

A detailed historical map of Haiti, showing the island's coastline, major rivers, and numerous settlements. The map is oriented with North at the top. Key features include the Tortuga Channel at the top, the Artibonite River flowing through the center, and the Cap-Haïtien area at the bottom. The map is labeled with various French names for locations and geographical features.

Maroon Nation

A HISTORY OF
REVOLUTIONARY
HAITI

JOHNHENRY GONZALEZ

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Maroon Nation

A History of Revolutionary Haiti

JOHNHENRY GONZALEZ

Yale

UNIVERSITY PRESS

New Haven and London

Published with assistance from the Annie Burr Lewis Fund.

Published with assistance from the Mary Cady Tew Memorial Fund.

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Set in Janson type by IDS Infotech, Ltd., Chandigarh, India.
Printed in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018956855
ISBN 978-0-300-23008-6 (hardcover : alk. paper)

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

This paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper).

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Preface

This book is meant to expand the scope of the increasingly rich academic literature on the Haitian Revolution by drawing the gaze of the historians' guild to the years following the monumental Haitian Declaration of Independence in 1804. Even as the fields of Latin American history, African diaspora studies, and Atlantic history have grown in recent decades, the Haitian nineteenth century remains an obscure and roundly neglected topic. Work on the book began many years ago as I conducted primary research on the topic of the Haitian War of Independence of 1802–1803. As I attempted to turn over every stone in search of new archival material on the Haitian Revolution, I eventually came across tantalizing documents from the early decades of Haitian independence—an era about which I knew almost nothing and had read almost nothing. During an advising meeting, Professor Dain Borges remarked that our discipline still knew very little about the land reforms of Haiti's first president, Alexandre

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Pétion. Having already discovered a handful of promising documents from this era, I devoted my subsequent scholarly career to the pursuit of this topic: the early decades of Haitian history.

With the emergence of the discipline of early modern Atlantic world history, narratives of transnational interconnection have heavily influenced studies of the Haitian Revolution. Ironically, historians arguably know more about the various impacts of the Haitian Revolution in France, Britain, Jamaica, Cuba, New Orleans, Baltimore, and Philadelphia than we do about the aftermath of the revolution within Haiti. This book endeavors to offer an introduction to early Haitian history, based on all the archival evidence that I have been able to consult in Haiti, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. I provide a basic overview of the country's early civil wars, and I also explore the process of land reform and the emergence of Haiti's independent peasantry. Through an analysis of the political economy of early Haiti, this volume explores the origins of the country's characteristic social institutions: family farms, public markets, and religious secret societies.

I began my research with a tight focus on warfare and political economy, and a plan to confine my study to colonial and early national archival sources. But a lengthy period of research in Haiti quickly taught me to follow the example of the Caribbeanist intellectuals Sidney Mintz and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, who exemplified the interpretive power of a combined historical and anthropological scholarly approach. Although the following chapters reflect many years of archival work, the analysis and arguments of this book are as much a reflection of my exposure to the oral history, language, and

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lifeways of Haiti. Accordingly, I hope that the book will be of some use not only to historians but also to the broader world of Caribbeanist anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, and literary scholars. Also, I hope that it will help to connect the growing world of Haitian Revolutionary studies with the study of the crises and complexities of contemporary Haiti. A robust literature on the age of revolutions has done little to explain the sort of question that occurs to many lay observers around the world: How did contemporary Haiti come to be the way it is? I hope that by attempting to advance the study of early nineteenth-century Haiti, this book can help to explain the origin of the country's twentieth-century crises of invasion, dictatorship, underdevelopment, and dependency.

The many debts incurred over a decade of research are too many to list here. In chronological order, my scholarly mentors have been Sam Mitrani, Vincent Brown, Laurent Dubois, Julie Saville, Paul Cheney, and Emilio Kouri. I was fortunate to conduct coursework with Thomas Holt, whose work informed my study of postemancipation social relations and ideologies of free labor. The work of Rebecca Scott similarly helped me to view Haiti in its comparative historical context. Long before he was my postdoctoral mentor, Professor Dubois gave me sound research advice, and his twin monographs on the era of the Haitian Revolution have taught me a great deal. I must reserve special thanks for my principal mentor, Julie Saville. She steered me right and shared my enthusiasm for the research. Her work helped me attempt to undertake a fine-grained examination of postemancipation social conflict at the level of agrarian relations. At a very early stage she

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encouraged me to think more expansively by steering me toward the literature on rural Southeast Asia. Being able to join her for a visit to Haiti and a trip over the mountain roads to the very ends of the earth at Jérémie was a very rewarding experience.

Among Haitian scholars, the works of Jean Casimir, Michel Hector, and Henock Trouillot were most influential. Beyond formal graduate instruction and mentorship, I have benefited greatly from the guidance of two Haitian intellectuals in particular. Among other topics, William Balan Gaubert in Chicago helped to answer my early questions about the Bizango, the Sanpwel, and the Vlangbendeng. In Boston, radio journalist and unstinting Haiti scholar Jean Lesly René was a constant source of invaluable insight, advice, and feedback. I would also like to afford special mention to the dedicated staff at the Haitian National Archives, who in the face of challenging circumstances have managed to preserve important and irreplaceable components of their nation's historic patrimony. In particular Mr. Cesaire, Mme. Zaphira, and Mr. Herold were of great assistance to me. I remain indebted to my Haitian guides, friends, and assistants Guillaume, Brucelee, Patrick, Sourit, and the late Pabé. Finally, I owe special thanks to my wife, Sabine, who has been my companion throughout my research, and whose work on the border provinces of Haiti and the Dominican Republic has helped me to understand rural social life.

MAROON NATION



Map of Haiti, 1823. (From the map collection of Joseph Gonzalez and Ralph Magnus)

CHAPTER ONE

The Maroon Nation Thesis

IN 1813, dozens of small vessels sailed from the Haitian port of Petite Goâve carrying a type of commodity that the island of Hispaniola had never before produced for sale on the world market. As early as the 1660s, ships had left this early French colonial port carrying sugar to distant European markets. By the mid-eighteenth century the colonists were also planting and exporting coffee. But in 1813 instead of tropical luxuries—sweeteners and stimulants—the Haitian ships carried corn, beans, and rice. The newly independent Haitian republic was exporting grain.

As they cleared Haitian shores bound for Jamaica, early Haitian traders looked out on an island that was becoming increasingly overgrown with new forest cover. In 1830 the British consul to Haiti, Charles Mackenzie, recorded the “uncultivated appearance of the country on approaching it from the sea.” Observing the “dense masses of rank natural vegetation” that covered the plains and mountains of Haiti, Mackenzie knew that only three decades earlier many of the apparently primeval

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stretches of thick forest had been “covered with sugar establishments, which must have rivaled any in the world.”¹

This book focuses on Haitian history during the first five decades of the nineteenth century, a period in which Haiti produced surpluses of food and experienced spreading forest cover. Today’s Haitians are commonly portrayed as Malthusian victims of self-imposed scarcity and environmental crisis—people who have carelessly cut down every last tree. Yet as recently as the mid-twentieth century, when much of Haiti was still covered with jungle, jaundiced foreign accounts emphasized the rugged and overgrown nature of the country. The 1823 American map of Haiti reproduced in this book prominently labels a vast swath of Haitian territory as “Uncultivated Country.”² In addition to foreign lamentations over the decline of the island’s plantation industry, this terminology subtly signals the economic and cultural dimensions of centuries of white people’s antipathy to the notion of a free black republic. A 1951 *Time* magazine article described the Haitians as a “Negro people with a hungry, vine-choked, voodoo-ridden way of life.”³ The term “vine-choked” suggests that the Haitians were powerless victims of a disorderly landscape and that they were incapable of developing a civilized society by bringing nature to heel. This book instead argues that Haiti’s overgrown roads and hidden hillside farms were the willful creations of an independent-minded people who historically took advantage of an impenetrable and fiscally illegible landscape in order to flee forced labor, predatory taxation, and state repression.

As Europe and North America industrialized and grew rich during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Haiti remained poor. Its economy has arguably deteriorated in the decades

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since World War II, when most of the rest of the world experienced unprecedented development. With the rise of international aid agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the twentieth century, Haiti's global image has become one of desperation and helplessness. Mired in constant crises, the only New World territory where blacks rose up to defeat their white masters has long been used to bolster white-supremacist narratives of history. In media and popular consciousness, Haiti has become identified with hunger. Yet this book covers an entirely different period in Haitian history. Rural self-sufficiency was the guiding principle that characterized the struggles, outlook, and economic achievements of the early Haitians, who generally had no trouble feeding themselves.

In addition to the creation of a new nation-state and the legal abolition of slavery, the Haitian Revolution gave rise to a free system of decentralized, small-scale agriculture that allowed for unprecedented demographic growth. With a founding population of well under four hundred thousand people in 1804, Haiti's population more than quintupled to perhaps as much as 2.5 million by 1904. Prior to the population booms of the twentieth century, this was the steepest and largest instance of demographic expansion in Caribbean history. Formally unrecognized by foreign governments during much of this period, and recipients of absolutely no foreign assistance or trade preferences, ordinary Haitians fed themselves easily and led autonomous lives on the basis of robust domestic food production and relatively modest exports of coffee and dyewood.

Increased food production and growing forest cover were never the results of any official state policies. Both phenomena

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represented early dictators' failures to rebuild the plantation economy. The founding Haitian leaders, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe, repeatedly ordered the destruction of food crops in an effort to force former slaves back onto sugar plantations. For Haitian rulers and foreign commercial agents, the shrubs and trees that covered former sugar lands signified lost profits and the mismanagement of the plantation economy. Yet for the majority of the former slaves, the collapse of sugar exports and the destruction of the plantation infrastructure represented success.

Successive groups of rulers demanded that the former slaves continue to intensively cultivate sugar and coffee for export, but the masses refused to accept legal confinement and forced labor. Thousands fled into the countryside, where they created new communities and took up food production. Haiti's early farmers succeeded in growing bumper crops of corn, beans, rice, millet, bananas, sweet potatoes, manioc, and yams. A land whose people had suffered years of hunger during periods of slavery and war had been turned into a kind of immense tropical kitchen garden that produced rich surpluses of food in exchange for relatively moderate outputs of labor.

The Haiti-Jamaica grain trade was a short-lived affair that occurred only because of the shipping blockades associated with the War of 1812. But it sheds light on one of the most turbulent and little-known eras in Haitian history. The corn and beans shipped from Haiti to Jamaica had an origin very different from that of the British or American grain typically fed to the Jamaican slaves in peacetime. Much of the Haitian corn was grown on remote mountain farms whose owners owned no formal deed or title to the land they tilled.

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The men and women who farmed this corn were former slaves and their immediate descendants. These early Haitian farmers had thrown off the hunger and indignities of slavery by claiming their own land and by cultivating food for themselves rather than sugar for a master. Corn and beans that the farmers did not eat made its way to the port through an informal but sophisticated network of rural markets. While the republican rulers at Port-au-Prince traded their country's surplus corn for the British gunpowder they needed to prosecute a multilateral civil war against rival Haitian regimes, the farmers were paid with a new and unique kind of money.

A WANGA NOUVO

The very first coin minted by the Haitian republican government at Port-au-Prince offers a tantalizing clue about the West African cultural symbolism that not only characterized Haitian popular life and religion but even reached up to shape the official emblems of the state. Pictured below is a twenty-five-cent piece of the sort first issued by the Haitian republic in 1813—the year of the wartime grain trade with Jamaica. This coin features an early version of the iconic Haitian treasure of arms on one side, and on the other an image of a circular serpent representing the Vodou snake deity Damballah Wedo.

These unique coins are the first and only New World currency to feature the image of an African deity. Since slaves in colonial Saint-Domingue were officially forbidden to carry money of any kind, this silver coin was a meaningful embodiment of the new freedoms enjoyed by the free citizens of the Haitian republic. For every Haitian who earned, spent, and



An 1815 Haitian coin.

handled this new coin, the image of the snake *lwa* was itself a *wanga nouvo*—a novel African charm of the sort commemorated in a traditional Haitian song referencing Jean-Jacques Dessalines and the advent of national independence.⁴ Much like the songs that heralded independence, or like the new Haitian flag, these new Vodou coins were icons of an unmistakable political change.

Throughout the early nineteenth century, Afrophobic, anti-Vodou discourse was the norm among the country's political and commercial elite. Mixed-race intellectuals and politicians such as Thomas Madiou endlessly decried the religious practices of their countrymen as barbarous superstitions. But the prevalence of elite anti-Vodou politics serves only to highlight the remarkable symbolic decision that Haiti's early republican rulers took when they placed the Dahomean deity Damballah Wedo on the first coin ever minted in Port-au-Prince. Snake deities were probably familiar to people from many areas of Africa. The effect, however, of the circular

serpent image would have been most pronounced among Fon- and Arada-speaking people who had been sold out of the port of Ouidah in the Kingdom of Dahomey—the West African cradle of the Vodou religion. Ironically, the mixed-race, French-educated Haitian president Alexandre Pétion, who ruled Haiti's southern republic, seems to have been no less willing to represent his state with African cultural symbols than was his northern rival, King Henry Christophe, who similarly invoked Benin by naming his elite corps of imported African palace guards the "Royal Dahomets."

But even the unprecedented circulation of Vodou coins could only hint at the profound social and economic transformations that were occurring in newly independent Haiti. Where whites had once exercised total social supremacy, the new black republic legally barred them from owning any land. White visitors were treated with suspicion and were often reminded that in Haiti they carried no special rights or privileges. Although such an occurrence seems scarcely imaginable today, in 1837 the Haitian republic even jailed a diplomatic representative of the United States amid a trade dispute.⁵

Although Haiti's governments conducted their affairs in French and officially promoted European religion, the early Haitians threw off many of the cultural and ideological trappings of colonialism. Survivors of the middle passage spoke their home languages, and a variety of West African lexical and grammatical features came to shape the Haitian Kreyòl language. African gods and African secret societies found new homes in the vast, rugged expanses of the Haitian interior.

The early Haitians' pronounced cultural autonomy developed on the basis of economic and political autonomy. In place

of a highly capitalized system of industrial agriculture based on sugar and forced labor, the Haitian insurrectionists laid the groundwork for a farming society with the most evenly distributed land-ownership pattern of any former plantation region of the Americas.⁶ By repeatedly rejecting labor systems that were reminiscent of slavery, rural laborers developed what Jean Casimir has called a “counter-plantation system.”⁷ In an effort to elaborate on the nature of this counter-plantation society, I focus on the ways in which early Haitian rural society came to resemble a vastly larger and more entrenched version of the maroon communities of runaway slaves that emerged throughout the Americas in rugged and marginal territories surrounding zones of colonial slave plantations.

The English term “maroon” and the French terms “maron” and “marronage” came from the Spanish term “cimarrón.” As the first European slave masters in the Americas, the Spanish conquistadores were the first to describe the flight of black runaways who created settlements at the tops, or *cimas*, of the mountains. New World marronage began in Hispaniola in the early sixteenth century in the immediate aftermath of Columbus’s voyages. And as this book argues, the maroon phenomenon reached its historical apogee three centuries later on the same island as a proliferation of autonomous black farm settlements spread over the Haitian hills.

Early Haiti was characterized by the widespread growth of unauthorized rural settlements that were peopled by plantation fugitives and based on undocumented and informal land claims. Wary of the heavy hand of a repressive military state, early Haitian farm settlements created their own clandestine networks of authority in the form of religious

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communities and secret societies that remain associated with the memory of maroon activity. The early Haitian populace resisted the state with a range of strategies, including remote resettlement, tax evasion, and patterns of local economic and cultural autonomy. Although slavery was forever abolished, the illegal nature of popular resistance under the draconian regimes that fought to rule early Haiti invites comparison with the maroon activity of the colonial era. Unauthorized landholding and the avoidance of formal commerce and taxation through production for use, barter, and smuggling are patterns that I view in terms of the seemingly paradoxical category of postemancipation marronage.

Once they had failed at reviving plantation exports, Haitian rulers instead appropriated the country's surplus production by levying predatory taxes on coffee and any other important commodity that the masses produced or consumed. Michel-Rolph Trouillot identifies this underlying conflict between the elite "republic of the merchants" and a nation of poor independent farmers in his book *Haiti: State against Nation*.⁸ Although the state could rely on the force of its military, the populace fiercely resisted taxation through subterfuge and determined self-reliance, which tended toward rural economic autarky. By producing much of what they needed to survive, buying, selling, and bartering in decentralized local markets and resorting to smuggling, the Haitian masses struggled to live and work on their own terms.

Even if their numbers were relatively small, runaway laborers who broke early Haitian law by fleeing plantations to set up new farms and communities in remote areas would have a disproportionate influence on the development of the

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country's characteristic economic and social institutions. Because the authorities frequently persecuted alleged *boungans*, or sorcerers, these people were more likely to evade the government and seek remote communities. Early Haitian documents record arrests and manhunts involving religious leaders. The sophisticated rural trade networks described by Sidney Mintz in the 1940s and 1950s emerged among rural producers, who became expert at avoiding taxation and organized their economic lives around the goal of holding on to their small family farms. Mintz aptly described the origins of rural Haitian life in terms of a history of flight from central authority by describing the postemancipation phenomenon of a "runaway peasantry."

The early Haitians did not necessarily have any good reason to be part of what academics have come to call the Atlantic world. Victims of the slave trade and their immediate descendants, the early Haitian masses strove to re-create African rather than European cultural and ideological forms. Surrounded by slaveholding powers who conspired to keep Haitian society at arm's length while still profiting from trade in the country's coffee, dyewoods, and other products, Haiti was simply not allowed to be an equal participant in Atlantic commerce, diplomacy, or an alleged "international community."⁹ Haiti was by no means hermetically sealed from the wider Caribbean and Atlantic economy. Historians have recently criticized the so-called isolation thesis for unduly representing Haitian society as external, archaic, and intrinsically other.¹⁰ But the isolation thesis is more than a mere misconception: it has its factual basis in the limited economic, political, and social relations that connected slaveholding nations

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with a nation of former slaves in arms. During the nineteenth century, the Haitian people favored what I describe as a maroon pattern of economic and social life by which they purposefully opted to be less engaged with the European- and North American-dominated Atlantic world economy.

The most important formal, legal expression of the maroon character of the Haitian Revolution was article 12 of Dessalines's 1805 constitution, which stated that "no white man of any nation can set foot on this territory with the title of master or property owner and cannot acquire any property in the future." This clause was reiterated in all subsequent Haitian constitutions until the United States invaded and rewrote the Haitian constitution in 1919.¹¹ Nineteenth-century Haiti's door remained relatively open to foreign commerce, but both its laws and the nativist political inclinations of its population represented a firmly closed door for direct foreign capital investment.¹² In this sense, Haiti was very unlike the slew of Latin American republics that gained their independence in the early nineteenth century. Although Haiti was *connected* to global mercantile networks as a result of the indispensable trade in certain key import and export commodities, it cannot be said to have been fully or even substantially *integrated* into the emerging global market. Early Haiti's maroon phenomenon can be conceptualized as a kind of nested structure. Haiti's poor masses retreated into rural autonomy and kept their distance from the state, and the earliest Haitian states kept their distance from hostile foreign powers.

By titling this book *Maroon Nation*, I intend to use the history of runaway-slave enclaves as a metaphor for the kinds of postemancipation rural communities that developed in

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nineteenth-century Haiti and that came to shape the entire society. Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite characterized Haiti as “the greatest and most successful Maroon polity of them all.”¹³ Unlike in Brazil, Jamaica, or the Guyanas, where certain communities continue to exist on the sites of colonial-era maroon settlements and where a subset of the population claims maroon ancestry, marronage in Haiti has no clear ethnic or geographical boundaries.¹⁴ Rather than a society such as Brazil or Jamaica with a history of maroon enclaves, Haiti represents the only example of a maroon nation, I argue, a place in which the maroon phenomenon came to characterize the entire country. The social patterns and economic strategies characteristic of marronage never disappeared in Haiti. Remote mountain settlements, secret societies, predial larceny, hidden gardens, and contraband trade have been present at every point in Haitian history. In his recent study *Freedom as Marronage*, political scientist Neil Roberts interprets the Haitian Revolution as an episode of “sovereign marronage,” a movement of slaves whose acts of flight and armed rebellion went so far beyond the *petit marronage* and *grand marronage* of the colonial era that they came to contend for sovereign power not simply over a remote enclave but also at the level of the society at large.¹⁵

Rather than a concept on loan from the ancient Greeks or Jacobin legislators, marronage is an endemic term that grows organically from the history of the Caribbean and has deeply permeated Haitian language and culture. Subtle proof of this lies in the fact that the term *marwonnaj* enjoys an ongoing and expansive metaphorical use in everyday Haitian popular life. Many of the Haitians’ latter-day survival strategies recall the

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lawless, precarious, and inventive aspects of marronage. A person promising to repay borrowed money might promise not to “go maroon.” Feral animals are labeled “maroon,” and so too is a stray bullet. Perhaps the most intriguing contemporary use of the term involves the experiences of undocumented migrants. In the headline of a recent article on arrests and deportations in Martinique, a contemporary Haitian journalist writes of “Haitians without papers living like maroons.”¹⁶ Viewed in this provocative light, the Haitian boat people of the 1990s represent a latter-day iteration of the country’s historical maroon phenomenon.

In theorizing slave resistance, it is possible to counterpose runaway communities with slave insurrections in a flight versus fight paradigm. Yet the Haitian case demonstrates that rebellion and escape were intertwined phenomena. In his 1972 book *Marrons de la liberté*, Haitian historian Jean Fouchard analyzes the experiences of the more than forty-eight thousand runaways who were reported missing and were pursued by French slave masters in the thirty years before the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution in 1791. Fouchard argues that these colonial-era runaways preserved and fostered an entrenched tradition of resistance that culminated in the Haitian Revolution. Although I have been influenced by Fouchard’s argument that maroons made the Haitian Revolution, my research has convinced me that the inverse process was even more true: that the Haitian Revolution made maroons.

This argument about postemancipation marronage contains an apparent paradox. How can we speak of maroons and runaway communities in a nation that famously spawned the first universal legal acts of slave emancipation in the history of

the Americas? This apparent paradox dissolves upon close examination of the labor systems devised by the early Haitian military rulers. In practice, the universal declarations of equality and liberty that grew out of the Haitian Revolution were universally violated by all early Haitian regimes. Notwithstanding revolutionary rhetoric guaranteeing liberty, Haiti's founding generals seemed to share the basic outlook of Alexander Hamilton, who wrote in 1799 that "no regular system of liberty will at present suit St. Domingo. The government if independent must be military—partaking of the feudal system."¹⁷ Hamilton was aware of General Toussaint Louverture's militarized plantation production known as *caporalisme agraire*, and his mention of a "feudal" organization of society was a prophetic prediction of the subsequent policies of Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines and King Henry Christophe.

Neither the first legal abolition of slavery by French colonial officials in 1793 nor the creation of an independent state in 1804 put an end to the underlying conflict between agricultural laborers and plantation elites that characterized the Haitian Revolution. Only following the fall of Henry Christophe's kingdom in 1819 and the final collapse of the sugar plantation system did the majority of Haiti's agricultural laborers generally achieve the goals that they first struck for in the uprising of August 1791. Rather than contenting themselves with legal proclamations of freedom, the masses of former slaves fought to escape the forced labor of the plantation system by fleeing the repressive reach of their rulers and acquiring and cultivating their own farms. Legal emancipation often did not protect former slaves from forced labor, but

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widespread processes of marronage, informal land acquisition, and autonomous production repeatedly bore fruit. The insurrectionaries of 1791 who began by burning sugarcane fields, destroying sugar mills, and attacking plantation managers set off a process that eventually transformed the most profitable plantation colony of the eighteenth-century Atlantic world into a society of small farmers who came to associate all forms of subservient employment with slavery. By attacking a single commodity and productive complex, poor field laborers remade an entire society and transformed their relationship with both the world capitalist market and the landscape and ecology of Hispaniola. By settling in the hills and creating their own language, religion, and rural economic order, the former slaves of Saint-Domingue made Haiti into history's only maroon nation—an entire country whose defining cultural and economic institutions were created by runaways.

HAITI AND THE FREE LAND PROBLEM

Contemporary accounts of economic decline in nineteenth-century Haiti were invariably written by disapproving foreigners who failed to consider what the frightful sight of decaying, crumbling sugar mills or overgrown plantation fields might have meant to the country's former slaves. Although it is no secret that plantations virtually disappeared in early Haiti, and the countryside became the domain of land-owning subsistence farmers, this transformation has been interpreted as evidence of a tragic, inexorable decline and has been built into a narrative of independent Haiti's helpless

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descent into chaos and backwardness. Many nineteenth-century observers and subsequent scholars viewed the independent Haitian peasants and their small farms as anti-economic and primitive, a sign of the country's decline from the days of the French colonists and their splendid estates. Haiti's rulers failed to construct a wealthy, stable state, and so the Haitian masses, with none to guide them, reverted spontaneously to a basic form of mixed subsistence production. By turning such a narrative on its head, this book argues that Haiti's rural subsistence economy represented the victory of former slaves over subsequent elites, each of which failed in turn to reconstruct a stable and profitable plantation economy. Haiti did not become a nation of small farmers because the plantation system fell. The plantation system fell because a large percentage of the early Haitians resolved to become small farmers. Rather than an unmitigated tragedy, Haiti's early history of civil wars and coups accompanied the masses' successful destruction of the plantation system and allowed for the rise of a rural population that enjoyed relative autonomy and prosperity during most of the nineteenth century.

None of the famous leaders of Haitian independence ever envisioned or willingly promoted the country's decentralized and irregular system of scattered small family farms. Following a decade of archival research, I have discovered only one hitherto unknown revolutionary figure who seems to have foreseen and accepted the unbreakable will of the Haitian people to possess their own farms. He was known simply as Commandant Guillaume, and the fact that he carried only one name suggests that he was probably a plantation slave at the outbreak of the revolution. In 1802, as the French expedi-

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tionary forces under General Charles Leclerc prepared to disarm the island's black laborers and restore slavery, they discovered that Commandant Guillaume had initiated a troubling new policy in his rural jurisdiction at Bainet near Jacmel. The French occupiers under General Leclerc spent the entirety of 1802 attempting to restore order and productivity in the colony by forcing former slaves to return to their old plantations and obediently serve the colony's surviving white masters. At Bainet, they fretted that the black laborers no longer possessed their "spirit of submission." The white colonists felt "particularly menaced" by those who had set up their own small farms in the hills. Following one of the constant campaigns to force wayward laborers back to the plantations, the French commanders complained that the laborers once again "returned to their isolated farms," claiming that they were authorized to do so by "permits" that they had received from Commandant Guillaume. Guillaume was captured in June 1802 and was almost certainly executed by the French forces, but he became the first Haitian revolutionary leader to fully acknowledge and endorse the unrelenting determination of his fellow former slaves to own their own small farms.¹⁸

Guillaume's unauthorized system of land permits represented the initial instance of wartime land reform in Haiti. Although Guillaume was purged by the French generals, his surviving rural constituents ultimately prevailed by holding stubbornly to their "isolated farms" of ten to twelve acres. His short-lived system of permits predicted the subsequent military land reforms of Haiti's early rulers and a process that I argue amounted to the eventual decommodification of farmland in nineteenth-century Haiti.

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Scholars and other observers who have commented on Haiti's unique transition from a plantation colony to a society of small farmers usually do not explain this economic transformation as the willful decision of the nation's laboring majority. Development economist and Haiti expert Mats Lundahl writes, "Much of the transition to peasant farms during the nineteenth century was a completely spontaneous affair. The peasants simply squatted on whatever land that was available and neither landowners nor the government could do anything to reverse this trend."¹⁹ Eugene Genovese writes that after Haiti's revolution "the country slipped inexorably into a subsistence peasant economy."²⁰ Rather than a "spontaneous" or "inexorable" evolution, Haiti's subsistence economy emerged as a result of a prolonged struggle between plantation laborers and wealthy rulers. The conflict between plantation production and subsistence agriculture was at the heart of the Haitian Revolution. And although most histories of the revolution conclude with Dessalines's Declaration of Independence on January 1, 1804, the conflict between the plantation system and the subsistence economy did not end in 1804, and victory for the masses was neither easy nor foreordained.

In emphasizing the importance of rural farms established by runaways and squatters, this book attempts to focus somewhat less on the military aspect of Haitian history and more on civilian forms of resistance and contestation. Even scholarly reinterpretations of the Haitian Revolution "from below" have often focused primarily on military leaders. Looking past the biographical histories of Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, scholars such as Carolyn Fick and

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Michel-Rolph Trouillot have brought attention to lesser-known military officers and guerrilla leaders. These include men such as Moïse Louverture, Jean-Baptiste Sans-Souci, and Charles Bélair, who were executed amid the revolutionary intrigues of the especially turbulent period from 1802 to 1804. Since these men never ruled the country, they are more easily cast as authentic martyrs of Haitian liberation and perhaps even as symbols of an alternative course of national development. The problem with this suggestion is that martyrdom in and of itself is no compelling proof that slain leaders represented any distinct program of political or economic organization for Haiti. Before they were purged, Moïse Louverture and Charles Bélair both became wealthy plantation owners and helped to administer Toussaint Louverture's repressive system of caporalisme agraire.

The Haitian Revolution is perhaps best known for spawning the first universal legal act of slave emancipation in the New World, but the other historic achievement of the country's former slaves was the unprecedented parceling out and outright decommmodification of Haiti's rich farmland. By simultaneously driving away the colonial plantocracy, withdrawing their labor from the plantation economy, and fleeing to create new farm communities, the early Haitians threw open Haiti's vast mountainous interior to settlement and took advantage of early Haiti's extremely favorable ratio of land to labor. Although he never made any study of Haitian history, economist Evsey Domar's theories on the questions of free land and free labor are proven by nineteenth-century Haiti. In his 1970 article "The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis," Domar asserts that of "free land, free peasants, and

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non-working landowners—any two elements but *never all three can exist simultaneously*.”²¹ In analyzing the rise of feudal social hierarchies in post-plague eastern Europe, Domar considers the ways that landowning nobles used repressive violence and legal restrictions on movement to rein in peasants who were otherwise inclined to take advantage of ample land by living as independent farmers. Early Haiti offers an inverse proof of Domar’s theory. By attacking and eliminating one of history’s most gilded groups of “non-working landowners,” and by successfully resisting all subsequent legal restrictions on movement, the early Haitian farmers created a society characterized by both free labor and freely available farmland.

The decommodification of Haitian farmland and the rise of free labor in early Haiti occurred because the country had a tiny population and an extremely rugged landscape. Although the population of Hispaniola became quite dense over the course of the twentieth century, it may have taken as many as four hundred years for the island to surpass pre-1492 population levels. Modern Haiti is commonly portrayed through apocalyptic, Malthusian images of crowded slums and flimsy boats overladen with refugees, but early Haiti was a sparsely populated place. Haiti’s high contemporary population density of more than nine hundred people per square mile is roughly on par with that of Rhode Island. But in 1804 it was somewhere in the vicinity of twenty-five people per square mile—comparable to the current rate in such relatively less densely populated places as Nebraska and Turkmenistan. Accustomed to a history of demographic expansion over the vast geographical frontier of the North American West with its thousands of miles of prairies, deserts, and immense moun-

tain ranges, it would be easy for Americans to ignore that Haiti, a tiny nation roughly the size of Maryland, also developed according to its own pattern of frontier settlement. In Haiti the frontiers were defined more by topography and barriers to transport than by vast distances on the map. In the era before powered transport, the small island of Hispaniola presented daunting obstacles for the movement of people and goods. Western Hispaniola is the most mountainous area in the entire Caribbean. The fertile plains surrounding Port-au-Prince, Le Cap, Léogâne, Saint Marc, and Les Cayes are all surrounded by imposing mountain ranges. In colonial Saint-Domingue, most travel and trade was conducted by sea. With its jagged mountains, weak states, and seasonal tropical storms Haiti has been characterized by one of the worst and most poorly maintained road systems in the Americas. Well into the twenty-first century, people have preferred to travel from the capital to the southern port of Jérémie by boat rather than endure a long and slow bus trip on the rugged mountain roads. During the nineteenth century, travel within Haiti was immeasurably slower and more difficult. In this era, the Haitian landscape was still characterized by old-growth forests reaching down from impenetrable mountain peaks. Even on the coastal plains, where the colonial plantations once thrived, foreign observers fretted over the loss of formerly profitable plantations to scrubby new forests of guava, logwood, cacti, and thorns.

Considering that Domar wrote on medieval Russia rather than nineteenth-century Haiti, it is interesting to observe how some of his lines perfectly encapsulate important aspects of Haitian political economy. With a prerevolutionary population

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of roughly half a million heavily reduced by warfare and disease, in Haiti, as in Domar's medieval Russia, "the scarce factor of production was not land but labor."²² Domar points out, "So long as agricultural skills can be easily acquired, the amount of capital for starting a farm is small, and the per capita income is relatively high (because of the ample supply of land), a good worker should be able to save or borrow and start on his own in time." By analyzing the few available documents concerning land prices in early Haiti, I demonstrate in chapter 6 that it would indeed have been possible for a poor laborer in early Haiti to have quickly saved up the modest capital needed to buy a small farm. In the context of wartime instability and a poorly policed rural interior, the amount of capital required for starting a farm often fell to zero. Widespread successful squatting and the speedy creation of new farms on jungle hillsides meant that former field laborers could create their own farms with no investment other than sweat equity. The best evidence for these unauthorized farms comes from the early rulers' determined efforts to eradicate them. Dessalines and Christophe repeatedly burned unauthorized settlements and rounded up runaway laborers. As Domar observes, "The next and final step to be taken by the government still pursuing its objective is the abolition of the peasants' right to move."²³ All early Haitian states promulgated strict laws confining laborers to their plantations and criminalizing all wayward individuals as vagabonds. For their part, the masses of the population would not be confined or directly exploited through plantation labor. They preferred small farms, a trading job at the country market, or even domestic servitude over the slave-like labor of the sugar estate. The fall of the northern kingdom of Henry Christophe in 1819

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represented the last gasp of the early Haitian sugar economy. With the end of the plantation system, the Haitian elite was forced to earn its profits indirectly, by taxing coffee, dyewood, and any other commodity from which it could skim revenue. Once again, Domar seems to have unwittingly described the social order that congealed out of the Haitian Revolution, writing that “a non-working class of servitors or others could be supported by the government out of taxes levied (directly or indirectly) on the peasants, but it could not support itself from land rents.”²⁴

A HISTORY OF SOCIAL IMPASSE

The Haitian Revolution of 1791–1804 has attracted the attention of scores of scholars curious about the Atlantic world, democracy, race, and the early modern “Age of Revolutions,” but very few have studied Haiti’s subsequent history. When I first endeavored to study Haitian history, I noticed a marked asymmetry between the wealth of scholarly production concerning the revolution and the near absence of scholarship concerning the subsequent decades. Both at the level of individual texts and within the historical literature as a whole, it seemed as if the lights somehow went out with the end of colonial rule in 1804. I approached this question with an open mind. At first I was willing to believe that the state of the scholarship might mainly reflect an actual void in the historical record. Perhaps people were right to claim that there were few or no sources from early nineteenth-century Haiti. Why would anyone expect to find extensive documentary records from a largely illiterate, impoverished, and war-torn society?

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Maybe the few documents produced in early independent Haiti had all been lost to the familiar island perils of hurricanes, floods, fires, civil unrest, willful destruction, and the incessant chewing of tropical insects. But after several years of determined research in the United States, France, and Haiti, I found enough primary material to overturn this supposition. The surviving archival records from early Haiti are certainly of a limited and partial nature, but they still shed substantial light on many previously obscure aspects of the country's early history. Even the Haitian National Archives, which I was warned would be impossible to navigate and were likely to have preserved few or no old documents, contain a collection of early state finance records dating back to 1812. In writing this book I was able to draw from a rich range of travelers' accounts, foreign government reports on Haiti, and Haitian military, judicial, and political documents. It is entirely possible that further sources from early Haiti will come to light in the future.

Satisfied that significant sources on the history of early independent Haiti have long gathered dust in European, North American, and Haitian archives, I reconsidered the possible reasons for scholarly neglect of this topic. Historians intrigued by the apparent modernity and ideological universalism of the Haitian Revolution have often neglected to delve beyond independence in 1804, mainly because the country's subsequent history does not conform to any conventional, teleological narrative of liberal-democratic modernization and institutional development.²⁵ From dispossessed French plantation owners to British and American travelers, foreign observers immediately lamented that the new nation of Haiti

represented the loss and ruin of a previously resplendent plantation economy. To the North Americans and Europeans who visited the early Haitian republic, nothing had ever looked so tragic as a crumbling sugar works being reclaimed by the jungle or a group of black people riding horses or napping rather than toiling in the sun. The American army officer David Porter conducted a secret fact-finding voyage to Haiti in 1847 and summed up the prevailing European and North American view: "Commerce is the best criterion of the advancement of a nation, and theirs is dissolving like snow under a burning sun."²⁶ Along with the violent expulsion of the white colonists, the early detractors of the Haitian Revolution decried what they understood to be the new nation's economic decline and descent into chaos. As long as historians of Haiti cluster their attentions on the colonial revolutionary period of 1791–1804 and neglect to interpret subsequent events, they leave intact the portrayal of the Haitian nineteenth century as nothing other than a case of pathological economic decline. By beginning to pay more attention to the society that emerged out of the revolution, scholars of Haiti will be able to reexamine and challenge the long-standing narrative by which Haitian independence ushered in not progress but disintegration.

Scholarly interpretations of postemancipation social relations in Haiti have suffered from attempts to force liberal-democratic and Marxist ideological categories onto the early Haitian social reality. Like a handful of other authors who anachronistically compare early Haiti's government-directed sugar economy to twentieth-century state socialism, Arthur Stinchcombe likens the caporalisme *agraire* of Louverture's

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republican regime to “war communism.”²⁷ The use of left and right to characterize the various political trends within Haiti is slightly less anachronistic than allusions to twentieth-century socialism, since these categories were emerging in Paris as the Haitian Revolution unfolded. Yet Stinchcombe’s claim that the “Haitian left was very left indeed” does not properly encapsulate the many complex dimensions of the popular politics of revolutionary Haiti.²⁸ Rather than the left-right political divide, which was literally in its historical infancy during the 1790s, the Haitian Revolution reflected a unique blend of West African political legacies, proto-anarchist patterns of armed insurrection, and a kind of rustic petty-bourgeois impulse to seek freedom through acquiring and clinging tightly to a small piece of farmland.

Gordon Lewis addresses this complex and contradictory aspect of the revolution by observing that “the Haitian note of new freedom was, after all, a combination of social conservatism and political radicalism.” He goes on to argue that “the real victors of 1804 were the new ruling class of black generals and mulatto elite; there was no socialist left-wing element in the Haitian Revolution to match the socialist movement of Babeuf in the last days of the French Revolution.”²⁹ Lewis’s analysis implies that in the absence of a proto-socialist ideology, the Haitian masses were unable to confront their new oppressors, and it overestimates the success of Haiti’s early capitalists and *caudillos*. In reality, Haiti’s fractious nineteenth-century state elites were repeatedly unable to constitute themselves as a stable or effective ruling class.

Rather than a clear victory for military strongmen and a nascent commercial elite, class conflict throughout nineteenth-

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century Haiti took the form of a lengthy political and economic stalemate. On one hand, the Haitian masses were never able to wrest control of the state or the port cities away from the often lighter-skinned elite of merchants and large landowners. On the other hand, the would-be elites were never able to achieve lasting stability or compel the population to perform plantation labor. Of the four military rulers who led Haiti during the first four decades of independence, only two died a natural death, and only one died in office. King Henry Christophe, who profitably revived plantation production on the basis of forced labor, fell to his nominally republican opponents in a civil war. Presidents Alexandre Pétion and Jean-Pierre Boyer created a relatively stable regime—but only by allowing the rural population to become self-sufficient small farmers and thereby tacitly accepting the terminal decline of the plantation system. Haiti's nineteenth-century elites had neither the access to capital nor the political power to sustainably re-create the agricultural profits of the colonial period. They could neither recombine the small farms into plantations nor overturn the system of subsistence agriculture preferred by most Haitians. When the rulers instead settled on a system of appropriating agricultural surpluses indirectly through taxation, they faced the refusal and resistance of a largely autonomous peasant population with a powerful will to evade taxes of any kind.

Early Haitians favored a variety of economic activities that enabled them to reject forced labor and early forms of wage labor or sharecropping. In addition to producing food, liquor, coffee, dyewood, and mahogany, nineteenth-century Haitians independently gathered or cultivated a wide range of secondary products that they could sell to supplement the subsistence

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crops that they grew in their gardens. Like free-growing dye-wood and mahogany, many of early Haiti's lesser exports were gathered from the wild. Among these were tortoiseshell, beeswax, and *lignum vitae* lumber that Haiti exported throughout the nineteenth century. Like coffee, secondary exports, including cacao, leather, and long-staple cotton that had been produced under the lash in the days of slavery, were subsequently cultivated less intensively, in a manner more suited to Haitians' determined rejection of plantation life. The rural laborers of early Haiti consistently preferred subsistence agriculture and the independent production or gathering of marketable commodities over large-scale mono-crop cultivation, the brutal discipline of the plantation work gang, and the stark social hierarchy of the plantation system.

Although independent Haiti was and remains unfavorably enmeshed in global networks of mercantile capitalism, the Haitian Revolution resulted in the destruction of the early industrial capitalism of the plantation economy. Accordingly, Haiti's founding revolution had an anti-industrial dimension. The revolution ultimately bolstered such decidedly precapitalist economic activities as foraging, barter, and production for use at the household level. Although the Haitians could not entirely eradicate some of the economic, racial, and linguistic legacies of the colonial social hierarchy, they were able to limit the power and ambitions of postemancipation elites by almost entirely undermining the plantation economy. Unlike the colonial slave masters, postemancipation rulers failed to secure control over agricultural production. By acquiring land and the means to support themselves, if only on a very modest basis, a majority of ordinary rural Haitians

had become their own bosses. They gathered, produced, and sold commodities as they saw fit, avoided working for others when they could, and fiercely resisted all attempts to put them back into plantation work gangs. Instead of directly profiting from plantation production, the relatively small Haitian elite was confined largely to the port cities and indirectly skimmed surpluses from the labor of the rural population by taxing imports and exports.

If the Haitian Revolution has been silenced or otherwise denied its proper place in the history of modern social revolutions, it is not only because its leading participants were former slaves of African descent. It is also because the revolution's outcomes do not conform to teleological narratives of liberal-democratic nation building or of revolution as a necessary force for ushering in economic and technological progress. In today's history curricula, the Haitian Revolution is increasingly grouped in with the American and French Revolutions as part of the early modern Age of Revolutions. But Haiti's founding revolution was profoundly different, especially in the sense that it never lived up to the schema by which revolution functions as a modernizing force catalyzing technological advancement and the emergence of new, more sophisticated and efficient modes of capital accumulation. Whereas the colonial slave system involved capital-intensive, proto-industrial methods of production, nineteenth-century Haitian society became profoundly decentralized and historically averse to large enterprise. In a reversal of modernist chronologies of advancement through capital accumulation, technological innovation, and economies of scale, the nineteenth-century Haitian economy was made up of a growing patchwork of small farms that

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were far smaller, less capitalized, less technologically advanced, and less efficient than the colonial plantations.

Scholars from wealthy industrialized countries are inclined to interpret the world with habits of thought shaped by our experiences of highly capitalized market economies, and robust formal institutions that grow on the basis of wage labor, urbanization, and economies of scale. Haiti became the least capitalized, least “institutionalized,” least formally employed society in the Americas. Mintz accurately described Haiti as a society with almost no functioning formal institutions outside the system of public markets. This is not an accident or a coincidence—it reflects the nature of the social and economic struggles that emerged during the Haitian Revolution and the early Haitian civil wars.

In a society where most families produced a range of crops and products for their own use and often sold surplus goods themselves, economic specialization and economies of scale could not easily take hold. Haiti presents the provocative paradox of a society that was somehow too capitalistic for the emergence of powerful business interests. Like the small control fires set to clear out the undergrowth and stop or prevent a large conflagration, Haiti’s widespread and decentralized system of small farms and country markets undermined large-scale capitalist development by spreading the country’s limited human and economic resources especially thin, thereby preventing the emergence of a ruling class capable of building lasting or powerful institutions.

Early Haiti came to be characterized by an entrenched, self-reinforcing cycle of counterinstitutionality. All early Haitian regimes attempted to use draconian measures to force

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the populace to toil on plantations, and once they failed at this, they instead endeavored to tax them heavily without offering state services of any kind. Faced with a state that demanded everything and offered nothing (not even rudimentary public education), the populace was never socialized to believe in the legitimacy of any official or elite institutions. Rather than playing along and contributing to plantation agriculture, state building, urbanization, and institutionality, the early Haitian masses literally vanished up the mountains and into the spreading undergrowth, where they cleverly evaded taxes and created their own institutions, which were decentralized, unauthorized, and sometimes outright clandestine. In this sense, the term “runaway” is important for this book in both a literal and a figurative sense. Haitian runaways who fled the plantations of the coastal plains in order to avoid forced labor established a profoundly entrenched counterinstitutional society, which led to runaway crises of state insolvency and instability.

Rather than an unmitigated victory for either side, nineteenth-century Haiti’s enduring class conflict offered advantages for both the narrow elite and the rural masses and is best understood as a kind of prolonged, complex stalemate or war of positions. Although the masses created their own counterelite cultures of land acquisition, autonomous production, and tax evasion, Haiti’s social order also helped the elite to preserve a stranglehold on the surplus wealth that they obtained through their monopoly on state power and commerce. By denying the rural masses any hope of formal education and confining them to the rustic freedom of decentralized crop production and marketeering, the elite jealously guarded the

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foreign trade and state revenue that represented the well-spring of their privilege. By monopolizing state revenue and foreign trade and conspiring to deny the masses access to the country's limited financial wealth, the narrow elite could take great advantage of Haiti's cheap and abundant supply of agricultural products and domestic labor. Bourgeois Haitians never remotely approached the creation of any meaningful infrastructure or industry, but they took endless advantage of their position in the local economy by enjoying abundant access to locally produced goods, lightly taxed foreign luxuries, and cheap domestic servants. With richly laden tables, Bordeaux wines, fine silks, jewels, the latest novels from Paris, and an easy supply of maids, servants, and lackeys, well-placed members of the outward-looking, nineteenth-century Haitian elite could enjoy most of the comforts and social distinctions relished by European aristocrats.

But even as the Haitian elite could enjoy special privileges by lording over the state and foreign commerce, the ever-present threat of upheaval posed by a restive and independent-minded populace meant that the outward-looking upper classes did not generally reinvest their money in Haiti. The narrow circles of elite Haitians who accumulated significant wealth as a result of their access to commercial profits or state revenues generally kept one foot outside the country, as they continue to do to this day. Haitian commercial and state fortunes were repeatedly squirreled away in British, French, German, or American banks. According to David Porter, President Jean-Pierre Boyer kept his personal fortune with the Bank of England.³⁰ This book uses mainly the lens of marronage to interpret the survival strategies of Haiti's poor masses; a parallel

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theory of bourgeois marronage helps explain tax evasion and economic secrecy on the part of the wealthy Haitians. Haiti's particular history of irregular class conflict and social division created counterinstitutional practices among both the masses and the elite.

Along with frequent periods of political instability and the decommodification of land, the expatriation of Haitian fortunes contributed to a self-reinforcing cycle of counterinstitutionality. Haitian wealth was repeatedly siphoned out of the country instead of being invested in anything resembling local industry or a national educational system. Denied any possibility of education or upward mobility through formal employment, the Haitian masses saw no reason to enrich their rulers, and they further starved the state of any possible resources for institutional development by systematically avoiding taxes whenever possible. By jealously cornering commercial profits and tax revenues, the narrow commercial elite ensured the enmity of the masses, who every so often started rural uprisings and frequently helped to overthrow the government by joining the rebel armies that periodically descended on the capital to install a new military strongman. This endemic instability gave the elite still more reason to store their wealth abroad or squander it on imported luxuries. Whereas a more "responsible" or far-sighted ruling class might have established educational institutions and fostered a corps of dutiful career politicians and bureaucrats, the nineteenth-century Haitian elite generally lived by the simple maxim of "take the money and run." This cycle of kleptocracy, upheaval, ouster, and exile has been rinsed and repeated so often as to have extended well into the realm of farce.

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A basic social compromise undergirding many of the world's relatively stable state systems seems to go something like this: the masses grudgingly accept taxation, social hierarchy, and elite corruption in exchange for social stability and the possibility that their children might advance through a state-supported educational system. Because Haiti's elite never seriously endeavored to offer schooling to the children of the masses, whom they disdained and literally referred to as *moun andeyò*, or "outsiders," Haiti developed an especially stark form of class division and a discordant pattern of endemic social impasse.

