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*Feeding a Population: Agricultural Education Priorities in Haitian History**

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ABSTRACT

The nation of Haiti has experienced a long history of poverty and of tests to its economic development. Among its priorities has been the establishment of an effective educational system. While educational standards remain high, the area of agricultural education—necessary for Haiti's economy as well as nutritional subsistence—has met with unique challenges. This paper examines analyses and programming policies of the past in order to illuminate contemporary circumstances.

KEY WORDS Haiti; Agriculture; Education; Farming; Population

The nation of Haiti has faced a multitude of challenges since the time of its independence in the early 19th century. Once the most profitable of France's sugar colonies, Haiti has experienced levels of poverty unmatched by other nations in the western hemisphere. In addressing these difficulties, Haitian leaders have often centered their attention on agricultural development, from both nutritional and cash-generating perspectives, as well as on education. Producing food in what promised to be an agriculturally rich land and expanding education to a greater segment of the population have been two of the nation's most essential issues, and they developed in ways unique to Haiti. It is important to recognize, as well, that these have not represented two distinct and unrelated endeavors. Rather, at one point in the early 20th century, the two intersected, as leaders believed the future of Haiti depended upon educational programs driven by agricultural primacy. The result was an emphasis on agricultural education. Although successes were limited, it is valuable to examine what drove a need for agricultural education in Haiti, how the education was designed, and why it did not progress. This story is representative of a Haitian history marked by hope, entrepreneurship, European and U.S. hegemony, reluctant dependency, and perseverance for more than two centuries.

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COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY ROOTS

Haiti—a native term meaning “mountainous land”—was considered not much more than a slave colony until its independence in 1804 and, as such, had little need for schools. Children of the elite class were privately educated and later sent to France for higher learning. Leading one of the most brutal and lucrative agricultural production systems of the world, elites had no interest in educating slaves, which constituted the majority of the population. In establishing the new republic in the early 19th century, however, revolutionary leaders emphasized the need for education as a symbol of democracy and initiated the creation of schools. Article 24 of the 1805 constitution stipulated: “Education shall be free. Primary education shall be compulsory. State education shall be free at every level” (Vincent and Lherisson N.d.:7).¹ Though the intention was there, it was difficult to implement this ideal in a way that would positively influence Haiti’s future. Early school designs were based on a European model and, in an affront to the French, employed British teachers. As the French government demanded that Haiti pay reparations due to lost labor and prospective profits resulting from independence, however, revenue intended for education was diverted to the former mother country. Early attempts were essentially ineffective in meeting Haiti’s needs, and debates over the purpose of education emerged. Utilitarian priorities—emphasizing agriculture—would eventually take hold in the 20th century, but this path would not be a smooth one. Haitian upper classes maintained a desire for classical education that would set them apart. At the same time, education leaders and policy makers sought to establish a more practical system integrating Haiti’s agricultural advantages with economic development and the provision of food for the growing population. An examination of sources—both primary and secondary—can provide some insight into a nation steeped in poverty and seemingly dependent on outside intervention.²

Independence and nationhood also met with significant challenges regarding land, production, class issues, and social and political priorities, which would shape educational debates and policies. Many Haitian leaders, in their quest for modernization and independent development, expressed resentment for the colonial plantation system and, as a result, sought to break up large tracts of land into smaller farms. Farmers generally succeeded in producing subsistence crops through simple farming methods, with enough for local markets; however, the nation’s economy foundered, and Haiti’s drop in status from one of the most profitable French colonies to bare subsistence was viewed as a sign of failure in the eyes of international observers. A stigma regarding manual labor and rural life still lingered among ex-slaves and their descendants, which acted as a barrier to education in agriculture. Compounded with cultural valuation of classical education and devaluation of utilitarian education, technical training for farmers was dismissed (Catholic Institute for International Relations 1989; Hanna 1836:2–28, 54). At the same time, independent Haitians ultimately adopted models of the elites they had fought against wholeheartedly and had sought to replace in agricultural economics and in politics. Skilled planters had fled during the Revolution, many making their way to Cuba, where they built successful coffee and sugar enterprises. Once-enslaved and mulatto Haitians were left to experiment with developing subsistence agriculture and

feeding their own people, as more economically developed nations were not interested in trading with this former slave colony. Inefficiencies and continued political upheaval plagued Haiti through the 19th century.³

Programs of land redistribution, breaking up former French plantations into smaller farms for thousands of ex-slaves, succeeded in growing for local markets, but exports dwindled. Coffee production continued on a limited basis, but sugar plantations disappeared. It was in this period that extensive deforestation and subsequent soil erosion in the higher elevations began, as peasants were pressured to clear land there for cultivation (Catholic Institute for International Relations 1989). Resentment toward particular elements of the colonial system seemed to outweigh efforts toward transforming agriculture for the benefit of the country's economy as a whole. For example, it became illegal for a white person to own any type of property, and a system of taxes on exports was implemented. Both were measures intended to usher in a new society for Haiti, but long-term effects were damaging. Basic foodstuffs such as eggs, butter, milk, plantains, coconuts, and limes seemed to be in ample supply, and enough sugar was being harvested to produce molasses and rum. In addition, butchered meat was available in the Port-au-Prince market. Land redistribution was inadequate, however, and plantations formerly owned by the French had become wildly overgrown within 30 years of independence. It became increasingly difficult to harvest beans for export, and the overall production of sugar declined rapidly (Hanna 1836: 2–28, 54). Critics questioned the wisdom of taxing exports in the early republic. Coffee, the single most important export commodity, was subject to a duty of “one dollar per hundred weight” before leaving the country. In a poor economy with a struggling treasury, such a policy secured one method of raising revenue; however, to Europeans who were well-versed in economic policy from the perspective of experienced mercantilists, it seemed a bit absurd to collect a duty on anything other than that which was produced abroad and imported (Hanna 1836:100). Although the challenges to both Haiti's agricultural economy and educational system were massive, there were concerted attempts to change this situation in the 20th century.

