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## Documents

**Document 1:** From Charles Pinckney in a letter to George Washington, September 20, 1791. <<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-08-02-0379>>. At the time of his writing, Pinckney was the governor of South Carolina. Pinckney had previously served as a delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention.

“Dear Sir

*I had the honour to write you lately by the Delaware since which an occasion makes it necessary for me to address you again, on the subject of the inclosed application to me from the general Assembly of St Domingo—By these inclosures you will percieve the wretched & distressed situation in which these unhappy people are & I am afraid if not checked in time it is a flame which will extend to all the neighbouring islands, & may eventually prove not a very pleasing or agreeable example to the Southern States....The detail of the almost indiscriminate Slaughter of all the whites who had fallen into their hands—The conflagration of the largest & most valuable Sugar Estates on the Island—The general destruction of property, & a probable famine are particularly unpleasant to us who live in Countries where Slaves abound...”*

**Document 2:** From Governor Winthrop Sargent, “Circular Letter to Slave-holders,” November 16, 1800, in *The Mississippi Territorial Archives, 1798–1803: Executive Journals of Governor Winthrop Sargent and Governor William Charles Cole Claiborne, Volume I*, Dunbar Rowland (ed.), Brandon, 1905, pp. 311–312. Sargent was the governor of the Mississippi Territory.

“His Excellency the Governour was pleased to write the following Letter, and in pursuance of his direction, near one hundred Printed Copies of it, were addressed to Respectable Characters, and slave holders, within the Mississippi Territory....

Sir,

*I believe it a Duty to Communicate to the Officers of the Territory, and Slave-holders within the same, that an intended Insurrection amongst the Negroes of Virginia, (in which fifty thousand were to have rose in Arms) is said to have been lately discovered, and that six of the Principal Blacks are already Executed at Richmond— but my Correspondent observes, that this alarming Business probably had its origin in foreign influence, and was intended to extend throughout the United States— to reiterate the horrid scenes of Rapine and Murders, which have been Practised in the French Islands— though the Chief and Villanous agents had not been detected at the time of his writing.*

*It is almost unnecessary sir, after the preface of this interesting Communication to Recommend, to your prudence and understanding the utmost Vigilance to your own and the slaves of your neighbors....”*

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**Document 3:** From Susan-Mary Grant, *A Concise History of the United States of America*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 154. Grant is a professor of American history at Newcastle University.

**“In 1791, the slave uprising in Saint-Domingue led by the black leader François Dominique Toussaint L’Ouverture and the establishment, in 1804, of Haiti was not a development likely to cheer the souls of America’s slaveholders. The thirteen years of bloodshed in what became Haiti sent a clear message to America about the dangers inherent in sustaining a slave society in a world in which slavery was coming under increasing attack both from abolitionists, white and black, and from slaves themselves. The events in Saint-Domingue, and indeed elsewhere in the Caribbean, in the early nineteenth century—the Easter Rebellion in Barbados (1816) and the Demerara Rebellion (1823)—naturally unsettled America’s slaveholders, already aware of the potential for the violent overthrow of slavery in their own society....”**

**Document 4:** From Thomas Jefferson in a letter to James Monroe, July 14, 1793. The National Archives <<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-26-02-0445>>. In 1793, Jefferson was U.S. secretary of state.

**“The situation of the St. Domingo fugitives (aristocrats as they are) calls aloud for pity and charity. Never was so deep a tragedy presented to the feelings of man. I deny the power of the general government to apply money to such a purpose but I deny it with a bleeding heart. It belongs to the state governments. Pray urge ours to be liberal.... I become daily more and more convinced that all the West India islands will remain in the hands of the people of colour, and a total expulsion of the whites sooner or later take place. It is high time we should foresee the bloody scenes which our children certainly, and possibly ourselves (South of Patowmac) have to wade through, and try to avert them....”**

**Document 5:** From Leslie M. Alexander, “‘The Black Republic’: The Influence of the Haitian Revolution on Northern Black Political Consciousness, 1816-1862” in *Haitian History: New Perspectives*, Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall (ed.) Routledge, 2013, p 197. Alexander is an associate professor of history at the University of Oregon.

