

## Activity #1: U.S. Interests in Latin America

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Using the map at the following site, answer the questions below:

<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/neh/interactives/caribbean/>

Question	Answer
How many times did the United States send troops to Central America and the Caribbean between the 1890s and the 1930s?	
To what nations did the United States send troops?	
In what nations did the United States supervise finances?	
What other actions did the United States take in Central America and the Caribbean between the 1890s and the 1930s?	
What do you think are the reasons the United States sent troops and supervised finances in Central America and the Caribbean?	

## Activity #2: U.S. Intervention in the Mexican Revolution

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Using the photographic exhibit below, make a list that answers the following question:

“What sort of problems did the revolution appear to cause for the people of Mexico?”

Exhibition of Robert Runyon’s photographs of the Mexican Revolution (scroll down to find photographs): <http://runyon.lib.utexas.edu/conflict.html>

### Your List:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

## Activity #2: U.S. Intervention in the Mexican Revolution

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer the questions below, using the documents that follow.

Question	Answer
Why did American capitalists support General Victoriano Huerta's murder of Mexican President Francisco Madero?	
What happened to nine American sailors in April 1914 in the Mexican city of Tampico?	
Why was Wilson angry even after Huerta apologized for the "Tampico Incident"?	
What does Wilson say about Mexico's political troubles?	
What does Wilson want Congress to allow him to do?	

Document 1: Background information on the Tampico incident:

<http://www.pbs.org/kpbs/theborder/history/timeline/15.html>

Document 2: Excerpt of Wilson's April 1914 statement to Congress on the Tampico incident:

(Source: <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=678>)

It is my duty to call your attention to a situation which has arisen in our dealings with General Victoriano Huerta at Mexico City which calls for action, and to ask your advice and cooperation in acting upon it.

On the 9th of April a paymaster of the U.S.S. *Dolphin* landed at the Iturbide Bridge landing at Tampico with a whaleboat and boat's crew to take off certain supplies needed by his ship, and while engaged in loading the boat was arrested by an officer and squad of men of the army of General Huerta. Neither the paymaster nor anyone of the boat's crew was armed. Two of the men were in the boat when the arrest took place and were obliged to leave it and submit to be taken into custody, notwithstanding the fact that the boat carried, both at her bow and at her stern, the flag of the United States.

The officer who made the arrest was proceeding up one of the streets of the town with his prisoners when met by an officer of higher authority, who ordered him to return to the landing and await orders; and within an hour and a half from the time of the arrest, orders were received from the commander of the Huertista forces at Tampico for the release of the paymaster and his men. The release was followed by apologies from the commander and later by an expression of regret by General Huerta himself . . .

The incident cannot be regarded as a trivial one, especially as two of the men arrested were taken from the boat itself -- that is to say, from the territory of the United States -- but had it stood by itself it might have been attributed to the ignorance or arrogance of a single officer. Unfortunately, it was not an isolated case. A series of incidents have recently occurred which cannot but create the impression that the representatives of General Huerta were willing to go out of their way to show disregard for the dignity and rights of this government and felt perfectly safe in doing what they pleased, making free to show in many ways their irritation and contempt . . .

Subsequent explanations and formal apologies did not and could not alter the popular impression, which it is possible it had been the object of the Huertista authorities to create, that the government of the United States was being singled out, and might be singled out with impunity, for slights and affronts in retaliation for its refusal to recognize the pretensions of General Huerta to be regarded as the constitutional provisional president of the Republic of Mexico . . .

I, therefore, felt it my duty to sustain Admiral Mayo in the whole of his demand and to insist that the flag of the United States should be saluted in such a way as to indicate a new spirit and attitude on the part of the Huertistas. Such a salute General Huerta has refused, and I have come to ask your approval and support in the course I now purpose to pursue.

This government can, I earnestly hope, in no circumstances be forced into war with the people of Mexico. Mexico is torn by civil strife. If we are to accept the tests of its own constitution, it has no government. General Huerta has set his power up in the City of Mexico, such as it is, without right and by methods for which there can be no justification. Only part of the country is under his control. If armed conflict should unhappily come as a result of his attitude of personal resentment toward this government, we should be fighting only General Huerta and those who adhere to him

and give him their support, and our object would be only to restore to the people of the distracted republic the opportunity to set up again their own laws and their own government . . .

