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# *The Ramifications of Revolution*

## *Haiti and the Influence of U.S. Policy*

By Emily Keane

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*The Haitian Revolution, lasting from 1791 to 1804, was the first successful slave-led insurrection against France in Saint-Domingue. Influenced by United States foreign policy, the fight to establish a free nation led the U.S. to question future economic and diplomatic relationships with an independent Haiti. Through excerpts from various sources, including a Pennsylvania Gazette article outlining violence in Saint-Domingue, the 1793 French Emancipation Decree and Laurent Dubois' historical narrative, this essay explores the precarious relationship between the U.S. and Haiti during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The vehement and successful rejection of foreign rule by an enslaved population swayed the American government to attempt to prevent a similar uprising within the states. The U.S. denial to recognize Haitian independence exemplifies the notion that the U.S. government denied Black autonomy to preserve its economy and power structures.*

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In 1791, the French colony of Saint-Domingue faced the realities of the eruption of the “social powder keg,” initiating the first successful revolution orchestrated by slaves.<sup>1</sup> An economically prosperous colony, constructed on the enslavement of Africans and sustained by popular exports, including sugarcane, cotton, and coffee, Saint-Domingue underwent a radical shift on the eve of the nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup> With France no longer maintaining rule over the colony, the “lower order of society” rose to power.<sup>3</sup> Thirteen years after the revolution ignited, a new government and constitution established Haiti as the first black-led nation to be founded on the remnants of revolution. Despite the opportunity for self-governance, the leaders of Haiti faced pushback from the United States, which maintained strategies of isolation toward the nation. After the slave uprising erupted in 1791, the United States influenced the Haitian Revolution and its aftermath through methods of preserving the slave system of the U.S., the inconsistency of foreign policy toward Haitian rebels from Washington to Jefferson, and the treatment Saint-Dominguan refugees faced after seeking solace in America.

The economic, political and human consequences enacted by the U.S. towards Haiti post-independence transpired because of the prevalence of slavery in Saint-Domingue. Prior to the Haitian Revolution, the island served as the most economically prosperous colony in the world. Consisting of only 10,600 miles, this small region manufactured and produced mass quantities of goods every harvest season.<sup>4</sup> This limited land area substantially influenced tensions between the white population, free people of color, and slaves. A population report from 1789, two years before the revolutionary movement emerged, outlined the fact that “Saint-Domingue contained 55,000 free people and 450,000 slaves...[and] the slaves outnumbered the free population by ten to one,” reflecting the fact that the colony not only profited off slave labor, but required an exorbitant amount of exploitation to maintain of the colony’s exports and economic viability.<sup>5</sup> White citizens in Saint-Domingue were “descendants of buccaneers, filibusters, and nobles,” deepening the divide between black and white, rich and poor.<sup>6</sup>

The massive number of blacks to the significantly lower number of whites, although a significant element in terms of the success of the Haitian Revolution, represented only one of the numerous underlying factors contributing to unrest in the Caribbean. Contributing factors to the 1791 outbreak of rebellion included discontent within the slave population, the threat of violence, alarmingly high mortality rates, and deplorable living conditions.<sup>7</sup> Branding, lashings and other forms of punishment, such as dismemberment and starvation, constantly loomed in the life of a slave on a Saint-Domingue plantation.<sup>8</sup> Many masters on sugar and coffee plantations found death to function as a more cost effective alternative to medical care for injured or sickly slaves, steadily increasing the five to ten percent death rate for African slaves in Saint-Domingue.<sup>9</sup> These inequalities served as some of the motives behind the subsequent slave revolt.

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1 Jean-Germain Gros, “Haiti: Political Economy and Sociology of Decay and Renewal,” *Latin American Research Review* 35, no. 3, (2000): 212.

2 Jean-Germain Gros, “Haiti: Political Economy and Sociology of Decay and Renewal.”

3 Franklin W. Knight, “AHR Forum: The Haitian Revolution” *American Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (2000): 105.

4 Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2012), 19.

5 Laurent Dubois.

6 Joan Daya, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, (Berkeley, University of California Press: 1995), 146.

