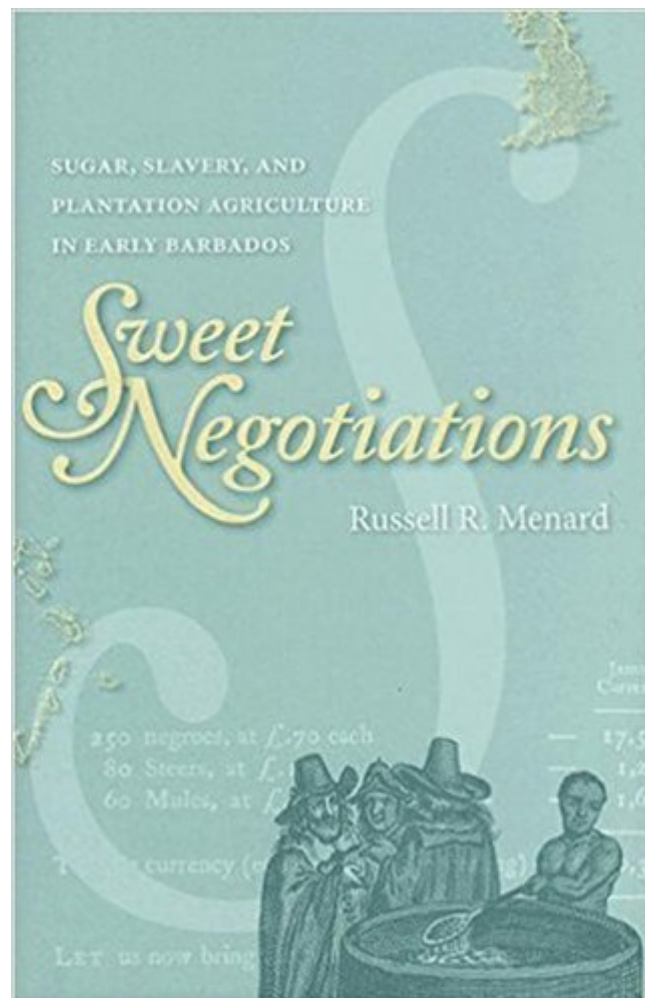




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Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, And Plantation Agriculture In Early Barbados



Synopsis

Intending at first simply to do further research on the mid-seventeenth-century "sugar revolution" in Barbados, Russell Menard traveled to the island. But once there, he quickly found many discrepancies between the historical understanding of the way in which this "revolution" fueled the institution of slavery and the actual, quotidian, records documenting the prominence of slavery on the island even before sugar spurred its economic growth. In *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados*, Menard reveals that black slavery's emergence in Barbados actually preceded the rise of sugar; in doing so he both reverses the long-held understanding of slavery as a consequence of the island's economic boom and repositions the impact that this surge of slavery had on America's slave trade. Based on fresh archival research conducted on the island and in England, *Sweet Negotiations* shows that Barbados was well on its way to becoming a plantation colony and a slave society before sugar emerged as the dominant crop. Menard sheds new light on the origins of the integrated plantation, gang labor, the slave economy, agricultural productivity, the organization of commerce, and the character of the planters who built the sugar industry. Despite its small size (166 square miles) and distant location, Barbados loomed large in England's American empire. With Menard's findings, the island's importance becomes that much more pronounced: because Barbados was a major site for the development and dissemination of the slave plantation system in the Americas, Menard's correction of the historical record has implications that reach far beyond the tiny island's shores. Russell R. Menard is Professor of History faculty at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of five books and numerous articles on various aspects of early American economics and social history.

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