

## STUDIES IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY

This series, specially commissioned by the Economic History Society, provides a guide to the current interpretations of the key themes of economic and social history in which advances have recently been made or in which there has been significant debate.

Originally entitled 'Studies in Economic History', in 1974 the series had its scope extended to include topics in social history, and the new series title, 'Studies in Economic and Social History', signalises this development.

The series gives readers access to the best work done, helps them to draw their own conclusions in major fields of study, and by means of the critical bibliography in each book guides them in the selection of further reading. The aim is to provide a springboard to further work rather than a set of pre-packaged conclusions or short-cuts.

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STUDIES IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY

*Edited for the Economic History Society by L. A. Clarkson*

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## Contents

<i>List of Tables, Map and Graph</i>	6
<i>Note on References</i>	7
<i>Editor's Preface</i>	11
1 Introduction	13
2 The Last Years of Slavery	17
3 Adjustments to Emancipation	31
4 Problems of Economic Development	46
5 General Conclusion	66
<i>Notes</i>	69
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	70
<i>Index</i>	79

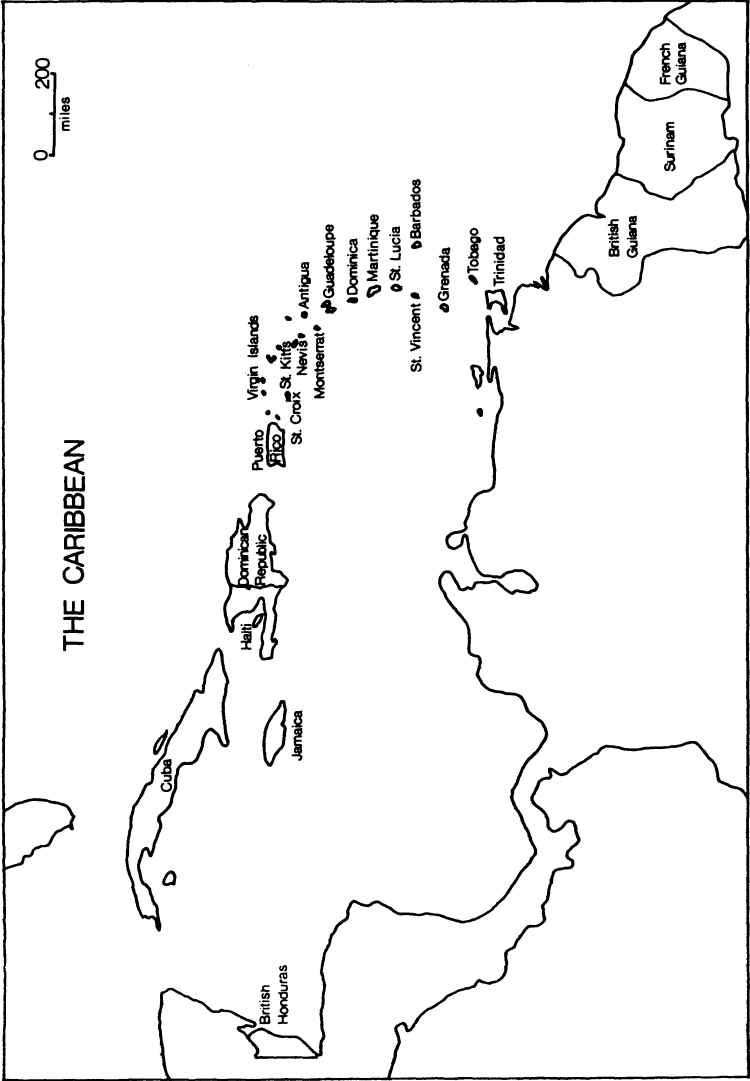
## *List of Tables, Map and Graph*

### *Tables*

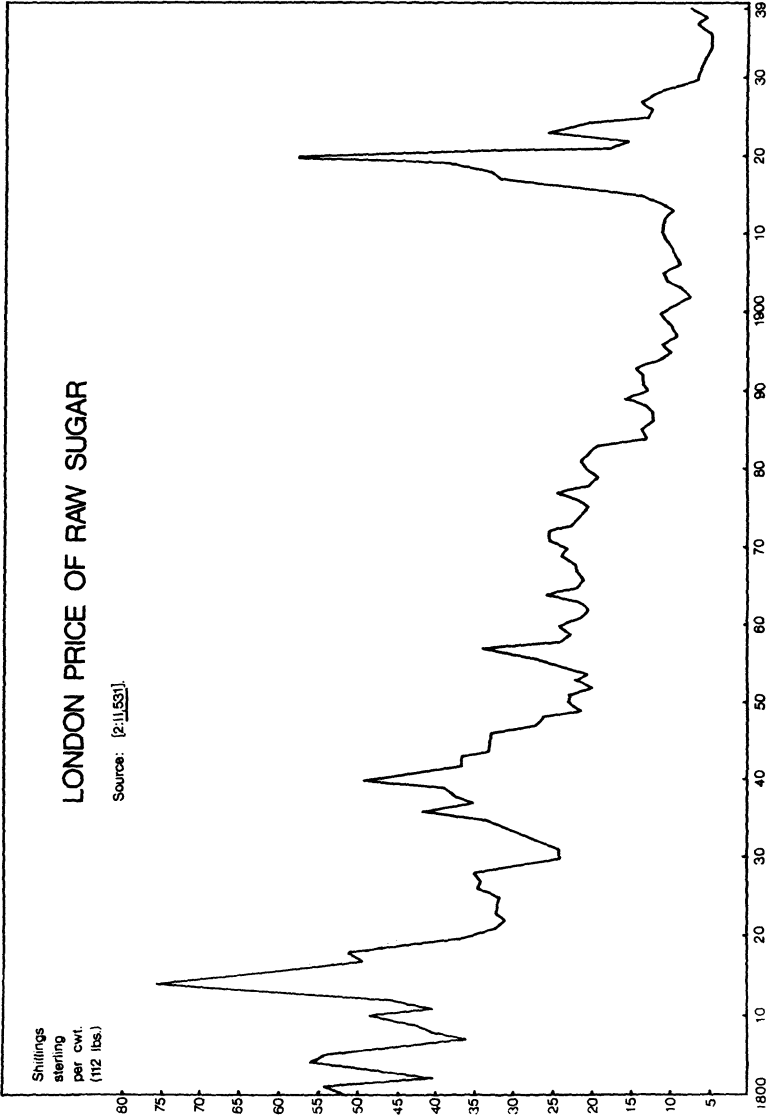
I Levels of Gross Domestic Product per Head of Population	14
II Average Annual Sugar Production	27
III Land–Population Ratios and Changes in Sugar Production after Emancipation	34–5
Map: The Caribbean	8
Graph: London Price of Raw Sugar 1800–1939	9

## *Note on References*

References in the text within square brackets relate to the numbered items in the Select Bibliography, followed, where necessary, by the page number in italics, for example (1:45]. The other references, numbered consecutively, relate to the items specified in the Notes section.