7 Laurent Dubois, 21.

8 Laurent Dubois, 20-21.

9 Laurent Dubois, 21.

Considered a “foundational event in world history,” the Haitian Revolution transpired over a thirteen year period, but the basis of the revolution itself existed through the institution of slavery on the island of Saint-Domingue.<sup>10</sup> The initial rumblings of what emerged as a full scale revolution transpired during the summer of 1791, when “slaves on the sugar plantations in the north...launched the largest slave revolt... They set the cane fields on fire, [and] killed their masters.”<sup>11</sup> The act of violent upheaval during the start of the Haitian Revolution, defined “antebellum Haitian political struggles...pitted blacks of various origins against mulattos, freed blacks against black slaves, [and] blacks against whites,” creating a powerful combination of racial tensions and deplorable human rights violations for Africans enslaved in Saint-Domingue.<sup>12</sup> Toussaint Louverture founded a “disciplined fighting force” consisting of slaves and free blacks in 1791, creating a mobilized revolutionary movement.<sup>13</sup> As the insurgency progressed and rebels continued to succeed against French forces, the idea of Saint-Domingue continuing to exist as a French colony waned. Louverture utilized the interest of other European forces, exploiting a deal with the Spanish for weaponry in exchange for colonial support.<sup>14</sup> In 1793, slaves established a “self-emancipation,” which yielded a direct European response.<sup>15</sup> The French Emancipation Decree of 1793, delivered by Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, a French Commissioner, not only legally liberated slaves within Saint-Domingue, but endowed “all former slaves...[with a] ticket of French citizenship.”<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, the Emancipation Decree served as the tangible “outcome of hard-fought political struggles...in the port cities of the United States,” influenced by white immigration from Saint-Domingue.<sup>17</sup> This declaration, enacted by the French government as a means to placate Saint-Dominguan rebels, granted slaves freedom, but did not quell the revolutionary fervor to create a black governed nation-state.

After thirteen years of rebellion against France, Saint-Domingue no longer existed in the realm of European control. Renamed Haiti, the new nation-state “abolished social ranks and privileges based on status, color, condition and occupation. Their leaders hoped that Haiti would become a genuine model meritocracy.”<sup>18</sup> The concept of people of the “lesser” race exercising self-governance, in conjunction with acknowledging people of color as equal, influenced the United States to exercise racialist policies as a method to subjugate slaves within America. The foundation of this vehement denial of Haitian independence by the U.S. government, swayed by the “Haitian model of state formation drove xenophobic fear” in the consciousness of American politicians and

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10 Gurinder K. Bhambra, “On the Haitian Revolution and the Society of Equals,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 37, no. 7-8, (2015): 267.

11 Laurent Dubois, 5.

12 Jean-Germain Gros, “Haiti: Political Economy and Sociology of Decay and Renewal,” *Latin American Research Review* 35, no. 3, (2000): 212.

13 Gerald Zarr, “The Tumultuous History of Haiti,” *History Magazine*, (Ajax: Moorshead Magazines Limited, February/March 2011), 32.

14 Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2012), 27-28.

15 Tim Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy: Haitian-American Relations during the Early Republic* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 62.

16 “French Commissioner Sonthonax, Emancipation Decree, 1793, 29 August 1793,” in *Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World—A Brief History with Documents*, eds. Sue Peabody and Keila Grinbeg, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 57.

17 Jeremy D. Popkin, *You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 249.

18 Franklin W. Knight, “The Haitian Revolution and the Notion of Human Rights,” *Journal of the Historical Society* 3, (2005): 394.

plantation owners.<sup>19</sup> Samuel Flagg Bemis stated that in 1799, at the height of Louverture's success as one of the key leaders of the Haitian Revolution, the United States entered a period that created "a de facto recognition of the quasi-independent government" in regards to "dealing" with the uprising in Saint-Domingue.<sup>20</sup> The agreement constructed by the United States in 1801 outlined the plan to avert "all maritime exertion on the part of the Negroes," which exhibited the reluctance of the U.S. to maintain a mutually beneficial with the newly independent Haiti.<sup>21</sup> The United States prevented recognition of the nationhood of Haiti following the 1804 Declaration, under the pretense that the Caribbean nation existed as sort of an abnormality. This justification led the American government to exclude "Haiti from the family of nations," utilizing race as an acceptable justification for isolation.<sup>22</sup>

