



Toussaint *L'Ouverture*

Paintings and Captions
by Jacob Lawrence



No. 1. Columbus discovered Haiti on December 6, 1492. The discovery was on Columbus' first trip to the New World. He is shown planting the official Spanish flag, under which he sailed. The priest shows the influence of the Church upon the people.



No. 2. Mistreatment by the Spanish soldiers caused much trouble on the island and caused the death of Anacaona, a native queen, 1503. Columbus left soldiers in charge, who began making slaves of the people. The queen was one of the leaders of the insurrection which followed.



No. 3. Spain and France fought for Haiti constantly, 1665-1691.



No. 4. Spain and France agree to divide Haiti, 1691.



No. 5. Slave trade reaches its height in Haiti, 1730.



No. 6. The birth of Toussaint L'Ouverture, May 20, 1743. Both of Toussaint's parents were slaves.



No. 7. As a child, Toussaint heard the twang of the planter's whip and saw the blood stream from the bodies of slaves.



No. 8. In early manhood his seemingly good nature won for him the coachmanship for Bayou de Libertas, 1763. His job as coachman gave him time to think about how to fight slavery. During this period, he taught himself to read and to write.



No. 9. He read Reynold's Anti-Slavery Book that predicted a Black Emancipator, which language spirited him, 1763-1776.



No. 10. The cruelty of the planters towards the slaves drove the slaves to revolt, 1776. Those revolts, which kept cropping up from time to time, finally came to a head in the rebellion.



No. 11. The society of the Friends of the Blacks was formed in England, 1778, the leading members being Price, Priestly, Sharp, Clarkson and Wilberforce.



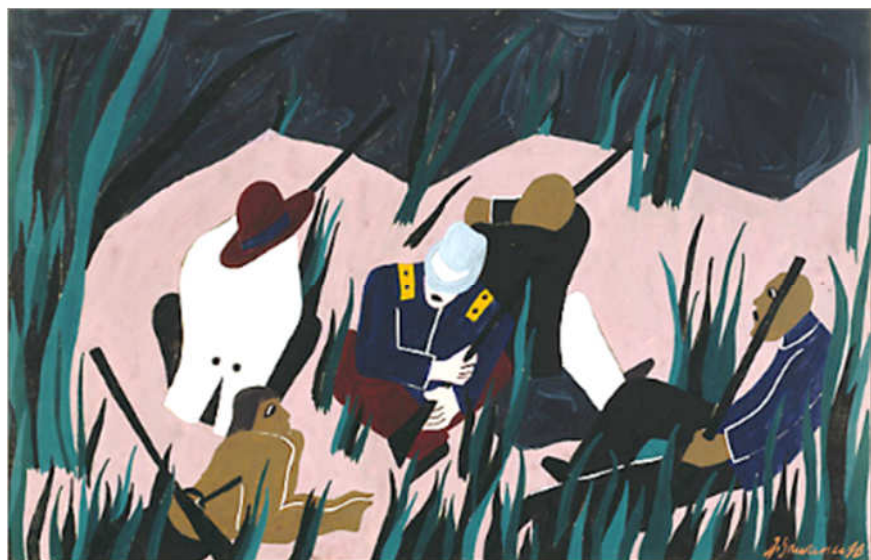
No. 12. Jean Francois, first Black to rebel in Haiti.



No. 13. During the rebellion of Jean Francois, Toussaint led his master and mistress to safety.



No. 14. The blacks were led by three chiefs, Jean Francois, Biassou, and Jeannot; Toussaint serving as aide-de-camp to Biassou.



No. 15. The Mulattoes, enemies of both the Blacks and the Whites, but tolerated more by the Whites, joined their forces in battle against the Blacks, 1793.



No. 16. Toussaint captured Dondon, a city in the center of Haiti, 1795.



No. 17. Toussaint captured Marmelade, held by Vernet, a mulatto, 1795.



No. 18. Toussaint captured Ennery.



No. 19. The Mulattoes had no organization; the English held only a point or two on the Island, while the Blacks formed into large bands and slaughtered every Mulatto and White they encountered. The Blacks learned the secret of their power. The Haitians now controlled half the island.



No. 20. General Toussaint L'Ouverture, Statesman and military genius, esteemed by the Spaniards, feared by the English, dreaded by the French, hated by the planters, and revered by the Blacks.



No. 21. General Toussaint L'Ouverture attacked the English at Artibonite and there captured two towns.



No. 22. Settling down at St. Marc, he took possession of two important posts.



No. 23. General L'Ouverture collected forces at Marmelade, and on October the 9th, 1794, left with 500 men to capture San Miguel.



No. 24. General L'Ouverture confers with Leveaux at Dondon with his principal aides, Dessalines, Commander of San Miguel, Duminil, Commander of Plaisance, Desrouleaux, Ceveaux and Maurepas, Commanders of Battalions, and prepares an attack at St. Marc.



No. 25. General Toussaint L'Ouverture defeats the English at Saline.



No. 26. On March 24, he captured Mirebalois.



No. 27. Returning to private life as the commander and chief of the army, he saw to it that the country was well taken care of, and Haiti returned to prosperity. During this important period, slavery was abolished, and attention focused upon agricultural pursuits.



No. 28. The constitution was prepared and presented to Toussaint on the 19th day of May, 1800, by nine men he had chosen, eight of whom were white proprietors and one mulatto. Toussaint's liberalism led him to choose such a group to draw up the constitution. He was much criticized for his choice, but the constitution proved workable.



