

[Back to index](#)**Black Émigrés: The Emergence of Nineteenth-Century United States Black Nationalism in Response to Haitian Emigration and Colonization, 1816-1840****by Eric Anderson****(Department of History, University of Idaho)**

Walking along the deck of the US merchant ship St. Louis, a nervous black sailor tried to look busy to avoid being given a task while the ship docked. He knew the routine as he had worked on merchant craft for some time now. His boss, Captain Thomas Payn, was a brutal man and the sailor had the scars to prove it. Once the ship docked he became increasingly edgy. Calm down, he repeatedly told himself. Wait until dark, then run. That night, under the cover of darkness, he did exactly that. This black sailor, who also happened to be a slave, ran through Port-au-Prince only stopping when he was over three miles into the countryside. Once there he obtained shelter from a local family and prepared to begin his new life as a free Haitian. He had finally achieved his dream of freedom.

Hundreds, possibly thousands, of blacks in the antebellum United States, saw a chance for freedom in the black republic, Haiti. The 1804 Haitian Constitution abolished slavery forever, and forbid whites from both owning property and obtaining a position of power within the Haitian government. The Haitian Constitution created an immediate response in the United States. People (both black and white, slave and free) developed an ideology to explain what Haiti had become. Northern merchants saw Haiti as a land of immeasurable wealth. Their foremost concern was continued trade between the US and Haiti. The southern slaveocracy saw Haiti as a nest of black militancy. The very existence of a free black republic in the Americas, which had achieved its liberation by use of force, was a threat to all white nations. Blacks in the United States, both slave and free, saw Haiti as a Mecca for black nationalism. To them, Haiti was irrefutable proof that having black skin did not mean you were destined to be ruled by whites.

The repercussions of the Haitian revolution manifested themselves in the US in a variety of ways. Slaves revolted invoking the name of Toussaint L'Ouverture, violence by masters against slaves increased, and free blacks looked to Haiti as a place where they could establish themselves as full citizens. Haiti held a special position in the psyche of many Americans. True, Haiti meant different things to different people, yet, it meant something to everyone.

Talk of colonization began in the United States in 1816 with the creation of the American Colonization Society (ACS). Repatriation of free blacks back to Africa was the goal of this white-led movement. A host of prominent figures in American history supported the ACS including Henry Clay, James Madison, James Monroe, Daniel Webster, several Protestant denominations and fourteen state legislatures. The ACS used colonization as a means to remove free black subversion from the South.

Colonization movements during this period spawned two African-American nationalist movements. Some free people of color in the 1820's to 1840's attempted to reestablish themselves as a black nation in Haiti. They wanted to transport African-Americans to Haiti where they could live in presumed racial equality. A larger group of blacks saw colonization as an enemy to African-Americans in the US. For them, anti-colonization movements were a way to ban together as a people and fight colonization's evils.

Whites, conversely, saw colonization as a way to remove the black stain African-Americans brought to the US. Haiti was thought of as a perfect place to colonize African-Americans for three reasons. First, Haiti's geographic proximity to the US meant colonization would be cost financially less than colonization to Africa. Moreover, colonizationists thought blacks might be more willing to emigrate to Haiti which was closer to family and friends in the US than Africa was. Second, Haiti's revolution firmly established it as a "black republic" in the Americas. With that came the responsibility of being the leader of Africans in the Americas. Haiti was always willing to accept the emigration of blacks for any reason, at any time. Most importantly, Haiti was economically profitable to the US. If the US colonized Haiti with African-Americans the connections, both economic and political, between the two countries would have increased. Colonizationists thought a colony of blacks in Haiti would be able to contribute to the US economically by participating in the cultivation of Haiti's agro-export products, yet, be unable to effect US.