The continued political and diplomatic denial of Haitian independence existed as a means for the United States to prevent the deconstruction of its own economic system. Despite the fact that Charles Pinckney, a U.S. senator from South Carolina, believed that Haitian independence "would be more advantageous to the Southern States than if it remained under the dominion of France," recognizing a black individual as the leader of a nation would "encourage the Negro slaves in the United States to seek to emulate the Negroes of Saint Domingue."<sup>23</sup> Additionally, this continuous rejection of Haitian recognition, influenced by Jefferson's wish to cause economic "distress" on the island, was devised in order to gain an American monetary profit, and to further distance the nation from France.<sup>24</sup> But, this precarious relationship, further exacerbated by various presidential policies, underscored the power of America in the political progress of a free Haiti.

The manner in which Washington, Adams, and Jefferson handled Toussaint Louverture's Haitian rebellion was characterized by political decisions that "formed a blueprint for executive dominance," perpetuating exclusionary policies for American benefit.<sup>25</sup> Through this alteration in presidential power, these men were able to avoid obtaining Congressional permission, often utilizing "ambiguous legislation or general statutory delegations of authority...[and some] violated or exceeded executive authority."<sup>26</sup> These national leaders, all of whom constructed the foundation of the American political fabric, utilized their personal motivations to enact isolationist and seemingly racist policies. The vagueness of Haitian foreign policy enabled American presidents to exercise command, while obscuring the underlying, often racially driven goal of these political strategies.

As the first president of the United States, George Washington confronted a multiplicity of problems, and over time, the Haitian Revolution emerged as a hindrance for the U.S. government and Washington. The proximity of Saint-Domingue to the United States worried Washington and U.S. policymakers for multiple

19 Franklin W. Knight, "AHR Forum: The Haitian Revolution" *American Historical Review* 105, no. 1 (2000): 105.

20 Logan, *Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti*, 76, quoting Professor Samuel Flagg Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States*, (New York, 1936), 120.

21 Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy*, 98, quoting Thornton to Lord Grenville, 28 March 1801, Henry Adams Transcripts, Library of Congress.

22 Rayford W. Logan, *Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti: 1776-1891*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 152.

23 Rayford W. Logan, 79.

24 Rayford W. Logan, 134.

25 Robert J. Reinstein, "Slavery, Executive Power, and International Law: The Haitian Revolution and American Constitutionalism," *American Journal of Legal History* 53, no. 2 (2013): 145.

26 Robert J. Reinstein, 102.

reasons.<sup>27</sup> The manner in which Washington approached the Haitian Revolution may have stimulated America's own mutinous revolution, making the situation in Saint-Domingue "too abhorrent and threatening for [Washington's] administration to stay neutral."<sup>28</sup> French politicians fervently searched for assistance in extinguishing the revolt, engaging in political negotiations to obtain U.S. aid in 1791, mere months following the outbreak of the insurgency.<sup>29</sup> The "George Washington Administration sold France arms...[giving] \$726,000 to go toward repaying the money...France loaned the United States during the American Revolution," suggesting the diplomatic relationship between France and the U.S. defended American economic autonomy, while aiding France in placating the rebellion.<sup>30</sup> This substantial sum ultimately enabled French forces to obtain "arms, ammunition and supplies...to aid the harassed planters of Saint-Domingue," lending U.S. recognition in momentarily enabling French forces to suppress the slave rebellion.<sup>31</sup> U.S. support for France in Saint-Domingue continued "trade and geopolitical interests" between the two nations, serving as another reason to maintain slavery on the island.<sup>32</sup> For nineteen months, Washington enacted foreign policies that contributed monetary aid to France, justified through the idea that U.S. involvement to reestablish Saint-Domingue as a prosperous French colony remained nationally beneficial.<sup>33</sup>

Assuming office in 1797, President John Adams began efforts to "solidify America's stake in the island's commerce and help black Domingans expel the remnants of French power," reinforcing Washington's prior policies that reaped economic benefits for the U.S.<sup>34</sup> In contrast to Washington, But, Adams searched to create an "expedient alliance" with Louverture to dismantle the potential for a French resurgence to emerge within the island.<sup>35</sup> Through constructing a friendly commerce relationship with the black-led government of Saint-Domingue, Adams hoped to insert U.S. diplomacy into Haitian politics by gaining Louverture's promise to "suppress French privateering and promote American commerce."<sup>36</sup> Adams did not extend this gesture of economic cooperation to the recently founded Haitian administration for altruistic motivations, but rather to infuriate the French government.<sup>37</sup> In regards to Adams' uncertainty in regards to recognizing the free black republic of Haiti, the president believed that the enslavement of Africans was unethical, but recognized its economic implications through the "prism of politics,"<sup>38</sup> seeing it as necessary to preserve the cash crop market of the U.S.

