

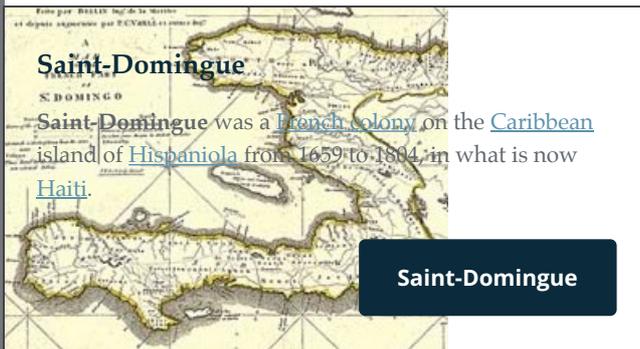
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BLACK SILHOUETTES OF FEMALE SLAVE OWNERS

Paris au temps de Daguerre, #2

This month's featured transmission is about black silhouettes of dark minds made in Paris in the 1820's, and is dedicated to Kara Walker.





French Slave Owners

In 1791, enslaved Africans and some [free people of color](#) of Saint-Domingue began waging a [rebellion against French authority](#). The rebels became reconciled to French rule following the abolition of slavery in the colony in 1793, although this alienated the island's dominant slave-holding class. France controlled the entirety of Hispaniola from 1795 to 1802, when a renewed rebellion began. The last French troops withdrew from the western portion of the island in late 1803, and the colony later declared its independence as [Haiti](#), its indigenous name, the following year.

Settlers from St.-Domingue

Document provisoire

F/12 – Secours aux réfugiés et colons spoliés, A - K

ARCHIVES NATIONALES

Secours aux réfugiés et colons spoliés

xix^e siècle

Sous-série F/12 (Commerce et industrie)

articles F/12/2740-2883 et F/12/7627-7632/1

Attention, cet instrument de recherche est en cours :
il porte actuellement [juin 2012]
sur les articles F/12/2740-2870 et F/12/7627-7632/1

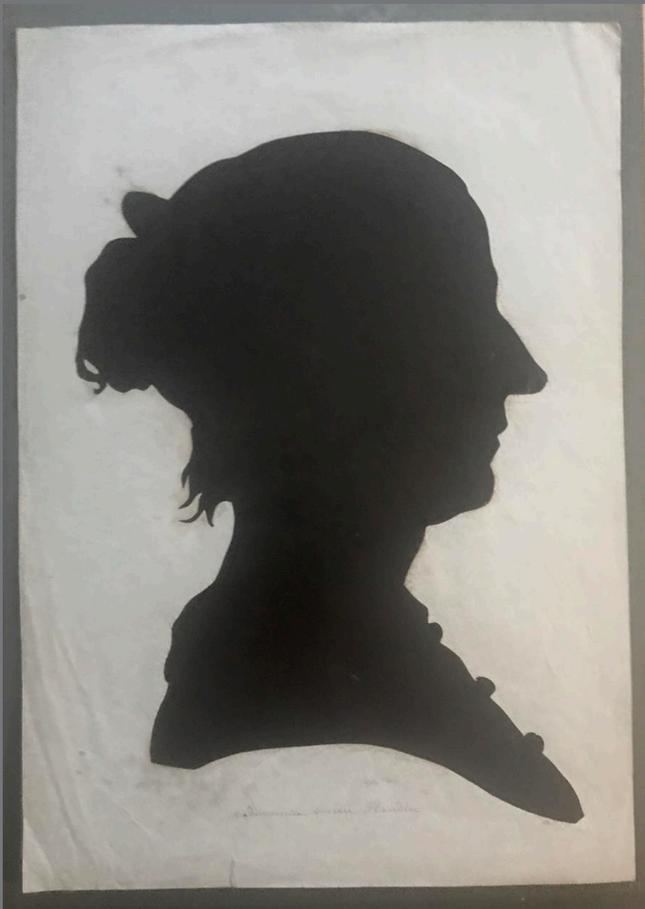
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Répertoire-index établi par
Christiane Demeulenaere-Douyère,
conservateur général du patrimoine

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Claims from Slave Owners

Between 1826 and 1833, following the French King's *Ordinance on the implementation of the Act of 30 April-13 May 1826 on the distribution of compensation for former settlers of St.-Domingue*, a Royal Commission verified more than 27,000 claims from St.-Domingue owners and their beneficiaries, ultimately retaining 12,000 files. Between 1828 and 1834, the commission published the results of its work in six large volumes.





