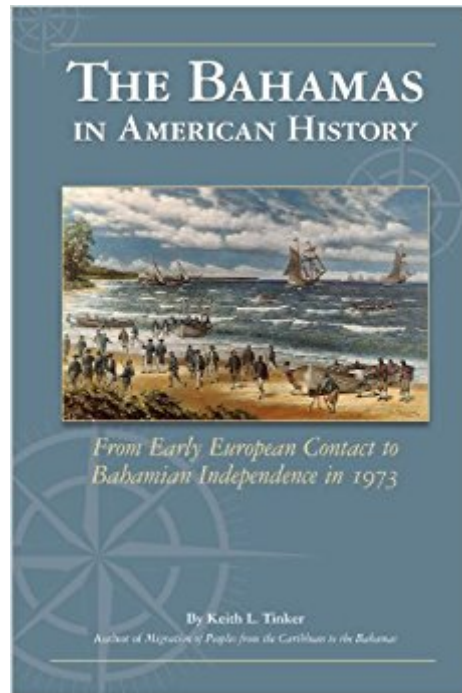




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The Bahamas In American History



Synopsis

Format Paperback Subject History

Book Information

Paperback: 170 pages

Publisher: Xlibris, Corp. (November 30, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1465310827

ISBN-13: 978-1465310828

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.4 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 11 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.9 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,693,644 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #56 in [Books > History > Americas > Caribbean & West Indies > Bahamas](#)

Customer Reviews

Keith Lamont Tinker is retired executive director of the National Museum of the Bahamas, former adjunct professor of Caribbean history at the College of the Bahamas, and author of *Migration of Peoples from the Caribbean to the Bahamas* (University Press of Florida, 2011).

This read more like a college term paper than like a book written by a professional historian. It had too many block quotes, copying and pasting large chunks of text from others' works, instead of thoughtfully weaving small quotes into the author's own words. I was tempted to count the number of lines of block quotes, relative to the number of lines in the book, suspecting the tally would be approximately one-third, or more, of the total. This excessive quoting resulted in the text never being able to establish a cadence or narrative flow of its own. This was unfortunate, given the interesting topic. For subsequent editions, I recommend that the author address this problem and rework the text to comprise a substantially larger percent of his own words.

Still preparing for the cruise, I am trying to learn about the places I will visit. Having read Peter Barratt's *Bahama Saga* I chose the Kindle version of this title for some balance. Tinker is well worth the read and more straight forward than the Barratt's fictionalized title. The focus is on the relationship between the United States and the Bahamas. After describing the early colonization of the island Tinker provides a lot of detail on the Revolutionary war. Little did I realize that the first

action of our fledgling navy was in the Bahamas. Rather a no brainer that hordes of the Crown loyal Americans would flood to the islands at the end of the conflict. Tinker puts the age of piracy in perspective. There is a repeating theme on how vital "wrecking" and it's nearly moral equivalent of piracy are to the Bahamian economy. The location of the islands, in the middle of (almost in the way of) trade routes is almost too perfect a coincidence to encourage such activity. The intrigue of the American Civil War marries the experience of piracy with blockade running. Although Great Britain outlaws slavery in the 1830's, there is much southern sympathy among locals. If you haven't noticed a recurring theme yet, others wars serve the Bahamian economy well. The sun continues to set quietly on the hammocks until Prohibition once again affords the opportunity for profits to the south. Proximity again provides the opportunity for profit as spirits freely flow but along with unwanted criminal influences. Another recurring theme is the drain of the population by opportunities on the mainland. I found the chapter on migration particularly interesting providing details about New Deal programs I was totally unaware. I appreciated gaining an understanding on the horrors of slavery, and the economic slavery that followed abolition. Tinker also does a good job intertwining the Bahamian involvement in various American political movements from the post-revolutionary war Florida intrigues, Garvey-ism and eventual independence. This title is even handed and reasoned, dealing with extremely sensitive subjects such as slavery and racism with aplomb. It might be criticized for picking the low hanging fruit, the easily identifiable high points but I believe I will leave those details to another day.

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