

MARRONAGE IN SAINT DOMINGUE:
APPROACHING THE REVOLUTION, 1770-1791

By

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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Marronage and its supposed impact on the Haitian Revolution has created much controversy among historians. In general, the main terms of the debate regard the extent of marronage, the reason for it, the fugitive slave's relationship with colonial society, and ultimately the connections (if any) between this phenomenon and the Haitian Revolution. The underlying purpose of this work is to revisit this debate regarding marronage and the slave insurrection that eventually led to the Haitian Revolution. However, this work also seeks to delineate the general contours of Saint Domingue's maroon population, and more generally the slave population as a whole during the two decades prior to the Haitian Revolution. This work attempts to shed light on the causes, the typology, the dimensions, the composition, and the evolution of marronage in Saint Domingue. A more balanced assessment of this phenomenon will be presented in effort to explore marronage independent from the Haitian Revolution.

The evidence attests to the dynamic and varied composition of the Haitian maroons during the two decades leading up to the Haitian Revolution. Many factors influenced the composition of the maroon population, the buying habits of planters, the type of crop worked, and the geographic location of plantations all helped determine where enslaved Africans ended up once they reached the shores of Saint Domingue. These factors also dictated where and when

slaves could and would attempt running away. The differences in not only marronage but also the plantation complex and between Africans and *créoles* are evident. Language skills, skin color, time in the colony, occupational training, and knowledge of the outside world were all important factors in determining success in marronage. In the end, this quantitative study explores the ethnic and gender composition of an influential sector of pre-revolutionary Saint Domingue society. While it is rather difficult to disassociate marronage in Saint Domingue from the Haitian Revolution, studying marronage independent of the Haitian Revolution will allow scholars to more fully appreciate this phenomenon's collective impact on colonial society in the decades prior to the revolution in Saint Domingue.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: RECOVERING THE FUGITIVE HISTORY OF MARRONAGE IN
SAINT DOMINGUE

During the eighteenth century, *marronage* (the act of becoming a fugitive) was a conspicuous and regular feature of the slave plantation system in the French Caribbean, as it was in many other American slave societies. The practice of running away is as old as slavery itself and the phenomenon existed before and persisted after the temporal framework of this discussion. Slaves of all sorts practiced marronage: young and old, male and female; newly arrived as well as “seasoned” Africans; *créoles*, and Indians; *mulâtres*, *griffes*, and *quarterons*; fieldworkers, artisans, and domestics; the well nourished and the hungry, the weak as well as the strong; those with cruel masters, and those with good ones.¹ The hard conditions of their lives, a master’s cruelty, an abusive manager or driver, injustices they refused to accept, or other incidental causes all pushed slaves, in the view of some historians, toward their decision to run away. Others historians suggest an innate desire for liberty may have been the leading cause of marronage and maroon activity.²

The special case of Saint Domingue sheds light on the causes, the typology, and the evolution of marronage and on the complexity of the relationship between marronage and the Haitian Revolution. The lived reality of marronage may be further revealed by uncovering the dynamics of this relationship.³ A long-standing debate exists between those scholars who explain marronage as the expression of a freedom impulse in the enslaved individual and those

¹ *Mulâtre*, *Griffe*, and *Quarteroon* are French terminology which describes varying degrees of African parentage. *Mulâtre* or mulatto refers to a person with one black and one white parent. *Griffe* refers to a person with one mulatto and one black parent. *Quarteroon* was used to describe a person who had one black grandparent and three Caucasian grandparents. These racial distinctions reflect the highly stratified nature of French colonial society.

² A distinction needs to be made between marronage and maroon activity. In this study, marronage refers to the act of becoming a fugitive both short and long term. Maroon activity denotes the actions of organized maroon bands such as attacking plantations, provision grounds, and city suburbs among other subversive actions against the established plantation system.

³ Leslie, F. Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts and Revolution in Saint Domingue-Haiti,” in *Annals New York Academy of Sciences*, 292, (June 1977): 426.

who depict marronage as a tool for negotiating small concessions to improve the daily life of the slave. However, it is likely that the conditions and causes of marronage changed over time, along with the colonial class structure and occupational hierarchy, and that the variety of individuals choosing marronage reflected this evolution, although historians have tended to ignore this.⁴

Nevertheless, historians often divide marronage into two categories, *petit* and *grand* marronage. *Petit* marronage refers to short-term absences, when maroons traveled to visit friends or family, went off to market or other gatherings without permission, or hid on the fringes of their plantation or in the hut of another slave nearby to avoid punishment or to satisfy other personal agendas. It may be suggested that a sizable proportion of slaves practiced this type of absenteeism at various moments during the colonial period especially during, but not limited to, holidays, market-days, and weekends. This form of absenteeism could have also been a result of the temperament of the slave, the nature of work assigned, or the conditions of that work.⁵ Historians view this practice as a necessary part of the colonial slave system. In fact, it is likely that contemporary colonial planters also accepted this behavior as a condition of the slave systems that they managed.

Because *petit* marronage often posed little if any overt threat to the plantation society or economy, it can best be described as a “safety-valve” within the slave system. However, more recently historians, Carolyn Fick and Robin Blackburn, have attempted to highlight the

⁴ Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts,” 426-27.

⁵ Gabriel Debien, “Marronage in the French Caribbean” in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, ed. Richard Price Third edition ,(Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 111.

organizational opportunities presented by this type of “absenteeism” for creating larger moments of resistance, such as the slave revolt on the Plaine du Nord in 1791.⁶

Contrary to *petit* marronage which was temporary flight, enslaved individuals practicing *grand* marronage intended to remove themselves from bondage permanently. Slaves who chose to flee and/or bear the hardships of marronage usually did so alone, and less often in small groups. However, a select number of slaves either created or joined larger maroon communities that dotted the landscape of the colonial frontier. Many details regarding the composition and activity of maroon communities in Saint Domingue remain elusive, despite a number of sources that address these autonomous communities.⁷

Throughout the Caribbean, maroons engaged in illicit activities with the broader colonial society. These activities included trading with both black and white sectors of colonial society; raiding plantations and local provision grounds and/or stealing animals and other implements essential for surviving on the frontiers of Saint Domingue. A small number of militant groups achieved official standing within the greater Caribbean by making treaties with colonial officials. Official recognition was usually granted in exchange for the maroons’ service in capturing other would-be maroons. It is uncertain how colonial society, white, black, free or enslaved, viewed trade relationships and interactions with fugitive slaves, but this paper will attempt to elucidate details of these relationships. Moreover, while this study will chiefly employ data regarding captured fugitives—those who failed in their attempt at flight—it will also speak to the plight of “successful fugitives” as well.

⁶ Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Revolution from Below*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990); Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Society: 1776-1848*, (London: Verso, 1988).

⁷ Much of the historiography rests upon a substantial number of administrative reports concerning maroon activity and official colonial counteraction. The “Haitian School” has utilized these sources to highlight certain “revolutionary” elements of marronage.

Where and when success *en marronage* emerged differed throughout American slave societies. Maroons could seek refuge in groups or solitude, in frontier enclaves or through urban assimilation, by utilizing illicit trade networks or participating in minor pilferage or by employing guerrilla warfare. Ultimately, *grand* marronage may or may not have posed an overt threat to the economies and mechanics of the plantation system but it has most certainly attracted more attention than *petit* marronage from both contemporaries and historians.

A relative lack of source material makes recovering the fugitive history of marronage in Saint Domingue a difficult task; however, the Saint Domingue press provides extremely rich and diverse documentation of the history of the most important Caribbean colony of the early modern period.⁸ Newspapers offer a wealth of information for examining the daily life of people in Saint Domingue during this period. The newspapers' abundant and varied references touch upon every aspect of colonial affairs: the theatre, literary and scientific life, the wealth of landed estates, the flow of merchandise and commodities, and slave ship arrivals. Politics, legislation, educations, meteorological observations, important commercial and population statistics, arrivals and departures of colonists, rumors from around the Atlantic World, food recreations, the progress of plantations and manufactures—all find coverage in the press.⁹

The newspapers are of particular importance to this study of Saint Domingue slave society and the phenomenon of marronage. Prior to the first newspaper's appearance in 1766,

⁸ Surprisingly, Jean Foucharard is among few historians to utilize the data available from this contemporary source thus far. Having been one of a few historians to seriously attempt to quantify (however, with suspect methodology) marronage and maroon activity in Saint Domingue, much of my work has been inspired by a need to be more methodical in approach. Gabriel Debien and David Geggus have also employed Saint Domingue's colonial newspapers in their assessments of marronage and maroon activity in the colony prior to the Haitian Revolution. See G. Debien, 'Les Marrons autour du Cap,' *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noir*, 27, série B (1965), 755-99; G. Debien and Jean Foucharard, 'Le Petit Marronage du Cap,' *Cahiers des Amériques Latines*, (1969); G. Debien, 'Les Esclaves Maroons à Saint-Domingue en 1764,' *Jamaican Historical Review*, 6 (1969); David Geggus, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution: Slave Runaways in Saint Domingue in the year 1790," in *Out of the House of Bondage: Runaways, Resistance and Marronage in Africa and the New World*, ed. Gad Heuman (London: Cass, 1986).

⁹ Jean Foucharard, *The Haitian Maroons: Liberty of Death*, translated for French by A. Faulkner Watts (New York : E.W. Blyden Press, 1981), 3.

colonists who were victims' of marronage, with a view of guaranteeing their rights, filed affidavits at the public registry, or less often, had their rights to the person of the fugitive notarized. However, when Monceaux, an attorney in Cap Français, produced the first *Gazette de Saint-Domingue*, on February 8, 1764, he issued an invitation for the submission of lists of incarcerated fugitive slaves. These announcements appeared so useful that the colonists on their own initiative also demanded of the *Gazette de Saint Domingue* the publication, beginning at the end of February 1764, of the first notices denouncing slaves *en marronage*, with their descriptions and all details pertinent to their capture.¹⁰ Posterity is surely grateful for the Royal Ordinance of 18 November 1767, which made it compulsory to publish both of these lists in *Les Affiches Américaines*, thus making a much more manageable search for the fugitive history of marronage in Saint Domingue.¹¹

The thereafter official, and until 1789 the only, newspaper of Saint Domingue, *Les Affiches Américaines*, offers unparalleled information on slave society in Saint Domingue through three types of sources, two of which are of utmost importance: advertisements for missing slaves, paid for by individual slave owners, and lists of fugitives captured and jailed in the colony's prisons. The latter category represents those who failed in their attempt at marronage.¹² At their best, the data are very detailed, providing the slave's name, information about his or her proprietor, place arrested, talents and trade, state of health, the wearing of jewelry, gait, bearing, dress, language skills, traces of punishments, wounds, descriptions of

¹⁰ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 8.

¹¹ Apparently, as Fouchard suggests, the independent name of the newspaper, *Le Gazette de Saint Domingue*, may have alarmed the metropolitan government; the name of the paper was subsequently changed to *Les Affiches Américaines*.

¹² The third category of data is lists of unclaimed captured slaves put up at auction in effort to alleviate the penal population pressure as well as a method for generating income. This data has been deliberately left out of this analysis because it represents obvious repetitions in the data sample. This methodology runs counter to Fouchard's, who included these adverts in his estimations of total slaves *en marronage*. This lapse in judgment led him to misrepresent (either deliberately or unintentionally,) the data by varying degrees.

brands, teeth, hair, and skin color, sex, ethnic identity, perceived personality traits, and other distinguishing physical characteristics.¹³

Other contemporary sources include plantation records and a vast quantity of administrative correspondence on which most of the historiography rests. Reports of militia commandants and colonists' writings to the colonial minister or governor help supplement these other sources and prove very useful in constructing a top-down view of Saint Domingue slave society. Such sources frequently present a highly subjective and skewed perspective of planters trying to 'manage' their 'troublesome human property,' and thus reflect the racial biases common to the era. Nevertheless, they do offer invaluable insights into colonial life necessary to support this analysis of marronage in Saint Domingue. These sources typically mention, address, and express fears and concerns about well-established maroon communities that posed 'recognizable' threats to the colonial regime.

In terms of methodology, quantitative analysis is central to this paper. The data and analysis present a complex demographic snapshot of Saint Domingue's fugitive slave population. This paper examines data drawn from *Les Affiches Américaines* and its supplement during the period 1770 to 1791.¹⁴ Published in Port-au-Prince the paper provides data for the Southern and Western Provinces of the colony. The *Supplément aux Affiches Américaines* was published in Cap Français (Le Cap) and provides data for the Northern Province. The purpose of this paper is to delineate the general contours of Saint Domingue's maroon population, and more generally the slave population as a whole during the two decades before the Haitian Revolution. *Les*

¹³ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 7; David Geggus, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution: Slave Runaway in Saint Domingue in the year 1790," in *Out of the House of Bondage: Runaways, Resistance and Marronage in Africa and the New World*, ed. Gad Heuman (London: Cass, 1986), 113-14.

¹⁴ This paper specifically examines publications from 1770, 1771, 1772, 1774, 1777, 1781, 1783, 1785, 1787, 1788, and 1791. The majority of these years were selected for their completeness. However, the data set from 1771 is incomplete.

Affiches Américaines sheds light on a number of aspects of marronage and slave society, including nutrition (using height and age data,) sex ratios and relations, linguistics, scarification, master/slave relations and differences between the experiences of Africans and *créoles*. More specifically, these data help to clarify the picture of ethnic, sexual, and regional variations among Saint Domingue's fugitive slave population. Quantitative analysis of the data available from *Les Affiches* will help to focus the still blurry picture of marronage in Saint Domingue.

This paper presents a series of tables that evaluate the data gathered from the newspaper. Critical commentary explains the tabulated figures and their potential to inform the present historiography of marronage in Saint Domingue. Of particular interest is the impact of marronage on the Haitian Revolution. Some historians, notably Jean Fouchard, argue that a growth of marronage provided the foundation for the slave revolt in 1791 by providing both a large number of potential revolutionaries and by helping to forge leaders capable of organizing an armed resistance effort. Although the identification of maroons among the insurgents of 1791 lies beyond the scope of this thesis, the question remains: was the fugitive slave population increasing faster than or in proportion to the total population? In the early 1770s the slave population was at least 200,000 and by the eve of the revolution in 1791 it had risen to nearly 500,000. The socio-economic and political conditions of pre-revolutionary Saint Domingue society were certainly complex, so this is not just a question of numbers. However, recognizing the rate of increase of the fugitive population in relation to the general population will help to untangle the complexities of the maroon population's effect on the impending revolution.

Marronage and its supposed impact on the Haitian Revolution has created much controversy among historians. In general, the main terms of the debate regard the extent of marronage, the reason for it, the fugitive slave's relationship with colonial society, and ultimately

the connections (if any) between this phenomenon and the Haitian Revolution.¹⁵ Scholarly opinion on marronage in Saint Domingue is distinctly divergent. Cautious scholars like Gabriel Debien and Yvan Debbasch deny any connection between marronage and revolutionary potential or action and thus represent one extreme side of the debate. Similarly, David Geggus describes marronage as primarily an alternative to rebellion, a safety-valve within the slave system that merely released tension by allowing indignant slaves to “rebel” without the structure to organize larger more coordinated movements. For Geggus, the absence of slave revolts in eighteenth-century Saint Domingue illustrates this argument.¹⁶

By contrast, Jean Fouchard and Edner Brutus contend that this type of unchecked behavior might have helped stimulate and perpetuate the greater, organized rebellion in Saint Domingue in 1791. More recently, Robin Blackburn and Carolyn Fick have suggested there was a revolutionary contribution of *petit* marronage in the organization of larger resistance movements.¹⁷ Nevertheless, before historians can reach a consensus about whether maroons in Saint Domingue were essentially apolitical or proto-revolutionary, it is critical that we first arrive at a sense of not only the historical context of marronage in Saint Domingue but also the contemporary dimensions and makeup of the maroon population that interacted with the larger colonial society. While this examination of marronage in Saint Domingue may inform this discussion of a potential impact on the Haitian Revolution, particularly on the slave revolt in the Plaine du Nord in August 1791, it will also force those who claim that marronage was directly related to the revolution to re-evaluate their positions and the evidence that supports it.

¹⁵ David Geggus, “Slave Resistance Studies and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt: Some Preliminary Considerations,” (Miami: Latin American and Caribbean Center, Florida International University, 1983), 4.

¹⁶ David Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 74.

¹⁷ Caroline Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990); Robin Blackburn, *Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848*, (London: Verso, 1988).

The remainder of this work is divided into specific sections that address particular elements of Saint Domingue's maroon population. Chapter Two will explore the historiography of marronage in Saint Domingue from the earliest contemporary historians to the latest work on runaways on the eve of the Haitian Revolution by David Geggus. Initially, this work will delve into the contemporary literature, as well as a large body of secondary work and then evaluate the data gathered which will help to support and dispel many assumptions and conclusions made prior to this investigation. The data or rather the "General Contours of the Maroon Population" is the subject of Chapter Three. This chapter opens with a brief discussion of marronage and maroon activity in Hispaniola from Columbus' arrival until 1770. In addition, this chapter will present quantitative data on the total numbers of slaves *en marronage* from the period from 1770 to 1790.¹⁸ The data will be broken down into various categories to highlight regional variations. This chapter also seeks to compare the maroon population with the slave population overall and will address the ever-present question about a growing fugitive slave movement toward revolution.

Chapter Four addresses the gender and ethnic composition of the maroon population in Saint Domingue. This chapter will seek to highlight the differences between males and females *en marronage*, and between the *créole* slave and the African slave. I will also examine distinctions between locally born *créoles* and foreign *créoles* from around the Atlantic World. The final section of this chapter will address "success and failure" rates among the various groups of fugitive slaves. Was a woman more likely to remain a fugitive than a man; did a foreign *créole* fare better than a local *créole*; and how did the experiences of different Africans compare?

¹⁸ As a point of reference I will compare my numbers with the generalizations offered by Jean Fouchard, the only other historian to address the phenomenon over several decades with comparable methodology.

Nowhere else in the contemporary sources do the lives of individual slaves come to life as they do in the pages of the aged newspapers of colonial Saint Domingue. The picture of slavery offered by these descriptions is unparalleled as it provides scholars, some two hundred and fifty years later, a chance to view slaves as individuals rather than as undifferentiated chattel as they so often appear in the literature. While the same white men who presented slaves as this undifferentiated lot also wrote these colorful advertisements, this chapter will seek to interpret these advertisements in the context of a black Atlantic identity despite the inherent bias of the authors. An entire monograph could be written about individual slaves from the thousands of advertisements in *Les Affiches Américaines*. With this in mind, a number of examples are presented to bring the individual slave who chose to throw off the yoke of slavery to the foreground of this picture of slave society in Saint Domingue during the dying days of the *ancien régime*. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the preceding discussions and offers a number of conclusions regarding marronage in Saint Domingue, its typology, its evolution and ultimately its place within the narrative of the Haitian Revolution.

The underlying purpose of this work is to revisit the debate regarding marronage and the slave insurrection that eventually led to the Haitian Revolution. Aside from the efforts of Jean Fouchard, historians have failed to quantify the number of runaway slaves in Saint Domingue or rather those who appear in the colonial newspaper, prior to the revolution. This work does exactly this.¹⁹ The quantitative analysis is the main contribution of this work, for it will help to clarify the blurry picture of marronage in Saint Domingue. However, with a clearer understanding of the gender, ethnic, and regional variations of the fugitive population, this work seeks to do much more than inform this rather tired debate. At bottom, the quantitative data to be presented are intended to illustrate the composition and dynamics of an essential and

¹⁹ The precise relation between these data and the number of total maroons in the colony is unknown.

influential sector of Saint Domingue's pre-revolutionary society. While it is rather difficult to disassociate marronage in Saint Domingue from the Haitian Revolution, studying marronage independent of the Haitian Revolution will allow scholars to more fully appreciate this phenomenon's collective impact on colonial society in the decades prior to the revolution in Saint Domingue.