No doubt I could do what is necessary in the circumstances to enforce respect for our government without recourse to the Congress and yet not exceed my constitutional powers as President; but I do not wish to act in a matter possibly of so grave consequence except in close conference and cooperation with both the Senate and House. I, therefore, come to ask your approval that I should use the armed forces of the United States in such ways and to such an extent as may be necessary to obtain from General Huerta and his adherents the fullest recognition of the rights and dignity of the United States, even amidst the distressing conditions now unhappily obtaining in Mexico.

## Activity #2: U.S. Intervention in the Mexican Revolution

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions (Group 1):** In this activity, you will be adopting the role of Venustiano Carranza, who replaced Huerta as Mexico's President. Using the following documents, you will prepare a presentation that explains the following:

1. Why you are unhappy with the United States
2. Why you believe the Presidents of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile should support you

Documents: Three letters from Venustiano Carranza to the Presidents of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, August 1915. (Source: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4940>)

To the President of Brazil

General Headquarters, Veracruz, August 8, 1915. His Excellency Sr.—Wenceslao J. Baceta, President of the Republic of Brazil. Rio de Janeiro.

It has come to my attention that [Robert] Lansing, Secretary of State of the United States of North America, met the day before yesterday with representatives of A. B. C., [Argentina, Brazil, and Chile] with the aim of pacifying the Republic of Mexico, in this way attempting to interfere in its internal affairs and violate its sovereignty. The Mexican people have learned, to their satisfaction, that your representative in Washington appropriately refused to be a party to the illegal enterprise, setting an example that can become a precedent for the positive harmony and fraternity that should exist among Latin American nations, whose destinies are intimately linked. In the name of the Mexican people and as Commander in Chief of the Constitutionalist Army in Charge of the Executive Power of the nation, I thank you for this just and amicable act, but I also lamentably have to inform you that Mr. Cardoso Oliveira has been among those that have caused the greatest harm to the Republic of Mexico and that in a certain manner he is responsible for the current state of relations with our neighboring Republic to the North.

I take advantage of this opportunity, Mr. President, to express to you the deep sentiments of cordiality and affection the Mexican People hold towards the Brazilian people and to assure you of my highest respect for you.—V. Carranza.

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To the President of Argentina

His Excellency Sr. Victoriano de la Plaza. President of the Republic of Argentina. Buenos Aires.

[Robert] Lansing, Secretary of State of the North American Government, and [the] Representative of A. B. C. met the day before yesterday in Washington to reach an understanding with respect to the pacification of Mexico, in an attempt to interfere in matters solely pertaining to its sovereignty. Compelled by the purest patriotism and desirous of assuring the rule of liberty and democracy in America, in the name of the Mexican people and as Commander in Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, in Charge of the Executive Power of the Union, I take the liberty of calling to your attention the potential dangers of a new policy of interference on the part of one or several nations of this continent in [other nations], [affairs] that lie exclusively within the domain of their sovereignty. In view of the fact that in the aforementioned meetings, the government of the nation over which you honorably preside has a Representative, I hope that your acts will be inspired by the ideas and sentiments that I have just expressed, for it would be an unpardonable error and a criminal act against our race, if that Government contributed to the provocation of war between two American nations, because a powerful government attempted to impose its will upon a free, independent, and sovereign People, violating their rights and nullifying the victory they have just won by force of arms, in order to establish once and for all the reign of liberty and justice. . . .—V. Carranza”

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To the President of Chile

His Excellency, Sr. Ramon Barroso Luco. President of the Republic of Chile. Santiago de Chile.

[Robert] Lansing, Secretary of State of the North American Government, and [the] Representative of A. B. C. met the day before yesterday in Washington, to resolve the pacification of Mexico, in an attempt to interfere in matters solely pertaining to its sovereignty. Compelled by the purest patriotism and desirous of assuring the rule of liberty and democracy in America, in the name of the Mexican people and as Commander in Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, in Charge of the Executive Power of the Union, I take the liberty of calling to your attention the potential dangers of a new policy of interference on the part of one or several nations of this Continent in [other nations], [affairs] that lie exclusively within the domain of their sovereignty. In view of the fact that in such meetings the government of the Nation over which you honorably preside has a Representative, I hope that your acts will be inspired by the ideas and sentiments that I have just expressed, for it would be an unpardonable error and that Government would become an accomplice to a crime against our race, if it contributed to the provocation of war between two American nations, because a powerful government attempted to impose its will upon a free, independent, and sovereign people, violating its rights and nullifying the total victory it has just won by force of arms, in order to establish once and for all the reign of liberty and justice. An act so unjustified and bearing such disastrous and far-reaching consequences for all Latin American nations . . . should [not be] tolerate[d] . . .—V. Carranza.

