



Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue

John D. Garrigus

THE AMERICAS IN THE EARLY MODERN ATLANTIC WORLD



BEFORE HAITI

THE AMERICAS IN THE EARLY MODERN ATLANTIC WORLD

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SAINT-DOMINGUE

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Printed in the United States of America.

For Ami, who taught me so much

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INTRODUCTION



On the morning of May 15, 1766, Julien Raimond, a 22-year-old native of the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue, made his first surviving appearance before a colonial notary. The son and grandson of successful indigo planters, Raimond had probably just returned from Europe, where many wealthy colonists like his father sent their children for schooling.¹ Two of his sisters had been in France before their 25th birthdays and both women eventually married well-to-do Frenchmen in Bordeaux and Toulouse and settled there.² But sometime after 1763, when the end of the Seven Years' War restored shipping, Julien Raimond returned to Saint-Domingue. There, with his three surviving brothers, he became an indigo planter like his father Pierre and maternal grandfather François Begasse. Eventually he owned hundreds of slaves and built an impressive plantation house. Profits from slave labor filled that residence, like his father's, with books, sheet music, silver, and crystal. A slave trained as a pastry chef prepared delicacies for his table.³

In 1766 the wealthy and well-connected 22-year-old creole was already something of a local notable. In an affidavit drafted on May 15 of that year the notary Rivet described him as "Sieur Julien Raimond," using a title of respect reserved for honorable citizens.⁴ Yet before Rivet stamped his seal on the document Raimond had signed, he realized he had made an error. The Superior Council of Port-au-Prince had recently required notaries and priests to keep more detailed and consistent records. So he took his quill and, in the margin next to Raimond's name, wrote "*quarteron.*" That word meant that one of the young man's four grandparents had been an African. Julien Raimond was a man of color.

In amending this document, the conscientious notary marked a new era in the history of the largest, deadliest, and most profitable slave regime in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. For this act was perhaps Raimond's first formal indication of the increasing hostility he and others like him would face from Saint-Domingue's administrative and social elite. By 1784, far wealthier than his French father or

grandfathers had ever been, Raimond was so frustrated by what he described as the “humiliations” of colonial life, that he returned to France to persuade imperial administrators to reform Saint-Domingue’s racial laws.

He wanted reform, not revolution. As a planter whose slave inventory covered several tightly written pages, he was not advocating emancipation. Raimond was not among the founding members of the new abolitionist Society of the Friends of the Blacks, formed in Paris in 1788. But the following year in Paris, Raimond and members of the Friends succeeded in putting colonial racism on trial before the Revolutionary deputies who had voted the Declaration of the Rights of Man. In 1791, when Parisian legislators gave limited voting rights to free people of color, whites in Saint-Domingue took up arms. Colonial men of color fought back. As civil war broke out, the Caribbean’s largest and best-policed slave system let down its guard. In late August, slaves in the colony’s richest sugar plain began to burn their masters’ plantations, launching the world’s only successful slave revolution. Their struggle against France ended, more than a decade later, with the creation of Haiti, the second independent nation-state in the New World.

In his 1986 survey of Latin American and Caribbean slavery, Herbert Klein described the unusual importance of men like Raimond in the history of the Americas:

A very small segment of the free colored in the French West Indies . . . more than any such group in America challenged the power and wealth of even the master class. Whereas the freedmen in all other slave societies entered at the lowest ranks of free society, in the French West Indies they were often permitted to enter the class of plantation owners from the beginning. Although their relative numbers were no greater than those for the northern European slave colonies, the French *gens de couleur* held a power to challenge even the highest elites. This helps explain the ferocity of the attack on their rights just as it explains their own ability to destroy the dominance of the master class in the midst of the French Revolution.⁵

This book began as an attempt to explain how and why this unusual class developed. For Saint-Domingue in 1789 was a society whose 30,831 French colonists, already outnumbered fourteen to one by their slaves, lived alongside at least 24,848 free people of African descent.⁶ Although many of these free people of color were black, the wealthiest and most outspoken of them were men and women of mixed European and African ancestry. In a much-cited claim, Raimond

estimated that his class controlled one-third of Saint-Domingue's pre-Revolutionary wealth. As Klein points out, "This was apparently the only significant group of free colored planters known to have existed in any slave society in America."⁷ How did this ostensibly unique group come into being?

In 1990 I tried to answer this question with a tightly focused study of the colonial economy, the kind of in-depth investigation of pre-Revolutionary Saint-Domingue that had never been published. I hoped that analyzing over 8,000 notarized contracts like the one Julien Raimond signed in 1766 would reveal the origins of free colored planting wealth. It might also answer an even more important question: Why did racial prejudice work differently in the various slave societies of the New World? Why did French West Indian colonists, as Klein describes them, allow "freedmen . . . to enter the class of plantation owners from the beginning," in contrast to slave owners in the rest of the hemisphere? Was this the dynamism of Saint-Domingue's plantation economy at work? Or was there something about French colonial culture that fostered such a glaring exception to the racial rules of New World slavery?

As I revised the doctoral dissertation that forms the core of this study, I received a letter from Rebecca Scott, who had read the manuscript. Scott challenged my assumption that racial labels in Saint-Domingue were fixed and based on objective criteria. She noted something I had not seen: my data illustrated how colonial racial categories shifted over time. Officials sometimes described Raimond and individuals like him as nonwhites, and, at other times, as members of the colonial elite. Her observation changed my research. In addition to investigating how men and women of African descent became wealthy slave owners, I now began to ask, "Why did colonial society scorn some wealthy slave owners as vile people of color?"

In the context of U.S. history, this question has an obvious answer: Raimond and those like him lived in a society built on the labor of enslaved Africans. Racial disdain justified the slave system and therefore afflicted anyone whose African ancestry was visible or known. But I argue in this book that Saint-Domingue's colonists did not universally apply this "one-drop rule" in Saint-Domingue, especially before the 1760s. In the late eighteenth century, French colonists described African descent as "an indelible stain," and I had originally accepted their racism as inevitable in a plantation society with so many African slaves and so few European masters. I understood Saint-Domingue's large free colored population to be a material phenomenon, produced by the colony's unique economy, population, and terrain. Most other

historians have done the same, for good reason.⁸ Conditions in Saint-Domingue were, in fact, quite different from those shaping France's other plantation colonies, Martinique and Guadeloupe.

But to understand why Saint-Domingue's free colored population was unique in the Americas, we must compare the colony to slave societies that did have similar material conditions—a dynamic plantation economy, an enslaved majority, and ample land available for new farms and ranches. British Jamaica and Portuguese Brazil both shared these characteristics. And in both colonies, elites accepted some of their most prosperous and Europeanized mixed-race neighbors as full members of the master class, as whites, in essence. The comparison of Saint-Domingue with Jamaica and Brazil, developed below, illustrates that, in the late eighteenth century, the wealth and social self-confidence of men like Julien Raimond was not in itself unusual. What was unusual was that Saint-Domingue's colonial elite defined Raimond as a man of color and sought to humiliate him.

The thesis of this study is that an important mid-century shift in the way French colonists defined their own identity deliberately alienated Saint-Domingue's wealthy freeborn families, recasting them as "freedmen," or ex-slaves. This redefinition, resulting from political disputes in the colony after the disastrous Seven Years' War, helped destabilize Saint-Domingue's slave regime in ways that made the Haitian Revolution possible. Racism certainly existed in France's colonies before 1763.⁹ And Saint-Domingue's leaders applied the new color line inconsistently, often debating its utility.¹⁰ But a new emphasis on white purity and mixed-race degeneracy provoked a deep reaction in some of the colony's richest creole families in one particular area of Saint-Domingue. That region, the colony's long and mountainous southern peninsula is the focus of this book.

Comparing Saint-Domingue to similar New World slave societies reveals that the existence of wealthy planters of partial African descent was not unique to this colony. What was unique was the way French colonists in the 1780s applied racial labels to such men, refusing to give "white" status to even a few well established light-skinned families. The problem is that Saint-Domingue cannot be fairly judged against most of its neighbors. Slavery's economic dynamism, the ratio of masters to slaves, and the availability of land in this French possession differed too greatly from conditions in the colonial United States, in the smaller plantation islands of the Lesser Antilles, and in Spain's Caribbean colonies. Only in Brazil and Jamaica were material conditions truly similar to Saint-Domingue, to the extent that wealthy

planters of African descent emerged there too by the late eighteenth century.

In British North America the numerical dominance of whites insured that African ancestry meant something very different than it did in Saint-Domingue. In the French sugar colony in 1788, people of African descent comprised roughly 90 percent of the population. In the southern states of the newly independent United States in 1790, they were only 40 percent. Mainland Anglo-American society officially disapproved of sex between masters and slaves. In 1790, free people of color were only 1 percent of the free population in the upper U.S. South and just 3 percent in the Deep South.¹¹ In Saint-Domingue in 1788, interracial sex was widely acknowledged. People of color there approached 50 percent of the free population.

Some free people of color in North America did become wealthy, but under British rule, most were farmers, fishermen, or boatmen. In the upper South, this pattern persisted into the national period.¹² In the lower South, after independence, prosperous free colored farmers were even more unusual. There was no free colored planter class, except in nineteenth-century Louisiana, where most were immigrants from Saint-Domingue. Even there, in 1832, only 212 free people of color owned slaves.¹³

The Lesser Antilles colonies of France and Britain were fundamentally less similar to Saint-Domingue than they appear at first glance. It is true that enslaved people were the majority in eighteenth-century Barbados, Martinique, Antigua, or Guadeloupe, comprising 75 to 85 percent of the population. Like Saint-Domingue, these were sugar colonies, in which slave mortality was high and white men outnumbered white women. Along with the harsh labor regime, interracial sex and slave manumission were accepted features of colonial life in these islands. Some, like Martinique in 1776, did develop free populations of color as large as one-quarter of the total free population.¹⁴ Yet these Lesser Antilles colonies were extremely small; most of them were no larger than five or six U.S. colonial parishes. Saint-Domingue alone had ten times the area of French Martinique and Guadeloupe combined. Because there was little vacant land in these islands, most free people of color lived and worked in the port cities, where white colonists used laws and social pressure to limit their economic success. Generally speaking, there was no free colored planter class in the Lesser Antilles in the eighteenth century.¹⁵

The two exceptions to this were Dominica and Grenada. In these underpopulated islands, which frequently changed hands between England and France, arable land was available for much of the

eighteenth century. Prosperous free colored planters did emerge there after the 1760s, some of them emigrating from neighboring colonies to establish coffee, cacao, and sugar estates.¹⁶ Yet, as a class, they never amassed the wealth of their counterparts in Saint-Domingue. They exerted much of their influence in local society through their military, rather than economic, presence.¹⁷

Spain's eighteenth-century Caribbean territories were too detached from the Atlantic trade in slaves and plantation goods to compare with Saint-Domingue. Many of these colonies did possess large, rural free populations of color. More than a quarter of Cuba's free population in 1774 was of African descent, as were more than half of all free people in Puerto Rico in 1775.¹⁸ But large-scale plantation slavery was not yet important. In 1774, slaves were only 23 percent of Cuba's population and only 11 percent in Puerto Rico the following year. Free people of color in these islands, like their white neighbors, were mostly poor farmers and artisans. The situation was similar in Santo Domingo, across the mountains from French Saint-Domingue, and in Trinidad, still a mostly undeveloped Spanish outpost in the 1780s. It was also the case in Spain's coastal ports on the mainland: Vera Cruz, Cartagena, Caracas, and, in Florida, Saint Augustine.¹⁹

Of the many slave colonies in the eighteenth-century New World, only British Jamaica and Portuguese Brazil were roughly similar to Saint-Domingue. Unlike Spain's Caribbean colonies, all three had large enslaved populations working under cruel conditions to produce sugar and other profitable commodities. In the eighteenth century alone, between them, these three territories absorbed over 40 percent of the transatlantic slave trade.²⁰ By 1768, slaves comprised about 50 percent of Brazil's population and 90 percent of Jamaica's. In all three societies it was openly acknowledged that many European colonists and their American-born sons had children with slave women. In all three, white fathers often freed their mixed-race children, and recognized their paternity.²¹ All three had the kind of undeveloped interior land that was unavailable in most of the Lesser Antilles islands. This frontier allowed free people of color, as well as new European immigrants, to establish farms and ranches, some of which eventually became full-blown slave plantations. In Jamaica and Brazil, even more than in Saint-Domingue, these interiors also sheltered semipermanent communities of escaped slaves. Finally, all three colonies relied on free people of African descent to police the slave population.²²

In Brazil, according to censuses, the free population of color was especially large in frontier regions like the Mato Grosso, where free coloreds outnumbered whites in the late eighteenth century. In the

district of Sabará, in the Minas Gerais region, the focus of a frontier gold rush in the 1750s but later an economic backwater, white men formally acknowledged paternity of about one-third of all the mulatto children they freed in the eighteenth century. Brazil's male colonists regularly bequeathed property to such children, despite complaints by white heirs. Moreover, Portuguese law insured that children born out of marriage could claim some share in their father's estate even if he had never drafted a legal testament.²³ Eighteenth-century Brazilian society was deeply racist, excluding persons with up to four degrees of African ancestry from public offices. Yet nearly all observers agreed that colonial officials were very flexible about these racial laws in practice, especially for wealthy, light-skinned persons.²⁴ In 1766, therefore, when Julien Raimond signed his contract in Saint-Domingue, it was highly likely that planters who looked like him existed in Brazil. In the Portuguese colony, however, these men's property and social connections would probably have given them "white" status, which French colonial society denied to Raimond. In fact, the free colored indigo planter was aware of this discrepancy. In the 1780s he recommended to French colonial officials that Saint-Domingue adopt Brazilian racial practice.²⁵

In Jamaica, as well, Raimond would probably have been considered "white." Jamaican law and practice discriminated against free people of African descent, but influential planters used the Colonial Assembly to carve out exceptions on a case-by-case basis. From the late 1600s through the 1700s this body granted civil rights to more than 200 free persons of color.²⁶ Consequently, by the 1760s Jamaica's population included numerous individuals who, despite their partial African ancestry, enjoyed the rights of full citizenship—a kind of honorary "whiteness." William Cunningham, perhaps the wealthiest, owned 160 slaves at his death in 1762.²⁷

In conditions like those found in parts of Jamaica, Brazil, and Saint-Domingue, where slaves outnumbered owners ten to one, where many of the slaves were African rather than locally born, and where there were many more male colonists than female, it is not surprising that free men and women who owned land and workers formed a united master class. What is harder to explain is why, in Saint-Domingue, the idea of racial impurity triumphed over slave-owners' solidarity. For by the 1780s, the French colony's meticulous exclusion of mixed-race people from white society had more in common with North America than with Jamaica and Brazil.²⁸ Understanding Julien Raimond's humiliation and the political campaign it engendered requires explaining why French Saint-Domingue refused

to acknowledge the social and political “whiteness” of wealthy, European-educated slave owners.

The answer has to do with emerging tensions about French colonists’ “American” identity. This book argues that France’s 1763 defeat in the Seven Years’ War led Saint-Domingue to abandon its social definition of racial categories, like those that Jamaica and Brazil used, for a more explicitly biological racism. After the war, the colony experienced the same kind of imperial restructuring that led North Americans to rebel against Britain and heightened the resentments of Spanish American colonists against peninsular authorities. Under this pressure, white creolized New World Frenchmen used race to define their political and cultural bond with the metropole. Saint-Domingue’s elite colonists wanted France to end military rule and claimed the colony was ready for a more “civilized” and “liberal” colonial regime. To dismiss French fears that island-born whites would abandon the metropole, these leading colonists collaborated with imperial administrators to create a new public sphere that emphasized the cultural and political community between all white people. To solidify this concept of the essentially French whiteness that immigrants and creole colonists shared, they used Enlightened notions of gender and biology to distance themselves from mixed-race creoles like Raimond. The moral and physical corruption of “mulatto” women and men, they argued, made both sexes unnaturally feminine and dangerous to civic life. In the 1770s and 1780s, these sexual and political stereotypes broke apart the colony’s creole class structure. The new racial and moral hierarchy ranked wealthy planters and merchants of color below even enslaved Africans, for free colored wealth and culture were merely the by-products of their “corruption.” In fact, the economic success of some free colored families created deep resentment among European immigrants to Saint-Domingue. The new color line soothed these class tensions. Humiliating wealthy mixed-race planters eased relations between poor whites and their wealthy neighbors, at least until the French Revolution began.

From the 1760s, Saint-Domingue’s free people of color responded to these new forms of prejudice by attacking colonial oppression with liberal ideals, proving their patriotism in rhetoric and action. After 1789, with little or no intention of liberating their slaves, the very families most likely to be accepted in Jamaica or Brazil as “white” revealed the absurdity of Dominguan racism. This elite group used the first three years of the French Revolution to offer another vision of colonial society, even as a new definition of metropolitan French citizenship was emerging. Adopting, and, indeed, helping shape the terms of this

French debate, Saint-Domingue's elite men of color proved to their European contemporaries that brown- and black-skinned people from the Caribbean could meet the Revolution's ideals. Their successful campaign for full civil rights was built upon a powerful claim to "natural" or "American" virtue that would ultimately justify Haitian independence. The history of those creole families in eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue is therefore an important thread in the story of Latin American independence and creole consciousness.

The history of Saint-Domingue's free people of color also illuminates the cultural factors shaping racism in different New World societies. The comparative study of New World slavery began in 1947, when Frank Tannenbaum, a U.S. historian of Latin America, published a short book entitled *Slave and Citizen*.²⁹ Tannenbaum concluded that differences in the religious and legal cultures of Europe's colonial powers explained why "the adventure of the Negro in the New World has been structured differently in the United States than in other parts of this hemisphere."³⁰ He was especially intrigued by how much easier it appeared to be for slaves to secure freedom in Latin America than in British colonies or in the antebellum United States. In Latin America, he believed, Catholicism and the Roman law tradition encouraged masters to recognize their slaves' humanity. In contrast, the rarity of manumission was the "primary aspect of slavery in the British West Indies and in the United States."³¹

For Tannenbaum, therefore, the number of ex-slaves or free people of color in a given New World society indicated the harshness of its slave regime and the virulence of racial prejudice there. Comparing the United States to what he believed was a less color-conscious Brazil, Tannenbaum wrote: "what the law and tradition did was to make social mobility [for slaves and ex-slaves] easy and natural in one place, difficult and slow and painful in another."³² Tannenbaum admitted that his *Slave and Citizen* raised many more questions than it answered. Indeed, his passing references to French Caribbean slavery classed it with British and North American varieties, in spite of the fact that these were Catholic islands with a slave code based on Roman law.

In the 1950s and 1960s, scholars began testing Tannenbaum's provocative hypothesis that the colonizing European culture determined New World racism. Comparing legal systems and plantation conditions with increasing rigor, by the early 1970s many historians had concluded that the material conditions of slavery were more important than culture in forging racism. In 1971, for example, Carl Degler reexamined the contrast between Brazil's racial history and

that of the United States. Calling his book *Neither Black Nor White*, Degler devoted special attention to the two societies' very different attitudes about racial mixture, rather than their legal definitions of slavery. Rejecting Tannenbaum's focus on Portuguese versus British culture, Degler identified the interworkings of geography, demography, and economy as the chief reasons why Brazilian slavery had what he called "the mulatto escape hatch"—the possibility of freedom and social mobility for mixed-race slaves.³³ Other historians working on Cuba, Jamaica, and the United States came to similar conclusions about the greater importance of the physical and economic environment over cultural factors in shaping slavery and racism.³⁴

In 1971, Gwendolyn Hall brought Saint-Domingue into this new materialist scholarship, demonstrating the similarities between the eighteenth-century French colony and nineteenth-century Cuba, the leading slave producer of sugar in its era. Like so many others, Hall turned to this topic out of interest in Tannenbaum's question of "why racism is, and has been, more powerful in the United States than elsewhere in the Americas."³⁵ In *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies*, she described how racial prejudice in Saint-Domingue and later in Cuba grew stronger as sugar plantations became more profitable and slaves became the largest single population group. Racism "[w]as a mind control device designed to keep the slave passive enough to insure the survival of the system," she concluded. The discrimination Julien Raimond experienced in Saint-Domingue was an expression of the "basic conflict . . . over wealth and over power to protect the wealth."³⁶ What was not clear from Hall's study was why, if racism primarily served economic interests, French colonists were so bent on humiliating wealthy slave owners like Raimond. Why had they permitted men like Raimond to become so prosperous in the first place?

In 1972 a collection of research essays on free people of color in over a dozen New World colonies, entitled *Neither Slave Nor Free* and edited by David Cohen and Jack Greene, administered the coup de grâce to Tannenbaum's cultural determinism. By juxtaposing their contributors' analyses of Dutch, British, Danish, Spanish, French, Portuguese/Brazilian, and U.S. racial policies, Cohen and Greene illustrated that material conditions consistently overrode religious and legal influences on New World racism. Economic pressures and the danger of slave rebellion, especially, shaped manumission and racial prejudice across the hemisphere.³⁷

Neither Slave nor Free liberated historians of the United States, Caribbean, and Latin America from the question suggested by Tannenbaum's essay, "Which European culture produced the worst

slavery and racism?” Since the 1970s scholars have moved away from elaborate comparative frameworks to focus on the ways racial prejudice shaped specific societies.³⁸ Yet when such detailed studies, like this one, are placed back into a comparative context, they again reveal the importance of culture in determining racial attitudes.

Acknowledging this fact does not require rejecting materialist explanations of racism. Attitudes in much of Saint-Domingue up to 1763, I argue, followed the pattern seen in Jamaica and Brazil. The constant influx of new African workers, the brutality of the plantation regime, the high ratio of male to female colonists, the military and economic value of local patronage networks, and isolation from other colonists all encouraged European men to free their children of color and establish them economically. The social status of some of these people of color over time came to be based more on their wealth and social connections than on their African genealogy. Local society regarded the wealthiest families of this type as members of the master class, as responsible and respectable colonists. The ongoing growth and oppression of the slave population did discourage the promotion of new free colored families to this elite level. But the examples of Jamaica and Brazil illustrate that those families that had been successfully “whitened” into the plantocracy were mostly immune from racial challenges. Moreover, though new racial tensions may have slowed the social ascent of new free colored families in Jamaica and Brazil, it seems never to have stopped the ascent completely, or reversed the process, at least until the era of the Haitian Revolution.

This is where Saint-Domingue’s history was exceptional. Here, my evidence shows, families that were once accepted in the elite were rejected as nonwhite in the 1770s and 1780s. I argue that cultural and political forces inspired and shaped the new color line, while the ever-mounting economic success of these families ensured that resentful whites would adopt the new racist stereotypes. After 1763, Enlightened ideas and social institutions produced a new self-consciousness in Saint-Domingue about “civilization,” “virtue,” as well as “race.” This is no resuscitation of Tannenbaum’s theory, for this cultural movement was not imported wholesale from France. Instead, at its highest levels, colonial and metropolitan discourse about many of these topics influenced each other, especially where race was concerned. Racism was a tool that colonial administrators and creole elites used together to “civilize” Saint-Domingue, despite the fact that the two groups defined this goal in strikingly different ways. There was no cultural determinism at work here. French political and scientific concerns, as well as Caribbean social and

economic conditions, shaped the evolution of Saint-Domingue's distinctive racial ideology.

Colonial culture was not only a tool for justifying and enforcing the subjugation of people of color. Joan Dayan has written, "Numerous accounts testify that in no instance was a black slave in Saint-Domingue helped by [French slave] laws or regulations."³⁹ This study, however, illustrates that French legal culture was a two-edged sword, one sometimes wielded by free coloreds and even by slaves. To reveal that dozens, perhaps hundreds, of slaves used the marriage provision of the Code Noir to attain freedom in the 1780s is not to defend the humanity of France's slave laws. Similarly, to point out how France's legal institutions allowed some colonial people of color to create public identities that whites could not challenge is not to claim, like Tannenbaum, that the Roman law system sheltered slaves from racism and inhumanity.

Instead the previously unstudied documents I analyze here confirm what Mimi Sheller has found in her comparison of peasant struggles in nineteenth-century Haiti and Jamaica: that social power in these islands was not only decided by imperial policies and by slavery's unequal distribution of freedom and wealth. Individuals who managed to escape slavery in eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue, like black peasants in nineteenth-century Haiti, were able to negotiate their racial and social identities in civil society, in a "public sphere" from which they were officially excluded.⁴⁰ Decades before the outbreak of the French and Haitian Revolutions, men and women with very little power used public texts to successfully protect their liberty and demand justice.

Such findings allow this book to contribute to a second historical literature, that which describes the causes of the Haitian Revolution. Given the historical importance of the Revolution and the influence of the cultural/material debate about American racism, it might appear surprising that scholars have devoted such little attention to Saint-Domingue's free people of color. Until quite recently, Gwendolyn Hall's *Social Control* was the only book-length study in English devoted to this topic.⁴¹ This was no oversight. Historians recognized that Saint-Domingue's free population of color was the first group of its kind to force the repeal of racial laws and that its success inspired imitation and repression throughout the hemisphere. But those who studied Haiti also knew that the best nineteenth-century accounts of the Haitian Revolution suffered from an overemphasis on free colored achievements. Looking for a more democratic and accurate understanding of Haiti's unprecedented independence, twentieth-century

scholars have mostly devoted themselves to the long-ignored question of slaves' role in the revolutionary period.

After declaring independence from France in 1804, descendants of men like Julien Raimond ruled Haiti for much of the nineteenth century. The Haitians who published the first detailed narratives of the revolution in the 1840s were members of this "mulatto"⁴² oligarchy. David Nicholls has described how these "*mulâtrist*" historians developed a Revolutionary narrative that served the interests of their class.⁴³ The strongest proponent of this interpretation, Beaubrun Ardouin, credited wealthy free men of color with beginning the Revolution. Glorifying free colored revolutionaries who challenged French racism, rather than the black men who led ex-slave armies, Ardouin wrote to confirm the oligarchic pretensions of his own mixed-race class. Free men of color had initiated the Revolution against France and their descendants' superior education and talents made them the natural leaders of the new nation, he argued. Because they suffered and fought French racism, they could not be guilty of racism against the darker-skinned peasant majority. As Mimi Sheller notes, it was no accident that Ardouin and others published their histories in the 1840s, shortly after the Haitian state exiled a black peasant leader who criticized a new mulatto president for not living up to his promises to democratize Haitian society.⁴⁴ This interpretation was so central to the self-conception of the nineteenth-century elite that Haitians writing in the generation after Ardouin published several volumes describing French prejudice against Saint-Domingue's free men of color.⁴⁵

But twentieth-century events shifted this focus. By the 100th anniversary of independence in 1904, the Haitian state had come to support a "black" Revolutionary narrative, one centered on the ex-slave generals Toussaint Louverture and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, rather than free colored planters. In the centenary year the government inaugurated what Joan Dayan has called the state cult of Dessalines, unveiling a monument and adopting a national anthem, "La Dessalinienne."⁴⁶ From 1915 to 1934 the humiliating U.S. occupation of the country increased urban intellectuals' interest in the culture of Haiti's rural majority. This painful period inspired the foundation of a Haitian historical society in 1924 and the appearance of new Haitian scholarship on Louverture and Dessalines.⁴⁷

In the 1930s Caribbean writers outside Haiti also turned to Saint-Domingue's great slave revolutionaries to remind the world of the potential power of colonized peoples.⁴⁸ *Black Jacobins*, published in 1938 by the Trinidadian man of letters C.L.R. James, remains the most widely read account of the Haitian Revolution. In the broadest

sense, most subsequent scholars have adopted his vision of the Revolution as an uprising of oppressed colonial working people. Following the example of his Haitian contemporaries, James helped retire the *mulâtrist* interpretation, arguing instead that Saint-Domingue's free population of color was a kind of Marxist middle class that aspired to join the white plantocracy. James agreed with Ardouin that these families were hardworking and frugal. But he also adopted French and populist stereotypes about their selfishness: they "were everywhere the least willing to submit to statute labor and public dues."⁴⁹ By emphasizing how mass revolutionary action had produced the Haitian Revolution, while others wrote of chaos and manipulation, and by combining critical scholarship in French archives with his own political zeal and stirring prose, James set a high literary standard that makes his book still valuable today.⁵⁰

It was not until the 1950s that new kinds of academic research emerged from France to reinforce James's conviction that Saint-Domingue's enslaved masses were at the heart of the Haitian Revolution. Since the 1880s, French historians had mostly studied the colony to understand and improve their nation's administration of its new African and Asian territories.⁵¹ But in the 1950s Gabriel Debien, a researcher trained in this imperialist tradition, began to focus on Caribbean plantation records, inspired by the work of Brazilian and U.S. scholars. While earlier French studies of Antilles slavery had been based on legal texts, travelers' accounts, and administrative correspondence,⁵² Debien adopted the social-science approach of France's *Annales* historians. He tracked down and analyzed estate inventories, colonists' letter-books, and other long forgotten documents containing information about slave death rates, African ethnicities, slave culture, and daily plantation operations.⁵³ After publishing close to one thousand articles and research notes, Debien warned readers of his 1974 book *Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises*, "It is still premature to present a overview of slavery in the French Antilles."⁵⁴ Indeed, in a single generation it was not possible for Debien, working in a field that attracted few advanced students, to synthesize the scattered and partial documentation he had unearthed. Yet his career reoriented French Caribbean historians toward a better understanding of how the material conditions of slavery shaped the possibilities for resistance. His successors have produced more sustained examinations of individual estates,⁵⁵ ventured deeper into demography,⁵⁶ and cast more light on the place of the plantation in the imperial economy.⁵⁷

Debien's careful attention to neglected primary sources was an important inspiration for the Haitian historian Jean Fouchard. Well before the 1960s Haitians had come to view those slaves who escaped plantation bondage as the founders of a popular resistance tradition that culminated in independence. In his statue of the "Unknown Maroon," installed before the presidential palace in Port-au-Prince around 1959, the Haitian sculptor Albert Mangonès had celebrated this quasi-mythic figure. Fouchard's *Les marrons de la liberté* (1972) reinforced this nationalist image, arguing that the Revolution was not the handiwork of French Jacobins, free colored planters, nor a few black generals.⁵⁸ Instead, Haiti's successful conquest of liberty was grounded in a pre-Revolutionary culture of slave resistance, which Fouchard investigated by collecting 48,000 notices of escaped slaves from colonial newspapers. His peers, including James and Debien, hailed *Les marrons* as a masterpiece. However, Fouchard could show no link between the beginnings of the Haitian Revolution and colonial-era *marronage* and many historians outside Haiti remain skeptical of his thesis.⁵⁹ Because his notices could not be reliably quantified, even his description of the scale of pre-Revolutionary slave escapes remained anecdotal. Yet Fouchard's book illustrates how far explanations of the Revolution had come from the nineteenth-century claim that wealthy slave-owning men of color launched the Haitian Revolution.

In the last twenty-five years, it has been David Geggus, together with Carolyn Fick, who has been most important in revealing the actions and aspirations of the enslaved people at the center of the Haitian Revolution. One of Geggus's most important achievements, building upon Debien's legacy, has been to create his own database out of hundreds of published and archival plantation slave lists. This has allowed him to chart, for example, the African ethnic groups most likely to be found on Saint-Domingue's wide variety of sugar, coffee, and indigo estates. This, in turn, has illuminated the extent to which the slave uprisings in the North Province in August 1791 were the result of cross-cultural alliances between island-born and African slaves. While maintaining a scholarly skepticism about nationalist and ideological rhetoric, Geggus has connected the conditions of colonial slave life to the events of the Revolution better than anyone. Thanks to him and to Fick's original research and book on the Revolution, we have a better understanding of how slaves' actions contributed to Haitian independence.⁶⁰ Moreover, Geggus has opened new connections between the Haitian Revolution and other fields of

slavery studies, by systematically evaluating Haiti's influence on early-nineteenth-century slave revolts throughout the Americas.⁶¹

Laurent Dubois's new narrative history, *Avengers of the New World*, synthesizes the archival research of Geggus, Fick and many others into a powerful argument for the importance of the Haitian Revolution in world history. Dubois breaks new ground by emphasizing, even in his title, that Haiti's Revolution was as much about the emergence of a new "American" identity as about slaves' unprecedented victory over their masters.⁶²

In fact, the idea of political independence from France only emerged late in the Revolution, but its roots lay deep in the eighteenth century. In Saint-Domingue as in the rest of the hemisphere, tensions between European administrators and colonists generated ideas about "American" or "creole" identity that reached a critical mass after the Seven Years' War. In France's largest remaining New World colony, those tensions were reflected in the changing civic status of the free population of color.

This book uses more than 9,000 notarial deeds from three neighboring colonial districts in Saint-Domingue's South Province to uncover those identities. Historians have often dismissed Haiti's southern peninsula as the center of "mulatto" power, implying that it cannot be representative of the nation's "black" majority, meaning the ex-slaves whose dark-skinned generals Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and Henri Christophe all emerged from Saint-Domingue's North Province. But there are three main reasons why this study looks carefully at the South as it considers the evolution of ideas about race and citizenship in Saint-Domingue and Haiti.

The first is that notarial records from the South are the oldest surviving from French colonial Saint-Domingue. They allow us to follow individuals and families across the most tumultuous half-century the Atlantic world had seen to that date, from 1760 to 1803. Because many authors focus their narratives on the blood and fire of the 1790s, this book's relatively long view of pre-Revolutionary conditions illuminates critical phenomena, like the gradual evolution of racial prejudice, and the slow and conservative rise of free colored planting wealth.

Second, scholarship on Saint-Domingue/Haiti, two hundred years after independence, has progressed to the point that the complex interplay of regional societies must be explored. Carolyn Fick's *Making of Haiti* (1990) illustrates the value of blending the revolutionary history of the South Province with better-known material from the rest of the colony.⁶³ Stewart King's *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig* uses

notarial contracts from the North and West to illuminate the existence of a free colored “military leadership class” as well as a distinct planter class in those provinces before 1789. But King’s synthetic approach masks profound regional differences. Dominique Rogers’ sophisticated comparison of the free coloreds of pre-revolutionary Cap Français and Port-au-Prince explores those variations and concludes that free coloreds there were gradually assimilating into colonial society before 1789. The South Province is now the missing piece of the puzzle. Unlike the areas King studies, it had no discernable “military leadership class,” nor the large and distinct free black population that both Rogers and King identify.⁶⁴

This inconsistency is significant. Historians have long portrayed Revolutionary-era conflicts between Saint-Domingue’s South and North Provinces as racial warfare between “blacks” and “mulattos,” even while acknowledging that these labels were inaccurate.⁶⁵ Beaubrun Ardouin, from the South, opined in the 1840s that the North Province was more “aristocratic” and his own province was more “democratic,” an orientation he attributed to the French education of Southern leaders.⁶⁶

But this study, taken together with the work of King and Rogers, offers a more convincing hypothesis. French military institutions and the constant influx of new African captives created a different set of free colored attitudes and opportunities in Cap Français than in the rest of Saint-Domingue. The South produced no ex-slave generals like Toussaint Louverture, nor a free black military class because the region was far more Caribbean in its orientation than the North or West. The conditions of frontier society in the South Province encouraged cross-cultural mixing which, together with the rarity of slave imports in this region, discouraged the formation of a distinct free black class. The South differed from the North not because it was more French, as Ardouin saw it, but because it was more “American,” in the broader sense of that term.

Finally, the history of the South Province is important since the region played a special role in the origin and conclusion of the Haitian Revolution. Though there were perhaps three hundred wealthy free people of color in the cities of Cap Français and Port-au-Prince and their surrounding regions in 1789,⁶⁷ it was free people of color from the South who challenged colonial racism most effectively. Julien Raimond, supported by about a dozen of his neighbors, convinced Parisian revolutionaries and abolitionists to postpone their attacks on the slave trade. By engaging these allies, instead, in a campaign to recognize the citizenship of mixed-race colonists, Raimond destroyed

the stability of the slave regime. This was not his goal. Nevertheless, by the summer of 1791, the legislation and publicity he had stimulated in France raised such high expectations among free coloreds and created such a furor among radical white racists that civil war in Saint-Domingue was practically inevitable. Moreover, chapter 8 provides new evidence that Raimond's free colored allies in Port Salut parish consciously provoked Saint-Domingue's first Revolutionary slave conspiracy on the estates of their white neighbors in January 1791. Finally, in 1804, it was the nephew of one of Raimond's neighbors and strongest political allies who wrote the Haitian Declaration of Independence. Chapter 9 concludes that this was not merely an expression of Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre's romantic personality. Haitian independence as he expressed it was shaped by the South's intense consciousness of its creole identity, set against its strong attachment to French Republican values.

This book's first chapter describes the origins of that identity. Legal and census records from the first half of the eighteenth century show how buccaneers, French immigrants, and enslaved Africans formed new households, as well as slave plantations, in this isolated region. On this frontier, it was not ancestry, but social class and to some extent gender, that defined racial labels. Newly arrived Frenchmen married the daughters of propertied colonists, regardless of their racial background. These relationships created a rich network of local and intra-Caribbean connections that survived into the 1760s. The second chapter draws on a systematic analysis of over 4,000 notarial contracts from the 1760s to describe the economic role of the free people of color in Saint-Domingue's southern peninsula. It illustrates how some children of French immigrants and slave women became wealthy planters, and describes how poorer free people of color established themselves in at least four distinctive occupations. Chapter 3 examines the complex and often contradictory interactions among free people of color, slaves, and the colonial state. It pays special attention to how free coloreds used the legal system, constabulary, and militia to protect their liberty and set themselves apart from the slave population.

Chapter 4 begins to examine the creation of a new, self-conscious colonial culture after the end of the Seven Years' War, in reaction to controversial imperial reforms. The end of the chapter traces free colored involvement in an anti-militia revolt in 1769, a critical event in the changing relationship among colonists, free people of color, and imperial authorities. Chapter 5 continues to describe the impact of Enlightenment thought on white colonial self-perceptions. It shows how a new ideology of white purity resolved the debate

between colonial elites and imperial administrators about whether Saint-Domingue should have a military or civilian government.

Chapter 6 returns to the economic realm and to the southern peninsula in the 1780s. It describes the ascending fortunes of free colored planters and poorer farmers, artisans, and householders, despite the new racism. This chapter devotes special attention to the mounting prosperity of those old creole families who were now officially labeled “people of color,” and shows their wealth was not due to coffee. Instead they continued to grow and smuggle indigo dye, diversifying into cotton. Chapter 7 examines the increasingly degraded civic status of free colored militiamen and slave-hunters in the 1770s. Some slaves found new routes to freedom in this period, through marriage and through constabulary service. More than 500 Dominguan men of color joined a French expedition to fight in the American Revolution in Georgia. Others tracked rebel slaves in the colony’s mountains. Yet French colonists would not recognize any civic virtue in these sacrifices.

Chapter 8 traces Revolutionary events on both sides of the Atlantic. Following the wealthy families described in chapters 3 and 6, it shows how men of color in both Paris and Saint-Domingue dismantled the sexual images that excluded them from public life. But white colonial revolutionaries denied that brown and black men could be citizens. In 1791 French attempts to impose free colored citizenship brought civil war to Saint-Domingue and, ultimately, slave revolution.

Chapter 9 uses the economic and social data from over 1,000 notarized contracts drafted in Aquin parish between 1790 and 1803 to trace the experience of the free colored elite in the Revolution. Though the free colored population dominated military and civilian leadership, plantation agriculture and property values suffered enormously after the end of slavery. At the same time, however, the town’s once-illegal trade with other Caribbean islands increased and some wealthy families began to sell land to ex-slaves, creating a new peasant class. Evidence of the ongoing vitality of Freemasonry suggests that, despite economic hardship, local elites embraced French republican values. The epilogue summarizes events that followed the arrival of a French expeditionary force in 1802, and ends by examining the life of Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, the author of the Haitian Declaration of Independence.

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CHAPTER 1



THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREOLE SOCIETY ON THE COLONIAL FRONTIER

In 1701, the Dominican missionary Jean-Baptiste Labat found himself in a lush valley in Saint-Domingue, where the two highest mountain-chains in the Antilles overlapped. Though he had spent seven years in Martinique and Guadeloupe, Labat found this colony, France's newest Caribbean possession, to be like nothing like the Lesser Antilles. Western Santo Domingo had been a base for French-speaking hunters and pirates since the beginning of the seventeenth century, but Spain had only just formally recognized French claims. As the priest toured its coastal settlements, grizzled ex-buccaneers served him on looted Spanish silver and swore loudly as he celebrated mass in the open air. The Dominican felt that he "hads fallen from the clouds and been transported into a new world," one in which he had no desire to remain, though Saint-Domingue desperately needed priests.¹

But in his description of this fertile mountain valley, Labat adopted a different, admiring, tone. Its settlers "grow the most beautiful cacao trees in the world . . . [and] raise their children with marvelous ease," feeding them day and night on chocolate and crushed maize.² He predicted that their rich bottomland would soon be filled with farms producing cacao, indigo, rocou, tobacco, and cotton. This promising district, a "nursery for cacao and for children," already had a name: Fond des Nègres. As Labat noted, these large and expanding families were almost all free mulattos or blacks.

What the missionary witnessed in 1701 was a situation that leading colonists and imperial administrators at the end of the eighteenth

century tried to deny had ever existed. For at least 60 years after Labat's visit, European men, African women, and their children in Saint-Domingue formed creole families and their descendants were accepted as French colonists, to the degree that they were successful as planters and slave owners.

In the 1770s, colonial intellectuals described racial prejudice as an inherent, natural feature of the Caribbean plantation regime. With hundreds of thousands of Africans working for a few thousand Frenchmen, they argued, brutal discipline and an abiding scorn for all people of color were essential tools of the sugar trade. Indeed, even in the remote southern peninsula, by 1720, hard-driving French planters-to-be had purchased so many enslaved Africans that they were outnumbered eight to one. Like planters everywhere in Saint-Domingue, they worked these men and women past the limits of human endurance and clamored for more slave imports, as they divided up the coastal plains to plant more sugarcane.

But those who managed to cross the line from slavery to freedom in Saint-Domingue found room to survive and even flourish in places like Fond des Nègres. As this chapter argues, Saint-Domingue remained a frontier society long after Labat went back to Guadeloupe, and the southern peninsula was the cutting edge of that frontier. Until the 1760s, a man able to clear trees from a hillside in the interior could easily claim a ranch or farm there, and many island-born children of hunters, indentured servants, slaves, and sugar planters did just that. Moreover, because French shipping was focused on the colony's Atlantic coast, throughout the eighteenth century, settlers in the southern peninsula and elsewhere continued the intra-Caribbean smuggling that had sustained the buccaneers of Labat's time.

Just as they routinely traded across imperial boundaries, colonists in places like Fond des Nègres regularly married or formed permanent families across racial lines, founding a deeply interconnected creole society. Rather than flee to France with their fortunes, before the 1760s many colonists in these parishes remained on their estates, marrying their sons and daughters into like families and to suitable newcomers. In the process they created a free population of color, though when these men and women were wealthy, their neighbors rarely used racial labels to describe them.

* * *

In 1625, after a century of attacking Spanish shipping in the Caribbean, representatives of the French monarchy finally established

themselves in the region. From the tiny island that the French called Saint-Christophe, colonists of the royally chartered French West Indies Company claimed Martinique and then Guadeloupe in 1635. In both islands they cleared the land and planted tobacco to sell in Europe. In the 1640s thousands of Frenchmen indentured themselves as servants to plant, tend, and harvest this crop, hoping eventually to establish their own island farms. Missionary orders like the Dominicans insured that these new societies had priests and churches.

As Labat discovered in 1701, the territory France called Saint-Domingue was quite different from these relatively well-ordered Lesser Antilles colonies. The contrast in geography alone was striking. Although it occupies only one-third of the island that Spain named Santo Domingo, Haiti has a surface area ten times larger than Martinique and Guadeloupe combined. The volcanic cones of the Lesser Antilles rise only 4,800 feet above sea level, while Haiti's highest peak is 8,790 feet high, and two-fifths of its land is located at 1,200 feet above sea level, or higher. In effect, the country consists of three steep mountain chains, which divide it into eleven distinct geographic regions and create the Caribbean's most distinctive coastline, with two peninsulas north and south that enclose the island's western shore. More than half of Haiti's land is on an incline greater than 20 percent; only 17 percent is flat and suited for farming. Most of the land of the latter kind is found in three regions: the Artibonite Plain, the Northern Plain, and Cul-de-Sac. The remaining arable soil is distributed among a dozen smaller plains, tightly framed by steep mountain slopes.³

By 1700 this rugged geography had already affected Europeans' attempts to dominate the island. Although Columbus landed on the northwest coast in 1492 and established a settlement there, in 1496 Spain established its capital, Santo Domingo, in the tamer landscape of the island's southeastern plain. In the early 1500s, the less accessible western part of the island was a refuge for native Tainos holding out against the Spanish conquest.⁴ When disease and repression all but exterminated these people, the descendants of Spanish colonists established livestock herds in their place. Yet in 1605, Spain abandoned the western coast, burning its own towns and forcibly evacuating its colonists, because it could not stop the Dutch smugglers who routinely traded there for leather.⁵

The abandoned coastal plains teeming with feral cattle, pigs, and horses soon attracted naval deserters, runaway servants, and castaways, a group that was almost exclusively male. By 1650 at least 500 of these "Brothers of the Coast" lived along Santo Domingo's northwest coast, men with no single language or overarching loyalty

to any one European state. Alexander Oexmelin, who came here from Honfleur as a servant in 1666, described three distinct groups among the “Brothers.” The first people Oexmelin saw when he arrived in Saint-Domingue were the *boucaniers* or buccaneers who sold leather and *boucan*—smoked meat—to passing ships. Wearing only a belt bristling with knives and long drawers caked with blood, such long-bearded sun-baked frontiersmen could still be found in Saint-Domingue in the late eighteenth century.⁶ A second group, known as *flibustiers* or freebooters, was composed of pirates who preyed on local shipping or smugglers who traded illegally with Spanish colonies. Many of the buccaneers became freebooters after 1640 when Spanish officials, hoping to be rid of them, poisoned the wild cattle they hunted. This infusion of men emboldened freebooter groups to extend their attacks from Spanish shipping to port cities on the mainland.⁷

Oexmelin’s third group, the *habitants*, resembled French settlers in the Lesser Antilles. Though *habitant*, or “resident,” would come to mean “planter” in the eighteenth century, the word originally distinguished these farmers from their roving compatriots. They grew tobacco, cacao, and ginger to sell to the Dutch. Those who could afford it bought the contracts of indentured servants and worked them mercilessly. They formed impromptu household partnerships called *amatelotages*, from the word for sailor or “mate.”⁸

In the 1640s, France began sending official representatives and settlers from Saint-Christophe to Saint-Domingue, hoping to claim jurisdiction there.⁹ These would-be French governors established themselves on the island of Tortuga, along the northwest coast, the area with the greatest concentration of “Brothers.” From about 1650, changes in Martinique and Guadeloupe helped increase Saint-Domingue’s habitant population. Europeans increasingly refused to fill their snuff boxes and clay pipes with low-quality Caribbean tobacco, so wealthier colonists in the Lesser Antilles began to plant more lucrative crops. Tobacco’s ultimate replacement was sugar, which required an immense investment in time, toil, and technology. Sugarcanes needed more than nine months of sun, water, and careful tending before they could be harvested. Then, within hours of being cut, sweet, watery syrup had to be crushed out of the canes before they rotted. The cane juice in turn was refined into crystals, through a complex and expensive process. Planters needed skilled sugar makers, their own mills and refining houses, and animals to power their machinery. These investments required aspiring sugar producers to plant hundreds of acres in cane. In the Lesser Antilles large sugar estates began to swallow up tobacco farms in the 1660s.

Most important for the future of the Caribbean, a sugar plantation required dozens, even hundreds, of laborers, to cut and crush cane all day and night during harvest season. Because tobacco's declining profitability discouraged European servants, Lesser Antilles sugar planters turned to Dutch traders who brought them African slaves. By 1660, enslaved people composed one-half of Martinique's population; in 1684, more than two-thirds of the colony was in chains.¹⁰ These changes convinced even more tobacco farmers and European servants to flee these small islands. Guadeloupe's French population fell from 12,000 in 1656 to 3,083 in 1671.¹¹

Many of these refugees came to Saint-Domingue hoping to rebuild what they had lost. Royal authorities were glad to have them, for administrators were having difficulty convincing rootless buccaneers and freebooters to settle on the land and defend it against the Spanish and English. When low tobacco prices prompted some Dominguan habitants to abandon their farms, the colony's French governors encouraged new plantation crops and greater slave imports. They sponsored immigrants from Europe, especially women, who they hoped would domesticate the "Brothers." Along the island's most accessible coasts, Saint-Domingue's colonial population became increasingly settled. The royal census of 1681 counted "2,970 Frenchmen, able to carry arms," though it also noted 1,000 or 1,200 freebooters.¹²

As French colonists and royal administrators grew more numerous, Saint-Domingue's freebooters increasingly coordinated their raids with French foreign policy.¹³ When most of Europe went to war against Louis XIV in the 1680s and 1690s, French governors awarded naval commissions to Caribbean pirate captains, incorporating them into official attacks on English, Dutch, and Spanish colonies. This strategy made many men rich but failed to encourage a strong identification with the colony. When the English attacked Saint-Domingue in 1695, many of the freebooters and buccaneers saw no reason to defend the territory.¹⁴

Some did combine land ownership with piracy, however. Governor de Cussy in 1684 claimed that at least half of Saint-Domingue's freebooters used their profits to buy land, which their partners cultivated while they periodically went to sea.¹⁵ A French raid on Jamaica in 1694 relied heavily on freebooters, who brought back over 1,500 slaves to Saint-Domingue. After an attack on Cartagena in 1697, Saint-Domingue's governor Galiffet proposed giving slaves rather than gold to the 650 freebooters who comprised half of the French fleet, so they would settle in the colony.¹⁶

Despite government attempts to turn buccaneers into *habitants*, the distinctive frontier culture of these hunters and pirates was still visible in many parishes as late as 1789. The eighteenth century saw a huge influx of European and enslaved Africans, but Saint-Domingue's mountains prevented them from dispersing throughout the territory. In the 1780s, nine frontier districts out of a total of 24 in Saint-Domingue had population densities far under the colonial average.¹⁷

For example, the district of Mirebalais on the Spanish border was known in the beginning of the eighteenth century as a refuge for hunters (map 1.1). In the 1780s, it still had only 10 residents per square kilometer, compared to the colonial average of 23. Although colonists established sugar plantations here late in the colonial period, French authorities never subdivided the land into parishes. In his encyclopedic *Description* of Saint-Domingue, written in the late 1780s, Moreau de Saint-Méry reported: "the character of the residents of this district still reflects that of the old colonists. They are good, frank, courageous, and opposed to restrictions."¹⁸ The district of Jacmel, south of Mirebalais, was also on the Spanish border. In the 1780s Moreau described it as the least known region of the colony because of the lack of roads; his figures suggest it had a population density of 14 persons per square kilometer. Jacmel's easternmost parish had been a refuge for indigenous rebels and escaped slaves since Spanish times and in the 1780s Moreau could still not describe it with any certainty, because no roads yet penetrated the interior. Vallière was another district that had long attracted only hunters, escaped slaves, and those pursuing them. Only in 1773 did administrators formally establish it as a parish, and, ten years later, there were only seven persons per square kilometer living there. Nor were frontier zones limited to the Spanish border. The mountainous parish of Les Verettes, part of the district of Saint-Marc, had parish registers dating back to 1715, but there were still few plantations there at the time of the Haitian Revolution.¹⁹

The largest and most distinctive of Saint-Domingue's frontier zones was its southern peninsula. This narrow strip of land, some 225 kilometers (140 miles) long from east to west, but only 64 kilometers (40 miles) wide from north to south, has some of the highest elevations in the Caribbean. These mountains made it difficult to travel over land to the southern coast and sailing there from elsewhere in French territory was equally dangerous. Because treacherous shallows dot the peninsula's northern face and complex currents swirl around its tip, French merchant-ships preferred to trade in highly accessible Atlantic harbors like that at Cap Français. Although they visited some west-coast ports like Saint-Marc, Port-au-Prince, or



Map 1.1 Frontier Parishes: Vallière, Mirebalais, Verettes, and Cayes de Jacmel

Léogane, few made time for the voyage around the peninsula to reach Les Cayes, in the south.

This isolation was a source of great frustration to the region's colonists, but it fostered an unusual degree of sociability among them. In the 1760s, Gabriel Brueys d'Aigalliers wrote about southern planters' celebrations after marriages and baptisms, or when children returned from school in France. "These enormous dinners, nearly always followed by dancing . . . are a kind of continual party, each planter giving one in his turn as these occasions come about."²⁰ Twenty years later Moreau de Saint-Méry, who generally found colonists in Saint-Domingue as unattached to one another as guests in a hotel, was also impressed by the festivities held in Torbec parish, one of the oldest in the Cayes district. He attributed the congenial atmosphere, in part, to planters' propensity to stay on their estates, rather than return to France, as was the custom elsewhere in Saint-Domingue. In Les Cayes itself, the region's main port and administrative capital, Moreau attended a planter's club where he found "something that is only rarely encountered in Saint-Domingue: men who seem happy to be together."²¹

The isolation of the southern peninsula also favored the survival of aspects of buccaneer culture. In the 1780s Moreau found men in the Nippes district living like the seventeenth-century "Brothers of the Coast."²² In Aquin parish he was amazed to see colonists still wearing the distinctive blouses (*vareuses*) of the early settlers and dressing their children in old-fashioned Dutch bonnets.²³

As this last detail suggests, the region's distance from France attracted merchants from other countries. Saint-Domingue's southern coast was in easy sailing reach of Dutch Curaçao, British Jamaica, and the Spanish American mainland. For Saint-Domingue's seventeenth-century freebooters, this open road to the rest of the Caribbean was the peninsula's chief attraction. The pirate captains de Graff and Granmont launched an expedition of 1,000 men against the Yucatan Peninsula from here in 1685.²⁴ However, before 1700 only a few hunters and farmers were permanently established along the southern coast. In 1681 a royal census counted 21 male heads of household, 4 women, and 10 indentured servants.²⁵ De Graff's Yucatan raids had apparently altered the gender imbalance somewhat, for nearly all of the marriages recorded by priests in this region before 1700 involved kidnapped Mayan women.²⁶ Although the 1681 census identified no plantations, it counted 41 enslaved Africans, who already outnumbered French colonists. Seventeen of these Africans were women, and the region was already home to mixed-race creole children. The 1681

census described 23 people, collectively, as “*métis* and mulattos; male and female Indians.” On this remote coast, therefore, 40 percent of the free population fell outside the categories the census-taker described as “French.” Elsewhere in Saint-Domingue, such people composed roughly 10 percent of the free population.

After peace with Spain in 1697, which included formal recognition of French sovereignty over Saint-Domingue, Versailles withdrew its support from large raids like de Graff’s Yucatan expedition. Leading freebooters joined the more prosperous immigrants in building plantations. Those plains best suited for agriculture and for commerce with France filled with sugarcane and African slaves. Even as the richest buccaneers settled down, however, the anarchic spirit of the “Brothers of the Coast” remained a distinctive element of Saint-Domingue’s local culture. In 1701, Dominguan colonists’ lack of respect for the church scandalized Labat, the visiting Dominican.²⁷ Nor was he prepared for the social mobility and ostentation of Saint-Domingue’s pirates-turned-planters.

Every one forgets who he was when he came to the island, and I could name a number of men who came out as indentured servants and were sold to buccaneers, but who are now such great lords that they cannot walk a step but must always ride in their carriage and six horses.²⁸

The richest of these newly minted planters produced sugar. But men with fewer resources could make a reasonable profit growing and refining indigo dye for export. The indigo plant was so vulnerable to wind, rain, drought, and insects that it required far more labor than tobacco, at least two workers per *carreau* (2.8 acres). According to Labat, “The ground where one wants to plant the indigo seed is hoed and cleaned five times. . . . Sometimes cleanliness is taken so far that the soil is swept as one would sweep a room.” Moreover, manufacturing the dye required considerable equipment and skill. Indigo makers soaked and drained their harvest in a series of large masonry tanks, churning and paddling the water to increase the precipitation of dye particles. Although the putrid basins were said to spawn deadly diseases, merchants paid well for the dark powder left when the water drained away. Despite the cost of acquiring slave workers, digging wells, and building vats, indigo required less than half as much land and labor as sugar.²⁹ And planters with capital or credit could get these workers from Dutch, English, and French merchants plying a rapidly growing African trade. In the 1680s, enslaved African men and women were already one-third of Saint-Domingue’s non-freebooter

population.³⁰ In 1713 they were 80 percent, and the colony had over 1,000 indigo works.³¹

As slavery and plantation agriculture grew, Saint-Domingue's governors continued to consolidate their authority. They gave militia commissions to prominent buccaneers and freebooters, urging them to dragoon their neighbors into regular musters, assign guard duty, and arrest troublemakers. With militia rank these former pirate captains also functioned as parish administrators, reporting to the governor about local fortifications, conducting censuses, repressing slave unrest, tallying local food supplies, and overseeing road maintenance.³²

In a similar attempt to implant and legitimize French institutions, in 1685 the naval secretary established the Sovereign Council of Petit Goâve, a high court with jurisdiction over four lower colonial courts.³³ By the early 1700s Saint-Domingue had two sovereign councils, a new one in the emerging sugar center of Cap Français and the other in Léogane, transferred from nearby Petit Goâve.³⁴ Loosely patterned on France's provincial parlements, the two councils were primarily courts of appeal. But they also had legislative powers, and were required to register all royal edicts before they could be recognized locally as law, a prerogative that allowed them to delay and debate royal policies. Unlike French magistrates, however, Saint-Domingue's early judges were uneducated men who wore their swords to court, believing "that whoever fought the best, also judged the best." In 1711 the Count d'Arguyan described the colonial bench as "a rustic vision" where legal judgments were rendered "pipe-in-mouth," with none of the erudition of France's regional parlements.³⁵

This gradually changed, as Saint-Domingue's coastal zones imported more slaves and exported more sugar. Profits from the most successful estates allowed rough-edged planters to send their children to France to be educated. As planters succeeded buccaneers, the colonial bench became more socially prestigious.³⁶ Judges were proud of their equivalence to French magistrates and the crown encouraged this at mid-century by giving them the right to don black robes. In 1752 the Léogane Council moved to the new city and administrative capital of Port-au-Prince.³⁷

The rise of planting also heightened colonists' resentment of the militia, which had never been popular among the buccaneer rank and file. In 1665, residents of Petit-Goâve described France's first attempts to require militia service as "the beginning of servitude." In 1701 Labat observed that nearly all Saint-Domingue's free residents were accomplished fighters who saw no reason for French troops, when they could defend themselves well enough. The following year,

administrators reported that "The [obligation to serve in an] ordinary militia watch is unbearable to the settlers, who, to escape it, move to distant districts like . . . the southern peninsula where there is no government."³⁸

Another reason French colonists hated militia service was that few of them, before 1763, had much experience with it. In France, exemptions were so widely available during the first two-thirds of the eighteenth century that for every 100,000 French people, only about 200 men served at arms. Militia duty was especially rare in France's western provinces, in which a majority of colonists were born.³⁹

In Saint-Domingue, however, militia participation was mandatory for all free men between the ages of 15 and 55.⁴⁰ Established colonists and immigrants alike resented the time they sacrificed to guard duty and reviews every two months. Planters ignored orders that inconvenienced them or requisitioned their slaves to build fortifications. Describing the impossibility of shaming planters into military service, one governor complained to Versailles, "Here no one is embarrassed by anything, except not making money."⁴¹ Faced with this apathy, the colonial state began to award command of parish militias to career military officers, rather than to old buccaneers or their sons. Vested with full administrative and military powers, these veterans of the royal army or navy punished crimes and frequently intervened in civil disputes as well. In 1755 one royal official wrote that the military commander and aide-major of Port-au-Prince heard more cases and settled more controversies in two days than the capital's royal judge did in a week.⁴² Colonial magistrates complained bitterly that such actions usurped their authority. While military leaders insisted that swift and harsh actions were necessary to maintain order, colonial judges accused them of benefiting personally from their unchecked power.

Another source of political tension in Saint-Domingue was the *exclusif*, France's monopoly on all colonial trade. In the seventeenth century, Dutch merchants had been the main commercial conduit between the French Caribbean and European markets. They paid relatively high prices for tobacco, sugar, and indigo, and sold slaves, tools, and provisions, often on generous credit. But in 1670 the French crown began to enforce its own mercantile policies rigorously in Saint-Domingue, doing its best to drive away Dutch and English smugglers. The change was a shock to Saint-Domingue's buccaneers and farmers. With the encouragement of Dutch captains, the "Brothers of the Coast" in the Nippes district took up arms against the French government for more than a year, as did others across the colony.⁴³ In 1722 and 1723, Saint-Domingue again revolted against

the royal administration for awarding a commercial monopoly to the royally chartered Company of the Occident. Colonists influenced by the angry planter-judges in the Léogane Council held the Company responsible for the shortage of circulating currency and for high labor prices, caused by its exclusive slave trading privileges.⁴⁴

But the most important political tension in eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue was between those who lived in freedom and the men and women they held in bondage. Membership in one of these two groups was marked in many ways, most of them written in a man's or woman's flesh. Slavery was based on race, though this was a word that most Europeans up to the 1770s still associated with family descent or social class, rather than physiognomy.⁴⁵ Almost all of those who worked and died in Saint-Domingue's cane fields were physically identifiable as non-Europeans, specifically, as Africans or descendants of Africans. In addition to their darker skin, distinctive hair, and occasionally, filed teeth or ritual scars, slaves' bodies carried the marks made by their masters: stripes from the whip, lacerations from manacles, stockades, and other more fearsome punishments. Planters burned distinctive symbols into Africans' flesh to further mark them as property. Many men and women bore three or four of these slave brands.

The brutality of Dominguan slavery was in part due to masters' fears of a servile population that vastly outnumbered them. From 1681 to 1713, while Saint-Domingue's settler population grew 30 percent (from 4,336 to 5,648), its slave population increased nearly 1,050 percent (2,102 to 24,156).⁴⁶ Martinique and Guadeloupe had experienced a similar transformation a few decades earlier. But Saint-Domingue's size allowed colonists there to build far larger estates. Economies of scale meant that planters' investments in land, machinery, livestock, irrigation, and the humans they regarded as chattel produced much greater profits than in the Lesser Antilles. There were approximately five enslaved Africans for every colonist in Saint-Domingue in 1713, and these slave numbers rose throughout the eighteenth century, especially with the acceleration of the slave trade after 1720 and then again after 1783. At the time of the French Revolution, the colony had more than ten slaves, on average, for every free person. Because of its land area, slave force, and capital investment in mills and irrigation, Saint-Domingue produced more commodities than any other contemporary Caribbean society. British Jamaica, its closest rival, remained far behind after the 1760s, not only in sheer export tonnage but also in production efficiency.⁴⁷

By this time every aspect of life in Saint-Domingue involved slavery, on and off the plantation. Bound workers turned the wheels of the

colony's economy so that masters with little more than a livestock pen, banana grove, or carpentry shop considered slaves vital to their livelihood. In plantation houses and in city residences slaves served as cooks, housekeepers, valets and grooms; they cut wood in thickly grown hollows, dug irrigation channels, and shouldered roof beams in urban construction projects. At wharves and jetties along the Dominguan, coast slave rowers and stevedores hauled provisions arriving from France and loaded barrels of sugar, coffee, and indigo bound for the metropole. In the colony white men did not work with their hands, so French immigrants bought or leased slaves and taught them their crafts. Slaves were such an integral component of any commercial enterprise in Saint-Domingue that their owners frequently sold them together with the plantations, warehouses, and sailing vessels in which they worked.

In the Lesser Antilles the slave population was mostly island-born by the middle of the eighteenth century. But Saint-Domingue's high death rates and the ongoing expansion of plantation agriculture meant that African-born slaves nearly always outnumbered those native to the colony. Over time many of Saint-Domingue's African slaves were "creolized" by Caribbean slavery, and those slaves born in the island were true "creoles," at home in a syncretic island-culture. They spoke a vernacular their predecessors had built out of the various African and European languages used in the slave trade. The successive waves of Africans shipped to Saint-Domingue imported diverse religious traditions, which formed, with Catholicism, the roots of modern Haitian *Vodou*.⁴⁸

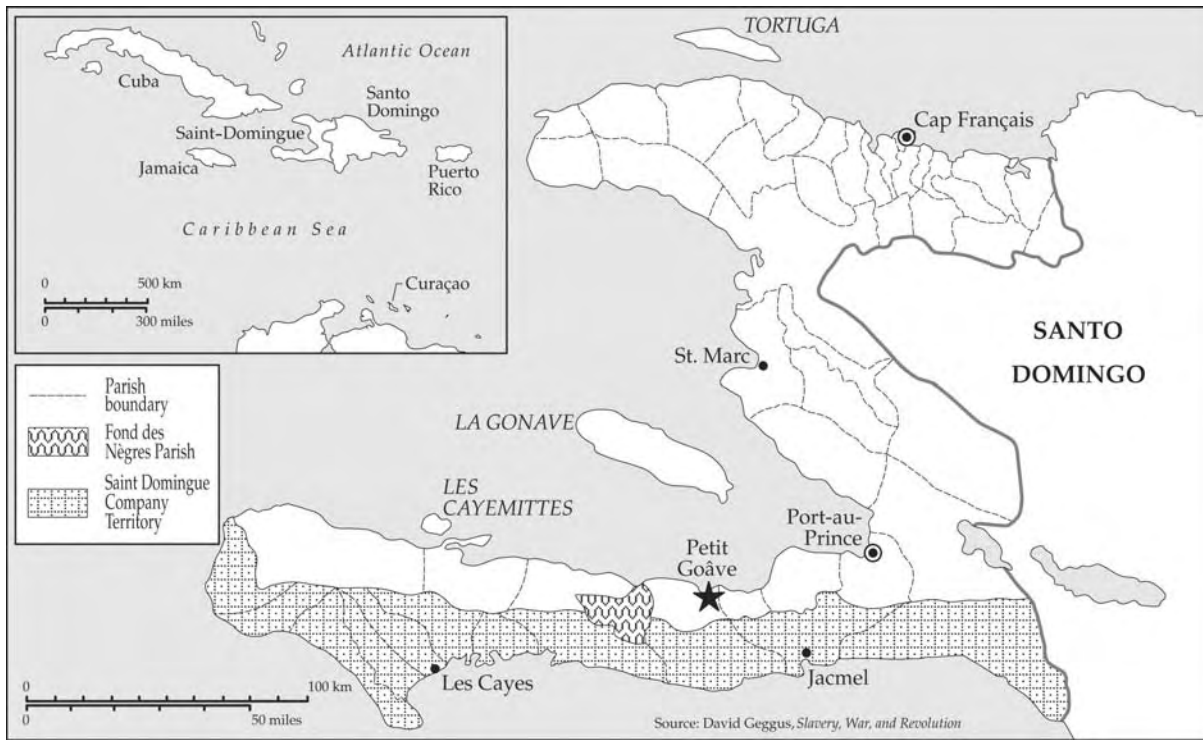
Life in Saint-Domingue also changed Europeans and their island-born children. Climate, slavery, the African cultures of the slaves, and the buccaneers' irreligiosity and suspicion of authority all transformed colonists into creoles, who spoke the same vernacular as island-born slaves. One Frenchman arriving in the colony in 1730 noted, "[I] thought myself transplanted to an unknown country whose inhabitants were French solely in their language, which most, it seemed, had only borrowed."⁴⁹ Moreau de Saint-Méry, a creole from Martinique himself, described Saint-Domingue's creoles as differing from the metropolitan French in personality and even physique.⁵⁰ Although European observers deplored the colony's social and spiritual anarchy, many did find positive elements in creole culture. Early tobacco farmers might have worked their indentured servants, and later, their slaves, to death, but the partnerships they established with other free men formed a "perfect community," resembling a family. Charlevoix found the buccaneers profane and vicious, but praised their hospitality,

a trait he believed they had passed to creole planters. He continued, "The charity of our creoles toward orphans is no less praiseworthy; the Public [*sic*] is never burdened with them. . . . the first ones who can take these poor children keep them in their home and support them all with the same care as if they were their own children."⁵¹

Bondage established a deep chasm between creole masters, especially those able to marry and socialize with European immigrants, and creole slaves, especially those who worked and founded families with imported Africans. There was, therefore, no single creole culture in Saint-Domingue. Instead, those born in the island exhibited a range of Euro-creole and Afro-creole sets of attitudes, affinities, and behaviors, the coherence and content of which was constantly evolving with new arrivals from across the water. These varieties of creole culture were a product of the class relations produced by plantation slavery and the impact of immigration from different parts of Europe and Africa. On the colony's frontier, however, isolation from Atlantic shipping, the rarity of large slave estates, and buccaneer customs, including the improvised partnerships called *amatelotages*, minimized these divisions. The geography of the southern peninsula, especially, outweighed the attempts of the French crown to create a colonial society tightly bound to France by commerce and culture. Instead, colonists in the South Peninsula gravitated towards trade with the rest of the Caribbean.

The ease of this inter-American commerce, in fact, was what prompted the formal colonization of the region. In 1698, Louis XIV awarded complete jurisdiction over this territory to the newly chartered Saint-Domingue Company (map 1.2). Courtiers had petitioned the king for these monopoly rights, anticipating that Spain would grant France permission to supply Spanish America with African slaves. When England held this *asiento* privilege, merchants based in Jamaica had often doubled their money, using the slave trade as a cover to sell contraband to Spanish colonists.⁵² The officers of the Saint-Domingue Company hoped their new territory would replace Jamaica in this trade, and become France's gateway to the rich Spanish American market. In 1702, as expected, Spain awarded the *asiento* to France.

In addition to its smuggling plans, the Company invited planters to settle in the southern peninsula. It provided them with land, credit, and slaves, but required them to sell it their sugar, indigo, and other export crops. In 1713, after building a fort, trading counters, administrative offices, and parish churches, the Company had attracted 644 immigrants, with 2,947 slaves.⁵³ Seven years later the territory had at



Map 1.2 Fonds des Nègres and the Lands of the Saint-Domingue Company, 1698–1720

least 797 free inhabitants with 4,818 slaves. In 1713 the southern coast had 6 sugar plantations; in 1720 there were 23 sugar works, some with more than 100 slaves.⁵⁴

But the Company could not replace established English and Dutch smugglers, as it had hoped. Not only did it fail to win Spanish-American customers away from these more experienced interlopers, but even its own settlers traded with the foreign ships that visited the southern coast almost daily. The Company's edicts, checkpoints, and officials could not stop this activity.⁵⁵ Smugglers were eager to buy sugar but they also paid well for cacao, which they sold to chocolate makers in Europe and Spanish America.

Like tobacco in the early seventeenth century, cacao was a crop small farmers could grow profitably, even without slave labor. In the 1690s an official in Spanish Caracas wrote that "a poor person, one with no funds at all, could plant and reap profits from a thousand-tree cacao grove, provided the cacao groves were properly located and judiciously managed."⁵⁶ Cacao trees flourished in Saint-Domingue's mountain valleys, and Dominguan cacao was said to be as good as that from Caracas and Maricaibo. By 1708 the colony was producing enough to reduce the profits of Martiniquean growers. French Caribbean cacao, carried by Dutch and French smugglers, flooded the Veracruz market until 1716.⁵⁷ In Jamaica, the traveler Gregorio de Robles met Jewish merchants who told him that they traded for cacao with "the Indians, mulattos and mestizos" throughout the Caribbean basin.⁵⁸ Certainly these Jamaican Jewish merchants were trading with Saint-Domingue's southern peninsula in 1701, when Father Labat visited Fonds des Nègres' cacao groves and wrote about the growing free colored families they supported.⁵⁹ At the dawn of the eighteenth century, smugglers may have been helping the planters of the Saint-Domingue Company build large slave estates, but they were also enabling the growth of a free population of color on this frontier.

Then, in 1715 and 1716, a cacao blight struck. Although the southern peninsula produced cacao until the 1750s, the disease dramatically reduced exports.⁶⁰ However some farmers may have built up enough financial resources or credit before the blight to begin planting indigo. In 1713, there were already 171 indigo estates in the districts of Les Cayes, Saint Louis, and Aquin, in the southern peninsula. Because it did not lose its value in storage the way sugar did, indigo was an ideal smuggler's crop. Like cacao before it, much of the dye produced in the lands of the Saint-Domingue Company went to English and Dutch merchants, who probably established their own agents in French territory. In 1720, for example, a resident of the

Les Cayes plain named Jacob Vanderpar had eight slaves and no recorded agricultural installations. Others had Sephardic Jewish names like Saporta, with one indigo basin and ten slaves, or Depas, with 50 slaves and no indigo or sugar works.⁶¹

In 1720, Versailles dissolved the Saint-Domingue Company, for the first time bringing the southern coast under direct royal administration. The territory became Saint-Domingue's South Province, joining the North Province, with its great port at Cap Français, and the West Province, the site of the colony's eighteenth-century capitals, Léogane and then Port-au-Prince.⁶² This administrative change brought a few more royal officials into the region, but it did little to challenge the local smuggling trade. After 1720, colonists saw few French merchants and those who did sail to this far side of Saint-Domingue did not readily offer credit. In fact, the end of the Company's operations ruined many small planters, and a number of retired freebooters returned to their old livelihood. From 1720 to 1733, piracy all but paralyzed shipping along the southern coast. Outlaws regularly attacked both the small boats ferrying French goods from the colony's main ports and the larger ships of Dutch and English smugglers. Without a permanent naval station in the region, local officials could only extend amnesties to pirates, hoping they would turn to planting or trade.⁶³

While coastal piracy did subside in the 1730s, smuggling did not. Saint-Domingue's Governor de Fayet believed that colonists in the South Province had sold 30 million livres worth of commodities to Jamaica from 1720 to 1733.⁶⁴ In 1732 the French naval secretary approved Fayet's suggestion to fill the main harbor on the Ile à Vaches opposite Les Cayes or divert its fresh water source into the sea to discourage smugglers based there. Neither of these projects was ever undertaken, for Fayet realized that credit from English merchants was essential to the region's planters.⁶⁵

As if to cement this illicit commercial relationship, in 1738, emissaries from Jamaica, probably indigo smugglers, established Saint-Domingue's first Masonic lodge, "Frères Unis," in the town of Les Cayes.⁶⁶ In 1748, Dominguan indigo planters proved their brotherly unity when they helped the British capture the virtually impregnable fort of Saint Louis in order to load their French dye onto enemy warships. Jamaican merchants got so much of this product from Saint-Domingue that British authorities proposed destructive raids on French plantations to encourage their own indigo growers.⁶⁷

Among the most important and durable of the networks connecting the southern peninsula to Jamaica and the rest of the

Caribbean were those built by Jewish merchant families. By the end of the seventeenth century, Portuguese-speaking Sephardic merchants in Jamaica and Curaçao had a lucrative trade with Saint-Domingue. In 1723 the Sephardic merchant David Gradis of Bordeaux, well aware of this commerce, sent his nephew Jacob Mendes to the southern peninsula for indigo shipments. Mendes settled in Les Cayes where he and David Mirande, who had worked in the Gradis counting house, served as an agent for their kinsman until the late 1740s. Between 1727 and 1735 a third relative in Martinique directed 11 of 17 Gradis ships on to Saint-Domingue, mostly to the southern peninsula.⁶⁸

Michel Depas, another member of the Gradis family network, may have arrived in Saint-Domingue from Bordeaux before 1720 to participate in the cacao trade. The census of that year shows a Depas household in the Aquin region, which by some accounts included Fond des Nègres, with its fertile cacao groves. The fact that this household reported no sugar mill or indigo basin in 1720, but had 50 slaves, far more than enough to manage its herd of 25 horses and 96 sheep, suggests it may have been a large cacao estate, struggling to deal with the blight. Beginning in the early 1720s, perhaps discouraged by cacao's decline, Michel Depas of Bordeaux served as royal doctor and judge in Petit Goâve. He eventually left this post to settle permanently in Fond des Nègres. Publicly converting to Catholicism, Depas donated "a large and inexpert painting" of his patron saint to the parish church there, which took the name Saint-Michel.⁶⁹

Michel Depas's brothers followed him from Bordeaux to the southern frontier and by mid-century they were successful planters there too. François Depas raised nine legitimate children in Aquin parish. In 1763, Philippe Lopez Depas, a third sibling, owned an Aquin estate with 63 slaves valued at 200,000 livres. Antoine-Joachim Lopez de Paz, possibly a relative, owned part of an indigo plantation not far away in Anse à Veau parish and another Lopez de Paz had half a share in a coffee estate in the frontier parish of Mirebalais. Through commerce and marriage the Aquin branch of the Depas clan maintained its ties to the Sephardic merchant families of Bordeaux, including the Gradis. They also participated in contraband trade with Curaçao, where Lopez Depas was a common name in the marriage registers of the Jewish community.⁷⁰

The presence of this thriving Jewish population in the South Province illustrates the difficulty royal officials had in enforcing laws on the frontier. For in 1685 the French crown had expressly barred Jews from its Antilles possessions. Although the policy was enforced in Martinique and Guadeloupe, Saint-Domingue's colonists mostly

ignored it, as they did most royal attempts to impose European legal and moral ideals on plantation society.

The most important of these attempts was the Code Noir, a collection of laws written by French scholars in the 1680s for France's emerging Caribbean slave colonies. The Code was based on Roman slave law, though prominent planters and colonial officials did review and revise it. Published in 1685, the new collection represented France's attempt to balance planters' concerns about security and profit, against a European religious and legal framework, which included the prohibition on Jewish colonists.⁷¹

In Saint-Domingue, this balance was never achieved. Notorious for their independence and materialism, the colony's ex-freebooters would not accept Versailles' guidance on how to drive and discipline their slaves. From the 1680s to the 1780s they and their successors largely ignored requirements to instruct slaves in Catholicism, supply them with prescribed amounts of food and clothing, and cancel work on holy days. As royal officials feared, Dominguan planters accepted slave deaths as a cost of production, and counted on commerce to bring replacement workers from Africa. It was more profitable for many estates to export the maximum amount of sugar and import new Africans than it was to reduce working hours and provide good food so slaves would live longer.

French jurists wrote the Code Noir with specific articles designed to prevent these abuses, but when it was published, the new slave law also contained loopholes. For example, while ordering royal attorneys to prosecute masters who tortured or neglected their slaves, the Code barred enslaved people from any role in the courts. Moreover it authorized local officials to absolve masters whose cruelty had been "necessary."⁷² As slaves grew from 30 percent to 80 and 90 percent of Saint-Domingue's population, officials grew even more reluctant to interfere with a master's power to discipline his slaves. In 1771, during a panic over a rumored slave conspiracy, judges of the regional court in Cap Français admitted that royal justice should not come between masters and slaves: "There are cruel times when necessity dictates that the law must turn a blind eye."⁷³ In practical terms, masters had almost complete life-and-death power over their slaves.

Over time, metropolitan officials came to believe that planters' short-term goals threatened slavery's long-term viability. They hoped that new laws establishing masters' rights and responsibilities would make colonial slavery more stable and more profitable for the kingdom. But colonists described Versailles' attempts to improve slave conditions in the 1780s as "tyrannical." In 1787 the naval secretary

had to dissolve the Council of Cap Français because its judges would not register his decrees allowing royal administrators to inspect the living conditions of estate slaves.⁷⁴

French officials were slightly more successful in limiting planters' ability to free their slaves, but that success came decades after 1685. In its original form, the Code Noir gave masters almost complete freedom to free slaves. According to the 1685 law, any slave owner who was 20 years old or more could manumit his human property without explanation. Besides the threat of torture and death, the promise of manumission was the most powerful tool slave owners had. Masters made conditional offers of liberty to motivate slaves to work harder. And they used liberty to rid themselves of slaves who were too old or sick to work productively.⁷⁵

Sexuality was another important aspect of manumission, especially in frontier areas where there were few European women. In Saint-Domingue, like most other slave societies in the hemisphere, women and children comprised about two-thirds of all slaves freed by masters. Dominguan society, contemporaries noted, expected men to manumit and provide support for the sons and daughters they had with slave women. The same was said of planters in Jamaica.⁷⁶ However the detailed journal kept for 36 years by Thomas Thistlewood, an Englishman who managed a series of isolated estates in the mid-eighteenth-century Jamaica, provides a wider perspective on such relationships. Thistlewood, who assiduously described the sadistic punishments he devised for slaves, recorded engaging in 1,774 acts of sexual intercourse in 13 years with 109 different slave women.⁷⁷ No single term can describe all of these encounters. Most were rapes, but there were times Thistlewood paid enslaved women for sex. Moreover, he took a slave woman named Phibba as his common-law wife, had a son with her, manumitted that child, and arranged for Phibba's freedom in his testament.⁷⁸

Thistlewood's extraordinary document reveals that affectionate manumission was just one element of white men's sexual behaviors on isolated colonial estates.⁷⁹ Plantation records suggest that eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue was full of men like Thistlewood, who built relationships and families with a few women of color, while they used rape as an instrument of control with many others.⁸⁰ David Geggus calculates from slave inventories that between one-quarter and one-fifth of pregnant slave women under the age of 20 were carrying the child of a white man. The same inventories prove that many mulatto children remained in bondage, comprising about 3 to 5 percent of the slave force. If, at the end of the eighteenth century, colonists

had freed all slaves with European ancestors, Saint-Domingue's free population of color might have increased by at least 50 percent.⁸¹

In spite of the power they gave to masters, the jurists of 1685 hoped to preserve colonists from the sin of concubinage. Article Nine of the Code Noir proclaimed that if a master had a child with a slave woman, he would irrevocably forfeit the mother and baby to the government. If that master married the slave woman, however, the same Article Nine declared her automatically free, along with the couple's children.⁸² This apparent endorsement of interracial marriage illustrates that in 1685, French Caribbean racial ideology was still solidifying. According to Father Dutertre, a seventeenth-century missionary in the Lesser Antilles, Frenchmen there who married African women were "esteemed to be members of honest society . . . [Due to] the lack of French women one accommodates oneself to this necessity."⁸³ In fact, in the mid-seventeenth century, colonists on these small islands considered the children of French fathers and enslaved African women to be free, because of their father's status. In the 1660s, however, as capital-intensive indigo and sugar estates crowded out small tobacco plots in Martinique and Guadeloupe, planters began to protest when other colonists impregnated their slaves, producing free children who were an expense for the mother's owner. To safeguard property rights it was decreed sometime after 1664 that such children would serve their mother's master until they were 20. In 1680, Guadeloupe's council took another step, ruling that all children of slave women would remain slaves, no matter who the father was. Property rights now outweighed the child's part-French ethnic identity, and the Code Noir maintained this principle, consistent with the Roman slave law doctrine.⁸⁴

However, marriage would wipe away the slavery of mother and child. Moreover, reflecting their understanding of ancient Roman practice, the Code's authors decreed that these ex-slaves and their children were legally indistinguishable from French colonists.⁸⁵

We grant manumitted slaves the same rights, privileges, and liberties enjoyed by freeborn persons; desiring that they merit this acquired liberty and that it produce in them, both for their persons and for their property, the same effects that the good fortune of natural liberty causes in our other subjects.⁸⁶

In formal terms, therefore, in 1685 the French crown defined slavery as a legal, not a racial, condition. The Code Noir did contain hints of prejudice against freedmen, perhaps reflecting colonists' early revisions. It put special burdens on ex-slaves. For example, those who

stole horses, cattle, or other valuable livestock were declared susceptible to the same corporal punishments as slaves, including death. The law prescribed harsher penalties for freedmen who sheltered escaped slaves than for freeborn people guilty of the same offense.⁸⁷ But the original Code did not describe freedmen, or their offenses, in racial terms.

After 1685, colonial administrators and creole judges gradually corrected much of what they perceived as the Code's leniency on questions of race and freedom. In 1711, for example, Guadeloupe outlawed interracial marriages.⁸⁸ Another local ordinance that year, confirmed by Versailles in 1713, required the colonial governor's written consent for any freedom a master granted; in 1721 and 1722, administrators established further bureaucratic obstacles to manumission. Finally, in 1726, the Lesser Antilles restricted the property whites could give former slaves or the children of slaves.⁸⁹

Saint-Domingue's colonists, however, were not concerned with limiting the size or wealth of their free population of color. Living amid a slave population that was much larger and more African than in the Lesser Antilles, Saint-Domingue's two councils never registered or enforced the 1726 royal ordinance that limited the value of gifts from colonists to ex-slaves.⁹⁰ Nor did they ever prohibit whites from marrying people of color. The complex social realities of frontier slavery, described below, account for this important omission.

Unlike colonists, Saint-Domingue's royal governors did worry about unrestricted manumission and tried repeatedly to limit masters' powers in this realm. In the early 1700s they claimed that freedmen disrupted the slave system, insulted colonists, dealt in stolen property, sold alcohol to slaves, and sheltered maroons. In 1711, therefore, administrators amended the Code's manumission policy. All bona fide manumissions in Saint-Domingue now had to be explained to the governor in writing and approved by him. The following year the Council of Cap Français revoked the liberties granted in a colonist's testament, ruling that he had freed too many of his workers.⁹¹ Yet these laws do not seem to have had much effect. In the 1730s, Saint-Domingue's administrators were still complaining about planters' self-serving use of manumissions. In 1736 they were obliged to republish the requirement that the governor approve all liberties.

Indeed, Saint-Domingue's governors were themselves ambivalent about manumission. Despite their complaints about free coloreds causing social problems, from the beginning of the eighteenth century they used ex-slaves to supplement their unpopular militia and replace royal soldiers who died of tropical diseases or deserted in high

numbers. The governor awarded freedoms and pensions to many of the slaves who participated in the 1697 raid on Cartagena. Two years later, with official approval, these ex-slaves created their own militia company, to avoid being locked out of leadership roles in the regular militia units where freeborn people, including people of mixed ancestry and whites, served together. In June 1721 the colonial government named Antoine Thomany of Cap Français “Major of the Company of Free Blacks in the Cap Region,” after freeing him for service to the colony.⁹²

The talents of these men were a constant temptation to royal administrators. In 1733, Governor DeFayet acknowledged that there were men of color suitable for leadership roles when he informed the commander of Cap Français that “no inhabitant of mixed blood is permitted to hold a position in the magistracy nor in the militia.” This prohibition explains why free mulattos and other men of mixed ancestry requested, sometime after 1724, to be allowed to form militia units separate from whites. Like ex-slaves before them, freeborn men realized that if they wanted to attain officer rank, they would have to muster separately. In 1740 a letter from the colonial ministry described “the softness that has come over the planters” but pointed out that free blacks and mulattos “have always been seen as the principal strength of the colony.”⁹³ Saint-Domingue’s governors, in other words, were opposed to manumission by colonists. In their eyes government manumission, however, was acceptable, even desirable.

From the viewpoint of Saint-Domingue’s enslaved majority, administrators’ praises and the Code Noir’s liberal manumission policies meant little or nothing. Few of the colony’s hundreds of thousands of slaves would ever be legally free, or even know another slave who had been manumitted. David Geggus calculates that in the 1770s and 1780s, Dominguan masters freed fewer than 3 out of 1,000 slaves in a given year.⁹⁴

However, an official deed was not a slave’s only route to some degree of freedom. While most of the colony’s plantation slaves were trapped in the crushing routine of daily fieldwork, roughly one-fifth worked as artisans, domestic servants, guards, or animal drivers. Such persons enjoyed a wider range of mobility and personal autonomy than field slaves did. Some masters turned their most talented slaves out to earn money for the estate through contract work or self-leasing. Others gave an old or favored slave an informal *liberté de savane*, which allowed him or her to live independently on plantation property. Saint-Domingue’s slaves also attained freedom through their own actions, including marronage or escape. Nearly 6 percent of

the slaves on the Laborde plantations in the Cayes plain were temporarily absent from the estate without permission every year, making 500 cases over a period of 20 to 25 years. Eighty of these were examples of so-called *grand marronage*, in which workers escaped permanently, either living in the wilderness or passing for free in colonial society.⁹⁵

And, for those rare people of color who did attain freedom, legally or illegally, before the 1760s, it was possible to make a place in a colonial society for themselves. As Labat's 1701 description of Fonds des Nègres confirms, the availability of hillside land and the importance of smuggling opened many economic possibilities for free people of color. Despite the brutality of the plantation regime, colonists developed relationships of patronage, partnership, and affection with some enslaved people, especially in frontier districts, and these produced new freedoms. In a number of cases, colonial society accepted the wealthiest free men and women of color as white, that is, as colonists and full members of the master class.

Because enslaved African people and their children were the blood-and-muscle of Saint-Domingue's economy, many students of the colony have overestimated the rigidity of racial categories, over time.⁹⁶ In the 1780s, for example, Moreau de Saint-Méry insisted that racial identity was an objective fact. Yet as he attempted to trace the growth of Saint-Domingue's free population of color using royal census documents, Moreau admitted his surprise that the census of 1703 counted only 500 of these people.⁹⁷ In fact the inconsistency of colonial census records proves that such color categories were highly subjective. Not only did racial designations change over time, but observers in different regions applied them differently. On the frontier, gender and property as well as physical appearance defined which free person was a "mulatto" and who was simply a colonist. A number of women with African ancestors fell into this second category.

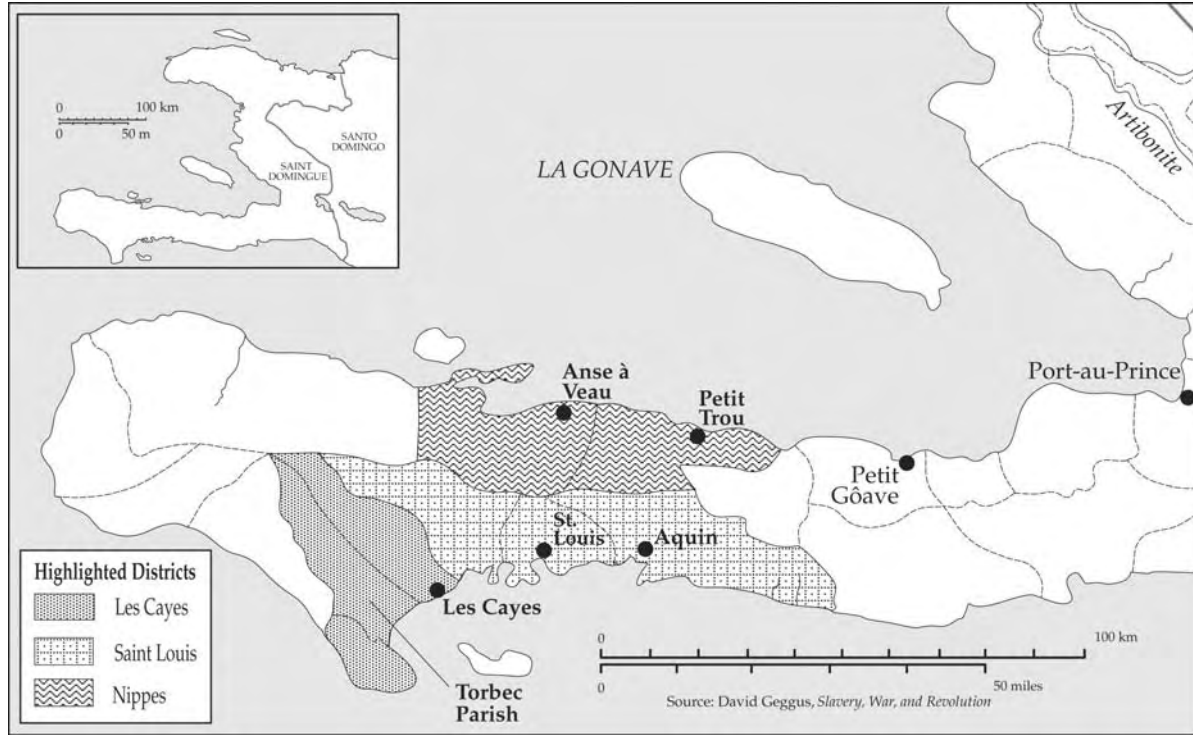
As Father Labat's comments prove, authorities and travelers in the southern peninsula around 1700 were quite aware that some free people living there were French and others were not. A census taken in 1713 described 62 residents of the districts of Les Cayes, Saint Louis, and Aquin as "free Indians, blacks, and mulattos."⁹⁸ But in 1720 the official who counted households in the former lands of the defunct Saint-Domingue Company did not record this racial information. The economic crisis caused by the collapse of the Company had produced more rootless buccaneers and potential outlaws than the southern peninsula had ever known.⁹⁹ It seems likely that as the militia officer listed the names of the 265 households under his command he was

thinking about how to turn these nomadic men into settled habitants. His document identified free people only as “men,” “women,” “children,” or “volunteers and white servants.” Although French officials elsewhere in the colony were counting “whites” separately from “free mulattos,” this officer recorded a racial label for only one household, that headed by “Claude *mulâtre*,” who owned five slaves.¹⁰⁰

Saint-Domingue’s administrators and others had long observed how marriage helped tame the colony’s frontiersmen. Since 1665 officials had been proposing to recruit and send French women to the colony for this very purpose, and de Graff’s freebooters brought Indian women from the Yucatan back to the southern peninsula. In 1701, Father Labat dined in Les Cayes with a 60-year-old ex-pirate who had recently married another colonist’s 13-year-old daughter.¹⁰¹ Colonial censuses routinely described girls older than 12 as “of marrying age.”

The 1720 census of the southern coastline confirms how difficult it was for men here to find a female partner who was not in slavery. There were only 155 free women living with the 352 male heads of household in the territory. Though the census-taker had no apparent interest in their ethnic identity, some local priests did. Marriage registers in parishes adjoining the census region recorded that from 1710 to 1720, and again from 1720 to 1730, approximately 17 percent of religious unions were interracial.¹⁰² Sixty years later a descendant of one of these early marriages described the situation in the 1720s: “All the planters of color and all those who had married girls of color did not identify their color; and since the general census was compiled only from individual declarations, all the[se] colored planters . . . were counted as whites, because the government did not go to check the color of the respondents.”¹⁰³ Nor did administrators care whether these frontier couples were legally married or if the woman was technically a slave. Whether she was free, slave, Indian, European, or African was less important to local administrators than the way a woman’s presence helped domesticate this wild frontier. Such conditions explain why a third of the surnames on the 1720 census (90 of 265) were borne by families described in the 1780s as free people of color.¹⁰⁴

A document summarizing the general colonial census of 1730 confirms that gender was more important than race for administrators in the southern peninsula. Officials across the colony were asked to count free people of color, but those in charge of tabulating results from the Les Cayes, Nippes, and Saint Louis districts (map 1.3) did not find a single adult woman in this group that year. They reported 152 free men of color and 199 boys, but the only females in this category,



Map 1.3 The Districts of Les Cayes, Saint Louis and Nippes

apparently, were 11 girls under the age of 12, all of them living in Saint Louis. In fact, the census-takers in more than half the colony's districts left the column "free *mulâtresses*" blank, suggesting that the ambiguity of free women's identity was widespread.¹⁰⁵

It is likely that in 1730 there were many women in Saint-Domingue who would have been described as "free colored" in the 1780s. Notarial records show that owners in the Nippes district, for example, liberated four times as many adult women as men from slavery between 1721 and 1770, so that more than two-thirds of Nippes's free people of color may have been female. In 1734 an official in Les Cayes wrote that there were "few white persons of pure blood; they are almost all mulattos or descendants of such."¹⁰⁶

Further proof of officials' reluctance to attach racial labels to settled households in which white men lived with women of color comes from Baintet parish in the southern peninsula. The 1730 census counted 317 whites here and only 12 free people of color.¹⁰⁷ Four years earlier a French immigrant named Pierre Raymond had stood before a priest and married Marie Begasse, the daughter of a Baintet planter named François Begasse and his wife Catherine. This couple provided a large dowry of 15,000 livres for Marie, who was one of three or perhaps four children. Pierre Raymond brought 6,000 livres to the new household, though he could not sign his name.¹⁰⁸ Neither could Catherine Begasse, his mother-in-law, but Raymond's new wife Marie was literate, like her siblings François and Françoise.

In 1737 and 1738, after more than ten years of marriage and the death of his father-in-law, Pierre Raymond purchased the Begasse estate from his wife's mother and three brother-in-laws, who now included Barthelemy Vincent, a surgeon from Languedoc in southern France, who had married Françoise Begasse.¹⁰⁹ Both Marie and Françoise, with their French husbands, founded large families. By 1750, had the original François Begasse still been alive, he would have had at least 13 grandchildren.¹¹⁰

These Raymond/Vincent children and their Begasse cousins were creoles, native to the Caribbean by two or even three generations, depending on the history of François and Catherine Begasse. Thanks to their wives' deep roots, Pierre Raymond and Barthelemy Vincent eventually prospered in this difficult region of Saint-Domingue, buying slaves and selling indigo, probably illegally in most cases. They spent part of their profits to send their sons and daughters to schools in France in the 1750s and 1760s.¹¹¹

It was only in the late 1760s that colonial notaries drafting sales contracts and estate inventories began consistently to record their

observation that Pierre Raymond's wife and adult children were people of color. However, in 1731 it was already clear to an official visiting Baintet that male colonists there were marrying local women as a way of establishing themselves. As he wrote to the governor, "There are few whites of pure blood there because all the whites willingly ally themselves by marriage with the blacks, who, by their thrift, acquire property more easily than the whites."¹¹²

This does not mean that such alliances were always accepted. In 1738 the Superior Council of Léogane nullified the religious union of Louis Delaunay of Fonds des Nègres and Jeanne Bossé.¹¹³ Because the groom was a minor, the opposition of his brother George Delaunay was sufficient to end the marriage. Like other documents of the time, the ruling of the Léogane Council did not describe the race of either family, but in the 1760s and 1780s the notaries of Aquin parish identified Jeanne and her brother Gaspard Bossé, also spelled Boissé, as free people of color.¹¹⁴

The Léogane Council did not explain why George Delaunay wanted his brother's marriage annulled. But it was probably because he believed that the Bossé family was socially beneath his own. According to the 1720 census the households of "Delaunay" and "Thomas Delaunay," both of Aquin parish, were not especially wealthy. One consisted of a man, a woman, three children and twenty-two slaves and the other had a man, a woman, no children, and seven slaves. "Pierre Delaunay" in a neighboring parish in 1720 had a household with one man, one woman, five children, one white servant, and three slaves. But the names Bossé or Boissé did not appear at all in that census. Either Jeanne's parents were too poor to be counted, they had not yet arrived in the region, or they were still in slavery.

By the time the case reached the Léogane court, Jeanne Bossé was pregnant. But the council ordered her and Louis de Launay not to regard each other as husband and wife nor even to spend time together. The judges instructed Jeanne's brother Gaspard to raise the child and forbade him to hold Louis de Launay responsible for its welfare. Nevertheless, by 1753 the free woman of color Jeanne Boissé had at least two sons and several daughters who called themselves Delaunay.¹¹⁵ By the 1760s all the Delaunays in this region in the 1760s were free people of color; there was no mention of a Louis or George. When the free woman of color Marie Rose Boissé drafted a testament in 1785 she identified her sister as "Jeanne Boissé the widow Delaunay."¹¹⁶

The Delaunay and Raymond/Begasse examples suggest that early-eighteenth-century colonists thought about African ancestry as

one component of their neighbors' class status, not as the dominant feature of their identity. George Delaunay probably felt his brother Louis made a foolish and invalid promise before the priest because Jeanne Boissé was a poor woman of color, not merely because she was a *mulâtresse*. If she had had a dowry like that of Marie or Françoise Begasse, he might have welcomed the alliance.