MODERNIZATION AND U.S. OCCUPATION

In the first years of the 20th century, Latin American and Caribbean nations sought to implement modernization measures modeled after those in the United States and Western Europe. Two of the areas undergoing transformation were agriculture and education, and Haitian leaders participated in both. Planned management of farming practices incorporating modern methods drew significant attention. Education philosophies shifted toward the idea of more practical preparation for society and the economy. This was the case for progressive industrial education in the western world, but philosophies also applied to agricultural education. In 1909, this notion was beginning to take hold in Haiti, where one writer noted, “It seems that we hold in horror agricultural work in our country that is essentially agricultural” (Logan 1930:428). The national government limited its investment in agricultural training programs during this

decade, but private educators made more notable attempts. In 1907, the Catholic Brothers opened an agricultural farm at Turgeau. With such investments came warnings that if Haitian leaders did not make substantive strides in improving education, including agricultural training, foreigners would step in. Between 1900 and 1910, enrollment in Haitian schools was remarkably low, particularly in rural schools, and teachers could not be guaranteed salaries. If the Haitian economy was to progress, some leaders argued, attention should be paid to educating the rural population in more practical ways (Logan 1930:430; Simpson 1905:7–8).

Increased attention to agricultural training was paid by Dantès Bellegarde upon his appointment as Haitian Minister of Public Instruction. Bellegarde developed a plan that included improvements in teacher preparation and also expanded provisions for rural education and extension classes as well as industrial and agricultural education. With proper funding, it was said, his proposal for training in agriculture might have succeeded in accomplishing a great deal for the country, but he had inadequate backing from the government and was dismissed from his position in 1908 (Bellegarde 1929:137–178). Regardless of who was in power, the government devoted comparatively little funding for education in general, with rural and agricultural education faring worse. In addition, political instability exacerbated the problem, with six presidents holding power from 1911 to 1915 alone.

U.S. foreign policy makers pointed to anarchy in Haiti as their justification for intervention and occupation beginning in 1915. With U.S. intervention, Haitian leaders feared the nation might shift toward a neocolonial system of production for an international market, with less emphasis on feeding Haiti's people. Their fears were warranted, as neocolonialism had swept much of Latin America in the previous century. Industrialized and industrializing European nations and eventually the United States looked to Latin America as a source of raw materials and agricultural products, and economies of extraction—compounded with political intervention—served to transfer wealth from the global south to the global north. The first two decades of the 20th century marked a period of intensified U.S. expansion, supported by military intervention, in the Caribbean, and Americans looked at Haitians with a great deal of paternalism. U.S. occupation of Haiti between 1915 and 1934 represented an effort to protect interests there but also to do for Haitians what was believed could not be done by Haitians themselves.⁴

Among the best contemporary examinations of Haiti were those conducted by economist and subsequent U.S. senator Paul H. Douglas. His *Political Science Quarterly* articles of 1927 detailed the unfolding of U.S. intervention and occupation of Haiti, providing a valuable framework for contextualizing the intent of foreign influence in social and political forces there.⁵ Douglas was no apologist for the American occupation and pointed to pronouncements articulated in the 1917 constitution drafted by then Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin Delano Roosevelt declaring that “the Republic of Haiti is one and indivisible, free, sovereign and independent. Its territory is inviolable and cannot be alienated by any treaty or by any convention” (Douglas 1927:228; *Constitution de la Republique d’Haiti* 1918:3). He also noted that among various U.S.

appointees to prominent positions in Haiti's government was the one in charge of agricultural education. An additional development only indirectly related at that time was the lifting of restrictions on foreign-owned land. Some Haitian representatives resisted ratification of the 1917 constitution based on this measure, as they feared it paved the way for "economic enslavement" (Douglas 1927:248–51).

Between 1915 and 1930, U.S. intervention in Haiti included the introduction of U.S. multinational corporations, such as the Haitian-American Sugar Company. This served as proof to critics who warned that such investment would seek the reestablishment of plantations or their neocolonial counterparts that were key to agribusiness. No longer run by colonial planters, these land tracts would be owned by commercial interests, critics argued, and U.S. implementation of agricultural education would be designed solely to meet the needs of those interests (Catholic Institute for International Relations 1989:6). There was ongoing concern that U.S. officials intended to create new agribusiness that would undermine small independent landowners; however, they were assured that if properly tended by individuals, rubber, coffee, and cotton plants distributed through various programs would thrive, ensuring peasants an added income. Major irrigation projects were also being considered, but Haitians were unwilling or unable to pay for construction and maintenance even when they might enjoy long-range benefits. Economic historian Melvin M. Knight (1926) warned planners to keep in mind Haitian needs:

Probably our agricultural schemes for Haiti are too ambitious, and imperfectly adapted to the country. Farming is more like a big industry in the United States even than it is in Europe, and we do not understand peasant proprietorship very well. If we construct vast irrigation works the land will probably have to be owned and managed by big foreign companies, which will expect to employ the cheap Haitian labor in the cane or sisal fields. The Haitian wants to own his land and work it himself, and if it is really for him that we are developing the country, we have no right to lay out a program which will violate his wishes. (P. 351)

In "Haiti and the United States," published in *The Journal of Negro History* in 1923, professor George W. Brown dismissed much of his contemporaries' research as failing to go far enough in condemning the United States' intentions for Haiti as well as the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Panama, and Nicaragua. Observing past and prospective management of sugar, tobacco, cacao, and banana production under U.S. influence in the Caribbean region, Brown noted the dire lack of education, particularly in rural areas. The potential for substantial agricultural development under occupation of Haiti was overshadowed by commercial trade capabilities involving other countries (Brown 1923: 142–43, 148–49).⁶ Brown devoted only limited attention to the topic of education but did note the issue of land ownership as one plaguing the region (p. 138).