## Activity #2: U.S. Intervention in the Mexican Revolution

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions (Group 2):** In this activity, you will be adopting the role of Secretary of State Robert Lansing. Using the following document, you will prepare a presentation for the President that explains the following:

1. Why it is important to not call U.S. military action in Mexico an “intervention”
2. Why U.S. military action is necessary

Document: “Avoid the Use of the Word Intervention”: June 1916 correspondence between Wilson and Secretary of State Robert Lansing concerning the U.S. invasion of Mexico:  
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4947>

Washington June 21, 1916.

My dear Mr. President:

As there appears to be an increasing probability that the Mexican situation may develop into a state of war I desire to make a suggestion for your consideration. It seems to me that we should avoid the use of the word “Intervention” and deny that any invasion of Mexico is for the sake of intervention.

There are several reasons why this appears to me expedient:

*First.* We have all along denied any purpose to interfere in the internal affairs of Mexico and the St. Louis platform declares against it. Intervention conveys the idea of such interference.

*Second.* Intervention would be humiliating to many Mexicans whose pride and sense of national honor would not resent severe terms of peace in case of being defeated in a war.

*Third.* American intervention in Mexico is extremely distasteful to all Latin America and might have a very bad effect upon our Pan-American program.

*Fourth.* Intervention, which suggests a definite purpose to “clean up” the country, would bind us to certain accomplishments which circumstances might make extremely difficult or inadvisable, and, on the other hand, it would impose conditions which might be found to be serious restraints upon us as the situation develops.

*Fifth.* Intervention also implies that the war would be made primarily in the interest of the Mexican people, while the fact is it would be a war forced on us by the Mexican Government, and, if we term it intervention, we will have considerable difficulty in explaining why we had not intervened before but waited until attacked.

It seems to me that the real attitude is that the *de facto* Government having attacked our forces engaged in a rightful enterprise or invaded our borders (as the case may be) we had no recourse but to defend ourselves and to do so it has become necessary to prevent future attacks by forcing the Mexican Government to perform its obligations. That is, it is simply a state of international war without purpose on our part other than to end the conditions which menace our national peace and the safety of our citizens, and that it is *not* intervention with all that that word implies.

I offer the foregoing suggestion, because I feel that we should have constantly in view the attitude we intend to take if worse comes to worse, so that we may regulate our present policy and future correspondence with Mexico and other American Republics with that attitude.

In case this suggestion meets with your approval I further suggest that we send to each diplomatic representative of a Latin American Republic in Washington a communication stating briefly our attitude and denying any intention to intervene. I enclose a draft of such a note. If this is to be done at all, it seems to me that it should be done at once, otherwise we will lose the chief benefit, namely, a right understanding by Latin America at the very outset.

Faithfully yours, Robert Lansing

## Activity #2: U.S. Intervention in the Mexican Revolution

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions (Group 3):** In this activity, you will be adopting the role of Secretary of State Robert Lansing. Using the following document, you will prepare a presentation that explains the following:

1. Why the United States cannot ignore Mexico's domestic troubles
2. Why U.S. forces have entered Mexico

Document: Excerpt from a June 20, 1916 letter from Robert Lansing to Venustiano Carranza:  
[http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/mexico\\_lansing.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/mexico_lansing.htm)

The Government of the United States has viewed with deep concern and increasing disappointment the progress of the revolution in Mexico.

Continuous bloodshed and disorders have marked its progress. For three years the Mexican Republic has been torn with civil strife; the lives of Americans and other aliens have been sacrificed; vast properties developed by American capital and enterprise have been destroyed or rendered non-productive; bandits have been permitted to roam at will through the territory contiguous to the United States and to seize, without punishment or without effective attempt at punishment, the property of Americans, while the lives of citizens of the United States, who ventured to remain in Mexican territory or to return there to protect their interests, have been taken, in some cases barbarously taken, and the murderers have neither been apprehended nor brought to justice....