In the 1740s and 1750s, as a new generation of Delaunays and Raymonds was born, the officials administering their region still disagreed about how to classify the free descendants of French colonists, when those men and especially women of partial African descent were legitimately married, and owned slaves and property. In 1753 the militia captain of Les Cayes district compiled a census based on 588 household declarations. As the largest and best-irrigated plain in the southern peninsula, Les Cayes was becoming an important sugar producer by this time. The census report showed the militia captain's care in categorizing the district's population, where slaves outnumbered masters nine to one. His document and the general colonial census for 1753 counted close to the same number of slaves, free unmarried women, arms-bearing men, and total inhabitants in Les Cayes. However, the authors disagreed about how to apply racial labels to nearly 100 free persons. The captain identified 50 percent more of his neighbors as "free black or mulatto" than the official who compiled the general census.¹¹⁷ The very narrowness of the inconsistency illustrates that for official observers, wealth and culture, rather than ethnic ancestry, defined creole identity.

* * *

Before 1763, the pragmatism of the frontier shaped racial attitudes in much of Saint-Domingue. By 1730, even in those parishes on the remote southern coast or in the interior, slaves outnumbered free people roughly eight to one, much as they did in the main coastal sugar districts.¹¹⁸ But these frontier colonists were isolated from regular trade with France. Like their buccaneer predecessors and ancestors, men and women in remote mountains or along isolated coastlines lived in a distinctive creole style, seen in their dress and demeanor up to 1789. The scarcity of credit and of new European arrivals made the free populations of these remote districts far more interdependent than colonists in more central locations. The immigrants who did push through to these frontier regions were successful to the extent that they could link their careers to established families. Through marriage, god-parentage, and sociability, aspiring

planters entered creole society, where they found access to the knowledge, slaves, land, and contraband networks that kept such districts alive, commercially. Far from the bustling Atlantic commerce of Cap Français, officials distinguished “colonists” from “free mulattos” by their social, rather than physical, characteristics.

CHAPTER 2



RACE AND CLASS IN CREOLE SOCIETY: SAINT-DOMINGUE IN THE 1760S

In 1756, when Thomas Ploy married Marie Rose Casamajor in Saint-Domingue's Aquin parish, he might have been another ambitious French colonist allying with an old colonial family. The bride's grandfather had been a royal notary in the southern peninsula almost since the time it opened to settlers. For years her father Pierre Casamajor had managed the public indigo warehouse at Aquin's wharf. By the time of the marriage Casamajor was an indigo planter wealthy enough to endow his daughter with 18,800 livres worth of property, including six silver place settings and six slaves, one of them a valet.¹

The bridegroom, Thomas Ploy, followed in his father-in-law's steps as he built his own fortune. In a 1762 auction, six years after marrying, he purchased some abandoned land and buildings adjoining the Casamajors at the Aquin pier.² This included a warehouse the notary described as "uninhabitable, even irreparable," a dovecote "rotten and ready to fall," and an "entirely unusable" kitchen building, with its oven "fallen totally into ruin." The property had originally been valued at 12,000 livres, but he paid only 2,155. Twenty-six years later, another notary estimated it was worth 45,000 livres.³ Ploy had constructed a house of squared timber and masonry, and covered it with durable mahogany shingles. He now had two warehouses, each equipped with secure doors and windows. In the 1780s he too would

be a planter of sorts, ready to pass his warehouses to his own son-in-law.

Ploy seemed like a French colonist, but he was not. The best description for him might be “creole.” Not only was his mother Anne Marie a free black woman, but, like several other women of color in Aquin parish, she was from the island of Curaçao. Ploy himself was a free mulatto, meaning his father was probably European, most likely a Dutchman. Ploy’s warehouses, like those of his father-in-law Pierre Casamajor, who was also a free man of color, were regularly stocked with goods coming from or going to Dutch smugglers.⁴

The Ploy/Casamajor marriage in 1756 illustrates how colonial society had evolved in Saint-Domingue’s South Province since Labat’s 1701 visit. The combination of frontier conditions, *ad hoc* buccaneer households, and isolation from France had been a crucible, amalgamating Europeans and Africans into new, creole families.

This chapter uses 4,882 notarized deeds from the years 1760–69 to describe the lives and origins of people like Thomas Ploy and Marie Casamajor.⁵ These records, which constitute the total surviving output of twenty-two notaries working in the adjacent colonial districts or *quartiers* of Les Cayes, Saint Louis and Nippes, are a generation older than the surviving archives from other parts of Saint-Domingue. In the North and West Provinces, notarial registers exist only from 1776, years after laws began to exclude men of color from public professions and militia commissions. This earlier material from the South, then, provides an unprecedented view of Saint-Domingue’s most prominent free families of color as their wealth emerged. These thousands of contracts allow us to answer three interrelated questions.

First, how did such a population arise? Comparing the plantation system of the South Province to the more dynamic economy of other regions makes it clear that slave conditions in this colonial region were no better than those elsewhere in the colony. Nor was manumission more frequent. However, the region’s isolation did promote lasting bonds between male colonists and some women of color. Despite the racial contempt and dehumanization many colonists practiced on their plantations, they often gave serious and sustained attention to their relationships with free men, women, and, especially, children of African descent. Other legal documents reveal that women and men of color were active in this process, helping create and defend their own freedom.

Second, how did free people of color in the South Province become so wealthy? The chapter examines four free families of color that were already established as planters by the 1760s. Was their

wealth merely the result of white generosity, as their political opponents later claimed, or of thrift and prudence, as they themselves maintained? Examples from the parishes of Aquin and Torbec show that, among those who inherited property, the most successful free colored planters were those who followed the economic and social strategies of their fathers and grandfathers. In the 1760s, some had expanded a one-quarter or one-eighth share of a parental estate into sizeable fortunes. But few rivaled the wealth of neighboring white planters, as they would in the 1770s and 1780s.

Third, what economic roles were available to poorer free people of color? The final section of the chapter describes four occupations typically held by members of this racial category. Notarial contracts also illustrate what was perhaps the most important pattern of free colored success in the 1760s: within the free population of color, women were far more important economically than was the case among whites.⁶

Beyond its economic portrait of an emerging free colored class, this chapter about creole society in the 1760s casts new light on the racial tensions of the 1780s. In this earlier decade, relationships based on social class outweighed those based on racial identity. Notarial records from the 1760s reveal very little solidarity between enslaved and free people of African descent. Those that do are presented in chapter 3, which focuses on friction and conflict between free people of color, whites, and slaves. The present chapter, however, describes something that is far more obvious in the notarial archives; on Saint-Domingue's frontier, economic, social, and familial relationships frequently and regularly joined whites and free people of color.

This is not to claim that there was no racial prejudice in the South Province in the 1760s. As chapter 3 illustrates, free people of color did struggle against discrimination and harassment. But these problems mostly affected poorer men and women, not the old mixed-race planting families. Only in the 1770s and 1780s would race replace social class as the defining element in local relationships.

* * *

By 1760, Saint-Domingue had developed one of the most profitable and exploitative systems of plantation slavery in world history. Half of all the Africans arriving in the colony died of disease, overwork, and malnutrition within eight years.⁷ To replace their labor, and meet the demand of expanding estates, merchants disembarked more slaves in Cap Français during the eighteenth century alone than in any other non-Brazilian port over the course of four centuries. Cap's hinterland,

the Plaine du Nord, was the largest and most intensely developed agricultural region in Saint-Domingue, perhaps in the entire American hemisphere. Because its plantations were heavily capitalized, with direct access to Atlantic trade routes, they produced more refined sugar than those anywhere else in the colony. The quality of this sugar, the region's massive and growing demand for the slaves, and its convenient location to commerce with West Africa and France, made Cap Français extremely attractive to slave merchants. They could liquidate their human cargoes and acquire valuable goods in less time and with greater profit than was possible in any other French Caribbean port.⁸

On the far side of the island, however, sugar from the South Province was so crudely refined that French merchants in the 1780s refused to accept it in exchange for slaves. When visitors described the South as being less developed than the other provinces, the region's planters blamed this on their commercial isolation. They received fewer slaves, paid higher prices for them, and often had to buy workers rejected in other ports. In 1771, according to the intendant's figures, slave ships brought 6,015 slaves to Cap Français, 886 to Saint-Marc, 2,369 to Port-au-Prince and Léogane, but only 531 to the chief southern port of Les Cayes. One merchant from this city proposed mounting a slaving voyage directly to Africa himself.⁹

Consequently, even large sugar plantations in the South Province generally had far fewer slaves than those in other regions. David Geggus has collected slave lists showing that an average sugar estate in the South Province had 113 slaves, compared to 182 in the North Province and 177 in the West. The median size of plantations in the Nippes district from 1761 to 1770 was 50 slaves. This was not considered enough to grow sugar profitably, which is why many colonists focused on crops like indigo, cotton, and coffee, and worked the land with fewer than two dozen slaves.¹⁰

In the 1760s, this smaller scale did not make freedom easier to attain in the southern peninsula than in Saint-Domingue's great plantation zones. Most people in the South lived in slavery, just like their counterparts in the rest of the colony. In absolute terms the South had fewer slaves than the West or North, but they comprised 80 percent of the province's population in the 1760s, roughly the same ratio of slave to free as elsewhere in the colony.¹¹

Nor, despite the protestations of local planters, is there evidence that slaves in the South enjoyed significantly better living conditions. Generally, five to ten percent of Dominguan plantation slaves died every year and the southern peninsula was no exception. The three-plantation Laborde complex in the Les Cayes plain, with over 1,000

slaves, was perhaps the largest in the region. Six percent of its slaves died annually in the 1780s and mortality went as high as eleven percent in some years. This was an unusually large operation, but at the more typical Pimelle sugar plantation at Fond des Nègres in 1776, roughly one-quarter of the 81 field slaves were too ill to work. The smaller estate suffered eleven percent mortality in that year.¹²

David Geggus's analysis of slave inventories from the kinds of smaller indigo and coffee estates that employed most slaves in the South Province shows that workers under these conditions had no significant health advantages over those working on larger sugar plantations. Nor could many slaves buy their freedom. Moreau de Saint-Méry claimed that in the Les Cayes plain there was enough undeveloped land that planters allowed slaves to grow and sell their own food. In fact the census of 1753 does show that Les Cayes, Saint Louis, and Nippes produced more plantains and manioc relative to the local slave population than almost any other part of the colony.¹³ But these conditions did not produce a high manumission rate. Even if some slaves accumulated money by selling the food they grew, masters desperate for more workers were not inclined to let them buy their freedom. Out of the 256 manumissions recorded in the Cayes, St Louis, and Nippes districts in the 1760s, only two were cases in which slaves were described as purchasing themselves.¹⁴ The same rarity of self-purchase can be seen in notarial records from late-eighteenth-century French Guiana, another region slave ships rarely visited.¹⁵

In contrast, Stewart King describes slave self-purchase as "a significant source of income for slave owners during bad years" in Saint-Domingue's North and West Provinces, where slave merchants visited frequently. He identifies 60 of 606 manumissions as either slaves buying their own freedom or being manumitted by family members.¹⁶ The comparison suggests that the isolation of the southern peninsula in the 1760s may have decreased slaves' chances at legal freedom. Planters in the South Province had more work to do than they had workers to do it.

All of this explains why in the 1760s the South Province's free population of color was not especially large, in comparison to the slave population. The censuses of Les Cayes, Saint Louis, and Nippes in 1753 and 1775 counted 25 to 40 percent of these districts' free people as "people of color." But when this free colored group is set against the tens of thousands held in slavery, it amounts to only one to three percent of all African-descended people. Manumission deeds confirm how rare freedom was. Liberty papers recorded in these three

districts between 1760 and 1769 show that out of roughly 30,000 slaves, masters freed only 309 persons, or one percent.¹⁷

Adult men, who planters believed were their most valuable workers, had by far the worst chance of attaining freedom this way. Masters manumitted only 37 grown male slaves in the 1760s, less than one quarter of one percent of all such men. Female slaves had relatively better odds, in part because sex allowed them to forge more complex relationships with their masters. White men like Abraham Suire, who freed his "Venus" in 1765 because of "the good and agreeable services that she has rendered him," initiated about two-thirds (163 out of 256) of the manumission deeds filed in the 1760s. In total, formal liberties freed 103 adult women, about one percent of a population of approximately 10,000 enslaved women.¹⁸

One reason male colonists grew attached to female slaves was that Saint-Domingue had relatively few European women. Since the seventeenth century, French immigration to the Caribbean had been overwhelmingly male. In Saint-Domingue's early years European men outnumbered women by four or even six to one. In Martinique and Guadeloupe the white sex ratio evened out by the middle of the eighteenth century, but not in Saint-Domingue. As late as 1788, officials counted 19,257 white men and boys in the colony but only 8,461 white women and girls, a ratio of over two to one.¹⁹

However, sex by itself was not enough to motivate most masters to free an expensive worker. In Jamaica, Thomas Thistlewood recorded that he had sexual relations with eleven different slave women in his first year on an estate. In Saint-Domingue too, male colonists considered sex with female slaves a perquisite of their status. When the son of the French investor Laborde visited his father's three plantations in the Cayes plain, he was pleased, though a bit perplexed, by the unusual abstemiousness of one estate manager. "He cares neither for food, gambling, nor women (they say he has not the slightest inclinations here and one might almost accuse him of frigidity) and these are the sole passions in this country which might lead one astray." Over a 23-year period, 20 slave women on the Laborde plantations, mostly domestic servants, gave birth to 34 mixed-race children. However, the estate or its employees freed only a few of these women and their children. Moreover, this group represented only a small fraction of the roughly 1,000 slaves working on the Laborde properties.²⁰

When male masters liberated female slaves they were usually recognizing longstanding relationships, often with a woman who was their housekeeper, or *ménagère*.²¹ This was the most powerful position an enslaved woman might hold on a plantation. Colonists regarded the

ménagère as equivalent to a spouse, for she was often the mistress both of the household staff and the proprietor's bed. An astute and loyal housekeeper was indispensable to a working plantation, especially in an isolated region where it was difficult to attract experienced white employees. In 1782 the Swiss traveler Justin Girod de Chantrons asked his readers to:

Imagine an unmarried man in his country house, the only white a *mulâtresse* directs his household; all his confidence rests in her; her vanity makes her an enemy of the Africans; proud of the sultan's attentions, she is as useful to him . . . for his safety as she is for his pleasure.²²

Ménagères were often free women of color, and some functioned as subcontractors or even partners of white men, bringing their own slaves into their employer's household. In 1768 the white merchant Pierre Samadet paid 3,310 livres to Genevieve, his free mulatto housekeeper, for domestic work her slaves had done for him.²³ This financial compensation suggests that colonists freed their slave *ménagères* because of the valuable work they performed, as well as to the need to insure their fidelity.

Travelers, however, were most impressed with the housekeepers' sexual role on the plantation. In a long poem tracing the career of a fictional French criminal-turned-colonist, Brueys d'Aigalliers described the *ménagère* as a kind of procuress. Like Chantrons, he used harem imagery to convey the planter's despotic power:

In his seraglio [reposing] on a great black teat
The solemn sultan throws his handkerchief
. . . and if, unfortunately, someone declines
to frolic with this crude animal
He will quickly have his sultana deliver a whipping . . .²⁴

Whites transferred this sexual stereotype to the entire free population of color (chapter 5), and stressed the ways such women manipulated their French employers. One woman whose career might have illustrated this cliché was Cecille Bouchauneau, a *mulâtresse* born in slavery but manumitted in 1755. Bouchauneau lived for a long time on the plantation of a creole militia captain named Pierre Michel Moulin, and eventually gave birth to his son and daughter. In 1762 Moulin wrote a testament instructing his executors to raise both free colored children as Catholics, and send them to France "in some province far from the seaports."²⁵ He wanted his son trained for a profession, and

his daughter enrolled in a convent, stipulating that neither should ever return to Saint-Domingue. The dying man himself had been raised in a creole family; he had a mulatto half-sister Catherine, to whom he left 2,000 livres. As for his children's mother, the planter instructed his executors to build Cecille Bouchauneau a house of untrimmed wood with a straw roof, and to let her animals graze in his savanna.

Moulin did not seem to be aware that Bouchauneau, just seven years out of slavery, owned expensive mahogany furniture and six silver place settings. With her brand on thirty head of cattle and four horses, she had apparently built a profitable business providing plantations with beef fattened in Moulin's pasture. In 1764 she contracted to deliver another white planter a butchered steer annually in exchange for use of approximately twenty-eight acres of his land. By 1767 she had moved from Moulin's plantation to the town of Petit Trou. Here she rented a house from a white widow and owned a store or warehouse bequeathed to her by Claude Mariot, a white cavalry captain and planter.²⁶ When she fell ill, Bouchauneau summoned a notary to her bed in the plantation house of Etienne Rousseau, a third white planter and militia captain. The testament she drafted that day left all her property to Mouchez, yet another white planter whom she also named her executor. Mouchez had been the executor of Pierre Moulin's estate and may have taken Cecille's side against Moulin's white heirs. He had certainly helped her acquire slaves, since one of her two African boys was branded "Mouchez."²⁷

By the time of her death, Cecille Bouchauneau was no longer supplying plantations with meat, for she now owned only three horses, a cow, and a calf. She had become a landlord in the town of Petit Trou, leasing mostly to white men. The notary counted only three silver place settings among her household possessions. Nevertheless she still had her two mahogany bed frames, her armoire, and trunks filled with many more linens and clothes than had been recorded in 1762. The combined value of her twenty skirts was almost as great as her saddle horse.

Bouchauneau's many notarial transactions show the entrepreneurial possibilities available to a *ménagère*, though colonial society may have assumed that her relationships with Moulin, Mariot, Mouchez, and Rousseau were sexual. Indeed, the stereotype of the housekeeper was so strong that whites assumed all successful free women of color were the servants or mistresses of white men.

The free black woman Marie Tirot was one of the rare individuals whose rejection of this stereotype was preserved on paper. Sometime in the 1740s Marie and a white merchant named Tirot had had a

daughter. By 1763 the merchant had died, leaving Marie a house at the entrance to Petit Trou and bequeathing some money to their daughter, the free *mulâtresse* “Marie Susanne Pelagie called Tirot.”²⁸ By 1764 the older Marie was working closely with Pierre Peigné, another white merchant in the town. As early as August of that year she rented part of her house to him. In March of 1766, they formally agreed that he would pay 1,000 livres for a room on one end of her building, which he was already using as a shop. Marie’s apartment was on the opposite side of the house. As landlord and tenant the two shared a common center room and a shack in the courtyard.

The relationship between Marie Tirot and Pierre Peigné went beyond the terms of his lease. Three months before Peigné rented his room, Tirot bought a modest plantation for her daughter and free mulatto son-in-law, and Peigné advanced her 10,000 of its 25,000 livres price. Later that year, when the son-in-law shot and killed an escaped slave, Peigné posted his 1,500 livres bond. Yet Peigné was more a partner than a patron to the free black woman. In 1767, when Pierre Peigné “merchant” and Marie Tirot “equally merchant” drafted a formal agreement about the 10,000 livres he had loaned her the previous year, they specified that they had had “diverse interests together, both for business affairs and for sums paid and advanced for each other.”²⁹

Yet many whites in the small town of Petit Trou could only grasp this mutually advantageous alliance through the stereotype of white patronage. The town’s baker, a white man, appeared on Pierre Peigné’s doorstep one morning to demand payment of Marie Tirot’s bill. Peigné turned him away.³⁰

The surgeon François Dubourg was another white townsman who assumed that Peigné was Marie’s master. On August 22, 1764, Dubourg purchased several pieces of cloth from Peigné’s shop and arranged to stop by the next day to pick up his package. On the 23rd, therefore, he went to Peigné’s boutique where, as he later told a notary, while lodging a formal complaint,

[in the shop] he found Marie Tirot *Négresse libre*, servant of Sieur Peigné from whom he requested the package that he had bought from her master the day before, and she answered that the said package was in the shop and showed it to him; the *déclarant* said to her that there should also be some thread there to sew the sheets, as agreed with her master, to which the *négresse* answered that the wrapping string would serve as thread, the *déclarant* having repeated that there should be some thread, by the agreement made with her master, this *négresse* answered, what is this, Monsieur, you [*vous*] are certainly impertinent,

know that I have no master here, and that I am *chez moi*, to which the *déclarant* responded that this made no difference to him at all, but that it was necessary to deliver him what had been agreed, and then the *déclarant* took it upon himself to take the package of canvas pieces to give them to his slave who was on horseback at the door; the said *négresse* having opposed this with no reason she pushed the *déclarant* with brutality and violence, seeing this, the *déclarant* having a crop in his hand, gave her three blows on the cheek.³¹

When Dubourg again attempted to take his purchase, Marie called her mother and some servants from the back of the house. The surgeon escaped their blows only by hailing several friends passing in the street outside.

When François Dubourg found a black woman tending Pierre Peigné's shop, though he knew she was free, he was sure she was the merchant's servant. This assumption was deeply galling to Marie, who was in fact Peigné's landlord, but she overlooked his first and even second reference to her "master." Not until Dubourg uttered that word a third time did she accuse him of disrespect, informing him that she herself was "master" of the house. For Dubourg, Tirot's civil condition or the particularities of her relationship with Peigné were irrelevant. The color of her skin, he believed, told him all he needed to know. For Marie, however, her status as a free woman and proprietor was the core of her social identity.

The stories of Cecille Bouchauneau and Marie Tirot illustrate the amount of property some ex-slaves could acquire in freedom, through complex relationships with colonists. But the two women also show that children were an important part of the connections between white men and the female slaves they freed. For, although masters favored women over men for freedom, manumissions in Saint-Domingue, as in other slave societies, went mostly to children. In the 1760s, children, or women with children, comprised 55 percent (170 of 309) of all the slaves freed by formal deeds in Cayes, Saint Louis, and Nippes. Most were sons or daughters of white men. Arlette Gauthier, digging deeper into the notarial records of the Nippes *quartier* from 1721 to 1770, found that women and/or children were named in nearly 75 percent of manumissions. In the 116 such documents she found involving children, only ten identified the slave child as black.³²

The number of mixed-race slaves in Saint-Domingue, about five percent on most plantations, proves that paternal responsibility was not a hard-and-fast rule. Nevertheless many of the men who did free their children openly recognized them as family members. Some, like Bouchauneau's employer Pierre Moulin, made elaborate arrangements

for their future. Despite its central role in the slave system, by this date racism was not yet powerful enough to override the family and class relations that constituted creole society.

These relations are most clearly portrayed in the notarized marriage contracts that accompanied religious vows for most propertied couples in France and its colonies. These documents, recording each spouse's contributions to the new household, were expensive, costing roughly one-quarter the price of a saddle horse.³³ Nevertheless, nearly 37 percent of the marriage contracts (45 of 122) from 1760–69 in the *quartiers* of Les Cayes, Saint Louis, and Nippes involved free men or women of color, roughly equivalent to what censuses reported was the free colored share of the free population.

The spouses' relatives and friends usually assembled in someone's home to witness and sign this important document. On average, free colored brides and grooms in the 1760s had a combined total of about six marriage guests, about half as many as white couples, who had eleven on average. Despite the smaller numbers, local notables frequently appeared when the free colored children of prominent colonists were married. In October of 1761, Jean Rey, a free mulatto mason and planter worth over 100,000 livres, considerably more than many white grooms, married Elizabeth Dégéac, a free *mulâtresse* and seamstress from the town of Les Cayes. The groom was the illegitimate son of Abel Rey, a white irrigation contractor who managed the estate of a former colonial administrator.³⁴ Jean Rey's free black mother Margueritte lived on this estate too. She and Abel Rey, together, witnessed their son's marriage contract in the presence of some of the wealthiest and most influential colonists in the province.

One of those guests, Julien Canard, the commander of the Ances district, had already paid Margueritte 18,000 livres for land she occupied in the mountains adjoining her son's property. In the marriage contract, Canard, "to give the bridegroom a certain and obvious sign of the affection and special goodwill he has for him, and his extreme satisfaction with the future marriage," gave this land to Jean Rey, on the express condition that he continue to allow his mother, her slaves, animals, and crops, to stay there. Rey's other friends and witnesses included the local priest, a cavalry captain and member of the prestigious military Order of Saint Louis, two militia captains, and five prominent planters. The bride's guests included three of Les Cayes' most active merchants, one of whom was a captain in the militia.

Only a handful of free colored marriages could attract such a large and elite group. But even at a lower social level such occasions showed local society's acceptance of family relationships that encompassed

illegitimacy and racial difference. The family of Jean Maignan, the militia captain of Anse à Veau parish, illustrates the extent of these networks and the energy colonists devoted to building them. Like many of the fathers discussed in this chapter, Maignan had roots in the colony that went back to the early eighteenth century. In 1763 he was 75 years old and had at least six daughters with Marie Catherine, a free black woman who lived on his estate. Throughout the 1760s the captain's white neighbors, clients, and colleagues stood as witnesses and patrons when he settled his daughters with promising men of color. In 1762, for example, Maignan's daughter Anne Madelaine married Jean Landron, a tailor and the illegitimate mulatto son of a planter and militia captain in Jacmel, another southern town. Landron's father was dead but his white half-brother, who had married into a prominent Nippes family and was now a planter in the district, came to Maignan's plantation with his wife and several other white planters to sign the marriage contract. The following year another Maignan daughter married Michel Duval, who had been a lieutenant of the free colored militia in the town of Petit Goâve. Duval was the illegitimate son of a white mason and a free black woman but the royal attorney from Petit Goâve and several white planters signed the marriage contract in his behalf.³⁵

Maignan bestowed his blessing and property on his grandchildren too, when they married. But he distinguished between children in the larger family circle who were or were not his direct descendants. Alexandre Fequière, a free mulatto who managed Maignan's livestock pen, was one of the captain's sons-in-law. When Fequière's illegitimate daughter by another woman was married in 1760, Maignan's daughters, who were Fequière's sisters-in-law, signed the nuptial contract as "relatives and family." But the militia captain himself was not among the six white men who identified themselves as "witnesses and protectors." Six years later, however, when one of Fequière's legitimate daughters married, the 78-year-old white grandfather did attend and sign the contract, as did Marie Catherine, the bride's free black grandmother.³⁶

The care some colonial fathers took to constitute dowries and sign contracts suggests a deep attachment to their grown children. When the white planter Jean Bougait wrote a notary about his son's marriage, only his racial description of the groom distinguished his concern from that of a father for his legitimate son.

I send you my mulatto Guillaume . . . my indisposition and my age prevent me, Monsieur, from coming to see you . . . I will find land to settle him and his spouse next to me, as they are both young I would be

comforted to have them around me in case one or the other had difficulties and I might be of some little help to them in their need.³⁷

Even if Bougait believed that race separated him from Guillaume, his words "I would be comforted . . . I might be of some little help" suggest he was motivated not by social pressure, but by family attachment. A similar emotion seems to have spurred Charles Piemont, a fifty-nine-year-old militia officer, royal administrator, and major landowner from the West Province, to travel for days from Port-au-Prince to the Nippes district. There he stood publicly with his former slave Rose Flore to witness the marriage of their free mulatto son, Jean, who worked as a bookkeeper on his Port-au-Prince plantation. Jean was marrying the free mulatto daughter of Etienne Rousseau, the militia commandant of Rochelois parish. Piemont promised to buy his son ten slaves from the next slave ship arriving in Port-au-Prince, a gift worth approximately 12,000 livres. Rousseau promised his daughter Marie Anne six new slaves from the same African cargo.³⁸

Rousseau had his own mulatto sons, who managed a mountain estate for him. Six years after Marie Anne's marriage, he formally gave these young men title to that property, plus ten slaves, for a total value of 15,500 livres. For seven years the brothers would have to share this gift in a partnership that could only be dissolved with their father's permission. Afterwards they could divide the land and slaves in order to marry.³⁹

By the 1760s, such arrangements had helped create a small number of wealthy families of color in the South Province. They, in turn, were frequently able to marry their daughters to European immigrants. Approximately 17 percent of all religious marriages during the eighteenth century in the South Province joined a white man to a free woman of color.⁴⁰ Interracial couples formed only about 7 percent (8 of 122) of the more expensive notarized marriages of the 1760s. But these documents illustrate the economic appeal of such alliances. The very largest bridal dowries belonged to white women (average: 23,248 livres), but free colored brides still brought significant property (average: 10,934 livres) to their marriages, more than free colored grooms (average: 7,470 livres).⁴¹ The eight women of color in these districts who married white men in the 1760s were among the richest in their racial category, bringing an average of 22,699 livres to the new household. Their new European husbands, while not penniless, were worth only 7,864 livres on average, compared to the 27,201 livres average for white bridegrooms overall.

The case of Jacques Challe, a native of France's Loire Valley, provides the most striking example of what an immigrant could gain by marrying the free colored daughter of a wealthy planter. In 1760, Challe married the free *mulâtresse* Françoise Dasmard, the illegitimate daughter of Julie, an ex-slave, and Pierre Dasmard, a white planter in Aquin parish. Dasmard had been born in the colony in the late seventeenth century and had been growing indigo in this region since at least the collapse of the Saint-Domingue Company. The 1720 census identified two "Dassemard" households in the southern peninsula, one with 22 and the other with 31 slaves. Forty years later Pierre Dasmard's daughter Françoise brought 71,220 livres to her marriage with Jacques Challe, including a plantation, 22 slaves, and a full complement of household goods. In contrast, the French groom made no recorded contribution to the union.⁴²

Within ten years the couple had three children and a considerable estate. In 1774, therefore, Challe gave Françoise, his wife, full legal authority over their colonial affairs. Like many immigrants he had come to Saint-Domingue to make his fortune; thanks in large part to her property and connections, he had accomplished that goal. The Frenchman returned home, where he paid over 90,000 livres for land and a feudal title. When he died in France in 1780, Françoise Dasmard Challe and their children were still in Aquin.⁴³ As chapter 6 recounts, the widow remarried two years later, this time choosing a island-born spouse nearly as wealthy as she was, a neighboring indigo planter named Julien Raimond.

Challe's rapid financial success was unusual. But his decision to bequeath substantial property to his creole family was typical of many immigrant men. Like the creole planters they emulated, most new colonists did not marry the women of color who shared their beds and many died as bachelors. But, like men born in the island, immigrants did frequently recognize as their own some of the children that came from these relationships. The testaments and deeds of gift they hired notaries to draft show that some of these unmarried colonists created wide-reaching networks of pseudo-kin, leaving property to a variety of children, both their own and those of friends, white and nonwhite.

For example, Jean Baptiste Heble wrote a testament leaving a pair of slaves each to his white goddaughter and her brother, the children of a local planter.⁴⁴ He also gave four slave couples to each of the two mulatto daughters of the free black woman Rosette. Then he bequeathed a pair of slaves to another white godson, the son of a local planter, and deeded specific slaves to the children of yet a third white planter and his wife. To another Jean Baptiste, the legitimate son of

the free mulatto planter Joseph Reaulx and his wife Madelaine, Heble left two pairs of new slaves. Madelaine Reaulx herself received a pair of new slaves and the twelve-year-old mulatto slave Jacques. Heble gave the free *mulâtresse* Marie Rose lifelong use of the Ibo slaves Louis and Louise.

Although Heble did reserve some property for his brothers and sisters in France, his largest bequest was for the illegitimate children of the late Françoise Lainy. Most of Heble's free colored beneficiaries were described in his testament as free mulattos or blacks, but he did not label Françoise Lainy, or her son, Jean Michel, and daughter, Martine Titiche. However, given their illegitimacy it is likely that Jean Michel and Martine Titiche were Hebel's own mixed-race children. He gave Martine Titiche eight slaves, while Jean Michel received half of Hebel's plantation and tools, with twelve slaves of his choice. Moreover, Hebel left Jean Michel his bedroom furniture, including two beds, an armoire, tables and chairs, his clothes, table and bed linens, his gold and silver buckles, buttons, watches, and jewels, as well as his horse and saddle, his silver-mounted pistols, his sword, a saddled mule, two domestic slaves with their children, and a slave valet. The dying colonist intended for the young man to inherit his class status—the land, horse, sword, clothes, furniture, and servants of a planter.

One way many French-born colonists assured the economic future of their illegitimate creole children, without arousing the suspicion of European relatives, was to draft a formal deed of gift. More than half of such documents (39 of 69) registered in the 1760s transferred property from whites to free people of color. Usually the bequest was effective immediately, but sometimes it was scheduled far in the future. Either way, the gift was irrevocable and would not necessarily be mentioned in the donor's testament, which French heirs would see.

For example, the white planter Joseph Dantue appeared before a notary in 1765 to record a gift to the free *négresse* Marie Louise and her three mulatto children. This was, in effect, a testament, since it encompassed most of Dantue's productive assets, which he specified would remain in his possession for twenty more years. Only then would the seventy-nine acres and thirteen skilled slaves, including a "canoe boss," a saddle maker, a potter, and two apprentice potters, pass to Marie Louise and finally to her children. In a clause reminiscent of many testaments Dantue explained that his intention was

to recognize the good and agreeable services Marie Louise has rendered him and out of the good affection that he has for the three

[children] . . . [and to] procure them the means of living comfortably . . . to be nourished, lodged, maintained, cared for, provided with medicine and educated, to learn a sufficient and suitable trade and to establish themselves in marriage.⁴⁵

Nor were deeds of gift prompted only by paternity. Whites occasionally served as godparents to their friends' illegitimate children and upheld these relationships with gifts. In 1765 the white planter Joseph de Ronseray drafted a formal gift to "Jean Louis his godson and to Rose, goddaughter of Dame de Ronseray his spouse, both the illegitimate children of Sieur François Dupuy the elder, planter, and of [the free colored woman] Marie Rose Delaunay." The donation consisted of a young male slave for Jean Louis and a young female slave for Rose. Marie Rose Delaunay was also present in the notary's office to accept the two slaves on behalf of her children.⁴⁶

* * *

In the 1780s and 1790s racial ideologues would argue that Saint-Domingue's free people of color owned plantations and slaves only because of the generosity of white colonists. Yet documents from the 1760s reveal a more complex situation. The colony's richest free colored families could almost always trace their wealth to some French ancestor or another. But these men did not leave property to their children out of charity. Rather, they bequeathed land and slaves to their children as a matter of course, as they would have done in France. Moreover, their most important contribution to their descendants' wealth was their own attachment to creole society. Whites too eager to return to France had neither the local knowledge, nor the patience, to make the most of their colonial estates. The most successful free colored planters in the southern peninsula largely constructed their own fortunes, but they built on knowledge, and relationships, as well as property, passed to them by fathers who had committed their lives to the colony.

The densest clusters of such planting families were in two long-settled parishes bordering the southern peninsula's most fertile sugar plain. In the 1720s, the parish of Aquin, in the St. Louis district, and the parish of Torbec, in the Les Cayes district, had been administrative centers for the Saint-Domingue Company. By the middle of the eighteenth century the growing port city of Les Cayes, seat of the sugar plain known as the Fond de l'Isle à Vache, had eclipsed both towns in wealth and importance. But the creole families of Aquin and Torbec

prospered nevertheless, amassing fortunes that eventually surpassed those of their French fathers and grandfathers.

Aquin parish produced the most famous free colored political figure of the Revolutionary decade. Julien Raimond⁴⁷ was the legitimately born son of Pierre Raymond, a Frenchman, and Marie Begasse, herself a legitimately born free *mulâtresse* and planter's daughter (chapter 1).⁴⁸ After twenty years of marriage, thanks especially to the help of the Begasse family, Pierre and Marie Begasse Raymond had a plantation with a handsome six-room house in her native Bainet parish, along Saint-Domingue's southern coast. In the 1750s, however, Bainet was in the grip of a crushing drought, so the couple transferred their large family and their slaves several dozen miles west, to a dilapidated farm in nearby Aquin parish. Although Pierre Raymond was at least fifty years old when the family relocated, within another twenty years his family had transformed a ruined property into a valuable estate. By Raymond's death in 1772 at the age of 80, his Aquin plantation was worth three times what he had paid for it. The three log structures covered in straw listed in the 1756 act of sale had given way to nine major buildings plus 35 slave cabins, a bell tower, a dove house, two chicken houses, a hurricane shelter, and three fenced corrals. Pierre Raymond owned 115 slaves in 1772. As in Bainet, his Aquin house was built of squared timber with masonry and mahogany shingles. Inside, appraisers found a couch and two armchairs in Russian leather with gilded studs, carved tables, silver candlesticks, and twenty-three silver place settings. Even those who had not seen his large flock of sheep, nor his fields of indigo, cotton, and provisions, would have recognized Raymond as a wealthy man, carrying a gold-handled cane and driving a well-appointed four-horse buggy.⁴⁹

Pierre and Marie Begasse Raymond raised eight children to adulthood, almost all of whom signed their names with a practiced hand. At least two of their children were educated in France and those who married in the 1750s received respectable, but not lavish, dowries of 12,000 livres.⁵⁰ Raymond's nieces and nephews, the five *quarteron* children of the Frenchman Barthelmy Vincent and Françoise Begasse, received even larger sums at adulthood.⁵¹ Pierre Raymond's five sons began their careers managing the family indigo works, animal pens, and provision grounds. As the brothers grew older they followed their father's strategy of buying and rebuilding abandoned properties, often in fraternal partnership. Within six years François and Jean-Baptiste Raimond quadrupled the value of an indigo plantation they worked together. In 1770, their brother Julien joined this partnership.⁵²

Two years later their father died. Even divided among so many siblings, Pierre Raymond's wealth allowed Julien Raimond to buy an indigo estate of his own in 1773, after selling land his father had left him. For 75,000 livres, already a large sum, he purchased a plantation the notary described as being "in total ruin." His younger brother Guillaume joined this project for eight years, lending his slaves and skills to rebuilding the estate.⁵³

Besides adopting their father's strategy of restoring abandoned plantations, Pierre Raymond's sons also copied him by choosing wealthy brides. In May 1766 the colonist's oldest son and namesake, Pierre, at the age of thirty, married his first cousin Marie Madeleine Vincent. Six days before the ceremony a notary had visited the bridegroom's parents to request their consent to the union, which had already received a religious dispensation. Through his spokesman the eldest son described the marriage as "the only one that can contribute to his happiness, as much by his inclination as by the other advantages he finds in it." But his parents would not approve the match.⁵⁴ The marriage went ahead without them, but the marriage contract signing was not a festive occasion, apparently. Only one younger brother, François, witnessed this event.

Even Julien was absent, though he had business with the same notary later that very week. Nevertheless, in 1771 he married another first cousin, Marie Marthe Vincent, the sister of Pierre's wife. Once again, his parents would not sign the marriage contract, "solely because of the family relation between him and the said Demoiselle."⁵⁵ Because he was only 26, Raimond could not convince a royal judge to order his parents' consent, as his brother had before him. Instead he persuaded his parents' priest to certify that they had not opposed the publication of his marriage bans. Then, like Pierre, he proceeded with the ceremony and contract, acknowledging that he risked disinheritance.

Marriages between cousins were not unheard of in the close-knit creole society of the South Province, but it was rare for intermarriage to join two brothers and two sisters, each time against the wishes of their parents.⁵⁶ But the second groom, like the first, insisted that the match was "a favorable and advantageous choice." Marie Marthe Vincent's property was valued at 60,000 livres in their marriage contract, nearly double his own large contribution of 35,000. Among free colored brides of the 1760s, only Raimond's neighbor Julie Dasmard, married eleven years earlier to Jacques Challe, had more money than his cousin Marie, and Dasmard was the illegitimate daughter of a slave.

Raimond appears to have spent lavishly on his wedding. The contract was signed on his elder brother's estate in Jacmel, in the presence of a militia captain and the bride's white guardian. By this time, Pierre had died, but Guillaume and François Raimond were present, and they, together with Julian, paid over 4,000 livres to a tailor in Aquin that year. Similarly, in 1771 Raimond paid out much of the 2,213 livres he spent on jewelry over seventeen years.⁵⁷

As perfect a social match as it was, this second marriage of first cousins did not last. Marie Marthe Vincent died within a year of signing the contract. Because she was a minor, Raimond returned half of her 60,000 livres dowry to her sisters, in the form of 16 slaves and some paper notes.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, in the 1770s and 1780s Julien Raimond's slaves, land, and indigo expertise would make him an even wealthier man. In those coming decades (chapter 6) his Aquin neighbors, also free people of color, joined him and his brothers in profiting from the smuggling trade, the fluctuating price of indigo, and their ability to rebuild the properties white colonists had abandoned.

Although the Raimonds were perhaps the wealthiest mixed-race family in the southern peninsula in the 1760s, Torbec parish in the mountains at the edge of the Les Cayes or Fond de l'Isle plain was home to a number of similar families, also descended from wealthy colonists of the 1720s. The 1720 census listed 115 slaves on the Trichet sugar plantation in the Les Cayes plain.⁵⁹ With the second largest slave force in the region, the Trichets also claimed 109 cattle and 130 sheep. These early planters were almost certainly the ancestors of François Trichet, who, forty years later, was a well-respected member of the Torbec community.

In 1763 the free *quarteron* François Trichet entered a five-year partnership agreement to plant indigo with his neighbors, two free mulatto brothers. The partners purchased land and slaves from Trichet's father-in-law, a white militia captain named Alexandre Proa. They paid him 53,200 livres in a transaction that was not only one of the largest free colored sales of the decade but also ranked in the top twenty percent of all rural property sales for the 1760s. Trichet's local reputation and social connections made the purchase possible: letters of credit covered nearly three-quarters of the plantation's price. Trichet was to supervise the manufacture and sale of the indigo, but eleven months later he dissolved the partnership, buying out his former associates. He soon sold a sliver of this land to his brother-in-law also named Alexandre Proa, a free *quarteron* who had bought slaves on credit from merchants in Les Cayes. In 1769, Proa died in Jamaica, where he may have been helping Trichet sell his indigo.⁶⁰

In the nineteenth century, the Hérards of Torbec were a wealthy mixed-race family that tried to spark and then manipulate a popular revolt in 1843 against the dictator Boyer.⁶¹ Like “Trichet”, the name “Hérard” belonged to some of the most prosperous households in the southern peninsula in 1720. At that early date the sugar plantation of “Fesniers and Herards[*sic*] brothers” had 119 slaves, 150 cattle, and 150 sheep, making it the region’s largest in all three categories. Fesnier was the militia commander of the plain and the Herards were also partners with the Fesniers in another sugar estate with 72 slaves, 72 cattle, and 50 sheep. A third 1720 “Herard” household, in Saint Louis parish, was an indigo plantation worked by 80 slaves.⁶²

By the 1760s, the most prominent Hérards in Torbec’s notarial registers were free people of color. With his brother and two sisters, Jean Domingue Hérard inherited lands in the Torbec plain, where his father had a sugar estate. In 1764 he had a plantation of his own but also worked as an estate manager. In 1765 he was guardian for two mulatto daughters of a dead white planter. His sister Marie married into the wealthy Boisrond family (see discussion below) and Hérard’s niece, the daughter of his other sister Catherine, married Julien Delaunay of Aquin (see discussion below). Jean Domingue’s first marriage was to a woman whose sisters had married into the prominent free colored Boury family (chapter 3).⁶³

If François Trichet sold his indigo to Jamaica through his brother-in-law Alexandre Proa, Hérard had connections to Curaçao. Jean Nicolas Fernandes, a free mulatto from that Dutch trading center, lived on Hérard’s Torbec plantation and was identified as his brother and as the uncle of Hérard’s children. In 1764 when Fernandes married the free mulatto daughter of a dead white planter, he and Hérard traveled to the Torbec plantation of Monseigneur Girard de Formont, the local white militia commander, to sign the marriage contract.⁶⁴

Five months earlier Hérard’s fifteen-year-old daughter Marie Elizabeth had been married on this very plantation to Alexis Girard, the commander’s illegitimate but acknowledged thirty-one-year-old mulatto son. Girard de Formont did not witness the marriage contract, but he did authorize Alexis to use his name. Hérard’s daughter was four months pregnant and the nuptial agreement specified that the couple had entered this union to legitimize the child. Alexis Girard’s contribution to the marriage was not noted, but Jean Domingue Hérard dowered his daughter with a horse and saddle, household furniture, 8,000 livres, and six slaves worth about that sum again. With property valued at 20,000 livres, this new household ranked in the top 40 percent of local marriages for this decade.⁶⁵

The Boisrond family, which produced the author of Haiti's 1804 Declaration of Independence, was Torbec's most conspicuous contribution to the free colored political leadership of the Revolutionary period. Like "Trichet" and "Hérard," "Boisrond" was a prominent name in the 1720 census. "Beausire et Boisrond" operated a sugar plantation with 99 slaves, the third largest estate in the region. This plantation also had 100 cattle and 97 sheep. The other "Boisrond" household was an indigo works with 89 slaves, the fourth largest in the plain. This too was a prosperous estate, with 50 cattle and 100 sheep.⁶⁶

By 1753 a free mulatto named François Boisrond owned land in the town of Torbec. Like François Trichet and Jean Domingue Hérard, he enjoyed considerable local respect. In 1762 he stood as godfather of the bride at the marriage of two free mulattos whose white fathers had died. By this time he had married Marie Hérard, Jean Domingue's sister. Through her Boisrond acquired one-fifth of the Hérard sugar plantation at Torbec. In 1761 he paid his wife's sister 20,000 livres for her share in the sugar estate, which had an estimated total value of 50,000.⁶⁷

François Boisrond was above all a planter, but he also worked as a builder and apparently trained his sons in this skill. In 1764 a white planter from a neighboring parish paid 1,000 livres to put a young man in a five-year apprenticeship in Torbec parish with "Sieur François Boisrond and Claude François Boisrond his son both builders." Boisrond's major building project was the piece of Hérard sugar land he and his wife Marie Hérard had purchased. In 1775, after the couple died, this property, valued at 50,000 livres in 1761, was sold with its slave force for 500,000 livres to a white planter and royal judge. Although Boisrond's creditors received substantial sums, the income from this sale helped launch his five children into the careful marriages that were an important aspect of their success. Marie Françoise Boisrond married the free colored planter Pierre Braquehais, who was politically active in the 1790s. Marie Adelaide Boisrond married Alexis Descoubes, a white planter at Cayes.⁶⁸ The three Boisrond sons all married in the years after the sale of their parents' estate and these alliances carried them east. They settled in the parishes of Cavaillon, Saint Louis, and, eventually, Aquin, where they emerged as planters and notables like their father.

It was in the 1780s that these families and their neighbors achieved enough prosperity to become politically active in the colony and in France. But by the end of 1760s, the components of their success were in place: careful marriage alliances, access to Caribbean contraband

networks, reliance on fellow siblings, and the strategic reconstruction of abandoned estates.

* * *

Despite the presence of this increasingly wealthy planter group, in the 1760s the South Province's free population of color was mostly composed of farmers, petty merchants, and artisans.

In data drawn largely from Saint-Domingue's North Province in the 1780s, Stewart King found that the free population of color was split into a mixed-race planting elite and a free colored military leadership class, heavily composed of free blacks.⁶⁹ Such a split did not exist in the South Province, in part because the region's isolation seems to have encouraged intermarriage between free blacks and other free people of color. Nearly half of the slaves (142 of 309) manumitted there in the 1760s were creole blacks or Africans, but they mostly entered households with people of mixed race. The 122 notarized marriage contracts from the 1760s involved only seven free blacks, five of whom chose partners of mixed descent. Church documents also show that the racial identity of free colored brides and grooms grew more mixed as the eighteenth century progressed. Surviving burial registers show free blacks decreasing from 74 percent of free colored church burials before the 1760s to 47 percent in the 1770s and 42 percent in the following decade.⁷⁰

Though most free people of color in the South Province had less land and fewer slaves than the Raimonds or the Hérards, free coloreds in general were an important part of the region's economy, nonetheless. Men and women of color were involved in 28 percent (63/225) of all rural land sales in Cayes, Nippes, and Saint Louis in the 1760s, buying and selling from whites in roughly equal amounts. Although they executed a few large sales or purchases in the 1760s, the value of free colored real estate transactions was generally modest compared to the value of those between whites. On average, free colored rural land sales had a value of around 6,000 livres, compared to an overall average value of 25,000 livres. The same was true of their participation in leases of agricultural land. They participated in about one third (8 of 23) of such transactions in the 1760s, mostly for sums of around several hundred livres per year, while leases between whites were routinely for five to ten times as much.

As the stories of Cecille Bouchauneau and Marie Tirot have already suggested, one of the distinctive characteristics of the free population of color was the important role played by women. According to the

local Les Cayes census for 1753, women ran over 40 percent of the plantations owned by free people of color, compared to only 9 percent among whites.⁷¹ In the 1760s free women of color participated in 21 percent of rural land sales involving free coloreds while only 16 percent of white sales involved women. This relative economic prominence of free colored women confirms the pattern seen in notarized marriage contracts, in which white grooms, on average, brought more property to marriage than white brides, but free women of color brought more than free men of color.

Most critical to the economic survival of free people of color in this plantation economy was their ability to exploit slave labor. A slave was an expensive purchase: a healthy adult man cost 1,200 to 2,000 livres, roughly three to five years salary for a free colored constable in the colony. Nevertheless, free people of color participated more frequently in slave sales than in any other kind of sale. In the 1760s over 40 percent of these transactions (63 of 154) had at least one free colored participant, probably because free people of color purchased slaves not only to acquire workers, but also to liberate family members, as chapter 3 explains. Yet free colored slave sales were worth less than sales between whites. The average value of all slave transactions in the 1760s was 6,400 livres, while the average price of sales involving free coloreds was 2,317 livres. About half of the free colored slave sales or purchases in these Dominguan districts in the 1760s involved free women of color.⁷²

The largest free colored slave purchaser in the decade was the free *quarтерonne* Victoire, who received nine slaves worth 12,600 livres plus use of a plot of land from the white planter François Brosseard in January 1768. This was a sale, not a gift, for Brosseard identified the slaves as compensation for fifteen years of “serving him as principal housekeeper, laundress, and taking care of his house, during which time she relinquished several sums and belongings to him. The second largest sale was concluded by Cecille Mirande, the daughter of a black slave woman and a colonist named Mirande. In 1760 the mixed-race woman purchased eight slaves from a planter acting as an agent for the Mirande merchant house in Bordeaux. A receipt noted that she paid for them with 7,500 livres in coin, coffee, and cotton. The sale was accompanied by a separate deed of gift. Mirande had arranged to give Cecille 1,350 livres to buy a slave and a saddle horse, perhaps in honor of the marriage contract she signed the following day with a free mulatto carpenter.⁷³

Access to slaves' labor was a kind of currency in the colony and one did not have to buy a man to benefit from his sweat. Colonists frequently

leased slaves, a kind of transaction that did not involve many free people of color until the 1780s (chapter 7). However, some free colored masters had wealthy patrons who bought their slaves but allowed them to retain possession. Though Stewart King describes such “pawning” as a common occurrence in the dynamic economy of Cap Français in the 1780s, it was quite rare in the South Province. The free colored couple Pierre Claude and Marion had worked for a white planter and his wife, who, in the 1750s, gave them lifetime use of several slaves and a plot of land. In 1769, as their health prevented them from working the land, the couple fell in debt to a white merchant who supplied them with provisions. One of their borrowed slaves had given birth to a child. To resolve their debt they sold this thirteen-year-old girl to the merchant, who allowed them to keep her until Marion, the older member of the couple, died. Similarly “Margueritte called Pradillon,” a free black woman from the city of Les Cayes, sold a female slave to a white man to cover 825 livres in accumulated debts and then, without drafting a separate lease, rented the slave back again.⁷⁴

The possession of a few slaves and some land allowed many free people of color to live as self-sustaining peasants or farmers, supplying food to plantations. But other economic activities brought them into the peninsula’s towns, for in the 1760s, urban real estate was far less expensive than agricultural land. Free people of color were as involved in urban as rural real estate transactions, figuring in 30 percent (23/76) of these. The average price of all such sales was just above 7,900 livres, though free people of color paid or received about 3,500 livres, on average. About one-fifth of urban leases in the 1760s (18/93) involved a free person of color.

Small-scale commerce was one occupation associated with poorer free people of color. Women were especially prominent as petty marketers, hucksters, or “higglers,” many continuing the commerce they had practiced as slaves during Sunday markets, and acting as distributors for free colored provision farmers as well as slave growers.⁷⁵ Free colored retailers also sold imported goods they bought from white merchants. In 1768 “Marie Louise called de Ruiq,” a free black woman, ran a small boutique on the main street of Les Cayes featuring fabric she bought from white neighbors and boatmen of all sorts, including one “Captain Massé.” This might have been Barthelmy, the husband of Margueritte Massé who traded and ran a store on the main street of the town of Anse à Veau, in the Nippes district. In 1764 thieves stole cloth, handkerchiefs, a shirt, soap, and cheese from Margueritte Massé’s boutique, while her husband was in Port-au-Prince with his

boat. Barthelmy Massé was one of a legion of coastal traders or *caboteurs* who brought legal and contraband goods from main trading centers to petty merchants and regular customers in the southern peninsula. The free *mulâtresse* Marie Jeanne, a market woman in the town of Anse à Veau, periodically hired a free mulatto *caboteur* from Port-au-Prince and his free black partner. The men ferried her down the coast to her native town of Léogane, where French ships regularly stopped. Here she bought baskets of goods to resell in Anse à Veau. Women as well as men owned and operated these small boats. Only four years after her manumission “Marion called Bin,” a Senegalese woman in her mid-forties, paid 300 livres for a seventeen-by-three foot sailing dugout, the kind of small craft used in the coastal trade. In 1788 Henriette Fabre, a free woman of color from the West Province, was at Aquin’s wharf where she paid a white merchant over 11,000 livres in cash for three slaves, household furnishings, and a rowboat large enough to carry four barrels.⁷⁶

This kind of commerce was most successful when the merchant had a wide network of friends and family, like Anne Dominique Acquiez. Acquiez was a free black woman, originally from Curaçao, who lived in Aquin parish. She had probably come to Saint-Domingue as a contraband slave in the years after the collapse of the Saint-Domingue Company and was manumitted in 1737 at around the age of twenty-five. Like many other free colored merchant women, though at a slightly higher level, she bought goods from French ships and merchants at the local pier to resell. In the mid-1760s she owed 2,597 livres to *La Catherine* out of Le Havre and 685 livres to a private trading cargo carried on that same ship. With strong connections to Aquin’s other Curaçaoan merchants-of-color, she almost certainly resold smuggled Dutch goods. By extending her business to the peninsula’s northern coast, where such contraband was harder to find, she probably increased her profits. In April 1768 she sent her slave François north across the mountains to Petit Goâve, where he set up a stand at the market and sold 150 livres worth of merchandise to the colonist Deronseray.⁷⁷

Acquiez also operated a tavern in the town of Aquin, which she purchased for 3,000 livres in 1760. Julien Raimond took his meals there for three-and-a-half years in the early 1770s, and paid her for merchandise in this period as well. In 1765 his sister Thérèse Raimond lent Acquiez 3,000 livres “to use in her business.”⁷⁸ The bonds between Acquiez and the prosperous Raimond clan were personal as well as commercial. Julien Raimond’s receipts showed sums paid to “Mama Acquiez” and in June 1773 he witnessed her last

will and testament. In May 1773, before a royal notary in Acquiez's tavern, his sister Elizabeth Raimond announced her intention to leave for France. Their brother Guillaume Raimond used Acquiez's establishment for the signing of his marriage contract, an important ceremony that usually took place in an official or familial setting.⁷⁹

Though Aquin was a small town, other free black women from Curaçao who lived there. Acquiez's testament left the sum of 100 pistoles to Jacques, the free mulatto son of "Marie Corassol," who may have been a compatriot. She certainly also knew Anne Marie, another free black woman from Curaçao, for she named Anne Marie's free mulatto son, Thomas Ploy, as executor and universal beneficiary of her estate. She deeded her personal effects to his three children.⁸⁰

Indigo was the most important commodity Ploy and others helped smuggle to English and Dutch merchants. The dye was notoriously difficult to refine successfully, but the creole planters of the south coast benefited from their families' decades of experience. As Moreau de Saint-Méry noted in the 1780s, Aquin's indigo was especially popular among merchants because it survived shipping better than most dye. Commodities like cotton, cacao, and coffee were also grown in the southern peninsula, and they constituted a second economic niche, one occupied by free colored small holders. Because they did not require distillation or refining, these products could be grown on a small scale like foodstuffs. The census of 1753 showed four or five times as much cacao being grown in Les Cayes, Saint Louis, and Nippes, as in almost any other colonial district.⁸¹ As they had probably done since the beginning of the eighteenth century, ex-slaves and other free people living as subsistence farmers used these crops to generate the cash or credit they needed for taxes and basic goods.

In this interconnected creole society at least some peasant producers used local patrons to market their commodities and pay their obligations. In 1763, for example, Marie Bety came before a notary to settle her accounts with Jean Maignan, the former militia commander of the Nippes district.⁸² From 1749 through 1760, Maignan served as a kind of banker for this free black woman. He received her deliveries of cotton in 1746, 1747, and 1754, and took payment from one of his free mulatto sons-in-law for six slaves the man leased from Marie Bety.⁸³ On an annual basis Maignan paid the small sums she owed in taxes on her six slaves. He guaranteed a note for 700 livres made out to Marie and repaid the 300 livres she had borrowed from a Mademoiselle Arnaud in 1751. He advanced Marie Bety 60 livres in silver in 1754, bought a horse for her daughter, as well as two barrels of wheat, and,

later, a barrel of salt beef from the cargo of *La Diademe*. When she purchased kerchief linen and striped muslin from the white merchant Tolet, and larger quantities of a cheaper cloth from Catin, probably a free colored woman, Maignan disbursed the money. Finally, Marie may have used Maignan's patronage to reinforce her authority over the white men in her employ. It was through him that she paid a white man to guard her property, a doctor to treat a slave, and a bailiff to serve papers on a white planter.

The lumber and construction trades were a third activity associated with free people of color on the frontier. Both Nippes and Saint Louis were at one time important sources of dyewood and, when prices were high, in one week a slave could cut enough to bring 180 livres on the market in Cap Français, roughly 9 percent of his purchase price. Construction timbers became especially sought after in the 1780s as new coffee plantations cleared many of Saint-Domingue's remaining hillsides. By this time colonists had to import building materials from the United States. In June 1786, for example, Captain Joachim Antonio Podrozo sold a cargo from New York or Boston of "planks and other American wood, codfish and other salted goods" to a merchant in Les Cayes. Yet even at this late date the heavily forested mountains to the west of the Les Cayes plain, in Torbec parish and beyond, still provided wood. On the north face of the peninsula the dry mountains of the Nippes district were renowned for the quality of the lumber they furnished to Port-au-Prince.⁸⁴

The search for valuable timber on the steep slopes in the interior of the southern peninsula involved many free people of color. In April 1765, for example, Pierre "called Errard," of Torbec's prominent free colored family, rented a small vessel from a white wholesale merchant. This lease was to last four months but Hérard, a carpenter and boat wright, formally dissolved the agreement after thirty-one days. He then purchased another boat for 300 livres and within two weeks sold a similar craft, perhaps the same one, to François Brilloin, a white merchant, for 2,000 livres. Hérard and Brilloin then entered a formal partnership.⁸⁵ The two men agreed to split the expenses and profits from a trade "in personal items, commodities, different sorts of merchandise like flour, sugar, rum, etc." Brilloin and four slave sailors would ply the coast in the recently purchased boat, probably looking for farmers and ranchers who were clearing their land. They would trade their wares for dyewood and mahogany. Back in the town of Cayes, Hérard would trim the wood into planks and sell it.

Profits from the lumber trade and other rural activities on the fringes of the plantation economy allowed some free families of color

to rise to elite status. In 1780, when Joseph Boury, the free colored captain of Torbec's free colored militia, (chapter 3) purchased half a plantation from a free mulatto named Etienne Bertrand Mendes, he agreed to pay one-fourth of the 62,000 livres price in top quality sawn lumber delivered to Port-au-Prince.⁸⁶

Hardwoods were valuable enough that "Marie called Debreuil," a free *mulâtresse* living in Port-au-Prince in 1784, sent a notary from the colonial capital to the coast of Nippes to record the theft of wood from her property there.⁸⁷ This expedition cost her fifty-six livres, half the price of a cow, and Debreuil also had to send someone to guard her timber after the notary left. When the official, the watchman, and witnesses stepped ashore onto Debreuil's land they found a white carpenter and ten slaves who had just shipped 600 mahogany shingles and eighteen squared beams to Port-au-Prince.

Ranching and leatherwork were a fourth economic niche. In the seventeenth century, Saint-Domingue's buccaneers had survived by selling meat and hides to passing ships; in the eighteenth century a number of free men of color adopted a similar lifestyle. A few accumulated enough money this way to become planters. As the naturalist Michel Descourtiz noted, "in Saint-Domingue [animal] herds thrive without much care and enrich their owners." Wild cattle roamed the Isle à Vache, or Cow Island, across from the port of Les Cayes. One of the two parishes in the Nippes district was called Anse à Veau, or Veal Cove. As sugar and indigo estates filled the plains of the North and West Provinces where wild cattle had once grazed, livestock from the southern peninsula began to have serious commercial value. One of Moreau de Saint-Méry's correspondents estimated that a rancher in Aquin could breed eight cattle into a herd of fifty in six to eight years, even if he had to sell half-a-dozen animals every year to pay expenses. Fifty cattle, carefully tended, would breed to 300 in a few more years. The 1753 census showed Les Cayes, Saint Louis, and Nippes to have nearly twice as many "horned animals" relative to the slave population as other districts of the colony had. Moreau himself extolled the quality of Aquin's horses, cattle, and sheep. He noted that mules from the Aquin parish were famous for their stamina in mountain travel and sugar work.⁸⁸

Animal husbandry was especially associated with free people of color, and probably helped some escape from slavery. In 1701 Labat noted that the men who captured wild horses sold them cheaply in Saint-Domingue, but that a rider might have to pay twice the purchase price to have his animal trained for the saddle. By the late eighteenth century, Saint-Domingue's mustangs had mostly

disappeared, but horsemanship was still a “passion” for the colony’s men of color, according to Moreau de Saint-Méry. Michel Descourtilz used the same language to describe the work at a corral in the Artibonite plain.⁸⁹

The *nègres* and men of color who serve as horse trainers passionately love this tiring and dangerous exercise which among creoles gives them a certain fame. They seem born for this lawless horsemanship . . . this passion drives them to such a degree that when they have undertaken to break a wild horse, they even work them at night, in order to avoid the attention of their boss and to safeguard their pride in case they fall.

Before achieving freedom around 1776, the future Toussaint Louverture managed the livestock pen on the plantation where he was enslaved.⁹⁰ His skill with animals, especially horses, may have contributed to the money he used to establish a coffee farm with thirteen leased slaves in 1779. Most plantations in Saint-Domingue had some kind of animal pen for horses and for the oxen that pulled cane wagons and powered sugar mills. Planters often reserved responsibility over such corrals for an older or favored slave, and the job was considered in itself a sort of informal liberty.

However, a thriving contraband trade in cattle from Spanish Santo Domingo spared most planters from having to raise their own meat. On both sides of the colonial border, men of mixed race dominated this important smuggling traffic. The official wholesaler to Port-au-Prince’s butchers complained that “infallibly free blacks and mulattos take the major part of the animals [brought over the border from Spanish Santo Domingo] destined for [Port-au-Prince] either for their independent butcheries or to resell them to [the wholesaler] at a considerable profit.”⁹¹

Because several head of cattle cost only a few hundred livres, ten or twenty percent of the cost of an adult slave, animal raising was an affordable activity for free people like Cecille Bouchauneau who did not own their own workers or land. However, free people of color may have felt vulnerable to accusations of cattle theft or contraband. Sixteen of the twenty contracts for the sale of livestock drafted during the 1760s involved free people of color. Whites normally did not draw up formal documents for such small transactions.

Because so many free men and women of color had at least one or two animals they were raising to sell, entrepreneurs with wide social contacts could accumulate the raw materials for a considerable trade in leather goods. In February 1761 the blockades of the Seven Years

War made it almost impossible for colonists to buy European products. Seeing an opportunity, Philippe, a free mulatto tailor from the town of Anse à Veau, paid 3,000 livres to Louis Verais, another free man of color from Léogane, for a half-share in a mulatto slave named Joseph, a 35-year-old shoemaker. At 6,000 livres, this contract valued Joseph at three times the sale price of a typical male plantation worker, suggesting that Philippe expected considerable profit from the partnership, which he and Verais agreed would last until the end of the war. The free mulatto tailor agreed to house the shoemaker and supply him with the necessary leather for his trade, probably from free colored ranchers in the surrounding hills.⁹²

Some free colored livestock entrepreneurs or skilled slaves were so successful that they established themselves as master saddle-makers, a highly respected craft that a few men used to become planters. One saddler-turned-planter was Julien Delaunay, who may have been an elder brother of the child Jeanne Boissé was carrying when the Léogane Council annulled her marriage to Louis deLaunay [*sic*] in 1738 (chapter 1). In 1752 Julien Delaunay was a 25-year-old free mulatto working in the Aquin parish slaughterhouse. That year he agreed to pay 300 livres to another man of color to capture and butcher animals for him, suggesting that he himself was working more with leather than with meat. Seven years later a notary described Delaunay as a “master saddler, living in the town of Aquin” when he bought a hillside farm for 3,000 livres from another man of color. The land was apparently to be used as a ranch or corral, for officials continued to describe Delaunay as a “saddler” throughout the 1760s, as his social profile rose. In 1763 he was self-confident enough to join eleven neighbors formally protesting the actions of a white man whose animals ran in their fields. The following year Delaunay was again identified as “master saddler of Aquin” when he and several other free men of color chose a legal guardian for the orphaned children of a free black woman. In 1769 he served as chief arbiter over two whites evaluating a horse in a legal dispute.⁹³ In the 1770s and 1780s, like his more prosperous neighbors in Aquin parish and elsewhere, Delaunay became a planter or *habitant* to local notaries, who stopped labeling him a saddle maker. (chapter 7).

* * *

The notarial record reveals that, at mid-century, family and social class overrode or at least counterbalanced racial identities in the frontier regions that still made up most of Saint-Domingue’s territory. In the

1760s as in the 1720s, aspiring planters married free women of color with property or social connections. Old colonial families included mixed-race relatives in their social networks. Because of the importance of these networks, and the rarity of direct slave imports from Africa, surviving records show few free colored families of purely African ancestry. This meant that there was no distinct free black population in the South, but the importance of social class meant that there was no single free colored “class” either. Despite their scorn for African ancestry, creole colonists and French immigrants deliberately passed their own class status on to some of their mixed-race children, leaving others in slavery or in an impoverished freedom. By following their fathers’ strategies of careful marriage and long-term investment, some light-skinned heirs of early colonists became a kind of planter elite, over time. But relatively few free people of color enjoyed these advantages. Instead, most profited from clearing land, selling lumber, raising livestock, growing small-scale commodities, or transporting merchandise along the coast. Others marketed food, imported goods, or worked as artisans. Slave labor was vital to economic success and free people of color at all economic levels actively bought and sold other human beings, though they were also prominent in manumitting slaves, as chapter 3 describes.

The fact that so few French women immigrated to Saint-Domingue helped some free women of color build social networks, find employment, and forge domestic partnerships with colonists that were not available to men of color. This pattern, and its reversal in the 1780s, was a critical aspect of the changing image of race and citizenship in Saint-Domingue (chapter 5).

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CHAPTER 3



FREEDOM, SLAVERY, AND THE FRENCH COLONIAL STATE

In 1767 the free mulatto Paul Carenan bought an indigo plantation in a valley adjoining the fertile parish of Fonds des Nègres. He paid 130,000 livres for the estate and its 60 slaves, by far the most valuable purchase any free person of color in the region made during the 1760s. The notary used the respectful title “Sieur” to describe Carenan in the sales contract. Yet three years later the Port-au-Prince Council decreed that Paul Carenan was a slave. Because his manumission papers had never been officially registered, every contract he had concluded was void, including purchases. This slave owner was to become, himself, the property of the court.¹

Within three weeks, the council reversed itself, following an appeal from Marie Jeanne Delaunay, Carenan’s legitimate wife of thirteen years and mother of his six children. Without challenging the high court’s right to take away her husband’s freedom, Delaunay noted that his life had included “public possession [of his liberty] for forty years, the repeated deeds of a free citizen, a steady [marriage] union contracted before the altar—in a word everything that would seem to protect him from the rigors of the law and make up for [the lack of] some formalities.”²

Paul Carenan’s story illustrates three important aspects of the free colored experience in the 1760s. First, it exposes his own understanding of his place in colonial society. He was a respected figure with powerful connections: his new plantation had previously belonged to Denis Carenan, a white man who was probably his father.³ Complacent because of his social position, Carenan was unaware that his liberty

needed government approval. Second, the episode demonstrates the increasing friction between whites and free people of color in the 1770s. In Carenan's case the problem was not local, but stemmed from the attempts of officials in Port-au-Prince to exert authority over even wealthy free people of color. As chapters 4 and 5 explain, racial identity became central in colonial society after 1769 because feuding colonial judges and governors agreed to write and enforce new racial laws. Carenan's case was an early example of this process.

Third, this episode shows how important notarial documents were to free people of color. Marie Jeanne Delaunay counted her husband's many notarized transactions among his "repeated deeds of a free citizen," for slaves could not enter legal contracts. Even though the state was trying to strip Carenan of his liberty, its notarial archives helped save him from this fate.

The multiple tensions revealed by the Carenan story are the subject of this chapter, which surveys relations between free people of color, slaves, and the colonial state in the 1760s. Despite the importance of social class and local relationships in creole society, by this decade Saint-Domingue's governors and legal officials possessed final authority over whether a given man or woman of color would live in freedom or in slavery. From this moment forward, the colonial state, not individual masters, defined the actions and documents that would bring liberty to a person of color. This increasing formalization of freedom posed new dangers and humiliations for planters like Paul Carenan, but it did have benefits for poorer people of color. Although interracial relationships within elite creole society protected wealthy families in the 1760s, whites did harass and exploit poorer free people of African descent because of their color. As this chapter illustrates, many of these people turned to official institutions like the notarial system, the militia hierarchy, and the slave-hunting constabulary to defend their freedom.

The first part of this chapter shows how free people of color used Saint-Domingue's notaries to create legal texts that guaranteed their liberty, property rights, and personal security. Even though many could not sign their names, they understood how the colony's legal system functioned and were often scrupulous about legal formalities. They notarized even minor sales, to protect themselves against accusations of theft. They filed criminal and civil affidavits with royal notaries, creating formal evidence that might serve them in court. Although Saint-Domingue's laws gave European masters near-total control over their African slaves, they also permitted free people of color to sue whites. The affidavits that free coloreds drafted frequently

referred to pending lawsuits, and whites' reactions show that they took these formal complaints seriously.

The second part of this chapter describes armed service as another way free people of color used the colonial state to distance themselves from slavery and reinforce their social status vis à vis whites. Wearing a royal bandoleer or commanding a militia unit demonstrated their loyalty to the slave regime and to France. This chapter introduces two military institutions that depended on free colored participation, and which would become the focus of controversies described in following chapters. First, the free colored militia, part of a mandatory system in which whites served in their own companies, is examined through the social position of three of its officers. In the South Province at least, free men of color were not visibly proud of their militia service. Even those who commanded their own companies rarely noted this fact in legal documents. Second, the slave hunting constabulary, a separate body whose members were composed mostly of poor free men of color, provides evidence of the kinds of daily tensions that existed between poorer free people of color, slaves, and whites.

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Because the cultural inferiority of Africans was a basic tenet of slave society, many colonists believed that blacks were mystified by writing. Jean-Baptiste Labat described slaves newly arrived in the French Antilles: "They say that one must be a sorcerer to make paper talk." Eighty years later Moreau de Saint-Méry claimed of Saint-Domingue's blacks, "What astonishes them the most in Whites is writing . . . and they say that the Whites would have called the blacks sorcerers if they had made this precious discovery." Yet many free people of color, even though illiterate, were keenly aware of how the colony's legal mechanisms functioned. It was rare to find a someone like Marie Magdelaine Cocoyer, who told a notary in 1784 that she had never drafted an official document and was ignorant of the procedures surrounding such deeds.⁴

Many free people of color had been enslaved, and understood that official papers were the key to freedom. They knew they needed royal notaries to authenticate their liberty papers, especially after the government established new manumission laws in 1767. In 1685 the Code Noir had given masters near-complete authority to free their slaves. But since the 1720s, colonial governors had tried to force masters to ask permission for each manumission. Most colonists seem to have ignored these laws. In 1745, hoping to discourage masters

from freeing so many slaves, Versailles ordered the administrators of the Lesser Antilles colonies to charge 1,000 livres to free a man and 600 livres to free a woman.⁵ By the 1760s, Saint-Domingue's administrators were demanding 800 livres to register a liberty deed.

This was the kind of tax and intrusion on masters' prerogatives that the colony's two high courts normally fought. However, during the Seven Years War, the Council of Cap Français published a collection of slave regulations that identified a new problem; notaries were drafting official contracts for blacks and mulattos who claimed to be free but could not prove their liberty. After the war, in 1764 a controversial new governor, Charles d'Estaing, believed Saint-Domingue needed more free people of color and he reduced the manumission fee from 800 to 300 livres.⁶ D'Estaing noted that many free people of color did not have proper liberty papers, and he began delivering official copies for 300 livres. This change did not survive his brief and tumultuous tenure, described in chapter 4.

After d'Estaing, administrators and colonial judges worked together to create and enforce new manumission regulations, promulgated in 1767. They noted that "a number of slaves believe themselves to be free and live as such, in virtue of a simple ticket from their masters."⁷ In other cases, indebted planters liberated valuable slaves, defrauding creditors. From 1767, therefore, freeing a slave required submitting a formal request to the governor and intendant, usually after registering it with a royal notary. These high administrators evaluated the reasons for granting the liberty and whether or not to waive the 800 livres liberty tax. If approved, the request passed to an official who recorded payment of the tax and sent it on to the clerk of the regional court. Here, in order to alert creditors, the court publicly announced the proposed manumission during three consecutive sessions. If no opposition emerged over this period, the document, by now well marked, returned to the office of the intendant for ratification. Only then did it pass into the hands of the individual, who from that moment would be officially free. As Paul Carenan discovered in 1770, the Port-au-Prince Council was intent on enforcing this new procedure.

Given the difficulty of obtaining these official documents, it is not surprising that free people of color guarded them carefully, even before the new procedures were put into place. Madelaine Clavier was a *mulâtresse* whose master freed her privately in 1748. In 1753 she had a notary inscribe this informal liberty into his official register. When Clavier died in 1767 officials found a locked mahogany trunk in her bedroom, containing the large sum of 500 livres in coin and a cigar case containing her proof of liberty.⁸ The free *quarteron*

Jean-Baptiste Petit lived in a dilapidated log house in Nippes in which notaries found little of value besides seven packets of paper, one containing proofs of freedom for Petit's family and another with documents for the pending manumission of a mulatto woman. In Haiti in the early 1980s the anthropologist Ira Lowenthal had an informant in the old Nippes district who still held the 1780 manumission papers of one of his ancestors.⁹

Even before the 1767 reform, if a master's promise of freedom was not publicly recorded by a notary, a slave risked remaining a slave in the eyes of other masters. Catherine Thisbé of Cayes found this to be true after her master Dubignon, a planter in the Les Cayes district, specified on his deathbed that she would be free if she served until his wife's death.¹⁰ Although he died in 1749, Dubignon's widow lived on until 1755. At that point Thisbé went to Sieur Delagautraye, Dubignon's stepson and the sole heir of his estate, to obtain her freedom. But Delagautraye claimed that she had belonged to his mother's first husband, not to Dubignon. He initiated formal procedures to return her to slavery. Thisbé was forced to go into hiding for nearly a decade. It was only in September 1764 that she was able to meet Governor d'Estaing, who was visiting Les Cayes on a tour of the colony. He provided her with a written confirmation of her liberty and Thisbé immediately went to a royal notary to have this approval copied into his register, making it part of the public record.

The mulattos Jacques Benjamin and his brother Alexandre were hoping to avoid similar difficulties when they visited a notary in the town of Les Cayes in 1769. Their master Jean-Baptiste Fauvil had freed them privately over twenty-three years earlier, and this arrangement had been approved by the governor and intendant. Yet the Benjamins' only proof of this important fact was a single sheet of paper, which they requested the notary to copy into his public records.¹¹

Free people of color also appreciated the importance of manumission papers because they themselves frequently liberated others from slavery. No kind of notarial transaction attracted more free colored participants in the 1760s than manumission deeds, which meant that many played the role of master in the bureaucratic freedom process. People of color manumitted about 23 percent (70 of 310) of the slaves freed in the Cayes, Saint Louis, and Nippes districts in the 1760s. Nearly half of these free colored manumitters were women (32 of 70). Across the board, children were the most likely candidates for freedom, regardless of the race or gender of the manumitter. But free women of color were unusual in that they freed almost as many

adults as children, which suggests that they were trying to liberate entire families.

Free people of color also used the notarial system regularly to defend themselves against harassment. Saint-Domingue was an extremely litigious society. In 1786, with a free population between 40,000 and 50,000, the colony's judges heard some 34,409 lawsuits, and rendered 30,766 judgments. Neither the Code Noir nor subsequent legislation in Saint-Domingue prohibited free people of color from suing whites, and the notary's office was the place where such lawsuits often began. Dominique Rogers has examined approximately 400 legal cases involving free people of color in Cap Français and Port-au-Prince in the 1780s, and found that free coloreds sued whites in civil cases and frequently won their suits.¹² Even those free people of color unwilling to pursue whites before a judge used notarial documents to negotiate the matrix of convention, social hierarchy, and kin relations that defined their social position between whites and slaves.

In 1764, for example, the free mulatto lumber worker Louis Bourelier of Les Cayes found himself in a sexual triangle involving his white uncle and a black slave woman. In 1754 Bourelier borrowed 1,600 livres to buy an African from a slave ship.¹³ He traded the new slave, plus 600 livres in specie, to a planter in exchange for Cathos, a black woman who was pregnant with his child. Bourelier did not manumit Cathos, perhaps because he could not afford the tax. But according to Bourelier,

Sieur Jean-Baptiste Bourelier, planter and [the white] brother of the declarant's father . . . had developed an affection for the *négresse* [Cathos, and] urged him on several occasions to free the said *négresse* to which he would never consent.

The free mulatto was surprised to learn, therefore, that on October 8, 1756, Cathos had obtained formal freedom papers from the colonial administration. He assumed that his uncle, the white planter, had engineered this manumission, and did nothing about it "as much out of respect as out of fear." Furthermore, he believed that Cathos's liberty was invalid because he still owed money for her purchase. Eight years later this "respect" and "fear" had ebbed somewhat. With his debt still unpaid and his assets reduced to an old slave unfit for work and a pocket watch, the lumber worker announced his intention to sue Cathos or "any others responsible [for her] surreptitious manumission."

Louis Bourelier could not compete against a white planter for Cathos's affection. But when Jean-Baptiste Bourelier freed the black

woman from slavery, he effectively robbed his free mulatto nephew of the money he had borrowed to purchase her. However, the free man of color was unwilling to openly accuse his white uncle of theft. Perhaps if Louis Bourelier had had a stronger social network, he might have convinced another planter to ask Jean-Baptiste for compensation on his behalf. Instead, he hoped that writing his story into the notary's official registers would prod his uncle to action. Using the notary, he made his private grievance a matter of public record. As is frequently the case, the notary's register reveals nothing more about this dispute.

Other free people of color were not so oblique about challenging whites. In July 1765, Jeanne, a recently manumitted mulatto woman, signed a contract with Joseph Beauvais, a white resident of the town of Les Cayes, to work as his housekeeper. Beauvais agreed to pay her an annual salary of 500 livres and supply "nourishment, lodgings, and medicine . . . in conformity with her status and condition." He also promised to give her a slave girl worth 1,200 livres within two to nine months.

This arrangement certified Jeanne's transition out of slavery in several ways. Since slaves could not enter legal contracts, the very drafting of this agreement confirmed her new freedom, even though her former owner signed the contract too, as her patron. And Beauvais was going to make her a master in her own right, with his gift of a slave. Jeanne, agreed for her part:

to enter from this day and immediately . . . in the service of the said Sieur Beauvais as his governing housekeeper, and to stay there as long as he is content and satisfied with her services and she, equally, with his good treatment and behavior toward her.¹⁴

It was this last condition that brought Jeanne back before the same notary within a month, this time without her former master,

to complain of [Beauvais'] bad behavior toward her . . . during all the time that she stayed with him not once ceasing to swear at her and to scold her for no reason and about nothing, going as far as to threaten to make her wash the feet of his favorite [*négresse*], named Margueritte, which [Jeanne] is not at all prepared to do, this is probably the reason he put her out in this way, without leaving her the time to take her belongings.¹⁵

Earlier that very year, Beauvais lost a black woman servant he had freed from slavery on the condition that she serve him for six more

years. She disappeared after only two.¹⁶ Jeanne knew that as a free woman she had contractual rights to “good treatment” from Beauvais. She would not kneel before his slave mistress, nor would she accept eviction without her personal possessions.

A notarized declaration by Pierre Hérard, a free mulatto from the city of Les Cayes, shows how a man of color could use the threat of royal justice to pressure a white family. On December 30, 1764, Hérard was standing on the doorstep of a prominent Les Cayes merchant house about five p.m., when someone struck him from behind with a walking stick. Wheeling around, Hérard recognized Gellée, a white planter, who answered his protests with two more blows from his cane and then left, without saying a word. Several men witnessed the episode and at six o’clock Hérard headed for the offices of a royal notary, to file an affidavit. The notary had closed his office for the night, but Hérard found a surgeon and the lieutenant of the local constabulary, and was consulting with them at seven p.m. when Gellée walked up. With his sword under one arm and his walking stick in the other hand, the white man pulled Hérard aside and said to him, according to Hérard,

So it is you [*toi*] who complained to M. Louet [the mayor of Les Cayes]. The declarant said to him Yes, Monsieur, you [*vous*] struck me for no reason, it is right that I complain, to which the said Sieur Gellée said to him, making a threatening gesture with his hand, be careful, you have only to walk straight and withdraw yourself.¹⁷

The surgeon and constable overheard this threat and Hérard decided to pursue his case. He dictated an affidavit to a notary, stressing his deference towards the white man. When Gellée addressed him using the familiar “*tu*” Hérard responded with the more respectful “*vous*” and “Monsieur.” Appointing an attorney to take his case before the regional court, Hérard placed himself under “the safeguard of the King and of justice” and asked “that the said Sieur Gellée be forbidden to insult or mistreat the declarant in the future.” This threat of legal action led one member of the family, “Gellée the younger,” to pay Hérard 135 livres, about the price of a cow, for a second notarized affidavit that the young Gellée had never attacked him. However, the following day, Hérard returned to the notary to declare that if young Gellée had not beaten him, then an older Gellée had. His poor acquaintance with the family, he explained, had led to the confusion.¹⁸

Sixte Poulain was another propertied and respected man of color victimized by a white man, but he could not get satisfaction without a

lawsuit. The Poulains were a large and relatively prominent free colored family in the Cayes district. In the 1760s, two Poulain women, perhaps his cousins, daughters, or sisters, married white men; on several occasions the friends and relatives of free colored orphans selected Sixte and his brothers to be guardians of the children. Notaries, who often accorded Poulain the respectful title “Sieur” in contracts, described him as a free *mestif*, of one-eighth African ancestry. As was common practice, he kept his horse in the pasture of a friendly but impoverished white planter named Baugé, who was married to a free *mulâtresse*.¹⁹

One day in February 1766 a white surgeon named Rousseau visited the Baugé plantation and saw Poulain’s horse. He claimed it was his animal, stolen ten months earlier, and took it home.²⁰ As soon as Poulain heard this news, he went looking for the surgeon and told him that he had owned the horse for nine years without interruption, since acquiring it in a trade. He offered to produce written evidence of that transaction, but Rousseau was unyielding. As Poulain told the notary, “not wishing to turn a good affair . . . into a bad one by some indiscreet replies” he withdrew, warning Rousseau that he would have to prove his accusations before the court.

Although Poulain could prove he owned the animal, he could not force Rousseau even to examine that evidence. He had been labeled a horse thief, reportedly the worst insult one could offer a free man of color in Saint-Domingue, but Poulain, for all his local connections, could not risk an “indiscreet” comment. In a society where some white men exchanged blows at the slightest affront, he withdrew to the notary’s office, to fight Rousseau with legal weapons.

Because they were often accused of selling stolen property for slaves, many free people of color carefully documented events that might be interpreted as theft. In September 1768, Nicolle, a free woman of color living in the hills behind Les Cayes, ended a long wait to take possession of three slaves she had leased to a Sieur Canard, who also allowed her to keep cows, goats, and sheep in his pastures.²¹ When Canard died, she sued his estate to reclaim her property. But no notice of the court’s decision ever reached her. Meanwhile Canard’s executor had died, part of his plantation had been sold, and his heirs had abandoned the remaining land. Nicolle’s slaves returned to her on their own initiative, sick and “dying of hunger.”

Afraid that this neglect would kill her livestock, she went to Canard’s plantation and brought back thirty-six animals. She then made an official declaration before a notary. Although she was unable to sign her name, Nicolle stipulated that she had confiscated far fewer

animals than were listed in Canard's inventory. With this affidavit, at least, she was safe from accusations of cattle rustling.

If settled landowners like Poulain and Nicolle had to rely on the courts and notaries to prove their honesty, people recently freed from slavery had a much more difficult time. In the 1780s, Moreau de Saint-Méry claimed that "in the opinion of the freedmen themselves there is a great distance between black freedmen and the others." Although Moreau saw this as a racial distinction, it was really based on social class, not color. As he explained, "There are very few free blacks whose habits differ from those of black slaves."²² In the South Province free people of color who chose slaves as friends and lovers risked being treated as slaves themselves, no matter what their color. Despite their low status, however, some of these free people turned to the colonial courts for help, especially after white patrons failed them.

The story that a free mulatto named Pierre Moreau told a notary in 1763 provides an example of this recourse to the law. Moreau was born free, but he had close ties to the world of slavery. In his native parish of Jacmel, east of Aquin on the southern coast, he formed a relationship with Perrine, a black plantation slave, with the consent of her white owner Prior. In 1761 or 1762, when Prior married a planter's widow in Les Cayes parish and moved there with his slaves, Pierre Moreau followed them. He lived with a free black cousin on a plantation near Prior's new estate. It was in this new setting that the established lines of patronage and servitude linking Prior, Perrine, and Moreau became tangled with those of other masters.

Sometime in late 1762, Pierre Moreau bought a young gelded pig from a white plantation overseer and entrusted it for fattening to a black *commandeur*, an elite plantation slave who directed the field work of other slaves. Moreau later learned that the son of another slave driver on a different plantation had stolen his animal and hidden it with the slaves of a third neighbor, Sieur LaPorte. Moreau recaptured his pig and took it back to the white overseer he had bought it from, who recognized it as the same animal.²³ He then went to the Prior plantation to see Perrine, for he had originally purchased the pig as a gift for her.

While Moreau was waiting for his friend at Prior's gate, two slaves he did not recognize came to tell him that Sieur LaPorte, whose slaves had harbored the stolen animal, was visiting Prior and wanted to talk with him. Moreau told them LaPorte could speak with him there and several minutes later the white planter arrived with four or five other white men, including Prior's overseer and his sugar refiner. They seized Moreau, dragged him back to the house, and interrogated him about the pig, which LaPorte claimed had been stolen from his slaves.

Informed of Moreau's dangerous situation, his friend Perrine, Prior's slave, sent a message to the overseer who had bred the pig for written proof of Moreau's ownership. In the meantime Prior's plantation staff was torturing Moreau as if he were their property. They locked him overnight in a set of leg irons attached to a bed, and the next morning, staked him spread-eagle to the ground. At just this moment Perrine brought the overseer's note to her master's plantation manager. According to an affidavit Moreau later filed, the white man just kept the note, "saying that such things merely showed cleverness and that their mischief had been supervised." Then two of the plantation's black slave drivers, one on each side, flogged Moreau, eventually returning him to the leg irons.

Although badly injured, the free mulatto escaped that afternoon, by claiming he needed to relieve himself outside. He hid in the cane fields until nightfall, then made his way to a neighboring plantation, where a slave he knew hid him for the next twenty-four hours. The following evening he limped into the city of Les Cayes, where he again found shelter with a friend, a Caraïbe Indian from Martinique, who lived in the pasture just outside town. At seven the next morning, carried by three persons, Moreau appeared before a royal notary to lodge a formal complaint. The accused thief recognized that at this point he needed official documentation to protect himself. Although he could not sign his name, Pierre Moreau was well aware of the mechanisms of royal justice and planned to press charges against his white assailants. A notary recorded his story in the presence of the acting royal attorney. Moreau then requested an examination by two surgeons, who submitted affidavits about his medical condition.²⁴

Moreau's story shows how poor free people of color, living on the very edge of slavery and freedom, with friends and associates on both sides of that line, negotiated their existence in slave society. Although he was new to the parish, Moreau already had a social network that included white overseers, slave drivers, and rural and urban people of color. But white planters like Prior and LaPorte considered those relationships to be under their private jurisdiction. When Moreau dealt with the slaves of a white planter with whom he had no client relationship, events spun out of his control. By punishing the free mulatto, LaPorte showed his own slaves the patronage he could exert for them in the petty commerce and crime of the neighborhood.

The story survived because Moreau turned to the state as a substitute for Prior, the patron who failed him. His affidavit does not say whether Perrine's master was among the group that tortured him, but Prior was either unwilling or unable to stop LaPorte. In July 1764

Moreau initiated a lawsuit against LaPorte, of which no records survive. But his experiences demonstrate that even those free people of color who practically lived in the slave world saw royal notaries and the documents they created as a way to assert their rights as free men. Without the authenticity and respectability conferred by the notary's signature and seal, Moreau would have had little success in establishing his innocence before a planter acting as self-appointed judge.

While Pierre Moreau was a free mulatto with a wide and varied social network, Jean and Marie Louise Barbier were free blacks who lived in the Nippes district on an island at the mouth of two rivers, far from the overlapping patronage systems of the plantation zone. The location of several fishing camps, the island was also a rendezvous for *caboteurs*, the boatmen and traders who ferried passengers, crops, and merchandise along the coast.²⁵ Despite this isolation and their illiteracy, the Barbiers, like Pierre Moreau, knew to turn to a notary when misfortune struck.

One October morning in 1768, the couple left their seven-year-old daughter Victoire at their cabin while Jean hunted with his musket and Marie Louise gathered wood for the household. About five p.m. the two of them, not far from home, heard Victoire's cries. Rushing back to the cabin, they found her struggling in the arms of Alexandre, a black slave belonging to Leblanc, a boatman from Port-au-Prince who normally transported wood from Nippes to the colonial capital. Leblanc, Alexandre, and three other members of his crew were carrying Victoire towards their canoe. Jean Barbier raised his gun but did not shoot, in fear of injuring his daughter. As he hesitated, Leblanc and his crew attacked, breaking one of Jean's teeth and kicking Marie Louise in the stomach. When the raiders' boat cleared the shore it held both Victoire Barbier and Jean's musket, probably his most valuable material possession.

Apparently without slaves, family, or friends to come to their defense, Jean, Marie Louise, and Victoire Barbier were ideal victims for Leblanc and his crew. In Port-au-Prince the boatmen could easily sell the child as a slave; even if the Barbiers were able to find their daughter in the colonial capital, they would still have to prove she was free. Two days after the attack, the Barbiers found a notary on a nearby plantation and made a formal declaration of events, explaining their intention to bring charges against Leblanc and his accomplices for the kidnapping.²⁶

As these stories illustrate, France's notarial system, like that of other legal traditions inspired by Roman law, was a valuable tool for the poorest free people of color. By providing an unimpeachable record of

what a client said, agreed to, or paid, a notarized affidavit, contract, or deed of sale provided a public voice for women and men who were otherwise under the control of an employer, white relative, or powerful neighbor. Thus notaries provided a doorway into a legal system that free people of color used to get justice from whites, especially in questions of property. Though many of Saint-Domingue's court archives have disappeared, the hundreds of cases from the 1780s studied by Dominique Rogers strongly support this conclusion.²⁷

More important for the coming of the Revolutionary era, notaries and the legal system constituted the beginnings of a public space.²⁸ Notarial declarations were an acceptable form of public speech for free men of color, an arena where men and women could marshal evidence in defense of their rights regardless of their social or racial status. The first free colored spokesmen in revolutionary Paris—a merchant and a planter—were so skilled at legalistic argument that historians have mistakenly described them as “lawyers.”²⁹

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The colonial militia and constabulary were another public arena in which, free men of color demonstrated and defended their freedom. After 1769, colonial militia service became the central issue in white colonists' unsuccessful struggle to secure civilian government for Saint-Domingue. During and after this bitter political controversy, free people of color argued that their armed service to the French state proved they were suitable for citizenship, as chapters 4 and 7 explain.

It is difficult to describe free colored militia service before 1769, however. Perhaps because of the unpopularity of Saint-Domingue's militia system, the colony's administrators kept almost no detailed records of the institution. In 1786 Governor La Luzerne searched the records of his predecessors and found neither militia lists nor records of officers' commissions before 1768.³⁰ Nevertheless, notarial records and other documents do reveal that the men who commanded free colored militia units in the South Province were respected members of the region's old creole elite.

In the area around Cap Français, free blacks formed their own militia company, separate from other free men, sometime after the siege of Cartagena in 1697. Free men of mixed ancestry served with whites until after 1724. In the South Province, this self-consciously-black class of free men did not emerge in the colonial period and the division between whites and men of color, generally, occurred much later. In 1734, when the royal governor wrote to an official in Les Cayes

district of his intention to prohibit men of color from serving in the white militia, the local official responded that virtually all local residents had some measure of mixed ancestry.³¹ It was not until the early 1740s, probably at the beginning of the War of Austrian Succession in 1742, that the royal lieutenant for Les Cayes separated white and free colored militiamen into distinct companies.³²

For two to four decades after their formation, Saint-Domingue's free colored militia units were commanded by men of color. Yet, on the frontier, race was not the primary criterion for these leadership positions. In Torbec parish, west of the town of Les Cayes, the captain of the free colored militia was a white man, François Farin, until 1760. Caribbean-born like many of his Torbec neighbors, Farin was descended from colonists who came to Saint-Domingue after evacuating the island of Saint-Christophe (Saint Kitts), after a major English victory in 1702. In the southern peninsula, the census of 1720 listed two separate Farin households in the same region where, in 1760, François Farin had a plantation and served as militia captain. These shared creole roots may have strengthened the relationship between Farin and his free colored neighbors in Torbec. One of them was the free mulatto indigo planter Jean Domingue Hérard (chapter 2) who was also descended from wealthy colonists named in the 1720 census. After Farin died in 1760, Hérard moved onto his plantation and managed it for the militia captain's white brother and sister.³³

Farin probably served as leader of Torbec's free colored militia because of his skill at hunting escaped slaves. As Saint-Domingue's enslaved population grew in the 1730s and 1740s, the rugged and isolated southern peninsula attracted maroons just as it had drawn freebooters and buccaneers earlier. For a long time the Blue Mountains between Les Cayes and Saint Louis sheltered a maroon raider known as Pompé, who was eventually captured in a cavern once used by the native Taino people. The northwest coast of the peninsula, across the mountains from Torbec, was home to a maroon band led by Plymouth, an escaped slave originally purchased in Jamaica. He and his followers were so dangerous and stealthy that planters had to mobilize militia units from across the province to flush them out of the hills. It was the mulatto militia of the Cayes plain, probably commanded by François Farin, that eventually killed Plymouth, and gave his name to this wilderness region. Indeed, Farin or one of his relatives may have remained in these unsettled mountains, so close to Torbec. Moreau de Saint-Méry described a retired constabulary officer named Farin who lived in the Plymouth wilderness in the 1750s, "until he tired of the solitude." In 1760, when the Torbec

militia captain dictated his last wishes from his sickbed, he commended his 36-year-old slave “Jerome Creole” for his devoted service “notably in my hunts for maroon slaves, in which he has bravely and faithfully seconded me.” François Farin freed no other slaves, but he left Jerome his musket and his freedom.³⁴

Jacques Boury, who seems to have succeeded Farin as Torbec’s free colored militia captain in 1760, probably did not share his predecessor’s devotion to tracking men through the forests of the interior.³⁵ But this work was no longer the militia’s responsibility. The royal government had expanded the slave-hunting constabulary or *maréchaussée*, leaving the militia to concentrate on external threats. These were especially troubling during the Seven Years’ War, and from 1760 to 1763, Saint-Domingue’s militia companies worked harder than ever before, preparing fortifications for an expected invasion from Jamaica. French troops were concentrated around Cap Français, leaving the defense of the South and West almost entirely in the hands of militiamen. Boury’s district was critical because its coastline controlled the western entrance to the port of Les Cayes and had long been a favorite target of British raiders.³⁶

The invasion never occurred. But Boury’s social background illustrates the kind of man royal officials entrusted with this important responsibility. The mulatto captain of Torbec’s free colored militia was the oldest of eight children, the son and namesake of a Jacques Boury who was probably an early French immigrant to the southern peninsula. The census of 1720 did not list a resident by that name, but in 1762 a notary sought the testimony of Jacques Boury, the father, because he had lived 40 years in Torbec parish. Like other early-eighteenth-century immigrants, this first Boury had married a creole woman, Louise Duteuil, who notaries described as a free *mulâtresse*. Duteuil’s father was probably a Frenchman, but her mother, Anne Thomas, was a free black woman born in Jamaica. Sometime after giving birth to Louise Duteuil, Anne Thomas married a free mulatto saddle-maker, and her white son-in-law Jacques Boury practiced the same craft. He did some animal doctoring as well, for Anne Thomas described him after his death as a “saddler and master *chatrer*” who gelded his neighbors’ livestock. This skill and his large creole family of four daughters and four sons allowed the Frenchman to build a network of contacts among local ranchers, who were often people of color. When this older, white Jacques Boury died in 1765, he held the potentially lucrative government contract to supply meat to butchers in the region.³⁷

By the 1760s, his free colored children were counted among the parish notables. One son, Alexis, was also a master saddler. A daughter,

Marie Anne Louise Boury, married a white man born in Martinique and brought property worth 22,300 livres to the union, equivalent to more than a dozen adult slaves. Her new husband made no recorded contribution to their household.³⁸ Though the notary did not assign racial labels to those who witnessed the marriage contract, most were propertied people of mixed European/African descent.