Trade relations between Haiti and the U.S. existed on shaky terms as a direct consequence of the Haitian Revolution, most notably through Adams' presidency. In June 1798, the U.S. government instated trade restrictions with "France and its colonies in retaliation against French privateering acts" that negatively

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27 Robert J. Reinstein, 159.

28 Robert J. Reinstein.

29 Robert J. Reinstein, 147.

30 Wanda Jackson, "Feeding Sharks Their Blood: A Historical Overview of the Diplomacy of Haitian Leaders, U.S. Diplomats, and the American Smugglers during the Revolution of 1888-1889," *Journal of Caribbean History* 47, no. 2 (2013): 185.

31 Rayford W. Logan, 36.

32 Robert J. Reinstein, 159.

33 Robert J. Reinstein, 158.

34 Tim Matthewson, 62.

35 Tim Matthewson, 57.

36 Tim Matthewson, 59.

37 Tim Matthewson, 61.

38 Tim Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy: Haitian-American Relations during the Early Republic* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 61.

influenced the social climate of Saint-Domingue.<sup>39</sup> As a French colony, the island mainly produced cash crops, leaving little agricultural space to grow and harvest enough crops to feed hundreds of thousands of slaves and French colonists.<sup>40</sup> Saint-Domingue received over six hundred ships in various ports around the island during 1796, but the American economic embargo “raised the prospect of a starving population, a defenseless government, and a ruined economy.”<sup>41</sup> President Adams’ 1799 policies, But, reinstated some level of trade with Haiti, leading to \$5,000,000 in trade between the U.S. and Saint-Domingue in 1801.<sup>42</sup> But, this drastic surge in profitability for the American economy and the U.S. government involved trade parameters. Merchants carting American exports to Saint-Domingue only acquired access to Cape Francois and Port Republican, both of which remained under Louverture’s watch.<sup>43</sup>

Prior to Thomas Jefferson’s inauguration as the third president to the United States, written correspondences demonstrated Jefferson’s rhetoric in regard to the situation in Saint-Domingue. In an 1791 letter to his daughter, Martha Jefferson Randolph, Thomas Jefferson expressed his doubt, stating that the colony remained “involved in a horrible civil war... as their slaves have been called into action, and are a terrible engine, absolutely ungovernable.”<sup>44</sup> This demonstrated Jefferson’s allegiance to France, denouncing the revolutionary actions of the African population on the island.<sup>45</sup> Two years later, on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1793, Jefferson proposed providing monetary aid to the revolutionary side in Saint-Domingue, but stated that white individuals fleeing Saint-Domingue required “pity & charity...it will have a great effect on doing away the impression of... disobligations towards France,” revealing Jefferson’s moral and political allegiance to French government.<sup>46</sup> Taking office in 1801, in the midst of the success of the rebellion in Haiti, Jefferson seized the opportunity to translate these political concepts into foreign policies towards France and Saint-Domingue.

The restoration of trade relations with Saint-Domingue posed a potential obstacle to preserving slavery within the United States.<sup>47</sup> In 1799, Vice President Jefferson articulated his reservations about an economic relationship with Saint-Domingue through the notion that the “repercussions of free trade with a nominally sovereign black state upon its black brethren still in slavery in the Southern United States,” a hesitation Jefferson retained even during his presidency.<sup>48</sup> Staunchly preserving the notion that French rule in Saint-Domingue perpetuated order, Haitian independence sparked President Thomas Jefferson to denounce the black

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39 Philippe R. Girard, “Toussaint Louverture’s Diplomacy, 1798-1802,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 66, No. 1, (2009): 97.