CHAPTER 2 THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MARRONAGE IN SAINT DOMINGUE

In 1897, just over a century after the great slave revolt began on the Plaine du Nord, Lucien Peytraud published the first European commentary on marronage in Saint Domingue.¹ Peytraud asserted that “le marronage fut la plaie continuelle des Antilles,”² (marronage was the running sore of the West Indies). Peytraud claimed that as soon as there were slaves in the islands, there were maroons and the numbers of those maroons continually increased. Why? Because, “tant est inné au coeur de l'homme l'amour de la liberté!”³ (so innate to the heart of man is the love of liberty!). Peytraud’s work gave rise to the frequent assertion that the phenomenon of marronage grew steadily in Saint Domingue and throughout the French Caribbean chiefly as a result of an intangible desire for liberty. Various authors, particularly those associated with the “Haitian school,” have perpetuated this claim.⁴ Some six decades later, Jean Fouchard cited this precise quotation.⁵ In point of fact, the study of marronage dates as far back as the colonial period when many memoirs, surveys, and papers on maroons were prepared, which attest that the phenomenon was a matter of interest and concern for the colonists and the French colonial administration.⁶

While Peytraud, a Frenchman, and Fouchard, a Haitian, agree on this point, there is a clear division between French and Haitian schools of thought on this topic. This division is most apparent in their disparate assertions about various issues regarding marronage but particularly its impact on the Haitian Revolution. For many Haitians and Haitian scholars alike the impact of

¹ Lucien Peytraud, *L'esclavage aux Antilles françaises avant 1789: d'après des documents inédits des archives coloniales*, (Paris: Edition et diffusion de la Culture antillaise, 1984). For the section of marronage see pages 405-40. This work is the first part of a voluminous collection on slavery and abolition in the French Caribbean.

² Peytraud, *L'esclavage*, 406.

³ Peytraud, *L'esclavage*, 406.

⁴ Including Jean Fouchard, Edner Brutus, and Gérard Laurent

⁵ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 93.

⁶ Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts,” 420.

marronage on the Haitian Revolution is central to an argument that stresses indigenous influences on the Haitian Revolution, as opposed to external ones, and its supposed historical role has become for many Haitians an object of national pride.⁷

The majority of the primary sources are located in France, thus both schools have not been able to access all the available sources; nevertheless, they tend to utilize their available sources in different fashions. Those sources include contemporary histories, travelers' accounts, memoirs, letters, official correspondence, plantation papers, and newspapers. The Haitian school tends to focus on a lengthy list of reports of maroon attacks on plantations during which they pillaged and plundered food, arms, and women. However, the data available from runaway advertisements and jailed lists do not typically inform discussions of maroon activity, the two of which are not always related. While slaves taking flight might have envisioned joining a frontier maroon community admittance into such an enclave theoretically involved a number of considerations for both parties involved, primarily food, shelter, and defensibility.

Debien, Fouchard, and Geggus have all utilized the colonial newspapers in their attempts to unravel the complexities of marronage in Saint Domingue. Although each of these scholars has made important contributions to the field, their findings are limited by the scope of their inquiries. By focusing on year or less, both Debien and Geggus observed only a brief historical snapshot, while Fouchard's sweeping examination of more than thirty years relies too heavily on broad generalizations often losing sight of the individual experiences in the process. The present work focuses on the colonial newspaper and examines a twenty-year period and attempts to distance itself from both French and Haitian interpretations.

Leslie Manigat offered an astute commentary on these conflicting schools of thought in a brief article in 1977. The French school represented primarily by French-born historians, views

⁷ Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 69.

marronage as an “accident” provoked by ad hoc material causes rather than an inherent desire for freedom. This school downplays the disruptive impact of fugitive slaves on French colonialism by stressing the variety of behaviors marronage encompassed.⁸ Furthermore, this French school, which encompasses an ethnocentric French perspective, studies the maroons as individuals, describes the cases one by one, analyzes the subjects, and finds each case as an “accident” in the normal daily life of the plantation. This type of oversimplification may have also been employed by contemporary planters in their discussion of marronage as an ad hoc phenomenon that intentionally downplayed the slaves’ ability to express a collective identity or thoughtful opposition to the labor regime. In effect, these empirical studies stress a lack of intensity in the phenomenon over an extended time period, its dispersion, and its disparate character through the singularity and subjectivity of individual maroons and was essentially developed as a critique of the Haitian school.⁹ This micro-study approach results in dismissing marronage as a serious and regular occurrence. Moreover, the French school tends to address the heterogeneous composition of maroon bands and so *grand* marronage is presented as a collection of discontented individuals rather than a collective form of resistance.¹⁰ The most prominent supporters of this interpretation are Yvan Debbasch and Gabriel Debien.¹¹

In “Le marronage aux Antilles Françaises au XVIIIe siècle,” Debien downplays the impact of even well established maroon communities suggesting that they caused serious troubles only in certain districts and particular circumstances. He goes on to suggest that they posed a real danger to crops, but rare was the colonist who really believed his personal safety

⁸ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Review of *Les Maroons de liberté* in *New West Indian Guide*, 56 (1982): 180-82; Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 70.

⁹ Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts,” 424.

¹⁰ Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts,” 425.

¹¹ Y. Debbasch, “le marronage: essai sur la desertion de l’esclave antillais,” *Année Sociologique* (1962); G. Debien, *Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises aux 17e et 18e siècles* (Basse Terre, 1974).

was threatened.¹² Citing Valentin de Cullion, Debien also downplays the impact of *petit* marronage. Debien asserts that neither planters nor managers in Saint Domingue brought up the issue with the owners in France.¹³ It was only when maroons deserted in groups or when an unfriendly neighbor threatened to mention them to the master living in France did representatives of the planters begin to speak about maroons.¹⁴ Debien agrees with Peytraud in that marronage was as old as slavery in the islands as it existed among white indentured servants as well as among black slaves. He also aligns with Fouchard in suggesting that “new” slaves who escaped during the first days or weeks after they were bought from the slave traders were the most numerous *en marronage*. However, Debien suggests that newly-arrived enslaved Africans were the least dangerous of all maroons, since they knew neither the countryside nor the creole language.¹⁵ For Fouchard, the newly arrived Africans’ immediate refusal of slavery was an illustration of an inherent desire for freedom that would be realized in 1804. In the end, newly-arrived Africans would have probably been the least dangerous but they were certainly not the most numerous, as this paper will later demonstrate. Debien suggests it is rather easy to sum up the principal causes of marronage: harsh treatment, fear of punishment and/or an inadequate diet are given as the most prominent reasons for flight. Other reasons given included drunken celebrations on prolonged holidays, the transfer of slaves from one plantation to another or a desire to escape after committing theft or assault.¹⁶ Nowhere does Debien mention an innate desire for freedom as a cause for flight.

¹² Debien, “Marronage in the French Caribbean,” 108.

¹³ Claude-François Valentin de Cullion, *Examen de l’esclavage et particulièrement de l’esclavage des nègres dans les colonies de l’Amérique* (Paris, 1803).

¹⁴ Debien, “Marronage in the French Caribbean,” 111.

¹⁵ Debien, “Marronage in the French Caribbean,” 125.

¹⁶ Debein, “Marronage in the French Caribbean,” 134.

The “Haitian” school similarly stresses the harshness of the slave system, but regards the quest for freedom as the primary cause for marronage. Moreover, this school ardently links maroon activities with the slave uprising of 1791. This linkage consists of two core claims: that the slave rebellion grew out of a rising tide of marronage that built up momentum through the colonial period and that the rebellion was organized and led by maroons.¹⁷ While they (those who adhere with the Haitian school) all emphatically agree on the existence of a link between marronage and the Haitian Revolution, their individual analyses are influenced by a variety of ideologies.¹⁸ In general, the Haitian school tends to base their assertions on *a priori* reasoning which has led more empirical historians to harshly criticize those assumptions. Moreover, this school believes that explanations of marronage in terms of biological impulses deny the slaves’ humanity. Again, Leslie Manigat succinctly explains these different ideological influences within the Haitian school.

The first ideological trend with “ethnonationalist” elements represents a traditional and classical position of Haitian historians on marronage. The school stretches from Beaubrun Ardouin in 1850 to Jean Fouchard in 1970. This ideology draws on the oft-forgotten human nature of an enslaved individual faced with the degrading slave system. Marronage remains a natural reaction in favor of freedom and independence in the face of the exploitative nature of colonial slavery. The Haitian Marxist school, which insists on the action of the masses and the role of violence, represents a second ideological trend. In effect, maroons were the revolutionary historical vanguard of the popular revolution.¹⁹ A third trend is marked by the Haitian *noiriste* school, which insists on race and color as the driving forces of the revolution. In this approach, maroons represent black consciousness and African rooted culture. Maroons’ radical and racial

¹⁷ Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 70.

¹⁸ Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts,” 425.

¹⁹ Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts,” 426.

opposition to the world of the masters allowed them to spearhead the black revolution and Haitian scholars presented the class and race dynamics in their studies of Haitian independence as the most important factor guiding the revolution. In the 1950's a *noiriste* Emmanuel Paul criticized Haitian leftist Etienne Charlier for depicting marronage merely as an early stage in the national liberation struggle that was supplanted by the uprising in 1791. As a representative of the 'mulatto' school of Haitian history, he aligned himself with the French school that typically sees the Haitian Revolution as a by-product of the French Revolution. For Paul and many other Haitian historians, the black struggle for freedom predated that of the Europeanized free coloreds, marronage being the illustration of this deep seated resistance.²⁰ The fourth and final ideological trend is a blend of Marxism and *noirisme*. The most prominent representatives of the Haitian school, which is obviously not monolithic, are Edner Brutus, Jean Fouchard and Gérard Laurent.²¹

The Haitian expatriate Leslie Manigat adopts a critical stance towards the Haitian school but displays distinct affinities with it both in methodology and ideology.²² Manigat is critical of Fouchard and Brutus who tend to ennoble marronage by directly attributing to it the emergence, the dynamism, and the successful outcome of the Haitian Revolution and by classifying all the rebels of 1791 as maroons because they rely on an "obviousness" connection between the two but provide no evidence.²³ However, he supports the idea that the experience of marronage naturally progressed into the Haitian Revolution. He also disagrees with Fouchard in his definition of marronage. Fouchard asserts that *petit* marronage represented small calculated steps to freedom. On the contrary, Manigat asserts that not all running away is marronage and

²⁰ Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 70.

²¹ See Gérard Laurent, *Quand les chaînes volent en éclats* (Port-au-Prince: Deschamps, 1979); Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*; and Edner Brutus, *Révolution dans Saint-Domingue*, (Paris: Editions du Panthéon, 1973).

²² Geggus, "Slave Resistance Studies and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt: Some Preliminary Considerations", 25.

²³ Manigat, "The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts," 421.

“spontaneous short-term absences” cannot be classified as such.²⁴ While Manigat does not explicitly state that marronage played an integral role in the Haitian Revolution, he is consistent with many Haitian school scholars in his insistence that marronage in Saint Domingue can only be understood against the backdrop of the Haitian Revolution.

However, there is little evidence that connects the two. Throughout the Americas during the Age of Revolution, many slave societies experienced both slave revolt and marronage. While no other colony underwent a black revolution, one cannot simply connect these issues on the basis of racial solidarity or pre-national consciousness. In a sense, most colonials were struggling with the same issues during the onset of their own revolutions, slavery, freedom, taxation, representation, among others. It does not necessarily follow that one form of resistance to bondage—running away—leads to another—revolution. If anything, marronage represents an individual choice, not a collective racial or national front against the colonial establishment. Slaves only now and again ran off in groups and those were typically small family units or a group of skilled slaves that may have had interests in exploiting the system from within and not from the frontier enclaves praised by the Haitian school as bastions of revolutionary training and ideology. It is also hard to find evidence from the onset of the slave revolt in the Northern Plain that the rebels were ever fugitives.

Perhaps, combining insights from these two schools might offer a more complete account of marronage in Saint Domingue by presenting the growth of marronage relative to the population, the impact of both *petit* and *grand* marronage on colonial society and the revolution, and the logical link between maroons and rebels. Assuming slaves would naturally want to resist the system without quantifying that resistance has generated the most criticism of the Haitian school. However, while the French school seems to suggest a need for an empirical and

²⁴ Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts,” 423.

quantitative study, it has failed to deliver one. This present work seeks to bridge these two divided schools of thought. Nevertheless, a stark division will still be readily apparent as many of these assertions on both sides have become politically charged as they continue to be informed by both black Haitian nationalism and French ethnocentrism.

However, several authors have suggested that the two schools may not be as disparate as they first appear. David Geggus suggests that their differences are merely semantic. He contends that the short-term absenteeism with apparently easily identifiable causes, which the French school observes was very much the most common variety, is excluded by the Haitian school, particularly Fouchard, from his definition of marronage altogether. However, Fouchard does address *petit* marronage but classifies it as “slaves feeling their way, groping toward the road of freedom.”²⁵ Fouchard continues by suggesting “there [cannot] be any doubt that from the time of his frequent escapes Boukman (an early rebel leader) was already nursing his dream of liberating his brothers from slavery.”²⁶ Nevertheless, this statement can neither be validated nor disproven as we cannot know what Boukman was thinking during the years prior to the Haitian Revolution or if he even frequently escaped. But, Fouchard does at least address the impact of these short-term absences, if not in name at least in theory, as he suggests that it was on these absences that slaves succeeded in establishing the extraordinary network of complicity and the careful plan for the general uprising.²⁷ It becomes clear that quantifying the different types of marronage is necessary before attempting to evaluate its impact on colonial society.²⁸

²⁵ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 248.

²⁶ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 249.

²⁷ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 249.

²⁸ Geggus, “Slave Resistance Studies and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt: Some Preliminary Considerations,” 5.

Following Peytraud, some eighty years later, Edner Brutus, who best represents the confluence of the Marxist and *noiriste* segment of the Haitian school, commented on marronage in *Révolution dans Saint-Domingue*, (1973):

“Under all its forms and with all its faculties, marronage remains the first expression of the class struggle in Saint-Domingue. An insurrectionary movement, it is prior to the revolution and its preparations. Various elements give rise to it, food and maintenance. If, in triggering and in continuity, the economical factor remains determining and predominant, religious or cultural causes also play an important role from the beginning. The racial notion there holds its place and confuses so narrowly with the social claim that it ends up being formulated in terms of color: the black fought against the white. Marronage represents the martial refusal of the transplanted Africans and their descendants to accept the colonial system, a passionate reaction of the most spirited, and erasure of all the inequalities created by the powers of one civilization enslaving another.”²⁹

Brutus views maroon activities as an “insurrectionary movement.” In true Marxist fashion, Brutus attends to material circumstances, the innate need to challenge oppressive white colonial institutions, and a desire for freedom as underpinnings of his arguments. Ultimately, for Brutus, marronage is an expression of the class struggle in a black-slave/white-master society.³⁰

With his comparatively well documented study of marronage, Jean Fouchard positions himself as essentially the dean of the Haitian school. However, his work *Les marrons de la liberté* (1972) translated as *The Haitian Maroons: Liberty or Death* is laden with political overtones as he castigates not only French colonials but also French historians who tend to down-play the impact of maroons on the Haitian Revolution. He even suggests that Yvan Debbasch is a “self-esteemed, inadequate essayist,” who vehemently attacks the Haitian school with imaginary statistics.³¹

²⁹ This excerpt was translated from Edner Brutus, *Révolution dans Saint-Domingue*, (Paris: Éditions du Panthéon, 1973,) 70.

³⁰ Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Saint Domingue,” 424-25.

³¹ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 90.

While it has typically been an article of faith for the Haitian school that marronage continually increased until the eve of the revolution, to date, Fouchard is the only historian to attempt to quantify the phenomenon.³² Fouchard suggests that there is evident proof that marronage continued to grow until the revolution. In fact he argues, the proscriptions and prohibitions aimed at blocking the road to marronage, the organization and permanent maintenance of militias for the pursuit of the fugitives, and the extraordinary abundance, in every region of the country, of retreats bearing the names of maroon leaders all indicate the maroon presence increased. Yet, this only indicates that a maroon population existed and it does nothing to illustrate an increase in the phenomenon. Fouchard goes on to suggest that the century-long resistance from the Bahoruco Mountains and the necessity to negotiate a peace treaty with the rebels, as one powerful people with another, also indicates an increase. However, Debbasch argues that the problem posed by le Maniel was modified by an increasing interest in the territory controlled by the maroons and this was the reason a political solution was considered at the very end of the eighteenth-century, not the exaggerated numbers of le Maniel or its supposed talent for prolonged resistance.³³ Moreover, Fouchard fails to recognize that officials in Saint Domingue rarely negotiated with rebels and this case was the primary exception; in point of fact the treaty was not ratified by the French government. The general theme running through the arguments of the Haitian school focuses on the activities of a select group of maroon communities throughout the history of Saint Domingue, which because of little evidence, can contribute little to the discussion about the growth of marronage before the Haitian Revolution. Moreover, Fouchard's methodology is suspect. Nevertheless, his margin of error may not have

³² Excluding the work of David Geggus on "Slave runaways on the Eve of the Haitian Revolution," (to be reviewed below) and two other short articles by Debien. See footnote 8.

³³ Yvan Debbasch, "Le Maniel: Further Notes," in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, ed. Richard Price Third edition (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 145-46.

been as wide as suggested by David Geggus. Fouchard does well to utilize a variety of primary sources, specifically the colonial newspapers, but he offers little evidence to support his discussion of motives for marronage. Fouchard also seems to equate maroon activity (organized bands attacking plantations and such) throughout this period with more general and individual cases of *petit* and *grand* marronage. However, while both imply a resistance to slavery it is important to remember that in several maroon groups were often deployed against would-be maroons as runaway slave catchers. Moreover, their involvement in the planning or carrying out of the revolution has yet to be determined. This work seeks to evaluate his assertions by employing a more methodical approach in analyzing the data available from the Saint Domingue's colonial newspaper.

Shortly after the publication of Fouchard's work, Thomas Ott in *The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804*, (1973) suggested that there is little evidence that when the revolution erupted, maroons came to the aid of their fellow blacks. A member of the French school, Ott, like T. Lothrop Stoddard, maintained that maroons played a reactionary role. Ott and Stoddard believed that it is possible that maroons viewed the general freedom of the slaves as a threat to their own position.³⁴ While not explicitly stating so, Ott grounds himself near the French end of the spectrum. Ott maintains that fugitive slaves, living in isolated communities only seldom challenged white authority directly, except for occasional raids on plantations. However, contrary to Debien, Ott suggests that white colonists feared the maroons because they may have spread the "infection of freedom" to the enslaved masses.³⁵ Ott offers no evidence for his insights into the mind of the fearful white colonists.

³⁴ Thomas Ott, *The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1972,) 18-19; T. Lothrop Stoddard, *The French Revolution in San Domingo*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914,) 63-64.

³⁵ Ott, *The Haitian Revolution*, 18.

Carolyn Fick also argues that white planters feared maroons and maroon activity. Ultimately, Fick argues that *petit* marronage played an integral role in the development of the Haitian Revolution. For Fick, marronage was the most viable and consistent form of resistance in Saint Domingue. In the vein of the Haitian school, Fick asserts that enslaved individuals claimed their right to freedom by defying the system that denied them the most “essential of human rights.” Fick also suggests that by 1791 marronage had developed a “collective characteristic that converged with the turbulent political climate, creating an opportunity for enslaved individuals to claim their freedom.³⁶ Maroon band activity, for Fick, was collective and illustrated a constant struggle against the colonial regime. She suggests that during the two decades prior to the Haitian Revolution, colonial correspondence, official reports, and administrative ordinances continued to underscore the threat of marronage to the general security of the colony; however, examples of such correspondence are not presented in her arguments.³⁷ Fick goes as far as to suggest that organized maroon activity, particularly the actions of Makandal, drew upon various African beliefs and practices and were aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the white masters and slavery.³⁸ Ultimately, Fick argues that this short-term absenteeism allowed slaves to organize the slave insurrection of 1791, in the sense that week-end and nocturnal gatherings helped perpetuate communication networks among disparate slaves which ultimately led to organized resistance. Fick assumes that these clandestine meetings involved some type of *petit* marronage since not all slaves could obtain travel passes.³⁹

³⁶ Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 49.

³⁷ Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 53.

³⁸ Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 61.

³⁹ Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, 94-95.

In *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery: 1776-1848*, Robin Blackburn presents a similar argument about the impact of *petit* marronage.⁴⁰ Blackburn highlights the absence of major slave uprisings in the French Antilles in the 1770s and 1780s and suggests that larger scale marronage did not seem to have grown in consequence, perhaps because the French military authorities achieved a high level of mobilization in the colony during this decade as troops were withdrawn from North America. However, Blackburn suggests that *petit* marronage produced a layer of slaves with outside knowledge, experience and contacts, with a continuing presence within plantations, a combination that could, under the right conditions, lead to plantation revolts.⁴¹ Yet, Blackburn does not address the particular conditions necessary for plantation revolts.