It is widely known that King Henry Christophe imported English schoolmasters and began to create an educational system, but only a small minority of his serf-like subjects ever entered school, and his schools mostly disappeared following the collapse of his kingdom. For their part, the republican authorities funded some schools, and in 1817 they established the Lycée Haïtien at Port-au-Prince, dedicated to providing a "liberal and patriotic" education. But for the upper classes, a narrow and exclusionary school system served a cynical purpose. Even though the school was state-run, the impossibly expensive tuition and fees (including steep charges for paper, ink, uniforms, and laundry service) far outstripped the means of any but the country's richest families.³¹ Denied formal schooling, the Haitian people found expression of their intellectual life largely through the country's oral tradition and popular religious practice. They developed a rich system of aphorisms as well as a lively religious life involving the memorization of a complex liturgy, the tracing of intricate visual symbols, and the creation of sophisticated societies of initiates. Yet none of these remarkable cultural systems received

the slightest attention or respect from the country's elite or from foreigners until the 1930s at the earliest. The Haitian rulers were content in their knowledge that as long as the masses were illiterate, spoke only Kreyòl, and clung to the remote mountaintops in order to distance themselves from the repressive and exploitative hand of the state, they would not challenge the established upper-class monopolies on foreign commerce and government office.

No literate contemporaries of the Haitian Revolution saw any reason to celebrate the division of plantation lands and the rise of a new class of small Haitian landowners. Colonial French officials, early Haitian rulers, and foreign observers all decried these new *minifundios*, which they generally saw as a primitive step down from the export-oriented, monocrop plantations that characterized colonial Saint-Domingue. Haitian governments that took their revenue almost entirely from export duties on tropical cash crops and import duties on foreign goods had no interest in overseeing the rise of a largely self-sufficient landed peasantry. Neither did the European and North American merchants who carried most of the island's commerce. To the extent that early Haitians produced their own food and household goods, the fruits of their labor escaped taxation and profit taking at Haitian customshouses and in the metropolitan port cities of France, Germany, Britain, and the United States.

An increasing number of scholars have analyzed the Haitian Revolution as a formative moment in the modern development of human-rights discourse and racial ideology; I contend that the revolution also represented one of history's most successful acts of industrial sabotage. The field slaves of Saint-Domingue

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were the true “econocides” of the early modern Caribbean.³² The former slaves repeatedly decided that their fortunes were inversely tied to the success of the plantation system. Every regime that attempted to restore order and revive plantation production in western Hispaniola confronted a population with little reason to believe that an export-oriented sugar system could ever represent a mutually beneficial project for national economic development. Former slaves experienced unprecedented opportunities for freedom of movement and social mobility through military service and property ownership precisely because they had destroyed the sugar plantations and sent their former masters running. The sugar economy was doomed once field laborers learned that their lives could improve if they set fire to the cane, mills, refineries, and slave quarters. Like the initial slave rebellion of August 1791, the wave of rural insurrections in the summer of 1802 was characterized by widespread arson directed against plantation buildings. After plantations had been burned, looted, and sacked, remaining irrigation works and stone structures deteriorated quickly, and the former cane fields were swallowed up by the undergrowth.

Just as the Haitian Revolution has been interpreted in contrast to other New World slave uprisings, perhaps it should also be considered with regard to other, less successful movements against industrial technology. In early nineteenth-century England, popular opposition to industrial innovation sometimes culminated in campaigns of destruction. Most famous among these were the struggles waged in 1811 and 1812 by the Luddite croppers of northern England, who smashed looms and laid siege to several textile mills in West Yorkshire.³³ During the Swing Riots of 1830, agricultural laborers throughout south-

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eastern England protested hunger, unemployment, and the enclosure of common lands by smashing threshing machines.³⁴ Luddism and the Swing Riots were responses to new industrial technology that rendered traditional occupations obsolete. By destroying looms or threshing machines, desperate laborers attempted to preserve what had become technologically outmoded, traditional relations of production. By contrast, Haitian field laborers who burned cane fields, mills, slave quarters, and other plantation buildings were not trying to preserve their previous position. In Haiti, the sugar industry did not develop atop centuries of continuous aristocratic rule, craft guilds, and local tradition. Rather than demanding to stay employed in the sugar industry or opposing some particular innovation within it, the former slaves were turning their backs on the plantations for good and even wiping them off the landscape. The Haitian Revolution succeeded because the former slaves were able to create a system of property ownership and labor organization that was new but also rooted in West African economic and cultural lifeways, as well as the system of semiautonomous provision gardens cultivated by slaves in the colonial era. In place of the sugar economy and its deadly marriage of slave labor and industrial agriculture, former slaves built an economy that was completely nonindustrial, and a labor system based on decentralized and autonomous production.

CHAPTER DIVISION

The next five chapters generally proceed in chronological order. Although readers may already be familiar with the events of the Haitian Revolution, chapter 2 sets up the argument of

the book by examining the origins of what I call postemancipation marronage in the period from 1791 to 1804. Chapter 3 explores the various schemes of forced labor that emerged alongside the formal emancipation of the Haitian Revolutionary period. It pays particular attention to the repressive extremes that Jean-Jacques Dessalines undertook as head of state in order to reestablish plantation production during his brief rule from 1804 to 1806.³⁵ This chapter focuses on the intense efforts of Dessalines and his second-in-command, General Henry Christophe, to maintain a system of plantation labor, as well as the monumental military construction projects that they undertook following independence. Drawing from the wider scholarship on postemancipation societies, the chapter considers the systems of legal confinement and the repressive measures by which Dessalines attempted to resuscitate the island's plantation economy. The few recent scholarly studies of the Dessalines regime have been largely state-centric and based on Dessalines's official pronouncements and foreign diplomatic correspondence. By focusing instead on Dessalines's draconian attempts to confine former slaves to state-administered sugar plantations, I discuss questions of flight, clandestinity, and the emergence of runaway communities. Although it is tempting to dwell on the grandiose state proclamations, military fortifications, and bombastic heraldry of Haiti's early tyrants, I attempt to identify the intractable, underlying social fissures that prevented the creation of the powerful, monolithic, and economically rationalized nation-state that Dessalines and his successor, Christophe, endeavored to construct.

Following the assassination of Dessalines in 1806, the country was divided between the southern Haitian republic at

Port-au-Prince, led by President Alexandre Pétion, and what would eventually become the northern Kingdom of Haiti under King Henry Christophe.³⁶ For fifteen years after independence, early Haiti was destabilized by insurrectionary intrigues and multilateral conflicts between competing regimes. At one point in 1811, the territory of Haiti was divided among four different military rulers. Chapter 4 explores the civil wars, insurrectionary scares, and patterns of evasive popular resistance that characterized the country during this period. This chapter endeavors to explain the apparent paradox of the eventual triumph of the cash-strapped Haitian republic over Christophe's wealthier kingdom. Scholars of Haiti have carefully reconstructed the complicated conflicts of the revolution of 1791–1804, but no such comprehensive narrative has yet emerged around the civil wars that defined Haitian political life from 1804 through the final unification of Haiti under President Boyer in 1820. With warfare and marronage as with postemancipation labor systems, a robust scholarly literature concerning the revolutionary period gives way to near silence with regard to the era of independence. In addition to providing a brief narrative of the Haitian Civil War, chapter 4 makes use of early Haitian military sources, foreign travel narratives, and Haitian ethnography in order to reconstruct the ways in which former slaves fled, subverted, and undermined the postemancipation plantation order. The experiences of plantation runaways, and the rare but tantalizing records concerning the emergence of unauthorized rural runaway communities and religious secret societies, drive my characterization of early Haiti as a maroon society defined by popular traditions of rural autonomy and clandestinity. Although unauthorized runaway

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settlements were repeatedly discovered and stamped out by both the monarchist and the republican authorities, chapter 4 lays the groundwork for my argument that Haitian runaways were ultimately successful in their prolonged war of attrition against the plantation order and that state-directed land-reform projects corresponded to a tacit official acceptance of their unique system of independent farms.

In chapter 5 I expand my analysis of the early Haitian civil wars and the triumph of Haiti's southern republic by analyzing the novel pattern of landownership that emerged in rural Haiti. I present my argument that farmland in the new country was so abundant and accessible that it ceased to function as a commodity and became akin to what economists refer to as a "free good." Since even the poorest of Haitian laborers could carve their own farms out of uncultivated jungle hillsides, early Haiti's informal and decentralized system of land tenure enabled most nineteenth-century Haitians to rely on subsistence agriculture and the rural market economy as a preferable alternative to any form of sharecropping, wage labor, or other formal employment. Chapter 6 departs from the roughly chronological organization of the previous chapters by addressing the theme of agricultural production and the Haitian rural economy throughout the revolutionary period and the early nineteenth century. The chapter explores the new ways in which Haitian farmers avoided subservient labor by producing crops for domestic use and by extracting cash crops from the landscape. In an effort to breathe life into the seemingly dry customs records of the early Haitian republic, I have sought clues concerning rural lifeways amid documents recording exports of coffee, dyewoods, mahogany, and tortoiseshell.

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In this book I have attempted to reconstruct the actions and outlooks of illiterate rural farmers despite the fact that much of my archival evidence is drawn from official state documents of one sort or another. Like other scholars, I make reference to Haitian law and the pronouncements and correspondence of Haitian rulers. Ordinary farmers appear almost exclusively in state sources at either the point of repression or the point of taxation. Early rulers interacted with the masses of former slaves in the most draconian of ways: often rounding people up and sending them to plantations, forcibly displacing them by razing and destroying unauthorized settlements, arresting them for economic crimes such as vagabondage, and sometimes even for ideological crimes such as speaking against the state, selling charms, or conducting religious ceremonies. Other than as victims of state repression, ordinary Haitians enter the state archives indirectly as the producers and gatherers of the all-important cash crops from which the Haitian state drew most of its tax revenue. In an attempt to gather together all available information on the early Haitian masses, I have drawn from scarce travelers' narratives, anthropological and ethnological sources on rural Haitian society, and Haitian state records of land reform, land prices, and agricultural production.

HAITI'S HISTORIC CRISES OF SUCCESS

Although the tens of thousands of former slaves who emerged as independent landowners were clear victors of the Haitian Revolution, this book does not intend to present an unduly idealized or romanticized account of their society. Academics

have naturally been attracted to the intellectual history of the Haitian Revolution because of the unprecedented universal application of citizenship rights to former slaves. The formal emancipation of slaves in colonial Saint-Domingue in 1793 and their inclusion as citizens of the revolutionary French Republic in 1794 represented a historic triumph of enlightenment principles over slavery, colonialism, and nascent racial ideology. Yet some scholars who celebrate the revolutionary achievements of Haiti's former slaves have tended to exaggerate the democratic and egalitarian character of early Haitian political life. Mimi Sheller claims that popular political activity in postemancipation Haiti reflected a "dynamic struggle for democratization."³⁷ Nick Nesbitt writes that the Haitian Revolution was "an affirmation of true democracy" and that Haiti became an "antimodern egalitarian society."³⁸ Perhaps in some important senses it was antimodern, but it was never egalitarian. It may be appealing to view the Haitian revolutionaries as early champions of a kind of democratic, Western liberalism, but these categories do not easily fit the social realities of early Haiti: a society characterized by *caudillismo*, marronage, and class conflict over forced labor. To be sure, ideologies of liberty, republicanism, citizenship, equality, and *résistance à l'oppression* were on the lips of the former slave insurgents, and they influenced official state discourse. But so too did such decidedly reactionary systems as empire, monarchy, and feudal aristocracy.

Doris Garraway comments that the Haitian Revolution "differs greatly from the 'nativist' paradigm of later anticolonialisms" because of its "explicit and spirited embrace of universalist political rhetorics and cultural values prevalent in

Europe.”³⁹ Indeed, the Haitian Revolution was unmistakably shaped by republican ideology and a variety of European cultural values. But so-called black Jacobinism was hardly the only trend. Although leading Haitian revolutionaries espoused such modern, liberal-democratic ideals as republican equality, thousands of insurgents and civilians simultaneously nurtured West African cultural and political practices that Eugene Genovese would have called “restorationist.” Some of the most plausible examples of West African legacies in early Haiti were of an underlying illiberal, nonmodern nature. These included militarized conceptions of monarchy, domestic servitude, and politico-religious secret societies. The empire of Dessalines and the kingdom of Henry Christophe recalled both the princely lineages of West Africa and the absolutist monarchies of Europe. David Geggus’s provocative assertion that the Haitian Revolution was “authoritarian from beginning to end”⁴⁰ does not, however, sufficiently convey the radical, emancipatory politics of the revolutionary Haitian masses. The postemancipation legacy of marronage encapsulates popular political practices of clandestinity and irregular forms of class struggle that were neither authoritarian nor liberal-democratic but that profoundly shaped the new nation.

Faced with oppressive rulers and denied the protection of official laws and rights, the early Haitian masses pursued land and liberty by extralegal means. Some academics are inclined to associate the term “democracy” with the struggles for freedom by the early Haitians, but the strategies and systems that they devised to avoid postemancipation confinement and exploitation do not easily map onto liberal-democratic discourses of legal rights or participatory politics. Rather than

struggling to express their collective aspirations through participating in nascent public institutions, early Haitian laborers avoided the repressive reach of the state and carved out semi-autonomous rural farms and communities that partially recalled the evasive strategies of colonial-era maroons. Rather than toiling for an enlightened, patriotic bourgeoisie and helping to create a powerful new nation-state with robust institutions, the Haitian masses resisted their haughty rulers by creating a separate and parallel system of economic and cultural institutions. These included a form of extended family farm compound called the *lakou*, the bustling network of decentralized public marketplaces, and a host of African-derived religious assemblies and secret societies. The postrevolutionary decades represented a formative era for Haiti's national religion and culture. In chapter 4 I address the quasi-political and quasi-military character of Vodou temple organizations and of prominent Haitian secret societies, such as the Bizango, Sanpwel, Zobops, and Vlangbendeng. Whatever the extent of their powers, these mysterious organizations never enabled the masses to fully free themselves from an entrenched commercial elite and a series of corrupt military regimes. But they are enduring and important institutions that have survived to the present day and remain as evidence of the early Haitian masses' underlying yearning for economic and social autonomy.

Judged against the plantation slavery that persisted in the rest of the Caribbean, and even the lives of serfs or free-born peasants and laborers in early nineteenth-century Europe, the former slaves of Haiti achieved a great deal. By the 1820s, a substantial percentage and perhaps even a majority of Haitian families in all regions of the country had acquired small farm-

steads, usually between three and twenty acres. Depending on the location and characteristics of the particular parcel, as little as five acres of Haitian farmland was sufficient to provide an early Haitian family with food for domestic consumption and surplus crops for sale on the local market. In addition, many postemancipation farmers had access to stands of coffee and dyewoods, which were early Haiti's primary export commodities. Some could also harvest secondary export commodities, including hardwoods, long-staple cotton, cacao, leather, beeswax, and tortoiseshell. Instead of intensive plantation cultivation, the coffee, dyewoods, hardwoods, and animal products that the Haitian peasants harvested and sold were either the remnants of colonial-era plantations or the products of spontaneous, natural growth. By periodically extracting these commodities from the landscape and selling them to cash-crop speculators, Haitian peasants made money with which they supplemented their independent subsistence production.

Even though Haiti emerged from the revolution with a comparatively even distribution of land, the society was neither egalitarian nor democratic. All of the early Haitian governments were military dictatorships. Even as the masses rejected forced labor and the plantation economy withered away, the countryside never became a paradise of social equality. Rather than a democratic or egalitarian spirit, the early Haitian farmers arguably demonstrated a bourgeois impulse to privately ensure their freedom through property ownership. Even collectively referring to the rural Haitian population as "the peasantry" carries the danger of disregarding the range of social distinctions that emerged from the ashes of the slave system.

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Absentee landowning, sharecropping, and domestic servitude all existed in postemancipation Haiti. At the top, the rural producers were exploited and disdained by military officials, cash-crop speculators, and the small, literate commercial elite in the port cities. But the rural Haitian *lakou* system of agrarian family compounds itself contained exploitative relationships of servitude and sharecropping that partially resembled the so-called fictive kinship slavery of some West African societies. Oppressive relations of production in the rural sphere never disappeared following the fall of the plantation economy; they just became so splintered, unstable, and small-scale that they could not support significant efforts toward capital accumulation or state building.

The history of nineteenth-century Haiti demonstrates that social progress, like beauty, exists in the eye of the beholder. Excepting a few abolitionist Haiti promoters such as Thomas Clarkson, who wrote guardedly optimistic accounts of the Haitian experiment, nearly every nineteenth-century European or North American observer decried the new nation as hopelessly barbaric and backward. But for the early citizens of Haiti, their new nation offered innumerable advantages over their previous condition of enslavement. At a time when slavery persisted in all neighboring societies of the Caribbean, ordinary Haitian laborers had a chance to achieve dignity and economic independence as landowners, tradespeople, or soldiers. Under Dessalines and Christophe, thousands of Haitians still felt compelled to illegally flee forced labor. But because early Haitian governments were relatively weak and embattled, and because they relied in part on the support of formally free black citizens, plantation laborers

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had a far easier time escaping and creating their own independent communities than did fugitive slaves in the days of the French colony. By the time the country was united under the republican regime of Jean-Pierre Boyer, forced labor on the plantations had fully given way to smaller-scale systems of independent farming, sharecropping, and domestic servitude. Early Haiti never emerged from the shadow of dictatorship and poverty, but for black people in the nineteenth century, it was the closest thing to a free country that existed anywhere in the New World.

In this book I have endeavored to cast Haitian history in a positive light. But only a morbidly detached observer could ignore the ongoing dismal failure of capitalist economic development in Haiti. Multiple research visits and a prolonged residence in Haiti and Santo Domingo also inform my perspective on the country's tragic course. Haiti remains very poor by the standards of a poor region. Even a nearby country such as Jamaica that suffers from high rates of poverty, unemployment, and violent crime can at least boast of an electrical grid and tap water. I contend that Haiti's tragic and prostrate contemporary condition cannot be deciphered without a sophisticated grasp of the century of history that preceded the crises of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

If Haiti's history is judged against the ideal of liberal democracy and European or North American standards of institutionality and statecraft, the founding revolution will inevitably be portrayed as an abject failure, much as it was by the country's early nineteenth-century white detractors. The experiences of the country's former slave citizens offer another framework with which to conceptualize and evaluate the

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revolution, however: as a prolonged, collective, popular campaign of escape from the confinement of plantation labor and from the repressive hand of the state. Judged in this light, whatever the treacherous and corrupt nature of the country's weak official institutions, the rise of partially autonomous rural communities in nineteenth-century Haiti represented an unprecedented triumph for former slaves and their descendants.

CHAPTER TWO

The Revolutionary Period, 1791–1804

IT may seem paradoxical that history's most successful slave rebellion should have occurred in the most profitable plantation colony of the eighteenth century—that the chain of early modern Atlantic slavery somehow broke at its strongest link and that one of the richest colonial elites in history failed to police and preserve its lucrative system of production. Saint-Domingue was the most profitable and economically dynamic European colony of the late eighteenth century. From 1784 through the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution in 1791, learned colonists at Le Cap convened an academic society called the Cercle des Philadelphes. In 1784, members of this society participated in the first-ever hot-air balloon flight in the Americas. In 1786, a French colonist imported a very early coal-powered steam engine with which he attempted to pump floodwater in order to irrigate his plantation. Yet it was precisely the rapid growth and extreme profitability of the Domingan slave plantations that made for explosive social relations. The booming Caribbean

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sugar plantations of the eighteenth century were so profitable that the masters found it economical to work their field slaves to death. No sugar colony was more profitable or more deadly than French Saint-Domingue. Even as the price of slaves rose through the eighteenth century, Domingan planters were making so much money from sugar that they preferred to purchase newly imported slaves in order to replace the roughly 5 to 10 percent of the labor force that might die in a given year. The motivations, successes, and failures of the Haitian revolutionaries must be judged in light of this fact. Their decisions to take up arms and destroy the plantation system grew out of working conditions, privations, and cruelties that not only offered no prosperity or social mobility but also threatened their short-term survival. Relentlessly exploited, humiliated, and controlled by force, the participants in the 1791 slave uprising were fighting for survival as they turned the violence of slavery back on their owners.¹

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the land that is now Haiti was far and away the most profitable European colony in the world. Officially protected by the Bourbon mercantilist law known as the *exclusif*, fabulously lucrative shiploads of sugar and coffee were carried to Bordeaux and Nantes by French traders and resold throughout Europe at a great markup. Unknowable quantities were also smuggled out by American, British, and Dutch merchants.

The sugar plantations of colonial Saint-Domingue were some of the most heavily capitalized, largest, and most profitable industrial enterprises of the early modern era. In the eighteenth century, Caribbean plantation colonies such as Saint-Domingue and Jamaica were among the most modern

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societies in the world in that they were designed entirely for the mass production of commodities destined for the world market. In turn, the intensive production of these commodities so dominated the colonial economy that many of the most basic factors of production and articles of subsistence had to be imported. Slaves forcibly imported from Africa were fed meager rations of grain, salted meat, and fish imported from Europe or North America. The slaves wielded machetes forged in Europe and wore rags woven in Europe. After it had been planted, cultivated, cut, transported, ground, refined, and crystalized according to a capital-intensive, technically sophisticated, and time-sensitive process, Dominican sugar was exported by licensed French traders or foreign smugglers and resold throughout Europe and North America. Whatever the presumed definitional distinctions between the free labor of industrial capitalism and the premodern bondage of chattel slavery, the early modern Caribbean sugar industry was a historic marriage of capitalism and slavery.²

As sugar and coffee profits fueled increased slave imports, eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue imported a growing majority of African-born slaves. According to the eighteenth-century scholar Moreau de Saint-Méry, whose writings provide many of the most detailed firsthand descriptions of the colony, in 1790 Saint-Domingue's population was made up of 40,000 whites, 28,000 free people of color, and 452,000 slaves.³ Since many slaves had been smuggled in illegally, there were surely more. As Laurent Dubois points out, on the eve of the revolution, roughly two-thirds of the slaves had not been born on the island, such that the majority of people in the colony were African-born captives who had survived the

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middle passage. As the most productive and most profitable eighteenth-century Caribbean sugar colony, Saint-Domingue was importing as many as 40,000 slaves a year by the 1780s. Slave ships frequently carried the captive veterans of African wars. In the case of Saint-Domingue, a large percentage of slaves were veterans of wars in the Congo. Early insurrectionary leaders reminded the French authorities that their soldiers were mostly Africans “who in their own country were accustomed to fighting wars.”⁴ In revolutionary Saint-Domingue, thousands of African military veterans found that they had a risky but realistic chance to fight for their freedom.

Although a majority of the slaves in Saint-Domingue were from the Congo and a great many more were from the Bight of Benin, there were captives from nearly all coastal slave-trading areas of West Africa. The colonial ethnographer Moreau de Saint-Méry mentions Senegalese, Wolof, Bambara, Bissagos, Mandinka, Foula, Arada, Mina, Ibo, Nago, Congolese, Mondongue, and many other ethnic and geographical classifications. Slaves from the Congo represented the largest single group. Christina Mobley’s linguistically grounded research establishes that a preponderance of so-called kongos came specifically from the Loango coast and the Mayombe rainforest.⁵ Many of the captives from the Senegambia region were Muslims. The father of the revolutionary leader Toussaint Louverture was from the Arada people. Louverture spoke the Arada language. Slaves shipped from ports such as Wydah and Dahomey in the Bight of Benin were especially influential in the development of the Haitian Vodou cosmology, but the religion draws from many different West African deities and traditions. Even small groups of Africans would become influ-

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ential in the course of the revolution and in Haiti's subsequent history. Slaves from the Bissagos Islands off Guinea Bissau, who arrived in Saint-Domingue "very rarely," would eventually found one of Haiti's most notorious and successful maroon secret societies: the Bizango.⁶

Saint-Domingue was a volatile society in large part because its residents did not generally share a common culture, language, religion, or long-standing cohesive social institutions. Under an economic system that treated the majority of laborers as fully expendable factors of production, domestic population growth was negligible except among the free people of color—a social category whose existence unsettled the white colonial elite. Whereas North American plantations producing tobacco, rice, indigo, or cotton usually exploited their slaves less intensively and relied on the slow historical emergence of paternalistic social ties to attenuate and manage the underlying conflict between masters and slaves, Dominican sugar planters made more recourse to naked force and were content to literally work their slaves to death. This plantation system was so deadly, and so dependent on fresh slave imports and raw coercion, that once it was broken apart by the violence of insurrection it was impossible to reconstruct.

In addition to demographics, the same geography and climate that had made sugar and coffee plantations so profitable could also favor runaways and insurgents. Hispaniola is the most mountainous island in the Caribbean. The western part of the island, the part that makes up present-day Haiti, is the more rugged side. The same hillsides that had produced half of the coffee consumed in the Western world gave refuge to runaways and rebels. Even as the plantation buildings and

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cane fields were burned and ruined in the revolution, the hillside coffee trees continued to bear fruit. Insurgents were able to acquire essential arms and provisions by trading coffee to foreign merchants. After the cane fields had been destroyed, former slaves had the chance to feed themselves by cultivating a great range and abundance of food crops in the island's fertile soil. Those who fled to the interior could build homes and produce food on lands that had been uninhabited since the time of the Spanish conquest. Though their liberty was repeatedly threatened by foreign invaders, the former slaves of Haiti could also count the island's climate and ecology as powerful protectors. Britain and France both lost tens of thousands of soldiers in their failed bids to conquer the former slaves of Saint-Domingue.⁷ Many of these Europeans were killed on the battlefield, but many more succumbed to mosquito-borne diseases. Most died of yellow fever, against which most African- and Caribbean-born people had acquired childhood immunity.⁸

Not coincidentally, the Haitian Revolution took place during one of the more turbulent and violent decades in European history. By 1789, the political ferment of the French Revolution had reached Saint-Domingue. In addition to dangerous talk of liberty and rights, the political turmoil that accompanied the news of the French Revolution created divisions within and among poor whites, aristocratic white planters, and free people of color. Surrounded by half a million slaves, the free residents of Saint-Domingue thought of how they might extend their liberties as a result of the revolution in the metropole. In the spring of 1790, white planters convened a colonial assembly, where they demanded increased

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legislative autonomy for the colony and relaxed trading restrictions.

Before the outbreak of the slave uprising, the news of the French Revolution unleashed bitter political conflicts among the free residents of Saint-Domingue. Leading men among the free people of color, many of whom were slave owners themselves, demanded full legal and political equality with the island's white citizens. Free people of color such as Julien Raimond and Vincent Ogé collaborated with early French abolitionists such as the Abbé Grégoire, and they campaigned to overturn the "aristocracy of the skin."⁹ Emboldened by the French Revolution and unsatisfied with the barriers to official reform, Ogé raised an armed rebellion of free people of color in the fall of 1790. Defeated by the white colonial authorities, he was broken on the wheel. Most of the wealthy white planters who met in Paris in the Club Massiac opposed extending political rights to free people of color out of fear that any erosion of racial privilege threatened the entire slave system. Profoundly resentful of free mixed-race people, some of whom were educated and prosperous landowners, the island's poor whites, or *petits blancs*, violently opposed racial equality. Thousands of *petits blancs* responded to the news of the French Revolution by donning cockades and joining political clubs, and the free people of color were frequently the targets of their politicized anger.

For two years, while the island's free people argued and fought over the limits and meanings of liberty and equality, most of the slaves toiled on. Yet their apparent docility only served to create false confidence among their owners. Once the slaves took up arms, the stakes of the conflict changed

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completely. Where different sectors of the free population had previously fought to determine who would enjoy which privileges within the colonial plantation economy, they were now fighting to defend the very existence of that system itself. As C. L. R. James points out, only the specter of slave rebellion and the total destruction of the plantation order brought about a cross-racial alliance of property owners.¹⁰ But by the time the white planters became willing to surrender racial prejudice in defense of their property, it was already too late.

1791

Scholarly controversy still surrounds the August 1791 slave rebellion that broke out on the Plaine du Nord outside Saint-Domingue's northern port of Le Cap. Contemporaries of the rebellion created the theory that the uprising was fomented by monarchist counterrevolutionaries. A more coherent retelling casts the autonomous planning and execution of the 1791 rebellion as the founding moment for the Haitian people and the beginning of a successful war against slavery. Based partially on contemporary testimony and partially on subsequent literary elaboration, a popular narrative emerged of a religious ceremony held at a place called Bois Caïman, where slaves made a sacred oath to destroy the masters and their system.¹¹

The most prominent military leader of the initial August 1791 uprising was called Boukman Dutty. A slave who had probably been illegally smuggled into the colony from Jamaica, Boukman led the explosive campaign of destruction that broke out in earnest on August 21, 1791. Historians will probably never know for sure whether Boukman, identified in

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some sources as a Vodou priest, was a rare literate slave (a “book-man”), or even a Muslim, as at least one scholar speculates.¹² Boukman was killed in battle in November 1791. Among the surviving rebel leaders were Jean-François and Georges Biassou, whose armed bands eventually included the future heads of state Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Henry Christophe.

As the general insurrection of August 1791 broke out, one of the earliest confrontations took place on a plantation called La Gosette, a sugar plantation owned by the Marquis de Gallifet. Before the 1791 rebellion, Gallifet was one of the richest plantation owners in the Americas. He owned three sugar plantations and two coffee plantations. Before the slave insurrection, Gallifet had a total of 915 slaves on his five plantations. Before 1791, annual revenues for the Gallifet properties were as high as three hundred thousand *livres tournois*.¹³ Sugar and coffee planting were by far some of the most profitable enterprises in the eighteenth-century Atlantic economy. But when the revolution abruptly engulfed the Gallifet estates in violence and arson, the sugar production and the profits came to a halt.¹⁴

Long after the revolution, the Marquis de Gallifet maintained that the slaves on his plantations had been content and exceptionally well treated. Nonetheless, his plantations were among the first to go up in flames. Slave insurgents attacked overseers, plantation managers, planters, sugar refiners, and members of the colonial military. Determined to destroy the slave economy, they burned cane fields and plantation buildings. At La Gosette, three to four hundred insurrectionaries armed with machetes, pikes, and a few firearms killed the senior manager of the Gallifet plantations. Another European

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manager, named Mossut, narrowly escaped on horseback with the assistance of a house slave. Mossut made it to the safety of French-controlled Le Cap, from which he continuously monitored the condition of his boss's plantations amid the turmoil of the revolution. Mossut initially declared that the slave rebels did not have the "*combinaison d'idées nécessaires*" to succeed with their uprising. As the colonists would observe over the next decade, however, the former slaves had ideas enough to surpass ancient Spartacus himself as they turned the entire society of colonial Saint-Domingue upside down.

Nearly a month after the outbreak of the August 1791 slave insurrection, Mossut took a telescope and climbed the tallest hill in the French-controlled territory near Le Cap. From his lookout, Mossut observed the three Gallifet sugar plantations located on the plain below. He noted that the cane fields had been burned in the initial uprising.¹⁵ By 1792, he had been able to visit all three of the Gallifet sugar plantations and closely assess the damage from the initial wave of uprisings. In each case the rebels had burned down the slave quarters and the bagasse huts—usually some of the flimsiest and most easily combustible structures on the plantation. At the largest Gallifet plantation, however, the slaves' campaign of destruction had already advanced beyond the wood and thatch huts and the cane fields themselves. There, by 1792 the rebels had burned down the sugar mill, the big house, the kitchen, and the stables.¹⁶ From the earliest days of the Saint-Domingue insurrection, former slaves burned and destroyed the costly installations and machinery that the sugar plantations needed to run.

Despite the rebels' early campaign of destruction, Mossut anticipated that the French colonial authorities would crush

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the slave insurrection and that the Gallifet family would be able to reclaim its damaged plantations and put them back into production. Vowing to be one of the first managers to return to the plain and reclaim his boss's plantations, Mossut prepared for the task of restoring the damaged estates to productivity. Following his first visit to the estates in 1792, he was guardedly optimistic about the chances for bringing back order and profitability. He noticed that cane fields that had been burned in the initial uprising had grown back on their own and were ready to be harvested. Assuming that the French officials could successfully negotiate a settlement with the insurgent leaders, he believed that the Gallifet estates could soon be back in business.¹⁷ In 1793, he estimated that Gallifet would need a loan of between three hundred thousand and six hundred thousand livres in order to bring his damaged plantations back to production. This figure represented roughly one to two years of prerevolutionary revenues from the Gallifet properties. Given the revolutionary turmoil in France, however, Mossut was not certain whether any such financing would be available.¹⁸ Had any European financiers chosen to loan money to Gallifet or any of the other Saint-Domingue planters who were scrambling to reclaim their estates from the rebels, they would have made one of the worst investments in history.

Within a week of the initial uprising, French colonists estimated that ten thousand former slaves were in arms on the northern plain.¹⁹ Within a month, roughly two hundred sugar plantations and twelve hundred coffee estates had been overtaken by the insurgents.²⁰ Apart from the armed men who were loosely organized into roving rebel bands, thousands

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more noncombatants had been suddenly freed. Once the planters, managers, and overseers had been killed or driven away and the plantations had been set alight, thousands of former slaves were on their own in a newly lawless landscape. Even those slaves who were not involved in the revolutionary conspiracy and who did not take up arms to make war on the slave owners could now decide whether to stay put or strike out on their own.

Fully two years before French authorities issued their first decree of general emancipation, freedom for the former plantation slaves meant an end to forced labor and freedom of movement. From this point on, anyone in western Hispaniola who attempted to force former slaves to work, take away their weapons, or keep them confined risked renewed violence.

The slaves on the northern plain who rose up in August 1791 began a process that would ultimately do away with the entire plantation system and the export-oriented sugar industry in western Hispaniola. By laying waste to the plantation infrastructure, they were not simply putting the colonial sugar planters out of business, they were physically disabling and removing the material means of their oppression and confinement.

FROM INSURGENTS TO OFFICERS

Many newly freed slaves traveled eastward toward the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo. By doing so they passed into sparsely populated border territory, where the French troops were less able to pursue them and where some of them could

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trade items that they had pillaged from the plantations. Joaquín García, the governor of the poor and long-neglected Spanish colony, saw the uprising as an opportunity.

By the fall of 1791, leaders of the rebellion were in communication with the Spanish authorities and were receiving supplies from the east. The insurgent Generals Biassou and Jean-François received arms, munitions, uniforms, and supplies from the Spanish Crown, and their bands were eventually recognized as auxiliary troops of King Carlos IV.²¹ The Spanish set a precedent that would eventually contribute to the end of colonial rule in Hispaniola. Although the insurgents had begun the rebellion on their own, the weapons, supplies, and commissions that European empires offered to former-slave combatants contributed to both the legal abolition of slavery and the rise of a powerful former-slave military elite.

Although they had risen to power by leading rebel slaves, Generals Biassou and Jean-François did not initially intend to abolish slavery.²² On some occasions these two rebel leaders raised funds by selling people into slavery in the Spanish colony.²³ By swearing loyalty to the Spanish Crown, they actually claimed to be avenging Louis XVI in their war against the French authorities.²⁴ In negotiations conducted with the new French civil commissioners in December 1791, Biassou and Jean-François offered to usher the majority of the newly freed slaves back to their plantations in exchange for a general amnesty, some improvements over the previous abuses and working conditions on the plantations, and guarantees of freedom for them and several hundred leading insurgents. Already in December 1791, only months after the initial outbreak of the Haitian Revolution, the leaders of the insurgents

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were preparing to collaborate with French colonial authorities to drive the masses of the former slaves back to the plantations. Although the new authorities were eager to negotiate peace with the slave rebels, the planters intransigently refused to deal on equal terms with men whom they still considered slaves. In any case, the rank and file refused to give up their arms or return to the plantations, and Biassou and Jean-François eventually found no reason to abandon their alliance with the Spanish.

In August 1793, the ongoing crises of interimperial warfare, internal political conflict, and slave insurrection compelled the civil commissioner Léger Félicité Sonthonax to issue the New World's first general decree of slave emancipation. For nearly two years following the August 1791 uprising, large stretches of Saint-Domingue's northern province were controlled by insurgents whose main leaders were officially officers of the Spanish Crown. Although the insurgents had failed in their initial attempt to sack the town of Le Cap in 1791, the French residents of that city had been living in a virtual state of siege since the uprising. Arriving in the fall of 1792, French civil commissioners Sonthonax and Étienne Polvorel had been appointed by the Brissotin faction in the National Assembly and were charged with the tasks of putting down the slave rebellion, extending equal rights to the free citizens of color, and restoring the colony to order and productivity. Deprived of troops, money, and supplies but determined to preserve French colonial control of Saint-Domingue, these civil commissioners eventually made the monumental decision to declare universal emancipation and thereby attract many of the former-slave combatants to the French cause.

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By the summer of 1793, Sonthonax and Polvorel found themselves in dire straits. Sensing a chance to take control of France's most profitable colony, the British Army was preparing to invade Saint-Domingue. Many French colonists supported the British, correctly guessing that their rights as slave owners were more secure under the British Crown than under the Jacobin republic. British troops invaded in September 1793 and quickly took over large expanses of plantation land in the western and southern provinces.²⁵ The Spanish, with the support of their former-slave allies, continued to threaten the French authorities from the east.

In the context of these pressures, an armed showdown with antirepublican planters and sailors in Le Cap eventually drove Sonthonax to seek an alliance with armed bands of former slaves based in the hills outside the city. In May 1793, the Domingan planter François-Thomas Galbaud arrived in the colony, established himself as governor, and openly opposed the civil commissioners as the defender of the colony's white planters. In June of that year the republican commissioners arrested Galbaud and imprisoned him on a ship in the harbor of Le Cap. Conspiring with fellow planters and antirepublican sailors, Galbaud escaped from the ship, assembled forces, and attacked the republican troops. Forced to flee the burning city, Sonthonax and Polvorel chose to offer legal recognition of freedom to all former-slave soldiers who helped them retake Le Cap for the republic. They allied with a former-slave insurgent named Pierrot, who led a band of several thousand fighters. With these newfound allies, the civil commissioners drove their opponents out of Le Cap and firmly established their power.²⁶ Pierrot was promoted to general.

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Vindicated by their initial successes, the civil commissioners concluded that general emancipation would help them attract the crucial assistance of more insurgents. At the end of August, Sonthonax declared a general emancipation in northern Saint-Domingue. Within months, this decree was extended to the southern and western provinces. In 1793, Saint-Domingue became the first New World plantation society to undergo universal slave emancipation.

Sonthonax's strategic decision to abolish slavery was ratified by the revolutionary government in Paris. In February 1794, at the most radical height of Jacobin rule, the National Convention received a delegation from Saint-Domingue, which included a former-slave delegate, Jean-Baptiste Mars Belley. On February 16, 1794, the Saint-Domingue delegation presented a decree of universal slave emancipation, which was passed unanimously and with great fanfare. The radical impulse behind Jacobin abolitionism was summed up by Committee of Public Safety member Bertrand Barère de Vieuxac, who spoke against the intrigues of Saint-Domingue colonists and said, "It is well known that the whites are the aristocrats of the colonies, while the people of color and the blacks are the patriots and that they were right to rise up against the whites."²⁷ Anticipating that the policy of slave emancipation would win tens of thousands of armed former slaves to the side of the French Republic and ruin the British invasion, Danton reportedly declared, "The English are done for."²⁸ By allying with former-slave fighters on the basis of universal emancipation, Sonthonax had gained the upper hand over his domestic opponents as well as pro-slavery Spanish and British invaders. By abolishing slavery and allying with former-slave

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fighters, however, the French colonial authorities were also empowering men who would eventually aspire to control the island and its profitable plantation economy independent of colonial oversight.

General Pierrot was only the first rebel leader to join the French cause in response to the new policy of general emancipation. Once Toussaint Louverture learned that the National Convention in Paris had decreed the abolition of slavery in all French colonies, he was soon in contact with Commissioner Sonthonax and with the French general Étienne Laveaux. In May of 1794, Louverture joined the French cause and marshaled his officers and troops against both the British invaders and his former allies Jean-François and Biassou, who were still fighting under the Spanish Crown. Louverture's volte face was a great success, and after a series of victories over the British and Spanish forces, Louverture and Laveaux ruled Saint-Domingue in the name of France.

With the advent of French emancipationism, the new regime incorporated an elite of former-slave officers that had coalesced around Toussaint Louverture. These officers included Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Henry Christophe, Charles Bélair, and Moïse Louverture. All had been born into slavery in the Caribbean, but most had risen above the ranks of the field slaves. The most well off was Toussaint Louverture, who had been a free man since the 1770s. He was literate before the revolution and had overseen a plantation and even briefly owned a slave.²⁹ The others were still slaves at the outbreak of the revolution, but as slaves, most had held somewhat privileged positions. Of these creole military leaders, Trouillot writes, "All of the rebel slaves did not come from the same

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category. Most of the leaders were former *commandeurs*, former house slaves, and former city slaves; and while they had suffered, they had not suffered in the same ways as the slaves at the bottom of the system who were treated like draft animals.”³⁰ Although this elite of former-slave officers became completely committed to legal emancipation, they aspired to keep the sugar plantations running and believed that the great majority of former slaves should remain plantation laborers.

SHARECROPPING AND CAPORALISME AGRAIRE

Following universal emancipation, the leaders of Saint-Domingue were immediately charged with the task of compelling hundreds of thousands of newly freed laborers to continue working on the plantations. It was Sonthonax who first proposed a system of sharecropping by quarters. According to this system, the plantation laborers, or *cultivateurs*, were entitled to be paid one-quarter of the revenue from the sale of a plantation’s sugar or coffee crop. Another quarter was taken by the state as a tax, and the remaining half went to the plantation owner or was to be divided between an absentee owner and a manager. As under slavery, the plantation owner was charged with providing housing, clothes, and medical care for the *cultivateurs* and providing them with food or provision grounds on which to grow their own food crops. Crucially, *cultivateurs* were not allowed to leave the plantations without permission, and those who did could be arrested as vagabonds.

Because this system of confinement to the plantations and postemancipation forced labor was enforced by the military, Haitian scholars have labeled it “caporalisme agraire.”³¹ In

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place of an elite of independent plantation owners, the French republican authorities envisioned the state and its military as the overarching guarantor and beneficiary of plantation production. Rather than being the slaves of a single plantation, the cultivateurs had an obligation to work as nominally free citizens of the French Republic. The regimes changed, but the logic of state-supervised forced labor remained the same. After independence, former-slave cultivateurs in northern Haiti were compelled to work for the empire of Dessalines and the kingdom of Christophe.

This transformation from a colony of private plantations to a militarized plantation state was partially successful. Toussaint Louverture skillfully balanced the politics of radical emancipation with repressive plantation policies and achieved economic successes that earned him the loyalty and admiration of many former slave owners. From 1794 through 1796, cash-crop exports from western Hispaniola reached a low point as the colony was convulsed by continued servile revolts, civil war, and interimperial conflicts. During those years, the average annual value of tropical commodities sold from Saint-Domingue (principally sugar and coffee, secondarily indigo and cotton) fell to less than 5 percent of the corresponding figure from 1789. In 1798, as Louverture consolidated his control over Saint-Domingue, he invited émigré white planters to return to their old plantations and resume the production of sugar and coffee. By defending the rights of landowners and enforcing a regime of compulsory labor on the plantations, he was able to considerably boost plantation output and revenues. By 1801, plantation production in Saint-Domingue had risen to no less than one-third of 1789 levels.³²

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His plantation policy brought substantial revenue to his government and earned Louverture the undying admiration of British merchants, French plantation owners, and generations of European historians. But even following the achievement of legal emancipation, he could not reconcile his policy with the former slaves' aversion to confinement and forced labor. Ongoing repression was the natural result. Haitian historian Michel Hector writes, "If the constitutive union of the nation-state was realized through the armed resistance of the *cultivateurs*, it was also constructed amid the repression of the most intransigent insurgent *cultivateurs*, repression being the sole guarantee of the hegemony of the new privileged categories in formation."³³ François Blancpain points out that slave abolition often consisted of a "simple change in vocabulary or appearance. The slave became a *cultivateur*, the maroon a vagabond, the slave driver a *conducteur de culture*, the master a proprietor or a manager. . . . [A]s for the whip, it was replaced by vines."³⁴

Toussaint Louverture's 1801 constitution set out strict laws meant to defend the "happy harmony" that had been "built upon the debris of anarchy."³⁵ Concerned over the re-emergence of insurrectionary conspiracies, Louverture outlawed nighttime meetings and ordered the arrest of anyone suspected of criminal acts of speech. His constitution declared that "all changes in residence on the part of the *cultivateurs* bring about the ruin of agriculture."³⁶ Theft of cash crops was punishable by five years in prison. Arson, conspiracy, and rebellion were all punishable by death. Prisoners who could not pay the fines necessary to get out of jail were required to take an advance from a plantation owner or other employer, to whom they were then forced to contract their labor.³⁷

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Louverture was a new kind of leader. He was the same color as the plantation laborers. He could speak to them in Kreyòl or Arada, and he assured them that as free citizens they should work hard in exchange for payment and for the benefit of the republic that guaranteed their freedom. But as Trouillot points out, the masses of Saint-Domingue were interested primarily in cultivating their own subsistence gardens. Louverture, however, was “for the plantation and against the subsistence garden, for international commerce and against internal commerce, for cash-crop production and against artisanal production.”³⁸ Slavery had been abolished, but the persistence of forced labor under Louverture engendered further marronage and servile rebellion. If nothing else, the breakdown of the colonial order enabled thousands of former slaves to escape and begin settling many mountainous and sparsely populated parts of the island. Robert Fatton speculates that “there were more maroons in many districts in 1800 than under the period of colonial slavery.”³⁹ The former slaves had not forgotten how to escape, set fire to cane fields, or take up arms. In 1795 Louverture himself received a bullet in the leg as he traveled to put down a rebellion of plantation laborers in the northern district of Marmelade.⁴⁰

In the fall of 1801, sugarcane fields on the northern plain once again went up in flames as plantation laborers launched a rebellion reminiscent of the August 1791 uprising. The insurgents briefly captured the town of Plaisance, killing more than three hundred white colonists. More than a decade after the outbreak of the revolution, laborers were still raising the standard of revolt, killing white plantation owners, and setting fire to sugar mills. The pressure of continued servile

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revolt was enough to create divisions among the new military elite of black officers who served under Louverture. General Moïse Louverture, a former slave and the nephew of Toussaint Louverture, was accused of leading the October 1801 revolt. Moïse had been one of the most trusted members of Louverture's ruling circle. But once he was convicted of leading an insurrection, he was executed along with hundreds of unnamed rebels.

Toussaint Louverture, roundly celebrated for his military prowess and his success in rebuilding the plantation economy, could not make the former slaves willingly accept a life of confinement and forced labor. Nonetheless, he was partially successful at maintaining plantation production under the new system of sharecropping and limited legal emancipation. Had there been no further foreign invasions of Saint-Domingue, perhaps Louverture would have continued to boost private and state revenues by policing the plantations. On the other hand, perhaps his regime would have been toppled by renewed servile rebellions like the one allegedly led by Moïse in October 1801. But once French invaders ousted Louverture and attempted to bring back the legal slavery of the old regime, the island's plantations once more went up in flames.

THE LECLERC EXPEDITION

The French general Victor-Emmanuel Leclerc arrived in Saint-Domingue in February 1802 with more than twenty thousand troops and secret orders from his brother-in-law Napoleon Bonaparte. The suspicions of the former slaves of

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Saint-Domingue were soon confirmed once it became clear that Leclerc had been sent to reestablish slavery.

Initially, Toussaint Louverture and his partisans put up several months of fierce resistance to the French occupiers. The man who had spent years rebuilding the plantations was now forced to readopt the familiar tactics of scorched earth in his attempts to maintain his control of the island. Well aware that tropical disease was his most powerful auxiliary in a war against European invaders, Louverture wrote to Dessalines: "As we wait for the rainy season, which will get rid of our enemies, we have no resource other than destruction and fire."⁴¹

Louverture and his military fought the French forces in a series of battles from February through May 1802. On May 6, after roughly three months of war, Louverture decided to officially lay down his arms and turn his forces over to Leclerc. Calculating that his army was short on supplies and could no longer sustain the war effort against the French, Louverture and his associates were biding their time. They correctly predicted that the French forces with their transatlantic supply lines would eventually succumb to disease and lose ground to the island's remaining rebels. By the end of May, all of his generals, including Dessalines and Christophe, followed Louverture in his decision to surrender to Leclerc. According to the terms of his surrender, Louverture was to give up his military and political office and retire to one of his plantations. His retirement lasted only a month. Fearful that Louverture was in communication with the island's rebels and that he could once again rise up against the French, Leclerc betrayed him. He was arrested in early June and sent to a cold alpine prison in France, where he died within a year.

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The French generals hoped that the surrender and elimination of Louverture would enable them to quickly pacify the colony, but many of the former slaves fought on. Despite his surrender the previous day, on May 7, 1802, one of his leading generals informed Louverture that “the soldiers nevertheless are burning to fight.”⁴² Thousands of common laborers and soldiers did not go along with Louverture’s decision to surrender, and independent armed bands of former slaves continued to seek refuge in the mountains.

As the unseasoned European army withered from tropical diseases and insurgent attacks, Leclerc was “forced to make do” with black generals and black troops, whom he ordered to disarm the plantation laborers and defeat insurgent bands.⁴³ During the summer of 1802, Dessalines, Christophe, and the other former-slave officers serving the French occupation force were engaged in a treacherous balancing act. Their official allegiance to the French military command brought them temporary security. Leclerc allowed the former-slave generals to maintain their ranks, and he offered them a chance to preserve or perhaps even add to the wealth that they had acquired under the regime of Louverture. On the other hand, as disease caused the French forces to dwindle and as rural insurrectionists grew bolder and more successful, the former-slave generals were increasingly tempted to turn on Leclerc. For Dessalines, the ultimate decision to rebel against Leclerc enabled him to take control of the growing movement against the French forces and to rule the island without French interference. Months before Dessalines’s decisive turn against the French in October of 1802, however, thousands of armed laborers were already spreading the rebellion by once again setting fire to the plantations and fleeing.

