

CARIBBEAN HISTORY- CORE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PEASANTRY

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 1900-1985

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PEASANTRY 1838 TO 1900

- The conditions which facilitated or hindered the development of a Caribbean peasant population and the growth of the free village movement in the Caribbean to the end of the 19th century.
 - The development of an Indo-Caribbean peasantry in Trinidad and Guyana.
 - Contribution of the peasantry to the social and economic life of the Caribbean.
- The Establishment of the Peasantry 1838 to 1900.

KEY TERMS

- **Arrowroot** – is a tropical plant with thick fleshy tubular roots. It is used for medicinal purposes and food consumption. The root is high in starch and commonly used to produce flour. Arrowroot is one of the crops grown by peasant farmers (in countries like Monserrat, St. Vincent and Grenadines) for local and export markets.
- **Ccoercive policies** – are methods of action or plans which force or threaten someone to do something. Coercive policies were employed by planters and colonial governments to control the socio-economic conditions of labourers. This was evident with the tenancy arrangements, where planters sought to control labour on the estates.
- **Cholera** – is a gastrointestinal disease caused by a bacterium (*Vibrio cholerae*) found in food and polluted water. During the 1850's cholera stirred havoc in the Caribbean. By 1854 several islands such as Grenada, Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago were faced with a cholera epidemic. Alarming death numbers of 20,000 in Barbados and 30,000 in Jamaica were recorded.
- **Crown lands** – government or state owned land.
- **Economic diversification** – refers to the process where different activities are engaged in to generate wealth as opposed to a single activity. Economic diversification can be placed into two broad categories agricultural diversification and non-agricultural diversification.
- **Exodus** – mass movement or departure of people

KEY TERMS

- **Free villages** – emerged during the post-emancipation period. These were communities of free persons who by their efforts formed villages haphazardly but mainly planned communities with the assistance of missionaries. Free villages were prevalent in Jamaica and were sometimes named after the missionaries who aided in their development. The missionaries helped the peasant acquire land by offering financial assistance or purchasing the land on their behalf and then dividing it. Examples of free villages are Sturge Town and Clarksonville.
- **Higglering/huckstering** – refers to the selling of food and goods (produced by the huckster or purchased for resale) for sale at a stall or by peddling. Some of the products sold were oil, preserves and cloth. This was one alternative to plantation labour.
- **Houses of Correction** (also called correction houses) – were designated places for punishing persons resisting authority or failing to carry out a task. Being placed on the treadmill was one form of punishment in the Houses of Correction during slavery.
- **Metayage (Metairie) or sharecropping** – is a system whereby formerly enslaved persons (metayers) entered an agreement with plantation owners to cultivate sugarcane on estates or nearby. The planters often provided the necessary tools and in some cases allowed the metayers to construct huts on the estate grounds. On some plantations the cane was also milled. Profits from these ventures were shared between the two parties. Sharecropping was carried out in Tobago, Grenada and St Lucia. The planters used the system as a last resort to maintain a labour supply
- **Mico Charity** – provided assistance to educate the labouring population. Lady Jane Mico had willed the money to her nephew but failure to meet her demands saw the money being administered by the British government for providing religious education. From this grant, Mico schools were established in countries such as Trinidad and Guyana in 1837.
- **Myalism** – is a syncretic spiritual belief system, a combination of African and Christian religious practices. It focuses on ancestral powers and involves dancing, drumming, spirit possession, ritual sacrifice and herbalism.

KEY TERMS

- **Negro Education Grant (1834)** – was established by the British government to provide religious and moral education to the Blacks, it commenced during apprenticeship. Initially, the grant was 25 000 pounds in 1835, it then increased to 30,000 in 1836, this amount was to be distributed annually for five years. Missionaries were given the responsibility of overseeing this project in the different islands. The grant was used to build the schools and later helped pay teachers' salaries.
- **Obeah** (sometimes spelled Obeya) – is a belief system that developed in the Caribbean but can be traced to Africa. It involves particular rituals and is typically associated with sorcery. This system was unfamiliar to the European colonizers who often feared and discouraged its practice.
- **Paddy rice** – also referred to as paddy or wet rice due to it being cultivated in wetland areas.
- **Peasant farming/subsistence farming** – involves activities of cultivating on small-scale or small plots cash crops production in addition to rearing a few animals such as pigs and chickens to provide for the peasant's families and selling any surpluses at the local market.
- **Peasantry** – refers to a class of labourers characterised by small holdings and subsistence agricultural activities.
- **Proto-peasantry** – peasant activities (producing food and selling at the market) that were informally initiated by enslaved persons within the plantation system as seen with the cultivation of provision grounds and sale of excess produce at Sunday markets. (Mintz, 1961).
- **Proprietary** – owned privately or produced and sold exclusively by the producer.
- **Provision grounds** – small plots of land used to cultivate crops for consumption. During slavery planters allowed enslaved persons to plant vegetables and provisions on the estate to reduce their own food expenses.
- **Pull factors** – conditions deemed favourable which attract persons to go to another area or country.

KEY TERMS

- **Push factors** – conditions deemed unfavourable which motivate persons to leave an area or country voluntarily in search of better conditions.
- **Radas** – a native of the French West African protectorate of Dahomey (now known as Benin). The Rada community was founded by a community of free Africans in Belmont, Trinidad in the mid-nineteenth century by immigrants from Dahomey. This group through resistance was able to liberate themselves before emancipation and retain African cultural traditions.
- **Revivalism** – is an evangelical Protestant movement characterized by renewed spiritual interest African-based religious practices such as Myalism became more prevalent with this movement.
- **Revivalism** – an evangelical Protestant movement which retained principles from the Christian bible but incorporated the idea of spirits, symbol and ritual from native African religions. Revivalism grew in popularity in Jamaica in the 1860's and saw a re-connection to African beliefs such as Myalism.
- **Root-winter-tip disease** – is a disease that can kill plants as it affects the plant starting from the roots.
- **Syncretic** – refers to various cultural aspects (such as religion) merging to form something new.
- **Squatting** – the unlawful occupation of private or state lands. This was prevalent after emancipation in larger territories like Jamaica and Guyana which had more unoccupied land than smaller territories. Squatting laws were passed to prevent this practice after emancipation.
- **Tannias** – also called cocoyam or Malanga is a tropical tubulous plant. Both the leaves and underground stem tubers are eaten with the latter being high in starch. Tannias are typically grown on slopes in countries like Dominica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, St Lucia and Grenada by peasant farmers.
- **Tapia huts** – also known as ajoupa were made from clay and initially used by the indigenes and later East Indians. However, East Indians made the hut by mixing clay, cow dung, grass and water. The roof was usually made from carat or palm leaves.
- **Witch-broom disease** – a disease affecting plants which stunts their growth, this was one of the challenges peasant farmers were faced with.

KEY TERMS

- **Ejectment Act 1838** – allowed proprietors to evict workers with one week’s notice without giving a reason.
- **Trespass Act 1838** – this act allowed an ejected person to get jail time if found on the landowners’ premises after receiving eviction notice. This was a coercive law employed by planters to force labourers to work for the wages offered.
- **Vagrancy Act 1837** – permitted loiterers, beggars and homeless persons to be apprehended, it was also used as a coercive method to keep labour on the estate.

EVENTS/DATES

- **1865 – Morant Bay Rebellion** – In 1865, the Morant Bay Uprising occurred in Jamaica due to peasants’ discontentment with their socio-economic condition. Paul Bogle led the rebellion. The rebellion facilitated the introduction of the Crown Colony system of government.

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