By contrast, Geggus believes that the revolt was planned from within rather than without. He suggests that slaves had ample opportunities within the system to meet and organize: on the way to provision grounds, at Sunday markets, and at weekend festivals, which some whites thought harmless. Citing Moreau de Saint Méry, Geggus calls attention to the Cap Français market that attracted nearly 15,000 slaves each week with dances and stick-fighting taking place at the city's outskirts, ignored by police, on Sunday evenings and holidays. Moreover, the infamous Bois Caïman ceremony was held on a Sunday night to the knowledge of many white planters.⁴²

Geggus's commentary on marronage in Saint Domingue can be found in two chapters in edited volumes, a short article and a pamphlet on slave resistance. In a brief article, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution: Slave Runaways in Saint Domingue in the year 1790," Geggus seeks to explore the assertions of Fouchard and the general claim of the Haitian school for a rising tide

⁴⁰ Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery: 1776-1848*, (London: Verso, 1988,) 169 and 208.

⁴¹ Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, 208.

⁴² Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 73.

in marronage. In the end, Geggus offers tentative conclusions regarding the maroon population on the eve of the revolution. Ultimately, he attempts to explore the unsubstantiated claims of previous historians and calls for more a methodical archive based mode of historical inquiry. Geggus offers several criticisms of Fochard's and others' work on marronage in Saint Domingue. However, his observations are based on an analysis of a single year or runways and may not stand up to a broader analysis of marronage.

Influenced by Geggus, Jacques Cauna offers his commentary on "The Singularity of the Saint Domingue Revolution: *Marronage*, Voodoo, and the Color Question." Cauna's problematic analysis stems from his limited definition of marronage. Cauna defines marronage as "running away to form communities of escaped slaves."⁴³ As stated before, marronage and semi-autonomous groups of maroon slaves are not necessarily equivalent. Moreover, he defines *grand* marronage as a group effort; again, this is not the typical definition of *grand* marronage for either the Haitian or French schools of thought.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Cauna suggests that creoles and artisans, more than any other slaves became fugitives.⁴⁵ As the data will attest this is a false assumption. Contrary to Debien and others from the French school, Cauna suggests that even *petit* marronage was a continual complaint of planters/managers even on well-run plantations.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Cauna does eventually align with the French school, and more specifically with Geggus, in stating the there is nothing to confirm that the fugitive movement was growing larger in the years leading up to the revolution.⁴⁷ Yet, he does suggest that marronage during the late eighteenth-century does reflect a turning point towards a more aggressive and systematic stance

⁴³ Jacques Cauna, "The Singularity of the Saint Domingue Revolution: *Marronage*, Voodoo, and the Color Question" in *Plantation Society in the Americas III*, 3 (1996), 321-45.

⁴⁴ Cauna, "The Singularity of the Saint Domingue Revolution," 331.

⁴⁵ Cauna, "The Singularity of the Saint Domingue Revolution," 332.

⁴⁶ Cauna, "The Singularity of the Saint Domingue Revolution," 331.

⁴⁷ Cauna, "The Singularity of the Saint Domingue Revolution," 333.

against the colonial regime.⁴⁸ Though he cites a work protest in the late 1770s and a clandestine meeting led by a mulatto these incidents are more suggestive than definitive and have little to do with marronage. In the end, Cauna's article offers little to methodical study of marronage in Saint Domingue except complication.

In a pamphlet, *Slave Resistance Studies and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt: Some Preliminary Considerations* (1983), Geggus offers a few guidelines for studying the issues under review with a stronger methodology. Geggus explores the main questions surrounding marronage in Saint Domingue: the motivations of slaves running away, the extent of marronage, the maroon's relations with colonial society and the connections between marronage and slave revolution. Of particular interest is his commentary concerning the Haitian school's assertion that the leaders of the slave insurrection in 1791 were former maroon-band leaders. Geggus concludes that while Boukman, Jean-François, Biassou and Jeannot, the first four to achieve prominence, are generally asserted by historians to have commanded bands of maroons, no proof of this seems to have been put forward. While Geggus admits there is a logical connection between the revolutionary leadership and an experience of marronage, there is also evidence that suggests that Boukman and Jeannot, and probably Biassou were all residents on their plantations at the time of the uprising. He offers documentation from memoirs and letters that suggest two of them participated in marronage but there is no evidence that they were leaders or members of organized maroon bands.⁴⁹ Thus, Geggus asserts that "it very much seems that it [the slave insurrection] was organized from within the system and not from outside it."⁵⁰

In an edited collection, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, (2002) Geggus sums up his assertions regarding marronage and the Haitian Revolution, "the evidence regarding the growth

⁴⁸ Cauna, "The Singularity of the Saint Domingue Revolution," 334.

⁴⁹ Geggus, "Slave Resistance and the Saint Domingue Revolt," 10.

⁵⁰ Geggus, "Slave Resistance Studies and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt," 9-10.

of marronage prior to the revolution is mixed, but it does not indicate a sustained increase in activity, especially in the activity of maroon bands.” He continues, “there is nothing to support Gérard Laurent’s claim that the organization and solidarity of maroons was steadily increasing.”⁵¹ However, Geggus does not discard the impact of marronage on the slave revolt, “It [marronage] presumably served through the years to keep alive a spirit of resistance, and it may have provided the strategic or tactical lessons for the insurgents of the 1790s.” Geggus states that while most plantations lost maroons, very few were attacked by them. The differences between micro- and macro-level manifestations of the phenomenon explain the divergent depictions of marronage by Haitian and European historians. For Geggus, the armed bands of fugitives that troubled colonial administrators, and whom novelists and nationalists had found so appealing, were far from being the “typical maroons” in a colony where hundreds, and later thousands escaped each year.⁵² Geggus believes that marronage was “primarily an alternative to rebellion, a safety-valve that helps explain the remarkable absence of slave revolts in eighteenth-century Saint Domingue.”⁵³ In the end, Geggus’s reliance on archival research forces him to deny a rising tide in marronage, while his theoretical observations force him to combine the two schools’ reasons for marronage in more complete, less politically charged account of marronage in Saint Domingue.

In conclusion, the historiography of marronage in Saint Domingue is complex and varied. While it is true that not every work regarding marronage in Saint Domingue has been reviewed here, with both schools of thought being explored with relative detail, it seems fair to suggest that the sources, assertions, and conclusions of each school are evident. Many of these authors, both Haitian and French, remain bound by their national identities and the claims associated with

⁵¹ Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 73.

⁵² Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 70.

⁵³ Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 74.

their particular schools of thought. More often than not, methodical historical research remains absent from their analysis. In the most recent work on marronage in Saint Domingue, Geggus suggests a need for a more empirical approach to the study of this topic. He, like Fouchard, employs in his research the main colonial newspaper *Les Affiches Américaines* to examine the maroon population.⁵⁴ However, unlike Fouchard, Geggus suggests his conclusions to be only tentative. In the chapters to follow *Les Affiches Américaines* garners the much needed attention called for by Geggus. Through this analysis a much clearer picture of the gender, ethnic, and regional variations will emerge exclusive from the previous schools of thought and ultimately from the Haitian Revolution. There is no deliberate attempt to prove or disprove either school's claims; rather, through quantitative analysis a justifiable picture of marronage in Saint Domingue takes shape. Methodical research in primary sources is at the heart of this work. The data have been calculated and tabulated with a concerted effort to eliminate the bias of the historiography. It may be true that marronage was a relatively constant phenomenon that reflected material circumstances, but it would be unwise to disregard any individual's desire to live an autonomous life. Ultimately, this work does not seek so much to understand the reasons for marronage, as this has been well-studied even if under-substantiated, rather it seeks to illustrate the dimension and composition of the maroon population in Saint Domingue during the years approaching the Haitian Revolution. The historical context of this phenomenon is important for understanding the breadth of both an individual and collective form of resistance.

⁵⁴ As stated in the introduction, the source material for studying marronage in Saint Domingue is particularly rich, quantitative work on the subject had been limited to three short articles and Fouchard's *The Haitian Maroons*.

CHAPTER 3 GENERAL CONTOURS OF MARRONAGE IN SAINT DOMINGUE

Marronage took many forms and impacted various segments of colonial society: black, brown, and white, free and enslaved. Disparate groups of enslaved individuals practiced marronage, from the newly arrived African to the locally-born artisan *créole*. Sometimes slaves absconded in small groups, but more typically marronage was a solitary endeavor. Running away was most certainly a conspicuous form of resistance, but answering the questions of why, how, where, and when slaves chose to run away is a more complex matter.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first explores the historical context of marronage on Hispaniola and in French Saint Domingue. The second section offers commentary on some general themes of marronage and relates some significant maroon events during the period from discovery until 1770. The final section is simply a quantitative study of the general contours of the maroon population during the period from 1770 to 1791. The first two sections provide the necessary context for the quantitative study. The third section seeks to illustrate the lack of quantitative research by previous historians and suggests a need to re-evaluate previously unsubstantiated assertions regarding marronage in Saint Domingue. Although this chapter is informed by the conclusions of previous historians, the more expansive methodology utilized here allows this study to push beyond more speculative analysis, as it seeks to illuminate the dim picture of marronage in Saint Domingue during the two decades prior to the Haitian Revolution. Ultimately, this quantitative study reveals a relatively stable rate of marronage in the three provinces of Saint Domingue during the period under examination. However, this chapter also seeks to highlight regional variations that add nuance to the study of marronage in Saint Domingue.

Certain aspects of the colonial milieu helped determine where slaves practiced marronage. Secure hiding places were not lacking in the colony with vast stretches of woodlands and the ubiquitous mountains which ringed most of its parishes. To these geographic spaces of freedom was added the relative proximity of the Spanish border, collusion based on fellowship and common interests, the anonymity of the swarming crowds in the suburbs of the large cities, the system of transportation between parishes by land and sea, and finally the disappearance of all fugitive traces over the long marches to distant cantons or mountain heights sheltering organized bands.¹

The geography of Saint Domingue includes bushy savannahs, wooded hills, and karst topography. Karst topography is characterized by sinkholes, subterranean caverns and caves, and tropical-creeper vegetation in remote areas. However, the zones of traditional maroon activity tended to be mountainous regions on the colonial frontier. Therefore, it is not surprising that the rich plains of Le Cap, Cul-de-Sac, and Les Cayes were prominent areas of marronage not only because they lie at the foot of Saint Domingue's mountain chains but also because a large portion of slaves lived there. Nevertheless, slaves actually living in the mountains may have been more likely to escape. The border between French Saint Domingue and Spanish Santo Domingo was also a traditional zone of marronage as it offered the possibility to *passer à l'espagnol* where fugitive slaves found refuge and in some cases may have even been welcomed by the neighboring colonial authorities. Indeed, many slaves headed for the "Spanish road" for the advantages of asylum in a foreign land.²

Moreover, the organization of plantations, with cultivated land, fields for grazing, provision grounds, and slave quarters scattered in different locations, certainly facilitated

¹ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 271.

² Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 276.

evasion, whether it be short or long term. It is quite possible that maroons may have remained on the fringes of society for many years, eating cane from the fields and/or food brought to them by friends and kin. Other times, fugitives may have stolen from provision grounds or garden plots. However, it is important to note that in some instances slaves were co-opted in the fight against maroon slaves and at other times slaves may have participated in providing the necessary elements to support marronage. Other slaves, most likely skilled *créoles* and particularly women, ran away to the towns, where they could often blend into the population of urban slaves and free-coloreds, especially if they were trained in a craft.³ Runaways may have also chosen to join various semi-autonomous maroon communities that dotted the frontier throughout the colony.

To reiterate, the three provinces, North, South, and West, are all divided by mountain chains, again perfect places for Africans and *créoles* alike to create easily defended enclaves. The North provided the largest town in Saint Domingue, Cap Français, while the Southern and Western provinces had several port-cities and small towns that may have provided fugitives with crowded streets and ports of departure.

The question of why slaves chose to run away has generated much debate. This question deals with both personal and collective reasoning behind flight and it directly informs the competing arguments of the two divergent schools on marronage in Saint Domingue. Some historians suggest that individual marronage must be explained in the context of the living conditions of the slaves. A slave may have reacted against the conditions of work (length, organization, and/or intensity) in several ways (laziness, apathy, walkouts) but the absolute refusal to work was running away. This type of resistance most likely engendered cases of *petit* marronage rather than *grand* marronage. Presumably, if a driver or master attempted to

³ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 52.

ameliorate the conditions of the work regime it is reasonable to suggest that the “fugitive” slave would return to work as certain conditions improved. In preparation for returning to the plantation, runaways might have made contact with old-timers on the plantation, a district priest, or an old woman close to the master’s family to help mitigate their punishment.⁴

If the plantation was unable to provide the basic needs—housing, health, clothes, or food—a slave may have also chosen to flee the plantation. It has been suggested by several scholars that a great deal of marronage was associated with a lack of food. Here again, this appears to be more likely a cause for *petit* marronage. Both stealing and fleeing punishment have also been the traditional explanations for marronage among French historians. However, as Manigat suggests slaves did not typically take flight to practice thievery but rather maroons were forced to steal because of the harsh conditions of life on the fringes of structured colonial society.⁵

Escaping punishment may have generated more long-term episodes of flight because any cause for punishment would have likely been increased if the slave attempted flight. On the opposite side of this causal spectrum is flight occurring when slaves ran away during their days off or during holidays looking for entertainment, leisure, and general amusement. This entailed gatherings for story-telling, singing songs, drinking, playing games, and of course, sexual exploits. Again, this most certainly was a case of *petit* marronage.

The most cited incidents of marronage by the Haitian school are those brought about by an automatic rejection of slavery by newly imported Africans. The newly arrived slaves’ refusal to adapt themselves to a servile life, for the Haitian school, illustrates an innate desire for freedom. Jean Fouchard, among others, has suggested that the majority of slaves *en marronage*

⁴ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 249.

⁵ Manigat, “The Relationship between Marronage and Slave Revolts,” 142.

were those classified as *nouveaux* or those who had newly arrived in the colony who had little or no working knowledge of the creole language; however, the evidence suggests otherwise.

During any given year, slaves classified as *nouveaux* never accounted for more a quarter of the total slaves *en marronage*. Over the twenty-year period under investigation slaves classified as *nouveaux* accounted for seventeen percent of the total sample. This point will be addressed in more detail below.

In the end, slaves ran off for a variety of reasons.⁶ While many incidents were most certainly impulsive, many others may have been well-calculated decisions based on the agricultural cycle, various holidays, or other times of distraction when success in marronage may have been more easily attainable. Whether or not slaves intended to remain on the fringes of colonial society indefinitely or intended to return once a personal situation improved still remains an important distinction. It informs both the nature of slave flight on the individual level and the larger question of this collective phenomenon's impact not only on the broader colony society but also the Haitian Revolution.

While the motivations of individual maroons suggest spontaneity, or at most a pre-political consciousness, group marronage may offer evidence of a political consciousness, a revolutionary consciousness, and/or a pre-national consciousness or so the Haitian school suggests. Maroon groups can be organized into three categories according to their degree of internal order. The first category is that of the wandering band with a loose structure that changes according to circumstances but maintains a strong central authoritative figure. The second represents a more stable community with the ability to change location for safety,

⁶ The causes of marronage are a major point of contention between the French and Haitian schools. Indeed, contemporary sources comment on the motivations for flight, but these claims must be viewed in light of the inherent biases of their authors and ultimately they may tell us very little about the psyche of enslaved individuals *en marronage*.

structured only enough to maintain a minimum of order and control. The third is a well-organized and permanent camp. Manigat suggests that this grouping is a military society that thrives on self-reliance, self-government, and self-defense, essentially an independent enclosed micro-state.⁷ However, this assertion that some maroon groups displayed an emerging collective proto-revolutionary identity remains unsubstantiated and speculative at best. This retrospective projection of a political consciousness onto maroon groups is typical of the Haitian school. However, it is important to remember that maroon communities were often the exception that proved the rule.

Indeed, maroon communities have a long history in the Caribbean. Those in Jamaica, Suriname, and Brazil have received the most attention from scholars and are consequently the most well known. However, different groups of fugitives carved out places of refuge on the frontiers of Saint Domingue at various times in its history as well. A quick account of some of the most influential maroon groups as well as other incidents of maroon-oriented resistance are worth retelling because those incidents speak to the intents and purposes of many slaves *en grand marronage* who chose to abandon the relative stability of the plantation for the hazardous life of a maroon.⁸

To preface a focused analysis of the quantitative data for the latter third of the eighteenth century, several salient maroon events will be related in an effort to provide the necessary context of the impact of Saint Domingue's maroon communities upon the larger colonial society.

The episodes of Enriquillo, Padre Jean, Polydor, François Makandal and the Maniel group are

⁷ Manigat, "The Relationship Between Marronage and Slave Revolts," 430.

⁸ While Fouchard's quantitative methodology is somewhat suspect, he offers a brilliant descriptive narrative of "A Chronology of Marronage," in which he details countless aspects of marronage in Saint Domingue during the period from Columbus' discovery to the eve of the Haitian Revolution. However, even within these descriptions he continually asserts that marronage continued to grow in number and influence. But the quantitative data suggest nothing of the sort especially when viewed in the context of the general population increase. Nevertheless, his "chronology" paints a rather comprehensive picture of marronage in Saint Domingue. Yet, as his "chronology" approaches the 1770s and 1780s it becomes considerably thinner than decades prior.

important events in the story of marronage in Saint Domingue as well as the maroons' possible struggle for independence. After a brief account of some of the most important affairs, the third section turns to the period from 1770 to 1790, in a discussion of the general contours of the maroon population during those years. The data will be presented in a number of contexts including "the big picture," and regional variations, which address the impact of marronage on the slave uprising in the North.

Marronage from Discovery to 1770

In relating the maroon events until the 1770s, this study will present the events utilized by the Haitian school as evidence for increasing maroon activity. However, it is easily recognizable that these events are disconnected by both time and space. In fact, the only long-running source of agitation for white colonials appears to have come from the Bahoruco Mountains in the French and Spanish borderlands. Even the actions of this enclave, do not seem to be very continuous.

The history of marronage in the Americas begins with the discovery of the New World. In 1499, the first African slaves, shipped from Spain, began to arrive in Hispaniola.⁹ Soon after, African slaves began to desert the work gangs of the Spanish and participate in localized rebellions such as in 1522 when a group of Africans sacked and pillaged a sugar mill belonging to Don Diego Columbus. Fouchard illustrates these incidents through the commentary of Governor Ovando, Bartolomé de Las Casas and Father Charlevoix. In doing so, Fouchard sought to demonstrate an inherent desire for liberty in response to the oppressive colonial regime. While these incidents offer little insight into the psyche of those first African slaves, they do highlight the legacy of maroons and foreshadow the subsequent actions of maroons to challenge slave plantation systems.

⁹ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 300; José L. Franco *Historia de la Revolución de Haití*, 35.

The first significant maroon group on the island of Hispaniola was led by Enriquillo, a Taíno Indian. While Ida Altman has recently called attention to the importance of the revolt of Enriquillo to the historiography of early Spanish America, this narrative also speaks toward various aspects of marronage in what became the French colony of Saint Domingue.¹⁰ From 1519 to 1533, Enriquillo along with a number of Taíno Indians revolted against Spanish forces in the Bahoruco Mountains.¹¹ Eventually, Enriquillo was able to negotiate freedom and the right of possession of his mountain enclave. Mountain enclaves, guerrilla warfare, autonomous subsistence, raiding, and negotiations with colonial officials are aspects that would come to typify maroon communities in Saint Domingue for the next three centuries. Most significant is that this was the first maroon treaty after which the Indians agreed to hunt for fugitive Africans with whom they were previously allied.

Not until the early seventeenth-century did French interlopers begin to make inroads into Hispaniola. They utilized the abandoned herds of pigs and cattle that the Spanish left behind as they settled the mainland, to support their presence as they transformed Tortuga into a way station for pillaging the returns from the Spanish Main. Beginning in 1665, Tortuga and the western third of Santo Domingo were brought under the French flag by Bertrand d'Ogeron de la Rivière. As governor for the new French West Indies Company, d'Ogeron's instructions from France were to impose order in Tortuga by settling farmers along the west coast of Hispaniola. During the next ten years, d'Ogeron skillfully accomplished both of these goals.¹² By 1681,

¹⁰ Ida Altman, "The Revolt of Enriquillo and the Historiography of Early Spanish America," in *The Americas*, 63:4 (April 2006): 587-614.

¹¹ The Bahoruco Mountains harbored a number of maroon communities throughout the colonial period. However, historians have not as of yet attempted to link the fugitive communities in the Bahoruco Mountains during the colonial period.

¹² Jan Rogoziński, *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak to the Carib to the Present*, (New York: Penguin Putman, 2000), 93.

nearly four thousand settlers lived in the French section, centered on the town of Port-de-Paix, opposite Tortuga.

