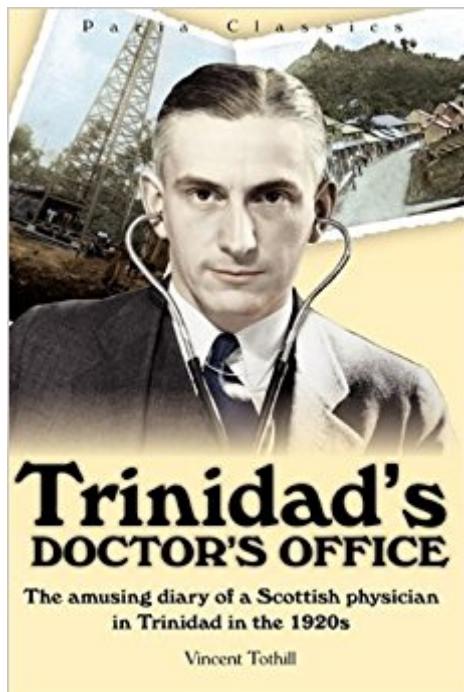


The book was found

Trinidad's Doctor's Office



Synopsis

Picture this: San Fernando, Trinidad, 1920. Longing for the tropics, the young medicus Dr. Vincent Tothill signs up with the Colonial Service and comes to southern Trinidad, where he first works in the oilfields, then in the sugar factory, and eventually sets up private practice. With Scottish wit and a subtle feel for the local parlance, he describes the people he meets and the events that mark the highlights of his sojourn. Tothill will make you laugh out loud with his sometimes picaresque adventures, but his diary is also a valuable anthropological and historical document, describing the language and customs of Trinidadians in that period and the shortcomings that of the medical service of the Colonial Government. This book was first published by Blackie & Sons in Scotland and is lavishly illustrated with contemporary photographs, some taken by Dr. Tothill himself, and others added from Paria Publishing's extensive archives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Great read

Useful as a historical record of Trinidad at the period. Highlighted several sociological perspectives of the early 20th Century. The writing was a bit tedious in terms of descriptions.

This book may have, at first glance, a limited readership (interested in Trinidadian/Caribbean History) since it is a sympathetic but dispassionate observation of an Empire-hopping Scottish

outsider into life in the British Colony in the 1920's & 30's. However, it is very relevant to anyone who lives in a culturally diverse society. As far back as the 19th Century, Trinidad has very diverse peoples living in a small island; the US has only had to deal with diversity as of the Late 20th Century as it was so large geographically that "minorities" were able to live in real or virtual "cultural ghettos". No so in the small island of Trinidad, and not so in the modern US with modern media and communications. How did Trinidad society deal with no majority ethnicity and a multiplicity of religions under a surface of British Colonial administration? We find Afro-Trinidadians, Indo-Trinidadians (of the India variety), Anglos, Francos and Hispanos, and all admixtures between. The local lingo is English but heavily influenced by the French who were largely responsible for education until early 20th Century and for economic development of the island until the 19th Century (since Spaniards headed off to El Dorado, leaving but a handful of Spanish administrators in this neglected Spanish island in New Granada). With humour but laser observation, the Scottish doctor, in what would be politically-incorrect today, expresses his thoughts on the peoples he comes across. Ahead of his time, he predicted the rebellion against the enforced social inferiority of Colonialism and had no hesitation and much pleasure in his pluralistic contacts both with Trinidad's patients and society (or societies, as he referred to parallel societies, coexisting). The biography was published first in buttoned-down 1939 so it did not include reference to what one can surmise was a central element to his bachelorhood, world mobility and open-mindedness; I believe he was gay as he referred to a Mr. Harris in various moments but never introduces him adequately; a very attractive Mr. Harris is prominently included in the pages of the book.

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