

# Haiti's Independence

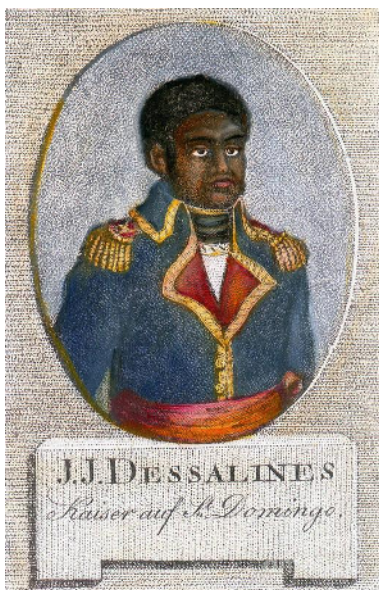
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A lot of people do not know about Haiti's Independence.

According to [www.Migrationpolicy.org](http://www.Migrationpolicy.org), in 2018 there were 687,000 Haitian immigrants in the United States; many of whom probably do not know about the revolution of Haiti's independence. I am Haitian and I want to tell you about Haiti's independence.

Haiti is a country in the Caribbean Sea that occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola. It is bordered by the Dominican Republic in the East, and it shares maritime borders with the Bahamas, Colombia, Cuba, and Jamaica.

J. J. Dessalines was brought to the French west Indian colony of Saint-Domingue (Haiti) as a slave. He worked as a field hand for a black master until 1791, when he joined the slave rebellion that broke out in the colony amid the turmoil caused by the French Revolution.



In the decade that followed, he distinguished himself as a lieutenant of the black leader Toussaint Louverture, who established himself as governor-general of Saint-Domingue with nominal allegiance to Revolutionary France.

When Toussaint was deposed in 1802 by a French expedition sent by Napoleon Bonaparte to reconquer the colony, Dessalines at first submitted to the new regime. In 1803, however, when Napoleon declared his intention to reintroduce slavery (which had been abolished by the French National Convention in 1794), Dessalines and other black and mulatto (of mixed European and African descent) leaders rose in rebellion.

They expelled the French from Saint-Domingue, and on January 1, 1804, Dessalines, as governor-general, proclaimed the entire island.

Haiti became the first country to permanently abolish slavery. Initially regarded as governor-general, Dessalines was later named Emperor of Haiti as Jacques I (1804–1806) by generals of the Haitian Revolution Army and ruled in that capacity.

While Toussaint's regime had a policy of using forced labor on plantations to prevent reversion to a purely subsistence economy, Dessalines continued this policy.

In a series of actions meant to prevent any renewal of white dominance over the blacks, who formed more than 80 percent of the population, he confiscated land owned by white people, made it illegal for them to own property, and, perhaps fearing them as potential subversives in the event of another French invasion, launched a campaign of extermination against the country's white inhabitants in which thousands were killed.

Resistance to Dessalines and his autocratic rule grew among the mulatto elites. Dessalines was named one of the founding fathers of Haiti.

He was finally killed trying to put down a revolt under the mulatto leader Alexandre Sabès Pétion, after which Pétion and the black leader Henry Christophe divided Haiti between themselves.



On this day in 1804 Haiti won its independence after the largest slave uprising since Spartacus, founding the first black republic and abolishing slavery. (image by Patrick Noze)

