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*Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology*

*General Editor: Jack Goody*

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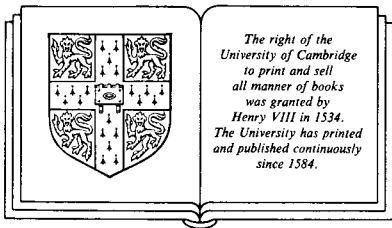
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# Kinship and class in the West Indies

**A genealogical study of Jamaica and Guyana**

**RAYMOND T. SMITH**

*University of Chicago*



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge

New York Port Chester Melbourne Sydney

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521345224](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521345224)

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First published 1988

First paperback edition 1990

Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2007

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Smith, Raymond Thomas, 1925-

Kinship and Class in the West Indies.

(Cambridge studies in social anthropology; 65)

Bibliography.

Includes index.

1. Kinship – Jamaica. 2. Kinship – Guyana.

3. Jamaica – Social life and customs.

4. Guyana – Social life and customs.

5. Jamaica – Genealogy. 6. Guyana – Genealogy.

I. Title. II. Series: Cambridge studies in social anthropology; no. 65.

GN564.J25S53 1988 306.8'3'097292 87-11662

ISBN 978-0-521-34522-4 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-39649-3 paperback

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## Preface

This book is the first of a projected three-part work that examines West Indian kinship, and the studies that have been made of it, over the past thirty or forty years. In this initial volume I present the findings of a number of genealogical studies carried out in Jamaica and Guyana, using them to question certain orthodox assumptions about class differences in West Indian kinship. In order to interpret these data adequately it has been necessary to consider some aspects of the historical development of kinship, and of kinship studies, in the West Indies, and to touch upon a number of theoretical issues that underly the direction taken by this analysis. In the second part of the projected work I shall present material derived from a twenty-five-year longitudinal study of two villages in Guyana – one Afro-Guyanese and one Indo-Guyanese – a study that also leads to a reconsideration of many accepted ideas about lower class kinship in the Caribbean and elsewhere. The final work will review the development of kinship studies in the Caribbean over the period since the ending of World War II and suggest some of its implications for kinship theory generally, and for the study of Afro-American kinship in particular.

I am indebted to many people who have contributed to the making of this book. To the National Science Foundation, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and the Lichtstern Memorial Fund Committee who provided funds at various stages that made possible the field research and writing. To the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana who provided hospitality, practical assistance and intellectual stimulation. To the colleagues who worked with me on the broader study at various stages: Jack Alexander, Patricia Anderson, Diane Austin, Dalton Davis, Christopher Davis, Michael Fischer, Nancy Foner, Derek Gordon, Jacqueline Mayers, Barbara Miller, Allen Roberts, and Don Robotham. Lois Bisek, Kathryn Barnes and Molly Carrington have, over many years, provided the kind of assistance without which research would be impossible, and Joy Pilgrim gave invaluable help in this study as in others. My thanks also to Colin Smith who prepared the maps at short notice. I owe a special debt of gratitude to David Schneider, both for his own work that