Racism and Slavery in the Antebellum United States

Slavery in the Americas established racial hierarchies whereby whites viewed people with black skin as inferior. Slave masters, drivers, overseers, and owners subjected slaves to a complex system of violent degradation, whereby slaves either gave in to their master's will or suffered dearly. The legal basis for chattel slavery was securely in place by the beginning of the eighteenth century. In 1699, the Fundamental Constitutions of the Carolinas—written for the largest slave holding colony at the time—declared, "every freedman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over Negro slaves of whatever opinion or religion soever." Most whites, regardless of whether or not they owned slaves, worked constantly to demonstrate white superiority over blacks. Many masters taught enslaved blacks from childhood that a slave was a thing to be used by whites. One slave wrote that he had been taught that "he was a thing for others' uses, and that he must bend his head, body and mind in conformity to that idea, in the presence of a superior race." Southern slavery has been called a peculiar institution for many reasons. One of which being the majority of whites in the South did not own slaves, yet, slavery had its strongest supporters among non-slave holders. Non-slave holding southern whites were encouraged to believe they were the beneficiaries and guardians of a noble, harmonious civilization. One whose very existence relied upon slavery. The marriage of slavery to race gave even the lowliest whites a sense of superiority over the multitude of blacks.

Free people of color lived with a dichotomy during the antebellum period. On one hand white discrimination and racism trapped them, yet, at the same time they demanded the liberty and equality guaranteed by the American revolution. Ex-slaves became freedmen in one of three ways. The State or a past owner manumitted the largest percentage of freedmen. Some slaves used self purchase as a vehicle to freedom. Marronage was the most dangerous, and least successful, way slaves attempted to gain freedom. Freedmen hoped to work as wage laborers to earn a living. However, once free, they found few employment opportunities. Many freedmen moved North only to find northern merchants did not like to hire blacks because of negative racial stereotypes. With no where else to go, most free blacks returned to the South where family and kin support networks were strong.

As the freedmen population began to rise, whites feared subversion among their slaves. Between 1810-1840 the freedmen population increased an average of 27% over their population at 1810. The largest growth occurred in the deep South where free black population increased over 42% (see table 2). This large growth of freedmen was seen as dangerous for many reasons. Freedmen challenged the racial codes upon which southern slavery was built. Direct competition between freedmen and whites for jobs, land, housing, etc., hinted at equality between the two. Finally, since the large majority of freedmen stayed near their places of previous enslavement, they became constant reminders to slaves about their lack of freedom.

The Symbol of Haiti

Whites, slaves, and freedmen in the United States all reacted very differently to the Haitian revolution of 1791-1804. In 1808, one white observer in Haiti wrote, "the existence of a negro people in arms occupying a country which it has soiled by the most criminal acts, is a horrible spectacle for all white nations." Immediately after the revolution whites feared the possibility of Haiti's revolutionary ideas spreading to blacks in the United States. The New Orleans City Council publicly declared fears of a repeat of St. Domingue when they said they believed at any time "smoking torches will be lighted again to set afire our peaceful homes." Black slaves saw the success of a slave-led revolution, which temporarily destroyed the myth of white dominance over blacks. Slaves saw revolt as a vehicle to freedom. Freedmen saw the revolution as the birth of a black homeland in the Americas.

Soon after the outbreak of revolts in Haiti, the master-class in the US took action to prevent the ideas of the revolution from spreading to their plantations. Whites attempted to end direct contact between black Haitians and the US to impede news of the revolution from reaching southern slaves. Between 1789 and 1808 eight slave states either banned the importation of slaves or severely increased the penalties for doing so. In 1803 the federal government became so worried about the influx of St. Domingue blacks they declared any ship that brought blacks from St. Domingue would be forfeited. In 1804 the governor of Louisiana, William C.C. Claiborne, ordered US controlled forts at the mouth of the Mississippi river to bar the entry of blacks from Haiti. In spite of these precautions, Haitian subversion entered the South's plantations.

