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Black Caribs - Garifuna Saint Vincent' Exiled People: The Roots Of The Garifuna



Synopsis

The story begins in South America, where people who spoke Arawak-an Amerindian language fashioned a culture based on yuca or cassava farming, hunting and fishing in a dense forest cut by many rivers. By the year 1000 AD some of them had moved up the Orinoco River to the Caribbean Sea and it's islands, where they established a new way of life. Later other people, whom history has called "Caribs", moved into the Caribbean out of the same areas. The Caribs welcomed and protected the Negro refugees, and in time allowed them to marry the Caribs. The Africans then adopted the languages, culture and traditions of the Yellow Island Caribs. The intermarriage brought about a rapid growth of hybrid mixture of African and Yellow Indians Caribs. From this union arose a half-bred race possessing some Caribs and African characteristics to which the name Garifuna or Black Carib was given.

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the best books in English about the history of the Garifuna people. It is by a Garifuna author living in Rhode Island and combines articles by leading Belizean Garifuna intellectuals like Roy Cayetano and Sebastian Cayetano with research by Caribbean and US academics who study the Garifunas and their relatives the Carib or Karib Indians of the Caribbean. This has the best study of Garifuna music and dances and ceremonies I have seen in English, done by a student of ethnomusicology and includes interviews with leading parranda musicians from Belize. There is also analysis by Roy Cayetano who speaks Garifuna of punta songs, another important genre of Garifuna music. The short modern history of the Garifunas of Belize is excellent. I have recommended this book at academic conferences like

SALALM and highlight it on my blogs about the Honduran Indians and Afro-Hondurans, including the Garífuna. It has written documentation used to declare Garifuna Intangible World Heritage by UNESCO, the companion to the video Garífuna Heritage. If your library is only going to have one book on the Garífuna, start with this one.

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