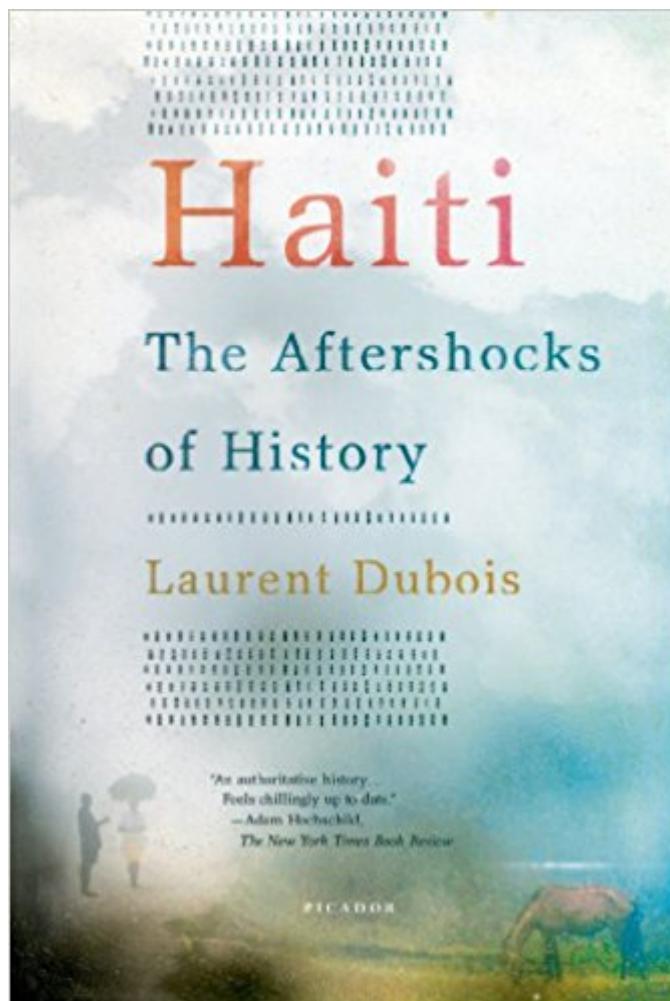


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# Haiti: The Aftershocks Of History



## Synopsis

A New York Times Notable Book of the Year Even before the devastating 2010 earthquake, Haiti was known as a benighted place of poverty and corruption, blamed by many for its own wretchedness. But as acclaimed historian Laurent Dubois demonstrates, Haiti's troubled present can only be understood by examining its complex past. The country's difficulties are inextricably rooted in its founding revolution--the only successful slave revolt in the history of the world; the hostility that this rebellion generated among the surrounding colonial powers; and the intense struggle within Haiti itself to define its newfound freedom and realize its promise. Revealing what lies behind the familiar moniker "the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere," this indispensable book illuminates the foundations on which a new Haiti might yet emerge.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ã¢ "Well-written, authoritative historyÃ¢ Â| enriched by careful attention to what Haitian intellectuals have had to say about their country over the last two centuries.Ã¢ Â• Ã¢ "The New York Times Book ReviewÃ¢ "A sweeping, passionate history of Haiti... Smart, honest, and utterly compelling, this book is the national biography this country and its people deserve.Ã¢ Â• Ã¢ "Boston GlobeÃ¢ "A book as welcome as it is timely: a lucid one-volume history of the nation, from Toussaint to the present, anchored in scholarship but rendered as a comprehensive-but-swift narrative for the general reader.Ã¢ Â• Ã¢ "The NationÃ¢ "This excellent, engaging history seeks to strip away centuries of mocking and reductive bias. Dubois's Haiti is a land of ceaseless activity, a ferment of suppression and insurrection exacerbated by the mercenary intrusions of foreign powers--in the past century, chiefly the United States. Dubois also

traces a parallel history of bold social experiments on the part of everyday Haitians. Throughout, he makes clear how economic pressures and political crises have left even the country's better leaders hamstrung, without downplaying their failures in fulfilling Haiti's great promise. The New Yorker: "An admirable chronicle." Reading Haiti: The Aftershocks of History, I was repeatedly struck by the deep and detailed explanations of things that had never quite made sense to me about Haiti. Those 'aha' moments were some of the most satisfying passages in this engrossing and deeply-researched book. The Miami Herald: "A vigorous, knowledgeable and empathetic account... A pleasure to add to my collection of writings about Haiti." San Francisco Chronicle: "Fascinating." For anyone with even a little interest in Haiti, this book is an essential read. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: "Very few times have I been able to say that I learned something new about a subject with which I am ostensibly familiar. But this is the case on virtually every page of Laurent Dubois's *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History*. Dubois, the veritable dean of Haitian studies, has produced that rarest of things: a highly entertaining narrative for the general reader, but one deeply satisfying to the scholar as well. This brilliant book, a compelling and colorful saga of the triumph and tragedy of Haitian revolution and freedom, should be required reading for anyone who wonders from whence the 'curse on Haiti' really emanated." Henry Louis Gates Jr., The Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Harvard University: "Laurent Dubois is an impeccable scholar and a master storyteller. *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* is the new standard work in English on the astounding panorama of Haitian history, from the seismic events of its founding to the earthquake of 2010." Madison Smartt Bell, author of *All Souls' Rising*: "Haiti's history is tragic and noble, worth knowing for its own sake and essential to the country's future. This book is an admirable synthesis of that history. It is sensible, comprehensive, and gracefully written." Tracy Kidder, author of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*: "A masterpiece." For those who, perusing the headlines, sometimes find themselves moved to ask the perennial question 'Why is Haiti like that?,' Laurent Dubois provides a brilliant and perceptive riposte. Wielding sharp, unsettling anecdotes and a flowing prose style, Dubois plumbs Haiti's rich and singular history--with its unlikely heroes and persuasive demons, its exploiters and its misfables, its compromisers and its intransigents--to teach us important and subtle lessons in revolution, occupation, and liberation. These lessons go well beyond the concerns of Haitianists to encompass the great surge of human history, which may well be bearing us, today, toward another similar age of revolution and upheaval. Amy Wilentz, author of *The Rainy*