Without official surveying of the country and legal titling of property, effective sustained agricultural development-related education programs could not be effective. To Brown, Haitian policies and practices were to blame for many of the nation's problems but illustrated the seriousness of U.S. intentions in commanding control of agriculture.

EDUCATING FOR AGRICULTURE

As a key element to carrying out their efforts, U.S. forces ultimately set out to create education programs to meet the needs of agriculture. Support for Haitian education in general was initially restricted, as U.S. policy makers believed funding would not be used effectively. In addition, Haitians were sensitive to U.S. racism and were reluctant to accept American cultural influences in their educational system. Pan-African activist and historian Rayford W. Logan argued, however, that if the United States was intent on investing in Haiti, it should do so in the realm of education (1930:440–42). In his 1930 article “Education in Haiti,” Logan worked very carefully to provide a comprehensive historical context for the contemporary situation, illustrating issues of race, class, labor, and international relations that had shaped leaders’ perspectives and policies from the colonial period. His observations described a system that was complex, and unregulated by authorities. He argued that the U.S. government offered too little financial assistance to Haitian education under occupation, as it distrusted education officials to make honest and effective decisions (Baber and Balch 1927:93; Pamphile 1985:100; U.S. Congress 1922:1349). To Logan, this was inexcusable. He wrote:

The failure to include in the Treaty of 1916 or in the “Additional Act” of 1917 any provision for educational development seems to many impartial students of Haiti an almost inexplicable omission. One of the most blatantly proclaimed pretexts for our intervention has been the necessity for training the natives in self-government. ...

There are, indeed, references to the “agricultural, mineral, and commercial resources”; the “establishment of the Haitian finances on a firm and solid basis”; to the creation “without delay of an efficient constabulary” and the “execution of such measures as ... may be necessary for the sanitation and public improvement of the Republic”; but as to education, nothing. (Logan, 1930:440, referring to Articles I, X, and XI of the Treaty of May 3, 1916)

Much of the concern stemmed from differences in perspective on which type of education would best bring a better future to Haiti. Whereas Haitian education had traditionally focused on classical studies, nearly to the exclusion of industrial arts, U.S. officials argued that teaching should focus on practical measures in production that might result in a raised standard of living, better nourishment, and improved health. According

to High Commissioner General John Henry Russell, U.S. Marine commander deployed to oversee operations in Haiti,

this emphasis of classical studies and practical exclusion of agricultural and industrial education has necessarily led to the creation of a class of young men who desire to take up professions and occupations such as law, medicine, commerce and clerical; a great portion of the latter seeking governmental positions. The members of this class do not know how to use their hands, and have no idea of the dignity of labor. As a result there is a regrettable shortage of agriculturists and skilled workers. It is among such a class that revolutions are bred. (Baber and Balch 1927:93–94)

It was this concern over the practical needs intrinsic to and missing from Haitian education that drove demands for agricultural programs. In 1924 and under the direction of U.S. leadership, Haiti opened the Central School of Agriculture with 50 students. The school’s curriculum was created by the Director General of the Technical Service of Agriculture, with approval by the Secretary of Agriculture. By fiscal year 1925–1926, funding for the school, plus various smaller rural agricultural schools, consumed more than one third of the overall budget of the Department of Agriculture, as shown in *Le Moniteur* (1928:38–39, as cited in Logan 1930:443–45):

Technical Service.

Administration	\$35,000.00	
Central experimental farm	35,000.00	
Experimental breeding station	15,000.00	
Experimental coffee plantation	10,000.00	
Sisal (plantations).....	5,000.00	
Forestry	20,000.00	
Cooperative farms	12,000.00	
Agricultural agents.....	15,000.00	
Rural agricultural schools	20,000.00	
Central School of Agriculture.....	105,000.00	
Scholarships at same.....	10,000.00	
Veterinary clinics	5,000.00	
Soil analysis	5,000.00	
Agricultural fairs.....	5,000.00	
Bonuses and prizes for coffee plantations	10,000.00	
Telegrams and telephones.....	1,000.00	\$308,000.00

Other.

Office and accounting staff.....	6,740.52	
Subsidies to a meteorological station and observatory	792.00	
Miscellaneous	1,090.00	8,622.52
<hr/>		
Total		\$316,622.52

Following the creation of budgeted programs in rural areas, officials still feared they might not be able to attract qualified students. The children of peasants appeared ill prepared for a structured education in reading, writing, and more advanced agricultural techniques, while urban children of more educated parents were heavily influenced by the social stigma of farming and labor, and resisted rural life. The scholarships included in the budget might sufficiently recruit students into rural agricultural programs, but there was a good deal of concern that there would be nothing enticing them to stay in farming professions once their educations were completed. The clearest criticism, however, was that agriculture education under this program was drawing nearly as much in appropriations as the entire Haitian Department of Public Instruction (Baber and Balch 1927:94-95).⁷

Haitian Minister of Agriculture M. Charles Bouchereau was optimistic that investment in agricultural education under U.S. occupation would prove beneficial. In an address delivered at the Central Agricultural School fair in 1928, he said,

There was founded first of all the Central Agricultural School, intended to form technicians, professor, (in a word the nucleus from which will come a select personnel for the dissemination of agricultural instruction;) next the establishment of numerous farm schools which are being spread throughout the country, of agricultural experimental stations—real centers for scientific experiments—, of breeding and stock stations for the improvement of cattle, etc., of demonstration fields under the form of cooperative farms for the purpose of encouraging the peasant to adopt modern agricultural methods, of scholarships to foreign countries that will permit the best students of the Service Technique to become familiar ... with the latest improvements in agricultural science.