40 Philippe R. Girard, 97.

41 Philippe R. Girard.

42 Tim Matthewson, 83.

43 Tim Matthewson, 83.

44 Thomas Jefferson, “To Martha Jefferson Randolph,” *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Volume 6, Correspondence from 1789-1792. March 24, 1791. Philadelphia, ed. Paul Leicester Ford.

45 Thomas Jefferson, “To Martha Jefferson Randolph,” *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*.

46 John E. Baur, “International Repercussions of the Haitian Revolution,” 395. Quoted in Paul Leicester Ford, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1895), VI, 349.

47 Carolyn Fick, “Chapter I: Revolutionary St. Domingue and the Emerging Atlantic: Paradigms of Sovereignty” *The Haitian Revolution and the Early United States: Histories, Textualities, Geographies*, ed. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon and Michael J. Drexler, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 36.

48 Fick, “Chapter I: Revolutionary St. Domingue and the Emerging Atlantic: Paradigms of Sovereignty” *The Haitian Revolution and the Early United States: Histories, Textualities, Geographies*, 36, quoting Edward E. Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, “Second Slavery,” 19.

population of Haiti, labeling them as “Cannibals of the terrible republic.”<sup>49</sup> Despite this disdain concerning rebels in Saint-Domingue, Jefferson’s willingness to exchange goods with the colony would only be sustained if “the island were still a part of the French realm...Jefferson had no sympathy for the colony’s independence... he would keep a distant and correct relationship” with the rebellion, including Toussaint.<sup>50</sup> Immediately after Haiti announced its freedom, Jefferson searched for viable options to somehow prohibit American commerce from benefiting the island economically, a nation built on the foundation of the autonomy of people of color.<sup>51</sup> Proposing a trade embargo against Haiti to Congress in 1804, Jefferson made use of the current tensions with France as justifiable means to deny trade with the Caribbean island.<sup>52</sup> But, the 1803 Louisiana Purchase served as a valuable deal regarding the relationship between the U.S., France and Haiti.

The Louisiana Purchase, although an exchange between France and the United States, was swayed by the success of the Haitian Revolution. Prior to the 1803 deal, France lacked a colony within North America, which would have enabled the French colony of Saint-Domingue to cease buying “foodstuffs, lumber, and livestock from...Americans...[and French] colonial trade...[would be] monopolized.”<sup>53</sup> The revolution in Saint-Domingue “generated [a] swift and stern reaction among...the American South,” which transformed Louisiana into more of a valuable commodity and pawn for the United States during the revolution.<sup>54</sup> Laurent Dubois highlights the “irony” embedded in the Louisiana Purchase and the impact on the Haitian Revolution, articulating that “the leadership of...Dessalines...made possible on of Thomas Jefferson’s signal political achievements, one of whose major results was the expansion of slavery in the United States.”<sup>55</sup> During the Haitian Revolution, France maintained its “hands, feet, and even a head, but no body,” but the Louisiana Purchase essentially rendered the French colonial system useless, due to incapacitation of slave labor on the island.<sup>56</sup> The historian Henry Adams articulated that the slave uprising in Saint-Domingue left “its plantations destroyed, its labor paralyzed, and its population reduced to barbarism,” supporting the notion that although the island was seemingly worthless to the French, the acquisition of Louisiana as an American territory held potential for the U.S. to trade with the Haiti.<sup>57</sup> But, the Louisiana Purchase coincided with the end of the Haitian Revolution, impacting trade relations between the U.S. and Haiti.

Haiti’s declaration of independence evoked various implications for the United States. During the Haitian Revolution, the economy of Saint-Domingue faced a possible collapse, due to the fact that U.S. trade with the island “was still desirable but of diminishing importance...and American merchants found alternative

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49 Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy*, 101, quoted in Jefferson to Aaron Burr, Philadelphia, 11 February 1799, *The Political Correspondence and Political Papers of Aaron Burr*, ed. Mary-Jo Kline, 2 Vols, (Princeton, 1983), 1: 390.

50 Gordon S. Brown, *Toussaint’s Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution*, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 183.

