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Haiti, Free Soil, and Antislavery in the Revolutionary Atlantic FREE

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IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, the French colony of Saint-Domingue was the richest colony in the world. Set in the Caribbean Sea, a short sail from some of the principal American colonies of Britain and Spain, in the 1780s it produced about half of all the sugar and coffee consumed in Europe and the Americas. It was, in the nomenclature of the time, the “Pearl of the Antilles,” the “Eden of the Western World.” It was there, in late August 1791, that the colony's enslaved rose up, eventually declaring war against the regime of slavery at its seat of most extreme and opulent power. Within a month, the rebel slaves numbered in the tens of thousands, and the property destroyed amounted to more than a thousand sugar and coffee farms. With this event—the largest and best-coordinated slave rebellion...

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