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Hesitant to declare the restoration of slavery, the French forces under Leclerc were nonetheless struggling to restore plantation production. The French occupiers were themselves aware of the parallels between their efforts and the caporalisme agraire of Toussaint Louverture. In a report prepared in June 1802 and presented to the leading officers of the French expeditionary force, a French official described the agricultural policy of Louverture. He wrote, "Toussaint was the one who best understood the spirit of the *noirs*. Consequently, he believed that only a severe regime would allow the restoration of the colony; he saw the need to replace the agricultural manpower that was lacking due to mortality, desertion, and *vagabondage*. He ordered the return of the *cultivateurs* to their respective plantations; he also recalled the children, domestic workers, as well as the individuals who had acquired small portions of land, of which he annulled the sale, and in order to constrain them to work, he used means that even the *Code Noir* had prohibited."⁴⁴

The leaders of the Leclerc expedition were struggling to copy Louverture's successful policies regarding land and labor. The French command had fought Louverture on the battlefield, and they had conspired to arrest him and deport him to his death in a French prison. They did not, however, allow their political enmity or their prejudices to prevent them from absorbing the lessons of his plantation policies. The French also relied on Louverture's former subordinates for their expertise in repressing uprisings against the plantation regime. In reference to Dessalines's service under Louverture, the French general Brunet expressed his confidence in the former-slave general by writing, "Dessalines will do everything

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to restore tranquillity, he cannot do otherwise.” In this message to Leclerc, which was written partially in cipher, Brunet added that Dessalines was “certainly not the friend of the blacks.” Brunet wrote that in this period Dessalines was doing the same thing that “he did with Toussaint”: “every time an insurrection flared up, he was the only black able to restore tranquillity.”⁴⁵

When the French minister of the marine ordered Leclerc to summarily arrest all of the black generals and send them to Europe in chains, Leclerc refused. Explaining his reliance on men such as Dessalines and Christophe, he wrote, “It would be simple enough to arrest them all the same day, but these generals serve me by stopping the continuous revolts that in certain areas have an alarming character.”⁴⁶ These continuous revolts were the expressions of the ongoing popular war against the plantation system—a war that eventually enabled the early Haitian leaders to expel the French occupiers, but that would also continue on long after independence.

ARMS, ARSON, AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

In 1802, Saint-Domingue’s surviving French planters hoped that the arrival of Leclerc’s army would mean an end to insurrection and the return of labor discipline and plantation profits. With Louverture out of the way, they anticipated that columns of European soldiers would defeat the remaining rebels and force the former slaves to return to work on the lands of their former masters. In order to achieve this goal, the French launched a campaign to disarm the cultivateurs.

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Leclerc's disarmament campaign backfired. In response to the disarmament efforts and French attempts to restore discipline to the plantations, former-slave combatants launched a widespread campaign of arson that over the course of the summer of 1802 brought about the destruction of most of the colony's remaining plantation infrastructure. Many of the estates that were restored to productivity under Louverture were burned in the uprisings against the French. And although many plantation districts in the southern and western provinces had avoided the wholesale destruction that broke out in the northern province in August of 1791, with the general uprising of 1802 the popular campaign of *koupe tèt, boule kay* (a revolutionary slogan meaning "cut heads, burn houses") reached every part of Saint-Domingue.

The cultivateurs of Saint-Domingue rebelled by concealing weapons and ammunition from the colonial authorities who came to disarm them, by encouraging fellow laborers to stop working and flee to the mountains, by killing French soldiers and plantation owners, and by setting fire to the plantations. In the village of Bainet west of Jacmel, the local laborers vowed to resist the French, claiming, "Even if we are disarmed, we will find plenty of rifles to fight with as we did at the beginning of the revolution."⁴⁷ In July 1802, rebels near the southern town of Jérémie threatened to "cut the throats of the whites and burn down the town."⁴⁸ Two months later insurgents in this same area made good on their threats and "burned down five plantations where they cut the throats of six white plantation managers."⁴⁹ In August, French forces at Jacmel captured and executed the cultivateur Azor and two unnamed associates, who had been hiding guns and ammunition in their

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plantation quarters.⁵⁰ While the French command ruthlessly executed any suspected rebels and dismissed all acts of rebellion as brigandage, isolated acts of arson and armed conflict were coalescing into a coordinated uprising against both the French military presence and the remaining plantations.⁵¹

Whereas the August 1791 uprising initially produced some limited demands for various improvements of conditions on the plantations, by the summer of 1802 the anonymous arsonists of Saint-Domingue were determined to break away from the plantation both as a space of physical confinement and as a system of property and labor relations. Rather than negotiate over the conditions of their bondage, rebellious cultivateurs envisioned a future outside the plantations. In March 1802, the former-slave officer Dieudonné warned his French superiors that he had arrested insurgents who were traveling through the mountains around Jacmel encouraging the cultivateurs to “abandon every type of work” and join their armed bands.⁵² The actions of the insurgent cultivateurs can be contrasted with the contemporaneous examples of strikes and work stoppages undertaken by urban laborers and artisans. On May 23, 1802, the employees at the military-run bakery and hospital at Port-au-Prince grew tired of waiting to receive their pay. They “refused to continue working until they were given at least some of what they were owed.”⁵³ They withdrew their labor and waited for the French military to pay up. This was not the strategy of the former plantation slaves. Instead of laying down their tools and bargaining for better conditions, insurgent cultivateurs torched what they could and took to the hills.

By the fall of 1802 the French forces had lost control of the mountainous areas of Saint-Domingue, and they were

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fighting desperately to defend the sugar plantations on the coastal plains from rebel attacks. Writing from Léogâne in September 1802, a French general reported: "The entire mountain appears to be in rebellion and the plain is in danger." By that point the French were still defending the active sugar plantations on the plains, which, "except for the ones at the foot of the mountains," were still working without interruption.⁵⁴ But as the French grew weaker and rebels in the mountains and the cultivateurs on the plains grew bolder, even the sugar plantations near the principal colonial ports began to go up in flames.

On the Cul-de-Sac plain outside of Port-au-Prince, laborers began burning and fleeing their plantations. On August 19, 1802, the sugar mill on the Santie estate was burned by "four *nègres* from the same plantation." These four escaped, but the French hanged an unnamed woman who was denounced as an accomplice in the arson.⁵⁵ Two nights earlier at the nearby Cottin plantation, the French arrested another female plantation laborer named Brule les Cayes.⁵⁶ Although the French reported nothing about this woman other than the fact that she was arrested and questioned about insurgent activity, her name itself was a revolutionary slogan that implied her participation in the insurgent campaign of destruction. In the cases of Brule les Cayes and the unnamed woman executed for burning down the sugar mill on the Santie plantation, arson allowed for a certain exception to the "masculine monopoly on arms."⁵⁷

By December 1802, a full year before the final expulsion of French troops and the Haitian Declaration of Independence, the rebel campaign of arson had already done away with most

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of the island's sugar plantations. That month a French general reported that the insurgents had already burned the entire plain of Petite Goâve, which had been one of the most productive sugar-producing areas on the island during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Dismayed at the sight of an entire region in ruins, the general wrote that it seemed as if the rebels' "projects of destruction were spreading everywhere."⁵⁸

COMMANDANT GUILLAUME AND THE ORIGINS OF HAITI'S RUNAWAY PEASANTRY

Former slaves set fire to their masters' plantations because they knew that they had an alternative to a life of forced labor and confinement. They favored growing their own crops for direct consumption and sale, either on the former plantation lands themselves or on new farms that they established in the hills. The historical antecedents to the early Haitian subsistence farms were the provision grounds on which plantation owners had allowed slaves to produce their own food crops, as well as the systems of agricultural labor that a majority of former slaves had known in West Africa. The partially autonomous nature of slave provision grounds was evident in the language of the French colonists, who referred to these gardens as "petites guinées."⁵⁹ Amid the turmoil of the revolution, as former slaves took to the mountains, the manager of the Ferronays plantation at Croix des Bouquets complained that his workers were off farming their own plots "as though they [were] in Guinea."⁶⁰ For Haiti's Vodou practitioners, an ancestral paradise called "Guinea" remains the destination for their souls in the afterlife.⁶¹

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Although the plantation provision grounds were an economically indispensable component of the sugar plantation system, this system also represented an arena of partial economic and social self-realization for slaves. Owned by planters who typically devoted as much land as possible to the cultivation of cash crops, these slave gardens almost never reached the one to three *carreaux* that represented the typical size of an early nineteenth-century Haitian subsistence farm. But years of learning to maximize the production of food crops in drastically limited circumstances made the slaves of Saint-Domingue into expert subsistence farmers, profoundly familiar with the island's soil, climate, and prevailing food crops. Paul Cheney records that Saint-Domingue colonists remarked at the secretive commerce that slaves conducted largely on the basis of the crops that they produced on their provision grounds. He also observes that slaves sometimes defied their masters by diverting precious water from irrigation channels in order to cultivate their gardens.⁶² Accordingly, the provision grounds represented a potential source of oblique resistance to the plantation order and a proto-peasant harbinger of the kinds of farms, family compounds, and rural marketplaces that the early Haitians ultimately created. Borrowing terms developed by Sidney Mintz in his region-wide studies of Caribbean rural history, the early Haitian subsistence farmers represented a "reconstituted," "runaway peasantry."⁶³

Throughout the Haitian Revolution, former slaves established small mountain farms in order to escape plantation labor. The turmoil of insurrection and warfare created openings for former plantation laborers to squat or purchase their own land. As successive state-building elites sent their militaries

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through rural communities in efforts to restart sugar production, however, they repeatedly tried to return laborers to the plantations by taking back their modest parcels. Toussaint Louverture struggled to preserve the plantation labor force by preventing former slaves from acquiring small farms. He knew full well that laborers who had the option of becoming independent proprietors would never again return to work on a plantation. Not only did he outlaw the division of large plantations and the sale of small plots of land, he retroactively annulled previous sales and transfers of small farms in order to force new proprietors back into the status of cultivateurs. In June 1801, while he commanded the southern province of Saint-Domingue under Governor-General Louverture, Desalines outlawed the sale of pieces of land of less than five carreaux, and he annulled any previous sales of small plots of land to local cultivateurs.⁶⁴ A back-and-forth struggle between elite forces hungry for plantation profits and rural laborers hungry for land characterized the revolutionary conflicts that preceded the final consolidation of the Haitian peasantry in the mid-nineteenth century.

During the summer of 1802, as the soldiers of the Leclerc expedition attempted to disarm the cultivateurs and restore discipline on the plantations, the district of Bainet in the hills west of Jacmel witnessed a prolonged conflict between colonial officials and cultivateurs over the right of the cultivateurs to live on their own small farms. In June 1802, French colonial administrators in Jacmel complained about cultivateurs in the surrounding rural districts, who, having acquired two to four carreaux of land, retreated to their properties and thus “deprived the plantations of a large number of workers.” In addi-

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tion, the French command worried that the small farms in the hills represented a growing wave of “marronage.”⁶⁵ The local military commander, Dieudonné, undertook a campaign to eject former cultivateurs from their small farms and compel them to “return to their respective plantations.” Despite the fact that small farms had been effectively outlawed by *Louverture* and were further restricted by other French colonial officials, the plantation owners around Jacmel had a hard time restoring a “spirit of submission” among “cultivateurs who were previously proprietors of three or four *carreaux* of land.”⁶⁶ A plot of land was a concrete alternative to servitude, and the former slaves of Haiti repeatedly risked their lives to defend small land claims. Colonial officials at Bainet complained that military commanders in the rural districts “no longer had the same influence over the cultivateurs, among whom the spirit of submission had totally changed.” Rather than accept a new era of forced labor under the French occupiers, the cultivateurs of Bainet “abandoned their work, and returned to the isolated lands,” where they had begun setting up independent homesteads.⁶⁷

It was at Bainet in 1802 that Commandant Guillaume, a former-slave officer in the colonial military, endorsed a radical program of land reform. During the spring and summer of 1802, the plantation owners of Bainet worked with the recently arrived officers of the Leclerc expedition to evict former slaves from their mountain refuges and force them back to work on the great estates. In the midst of this campaign, the French officers discovered that some of the former cultivateurs who had established themselves in the hills claimed that their new properties had been “authorized by permits” that

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they acquired from Commandant Guillaume for the fee of one *gourde*.⁶⁸ Guillaume understood that the former-slave cultivateurs were concerned primarily with owning and farming their own pieces of land. Unlike his superiors in the French command, who continued to annul the sale of small properties and send laborers back to the plantations, Guillaume acquired the political loyalty of the local population (along with an unknown amount of cash payoffs) by officially endorsing their property claims.

By supporting the property rights of former slaves, Commandant Guillaume drew the ire of the local plantation owners and his superior officers. In Bainet, as in most of western Hispaniola, the summer of 1802 was a period of rising political tension and violence. The fear of renewed uprisings around Bainet even compelled some of the local whites to take refuge in the surrounding forests. Guillaume was blamed for inciting the acts of “daily disobedience” that the French administration reported were occurring on one plantation after another. He issued orders against corporal punishment and forced labor and was accused by the French command of favoring blacks over whites. Fully aware that the politics of land redistribution could destroy the plantation order, the French generals quickly moved to get rid of Guillaume. Before the end of June 1802, the French authorities arrested him and packed him away on a ship leaving Jacmel. He was replaced by an officer who could be trusted to “repress the blacks as needed, and constrain them to their work.”⁶⁹ Even, however, after deploying heavy-handed repression of the plantation workforce and deporting or executing hundreds of potentially rebellious officers such as Guillaume, the French occupation forces were

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unable to eliminate the cultivateurs' persistent desire to own land. By the summer of 1802, the political conditions that gave rise to Guillaume's localized land reform movement in Bainet prevailed in many other areas of western Hispaniola. Having experienced nearly ten years of legal liberty while still frequently subjected to forced labor, the former slaves who would become the first citizens of Haiti were determined to get a piece of land and leave the plantations for good.

CHAPTER THREE

Despotism and Forced Labor: Dessalines and the State-Directed Plantation Economy

STARTING with the first general decree of emancipation in Saint-Domingue in August 1793, the island's rulers struggled to reconcile the legal abolition of slavery with the continuation of the plantation system. After the expulsion of the French brought the Haitian Declaration of Independence in 1804, the fractious military elite remained committed to creating an economy based on forced labor. From the 1790s through the 1840s, regimes rose and fell. European empires invaded and were driven out. Military leaders of all colors led uprisings, created governments, and waged civil wars. From radical Jacobin republicanism to the feudalism of King Henry Christophe's heraldic nobility, the former slaves who survived the Haitian Revolution were exposed and subjected to nearly all of the political ideologies and state forms that the early modern Atlantic world had to offer. But one thing that all postemancipation states had in common was their commitment to securing revenue through the export of sugar, coffee,

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and secondary plantation crops, such as cotton and cacao. For as much as they pronounced against slavery, the governors of postemancipation Saint-Domingue and the early Haitian leaders worked to organize their economy in ways that mirrored the old order.

Every Haitian constitution began by affirming that there were not and could never be any slaves in Haiti. Instead, the majority of the citizens of postemancipation Saint-Domingue and early Haiti were categorized by the state as “cultivateurs.” In one case after another, successive regimes struggled to extract labor from the cultivateurs by keeping them confined to their designated plantations, where they were supposed to work six days a week on the production of the same cash crops that the island had exported during slavery. Committed to the survival of the sugar economy, Haiti’s early leaders attempted to make obedient plantation laborers out of a generation of former slaves who were veterans of the uprisings and military campaigns of the Haitian Revolution. Given the challenges that they faced, the limited measures of success that Haiti’s early leaders achieved in confining workers to the plantations and restarting sugar exports are perhaps more surprising than the ultimate failure of *la grande culture* in Haiti. Faced with threats of external invasion and civil war, Haitian rulers justified forced labor and the plantation system as the only means to pay for a large military apparatus. But along with building fortifications and organizing armies, Haitian military leaders used the plantation surpluses to acquire massive private estates, stores of treasure, and extravagant imported luxuries.

From 1798 to 1802, the ruling triumvirate of Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Henry Christophe

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presided over the reorganization of forced labor and sugar exports in postemancipation Saint-Domingue. Following independence, Dessalines and Christophe instituted draconian measures to confine workers to the plantations and boost cash-crop exports in northern Haiti. Postemancipation forced labor reached its most repressive and profitable extreme in the kingdom of Henry Christophe. According to the largest estimates, in 1815 Christophe's northern kingdom may have exported up to a hundred million pounds of sugar, roughly half of the reported 1789 sugar exports from the entirety of old-regime Saint-Domingue. On the basis of tight surveillance, militarized plantation agriculture, and booming sugar exports, Christophe's kingdom built up bullion reserves of eleven million Spanish pesos in silver and six million in gold.¹ More than the declaration of Haitian independence in 1804, it was the violent fall of Christophe's kingdom in 1820 that represented the swan song for the sugar plantation in western Hispaniola and the associated regime of forced labor.

Among the revolutionary veterans who became Haitian heads of state, only Alexandre Pétion, whose republican regime ruled in Port-au-Prince from 1806 through his death in 1818, officially supported the right of former slaves to move freely about the country and negotiate the terms of their employment with whichever plantation owner they chose. Freed from strict confinement to specific estates, laborers in the early Haitian republic overwhelmingly preferred to purchase or squat on small pieces of land where they could independently cultivate subsistence crops. Regretting the liberties that Pétion afforded plantation workers, his successor, Jean-Pierre Boyer, attempted to prop up flagging plantation reve-

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nues by once again attaching laborers to specific plantations and compelling them to produce under the threat of corporal punishment. Boyer's 1826 Code Rural, like Christophe's 1812 Code Henry and Louverture's 1801 constitution, legally obliged Haiti's cultivateurs to work on their respective plantations or face arrest and possible beatings. By 1826, however, the legal restrictions prescribed in Boyer's Code Rural represented a rearguard action on the part of an elite that was losing in the struggle to maintain the plantation system. Although forced labor and the plantation system survived for decades after slave emancipation and Haitian independence, these intertwined institutions ultimately perished in Haiti as a result of prolonged civil wars, armed uprisings, land reform, and the rise of subsistence production and the decentralized extraction of coffee and dyewood.

Dessalines and Christophe faced a tall task as they attempted to reorganize a plantation economy that had been attacked and torn asunder by more than a decade of insurrection, civil war, and the emergence of popular patterns of squatting. Armed squatters made investigating landownership claims and surveying agricultural property a risky proposition in revolutionary Haiti. In May 1802, a French officer named Vauthieu set off from Gonaïves on a tour of the surrounding plantations. Escorted by four dragoons, Vauthieu was charged with making a survey of the nearby estates and reporting to the French command on their production, revenues, population, and topography. Locals did not all take kindly to rural fact-finding missions from the French colonial authorities. As Vauthieu and his soldiers arrived at the Morel plantation, they were invited into a house to "refresh themselves." As the

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French soldiers entered the house, a trap was sprung and a group of insurgents attacked them with bayonets. Vauthieu reportedly had his head chopped off by the stroke of an axe.²

After independence, Haitian citizens were no less determined to defend their irregular land claims from state attempts to verify land titles. In September 1806, as Dessalines ordered his director general of estates Joseph Inginac to verify property titles, he made sure to provide Inginac with the “necessary means” to verify land titles. These included bayonets and guns.³ Michel Rolph Trouillot observes that “once social categories or classes begin to dispute land in Haiti, guns must surely be fired.”⁴ Throughout the Haitian Revolution, people of all classes and colors who had successfully acquired formal or informal landownership rights were repeatedly willing to use violence to defend their claims.

THE GREAT ESTATE IN EARLY HAITI

Instead of breaking up the great estates of Saint-Domingue, the military leaders of the Haitian Revolution strove to keep them intact and operational. In many cases, leading officers came to personally own some of the largest and most productive plantations. The landowning military elites of early Haiti were ambitious to become a reconstituted plantocracy. As the turmoil of insurrection and civil war disrupted the colonial class order, the leading military officers rushed to step into the shoes of planters whose land had been expropriated and who had been exiled by the revolution.

The preservation of the great sugar estates in early Haiti gave some exiled French planters hope that they might be able

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to once again profit from their former colonial properties. In the immediate aftermath of independence, Joseph Bunel, a French planter and former treasurer for Toussaint Louverture, kept his eyes on his former home and plantations in the hopes of regaining his valuable property. By working with his island-born, African-descended wife and her relatives, Bunel kept track of his former lands and attempted to maintain ownership. Dismayed upon learning that Dessalines had expropriated his two plantations near Le Cap, Bunel instructed his in-law and associate Grand-Jean to lobby the emperor to reverse the expropriations. Bunel and his wife maintained family and business contacts in northern Haiti through 1810, when Christophe denounced Bunel as a thief and conspirator and expelled him from the country.⁵ Not even the most persistent and well-connected former French landowners could keep their hands on Haitian land. Rather than inviting French planters back and striking deals with them, as Louverture had done, Dessalines, Pétion, and Christophe strove to construct their own native Haitian planter elite.

In the eyes of the Haitian military chiefs who had come of age during the height of sugar and coffee production in Saint-Domingue, large plantations represented the country's greatest potential source of riches. Although they were proud to have driven out the European planters, the leading Haitian generals still saw plantation ownership as a fundamental mark of social prestige. In one case after another, the turbulence of revolutionary violence enabled ruling factions to appropriate massive tracts of plantation lands. The French colonists who had lost their lands during the revolution raged at the fact that formerly enslaved generals such as Louverture, Dessalines,

Hyacinthe, Moïse, and Christophe had become the new owners of multiple immense sugar estates. In 1802, one colonist complained that “the apostles of Toussaint” had each come to hold the leases to forty or fifty plantations and that they had used their control of these lands to acquire “scandalous fortunes.”⁶ From the very beginning, Haiti’s rulers have consistently treated the state as a vehicle for accumulating personal wealth. With this goal in sight, the founding generals were perpetually concerned with the distribution and profitable exploitation of the plantations.

Under the military dictatorships of Louverture, Dessalines, and Christophe, lands confiscated by the state were turned into the private fiefdoms of the ruling officers. As in France, republican authorities in Saint-Domingue began confiscating properties during the 1790s. The state took over the land of émigrés and planters who had supported the invading British troops. Under Louverture, these *domaines nationaux* were leased and distributed to high-ranking officers. After independence, Dessalines organized a nationwide effort to extend state landholding by expropriating lands that had belonged to French colonists and verifying property titles held by the citizens of the new nation. Some of his nationalist admirers maintained that Dessalines was planning to widely redistribute state lands among the masses. Others have suggested that his program of expropriation was a move toward a kind of state collectivism *avant la lettre*.⁷ In reality, Dessalines was interested in placing a large percentage of Haiti’s most potentially productive plantations under state ownership and then granting or leasing these lands to his supporters and associates within the military.

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Dessalines and his successors preferred leasing out large state-owned plantations, since this system effectively enabled them to tax plantation production twice. Under Dessalines and Christophe, plantation revenues were divided four ways. The cultivateurs were legally entitled to one-quarter of the proceeds as compensation for their labor. The leaseholder, or *fermier*, was entitled to half of the revenue, which in some cases was split with a *gérant*, or manager. The remaining quarter of the revenue, called the *quart de subvention*, was collected by the state. Not only did Dessalines's empire appropriate a quarter of plantation production up front, the state made considerable additional revenue from customs duties on all cash crops legally exported from Haiti's ports. Because of this lucrative double taxation, state-owned plantations were the key institution that Dessalines planned to use to raise revenue for his military state-building efforts.

Dessalines's decision to place a large proportion, if not the majority, of Haiti's best plantation lands under state ownership met vigorous opposition. Although his government had successfully nationalized and leased out many of the best plantations in the north, plantation owners in the western and southern provinces opposed the efforts of Dessalines to verify their land titles and potentially nullify their claims. Plantation owners in the south and west who feared losing their properties resisted Dessalines's campaign of expropriations and contributed to his violent downfall. Some of these landowners were holding on to properties that had been in their families since the days of slavery. Others had purchased or forged their land titles amid the turbulence of the revolution. In any case, the aspiring plantation elite of southern and western Haiti

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preferred to own their estates outright rather than cultivate the political connections necessary to lease plantation land from the state and thereby surrender a quarter of initial revenue.

In the west and the south, the movement against Dessalines was led by men who favored private rather than state-owned plantations. The stated targets of Dessalines's campaign of expropriations were lands formerly owned by French colonists who had been killed or sent into exile by the revolution. Before leaving the island, however, many French planters sold or otherwise transferred their land titles to nonwhite associates. In other cases, Haitian citizens merely laid personal claim to the property of dead or exiled colonists. Shortly before his assassination, Dessalines complained that even though the French colonists were gone, not even a hundred plantations or homes had been nationalized in the entire southern province.⁸ Determined to extend the system of militarized plantation production and state landholding beyond the northern province, Dessalines toured the south in the summer of 1806 and ordered Inginac to proceed with the investigation of land titles and the expropriation of plantations. By the end of the summer, Inginac had overseen the expropriation of 562 plantations in the western province.⁹ Plantation owners in the southern province were terrified that Dessalines and Inginac would execute a similar campaign of expropriations there. This realistic fear was the main motivation for the elite conspiracy to assassinate Dessalines. When an uprising began in the south during the fall of 1806 and Dessalines rode out to put down the rebels, he was ambushed and killed north of Port-au-Prince. The assassination of Dessalines put an end to the campaign of expropriations

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and to the possibility of militarized, state-directed plantation agriculture in the southern and western provinces.

Following the fall of Dessalines and the division of Haiti into the northern kingdom and the southern republic, the two competing elites pursued contrasting agrarian policies. Both regimes attempted to foster plantation production, but only the northern kingdom under Henry Christophe was able to keep the plantation system intact and export significant quantities of sugar. In northern Haiti—the former heartland of Louverture's caporalisme agraire—Christophe continued the regime of forced labor and increased plantation production. He also attempted to preserve the great estates on the northern plain by creating a hereditary nobility. Under the republican regime of Pétion, large landowners attempted to pursue plantation production on their privately held lands. At the same time, however, that Pétion encouraged the republican elite to produce sugar and other plantation cash crops, he secured the support of his citizens by allowing laborers to move around the country freely and by not making extensive use of forced labor or corporal punishment. This relatively liberal labor policy, along with Pétion's eventual land reform, meant that the great plantations of southern Haiti were beset by an intractable labor shortage.

POPULATION LOSS AND LABOR SHORTAGE

Haiti's founding revolution brought about a disastrous decrease in population. Not since the days of the Spanish conquest had Hispaniola witnessed so much death, destruction, and disease. From the outbreak of the August 1791 slave insurrection through

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the creation of the first officially independent Haitian state in 1804, a large percentage of the island's population perished as a result of disease, conflict, and famine. Tens of thousands of free people fled the revolution in Saint-Domingue and sought refuge and resettlement elsewhere in the Caribbean, the United States, or Europe. Many of them brought slaves with them. Of the tens of thousands of French and British soldiers who participated in doomed campaigns to wrest control of Saint-Domingue, most died on the island. The years of violence and upheaval in Saint-Domingue also discouraged natural demographic growth. According to the French Royal census of 1789, Saint-Domingue had a population of roughly five hundred thousand. Deborah Jenson quotes figures from Alexander von Humboldt, who in 1803, after twelve years of revolutionary violence, estimated the population of Saint-Domingue at 348,000.¹⁰ British agent Edward Corbet, who dealt extensively with Desalines, estimated that after Haitian independence the entire country's population was as low as 150,000 to 160,000.¹¹ Both figures were little more than guesses. Although no exact figures exist for population loss in revolutionary Saint-Domingue, there is no question that the revolution resulted in the destruction of a very significant percentage of the potential laboring population in the new nation of Haiti. With no significant inward migration, Haiti's laboring population did not rebound quickly. By 1824, when Haiti published its first official census, the government reported a population of roughly 933,335. James Franklin, a British merchant who visited and sometimes resided in Haiti during the early nineteenth century, believed that the Haitian census figure was exaggerated and that the population of the country in 1824 was closer to seven hundred thousand.¹²

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The upheavals of the Haitian Revolution gave rise to an endemic labor shortage, which plagued every group that attempted to resurrect the wildly profitable plantation system of colonial Saint-Domingue. The revolution put an end to the massive importation of African slaves that had sustained the colonial economy. Even though André Rigaud and Toussaint Louverture were open to the importation of African captives to fill out the plantation labor force, neither of these leaders succeeded at bringing in significant quantities of Africans. Henry Christophe imported soldiers from West Africa whom he employed as a palace guard, but this was a small group.¹³ Roughly six thousand African Americans migrated to Haiti during the 1820s hoping to make new lives in a nation free of slavery and racial prejudice. President Jean-Pierre Boyer, whose government invited them and subsidized their passage, hoped that North American migrants might help solve the country's labor problem. Instead, confronted by high mortality rates due to disease, an unfamiliar society, and little apparent economic opportunity, most of the African American migrants to Haiti returned to the United States.¹⁴ Boyer may have entertained the possibility of bringing in laborers from India or China, but his regime never enacted such a scheme.¹⁵

Along with outright population loss, the violence and disruptions of civil war and revolution also decreased Haiti's potential agricultural workforce by pulling men into the military. European empires, insurgent bands, and rival Haitian governments were constantly enlisting and conscripting soldiers. Thousands of former slaves and nominally free agricultural laborers accepted the dangers and hardships of military service as a favorable alternative to life on the plantations. Even

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as the military drained the country's labor force, the new state authorities used the military as their primary means of enforcing their economic program. As Haiti's founding leaders worked to implement the system of caporalisme agraire, the army, along with state agricultural inspectors, rural police, and government informers, came to underwrite the authority of plantation owners, leaseholders, and managers over their legally confined workforces.

SLAVES IN THE LAND OF LIBERTY

In February 1794, the Jacobin-controlled National Convention in Paris declared the abolition of slavery throughout the French Empire. After October 1798, when Toussaint Louverture negotiated the withdrawal of British troops under General Thomas Maitland, there were no longer any people in western Hispaniola who lived in a condition of legal slavery. Slave emancipation had been officially accomplished. Nevertheless, the enshrinement of liberty as the law of the land did not end the treatment of human beings as property. Not only did forced labor on early Haitian plantations often resemble the old order, certain especially unfortunate groups in postemancipation Saint-Domingue and early independent Haiti suffered under conditions that were effectively indistinguishable from chattel slavery.

Faced with the labor shortage created by the Haitian Revolution, the rulers of postemancipation Saint-Domingue looked to import more plantation workers to the island. In his 1801 constitution, Louverture declared that the introduction of new cultivateurs was indispensable for the reestablishment

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and growth of agriculture and that he would take the necessary measures to bring in laborers. He pledged that as governor he would “assure and guarantee the respective engagements” involving the introduction of new cultivateurs.¹⁶ Nowhere did he spell out that the new laborers would come from Africa or that he would contract to purchase them from slave traders, but Carolyn Fick speculates that this was his intention.¹⁷

The French officers of the Leclerc expedition were less vague about their plans for the introduction of captive African laborers into Saint-Domingue. While they were waiting to defeat the local insurgents before officially reestablishing slavery, they had clear intentions to begin importing Africans even before overturning emancipation. As they were fiercely fighting to subdue the former slaves of Saint-Domingue, a certain Mr. Malenfant proposed a system of indenture by which plantation owners could purchase “noirs nouveaux” (new blacks) for a period of nine years. According to the Malenfant scheme, the proprietor would provide indentured laborers with clothing and a small provision ground of the sort formerly cultivated by slaves. After the conclusion of nine years of indenture, the laborers would be proclaimed free by the local judge and would then experience their newfound legal liberty while still “attached to their jobs on the plantation.”¹⁸ Still nominally committed to the abolition of slavery, the French officials of the Leclerc expedition were nonetheless planning to import captive Africans.

French plans to restart the large-scale importation of slaves were interrupted by the ongoing uprisings in Saint-Domingue and the eventual creation of independent Haiti. The small number of Africans who were actually brought to

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Saint-Domingue during the Haitian Revolution came as a result of corsair activity. During the second half of the 1790s, corsairs were armed out of French Caribbean ports and preyed on both British and American merchant vessels in the Atlantic. French corsair ships, which were often crewed by formerly enslaved sailors, sometimes captured British slave ships laden with human cargo. When corsairs brought captive slave ships into French Caribbean ports during the period of French republican slave emancipation, the captive Africans legally became free French citizens.¹⁹ But upon rescuing unfortunate Africans from the holds of slave ships, French republican authorities saw the “new citizens” as potential plantation laborers whom they desperately needed to replace those who may have taken up arms or otherwise fled the plantations in the course of the revolution.

In November 1797, after a lengthy battle on the high seas, the French corsair *Le Regulus* captured two massive English slave ships, the *Cyclops* and the *African Queen*. On board these two ships were 825 enslaved African men and women. The captain of the *Regulus* brought the Africans to the port city of Les Cayes in southern Saint-Domingue. Upon their arrival, the captives came under the authority of the ruling military governor of the southern department, General André Rigaud. Rigaud distributed the recently arrived men and women among different plantations in the region. For the next five years, many of these former slaves who had technically become free citizens of the French Republic toiled in the vicinity of Les Cayes for the benefit of plantation owners favored by Rigaud. Although the 825 survivors of the *Cyclops* and the *African Queen* were free according to the French National

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Convention's law of 16 Pluviôse, An II, the sea captain who had captured them from their English traffickers and the French officials of the Leclerc expedition treated them as human property. In July 1802, the corsair captain wrote to French colonial authorities in Les Cayes pointing out that he had not received any indemnity or payment for the 825 plantation laborers that he had delivered to the colony. He appealed to the government's sense of "equity" and requested that the 825 Africans that he took from the English be transported to work on lands that he owned in southern Saint-Domingue. A French official received the captain's petition and agreed that the plantation owner and sometime swash-buckler should reclaim the cultivateurs "from those who possess them."²⁰ Armed with state sanction, the French corsair captain began tracking down and staking his claim to the people he had captured from the English slave ships. In any case, the summer of 1802 was not an opportune time to transport forced laborers and integrate them into new plantation work gangs, as the entire colony was then experiencing a new wave of rebellions fueled by rumors that the French had come to restore slavery.

Upon declaring the independence of Haiti, the founders of the new nation stood on the principle that slavery was forever abolished. Like the French colonial regimes that immediately preceded it, however, the government of Jean-Jacques Dessalines attempted to square the rhetoric and politics of antislavery with draconian systems of forced labor. In a few exceptional cases, Dessalines's systems of forced labor turned the tables on some of the very Europeans who had enjoyed a privileged status in the colonial order. It is an oft-remembered

fact that shortly after independence in 1804, Dessalines's government organized a widespread massacre of thousands of remaining French colonists, from which only women and Polish and German survivors of the Leclerc expedition were spared. In addition to the news of the notorious massacre, a vague rumor emerged to the effect that the Haitian generals had enslaved some surviving Europeans. In February 1804, the Domingan émigré Étienne Dupuche reported to a colleague that as the Haitian military under Dessalines began constructing a network of inland fortifications, they were forcing a handful of European men to drag cannons overland and up mountains. According to Dupuche, the Haitian officers told white men, "In the past you were my master, but now I have you, you are mine." The Haitian leaders put them to work for a short period, after which they reportedly put them to death.²¹

The Haitian Revolution generated no shortage of false rumors, but Dupuche's report was probably based in fact. Dessalines's regime did strictly confine the few surviving Europeans in early Haiti, and it forced a few of them to toil in the construction of forts. As of January 1806, three German survivors of the Leclerc expedition were working on the construction of a fort in northern Haiti.²² In addition to a few hundred Polish and German soldiers who had defected during the war of independence and who were declared citizens of the new nation, Dessalines's government held as captives a very small number of French professionals whose particular skills proved necessary to the new Haitian rulers. These included doctors, clockmakers, hatmakers, tailors, printers, blacksmiths, masons, cabinetmakers, and bakers.²³ As Jeremy

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Popkin points out in his article on Dessalines's 1804 massacre, the French tailor Norbert Thoret, who wrote a rare eyewitness account of the event, survived only because of his useful trade.²⁴ French artisans were lucky to survive the civil wars and massacres of the revolution, but they were not allowed to ply their trades freely in Haiti. The military regime of Dessalines controlled their every movement. They served the rulers directly, they were forbidden to leave Haiti, and they were watched with great suspicion.

On the night of Easter Sunday in 1806, a group of six French men and women used two canoes to slip out of the harbor of Le Cap in a risky bid to flee the country. The Haitian generals feared that any refugees who made it out of Haiti would divulge military secrets to France and compromise the security of the fledgling state.²⁵ These six individuals succeeded in escaping from Dessalines's Haiti, but their flight inspired the state to clamp down. Starting in April 1806, Generals Dessalines and Christophe issued orders that reduced the few remaining Europeans in Haiti to forced laborers. On April 8, Christophe summoned nine French professionals and craftsmen to work at Milot, where he was overseeing the construction of what would eventually become the Citadel Laferrière and Sans-Souci Palace. He instructed the local commander that no Frenchman could leave the site without a written pass and a soldier to monitor and escort him.²⁶ The next day, Christophe forcibly rounded up all the Europeans still living in Le Cap. He sent them to perform forced labor in the countryside, as he put it, "under the responsibility of the military commanders who will distribute the women among the different plantations where they will be under the

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surveillance of managers and work-gang leaders, and the men among the different fortifications where they will work for the state.” In all, Christophe sent at least thirty-three European men, women, and children to plantations and military work camps, where he was confident that they would no longer represent a flight risk.²⁷ Several dozen European captives could not have made any significant dent in Haiti’s labor shortage, and their confinement represented an exceptional reversal of the racial hierarchy of New World slavery.

In their attempt to expand the workforce of the early Haitian empire, Dessalines and his generals went so far as to take captives from the east during their failed bid to conquer the entire island. Like Louverture, whose government occupied eastern Hispaniola from January 1801 through February 1802, subsequent nineteenth-century Haitian leaders believed that controlling the east was essential for securing the independence and stability of their regimes. It was Louverture’s regime that first abolished slavery in the former Spanish colony of Santo Domingo after Louverture took control of the entire island in 1801. Haitian forces under Dessalines drove the French out of western Hispaniola by the end of 1803, but French troops under General Jean-Louis Ferrand still occupied the port of Santo Domingo and the eastern part of the island, where in July 1802 they officially reestablished slavery.²⁸ In March 1805, Dessalines led an army of roughly nine thousand Haitian soldiers into the eastern part of the island. The Haitian army laid siege to the French troops at Santo Domingo for more than three weeks. The French forces were on their last legs when the arrival of French reinforcements convinced Dessalines to lift the siege in preparation for what he feared might be an

imminent French invasion of Haiti. As they retreated from the east, Dessalines ordered his troops to burn down the towns of Cotui, La Vega, and Santiago.

Having failed in their efforts to capture Santo Domingo and drive the French out of Hispaniola, the Haitian generals were at least determined not to return empty-handed. Haitian officers were ordered to gather up thousands of cattle on the ranchlands of the Cibao valley.²⁹ As the Haitian columns retreated to the west, they also brought with them more than a thousand captive men, women, and children, who were effectively enslaved and brought to Haiti to work the plantations.

The Haitian military referred to the captives from the east as “espagnols.” They were taken from their homes and forced to march as much as one hundred miles. Most were transported westward in groups numbering more than one hundred. This forced transport of captives was neither a secret nor the isolated act of rogue elements within the Haitian state. Dessalines himself inspected groups of captives and received the report that many of them had succumbed to disease and fatigue during their long journey. The espagnols were completely at the mercy of the Haitian generals, who decided when and where they marched and who provided them with rations of bananas, sweet potatoes, or cassava.³⁰

Soon after they reached Haitian territory, Christophe, Dessalines, and other leading Haitian generals began distributing the captive espagnols among the plantations of northern Haiti. On April 15, 1805, Christophe granted a plantation owner named Noisy the right to bring eleven people captured from the coastal village of Isabela to his plantation in northern Haiti. Noisy was charged with provisioning the eleven

captives with local food crops and treating them as a good “*père de famille*” (head of the family) would.³¹ The French colonists had often used these same paternalistic terms to describe the master-slave relationship. In the spring of 1805, when hundreds of prisoners from the east were being forcibly imported into northern Haiti and divided up among local plantation bosses, slavery had been legally abolished for more than ten years. The patriarchal conception of the plantation owner as the beneficial provider for his captive labor force had survived, however, and continued to reemerge despite waves of servile revolt and civil war.

The Haitian state captured and imported people from the east with no other goal than to put them to work in the arduous jobs that Haitian laborers themselves proved stubbornly unwilling to accept. As Dessalines’s empire furiously erected a chain of inland fortresses to defend against foreign invasion, the state was in constant need of both skilled and unskilled construction labor. In May 1805, Christophe ordered that any of the “evacuated” Spanish laborers who were professional carpenters, blacksmiths, or cartwrights be sent to him immediately.³² But the majority of the *espagnols* were sent to work on sugar plantations that the Haitian generals were struggling to bring back into production. In April of 1805, Christophe instructed General Toussaint Brave to send fifty of the eastern captives to the Thilorier plantation because the local Haitian *cultivateurs* who were assigned to that plantation were absent and had not yet heeded Dessalines’s orders to return to work.³³ Notwithstanding the great effort invested in capturing them and dragging them across the island against their will, the *espagnols* did not make good plantation hands. The laborers

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were willing to risk their lives to escape conditions analogous to slavery, and the young Haitian state could not easily control their movements on an island that was sparsely populated, mountainous, poorly patrolled, and politically divided. Captive espagnols who had been snatched away from open-range cattle ranching operations, small-scale tobacco farms, and *conucos* (small plots) in the east longed to escape home.

Dessalines did not succeed at making docile plantation workers out of the espagnols. In November 1805, seven months after the forced transportation of laborers from the east, General Christophe informed Emperor Dessalines that espagnols were escaping or attempting to escape on a daily basis. Christophe was determined to keep them in Haiti, both to make use of them as plantation workers and to prevent them from returning east and divulging information to the French about Haiti's military defenses. His solution was to round up all of the espagnols and once again move them west, where they would be farther from the contested border with French-controlled Santo Domingo and less able to escape. Christophe ordered General François Capois to secretly arrest all of the eastern captives in the border regions "on the same day and at the same hour." His plan was to send them to plantations in the rural districts roughly fifty miles west of the border. By the fall of 1805, espagnols caught fleeing Haiti were summarily executed by the military. General Christophe repeatedly instructed his subordinates to hang any espagnols caught trying to escape to the east. This was the fate of one eastern fugitive who was captured near the border and sent to the northern capital of Le Cap, where he was hanged from the great seaside beam balance—a gruesome display of state-enforced captivity in Dessalines's empire.³⁴

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ROUNDUPS AND FORCED LABOR UNDER DESSALINES

During their service in the military regimes of Louverture and Leclerc, Dessalines and Christophe were constantly occupied with returning laborers to the plantations and compelling them to stay put and cultivate sugar and coffee. Although Louverture, Dessalines, and Christophe fiercely proclaimed their aversion to slavery, they propagated an agricultural system that contemporary observers likened to European serfdom. The unbreakable legal attachment of the cultivateur to a single plantation was the pillar of Louverture's agrarian policy. His 1801 constitution declared that "all changes in residence on the part of the cultivateurs bring about the ruin of agriculture."³⁵ The British diplomat James Franklin was a great admirer of the productivity achieved by Louverture's agrarian policy. He explained the economic success of Saint-Domingue under Louverture as resulting from the fact that "the labourers became once more slaves in fact, although not so in name."³⁶

An anonymously written set of agricultural laws in the files of the French expeditionary force under General Leclerc proclaimed that agriculture in Saint-Domingue would be regulated along military lines, and that all cultivateurs would be attached to the *glèbe*—a French word dating from the fifteenth century and referring to the piece of land to which European serfs were inexorably bound by law and feudal tradition.³⁷ This particular term for agrarian bondage appears again in the works of the nineteenth-century Haitian historian Thomas Madiou, who wrote that during the reign of Christophe in northern Haiti, laborers were "attached to the

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glèbe as they were under Toussaint Louverture.”³⁸ Dessalines and Christophe, Louverture’s comrades in arms and successors, employed all of the means at their disposal to assign Haiti’s laborers to the plantations and to formalize their attachment to specific estates. Although few records survive to indicate exactly who made up the workforces of early Haitian plantations, it is likely that plantation owners and managers under Dessalines, Christophe, and even the comparatively liberal Pétion forcibly compelled early Haitian citizens to work on the same estates where they had previously toiled as slaves.

One exceptional set of documents provides evidence that Christophe’s regime forced laborers to return to the very same plantations that they had been bound to as slaves. As they struggled to increase sugar revenues, Christophe’s officials focused many of their efforts on the formerly resplendent Gallifet sugar plantations. In an effort to make a symbolic break with the colonial past, Christophe renamed colonial establishments. The largest of the former Gallifet estates was rechristened *La Racine*. But even though the name had changed, the cultivateurs remained legally confined and were forced to cultivate sugar much as they had done under the French. In December 1805, General Christophe ordered that the local officer and agricultural inspector search out all the fugitive cultivateurs from the three Gallifet sugar plantations and send them back to work. Christophe complained that if the plantations did not have enough laborers, their leaseholders would not be able to pay their rent to the state.³⁹ The Haitian rulers monitored the plantation work gangs extremely closely. In August 1806, Christophe ordered the arrest of fugitives from

the Gallifet plantations, and he instructed a subordinate general to return a particular *cultivatrice* named Charlotte to the largest of the three Gallifet estates.⁴⁰ Among the 373 slaves who labored on the largest of the Gallifet sugar plantations in January 1791, there was one sixteen-year-old field slave named Charlotte.⁴¹ It is probable if not entirely certain that this was the same woman whom Christophe forcibly returned to the Gallifet estate fifteen years later, in 1806. By compelling former slaves to cultivate and process sugarcane, in some cases on the exact same plantations that they had been confined to under the old regime, Dessalines and Christophe were able to partially resurrect the sugar industry on Haiti's northern plain.

Starting with the civil commissioner Léger Félicité Sonthonax in 1793, postemancipation plantation production was theoretically organized as a sharecropping arrangement. Under the forced-labor schemes of Sonthonax, Louverture, Leclerc, Dessalines, and Christophe, the cultivateurs were supposed to receive one-fourth of the revenue from a plantation's cash-crop sales. As in the days of slavery, the plantation owner or leaseholder was responsible for providing the laborers with housing, clothes, and a small *place à vivres*, or provision land, on which to grow food. The sharecroppers, however, did not always receive their due. Madiou reports that under Dessalines, when the prices of commodities like coffee or sugar went up, plantation owners and managers did not necessarily inform their laborers and sometimes paid them below the market rate. Sometimes the cultivateurs were not paid at all.⁴² More than one traditional Haitian song contains a version of the line "travay, m travay yo pa peye mwen."⁴³ It translates to "I work, but they do not pay me." The experience would have

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been familiar to Haitian laborers both before and after emancipation and independence.

As they struggled to consolidate their fledgling state and reactivate Haiti's plantation economy, Dessalines and Christophe organized a campaign of roundups designed to bring laborers back to the plantations. During his roughly thirty-three months as the ruler of Haiti, Dessalines was constantly sending out patrols that were charged with finding fugitive laborers, determining which plantation they belonged on, and compelling them to return. In June 1805, the Haitian generals launched an ambitious effort to gather from every plantation manager in the country a list of the cultivateurs who were absent from the work gangs. The military patrols were instructed to gather leads about the location of elusive laborers, arrest them, and conduct them back to their assigned plantations. General Christophe acknowledged that this nationwide paramilitary roundup of defiant cultivateurs would be a slow and difficult task, but he assured the Haitian military elite that the campaign was worth the trouble given the positive effects it would have on the nation's agriculture and commerce.⁴⁴

The 1805 campaign of roundups reached nearly every district in northern Haiti, and it resulted in the arrest of thousands of men, women, and children. The roundups began in the towns, but by the summer Dessalines and Christophe had sent patrols into nearly every rural hamlet and district in northern Haiti. The general staff closely monitored the progress of the campaign and demanded that individual officers bring in as many fugitives as possible. When the patrol led by Colonel Étienne Albert sent in only seven captives, Christophe

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demanding that he redouble his efforts, and he pointed out that other patrols had succeeded in arresting larger numbers of people.⁴⁵ The military had no trouble finding men, women, and children to lock up. By the end of June, the officers had to speed up the transfer of captives from Le Cap to the plantations, both because the town's prisons were not large enough to accommodate the influx of new inmates and because among the prisoners were a large number of pregnant women and nursing mothers. Although the ruling generals were willing to put pregnant women and infants behind bars, they were perhaps concerned enough with the growth of the laboring population not to let them linger there for too long.⁴⁶ The state's solution to the overstuffed prisons was to send the captured laborers to an impromptu prison camp at Milot. From there, Christophe summoned an overseer from every plantation on the northern plain to claim fugitive cultivateurs and bring them back to work the fields.⁴⁷

The military was able to quickly arrest more than enough people to fill Haiti's prisons, but the state then faced the troublesome task of deciding which plantations particular laborers belonged on. Labor was scarce in early independent Haiti, and plantation managers sometimes got into disputes over which cultivateurs belonged on which estates.⁴⁸ In addition, some of the military officers charged with capturing and distributing fugitive laborers saw the campaign of arrests as a chance to advance their own interests. In early Haiti, most of the large landowners were military officers. Throughout the course of the Haitian Revolution, it was the victorious military leaders who took over choice plantation lands once owned by exiled or deceased French landowners. The army

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officers sent to arrest and relocate wayward plantation workers were in a good position to try to appropriate laborers for their own use. Instead of rounding up fugitives and sending them back to the sugar plantations, officers from the 27th Demi-Brigade were accused of hiding groups of laborers on their own plantation lands.⁴⁹ Faced with a generalized labor shortage, Dessalines and the elite generals worried that lower-ranking officers were taking advantage of their function as patrol leaders to appropriate captive laborers for their own private gain. But no matter which plantation particular cultivateurs were sent to, their arrest and forcible relocation reflected the conviction throughout Haiti's officer corps that the military elite were entitled to oversee and profit from forced labor.

