



Independence

Art of Haiti

Rebecca Hinson

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ARTISTS Cover, 22, Ulrick Jean-Pierre (Jean-Pierre is a living artist who currently resides in New Orleans, Louisiana.) Collection of Dr. & Mrs. Michel Joseph Lemaire; 4, Ulrick Jean-Pierre; 6, François-Auguste Biard; 10, Jean Baptiste Debret; 11, Ulrick Jean-Pierre, Collection of George & Leah McKenna Museum of African American Art; 12, Ulrick Jean-Pierre, Collection of Drs. Edna & Farère Dyer; 13, Ulrick Jean-Pierre, Collection of Picard & Sharon Losier Esquire; 14, Ulrick Jean-Pierre; 15, Ulrick Jean-Pierre, Collection of Dr. & Mrs. Daniel J. Mompoin; 16, Digital Library of the Caribbean; 19, Ulrick Jean-Pierre; 20, Jacques-Louis David; 21, François-Joseph Kinson; 22, Ulrick Jean-Pierre, Collection of Dr. & Mrs. Michel Joseph Lemaire; 23, Ulrick Jean-Pierre, Collection of Dr. & Mrs. Ludner Confident.

SOURCES Cécile Accilien, Jessica Adams, Elmide Méléance, *Revolutionary Freedoms*; Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*; Philippe Girard, *Haiti*.



The island Ayiti (land of high mountains) was once home to about one-and-a-half million Taínos Indians, whose ancestors came from South America. Living in thatched roof huts around a central plaza, they farmed, fished, and hunted. Five tribal caciques (chiefs) ruled five kingdoms.



In 1492, Christopher Columbus claimed the island for the Spanish who later named it Hispaniola. The Taínos welcomed the Europeans, bringing them bread, fish, parrots, gold, and cotton. Columbus noted that the natives were submissive and would be easy to enslave.



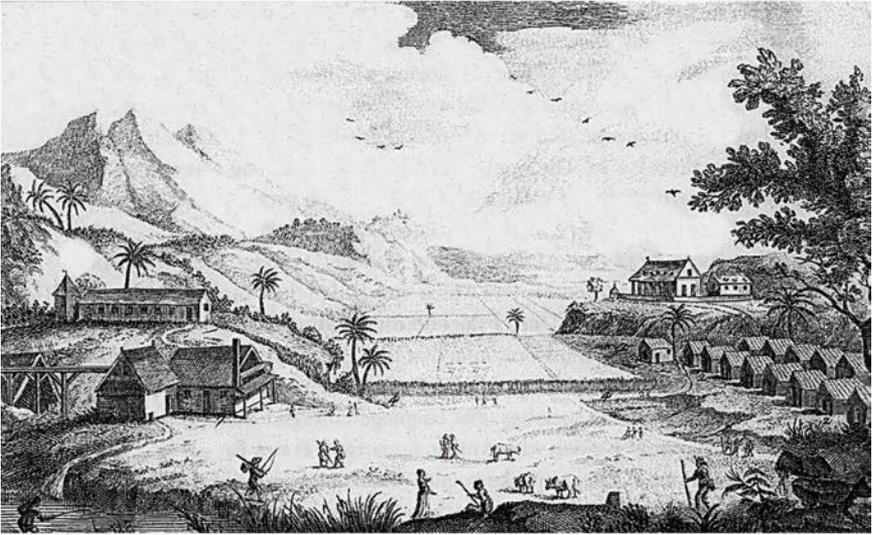
Spaniards began pillaging villages and killing or capturing the Taínos who resisted. The Europeans believed it was their divine right to seize Indian land and enslave natives.



By 1503, most natives had died from harsh labor in gold mines or diseases contracted from the Spanish. Some Taínos escaped to the mountains, where they vowed to live free or die.



With feet and arms bound, Africans were imported to replace the Indian work force. Treated like livestock, slaves were required to work without ceasing. They revolted in 1522, but were quickly suppressed.



By the early 1600s, French and British settlers began to occupy western Hispaniola. By 1697, Spain ceded the western third of the island to the French, which they named Saint-Domingue. French settlers began cultivating sugar, tobacco, indigo, coffee, and cotton.



With 6,000 plantations by 1789, Saint-Domingue became France's most lucrative colony producing more sugar and coffee than any other colony, in the Americas. Sugar refineries required more and more labor. As many as one million Africans were brought to Saint-Domingue.

LE CODE NOIR
OU
EDIT DU ROY,

SERVANT DE REGLEMENT

POUR le Gouvernement & l'Administration de Justice & la
Police des Isles Françaises de l'Amérique, & pour la
Discipline & le Commerce des Nègres & Mulâtres
dans ledit Pays.

Donné à Versailles au mois de Mars 1685.

A V E C,

L'EDIT du mois d'Avril 1685. portant établissement d'un
Conseil Supérieur de six quatrevingt Roys ou dans
la Colonie de l'Isle de S. Domingue.