In 1697, (with the Treaty of Ryswick) Spain conceded the western third of Hispaniola to France. Nearly twenty years earlier, in 1679, a slave named Padre Jean rose up and assassinated his master in Spanish Santo Domingo. Jean then made his way to the western third of the island and settled near Port-de-Paix. While there, he convinced a number of his African counterparts to rise up against the planter class. The uprising began near Port Margot where the participants killed several slave holders and subsequently retreated into the mountains nearby. Padre Jean was eventually killed by pirates, serving as the French settlement's main defensive unit, who had tracked him down in his mountain retreat. Padre Jean was killed alongside several other maroons. The rebellion was one of the earliest recorded in Saint Domingue and Padre Jean is viewed as an early fighter against the cruelties of French-imposed slavery. Today, Padre Jean is recognized as a Haitian national hero.

The eighteenth century saw a number of important maroon affairs unfold. During the late seventeenth century, in March 1685, King Louis XIV issued the *Code Noir* which stipulated a number of measures for slave societies in the French Antilles. The code regulated slave markets, other social gatherings, marriage, the carrying of arms and fixed a number of other restrictions on the enslaved in the French Caribbean. This code also standardized punishments for marronage. A slave who had been away from the plantation for more than a month was to have one of his ears cut off and a *fleur-de-lis* branded on his shoulder. A slave who ran away again for a month was to receive a second brand and have a hamstring cut. The punishment for the third offense was death. Rather than follow these prescriptions for mutilation, most masters and

managers devised other punishments that caused suffering but did not cause fatal damage to their human property.¹³

Masters usually whipped captured slaves upon their return. At other times, a returning runaway's garden plot may have been confiscated. Slaves might also be locked up in plantation hospitals or dungeons. Chains might also be attached to the slave's legs, sometimes with a ball added to make running difficult, and/or iron spikes on an iron collar placed around the neck. Only a blacksmith could remove these restraints. However, such devices did not always deter fugitives from fleeing a second or third time.¹⁴ From 1770 to 1790 over seventy-five slaves were jailed with some type of restraint mechanism attached to their body.

Maroon bands of various dimensions were present throughout Saint Domingue during the eighteenth century. During the first half of the eighteenth century, maroon activity, particularly plantation raids, focused in the Sud du Cap region. From the beginning of the eighteenth-century, bands of maroons had been devastating crops. Attempts were made to co-opt other slaves and free-coloreds to pursue these fugitives, eventually a maroon chief was taken at Montègre, above the village of Tannerie, between Grande-Rivière and Limonade. He was Colas-Jambes-Coupées, another maroon celebrated by Haitian nationalists.¹⁵

In 1730 in the Grande-Anse region, on the southern peninsula, colonists mounted a successful counter attack against a maroon band that operated around Nippes. In the hills of Anse-du-Clerc, the attack resulted in twenty-three prisoners and a number more maroons, among them Plymouth, (the band leader originally from the British West Indies) dead.¹⁶ However,

¹³ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 53.

¹⁴ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 53.

¹⁵ Gabel Debien, "Marronage in the French Caribbean" in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, Third edition, ed. Richard Price Third edition (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 109-110.

¹⁶ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 313; Debien, "Marronage in the French Caribbean," 109.

vulnerable areas remained around Trou and Fort-Dauphin, between Le Cap and the Spanish frontier. Polydor terrorized white colonists in the Trou region. Planters, joined by the *maréchaussée*, mounted a successful attack against this group, killing Polydor in the savanna that now bears his name.¹⁷ Polydor was denounced by another slave who subsequently gained his freedom.¹⁸ This incident reveals much about the ways in which colonial society may have viewed the activities of fugitives. However, colonists in this region had great difficulty gaining support for this campaign from black slaves and the colored militia.

In January 1758, François Makandal, a fugitive slave, after an extraordinary eighteen-year period of marronage came to an end, was made to kneel in a plaza in Le Cap wearing sign that read “Seducer, Profaner, Poisoner.” He was then tied to a post in the center of plaza and a fire was lit beneath him. Makandal had become legendary among both blacks and whites in Saint Domingue. For enslaved blacks and members of the Haitian school, Makandal, who was born in Africa and became a slave on a plantation in the parish of Limbé in the Northern Province, represented the slaves’ struggle against the dominant white planter class. Makandal’s legendary status might have grown out of his ability to gather together large bands of fugitives to attack plantations. Nevertheless, his primary source of terror was his suspected use of poison. While Makandal was neither the first nor the last slave to use poison as a means of resistance, the extent of his activities and the publicity they gained help set in motion a pattern of paranoia and violence that continued in Saint Domingue for decades.¹⁹ For colonial whites, Makandal came to represent the danger of a mass uprising that could destroy the whites in the colony. This fear was realized thirty-five years later in August 1791.

¹⁷ In the 1730s, a local police force, the *maréchaussée*, was founded to supplement the colonial militia in the policing of slaves. The *maréchaussée* was comprised of mainly free men of color who patrolled the roads, searched slave huts, and pursued fugitives into the interior.

¹⁸ Debien, “Marronage in the French Caribbean,” 110.

¹⁹ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 51-52; Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 317.

Perhaps the most famous of the French maroon communities was le Maniel, which straddled the border of French Saint Domingue and Spanish Santo Domingo. Yvan Debbasch suggests that in fact two separate bands existed in the borderlands at a very early date (1717), but there was no indication that they were allied.²⁰ The Maniel maroon band was once thought to number in 1778 at most 700-800 but in 1785 a census revealed, after many had died of small pox, only 133 comprised the group.²¹ While the role of maroon bands in the revolution is ambiguous, Geggus points out that le Maniel is the only band we know of who participated in the events of the Haitian Revolution. The members of le Maniel kept aloof for several years, and subsequently played a rather vague role, fighting for Saint Domingue's Spanish invaders and keeping or selling their black captives as slaves.²² Prior to the revolution, in 1785, the governor of Saint Domingue negotiated with these borderland maroons. However, as discussed earlier Haitian and French scholars disagree as to why.

The period of this quantitative study begins in 1770. Coincidentally, on June 3, 1770, an earthquake desolated Port-au-Prince. During the aftermath of this disaster, printers in Le Cap picked up the publication of the "jailed lists" from the South/West provinces until *Les Affiches Américaines* started publishing once again six weeks later. A contemporary commentator reveals much about the uncertainty in the months after the earthquake as he suggested that "the number of maroons increased to such proportions that we had the gravest fears for the tranquility of the colony. Security became nonexistent and it was unwise to wander in the hills."²³ However, the evidence for this period reveals nothing remarkable about the published maroon population

²⁰ Yvan Debbasch, "Le Maniel: Further Notes" in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, ed. Richard Price Third edition (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 143.

²¹ Geggus, "Slave Resistance Studies and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt," 7.

²² Geggus, "Slave Resistance Studies and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt," 9.

²³ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 327; Castonnet des Fosses, *Saint Domingue sous Louis XV*, 36.

during this year. The last section of this chapter will focus on a more empirical approach to the study of marronage in Saint Domingue during the two decades prior to the Haitian Revolution.

The Evidence

Although these significant maroon events in Saint Domingue help to provide historical context and illustrate the development of marronage during this period, they do little to suggest how many slaves participated in this form of resistance, organized communities, or the overall numbers of slaves who took flight. These events were not led by individuals practicing *petit* marronage trying to secure some small advantage. Rather, they were led by individuals in *grand* marronage determined to exist outside of and as a challenge to the colonial regime. These individuals and these events were quite unique in the history of marronage in Saint Domingue. Ultimately, these episodes of organized maroon activity waned during the years approaching the Haitian Revolution and subsequently offer very specific insight into marronage prior to the Haitian Revolution. To develop a better understanding of more typical maroon experiences, the newspaper, *Les Affiches Américaines* must be consulted.

There are a number of issues that need to be addressed before evaluating the data presented here. The issues concern these data's ability to accurately express the actual number of fugitives and moreover the overall population composition of Saint Dominguan maroons. In examining the evidence, it is important to remember that the number of fugitives advertised for or jailed bears no certain relation to the total number who fled or were caught, still less the total number at large.²⁴ As the number of jailed is nearly twice and sometimes three times as great as the number advertised as missing, it is clear only a minority of runaways were the subject of advertisements. The propensity of a planter to advertise for runaway slaves most likely depended on the slave's value, the ability to produce an effective description, the agricultural

²⁴ Geggus, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution," 114.

cycle and the plantation's proximity to Cap Français or Port-au-Prince.²⁵ Another factor worth attention is the time period shortly after the slave's escape that the planter allowed for his/her return. Fugitives recaptured or who returned during this time obviously did not generate missing advertisements.

Similarly, the number of those who were jailed does not necessarily accurately represent the actual number of fugitives. Many other factors contributed to this as well, including, those slaves who were returned directly to their master, those who died before or after being recaptured, and the honesty of the *maréchaussée*, the mainly free-colored rural police force, who were known to seize slaves on the roads and destroy their travel passes. This was in an effort to collect rewards for returning fugitives, a practice that may have increased as the revolutionary period loomed over Saint Dominguan society because of an increasing activity of this rural police force. However, it is important to remember that the police and free-colored militia became less active, or more, at certain times. In the 1770s and 1780s, as the importation of enslaved Africans reached its peak, colonial governors ordered the free colored militiamen to help the constabulary with slave policing duties.²⁶ Meanwhile, the rights of free-coloreds were being restricted as their numbers continued to grow. This may have contributed to the already widening social cleavage between enslaved blacks and free people of color as free-coloreds continued to try to distance themselves from black slaves. Also, the sending of jail lists from distant towns also fluctuated in frequency. It is important to remember that the former may have increased the number jailed and the other factors may have decreased that number. Perhaps the most important factor was the successful fugitive slaves that were never caught. Unfortunately, the evidence suggests little about those successes.

²⁵ Geggus, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution," 114-116.

²⁶ Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston: Bedford, 2006), 15.

Despite the problems associated with these numbers, the “jailed” population offers the greatest insight into the fugitive slave world, because the “jailed” total is closer to the total fled than the obviously selective “missing” total, although how close is debatable. The slaves *entrés à la Geôle* were of all types, African, *créole*, male, female, skilled and *nouveau* and thus the jailed lists offer a picture of the broad spectrum of the truant slave population. It is true that not every slave who ran away was arrested and/or jailed in a local prison so in turn it is impossible to recreate an exact picture of the fugitive population. Consequently, these data cannot provide a picture of the complete maroon population, but several larger trends can be determined through a careful evaluation.

The analysis provided here has been extracted from 19,903 separate and unique entries taken from eleven years during the period from 1770 to 1790. Without neglecting the variations in annual totals and the factors that influenced those totals, it may be suggested that during the entire period, 30,000 to 40,000 entries might be a reasonable estimate. With an annual average of about 1,800 total recorded fugitives compared with a total population that averaged about 330,000 during the period under discussion. This would suggest at least 0.55% of slaves ran away in a given year. However, at the present moment it is impossible to know how long each maroon was absent from the plantation and in turn the total annual number of runaways. Geggus has suggested that one possible way to come to a reasonable estimation is through the use of plantation records. By comparing lists of slaves drawn up annual by managers with the data from *Les Affiches* it may be possible to quantify the phenomenon in terms of how slaves flee each year and for how long.²⁷

²⁷ Geggus, “On the eve of the Haitian Revolution,” 116-17.

Ultimately, the evidence suggests that with close to 1,000 fugitives jailed each year, at the very least some 1 in 200 slaves per year ran away for the period prior to 1785.²⁸ After 1789 the total slave population had risen to nearly 450,000, so with around 2500 slaves running away each year the ratio remains fairly balanced. This may be the biggest indicator that the rate of marronage was a relatively consistent phenomenon and during the years approaching the revolution it may in fact have been in decline. Of course there may be a number of factors that help explain the changes in these ratios. Table 3-1 offers population estimates for Saint Domingue during this twenty-year period.

One striking characteristic of Saint Domingue's general population was its large and ever-increasing sector of free people of color. Nearly as large as the white population the almost 25,000 free people of color provided an unparalleled outlet for runaways, particularly skilled and/or female slaves, who fled to city centers attempting to pass themselves off as a member of the free colored segment of Saint Dominguan society. On the other hand, as coffee plantations were being carved out of the mountainside, this may have limited the opportunities for marronage. It is also important to remember that forty percent of the total population lived in the North.

Table 3-2 presents the general contours of the data drawn from *Les Affiches Américaines* in the form of annual totals of total recorded maroons.²⁹ These precise annual totals are compared to Jean Fouchard's rough tallies (descriptions of maroons) presented in *The Haitian Maroons: Liberty or Death*. While Fouchard calculated rough estimates for total slaves *en*

²⁸ When compared with average annual population of 330,000 slaves in Saint Domingue during the period under discussion.

²⁹ *En marronage* is an ambiguous term, since the people in jail were no longer *en marronage*. A phrase like "total recorded maroons," is more accurate. Moreover, there is an uncertain relationship of its component figures respectively to the total who went absent and the total captured in a given year, and an additional problem of overlap (since some advertised also were jailed). Therefore, there is an artificial nature of the numbers in this category; nevertheless, it will serve as a heuristic device, since it is the best available figure that is likely to approach the unknowable total of slaves who fled each year.

marronage, these data reflect careful and methodical counting and tabulation attempting not to misrepresent the information contained in the newspapers. A concerted effort was made to eliminate duplicate advertisements from the data set.³⁰

David Geggus, in a similar study of the data from the year 1790, suggests that Fouchard conflated not only runaway advertisements and prison lists but also the published lists of *épaves*, (“strays”), those recaptured runaways who were not reclaimed from the jail and were subsequently advertised for sale.³¹ Furthermore, Fouchard also used data from other newspapers, which duplicated those in *Les Affiches Américaines*,³² and he may not have taken into account that fact that duplicate advertisements also appeared within the same newspaper.³³ These oversights may have led Fouchard to count individual slaves multiple times. This oversight, coupled with the strong political overtones of his arguments has generated much criticism by more empirical historians in the late twentieth-century. However, this criticism of his methodology may have been unjustified as Table 3-2 suggests that the totals presented by Fouchard are not particularly exaggerated except for 1781 and 1790. In fact, he even appears to have under-estimated for 1771, 1774, and 1783. Nevertheless, Fouchard’s figures are not relatively accurate with a fluctuation between an over-count of 72% and an undercount of 35%. There is also a large distortion of the 1790 figure which led to an artificial “upsurge” in runaways just prior to the slave revolt. Finally, though the apparent size of the decline in 1781 is rather surprising, the fact there was a decline is not remotely surprising, nor that there was a post-war recovery. Neither Fouchard’s data nor my own suggest any large increase in the

³⁰ While some slaves may have appeared in both the advertisements and the jailed lists, the two data sets have been combined to illustrate the broader picture of *marronage* in Saint Domingue.

³¹ The period of time before a slave was resold varied from two to six months.

³² This is only applicable to years after 1789 when other colonial newspapers were being published in Saint Domingue.

³³ Geggus, “On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution,” 114.

maroon population except for a few explicit cases that may be explained by particular circumstances to be discussed below.

This data set offers a number of general observations. First, during the period from 1770 to 1790 the annual total of recorded fugitives doubled from 1,297 in 1770 to 2,651 in 1790. As mentioned earlier the general slave population had also more than doubled during the same period from around 200,000 to nearly 500,000. Thus, this general increase in the maroon population must be viewed in light of the general population increase. However, Debiens has suggested, that this apparent increase may have been a result of the increased circulation and publication of the newspaper itself. Otherwise, it may have also been a result in the increased effectiveness of the rural police force.

Second, three periods have marked fluctuations: between 1777 and 1781 a forty-two percent decrease is observable; between 1781 and 1783 the total rebounded by thirty-six percent only to increase even more during the period 1783-1785 by over fifty percent. The mid-1780s average figure of around 2,250 total recorded maroons remains relatively constant until the eve of the Haitian Revolution. These data run contrary to Fouchard's claims. While these data support Fouchard's claim that marronage increased steadily during the last thirty years of slavery and sharply after 1784, it does offer a counterpoint in that that sharp increase was followed by a relatively stable period when marronage continued to increase by only small increments. Thus, it is hard to suggest a rising tide in maroon activity caused by proto-revolutionary elements. Ultimately, Fouchard's main contention is that all marronage including those incidents of *petit marronage*, which may not be represented in these data, indicated some type of pre-revolutionary collective consciousness, though the bases of this assertion remains unclear. Fouchard suggest that short-term flights were not always the behavior of the individual timid,

frightened slave but also of many aggressive, determined slaves feeling their way along the road of freedom.³⁴

It appears that 1785 saw a sharp increase of marronage in both advertisements and jailed lists across all regions. During the decade before the Haitian Revolution, Saint Domingue achieved its greatest economic potential. In this period exports were at their height, and slave imports averaged nearly 30,000 per year. Contemporary sources make note of this sharp increase in 1785. In November of that year a Saint Dominguan merchant expressed his growing concern that, “the number of maroons increases everyday and their audacity even more so...soon whites would be held up on the highway.”³⁵ However, Geggus has suggested that “such complaints were as old as the colony and in this instance were directed toward the withdrawal of recent liberal legislation on slavery.”³⁶ Yet, the data seems to support this contemporary complaint. The merchant wrote just a year after *l’ordonnance sur les procureurs, 3 décembre, 1784*, was issued. This ordinance gave slaves in Saint Domingue the right to complain about their masters’ treatment and the conditions in which they worked. This is the legislation to which Geggus refers. The law generated great alarm within the ruling class of Saint Domingue. A report from the *Chambre d’Agriculture* in June 1785 seems to indicate a growing concern over increasing marronage as well. Further complicating the matter, in September 1786, the new governor wrote that marronage had been decreasing for two years and its incidence had probably never been so low. The data extrapolated from *Les Affiches* suggests otherwise. Nevertheless, the governor repeated his claim in August of 1787 despite the activities of a small group of fugitives in the mountains of Port Margot. He goes on to suggest that the great majority of

³⁴ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 248.

³⁵ Maurice Begouën-Demeaux, *Stanislas Foäche: Mémorial d’une famille du Havre*, (Le Havre, Impr. M. Étaix, 1948), 110.

³⁶ Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 71.

marronage cases were short term and local.³⁷ Again, if the governor was referring to overt actions from maroon communities, then his assessment seems well grounded and his appraisal of marronage as a short term and local phenomenon is perhaps accurate as the data suggests.

Another factor that may have increased marronage was the circulating rumor that the governor was negotiating with le Maniel maroon community. Colonial administrators of both the Spanish and French colonies signed a treaty with this group of around 100 maroons living in the frontier region of Bahoruco.³⁸ This could have encouraged other slaves to flee while also distressing the white planter class who typically thought the only way to deal with maroons was to eliminate them. Nevertheless, as Geggus has suggested, it must have been increasingly difficult to become a successful rural maroon after the enormous expansion of coffee cultivation in the mountains that began at mid-century, the extradition treaty in 1777 with Santo Domingo, and le Maniel treaty of 1785. It comes as no surprise that maroon band activity might have decreased at this time.³⁹ Nevertheless, maroons, while not drastically increasing, consistently appeared in *Les Affiches* up until the Haitian Revolution.

While the annual general totals offer insights into the fugitive slave population, they also mask issues of regional variation that must still be considered. As separate editions of colonial Saint Domingue's newspaper were published in both the North (Cap Français) and South/West (Port-au-Prince) the data can easily be presented by region as well. This is of particular importance in distinguishing the North Province, where the great slave uprising was soon to take place from the West and South Provinces where the slave revolution developed more slowly. Table 3-3 presents the general contours of the maroon population in terms of regional variations.

³⁷ Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 71.

³⁸ Dubois, *Avengers of the New World*, 54.

³⁹ Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 74.

In general, the total recorded maroons appear to be increasing intermittingly in both regions over this twenty-year period.⁴⁰ However, in the South/West during the period from 1777 to 1781 the number of total recorded maroons dropped drastically by fifty percent. From that point the total recorded maroons in the South/West continually increased until 1788 only to decline slightly in 1790. In the North, 1781 also marked a low-point in total recorded maroons from that point until 1790 the totals steadily increased. However, except for 1772, 1781, and 1783 the total number of entries is higher in the South/West than the North. It appears the North experienced more marronage during the early part of the period under examination and for reasons mentioned earlier successful flight may have been becoming increasing difficult. Moreover the total recorded maroons is slightly greater in the South/West than the total in the North. More specifically, the number of advertisements in the North decreased during the period from 1783 to 1790 after the total steadily increased during the period from 1770 to 1785. The year 1785 as in the South/West, marks a high point in advertisements over the twenty-year period. This decrease is paradoxical because previous historians have assumed the numbers in the North should illustrate a marked increase up until the eve of the revolution. One possible explanation for this decline may be attributed to an increase in advertising rates.