Dessalines's postindependence campaign of arrests was designed primarily to place workers on large sugar plantations, such as the former Gallifet estates near Le Cap or the massive sugar-producing complex that Dessalines was constructing on the site of his new capital at Marchand. Faced with a system that required them to be attached to a particular property, some laborers tried to choose the terms of their confinement by living on plantations where they may have been better able to avoid hard labor and corporal punishment. But just as Dessalines's state did not allow workers to abandon the plantations altogether, it did not allow them to freely choose which plantation they preferred. When the authorities discovered that Lozalie, a cultivatrice from the Pierre plantation, had taken up residence on the Cuvert plantation, they arrested her and ordered that she and her three children return to her original workplace.⁵⁰

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Despite its willingness to repeatedly arrest and forcibly relocate Haitian citizens, the state did not have an easy time removing people from the places that they had chosen to make their homes. General Christophe, who had a penchant for figurative language, complained that as soon as fugitive laborers were “chased out the door, they return[ed] through the window.”⁵¹ Not satisfied with the results of their campaign to force the country’s laborers onto the plantations to which they had been historically tied, and frustrated that landowners were harboring laborers who did not “belong” on their property, Dessalines’s state came up with another solution. It decided to target any landowner or renter who was providing refuge to a fugitive cultivateur. In October 1806, Christophe was again commanding his subordinates to comb the towns and rural districts of northern Haiti in search of workers who had fled the plantations. This time the patrols were instructed to search out plantation owners or leaseholders who were harboring fugitive workers on their properties. Patrolers who found laborers living on the wrong plantation were instructed to collect a fine of twelve gourdes from the owner of the land, the leaseholder, or a manager responsible for the property. Dessalines’s government was so determined to track down laborers and place them on the particular plantations favored by the new military elite that they placed a substantial cash bounty on fugitives. If any landowners or managers caught harboring fugitive laborers refused to pay the fine, they were to be arrested and sent to answer to Christophe. Under this new scheme, the owners or renters of land who were caught housing laborers who legally belonged to another plantation had to decide whether to surrender those labor-

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ers to the military patrols, make a substantial payoff, or face arrest themselves.⁵²

The shortage of cultivateurs on the early Haitian sugar plantations was exacerbated by the state's need for construction workers to build fortifications and palaces. Dessalines's military drafted its construction laborers from the plantations. And much like the cultivateurs on the early Haitian sugar plantations, the troops in Dessalines's army and the workers summoned to build the forts were forbidden to leave their posts, were disciplined by force, and frequently went without rations or pay.

At the same time that the Haitian military was patrolling the countryside in order to force cultivateurs back onto the plantations, it was systematically drawing large rotations of laborers off of the plantations in order to build the Citadel Laferrière and other military installations. Dessalines's labor drafts were widespread and well organized. A circular sent to all the generals in northern Haiti instructed them to summon all masons and carpenters on all of the plantations and send them to Laferrière to help build the massive fort.⁵³ When a military commander was given a quota of sixty laborers and delivered only fifty-three, Christophe immediately wrote to him and demanded that he send the remaining seven.⁵⁴ In the region of Le Cap, the state demanded that twenty-five cultivateurs or cultivatrices be sent from every sugar plantation, and twelve from every coffee plantation.⁵⁵ Shunted between state-owned sugar plantations and military construction projects, forced laborers under Dessalines and Christophe were treated like state property.

Laborers who fled the construction sites were pursued as fugitives, much like cultivateurs who left the plantations. Skilled construction workers who fled their state-assigned tasks risked

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a serious demotion upon recapture. When cabinetmakers and carpenters failed to show up in the morning, local military commanders were instructed to arrest them and send them to Laferrière, where they would be reassigned to transporting stones.⁵⁶ Christophe favored maintaining a network of “spies” or informants in the countryside and at the construction sites in order to keep track of laborers and locate them when they escaped.⁵⁷ When groups of carpenters and mortar makers escaped Laferrière, he sent out arrest orders that included the names and suspected locations of the individual fugitives.⁵⁸ Dessalines and his circle of elite military officers were persistent in their campaign to track down and arrest runaway laborers. But despite frequent patrols and harsh punishment, Haiti’s citizens did not stop fleeing the sugar plantations and the military construction sites. It was not long before Dessalines and Christophe turned to a policy of mandatory national identification documents in order to keep plantation laborers in their place.

THE CARTE DE SÛRETÉ: STATE-DIRECTED CLASS FORMATION

Haiti, the second independent state in the Americas, was probably the first state in history to attempt the creation of a mandatory system of national identification documents for all citizens. The regime of Toussaint Louverture, the French occupation authorities under General Leclerc and his fellow general the Vicomte de Rochambeau, and the empire of Dessalines all successively attempted to legally impose the use of a standardized national identity card called the *carte de sûreté*. For all of these regimes, the project of forcing all women and

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men to carry identification papers proving their name, age, place of residence, and profession was designed to prevent unauthorized movement and shore up forced labor and sugar production on the plantations.

The *carte de sûreté* had its direct antecedents. Like other slave societies in the New World, colonial Saint-Domingue had a complex system of written passes by which plantation owners could give slaves permission to leave the plantation for certain errands and for strictly defined periods of time. In addition to the slave pass system, the Haitian *carte de sûreté* had its origins in the military pass system employed by the French colonial authorities in revolutionary-era Saint-Domingue. The identity-card system also emerged amid the expansion and increasing standardization of passports for overseas travel issued by western European colonial empires. In more than one instance, French colonists who advised the Leclerc regime on the best methods to keep the *cultivateurs* confined to their plantations referred to locally issued identity papers as “passports” or “internal passports.”⁵⁹

Whereas slave passes in colonial Saint-Domingue were issued by individual plantation proprietors, the *cartes de sûreté* represented an ambitious new project of state surveillance and labor control. The identification documents were intended to reinforce the leading generals’ plan to create a militarized, state-directed system of export agriculture by which plantations that had formerly been the sole property of individual colonists were taken over by the state and leased or granted to leading military officers. Plantation slaves under the old regime had toiled for the benefit of a single plantation owner, but under the *caporalisme agraire* of Louverture and Dessalines,

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cultivateurs worked on state-owned lands, and the profits of their labor accrued largely to a military elite. Whereas the pass carried by a slave identified that individual as the property of a particular planter, a standardized, state-issued identification card reflected a relationship of proprietary control between the military elite as a whole and the entire class of cultivateurs.

Toussaint Louverture was the first leader to order the establishment of a universal system of identity documents in Saint-Domingue. In a public order dated November 26, 1801, he spelled out the details of the new colony-wide identity card, which he obliged all male and female citizens to acquire and renew every six months for a fee of one *gourdin*.⁶⁰ The *carte de sûreté* had to be signed by the mayor and local police chief, who were charged with making sure that the bearer of the document held a productive job and was a well-behaved citizen. The government prescribed swift punishment for people caught without this I.D. card. Foreigners found without proper identification were to be deported, and all “creoles” who had not obtained these cards within fifteen days of the governor-general’s order were to be sent to work on the plantations. Louverture’s orders regarding the *carte de sûreté* also called for a strict centralized accounting of all the plantation workforces in the colony. It is unclear whether Louverture intended to force white colonists and plantation owners to carry an I.D. card as well. The system was intended mainly to control the plantation workforce. Every plantation manager and *conducteur de culture* was responsible for providing the local military commanders with an exact list of all the laborers attached to each plantation.

Louverture’s orders were designed to provide a legal framework to crack down on the “disorders,” “vagabondage,”

and “laziness” that threatened the revenues that the state demanded from sugar and coffee production. Local military officials were obliged under the threat of punishment to arrest all people found without the necessary identity papers and to send them to work on their respective plantations.⁶¹ Anyone who could not afford to pay for an identity card, was unaware of the law, or was unable to obtain the requisite documents in time was subject to arrest and forced transport to a plantation. The French occupation force that ousted Louverture also attempted to issue *cartes de sûreté* to all citizens of Saint-Domingue, as did the independent regime of Dessalines. Neither the French expeditionary force under Leclerc nor the Haitian state under Dessalines changed the name of the I.D. card. In each case it was referred to as a *carte de sûreté*, and in each case the goal was the same: securing a fixed labor force on the plantations by forcing people to work not only under many of the same conditions that characterized *ancien régime* slavery, but often on the very same plantations where they had toiled as slaves in the preemancipation period. In a series of recommendations that he presented to General Leclerc in March 1802, the colonist Gambart proposed that the military government require all citizens of both sexes over the age of twelve to have a card that the local *gendarmes* could use to determine their names and their place of residence.⁶² On July 5, 1803, the French officer Pascal Sabès issued an order at Le Cap annulling all previous identity cards issued to the “*négres et négresses non libres*” and requiring that they reapply for new government-issued *cartes de sûreté*. Louverture referred to the agricultural laborers as “*cultivateurs*” and “*cultivatrices*” instead of “*nègres*” and “*négresses*,” but the substance of

the French I.D. card rules were much the same as before. If laborers did not comply with the law and start carrying the new I.D. card, they would be subject to arrest.⁶³

After the final defeat of the French expeditionary forces and the declaration of Haitian independence, the leaders of the new Haitian state continued to issue *cartes de sûreté* in their efforts to rebuild the plantation economy. The distribution and regulation of the identification documents issued under Dessalines were very much the same as those issued under Louverture and under Leclerc and Rochambeau. The card was issued for a fee of one *gourdin*, and it was renewable every six months.⁶⁴ Local military commanders were specifically instructed to arrest all laborers or soldiers who were not carrying either *cartes de sûreté* or written permits from their military commander or their plantation boss.⁶⁵ According to Dessalines's system, those arrested for not having their state-issued identity documents were liable to be put to work on state construction projects.⁶⁶ In a society where the vast majority of citizens were still illiterate, the state enforcement of a system of written identity documents could do nothing but reinforce class distinctions inherited from the colonial order.

Although the state intended to make the *carte de sûreté* into a standardized, universal I.D. card to be issued throughout the country, the distribution of the cards by local military commanders was uneven and incomplete. During Dessalines's short-lived regime, the *carte de sûreté* never fully replaced the system of handwritten passes issued by local military commanders and plantation managers. There is no evidence to suggest that the standardized, centrally issued *cartes de sûreté* ever reached the hands of anything close to a majority of the

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adult population of colonial Saint-Domingue or independent Haiti. Even as it fell into disuse in the 1810s and 1820s, however, the scheme did not entirely disappear as a repressive tool in the arsenal of the Haitian state. At the beginning of May 1837, an obscure group of cultivateurs, artisans, and low-ranking army officers launched a plot to assassinate the Haitian secretary of state, Joseph Inginac, and raise a revolutionary uprising among the cultivateurs in the region of Léogâne. Although they succeeded in wounding the secretary, the leaders of the insurrection were caught before they could foment a general uprising. In addition to jailing and executing the captured ringleaders, Boyer's government responded to the threat of rebellion by ordering that anyone traveling from one town to another would be legally required to carry a written travel permit issued by the local military commander.⁶⁷ In nineteenth-century Haiti, the state reserved the right to force all its citizens to carry identification documents or risk arrest. Ultimately, the importance of the early Haitian I.D. card system lies both in the fact that it sheds light on the intentions of the state authorities and in the fact that the scheme's eventual failure to take hold is evidence of former slaves' effective resistance to the plantation system, as well as their inability and unwillingness to pay a biannual tax for state-issued identity documents.

Haiti's early identity card system was an innovative attempt by successive embattled regimes to reconcile a system of forced production with the legal abolition of slavery. The I.D. card was one of many tools designed to squeeze profitable labor out of a restive population that was continuing to learn the difference between the legal freedom afforded landless

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plantation workers and the far more rewarding freedoms of property ownership and economic autonomy. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the violent social upheaval of revolutionary Haiti compelled elite groups in that society to experiment with a system of compulsory national I.D. cards for adults of both sexes. At its founding, Haiti was undergoing a historic transition from handwritten identification documents and travel permits authorized by individual plantation owners or military officials to the creation of compulsory and standardized forms of state-issued I.D. cards. Ironically enough, through the twentieth century and well into the twenty-first, no Haitian government has been able to place national identity documents into the hands of the entire populace. But early Haiti's repressive rulers were ahead of their time in this regard. Universal, government-issued identification documents did not arrive in most of the rest of the world until much later.⁶⁸ Standardized identification documents have become increasingly ubiquitous in subsequent centuries, but few of the billions of people who now carry them are aware that these kinds of documents might have first seen light amid the political violence and state-directed class formation of early nineteenth-century Hispaniola.

PUNISHMENT, PRISON, AND FORCED LABOR IN EARLY HAITI

Among the early Haitians, the chain, the whip, and the *cachot* (a tiny, solitary jail cell) were some of the most hated memories and symbols of the days of slavery. The false rumor that King Louis XVI had decreed the abolition of the whip and the

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cachot had contributed to the political ferment among the slaves of Saint-Domingue in the buildup to the August 1791 insurrection.⁶⁹ Upon declaring the abolition of slavery in Haiti's northern province in August 1793, Sonthonax officially abolished the use of the whip and instituted a plantation code that used monetary fines and confinement to the pillory, prison, or state-supervised forced labor as replacement punishments.⁷⁰ During the Haitian war of independence, as the French military under General Rochambeau prepared to openly reinstate slavery, whips and chains once again made their appearance. At the end of February 1803, a French military column attacked a group of insurgents camped in the mountains above Saint Marc. After capturing the camp and executing the majority of the "brigands," the French troops spared six survivors and brought them before the French general Philibert Fressinet. The French troops delivered a hundred lashes of the whip to each of the six prisoners. General Fressinet then put the prisoners in chains and made them serve the French army as laborers.⁷¹ Veterans of the Haitian Revolution had been threatened with the reimposition of the old order—and the whip and the chain were concrete embodiments of not only the memory of slavery but also the danger of its return. Sensitive to their symbolic power, Louverture, Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer all refrained from using the leather whip and iron shackles to control and confine disobedient cultivateurs and soldiers. But symbolism notwithstanding, these leaders all found similar means to imprison and physically punish their citizens.

Early Haitian field laborers were technically not driven by the lash. Plantation managers, overseers, and military officials

did, however, punish them with clubs and vines. Under Dessalines and Christophe, military deserters, disobedient plantation workers, and thieves were usually beaten with vines—a punishment known as “faire passer par les verges.” Livestock thieves were especially liable to be punished in this fashion, with Christophe sometimes personally taking part. On March 4, 1806, he instructed one of his officers to cut a large quantity of vines, which he planned to use to beat a pair of cattle thieves before putting them to work building the Citadelle Laferrière.⁷²

Although Dessalines was reported to have inspired the loyalty of his troops and galvanized enmity toward the French by displaying his whip scars during wartime speeches, he also did not shy away from using similar corporal punishment to compel his subjects back to the plantations. As they were pursuing laborers who had left their plantations and “were hiding in the woods or other places,” Dessalines’s generals were instructed to make sure that all the captured field hands be beaten with vines before sending them back to work in the sugarcane fields. According to Christophe, Dessalines saw this punishment as “the only means to keep them at their task.”⁷³ Although the republican regimes of Pétion and Boyer did not pursue the militarized agrarian policy that characterized the governments of Louverture, Dessalines, and Christophe, the few estates that kept up large-scale production in the southern and western provinces of Haiti did so on the basis of coercion. Even as the plantation system was nearing complete extinction in southern Haiti, plantation managers who stuck with corporal punishment maintained islands of forced labor amid a growing sea of peasant proprietorships.

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The British consul Charles Mackenzie visited one such plantation near Grande-Goâve in the late 1820s. This sugar estate was owned by a military aide-de-camp of President Boyer who had maintained production on his plantation through the rule of “club-law.” Mackenzie reported that in one instance this officer took out the eye of one of his laborers with a fierce blow from his hardwood baton, or *cocomacac*.⁷⁴

Having abandoned the use of iron shackles to chain prisoners, postemancipation regimes simply tied them up. The substitution of rope for chain did not entirely convince former slaves of the virtues of republican liberty. Under Dessalines, military deserters, fugitive laborers, and people caught without cartes de sûreté were all tied up upon arrest. In one case, fearing that a fugitive construction laborer would escape once more, Christophe ordered that the man be “tied up and bound like a twist of tobacco.”⁷⁵ People who had risen up to break their chains were not content to be bound by rope. The use of the Haitian term “mare,” meaning “tied” or “to tie,” to symbolize bondage likely grows out of the historical use of ropes to arrest and confine people. In one traditional Haitian religious song, the singer laments, “Yo pote kod pou yo mare mwen. M pa ti kabrit yo, m pa ti mouton yo. Mwen pa ti bef yo.”⁷⁶ The lyrics translate as “They carry a cord to tie me up. I am not their little goat, I am not their little sheep. I am not their little cow.”

THE SPECTER OF REENSLAVEMENT

The fear of reenslavement haunted the early citizens of Haiti. For their part, the rulers of early Haiti were especially concerned about the instability and uprisings that these fears

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could cause. From the time of Toussaint Louverture, heads of state in Saint-Domingue and independent Haiti were quick to stamp out any talk of the return of slavery. As he worked with former slave owners to rebuild the plantation economy of Saint-Domingue, Louverture was careful to prevent anyone in society from rekindling the flames of servile revolt. While his regime was creating regulations designed to force workers back to the plantations, he was alarmed to hear that former slave owners were pushing the envelope by telling laborers that they were not really free and that they would be treated as they had been in the old days. Even if it was the truth, he knew that many truths were better not spoken. He claimed that talk of the return of slavery would slow the restoration of the colony, endanger public tranquillity, and “perpetuate anarchy.” Unwilling to allow any incendiary discussion of slavery to touch off new insurrections, he prescribed immediate arrest for anyone in the colony caught speaking of slavery.⁷⁷

Although they fully intended to eventually restore slavery in Saint-Domingue, the French military officers of the Leclerc expedition were no less sensitive to the destabilizing consequences of slavery rumors. The top French officials planned to reimpose slavery only after they had regained military control of the colony. Until that point, they sought to quell the widespread rumor that the European troops would reestablish slavery. The French general Brunet reported to Leclerc that the single word “slavery” greatly contributed to their military difficulties in the colony. He blamed “des gens peu politiques” (people lacking political sense) for allowing the incendiary term to circulate and contribute to the insurrections that wound up definitively driving out the French.⁷⁸

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The expulsion of the French did not end Haitians' fears of reenslavement. Haitian heads of state recognized that any talk of slavery was a very serious matter, and they took harsh steps to suppress any rumors of enslavement. In September 1805, Colonel Noël Joaquin discovered that a very troublesome rumor had begun to spread among the laborers on the northern plain. Someone was spreading the news that Dessalines had begun capturing children in order to sell them. In the immediate aftermath of independence, some former slaves of Haiti were afraid that their new rulers might steal their children and sell them into slavery. Dessalines's government took this loose talk of reenslavement very seriously. Christophe ordered his officers to find the authors of this rumor, arrest them, and send them to town under guard so that they could be executed by firing squad.⁷⁹

Insurgents in independent Haiti did accuse rulers of bringing back slavery in order to justify renewed armed rebellions. In May 1807, as Haiti was falling into civil war between the republic of Pétion in the south and the kingdom of Christophe in the north, Christophe struggled to put down an uprising in the vicinity of Port de Paix led by a common soldier named Jean-Louis Rebecca. As Christophe and Pétion led armies against each other, Rebecca and his followers declared their support for Pétion's republic. Christophe sent an army under General Paul Romain to the region of Port de Paix to attack the rebel Rebecca and his followers. The insurgents were quickly defeated. Madiou reports that after executing most of the surviving rebels, General Romain interrogated Rebecca and asked him why he had taken up arms against Christophe. According to Madiou, Rebecca explained his rebellion by declaring that

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Christophe was a “tyrant who while speaking of liberty, was reestablishing slavery.” After denouncing his captors, Rebecca’s head was cut off, put on a pike, and delivered to Christophe.⁸⁰ Whether or not this dramatic final exchange between Rebecca and Romain actually took place, the persistence in postemancipation Haiti of both forced labor and armed rebellions meant that even the mere mention of slavery was a politically loaded and potentially incendiary event.

EMANCIPATION WITHOUT FREE-LABOR IDEOLOGY

The near absence of capitalist wage labor in early Haiti was a result of the unique timing of slave emancipation in Saint-Domingue. With slavery legally abolished before the turn of the nineteenth century, Saint-Domingue was the first New World slave society to undergo emancipation. Thomas Holt observes that in the 1830s “the ideology thrown up by Britain’s free labor economy provided the model of what should replace slavery.”⁸¹ In the case of Haiti, however, the process of emancipation began in the 1790s in the midst of a revolution led by slaves. Ideologically, the Haitian Revolution borrowed from and contributed to the intellectual currents in revolutionary France. Haiti’s founding battles were waged amid a lofty political rhetoric of political equality, universal emancipation, and resistance to oppression. But the country emerged in an early nineteenth-century Atlantic economy that was still very much made up of masters and bondsmen rather than capitalist employers and free laborers. Accordingly, postemancipation labor forms in Haiti were less influenced by the free-

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labor ideology of Europe's nascent industrial bourgeoisie than in any of the societies that underwent emancipation in the nineteenth century. Haiti's former slaves had been officially free for nearly four decades by the time the British Empire proclaimed complete emancipation in 1838. As a result, Haiti came into being in an early capitalist world economy that had not yet given rise to a widespread and prevalent ideology of free labor, wage relations, and contractual agreements.

Postemancipation authorities attempted to create moral and material incentives that would instill productive habits into a population that Louverture decried for having decided that "liberty was the right to be lazy . . . to disregard the laws, and to only follow their caprices."⁸² The political leaders of revolutionary Saint-Domingue and independent Haiti were constantly exhorting agricultural workers to adopt what Paul Lafargue called "the dogma of work."⁸³ André Rigaud reminded the cultivateurs of southern Saint-Domingue that work was the basis of all prosperity and that they could prove that they were genuinely deserving of freedom by showing that they could be productive on the basis of "the sentiment of dignity" rather than the threat of physical punishment.⁸⁴ The fractious elites of early Haiti strove to propagate a version of liberty that was compatible with the plantation system. Upon sending a recently arrested laborer back to his assigned plantation, Christophe declared, "It is time that our brothers return to order and that they understand that work never dishonors a free man."⁸⁵ Along with moral appeals about the honor and dignity of hard work, military officials proposed to encourage agricultural labor through promises of payment, rewards, and benevolent rule. In addition to the benefits of a

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“small salary,” one French official argued that the free cultivators of Saint-Domingue would be more likely to stay and work on their plantation because they no longer lived under the threat of being sold from one moment to the next.⁸⁶ Another French adviser to Leclerc proposed that the hardest-working laborers on a given plantation be rewarded with an annual cash prize and an engraved portrait of Bonaparte.⁸⁷

Having witnessed the collapse of plantation production in the aftermath of revolutionary slave emancipation, some French military officials openly despaired and gave up on the thought that former slaves could be made to work the plantations on the basis of free labor. Victor Hugues, the French republican commissioner who oversaw slave emancipation on the island of Guadeloupe, quickly became disillusioned with the possibility of reconciling productivity with freedom. Hugues warned his French counterparts in Saint-Domingue that they would soon recognize the impossibility of organizing a country with men who he complained were “so violent, so diverse, and who loved work so little.” “Liberty,” he complained, “is nothing but a word in the mouth of these men.”⁸⁸ For their part, former slaves who were told that they were free but still had to do the same work on the same plantations where they had lived before emancipation may well have concluded that liberty was merely a word in the mouths of their rulers.

CHAPTER FOUR

Echoes of the Revolution: Rebellion and Civil War in Early Haiti

THE irregular, multilateral warfare that characterized the Haitian revolutionary period did not end with independence in 1804. Born of war, independent Haiti was torn by military conflict throughout its early existence.

Western Hispaniola experienced a constant series of wars in the period from 1791 through 1820. During these three decades, Haiti did not go through a single year without military conflict of one kind or another. These conflicts had profound effects on the young nation's economic and social development. War gave people reasons to flee their homes, and the disruptions of military campaigns, sieges, and shifting borders provided opportunities for laborers to escape the plantations to which they were legally bound. As rival armies marched over the plains, civilians were driven to seek refuge among the mountain communities that grew up in areas that had been largely uninhabited during the colonial era. Forced to fight a war and faced with empty state coffers, the republican regime

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of Alexandre Pétion paid its soldiers with land grants. The successive waves of republican land reform contributed to a cascading process by which Haitian agricultural land became effectively decommodified, and a huge proportion of Haitians could aspire to become independent farmers. Finally, war disrupted commerce and thereby contributed indirectly to the self-sustaining lifeways of the rural producers. When peace came in 1820, following roughly three decades of nearly uninterrupted warfare, the Haitian masses had learned to survive with relatively little in the way of imported commodities. Faced with regimes of predatory taxation imposed on imports and exports, Haitian farmers chose to maximize their own autonomy by doing for themselves, and they created a system through which direct consumption and micro-commerce both functioned as important forms of *de facto* tax evasion and anti-elite resistance.

Following independence in January 1804, Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared himself emperor of Haiti in October 1804. His draconian rule lasted less than two years. After angering southern landowners by threatening to expropriate plantations that they had acquired during the course of the revolution, Dessalines fell to an assassination plot in October 1806. Soon afterward, Haiti was divided between the State of Hayti under Henry Christophe in the north and the republican regime of Alexandre Pétion in the south. Like his predecessor Dessalines, Christophe embraced formal absolutism and declared himself King Henry I in 1811. The original two-way division of Haiti gave way to further splintering. Not only was early Haiti divided between two main rival governments, the instability of the period gave rise to other rebellious state-

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lets in the mountainous south. At the start of the hostilities between Pétion and Christophe, an uprising among low-ranking army officers in the Grand Anse region at the tip of the southern peninsula grew into a full-fledged regional insurgency. The battalion chief Jean-Baptiste Perrier, better known as Goman, became the leader of the Grand Anse rebellion. Goman, an African, allied with Christophe, who sent supplies and munitions in order to encourage his armed movement against Pétion's regime. In December 1810, André Rigaud returned to his hometown of Les Cayes and set up his own republican government in opposition to that of Pétion in Port-au-Prince. Rigaud died shortly after his return to Les Cayes, and the independent republic there lasted for less than a year. By 1811, arguably the high point of postindependence political instability, the territory of Haiti was divided among four separate military rulers. But as rival states battled to control the country, they faced the intractable problem of evasive forms of resistance from below. Civil war and instability at the top created a context that favored the persistent emergence of defiance from below.

EARLY INCIDENTS OF DISORDER

The heavy-handed domestic policy of Dessalines's empire can be attributed largely to the regime's reliance on forced labor and the leading officers' constant vigilance against uprisings and "complots." Borrowing much of the language of his French colonial predecessors, Dessalines held up the maintenance of political and military "tranquillity" as the main goal of his frequent police actions. During the roughly two years

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of his reign, his officers were often directed to investigate and arrest suspected troublemakers.

Even a few suspicious words uttered by an obscure individual on a rural plantation were enough to incur a rigorous investigation by Dessalines's government. On January 11, 1806, the emperor received a report that Antoine, a cultivateur on a northern plantation, had somehow threatened "public tranquillity" in the course of a New Year's greeting to a local official. Antoine was immediately arrested. General Christophe himself visited the plantation in order to investigate. Upon interrogating Antoine, Christophe determined that the prisoner's suspicious talk amounted only to some "empty statements" pronounced in a state of drunkenness. Nevertheless, Christophe agreed with the decision of the local commandant to arrest Antoine. He commended the arresting officer for his prudence and justified the government's vigilance by citing a proverb to the effect that "where there is smoke there is fire." The government's apprehension over any possible resurgence of disorder was such that a few indiscreet words pronounced in a drunken state at a New Year's party were enough to incur an arrest followed by a visit and full-scale investigation from the country's number-two military leader.¹

Haitian laborers in the early decades of independence tended to resist forced labor by fleeing to remote areas of the island, but they occasionally adopted more confrontational tactics reminiscent of the era of the revolution itself. In southern Haiti, isolated reports of property destruction and violence suggest that areas of the rural interior were sometimes prone to periodic outbursts of rebellious violence.

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In 1805, on the outskirts of the southern port of Les Cayes, an obscure laborer named Germain Pico launched a daring armed rebellion. Pico farmed a small piece of land near the fort at Les Platons. As the leading Haitian generals consolidated their power and secretly plotted against one another, Pico brought together a group of co-conspirators and organized an uprising against Dessalines's government. He led roughly one hundred rebels, who struck the fort at Les Platons while most of the garrison was away at a party. Once they had taken the fort, the insurgents gathered up the weapons and gunpowder they found. As government troops approached, the rebels escaped into the forest. The revolt was unsuccessful, and Pico was killed soon afterward, but his abortive uprising anticipated the rural political unrest and popular rebellions that gripped Haiti's southern peninsula for decades after independence.²

Rebel cultivateurs were generally more successful when they attacked individual plantations rather than government fortresses. On May 2, 1810, a plantation manager named Claude Loiseau visited the courthouse in the southern town of Corail to make a declaration of recent losses suffered on at least six different plantations for which he held the leases. Loiseau declared that he had lost all of his property in the form of cash crops, furniture, tools, and household goods. Aside from nearly a thousand gourdes of household items and livestock, Loiseau reported losses of no less than thirty-eight thousand gourdes in coffee and two thousand gourdes in cotton. He did not explicitly say how he had suffered the immense losses that he reported, but he left some clues that suggest that his plantation properties may have been pillaged and destroyed by the local laborers. He reported that he could not

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be sure whether all of his properties had been burned or not. He added that the current circumstances prevented him from visiting the properties.³ The fear that his goods may have gone up in flames or been pillaged and the claim that “circumstances” kept him from his nearby estates suggest that the plantations managed by Loiseau were probably taken over and ransacked by restive locals.

Although Claude Loiseau was a Haitian citizen, he, like many unsuccessful French planters before him, scrambled to maintain his claims to plantation profits in a society that was steadily destroying the *grande culture* system root and branch. Just as colonial planters rushed to courthouses and notaries in Saint-Domingue, France, and elsewhere to document and quantify their losses following the slave uprisings of the 1790s, Loiseau was presumably registering his losses with the state in the hopes that he could claim some form of recompense. He probably recorded his monetary damages in the slim hope that the young Haitian republic would somehow indemnify him for his losses one day. However, as southern Haiti continued to be gripped by the instability of the Goman insurrection and as Pétion’s government made key concessions to the cultivateurs, it is most likely that the lands formerly leased by Loiseau were eventually divided up and became the de facto property of former plantation laborers.

DESSALINES’S WAR ON VODOU

Although it is impossible to determine exactly the role of African religious practices at various phases of the Haitian Revolution, it is clear that both French colonial officials and

early Haitian rulers regarded Vodou practitioners as a serious threat to their authority. Michel Rolph Trouillot writes that Louverture outlawed the practice of Vodou because he did not control the country's many religious organizations, and because he feared that religiously inspired leaders could rekindle revolutionary upheaval and disrupt plantation production.⁴ Fearful that Vodou leaders could influence plantation laborers to stop working and take up arms, Louverture outlawed nighttime dances and assemblies in a decree that Trouillot compares with the colonial Code Noir.⁵ In an article on religious repression in early Haiti, Hénock Trouillot writes that Vodou and insurrection represented "at least during periods of crisis, two aspects of the same phenomenon."⁶ As with marronage, popular religious activity proliferated in early Haiti despite elite efforts to stamp out Vodou and arrest troublesome religious figures. While early Haitian leaders were attempting to police agricultural labor and production, they simultaneously struggled to suppress and eliminate religious figures who represented autonomous networks of political authority.

The first four decades of Haitian independence offered new possibilities for the expansion of Vodou societies throughout the country. Nearly all the European residents of colonial Saint-Domingue had either fled the country or been killed. Following independence, the country was formally cut off from the Catholic Church until the concordat of 1860. The limited activities of foreign missionaries and African American Protestant émigrés had relatively little influence on the religious life of early nineteenth-century Haiti. Whatever the political role of Vodou in the rebellions and campaigns of

the revolution, the expulsion of the French and the destruction of the plantation system increased the opportunities of former slaves to organize their religious life as they saw fit. Vodou flourished in early nineteenth-century Haiti in spite of state officials' conviction that Vodou practitioners represented a threat to law and order.

During the war of independence of 1802–1803, French officers under Generals Leclerc and Rochambeau persecuted and killed suspected Vodou leaders. On September 6, 1803, only a few months before the final French surrender and evacuation from Haiti, the French army executed a man named Godard, who was described as a “grand maître de l'ordre de vaudoux” (a grand master of the order of Vodou). No other reason was given for his execution.⁷

For as much as they vocally rejected France's colonial legacy, Haiti's founding generals continued the persecution of *Vodouisants*. In her book *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti*, Kate Ramsey analyzes the 1835 law by which Jean-Pierre Boyer's government formally outlawed Vodou practices as a form of *sortilège*, or sorcery.⁸ The persecution of Vodou practitioners in independent Haiti preceded this law by decades.

Dessalines's 1805 constitution may have officially guaranteed freedom of religion, but Dessalines did not hesitate to arrest and summarily punish any Vodouisants he feared might threaten the political order. In November 1805, General Christophe ordered his troops to suppress Vodou services. In a letter to General Capois, Christophe expressed concern over reports that the residents of a particular area were “continually dancing Vodou.” Christophe explained that the Vodou dance threatened domestic tranquility, and he cited the

precedent that Vodou “had always been forbidden by all governments.” He ordered Capois to “take all necessary measures to stop this dance and to arrest the leaders.”⁹

Christophe was correct that Vodou had been outlawed and that Vodouisants had been persecuted by the regimes of his predecessors. Nor would the government of Dessalines or Christophe’s own subsequent kingdom be the last regimes to actively suppress the Vodou religion. The surveillance and suppression of Vodou practitioners by the state was a reality of life that persisted long after Haitian independence.

The history of nineteenth-century Haiti is peppered with cases of Vodouisants and “magicians” being arrested for such crimes as selling charms, organizing Vodou dances, insulting representatives of the state, or even seducing women. Dessalines and Christophe actively pursued and arrested Vodou leaders on the grounds that they posed a threat to domestic tranquillity. On November 23, 1805, General Christophe received a prisoner who had been arrested for his religious activity. The prisoner was a cook attached to the Pernerle sugar plantation near Les Cayes. His legal name was Jean Pierre Narcisse, but he was better known as Dieau Chaud. He was arrested for organizing weekly Vodou dances and for selling *macanda*, or charms. Dieau Chaud advertised that his charms would bring women good luck, and he reportedly bragged that they would also allow him to take “all that their men had.” Christophe was especially surprised that the most respectable women of the town went in crowds to see this charm seller. Christophe was adamant that Vodouisants like Dieau Chaud were “dangerous and harmful to tranquillity.” Christophe sent him to Dessalines under military escort. In April

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1805, Dieau Chaud somehow escaped his captors, and Christophe issued an order to arrest the fugitive. It is unclear whether he was ever recaptured by the state.¹⁰ In May 1806, Christophe ordered the arrest of another seller of *caprelata*.¹¹ Perhaps wary over the recent escape of Dieau Chaud, Christophe ordered that this wanted magician be well tied up and brought to him under military escort.

MAROONS AND RUNAWAYS IN EARLY HAITI

In addition to rival military governments and potential insurgents within the armed forces, early Haitian rulers had to contend with the ever-present problem of maroon activity among the laboring population. Many citizens of Dessalines's new Haitian empire fled forced labor and joined maroon camps and independent armed bands in the hills. In February 1806, Christophe issued the order to arrest a fugitive cultivateur named Mars. In order to emphasize the importance of apprehending Mars, Christophe pointed out that he was the veteran of an armed band that had operated in the mountains. When the authorities caught up with Mars on March 1, Christophe demanded that the prisoner be tightly bound to prevent his escape.¹² In April of the same year, Christophe issued the order to arrest a former soldier named Agoutine, who was directly accused of trying to foment uprisings against the state. Upon arresting him for seditious activity, Christophe sent the prisoner to the emperor. But while in transit, Agoutine managed to escape his captors and ran away into the mountains.¹³

After escaping arrest, Agoutine may have joined any number of unauthorized settlements that had sprung up in the rural

interstices of Dessalines's empire. The strategists of the Leclerc expedition correctly predicted that the former slaves of Saint-Domingue would respond to renewed military conflict with "a very long and difficult marronage." They were also right to guess that many of these maroons would flee eastward into sparsely populated areas of the former Spanish colony.¹⁴ Under Dessalines and Christophe, military deserters and plantation runaways fled to border communities such as Las Cahobas, where they set up their own farms and homesteads.¹⁵ Despite the expulsion of the French and the legal enshrinement of emancipation by the new Haitian state, marronage was probably a more widespread phenomenon in independent Haiti than it had been in old-regime Saint-Domingue.

No level of repressive severity could have enabled the early Haitian state to overcome the political, economic, and geographical factors that encouraged marronage. Many former slaves successfully avoided forced labor by retreating to abandoned plantations, overgrown swampy areas, and remote mountains. In September 1806, Dessalines sent General Christophe to crack down on the *malveillants* who were hiding out in the "underbrush" of abandoned plantations near Petite Anse. Complaining that the unauthorized squatters were harassing and robbing passersby, Christophe accused them of brigandage. This was the same term that the French had used to describe Haitian insurgents during the war of independence. Christophe instructed the local commandant to conduct frequent patrols among the mangrove swamps and abandoned plantations near Petite Anse. The objective of these patrols was to arrest anyone found without a permit and anyone who "looked suspicious" and send him or her to Fort

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Laferrière, presumably to perform forced labor on the construction of the citadel. Although some unfortunate Haitians were likely captured in these patrols and sent away to haul stones, the growth of marronage in Petite Anse demonstrates the difficulty that the state faced in attempting to pin down former slaves and squeeze productive labor out of them. Petite Anse is today a suburb of Le Cap, lying less than three kilometers (1.8 miles) from the city center. If the early Haitian state had to organize special patrols to capture squatters there, there was little possibility of Dessalines's government preventing the rise of maroon communities in the vast mountainous interior of the country.

By their very nature, it is impossible to know how many secret maroon organizations developed amid the turmoil of the Haitian Revolution and during the early war-torn decades of Haitian independence. But there can be no question of the existence of runaway communities and secretive popular religious organizations, given both the Haitian rulers' violent campaigns against them and the survival of maroon secret societies well into the modern era.

Legally obliged to work on sugar plantations and unable to move about freely, Dessalines's subjects repeatedly ran away and established unauthorized settlements. Gravitating toward what James C. Scott refers to as the "mutually cancelling weak sovereignties" of border zones, hundreds of early Haitian run-aways slipped away to the island's rugged eastern border.¹⁶

The regions of Ouanaminthe, Maribaroux, Manzanillo, and Montecristi along the northern end of the border that historically divided the French and Spanish colonies were sparsely populated in the aftermath of Haitian independence.

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Since the outbreak of the revolution in 1791, the northern border region was something of a lawless refuge where former-slave insurgents hid out from the French military, traded for arms, and negotiated with the Spanish authorities. As Dessalines's empire went about capturing fugitive laborers and reorganizing sugar production on the plantations of the northern plain, some laborers escaped by traveling east to regions that they hoped were beyond the reach of the Haitian military.

Christophe complained that the northeastern border had become a haven of brigandage.¹⁷ The Haitian authorities had no reliable method for counting the population of unauthorized, fugitive settlements created in marginal regions. But because they were furious upon learning of these extralegal communities, the Haitian generals were inclined to exaggerate their size. At the end of October 1805, General Capois informed Christophe and Dessalines that "an infinity of soldiers and cultivateurs" had taken refuge on the islands in the Bay of Manzanillo in order to "hide from military service and work."¹⁸ Christophe ordered Capois to bring a battalion of soldiers to the region of Montecristi and Manzanillo, scour the seven small offshore islands where groups of fugitives had taken refuge, and arrest the runaways so that they could be returned to their respective plantations or military units.¹⁹ The campaign of destruction that Christophe conducted in the isolated mountain valleys of the northern frontier and on the tiny windswept Cayos Siete Hermanos is poignant proof of both the existence of runaway communities in early Haiti and the factors that drove early Haitian laborers to flee life on the plain and seek remote regions of the island where they might freely and peacefully enjoy the fruits of their labor.

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At first, Haitian military activity along the northeastern border was simply an extension of the campaign of roundups that began in June 1805. As, however, they became convinced that the border region had become a pole of attraction for wayward cultivateurs and military deserters, Dessalines and Christophe mounted a full-fledged campaign of depopulation. Their main tactics were mass arrests of fugitives, setting fire to and completely destroying unauthorized settlements, and shoring up border patrols. The military patrol sent to the islands off Montecristi not only arrested all of the people on the island, they also burned all of the *ajoupas* (thatch huts) that they found there.²⁰ Following the raid on the islands, Christophe ordered Capois to go to Maribaroux and “burn all of the small houses that ha[d] been built there.”²¹ In addition to the modest homes built by the runaways of the border region, the military made sure to burn the gardens that these people had planted for their subsistence. On November 14, 1805, Christophe sent patrols up and down the border from Dajabón to the mouth of the river Guayubín at the Bay of Manzanillo with instructions to burn all of the “ajoupas or conucos” and “ruin” the food crops in the region.²² In addition to growing subsistence crops, or “vivres,” some unauthorized inhabitants of the border region were making a living by capturing cattle that ranged freely on the savannahs and conducting coastal trade in small canoes. In the eyes of the early Haitian rulers, subsistence farming, cattle wrangling, and the canoe trade produced little or no revenue for the state and provided laborers with a potential alternative to the plantation economy. Christophe ordered Capois to put an end to these activities by arresting people found capturing cattle and by confiscating the canoes of coastal traders.²³

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Having failed in their daring bid to take over the entire island, Dessalines and his general staff decided that they needed to establish a systematically patrolled, militarized border. Although Dessalines was constantly alive to the threat of another French invasion, his decision to send military units to set up new checkpoints and patrols along the border was as much intended to keep laborers from escaping Haiti as to protect Haiti from external enemies. Christophe ordered the creation of a new military post at Maribaroux from which the army could mount regular patrols of the border.²⁴ The military established guard posts all along the Guayubín River with the aim of preventing anyone from passing without military authorization.²⁵ Not only had ordinary Haitian citizens escaped the plantations and deserted the military to settle along the northeastern border, espagnols who had been forcibly transported to Haiti were crossing the border in their desperate attempts to flee Haiti and return to the east. Christophe reported to Dessalines that those espagnols who were arrested trying to cross were shot and their bodies thrown into the river.²⁶

THE MAROON SECRET SOCIETIES

Although the secrets of contemporary Haitian religious organizations are usually discussed in sacral or supernatural terms, the strategic secret knowledge of Haiti's early maroon communities involved the very existence and location of their unauthorized settlements and the quasi-military hierarchy by which they strove to preserve their rustic freedom. A variety of secret maroon organizations developed in the course of the

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Haitian Revolution, but not all of them have survived to the present day. Some African-led guerrilla organizations were crushed by the ruling authorities either during or after the revolution. The Congo warriors of northern Saint-Domingue, led by Sans-Souci and Ti Noël Prieur, were defeated and dispersed by Generals Christophe and Dessalines. The insurgent “kingdom” of Grande Anse led by the African Goman was finally put down by Boyer’s republican troops in 1819. Perhaps paradoxically, the most prominently militaristic of the African maroon organizations, such as the Congos or the Grande Anse warriors, seem to have been most quickly eradicated, whereas the most evasive and secretive ones have endured. Confirming the logic of the Japanese proverb stating that the tall nail gets hammered down, the early Haitian rulers fiercely pursued and executed the most prominent military renegades, such as Goman and Sans-Souci. For their part, the unknown early leaders of the Bizango and the Sanpwel demonstrated the logic of the Haitian proverb stating that the snake who wants to grow stays underneath his rock.

The names of Haiti’s maroon secret societies offer valuable clues about their origins. Like the Congo, Rada, and Ginen societies of the Vodou faith, several of the maroon secret societies are named after places in Africa. Guinea, Congo, and the Bight of Benin are often mentioned as the ancestral homes of the Haitians, but the Mandingue secret society of Haiti’s Artibonite Valley attests to the Senegambian (and potentially Muslim) origin of some of the early Haitians. But probably the most prominent and fearsome of Haiti’s quasi-military secret societies originated in one of the most obscure and sparsely populated backwaters in the whole of West Africa.

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Haiti's Bizango society was founded by captives taken from the Bissagos archipelago off present-day Guinea-Bissau. The people of these islands, known as the Bijago or Bidyogo, are currently estimated to number roughly thirty thousand. Given that there are well over ten million Haitians, it is entirely conceivable that the membership of the Bizango secret society in Haiti is currently larger than the entire population of the Bissagos Islands. But in light of the formally secret nature of the Haitian Bizango order, it is not easy to say anything certain regarding their numbers.

The history and rituals of the Haitian Bizango organization reflect both West African practices learned by religious initiates in the Bissagos Islands and the turbulent and dangerous political climate of early Haiti. The relative autonomy of the Bissagos people has to do with the fact that their native islands are malaria ridden and apparently possess no significant mineral resources or valuable hardwoods that might have invited large-scale incursions from European colonizers. The only valuable item that the Portuguese colonists could extract from these islands was Bissagos slaves. The ongoing presence of slave traders from the fifteenth century through the nineteenth largely explains why the Bissagos have a historical reputation as a warlike people, prepared to use violence to hold on to their geographical and cultural autonomy.

Traditions of secret military organizations surely helped Bissagos slaves to survive in the hazardous context of the Haitian Revolution. Before they ever saw the inside of a slave ship, the hunters, fishermen, palm tappers, and small-scale farmers of the Bissagos Islands had grown up in the original offshore African university of marronage. Their society was

based on mixed horticulture and extractive systems of hunting, fishing, and gathering. Their culture was based on a strict and secretive orally based religion of initiates. The Bissagos slaves of colonial Saint-Domingue had been born and raised in a society that had been resisting and fleeing slave traders for generations. Angelika Andrees and Sigurdur Grimsson, anthropologists of the Bissagos Islands, report that until recently on the remote Bissagos island of Canhabaque the locals possessed the defensive tradition of immediately killing any white visitor on first sight.²⁷ Traditions involving flight, clandestinity, and decentralized violence in the form of ambush and sorcery grew directly out of the Atlantic slave trade, and they wound up being adapted to the Haitian context by the founders of the notorious Bizango.

Other Haitian secret societies are not directly named for any African place or people, and some may well have New World, aboriginal origins. Yet their names and rituals also encode histories of clandestinity and marronage. The Makandal society of northern Haiti is named after the fugitive slave who led an alleged poisoning conspiracy directed against French planters during the mid-eighteenth century.²⁸ Other secret societies are said to preserve the traditions of indigenous runaways whose hidden villages may have harbored Hispaniola's earliest African maroons. The Petwo rites of Haitian Vodou are named after a certain early Vodou priest named Don Pedro. Prominent among the Petwo pantheon are spirits such as Makaya and Gran Bwa, which are associated with the high mountain jungles and perhaps also the legacy of Hispaniola's native Tainos.

The Sanpwel, or Champwel, secret society is also held up by contemporary Vodou intellectuals as an example of Haiti's

indigenous cultural legacy. The name of the group is compelling evidence of its fugitive, maroon origins. The name Sanpwel is short for Cochon Sans Pwel, or hairless pig. In one sense this title is an animal metaphor that refers to the hunt for slave runaways. By the same token, the Haitian expression *kabrit de pye*, or “two-legged goat,” reflects the notion of a bestialized human being. The “hairless pig,” or human runaway, was the object of pursuit in the same way that the four-legged wild pig was historically pursued by hunters in Hispaniola from early colonial times into the early part of the twentieth century. But the name Sanpwel invokes another image that refers to the evasive and unrestrainable nature of the Haitian maroons. A cochon sans pwel, or hairless pig, also invokes the carnivalesque greased-pig contest in which a bald pig slathered in oil fiercely kicks, slips, and slides its way out of the grip of any foolish pursuer. This image—the folk spectacle of the greased-pig contest—is the metaphor that preserves the fugitive, maroon origins of the Sanpwel secret society. The evasive and uncontrollable nature of colonial and postemancipation maroon groups remains a profoundly influential theme in the cultural memory of the Haitian people.