He went on to say,

Let us notice also the interesting achievements in the research department, in seeking new openings, in the

application of veterinary science, in silviculture, and also in the domain of vocational training by which practical training in trades is given in school equipped with the most modern tools. ... By the establishment of factories for the scientific preparation of coffee, of hemp, of demonstration fields, of cooperative farms, by the institution of the system of bonuses for coffee in order to encourage new plantings, by the distribution of plants and seeds to the peasants, and above all by the appointment of a certain number of agricultural agents the Service has proved its desire to leave no stone unturned in order to increase rapidly our production. (Logan 1930:449)⁸

Ulysses Grant Weatherly, Indiana University professor of economics and sociology, and former president of the American Sociological Society, commended U.S. agricultural education efforts, though he still held the Haitian people and their farming practices in low regard. Weatherly wrote in “Haiti: An Experiment in Pragmatism” (1926:360–61):

Owing to the backward condition of the population, the type of cultivation is exceedingly primitive and the methods of marketing are defective. Despite an exceedingly fertile soil, the actual production is small as compared with what might be secured by the application of improved methods. Here, therefore, even more than elsewhere in the American tropics, there is pressing need for a radical reorganization of agriculture.

His recommendations for this “tropical country inhabited by a tropical race deficient in traditions of efficiency” (p. 364) were many. They included the infusion of experts and expertise in Haitian agricultural education, the preparation and inclusion of Haitians into the American-based administrative system, and the influence of increased consumption and demand for Haitian agricultural products. Increased demand, he noted, could come only through general education of the population, which would instill discontent with meager standards of living and inferior status. He criticized the fact that the Treaty of 1915 did not give the United States control over Haiti’s entire educational system, as such a move could have taught Haitians more quickly the economic value of consumption. Farm schools and vocational education might eventually provide a better standard of living that would drive further consumption, but it would take some time (Weatherly 1926:363–64).

QUESTIONS OF QUALITY

By the mid-1920s, discontent over the U.S. occupation of Haiti intensified. Criticism was voiced by academics and politicians, as well as from the black community in the United

States. Black Americans pointed to the poor treatment of Haitians as racial injustice, contacting their congressmen and writing letters to newspapers, calling for change. Their list of grievances was long and included labor abuses, due-process violations, suppression of resistance movements, and American brutality. They also pointed to student dissatisfaction with U.S.-directed agricultural education programs. New York's growing Haitian-American community began to mobilize and called for investigations into the occupation and any proclaimed progress in education (Daniel 1934; Plummer 1982).⁹

In 1925, Haitian members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) requested that the organization investigate conditions in their home country. The WILPF sent a delegation, and its subsequent report expressed gratitude to officials of the U.S. occupation for allowing them free access to research while in the country but recommended that the occupation be short-lived. Calling for early withdrawal, researchers argued for a "well-considered and carefully planned program of progressive steps toward self-government, and especially for the reestablishment of an elected legislature, so that Haiti may be as well prepared as possible to stand on her own feet" (Baber and Balch 1927:vi-vii). Noting that effective use of the land was essential to authentic independence, researcher and WILPF member Emily Balch acknowledged that it was too soon to determine the impact of the recently created Department of Agriculture. There were experiments completed in coffee quality improvement, cattle breeding, building of veterinary clinics, and cold-storage shipment of vegetables to New York, however. New weighing stations for cotton were established to protect buyers and sellers from fraud, and the distribution of young rubber trees to peasants was under consideration (Baber and Balch 1927:82-83).

The WILPF report made a number of recommendations in the area of education, including improved teachers' salaries, support for school inspections, and additional construction of rural primary schools. It also articulated caveats, however. First, the elitist attitude toward education, which was well grounded in the nation's French history and reflected aristocratic European prejudice, would not be easily changed. It was one that honored literary and professional work and that continued to associate manual labor, particularly that on the land, with slavery. In addition, "the Americans ... are prone to regard classical and liberal studies as too expensive a luxury for a country like Haiti, a feeling that may be unconsciously accentuated in some cases by color prejudice" (Baber and Balch 1927:103-104). Many Haitians held to the French view that learning tied to livelihood essentially debased education and that the value of true learning should be more reflective of culture than career earnings or productivity. If the United States were given the opportunity to shape the future of Haitian education, they feared, the system would be founded exclusively on materialist and utilitarian trends popular in the industrialized world (Baber and Balch 1927:104).

In 1930, the United States Commission on Education in Haiti filed an extensive report on the "values and deficiencies" in the country's educational system, following a series of meetings with officials from both the Haitian government and the American occupation, educational leaders, and Haitian and U.S. citizens, which included visits to school facilities and various educational projects. Its general conclusion noted that

“[w]hatever the shortcomings of Haiti’s present school system, evidence is not lacking that the Haitian people have an abiding faith in education” (U.S. Commission on Education in Haiti 1931:51). The Haitian government’s emphasis on agriculture, the manual arts, and teacher education provided under the normal system reflected an acknowledgment of society’s needs, according to the investigation, and though it was not specifically reflective of the demands of a democracy, it was “workable.” Lacking, however, were financial capacity and trained personnel required to carry this out. For example, researchers estimated that a well-run educational system would demand some 10,000 teachers, though only some 2,000 were currently employed. Of those, only half demonstrated more than a sixth-grade education.