During the past nine months in particular, the frontier of the United States along the lower Rio Grande has been thrown into a state of constant apprehension and turmoil because of frequent and sudden incursions into American territory and depredations and murders on American soil by Mexican bandits, who have taken the lives and destroyed the property of American citizens, sometimes carrying American citizens across the international boundary with the booty seized....

This Government has repeatedly requested in the strongest terms that the de facto Government [led by Carranza] safeguard the lives and homes of American citizens and furnish the protection which international obligation imposes, to American interests in the northern States of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, and Sonora, and also in the States to the south....

In the face of these depredations, not only on American lives and property on Mexican soil, but on American soldiers, citizens, and homes on American territory, the perpetrators of which General Carranza was unable or possibly considered it inadvisable to apprehend and punish, the

United States had no recourse other than to employ force to disperse the bands of Mexican outlaws who were with increasing boldness systematically raiding across the international boundary....

In this manner and for these reasons have the American forces entered Mexican territory.

## Activity #2: U.S. Intervention in the Mexican Revolution

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Rubric for Student Presentations

	Student(s) demonstrates understanding of primary source.	Student(s) demonstrates an understanding of the individual portrayed.	Students(s) support ideas/arguments with references from the text.	Student(s) encourage thinking and participation in others.	Student(s) presentation is well organized and delivered.
4-5 points: Very Evident					
2-3 points: Somewhat evident					
0-1 points: Not present.					
Not applicable					

Comments:

Final Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

## Activity #3: U.S. Intervention in Haiti

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** In this exercise, you will adopt the role of an American news correspondent in Haiti in 1920. Your task is to use the following documents to write a brief article (2-3 paragraphs) answering **one** of these questions:

1. “How have the Haitians responded to the presence of U.S. Marines in their country?”

**Tip:** start with Document 1, the letters from Charlemagne Péralte

2. What do many of the Americans in Haiti think of Haitians, and how do they (Americans) treat them (Haitians)?

**Tip:** start with Document 2, the 1920 NAACP article about Haiti, especially the sections “Fitness to Rule” and “American ‘Benefits’”

Document 1: 1915 letters from Charlemagne Péralte criticizing presence of U.S. Marines:  
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4946>

Background information from History Matters: “In 1910, an international consortium of banks refinanced Haiti’s international debt and took control of the country’s treasury. In 1914, the bank refused to issue gold payments to the Haitian government and asked the U.S. military to protect the gold reserves. On December 17, 1914, U.S. marines landed in Haiti and moved the gold to the bank’s New York vaults. Eight months later, the marines again landed in Port au Prince, Haiti’s capital, this time claiming the need to protect foreign lives and property. They placed Port au Prince under martial law, ruthlessly subdued armed resistance in rural areas, and began training a new Haitian militia. Charlemagne Péralte led a resistance movement. In this “call to arms” and letter to the French minister, Péralte attacked President Wilson as a hypocrite for claiming to respect the sovereignty of small nations of Europe while occupying Haiti and urged Haitians to resist the Americans.”

Péralte letters:

People of Haiti!

Soon a day like the 1st of January 1804 [the date of the Haitian uprising against France] will rise. For four years the [American] Occupation has been insulting us constantly. Each morning it brings us a new offense. The people are poor and the Occupation still oppresses us with taxes. It spreads fires and forbids us to rebuild wooden houses under the pretext of keeping the city beautiful.

Haitians, let's stay firm. Let's follow the Belgian example. If they burn our cities, it doesn't matter! As the inscription on the tomb of the great Dessalines states: "At the first cannon shot, giving the alarm, cities disappear and the nation stands up."

The holy battle in the North is led by brave citizens. The South is only waiting for the right man to follow its wonderful example. Don't worry, we have the arms. Let's get rid of those savage people, whose beastly character is evident in the person of their President Wilson—traitor, bandit, trouble maker, and thief.

Die for your country.

Long live Independence!

Long live the Union!

Long live the just war!

Down with the Americans!

From Charles the Great Massena Peralte High Commander of the Revolution in Haiti to The French Minister in Haiti

Port-au-Prince

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Honored Minister,

Despite the principles, of international law usually adopted by civilized nations, and coming out of Great War in Europe, the American Government got involved in the internal affairs of the small republic of Haiti and imposed a rule whose approval by the Haitian Parliament was guaranteed enforced by military occupation.