Other Haitian secret societies carry onomatopoeic names that reference the music that invariably accompanies their nocturnal assemblies and processions. The societies known as Zobop are named after the rhythmic beat of the drum or the Haitian bamboo trumpet, which typically marks time during their secretive nocturnal marches. The clandestinity and quasi-military nature of the nighttime march of the Zobop was apparently exploited during the early twentieth century by Levantine merchants who hired the Zobop to illegally transport

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smuggled cloth through Port-au-Prince at night. The fearsome reputation of mystical secret societies and their established traditions of clandestinity and discretion made them suited to work as smuggling organizations in the twentieth century. Along with illicit African religious practices and a certain paramilitary potential, a history of smuggling may have also explained why these organizations developed traditions of secrecy and cultivated a fearsome and mysterious cachet. The Zobops of the twentieth century may have smuggled cloth for Syrian merchants, and their nineteenth-century forebears may have also teamed up with foreign merchants or local officials to smuggle coffee, dyewood, or other valuable commodities.

The hoe was one of the principal tools with which early Haitian farmers carved their living from remote hillsides, but the hoe blade dangled in the hand and played with a metal rod is also an important musical instrument that accentuates the rhythms of the Vodou drums. From the percussive, metallic ringing of this typically Haitian instrument comes the onomatopoeic name of another secret society, the Vlangbendeng. As with the Zobop, the sonorous name of the Vlangbendeng invokes the music that accompanies the society's midnight marches and secret rituals. Music could carry powerful political meaning for early Haitians who may have been raised in West African societies where "talking drums" were used to spread messages. Since the days of the revolution, when insurgents announced their campaigns with drumming in the hills and trumpeting conch shells, music has invariably marked the political life of the Haitian masses, who have come to know certain notorious secret assemblies according to their characteristic rhythms.

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Over the centuries, the initiates of Haiti's secret societies seem to have done a good job of keeping their secrets. The available scholarship on these organizations remains limited. However, Haitian anthropologist Michel Laguerre offers certain key analyses of the Bizango rituals and the clues that they offer regarding early Haitian history. Laguerre's descriptions of Bizango practices have influenced Kate Ramsey's characterization of these organizations' historical position as a "potentially parallel political power in Haiti."²⁹

Laguerre argues that for early Haitian farmers who clung fiercely to informal land claims, secret societies offered protection against government officials or anyone else who might try to take away their land. Laguerre emphasizes that the initiation rites and the songs of the Bizango all emphasize secrecy and warn both members and outsiders not to talk loosely about the society, its members, or its activities. As with Vodou priests, Bizango leaders possess an arcane system of secret handshakes by which they can communicate in code with other members of the so-called kingdom of the night. A Bizango march is led by a *sentinelle*. The troop includes flag bearers, and some members march with machetes. At the sound of a whistle blown by the *sentinelle*, the Bizango marchers know to immediately disperse and lie down by the side of the road in order to avoid detection. Having emerged in an era of revolution and intense repression, when both French colonizers and early Haitian regimes sought to control the movement of laborers with internal passports, the secret societies themselves adopted the ceremonial practice of controlling nocturnal travel in their areas by issuing special passports. In his 1959 book *Voodoo in Haiti*, Swiss anthropologist Alfred Métraux published the image of a passport issued

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by a Zobop society. In the course of his research, Michel Laguerre also found a copy of a Bizango passport.³⁰ With their quasi-military hierarchies, identity documents, and practices of collecting taxes and administering punishments, the state-like nature of Haitian secret societies has often transcended mere performance.

For the runaway farmers who populated the remote hills and valleys of Haiti in the early nineteenth century, maroon secret societies surely represented one of the most important forms of political organization and institutional participation. Given their secretive and hierarchical nature, Haitian religious organizations could not easily be described as “democratic.” But they were popular and participatory. For the maroon secret societies and for the many ordinary Vodou assemblies, collective religious life in Haiti emphasized reverence for sacred ancestral land. An array of beliefs concerning farms, sacred household trees, ancestors, and “rootedness” conforms to Laguerre’s functional explanation of Haitian religious societies as the guardians of the informal land claims of the masses.

THE HAITIAN CIVIL WAR

The Haitian Civil War of 1806–1819 between the north and the south was a conflict between Christophe’s system of direct exploitation of labor through plantation production and the republican system of indirect exploitation through taxation. The Haitian masses’ overwhelming preference for the relative freedom of autonomous production ensured the ultimate victory of the southern republic against the wealthier northern kingdom.

The rival governments of Pétion and Christophe fought battles and sieges, but they also utilized propaganda and material rewards to compete for the loyalty of Haitian citizens. In early Haiti, no topic was more incendiary than the return of slavery, and this was a charge that the two main regimes leveled against each other. Christophe's regime attacked Pétion for entertaining diplomatic negotiations with the French and for being pro-white. Christophe denounced Pétion for supposedly favoring the return of the hated "blancs Français."³¹ Christophe employed a proto-*noiriste* rhetoric to discredit his mixed-race, French-educated republican opponent.³² He declared that Pétion "was no different from the white man except in his skin color," and that he connived to "replunge" the Haitians into slavery by making deals to turn the country back over to the French.³³ For their part, the republican rulers at Port-au-Prince accused Christophe of treating common laborers as slaves. In 1812, as Christophe's soldiers unsuccessfully laid siege to Port-au-Prince, Pétion's forces agitated among the royalist troops, claiming that they were free citizens of the republic rather than "slaves like those of a miserable king."³⁴

In their denunciations of each other, both Christophe and Pétion grounded their propaganda in reality. The mere fact that Pétion entertained negotiations with French diplomatic emissaries did not sit well with many Haitians. The republican policy of diplomatic engagement with France would set the stage for a disastrous indemnity deal signed in the crosshairs of French navy cannons in 1825 by Pétion's successor, Boyer. This humiliating and disabling indemnity, by which generations of Haitian taxpayers paid damages to the French state and to former colonial slave owners, would contribute to

the country's centuries of economic stagnation and decline. Indeed, the forced labor employed on the plantations and construction sites in Christophe's kingdom did bear a resemblance to the slavery of the colonial era, and this fact surely contributed to the tyrant's violent fall.³⁵

But notwithstanding campaigns of wartime propaganda and elements of an ideological clash between monarchy and republicanism, Christophe and Pétion could marshal the support of Haiti's citizens only by offering them tangible rewards for service, the main ones being military rank and land. Chapter 5 outlines the military land reform that began under Pétion as well as the limited land reform undertaken by Christophe as his kingdom was on its last legs. Pétion's republic was land-rich and cash-poor, and agricultural land grants were one of the few ways that Pétion could purchase the support of his soldiers. Having witnessed the fortunes and the social prestige amassed by their superiors during the course of the revolution, Haitian soldiers sought high rank and government land grants as recompense for their service.

Amid a climate of instability and civil war, disgruntled soldiers and officers who were unhappy with their superiors had the real option of defecting to a rival government. Thomas Madiou argues that Christophe's decision to establish a European-style hereditary nobility was intended in part to entice southern officers to defect to his kingdom in exchange for a fief and a title.³⁶ Similarly, Pétion's decision to conduct military land reform was also intended to both reward the loyalty of his own troops and offer enticements to defectors. Some fighting men successfully switched from one side to the other and were rewarded for their acts of defection. In 1811,

Christophe was able to use his kingdom's swelling plantation revenues to purchase an armed frigate from the British. He christened the ship the *Princesse Royale Amethyste* and sent it into southern waters to intimidate his rivals. Not long after it sailed, however, he was enraged to learn that his sailors had taken the ship and defected to the south.³⁷ In 1815, when he outfitted a barge with supplies for his southern ally, Goman, the commanding officer and his crew of 120 also took the ship and defected to the republic.³⁸ As in revolutionary Saint-Domingue, soldiers and officers in early Haiti often switched loyalties between competing regimes, and the possibility of defection limited rulers' ability to govern by force.

Although many Haitian military men found reason to jump ship in the country's early civil wars, some went further and created their own insurgent movements. Rather than simply crossing the ill-defined military border and switching allegiances from Christophe to Pétion or vice versa, Goman was able to bring together his own band of armed insurgents and take control of a remote stretch of southern Haiti.

Goman was the most prominent and successful guerrilla leader in early Haiti. The end of Haiti's southern peninsula was the site of significant maroon activity from the very earliest days of the Haitian Revolution. An African-born survivor of the middle passage, Goman had been a leader of the remote maroon community of Platons, which reached an estimated size of ten to twelve thousand insurgents in the years 1792–1793. Les Platons were located in an area of long-standing maroon activity that coalesced in the especially rugged hillsides surrounding Pic Makaya, Haiti's second-tallest mountain.³⁹ Goman went from maroon rebel to European colonial officer in

1794, when he fought under Rigaud in the French republican campaign to oust the British from Saint-Domingue. In the context of shifting political tides, the French officer could switch back to the role of hillside insurgent. During the Leclerc expedition, Goman was one of the chief bandleaders who organized armed resistance to the French. Historian Beaubrun Ardouin groups Goman along with Sylla, Lamour Derance, and Jean Panier as one of the principal African guerrilla leaders who organized armed resistance against the French during the spring and summer of 1802.⁴⁰ Following independence, Goman became a battalion chief at Anse d'Hainault on the far western tip of the southern peninsula. In 1807, as war was breaking out between Pétion and Christophe, a group of restive officers in the Grande Anse region took up arms against Pétion's government. Goman rose to the leadership of this movement. Although Goman's rebels failed to capture the regional capital, Jérémie, they fled to the mountainous interior of southwestern Haiti, where they held out for thirteen years. Although Goman was not explicitly opposed to the plantation system, his movement exemplified the political instability that undermined the plantation order since disgruntled field laborers in the southwest had the option of fleeing forced labor by joining his insurgency.

Goman's rebel enclave was an enduring thorn in the side of the republican authorities at Port-au-Prince. As his troops skirmished with republican forces, Goman moved his headquarters from one mountainside to another. His rebel command received supplies and munitions from foreign smugglers and from Christophe's kingdom, to which Goman's movement was allied.⁴¹ Goman's fearsome soldiers were among the most hard-

ened veterans of the Haitian Revolution. The Grande Anse maroons carried large leather shields which were designed to defend against swords and bayonets and for which they were named "brigands plaqués" (shield-bearing brigands). The republican troops who went to crush the Grande Anse rebellion faced ambushes and booby traps. As in other early Haitian military campaigns, Pétion's government resorted to scorched-earth tactics in order to crush Goman's movement and bring all of southern Haiti under republican control. During an 1813 campaign, republican troops burned all of the huts and destroyed all of the cultivation that they could find in rebel territory, but they could not successfully dislodge the insurgents.⁴²

The example of the Grande Anse movement emboldened other rebellious Haitians. In 1812, when a republican officer named Léveillé was dissatisfied that he had not received any reward or promotion following a republican military victory, he began to hatch a plot. Léveillé argued to a group of associates that "the forests and the mountains have neither doors nor keys and we can well enter there as Goman did in 1807."⁴³ Although Léveillé himself failed to organize a successful uprising, the presence of an entrenched rural insurgency had the potential to encourage similar armed movements.

Ultimately, the triumph of the Haitian republic over both Christophe's kingdom and Goman's insurgency had more to do with land and labor policy than with sheer military force. The threats of war and insurgency compelled President Pétion to give land to common soldiers and to officially grant freedom of movement to the cultivateurs. These two policies spelled ruin for the plantation system, but they were crucial for winning ordinary Haitians to the side of the republic.

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In the course of his 1813 campaign against the Grande Anse insurgents, Pétion issued a set of orders that outlined his policy concerning the rights of the cultivateurs. He instructed his military commanders that agricultural laborers were not to be forced against their will to stay on the plantations “to which they were attached in the past.”⁴⁴ This unspecified invocation of “the past” was probably an indirect way of referring to the touchy subject of slavery and to the fact that some military men and plantation bosses were forcing laborers to toil on the very same plantations to which they had been confined as slaves. Pétion complained that the laborers in republican-controlled areas of the southwest were “tyrannized,” treated like “serfs,” and never paid. He argued that this mistreatment was one of the main reasons for the survival of Goman’s insurrection. In order to undercut his military rivals, Pétion demanded liberalized labor relations. He declared that the field laborers were as free as their employers, and that they had the right to contract with whatever plantation owner or leaseholder they chose. Pétion affirmed that “free people must not be whipped,” and he instructed his officers to inform the cultivateurs that they were free and that the republican government cared for their rights and well-being. He argued that in order to restore a rebellious population to productive toil, the government should treat workers with equity rather than repression. He also relied on material concessions in the form of land grants in order to undercut the southern rebellion, believing that an expanded class of small proprietors would support and strengthen his regime.⁴⁵

His land grants and support for the cultivateurs’ freedom of movement helped his immediate successor, Boyer, defeat both Goman’s insurgency and Christophe’s northern kingdom.

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These policies also accounted for the fact that Pétion was nicknamed *Papa Bon Coeur*; and they probably explain why he was the only early Haitian head of state who died a natural death in office. The policies of land reform and freedom of movement did not, however, simply grow out of the president's famously good heart. The credible threats to the republican regime posed by guerrilla insurgents and Christophe's militarized kingdom caused Pétion's regime to reach out to the laborers and common soldiers with land grants and expanded freedoms. As early Haitian military leaders made war on one another, the rural laborers were making slow, steady gains in their prolonged, irregular war against forced labor and the plantation system.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Land Question and the Triumph of the Haitian Republic

THE Haitian Revolution and the process of decentralized settlement described in this book represented not the first but the second major wave of maroon settlement on Hispaniola. In *The Repeating Island*, a dense tome filled with postmodern wordplay, the Cuban thinker Antonio Benítez-Rojo explores the comparative dimensions of Caribbean history and the cyclically parallel historical processes that unite the histories of a varied and divided archipelago.¹ Spanish Santo Domingo was the initial nexus of African slave importation in the Americas and the site of the first Caribbean sugar boom during the first half of the sixteenth century. Plantation slavery quickly spawned violent rebellion, and in 1522 Wolof slaves launched an uprising on the plantation of Columbus's son Diego Colón. By the 1540s, maroon communities had become entrenched in the island's interior. Slaves who ran away or who were manumitted became roving cattle hunters and farmed small plots, or conucos. This early, maroon-like social substrate

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of black and mixed-race independent producers was the origin of much of the population of Spanish Santo Domingo.

Richard Turits points out that as late as the early twentieth century, the Dominican rural interior was so rustic and sparsely settled that so-called *montería* remained one of the main modes of economic subsistence.² This was the name for the capture and slaughter of feral and semi-feral swine, goats, and cattle. Centuries of rough, rural freedom in *el monte* was the historical outgrowth of early colonial patterns of marronage and metropolitan neglect.

As with the early Haitian grain trade that augmented the food supply of the Jamaican slave plantations, maroon economies could exist in a kind of ironic symbiosis with neighboring slave colonies. The unregulated, decentralized, pastoral economy of colonial Santo Domingo grew during the eighteenth century because of a cross-island trade that supplied essential draft animals to the booming slave plantations of French Saint-Domingue.

Following the Haitian Revolution, Hispaniola became an island characterized by two different maroon economic modes: intensive Haitian food farms in the west and sprawling, unfenced Dominican cattle operations in the east. These two maroon modes came to intermingle and overlap each other along the unregulated, ill-defined border of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Haiti's population grew and as its government took control of the east, former Spanish colonial towns became Haitian towns. Hinche and Saint Michel de L'Attalaye are probably the two largest examples. But the names of a variety of Haitian towns, such as Lascahobas, Cerca Carvajal, Los Cacaos, or Los Palis, attest

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to their early history as Spanish colonial settlements. Spanish-speaking people who could perhaps best be described as “ethnic Dominicans” made up part of the population of these regions. Also, in an extension of the maroon pattern of state evasion, Haitian farmers fled conscription and the dangers of the periodic insurrections of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by settling across the border where land was more abundant. Haitians set up farms in a variety of Dominican border communities, but they were especially numerous around Restauración, Loma de Cabrera, and Dajabón in the north.³

Sixteenth-century Santo Domingo was the site of the first Caribbean sugar boom, but its slave population was small compared to the large Caribbean plantation colonies of the early modern era: Jamaica, Saint-Domingue, and Cuba. Separated from the initial emergence of the free black and mixed-race population in Santo Domingo by more than two centuries of history, the Haitian Revolution is best contrasted with the history of subsequent emancipation processes in Jamaica, the United States, and Cuba.

It is not by chance that Haitian history has not featured prominently amid the recent postemancipation histories that have focused on Cuba, Louisiana, or Jamaica. It is because Haiti’s history simply does not easily fit alongside these other cases. The political stirrings and economic ambitions of former slaves in Jamaica, Cuba, Brazil, or the United States never overcame the political and economic hegemony of white rule. Haiti’s history does not easily lend itself to the comparative mode of analysis. Only in Haiti were the slave masters killed or exiled permanently. The few mixed-race slave mas-

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ters who remained, and the military strongmen who attempted to step into the shoes of the colonial planters, were never successful at controlling the country's system of landownership. The iron-fisted Henry Christophe held a feudal plantation scheme together for fifteen years but fell to violence.

The contentious issue of squatting may exist in some form in every country on earth—perhaps even in Singapore and Luxembourg. But the question of squatting in Haiti has been of paramount importance to any coherent analysis of the country's history. Unauthorized, informal land claims remain the key to understanding the country's economic and social development and the differences between it and the surrounding post-slave societies. Like the former slaves of Haiti, freed people in Jamaica aspired primarily to own their own small farms as a means of controlling their own labor and lives; Thomas Holt describes the mass exodus of former slaves from Jamaican estates in the 1840s and the growth of squatting in the Jamaican countryside. The 1859 land conflict that emerged in Westmoreland Parish and exploded into a violent incident in Falmouth exemplified the determination of black Jamaican "settlers" to make and defend claims to the farms that they established on abandoned former sugar plantations.⁴ British and Jamaican authorities can be compared to French and early Haitian authorities inasmuch as they were all generally "blind to the economic potential of peasant agriculture," because of their "willful refusal to consider alternatives to the failing sugar industry."⁵ But the political and social balance of forces in revolutionary and early independent Haiti was so drastically different from that in Jamaica and other postemancipation countries that in Haiti small-scale proprietary farming not

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only emerged in the margins of the plantation system but grew to blanket the majority of the country's productive land. Only in Haiti did the interrelated processes of civil war, land reform, and squatting that I examine in this chapter create a new majority class of freeholders.

Whereas British slave emancipation in the 1830s contributed to the decline of plantation production in Jamaica and other British West Indian colonies, in Cuba, Rebecca Scott points out, the sugar sector grew following war and eventual slave emancipation in 1886. Former slaves in Cuba were largely unable to acquire self-sustaining farms. The large sugar estates remained intact and could be bought up by Yankee investors whose property rights were sacrosanct. Land ownership in pre-Castro Cuba was especially concentrated, and the agricultural system functioned on the backs of plantation laborers, tenants, and sharecroppers. A significant proportion of Cuba's freed people and their descendants had no choice but to cut cane and endure plantation life with its cycles of toil, indebtedness, and hunger during the notorious dead season when there was little work to be had. In the U.S. South, General Sherman's famous promise of forty acres to freed slaves went unfulfilled. The postwar U.S. South had large expanses of available farmland, but the authors and enforcers of the Jim Crow social order made sure that precious little of it could be owned by blacks.

The long-standing intellectual habit of "Haitian exceptionalism" is surely a product of racial thinking and the long-standing tendency of white scholars who have cast Haiti as an exotic, primitive, destructive, and hopelessly desperate other. But by itself, a refusal to accept racial determinism does not

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resolve the question of how to explain the origins and trajectory of this remarkable, and remarkably poor, nation. No other society in the Americas experienced such a widespread transition to small-scale freeholding, and no other witnessed more than two centuries of total breakdown in formal, elite-directed systems of landownership. Since its founding revolution, Haiti has never yet had an effective cadastral survey or any other system that could underlie a stable market in rural and urban land. From 1915 to 1935, American occupiers tried and failed to establish some kind of order so that they could generate in Haiti the kind of substantial profits that they had accrued from plantations in Cuba or Central America. Their failure to do so is arguably one of the most important elements in explaining how Haiti became poor and undercapitalized even by the standards of a poor, undercapitalized region.

At every level, Haiti's history has been characterized by irregularity and contestation regarding the ownership and administration of lands large and small. As this chapter endeavors to explain, landownership in Haitian history has been a chaos of competing interests. The confused patchwork of Haitian land tenure has been shaped by private notaries and surveyors, undocumented claims to land inherited through families, and vast state-owned lands that have been used, underused, neglected, and appropriated by unauthorized squatters amid a range of government leasing arrangements that have typically favored kleptocrats. Land conflict has occurred in all eras and in a kaleidoscopic diversity of forms. At the lowest level, siblings or neighbors might fight it out over a small garden that produces bananas or peas. Such low-level conflicts would often have been settled by rudimentary, popular means:

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sticks and stones, machetes, or the use of a pernicious magic spell or poisonous powder.

The nineteenth century was characterized by an abundance of cheap, uncultivated land, and by the turn of the twentieth century most of the best farmland was occupied. The twentieth century witnessed repeated, sometimes bloody conflicts between communities of small farmers and large landowners, or *grandons*, who periodically attempted to evict families. The notorious Jean-Rabel massacre of 1987 represents only one prominent example. Rival claims to land are a consistent problem hampering investment and economic development throughout the country. In contemporary Haiti, falsified land papers and unauthorized land transactions represent one of the most widespread forms of crime and well-springs of discord. Haitians are constantly going to jail over cases of forged land papers. Along with the generalized lack of credit and financing, the conflict, uncertainty, and contention that characterize the country's chaotic land market remain a major obstacle to development.

Popular land conflict in the twentieth century has also reached the level of decentralized collective resistance to foreign capital. During World War II, the U.S. government sought to address wartime shortages in tropical commodities by establishing rubber and citronella plantations in Haiti. Hungry farmers displaced by these projects would set fire to American plantation facilities—a kind of latter-day echo of the forms of social conflict described in this book. In recent years, foreign companies have undertaken drilling programs to assess the viability of prospective gold and copper mines in Haiti's northern mountains. In small communities that supplement

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their farming with artisanal gold mining, the people view the foreign mining companies with trepidation. In addition to ore grades, multinational mining giants must also consider the inclinations of local residents, who can block roads to protest investment and development that Haitians justifiably fear might bring them no significant benefits.

LAND AND FREEDOM

The Haitian Revolution was a prolonged struggle over the ownership and use of land. Amid the political violence of the period from 1791 through 1844, former slaves and free-born Haitian citizens brought about a drastic transformation in land tenure that was fundamentally unlike that of any of the other postemancipation societies of the New World. As rebelling laborers destroyed and abandoned the industrial agriculture of the sugar economy, they undermined the system of large-scale landownership upon which the plantation system was based. In its place the Haitian laborers developed a system of small-scale, private landholding and mixed subsistence agriculture that shaped the subsequent social and economic development of Haiti and ultimately doomed all elite attempts to bring back the sugar business and the plantation profits of the colonial era.

Michel Laguerre observes that the historical purpose of maroon secret societies such as the Bizango was the organization of poor Haitian farmers for the defense of their landholdings.⁶ Having argued in the previous chapters that the early Haitian military regimes attempted to force former slaves back onto plantations and that the Haitian laborers repeatedly

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fled arrangements of forced labor, in this chapter I discuss the origins of the small, independent farms that the Haitians turned to as the fundamental alternative to bondage and servitude.

For the early citizens of Haiti, landownership became indistinguishably linked with the concept of freedom. Michel Rolph Trouillot writes that for former slaves “land meant liberty.”⁷ After independence, although all Haitians were free according to the law, the owner of even a tiny farm of one *carreau* enjoyed a status and a lifestyle that fundamentally distinguished him or her from a cultivateur hired or confined to work on someone else’s land. Among most citizens of early Haiti, farmland was the primary source of both material subsistence and social status. For small farmers, freedom meant freedom from the compulsion to work for anyone else.

As leaders of postemancipation Saint-Domingue and early Haiti attempted to convince the masses of the distinction between slavery and free labor, most of the former slaves were more concerned with the less abstract distinction between landownership and landlessness. The popular preoccupation with landholding characterized the worldview of postemancipation populations throughout the Caribbean. Nigel Bolland writes that former slaves’ views about the relationship between landownership and freedom point to “the need to look beyond the liberal notion of freedom and its association with the bourgeois marketplace.”⁸ In Haiti as in other societies emerging from slavery, postemancipation labor arrangements still involved coercion and rigid class distinction. But since the former slaves of Haiti were able to acquire land and turn to subsistence farming for their livelihoods, Haitian elites were

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neither able to corral the laboring population into large-scale workplaces nor impart upon them the ideological association of capitalist wage labor with freedom. As Haiti's laborers found hard-won refuge in the rural fastnesses of their small farms, the success and growth of Haitian agriculture allowed for a solidification of the popular conception that all forms of plantation work and hired labor were equivalent to slavery.

All of Haiti's early leaders favored the system of large-scale plantations known as *la grande culture*. No Haitian leader ever advocated a complete parceling out of the plantations or the widespread distribution of land to ordinary citizens. Even the "maroon chief" Goman apparently harbored ambitions to resume plantation production in the Grand Anse region. During an 1813 military campaign, he ordered his subordinates not to set fire to the plantations, since this would only make it more costly to rebuild them in the future.⁹ But despite every elite grouping's attempt to constitute itself as the island's next plantocracy, the former slaves succeeded in gradually dividing the nation's agricultural land among themselves.

Ruling regimes tried but failed to reestablish plantation agriculture because former slaves acquired small bits of land and defended them by whatever means possible. Rulers' efforts to preserve the great estates and turn the majority of former slaves into a class of landless cultivateurs were thwarted by the destabilizing conflicts between competing colonial empires and military governments. In an era of nearly continuous civil war in which every competing regime relied upon winning the loyalties of armed former slaves, land grants became the most effective form of payment for military service. All competing military elites were concerned with becoming the

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new beneficiaries of the plantation surpluses, but the conflicts themselves destroyed a large part of the very spoils for which the leaders were fighting. Haiti's early conflicts contributed to the destruction of the plantations and the emergence of the smallholding peasantry in two principal ways. In the first place, prolonged war drew the efforts of military leaders away from policing the plantation system. And more important, the exigencies of civil war drove President Pétion to use land grants to secure the loyalty of soldiers and to legally recognize the legitimacy of small farms of one to five carreaux in order to win the support of the broader populace. These military land reforms encouraged the breakup of the great estates, and they also represented rulers' partial, grudging acceptance of a process that had been occurring since the early days of the slave insurrection. People who had made the hard-won transition from forced laborers to landowners were unwilling to go back.

LAND REFORM FOR THE ELITE

State-directed land distribution in western Hispaniola did not begin as an egalitarian or populist measure. No military regime came into power with a program of dividing up the estates in order to turn former slaves into yeoman farmers. Rather, French colonial authorities and Haitian rulers initially used grants and leases of state-owned plantations as a way to reward or purchase the loyalty of high-ranking officers and to enrich themselves and their associates.

The earliest postemancipation state land transfers were grants or leases of intact plantations. The recipients of these grants and leases not only had rights to the land but also re-

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ceived legal rights to the labor of the nominally free cultivateurs who were attached to specific properties. In January 1803, the struggling French colonial administration under General Rochambeau granted a five-year lease of the Bois Gerard coffee plantation to Vice Admiral Latouche Tréville, the highest-ranking French naval officer in the colony. In addition to paying a yearly lease to the state and paying the laborers one-fourth of the annual revenue, in his new capacity as planter Tréville was responsible for watching over the formerly enslaved cultivateurs of the plantation “en bon père de famille” (as a good father).¹⁰ Far from upending the plantation system, state redistribution of land in western Hispaniola began as a means of shifting the ownership and administration of particular plantations to suit the interests of military rulers.

Haitian heads of state used the redistribution of plantation lands as a way to accumulate personal wealth. In the midst of distributing plantations to their inner circle of top military officers, Pétion and Christophe were able to reserve some of the choicest properties for themselves. In October 1805, Christophe granted a citizen the right to lease a coffee plantation near the northwestern village of Moustiques and then instructed the local administrator to reserve a similar plantation for himself.¹¹ Pétion began his program of land reform by granting a massive sugar plantation to each of his generals and a coffee plantation to each of the republic’s adjutant generals and colonels. As his government was making these grants, Pétion himself received two entire sugar plantations: the Momance estate near Léogâne and the Rocheblanche estate on the Cul-de-Sac plain.¹² The republican President Pétion felt no less entitled to massive private estates than his royalist adversary Christophe.

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For these two founding Haitian statesmen, land reform began at home.

As head of state, Dessalines continued Louverture's policy of banning the sale of small farms and legally overturning small land transfers when he discovered them. In May 1806, Christophe and Dessalines organized a campaign against small farmers who had taken to cultivating sections of former plantation land or who had set up gardens and homesteads in remote parts of the mountainous interior. Christophe ordered officers to search every region of the country, "particularly in the mountains," in order to annul and break up all of the small properties that the regime considered unprofitable and that were purchased or otherwise set up without the permission of the emperor. He also ordered the military to crack down on all of the laborers who were cultivating small plots of land on a half-and-half sharecropping arrangement with plantation leaseholders. This sharecropping arrangement was an early example of the Haitian *demwatye* system, by which the farm laborer or group of laborers receives one-half of a crop grown on land belonging to someone else. Whereas the official state agrarian policy called for laborers to be paid one-fourth of the value of a crop, the rise of a system of farming to halves reflected the shortage of agricultural labor in postemancipation Haiti. It also reflected a transitional period in the embattled evolution from the plantation system to small-scale subsistence production. In a determined effort to prevent subsistence farming from edging out their plantation profits, Dessalines and Christophe ordered that plantation fugitives caught living on small farms be arrested and sent back to one of the empire's large sugar operations.¹³

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LAND REFORM FOR THE RANK AND FILE

Like state-sponsored slave emancipation, state-sponsored land reform ultimately occurred as a result of war. In 1793, the embattled French republican authorities needed to recruit rebel slave soldiers in a desperate bid to retain control of the colony. The one thing that they could offer over their British and Spanish adversaries was a universal decree of emancipation designed to secure the loyalty of former slave combatants. From 1806 through 1819, as the regimes of Pétion and Christophe waged a prolonged civil war, land was one of the few material rewards that they could use to bolster the allegiance of their soldiers.

Five years after the arrest and likely execution of Commandant Guillaume, Pétion once again granted former slaves legal claim to farmland that they had taken over during the revolution. In the aftermath of Dessalines's assassination, the earliest distributions of land in the southern and western provinces were designed to shore up support for Pétion's embattled republic. In 1807, as the republic in Port-au-Prince faced attack from Christophe's regime in the north and Goman's insurgency in the south, Pétion and the senate issued one of the most radical decrees of the entire Haitian Revolution. On April 20, 1807, Pétion's republic officially granted ownership rights to any farmers then cultivating land regardless of the size of the parcel. The one condition of this unprecedented, blanket land grant was that new landowners were obliged to plant their parcels in coffee, cotton, or other cash crops within a year of the decree.¹⁴ It is not clear how many Haitians acquired official land papers as a result of the April 20th legislation. The political significance of this decision lies

in the fact that Pétion's regime was compelled to step back from its commitment to *la grande culture* in order to appeal for the political support of ordinary citizens who had begun cultivating small plots of land without legal title.

By distributing state lands to military veterans, President Pétion contributed to the process by which former slaves settled the countryside and established independent farms. But this was never his initial vision or aspiration. His military land reform occurred under the joint duress of civil war and empty state coffers, and it began as a program of distributing large plantations to a small core of high-ranking officers. What might have happened if early Haiti had ever known a ruler who openly advocated the dismantling and parceling out of the plantations and the creation of a nation of small independent landowners? Perhaps such a ruler would have been credited with creating the new Haitian social order from above. The fields of political and intellectual history with their insistent focus on ideology and elite discourse inevitably emphasize the importance of leadership and policy. Like the very political leaders that they study, historians of *la politique politicienne* often imagine that state authorities are somehow sovereign over larger processes of social and economic change. What is most interesting about the emergence of Haiti's counter-plantation system is not that it reflected the revolutionary aspirations of any particular leader but rather that it rose up in spite of *all* Haitian rulers' relentless attempts to reconstitute the plantation system.

Haiti's former slaves did not divide the land in an orderly or consistent manner. In place of the large and medium-sized plantations that characterized old regime Saint-Domingue,

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land tenure in postemancipation Haiti became an unruly patchwork of great estates and small farms. The forms and origins of property ownership were as diverse as the sizes and types of properties themselves. In a few cases, despite the revolutionary break with the colonial past, Haitian citizens in the Léogâne area held and renewed land titles dating to the days of slavery. In 1820, the citoyenne Jeane Saliman registered her legal claim to a 169-acre plantation near Petite Goâve on the basis of a family land document dating back to 1769.¹⁵ But even as some of Haiti's plantation land stayed in the families of former slaveholders, Haiti's laboring masses were increasingly able to acquire modest pieces of land so that they would not have to live as servile laborers working for plantation owners such as Citoyenne Saliman.

Former plantation laborers became small-scale proprietors in three main ways: by squatting on land without any formal title, by purchasing small plots of land, and by receiving small grants of land from the state in exchange for military service. Of these three methods, squatting was probably the most prevalent and the least documented. Whereas some incomplete records of early nineteenth-century land sales and land grants survive, by their very nature the more successful squatters and maroon runaways did not leave much of a paper trail.

Dessalines and Christophe were not the only Haitian rulers who struggled to ferret out and forcibly depopulate early runaway settlements. As President Boyer strived to resurrect the plantation system in the 1820s, the prospect of a rough but autonomous existence on Haiti's smaller offshore islands continued to attract laborers who fled the plantations. Just as

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refugees from northern plantations fled to the small islands off Montecristi, laborers in the western province began setting up homesteads on the island of La Gonâve northwest of Port-au-Prince. These unauthorized settlers survived outside the plantation zones by fishing, cutting mahogany, and cultivating subsistence gardens. Following the publication of Boyer's Code Rural and the state's campaign to renew plantation production, however, the government at Port-au-Prince decided to wipe out the settlements on La Gonâve and put the offshore squatters back to work. In the late 1820s, Boyer launched an expedition in which the military destroyed all the "squattings" set up by migrants on the island and "brought them to the main land, to contribute to its welfare, industry, and prosperity."⁶ Like Dessalines's, Boyer's efforts to compel Haiti's citizens to accept forced labor involved destroying modest settlements on offshore islands and in other geographically marginal zones where fugitive cultivateurs sought refuge from the plantation economy. These settlements tend to have appeared in the historical record only at the very point that they were discovered and stamped out by the state. But laborers who had the experience of setting up a runaway settlement were determined and versatile people who relied on mobility in their ongoing struggle to exist beyond the reach of the state. For every unauthorized settlement that was destroyed, an unknowable proliferation of other settlements thrived in rural obscurity.

The rarity of written records on landholding and land use in postemancipation Haiti is itself evidence of the irregular and covert means by which former slaves became independent rural producers. Individuals who cultivated and occupied

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land without any legal title were understandably suspicious and resistant toward state investigators, surveyors, and absentee claimants who threatened their undocumented land claims. Illiterate former slaves who could not obtain legal titles to their land were wise to avoid and thwart any elite efforts to survey their fields and create comprehensive cadastral surveys of the countryside. Those few farmers who could pay surveyors, notaries, and state officials were quick to obtain official land papers. Many land documents dating to the nineteenth century are still held by families and private notaries throughout Haiti. But in the aftermath of emancipation, widespread acts of marronage, rural migration, and usurpation through extralegal squatting accounted for the majority of the tens of thousands of small farms that grew up in the countryside. For the early Haitian farmers who lived and raised families on land that they held no papers for, the most meaningful concept of ownership was summed up in the popular dictum “*sak nan min ou, e sa ki propriete ou*”—that which is in your hands is that which is your property.

As Pétion's civil war with Christophe's kingdom continued, the chronically impoverished republic repeatedly used land grants to pay soldiers and officers. Though Pétion's program of land redistribution began with grants of large plantations to generals, it did not end there. Pétion was later compelled to provide land grants to the lower-ranking officers and common soldiers in a bid to curry support for his war against Christophe. In December 1809, Pétion began an unprecedented wave of military land grants. According to the new scheme, veterans of the Haitian war of independence were all entitled to grants of state-owned land. Among the revolutionary veterans living

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in the republic, colonels received twenty-five carreaux, battalion chiefs received fifteen, captains and lieutenants received ten, and soldiers and noncommissioned officers were given small parcels of five carreaux.¹⁷ These land grants continued throughout Pétion's regime and were eventually extended to include soldiers who had not fought in the war of independence.

Pétion always intended his division of plantation lands and his support for the creation of small rural properties as limited measures. He and his political circle saw small farms as a necessary concession made to members of the military, which they hoped could coexist alongside the sugar industry rather than supplant it. In the course of distributing state-owned lands, Pétion and his successor, Boyer, made sure not to break up sugar estates. The small plots of land issued to soldiers and lower-ranking officers by the Haitian republic were all in areas of "standing timber" or sections of coffee plantations that were either "unestablished" or "abandoned."¹⁸ In addition, Pétion's regime worked to prevent the new small farms from drawing large numbers of laborers off the existing plantations. While Pétion's regime grudgingly granted parcels of five carreaux (roughly 6.45 hectares, or just under sixteen acres) to an estimated six thousand common soldiers, the state worked to prevent these new sixteen-acre minifundias from employing dependent laborers and thereby draining the workforces of the struggling sugar plantations. An 1813 grant of five carreaux of former plantation land to a soldier named Profit Titre was made on the condition that the new owner not "support" any cultivateurs on his land.¹⁹ Whereas sixteen acres of fertile tropical farmland was potentially enough to maintain several tenants, sharecroppers, or servants, such small parcels

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were not large enough to profitably manufacture sugar. Accordingly, Pétion's government strove to legally prevent military land grants from draining the already dwindling supply of cultivateurs available to the sugar industry.

Perhaps the best evidence for the success and popularity of the program of military land grants Pétion instituted was the fact that his rival Christophe wound up copying this policy. Toward the end of his reign, as both internal and external pressures threatened his kingdom, and soldiers continued to defect to the south in search of land grants and an escape from the rigid discipline of the royal military, Christophe began doling out small farms to his fighting men. His land reform began in December 1819, less than a year before the violent fall of his kingdom. Much like the land reforms that Pétion had launched in 1809, Christophe distributed parcels of former plantation lands to military veterans according to their rank. The main difference was one of scale. Under Christophe's land reform, captains received ten carreaux of land, sublieutenants received six, sergeant majors received four, sergeants received three, and corporals received two. Whereas Pétion granted five carreaux to common soldiers, Christophe granted them a single carreau. Out of at least 1,853 land grants that Christophe's kingdom made in 1819, the vast majority were one-carreau parcels distributed to enlisted men.²⁰

A farm of one carreau (the equivalent of just 1.29 hectares, or 3.19 acres) was small indeed. Even such a seemingly tiny portion of Caribbean farmland, however, was enough to support a family on the basis of mixed agriculture. After independence, family farms, including many as small as one carreau, became the basic institution of the Haitian economy—a fact

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that the military rulers reluctantly came to accept. Following the death of Pétion in 1818, as Boyer staked his claim to the presidency of the republic, he was compelled to acknowledge the smallholders who had acquired modest tracts of land under the regime of his predecessor. In his first speech as president, Boyer affirmed that the republic was based on the “sacred right of property,” and that the “master of one carreau of land like the master of one hundred” was equal in the eyes of the law.²¹ Pétion and Boyer never made land grants smaller than five carreaux. As his regime was on its last legs, Christophe made only a few thousand land grants of this size. The masters of one carreau of land whom Boyer sought to appeal to upon his ascendance to power were people who had either taken over a piece of land as squatters or purchased a small plot of land for very little money on the secondary market. Even though Haiti’s rulers all recognized that these tiny farms barely larger than a hectare (2.5 acres) were undermining their efforts to reanimate the plantation system, at times of war and instability, when they needed to rely on the rank and file of their armies and prevent rural unrest, they were willing to bend to their citizens’ underlying desire to become landowners. By 1820, Haiti’s former slaves had forced their rulers to grudgingly recognize the property rights of smallholders.

THE DECOMMODIFICATION OF RURAL LAND

The industrial sugar plantation and the small peasant proprietorship coexisted in early Haiti, but in that historical context they proved to be fundamentally incompatible institutions. As political considerations compelled them to issue small land

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grants, Pétion, Boyer, and Christophe may have nursed the vain hope that small farms of three to sixteen acres would not interfere with the sugar economy. State-issued small farms had a catalytic effect in the creation of Haiti's independent peasantry, however. By distributing at least three hundred thousand acres to more than eight thousand soldiers and government officials before his death in 1818, Pétion initiated a self-reinforcing economic cycle by which the cost of labor rose and the cost of rural land fell.

By subdividing untended plantation land and granting thousands of parcels to soldiers, Pétion's land reform lowered the economic demand for farmland in Haiti, since thousands of potential buyers were suddenly granted parcels by the state. The initial land grants also increased the supply of small farms on the market, since some of the individuals who received larger land grants of ten or twenty-five carreaux turned around and further subdivided their new property for sale. In July 1810, Jean-François Vincent received a government land grant of ten carreaux on the former Coulon plantation near Petite Goâve. Less than a year later he divided the parcel and sold nine of those ten carreaux to a local woman.²² Pétion's government eventually acknowledged and even acquiesced to the reality that the recipients of state land grants were chopping up the parcels for sale. In an April 1816 grant of twenty carreaux to Sublieutenant Jolivet Charlot, Pétion authorized the recipient both to take possession of the land and to "divide" it.²³ Whereas Louverture and Dessalines had struggled mightily to prevent the sale of small farms, Pétion, Boyer, and even Christophe were compelled to take land-reform measures that effectively flooded the country with available farmland.

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Land reform contributed to a spiraling economic process that spelled the death of large-scale plantation agriculture in general and the sugar industry in particular. As cultivateurs left the plantations to live on small farms, the supply of plantation laborers decreased. This exodus from the plantations exacerbated the underlying labor shortage caused by the significant population loss that had occurred during the violence of the revolution. With fewer available laborers, plantation owners and leaseholders who could no longer rely on corporal punishment and forced confinement were faced with two options: either give up intensive cash-crop cultivation or begin to pay the cultivateurs better. Both options contributed to the ruin of the plantation system and the further growth of the *petite paysannerie*. Every time a plantation owner ceased to plant sugar and gave up tending and planting coffee trees, the newly fallow plantation land became open to cultivation by subsistence farmers. Titleholders had the option of waiting for their land to be used by squatters or attempting to subdivide the land and sell it off. In either case, the unavailability of plantation labor and the abandonment of one plantation after another caused land prices to fall. As land prices fell and the shrinking corps of cultivateurs began to be paid one-half rather than one-quarter of plantation revenue, laborers who had not yet been able to leave the plantation had better chances to buy their own small farms.

Although records of land rental and sale in early Haiti are rare and far from complete, those documents that have survived partially illuminate both the relative cost of urban versus rural properties as well as the cost of land in terms of the earning power of ordinary Haitian citizens. Two important

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facts come through clearly: first, agricultural land in the early Haitian republic was relatively cheap, even when measured against the meager earnings of laborers and soldiers. And second, urban real estate became more expensive relative to rural land as the countryside became the domain of independent farmers, and the small economic elite of early Haiti congregated in the port cities and mainly took on a comprador role: trading in coffee and other tropical commodities.

Those Haitian citizens who did not receive military land grants and who did not become rural squatters had a realistic chance to become small-scale proprietors by buying land. Although Pétion originally continued with Dessalines's and Louverture's policy of outlawing the purchase of small pieces of land, small-scale land transfers eventually became common in the early Haitian republic. A handful of surviving land-transfer records representing all three provinces of Haiti indicate that land prices in early nineteenth-century Haiti ranged from six to sixteen gourdes per carreau. In order to place these prices in some context, state-employed construction workers and common soldiers generally earned half a gourde per week during the early nineteenth century. At this rate of two gourdes per month, or twenty-four gourdes per year, one or two carreaux of farmland at roughly ten gourdes per carreau was probably within reach of a large proportion of Haiti's ordinary citizens.

Land is an interesting commodity in that its nominal and relative price can undergo mind-boggling transformations on the basis of broad political, historical, and economic changes. The farmland of Saint-Domingue skyrocketed in price during the plantation boom of the eighteenth century on the basis of

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slavery, a debt-fueled system of mercantile credit, and supercycles of exploding demand for coffee and sugar. Following Haitian independence, the same land would give meaning to the expression “dirt cheap.” The tremendously low price of land in early nineteenth-century Haiti is evident when compared with contemporary costs of other basic commodities. At Port-au-Prince in 1813, cattle sold for between ten and fifty-six gourdes per head, whereas former plantation land in the vicinity of the capital sold for six gourdes per carreau in 1816.²⁴ At Pestel in May 1836, while fifteen carreaux of land sold for nine and six-tenths gourdes per carreau, a single cow sold for eighteen gourdes.²⁵ In early Haiti, a single head of cattle generally sold for more than an entire hectare (2.5 acres) of prime agricultural land. Land in early Haiti was also relatively cheap compared to other agricultural and industrial commodities. In Jacmel in 1824, the military and the state hospital purchased eggs for twenty-five cents a dozen, milk for twelve cents a bottle, bread for twelve and a half cents a pound, chickens for twelve cents each, and fresh meat for between eight and twelve and a half cents a pound.²⁶ By conservatively assuming an average land price of ten gourdes per carreau, farmland in 1820s Haiti could theoretically have been purchased for the equivalent of forty dozen eggs, eighty bottles of milk, or a hundred pounds of bread or fresh beef per carreau.

Land in the early Haitian republic was also cheap in comparison to imported industrial commodities. At Port-au-Prince in 1813, imported hoes and scythes sold for half a gourde.²⁷ At this rate, an entire carreau of farmland would have traded for the value of twenty iron hoes. Whereas the slaves and cultivateurs of Saint-Domingue were afforded only

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the limited use of provision grounds as part of their attachment to a particular plantation, citizens of early Haiti who could muster up the cash value of a single cow or a load of metal tools had a real chance to become legal proprietors.

Foreign observers were struck by the low prices of land in early Haiti. In 1828, James Franklin estimated that “the finest land in the republic would not sell for more than sixty dollars per acre, “ and he observed the sale of “an old cotton plantation, which only brought twenty dollars per acre for one part, and about twelve for another.” Franklin attributed such apparently low prices to “the difficulty of finding labourers for cultivation” and the lack of domestic demand for agricultural products. Lamenting the unique economic situation in early Haiti, he noted that “a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers.”²⁸ This stagnant market that foreigners like Franklin found strange and dysfunctional reflected the former slaves’ triumph over the plantation system. Even wealthy Haitians who owned large plantations could no longer compel potential laborers to toil, since most of them now had a parcel of land and could provide for their own basic needs.

Many Haitians did not buy farmland, but this was because they had other alternatives. In the first place, many people knew better than to buy what they had already acquired or could readily obtain for free. The almost ten thousand soldiers who received government land grants were generally less likely to go out and spend money on more fallow farmland. And throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, Haitians who could not or would not buy land at the relatively low market prices

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frequently had the option of occupying abandoned plantation land or pioneering new *conucos* in the mountains. Many founded new settlements. The names of certain rural, inland locales on the Haitian map provide excellent evidence of the uphill, “settler” nature of nineteenth-century demographic growth. Places with unmistakably Kreyòl or West African names like Bois Nago, Nan Cofi, Savane Zombi, Nan Ti Bwa, Maché Dan Griyen, and Harbe Guinée all attest to the fact that most of the country’s rural communities were carved out of the wilderness by free Haitian farmers. And even though independent farming was the most common alternative to the plantation system, many citizens did not farm. The next chapter deals more extensively with the fishermen, lumbermen, and other early Haitians who took up extractive economic endeavors that in many cases probably complemented rather than replaced subsistence agriculture. In addition to these rural extractors, many Haitians, including most of the new nation’s wealthiest citizens, made their homes in port cities and lived off commerce.

The importance of international commerce in early Haiti and its role in the process of class formation is evident with regard to the price difference between urban and rural real estate. Whereas the prices of rural farmland fell and remained low as a result of labor shortages, land reform, and the collapse of the sugar economy, the value of homes and businesses in Haiti’s port towns remained high by comparison with the former plantations. The average urban house in Jérémie in 1816 was 1.6 times costlier than the average plantation in the surrounding area. Eleven years later at Cap Haïtien on the other side of the country, the average urban leaseholder paid roughly 2.8 times the rent paid by the average plantation

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leaseholder. These proportions reflect not only the destruction of the plantation economy that occurred as a result of the revolution but also the associated geographical shift in the opportunities for elite exploitation of export profits. The greatest profits in colonial Saint-Domingue were made by sugar planters, whose massive rural estates produced the refined sugar that eighteenth-century Europe voraciously demanded. The revolutionary destruction of the sugar industry altered the absolute and relative values of urban and rural land on the island, however. Instead of running sugar plantations, the economic elite of early Haiti coalesced in the port cities, where merchants and speculators made their profits on the export of coffee, dyewood, and other commodities that the farmers preferred to produce.