**“[M]any African Americans in the early nineteenth century viewed Haiti as a beacon of hope, a land full of vitality and potential where people of African descent could build a new republic, free from the bonds of slavery and racism. Enthusiasm about the budding nation was particularly strong among free Black Northerners, who were inspired by Haiti’s status as an independent Black republic. Their excitement grew in the 1820s after the country’s political leaders began espousing early notions of Pan-Africanism; the Haitian government openly promoted racial solidarity, and urged African Americans to migrate to Haiti where they could help create a powerful, autonomous Black nation. As the exodus from New York City demonstrated, the Haitian emigration movement blossomed during this era and thousands of African Americans fled the US....”**

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**Document 6:** From David Walker, *Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America*, September 28, 1829. (Revised and republished in 1830.) Walker was a free black writer and activist who wrote and spoke publicly against slavery.

**“Beloved brethren—here let me tell you, and believe it, that the Lord our God...will give you a Hannibal, and when the Lord shall have raised him up, and given him to you for your possession, O my suffering brethren! remember the divisions and consequent sufferings of Carthage and of Hayti. Read the history particularly of Hayti, and see how they were butchered by the whites, and do you take warning. The person whom God shall give you, give him your support and let him go his length, and behold in him the salvation of your God. God will indeed, deliver you through him from your deplorable and wretched condition under the Christians of America.... The whites want slaves, and want us for their slaves, but some of them will curse the day they ever saw us.... They shall have enough of making slaves of, and butchering, and murdering us in the manner which they have.... ...Hayti, the glory of the blacks and terror of tyrants, is enough to convince the most avaricious and stupid of wretches....”**

**Document 7:** From Jacqueline Bacon, “A Revolution Unexampled in the History of Man: The Haitian Revolution in *Freedom's Journal*, 1827-1829” in *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution*, Maurice Jackson and Jacqueline Bacon (eds.) Routledge, 2010, p. 81. Bacon is an independent scholar who received a Ph.D. in English from the University of Texas at Austin.

**“[T]he Haitian Revolution and the island's achievement of independence as a black nation exemplified the strength and self-determination central to the vision of black leaders of the late 1820s, linked black people throughout the United States to each other and to people of African descent throughout the world, and underscored a pan-African sensibility that was key to antebellum African Americans' sense of their role in national and world history.... Haiti's history proved that those of African descent were not destined to be oppressed forever, whether in the United States or elsewhere. Not only could they rise to greatness; they could be active and courageous participants in history, demonstrating the power of subjugated Africans to fight for and win the right to determine their own futures....”**

**Document 8:** From the Haytien Emigration Society, “Information for the free people of colour who are inclined to emigrate to Hayti,” printed by John H. Cunningham, Philadelphia, 1825. <<https://archive.org/details/informationforfr00hayt>>. The Haytien Emigration Society helped black people in the United States migrate to Haiti.

**“The Society feels that the fact that its operations are carried on by those who can, from bitter experience, sympathise most deeply with the emigrants, will give our coloured brethren throughout the country, the greater confidence in this Society, and lead them more readily to apply to our office. We are your brethren in colour and degradation; and it gives us a peculiar delight to assist a brother to leave a country, where it is but too certain the coloured man can never enjoy his rights....”**

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**Document 9:** From Maria W. Stewart, “An Address Delivered Before the Afric-American Female Intelligence Society of America,” delivered in spring 1832 and printed in *The Liberator*, April 28, 1832, in *Maria W. Stewart: America’s First Black Political Writer*, Marilyn Richardson (ed.) Indiana University Press, 1987, p. 53. Stewart was a free black writer and activist. She was an abolitionist and advocated for the rights of black women.

*“We this day are considered as one of the most degraded races upon the face of the earth. It is useless for us any longer to sit with our hands folded, reproaching the whites; for that will never elevate us. All the nations of the earth have distinguished themselves, and have shown forth a noble and gallant spirit. Look at the suffering Greeks! Their proud souls revolted at the idea of serving a tyrannical nation, who were no better than themselves, and perhaps not so good. They made a mighty effort and arose; their souls were knit together in the holy bonds of love and union; they were united, and came off victorious. Look at the French in the late revolution! No traitors among them, to expose their plans to the crowned heads of Europe! ‘Liberty or Death!’ was their cry. And the Haytians, though they have not yet been acknowledged as a nation, yet their firmness of character, and independence of spirit have been greatly admired, and high applauded....”*

**Document 10:** From J., “Haytien Revolution” in *Freedom’s Journal*, April 6, 1827. While this piece was published anonymously under the name of “J.,” some historians believe it was written John Russwurm. Russwurm was one of the editors of *Freedom’s Journal*, the first black newspaper in the United States.

