



**The History of Jamaica: Or, General Survey of the  
Antient and Modern State of that Island, with  
Reflections on its Situation, Settlements, ... Library  
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*Edward Long*

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Edward Long's three-volume work marks a major turning point in the historiography of Jamaica, as the first attempt at a comprehensive description of the colony, its history, government, people, economy and geography. The son of a prominent Jamaican plantation owner, Long (1734-1813) spent twelve years running his father's property, an experience which permeates his vision of the island's past, present and future. Long defends slavery as 'inevitably necessary' in Jamaica, suggesting the institution to be implicit in the 'possession of British freedom'. Volume 3 covers the natural history of Jamaica, including descriptions of weather phenomena and a catalogue of native flora of potential interest to British importers. It also includes a translation of the French 'code noir' governing slavery, proposed as a model for future British legislation. This important 1774 book provides fascinating insights into eighteenth-century colonial Jamaica and the ideology of its commercial and administrative elite.

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