The breakup and abandonment of the sugar estates and the consolidation of a freeholding peasantry caused the price of rural land to fall. As states granted land in order to secure the loyalty of their soldiers, pioneering runaways used subterfuge and sweat equity to build farms on unpurchased land to which they possessed no legal claim. In this sense, rural land in Haiti no longer functioned as a commodity in the capitalist market. Instead, small farms became both the material and the ideological basis for the dignity experienced by former slaves who had fought for years so that they themselves would not be treated as commodities.

While many of Haiti's former slaves and cultivateurs were consolidating their hold on small farms on the plains or in the island's remote interior, the nation's new economic elite was coalescing in the towns. The next chapter focuses on the commodities that Haiti's early farmers turned to as alternatives to

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forced labor on the sugar plantations. These included coffee, dyewood, lumber, leather, grain, and a variety of other products that early Haitians used to complement their production of subsistence crops. Trade in these commodities and the concentration of commercial profits at the ports caused the price of urban real estate in towns like Jérémie, Le Cap, Les Cayes, and Port-au-Prince to rise relative to the price of rural land.

As revolution and land reform changed the nature of agricultural production in western Hispaniola, a new elite of foreign-friendly merchants, speculators, and politicians grew up around the customs houses. Even though this commercial elite was determined to profit from whatever the rural populace could produce or gather, it was not sovereign over Haiti's economic development, and it had little means to regulate or control the countryside. If it can be said that Haiti's early elites excluded the masses from the political power, educational opportunities, and trade profits found in the port cities, the masses for their part wound up confining the country's haughty rulers to the towns, definitively putting an end to the plantation system and carving out a hard-won domain of rural economic and cultural autonomy.

Dissatisfied with empty versions of formal legal freedom, thousands of laborers fled the plantation districts and sought a rustic version of liberty in remote, mountainous regions. But even as Haiti's rural population expanded to fill in widely available rural land and emerged by the mid-nineteenth century with what was probably the most evenly divided system of landownership anywhere in the New World, the social and economic institutions that solidified in early Haiti were not especially democratic or egalitarian.

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Military officers, cash-crop speculators, congressmen, senators, lawyers, notaries, innkeepers, and a handful of landed heirs and heiresses all occupied privileged positions and had the chance to enjoy the material comforts and status symbols that characterized well-off citizens of nineteenth-century Haiti. These included the low food prices and low-wage domestic servants characteristic of a cash-poor country, imported clothes and adornments, wine and imported foods, fine horses, and often paper claims to large stretches of rural land. The categories of town-dwelling *grandons* listed above viewed themselves as naturally superior to the illiterate rural farmers. The rural population was by no means an undifferentiated mass of humble cultivateurs. Even though the nation's wealthiest merchants and rulers were concentrated in the port cities and coastal plains, social distinctions based on landownership, wealth, and status also existed on the hillsides. Some farm families came to possess more and better lands than others. Poorer farmers often had to work as sharecroppers, and they were more likely to send their children to work as domestic servants or unpaid farmhands. Rural society had its own hierarchies of prestige and power based not only on landownership but also on wealth accumulated through trade or cattle. Some rural people even became comparatively well off by successfully plying the trade of smuggler or of Vodou priest or priestess, or by raising champion gamecocks.

Rather than ending all unfree systems of labor, the Haitian Revolution unmade the highly rationalized and deadly chattel slavery of the sugar plantation. Intense, large-scale agrarian servitude gave way in part to a widespread pattern of small-scale domestic and agrarian servitude. Through the violence

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of the Haitian Revolution, the masses undid the very possibility of a Haitian plantation economy but often traded the direct subjugation of the plantation work gang for the ameliorated but still servile life as a domestic servant or a sharecropping farmer. The emergence of the Haitian *lakou* system of agrarian family compounds reflected the rise of semiautonomous family communities partially based on African or maroon patterns of social organization. Nevertheless, the social and economic realities of the Haitian *lakou* do not justify a wishful celebration of the *lakou* as a harmonious and equitable social system. Rather than rural islands of egalitarianism, the *lakou* became constituent components of Haiti's emerging social and economic hierarchy. In a cash-poor, rural, agricultural economy characterized by small independent farms, unequal labor relations often emerged within extended family units. In some cases, the blending of extended family relations with systems of sharecropping and domestic servitude represented a New World iteration of West African systems of fictive kinship slavery.

THE BOYER ERA

Because of his relatively permissive land policy, Pétion became known as *Papa Bon Kè*—the good-hearted father. His direct successor, Jean-Pierre Boyer, never received an endearing nickname. Although he essentially carried on Pétion's land policy and was obliged to accept the rise of Haiti's peasant economy, his regime was characterized by a more explicitly repressive economic policy laid out in his 1826 Code Rural, and by his ultimate failure to enforce this draconian law.

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By some measures, the Boyer government was one of the most successful regimes in Haitian history. In office from 1818 to 1843, Boyer held power longer than any other single Haitian ruler. Soon after taking power, he achieved the final military defeat of his Haitian military rivals Christophe and Goman in 1820, and he crowned his success by achieving Louverture's and Dessalines's elusive strategic goal of ruling the entire island of Hispaniola. Beneficiaries of the collapse of Spanish colonialism, the members of Boyer's military took control of eastern Hispaniola in 1822, decreed the final abolition of slavery in the present-day Dominican Republic, and held that territory for more than twenty years.

The Boyer government was characterized by two historic windfalls that attracted the predatory attention of France's Restoration-era Bourbon monarchy. First, upon defeating Christophe's northern kingdom in 1820, Boyer's government took control of large stretches of plantation land, a network of fortresses and palaces, and a quantity of treasure that can probably never be known to historians. Two years later Boyer took over the entire island and thereby tripled the territory under his control. Finally able to negotiate with a single Haitian regime, and motivated by the thought that Boyer might have had some financial assets worth taking, in 1825 the French sent a naval mission to Port-au-Prince. Under the threat that French warships would open fire on his palace, Boyer met with the representative of Charles X and essentially signed away his country's future.

Haiti was saddled with a debt of 150 million francs, and Boyer's government took out a series of loans that would not be paid off until 1947. The quantity and eventual destinations

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of Christophe's treasure are naturally a great mystery. But its disposal may have played a part in the secret negotiations around the 1825 indemnity and the initial payment of twenty-four million gold francs from a French commercial bank to the French treasury. Much of the money was paid out to former Saint-Domingue slave owners and their heirs, who maintained well-documented claims and received indemnity payments and French state relief funds throughout much of the nineteenth century.

Having mortgaged the entirety of Hispaniola and future Haitian state revenues to French banks in exchange for formal French recognition and a guarantee against the threat of invasion, Boyer attempted to revive the plantation sector and stimulate the export economy in eastern Hispaniola in order to raise the revenue to pay the foreign debt. This is why he promulgated the Code Rural in 1826. The lengthy law forbade agricultural laborers from moving to the towns; it forbade laborers from owning plantations collectively through cooperatives or share structures; and it stipulated that plantation laborers' quarters had to be built on the plantations to which they were "attached." On paper, Boyer's plantation code was very much like the codes of his rivals and predecessors Christophe, Dessalines, and Louverture. The state imposed strict limits on the mobility of laborers, who were subject to arrest if they were caught traveling the countryside without a pass. But unlike Dessalines and Christophe, Boyer bore the legacy of Pétion's land reform and his toleration of squatters. Like his predecessor, Boyer owed his political survival to his tacit and occasionally explicit acceptance of the rights of smallholders. His repressive Code Rural was a dead letter.

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REPUBLICAN REPRESSION

Although Boyer failed in his grand design to re-create a plantation economy, his government did possess some repressive capacity. In addition to the rule of so-called club-law on the plantations and in the military, the Boyer regime's preferred form of legal punishment was imprisonment. As the Haitian state used police and military power in its unending campaign against so-called vagabonds,²⁹ it relied on a growing island-wide network of jails and prisons to lock up drifters, thieves, military deserters, and other enemies of the economic order. Under Boyer, the provincial capitals and regional commercial centers all had their own prisons, or *maisons d'arrêt*. Even tiny provincial hamlets often maintained their own small prisons staffed by professional jailers. Boyer's government sponsored the construction and expansion of prisons throughout the island. In 1835, the republican state commissioned two prison-construction projects at the country's two geographical extremes, Jérémie in the southwest and Higüey at the eastern end of the present-day Dominican Republic.³⁰ These two modest prison-construction projects were some of the only public works that Boyer's government ever undertook. Gone were the days of the massive fortresses and palaces erected by Dessalines and Christophe. Under Boyer, most buildings used for public business were rented from private individuals. Prisons were virtually the only buildings that the state saw fit to build. The state's special attention to prison construction demonstrated the importance of regional prisons as pillars of the republican regime.

The thousands of men and women who served time in prison during the rule of Boyer fell into four main categories:

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people convicted of theft, those convicted of violent crime, soldiers convicted of desertion, and people found suffering from *folie*. The limited and fragmentary prison records that survive from the 1820s and 1830s suggest that violent offenders and the mentally ill together made up a minority of less than 10 percent of inmates. In Boyer's Haiti, the vast majority of convicts were imprisoned either for theft or for attempting to break free from the rigid discipline of the military. Convicted thieves were frequently imprisoned for stealing money or alcohol, but the most commonly stolen items seem to have been farm animals. A large proportion of prisoners in Haiti were sentenced to forced labor. Of the 212 inmates held at the Port-au-Prince jail in August 1836, fifty-six were condemned to forced labor. Of the eleven agricultural laborers, domestic workers, and construction workers imprisoned in Les Cayes in December 1830, all but one were doing forced labor. These prison laborers carried sentences that ranged from three months to five years.³¹ As in other postemancipation societies, prisoners in Haiti knew the experience of corporal punishment and unpaid labor long after the legal abolition of slavery.

Much as his regime hoped to control the population through arrests and prison labor, popular suspicions over the danger of reenslavement limited the ease with which Boyer's state could lock up its citizens. One of the few individuals to witness and write about conditions in the prisons of the early Haitian republic was the anonymous French author of an 1826 report entitled *Observations sur la province du Nord d'Haïti*. The author, who visited the prison at Le Cap, reported that inmates' conditions had improved since the time of Christophe, who locked prisoners into "dark and humid cachos." The author

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witnessed prisoners sentenced to forced labor, but he reported that they were few in number due to the sheer difficulty of keeping them confined. He explained that “the memory of the chains that we use on slaves is still so vivid, that they fear a revolt of the nègres if chains are used to confine forced laborers.”³²

Vodou organizations flourished throughout Haiti in the early nineteenth century, and under Boyer, Vodouisants were persecuted for their religious activity much as they had been under Christophe. Boyer’s government officially opposed African religious practices and arrested prominent Vodouisants. In 1823, Colonel Théodore Cupidon, aide-de-camp of President Boyer, announced that he would tour the plantations in the vicinity of Grand-Goâve in order to improve production by carrying on the Haitian state’s endless struggle against “negligence” and “laziness” among the cultivateurs. In addition to enforcing labor discipline, Colonel Cupidon announced his opposition to the locals’ religious practices. He complained that the majority of the people in Grand-Goâve were involved in “superstition, which true religion disapproves of.” He continued that “our fathers, born in other climates and under other laws, followed beliefs and religious customs that we must reject entirely because they are far from those of Christianity.”³³ Cupidon euphemistically skirted words like “Africa” and “Vodou,” but the state formally opposed the widespread religious practices of the Haitian masses. Like forced labor and color prejudice, the politicized persecution of African religious practices was a colonial holdover in early Haiti and a source of conflict between state elites and rural laborers.

In 1836, in the small southern town of Abricots, the local police interrupted a Vodou dance to arrest one of the leading

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Vodouisants, a certain Sannon Cheneau. Based on his estimated age, Cheneau was born on the Cheneau plantation sometime around 1795. He was almost certainly the child of slaves, and as a child he may have briefly lived as a slave during the British military occupation of the Jérémie region. He was born and raised amid the violence of slave emancipation and civil war. Assuming that he lived most of his life in the vicinity of Abricots—the region where he was born, raised, and arrested—he would have spent much of his adolescence and early adulthood living in territory controlled by the African insurgent leader Goman.

Starting in 1836, a year after Boyer's government issued its law against sorcery, Cheneau had a series of confrontations with the local authorities who arrested and imprisoned him for debts, for his Vodou practices, and for repeatedly cursing and threatening them. The handful of surviving judicial records on the arrest and imprisonment of Cheneau provide evidence of the connection that provincial Haitian authorities drew between Vodou and criminal threats to the political order. In 1840, Cheneau was denounced by the local authorities as a "bad charm seller" and a "professinal Vodou man." Although he was likely born to slave parents and may have briefly lived as a slave in his early childhood, at the time of his arrest in November 1840 he was a landowning farmer. His social position as both a leading Vodouisant and a proprietor may have contributed to his independent and defiant attitude toward the local officials. Following his arrest at a Vodou ceremony in 1836, Cheneau reportedly uttered "very outrageous injuries" to the arresting commandant. While under arrest for debt in November 1840, Cheneau was accused of organizing

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a “cabale” inside the local jail in Abricots. The jailers there decided to transfer him to the jail in the provincial capital of Jérémie because of his repeated insults and threats. Much as Dessalines judged Vodou to be a threat to his conception of domestic order, local police authorities under the Boyer regime were inclined to associate Vodou with criminality and to arrest leading practitioners.

The history of state repression of Vodouisants in postemancipation Haiti helps to explain the religion’s enduring traditions of discretion, secrecy, and exclusive family networks of transmission. Not only were early Vodouisants concerned with hiding secrets from colonial slave masters, following emancipation they had to be on the lookout for heavy-handed Haitian military officials and their spies. The relations between Vodouisants and the state were one part of the ongoing conflict between Haiti’s rural masses and the narrow ruling elite. Early Haitian authorities were quick to repress Vodouisants, but they had a very limited capacity to surveil and police the entirety of the Haitian countryside. Vodouisants who valued their freedom probably learned not to openly practice their religion in the large provincial capitals and to keep their activities somewhat shielded from the eyes of the state. The magicians and Vodou leaders who were arrested were those who made waves, for example, by attracting the business of the prominent women of Les Cayes or by openly criticizing a ruler. Most of Haiti’s early Vodouisants were probably more prudent than Sannon Cheneau, whose tirades and threats leveled at the local police earned him jail time. Like the postemancipation maroons who escaped the plantations by setting up communities in remote valleys or the squatters who came to own

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prosperous farms without possessing any deeds, Vodou practitioners could not fully topple their oppressors or secure just treatment from the state. They could, however, practice their religion in the relative freedom of the countryside.

RENEWED INSTABILITY, 1843–1848

Following his defeat of Christophe in 1820 and the unification of the island in 1822, Boyer presided over one of the longest periods of stability in Haiti's history. But in 1843, Boyer's quarter-century balancing act came to an end, and relative stability gave way to further crises, coups, and popular uprisings. The wave of political upheaval that shook Haiti from 1843 to 1848 resulted in five regime changes. From this period of unrest emerged the dictatorship of Faustin-Élie Soulouque, whose imperial government, hereditary nobility, and notoriously excessive luxuries hearkened back to the kingdom of Christophe. Soulouque did away with his predecessors' nominally republican institutions of government. In the autumn of 1849, before Soulouque's regime had gotten around to printing its own stationery, some state scribes simply crossed out the word "republic" and wrote in "empire."³⁴

But not even the reemergence of formal absolutism could undo the changes in landownership and agricultural labor brought about by the Haitian Revolution. Unlike the prior Haitian monarchs Dessalines and Christophe who had successfully exported sugar, neither Soulouque nor any subsequent tyrant was ever able to create a successful plantation economy or overturn Haiti's irregular and decentralized system of land tenure.

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In some respects, the crisis of 1843–1848 mirrored the revolutionary events of the 1790s. Political agitation against Boyer's regime began among privileged intermediate social groups and liberal opposition parliamentarians. Where once Vincent Ogé had organized an insurrectionary conspiracy to demand that the whites respect the rights of mixed-race property owners, the black leaders Castel Père and Dalzon organized rebellions in 1843 demanding an end to discrimination by the light-skinned elite.³⁵ Political struggles among politicians and members of the middle class probably helped kindle rebellion among the common people in the countryside.

Whereas the 1791 uprising occurred in the north, the popular insurrections of 1844 were centered in the south. In March 1844, a group of roughly eight hundred farmers and low-ranking military veterans calling themselves "the army of the people" or "the army of the sufferers" captured the inland southern town of Camp-Perrin. The small farmer Jean-Jacques Acaau quickly became the main leader of the army of the sufferers. The movement was known as the Piquet Rebellion because many of the rebel soldiers were armed with homemade pikes. In April 1844 a force of two thousand Piquets captured the southern capital of Les Cayes, while another peasant force captured Jérémie. In actions vaguely reminiscent of refugee French colonists half a century before, many of the leading merchants of Les Cayes and Jérémie packed their families and their money onto ships and fled to Jamaica or Port-au-Prince.³⁶

Yet despite certain parallels, the Piquet Rebellion was fundamentally different from the rebellions and wars of the Haitian Revolution. The Piquet fighters were rising up

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against a corrupt and racist political and economic elite rather than an entire system of production and land tenure. The Piquets and other peasant armies that followed did not destroy and remake the island's economy as had the insurgents of the Haitian Revolution. Instead, their movements were meant to challenge the power of particular elite factions. Though they often culminated in regime change, rebellions like the one led by Acaau were not meant to overturn Haiti's unique relations of production, merely to defend and improve the lot of the small peasant proprietors. In 1844, as rebel peasant armies marched through Haiti's southern peninsula, they did not burn and destroy cane fields and plantations—indeed, there were practically no plantations left to destroy. Whereas Rémy Bastien credits Acaau's revolutionary movement with “saving Haiti from the threat of *la gran propiedad*,” the rebels of 1844 were reinforcing gains that had been achieved and consolidated a generation earlier. Whereas the revolutionaries of 1791 had been among history's greatest saboteurs and arsonists, Acaau successfully prevented his forces from looting and destroying the areas that they captured, and he observed what Michel Hector describes as a “strict respect for property.”³⁷ This respect for property was possible because a significant proportion of the Piquet rebels were small landowners, possessed of a characteristic Haitian popular faith in land as the ultimate guarantee of freedom, dignity, and status. Slaves of Saint-Domingue, by rebelling against their owners and making war on the plantation system, had transformed themselves from human property into landed proprietors.

CHAPTER SIX

The Maroon Economy: Subsistence Production, Cash Crops, and Tax Evasion

FOR the earliest generations of Haitian citizens, the so-called counter-plantation system involved physically running away from the plantations and setting up remote and sometimes even hidden farm settlements in the rural interior. Having grudgingly come to accept that the laboring population had evaded and unmade the plantation economy, the Haitian republican rulers had to settle on a system of indirectly appropriating the meager surpluses of rural production through taxes levied on cash-crop exports, imports, and commerce in general. Receiving no significant economic or social benefits from the state, the rural population became fundamentally and eternally resolved to evade taxation of any kind. Class conflict in early Haiti often expressed itself through struggles between the state and the masses concerning the enforcement and evasion of taxes. The masses avoided taxation in a variety of ways. Traders resisted state entrance fees at official marketplaces and created unofficial marketplaces outside the purview

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of the state. Farmers concealed surpluses of coffee or rice from military officials who toured the country demanding taxation in kind. Laborers who did not want to bear the burden of steep import duties on flour, cloth, soap, or salted fish often purchased contraband goods smuggled in at any point along Haiti's long, rugged coast. But the Haitian masses also avoided taxes in a more fundamental way: by eschewing taxable acts of formal commercial exchange and striving to produce most of what they needed. A single household could magnify its range of untaxed economic activity by sharing among extended families and by bartering at local markets. Haitian communities created creole financial systems of the sort that characterize cash-poor societies without formal banking sectors. The Haitians developed a mutual savings cooperative known as the *kob sòl*, by which regular small contributions of a group are paid as a lump sum to individual members according to a monthly rotation. In an era long past, market women who dealt in credit sometimes even recorded obligations with pebbles. This creole abacus functioned as a rustic account ledger for early Haitian traders. What record of profits and expenses could ever have been less accessible to the eyes of a tax-hungry official than a curiously arranged pattern of rocks on the ground? With barter replacing purchases, livestock replacing bank accounts, and even stones replacing currency, the rural Haitian logic of domestic self-sufficiency extended to the point of strategic nonparticipation in formal commerce. At some level, the early Haitian rural economic order became so oriented toward domestic subsistence, local exchange, and production for use that it became partially countercommercial and perhaps even cash-averse.

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The countercommercial logic of Haitian rural life was evident in some places well into the twentieth century. In June 1943, the Dominican consul in the Haitian provincial capital of Hinche wrote that the local farmers were “hardworking” but that they seemed to favor surpluses of leisure over surpluses of earnings. The consul reported the complaints of a Levantine-Haitian cloth merchant who captured the phenomenon with a “picturesque phrase” to the effect that “mango season is a bad season for business; the Haitian does not work because he has a sure supply of food.”¹ More than a commonplace racial trope about laziness, this merchant’s observation records the Haitian farmers’ historical strategy of extracting seasonal bounties of uncultivated food crops in order to step back from the exigencies of commercial exchange. Windfalls of rich seasonal foods such as mangoes or avocados probably functioned much like the cash payouts at the conclusion of coffee harvest: they allowed for the rural Haitian equivalent of paid vacation time.

The trend in Haitian revolutionary scholarship has been to emphasize the Atlantic and transnational dimensions of Haiti’s origins, but the fact is that the early Haitians created an economy that was less oriented toward foreign trade. The Haitians’ widespread preference for systems of mixed subsistence production represented a powerful popular impulse toward strategic rural autarky, a fundamental feature of the Haitian historical experience that does not fit well with region-making discourses of universalized Atlantic interconnectivity. In economic terms, no island is truly an island. Not even an island sparsely populated by armed former slaves, wary of foreign overlords and conquerors. But in the nineteenth century, Haiti

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was a far more agriculturally self-sufficient society than it was under the French colonists or than it became in the twentieth century.

By raising the concept of strategic economic autarky, I am not suggesting that the early Haitians were “isolated” or historically exceptional. Nations and peoples that experience political conflict usually remain involved in some kind of economic exchange. Haiti, the nation that defied France, Spain, the United States, and Great Britain by abolishing slavery forever and creating a black state in the New World, was denied official diplomatic recognition for decades after independence. Yet foreign traders continuously flocked to Haitian coasts to profit from valuable coffee crops, and the Haitian military could never have won its battles without cloth, guns, and ammunition imported from Europe and North America. Haiti politically opposed the same slave-owning powers with which it was inevitably economically intertwined. By the same token, Native American military and political resistance to white territorial expansion did not transcend the material and technological Columbian exchange. Just as the Chiracahua Apache held back the Mexican and U.S. armies for years with their mastery of horses and Springfield repeating rifles, so too have the so-called uncontacted peoples of the Amazon blazed paths into the world’s deepest jungles using steel machetes. Popular aerial photographs of the world’s “uncontacted” tribes often focus on their wooden spears or body paint, but I always scan the background for evidence of the stainless steel or aluminum cooking pot.

The case of early Haiti demonstrates that political and military resistance is not entirely akin to separation, nonen-

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agement, or isolation. Haitians upended and resisted the Atlantic slave economy while always engaged in various ways with white trading powers and European and North American material goods and technologies. Yet through the total elimination of the export-oriented sugar industry, and a partially autarkic preference for domestic food production, early Haiti interacted with the European and North American economies in ways very different from those of the surrounding slave societies.

THE END OF SUGAR EXPORTS

The nineteenth-century Haitian historian Thomas Madiou writes that the collapse of sugar production in the early Haitian republic was the result of the “division of the land and the lack of capital.”² Both the division of plantation lands discussed in the previous chapter and the abandonment and destruction of the plantation infrastructure were the willful acts of former slaves. By dividing the land to create farms, by repeatedly refusing to intensively cultivate and process sugarcane, and by destroying the material capital necessary for milling and refining sugar, the former slaves of Haiti remade their entire society.

Early Haitians rebelled against the sugar industry in three main ways. In the first place, they repeatedly voted with their feet: removing their labor and finding alternatives to the punishing routine of work on the sugar plantation. Second, starting with the great northern slave insurrection of 1791 through the final ouster of the French in 1803, former slaves violently confronted and sometimes killed members of the plantation hierarchy, including overseers, managers, leaseholders, and

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landowners. Finally, former slaves helped guarantee that the sugar industry would not reemerge in the aftermath of revolutionary conflicts by burning, dismantling, selling off, or otherwise destroying essential components of the plantation infrastructure. During the roughly thirty years between the outbreak of the slave revolution in 1791 and the fall of Christophe's kingdom in 1820, the Haitian popular struggle against the sugar industry brought the historically substantial sugar exports of Saint-Domingue down to nearly zero. Although Saint-Domingue became the world's greatest sugar-producing colony during the eighteenth century, by the 1820s Haitians were buying refined sugar smuggled in from Cuba. A French consular official living in Port-au-Prince during the 1820s explained the total collapse of Haitian sugar production simply and accurately by pointing out that it required "coercive means incompatible with the current state of the country."³

As they abandoned or even actively undermined the sugar economy, Haiti's ordinary citizens adopted a variety of alternative economic activities. Since former slaves were often systematically starved by their masters and frequently suffered from the wartime famines of the Haitian Revolution, newly freed laborers immediately worked to secure an autonomous food supply. As soon as they were no longer compelled to spend six days a week producing sugar, Haiti's rural masses focused on securing their own subsistence by cultivating food crops. Whenever they had a choice, Haitian laborers abandoned sugar and made money by cultivating or gathering a range of alternative commodities, the most important of which were coffee and dyewood. By choosing where to live

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and which crops to cultivate, the early Haitians changed the terms of their relationship with both the world capitalist market and the island's natural resources and ecology. The result was a society that was more self-sufficient in terms of food production and relatively free of direct, intensive forms of labor exploitation.

During the course of the revolution of 1791-1804, the combined results of rebels' targeted campaigns of arson and pillage, the arming and military mobilization of former slaves, and the unchecked wear and tear of the elements reduced the world's largest, most profitable, and most technologically advanced sugar estates to overgrown fields and charred ruins. By June 1802, as the colony's former slaves rebelled once more against the French colonial forces, the Marquis de Gallifet's agent Pierre Mossut came to fully appreciate the multiple factors that prevented him from getting the Gallifet estates up and running again. Whereas many of Gallifet's plantation buildings were still standing in 1792, ten years of revolutionary mobilizations, civil war, and neglect undid the colonists' efforts to resurrect the sugar industry. Mossut observed that all the buildings on the Gallifet estates had been "entirely reduced to cinders." In addition, the elaborate stone irrigation canals and reservoirs had been filled in and ruined. Mossut estimated that two-thirds of the Gallifet cane fields had become secondary succession savannahs. Among the dozen or so cane fields that he observed to be still under cultivation, he speculated that they might have produced roughly a hundred thousand livres worth of sugar. His inability to organize the harvest and processing of this cane, however, exemplified the material breakdown of the Domingan sugar industry. Mossut

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pointed out that the hundred thousand livres worth of unharvested sugar that he observed swaying in the fields could not be brought to market without a mill to grind it, carts to haul it, oxen or mules to pull the carts and turn the mill, and construction materials to repair or build the most essential structures, such as the mill, the refinery, the curing house, and the slaves' quarters. All of these factors of production had been damaged or wiped away by the revolution. So had the most critical factor, labor. Although Gallifet never surrendered claim to his former slaves despite nearly a decade of legal emancipation, Mossut observed that it would have been extremely difficult to bring them back to work sugar, as most of them had left the plantations and moved to the towns, to the Spanish side of the island, or to other rural districts far afield.⁴

Upon witnessing the destruction and breakdown of the eighteenth-century sugar infrastructure, observers came to recognize that the economy of independent Haiti would never approach the heights of output and profitability of the colonial era. An early nineteenth-century American traveler who kept a journal during his long-term residence in the Grande Anse region in 1821–1822 recorded his amazement at seeing the destroyed remains of colonial plantations. While on a hunting trip through former plantation districts surrounding Jérémie, the anonymous American observer noted that “the destruction made by the revolvers” was “past description.” He estimated that not even ten million 1822 dollars could raise “to its former grandeur the lofty buildings, the machinery work, the walls, and conduits so completely in ruins.”⁵ By destroying most of the former sugar plantations of Saint-Domingue and allowing them to fall into ruin, Haitian

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revolutionaries permanently undermined the island's sugar business and made future investment in Haiti's sugar industry unattractive and impracticable.

SUGAR IN EARLY HAITI

No ruler of colonial Saint-Domingue or early Haiti was willing to give up on the sugar industry. No matter how much the ordinary citizens resisted being made to work on sugar plantations, the potential profits were too high to be ignored. Postemancipation leaders all contrived to preserve the sugar industry, while most former slaves struggled to avoid confinement and toil on the plantations.

In addition to the private profits and state revenues that came with sugar exports, Haitian leaders also seem to have had an extra-economic affinity for the grandeur and social prestige of being a sugar planter. Although all early Haitian leaders celebrated the defeat and expulsion of the colonists, they tended to preserve the colonial association of sugar plantations with power and status. The greatest and most productive sugar plantations of early Haiti were often owned or leased by prominent military and state officials. Under Dessalines's government, Colonel Germain Frère ran the massive Santo plantation on the Cul-de-Sac plain outside Port-au-Prince. When he entertained fellow officers, he proudly sweetened their morning coffee with sugar that had been cut at one o'clock in the morning and processed in the predawn hours by laborers who were forced to keep the refinery running through the night.⁶ During the republican era, the greatest sugar plantations surrounding Port-au-Prince were owned and operated

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by the upper echelons of the state elite. President Pétion, President Boyer, Secretary of State Inginac, and Treasurer General Nau were among the owners of the largest former colonial-era plantations on the Cul-de-Sac and Léogâne plains.⁷ Even by 1830, when Haitian sugar exports had almost entirely collapsed to zero, the country's rulers were still attempting to grow and sell sugar. Included in the negligibly small amount of sugar shipped from Port-au-Prince in 1830 was one barrel of raw sugar "de la sucrerie de Madame la presidente" (from the sugar plantation of the first lady).⁸ Whereas former slaves were surely haunted by their memories of overwork and suffering on the sugar plantations, the postemancipation sugar bosses refused to give up the ghost.

Although they naturally used plantation export revenues to make themselves personally rich and powerful, Dessalines and Christophe also encouraged sugar exports in order to accumulate the state funds necessary to construct large military installations and support a large standing army. At times, the material requirements of these two leaders' grandiose military construction projects were partially at odds with their program of rebuilding the plantation infrastructure. In the first place, the *corvée*-style labor drafts that Dessalines and Christophe instituted in order to construct huge stone and brick fortifications such as the Citadel Laferrière systematically drew field laborers away from the plantations. In addition, the construction projects deprived plantations of important non-human capital. Starting in January 1806, Christophe ordered that all of the state-owned plantations in the districts near the site of the citadel provide one oxcart for the transport of bricks to the construction site. He also ordered that forty-

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eight northern plantations assign laborers to break up and load bricks from abandoned or ruined colonial plantation buildings. The partially ruined plantation buildings and waterworks represented an expedient source of construction materials for the northern military regimes. Plantation managers were required to supply one cartload of bricks a day to the construction crews who were busily building the citadel.⁹ By using oxen, mules, and carts that would otherwise be hauling sugarcane and by cannibalizing bricks from buildings that once made up the essential infrastructure for sugar production, Dessalines and Christophe made a trade-off between military security and plantation output. Although these two leaders were probably loath to see the brick-by-brick destruction of many of the northern plain's most impressive and sturdy plantation structures, they believed that the stately and imposing fortresses that they were building were essential for defending their increasingly wealthy regimes against the realistic threat of a new foreign invasion. While relying on plantation profits to support a large military apparatus, and using their military to guarantee the continuation of forced labor on the sugar plantations, Dessalines and Christophe pioneered a postcolonial, postracial version of the early modern Caribbean's military-plantation complex.

Among the early rulers of independent Haiti, Christophe was the most successful at boosting plantation production and using the export of tropical cash crops to fill state coffers. The surviving records of plantation output and state revenue under Christophe are far from complete, and secondary accounts are contradictory. For example, the quantity and ultimate fate of the gold and silver bullion in Christophe's royal treasury

remain shrouded in mystery. Nineteenth-century estimates of annual sugar exports from the northern kingdom range from six million pounds to an amazing one hundred million pounds.¹⁰ The latter figure represents fully half of the sugar exports from prerevolutionary Saint-Domingue. A more reliable estimate for the output of sugar and other plantation crops during Christophe's reign will require a comprehensive analysis of the shipping records of the dozens of British, American, and northern European merchants who maintained active commerce with Christophe's kingdom and eagerly carried off Haitian sugar year after year. Yet despite the imperfect and widely varying estimates, there is no question that Christophe's northern kingdom was able to maintain and raise the production and export of sugar at the same time that the industry was falling apart in the southern republic.

Not even the military and political genius of Henry Christophe, however, could stand against the Haitian masses' historic rejection of the plantation system and the sugar industry. The violent fall of Christophe in 1820 represented the end of the large-scale production of sugar by forced laborers in western Hispaniola. Foreign visitors who observed the Haitian countryside and the export trade during the 1820s reported on the almost total collapse of the sugar industry. English Consul-General Charles Mackenzie, who lived in Port-au-Prince in 1826 and 1827, made extensive tours of the plantations on the Léogâne plain. On the Letor plantation west of Port-au-Prince, where "formerly one thousand seven hundred carreaux were in canes," he found that roughly seven carreaux were in cultivation in 1826 and noted: "The only produce is a little syrup and tafia, which last is retailed in a

small shop by the road side in front of the president's residence."¹¹ When he visited the former Laferronais plantation near Petit-Goâve, the property's new owner, Senator Viallet, informed him that the property formerly produced "above six hundred thousand pounds of clayed sugar." At the time of his visit, Mackenzie observed: "Now not an ounce, and no labourers are to be found."¹² An anonymous French observer who lived at Le Cap around the same time that Mackenzie was stationed in Port-au-Prince made similar observations about the collapse of sugar production in the north. He estimated that under Christophe the Walsh plantation annually produced twenty-five thousand pounds of sugar, but that by 1826 it produced no more than eight hundred pounds of syrup. Taking into consideration the entirety of the sugar industry in northern Haiti, the French observer estimated that under Christophe the north province annually produced six million pounds of sugar and that by 1826 the figure was less than two hundred thousand pounds.¹³ The former Gallifet sugar plantations were among the estates that were kept in production under Dessalines and Christophe, but they virtually ceased to produce sugar following the fall of Christophe and the reunification of Haiti. In 1827, two men leased the former Gallifet sugar plantation known as Desplantes. Before the outbreak of the revolution in 1791, Desplantes was the second-largest Gallifet sugar plantation, with a total of 216 slaves. The 1827 annual lease rate for this same estate was a mere 150 gourdes, roughly equivalent to the annual salary for six laborers.¹⁴ During the three decades from the August 1791 insurrection through the fall of Christophe's kingdom in 1820, laborers' determined resistance to the plantation system had

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mostly done away with the colonial-style sugar estate and the export of both raw and refined sugar from Haiti.

As early Haitian leaders set about establishing laws and policies governing trade, they gave special preference to sugar exports. Sugar, like other locally produced cash crops and precious woods, was on a list of goods that were legally excluded for import into Haiti.¹⁵ In addition to this blanket trade protection, sugar producers were given a significant tax break both by Christophe's monarchy and by the republican government at Port-au-Prince. In 1807, Christophe removed the 10 percent export tax on sugar while continuing to tax coffee at this rate.¹⁶ But neither state subsidies nor elite Haitian planters' determined efforts were able to preserve the industry.

By the 1820s, Haitians were buying imported Cuban sugar that was either smuggled into the country or legally imported upon the payment of extremely high customs duties. This fact is the clearest evidence of the effective collapse of Haiti's export-oriented sugar industry and the total reorientation of the country's limited sugarcane crop toward the production of alcohol and syrup. In light of Haiti's history of sugar production, Mackenzie was surprised during his trip to the southern port of Les Cayes in 1826 to find that sugar was the principal import in Haiti's illicit trade with Cuba.¹⁷ White sugar became so scarce in postemancipation Haiti that the contraband sugar trade eventually expanded beyond the small cargoes carried by interisland Cuban and Haitian *caboteurs*, or coastal traders. In 1838, an official from the French Foreign Affairs bureau reported that German and English ships were smuggling "important quantities" of sugar from Europe to Haiti.¹⁸ So thoroughly had the Haitian Revolution rearranged

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the productive economy of western Hispaniola that the society that had risen as Europe's greatest single supplier of table sugar was now receiving the stuff from Hamburg merchants. The legal side of this small but remarkable trade was partially recorded in the customs records of the Haitian republic. At Jérémie in 1827, a ship unloaded a barrel of imported sugar along with other exotic products such as foreign-made shoes and Gruyère cheese.¹⁹ During the Haitian occupation of Santo Domingo, Haitian authorities were also unable to prevent sugar imports to the eastern part of the island. At Puerto Plata in 1825, an American merchant ship from Philadelphia sold fifteen loaves of refined white sugar along with other imported foodstuffs, alcoholic beverages, and textiles.²⁰ And although French merchants did not sell much sugar to the former colony, sugar-based confections were among the luxury goods that French ships brought to Haiti following the resumption of diplomatic and trade relations in 1825. In that year the French ship *Les Deux Frères* sailed to Haiti from Bordeaux and carried 434 pounds of *bonbons au sucre* in its cargo.²¹

Haiti's masses had done such a good job of destroying the industrial agriculture of the sugar economy that when Haiti's elite wanted refined sugar for their tables, they either paid the extremely high tax of fifty cents a pound for legally imported white sugar or paid a smuggler's premium for contraband.²² After the fall of Boyer's government in 1843, the Haitian state responded to the interests of the commercial elite and gave up the extremely high import duties on refined sugar. A government decree issued at Le Cap in September 1844 drastically lowered the import duty on white sugar from the previous level of fifty cents a pound to four cents a pound. The authors

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of this new turn in trade policy finally acknowledged that the output of the moribund Haitian sugar industry was “well below the demand for consumption,” and that the high, protectionist tariff on white sugar had ultimately robbed state coffers by encouraging contraband.²³ This inconspicuous piece of trade legislation marked the Haitian mercantile elite’s reluctant acceptance of a process that had begun more than half a century earlier, in 1791, as arson and rebellion broke out in the sugarcane fields surrounding Le Cap. Although Haiti’s laborers had effectively won their war against the sugar industry by the 1820s, it was not until 1844 that the nation’s rulers and commercial elite finally raised the white flag and gave up altogether on the prospect of exporting sugar in any form.

Even as sugar exports virtually came to a halt, sugarcane never ceased to be cultivated in Haiti. The scale and the economic character of Haitian sugar production changed fundamentally, however. Colonial Saint-Domingue’s most prized exports were the refined white sugarloaves known as *sucre terré* because they were whitened using moist clay. These *pains de sucre* were the end product of a capital-intensive and time-sensitive industrial process that involved a large mill, multiple specialized tasks performed by a tightly organized slave workforce, a refinery with up to six separate boiling cauldrons, and the oversight of a “master sugar maker” charged with coordinating the complex, multistage production process. Early Haitian leaders attempted to continue producing and exporting refined sugar, but the revolutionary-era destruction of the island’s plantation capital and the associated breakdown in the labor supply meant that none of the cane grown in independent Haiti was turned into white sugarloaves. Most of the

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sugar exported from Pétion's republic was *sucre brut*, or partially refined, brown-colored raw sugar. But even as Haiti virtually ceased to export raw sugar, people still had a variety of uses for sugarcane that did not involve large-scale cultivation, refinement, or export.

Following the collapse of the plantation system, Haitians consumed sugarcane in three main ways: directly as cane, as simple cane syrup, and as distilled cane spirits. In Haiti and throughout the tropics, people continued to eat sugarcane as the grass's first prehistoric discoverers must have, by chewing it and directly consuming the sweet juice. Rather than buying processed sugar, farmers who cultivated small stands of cane often ran rustic animal- or human-powered mills and used unrefined cane juice to produce their own sweetened coffee and chocolate. In addition, Haitians used a simple, single-pot boiling system to make *siwo*, or cane syrup—an important component of the popular diet. Surviving tax records for sugar production at Ouanaminthe and Petite Anse in 1830 indicate that the remaining stands of cane cultivated in Haiti's former plantation regions were overwhelmingly turned into syrup. Eight small plantations taxed by the state in that year produced a total of 25,250 pounds of cane syrup, as opposed to only 540 pounds of solid, raw sugar.²⁴ A portion of this cane syrup would have been directly consumed as a sweetener for porridges such as *akason* and for other dishes, but the bulk of it went to the production of *tafya*, or cane liquor. Tafya, produced in small and medium-sized distilleries throughout Haiti, was a mainstay of the country's economy and the principal source of alcohol. As in most alcohol-consuming societies in history, in early Haiti strong drink was a jealously guarded

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wellspring of tax revenues and profits for the elite. Although Haitian rulers largely failed in their efforts to become postemancipation sugar barons, they were partially consoled by the profits and taxes that they collected by operating distilleries and policing the domestic liquor market.

Involved as they were with sugar, early Haitian statesmen were simultaneously involved in the day-to-day production of alcohol and in the overarching trade policies that governed the industry. In the aftermath of independence, Christophe and Dessalines frantically searched amid the postwar wreckage for copper still heads or for scrap copper with which to manufacture them. The rarity of these items frustrated these leaders as they worked to rebuild the country's alcohol industry.²⁵ Christophe also worked to set and enforce government standards for the liquor business. In December 1805, he reprimanded an army officer for selling a bottle of tafia that was under the official standard of 18 percent alcohol.²⁶ In order to defend the domestic liquor industry, all early Haitian governments placed tariffs and restrictions on imported alcohol. In October 1806, Dessalines's government confiscated rum and gin illegally imported by American merchants.²⁷ French officials complained about the import duty of twelve gourdes a barrel that the Haitian republic levied on imported wines in order to protect the profits of domestic producers.²⁸ These foreign observers were well aware that the profits in question frequently flowed to government officials such as Secretary of State Inginac, who himself owned a distillery.²⁹

Although the involvement of state officials in the tafia business was a straightforward question of strategic economic interest, it is more difficult to determine the nature of ordi-

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nary Haitian farmers' relationship with this industry. Some observers decried the Haitians as an intemperate lot whose consumption Consul-General Mackenzie said rivaled the "hard gin-drinking parts of London," but these characterizations were not universal.³⁰ The anonymous French author of the 1826 *Observations sur la province du Nord d'Haïti* wrote that Haitians did not usually display "the vice of drunkenness" and that they were a generally sober people.³¹ As for production, small and medium-sized tafya distilleries did not require the fixed capital and large captive labor forces that characterized the sugar plantations. Tafya production still involved the cultivation, cutting, and milling of sugarcane, but this industry demanded far fewer laborers, and it never came close to the violent discipline and strict command that characterized the great sugar estates of the old regime. Even though some small liquor-producing sugar plantations dotted the landscape of nineteenth-century Haiti, the domestic tafya business was a shadow of the Saint-Domingue sugar industry. The mere presence of sugarcane, the crop whose widespread cultivation and industrial processing gave rise to the massive importation of African slaves to the Caribbean, did not itself guarantee the widespread continuation of slave-like social relations. As former slaves rebelled and broke up the slave system, they redefined the terms of their relationship with this crop.

KING COFFEE

In subsequent sections I discuss the systems of farming, pastoralism, hunting, and fishing by which the early Haitians survived and evaded forced labor. But man does not live by

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breadfruit alone. The Haitian laborers required some kind of cash crop with which to purchase imported essentials. Staple food production was fundamental to Haiti's postemancipation political economy, but it would not suffice for international trade. The 1813 grain exports from republican Haiti to Jamaica were the product of wartime disruptions in transoceanic shipping, and they shed more light on food production in early Haiti than they do on Haiti's strategic position in the early nineteenth-century world economy. For as much as Haiti's farmers were able to produce an abundance of food crops, Haitian grain production could never compete with the temperate breadbaskets of North America or Europe; the deficits in the local protein supply were evident in the continuous importation of salted fish and salted meats. Essential foreign goods, including textiles and metal tools along with the weaponry and luxury items that Haiti continuously imported, had to be purchased somehow, and the European and North American merchants could not be paid with yams, corn, or pumpkins. Even though most agricultural production in early Haiti was generally under the control of the farmers themselves, the masses could not break away entirely from networks of exchange dominated by European commercial interests. Haitian farmers who wanted foreign-made tools, foreign-made cloth, or any other imported items were therefore bound to produce tropical commodities that were in demand in European and North American markets. The first among these was coffee.

As sugar exports declined in revolutionary Saint-Domingue and early Haiti, coffee became the country's leading export crop. Sugar and coffee were both produced in the tropics, were transported by the same ships, and were typically combined at

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the point of consumption to create the ubiquitous, uplifting beverage. Both crops created hefty profits for colonial planters and transatlantic merchants and were critical to the economic development of eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue. These two pillars of the colonial slave economy, however, had very different exigencies of cultivation and processing. Whereas sugarcane was cultivated most profitably in wide, sunny coastal plains, the *coffea arabica* first introduced to French Saint-Domingue after 1720 thrived in well-watered, cloudy, hilly sections of Hispaniola. As a tree crop that could live for fifty years, coffee did not require the constant attention needed by a cut-down crop like sugarcane. Also, as a plant suited to some of the island's more remote mountains and valleys, coffee could survive years of neglect during the economic collapses and violent turmoil of the period from 1791 to 1820. And perhaps most important, the harvesting and processing of coffee required neither the expensive, sophisticated material capital nor the large, hierarchically organized slave-labor gangs that characterized a profitable early modern Caribbean sugar plantation.³²

Coffee sales played an important role in the Haitian war of independence. Coffee was a value-dense, nonperishable commodity in high global demand that sustained rebel groups during the Haitian Revolution. In the bloody conflicts of 1802–1803, as the French controlled most of the port cities and attempted to starve out the insurgents operating in the mountains, rebel bands traded coffee for critical shipments of arms and ammunition. In October 1802, a French officer at Les Cayes reported to General Rochambeau that local insurgents were trading with Dutch merchants from Curaçao, who were visiting the coast of Saint-Domingue to trade gunpowder and

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lead for coffee.³³ When the French command complained, Dutch authorities professed their innocence and affirmed the Batavian Republic's loyalty to France.³⁴ Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the Caribbean shipping lanes teemed with Dutch, American, and British merchants who were willing to fish in troubled waters by trading arms to Saint-Domingue insurgents. Even the French officers themselves were willing to suspend hostilities and negotiate with rebel leaders on the lucrative question of coffee sales. In June 1803, the besieged French forces at Le Cap entertained negotiations with the rebel leaders Gagnette and Petit Noël Prieur around the question of coffee shipments. The rebel leaders proposed sending down a convoy of a hundred horses loaded with thousands of pounds of coffee and dividing the revenues with the French authorities at the port.³⁵ As French forces attempted to pacify the countryside and skirmishes unfolded in rural plantation zones, soldiers on both sides pillaged coffee from the plantations. In July 1802, as a French colonial regiment undertook "a maroon hunt" in pursuit of rebels through the mountains south of Port-au-Prince, French soldiers filled up their knapsacks with coffee.³⁶ Just as rival elites were fighting to see who would ultimately control the island's lucrative coffee trade, individual armed bands were acting out the strategic struggle on a smaller scale—snatching sacks of coffee as battlefield spoils.

Following Haitian independence, coffee production suited the economic ambitions and material means of Haiti's founding generation of independent rural producers. The ecology, growth cycle, and processing requirements of coffee complemented the lifeways of Haitian subsistence farmers. The French consul Barbot observed that the "easy and lucra-

tive" cultivation of coffee fitted well with "Haitian habits."³⁷ Mackenzie also observed: "Everywhere . . . sugar was abandoned for coffee, which is preferred by the cultivators as less laborious."³⁸ Whereas Dominican sugar plantations were characterized by large tracts of land, a large subservient labor force, a mill, a refinery, and expert management, coffee could be cultivated, harvested, and processed on a very small scale with next to no fixed capital. Coffee cherries can become ripe at various times throughout the year. After selectively harvesting them by hand, Haitian farmers processed the coffee by placing the cherries out in the sun to dry. Once dried they could be sold as such or hulled, often using nothing more than the large wooden mortar and pestle, or *pilon*. Rural coffee producers could bring a valuable crop to market with virtually no capital. Although coffee harvesting was laborious, it did not require the hierarchical coordination of the plantation work gangs. In areas where coffee trees were growing abundantly in a semi-feral state, rural people could often choose how much or how little coffee to harvest, depending on their economic needs, available time, other agricultural and household labor, and personal inclinations. Although Saint-Domingue's coffee industry began on the basis of slave labor, coffee cultivation was uniquely suited to Haiti's postemancipation social relations. Michel Rolph Trouillot is correct that the economic importance of coffee in early Haiti represented a certain continuity with the colonial trend of increasing coffee cultivation, but early Haitians did not organize coffee cultivation in the same way their former owners and colonial rulers had.³⁹

Contrasting systems of coffee cultivation in early Haiti reflected an underlying conflict between former slaves, who

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preferred polyculture, and ruling interests, who demanded increased cash-crop exports through intensive monoculture. Christophe's royal government published an official guide for coffee production in 1818, which laid out a set of guidelines designed to increase output and productivity. This guide called for the systematic management of surviving colonial-era coffee trees as well as the clearing of new land for coffee cultivation. Fully aware of his subjects' predilection for the mixed cultivation of the Haitian *conuco*, Christophe forbade the planting of rice, yams, and sweet potatoes amid the coffee bushes.⁴⁰ No official dictates, however, could compel the Haitian masses to embrace the intensive, rationalized mono-crop cultivation that had characterized the colonial slave economy. Simply put, former slaves knew better than to put the revenue of state customs houses and the profits of commodity speculators and foreign merchants above their own food supply.