51 Tim Matthewson, 119.

52 Tim Matthewson, 126.

53 David Geggus, “The Louisiana Purchase and the Haitian Revolution,” in *The Haitian Revolution and the Early United States*, eds. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon and Michael J. Drexler. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 119.

54 Thomas Fiehrer, “Saint-Domingue/Haiti: Louisiana’s Caribbean Connection,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 30, No. 4, (1989): 420.

55 Laurent Dubois, “The Haitian Revolution and the Sale of Louisiana”, *Southern Quarterly* 44, no. 3, (2007): 18.

56 Logan, *Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti*, 142.

57 Logan, *Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti*, 142, quoting Henry Adams, *History of the United States during the administrations of Jefferson and Madison*, (New York, 1930), II, 14-15.



sources in British and Spanish colonies.”<sup>58</sup> Maintaining international trade relations with Haiti held the potential for the U.S. to “please Northern merchants, refusing to recognize Haitian independence would gratify the defenders of slavery, and acknowledging French sovereignty and its right to prohibit American trade with Haiti would satisfy Bonaparte,” a decision made by Jefferson until 1806.<sup>59</sup> As a method of self-preservation, the U.S. government reintroduced trade with Haiti almost a decade after Haitian independence was declared, but this freedom was continuously denied by American presidents.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, “inherent public hostility towards a black government in Haiti...reemerged” following instances of violence against whites in Haiti ordered by Dessalines, despite the fact that the U.S. public continued to support a system that benefited directly from the suffering of hundreds of thousands of slaves.<sup>61</sup> The Revolution not only influenced trade and the American economy, but also precipitated an outpouring of refugees fleeing Haiti and settling in the U.S.

This revolution precipitated a surge of people leaving the island, including white planters, citizens and people of color alike. The white population within French controlled Saint-Domingue only amount to around 40,000 people, while slaves in the island reached half a million, intensifying racial tensions.<sup>62</sup> This led to an unsustainable and “dangerous misbalance...that presaged social instability,” formulating an environment that ultimately influenced the fall of Saint-Domingue as a white led colony.<sup>63</sup> Two years into the slave rebellion, ninety percent of whites on the island evaded the potential violence, some relocating to the U.S.<sup>64</sup> Prior to the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, a substantial number of emigrants from Saint-Domingue dispersed along the East coast of America, choosing to relocate to cities such as New York, Philadelphia and Charleston.<sup>65</sup> This influx of thousands of people, black and white free and formerly enslaved persons, “contributed to the furor of [U.S.] relations with France...and encouraged a growing sense of insecurity among American slaveowners.”<sup>66</sup> Accepting these refugees into the United States signaled to France that American politics aligned more sympathetically to the people involved in the revolution, as well as demonstrating to slaves within the U.S. that black Haitians successfully rejected subjugation and forced enslavement, leading a life of freedom in a new land.

Black Haitian refugees who arrived in the U.S. during the slave rebellion and after the declaration of the liberated state of Haiti faced threats of re-enslavement and bigotry. The revolution produced a multitude of refugees fleeing Saint-Domingue, many resettling in the United States. Louisiana, acquired by the U.S. from Napoleon in 1803, transformed into a popular area for these emigrants. But, upon arrival to the state, specifically the city of New Orleans, the government of the city instituted a resolution that “expressly forbade,

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58 Robert J. Reinstein, 194.

59 Robert J. Reinstein, 193.

60 Robert J. Reinstein.

61 Robert J. Reinstein, “Slavery, Executive Power, and International Law: The Haitian Revolution and American Constitutionalism,” *American Journal of Legal History* 53, no. 2 (2013): 194.

62 Tim Matthewson, 3.

63 Tim Matthewson, 3.

64 John E. Baur, “International Repercussions of the Haitian Revolution,” *The Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 26, No. 4, 395.

