

HAITI TIMELINE

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1492-1789 : THE RICHEST COLONY

- 1492: December 5: Columbus lands on Hispaniola; Spanish enslavement of natives.
- 1517: Importation of 15,000 African slaves to make up for destroyed native population.
- 1522: Massive slave rebellion, the first of dozens, crushed in Hispaniola.
- 1659: French pirates take western part of island.
- 1685: *Code Noir* (Louis XIV): grants some rights to free people of color
- 1695: Spain recognizes French control of western part of island.
- 1743: Toussaint born on the Breda plantation.
- 1787: *Amis des Noirs* (abolitionist society) formed in France.

1789-1804: REVOLUTIONS

- 1789 July 14: Storming of the Bastille in Paris.
 - August: Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens
- 1790: November: Le Cap: revolt of Ogé and Chavannes (Mulattoes) crushed.
- 1791: March: torture and execution of Ogé and Chavannes.
 - May 15: Paris: French National Assembly recognizes civil rights for Mulattoes with 2 free parents.
 - August 22: Haitian slave revolution begins under voodoo priest Boukman.

August: Colonial Assembly asks Britain, Spain, US for help against slave revolt. President Washington, and cabinet members Jefferson and Hamilton, arrange for help to be sent to planters via France. (Washington and Jefferson are of course slave owners.)

September: Colonial Assembly extends civil rights to all free people of color (going farther than decree of May 15). Looking for mulatto allies against slaves.

September 24: French National Assembly rescinds Act of May 15.

August: Mulatto revolt in West. (Rigaud, Beauvais, Pinchinat)

September: Toussaint joins slave rebellion. (Other black commanders: Jean François, Biassou, Jeannot; later Moïse, Christophe, Dessalines). Toussaint is a gifted organizer, disciplinarian, trainer, commander, diplomat. He is able to transform proletarian (uprooted / disciplined) slaves into (proletarian) troops.

December: slave revolt leaders offer to lead mass back to slavery in exchange for freedom for leaders. Colonial Assembly refuses to bargain.

1792: April 4: French National Assembly grants civil rights to all free people of color.

August. Parisian masses trigger switch from Girondin to Jacobin power; French Republic declared.

September 18: Sonthonax (Jacobin revolutionary) arrives from France as Commissioner to enforce the *exclusif*. Allied with Mulattoes, he deports royalist troop commander and works for civil rights for Mulattoes, alienating revolutionary small whites, but fighting against rebel slaves.

1793: January: French Republic executes King; declares war on Britain and Spain.

February: French planters in Martinique and Guadeloupe invite British occupation.

March / August: unsuccessful slave revolts in Guadeloupe.

June: Sonthonax arms blacks of Le Cap to fight against counter-revolutionary whites; Le Cap is destroyed in battle.

July: Toussaint, at brink of defeat, joins Spanish forces, fighting as royalist.

August 29: Sonthonax declares abolition of slavery in St. Domingue, alienating whites and mulatto planters, but hoping to bring blacks into the Republican cause.

September. First British soldiers came ashore in St. Domingue.

1794: February 4. French National Assembly confirms Sonthonax's declaration and abolishes colonial slavery.

April: French Republican forces attack slave holders and British troops in Guadeloupe. French Republican piracy preys upon British, Spanish, US shipping. Maroon rebellions in Venezuela, Brazil, Jamaica, Cuba. Slave revolts in St. Vincent and Grenada. Pointe Coupee conspiracy in Louisiana in 1795.

May 6. Toussaint joins Republican forces, fighting for Laveaux, after hearing of February 4 declaration abolishing colonial slavery. (In lands he controlled instituted a harsh serf economy: workers could not leave the land, though they did receive 25% of the receipts as well as food, shelter and clothing.)

June 4: British troops capture Port-au-Prince.

June : Sonthonax recalled to France

1795 : July : Spain settles for peace with France; cedes eastern part of island to France.

1796 : March: Laveaux (French commander) imprisoned in Le Cap. Toussaint comes to his rescue and is made Governor as a reward. Sonthonax returns to St. Domingue. Eventually, Toussaint turns against both Laveaux and Sonthonax (who has returned in meantime).