Rather than clearing land to create extensive new coffee plantations, Haitian farmers complemented their subsistence production by gathering the coffee that continued to thrive on the forested hillsides. Before the outbreak of the revolution, plantation owners in Saint-Domingue had overseen the planting of more than a hundred million coffee trees.⁴¹ Originally planted by slaves and harvested for the benefit of Saint-Domingue's prosperous class of predominantly island-born coffee planters, many of these trees wound up sustaining Haitian communities in the postemancipation era. After the former slaves got rid of most of the former plantation owners, the character of coffee cultivation and harvesting changed dramatically. During his travels in the Léogâne area, Mackenzie passed through an area of coffee cultivation but described see-

ing “nothing bearing the least resemblance to a plantation.” Instead, he noted that the “coffee grew in a wild state.” When the locals showed that they were “not much pleased that [he] should have intruded on their privacy,” Mackenzie was warned by his guide to move along.⁴² In place of the orderly coffee plantations of eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue, the overgrown nineteenth-century Haitian countryside included lucrative patches of what one French anthropologist described as “maquis caféier” (a wild undergrowth of coffee). Rather than planting and cultivating this crop in the traditional sense, Haitians frequently harvested the cherries from semi-feral coffee trees as part of a process of *grappillage*, or gathering.⁴³ Instead of notarized land papers, many rural Haitians held profitable local knowledge—they knew where to find the coffee trees on a particular hillside. Given that landownership was constantly contested in early Haiti, police were frequently accused of “robbing the poor cultivators of their coffee.”⁴⁴ Farmers were generally afraid of predial larceny, and so they had good reason to guard the location of out-of-the-way coffee groves. It is not surprising, then, that when Mackenzie began nosing around in their coffee trees, the Léogâne locals immediately warned him to move along. By gathering a cash crop that they could harvest on their own terms, process at home, and bring to market themselves, former slaves found in coffee a concrete alternative to doing the bidding of an overseer and working to fill the pockets of a plantation owner.

The Haitian farmers’ willingness to gather coffee explains the fact that postemancipation coffee exports rose to roughly one-half to two-thirds of pre-1791 levels by the 1820s, while sugar production fell off precipitously. Surviving Haitian customs

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records leave no doubt about the massive importance of coffee and the nearly total disappearance of sugar in post-1820 Haitian exports. Of seventy-seven American, British, French, German, and Haitian vessels that cleared Haitian ports between 1821 and 1835, all but three carried coffee in their cargo. For the vast majority of these voyages, coffee constituted the primary cargo in terms of both value and bulk. The coffee exports through these seventy-seven voyages spanning fifteen years totaled 7,288,681 pounds. By contrast, only one of these ships carried any sugar at all: a single shipment consisting of ten quarter loaves of raw brown sugar.⁴⁵ Records of French imports from Haiti tell a similar story. From 1821 through 1833, France imported an average of roughly 4.5 million pounds of Haitian coffee. During the same years, French merchants imported an average of only 46,255 pounds of Haitian raw sugar.⁴⁶ After the fall of Christophe's kingdom, Haiti was not producing any white sugar whatsoever, and coffee exports outweighed sugar exports by a factor of at least one hundred. Whereas the Haitian populace associated sugar production and plantation work with slavery, the nonintensive harvest of coffee organized by individual households seems to have conformed with and even perhaps conditioned popular conceptions of freedom in early Haiti.

MONEY GROWS ON TREES: DYEWOOD AND PRECIOUS HARDWOODS IN POSTEMANCIPATION HAITI

Coffee quickly became independent Haiti's most important single export commodity, but the number-two export commodity was a product that most people in the twenty-first

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century have never heard of. Known as logwood in English, *bwa kanpèch* was named for the region of Campeche in the Yucatán Peninsula, where the tree is part of the native flora. Bwa kanpèch was used to dye textiles and paper red and to make red stain for wood products. The chemical compound extracted from logwood by dye makers is very similar to the one found in the brazilwood for which the South American nation was named. Starting in the sixteenth century, Europeans began harvesting and transporting logwood across the Atlantic, where it fetched a high price in the dye markets of color-starved early modern Europe. Because of logwood's high value, shipments of the wood were a favorite target of seventeenth-century pirates. The harvest and export of logwood was the principal economic activity in the colony of British Honduras, and the logwood tree is today featured at the center of the Belizean flag. The tree was first transported to the French colony of Saint-Domingue in 1730.⁴⁷ Well suited to the Caribbean climate and propagated by colonists who hoped to profit from the dyewood trade, *bwa kanpèch* became abundant in Hispaniola and a favorite source of revenue for rural families in early Haiti.

Rather than embracing the dyewood trade, proponents of the plantation system saw it as a drain on the already scarce labor supply. One French observer in 1838 complained that the trade in dyewoods and precious hardwoods was not a genuine source of wealth for the country, since it pulled laborers away from "proper agriculture."⁴⁸ In his reports to Dessalines, General Christophe frequently raged against the widespread cutting and sale of dyewood. Throughout 1805 and 1806, Christophe complained that, throughout the northern re-

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gion, people from all ranks of society were involved in plots to cut and sell dyewood. He reported that plantation managers and high-ranking officers were allowing their subordinates to participate in the business in exchange for a share of the profits. Dyewood was well suited to contraband trade. A nonperishable commodity, it could be stored in preparation for the unpredictable comings and goings of foreign traders. It required no special processing and grew abundantly in different parts of the island. At any point along Haiti's lengthy coastline, deals could be struck outside the reach of customs authorities, and wood could be floated out to ships in exchange for cash or trade in kind. Despite Dessalines's government's early attempts to issue limited logging permits and tax the dyewood business, people throughout the country cut dyewood illegally and avoided the government customs houses by selling directly to American merchants.⁴⁹

Haitian rulers recognized that dyewood was a profitable commodity, but it was also a commodity that was easy to smuggle. Dessalines feared that limited customs revenues from timber exports would not make up for the continued abandonment and decline of the plantation sector, which he viewed as the country's primary source of wealth. Christophe and Dessalines objected to the burgeoning dyewood trade because it took workers away from the plantations and threatened to diminish state revenues from sugar and coffee production. In a lengthy set of orders meant to encourage the restoration of plantation agriculture, Christophe promulgated a ban on dyewood logging. He partially blamed the logging business when he observed that the colony's agriculture was "ruined and abandoned."⁵⁰ In order to cut off this alternative

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to the plantation system, he ordered Generals Capaix and Romain to arrest anyone found to be involved in the cutting or commerce of logwood.⁵¹ When Dessalines undertook a final tour of the western and southern provinces in 1806, he made great efforts to repress the dyewood trade. Madiou reports that all across the southern peninsula Dessalines defied fierce local resistance and ordered his soldiers to burn more than two million pounds of cut dyewood.⁵² Dessalines was apparently compelled by the belief that this illicit commerce in dyewood was leading residents of the south to abandon "principal" export crops, such as coffee and cacao. Bitterness over his destruction of dyewood stores in the south may well have contributed to the violent movement that overthrew him. In any case, no state measures were successful in stopping early Haitian citizens from pursuing the timber trade.

Postemancipation Haiti experienced a boom in the export of dyewood and precious hardwoods. Timber exports from Hispaniola had been occurring since the early days of Spanish colonization. The destruction of the sugar industry in the western part of the island, however, along with the rise of a new postemancipation rural population eager to supplement its income with wood money, increased both the absolute level of timber exports and the relative importance of timber in the Haitian economy. Dyewood was a pillar of the early nineteenth-century Haitian economy. Its value as an export commodity was second only to coffee's. In 1782, France imported 964,211 pounds of dyewood from Saint-Domingue. Between 1821 and 1833, French imports of Haitian dyewood averaged 962,264 pounds a year.⁵³ This slight decline in the annual French import of Haitian dyewood actually reflects an overall

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increase in Haitian dyewood exports. In 1782, the Saint-Domingue trade was governed by exclusive French imperial trade laws. Although an unknown quantity of dyewood was smuggled to foreign merchants under the old regime, following independence Haiti openly sold its dyewood to American, British, and German merchants. Of the seventy-seven merchant ships mentioned above that left Haiti between 1821 and 1835, fifty-five carried logwood, with the average ship carrying more than 26,800 pounds of it.⁵⁴

Chopping down trees with hand tools and hauling logs across the rugged Haitian countryside could not have been very glamorous work. Logging hardwoods with hand tools was an exhausting and somewhat risky job. Extremely heavy species such as mahogany and *lignum vitae* often could not be brought to market unless they were found near the banks of a river down which they could be floated to the sea during the rainy season. Logwood, however—*Haematoxylon campeachianum*—is a relatively small, fast-growing, and scrubby species. Light and slender logwood trees could be chopped down and broken up fairly readily by a single laborer carrying the typical Haitian machete. Logwood required only about ten years of growing before it was suitable for harvest and export. And unlike mahogany, which needed to be shipped and sold in large pieces for use in the furniture industry, dyewood was ground up to make dye, so it could be broken down to smaller pieces for easy transport and sold by weight. Like coffee, dyewood was an ideal, low-input, extractable export commodity suited to the Haitian popular preference for nonhierarchical, decentralized forms of labor.

Following logwood, Haiti's most important timber export was mahogany. At the time of European conquest, the

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islands of the Caribbean were covered with old-growth forests, many of which were in strategic proximity to the coast and within easy reach of logging crews. The Caribbean—Hispaniola in particular—became Europe's first source of *bois d'acajou*, known in Spanish as *caoba* and in English as mahogany. With its characteristic dark color, even grain, high density, and durability, mahogany was the favorite building material of cabinetmakers in Europe and North America. Also, because of its renowned acoustic properties, mahogany is a popular material for stringed instruments. Because its lumber is very strong and resistant to rot, mahogany was sought after as a primary component for the construction and repair of oceangoing vessels. Europeans began to exploit Caribbean mahogany in the sixteenth century. In remote, mountainous sections of Hispaniola, however, massive, first-growth mahoganies reaching over a hundred feet tall survived well into the twentieth century. Accordingly, Haiti's abundant mahogany trees were an important source of cash income in the early nineteenth century.⁵⁵

THE FREEDOM OF A FULL STOMACH

The former slaves who made up the majority of Haiti's early citizens had repeatedly suffered from long periods of famine. Early Haiti's formative collective experiences included the privations of the middle passage, the poor and insufficient rations and provision grounds afforded slaves under the old regime, and the hardships that resulted from the frequent blockades, economic crises, and episodes of pillage and destruction during the Haitian Revolution and early Haitian

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civil wars. People who had survived events like these were understandably preoccupied with producing their own food. Because most of Haiti's founding citizens were agricultural laborers, it is not surprising that they turned to subsistence agriculture amid the privations and instability of the revolution.

During the war of independence against the French and during the civil wars and invasion scares of the postindependence period, early Haitian leaders were concerned with boosting domestic food production for strategic reasons. This was a rare case in which the desires of the leaders dovetailed with those of the population. If Haiti's military regimes hoped to survive invasion and blockade, the defending armies would require a local food supply. In February 1802, at the height of Louverture's initial resistance to the French expeditionary army, the insurgent leader Gingembre Trop Fort, who ruled the district of Borgne, ordered local plantation managers to plant and cultivate bananas, beans, corn, sweet potatoes, and rice "for the subsistence of the brave defenders of liberty."⁵⁶ Anticipating another French invasion, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion made strategic plans for the production of domestic food reserves. As early as 1805, Christophe began to order plantation owners and leaseholders to plant at least one carreau with cassava and to make regular deliveries of the crop in order to help provision the military.⁵⁷ Cassava, also known as yuca or manioc, was the staple food crop of the pre-Columbian natives of Hispaniola, and it was an easy choice for the production and buildup of a strategic food reserve. In 1812, as Pétion prepared for the possibility of a new invasion, he ordered the massive cultivation of cassava and the manufacture of cassava

flour to be stored in barrels and warehoused by the state. Along with creating caches of gunpowder and lead, he ordered the increased cultivation of ground provisions and grain in the mountainous interior.⁵⁸ Under Christophe, food production as an aspect of war footing took on the character of a total mobilization of the population. Fearing invasion on the occasion of French talks with his rival Pétion in 1814, Christophe declared: "Women, old people, and children will plant provisions of all kinds in the most inaccessible areas of the mountains," just as the soldiers armed for war. Christophe apparently took an active interest in these strategic measures, visiting state-mandated provision grounds and further ordering that plantations put in certain quantities of breadfruit and mango trees on an annual basis.⁵⁹ Whereas most of his subjects suffered under onerous state enforcement of sugar production, plantation discipline, and taxation, his law mandating food production was his only policy that was actually in tune with the interests and preferences of the masses.

Although the post-1804 French invasion never materialized, state-mandated food production, along with the independent efforts of the growing rural population, contributed to an eventual surplus of food in early Haiti. Less than a decade after independence, Haiti became fully self-sufficient in the production of staple food crops. Its ports were still receiving a range of products that the country itself could not produce in great abundance, such as flour, salted fish, wine, butter, and cheese. But the fact that since its founding Haiti has always imported a wide range of foreign foods does not in and of itself shed much light on its relative level of food security at different points in its history. During the first two decades of

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independence, with a population of well under a million people and tropical territory roughly the size of Maryland, the former slaves of Haiti were more than capable of feeding themselves. Amazed by the fertility of the place, an observer described the Haitian countryside as a “garden of Eden” and wrote that it was “curious for an American” to see stands of corn being harvested alongside corn that was both half grown and recently planted.⁶⁰ Foreigners frequently made observations to the effect that ground provisions, or *vivres*, such as bananas, sweet potatoes, yams, and cassava, “grow in abundance and without demanding any care other than planting.”⁶¹ These sorts of observations were dismissive of the toil and hardship endured by Haitian cultivateurs. But to some extent foreigners can be forgiven for having marveled at the extreme productivity of rainy, fertile sections of Haiti that had deep, rich soils and received twelve months of tropical sunshine. The fact that Haiti became a desperate importer of food in the twentieth century as a result of an ugly history of American crop-dumping and domestic ecological crisis partially obscures the country’s historical potential for agricultural abundance.

The clearest evidence of Haiti’s postemancipation bonanza of food production is the fact that a decade after independence the country began to export grain. As a result of the disruptions to British and American shipping during the War of 1812, Jamaica was cut off from food exports and was threatened by one of the wartime famines that periodically gripped the slave colonies of the Caribbean. This circumstance, along with Haiti’s growing output of grain and ground provisions, created an opportunity for Haitian merchants and for Pétion’s government. Pétion agreed to allow Haitian and British ships

to carry grain to Jamaica in exchange for discounted sales of British gunpowder.⁶² Haitian customs records show that roughly a dozen Haitian ships, along with two Spanish and one English, made twenty-six voyages from Port-au-Prince or Petit-Goâve in 1813 carrying grain. In total, these ships carried at least 3,510 barrels of corn, 911 barrels of beans, 341 barrels of rice, and sixty barrels of yams.⁶³ Nearly all of these ships brought their cargoes to Jamaica. It is interesting to consider whether Haitians pondered the irony that because of the rise in food production following emancipation, their country found itself in a position to supply barrels of grain used to sustain plantation slaves on a nearby island.

In any case, the 1813 grain exports reflected robust domestic food production and suggest that the former slaves of Haiti had largely conquered hunger by destroying the plantation system. Although Pétion was as much a military dictator as he was a republican statesman, he was probably not among the leaders in history who could have exported grain amid famine. The Haitians of 1813 were the same people who had destroyed the sugar plantations in the western and southern provinces, fought in a series of civil wars, driven out the French, and begun to take ownership of their own tracts of farmland. Pétion and the Port-au-Prince mercantile elite did not have an easy time telling them what to do, and if the rural producers were suffering from a shortage of food, it is not likely that thousands of barrels of grain would have made it to the wharf.

Throughout the 1810s and 1820s, Haiti seems to have produced more food than neighboring Caribbean islands. In August 1814, Pétion responded to renewed suspicions about a French invasion by disallowing grain exports in order to once

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again build up strategic domestic food reserves. Smugglers, however, still seem to have taken advantage of Haiti's revolutionary rejection of the sugar industry and its comparatively rich food supply. In 1823, President Boyer issued a proclamation banning interisland trade in which he complained that foreign smugglers were plying the Haitian coast and trading contraband Cuban or Jamaican sugar, syrup, and rum for grain, root crops, and livestock raised in Haiti.⁶⁴ This unique trade of Haitian foodstuffs for sugar-derived products from neighboring islands demonstrated the extent to which Haiti had moved away from the complex of slave-based plantation production that had once characterized colonial Saint-Domingue and that still operated in nearby Cuba and Jamaica.

HAITIAN CRYPTOCULTURE

The Haitian conuco system of mixed agriculture and swidden hillside cultivation evolved as a means for rural families to meet most of their needs without working for a boss or surrendering the fruits of their labor to a predatory state. The widespread production of root crops and the proliferation of shifting slash-and-burn production in remote locations suggest that traditional Haitian farming encodes a history of escape agriculture. It is no surprise that farmers in southern Mexico and Guatemala still call their system of corn and bean planting by the Mayan name "milpa," or that rural Bolivians still live and farm according to the pre-Columbian *ayllu* system of extended family, reciprocal obligations, and group landownership. In those societies, huge areas remain populated by the descendants of pre-Columbian peoples who have

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held on to many of their languages and lifeways. It is perhaps more intriguing that the system of small-scale farming in Hispaniola is still known in many places by the pre-Columbian name “conuco,” even despite the almost total elimination of the native population through disease, conquest, and slavery. Just as the Sanpwel secret society may preserve traditions of runaway native American communities that held out against Hispaniola’s Spanish colonizers, the inaccessible conuco may be a legacy of small communities of Afro-Indian maroons who survived in the island’s interior through centuries of colonial rule.

By farming amid deep jungles and on high mountain peaks, and by avoiding the sort of seasonal mono-crop harvests that would make their labor “legible” and thereby taxable by the state, Haitian farmers strove for freedom and domestic autonomy. One of their most enduring strategies has been a seemingly haphazard system of intercropping. Outsiders walking into a conuco might not even realize that they had left the jungle and entered a farmer’s field.⁶⁵ Perhaps by noticing only one particular fruit in season, outsiders might overlook a dozen other food crops forming an apparent underbrush. In a Haitian hillside conuco, manioc, sugarcane, coconut, taro, sweet potato, yams, plantain, and mango might all vie for sunlight against the wild shrubs and grasses that provide forage for goats, or the jungle tree that the farmer might cut down to make charcoal. Although the Taino term “conuco” is still used to describe small farms and gardens in the neighboring countries of Cuba and the Dominican Republic, conucos in those countries are usually orderly plots devoted to a single crop. It is the Haitian conuco that is synonymous with a dizzying diversity of crops

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planted in one place. Rather than a simple lack of order, this system is evidence of a people's historical drive toward rural economic self-sufficiency and determination to avoid taxation, dependence, and state control.

This versatile system of planting two dozen crops on the same three-acre plot offered its own special advantages in a society of independent producers who often possessed no formal land documents and who received absolutely no benefit from the taxes appropriated by the state. Diversification insured against all forms of crop loss. Insect plagues, plant diseases, drought, or flood would not devastate all crops equally. By producing as many kinds of crops as possible, farm families and local communities could avoid taxes in the surest way possible: by avoiding formal commerce altogether. Hand-to-mouth (perhaps better envisioned as hill-to-hearth) consumption was a sure way to cut out the taxman, as was barter and ritual exchange among extended families and local communities. Just as extensive lowland fields of grain or cane would easily draw the eye of the state authorities, shifting jungle conucos produced by the swidden or slash-and-burn method often amounted to what I call cryptoculture: remote and shifting systems of farming designed to conceal crops and entire settlements from the roving eyes of passing soldiers, taxmen, or thieves. In terms of strategic placement, early Haitian farms would have resembled the ones observed by David Porter in the Dominican Republic in 1847 in the immediate aftermath of the Haitian occupation. Porter noted that farms were not visible from the main roads and could be observed only from hilltops; "an unsocial disposition," he wrote, "causes many to retire back into the country, while other[s] leave the

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roadsides to avoid depredations often committed by a disorderly soldiery.”⁶⁶ War and military confiscation gave rise to hidden and temporary farms.

In his anarchist history of the hill peoples of southeast Asia, James C. Scott acknowledges the partial parallels between these groups and fugitive-slave communities in the Americas. The history of postemancipation rural settlements in Haiti reflects Scott’s notion of “deliberate and reactive statelessness.”⁶⁷ To borrow another of Scott’s formulations, the Haitian farmers skillfully devised systems of mixed crop production and systems of local exchange that were not “fiscally legible” to state authorities whose governments were generally useless at best, repressive at worst, and perpetually tax-hungry. The fiscal illegibility of Haitian crop production was based on production for use, barter and mutual assistance at the level of the extended family and the local community, and forms of smuggling and tax evasion.

The early Haitian context supports Scott’s argument that roots, fruits, and gourds are especially suited to the agriculture of escape. It is not random or arbitrary that the fast-growing and nutritious pumpkin is the basis of the soup by which the Haitians traditionally commemorate their national independence on January 1. Scott writes, “Cultivars that cannot be stored long without spoiling, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, or that have low value per unit weight and volume, such as most gourds, rootcrops, and tubers, will not repay the efforts of a tax gatherer.” Nineteenth-century European visitors may have wrung their hands in frustration watching fruit fall to the ground and rot in Haitian gardens, but perishability and abundance reflected pervasive freedom

from both want and state appropriation. Scott emphasizes the “underground” nature of long-lasting root crops and contrasts roots and tubers with grain. He writes, “Grain, after all, grows aboveground, and it typically and predictably all ripens at the same time. The tax collector can survey the crop in the field as it ripens and can calculate in advance the probable yield. Most important of all, if the army and/or the tax collector arrive on the scene when the crop is ripe, they can confiscate as much of the crop as they wish.”⁶⁸

But Haiti’s landscape and the system of shifting, mixed, and dispersed cultivation allowed the early Haitian farmers to keep even grain crops outside the grasping reach of the state. In early Haiti, grain production was more geographically dispersed and less fiscally legible than in the floodplains of the southeast Asian padi, or paddy, states described by Scott. Haiti does have a long history of wet rice production in the Artibonite valley. This rice was grown in a concentrated space and was probably more easily taxed by the state. But elsewhere in the country, grain crops were planted in small remote plots, sometimes in the same kind of shifting, promiscuous, half-hidden style in which Haitian farmers also produced beans, root crops, fruits, and vegetables. Nostalgia for Africa may have partially contributed to the widespread production of millet and rice, but the earliest customs records suggest that the largest grain crop was corn, which Haitians complemented with nitrogen-fixing legumes, including beans and the beloved Congo pea.⁶⁹

Scott emphasizes the eminently taxable aspects of seasonal rice agriculture in the alluvial valley kingdoms of southeast Asia, but early Haitians produced grain crops high up the

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hills and at varying times in the year. Unhindered by the topographical exigencies of the plow, Haitian farmers who worked with the machete and the hoe cultivated grain on steep hillsides. The Haitian agrarian landscape has often inspired the old joke about the farmer who broke his leg falling out of his cornfield. Crops produced and consumed in the most rugged reaches of the Haitian mountains were unlikely ever to pass anywhere near the gaze of a government tax collector. And unlike the watchful officials of southeast Asian padi states, Haitian rulers could not easily focus their efforts on a particular season for the harvest of Haiti's widely dispersed staple crops. Haiti receives uninterrupted tropical sunshine, and many areas stay lush and green all year. The Caribbean experiences seasonality in many forms, and farmers were not always bound to produce crops according to the fixed, temperate harvest seasons that leave producers particularly vulnerable to taxation.

LIVING OFF THE LAND

Although early Haiti continued to import some salted fish and salted pork, the dispersion of the rural population resulted in a major increase in the domestic meat supply. Haitians who had little money and no banks pursued capital accumulation on the hoof. The proverbial Haitian piggy bank represented the possibility of prosperity and abundance even in the context of a cash-poor rural society. But in the early decades of Haitian history, the sparsely populated landscape allowed for forms of hunting that even recalled the rugged era of the early colonial buccaneers who survived by hunting feral cattle.

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To this day, to eat grilled food in Haiti is to have it *boukané*. Just as the early Haitians preferred extracting the cherries of uncultivated coffee trees or the timber of wild-growing logwood, the widespread hunting and harvesting of wild and feral animals exemplified the maroon nature of early Haitian society. Haiti's early population of well under a million people had access to ample reserves of wild food, and the steady demographic growth of the nineteenth century reflected a rural society that was literally expanding off the fat of the land. Haiti currently imports low-end hot dogs, by-catch fish, and the notorious Dominican-made "salami," but the earliest Haitians had relatively reliable access to wild fish, creole beef, conch, crabs, guinea fowl, and turtle eggs.

Cattle and sea turtles represented a special hybrid commodity. These were animals that would inevitably be harvested or slaughtered for their food value but that also produced nonperishable products that could be sold to foreign merchants who paid cash for tortoiseshell and rawhides. A sea turtle hunt, or a farm family's decision to slaughter a drying milk cow, would have fueled two distinct but intertwined economies. Perishable and valuable fresh meat would have immediately entered the domestic food market. At the same time, the precious tortoiseshell or the humble cowhide would either make its way to the customs house and enter the formal international trade, from which the narrow Haitian elite skimmed its profits, or be traded illegally with foreign smugglers. Either way, these commodities represented one more means by which the Haitian masses obtained such indispensable foreign goods as cloth, metal tools, soap, and cooking pots.

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The early Haitian trade in tortoiseshell exemplified the popular preference for extractive enterprise. Tortoiseshell appears in the Haitian customs records as *écailles de Carêt*. *Carey* was the Taino word for the hawksbill sea turtle—the primary source of the translucent decorative material that was used to make such luxury goods as snuffboxes, combs, and inlaid veneers. Haitian fishermen pursued these turtles at sea, and they took advantage of nesting periods to harvest them on land.⁷⁰ Like picking coffee or felling logs on a jungle hillside, taking to the sea in small, locally fashioned wooden boats to spear turtles was hard work. But tortoiseshell was to fishermen what coffee or dyewood was to the rural farmer: an exportable commodity that could be sold for hard currency. Fishermen ate or sold the meat and eggs of the sea turtle, but they also sold the valuable shells to the higglers and speculators who connected the countryside with the foreign trade at the ports. Tortoiseshell would have reached the port cities on the same mule trains and small sailing vessels that carried the abundant harvests of coffee and dyewood.

The iconic Haitian market woman, or *madan sara*, of tourist photographs and colorful paintings is usually a woman bearing an appealing basket of tropical fruits. The market women who slaughter livestock and swing cleavers in the tropical heat are perhaps less picturesque. But the meat business has always been a critical part of the Haitian agricultural market system. To this day, literal meat and bones are the meat and bones of a Haitian rural marketplace. Livestock on the hoof represented one of the only ways for early Haitian farmers to accumulate wealth, but the state also looked to the domestic meat market as a potential source of revenue. Fearful that the fishing trade was pulling laborers away from agriculture and

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military service, in April 1806 General Christophe rounded up at least twenty-nine fishermen and sent them into the military. Those few people officially allowed to continue fishing were made to pay for government permits.⁷¹ At the same time, Christophe attempted to clamp down on a growing trade in *cecines*, or dried beef, by requiring the owner of any cow or bull who wanted to slaughter the animal to obtain a permit from the local military commander proving rightful ownership.⁷² Haitian fishermen, pastoralists, and feral cattle hunters likely moved to more remote areas of the country in order to avoid state regulation and taxation. The Haitian state's earliest efforts to regulate and tax the country's meat trade suggest that stock rearing, hunting, and fishing represented principal ways in which the rural Haitians not only sustained themselves but also defied state control through tax evasion.

COMMERCE, COTTAGE INDUSTRY, AND COUNTERFEIT

In the immediate aftermath of national independence, Haitian rulers recognized that the rising system of widespread, informal marketplaces was not compatible with their plans to revive the plantation economy. On January 20, 1804, only three weeks after Haiti's declaration of independence, General Dessalines lamented the number of laborers who had been pulled away from the plantations—particularly “young creole women” who took refuge in the cities and towns, “calling themselves merchants.” Well aware that, left to their own devices, Haitian citizens would rather become market women than cultivatrices, Dessalines passed a restrictive ordinance. His law

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demanding that every Haitian who had been “previously attached to agriculture” would need a special certificate from the local military commander declaring that she had sufficient means to become a merchant. Those who did not acquire this special new permit “would be sent back, within twenty-four hours, to the plantation to which they had previously been attached.”⁷³ Amid the turmoil, instability, and civil wars that characterized the country’s early history, no regime could interfere with the Haitian women’s irrepressible will to live and travel as independent traders. Known in the British West Indies as hawkers or higglers, in Santo Domingo as *marchantas*, and in Haiti as *ti machan*, or *madan sara*, the price-savvy market women who transported their goods on their heads or on the back of a donkey were the backbone of the Haitian economy and of the outdoor marketplace. Sidney Mintz uses his subtle, first-hand knowledge of the Haitian rural market system to argue that Haitian rural society developed a “quasi-capitalist” character. He observes that Haitian farm families survived on minor commerce but also strategically limited their commercial output in order to avoid taxation and preserve their autonomy.⁷⁴ Like so many other Haitian social institutions, the marketplace encodes a history of state repression. It is not by accident that the Haitian marketplace emerged historically as a female-dominated space. Black women played a prominent role in commerce in colonial Saint-Domingue and in other postemancipation Caribbean societies, and in Haiti the feminine character of public commerce represents still another facet of the history of maroon social evasion. Throughout the nineteenth century, as army patrols captured and conscripted men for forced military service, rural Haitian

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families developed a historical habitus by which men cultivated remote farms while women conducted commerce in the towns.

In addition to the country's plethora of food crops, market women dealt in the wide array of household goods produced by Haiti's early small-scale cottage industries. Cash poor and exploited by import taxes and elite urban merchants, the rural Haitian masses generally strove to limit their purchases of expensive imported goods. Cloth was one unavoidable import in universal demand, and as such it was a frequent item of contraband. But local Haitian tailors and seamstresses fabricated, repaired, and patched every sort of garment. Weavers made rope and cord, woven mats, baskets, and characteristic satchels known as *makouts*. In addition to building their own boats, fishermen wove their own nets and wickerwork fish traps. Skilled carpenters made homes, wooden furniture, and open-hulled boats. They also drew on African artisanal traditions in fashioning the gigantic Haitian mortar and pestle, or *pilon*, as well as elegantly carved wooden serving dishes such as the ceremonial *plat Marassa*. Using the beloved calabash tree, any farm family could make its own bowls and drinking gourds. Professional potters also fashioned and fired clay vessels.

None of this is meant to imply that artisanal Haitian craft producers were especially prosperous in general. One of the finest Haitian proverbs recounts that "the mat maker makes mats but sleeps on the bare earth." Nineteenth-century Haitian craft production was rudimentary and never rose to challenge the importation of foreign industrial goods and luxury items. But it contributed to the partial self-sufficiency of the rural market economy.

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The Vodou religion has spirits for farmers, fishermen, market women, and nearly any other important profession, but it emphasizes the sacred power of the blacksmith. The methods and traditions of Haitian blacksmiths could perhaps represent a promising topic for an anthropologist concerned with Vodou and Haitian history. It seems that a good proportion of colonial Saint-Domingue's blacksmiths were whites, and after independence blacksmiths were in high demand. Among the hundreds of captives brought to Haiti following the siege of Santo Domingo in 1805, General Christophe ordered that any skilled blacksmiths be taken aside and employed in military construction projects. In 1806, Dessalines's government imprisoned the two remaining white blacksmiths at Le Cap and brought them to work at the citadel. But long after the last European blacksmiths were gone, the Haitians were free to serve the African gods of the forge.

In West Africa, iron smelting and forging dates back more than two thousand years. African warriors fought with iron weapons, and the divine blacksmith Ogoun Ferraille is a god of war—both in Benin and in Haiti. The ceremonial use of swords, daggers, and bayonets in the Vodou tradition is a reminder of the memory of warfare in Haitian popular religion. Given the association among iron weapons, the blacksmith's forge, and the lwa Ogoun Ferraille, the Haitian cultural memory of warfare corroborates John Thornton's argument that early Haitian military practices grew directly out of former slaves' military experience in West Africa.

Early Haitian blacksmiths probably spent most of their workdays fashioning and repairing metal tools, as the country no doubt witnessed a diminishing demand for horseshoes.

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The republican regime created no paved roads at all, and those few that remained from the colonial era soon came to resemble the dirt paths that connected the rest of the country. The wheelwright's trade certainly dwindled in a country where the impassable state of the roads reached legendary extremes.

Surely the cleverest of the early Haitian craftsmen were the counterfeiters who used base alloys to reproduce fake versions of early Haitian silver coins. Their risky profession exemplified the underlying lawlessness that characterized Haiti's maroon-like society. A West African religious symbol on Haitian coins offers insights regarding cultural and political life in the emerging nation; early Haitians' willingness to subvert the government's currency system attests to the profound challenges to institutionality that characterized the new nation.

The obscure field of early Haitian numismatics offers a unique window into the prevalence of subterfuge and illegality in the maroon nation. Counterfeiting was a booming business in the early Haitian republic. Though counterfeiting, like other covert economic enterprises, is inherently difficult to study with any certainty, there is no question that the production and passing of phony Haitian currency was widespread under both Pétion and Boyer. Many examples of early counterfeit Haitian coins survive to this day. In 1811, before his government had acquired minting equipment from the United States, Pétion issued the Haitian republic's first coinage by crudely piercing and countermarking colonial Spanish and French silver coins.⁷⁵ Like the first Haitian flag that was famously sewn together from the remnants of the French Tricolor after the white section had been torn out, some of the

first Haitian currency was directly created out of colonial objects that were destroyed and rechristened as emblems of Haitian independence.⁷⁶

These small silver cutout coins known as *d'Haitis* were notoriously easy to forge and reproduce. The counterfeiting business in early Haiti was open to people from all levels of society. Naturally, foreigners also played a part.⁷⁷ Counterfeiters used iron, copper, bronze, or other alloys and cast or hammered out small round disks roughly the size of the state-issued d'Haiti. Pétion's government quickly issued decrees against *faux monnayeurs* and threatened counterfeiters with the death penalty, but it could do little to stop the problem.⁷⁸ In 1812, as Christophe's army laid siege to Port-au-Prince, republican soldiers allegedly took advantage of the din from the blasting cannons and rifles to inconspicuously hammer out counterfeit coins.⁷⁹ As counterfeit coins proliferated and state financial crises mounted, republican authorities kept using currency manipulation to attempt to solve underlying revenue problems. Not to be outdone by fly-by-night counterfeit coin strikers, the government repeatedly rounded up and melted down national coinage and reissued a newer currency with less metallic value. Pétion put out a new series of coins in 1817 that contained only one-third silver. When Boyer issued new coins in 1828, the proportion fell to one-quarter silver.⁸⁰ The interactions among the Haitian state, counterfeiters, commodity speculators, and international merchants entailed constant scheming and attempts by one to profit at the expense of the other. The economic climate of these decades was summed up well by the common Haitian expression "*volè vole volè*"—thieves robbing thieves.

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For their part, the Haitian masses became rightly skeptical of the true value of the money that circulated in their society. The advent of state-issued paper money did even more than fake and debased coins to erode popular confidence in the Haitian gourde. Secretary of State Inginac, who initially proposed the creation of paper money in 1813, came to recognize that this measure contributed to inflation and economic instability.⁸¹ Much like the continental dollars printed during the American Revolution, or the notorious *assignats* printed under the Jacobins, early Haitian paper currency quickly depreciated amid inflationary crises of confidence. In 1840, a French naval captain reported that the most recently issued paper currency had lost 50 to 60 percent of its face value and that the paper gourde traded for the silver gourde at the rate of roughly 2.3 to 1.⁸² Already wizened by counterfeit



An early nineteenth-century counterfeit half-dollar in copper alloy.

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currency and long swindled by state officials, merchants, and commodities speculators, the Haitian masses called the new paper money *zorey bourik*—donkey's ears. Haitian farmers not only mistrusted the rulers who longed to return them to the plantations, they were also suspicious of the very cash with which they were supposed to be compensated for their work as free laborers.

In addition to counterfeiting, the mutilation, repurposing, and occasional rejection of money by early Haitians reflected the limited significance of currency in rural Haiti. Gold coinage was so rare that rural people did not recognize it. The Quaker abolitionist John Candler, who toured Haiti in 1840, once attempted to pay for food and lodgings at a rural inn with a small gold coin. His host looked the item over “as though it was meant to deceive her” and ultimately refused to accept it.⁸³ Some Haitians refused to accept gold



A pierced early nineteenth-century
silver coin.

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coins, and others took silver coins out of circulation by piercing them and using them as items of adornment rather than instruments of exchange. Within the arena of antique numismatics, specimens of nineteenth-century Haitian silver coins exhibit an unusually high rate of piercing. The most plausible explanation for this marked pattern is that the early Haitians commonly repurposed their currency as shiny baubles.

By converting their money into a smart pair of earrings or dangling embellishments for ceremonial clothing, early Haitians created a flashy display of prosperity and triumph over necessity.

Epilogue

THE history of nineteenth-century Haiti proved two politically troublesome points: that humanity can thrive autonomously at the most remote margins of world markets and imperial systems, and that blacks—through violence—can overcome whites. History's ultimate island, deprived of capital and surrounded by hostile powers that only became more and more powerful over the course of the industrial age, Haiti has repeatedly been punished for its original sin of racial insurgency.

It is impossible today to live in Haiti as a researcher or to even discuss Haitian history without acknowledging dire contemporary crises, including massive unemployment, non-existent infrastructure, official corruption, child labor and servitude, and the mistreatment and stateless condition of ethnic Haitians in the Dominican Republic. With most Haitians currently eager to go abroad to earn more money but unable to leave due to visa restrictions and the pervasive lack of

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economic resources, the knot of history has been retied, and the country is once again defined by a generalized condition of deprivation and confinement. Millions of Haitians unabashedly use the metaphor of slavery to describe their current status and treatment. But the nineteenth-century history of black freedom and meteoric demographic growth demonstrates that the country's twentieth- and twenty-first-century predicament grew out of a historical crisis of success. The country's social order still encodes a previously successful pattern of flight and autonomous survival. As day turns to night and back, historical phenomena seem to transform into their very opposites. Haitian society has careened from colonial slavery to a "runaway" society conditioned by popular autonomy and a lack of institutional development. Through a combination of agrarian abundance and entrenched political instability, the population rose quickly, while the state failed to foster educational or economic development. Unfortunately for Haiti, the rural population grew to the point of filling in and exhausting the available land at roughly the same point that the country was becoming even more starkly outpaced by technological and economic development in industrial Europe and North America. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the country that had been founded by former slaves on the principle that no white man should ever own any land there had become ripe for U.S. invasion and takeover. From there began a new and ongoing phase in Haiti's saga of foreign invasion and foreign economic control. Yet Haiti's linguistic, cultural, and religious institutions are residual proof of the widespread political and economic autonomy that the Haitian masses enjoyed during most of the nineteenth century.

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In addition to an analysis of the Haitian Revolution, this book reflects an attempt to explain the subsequent history of Haiti and its seemingly intractable crises of underdevelopment. I focus on rural social conflict and the emergence of Haiti's rural economic systems because Haiti's rural lifeways and social institutions have played an outsized role in the country's modern history. The massive internal migration that characterized twentieth-century Haitian history cannot be flatly equated with urbanization in wealthy industrial nations, or even with the growth of the semi-industrialized capital cities of nearby poor Latin American countries. Rather than the urbanization of Haiti, with ensuing processes of modernization and capital accumulation, Haitian intellectual Jean René has aptly characterized internal migration in twentieth-century Haiti as the "ruralization of Port-au-Prince."¹ Even as the capital city has swelled to a population of millions, its people have not enjoyed the advantages of reliable electricity, plumbing, paved roads, public education, building codes, or trash collection. The majority of the population—rural migrants and their descendants—reproduced rural economic institutions and social habits, including informal markets, squatting and contested land claims, widespread domestic servitude, traditional religious services, an infinity of open-air marketplaces, unbanked systems of economic exchange (including barter and informal credit arrangements), urban reiterations of the *lakou* system of family compounds, and constant circulation of people and goods to and from the rural provinces. In a small country the size of Maryland, the countryside was never far from the capital, notwithstanding the notoriously bad roads. In the expansive sense that I employ

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the term, Port-au-Prince is as much a maroon territory as the country's highest and most remote mountain village.

The former slaves of Haiti did not conquer their servitude with pen and ink, and they did not create stable, formally democratic institutions. They won freedom with pikes, machetes, and fleetness of foot. They built private, local social institutions, including informal markets and religious organizations that have long defied scholarly description because of their secretive nature. The patterns of state repression, unauthorized settlement, and local economic autonomy discussed in the previous chapters fit well with Michel Laguerre's claim that the secret tactics of Bizango "guerrilla warfare" were designed to prepare poor, illiterate Haitian farmers "for the eventual defense of their land against [the] mulatto and black elite."² Haitian scholar William Balan Gaubert has claimed that these organizations emerged in postemancipation settlements as a sort of protective "maroon police."³ Perhaps further anthropological investigation into the rites, practices, and oral histories of such societies as the Sanpwel, Bizango, Zobops, and Vlangbendeng can provide illuminating information about the role of these organizations in the emergence of Haiti's postemancipation social order.

The names of these secret societies are generally well known in Haiti, but reliable, detailed information about them is hard to come by. Any researcher attempting to take on the history of Haiti's secret societies must first understand that many of the mysteries and unanswered questions in the foreign scholarly literature on Haiti exist for a reason. Whether they emerged amid the violence of the West African slave trade, in hidden settlements of native Taino runaways, or

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among armed encampments during the Haitian Revolution, these organizations were forged in secrecy and still guard certain sacred knowledge from noninitiates. The foreign researcher in search of alternate popular histories might just as easily meet with guile, obfuscation, or purposeful misinformation. Vodouisants in Croix des Bouquets tell the story of European researchers who came asking to learn the secrets of the Haitian liturgy by being “initiated” into Vodou. A local *houngan*, or Vodou priest, accepted their offers of payment and went on to request larger and larger sums of money. Once the foreigners had departed, the *houngan* bragged that instead of teaching the *blan* any of his important secrets, he told them a bunch of improvised hogwash. With this story in mind, I suspect that visiting scholars who attempt to make a direct study of Haitian secret societies might instead become unwitting students of the archetypical Haitian trickster figure *ti malice*. It is likely that the best scholarly interpretations of Haitian secret societies will come from scholars within Haiti—possibly from people who happen to have connections to these historical organizations. Lewis Clormeus, a prominent Haitian scholar of religion, has taken great interest in organizations like the Zobops and in events like the nineteenth-century religious conflicts between Les Saints and Les Guyons.⁴

Anthropologists and ethnographers might also be able to shed further light on the history of nineteenth-century Haiti by conducting regional studies. It would be fascinating to ascertain whether the rural insurgency led by Goman from 1807 to 1819 left any identifiable legacy in the local religious traditions of the Grande Anse region at the end of Haiti’s southern peninsula. Given the pronounced geographical remoteness of

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Haiti's southwestern communities, a systematic investigation of the region's oral liturgy and hereditary religious songs might yield new evidence concerning the history of the Grande Anse maroon enclave.

Though inquisitive anthropologists are likely to encounter mystification and purposeful misinformation if they attempt to directly investigate Haiti's historical secret societies, they will encounter no such barriers if they endeavor to study subsistence farming, artisanal fishing, or the life of the outdoor market. The rural fieldwork of anthropologists Sidney Mintz and Drexel Woodson offer excellent examples of this sort of study.⁵

Secret societies may continue to succeed at concealing their past from nosy scholars, or the very earth itself might someday offer up important evidence concerning Haitian life in the nineteenth century. Haiti—a place of tremendous historical importance—has also been one of the countries least explored by academic archaeologists. Bad roads, political instability, tropical maladies, and the many challenges facing the local academic establishment have all contributed to the lack of systematic archaeological exploration in Haiti. In recent decades, many historic structures and sites have been callously bulldozed, consigned to neglect and decay, and poorly guarded from the predatory incursions of foreign treasure hunters.

Perhaps such disciplines as archaeology, anthropology, and art history will help us to understand the Haitian past by interpreting the country's rich material culture. Despite state and ecclesiastical authorities' repetitive anti-Vodou campaigns, which have invariably involved the confiscation and

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destruction of ceremonial objects, clandestinity inevitably persists. Haitian temples and altars continue to guard a range of historical treasures. This mysterious and secretive scattering of historical artifacts could be described as the maroon version of historical archives or museums. In the course of a recent documentary film project on Vodou, historian Sabine Cadeau discovered an eighteenth-century European bayonet preserved amid the altar treasures of a Vodou priest. It is the same kind of long, triangular bayonet depicted in the background of the “treasure of arms,” Haiti’s iconic national symbol.⁶ The owner of the bayonet affirms that it is both a combat relic and a spiritual object—a connection to the Nago god of ironwork and a direct, palpable legacy of rebel slaves who at first had no guns but fought for their freedom with machetes and pikes.

Official archives and written sources represent only one dimension of the effort to comprehend and interpret Haiti’s past. The emergence of a bayonet from the era of the Haitian Revolution recalls a prominent Haitian proverb, which sums up the country’s political history in six succinct words: “Konsitisyon se papye, bayonèt se fè”—the constitution is paper, bayonets are steel. This stark turn of phrase encapsulates the ethos of generalized lawlessness that has pervaded the history of the maroon nation. Early Haitian laborers were legally bound to large sugar plantations. They consistently fled. Subsequent generations of early Haitian farmers were legally obliged to pay taxes on coffee, dyewoods, and imported goods, and they were required to pay entrance taxes at public markets. They vigorously evaded these taxes whenever they could. Haitians were legally forbidden to practice Vodou. The religion

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thrived and grew. But unlike the iconic machete, the lawlessness of the maroon nation was a double-edged sword. Haiti's masses of poor farmers made recourse to tax evasion and defied laws that went against their interests, but so too did Haiti's ruling military and commercial elites. Rather than a tropical anarchist utopia, or an ideal libertarian free market, nineteenth-century Haiti was a decidedly unequal and exploitative society.

Celebratory accounts explaining the Haitian Revolution as a step in a teleologically conceived political evolution toward a system of universal human rights do not address the massive enduring contradiction at the heart of Haiti's national history: the fact that the country has been characterized, on the one hand, by a foundational impulse toward popular rebellion and autonomy and, on the other, by centuries of predatory forms of elite impunity and exploitation.

Although this book has attempted to interpret Haiti's political economy through the lens of marronage, this is not to say that the maroon phenomenon was somehow immaculately righteous, inherently egalitarian, or heroically progressive. Maroon entities, though they represented proud challenges to the evils of slavery, were not immune from the seemingly universal human phenomena of exploitation, hierarchy, and elite corruption. After holding their own in prolonged wars, Jamaican maroon settlements survived by coming to official terms with the British colonial regime. In exchange for written guarantees of their freedom and independence, maroon leaders agreed to return new runaway slaves to their plantations and assist the colonial power in case of a broad slave insurgency. Maroon auxiliaries played a decisive role in putting down the

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Jamaican slave uprising of 1760. In this sense, Haiti was a massively scaled-up version of the maroon settlements in other regions of the Americas. Haitian rulers secured external guarantees of their country's independence, first by vowing not to spread slave rebellion to the surrounding British colonies and later by saddling their country with a disastrous debt in order to repay French slave owners for their losses.

Standing precariously atop a counterinstitutional maroon society, the Haitian state eventually emerged as little other than a commercial taxation apparatus that supported an inward-looking military. With essentially no meaningful public commitment to education or infrastructure, those few Haitians who could amass fortunes either through a privileged relationship with the state or through commerce enjoyed a very low cost of living and very low taxes. In a society almost entirely devoid of public education, public works, and public health care, wealthy Haitians have been able to avoid the cumbersome overhead costs found in countries that can boast of having roads, schools, or plumbing. Is this to say that Haiti's rulers and economic upper echelons should somehow be classified as a "maroon bourgeoisie"? A theory of bourgeois marronage would encompass patterns of tax evasion, secrecy, and offshore banking. Such a concept would stand alongside other innovative descriptions of self-serving Caribbean and Latin American ruling classes. The small Haitian elite has been called a comprador bourgeoisie and a *bourgeoisie revendeuse*. In Haitian popular parlance they are often referred to as the *boujwazi malpwòp*—which could be translated as a "dirty, no good bourgeoisie." To borrow a clever formulation from Paul Baran, E. Franklin Frazier, and Andre Gunder

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Frank, the elite Haitian merchant class has functioned as the ultimate “lumpenbourgeoisie,” rootless, opportunistic, and unconcerned with the condition of the country’s institutions or its populace.⁷ If the masses thwarted capital accumulation and institutional development in early Haiti by fleeing the exploitation of the plantation sector, have not generations of wealthy Haitians perhaps played a greater role in undermining the country’s economic development by offshoring their wealth to England, New York, France, or Switzerland?

