Contours of the Haitian Past; Glimpses of the Future

W. FRANK ROBINSON
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
Caribbean
Haiti Overview

Historical Themes

1. impact of French colonization and African slaves
2. legacy of the Haitian Revolution
3. bitter rivalry between small mulatto elite and black majority
4. question of identity and authentic culture
Haiti
Colonial Era

Saint-Domingue

French colony - Treaty of Ryswick 1697

1. three-tiered social structure
   a. internal divisions
   b. immense slave population
La Perle des Antilles
Sugar Plantation
Haitian Revolution

1. slave rebellion
2. Toussaint Louverture
3. French invasion
4. Jean-Jacques Dessalines
5. symbolism of name “Haiti”
Bois Caiman
Toussaint Louverture
Jean-Jacques Dessalines
Henri Christophe
Christophe Statue
Sans Souci
Citadel
Haiti

Post-Independence and Struggles of Nation-Building

A. Consolidation and Expansion
   1. government of Dessalines
   2. Henri Christophe and Alexandre Pétion
   3. Jean Pierre Boyer
      a. reunification
      b. stern tactics
      c. rule over Dominican Republic

B. Years of Turmoil, 1843-1915
   1. Age of Dictators and Disturbances
      22 dictators in 72 years
United States Intervention, 1915-1934

Violent Conditions and Temporary Solutions

1. Haitian Guard (Garde d’Haiti)
2. fruits of U.S. presence
3. issues of sovereignty and favoritism
United States Marines
United States Occupation
Anti-haitianismo in Dominican Republic
El Corte or Parsley Massacre of 1937
Duvalier Dynasty

François Duvalier (1957-1971)
1. physician
2. writings on Afro-Haitian cultural heritage - négritude
3. election victory of 1957
4. consolidation of power
5. elimination of rivals and suppression of criticism
6. imprisonment, torture, and disappearances
7. tonton macoutes, Police Secrète, and Milice Civile
8. immeasurable strength from voodoo
9. president-for-life
10. palace intrigues
11. successor

Jean-Claude Duvalier - Duvalier fils (1971-1986)
1. attempts at improving image abroad
2. decrease in overt violence
3. increasing association with old elites
4. spectacular corruption
5. flown to exile in France by the United States in 1986
Francois Duvalier
Papa Doc
Duvalier and Power

Papa Doc

Baron Samedi
Post-Duvalier Haiti

Power Vacuum

A. Post Duvalier
1. democratic openings
2. election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1990
   a. “church of the poor”
   b. Lavalas (Floodtide) movement - promises of sweeping change
3. ouster of Aristide by army in 1991
5. social drift
6. 2000 victory for Aristide
8. coup 2004
January 12, 2010 Earthquake
Aftermath

The Toll:

Magnitude 7.1
316,000: Estimates of the death toll vary
300,000: Number of injured
1.5 million: People homeless/displaced
37,867: Displaced people as of September 2017
Temporary Protected Status terminated
Deforestation and Resulting Desertification