Jacques Boury's eldest son, also named Jacques, was the free colored militia captain. He seems to have inherited much, but not all, of the respect local society accorded his father. Notaries often described this second Jacques Boury and his brothers as "Sieur" in contracts, and all the Boury children, like their father but not their mother, could sign their names. In the relatively wealthy Les Cayes plantation district, Boury's name helped him gain access to the most powerful figures in local society, but it did not grant him equality. When he and Julien Canard attended the marriage contract of Jean Rey and Elizabeth Dégéac in 1761, both of them shared with the bridegroom the status of being free colored sons of local notables.³⁹ But they were the only men of color at this elite gathering and the notary listed their names at the end of the contract, in a different paragraph from the other guests. The notary did not identify their race. But neither did he describe these men of color as "Sieur," reserving this title for the white guests.

There may have been other ways in which the son's racial identity robbed him of his father's full legacy. Within weeks of the first Jacques Boury's death in 1765, the second Jacques Boury transferred his father's responsibilities over the regional butchers and bakers back to the colonial state, possibly because as a man of color he could not hold such a responsibility. Official colonial butchers frequently accused free men of color of illegally controlling the supply of cattle from Santo Domingo.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the second Jacques Boury was a well-connected figure, familiar with the workings of the royal courts. He was related to most of Torbec's propertied free families of color through the marriages of his brothers and sisters. As eldest of the Boury clan, he housed his eighty-year-old free black grandmother, Anne Thomas. In her testament she thanked him

for the services that he has rendered me on all occasions and especially in the great lawsuit that I previously had at the Saint Louis court against the imposter who falsely claimed to be my son, in which lawsuit my grandson made all the advances [of money] and took all the necessary measures.⁴¹

As chapter 5 describes, in 1769 Boury's militia rank put him at the center of a controversy about this important colonial institution. But in the early part of the decade his militia office confirmed his position as a respected property owner, able to mobilize the social networks he and his family had constructed. The fact that he became militia captain during the Seven Years' War, as Saint-Domingue faced its most serious external threat in half-a-century, might have made Boury proud of his volunteer leadership. Nevertheless, he did not identify himself as a militia officer in his notarial contracts, though whites often did, as did men of color in the North Province in a later decade. The region around Cap Français, where so many imperial expeditions landed and were launched, seems to have had a military culture that did not develop in the South before the Revolution.⁴²

The only other identifiable free colored militia officer in the South Province was Guillaume Labadie of Aquin parish, the victim of a famous near-lynching in 1789 (chapter 8). Labadie was one of three or four free colored sons of Jean-Baptiste Labadie, a native of Bayonne, France. Jean-Baptiste may have feared that his French relatives would prevent him from leaving property to his colonial children if he described these bequests in his last testament. In August 1761, therefore, about six months before he died, the Frenchman gave 24 African and creole slaves worth 15,000 livres to his son Guillaume, the most valuable single donation to a free person of color in this region in the 1760s. That same day he gave another mulatto son, his namesake Jean-Baptiste, twelve slaves "in order that he can honestly maintain and support himself," an admonition that was not in the gift to Guillaume. Out of all these slaves deeded to his sons, he freed only one that day, a black creole woman named Grande Mariane. The liberty deed said nothing about whether she was the mother of Guillaume or Jean-Baptiste.⁴³

By the time of his father's bequest, Guillaume Labadie was already a lieutenant in Aquin's free colored militia. He also owned his own plantation, where his father lay dying in 1762, as the notary recorded his final wishes. The Seven Years' War was drawing to a close and Jean-Baptiste named as his executor the white captain of the company of Hussards stationed in Aquin. A lieutenant from that company was present at his bedside. But in this, his final legal deed, the colonist did not mention his sons. Instead he gave the bulk of his property to his neighbor Pierre Dasmard and another white planter. These two men, who had free colored children of their own, passed the estate on to the Labadie brothers after their father was buried.⁴⁴

This inheritance probably helped Guillaume buy a refurbished indigo estate for 25,000 livres from a white planter in 1764. From the 1760s through the 1780s, he was a prominent patron to poorer free people of color and served as the judicial guardian for numerous free colored orphans. He eventually married one of Julien Delaunay's sisters, Françoise Delaunay.⁴⁵ Like Jacques Boury, however, Guillaume Labadie rarely labeled himself a militia officer in any of these notarized documents.

This reticence suggests an attitude that the events of 1769 would confirm: like other propertied creoles, wealthy men of color in the South Province seem to have resented militia service. If this was the case, these free colored planters had one thing to be thankful for: their property and well-established freedom kept them out of the ranks of Saint-Domingue's hardworking *maréchaussée*, its slave-hunting constabulary.

Saint-Domingue's constables were the muscle of the colonial state in day-to-day life. Drawn mostly from the poorest free colored classes, they guarded the border between the slave world and civil society, one that many among them had only recently crossed themselves. Serving under white officers, they patrolled remote mountain paths and combed colonial cities, looking for maroon slaves.⁴⁶ Although they were generally charged with keeping the peace, free colored victims like Pierre Moreau, who was whipped for possessing a pig, or the homesteaders Jean and Marie Louise Barbier, whose daughter was kidnapped, were never reported turning to the *maréchaussée* for help. Indeed, constables seem more likely to have suspected such people of sheltering escaped slaves than to regard them as citizens to be protected.

Their focus on escaped slaves meant that the constables, like all free people of color who supervised slaves' work or monitored their behavior, lived enmeshed in the constant tension between their own freedom and others' lack of it. But the notarial records reveal almost nothing about whether they had any sympathy for the slaves' plight. The question of free colored allegiance to the slave regime was a serious one to most whites. Although Saint-Domingue experienced no major uprisings or maroon wars before 1791, colonists frequently remarked that they were engaged in a permanent war against the slave population, and that they lived in fear of invisible ways by which slaves might strike at them. In 1757, for example, masters panicked over rumors that African sorcerers were killing livestock and humans in the North Province. Fear spread quickly through the colony that these poisoners would drive all whites from the island.⁴⁷ As one colonial official wrote

in 1758 after the capture of an alleged poisoner

the trial . . . has proven that all *nègres* in their superstitious practices eventually progress to all crimes . . . therefore, instead of viewing their so-called superstitions with indifference, we must neglect nothing to stop them.⁴⁸

Though about half of Saint-Domingue's slaves were native-born Africans, colonists feared creolized African-Caribbean cultures as well as African practices. One source described island-born domestic slaves, "the coachman, the cook and the other servants," as accomplices to the poisonings. Whites also questioned the loyalty of ex-slaves and their freeborn descendants. Were they privy to deadly cultural knowledge? An accused slave in 1757 reportedly testified that "there is a secret among [the blacks] which can only lead to the destruction of the colony; the whites know nothing of this and the free blacks are its principal force."⁴⁹

The question of cultural and political loyalties was a troubling one for free women or men of color managing slaves on isolated estates. When neighboring whites criticized the disruptive behavior of African workers and took matters into their own hands, there was little free coloreds could do to defuse such confrontations. Alexandre Fequière was one man caught between the world of white masters and that of black slaves. Fequière was a free mulatto who managed the livestock pen of his white father-in-law, Jean Maignan.⁵⁰ One evening two of Maignan's slaves were in their hut with a third slave who belonged to a white planter named Desportes. Desportes's slave had come to the pen to get provisions and had been unable to return because of nightfall. According to Desportes, "these three *nègres* were together amusing themselves in the hut, beating on a little drum that was there, which caused Sieur Delmas, a neighboring planter, to go to the hut." Delmas planted himself before the door with a machete, preventing the slaves from leaving. He then urged his companion Durand, who lived on Delmas' plantation with him, to enter the hut and "tear the occupants apart." Durand's machete blows severely injured the three men.

Fequière, returning from guard duty with some other slaves about half-an-hour later, took the victims to a doctor and then informed his white father-in-law and employer. He apparently made no effort to confront Delmas and Durand, other than to make an official declaration before a notary. Neither Fequière nor the white planter Desportes had witnessed these events, but the free colored supervisor had arrived

soon after the incident and the details of his account provided the core of the affidavit Desportes filed nearly three months later: the three slaves, the drum, the position of Delmas, and the machete-wielding role of Durand were identical in both versions. But only Desportes, the white man, testified that the drum had “caused” Delmas to come to the hut; Fequièrè assigned no motive for the violence.

The omission might have been an oversight. But as Maignan’s steward, Fequièrè may also have worried that calling attention to the drum would focus attention on his own African ancestry and away from the violence and property damage. As a free mulatto alone with Maignan’s slaves at an isolated corral in the hills, Alexandre Fequièrè was vulnerable to suspicions that he had allowed or encouraged the slaves to use their drum. His effectiveness in his position depended on presenting himself as Maignan’s representative; he needed to be a member of the master class and to avoid the complex issue of his own cultural identity.

A similar situation occurred in 1768, according to Jean-Baptiste Massé, a white man, royal surveyor, and plantation manager.⁵¹ Massé worked for an estate in Aquin parish that allowed its livestock to graze freely during the day. One evening some of the animals strayed into the pasture of the adjacent Gaye plantation and Massé sent a slave to retrieve them. When the slave returned empty-handed, claiming that he had been harassed and beaten by an African slave of the Bambara nation named Auguste, Massé went down the road for an explanation.

Arriving at the Gaye plantation, Massé first asked for Marie Louise, a free mulatto woman who lived there. She was probably the estate manager, for Massé never mentioned Gaye in his affidavit. Marie Louise was at the gate with her mother, preparing to leave, but Massé had her called back to the main house. Why had his slave been mistreated, he wanted to know. Why had he not been allowed to collect the animals? Marie Louise “answered him that she knew nothing of all that and . . . right away remounted her horse and left.”

Marie Louise probably avoided Massé’s attempt to involve her in disciplining Gaye’s workers because she knew his history. Two years earlier, Massé had ordered the flogging of a Kongo slave named Pierrot whom he had blamed for allowing Gaye’s animals to trample his crops. If Marie Louise or her mother had friends in the plantation work force, they may have known what the slaves Auguste and Pierrot were about to do. In this case her rapid exit was a wise strategy, resembling Alexandre Fequièrè’s circumspection about the slaves’ drum.

Once Marie Louise had gone, Massé addressed Auguste, the Bambara man accused of the beating. When this slave would not

satisfactorily answer his questions, Massé turned to go. As he did, however,

the said Auguste took an old tattered piece of doubled up lasso [*eperlin*] from the hands of the said *nègre* Pierrot Kongo which he held hidden behind his back and then [held] up-wind of the said declarant, turning his [own] head, extending his arms, and shaking the said piece of lasso with all his might saying to him, this, Monsieur, is what I beat your *nègre* with, therefore I could not have done him much harm, and when he had amply shaken the said lasso he put it under his arm and moved downwind of the said declarant, who within a minute felt his head seized, his mouth and throat inflamed, his saliva stopped; he understood at that moment that there was something supernatural there and without delay he left this stinking place . . . without saying anything to the said *nègres* Auguste and Pierrot Kongo; but he was not 300 steps from there when he seemed to stop dead in his tracks, suddenly his breath and all his strength were gone and in this miserable state he called to God and begged his mercy to give him back his strength and allow him to return [to the Daudin estate] and when he felt a little restored he continued his route; but upon reaching the Lazile road the same unfortunate accident occurred.⁵²

Massé was ill for two days and counted himself lucky that he had not asked one of the Gaye slaves for water, a reference to the rumored slave poisonings. As Massé interpreted it, Pierrot had engineered this entire incident, to avoid another flogging.

More than any other free people of color, Saint-Domingue's black and brown constables negotiated these kinds of social and cultural confrontations on a daily basis. The colony's police force or *maréchaussée* was born in 1721, when administrators formed permanent maroon-hunting brigades after free black militia companies complained about always being charged with the task. The *maréchaussée* was originally intended to employ poor whites but so few enrolled that in 1733 and 1739 administrators reformed the institution, now specifying that constables be free men of color. The new *maréchaussée* was to check slave cabins periodically for arms and report planters who allowed slaves to hold dances or other assemblies after dark. Archers were to inspect rural taverns and close those selling liquor to slaves or trafficking in stolen goods. The reform directed *maréchaussée* brigades to mount weekly searches for escaped slaves, paying constables a daily rate for such work, and increasing their bounties. The ordinance added more low-grade officers, paid all men a salary of 300 to 1,000 livres a year, and required them to wear distinctive sashes while on

duty. The government threatened to fine constables who let unqualified persons wear this authority symbol and to inflict corporal punishment for habitual offenses of this kind. Under these terms, by the mid-1760s Saint-Domingue's *maréchaussée* had grown from 33 to 167 men. Thirteen areas of the colonies had brigades; in the southern peninsula the Saint Louis district had ten constables, while Nippes had an eight-man force.⁵³

Unlike militiamen, the archers of the *maréchaussée* were full-time agents of the crown, commanded by white officers. In March 1745 Mathurin Geffrard, a free mulatto from Les Cayes, was commissioned as a brigade leader, perhaps in connection with the Plymouth campaign, but generally free colored constables remained in the lower ranks. Colonial administrators acknowledged the danger of using men of color to police a society built upon the subordination of African slaves. They worried that black and brown constables would lose respect for whites as they arrested deserting soldiers and irate planters. They watched carefully for evidence of such behavior, and in March 1777 a free mulatto sergeant and a free black archer were sentenced to spend three market days in shackles at Port-au-Prince for having arrested, bound, and gagged a white captain of the Port-au-Prince regiment as a deserter.⁵⁴

Constables were also punished if they were too lenient to other people of color. In 1778 two free colored archers were sentenced to a month in prison without wages for refusing to help arrest a free mulatto who had been sentenced to be hanged.⁵⁵ Moreover, colonial judges expected constables to distance themselves from those aspects of free colored society that whites found disorderly and decadent. In September 1744, a police ordinance was issued

on the subject of the people of color [who] . . . give dances at night or *calindas*, which result in battles that disturb the public tranquility; that notably last night there was held . . . a tumultuous assembly of mulattos, *mulâtresses* and even members of the *maréchaussée*, in which several disorders were committed.⁵⁶

When nearby whites tried to stop a brawl at this gathering, they were

insultingly received and mistreated by the mulattos of this assembly and particularly by several members of the *ma'réchaussée* in this group, led then by Nalée, one of the sergeants of the said *maréchaussée*, who, instead of preventing the disorder, sanctioned it.

A judge reviewing this case forbade any sergeant or archer to attend *calindas* or other such assemblies unless ordered to do so. Nalée's

attendance at such a slave dance was perhaps too clear a sign of his attachment to Saint-Domingue's evolving Afro-creole culture, rather than to the colonial order he was supposed to represent.⁵⁷

Such restrictions isolated free colored constables socially, barring them from full participation in Afro-creole life, while the colonial elite scorned their low class status.⁵⁸ As chapter 4 describes, in the 1760s, political and cultural changes in Saint-Domingue were leading whites to emphasize sexual immorality as a reason for the prejudice against free people of color. Yet constables could reject these stereotypes. As the following example shows, some of these men had a strong sense of their own public respectability vis à vis other free people of color and whites. Their familiarity with legal procedure left them well equipped to defend this identity.

Pierrot Lafleur was a free black constable and property owner. In the 1760s he was landlord to a widow, a doctor, and a merchant in Les Cayes, all of them whites. In 1765 he paid a white artisan 900 livres for woodwork and masonry and bought a slave for 3,000 livres. In April 1765 Joseph Beauvais of Les Cayes, a white man, met Lafleur in the street and reproached him about a financial transaction. Beauvais said, "Wretch, you [*tu*] told me you had lost my note for two hundred livres, you promised me you would return it to me and [now I learn that] you wanted to negotiate it with M. Laconforsz [a local merchant]; you are quite a scoundrel." According to Beauvais's declaration, Lafleur responded, "I don't know a bigger scoundrel than you [*vous*]," parried the blow Beauvais aimed at him, stunned the white man with a slap of his own, and left, shouting insults.⁵⁹

An incident that occurred two years earlier provides even clearer proof of Lafleur's confidence vis à vis whites and reveals the bases of that confidence. One afternoon Lafleur met Eustache Berquin, a powerful white planter, at the gate of a plantation just outside the city of Les Cayes.⁶⁰ Berquin, on horseback, approached Lafleur, who was on foot, saying he had heard from a third party that Lafleur thought Berquin had swindled him. He asked why the black man believed such a thing. Lafleur's reply, according to Berquin, was "leave me in peace [*vous*]." But Berquin, who was bent on "reprimanding" Lafleur, continued his questions. The free black responded by shaking the bridle of Berquin's horse so hard that he was obliged to dismount. His feet on the ground, the white planter stepped forward to strike Lafleur with his whip, but the other man grabbed him by the collar, tearing his shirt, and snatched the whip away. Lafleur then turned to escape, but another white, recently arrived, blocked his path. After a scuffle, he surrendered Berquin's whip to the newcomer and disappeared.

As a member of the local police force, Lafleur, although unable to sign his name, knew what a respectable citizen should do next. He immediately appeared before the acting royal attorney of Cayes to lodge a complaint against Berquin and then swore an affidavit before a notary. Berquin had the same impulse and went to Duverney, a notary in Les Cayes. Duverney told him there was no need to draft such a document, for he could simply have Lafleur brought before the authorities. As a white man Berquin would not need written proof against a free black, especially since he would have the corroborating testimony of the other white who had recovered his whip. But after leaving Duverney's offices, Berquin heard that Lafleur had already filed an affidavit and he quickly found another notary to record his own version of events.

By now the planter was as angry at the fact that a black man would dare take him to court as he was at Lafleur's earlier attempts to sidestep his whip. "Considering that to leave unpunished such insolence from a *nègre* who is still complaining might have consequences, especially since the said *nègre* claims to justify his excesses and seems to seek an authorization of his arrogance." Yet Lafleur, when he belatedly received notice of this counter-declaration two weeks later, declared that Berquin's affidavit was totally false, and surmised that it was only intended to intimidate him into withdrawing his lawsuit.⁶¹

The full account of Lafleur's reaction to this counteroffensive illustrates his keen understanding of the legal system in which he served, despite his inability to sign his name. Returning home at nine a.m. from an official search for deserters at the port of Les Cayes, he "was very surprised to find there on the table a signification signed Montpellier, dated the ninth of this month and pertaining to him." The signification was an official notification of Berquin's charges against Lafleur. The black constable quickly sought out Montpellier, a royal bailiff, and scolded him for having falsified this document. Not only had Montpellier misdated the paper, he charged, but he had ignored the requirement that it be delivered into Lafleur's hands.⁶²

His work in the *maréchaussée* and his resulting familiarity with legal procedure seems likely to have been one source of Lafleur's confidence with whites in these situations. But the constable also insisted on his public respectability as a property owner and a male head of household. As such he explicitly rejected the stereotype of free colored "vice." On December 27, 1766, he dictated the following

narrative to a royal notary:

Yesterday, having returned to his home in the evening and having learned there that his wife, who he has forbidden a number of times to spent time with Lucie, *négresse libre*, who occupies a room attached to his house, was then with that *négresse*, [he] immediately entered her home and made his wife leave, telling her that he intended that she never under any pretext set foot in Lucie's home, since she led a very bad life and made a real brothel of her [his?] house, which [words] passed between him and his wife and went no further, neither with his wife nor with Lucie.⁶³

That same morning one hour earlier, Lucie had appeared before a different notary to declare, without elaboration or explanation, that Lafleur had entered her apartment the previous evening and had beaten her for conversing with his wife.⁶⁴

The matter-of-fact tone of Lucie's statement illuminates Lafleur's representation of this incident. For her this was a neighborhood quarrel, but for him it was the attempt of a respectable man to separate his household from that of a prostitute. In his statement Lafleur asserted his distance from the free colored world of courtesans and *calindas*. As he continued his affidavit, other aspects of Lafleur's respectability emerged.

This morning after returning home from an all night journey he had to make for the service of his state/status, and having not yet taken off his bandoleer, he saw Lucie enter his home, vomiting a thousand atrocious insults against him; tired of hearing [them] he took it upon himself to push her out of his place, but this *négresse furieuse* took him by the parts and gripped them so that he almost lost consciousness; to make her let him go he was obliged to give her a slap with all his strength, which produced the desired effect; the *négresse* thereby released the spot where she held him, but at the same time, struck him on the right eye with her fist, making him bleed.⁶⁵

Lafleur portrayed Lucie's attack as an assault on a uniformed servant of the crown, as an invasion of his home, and as a threat to his very masculinity. His neighbor, "this furious *négresse*," was a menace to established authority, however that authority might be defined. Lucie sought to subvert his power as a husband over his wife, his public position as a royal officer, and his rights as a householder over his home. In describing her cruel grasp on the most tender parts of his

anatomy, Lafleur was doing more than illustrating Lucie's skills at self-defense. He was making a point about the nature of the threat she posed to him and articulating the bases of his respectability: constable, proprietor, and husband.

* * *

Through the 1760s, masters increasingly ceded control over manumission procedures to the colonial state. The Code Noir gave masters the ability to free slaves as they chose, but in the mid-eighteenth-century the state successfully imposed new liberty taxes and procedures, marking a transition from private to government power in this domain. This change, which began later in the South Province than in the great central sugar districts of the colony, was never to reach completion. Nevertheless, by the 1770s the patronage networks of older and propertied families of color were far less effective than they had been in the first half of the century. Official freedom documents become absolutely essential for all free people of color, even wealthy slave-owning planters. The codification of free colored status, and the deteriorating social rank of wealthy families of color, was especially evident in the armed forces. The end of the Seven Years' War in 1763 accelerated the transformation of the colonial free colored militia from a force that propertied men of color often commanded but did not brag about, into a service that many described as a kind of slavery.

These shifts in colonial culture shaped the social attitudes and civic identities that Saint-Domingue's free people of color carried into the French and Haitian Revolutions. Although other American slave societies had similarly large and wealthy free populations of color, only in Saint-Domingue were colonists so troubled by questions about their own identity that they instigated a sharp change in racial labeling. Well into the 1760s, observers weighed the honor of white descent against the shame of slave ancestry. Because this continuum of honor and shame included wealth, social connections, and cultural identity, some families with distant African ancestors could be considered socially "white." But as chapter 4 describes, after the Seven Years' War, "virtue" replaced "honor" in French and colonial discourse. Colonists and administrators in Saint-Domingue described racial color in a more starkly biological fashion, as a stain or impurity that made mixed-race individuals politically and culturally more dangerous than pure Europeans or Africans.

CHAPTER 4



REFORM AND REVOLT AFTER THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR

In February of 1769, free men of color from Torbec parish, including ranchers, planters, and artisans, abducted their neighbor Jacques Boury, the light-skinned planter and former captain of the parish's free colored militia. The kidnapping, which may have involved Boury's two younger brothers, was a carefully gauged act of resistance against Saint-Domingue's new governor, the Prince de Rohan-Montbazon. By kidnapping Boury, his neighbors communicated their rejection of Rohan-Montbazon's militia reforms, which Torbec's white creole planters claimed would bring all free men of all colors under a kind of "slavery."

The whites were partially right. Although the 1769 kidnapping turned into an anti-militia revolt, it failed to stop Rohan-Montbazon's new regime. The Governor's militia reforms locked free men of color into a kind of second-class citizenship they had never before known. From that point on they would no longer command their own militia units. The government would now require all men of color, but not whites, to help the *maréchaussée* search for escaped slaves. At the same time a host of new laws shut even wealthy free people of color out of respectable colonial society. After 1769, even in the isolated southern peninsula, new, mutually exclusive definitions of "whiteness" and "color" cut across creole society, replacing older hierarchies based on wealth and culture.

In the Revolutionary era colonists described this racial segregation as a bulwark against slave rebellion. This chapter and the one that follows it show, instead, that new racial laws were a way for administrators

and creole elites to resolve troubling questions about colonial loyalty. In the wake of the Seven Years' War (1756–63), Versailles was determined to strengthen bonds between Saint-Domingue and France, at a time when influential colonists were already chafing at imperial restrictions. Narrating the attempts of three governors to create a “patriotic” colonial public and defend the colony as efficiently as possible, this chapter shows how they increasingly required free men of color to bear civic responsibilities that colonists refused to shoulder. A narrative of the failed revolt of 1769 illustrates how white planters in the South Province were unable to rally creole society against the royal government. And, as the following chapter describes, when the imperial state and colonial elites reconciled after this traumatic event, they turned to a new kind of racism to unite Saint-Domingue's whites into a “civilized” colonial public, one they hoped would heal their political disagreements.

* * *

The events leading up to the 1769 revolt illustrate that Saint-Domingue participated in a hemispheric reevaluation of creole identity following the Seven Years' War. In the Americas, this conflict was an expensive and unpopular struggle between the British on one hand and the French and Spanish empires on the other. Beyond the transfer of Québec and Florida into British control in 1763, the war prompted controversial administrative and fiscal reforms in all three New World empires. Narratives of Latin America's wars for national independence often begin with creole reactions to Spain's post-Seven Years' War “Bourbon reforms.” Among historians of the United States, Fred Anderson makes a compelling case that the Seven Years' War shaped the emerging American identities of Britain's thirteen mainland colonies.¹ And, as this chapter argues, France's devastating losses helped produce the stark definitions of race in Saint-Domingue that prepared the way for Haiti's great slave revolt.

The Seven Years' War was a conflict like none Europe's New World colonies had ever experienced. This was especially true for the French Antilles. In earlier imperial struggles Versailles gave its Caribbean colonies priority over Québec. During the War of Austrian Succession, from 1740 to 1748, French convoys protected Caribbean shipping from the British navy. After all, Antillean sugar and other commodities were the greatest success of France's eighteenth-century economy. Most of these colonial products were sold to other European countries; by the 1750s they made up half of all French

reexports, and their value kept increasing. Trade with Africa and the Caribbean created new fortunes in the kingdom's Atlantic ports after 1748, and colonial interests might have expected similar protection in another conflict.²

But when the Seven Years' War began in 1756, Versailles treated its claims on the vast North American interior as its top military priority. It directed naval convoys to Québec, leaving Caribbean commerce unprotected. British blockades cut French traffic with the island colonies by 70 percent, and inflated the cost of maritime insurance from 2 or 3 percent to nearly two-thirds of a cargo's value. When the British took Quebec in 1759, France merely shifted its resources to the war's European theater, leaving the Antilles under the worst commercial blockade they had ever known, and vulnerable to attack.³

Even in peace, many colonists resented France's commercial monopoly, but Versailles was taken aback in 1759 when Guadeloupe surrendered to the British after a resistance some described as less than heroic. During the rest of the war, Guadeloupe's planters, who had long criticized French mercantilism, profited from direct access to British slave traders. Between 1700 and 1759, French traders brought only 2,406 Africans directly to Guadeloupean ports. But in two years of British occupation, British ships disembarked 18,711 slaves on the island.⁴ Although Martinique repelled the British in 1759, that colony surrendered to a second invasion in early 1762.

These defeats sharpened French awareness of the tension between imperial loyalty and colonial self-interest. Would planters in Saint-Domingue fight to preserve French territory or surrender to preserve their plantations? As the Abbé Raynal concluded

What happened [in Guadeloupe] is what will always happen. . . . by taking up arms the cultivators of these opulent colonies risk seeing their lives' work destroyed, their slaves kidnapped, their descendants' dreams wiped out by fire or destruction, they will always surrender to the enemy. Even if they were content with their government, they are less attached to their reputations than to their wealth.⁵

By 1763, the most influential discussion of this situation had been in print for over a decade. In 1750, a 35-year-old native of Saint-Domingue named Emilien Petit had written a small book called *Le Patriotisme américain*, describing a way to ensure that colonists were attached both to France and Saint-Domingue⁶ Petit, who had been a member of the Léogane Council, drew on French "patriot" authors, who argued that love of one's country was strongest when it

was rooted in liberty and prosperity. *Le Patriotisme américain* was a liberal critique of the authoritarian colonial state. It expressed colonists' frustration with military administrators, especially at the local level.⁷

In the seventeenth century, French governors had chosen militia commanders and council members from the colonial elite. By 1750, this had changed. Although many prominent planters held high militia rank, their parish commanders were usually career soldiers. These men had little respect for, or patience with, colonists, as Petit described.

In general military officers are vain and scornful, though often only the height of their plumes hides their low birth. . . . when real or appointed power accompanies his pretensions, the officer insists on the full measure of his superiority; to speak with restraint to a planter, merchant, or reputable worker would be unworthy [of his position]—Must a man like me repeat an order? You dare show disrespect to a man like me; I forbid you; I command you, no discussion; to prison, to the dungeon—and all is carried out as ordered, accompanied by the foulest words.⁸

If administrators wanted colonists to stay in Saint-Domingue, rather than return home to France, Petit argued, they needed to guarantee that they would not be “gratuitously exposed every day to the most violent effects of an arbitrary power, . . . to the caprices of the smallest local commander, who uses the needs of the government to justify his own pride and stupidity and demand absolute and passive obedience.”⁹

Despite its condemnation of military government, Petit's book appealed to metropolitan merchants and administrators because it did not challenge French trade laws as many colonists did. Rather, it emphasized how greater colonial liberty would increase the value of the colony for France. When the rule of law liberated colonists from the arbitrary decisions of local military leaders, their rational self-interest would create prosperity and order. When French-American colonists were secure from government oppression, they would develop a strong attachment to the fatherland. Yet, at the heart of Petit's vision of such a “liberal” colonial government was a new framework of racial laws.

Well before the pressures of the Seven Years' War, the former colonial judge recognized that Saint-Domingue was developing its own creole culture, oriented away from France. He proposed racial segregation, not to reinforce slavery, but to strengthen colonists' French identity while allowing them more local freedom.

In Petit's vision, Saint-Domingue needed to attract large numbers of male, and especially female, settlers who would remain in the

colony. He proposed to reserve jobs for these European immigrants in plantation houses and port cities by banishing free people of color into the mountains. If black and mulatto women did not monopolize domestic service, wet nursing, and market commerce, then hardworking Frenchwomen might immigrate to the colony, where they would be potential wives for white artisans, who were similarly locked out of jobs because of slaves and free colored workers. In the mountains, free men and women of color would insure the plantations' prosperity by growing food, raising animals, and arresting fugitive slaves. Colonists would be discouraged from employing free people of color, even as domestic servants in their plantation houses, for whites should occupy these places. Such segregation would require strict government controls on manumission. Petit recommended that colonists be allowed to free slaves only in their last testaments. That way, after a master's death, his executor and the government would be able to assess his motives for freeing the slave, and direct the actions of the newly freed man or woman.

Petit did not sensationalize colonial sexuality like later authors would. Nevertheless he was concerned with the consequences of male colonists founding creole families with slave women. It was for this reason, and not to defend slavery, that Petit described racial prejudice as "politically astute."¹⁰ He acknowledged that some wealthy people of color had settled in France, where their French friends criticized colonists' scorn for them as *chimérique*, an absurdity, an illusion. But Petit believed marriage between Europeans and free people of color should be outlawed because of the vile birth of these people, just as respectable French subjects did not marry theatrical players. People of color were worse than actors, because of their relatives in slavery, and their "blood . . . infamous for its inclinations and dangerous for its blackness of character."

Petit's racism was not primarily biological, but driven by the need to orient colonial "patriotism" toward France. Later authors argued that whites should scorn free people of color to reinforce the racial basis of slavery. But for Petit, if whites and people of color became too "familiar," that is, if they established viable families, "creole patriotism" might come to mean imperial autonomy or independence. Though he did not explicitly describe this possibility, he encouraged French administrators to watch the problem carefully.

But the principal reason to prohibit these matches [between immigrants and free people of color] has to do with the necessity of maintaining, in these sorts of men, the ideas of esteem and respect for

white blood with which they must not be allowed to become too familiar, because, were they to develop common interests, the results might be dangerous, even irreparable.¹¹

The career military officers who ran the Colonial Office, a branch of the Naval Ministry, recognized in Petit's ideas a way to increase colonial loyalty without abolishing the unpopular trade monopoly. In 1759, in the middle of the Seven Years' War, they hired him. For the next 20 years the creole judge corresponded with colonial authorities from his office at Versailles, collecting legal documentation and proposing reforms.¹²

Within a year he had already helped write laws designed to reduce the corruption of colonial governors. They were now prohibited from buying colonial land, marrying in the colony, or ruling on land-grant disputes. Moreover, Versailles now barred governors from collecting a 2-percent tax on slave imports, monies that helped pay their expenses, but which stifled the colonial economy. The Colonial Office pledged to provide administrators with increased funds directly.¹³

Petit was also part of a legislative project that created special chambers of commerce and agriculture in the Caribbean colonies in 1759, staffed with four merchants and four planters. Reacting to complaints that France cared little about colonists' opinions, the Ministry hoped the new chambers would offer them a valuable colonial perspective. But in 1766 Versailles had to eliminate the commercial representatives, who had been too outspoken about the French trade monopoly.¹⁴

Nevertheless, the Colonial Office followed Petit's reasoning that colonists would be more loyal when they were no longer ruled by an iron hand. In 1760, Versailles chose a member of the Parlement of Dijon to be Saint-Domingue's intendant, second only to the governor. The new administrator, Jean Bernard de Clugny, owned property in Martinique, and was Saint-Domingue's first high officer not to come out of the military. He arrived in the colony in December 1760. Then, as the English blockade on Saint-Domingue tightened in 1761, the crown named Gabriel de Bory as governor of the colony, a naval officer with an abiding interest in colonial reform.¹⁵

The wartime emergency led Bory to consider the problem of colonists' distaste for militia service. In August 1761, with a British invasion apparently looming, he wrote to the Naval Secretary Choiseul suggesting that military veterans in Saint-Domingue be given "command of free blacks and mulattos, [who are] very loyal people."¹⁶ Nothing came immediately of this proposal. But France's

military position in the Caribbean seemed close to collapse in early 1762, as the British conquered Martinique and then the rest of the Lesser Antilles. Officials and colonists alike were sure that Saint-Domingue was the next target. In July of that year Versailles transferred Bory's military powers as governor to the Vicomte de Belzunce and this new commander pressed local militia units into full-time duty, despite vigorous complaints. A remonstrance by the Port-au-Prince Council late in 1761 had already described the colony as being under a regime of "barbaric laws, violent and meaningless administration," and blamed the "ambitious spite of [local] commanders," singling out the commander of the South Province.¹⁷ Because Belzunce pulled most royal troops into the North Province to defend Cap Français in 1762, the militias of the West and South Provinces had to assume near total responsibility for coastal defense. Belzunce began to enforce regulations requiring estates to plant food crops and to send them to government warehouses. He created a network of interior fortifications and established a "scorched earth" defense plan in case of British invasion. Colonial opposition to these plans was so strong that there were rumors that a group in Les Cayes was negotiating with Jamaica to turn the southern peninsula over to the enemy.¹⁸ According to an anonymous author after the war,

Militia service was as painful and as burdensome as it was possible to be . . . so much that the poor and other persons with nothing to attach them to the country . . . could no longer bear it and fled to neutral nations or to the enemy.¹⁹

With his new powers, Belzunce acted on Bory's proposal to make better use of the free men of color. He created the *Chasseurs volontaires d'Amérique*, a temporary unit assigned to fill gaps in the colony's defense. Within two months the unit had 400, then 500 men, and the administration began to construct a barracks in Cap Français to house them.²⁰

Presumably to speed up the training of the new company, Belzunce reserved officer ranks in the *Chasseurs* for French veterans. These men described their free colored soldiers in enthusiastic terms: they were practically immune to the tropical diseases that killed Europeans; their food and uniforms did not have to be imported; they did not need expensive shoes since many had gone barefoot all their lives. Most importantly, the *Chasseurs* exhibited genuine military aptitude:

[the troop] performed the drill with arms perfectly and executed all the maneuvers; the military men who saw these exercises were surprised by

this swiftness and precision. There are few units who can shoot this well and as accurately; these [free people of color] are born with all the elements necessary to train a man for guerilla war.²¹

Given the triumph of this experiment, in August 1762 Bory recommended that the Colonial Office free all mixed-race slaves to serve as soldiers. Under his plan, officers of the regular army would contain these ex-slave soldiers under strict discipline. At the same time, the governor also recommended abolishing Saint-Domingue's white militia, which was more unpopular than ever. Since his arrival, Clugny, the new intendant and member of the Parlement of Burgundy, had severely criticized the way local militia commanders usurped judicial functions. The colonial councils echoed him, content to find at least one administrator who understood the importance of legal procedure. Back in Versailles Petit was also sympathetic. Even before the war's end, the Colonial Office issued a decree limiting military officers' power over judicial personnel.²²

In early 1763, France and Britain signed the Treaty of Paris ending the war. Within weeks, imperial officials gave Saint-Domingue's "patriotic" colonists what they had been asking for: an end to onerous militia duties and to the military government. The Colonial Office seem to have been convinced that there was no other way to keep the colony from following Guadeloupe's example in the next war. On March 24, 1763, setting aside the question of Saint-Domingue's defense, imperial officials dissolved the militia, whose ranking officers had administered local government. Versailles ordered that these parish commanders pass their responsibilities to new civilian officials. In each locality a parish assembly was to elect a *syndic*, or mayor. This civilian administrator would report to the nearest colonial council instead of to the governor, as the old militia commanders had. The intendant Clugny was so eager to inaugurate this new system that on June 17, 1763 he ordered parishes to begin preparing local elections.²³

The new law transformed colonial government at all levels, in ways that magistrates and their supporters had long argued would guarantee prosperity and colonial loyalty. Henceforth only the governor and intendant would have the right to enter the law courts; none of their subordinates would be able to intervene in this domain. Because the councils would supervise the parish *syndics*, judicial discussion and predefined procedures would replace the unpredictable decisions of the old, all-powerful militia commander. Moreover, by eliminating mandatory militia service, the Colonial Office was freeing

Saint-Domingue's colonists to follow their natural self-interest. Mandatory target practice and guard duty would no longer distract them from maximizing the production of their estates, which, they argued, were so profitable for France. Finally, in the long-delayed financial reckoning that accompanied the end of the war, the crown also requested a special payment of four million livres from the colony in compensation for ending militia service. Eager to seal the transition from military to civilian rule, the councils quickly approved the tax.²⁴

Versailles' speed in implementing this reform was born out of the power accumulated by the Duke de Choiseul, who became secretary for foreign affairs in late 1758. By the end of the war, Choiseul also held the ministerial portfolios for War and for the Navy, with control over the colonies, and had demonstrated his interest in changing attitudes about the conflict. He was deeply impressed by British popular enthusiasm for the war, which his advisors ascribed to the influence of Pitt, Britain's "Patriot minister." Taking this example to heart, from about 1760, government publicists, as well as independent poets and playwrights, began to glorify a "patriotic" ideal of self-sacrifice for the fatherland.²⁵

This new official French patriotism was markedly different from that espoused by the earlier antiauthoritarian writers who had inspired Emilien Petit's book. They had emphasized "liberal" virtue, the positive behaviors that occurred naturally when the rule of law protected subjects from a despot's arbitrary decisions. Choiseul's writers, on the other hand, identified patriotism with the ancient Greek and Roman examples of civic virtue, stressing obedience and discipline for the greater good of the community. Unlike Petit's patriotism, this classical ideal was compatible with military government, especially in a society threatened with both slave rebellion and external attack, like ancient Sparta or Saint-Domingue. Choiseul's belief that his officials, including colonial governors, could shape popular opinion and encourage greater patriotism had a major impact in Saint-Domingue. There, advocates of this "civic virtue" found strong opposition from those who believed that "liberal virtue" was the key to colonial prosperity.

The conflict emerged almost as soon as the militia reform was in place. As they reflected on the cultural consequences of Saint-Domingue's much-anticipated "rule of law," leading royal administrators became convinced that the ordinance of March 1763 had been a mistake. The search for an inexpensive colonial defense helped sustain this conviction. Soon after abolishing the militia, Versailles received a proposal promising 4,800 local soldiers to defend the territory. The plan proposed to conscript every free man of color under the age of 40 who had fewer than three legitimate children, requiring him to

serve six out of every 12 months over a ten-year period. Modeled on the wartime *Chasseurs volontaires*, such a force would be inexpensive, but it would also be eight times larger than Belzunce's experimental company, with no white militia as a counterweight. Although the *Chasseurs'* commanders were still enthusiastic, their superiors worried that a few officers might not be able to contain so many free colored soldiers. Moreover, the proposal for 4,800 free colored militiamen was far below what total mandatory service would produce, which Pierre Pluchon estimates as 10,000 whites and 10,000 free men of color.²⁶ By 1764, advocates of a reestablished colonial militia were insisting that anarchy had replaced Saint-Domingue's wartime discipline. There were more maroon raids, they claimed, and in some districts white brigands were leading bands of escaped slaves in attacks on highway travelers.²⁷

In fact, after the war a major wave of new European immigration had complicated the militia question. The economic and social frustrations of the poorest of these new arrivals, known disparagingly as *petits blancs*, became a critical factor in Saint-Domingue's internal politics. After 1763 about a thousand of them arrived every year from France, so that by the late 1780s they comprised about one-third of Saint-Domingue's roughly 30,000 colonists.²⁸

Although described as a single class, the *petit blanc* label covered at least two social types, both bitter about what they found in Saint-Domingue. One type of *petit blanc* was an ambitious young man hoping to make his fortune as a planter. Tradesmen, lower government officials, and the younger sons of merchants or landowning families in France flocked to Saint-Domingue in the 1760s and 1770s with this goal. But while diligence, networking, and the exploitation of enslaved Africans had created wealth for an earlier colonial generation, after 1763 planters needed far more credit, knowledge, and connections than their predecessors did. Few immigrants were familiar with the technical and managerial complexities of sugar, coffee, indigo, or cotton growing. To build connections and expertise they became plantation bookkeepers, a poorly paid position that plunged them to the very bottom of the social hierarchy.

A second type of *petit blanc* was the same kind of refugee from state authority that had populated the colony in the seventeenth century. But this new generation of ex-sailors, ex-soldiers, servants, petty criminals, and others found far fewer opportunities for independence than their predecessors. In the first half of the eighteenth century such men had found careers in smuggling, petty piracy, coastal marketing, or small-scale ranching in frontier zones. Some had allied with ex-slaves.

After 1763 the dramatic increase in hillside coffee estates struck directly at this class of immigrant. As chapter 7 describes, the coffee boom left little undeveloped land that a poor man could afford. Many, therefore, fell back into the colonial ports. As the population density in these settlements doubled after 1770, the white vagrant became even more of a troublesome social type than before. In the 1760s royal officials pessimistic about colonial society saw little to praise in the residents of colonial cities. "By the nature of things, there is only one kind of Citizen in the colonies, the planter, the proprietor who alone can be governed by the laws . . . the cities of the colonies, the towns, the jetties are ordinarily inhabited by unemployed folk, who since they have no property . . . have nothing to fear from the legal authorities."²⁹ The notarial registers of even small towns in the southern peninsula are full of stories illustrating this social disruption. A neighbor made terrible threats when a white cabinet maker argued too loudly with his wife at 9 p.m.; a tailor shot and wounded a cobbler who tried to engage him in horseplay one morning; a plantation manager overheard two employees plotting to drive him off the plantation, and one of them shot at him a goldsmith visiting a client one evening was attacked by six other artisans. A merchant and a surgeon accused a plantation overseer and his friends of strolling in the town every evening while loudly insulting the townspeople, and beating those who challenged them. For his part the overseer complained separately that an angry mob had attacked him without provocation.³⁰

In 1764, reports of mounting social disorder, uneasiness about relying solely on free colored soldiers, and the expense of defending the colony with professional troops, all convinced Versailles to reestablish the colony's militia and military government. Colonists were incredulous. Just months after paying four million livres to be rid of militia duty, few colonial "patriots" would accept a return to the old system.

The new governor charged with carrying out this controversial reestablishment, Charles, Count d'Estaing, was a career military man, as these officers always were. However, d'Estaing had a more ostentatious style of life and deeper connections at court than any of his predecessors. His appointment was rumored to be compensation for his half-sister's amorous services to Louis XV. Earning ten to fifteen times the salary of previous governors, he had the former Jesuit house in Cap Français remodeled as an official residence and moved in with a large household staff. Colonists visiting him there left whispering about his armorial dinner service, expensive wine, books, and courtier's wardrobe.³¹ D'Estaing quickly made enemies in the colony,

who described his wealth as evidence of corruption and an insatiable desire for power.³²

Such attacks were inevitable given the unpopularity of the militia and government systems he was ordered to restore. But d'Estaing was especially vulnerable because he actively courted colonial public opinion. Like his superior, Choiseul, the new governor believed that social interaction and communication, directed by his administration, would forge a new imperial patriotism. Like other military reformers of the day, d'Estaing's understanding of patriotism was based on classical models. In the 1790s he published a play entitled *Les Thermopyles*, recalling the heroic stand of Leonidas and his band of Spartan warrior-citizens. In 1764 he was determined to awaken a similar spirit in Saint-Domingue and believed he could nurture—or manipulate—Dominguan civic virtue into existence.³³

His strategy rested in part on the colonial appetite for ostentation observed by Bruy d'Aigallier.

Such is the custom in this country
An errand boy dubs himself a clerk
A clerk is a secretary
A ship's secretary calls himself a shipping agent
A simple agent is Monsieur L'Intendant
And though one owns only a quarter acre of land
Nevertheless he calls himself a "planter"³⁴

D'Estaing believed this love of titles would lead colonists to compete for military ranks. He planned to call the reestablished militia *The National Troop* and reward its leaders publicly with medals and titles.³⁵

Honors, privileges and even puerile distinctions . . . will perhaps one day bring people whose only concern is the calculations of commerce back to a love of true glory . . . over a long period, vanity can work a miracle on American minds.³⁶

This juxtaposition of "commercial calculation" and "true glory" illustrates the tension between d'Estaing's goals and the liberal virtues extolled by many colonists. The new governor's anti-Semitic policies gave further expression to this conflict. In 1685 the *Code Noir* had formally barred Jews from colonial commerce. But from the early eighteenth century, Jewish families with roots in Portugal were a major commercial presence in Saint-Domingue's ports. Their connections to the Sephardic diaspora in Curaçao, Jamaica, London,

Bordeaux, and Amsterdam facilitated the contraband trade that sustained planters and merchants, especially along the southern coast.

When he discovered this fact in September 1764 during his tour of the South Province, d'Estaing acted quickly. As he wrote Choiseul:

I hasten to notify you that I made the synagogues of St Louis and of Les Cayes contribute to the public good . . . [Such] Jews, proprietors of slaves that they make into israelites like themselves, who buy and possess lands in a Christian country, should, to be tolerated there, bring water to the cities, furnish vessels to the King and occupy themselves with other *petits utilités* [small useful deeds] that will do them honor in future centuries; this is what I have counseled them and it is not much, though Mr Gradis could disapprove and protest; moreover I have apportioned these little voluntary gifts [a series of forced loans levied on Jewish colonists] on the good or bad conduct of these children of Moses.³⁷

D'Estaing was correct in assuming that Abraham Gradis would defend the Jews of Les Cayes and Saint Louis.³⁸ The Gradis family of Bordeaux was one of the most important merchant houses in France. During the Seven Years' War, the Naval Ministry had relied heavily on the Gradis's ships and commercial connections to move men and goods between France and Québec. A string of colonial ministers and the Parlement of Bordeaux had publicly recognized the Gradis's many services to the kingdom.³⁹ D'Estaing was surely aware of this fact, yet he levied his highest fines on the Lopez Depas family of Saint Louis and Aquin, which functioned as Gradis' agents along the southern coast and in the interlope trade there. D'Estaing assessed the head of the Depas family, who he said owned at least 280 slaves and three plantations, 7,000 livres a year to construct an aqueduct. Depas the younger, with houses in Saint Louis and Les Cayes and at least 100 slaves in Aquin parish, was deemed an "upstanding man" and was only required to build an inn for the postal service, as was another Depas. The worst of the Depas clan, in d'Estaing's view, was Michel Depas, or Michel Depas-Medina, as he would later be known. As part of d'Estaing's attempt to turn what he perceived as the selfish, inward-looking Jewish population toward the "public good," he fined Michel Depas 50,000 livres, the price of a sizeable plantation, over two years, to purchase boats for royal service.⁴⁰ The governor described him as

a troublemaker, against whom there are a multitude of complaints by the planters; free mulatto and bastard [*bâtard*]. He owns a very sizeable plantation at the Grande Colline with 120 slaves; moreover he has

another plantation at the Colline à Mangon with 30 slaves. He has rebelled several times against commands that have been given to him in the interest of good public order. The man was formerly a courtier of M. Gradis.⁴¹

In France, d'Estaing's superiors were furious at his actions. Choiseul reversed his orders and called him "a dangerous fool."⁴²

It is significant that d'Estaing was especially severe on the Jews of the southern peninsula. He wrote that "nearly all are Dutch or English and come from Curaçao or from Jamaica."⁴³ But what d'Estaing saw as the South Province's antipatriotic commercialism was a reflection of the creole society that had developed in this isolated region. Jews and wealthy mixed-race people like Michel Depas-Medina were part of that creole society, and their status in it was more affected by social class than by ethnic origins.

Like Petit with his liberal reforms, d'Estaing proposed to change this. Hoping to encourage military, as opposed to commercial, virtue, he planned to increase free colored numbers and make them the backbone of colonial defense. He lowered manumission taxes from 800 to 300 livres and offered to supply official freedom papers to those who had lost theirs. Though the *maréchaussée* and militia had been organizationally separate, d'Estaing reformed the mostly free colored constabulary into a light cavalry troop called the Saint-Domingue Legion. On pain of losing their freedom, all free men of color would join the Legion for full-time duty from age 16 to 19, and all newly manumitted persons would also serve three years. Free women of color were to provide a male slave to serve in their stead. When their term elapsed, however, the state would recognize these former slaves as free men. In other words, the Legion constituted a tax on free colored women of 1,000 to 2,000 livres, the price of the healthy male slave.⁴⁴

Not surprisingly, Saint-Domingue's free people of color perceived d'Estaing's Legion as an attack on their freedom and social status. They saw that that royal troops lived under strict discipline and in squalid conditions. D'Estaing noted that men of color had dubbed these soldiers "*nègres blancs*," a term that could be translated as "white slaves."⁴⁵ In April 1765 his administration had to jail 30 free men of color from the North Province who refused to serve in the new Legion. In protest they wrote to the Cap Français Council that "we have been subjected to a permanent slavery . . . by putting us in irons to force us to enlist, we [who] have always faithfully served His Majesty without being enlisted." By this time Dominguan whites

were also denouncing militia service as "slavery," anticipating that d'Estaing would dramatically increase their armed duties, too. But the free colored petitioners had a different message. They were willing to suffer for the crown; for them "slavery" was the loss of volunteer status. How could they prove their civic virtue unless allowed to choose? Under d'Estaing's plan, whites were not required to join the constabulary and if they did they would be paid 50 percent more than men of color at equivalent rank. Whites could also purchase annual exemptions from regular militia service for 200 livres, while free men of color could not.⁴⁶

D'Estaing also planned to reestablish militia duty for all free men, but under his proposal there would be no officers of African descent commanding other free men of color. D'Estaing's belief in the need to stroke planters' egos required reserving all commissions for whites. Men like Jacques Boury or Guillaume Labadie, who led free mulatto or black militia units before 1763, would now serve as sergeants and quartermasters.⁴⁷

D'Estaing was aware that he needed men of color to support his changes. No previous colonial administrator had ever announced, to the degree he did, his belief in the moral worth of free men of color. He described them as loyal sons, proud, and frugal. He proposed a special "Prize of Valor" and "Prize of Virtue" for free colored soldiers with attached pensions, to be awarded during a special ceremony on the king's birthday. Moreover, he proposed that anyone of one-eighth or less African ancestry be considered officially white, immune from all legal discrimination. Insisting on the artificiality of color distinctions among successful creole families, he described this measure as merely "treating like Whites those who are, really." D'Estaing knew this proposal would cause a political tumult. However, "to reject from the citizen class people so precious, especially in a country where men are so necessary, seemed to me to be a contradiction worth fighting."⁴⁸ He believed that such a reform would strengthen the patriotism of the entire free population of color. Time and marriage with the descendants of Europeans would open full citizenship to qualified families.

For Saint-Domingue's most powerful colonists, however, d'Estaing's reforms confirmed his duplicity and appetite for power. One colonial opponent described him, in verse, as an "execrable tyrant, insatiable glutton; born from of the depths of despair, vomited up by a demon, you find pleasure only in oppressing colonists."⁴⁹ There were anti-militia public disturbances in the southern peninsula, where opposition to the governor was especially fierce. In June 1765 in the city of Les Cayes, a personal dispute between a planter and

d'Estaing's military commander became an armed standoff between royal troops and a large crowd in the central square. A group of 40 merchants from the city sent 50 copies of a memorandum about the incident to France's Chambers of Commerce, describing d'Estaing's military government as the scourge of the public and the violator of citizens' liberties. Yet during this period it was reported that the government could "still . . . be content with the service of the mulattos."⁵⁰ According to d'Estaing, at about the same time,

I have been informed that there was an assembly in the Savannettes plain, where the mulattos refused to join the Les Cayes peddlers and the small planters, who opposed the debarkation and arrival of His Majesty's troops; in this assembly the *people of color* affirmed . . . that they would never carry arms against any other than the enemies of the King.⁵¹

The Port-au-Prince Council so firmly opposed the Governor's proposal that he was forced to withdraw it in August 1765. Soon thereafter Versailles recalled d'Estaing and named another governor.

Although his ideas were repudiated in the colony and by Versailles, d'Estaing's attention to "utility" and civic virtue gave Saint-Domingue a taste of the future. His failed program was part of a movement to rationalize royal social policy that would eventually lead to serious discussion of civil reform in Saint-Domingue. He augured later reformers who would describe wealthy men of color as Saint-Domingue's "natural" citizens and defenders.⁵² In 1765, however, colonists found these solutions to be worse than the problems they addressed.

D'Estaing's failure in Saint-Domingue was shaped by the eighteenth-century cultural phenomena Jürgen Habermas has labeled "the development of the public sphere." Beginning about mid-century, the "public" became a powerful idea in France, in part because of increased literacy, publishing, urbanization, and new forms of sociability. Under Choiseul's direction, d'Estaing helped ensure that these developments would take root in Saint-Domingue after 1763. His administration established the colony's first successful print shop, which typeset judicial decrees, administrative forms, and official announcements. The new press also produced an officially approved commercial broadsheet, the *Affiches Américaines*, which eventually had 1,500 subscribers and delivered separate editions out of Port-au-Prince and Cap Français. In 1772, Versailles tried to shut down Saint-Domingue's government printing office and planned to send the

colony preprinted administrative forms. But the naval secretary rescinded the order within months: the government needed to be able to print on a daily basis. In fact that same year, the administration extended the range of documents Dominguan printers could legally produce, and new print shops emerged. Like their counterparts in provincial France, Saint-Domingue's print shops and booksellers sold legal pamphlets and religious texts, as well as political works, pornographic literature, and other forbidden items.⁵³ In 1769 a planter wrote:

All fashions are found in the colony today: plays, concerts, libraries, sumptuous parties where gaiety and wit oppose irksome boredom Pirates have given way to dandies with embroidered velvet jackets and fancy dressing is so common it has passed to women of color. A love of learning accompanies this love of luxury. Those who previously could not read or write are today poets, orators, and scientists. The printing press, that useful institution and source of national pride, crowns all this luster, and from it come the public papers, factums and memoirs.⁵⁴

Increasing levels of literacy in the colony accompanied this new availability of printed materials. Marriage registers from the South Province after 1760 show that 90 percent of white men and 70 percent of white women were able to sign their names, respectively, while 47 and 34 percent of free colored men and women met these same criteria.⁵⁵

In metropolitan France the ideas contained in these books, pamphlets, broadsheets, gazettes, journals, and other publications spilled from the printed page into elite social spaces like salons, law chambers, literary academies, and Masonic lodges. But the new French public was composed of more than just the book-buying classes. As royal and municipal authorities constructed new government buildings, squares, and walkways in French cities, rationalizing street plans and codifying architectural practices as best they could, these urban spaces became sites for public gatherings. Entrepreneurs built their own cafés, popular theaters, and gardens. All of these new spaces allowed urban residents to distribute and discuss printed texts to a degree never before possible.⁵⁶

Saint-Domingue's population was mostly rural. The island's mountainous terrain and complex coastline prevented the emergence of a single commercial and governmental center, like Kingston, Jamaica or Havana, Cuba. As late as 1789, merely 8 percent of the colony's residents lived in towns with more than 1,000 inhabitants.

However, this urban population included more than half the colony's whites. Beginning with d'Estaing's administration, royal engineers redesigned colonial towns into social and cultural centers.⁵⁷ Cap Français was Saint-Domingue's most remarkable example of this new urban public space, and most of its 79 public structures were built after 1763. This important port city grew from 257 free and enslaved inhabitants in 1692 to over 6,000 in 1775. Its population tripled to some 18,550 in 1788, by Moreau de Saint-Méry's estimate, due in large part to the influx of soldiers and male fortune-seekers from Europe.⁵⁸ Starting in 1750, royal administrators transferred the colonial capital from Léogane to a new planned capital, Port-au-Prince, where an earthquake leveled construction in 1752 and again in 1770. Colonial Port-au-Prince was never as large as Cap Français, but the city grew especially rapidly after the Seven Years' War, from 392 houses in 1761 to 683 houses in 1764. In 1789 Moreau de Saint-Méry estimated its population at 6,200, plus 2,200 soldiers and sailors. The new capital received its share of public buildings and spaces, including a dinner club or Vauxhall, a charity home, an official chamber of agriculture, a royal scientific garden, a theater that could hold 750 spectators, and public monuments and parks.⁵⁹

In the late 1770s and 1780s this urban development extended to a second tier of colonial cities. In Saint-Marc the royal government built a public promenade, a bookseller set up shop, and an entrepreneur reopened the local theater. About 50 townspeople formed a Vauxhall, though gambling disputes ended this association. In the southern peninsula, the administration transferred the capital of the South Province from the military port of Saint Louis to the plantation and commercial center of Les Cayes in 1779, prompting that city to grow from 329 houses in 1776 to over 700 by 1788. Like Saint-Marc, Les Cayes in the 1780s saw the foundation of a Vauxhall and, from the 1760s, persistent attempts to establish a profitable theater. By the 1780s some colonial towns enjoyed regular mail and stagecoach service. The number of colonial post offices grew from 21 in 1773 to 56 in 1791. The government expanded road and bridge construction and these improvements in local communication helped foster the creation of about 40 Masonic lodges with 1,000 members by the 1780s.⁶⁰

An important feature of this new literary and sociological "public" was its self-consciousness. In France itself, an idealized notion of public debate, in theory limited to the educated and propertied classes, transformed Old Regime political culture. By the end of the eighteenth century, public opinion in France became "a new source of

authority, the supreme tribunal to which the absolute monarchy, no less than its critics, was compelled to appeal." In the 1760s, as parliamentary judges quarreled with Louis XV's ministers over religious issues, taxes, foreign policy, and court morality, magistrates and ministers alike learned to appeal in print for the support of "the public." Choiseul's sponsorship of writers urging French patriotism against Britain after 1760 was just one example of these attempts to shape public opinion.⁶¹

Those who celebrated the advent of this "public sphere" claimed that an open and rational evaluation of ideas brought forward the most reasonable policies. They criticized royal officials for deciding important matters in secrecy, where greed, favoritism, and other corrupting forces could steer the state. In Saint-Domingue, where Petit's 1750 *Patriot américain* had attacked the way local military commanders abused their authority, the ideal of public discussion became central to the supporters of the colonial councils and civilian government. For their part, however, post-1763 royal governors like d'Estaing also advocated the growth of a colonial public. As they worked to restore the militia system, these administrators believed that better communication and new social institutions would forge bonds among selfish colonists. New public monuments, a colonial newspaper, and official ceremonies would help turn planters into patriots.

Ironically, d'Estaing's political defeat in 1765 proved the growing power of colonial public opinion. The governor faced an opposition that was larger and better informed than ever in the colony's history. With its new theaters, colonial journal, and locally elected administrators, Saint-Domingue was ready to reject "ministerial tyranny." The council of Port-au-Prince was at the heart of this challenge. The militia reestablishment was only one of seven grievances the council had against the governor. The judges claimed he had "humiliated" them by informing them that they had to register his decrees, thereby violating their right of remonstrance. They were furious about his financial reforms, which included taking over the municipal funds that paid the free colored constabulary. Militia opponents saw his reestablishment project as an end to the short-lived "rule of law" that had put local affairs in the hands of elected parish officials.⁶² They labeled d'Estaing a tyrant and described resistance as an act of patriotism.

One colonist who viewed opposition to d'Estaing's proposed reforms as part of the French Parliamentary battle against royal absolutism was the Léogane planter Galbaud du Fort. From 1745 to 1762 he had served in Brittany's Chamber of Accounts, a parliamentary-style

body that had stormy relations with Louis XV's ministers. Back on his colonial plantation after the war, he exchanged letters with his former colleagues, describing parallels between the metropolitan and colonial situations. Galbaud agreed with Emilien Petit that liberal government fostered patriotism: "Arbitrary power, always followed by despotism, is the greatest obstacle to the progress of the colony and consequently is absolutely deadly to the commerce of the metropole and to the growth of the Navy; gentle government, on the contrary, encourages the colonist, makes him love his country and creates a cordial and harmonious society."⁶³

Contemporaries believed that public opposition to d'Estaing's reforms was a positive sign, a symptom of the colony's cultural maturity. In 1765 an anonymous defender of the Port-au-Prince Council in its battle with Governor d'Estaing wrote "originally [this body] was vulnerable to the criticism that its members were rude and ignorant, but times have indeed changed; today they are well-born, enlightened and honest, forming a respectable Senate."⁶⁴ Other writers were even more specific about the social and intellectual sources of colonial "enlightenment":

As long as the first colonial generation was alive, these simple and coarse folk, mostly sailors or ships' carpenters, found little to criticize. But as the colony grew it was increasingly populated by a more enlightened and more polished kind of colonist, . . . new opinions were introduced to everyone; the very respectable remonstrances with which the Parlement periodically bothered His Majesty three or four times a year in the last twenty years of Louis XV's reign were brought into the colony and inflamed countless minds. Colonists began to read *The Spirit of the Laws* by the immortal Montesquieu . . . Everyone saw or believed they saw there the corroboration of their interests and opinions.⁶⁵

The councils of Cap Français and Port-au-Prince adopted the tools of the metropolitan *Parlements*—debates over precedent, legal theory, and public pamphlets—and used them with growing skill against the royal administration. D'Estaing's successor would face the same judicial resistance over the same issues, flaring into outright revolt in 1768 and 1769.

Versailles did not abandon its militia project when the Port-au-Prince Council rejected it. Rather, Choiseul named a replacement who appeared to be more politically skilled than d'Estaing but equally committed to managing public opinion. This was the Prince de Rohan-Montbazon, who arrived in Saint-Domingue in 1766,

believing he could convince the colony it needed a militia. Like d'Estaing, he lived and governed ostentatiously, confirming that a new "civilized" style of life was replacing the planters' creole dress and culture. Upon arriving he pronounced himself charmed by the planters' "zeal" to serve the king. The new governor believed his predecessor had been too rigid with the councils; d'Estaing agreed that Rohan-Montbazon should proceed more slowly than he had.⁶⁶

Part of the Colonial Office strategy to smooth the militia reform was to increase the professionalism of the councils. In 1766 it ordered that new councilors hold a law degree and be at least 27 years old. That same year Choiseul wrote to the head of the Paris barristers' guild about the crown's desire to "settle" Saint-Domingue's councils "and to fill them with educated and experienced subjects." He directed that twelve barristers from the Paris Parlement be appointed to the colonial bench.⁶⁷ However, the Paris Parlement itself was hardly "settled" in the 1760s. Parisian judges were among those arguing in the press and on the bench for more ministerial accountability and discussion of royal policy. When Louis XV replaced Choiseul with a new ministerial favorite, René de Maupeou, in 1770, the Paris Parlement was the main target of Maupeou's attempt to reestablish royal authority. In 1771 he exiled 165 of the most contentious Parisian magistrates to remote provincial towns to end their obstruction of royal legislation, and established a new court system. Advocates of public discourse described this purge as "tyrannical."⁶⁸

Choiseul's Parisian appointees to the Port-au-Prince bench in 1766, therefore, may have strengthened the idea that public opinion could stop the militia reestablishment. In any case the actions of the new governor, Rohan-Montbazon, encouraged this belief. Like d'Estaing, he legitimized the idea of a public debate on militia policy by acknowledging and trying to shape colonial opinion. He ended up producing the same kind of anti-militia agitation as d'Estaing, and, when he refused to back down, a revolt broke out in the South and West Provinces.⁶⁹

Five months after arriving in the colony in June 1766, Rohan-Montbazon presented Saint-Domingue's two councils with his militia program. When the Port-au-Prince council opposed it, he convened a "General Assembly" of the planters. Attempting to bypass the council judges, who claimed to represent the best interests of the colony, the governor asked civilian administrators to organize a meeting in each of Saint-Domingue's fourteen districts. These local assemblies would send representatives to discuss the new militia with the governor.⁷⁰

In Les Cayes, militia opponents dominated the assembly, which produced a document signed by 400 colonists, explaining why the

militia was not necessary. Because those signatures were not included in the surviving text, there is no way of determining whether free colored planters, ranchers, and property owners participated, though Rohan-Montbazon later commented that these meetings included new arrivals and *petits blancs* with no property in the colony.⁷¹ But his instructions did not specify who was to be included.

The Les Cayes petition described the injustice of reestablishing the militia. The assembly instructed its representatives to inform Rohan-Montbazon that Saint-Domingue did not need military rule and that they would take their own precautions against slave revolt. They claimed the militia only existed to force their subjugation to the king, and they hotly defended their patriotic attachment to the monarch. "The militia, under any form, removes the citizen from the rule of law to put him under that of military discipline. Now, as soon as one is no longer under the law, one is in a state of anarchy, of slavery."⁷²

Such fervor ensured that Rohan-Montbazon's December 10, 1766 meeting with district representatives was a failure. They rejected his arguments and were unimpressed when he showed them the formal instructions in which Versailles ordered him to reestablish the militia. The Les Cayes representatives returned home for a second assembly, which concluded that such instructions were not a royal order. Their resistance, therefore, was not treason. When the governor scheduled another meeting with local representatives in January, representatives from Les Cayes and four other districts did not even attend.⁷³

Believing he had no alternative now but to take a hard line, Rohan-Montbazon asked Choiseul for a royal militia decree that the Port-au-Prince Council would have to approve. The naval secretary counseled patience, to allow the opposition to cool. Only in October 1768 did Rohan-Montbazon finally receive a militia law signed by Louis XV. Whatever the objections of judges in Port-au-Prince, those who refused to acknowledge the legality of this document would be in rebellion.⁷⁴

But the delays gave the anti-militia movement additional time to recruit supporters and perfect its arguments that militia service was equivalent to slavery. As Rohan-Montbazon waited for Versailles to send the decree, anti-militia petitions circulated in several districts. In 1767 he wrote Choiseul, "The anarchy is such that even the mixed-blood [people] believe themselves independent and recently, after some words, two mulattos beat a merchant captain with a cane."⁷⁵ The law's arrival exacerbated the violence. After the councils formally registered the decree in 1768, allowing Rohan-Montbazon to issue new militia commissions, opponents threatened and harassed men

who accepted these offices. In December 1768 as the new militia companies mustered, this long-simmering protest boiled over into armed revolt. Anonymous broadsides appeared in the hinterlands of Port-au-Prince and Les Cayes, claiming that the Port-au-Prince Council and ultimately, Louis XV, sanctioned resistance to the governor. Those who had ordered the militia reform, they argued, had perverted the king's true intentions for the colony.⁷⁶

Rohan-Montbazon had rejected d'Estaing's plan to publicly acknowledge free colored patriotism, but he retained the idea of reserving all commissioned ranks, even those in free colored units, for white men. In November 1768, he visited the southern peninsula where he saw printed materials urging blacks, mulattos, and whites to fight the militia reform, under the authority of the Port-au-Prince Council. Yet the governor refused to acknowledge that the new law diminished the civic status of the free colored population. He announced that "the freedmen . . . are still under the protection of the laws . . . [in] the reestablishment of the militia the people of color are treated like all the other subjects of His Majesty in this colony."⁷⁷

The militia revolt of 1768–69 was confined to the West and South Provinces, the two regions where wartime militia service had pressed colonists the hardest. The South, particularly the parish of Torbec in the Les Cayes district, saw the greatest social agitation and involvement of free people of color. But members of this class were involved in other regions too. Free men of color in the largely undeveloped mountain parish of Mirebalais were purportedly the authors of a letter to the government in late December, or January 1769. They described vague "dangers" to the colony if they were not assured of their freedom, fearing a "return to slavery."⁷⁸ Because 90 percent of Saint-Domingue's inhabitants, including thousands of the children and grandchildren of Frenchmen, lived, labored, and died as the property of another human being, free people of color may have believed the new militia would literally put them in chains. It is more likely, however, that they understood that whites were using slavery as a metaphor. Free men of color recognized that forced service would not be considered civic virtue; they wanted to preserve their ability to decide to serve the colony.

The anti-militia revolt that finally broke out in January 1769 was the last attempt of Saint-Domingue's old families to assert the cohesion of the creole population. In the South Province, the most violent resistance to Rohan-Montbazon's reform came from Torbec parish, where the colonists of the Saint-Domingue Company had built some of the peninsula's first plantations. In most neighboring parishes,

whites and free men of color accepted their militia orders and turned out in late 1768 to be counted by their new officers. But Torbec's first militia muster was poorly attended. Robert d'Argout, the commander of the South Province, suspected a prominent man of color named Jacques Delaunay of passing seditious pamphlets and holding anti-militia meetings for free people of color on his plantation.⁷⁹ Delaunay was among those who did not attend Torbec's first militia muster and, in late January 1769, d'Argout arrested him.

Delaunay was one of the free colored officers in the old militia system who would be demoted in the reorganization.⁸⁰ Part of a numerous and socially ascendant free colored family in Aquin parish, Delaunay was probably the brother of the master saddler Julien Delaunay and the son of Jeanne Boissé. His sister Françoise was married to Aquin's Guillaume Labadie, the free colored indigo planter and former militia lieutenant. In 1765 Delaunay had traded his own well-constructed indigo plantation in Aquin parish to another, lighter-skinned free man of color, in exchange for a run-down indigo estate with four times the acreage.⁸¹ Jacques Delaunay may have entrusted this property to his brother Julien or another family member at Aquin, for soon after this transaction, he moved west to Torbec parish. Here he found successful creole families of mixed descent who, like their counterparts in Aquin, could trace their ancestry back to the earliest French settlers and were involved in the contraband indigo trade.

As far away as Port-au-Prince, Governor Rohan-Montbazon had heard about the anti-militia stance of Torbec's free colored planters. In addition to Jacques Delaunay, Jean Domingue Hérard, François Boisrond, and at least one of his sons (chapter 2) had also publicly rejected the militia reform. In early February, after d'Argout had arrested Delaunay, Rohan-Montbazon ordered him to punish these men, too. The South Province commander confirmed "the bad conduct of these troublemakers," but claimed he had no way to take action against them at the moment.⁸²

As it was, Torbec's anti-militia white planters were pressing d'Argout to release Delaunay. One of them sent him an unsigned letter proclaiming Delaunay's innocence and demanding the release of this "family father." Torbec would never again support a militia, the letter claimed, threatening to mobilize two thousand men to free Delaunay.⁸³ On February 2, 1769, about 150 free people of color assembled on Delaunay's property to discuss how to free him. Sometime later that day they kidnapped the free mulatto planter Jacques Boury and held him hostage against their friend's release.

Although he was one of the free colored officers who would now have to serve as regular militia soldiers, Boury had not opposed the new plan and had remained friendly with d'Argout. With Boury in custody, according to d'Argout's spies, Torbec's men of color wrote to their counterparts in the town of Les Cayes about attacking the jail where Delaunay was held.⁸⁴

To ensure Boury's safety, d'Argout sent Torbec's white militia commander Girard de Formont to negotiate with the free colored rebels. Girard's mulatto son had married Jean Domingue Hérard's daughter, though the white militia commander did not attend the marriage contract signing which took place on his own plantation in 1764.⁸⁵ If racial scorn had prompted this absence, in 1769 Girard left the hostage negotiations impressed by how serious and well organized his rebellious neighbors and in-laws, were. On February 6 he wrote d'Argout, "In truth these people seem to me quite determined to do whatever [is necessary] and the damage [from this] would perhaps be greater than we can imagine . . . I would not have believed them capable of the order that there was among them."⁸⁶ In this meeting, Torbec's free people of color emphasized that they believed themselves to be good citizens, and were closely aligned with the parish's white elite. Girard reported:

They made me promise to ask you to leave them alone regarding the militia, assuring me that they will always be disposed to follow the example of *Messieurs* the planters, that they are faithful subjects of the King and good citizens, [and] that they demand the same treatment.

Girard apparently convinced Boury's captors of his good faith, for he persuaded them to release their hostage first and wait for Delaunay to be freed.

Boury's release was a major surprise to anti-militia whites, according to the free mulatto Jean Bourdet, probably the son of Etienne Bourdet, the deceased white militia commander of Les Cayes parish. Bourdet had refused to attend the anti-militia assemblies after Delaunay's arrest, although many of his cousins were involved.⁸⁷ During Girard's negotiations some anti-militia men of color arrested Bourdet in Torbec and took him to their camp. Released when the negotiations concluded, on his way home he stopped at the plantation of an anti-militia planter to eat with a relative who lived there. Some whites on the estate recognized Bourdet and questioned him about the negotiations to free Delaunay. They were very disappointed to learn that the men of color had released Boury so rapidly.⁸⁸

Bourdet also said that 12 to 13 whites had joined the 150 or more free people of color assembled in support of Delaunay. The planter Jean-Pierre Mallet, brother of the mayor of Cotteaux parish was there. The white overseers La Forest and Laroque, he claimed, had come and gone frequently, carrying news.⁸⁹ Jacques Boury confirmed that someone was supplying the free colored camp with beef, biscuit, and salt. Jacques Delaunay himself implied that free colored discontent was being encouraged and manipulated by a group of white planters seeking to squash the militia reestablishment without openly defying the government. Interrogated in prison by d'Argout, before Girard's negotiation, Delaunay

appeared very effected by all that has happened. He told me that it was the bad counsel of whites that had led them to fail in their duty [toward the administration] and that Sieur Laroque, an overseer . . . had read them a letter he said came from Port-au-Prince to get them not to appear at the [militia] reviews that were being held.⁹⁰

Free colored participation in these events involved a delicate counterbalancing of local and royal authority. Delaunay and others represented themselves as good citizens, loyal to the king, the Port-au-Prince Council, and "*Messieurs* the planters." One rebel named Dugué claimed that the notary Desvergers had convinced him to join by showing him a piece of paper with writing from the colonial minister. Dugué reported that Desvergers said this document proved that the king had not given orders to reestablish the militia; they were to hold firm and not submit.⁹¹ Delaunay's friends proved their good citizenship by kidnapping another free man of color, rather than a white. Once negotiations began, they quickly released their hostage, acting on their own initiative.

For his part, d'Argout released Jacques Delaunay. Yet the resolution of this hostage situation did not end opposition to the militia. On February 10, 1769, d'Argout received word that more anti-militia letters were circulating in the Les Cayes plain and that approximately 200 whites—small planters, artisans, ex-soldiers, and other *petits blancs*—and 50 free people of color had gathered at Les Savannettes, where a similar meeting had been held against d'Estaing in 1765. The whites were again led by the planter Mallet, while Cornet, a free mulatto who may have been Delaunay's nephew, led the free people of color.⁹² This assembly proclaimed that when d'Argout arrested the first white, free mulatto, or free black for resisting the militia, the entire group would take up arms, reassemble, and support the Port-au-Prince Council against the reform.⁹³

Within a week d'Argout reported that he had successfully mustered the new militia in the two troublesome parishes of Cotteaux and Tiburon, frontier districts the government had recently carved out of the mountains west of Torbec. However, few men of color had attended these required assemblies. In Torbec parish itself Jacques Boury was free, though his free colored neighbors apparently still regarded him with suspicion. On February 21 Jacques Dasque, a free mulatto planter connected to the anti-militia group, had arrested one of Boury's slaves near his plantation. Dasque told a notary that Boury had ordered the slave to encourage Dasque's slaves to run away.⁹⁴

In spite of these tensions within creole society, Torbec's anti-militia forces were trying to mobilize the smuggling networks that had long sustained their frontier plantations in the absence of French commerce. On March 2, d'Argout learned that a group of white planters was writing to the governor of Jamaica, whose merchants bought much of the southern peninsula's sugar, indigo, and cotton. Their letter allegedly announced "that they were prepared to come over to English rule and assured [the governor] that he would find all minds here ready to greet him." Three days later d'Argout's spies reported that these men were stockpiling arms and planning to gather in Les Savannettes to fight at the first sign of government hostility. Moreover, the anti-militia forces were pressing officers in Rohan-Montbazon's new militia to resign their commissions. They had decided to hold another assembly if this did not occur.⁹⁵

These threats of secession and violence seem to have chilled the anti-militia ardor of Torbec's free people of color. The night of March 8, 1769, one of d'Argout's spies attended an anti-militia assembly. Saint Martin, a white planter, had addressed a racially mixed group of supporters, scolding the free mulattos for not arriving on time. They answered "that they clearly saw that they [the planters] wanted them to pull their chestnuts from the fire and that they [the free people of color] were tired of all these assemblies."⁹⁶ Saint Martin assured them that the meetings would stop once they had dissuaded those militia officers who had returned their commissions from appearing before Governor Rohan-Montbazon in Port-au-Prince, as they had been ordered. According to the report Saint Martin assured them that "after this they [the planters] would leave them alone. The mulattos promised [to cooperate] but for the last time."

That very night nine prominent men of color reversed their anti-militia stance. These younger members of Torbec's free colored planter families included two of Jacques Boury's younger brothers, the mulatto son of Girard de Formont, and one of Jean Domingue

Hérard's sons. Formally asking d'Argout for mercy, they declared that they had received anonymous threatening letters signed "La Colonie," directing them to assemble at Les Savannettes. The threats ordered them to prevent M. Penfentenir, one of the militia captains who had surrendered his commission, from traveling to meet Rohan-Montbazan in Port-au-Prince to explain his resignation.⁹⁷

These men presented themselves as dupes of their wealthy white neighbors, who, they claimed, were using them and poor whites as a screen to hide their own anti-militia stance. They announced, "Seeing that the white *messieurs* did not appear at the said assembly at Les Savannettes, we realized the mistake that we had made." Though they had originally warned Penfentenir not to go to Port-au-Prince, they returned to encourage him to follow Rohan-Montbazan's orders as soon as possible. The next morning when they returned to confirm Penfentenir's departure "we found a number of the most notable planters of the neighborhood, who opposed the departure of M. Penfentenir." The petitioners listed these "notable *Messieurs*" for d'Argout, saying that "the frankness with which we act leads us to hope that by your well-known kindness, you would please intervene for the poor wretches who have been immersed in a mistake that they only recognized several days ago."⁹⁸

Meanwhile, a combined force of men of color and *petits blancs* was harassing militia officers in Cotteaux parish, west of Torbec. On March 11 the white planter Jean-Pierre Mallet led a group that kidnapped the brother of the notary Laroque. They took him to the town of Cotteaux and ordered him to turn over his militia commission and uniform. Laroque's neighbors vilified him for conforming to the new militia law and started a rumor after the revolt that he was of mixed blood. D'Argout had to issue a statement commending the notary and declaring that there was no African blood in either Laroque or his wife.⁹⁹

On March 15, a few days after Laroque's abduction, 30 armed whites and free mulattos under the free mulatto Delaunay and Charles Mallet, the brother of Jean-Pierre, forcibly occupied the plantation of Chamoux, a militia officer in the same area. They insulted Chamoux's family and forced him to surrender his commission. The rebels then took him to another plantation where more than 100 "brigands" had gathered, including at least 80 free people of color, with yet more militia officers in custody. The crowd took these men to Cotteaux and publicly humiliated them there, until word arrived that d'Argout was en route from Les Cayes with 200 men. At this news, the anti-militia forces left Cotteaux to regroup in Les Savannettes.¹⁰⁰

D'Argout's show of strength was possible because soldiers had arrived from the West Province, where they had already quelled similar disturbances. Moreover, the commander called on free colored constables from neighboring districts. On March 28, therefore, nearly 100 men of color under d'Argout's orders marched out of the town of Les Cayes with 120 royal troops. They made directly for Les Savanettes and, at dawn, raided two adjacent plantations belonging to white anti-militia leaders. Interrupting what appeared to have been a meeting, they arrested four men, including a slave and a white plantation artisan. After a hasty court martial in Les Cayes the following week, the government executed all four.¹⁰¹

Generally, however, government treatment of the rebels was light-handed, especially where free people of color were concerned. After a formal investigation and trial the crown executed only eight rebels; just one was a free man of color. As Charles Frostin points out, the government preferred to blame poor whites and new French immigrants, rather than attack established creole families. The major exception to this pattern was the punishment meted out to the Port-au-Prince magistrates, whom Rohan-Montbazon expelled from the colony in 1769.¹⁰² One free *quarteron* was sent to the galleys and less than a third of the 17 men "admonished" by their local courts were men of color.

Rohan-Montbazon believed he understood well "the ferocious spirit of these sorts of people (of color), their attachment to their liberty and their scorn for life when they believe we are trying to return them to slavery." Because he believed they had been misled by the whites, he ordered free colored rebels to return home "and to execute with respect the wishes of a King who never wanted to take away their liberty but who, on the contrary, wanted them to enjoy the same privileges as his other subjects, of which they are a part."¹⁰³

* * *

The militia controversies of 1764–69 illustrate the limited range of free colored protest at this early stage of their exclusion from colonial public affairs. Postwar reforms had threatened their militia leadership, but d'Estaing had acknowledged their sacrifices and planned to compensate them with prizes and honors. The trade-off appears to have been acceptable. In 1765, free people of color in the South Province did not protest d'Estaing's plans, though their white neighbors did. However, Rohan-Montbazon's attempt to cultivate public opinion in 1766 and 1767 unwittingly strengthened anti-militia arguments to

the point that Jacques Delaunay and his neighbors in Torbec parish followed the urging of white planters, and refused to muster. Yet, of all the parishes in the southern peninsula, only the adjacent territories of Torbec, Les Anses, and Cotteaux experienced disturbances in 1769. Elsewhere in the province, men of color shouldered muskets for d'Argout when he moved against the anti-militia assemblies.

Courted by both pro- and anti-militia forces, Torbec's free people of color were not puppets, but their leaders belonged to an emerging group of light-skinned planters who knew the importance of strong relationships with the more powerful families in the region. Although the Delaunays, Boisronds, Hérards, and others were not dependent on white patronage, they understood its value. Delaunay in particular had just moved to the parish. Social networks were essential in this world and these men defined "good citizenship" as solidarity with messieurs the planters, and the Port-au-Prince Council.

Jacques Boury's decision to support the militia reform despite pressure from his neighbors suggests some further characteristics of Torbec's free colored rebels. Boury was wealthier and had far more experience with the royal government and militia. Though he stood to lose his status as a militia officer, he may have recognized that the royal government was a more reliable ally than local whites, particularly as resentful immigrants were flocking to the colony. His younger brothers Alexis and René Boury opposed the militia until near the end of the revolt, but they may have needed local patrons more than Jacques did.

Despite the defiance of the younger Bourys, the entire family prospered in the 1770s and 1780s. The revolt was barely over in October 1769 when one of Jacques Boury's sisters married a white planter. In 1770 René Boury and another free man of color were partners in a sugar plantation valued at 250,000 livres, one of the most valuable free colored properties in the peninsula. By 1783 Jacques Boury himself was quartermaster general of the mulatto and black militia in the South Province, the highest position a man of color could hold under the new regulations.¹⁰⁴

The failed militia revolt is important because it was the last time Saint-Domingue's creole planting families joined forces. As the next chapter describes, after 1769 a color line split the colony as never before, slicing even the wealthiest and lightest skinned families of color from the ranks of French colonists. Once the government had defeated anti-militia forces, military officials worked with legal and planter elites to salve the political tensions and cultural anxieties that split Saint-Domingue's colonial population. Together these

groups wrote new laws and emphasized longstanding policies in which race replaced class as the main sign of social and civic status. From 1770, new legal and social terminology emphasized the African, rather than French, identity of mixed race families. Free people of color were not banished to the hills to make room for white immigrants, as Petit had advocated in his 1750 *Patriot américain*. However, after 1769, established colonists, military administrators, and *petit blancs* worked hard to deny people of color the ability to be "American patriots."

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CHAPTER 5



CITIZENSHIP AND RACISM IN THE NEW PUBLIC SPHERE

On January 26, 1776, Europe's latest innovation in urban sociability opened its doors in Cap Français. An entrepreneur named Pamelart, probably a recent arrival in the colony, invited the public to his Vauxhall, a fashionable combination of meeting hall and café. Perhaps having heard how colonists loved to dance, Pamelart included a ballroom in his new establishment, which drew large crowds during that year's Carnival season. But after the holiday, the café and its dance floor stood empty. Pamelart tried to lure the public back with tactics that might have worked in a European city, like advertising in the *Affiches américaines* and holding fireworks demonstrations. Only in May, when he began scheduling dances for Cap's free people of color, did he appear to have found the formula for success. These functions again made the Vauxhall a social center, for many white men attended free colored balls to find mistresses. But since Cap Français's new theatre opened in 1764, the city government had required the racial segregation of public places. When Pamelart began to enforce this law, his dance floor emptied again. The Vauxhall closed soon afterward. Although imperial administrators, creole magistrates, and other reformers described free people of color as a threat to public virtue, European men wanted sexual partnerships with women of color.¹

Nine years later, Pamelart had apparently adapted to colonial racial sensitivities. In 1785 a court bailiff named "Pamelard," probably the failed Vauxhall owner, paid to have a pamphlet printed. It claimed that Pamelard and his wife had suffered "the cruelest degradation and defamation of their reputation, their honor and their probity."²

Another pamphleteer had described the couple “in terms and with expressions that in this colony are only given to people of color.” Pamelard was not complaining about explicit labels like “free *quarteron*,” or “free black,” but a far more subtle set of codes. He cited twenty instances in which the earlier pamphlet referred to him as simply “Pamelard” or “a Pamelard” and his wife as “the woman Pamelard.” In France, use of “the so-called” or “the woman” in place of the respectful titles “Sieur” and “Demoiselle” denoted an individual’s low social status. Though insulting, such terms might have been applied to the failed dance-hall owner and his wife.

By 1785 in Saint-Domingue, however, race had replaced class as the primary dividing line in society. Even poor whites were now addressed as “Sieur,” by virtue of their race. In February 1783 the Cap Français court believed it necessary to declare that, although a lawyer referred to one of his witnesses as “the so-called,” this person was nonetheless recognized as white “and not stained with mixed blood.” Similarly, in January 1787 the Cap Français court ruled that although a free *quarteron* saddle maker had been described in earlier court papers as “Sieur,” this would be erased from the documents. The man was expressly forbidden to take this title in the future.³ In an October 1783 case assessing the race of the Reculé family of Jacmel, it was noted that nearly all the available evidence showed that they had African ancestry. “In favor of the Reculés we see only documents in which their ancestors are sometimes given the title of Sieur and sometimes not, according to how advantageous it was to flatter the contracting parties.”⁴

Pamelart’s two appeals to the colonial public illustrate the changing racial climate in Saint-Domingue since the anti-militia revolt of 1769. On one level, Saint-Domingue still drew mostly male immigrants from Europe, as it had since the seventeenth century, and these men sought free women of color as companions. Pamelart’s Vauxhall failed because new laws required him to segregate his clientele.

In terms of his own identity, however, Pamelart exhibited a hypersensitivity to racial description that was now common among colonial whites, particularly poorer ones. Suspicion that he was a man of color could have cost him his bailiff’s post; the government had recently prohibited nonwhites from employment in the courts. As the colony’s leaders self-consciously established a new colonial public that would civilize and unite French colonists, they insisted that meeting places and formal institutions exclude free people of mixed race, despite, or rather, because of, the powerful attraction they exerted on whites.

The economic frustrations of *petits blancs* like Pamelart reinforced this political project. In the 1770s and 1780s, free people of color in all regions of Saint-Domingue emerged as prosperous merchants, artisans, farmers, and even planters. This was especially true in the South where a new generation of deep-rooted creole families successfully built on the cultural and economic legacies of their parents (chapter 6). The trend was most immediately visible and troubling to colonists, however, in the North and West provinces. By the 1780s, Cap Français's dynamic economy had produced hundreds of wealthy free coloreds. Here especially, unlike the South, there emerged a distinct and socially mobile free black population, in addition to mixed-race creole families.⁵ The contrast between rising free colored wealth and the economic disillusionment of many French immigrants helped solidify the notion of a single, contemptible class of "nonwhites."

This chapter argues that in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War, Saint-Domingue's leading intellectuals and jurists struggled to reconcile the colony's French identity with the colonists' strong attachment to women and children of color. As in many nineteenth-century European colonies in Asia and Africa, fears about colonists' cultural and political loyalties persuaded elites to try to divide free society into "white" and "nonwhite" groups. In Saint-Domingue this artificial separation created new kinds of racial stereotypes. By describing mixed race women and men as unnaturally feminine, colonial elites established a far greater distance between Europeans and their creole children than was possible under the older bloodline conception of ethnicity. Because misogyny was an important thread in anti-absolutist French political rhetoric, these new racial stereotypes were especially effective in explaining how mixed-race people threatened the public virtue that both pro- and anti-militia forces agreed was necessary for colonial citizenship and patriotism.

This chapter examines the new racial codes that divided colonial society after 1769. After describing how an influx of European immigrants threatened Saint-Domingue's established social structure, the heart of the chapter traces the increasingly intertwined discourses of citizenship, sexual decadence, and racial impurity, in both Saint-Domingue and France. By condemning people of mixed race in biological and well as moral terms, reformers cut them out of the white public and even excised them from white families, in theory. In closing, an analysis of colonial census reports suggests that the dramatic growth of Saint-Domingue's free population of color in the

1770s and 1780s was at least partly due to the racial reclassification of old colonial families, from “white” to “nonwhite.”

* * *

In the 1770s and 1780s, one important aspect of the perceived need for colonial patriotism and unity in Saint-Domingue was the growing size and dissatisfaction of the colony’s poor white population. In 1750, Emilien Petit had described ways to attract and retain new colonists, who might become “American patriots.” His notion that new immigrants could not successfully compete for jobs against free people of color prompted him to propose restricting free coloreds to the hills. Petit had also warned that if these immigrants got too close to free coloreds, became too creolized, they might turn against France. As if to illustrate this threat, in 1769 poor whites had joined free men of color as the foot soldiers of the anti-militia revolt, under pressure from Torbec’s old planting families. But even in the late 1760s, competition between these two groups outweighed shared political grievances. In the militia revolt, poor whites and free coloreds had held different assemblies, under different leaders. Disgruntled at their exclusion from the complex relationships that constituted creole society, newcomers generally resented wealthy light-skinned planters who thought of themselves as French colonists. New kinds of racial politics flourished in this atmosphere of economic and social frustration.

For example, one day in 1765 the white peddler Jean Chatry searched for the free *quarteron* planter Charles Tourelle and found him on the plantation of two white neighbors.⁶ Chatry confronted Tourelle and demanded he sell him Angelique, a black slave then shopping in town with Tourelle’s wife. When Tourelle refused, the peddler picked up a knife from a nearby table and lunged at him. The two white planters restrained him, but Chatry swore that he and his dagger would find Tourelle on the main highway some day or night. To calm the man Tourelle promised to deliver the slave when she returned, but after Chatry left the free colored planter swore an affidavit about the incident before a notary.

It is not clear if Chatry believed he could intimidate Tourelle because Angelique’s owner was a man of color. But threats of violence were not too effective against a property owner who had other planters standing by his side. A better weapon was one that took advantage of the growing sense that Saint-Domingue had a colonial “public” that existed outside of creole family and patronage networks. By attacking the status of free people of color in that public arena,

white immigrants might improve their own position in colonial society.

Ambition appears to have been what motivated Arnaud Lonné, the white plantation manager of the free *mulâtresse* and wealthy widow Marie Begasse Raymond, to make a serious charge against one of his employer's sons. In January 1774, Lonné appeared before a royal judge to protest against "the insults, threats and acts of violence committed against him by a mulatto from Aquin named Guillaume Raymond [*sic*]."7 According to Lonné,

Guillaume Raymond desires to continue to benefit from the pleasure of tormenting and being disagreeable [to his mother, Lonné's employer] as he has always been since the death of Raymond *père*. No sooner was he settled on this neighboring plantation [recently acquired by his older brother Julien] than his slaves came to ravage crops and steal provisions from the widow Raymond's plantation, where the plaintiff resides.

After Lonné had taken measures to end these raids, he set out one Saturday morning for town. But,

He was no sooner before the plantation where Guillaume Raymond lives, than he saw the aforementioned Guillaume Raymond's slaves congregate in the road, and block his passage, and the aforementioned Guillaume Raymond emerge from their midst and approach the plaintiff with a club in his hand addressing these words to him—So, you beggar [*bougre*] according to what I've been told you took it in your head the other day to break the water gourd of one of my slaves, you good for nothing [St. Jean foutre], I'll have that same slave break your arms, you're a f . . . [*f . . . bougre*] beggar, a f . . . knave, [*f . . . geux*] a churl [*menant*] I'd like to give a good thrashing.

In the resulting confusion, according to Lonné, Guillaume struck him three times and then strode away, leaving his mother's manager to contend with the jeering crowd of slaves. In his affidavit Lonné demanded 50,000 livres in compensation. This sum would have allowed him to buy his own plantation, though Lonné did not emphasize the money. The assault was an affront to his personal honor, and to "the interest of society and the security that each citizen must enjoy."

No matter whether this incident had really occurred—Lonné's only evidence was an inventory of his bruises, and he seems not to have pursued the matter further in the courts—the accusation was especially damning for the Raimonds. Whatever his wealth and local

status, no man of color could afford to be known for leading a slave mob against whites. Lonné's description of the "so-called" Guillaume Raimond as "mulatto" was but another aspect of his attack on Raimond's character, for the Raimond children were all *quarterons* and were often identified as "Sieur."

None of this was lost on the Raimonds, who rushed to a notary to affirm their respectability publicly and officially. The day after being notified of Lonné's charges, both Guillaume and his elder brother Julien filed their own affidavit denying that such an incident had even taken place. They pointedly identified themselves in their narrative as "Sieur" and "carteron" [*sic*].⁸ Julien led this defense, though he had not been named in Lonné's complaint. "The aforementioned Sieur Julien Raymond [*sic*] *quarteron* is . . . astonished that the aforementioned Sieur Lonné in this complaint dares attack his reputation and that of his aforementioned brother." The Raimonds asserted that they were

in a position to prove that their conduct has never been other than irreproachable and therefore it cannot be presumed they be the sort to commit such infamies The aforementioned Sieur Lonné wants only to attack and debase their reputation before a public toward which they have always made it their duty to behave well.

Whether or not Guillaume Raimond took "pleasure in tormenting and being disagreeable" to his mother, Lonné's charges confirm what contemporaries said about *petits blancs*: they sought to profit from bringing private squabbles before the public. "Those [poor whites] who can write go from bailiff to bailiff. Clerks for attorneys and advocates sometimes rise even higher and from there raid the fortunes of widows and orphans, causing quarrels and lawsuits within families, forming cabals, and plots against the administrators."⁹ Some 20 years later, Julien Raimond portrayed Lonné in these very terms.

He made about 100,000 livres with my family, like . . . all the whites who are not planters make money, that is, by all sorts of ways. Lonné bought from us a note we held against our mother's plantations With this debt he found a means to make himself master of my late mother's plantation, a woman then older than 65, unable to act because of her infirmities and who Lonné turned against us by his poisonous reports, in order to keep us from seeing his maneuvers. In the two years he managed my mother's affairs, he gained 40 slaves.¹⁰

Wealthy, light-skinned families of color may have been a favored target for unscrupulous immigrants. In 1763 a white soldier garrisoned

in Cap Français sent word to Catherine Marquin, a free *quarteronne* who lived in that city, that her brother Nicolas had returned from France and wanted to see her.¹¹ When they met this man, neither Catherine nor her brothers recognized him as the boy who had sailed away to school in Europe 20 years earlier. However, their widowed mother, a free *mulâtresse*, disagreed. She did identify the soldier as Nicholas Marquin, allowing him to claim a piece of the sizeable Marquin estate.

The Marquin siblings sued the newcomer for fraud and won their case in 1770. They discovered that he was a Frenchman who had already deserted once. When he had arrived in Cap Français in a new regiment in September 1762, he had heard about the Marquin inheritance and the missing heir. A colonial court ruled that he was an imposter, but the false Marquin traveled to France and returned with more evidence that he was Nicholas Marquin. He raised an appeal that was struck down in 1772, after the heirs demonstrated that he was five fingers shorter than their brother.

The fact that a soldier from southwestern France could sustain a claim to be the *quarteron* Nicholas Marquin for nearly a decade underlines that the “nonwhite” identity of such families had little to do with physical appearance.¹² Though there were some enslaved *quarterons* in the colony, the Raimonds or the Marquins probably bore little resemblance to most Dominguan slaves. Their African ancestry affected their lives only because it existed in public consciousness. Descendants of old creole families were the most vulnerable to such suspicions. This was especially true if they were poor, since low social class was increasingly associated with racial impurity.

René Glisset, a poor fisherman who operated a small boat and lived in the pasture outside the town of Les Cayes, was one such man. At his death in 1768 Glisset had an illegitimate free colored daughter and shared his home with Victoire Mathieu, who may have been a free woman of color.¹³ Despite his poverty, the fisherman could sign his name and notaries did not describe his race in contracts, implying he was white. In 1762, Glisset was the only one of the seven guests at the signing of a marriage contract between two free people of color to whom the notary gave the respectful title “Sieur.”¹⁴

One morning in 1765 “Sieur René Glisset, boatman,” as the notary described him, was working with his slaves to erect a wall around his property in the town of Les Cayes. A white man named Secourt came by with ten or twelve slaves of his own and began to cart away a pile of sand that Glisset planned to use. When the boatman claimed the sand, the two began to argue. Furious, Secourt said “It’s

a fine thing for a f.[*sic*] beggar of a mulatto like you to demand special treatment.” Glisset replied that he was as white as Secourt, that he had proven his whiteness before, and could prove it again.¹⁵ He then went to a notary to record this insult for future legal action.

As Secourt’s accusation suggests, Glisset’s racial status was open to doubt. Two-and-a-half years later Charles Drouet, a peddler and free *mestif*, of one-eighth African ancestry, appeared before a notary in Les Cayes.¹⁶ There he declared “for public notoriety” that he had grown up with “Sieur René Glisset boatman” in their native Jacmel. Glisset’s father had had a dark complexion and in Jacmel Glisset himself had always been considered to be of mixed race. According to Drouet, Glisset had married a mulatto woman in Jacmel, and, though she had died before bearing him any children, her mulatto brothers were still alive. Moreover, Drouet said, one of Glisset’s sisters had married his cousin Julien Drouet, also a free *mestif*. Jannot Drouet, another cousin, had known Glisset’s uncle Noel, who was also considered to be of mixed race, although he married a white woman.