Black Silhouettes of Three Former Slaves

BLACK SILHOUETTES OF THREE FORMER SLAVES

Owners:

Alice Genet, Amélie Flandin and Lucie Barras

Paris, circa 1830 (Instruction of the indemnisation, 1826-1833)

*Three cut-out silhouettes, 40x25 cm, on original paper mounts, sheets, about 50x40 cm, with names in ink or pencil (followed by a digital image of the left panel of Kara Walker's triptych *Resurrection Story with Patrons*, courtesy Hamilton College)*

In 1791, enslaved Africans and some [free people of color](#) of Saint-Domingue began waging a [rebellion against French authority](#). The rebels became reconciled to French rule following the abolition of slavery in the colony in 1793, although this alienated the island's dominant slave-holding class. France controlled the entirety of Hispaniola from 1795 to 1802, when a renewed rebellion began. The last French troops withdrew from the western portion of the island in late 1803, and the colony later declared its independence as [Haiti](#), its indigenous name, the following year.

Prior to the [Seven Years' War](#) (1756–1763), the economy of Saint-Domingue gradually expanded, with sugar and, later, coffee becoming important export crops. After the war, which disrupted maritime commerce, the colony underwent rapid expansion. In 1767, it exported 72 million pounds of [raw sugar](#) and 51 million pounds of [refined sugar](#), one million pounds of [indigo](#), and two million pounds of cotton.^[11] Saint-Domingue became known as the "Pearl of the [Antilles](#)" — one of the richest colonies in the world in the 18th-century [French empire](#). It was the greatest jewel in imperial France's mercantile crown. By the 1780s, Saint-Domingue produced about 40 percent of all the sugar and 60 percent of all the coffee consumed in Europe. This single colony, roughly the size of [Hawaii](#) or [Belgium](#), produced more sugar and coffee than all of the [British West Indies](#) colonies combined, generating enormous revenue for the French government and enhancing its power.

The labor for these plantations was provided by an estimated 790,000 African slaves, accounting in 1783–1791 for a third of the entire Atlantic [slave trade](#). Between 1764 and 1771, the average annual importation of slaves varied between 10,000 and 15,000; by 1786 it was about 28,000, and from 1787 onward, the colony received more than 40,000 slaves a year. However, the inability to maintain slave numbers without constant resupply from Africa meant the slave population in 1789 totalled to 500,000, ruled over by a white population that numbered only 32,000.^[11] At all times, a majority of slaves in the colony were African-born, as the brutal conditions of slavery and [tropical diseases](#) such as [yellow fever](#) prevented the

population from experiencing growth through natural increase [1]. African culture thus remained strong among slaves to the end of French rule. The folk religion of [Vodou commingled](#) Catholic liturgy and ritual with the beliefs and practices of the [Vodun](#) religion of [Guinea](#), [Congo](#) and [Dahomey](#). [12] Slave traders scoured the Atlantic coast of Africa, and the slaves who arrived came from hundreds of different tribes, their languages often mutually incomprehensible.

Saint-Domingue had the largest and wealthiest [free population of color](#) in the [Caribbean](#); they were known as the *gens de couleur*. The royal census of 1789 counted roughly 25,000 such persons. While many [free population of color](#) were former slaves, most members of this class were [mulattoes](#), of mixed French/European and African ancestry. Typically, they were the descendants of the enslaved women and French colonists. As in New Orleans, a system of *placage* developed, in which white men had a kind of common-law marriage with slave or free mistresses, and provided for them with a dowry, sometimes freedom, and often education or apprenticeships for their [mixed-race](#) children. Some such descendants of planters inherited considerable property. As their numbers grew, they were made subject to discriminatory colonial legislation. Statutes forbade *gens de couleur* from taking up certain professions, marrying whites, wearing European clothing, carrying swords or firearms in public, or attending social functions where whites were present

After the defeat of the French army, wealthy white owners saw the opportunity to preserve their political power and plantations. They attacked the town halls that had representatives of the defeated French authority. Elite planters took control of the former Spanish side of the island, asking Spain for a Spanish government and protection by the Spanish army. Later these planters created trade regulations that would further preserve their own wealth and power.

Between 1826 and 1833, following the King's Ordinance on the implementation of the Act of 30 April-13 May 1826 on the distribution of compensation for former settlers of Santo Domingo[archive], a Royal Commission verified more than 27,000 claims from Santo Domingo owners and their beneficiaries, ultimately retaining 12,000 files. Between 1828 and 1834, the commission published the results of its work in six large volumes. This is the famous detailed statement of the liquidations carried out by the Commission responsible for distributing the compensation awarded to the former settlers of Santo Domingo, in accordance with the law of 30 April 1826. An important source of genealogy, social and economic history of Santo Domingo, the detailed state includes data on about 7,900 former homeowners and 1,500 other buildings. The document provides as follows:

the surnames and forenames of the owner(s);

the surnames and forenames of the heirs/beneficiaries of the former owner(s);

the name, parish and exact location of the dwelling;

the type of activity (sugar factory, cafeteria, indigotry, cottage industry, etc.)

the amount of compensation awarded.



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