The ideology that came out of the Haitian revolution influenced slaves most. The Haitian example inspired tens, if not hundreds, of slave revolts. In 1795, on a plantation 150 miles from New Orleans, slaves conspired to revolt after being influenced by Haitian blacks. Their plans included the massacre of all local

whites, and the overthrow of plantation rule in the area. In 1793, a white man in Richmond, Virginia overheard blacks threaten to repeat the Haitian uprising in that city. In 1798, a conspiracy was uncovered where St. Domingue Negroes planned to burn the entire city of Charleston. The largest, and best known slave uprising inspired by the Haitian revolution occurred in 1822, under the direction of Denmark Vessey. He patterned the strategy of his revolt after the Haitian model. Vessey even wrote a letter to President Boyer asking for Haiti's help when the revolt took place. Two of Vessey's supporters betrayed him and the revolt was crushed before it ever began.

Haiti became a symbol of equality, liberty, and freedom for free blacks throughout the Americas. Before the revolution, freedmen were simply a class of people in flux. They were neither black, because black meant slave, nor white, because of their African heritage. Relegated to menial positions in the work force even though they had marketable skills, freedmen had few opportunities for economic success in the United States. The Haitian revolution showed blacks that whites were no better than themselves. More importantly, the revolution produced much needed heroes for the African-American race, Toussaint L'Ouverture being the most influential. While Toussaint stood for the violent overthrow of slavery to the master-class and slaves, to freedmen he meant much more. Toussaint became a symbol of equality, a manifestation to freedmen that blacks could flourish in society when given the opportunity. Toussaint had such a powerful message, freedmen in the US celebrated the success of the revolution up into the 1850's and in 1903 WEB DuBois described him as "Toussaint the savior" in *The Souls of Black Folks*.

Colonization and Emigration 1824-1839

With ideologies and personalities from the Haitian revolution becoming a part of popular culture in US, it was no wonder many emigration plans for blacks centered on Haiti. After the Haitian revolution, slave holders became increasingly nervous about having freedmen on or near their plantations. As freedmen populations began to rise throughout the South, fear of freedmen militancy increased. Moreover, as the threat of emancipation increased, plantation owners looked for possible places to continue their agro-export businesses. Caribbean islands seemed like the perfect place to continue their trade.

Consequently, the 1820's, saw the birth of colonization movements throughout the Upper South. These states witnessed first hand the emancipation of slaves in the North and worried about the effect on southern plantations. In 1826, the Maryland legislature appropriated a thousand dollars annually for the support of the Maryland Colonization Auxiliary, a group working to deport free blacks from the US. Delaware, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia followed suit with similar legislation the following year. After Nat Turner's 1831 rebellion in Virginia, colonization fever took hold of the South. During the 1830's, Virginia, Maryland and Tennessee all passed laws allowing public moneys to be spent on the colonization of freedmen. The most ambitious scheme to remove freedmen came from Maryland. They forcefully deported freedmen who did not agree to be re-enslaved or to migrate to Africa. Although most plans for emigration centered on Africa, a few looked to Haiti as their destination.

In 1824 The New York Colonization Society made plans for the emigration of freedmen to Haiti. An agent of the New York Colonization Society, a local group that was a part of the larger white-led American Colonization Society, wrote to President Boyer about the possibility of colonizing freedmen in Haiti. Boyer, favorable to the settlement of blacks from the US, sent a representative from Haiti to the United States to make the necessary arrangements. Haiti agreed to pay passage for all immigrants, to support them for a four-month grace period after their arrival, to grant land at the rate of 36 acres for every twelve laborers, and to finance the trip of those who desired to return. Boyer planned for some 6,000 permanent immigrants between August and December of 1824. In 1825 the Haitian government estimated that less than 6,000 blacks made the trip and substantially less stayed permanently. Most emigrants, unaccustomed to rural life, found life in Haiti difficult. When the Haitian government was unable, and unwilling, to provide continued support after the grace period, emigrants returned to the US in mass. The plan was such a failure that by April of 1825, Haitian officials required departing US blacks to pay their own passage back to the United States and to repay the Haitian government the cost of their initial voyage.