In a society where most Frenchmen did no manual labor, Glisset’s working-class occupation and creole identity raised questions about his racial status, though some people assumed he was white, perhaps based on his physical appearance. By the end of the 1760s, however, even wealthy creoles were increasingly under racial suspicion. When Charles-Claude Gelée, a planter in the Les Cayes district, requested in 1767 that the Port-au-Prince Council confirm his letters of nobility, rumors spread that not all of his ancestors were white.¹⁷ Gelée’s paternal grandfather had been one of the principal magistrates of Nantes, France’s chief slave-trading port. In 1731 he became royal secretary of the Parlement of Brittany. His son, Gelée’s father, had come to Saint-Domingue in the 1720s, marrying in the Les Cayes plain not long after the southern peninsula was opened for settlement.¹⁸

Local gossip, however, insisted that Gelée’s mother’s family, the Boisron [*sic*], was of African descent. In fact, Boisron was the name of one of the most prominent free families of color in the region. (chapters 2, 4, 7, 8, and 9) To quell these rumors, in March 1768, Gelée requested that the council of Port-au-Prince investigate the claim that his mother was a woman of color. “Marie Catherine Boisron,” although descended from two colonial judges, traced her ancestry to a marriage celebrated in Saint-Christophe (St. Kitts) in 1698. As the earliest successful French Caribbean settlement, Saint-Christophe had a reputation as a place where white colonists had married black slaves and Indians. Moreover, France’s long struggle against the British for control of the island had destroyed almost all

French civil records there. Gelée's maternal grandmother was born on Saint-Christophe and her certificate of baptism was missing. This in itself was enough to prompt the Port-au-Prince magistrates in 1768 to order a full investigation.

The Gelées, like other old creole families, claimed that their ancestor was an Indian. Hilliard d'Auberteuil said that claims to be born of Indian parents in Saint-Christophe were an "infallible" method for wealthy free people of color to pass as white.¹⁹ In response to the Gelée case the colonial ministry affirmed that

His Majesty has always admitted . . . an essential difference between Indians and *nègres*, the reason . . . [is] that Indians are born free, and have always held the advantage of freedom in the colonies . . . those who come from an Indian race should be assimilated to those subjects of the King originally from Europe, but . . . his Majesty intends that first their genealogy be proved, in such a manner that no doubt remain about their origin.²⁰

In other words, society would consider self-proclaimed Indians to be African until proven otherwise.²¹ Gelée and his brothers, who had already served as officers in the royal army and the colonial militia, were apparently cleared of these charges. Gelée went on to belong to several Masonic lodges in the Les Cayes region, and held a commission as captain of the mounted militia dragoons in 1787.²²

The experiences of Guillaume Raimond, Charles-Claude Gelée and René Glisset illustrate how postwar immigrants challenged the class structure of creole society. However, the changes in Saint-Domingue's racial ideology were due to more than resentful *petits blancs*. Their stymied ambitions aggravated the ongoing political debate about the nature of colonial government and citizenship. As the 1769 revolt illustrated, Saint-Domingue was divided over whether the colony could have a civilian government based on the rule of law, or a military regime. Would colonists be more patriotic, as Emilien Petit argued, if their behavior was guided only by the "liberal" virtues of self-interest, under just laws? Administrators like d'Estaing and Rohan-Montbazon maintained, to the contrary, that colonists needed more civic virtue, defined as self-discipline and sacrifice for the larger imperial community. Ultimately, both groups compromised by agreeing that virtue and full colonial citizenship were above all "white."

This solution was a novel one, because France itself had not defined citizenship well. Throughout much of the eighteenth century the category "citizen" was "a complex, incoherent set of exceptions and derogations."²³ Most of Louis XV's European subjects conceived

their social identity in corporate terms: they were members of a family, profession, guild, congregation, noble order, parish, or urban neighborhood, to name a few of the overlapping jurisdictions that comprised the kingdom. Thus one original meaning of “citizen” was “tax-paying resident of a specific city.” In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, France’s high magistrates and other authors began using the term in a broader political sense. In pamphlets criticizing royal absolutism, jurists used the concept of French citizenship to describe those who held the natural and customary rights of French subjects.²⁴

The Port-au-Prince Council modeled its own struggle against d’Estaing and Rohan-Montbazon on this metropolitan example and joined French judges in wielding the word “citizen” as a weapon. For example, the anonymous author of a long 1765 memorandum recounting d’Estaing’s troubles used the word to describe himself. “My name is The Patriot, my fatherland is Saint-Domingue, my condition is Citizen, my religion is the love of truth and justice, and my occupations are to boldly attack vice and loudly praise virtue.”²⁵ On the other side of the controversy, those who wanted to restore militia service also used the word, linking it to the colony’s French identity. Another anonymous memorandum to the Naval Ministry described the new vogue of antiauthoritarian “citizenship” as a result of colonists’ inability to earn respect through military service to the crown.

Citizens’ rights have become so extensive, they have become so respectable that that is all they want to be [a citizen] . . . [Because] they can no longer acquire respect by serving the sovereign, individuals find it easier and more honorable to acquire respect by calling themselves citizen by the grace of God, out of republican audacity. It is not that people here are less French than elsewhere; they love their prince and prefer his rule to any other. They will obey as soon as it comes back into fashion.²⁶

Beyond the broad concepts of vice and virtue, the metropolitan discussion over the meaning of citizenship did not fit colonial society. In the 1770s and 1780s, for example, a number of French authors defined “citizen” in opposition to older corporate identities based on religion, profession, or noble birth. Protestant and Jansenist intellectuals were especially prominent here, as they argued for the relaxation of the legal disabilities they bore.²⁷ Citizenship, they argued, should not be defined by religion but by one’s ancestry, residence in the kingdom, and obedience to its laws. They stressed their loyalty and contributions to the kingdom’s population and prosperity. In 1787

Louis XVI signed a law giving them rights equal to those of Catholic subjects.²⁸

But European-style corporate ranks had never been important in Saint-Domingue, so citizenship could not be described as a way of uniting Protestant and Catholic subjects. Visitors were scandalized by the way colonists dismissed Catholicism, theoretically the most important component of French identity.²⁹ Governor d'Estaing could not believe how local authorities supported the property rights of Jewish colonists.

Another way of defining French citizenship in the 1770s and 1780s was in describing the rights of naturalized foreigners. As royal officials granted increasing numbers of official letters of naturalization to foreign-born residents of the kingdom, allowing them to pass property to their heirs, they paid less attention to whether these new "Frenchmen" converted to Catholicism.³⁰ Instead, it was more important that they be loyal to the monarch and useful to the kingdom. Citizenship was a way to describe the rights and responsibilities that united new and old subjects.

Saint-Domingue's colonists did apply for and receive letters of naturalization.³¹ But as d'Estaing found when he began to investigate the Jewish population, colonists did not make a strong distinction between foreigners and Frenchmen when all concerned were planters, merchants, or slaveowners. The colony's most obvious foreigners were the tens of thousands of enslaved Africans who arrived in Saint-Domingue every year. The cultural distance between French-born subjects and the subjects of other European rulers was minor in comparison to the gulf between slave and free.

As the policies of d'Estaing and Rohan-Montbazon illustrated, Versailles hoped after the Seven Years' War that militia service would define colonial "citizenship." The crown's investment in building up Saint-Domingue's cities and transportation network was part of its attempt to create a cohesive colonial community, where such imperial patriotism could flower. Liberal colonial intellectuals supported the improvements in urban life and communications, although they opposed the tyranny of military government. Like their counterparts in France, many hoped that this new public sphere would strengthen their argument that Saint-Domingue no longer needed harsh military rule. To this end, they established coffeehouses, Masonic lodges, and a scientific society, institutions where rational debate might flourish.

But not every advocate of the new Enlightened public agreed that opening the public sphere to all educated minds was a weapon against despotism. For followers of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, it was

more important that the public be exclusively masculine. Exhibited in public, female passions threatened the community of virtuous male citizens, making them weak and selfish; marriage and motherhood were necessary to contain women in a separate and closed “private” sphere. Like Montesquieu and others, Rousseau saw the public freedom of women as a symptom either of a despotism that “feminized” men, or of social chaos. Adapted by a generation of pamphleteers attacking the French monarchy, this misogynist imagery became part of pre-Revolutionary French political culture. Their texts suggested that the decadent sexuality of courtiers at Versailles, where Louis XV’s mistresses influenced the king’s choice of advisors, was a critical element of France’s constitutional problems. Sexually skilled women used their unnatural powers to control and corrupt the king, making him weak and effeminate.³²

This discourse resonated powerfully in Saint-Domingue, where d’Estaing and Rohan-Montbazon had established a kind of court life at the governor’s residence for the first time. Popular colonial criticism of these two men included commentary on their sexual appetite for women of color. In 1770, the Port-au-Prince Chamber of Agriculture accused Rohan of so openly favoring his free colored mistress that he emboldened other free people of color and eroded plantation discipline.³³

But similar accusations could be leveled against most colonists. Travel accounts frequently described Dominguan planters as petty despots, whose power and sexual passions had extinguished their natural instincts. A story Girod de Chantrans claimed was true and widely circulating in the colony in the 1780s illustrates the unsettling effects of this passion on colonial mores.³⁴ An unmarried white man, living on his plantation with his illegitimate children, fell in love with his mulatto daughter, a beautiful girl praised throughout the district for her good conduct and intelligence. The father attempted to seduce her, gently at first. When she rejected him, he tried threats and eventually resorted to force. Outraged by these crimes, the girl’s brothers strangled their father in his bed and surrendered themselves to the authorities, who also arrested the sister. The local court convicted them of their father’s murder and put them all to death.

For Chantrans this story demonstrated “the impotence of virtue and sensibility” when confronted by “despotism’s powerful cruelty and unrestrained debauchery.”³⁵ When men had the kind of power planters had over their slaves, visitors opined, ordinary morality and virtue disappeared. Chantrans would have agreed with Brueys d’Aigalliers, writing 20 years earlier, that life in Saint-Domingue

transformed Frenchmen for the worse:

Oh my friends, what customs, what laws
 For this is how the petit bourgeois
 Come from France in rags and in poverty . . .
 Starting with nothing, become something
 Thanks to the effects of the metamorphosis
 They are brazen and behave like little kings.³⁶

The Count d'Autichamp believed that whites in the colony "have all the vices of the most corrupt monarchy, they live in the most anarchic disorder and their spirits acquire all the turmoil of a republic without the virtues [of such a state]." This condition revealed more than mere lawlessness, for d'Autichamp, like others in the colony, saw white Saint-Domingue as an emasculated society. "Here (one must agree) there are none of those great crimes which indicate a manly and vigorous wickedness which might be the seed of great virtues."³⁷

D'Autichamp did not describe the difference between manly and unmanly vice. But he was one among the many royal administrators and colonial elites who agreed that the lack of legitimate social bonds and the force of pride weakened political, familial, and social relations in Saint-Domingue.³⁸ For the creole author Emilien Petit, as for Rousseau, marriage helped make men into good fathers, husbands, and citizens.³⁹ Rousseau wrote that marriage controlled female desire, without the despotism of the harem.⁴⁰ Most colonial observers concurred with Brueys d'Aigalliers that in Saint-Domingue ambition and tropical sexuality had warped the institution of marriage.

If, in innocent sentences
 I were to describe those libertines
 I would paint for you naked Messalinas
 In the arms of new Aretinos
 Competing in shameful debauchery.
 You would see these gangrenous couples
 Aimlessly immerse their dissolute souls.
 Love, modesty, the sweetest feelings,
 Flee, flee these dangerous shores
 For, beneath your mask, you are mocked here
 The town takes its mother as a model
 [La ville prend sa mère pour modèle]
 And I believe that marriage delivers a tender virgin
 To a desiring husband even more rarely here than in Paris.⁴¹

Hilliard d'Auberteuil claimed that thousands of white women lived as prostitutes or concubines in Saint-Domingue.⁴² Indeed, white

women in Saint-Domingue were roughly four times as likely to conceive a child before marriage as in rural Normandy, and illegitimate births increased sharply after 1760.⁴³

The most cited examples of colonial vice, however, were relationships between white men and women of color. As one writer described colonial life,

a number of masters, instead of hiding their depravity, glory in it, keeping in their homes their black concubines and the children they have had by them, and displaying them to everyone with as much self-confidence as if they were the offspring of a legitimate marriage.⁴⁴

Brueys d'Aigalliers adopted this literary trope when he inserted a beautiful mulatto woman into his poem describing a colonist's unethical rise to power and wealth.

he chooses as his mistress
 a café-au-lait colored Laïs
 That in these climes is called a *mulâtresse*
 A delightful dusky, with rounded breasts
 Dark lashes, and the limbs of a doe
 Slender waist and a bona fide rump
 Who, exposing him to numerous dangers
 Through the excesses of her debauchery
 Handsomely maintains his household
 And populates it with the prettiest bastards
 That he believes to be his own, as is the custom.⁴⁵

In 1782, Girod de Chantrons, who acknowledged the practicality of these arrangements, could not resist the image of an Eastern harem, describing a planter's housekeeper as his "sultana." But he did not believe that plantation slaves or even housekeepers had any real emotional influence over male colonists, compared to women of color in colonial cities.⁴⁶

These [urban] women, naturally more lascivious than European women, flattered by their control over white men, have collected and preserved all the sensual pleasures they are capable of. Sexual ecstasy [*la jouissance*] has become for them an object of study, a specialized and necessary skill used with worn-out or depraved lovers, who simple nature can no longer delight.⁴⁷

Such images of morally corrupt feminine desire dominated printed discussions of race in Saint-Domingue after 1763. Moreau de

Saint-Méry, who had a mulatto mistress, and, perhaps, a quadroon daughter of his own,⁴⁸ described the sexuality of women of color as “both the danger and the delight” of men.

The entire being of a *Mulâtresse* is dedicated to sensual pleasure, and the fire of that goddess [Venus] burns in her heart until she dies There is nothing that most passionate imagination can conceive that she has not already sensed, foreseen, or experienced. Her single focus is to charm all the senses, to expose them to the most delicious ecstasies, to suspend them in the most seductive raptures. In addition, nature, pleasure’s accomplice, has given her charm, appeal, sensitivity, and, what is far more dangerous, the ability to experience more keenly than her partner, sensual pleasures whose secrets surpass those of Paphos [the legendary birthplace of Aphrodite].⁴⁹

The Baron de Wimpffen also emphasized artificial and unnatural pleasures:

[T]hese Priestesses of an American Venus . . . have made sensual pleasure a kind of mechanical skill taken to the highest perfection. Next to them [the Renaissance pornographer] Aretino is a prudish school boy They combine the explosiveness of saltpeter with an exuberance of desire, that scorning all, drives them to pursue, acquire and devour pleasure, like a blazing fire consumes its nourishment.⁵⁰

It was in Saint-Domingue’s new cities that critics of this colonial libertinage found the most objectionable behavior. Cap Français was the “Babylon of the New World” for many, and, if Moreau de Saint-Méry admitted that in Port-au-Prince “there are some men who gather together to sample the innocent pleasures of Masonic brotherhood,” he was more fascinated by the urban display of “passion” and “luxury.”⁵¹ Moreau maintained that prostitution in Saint-Domingue exploded after 1770. His figures on Cap Français’s population show an overall doubling between 1771 and 1789, while the city’s free colored population, especially its free women of color, increased by a factor of seven between 1775 and 1780.⁵²

Like many of his contemporaries, Moreau’s approach to this subject was shaped by Rousseau. His description of the “insatiable” consumption of the finest cottons, muslins, jewels, and rich lace by urban women of color echoed the Swiss philosopher’s attack on fashion.⁵³ Though born in Martinique, Moreau was shocked that in Saint-Domingue “one is not protected . . . by the public decency that preserves morality [even] in . . . the depravity of [Europe’s] capitals.”

Adopting metropolitan commonplaces about the corrupting effects of feminine narcissism and urban display, he emphasized the dangers women of color posed to the public. "Publicity, I repeat, is one of the sweetest pleasures [of Saint-Domingue's *mulâtresses*]." He was pleased to find that women of color in Saint-Marc had not yet acquired "those extremes of civilization where there is a sort of sensual pleasure [*la jouissance*] in offending public decency."⁵⁴

Moreau and others regarded the sexual power women of color exercised over white men as a corruption of nature, a feminine "empire based on libertinage."⁵⁵ At a time when eminent writers like Buffon and Cornelius dePauw were describing populations native to the New World as unnatural, unmasculine, and degenerate, it was especially important for white creoles arguing against military government to explain why their society was so different from that of France.⁵⁶ Indeed, some colonial physicians described the process by which newcomers to the Antilles became immune to tropical disease as a kind of physiological "degradation." In 1768 one author wrote that European bodies "do not suddenly lose their initial strength and initial vigor. It is only with time . . . that they absolutely lose their initial constitution, they creolize, as we say."⁵⁷ These same doctors described the danger of "spermatic loss" in this environment and counseled sexual restraint under such conditions.⁵⁸

This biological discourse was politically dangerous for colonists because it suggested that Saint-Domingue's planters were weakened, even emasculated, by the climate and that they needed an authoritarian government to force them to be virtuous. Rejecting the idea of American degeneracy, "liberal" colonists instead described women and men of color as unnaturally feminine. Couched in scientific, as well as moral, terms, this gendered description of the free population of color explained why whites had to reject mixed-race men from the colonial public before the rule of law and rational self-interest could prevail.

The work of Moreau de Saint-Méry provides the best example of this scientific discourse. Like Emilien Petit, Moreau was a creole jurist critical of royal despotism but committed to creating a virtuous French colonial public. Sharing Petit's goal of acquainting France with the true nature of colonial society, Moreau combined his social and political convictions in an encyclopedic parish-by-parish *Description* of Saint-Domingue. In the introduction to this three-volume work he devoted five pages to island-born white men and five to white creole women. But in his description of "freedmen" he gave only one-and-a-half pages to the mulatto and five-and-a-half pages to

“La Mulâtresse.” In his opinion, “all the advantages given by nature to the mulatto are lavished upon the Mulâtresse.” “The mulatto loves finery,” but “to do nothing is for him supreme happiness.” For the mulatto as for the *mulâtresse*, “pleasure is his sole master, but it is a despotic master.” Women of color appeared repeatedly in Moreau’s general description of free colonial society. Their narcissism, languor, and moral corruption epitomized the free population of color; their sexuality enthralled white men and their coquetry was a model for white women.⁵⁹

Convinced of the social and political benefits to the colony of rational, public investigation, Moreau used the scientific and political trends of his day to create his own description of race in Saint-Domingue. Although dictionaries would not reflect the new usage until the 1830s, French-language writers after 1750 increasingly used “race” as an anthropological term describing the physical and cultural differences among global populations, rather than as a social term, referring to family lineage.⁶⁰ Indeed, erudite French discourse had begun to describe blacks as a different race in 1684.⁶¹ Since the appearance of an albino African child in Paris in the late 1730s or 1740s, physicians and philosophers there had been studying the physical features of skin color. Works like Barrère’s 1741 *Dissertation sur la cause physique de la couleur des Nègres* or, in 1744, Maupertuis’s *Dissertation physique à l’occasion du nègre blanc* or his *Venus physique*, which appeared in 1745 and was in its sixth edition by 1751, illustrate this new biological approach to human difference.⁶² After conducting dissections, Barrère described Africans’ skin color as the product of a superabundance of black bile, a “humoral imbalance” that indicated an innate pathology. Other physicians disputed these claims.⁶³ Moreover, philosophers disagreed about whether regional environments caused racial differences, as Buffon maintained, or whether Africans, in particular, had an entirely different biological origin, as Voltaire and others insisted.

Moreau did not pronounce on these specific controversies. His analysis of Saint-Domingue’s racial groups relied heavily on vitalism, a school of philosophical medicine developed by the medical faculty of Montpellier, where more than 70 percent (19/26) of Saint-Domingue’s physicians in 1791 had received their degrees.⁶⁴ By the late 1770s, leading vitalists taught that that each human physiological type exhibited a specific balance between what they referred to as the “physical” and the “moral” or mental forces. Where one force was weak the other was correspondingly stronger, creating a specific temperament for that individual or type. This idea of physical–moral

reciprocity became a standard element of nineteenth-century racial thought and was at the core of Moreau's description of whites, blacks, and people of mixed race in Saint-Domingue.⁶⁵

Writing in the 1780s,⁶⁶ Moreau used vitalism and the idea of racial degeneration to demonstrate that Saint-Domingue's people of mixed ancestry were biologically and morally inferior to whites and even to blacks.⁶⁷ His interest in this question led him to a ludicrous degree of theoretical precision, which in itself demonstrates how important such scientific reasoning had become to colonial intellectuals. He counted 11 distinct racial categories between "pure" black and white, and identified which combinations of African and European parentage produced what kinds of skin and hair. Drawing on vitalist theory, he discerned in people of color a predictable level of strength and passion, the legacy of their black ancestors, and a certain amount of grace and intelligence, according to their degree of white descent. For example, he described mulattos, who were one-half black, as stronger than *quarterons*, who were one-quarter black, because of their African blood. *Mestifs*, who were one-eighth black, were weaker still than *quarterons*; in fact they were weaker than whites, because of the corrupting effects of racial mixture.

In addition to strength and endurance, African ancestry also produced an appetite for physical pleasure that was especially pronounced when combined with white intellectual attributes, according to Moreau. Mulattos lived for sexual gratification, and "*grifs*," fruit of the union between a mulatto and a black, had a "temperament impossible to contain." "In an individual of this shade, [sexual] continence is practically an unknown phenomenon."⁶⁸

Although his classifications extended to the category of *sang-mêlé*, or one-sixty-fourth black, Moreau believed that such persons were extremely rare in the colony. Rather than attribute this to colonial culture, which probably allowed such individuals to pass for white, he insisted that an experienced eye could detect any amount of African ancestry. One rarely saw *sang-mêlés*, he believed, because racial degeneration made it difficult for them to reproduce.⁶⁹

Following his conviction that "blackness" and "whiteness" were biological qualities that would never disappear in a given genealogical line, Moreau charted the different ancestral combinations that might produce each racial category. For example, a mulatto might be the child of a white and a black or the descendant of a mulatto and a *mulâtresse*. But there were ten other parental combinations that could produce a mulatto child, like the union of a *quarteron* (one-fourth black) with a *griffe* (three-quarters black). Hypothesizing "that the White and the Black each form a whole composed of 128 parts which

are white in the one and black in the other,” Moreau inadvertently illustrated that these categories were based on social, not biological criteria. He reasoned that a mulatto might have anywhere from 56 to 70 white parts and from 58 to 72 black parts, depending on his parentage. A *quarteron*, produced by 20 possible combinations of mother and father, had between 71 and 96 white parts and 32 to 57 black parts.⁷⁰ This racial calculus collapsed under its own weight. A mulatto with the maximum white ancestry (70 parts white to 58 parts black) had nearly as much “white blood” as a *quarteron* with the minimum white ancestry (71 parts white to 57 parts black). Admitting “the influence of arbitrary choices on the entire classification,” Moreau nonetheless clung to his biological perspective. Noting that the blacks he had observed in France were “less black” than those in the Antilles, he explained this as an effect of the climate upon their skin, rather than a result of his own subjective perceptions.⁷¹

In fact, the growing, though still miniscule, presence of people of color in France was producing similar tensions there about sex, racial mixture, and urban society. As Sue Peabody has shown, Parisian officials and jurists increasingly battled over ethnic diversity and slavery, which they claimed threatened public order and political liberty, respectively. In 1762, with the British blockade cutting off travel to the Antilles, the royal attorney of Paris accused free people of color in the capital—there were at least 159 in this city of 600,000—of contributing to public disorder. He identified prostitution as one of their vices, although royal records show that three-quarters of this population between the ages of 11 and 30 was male. Only 13 percent of Parisian free people of color were of mixed race, but this sub-group was two-thirds female. In fact, the royal attorney was more worried about racial mixture than sexual commerce. He claimed that the presence of people of color in France would lead to the “disfigurement” of the “French nation.” In 1762, royal officials updated a 1739 law requiring that all slaves on French soil be registered. Now, for the first time, the government demanded the registration of all “negroes and mulattos,” even if they were free. In 1763, at the end of the war, the Naval Secretary Choiseul ordered planters to take their slaves back to the Antilles and prohibited colonial people of color from traveling to France. Although there is ample evidence that this decree was ignored on both sides of the Atlantic, Choiseul’s reasoning was important, for it betrayed a new focus on French whiteness. These people were producing a new mixed-race population with French whites.⁷²

The emergence of official racial fears in Paris, but not Bordeaux, the kingdom’s main colonial port, suggests that this was more a

cultural and intellectual matter than a social one. Even without new colonial populations, Paris was the center of illicit bookselling, religious controversy, and legal battles that threatened the closed intellectual, religious, and political structures of the monarchy.⁷³ Although they were less than one-thirtieth of 1 percent of the city's population, dark-skinned men and women represented sexual and perhaps political disorder in the capital—the “disfigurement of the French nation”—while in Bordeaux they marked the vitality of the colonial trade. Although Parisian officials may have objected to blacks as foreigners, their worst criticism was directed at people of mixed race, the physical embodiment of colonial vice. In 1770 the Abbé Raynal encapsulated this mixture of biological and moral repugnance when he described mulattos as “vile . . . children of the most detestable debauchery, a sort of monster always composed of the knavery of the two colors.”⁷⁴

In Saint-Domingue, advocates of colonial reform, particularly those opposed to military government, seized on this new racial thought as a way of strengthening the colony. As in Moreau de Saint-Méry's racial analysis, writers tended to focus on this intermediate group. But their mostly unspoken concern was a definition of whiteness that would unite creoles and French immigrants, planters and *petits blancs*.

The most controversial spokesman for this idea was Michel René Hilliard d'Auberteuil, whose 1776 book *Considérations sur l'état présent de la colonie française de Saint-Domingue* originally had the support of the colonial ministry, probably due to the influence of Emilien Petit.⁷⁵ After publication, however, the state banned the volume, which relied heavily on Montesquieu and Petit to attack military government and defend the colony's two high councils.

Born in Brittany but hoping to secure an appointment in the colonial judiciary, Hilliard d'Auberteuil was in many ways typical of the new wave of white immigrants to Saint-Domingue after the Seven Years' War. His book merged the liberal antiauthoritarianism of militia opponents with a strong critique of the creole social hierarchy.

There must not be any distinction between white men other than that which results from their jobs and personal merits; in the colony there must be neither Grandees [*grands*], nor nobles, nor a body of the people; there should only be freeborn men [*ingénus*], freedmen [*affranchis*], slaves and the laws; there must be no preference in families, no right of primogeniture.⁷⁶

His emphasis on social equality among colonial whites and use of Montesquieu's political theories made Hilliard the most outspoken proponent of a racially defined colonial public. In the 1780s, Julien

Raimond wrote the ministry that *Considérations* was the “rallying point” for white racism.⁷⁷ Observing a strict color hierarchy in society would bring order to Saint-Domingue without subjecting colonists to an authoritarian government, Hilliard argued. He recommended that all blacks be enslaved and all mulattos be emancipated to serve in the *maréchaussée*, in order to emphasize the degree to which freedom was a product of whiteness. At the same time, he advocated prohibiting all marriages between whites and people of color, to establish that people of color could never attain white status. Despite his belief that Saint-Domingue’s whites should be governed by established laws, and not the whims of military officers, Hilliard argued that whites should be allowed to retaliate immediately against mulattos who insulted them, rather than to have to call the authorities. He lamented that the military government had recently jailed white men who struck out at insubordinate men of color. Unlike Moreau, who later argued that racism against free people of color was “natural,” Hilliard acknowledged that “Among all the peoples who have had slaves, the son or grand-son of an ex-slave was considered blameless. But in Saint-Domingue, interest and security require that we burden the Black race with such a great scorn that whoever descends from it, until the sixth generation, be marked with an indelible stain.”⁷⁸

The best example of how the new ideology of white purity came to dominate colonial thought after 1763 was the work of Pierre Victoire Malouet, who came to Saint-Domingue as part of the wave of junior colonial administrators after the Seven Years’ War. In 1775 Malouet wrote *Mémoire sur l’esclavage des nègres*, which he published in 1788, probably to combat Enlightenment antislavery writings. Reversing Hilliard’s position that prejudice protected the slave system, Malouet argued that slavery was justified because it prevented racial mixture.

Surely no one will make us desire the incorporation and the mixing of Races? Yet, slavery is essential if we wish to avoid this. Only the ignominy attached to an alliance with a Black Slave secures the Nation’s own filiation. If this prejudice is destroyed, if the Black man is assimilated to the Whites among us, it is more than probable that in short order we shall see mulattos as Nobles, financiers [and] Traders, . . . [and that their] wealth will soon procure wives and mothers [with colored skin] to all Estates within the State. It is thus that individuals, families [and] Nations become altered, debased, and that they dissolve.⁷⁹

* * *

After the anti-militia revolt of 1769, administrators and colonists disagreed about which was more virtuous, defending France’s empire

against Britain or making it more profitable, but each side realized it needed the other to achieve its vision of a better Saint-Domingue. The government had defeated the rebels and treated them leniently, but the larger political dilemma remained: How could France improve colonial self-defense without alienating planters? How could royal officials control angry *petits blancs* without making colonial government more authoritarian? How could Versailles insure Saint-Domingue's loyalty in the next war, without giving up the colonial trade monopoly on which French ports depended?

A new ideology of "whiteness" that feminized people of mixed ancestry helped solve these problems, much as it would in Europe's Asian and African colonies in the nineteenth century.⁸⁰ The alleged sexual degeneracy of mixed-race men and women destroyed any claims that old creole families of this sort were gradually becoming whiter. They were wealthy because whites were vulnerable to the sensual expertise of debauched *mulâtresses*. Driving all people of color out of the colony's emerging public sphere appeared to resolve questions about whether public virtue and rational discussion was possible in a slave society. And the new ideology of whiteness affirmed Saint-Domingue's French identity, at a time when the colony was, in fact, becoming more and more African through a redoubling of the slave trade.

As Governors Bory, Belzunce, d'Estaing, and Rohan-Montbazon had seen, transferring militia duties to the free men of color reduced military costs. And it kept both rich and poor whites happy, as long as it did not create a free colored militia elite whose patriotism would rival white achievements. The challenge was to mute the growing rhetoric of civic virtue and prestige of the citizen-soldier in far-away France. Making African ancestry "an indelible stain" accomplished this. Administrators could assign the most difficult militia duties to nonwhites and describe their obligation as a racial, not a civic, burden. Despite white fears about heavy militia service under d'Estaing and Rohan-Montbazon, the reformed militia did away with regular reviews, except in times of war.⁸¹ For the average colonial white man, militia service would be about what it had been before. This was not true for free men of color, whose military obligations expanded dramatically. Racist rhetoric about feminized vice-ridden mulattos easily adapted to the importance of the mulatto militiaman (chapter 7).

But the most striking social change after 1769 was the wave of restrictions on free colored participation in the colony's new public life: in theory, at any rate, Saint-Domingue's new urban spaces, cultural events, and expanding official bureaucracy were open only to

whites. In the 1780s, Julien Raimond described prejudice against free people of color as a minor aspect of colonial life until 1768.⁸² By his account it was a speech delivered to the Port-au-Prince Council in 1770 upon the arrival of Rohan-Montbazon's replacement from France that signaled the change. Raimond claimed to have read the speech in the new colonial broadsheet. While welcoming the new governor and intendant, who sat before him, the council's attorney had called for harsher laws against the dangerous class "which still bears on its forehead the mark of slavery."⁸³ It was this speech, Raimond believed, that unleashed the torrent of discriminatory laws issued by the magistrates in the years that followed.

The chronology of the change was not precise. It was in 1764 that authorities closed Cap Français' new theater to people of color; later, the management segregated the seating, and new theaters in Port-au-Prince and Les Cayes followed this rule, as did Pamelart's Vauxhall. In 1779 a sumptuary law first proposed by the royal attorney of Cap Français was applied to the entire colony, forbidding both men and women of color from wearing certain types of fabric and garments. That year the governor and intendant urged police to watch carefully for "the assimilation of the *gens de couleur* with white persons, in their manner of dress." From 1779, people of color were to carry a certificate from their militia captain when they moved from one parish to settle in another. Occupational restrictions kept them from working as notarial clerks or as surgeons.⁸⁴

Recently, Dominique Rogers has argued that there was, in fact, no racial segregation in Saint-Domingue in the 1780s. Her deep and unprecedented research in the legal archives of Cap Français and Port-au-Prince shows that local officials were lax about enforcing some discriminatory laws, and that there were high French administrators who hoped that free coloreds would eventually integrate into colonial society. She maintains that in these cities the rapid economic gains of free blacks and people of mixed race genuinely improved their social condition in ways that outstripped any deterioration in their civil status.⁸⁵

Yet the changes described in this chapter were far more important for their cultural, than their practical, impact. For in the 1780s this new kind of racial categorization raised powerful objections, not from urban free coloreds who lived near Saint-Domingue's new public spaces, but from wealthy light-skinned families in the isolated South Province (chapters 7 and 8). More powerful yet, in the early years of the French Revolution, was white colonists' attachment to the idea of white purity. Even after the great slave uprising of August 1791, *petits*

blancs continued to fight free colored equality, rather than compromise in order to save the lucrative slave system (chapter 8).

Fundamentally, the new racism was more about colonial identity than repression of free people of color. As Pamelart's 1785 pamphlet illustrates, whites grew increasingly concerned about racial passing. Since 1698, colonial judges had been chastising parish priests and notaries for forgetting to note in their documents whether individuals were born illegitimate or legitimately, whether they were French or the subjects of some other European king, and when and where they were born. In 1758, the Cap Français Council noted that notaries were drafting documents for blacks and mulattos who claimed to be free but could not prove their liberty. In 1761, however, the Port-au-Prince Council was more concerned by notaries and priests who recorded deeds for free people of color without noting "the qualities that distinguish them from other citizens," specifically, whether they were black, mulatto, or quadroon.⁸⁶

In the 1760s, racial accusations were limited to individuals, mostly. But in the 1770s, individuals and the government monitored social groups and institutions closely for white purity. In the late 1770s, for example, a militia captain in the Northern Province wrote Versailles to identify five local families who had successfully acquired white status. By the mid-1780s Saint-Domingue's administrators had to advise the colonial ministry to overlook "the diverse means by which many families in Saint-Domingue have succeeded in passing as pure and freeborn [whites]."⁸⁷

Nevertheless, such disputes made their way into the courts, most notoriously in the case of Chapuiset, an officer in a white militia unit in the North Province. In the 1770s, Chapuiset's fellow officers accused him of having "mixed blood," which would have disqualified him from serving in their ranks. Although in 1771 he had been declared officially white, in 1779 there was a great protest when he received a commission in the white militia. Pursuing the matter before the Cap Français Council, Chapuiset's opponents relied on the idea that African blood was "indelible," "a stain which not only excludes them from military and civil positions, but which never entirely disappears even in the acts of civil society."⁸⁸

Because Chapuiset's roots in colonial society went back so far that it was impossible to reconstruct his ancestry from eyewitness accounts, both sides relied upon documentary evidence. His opponents published a "Genealogical table of the ascending maternal line of the so-called Chapuset [*sic*], according to the recovered papers," showing his descent from a free black woman in Saint-Christophe.

The defendant's lawyers also turned to the archives. In a ten-page pamphlet printed in 1779 they reproduced 15 notarized deeds dating from 1703 to 1722, together with a detailed analysis of the language and terms used in these documents.⁸⁹ Because certificates of baptism, marriage, or death were unavailable, they produced receipts, contracts of sale, and other notarial evidence.

Chapuiset's lawyers argued for a social definition of race, like the one that had prevailed in the South Province up through the 1760s. "To communicate familiarly with Whites, to be admitted into White society, to deal as an equal with Whites of all classes is to enjoy the status of being White." They showed how Chapuiset's maternal great-great-grandmother had sold land to the president of the Cap Français Council. Prominent whites, they pointed out, figured as witnesses and as second parties in these and other records in which this woman was described as "Demoiselle." Nowhere in the surviving notarial record was she identified as a *mulâtresse*.

The council found no reason to overturn the earlier ruling that Chapuiset was white. Nevertheless, public outrage in 1779 forced the governor and intendant to withdraw his militia commission. Songs, epigrams, posters, and threats of mass resignations by other militia officers all confirmed that colonial whites demanded a deep-reaching racial division of public life.⁹⁰ The problem for the new racism was that it claimed to be based in "nature," both in the sense of the nature of slave society, and then the scientific sense of a natural hierarchy of white over nonwhite. As the Chapuiset case showed, however, for generations colonists had ignored such "indelible" distinctions.

Although many colonists acknowledged their mixed-race kin, in 1773 law makers decided to separate creole families into European and African branches.

The usurpation of a white family name throws doubt on the status of individuals, injects confusion into the settlement of inheritances, and, finally, destroys that insurmountable barrier between whites and people of color built by public opinion and maintained by the wisdom of the government.⁹¹

A new law gave all free people of color who were using names associated with white families three months to adopt "a surname taken from the African idiom or from their trade and color, but which can never be that of any white family in the colony." After 1773 all manumission requests had to contain this "African" name; clergy, notaries, and legal personnel were forbidden to conduct any business with people of color claiming white names.

As earlier chapters have suggested, family names represented connections between parents and children that many did not want to rupture. Following the letter of the new law, a number of families deliberately challenged its spirit, choosing new “African” names that were closely related to their former “white” names. Often it was white family members who made these decisions. The colonist Fulerant Fabre, a white plantation overseer, freed the black woman Jeannet and her mulatto son, stipulating that they would carry the surname “Erbaf,” which was “Fabre” spelled backwards. The white planter Julien Pilorge had manumitted his twelve-year-old mulatto son in 1765, and in 1783 the white captain of Les Cayes’ mulatto militia petitioned the governor and intendant to confirm this liberty. The militia officer suggested the new name “Coleriq” for the free mulatto Denis Pilorge, who was now 30. However, when he married five months later, he was identified as “Denis Golerep, formerly called Pilorge.” Jean Caton Decopin was a free *quarteron* planter who inverted his surname to “Pain Cordé” although officials continued to note in documents that he was “formerly Decopin.”⁹² Pierre Raymond ‘s wealthy *quarteron* sons seem to have favored the “Raimond” spelling of their family name, though the orthography was not consistent.

The mulatto branch of the Depas family in Aquin parish changed its name to “Medina” in 1777. This was not an African name, but a Jewish one; the Medina family, like the Depas, figured prominently in the Sephardic community of Bordeaux and they were also prominent merchants in Curaçao.⁹³ The most prosperous member of this mixed-race family branch, the free mulatto planter Michel Depas, requested that he be allowed to keep the name “Depas.” Although his petition was denied, notaries continued to refer to him and to his sons as “Medina formerly Depas” or “Medina known as Depas.”⁹⁴

Use of these “African” names was not consistent over time. As free families of color grew wealthier, the notaries they hired were less insistent that they use a deliberately foreign name. The four free mulatto children of Bernard Maignan, a militia officer at Nippes, had changed their name to Tercé by 1782. The most prominent of Maignan’s descendants persisted in signing his name “Claude Maignan,” even in documents where he was identified as “Claude Tercé formerly called Maignan ML [*mulâtre libre*].”⁹⁵ Claude Tercé/Maignan married into the free colored Anglade family and was hired by the white planter Joseph Anglade as a plantation overseer. By the middle of the 1780s the planter had moved to Bordeaux, and relied more and more on Claude Tercé/Maignan to direct his colonial affairs. As this happened, notaries dropped the overseer’s artificial name “Tercé.” In 1786 he

was described as “Claude, known as Maignan,” representing his absentee employer in the purchase of a 33,000 livre plantation. In 1789 he left Saint-Domingue to assist Anglade in France. In the documents notaries drafted before his departure, “Claude Maignan” seemed to have won back his father’s name.⁹⁶

Another aspect of the new demarcation of whites from free non-whites after 1770 was the increasing use of the term *affranchi* for free people of color. The word literally means “freedman” in the sense of “ex-slave” or “emancipated person.” Labeling all free people of color “*affranchis*” was a way of saying that they were all ex-slaves, even those who were born free. For this reason the state required them to produce documents proving their liberty at any time, an idea that had its roots in plantation discipline.⁹⁷ In 1761 in Martinique, the governor and intendant ordered all free coloreds to submit “the original titles of their manumission” to a special commissioner within three months, and threatened to sell into slavery anyone whose papers were unsatisfactory.⁹⁸ Authorities in Saint-Domingue periodically attempted the same sorts of controls on the ever-expanding slave population. In 1758 at Cap Français, judges, clerks, and notaries were forbidden to draw up any deed for a mulatto or black who could not prove that he or she was free. In 1773 the royal judge in Jérémie, a new town at the very tip of the southern peninsula in a region known for maroon activity, ordered the arrest of all blacks and mulattos claiming to be free unless they could prove their liberty “on the spot.”

But another objective of these new documentary requirements was to underline that free people of color had no natural place in public life. In 1774, for example, a judge in Cap Français advocated that all free people of color “wear a cocarde or a piece of red ribbon on their head,” so officials could tell at a glance who claimed to be free. In 1777 the Port-au-Prince Council ordered priests and notaries not to register religious or commercial documents for free people of color unless they could prove their liberty. To solve the problem of unofficial liberty papers, in 1778 the council of Port-au-Prince required these officials to go to even greater lengths in all documents involving free people of color. They were to demand proof of manumission and record not only the date of the manumission act but also the date it had been ratified by the colonial administration. Notaries who did not follow these procedures risked prosecution as accomplices to the frauds committed by their clients of color.⁹⁹

In the southern peninsula, some of the wealthy free colored planters did not adjust well to this latest requirement, which Julien Raimond later described as “a humiliation.”¹⁰⁰ Paul Carenan, a

prosperous planter born in slavery who almost lost his freedom in 1770 (chapter 3) may have been among those who rejected this innovation. In 1781, 11 years after the lack of formal manumission papers nearly reduced him to slavery, Carenan and his wife Marie-Jeanne Delaunay stood by as their son explained to the notary drafting his marriage contract that he had not carried his baptismal certificate to the ceremony “because he had not foreseen that . . . he might need it.” He had to return after the ceremony to have the document copied onto the end of the contract.¹⁰¹

This new requirement was an extension of the longstanding but only recently enforced rule that free people of color be identified as such in legal documents. Though notaries in the South Province omitted such terms for wealthy families of color in the 1760s, by the 1780s even wealthy planters could not escape the label “free mulatto” or “free quadroon.” Notaries were also more reluctant to use the courtesy titles “Sieur,” “Madame,” and “Demoiselle” in free colored contracts, though they seem to have tried other techniques to illustrate social status. In 1780, for example, a notary described Julien Raimond’s brother not as “Sieur Raimond” but rather as “Guillaume Raimond, legitimate son of the late Sieur Pierre Raimond [*Sic*],” thereby still distinguishing him from other less-respectable free coloreds. In a contract of sale from March 1783, Raimond was “Julien Raimond, Q.L. [*quarteron libre*] legitimate son of the late Sieur Pierre Raimond [*Sic*],” while the other party was identified as “the so-called Marie Madelaine free *griffe*.” Raimond’s status was such that he was never referred to as “the so-called,” but it was not until he traveled to France in 1784 that a notary would again describe him as “Sieur.”¹⁰² A contract drafted for François Raimond in 1787 shows the notary describing his client as “Sieur” in the version that would remain in the colony, but omitting the honorary title in the copy of the contract that would be deposited in the Naval Ministry in Versailles.¹⁰³

This heightened racial sensitivity appears to have distorted colonists’ and administrators’ perception of social trends. In the 1770s and 1780s, as racial discrimination was increasingly separating whites from nonwhites, official census reports showed that Saint-Domingue’s free population of color was expanding dramatically. Yet this was at least in part due to a new precision in administrators’ racial terminology after the 1775 census. In a summary table reporting 1782 data from the West and South provinces, the census officials split the category they had used in 1775, “free blacks and mulattos,” into two more specific headings, “people of color, mulattos, etc.” and “free blacks.”¹⁰⁴ Overall in the two provinces, free blacks and mulattos

together comprised 44 percent of the free population in 1782, up from the 29 percent reported in the 1775 census. In a number of regions, according to the later document, the white population fell as the free colored population rose. In the Saint Louis district, which included Julien Raimond's Aquin parish, between the 1775 and 1782 censuses, the free population of color more than doubled from 165 to 345, while the white population shrank from 777 to 661. In the Les Cayes district, which included Torbec parish, the free colored population rose from 288 in 1775 to 746 in 1782 while the white population contracted from 1,479 to 1,412. In the West Province, the similarly isolated district of Mirebalais reported a free colored population of 327 in the 1775 census, outnumbered by a white population of 1,061. Seven years later, Mirebalais had only 402 whites and 818 free people of color.¹⁰⁵

In 1788 an official parish-by-parish comparison of white and free colored populations combined data in a different way.¹⁰⁶ But it showed that people of color composed 48 percent of the free population in the South and West Provinces, compared to 44 percent in the 1782 report. If they accepted these census figures as reliable and comparable, royal officials had reason to believe that the free population of color in Saint Louis had quintupled in size from 1775 to 1788. The free colored population of the Les Cayes district appeared to have increased by a factor of six in thirteen years. In Mirebalais by 1788, royal officials counted three and a half times as many free people of color as they had in 1775.

Other developments besides racial reclassification surely influenced this data. In these frontier regions, officials were undoubtedly counting, for the first time, families long settled in isolated valleys or on remote hillsides. Censuses were tied to collection of a tax on slaves, so increasing free colored wealth produced larger population reports.¹⁰⁷ Moreover there was surely a real growth in the free population of color over time. Baptismal records from the southern peninsula show that free women of color were between 9 and 21 percent more fertile than comparable white women.¹⁰⁸ Some of the growth was also due to new modes of manumission through marriage and military service, examined in chapter 7.

* * *

Close examination of the growing Dominguan obsession with race in the 1770s shows that the new line colonists drew between "white" and "nonwhite" was more about creating a unified French colonial

community than maintaining slave discipline. The color line did not help immigrants from Europe acquire the riches they dreamed of, but the notion of white purity was deeply satisfying to many. They acquired the right to be addressed as “Sieur” while wealthy men of color had to prove their freedom before every clerk and scribe. Because this new social order challenged old creole family networks it was important that it be based on the latest metropolitan science, but also on gender. Describing men of mixed race as effeminate in their vanity, physical weakness, sexual insatiability, and lack of discipline made them morally and physically inferior to African slaves and tied them to French political rhetoric about courtly decadence. Sexualizing people of color and ordering their exclusion from public life excused colonial immorality and promised that Saint-Domingue’s whites could be virtuous and patriotic.

Creating a “white” public in Saint-Domingue did not actually make a community out of *petits blancs*, military administrators, and old colonial families. Nor does it seem that the new regulations damaged the economic prospects of free people of color, who continued to buy and sell property, draft binding contracts, and otherwise use the legal system to protect their interests against whites. Free coloreds in the growing colonial cities did not fight the new laws. But in the South Province, far from these new public spaces, and from shipping lanes that brought hundreds of new Europeans and thousands of new Africans to the colony every month, the new color line was a shock. Wealthy freeborn creole families who considered themselves French colonists now learned they were *affranchis*—ex-slaves—in the eyes of their neighbors and the colonial state.

CHAPTER 6



THE RISING ECONOMIC POWER OF FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR IN THE 1780S

In 1782, Julien Raimond, now a successful indigo planter in Aquin parish, married for the second time. Racial prejudice had increased significantly in the decade since his first wife and cousin died, but so had Raimond's wealth. At the age of 26 he had been worth 35,000 livres. Now, at age 37, Raimond owned two indigo works, land, nearly 100 slaves, and other property worth 202,000 livres. His new spouse was someone he had known almost all his life, his neighbor, Françoise Dasmard Challe. In 1760 she had married the French immigrant Jacques Challe (chapter 2), but in 1774 he had returned to France without her or their children. Since that time Raimond had advised Françoise about her plantation, which had 51 slaves and was worth over 177,000 livres. In 1777 Françoise's mother Julie drafted a testament leaving half her estate to her daughter and the other half to Raimond, "in order that he remember her in his prayers." When Jacques Challe died in France in 1780, he left most of his property to his widow, including seigneurial land in France that had cost him 90,000 livres. The local court appointed Julien Raimond guardian of the Challe children.¹

The Raimond/Dasmard Challe alliance of 1782, therefore, had been long in the making. And it led to another marriage, as the Raimond brother followed the pattern of family networking that had helped build their family fortune. Julien's first marriage had been to his cousin, who was also the sister of his elder brother's wife. Similarly,

in 1784 Julien's younger brother François married Louise Françoise Challe, Françoise Dasmard's daughter. Through this double union, the two Raimond brothers assumed control of the Challe estate, with Julien handling his wife's portion, and François serving as guardian for his own wife and the other Challe children.²

Since the early eighteenth century, such local interconnections had been essential to the success of creole families in the South Province. But indigo planters here inhabited a world with boundaries much wider than their narrow peninsula. When an inventory of Raimond's commercial papers was deposited with a notary in 1785, 40 percent (60 of 159) involved overseas transactions.³ Two-thirds of these were receipts issued by captains from Bordeaux, where at least one of his sisters had married and settled. After Bordeaux, however, no Raimond dealt most frequently with Curaçao, the Dutch contraband center in the eastern Caribbean. Profits from wartime commerce with Dutch merchants were probably responsible for his increasing wealth in the 1780s. Although the War of American Independence drastically reduced commerce between France and Saint-Domingue from 1779 to 1783, that period was an especially prosperous one for Raimond. In four purchases between 1773 and 1781 he spent over 1,500 livres, the price of a field slave, on books, pamphlets, and sheet music. In 1782 he bought a silver oil decanter with crystal carafes, four silver salt dishes, and six knives, together with a matched set of beds, for 2,301 livres. The following year he paid one of the region's wealthiest planters 4,500 livres for a slave trained as a pastry chef and confectioner. Although his family had three generations of indigo experience, Raimond continued to invest in the latest techniques in growing and processing the dye. In 1781 he had an artisan construct an elaborate machine at his well to draw water for his soaking basins, and in 1784 he subscribed 200 livres for the publication of new information about indigo manufacture.⁴

As this chapter illustrates, Raimond was not the only free man of color to reach a new level of wealth in the 1780s. After reviewing the rapid expansion of Saint-Domingue's economy from 1763 through the 1780s, this chapter uses a sample of 2,654 notarial deeds from the period of 1780–89 to show that, as a group, free people of color in the South Province were prospering faster than their white neighbors.⁵ Compared with similar documents from the 1760s, analyzed in chapter 2, this data reveals that the average value of free colored economic activity, relative to transactions exclusively between whites, increased markedly. So did their rate of participation in the region's formal economy. The rest of the chapter examines the causes and

character of this prosperity. Comparisons with data collected by Stewart King and Dominique Rogers show that Raimond and other leading southern free coloreds were no wealthier than their counterparts in the North and West Provinces. But in the context of the poorer southern peninsula, their prosperity and prominence was more noticeable, especially to poor whites.

Returning to the family narratives developed in chapter 2, this chapter confirms that Saint-Domingue's wealthiest free people of color on the eve of the French Revolution were not upstarts. Instead, they descended from long-established families with commercial networks and economic strategies that were especially lucrative in the 1770s and 1780s. The new importance of coffee as a plantation export was not an important factor in their success, though white coffee planters did pay more to buy previously inexpensive hillside land. The specific economic activities identified with free people of color in chapter 2 also evolved. Ambitious saddle-makers, land speculators, warehouse agents, and cotton growers attained a new level of property and prestige in the 1780s, but they were not a new class rising out of slavery. Instead they were from the same mixed-race background as the established planter families and tended to use the same economic strategies. Unlike Cap Français and Port-au-Prince, there was no separate free black class emerging in the South Province.

* * *

The 1770s and 1780s were a time of frenetic growth in Saint-Domingue. France reexported most of its colonial goods to other European markets, and the value of this commerce tripled from the 1750s to the 1790s.⁶ In 1763, as the Seven Years' War ended, French slavers disembarked fewer than 2,000 Africans in the colony. In the years immediately following the Treaty of Paris, however, this number increased to more than 14,000 slaves a year, swelling to approximately 20,000 a year after the War of American Independence. By the late 1780s French merchants carried more than 30,000 Africans to Saint-Domingue annually.⁷ Other forms of plantation investment complemented the colony's insatiable appetite for disposable laborers. Planters undertook massive irrigation projects in Saint-Domingue's most fertile plains. Many converted their estate refineries to produce clayed sugar, a more valuable export than semi-refined brown sugar.

In this same period, the coffee bush emerged as sugar cane's rival, though wealthy planters grew both crops. Saint-Domingue exported 7 million pounds of coffee in 1755 and 15 million in 1764. Rising

coffee prices up to 1770 attracted many European immigrants, as did the fact that coffee plantations were smaller and less expensive to establish than sugar plantations. The average coffee estate in Saint-Domingue had only 33 slaves and many had less than 2 dozen. A sugar plantation needed at least 100 workers, more outbuildings, processing equipment, and specialized personnel. Sugar cane required well-watered flat land, most of which had been claimed in Saint-Domingue by 1763. Coffee, in contrast, needed cool temperatures and Saint-Domingue had many suitable hillsides that sheltered only provision farmers, ranchers, hunters, and escaped slaves. By the end of the century coffee estates outnumbered sugar plantations by as much as eight to one in some regions of the colony.⁸

Because of its long isolation from French commerce, the South Province benefited disproportionately from the postwar expansion. As new roads, bridges, coastal maps, and other government projects improved communication with the rest of the colony, the southern peninsula drew more investors, more *petit blanc* immigrants, and, after 1788, more African slaves. Following the War of American Independence the royal government gave merchants a 200 livres subsidy for each slave they brought to the South, though some slavers complained that this ten percent premium still did not make the trip profitable. In 1787 the French crown allowed English merchants to sail directly from the African coast to Les Cayes-Saint Louis, nearly quadrupling annual imports into the South Province from 1,258 to 4,792 slaves. The peninsula's share of Saint-Domingue's slave trade rose from five to fifteen percent.⁹

The South's sugar production also increased. By the 1780s irrigation projects works provided water to about half the plantations in the Les Cayes plain. There had been 55 sugar works around the city of Les Cayes in 1762, but there were 100 in 1788. Moreau de Saint-Méry believed there was room for another 30.¹⁰

In the 1770s, planters and immigrants looking for new coffee lands caused a kind of scramble for mountain property in the South Province. Wealthy planters, especially, began switching from indigo to this relatively new crop. According to travelers, the transformation was especially noticeable in parishes like Cotteaux, west of Torbec, or Cavaillon and Saint Louis, east of Les Cayes. Elsewhere, as in Aquin or Anse à Veau parishes, coffee was less dominant, joining indigo and cotton in a mix of commodity crops grown on large and small estates.¹¹

The 1780s also brought increasing government and commercial attention to the port city of Les Cayes. In 1784, Versailles again

loosened its mercantile regulation, as it had immediately after the Seven Years' War. New regulations allowed merchants in Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, and Les Cayes to sell sugar products to foreigners and import wood and certain foodstuffs. Indigo, coffee, and cotton, however, remained on a list of commodities that, legally, could only be sold to France.¹²

This insured that smuggling remained a major activity for planters along Saint-Domingue's southern coast. Merchants in Jamaica and Curaçao were still eager to trade with colonists. In the commercial blockades of the War of American Independence, there was so much Dutch shipping in the South Province that in 1780 a barrel of wheat sold at peacetime prices in Les Cayes, while it cost three times as much in Cap Français. After the war ended, U.S. captains rivaled the British as the most pervasive smugglers.¹³

In this dynamic period, the wealth of the southern peninsula's free people of color grew even faster than that of the whites. Contracts written by the region's notaries illustrate that the value of free colored transactions rose markedly from the levels of the 1760s. Just as important, free people of color formed a greater percentage of those buying, selling, and leasing property. Yet evidence from manumissions and deeds of gift suggest the declining importance of community across racial lines, even in this established creole society.

The most significant change in free colored economic activity in the 1780s was in sales of rural land. In the 1780s they were involved in 44 percent (148/334) of these transactions, compared to 28 percent (63/225) in the 1760s.¹⁴ Moreover, in the 1780s they participated in 20 to 30 percent of the most valuable land sales, where 20 years earlier they had only participated in 10 percent or less of those top sales. In Aquin parish, Julien Raimond's home, the change was especially prominent because as free people of color grew wealthier, the value of white transactions declined. The average value of the 50 notarized real estate sales between whites in Aquin in the 1760s was 28,754 livres. In the 1780s there were 103 sales of this sort, but their average value slipped to 16,293. Over the same period, the value of real estate sales involving free people of color grew from an average of 3,895 to 10,793 livres. In Aquin, free people of color participated in 58 percent of all 1780s real estate sales, including 12 of the 24 most valuable.

In the urban real estate market, free colored participation in the 1780s remained at roughly the same level as in the 1760s. In that earlier decade members of this class had been involved in 30 percent of these transactions (23/76) and this grew to only 35 percent in the 1780s (87/251). In the 1780s the average value of free colored urban

land sales was 5,628 livres, compared to 3,500 in 1760s. However, the simple fact that free people of color held their position in this market reveals their growing economic muscle. Urban property was far more valuable in the 1780s than it had been earlier. The median sale price of rural land had gone up only 20 percent in the two decades, (from 6,600 to 8,000 livres). Over the same period the median price of urban property transactions almost doubled (from 5,500 to 10,000 livres). While rural property sales increased from 5 percent of all notarial activity (225/4882) to 12 percent in the 1780s (334/2679), urban property sales went from 1.5 percent of notarial contracts (76/4882) to 9 percent (251/2679) in the same period.

This increased activity was the result of new government spending, ongoing European immigration, and burgeoning commerce. Colonial towns came to be seen less as temporary homes for would-be planters and more as permanent locations for aspiring businessmen and artisans. The relative number of notarized urban leases dropped in half from the 1760s to the 1780s.¹⁵ Yet more free people of color were active as landlords or renters. In the 1780s they participated in 30 percent (14/46) of urban leases, up from 19 percent (18/93) in the 1760s.

As travelers often noted, free women of color were especially important in this urban economy and their prominence was quite marked in comparison to white women. The negative feminine stereotypes of the free colored class drew support from the fact that an ex-slave was more than twice as likely to be a woman as a man, and that free women of color had considerably more economic independence than white women. In 1753, 68 percent of free colored householders in the city of Les Cayes (15 of 22) were female, while only 3 percent of white heads of households or stores (4 of 120) were women.¹⁶ In the 1780s free women of color participated in 60 percent (53 of 88) of free colored urban sales, compared to white women who were in only 18 percent (29 of 165). In the 1760s and 1780s free women of color were involved in nearly 58 and 43 percent, respectively, of the leases of urban property in which free coloreds participated, compared to a female participation rate of only 21 and 4 percent among whites for the same periods. The relative importance of women of color also extended into rural land transactions. In the 1780s free women of color were involved in 43 percent (68 of 160) of rural land sales involving their class, while white women accounted for only 11 percent (39 of 340). Dominique Rogers found that in both Cap Français and Port-au-Prince after 1776, women were 62 percent of free colored notarial clients.¹⁷

Although buying, selling, and leasing slaves involved more than economic considerations for many free people of color, in the 1780s their attitude towards slavery appears to have become more narrowly capitalistic. The value and frequency of free colored slave sales or purchases rose significantly from the 1760s to the 1780s. In the earlier decade, free people of color participated in 41 percent (63/154) of these transactions, while in the 1780s nearly 57 percent (33/58) of slave sales involved at least one free person of color. In the 1780s free coloreds concluded slave sale with an average value was 6,924 livres, up from an average value of 2,317 livres in the 1760s. In the 1760s they participated in only 12 percent (9/75) of slave leases, but in the 1780s, they were involved in 49 percent (19/39). In the 1760s, the average value of free colored slave leases was a mere 320 livres, compared to an average value of 1,071 livres for all such transactions; in the 1780s, free colored leases were worth an average of 1,168 livres compared to the overall average of 2,175.

Much of this activity was generated by the growing free colored planter class. In 1784, Julien Raimond and his wife Françoise sold 24 slaves to a white merchant from the town of Aquin in the largest such sale involving free people of color in the 1780s sample. The white merchant who bought the workers planned to use them in an indigo-planting partnership he signed that very day with François Raimond, Julien's younger brother.¹⁸ The second-largest slave sale drafted by a free person of color in the 1780s also involved a mixed-race family with long roots in the southern peninsula. Claude Boisrond, one of Raimond's free colored neighbors, bought 17 slaves from a white planter for 45,909 livres, also paying the same man 25,000 for prime river land in Aquin parish.¹⁹

Despite their substantially greater wealth, as a class, free people of color were only marginally more active as manumitters in the 1780s than the 1760s, drafting 26 percent of freedom deeds, up from 23 percent. This was in part due to the government's efforts to discourage traditional legal manumissions. The new conception of the free population of color as a sexual danger to the white public was evident in the revised manumission taxes. After 1775, administrators charged masters 1,000 livres to free a male slave, but 2,000 to manumit a woman under 40, more than the market price of many such slaves.²⁰ Accordingly, manumission deeds declined from 5 percent of notarized documents in the 1760s (256 of 4,814), to just above 2 percent in the 1780s (62 of 2,654).

The changing social profile of manumitters in this period suggests how much the wave of incoming single European men had eroded

white creole society. In the 1760s, white women and white married couples had drafted 14 percent of manumissions. In the 1780s, such persons comprised merely 3 percent of manumittors. Instead, white men acting alone accounted for 71 percent of all 1780s manumission deeds, up from 64 percent. A similar trend can be seen in the declining level of notarized gifts from whites to free people of color in the 1780s. As racial discrimination in the southern peninsula grew closer to that seen in the colony's main plantation zones, less than a third of the deeds of gift drafted here (22/73) were from whites to free people of color. In the 1760s such donations had been half of all gifts (39/69).

If the bonds between whites and people of color in creole society were weakening in the 1780s, the marriage contracts drafted in this decade show that European immigrants continued to seek wives among the South's free women of color. Many whites scorned these kinds of unions, or affected to. In the late 1760s, a white man whose free colored wife had died petitioned the commander of the South Province to be readmitted into a white militia company, arguing that "when the beast is dead, so is its poison." D'Argout denied his request.²¹ Moreau de Saint-Méry described "*mésalliés*" like this man as a "new intermediary between whites and people of color." Yet there was nothing "new" about such alliances on the colonial frontier. Moreover, in the South Province the rate of interracial marriage did not change appreciably into the 1780s, declining only from 20 percent of all religious marriages celebrated in the 1760s to 17 percent in the 1780s. Among notarized marriage contracts drafted in the 1780s, 8 percent (5 of 65) united white men and free women of color, compared with 6 percent in the 1760s (7 of 122). This ongoing family formation illustrates that racial ideology was a poor mirror of reality. Dominique Rogers found that 7 percent of Port-au-Prince marriage contracts and 11 percent of Cap Français marriage contracts united white men and free women of color.²²

An analysis of 1780s marriage contracts from the South illustrates the free colored prosperity that still attracted white bridegrooms. In the 1780s, free people of color drafted 53 percent of these nuptial agreements, up from 37 percent in the 1760s. These numbers in themselves suggest that more men and women of color had property that they wanted to protect through such formal arrangements. At the same time, commentators in the 1770s and 1780s observed that many whites were less interested in colonial marriages. Whites who did marry were quite wealthy. White spouses in the 1760s had an average combined wealth of 35,680 livres, and this increased to 86,335 livres

in the 1780s.²³ Many free colored couples, on the other hand, married with very little property. Their average household wealth also increased sharply, but it grew less rapidly than that of white couples: 15,600 livres in the 1760s, and 30,670 livres in the 1780s.²⁴

Within these averages, however, some free families of color were rising into property levels that had once been exclusively white. In the 1760s, only 3 of the wealthiest 31 couples were free colored. In the 1780s, 6 of the top 31 couples were free people of color (chart 5.1).

These wealthier free colored couples were squarely in the company of the local white elite. The 1782 marriage of Julien Raimond and Françoise Dasmard Challe created a household worth more than 300,000 livres. This figure put them on the same economic level as a notary's daughter who married a militia officer, with combined property worth 227,200 livres, or a white indigo planter who brought 250,000 livres to his marriage. Other wealthy free couples of color included three brothers of the Depas-Medina family, whose marriage contracts, worth 143,200, 61,372, and 60,838 livres, were similar in value to that of a militia officer who married an indigo planter's daughter (93,700 livres) or a royal attorney who married the daughter of another attorney and notary (70,000 livres).²⁵

The free colored elite of the South Province was about as rich as its counterparts in other parts of Saint-Domingue. The wealthiest free families of color Stewart King found in the North and West provinces in the 1770s and 1780s reached this same level of prosperity.

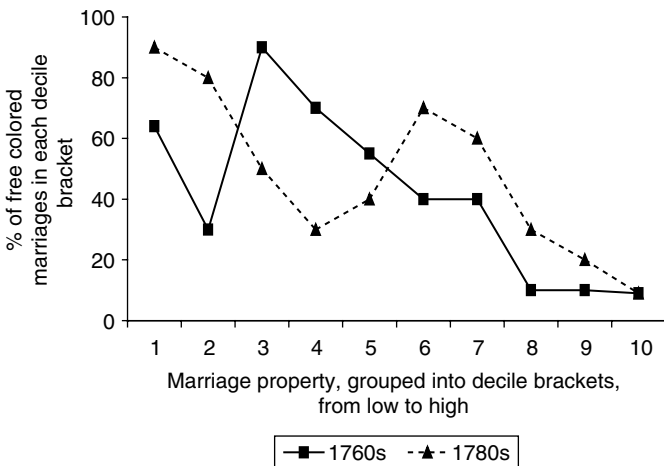


Chart 5.1 More Free Colored Couples in High-Value Marriages, 1760s vs. 1780s.

The Laporte family of Limonade parish in the North Province had 300 slaves and over 1,000 acres (800 cx) of land, approximately the combined wealth of the Raimond siblings of Aquin. Vincent Ogé, a merchant and landowner in Cap Français, was worth 127,000 in 1776, about the same wealth Julien Raimond had at the same time, between his first and second marriages. King describes other wealthy free colored families in the West Province, the Baugé of Croix des Bouquets parish, the Nivard or Rossignol of Mirebalais, the Turgeau of Port-au-Prince, as worth about 100,000 livres each in the 1780s. Dominique Rogers identifies nine other persons of color in Cap Français and Port-au-Prince who drafted single notarial contracts worth more than 50,000 livres.²⁶

However, Cap Français, Limonade, Croix des Bouquets, and Port-au-Prince were all among the wealthiest parishes in the colony.²⁷ Free colored planters in Torbec, Aquin, or even in the southern sugar district of Les Cayes, would have been more impressive in local society because these were not show case districts. Moreover, they seem to have been more prosperous as buyers and sellers of land than their counterparts in the North and West Provinces. King found that the average value of free colored land sales in his selected parishes in the 1770s and 1780s, including Cap Français, was 5,793 livres.²⁸ The equivalent figure for the South Province, combining rural and urban property transactions in the 1780s, was 7,797 livres, despite the fact that property in this region was generally less valuable than in the West and North.

Another way in which the relatively deep creole history of the South separates it from the West/North is that, by the 1780s, the wealth of mixed-race families was increasingly in male, rather than female, hands. Because whites accused free coloreds of a kind of moral effeminacy, this shift in wealth was important for free colored political claims in the Revolutionary era. In the 1760s marriage contracts from this region, women of color generally brought more property to marriage than their spouses, especially in the most prosperous couples. Stewart King found the same pattern in among notarized free colored marriages in the North and West provinces in the period after 1776.²⁹

In the 1780s, however, this pattern changed in the South. The property of free women of color did not decline compared to white brides, but wealthy free colored grooms were far more prosperous than they had been earlier. In the marriage contracts of the 1780s the average value of the property free women of color brought to their marriages was 13,425 livres, up from 10,934 in the 1760s (chart 5.2). But bridegrooms in this racial category brought, on average, 23,497 livres, compared to 7,470 twenty years earlier. The property

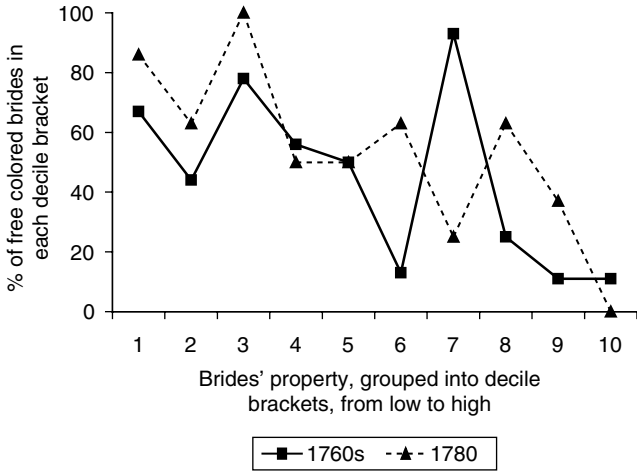


Chart 5.2 More Free Women of Color Among Wealthy Brides, 1760s vs. 1780s.

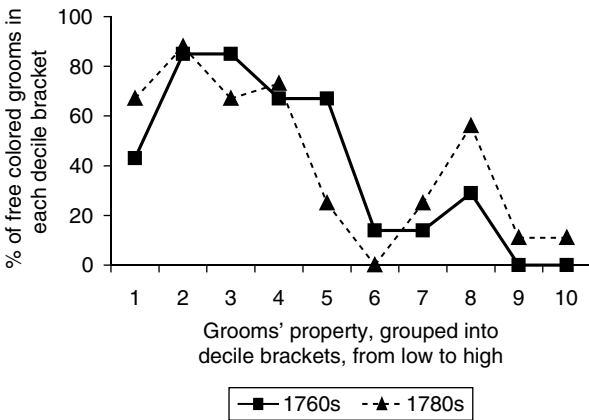


Chart 5.3 More Free Men of Color Among Wealthy Grooms, 1760s vs. 1780s.

listed in Julien Raimond's 1782 marriage contract was nearly ten times what the wealthiest free man of color had claimed in the 1760s. In 20 years free men of color went from 10 percent (2/21) to 30 percent (8/27) of the wealthiest 30 percent of grooms (chart 5.3).

The grooms' new affluence reflects the emergence of a second or third generation of island-born families. These families had well-established estates and reliable contacts with French and illegal

foreign merchants. Some of these advantages were a legacy from a white ancestor who had arrived in the 1720s. But the more prosperous free colored bridegrooms of the 1780s had built, rather than inherited, their own estates. Unlike the earlier generation, a number were planters, with valuable land. The brides' wealth in the 1780s, as in the 1760s, was in slaves, animals, and personal effects. As the following examples illustrate, in the 1770s and the 1780s, the sons and grandsons of early-eighteenth-century French colonists were primed to take their place among the regional or even colonial elite.

Julien Raimond was probably the wealthiest man of color in the southern peninsula, especially after marrying Françoise Dasmard Challe. Though he took on considerable debt to buy his plantation, in 1790 he was able to sell it to a Frenchman from Angoulême for 320,000 livres. Raimond's brother François had married one of Challe's daughters and took over his mother's plantation after she died. He sold half of it for 40,000 livres in 1789, about the time his wife inherited colonial land from her free black grandmother and land in France from her French grandmother. As late as 1793, with slaves rebelling all over Saint-Domingue, Guillaume Raimond and his white partner were confident enough about the future to spend 90,000 livres on 30 slaves for their coffee plantation.³⁰

Their neighbors had also amassed considerable property. In 1783 when Michel Depas-Medina died, he left an estate in Aquin parish the inventory of which covered some 60 pages and cost his heirs 1,200 livres in notarial fees, the price of a field slave. Depas-Medina's main plantation had 67 slaves, 27 slave huts, an animal pen, and 7 different outbuildings. Another smaller farm remained uninventoried. The notaries found 14 silver place settings and assorted silver table service in his dining room. In his study Depas-Medina kept an "optical box" and prints to view with the device.³¹

Michel Depas-Medina was a member of the colonial clan started before the 1720s by Michel Lopez Depas, the Sephardic doctor, judge, and planter from Bordeaux, who was probably his father (chapter 1). In 1743, royal administrators described this "M. de Paz" as having an ongoing relationship with a former slave woman. "He is very fond of the[ir] children and has sent them to his parents in Bordeaux to be educated."³² In 1764 Governor d'Estaing had described the free colored Michel Depas-Medina as a "former courtier of M. Gradis," the powerful Sephardic merchant. Indeed, a "Michel Depas" worked in the Gradis merchant house in Bordeaux in the late 1730s and early 1740s.³³

No records have been found of the testament of the elder Michel Depas, who died sometime around 1762. Perhaps his brothers Philippe

and François distributed bequests within the family, since the law denied French Jews living outside Bordeaux the right to a valid testament. In 1762 one of Depas's white nephews in Aquin described his share of the doctor's estate as worth 37,000 livres, but it is not clear whether Depas left property to his mulatto son and namesake, Michel. However, this son did business with his father and owed him 3,000 livres in 1760. After 1777, when administrators denied his request to keep the Depas name, Michel Depas the younger became "Michel Medina," taking the name of a prominent Sephardic trading family as his "African" name (chapter 5). And he continued to use his close connections to what was arguably the most powerful merchant house in eighteenth-century France, selling his indigo to the local representative of the Gradis house.³⁴

When he died in 1783, 20 years after his father, Michel Depas-Medina owned more slaves than his white uncle Philippe Depas. Seven sons survived him and three of them married in the spring and summer of 1785 as their father's estate was settled. Their property, combined with that of their wives, ranged from 60,838 to 143,200 livres, placing them in the top 10 and 20 percent of 1780s marriages in the southern peninsula. These creole grandsons of Michel Lopez Depas were now planters in their own right. In 1793 one of them became the first man of color to work as a notary in Aquin³⁵ (chapter 9).

Another of Raimond's wealthy free colored neighbors was Pierre Casamajor (chapter 2). When Casamajor died in 1773, he left property worth nearly 134,000 livres to be divided among his large family, including a plantation with 57 slaves. His estate included silver place settings for 12, a silver tea service, mahogany furniture, Indian cotton bed clothing, and a slave valet and cook.³⁶

Pierre Casamajor was the son of David Casamajor, who had arrived in the southern peninsula in the 1720s as it officially opened to settlement. A royal notary, David Casamajor built Aquin's first pier in 1730, presumably to simplify loading and unloading of the ships from Curaçao and Jamaica that came more regularly than French merchants. About 25 years later the royal government granted land near this wharf to "Pierre called Casamajor," one of at least three mulatto sons born out of wedlock to David Casamajor and the slave Marie Madeleine. For the next decade, as David Casamajor continued to work as Aquin's royal notary, his son Pierre served as the public warehouse agent, charged with the safekeeping of indigo and other outgoing cargoes. By his death in 1773, the notary's son had moved from storing indigo to the more profitable business of growing it.³⁷

In 1756, Pierre Casamajor married his daughter Marie Rose to Thomas Ploy, a man of color from Curaçao. As chapter 2 describes,

Ploy built his own warehouses at the Aquin pier and eventually assumed Casamajor's functions as storage agent. Twenty-seven years later, in 1783, Ploy and Marie Rose repeated the marriage strategy that had brought them together, settling their own daughter with Jean Louis Garsia [*sic*], who hailed from the same Curaçao parish as Ploy's mother. The Garcia DePas family had been in Curaçao since before 1674 and was allied there with that island's branch of the Lopez Depas clan, which had its own branch in Aquin parish. Garsia had begun working in Ploy's warehouse during the War of American Independence, when the Dutch trade was flourishing. As the war ended he brought 4,000 livres in "furnishings, effects and merchandise" to the new household.³⁸ With 18,345 livres in combined property, the Garsia/Ploy marriage was not especially prosperous, ranking far below the average value of the community property of free colored couples in the 1780s sample, which was 30,670 livres.

With his Curaçaoan son-in-law managing his warehouse, Thomas Ploy, like his own father-in-law before him, turned his attention to agriculture. In 1788 most of the 32 slaves he and his wife owned worked on their cotton plantation.³⁹ Other slaves ran a livestock pen on property that Marie Rose Casamajor had brought to the marriage. But the Ploys still lived at the Aquin pier, where their belongings included nine silver place settings worth over 600 livres.

Though he adopted many of the economic strategies of his clients and neighbors Julien Raimond and Michel Depas-Medina, Thomas Ploy himself never became a planter and slave owner on their scale. But his son Jacques Thomas, the great-grandson of the notary David Casamajor, was poised to join that elite. In January of 1783, the younger Ploy leased a dilapidated coffee and cotton plantation that had belonged to Michel Depas-Medina. Nearly three years later he married Jeanne Henriette Lauzenguez, a free *quarteronne* related to the Depas-Medina clan on her mother's side. In the marriage contract Jacques Thomas Ploy promoted himself racially by identifying himself as a free *quarteron*, like his bride, although notaries commonly described both his parents as mulattos. The Ploys contributed 15,000 livres in cash and slaves to their son's new household, about as much as they had given their daughter two years before. But Jeanne Lauzenguez brought 15,000 in slaves, giving the couple nearly twice as much property as the earlier Garsia/Ploy match. The wealth of this new household placed it in the top 40 percent of all sampled colonial marriages for the 1780s. Moreover, in 1788 Thomas Ploy agreed to let his cotton plantation pass under his son's control.⁴⁰

The gradual rise of the Casamajor/Ploy family from warehouse agents to planters was paralleled by the ascent of Aquin's master

saddle-maker Julien Delaunay. Probably descended from one of the three Delaunay households named in the 1720s census of Aquin parish, Delaunay was a rancher and artisan who seems to have made the transition to planter with the help of his brother Jacques. Jacques had acquired an Aquin plantation from the heirs of a white colonist. After rebuilding this property, in 1765 he exchanged it with another man of color for an abandoned indigo and cotton estate that was four times larger. Soon after this transaction, he moved to Torbec parish, perhaps to work with another brother or relative there. In Torbec, he became a central figure in the anti-militia disturbances of 1769 (chapter 4).⁴¹

Perhaps because Julien Delaunay was managing his older brother's land, in the 1780s his neighbors no longer identified him as "saddler," but as "habitant" or planter. They nominated him repeatedly with other planters like the Raimonds and the Depas-Medinas to serve as guardian for free colored orphans. He appeared as a godfather and benefactor in the marriage contracts of poorer free people of color in Aquin, including those of two free mulatto men marrying black women to free them from slavery. In 1785 the former saddler formed a partnership with his widowed mother, combining the 14 slaves he and his wife owned with her 14 workers. Delaunay would manage his mother's animal pen and direct the harvest and refining of her indigo. In return, the family agreed that he would have first claim on the land when she died.⁴²

In Torbec parish, as in Aquin, the 1780s witnessed free colored planter families consolidating their wealth, and free colored artisans reaching new levels of prosperity. Like the Raimonds and others, Torbec's Trichet family married carefully, used partnerships to combine slaves, land, and expertise, and bought dilapidated properties in order to restore them (chapter 2). Though they never had the wealth of the Raimonds or Depas-Medinas, the Trichet family did avoid the most explicit of the racial labels that all persons of African descent were required to bear after 1773.⁴³ While notaries publicly identified other successful creole planters as "*mulâtre*" or "*quarteron*" and required them to prove their freedom at every turn, the Trichets generally escaped this fate. Such a conspicuous omission suggests that by the 1780s the Trichets were frequently taken to be white.

Throughout the 1770s and 1780s François Trichet continued to accumulate land in Torbec's Marche-à-terre region as he had through the 1760s, buying large and small parcels from free men of color and from whites. In 1774 he paid a white planter 15,000 livres for 279 acres adjoining the property of his mother's second husband, which Trichet

was managing for his step-father. In 1782 Trichet's mother, widowed again, left that plantation and nine slaves to "Sieur François Joseph Trichet, her only son," giving him a good-sized estate.⁴⁴

By 1782 it was illegal to apply the respectful title "Sieur" to a man of color.⁴⁵ But François Trichet had social and economic connections with both whites and free people of color that established him as a parish notable. In 1766, for example, friends and members of the neighboring free mulatto Dasque family named him guardian of a younger Dasque brother, Jean Jacques. In this document the notary identified the Dasques as "free mulattos" while he assigned no racial label to Trichet. Seventeen years later Trichet's ward was legally independent and an astute planter in his own right. Jean Jacques Dasques, like his two brothers, married well and had inherited his father-in-law's plantation, which bordered Trichet's. In 1783 he sold these indigo and cotton lands to his former guardian for 40,000 livres and the two formed a partnership to plant indigo.⁴⁶ Trichet, who contributed 50 slaves to the enterprise, was to oversee the making of the dye, while Dasque, who put in 25 slaves, would grow food for the plantation on his own lands. Significantly, the partnership agreement was between "Jacques Joseph Dasque free mulatto" and "François Trichet planter."

Like partnership, marriage was an important route to success for free families of color in Torbec parish. Trichet's growing wealth and connections helped make his daughters attractive partners. In 1780 Marie Françoise Gertrude Trichet married a young man named Jean François Pinet, who appears to have been the legitimately born mulatto son of a white man. While Pinet's parents gave him two slaves, making the value of his property 3,950 livres, the Trichets gave their daughter slaves, land, and furniture totaling 15,600 livres. Bad health prevented the groom's white father from attending the ceremony, but the note he sent to Trichet spelled out his expectation that the indigo planter would assist his son. "When I am able to mount my horse, I will have the pleasure of visiting you and the newly-weds who I hope will be blessed by God and prosperous; this will be easy for them with your help."⁴⁷

Despite Trichet's assistance, the value of this marriage property was well below the free colored average of 30,670 livres for the 1780s. Although the groom was born of a legitimate marriage, the notary did not identify him as "Sieur" in the marriage contract. However, he did name François Trichet, his wife, and daughter, as "Sieur," "Dame," and "Demoiselle" and did not describe their race.

Four years later Jean François Pinet had died and Trichet's daughter remarried a French merchant. The groom was Jacques Manaut,

originally from Toulouse, and he signed this contract with the Trichets in the Les Cayes business district with at least two prominent white merchants attending. While the notary at the Trichet/Pinet marriage may have seen the Trichets as the socially superior side of the match, the notary for the Trichet/Manaut union seems to have regarded the bride's family as socially inferior to the French bridegroom. He did not give the Trichets "white" titles of respect. Yet neither did he label them *quarteron*, as the law required. Other whites may have condemned interracial marriages like this one, but in material terms it was an excellent match for Manaut, the immigrant. His bride brought a plantation, slaves, animals and furnishings valued at 24,150 livres to this, her second, marriage.⁴⁸ The couple's combined property put them in the top 40 percent of local marriages for this decade.

Later that year another of François Trichet's daughters, Gertrude Pascal Trichet, married a white man.⁴⁹ The entire Trichet family signed the contract, including the bride's French brother-in-law "Sieur Jacques Manaut." As in the earlier marriage document the notary gave none of the bride's party, except Manaut, honorific titles like "Sieur" or "Dame." Yet again he omitted the required racial labels. François Trichet gave his daughter 15,000 livres and she had her own savings of about 3,000 livres. Moreover this bridegroom, Robert Simeon Viart de Saint-Robert, was no penniless immigrant. A native of Cap Français, he had an inheritance and collectable debts worth nearly twice what his bride possessed. The southern peninsula offered Viart de Saint-Robert fresh land and the chance to build a plantation away from the immense competition of the North Province. Marriage into one of Torbec's oldest planting families strengthened that opportunity. Together their community of 59,000 livres placed the Viart/Trichet household far above the free colored average and in the top 20 percent of all marriages in the three districts.

Of all of Torbec's free colored planters, the Boisronds had the most impressive ascent in the 1780s. The death of the free mulatto planter François Boisrond in 1780 (chapter 2) set the stage for the marriage and full economic establishment of his two daughters and three sons. In 1780, one of those sons, Mathurin, sold an indigo plantation in the Les Cayes plain for 76,000 livres to a white militia captain and planter. The land itself came from the Felixes, his wife's family, but Boisrond had paid 20,000 livres to buy additional water rights, an investment that netted him 10,000 in profit when the property was sold. A month later he sold another estate that had belonged to his wife's family for 10,000 livres.⁵⁰

By this time his brothers Claude and Louis-François Boisrond had already moved east from Torbec to Cavaillon parish where Claude's

wife owned two plantations. Louis François, the youngest of the brothers, was living in Cavaillon in 1781 when he married Marie Rose Boissé of Aquin, Julien Delaunay's aunt. Boissé was a widow and owned an indigo plantation close to her nephew's property.⁵¹ She was prosperous enough, six months before her own marriage to Boisrond, to give household furniture and six male slaves to a free colored couple who signed their marriage contract on her plantation. The Boisrond-Boissé contract did not list the possessions of the spouses, but the bride did reserve three slaves and the large sum of 64,000 livres as her personal property.⁵² This amount alone, without considering her new husband's unlisted assets, placed their new household in the top 20 percent of colonial marriages in the 1780s sample, with more than double the average property other free colored households listed.

This alliance confirmed Louis-François Boisrond's membership in Aquin's free colored elite, making him the kind of respected figure whom the royal court summoned with other free colored planters to nominate a guardian for a young orphan. In Aquin, Boisrond found cousins on his mother's side, with their own claims to the Torbec sugar plantation that his father had rebuilt 20 years before. In 1787 and 1788 the Boisronds and Julien Delaunay, whose wife descended from the Hérards of Torbec (chapter 2), settled some outstanding debts from the long-defunct Hérard estate.⁵³

Louis-François's establishment in Aquin soon brought his two elder brothers into the parish. In 1784 Claude Boisrond and his wife sold the second of their two Cavaillon plantations and purchased slaves and land on the banks of Aquin's Rivière Dormante for 25,000 livres. Within months they traded this property for a larger estate in the upper Aquin plain. That same year Mathurin Boisrond, too, purchased a plantation in Aquin.⁵⁴

Free colored political consciousness ran high in this parish. In 1789, five years after Julien Raimond had left the colony for France (chapter 7), his brothers and other free colored planters in Aquin petitioned Versailles for representation in the Estates General. The Boisronds were leaders of this group and maintained strong ties to Torbec where they may have helped convince more free colored planters to support Raimond. One of their Hérard cousins and at least one former neighbor, Jacques Boury, were among the five free men of color Raimond identified by name in 1789 as supporters of the Aquin cause.⁵⁵ In December 1790 the Marche-à-terre district of Torbec, where Bourys, Dasques, and Hérards lived, by then a separate parish called Port Salut, was the site of an armed standoff between free coloreds and whites. In January 1791 the neighborhood gave rise to

Saint-Domingue's first Revolutionary-era slave conspiracy (chapter 8). Back in Aquin, Louis-François Boisrond was prominent at the parish, provincial, and colonial level throughout the Revolution. And on January 1, 1804, Mathurin Boisrond's son, Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, would orally proclaim the Haitian Declaration of Independence he had written the night before (chapter 9).

Because these particular free colored families had such an important impact on the Revolutionary period, some historians, trying to explain how such scorned persons might have accumulated this wealth, have argued that coffee helped create the free colored planter class in the southern peninsula. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot points out, a period of increasing coffee prices between 1763 and 1784 coincided with the establishment of nine new parishes in the southern mountains. Stewart King identifies coffee as the main crop of the wealthiest free colored families in Saint-Domingue's North and West provinces.⁵⁶

But coffee was not an important aspect of the wealth of the free colored families who helped challenge colonial racism in the 1780s and in the early Revolution. This was not a group whose new wealth suddenly thrust it to the foreground: these were conservative families who had built their fortunes over generations. It was true that many poor free people of color in the South Province owned hillside land that was worth more because of the coffee boom. Free colored sales of land to whites did increase over time in the districts of Les Cayes, Nippes, and Saint Louis. In the 1780s, 52 percent of free colored land sales went to whites (77 of 149), compared to only 39 percent in the 1760s (27 of 69).

However, the individual histories of wealthy southern families of color show very little involvement in coffee production. The one example of a member of a prominent free colored coffee planter is Julien Raimond's younger brother Guillaume, who harvested 150 *milliers* of coffee from his lands in Saint Louis parish in 1792. But the case of two free colored orphans who bought an estate with 6,000 coffee bushes for 15,000 livres in 1787 was more typical. The children's legal guardians were Mathurin Boisrond and Hyacinthe Bleck, a rising free colored artisan discussed below, and this suggests that these men recognized coffee as a good investment. Nevertheless, they did not put their own money into it. Out of the 30 notarized contracts drafted by members of the Bleck family in the 1780s, this was the only one that mentioned coffee. Of the 43 deeds involving members of the Boisrond family in the same decade, the only other one to mention coffee referred merely to "several bushes" growing on a provision ground.⁵⁷

The Dasques family of Torbec parish, neighbors of François Trichet, seems to have dabbled in coffee. In 1772 two Dasque brothers formed a partnership and acquired land, probably for this new crop. But 15 years later they sold the property, “having been planted in coffee but now having only several corrupted [*empoisoné*] coffee plants, the rest in bushes and woods.” They parted with the land for only 6,000 livres. Coffee also disappointed some whites in Torbec. In February 1783 Pierre Vachon, a white man, sold land he had purchased four years earlier from a member of a prominent free colored family, René Boury. Boury and his wife had bought the land in 1774 and sold it to Vachon for 15,000 livres in 1779. In 1783, even though the land had 20,000 coffee plants and the necessary structures for sorting and drying the beans, Vachon sold it for only 6,500 livres.⁵⁸

Instead of coffee, established families continued to grow the indigo they knew well. When faced with drought, or low dye prices, they diversified into cotton, not coffee, perhaps responding to demand from foreign merchants. Although French indigo prices fell sharply when the War of the American Revolution began in 1778, Dutch smugglers continued to demand blocks of dye and bales of cotton, probably for the emerging textile industry in Britain. While Jamaica was a major coffee exporter, it produced neither indigo nor cotton in large quantities.⁵⁹

In the 1780s Julien Raimond chose cotton over coffee. The Challe plantation he was managing for his stepchildren was planted in both indigo and cotton in 1788. When he sold his own estate in 1790, it had both indigo and cotton fields. When his brother François in Aquin first took over his mother’s plantation when she died, he worked this land in partnership with a white merchant. When they dissolved their association in 1789, the old Raimond/Begasse estate was completely planted in cotton.⁶⁰

Small-scale free colored planters especially favored cotton. Men like Pierre Proa, a free *quarteron* in Torbec parish, whose sister had married François Trichet, but who had only about 56 acres and 7 slaves, planted cotton and provision crops. Although Proa’s white father had been a militia captain and indigo planter, Pierre and his brother Alexandre focused on cotton after their sister’s husband Trichet bought the majority of their father’s land. When Pierre married in 1781, his mother gave him control of her 123 acres and 9 slaves. This estate, like his own, was planted in cotton and provisions, and Proa’s mother still owed merchants substantial sums for slaves she had purchased.⁶¹

If cotton was the alternative to indigo among the south’s oldest mixed-race families, coffee was the favored crop of white men

attempting to become planters. In the 1780s, the largest free colored coffee proprietors were women partnered with immigrants swept up in the coffee craze. Antoine Bouriquaud, for example, was a white man whose family was expanding into coffee production at Nippes. In 1783 he amicably dissolved a two-year-old coffee-growing partnership with another white man, and in 1786 his younger brother combined his lands with the slaves of fourth white man to grow this crop. Bouriquaud himself owned slaves but no land. However, since at least 1783 Marie Françoise Elizabeth Gautier, known as Popotte, had been Bouriquaud's housekeeper, and her free mulatto family had land they could not cultivate. Gautier's widowed mother had inherited the property from her husband, but did not have enough slaves or, perhaps, agricultural expertise, to farm it. She was afraid to sell it because of an unresolved controversy about the title.

In 1785, therefore, Popotte Gautier's mother transferred ownership of her plantation to her daughter, who promptly sold half of the land to Antoine Bouriquaud. That very day the couple signed a formal partnership to plant coffee. Gautier, the former housekeeper, contributed seven slaves to their joint operation and Bouriquaud, eleven. They agreed that Bouriquaud would manage the estate and that profits would be apportioned to each by the number of slaves they contributed. Within six months they contracted with a free black mason to build them a house, a cistern, and two coffee drying platforms, in exchange for the freedom of his African father, who was one of their slaves. The surviving documents portray the Gautier/Bouriquaud coffee partnership as struggling to make a profit. Over the first two years (1786–87) their income covered only 75 percent of estate expenses. But Bouriquaud's connections did help the Gautiers solve their land quarrels. In 1787 Popotte Gautier gave Bouriquaud's nephew power of attorney for these affairs, and by 1788 the claims against her family had been dropped.⁶²

In a similar case, on March 21, 1787, Mathieu Lanoix, a member of a white creole family, summoned a notary to his bedside. He had been sick for several years and was now so blind he could no longer go about his normal business.⁶³ Before the notary Lanoix sold his plantation to his sister and brother-in-law in exchange for an annual payment of 5,000 livres. That same afternoon he sold 112 acres of land "more or less established in coffee" to "Cecille known as Cocoyer," a black woman he had freed from slavery eight years earlier. Three years earlier the dying man's brother, Dominique, had purchased the property for 3,300 livres from a free colored planter, when only a few meager provision crops were growing on it. Since

then, Dominique Lanoix had planted about 3,000 coffee bushes on the land. He sold it to Mathieu minutes before his dying brother sold it to Cecille. Four months later, Cecille married a free black shoemaker. The coffee plants and land she had purchased from Lanoix for 3,600 livres were part of the property she brought to the marriage. She or the notary assessed its value at 30,000 livres, including six slaves and a dozen animals that were now attached to it.⁶⁴

The white surgeon Guilhamet was another white man who believed that coffee profits would secure the future of his free colored mistress. In 1784 Guilhamet had a dispensary in the town of Anse à Veau and owned a coffee plantation in the new, adjoining parish of Plymouth. His cousin managed this estate. Contiguous with this coffee land was a 140-acre parcel that belonged to Genevieve Clemence, an ex-slave who had been Guilhamet's housekeeper for 20 years and was the mother of his seven *quartereron* children. Three years before Guilhamet died, Clemence went to a notary to authorize a deed giving him use of the property. In exchange, the white man was to build a lumber and masonry house there, plant 1,000 coffee bushes, and install a masonry patio for sorting and drying the crop. Guilhamet's testament did not indicate whether he had accomplished this work, but he left Clemence 3,000 livres and eight slaves, plus 4,200 livres to educate their seven children and instruct them in the Catholic faith. Though she could not sign her name, Clemence successfully sued Guilhamet's partner to get him to pay the bequests.⁶⁵

As these examples show, in this part of Saint-Domingue, coffee was identified mostly with whites and was much less important than cotton to the old free colored planting families. In fact, coffee development may have eliminated ranching as an economic niche for rising free people of color. In the 1780s, there were far fewer examples of free people of color operating their own animal pens than 20 years earlier, probably because such land could be more profitably sold for coffee cultivation. In 1783, for example, a merchant from Cap Français paid 25,000 livres for land in the Plymouth region that the government had originally granted a free mulatto to establish an animal pen. In 1753, the ratio of livestock to humans in the Les Cayes, Saint Louis, and Nippes districts had been much greater than in other parts of the colony. This was no longer the case in 1775 and 1782, according to government censuses in those years. Yet colonists continued to complain about free colored involvement in cattle smuggling over the Spanish border. In 1772 Martin, who held the official monopoly over meat sold in Port-au-Prince, complained to the governor that "free blacks and mulattos infallibly take the majority

of the animals destined for [him] either for their own illegal butcheries or to re-sell to [him] at a considerable profit.”⁶⁶

Despite the decline in ranching, in the 1780s there were more free men of color identifying themselves as “saddlers” or “shoemakers” than ever before. As in the 1760s, working in leather was a respected trade for upwardly mobile men of color, but now such men were mostly established in the colonial towns rather than in the countryside. For example, Théodore Labierre was a free mulatto saddlemaker from Petit-Goâve who traveled to Anse à Veau to purchase and marry a mulatto slave woman who already owned her own slave and mare. The couple received three slaves and a plot of land from white militia officers who attended the contract signing. The groom’s free black aunt also gave them a slave and four silver place settings.⁶⁷

The South may have been especially attractive to foreign artisans, who perhaps immigrated with the contraband trade. Pierre Pietre was a 25-year-old free black native of Curaçao, living in Aquin parish, who married his 30-year-old slave, a creole from Guadeloupe, in 1787. Joseph François Bélhoc was a mixed-race shoemaker in the town of Anse à Veau who presented papers at his marriage showing he was born in legitimate marriage in the town of “Carac in Spain,” perhaps meaning Caracas on the Spanish-American mainland. He and his bride, a 48-year-old free mulatto woman, already had a seventeen-year-old child. Another shoemaker in Anse à Veau, Pierre Jacques, was a 42-year-old free black man who had been baptized in Saint Pierre, Martinique’s leading port. He married Marie Jeanne Lintriganse, a 32-year old free black woman who had a small shop in the town.⁶⁸

The two most prominent free colored artisans in the South Province were the saddle-makers Hyacinthe Bleck and his colleague Louis François Chalvière, both from the city of Les Cayes. In the 1780s, both men were moving steadily towards elite status. Bleck was a mulatto from a family that had long been free. His aunt was a black woman who had been freed from slavery by marrying a free black man in 1727. The couple had never had any children. They had purchased land in 1743 but by 1785, Bleck’s uncle was dead and his aunt’s land had fallen into disrepair. Nevertheless, with Bleck’s help she was able to sell the property to a white court bailiff for the large sum of 45,000 livres, using part of the money to buy a plot in town. She entrusted Bleck with investing over 20,000 livres for her, and he apparently used the money to buy and resell more urban land, including a house with five apartments. In 1788 Bleck described himself as a “contractor in saddle-making, cabinetry, carpentry, and other work.” Yet when he purchased lots he frequently divided and sold them at a profit without construction.⁶⁹

Louis François Chalvière was a free *quarteron* who was perhaps the son of the white planter Joseph Antoine Chalvière. Like his friend and fellow saddle-maker Hyacinthe Bleck, Chalvière was literate, self-confident, and had been a patron to other, poorer, people of color.⁷⁰ He was also experienced in the law courts. From the early 1760s to 1786 he led his wife and her sisters in a legal battle to claim slaves from their white father's estate, eventually winning 21,600 livres to be split three ways.⁷¹ In 1790, this same fighting spirit would put Chalvière and Bleck at the head of Les Cayes' Revolutionary free colored National Guard.

* * *

In the 1780s Saint-Domingue was torn in three directions. Demographically, the slave trade was making the colony more African than ever before, bringing in twice as many slaves annually in 1788 as in 1764.⁷² In its elite culture, the colony was more self-consciously French than it had ever been, with greater private and government investment, a new urban cultural life, and a racial ideology that rejected mixed-race families as nonwhite. Yet the colony was also becoming more creole in the 1780s. The economic and social investments that Saint-Domingue's island-born families had made over generations had begun to pay dividends.

This was especially true in the South Province, where isolation from European shipping and relatively late colonization had delayed development but reinforced creole society. Plugged into contraband trade networks as well as official French commerce, the South's old families did not just survive the blockades of the War of American Independence, they profited from them. With a long-term perspective on the economy, they benefited when colonists returned to France after building successful plantations or running out of patience. They rebuilt abandoned estates and may have profited from the coffee boom of the 1770s by selling land to whites eager to make a fortune in this new crop. But for their own account, the older mixed-race families stayed with indigo and cotton, crops they could sell illegally to suppliers of Britain's nascent textile industry.