Geggus has suggested that continuity is also difficult to find between maroon activity and the revolution in terms of geography. He suggests that the areas where Fouchard states maroon bands were present on the eve of the revolution were not those where the slave revolt broke out; in fact they tended to be the districts where the slave regime remained intact the longest. Geggus has also suggested that the newspaper advertisements, which have nothing to do with the activities of maroon bands, suggest a somewhat higher incidence of marronage in the North

⁴⁰ Forty percent of Saint Domingue's population lived in the North during this period.

Province than elsewhere.⁴¹ The evidence does not necessarily bear this out however. Further research called for by Geggus has now proven, as far as the publication of slaves *en marroange* is concerned, that maroons in the South/West outnumber those in the North in total, for every year in the 1780s and majority of the remainder of the data set. This seems logical as 60% of the total population lived in the Southern and Western Provinces.

While the Haitian argument is that both *petit* and *grand* marronage facilitated the development of communication networks to organize and carry out the only successful slave revolt in history, slaves had similar opportunities to organize and gather that were known to the white planter class. In fact, the supposed organizing ceremony of Bois Caïman was an event known to a number of white planters. Nevertheless, the data for those being advertised as fugitives reveals that the Haitian school's "article of faith" has little evidentiary basis. As for the number of advertisements in the South/West Provinces, there appears to be a bit more variation. The low point in advertisements for the South/West in 1781 with only 137 slaves advertised as fugitives. Before and after that year the number of advertisement fluctuates between 197 and 390.

The "jailed" totals may offer a more insightful window into the past. In the North there are two waves of notable increase separated by a marked decrease in the middle. For the period from 1770 to 1777 the number of jailed maroons increased steadily. However, in 1781 a sharp decrease in the number jailed is observed. For the remainder of the data set, the period from 1781 to 1790, the number of fugitives jailed most certainly increases, but that increase may not have been of "revolutionary" proportions. However, from 1781 to 1790 the number of those jailed did indeed triple. As for the South/West Provinces one can observe a similar pattern. During the period from 1770 to 1777, the evidence illustrates a steady increase, in fact an

⁴¹ Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, 72.

increase that is proportionally higher than that of the North. The year 1781 marked the same notable decrease in the South and West as well. The common decrease was also followed by an uninterrupted increase in jailed fugitives during the period from 1781 to 1788 only to fall slightly during 1790. Citing Father Cabon, Fouchard claims that in February 1775 the detachments of the colonial militia at Croix des Bouquets, Grands Bois, Roucheblanche, and Fonds Parisien were strengthened to combat possible maroon activity but probably for the safety of the colonial on the whole.⁴² While 1775 is not specifically analyzed, Table 3-3 shows a marked increase in the number of jailed fugitives in the South and West between 1774, before the strengthening of local police forces, and 1777.

The three most obvious questions surrounding this data set center around 1777 when total recorded maroons were at a relative high and 1781 when that high was followed by a relative low, only to sharply increase in 1785 and remain relatively constant until the eve of the Haitian Revolution. What occurred during this eight-year period? There must have been larger forces at work. The colonial struggle of the American colonies certainly affected life in the Caribbean islands in terms of supplying goods, slave importations, and viable trade partners. As for 1785, it appears that internal influences in Saint Domingue were affecting change throughout the colony. Several factors have been offered that help explain this marked increase in maroon activity but ultimately those offered are merely speculative. However, one concrete influence of the American struggle for independence was the halt of the African slave trade to Saint Domingue. Beginning 1779, due to the insecurity on the high seas slave ships entering Saint Dominguan ports became practically non-existent. In fact, only four vessels entered the harbors of Saint Domingue, at least those that were legally sanctioned and published in *Les Affiches*.⁴³ In 1780,

⁴² Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 327.

⁴³ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 130.

Saint Domingue continued to feel the effects of the war and of a blockade effectively cutting off the arrival of slave ships. Hostilities continued through 1781 and maritime transport continued to experience the same difficulties. The slave trade was reduced to the rare ship able run the blockade, and a few neutral ships, perhaps Danish or Spanish, bringing meager contingents of Africans after leaving Havana.⁴⁴ As the war ended, the slave trade to Saint Domingue began to recover. From 1783 to the eve of the Haitian Revolution, Saint Domingue became the leading destination for African slaves with nearly 30,000 annual importations. In the end, the connection between marronage and slave importation is tenuous at best. The impact of the American War of Independence and slaves classified as *nouveaux* is addressed in the following chapter.

This chapter serves as the foundation for more focused and specific discussions to come. The main objective has been to present the most general contours of the maroon population during the last two decades prior to the Haitian Revolution, the source from which that data was drawn, and that data's ability to inform our knowledge of pre-revolutionary Saint Domingue. This chapter also sought to address the question of the maroons' impact on the revolution particularly the question of whether or not there was a rising momentum in this phenomenon prior to 1791. While the number of maroons did indeed increase it was relative to the increasing general slave population. Moreover, it was in the Southern and Western provinces where a marked increase is most noticeable. This is significant because it was in the North where the great slave uprising took place, while in the South and West colonial administrators were able to maintain relative authority for a number of years while the North was essentially lost. Once an article of faith for the Haitian school, the theory of a rising-tide in marronage must now be abandoned.

⁴⁴ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 131-32.

While understanding marronage in relation to the Haitian Revolution is important, we must now turn our attention to more specific and under-studied aspects of marronage in Saint Domingue. Each of the nearly twenty thousand entries offers a unique story. Issues of gendered variation in the maroon population will be addressed. The experiences of a multitude of different African and *créole* individuals can also offer various insights in the socio-economic composition of the maroon population. Moreover, the experiences of foreign *créoles* will contribute to the growing scholarship on Black Atlantic identity. The next chapter explores these specific elements of Saint Domingue's very dynamic and diverse maroon population.

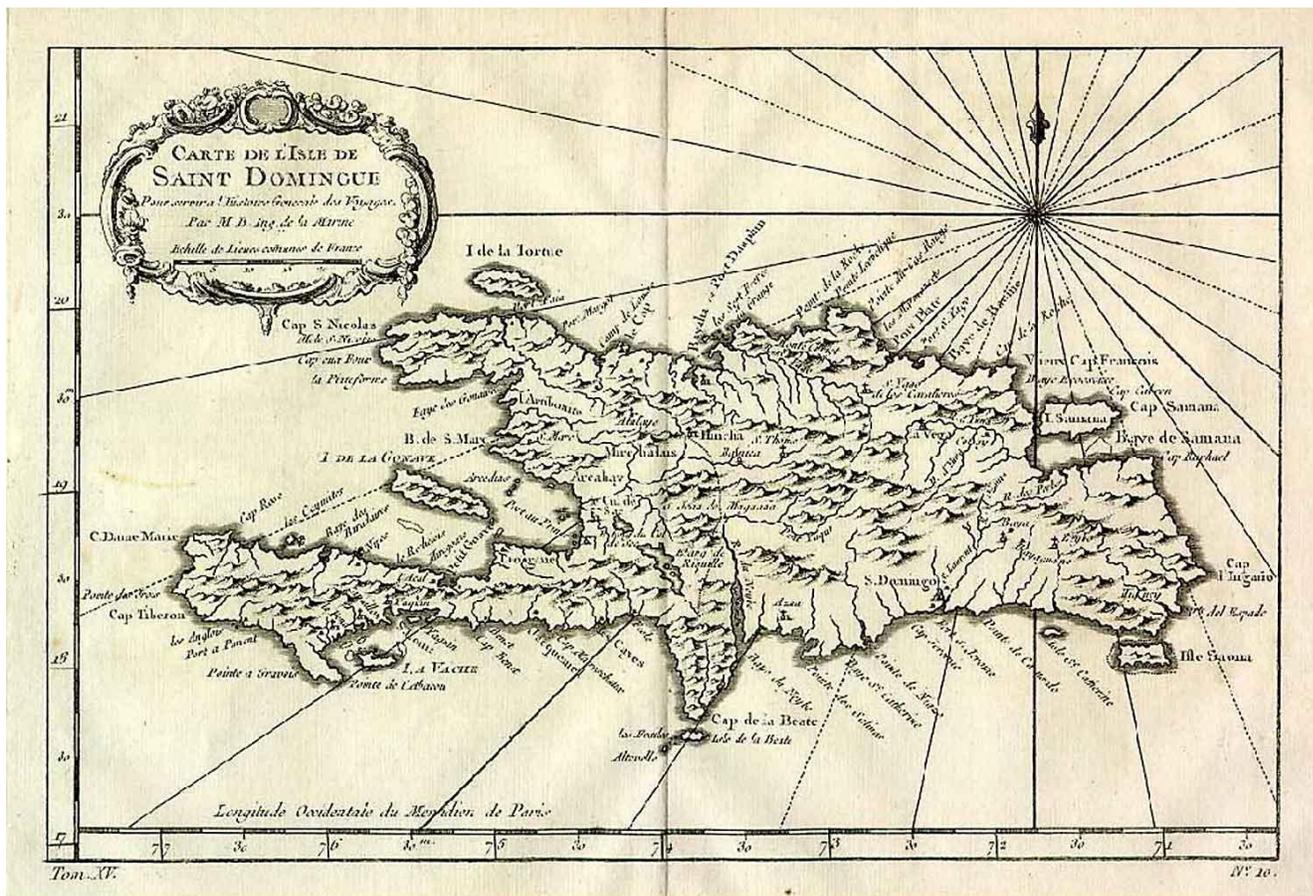


Figure 3-1. Geographical Map of Saint Domingue.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Map Taken from “Cartes et plans de Saint Domingue: Ancienne colonie française aujourd’hui appelée HAÏTI, Une Collection d’images numériques rassemblée mise en forme,” for J. P. Manuel
 <<http://www.rootsweb.com/~htiwgw/cartes/images/sd_bellin/sd_Bellin-1758.jpg>> accessed January 1, 2008.

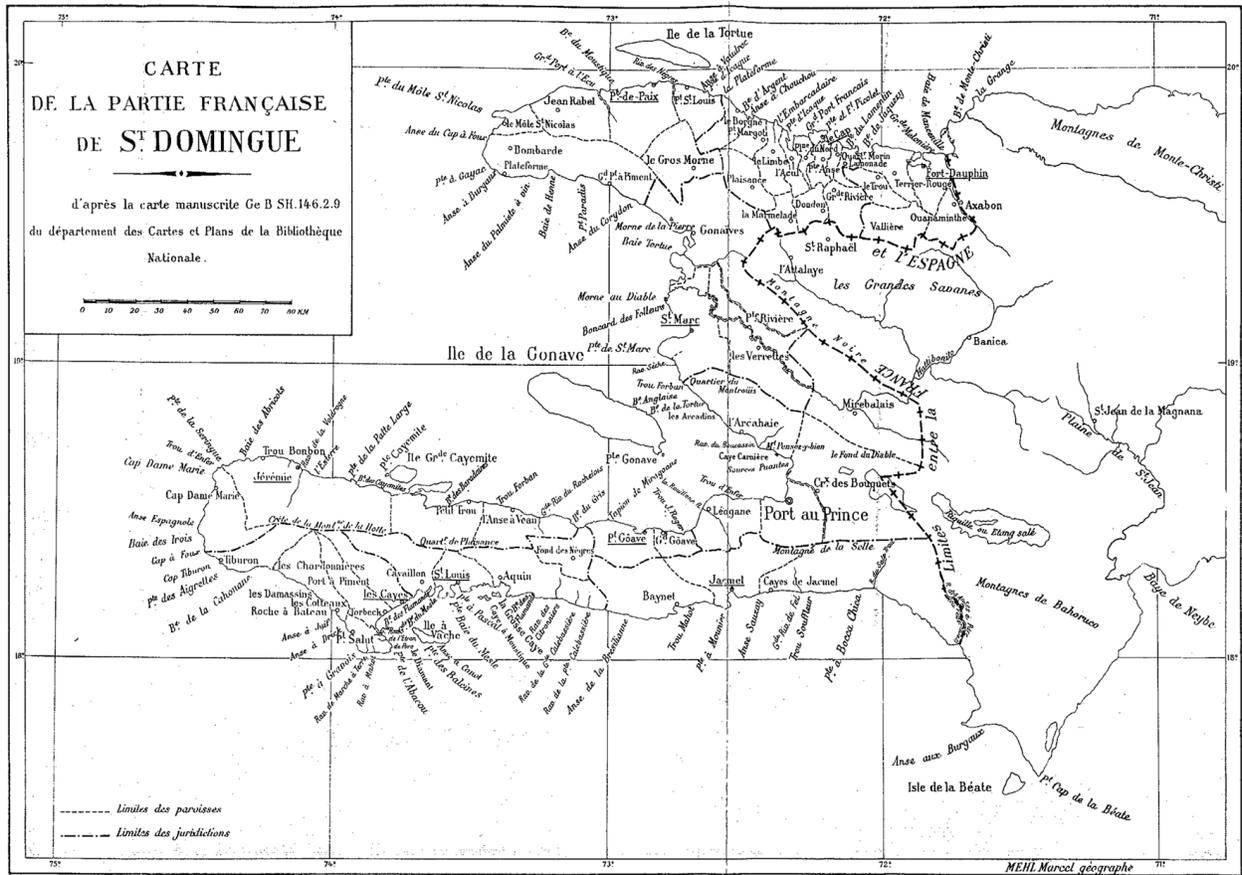


Figure 3-2. Provinces and Towns in Saint Domingue.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Map taken from "Cartes et plans de Saint Domingue: Ancienne colonie française aujourd'hui appelée HAÏTI, Une Collection d'images numériques rassemblée mise en forme," for J. P. Manuel
 <<http://www.rootsweb.com/~htiwgw/cartes/images/sd_bellin/sd_Bellin-1758.jpg>> accessed January 1, 2008.

Table 3-1. Saint Domingue's Total Population Estimates.⁴⁷

YEAR	WHITES	FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR	SLAVES
1771	18,418	6,180	219,698
1775	20,438	5,897	261,471
1780	20,543	10,427	251,471
1786	25,000	15,000	340,000
1787	24,192	19,632	364,196
1788	27,718	21,808	405,528
1789	30,826	24,848	434,429

Table 3-2. Comparative Annual Totals

Year of publication	Advertisements for the return of fugitive slaves	Captured runaways published in jailed lists	Total Recorded Maroons	(+/-) % of fluctuation from previous year	Fouchard's Totals ⁴⁸
1770	402	895	1,297	N/A	1,300
1771	407	877	1,284	-1%	950
1772	446	864	1,310	+2%	No Entry
1774	533	1,001	1,534	+17%	1,000
1777	450	1,458	1,908	+24%	2,000
1781	391	712	1,103	-42%	1,900
1783	684	820	1,504	+36%	1,386
1785	830	1,521	2,351	+56%	2,400
1787 ⁴⁹	621	1,695	2,316	-1%	2,500
1788 ⁵⁰	620	2,025	2,645	+14%	2,800
1790 ⁵¹	632	2,019	2,651	+ < 1%	3,500
TOTAL	6,016	13,887	19,903	-----	-----

⁴⁷ Table taken from Pierre Pluchon's *Vaudou Sorciers Empoisonneurs de Saint-Domingue à Haïti*, (Paris: Editions Karthala, 1987), 307.

⁴⁸ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 126-37.

⁴⁹ Totals for 1787 taken from personal correspondence with Professor David Geggus from unpublished research and were confirmed but not specifically tabulated.

⁵⁰ Totals for 1788 taken from personal correspondence with Professor David Geggus from unpublished research and were confirmed but not specifically tabulated.

⁵¹ All numbers for 1790 are taken from Geggus, "On the eve of the Haitian Revolution: Slave Runaways in Saint Domingue in the year 1790." After personal correspondence with Professor David Geggus, we discovered he over-counted one slave on the jailed lists from the Northern Province. The data set has been adjusted according throughout this study.

Table 3-3. Regional Distribution of Marronage

Year of Publication	Northern Province		Regional Total of Maroons	South/West Provinces		Regional Total of Maroons	Overall Annual Totals
	Adverts	Jailed		Adverts	Jailed		
1770	162	538	700	240	357	597	1,297
1771 ⁵²	172	466	638	235	411	646	1,284
	(219)	(591)	(810)	(244)	(427)	(671)	(1,481)
1772	249	543	792	197	321	518	1,310
1774	247	463	710	286	538	824	1,534
1777	166	635	801	284	823	1,107	1,908
1781	254	390	644	137	322	459	1,103
1783	407	394	801	277	426	703	1,504
1785	440	661	1,101	390	860	1,250	2,351
1787 ⁵³	295	772	1,067	326	923	1,249	2,316
1788	333	910	1,243	287	1,115	1,402	2,645
1790 ⁵⁴	309	1,005	1,314	323	1,014	1,337	2,651
TOTAL	3,034	6,777	9,802	2,982	7,110	10,092	19,903

⁵² The numbers that appear in parenthesis for 1771 are estimations. These estimates serve as a possible representation of the *actual* number of advertisements and jailed lists that may have been published during this period. This is necessary due to missing issues of the weekly newspaper. For *Les Affiches Américaines*, editions 1-11 are missing (Jan. 6th to March 16th) for *Supplément aux Les Affiches* editions 32 and 33 are missing (Aug. 7th and 14th). Because this approach is rather problematic, the remaining years of inquiry were selected based on their completeness. From the available weekly issues in the year in question a weekly regional average of both jailed list and advertisements was deduced and applied accordingly. These numbers only serve as a suggestion to the actual figures.

⁵³ During 1787 and 1788, *Les Affiches Américaines* was published bi-weekly. However, a relatively small number of the original *Supplément aux Affiches Américaines* remain extant. Yet, another supplement appears under a different name.

⁵⁴ All numbers for 1790 were taken from Geggus, "On the eve of the Haitian Revolution."

CHAPTER 4 ETHNIC AND GENDER COMPOSITION IN SAINT DOMINGUE'S MAROON POPULATION

The maroons of Saint Domingue were a varied and dynamic group. Being indentified by at least 165 separate African ethnic labels or geographic locations, every province of Saint Domingue, and several French, English, Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese colonies, the maroons of Saint Domingue were an extremely heterogeneous lot.¹ Some slaves were in the colony for only a few days before taking flight while others were born, raised, and trained in a specific occupation before pursuing life as a fugitive. The reasons for flight and the opportunities and hindrances faced by these diverse individuals have already been discussed. This chapter will illuminate the ethnic and gendered composition of the maroon population. It will also offer insight into the success and failure rates of slaves *en marronage*.

The slaves of Saint Domingue worked mainly on two types of plantations: *sucreries*, sugar plantations and *caféières*, coffee plantations. For most of the period under study, sugar-estate work forces or *ateliers* were largest in the North Province of Saint Domingue, which produced the majority of the colony's semi-refined sugar. Their numbers were slightly smaller in the West Province, which mainly made muscovado, and were smallest in the South, which

¹ Along with origin and the sex of the fugitive, age was another factor to take into consideration. Yet, the data regarding age are very incomplete. An average of fugitives would do little to explain the impact of age on the propensity to run away. The only conclusion regarding age suggested by the advertisements was that everyone from the 65-year-old créole to the enfant *nouveau* carried off by his or her mother, participated in marronage. No particular age fared better as a fugitive. The majority of runaways fell in the 18-30 range, but many fugitives were older. Adolescent fugitives accounted for the smallest percentage of runaways. There are very few slaves *en marronage* under 15 years of age. Obtaining a complete picture of "age" in Saint Domingue slave society is difficult due to the incomplete age data regarding those fugitives who entered the jail and those considered *nouveaux*. Nevertheless, in quite a number of both the jailed and missing advertisements the slave's height is included along with his or her age. These together could provide data for one to compare nutrition across temporal, geographical, and social lines. However, at the present moment this line of inquiry will remain unexplored.

was the slowest of the three provinces to develop a plantation economy. Across the three provinces, the average sugar plantation had a labor force of just under 200 slaves.²

Coffee plantations were considerably more diverse than sugar estates. They demanded far less capital investment, and were generally smaller. The average *atelier*, or workforce was about one-quarter the size of the average slaveholding in sugar cultivation. Plantations were much smaller in the North than in the other provinces.³

On the coastal-plains of Saint Domingue it was easier for enslaved individuals to mingle than it was for those in the mountainous regions, which had half the population density and where travel was difficult. However, in the intensely cultivated mountainous regions of the Northern Province the situation differed little from-in the plains because of the relative proximity of the estates and the development of infrastructure. On the pioneer settlements of the western and southern highlands slaves lived much more isolated lives.⁴ In the late eighteenth century, most of Saint Domingue's coffee plantations were of recent foundation and were worked by recently imported slaves; resulting in a generally larger African-born presence on coffee plantations than on sugar estates. The Northern Province was the most creolized and had the smallest proportion of adult men.⁵ It is important to bear in mind these distinctions when evaluating both the ethnic and gender composition of the maroon population.