Centralization was at the system’s core, with the Secretary of State for Public Instruction leading administration efforts, and very little decision-making potential or control at the local level. Although this may have allowed for greater efficiency in a small nation such as Haiti, it also permitted neglect of schooling in rural areas. Leaders in superior education, the equivalent to postsecondary education in the United States, recognized the need to expand programs in the practical sciences, economics, business, and engineering to expand the nation’s economy and also to develop the countryside. Rural improvements were necessary not only to better feed the population but also to unveil the potential for the entire country’s inhabitants. According to the report, “While the peasant child must not be denied the opportunity to rise and develop his capacities to the utmost, an education which fully utilized his environment need not and will not hold him back, but may spur him on and give him strength and fiber for a distinguished career” (U.S. Commission on Education in Haiti 1931:55).

The commission considered the following set of objectives in its investigation and recommendations, which it argued lay at the foundation of effective education in a democratic state:

1. Raising of the standards of living for all people
2. Increase of agricultural and industrial effectiveness among the people
3. Preparation of the masses for intelligent participation in the government
4. Training of leaders for the nation

These, in addition, should be kept in mind following withdrawal of U.S. forces. Very importantly, the commission warned:

If the Haitian people have been at all cold toward the administration of their affairs by external agents, the reason, aside from the encroachment upon their national sovereignty which it represents, might easily be found in the attitude assumed among representatives of our Government in discharging the responsibilities devolving upon them as part of the occupational forces. ...

Had there been less of a disposition to deal with the island as a conquered territory and more to help a sister state in distress, less of a desire to demonstrate efficiency and more to help others to the efficient direction of their own affairs, less of enforced control and more of helpful cooperation, the United States might today have greater reason to be proud of her intervention in the affairs of a struggling neighbor. (1931:73)

The Central School of Agriculture substantially changed Haiti's educational system by introducing what many considered the country's most essential sector in preparation for the future and potential transformation of the economy. Some patterns of failure emerged, however. First, the demand for training of Haitian specialists to assist U.S. technical experts intensified, shifting curriculum emphasis from applied sciences and manual labor to theoretical and academic subjects. In addition, rather than wait for this new system to meet the needs of the United States, many Haitians began studying abroad in American universities. Returning to Haiti with degrees in hand resulted in the "Haitianization" of technical services in agriculture, in which technicians were well educated and were prepared to take over responsibilities as U.S. occupation came to an end. The manner of their education and experiences in the United States differed substantially from what they had been accustomed to in Haiti, however, and the returning students became less interested in the hard work of application of knowledge in Haiti's rural areas. They preferred to hold official positions in Port-au-Prince. In addition, Haitian teachers employed in agricultural education often reverted to traditional styles, which emphasized theory and philosophy. Though the Central School of Agriculture showed promise, in the end, there was little measurable influence on Haitian agriculture, or substantive development in the nation's rural areas (Holly 1955:210–11).

POST-OCCUPATION

Once U.S. military forces pulled out of Haiti, the onus was on the Haitian government to lead on its own, and from the end of occupation to 1946, it worked to maintain and expand programs in agricultural education. The recent division of elites' tracts of land into smaller parcels put more property into the hands of those who had never cared for their own, paralleling trends and challenges in postrevolutionary Haiti (Christ 1952).¹⁰ New agricultural education programs were designed to assist Haitians in learning to productively maintain their own land, and many began to include the fundamental schooling of young children. Put into place were primary agricultural education provided at farm, rural, and communal schools, at agricultural settlement schools, and at some small-town elementary schools; secondary or intermediate agricultural education given at the secondary school of Chatard and at the Normal Section of the National School of Agriculture; and higher agricultural education given at the National School of Agriculture. The elementary level was provided to children between the ages of 7 and 16, and attendance was compulsory. The curriculum included not only gardening but also

regular school subjects that were uniquely Haitian—including French grammar and religion—and introductions to occupations and vocational training. By 1939, 293 primary agricultural schools for boys were located throughout the country's rural areas, 126 for girls, and 36 coeducational, serving between 30,000 and 35,000 students. Of these, the farm schools were considerably better, because the buildings were constructed specifically for this purpose, with good ventilation and lighting, new furniture, gardens, shops, and playgrounds (Holly 1955:201–02).

Courses devoted entirely to agriculture were generally limited to students who were older than 12 years old. It was then that students cultivated gardens under the direction of a teacher or, when no land was available on school grounds, at home under the direction of parents with teachers' instructions. Curriculum relied on a mixture of theoretical and practical lessons, with studies of the physical, natural, and biological sciences, and, when possible, with visits to experimental farms. By the 1940s, some farm schools were introducing studies of poultry keeping, beekeeping, and the raising of pigs and goats (Holly 1955:203–05). At the intermediate level, the lower grade paralleled primary instruction but was more intensive and comprehensive; given at the secondary school of Chatard beginning in 1927, it included more practical training and agricultural sciences. The two-year program included courses in agricultural subjects, as well as history, geography, French grammar, geometry, algebra, hygiene, manual work, drawing, religion, civics, and music. Graduates would be considered leaders of the rural classes, influencing change by introducing peasants to ideas and policies outlined by the government. Students were selected from among the best primary agricultural school achievers from across the country (Holly 1955:207–08).

The higher grade of the intermediate level was offered at the Normal Section of the National School of Agriculture. This program was intended essentially as agricultural school teacher training, and its instruction was primarily vocational. Curriculum included courses in education, agriculture, and rural sociology. Students were 17 to 22 years old and were admitted based on examination and on recommendations of their secondary-school instructors at Chatard or urban schools. The program was also open to practicing elementary country schoolteachers who did not yet have diplomas or certification. The highest level of agricultural education prepared agronomists and field agents for the Agricultural Extension Service. It also educated specialists for research and laboratory work who would be employed by the national government or large agricultural companies (Holly 1955: 209–10). The curriculum of the National School included zoology, botany, chemistry, agronomy, horticulture, dairying, soil science, rural economy, veterinary medicine, forestry, and surveying. It was affiliated with the University of Haiti and located on a 300-acre farm six miles from Port-au-Prince. The Section of Agronomy and Horticulture held a large area of land for nurseries and experimental plots, in addition to a herd of Jersey, Guernsey, and Holstein cows, and a creamery. Admission depended on previous school certification, referrals, and examinations in botany, zoology, physics, chemistry, math, geography, and history. Successful completion of the three-year program granted a diploma as agronomist (Holly 1955:213).