The vision of Haiti as a Mecca for free blacks from the US, however, did not disappear quickly. Fourteen years later in September 1838, Ralph Higinston, newly appointed consul at Aux Cayes, penned a letter to Secretary of State John Forsyth asking him to consider sending freedmen to Haiti. Higinston thought a purge of freedmen would rid the United States of its racial problems. Higinston believed, as did most fellow southerners in the 1830's, that freedmen caused trouble among slave populations. Higinston settled in Haiti to make a fortune as a merchant. Once established Aux Cayes he founded a trading house dealing mostly in wood and coffee exports. While there, he became aware of the shortage of workers in Haiti. Years of revolutionary war followed by decades of civil war had decimated the population in Haiti.

Without a capable work force, Haiti could not expect to produce enough export crops to keep their agro-export based economy afloat. Higinston believed that because of the labor shortage in Haiti, freedmen from the US would have opportunities to make a better life than that which they experienced in the United States.

Secretary of State Forsyth rejected his idea for three reasons. First, throughout the 1820's and 1830's anti-colonization sentiment among the free black population made colonization a hard-sell. Twenty years of anti-colonization organization could not be ignored. Second, since 1816 the American Colonization Society had tried to colonize freedmen in Africa with little success. There was no evidence that Haiti would prove any more attractive to potential colonists. Last, it was financially unrealistic for the federal government to move freedmen to Haiti. In 1840 there were 386,000 freedmen in the US, 215,000 living in Southern states. Even if you just deported those freedmen living in the South, the cost to the federal government would have been hundreds of millions of dollars.

As Higinston planned the deportation of freedmen to Haiti, other southerners looked toward Haiti as a place to establish new plantations. In October of 1838, Mr. Kingsley, a plantation owner from Florida, moved a group of his slaves to Haiti. With permission from President Boyer, he placed them in nine-year indentured contracts to work on Haitian plantations. Since the 1804 Haitian constitution forbid whites to own property, Mr. Kingsley placed the indentures under the control of his mulatto children. When Consul Higinston learned this, he immediately asked the Haitian government to grant this privilege to other US citizens. President Boyer, seeing the opportunity to import workers from the US, agreed. Boyer alone authorized contracts of indenture between colored workers and white proprietors. These contracts mimicked Boyer's Code Royal contracts that Haitians were forced to take. He set the maximum limit of service for indentures at nine years, and required such workers either to be paid a share of the crops they produced or a part of the profits. The Haitian government allowed proprietors to indenture agricultural workers, artisans, and skilled laborers.

In an effort to work around Haiti's law that forbid white property ownership, Higinston arranged for Haitian "ghost owners." White planters from the US supplied black Haitians capital. These Haitians bought land for plantations for a small fee. The blacks were then "ghost owners." They retained ownership of the land on paper only; whites oversaw the day-to-day operations of the plantation and retained the profits.

It is easy to see Boyer's motives for allowing whites to reestablish plantations. First, in order for the United States to move thousands of black slaves to Haiti under the auspices of indentured servants, some sort of diplomatic relationship had to be established. Since the 1804 Declaration of Independence, Haiti had been trying to gain recognition from the US. Second, Haiti had a severe shortage of laborers. This problem could be solved with the importation of indentures from the US. The Haitian government considered any plan that allowed for the importation of workers and recognition by the United States advantageous.

A vibrant relationship had existed between the United States government and the Haitian government since the beginning of the Haitian revolution. However, the United States did not recognize an independent Haiti until the 1860's. To protect investments in Haiti, the United States appointed consular agents throughout the revolution and during the first forty years of the 1800's. During the 1820's, Haiti was the third largest trading partner of the United States, behind the British (including the British Caribbean) and Cuba. Northern merchants had de-facto recognized an independent Haiti for years, however, southern opposition prevented the government from extending official diplomatic recognition. Issues of recognition became so controversial that in 1839 the United States government relieved Consul Higinston after he challenged the US policy of non-recognition.

