



Slavery, Smallholding and Tourism: Social Transformations in the British Virgin Islands

Michael E. O'Neal

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Slavery, Smallholding and Tourism explores the political economy of development in the British Virgin Islands — from plantations, through the evolution of a smallholding economy, to the rise of tourism. The study argues that the demise of plantation economy in the BVI ushered in a century of imperial disinterest persisting until recently, when a new “monocrop” — tourism — became ascendant. Using an historical and anthropological approach, O'Neal reveals how the trend toward reliance on tourism and other dependent industries affects many BVI Islanders — called the “Belongers” — in ways that echo their historical and economic heritage.

Part of the *Classic Dissertation Series* from Quid Pro Books, the book adds a new Foreword by Vassar's Colleen Ballerino Cohen and additional commentary by UC-Irvine's Bill Maurer, who shows how even the emergence of a financial services industry may be understood through the insights that O'Neal presents in his study.

From the new Foreword:

“Read in the historical context of tourism and Caribbean research, Michael O’Neal’s work stands out as an early and significant contribution. But even apart from its pioneering status, this is an important book. A quarter of a century after the original research, the work is fresh, innovative, and ethnographically rich... an in-depth account of the transformations activated by tourism, as they are happening.”

— Colleen Ballerino Cohen, Professor of Anthropology and Women’s Studies, Vassar College
Author, *Take Me to My Paradise*

From the new Afterword:

“O’Neal’s book is a story of tourism, not finance. But it was written right at the beginning of the emergence of this ‘second pillar’ of the British Virgin Islands’ economy — financial services — and the tantalizing references to that industry in this book, as well as the rich discussion of the enduring influence of the plantation complex, provide ... commentary on value, its circulation, and its deep histories, histories that this volume helps us better to discern.”

— Bill Maurer, Professor of Anthropology and Law, University of California, Irvine
Author, *Recharting the Caribbean*



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