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A Description Of St. Vincent In 1764

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Sir William Young
David Long (Editor)



Synopsis

This description of the Eastern Caribbean island of St. Vincent, was published in 1764. Its author was Sir William Young, the Elder (1724 or 1725-88). Young was born in the British West Indian colony of Antigua, and was a prominent sugar planter and administrator in the British Caribbean colonies. Grenada, the Grenadines, St. Vincent, Dominica, and Tobago, were ceded to Britain in 1763, under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. The 1763 treaty ended the Seven Years' War, which pitted Great Britain against France and Spain. The war was fought in Europe and in the European colonial possession in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. During the war, Britain occupied a number of Caribbean islands that belonged to its French and Spanish enemies, including Dominica. When the war ended, France formally ceded several islands in the Eastern Caribbean, or Lesser Antilles, to Britain. Collectively, these newly acquired territories were known as the Ceded Islands. In return, Britain returned the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, which it had occupied during the war, to French control. Young's 1764 description of the newly acquired island of St. Vincent was intended to encourage British people to settle the island and establish plantations there. Sir William Young went on to serve as governor of Dominica. When he died he left most of his extensive Caribbean properties and plantations to his eldest son, who was also named William Young. The younger William Young served as governor of Tobago in the early 1800s. In this account of St. Vincent, Young describes the "Black Caribs", or Garifuna people, who lived on the island. The Garifuna were descended from shipwrecked Africans and escaped enslaved blacks from nearby islands. These refugees were adopted into local Island Carib, or Kalinago, communities. The Garifuna are the Island Carib language-speaking descendants of the Africans and Kalinago in St. Vincent. The Garifuna of St. Vincent rebelled against British rule, with French help, in the 1790s, during the Second Carib War. The Garifuna leader during the war was Joseph Chatoyer (d. 1795). The Garifuna revolt was backed by French revolutionary leader Victor Hughes as part of the French Revolutionary wars. After that war, the British deported all of the St. Vincent Caribs with African ancestry to the island of Roatan, off the Caribbean coast of Central America. The Garifuna found the island too small to accommodate them, and settled on the coast of Central America, where their descendants live today. The modern Garifuna homeland extends through the coasts of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. After Young died, his notes and writings were used to compile a book called "An Account of the Black Caribs in the Island of St. Vincent" (1795). Great Britain maintained control of St. Vincent until 1979, when it gained independence as St. Vincent and the Grenadines. After slavery was abolished in the British Empire from 1834-38, East Indians were brought as indentured laborers to replace the enslaved

workers. St. Vincent's capital is Kingstown.

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