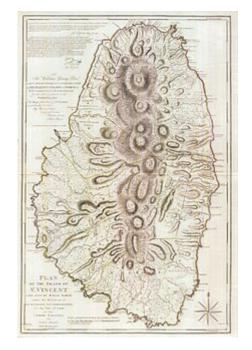
French and British colonisation and the Carib Wars



A 1776 map of the Caribbean isle of Saint Vincent. The southern portion of the island was under British control, and the northern portion was under the control of the Black Caribs.

The first Europeans to occupy St. Vincent was the French. However, following a series of wars and peace treaties, the islands were eventually ceded to the British. While the English were the first to lay claim to St. Vincent in 1627, the French (centred on the island of Martinique) would be the first European settlers on the island when they established their first colony at Barrouallie on the

Leeward side of St. Vincent in 1719.^[3] The French settlers cultivated coffee, tobacco, indigo, corn, and sugar on plantations worked by African slaves.

St. Vincent was ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Paris (1763). From 1763 until independence, St. Vincent passed through various stages of colonial status under the British.

Friction between the British and the Caribs led to the First Carib War. The First Carib War (1769–1773) was fought over British attempts to extend colonial settlements into Black Carib territories and resulted in a stalemate and an unsatisfactory peace agreement. Led primarily by Black Carib chieftain Joseph Chatoyer, the Caribs successfully defended the windward side of the island against a military survey expedition in 1769 and rebuffed repeated demands that they sell their land to representatives of the British colonial government. Frustrated by what they saw as intransigence, the British commissioners launched a full-scale military assault on the Caribs in 1772 with the objective of subjugating and deporting them from the island. British unfamiliarity with the windward lands of the island and effective Carib defence of the island's difficult mountain terrain blunted the British advance, and political opposition to the expedition in London prompted an enquiry and calls for it to be ended. With military matters at a stalemate, a peace agreement was signed in 1773 that delineated boundaries between British and Carib areas of the island.

A representative assembly was authorized by the British in 1776.

France captured Saint Vincent in 1779 during the American War of Independence, but it was restored to Britain by the Treaty of Versailles (1783).

The Second Carib War began in March 1795 by the Caribs, who harboured long-standing grievances against the British colonial administration, and were supported by French Revolutionary advisors including the radical Victor Hugues. The Caribs successfully gained control of most of the island except for the immediate area around Kingstown, which was saved from a direct assault on several occasions by the timely arrival of British reinforcements. British efforts to penetrate and control the interior and windward areas of the island were repeatedly frustrated by incompetence, disease, and effective Carib defences, which were eventually supplemented by the arrival of some French troops from Martinique. A major military expedition by General Ralph Abercromby was eventually successful in crushing the Carib opposition in 1797. More than 5,000 black Caribs were deported from Saint Vincent first to the island of Baliceaux, off Bequia, where half of them died in concentration camps, and then to the island of Roatán off the coast of present-day Honduras, where they later became known as the Garifuna people.

Like the French before them, the British also used African slaves to work plantations of sugar, coffee, indigo, tobacco, cotton and cocoa. Decades after the success of the Haitian Revolution, the British abolished slavery in 1834; full emancipation was achieved in 1838. The economy then went into a period of decline with many landowners abandoning their estates and leaving the land to be cultivated by liberated slaves. The resulting labour shortages on the plantations attracted Portuguese immigrants in the 1840s and East Indians in the 1860s as labourers. Conditions remained harsh for both former slaves and immigrant agricultural workers, as depressed world sugar prices kept the economy stagnant until the turn of the 20th century.

A Crown Colony government was installed in 1877, a Legislative Council created in 1925, and universal adult suffrage granted in 1951. During this period, the British made several unsuccessful attempts to affiliate St. Vincent with the other Windward Islands in order to govern the region through a unified administration. The most notable was the West Indies Federation, which collapsed in 1962.

The La Soufriere volcano erupted in 1812 and 1902 when much of the island was destroyed and many people were killed. In 1979 it erupted again, this time with no fatalities. In the same year, St Vincent and The Grenadines gained full independence from Britain, while remaining a member of the Commonwealth of Nations.