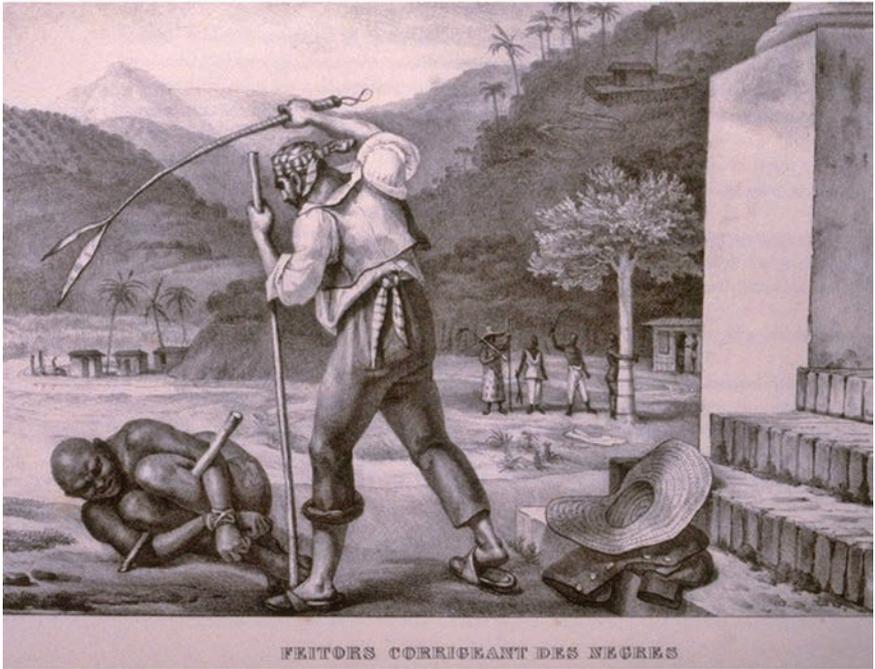


A PARIS

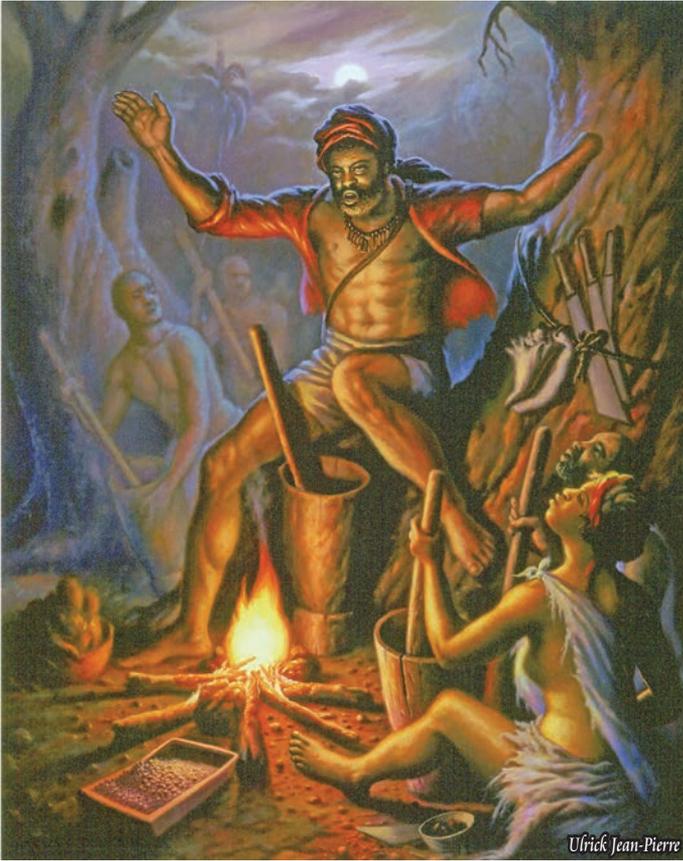
Chez le Vendeur SARRAZIN, à l'entrée du Quay de Grève,
devisé du Pont au Change, en France.

M. DCCXVIII

The Code Noir decreed by French King Louis XIV required that slaves be kept together with their spouses, be provided with adequate food and clothing, and not be killed or tortured. All slaves were to be baptized Catholic and given Christian names.



In practice the Code Noir was not enforced, and masters occasionally tortured or mutilated slaves. Most slaves were ill-fed and worked eighteen to twenty hours a day. As plantations accumulated great wealth, harsh conditions killed one-third to one-half of imported slaves within a few years.



From 1751 to 1758, a slave conspiracy was led by Makandal, a maroon slave who had lost his hand in a sugar mill. The Vodou priest conspired with slaves to poison their masters' households. The rebel leader was captured and burned at the stake, but he inspired slaves to believe in their own freedom.



Slave leaders gathered August 14, 1791, at Bois Caïman, with Vodou priest Dutty Boukman and priestess Cécile Fatiman. They took a blood oath to revolt and break the bonds of slavery. Boukman spoke of the Vodou warrior god Ogou, who would “direct our arms and stand beside us. Listen to the voice of freedom rising in your heart.”