CONTINUING STRUGGLES

During the mid-1940s, policy makers both inside and outside Haiti focused increasing attention on improving Haiti's economy. The U.S. occupation had ended a decade earlier, but little progress had been made. Recommendations once again centered on the agricultural sector, noting problems in soil exhaustion, lack of widespread technical skills, and faulty tax structures. Haiti continued to rely on export duties, rather than income or property taxes, for revenue, hindering the production of food products and other goods for the global market. Experts recommended import-substitution industrialization, a common mid-century practice in Latin America that encouraged factory expansion to produce for the domestic market. The intention was to decrease dependence on foreign goods and also to spur industry-related job growth. As export duties remained in place, Haiti was encouraged to limit its focus to producing for local consumers as a way to strengthen economic development (Dartigue 1946:4–5).

Haitian leaders in agriculture, continuing to examine models from Europe, looked to the 1943 "Report of the Committee on Post-War Agricultural Education in England and Wales," which described the aims of agricultural education this way:

The general objective of agricultural education should be (a) intellectual development; (b) and understanding of the physical, biological and economic principles by which the forms and practices of agriculture are ultimately determined. This is required to promote interest and satisfaction and pleasure in work as well as to stimulate thought and new developments; and (c) technical efficiency in all matters connected with the industry both practical and scientific. (Holly 1955:198)

In 1955, Marc Aurele Holly, Haitian expert in agricultural education and critic of past policies, interpreted the above while considering Haiti's social and economic needs:

First, in the interest of society, land must be fully and effectively utilized, but with caution to prevent exhaustion; hence the necessity of sound methods of farming. Secondly, like any other worker, the farmer is interested in profits and making a decent livelihood from his work. "Consequently," as is said in the "Report on Vocational Education in Agriculture," (Geneva 1929) "he will profit personally by instruction in the science and practice of his occupation and will presumably welcome such information provided that its advantages can be explained to him. ... If society is to be fed, the cultivator is to be rewarded." Thirdly, a prosperous agriculture undoubtedly lessens the drift of the rural population to the cities and thus secures a

proper balance between the urban and the rural populations. To quote the work just mentioned, “the cultivator, properly instructed, will have more interest and satisfaction in his work, and greater security; he will be more the master of his fate and less the prey of circumstances.” (Pp. 198–99)

Holly considered agricultural education of “paramount importance” in Haiti. His concerns included Haitians’ ignorance of seed selection, crop rotation, plowing, soil humidity and fertility conservation, disease and insect control, and the value of using fertilizers. Until the establishment of the Central School of Agriculture in 1924, he argued, no serious attention had been paid to technical education in rural Haiti and that situation needed to change (p. 200).

In 1950, the Haitian government attempted to address agricultural issues more scientifically, with increased precision and accuracy. The challenges faced seemed insurmountable, however. First, an inventory of land rights showed that ownership of the vast majority of land could not be determined; it was under official ownership of neither the state nor individuals. Plantations had been disaggregated in attempts toward modernization and economic democratization, yet large tracts of land remained beyond the realm of ownership and, therefore, responsibility for cultivation. For this reason, even widespread programs of agricultural education designed to introduce more effective farming methods to enhance productivity were limited in their potential scope (Bernardin 1993:32–35). In addition, attention to export crops, such as tobacco, coffee, sugar, cacao, and cotton, continued to surface. For the country to grow economically, increasing foods and other agricultural products for export was essential, but Haitians did not want outsiders to dictate what those products would be. During and following U.S. occupation, Haitians had worked to establish and maintain greater control over their choice of crops. Some new efforts toward cultivating produce preferred by Haitians in their diets were introduced; those crops included beans, sweet potatoes, and plantains. With access to land came a sense of natural personal relationship to the land and what it could produce with the aid of devoted manual labor; however, rural Haitians often rejected modern training techniques, choosing, for example, to rely on positions of the moon when planting (Bernardin 1993:50–54).

By 1950, the Haitian Agricultural Ministry was beginning to form a working relationship with United Nations advisors and was able to articulate a plan for Haiti’s agricultural strategy. With adequate funding, the Haitian government envisioned a professional school of agriculture, a new school of rural institutions, an agricultural development service, a mechanism to oversee quality control for agricultural products destined for export, and a variety of agricultural technical services. There was some debate regarding the placement of agricultural education programs under either the Agricultural Ministry or the Education Ministry, and they were ultimately deemed the responsibility of the Agricultural Ministry. This posed significant obstacles when individuals allowed personal politics to interfere with collaboration. In addition, failure to communicate and

collaborate often left students graduating from primary and secondary programs ill prepared for the demands of technical education in agriculture (Bernardin 1993:89–92).

In 1958, University of Florida economist Maurice de Young contended that outside experts failed to recognize the true nature of the rural economy in Haiti's history. While attempts were made to provide technical assistance in expanding the potential for agriculture there, de Young noted, Haiti's land had been used more effectively for horticulture. In other words, the land produces a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and nuts, as well as plant materials used in rope and clothing. The production had been perennial as opposed to annual, and the use of small land plots had been mistakenly considered evidence of a subsistence economy. In fact, said de Young, Haitian producers had been more actively engaged in an internal economy, supplying consumables for the Haitian population in rural as well as urban areas. When advisors from the United Nations or the United States attempted to improve the economy through better agriculture, it benefitted only a few, profited government officials, and redistributed land and the population in undesirable ways (de Young 1958:1–6, 66–73).¹¹ He quoted T. Lynn Smith, who, in his 1953 work *The Sociology of Rural Life*, commented, "If large scale agriculture were actually efficient, the rural South would today be characterized by enlightenment and a high plane of living instead of ignorance and poverty" (Smith 1953:298). It appeared there was a strong case for restructuring land production priorities in Haiti, which might have progressed with strong support from the national government.