These wealthy families were not the only free people of color in the South Province to profit from the economic growth of the 1780s. Free colored artisans too grew more visible and more prosperous. Their challenge was how to reconcile this increasing wealth with the mounting scorn of Saint-Domingue's whites.

CHAPTER 7



PROVING FREE COLORED VIRTUE

In February 1771, Philippe Fossé known as Bonhomme, or “Goodfellow,” returned home to Aquin on military leave. A free, legitimately born *quarteron*, Fossé appears to have been the kind of sturdy, responsible man royal officers believed was Saint-Domingue’s best defense against a British attack. His reputation in Aquin was solid enough that in 1769 a white widow had hired him and another man of color to guard her goddaughter from a persistent suitor. When the girl ran off with her paramour during the night, Fossé and his colleague pursued the white couple to the plantation gate, but no further.¹ Sometime after this incident, “Goodfellow” Fossé joined the military and moved away, probably to Cap Français.

But in 1771 he was home, visiting his mother in the apartment she rented in the town of Aquin. One afternoon while Fossé was out, a Swiss locksmith named Pierre Langlade came to the house. Julien Raimond later wrote that Langlade was angry because Fossé had caught him cheating at cards. The locksmith began to curse Fossé’s mother, who cried out for her son. When the soldier returned and stationed himself at her doorway, Langlade retreated across the street. The two men shouted angry insults, but after Langlade threw a rock at him, Fossé lost his temper. He wrestled the locksmith to the ground, scratching him and tearing his shirt. Neighbors and, according to a one witness, a free colored policeman named “Raymond,” pulled them apart.²

Langlade, the white man, charged Fossé with assault. Two months later the local court sentenced the *quarteron* soldier to be flogged and branded in the town square. The government would confiscate his property and he would serve an unspecified period as a royal galley

slave. Saint-Domingue's new racial ideology motivated this harsh sentence, but so did the fact that Fossé was judged *en absentia*. The free man of color was so frightened by what he had done, he later admitted, that he fled back to his company in Cap Français, at the other end of the colony.

Nevertheless the affair weighed heavily on his mind. Eight years later, in 1779, Fossé's officers gave him a leave of absence to resolve the matter. He petitioned the colonial courts for clemency, citing his good local reputation, his service as corporal in the royal army, the provocation of having his mother insulted in his own house, and the stone Langlade had thrown at him.

Despite the fact that the Swiss locksmith died in 1775, in June 1787 the Royal Council of Dispatches in Versailles was still considering Fossé's case, eventually recommending a royal pardon. It was perhaps because of his military connections that Fossé was able to push his case so far. But there was no evidence that colonial judges considered his claim to have "served a long time with honor in the royal troop and always behaved well there." His dossier contained no letters from officers; the militia captain of Aquin testified at his trial only to report that he had seen Langlade throw the stone. A white baker reported that a free colored policeman had broken up the fight. There was no testimony from this "Raymond," though Julien Raimond mentioned the incident in a 1784 or 1785 letter to the colonial ministry.³

Fossé's case illustrates the difficult position in which Saint-Domingue's free people of color found themselves after 1769. Up to the early 1780s, they did their best to adjust to the new racial climate. Responding to new laws and the government's rhetoric of sacrificial virtue, they served the colony as constables and soldiers. Men of color living close to slavery used these institutions to create new identities as freedmen. But it appears that freeborn men like Fossé acquired no prestige from their uniforms. In fact, free colored planters in Aquin and Torbec, who owned slaves and already considered themselves French colonists, were especially frustrated by these obligations when whites refused to acknowledge that virtue motivated their military service.

For whites, on the other hand, especially *petits blancs* like Langlois, Saint-Domingue's new color line was not simply an element of a post-1769 compromise between the military government and advocates of civilian rule: it became central to their identity. "White purity" freed colonists from the most unpleasant militia duties and united immigrants with island-born men through a shared biological and moral

superiority. In the 1770s and 1780s, new arrivals and island-born families alike came to consider their whiteness an integral part of their civil and social position in the colony.

This chapter examines how Saint-Domingue's new racial climate affected the freedom and collective civic status of Saint-Domingue's free people of color. People of color found new routes to legal freedom, through marriage and armed service, as the colonial state attempted to discourage traditional manumissions. In 1779 hundreds of free men of color participated in a French expedition to help North Americans fight the British. Evidence of whites' scorn for these free colored volunteers appears to have driven wealthy men of color to adopt a new political strategy in 1782, appealing directly to Versailles for racial reforms. Julien Raimond's letters to the colonial ministry in the mid-1780s illustrate his cooption of colonial liberal arguments. At the same time, Moreau de Saint-Méry, hoping to recognize and reward free colored virtue in Saint-Domingue, was publicly labeled an abolitionist for proposing to honor a free black philanthropist. On the eve of the French Revolution, Moreau's actions challenged the white civic ideology he himself described as a biological fact.

* * *

One aspect of Saint-Domingue's post-1769 racial reforms was that royal administrators claimed control over manumissions. Individual colonists continued to free slaves formally and informally. But new regulations requiring free people of color to prove their freedom in any public deed or document made it far more difficult to flout the law. The new manumission regulations reflected the agreement of administrative and legal elites that the size of the free colored population, particularly the freedom of so many sexually active women, was a sign of moral corruption. In 1775, the administration increased the 800 livres manumission tax to 1,000 livres for a male slave and 2,000 livres for a woman under 40. These sums went into a special account "to be used for different objects of public utility, to avoid the slightest suspicion that such funds are being diverted."⁴ If masters insisted on threatening the colony's French "community" by their ties to slaves and free coloreds, they would pay to reinforce Saint-Domingue's nascent public space with new buildings, fountains, and promenades.

Critics of the colonial administration later charged that the new liberty tax accelerated the growth of the free colored population. From August 1780 through July 1781, 387 deeds of manumission freed 527 persons and put 630,470 livres into the fund. In September

1780 the royal administration admitted it had intended to cancel these pending freedoms but did not due to its “pressing need of money.” Moreau de Saint-Méry accused the government of ratifying seven or eight thousand liberties between 1780 and 1789 to get the tax revenues. In 1787 the governor and intendant established a new poorhouse in Port-au-Prince, financed in large part by manumission taxes. In July 1789, when the Naval Ministry in Versailles recommended that administrators curtail manumissions, Saint-Domingue’s governor and intendant wrote back, again citing revenue as a major reason to continue granting liberties.⁵

In the South Province, this phenomenon troubled the provincial commander in 1781. “Indiscreet and endlessly multiplied manumission” was the region’s most serious problem, he believed, greater than the lack of trade, or the difficulty of communicating with Cap Français and Port-au-Prince. Not only did free people of color commit crimes, he said, but the most damaging aspect of manumission was the way it diminished the slave population. “We are taking workers off the land and complaining, rightly, that we don’t have enough workers.” Even with the new taxes, manumission was too common and too inexpensive. Masters sometimes freed slaves “for very modest sums.”⁶

The South Province’s notarial archives tell a different story. Manumissions were only half as frequent in the 1780s as they had been in the 1760s, suggesting that the new taxes did discourage freedoms, affecting whites and free colored manumitters equally. Manumissions declined from 5 percent of notarial activity (236 of 4882 contracts) in the 1760s to about 2 percent (63 of a sample of 2,654) in the 1780s in the same three districts.

Some slaves, masters, and families did find an alternative legal strategy. Colonists and administrators had long ignored much of the Code Noir, including its Article 59, which promised that ex-slaves would enjoy the full rights of French subjects. Yet the 1685 statute was still the letter of the law. Article 9 of the code stipulated that that marriage between a master and slave automatically freed that slave. Throughout the 1780s, therefore, free colored masters married their slaves, manumitting them while avoiding the liberty tax. Some whites who did not want to pay the tax gave a slave to a free person of color or sold him cheaply, on the explicit condition of an emancipating marriage.

Church documents from the three parishes just east of Aquin show that religious marriages involving slaves expanded remarkably in this period. They grew from nearly nothing early in the century to 24 percent of free colored marriages in the 1770s and then to 42 percent in the 1780s. The notarial registers of Les Cayes, Nippes, and

Saint Louis in the 1760s and 1780s confirm the pattern. Of 45 marriage contracts involving at least one person of color in the 1760s, only one included a spouse who was in slavery; in the 1780s, 24 of the 65 free colored marriage contracts included at least one spouse who was a slave. Dominique Rogers found a similarly high percentage of these kinds of marriages among free coloreds in Port-au-Prince in the 1780s.⁷

This new manumission mechanism was no secret. Moreau de Saint-Méry noted that after 1780, marriages between slaves and free people of color became more common than ever before. Notarized marriage documents explicitly invoked the Code Noir when one of the spouses was a slave. When Mathieu Thramu, a free creole black from Les Cayes who had been manumitted in 1778, married his slave Jacqueline two years later, their nuptial contract stated that Thramu had been “instructed that by article nine of the edict of March 1685, the Code Noir, he can free the said Jacqueline his slave by uniting with her in marriage in the forms observed by the church.”⁸

Article Nine brought freedom to a married couple’s children as well, if no one else owned them. Jean Louis Frontin was a black man freed in 1778. About that time he had the first of six children with Marie Agnes, a black woman enslaved on the Picault plantation. In 1785 Frontin, “through a long and difficult effort,” purchased Marie Agnes and four of their children and married her, citing Article Nine as his motivation. While men were usually the owners in these free colored/slave marriages, women also freed men this way. Marie Aya was a black woman manumitted in 1781. In 1784 she paid a white tailor the unusually high price of 6,600 livres for Jean François Neptune, a 42-year-old African (Ibo) and a tailor himself. They wed the following year, using Article Nine to claim Neptune’s freedom and that of their four children, aged two through twelve.⁹

The successful and well-connected planter Jean-Baptiste Gérard, a white man who oversaw more than 2,000 slaves on the estates he managed and owned in the Les Cayes plain, made at least three such marriages possible in the 1780s.¹⁰ In 1781 one of Gérard’s ex-slaves, Jean-Baptiste called César, a 55-year-old African of the Arada nation who worked caulking boats, married Marie Thérèse known as Lisette, a 35-year-old Senegalese woman. Besides the celebrants, not a single person of color attended the marriage contract signing. But, probably because of Gérard’s patronage, five white merchants and a planter’s wife were present to give “advice and counsel.” César had purchased Lisette just in time for their fourth child to be born in freedom. However the couple’s three previous children, the oldest of whom was 11, remained enslaved to Lisette’s former master.¹¹

In 1782 Gérard, in effect, gave his 42-year-old African slave Flore to François Alexis, one of the rare persons to identify himself to a notary as a member of the free black militia of Les Cayes.¹² Alexis, whose property included seven acres of land, two slaves, and five horses, told the notary that he had “acquired the means to buy Flore through long and difficult labor,” and he paid Flore’s purchase price to Gérard in coin. In the marriage contract, however, Gérard returned the money to Alexis as a gift, on the condition that the couple marry in the church. Gérard seems to have been a lenient master to Flore, for his ex-slave had 2,000 livres in savings and a 30-year-old slave woman whom she purchased with Gérard’s permission.

Later that year, Gérard was involved in yet another marriage-manumission. This time, he sold an 18-year-old mulatto woman named Marie Claire, whom he had received as a bequest in another colonist’s testament. Marie Claire’s new owner was Michel Bertrand, the 32-year-old freeborn mulatto son of a white barrel maker.¹³ Bertrand, who owned a fishing canoe and shared with his sister the rental income from 15 slaves, had saved money to purchase Marie Claire, but Gérard again returned the 1,200 livres purchase price “to help and favor” the couple, on the condition that they marry in church.

Free colored patrons were also involved in these marriage-manumissions. The black man “Jean Pierre called Virgile” had been free since 1755 and lived in Aquin’s Grand Colline neighborhood, near some of the southern peninsula’s wealthiest free families of color. In 1782 he purchased Marie Ursule from the free colored planter Louis-François Boisrond for 1,800 livres and married her later that year in a ceremony attended by Boisrond and several other wealthy Aquin free people of color and whites. Jean-Baptiste Rémarais, a literate free mulatto from Les Cayes, was named executor in the 1772 testament of Anne Déjéac, a free black woman. Déjéac’s testament instructed Remarais to free the Kongo slave Agathe and provide her with a pension. By 1779 Remarais had not yet accomplished this, so he arranged for Augustin, a free black man known as Affiba, to buy Agathe from the estate for 1,000 livres and then marry her. The purchase price was returned to the couple as Agathe’s dowry.¹⁴

In 1787, Jean Joseph Lavoille Bossé, a 25-year-old free mulatto, realized that his entire family was in jeopardy. Bossé had three illegitimate children with Marie Rose, a mulatto slave woman, and no authentic record of his own liberty. He claimed to have been born free, but “due to the negligence of his parents” his baptism was not recorded in the parish register. Not yet of legal majority, Bossé

petitioned the local court to appoint a guardian for him, and a group of seven white planters and merchants in the Nippes district nominated one. He then signed a marriage contract with Marie Rose, followed by a religious ceremony. Four white planters witnessed the contract, attesting to his freedom. The object of the marriage, according to the document, was to establish the legitimacy of the three children. By the terms of the Code Noir, the marriage also automatically freed Marie Rose, though this was not mentioned.¹⁵

Some whites criticized this loophole in the slave code. In 1790 the residents of Gonaïve parish in the West Province urged a reduction of manumission taxes to end the “monstrous marriages” between masters and slaves. Moreau de Saint-Méry claimed that whites married slaves in a “well-paid connivance,” and reported that in the South Province some white men were rumored to have married several slave women in succession. He claimed that the simultaneous liberation of these couples’ children expanded the free colored population considerably.¹⁶ Yet the colonial government did nothing to outlaw this practice.

In fact, colonial administrators were willing to increase the free population of color, as long as this occurred in ways that made colonial society more manageable. Members of the Naval Ministry’s colonial reform committee discussed the desirability of slave marriages and even considered laws that would replace racial prejudice against persons of color born outside of marriage. Because free colored sexual immorality was what supposedly threatened the colonial public, administrators reasoned that more married free people of color were acceptable.¹⁷

A second new liberty law, passed in 1775 like the increased manumission tax, confirmed this willingness to increase the free colored population, if it strengthened the colony. The law allowed approved men to earn their freedom papers by serving ten years in the *maréchaussée*. In 1789 the government reduced the requirement to six years.¹⁸ Since the Seven Years’ War royal ministers and military reformers had been advocating the self-sacrificial civic virtue extolled by classical and Renaissance writers. The ex-slaves who joined the constabulary after 1775 could be said to be earning their freedom by demonstrating the qualities of a classical citizen-soldier: the willingness to sacrifice their lives for the polity.

By limiting this manumission mechanism to approved slaves, the new law allowed administrators to target so-called *libres de savane* or defacto freedmen, who lived outside slavery but did not have proper documentation. In other words, these were men whose masters either

could not control them or who would not pay the manumission tax. *Maréchaussée* duty would bring these men under formal control. Rather than weakening slave society, it strengthened it.

An affidavit made in December 1781 by one such man of color illustrates his understanding that as a constable he was proving his loyalty to the white public and the slave system. François Picau worked as a bookkeeper on the plantation of a white planter's widow in Nippes; he was a light-skinned man who claimed to be free, but his manumission papers had never been properly registered.¹⁹

In mid-December 1781 the inhabitants of the Barradaires region of Nippes were searching for the maroon "Sim called Dompête," a creole slave who had escaped from the Les Cayes area and was reported to be poisoning animals in the area around Nippes. His identification as "Dompête" suggests that this "Sim" was no ordinary slave. Dompête or Dom Pèdro was a form of African spirituality strongly identified with Kongo slaves, the largest African ethnic group in the southern peninsula. It had first been identified in the 1760s near Léogane, on the northern face of the southern peninsula. Believers credited the Petro rite with a formidable array of supernatural powers, and this is still the case in Haiti.²⁰ In 1814 Drouin de Bercy identified the Petro cult as "the most dangerous of all the black societies . . . its members are thieves, liars, and hypocrites and they offer evil advice that destroys livestock and poultry. It is they who distribute that slow and subtle poison that kills whites and other blacks who have displeased them." Michel Descourtiz reported that "Dompête [*sic*], it is said, has the power to uncover with his eyes all that happens, in spite of any material obstacle, at no matter what distance The members of this sect have access to magic to inflict their vengeance."²¹

In 1781 the former *maréchaussée* commander of the Nippes district and several free people of color had already searched for "Dompête" with no success. But François Picau and the free mulatto Joseph Aubert mounted their own private expedition, "seeing the importance for the public welfare and for the security of the citizen." With clues about Dompête that probably came from slave-informants, the two entered the woods known as the "grand Désert" about 7 p.m. They traveled through the night, stopping at dawn on an abandoned plantation.²²

Warned that Dompête would pass this way, Picau and Aubert spent the day hidden in the woods. As Picau told the story, after sunset the two men patrolled the road under a brilliant moon. At 11 p.m. he spied someone approaching, dressed in white. As the figure drew

closer he saw that it was a black man he did not know, carrying a saber and a white hat under his left arm, with a sack called a *macoute* slung over his shoulder. Picau called out, "Who are you, who are you [*vous*]" and then "is it you [*tu*] Sim?" Without responding the stranger stepped back a few feet, drew his sword and attacked the constable, who defended himself with his machete.

As the two fought Picau called out, "One more time, is it you, Sim? Believe me, give yourself up or I will have your head, if you don't take mine." But his opponent refused to answer and groped with his free hand for the bag that swung from his shoulder. Fearing that this *macoute* contained a pistol, Picau instructed Aubert, who could not join the fight because of the closeness of the trees, to shoot "this courageous *nègre* Sim, who prefers death to life." When Aubert's musket failed, Picau managed to draw one of his own pistols and discharge its double shot at Sim. This wound only doubled Sim's ferocity and his efforts to open his *macoute*. Picau fired his remaining pistol, which "weakened the strength but not the courage of the said Sim" who fell dead to the ground, "the reward of a brave combat that lasted at least three hours." The two men cut off Sim's head and took his sword and bag.

Back in the town of Anse à Veau they presented these objects to the acting royal attorney. Picau added a long, detailed statement to this official evidence. His narrative may be read as a declaration of identity, a public document that unequivocally established its author and central character as a member of free society. Representing his actions not as an extension of his work as constable, but as motivated by his concern for the "security of the citizen," Picau identified himself as a member of free society, although his manumission papers were not yet formalized.

Picau's dramatic description of his moonlit battle with a ghostly adversary, whose weapons included not only his sword and the pistol concealed in his bag, but the power of the charms that the *macoute* also contained, might be interpreted as his public rejection of the Afro-creole culture that assigned such power to carefully saved bits of bone, black seeds, and red cloth. No matter how Picau came to possess the bloody head he laid on the attorney's desk in Anse à Veau, his affidavit spelled out that for the constable, power and authority were vested not in the Afro-creole artifacts he spread before the official, but in the royal stamp that would seal his statement and someday authenticate his manumission papers.

The ability to earn freedom through constabulary service was an attractive one for quasi-free men like Picau, who were mostly of mixed ancestry, rather than free blacks as appears to have been the case in the

North Province.²³ In a sample of over 2,000 notarial contracts from the 1780s, ten men of color identified themselves as members of the *maréchaussée*, and only two of them were free blacks. Whites commanded the local constabulary brigades, but men of color served both as cavaliers, or mounted patrolmen, and at the higher rank of brigadier. However in the South Province they were not especially active in the economy, according to notarial records. The most valuable transaction in which any of them participated was the sale of a large hillside provision farm for 10,000 livres, which two free mulatto brothers in the *maréchaussée* inherited from their free mulatto mother and were going to split with a third free mulatto.²⁴

Stewart King suggests that constables in the North Province could earn a decent living and become landowners. As part of the “military leadership class” he identifies among free coloreds, *maréchaussée* brigadiers “were some of the most powerful non-commissioned officers in the colonial military because of their power over the daily lives of all free coloreds.” The notarial archives of the 1760s and 1780s, including hundreds of criminal complaints, do not provide much evidence of this South Province.²⁵ Constables like Pierrot Lafleur (chapter 3) or François Picau asserted their own respectability, but their free colored and white neighbors did not. Perhaps constables’ social authority did not compensate for their relatively low economic status in this region, where commerce was so much more important than military honor. The economic status of Jean Pierre Prince, a free black brigadier who rented a room behind the theater in Les Cayes, was typical of the handful of free colored constables there who left notarial records. In debt to his landlord for more than 1,000 livres representing three years of unpaid rent, Prince agreed in 1781 to make repairs equaling that amount. However, several weeks later he purchased a city plot with a decrepit house for 600 livres and may have moved there.²⁶

While the 1775 *maréchaussée* reform reinforced the freedom of men who were technically slaves, this new form of manumission may have diminished the status of the freeborn men who had to serve with these ex-slaves. In fact, the reluctance of Saint-Domingue’s men of color to serve in the constabulary was widely acknowledged. Ever since the 1769 militia reform, constabulary officers could supplement the *maréchaussée* with free colored militiamen, as needed. In July 1779 the administrators of the North Province advised a parish militia commandant to arrest the six men his parish was required to deliver to the district *maréchaussée*. “It is not likely that you will manage to make them show up by a simple order, given the distaste they

have for service in this troop." In 1786, militiamen at Port-de-Paix in the North Province refused to serve in the constabulary, claiming that the division of duties was not fair. When their noncommissioned officers were jailed, the other citizen-soldiers also demanded imprisonment, though local cells could not hold them all. Port-de-Paix was a special case, for free people of color there constituted only 22 percent of the parish's free population yet made up 40 percent of its militia. In South Province parishes like Les Cayes and Anse à Veau, free coloreds also served disproportionately in the militia, but only by 5 or 10 percent more than their weight in the general population. In Anse à Veau, for example, Moreau de Saint-Méry's numbers indicate that free people of color composed 35 percent of the free population and 43 percent of the militia.²⁷

But even in parishes like Aquin, Saint Louis, and Cavaillon, where free people of color in 1788 composed about half of the free population and about half of the militia, men of color complained bitterly about the extra duties they bore. In 1786 Julien Raimond cited the heavy demands of royal service as an example of racial abuse, because only men of color were forced to spend long periods of time away from their families, shops, and fields. Although he owned 100 slaves, more than many of his white neighbors, Raimond was merely a sergeant in the Aquin militia. On at least one occasion he was ordered to arrest a handful of free colored neighbors who had not reported for guard duty.²⁸

Despite such frustrations, in 1779 many of these men may have still hoped that military service would improve their civic and social status. In the spring of that year Charles d'Estaing, now an admiral, returned to Cap Français nearly 15 years after leaving as a controversial governor. France had just joined the North American colonies' war against the British, and the admiral's fleet had recaptured the island of Grenada. Among the notables who welcomed d'Estaing back to Saint-Domingue in 1779 was Vincent Olivier, a free black man said to be 119 years old. Olivier, known widely as Captain Vincent, was a living symbol of free colored military valor. He had been a slave but had earned his freedom in a 1697 raid on Cartagena. Returning from the battle he had been captured and taken to Europe, where he was ransomed. He was formally presented to Louis XIV at court and had served with the French army in Germany before returning to Saint-Domingue. In 1716 he was appointed captain-general of the free colored militia in Cap Français; he wore a sword given him by the king, was seen at the governor's table, and in 1776 had been awarded an official pension. When he died the year after d'Estaing's visit,

Captain Vincent was buried with full military honors, and the colonial broadsheet declared him an example for the colony: "This brave *Nègre* will serve as new proof for those who need it that a truly great soul, no matter what shell it inhabits, is visible to all men and can silence even those prejudices that seem necessary [to society]."29

Captain Vincent's fame may have convinced other men of color that military service could thwart racial prejudice. Five months after the old soldier and the admiral embraced before the colonial elite, d'Estaing set sail from the colony with an expeditionary force that now included 545 free blacks and men of color, including Captain Vincent's sons. According to Moreau de Saint-Méry, the black veteran spent much of "the year preceding his death recalling his past glories to the men of color who were being enrolled for the expedition."³⁰

In March 1779, to enroll men of color into d'Estaing's approaching expedition, colonial administrators reformed the *Chasseurs Volontaires*, the free colored unit established in 1762. Patriotism and civic spirit had been the themes of d'Estaing's previous tenure in Saint-Domingue and, in April 1779, as the admiral's ships drew near, the colonial press exhorted the public in similar terms:

At this moment what Frenchman does not experience a reawakening of his courage and ardor to fight against the enemies of the State? We have here a very good example of this in the enthusiasm shown daily [by the men who] join the *Volontaires* created . . . last March . . . to awaken the zeal and the good will of Citizens of every sort [*espèce*]. Good Frenchmen, surely, will not need much encouragement to show their natural valor Thus one sees each day in the different regions of the Colony the most promising young men present themselves for service. Entire companies have already been formed and all yearn to begin the approaching campaign.³¹

This call to "citizens of every sort" and "good Frenchmen," following d'Estaing's public reunion with Captain Vincent, may have drawn free men of color to the recruiting table. LeNoir de Rouvray, the white commanding officer of the reformed *Chasseurs*, extolled the zeal shown by his volunteers, who had joined without recruiting bonuses.³² One of d'Estaing's protégés, Rouvray trumpeted the patriotic virtues of free colored soldiers. Whites considered the colony a temporary home, but "the people of color are far more attached to their families than the whites are; ties of blood and filial obedience are much more respected among them than among the whites." For such men to reach their potential in service, all "humiliating and degrading distinctions" separating them from other troops must be removed.

It was paramount, he claimed, that officers not describe them as “slaves” of the state, a term that some colonists used to describe royal soldiers. Rouvray, like d’Estaing, predicted that the prestige of military service would ultimately allow free men of color to reject racial stereotypes. The commander wanted his *Volontaires* to be able to say to themselves,

I must make the whites blush for the scorn they have heaped on me in my civil status and for the injustices and tyrannies they have continually exercised over me with impunity. I must prove to them that as a soldier I am capable of at least as much honor and courage and of even more loyalty.³³

Yet many free men of color perceived the call to arms differently. As in the reformed militia and constabulary, white officers commanded the *Chasseurs*. For those who had been leaders in an earlier service, the *Chasseurs* were a potent reminder of the prejudices against them. On the eve of the Revolution, Rouvray himself remembered that

When the *Chasseurs Royaux* [*sic*] of Saint-Domingue were being formed for the Savannah campaign, a mulatto came to Mr de Rouvray bringing with him two of his young mulatto sons to volunteer them for this expedition. When the Colonel remarked that he should at least keep one of them [at home] since both could be killed [at Savannah], “Eh Monsieur,” [the father] tearfully replied, ‘what better can a mulatto do with his life than get himself killed!’³⁴

These free men of color may have joined the *Chasseurs Volontaires* less out of patriotism than from the pressure of local patrons. White officers of free colored militia units commanded six of the ten *Chasseurs Volontaires* companies. These units enjoyed the greatest recruiting success. The white man Charles Dupetithouars, for example, had married into an elite planting family and was captain of his parish’s mulatto militia.³⁵ The day after the formation of the *Chasseurs Volontaires*, 32 mulattos had already enlisted under his command. The intendant acknowledged that Jacques Mesnier, a prosperous merchant and captain of the free colored militia of Cap Français, spent large sums recruiting for his company, buying arms and equipment for those who could not equip themselves. When Mesnier, who was over 60, tried to resign his commission during preparation for the expedition, the governor persuaded him to remain since his men “would have all deserted if he had not assured them that he would march with them.” Even so, more than 100 mulattos led by one of Mesnier’s aides appeared before colonial officials to request that they be allowed to return to their homes.³⁶

As this incident suggests, royal administrators had to complement the tug of local patronage with a sharp official spur. After the formation of the *Chasseurs Volontaires* in 1779, the governor dissolved several free colored militias near Cap Français and ordered their members to enlist in the new company within the week. All quadroons who disobeyed these instructions were demoted into mulatto companies. Uncooperative mulattos, in turn, were condemned to muster with free black units. Two weeks later all those who had not yet presented themselves to the *Chasseurs* were sentenced to serve three months in the constabulary though they could still avoid this unpopular assignment by “volunteering” for d’Estaing’s expedition.³⁷

Whether motivated by civic spirit, patronage, or government bullying, 941 free men of color arrived in Cap Français during March and April 1779 to join the *Chasseurs Volontaires*, with sometimes as many as ten and fifteen enlisting in a given company in a single day. Although 20 percent of these recruits had deserted by August 11, the free colored force was far superior to its white counterpart, the Volunteer Grenadiers. Only four companies made up the Grenadiers, compared to ten for the *Chasseurs*. While free mulatto and black companies had enrolled 70 to 80 soldiers apiece by the eve of the campaign, the largest of the four white units numbered only 43 men. More than half the recruits in one Grenadier company deserted over the summer. While 545 free colored *Chasseurs* set sail with d’Estaing in August, only 156 white Volunteer Grenadiers were part of the expedition.³⁸ Despite the growing prejudice against them, the colony’s free men of color in 1779 may have felt that they had proven d’Estaing’s claims that they were the most patriotic of all colonial Frenchmen.

In France the image of the soldier improved dramatically in the late eighteenth century, in part because of better discipline, but also because of the new patriotic rhetoric and social utility of soldiers. A number of reform-minded veteran officers published their social and moral reflections and some were practically regarded as philosophers.³⁹ However, white Saint-Dominguans had a different image of their own civic role, as they had demonstrated by rejecting d’Estaing in 1765. Few white colonists dreamed of Spartan glory, and in 1779 white colonists chose a form of self-sacrifice consistent with their liberal notion of virtue. Rather than enlist in the expedition to Savannah, elite whites began collecting money to buy a new ship of the line for the royal navy.

This was an idea that had been pioneered by Choiseul’s publicists in France during the Seven Years’ War. In the early 1760s, in an

attempt to stir up public enthusiasm for the war and to replenish the royal navy, the naval secretary had coordinated a subscription campaign in France. Heavily supported in the provincial press, the campaign eventually raised thirteen million livres to buy sixteen warships. The vessels were considered gifts to the king and were named for the regions that sponsored them.⁴⁰

During the War of American Independence, the naval secretary Castries was pushing again to increase the size of France's navy.⁴¹ The Agricultural Chambers of Port-au-Prince and Cap Français approved the colonial subscription drive and the *Affiches américaines* extolled it, even as it urged free men of color to join d'Estaing's expedition. For the broadsheet, such patriotic donations illustrated the superiority of Saint-Domingue's liberal virtue to the classical ideals d'Estaing constantly invoked. "Compared to us, what are those superb cities of antiquity, whose citizens have been so praised for their great feats and worthy souls?" The answer was that the ancients had been "harsh" and "severe." While Captain Vincent was urging men of color to enroll in d'Estaing's expedition, the *Affiches* announced:

To the honor of humanity, surely one will never again see a ferocious and barbarian mother send her son to his death with a dry eye, without emotion, see him again pale and bleeding and believe she owes this horrible sacrifice to the fatherland These awful traits, so long admired by our fathers, are unnatural and make any respectable and sensitive soul tremble.⁴²

Even as royal volunteers, then, free men of color were not "respectable" or "sensitive" citizens. Though military service would seem to contradict the stereotype of mixed-race effeminacy, Moreau de Saint-Méry believed that these men of color sought armed service because it allowed them to be lazy and sexually debauched.

It seems that then [in the ranks, a mulatto] loses his laziness, but all the world knows that a soldier's life, in the leisure it provides, has attractions for indolent men A mulatto soldier will appear exactly to the calls of day, perhaps even to those of the evening, but it is in vain that one tries to restrict his liberty at night; [the night] belongs to pleasure and he will not indenture it, no matter what commitments he has made elsewhere.⁴³

In fact, the Savannah campaign coincided with the tightening of new racial restrictions. It was in 1779 that sumptuary laws forbade people of color to dress like whites. In the same year the commander

of Cap Français reminded the commander of the Limonade district that families of color were required to get permission from local captains to take up residence in a new parish.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, in early September 1779, as d'Estaing's fleet anchored off the south Georgia coast, the Admiral ordered that "the people of color . . . be treated at all times like the whites. . . . They aspire to the same honor; they will exhibit the same bravery." Nevertheless an official list of the units participating in the expedition identified both the Volunteer Grenadiers and the Chasseurs as units "raised recently in Saint-Domingue and not to be employed for more than trench work." Since the British fort at Savannah was strongly fortified, there was quite a bit of digging to be done.⁴⁵ After a month of blockade and siege, however, the French attack failed, with 521 dead and wounded, compared to American-rebel and British casualties of 231 and 57, respectively. A bloody British counterattack killed one Chasseur and wounded seven men of color defending the retreating French troops.⁴⁶ As the October weather worsened, d'Estaing's ships left Georgia, sailing for various destinations.

Although the Savannah campaign had concluded, Saint-Domingue's free colored volunteers soon discovered that their military service had not. Within three months of the battle, Chasseur detachments were scattered throughout the Atlantic. It would be three years before many would see their homes. In December 1779 a few had returned to the colony but others were in France, accompanying Rouvray and d'Estaing to Versailles. Not until May 1780 did these men disembark in Saint-Domingue. One Chasseur company of 62 escorted Savannah casualties to Charleston, South Carolina, and was the sole French troop serving during the siege of that city in the spring of 1780. D'Estaing sent more than one-third of the entire Chasseur force, 150 to 200 men, to Grenada in the eastern Caribbean. Two-and-a-half years later over a 100 members of this detachment were still there. Rouvray, their commander, protested such treatment, warning the colonial minister that "the Chasseurs are nearly all property owners who have abandoned their fortune to serve the King."⁴⁷ But the affordability of volunteer soldiers was too tempting for royal officials.

In the aftermath of the Savannah expedition Saint-Domingue's administrators nearly completed what they started in 1769 with the merging of the *maréchaussée* and free colored militia: the transformation of colonial civilians into regular royal troops. A blurring of the categories "militiaman" and "regular soldier" had already occurred in frontier provinces in France, but colonial whites, both *grands* and *petits*, fought so bitterly against the reinstatement of the militia in 1769

that the royal government was wary of offering them any further innovations. Free colored civilians, however, were already rotating regularly through the expanded *maréchaussée*. Reynaud de Villevert, Saint-Domingue's acting governor, believed that full-time service would not be a big change for men of color.

So, in late March 1780, with hundreds of Chasseurs Volontaires still in faraway Grenada, Reynaud ordered the formation of a new free colored troop to be called the Chasseurs Royaux. The name change was significant: unlike the unit assembled 12 months earlier for Savannah there was not to be even a pretense of volunteer service in the Chasseurs Royaux. Free colored militiamen from each parish were to be conscripted into royal service. Lacking volunteers, preferably veterans of Savannah, each parish captain was to send men of color aged 15 or 16 or those whose manumission papers were not in good order. If necessary, officers were to notify free men of color in order of seniority to report to Cap Français for enlistment.⁴⁸

By attacking the oldest, wealthiest, and most influential members of this class, Reynaud tried to exploit the vaunted filial attachment of free men of color and force younger kinsmen out of hiding. Younger men would have less to lose in the new unit. For while many Chasseurs Volontaires had enlisted under their former militia officers, Chasseurs Royaux were to be removed from such local allegiances and placed under full military discipline. Not only would they surrender the livelihoods and security they had acquired in their districts, but they were to transfer their loyalties from local patrons to royal officers with little influence in their home parishes.

The white men who commanded militias of color were among the first to protest these orders. One captain could secure only seven of the fourteen men demanded of his parish and these he held under armed guard, a precaution followed in several other districts. A second parish sent three mulattos to Cap Français against their will, noting that one had incomplete manumission papers, the second was only 16, and the third, though free by birth, "because he possesses nothing, can do no better than remain in the Chasseurs."⁴⁹

White officers fought establishment of the Chasseurs Royaux for several reasons. The new unit deprived parishes of constables who performed critical services for slave owners, especially the search for maroon slaves. Secondly, the new service was so unpopular that militia captains who drafted their own men destroyed the relations they had forged with their companies. One captain reported that he had difficulty mustering his free colored soldiers to hunt escaped slaves since many feared a trap to impress them into the Chasseurs Royaux.

Third, whites believed the Chasseurs Royaux project suggested that the government might force their militia companies into the regular army, as well. One parish officer noted pointedly that the treatment of the Chasseurs Royaux illustrated the difference between the freedoms enjoyed by free men of color and white colonists. Jacques Mesnier, who commanded the free colored militia of Cap Français, reminded Reynaud that as a militia officer, even if his soldiers were men of color, they could not be conscripted into regular service. "I command . . . only free men, who have the ability to choose the company in which they will do their service."⁵⁰ In 1769 whites had encouraged free men of color to revolt against the reimposition of militia obligations. In 1780 and 1781, whites like Mesnier joined men of color in protesting the transformation of civilian militiamen into professional soldiers.

None were more concerned with preventing this change, however, than those pressured to serve in the new Chasseurs Royaux. In 1779, officers in the Savannah expedition had hailed the attachment of free colored volunteers to their homes and families, but in 1780 men of color fled these homes rather than join the new corps. When it was announced that Chasseurs Royaux would be recruited from free colored militias, attendance at muster in one Cap Français unit dropped from 62 to 28. One week later when these men presented themselves, as ordered, to enroll in the Chasseurs Royaux, two mulatto militiamen "humbly stated to M. de Reynaud that as established residents of the city, as proprietors, husbands and fathers they could not enter such an engagement."⁵¹ Their words not only defied orders, but challenged the image of free colored debauchery. These two men spent much of the next year in chains, and they were not alone in opposing the acting governor. A report to the naval secretary shortly after that said that free men of color "were frightened and repelled" by the newly created Chasseurs Royaux,

and most of them have fled to the Spanish part of Saint-Domingue. We are much more plagued with maroon slaves than before this [troop] formation and we have no means of opposing [maroon] raids and gatherings. It is essential and urgent to bring back these people of color.⁵²

Acting governor Reynaud responded sternly. In early July 1780 he ordered the arrest of all reluctant draftees. The following week militia officers were directed to replace the fugitives with "the richest men from their companies . . . married or not." By the end of the month the acting governor instructed local authorities to arrest the fathers of

militiamen who had fled the Chasseurs Royaux and bring them to Cap Français to serve for their sons.⁵³

Yet these attempts to manipulate free colored family ties failed. By September 1, 1780, many parishes still had not filled their quotas. In Limonade parish, jailing the fathers and even the mothers of eligible soldiers had not restored these men to the Chasseurs Royaux. Despairing of ever filling his orders, one white captain attributed his difficulties to the abuse inflicted on free colored volunteers before, during, and after the Savannah campaign:

I believe that the refusal of the men of color to take part in the new Corps must be attributed to the manner in which the Volontaires were recruited, to the misery they experienced in a cold country, to the harshness of their treatment [there and], to the lack of precision with which they were discharged . . . The men of color are afraid of being exposed again, of being held like those who are in service at Grenada.⁵⁴

Reynaud de Villevert also blamed Savannah for the unpopularity of the Chasseurs Royaux, though he additionally cited “the seditious remarks” of Mesnier, whom he jailed after the two argued on the Cap Français parade grounds. To justify this measure Reynaud maintained that “in a country this far [from France], every one should tremble at the words ‘by order of the King.’”⁵⁵

Officials closer to the throne did not agree. Reynaud was recreating the crisis of 1769 and colonial tranquility was now Versailles’ main objective. Mesnier and his fellow militia officers had friends at court and the acceleration of maroon attacks further emphasized the value of free colored militia service on the parish level. The naval secretary issued strict instructions to liberate those arrested for sedition and to disband the controversial Chasseurs Royaux. Free colored militia service in Saint-Domingue returned to its previous basis.⁵⁶

By the 1780s, that service had become a central, if ambiguous, element in the civic lives of Saint-Domingue’s free people of color. For men like François Picau who lived in freedom but were technically still slaves, the militia and *maréchaussée* provided an important institutional ladder into free society. Picau could trade the charm bag and bloody head of an African sorcerer for formal liberty papers: by proving his allegiance to slave society in this internal war, he became a citizen, of sorts. The same notion of civic virtue may have inspired many men of color to join d’Estaing’s expedition in 1779.

But for those who already had such documents, tramping through the woods with men like Picau, or standing guard outside the home

of the white militia captain was social humiliation. The property owners and family fathers who bowed to local pressure and joined the *Chasseurs Volontaires* found that royal officials, like their white neighbors, abused their patriotism. Nor did service in the royal troop count for anything in the trials of *Bonhomme Fossé*. Even ex-colonists living in France identified militia duty as a humiliation for men of color. In 1784, Charles Labarrère, a Frenchman who had built a successful plantation in the *Les Cayes* plain before returning home to Bordeaux, wrote a high royal official in Paris. In 1764, after 24 years in the colony, Labarrère had sent his infant son from *Saint-Domingue* to France. In 1770 he returned home himself, entrusting his colonial estate to a prominent merchant firm. In 1784 his island-born son had completed his education, and Labarrère wanted to send him back to *Les Cayes* to manage his plantation there.⁵⁷ However, he wrote,

The residents of the *Isle à Vache* claim that the mother of *Sieur Labarrère's* son, although [she is] as white as a European woman, is descended from the black race and if this young man entered in the militia, they would surely make him feel the effects of their prejudice, with all the malice that is only too natural among men. The young *Labarrère*, born with a sensitive soul and feelings of honor, would be exposed, for no fault of his own, to continual humiliations.

The elder *Labarrère* estimated that in the last war mismanagement by his plantation attorneys had cost him 80,000 livres—almost the price of a new smaller estate. He asked the Naval Ministry to exempt his son from colonial militia service, so that he could restore the estate to profitability. The government granted this request.

The scant evidence of free colored pride in military service in the southern peninsula contradicts *Stewart King's* discovery of a distinct “military leadership class” among the free people of color in *Saint-Domingue's* North Province in the 1780s. Less wealthy than free colored planters, but more prosperous than the average free person of color, *King's* men readily identified themselves to notaries as sergeants and corporals in the militia and *Chasseurs Volontaires*. Without the kinds of strong social connections to white society that free colored planters had, these free colored military figures developed their own patronage networks in the population of color, appearing disproportionately in marriage contracts and other family deeds. *King* identifies them as an unofficial leadership class in local society. His evidence also suggests that they were predominately free blacks, while free colored planters were of mixed ancestry.⁵⁸

Either such a class did not exist in the South Province in the 1780s, or its members were not very proud of their noncommissioned military ranks. Notaries in this region almost never noted the militia rank of free colored clients, though they did for white militia officers. Even future revolutionary leaders like André Rigaud or Guillaume Bleck, whom Haitian historical tradition identifies as ex-Chasseurs Volontaires, did not claim this title when they had notaries draft official documents in the 1780s.⁵⁹

The sole notarial record left by a free colored Chasseur in the South was a 1780 manumission drafted en absentia. Jean Jasmin, known as Basset, was a free black man who enlisted in the Chasseurs but had meant to free his Ibo slave woman and her mulatto son before leaving. He was in Cap Français but entrusted the task of formalizing the manumission deed to Frontin, another free black who had been the slave cook of the provincial commander only three years earlier.⁶⁰ Considered with the clemency petition of Aquin's "Bonhomme" Fossé, Jasmin's long-distance manumission suggests that royal attempts to create free colored military units may have pulled these free colored soldiers from outlying regions, concentrating them in the North Province. Cap Français was the centerpiece of the colonial government's attempt to build civic virtue; ever since the militia revolt of 1769, the South had been Saint-Domingue's most skeptical region on that score.

That skepticism on the part of free men of color worried royal officials. As Dominique Rogers has pointed out, royal policy about France's free colored population was often inconsistent, varying from one governor or naval secretary to another.⁶¹ Although Versailles had helped colonists create the new color line, royal officials and their advisors valued free colored service and wanted to encourage it. Evidence of these attitudes filtered through to the colony in the publications of philosophes associated with the Colonial Office. In the original 1765 edition of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, for example, the entry for "*mulâtre*" merely restated the definition offered by contemporary dictionaries, stressing "colonists' libertinage with slave women" and the attempts of the Code Noir to eliminate this behavior.⁶² However, the *Encyclopédie's* 1776 *Supplément* revised and expanded this article.⁶³ While describing the disorder caused by white men's attraction to slave women, it balanced that against the value of mulatto military service, their role in convincing slaves of white superiority, and their consumption of French products.

This recognition of the positive contributions of the "mulatto" class took form in March 1778, as France prepared for war with

Britain. A full year before d'Estaing returned to Saint-Domingue the Naval Ministry revived his controversial idea of honoring free colored civic virtue. The secretary ordered the creation of six silver medals for deserving men of color in the colonies. The medals were to bear the royal coat of arms on one side and two oak branches with the motto *Civili Virtuti Concessum* on the other.⁶⁴

This metropolitan interest in the patriotism of Saint-Domingue's men of color was illustrated again in 1781, when the ministry condemned Reynaud's Chasseurs Royaux. In that year, as a new governor and intendant arrived in Saint-Domingue, Versailles formally dissolved the unpopular company. Furthermore, in preparing a formal letter of instruction for the new administrators Bellecombe and Bongars, the Colonial Office drafted a list of 25 possible reforms for the colony. Only one of these items directly addressed Saint-Domingue's free population of color: a proposal to eliminate the manumission tax and require, instead, that an ex-slave's former master furnish the freedman with the basic needs of life. This idea was rejected and was not included in the Ministry's formal instructions. However, the instructions did note that "The most thoughtful persons consider . . . that today the people of color are the strongest barrier against trouble from the slaves. This class of men, in their opinion, deserves consideration and special handling, and they believe that the established degradation should be tempered, and even given a limit." Without adopting this position, the new naval secretary, de Castries, asked Bellecombe and Bongars to explore such racial reforms discretely with the colonial elite.⁶⁵

This sentence describing a limit to racial prejudice explains why, according to Raimond, "When MM De Bellecombe and Bongars came to administer the colony, a general rumor spread that these administrators carried an order from his Majesty declaring that in the future all legitimate *quarterons* [would be considered] white." Raimond believed the new officials had blocked a law that would have outlawed interracial marriages.⁶⁶ Following Castries's orders, Bellecombe tried to reverse the impression given by the Chasseurs Royaux episode that military service was yet another burden to be forced upon the free people of color. He awarded a pension of 500 livres to "Barthelemy Ibar known as Bartole", a free *quarteron* of Captain Vincent's generation, who had commanded the free colored militia companies of the Vérettes, Petite-Rivière, and Saint-Marc parishes.⁶⁷

Emboldened by the notion that the crown was going to limit racial prejudice, and perhaps still dismayed over Reynaud's treatment of free

colored soldiers, South Province's wealthiest free men of color proposed a new, nonmartial way to prove their virtue. In 1782 a group, probably led by Julien Raimond, asked Governor Bellecombe if it could join the colonial campaign to collect donations for a ship. The donation would illustrate that Saint-Domingue's free colored elite possessed the same liberal virtues claimed by white colonists. Bellecombe approved the request and put Raimond in charge. By his own account the indigo planter amassed 9,450 livres from about 20 of his neighbors in Aquin, amounting to the price of a fine saddle horse from each contributor, on average.⁶⁸

Though Raimond did not identify his contributors, seven years later he did name the free colored families of Aquin who supported his political efforts. In addition to the Boisrond brothers they included a dozen families of roughly similar affluence, nearly all of them linked by kinship. Few, however, were as wealthy as Raimond, whose estate was worth between 200,000 and 300,000 livres. Claude Leclerc, for example, was a wealthy light-skinned man of color who with his wife had been forbidden by the regional commandant to dine with a Bordeaux ship captain in Aquin, although they had business with the man. Leclerc was a grandson of the widow Montbrun, another of Raimond's supporters, who had three other free colored sons in France. Leclerc's widowed mother married Jean Lalanne in 1785, another man of color later named by Raimond as a partisan. The marriage contract listed the value of the widow Leclerc's property as 68,120 livres. The year before the marriage Jean Lalanne had assembled an indigo plantation split by inheritance, buying the pieces from other free men and women of color. The value of his estate in 1785 was 47,512 livres. In 1788 he himself made plans to go to France, with his stepson Leclerc.⁶⁹

Another of Raimond's Aquin supporters was Jean-Baptiste Lauzenguez, a free *quarteron* who gave both his daughter and his son 15,000 livres apiece in dowry when they married in 1785, both on the same day. The son also received 10,000 livres from his aunt. The Lauzenguez were connected by marriage to Aquin's free colored Ploys and Depas-Medinas, pillars of the illegal Curaçao trade.⁷⁰

Although Raimond's enthusiasm for a free colored patriotic donation to France lingered well into the Revolutionary period, in 1783, as the war ended, white contributions to the royal gift fell off and the subscription campaign was set aside. Raimond did not pursue free colored donations outside Aquin, apparently. Yet Aquin's free colored families were aware that France was enlarging the traditional definition of French citizenship. In 1782, the death of the Jewish planter

Philippe Depas in Aquin raised the question of whether his daughter, who had followed a family tradition by marrying one of her Gradis cousins in Bordeaux, could inherit colonial property.⁷¹ Overturning the civil disabilities borne by Jews in the kingdom, French courts validated the Depas testament, partly because of “the services this [Gradis] family has rendered to the state.” The Naval Secretary Castries was probably behind this decision, for in 1783 he had extended full civil rights to Sephardim in Saint-Domingue’s rich North Province.⁷²

Encouraged by these changes, and on the advice of Governor Bellecombe, Julien Raimond appealed directly to Castries, addressing the secretary in a series of memoranda, and meeting with him in Bordeaux.⁷³ The meeting was possible because in 1780 Raimond’s wife, Françoise Dasmard, had inherited property in France from her first husband. From 1779 to 1783, the War of American Independence had eliminated reliable contact between France and the South Province. But in 1784, normal shipping resumed and the couple sailed for France, leaving their colonial affairs in the care of Raimond’s brothers. Bellecombe’s tenure as governor had lapsed just about this time and when Raimond arrived in Bordeaux the two reestablished contact.⁷⁴

From France, in 1785 and 1786 Raimond submitted four manuscripts urging the Naval Ministry to reform colonial racism. His reasoning and rhetoric were fortified by footnotes, references to the classical past, citations of contemporary writers, and other characteristics of the enlightened “public” world from which he was excluded in Saint-Domingue. In these early writings Raimond justified his self-identification as a Frenchman on three grounds: economic productivity, utility to the state, and moral respectability.

Because colonial racism was built around the notion of free colored vice, Raimond’s first memorandum to Castries focused on virtue, challenging the negative feminine image of his class.⁷⁵ In opening and closing this first text, he described himself as attempting to restore to Saint-Domingue the Roman practice of allowing the descendants of slaves to become citizens after two generations. Perhaps revealing the influence of Rayal’s *Histoire des deux Indes*, he also held up modern Brazil and Santo Domingo as contemporary societies that had prospered by reducing the legal impact of racial prejudice.⁷⁶ He called for a return to the Code Noir’s stipulation that “freedmen” [*affranchis*] were subjects of the crown like any other. Praising the law’s Roman roots, he insisted that in Saint-Domingue as in the ancient world, slavery was not based on race but on law and property. Drawing on

the planters' liberal arguments against military rule, he contended that discrimination against propertied people was a threat to the plantation system, not its bulwark.

Raimond's opposition between the "rule of law" and arbitrary power showed his familiarity with French parliamentary and colonial anti-militia discourse, but he turned these arguments against sexualized racial stereotypes. In cases involving free people of color, French law abandoned husbands, proprietors, and loyal subjects. He cited the 1782 case of a man of color whose slave was stolen by a white. The judge ruled against the white man, whose attorney then proposed that the free man of color be punished for bringing these charges.⁷⁷ Raimond moved easily from this example of white legal immunity to the issue of sexual respectability. Rather than deny the lurid reputation of Saint-Domingue's *mulâtresses*, he argued that racism in the courts and society fostered colonial libertinage by emasculating men of color, destroying their authority over their wives and daughters. Because whites did not fear accusations from these men, they thought little of invading a home and dishonoring the women there as fathers and husbands stood by, helpless. Drawing on the anti-militia tradition, he claimed that white militia officers used their powers to separate husbands from wives and fathers from daughters, so they could debauch these unprotected women. European immigrants took concubines rather than establish legal unions because prejudice discouraged interracial marriages. Since racism made social mobility impossible, free men of color stopped trying to lead moral lives. Possibly referring to a controversial attempt by Castries in the 1780s to ameliorate slave conditions in Saint-Domingue, Raimond pointed out that even slaves enjoyed the king's protection and had some hope of advancing in society, though manumission. Despair and humiliation were the only prospects for men of color.⁷⁸

Raimond cited freely from the *Encyclopédie's* expanded 1776 article on *mulâtre*. Because free men of color were not allowed to enter the public arena in any way but through the militia, and then in the most demeaning fashion, they were not citizens. Even the wealthiest free colored planters were not allowed to serve as parish sextons or attend local assemblies. Using images of family and piety to undermine concerns about the ostentation of mulatto "courtesans," Raimond described white officials waiting outside church during mass to enforce new sumptuary laws. When respectable women of color emerged after the service, "More than once [these white men] produced the horrible spectacle of rendering several [women of color] almost naked in the public square."⁷⁹

Articulate, substantiated, couched in the philosophical language of virtue and justice while arguing in the practical terms of utility and social order, Raimond's manuscripts hit their mark with Castries and with several members of the his colonial reform committee, including the poet Saint-Lambert.⁸⁰ The naval secretary sent the memoranda to Saint-Domingue for comments from the new governor and intendant there.

However, Governor Bellecombe's replacement, La Luzerne, was far more skeptical than his metropolitan colleagues. His reply to Versailles in September 1786 described many of Raimond's charges as baseless. Some of his citations were unfaithful, La Luzerne claimed, while others were taken from obscure regulations or from legislative proposals that had never been enacted. The governor admitted that there was room for reform, but changes would have to come slowly.⁸¹

Sometime during this period, perhaps after La Luzerne's negative reply, Julien Raimond wrote directly to the king.⁸² Again emphasizing the utility and patriotism of the free population of color, he argued, as before, that prejudice produced debauchery, not the other way around. This text offered more than analysis; it advanced a specific reform. Because the letter bears no date there is no way to tell if it was written before La Luzerne's response, showing Raimond's own racism, or after, reflecting his realization that the crown would only adopt a conservative proposal.⁸³ He advocated that men and women who were wealthy, well-educated, legitimately born, had a light complexion, and could prove they had no relatives in slavery be considered "white." In his words, they would be "new whites," a term reminiscent of the "new Christians" that royal letters patent had made out of the Sephardic Jews of Bordeaux.

"Whitening" such individuals, whose characteristics were a fair description of Raimond himself, would open new vistas to all free people of color, intensifying their industry and loyalty to the colony and to France. In his first text he had claimed that two-thirds of the free population of color, or, he estimated, about 20,000 people, had no direct ties to the slave world. Now he offered a reform that he estimated would affect only about 2,000 people.⁸⁴ By breaking the color line, the measure would restore hope to poorer free people of color and allow indigent whites to marry, found families, and establish themselves on the soil. The encouragement of interracial marriage would swell the ranks of small hillside farmers, bolster the colonial economy, and protect the great plantations against maroon slaves.

Raimond's last pre-Revolutionary memorandum received no response from the ministry. La Luzerne succeeded Castries as naval secretary in 1787 and Versailles was wary about ordering even minor changes in a colony so quick to condemn "ministerial tyranny." In November 1788 Raimond was still awaiting a decision.⁸⁵

However, back in Saint-Domingue some antiauthoritarian colonial intellectuals shared Versailles' interest in rewarding free colored virtue. Though he believed that racial mixture created individuals predisposed to seek pleasure and avoid work, Moreau de Saint-Méry also believed that "The people of color are in general good and capable of moral advancement and one cannot sufficiently praise the women's compassion for the poor and especially the sick."⁸⁶

If this stance seemed to contradict his biological view of racial "corruption," the white residents of Cap Français duly chastised Moreau for his inconsistency. In 1789 they labeled him an abolitionist for attempting to award a medal of virtue to a free black man. These events, on the very eve of the Revolution, illustrate how threatening the notion of free colored virtue was to Dominguan society. When men of color, led by Raimond, reintroduced this idea to the colony in 1790 and 1791, the resulting explosion destabilized slave society, as chapter 8 shows.

In 1785, Charles Arthaud, Moreau de Saint-Méry's brother-in-law and the royal physician of Cap Français, established a colonial scientific society. Moreau was among its charter members. This *Cercle des Philadelphes*, as it was called, proclaimed allegiance to "enlightened" and "universal" principles of rational inquiry and open discussion. As James McClellan notes, the *Cercle* was as much a civic institution as a research society, its name reflecting the founders' desire to enhance social harmony. Because the society aimed to "contribute to the spread of useful knowledge and . . . furnish useful examples of good morals and virtue," its founders recommended that a special committee report on members' activities and reputations. The founders of the *Cercle* shared the belief that Saint-Domingue would develop its own virtuous public, and that that rational reforms would rescue it from military despotism. In Paris, the very year of the *Cercle*'s founding, the Abbé Raynal and Victor Malouet, a member of the colonial reform committee at the Naval Ministry, published an *Essai sur l'administration de Saint-Domingue* (Essay on the administration of Saint-Domingue), advocating a civil rather than military government, with annual district meetings to air complaints.⁸⁷

The Cercle des Philadelphes aimed above all to improve the profitability of Saint-Domingue's plantation system. But in its commitment to social improvement through public discussion, the Cercle, specifically Moreau and Arthaud, stumbled over the racial barriers that closed the "public sphere" to all nonwhites. In the 1780s, while investigating the history of Saint-Domingue's charitable institutions as part of the Cercle's attempt to publicize local philanthropy, Moreau heard of the charitable work of a free black named Jasmin Thomasseau, also known as Jean Jasmin. Jasmin was born in Africa in 1714 and had been sold in Saint-Domingue to a mason, who eventually bequeathed him to a building contractor. With the support of both his former masters, Jasmin was freed in 1741. He married another free African and in 1756 the couple, with their slaves, built a four-room structure on property granted them by the Cap Français poorhouse. Here, next to the city hospice, Jasmin, his wife, and their twelve slaves cared for 12 to 18 invalids, mostly poor people of color. Their work was at first partially subsidized by the Jesuits, but after the expulsion of this order in 1762, their only outside support came from an annual Holy Week collection. Besides an exemption from militia duty, Jasmin received little assistance from the colonial government.⁸⁸

Impressed with Jasmin's achievement, Moreau sought public recognition for the hospice. In 1788 he traveled to France, carrying character references for Jasmin from "the most esteemed persons of Cap." His most pressing business was to request a royal charter for the Cercle des Philadelphes, but he asked the Colonial Office to charter the hospice, as well. The Naval Ministry issued both documents and agreed to grant Jasmin an honorary pension, as it had done for Captain Vincent, Bartelemy Ibar, and other soldiers of color. Moreau hoped to make Jasmin's hospice a public institution equivalent to the *maréchaussée*. The naval secretary consented that slaves donated to the hospice for a fixed period of service would be manumitted without tax, like slave constables. To honor Jasmin's contribution to colonial society, Versailles agreed to award him a gold medal.⁸⁹

Like d'Estaing with his proposed militia prizes in 1765, Moreau believed that Jasmin's medal would encourage other colonial philanthropists. He convinced the Royal Agricultural Society in Paris to award Jasmin a second gold medal for the way he used his small farm outside Cap Français to feed the hospice. Finally, Moreau asked his friends in the Cercle des Philadelphes to consider Jasmin's work. Arthaud and others toured the hospice in July 1789 and the Cercle agreed to give Jasmin its own gold medal of civic virtue in August 1789.

However, when Versailles informed Cap Français' royal attorney of its plans to honor Jasmin, a major scandal ensued. Whites had already defeated efforts to reform slavery in the colony. In 1783 the Naval Ministry had issued new regulations aimed at humanizing the condition of slaves but the council of Cap Français had refused to register the ordinance. In 1787, partly because of this controversy, the Naval Minister dissolved the Cap Council, leaving Saint-Domingue with only the council of Port-au-Prince and further inflaming that council's anger at administrators.⁹⁰ Colonists were aware by 1788 that abolitionists in Pennsylvania, England, and France were challenging the inhumanity of the slave trade and slavery itself.

Unfortunately for Moreau, Arthaud, and Jasmin, some colonists suspected that the Cercle, with its connections to learned men in Philadelphia, London, and Paris, and its devotion to reform and brotherly love, was sympathetic to these ideas. Colonial officials advised Versailles against awarding a medal to Jasmin. In August 1789 when the Cercle notified the acting administrators that it, too, planned to award Jasmin a medal, those plans were also suspended. Moreau was furious over these dismissals. He publicly consoled Jasmin in his *Description*, writing in the patronizing *tu* form.

Virtuous Jasmin! Let hope not perish in your heart! If the witnesses to your efforts are for the most part unimpressed, if a prejudice that has nothing in common with your work prevents them from honoring you as you deserve, take solace; a voice dedicated to truth, to the praise of good men and condemnation of evil [men] will publish your virtues. This voice will be heard and . . . public censure will then be the lot of all those incapable of following you, who said that to reward your good works was to threaten the political safety of the colony.⁹¹

By the time Moreau published these words the Cercle had expelled him and Arthaud as "traitors" amid rumors they were abolitionists. In 1789 when the Declaration of the Rights of Man arrived in the colony, Moreau was in France but a crowd in Cap Français forced Arthaud, clad only in his nightshirt, to ride about the city on an ass. Members of the Cercle resigned "not wishing to be associated with an organization that so merited public disgrace."⁹²

Although Arthaud and Moreau were eventually restored to the Cercle, both men revised their position on free colored civic virtue. In July 1790 the Cercle awarded Moreau a prize for his panegyric on the white founders of two colonial poorhouses. Apparently the publication did not mention Jasmin, although elsewhere Moreau had declared

him equal to these other philanthropists. At one of the last meetings of the Cercle in August 1791 Arthaud presented a paper on “the physical and moral character of the mulattos of Saint-Domingue,” refuting pro-free colored pamphlets published in Paris.⁹³

* * *

After 1769 Saint-Domingue’s free men of color struggled to adjust to the new terms of colonial racism. At times it appeared that the imperial government was trying to create a positive identity for these men. Although administrators made manumission more expensive, especially for women, they allowed couples to use the Code Noir’s marriage clause to formalize their liberty, which had not occurred in the 1760s. More important, they established a new kind of public manumission procedure, by awarding liberty papers for *maréchaussée* service. However, these innovations had few benefits for freeborn people of color. Indeed they reinforced the reorientation of colonial society along lines of race rather than social class; the now-impermeable color line placed wealthy men and women of African descent in the same category as ex-slaves.

The 1779 Savannah expedition and its aftermath confirmed these changes, signaling that it was going to be very difficult for propertied families of color to use the government’s notion of “civic virtue” to attain more respect. Administrators demanded too much sacrifice, and some colonists described free colored service as “unnatural.” When respected organizations like the Cercle des Philadelphes recognized free colored civic virtue, colonial public opinion was enraged. The very ideas of virtue and color had become antithetical.

Given that there were roughly 300 wealthy free people of color in the area around Cap Français and Port-au-Prince,⁹⁴ why was it that the most important challenge to the new color line came from the South Province? A number of factors may account for this. Their geographic isolation meant that free colored planters in this region seem not to have experienced the “humiliations” Julien Raimond described until the War of American Independence, when their wealth and self-confidence were at a peak. Its remote location also meant that the South was late to receive the post-1763 flood of *petits blancs* immigrants and relatively slow to participate in the construction of a self-consciously “white” colonial public. Because they saw few of the hundreds of French ships that docked every year at Cap Français, and dealt more frequently with foreign merchants, Raimond and his neighbors may have felt, paradoxically, more like French colonists

than free coloreds did in the North and West. And evidence suggests that in the South Province whites and free coloreds alike were less attracted to civic virtue and the discipline of French imperial military culture than to commercial freedom and the “liberal virtues” Raimond championed in his memoranda to the Naval Ministry. The South had no free colored “military leadership class” like that described by Stewart King.

For Raimond, the production of wealth and the rule of law should be Saint-Domingue’s fundamental priorities, and racism was an obstacle to colonial prosperity. He advocated reforms that would encourage European immigrants to marry colonial women of color. What he proposed, in effect, was a return to the creole society that the South had known before the Seven Years’ War.

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CHAPTER 8



FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR IN THE SOUTHERN PENINSULA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION, 1789–1791

Historians of the Haitian Revolution have traditionally emphasized the power of the sword, or rather, of the cane knife, over the power of the pen. Nearly all authors describe the great plantation uprising of August 22, 1791 in Saint-Domingue's North Province as launching the Revolution. But these events cannot be understood without considering tensions in Saint-Domingue's southern peninsula and the Parisian publications of the region's most prominent free colored planter, Julien Raimond. By 1785, Raimond was living in France, pressuring authorities to eliminate, or at least moderate, racism towards colonial free men of color.

As preceding chapters have shown, Raimond came from the one province in Saint-Domingue where this idea seemed feasible. Mixed-race families had been wealthy and prominent residents of the southern peninsula since French colonization began. In the 1780s, the cultural changes experienced in the North and West were still new to this isolated region. The South Province had just one city, Les Cayes, and fewer of the new public spaces than any other region of Saint-Domingue. Its external commerce, including its slave trade, consisted mostly of smuggling and inter-island exchanges. Unlike the North and the West Provinces, the South had no wealthy free blacks to speak of. Raimond's roots here allowed him to present Saint-Domingue as home to hundreds

of property-owning, mixed-race colonial families, virtuous citizens humiliated by the prejudices of their vice-ridden white neighbors.

In fact, his descriptions ignored conditions in and around the colony's two great cities. The importation of enslaved Africans reached new highs in the 1780s. In Port-au-Prince and especially Cap Français, which received the bulk of slave imports, this decade had also given rise to a large and self-confident free black population. Raimond, in stressing the social and cultural distance between free people of color and slaves, insisted Saint-Domingue had few free blacks. Out of ignorance or self-interest, he dismissed the reality that many free men of color, like those serving in the constabulary, had been born in slavery. He disparaged the colonial idea of African descent as an "indelible stain" by emphasizing the generations that had passed since the ancestors of free colored planters had been enslaved. Emphasizing the irrationality of dividing colonial society by genealogy, Raimond dismissed the complex social connections linking some free people to the enslaved population. He also discounted the deep attachment of elite colonists and new immigrants to the idea of white purity. His descriptions of brown-skinned citizens suffering racial injustice appealed to revolutionaries in France, but frightened the many colonists who based their social identity on their white skin. When Raimond inspired Parisian legislators to force even minor racial reforms on Saint-Domingue in May 1791, the resulting civil war between free men of color and whites destabilized the slave regime.

This is not the place to tell the story of the Haitian Revolution, which in recent years has received illuminating treatment by David Geggus, Carolyn Fick, and Laurent Dubois. Instead, this chapter traces actions of South Province free coloreds from the beginning of the revolutionary era until the moment when rebel slaves replaced them as the major threat to the colonial order. To say that Raimond's pen started the Haitian Revolution is not to credit him with trying to end slavery. Nor is it to deny the centrality of the massive August 1791 uprising outside Cap Français. As this chapter explains, however, Raimond and his political network in the South did help spark Saint-Domingue's first Revolutionary-era slave conspiracy. In 1790, in what had once been Torbec parish, descendants of the free colored planters who had resisted the 1769 militia reforms prepared to fight for rights they believed Raimond had won for them in France. Authorities disarmed them, but within weeks slaves from neighboring plantations were planning a revolt, citing free colored encouragement.

This slave conspiracy had no physical support from Torbec's planters, and local authorities quickly squelched it. Like Raimond

himself, the free coloreds of Torbec and Les Cayes simply wanted France to admit them to the colonial public in recognition of their virtue, wealth, and utility. They wanted to return to the class hierarchy that had once defined creole society, when there had been no color line for rich men and women. As slave-owners and wealthy planters, they did not want to stir up a revolution in Saint-Domingue. But that is exactly what they ended up doing.

* * *

In hindsight, “liberty, equality, and fraternity” were dangerous slogans for Saint-Domingue’s colonists in 1789 and 1790. In 1788, the census counted nearly as many free people of color as whites and those two categories had never been more rigidly defined. With 30,000 enslaved Africans arriving annually, the colony depended on armed men of color to maintain social order. Yet the white colonists believed that Saint-Domingue’s racial hierarchy was an expression of political, moral, and scientific truths, all of which identified mixed-race corruption as a threat to civilization. Many hoped that the Revolution would lead to another, higher level of social regeneration: the victory of civilian over military government, as the colonial elite had envisioned in 1769. During those events, wealthy planters had directed the actions of poor whites and free people of color in the South Province against the “tyranny” of a new royal militia ordinance. But racism and immigration had weakened the bonds that once held creole society together. As Revolutionary news arrived from France, Saint-Domingue’s poor whites saw an opportunity to throw off not only administrative despotism but planter arrogance as well.

Saint-Domingue’s wealthiest free people of color understood that when colonial whites spoke of “regeneration” they did not mean reviving interracial creole relationships. On March 15, 1789, François Raimond, Louis-François Boisrond, and others from Aquin wrote the naval secretary asking for the right to choose their own representatives for France’s approaching Estates General.¹ By the time Versailles denied their request, that Estates General had become the revolutionary National Assembly, but free colored planters knew that appealing to the metropole was far safer than making such a proposal to colonial whites.

Throughout the colony, confusion about what revolutionary events in France would mean for Saint-Domingue created dramatic uncertainties, for whites, free colored, and enslaved people. In October 1789, as the colony absorbed news of the fall of the Bastille, the abolition of hereditary privileges, and the drafting of the Declaration of

the Rights of Man and Citizen, a furor arose in the area around Cap Français. In the North Province, a plantation manager from the Limonade parish wrote his employer in France on October 22 that whites feared for their lives. Estate workers claimed that Frenchmen had asked the king to free the slaves. On several estates, he reported, slaves had informed their masters that they were free. On others, they were asking for three days a week free from plantation labor. The following day he wrote that the inhabitants of Cap Français had been up all night, firing the alarm cannons and preparing for an attack by 15,000 slaves. The Limonade parish assembly scheduled round-the-clock patrols to stop slave gatherings. One slave had tried to kill his master, saying “now we are all equal by order of the King.”²

Amid this confusion, the overseer noted, a free mulatto named Fabien Gentil in Limonade had formed a plot “against us” with accomplices that included property-less whites. The overseer did not explicitly connect this to his fear of an eminent slave revolt, only noting that the whites would surely be tortured for “their terrible crime.” In fact, since his manumission in 1780, Gentil had achieved remarkable success for an ex-slave. He had moved from Cap Français to Limonade and opened a store at the wharf there in partnership with a white man. Though the business failed in 1784, the following year Gentil let a house in Limonade to another white who ran an inn there. Marrying, freeing several slaves, settling his debts, and acquiring an undeveloped plot of land, Gentil may have rallied his white friends to protest the heavy militia burden caused by the rumors of a slave revolt.³ They may also have been emboldened by France’s new Declaration of Rights, the first article of which proclaimed that men are born and remain free and equal in rights, with social distinctions only legitimate if they were based on common utility.

Gentil’s alleged conspiracy amid fears of a slave rebellion in the North Province illustrates the conservatism of free coloreds in the South, whose reaction to the Declaration of Rights was publicized in Paris by Raimond. In November 1789, the residents of Petit-Goâve parish, just north of Aquin, gathered to elect deputies for a new Colonial Assembly. This larger meeting, in turn, would choose men to represent Saint-Domingue in France. According to a white witness, “the free people of color respectfully presented themselves [at the meeting] and asked us to please receive their suggestions for reform [*cahier*]; we accepted it and read it aloud [to the assembly].”⁴

The free colored recommendation that the Revolution “abolish the prejudice against them” infuriated the Petit-Goâve parish assembly.

When the petitioners refused to withdraw their suggestions, whites demanded to know who had drawn up the document. After arresting a handful of prominent free *quarterons* and disarming Petit-Goâve's free population of color, the assembly learned that a prominent white man, Ferrand de Beaudière, had drafted the petition. The parish had already nominated this senior attorney who had once been the district's royal judge to represent it at the Colonial Assembly. However, Beaudière was a controversial figure. He had come to his office as admiralty judge in Petit-Goâve in 1766, during the anti-militia tension between Governor Rohan-Montbazon and the Port-au-Prince Council. Probably because he was a client of the Naval Secretary Choiseul, the council refused to recognize Beaudière's appointment, claiming that he demonstrated insufficient respect for its powers.⁵ Nor did this conflict disappear when Rohan-Montbazon exiled members of the council after the anti-militia revolt. In 1784, Port-au-Prince's high court deposed the Petit-Goâve judge for having used "injurious and outrageous expressions" against its officers.⁶ For this reason, some of Beaudière's neighbors may have seen him, still, as an agent of "despotic" military governors. From this perspective, an alliance between the judge and the local free men of color threatened the possibility of colonial liberty under the rule of law. Beaudière's enemies sealed this notion of his corruption by evoking the sexual powers of mixed-race women, when they claimed his relationship with the free colored widow Savariot had influenced his judgment.⁷

Within 24 hours of arresting the judge, members of the parish assembly decapitated him in the town square, despite the attempts of parish leaders to postpone the execution. The town identified Baudry, another white man, as a co-conspirator and forced him to ride backward through Petit-Goâve on an ass, carrying his friend's bloody head. The parish banished Baudry from the jurisdiction and dumped the judge's body where slave merchants discarded their corpses. They did not harm the free colored petitioners.

In nearby Aquin, whites were convinced that the wealthiest free colored indigo planters were involved in Petit Goâve's subversive proposal. About 25 days after Beaudière's death two-dozen armed men surrounded the plantation house of the 70-year-old indigo planter Guillaume Labadie. A neighbor and friend of Julien Raimond, Labadie had been the lieutenant of Aquin's free colored militia in the days when men of color held such ranks. Carrying torches and muskets, the group searched Labadie's home for a copy of the Petit-Goâve petition or evidence of a political meeting. Finding little, they arrested

him, shot him during a scuffle, and transported him to town for treatment and interrogation. A similar group visited the homes of Louis-François Boisrond and François Raimond, seizing their papers.⁸

But neither man was home. Authorities in Les Cayes, the provincial capital, had summoned them, as Julien Raimond's closest colonial allies, to answer questions about their political activities. Les Cayes feared a free colored revolt and the resulting social chaos. Although white planters and legal officials in 1789 mostly defended colonial racism, none of them wanted to see resentful *petits blancs* harm propertied men, regardless of color. It was one thing to reinforce racial ideology and another to attack flourishing plantations. Wealthy whites were the ones who intervened to save Guillaume Labadie and delay Beaudière's death. François Raimond assured the leaders of Les Cayes that his group would not present their grievances in the colony, but only to the French Estates General.⁹

As the Revolutionary era opened, class tensions divided the white population of Les Cayes. The city was the peninsula's chief commercial port and had grown dramatically in the 1770s and 1780s, drawing in immigrants. Yet it was also the seat of a rich sugar plain with an established creole elite dating to the beginning of the century. The town had two Masonic lodges, one established in the 1740s by visiting British merchants, with a membership that included many of the local militia officers. The second, founded in 1784, was nearly three-quarters metropolitan and had an argumentative relationship with the older colonial lodges, describing their actions as "tyrannical" in 1787.¹⁰

In 1789, these kinds of tensions led Les Cayes's poor whites to establish their own "Patriot" club, reviving the antiauthoritarian rhetoric of the 1760s. When a Patriot killed a young white man in a duel for refusing to wear the new tricolor cocarde, a crowd decapitated the corpse. The 185 citizens who attended Les Cayes's first Revolutionary parish assembly on December 8, 1789 wrote to Paris to ensure that the wealthy men representing them before the National Assembly would interpret the ambiguous word "habitant" to mean "colonial resident," not just "planter."¹¹

Despite such divisions, white Saint-Domingue did not fall apart as quickly as Martinique, where planters and *petits blancs* were already at odds in 1789 and embattled by 1790. In the larger colony, the need to deflect free colored claims to citizenship united rich and poor whites until 1791, when free colored political success and slave uprisings redefined the meaning of the colonial Revolution. For two years, whites did their best to monopolize the Revolution in Saint-Domingue.

On February 15, 1790, parish representatives gathered in a rented Masonic lodge in Les Cayes to establish a Revolutionary government for the South Province. Acting on longstanding regional complaints, this Provincial Assembly decreed that henceforth all tax revenues would be spent locally. They ordered the formation of a new regional security force and a printing press. The delegates barred free people of color from formal parish meetings and created a special white militia brigade to monitor political correspondence arriving by ship. Nevertheless, the South Province did allow free coloreds to submit written complaints through a white patron.¹² The Provincial Assembly hoped to keep free people of color on the fringes of the Revolution, rather than exclude them entirely, probably so that mulatto constables and militiamen would answer to local assemblies, not to royal military officials. In its March 3, 1790 meeting, the assembly decided to use the first muster of a new free colored militia to announce how this class could submit its reform suggestions.

But Les Cayes's free people of color acted first. On March 9, the free colored saddle-maker Louis Chalvière asked to address the deputies. Although the assembly had not yet formally established the new free colored militia, the artisan laid before them a plan that local men of color had devised for such a company, including the election of officers and the drafting of a reform petition.¹³ The next day a free colored troop appeared before the assembly, calling itself the *Grenadiers Nationaux*. Its leaders were Chalvière and Hyacinthe Bleck, another free colored saddle maker and entrepreneur.

This was the whites' first indication that free men of color would use the militia as a political tool. But the deputies still believed they could control Revolutionary symbols and institutions. The assembly approved Chalvière's *Grenadiers Nationaux* but reserved the right to name whites as its quartermasters and standard bearers. Elsewhere Dominguan whites had already tried to prevent free men of color from wearing the Revolutionary cocarde. Raimond claimed that Governor Blanchelande had affirmed that men of color did have this right. But white revolutionaries distrusted the governor's support of free men of color; they were determined to keep the new militia under their command. Les Cayes's free colored *Grenadiers* did not challenge this position, for they chose a white man as their captain.¹⁴

Across Saint-Domingue in 1789 free people of color identified militia service as their most important contribution to colonial civic life. In November more than 40 free men of color in the North Province's Grande Rivière parish signed a petition to their Provincial Assembly in Cap Français.¹⁵ After describing the importance of their

class in Saint-Domingue's security, this text characterized whites as "despotic": "in scorn of the services that we unceasingly render to the colony. They treat us . . . these fathers, like slaves . . . and finally become tyrants to us." Grande Rivière's men of color asked the Provincial Assembly to inform France of their loyalty and service so the king and French National Assembly would secure for them "all the benefits precious to all French people." They sought the right to practice all crafts and occupations, to be recognized as good and faithful subjects, to be commanded by men drawn from their own class and requested "that it be expressly prohibited to call us *affranchis* [ex-slaves]." They asked to participate in the new colonial assemblies and to be exempted from special work assignments, except those required of all citizens. Wielding the idealistic language colonial reformers had used since d'Estaing, they asserted that eliminating prejudice would only increase free colored virtue and patriotism.

In 1789 and 1790, Saint-Domingue's free people of color were determined to enter the colonial public. The emergence of that public after 1769 had solidified the new ideology of white citizenship, though governors like d'Estaing and Bellecombe had tried to temper racism. Free men of color recognized in 1789 that if the Revolution gave white Patriots, rather than military administrators, control of the colony, there would be nothing to check prejudice. Already, the Provincial Assembly of the West had forced men of color there to swear fidelity and respect for the whites, though in the frontier parishes of Vêrrettes and Petite Rivière free colored militiamen refused to obey map 8.1.¹⁶

In the South Province free coloreds were less assertive, but by the time Aquin's whites ransacked Guillaume Labadie's house for incriminating papers, one of that parish's most successful indigo planters was making racism the central colonial controversy in Paris.

Beginning in 1784, when he arrived in France, Julien Raimond spent five years working alone to convince the Naval Ministry to reform colonial racial laws. Traveling from the Angoumois region in western France to meet with sympathetic ex-colonial officials like the former Naval Minister de Castries in Bordeaux, the Aquin planter had no close allies in the metropole. In 1788 Jacques-Pierre Brissot formed the abolitionist Society of the Friends of the Blacks but until August 1789 this group had no connection with Raimond, who was, as yet, no abolitionist.¹⁷ He and his wife still owned 100 slaves in the colony.

This isolation and attachment to the old colonial system explain Raimond's slow reaction to early Revolutionary events. He continued



Map 8.1 Parishes Where Free Men of Color Protested Election Exclusion in 1790–91.

to meet with bureaucrats in Versailles even after the fall of the Bastille, traveling back and forth from Angoumois. Then, in late July 1789 in Jarnac, near Angoulême, he hired a notary to record his claim to be an official delegate of Saint-Domingue's free people of color. Raimond explained that a formal meeting in the colony would have prompted "disadvantageous suspicions," so he possessed no written charge from his constituents. But he formally transferred his representative powers to Charles de Rohan-Chabot, the Count de Jarnac. Jarnac, who owned lands nearby had heard of Raimond's correspondence with the colonial ministry, and volunteered to help him with his case. The nobleman agreed to present free colored claims to the Estates General and work for a law that would legally "whiten" persons of mixed blood with two generations of legitimacy, like Raimond himself. Jarnac even wrote to Raimond's friends in Aquin for more information. But his sponsorship produced nothing.¹⁸

Perhaps anticipating this, Raimond moved to Paris weeks later. On August 25 he appeared at Versailles and met with the president of the National Assembly about free colored representation. The following day he spoke at the Hotel Massiac in Paris, describing his reform ideas to a group of conservative absentee planters meeting there. Although they recognized the positive response Raimond might generate in France, these men saw no reason to chip away at racial categories.¹⁹

Vincent Ogé was another exceptionally wealthy Dominguan *quarteron* living in France when the Revolution occurred. Though there is no evidence that the two men knew each other before meeting in Paris, Ogé shared Raimond's instinct to search out white patrons and allies. Within days of Raimond's presentation he too appeared at the Hotel Massiac, distributing a printed "Motion" that neither mentioned his racial status nor referred to Saint-Domingue's free people of color. A wholesale merchant and landlord based in Cap Français, Ogé portrayed himself as a colonial proprietor and "native" interested in protecting "our properties" and deflecting the disaster that "menaces us." He attacked administrative despotism and proposed commercial reforms that would benefit colonial planters and merchants. Yet he admitted that he believed that liberty was "for all men" and should be given to them, eventually. He claimed to have a plan to accomplish this and save the colony from the abyss over which it tottered.²⁰ The Massiac colonists were unresponsive.

The two wealthy men of color got a better reception from another colonial group meeting in Paris. On August 29, 1789, 30 free people of color had assembled in the offices of Etienne-Louis Hector de Joly, a white Parisian barrister. The group consisted largely of Parisian

artisans and domestics, led by a master saddle-maker and a perfumer. By September 8 they had drawn up their own proposal for racial reform and submitted it to the Hotel Massiac. On September 12, they met again, after extending invitations to Raimond, Ogé, and other colonial people of color in the capital. Raimond's influence on the political strategy of this group was immediately apparent.²¹ At the first meeting he attended, the de Joly group announced a campaign to donate six million livres to the Revolution as a "patriotic gift." While artisans of color like Chalvière and Bleck in Les Cayes were emphasizing their civic virtue as national guardsmen, Raimond fell back on the same "liberal virtue" arguments wealthy planters had used to argue against military rule. Vincent Ogé later explained that Raimond figured that Saint-Domingue's economy produced 120 million livres in profit and that free people of color controlled about one-third of this, or 24 million. The Aquin planter proposed to give the Revolution one quarter of this sum, or six million. On September 22 the group chose Raimond and Ogé as its second and third deputies to the assembly, behind de Joly, the white lawyer.²²

These leaders returned to Versailles between September 28 and October 10, 1789, requesting time to address the National Assembly. On October 22 de Joly spoke to the deputies in a speech the printed version of which proclaimed 19 times in 9 pages that men of color were citizens, "Frenchmen who groan under the yoke of oppression." The speech drew heavily on the still-new Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, emphasizing "these inalienable rights based on nature and the social contract." Free people of color were natural men, "Americans," who "live as foreigners in their own country." Colonial whites, like French aristocrats, had created "outrageous distinctions between citizens of the same country." de Joly underscored free colored readiness to defend the nation and to donate six million livres to the Revolution.²³

Simultaneously, the Parisian free colored group printed its reform proposals and de Joly delivered them to the assembly's Credentials Committee. The document advocated eliminating racial distinctions from the law, so that in the colonies there would be only free men and slaves. Yet, like Raimond's pre-Revolutionary writings, it offered a racial definition of French identity. All slaves with white ancestry would be freed. Avoiding discussion of whether these "mulattos" were more European or more African, the Parisian group instead labeled them "American." From about the time Raimond and Ogé joined its ranks, de Joly's group began to call itself "The Society of American Colonists." By July 1790 Aquin's Louis-François Boisrond

had adopted the term, referring to whites as “French colonists.” As “Americans,” people of color were a new and natural people, not the degenerate product of two pure races, as their enemies asserted.²⁴ The free colored political movement was drawing on the double identity of planters like Raimond and Boisrond. They were not a mixture of Africans and Europeans: they were both creoles and French.

A pamphlet published sometime in 1789 by “J.M.C. American” captured the full thrust of this claim to be new people, taking up the themes of natural virtue and public spiritedness. Like Raimond’s first memorandum to Castries, this *Précis des gémissemens des sang-mêlés dans les colonies françaises* (Summary of the agonies of mixed blood people in the French colonies) seized upon long-standing criticisms of colonial behavior. Planters were little better than Eastern despots, for “the plantations are nearly all harems for their owners.” Echoing travel writers like Girod de Chantrons, the “Summary” accused Dominguan whites of the same tyranny and unchecked ambition they condemned in colonial administrators. These characteristics explained the rise of color prejudice. In their lust and greed, colonists had deceived the government into confusing free people of color with slaves. These families were not African but French; their color simply showed that they were “American.” It was planters, with their “scandalous mores” who produced a mixed-race people, many of whom they still kept in slavery, creating an “infamous commerce in French blood.” J.M.C. recommended the establishment of a home for all mixed-blood children born into slavery, to be financed by fines levied against their white fathers as proposed by the Code Noir. Taking Raimond’s arguments to the pamphlet-reading public, the *Summary* used images of tropical sexuality and colonial inhumanity to defend, not attack, the free population of color. These people were “fond and loyal native subjects of the King [*régnicoles*] as valuable as other, European subjects to agriculture, commerce, crafts and population.”²⁵

In rejecting the stereotypes of sexual degeneracy, foreignness, and parasitism, the “American Colonists” tapped a current in French political culture that had far more power than abolitionism. What did it mean to be French? Before the Revolution, religious controversies had widened the definition of French citizenship. From 1787, Protestants had full civil equality with other royal subjects. But if “parentage, residence and obedience,” not religion, made someone French, ethnic identity remained an obstacle. French-born Sephardic Jews had argued that they were *régnicoles* and, in Bordeaux, some had even stood for election to the Estates General. Many qualified as “active citizens” with voting rights under the terms of the 1791

Constitution by being independently employed, financially solvent, serving in the National Guard, and paying taxes equal to the value of three days' work. But adult male Jews born in French territory, like free men of color, could not be more than "passive citizens."²⁶

With his many Sephardic neighbors in Aquin, Raimond surely appreciated the similarity of Jewish and free colored disenfranchisement. In fact, it may have been this appreciation that allowed him to bring the Abbé Henri Grégoire into the arena of colonial affairs. Raimond later described Grégoire's writings as the most important ingredient of free colored political success in Paris, and he was Grégoire's chief informant about colonial conditions. The Abbé was a member of the National Assembly's Credentials Committee, which for 12 sessions in October and November 1789 considered how France's colonial population should be represented. It was probably in these gatherings that Raimond and Grégoire met.²⁷

Like many of his compatriots, Grégoire had little knowledge of or interest in colonial affairs before 1789. Instead, he was known as an advocate of Jewish assimilation in his home region of eastern France. These Ashkenazic Jews were more numerous than Bordeaux's Sephardic population and were also less assimilated. They lived in ghettos, were prohibited from many occupations, and often did not speak French. Eighteenth-century descriptions of French Ashkenazim emphasized their foreignness in many of the same ways that colonists characterized Saint-Domingue's free people of color. They were said to be physically weak, lazy, greedy, parasitic, and effeminate. Even Grégoire noted that "They almost all have sparse beards, a normal sign of a feminine temperament." But his 1788 *Essay on the physical, moral and political regeneration of the Jews* argued that prejudice, not nature, had produced most of the Jews' undesirable characteristics. Like colonial reformers, Grégoire believed that repealing discriminatory laws would make Jews more loyal and productive.²⁸ Attaching little value to their Jewishness, he advocated integrating the Ashkenazim into French society. Jews were "members of that universal family which make up the brotherhood of all people . . . children of the same father, turn away all excuses for loathing your brothers, [you] will all one day be united in the same cradle."²⁹

Before the Revolution, the royal government had been moving toward emancipation of the Ashkenazim. Nevertheless, in 1789 most representatives to the Estates General saw little connection between the Revolution and Jewish citizenship; they considered this a regional controversy best resolved by local authorities, like questions about "mulatto" rights.³⁰ Raimond and Grégoire helped transform such local issues into symbols of the larger Revolution.

Grégoire, originally, wanted little to do with free men of color or abolitionists. However, his meetings in Paris with Raimond and the “American Colonists” seem to have changed his mind. Although the text of his October 1789 pamphlet *Memorandum in favor of the Jews*, probably written in August or September, criticized those who ignored the plight of Jews to fight on behalf of slaves or mulattos, an introduction written just before publication acknowledged that the two causes were equivalent. By February 1790 Grégoire had dropped his efforts on behalf of Jews to work with the “American Colonists.”³¹

Over the same period, the Society of the Friends of the Blacks began to play an increasingly visible role in free colored efforts to win representation in the French National Assembly. De Joly was a member of the Friends and served with its founder Jacques-Pierre Brissot in the Revolutionary city government of Paris. Nevertheless, the “American Colonists” did not formally ally with the abolitionist society until November 25, 1789. Individual members of the society were extremely busy in September and October 1789. Even the British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson, who arrived from London on August 7 to help the fledgling French society, had difficulty scheduling a meeting.³²

On October 9, 1789, Brissot’s journal *Le Patriote Français* began to report on the free colored campaign to win representation at the National Assembly, signaling an alliance between the men of color and the abolitionists. Sometime before October 22, Raimond, Ogé, and other men of color dined with Clarkson at Lafayette’s house. On the eve of de Joly’s appearance before the National Assembly to present free colored credentials, the *Patriote Français* confidently predicted free colored representation.³³

Grégoire and other members of the Credentials Committee decided that the Colonists did have a legitimate claim to representation. But planter interests in the Assembly suppressed this report and attacked Raimond’s emphasis on people of mixed-race as hypocritical. On November 29, 1789, a group of free blacks came to the public bar of the National Assembly. Presumably organized by colonial planters, this group accused the predominately mulatto “American Colonists” of racism. They mocked Raimond’s proposed six million livres gift by offering to donate twice as much. In response, the “American Colonists” recruited new members. Within three months, free blacks comprised nearly half their company. In December 1789 the group produced another pamphlet describing themselves as tyrannized citizens. In 21 pages they showed how colonial laws from 1685 to 1779 had been designed to bypass the letter and spirit of the Code Noir. The result was that “forty thousand Frenchmen have been categorized as slaves.”³⁴

Grégoire also published a pamphlet in late 1789, reflecting the connections in his mind between Jewish regeneration and this colonial controversy. Two months after his *Memorandum in favor of the Jews* he released a *Memorandum in favor of the people of color or mixed-bloods of St.-Domingue and the other French islands of America*. He proposed admitting to the National Assembly five of the free colored deputies elected by the "American Colonists." The pamphlet depended heavily on Raimond's pre-Revolutionary writings. Grégoire listed the burdens borne by the free people of color: mandatory militia and *maréchaussée* duty, humiliating racial labels, and prohibitions against practicing certain professions, taking European names, eating with whites, dancing after 9 p.m., using a carriage, or serving in any public position. Grégoire used Raimond's description of women stripped naked at the church door by officials enforcing sumptuary laws. The militia gave white men the power of a "vizier" over men of color, including the ability to seduce their wives and daughters while they were away. Men of color were the ones with "admirable domestic mores" and their filial piety, "nearly unheard of among us," extended toward the whites. Grégoire did not deny the stereotype of free colored female sexual immorality, but pointed out that whites were morally guilty too, of neglecting their children.³⁵ He concluded that ending racial prejudice would benefit Saint-Domingue economically and militarily.

Despite Raimond's influence, *Memorandum in favor of the people of color* went far beyond what the indigo planter had proposed. In the second half of his pamphlet, Grégoire predicted the end of the slave trade and the possibility of slave revolt, drawing on Sebastien Mercier's 1770 prediction of a "Black Spartacus" in the slave colonies. "Yes, the cry of liberty resounds in the two worlds; it requires only an Othello, a Padrejean, to awaken in the soul of the blacks the *sentiment* of their inalienable rights."³⁶ The text confirmed what many colonists had long believed: attacks on racism were attacks on slavery.

This put Raimond, as a colonial planter, in an awkward position. In October 1789 his brother François had written of his worries that the Revolution would lead to slave revolt. Yet by the end of the year Julien Raimond was vaguely alluding in print to the eventual freedom of colonial slaves, never mentioning that he was still profiting from the labor of 100 enslaved men, women, and children.³⁷ As Raimond explained in 1792, after the slave revolt of 1791 colonists in Paris had accused him of always intending to free Saint-Domingue's slaves. "One could hardly suppose that I wanted to ruin, with a single stroke, my entire family which owns 7 to 8 million worth of property in

Saint-Domingue.”³⁸ This statement exaggerated his family’s worth, but it was true that their colonial affairs in this period reveal no abolitionist sympathies. On September 12, 1789, for example, Raimond’s white plantation manager sold a 45-year-old creole slave woman to a constable in Aquin, who wanted to marry her and free her. Raimond received the unusually high price of 4,000 livres for the sale.³⁹ In August 1790 he and his wife sold their colonial indigo, cotton, and provision grounds which included 100 slaves valued at 2,000 livres each.⁴⁰ In fact, Raimond’s family continued to deal in slaves. In early 1791 his 26-year-old stepson Jacques-Joseph Challe returned to the colony from France after completing his education under Raimond’s direction. In June of that year Challe sold the indigo plantation and 28 slaves he had inherited from his free black grandmother to a white planter for 152,716 livres. On January 9, 1793, Raimond’s younger brother Guillaume bought 30 slaves, most of them Africans, from a white planter for 90,000 livres.⁴¹

By the end of 1789, the broad outlines of the political position taken by the free people of color in Paris had emerged. Rebuffed by white absentee planters, the American Colonists joined forces with the Friends of the Blacks. Although this alliance raised the question of slavery’s future, the Colonists focused on overturning the white purity ideology of colonial Patriots. When colonists complained of ministerial despotism, the American Colonists exposed “the tyranny of the whites, their despotism, their cruelty.” When whites offered stereotypes of mulatto libertinage, the people of color charged that colonists were sexual predators and irresponsible fathers.⁴²

When Grégoire, Brissot, and Raimond accused whites of sexual immorality, they framed the exotic question of colonial civil rights in terms accessible to metropolitan revolutionaries. Planters in Paris were obliged to respond. Late in 1789, Moreau de Saint-Méry anonymously published a pamphlet attacking Grégoire and Raimond. He claimed that “‘This illicit contact [between white men and women of color] which offends morality and religion is a necessary evil in the colonies . . . [where] it prevents greater vices.’”⁴³ But the argument that tropical heat or plantation agriculture demanded a new morality only brought up a dilemma facing colonial intellectuals and magistrates since 1763. If free Dominguan society was fundamentally different from France, how could colonists demand French liberties? If the colony’s tropical environment so determined social relations then perhaps the colony did need despotic government. Answering Moreau, the Abbé Cournand asked, “Is it the nature of these lands that each plantation be a harem, and that all women of color be mistresses of

Messieurs the whites?" This question about what was natural in Saint-Domingue was one that colonists could not easily answer.⁴⁴

Moreover, by this time Parisian deputies had begun to consider the relationship between ethnic identity and French citizenship. In October 1789, while Grégoire's Credential Committee heard the American Colonists, other deputies debated Jewish status. The prosperous Sephardic families of Bordeaux had already participated in the elections for the Estates General, while in Paris more than one hundred Jews were in the National Guard, a duty reserved for full or "active" citizens. On January 28, 1790, the National Assembly voted to grant complete citizenship to financially qualified Sephardim. The Marquis de Lafayette, whose leadership of the National Guard made him a symbol of the regenerated nation, voted for the measure, though there was serious opposition. The status of the Jews of eastern France was left unresolved, for the moment. Attached to a different language, dress, and culture, the Ashkenazim remained a "foreign" population.⁴⁵

The conservative absentee planters at the Hotel Massiac argued that free colored citizenship was a similar issue, one that only the colonies themselves could resolve. In the National Assembly, the Credentials, Naval, and Agricultural Committees all claimed overlapping jurisdiction over this question. To resolve the confusion, on March 2, 1790 the assembly created a Colonial Committee, with members were drawn mostly from planter or commercial constituencies. Six days later they recommended that the deputies approve a loose constitutional relationship between the colonies and the metropole. "Freely elected" Colonial Assemblies would write local laws and supply delegates to the French National Assembly. Ministerial decrees would no longer rule the colonists. The deputies readily approved these terms. When members of the Friends of the Blacks tried to speak they were shouted down.⁴⁶

Despite speeches and pamphlets by de Joly, Grégoire, and others, the committee's March 8 report said nothing about whether qualified men of color would be allowed to vote in colonial elections. To clarify its recommendation, the Colonial Committee drafted an "Instruction" to the colonies that the assembly approved on March 28, 1790. But this document offered no clear verdict on race either, merely substituting the word "persons" for "citizens" in describing eligible colonial voters. Grégoire asked specifically that the Instruction's Article 4 be rewritten to open the franchise to "all free persons without exception." But the Assembly voted to end discussion without clarifying the issue.⁴⁷

For the next two years, conflicting interpretation of Article 4 dominated Saint-Domingue's political life. Even colonial opponents of racial equality asked the National Assembly for a clearer statement, before proceeding to an interpretation that limited citizenship to whites. In Paris, Brissot, Grégoire, and de Joly later insisted they believed that the shift from "citizens" to "persons" had enfranchised qualified men of color. According to Raimond, at least two Parisian journals, *Le Point de Jour* and *Le Journal de Paris*, interpreted Article 4 the same way.⁴⁸

Yet he recognized the ambiguity. On April 10, 1790, Raimond sent his own instructions to his colonial correspondents about Article 4.⁴⁹ If whites did recognize free colored rights, his friends were to draw up their own reform proposals and present them to colonial assemblies with "decency and respectability." If, on the other hand, local whites obstructed free colored rights, he recommended above all that his neighbors remain orderly. Nevertheless, they were to conduct their own district meetings, swear an oath of loyalty to the French National Assembly, and choose three men of color to travel to France.

