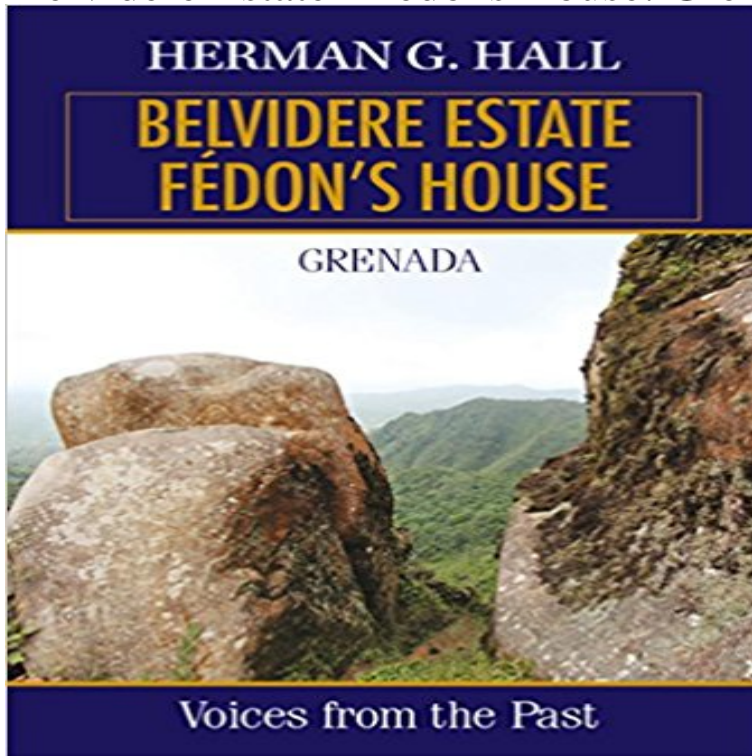


## Belvidere Estate - Fedons House: Grenada - Voices from the Past



Rebellion, insurrection, revolt, executions, religion, maroons, slavery, ghosts, coffee, plantain, nutmegs and cocoa all add to the spicy flavor, high drama and creative tension of Belvidere Estate Fedons House. This book relates the oral history of Julien Fedon, adoringly kept alive in the memories of Belvidere Estates mostly illiterate laborers over the centuries. Some of these tales were either overheard by the author, who was born and raised on Belvidere Estate, or told directly to him by laborers of the 1950s who kept alive the saga of Fedons 18th-century exploits. Belvidere Estate Fedons House brings to life and celebrates the 1795-1796 insurrection now known as Fedons Revolution, which occurred on what was, at the time, the British colony of Grenada. President George Washington was aware of problems brewing on the island but Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson advised Washington to ignore the request of the French-speaking mulattoes. Sir Ralph Abercromby, the celebrated British war hero who captured Spanish Trinidad for the British, visited Belvidere in June, 1796 with German commandos in the quest to defeat Fedon. Almost 187 years later when U.S. President Ronald Reagan dispatched troops to invade or rescue the Spice Isle, Grenada, soldiers landed in Belvidere. In describing Belvidere, sequestered in the lush central part of the Caribbean island of Grenada, writers mainly think of the mountain rangenow called Fedons Campwhere Julien Fedon established his military headquarters and massacred prisoners. Belvidere Estate, which Fedon believed he owned, is seldom mentioned despite the fact that more than 7,000 peplemen, women, children, slaves, French whites, mulattoes and, finally, invading British forcesresided there in 1795-96. Historians explain that the U. S. War of Independence, the French Revolution and the Haitian Revolution all

influenced Fedons Revolution, although they acknowledge that Fedons Revolution was actually a product of the bitter rivalry between Britain and France for empire expansion. Indeed, within an unsettling 20-year period 1763 to 1783 control of Grenada passed between France and England three times, moving from French to English, English to French and, once again, French to English. It took British soldiers, sailors and marines along with German commandos 16 months to crush the rebellion. Was Fedon killed? Was he caught? Did he commit suicide? Did he escape? And if so, where to? Was Fedon exploited when he purchased Belvidere Estate? Did he deliberately participate in fraud when he assumed ownership of Belvidere Estate? Did he ever really own the estate? More than 200 years later, people are still asking these questions. The memory and exploits of Julien Fedon serve as a backdrop for Belvidere Estate Fedons House. The story of Julien Fedon is, in fact, the story of Belvidere Estate; the story of Belvidere Estate is, in fact, the story of Julien Fedon. Belvidere Estate Fedons House takes the reader on a journey through time to experience life on a mid-20th-century Caribbean plantation, with the spirit of 18th-century Julien Fedon as a continuous presence and, even now, in Century 21. It is a historical narrative that provides: \*A historical account of Julien Fedon and Fedons Revolution \*A memoir of plantation life in Colonial Grenada \*A coming-of-age story about the author Many chapters begin with a contemporaneous scene of life at Belvidere Estate in the 1950s, as experienced by the author as a youth. He then analyzes the conversations about Julien Fedon that he heard as a youth, placing them in a historical perspective while also celebrating the wisdom and informal knowledge of everyday folks. Throughout this chronicle, Fedons Revolution is sometimes referred to by the various names by which the British branded it: a revolt, rebellion, uprising, insurrection, or insurgency.

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