March-April: major British forces sent to West Indies; battle slave rebels in Grenada and St. Vincent. Up to 40,000 British troops die from combat and disease from 1796-1800 in these campaigns.

1797: March 4: John Adams is sworn in as US President. Secretary of State Timothy Pickering extends aid to slave rebels in order to outflank French privateers. Toussaint plays threat of independence and alliance with US to gain leverage with Paris. (US offered better trade conditions, as it had no restrictive *exclusif*. South Carolina, with a large merchant class, was key in approving US aid and trade with St. Domingue. Pickering sends consul general, an implicit diplomatic recognition, directly to Toussaint.)

March: Laveaux is outmaneuvered by Toussaint and elected delegate to French National Assembly. His move to Paris consolidates Toussaint's power.

August: Sonthonax forced by Toussaint to leave for France.

1798: January: Toussaint begins campaign against the British.

October: British leave St. Domingue after losing 20,000 (many to yellow fever).

1799: March: civil war between Rigaud and mulattoes against Toussaint.

November: *coup d'état* establishes Napoleon as ruler of France.

1800: July: Rigaud (mulatto leader) is defeated by Toussaint and leaves for France. US Navy ships aid Toussaint in the decisive battle of Jacmel.

December: Toussaint invades eastern part of island.

1801: January: Toussaint defeats Spanish in east and consolidates power in all of island, eradicating slavery and insisting on wage labor under his serf system.

March: Jefferson inaugurated as US President. Withdraws US consul general; tells France that they will respect French rights in St. Domingue.

July 7: Toussaint declares Haitian independence and frames a constitution, appointing himself Governor for Life, though still claiming to be loyal to France.

October: peace treaty between France and Britain frees Napoleon to turn attention to St. Domingue.

1802: February: Napoleon sends large army under Leclerc to regain control of St. Domingue, re-establish slavery and enforce the *exclusif*. Napoleon's wife Josephine was a property holder in St. Domingue and Martinique. Jefferson offers US supplies to help Napoleon at first, but backs off in fear Leclerc would continue on to French Louisiana. (Some claim the ultimate goal is the US to be attacked via French Louisiana, but that the war in St. Domingue delays Napoleon, and thus the bravery of the Haitian revolutionaries saves the US. Others say Louisiana is simply to be a supply source for feeding the slaves who will restock St. Domingue, which was much more profitable. When French lose St. Domingue, they lose interest in Louisiana and sell it to US. Britain and Spain, as slave powers, are also favorable to Napoleon's expedition.)

April – October: Christophe and Dessalines fighting for Leclerc to disarm blacks.

May: Toussaint surrenders to Leclerc.

June 6: Toussaint arrested and sent to France in chains.

August 7: Napoleon orders re-instatement of slavery on St. Domingue.

August 25 : Toussaint imprisoned in Fort de Joux, Jura, France.

October: Dessalines and others join mulatto forces against Leclerc. Brutal war of atrocities and attempted racial extermination by French matched by atrocities

committed by Dessalines. Ecological devastation from scorched earth tactics of Dessalines.

November 2 : Leclerc dies of yellow fever. Rochambeau assumes command.

1803: April 17: Toussaint dies in a dungeon at Fort Joux in the French Alps.

May: Louisiana Purchase agreement solidifies French – US accord and allows Napoleon to wage war against Britain.

May: Britain declares war against France. No more reinforcements sent to help French troops in St. Domingue.

November 18: Dessalines wins decisive victory over French troops.

November 29: British evacuate remainder of French troops. Total losses: 20,000 to yellow fever; 8,000 to battle.

1804: January 1: Dessalines proclaims Republic of Haiti. Jefferson's US administration refuses to recognize it; institutes trade embargo, which is routinely violated by New England merchants.

March 29: Thousands of whites massacred in Haiti.

June: New Jersey becomes last Northern state to abolish slavery. Most of these "Emancipation Laws" freed only children of slaves, keeping adults enslaved.

September: Dessalines proclaims himself Emperor Jacques I of Haiti.

1804-1915: AFTERMATHS

1806: Dessalines (Emperor. Jacques I of Haiti) assassinated.

1806: US trade embargo. Haitian ships cannot land in US ports. Officially expires 1809.