This chapter addresses several specific components of the maroon population, beginning with the gendered composition of these runaways, followed by the incidence of *créoles*, both local and foreign, and finally the ethnic variety among African-born maroons. Because historians

² Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee Cultivation in Saint Domingue and the Shaping of the Slave Labor Force," in *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, ed. Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993,) 74-75.

³ Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee," 76-77.

⁴ Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee," 78.

⁵ Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee," 78.

have often focused on the recently arrived Africans in the maroon population when making claims regarding the impact of marronage on the Haitian Revolution, the *nouveaux* population will be explored with special attention. This demographic analysis will reveal various trends in the success and failure rates of various groups engaged in marronage. Thus, the analysis provided in this chapter will illuminate the historiographic debate regarding the frequency of marronage among the African-born and *créole*.⁶

As Table 4-1 shows, the majority of the runaways were of African origins, but were not exclusively new arrivals. Of the African sample, Congolese slaves comprised the majority. Their frequent appearance in both advertisements and jailed lists was simply a result of their numerical prominence in the colony during the latter part of the eighteenth-century. Obviously, slaves who had been born in Saint Domingue or various other places around the New World make up the remainder of the sample.

The jailed lists and advertisements do not identify the ethnicity of every slave listed. 12% of slaves went unidentified. Although the great majority of these individuals were likely of African origins, many of the unidentified slaves may have been local *créoles* known by name or other distinguishing characteristics in the various regions of the colony. Moreover, several individuals of unknown origins were identified in the newspaper by their specific training in a craft or trade, suggesting creolized origins. Overall, Africans comprised just over two-thirds of the total sample while local *créoles* accounted for less than a quarter. Foreign *créoles* accounted for less than 5% of the total runaways. More specific analysis of these segments of the maroon population is provided below.

⁶ Some historians assert that newly arrived African slaves were the most likely to take flight, while other historians suggest that *créole* slaves, with a better knowledge of the colony were the most frequent participants in marronage.

Men and Women

Basic to understanding marronage in Saint Domingue is attaining a better picture of the sex ratio of the fugitive slave population. Geggus has noted that the colonial censuses show less gender imbalance in the slave population than historians usually have assumed, and that the population was more evenly balanced than the colonial censuses suggest. He accredits this to the under-registration of the oldest slaves, who were disproportionately female. Indeed, Saint Domingue's planters did import more males than females from Africa, but higher mortality rates suffered by males and by Africans in general worked as a balancing factor.⁷ Although the exact ratio of males to females remains somewhat uncertain, the impact of females on enslaved society was great whether they were demographically equal or not. However, the position of enslaved women in Saint Domingue was quite paradoxical. Although enslaved women may have been afforded numerous advantages in Saint Dominguan society generally, they were also subjected to a broad array of abuses within the patriarchal society in which they lived. Nevertheless, women were essential to the agricultural and cultural development of plantation society in Saint Domingue. The study of women in the French Caribbean is still in its infancy but much of what does exist is focused on Saint Domingue.

Historians often assert that gender was not a consideration in the allocation of most tasks; in the French Caribbean women engaged in hard labor and the allocation of tasks conditioned women's responses to slavery, including resistance.⁸ Women on plantations in the French Antilles performed a variety of tasks, but they were mostly relegated to the fields where they outnumbered men in the gangs; however, men maintained their influence in artisan crafts;

⁷ Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee," 79.

⁸ Moitt, Bernard, "Women, Work, and Resistance in the French Caribbean during Slavery, 1700-1848," in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World: A Student Reader*, edited by Verne Shepherd and Hilary McD. Beckles (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2000,) 1017.

coopering, carpentry, masonry, and blacksmithing, sugar-boiling, coach-driving amongst other specialized occupations. The gangs of field slaves were broken into three groups. The first was reserved for the strongest males and females who did the majority of the difficult work, the second gang also performed a number a difficult tasks while also being responsible for the cultivation of provision grounds and was reserved for newly arrived slaves, the weak, pregnant women, and adolescent children. The third gang performed janitorial duties around the mill and was usually driven by a woman who not only asserted control but was also responsible for the care of and socialization of young slaves into the slave system.⁹ In a study of sugar and coffee estates, Geggus suggests that the “typical gang of seventy field slaves” was one-half Africans, equally divided between males and females, about ten were creole men, and more than one-third young creole women.¹⁰

Although gender imbalance in the colony was not extreme, marronage in Saint Domingue was dominated by males. Explanations for this pattern of resistance remain largely male centered and unsatisfactory. Bernard Moitt asserts that the issues are more complex than they appear. Traditional explanations imply that men were simply better able to endure the hardships of life on the frontier or were historically less restricted in both Africa and the Caribbean. Moitt suggests that women may have been less mobile than men in African, but in both Africa and the Caribbean they were the primary agricultural producers. It is likely that this was also the case in maroon communities in the Caribbean.¹¹

⁹ Moitt, “Women, Work, and Resistance,” 1019.

¹⁰ Geggus, “Sugar and Coffee,” 88

¹¹ Bernard Moitt, *Women and Slavery in the French Antilles, 1635-1848*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 133.

Mobility has also been linked to maturity. Arlette Gautier has suggested that children and maintaining familial bonds served as deterrents to would-be fugitives.¹² The advertisements and jailed lists provide surprising information about female fugitives. It appears that neither pregnancy nor the age of their children seem to have prevented some women in Saint Domingue from running away, although, the majority of women *en marronage* were without child.¹³ However, some women did flee with their children for example an unidentified woman was jailed,

*Au Cap, le 29 du mois dernier, une Nègresse nommée Zaire, avec son enfant griffe à la mamelle, laquelle a dit appartenir à M. Dion, en cette ville.*¹⁴

At Cap, the 29 of the last month, a Nègresse named *Zaire*, with a nursing child said to belong to Mr. Dion, in this city.

Another example of women taking flight with children is

*Une Nègresse nommée Françoise, nation Nago, étampée P BELLY AU CAP, est partie maronne le 17 de ce mois avec deux enfants, l'un nommé Jean-Louis, âgé de cinq ans, et l'autre à la mamelle. Ceux qui reconnoîtront ladite Nègresse, sont priés de la faire arrêter et d'en donner avis à Pierre belly, Tailleur, rue Espagnol, ou sur son habitation au Fonds-Lodin: il y a recompense.*¹⁵

A Nègresse named Françoise, nation Nago, branded P BELLY AU CAP, went maroon on the 17th of this month with two children, the one said person John-Louis, five years old, and the other a nursing enfant. Those that know of this Nègresse, are prayed to tell it to stop and give some notice to Pierre belly, Tailor, Spanish street, or his dwelling at the Fonds-Lodin: there is a reward.

Women also fled with their small family units like,

*Jean, Créole, âgé de 22 ans; Marie-Louise aussi créole, âgée 28 ans, grande et maigre; Lisette, sa fille, âgée de 12 ans, et Jeannit, son fils, âgé de 8 ans, sont sortis de l'Habitation de M. Provost, sise à la Coupe-du-Limbé, la nuit du 1er au 2 de ce mois, et ont emporté avec eux leurs effets.*¹⁶

¹² Moitt, *Women and Slavery*, 133.

¹³ During the twenty-year period understudy ten women were identified as pregnant and fifteen were nursing an infant, usually of mixed racial descent.

¹⁴ February 5th 1770, Supplément aux Affiches Américaines

¹⁵ April 24th 1781, Les Affiches Américaines

¹⁶ January 13th 1770, Supplément aux Affiches Américaines

Jean, Creole, 22 years old; Marie-Louise also creole, 28 years old, big and lean; Lisette, his girl, 12 years old, and Jeannit, his son, 8 years old, went out of the Dwelling of Mr. Provost, fled to the Coupe-du-Limbé, the night of the 1st or 2nd of this month, and has taken their effects with them.

Another example on a family unit *en marronage*:

*Jacques, nation Cotocolly, âgé de 50 ans: René, Créole, âgé de 18 ans: Manon, nation Ibo, âgée de 40 ans: Narcisse son fils, Créole âgé de 12 ans: Joseph, idem, âgé de 4 ans: Catherine, idem, âgée de 7 ans: Marie-Louise, Créole, âgée de 9 ans: François, même nation, fils d'une Nègresse libre, âgée de 12 ans; et Adelaïde sa soeur, âgée de 9 ans, sont marons depuis le 25 dudit mois de Décembre dernier. Cuex qui les reconnoîtront, sont priés de les faire arrêter et donner avis à Mrs Sabourin freres, Huissiers au Boucassin. Il y aura recompense.*¹⁷

Jacques, nation Cotocolly, 50 years old: René, creole, 18 years old: Manon, nation Ibo, 40 years old: Narcisse his son, 12 years old Creole: *Joseph*, also creole, 4 years old: *Catherine*, creole, 7 years old: Marie-Louise, Creole, 9 years old: François, creole, son of a free-black Nègresse, 12 years old; and Adelaïde his sister, 9 years old, are maroons since the 25 day in the month of last December. Those that know of them are requested to have them arrested and to inform Mr. *Sabourin* brothers, court bailiffs in Boucassin. There will be a reward.

While these examples highlight a sense of collective marronage, it is important to remember that these examples only occur intermittently during the twenty-year and by and large marronage was solitary endeavor. However, these examples do highlight the ability of enslaved individuals to form and maintain personal relationships *en marronage*.

Overall, females accounted for 14 % of the total sample. Smaller independent annual studies by Gautier, Debien, Fouchard, and Geggus have returned percentages of female runaways ranging from 12 % to 15-20%. Table 4-2 reveals that women appeared less frequently in jailed lists than in runaway advertisements. The advertisements appear to be constant in both regions of the colony. However, the table does demonstrate that those advertisements increased in appearance as the Haitian Revolution approached.

¹⁷ March 20th 1771, Les Affiches Américaines

This increase is probably the result of growing towns and cities, places that afforded refuge for female runaways. It is also possible however that this swell was a reflection of an increase in the publication and circulation of the newspaper. While the number of women in the advertisements increases during the years approaching the Haitian Revolution, the percentage of women in advertisements remains close to 15%. However, in both 1783 and 1785 women comprised nearly one-fifth of total advertisements. In 1790, the percentage (13%) of women in advertisements drops to an absolute low. Suggesting a higher rate of men running away as the revolution approached.

As for the captured female population, the percentages remained fairly consistent, hovering around 13% of the total captured population. If women were more prone to flee toward cities rather than the mountains then it is logical to find more women jailed in the North than the South/West because the North had the largest city into which many female runaways may have attempted to assimilate. On average, for every three women jailed in the North, one was advertised as missing compared to a ratio of 2:1 in the South/West. It is important to remember while Le Cap in the North was the largest city in Saint Domingue, the South/West offered a variety of smaller towns where the population may have been less familiar with local slaves or even more willing to employ fugitives because of a lack of an urban workforce.

Women comprised 12% of total recorded maroons in the North and 9% in the South/West. Total number of women in the North was nearly 20% greater than in the South/West. The North had more female slaves in both advertisements and jailed lists. Geggus suggests that the South/West contained more women than the North; if this is true then it seems that women in the North, despite fewer numbers, were more prone to flight and recapture.¹⁸ It appears that a woman's chance of escape were slightly better in the South/West than in the North

¹⁸ Geggus, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution," 118.

because the region contained fewer female slaves in the total slave population but those fewer women were re-captured proportionally fewer times.¹⁹

Créoles

While women held a distinctive position within both the fugitive and general populations in Saint Domingue, so too, did *créoles*, those born locally or within the Caribbean. *Créoles* possessed many qualities that could improve their status within slave society. Moreover, much of their specialized knowledge could be employed to facilitate their resistance to bondage through flight. Local *créoles* might know not only creolized French, but continental French as well, while foreign *créoles* might have had Spanish, Dutch, and/or English in their linguistic repertoires. The ability to speak a variety of foreign languages allowed for broader opportunities in marronage. Foreign language skills also illustrate the mobility of certain slaves. Foreign *créoles*' knowledge of the outside world and the opportunities for freedom that ports throughout the Caribbean offered also helped transform maroons into free persons of color. A broader linguistic base, knowledge of the outside world, their status as new-comers most surely made it easier to assume different identities. For example:

*Un Mulâtre, Créole, nommé Antoine, sans étampe, âgé d'environ 25 ans, taille de 5 pieds un pouce, extrêmement vêlu, bon Matelot et parlant, bon Français, Anglois, Hollandois, est parti marron de Saint-Marc le 28 du mois dernier. Ceux qui le reconnoîtront, sont priés de le faire arrêter et d'en donner avis Mrs Corpron et Patte Négocians à Saint-Marc: il y aura recompense.*²⁰

A Mulatto, Creole, named Antoine, without a brand, about 25 years old, 5 *pieds* 1 *pouce*, extremely hairy, good Sailor and speaks, good French, English, Dutch, went maroon from *Saint-Marc* on the 28 of the last month. Those that know of him are requested to have him arrested and to give notice to Mrs Corpron and Patte Négocians in *Saint-Marc*: there will be a reward.

¹⁹ In his study of 1790, Geggus offered the same assertion but suggested that the data was incorrect and this apparent success was caused by ethnic differences. However, this much larger data set seems to prove otherwise. Using a regional ratio of “jailed to fled,” women in the South/West fared slightly better in flight during this twenty year period.

²⁰ October 17th 1770, Les Affiches Américaines

Antoine was probably not only light-skinned but also of prime age, and more than likely familiar with the port at Saint Marc. His ability to speak multiple languages coupled with his nautical acumen could have afforded him opportunities on various ships leaving port for any number of foreign colonies. Once aboard he could have assumed an identity as a free person of color, earned a wage and effectively used the system for his own gain. Antoine is only one of these industrious fugitives who attempted flight for a better life. Slaves of this sort must work against the Haitian school's idea of collective resistance aimed at revolutionary upheaval.

Another “nameless” fugitive that illustrates the interconnectedness of France and Saint

Domingue was

Un Mulâtre, créole de la Martinique, Menuisier sans étampe, âgé d'environ 30 ans, taille 5 pieds 2 à 3 pouces, sachant un peu l'Espagnol et l'Anglais, et ayant été en France, assez bien taille, mais d'une foible constitution, les yeux enfoncés belle jambe et bien fait, est maron depuis le 6 Août dernier. On prie ceux qui auront connoissance de ce Mulâtre de les faire arrêter et d'en donner avis à M. marchand fils, Négociant au Port-au-Prince: il y aura pour chacun 120 liv. de récompense, outre le prix ordinaire²¹

A Mulatto, creole of Martinique, Carpenter without brandings, about 30 years of age, 5 *pieds* 2 to 3 *pouces*, knows a little Spanish and English, and having been in France, of good height, but of a weak constitution, sunken eyes and beautiful and good legs, been maroon since last August 6. If one knows of this Mulatto are requested to have him arrested and give notice to the son of M. *Merchand*, Merchant of *Port-au-Prince*: there will be 120 livre reward, besides the ordinary price

Table 4-3 presents the general composition of the fugitive *créole* population in Saint Domingue during the period 1770-1790. In general, slaves born in the New World make up 20% of the total data set. Women comprised 13% of the total number of *créoles en marronage*.²²

Geggus suggests that creoles constituted about one-third of the adult slaves in Saint Domingue.

²¹ February 9th 1774, Les Affiches Américaines

²² The percentage of *créole* women *en marronage* steadily increased over the twenty-year period from 11% to 17% of the total *créoles en marronage*. This may have been a result of more attempts at marronage as cities grew larger and the crowds within became increasing ambiguous. On the other hand, it may simply be a result of increasing advertisements.

In his analysis of 1790, *créoles* account for less than one-fifth of the sample leading him to suggest that creoles were “clearly underrepresented” in marronage.²³ In every year, *créoles* were more frequently “missing” than “caught” and hence presumably more successful in escaping. Although the percentage of *créoles* in the total population was changing, it was always greater than the percentage of *créoles* among maroons. Thus, *créoles* were underrepresented in the maroon population. Ultimately, the data set suggests that *créoles* enjoyed particular success in flight. On the other hand, it may be suggested that *créoles* were simply less likely to flee perhaps due to the relatively elevated positions they enjoyed within the slave system. Ultimately, it is hard to say for certain whether *créoles* were either better *en marronage* or more likely not to participate *en marronage*. The generalizations of Table 4-3 mask regional variations which are the subject of Table 4-4.

In his analysis of various agricultural estates, David Geggus suggests that the Northern Province was more creolized than the Southern and Western provinces the regional breakdown of Table 4-4 speaks to that assertion. *Créoles* comprise 26% of all advertisements and 18% of those jailed across both regions. This seems to suggest that *créoles* may have enjoyed some success in evading re-capture. However, it is clear that *créoles* did not fare particularly well *en marronage* in the North because the number of *créoles* jailed in the North almost always exceeds the number advertised for as missing. In fact, in 1777 the number of *créoles* jailed in the North is four times as many advertised and in 1790 it is nearly twice as many. During the years of the American War of Independence, when the African slave trade to Saint Domingue nearly ceased, *créoles* represented nearly a third of the total recorded maroons. These years represented the height of the percentage of *créoles en marronage*. The *créole* percentage then declined up until the Haitian Revolution. It seems reasonable to suggest that with increasing numbers of Africans,

²³ Geggus, “On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution,” 119.

who were perhaps more easily caught, *créoles* began to maintain relative success in running away.

The *créole* segment of the population was not a monolithic group. To get a better understanding of the stratified nature of French colonial society, it is necessary to delineate the various groups under this general heading. Table 4-5 presents the “color breakdown” of the locally-born *créole* maroon population.

The vast majority of the locally-born *créoles* were black. Of the nearly 2,500 local *créoles* recorded only 12% were identified as “colored.” *Mulâtres* comprised nearly the entire sample of the colored population while *griffes*, children of black and mulatto parents, account for the small remainder of the local *créole* population. Only five *quarteroons* appear *en marronage* during this twenty year period under study, and not a single one appeared in jail. This is radically different from the 1790 figures, where the colored percentage (2%) was roughly what it was in the general population. Thus, suggesting that *créoles* took flight more frequently than once suggested by Geggus’s 1790 figures.

The composition of the foreign population is also interesting on several different levels. Table 4-6 presents the breakdown of the 575 foreign *créoles* tabulated during this period. Slaves from the British Caribbean including Jamaica, the Windward Islands, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Christophe, and Suriname comprise 37% of the total foreign *créole* population. Martinique and Guadeloupe provided another 24% of the sample. Foreign slaves from the Dutch Caribbean, typically Curaçao, constitute 18%, while the final 11% were from the Spanish Caribbean, Portuguese Brazil or Angola, and various places from the North American continent. Several slaves arrived in Saint Domingue from Louisiana, New England, and New York. While foreign *créoles* comprised only 19% of the total *créole* maroons recorded their presence in Saint

Domingue highlights the interconnectedness of the Atlantic World and the mobility of people, even those in bondage, across these vast trade networks.

The most notable aspect of Table 4-6 is the marked increase in foreign slaves *en marronage* after the American War of Independence. During the 1770s, foreign *créoles* were but only a small contingent of the total *créole* maroons recorded. However, by 1783 and 1785 their numbers had more than tripled. The majority (85%) of these foreign *créoles* were black while the remainder of the sample, mainly *mulâtres*, but several *griffes* and a few *quarteroons*, is accounted for by “colored” fugitives. A substantial number of black foreign *créoles* were jailed over the twenty-year period under study, but their “colored” counterparts maintained relative success *en marronage* as they rarely appear in the published jailed lists.

Specialists

Like Antoine, foreign and local *créoles* alike could often be “skilled workers,” trained in a variety of professions. Nearly fifty different occupations or artisan crafts, most of them held exclusively by male *créoles* were used to identify fugitive slaves. Similarly, but with less frequency, African-born men were also skilled laborers. Geggus suggests that about one-fifth of all slaves in Saint Domingue had an occupation other than that of field hand.²⁴ Also he contends that men were eight times more likely than women to escape the drudgery of field labor to gain a position of relative independence and responsibility. Very few women *en marronage* were identified by a skilled occupation.