THE DUVALIERS AND CENTRALIZATION

Beginning in the late 1950s, government support for rural development diminished. Following the rise of François Duvalier to the presidency in 1957, policy measures and subsequent economic and social adjustments resulted in significant demographic and monetary shifts to Port-au-Prince. There were several reasons for rural-to-urban migration under both his regime and that of his son, Jean-Claude, which began upon the father's death in 1971. Duvalier monetary policies were especially hard on the rural poor, with direct taxation of peasant farmers (composing nearly 80 percent of government revenues), duties on exported coffee, and additional taxes on imported basic necessities. At the same time, little taxation affected the rich (Catholic Institute for International Relations 1989:11). Land policies made it impractical for local farmers to produce for the small domestic market, which would have benefitted them more fully and directly. In addition, the massive use of trees for fuel led to rapidly increasing deforestation and erosion, leading to limitations on fertile land (Conway 1979; Laguerre 1998:225–26; Murray 1979; Voltaire 1979). The rural economy deteriorated, offering few opportunities for those who remained there, and obtaining credit in the countryside was viewed as too speculative with little backing from the national government (Girault 1982; Smucker 1982, 1983). Even studies that minimize the extent of migration to the cities illustrate the overall population density of the country and significant proportion of land with notable low soil fertility and excessive ruggedness (Lundahl 1979:55–58). The Duvaliers favored urban commercial development, particularly in the capital, leaving behind economic

development elsewhere. Much of this development came in the form of assembly plants built by foreign corporations (Lundahl 1979:307–12; 1983).

The government offered limited support to the rural population with adult education in farming techniques through the National Office of Literacy and Community Action (ONAAC) created in 1969. ONAAC replaced the National Office of Community Education and sought increased application and results from educational programs. By educating rural adults in farming methods and assisting them with supplies, ONAAC envisioned more effective provision of subsistence by the rural population itself, as well as an address of erosion caused by deforestation. There was some narrow success. Families were supplied with some 250,000 plants in 1970 to assist in recovering crops destroyed in hurricanes of 1963 and 1966, which had destroyed an estimated 75 million plants. As a result, a total of 120 additional families were able to grow cabbage, beets, onions, eggplants, and tomatoes (Bernardin 1993:94–95).

A 1976 constitutional mandate laid the foundation for compulsory education from ages 6 to 14; however, economic, social, and political circumstances made it impossible for the government to provide a stable education system for all. Although tuition was waived in the public system, parents were responsible for fees, textbooks, supplies, and uniforms, and the majority of school-age children did not attend consistently. The majority of Haiti's population still resided in remote rural areas, where few schools existed. Where historically the population had grown from valley and waterfront to mountaintop as Haitians engaged in subsistence farming, there were still few school buildings or teachers, and with less than 10 percent of the Haitian budget allocated for education, schooling in the rural areas continued to be underfunded (Simmons 1985:4).

In 1978, the rural and urban education systems were unified, giving control of all public and private education, both urban and rural, to the Department of National Education. The Department of Agriculture would continue agricultural training at the upper levels but would no longer administer primary education programs that happened to be located in rural areas. The system remained two-tiered, with stark differences between the urban primary school and the rural primary school. These differences remained especially clear in school attendance, family resources, economic conditions, and student needs. Very importantly, urban students were twice as likely to complete primary school. During the 1980s, kindergarten students made up one third of the entire primary enrollment in rural areas (through sixth grade), indicating the high attrition rate (Simmons 1985:15).

The early 1980s brought a shift in international monetary policies, and the World Bank responded to the economic crisis in Haiti by supporting export growth. Low-wage labor was used to produce for the U.S. market, particularly in the areas of agriculture, agro-industry, and assembly industries. Much of this economic vision was outlined in the Reagan administration's Caribbean Basin Initiative (Catholic Institute for International Relations 1989:15). U.S. Assistance for International Development envisioned a successful transference of land to cultivation for export. Though 30 percent of land previously used for the production of domestic foodstuffs was lost to export, the profits

from exports declined. There was some diversification in agricultural exports, but coffee still dominated production. As coffee exports and market prices fell, per capita income fell, and trade difficulties continued. Thousands migrated to Port-au-Prince for assembly jobs that continued to pay desperately low wages, and more than half of the nation's imports were based on food purchases. Food aid from the United States, where farmers had been subsidized, further undermined the agricultural economy, as Haitian farmers were unable to compete (Catholic Institute for International Relations 1989:15–16).

In 1980, the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development initiated an investigation of the world's poorest countries, resulting in a series of reports under the framework of "Interdependence and Development." The report on Haiti, *Human Capital Development through Education in Haiti* (1984), was produced by Bernard Salome, who later became managing director of the Millennium Foundation for Innovative Finance for Health.¹² In his report, Salome noted many of the same findings of earlier researchers. First, pedagogical impediments (i.e., inadequate teacher training) posed limitations on the quality of education overall. Furthermore, the dire lack of financial resources continued to restrict implementation of well-intentioned plans. He acknowledged two additional basic factors affecting education that had gone largely unnoticed by his predecessors, however. Very important, Salome asserted, were the roles that children were expected to play in Haitian society. Late in the 20th century, Haitian children were still representing a labor force, as fieldworkers, or in workshops of the urban informal economy. Second, the language barrier between the French-speaking professional class and the Creole-speaking population perpetuated difficulties in creating and sustaining a well-integrated educational system. According to Salome (1984:10), "Up to now school has been regarded as something foreign, since instruction has been given in French—whereas virtually the entire population speaks only Creole—and the subjects studied have had no direct relevance to daily life."

