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Prince Sanders (1775–1839) was an African-American teacher and advocate of black American emigration to Africa and Haiti. When Sanders was on a speaking tour of England he met abolitionist William Wilberforce, who encouraged him to go to Haiti and meet King Henri Christophe (1767–1820). Haiti during this time was divided, and Christophe ruled over the northern region. Sanders travelled to the island and was quickly hired as Christophe's adviser. In 1816 Sanders published this translation of documents, which include Christophe's land reforms, his establishment of a monarchy in Haiti, and some of his correspondence. This publication was part of an attempt by Christophe and Sanders to show white Europeans that former slaves could successfully run their own country without international interference. Although Haiti was reunited in 1820, after Christophe's death, these documents illustrate his efforts to protect the country during its fragile early years of independence.

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Frontmatter

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# Haytian Papers

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Interesting Proclamations,  
and Other Official Documents*

EDITED BY PRINCE SANDERS



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Frontmatter  
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*By Authority.*

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A

**COLLECTION**

OF THE VERY

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AND OTHER

**OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS;**

TOGETHER WITH

**SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND  
PRESENT STATE**

OF

*THE KINGDOM OF HAYTI.*

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WITH A PREFACE

BY

**PRINCE SANDERS, ESQ.**

AGENT FOR THE HAYTIAN GOVERNMENT.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

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Proclamations, and Other Official Documents

Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## C O N T E N T S.

---

EDITOR'S ADDRESS .....	i
Extracts from the Registers of the Deliberations of the Consuls of the Republic .....	1
Narrative of the Accession of their Royal Majesties to the Throne of Hayti, &c. ....	55
State of Hayti. Proclamation, &c. ....	99
Constitutional Law, &c. ....	124
Manifesto of the King .....	154
Reflections of the Editor .....	192
Royal Gazette of Hayti .....	198
Proclamation .....	200
Reflections on the Abolition of the Slave Trade .....	215

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05053-1 - Haytian Papers: A Collection of the Very Interesting  
Proclamations, and Other Official Documents

Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---



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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## TO THE PUBLIC.

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I AM induced to lay the following Translations of Haytian State Papers, in conjunction with some extracts from their ordinary Publications, before the British people generally, in order to give them some more correct information with respect to the enlightened systems of policy, the pacific spirit, the altogether domestic views, and liberal principles of the Government; and also to more obviously evince the ameliorated and much improved condition of all classes of society in that new and truly interesting Empire (with which I have the honour to be connected) than I am inclined to think have hitherto been fully known or understood in this country.

For I am deeply penetrated with the conviction, that it is only necessary that the actual character and feelings of the Haytians

b

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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

should be made apparent, to most assuredly and most satisfactorily allay all those apprehensions of their interference with the internal regulations of neighbouring powers, which the enemies to the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and the foes to all attempts at the improvement and elevation of the African race, would, by their misrepresentations and false statements, endeavour to excite in the minds of this nation of genuine philanthropists. But to the immortal honour of noble and generous Englishmen be it said, their hearts are in general attuned to the exercise of more humane, and more rationally illumined views and sentiments. O happy England! to thee most appropriately belong the exalted appellations of protectress of the Christian world; the strong hold of rational freedom; the liberatress as well as the genuine asylum for oppressed humanity, and the promulgatress of civilization, knowledge, and piety to every region of the globe. In thee we see a practical exemplification of those principles of benevolence and kind affection which encompass the human character with an imperishable lustre of glory and honour.

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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## iii

Having understood that it has often been insinuated by those few individuals, whose babitual labour is the perversion, (and as far as they are able,) the absolute destruction of every object which has a tendency to show that the Blacks possess, to any considerable extent, that portion of natural intelligence which the beneficent Father of all ordinarily imparts to His children; I say, being convinced, that for these inglorious and malevolent purposes, such persons have endeavoured to impress the public with the idea, that those official documents which have occasionally, appeared in this country, are not written by black Haytians themselves; but that they are either written by Europeans in this country, or by some who, *they say*, are employed for that purpose in the public offices at Hayti; and, for the entire refutation of this gross misrepresentation, I upon my honour declare, that there is not a single white European at present employed in writing at any of the public offices; and that all the public documents are written by those of the King's Secretaries whose names they bear, and that they are all black men, or men of colour.