Freedmen rarely supported the white-led colonization societies that swept the United States during the decades of the 1820's and 1830's. They rejected colonization because they believed it was both a threat to their American citizenship and an erasure of their contributions in creating the new US republic. Black anti-colonization groups that emerged in cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and Boston set the tone of the struggle with their angry protests. "Here we were born, and here we will die," promised a defiant New York anti-colonization group. The first black presses, so valuable to the abolitionist campaign, were established to provide a voice against colonization. Theodore Wright and Samuel E. Cornish established Freedom's Journal, the first black newspaper in the US. They immediately opened their columns to critics of anti-colonization. Only about 3% of the freedmen population in the US between 1816 and 1865 supported any one of the many colonization groups working for the repatriation of blacks in Africa. Both urban and rural freedmen realized that white-led colonization efforts were nothing more than racist attempts to remove blacks from the US. During the 1820's and 1830's, few emigrants could be found due to effective anti-colonization organization.

Black-led emigration schemes were even less successful than white-led colonization efforts. State government funding or white donations supported most colonization societies during the 1820's and 1830's. Black emigration movements had no access to either of these sources of money. Nevertheless, emigration societies did appear during the 1820's. The black-created Maryland Haitian Society formed in 1821 with the goal of organizing an emigration movement of freedmen from Maryland to Haiti. This group enjoyed a large membership, however, the societies meager financial budget did not allow a mass-migration as planned.

Most freedmen did not have the financial means to afford emigration, and so found other ways to travel. Some freedmen took jobs as sailors only to desert when they reached a foreign port. Desertion by blacks became so common in Haiti that on two separate occasions the US consul in Haiti complained to the Secretary of State about such episodes. In many cases the black sailors who deserted were slaves; and knew in desertion in Haiti meant their permanent freedom. In order to search for deserters Haitian law required the US consul to notify the police before any search started. Knowing the police would not allow a slave to be recaptured, oftentimes the consul conducted secret searches at night.

In April, 1837, a group of officers from the St. Louis and the US consul's fifteen-year-old son (who knew the area and could guide the search party) pursued a sailor/slave who had escaped from the ship. The pursuit occurred at night without police involvement. Immediately after the slave ran, the Captain of the St. Louis, Captain Thomas Payn, went to the consul and asked for help. The consul posted handbills around the docks in Port au Prince offering a reward for information leading to the recapture of the runaway. A Haitian, no doubt attracted by the large reward, provided the location of the runaway. That night, the search party left the city and went into the countryside, following the directions of the Haitian informer. The search party recaptured the runaway and Captain Payn brutally beat him. The following day the police learned of the event and questioned the consul. He informed them that he knew nothing about the required involvement of the Haitian police, and apologized for the misunderstanding. Meanwhile, the St. Louis left Port au Prince with the runaway. Neither the consul, nor the State Department, mentioned any re-enslavement of runaway sailor/slaves in Haiti after the St. Louis incident. It was doubtful, nevertheless, that slaves no longer fled or that owners stopped looking for such runaways. Future search parties most likely used higher levels of discretion so as to avoid being discovered.

Haitian Strategies and Responses

From the end of the Revolution, Haitian leaders made it known that they would welcome all blacks willing to come to their nation. Haitian motives for wanting black émigrés stemmed from the demographic problems Haiti endured through the first forty years of the nineteenth century. The thirteen years of the Haitian revolution coupled with the violent methods of warfare used greatly diminished the population. In 1790, Haiti's population was 519,000. In 1805 it had decreased to 380,000, with women outnumbering men 3 to 2. The Haitian government tried several methods of repopulating the island, but none succeeded.

After the 1804 declaration of independence Jean-Jacques Dessalines led Haiti for better or worse until 1806. He was for all purposes an ineffective leader who reacted with violence when public opinion went against him. Dessalines believed only a strong economy would allow Haiti to enter world politics. With that in mind, he undertook the controversial policy of introducing coffee as an alternative crop for export. Even though coffee production was less labor intensive than sugar cane, Haiti still lacked men able to work. Just as the US looked to Haiti as a depository for blacks, Haiti also viewed the US as a potential pool of laborers. After taking power, Dessalines offered forty dollars bounty to United States merchant ship Captains for every negro brought back from the United States. Dessalines' plan, however, did little. Haiti's population continued to fall after 1803 as people fled the country.

