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Title: “The Haitian Revolution’s Impact on Freedom and Abolition in the Americas: The Cases of Simon Bolivar and Frederick Douglass”

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Phylea Anderson is a senior at IPFW. She will be earning a degree in Communications with a concentration of interpersonal and organizational. Along with her B.A., she will also be receiving a certificate in Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS). Each of these disciplines has allowed her to see farther than the world she lives in and the people that surround her. Her biggest joy is volunteering for the annual Harambee Festival in Fort Wayne. Founded over 20 years ago by Phylea’s grandmother, it has enabled her to continue the legacy of goodwill and peace.

Abstract

Haiti became the second independent republic in the western hemisphere when it won its independence from the France in 1804. It was the only colony to gain independence and abolish slavery simultaneously. Haiti’s revolution became synonymous with abolition and because of that many revolutionaries and nations shied away from tying themselves to Haiti. Many leaders in other nations feared that the slave uprising in Haiti had the potential to spread, and because of that did not want to be associated with Haiti and her ties to abolition and black freedom. Nevertheless, the Haitian Revolution had positive consequences on abolitionism and freedom, and the revolution’s impact varied in different contexts. We can see these diverse positive consequences through the distinct impact the Haitian Revolution had on two individuals: Simon Bolivar (1783-1830) and Frederick Douglass (1818-1895).

Bolivar is known as “*el liberator*” due to his great influence on the independence movements of Venezuela, Bolivia, Columbia, Panama, Ecuador, and Peru. He was born into a prominent family, but was orphaned at a young age. As a teen he traveled to Europe where he was exposed to those who opposed Spanish rule in the New World. He promised then to liberate his homeland. After many defeats, in 1815, Bolivar arrived to the southern part of Haiti seeking aid and relief from President Alexander Sabes Petion. This aid was granted with the promise to end slavery in any country that became independent. Succeeding in 6 countries, Bolivar kept his promise and took initial steps that eventually led to the abolition of slavery in those independent South American nations.

Douglass was a very influential black abolitionist. Born a slave, Douglass was able to eventually buy his freedom and then became a champion for black freedom. Unlike Bolivar, Douglass was not seeking independence from Europe, but looking for the same freedoms that the Haitian people enjoyed after their own revolution to be granted to American blacks. Haiti was a "promised land" that Douglass and other black Americans looked towards. While Douglass’s direct involvement with the island did not come until later in life when he was a diplomat (1871 and 1889-1891), the Haitian model of abolition and black freedom influenced Douglass

throughout his life. Although Bolivar and Douglass had differing opinions over their years as revolutionaries, Haiti, albeit in distinct ways, influenced both of their movements for abolition and freedom.

Bibliographical note

To start my research I began looking into secondary sources. Sources such as “Haiti: Revolution” by Bob Clement, were able to give me a more in depth view of the revolution. Setting the groundwork, I was then able to discover my primary sources that were written by Simon Bolivar and Frederick Douglass. The primary sources make up a majority evidence for my thesis. For example, there is a correspondence that occurred between Bolivar and Haitian President, Alexandre Petion, discussing the terms to the aid Bolivar would receive from Haiti. Sources such as the correspondence were able to provide concrete evidence of the impact Haiti had on Bolivar and the Americas.