In his sample, Africans made up more than one-third of sugar estate specialists on the eve of the revolution and a large majority of those on coffee estates. This is dramatically higher than the proportion of skilled Africans *en marronage*. Yet, as the data suggest for both the general slave population and those *en marronage*, there was a clear-cut preference for *créole* slaves,

²⁴ Geggus, “Sugar and Coffee,” 84.

particularly for the few jobs performed by women and for posts attached to the plantation house or allowing for travel off the plantation.²⁵ Nevertheless, certain African groups were generally praised by planters for other talents—Congos as domestics, craftsmen, and fishermen; Sénégalais as domestics and stockmen; and Bambaras also as craftsmen.²⁶

Many slaves who appear in the fugitive advertisements were identifiable by their unique skill set, many more also had more than one specialization listed.²⁷ For example,

*Un Negre Congo, nommé Cupidon âgé d'environ 27 ans, taille d'environ 5 pieds, Perruquier pour homme et pour femme, Cuisiner, Blanchisseur de Bas de foie et Joueur du violon. Ceux qui le reconnoîtront, sont priés de le faire arrêter et d'en donner avis à M. Cami sat-de-Mauroy, Négociant au Cap, à qui il appartient: il y aura récompense. Ledit Negre est marque petite-verole.*²⁸

A Negre Congo, named *Cupidon* about 27 years of age, around 5 *pieds* tall, Wigmaker for men and for women, Cook, Launder, and violin player. Those that know of him are requested to have him arrested and give some notice to Mr. *Cami sat-de-Mauroy*, Merchant in Cap: there will be a reward. The aforementioned Negre has small-pox marks.

Another example of a multi-talented fugitive appeared just a under a year later,

*Un Negre, nommé la Rose, Congo, étampé LE ROY ET LOVET, âgé de 24 à 25, taille de 5 pieds 4 pouces: Valet, charpentier, maçon, couvreur, peintre, et cuisinier, ayant une culotte de drap bleu, boutonnières rouges, jarretières et bouton d'or, est maron depuis le 7 de ce mois. Ceux qui en auront connoissance, sont priés d'en donner avis M. Sauvé, au Petit-Goave: il y aura recompense.*²⁹

A Negre, named *la Rose*, Congo, branded *LE ROY ET LOVET*, 24 to 25 years of age, 5 *pieds 4 pouces* tall: Servant, carpenter, mason, roofer, painter, and cook, wearing knee-breeches of blue cloth, with red button-holes, garters and golden buttons, been maroon since the 7th of this month. Those that have known of him are requested to give notice Mr. *Sauvé*, of *Petit-Goave*: there will be rewards.

The maroons of Saint Domingue were employed in almost every occupation in the colony from goldsmith to wigmaker. Details of fugitives' occupations were typically recorded in

²⁵ Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee," 84.

²⁶ Geggus, Sugar and Coffee, 86.

²⁷ Of the 486 skilled slaves 80 (16%) were identified with multiple occupations.

²⁸ June 22nd 1771, Supplément aux Affiches Américaines

²⁹ May 23rd 1772, Les Affiches Américaines

advertisements *en marronage*.³⁰ Table 4-7 presents, in the most generic terms, the percentages of skilled slaves *en marronage*.³¹

Skilled slaves accounted for 10% of the total advertisements. This percentage is skewed by the last two years of the sample when the appearance of skilled slaves declined. Skilled slaves had probably not stopped running away; it seems much more likely that advertisers and publishers were simply omitting these details. Most of the major occupational categories are represented in the data sample.³² However, slaves with particular occupations appear to have produced relatively more fugitives. Table 4-8 presents the occupation breakdown of slaves *en marronage*.

Of all the occupational categories, slaves identified as cooks or bakers appear most *en marronage*, 18% of the total skilled slaves recorded. Cooks were followed strangely by wigmakers who comprise another 17% of the total skilled slaves *en marronage*. Slaves trained in artisan crafts, carpenters, roofers, coopers, and blacksmiths, comprised nearly one-third of the sample, while domestics, coachmen, valets, and household servants, account for 12% of the sample. Geggus has suggested that carpenters were the occupational group most prone to

³⁰ I found several occasions when occupations appeared on the jailed lists. As it was presented, it appeared to suggest that skilled slaves managed to avoid being jailed all together. This probably not being the case, it seems more likely that the jailers took little interest in recording supposed occupations. Nevertheless, several years in Table 4-7 are footnoted with those skilled slaves who were jailed during the twenty year period under inquiry.

³¹ In the case of multiple occupations only the first was tabulated.

³² At least one slave was listed to be trained in each of these occupations: l'art de la Chirurgie: the art of surgery; Blanchisseuse: washer women; Boucher (de Moutons): Butcher (of Sheep); Boulanger: Baker; Cabrouettier : Carter/Wainman; Canoteur: Boatman; Charpentier: Carpenter; Charron: Cartwright; Cocher: Coachman; Coëffeur (pour femmes): Hairdresser (for women); Conduisant des Chevaux de Charge: Driving Pack Horses; Confiseur: Confectionner; Commandeur : Slave-Driver; Cordonnier: Cobbler; Couturière: Seamstress; Couvreur: Roofer; Cuisinier: Cook; Domestique: Domestic (household servant); Doleur: Roofer/Shingle-maker; Forgeron: Blacksmith; Hospitaliere: Nurse; Indigotier: Indigo Maker; Machoquie : Blacksmith or makes/mends tools; Maçon: Mason; Maître-Cabrouettier: Master carter/wainman; Maquignon: Horse-dealer; Marchand (du pain) : Bread seller; Marin: Sailor; Matelassier: Mattress maker; Matelot: Sailor; Menuisier: Carpenter /Cabinet Maker; Navigateur de Prosession : Navigator of Procession; Orfevre: Goldsmith; Pacotilleur: Tinker; Pâtissier: Pastrycook; Pêcheur : Fisherman; Peintre: Painter; Perruquier (pour homme, pour femme : Wigmaker (for man, for woman); Postillon: Coachman; Repasseus : Presser; Scieur de Long: Pit Sawyer; Sellier: saddler; Tailleur: Tailor; Tanneur: Hide Tanner; Tonnelier: Wet Cooper (Barrel maker); Valet: Body Servant; Voilier: Sailmaker

marronage because they could command good wages in the colony and were much in need in both town and countryside.³³ This is most certainly true as it probably was for the other artisan craftsmen. Cooks, bakers, and pastry-chefs may have also found employment in both town and countryside. However, what is to be made of the high percentage of wigmaking fugitives? An firm explanation eludes the author. Perhaps, it may be reasonable to suggest that domestics and body servants, who were closely associated with the master were less likely to accept harsh treatment and consequently more prone to runaway after what they deemed cruel or unwarranted treatment.

Along with being multi-lingual and trained in specific occupations, *créoles* might have also been literate. Literacy could have helped facilitate successful marronage. Essentially, an educated fugitive could have falsified a travel pass or other written documents that might attest to his or her freedom. For example:

Un Mulâtre, sans étampe, nommé Almazor, perruquier et même cuisinier, parlant bon François, taille de 5 pieds 4 pouces, marqué de petite vérole, les cheveux longs, la jambe bien faite, la voix forte, fçachant lire et écrire et ayant appartenu à Mde la Marquise de Virieux,, qui l'a vendu à M. Mazeres, lequel l'a revendu au sieur Bego, à qui il appartient, est parti maron, la nuit du 19 au 20 juillet dernier, sur un beau Cheval Anglois, poil rouan, harnaché d'une selle du cuir de Russie, garnie en velours cramoisi, la housse et les faux fourreaux de velours violet, galonnés en or, avec une paire de pistolets montés en argent et a emmené avec lui un Negre nommé Etienne, appartenant au Sieru Arteaux, Charpentier au Cap, monté aussi sur un Cheval, poil alezan, les quarte pieds blancs, étampé à l'épaule du côté du montoir BY, avec une selle à valet et un portemanteau. Ledit Mulâtre est toujours botté ou chauffé, et parle la Langue Espagnole et la Hollandoise. Ceux qui les reconnoîtront, sont priés de les faire arrêter³⁴

A Mulatto, without branding, named Almazor, wigmaker and cook, speaking good French, 5 *pieds 4 pouces* tall, small pox marks, long hair, good legs, strong voice, taught to read and write and having belonged to Mde the *Marquise of Virieux*, that sold it to *M. Mazeres*, who sold it to the *sieur Bego*, to be apprenticed, went maroon, the night of the last, on a beautiful English Horse, harnessed with a saddle of leather from Russia, outfitted in crimson velvet, slip-cover and false *fourreaux* of purple, trimmed with a velvet braid, with a pair of the pistols and money and took with him a named Negre

³³ Geggus, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution," 125.

³⁴ August 1st 1772, Supplément aux Affiches Américaines

Etienne, belonging to the *Sieur Arteaux*, Carpenter of Cap, also climbed on a horse, chestnut hair, the four feet white, Montoir BY, with a saddle to servant and a door coat. The aforementioned Mulatto always has boots or shoes, and speaks the Spanish Language and Dutch. Those that know of them are requested to have them arrested.

In the end, skin color, literacy, language proficiency, and occupational specialization all provided certain benefits on the plantation, in the city, and *en marronage*. In general, *créoles* enjoyed these benefits much more than did Africans.

Africans

Saint Domingue's African-born slaves made up a fascinating ethnic mosaic that varied through time and across different regions, as well as between different types of plantations. The populating of Saint Domingue by the slave trade drew upon a vast geographic area embracing innumerable nations and peoples. Table 4-9 presents the general composition of Africans *en marronage*.

Overall, Africans accounted for 67% of the total recorded maroons. Their frequency in appearance remains relatively stable until 1790 when African comprised four-fifths of the annual total. More than likely this is a function of the increasing importation of Africans during the last few years approaching the Haitian Revolution. However, the percentage of unclassified slaves, a majority of which were of African origins, must also be taken into consideration. Interestingly, during the years of the American War of Independence, the percentage of Africans was at its lowest. However, Africans still constitute nearly two-thirds of the total sample. It has been suggested that *marronage* was an African dominated practice, so a marked decrease during the curtailment of the African slave trade would seem logical, but this cannot explain the increase in *créoles* taking flight during this same period. It is important to remember the continued growth of the *créole* population. In theory, one would expect the total recorded maroons to decrease, but the evidence shows a consistent rate of runaways with a fluctuation in composition but not

frequency. We will return to the question of the relationship between new arrivals and marronage shortly.

Where the enslaved Africans originated is also a critical question. French planters employed an elaborate lexicon to identify the origins of their slaves. However, these designations were frequently Eurocentric and did not necessarily represent enslaved Africans' own sense of ethnic identities. Thus, one should not assume the attributed national origins of the enslaved individuals reported as runaways were the actual identities they might have claimed for themselves.³⁵ During the period under study, more than 160 different ethnic labels were used to identify the maroons. Further complicating the issue of identity or origin was that many enslaved peoples were identified by Europeans by their port of departure rather than their actual homeland. Even though most of the main *nations* identified by colonists could be found on all types of plantations, to a significant degree, sugar and coffee planters tended to buy Africans from different ethnic regions. Regional variation was a function of crop-related planter preferences as French slavers delivered a different ethnic mix to each of the colony's three provinces, typically based on the differing mix of crops.³⁶

Coffee planters bought a proportionately greater number of slaves of those ethnic groups that Saint Domingue's slaveholders as a whole disdained—Bibi, Mondongue, Igbo, and Congo. Conversely, the most highly regarded *nations* could be found more frequently on sugar estates.³⁷ Less well-established in the market, buying smaller quantities, but with greater urgency, coffee planters were less selective in purchasing slaves than were sugar planters. Geggus suggests that planters based their African stereotypes on a variety of factors, including physical strength,

³⁵ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 114.

³⁶ Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee," 80.

³⁷ Those most highly regarded by Saint Domingue's planters included slaves from the Bight of Benin: Arada, Fon, Foëda, Adia, Nago, Barba, Cotocoly, Taqua, Tiamba, Aoussa among several others.

height, health, dietary preferences, and agricultural experience, as well as ascribed attributes of a more fanciful nature.³⁸

Slaves from the Bight of Benin were highly valued in Saint Domingue because they were considered physically strong and both men and women were good agriculturalists, accustomed to wielding a hoe and able to take charge of their own provision grounds. Congo slaves were notably shorter, and in their homeland the majority of agricultural work was left to women. They also proved unhealthier on the sugar plains. In general, sugar planters expressed a strong aversion to them. Slaves from the Bight of Biafra, including Igbo and Bibi, were generally concentrated on mountain plantations and believed to be sickly and sometimes suicidal. Mandingues also attracted an indifferent assessment; however, their height usually made them favorites of sugar planters. The height of slaves from the Windward Coast may also explain their selection by sugar planters.³⁹ The Mondongues approached average height but were avoided by sugar planters, doubtless because of their widespread reputation as cannibals who were difficult to feed. Colonists expressed contrasting opinions concerning the Bambara, and their *Sénégalois* neighbors as they were regarded differently in different regions.⁴⁰ In the end, it is clear that planters took into account the traits, whether true or false, they ascribed to different African *nations*. These ethnic stereotypes then influenced the purchasing habits of diffuse planters and therefore impacted the work routines and opportunities for marronage presented to enslaved individuals from different regions of Africa. In other words, not all enslaved Africans in Saint Domingue had the same opportunities to run away from their bondage.

³⁸ Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee," 80.

³⁹ Slaves from the Windward Coast include, Soso, Kissi, Cap Lao, Mesurade and Canga.

⁴⁰ The details of the various African *nations* were taken from, Geggus "Sugar and Coffee," 80-82.

With these stereotypes in mind, by and large the majority of slaves *en marronage* were of African origin. Aside from the aforementioned maroons of unspecified origins, the public notices specified the “national origin” of each slave. Africans were both far more likely to flee and the most prone to recapture.

Congolese slaves were the most prominent of the African nations to appear in both advertisements and jail. While Congolese slaves do not always constitute a numerical majority of the data set, they do remain the highest percentage of all African nations of the total recorded maroons. Over the twenty-year period the Congo account for 35% of the total recorded maroons and over half of the African sample. Table 4-10 presents the frequency of the Congo in the total recorded maroons.

However, their frequency in appearance does not necessarily relate to their collective ability to escape, or their propensity for recapture. The data present no evidence to suggest that their numbers benefited or hampered them in marronage. However, it may be reasonable to suggest that specific Africans may have been willing to help one another with common linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Yet, Geggus suggests that “the paradoxical reputation [of the Congo] as runways was probably based simply on their numerical prominence in the colony.”⁴¹ Other African groups also appear with great frequency in the newspapers including the Bambara, Mandingue, Arada, Mondongue, among several others.

Among these Africans, many were classified as ‘*Nègres Nouveaux*’ who had yet to acquire competence in the creole language and were believed to have spent less than a year in Saint Domingue. Table 4-11 reveals a rather complex picture of new arrivals in Saint Domingue. Of the 2,526 newly arrived slaves only 183 (7%) were women. As the African slave

⁴¹ Geggus, “On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution,” 122-23.

trade brought only twice as many males as females to Saint Domingue during those decades, newly arrived males evidently had a greater propensity to flee than their female counterparts.

Fouchard asserts that individual flights were the most frequent due to the very fact that marronage was ventured more often by new blacks.⁴² He further suggests that marronage by new blacks is positive evidence of true marronage which was equivalent to hostility to slavery and therefore a precursor to revolution.⁴³ His argument is based on a fifteen-day sample during 1786 that disproportionately represented the number of new arrivals in the colony. Contrary to Fouchard's assertions, only a small percentage of runaways were those classified as *nouveaux*. The evidence proves that *nègres nouveaux*, who account for 17% of the total sample, did not appear more frequently *en marronage* than *créoles* (20%). It should seem obvious that *créoles* appear more frequently in advertisements, but if Fouchard and others are to be believed then *nouveaux* should greatly outnumber *créoles* in the jailed list. On the contrary, the percentage of *nouveaux* who were listed as *entrés à la Geôle* (19%) was only one percent higher than the percentage of *créoles* (18%). The prominence of new arrivals as fugitives depended on the rate of importation. Slave imports averaged more than 30,000 per annum in the years 1785-90. This high rate of importation followed a virtual halt to the legal importation of slaves in Saint Domingue, during the middle years of the American War of Independence.

Beginning in 1779, because of insecurity on the high seas, slave ships entering Saint Domingue's ports almost ceased entirely. In fact, Fouchard cites just four vessels that legally entered Saint Domingue's harbors and were announced in *Les Affiches Américaines*.⁴⁴ In 1780, Saint Domingue continued to feel the effects of the war and of a blockade effectively cutting off the arrival of slave ships. Hostilities continued through 1781 and maritime transport remained in

⁴² Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 262.

⁴³ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 257.

⁴⁴ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 130.

decline. The slave trade was reduced to a trickle, with new imports arriving only when small and speedy vessels managed to run the blockade or when the occasional Danish or Spanish ship carried unsold enslaved Africans from Havana to the French colonial ports.⁴⁵ As the war waned, the slave trade to Saint Domingue began to recover—from 1783 to the eve of the Haitian Revolution Saint Domingue became the leading depository for African slaves—to nearly 30,000 annual importations. Table 4-11 reflects this fluctuation in the curtailment of the African slave trade to Saint Domingue. Prior to 1777 those classified as *nouveaux* comprised 15-22% of the total recorded maroons. Planters may have been less likely to advertise for newcomers as those jailed made up at least twice as many as those advertised. *Nouveaux* typically comprised 10-15% of the total advertisements while those jailed typically accounted for 20-25% of the total jailed population. This is excluding the years between 1777-1785 when newcomers made up less than 10% of advertisements and less than 15% of the total jailed population. The absolute low point occurred in 1781 when *nègres nouveaux* comprised only 2% of the total recorded maroons. These fluctuations have certainly skewed the data, and the relationship between new arrivals and increasing runaways.

Success and Failure *En Marronage*

The question remains whether these data represent some larger collective fugitive revolutionary movement. Table 4-12 whose rationale is much more specific, yet contestable, addresses the question of success in marronage. Table 4-12 presents “jailed: fled” ratios for different groups at the colonial level. These comparisons probably provide a rough guide to the failure rates as runaways in broad groupings.

⁴⁵ Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, 131-32.

It is true that this table may favor more valuable slave while neglecting those from the coffee plantations in the north and newly arrived Africans for reasons mentioned earlier.⁴⁶ Consequently, it is hard to conclude with any certainty which group was more prone to recapture. While comparable relative success between Africans and *créoles* cannot be certainly deduced from this table, gender differences and differences between blacks and coloreds should be ascertainable. Ultimately, it does reveal the broader differences in marronage among the different groups.

Overall, the table, as suggested earlier, reveals that light-skinned foreign *créoles* enjoyed the most success *en marronage*. Their locally-born light-skinned counterparts also maintained relative success. That fact that local and foreign black *créoles* fared considerably worse *en marronage* suggests that light skin was the most important factor in successfully assimilating into Saint Domingue's free black society. Geggus has suggested that light skin was the chief factor in success because of the implied employment skills. However, foreign *créoles* and presumably their language skills or knowledge of the outside world must be considered the second most important factor in successful marronage. Gender must also be considered as important to success. In general, women fared substantially better than men *en marronage*. *Créole* women and both newly arrived African and "seasoned" African women all fared considerably better than their male counterparts. However, newly arrived Africans by and large fared the absolute worst *en marronage*. Yet, this could be a result in the unequal publication of advertisements for *créoles en marronage*.

In the end, the evidence attests to a dynamic and varied composition of the Haitian maroons during the two decades leading up to the Haitian Revolution. Many factors influenced

⁴⁶ The propensity for a planter to advertise for runaway slaves most likely depended on the slave's value, the agricultural cycle, the ability to accurately identify the fugitive and the plantation's proximity to Cap Français or Port-au-Prince where the newspapers were published.

the composition of the maroon population, the buying habits of planters, the type of crop worked, and the geographic location of plantation all helped determine where enslaved Africans ended up once they reached the shores of Saint Domingue. These factors also dictated where and when slaves could and would attempt running away. The differences in not only marronage but also the plantation complex, between Africans and *créoles* are evident. Language skills, skin color, time in the colony, occupational training, and knowledge of the outside world were all important factors in determining success in marronage. Ultimately, this chapter sought not only to highlight the plight of these disparate groups, but also to simply outline the ethnic and gendered composition of the maroon population. Historians have failed to explore this composition and subsequently their assumptions about the role of marronage in Saint Domingue have generally been ill-informed. The once dim picture of marronage in Saint Domingue may now begin to illuminate. The final chapter of this work seeks to review the conclusions drawn for the evidence extrapolated from *Les Affiches Américaines* and will also offer several suggestions for the future study of marronage in Saint Domingue.

