/Great Gang-** these were the strongest, enslaved men and women in the plantation work force. It consisted of primarily newly arrived Africans. This gang did all the heavy work such as digging drains or cutting the cane.
- **Foster-fathers** – adult males who mentored enslaved children who were separated from their parents either because of sale or death. The Dutch were referred to as the "Foster-fathers" of the Caribbean English and French settlements since it was they who supplied them with much needed goods when France and England were otherwise pre-occupied with domestic and European affairs in the 1600's. It was also the Dutch that introduced large-scale sugar-cultivation to the colonists.
- **Gold Coast** – coastal region in West Africa under the control of the Asante/Ashanti. Today it is modern day Ghana.
- **Great House** – or 'mansion' was the main residence of the plantation owner or attorney and his family. It was the largest building on the plantation-usually two stories high and elaborately furnished.
- **Glut** – the abundant supply of a product on the market e.g. sugar. A glut usually causes prices to go down.
- **Griots/chantwells** – chantuelle (the leader of the song or chant) was the first calypsonian.

- **Hogsheads** – large wooden barrels in which sugar was packed. Each hogshead would weigh between 800 and 1500 pounds.
- **Holeing** – the more common method of growing cane in the 18th century. Shallow holes were dug about 5-9 inches deep with a hoe to place the cane stalks.

KEY TERMS

- **Hybridisation/creolisation** – the cultural reshaping of both Africans and Europeans to form a new dominant culture. Creolisation occurred with the daily interactions of both ethnic groups in the physical space of the Caribbean plantation.
- **Igbo** – an African ethnic group native to south, central and south eastern Nigeria. In the 15th century, they believed that they all belonged to a wider society not just their own village and so established social networks with other villages. All Igbo shared a common language and traded with one another.
- **Jobbing slaves** – perhaps the least fortunate of the enslaved. They belonged to slave contractors, small landowners or occasionally to a group of planters who shared the use of their labour. These enslaved Africans were hired out to do extra work which could not be handled by regular plantation slaves. Some planters gave these jobbing slaves a percentage of the payment they received for the tasks they completed on other plantations.
- **Loose packaging** – the loose or spaced method in which the enslaved were packed on board the ship to make the journey from West Africa to the Caribbean. This method ensured a greater chance of survival of the Africans during the middle passage.
- **Lost-wax method** – the branch of science and technology concerned with the properties of metals and their production and purification. Early West African forest people used the art to turn brass, bronze and copper into figures and models.
- **John Canoe/Junkanoo** – a major Christmas festival celebrated in Jamaica, Bahamas, Antigua, Tortola British Virgin Islands and even Belize many years after emancipation. It was a secular festival celebrated around Christmas because it was the holiday season. However, it had died out by 1930.
- **Johnny Jumper** – an enslaved who was called upon to carry out the whipping of other enslaved Africans instead of the driver.

- **Limbo** – is a dance, originally a ritual performed at 'wakes' (funeral dance which may be related to African legba or legua dance) in Trinidad from the mid or late 19th century. It does not appear to have any roots in West Africa where most African traditions within the diaspora have emerged.
Today, limbo refers to a dance where the participant moves and dances to a rhythm under a stick which is held up by a person on each end of the stick or stand. If the dancer successfully dances under the stick without knocking or touching it, (s)he must repeat this again and again with the bar being lowered another "notch" each time.

KEY TERMS

- **Metallurgy** – the branch of science and technology concerned with the properties of metals and their production and purification.
- **Mill house** – the first stage in the manufacturing of sugar. Here the sugar cane stalks were crushed to extract the juice. Mills were of three type: water, wind and animal drawn.
- **Millet** – cereal crop/grain. This was one of the main staples grown by the Savannah farmers of West Africa.
- **Miscegenation** – inbreeding of persons of different races e.g. Europeans and Africans (European male enslaver and an enslaved African female).
- **Molasses** – a by-product of the sugar-making process which comes from crushed sugar cane. It is a thick is dark syrup and can also be used as a sweetener.
- **Mulatto** – a mixed race person who is the offspring of a white father and black enslaved mother. The term was usually used in a derogatory manner to describe such mixed-persons.
- **Middle Passage** – The middle leg of the trans-atlantic journey of enslaved Africans between West Africa and the Americas (including the Caribbean).
- **Moors** – were African Muslim descendants who traded with Europeans during the 15th century bringing goods such as gold, ivory, ebony and spices from Africa and the East Indies. 'Moors' was a term coined by the Spaniards to describe these Arab Merchants.
- **Muscovado** – raw, unrefined cane sugar that contains molasses. It's dark brown in colour, moist and coarse in texture. Many Caribbean plantations in the Caribbean produced this type of sugar. The advantage being that it shipped and stored well.

- **Myalism** – Jamaican folk religion which has its origin from the Ashanti of West Africa. Myalists believe that all misfortune, not just slavery, stemmed from malicious forces, embodied in the spirit of the dead. Myalism was used to counteract the forces or effects of obeah and focused on ancestral power through drumming, dancing, spirit possession, ritual sacrifice and use of herbs.
- **Night walking** – many enslaved Africans took to walking at night to visit a loved one on another plantation to avoid being caught because of the restriction of movement that was imposed on them.