It was easier to advise this course of action in Paris than to act on it in Saint-Domingue. In 1790 whites elected a Colonial Assembly dominated by "Patriots," which met in the city of Saint-Marc. The Saint-Marc Assembly declared itself a sovereign legislative body, despite the protests of the Governor and many colonists. It prohibited free colored meetings and forced men of color to sign an oath of loyalty and submission. On May 20, 1790 the Saint-Marc Assembly voted to exclude all men of African ancestry from full citizenship, including whites who had married women of color.⁵⁰

The North Province, with its close mercantile ties to France, was especially incensed by discussions of independence in Saint-Marc. But the South Province was more supportive. In Les Cayes the parish assembly summoned Jacques Boury, the former captain of the Torbec free colored militia whose acquiescence to the government's 1769 reforms had helped topple the anti-militia movement. Nearly two months after local men of color had formed the *Grenadiers Nationaux*, the parish deputies informed Boury that it was "lunacy to believe that you might ever march in the same rank as your benefactors, your former masters, or participate in all public offices or public rights." Boury promised free colored obedience and fidelity.

Louis-François Boisrond wrote to Raimond in a mixture of disgust and despair.

It is no longer possible to bear the imperious humiliations of the whites who have illegally assumed the right to govern us . . . They will only

acknowledge us . . . under the insulting designation of enemies of the public good . . . Never before have we suffered so many arbitrary humiliations.⁵¹

Raimond's standard reply to such messages was to describe his progress in Paris and recommend patience. But this quality was increasingly scarce in the colony. Free men of color believed white Patriots were intercepting official messages from France, perhaps about their citizenship. In July 1790, free men of color along the southern coast, realizing that whites would not interpret the March 28 Instruction to include them, formed committees as Raimond had advised. Aquin's free people of color did not, however. According to Boisrond, Patriots had intercepted his letters and he was in danger of arrest. Aquin's white mayor supported the Saint-Marc Assembly and wealthy men of color were under surveillance.⁵²

However in Cavaillon parish, between Les Cayes and Saint Louis, 35 men of color met under the leadership of Boisrond's brother-in-law Pierre Braquehais.⁵³ In a formal petition they identified Julien Raimond as their representative in Paris and rejected the authority of colonial assemblies over them, "as good Frenchmen, proprietors, and full citizens."⁵⁴ A similar committee met in Les Cayes parish, where Boisrond and Braquehais also had property. They praised the efforts of the Friends of the Blacks in Paris but explained that the Saint-Marc Assembly had made racism far worse than it had ever been. Like Raimond's other correspondents, this group accused Saint-Marc of aspiring to independence. They insisted "whatever happens, . . . we will die as Frenchmen." The Les Cayes free colored committee sent a declaration to this effect to the provincial commander. Speaking for all citizens of color, they proclaimed that no colonial authority could abrogate the National Assembly's orders of 8 and 28 March.⁵⁵

Most of the identifiable members of this July 1790 committee, men like Louis-François Boisrond, and his brother-in-law Pierre Braquehais, were literate and wealthy members of light-skinned families that had long lived in freedom. Another member, Hyacinthe Bleck, was an artisan, not a planter, but had rapidly acquired wealth in the 1780s. However, the group's secretary and eventually most famous member, André Rigaud, was much poorer. By 1793 he would become the military and political leader of the southern peninsula. But in July 1790 Rigaud's legal and economic status was exceedingly fragile.

These difficulties may explain at least some of Rigaud's attachment to the Revolution. His father was a white man also named André Rigaud, who had served as minor court official in Les Cayes since at

least the 1760s. His mother was a black woman named “Rose Dessa or Bossi,” perhaps an ex-slave. In 1769, as colonial racial laws grew more rigorous, the senior André Rigaud gave power of attorney to his sister in Poitou, perhaps to watch over his son André, for Haitian tradition holds that the future general was educated and trained as a goldsmith in Bordeaux or Marseilles. The same tradition places Rigaud and Bleck at Savannah, Georgia in 1779 in d’Estaing’s expedition. By 1784 Rigaud had returned to Les Cayes, where he purchased a modest house divided into two apartments. In the contract for this transaction, the notary had nothing to write after the required formula that described Rigaud as “having proven his liberty by deed dated [blank].”⁵⁶ If he were, in fact, without proof of his freedom, André Rigaud was in danger of returning to slavery, whatever his education and travels.

Free men of color in Les Cayes faced a special challenge because of the strength of the regional capital’s *petit blanc* Patriot movement. In August 1790 Les Cayes’s Patriots supported Saint-Marc in denouncing royal officials and local notables as counter-revolutionaries. On August 1, 1790 when the Les Cayes parish assembly elected a new municipal government, members of the city’s Patriotic Club loudly opposed several nominees, like Philippe Collet, a well-connected judge worth about 450,000 livres. In the streets of Port-au-Prince, meanwhile, Patriots rioted against royal troops. Interpreting this struggle in the capital as evidence of counterrevolution, the Saint-Marc Assembly called for Governor Blanchelande’s removal. Instead of leaving, he called in royal troops, assisted by free colored militiamen, to close down the Saint-Marc Assembly. Eight-four deputies found a ship willing to transport them to France where they believed the National Assembly would vindicate them. They arrived in Paris in October 1790.⁵⁷

These events further divided whites in Les Cayes. The Patriotic Club there convinced the newly elected city government that revolutionaries in Port-au-Prince needed rescue, though city officers later canceled a planned march to the capital. Members of the white National Guard harassed Judge Collet, whom the Patriots described as a partisan of the old regime. In Torbec parish 200 men attacked a retired army officer and planter named Caudère, after intercepting his correspondence with Governor Blanchelande. They shot Caudère, ravaged his house, and set his fields on fire. The crowd paraded his head through town, taunting the officers of the royal regiment stationed in Les Cayes.⁵⁸

Another aspect of the closing of the Saint-Marc Assembly that troubled white Patriots was the role of free colored militiamen.

In France, as July 14, 1790 approached, the first anniversary of the Revolution, National Guardsmen across France swore their brotherhood in Federation ceremonies symbolizing the regeneration of the nation. But in the Antilles colonial whites denied that free colored militiamen were virtuous, or deserved to celebrate the triumph of revolutionary fraternity. According to Moreau de Saint-Méry, in June 1790 Martiniquan *petits blancs* castrated a twelve-year-old boy during a riot against free colored militiamen participating in a Revolutionary ceremony.⁵⁹ Moreau described the act as “barbarity” representative of “the popular furor.” But this mutilation, which apparently was not fatal, if in fact it did occur, was surely symbolic, either for Moreau who reported it or for those who executed it. France’s growing regard for virtuous citizen-soldiers threatened the colonial myth of free colored sloth and devotion to pleasure. The emasculation of a mulatto child warned that men of color, for all their soldiering, would not be admitted into the fraternity of the Revolution.

The participation of 300 free colored soldiers with royal troops in closing the Saint-Marc Assembly fed these same white fears in Saint-Domingue. In early September 1790, the mayor of Aquin warned a neighboring municipality against a “deadly” alliance between overconfident men of color and royal officials, and tried to persuade them to adopt a strict position on racial subordination. The leaders of Cavaillon also blamed Governor Blanchelande for extending the hope of citizenship “to these people who should be kept in order and subordination.”⁶⁰

In fact, it was Julien Raimond by convincing Parisian abolitionists to help him attack racism, instead of slavery, who was giving men like André Rigaud and Jacques Boury the hope of citizenship. In October 1790, he advised his correspondents: “In a century of enlightenment and philosophy, well established arguments and well substantiated facts are more likely to defeat prejudice than bayonets and cannons are.” Yet at the moment Raimond wrote those words, his colleague Vincent Ogé was sailing back to Saint-Domingue. Leaving Paris after the National Assembly’s ambiguous Instruction of March 28, 1790, Ogé arrived in his native North province in October 1790, just as whites were preparing to elect a new Colonial Assembly. Claiming France’s will was clear, Ogé demanded that Governor Blanchelande allow qualified men of color to vote.⁶¹ At the same time, he tried to convince other wealthy men of color across Saint-Domingue to defend his demands.

Although Raimond later claimed to know nothing of these plans, Ogé tried to use Raimond’s political network. He possessed copies of

Raimond's correspondence, including petitions and resolutions drafted by his contacts in Les Cayes and Torbec parishes. When Guillaume Labadie of Aquin wrote to de Joly in Paris, it was Ogé who wrote back to him. Ogé was not successful in rallying support from Raimond's home parish, though colonial authorities were convinced he had sympathizers there. Witnesses testified that he had spoken of 27 men of color from Paris who sailed from France directly to Aquin, landing near the Montbrun plantation. Other Parisian men of color were allegedly hiding on Aquin's Dumoulin plantation. In fact Montbrun and Dumoulin were prominent, light-skinned free men of color in Aquin.⁶² But no disturbances were reported there in October and November 1790.

In the West Province as well, Ogé failed to inspire free men of color. On October 29, 1790, a group of prominent free men from Port-au-Prince informed Ogé that his letters to authorities were "written in imprudent terms and may have a bad effect." While he was challenging the governor and Colonial Assembly, they asked him to come to the isolated parish of Mirebalais with documents proving that Paris had given them citizenship.⁶³

Ogé did find collaborators, however, in the Southern parish known as Port Salut, which had once been part of Torbec. In 1769, in this very district, angry free people of color had kidnapped the free colored planter Jacques Boury, their former militia captain, to pressure the royal government to drop a controversial militia reform. Before leaving for France, Raimond had developed political contacts in this parish and, in 1789, he named Elie Boury among his leading colonial supporters. In early November 1790, Elie Boury wrote to Governor Blanchelande, in a letter that represented decades of political contestation by the free coloreds of his district. Simultaneously with Ogé in the North Province, Boury insisted that the Governor enforce Article 4 in the National Assembly's March 28 instructions. When local whites threatened him for making these demands, Boury and his supporters, including Jean-Jacques Dasque, from another family prominent in the 1769 revolt, retreated to the mountain plantation of the free mulatto Léon Proux in the mountains about 4 leagues from Les Cayes.⁶⁴

Within days, between six and eight hundred free men of color were camped on Proux's land. Many came from the neighboring city and parish of Les Cayes, including André Rigaud, the secretary of the free colored committee whose letter to Julien Raimond was later found in Ogé's baggage. On November 13, 1790, the Proux estate repelled an attack by four to five hundred whites from Les Cayes, with two deaths and eight other casualties.⁶⁵ On November 17, Governor

Blanchelande sent military reinforcements from Port-au-Prince, but, like his predecessors in 1769, stressed the need to use diplomacy. In fact, the standoff lasted over two weeks, ending only when royal troops arrived. Their colonel, anxious to avoid bloodshed, promised the free men of color complete amnesty and to return their weapons to them, after they swore a loyalty oath.

Events in Ogé's North province turned out differently, proving that although royal authorities in the South were willing to discuss free colored equality, whites elsewhere would fight such a change. Ogé may have realized this from the beginning. Or perhaps he adopted a military identity to appeal to what Stewart King describes as a pre-Revolutionary free colored "military leadership class" in the North Province. For even before his secret departure from France, Ogé represented himself as a National Guard officer. He wore a uniform, the mark of full Revolutionary citizenship, while visiting the Sèvres porcelain works outside Paris. From September through November 1789, he wrote to his mother in the colony and to his sisters in Bordeaux, signing his name as "commandant" and "infantry colonel." He purchased a colonel's commission and three medals from the Prince of Limburg, and may have commissioned a portrait of himself in a colonel's uniform wearing the prestigious Cross of Saint-Louis, often awarded to colonial militia officers. Colonists later described Ogé as an officer in the Bordeaux National Guard, while others claimed he had served in the Paris Guard. From October 1790 until his capture in January 1791, Ogé wore and carried with him several uniforms, some with gold epaulets and all with buttons bearing the arms of the city of Paris.⁶⁶

Whether they were inspired by his uniform or his political ideas, more than 300 of free men of color in the Grande Rivière parish gathered around Ogé after Governor Blanchelande rejected his demands. These were far fewer men than those Boury and Rigaud gathered in the South, and Ogé was just miles from Cap Français, the military headquarters of the colony. After a few successful skirmishes with local white militias, Ogé and his followers fled across the Spanish border to escape a large force of royal troops. Extradited in January 1791, Julien Raimond's Parisian colleague and 23 companions were broken on the rack in Cap Français's main square in February, their corpses publicly displayed like those of rebel slaves. Another 13 men of color were sentenced to lifetime slavery in the royal galleys.⁶⁷

When the Provincial Assembly of the South learned of Ogé's uprising, it demanded that Governor Blanchelande reassemble Boury's supporters and permanently confiscate their weapons. In a

letter written December 10, 1790, the Governor worried that public animosity would lead to attacks on innocent free people of color in the South, yet he agreed that disarming them was “an extreme but necessary act.” The Provincial Assembly also insisted that Boury, Dasque, Rigaud, Bleck, and others be arrested and tried for their actions. François Raimond believed that these men would have been tortured and executed like Ogé, had Blanchlande not moved them from Les Cayes to a prison in Port-au-Prince.⁶⁸

Approximately six weeks after this disarming, Port Salut parish was the site of Saint-Domingue’s first revolutionary slave conspiracy. Carolyn Fick, who first brought attention to this important event, suggests that free colored protests inspired the district’s enslaved people.⁶⁹ Even closer investigation reveals that the white owners of the slaves involved in this conspiracy, like the adjoining free colored landowners, had been involved in the anti-militia revolt of 1769.

The plan was discovered by Joseph Alabré, the white island-born son of a planter. Joseph had an illegitimate half-sister Marie Françoise Alabré, who may have been a light-skinned woman of color. When she married a French immigrant in 1782, Joseph and his brother Pierre signed her wedding contract, though the document did not mention their father. In the 1760s Pierre Alabré had witnessed at least one notarial deed with Jean Joseph Dasque, who was involved in the militia revolt and was a leader of the free colored standoff in November and December 1790.⁷⁰

The night of January 24–25, 1791, in the road before his father’s plantation, Joseph Alabré met a creole slave named Antoine from the nearby plantation of Jean-Baptiste Masson Duhard. Duhard was in France at the time, but like the Alabrés, he had participated in important transactions with local free colored planters. Joseph Jabouin, a white man and neighbor, was managing Duhard’s estate. He too had many dealings with the Dasques and other prominent free coloreds.⁷¹

The slave Antoine told Alabré that a man named Jean-Claude Lateste had visited the Duhard plantation. Lateste told Duhard’s workers that the king had given slaves three free days a week and that the mulattos claimed the whites were blocking this reform. Antoine did not identify Lateste further, but it seems likely that he was a free man of color. The sampled 1780s notarial records of the parish reveal no whites with that name but do contain deeds from a free man of color named Bernard Lataste or Latuste, who was among the free men of color most active in the 1769 militia revolt, and who was still alive in the 1780s.⁷²

Slaves on nearby estates quickly heard about Lateste’s message. The night of January 24, perhaps several hours before Joseph Alabré

stopped Antoine, a group of enslaved people had gathered on the Duhard plantation to discuss the reforms they believed had been decreed in France. Many of them were owned by white men who had helped organize the anti-militia revolt 22 years earlier. A number came from the plantation of Charles Nicolas Lafosse, who Bernard Latuste had described in 1769 as one of the whites that urged them to fight the militia reform.⁷³ The white planter Merlet was another of the 1769 ringleaders, and the Merlet plantation, now run by his widow, furnished other slave conspirators.

According to Antoine, “the mulattoes had assured the blacks that they were going to fight the whites to obtain three free days per week.” If the whites gave it to them, they would extend it to the slaves. By 2 o’clock in the morning of April 25, about 200 slaves had gathered on the Duhard estate, where they decided to recruit other slaves to join them in demanding three work-free days per week from their masters. All the workers would act on the same day. If whites refused, the conspirators would kill them. With this plan, the rebels went to the plantation of Jacques Fabre, a white planter.⁷⁴ They kidnapped the estate’s head slave and several others, but these men escaped and reported the plot to Fabre, who alerted the authorities. The following morning he and the slave Antoine made formal declarations to the mayor and the president of the parish assembly.

At the least, these complex connections among the white and free colored planters of Port Salut illustrate how closely old and propertied creole families were intertwined. By the 1791, three generations of these families had maintained social and commercial networks that crossed and even obscured the color line between “white” and “nonwhite.”

Carolyn Fick maintains that free colored demands for voting rights inspired these claims from Port Salut’s slaves. But at least six weeks had passed between the end of the free colored standoff and the discovery of the slave conspiracy. In the meantime, Rigaud, Boury, Dasque, and others had been arrested and moved to Port-au-Prince, Ogé had been captured in the North, and royal troops had confiscated the weapons of local free men of color. The passage of time, these intervening events, and the possibility that Lateste was a free man of color, suggests that Port Salut’s free colored leaders encouraged slaves to pressure their masters. As Raimond and other pamphleteers had written, the danger of a slave uprising was one of best arguments to enfranchise wealthy and light-skinned free men of color.

Was it a coincidence that the 1769 militia revolt, the 1790 free colored standoff and the 1791 slave conspiracy occurred in exactly the same district and involved many of the same white and free colored

families? Did Dasque, Boury, Lateste, or others stir up slaves to strike back at Lafosse, Merlet, and other white neighbors they felt had manipulated them in 1769?

Free colored demands for citizenship did not directly benefit from events in Port Salut, but royal officials did move quickly to rein in angry *petits blancs*. Within a week of the foiled slave conspiracy, on February 3, 1791, royal officials ordered free colored constables and French regular troops to arrest four members of Les Cayes' "Patriotic Club" for murdering the royalist Caudère in Torbec six months earlier. The Patriots had been the most outspoken and violent opponents of free colored civil rights. Now these accused men joined André Rigaud, Hyacinthe and Guillaume Bleck, and Jacques Boury in the prisons of Port-au-Prince. Les Cayes's Patriots saw these arrests as evidence of counter-revolution, and in a pamphlet described the free colored *maréchaussée* as monstrous agents of the despotic governor—"these ambiguous creatures rejected by our social laws, who descend from two species of man but belong to neither, these beings, whose bodies are nature's rubbish, and whose morals are the dregs of society and political life."⁷⁵

However, neither the white nor free colored prisoners from Les Cayes were behind bars long in the capital. On March 4, 1791, during another riot in Port-au-Prince, all prisoners were allowed to escape. Wary of returning home, Rigaud, Boury, and the Blecks remained in the West Province, forging bonds with the more cautious free men of color there, who had refused Ogé's call to challenge Governor Blanchelande. Les Cayes' Patriots did return to the South and quickly took control of the parish assembly and city government. In April, when Les Cayes parish named six new representatives to the Provincial Assembly, three of them were former Saint-Marc deputies. Louis-François Boisrond reported from Aquin that he was under constant threat and advised Raimond to hide his letters to the colony in barrels of flour.⁷⁶

* * *

In France, the National Assembly slowly moved to clarify its controversial March 28, 1790 Instruction. In October 1790, as Ogé was landing in Saint-Domingue, Parisian deputies voted that the colonies would decide racial questions. This belated decision provoked another pamphlet by Grégoire, who pointed out that withholding judgment on colonial affairs betrayed revolutionary ideals and would not solve problems in the islands. As before he stressed the inevitability of

colonial conflict as the demographic, economic, and political power of the free people of color continued to grow.⁷⁷ In December, as the free coloreds of Torbec/Port-Salut and Les Cayes were being disarmed, Jacques-Pierre Brissot, founder of the Friends of the Blacks, published his own pamphlet denouncing the Revolution's colonial policies. "Deeply perverse and clever men" had misled the National Assembly about colonial society. Heavily influenced by Raimond, Brissot portrayed economic sterility and moral corruption as consequences of white colonial despotism and tyranny. He compared the urban corruption of whites with the rural virtue of free people of color. Whites were "jaded creatures, corrupted [*denaturé*] for liberty by the slaves they command." Absentee planters squandered their colonial fortunes in the fleshpots of Paris instead of returning their profits to the soil. Acknowledging that not all mulattos were models of virtue, Brissot took Saint-Domingue's free colored planters as his model. He praised Raimond's neighbor Guillaume Labadie, the Aquin indigo grower who whites had nearly killed in late 1789.⁷⁸

Brissot's description of Labadie brought forth a public rebuttal from a white colonist named Laborde, one of the men who had arrested Labadie on his estate that night. A strong Patriot, Laborde had gone on to represent the neighboring Anse-à-Veau parish in the now-defunct Saint-Marc Assembly, whose dissolution had since been confirmed by the National Assembly. In Paris, Laborde published a pamphlet describing how Labadie's white father had given him land and slaves.

Labadie's wealth is therefore a pure gift of chance, an endowment from his master and father and not the result of intelligence, frugality and hard work What you [Brissot] describe as Labadie's brilliance and talent is more inaccurate This Labadie could read, write and perhaps do arithmetic Nature did not supply that wooly head with the knowledge of d'Alembert, the genius of Buffon and the erudition of our ancient and modern historians.⁷⁹

Julien Raimond fiercely defended his friend's accomplishments in a pamphlet of his own in 1791. He described the long drought in Aquin that had driven Labadie from his inherited lands. According to Raimond, Labadie built a new and successful plantation with 150 slaves starting with fifteen inherited workers. Labadie was wealthy, but generous to his neighbors, including *petits blancs* like Laborde. Raimond admitted that his friend was no intellectual, but then neither was his accuser. Appealing to public opinion and drawing attention to his own wealth, Raimond challenged Laborde to put up 6,000 livres

for a contest to decide who was better educated: the Saint-Marc deputy or the old indigo planter he had once arrested.⁸⁰

Raimond's defense of Guillaume Labadie was part of his *Observations on the origins and progress of white colonists' prejudice against the men of color*, whose main idea was that current racial attitudes in Saint-Domingue were only 30 years old. On December 2, 1789, a pamphlet published by the "American Colonists," and signed by Raimond and others, had identified racism as a problem that began in 1703. As Florence Gauthier has suggested, the free colored group initially believed metropolitan France was ignorant of the way colonists treated them. In his 1791 pamphlet, however, Raimond seemed more concerned that the Revolutionary public not confuse free people of color with slaves.⁸¹

In *Observations*, he identified 1763 as the turning point in Dominguan history, but not because the end of the Seven Years' War brought "civilization" to the island, as Moreau de Saint-Méry claimed. Instead, whites began to introduce prejudice into colonial institutions, a process that culminated six years later when they stripped militia commissions from patriotic men of color. Early in the eighteenth century, Raimond claimed, white men had preferred the care given them by their slaves, or the fortunes brought them by honest free women of color, to the debauchery of fortune-hunting white women. Racism arose after 1763 because of the jealousy of white women and *petits blancs*, like those who had attacked his neighbor Labadie.⁸²

In the spring of 1791 Raimond's argument that free men of color were virtuous Frenchmen while colonial whites were bad fathers and brothers began to bear fruit. In a pamphlet published anonymously in December 1789 Moreau de Saint-Méry had employed irony, scorn, and the full complement of anti-mulatto stereotypes against the American Colonists. In a March 1791 response to Brissot and Raimond, however, he adopted a more conciliatory tone, perhaps because Parisians had been shocked recently by the news that colonists had publicly tortured Ogé to death. Discarding his earlier claim that interracial concubinage was a "necessary evil," Moreau maintained that the very existence of a free population of color proved white benevolence. Colonial society was not inherently despotic: France had foisted slavery upon the colonies. Whites had continued to manumit their faithful workers despite royal opposition, because they were good fathers. Free colored attempts to improve their social status were therefore pure ingratitude, stirred up by the Friends of the Blacks. The abolitionists had produced Ogé's revolt.⁸³

Moreau disputed Raimond's claim that racism in Saint-Domingue had a history. "The freedmen always formed a distinct and separate class"; there was no period in which racism grew more powerful. Nor did free people of color hold one-third to one-fourth of Saint-Domingue's property, as Raimond claimed, but merely one-tenth. "This considerable sum is almost entirely the fruit of our weaknesses, our patronage, and it is to repay these that the laws are now to be dictated to us."⁸⁴ Moreau would not abandon racial stereotypes but he did moderate them; free people of color were now ungrateful bastards rather than amoral monsters. In the spring of 1791, as colonial Patriots rioted and Revolutionary deputies blanched at Ogé's fate, it was more important to rescue the image of white planters than to condemn free people of color.

In effect, free men of color in Saint-Domingue and France had made it impossible for the National Assembly to avoid colonial politics. Ogé's uprising and the simultaneous events in Port Salut had empowered colonial Patriots to press for a strict racial hierarchy and rail against French control. In Paris, Raimond's speeches and the influence on the Friends of the Blacks had amplified the theme of pre-Revolutionary travel writers: selfish ambition, unlimited power, and sexual desire had warped Saint-Domingue's leading colonists. They were bad, unnatural fathers, who had rejected their colonial children. If Saint-Domingue's representatives insisted that colonial society was so fragile that extending rights to men like Raimond would produce a slave revolt, they risked destroying the basis for the administrative reforms they sought.

An elaborate political cartoon of 1791 illustrates Raimond's success in reformulating colonial stereotypes (figure 8.1). The image places him at the center of several dozen personalities and metaphorical figures in the colonial debate, a strong and handsome man, in profile, reaching to tear the Declaration of the Rights of Man from the hand of Barnave, the head of the National Assembly's Colonial Committee. While simpering or decrepit colonists, including Moreau de Saint-Méry, cluster on one side of the image with their slave mistresses, Raimond stretches his arm over a kneeling black woman and two mixed-race children, who with clasping hands implore their white father, Gouy d'Arsty, the head of the colonial lobby, to speak for them. The planter responds, "Alas, my son, I would, if I could only make a 42 percent profit."

By 1791, therefore, Raimond was a well-known personality in Paris. After the March 28, 1790 Instruction, de Joly had stepped aside and the "American Colonists" group became much less visible.



DISCUSSION SUR LES HOMMES DE COULEUR

M^{rs} de la Rochelle, présidente, sur le projet de loi sur le mariage des gens de couleur.
 2. **BARNAVE** sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 3. **CARNE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 4. **ALEXANDRE** de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 5. **DECAUX** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 6. **DEPREMENT** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 7. **REINAUD** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 8. **GÉRARD** LE BOURGEOIS M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 9. **MOREAU DES NÈRES** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 10. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 11. **LE PETIT** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 12. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 13. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 14. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 15. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 16. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 17. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 18. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 19. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.
 20. **DE LA ROCHE** M^{rs} de la Rochelle, sur le principe qui pour les hommes de couleur croit la loi qui les rendent libres.

Figure 8.1 “Discussion on the Men of Color” From the *Moniteur* (Paris) of May 15, 1791.
 Source: Reproduced with permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The authors of pamphlets no longer described themselves as free colored “deputies.” Sometime in 1791 or 1792 Raimond had moved to the heart of revolutionary Paris, to an apartment near the royal Orangerie, His letters to Saint-Domingue demanded funds for publications “to enlighten minds and shape public opinion which is so important to our cause, which our enemies have confused with that of the slaves.” After 1789 he produced at least sixteen pamphlets on colonial affairs and had letters from colonial men of color inserted into Revolutionary journals “to consolidate the national opinion that the citizens of color alone can save and conserve the unfortunate remainder of our colony.”⁸⁵

Such publicity was more difficult in Saint-Domingue. Louis-François Boisrond and others circulated Raimond’s letters from Paris through their own colonial network. In 1791 Raimond sent a M. Mahon to the colony with six identical packets of thirty printed works each to show free people of color what he was doing for them in Paris. He hoped his friends would respond by pledging one-quarter of their income to the “patriotic gift” that he had long promised the National Assembly, as a display of free colored liberal virtue. He reminded his correspondents: “It is only by such signs of selflessness that one can show one’s patriotism.”⁸⁶ On March 18, 1791, perhaps trying to play on sympathy for Ogé, Raimond and other men of color in Paris demanded “their rights as active citizens as accorded them by Article 4 of the decree of March 28, 1790.” They described colonial whites as

the fathers, the brothers of the citizens of color; it is their blood, French blood, that runs in [free colored] veins and the whites want to demean their children, these children who hold them dear, who have risked their lives for them so many times . . . as the generals who have commanded them in recent wars will attest!⁸⁷

The argument that men of mixed blood were inherently corrupt was losing some of its power. For the Abbé Maury in May 1791, free people of color “are not, whatever may be said, true Frenchmen, since they have not even seen France.” Africa was their homeland. Free blacks had at least earned their liberty, unlike people of mixed blood, he insisted. Yet nearly a century of free colored militia service in Saint-Domingue contradicted this statement. In 1779, Dominguan colonists had described voluntary enlistment as repugnant to any “respectable and sensitive soul,” but Revolutionary France felt differently. In 1791 Claude Milscent, a white planter from Ogé’s home district who had led free colored troops against maroon slaves, began

to urge France's regional Jacobin clubs to petition Paris for free colored citizenship. Bordeaux supported this position.⁸⁸

This shifting mood helped produce the first decree violating Saint-Domingue's color line. During the spring of 1791, the National Assembly voted to send more troops to deal with colonial unrest. It asked the Colonial Committee to draw up instructions for these forces. When the committee presented its work to the Assembly on May 9, 1791, Grégoire and other pro-free colored deputies again raised the issue of race and citizenship. The free men of color had gained important allies by this time, for their cause increasingly attracted those who favored a wide definition of citizenship. Ogé's death had reinforced the image of colonial whites as "aristocrats" clinging to irrational privileges. Brissot and Raimond had both joined the Jacobin Club while many colonial proprietors had left. Robespierre and other Jacobin deputies supported the anti-slavery position of the Friends.⁸⁹

On May 13 Grégoire urged the assembly to extend citizenship to colonial slaves: Robespierre argued that retaining the colonies was not as important as fulfilling the promise of the Revolution. That night Raimond campaigned at the Jacobin Club, assuring his audience, incorrectly, that two-thirds of Saint-Domingue's free men of color were born in freedom and that there were fewer than 1,500 free blacks in the free colored class. Of these free blacks, he maintained, two-thirds were born free. "These facts, these figures, can easily be verified in militia rolls and parish registers." Anyone familiar with colonial society would have known that this was not the case, but Raimond had established himself as a reliable, verifiable source of information about Saint-Domingue. His speech the following day was more palatable to colonial planters. Though he had sold his own plantations seven months before, he maintained his original argument: recognizing free men of color as citizens would not weaken slavery but reinforce it.⁹⁰

On May 15, 1791, the National Assembly approved a compromise decree. The new legislation split the ground between those opposed to any colonial social reforms and those who argued that Saint-Domingue's free people of color were entitled to full citizenship. In return for agreeing that the taxpaying adult sons of free fathers and mothers could vote, colonial interests won a promise that the National Assembly would never legislate on the status of men born to slaves, unless the colonies requested such a law. There was no question of enfranchising slaves, nor even all free men of color. Many Jacobins and Friends of the Blacks rejected the measure as too conservative.⁹¹

The critical point for Saint-Domingue, however, was that in its May 15 decree the assembly now recognized elite men of color as full citizens. Some royal administrators had been recommending this reform since d'Estaing's time, to temper colonial racism and divide the free colored population along class lines. This was the reform Raimond had sought in 1786, one that would restore the class hierarchy to free colonial society. By 1791, however, the whites' racial identity was too firmly entrenched for this kind of tinkering.

It is difficult to know how many of Saint-Domingue's free people of color this decree would have enfranchised had colonists accepted the May 15 decree. Governor Blanchelande, who refused to enact it, told the National Assembly that it would affect only about 400 men of color, compared to a white population with at least 9,000 voters.⁹² However, if one considers that the rapid expansion of the free colored population was due, in part, to the reclassification of large light-skinned families like the Hérards of Torbec and the Raimonds of Aquin, then the requirement that voters be born of free parents might have enfranchised many more men, perhaps as many as 1,000 out of approximately 4,600 adult males. Several dozen might have had the property to stand for election.⁹³ In Les Cayes André Rigaud would not have been counted as a citizen; his colleagues Jacques Boury, Jean Jacques Dasque, and Hyacinthe Bleck, on the other hand, would probably have been admitted to vote in Torbec and Port Salut.

But colonial whites refused to accept the May 15, 1791 decree. Their deputies in Paris managed to stall the legislation so that it never officially arrived in Saint-Domingue. Nevertheless, the reform was widely discussed in the colony by late June. Furious over the interference from France, Saint-Domingue's newly elected Colonial Assembly donned black cocards in place of red, white and blue, while white militias defiantly wore white, yellow and green. In July 1791 Cap Français hanged Grégoire in effigy while colonists sang, in creole, "No, mulattos can never be white . . . Only we are masters."⁹⁴

This emphatic reaction drove many initially conservative free people of color to arms. In the West Province, men of color who had rebuffed Ogé in late 1790 agreed to fight for the limited but unambiguous rights spelled out in the blocked law. In both the South and West, free people of color fled the towns and plains, where among other humiliations they were asked to sign petitions against the May 15 decree. Shut out of local, provincial, and colonial assemblies, in August 1791 François Raimond, Bleck, and others from the South met secretly with men of color from the West Province on a farm just outside Port-au-Prince. By the end of the month, a larger meeting in

Mirebalais, again in the West, united groups from these two regions. When their leaders asked Governor Blanchelande for the protection of “old and new laws,” he ordered them to disband. The assemblies continued.⁹⁵

In the midst of this unprecedented situation, slaves began to burn sugar plantations around Cap Français on August 22, 1791. *Petits blancs* in Port-au-Prince remained fiercely opposed to free colored rights and French interference; for them the slave rebellion was a direct result of tinkering with racial categories. As the North Province struggled against its slaves, on September 2, Patriot forces from Port-au-Prince fought free men of color in the plain outside the capital city. Propertied whites in the West were more flexible about racial issues than the *petit blanc* militia. Within a week of this battle, as escaped slaves joined the free colored army, conservative whites, including the Port-au-Prince city government, signed a treaty with the men of color recognizing the May 15 decree. Saint-Marc and several southern parishes did the same. This “Concordat” not only ended the fighting, it endorsed Raimond’s *Observations* about the rise of colonial prejudice. Racism in Saint-Domingue was not natural but had evolved historically, as whites had gradually excluded free coloreds from the equality guaranteed them by the 1685 Code Noir.⁹⁶

But white Patriots refused to lay down their arms and neither Governor Blanchelande nor the National Guard commander of Port-au-Prince would ratify the agreement. Fighting outside the city continued until a new agreement was reached on October 23. This second treaty specified that whites would serve alongside men of color in the National Guard and racial labels would no longer set one citizen apart from another. Qualified men of color would participate in new municipal elections. The two sides celebrated their alliance in a Port-au-Prince banquet reminiscent of the federation ceremonies held in provincial France since 1789. And afterwards, men of color who had been active in the Port-au-Prince theater coordinated peace making in parishes throughout the West and South Provinces.⁹⁷

Whites in these isolated rural districts did not welcome this agreement as a return to the days when wealthy creole planters of all colors lived in harmony. It was fear that drove them to join this “Concordat” movement. In a number of southern parishes like Fond des Nègres, directly north of Aquin, whites had a new reason to appreciate the Euro-centric creole identity of local free colored planters. For in this region, the Revolutionary disturbances had pushed another kind of creole or “American” identity to the fore, one that potentially spelled the end of the plantation system.

On October 14, 1791, nine days before Port-au-Prince feted the second Concordat, 36 of Fond des Nègres's white proprietors assembled to discuss how to "secure ourselves from the terrible convulsions of anarchy, provoked and spread by the slave revolt." They were referring to raids in the nearby mountains by the army of Romaine Rivière, a free man of color whose rapid rise to power may have helped whites in the South Province realize how much they had in common with men like Julien Raimond. By December 1791, commanding as many as 14,000 men, most of them slaves, Rivière controlled the towns of Léogane and Jacmel and the rugged territory between them.

A property owner, husband, and father, in 1791 Rivière either adopted or created a syncretic religious movement that drew more heavily on what Terry Rey has argued were Kongolese elements than anything seen in the South Province since the arrest of Sim Dompête in 1782.⁹⁸ At a moment when free colored pamphleteers in Paris stressed their masculine virtues, Rivière took a feminine title, "Romaine La Prophetesse," and claimed to be the godchild of the Virgin Mary. He conducted spiritual rites at an abandoned church near his farm in the mountains south of Léogane, brandishing an inverted cross in one hand and a sword in the other. He wrote messages to the Virgin and received written replies from her. He also exploited the political possibilities of the Revolution, striking a deal with the royalist mayor of Léogane to take control of that city. Jean Fouchard claimed to have found correspondence between Rivière and the Abbé Pascalis Ouviaère, who represented the free coloreds of Port-au-Prince in the West Province and in France in 1791 and 1792.⁹⁹

Faced with this example of a very different kind of creole identity, on October 14, Fond des Nègres enlarged its *maréchaussée* to 20 men and increased their wages by 50 percent. The all-white parish assembly urged citizens to pay their municipal taxes, "a sacred debt." It advised militia officers to use "the full extent of powers delegated to them by the law" for "the slightest delay could be deadly." At its next meeting, two weeks later, the assembly slowly began to recognize local free coloreds as allies. They ordered that the parish militia commander safeguard all parish records, but specified that access was open to whites and free colored citizens alike, "hoping in this way to give the latter group a new proof of our feelings of truthfulness and loyalty towards them." On November 15, 1791, the Fond des Nègres's parish assembly gathered again. Like their neighbors in Saint Louis, Aquin, and Cavaillon, the whites of Fond des Nègres had decided to adopt a version of the Port-au-Prince Concordat.¹⁰⁰

Although the minutes of that meeting have disappeared, records do exist from a parish meeting held five weeks later, on December 21. Nearly three times as many people signed the register of the newly expanded assembly as had on October 14, and, following the terms of the Concordat, the document did not assign racial labels. But pre-Revolutionary notarial records make it possible to identify at least 42 of the 93 signers as whites, and only 8 signers as free colored. Seventeen of the family names were linked to both free people of color and to whites and 26 of the signers had names that do not appear in the surviving archives.

Resolved to find ways to “unite the citizens without distinction,” the assembly created a six-man correspondence committee to serve as a temporary town government. It chose three white men and three men of color unanimously for this responsibility. One of them, Paul Depas, was the free colored grandson of Michel Lopez Depas, the Jewish doctor and judge who had endowed the parish church. Depas was also one of the twelve men elected to a “bureau of police,” serving alongside the notary Colombel and Faodoas, the parish’s biggest planter. Ten days later, on December 30, three of Fond des Nègres’s most important whites, the planters Faodas, Delaumeau, Dufourq, and Leman de la Barre, arrived in Croix des Bouquets to report to the free colored war council there.¹⁰¹ Afterwards Faodas and Delaumeau accompanied other parish representatives to Cap Français, where they recommended that the Colonial Assembly accept the Concordat.

These agreements to accept the May 15, 1791 decree were essentially what Julien Raimond had been working for since the middle of the 1780s: a return to a social hierarchy based on class, rather than race. This appealed to the wealthy planters, but not to the revolutionary Patriots agitating in Les Cayes, Port-au-Prince, and Cap Français. Those who supported the Concordat were aware of this. On November 24, 1791, while Fond des Nègres was reorganizing its municipal government, the city fathers in nearby Aquin, completing a similar process, wrote to the governor to urge him to ratify the peace. Their letter lamented the political dominance of urban groups. “It is finally time to end the unjust and impolitic influence of the towns over the plains, which has plunged us into the frightening abyss where we find ourselves. It is time to shelter us and our property from . . . their tumult and their opinion. . . . Please consult the wishes of the planters . . . if they agree to give advantages to the citizens of color, only lunatics and enemies of the public peace would find fault.” Recognizing, as Raimond did, the importance of appealing to that

new public, Aquin's planters printed their pamphlet, and the governor's disparaging response.¹⁰²

* * *

The Concordat movement did not bring the peace and social unity for which Aquin and Fond des Nègres longed. The success of the slave revolt in the North province changed the nature of colonial politics, both in Saint-Domingue and in France. On September 24, 1791, hearing news of the slave rebellion, the French National Assembly rescinded its May 15 decree. This reversal destroyed the parish-level peace treaties, but now an organized free network of free colored leaders was determined to fight for equality, even if France withdrew it. In March 1792 white and free colored troops defeated the armies of Romaine La Prophetesse, but in the area around Les Cayes and Port-au-Prince fighting between whites and free colored resumed or grew worse. Although the slave revolt in the North was growing steadily, in the South and West provinces, whites and free colored forces began to arm slaves to fight on their behalf.

Until this point, their struggle had fundamentally been about how the French Revolution might be applied in Saint-Domingue. With the mobilization of slaves to fight for what each side claimed was "justice," the Haitian Revolution had finally begun.

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CHAPTER 9



REVOLUTION AND REPUBLICANISM IN AQUIN PARISH

In January 1792, slave rebellion flared on the Aquin plantation of Hugues Melinet. In much of the southern peninsula, free people were preoccupied with their war over civil rights. Whites from all over the coast had taken refuge in Les Cayes, while free coloreds controlled the surrounding plantations, as well as the towns of Torbec, Cavaillon, and Saint Louis. Disregarding the local Port Salut slave conspiracy of 1791 and the ongoing rebellion in the North, each side had armed slaves to fight for its cause. When whites and free coloreds signed a grudging peace in July 1792, their bondsmen were in full rebellion.¹

Down the coast from Les Cayes, Aquin was mostly peaceful in January, but its enslaved fieldworkers recognized that a revolution had begun. The Melinet estate was one of the largest in this parish, home to 117 workers even in 1798. On Sunday, January 15, 1792, Melinet's number two slave driver began to rally his neighbors, who probably included the hundreds of laborers on a nearby sugar plantation. Perhaps inspired by the demands of Les Cayes's slave soldiers, he assembled a considerable crowd, drumming and singing in creole, "Join me, friends, this is our country." At this moment, according to Hugues Melinet, the planter, two of his slaves, François and Louis Etienne, took "firm" action that prevented a full-blown rebellion. Melinet did not describe exactly how their "zeal and good conduct . . . procured tranquility for the district." Nevertheless, a month later he freed both young men and promised to help them in their new lives.²

Melinet did not say that François and Louis Etienne were his sons. He noted instead that they were both mulattos, aged 18 and 16, and

that their mothers were Fastine Doria and Rose Lima, two free black women. Four years earlier Melinet had manumitted Fastine and her 13-year-old mixed-race daughter Geneviève, specifying that the mother would be known as Doria and the girl as Dedé. And in 1801 he officially declared that Fastine Doria “had always lived with him,” and that Geneviève Dedé was their daughter. Why did Melinet not liberate Geneviève’s brother François, who would have been eleven when his mother and sister got their freedom? In May 1791, Geneviève married Laurent Anglade, the free colored son and trusted manager of Joseph Anglade, a wealthy planter living in France.³ Meanwhile François lived in bondage on their father’s plantation.

Much like François and Louis Etienne’s decision to protect the estate of a father who let them live in slavery, through the 1790s the South’s free people of color remained faithful to France, though it had ignored or rejected them for so long. In both cases, the bond was partially rooted in self-interest. As he might have predicted when he sided with his father in 1792, the slave François eventually became “François Melinet;” in 1794 the Revolutionary government impounded his father’s estate and appointed him manager under that name.⁴

Similarly, the South’s mixed-race families seem to have believed France would eventually return them to a social hierarchy determined by property, not whiteness. At the same time, however, evidence presented below suggests that a number of the region’s *anciens libres*, as free coloreds were known after emancipation, were committed to French republican ideals. In practice they seemed to have been most involved in securing their own “liberty,” “equality,” and “fraternity.” But there is also evidence that they recognized a fraternal bond with at least specific ex-slaves, or *nouveaux libres*. Elsewhere in the colony, their counterparts fought against general emancipation. During the second half of 1793, after France’s Second Civil Commission ended slavery in Saint-Domingue, wealthy men of color in other parts of Saint-Domingue went over to the British in towns like Léogane, Saint-Marc, and Arcahaie. The South’s *anciens libres* owned many more slaves than these counterparts. They also had a long history of clandestine relations with Jamaica. Yet they defeated a well-entrenched British occupation of their peninsula by 1798, with little help from France or other regions of Saint-Domingue.

It is important to understand the South’s loyalty to Revolutionary France because its geographical and commercial orientation away from Europe had produced the idea of an independent Haiti even before 1789. David Geggus credits Charles de Bleschamps, a naval bureaucrat stationed in Les Cayes, with formally resurrecting this

sixteenth-century name for the island in 1788.⁵ In that year Bleschamps published an *Essay on the government of the French colonies*, written in the colonial “Patriot” tradition. He used the South Province to illustrate how all three of Saint-Domingue’s provinces were, essentially, separate countries. He proposed making them autonomous regions whose representatives would gather periodically in the “Parlement d’Aïti.” Then in 1803, Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, whose family was from Torbec and Aquin, translated this idea of a self-governing Haiti into a formal declaration of national independence.

The Revolutionary experience of the South Province illustrates how this region was torn between its attachment to French republican values, and its creole, that is to say “American,” identity. The personality-obsessed historiography of the Haitian Revolution has presented this conflict as a creation of André Rigaud, who governed the peninsula from 1794 until his defeat by Toussaint Louverture in 1800. But a 1798 census and analysis of 1021 notarial contracts from Aquin in the years 1790–1803 reveal this tension within the emerging values and social structure of creole society.

After a brief overview of Revolutionary events in the South Province, this chapter sketches the influential ideas of Aquin’s Julien Raimond and the French Civil Commissioner Etienne Polvérel about how slave plantations might adapt to the values of the Revolution. It then goes on to examine four ways planters dealt with their slaves’ transformation into free cultivators.

The heart of the chapter, however, is an examination of how *anciens libres* experienced and interpreted the Revolutionary values of liberty, equality, and fraternity. In addition to slaves’ freedom, the South experienced a new commercial liberty that strengthened its longstanding intra-Caribbean trade. At the same time, *anciens libres* acquired a new political equality, or even superiority, for after 1793 they dominated Aquin’s military and civilian leadership. Most striking, however, is what the notarial record reveals about fraternity. One or perhaps several freemasonic networks connected Aquin’s white, *ancien libre* and ex-slave officials, merchants, and artisans to each other, to other parishes and to the outside world. Yet in terms of marriages, the Revolutionary decade saw fewer alliances between whites, former free coloreds, and ex-slaves than ever before.

* * *

Like the rest of Saint-Domingue, the South Province experienced deep unrest between the initial slave revolts of 1791 and France’s

confirmation of the end of slavery in 1794. Though local slaves had shown that they would fight to improve their condition, whites and free people of color fought over civil rights throughout 1791. In April 1792, hoping to contain rebel slaves, France extended citizenship to all free men of color, not simply those legitimately born men enfranchised in the May 15, 1791 law. The National Assembly sent a Civil Commission to Saint-Domingue to oversee this controversial change. Under the leadership of commissioners Léger Sonthonax and Etienne Polvérel, whites reluctantly joined with free coloreds to fight the rebels. But after Parisian revolutionaries proclaimed the French Republic in September 1792, and executed Louis XVI in early 1793, many colonists turned against the “Jacobin Commissioners.” In June 1793, white counter-revolutionaries in Cap Français nearly expelled Sonthonax from the colony by force. He held on by offering freedom to rebel slave fighters camped outside the city. Needing troops to fight a Spanish invasion from Santo Domingo, Sonthonax gradually extended this emancipation offer, decreeing the end of slavery in the North on August 29. His actions forced Polvérel to follow suite in the South and West Provinces. And on October 31, 1793, the two commissioners declared that slavery was over in Saint-Domingue.

In 1794, when France recalled the commissioners, Polvérel entrusted command of the southern peninsula to André Rigaud. Rigaud had worked with other Raimond supporters in Les Cayes for political change, but his military background now became critical. For in September 1793, the British had invaded Saint-Domingue from Jamaica. The South was one of their key targets and they eventually occupied peninsular towns like Tiburon and Jérémie. Working with colonial counter-revolutionaries, they also took Léogane, Port-au-Prince, Saint-Marc, and Arcahaie, cutting communication between the South and the rest of the colony.

During five years of fighting this occupation, largely without outside military support, the South developed its own administration, funded by foreign trade in plantation commodities produced by free men and women. In 1800, the armies of Toussaint Louverture, by then the top-ranking French officer in Saint-Domingue, defeated Rigaud’s regime in a bloody conflict known as the War of the South. With Louverture’s victory, the South Province was again incorporated under the general colonial administration. But for six years, *anciens libres* here developed a revolutionary society without direction from Paris, Cap Français, or Port-au-Prince, now renamed Port-Républicain.

There are few sources that permit us to see how the South’s wealthy free families of color envisioned the future in 1792 and 1793,

after colonial whites reluctantly accepted their citizenship and joined forces with them against the slave rebellion. The rebels had developed considerable military and political momentum, but there is no evidence that free colored planters in the colony anticipated the end of slavery.

Julien Raimond had, however. In January 1793, from Paris, he published a plan that was pragmatic, self-interested, and consistent with his advocacy of free colored rights. Though Britain had not yet declared war against France, it was already clear to Raimond that even with free colored and white citizen-soldiers marching together, the Revolution could not defeat the rebels, who had been improving their strength and military tactics for nearly 18 months. He argued that the insurgency had progressed to this point because colonists had refused justice to free people of color for so long. Now, he wrote, "slaves must be included in the revolution, not to the full extent, but to interest them by improving their situation considerably, in a way that our commerce is not destroyed and individual fortunes are not damaged."⁶

With these conservative priorities, Raimond described immediate emancipation as an "insane project." Instead, he proposed a plan by which slaves could earn their freedom gradually. Before the Revolution, Raimond had predicted that dismantling racial laws would encourage more whites to marry women of color and become small farmers in Saint-Domingue. Now he envisioned the hardest-working slaves becoming peasant farmers, developing the same virtues he saw in his own class: thrift, productivity, attachment to the land, and sexual morality.

Raimond proposed a law allowing any worker to buy his or her freedom according to an official price schedule. The law would also require owners to give slaves three free hours a day to work for themselves. Those who accumulated 100 livres from their gardens and commerce would receive extra free time, enabling them to earn more money. Hard work, agricultural skill, and financial discipline would eventually allow some to accumulate 2,000 livres or more to buy their freedom. Raimond believed slaves had to respect their masters' property rights and develop the habit of work, "the first quality essential to the condition of freedom and equality." And, after self-purchase, freedmen would have to abide by society's laws, and adopt new sexual behaviors. Men would have to abandon seduction and polygamy. And women would have to be more modest, covering themselves decently in public to avoid the sexual immorality of their slave past.⁷

Raimond's tone suggested that he sympathized more with the planters than with the slaves. In a section of the pamphlet ostensibly

written to the insurgents, he admonished them: "return quickly to your places, errant men, and in respectful silence await the laws that will revitalize you." Enslaved people would remain under special laws until they achieved "respect for persons and property." Echoing his words to Aquin's free men of color, Raimond counseled slaves "never to forget the benefits you receive from the nation. At all times you must show your gratitude; nothing can better prove this than continuing to make the colony's soil productive by your work." Indeed, Raimond described slave grievances as equivalent to those of the free population of color in 1789 and 1790. His proposal reflected the ideas he had developed in the preceding decade about free colored freedom: the importance of law, hard work, property, and propriety. "If the law encourages slaves to acquire a taste for the things we consume and enjoy, and even allows them to have a bit of land independent of their master's caprice, then we will be forever assured of our properties and of peace in the colonies."⁸

The way events unfolded in Saint-Domingue ensured that Raimond's conservative plan was not adopted, as such. Facing a counter-revolutionary coup, in June 1793 the Revolutionary Commissioner Sonthonax offered immediate freedom to slaves in return for military assistance. Yet, as will be seen below, Raimond's ex-neighbors in Aquin adopted elements of his proposal after emancipation. Though they may not have read his pamphlet, in 1797 and 1798 they began to sell small bits of land to ex-slaves, helping build a Haitian peasantry.

It is easier to trace Raimond's influence on Revolutionary officials like the second civil commissioners. Etienne Polvérel, who joined the Parisian Jacobin club at about the same time as Raimond, had almost certainly discussed the future of plantation slavery with him and shared his belief in gradualism. Raimond had advised the commissioners on colonial affairs before they left Paris and had recommended Delpech, their secretary. Like Victor Hugues in post-slavery Guadeloupe, Polvérel was influenced by Raimond's idea that ex-slaves owed a debt to the French Republic and to their masters. At the same time, the laws he established in the South after emancipation tried to inculcate market values in the cultivators and to convince them to support the plantation system out of economic, as well as political, self-interest.⁹

In his agricultural code, published in February 1794 in Les Cayes, Polvérel told the ex-slaves that they were now completely free, but that if they wanted to eat, clothe themselves and provide for their families, they would need to work.¹⁰ Without the plantation system, he

stressed, the Republic would abandon Saint-Domingue, which would fall prey to foreign attack and eventually chaos. His code set aside one-third of net plantation profits for the cultivators and gave them a voice in management. Each estate would have an administrative council where *conducteurs*, the former head slaves, would represent workers. The councils, which included planters or their managers, would decide work schedules, exploitation of the estate's resources, and how to spend revenues. Ex-slaves and ex-masters would share the estate's land, animals, and buildings.

But work crews needed to labor six days a week. Plantation councils could choose a five-day schedule, but since those estates would generate less revenue, workers would have to absorb the full cost of their decision. They would receive only one-fifth of profits, instead of one-third. With less than five days of labor a week, a plantation could not be profitable. Polvérel assured workers that state would evict work crews who chose such a schedule. While they might find employment as day laborers, "the right to shelter and provision grounds, like the right to a share of the revenue, is only given to those whose constant and diligent work makes them part of the plantation."

Polvérel acknowledged that many cultivators wanted to farm for themselves and had already increased the size of their personal gardens at the expense of plantation crops. Now that they had a share of plantation profits, he argued, they did not need more land to grow food. Plantation gardens would stay at about one-fifth of an acre. Nevertheless, Polvérel maintained the custom of giving workers more land than just their small garden plots. He allotted 19 acres of flat land or 25.5 hillside acres to each field hand with a share in the profits. Managers received three times as much, for their own use.

To ensure that cultivators understood the new system, in February 1794 Polvérel ordered owners and managers, with witnesses, to read and explain the law to all plantation workers. After these discussions, they were to let the workers vote whether they wanted to work five or six days a week. As Raimond might have recommended, many of these presentations included exhortations to adopt the values of the propertied classes. One manager reading Polvérel's code to workers in the Les Cayes plain said he asked them to "imagine the poverty that might afflict them in their old age, if they did not provide for themselves by being a little greedy for wealth." Another reminded his audience of "the advantages that the Republic will bring them if they do their part to uphold it and pay for the costs of the war; [but also] the well-being that awaits them if they imitate the greed of whites newly arrived in this land."¹¹

In Aquin, workers on the Labat plantation did not believe Polvérel had written the regulations their manager read to them. They suspected that the rules were a plot by the whites. Women on the estate pointed out that “if it had been sent by the Commissioner there would have been soldiers to witness the reading.” The workers on the Dufrettey sugar estate voted to work only five days, and to make Thursday their additional day of rest, not Saturday. The Charpentier Destournelles cultivators chose to take Thursday off “in imitation of the cultivators of the Dufrettey plantation.” The Castera Davezac estate also voted for Thursday, as did the Melinet plantation, under the management of the former slave François Melinet.¹²

An important part of Polvérel’s plan, like Raimond’s, was the elimination of capital punishment on the estates. On October 25, 1793, a week before general emancipation, he ordered the arrest of “Claude Affricaine,” the former head slave of the Giraud plantation in Les Cayes, for having whipped Julienne Zabet, one of the workers under his supervision. More than Raimond, however, the commissioner insisted that plantations were no longer the exclusive property of planters. In addition to “Claude Affricaine,” he arrested Giraud himself for answering, when several people asked him what was happening with his workers, “that it was none of their business.”¹³

In June 1794, as he left for France with Sonthonax, Polvérel conferred leadership of the southern peninsula on André Rigaud, now a general in the French army. Rigaud’s most pressing task was to defeat the British, who by this time occupied Port-au-Prince, as well as several towns in the southern peninsula itself. The invaders at shipping between the southern coast and the rest of Saint-Domingue, but Rigaud managed to finance his operations by maintaining Polvérel’s agricultural code and exporting plantation products. He had enough success fighting the British and establishing a government that when Sonthonax returned to the colony in May 1796 as part of the Third Civil Commission, he suspected that Rigaud had reestablished slavery and was moving the South towards independence. In August he sent envoys to the South to lead field workers in a rebellion against Rigaud. Instead, the cultivators rioted against them. By the end of 1796, Sonthonax and officials in the North had effectively concluded there was little they could do about Southern autonomy.¹⁴

In the nineteenth century, especially, Haitian historians focused on Rigaud’s ability to convince the ex-slaves or *nouveaux libres* to support his regime. According to Thomas Madiou in 1847, Rigaud created a prosperous South. By capturing slave ships and freeing their human cargo, by abolishing the whip and sharing profits as Polvérel

had outlined, and by personally exhorting plantation cultivators to fight the British by producing more commodities, Rigaud ensured that his region would have both food and government revenues while the rest of Saint-Domingue suffered famine.¹⁵

The surviving pages of Aquin's 1798 census illustrate the limits on this post-emancipation prosperity. Violence and the end of slavery had cost Aquin's plantations nearly one-third of their workers. In 1788, Moreau de Saint-Méry counted about 8,000 slaves in Aquin. The census of 1798 reveals only 5,300 cultivators and other laborers.¹⁶

This declining labor force was Aquin's greatest economic problem. The Dufrettey sugar plantation, which was under government control, had nearly 300 workers in 1798. But the neighboring Bodkin indigo plantation, which had had close to 180 workers in 1789, had only 95 resident ex-slaves in 1798. Seventeen of these were ill and eight were under the age of 12. When the plantation was sold in 1799, the purchaser counted just over 60 cultivators.¹⁷ Both of these estates were in the canton known as The Plain, which had three other plantations with over 100 workers. But The Plain was exceptional. The median number of workers per household there, 48, was three times higher than in any other canton in the parish.

Not only had Aquin had lost thousands of field workers, it had lost hundreds of proprietors and their families. In 1788 Moreau counted 210 whites and 290 free coloreds, or 500 persons. A decade later, the census listed only 303 individuals whose names and pre-Revolutionary occupations showed they had not been slaves. Some of the missing colonists had left with the approval of local authorities; many others had fled or been deported, in which case the government sequestered their estates. Proprietors were still resident in about two-thirds of Aquin's households in 1798. But in The Plain, and in the mountainous coffee-growing canton known as Asile, absent owners outnumbered residents. Two-thirds of Asile's planters and 57 percent of proprietors in The Plain were gone. In Aquin's other cantons, Grande Colline and the Colline à Mangon, only 26 and 17 percent of landowners were absent, respectively.

Predictably, the planters most likely to have disappeared were whites who owned large numbers of slaves, while those most likely to remain were free people of color with smaller workforces. Because the revolution eliminated racial labels, it is difficult to reconstruct Aquin's 1798 racial profile. But 37 percent of the households listed family names associated with prominent free colored families from the 1780s, while 33 percent had names of well-known white families.¹⁸ In the parish overall, over two-thirds (68 percent) of landowners with

prominent white names were absentees. Only 18 percent of free colored proprietors were absent. The heavily absentee cantons of The Plain and Asile were areas with few free colored proprietors; they constituted only 14 and 25 percent of the identifiable household names, respectively. In the two cantons where absentees were rare, free coloreds made up 35 and 53 percent of households.

Given the exodus or death of one-third of Aquin's residents over ten years, it is not surprising that property values crumbled. From the 1760s to the 1780s, the median price of rural property in Aquin, Les Cayes, and Nippes, had risen from 6,600 to 8,000 livres. In the Revolutionary decade, the median price of land in Aquin fell to 1,200 livres. Emigration, violence, and insecurity about the future of plantation agriculture all influenced this decline. The median value of urban property sales in the southern peninsula had almost doubled from 5,500 livres in the 1760s to 10,000 in the 1780s. The Revolution was hard on these transactions too, bringing them down to a median value of 990 livres in the 1790s. There was some high-priced urban real estate sold during these years, mostly residences for merchants and government officials. In 1798, the French merchant Pierre Bonnefils, who had married into a free colored family twenty years earlier, paid 72,000 livres for a house in Aquin. The following year his neighbor, the *ancien libre* parish commander Louis Beutier paid 40,000 livres for a two-story house originally belonging to a white merchant who had left for France. He then leased it to the government for 10,000 livres a year. As a high official, Beutier received land grants from André Rigaud's government, including one near Aquin's pier. He sold plots to lower-ranking soldiers and other citizens, collecting 1,000 livres for one of them in 1799. Two years later, when Rigaud's government collapsed and Beutier was no longer commander, he sold another plot for only 300 livres.¹⁹

These occasional large sales in the town of Aquin, and at its pier, illustrate that some merchants were thriving under Revolutionary conditions, as described below. But plantation sales and other surviving contracts confirm that in the years after emancipation, the goal of propertied families was survival. Aquin's notarial archives reveal four strategies employed by planters uncertain of how to attract, retain, and manage free laborers on their estates.

The first of these underlines the importance of the military in this period of foreign and civil war. Planters frequently formed partnerships with officers, like Louis Beutier, a free man of color before the Revolution, who was a captain in the Dragoons of Equality in 1794. At this rank, Beutier occupied a house in town that belonged to

Jean-Baptiste Anglade, a white creole and Aquin's former parish commander who had gone to France before the Revolution. But when he became parish commander himself, around 1796, Beutier emerged as a prominent coffee planter in the Asile district. As military chief, he probably had access to manpower and transportation other planters needed. In 1796, for example, the notary Allegre gave him power to administer his plantation. And in 1799, Beutier leased Anglade's large Asile coffee plantation. Because Anglade had left Saint-Domingue, Rigaud's government had sequestered his estate and took the owner's share of the profits. Under state control, the property seems to have received special attention. In 1798, it had 177 workers while the next largest workforce in Asile had only 63. The following year it had 150,000 coffee bushes and close to 90 acres in provision crops. In 1799 Jean-Baptiste Anglade returned to Aquin. But the former parish commander may have doubted his ability to keep these free workers on the land. So he let the property to Beutier for the substantial sum of 16,600 livres a year plus repairs. The lease did not even mention workers, as if they were Beutier's responsibility, independent of Anglade's control. Later that same year, Anglade gave Beutier power of attorney to receive income from a leased sugar plantation in a neighboring parish and to pursue funds from his sister's estate. In 1800, when Rigaud's government fell and Toussaint Louverture's officers took command of Aquin, Beutier transferred his lease on Anglade's coffee plantation to a neighboring planter, Dominique Brun.²⁰

Pierre Barbier, an officer in the National Guard, was another military figure who rented valuable coffee land in Asile from Aquin's elite whites. In his case, it was the prominent La Potherie family, who disappeared from Aquin's notarial record sometime between August and December of 1791, as the slave rebellion began. In 1797, when the La Potheries again began drafting contracts in Aquin, their two plantations were in deep disrepair. Only ten former slaves still lived on their 795-acre estate in the Aquin plain, whose once luxurious main house was tiled in marble out to the front veranda. Four of these residents were women with small children. In Asile, the La Potherie plantation had 20,000 neglected coffee bushes and 30 cultivators, but Marc Leroy de La Potherie-Saint Ours seems to have been worried about his safety in the mountains. In 1797 he leased both plantations to Pierre Barbier for the unusually brief period of two years and the exceptionally low price of 3,000 livres.²¹

In 1799, as the lease ended, Barbier claimed that La Potherie had given him 95 acres of the Asile estate, containing 11,500 coffee

bushes, provision crops, and two straw-covered buildings. The National Guard officer entered a nine-year partnership with Jean Aubert, a building contractor. Aubert was to build a house of squared timber, a coffee mill, and a large drying platform on the site.²²

Meanwhile, La Potherie's workforce in Asile dwindled, as workers in the mountains moved from plantation to plantation. Of the 30 cultivators named in the 1797 lease, only 11 remained in 1798. Seven new men and one new woman had now joined the estate. The La Potheries could not succeed in these conditions, made worse by war from 1799 to 1803. In 1802 another family member sold the remaining undeveloped coffee land.²³

A third soldier/planter was Claude Gourdet, an officer in Aquin's armed troop in 1794. Gourdet's career illustrates that even military officials found it challenging to rebuild an estate in the middle of a revolution. By 1798 he was second in command in the local Dragoons of Equality, as Rigaud called his military force. He also held the government lease on the abandoned Maragon indigo plantation with its 48 workers. But in 1799, as the War of the South began, he relinquished the lease, which was traded among a host of newly returned *émigrés*, including Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre.²⁴ Two years later, Gourdet and a National Guard officer named François Alphonse dissolved their 1796 partnership to plant coffee on Gourdet's land in Asile. They blamed "the unfortunate events" that had started in June 1799, when Louverture's army entered the peninsula.

Within months of nullifying his agreement with Alphonse, Gourdet entered a partnership with Louverture's war commissioner for the St Louis district, Louis Dexéa, who had already leased at least one modest coffee estate six months earlier. The new partners agreed to furnish equal numbers of workers and to split the profits from the 35,000 coffee bushes on Gourdet's land. The same day Gourdet and Dexéa formed another partnership to develop the coffee plantation of Etienne Olive, a deaf man under Gourdet's legal guardianship. In both agreements, Dexéa pledged to bring cultivators to conduct the harvest and to oversee their work. On May 1, 1802, Dexéa took over the government lease of the once-large Labat coffee plantation, where only 21 workers remained of the 58 that were there in 1798.²⁵

Meanwhile, Gourdet's old associate, François Alphonse, formerly of the National Guard, had formed a partnership with Aquin's new National Guard commander, Michaud Nicholas. The men purchased a cotton plantation that had only six resident cultivators, but their agreement noted, "They plan to return several individual cultivators who once lived there."²⁶

A second strategy for dealing with the end of slavery was to attend to workers' rights and needs. Jean Aubert's partnership with Pierre Barbier specified that he was to "maintain discipline among the cultivators who will work on the land out of their own good will and free movement," according to conventions made before the local justice of the peace. These stipulations, based on Polvérel's agricultural code, were maintained by Rigaud. Hugues Montbrun, a free man of color with a large family estate in Aquin but who spent nearly all his life in Bordeaux, returned to Saint-Domingue in 1792 as an officer with the royal army.²⁷ In 1794, forced back to Europe by Rigaud, who regarded him as a rival, Montbrun left careful instructions with the managers of his Aquin lands about which bales of cotton had been harvested after emancipation, and how to share them with the cultivators.²⁸

An important aspect of workers' new rights was Polvérel's decision to give them a voice in estate management. On March 31, 1794, he had created agricultural inspectors to watch over and even manage multiple plantations belonging to the state. The inspectors, chosen from former field hands, directed their plantations' administrative councils and received 100 livres per month plus half a percent of the state's share of profits. Rigaud too hired former head slaves as inspectors.²⁹

In 1798 at least four different men in Aquin, all of them former slaves, called themselves "inspector" and managed sequestered plantations. One of them was "Guillaume Inspecteur" who had already leased a 174-acre plantation with attached workers from a planter who had inherited the property and who charged him a mere 330 livres per year.³⁰

Nor did such men need overwhelmed planters to give them such opportunities. According to the 1798 census, former head slaves were running about two-thirds of the absentee households in Aquin, while professional managers directed the remaining third. This appears to be more a matter of state policy than planter strategy, for generally ex-slaves administered properties belonging to absent whites, who were likely to be political exiles. Managers presided over property belonging to *anciens libres*, who were more likely to have left voluntarily. In Asile, for example, all the whites were absent and ex-slaves ran six of these eight properties. In the Grande Colline canton, there were five absent free colored households and managers supervised four of them. But ex-slaves directed six of the canton's nine absent white estates.

In 1802, notaries working for an *émigré* who had just returned to Saint-Domingue found a former head slave, named Mentor, in charge of 30,000 well-maintained coffee bushes.³¹ When they asked "citizen Mentor" to tell them how much coffee had been collected on the

plantation, "he told us that according to the mark he made on a stick which he showed us, eleven hundred barrels of green coffee had been taken from the gardens, which had been reduced by half through drying and should produce the quantity of 27,500 pounds of coffee."

The Revolutionary state was not the only one to notice this kind of managerial skill. Some resident planters relinquished estate management to ex-slaves. One was Bernard Desmier d'Olbreuse, one of Aquin's remaining whites. Desmier lived with his wife and five young children on a plantation with 22 workers but owned a second estate several miles away, where a former head-slave directed the work of 30 cultivators.³²

A third strategy planters used to cope with the uncertainty of the Revolutionary decade was to change commodity crops, switching from indigo to coffee and other alternatives. Even before the Revolution, a drought had put a number of Aquin's indigo plantations out of business. Many indigo plantations also grew cotton, and more adopted it in the 1780s in response to the drought. Though coffee was already firmly established in many parts of the peninsula before the Revolution, in the 1790s large numbers of Aquin's planters finally began to grow this crop. The census of 1798 revealed at least nine former slaves who had been indigo refiners but were now on estates that had no need for this skill.

Coffee grew on hillsides that could not support indigo. It was less expensive to dry coffee berries on a masonry platform, and mill away their outer shells, than to distill dark powder from fermenting vats of harvested indigo. Though coffee work was demanding, it may have been more acceptable than indigo to ex-slaves. In the hills, temperatures were cooler and vacant land more readily available.

Moreover Aquin's foreign trading partners, like the town's resident U.S. merchants described below, seem to have been seeking out the crop. In Asile, for example, Pierre Barbier's neighbor Henry Fort was either a foreign merchant or he had invested heavily in his coffee works to meet foreign demand. In 1800, Fort sailed to the commercial center at Saint Thomas in the Danish Virgin Islands, leasing his coffee plantation with 40,000 well-maintained bushes, a crushing mill built in masonry, plus two winnowing mills, fourteen drying platforms, and a main house built partially out of stone.³³ Few coffee estates in Aquin were this solidly constructed.

Invested in the indigo trade for at least three generations, the Raimond family, like others, suffered with the decline of this crop. Aquin's drought had ruined François Raimond's indigo fields by the time of his death around 1797. In 1799, the main plantation house

still contained furniture and tableware, but the structure needed heavy repairs. The indigo works were abandoned and only few acres were planted in saleable cotton. The barn where Raimond had once dried his indigo now held several hundred pounds of cotton and a mill to clean the fibers. The only coffee equipment on the property was a small grinder in the kitchen. Twenty-four cultivators still lived on the grounds when Raimond's heirs leased the estate to a couple identified as "Citizens Ciprien and Martine." Neither of them could sign their names. They lived on a nearby plantation, and were likely *nouveaux libres*.³⁴

Guillaume Raimond was less involved in politics than François and Julien. He was the one family member to buy and develop a coffee plantation before the Revolution. In 1799, Guillaume and his partner, a white man, were both dead, but their estate's coffee equipment was in good repair. Five years after general emancipation, 53 male and 29 female field hands worked there still, plus 36 children. And in 1800, workers from this estate delivered 100 sacks of coffee to a merchant in Saint Louis. Following the law, they had used their share of the profits to buy food supplies.³⁵ The arbiters valued the plantation at 200,000 livres.

After coffee, lumber was another commodity many estates used to generate profits and keep workers on the land. Joseph Pyracmon was Aquin's new parish commander after the War of the South. The same day he took possession of his official residence in town, he formed partnerships with two prominent *anciens libres*. One of them was André Maigret, who was now a municipal administrator. Maigret had been growing coffee since 1797 and in 1801 he joined Pyracmon to exploit the timber on his land. The commander agreed that he would furnish the workers and the oxen to transport the wood to Aquin. Similarly, Pyracmon's partnership with Laurent Boisrond was to cut timber on the Boisrond plantation and haul it to town. In this case, each partner would provide one-half of the workers.³⁶

The fourth plantation strategy Aquin's *anciens libres* used was simultaneously the most revolutionary and the most conservative. In 1793, Julien Raimond wrote in 1793, the best way for wealthy planters to secure their property and guarantee peace was turn laborers into landowners. In the late 1790s, therefore, some families began to do just that, by selling small plots on the edges of their estates to ex-slaves from nearby plantations.

In 1799, for example, the cultivator Madeleine purchased approximately eight acres of land from Antoine Lavoile, a builder, and his wife. The Lavoile family was involved in at least ten similar small land

sales and partnerships in this period, including several with ex-slaves like Madeleine. The land they sold her contained badly maintained coffee and banana plants. Madeleine was a cultivator and promised in her sales contract to honor her obligation to work on the nearby Marceillan plantation. Several months later, she and Simon, another Marceillan worker, established a formal nine-year partnership to tend the 1,200 coffee bushes and bananas on her new land.³⁷

The four sons of the controversial free colored planter Michel Depas-Medina were neighbors of the Lavoiles. They too sold small plots of land to ex-slaves in this period.³⁸ In 1791, one of the brothers, Paul Depas, had been elected to the first multi-racial leadership of Fond des Nègres parish, next to Aquin. He was dead by 1796 but his brothers, Jean Louis, Antoine, and François Joseph remained. They were light-skinned men and probably French-educated like their father Michel, who had worked in the Bordeaux counting house of the Gradis family at mid-century.

In 1797, Antoine Depas-Medina known as Antoine Depas, and his wife, lived on a plantation with 15 workers. According to the 1798 census their manager Louis Dasmal, age 60, had held this position before the revolution. But in 1797, when Antoine sold seven acres to "Louis Damaza," he described him as a cultivator, or ex-slave. Perhaps it was not the same man, for Damaza could pay only two-thirds of the low purchase price, though he promised to provide the rest after the upcoming coffee harvest. Two years later Antoine Depas sold Damaza one-third of an acre on the edge of his plantation where Damaza had already cut down trees, planted crops and created a road. Soon Damaza was selling land, himself. In 1800 he sold another ex-slave and his family about ten acres of land he had previously purchased from Depas. By 1802 he had accumulated a plantation with over 150 acres in the same section of Aquin. He sold half of it to Jacques Jousseau, Jean Louis Depas-Medina's manager. The two men formed a partnership to work the land, which bordered property Jousseau was leasing from Jean Louis Depas-Medina.³⁹

François Joseph Depas-Medina was even more active in selling property to men and women who had been his neighbors' slaves. Sometime in 1795, Gilles Cupidon and François Bromand of the Gastumeau plantation had purchased about 20 acres from "Joseph Depas," paying the unusually low 1,386 livres price with a horse and pig. In 1796 the two *nouveaux libres* had a notary record the sale and shortly thereafter divided the land between them. Cupidon did not immediately leave the plantation, however. In 1797, he drafted a testament identifying himself as Kongo, age 55, and living on the Gastumeau plantation. "Fearing death" he gave one-third of his land

to Madeleine, who had once been a Labadie slave but had moved to the Gastumeau plantation. He left the other two-thirds to the son of a woman on Antoine Depas's plantation. Gilles Cupidon was still alive the following year, though the census official thought he was 64 years old. At last he and Madeleine, age 36, had left the Gastumeau estate, and headed their own household. Three years later, in 1801, Cupidon drafted another testament. This time he divided his property between Madeleine and the daughter of a woman he had known on the Gastumeau estate.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, François Joseph Depas continued to trade land for livestock with ex-slaves. In 1797 he took a horse from Denés, a cultivator on the Laveau plantation, in exchange for eleven virgin acres. Denés bought the land with his sister Bernadine, a domestic servant, and their nephew Augustine, a soldier. Three days later, Depas traded an even smaller plot, about five acres, for another horse to Pierre Hector who lived on another nearby plantation. The undeveloped land had been in the Depas family for over 30 years, but had only recently been surveyed.⁴¹

Were the Depas-Medina brothers consciously following Julien Raimond's advice to make ex-slaves into landowners? There's no evidence of this, but François and Jean Louis did leave marks, analyzed below, that suggest they were freemasons. These small unprofitable land sales, which other freemasons also engaged in, may have been expressions of their masonic commitment to fraternity and charity. At the very least, sales like this patched the social and economic fabric of their parish much as Raimond had advocated. And as sellers, the Depas-Medinas benefited themselves. The new peasants they were helping create might produce small crops of coffee and cotton that *anciens libres* could profitably market. Or they might function as clients for this literate family that was involved in municipal administration. Moreover, when the political or military situation shifted the Depas-Medina brothers might be glad to have *nouveaux libres* neighbors they knew and trusted. In 1799, the ex-slave "Citizen Jacques" bought ten acres from Antoine Depas-Medina, including a building, garden, and cotton bushes. After Jacques's deed was destroyed in the War of the South the following year, Depas-Medina accompanied him to a notary to redraft the sale, "so that he has enough of a title to guarantee him peaceful ownership."⁴²

* * *

Because the South rejected Sonthonax's authority, survived its isolation from France and the rest of Saint-Domingue, yet still managed to

defeat the British occupation, some contemporaries, including Toussaint Louverture, portrayed it as a mulatto oligarchy seeking autonomy from France. Given the importance of the southern peninsula in the movement for Haitian Independence [see epilogue], historians might agree. Yet André Rigaud and members of his government insisted on their loyalty to France and rejected offers from the British to change sides. Why were *ancien libre* planters here loyal to France when slave-owning *anciens libres* in Saint-Marc, Arcahaie, Léogane and elsewhere allied with the British to preserve slavery?⁴³

One reason frequently cited is that Rigaud's government succeeded in maintaining a viable plantation labor system and may have seen a future in which France would help wealthy families keep most of the population in quasi-slavery. But this theory overstates the success of Rigaud's plantation policies. The fact that Aquin's Dufrettey sugar works had 300 workers in 1798 and Anglade's coffee estate had 177 cultivators shows that parish administrators carefully allocated labor to the most profitable estates. But these large workforces seem to have been based on men and women pulled from other, privately held, plantations. And these, as we have seen, were hardly thriving. Marriage dowries, analyzed below, along with the land sales examined above, show that the wealth of *anciens libres* fell dramatically in the 1790s. If a plantocracy was what the South's *anciens libres* truly wanted, they would have done better to bring in their British smuggling partners and help them reinstall slavery.

Their attachment to France certainly had a cultural component. The Francophilia of the Haitian elite after independence suggests that even with their indigo vats empty and their workforces in constant flux, *ancien libres* maintained a sense of cultural superiority over *nouveaux libres* that derived from their French connections. And, there may have been families of color who hoped that French officials and troops would return and help Saint-Domingue rebuild a profitable plantation system. No matter what happened to the ex-slaves when the French returned, some *anciens libres* may have thought, educated landowning men of mixed race like themselves would certainly retain their equality with the French. Indeed, this is probably why the South so quickly welcomed the Leclerc expedition of 1802, while Toussaint Louverture and his lieutenants resisted for months.⁴⁴

Aquin's notarial archives reveal more about economic than ideological matters. Yet the surviving contracts do contain evidence of *ancien libre* attachment to the French republican values of liberty, equality and fraternity. For example, though the liberty of their slaves may have been difficult for many planters, commercial liberty from

France was something the South had long been clamoring for. The Revolution brought that freedom, so Aquin's smuggling port became the economic center of the parish. In the 1780s, when Moreau de Saint-Méry visited Aquin, its pier was already a small village, with 13 buildings. But in 1798, official documents began to refer to it as the "new town." The government drew up a master plan, granted land, and owners subdivided their property into housing plots. The 1798 census listed 136 people living at the port, not one of whom can be identified as white from pre-Revolutionary documents.⁴⁵ Most of the adults were ex-slaves working in trades they had adopted since the Revolution began. Less than half of the 56 men had lived either at the wharf or in the town of Aquin before 1791. Most of the women were servants or washerwomen but only 14 of the 54 had been there before the Revolution. There were men and women from local plantations and from coastal cities, like Les Cayes, Jérémie, or even Cap Français.

Aquin's bay was neither large nor deep, but its location drew ships from Curaçao and the Virgin Islands. Joannes Lopes and Moïse Parera, on the *Royal Ark* from Saint Thomas, visited Aquin in June 1799. In November they spent three weeks at sea, caught in strong currents as they tried to sail from Jacmel to Curaçao. After boiling their shoes for food, they were happy to return safely to Aquin. Britain's naval blockades also fostered trade in Aquin. In 1798 the Spanish schooner *Nuestra Señora del Carmen* tried to sail from Les Cayes to Curaçao but when it was becalmed two English vessels appeared and forced it to take shelter in Aquin's bay.⁴⁶

In 1799, when the U.S. Navy joined the British blockade of the peninsula, privateers sympathetic to the Rigaud's government forced foreign traders into Aquin. In October 1799, a French privateer sailing out of Curaçao compelled a ship from Saint Thomas captained by Tommaso Lii to travel to Aquin. The following May a French corsair based in Santo Domingo and calling itself the *Makanda*, after Saint-Domingue's famous pre-Revolutionary rebel Makandal, captured the *Adler*, a schooner out of Saint Croix en route to Jacmel. They sold its cargo in Aquin, where officials noted, "the scarcity of food and other merchandise is extreme at this moment." Captain Frederick Riley, sailing for Georges H. Remsen and Company in New York, was trying to sail from Saint Thomas to Curaçao when a French privateer off the coast of Puerto Rico forced him to go to Aquin. Riley's difficulties were an example of tensions between the United States and France over shipping that might have closed Aquin's trade with North America, if the parish had not had a long smuggling tradition. Local merchants knew how to avoid appearances of trading with hostile

powers. In 1799, for example, two planters in Aquin wrote that the only ships in the bay were “so-called neutral ships which actually come from Jamaica under the Danish flag.”⁴⁷

While the British and the Dutch had purchased most of Aquin’s indigo up to the 1780s, in the 1790s the parish’s coffee was probably going to the United States. When political tensions between the United States and France made direct trade more difficult, Aquin’s coffee went through neutral Curaçao and Saint Thomas.⁴⁸ In the late 1790s, at least six United States merchants lived in Aquin, probably to coordinate shipments through these Dutch and Danish ports. The merchant John Cunningham who lived in Aquin in 1798 and 1799 was identified both as Danish and American. In 1797, Joseph Clark of Albany, New York, arrived in Aquin where he already had a longstanding partnership with three local merchants and dozens of clients. The following year he drafted a testament leaving money so Coco Lefevre and her 19-month-old son Joseph could buy a house in the town.⁴⁹

Aquin’s century-old Sephardic connections were another way the parish could route its crops to the major markets. Salomon Levy of Saint Thomas was one of the merchants who sent schooners to Aquin. Others came from New York, like Abraham Isaac Henriqués. In 1794 he sold a cargo including over 100 pairs of shoes to government officials in Aquin. Henriques was almost certainly related to the Henriques brothers of Curaçao who in 1798 still owned a plantation in Aquin’s plain with 141 workers, though they no longer lived there. Neither did the Gradis family of Bordeaux, whose Aquin estate had 114 cultivators. The land belonged to Esther Lopez Depas in Bordeaux, the widow of Jacob Gradis. Moses Gradis, living in Philadelphia in 1799, was trying to clear his family’s title to this property.⁵⁰

Curaçao, with its important Sephardic community, had been Aquin’s most important smuggling partner for most of the eighteenth century. In 1798 five men living at Aquin’s pier said they had been sailors or merchants in Curaçao before the Revolution, but the most prominent Curaçaoan was Jean Louis David Garcia, who was described as a free mulatto when he married Thomas Ploy’s daughter in 1785. In 1794 Garcia was the “warehouse agent of the Republic” and used his foreign contacts openly. In 1790 he collected money for Hibrahim, “of Turkish nationality,” who lived at the water’s edge and owned a dugout canoe. In 1802 he admitted he had used notes from Curaçao to buy a 24-ton Spanish schooner for the navigator Albert Ples Lopez. Garcia also had contacts in Saint Thomas, maybe even

family. In 1794, Abraham Garsia, supercargo of the Danish boat *Three Brothers* out of Saint Thomas, sold salt, wheat and hard tack to the government of Aquin. In 1800 Jean Louis Garcia spoke Danish well enough to interpret for the crew of the brigantine *Lillienschold*, from Saint Croix.⁵¹

Since the 1760s, Aquin's free colored merchants and warehouse agents Pierre Casamajor and Thomas Ploy had used their business to move into planting. In 1798 Garcia, his wife, and their 8 children, ages 2 to 15, still lived at the pier. They had just three cultivators living on the only bit of rural land they owned, which was probably a provision garden. But the merchant took advantage of the availability of confiscated plantations. In 1799, the day after appraising a plantation lease for another resident of the pier, he leased a sequestered coffee plantation in the hills near the bay, with 18 healthy workers and 23 retired or sick ones.⁵²

In the 1790s, the only merchant at Aquin's port who was not moving into planting was a European. In 1778, Pierre Bonnefils, from western France, had married Marie Jeanne Casamajor, the legitimate daughter of Pierre Casamajor, the former warehouse agent. Bonnefils's father-in-law was dead by that time, but marriage made the immigrant part of Aquin's free colored family network. When Jean Louis Garcia had married Bonnefils's wife's cousin in 1783, Bonnefils had signed the wedding contract. Such family connections helped the Frenchman establish himself. In 1783, he bought a small plot of land in Fond des Nègres from his brother-in-law François Casamajor. In 1785 he leased half of the Depas-Medina plantation along the coast and a decade later purchased the entire estate for a mere 8,560 livres.⁵³

Yet it was not land, but his work as a wartime merchant that elevated Bonnefils into one of the most important people in the parish. In 1794 Aquin's administrators leased his house at the pier for official business and gave him the use of a large and prominent building on Aquin's central square in exchange. In 1798 he purchased a similar house, paying 72,000 livres. The following year he was a justice of the peace, attesting to the work agreements between cultivators and planters. Aquin's military commander moved into the house next door.⁵⁴

Bonnefils's profits came from selling imported flour, cloth, shoes and paper to the government, which in 1799 owed him 40,000 livres for numerous deliveries. Yet the merchants he dealt with, like Baltimore's Cuvers Lily in 1798, may have been reluctant to risk running the blockades around Saint-Domingue. In 1798 Bonnefils

helped a planter buy a Danish schooner for 13,550 livres from John Cunningham, one of Aquin's resident Americans. Before the end of 1798 Cunningham sold Bonnefils a second Danish schooner 36-tons with a copper-sheathed hull, for 33,000 livres. A few months later he bought the 86-ton *Betsy*, also Danish, for 49,500 livres and hired François Gerrigou to sail it to Saint Thomas.⁵⁵

By 1799, Bonnefils was doing so much business with North America that Aquin's other merchants were using him to recover debts from Baltimore. In February 1800, he extended a power of attorney to his wife, Marie Jeanne, to recover debts in that city. In March 1800, Bonnefils entered into a partnership with another merchant and bought a three-masted 150-ton New York schooner captured by a French corsair. The partners paid the New York captain 123,750 livres, most of it in the form of coffee from their warehouses.⁵⁶

But Bonnefils's large maritime investments between 1798 and 1800 were not an expression of his confidence in the future; they were his exit strategy. Unlike his creole in-laws, the Casamajors, he did not put the bulk of his profits into agriculture. His accelerating ship purchases coincided with rising tensions between Toussaint Louverture and André Rigaud. In June 1799, Louverture's armies invaded the peninsula, while his British and American allies tried to shut down southern shipping. In March 1800, Jacmel fell to northern armies after a long and brutal siege. Three months later, Bonnefils issued a power of attorney to Aquin's military commander to manage his plantation and to his partner Pierre Sentou for his business affairs.⁵⁷ From this point, neither he nor Marie Jeanne Casamajor appeared in the surviving notarial record.

If Aquin's merchants and planters felt they had achieved a measure of Revolutionary "liberty" in their new commercial freedom, they had certainly achieved "equality" in the political sense. The parish's records confirm the existence of what historians routinely describe as "Rigaud's mulatto state." With the peninsula under attack and negotiating a social revolution, officers in Rigaud's army, called the "Legion of Equality," were at the heart of that state. In some senses, the Legion's officers were hardly exemplars of "Equality." They lived in prominent buildings on Aquin's main square at government expense, often occupying the homes of white *émigrés* who once led colonial militias.

But they represented a new egalitarianism in the sense that most of them were just one generation removed from slavery, like André Rigaud himself. Most of Aquin's military commanders were nearly invisible in the notarial archives before the Revolution. They were

typically free men of mixed ancestry, members of the pre-Revolutionary constabulary, literate, but with little property. Louis Beutier, Aquin's parish commander from around 1796 to 1800, was a "free mulatto horseman in the constabulary" in 1780. He could sign his name, unlike the white blacksmith who purchased one of his horses.⁵⁸

Claude Gourdet, who eventually rose to second in command of Aquin's Dragoons of Equality, was "Jean Baptiste Claude known as Gourdet" before 1789. Marguerite Gourdet, a black woman freed from slavery in 1748, had had six mulatto children with Jean Catherine Decopin Degourdet, a white planter. In a series of deeds up to his death in 1760, Decopin and his brother left Marguerite and her children over 20 slaves, land in the Asile hills, and buildings in town. Though Claude was the eldest, it was only in 1785 that he took control of this property in the name of his sisters, nieces and nephews. His mother was worn out by a court case she had against a white merchant. She turned the family assets over to Claude, keeping her domestic slaves and the best furniture from Decopin's bequests.⁵⁹

Before the revolution, then, Claude Gourdet had not come into his own as a planter. Even officers from older free colored families, like Jacques Joseph and Mathurin Casamajor, lieutenant and second lieutenant respectively in the Legion of Equality, were from the poor branch of the free colored elite, as described below.

One of the few officers did not fit this profile was Pierre Bineau, a cavalry captain from Aquin. Bineau was the legitimately born son of a white man and a woman from the free colored Depas family. In 1799 he married a woman who brought him over 26,000 livres in property.⁶⁰

At least one Legion officer was a white man. Louis Claudot was born in the eastern France, but in 1791 he was the bookkeeper on Hugues Melinet's plantation (chapter 8). Like his employer, Claudot had a daughter with one of the enslaved women on the estate. In 1792 he bought and freed this ten-year-old girl, Geneviève Louis Zélia, sending her to live with her godmother, Melinet's free colored daughter Geneviève Dedé.

Despite Claudot's relatively lowly status as a white bookkeeper, in September and October of 1792 as all free men of color received citizenship, he moved in high social circles, witnessing a testament for the parish commander's brother and attending the marriage of another member of this wealthy white family. Some of Aquin's free colored political leaders were also present at this last event, including François Raimond. It seems possible that Claudot supported the Revolutionary changes that were occurring in the colony. In December he was the only white man, besides the notary, to

witness Michel Francillon's purchase of an enslaved mulatto woman he would soon marry and free.⁶¹

After this, Claudot vanished from the Aquin notarial record, only reappearing at a wedding in February 1798, now identified as a Captain in the Legion of Equality. In June, at age 48, he drafted a testament leaving all his property to his colleague Louis Beutier, the military commander. But Claudot was in good health and witnessed half-a-dozen transactions, often with Beutier, through February 1800.⁶²

Despite the power of Aquin's Legion officers and the chaotic social conditions of the late 1790s, during most of the Revolution civilians led and staffed Aquin's municipal government. From January 1794 to May 1799, the town's most important official was the parish administrator, Jean Augustin Cator the younger. Probably appointed by Polvérel in the heady days, Cator quickly exerted control over the plantations abandoned by those colonists who were fleeing the parish. Profits from such impounded property were to be a major source of revenue for his administration. On December 4, 1793, the Chevalier Dufrettey left for France, leaving Aquin's largest plantation under the management of Jean-Baptiste Plaideau, a free man of color. Seven weeks later, Cator sequestered the Dufrettey estate. Under municipal oversight, the plantation received the labor it needed to continue producing sugar. With 300 cultivators, it had six or seven times more workers than the average Aquin plantation in 1798.⁶³

Cator traded the Dufrettey sugar directly to foreign merchants at Aquin's pier, along with the coffee and cotton other confiscated estates produced. This aspect of his duties was so important that several months after taking office he set up an administrative center at the pier, as well as a military hospital and soldiers' lodgings. He seems to have dealt with ship captains as often as once a week. From June 13 to September 30, 1794, for example, he signed 15 contracts with merchant ships, nearly all of them based in the Danish Virgin Islands.⁶⁴

Unlike the military officials described above, Cator was not a native of Aquin, or at least that name does not appear in its pre-1794 records. But when he first signed a notary's register in Aquin, he had already married Marie Luce Jeanne Elizabeth Delaunay, from one of the parish's well-respected *ancien libre* families. His wife's uncle, Julien Delaunay, had been an important supporter of Julien Raimond in the 1780s. Her father, François Delaunay, had died in the North Province in 1786. He left a plantation in the Grande Rivière parish, the site of Vincent Ogé's revolt, which his children and widow managed with the help of Auguste Chavannes of Cap Français.⁶⁵

Cator may have been from the North Province himself, for he was especially eager to leave Aquin before the peninsula was invaded by Toussaint Louverture's troops. On May 13, 1799, he and Aquin's warehouse agent relinquished their papers to an official in Saint Louis, just weeks before a Northern army entered the peninsula. On August 11, Cator signed one more notarial contract, as "benefactor" to an apprentice tailor, and disappeared from the record. He also vanished from his wife's life. Three months later, on November 26, a notary described her, not as a widow, but as "formerly the spouse of Citizen Cator." Within two years, she relinquished all her claims to Delaunay property in Aquin, and moved—perhaps returned—to Cap Français.⁶⁶

Cator's brother-law François Julien Delaunay did not flee Toussaint's armies, however. In 1797, he was Aquin's military secretary and then customs director in April 1799, just as Cator was vacating his office. In December 1798 he had enough confidence in the future to lease the old Bodkin estate and partner with his brother and Toussaint Boisrond to grow coffee there. He remained Aquin's customs' director in late October 1799 and was still living at the port in September 1801. But he and his siblings sold the old family indigo plantation to François Alphonse and Michaud Nicholas, the old and new commanders of Aquin's National Guard. The land was now planted in cotton and brought only 11,000 livres.⁶⁷

While younger members of Aquin's *ancien libre* elite handled day-to-day governance, the older members of this class represented the parish on the colonial and national levels. Men in Julien Raimond's circle had taken parish-level political roles early in the Revolution but they went on to larger responsibilities after emancipation. In 1791 Louis-François Boisrond was elected president of the town of Saint Louis—and the following year he was one of two men entrusted with voluntary patriotic contributions in Aquin.⁶⁸ In August, 1792, François Raimond was "captain commanding the people of color" in Aquin. In October 1792 Sonthonax chose both men to sit with other free colored representatives in Cap Français. In 1795, Aquin chose Louis-François Boisrond to represent it at a Colonial Assembly, where other delegates named him to represent Saint-Domingue in Paris at the council of 500 in August 1796. He left his Aquin plantation with 64 cultivators in the hands of his two former head slaves.⁶⁹

Guillaume Labadie, whom whites nearly killed in 1789, served on the superior council of Port-au-Prince in 1797 on Julien Raimond's recommendation. When the census was taken in 1798, Labadie,

aged 73, was back on his plantation in Aquin, with 30 workers. He signed notarial contracts as late as January 1801.⁷⁰

Other evidence suggests that Aquin's old mixed-race families shared a commitment to republican "equality" that went beyond their new access to positions whites once monopolized. Before the Revolution, for example, the wealthiest white and free colored families sent their children to France. *Anciens libres* considered education to be one of their strongest qualifications for citizenship. It was significant, therefore, when Louis-François Boisrond wrote Julien Raimond on July 12, 1791, asking him to send his niece and nephews home to Saint-Domingue. Boisrond had just heard that France had broken the color line by admitting some men of color to citizenship and he bubbled with patriotic enthusiasm. He asked Raimond to "choose three or four good teachers to form the beginnings of a secondary school [*collège*] in Aquin. I will sacrifice my rest to achieve this happy goal. Help me in this occasion; we will have settled another debt to posterity and will make converts to the national spirit, by training the children of all of our brothers there."⁷¹

Revolution and war probably delayed this project, but on December 16, 1794, Rigaud gave Father Augustin Outrebon permission to teach Aquin's children "the principles with which all French republicans should be imbued, and to make them cherish their fatherland and the duties they will have to fulfill." On January 23, "Citizen Outrebon," who had been the priest in neighboring Cavaillon, leased the parish house and multiple outbuildings on Aquin's central square from the municipal government. He signed a commercial "farming lease," as if he would be running a business on the property, not simply living there.⁷²

In 1797 Saint-Domingue experienced a new emphasis on education as Julien Raimond returned to the colony, as a member of the Third Commission. Raimond expanded Cap Français's schools, so that in February of that year there were 1,651 enrolled students in the North Province. Aquin, perhaps because of the influence of men like Boisrond and Labadie, joined this the new educational campaign. On March 23, 1797, a planter from Petit-Goâve named Jean Alexandre Paulmier agreed to let the commanding officer of the resident battalion manage his plantation. The following day Paulmier was in Aquin, where notaries identified him as the parish teacher. Four days later, he leased a house there. Nearly always described as "teacher," Paulmier signed over 60 notarial contracts in Aquin as a witness, sometimes several per day, but none of them pertained to his teaching activities. Then, after April 1798, notaries stopped labeling him "teacher."

The records say nothing about the closing of the municipal school, but it appears this may have happened. According to the 1798 census, Michel Labadie and his seven children, aged 1 to 15, shared their house with a 71-year-old "private tutor." After January 1799, Paulmier served as Aquin's municipal clerk.⁷³

There were other areas where *anciens libres* worked for social equality with ex-slaves. Guillaume Raimond, Julien's younger brother became "official instructor" at Saint Louis's military tribunal, perhaps to advise ex-slaves on court procedure. And a new emphasis on stripping all racial labels from official documents led Aquin's notaries to stop referring to the neighboring parish as "Fond des Nègres." Instead, they increasingly called it St. Michel, after its patron saint.⁷⁴

With the exception of Aquin's school and its civilian government, the notarial records provide very little information about community life in the Revolutionary decade. The parish elite welcomed commercial liberty, and accepted the freedom of the cultivators, who were still obliged to work their estates. The civilian leadership and officer corps illustrate that *anciens libres* had achieved equality for more ex-slaves. Yet Aquin's attempts to establish a school show a certain commitment to equality.

But what about Revolutionary "fraternity"? The brotherhood and fellowship of enlightened citizens had been an important aspect of Saint-Domingue's emerging public sphere before the revolution and, in the South Province, especially, freemasonry was at the heart of this. The smuggling trade with Jamaica brought freemasonry to Les Cayes in 1738, nine years before French freemasons established a lodge in Cap Français. Freemasonry expanded dramatically after the Seven Years' War, when colonists founded lodges all over the colony. Perhaps because of its deep creole roots, the South Province had 11 "orients," or founding lodges, while the North had only 8, the West just 1. In 1789 these 20 orients had about 40 lodges, with a total of about 1,000 members. But the nature of Saint-Domingue's segregated public space insured that none of them were men of color. When Cap Français's "Truth" lodge chose a man married to a woman of color as their "Venerable," they were rejected by all the freemasons in the colony.⁷⁵

The bitter disputes of the Revolution provided an even greater challenge to Saint-Domingue's freemasons. In Les Cayes, there was political tension between the "Reunited Brothers" lodge, dominated by militia officers and old creole families, and the mostly European "Discrete Brothers," whose leader Tanguy de la Boissière was one of Saint-Domingue's most outspoken white Patriots. By 1791 there

were only 19 lodges left in the colony, and these numbers diminished as the slave rebellion expanded. As colonial whites fled the Revolution, they took freemasonry with them. A number of *émigrés* re-established their Dominguan lodges in Cuba or the United States. The first masonic lodge in New Orleans was founded in 1793 under the name "Parfaite Union," the name of a tumultuous Port-au-Prince lodge. Historians have generally concluded that the Revolution destroyed freemasonry in Saint-Domingue.⁷⁶

In France, however, many of the men who supported racial equality were freemasons, like Hector de Joly, the Marquis de Lafayette, and Etienne Polvérel of Saint-Domingue's Second Civil Commission. Philippe Roume de St. Laurent, who served on the First and Third Civil Commissions in 1791 and 1798, was a freemason. The Abbé Grégoire, believed its egalitarian principles might have brought justice more peacefully and gradually than the Revolution.⁷⁷

There is no evidence that Grégoire, Polvérel, Roume or other revolutionaries tried to establish freemasonry among Saint-Domingue's men of color, though Roume's mulatto son Marissé did found a lodge in Les Cayes in 1822. But by 1843, Haiti had 23 lodges. Freemasonry played such a critical role in the political culture of the independent nation that at least one historian concludes that "a more or less hidden hidden masonic life" existed in Revolutionary Saint-Domingue.⁷⁸

Proof of this can be found in the distinctive marks that 83 men in Aquin parish incorporated into their signatures in the period 1791 to 1803. These dots and lines were probably what freemasons call "modes of recognition"—the signs, gestures, and symbols by which masons reveal their identity to each other.⁷⁹ Though there is no official record of Toussaint Louverture having been a freemason, Haitians have long speculated that the three dots forming a triangle at the end of his autograph indicated some kind of association with freemasonry.⁸⁰ These marks were not identical from individual to individual, but all were composed of dots or parallel lines, and often both. The most common symbol was three points arranged in a triangle, but the points were often in a horizontal line, sometimes between two parallel lines. Some marks incorporated five or even seven dots, perhaps indicating different grades within freemasonry. Some men used the dotted "i" in their name as the apex of a triangle, completed by two dots below their signature.