No. 29. L'Ouverture made a triumphant march into San Domingo on the 2nd of January, 1801, at the head of 10,000 men, and hoisted the flag of the French Republic. Toussaint did not wish to break with the French, the largest group of Haitian inhabitants. The Blacks themselves spoke patois French.



No. 30. Napoleon Bonaparte begins to look on Haiti as a new land to conquer. Conquest inevitably meant further slavery.



No. 31. Napoleon's troops under LeClerc arrive at the shores of Haiti.



No. 33. General L'Ouverture, set for war with Napoleon, prepares Crete-a-Pierrot as a point of resistance. Toussaint took his troops into the mountains, deciding upon guerrilla warfare.



No. 34. Toussaint defeats Napoleon's troops at Ennery.



No. 35. Yellow fever broke out with great violence, thus having a great physical and moral effect on the French soldiers. The French sought a truce with L'Ouverture.



No. 36. During the truce Toussaint is deceived and arrested by leClerc. leClerc led Toussaint to believe that he was sincere, believing that when Toussaint was out of his way, the Blacks would surrender.



No. 37. Toussaint is taken to Paris and imprisoned in the dungeon of the Castle Joux, August 17, 1802. This was the worst punishment Napoleon could have given him. Toussaint brooded.



No. 38. Napoleon's attempt to restore slavery in Haiti was unsuccessful, Dessalines, Chief of the Blacks, defeated LeClerc. Black men, women, and children took up arms to preserve their freedom, November 1802.



No. 39. The death of Toussaint L'Ouverture in the Prison of Le Joux, April 1803. This was a year later. He died of starvation, because "he didn't feel like eating."



No. 40. The Declaration of Independence was signed January 1, 1804 - Dessalines, Cleveaux, and Henri Christophe. The people won out. These three men made up a new constitution, writing it themselves. They were the ones who had criticized Toussaint L'Ouverture for his idealism in allowing whites to draw up the former one. Haitian flag shows in the sketch.



No. 41. Dessalines was crowned Emperor, October 4, 1804.

Known to his contemporaries as “The Black Napoleon,” Toussaint L’Ouverture was a former slave who rose to become the leader of the only successful slave revolt in modern history, the Haitian Revolution.

Born into slavery on May 20, 1743 in the French colony of Saint Dominique, L’Ouverture was the eldest son of Gaou Guinon, an African prince who was captured by slavers. At a time when revisions to the French *Code Noir* (Black Code) legalized the harsh treatment of slaves as property, young L’Ouverture instead inspired kindness from those in authority over him. His godfather, the priest Simon Baptiste, for example, taught him to read and write. Impressed by L’Ouverture, Bayon de Libertad, the manager of the Breda plantation on which L’Ouverture was born, allowed him unlimited access to his personal library. By the time he was twenty, the well-read and trilingual L’Ouverture—he spoke French, Creole, and some Latin—had also gained a reputation as a skilled horseman and for his knowledge of medicinal plants and herbs. More importantly, L’Ouverture had secured his freedom from de Libertad even as he continued to manage his former owner’s household personnel and to act as his coachman. Over the course of the next 18 years, L’Ouverture settled into life on the Breda plantation marrying fellow Catholic Suzanne Simon and parenting two sons, Isaac and Saint-Jean.

The events of August 22, 1791, the “Night of Fire” in which slaves revolted by setting fire to plantation houses and fields and killing whites, convinced the 48-year-old L’Ouverture that he should join the growing insurgency, although not before securing the safety of his wife and children in the Spanish-controlled eastern half of the island (Santo Domingo) and assuring that Bayon de Libertad and his wife were safely onboard a ship bound for the United States.

Inspired by French Revolutionary ideology and angered by generations of abuse at the hands of white planters, the initial slave uprising was quelled within several days, but ongoing fighting between the slaves, free blacks, and planters continued. Although he was free, L’Ouverture joined the slave insurgency and quickly developed a reputation first as a capable soldier and then as military secretary to Georges Biassou, one of the insurgency’s leaders. When the insurgency’s leadership chose to

ally itself with Spain against France, L'Ouverture followed. Threatened by Spain and Britain's attempts to control the island, the French National Convention acted to preserve its colonial rule in 1794 by securing the loyalty of the black population; France granted citizenship rights and freedom to all blacks within the empire.

Following France's decision to emancipate the slaves, L'Ouverture allied with France against Spain, and from 1794 to 1802, he was the dominant political and military leader in the French colony. Operating under the self-assumed title of General-in-Chief of the Army, L'Ouverture led the French in ousting the British and then in capturing the Spanish controlled half of the island. By 1801, although Saint Dominique remained ostensibly a French colony, L'Ouverture was ruling it as an independent state. He drafted a constitution in which he reiterated the 1794 abolition of slavery and appointed himself governor for "the rest of his glorious life."

L'Ouverture's actions eventually aroused the ire of Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1802 Napoleon dispatched his brother-in-law, Charles Leclerc, to capture L'Ouverture and return the island to slavery under French control. Captured and imprisoned at Fort de Joux in France, L'Ouverture died of pneumonia on April 7, 1803. Independence for Saint Dominique would follow one year later under the leadership of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, one of L'Ouverture's generals.

<http://www.blackpast.org/gah/loverture-toussaint-1742-1803>