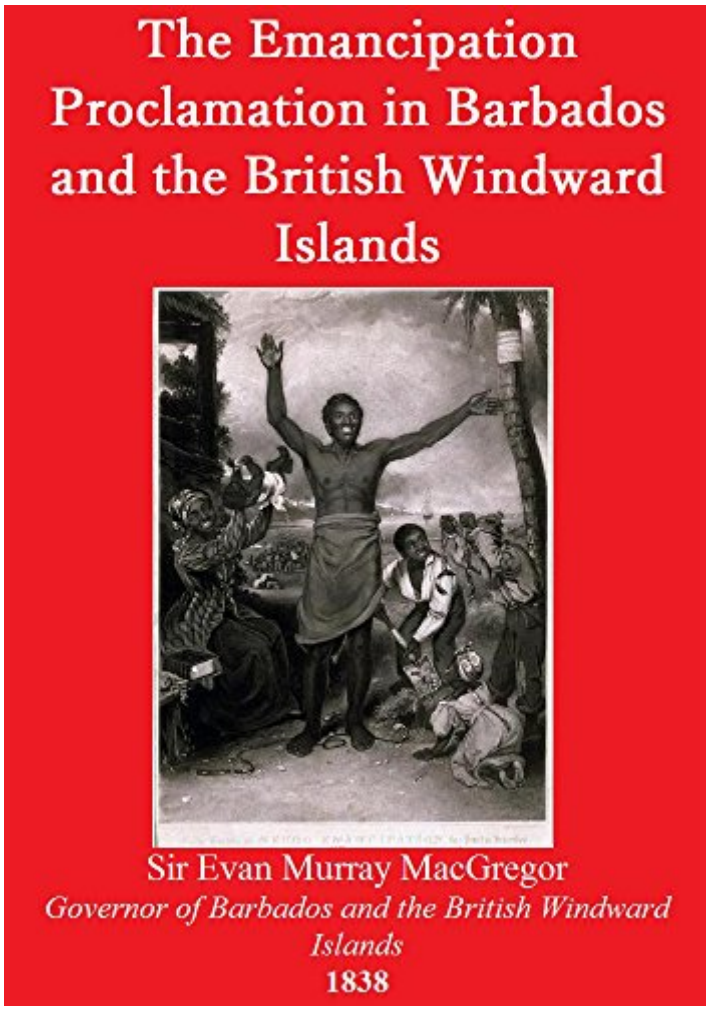
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The Emancipation Proclamation In Barbados And The British Windward Islands



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“The Emancipation Proclamation in Barbados and the British Windward IslandsÃ¢â ¬Â• contains the text of the emancipation proclamation as it was issued in Barbados and the British Windward islands in 1838.Slavery was abolished in the British Empire between 1834 and 1838. In 1833, after many years of abolitionist anti-slavery lobbying and a series of large-scale slave revolts in the British West Indies, the British Parliament passed a bill providing for the implementation of a process of gradual emancipation. Enslaved people in the British colonies were to be legally freed from slavery, but would remain Ã¢â ¬Å“apprenticesÃ¢â ¬Â• to their former owners for a period of years. The apprenticeship system was ostensibly designed to prepare ex-slaves for full freedom. But, in reality, it was probably a way to compensate former slave owners by providing them with continued free labour, and giving them time to prepare for when they would have to find alternative sources of labour.The apprenticeship system went into effect in 1834. Other than the name, there probably was not much difference between Ã¢â ¬Å“apprenticeshipÃ¢â ¬Â• and slavery, except the knowledge that apprenticeship would end after a set period of time. In fact, planters generally treated the apprentices more harshly than they had treated enslaved workers. The latter were a long-term investment, whereas the planters knew the apprentices would win their freedom in a few years, so they had an incentive to try to squeeze as much labour as possible out of them. Apprentices were often overworked, and underfed, because planters cut food rations. Planters refused to provide for anyone who wasnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t working for them, so they did not provide food rations to the apprenticesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ children. Under the 1833 bill, all enslaved children under 6 yearsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ old were freed immediately, so the planters refused to accept any responsibility for these free children. Apprentices struggled to feed their children on their own, and the results were high rates of infant mortality and child abandonment.Finally, by early 1838, the widespread abuses, along with the lobbying of some apprentices and abolitionists, convinced the British Colonial Office to push for the abolishment of the apprenticeship system and for immediate emancipation. Charles Grant, 1st Baron Glenelg (1778-1866, known as Lord Glenelg), the head of the Colonial Office since 1835, called for apprenticeship to be ended. GlenelgÃ¢â ¬â„¢s position was supported by Sir Evan Murray MacGregor, the Governor of Barbados and the British Windward Islands (including St. Vincent, Grenada, Tobago, St. Lucia, and Trinidad). Governor MacGregor managed to convince the Barbadian Legislature to end apprenticeship, arguing that there would be abundant labour even after emancipation. In May 1838, the Barbadian Legislature passed a law providing for full emancipation on 1 August 1838. Governor MacGregor issued this emancipation proclamation document on 2 June 1838, applying to Barbados and the other British Windward Islands under his

administration (Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Tobago, Trinidad, etc.).

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