The existence of freemasonry in the Revolutionary Aquin confirms that the parish's *anciens libres* were not just surviving the Revolution; they were deeply attached to its ideals. As scholars of French freemasonry have noted, "lodges presented themselves . . . self-consciously

as schools of government where brothers learned to vote, give orations, lived under constitutions and majority rule, . . . and merit the esteem of the public." Freemasons devoted themselves to living the ideals of liberty and equality; their rituals spoke of "spoke of leaving bondage, of learning freedom through Masonic instructions, of the unworthiness of the strong who enslave the weak, of the need for complete liberty through full commitment."⁸¹ By the end of the eighteenth century, charity had also become an essential element of freemasonry.

With with one notable exception, none of Aquin's wealthy and prominent free men of color mentioned in chapters 7 and 8, or above, made masonic signs in the contracts they drafted. Jean Augustine Cator, Louis Beutier and Claude Gourdet, the school teacher Alexandre Paulmier all signed without these marks. So did the Raimonds, the Boisronds, the Casamajors, and the Delaunays.

The exception was the Depas-Medina brothers, especially Jean Louis, who became Aquin's first nonwhite notary. In 1783 he and his seven brothers and sisters inherited 99 slaves and 2 plantations from their father Michel, the free mulatto son of the converted Sephardic judge, doctor and merchant, Michel Lopez Depas. Jean Louis purchased and built up a plantation in Bainet parish with his brother Antoine and then bought out his share. In 1789 he married his cousin, Anne Julienne Lauzenguez. When he traded his Bainet land for a plantation in Aquin in 1791, he was already signing his name with a unique flourish involving seven dots.⁸²

This masonic connection may have helped Depas-Medina become a notary. Sometime in September 1793, he was among the dozens of men Etienne Polvérel, a fellow freemason, appointed to replace officials who had died, emigrated, or been deported in the tumult surrounding emancipation. Aquin's notary Antoine Allegre, who also used a masonic signature, though sparingly, appears to have guided Depas-Medina through a kind of notarial apprenticeship, until he began working on his own in February 1794 as Polvérel's local representative. In 1797 Depas-Medina identified himself as Aquin's representative of the "national commissioner," perhaps referring to Julien Raimond, who had returned to Saint-Domingue as a member of the Third Civil Commission.⁸³

In 1798, still working as a notary, Depas-Medina owned a coffee and cotton plantation with 34 workers. In 1800, as the South came under attack from Toussaint Louverture, he leased the property to Jacques Jousseau, his manager. Jousseau, a black man, was also a freemason. Under Toussaint, he became Aquin's militia captain.⁸⁴

Unlike Aquin's parish administrator Jean Augustine Cator, Jean Louis Depas-Medina did not lose or surrender his official position when Rigaud's government gave way to Toussaint's. The legal knowledge required to draft valid contracts made notaries hard to replace. And Toussaint's plan to revive Saint-Domingue's large plantations needed such officials, to help it restore the property of returning *émigrés*. In 1800, Depas-Medina's signature began to appear on the bottom of many deeds recorded by other notaries, certifying their registry in the "Bureau d'Aquin," where officials deposited their registers in 1801.⁸⁵

Besides Depas-Medina, those freemasons in Aquin who did government or legal work were mostly from a lower level of the administration. Michel Dumoulin, for example, served as secretary for Aquin's military headquarters and also as "Provisions Officer." Yves Lemonnier, originally from Brittany, was Aquin's public health inspector in 1799. Because the marks were "modes of recognition," many men did not use them routinely, but only when encountering strangers. Nicolas Erique was Aquin's postmaster as well as a merchant in the town and he used the mark only once in 15 contracts. This may have been because he was signing a document with a man he did not know, Jean-Baptiste Edouard Lelievre, a white planter from the neighboring parish of Fond des Nègres. Lelievre was selling eight acres of land to an ex-slave, like the Depas-Medina brothers and other free masons. But Lelievre did not make his own masonic sign in the document. The regional surveyor Pierre Engeran, who normally lived in Saint Louis, was another official who left masonic marks during a rare visit to Aquin to sign contracts.⁸⁶

Military officials also left masonic marks when they were away from their homes, probably to see if acquaintances shared their masonic affiliation. Nicolas Henry, a free mulatto before the Revolution, was commander in chief of the Saint Louis National Guard in 1802. He signed placing seven dots between the two parallel lines in "N," while visiting Aquin. Jean Louis Sipan was a lieutenant in the Legion of Equality from Miragoane. He came to Aquin to sign a marriage contract, leaving his mark.⁸⁷

Planters and merchants also left masonic "modes of recognition" in documents that would be seen by strangers. The merchant Pierre Bonnefils was apparently not a freemason, but when he traveled to Baltimore to collect debts on behalf of other merchants, he carried documents with marks suggesting that those creditors were freemasons. The idea of a secret global fraternity may have been especially appealing to Christophe François Gruau, a planter from Petit-Goâve.

In November 1798 Rigaud's government expelled Gruau from Saint-Domingue and he left a masonic sign on his official protest, noting that he would probably wind up in Jamaica. He put the same sign by his name when he gave a merchant power to manage his property. Ship captains like the Spaniard San Cardoso from Santiago and Godefroy of Danish Saint Thomas, made masonic signs but so did their subordinates like the cargo agent Piednoir and the pilot Santo Mattei, both of Saint Thomas.⁸⁸

A number of artisans were freemasons, like the builders Jean Aubert of Anse-à-Veau and Pierre Joseph Masson Desroudières, originally from France, the tailor Louis Baronnet, who was also a sergeant in the Legion of Equality, the saddle maker Jean Marcellin Jourdan, and the cabinetmaker and merchant Antoine Galicy.⁸⁹

It is difficult to know who was propagating freemasonry in the Revolutionary Aquin for there was no masonic lodge in the parish before the Revolution. It may have been transmitted from Bordeaux, which was one of the most important centers of free masonry in Europe, rivaling Paris or Berlin after 1760. This would explain the masonic signature of the notary Jean Louis Depas-Medina and other prominent free men of color with strong ties to that French port city. Joseph Charpentier, known as Saubiac, had been born in Bordeaux in 1753 to unknown parents. By the 1780s he was a well-respected member of Aquin's free colored community and was almost certainly one of the parish's leading Revolutionary-era freemasons.⁹⁰

Freemasonry may have come from neighboring parishes, where there were at least three strong lodges before 1789. Cavaillon's "Zealous Brothers," founded in 1775, had 55 members, nearly all of whom were planters. In 1797 the white creole Balthazar Delmas Kerifal signed as a mason in Aquin. His father had been militia captain of Petit-Trou and belonged to its "Perfected Reason" lodge. The senior Delmas had also been a senior official in Les Cayes "Reunited Brothers," where a number of other Delmas were also members.⁹¹

The most likely source of freemasonry in Aquin was the adjoining Fond de Nègres parish. Founded in 1772, "The Chosen Brothers" lodge there had helped establish many of the other lodges in the South Province, as well as one in Port-au-Prince. Its members were mostly creoles, and included the militia commanders of Saint Louis and other nearby districts.⁹² But Henry Gastumeau, who had been an officer in the "The Chosen Brothers," and who had belonged, at different times, to Les Cayes's "Reunited Brothers," Cavaillon's "Zealous Brothers," and Petit-Trou's "Perfected Reason," signed nearly two dozen contracts in Aquin in the 1790s and did not leave a

single masonic sign. Did he reject the admission of men of color into freemasonry or was Gastumeau so well known among local masons that he did not need to identify himself?

The latter was probably true, for at least two freemasons of color stepped up to help him in February 1796, when Gastumeau returned to Aquin and discovered that the Revolutionary government had confiscated his property. In late 1794 he had left Saint-Domingue for New England, carrying with him, he later insisted, official permission. He left his two plantations, one in coffee and the other in indigo, under the care of Louis Baronnet and Joseph Saubiac, men of color who regularly left masonic signs. But the Spanish captured his ship and took Gastumeau to Santo Domingo. After 15 months, when he finally returned home, he asked a collection of well-known local persons to declare that his story was true and that he had lived in the area for 30 years. Baronnet and Saubiac were among those he asked to help him get his property back. They obliged, though they did not make masonic marks in this document.⁹³

Given the number of men who left these distinguishing signatures, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that Aquin had some kind of masonic lodge in the 1790s. The actions of at least a few local freemasons confirm that they wanted to establish peace, equality, and progress in Saint-Domingue. For example, freemasons appear to have been disproportionately involved in the sale of small plots of land to ex-slaves. Not only were at least two of the Depas-Medina brothers freemasons, but so was François Brun, an *ancien libre* who was selling 6 and 9 acre plots in 1800 and 1801. A third freemason who made two of these kinds of sales to ex-slaves was Jean Louis Leclerc cadet.⁹⁴

The case of Joseph Chabrier offers another example of a freemason working to create a more integrated society in Aquin. In March 1799 Chabrier, who was born in Provence, where he owned a house and a tiny vineyard, married Geneviève Vigne. The bride was a 15-year-old girl whose widowed mother, a member of a prominent free colored family, had just died. The groom managed a sequestered estate for the municipal government, and had leased vacant land from André Maigret, a prominent man of color, promising to establish it either in cotton or coffee.⁹⁵ Chabrier's young wife owned her parents' plantation, which her guardians had already leased to provide her an income. Protecting her, the contract specified that only one-third of this land would enter the marriage community.

In several ways, this Chabrier/Vigne alliance was the Revolutionary-era equivalent of the marriages between Pierre Raymond and Marie Begasse in the 1720s, Jacques Challe and Françoise Dasmard in the

1760s, and Pierre Bonnefils and Marie Jeanne Casamajor in the 1770s. Geneviève Vigne's parents were legitimately married, and both of them were, in turn, the product of legitimate marriages between white men and women of color. In his 1781 marriage contract, her father Pierre Vigne was described as a "free *tierceron*," indicating that he was extremely light-skinned. Geneviève's aunts had both married into the same family, so Antoine and Jean Baptiste Depas-Medina were both her uncles by marriage.⁹⁶

The Chabrier/Vigne alliance was Aquin's sole Revolutionary-era interracial marriage and it was probably not an accident that Chabrier drew three vertical dots between parallel lines before he signed his name. At his marriage he was surrounded by men of color who prominently displayed their freemasonic symbols: François Brun, Louis Baronnet, Michel Dumoulin, and Nicholas Erique.⁹⁷

For a handful of Aquin's white colonists, however, freemasonry appears to have been more a marker of their European, rather than creole, identity. Like Chabrier, Joseph Carmagnolle of Marseille drew masonic marks when he signed his marriage contract, an occasion when he was surrounded by other freemasons. But none of them were men of color. Carmagnolle was marrying a wealthy white creole named Marie Catherine Lapeyre, a widow twice over with no children. His fellow freemasons were men like Bernard Desmier d'Olbreuse, who was raising seven young children with his wife in Aquin, but who almost never appeared in a contract with a man of color. Another was the baker Guéré or Queré, known as "La France."⁹⁸

As this example suggests, with only a few exceptions, Aquin's whites, *anciens libres*, and ex-slaves did not intermarry in the 1790s. Whites and mixed race families in particular were less likely to sign marriage contracts together in this decade than any time since 1760.

After emancipation, few ex-slaves drafted notarized marriage contracts, for the manumission-marriages of the 1780 were no longer necessary. In Aquin the last of these occurred on December 15, 1792. Free people of color had full civil rights, but the slave rebellion was still building when Michel Francillon, probably a man of color, purchased Jeanne Françoise, the enslaved mulatto daughter of a planter, from Anne Marie Françoise Ploy. At 3,300 livres, the price was no bargain, but, as the marriage contract revealed, Jeanne Françoise was in many ways closer to the free colored elite than her new owner and husband, Michel Francillon. She was Annemarie Ploy's cousin and two years earlier, Ploy, a widow now married to the free colored planter Joseph Poinson, had paid 3,000 livres for Jeanne.⁹⁹

Jeanne, the ex-slave and bride, was wealthier than her husband, according to the marriage contract she and Francillon signed three days later.¹⁰⁰ She owned five of her own slaves, plus livestock and furniture totaling nearly 11,000 livres, “fruit of her work and industriousness.” Francillon had a 40 acre coffee plot, but only one slave and fewer animals than his new wife. Given the wealth and family connections of the bride, the Francillon marriage, then, was more about consolidating the free colored class than about emancipating a slave. After emancipation, the new Madame Francillon could accurately claim to be an *ancien libre*.

Marriage contracts drafted during the Revolution confirm the declining wealth of Aquin’s *ancien libre* families. In the years 1760–69, grooms from Aquin and the surrounding districts brought an average of 19,008 livres to their new households, a value that rose to 49,780 livres in the 1780s, but fell to 36,908 in the 1790s. In the 1760s, brides listed an average property value of 17,460 livres, which rose to 39,077 in the 1780s but fell to an average of 12,369 during the Revolution.

Beyond the economic insecurity it created for landowning families, the Revolution transformed formal marriage in Aquin by eliminating nearly all whites from the marriage market. The number of absentee plantations in Aquin’s 1798 census suggests that at least 60 percent of whites had fled the parish by that date. In the 1760s and 1780s, free people of color had drafted 37 and 53 percent of all marriage contacts, and in the 1790s they formed approximately 71 percent of civil marriages.

Aquin’s few Revolutionary-era marriages between whites usually involved a European groom who was speculating on the return of plantation slavery. These couples were far wealthier than couples of color. Revolutionary-era grooms of color brought 12,189 livres to their marriages, and brides of color, 7,523, on average. In contrast, the grooms who were obviously French or white creoles brought 92,525 livres on average; white brides brought 27,514, on average.

One of these white grooms was Pierre Joseph Dondasne of Dieppe, France. In 1792, Dondasne was serving in Saint-Domingue as naval commissioner in Port-au-Prince. He came to Aquin to marry the orphaned daughter of a planter, Thérèse Adélaïde de Santo Domingo, whose maternal uncle and guardian was the parish militia commander.¹⁰¹ The bride had inherited substantial property from her late father, but it had not been inventoried. For his part, the groom had invested in multiple plantations in the emerging coffee districts of Plymouth and Tiburon, in the hinterland of Les Cayes; his property was valued at 287,000 livres.

Another white man who expected slavery to return was Alexandre Henry Chamillard Devarville, a former captain in the queen's regiment at Versailles.¹⁰² In 1802, as a French expedition defeated the armies of Toussaint Louverture, Chamillard married Emilie de Sanglier, the daughter of a prominent white Aquin planter. The groom possessed the extraordinary sum of 100,000 livres in specie. The bride was far less wealthy, but she too was anticipating the eventual revival of slavery. The marriage contract noted that before emancipation she had owned eight fieldworkers. The document listed each of them by name, "for the record."

Dondasne, Chamillard, and perhaps the freemason Carmagnolle married white creole women in order to establish themselves as planters at times when other white colonists had abandoned the colony. Chabrier's marriage to Genevieve Vigne stands out as the 1790s' only notarized interracial marriage in a parish with a long history of such unions.

The marriage contracts of the 1790s suggest that Aquin's *anciens libres* were turning inward, reinforcing old family interconnections. Perhaps they rejected whites like Dondasne or Chamillard because of their political views or perhaps these men rejected them because such families were no longer rich enough to attract white suitors.

Unwilling or unable to marry whites, and probably unwilling to ally with *nouveaux libres*, Aquin's old families of color turned to each other.¹⁰³ The web of family interconnections was dense in districts like Aquin's Colline à Mangon, home to the prolific mixed-race descendants of the notary David Casamajor, who died in Aquin in 1770 at the age of 90. Colline à Mangon had at least four households named Casamajor in 1798. Rose Casamajor, aged 65, had an estate with 44 workers. Marie Françoise Visse, the widow of Pierre Casamajor, the former warehouse agent, lived with ten cultivators and a family of nine, including her 60-year-old brother, five daughters and three sons. Two more of her sons were established independently: Jacques with 13 workers and François with 3. Joseph Casamajor, another of the notary's sons, was 89, and lived with his wife and two workers in the Colline à Mangon, but he had at least three grown sons in the canton of Asile, a daughter and son in Saint Louis, and another son in the military.

Another of the notary's daughters, Marie Magdelaine Casamajor was married to Nicolas Guerivaux. The family had just seven cultivators, enough to run a farm, but not a plantation. They also had six children, five of whom were daughters. In 1799 they married their 29-year-old son Jean Nicholas to his cousin Jeanne Casamajor the daughter of Pierre. Four days later, they celebrated their daughter Rose's marriage

to Jean-Baptiste Bonneaux. Unlike the bride's parents, Bonneaux's parents were not legally married but his godparents were members of the Delaunay family.¹⁰⁴

Other families in the Colline à Mangon had the same overlapping family links. Seventy years old in 1798, Jean Chatelier was part of the same generation as the elder Casamajors, but he was a wealthier man, with 59 workers and a family of 9.¹⁰⁵ His sons Joseph and Blaise were 22 and 17 respectively, and both were apprenticed in the building trades. Another son managed the nearby Labat plantation.

Two of Chatelier's daughters, both in their mid-40s, lived with him, but a third, Marie Jean, had married a neighboring planter, Charles Hérard. The Hérards, aged 44 and 38, had 41 workers, 7 daughters between the ages of 19 and 1, and one son Charlemagne, age 15. Charles's sister Anne Hérard, age 40, also lived with them, as did the 55-year-old Joseph Malbranch, though he had a son, a brother, and other family in the canton.¹⁰⁶

No documents link Charles or Anne Hérard to the prominent Hérards of Torbec parish. Yet, a connection was likely. Aquin's Delaunay and Boisrond families had family and marriage alliances to Torbec. In 1797, Hérards' neighbors Jean-Baptiste Pochet, aged 70, and his wife Marie Catherine Casamajor, gave another neighbor power of attorney to go to Torbec on their behalf. They were too frail to make the trip, but their son was marrying the daughter of Dominique Hérard there. The Pochets provided a dowry in land and coffee though they did not know the girl's first name. They did not mention their neighbor Charles Hérard in this document, but two years later he did witness the marriage contract their daughter signed with yet another neighbor.¹⁰⁷

* * *

Viewed alongside other notarial evidence, marriage contracts reveal the conflicting impulses Aquin's residents experienced during the Revolution. In their marriage strategies, *anciens libres* reacted to the deep uncertainties of the 1790s by closing ranks, reaffirming their creole identity, rather than allying with French immigrants or former slaves. Yet in other ways, they appeared to embrace Saint-Domingue's transformation into the free, equal, and fraternal society that free-masonry advocated. Some families, especially those who left masonic signatures, sold land to *nouveaux libres* at low prices, and others took advantage of the new commercial freedom. New men led the parish, and some planters even left the land for administrative work, like the

notary Jean Louis Depas-Medina. Others abandoned the indigo that had made them rich for new crops like coffee.

The question that many must have been asking throughout this period was, what would happen when the war ends? When the British withdraw and the island's relationship with France is reestablished, what aspects of colonial society would return with the white planters who fled the Revolution?

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EPILOGUE



As the South Province fought the British and adjusted to its new Revolutionary situation, in 1797 Toussaint Louverture emerged as the single most powerful figure in Saint-Domingue. Rejecting the authority of France's Third Civil Commission, the South maintained its autonomy even after the British evacuated in 1798. But as the external threat faded, the rivalry between Toussaint and André Rigaud produced the War of the South. Led by Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the far larger northern army defeated Rigaud in 1800, driving him and hundreds of other mixed-race officers into exile. The war was brutal, and Haitian tradition holds that Dessalines's troops executed thousands of Southerners in reprisals after the fighting stopped.¹

Meanwhile, as Napoleon Bonaparte solidified his power, white Dominguan colonists returned to France from exile in the United States, England, and elsewhere. In 1799, as Dessalines's armies entered the southern peninsula, Bonaparte began interviewing whites, blacks, and mulattos, both advocates and opponents of slavery, about Saint-Domingue's future.² In late 1801, after several false starts, a great military expedition under the command of Charles Leclerc sailed for Saint-Domingue, arriving in February 1802.

Toussaint's army fought Leclerc bitterly. But the South saw no reason to defend Toussaint, the colony's "Governor for Life" according to the constitution his handpicked committee wrote in 1801. Within fifteen days of the fall of Port-au-Prince, by then renamed Port-Republicain, the South Province welcomed French troops without firing a single shot.³ In May, Toussaint signed a treaty ending his struggle against the expeditionary force. The following month, Leclerc had Louverture arrested and sent to France. There was little protest on his behalf.

Yet there were questions about France's intentions. Bonaparte and Leclerc had said little publicly about what would happen after they removed Toussaint. In a proclamation dated December 25, 1799, Bonaparte's Consular government, which had just come to power, assured Saint-Domingue's "brave blacks" that it would maintain the abolition of slavery. When France adopted a new constitution in 1800, however, it abandoned the universal application of republican

principles mandated by the 1795 constitution. Special laws would be written for the overseas territories, as planters had advocated since the beginning of the Revolution.⁴

When Leclerc arrived in 1802, therefore, many *anciens libres* must have wondered if his administration would treat them as full French citizens. Rigaud, the exiled leader of the South Province, returned from France with the expedition. What his supporters did not know, however, was that Bonaparte's counselors placed no credence in the mulatto general's claims of loyalty to France. Like Toussaint, they said, he wanted only to rule Saint-Domingue. After all, they might have reminded the first consul, Julien Raimond had claimed *anciens libres* would never abandon France. As a member of the Third Civil Commission from 1796 to 1798, he had used his experience in rebuilding run-down indigo estates to reestablish the devastated plantations of the North Province. In 1800 Napoleon sent Raimond back to Saint-Domingue to assess Toussaint's loyalty. Since then, however, Raimond had allied with the black general, who had named him "Director of State Domains." Charged with leasing abandoned plantations, Raimond was said to be keeping the most profitable properties for himself. His enemies claimed he owed so much to Parisian creditors that he had no intention of ever returning to France. Some even blamed him for Toussaint's growing independence. He was one of the ten men who wrote Toussaint's 1801 Constitution.⁵

For his part, Raimond suspected that Napoleon intended to revoke emancipation. On August 19, 1800, he wrote the first consul from Saint-Domingue, defending himself against charges of corruption. But he also asked Bonaparte to prove the sincerity of his antislavery proclamations by outlawing the institution in all French territories. Napoleon never replied. Raimond died of natural causes in Cap Français in October 1801.⁶

Considerable evidence suggests that Raimond's suspicions were justified. In September 1800 the French general Sahaguet, who at that time was assigned to lead the Saint-Domingue expedition, described his mission as "finding and fixing the limits of civil liberty for those individuals who, raised as slaves, have only left this state through disorder and anarchy." The following year the Naval Ministry secretly ordered military planners not to include black and mulatto officers in the expedition: the presence of a single one might hurt the campaign. They noted that the government would eventually remove these men of color from France, but they would not go to the colony.⁷ Later, Bonaparte's advisors reversed this policy. They reasoned that the presence of officers of color would make Leclerc's expedition less threatening to Saint-Domingue's residents.

And so Rigaud and some 30 highly decorated mulatto and black officers in the French Army were among the first wave of 20,000 troops that sailed with Leclerc in December 1801. The French billeted all nonwhite officers on a single ship, *La Vertu*. Even before boarding, Rigaud's subordinate Alexandre Pétion grew concerned when a naval official in Brest informed him that, as a man of color, he had no right to hold an officer's rank. All mulattos should be sent to Madagascar, the man told Pétion. This was more or less the opinion of General Narcisse Baudry des Lozières, a Dominguan colonist and colleague of Forfait, the Minister of the Navy and the Colonies. In a book dedicated to Josephine and published in 1802, Des Lozières described his horror at the idea of racial mixture in France. He advocated exiling to Madagascar all those who fought against France in Saint-Domingue. Pétion saw things even more pessimistically. He told his fellow officers on *La Vertu* that unless Leclerc needed them to defeat Toussaint, "we are all bound for Madagascar."⁸

That distant African island was also on the mind of the Admiral Lacrosse, one of the officers Bonaparte sent to Guadeloupe in 1800 and 1801 on a mission similar to Leclerc's. In October 1801, Lacrosse refused to promote Magloire Pélage, the ranking senior officer and a man of color, to the newly vacant command of the important fort at Guadeloupe's Basse Terre. When colonial soldiers rebelled against this racism, they found a letter in which Lacrosse described his intention to deport the colony's mulatto and black officers to Madagascar, a recommendation the admiral later repeated in his correspondence with Paris. In 1802, after the French general Richepanse imprisoned Pélage and 600 other soldiers of color and began to reestablish slavery in the island, the mulatto officer and his men convinced their captors to let them fight the antislavery rebels. Yet, after they helped him suppress the revolt, Richepanse exiled over a thousand loyal Guadeloupean soldiers of color, many of whom ended up in occupied Italy where they labored on fortifications and roads. Pélage was deported to France. As the French gradually extinguished resistance to slavery in Guadeloupe, they executed some 10,000 men and women, approximately ten percent of the nonwhite population.⁹

As Pétion feared, the Naval Ministry in 1800 and 1801 had instructed the leaders of the Saint-Domingue expedition to deport all black officers above the rank of captain after they landed, if they could do so without creating popular unrest. Once in the colony, Leclerc was so nervous about his nonwhite officers that he sent André Rigaud back to France before defeating Toussaint. After less than two months in Saint-Domingue, the French commander claimed that the mulatto

general threatened public order, perhaps because hundreds of Rigaud's junior officers had returned from Santiago, Cuba. Leclerc secretly ordered the ship Rigaud thought was carrying him home to the South Province to sail for France instead. This sudden deportation deepened the suspicions of many officers of color, as did the rumors of bloodshed and betrayal trickling in from Guadeloupe.¹⁰

In May 1802, when Toussaint capitulated to Leclerc, Alexandre Pétion, now among the most prominent officers of color after Rigaud's abrupt departure, was present at the ceremony. He chided Louverture for not immediately recognizing French authority. But it was increasingly obvious that Leclerc was using black and mulatto officers to force the ex-slaves back to the plantations. He had deported Rigaud with no evidence of treason. But after arresting Toussaint he offered military commands to Toussaint's lieutenants Dessalines and Christophe, though they had fiercely opposed his power.¹¹

Leclerc needed these officers because, about the time of Toussaint's deportation, he ordered his troops to disarm the Dominguan population. Now that a French general was in charge, counter-revolutionary planters began to return to the colony *en masse*. Their open demands for slavery and their easy access to Leclerc, combined with the disarming campaign, signaled ever more clearly that France wanted a complete reestablishment of the old colonial system. So did news from Guadeloupe, and word of Bonaparte's agreement to allow the continuation of slavery in French colonies like Martinique that had been under British control.¹²

In August 1802, frustrated by the slow progress of his disarming campaign, Leclerc threatened to arrest local notables and hang National Guard leaders caught meeting with local rebel bands. The following month, he began ordering the arrest of black and mulatto generals and executed two of them in Cap Français. About this time, Toussaint's nephew Charles Belair, a charismatic officer, turned against Leclerc, who sent Dessalines to capture and execute him. On October 4, 1802, the night before Belair was to be shot, the mulatto general Augustin Clerveaux attended a dinner at the home of Madame Leclerc. Guests described him as agitated. At one point in the evening he exclaimed, "I was free before; all the new circumstances have done for me is to raise up my scorned color. But if I ever thought that there was a question of slavery here, at that very moment I would become a rebel."¹³

Leclerc now recognized that he faced a general insurrection. He wrote Napoleon that all people of color above 12 should be killed, especially any man who had ever worn epaulettes. Dessalines, Pétion, and other officers had already begun to meet and plan their defection.¹⁴

Pétion, with his troops, was the first to strike. Convincing Clerveaux to join him, he attacked Cap Français on October 13, 1802. Three days later Henri Christophe allied with them. By this time, yellow fever and other tropical diseases had already killed 24,000 out of 34,000 French soldiers, and another 7,000 were ill. Though fresh European troops arrived to replace them, Leclerc himself died in besieged Cap Français on November 1, 1802, sick and exhausted. His immediate successor Daure continued to purge blacks and mulattos from the army for suspected disloyalty, increasing the defections to Pétion's camp.¹⁵ Later that month Dessalines, who had been meeting secretly with Pétion since October, joined those openly fighting the French.

The racial, rather than ideological, character of the struggle became clear on November 17, when Donatien-Marie-Joseph Rochambeau officially took command of the expedition. Supplementing public executions of prisoners with mass drownings, Rochambeau did not hide his belief that blacks were more trustworthy allies than mulattos. He is estimated to have killed 20,000 people between November 1802 and March 1803, both blacks and mulattos.¹⁶ These atrocities helped unify the emerging anti-French coalition. Even in the South, which had initially welcomed the French, officers began to turn against the expedition. On November 13, 1802, the mulatto general Cangé wrote to his colleague Delpech, commander of Petit-Goâve.

Like me, you have seen how this new government tramples the beneficial laws of the French Republic to commit acts of cruelty. Like me, you have seen thousands of black and red men, women, and children drowned and hanged; what have they done? How can they accuse children of crimes deserving death? Such things have never been seen under any government. Why have they not hanged and drowned white women and children? It is because of their color. We are the only ones who can get along with each other and bring happiness to our land.¹⁷

Typical of the region's autonomy throughout the Revolution, in 1802 and 1803 the South fought and defeated the local French occupation without help from Dessalines or Pétion. Guerrilla bands fought more-or-less in isolation, while their small craft controlled the southern coast. The actions of the pro-French commanders of Les Cayes, Saint Louis, and Aquin helped motivate this struggle. For example, in 1803 when Elie Boury deserted the rebel forces and delivered information about them to the French commander of Les Cayes, that officer had him drowned in the harbor.¹⁸

In July 1803, French forces still occupied the city of Les Cayes, but local rebel chiefs held the rest of the peninsula. Using his prestige as Rigaud's former top lieutenant, Alexandre Pétion helped convince Southern commanders to recognize Dessalines' authority. Assembling at Camp Gérard in the Les Cayes plain to meet the black general, they promised him their loyalty. In return, Dessalines gave them high ranks in his army. Three months later, Port-au-Prince and Les Cayes fell. Dessalines' united army, some 20,000 strong, arrived before Cap Français on November 18, 1803. Within ten days, Rochambeau and his forces evacuated.¹⁹

In December 1803, Dessalines ordered Charéron, one of his mulatto secretaries, to draft an official proclamation of the colony's independence, to be delivered on January 1, 1804. Charéron's draft was written in the language of law and philosophy, perhaps inspired by the U.S. Declaration of Independence. But Dessalines wanted an emotionally powerful statement of national unity. On December 31, he entrusted the task to another secretary, after hearing him exclaim that such a document should be written " 'with a white man's skin for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for a quill' ".²⁰

This image was creation of Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, the 27-year-old son of the indigo planter Mathurin Boisrond and nephew of Aquin's Louis-François Boisrond. *Tonnerre* means thunder and at least one scholar surmises that a violent storm raged the night Boisrond-Tonnerre was born. It appears more likely, however, that "Tonnerre" was the French town where this light-skinned young man was probably educated and spent much of the 1790s. The author of the declaration was at least a fourth generation creole, and a member of the class Julien Raimond had labeled the "American colonists." But Boisrond-Tonnerre had probably spent as much of his life in France as in Saint-Domingue when, in July 1803, he was presented to Dessalines at Camp Gérard.²¹

Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre would have been 15 years old in 1791, when his uncle Louis-François Boisrond asked Julien Raimond to send his nieces and nephews home from France, including Ebé, Boisrond-Tonnerre's sister. The chaos of the Revolution in that year makes it doubtful that Raimond followed these instructions. At the time, he was overseeing the education of his own nephews and stepchildren. In 1791 his nephew Pierre Julien Raimond, in his mid-twenties, was living in the village of Tonnerre, a day or two southeast of Paris. The young man had married there, apparently settling into this village that was already home to the family of

Pierre Simon Jacquesson, a former planter from the South. Jacquesson had returned permanently to France and in 1789 he was lieutenant of the Tonnerre constabulary. The Jacquessons were well known to the Boisronds, for Henri Jacquesson had been the notary and mayor (*syndic*) of Torbec parish in the 1780s and had drafted contracts there for the Boisrond family.²² These multiple connections suggest that Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre was educated in Tonnerre, France, and took this name to distinguish himself from other family members, especially his uncle and guardian Louis-François, who came to France in 1796 as one of Saint-Domingue's legislative representatives.

The Revolutionary career of this uncle illustrates the family's strong identification with France. Louis-François Boisrond was one of the wealthiest men of color in the South Province, particularly after he moved from Torbec to Aquin parish in 1781 and married a wealthy free colored widow there. His two older brothers, including Boisrond-Tonnerre's father, followed him to this indigo and smuggling center (chapter 6). After his neighbors Julien and François Raimond, Louis-François was the most politically active man of color in Aquin, perhaps inspired by his father François Boisrond, a free mulatto planter who was nearly arrested as a "trouble-maker" in the Torbec militia revolt of 1769. In financial and political terms, Louis-François was the most prominent colonial supporter of Raimond's political work in Paris.²³

Louis-François Boisrond was conscious, even proud, of being a creole. But he expressed that identity in Euro-centric terms. In 1790 he adopted Raimond's phrase "American colonists" for free people of color and described men like himself as "the island-born," to stress that tensions between whites and mulattoes were cultural, not racial. He wanted to found a school in Aquin in 1791, to "make converts to the national spirit." But he asked Raimond to choose the teachers in France.²⁴

Louis-François Boisrond's "national spirit" was almost certainly French in his mind. In Paris from 1797 onward, he was a member of the renewed Society of the Friends of the Blacks, mobilized in November of that year to counter-balance colonial conservatives. Though Boisrond was not prominent in the group, he was probably sympathetic to its interest in a new colonial order, based on free labor, racial equality, more international commerce, and a stronger integration of the republic's overseas territories into the administration of metropolitan France.²⁵ When he died in Paris in April 1800, it seems unlikely that his nephew Boisrond-Tonnerre, then 24, helped bury

him in the capital. On December 15, 1798 Boisrond-Tonnerre was back in Aquin, bidding on a sequestered plantation. By 1803, he was the "*chef de section*" in the neighboring parish of Cavaillon.²⁶

This, then, was the contradictory background of the author of Haiti's Declaration of Independence. Like many in his class in the southern peninsula, he was the fourth generation of a colonial family, but his adopted name was inspired by a French provincial education. He was the protégé of an uncle whose wealth was based on indigo smuggling but who died working to help bind Saint-Domingue closer to France. Julien Raimond, his guardian in France, on the other hand, preached loyalty to Paris for decades, and then helped Toussaint Louverture draft an autonomous constitution for Saint-Domingue.

Boisrond-Tonnerre's declaration sidestepped these contradictions by asserting Saint-Domingue's creole, or American, identity in an indigenous, not colonial, context. He portrayed the island's people not as the children of Africa and Europe, but as heirs to a long tradition of indigenous struggle. It seems likely that Boisrond's relatives in Torbec and Aquin knew of Bleschamp's 1788 pamphlet, published in Les Cayes, proposing the indigenous name "Haiti" for Saint-Domingue. Boisrond-Tonnerre may have helped Dessalines choose this name for the new nation.²⁷ Consciously or unconsciously, he also borrowed from Las Casas's sixteenth-century juxtaposition of Haiti's innocent Taino natives and bloodthirsty Europeans. He advised the new nation to "imitate those people who . . . preferred to be exterminated rather than lose their place as one of the world's free peoples." He was probably also thinking of events two years earlier in Guadeloupe, where hundreds of black and mulatto soldiers committed suicide by igniting their barrels of gunpowder rather than submit to French re-enslavement.²⁸ Guadeloupe's men had shouted "Live free or die," as their ammunition exploded. Boisrond-Tonnerre changed this to "live independent or die."

Reassuring the governments of nearby slave colonies like Jamaica and Cuba, the declaration proclaimed that Haiti's neighbors were "fortunate to have never known the ideals that have destroyed us." Yet Boisrond-Tonnerre did not reject those ideals. He rejected the French. The island's citizens had nearly lost their liberty, he declared, not in military defeat, but because of "fourteen years of our credulity and indulgence" for "the pathetic eloquence of their agents' proclamations."²⁹

Dessalines had already ripped the white from the tricolor flag that since 1793 had symbolized the union of whites, mulattos, and blacks in Saint-Domingue.³⁰ Boisrond-Tonnerre now insisted that his

compatriots purge Frenchmen from the island. “Everything here recalls the cruelties of this barbarous people; our laws, our mores, our cities, everything still bears the mark of France.” The island would never be free as long as Frenchmen—a “barbarous people,” “vultures,” and “tigers dripping with blood”—stood upon its soil. In 1769, Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre’s grandfather François had fought the militia reform and the divisive racial rhetoric of colonial civilization and white virtue. His uncle Louis-François had worked to claim a place for wealthy men of color and eventually former slaves in a regenerated Republican France. Now Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, in many ways more French than either of his ancestors, rejected the Europeans who had rejected him. The new Haitian state also inverted the ideology of whiteness colonists had formulated. The Constitution of 1805, which tradition holds was largely written by Boisrond-Tonnerre, identified all Haitians as “black,” and offered citizenship to Amerindians and blacks fleeing slavery.³¹

* * *

This book has shown that “race” in Saint-Domingue has a history. Although French colonists described their scorn for free mixed-race people as a necessary and natural extension of black slavery, their prejudice defied hemispheric patterns. For much of the eighteenth century, in Saint-Domingue as in Jamaica and Brazil, geographic isolation, shared economic interests, and the threats of slave revolt and foreign invasion all motivated the planting elites to acknowledge the whiteness of their colonies’ wealthiest and most Euro-centric families of mixed ancestry. But after 1769, querulous Dominguan judges and security-minded governors imposed new racial codes on the colony, in order to create a new white public. Unwelcome imperial reforms, new European immigrants, “Enlightened” concepts of civilization and virtue, and wealthy families of color threatened colonists’ identity. By changing the definition of “whiteness” to depend on biological, rather than social characteristics, in the years after 1769 colonists unified Saint-Domingue’s French population. The new color line was meant to make white creoles, ambitious immigrants, and imperial administrators into American patriots, as Emilien Petit might have described them. However, the French Revolution revealed how illusory that white public had been. The fierce refusal of Saint-Domingue’s white colonists in 1791 to recognize free people of color as citizens, a rejection that led indirectly to the great slave revolt in August of that year, was based on this relatively new concept of white purity.

The profound impact of this new racial ideology on Saint-Domingue's southern frontier, far from the French shipping and military installations surrounding Cap Français, suggests that some of the most important roots of Haitian revolutionary consciousness lay in these kinds of creole districts. In the South Province, inter-Caribbean commerce and a long history of mixed European, African, and native American families created a powerful sense of local, American identity. Even as prejudice grew after 1769, so did the wealth of many old families. Yet in isolated parishes like Torbec and Aquin, prosperous men of color were slow to acknowledge the political consequences of their creole identity, preferring to think of themselves as French American colonists.

Their attachment to French culture allowed Julien Raimond to spark, even dominate, discussions of colonial reform in Paris, before and especially after 1789. When colonists claimed that free colored sexual decadence and moral effeminacy disqualified them from French citizenship, men of color turned these arguments against them. Claiming to possess the "liberal virtues" white colonists ascribed to productive planters, they also vaunted the self-sacrificial "civic virtues" sought by royal administrators. Because colonial whites before the Revolution relied upon these men to perform unpopular military service, the violence of the Revolutionary era gave brown and black soldiers enormous practical, as well as rhetorical, power.

By focusing on these frontier districts, this book complements Stewart King's recent description of Saint-Domingue's elite free colored population as divided between a military class of "blue coats" and a conservative planter group of "powdered wigs." Viewed together, the two studies, based on similar notarial sources, reveal the contrasting regional cultures that produced the deep antagonism between Toussaint's Northern "blacks" and Rigaud's Southern "mulattos" in the Revolution.

King's free black "military leadership class" did not exist in the South, nor, probably, in Saint-Domingue's other isolated districts. In the area around Cap Français, where French authorities mounted major experiments with free colored soldiers, and where imperial patriotism and its rewards were prominently displayed, free men of color appear to have used military service, even at the lowest ranks and in the constabulary, to fashion a kind of local notability. According to King's data, these men were more likely to be free blacks than men of mixed race. They had fewer family relationships with whites than free colored planters did. While some military "blue coats" were ex-slaves, others were the children of free black parents, suggesting a pattern of

black endogamy in the North Province. The extraordinary volume of African slaves debarked in Cap Français may have reinforced this “black” racial identity, over time.

In the South, however, free blacks and mulattos were far less likely to become involved in military activities. Those who did garnered little prestige. Perhaps the men most attracted to a military career were permanently drawn into the North Province, where such units were based. Instead of “blue coats,” the South in the 1780s witnessed the growing affluence of the group King labels the “powdered wigs,” families like the Raimonds and Boisronds. Though the richest free people of color in the southern peninsula were no wealthier than those in King’s study, their prosperity was far closer to that of their white neighbors. Relatively speaking, the richest free colored families in the South Province had a greater claim to membership in the local plantocracy than was the case in the great sugar districts, like those outside Cap Français.

Not only was there was no “military leadership class” among free people of color in the South Province, there was no distinct free black class either. Perhaps this was because contraband merchants brought the South enslaved men and women who were more “creolized” than their counterparts in the North Province, who arrived directly from Africa. In the less dynamic, less urban economy of the frontier, there was more incentive for black ex-slaves to form households, or even marry, into free families of mixed racial descent. At all levels of society and in all racial groups creole families knew that networks were essential to their economic and social survival.

Unlike the Africans and others exploited in slavery until the Revolution, therefore, Saint-Domingue’s most influential free people of color, especially those in the remote southern peninsula, experienced the events leading to Haitian independence as a kind of family trauma. Despite their active and illegal trade with Dutch Curaçao, Danish Saint Thomas, and British Jamaica, wealthy families of color identified themselves as children of France. Then, in the 1790s they embraced the ideals of the Revolution. Though it destroyed the value of their plantations, *anciens libres* gained a degree of commercial liberty, political equality, and republican fraternity vis à vis France that their class had not experienced since at least the 1760s.

Though their ally the Abbé Grégoire may have been using a religious metaphor when he wrote that European and Caribbean citizens of France were all “children of the same father,” the statement was literally true for many men of color.³² And so, on January 1, 1804 when black and brown soldiers dared to assert their independence

from France, the decision was not an easy one, though the blood shed by Leclerc and Rochambeau simplified the break. As Cangé wrote his friend Delpech, "Like me, you have seen thousands of black and red men, women, and children drowned and hanged." After 1769 European racism had divided free creole society into whites and non-whites. But by ending slavery, republican ideals had promised to restore the community of brown and white men and to make it even more egalitarian than before by extending citizenship to black men. To protect their vision of that renewed community, creoles defied the world and formed their own republic, Haiti.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Moreau de Saint Méry, *Observations d'un habitant des colonies*, 5, cited in Yvan Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté Le jeu du critère ethnique dans un ordre esclavagiste* (Paris: Dalloz, 1967), 90, note 2, maintained that Raimond had been educated in France. A bill listed among Raimond's papers suggests that he was in Toulouse in 1762 at the age of 18; see Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer, dépôt des papiers publics des colonies, notariat, Saint-Domingue registre 1465, April 5, 1785. All notarial sources are from this archive unless noted, and will be identified as SDOM 1465. Raimond is not mentioned in the notarial archives of his native region from 1760 to 1766, but references to him appear frequently after that date.
2. SDOM 105, April 23, 1773; SDOM 1418, June 9, 1783.
3. SDOM 105, July 1, 1772; SDOM 1419, January 5, 1784; SDOM 1465, April 5, 1785; Archives Nationales Minutier Centrale, August 30, 1790, Rouen reg. 99.
4. SDOM 1557, May 15, 1766.
5. Herbert S. Klein, *African Slavery in Latin American and the Caribbean* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 226.
6. David P. Geggus, "The Major Port Towns of Saint Domingue in the Later Eighteenth Century," in *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650–1850*, Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, eds (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 102.
7. Klein, *African Slavery*, 237.
8. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Motion in the System: Coffee, Color, and Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Saint-Domingue," *Review 5* (1982): 331–388; Stewart R. King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint Domingue* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2001).
9. Guillaume Aubert, "'The Blood of France': Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World," *William and Mary Quarterly* 61 (July 2004): 439–478.
10. Dominique Rogers, "Les libres de couleur dans les capitales de Saint-Domingue: fortune, mentalités et intégration à la fin de l'Ancien Régime (1776–1789)" (Unpublished manuscript, 2005), conclusion.
11. *Neither Slave Nor Free: The Freedmen of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World*, ed. David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), Table A-9, 339.
12. Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 208; Peter J. Parish, *Slavery: History and Historians* (New York:

- Harper and Row, 1989), 107; Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom in the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 24, 27.
13. Parish, *Slavery*, 108–9; Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters*, 115; H. E. Sterkx, *The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Louisiana* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972), 236.
 14. *Neither Slave Nor Free*, Tables A-5, 337, A-8, 338.
 15. David Barry Gaspar, “‘A Mockery of Freedom’: The Status of Freedmen in Antigua Slave Society Before 1760,” *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 59 (1985), 136, 138; Jerome S. Handler, *The “Unappropriated People”: Freedmen in the Slave Society of Barbados* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1974), 141; Emile Hayot, *Les gens de couleur libres du Fort-Royale, 1674–1823* (Paris: La société française d’histoire d’outre-mer, 1971); Lucien-René Abénon, “Blancs et libres de couleur dans deux paroisses de la Guadeloupe (Capesterre et Trois-Rivières) 1699–1779,” *Société française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 60 (1973): 297–329.
 16. Edward L. Cox, *Free Coloreds in the Slave Societies of St. Kitts and Grenada, 1763–1833* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 60–64, 87.
 17. Cox, *Free Coloreds*, 150–51; Lorna McDaniel, “The Philips: A Free Mulatto Family of Grenada,” *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 24:2 (1990): 178–194; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “The Inconvenience of Freedom: Free People of Color and the Aftermath of Slavery in Dominica and Saint-Domingue/Haiti,” 147–82 in *The Meaning of Freedom: Economics, Politics and Culture After Slavery*, eds. F. McGlynn and Seymour Drescher (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992).
 18. Percentages calculated from *Neither Slave Nor Free*, Tables A-1, 335, A 10, 339; Jay Kinsbruner, *Not of Pure-Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 26–29, 128–29, 141; Franklin W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba During the Nineteenth Century* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 93.
 19. Margarita Gascón, “The Military of Santo Domingo, 1720–1764,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 73 (3) (August 1993): 431–452; Carl Campbell, *Cedulants and Capitulants: Politics of the Coloured Opposition in the Slave Society of Trinidad, 1783–1838* (Port of Spain, Trinidad: Paria Publishing Co., 1992), 82, 223–24; Eugenio Piñero, *The Town of San Felipe and Colonial Cacao Economics* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1994), 83; P. Michael McKinley, *Pre-Revolutionary Caracas: Politics, Economy, and Society: 1777–1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2, 9, 18, 28, 116–19; Jackie R. Booker, “Needed but Unwanted: Black Militiamen in Veracruz, Mexico, 1760–1810,” *The Historian* (Spring, 1993): 259, 267; Patrick J. Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1991), 147; Aline Helg, “The Limits of Equality: Free People of Colour and Slaves During the First Independence of Cartagena, Colombia, 1810–15,” *Slavery & Abolition* (London) 20, 2 (August 1999): 2, 14–18; Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 84–106, 202–5.
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22. Herbert S. Klein, “The Colored Freedmen in Brazilian Slave Society,” *Journal of Social History*, 3 (1969), 31–32; Russell-Wood, *The Black Man in Slavery*, 84–87. Samuel J. Hurwitz and Edith F. Hurwitz, “A Token of Freedom: Private Bill Legislation for Free Negroes in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 24, 1 (1967), 427; Douglas Hall, “Jamaica,” *Neither Slave Nor Free*, 206.
23. Kathleen J. Higgins, “Gender and the Manumission of Slaves in Colonial Brazil: The Prospects for Freedom in Sabará, Minas Gerais, 1710–1809,” *Slavery & Abolition*, 18 (2) (August 1997), 1, 12, 13; Herbert S. Klein, “The Colored Freedmen in Brazilian Slave Society,” *Journal of Social History*, 3 (1969), 34, 41; Linda Lewin, “Natural and Spurious Children in Brazilian Inheritance Law From Colony to Nation: A Methodological Essay,” *The Americas*, XLVIII (January, 1992), 363–68.
24. Russell-Wood, *The Black Man in Slavery*, 69–75; Degler, *Neither Black Nor White*, 84.
25. Archives Nationales, Colonies F³ 91, 182; Raimond’s first memorandum to the naval secretary in the mid 1780s referred to changes in Brazilian racial law in 1755.
26. Trevor Burnard, “The Sexual Life of an Eighteenth-Century Jamaican Slave Overseer,” in *Sex and Sexuality in Early America*, ed. Merrill D. Smith (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 57–58; Hurwitz and Hurwitz, “A Token of Freedom,” *William & Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 24 (1967), 424–30.
27. Linda Sturz, “‘A Very Nuisance to the Community’: The Ambivalent Place of Freedmen in Jamaican Free Society in the Eighteenth Century” (1999), paper prepared for the 31st annual conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians; Havana Cuba, April 11–17, 1999, 25.
28. William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans, 1530–1880* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1980), 52–53, notes his confusion about French colonial sensitivity to race, compared with attitudes in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies.
29. Franklin W. Knight, “Introduction,” to Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (Boston: Beacon Press Books, 1992).
30. Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, 42.
31. *Ibid.*, 69.
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34. For example, Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba*; Winthrop D. Jordan, “American Chiaroscuro: The Status and Definition of Mulattoes in the British Colonies,”

- William & Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 19 (1962): 183–200; Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).
35. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), 153.
 36. Hall, *Social Control*, 142, 144.
 37. Cohen and Greene, "Introduction," *Neither Slave Nor Free*, 17.
 38. Stuart B. Schwartz, *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels: Reconsidering Brazilian Slavery* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 18. Arnold A. Sio, "Race, Colour, and Miscegenation: The Free Coloured of Jamaica and Barbados," *Caribbean Studies*, 16 (1976): 5–21; Handler, *The "Unappropriated People"*; Gad J. Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics and the Free Coloreds in Jamaica, 1792–1865* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1981); Campbell, *Cedulants and Capitulants*, (1992); Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (1999); Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz* (1991); Russell-Wood, *The Black Man in Slavery* (1982).
 39. Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 285.
 40. Mimi Sheller, *Democracy After Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000), 11–13, 98, 101, 106, 139.
 41. The article literature has been richer. Here the most important is Trouillot, "Motion in the System." But see also Laura Foner, "The Free People of Color in Louisiana and St. Domingue: A Comparative Portrait of Two Three-Caste Slave Societies," *Journal of Social History*, 3 (1970): 407–30; Robert Stein, "The Free Men of Color and the Revolution in Saint Domingue, 1789–1792," *Histoire Sociale—Social History*, 14 (1981): 7–28.
 42. Popular and academic usage has labeled Haiti's Franco-centric mixed-race social elite as the "mulatto" class, though most would not fit the literal definition of this term, which denotes the child of a black and a white parent. Julien Raimond, for example, was not technically a mulatto because his mother, though a woman of color, was not black. Because this book traces the increasing importance of such racial nuances in colonial society, I have tried to remain true to the exact meaning of these words. However, when I use quotation marks around the term "mulatto," I am referring to the larger, more inclusive meaning of this term.
 43. David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 85–101 refers especially to Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, 8 vols. (1847–48; Port-au-Prince: Henri Deschamps, 1989); Alexis Beaubrun Ardouin, *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti suivies de la vie du général J.-M. Borgella*, François Dalencourt (Port-au-Prince, Haiti:1853; Chez Dr. François Dalencourt, 1958).
 44. Sheller, *Democracy After Slavery* (2000), 101.
 45. Beauvais Lespinasse, *Histoire des affranchis de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1881); C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, [1938]

- 1963), cites A. Lebeau, *De la condition des gens de couleur libres sous l'ancien régime* (Poitiers, 1903).
46. Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods*, 28.
 47. Anne Pérotin-Dumon, "Histoire et identité des Antilles françaises: les prémisses d'une historiographie moderne," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 51, 2 (1994), 307.
 48. Pérotin-Dumon, "Histoire et identité," 308–9.
 49. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 39.
 50. David P. Geggus, "30 Years of Haitian Revolution Historiography," *Revista Mexicana Del Caribe* (Chetumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico) 5 (1998), 179–80; Robin Blackburn, "The Black Jacobins and New World Slavery," in C. L. R. James: *His Intellectual Legacies*, ed. Selwyn R. Cudjo and William E. Cain (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 87–89.
 51. Pérotin-Dumon, "Histoire et identité, 305–10.
 52. Lucien M. Petyraud, *L'esclavage aux antilles françaises avant 1789* (Paris: Hachette, 1897); Gaston Martin, *Histoire de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948); Antoine Gisler, *L'Esclavage aux Antilles françaises* (Fribourg: Editions universitaires, 1965).
 53. For example, Gabriel Debien, "Pour connaître un type de fortune: Les archives de quelques familles de planteurs antillais," *Annales d'histoire économique et social* (September 1938), 424–429; Gabriel Debien, "A Saint-Domingue avec deux jeunes économistes de plantation, 1774–1788," *Revue de la société d'histoire d'Haïti* (1945).
 54. Gabriel Debien, *Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises* (Basse-Terre: Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1974), 7.
 55. For example, Jacques Cauna, *Au temps des îles à sucre: Histoire d'une plantation de Saint-Domingue au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Karthala, 1987); Bernard Foubert, "Les habitations Laborde à Saint Domingue dans la seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle," *Revue de la société haïtienne d'histoire et de géographie*, 48, no. 174 (Décembre 1992): 3–13.
 56. For example, Lucien-René Abénon, "Blancs et libres de couleur dans deux paroisses de la Guadeloupe (Capesterre et Trois-Rivières) 1699–1779," *Société française d'histoire d'outre-mer* (1973): 297–329; Nicole Vanony-Frisch, *Les esclaves de la Guadeloupe à la fin de l'ancien régime d'après les sources notariales, 1770–1789* (Basse-Terre: Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1985).
 57. Dale W. Tomich, *Slavery in the Circuit of Sugar: Martinique and the World Economy, 1830–1848*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1989.
 58. Jean Fouchard, *Les marrons de la liberté* (Paris: Ecole, 1972) [reprinted Port-au-Prince: Henri Deschamps, 1988], 138–139.
 59. David P. Geggus, "30 Years of Haitian Revolution Historiography," 182–84.
 60. Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002); Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution From Below* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1990).
 61. This has been inspired by his rejection of Eugene Genovese's thesis that the Haitian Revolution marked a turning point in the history of

- slave revolution in the Americas. See Genovese's *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979) and a host of responses by Geggus, summarized best in his contributions to David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus eds., *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997) and Geggus, ed., *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World [?]* (SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002).
62. Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).
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 65. See for example, Fick, *Making of Haiti*, 154 and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti; State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 45.
 66. Ardouin, *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haiti*, 17–23.
 67. Rogers, "Les libres de couleur" (2005), 592.

CHAPTER 1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF CREOLE SOCIETY ON THE COLONIAL FRONTIER

1. Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Voyage aux Isles: Chronique aventureuse des Caraïbes, 1693–1705*, Michel Le Bris (Paris: Phébus, 1993), 31.
2. Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux isles de l'Amérique* (Fort de France: Éditions des Horizons Caraïbes, 1972 [Paris, 1742]), 7ième partie, 114.
3. Paul Moral, *Le paysan haïtien: Étude sur la vie rurale en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1978), 73; Jan Rogozinski, *A Brief History of the Caribbean* (New York: Meridien, 1992), 4; Jennie B. Smith, *When the Hands Are Many: Community Organization and Social Change in Rural Haiti* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 69.
4. Samuel M. Wilson, *Hispaniola: Caribbean Chiefdoms in the Age of Columbus* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 134.
5. Rogozinski, *Brief History*, 42, 51.
6. Pierre Pluchon, *Le premier empire colonial, des origines à la Restauration* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 376.
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8. Paul Butel, "Le Temps des fondations: Les Antilles avant Colbert," in *L'Histoire des Antilles et de la Guyane*, ed. Pierre Pluchon (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), 72.
9. Pluchon, *Le premier empire colonial*, 374–75; Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire de l'isle espagnole, ou de S. Domingue* (Paris: Hippolyne-Louis Guerin, 1730–1731), 2:52.
10. David P. Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee Production and the Shaping of Slavery in Saint Domingue," in *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan,

- eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), 75; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800* (London: Verso, 1997), 283.
11. Robert Louis Stein, *The French Sugar Business in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 42.
 12. Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer, henceforth CAOM G¹509 N 2.
 13. Charles Frostin, "La piraterie américaine des années 1720, vue de Saint-Domingue (répression, environnement et recrutement)," *Cahiers d'histoire* 25, 2 (1980): 177–210; Pluchon, *Le premier empire colonial*, 384, estimates that in 1684 as many as half of Saint-Domingue's inhabitants were involved in piracy or smuggling.
 14. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 382; Charlevoix, *Histoire de l'isle*, 2: 43–52.
 15. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 382.
 16. Charlevoix, *Histoire de l'isle*, 2:261 says 3,000 slaves in 1694; see also 2:314, 353 for Cartagena; Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 381, says 1,800.
 17. Georges Anglade, *L'espace haïtien* (Montreal: Presses de l'Université de Québec, 1975), 60–62, gets his population data from *Médéric Louis Elie Moreau de Saint-Méry, Description topographique, Physique, Civile, Politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle Saint Domingue*, Blanche Maurel and Etienne Taillemite eds. (Philadelphia: 1997; Société de l'histoire des colonies françaises, 1984).
 18. Charlevoix, *Histoire . . . de l'isle*, 2:43; Moreau de Saint Méry, *Description*, 912.
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 22. Moreau de Saint Méry, *Description*, 1221, 1394–95.
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 24. Charlevoix, *Histoire . . . de l'isle*, 2: 197, 208.
 25. CAOM G¹509, no. 2.
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 28. Jean-Baptiste Labat, *The Memoirs of Père Labat, 1693–1705*, trans. John Eaden (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 165–67.
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 30. CAOM G¹509, no. 2.
 31. CAOM G¹509, no. 12.
 32. Charlevoix, *Histoire de l'isle*, 2:43, 2:240; Charles Frostin, "Histoire de l'autonomisme colon de la partie française de Saint-Domingue aux xvii^e et xviii^e siècles: Contribution à l'étude du sentiment américain d'indépendance" (Doctorat d'état, Université de Paris I, 1972), 206.
 33. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 376.
 34. *Ibid.*, 440.

35. Archives Nationales [henceforth AN] Col. F³76, 152.
36. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 395.
37. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 716; AN Col. F³76, 153.
38. Frostin cites Dutertre on the Nippes rebels in *Révoltes blanches*, 100; Labat, ed. Eden, *Memoirs*, 149.
39. George A. Kelly, *Mortal Politics in Eighteenth-Century France* (Waterloo, Ontario, 1986), 161–63; André Corvisier, *Armies and Societies in Europe, 1494–1789*, trans. Abigail T. Siddall. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 16, 36.
40. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 631.
41. Charles Frostin, “Les ‘enfants perdus de l’état’ ou la condition militaire à Saint-Domingue au xviii^e siècle,” *Annales de Bretagne* 80 (1973), 319 quotes Governor d’Estaing, writing on December 26, 1764.
42. Vassière, *Saint Domingue*, 112–14.
43. Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 99–104.
44. *Ibid.*, 181–200.
45. Nicholas Hudson, “From ‘Nation’ to ‘Race’: The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, 3 (1996), 252–53; Guillaume Aubert, “‘The Blood of France’: Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 61 (July 2004), paragraph 5.
46. CAOM G¹509, no. 2; CAOM G¹509, no. 12.
47. Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 394–430.
48. Edward Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770–1820* (Oxford, 1971), 298–311. As David Geggus has noted, there is little evidence that different African religions had been syncretized into a uniform Vodou religion in the colonial period. See his “Haitian Voodoo in the Eighteenth Century: Language, Culture, Resistance,” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte von staats, wirtschaft und gesellschaft Lateinamerikas* 28 (1991): 21–51.
49. Cited in Charles Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches à Saint-Domingue aux xvii^e et xviii^e siècles* (Paris: Editions de l’Ecole, 1975), 265.
50. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 34–44.
51. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 379; Charlevoix, *Histoire de l’isle*, 2: 42, 483.
52. Nuala Zahedieh, “The Merchants of Port Royal Jamaica and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655–1692,” *William and Mary Quarterly* XLIII (1986), 587.
53. CAOM G¹509, no. 12.
54. CAOM G¹509, no. 17; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 2: 360; Charles Frostin, “Les Pontchartrain et la pénétration commerciale française en Amérique espagnole,” *Revue historique* 245 (1971): 307–336; André Lespagnol, “Etat, capital privé et compagnies de commerce sous Louis XIV: Quelques réflexions,” *La France d’ancien régime: Études réunies en l’honneur de Pierre Goubert* (Toulouse: Éditions Privat, 1984), 415–22.
55. Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 123.
56. Cited in Piñero, *Town of San Felipe*, 65, 82, 89.
57. Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 2: 360; Eugenio Piñero, *The Town of San Felipe and Colonial Cacao Economies* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1994), 65.
58. Cornelis Christiaan Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas, 1680–1791* (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1985), 190,

- 196, 225; Piñero, *Town of San Felipe*, 28–30, 148–49; Gregorio de Robles, *América a fines del siglo xviii: Noticia de los lugares de contrabando*, (Valladolid: Seminario Americanista de la Universidad de Valladolid, 1980), 35–36; Celestino Andres Arauz Monfante, *El contrabando holandés en el Caribe durante la primera mitad del siglo XVIII* (Caracas: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1984), 1:47–59:
59. Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 2: 489–90; concludes from Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux îles de l’Amérique*, 114–15.
 60. Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 2: 360, 390; Moreau de Saint Méry, *Description*, 1197–99.
 61. Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 2: 253; CAOM G¹509, no. 17.
 62. The territorial boundaries of the South Province changed several times over the eighteenth century. Most of the changes involved the inclusion of north coast of the peninsula and the city of Jacmel, at the southeastern corner of the peninsula. The north coast, including the multi-parish district or *quartier* of Nippes, was only included in the South Province after 1776. However, all references to the South Province in this text should be understood to include Nippes, as well as the districts of Les Cayes and Saint-Louis. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 978, 1095, 1163–64.
 63. Charles Frostin, “La piraterie américaine,” *Cahiers d’histoire* 25, 2 (1980): 177–210.
 64. Charles Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 276.
 65. Charles Frostin, “Piraterie américaine,” 194–95; Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 167–263; Léon Vignols, “Land Appropriation in Haiti in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” *Journal of Economic and Business History* II (1930), 121.
 66. Élisabeth Escalle and Mariel Gouyon Guillaume, *Francs-Maçons des loges françaises aux Amériques, 1750–1850* (Paris: Édition E. Escalle, 1992), 124, 128.
 67. Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739–1763* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1963), 180, 183, 417, note 3; CAOM G¹509, nos. 12, 21, 28, 30, 31, and 32.
 68. Paul Butel, *Les négociants bordelais: L’Europe et les îles au xviii^e siècle* (Paris: Éditions Aubier-Montaigne, 1974), 235–36; Richard Menkis, “The Gradis Family of Eighteenth-Century Bordeaux: A Social and Economic Study” (Phd thesis, Brandeis University, 1988), 155, 163, 173.
 69. CAOM G¹509, no. 17; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1196.
 70. SDOM 359, December 3, 1754; SDOM 429 [illegible] February 1763; Zvi Loker, “Docteur Michel Lopez de Paz: médecin et savant de Saint-Domingue,” *Revue d’histoire de la médecine hébraïque* 33 (1980): 55–57; Zvi Loker, “Were There Jewish Communities in Saint Domingue (Haiti)?” *Jewish Social Studies* 45 (1983), 144; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1196, 1236, 1251, 1518, 1519; Pierre Pluchon, *Nègres et juifs au xviii^e siècle: Le racisme au siècle des lumières* (Paris: Tallandier, 1984), 59, 109. One of Michel Lopez Depas’ nieces married into the Gradis family and another into the Mendès family at Bordeaux; two of François’ sons became merchants, first in Aquin and then in Nippes. SDOM 429, June 3, 1762; SDOM 430, January 16, 1764; SDOM 102, November 15, 1768; Isaac S. and Suzanne A. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles* (Cincinnati, 1970), 828–30, 964–66.

71. Colonial notables were consulted twice in the process of formulating the Code Noir and many of its provisions were already law in the colonies. For these reasons Yvan Debbasch sees it as inspired from within rather than imposed from without. Debbasch, "Au coeur du 'gouvernement des esclaves': La souveraineté domestique aux antilles françaises, xvii^e–xviii^e siècles," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* 72 (1986), 32; Alan Watson, *Slave Law*, in the Americas (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 84–86, 126–128.
72. Louis Sala-Molins, *Le code noir ou le calvaire de Canaan* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987), 134, 142, 150, 174, 176.
73. Cited in Yvan Debbasch, "La souveraineté domestique aux antilles," 38; Antoine Gisler, *L'esclavage aux antilles françaises* (Paris, 1981), 22–24.
74. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 613.
75. Gabriel Debien, "Une indigoterie à Saint-Domingue à la fin du xviii^e siècle," *Revue d'histoire des colonies* 23 (1940–1946), 34.
76. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 85; Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *Considérations sur l'état présent de la colonie française de Saint Domingue, ouvrage politique et législatif* (Paris, 1776), 2:73; Donald L. Horowitz, "Colour Differentiation in the American Systems of Slavery," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 3, 3 (Winter 1973), 534, 539.
77. Philip D. Morgan, "Three Planters and Their Slaves: Perspectives on Slavery in Virginia, South Carolina, and Jamaica, 1750–1790," in *Race and Family in the Colonial South*, ed. Winthrop D. Jordan and Sheila L. Skemp (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1987), 68, 74.
78. Philip D. Morgan, "Interracial Sex in the Chesapeake and the British Atlantic World, ca. 1700–1820," in *Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture*, ed. Jan Ellen Lewis and Peter S. Onuf (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 72.
79. Trevor Burnard, "The Sexual Life of an Eighteenth-Century Jamaican Slave Overseer," in *Sex and Sexuality in Early America*, ed. Merrill D. Smith (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 171–72.
80. Jacques Cauna, *Au temps des îles à sucre: Histoire d'une plantation de Saint Domingue au xviii^e siècle* (Paris, 1987), 30, 61, 74, 87.
81. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 85; David P. Geggus, "Les esclaves de la Plaine du Nord à la veille de la révolution française: Les équipes de travail sur une vingtaine de sucreries. Partie IV," *Revue de la société d'histoire de géographie d'Haïti* 42, 144 (1984), 20. Three percent of the slave population of 434,429 would be 13,033, or about half, again of the free population of color counted at 24,848.
82. *Le Code Noir ou recueil des règlements rendus jusqu'à présent* (Paris: Prault, 1767 [Basse-Terre: Société de l'histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1980]), 33–34, 55; Gisler, *L'esclavage aux antilles françaises*, 20; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 30–33.
83. Yvan Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*. (Paris, 1967), 23, cites Dutertre's *Histoire générale des Antilles*, 2: 489.
84. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 22–26.
85. The Romans had allowed masters to educate their slaves, entrust them with important positions, free them, and once they were free, provide them with property. Modern scholars dispute the extent to which Roman masters practiced manumission but seem to agree that freeing slaves for loyal service and allowing them to enter civic society was an ideal in which

- many Romans believed. See Thomas E. J. Wiedemann, "The Regularity of Manumission at Rome," *Classical Quarterly* 35 (1985), 175; Wiedemann, *Slavery* (Oxford, 1987), 26–28; Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves: Sociological Studies in Roman History* (Cambridge, 1978), 115–133. On the connection between Roman law and the Code Noir, see Watson, *Slave Law in the Americas*, 22, 24, 126, 128.
86. *Code Noir* (Basse-Terre, 1980).
 87. Sala-Molins, *Le Code Noir*, 160, 168.
 88. *Ibid.*, 108.
 89. Léo Elisabeth, "The French Antilles," in *Neither Slave Nor Free*, 140–141.
 90. Some historians hypothesize that the 1726 measure was simply never sent to Saint-Domingue. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 40, 84.
 91. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions des colonies françaises de l'Amérique sous le vente*, 6 vols. (Paris: Quillau, Méquignon jeune, 1784–90), 2: 398.
 92. Frostin, "Les 'enfants perdus de l'état'," 327; Charlevoix, *Histoire de l'isle*, 2: 307; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 50; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 2:747.
 93. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 3:96, 382, 761, 598.
 94. David P. Geggus, "Slave and Free Colored Women in Saint Domingue," in *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*, eds. Darlene C. Hine and David Barry Gaspar (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 68.
 95. Debien, *Les Esclaves*, 93–104, 380–84; Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee Production," 84; Bernard Foubert, "Le marronage sur les habitations Laborde à Saint-Domingue dans la seconde moitié du xviii^e siècle," *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest* 95, 3 (1988).
 96. For example, Shanti Marie Singham, "Betwixt Cattle and Men: Jews, Blacks, and Women, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man," in Dale Van Kley, ed. *The French Idea of Freedom: The Old Regime and the Declaration of Rights of 1789* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 129–33.
 97. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 84, 92–93.
 98. CAOM G¹509, no. 12.
 99. Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 2: 458; Frostin, "La piraterie," 204–09.
 100. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1279; CAOM G¹509, no. 17.
 101. Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 2: 62–64; Jean Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (Martinique, 1972), 7:116.
 102. For religious marriages see Jacques Houdaille, "Trois paroisses de Saint-Domingue au xviii^e siècle," *Population* 18 (1963), 100. Houdaille surveyed church records from Fond des Nègres, Jacmel, and Cayes de Jacmel.
 103. Julien Raimond, *Réponse aux considérations de M. Moreau, dit Saint-Méry. sur les colonies, par M. Raymond, citoyen de couleur de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Imprimerie du Patriote Française, 1791), 52.
 104. CAOM G¹509, no. 17; 25 of the 265 entries in the nominative census from 1720 were completely blank, after listing the name of the household.

105. CAOM G¹509, no. 20. Although male slaves were freed for military service to the colony, the presence of so many boys under the age of 12 suggests this was not the reason for the skewed numbers in these documents.
106. Arlette Gautier, *Soeurs de Solitude: La condition féminine dans l'esclavage aux Antilles du xvii^e au xix^e siècle* (Paris: Éditions Caribéennes, 1985), 172–74; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 48, note 4, cites AN Col. C⁹A33, letter from Rochelar dated July 5, 1734.
107. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1155.
108. Luc Nemours, "J. Raimond, le chef des gens de couleur et sa famille," *Annales historiques de la révolution française* 23 (1951), 259.
109. SDOM 119, January 31, 1738 and August 5, 1737.
110. SDOM 126, October 3, 1754; the testament of Marie Raymond Vinedon, an elder, married daughter of Pierre and Marie, named six siblings and one Begasse cousin, saying nothing of the Vincent branch of the family; SDOM 123, December 16, 1762, a lease of slaves belonging to the Vincent estate names five Vincent children.
111. SDOM 105, April 23, 1773; SDOM 1418, June 9, 1783.
112. Moreau de Saint Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 2:382; AN Col. F³91, 96–97.
113. *Ibid.*, 3:490–91.
114. See the marriage of Gaspard Boissé, SDOM 807, September 25, 1766; for Jeanne Boissé, widow Delaunay, see SDOM 1465, September 12, 1785.
115. SDOM 359, February 27, 1753.
116. SDOM 1465, September 12, 1785.
117. CAOM G¹509, nos. 26 and 27.
118. CAOM G¹509, no. 20.

CHAPTER 2 RACE AND CLASS IN CREOLE SOCIETY: SAINT-DOMINGUE IN THE 1760S

1. SDOM 477, June 4, 1756.
2. SDOM 428, December 12, 1761.
3. SDOM 340, January 29, 1788.
4. SDOM 1465, April 5, 1785.
5. Only in 1776 did royal administrators require Saint-Domingue's notaries to send copies of their most important contracts to Versailles for safekeeping. In the 1790s, revolutionary violence in the colony destroyed older local notarial archives everywhere except the South Province, where they were safely evacuated. This means that only in this region did notarial registers from the early eighteenth century survive. Isabelle Dion and Anne-Cécile Tizon-Germe, *Dépôt des Papiers publics des colonies (DPPC). Notariat: Répertoire numérique* (Aix-en-Provence: Centre des Archives d'Outre-mer, 2001). Marie-Antoinette Menier, "Dépôt des papiers publics des colonies: Saint-Domingue Notariat," *Revue d'histoire des colonies* 135 (1951): 339–358; M.-A. Menier, "Les sources de l'histoire des Antilles dans les Archives nationales françaises," *Bulletin de la société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe* 36 (1978), 20; and M.-A. Menier,

- “Les sources de l’histoire de la partie française de l’île de Saint-Domingue aux archives de France,” *Conjonction, revue franco-haïtienne* 140 (1978): 119–135.
6. The same was true in the United States in the nineteenth century; Loren Schweningen, *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790–1915* (Urbana, IL, 1990), 84–86.
 7. Gabriel Debien, *Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises* (Basse-Terre: Société d’histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1974), 374.
 8. Philip D. Morgan, “The Cultural Implications of the Atlantic Slave Trade: African Regional Origins, American Destinations, and New World Developments,” *Slavery & Abolition* 18, 1 (1997), 132–33; David P. Geggus, “Sugar and Coffee Production, 73–75; Paul Butel, “L’essor antillais aux xviii^e siècle,” in *Histoire des Antilles et de la Guyane*, ed. Pierre Pluchon (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), 116; David Geggus, “The French Slave Trade: An Overview,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 58, 1 (January 2001): (<<http://www.historycooperative.org/wm/58.1/geggus.html>>) paragraph 19 and 25.
 9. Jean Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France à la fin de l’ancien régime: L’évolution du régime de l’Exclusif de 1763 à 1789* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), 2: 390 and 2: 623, note 132; Gabriel Debien, “Un officier du régiment de Forez à Saint Domingue en 1764,” *Conjonction* 124 (1974), 119; Charles Frostin, “Les colons de Saint-Domingue et la métropole,” *Revue historique* 482 (1967), 402.
 10. Geggus, “Sugar and Coffee Production,” 75, 76; Geggus has data from only 6 southern plantations, compared to 65 in the North and 29 in the West. Arlette Gautier, *Les soeurs de solitude* (Paris: Éditions Caribéennes, 1985), 83.
 11. CAOM G¹509, nos. 27 and 31.
 12. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1296; Debien, *Les esclaves*, 345; Pluchon, *Premier empire*, 422; Bernard Foubert, “Les habitations Laborde à Saint-Domingue dans la seconde moitié du xviii^e siècle: contribution à l’histoire d’Haïti (plaine des Cayes)” (Thèse d’état, Paris: École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1990), 467–70; Bernard Foubert, “Une habitation à Saint Domingue à la veille de la Guerre d’Amérique (1777): La sucrerie Pimelle au Fond des Nègres,” *Revue de la société haïtienne d’histoire et de géographie* 30 (1981), 26.
 13. David P. Geggus, “Indigo and Slavery in Saint-Domingue,” *Plantation Society in the Americas* 5, 2 & 3 (Fall 1998), 203; David P. Geggus, “The Slaves of British-Occupied Saint Domingue,” *Caribbean Studies* 18 (1978), 29; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1296; CAOM G¹590, no. 27.
 14. This data does not include manumissions stipulated in testaments.
 15. Jean Tarrade, “Affranchis et gens de couleur libres à la Guyane à la fin du Xviii^e siècle, d’après les minutes des notaires,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 49 (1962), 99.
 16. Stewart R. King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig*, 111.
 17. The royal censuses counted 26,539 slaves in these districts in 1753 and 33,438 in 1775. CAOM G¹509, nos. 27 and 31.
 18. The royal censuses counted 13,356 adult male slaves in these districts in 1753 and 16,137 in 1775. CAOM G¹509, nos 27 and 31; SDOM 322, October 19, 1765; the royal censuses counted 8,107 adult female slaves in these districts in 1753 and 11,882 in 1775.

19. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 396–97.
20. Foubert, “Les habitations Laborde à Saint-Domingue,” 419–21.
21. Philip Morgan, “Three Planters and Their Slaves: Perspectives on Slavery in Virginia, South Carolina, and Jamaica, 1750–1790,” in Jordan and Skemp, eds., *Race and Family in the Colonial South* (Jackson, 1987), 68–69; Hilary Beckles, *Natural Rebels: A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados* (New Brunswick, 1989), 55–58; Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650–1838* (Bloomington, 1990), 114–115; Rosemary Brana-Shute, “Slave Manumission in Suriname, 1760–1828,” *Slavery and Abolition* 10 (December 1989), 40.
22. Justin Girod de Chantrains, *Voyage d’un Suisse dans différentes colonies d’Amérique*, Pierre Pluchon, ed. (Paris: Tallandier, 1980), 130.
23. SDOM 98, 22 Octobre 1768.
24. Cited in Fouchard *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue: Notes sur sa vie sociale, littéraire et artistique* (Port-au-Prince, 1955), 91–93.
25. SDOM 95, November 3, 1762.
26. SDOM 586, January 8, 1764; SDOM 97, May 8, 1767; SDOM 95, August 31, 1761; SDOM 589, December 14, 1767; SDOM 590, February 6, 1768.
27. Two years after Moulin dictated his testament, his white niece and her husband announced their plans for Françoise, Cecille Bouchaudeau’s free colored daughter. The girl was to live with them until she married, when they would give her 6,000 livres from Moulin’s estate. They said nothing of sending her to France or educating her in a convent there. Nor did they mention Cecille’s son. SDOM 96, January 6, 1764; SDOM 589, September 26, 1767.
28. SDOM 96, March 30, 1763.
29. SDOM 588, January 23, 1766; SDOM 97, May 11, 1767; SDOM 97, May 11, 1767; SDOM 98, January 20, 1769.
30. SDOM 97, May 4, 1767; SDOM 99, September 13, 1769.
31. SDOM 96, August 23, 1764; emphasis is mine.
32. Arlette Gautier, *Les sours de solitude* (Paris, 1985), 172–77.
33. Moreau de Saint-Méry insisted that “in the colonies no value is given to a privately-signed marriage,” ms. AN Col. F³133, ms “Répertoire des notions coloniales,” 448–49. On the prevalence of the institution in Louisiana and Quebec, see Hans W. Baade, “Introduction” to *Marriage Contracts in Colonial Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1980), iv, and A. Shortt and A. G. Doughty, *Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada* (1907), 310, 332. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5: 619–39.
34. SDOM 1153, October 6, 1761. This was the Maillard plantation; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1280, 1332–34.
35. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1520; SDOM 586, August 6, 1764; SDOM 95, January 29, 1762 and November 23, 1762; SDOM 96, July 7, 1763.
36. SDOM 586, March 2, 1764; SDOM 94, November 26, 1760; SDOM 96, January 14, 1765.
37. SDOM 588, April 11, 1766.
38. SDOM 95, September 7, 1761.

39. SDOM 97, February 23, 1767.
40. Jacques Houdaille, "Trois paroisses de Saint-Domingue au XVIII^e siècle: Etude démographique," *Population* 18 (1963) 100, uses the surviving church registers of Jacmel, Cayes de Jacmel and Fond des Nègres parishes adjacent to Aquin.
41. A number of spouses did not report the value of the property they were bringing to the marriage, for two very different reasons: either they had no significant assets, or their property consisted of a future inheritance share. Dowry values analyzed here reflect only those who reported specific property. Rates of property reporting were as follows: White brides, 62%; free colored brides, 84%; white grooms, 49%; free colored grooms, 71%.
42. CAOM G¹509, no. 17; SDOM 359, March 19, 1760.
43. SDOM 1604, April 6, 1774.
44. SDOM 1370, June 16, 1768.
45. SDOM 131, March 13, 1765.
46. SDOM 96, October 16, 1765.
47. Julien Raimond sometimes spelled his family name with a "y" like his father and sometimes with an "i." I use the different spelling consistently because in 1773 the colonial government required all free people of color to take names "of African origin" and forbade them to use the names of French families (chapter 5). Many families of color complied with the ordinance by changing the spelling of their names.
48. Luc Nemours, "Julien Raimond, le chef des gens de couleur et sa famille," *Annales historique de la révolution française* 23 (1951), 257.
49. SDOM 477, December 17, 1756; Moreau de Saint Méry, *Description*, 1154, 1238; SDOM 105, July 1, 1772.
50. Julien Raimond's cousin Agathe Vincent was in France in 1765 as a legal minor. Elizabeth and Agathe Raimond both eventually married there, Agathe to a propertied citizen of Bordeaux and Elizabeth to a former attorney of the Parlement of Toulouse. SDOM 105, April 23, 1773; SDOM 1418, June 9, 1783.
51. SDOM 1315, November 13, 1754; SDOM 1009, February 9, 1771; SDOM 428, August 19, 1761.
52. SDOM 430, September 22, 1764; SDOM 103, July 10, 1769.
53. SDOM 1377, October 25, 1772; SDOM 106, August 20, 1773; SDOM 1604, January 1, 1775.
54. SDOM 1557, May 12, 1766; SDOM 431, May 6, 1766.
55. SDOM 1009, February 9, 1771.
56. See Gabriel Debien, *Lettres de colons* (Laval, 1965), 11. In another isolated region of colonial France, "first-cousin marriages had been popular, even customary, in parts of Louisiana since the eighteenth century." Virginia R. Domínguez, *White By Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1986), 61.
57. SDOM 1465, April 5, 1785; SDOM 1009, February 9, 1771.
58. SDOM 1377, October 25, 1772.
59. CAOM G¹509, no. 17.
60. SDOM 129, February 3, 1763; SDOM 130, December 30, 1764; SDOM 129, December 18, 1763; SDOM 1597, February 4, 1781.

61. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (repr. Port-au-Prince, 1988), 7:407, 420–21, 435–536; for differing political interpretations of the candidacy of Charles Hérard, see Mimi Sheller, “The Army of Sufferers: Peasant Democracy in the Early Republic of Haiti,” *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-IndischeGids* 74, 1&2 (2000): 41–42, 47; and Joan Dayan, “Haiti, History and The Gods,” in *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 71.
62. CAOM G¹509, No. 17.
63. SDOM 54, September 13, 1787; SDOM 55, August 8, 1788; SDOM 1416, August 5, 1780; SDOM 322, October 15, 1765; SDOM 130, May 19, 1764; SDOM 1153, May 10, 1769.
64. SDOM 130, May 19, 1764 and October 17, 1764. Five years later during disturbances over militia reform, Girard de Formont served as negotiator between the provincial governor and Torbec’s free men of color. AN Col. F³182.
65. SDOM 130, May 22, 1764; SDOM 129, June 30, 1763.
66. CAOM G¹509, no. 17.
67. SDOM 1600, July 26, 1784; SDOM 1210, November 22, 1762; SDOM 54, September 13, 1787.
68. SDOM 130, July 29, 1764; SDOM 1601, January 11, 1785; SDOM 54, September 13, 1787; SDOM 54, September 13, 1787; SDOM 1601, January 11, 1785.
69. King, in *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig* looks at both the North and West Provinces and takes care not to assign racial labels to the two groups described in his title. Nevertheless, a list of 44 members of his “military leadership class” in Appendix Two suggests that these men were mostly based in the North Province and were overwhelmingly free black, rather than people of mixed descent, an important finding for understanding the roots of the Haitian Revolution. See 226–334, and 277.
70. Jacques Houdaille, “Trois paroisses,” 100, and Houdaille, “Quelques données sur la population de Saint-Domingue au xviii^e siècle,” *Population* 28 (July–October 1973), 865.
71. CAOM G¹509, No. 26.
72. Even in Barbados, one of the few British colonies where free colored men outnumbered free colored women in 1817, the majority of the slaves owned by free coloreds were held by women. Barry W. Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Carribean, 1807–1834* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 109.
73. SDOM 98, January 30, 1768; SDOM 314, February 25, 1760 and February 26, 1760.
74. King, *Blue Coat*, 117–18; SDOM 99, July 7, 1769 and November 13, 1769; SDOM 325, August 26, 1767.
75. Jerome Handler, *The Unappropriated People*, 118; Sidney Mintz, “The Origin of the Jamaican Market System,” *Caribbean Transformations* (Baltimore, 1974), 180–213; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1316.

76. SDOM 326, February 18, 1768; SDOM 96, April 26, 1764; SDOM 748, September 11, 1783; SDOM 319, October 21, 1764; SDOM 1221, February 12, 1768; November 15, 1788, Belin Duressort reg. 108, Aquin, vente.
77. Account annexed to SDOM 431, March 19, 1765; SDOM 102, July 29, 1768.
78. SDOM 359, August 20, 1760; SDOM 1465, April 5, 1785; SDOM 102, October 30, 1767; SDOM 431, June 26, 1765.
79. SDOM 105, April 23, 1773, May 20, 1773 and June 30, 1773. Of the 118 such documents surviving from the period 1760–1769 from this region, nearly 85 percent were signed either in the notary's office or at the home of the bride or of her parents. Only 7.6 percent were signed in the residence of someone unrelated to either the bride or groom.
80. SDOM 105, June 30, 1773.
81. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1238; CAOM G¹509, no. 27.
82. SDOM 586, November 17, 1763. Maignan did the same for other local clients. In 1762 his son-in-law Jean Landron, a free mulatto tailor in the town of Anse à Veau, owed the planter 2,558 livres “for the balance of diverse merchandise that the Sieur Maignan bought at the cash price, according to the account he returned this day paid.” SDOM 95, November 23, 1762.
83. This son-in-law was Alexandre Fequière, who apparently had an illegitimate child with Bety's daughter Thérèse. See SDOM 94, November 26, 1760.
84. SDOM 335, December 13, 1785; Moreau de Saint Méry, *Description*, 1216, 1226, 1230, 1239, 1243–44, 1263, 1297, 1316, 1330.
85. SDOM 320, April 21, 1765 and May 22, 1765; SDOM 321, July 3, 1765, July 17, 1765, and July 26, 1765; SDOM 321, July 28, 1765.
86. SDOM 335, June 12, 1786.
87. SDOM 749, January 30, 1784.
88. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1325, 1233, 1238; Michel Etienne Descourtilz, *Voyage d'un naturaliste et ses observations faites à Saint Domingue* (Paris: Dufart père, 1809), 2: 35, 341; AN. Col. F³133, 464, 465; CAOM G¹509, nos 27 and 31.
89. Jean-Baptiste Labat, *The Memoirs of Père Labat, 1693–1705*, trans. John Eaden (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 167; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 103; Descourtilz, *Voyage*, 2: 341.
90. Pierre Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), 57.
91. André Fritz Pierre, “Le commerce de la viande à Saint-Domingue au xviii siècle,” *Revue de la société haïtienne d'histoire et de géographie*, 204 (juillet–septembre 2000), 11; Margarita Gascón, “The Military of Santo Domingo, 1720–1764,” *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 73 (3) (August 1993), 441; AN Col. F³273, 635–7, “Ordonnance Des Dr^s .. du December 23, 1772.”
92. SDOM 95, February 16, 1761.
93. SDOM 1416, August 5, 1780; SDOM 429, April 7, 1763; SDOM 428, August 20, 1759; SDOM 429, November 9, 1763; SDOM 430, October 18, 1764; SDOM 103, March 8, 1769.

CHAPTER 3 FREEDOM, SLAVERY, AND THE FRENCH COLONIAL STATE

1. SDOM 102, September 23, 1767; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5: 290.
2. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5: 290–291.
3. At least five years earlier Denis Carenan had given a far less valuable piece of land to the free mulatto woman Marie Roze Carenan, when she married the free quadroon Guillaume Le Roux. SDOM 430, January 21, 1764. The couple sold that land to a prosperous free colored planter, who leased it to Paul Carenan within a week to use for his livestock. SDOM 430, February 1, 1764.
4. Labat, *Nouveau voyage* (Martinique, 1972), 2:409; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 79; SDOM 750, November 19, 1784.
5. Gabriel Debien, *Les esclaves Antilles françaises* (Basse-Terre: Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1974), 374.
6. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 3:222, 4:429; AN Col. C⁹B, May 10, 1765.
7. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5:149, 152–53, 190.
8. This was a large sum to have in specie, for Saint Domingue merchants were continually complaining about a shortage of currency. SDOM 589, July 21, 1767.
9. SDOM 752, December 1, 1786; Ira Lowenthal, “‘Marriage is 20, Children are 21’: The Cultural Construction of Conjuality and the Family in Rural Haiti” (Ph.D. thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1987), 24. For evidence of the importance of paper documents in the southern peninsula in the 1940s, see Rémy Bastien, *Le paysan haïtien et sa famille* (Paris, 1985 [Mexico City, 1951]), 81.
10. SDOM 1213, September 15, 1764.
11. SDOM 1225, September 9, 1769.
12. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 395. Dominique Rogers, “Les libres de couleur”, 344–60.
13. SDOM 323, April 12, 1766; SDOM 320, February 22, 1765.
14. SDOM 321, July 5, 1765.
15. SDOM 321, August 4, 1765.
16. SDOM 320, April 15, 1765.
17. SDOM 130, December 31, 1764.
18. None of these documents explain why Gellée might have attacked Hérard, but both were members of families that had been settled in Torbec since the early 1700s. In 1768, Claude-Charles Gellée asked the Council of Port-au-Prince to investigate and dismiss public rumors that his grandmother was an woman of color. See chapter 5.
19. SDOM 1220, July 23, 1767; SDOM 314, June 2, 1760; SDOM 318 [date illegible] September 1763; SDOM 326, November 1, 1768; SDOM 1212, July 29, 1763; SDOM 1222, June 3, 1768 and September 17, 1768; SDOM 1219, May 14, 1767. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 92; when Baugé died later that year his widow formally renounced her share in his estate as “more onerous than profitable.” SDOM 1216, May 3, 1766.

20. SDOM 323, February 18, 1766.
21. SDOM 1222, September 26, 1768.
22. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 102–3.
23. SDOM 318, March 28, 1763; SDOM 130, September 26, 1764.
24. SDOM 318, March 28, 1763. They found he had “des excoriations tombées en suppuration dans toutes l’étendue de tous les muscles fessiers, laquelle nous a paru être faite par des coups de fouet.” SDOM 130, September 26, 1764.
25. SDOM 98, October 28, 1768; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1215–16.
26. SDOM 98, October 28, 1768.
27. Dominique Rogers, “Les livres de couleur,” 363.
28. David A. Bell, “The ‘Public Sphere,’ the State, and the World of Law in Eighteenth-Century France,” *French Historical Studies*, 17 (Fall 1992), 919.
29. For example, Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776–1848* (London: Verso, 1988), 169, characterizes the free colored merchant Vincent Ogé as a lawyer. C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House [1938] 1963), 68, ascribes the same profession to the indigo planter Julien Raimond.
30. AN Col. D²C 114.
31. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 50 and 51, cites AN Col. F³132 and AN Col. C^{9A}33, letter from Rochelar dated July 5, 1734.
32. See SDOM 1210, November 10, 1762, in which residents of Torbec describe a militia review under the command of de Vaudreuil, who lived in Torbec from 1740 as royal commandant of the province. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1314, 1327, 1556.
33. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 119; Charlevoix, *Histoire*, 2: 384; on Saint Christophe creoles in the southern peninsula in the early eighteenth century, see Labat, *Voyage aux îles*, ed. Le Bris (1993), 347–48; CAOM G¹509, no. 17; SDOM 130, May 22, 1764. See chapter 7 for the Hérard family.
34. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1271, 1396; SDOM 1370, January 8, 1760; SDOM 1210, November 10, 1762.
35. Julien Raimond identified Boury as a free colored militia officer before the reforms of 1769. See Raimond, *Observations sur l’origine et les progrès du préjugé* (Paris: Belin, 1791), 9.
36. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1335–36.
37. SDOM 1225, October 7, 1769; SDOM 1210, November 10, 1762; SDOM 1153, May 10, 1769; SDOM 320, April 18, 1765; the “chatrer” label comes from Anne Thomas’s testament, SDOM 1153, May 10, 1769.
38. SDOM 1225, October 7, 1769; SDOM 1216, May 11, 1766; SDOM 1225, October 7, 1769.
39. SDOM 1220, October 3, 1767; SDOM 1225, October 7, 1769; SDOM 1153, October 6, 1761. Canard’s father was the commander of the Ances district. Days before signing the marriage contract, Boury had served as an expert witness to evaluate Rey’s plantation so its value could be recorded in the contract.

40. SDOM 321, July 18, 1765; AN Col. F³273, 655–57.
41. SDOM 1153, May 10, 1769.
42. King, *Blue Coat*, 254.
43. SDOM 428, August 18, 1761.
44. SDOM 429, February 25, 1762; SDOM 431, August 1, 1765.
45. SDOM 428, April 25, 1761; SDOM 430, January 29, 1764; SDOM 1465, August 12, 1785; SDOM 431, April 6, 1766, shows Guillaume Labadie as the former tutor of Gabriel Buisserre *mestif libre*. See also Julien Raimond, *Observations sur l'origine et les progrès du préjugé*, 32.
46. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 2:727, 750–59; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 440.
47. David P. Geggus, “Marronage, Voodoo and the Saint-Domingue Slave Revolution of 1791,” *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, eds. Patricia Galloway, Philip Boucher (Lanham, MD, University Presses of America, 1992), Meeting held in Martinique and Guadeloupe, May 1989, unpaginated; Alfred Mettraux, *Le vaudou haïtien* (Paris, 1958), 37–38.
48. Cited by Pierre Pluchon, *Vaudou, sorciers, empoisonneurs à Haïti* (Paris, 1987), 209.
49. Pluchon, *Vaudou, sorciers, empoisonneurs*, 111. David Geggus found that 91 percent of domestic slaves were creoles; “Les esclaves de la Plaine du Nord,” *Revue de la société haïtienne d’histoire* 42, no. 144 (1984), 28; Pluchon, *Vaudou*, 183, cites from notes on the testimony of the slaves accused of the poisoning in 1757.
50. SDOM 586, March 2, 1764 and June 22, 1764.
51. SDOM 102, August 25, 1768 and September 16, 1768.
52. The word “eperlin” appears in André Fritz Pierre, “Le commerce de la viande à Saint-Domingue aux XVIIIe siècles,” *Revue de la société haïtienne d’histoire de géographie* 52, 192 (June 1997), 50.
53. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 3:96, 3:344–7, 3:553–60, 3:754–59; AN C⁹B¹⁷; no figures were given for the Les Cayes area.
54. AN Col. F³133, 234; AN Col. F³91, 107; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5:762.
55. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5:762, 811.
56. AN Col. F³273, 868–9.
57. AN Col. F³273, 868–9; *Description*, 63.
58. AN Col. F³91, 108, from a 1739 “Mémoire sur les maréchassées.”
59. SDOM 321, August 23, 1765; SDOM 320, March 7, 1765; SDOM 323, February 14, 1766; SDOM 327, March 13, 1769; SDOM 1210, March 24, 1761; SDOM 131, April 6, 1765; for Laconforsz, see SDOM 1596, June 18, 1780.
60. Berquin was a member of the Nippes elite. In 1782 his daughter married the son of an old militia family in Nippes. SDOM 747, October 15, 1782.
61. SDOM 129, June 25, 1763; SDOM 318, July 11, 1763.
62. SDOM 318, June 11, 1763.
63. SDOM 324, December 27, 1766.
64. SDOM 1218, December 27, 1766.
65. SDOM 324, December 27, 1766.

CHAPTER 4 REFORM AND REVOLT AFTER THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR

1. John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions, 1808–1826* (Norton, 1986, 2nd edn.) 5–15; Fred Anderson, *Crucible Of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), xviii–xxii.
2. Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 445.
3. Pluchon, *Le premier empire colonial*, 216, 233–34; Pierre H. Boulle, "Patterns of French Colonial Trade and the Seven Years' War," *Histoire Sociale—Social History* 7, 3 (1974): 50–52.
4. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 234–35; Eltis, Behrend, Richardson, and Klein, *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database on CD-ROM* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Guadeloupean planters got most of their slaves from the inter-island trade with Martinique and from smuggling".
5. Cited in Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 239.
6. Emilien Petit, *Le Patriotisme américain ou Mémoires sur l'établissement de la partie française de l'isle de Saint-Domingue, sous le vent de l'Amérique* (S.l, 1750).
7. Jacques Godechot, "Nation, patrie, nationalisme et patriotisme en France au xviii^e siècle," *Annales historiques de la révolution française* 43, 4 (1971), 485.
8. Petit, *Patriotisme*, 12.
9. Petit, *Patriotisme*, 130.
10. Petit, *Patriotisme*, 114.
11. Petit, *Patriotisme*, 115.
12. Jean Tarrade, "L'administration coloniale en France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime: Projets de réforme," *Revue historique* 229 (jan–mars 1963), 103.
13. Gabriel Debien, "Gouverneurs, magistrats et colons: L'opposition parlementaire et coloniale à Saint-Domingue (1763–1769)," *Revue de la société haïtienne d'histoire, de géographie, et de géologie* (1–50) (juillet–octobre 1958), 1.
14. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 613; James E. McClellan III, *Colonialism and Science: Saint Domingue in the Old Regime* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 44.
15. Debien, "Gouverneurs, magistrats et colons," 3. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 235; Bory later served as a scientific correspondent of the Académie des sciences and in 1798 was named a member of the Institute. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, index, 1455. See Gabriel de Bory, *Mémoires sur l'administration de la marine et des colonies, par un officier général de la marine, doyen des gouverneurs généraux de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1789–1790).
16. AN Col. F³175, 83, letter to Choiseul, August 31, 1761.
17. AN Col. F³175, 67 "Lettre de M. Bart gouverneur général . . . au ministre touchant les remontrances du conseil du Port-au-Prince au Roi contre lui. Au Port-au-Prince ce 27 janvier 1762."
18. Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 293; Auguste Nemours, *Haïti et la guerre d'Indépendance américaine* (Port-au-Prince, 1952), 99; Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 610.