## Season

Laurent Dubois is the author of *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*, a Los Angeles Times Best Book of 2004. The Marcello Lotti Professor of Romance Studies and History at Duke University, Dubois has written on Haiti for the Los Angeles Times, *The Nation*, and the *New Yorker* Web site, among other publications, and is the codirector of the Haiti Lab at the Franklin Humanities Institute. He lives in Durham, North Carolina.

Having lived and worked in Haiti over a period of 40 years I approach any book and article about the country with great apprehension. So much of what is written is simplistic and judgmental, buying into one or another side of deeply polarizing issues, events, and personalities. This book beautifully conveys Haiti's complexity and puts it in historical context. For non Haitians who love Haiti as I do or for those who want to understand what lies beneath the country they know about only through the media, this is an excellent source of information. Thank you Laurent Dubois.

I picked up this history of Haiti after seeing it appear on the NY Times Notable Books of 2012 list. I have always been looking to read a good history of Haiti in advance of going to visit the country and having completed this book I now feel as if I have a much better idea of what the country is all about and how it came to be where it is. I found it quite interesting to read the author's explanation for how Haiti has struggled over the years with having to pay so much of its income back to France and other occupiers as a tax. That seems to have really debilitated the country and probably set it back many years from where it really could be. I thought his treatment of the early years of the country was good but a bit longish and dull. The part that I really wanted to read more about was the time when Doc Duvalier and his son Baby Doc Duvalier were in power and although he surely did address that in the final chapter of the book, I felt it could have been more descriptive. Finally, he really did not touch on the devastating earthquake of a few years ago at all other than to mention it in passing once. Given the magnitude of that disaster and how it has affected modern-day Haiti, I would have liked to have seen more about that. That said, if you are looking for a good general history of Haiti, its rulers, and its relationship to other countries including the US, then this is a good book to read.

Breaks my heart to learn and understand how we treated these hard working people. Seems Europe and the US just saw them as pawns, cheap labor and another world they could exploit.

Unfortunately, small Haiti did not have the ability to fend off the foreign "invaders" who often corrupted even well meaning leaders.

Before I read this book I had very ignorant views of Haiti. I thought it was a country who's people were just corrupt and incapable of democracy. However, after reading, I've come to a great appreciation of Haitian history. This book does a great job of helping the reader understand why Haiti is the way it is today and it's inspiring leaders and intellectuals. I hope to one day to travel to some of the historic sites mentioned in this book. Haiti has a rich history that has been truly under appreciated. I highly recommend this book. I was never bored and kept wanting to read more and more even after there were no more pages to read.

I was worried by low-star reviews, but I found the book to be a great primer, well-written, compelling, and full of sources and ways to branch out into further, deeper study. The book ends in a rush, with Aristide, parts one and two, the earthquake, and the problems with NGOs; however, this is the epilogue. The book's chapters, running through the reign of the Duvaliers, are substantial and worth it. I will say, though, that if one of your main aims is to learn about Aristide then this is not the book for you. Yet, I maintain that, for what it is, it is a very good book, and I highly recommend it.

I checked out the book from our agency's library before my first trip to Haiti. There wasn't a plethora of books on the history of Haiti, so my choices were limited. It turned out to be perfect. Great detail and the author connects the dots in such a way that it is easy to follow. When I visited Port-au-Prince, Cap Haitien, Citadel, and Sans Souci, my trips were greatly enriched by the background information from the book. It enhanced my appreciation for the country, its people, and the current situation. Thank you, Laurent Dubois.

Dubois dispassionately explores Haiti's history between 1804 and 1957. He articulates the realistic policy options the new states'(s) leaders faced in its first few years of independence, the reactions of the Haitian people, and Haiti's interaction with the outside world. His thoroughly documents the stagnation under Boyer and the subsequent calcification of Haiti's political and socioeconomic trajectory, but his work is not a simple cri de coeur against any one group or class in particular. Dubois' work includes voices from Haiti's small, but spirited intelligentsia, and chronicles their efforts to direct the ship of state. The biggest disappoint was the brief discussion about the impacts of the Haitian occupation of the Dominican Republic.

A great little history of the nation of Haiti. I have read others that were much more dense. This one was easy to keep up with and told the story very well. The section on the occupation by the US Marines was chilling, especially to this former marine. I saw some names there that I recognized as marines that went on to greatness and fame in later actions, though Dubois did not mention it. If you are looking to understand the current situation in Haiti, this book will help you a lot.

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