

Jamaica

Inhabited by Arawak Indians—Columbus comes in 1494. Spanish control until 1655—then the British.

Sugarworks—Jamaica—use waterpowered mills fed by elaborate aqueducts.

Average plantation size in 17th century was 100 acres—twice that by 18th. In 1774

Jamaica's 680 sugar plantations averaged 441 acres, with some as large as 2000.

Jamaica was so specialized in sugar production that it relied on food imports.

Large amount of deforestation and the end of many indigenous species—by 18th c almost all animals and crops were European in origin and later African, e.g. okra, black-eyed peas, yams, sorghum, millet, and mangoes.

Slaves—great gang made of the strongest did the heaviest work and the grass gang of kids supervised by an elderly did light tasks. Women form majority of field laborers. Old women take care of toddlers.

Slaveships brought twice as many male slaves as female slaves from Africa.

Poor nutrition and overwork meant that many women did not carry children to term—therefore there was not a high rate of natural increase.

About 1/3 of slaves died during process of seasoning—becoming accustomed to the new environment.

Maroon communities existed in the interior of Jamaica and Hispanola.

Birth & Death on a Jamaican Sugar Plantation, 1779-85

<u>Year</u>	<u>Born</u>		<u>Purchased</u>	<u>Died</u>		<u>Proportion of Deaths</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>		<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	
1779	5	2	6	7	5	1 in 26
1780	4	3	--	3	2	1 in 62
1781	2	3	--	4	2	1 in 52
1782	1	3	9	4	5	1 in 35
1783	3	3	--	8	10	1 in 17
1784	2	1	12	9	10	1 in 17
1785	2	3	--	0	3	1 in 99
Total	19	18	27	35	37	
	<i>Born 37</i>			<i>Died 72</i>		

Table¹

¹ From "Edward Long to William Pitt," in Craton, Walvin, and Wright, eds., *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation* (London: Longman, 1976), 105.