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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## iv

It is my humble, though sincere opinion, that no one can visit Hayti at this period, and have an opportunity of seeing the decency of manners, the apparent cheerfulness, the happiness and industry which prevail among all grades of the community, without being struck with the astonishing accuracy with which it has pleased God to bring to pass a state of society there, the very idea of the establishment of which in that country Mr. Bryan Edwards observed, in his History of St. Domingo, “ is so pleasing to the imagination, that every humane and reflecting mind must wish it may be realized.”

Says Mr. Edwards, “ I might here expatiate upon the wonderful dispensations of Divine Providence in raising up enslaved Africans to avenge the wrongs of the injured Aborigines; I might also indulge the *fond* but *fallacious idea*, that, as the negroes of St. Domingo have been eye-witnesses of the benefits of civilized life among the whites; have seen in what manner and to what extent social order, sober industry, and submission to the laws, contribute to individual and general prosperity (advantages which were denied to them in their native country), some superior spirits may hereafter

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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

v

rise up among them, by whose encouragement and example they may be taught, in due time, to discard the ferocious and sordid manners and pursuits of savage life; to correct their vices, and be led progressively on to civilization and gentleness, to the knowledge of truth, and the practice of virtue!

“This picture (then continues he) is so pleasing to the imagination, that every humane and reflecting mind must wish it may be realized; but I am afraid it is the mere creation of the fancy, the fabric of a vision!”

If it had pleased God to spare Mr. Edwards to this time, and he had been permitted to revisit Hayti in its present improved state, I am inclined to think he would be ready to exclaim, “I now behold here a scene of things, the momentary anticipation of the possibility of the existence of which among these people, a few years since, seemed to me like the “mere creation of the fancy,” and the “fabric of a vision.”

They are now blest with a Sovereign, whose sincere desire, and firmly settled purpose, most obviously appears to be the elevation of the

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Proclamations, and Other Official Documents

Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

vi

characters, and the improvement of the hearts and lives, of all the various classes of society. It especially appears to be his object to ameliorate the condition and improve the character of the humblest class, namely, that of the plantation labourers. For the full confirmation of the truth of this fact, the following extracts from the laws relating to the agricultural interest, and management in all its relative departments and bearings, will be most satisfactory to every reflecting and unprejudiced mind.

P. SANDERS.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## CODE HENRI.

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### LAW RESPECTING THE CULTURE.

#### *Titre 1, Chap. 1.*

The proprietors and farmers of land are bound to treat their respective labourers with true paternal solicitude ; an obligation which it is greatly for their own interest to fulfil in its utmost extent.

#### *2 Chap. 16 par. Page 5.*

The law exacts from the labourers in return a reciprocal attention to the welfare and interest of the landlord and farmer.

#### *Titre 4, Pa. 56.*

In lieu of wages, the labourers in plantations shall be allowed a full fourth of the gross product, free from all duties and expenses to the time of removal.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Page 1, Art. I. It is the King's express order, that on every complaint of the cultivators against their landlords and farmers, the lieutenant commanding in the parish shall immediately attend to the circumstances of the case; and on proof of the grievance, report to the the general of the district, who shall thereupon transmit the same to the privy council, who shall decide on the case, and pronounce sentence of punishment according to the nature of the offence.

On refusal of this parish officer to enter into the business, the plaintiff is authorised to address the commandant; in default of whose interference he may address the general of division; and, if need be, the privy council direct.

III. No landlord or farmer has authority to reject any cultivator from his habitation on pretext of illness or infirmity.

IV. An hospital shall be built on every plantation wherein the sick labourers shall be attended by professional assistance, and supplied with medicines at the expense of the landlord or farmer, who is to secure the personal attendance twice in each week.



Another hospital shall be provided for such as are afflicted with contagious disorders.

Independent of the professional visitor, each hospital shall be provided with a midwife and a female nurse.

V. The medical visitors are bound to act in conformity with all the King's ordinances respecting the exercise of their profession.

VI. Landlords and proprietors are bound to maintain and support the aged and infirm cultivators, and to furnish medicine and attendance.

VII. Landlords and farmers are most expressly prohibited from forcing their cultivators to quit their dwellings for the purpose of working at another plantation, or in any other branch of cultivation than that in which they have been accustomed to labour, without the privy council's permission; to be obtained only on proof of the lands proposed to be abandoned being no longer susceptible of production.