19. AN C⁹B18, "Mémoire . . . gigantesques debellatures furores," an anonymous 1765 ms. generally favorable to Belzunce.
20. Nemours, *Haïti et la guerre d'Indépendance américaine*, 24; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 4:459.
21. AN Col. F³175, 49–51.
22. AN Col. F³175, 162–4; Debien, "Gouverneurs, magistrats et colons," 4. Tarrade, "L'administration coloniale," 106.
23. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 631.
24. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 4:538–9.
25. Alfred Cobban, *A History of Modern France*, 3 vols. (Penguin, 1963), 1: 80–81; Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 211; Edmond Dziembowski, *Un nouveau patriotisme français, 1750–1770: La France face à la puissance anglaise à l'époque de la guerre de sept ans* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998), 451–52, 488–89, 493.
26. AN Col. F³175, 47, 162–164; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 4:538–9; During peacetime, European troops of the line in Saint-Domingue numbered about 3,000, increasing to 5,000 in war years. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 631.
27. AN Col. F³192, anonymous mémoire dated 1785 entitled "Reflexions sur la position actuelle de St Domingue."
28. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 392–93.
29. David P. Geggus, "Urban Development in 18th Century Saint-Domingue," *Bulletin du centre d'histoire des espaces atlantiques* 5 (1990), 210; AN Col. F³192, "Réflexions sur la position actuelle de Saint-Domingue."
30. SDOM 1210, March 7, 1762; SDOM 98, May 8, 1769; SDOM 587, March 21, 1765; SDOM 96, March 7, 1764; SDOM 96, November 7, 1764; SDOM 586, November 7, 1764.
31. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 237; Michel Vergé-Franceschi, "Fortune et plantations des administrateurs coloniaux aux îles d'Amérique aux xviii et xviii siècles," in *Commerce et plantation dans la Caraïbe xviii et xixe siècles*, Paul Butel (Bordeaux: Maison des pays ibériques, 1992), 124; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 381, 471.
32. AN Col. F³179, 56; "Arrête du Conseil du Port-au-Prince qui nomme quatre commissaires pour faire le relevé des pouvoirs du Général et de l'Intendant; du 24 Janvier, 1765." However, the most public statements of this perspective came in the local assemblies convoked by d'Estaing's successor, the Prince de Rohan Montbazon, in 1766. AN Col. F³180, 322.
33. Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (NY, 1989), 169–174; Jean Chagniot, *Paris et l'armée au xviii siècle: Étude politique et sociale* (Paris, 1985), 656–7; André Corvisier, *Armies and Societies in Europe, 1494–1789*, trans. Abigail T. Siddall (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 103; Charles Henri d'Estaing, *Les Thermopyles, tragédie de circonstance* (Paris, 1791).
34. Cited in Jean Fouchard, *Artistes et répertoire des scènes de Saint-Domingue* (Port-au-Prince, 1955), 87.

35. Contemporary officials renamed provincial militias in France in an unsuccessful attempt to popularize these institutions, see Corvisier, *Armies and Societies*, 55.
36. AN C^{9B}17, d'Estaing's ms. "Objets principaux que j'ai eu dans . . . l'ordonnance des milices," dated January 15, 1765.
37. Zyi Loker, *Jews in the Caribbean* (Jerusalem, 1991), 227 cites AN Col. C^{9A}120.
38. In 1759 the provincial intendant tried to force Bordeaux's Jews to build a foundling home in the city, but the Jewish community was able to use Abraham Gradis' prestige and connections to circumvent this special tax. Richard Menkis, "The Gradis Family," 144.
39. Frances Malino, *The Sephardic Jews of Bordeaux: Assimilation and Emancipation in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France* (University, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1978), 14; Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial*, 309, 475; Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 219; Sylvia Marzagalli, "Atlantic Trade and Sephardim Merchants in Eighteenth-Century France: The Case of Bordeaux," in *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, eds. Paolo Bernadini and Norman Fiering (Berghan Press, 2001), 279.
40. AN Col. F³12, 259. Other projects in the southern peninsula to be financed by this special tax on Jews included a bridge and an artillery battery for the defense of Saint Louis. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1236, 1251, 1267.
41. Loker, *Jews in the Caribbean*, 230, cites AN Col. C^{9A} 120.
42. Loker, *Jews in the Caribbean*, 227; Pluchon, *Nègres et juifs au xviiiè siècle: Le racisme au siècle des lumières* (Paris: Tallandier, 1984), 96.
43. Pluchon, *Nègres et juifs*, 97.
44. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 4:285–86, 4:820–824; Nemours, *Haïti*, 26–31; AN C^{9B}17, d'Estaing's memoir entitled "Observations particulières" dated June 14, 1765, no 20bis; AN C^{9B}17bis, August 18, 1765, letter from d'Estaing to Choiseul, the colonial minister.
45. Frostin, "Les 'enfants perdus de l'état,'" 321.
46. AN Col. C^{9B}17b; AN Col. F³178, entitled "Mémoire No 6, Paragraphe 6," from d'Estaing's paragraph-by-paragraph rebuttal of the seven mémoires the colony sent to Versailles against him. See also AN Col. F³180, 54, d'Estaing to Choiseul, dated July 10, 1765. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 4:800.
47. AN Col. F³177, 169–72.
48. AN Col. C^{9B}17 ms. "Objets principaux" dated January 15, 1765; AN Col. C^{9B}17 ms. d'Estaing to Versailles, "Objets principaux que j'ai eu en vue dans le réédition de l'ordonnance des Milices," section 13, dated January 15, 1765; AN Col. C^{9B}17, "Objets principaux," section 13.
49. Cited by Pierre Pluchon, "Le spectacle colonial," *Histoire des Antilles et de la Guyane* (Toulouse: Privat, 1985), 211.
50. AN Col. C^{9B}17bis, Mémoire du Corps du Commerce des Cayes, adressé aux douze Chambres du commerce du Royaume, printed with a rebuttal by the Cap Français Chamber of Agriculture. AN Col. F³180, 34, 41; AN Col. F³177, 184.

51. AN Col. F³180, 198; also AN Col. E7, dossier d'Argout, 23.
52. Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1990), 159, 164. James E. McClellan III, *Colonialism and Science*, 289–291; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 118–131.
53. AN Col. F³146, 188–89, undated ms. “Recette des affiches américains pour l'imprimeur du Port-au-Prince”; AN Col. F³273, 637–38, September 19, 1772. McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 97–102; AN Col. F³146, 188–89.
54. McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 189.
55. Jacques Houdaille, “Trois paroisses de Saint-Domingue au xviii^e siècle,” *Population* 18 (1963), 104.
56. Joan G. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1988).
57. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 396, describes the colony's white population in 1788 as 14,500 urban and 13,217 rural. On the importance of city planning in the French and French colonial world after the Seven Years' War, see Anne Pérotin-Dumon, *La ville aux îles, la ville dans l'île: Basse-Terre et Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, 1650–1820* (Paris: Karthala, 2000), 341–79 and 575–640. Also, McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 82–3.
58. McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 75, 94–96, 106–108, and his evocative description of Cap Français, 83–94. Figures on Cap Français are from Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 479–80, and these are analyzed in David P. Geggus, “The Major Port Towns of Saint Domingue in the Later Eighteenth Century,” in *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650–1850*, eds. Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 102.
59. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 979–80, 1053; McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 95.
60. David P. Geggus, “Urban Development,” 197, 203; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 879–85, 891, 1202, 1307, 1309, 1315–16; McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 80–81, 105–106; Alain LeBihan, “La franc-maçonnerie dans les colonies françaises du xviii^e siècle,” *Annales historiques de la révolution française* 46 (1974): 44–46; Escalle and Gouyon Guillaume, *Francsmaçons*, 124.
61. Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, 168–72. Bell, “The ‘Public Sphere,’” 914.
62. AN Col. F³179, 38–42, 56; Vergé-Franceschi, “Fortune et plantations des administrateurs coloniaux,” 124.
63. Gabriel Debien, “Gouverneurs, magistrats et colons: L'opposition parlementaire et coloniale à Saint-Domingue (1763–1769),” *Revue de la société haïtienne d'histoire, de géographie, et de géologie* (juillet– octobre 1958), 29.
64. AN C^{9B}18, “Mémoire . . . de bellaturea furores.”
65. AN Col. F³192, “Réflexions sur la position actuelle de Saint-Domingue.”
66. Vergé-Franceschi, “Fortune et plantations des administrateurs coloniaux,” 124; AN Col. F³180, 252, Rohan's instructions from the King, dated

- March 15, 1766; AN Col. F³180, 288, “lettre de Mr Le prince de Rohan au ministre . . . 15 octobre 1766”; AN Col. F³180, 54, letter from d’Estaing to minister, July 10, 1765.
67. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 4:508, 5:768; AN Col. C^{9B}18 “Copie de la lettre de Mgr le Duc de Choiseul à M. Estienne Batonnier de l’ordre des avocats. De Versailles le 3 mars 1766.”
 68. Cobban, *History of Modern France*, 1:95–96.
 69. AN Col. F³180, 296.
 70. AN Col. F³180, 296 “Lettre circulaire du Gouverneur général aux commandants de quartier, touchant le rétablissement des milices; du 10 Novembre 1766.”
 71. AN Col. F³180, 319–333, “Mémoire sur l’inutilité et le danger du rétablissement de la milice à St Domingue pour servir d’instruction aux députés des quartiers du fond de l’isle à vache, des ances, de tiburon, marchaterre, et ville des Cayes à l’assemblée tenu par Mr de Rohan.” The names of the signers were not included in this copy.
 72. “Mémoire sur l’inutilité.”
 73. AN Col. F³180, 331; AN Col. F³180, 267. AN Col. F³180, 312–13, “Lettre du prince du Rohan au ministre et pièces sur le rétablissement des milices, 1 Février 1767.”
 74. AN Col. F³180, 340 “Lettre du Ministre à M. Le Chevalier Prince de Rohan sur le retablissement des Milices, 14 juin 1767”; AN Col. F³ 180, 363–4, “Lettre de M. le Prince de Rohan au ministre sur les milices . . . 10 Novembre 1767”; AN Col. F³181, 142–44.
 75. Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 309, cites AN Col. C^{9A}, rec. 130, February 1, 1767.
 76. See the texts reprinted in Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 394–96, 399.
 77. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5: 214–15.
 78. AN Col. F³181, 223.
 79. AN Col. F³182, d’Argout to Rohan, February 3, 1769.
 80. In 1791 Julien Raimond identified Jacques Delaunay and Jacques Boury as free men of color who had led militia units before Rohan’s reform. Raimond, “*Observations sur l’origine*,” 9.
 81. SDOM 359, June 2, 1760; SDOM 431, January 15, 1765.
 82. AN Col. F³ 182, d’Argout to Rohan, February 4, 1769.
 83. AN Col. F³ 182. D’Argout later learned that this letter was written by Joseph Lafreseliere, a white man who, with his brother-in-law Desrouaudieres, was a major agent in these disturbances.
 84. AN Col. F³182, d’Argout to Rohan, February 4, 1769.
 85. May 19, May, Berton reg. 130, mariage, Cayes.
 86. AN Col. F³182, Girard de Formont to d’Argout, February 6, 1769.
 87. In January 1765, Claire, the illegitimate daughter of Etienne Bourdet and Marie Catherine Duteuil, and probably the sister of Jean, had been married in Torbec. Her mother was a sister of the women Jacques Boury and Jean Domingue Hérard had married. Her brother-in-law, Alexis Girard, and her cousins René and Alexis Boury, and Bernard Latuste, who attended the marriage, were all among the anti-militia rebels. SDOM 1370, January 17, 1765.
 88. AN Col. F³182.

89. AN Col. F³182, ms. "Copie d'une déclaration verbale que le nommé Jean Bourdet Mulâtre libre est venu faire à M. d'Argout, le 22 février 1769."
90. AN Col. F³182, d'Argout to Rohan, February 4, 1769.
91. AN Col. F³182.
92. SDOM431, September 26, 1765.
93. AN Col. F³182, d'Argout to Rohan, February 10, 1769.
94. AN Col. F³182, d'Argout to Versailles, February 16, 1769; SDOM 1224, February 21, 1769.
95. AN Col. F³182, d'Argout to Versailles, February 24, 1769; AN Col. F³182, d'Argout to Rohan, March 2, 1769; AN Col. F³182, d'Argout to Rohan, March 5, 1769.
96. AN Col. F³182, d'Argout to Rohan, March 9, 1769.
97. The complete list was LaPlante, Bodou cadet, B. Latuste, Antoine Boury, Boury cadet, Valles, Alexis Girard, and his brother-in-law Georges Hérard and two others. These men had numerous family connections. The Bourys, Boudou, Latuste, Girard, and Hérard's brother were all named in the will of the cotton planter François Girard, in 1780. SDOM 1416, August 5, 1780. The Bourys, Latuste and Girard were all related to the family of Anne Thomas, a free black woman who had come to Saint-Domingue from Jamaica in the first half of the century and had attended numerous weddings together; SDOM 1370, January 17, 1765; SDOM 1597, May 31, 1781.
98. AN Col. F³182, undated "Copie d'une requête présentée par des mulâtres à Monsieur d'Argout." The whites they named were "Messieurs St Martin cadet et l'ainé, Redon et Desgrottes, Plunket, Lefebvre des hayes, Lefebvre vignons, Bretet, Dantan, Desrouaudieres, Merlet, Duc, Laferriere, Moreau, Soules, Pinau l'ainé et cadet, Joseph de Lafresliere, Georges, Rambau, Gouen, Cambri fils, Chevalier, Castelpers, Tournez, Borgnet, Charles Lafosse, Gerard procureur de M. Picot."
99. AN Col. F³182, deLarocque to d'Argout, March 11, 1769; there is no indication that this man was related to the Delarocque mentioned above. AN Col. E 257bis, dossier "LaRoque, aîné."
100. AN Col. F³182, Chamoux to d'Argout, March 20, 1769; a large section is reprinted in Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 399–400.
101. AN Col. C^{9A} rec. 135, cited in Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 401; also AN Col. E 57, dossier "Buttet (André)"; AN Col. F³182, 421; AN Col. F³182, a 22 page ms. "Mémoire relatif à l'affaire des milices, 1769," written in November 1769 by one H. Berquier at Jérémie.
102. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5:338–340; Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 315; Pierre Pluchon, "Les colonies en lutte avec leur métropole," in *Histoire des Antilles et de la Guyane*, Pluchon, ed. (Toulouse: Privat, 1982), 258.
103. Rohan to the Duc de Praslin, on March 1, 1769, reprinted in Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 397–98.
104. SDOM 1599, August 22, 1783; SDOM 335, June 12, 1786; SDOM 1225, 7 October 176.

CHAPTER 5 CITIZENSHIP AND RACISM IN THE NEW PUBLIC SPHERE

1. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 456; Jean Fouchard, *Artistes et répertoire des scènes de Saint-Domingue* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1955), 129–30.
2. CAOM Recueil de Mémoires, Colonie Tome XVIII, Bibliothèque Moreau de Saint-Méry 95, no. 11, 2.
3. AN Col. F³276, 245; AN Col. F³278, 133; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 37.
4. AN Col. F³249, 121.
5. This is the central conclusion of Stewart R. King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint Domingue* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2001). Many aspects of King's thesis are confirmed by Dominique Roger's thorough and nuanced study, "Les libres de couleur dans les capitales de Saint-Domingue: fortune, mentalités et intégration à la fin de l'Ancien Régime (1776–1789)" (unpublished manuscript, 2005).
6. SDOM 431, April 18, 1765.
7. Document attached to SDOM 1604, April 24, 1774.
8. SDOM 1604, April 24, 1774.
9. AN Col. F³192, anonymous memorandum entitled "Reflexions sur la position actuelle de St Domingue," dated 1785.
10. Julien Raimond, "*Observations sur l'origine*," 41.
11. AN Col. F³173, 543.
12. The imposter had originally joined, then deserted, a regiment from the province of Languedoc.
13. SDOM 1221, March 9, 1768; "Victoire" and "Mathieu" were names claimed by a number of Les Cayes' free *mulâtresses*; "Victoire" especially, was a rare name for a white woman.
14. SDOM 1210, November 22, 1762.
15. SDOM 320, April 16, 1765; this incident may have also been related to the fact that Glisset was working with his slaves. By this period manual labor had come to be associated with non-whites, for white artisans in the colony did not dirty their own hands, but trained their slaves and then oversaw their work; see Henock Trouillot, "Les ouvriers de couleur à Saint Domingue," *Revue de la Société haïtienne d'histoire, de géographie et de géologie* 28 (1955), 37.
16. SDOM 1220, December 7, 1767.
17. Escalle and Gouyon Guillaume, *Francs-maçons*, 499.
18. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1493; AN Col. F³273, 213.
19. Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *Considérations* (1776), 2: 82.
20. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5: 80; see also Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 57–8, for other cases.
21. AN Col. F³273, 279.
22. Escalle and Guillaume, *Francs-maçons*, 499.
23. Peter Sahlins, "Fictions of a Catholic France: The Naturalization of Foreigners, 1685–1787," *Representations* 47 (1994), 87.

24. Jeffery Merrick, "Subjects and Citizens in the Remonstrances of the Parlement of Paris in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 51 (July–Sept., 1990), 456–58.
25. "Mémoire . . . gigantesques debellaturea furores" in AN Col. C⁹b18.
26. AN Col. F³180, anonymous "Mémoire sur la deffense terrestre de St Domingue."
27. Jeffrey Merrick, "Conscience and Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century France," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 21 (1987), 49, 60.
28. Merrick, "Conscience and Citizenship," 60, 61, 70.
29. Charles Frostin, "Méthodologie missionnaire et sentiment religieux en Amérique française aux 17^e et 18^e siècles: Le cas de Saint-Domingue," *Cahiers d'Histoire* 24, 1 (1979): 19–43.
30. Sahllins, "Fictions of a Catholic France," 90–94.
31. See for example, the naturalization of the Irishman Jacques Skerret, SDOM 326, October 4, 1768.
32. Carol Blum, *Rousseau and the Republic of Virtue: The Language of Politics in the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 125; Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*, 35–38, 70, cites Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, book Seven, chapters 8 and 9 and Rousseau's *Second Discourse*; Sarah Maza, "The Diamond Necklace Affair Revisited (1785–1786): The Case of the Missing Queen," *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, Lynn Hunt, ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 68–69.
33. Vergé-Franceschi, "Fortune et plantations des administrateurs coloniaux," 125; Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 612.
34. Girod de Chantrons, *Voyage*, 140–41.
35. Girod de Chantrons, *Voyage*, 141.
36. Fouchard, *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue*.
37. AN Col. F³190, Count d'Autichamp, "Observations sur . . . St Domingue," ms. dated 1781, 92.
38. AN Col. F³192, "Réflexions sur la position actuelle de St Domingue"; AN Col. F3190, Count d'Autichamp, "Observations sur . . . St Domingue," ms. dated 1781; AN Col. E 233, dossier "Jussan."
39. Emilien Petit, *Droit publique ou gouvernement des colonies françaises d'après les loix faites pour ces pays* [1771] (Paris: Librairie Paul Geunthner, 1911), 481, 491, 521.
40. Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere*, 32, 82, 85.
41. Cited in Fouchard, *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue*, 89–91.
42. Père Nicolson, *Essai sur l'histoire naturelle de l'isle de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Chez Gobreau Libraire), 51–52; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 40–41; Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *Considérations sur l'état présent de la colonie*, 2:45. See Pluchon, *Histoire des Antilles*, 180, 182, for a reproduction of Hilliard's census of Saint-Domingue's free population.
43. Jacques Houdaille, "Trois paroisses de Saint-Domingue au XVIII^e siècle: Etude démographique," *Population* 18 (1963), 100, compares the 3 percent rate of prenuptial conceptions in Crulai, Normandy, with the 13.9 percent he calculates for white women in Saint-Domingue. Jacques Houdaille, "Le métrissage dans les anciennes colonies françaises," *Population* 36, 2 (mars/avril 1981), 278, describes illegitimate births in selected

- Saint-Domingue parishes increasing from 11 percent of baptisms in 1710–1729 to 55 percent from 1760 to the Revolution.
44. Cited without attribution in Henock Trouillot, “La condition de la femme de couleur à St Domingue,” *Revue de la société haïtienne d’histoire et de géographie* 30 (1957): 45.
 45. Jean Fouchard, *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue* (Port-au-Prince, 1955), 91–93.
 46. Girod de Chantrons, *Voyage*, 153.
 47. Girod de Chantrons, *Voyage*, 153–54.
 48. AN Col. F⁵76, 151; “Une fille naturelle de Moreau de Saint-Méry à Saint-Domingue,” *Société haïtienne d’histoire et de géographie* 46 (March, 1989):51. According to this research note drawn from Cap Français notarial records [SDOM 31, 8 avril 1781 and 13 juin 1781], a free *mulâtresse* named Marie-Louise Laplaine had been Moreau’s housekeeper since 1776 and he was probably the father of her *quarteronne* daughter Jeanne-Louise known as Amenaïde. On the eve of his marriage to Louise-Catherine Milhet he gave Laplaine and Jeanne-Louise two slaves and money to buy a third.
 49. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 104.
 50. Cited in Pierre Pluchon, *Nègres et juifs au xviii^e siècle: Le racisme au siècle des lumières* (Paris: Tallandier, 1984), 286.
 51. Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 386; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1055; see Moreau on the poor health caused by the excess of passion and lack of “true” sociability in Cap Français, 517–518.
 52. Geggus, “Urban Development in 18th Century Saint-Domingue,” 212.
 53. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 31–33, 105, 109; Jennifer M. Jones, “Repackaging Rousseau: Femininity and Fashion in Old Regime France,” *French Historical Studies* 18 (1993), 940, 944, 948.
 54. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 885; see also 1054 for his description of “luxure” and the behavior of free colored prostitutes at Port-au-Prince.
 55. Hilliard d’Auberteuil, *Considérations sur l’état présent de la colonie*, 2:27.
 56. Michèle Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire au siècle des lumières: Buffon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvétius, Diderot*, ed. Claude Blanckaert (Paris: François Maspéro, 1971), 201–5.
 57. Sean Quinlan, “Colonial Bodies, Hygiene and Abolitionist Politics In Eighteenth-Century France,” *History Workshop Journal* 42 (1996), 110, quotes Antoine Bertin, *Des moyens de conserver la santé des blancs et des nègres aux Antilles ou climats chauds et humides de l’Amérique* (Paris, 1768), 14–15.
 58. Quinlan cites Antoine Poissonnier-Desperrières, *Traité des fièvres de l’isle de St.-Domingue*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1766).
 59. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 103, 104, 108, 109.
 60. Hudson, “From ‘Nation’ to ‘Race’,” 247–48.
 61. Quinlan, “Colonial Bodies,” 111.
 62. Jacques Roger, translated Robert Ellrich, *The Life Sciences In Eighteenth-Century French Thought*, Keith R. Benson (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 383–85.
 63. Quinlan, “Colonial Bodies,” 112.
 64. Elizabeth A. Williams, *The Physical and the Moral: Anthropology, Physiology, and Philosophical Medicine in France, 1750–1850* (New York:

- Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8, 22, 63; McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 133.
65. Williams, *The Physical and the Moral*, 16, 50, 58–59.
 66. Although he did not publish the work until 1797, Moreau insisted in his preface that he had stopped writing the *Description* in 1789. Although the revolutionary decade had changed a number of his ideas, he maintained that his only change was to remove some material, recovered by later editors, that might be offensive to individuals “already punished by public misfortunes.” *Description*, 5, 10.
 67. On the role of anatomical science in eighteenth-century definitions of gender and of race, see Londa Shiebinger, “The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23 (Summer, 1990): 387–405. See also Pierre H. Boulle, “In Defense of Slavery: Eighteenth-Century Opposition to Abolition and the Origins of Racist Ideology in France,” in *History From Below: Studies in Popular Protest and Popular Ideology in Honour of George Rude*, Frederick Krantz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 219–246; Nancy Stepan, “Biological Degeneration: Races and Proper Places,” *Degeneration: The Dark Side of Progress*, J. Edward Chamberlin and Sander L. Gilman, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 97–120.
 68. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 94.
 69. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 90–93.
 70. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 96–97.
 71. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 100–01.
 72. Sue Peabody, “There Are No Slaves in France”: *The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 74–75, 85.
 73. Daniel Roche, *The People of Paris: An Essay in Popular culture in the Eighteenth Century*, translated Marie Evans (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 273.
 74. Cited in Pierre H. Boulle, “In Defense of Slavery,” 227.
 75. Charles Frostin, “Les colons de Saint-Domingue et la métropole,” *Revue historique* 482 (1967): 381–414; Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 626; Malick W. Ghachem, “Montesquieu in the Caribbean: The Colonial Enlightenment Between *Code Noir* and *Code Civil*,” *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques* 25, 2 (1999), 194–199; Gene E. Ogle, “‘The Eternal Power of Reason’ and ‘The Superiority of Whites’: Hilliard d’Auberteuil’s Colonial Enlightenment,” *French Colonial History* 3 (2001): 35–50.
 76. Ogle, “‘The Eternal Power of Reason,’” cites *Considérations* 2:48–50.
 77. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 79, note 1.
 78. Hilliard d’Auberteuil, *Considérations sur l’état présent de la colonie*, 2: 73, 78, 83–84, 88.
 79. Cited in Boulle, “In Defense of Slavery,” 230.
 80. Ann Laura Stoler, “Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia,” *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era* (eds., Micaela di Leonardo (Berkeley, Calif.), 1991), 85.
 81. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix*, 5:173–74.

82. AN Col. F³91, 192–97.
83. AN Col. F³91, 189.
84. Pluchon, *Nègres et juifs au xviiiè siècle*, 198; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 94, 100–4; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 4:225, 342, 466, 495; 5:384–5, 823; AN Col. F³243, 341; Col. F³273, 119; AN Col. F³91, 115; AN Col. F³189, decree of June 2, 1780.
85. Rogers, “Les libres de couleur,” chapter 5 and Conclusion.
86. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 1:636–38, 3:222, 4:429, 412–13.
87. AN Col. E21, dossier “Bayon”; AN Col. F³91, 203.
88. AN Col. E21, dossier “Bayon de Libertas,” 54.
89. AN Col. E71, dossier “Chapuiset,” piece 273; “Réflexions sommaires sur la possession d’état des Chapuiset” (Cap Français, 1779).
90. Debbasch *Couleur et liberté* (1967), 69.
91. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5:448–9; See the case of André Begon, AN Col. F³272, 375.
92. SDOM 334, December 5, 1784; SDOM 333, January 27, 1783; SDOM 1599, May 13, 1783; SDOM 751, April 1, 1785.
93. Pluchon, *Nègres et Juifs*, 59; Emmanuel, *History of the Jews*, 691, 695, 697, 700, 1034; SDOM 429, June 7, 1762.
94. See, for example, SDOM 1465, July 7, 1785.
95. SDOM 341, May 7, 1789; SDOM 747, November 5, 1782; SDOM 748, May 27, 1783.
96. SDOM 1424, November 30, 1786; SDOM 341, May 7, 1789.
97. Gwendolyn Hall, *Social Control*, 77.
98. Emile Hayot, *Les gens de couleur libres du Fort-Royale, 1674–1823* (Paris, 1971), 13. This measure was never enacted because free coloreds were shortly thereafter needed to fight off a British invasion.
99. AN Col. F³273, 783; AN Col. F³91, 129–30, ms. “Mémoire sur la police des gens de couleur libres”; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5: 767, 807.
100. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 101, note 1.
101. SDOM 108, August 8, 1781.
102. SDOM 1416, May 9, 1781; SDOM 1418, March 8, 1783; see the notarial act drafted for “Sieur Julien Raimond” at Angoulême in July 1789, reproduced in Andre Maistre du Chambon, “Acte notarié relatif aux doléances des ‘gens de couleur,’” *Mémoires de la Société archéologique et historique de la Charente* (June 10, 1931), 7.
103. SDOM 108, August 16, 1787.
104. CAOM G¹509, no. 33, “Recensement; P. de l’ouest et du Sud; 1782: Port-au-Prince.”
105. CAOM G¹509, nos 31, 33, and 38.
106. CAOM G¹509, no. 38, “Extrait du Recensement général de la population de St Domingue pour l’année 1788, en ce qui concerne les Blancs et les Gens de Couleur libres.”
107. David P. Geggus, “The Major Port Towns of Saint Domingue,” 103.
108. Jacques Houdaille, “Quelques données sur la population de Saint-Domingue au xviiiè siècle,” *Population* 28 (July–Oct 1973), 102.

CHAPTER 6 THE RISING ECONOMIC POWER OF FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR IN THE 1780S

1. SDOM 1417, February 10, 1782; SDOM 107, November 11, 1777; SDOM 1604, April 6, 1774.
2. SDOM 1419, January 5, 1784.
3. SDOM 1465, April 5, 1785.
4. SDOM 1416, October 13, 1781.
5. This sample of notarial deeds was created by analyzing the records of most active notaries from the districts of Les Cayes, Nippes, and Saint Louis in this period. The 1760s data represents all surviving documents from the same districts. Nevertheless, the 1780s material appears to include at least half of the families identified as “*gens de couleur*” in 1788. The 2,654 contracts yielded 510 different family names belonging to free people of color, while the 1788 census [CAOM G¹509, no. 38] counted 1,044 free adult men and women in the same three districts.
6. Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 445.
7. David Eltis, et al., *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database*.
8. Trouillot, “Motion in the System, 337, 344, 347–8; Geggus, “Sugar and Coffee Production,” 76–78; Geggus, “The Major Port Towns of Saint Domingue,” 89–90.
9. Tarrade, *Le commerce coloniale*, 2: 623, note 132, 624–26, 631.
10. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1279–1293, 1295.
11. See Trouillot, “Motion in the system.” Jean Fouchard, *Plaisirs de Saint-Domingue*, 58; Gabriel Debien, *Lettres de colons* (Laval, 1965), 9; Père Nicolson, *Essai sur l’histoire naturelle de l’île de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: chez Gobreau Libraire, 1776), 102, 106–9, 115.
12. Charles Frostin, “Saint-Domingue et la révolution américaine,” *Bulletin de la société d’histoire de la Guadeloupe* 22 (1974), 108.
13. Philippe Chassaingne, “L’économie des îles sucrières dans les conflits maritimes de la seconde moitié du xviii^e siècle,” *Histoire, économie, société* 7, 1 (1988), 99, 101; Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 694–95, 698; Frostin, “Saint-Domingue et la révolution américaine,” 98, 101, 106. Tarrade, *Le commerce coloniale*, 2: 298, 599, note 31, 602.
14. See John D. Garrigus, “Color, Class and Identity on the Eve of the Haitian Revolution: Saint-Domingue’s Free Colored Elite as *colons américains*,” *Slavery & Abolition* 17 (1996), 24–25.
15. From 93 leases in the 1760s, the number dropped to 46 in the 1780s. Leases of plantations or undeveloped rural terrain remained were relatively infrequent at Cayes, Saint Louis and Nippes, where only 23 agricultural leases were drafted in the period 1760–1769 and only 19 in the 1780s sample. Free people of color took part in roughly one-third of these in each of the decades (8/23 and 6/18). This discussion of land leasing does not include a number of cases in which undivided estates or plantations belonging to legal minors were rented out to provide the estate with a dependable cash income. This type of estate leasing involved mostly whites, property values were usually substantially higher, and arrangements were complex and framed in a variety of acts. For these

- reasons we have limited our analysis to simple leases which are more revealing of free colored involvement.
16. CAOM G¹509, No. 26; a similar if less marked contrast between white and free colored women has been noted for house owners in nineteenth century San Juan, Puerto Rico; Jay Kinsbruner, "Caste and Capitalism in the Caribbean: Residential Patterns and House Ownership among the Free People of Color of San Juan, Puerto Rico, 1823–46," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 70 (1990), 455.
 17. Rogers, "Les livres de couleur" (2005), 103, 109.
 18. SDOM 1465, March 1, 1784.
 19. SDOM 1465, July 27, 1784; SDOM 1464, April 25, 1781.
 20. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5: 587, 610–13.
 21. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 74, note 1, cites AN Col. F³133, 220–221.
 22. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 110; Houdaille, "Trois paroisses," 101; Rogers, "Les livres de couleur," (2005), 545, 547.
 23. Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *Considérations*, 2: 45. Sixteen white couples in the 1760s period did not list property at all.
 24. In the 1760s, only three free colored couples described no property in their marriage documents. Seventeen of the 65 free colored marriages for the 1780s listed no property for either spouse; this included rich families like the Boisronds examined below, as well as poor couples with no property to speak of. Four of the 1780s white marriages showed no property for either spouse.
 25. SDOM 1417, February 10, 1782; SDOM 751, November 19, 1785; SDOM 752, December 26, 1786; SDOM 1419, February 8, 1784; SDOM 1419, January 5, 1784; SDOM 1428, January 14, 1789; SDOM 1465, January 10, 1785; SDOM 1465, April 11, 1785; SDOM 747, October 15, 1782; SDOM 1597, January 16, 1781.
 26. King, *Blue Coat*, 144–45, 189, 196, 205, 208, 223–34; Rogers, "Les livres de couleur" (2005), 104, 110.
 27. The population density of Limonade in the 1780s, for example, was 66 persons per square kilometer, nearly double the density of Les Cayes, which had the largest population in the South Province. Anglade, *L'espace haïtien*, 60–62. Moreau de Saint-Méry described Limonade as "one of the most famous and rich" parishes in the colony. Croix-des-Bouquets, in the hinterland of Port-au-Prince, was not as old nor as thickly populated, and had a population density comparable to Les Cayes. But its wealth exploded in the 1780s, so that of its 95 sugar plantations, 50 were producing the highest grade of sugar. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 187, 969.
 28. King, *Blue Coat*, 133.
 29. *Ibid.*, 197.
 30. Archives Nationales Minutier Central 99, August 30, 1790; SDOM 340, March 27, 1789; SDOM 1429, August 23, 1789; SDOM 1429, September 25, 1789; SDOM 1435, January 9, 1793.
 31. SDOM 1464, October 15, 1783.
 32. Mordechai Arbelle, "Jewish Settlements in the French Colonies in the Caribbean (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Cayenne) and the 'Black Code,'" in *The Jews and The Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450–1800*, eds. Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghahn Books,

- 2001), 303, cites Abraham Cahen, "Les juifs dans les colonies françaises au XVIII siècle" *Revue des études juives* 4 (1882), 141.
33. Loker, *Jews in the Caribbean*, 230, cites AN Col. C^{9A} 120; Menkis, "The Gradis Family," 110, 174.
 34. SDOM 429, February 5, 1762; SDOM 429, June 3, 1762; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions* 5: 448. Pluchon, *Nègres et Juifs*, 59; Emmanuel, *History of the Jews*, 691, 695, 697, 700, 1034; Loker, *Jews in the Caribbean*, 238; SDOM 429, June 7, 1762.
 35. SDOM 1464, October 15, 1783; SDOM 1465, January 10, 1785; SDOM 1465, April 11, 1785; SDOM 1465, July 7, 1785; R. Richard, "Les minutes des notaires de S.D. aux archives du ministère de la France d'outre-mer," *Revue d'histoire des colonies* (1951): 340–358. See Church of Latter Day Saints Family History Center microfilm # 1095763.
 36. SDOM 105, April 29, 1773.
 37. SDOM 105, April 29, 1773; SDOM 590, February 9, 1768; Moreau de Saint Méry, *Description*, 1235, 1462.
 38. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews*, 966; SDOM 1464, February 22, 1783; SDOM 1465, April 5, 1785.
 39. SDOM 340, January 29, 1788.
 40. SDOM 108, November 17, 1785.
 41. SDOM 431, January 15, 1765; On Pierre Delaunay of Torbec, see SDOM 338, March 8, 1789; SDOM 1597, January 3, 1781.
 42. SDOM 1464, September 9, 1783; SDOM 1465, April 12, 1784; SDOM 55, April 20, 1788; SDOM 1429, October 13, 1789; SDOM 1465, October 25, 1785; SDOM 1428, February 17, 1789; SDOM 1465, 28 October, 1785.
 43. Moreau de Saint Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5:448–9; Yvan Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 69.
 44. SDOM 1222, September 27, 1768; SDOM 1597, May 6, 1781; SDOM 1597, November 7, 1781; SDOM 1598, November 22, 1782; SDOM 1598, October 6, 1782; SDOM 1598, November 22, 1782.
 45. Moreau de Saint Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5:448–9. By the late 1770s use of these titles in legal documents was cited in court cases to prove that a family was considered white. See AN Col. E71, dossier "Chapuiset," "Réflexions sommaires sur la possession d'état des Chapuiset" (Cap Français, 1779).
 46. SDOM 1216, January 13, 1766; SDOM 1216, May 11, 1766; SDOM 394, May 15, 1766. The name Dasque also appeared on the 1720 census. SDOM 1599, April 22, 1783.
 47. SDOM 1596, October 30, 1780.
 48. SDOM 1600, January 24, 1784; SDOM 1601, December 20, 1785. On intermarriage, see Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 47.
 49. SDOM 1600, September 28, 1784. Baudry des Lozières, cited in McClellan, *Colonialism and Science* (1992), 83.
 50. SDOM 1596, November 21, 1780; SDOM 1598, December 20, 1782.
 51. SDOM 1464, April 25, 1781; SDOM 1465, February 15, 1784; SDOM 1465, December 12, 1785.

52. SDOM 1464, September 28, 1780. The widow LeComte had every intention of using this reserve. In 1784, three years after her marriage to Boisrond, she drew up a testament that gave 14,375 livres to each of her four siblings, and left slaves to other family members, including to one Boisrond niece and to her Boisrond brother-in-law. She was in perfect health and she made her husband executor of the will. SDOM 1465, February 15, 1784. Nineteen months later she was ill and remade her will, this time simply dividing her indigo plantation among her four siblings, to avoid a court battle over payment of the money. SDOM 1465, September 12, 1785. Lecomte-Boisrond's three sisters were, like her, widows of local free colored planters.
53. SDOM 1465, April 12, 1784; SDOM 54, September 13, 1787; SDOM 55, August 8, 1788.
54. SDOM 1596, June 20, 1780; SDOM 1600, April 12, 1784; SDOM 1600, June 28, 1784; SDOM 1600, July 26, 1784; SDOM 1465, April 19, 1784; SDOM 1465, April 9, 1784; SDOM 1465, July 27, 1784; SDOM 1465, May 23, 1785; SDOM 1465, October 14, 1784.
55. Debien, *Gens de couleur libres et colons*, 8; André Maistre de Chambon, "Acte notarié relatif aux doléances des 'gens de couleur,'" 9.
56. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Motion in the System," *Review* 5 (1982), 343–48, 354, 364; King, *Blue Coat*, 123.
57. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 101; SDOM 1465, July 27, 1784.
58. SDOM 336, May 23, 1787; SDOM 1599, February 16, 1783.
59. Chassaingne, "L'économie des îles sucrières dans les conflits maritimes," 94; Tarrade, *Le commerce coloniale*, 2:602, 756; Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *Considérations*, 1:281–83; Paul Butel in Pierre Pluchon, ed., *Histoire des Antilles et de la Guyane* (Toulouse: Privat), 117–18, points to the surging trade between Bordeaux and London in French Caribbean cotton in the late eighteenth century; Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739–1763* (London: Frank Cass & C., 1963), 2:383; David P. Geggus, "Indigo and Slavery in Saint-Domingue," *Plantation Society in the Americas* 5, 2 & 3 (Fall 1998), 194.
60. SDOM 1427, December 8, 1788; SDOM 340, March 23, 1789.
61. SDOM 1597, February 4, 1781; SDOM 1597, May 31, 1781; SDOM 130, December 30, 1764.
62. SDOM 748, December 20, 1783; SDOM 752, April 27, 1786; SDOM 751, April 6, 1785; SDOM 747, September 23, 1782; SDOM 752, January 21, 1786; SDOM 752, January 21, 1786; SDOM 752, July 8, 1786; SDOM 754, January 25, 1788; SDOM 754, January 25, 1788; SDOM 753, September 6, 1787.
63. SDOM 753, March 21, 1787. Lanoix was the oldest son and namesake of Mathieu Lanoix, a planter and the former royal surveyor in the Azille region of the Nipopes district. His brother was a planter who married the widow of militia captain in their native parish of Nippes. SDOM 748, October 6, 1783. His sister was married to a militia captain and planter in Léogane, SDOM 753, March 21, 1787.
64. SDOM 749, February 26, 1784; SDOM 753, March 24, 1787; SDOM 753, March 21, 1787; SDOM 753, July 24, 1787; the 6 slaves and animals would have been worth about 18,000 livres, at most, meaning the

- land was worth 12,000, about four times what the bride had paid three months earlier.
65. SDOM 1601, February 14, 1785; SDOM 1597, October 25, 1781; SDOM 1601, August 21, 1785.
 66. SDOM 334, May 31, 1784; CAOM G¹509, nos 27, 31, and 33; AN Col. F³273, 655–57, ordonnance dated December 23, 1772.
 67. SDOM 752, January 11, 1786.
 68. SDOM 1425, February 20, 1787; SDOM 747, June 8, 1782; SDOM 751, July 23, 1785.
 69. SDOM 335, July 14, 1785; SDOM 338, October 9, 1788; SDOM 338, April 26, 1788; SDOM 335, July 20, 1785; SDOM 337, December 21, 1787; SDOM 338, May 7, 1788.
 70. One of Bleck's elderly aunts owed Chalvière 13,302 livres and he had purchased a plot in the Cayes savanna from Hyacinthe Bleck for 10,200 livres. Chalvière and members of the Bleck family were together at several free colored marriages in the 1780s. SDOM 1598, October 18, 1782; SDOM 1598, May 20, 1782; SDOM 1598, April 23, 1782; SDOM 335, July 14, 1785; SDOM 335, July 20, 1785; SDOM 336, April 6, 1787; SDOM 337, September 8, 1787; SDOM 337, November 3, 1787; SDOM 337, April 26, 1788; SDOM 338, July 5, 1788; SDOM 338, October 1, 1788; SDOM 338, October 9, 1788; SDOM 1596, 27 June, 1780; SDOM 335, June 12, 1786.
 71. The other financial transaction found for Chalvière was his sale of an inherited plot of land for 12,000 livres; SDOM 1602, 20 March 1786. His wife, Julienne Fresil, was one of three children born to a *mulâtresse* named Jeanne and Jean LaFressellière, a white man who died in 1760. LaFressellière left twenty-four slaves to be divided among his children, but Chalvière's wife and her siblings had difficulty forcing the white estate executor to turn over their property when they reached majority. SDOM 1602, 2 February 1786; SDOM 1602, 18 June 1786.
 72. Eltis and others, *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Database*.

CHAPTER 7 PROVING FREE COLORED VIRTUE

1. SDOM 103, July 10, 1769.
2. AN Col. E 189, dossier "Nommé Fossé." This policeman may have been Julien Raimond or one of his brothers. Raimond described the Fossé case in his first memorandum to the Naval Secretary, as evidence of the injustices borne by men of color. AN Col. F³91, 179. However, Raimond never identified himself as a constable, and there were several eye-witness accounts of the fight that did not mention a "Raymond."
3. AN Col. F³91, 179.
4. AN Col. F³273, 759–61.
5. AN Col. F³ 273, 759–61; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 85, 1032; AN Col. F³ 150, 162; Charles Frostin, "Saint-Domingue et la Révolution américaine," *Bulletin de la société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe* 22 (1974), 112.
6. AN Col. F³190, 97, D'autichamp's "Observations," dated February 25, 1781.

7. Jacques Houdaille, "Trois paroisses de Saint-Domingue au xviii^e siècle: Étude démographique," *Population* 18 (1963), 101. Rogers, "Les livres de couleur" (2005), 557; she found 24 out of 67 free colored marriages in Port-au-Prince in the years after 1776 involved a slave but only 13 out of 108 in Cap Français.
8. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 85; Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *Considerations*, 2: 96; SDOM 1596, July 3, 1780.
9. SDOM 1601, March 30, 1785; SDOM 1601, November 4, 1785.
10. Blanche Maurel, *Le vent du large, ou le destin tourmenté de Jean-Baptiste Gérard, colon de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: La nef de Paris, 1952), 56, 58, 71. Maurel notes that Gérard gave 8,000 livres of his own money to the mulatto woman Zabet and her seven children, who were freed from slavery by the testament of one of his estate overseers.
11. SDOM 1597, August 20, 1781.
12. SDOM 1598, April 3, 1782.
13. SDOM 1598, October 18, 1782.
14. SDOM 1464, September 13, 1782; SDOM 1597, May 13, 1781.
15. SDOM 753, November 24, 1787.
16. "Cahier de doléances de la paroisse des Gonaïves" (Port-au-Prince, 1790) reproduced in *Doléances des peuples coloniaux à l'assemblée nationale constituante, 1789-1790*, ed. Monique Pouliquen (Paris, 1989), 33; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 85.
17. Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire*, 187-192.
18. Gwendolyn M. Hall, "Saint Domingue," *Neither Slave Nor Free*, 177; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et Constitutions* 5:611-12; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 85; AN Col. F³150, 162.
19. SDOM 746, December 31, 1781; all following quotations are drawn from this statement by Picau.
20. I thank David Geggus for calling this connection to my attention; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 69; Pierre Pluchon, *Vaudou, sorciers, empoisonneurs de Saint-Domingue à Haïti* (Paris, 1987), 84, 97; Alfred Métraux, *Voodoo in Haiti*, trans. Hugo Chartiris (New York, 1972), 77, 273.
21. De Bercy cited in Howard Sosis, "The Colonial Environment and Religion in Haiti: An Introduction to the Black Slave Cults in Eighteenth-Century Saint-Domingue," (Columbia University, Ph.D., 1971), 275; Descourtiz cited in Pierre Pluchon, *Vaudou, sorciers, empoisonneurs*, 100.
22. This sparsely settled region in the interior had a long history of maroon activity; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1393-6.
23. King, *Powdered Wig*, 228-29, 277, does not identify *maréchaussée* constables as predominantly free blacks, but this is the impression given by his data.
24. SDOM 747, May 13, 1782.
25. In the 1760s data reviewed for this book, there were 259 *declarations*, or affidavits. In the 1780s sample, there were 101.
26. SDOM 1597, March 5, 1781; SDOM 1597, March 28, 1781.
27. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 442; AN Col. F³188; see also Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 442; AN Col. F³91, 163-166; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 442, 692, 1185, 1202, 1212, 1223, 1238, 1261, 1270, 1316, 1329, 1337, 1344, 1358, 1400, 1155, and 1147.
28. AN Col. F³90.

29. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 230; *Affiches Américaines*, 21 mars 1780, no. 12.
30. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1:229.
31. *Affiches Américaines*, 6 avril 1779, no. 14.
32. AN Col. F³188, Rouvray's "Reflexions."
33. AN Col. F³188, Rouvray's "Reflexions."
34. AN Col. F³134, Moreau de Saint-Méry notebook.
35. AN Col. D^{2c}41; AN Col. E150, dossier "Dupetit-Thouars." For a deeper discussion of Dupetit-Thouars's role as patron to one of his ex-slaves, see Stewart King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig*, 245–47.
36. AN Col. F³190, 265, 258.
37. AN Col. F³188, orders of March 30, 1779, April 13, 1779, 3 May, 1779, June 26, 1779, and 30 July, 1779; AN Col. F³189, "Lettres du Gouvernement sur les chasseurs volontaires des 18 septembre et 8 octobre 1779."
38. In June the Chasseurs were officially numbered at 1,034, but only 836 men appeared at the parade grounds, for 105 were absent and 64 were in the hospital, see AN Col. D^{2c}41; for the expedition see AN Col. F³189, "Etat comparatif des forces françaises, américaines et anglaises devant ou dedans Savannah"; Lawrence, 49, cites the same numbers from French naval records: AN Marine B¹167, 247.
39. Chagniot, *Paris et l'armée*, 611, 629.
40. Dziembowski, *Un nouveau patriotisme français*, 458–68.
41. Bailey Stone, *The Genesis of the French Revolution: A Global-Historical Interpretation* (Cambridge, 1994), 125–127.
42. *Affiches Américaines*, mardi 30 mars 1779, no. 13; Bibliothèque Nationale 4, lc 12 20/22.
43. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 103–104.
44. AN Col. F³91, 115, 189, 199; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Loix et constitutions*, 5:384–5, 823.
45. AN Col. F³189. "État comparatif"; *Journal* of the French captain Jean-Rémy de Tarragon cited in Alexander Lawrence, *Storm Over Savannah: The Story of Count d'Estaing and the Siege of the Town in 1779* (Athens, GA, 1951), 57, 60.
46. Lawrence, 107; AN Col. F³189; Theophilus Gould Steward, "How the Black St. Domingo Legion Saved the Patriot Army in the Siege of Savannah, 1779," *Occasional Paper No. 5* (Washington, D.C., 1899); Auguste Nemours, *Haïti et la guerre d'indépendance américaine* (Port-au-Prince, 1952).
47. *Affiches Américaines*, 14 décembre 1779, no. 50, and 2 mai 1780, no. 18; AN Col. E251, dossier "de Lamorlière Du Tillet (Louis-Antoine)"; AN Col. E278, dossier "Lenoir de Rouvray," 54 and 55; AN Col. D^{2c}341, "Régiment des chasseurs volontaires de St Domingue."
48. AN Col. F³189, "Lettre de M. Le Commandant general par interim à M. L'Intendant . . . du 26 mai 1780"; AN Col. D^{2c}41.
49. AN Col. E 310, dossier "Mesnier, Jacques," letters dated "Limbé, August 4, 1780," "Borgne, August 7, 1780."
50. AN Col. E 310, dossier "Mesnier, Jacques," letter dated "Grande Rivière, July 29, 1780"; AN Col. F³190.
51. AN Col. F³190, 259, 262, 266.

52. AN Col. E 310, dossier "Mesnier."
53. AN Col. F³189.
54. AN Col. E 310, dossier "Mesnier," letter dated September 1, 1780.
55. AN Col. E 349, dossier "Reynaud de Villeverd"; AN Col. F³190, 259.
56. AN Col. E 310, dossier "Mesnier."
57. AN Col. E 236, dossier "Labarrere (Charles)."
58. Although he examines communities in the West Province too and treats his sample as representative of the colony, King's military leadership class appears to be heavily concentrated in the Cap Français area, judging by his text and the list of "military leaders" in his appendix. King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig*, 226–265, 277.
59. Gérard M. Laurent, *Haiti et l'indépendance américaine* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie du Séminaire Adventiste, 1976), 60, lists 28 Savannah veterans who distinguished themselves in the Haitian Revolution. Rigaud and Bleck were the only names from that list that appeared in the 1780s notarial sample. For Rigaud, see SDOM 1600, May 3, 1784; for Bleck see SDOM 335, June 12, 1786.
60. SDOM 1596, December 2, 1780.
61. Rogers, "Les livres de couleur" (2005), chapter 5, 19–25; 35–40.
62. D.J., "Mulâtre," *L'Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences des arts et des métiers*, ed. Denis Diderot (Neufchâtel: Samuel Faulche, 1765; reprint: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1966–7), 10: 853; Sylvaine Albertan-Coppola, "La notion de métissage à travers les dictionnaires du xviii siècle," *Métissages*, ed. Jean-Claude Carpanin Marimoutou and Jean-Michel Racault (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), 44.
63. A.A., "Mulâtre," *Supplément à l'Encyclopédie*, ed. Denis Diderot (Amsterdam: Rey, 1776; reprint Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1966–67), 3: 973–74.
64. AN Col. F³91 136, "Lettre du Ministre à M. Berlize, agent des Colonies; du 28 mars 1778."
65. Tarrade, "L'administration coloniale," 116–17. Cited in Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire*, 160; Debbasch *Couleur et liberté*, 126–27.
66. AN Col. F³91, 191, 197.
67. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 902, notes that in 1789 Barthele was 90 years old and had 10 children.
68. AN Col. F³91, 189.
69. AN Col. F³91, 192; NOT SDOM 133, March 24, 1783; SDOM 1465, January 12, 1785, Aquin; SDOM 1465, June 10, 1784; SDOM 1465, June 10, 1784; SDOM 1465, January 2, 1785; SDOM 55, April 2, 1788; SDOM 55, April 10, 1788.
70. SDOM 108, November 17, 1785; SDOM 1465, April 11, 1785; SDOM 1465, July 7, 1785.
71. In addition to their political, kin, and commercial connections in Saint-Domingue, the Gradises had already acquired considerable colonial property by collecting on planters' bad debts. This meant that the inheritance problem had already risen once. In 1752 Esther Gradis, married to a Bordeaux gentile, had contested the will of her brother Abraham. She argued that since Jews had no legal status in the French Antilles they could not transfer colonial property in such a document. A colonial court upheld Abraham's Gradis's testament, nevertheless.

- Pluchon, *Nègres et juifs*, 111; Menkis, "The Gradis Family," 157; Debbasch, "Privilège réel ou Privilège personnel? Le statut des 'Juifs portugais' aux îles" in *Religion, société et politique: Mélanges en hommage à Jacques Ellul* (Paris, 1983), 217.
72. Loker, *Jews in the Caribbean* (1991), 238–39 and John D. Garrigus, " 'New Christians' 'New Whites': Sephardic Jews, Free People of Color, and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue, 1760–1789," in *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West*, ed. Paolo Bernardini and Norman Fiering (New York: Berghan Books, 2001), 314–32.
 73. André Maistre de Chambon, "Acte notarié relatif aux doléances des 'gens de couleur' de Saint-Domingue (29 juillet 1789)," *Mémoires de la Société archéologique et historique de la Charente* (June, 1931), 7–8.
 74. Pluchon, *Le premier empire*, 698; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 126, note 1.
 75. AN Col. F³91, 171–183; these archival documents are copies of Raimond's text and none but the first are dated. The first bears the notation "1^{er} mémoire de Raimond, en 7bre [September] 1786," but the letter from the royal administrators Saint-Domingue replying to Raimond's charges is dated "25 7bre 1786." Raimond's correspondence with Castries must therefore have taken place before this date.
 76. AN Col. F³91, 179; as Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire*, 183, points out, book 9, chapter 15 of the 1780 edition of Raynal's *Histoire*, praises the racial reforms undertaken by Pombal in Brazil.
 77. The colonial administration, on orders from Versailles, was unable to find any evidence that the court entertained this motion. AN Col. F³91, 183.
 78. AN Col. F³91, 177–78, 194.
 79. AN Col. F³91, 183, 185, 190.
 80. Duchet, *Anthropologie et histoire*, 177–92, provides the text of Saint-Lambert's manuscript notes on the free colored problem in the colonies, revealing his sympathy to Raimond's memoranda.
 81. AN Col. F³91, 200.
 82. AN Col. F³91, 185, 189; as Yvan Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 123, note 3, points out, this undated memorandum to the king is bound between Raimond's first and second memorandum to Castries, but was probably written after them.
 83. AN Col. F³91, 188–189.
 84. AN Col. F³91, 187.
 85. AN Col. F³278, 341; AN Col. F³91, 223.
 86. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description* 110.
 87. McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 175–177, 179, 193, 199; Pluchon, "Des colonies en lutte avec leur métropole," in Pluchon, ed., *Histoire des Antilles*, 245; Tarrade, "L'administration coloniale," 113, 116.
 88. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 411–416.
 89. McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 248–9. AN Col. F³193. A July 1789 letter from the *Cercle* to the commandant of Cap Français explicitly compared Jasmin's medal to that given to Vincent and to the Chasseurs Volontaires.
 90. Pluchon, *Premier empire*, 613.
 91. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 415.

92. McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 274–276, reports these incidents, but makes no connection between them and the Jasmin controversy, which he relates to a footnote in a discussion of urban institutions in the colony. However, he is unable to explain this “counterrevolutionary purge” beyond “wild rumors” that Arthaud and Moreau favored emancipating the slaves.
93. McClellan, *Colonialism and Science*, 276, 280; Moreau de Saint Méry, *Description*, 413.
94. Rogers, “Les livres de couleur” (2005), 592.

CHAPTER 8 FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR IN THE SOUTHERN PENINSULA AND THE ORIGINS OF THE HAITIAN REVOLUTION, 1789–1791

1. Debien, “Gens de couleur libres et colons,” 13.
2. AN Col. F³194, copy of a 22 October letter from Limonade.
3. King, *Blue Coat*, 138, 244–46, reconstructs Gentil’s career, but does not mention his role in the Revolution.
4. AN Col. F³194, copy of a November 20, 1789 letter from Petit-Goâve; all the following citations are taken from this source.
5. Frostin, *Les révoltes blanches*, 393–94.
6. AN Col. F³149, 136–41.
7. On Savariot, Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 174, note 2, cites AN Col. F³135, 342–48.
8. Françoise Thésée, “Les assemblées paroissiales des Cayes à St. Domingue (1774–1793),” *Revue de la société haïtienne d’histoire et de géographie* 40 (1982), 29; Raimond, *Réponse aux considérations*, 21.
9. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Considérations présentées* (Paris, [March] 1791), 20, 21; Julien Raimond, *Correspondance de Julien Raimond, avec ses frères, de Saint-Domingue, et les pièces qui lui ont été adressées par eux* (Paris: Imprimerie du Cercle Social, sd).
10. Escalle and Guillaume, *Francs-maçons*, 124.
11. Thésée, “Les assemblées paroissiales des Cayes,” 25; Thésée, “Les assemblées paroissiales,” 31.
12. Thésée, “Les assemblées,” 39, 42.
13. *Ibid.*, 43.
14. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 4; Thésée, “Les assemblées,” 43.
15. Document entitled “Messieurs le Président et membres de l’assemblée générale et provinciale de la partie du Nord” and shown to me, in photocopy form, by Dr. Marcel Chatillon in 1988. The document was apparently from some papers of Jacques Pierre Brissot at that time owned by Dr. Chatillon.
16. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 171.
17. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 6, n. 3; on the Amis des Noirs, see Marcel Dorigny and Bernard Gainot, eds. *La société des Amis des Noirs 1788–1799: Contribution à l’histoire de l’abolition de l’esclavage* (Paris: UNESCO, 1998).

18. Maistre du Chambon, "Acte notarié," 5–11; Gabriel Debien, "Gens de couleur libres," 14–16. By the end of 1789 Jarnac had joined a counter-revolutionary club, which explains Raimond's 1794 description of this arrangement as Jarnac's idea. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 6, note 3.
19. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 145, note 3, 151, note 2; Debien, *Club Massiac* (1953), 157; Debien, "Gens de couleur libres" (1951), 18.
20. Vincent Ogé le jeune, *Motion faite par M. Vincent Ogé jeune à l'assemblée des colons, habitans de S.-Domingue, à l'Hôtel de Massiac, Place des Victoires* (Sept. 1789) 7, reprinted in *La révolution française et l'abolition de l'esclavage* (Paris, Editions d'histoire sociale, 1968).
21. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 163; Debien, "Gens de couleur et colons," 24–25.
22. Debien, *Club Massiac*, 153, 161; Jacques Godechot, "Dejoly et les gens de couleur libres," *Annales historiques de la révolution française*, 23 (1951), 52; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 144, 149, 155, 159–63.
23. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 145, note 3; Monique Pouliquen, ed. *Doléances des peuples coloniaux à l'assemblée nationale constituante, 1789–1790* (Paris, 1989), 148–50.
24. Debien, "Gens de couleur et colons," 27; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 153; Raimond, *Correspondance*, 17, 18, 24.
25. "Précis des gémissemens des sang-mêlés dans les colonies françaises. Par J.M.C. Américain, Sang-mêlé," reprinted in *La révolution française et l'abolition de l'esclavage: Textes et documents* (Éditions d'histoire sociale, 1968), 11:7, 12, 37.
26. Jeffrey Merrick, "Conscience and Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century France," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 21 (1987), 53, 60, 69; Gary Kates, "Jews into Frenchmen: Nationality and Representation in Revolutionary France," *Social Research* 56 (Spring 1989), 223; Colin Jones, *The Longman Companion to the French Revolution* (New York, 1988), 67–68.
27. Ruth Necheles, *The Abbé Grégoire, 1787–1831: The Odyssey of an Egalitarian* (Westport CT, 1971), 59, 65–66, 125.
28. Cited in Pluchon, *Nègres et juif au XVIII^e siècle*, 82–87; Necheles, *Abbé Grégoire*, 14, 15.
29. Jean Tild, *L'abbé Grégoire, d'après ses mémoires* (Paris, 1946) 13, cites Grégoire's *Essai sur la régénération physique*.
30. Necheles, *Abbé Grégoire*, 9, 26, 27; Merrick, "Conscience and Citizenship," 65.
31. Necheles, *Abbé Grégoire*, 32, 60; Thésée "Les assemblées," 42.
32. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 150, 155; Françoise Thésée, "Autour de la société des Amis des noirs: Clarkson, Mirabeau et l'abolition de la traite (août 1789– mars 1790)" *Présence africaine* 125 (1983), 9, 18–19.
33. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 155, note 1; Thésée, "Autour de la société des Amis des noirs," 15; Debien, "Les gens de couleur et les colons," 27.
34. Debien, "Gens de couleur libres," 42, 46, 55–56; Pouliquen, ed., *Doléances*, 154–159.
35. Debien, "Gens de couleur libres," 52; Necheles, *Abbé Grégoire*, 64; Henri Grégoire, *Mémoire en faveur des gens de couleur ou sang-mêlés de St.-Domingue, et des autres Isles françaises de l'Amérique, adressé à l'Assemblée Nationale. Par M. Grégoire, curé d'Embermenil, Député de Lorraine* (Paris: Chez Belin, Libraire, 1789), 5–10, 19.

36. Grégoire, *Mémoire en faveur des gens de couleur*, 36. On Mercier, see Marcel Dorigny, "Introduction," *La société des Amis des Noirs 1788-1799*, 17-20, 54.
37. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 3; for the muted acknowledgment that the revolution meant eventual emancipation, see *Observations adressées à l'Assemblée Nationale par un député des colons américains* (S.I., 1789), 14-15.
38. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 77. The notarial record suggests that the combined colonial assets of the extended Raimond and Challe families, at their peak, might have been valued at 1 million livres.
39. SDOM 1429, September 12, 1789. Unusually, the sales deed did not mention the constable's race.
40. ANMC, August 30, 1790, Rouen register 99; Raimond, who claimed he needed the money for political activities, was to receive 320,000 livres for this property. In August, 1792, the purchaser, a neighbor from Jarnac, demanded and received from Raimond a rebate of 7,424 livres. By 1795 he had paid the rest of the purchase price, mostly in Revolutionary *assignats*. November 2, 1793, Rouen register 99; 2 floreal, year III, Rouen register 99; 2 germinal, year III, Rouen register 99; 25 nivôse, year III; Rouen register 99; 11 pluvoise, year III; Rouen register 99.
41. SDOM 1432, June 14, 1791; Challe seems to have died in Aquin later that year, SDOM 1432, November 28, 1791; SDOM 1435, January 9, 1793.
42. "Supplique des citoyens de couleur des îles et colonies françaises," signed by Raimond and Ogé, December 2, 1789, reproduced in Pouliquen, ed. *Doléances*, 154.
43. Gabriel Debien, "Gens de couleur libres," 54, attributes *Observations d'un habitant des colonies sur le Mémoire en faveur des gens de couleur ou sang-mêlés de Saint-Domingue . . . adressé à l'Assemblée Nationale par M. Grégoire* to Moreau de Saint-Méry.
44. Abbé de Courmand, *Réponse aux observations d'un habitant des colonies, sur le Mémoire en faveur des Gens de couleur, ou sang-mêlés, de Saint-Domingue, et des autres Isles françoises de l'Amérique, adressé à l'Assemblée Nationale, par M. Grégoire, Curé d'Emberménil, Député de Lorraine* (1789), 33.
45. Louis Gottschalk and Margaret Maddox, *Lafayette in the French Revolution: From the October Days through the Federation* (Chicago: 1973), 250; Necheles, *Abbé Grégoire*, 6-7; Kates, "Jews into Frenchmen," 226.
46. Necheles, *Abbé Grégoire*, 71-2; Florence Gauthier, "Le rôle de Julien Raimond dans la formation du nouveau peuple de Saint-Domingue, 1789-1793," in *Esclavage, résistances et abolitions*, Marcel Dorigny, ed. (Martinique, 1999), 228." Debien, "Gens de couleur et colons," 62-65; Thésée, "Autour les Amis des Noirs," 72.
47. Debien, "Gens de couleur et colons," 65-66; David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Ithaca, 1975), 139-40; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 177.
48. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 177-178; Yves Bénot, *La Révolution française et la fin des colonies (1789-1794)* (Paris, 1988), 731; Julien Raimond, *Réponse aux considérations de M. Moreau, dit Saint-Méry . . . sur*

- les colonies, par M. Raymond, citoyen de couleur de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1791), 32.
49. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 11–14.
 50. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 16, 24; Thésée, “Les assemblées,” 52–54.
 51. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 15–16; AN DXXV 46, 439, no. 216.
 52. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 14, 25, 27, 30–31, 39, 44.
 53. Braquehais had married into the wealthy free colored Boisrond family and received, as guardian for his wife, 100,000 livres from her father’s estate. In the late 1750s he had also been deeded property from a white man and his social status was high enough that notaries only rarely identified him as a man of color. In 1780 the free *mulâtresse* Magdelaine Rossignol had named him as executor of her estate, entrusting to him the liberty of her slaves. SDOM 1601, January 11, 1785; SDOM 1600, February 24, 1784; SDOM 1596, December 23, 1780.
 54. The light-skinned landowner André Torchon was another member. Notaries frequently did not describe his race in 1780s contracts. See SDOM 749, February 26, 1784; SDOM 747, August 13, 1782; SDOM 748, October 13, 1783. The notarial record reveals little about the other members of this July 1790 committee—Rémarais, Morel, Etienne Bouet, Narcisse Rollain, Massé, S. Glezil. Petition reproduced as a footnote in Raimond, *Correspondance*, 25–26. Only 19 of the 36 Cavaillon petitioners were able to sign their names.
 55. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 32–39.
 56. Thésée, “Les assemblées,” 122, 187; SDOM 1599, November 2, 1783; SDOM 1224, January 31, 1769; SDOM 1225, October 9, 1769; Thésée, “Les assemblées,” 187; James, *Black Jacobins* (New York, 1963), 96; Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 120; Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d’Haïti*, 1:81; SDOM 1600, May 3, 1784.
 57. Thésée, “Les assemblées,” 56–57, 61; SDOM 334, April 19, 1784; Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 82, 84.
 58. Thésée, “Les assemblées,” 59–62.
 59. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Considérations présentées aux vrais amis du repos et du bonheur de la France, à l’occasion des nouveaux mouvements de quelques soi-disant Amis-des-noirs* (Paris: L’Imprimerie Nationale [March]1791), 24.
 60. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 63; AN Dxxv 65/658, piece 3 and 7.
 61. Raimond cited in Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 166, see also 179, 181.
 62. AN DXX58, dossier Ogé; Raimond, *Correspondance*, 23, 90; AN Dxxv 58/574, interrogation at Dondon, dated November 12, 1790; AN Dxxv 58/Ogé; SDOM 1428, June 11, 1789; SDOM 108, October 8, 1789; SDOM 1465, April 25, 1781; SDOM 133, October 6, 1783; SDOM 1428, March 15, 1789. AN Col. F³91, 175 and 184, note E.
 63. AN Col. F³196, 114.
 64. Debien, “Gens de couleur” 8; Thésée, “Les assemblées” 67; SDOM 1600, January 28, 1784; Joseph Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti: Etude monographique et historique*, François Dalencour (Paris:1854–57; Berger-Levrault, 1956), 34.
 65. AN Col. F³196, letter from Blanchelande to the naval ministry, dated November 25, 1790. François Raimond, Julien Raimond’s brother, believed there were only 600; Raimond, *Correspondance*, 50.

66. Dale L. Clifford, "Can the Uniform Make the Citizen? Paris, 1789–1791," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 34, 3 (2001): 363–82; Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti*, 72; AN Col. F³ 196; Emile Nau, *Réclamation par les affranchis des droits civils et politiques* (Port-au-Prince, 1840), 32; AN Dxxv 58, dossier Ogé.
67. Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti*, 72.
68. AN Col. F³196, 263–265; Thésée, "Les assemblées," 68.
69. Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 140.
70. SDOM 1598, August 29, 1782; SDOM 1220, August 21, 1767.
71. For example, François Trichet; see SDOM 1598, November 22, 1782. Fick gives his name as Jadouin, but the notarial registers for Torbec parish consistently give the spelling as Jabouin. See for example, SDOM 1599, April 22, 1783.
72. SDOM 1597, May 31, 1781; SDOM 1416, August 05, 1780; SDOM 1370, January 17, 1765; SDOM 130, October 17, 1764.
73. SDOM 1600, January 27, 1784; AN Col F³ 182. Dargout to Rohan, dated February 3, 1769.
74. Fick, *Making of Haiti* (1991), 268–69; SDOM 1597, January 16, 1781.
75. Thésée, "Les assemblées," 68, 81; Ardouin, *Etudes sur l'histoire d'haïti*, 38; AN Dxxv 112/889, piece 1.
76. Thésée, "Les assemblées," 77, note 1, 81, note 1, 83–92; Assemblée provinciale du Sud, "Extrait des minutes Déposées aux archives de l'Assemblée provinciale" (1791); Ardouin, *Etudes*, 38; Raimond, *Correspondance*, 47.
77. Henri Grégoire, *Lettre aux philanthropes, sur les malheurs, les droits et les réclamations des gens de couleur de Saint Domingue et des autres îles françoises de l'Amérique* (Paris, October 1790); Grégoire, *Lettre aux philanthropes*, 11–17.
78. Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville, *Lettre de J.P. Brissot à M. Barnave: sur ses rapports concernant les colonies, les décrets qui les ont suivis, leurs conséquences fatales; sur sa conduite dans le cours de la révolution; sur le caractère des vrais démocrates; sur les bases de la constitution, les obstacles qui s'opposent à son achèvement, la nécessité de la terminer promptement, etc.* (Paris, 20 Novembre, 1790), 18, 31.
79. P. B. F. Laborde, *Lettre à M. J. P. Brissot de Warville par M. P.-B.-F. Laborde . . .* (Paris: Imprimerie de J.-B. Chemin, n.d.), 4–5.
80. Raimond, *Observations sur l'origine et les progrès [sic] du préjugé des colons blancs contre les hommes de couleur; sur les inconvénients de le perpétuer; la nécessité, la facilité de le détruire; sur le projet du Comité colonial, etc.* (Paris: Chez Belin, 1791), 30–31; Raimond, *Observations*, 34.
81. Florence Gauthier, "Julien Raimond or the Triple Critique of the Colonial Slave and Segregationist System" in Barry Rothas, ed. *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History* 28 (Greely, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2002).
82. Raimond, *Observations sur l'origine*, 7, 11–14.
83. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Considérations présentées aux vrais Amis du repos et du bonheur de la France, à l'occasion des nouveaux mouvements de quelques soi-disant Amis-des-noirs* (Paris, [March] 1791), 20–22, 26–27, 45–47.
84. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Considérations présentées*, 38, 39, 43.

85. Godechot, "Dejoly," 60; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 65; Julien Raimond, *Lettre de Raimond, mulâtre, créole d'Aquin, et habitant de Jacmel, datée de Paris, rue Meslée no. 33, le 4 mars 1791* (Cap Français: chez Dufour de Rians, imprimeur de l'Assemblée coloniale de la partie française de Saint-Domingue, 1791), 8; Raimond, *Correspondance*, 69–70, 112.
86. Raimond, *Lettre de Raimond, mulâtre*, 2–5.
87. *Pétition des Citoyens de couleur des îles françaises, à l'assemblée nationale; précédée d'un avertissement sur les manoeuvres employées pour faire échouer cette Pétition, et suivie de pièces justificatives* (Paris, 18 Mars 1791), iii, 7–9. Signed by "Raymond l'aîné, Raymond le jeune, Fleuri, Honoré Saint-Albert, Desoulchay de Saint-Réal, et Desoulchay, Porsade et Audiger.
88. Maury cited in Ardouin, *Etudes*, 40. Geggus, "Racial Equality, Slavery and Colonial Secession," 1302, note 75; on Milscent's militia career, see Geggus, "Marronage, Voodoo and the Saint-Domingue Slave Revolution of 1791," *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society* (Lanham, 1992) unpaginated, note 13, which cites C. Milscent du Musset, *Sur les troubles de Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1792), 3–12.
89. Necheles, *Abbé Grégoire*, 80, 83, 95; Florence Gauthier, "La révolution française et le problème coloniale: le 'cas Robespierre,'" *Annales historiques de la révolution française* 288 (avril–juin 1992), 175.
90. Gauthier, "La révolution française," 178; David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery*, 142–143; Jean-Daniel Piquet, *L'émancipation des Noirs dans la Révolution française (1789–1795)* (Paris: Karthala, 2002), 92–94.
91. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 184; Gauthier, "La révolution française," 175.
92. Piquet, *L'émancipation des Noirs*, 92; according to the 1788 census there were 9,689 white men in Saint-Domingue, not counting those listed as clerks, overseers, surgeons, refiners, and other workers.
93. David Geggus, "Racial Equality, Slavery, and Colonial Secession during the Constituent Assembly," *American Historical Review* 94 (1989), 1303, agrees 400 may underestimate the impact of this decree. The 1788 census put the total free colored population at 21,813, counting 3,493 men over the age of twelve, or about one-sixth of the total. Moreau de Saint-Méry reckoned this population to be 28,000, which would make for a free adult male population of color of 4,670. AN Col. G¹509, no. 38; Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 85; Raimond, *Correspondance*, 11, note 2.
94. Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 185, 187; Ardouin, *Etudes*, 54; Debbasch *Couleur et liberté*, 188, note 1.
95. Ardouin, *Etudes*, 44, 46.
96. David Geggus, "The Bois Caïman Ceremony," *Journal of Caribbean History* 25 (1991): 41–57 establishes, as well as sources currently permit, the precise timing and location of this event. Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 121, 122; Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Harvard, 2004), 120.

97. Dubois, *Avengers*, 120; Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 123–124; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 204; Ardouin, *Etudes*, 56; Debbasch, *Couleur et liberté*, 204.
98. Terry Rey, “The Virgin Mary and Revolution in Saint-Domingue: The Charisma of Romaine-La-Prophétesse,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* (Great Britain) 11, 3 (1998): 341–69.
99. Jean Fouchard, *Les Marrons du syllabaire* (Port-au-Prince: Deschamps, 1988), 115, note 202; AN Dxxv 110—a two-page manuscript “Discours prononcé par mr. L’Abbé Ouviere en présence de l’armée combinée des citoyens de couleur, campée à la Croix des Bouquets, le 20 xbre 1791.” And AN Dxxv 110, Dossier 867, a letter from Croix des Bouquets, January 10, 1792, naming Ouvière as a Port-au-Prince representative. Joseph Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (1956), 62.
100. AN Dxxv 110/872, piece 3; AN Dxxv 110/877.
101. AN Dxxv 110/872, piece 3; AN Dxxv 110/877, “30 décembre 1791, extrait des délibérations du conseil des commissaires des paroisses de la dépendance de l’ouest et du conseil de Guerre de l’armée combinée des citoyens de la même dépendance, réunis, à la Croix-des-Bouquets.”
102. AN Dxxv 65/658, dossier 4.

CHAPTER 9 REVOLUTION AND REPUBLICANISM IN AQUIN PARISH

1. Thésée, “Les assemblées paroissiales des Cayes,” 106–107, 111–17, 131–33, 139–44.
2. CAOM 5 SUPSDOM 5. This is a census taken in Aquin parish in 1798. AN Dxxv 28 dossier 287, 25 fevrier 1794. SDOM 342, February 4, 1792.
3. SDOM 340, June 9, 1788; SDOM 355, 19 prairial, year 9 [1801]; Laurent was probably the son of Joseph Anglade, whose affairs he managed in 1789 while Anglade was in France, see SDOM 1429, October 8, 1789. SDOM 352, 23 frimaire, year 8 [1799].
4. AN Dxxv 28 dossier 287.
5. David P. Geggus, “The Naming of Haiti,” *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 71, 1&2 (1997c): 43–68.
6. Thanks to Laurent Dubois, who helped me see the importance of this pamphlet. Julien Raimond, *Réflexions sur les véritables causes des troubles et des désastres de nos colonies, notamment sur ceux de Saint-Domingue; avec les moyens à employer pour préserver cette colonie d’une ruine totale; adressées à la convention nationale; par Julien Raymond[sic], colon de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Imprimerie des Patriotes, 1793), 5.
7. Raimond, *Réflexions*, 18, 19–28.
8. *Ibid.*, 19, 26–27, 31.
9. AN Dxxv56, dossier Raymond, 4; Jean-Daniel Piquet, *L’émancipation des Noirs dans la Révolution française (1789–1795)* (Paris: Karthala, 2002), 451; Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 164–65, 168; Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004), 185–87.

10. "Documents aux origines de l'abolition de l'esclavage: Proclamations de Polvérel et de Sonthonax, 1793-1794," *Revue d'histoire des colonies* 36 (1949): 24-55, and 348-422.
11. AN DXXV 28, dossier no. 287, 8 mars 1794; AN Dxxv 28, dossier 287.
12. AN Dxxv 28, dossier 287; AN Dxxv 28 dossier 287; SDOM 342, February 4, 1792.
13. AN Dxxv 41, dossier 404, October 25, 1793.
14. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, 1: 286, 330-32; Robert Louis Stein, *Léger Félicité Sonthonax the Lost Sentinel of the Republic* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985), 135-36, 40, 138-140.
15. Madiou, *Histoire*, 1: 286-87.
16. The 1798 document, CAOM 5 SUPSDOM 5, says nothing about the town of Aquin and covers only five of the parish's seven cantons, but the two missing districts were already depopulated in the late 1780s by severe drought according to Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1229.
17. Gabriel Debien, "Une indigoterie à Saint-Domingue à la fin du XVIIIe siècle," *Revue d'histoire des colonies* 23 (1940-46), 27-28; CAOM 5 SUPSDOM 5; SDOM 347, 19 nivôse, year 7; SDOM 349, 5 floréal, year 7.
18. Ex-slaves were proprietors in only 5 percent of households and 29 percent of the household names could not be categorized.
19. SDOM 345, 25 prairial, year 6; SDOM 348, 26 germinal, year 7; SDOM 349, 18 floréal, year 6; SDOM 349, 7 messidor, year 7; SDOM 355, 12 messidor, year 9.
20. SDOM 35, 2 nivôse, year 3; SDOM 35, September 2, 1794; SDOM 1429, October 28, 1786; SDOM 1429, November 12, 1786; SDOM 36 9 pluviôse, year 4; SDOM 343 6 floréal, year 5; SDOM 349, 13 messidor, year 7; SDOM 350, 3 thermidor, year 7; SDOM 352, 8 ventôse, year 8.
21. SDOM 353, 21 germinal, year 8; SDOM 342, August 13, 1791; SDOM 342, January 9, 1791 with codicil from November 19, 1792; SDOM 342, December 5, 1791; SDOM 36, 3 frimaire, year 5.
22. SDOM 351, 14 brumaire, year 8; SDOM 351, 14 brumaire, year 8.
23. CAOM 5 SUPSDOM 5; SDOM 1541, 21 messidor, year 10.
24. SDOM 35, July 28, 1794; SDOM 35 2 nivôse, year 3; SDOM 343, 16 vendémiaire, year 6; SDOM 348, 1 germinal, year 7; SDOM 349, 9 floréal, year 7; SDOM 349 13 messidor, year 7; SDOM 350, 13 fructidor, year 7.
25. SDOM 355, 21 germinal, year 9; SDOM 355, 20 fructidor, year 9; SDOM 355, 13 fructidor, year 9; SDOM 355, 20 fructidor, year 9; SDOM 1541, 11 floréal, year 10; CAOM 5 SUPSDOM 5.
26. SDOM 355, 4 vendémiaire, year 10.
27. SDOM 351 14 brumaire, year 8; Montbrun had arrived in Bordeaux in 1759 at the age of five. His two brothers also lived in France. Oriol, *Histoire et dictionnaire biographique* . . . 226. Before 1792 Montbrun was colonel of Bordeaux's Sainte Eulalie regiment and commander in chief of the 5th regiment of national volunteers of the Gironde. SDOM 342, July 23, 1792.
28. SDOM 35, October 9, 1794.
29. AN Dxxv 28 dossier 288; Madiou, *Histoire*, 1: 286.

30. Gilles Inspecteur and his brother Charles signed a partnership with Charles Gosses St. Eloy, a goldsmith in Aquin, to grow cotton for seven years in SDOM 345, 22 fructidor, year 6; see also "Moise inspecteur" in SDOM 347, 11 pluviôse, year 7; SDOM 345, 10 messidor, year 6; SDOM 36, 1 nivôse, year 4.
31. SDOM 1514, 20 pluviôse, year 10.
32. SDOM 348, 28 ventôse, year 7; SDOM 347, 4 pluviôse, year 7; SDOM 349, 22 prairial, year 7.
33. SDOM 353, 25 floréal, year 8.
34. LDS Family History Center Microfilm SDOM #1095763, 3 floréal, year 4, Depas-Medina; SDOM 351, 28 brumaire, year 7.
35. SDOM 348, 9 germinal, year 7; SDOM 1541, 24 ventôse, year 10.
36. SDOM 343, 4 germinal, year 5; SDOM 354, 1 nivôse, year 9; SDOM 354, 1 nivôse, year 9.
37. SDOM 36, 13 pluviôse, year 5; SDOM 346, 11 frimaire, year 7; SDOM 348 ventôse, year 7; SDOM 349, 20 floréal, year 7; SDOM 353, 28 floréal, year 8; SDOM 354, 24 frimaire, year 9; SDOM 354, pluviôse, year 9; SDOM 346, 9 brumaire, year 7; SDOM 345 10 messidor, year 6; SDOM 344, 20 pluviôse, year 6; SDOM 350, 22 fructidor, year 7; SDOM 351, 5 vendémiaire, year 8.
38. SDOM 1514, 20 germinal, year 10.
39. CAOM 5 SUPSDOM5, Grande Colline; SDOM 343, 3 fructidor, year 5; SDOM 352, 23 nivôse, year 8; SDOM 354, 22 germinal, year 10; SDOM 1514, 22 germinal, year 10.
40. SDOM 36, 8 fructidor, year 4; SDOM 36, 30 brumaire, year 5; SDOM 354, 20 pluviôse, year 9.
41. SDOM 343, 24 thermidor, year 5; SDOM 343, 21 thermidor, year 5.
42. SDOM 354, 30 nivôse, year 9.
43. Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, 1:263.
44. Léon-François Hoffmann, *Haïti, couleurs, croyance, créole* (Port-au-Prince: Editions Henri Deschamps et CIDIHCA, 1990), 43; Beaubrun Arouin, *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, 5:18.
45. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description*, 1235; SDOM 354, 26 frimaire, year 9; SDOM 354 16 nivôse, year 9; CAOM 5 SUPSDOM5.
46. SDOM 349, 2 messidor, year 7; SDOM 352, 11 frimaire, year 8; SDOM 349, 29 messidor, year 6.
47. SDOM 351, 28 vendémiaire, year 8; SDOM 354, 20 prairial, year 8; SDOM 354, 25 prairial, year 8; SDOM 353, 21 germinal, year 8; SDOM 346, 21 brumaire, year 7.
48. Michelle Craig Mc Donald, "The chance of the Moment: Coffee and the New West Indies Commodities Trade," *The William and Mary Quarterly* July 2005 <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/wm/62.3/mcdonald.html>> (November 20, 2005), pars 22–24.
49. SDOM 345, 8 fructidor, year 6. Their names were Joseph Clark, Conrad Simons, Joseph Lecky, and Oliver Carter; for John Hill from Fredericksburg Virginia, see SDOM 346, 6 brumaire, year 7. For Richard Servan of Norfolk see SDOM 347, 7 pluviôse, year 7; SDOM 346, 10 frimaire, year 7; SDOM 346, frimaire, year 7; SDOM 345, 19 fructidor, year 6; SDOM 344, 10 germinal, year 6; SDOM 345, 19 fructidor, year 6.

50. SDOM 353, 8 floréal, year 8; SDOM 35, June 13, 1794; SDOM 347, 2 pluviôse, year 7.
51. SDOM 341, July 5, 1785; SDOM 35, October 9, 1794; SDOM 108, May 5, 1790; SDOM 1541, 11 ventôse, year 10 [March 2, 1802]; SDOM 35, September 15, 1794; SDOM 352, 22 pluviôse, year 8.
52. SDOM 349, 5 floréal, year 7.
53. SDOM 353, 8 germinal, year 8; SDOM 1464, February 22, 1783; SDOM 342, November 24, 1791; see also SDOM 108, May 6, 1783; SDOM 344, 23 frimaire, year 6.
54. SDOM 35, April 21, 1794; SDOM 35, May 18, 1794; SDOM 345, 25 prairial, year 6; SDOM 348, 26 germinal, year 7.
55. SDOM 35, 19 pluviôse, year 3; SDOM 346, 14 frimaire, year 7; SDOM 344, 14 floréal, year 6; SDOM 344, 15 germinal, year 6; SDOM 346, 4 frimaire, year 7; SDOM 348, 3 ventôse, year 7; SDOM 348, 16 ventôse, year 7.
56. SDOM 348, 12 germinal, year 7; SDOM 349, 25 messidor, year 7; SDOM 352, 30 ventôse, year 8; SDOM 353, 8 germinal, year 8; SDOM 353, 10 germinal, year 8; SDOM 353, 21 germinal, year 8.
57. Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture* (1989), 269–72; SDOM 354, 9 messidor, year 8; SDOM 354, 10 messidor, year 8.
58. SDOM 1416, March 21, 1780.
59. SDOM 133, November 25, 1785.
60. SDOM 1416, October 23, 1780; SDOM 346, 11 frimaire, year 7. For Bineau's sister's marriage into the Casamajor family, see SDOM 352, 13 ventôse, year 8.
61. SDOM 342, June 27, 1792; SDOM 342, July 4, 1792; SDOM 342, September 15, 1792; SDOM 342, October 3, 1792; SDOM 342, December 15, 1792.
62. SDOM 344, 25 pluviôse, year 6; SDOM 345, 27 prairial, year 6; SDOM 352, 8 ventôse, year 8.
63. SDOM 345, 1 thermidor, year 6.
64. The 1795 inventory of the merchant Guillaume Gandillac listed several record books maintained by Cator in 1794 and 1795. SDOM 36, 8 ventôse, year 3; SDOM 35, April 21, 1794, August 23, 1794 and September 1, 1794; SDOM 35, June 13, 1794 to 30 September, 1794.
65. SDOM 343, 27 fructidor, year 5; SDOM 55, April 20, 1788.
66. SDOM 349, 24 floréal, year 7; SDOM 350, 24 thermidor, year 7; SDOM 352, 6 frimaire, year 8 and 30 pluviôse, year 8; SDOM 355, 4 vendémiaire, year 10.
67. SDOM 343, 24 thermidor, year 5; SDOM 349, 9 floréal, year 7; SDOM 349, 11 prairial, year 7; SDOM 346, 10 brumaire, year 7; SDOM 355, 4 vendémiaire, year 10.
68. SDOM 36, 8 ventôse, year 3; Julien Raimond, *Correspondance*, 54.
69. SDOM 342, August 28, 1792; SDOM 35, March 10, 1794; Pamphile de Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti* ed. Pierre Pluchon (Paris, 1819; Karthala, 1995), 153; Raimond, "Mémoire sur les causes," (1793) 40, 47, 54; M. Oriol, *Histoire et dictionnaire de la révolution*, 166; Marcel Dorigny and Bernard Gainot, *La Société des Amis des Noirs 1788–1799* (Paris: UNESCO, 1998a), Dorigny, (1998), 333, cites Auguste Kuscinski,

- Dictionnaire des conventionnels* (Société de l'Histoire de la Révolution française, 1917).
70. Raimond, *Rapport de Julien Raimond commissaire* (1797), 6; SDOM 36, 4 messidor, year 4; SDOM 354, 19 nivôse, year 9.
 71. Julien Raimond, *Correspondance de Julien Raimond avec ses frères*, (Paris: Imprimerie du Cercle Social, An 2, 1793), 89.
 72. SDOM 35, 2 nivôse, year 3; SDOM 35, 4 pluviôse, year 3.
 73. Stein, *Sonthonax* (1985), 153; SDOM 343, 3 germinal, year 5; SDOM 343, 4 germinal, year 5; SDOM 36, 8 germinal, year 5; CAOM 5 SUPSDOM5; SDOM 344, 17 germinal, year 6; SDOM 347, 30 nivôse, year 7.
 74. AN DXXV 41 dossier 404; SDOM 343, 14 thermidor, year 5 [1797]; SDOM 346, 21 brumaire, year 7.
 75. Escalle and Gouyon Guillaume, *Francs-maçons* 3, 110, 113, 124, 128; Alain LeBihan, "La franc-maçonnerie dans les colonies françaises du xviii siècle," *Annales historiques de la révolution française* 46 (1974), 44, 46.
 76. Escalle and Guillaume, *Francs-maçons*, 124, 165; Jacques de Cauna, "Quelques aperçus sur l'histoire de la franc-maçonnerie en Haïti," *Revue de la société haïtienne d'histoire et de géographie* 52, 189–190 (September–December 1996), 30; Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana, 1718–1868* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1997), 154.
 77. LeBihan, "La franc-maçonnerie dans les colonies françaises," 47; Cauna, "Quelques aperçus," 27. Grégoire cited in Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism*, 154–55.
 78. Mimi Sheller, "Sword-Bearing Citizens: Militarism and Manhood in Nineteenth-Century Haiti," *Plantation Society in the Americas* 4, 2–3 (Fall, 1997), 252–54; Cauna, "Quelques aperçus," 30.
 79. Bernard Andrès, "Les manuscrits d'un Albigeois: de la signature maçonnique dans les pétitions québécoises de Pierre de Sales Laterrière (1778–1782)," in Jacinthe Martel et Robert Melançon, eds. *Inventaire, -lecture, invention. Mélanges de critique et d'histoire littéraires offerts à Bernard Beugnot* (Montréal: Université de Montréal, 1999), 123–24.
 80. Edrick Richemond, "Toussaint Louverture: The creation of an icon and a question about his signature," http://www.kwabs.com/toussaint_signature.html (July 13, 2005). This masonic signature can be seen in Toussaint's approval of a plantation sale in 1801. SDOM 355, 4 vendémiaire, year 10.
 81. Janet M. Burke and Margaret C. Jacob, "French Freemasonry, Women, and Feminist Scholarship," *The Journal of Modern History* 68, 3 (September 1996), 527, 536.
 82. SDOM 1464, October 15, 1783; SDOM 1465, December 10, 1785; SDOM 1464, September 9, 1783; SDOM 1428, January 14, 1789; SDOM 345, 30 prairial, year 6; SDOM 342, September 2, 1791.
 83. AN Dxxv 28, Dossier 288 for notary Billard's departure; AN Dxxv 41 dossier 404 for appointment of Dunoizé to the post of notary in Fond des Nègres in October 1793; SDOM 35, March 2, 1794; SDOM 35, September 9, 1793; SDOM 35, February 5, 1794. SDOM 36, 17 pluviôse, year 5.

84. CAOM 5 SUPSDOM5; SDOM 352, 18 nivôse, year 8; SDOM 355, 8 messidor, year 9. For his masonic signature, see SDOM 1541, 22 germinal, year 10. In 1803, the French executed Jousseume for failing to lead Aquin's militia against the anti-imperial forces who had captured Saint Louis. Fick, *Making of Haiti*, 219–220.
85. SDOM 354, 5 messidor, year 8, and 10 messidor, year 8.
86. Also SDOM 352, 26 nivôse, year 8; SDOM 354, 29 nivôse, year 9; SDOM 348, 22 ventôse, year 7 [March 2, 1799]; SDOM 355, 21 fructidor, year 9.
87. SDOM 1541, 6 prairial, year 10; SDOM 343, 7 fructidor, year 5; for N. Henry in 1783, see SDOM 1418, 2 January 1783; SDOM 36, 13 nivôse, year 5.
88. Louis Gallois came from Grand-Goâve to ask Aquin's Pierre Bonnefils to collect debts for him in Baltimore; SDOM 348, 12 germinal, year 7; André Icard, from Nippes, did the same in SDOM 348, 27 germinal, year 7; SDOM 346, 21 brumaire, year 7; SDOM 346, 5 frimaire, year 7; SDOM 351, 12 brumaire, year 8; SDOM 35, August 30, 1794; SDOM 35, August 21, 1794; SDOM 351, 28 vendémiaire, year 8.
89. SDOM 351, 14 brumaire, year 8; SDOM 344, 25 pluviôse, year 6; SDOM 344, 29 pluviôse, year 6; SDOM 344, 22 nivôse, year 6; SDOM 348, 28 germinal, year 7; SDOM 346, 23 frimaire, year 7; SDOM 347, 15 pluviôse, year 7; SDOM 354, 9 messidor, year 8; SDOM 349, 21 floréal, year 7.
90. Cauna, "Quelques aperçus," 22; SDOM 1464, September 28, 1780.
91. Escalle, *Francs-maçons*, 128, 394.
92. *Ibid.*, 120, 132–33.
93. SDOM 342, August 13, 1791; SDOM 36, 18 pluviôse, year 4.
94. SDOM 343, 10 prairial, year 5; SDOM 354, 11 nivôse, year 9 and 11 pluviôse, year 9; SDOM 351, 15 brumaire, year 8; SDOM 355, 27 prairial, year 9.
95. SDOM 348, 28 ventôse, year 7; SDOM 352, 3 frimaire, year 8. The notary Cartier noted documents by a Chabrier when Joseph Montbrun retook possession of his plantation and the 1798 census listed a "Chabuin" as the manager of the 72-worker Montbrun plantation; SDOM 344, 20 ventôse, year 6.
96. SDM 1416, February 19, 1781; SDOM 1465, January 10, 1785 and July 7, 1785.
97. SDOM 348, 28 ventôse, year 7.
98. SDOM 353, 26 germinal, year 8; SDOM 349, 22 prairial, year 7; SDOM 345, 7 fructidor, year 6.
99. SDOM 355, 26 messidor, year 9; SDOM 342, December 15, 1792.
100. SDOM 342, December 18, 1792.
101. SDOM 342, October 3, 1792.
102. SDOM 1514, 7 thermidor, year 10.
103. All of the following discussion is based on the 1798 census data in CAOM 5 SUPSDOM 5.
104. SDOM 351, 9 vendémiaire, year 8, and 13 vendémiaire, year 8.
105. SDOM 1423, February 16, 1786; SDOM 353, 16 germinal, year 8.
106. SDOM 349, 10 prairial, year 7; SDOM 108, November 17, 1785; P. B. F. Laborde, *Lettre à M. J. P. Brissot de Warville* (Paris:1792), 9–10,

named “Malbranches” among the leading men of color in the early revolution in Aquin

107. SDOM 343, 15 vendémiaire, year 6; SDOM 353, 16 germinal, year 8.

EPILOGUE

1. Pluchon, *Toussaint* (1989), 265–273; Pamphile de Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti (Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Révolution de Saint-Domingue)*, ed. Pierre Pluchon (Paris: 1819; Karthala, 1995), 228–30; Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 205.
2. Yves Benot, *La Démence coloniale sous Napoléon* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1992), 68, 184–189; Claude B. Auguste and Marcel B. Auguste, *L'Expédition Leclerc, 1801–1803* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie Henri Deschamps, 1985), 22–26.
3. Madiou *Histoire*, 2: 193–201.
4. Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 21.
5. University of Florida, Rochambeau papers, no. 2194; Auguste and Auguste, *L'Expédition Leclerc*, 7; Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 22; Pamphile de Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti*, 259. Lacroix did not believe the charges and maintained that Toussaint had developed the idea of autonomy before Raimond's arrival.
6. Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 35; Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture* (1989), 413.
7. Benot *La Démence coloniale*, 24, 27.
8. Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 57–59; Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, 5:4, 8–9; Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 193–94, cites Baudry des Lozières, *Les Égaréments du négrophilism*.
9. Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 40, 72–74, 75; Laurent Dubois, “A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004), 358–62, 393, 404.
10. Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 25–27, 58; Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, 5: 27, 28.
11. Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti*, 342, 348–50.
12. Auguste and Auguste, *L'Expédition Leclerc*, 183–186; Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti*, 360, 362, 368; Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 78, 81; Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, 5: 63.
13. Auguste and Auguste, *L'Expédition Leclerc*, 204; Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti*, 360, 367, 368; Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 82; Ardouin, *Etudes*, 61.
14. Auguste and Auguste, *L'Expédition Leclerc*, 227, 237, 236–238.
15. David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, 33; Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti*, 369, 372, 377; Auguste and Auguste, *L'Expédition Leclerc*, 247–48.
16. Benot, *La Démence coloniale*, 83, 85, 88; Auguste and Auguste, *L'Expédition Leclerc*, 267. For Rochambeau's taunting of mulatto women in Port-au-Prince and stated preference for black allies, see Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti*, 347; Auguste and Auguste, *L'Expédition Leclerc*, 273.
17. University of Florida, Rochambeau papers, no. 1331.

18. Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 23; Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, 5: 77, 83.
19. Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, 5:79–80; Lacroix, *La Révolution de Haïti*, 277–80; Auguste and Auguste, *L'Expédition Leclerc*, 287; Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, 3:108–25.
20. David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, 36; Madiou, *Histoire*, 3:144–145.
21. Pierre Buteau, “Preface” to Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince: Editions Antilles, 1991), 6.
22. AN Dxxv 111 dr 880 piece 3 SDOM 1432, January 17, 1791; SDOM 1596, March 20, 1780.
23. AN Col. F³ 182, d'Argout to Rohan, 4 February, 1769; AN Dxxv 110, “Correspondance de Raimond.”
24. Raimond, *Correspondance*, 89.
25. Gainot, “Introduction,” *La Société des Amis des Noirs 1788–1799* (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), 311–13, 317–18, 333.
26. SDOM 350, 13 fructidor, year 7; Michel Acacia, “Preface” in Louis Boisrond-Tonnerre, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince: Editions Antilles, 1991).
27. David P. Geggus, “The Naming of Haiti,” *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 71, 1&2 (1997), 54.
28. Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, 400.
29. Madiou, *Histoire*, 3:146–50.
30. On the creation of the Haitian flag by Dessalines, see Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, 5: 83; on the June 1793 appearance at the Paris Jacobin club of an ex-slave from Saint-Domingue carrying a tricolor flag whose bands each bore the image of a different colored man, under the motto “notre union fera notre force,” see Florence Gauthier, “La révolution française et le problème coloniale: le ‘cas Robespierre,’” *Annales historiques de la révolution française* 288 (avril–juin 1992), 179–80. On the creation of a similar flag in Guadeloupe in Laurent Dubois, “*A Colony of Citizens*, 400.
31. “Madiou, *Histoire*, 3: 546–53.”
32. “Grégoire, *Lettre aux citoyens de couleur et nègres libres* (1791), 7.

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