By the 1980s, a number of reforms had been put into place, mainly the result of the series of international education-assistance missions in previous decades. Those areas slated for improvement included (1) instruction in Creole rather than French; (2) more effective centralization of public education; (3) curriculum updates at the intermediate and secondary levels; (4) increased emphasis on more pragmatic technical, vocational, and professional training, and less emphasis on classical education; (5) a unified system of urban and rural schools under the Department of National Education; and (6) the establishment of a basic education component to better prepare students in basic skills. Many of these recommendations were enacted though have not yet been institutionalized (Simmons 1985:11).

In the last decades of the 20th century, vocational agricultural training took place at the secondary level. The 1978 unification of urban and rural education resulted in the closing of vocational agricultural schools, the intermediate (middle school) agricultural program, and the agricultural normal school that had trained teachers for rural primary schools. Centralization efforts served to create a new system, in which the Department of Agriculture, through the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, operated the centers for agricultural training and the *École Moyenne Agricole* (Middle Agricultural

School) within the secondary vocational education system. Students were eligible for the three-year program directly after successful completion of general primary studies. Teacher certification was offered, but graduates could teach only in agricultural programs. The other option was preparing for a trade in agriculture, preferably in a rural area (Simmons 1985:35). Many graduates chose to live in urban areas and attempted to use their training there, however.

In the years following the Duvalier regimes, the Haitian educational system continued its path of centralization. The National Education Ministry and the Department of National Education (DEN, or *Département de l'Éducation Nationale*) oversee all education and training in the nation. The DEN consists of multiple divisions devoted to specific areas: university education; vocational and professional training; literacy and community education; curriculum, orientation, and evaluation; culture and planning; and so on. Further divisions are devoted to such areas as administration and planning, personnel, and pedagogical inspection and assistance. Overall management, curriculum standards, national exam supervision, and site visits have been initiated and regulated in Port-au-Prince. Though broad education programs and management are carried out by DEN, various national ministries fund and maintain responsibility for specialized training. For example, the Department of Agriculture administers agricultural training; the Department of Public Health administers the training of health science professionals; the Department of Foreign Affairs' Tourism Division administers hotel, restaurant, and guide training; and the Department of Social Affairs funds adult education and literacy campaigns, continuing education, and artisan training (Simmons 1985:5). National bureaucracy originating in Port-au-Prince often functions in ways detached from realistic needs in Haiti's rural regions.

CONCLUSION

There have been many obstacles to agricultural education in Haiti, not the least of which is a continual lack of commitment from policy makers in Port-au-Prince to educating the rural poor. Continued discrimination rooted in the colonial and early national periods exists against peasants because they represent the lowest of the classes in what continues to be a highly stratified society. Haitians who work the land are looked down upon by urban elites, and those in the countryside who have no land at all remain at the bottom of the economic ladder. In addition, stratification that preserves privilege among elites does not tend to support education for all. Rhetoric of democracy and equality reaching as far back as the French Revolution has spoken to widespread education, but implementation comes with a price, both in monetary investment and the potential weakening of social position (Holly 1955:217). This 20th-century nation that experienced more political upheaval than smooth transition of power has seen programs in education stifled or abandoned. A system webbed with bureaucracy provides inhibitors of its own. Above all, Haiti's lack of resources has long stood in the way of progress in costly educational development. Very importantly, when assistance intended to rectify the situation has come from outside Haiti, long-term successes have proved inadequate.

Endeavors toward constructing more effective means of feeding the population while encouraging independent, sustainable, agriculturally based economic development continue. Uncertainty regarding Haiti's economic future lingers, but many of its challenges are longstanding and rooted in the past. Persistence of class divisions and urban-rural conflicts, as well as neocolonial imbalances and hegemonic forces, should not be ignored. Leaders and innovators of current and future agricultural education programs can make strides only when considering this past.

ENDNOTES

1. See also Serge Petit-Frere (N.d.) and Salome (1984).
2. For early accounts of Haiti's development, see Hanna (1836), Basket (1824:2–3), and Vincent and Lherisson (N.d.:7). See also Petit-Frere (N.d.) and Salome (1984). For general accounts of Haiti's history of education, see early sections of Simmons (1985).
3. For more on this period, the Haitian Revolution, and the region, see Ferrer (2014) and Geggus (2001).
4. For an extensive examination of U.S. imperialism in Haiti during the first half of the 20th century, see Renda (2001).
5. Also see Johnson (1920). The work of the Investigation Committee of the United States Senate, particularly on *Treaties and Conventions between the United States and Other Powers*, inspired continued investigations into U.S. relations with Haiti.
6. This article originally served as Brown's master's thesis in the graduate school at Western Reserve University.
7. Also see Russell (1929:28–30). For comparisons on spending in Haiti from year to year during occupation, see the annual reports of the Financial Adviser-General Receiver (Bureau du Conseiller Financier-Receveur Général) for Fiscal Years October 1923–September 1924 through October 1932–September 1933, available from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC).
8. In relation to Bouchereau's mention of scholarships to foreign countries, there were graduates studying at the University of Wisconsin, University of California, Columbia University, and Ohio State University.
9. For more critique, see Pamphile's "America's Policy-Making" (1985) and *Clash of Cultures: America's Educational Strategies in Occupied Haiti, 1915–1934* (2008).
10. For more general background information on the class divide during the mid-20th century, see Lobb (1940) and de Young (1959).
11. Also see Mosher (1957).
12. The Millennium Foundation for Innovative Finance for Health is an independent nonprofit Swiss organization.

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