Following Dessalines' overthrow, the fragile political situation deteriorated with the formation of two separate governments. Dessalines' logical successor would have been Henry Cristophe, a black ex-slave. The only person powerful enough to oppose Cristophe was a mulatto revolutionary war veteran, Alexandre Pétion. Pétion agreed to let Cristophe rule until an elected Constitutional assembly could choose a leader. Cristophe assumed that a black majority who supported him would be elected to the assembly. Much to his chagrin, the majority of representatives elected were mulattos, who would not support a black as president. The mulatto assembly unsurprisingly elected Pétion to the presidency. A disgruntled Cristophe, unable to take power, set up a black-kingdom in the North, while Pétion, the elected President of Haiti, ruled over the West and South.

Cristophe, former slave and famed general during the revolution, continued the economic policies laid out by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. Cristophe established a feudal structure in the north. He went

so far as to crown himself King Henry I and to appoint dukes, barons, counts and knights to rule over plantations. Even though a feudal system flourished under Cristophe, he allowed Haitians of all racial backgrounds—both blacks and mulattos—to enter the gentry.

Pétion's government, however, was based on small plot farming and laissez-faire economics. More importantly, Pétion's Haiti began the policy of discriminating against African-Haitians. His government provided subsidies to farmers in bad times. However, elite mulattos were always the first to reap any government benefits. While Pétion did not propose emigration plans for US blacks, he did establish Haiti as a symbol of liberty and freedom for blacks. Realizing the importance of fellow independent republics in the Caribbean, Pétion repeatedly assisted Simon Bolívar with his wars for liberation. Haiti, fresh from the violent war to overthrow French colonial control, understood what Bolívar wanted to achieve with his revolutions. Haiti's only requirement for helping Bolívar was that these new South American countries emancipate their slaves. The entire world knew about Haiti's efforts to emancipate slaves in mainland South America.

It was not until Jean-Pierre Boyer came to power that Haiti renewed her efforts to attract blacks from the United States. Boyer wanted, in part to complete the re-population of Haiti started by Dessalines, and to create formal diplomatic relations between the US and Haiti. Boyer's first of two colonization/emigration plans began in 1824. The cost to Haiti for the 1824 plan was enormous. Not only did Haiti pay the emigrants' passage, but also agreed to support emigrants for four months after their arrival. The plan's failure caused Boyer to be more cautious about using funds from Haiti's treasury to support emigration in the future. A second plan implemented in 1838 also failed. Boyer saw the second plan as a means to gain diplomatic recognition from the United States. After all, thirty-four years had passed since Haiti had declared its independence from France. Moreover, in 1836 both Britain and France extended official recognition to Haiti. However, in the United States, the South's lobby against Haitian recognition prevailed, as a result, Haitian independence continued to be ignored.

Haiti also attempted to seize workers under the auspices of the suppression of the slave trade. After Boyer took power (1818) he immediately commissioned a Haitian warship to stifle the slave trade in the Caribbean. In 1820, the Haitian warship Wilberforce actually outperformed the British anti-slave squadron in the Caribbean when it captured several Spanish slavers. Haiti was the only nation involved in suppressing the slave trade that released slaves found on slave trading vessels in Haiti. All other nations released slaves in a port where a bureaucratic structure (usually a court of Admiralty) existed to deal with the "liberated" Africans.

Boyer's motives for commissioning the Wilberforce, however, were not so noble. The Haitian leader desperately wanted to liberate the eastern part of the island, Santo Domingo (modern-day Dominican Republic), from the Spanish. He knew from experience in the Haitian revolution that without supplies Spain's soldiers in Santo Domingo would be less likely to provide an effective defense if attacked. Boyer saw an opportunity to use a captured warship, aptly named the Wilberforce, to harass Spanish shipping in the area. Because Spain's navy was far superior to Haiti's, Boyer attempted to hide the Wilberforce's true mission behind the facade of slave trade suppression. He knew the British would retaliate if Spain attacked a ship whose "official" mission was suppression of the international slave trade.

