

Act of Independence

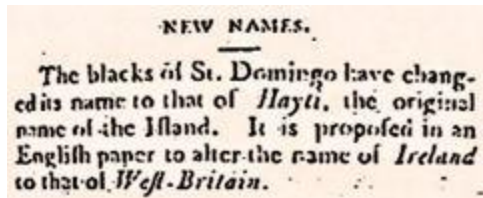
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Portrait of Jean-Jacques Dessalines.



Portrait of François Capois "La Mort".



Newspaper announcing the name change of Saint-Domingue.

The Haitian **Act of Independence** (French: *Acte de l'Indépendance*), declaring former Saint-Domingue independent from France, was drafted by Boisrond Tonnerre and read by Jean-Jacques Dessalines on the Place d'Armes of Gonaïves on January 1, 1804. This marks the beginning of independence for Haiti.

Actually, the first declaration of independence was read in Fort-Dauphin on November 29, 1803; it was signed by Dessalines, Christophe and Clerveaux and drafted by B. Aime. Of note, all of the "chiefs of Saint-Domingue" who signed the first ringing declaration at Fort-Dauphin had been generals of Leclerc 14 months before. Also of note it spoke of St. Domingue while the name was changed to Haiti in the one that was proclaimed in Gonaïves.

LIBERTY OR DEATH

Gonaïves, January 1, 1804

Year I of Independence'

Today, January 1, 1804, the General in Chief of the Indigenous Army, accompanied by generals and army chiefs convoked in order to take measures tending to the happiness of the country:

After having made known to the assembled generals his true intention of forever ensuring to the natives of Haiti a stable government — the object of his greatest solicitude, which he did in a speech that made known to foreign powers the resolution to render the country independent, and to enjoy the liberty consecrated by the blood of the people of this island; and, after having gathered their opinions, asked each of the assembled generals to pronounce a vow to forever renounce France; to die rather than to live under its domination; and to fight for independence with their last breath.

The generals, imbued with these sacred principles, after having with one voice given their

adherence to the well manifested project of independence, have all sworn before eternity and before the entire universe to forever renounce France and to die rather than live under its domination.

Signed:

Dessalines

General-in-Chief

Christophe, Pétion, Clerveaux, Vernet, Gabart

Major Generals

P.Romain, G. Gérin, F. Capois, Jean-Louis François, Férou, Cangé, G. Bazelais, Magloire Ambroise, J.J.

Herne, Toussaint Brave, Yayou

Brigadier generals

Bonet, F. Paplier, Morelly, Chevalier, Marion

Adjutants-general

Magny, Roux

Brigade Chiefs

Chaperon, B. Goret, Macajoux, Dupuy, Carbonne, Diaquoi aîné, Raphaël, Malet, Derenoncourt

Army officers

Boisrond Tonnerre

Secretary

Source

Translation by Mitch Abidor marxists.org

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See also

- Act of Independence (French) - French text of the declaration of independence.
- French Capitulation in Saint-Domingue - Document from November 19, 1803.
- Haitian Constitution of 1805
- The Struggle for the Recognition of Haiti and Liberia as Independent Republics - 1917 article from *The Journal of Negro History* outlining some of the reasons behind the U.S. delay in recognizing Haiti.

External links

- Proclamación de la Independencia de Haití - Spanish translation of the Haitian Independence Declaration.
- YouTube: Black August 2004 by Mumia Abu Jamal (audio/video) - Read by Mr. Jamal, set to music track and images of war.
 - Black August 2004 by Mumia Abu Jamal (text version) - Mumia Abu Jamal comments on the Haitian Revolution culminating in the events of 1804(2004).

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