



Photo: Paul Jeffrey

Haiti Timeline

Pre-Columbian Era

The island (named La Isla Española by Columbus, now called Hispaniola) is inhabited by Arawak/Taino people. Their numbers are estimated as between 100,000 and a million or more. Five *caciques* (chiefs) hold different regions of the

1577

Spain begins to import slaves from Africa to Hispaniola.

1640

France sends Governor Levasseur to claim the island for France. Four years later, sugar cane from Java is introduced.

1789

St. Domingue (Haiti) is "the pearl of the Antilles," the most prosperous colony of France. It supplies Europe with sugar, coffee, cotton, and spice. In France, the French Revolution begins.

1817

Pétion invites Methodists from the United States to begin work in Haiti. The Haitian government works with the Methodists to establish churches, colleges, schools, and clinics. Nouveau College Bird School is established in 1817. L'Eglise Méthodiste de Haiti (EMH, the Methodist Church in Haiti) is the first Protestant denomination established on the island.



Alexandra Petion



Photo: Paul Jeffrey.

1956

François ("Papa Doc") Duvalier seizes power in a military coup and is elected president in 1957. In 1964, he declares himself president for life and rules as a dictator, aided by secret police called Tonton Macoutes (bogeymen).

2010

On Jan. 12, Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, and much of the country is destroyed by a major earthquake that kills 100,000 Haitians. The General Board of Global Ministries loses two executives, the Rev. Sam Dixon and the Rev. Clint Rabb, found under the rubble of the Hotel Montana. Jim Gulley, a former missionary and continuing consultant for UMCOR, is rescued after 3 days.

The MCCA celebrates the 250th anniversary of Methodism in the Caribbean.



Photo: Courtesy MCCA.

Pre-Columbian Era

Today

1492

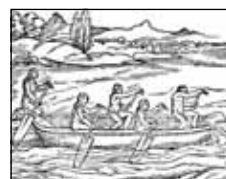
Christopher Columbus sails westward from Spain, seeking a shorter sea route to the East Indies. After he visits the Bahamas and Cuba, his flagship, the Santa María, wrecks on reefs on Hispaniola's north coast, near Cap Haïtien, on Christmas Day.

1503

Nicolás de Ovando, Hispaniola's Spanish governor, massacres the island's native queen and many of her subjects. The remaining Arawak/Taino islanders suffer from forced labor, deprivation, and disease.

1592

After 100 years, fewer than 200 indigenous Arawak/Taino people are left.



1760

Nathaniel Gilbert plants the first Methodist community in the Caribbean on the Island of Antigua.



Portrait by: Nicolas Eustache Maurin (1838).

1793

Toussaint L'Ouverture, a former slave, leads a Haitian revolution, defeating British, Spanish, and French troops and freeing St. Domingue's slaves. He oversees the country's initial attempts at political and social reform, striving for a race-blind, independent country of equals.



"Battle on Santo Domingo" Painting by: January Suchodolski (1804).

1802

Napoléon Bonaparte sends General Victor Leclerc and 20,000 troops to reclaim Haiti and reinstitute slavery. Leclerc advocates killing all slaves over age 12 to pacify Haiti. He needs 40,000 reinforcements to finally defeat Toussaint, who dies in 1803, imprisoned in France.



1915

The United States invades Haiti to restore order after black/mulatto friction and unrest. It withdraws troops in 1934 but maintains fiscal control until 1947.

1806

Dessalines is assassinated and Haiti is split in two: the northern half under Henri Christophe; the southern half under Alexandre Pétion.



General Jean Jacques Dessalines (circa 1802).

1804

Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who had betrayed Toussaint, joins forces with Alexandre Pétion to defeat the French. He declares Haiti's independence and is its first president.

1971

Duvalier dies and is succeeded by his 19-year-old son, Jean-Claude ("Baby Doc") Duvalier. He also declares himself president for life but flees Haiti in 1986 following a rebellion.

1990

Jean-Bertrand Aristède, a former priest, becomes Haiti's first democratically elected president. In 1991 he is ousted in a military coup.



Hurricane Hanna.

2008

Haiti is hit by four hurricanes: Fay, Gustav, Hanna, and Ike.

1994

The United States forces the military regime to reinstate President Aristède.

1995

René Prével is elected president.

1998

Hurricane Georges destroys 80 percent of Haiti's crops.



Map Illustration: Jacques Nicolas Bellin (1754)

1493

JAN. After 40 crew members build a fort, La Navidad, with wood from the shipwreck, Columbus leaves them there to look for gold. He and the others sail back to Spain in the Niña and Pinta. **SEPT.** Columbus returns with 17 ships and 1,000 men, finding the fort destroyed and the 40 men dead. He founds Isabela, the first Spanish colony in the New World.