All of Boyer's efforts at emigration or colonization ended in disaster. For the most part, blacks from the United States were not prepared for the poverty of Haiti. Haiti in the 1830's was a desperately poor country. Victor Schoelcher, a French abolitionist and sociologist, described Port au Prince in 1841.

Here is the Capital. Foul public squares, ruined monuments, dwellings of plank and thatch, stove-in quays, tottering wharves, no names on the streets, no numbers on the doorways, no street lights at night, no paving anywhere: the ground underfoot [is] composed of dust and excrement on which walking is impossible after an hour's rain. What disorder, what general ruin.

Conditions in rural areas were worse. On a visit to Haiti sometime in the 1830's, the Englishman James Franklin believed there were no bridges or navigable roads in the island's interior. In 1827, the British consul visited what had been one of the largest sugarcane plantations on the island. He found the cane fields now pastures for half-wild cows and all the mills inoperable.

Those who settled in Haiti found the realities of Haitian life a far cry from what blacks in the US thought them to be. Over three hundred years of colonialism followed by thirteen years of revolution destroyed St. Domingue's chance of becoming a profitable, independent country. Blacks in the US knew about the devastation the revolution caused, but, refused to recognize it. Although the first black emigrants did not arrive in Haiti until almost twenty years after Haiti's Declaration of Independence, the life style remained brutal. Whites, slaves, and freedmen in the United States all looked at Haiti as a savior for their problems.

In the end, however, Haiti never fulfilled their aspirations. Freedmen were never able to establish successful colonies on the island, whites did not reestablish plantations, and in no other country did slaves repeat Haiti's success by rising up and overthrowing their bonds of slavery.

The desire to attract and retain cheap labor set an important pattern in Haiti's history. The destructive nature of the revolution forced Haiti's first government to find a work force to labor on plantations as a means to reenter the world economy. Moreover, Haitian leaders thought a successful transition from slave labor to free labor would lend credibility to the revolution. However, at the same time leaders were trying to demonstrate the success of the revolution, they were betraying it. By forcing Haitians to work on plantations, the government, in a sense, sought to exploit cheap labor in a similar way to what French colonists did before the revolution. Although, it is wrong to say that the agrarian reform policies put into place by leaders like Pétion and Boyer were a return to colonialism (or slavery), they were precedent setting, however, because they forever cemented racial discrimination by a mulatto elite on a poor black majority. These policies set the agenda of race and exploitation which the Duvaliers continued in the twentieth century.

African-American emigration movements during this period demonstrate an effort to rebel against white control. Haiti took a special role in this movement. As the threat (real and imaginary) of race war in the US increased after the Haitian revolution both blacks and whites in the US looked for ways to prevent such a conflict. Haiti became something of a pressure release valve for both races. For African-Americans, Haiti's revolution established it as a refuge for blacks in the Americas. Many African-Americans felt Africa was too culturally distant. Haiti, however, accepted Christianity openly, spoke a western language (which some wealthy free blacks already spoke), and was geographically close to family and friends in the United States. Whites, on the other hand, saw Haiti as an ethnically African nation in the Atlantic world. There, African-Americans could exist beyond the pale of the United States. They would be geographically far enough not to cause problems within the US, yet, they could still be economically profitable to United States merchants by working in Haiti's largely agro-export economy. Even though emigration failed, these movements demonstrate an attempt by marginalized African-Americans to empower themselves as a black people to withstand the racism against them.

Table 1

Haitian Population

1790 Census:

	Population	Whites	Mixed-Race	Slaves
North	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Total	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

1805 Census:

Total Population (white, mixed-race, and black combined): 380,00061

Table 2

United States Free Negro Population 1790-1840

	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840
North	27,109	47,154	78,181	99,281	137,529	170,728
South	32,357	61,241	108,265	134,223	182,070	215,575
Upper South	30,158	56,855	94,085	114,070	151,877	203,702
Lower South	2,199	4,386	14,180	20,153	30,193	41,218