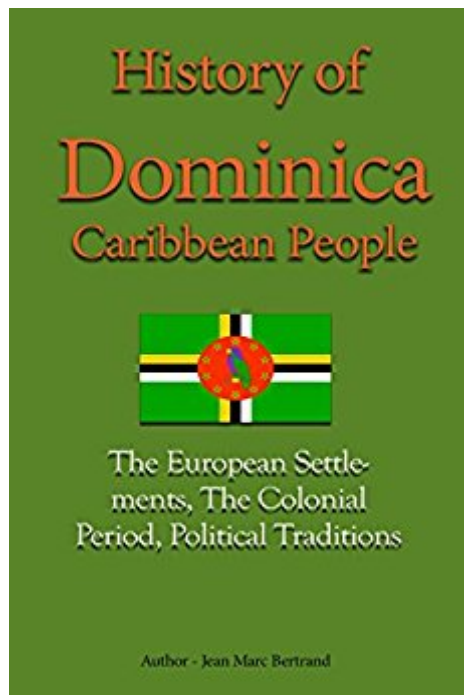




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Dominica History, Caribbean People: The European Settlements, The Colonial Period, Political Traditions



Synopsis

Dominica History. European settlements in the Caribbean began with Christopher Columbus. Carrying an elaborate feudal commission that made him perpetual governor of all lands discovered and gave him a percentage of all trade conducted, Columbus set sail in September 1492, determined to find a faster, shorter way to China and Japan. He planned to set up a trading-post empire, modeled after the successful Portuguese venture along the West African coast. His aim was to establish direct commercial relations with the producers of spices and other luxuries of the fabled East, thereby cutting out the Arab middlemen who had monopolized trade since capturing Constantinople in 1453. He also planned to link up with the lost Christians of Abyssinia, who were reputed to have great quantities of gold--a commodity in great demand in Europe. Finally, as a good Christian, Columbus wanted to spread Christianity to new peoples. Columbus, of course, did not find the East. Nevertheless, he called the peoples he met "Indians," and, because he had sailed west, referred to the region he found as the "West Indies

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