65 Gordon S. Brown, *Toussaint’s Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005,) 80.

under penalty of fine, the landing of refugee Negroes.”<sup>67</sup> This decision, strongly influenced by the yearlong food shortage due to the slave mutiny in Saint-Domingue in 1791, enabled blatant racism against black refugees from Haiti to subsist in Louisiana. The arrival of emigrants from Haiti between 1809 and 1810 dramatically increased the population of New Orleans, altering the economic, racial and cultural spheres of the city.<sup>68</sup> But, people of color who arrived after Haiti’s official declaration of freedom from the France were met with setbacks for their own personal autonomy. Administrators overseeing the arrival of 3,226 people of color from Haiti and Cuba “disregarded the 1794 general emancipation decree and instead assigned slave status to thousands of incoming refugees of African descent. One labeled as a slave, it was difficult to reverse.”<sup>69</sup> One reason for this reluctance to grant former slaves their rightful freedom as a refugee to the United States was rooted in racial anxiety, in the fear that the presence of a free person of color could incite an internal American slave rebellion.<sup>70</sup> Many former slaves arrived in Pennsylvania as refugees, and one merchant, Stephen Girard, revealed in a letter that upon arrival, “it is...quite easy to forward [black refugees] from here to any Southern state...where they are sold just as in St. Domingo.”<sup>71</sup>

Women of color, used as a tool of political bargaining, experienced an alternative aspect of the revolution.<sup>72</sup> These women sometimes assumed dangerous responsibilities in an attempt to conspire against French forces, including acts of “provisioning, espionage, and combat.”<sup>73</sup> But, as the Haitian Revolution dragged on, the French altered their limits of execution in 1802 to include black women.<sup>74</sup> The French General Charles Leclerc, as a method to “weed” out insurgents against the French, “ordered the entire 6<sup>th</sup> Colonial Regiment to be drowned... he then added to the list a good proportion of the town’s population of colour, women and children included,” exemplifying France’s willingness to seek revenge for being economically displaced in Saint-Domingue.<sup>75</sup> But, following a French withdrawal from Saint-Domingue in 1803, many of the women of color who participated in the revolution relocated to cities in the United States, specifically New Orleans.<sup>76</sup>

During a speech to 1,500 Americans in 1893, Frederick Douglass challenged the national perception of the Haitian Revolution. The leaders of the revolution, including Toussaint Louverture, faced “the jaws of death to obtain liberty,” facing not only French forces, but political resistance from the United States.<sup>77</sup> During the Haitian Revolution, the U.S. questioned whether to continue trade with Saint-Domingue, and this trade issue became more complex following Haitian independence. Refugees, especially people of color, faced the notion of re-enslavement due to them resettling in a slave nation, exemplifying America’s persistence to sustain their

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67 Baur, “International Repercussions of the Haitian Revolution,” 400.

68 Thomas Fiehrer, “Saint-Domingue/Haiti: Louisiana’s Caribbean Connection,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 30, No. 4, (1989): 431.

69 Elizabeth C. Neidenbach, “Refugee from St. Domingue Living in this City”: The Geography of Social Networks in Testaments of Refugee Free Women of Color in New Orleans,” *Journal of Urban History*, 42, no. (5), (2016): 845.

70 Popkin, *You Are All Free*, 314.

71 Popkin, *You Are All Free*, 314, quoting S. Girard to Labattut, August 28, 1793, in APS, Girard Papers, roll 122.

72 Philippe Gerard, “Rebelle with a Cause: Women in the Haitian War of Independence, 1802-1804,” *Gender & History* 21, no. 1, (2009): 66.

73 Gerard, 73.

74 Gerard.

75 Gerard, 74.

76 Neidenbach, “Refugee from St. Domingue Living in This City,” 845.

77 Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy*, ix, quoting Frederick Douglass’ “Lecture on Haiti” January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1893, Chicago, Illinois.

slave economy. Eighty nine years after Haitian independence, the U.S. continued to question the autonomous capacity of black Haitians.<sup>78</sup> But, this resistance evoked by America did not prevent Haiti from being the first nation led by people of color, “the second republic in the Western Hemisphere, and the only state to found its independence upon a revolution of slaves.”<sup>79</sup> One hundred years prior, in 1793, H. D. de Saint-Maurice declared that “this black individual is free...He is your equal, because he is a man. He is a citizen, because he serves this country,” which affirmed the revolutionary role of Saint-Dominguan slaves, and their perseverance to gain not only autonomy, but equality.<sup>80</sup>

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78 Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy*, ix, quoting in Frederick Douglass’ “Lecture on Haiti” January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1893, Chicago, Illinois.

79 Logan, *Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti*, 112.

80 Denis Young, *1793*, 396.  
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