Any observer who attempts to comprehend Haiti’s complex history must not ignore or underestimate the wealth, power, and prestige that the country’s rulers have enjoyed over time. Although racist Europeans mocked the aristocratic pretensions of the black King Henry Christophe and members of his noble court who bore such titles as the Count of Limonade and the Duke of Marmelade, the money, luxuries, and social prestige of early Haitian grandees were entirely real. Christophe’s nobility did not survive the unification of Haiti, but the oldest of the country’s aristocratic fortunes dates back to the early Haitian republic. The mystery that shrouds Haiti’s greatest private fortunes represents a sort of elite marronage.

As in nearly all Latin American and Caribbean republics, elements of the latter-day Haitian elite and Haitian state have long been involved in narco-trafficking and related money laundering. In addition to this maroon-like trade, the Haitian elite has also recently been tarnished by internecine kidnapping scandals that suggest the existence of mafias and protection rackets. The term “mafya” is well known and very productively applied throughout Haitian society. If poor, dark-skinned

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squatters or illegal immigrants can be called latter-day maroons, perhaps rich, light-skinned racketeers can also be described in terms of an expansive definition of marronage that encompasses multiple forms of systematized lawlessness.

As I have attempted to demonstrate in the preceding chapters, independent Haiti has inevitably been connected to networks of global commerce, but it was never favorably integrated into networks of global capital investment. For this reason, independent Haiti has remained one of the world's most cash-poor societies. Foreign capital has almost always failed to profitably employ Haitian labor within Haitian borders, but local elites have benefited immensely from the dirt-cheap cost of labor. With a balefully low GDP, generalized poverty, and a massive informal sector, within Haiti a given quantity of nominal monetary wealth has tended to go very far in terms of employing servants, living the good life, and jockeying for social position. Abstract nominal estimates of the size of Haitian fortunes in dollar terms would yield an insufficient assessment of the relative privilege and local social weight of Haitian wealth.

Haiti's maroon society emerged because of the determination of a formerly enslaved people to be free, but it was immune neither to internal corruption nor to exploitation from the outside. Armed with steel-hulled warships, repeating firearms, aviation, and the rudiments of modern medicine, by 1915 the United States was able to easily invade Haiti and put an end to more than a century of formal territorial sovereignty. The Americans overturned Haiti's constitutional prohibition on foreign land ownership. Haiti's decentralized land tenure as well as a profound pattern of political resistance to foreign

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control stood in the way of American efforts to turn Haiti into a profitable arena of investment. But just as Haiti's early rulers turned to indirect forms of exploitation following the collapse of the plantation system, Haiti's North American overlords have also exploited the country indirectly following the general failure of direct investment in the plantation sector. If Haiti could not match Cuba, the Dominican Republic, or Central America in the profitable export of sugar or bananas, it could at least function as a captive market for a range of American exports. Unable to create a profitable twentieth-century Haitian plantation sector, American capital employed cheap Haitian labor in the sugar plantations of Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Later in the twentieth century, the United States, Canada, and France all imported cheap Haitian labor directly while contributing to the modest growth of a luxurious tourist industry, which collapsed in the 1980s amid the turbulent fall of the Duvalier dynasty and the AIDS scare.

Long branded as "the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere," with every catastrophic natural disaster, epidemic, or renewed wave of political instability, Haiti reliably provides miserable footage for the news cameras. A variety of recent scandals have demonstrated to the world what Haitians have casually observed for decades: that all of the branches of the foreign aid or "governance" sector, including private charities, government entities, and armed peacekeeping missions, are deeply stained by corruption and imperialism. How are scholars and lay observers to square a history of popular liberation, autonomy, and black pride with profound patterns of dependency, corruption, and generalized poverty? In Haiti itself one often encounters a despairing discourse.

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Exclamations to the effect that “Haiti is finished” or “Haiti has died long ago” are commonplace. And yet for as many times as the land has been burned, looted, and ravaged by earthquakes and hurricanes, the maroon nation has remained. Long freed from the stultifying ideological influences of Western colonialism, Haiti’s art, music, and literature stand out as among the very best of the Caribbean and Latin American region. And although cultural achievements are no replacement for paved roads or a power grid, Haiti’s relatively prostrate economy might someday find its footing. Official counts are hardly reliable, but according to available statistics Haiti is a country of roughly eleven million people—not very large, but hardly insignificant. In light of its impoverished and underdeveloped condition, the tremendous challenges should be considered alongside the tremendous potential for growth. Scholars who have casually repeated the claim that the country has no significant natural resources are dead wrong. The well-known crises of deforestation and erosion have not erased the country’s tremendous agricultural potential, which is based on significant annual rainfall and abundant tropical sunshine. Haiti’s potential fossil fuel reserves seem scarcely to have been explored. The country possesses significant reserves of gold, copper, and bauxite. Ever suspicious of the realistic threat of foreign land grabs, the Haitian people tightly hold on to the principal form of maroon wealth and the historic wellspring of their freedom: the land beneath their feet.

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Notes

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

AG, ANF	Archives Gallifet, 107AP/127, Archives Nationales de France, Paris
ANH	Archives Nationales d'Haïti, Port-au-Prince
HSP	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
RC	Rochambeau Collection, University of Florida, Gainesville, George Smathers Library Special Collections
SCRBC	Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, New York
SHAT	Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre, Paris
UF, GSL	University of Florida, Gainesville, George Smathers Library Special Collections

CHAPTER I. THE MAROON NATION THESIS

1. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti Made during a Residence in That Republic* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 39–40.
2. Fielding Lucas Jr., *Haiti or Saint Domingo* [map] 1:1,520,640. In Fielding Lucas Jr., *General Atlas* (Baltimore, 1823).
3. "Art: Intermittent Lighting," *Time*, June 11, 1951.

4. Originally transcribed by Timoleon Brutus in 1901, this traditional Haitian religious song heralding Dessalines's 1804 Declaration of Independence is cited in Joan Dayan, *Haiti and the Gods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). It is conceivable that the circular snake symbol could also have had some relation with Haiti's Masonic tradition or that the designer of the coin could have been aware of the ouroboros symbol that originated in ancient Egypt and appeared in Gnostic and Hermetic traditions. Early Haitians, however, would have been more in touch with the Dahomean origins of this symbol.

5. See Johnhenry Gonzalez, "Defiant Haiti: Free-Soil Runaways, Ship Seizures, and the Politics of Diplomatic Non-Recognition in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Slavery and Abolition* 35, no. 2 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144039X.2014.895508>.

6. Sidney Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago: Aldine, 1974), 273.

7. Jean Casimir, *The Caribbean: One and Divisible* (New York: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1992), III.

8. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti: State against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2003).

9. The term "international community" falls short of reflecting the strategic conflicts that characterize global relations in the contemporary era, but it seems especially out of place when applied to the history of Haiti—a long-suffering nation of blacks who created an independent state by waging war against the slaveholding colonial powers of Europe.

10. See Julia Gaffield, *Haitian Connections in the Atlantic World: Recognition after Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 12.

11. The then assistant secretary of the navy, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, proudly took credit for writing Haiti's 1919 constitution.

12. A numerically insignificant handful of white investors, such as British Royal Navy Lieutenant Hannibal Price, who imported an early steam-powered mill to his sugar plantation near Jacmel in 1818, represented rare exceptions that proved the rule. Historians better grounded in the records of the British Empire may someday discover the nature of the agreement that Price struck with Pétion that seemingly excused him from the country's constitutional exclusion of foreign proprietors.

Perhaps he rendered some critical service to the republican regime during the civil war, at a time when Pétion and his successor, Boyer, were able to make payments only in the form of land. As a kind of template for the sort of foreign-Haitian elite alliances that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Price was able to pass on his property only through marriage to a Haitian wife.

13. Kamau Brathwaite, *Roots* (Havana: Casa de las Américas, 1986), 231.

14. Home to many of the oldest maroon groups in the Americas, including the Saramaka, Aluku, Paramaka, and Ndyuka peoples, the Guyanas retain a colonial maroon dynamic. With Guyana and Suriname gaining independence relatively recently and French Guyana remaining a colony, the maroon communities with their own languages and lifeways survive at the geographical margins of the colonial societies. Protected by the world's most remote jungles, the maroons of the Guyanas survive on the basis of such typically maroon economic activities as fishing, farming, and illegal gold mining. As recently as the 1990s, Suriname's maroon warlord Ronnie Brunswijk led a war against the country's government, demanding regional autonomy and a greater share of the country's mining and logging wealth. Threatened by violence, thousands of Surinamese maroons were forced to reprise the maroon legacy of flight by escaping to refugee settlements in French Guyana. Elements of the story sound as if they were drawn directly from the seventeenth century. But as with twenty-first-century pirates, slave traders, and "uncontacted" Amazon natives, rebel maroons belong to the present as well as the past.

15. Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 103, 116. In the colonial era, "petit marronage" referred to temporary flight from a plantation and "grand marronage" to the attempt to flee slavery indefinitely. In his wide-ranging study, Roberts further theorizes that the Haitian Revolution was characterized by what he calls "sociogenic marronage," a process by which the widespread act of flight from bondage shaped the nature of the society that emerged from the revolution.

16. Robenson Geffrard, "Undocumented Haitians as Maroons," *Le nouveliste*, December 7, 2012.

17. Alexander Hamilton to Secretary of State Timothy Pickering, February 21, 1799, *Hamilton Papers*, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-22-02-0294>.

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18. L'administration municipale to Druin, Bainet, May 31, 1802, Rochambeau Microfilm, Reel 1, Lot 39, University of Florida, George Smathers Library Special Collections (hereafter referred to as UF, GSL); Drouin to Rochambeau, Jacmel, June 8, 1802, Rochambeau Microfilm, Reel 1, Lot 39, UF, GSL.

19. Mats Lundahl, *Politics or Markets: Essays on Haitian Underdevelopment* (London: Routledge, 1992), 148.

20. Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan Roll* (New York: First Vintage Books, 1976), 175.

21. Evsey Domar, "The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom: A Hypothesis," *Journal of Economic History* 30, no. 1 (1970): 21.

22. Domar, "The Causes of Slavery or Serfdom," 19.

23. *Ibid.*, 20.

24. *Ibid.*, 19.

25. Some scholars have advised me to use Haiti's history to challenge and rework the notion of modernity and decouple it from industrialization. I have chosen not to, and I retain what some may consider to be a simplistic association between modernity and capital accumulation. The poverty and underdevelopment of countries like Haiti seem to me to represent something like self-evident, inverse proof of the correlation between the two. Modernity, as I use it, is not simply a loaded conceptual category—a historical construct to be complicated and promiscuously amended by including all of the complexities and antimodern dimensions of Haiti's postindependence history. In a very concrete historical sense, economic modernity is a wealthy club of nations characterized by the presence of a transportation infrastructure and an electrical infrastructure, among other things. Even before the earthquake of 2010, Haiti did not even have a decent road network or much of an electrical grid except in a few small enclaves. Although the ideological innovations of the Haitian Revolution have found a prominent place in debates over the emergence of political modernity in the age of Atlantic revolutions, I look to Haiti's early history as an important point of reference for explaining the country's own subsequent economic and social trajectory.

26. David D. Porter, "Diary of Secret Service," in David Dixon Porter Papers, 1847, Rubenstein Library Special Collections, 4275, Duke University, p. 284.

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27. Arthur Stinchcombe, *Sugar Island Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 233.

28. *Ibid.*, 207.

29. Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in Its Ideological Aspects, 1492–1900* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 257.

30. One hopes a newer generation of economic historians will follow the outward trajectory of Haiti's substantial nineteenth-century commercial revenues both through the indemnity payments made to former French slaveholders as well as deposits made by elite Haitians in foreign banks.

31. "Lycée Haïtien Prospectus," March 1, 1817, Port-au-Prince, Haitian Periodicals in the Saint Louis Gonzague Collection, Latin American Microform Project, Center for Research Libraries, University of Chicago.

32. This term, coined by Seymour Drescher in his 1977 study, *Econocide* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), refers to the thesis that the British West Indian slave economy was consciously undone by abolitionists despite its continuing profitability.

33. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963).

34. Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).

35. Having claimed Toussaint Louverture's former title of governor-general at the time of independence, Jean-Jacques Dessalines later declared himself Emperor Jacques I. He is referred to here as General Dessalines, or Dessalines.

36. From 1807 to 1811 Henry Christophe called his government the State of Hayti and held the official title of president. In 1811 he declared himself King Henry the First. Here he is referred to as General Christophe, King Christophe, or Christophe.

37. Mimi Sheller, *Democracy after Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000).

38. Nick Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 37.

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39. Doris Garraway, “Introduction,” in *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, ed. Doris Garraway (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 4.

40. David Geggus, “The Caribbean in the Age of Revolution,” in *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, 1760–1840*, ed. David Armitage and Sanjay Subramanyam (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 97.

CHAPTER 2. THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD, 1791–1804

1. This analysis of the origins of the Haitian uprising borrows from C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Dial Press, 1938).

2. For further discussion and evidence of the industrial or “proto-industrial” character of the colonial Caribbean sugar industry, see B. H. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica 1750–1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2005); Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El ingenio* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2001); Jacques-François Dutrône de la couture, *Précis sur la canne et sur les moyens d’en extraire le sel essentiel* (Paris, 1791).

3. Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie Française de l’isle Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia: Chez l’auteur, 1797–1798), 6.

4. John Thornton, “African Soldiers in the Haitian Revolution,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 25, no. 1 (1993): 51–80. Laurent Dubois, *Avengers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 109, note 36. In addition to the thousands of slaves who were veterans of African wars, more than five hundred free black and mixed-race men, including Henry Christophe, made up the majority of the Chasseurs Volontaires de Saint-Domingue who fought under the Comte D’Estaing at the battle of Savannah in 1779.

5. Christina Mobley, “The Kongolese Atlantic: Central African Slavery and Culture from Mayombe to Haiti,” Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2015.

6. Saint-Méry, *Description topographique*, 28.

7. David Patrick Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint-Domingue, 1793–1798* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

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8. J. R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Some European soldiers also died of malaria, to which African slaves often had partial acquired immunity and sometimes partial genetic immunity due to the sickle-cell trait.

9. S. Linstant Pradine and Victor Schoelcher, *Contre le préjugé de couleur: Le legs de l'abbé Grégoire* (Paris: CTHS, 2001).

10. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 104.

11. David Patrick Geggus, "The Bois Caïman Ceremony," in Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 81–98.

12. Susan Buck Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 141.

13. Although it is difficult to precisely translate the value of eighteenth-century currencies into contemporary terms, three hundred thousand livres turnois represented a massive amount of revenue, which in twenty-first-century American terms would be reckoned in multiple millions of dollars. At the time, this quantity would have represented roughly 185 pounds (or a person's proverbial weight) in gold.

14. Mossut to Gallifet, (month illegible) 1792, Camp Breda, Gallifet slave register, January 1, 1791, Archives Gallifet, 107AP/127, Archives Nationales de France (hereafter referred to as AG, ANF).

15. Mossut to Gallifet, September 19, 1791, Le Cap, AG, ANF.

16. Mossut to Gallifet, (month illegible) 1792, Camp Breda, AG, ANF.

17. Ibid.

18. Mossut, "Mémoire sur la situation actuelle de Saint-Domingue aux habitations Gallifet et les moyens d'en rétablir les revenus," 1793, AG, ANF.

19. Dubois, *Avengers*, 97.

20. Emilio Cordero-Michel, *La revolución haitiana y Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Editora Nacional, 1968), 40–41.

21. Jane G. Landers, "Rebellion and Royalism in Spanish Florida: The French Revolution on Spain's Northern Colonial Frontier," in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, ed. David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 161–63.

22. It was not until July 1792, after failed negotiations with the French authorities, that Biassou and Jean-François, along with Charles

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Bélair, signed their names to a letter calling for general emancipation. See Nathalie Piquionne, "Lettre de Jean-François, Biassou et Bélair, juillet 1792," *Annales historiques de la révolution française* no. 311 (January–March 1998): 132–39.

23. Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Ti difé boulé sou Istoua Ayiti* (New York: Koléksion Lakansièl, 1977), 93.

24. Jean-François's letter to the Dominican Archbishop, transmitting his oath of loyalty to the Spanish Crown. La Mine. May 28, 1793. Archivo General de Simancas, Secretario del Despacho de Guerra, b. 7157, e. 22, d. 368.

25. Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution*.

26. For a detailed history of the political conflicts preceding Sonthonax's decree of emancipation, see Jeremy Popkin, *You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

27. Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac, quoted in Yves Bénéot, "Comment la Convention a-t-elle voté l'abolition de l'esclavage en l'an II," in *Annales historiques de la révolution française* nos. 293–94 (1993): 349–61.

28. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 141.

29. Dubois, *Avengers*, 171.

30. Trouillot, *Ti difé*, 161.

31. Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti: State against Nation* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 43.

32. Yves Benot, *La démenche coloniale sous Napoléon* (Paris: La Découverte, 1992), 29.

33. Michel Hector, *Crises et mouvements populaires en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince: Cidhica, 2000), 33.

34. François Blancpain, *La condition des paysans haïtiens: Du Code noir aux codes ruraux* (Paris: Karthala, 2003), 99.

35. Louverture, "Circular, 2e vendémiaire an 7e," Haiti Miscellaneous Collection, SCRBC, New York.

36. Toussaint Louverture, "Titre VI des cultures et du commerce," *Constitution de la Colonie Française de Saint-Domingue*, May 9, 1801, in *Les lois de Toussaint Louverture* (Port-au-Prince: Presses Nationales d'Haïti, 2008), 44.

37. Ibid., 56.

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38. Trouillot, *Ti difé*, 170.
39. Robert Fatton, *The Roots of Haitian Despotism* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007), 104.
40. Dubois, *Avengers*, 189–90.
41. Louverture to Dessalines, Gonaïves, 19 pluviôse an 10, appendix to Joseph Elisée Peyre-Ferry, *Journal des opérations militaires de l'armée française à Saint-Domingue 1802–1803* (Paris: De Paris, 2004), 274.
42. General Charles Bélair to General Toussaint Louverture, May 7, 1802, Doc. 327, Rochambeau Collection (hereafter referred to as RC), UF, GSL.
43. General Leclerc to Bonaparte, August 6, 1802. *Lettres du Général Leclerc commandant en chef de l'armée de Saint-Domingue en 1802* (Paris: Société de l'Histoire des Colonies Françaises, 1937), 201–2.
44. Bizouard, Commission report to General Leclerc, June 10, 1802, Doc. 492, RC, UF, GSL.
45. General Brunet to General Leclerc, September 30, 1802, Doc. 1125, RC, UF, GSL.
46. General Leclerc to the Minister of the Marine, August 25, 1802. *Lettres*, 217.
47. Pene to General de Division Rochambeau, Baynet, 16 prairial an 10, Rochambeau Microfilm, Reel 1, Lot 39, UF, GSL.
48. General Desboureux to General Rochambeau, July 27, 1802, Doc. 701, RC, UF, GSL.
49. Commandant Bernard to General Rochambeau, September 28, 1802, Doc. 1112, RC, UF, GSL.
50. General Pageot to General Rochambeau, Jacmel, August 15, 1802, Doc. 818, RC, UF, GSL.
51. The terms “brigand” and “brigandage” were used by the French military to describe insurgent activity during the Leclerc expedition. The term was used in Napoleonic France to describe the combination of criminal activity with political dissent.
52. Dieudonné chef de brigade commandant l'arrondissement de Jacmel au Citoyen Leclerc général en chef de l'armée de Saint-Domingue, Jacmel, March 19, 1802, Saint-Domingue Autograph Papers, Group 218, UF, GSL.
53. Captain Maurin to General Rochambeau, May 23, 1802, Doc. 403, RC, UF, GSL.

54. Port Républicain General Neraud to General Rochambeau, August 19, 1802, Port Républicain, Doc. 840, RC, UF, GSL.
55. General Pageot to General Rochambeau, Léogâne, September 12, 1802, Doc. 1014, RC, UF, GSL.
56. Chef de Bataillon Pichot to General Rochambeau, Croix des Bouquets, August 17, 1802, Doc. 832, RC, UF, GSL.
57. Arlette Gauthier, *Les soeurs de solitude: La condition féminine dans l'esclavage aux Antilles du XVIIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Caribéennes, 1985), 256.
58. General Pageot to General Rochambeau, Jacmel, December 21, 1802, Doc. 1453, RC, UF, GSL.
59. Gabriel Debien, "La nourriture des esclaves sur les plantations des Antilles Françaises aux XVIII^e et XVIII^e siècles," *Caribbean Studies* 4, no. 2 (1964): 10.
60. Pierre-Jacques Corbier to Ferron de la Ferronnays, April 9, 1802, cited in Paul Cheney, *Cul de Sac: Patrimony, Capitalism, and Slavery in French Saint-Domingue* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 189.
61. See the poem "Guinée" in Jacques Roumain, *When the Tom-Tom Beats: Selected Prose and Poems* (Washington, DC: Azul, 1995), 26, as well as the English translation by Langston Hughes.
62. Cheney, *Cul de Sac*, 115–16.
63. Sidney Mintz, "Origins of Reconstituted Peasantries," in Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago: Aldine, 1974).
64. Michèle Oriol, *Histoire et dictionnaire de la révolution et de l'indépendance d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince: Fondation pour la Recherche Iconographique et Documentaire, 2002), 133. The carreau is a unit of land area that was used in colonial Saint-Domingue and is still used in Haiti. One carreau is approximately equivalent to 1.29 hectares or 3.19 acres.
65. Commissaire du gouvernement, le tribunal de 1^{re} instance à Jacmel to General Rochambeau, June 12, 1802, Jacmel, Rochambeau Microfilm, Reel 1, Lot 39, UF, GSL.
66. L'administration municipale to General Druin, Bainet, June 10, 1802, Rochambeau Microfilm, Reel 1, Lot 39, UF, GSL.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid. Initially equivalent to a Spanish piece of eight or a North American silver dollar, the gourde is the national currency of Haiti.

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69. General Drouin to General Rochambeau, June 18, 1802, Jacmel, Rochambeau Microfilm, Reel 1, Lot 39, UF, GSL.

CHAPTER 3. DESPOTISM AND FORCED LABOR

1. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, 8 vols. (Port-au-Prince: Henri Deschamps, 1985–1991), vol. 5, pp. 238, 319.

2. Mariotte to General Rochambeau, Gonaïves, June 1, 1802, Doc. 436a, RC, UF, GSL.

3. Jacques 1er Empereur d'Haïti au Directeur des Domaines Inginac, September 8, 1806, in Maurice Nau and Nemours Telhomme, *Code domanial: Contenant les lois et actes relatifs aux droits de propriété en Haïti à l'arpentage et au notariat, 1804–1930* (Port-au-Prince: Nemours Telhomme, 1930), 13.

4. Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Ti difé boulé sou Istoua Ayiti* (New York: Koléksion Lakansiel, 1977), 116.

5. Grand-Jean to Mme. Bunel, September 18, 1804, Au Cap. Grand Jean to Mr. Bunel, October 1804, Au Cap, Bunel Papers, Bining Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter referred to as HSP), Philadelphia; Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 5, p. 67.

6. Gambart, "Observations présentées au gouvernement sur l'administration générale de Saint-Domingue," March 27, 1802, Doc. 162, RC, UF, GSL.

7. François Blancpain, *La condition des paysans haïtiens: Du Code noir aux codes ruraux* (Paris: Karthala, 2003), 117.

8. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 3, p. 220.

9. Robert Lacerte, "The Evolution of Land and Labor in the Haitian Revolution, 1791–1820," *Americas* 34, no. 4 (1978): 456.

10. Deborah Jensen, *Beyond the Slave Narrative: Politics, Sex, and Manuscripts in the Haitian Revolution* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 95.

11. *The Haitian Declaration of Independence: Creation, Context, and Legacy*, ed. Julia Gaffield (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), 77.

12. Population statistics for colonial Saint-Domingue and early independent Haiti are rare, and those that exist represent rough estimates at best. Nevertheless, they point toward a precipitous decline as a result of the revolution. James Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti* (London: John Murray, 1828), 172.

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13. Jonathan Brown, *History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: William Marshall, 1837), vol. 2, p. 204.
14. Chris Dixon, *African America and Haiti* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000).
15. David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 68.
16. Toussaint Louverture, article 17, *Constitution de la Colonie Française de Saint-Domingue*, May 9, 1801, in *Les lois de Toussaint Louverture* (Port-au-Prince: Presses Nationales d'Haïti, 2008).
17. Carolyn Fick, "Emancipation in Haiti," in *After Slavery: Emancipation and Its Discontents*, ed. Howard Temperley (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 209.
18. Charles Malenfant, "Règlement sur la culture," article 57, n.d., n.p., Doc. 2239, RC, UF, GSL.
19. See Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), chap. 9.
20. Pre. Olanget to sous préfet interim du département du sud, July 31, 1802, Kurt Fisher Collection Microfilms, Reel 1, General Correspondence, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (hereafter referred to as SCRBC), New York.
21. Étienne Dupuche to Mr. Chailhou Negociant à Charleston, February 21, 1804, Dupuche Ducasse Letterbook, Borie Collection, HSP.
22. General Henry Christophe to General Guillaume Gérôme, January 14, 1806, Copie des lettres aux deuxième et troisième ans de l'indépendance, Mangonès Papers Microfilm Collection, Reels 69-70, UF, GSL.
23. General Henry Christophe to the Commandant de la Place du Cap, April 8, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.
24. Jeremy Popkin, "Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Norbert Thoret, and the Violent Aftermath of the Haitian Declaration of Independence," in Gaffield, ed., *The Haitian Declaration of Independence*, 115-35.
25. General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, April 9, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.
26. General Henry Christophe to Commandant Poux, April 8, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

27. General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, April 9, 1806; to General Romain, April 9, 1806; to General Dartiguenave, April 9, 1806; to Commandant Liphaine, April 10, 1806; to S. M. L'Empereur, May 18, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

28. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 3, p. 141. For an excellent examination of the complex ramifications of the Haitian Revolution in eastern Hispaniola, see Graham T. Nessler, *An Islandwide Struggle for Freedom: Revolution, Emancipation, and Reenslavement in Hispaniola, 1789–1809* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

29. General Henry Christophe to Citoyen Hilaire Gaston, April 3, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

30. General Henry Christophe to illegible addressee, April 23, 1805; to S. M. L'Empereur, May 2, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

31. General Henry Christophe to Citoyen Noisy, April 15, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

32. General Henry Christophe to illegible addressee, May 5, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

33. General Henry Christophe to General Brave, April 18, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

34. General Henry Christophe to General Capois, November 20, 1805; General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, November 20, 1805; General Henry Christophe to General Romain, November 26, 1805; General Henry Christophe to General Romain, March 11, 1806; General Henry Christophe to General Capois, March 18, 1806; General Henry Christophe to General Capois, June 26, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

35. Toussaint Louverture, "Titre VI des cultures et du commerce," *Constitution de la Colonie Française de Saint-Domingue*, May 9, 1801, in *Les lois de Toussaint Louverture* (Port-au-Prince: Presses Nationales d'Haïti, 2008).

36. Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, 320.

37. Ch. Malenfant, "Règlement sur la culture," n.d., n.p., Doc. 2239, RC, UF, GSL.

38. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 3, p. 369. Forced agricultural labor in Saint-Domingue/Haiti was compared to European serfdom by a handful of nineteenth-century observers. Franklin wrote, "The system adopted by Toussaint was not dissimilar to that which appears to prevail in Russia, where the peasantry are attached to the soil, 'adscripti

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glebae' " (Franklin, *Present State of Haiti*, 172). Although François Chevalier compared the Mayeque class in pre-Columbian central Mexico to "the glebe serfs of Europe," in Chevalier, *Land and Society in Colonial Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 21, the officers of the Leclerc expedition may have been the first to prescriptively apply this designation to agricultural laborers in Latin America.

39. General Henry Christophe to Commandant L. Poux, December 22, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

40. General Henry Christophe, Circular, August 27, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

41. "État par métier des nègres des cinq habitations de monsieur le marquis de Gallifet," January 1, 1791, AG, ANF.

42. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haiti*, vol. 3, pp. 162, 232.

43. Song 01631, in *Le grand recueil sacré*, ed. Max G. Beauvoir (Port-au-Prince: Edisyon Pres Nasyonal d'Ayiti, 2008), 417.

44. General Henry Christophe to the Généraux de Brigade et aux commandants militaires, June 22, 1805; General Henry Christophe to M. M. Comdemince, June 24, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

45. General Henry Christophe to Colonel Étienne Albert, June 19, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

46. General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, June 29, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

47. General Henry Christophe to S. E. les généraux Romain & Brave, June 16, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL. Under ancien régime slavery, *conducteur* was the title given to the enslaved work gang leaders. Sometime translated into English as "driver," the term remained in use on the plantations long after emancipation.

48. General Henry Christophe to General Dartiguenave, October 12, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

49. General Henry Christophe to General Dartiguenave, June 6, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

50. Ibid.

51. General Henry Christophe to Commandant Jean-François Prevost de St. Raphael, April 13, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

52. General Henry Christophe to S. E. le Gen. Dartiguenave, October 11, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

53. General Henry Christophe, Circulaire militaire, April 19, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

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54. General Henry Christophe to Commandant Lolote Poux, July 5, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

55. General Henry Christophe to illegible addressee, April 15, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

56. General Henry Christophe to illegible addressee, April 24, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

57. General Henry Christophe to Commandant Fidèle, December 15, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

58. General Henry Christophe to the Commandant at Au Cap, April 12, 1805; General Henry Christophe to Commandant Dagobert, June 30, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

59. Gambart, "Observations présentées au gouvernement sur l'administration générale de Saint-Domingue," March 27, 1802, Doc. 162, RC, UF, GSL; Charles Malenfant, "Règlement sur la culture," art. 57, n.d., n.p., Doc. 2239, RC, UF, GSL.

60. One *gourdin* was worth .25 gourdes. In early nineteenth-century Haiti, this sum represented roughly one-half of the weekly salary of construction workers and low-ranking state employees.

61. Toussaint Louverture, "Extrait des nouvelles officielles, du journal du soir, courrier de la République Française," February 19, 1802, Haiti Miscellaneous Collection, SCRBC, New York.

62. Gambart, "Observations présentées au gouvernement sur l'administration générale de Saint-Domingue," March 27, 1802, Doc. 162, RC, UF, GSL.

63. Pascal Sabès, Adjudant-Commandant, Commandant le Cap et son Arrondissement, "Règlement," Cap Français, July 5, 1803, Rochambeau Microfilm Collection, Reel 1, Lot 14, UF, GSL.

64. General Henry Christophe, "Circulaire aux T. Brave, Romain, aux comd'ts militaires," May 7, 1805; "Circulaire aux généraux," July 1, 1805; General Henry Christophe to Général de division P. Romain, October 10, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

65. Henry Christophe to Le chef du premier escadron de cavalerie Pierre Poux, July 9, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

66. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 3, p. 164.

67. Michel Hector, *Crises et mouvements populaires en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince: Cidhica, 2000), 112–17.

68. In his book *Citizen Sailors*, Nathan Perl-Rosenthal analyzes the early American government's issuance of tens of thousands of standardized

identification documents to American sailors during the 1790s. Although it was contemporaneous with the emergence of cartes de sûreté in Haiti, this process was different in many respects. The American documents were not meant to be universally issued to every American citizen, and they were created in order to protect the sailors who carried them from impressment into the British navy rather than to police them. See Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, *Citizen Sailors: Becoming American in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

69. David Patrick Geggus, “The Bois Caïman Ceremony,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 25, nos. 1 and 2 (1991): 41–57.

70. Fick, “Emancipation in Haiti,” in Temperley, ed., *After Slavery*, 17–18.

71. General Fressinet to General Rochambeau, March 5, 1803, Doc. 1687, RC, UF, GSL.

72. General Henry Christophe to Capitain André Chef des Maçons de Laferrière, March 4, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

73. General Henry Christophe to Generals Romain and Capois, May 28, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

74. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti Made during a Residence in That Republic* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 59.

75. General Henry Christophe to the Commandant de la Place du Cap, October 18, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

76. Song 01688, in Beauvoir, ed., *Le grand recueil sacré*, 428.

77. Toussaint Louverture, Ordonnance, October 14, 1800, Port Républicain, Haiti Miscellaneous Collection, SCRBC.

78. General Brunet to General Leclerc, September 30, 1802, Gros Morne, Doc. 1125, RC, UF, GSL.

79. General Henry Christophe to illegible addressee, September 3, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

80. Madiou, *Histoire d’Haïti*, vol. 3, pp. 370, 375.

81. Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Labor, Race, and Politics in Jamaica and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 7.

82. Toussaint Louverture, “Extrait des nouvelles officielles du journal du soir, courrier de la République Française,” February 19, 1802, Cap Français, Haiti Miscellaneous Collection, SCRBC.

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83. Paul Lafargue, *The Right to Be Lazy* (1883), <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lafargue/1883/lazy/index.htm>

84. André Rigaud, "Proclamation," n.d., Executive Correspondence, Kurt Fisher Collection Additions, SCRBC.

85. General Henry Christophe to illegible addressee, July 24, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

86. Vincent Directeur des Fortifications de Saint-Domingue, "Considérations relatives à la sûreté intérieure de l'isle de Saint-Domingue," n.d., n.p., Doc. 2306, p. 5, RC, UF, GSL.

87. Anonymous, "Règlement sur la culture," n.d., n.p., Document 2239, p. 47, RC, UF, GSL.

88. Victor Hugues to General Hédouville, May 12, 1798, Basse Terre, Guadeloupe, Kurt Fisher Collection Additions, SCRBC.

CHAPTER 4. ECHOES OF THE REVOLUTION

1. General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, January 11, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL. General Henry Christophe to S. M. Impériale, January 23, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

2. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, 8 vols. (Port-au-Prince: Henri Deschamps, 1985–1991), vol. 3, p. 237.

3. Nicolas Decasse, "Déclaration de Claude Loiseau," May 2, 1810, Haitian Registry Papers, Group 44, UF, GSL.

4. Haitian Vodou has never had a central ecclesiastical hierarchy, but the religion does involve social cohesion around particular temples, traditions, and family lineages. Phenomena such as initiation, divine secrets, collective rituals, and religious hierarchy surely contributed to elite fears that Vodou societies might give rise to insurrectionary conspiracies.

5. Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Ti difé boulé sou Istoua Ayiti* (New York: Koléksion Lakansiel, 1977), 201–2.

6. Hénock Trouillot, "La guerre de l'indépendance d'Haïti: Les hommes des troupes coloniales contre les grands prêtres du *Vodou*," *Re-vista de Historia de América* 73–74 (1972): 84.

7. Gt. Neraud to General Rochambeau, Au Cap, September 6, 1803, Rochambeau Microfilm, Reel 1, Lot 14, UF, GSL.

8. Kate Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law: Vodou and Power in Haiti* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

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9. General Henry Christophe to General Capois, November 14, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

10. General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, November 23, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

11. *Caprelata* is a Haitian term for a magical charm.

12. General Henry Christophe to General Capois, February 17, 1806; General Henry Christophe to S. M. Imperiale, February 17, 1806; General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, March 1, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

13. General Henry Christophe to General Dartiguenave, April 4, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

14. "Instructions pour le général nommé commandant général de toute l'île de Saint-Domingue," October 1801, Paris, Le Ministre de la marine et des colonies, Archives de la Marine, 69, Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre (hereafter referred to as SHAT), Paris.

15. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 5, p. 144.

16. James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 11.

17. General Henry Christophe to General Capois, November 14, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

18. Known as the Cayos Siete Hermanos, the seven tiny islands in the Bay of Manzanillo are now uninhabited. Visited by fishermen and the occasional tourist seeking coral reefs and deserted beaches, they form part of the Dominican Republic's Parque Nacional Montecristi.

19. General Henry Christophe to General Capois, November 1, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

20. General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, November 13, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

21. General Henry Christophe to General Capois, November 12, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

22. "Conuco" was the name that the pre-Columbian inhabitants of Hispaniola gave to the raised fields where they cultivated cassava and other crops. Nearly three centuries after the decimation of Hispaniola's native population, their word "conuco" was still used to describe a system of small-scale, mixed agriculture. By the time of Haitian independence, the conucos of Hispaniola still included such New World staples

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as cassava, sweet potatoes, beans, corn, squash, papaya, and pineapple, as well as such Old World imports as bananas, millet, yams, citrus, and mangoes. Christophe recognized the conuco as a serious threat to the plantation system.

23. General Henry Christophe to General Capois, November 14, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

24. General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, November 13, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

25. General Henry Christophe to illegible addressee, April 27, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

26. General Henry Christophe to General Capois, November 14, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL. The river that has historically formed the northern end of the political border between eastern and western Hispaniola has been called the Guayubín in Spanish and the Goyavine in French. The river was given the name Rio Masacre after an eighteenth-century battle between Spanish troops and French buccaneers. The Spanish-speaking prisoners caught fleeing forced labor in Haiti were not the last group of people to be executed along its banks. In 1937, the Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo ordered the widespread slaughter of ethnic Haitian civilians in this region.

27. *Bissagos: Just Another Lovestory*, directed by Angelika Andrees and Sigurdur Grimsson (2000, Grimsfilm, Iceland) <http://www.cultureunplugged.com/play/4479/Bissagos—Just-Another-Lovestory>.

28. Michel Laguerre, "Bizango, a Voodoo Secret Society in Haiti," in *Secrecy: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Stanton L. Tefft (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1980), 148.

29. Ramsey, *The Spirits and the Law*, 52.

30. Laguerre, "Bizango, a Voodoo Secret Society in Haiti," 155.

31. "Réflexions sur l'abolition de la traite des noirs," *Gazette Royale d'Hayti*, January 25, 1816, 3. In this article, Christophe accused Pétion of executing the officer Louis Mosambique, supposedly because of his opposition to reannexation to France.

32. The politics of race and color in Haiti has a long history. Des-salines and Christophe embodied a form of sovereign, elite, military black pride, but independent Haiti's most prominent racial polemicist was an African intellectual émigré named Felix Darfour. Probably a Sudanese, Darfour left France for Haiti in 1818 having heard of a country

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governed by black men. Publishing his own newspaper, Darfour criticized Haiti's light-skinned elite and its dealings with European merchants and diplomats. President Boyer had him executed in 1822. *Noirisme* was a twentieth-century political movement that emerged to challenge the domination of Haitian political and economic life by light-skinned *milat*. Haiti's revolution of 1946 represented an apogee of *noiriste* politics. Subsequently, dictator François Duvalier skillfully deployed color politics by attacking Haiti's light-skinned elite and forcing some schools and other exclusive institutions to integrate dark-skinned Haitians.

33. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 5, p. 154.

34. *Ibid.*, 133.

35. Charles Mackenzie reported, "It is said that the severity of this service [forced labor in constructing the citadel] was one of the principal causes of the revolution." Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti Made during a Residence in That Republic* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 180.

36. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 5, p. 51.

37. *Ibid.*, 56.

38. *Ibid.*, 329.

39. For more on the history of revolutionary activity in the Platons region, see Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint-Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990).

40. Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, 11 vols. (Paris: Hachette Livre-BNF, 1853–1860), vol. 6, p. 36.

41. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 3, p. 358.

42. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, pp. 198–201.

43. Procès-verbal, June 20, 1812, in Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 5, p. 151.

44. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 5, p. 224.

45. *Ibid.*, 224, 226.

CHAPTER 5. THE LAND QUESTION AND THE
TRIUMPH OF THE HAITIAN REPUBLIC

1. Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

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2. Richard Turits, *Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime and Modernity in the Dominican Republic* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002) chaps. 1–2.

3. Notwithstanding this historical argument that the Dominicans and Haitians are both maroon peoples, and the fact that the two nations found common cause in a war against Spain in the 1860s, the relations between the Black Republic and what April Mayes has termed “the Mulatto Republic” would eventually become disastrous. A relatively open border was tightly closed from 1937 through the 1980s after the Dominican dictator Trujillo launched a genocidal campaign of extermination in which he killed tens of thousands of ethnically Haitian men, women, and children. As the Dominican sugar industry grew, temporary Haitian laborers were regularly imported for the harvest, where they toiled in slave-like conditions. As the border began to open up in the late 1980s, Haiti’s enduring economic crises compelled well over a million Haitians to migrate from a land of extreme poverty to a land of poverty where they toil in every economic arena and endure terrible pay, police extortion, abuse, and occasional violence. The outside world has occasionally taken notice of this seemingly bizarre historical circumstance—a largely black nation that wields the cruel weapon of white supremacy against its blacker neighbor.

4. Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Labor, Race, and Politics in Jamaica and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 267–68.

5. *Ibid.*, 277.

6. Michel Laguerre, “Bizango, a Voodoo Secret Society in Haiti,” in *Secrecy: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Stanton L. Tefft (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1980), 155.

7. Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Ti difé boulé sou Istoua Ayiti* (New York: Koléksion Lakansiel, 1977), 71.

8. O. Nigel Bolland, *The Politics of Labor in the British Caribbean* (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2001), 95.

9. Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint-Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 235. Goman to Baron Bazile, 1813, in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d’Haïti*, 8 vols. (Port-au-Prince: Henri Deschamps, 1985–1991), vol. 5, p. 201.

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10. Bail à ferme de l'habitation connue sous le nom de Bois Gerard, January 25, 1803, Reel 2, Lot 103, Rochambeau Microfilm, UF, GSL.
11. General Henry Christophe to Mr. Jacques Simon Administrateur de la 1ere Division, October 11, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.
12. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 5, pp. 49-50, 188.
13. General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur, May 28, 1806; General Henry Christophe à leurs excellences les généraux de div'on Romain et Capois, May 28, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.
14. "Loi concernant la police des habitations, les obligations réciproques des propriétaires et fermiers," April 20, 1807, Port-au-Prince, in Maurice Nau and Nemours Telhomme, *Code domanial: Contenant les lois et actes relatifs aux droits de propriété en Haïti à l'arpentage et au notariat, 1804-1930* (Port-au-Prince: Nemours Telhomme, 1930), 241.
15. Maillet, "Pour la nommée Jeane Saliman dans les hauteurs de cette ville," January 25, 1820, Haitian Registry Papers, Group 44, UF, GSL.
16. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti Made during a Residence in That Republic* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 46-47.
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25. Finances, 1837-1839, 10.032, ANH.
26. Finances, January-March 1824, 10.038, ANH.
27. Douane Nationale, 1813, 10.079, ANH.
28. James Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti* (London: John Murray, 1828), 313-16.
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30. "Ordre de dépense," January 19, 1835, Jérémie, Folder 10070, ANH.
31. "État nominatif des personnes de la classe civile qui ne sont point condamnées détenues à la prison du Cap Haïtien aux ordres de la justice," January 1831, Cap Haïtien, Haitian Papers, Group 44a 6, UF, GSL. "État des condamnés dernière session de l'année 1830 par le tribunal criminel," October 30, 1830, Les Cayes, Haitian Papers, Group 44a 7, UF, GSL. "Feuille de remboursement d'une semaine de rations aux personnes détenues à la maison d'arrêt," March 20, 1825, Cap Haïtien, Folder 10032, ANH. "État de remboursement des rations dûs aux prisonniers détenues à la geôle de cette ville," February 28, 1824, Jacmel, Folder 10038, ANH. "Bon pour deux cent douze rations en argent pour autant des prisonniers détenus à la maison d'arrêt de cette ville," August 20, 1836, Port-au-Prince, Folder 10040, ANH.
32. Anonymous, *Observations sur la province du Nord d'Haïti*, 1826, Affaires Étrangères, B III 458, ANF.
33. Colonel Théodore Cupidon, aide-de-camp de S. E. le Président d'Haïti et commandant provisoire de la place de Grand Goave, February 9, 1823, *Le télégraphe*, no. 6, Port-au-Prince.
34. Cabotage record no. 553, Cap Haïtien, September 25, 1849, Douane Nationale, 10045, ANH.
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CHAPTER 6. THE MAROON ECONOMY

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2. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, 8 vols. (Port-au-Prince: Henri Deschamps, 1985-1991), vol. 5, p. 319.

3. M. Barbot, Chancelier, gérant par interim le consulat général à Port-au-Prince, "Mémoire général sur l'île d'Haïti," Affaires Étrangères, B III 458, ANF.

4. Pierre Mossut to Marquis de Gallifet, June 22, 1802, Le Cap, AG, ANF.

5. Anonymous, Jérémie Journal, April 5, 1821, 6, UF, GSL.

6. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 3, p. 234.

7. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti Made during a Residence in That Republic* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 41.

8. Douane Nationale, November 7, 1830, 10.061, ANH.

9. General Henry Christophe to General Capois, January 15, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.

10. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 5, p. 319. Anonymous, *Observations sur la province du Nord d'Haïti*, 1826, Affaires Étrangères, B III 458, ANF.

11. Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, 41.

12. Ibid., 64.

13. Anonymous, *Observations sur la province du Nord d'Haïti*.

14. "État par métier des nègres des cinq habitations de monsieur le marquis de Gallifet," January 1, 1791, AG, ANF. Finances, 1827, 10.062, ANH.

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16. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 3, p. 383.
17. Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, 77.
18. Anonymous, "Notes sur la république d'Haïti," 1838, Affaires Étrangères, B III 458, ANF.
19. Douane Nationale, January 20, 1827, Jérémie, 10.049, ANH.
20. Douane Nationale, 1825, Puerto Plata, 10.071, ANH.
21. "Les deux frères," October 5, 1825, Bordeaux, Commerce Extérieur, F/12/2696, ANF.
22. M. Barbot, Chancelier, gérant par interim le consulat général à Port-au-Prince, "Mémoire général sur l'île d'Haïti," Affaires Étrangères, B III 458, ANF.
23. "Arrêté portant diminution sur les droits que paie le sucre blanc à l'importation," September 30, 1844, Le Cap, Haitian Papers, Group 44a6, UF, GSL.
24. "État détaillé des recouvrements faits de la perception de droit foncier du 17 au 31 du mois mai 1830," Ouanaminthe, Finances, 10.108, ANH.
25. General Henry Christophe to S. M. L'Empereur d'Haïty, May 9, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.
26. General Henry Christophe to Commandant Charles Pierre, December 22, 1805, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.
27. General Henry Christophe to l'Administrateur Roumage, October 7, 1806, Copie des lettres, UF, GSL.
28. M. Barbot, Chancelier, gérant par interim le consulat général à Port-au-Prince, "Mémoire général sur l'île d'Haïti," Affaires Étrangères, B III 458, ANF.
29. Douane Nationale, October 10, 1827, Port-au-Prince, 10.071, ANH.
30. Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, 80.
31. "La vice de l'ivrognerie." Anonymous, *Observations sur la province du Nord d'Haïti*.
32. David Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee Cultivation in Saint-Domingue and the Shaping of the Slave Labor Force," in *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, ed. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), 73–97.

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34. Cornelius Berhofs, Proclamation, Willemstadt, Curaçao, March 29, 1803, Doc. 1758, RC, UF, GSL.
35. Malherbe to Gallifet, June 20, 1803, Le Cap, AG, ANF.
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43. André-Marcel D’Ans, *Haïti, paysage et société* (Paris: Karthala, 1987), 223.
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47. Thignot, “Nouvelle description de l’Isle d’haïti (République haïtienne) avec les îles adjacentes qui en dépendent,” n.d., Affaires Étrangères, B III 458, ANF.
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64. Jean-Pierre Boyer, Président d’Hayti, March 20, 1823, Port-au-Prince, item no. 23280034, Center for Research Libraries, University of Chicago.
65. Sidney Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago: Aldine, 1974), 187–89.
66. Porter, “Diary of Secret Service,” 211.
67. James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), x.
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70. The African American painter William Edouard Scott traveled to Haiti extensively in the 1930s in order to study and depict the culture and lifeways of the Haitian people. His 1931 canvas *Night Turtle Fishing in Haiti*, on display at Clark Atlanta University, conveys a sense of the hazards endured by men who used rudimentary means to pull giant sea turtles from the ocean.

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75. For more information, see F. Carl Braun, “A Triple Numismatic Enigma of the Nineteenth-Century Caribbean: Haïti, Barbados, St. Kitts, or Vieques?” in *Money of the Caribbean*, ed. Richard G. Doty and John M. Kleeberg (New York: American Numismatic Society, 2007).
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77. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires de Joseph Balthazar Inginac depuis 1797 jusqu’à 1843* (Kingston: J. R. DeCordova, 1843), 74. Inginac reports that soon after Pétion’s government minted its first coins in 1813, it was obliged to take them out of circulation, since counterfeit versions were being smuggled in along the southern coast.
78. Madiou, *Histoire d’Haïti*, vol. 5, p. 139, 207.
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82. M. Nonay, “Situation d’Haïti au commencement de l’année 1840,” *Affaires Étrangères*, B III 458, ANF.
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4. Lewis Ampidu Clormeus, *Le vodou haïtien, entre mythes et constructions savantes* (Paris: Riveneuve, 2015).
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