KEY TERMS

- **Non-praedral** – these were house slaves (domestics) which comprised of butlers, cooks, washerwomen for example. Non-praedials were enslaved workers that were not required to work on the fields.
- **Oba** – ruler in the Yoruba and Bini languages of West Africa
- **Obeah** – an Afro-Caribbean spirit-based religion. The word comes from the language of the Ashanti people, now present day Ghana.
- **Obeahman** – The West Indian Obeahman (who could in fact be a woman) acted in secret to harm people. They were practitioners of harmful, black magic.
- **Orisha** – native religion of the Yoruba people of West Africa. It is practiced by people of Trinidad and Tobago and Cuba who are descendants of the Yoruba. The religion is commonly known as Shango.
- **Out of Africa theory** – the theory that states that humans originated in Africa.
- **Santeria** – also known as Ocha Rule, came from the Yoruba culture in Nigeria. The worship is focused on a group of gods connected to different myths. Some of these gods include Olofin and Olodduware. Santeria beliefs have persisted in Cuba to this day.
- **Shango** – king of the Oyo people, a prominent group among enslaved Yoruba. In African theology Shango is one of the Gods who walked the earth.
- **Slave Coast** – the coastal stretch of 3000 miles (4800km) from the Senegal river to the Congo river from which Africans were taken to become enslaved in the West Indies.
- **Sugar Revolution** – the rapid change from tobacco production to sugar production in the British Caribbean particularly that of Barbados where the change took one decade

(ten years). The economic changeover to sugar had far-reaching social, political and cultural changes in the Caribbean.

- **Sunday market** – an institution established by the enslaved to buy and sell their produce in order to earn money. It also served as an opportunity to socialize. Most of the traders were females. Money earned was used to provide for their needs and purchase one's freedom from enslavement.

KEY TERMS

- **One-Drop Rule** – The one-drop rule is a social and legal principle of racial classification that was historically prominent in the United States in the 20th century. It asserted that any person with even one ancestor of sub-Saharan African ancestry is considered black.
- **Osнарburg** – a coarse, plain-weave fabric used to make enslaved African clothing.
- **Out of Crop Season** – the period between August to November when holing, manuring, ratooning and weeding of the sugar cane field took place. Also, when timber cutting, road repairs and odd jobs were done
- **Overseer** – the person responsible to looking after the daily work of the plantation. It was his job to keep the books for the planter or his attorney, order the daily work to be done and distribute food, clothing, equipment and stores. Overseers were assisted by the book-keepers.
- **Papiamento** – a creole language spoken in the Dutch Caribbean.
- **Pen-Keeping** – a non-sugar economic activity that involved the rearing of livestock particularly in Jamaica and Antigua/ Barbuda. Pens kept the plantations supplied with work animals.
- **Pickanny/Pickney Gang** – the third gang on the sugar plantation which consisted on of children between the ages of 4-10. They were mainly responsible for feeding smaller animals, weeding and collecting firewood.
- **Praedial** – these were field slaves. This group was divided into three gangs: the first or great gang, second gang and third gang.
- **Ratooning** – the process by which a cutting of the cane about 1 or 2 inches above the root, was used to bud or shoot from the harvested root. This was used to replant the field instead of planting the field with new cane.

- **Scramble** – one method of purchasing slaves whereby potential buyers rushed and scrambled to get the best deals on groups of Africans for whom prices had already been fixed.
- **Seasoning** – a period of adaptation to the plantation life for the newly arrived enslaved Africans. During this time new arrivals were given new names, learnt the European language and was taught to work and live in the way enforced by the Europeans.

KEY TERMS

- **Slave Driver** – a position given to a loyal slave with the responsibility of commanding the field gang. His task was to see to that the work ordered by the overseer for the day was completed. The driver also had permission to whip the slaves.
- **Slaver** – a person who traded in slaves.
- **Syncretic** – the fusion of Afrocentric religion with that of European religion e.g. Spiritual Baptist
- **Tamboo Bamboo** – the word tamboo comes from the French ‘tambour’ which means drums and bamboo is a member of the grass family. Tamboo bamboo stems are made of different sizes, weights, widths and lengths to form a purely rhythmic ensemble of different sounds to achieve tonal balance. The tamboo bamboo has played a very vital and important role in the ultimate development of the steel pan. Tamboo bamboo has been part of Trinidad and Tobago's music celebration for decades. Its music was played by the African population for stick-fights, folk dances such as bongo and Dame Lorraine, in wakes and revelries especially at Carnival.
- **Tapia Houses** – houses built using indigenous materials from the environment such as forest lumber, leaves from palms/grasses for covering and walls of clay reinforced by a grass, known as tapia grass.
- **Teache** – the smallest and last copper boiler in the boiling house.
- **Trenching** – the digging of long trenches of the plant in the trenches, in double rows.
- **Triangular Trade** – term used to describe the three-legged trade route from Europe to West Africa, West Africa to the West Indies and the West Indies back to Europe
- **Tye Dye** – technique of dying cloth or a garment by tying by parts of it to shield it from the dye.

- **Voodoo/Vodun** – African cultural practice often associated with magic/religious elements
- **White Lime** – an additive that was placed in the cane juice while boiling to remove the impurities.
- **Woodlands** – this area of the plantation provided lumber for building purposes as well as fuel for the boilers and for cooking.

KEY TERMS

- **Yaws** – a chronic infectious disease that affects the skin, bones and cartilage. Many enslaved Africans suffered from this disease on the middle passage journey as well as on the plantations.
- **Yoruba** – an African ethnic group that inhabits western Africa, mainly Nigeria and Benin

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