VIII. Resident planters convicted of having suborned or connived at the desertion of a soldier, or his absence without a furlough,

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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

are punishable according to art. 12. sect. 2. of the military code.

IX. Farmers are obliged to furnish tools and implements of cultivation, for which the managers shall be responsible.

X. Provision grounds shall be allotted upon every plantation in presence of the public authorities, and proportionally among the respective labouring families, according to the quality and extent of the land applicable to such purpose.

XI. In case of fire, the labourers on contiguous plantations are enjoined to assist in extinguishing it, and the neighbouring farmers to contribute in every way to that effect.

XII. No landlord or cultivator shall carry fire among the cane-pieces, nor plant any fresh wood upon his boundaries without due notice to his neighbour, and observation of the distances proper, to prevent accidents by fire.

XIII. Farmers have the right of pasturing their saddle and carriage horses : but the attendants of these animals shall have no right to share in the crop.

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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

XIV. The keep of too many animals upon cultivated land being found prejudicial to cultivation and good husbandry, their number shall be limited, and the surplus number turned into the common field.

XV. A limited number of attendants on the plantation cattle shall share in the fourth part of the produce allotted to the agriculturists and assistants in the manufacture.

*Chap. II.*

Art. XVII. The law punishes the lazy and vagabond, among whom are comprehended labourers of both sexes who shall quit the habitations in which they have domiciled, in order to reside in towns or other places where they are forbidden to settle: penalty, Art. 114. Titre 8.

XVIII. Marriage being the source of moral conduct, it shall be especially encouraged and protected; and the laborious peasantry who shall bring up the greatest number of legitimate children in a reputable manner, shall be distinguished and encouraged by government itself.

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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

**XIX.** Mendicity and female licentiousness are severely reprobatedall; beggars on the highway, prostitutes, and stragglers shall be arrested, and such as have no legal settlement placed by the proper authorities, in their discretion, to labour for their livelihood. His Majesty's governors and lieutenants are strictly ordered to enforce these regulations, and the good and faithful subjects invited to denounce the delinquents.

**XX.** Every conductor or manager who shall be convicted of neglecting the cultivation confided to his care, or of converting to his own benefit the property of his employer, by diverting the workmen to fish or chase, employ them in building for his own benefit, or who shall have mistreated the labourers, or misused his own authority, shall be liable to the penalties in Art. 115. T. 111.

**XXI.** The misconduct of managers and conductors with respect to others, in which the proprietors and farmers appear neither to have participated nor to have derived any advantage, shall in no case attach to the latter, nor to prejudice the interest of absentees: but if

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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

the case be otherwise, they shall be responsible according to the nature of the transaction.

XXII. The following hours of labour are irrevocably established.

Work shall commence with the day-light, and be continued uninterruptedly till eight o'clock:—one hour is allotted to the labourer for breakfast on the spot where employed; at nine work recommences until noon, when two hours repose are granted them: at two exactly they recommence work, and shall not leave off before night-fall.

XXIII. Women pregnant, or with children at nurse, are exempt from field labour.

XXIV. Prayers shall be read to the labourers every night, and the landlord, farmer, or manager, shall invite the people to attend on the Sabbath and on fast days to public prayers in their parish.

XXV. Proprietors, farmers, and managers of plantations are compelled to see the provision-ground well kept by the respective labourers to whom they have been granted: if the latter neglect this duty, they shall be employed in it

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Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

during their hours of respite from plantation-work.

XXVI. No labourer, without permission of the lieutenant of the King, shall absent himself from the plantation on working days, unless this be obtained through the overseer or conductor.

XXVII. On the appearance of disorder or seditious movement on a plantation, the proprietor, farmer, or superintendant, shall apply to his neighbours for assistance in arresting the guilty; after which notice shall be dispatched to the commandant of the police, who is bound to repair to the spot and secure the disturbers of the public peace, imprison, and report to the proper authorities, on pain of becoming personally liable for all consequences.

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I would here beg leave to observe, that while reading the foregoing laws, in order to have a fair understanding of the grounds upon which the military aspect of them is to be justly founded and approved, is, that at the period when they were framed the whole popu-

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Proclamations, and Other Official Documents

Edited by Prince Sanders

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

xv

lation were soldiers ; and all the most improved and intelligent men were placed in the highest civil and military offices: in this state of things, a government bearing some degree of consonance to the condition, character, wants, and employment of the whole people, was absolutely necessary.

P. S.