*“The last half century will ever be regarded as a period in which changes the most interesting, and occurrences the most remarkable in the history of man have happened.— And the revolution of St. Domingo, which developed the resources and aroused the energies of a people deemed but a step above brute creation, is not the least remarkable and interesting....”*

*We have seen the establishment of an independent nation by men of our own color; the world has seen it; and its successes and durability are now placed beyond doubt. There is something in the firm establishment of a free government by those who but lately were in the bonds of slavery that strikes us as manifesting in a peculiar degree the interposition of Divine Providence....”*

*[T]housands arose of young and old—bond and free, eager to expose their lives and property in defense of what to every man should be dearer than life itself. The struggle of liberty against slavery; of light against darkness, cannot last long. And tho’ our brethren of St. Domingo had to contend against ‘fearful odds’ (being opposed by the flower of the French army,) yet such success attended their noble efforts, that in a short time there was scarcely a Frenchmen left on the island.... Thus perished the French army, and so perish every attempt against the liberties of people.”*

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**Document 11:** John Randolph's Deposition, July 22, 1793, in *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts*, vol. 6, Sherwin McRae (ed.), 1886. Randolph is describing a conversation he overheard among a group of enslaved people outside of his home in Richmond, VA.

**“Betwixt the hours of 10 & 11 o’cl’k of the last Evening, there were a number of negroes assembled together in the street near my house.... I arose & went softly to my window, where I discovered two negroes close to the wall of my house nearly under me; the one spoke to the other telling him that the blacks were to kill the white people soon in this place. The other asked how soon; the other replied, there must be a day sot. He said when; & the other answered, between this and the 15th day of October.... In this time another had Joined them—it still remained a doubt with two of them whether the plot would be put in Execution or not.... The one who seemed to be chief speaker, said, you see how the blacks has killed the whites in the French Island and took it a little while ago.**

**JOHN RANDOLPH.**

**Sworn to before me, this 22d day of July, 1793, as witness my hand.**

**SAM. SCHERER.”**

**Document 12:** From Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Mifflin in a letter to President John Adams, June 27, 1798. National Archives <<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-2666>>.

**“Sir**

**I think it proper to inform your Excellency, that on the evacuation of Port au Prince by the British troops, a very great number of French white-men and negroes were put on board of transports and sent to America.... To prevent, as far as I can, the obvious danger from such an importation at this crisis, I have determined, with the advice of the Attorney General and other State Officers, to prohibit the landing of any French negroes, arriving at the port of Philadelphia, in vessels under the circumstances which I have stated; but the limited jurisdiction of Pennsylvania, the facility with which our regulations may be evaded, by disembarking the negroes in any adjacent State, and perhaps the necessity of extending the prohibition to white-men, induce me to submit the subject to your consideration; and to request such a co-operation of the Federal authority, as your Excellency may deem expedient for the general safety....”**

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**Document 13:** Video: “How did the Haitian Revolution affect the world?” Answered by Anthony Bogues. See <[www.choices.edu/newnation](http://www.choices.edu/newnation)>. Bogues is a professor of Africana studies at Brown University.

*“When we think of Haiti, you say to yourself, you know, other societies had slavery, from time immemorial. But there was never a successful slave revolt that we know of in history. And here is the first successful slave revolt in history. The influence of that would be absolutely enormous. In the first instance, right along the Americas, all the slaves looked to Haiti. And there was, there developed in the region, something among the planter class, from Cuba, to the southern part of the United States, to the Caribbean, there developed something that became known as the ‘Haitian fear,’ a fear of Haiti, meaning the Haitian example. Secondly, not only did the slaves look to Haiti, the slaves actually attempted in some instances to develop struggles along the lines of the Haitian Revolution. So for example, the 1831 rebellion in Jamaica, led by a man called Sam Sharpe. When you look at how Sharpe organized the revolutionary army of slaves, it is on the exact same lines as how the Haitians organized—revolutionary army was organized. When you look at the 1800s there’s a revolution in Virginia—not revolution, a rebellion—led by a man called Gabriel. Where is Gabriel’s inspiration coming from? So many black Union armies in the American Civil War in 1865, some of them are named what? Toussaint Louverture. Where does that come from? Other major influences as far as Latin America, Simón Bolívar and so on, who is known as ‘the father of Latin American independence.’ He has to go to where? He has to go to Haiti for refuge. To think about the Haitian Revolution therefore is to think about a revolution that shakes the entire Americas, and indeed perhaps shakes the world.”*