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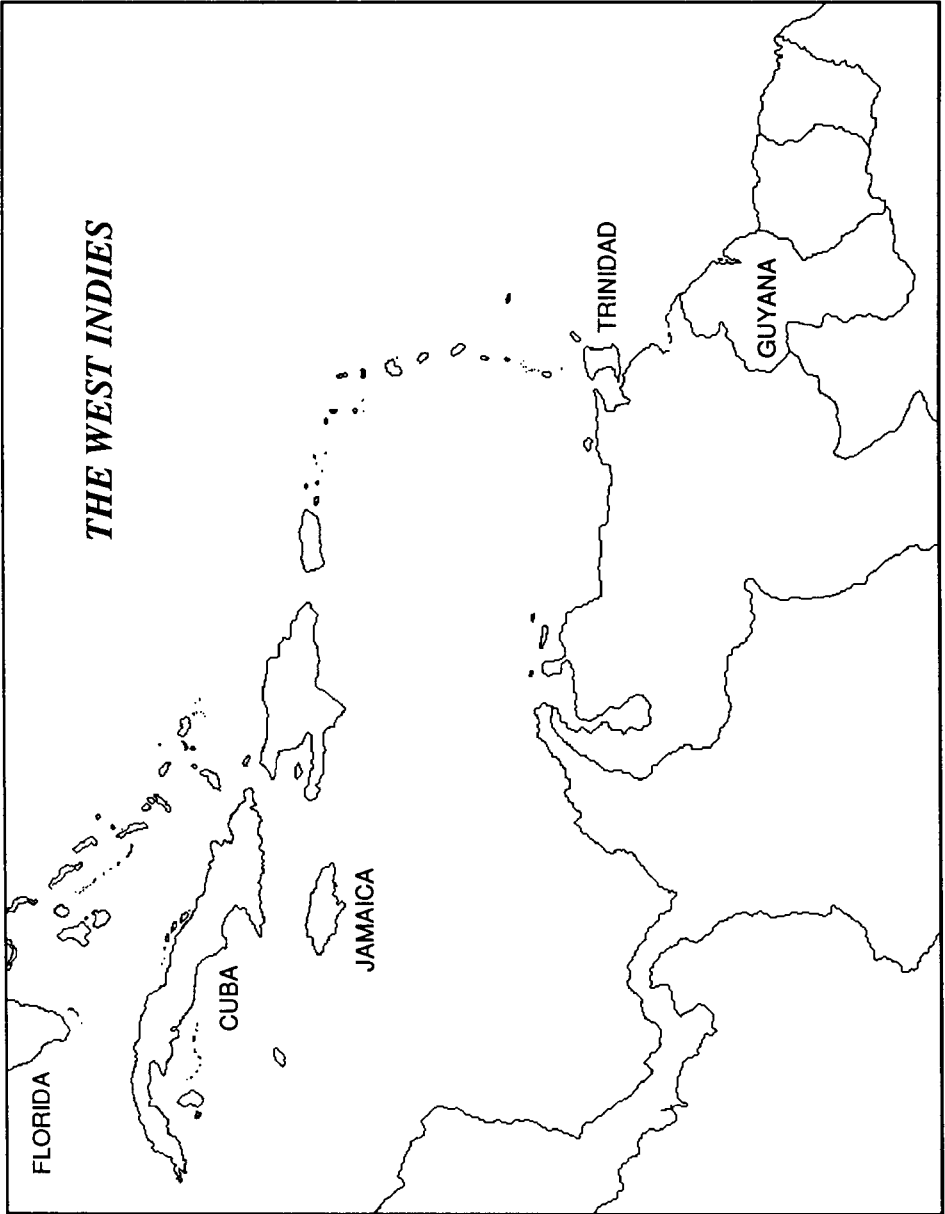
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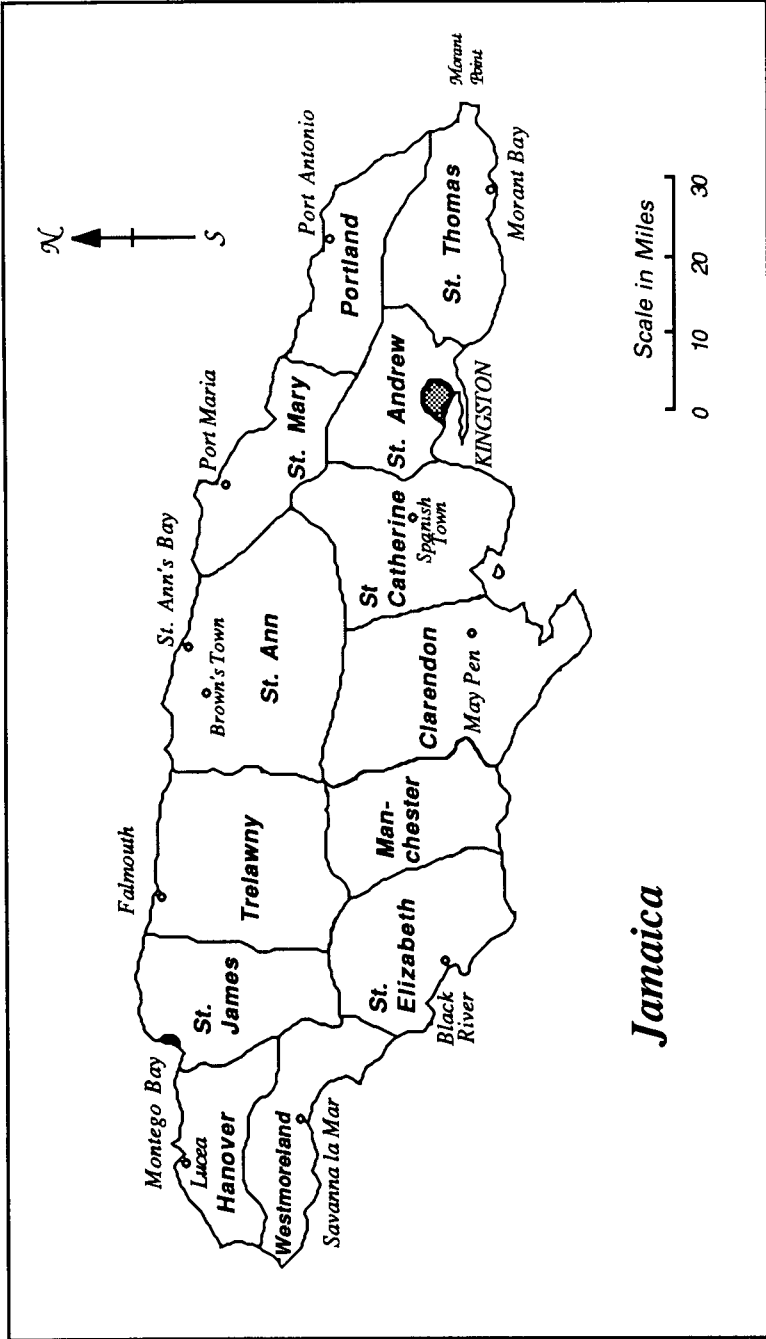
*Preface*

has stimulated so many scholars even when they could not wholly agree with him, and for the always provocative comments he has made on mine.



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