## *Editor's Preface*

When this series was established in 1968 the first editor, the late Professor M. W. Flinn, laid down three guiding principles. The books should be concerned with important fields of economic history; they should be surveys of the current state of scholarship rather than a vehicle for the specialist views of the authors; and, above all, they were to be introductions to their subject and not 'a set of pre-packaged conclusions'. These aims were admirably fulfilled by Professor Flinn and by his successor, Professor T. C. Smout, who took over the series in 1977. As it passes to its third editor and approaches its third decade, the principles remain the same.

Nevertheless, times change, even though principles do not. The series was launched when the study of economic history was burgeoning and new findings and fresh interpretations were threatening to overwhelm students – and sometimes their teachers. The series has expanded its scope, particularly in the area of social history – although the distinction between 'economic' and 'social' is sometimes hard to recognise and even more difficult to sustain. It has also extended geographically; its roots remain firmly British, but an increasing number of titles is concerned with the economic and social history of the wider world. However, some of the early titles can no longer claim to be introductions to the current state of scholarship; and the discipline as a whole lacks the heady growth of the 1960s and early 1970s. To overcome the first problem a number of new editions, or entirely new works, have been commissioned – some have already appeared. To deal with the second, the aim remains to publish up-to-date introductions to important areas of debate. If the series can demonstrate to students and their teachers the importance of the discipline of economic and social history and excite its further study, it will continue the task so ably begun by its first two editors.

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