Table 4-1. General Ethnic Composition

Year of publication	Total Unspecified Origins	Total Africans	Total Local <i>Créoles</i> ⁴⁷	Total Foreign <i>Créoles</i> ⁴⁸	Total Recorded Maroons
1770	192 (15%)	887 (68%)	180 (14%)	38 (3%)	1,297
1771	184 (14%)	844 (66%)	224 (17%)	32 (3%)	1,284
1772	172 (13%)	826 (63%)	256 (20%)	56 (4%)	1,310
1774	197 (13%)	1,016 (66%)	263 (17%)	58 (4%)	1,534
1777	333 (17%)	1,257 (66%)	259 (14%)	59 (3%)	1,908
1781	112 (10%)	660 (60%)	266 (24%)	65 (6%)	1,103
1783	211 (14%)	898 (60%)	304 (20%)	91 (6%)	1,504
1785	386 (16%)	1,491 (64%)	380 (16%)	94 (4%)	2,351
1790 ⁴⁹	102 (4%)	2,113 (80%)	354 (13%)	82 (3%)	2,651
TOTAL	1,889 (12%)	9,992 (67%)	2,486 (17%)	575 (4%)	14,942

⁴⁷ Local *créoles* include: local black *créoles*, mulâtres and mulâtresses, griffes, and quarterons.

⁴⁸ Foreign *créoles* include: all slaves who had come from other European colonies.

⁴⁹ All numbers for 1790 are taken or converted from Geggus, “On the eve of the Haitian Revolution.”

Table 4-2. Gender Composition

Year of Publication	Total Adverts	Regional Distribution of Women in Advertisements		Total Women in Advertisements	Total Jailed	Regional Distribution of Women Jailed		Total Women Jailed	Total Women Recorded
		North	South /West			North	South /West		
1770	402	24	22	46 (11%)	895	75	41	116 (13%)	162 (12%)
1771	407	30	39	69 (17%)	877	80	31	111 (13%)	180 (14%)
1772	446	39	32	71 (16%)	864	92	39	131 (15%)	202 (15%)
1774	533	31	30	61 (11%)	1,001	63	73	136 (14%)	197 (13%)
1777	450	30	38	68 (15%)	1,458	98	96	194 (13%)	262 (14%)
1781	391	47	20	67 (17%)	712	65	41	106 (15%)	173 (16%)
1783	684	87	44	131 (19%)	820	53	46	99 (12%)	230 (15%)
1785	830	73	79	152 (18%)	1,521	84	110	194 (13%)	346 (15%)
1790 ¹	632	39	45	84 (13%)	2,019	129	96	225 (11%)	309 (12%)
TOTAL	4,775	400	349	749 (16%)	10,167	739	573	1,312 (13%)	2,061 (14%)

¹ All numbers for 1790 are taken or converted from Geggus, "On the eve of the Haitian Revolution".

Table 4-3. Total *Créoles*

Year of publication	Total Recorded Maroons	Total Local Créoles ¹	Total Foreign Créoles ²	Total Créoles (% of total entries)
1770	1,297	180	38	218 (17%)
1771	1,284	224	32	256 (20%)
1772	1,310	256	56	312 (24%)
1774	1,534	249	53	302 (20%)
1777	1,908	254	59	313 (16%)
1781	1,103	266	65	331 (30%)
1783	1,504	303	91	394 (26%)
1785	2,351	380	94	474 (20%)
1790 ³	2,651	354	82	436 (16%)
TOTAL	14,942	2,459	569	3,029 (20%)

¹ Local créoles include: local black creoles, mulâtres and mulâtresses, and griffes

² Foreign créoles include: all fugitives slaves born within the Americas or having come from other colonies.

³ All numbers for 1790 are taken or converted from Geggus, "On the eve of the Haitian Revolution: Slave Runaways in Saint Domingue in the year 1790," in *Out of the House of Bondage* ed. G. Heuman

Table 4-4. Regional Distribution of *Créoles*

Year of Publication	Total Adverts	Regional Distribution of <i>Créoles</i> in Advertisements		Total <i>Créoles</i> in Advertisements	Total Jailed	Regional Distribution of <i>Créoles</i> Jailed		Total <i>Créoles</i> Jailed	Total <i>Créoles</i>
		North	South /West			North	South /West		
1770	402	43	47	90 (22%)	895	45	83	128 (14%)	218 (17%)
1771	407	56	65	121 (30%)	877	70	65	135 (15%)	256 (20%)
1772	446	86	46	132 (30%)	864	101	79	180 (21%)	312 (24%)
1774	533	56	65	121 (23%)	1,001	94	105	199 (20%)	320 (21%)
1777	450	38	66	104 (23%)	1,458	122	92	214 (14%)	318 (17%)
1781	391	106	46	152 (39%)	712	96	83	179 (25%)	331 (30%)
1783	684	109	94	203 (30%)	820	87	105	192 (23%)	395 (26%)
1785	830	109	92	200 (24%)	1,521	122	151	273 (18%)	473 (20%)
1790 ¹	632	73	69	142 (22%)	2,019	142	152	294 (15%)	436 (16%)
TOTAL	4,775	675	588	1,263 (26%)	10,167	879	915	1,794 (18%)	3,059 (20%)

¹ All numbers for 1790 are taken or converted from Geggus, "On the eve of the Haitian Revolution: Slave Runaways in Saint Domingue in the year 1790," in *Out of the House of Bondage* edited by G. Heuman

Table 4-5. Local *Créole* Composition

Year of publication	Black Créoles	Mulâtres	Griffes	Quarterons	Total Local Créoles ¹
1770	162	14	4	----	180
1771	202	20	2	----	224
1772	237	18	1	----	256
1774	232	21	10	----	263
1777	231	22	6	----	259
1781	227	29	10	----	266
1783	264	34	5	1	304
1785	324	44	10	2	380
1790 ²	300	42	10	2	354
TOTAL	2,178	244	58	5	2,486

¹ Local creoles include: local black *créoles*, mulâtres and mulâtresses, griffes, and quarterons.

² All numbers for 1790 are taken or converted from Geggus, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution" or else have been taken from personal correspondence with Professor David Geggus.

Table 4-6. Foreign *Créole* Composition

Year of publication	“Français” French ¹	“Anglois” English ²	“Espagnol” Spanish	“Hollandois” ” Dutch ³	“Portugais” Portuguese	North American Continent ⁴	Total Foreign Créoles ⁵
1770	6	9	6	11	3	3	38
1771	10	8	3	7	2	2	32
1772	15	17	9	9	4	2	56
1774	15	18	10	14	1	-----	58
1777	11	23	7	12	4	2	59
1781	14	35	6	8	-----	2	65
1783	25	40	4	14	6	2	91
1785	28	27	7	17	12	3	94
1790 ⁶	14	32 ⁷	4	14	12	6	82
TOTAL	137	209	56	106	44	22	575

¹ Includes Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Madagascar.

² Includes Generic Anglois, Isle du vent, Jamaïque, Grenade, St. Vincent, St. Christophe, and Suriname.

³ Includes Generic Hollandois, and Curaçao.

⁴ Includes, Americaine, Nord Americaine, Mississippian, Louisianan, Nouvelle Angleterre, Nouvelle Yorcke, and Boston.

⁵ Foreign creoles include: all fugitives slaves having come from other colonies.

⁶ All numbers for 1790 are taken or converted from Geggus, “On the eve of the Haitian Revolution.”

⁷ For 1790 two slaves were classified as Danish and for the sake of continuity they were included in the English category.

Table 4-7. Skilled Slaves *en Marronage*

Year of publication	Advertisements for the return of fugitive slaves	Skilled Workers <i>en Marronage</i> (Advertisements)
1770 ¹	402	53 (13%)
1771 ²	407	39 (10%)
1772 ³	446	46 (10%)
1774 ⁴	533	60 (11%)
1777 ⁵	450	50 (11%)
1781	391	58 (15%)
1783 ⁶	684	81 (12%)
1785	830	74 (9%)
1790 ⁷	632	31 (5%)
TOTAL	4,775	492 (10%)

¹ 1 Jailed skilled slave (Maçon)

² 1 Jailed skilled slave (Boulangier/perruquier)

³ 5 Jailed skilled slaves (Maçon, navigateur de possession, domestique, perruquier, l'art de la Chirurgie)

⁴ 1 Jailed skilled slave (Charpentier)

⁵ 5 Jailed skilled slaves (perruquier, cuisinier, machoquier, cuisinier/perruquier, matelot)

⁶ 1 Jailed skilled slave (marin)

⁷ All numbers for 1790 are taken from Geggus, "On the eve of the Haitian Revolution: Slave Runaways in Saint Domingue in the year 1790," in *Out of the House of Bondage* edited by G. Heuman

Table 4-8. Occupational Breakdown

Occupations	1770	1771	1772	1774	1777	1781	1783	1785	TOTALS
Carter/Cartwright	1	1	1	1	-----	-----	-----	1	5
Indigo-maker	-----	1	-----	-----	1	1	-----	-----	3
Slave Driver	1	1	1	-----	3	-----	-----	-----	6
Blacksmith ⁸	1	-----	1	2	1	3	1	1	10
Carpenter ⁹	11	2	5	10	5	3	6	16	58
Mason	3	3	5	3	4	2	6	2	28
Cobbler/Shoe-maker	5	-----	1	2	2	2	1	2	15
Roofer ¹⁰	2	-----	3	-----	-----	1	-----	-----	6
Cooper ¹¹	5	2	4	3	6	4	5	4	33
Coachman ¹²	3	4	1	4	5	2	2	3	24
Baker/Cook ¹³	7	10	5	5	6	11	19	20	83
Household Servant ¹⁴	1	2	2	2	1	4	7	5	24
Valet/Body-Servant ¹⁵	1	-----	3	3	-----	-----	1	1	9
Sailor/Mariner ¹⁶	4	1	1	8	4	10	2	2	32
Merchant/Craftsmen ¹⁷	3	3	2	1	3	2	3	-----	17
Tailor /Seamstress	4	4	4	4	2	3	6	2	29
Wigmaker ¹⁸	1	5	7	12	7	10	22	15	79
TOTALS ¹⁹	53	39	46	60	50	58	81	74	461

⁸ Includes tool-repairmen. The category includes one tinker from 1774; 4 goldsmiths, one from 1777 and 3 from 1781

⁹ This category includes cabinet-makers.

¹⁰ Shingle-maker

¹¹ Barrel-maker

¹² This category includes one pack-horse driver from 1772; one navigator from 1777

¹³ All slaves recorded in this category were identified as bakers and cooks but several maroons had specialized pastry skills.

¹⁴ The category includes four washerwomen, one from 1771, 1774, 1783, and 1785; one violin player from 1774; one painter from 1783

¹⁵ This category includes one nurse from 1783

¹⁶ The category includes small boatmen and fishermen.

¹⁷ This category includes generic merchants; one bread seller from 1774; one horse dealer from 1771; two butchers from 1777 and 1783; one sail-maker from 1770; three saddle-makers, two from 1774 and one from 1783; three mattress-makers, two from 1771 and one from 1783

¹⁸ This category includes one hairdresser from 1774

¹⁹ 1790 has been excluded from this table because the Geggus does not detail the composition the skilled sample for this year.

Table 4-9. African Composition

Year of publication	Total Africans (% of total entries)	Total Recorded Maroons
1770	887 (68%)	1,297
1771	844 (66%)	1,284
1772	909 (69%)	1,310
1774	1,016 (66%)	1,534
1777	1,257 (66%)	1,908
1781	660 (60%)	1,103
1783	898 (60%)	1,504
1785	1,491 (64%)	2,351
1790 ²⁰	2,113 (80%)	2,651
TOTAL	10,075 (67%)	14,942

Table 4-10. Congo Composition

Year of publication	Total Recorded Maroons	Total Africans	Total Congo (% of total/% of Africans)
1770	1,297	887	584 (45%/63%)
1771	1,284	844	457 (36%/54%)
1772	1,310	909	504 (38%/61%)
1774	1,534	1,016	552 (36%/54%)
1777	1,908	1,257	685 (36%/54%)
1781	1,103	660	341 (31%/49%)
1783	1,504	898	411 (27%/46%)
1785	2,351	1,491	795 (34%/53%)
1790 ²¹	2,651	2,113	951 (36%/45%)
TOTAL	14,942	10,075	5,280 (35%/52%)

²⁰ All numbers for 1790 are taken or converted from Geggus, "On the eve of the Haitian Revolution."

²¹ All numbers for 1790 are taken or converted from Geggus, "On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution."

Table 4-11. Regional Distribution of *nouveaux*

Year of Publication	Total Adverts	Regional Distribution of <i>Nouveaux</i> in Advertisements		Total <i>Nouveaux</i> in Advertisements	Total Jailed	Regional Distribution of <i>Nouveaux</i> Jailed		Total <i>Nouveaux</i> Jailed	Total <i>Nouveaux</i>
		North	South/ West			North	South /West		
1770	402	24	37	61 (15%)	895	159	60	219 (24%)	280 (22%)
1771	407	22	21	43 (11%)	877	118	52	170 (19%)	213 (17%)
1772	446	19	24	43 (10%)	864	85	30	115 (13%)	158 (12%)
1774	533	31	53	84 (16%)	1,001	86	105	191 (19%)	275 (18%)
1777	450	11	40	51 (11%)	1,458	79	232	311 (21%)	362 (19%)
1781	391	12	6	18 (5%)	712	5	1	6 (<1%)	24 (2%)
1783	684	37	19	56 (8%)	820	47	23	70 (9%)	126 (8%)
1785	830	71	67	138 (17%)	1,521	185	218	403 (26%)	541 (23%)
1790 ¹	632	-----	-----	111 (18%)	2,019	-----	-----	436 (22%)	547 (21%)
TOTAL	4,775	-----	-----	605 (13%)	10,167	-----	-----	1,921 (19%)	2,526 (17%)

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¹ All numbers for 1790 are taken or converted from Geggus, “On the Eve of the Haitian Revolution.”

Table 4-12. Success and Failure

Description	Jailed : Fled	Ratio per 100 'fled' Success Index ¹
Total Men	8,857 : 4,026	220
Total Women	1,312 : 749	175
Total <i>Créoles</i>	1,794 : 1,263	142
Total <i>Créole</i> Women	223 : 243	92
Total <i>Créole</i> Men	1,571 : 1,020	154
Local Black <i>Créoles</i>	1,173 : 703	167
Local Colored <i>Créoles</i>	75 : 178	42
Foreign Black <i>Créoles</i>	221 : 200	111
Foreign Colored <i>Créoles</i>	22 : 41	54
Total Africans	5,506 : 2,373	232
African Women	698 : 373	187
African Men	4,808 : 2,000	240
Total <i>Nouveaux</i>	1,921 : 605	318
<i>Nouveaux</i> Women	137 : 47	291
<i>Nouveaux</i> Men	1,784 : 559	319
Total Unspecified Origins	1,142 : 645	177

¹ The "success index" is calculated by dividing the jailed category by the fled category and then multiplying that decimal by one hundred. This provides a guide in relation to one hundred slaves. A lower number theoretically represents more success in marronage.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

In the end, the underlying purpose of this work was to revisit the debate regarding marronage and the slave insurrection that eventually led to the Haitian Revolution. However, this work also sought to delineate the general contours of Saint Domingue's maroon population, and more generally the slave population as a whole during the two decades prior to the Haitian Revolution. This work attempted to shed light on the causes, the typology, the dimensions, the composition, and the evolution of marronage in Saint Domingue. A more balanced assessment of this phenomenon was presented to effort to explore marronage independent from the Haitian Revolution. It is evident that slaves of all sorts practiced marronage: young and old, male and female; newly arrived as well as "seasoned" Africans; *créoles*, and Indians; *mulâtres*, *griffes*, and *quarterons*; fieldworkers, artisans, and domestics; the well nourished and the hungry, the weak as well as the strong; those with cruel masters, and those with good ones. There is little doubt that nearly all districts of Saint Domingue were affected by marronage.

The evidence attests to the dynamic and varied composition of the Haitian maroons during the two decades leading up to the Haitian Revolution. Many factors influenced the composition of the maroon population, the buying habits of planters, the type of crop worked, and the geographic location of plantations all helped determine where enslaved Africans ended up once they reached the shores of Saint Domingue. These factors also dictated where and when slaves could and would attempt running away. The differences in not only marronage but also the plantation complex and between Africans and *créoles* are evident. Language skills, skin color, time in the colony, occupational training, and knowledge of the outside world were all important factors in determining success in marronage. Typically, previous historians have failed to explore the complexities of this composition and subsequently their assumptions about

the role of marronage in Saint Domingue have generally been ill-informed. The once dim picture of marronage in Saint Domingue has been brought to light.

The primary assertion of the Haitian school is that there is an easily recognizable increase in marronage and maroon activity during this period and that that increasing revolutionary activity eventually led to the Haitian Revolution. European scholars tend to argue against this point by explaining marronage as a disconnected form of resistance. Combining insights from these two schools offers a more complete account of marronage in Saint Domingue by presenting the growth of marronage relative to the population, the impact of both *petit* and *grand* marronage on colonial society and the revolution, and the logical link between maroons and rebels. This present work has sought to bridge these two divided schools of thought. Methodical research in primary sources was at the heart of this work. The data were calculated and tabulated with a concerted effort to eliminate the bias of the historiography and the colonial newspapers have proven to be an invaluable resource in recovering the fugitive history of marronage in Saint Domingue.

In returning to the question of the maroons' impact on the revolution and particularly whether or not there was a rising momentum in this phenomenon prior to 1791, the evidence suggests several conclusions. While the number of maroons did indeed increase it did so no more than the increasing general slave population. The Haitian article of faith, a rising tide in marronage, was created by Fouchard's sometimes underestimated but usually overestimated total slaves *en marronage*. This is especially true for 1790, as it created an artificial "upsurge" on the eve of the 1791 uprising. Moreover, it was in the Southern and Western provinces where a marked increase is most noticeable. This is significant because it was in the North where the great slave uprising took place, while in the South and West colonial administrators were able to

maintain relative authority for a number of years while the North was essentially lost. Once an article of faith for the Haitian school, the theory of a rising-tide in marronage must now be abandoned. Yet, the French school's assertion that marronage was simply a collection of disconnected individuals does not accurately portray the maroons of Saint Domingue either. This study has sought to present the maroons of Saint Domingue as both individuals and as a collective group. By highlighting the varied nature of the maroons and also their collective impact on colonial society, the study of marronage in Saint Domingue becomes much less divergent.

It is clear that planters took into account the traits, whether true or false, they ascribed to different enslaved individuals *en marronage*. These ethnic stereotypes then influenced the purchasing habits of diffuse planters and therefore impacted the work routines and opportunities for marronage presented to enslaved individuals from different regions. In other words, not all enslaved Africans in Saint Domingue had the same opportunities to run away from their bondage. In the end, gender, skin color, literacy, language proficiency, and occupational specialization all provided certain benefits on the plantation, in the city, and *en marronage*. In general, *créoles* enjoyed these benefits much more than Africans did, while the newly arrived experienced the greatest difficulties *en marronage*. Ultimately, the connection between the importation of Africans and an increase in marronage remains inconclusive. During the twenty-year period, *créoles* and newly arrived Africans constituted similar proportions of the data sample while creolized Africans comprised the majority.

The maroons of Saint Domingue have enjoyed a fairly controversial place within the historiography of Saint Domingue. This controversy was most certainly a product of historians failing to explore the complexities of this dynamic and varied group of individuals. No longer

can the maroons of Saint Domingue be considered a proto-revolutionary mass of discontented individuals awaiting their opportunity to overthrow the French colonial government. On the other hand, viewing this group, like the French school, as a disconnected and apathetic crowd of aimless vagabonds aimed at satisfying personal agenda will also not suffice. Instead, this work has sought to deliver the individuals *en marronage* from obscurity. From here, one can only hope that the study of marronage continues to be informed by more methodical archival research and not the unsubstantiated claims of historians bound by certain pre-determined conclusions put forward by their corresponding schools.

In the end, when discussing the impact of marronage on the Saint Dominguan society and the Haitian Revolution the conclusions of this work must be taken into considerations. *Les Affiches Américaines* has gained the much needed attention it deserved; now the maroons of Saint Domingue and across New World slave societies also deserve a more even-handed and methodical study. Only then we may begin to better understand how this dynamic and diverse group interacted with colonial society and ultimately their place within the narrative of slavery in the Caribbean.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jason Daniels was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia in 1982. As the only child of Richard and Judith Daniels, he grew up in Palm City, Florida and graduated from Martin County High School in 2000. Jason has a half-sister, Meredith Onderko, who lives with her husband, Richard and their three daughters, Parker, Jenna, and Carson in Tampa, Florida. Jason earned a B.A. in history from the University of Florida in 2006. Upon the completion of his M.A. in Latin American history, Jason will be teaching at Indian River State College in Ft. Pierce, Florida, while taking a hiatus in his graduate training. Jason currently resides in Hobe Sound, Florida, and intends to return to his studies in 2009 to complete his doctoral research.