

Haitian Soldiers at the Siege of Savannah (1779)



THE DRUMMER REPRESENTS YOUNG HENRI CHRISTOPHE, WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE OCTOBER 9, 1779 BATTLE OF SAVANNAH. CHRISTOPHE LATER BECAME A LEADER IN THE STRUGGLE FOR HAITIAN INDEPENDENCE FROM FRENCH COLONIAL RULE, ENDING IN 1804. A COMMANDER OF THE HAITIAN ARMY, HE BECAME KING OF HAITI, BEING AMONG THE FIRST HEADS OF STATE OF AFRICA DESCENT IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE.

THE LARGEST UNIT OF AFRICAN DESCENT WHO AMERICAN REVOLUTION W "LES CHASSEURS VOLONT DOMINGUE" FROM HAITI. CONSISTED OF FREE VOLUNTEERED FOR A C CAPTURE SAVANNAH FRO IN 1779. THEIR SACRIFIC THAT MEN OF AFRICAN ALSO PRESENT ON M BATTLEFIELDS DURING T





Vue de la Ville de Savannah, du C...
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During the American Revolutionary War, France sent troops to assist the American colonies in their struggle for independence from Great Britain. Among these forces was a regiment from the French colony of Saint-Domingue (present-day Haiti) known as the Chasseurs-Volontaires de Saint-Domingue. Approximately 500–800 soldiers of African descent from Saint-Domingue participated in the campaign against the British at the Siege of Savannah in Savannah.

These soldiers included free men of color and some enslaved men who were promised freedom for their military service. They sailed from Saint-Domingue in August 1779 under the command of French Admiral Charles Henri d'Estaing to help the American and French forces recapture Savannah from the British.

Their Role in the Battle

The Haitian volunteers helped defend trenches, support French and American operations, and participated in combat during the assault on British defenses. Although the Franco-American attack ultimately failed on October 9, 1779, the courage of these soldiers was widely recognized. Approximately 545 members of the regiment took part in the siege.

Henri Christophe

One of the most famous participants was believed to be a young drummer boy named Henri Christophe, who later became a leader of the Haitian Revolution and eventually King of Haiti. His experience at Savannah exposed him to military tactics and the ideals of liberty that would later influence Haiti's struggle for independence.

Why Their Service Matters

The Haitian soldiers who fought at Savannah represent one of the earliest documented military contributions of people from what would become Haiti to the United States. Their participation demonstrates that people of African descent played a significant role in the American Revolution. Historians have also noted that many veterans of Savannah later became leaders, officers, and fighters in the movement that culminated in the independence of Haiti in 1804.

The Haitian Monument in Savannah

In 2009, a monument honoring these soldiers was dedicated in Savannah. The monument commemorates the sacrifice of the Haitian volunteers and their contribution to American independence.

Historical Significance for Haiti

The story of the Savannah volunteers forms a symbolic bridge between the American Revolution and the Haitian Revolution. The same ideals of freedom and self-determination that inspired American independence later inspired the people of Haiti to defeat Napoleon's armies and establish the world's first independent Black republic under leaders such as Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Henri Christophe, and Alexandre Pétion.

For Haitians, the soldiers of Savannah are remembered as pioneers whose bravery helped shape the histories of both nations.