1807-1818: Two Haitis: in North, State of Haiti, later Kingdom of Haiti. In South, Petion establishes Republic of Haiti, which sets pattern lasting much the same until today. Many small peasants have bits of their own land, practicing subsistence agriculture, but with tiny amount of coffee they sell to elite mulattoes, living in cities operating as coffee brokers.

1808: British and US ban slave trade; some smuggling continues. Internal US slave market flourishing, with Virginia and Kentucky exporting surplus slave population, particularly to Louisiana. (All southern states other than South

Carolina had by this time passed state laws against importing slaves, trying to support internal slave market prices; New Orleans slave traders and Louisiana planters object to cutting off supply of cheaper African slaves. “New” African slaves, however, were widely feared as more likely to revolt, especially if they came in contact with Haitian agents circulating in the American South.)

1814: French reclaim slave colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique from British according to Treaty of Paris ending the Napoleonic era.

1814-1831: French slave trade between Africa and the Caribbean.

1825: French emissary of Charles X demands Haiti pay 150 million gold francs in exchange for recognition as French warships cruise nearby. The deal required 5 annual payments of 30 million and required a loan from a French bank for the 1st payment. Haiti renegotiated the debt in 1838. In 2004 Aristide’s regime in Haiti demanded nearly \$22 billion in restitution. After his overthrow, the new government declares it is not interested in restitution.

1834: British abolish slavery in their colonies.

1838: Full French recognition of Haiti

1848: French abolish slavery.

1854: French conquer Senegal and establish colony there. Beginnings of European conquest and colonization of Africa. Independence of most African states in 1960s.

1862: United States recognition of Haiti

1865: End of US slavery.

1886: End of Cuban slavery

1888: End of Brazilian slavery

1900: Haiti is paying 80% of its national governmental budget for “debt”

1915-2004: US DOMINATION

1915: July 3: US military forces occupy Haiti; remain until 1934.

1947: Last payment to France

- 1957: François “Papa Doc” Duvalier becomes President of Haiti; taking advantage of Cold War geopolitics, he pursues policy of heavy borrowing, much of which is diverted to private use. A considerable part of Haiti’s current debt of \$1.4 billion stems from the Duvalier period. Estimates of their thievery, for which the Haitian people are still responsible, run to \$900 million. This sets the stage for the renewal of foreign control of Haiti through debt. From 1987, the end of the Duvalier regime, through 2004, Haiti paid \$779 million in debt service, an average of \$41 million per year.
- 1964: Papa Doc declares himself President for Life
- 1971: Papa Doc dies; succeeded by son, Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier
- 1987: Baby Doc flees Haiti, flown by US to exile in France. Military junta rules.
- 1990: December: Election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide.
- 1991: September: Military coup deposes Aristide, who goes into exile in US.
- 1994: September: Military government resigns at request of US government; US troops occupy Haiti.
- October: Aristide returns to power.
- 1995: US cedes official military control to UN, but remains the real power. Aristide dissolves Haitian Army.
- 1995: A single instance in the long-term campaign of using debt as weapon of neo-colonialism via “structural adjustment.” In 1995 the IMF forced Haiti to slash its rice tariff from 35% to 3%. According to Oxfam, this resulted in an increase in imports of more than 150% between 1994 and 2003, with 95% of them coming from the US. By 2005, three out of every four plates of rice eaten in Haiti came from the US. Traditional rice-farming areas of Haiti now have some of the highest concentrations of malnutrition and a country that was self-sufficient in rice is now dependent on foreign imports.
- 1996: February: Aristide leaves office at end of his presidential term.
- 2000: November: Aristide wins re-election as President.
- 2001: US successfully leads effort to freeze \$148 million in already-approved loans and many hundreds of millions more of potential loans from the Inter-American Development Bank to Haiti. These funds were dedicated to improve education, public health and roads.

2001-2004: US insists that any international funds sent to Haiti had to go through non-governmental organizations. Funds that would have provided government services were re-routed, thus shrinking ability of the government to provide aid.

2004: February: Aristide presses claim for \$22 billion restitution from France. Overthrown shortly thereafter amid charges of violence and corruption.