We were ready to accept this rule and follow its obligations, despite the threat to our autonomy and the dignity of our free and independent people. But the false promises, given by the Yankees, when they invaded our land, brought in almost four years of continuous insults, incredible crimes, killings, theft and barbarian acts, the secrets of which are known only to Americans.

Today we lost patience and we reclaim our rights, rights, ignored by the unscrupulous Americans, who by destroying our institutions deprive the people of Haiti of all its resources and devour our name and our blood. For four years, cruel and unjust Yankees brought ruin and hopelessness to our territory. Now, during the peace conference and before the whole world, the civilized nations took an oath to respect the rights and sovereignty of small nations. We demand the liberation of our territory and all the advantages given to free and independent states by

international law. Therefore, please take into consideration that ten months of fighting has been in pursuit of this aim and that our victories give us the right to ask for your recognition.

We are prepared to sacrifice everything to liberate Haiti, and establish here the principles affirmed by President Wilson himself: the rights and sovereignty of small nations. Please note, honored Consul, that American troops, following their own laws, don't have any right to fight against us.

Dear Sirs (sic), please, accept our distinguished salutations.

Signed by the High Commander of the Revolution

M. Peralte

**Document 2: 1920 NAACP article about Haiti:** <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5018>

Background information from History Matters: "U.S. marines occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934. By 1919, Haitian Charlemagne Peralte had organized more than a thousand *cacos*, or armed guerrillas, to militarily oppose the marine occupation. The marines responded to the resistance with a counterinsurgency campaign that razed villages, killed thousands of Haitians, and destroyed the livelihoods of even more. American organizations such as the NAACP opposed the U.S. occupation of Haiti. They sent delegations that investigated conditions and protested the blatant racism and imperialism of U.S. policy in Haiti in the early 20th century. An article from 1920, by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson, countered the standard justifications for U.S. occupation of Haiti."

Document: James Weldon Johnson, "The Truth about Haiti: An NAACP Investigation"

In writing of my visit to Haiti for *Crisis* readers, I should like to tell all that I learned about political, economic and social conditions there, and to give, as well, the information and impressions I gained about the country and the Haitian people themselves. This, of course, will not be possible, for either of these phases of the subject, fully treated, would make a complete article. I have decided that something about each phase will be more interesting and more comprehensive than all about one. Therefore, what I say will of necessity be rather sketchy.

### **The Historic Background**

I should like the reader, first of all, to take a swift glance at the historical and cultural background of the Haitian people. In order to fully understand present and actual conditions, it is necessary to be familiar with the fact that the Haitian people have a glorious history behind them. Haiti was the first of the American Republics, after the United States, to gain its independence. The story of the war for Haitian independence is one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of the world. If one reads only what alien historians have written, he gains the idea that the Haitian struggle was nothing more than the massacre of outnumbered whites by hordes of semi-savage blacks. There was massacre and savagery but it was on both sides. But the war itself was one which suffers very little in magnitude by comparison with the American Revolution. There

were times when the French troops and the Haitian troops engaged, aggregated more than 80,000 men. The French troops were the best that Napoleon could send. The Haitian troops were not a band of lawless guerrillas but were well drilled and well officered. There were battles in which these troops compelled the admiration of the French for their valor, and their commanders, for their military ability and gallantry.

It should also be borne in mind that the Haitian Revolution was not merely a political revolution. It was also a social revolution. There was a complete overturn of both the political and social organization of the country. The man who had been the chattel became the ruler. The great estates of the colonial slave holders were cut up into small parcels and allotted among the former slaves. This last fact has a direct bearing on present conditions in Haiti, to which I shall refer later.

Haiti gained her independence 116 years ago and maintained her complete sovereignty down to 1915, the year of American intervention. None of the Latin-American Republics had the difficulties in maintaining their independence that Haiti encountered. The Black Republic did not receive from the United States the support which it had a right to expect. Haiti had fought France, England and Spain, but the United States was the last of all the strong nations to recognize her independence, when, indeed, she should have been the first.

### **Christophe**

Even intelligent colored Americans are apt to feel indulgent or embarrassed over the subject of Haitian history. No doubt many of them have smiled or felt ashamed at the generally accepted story about King Christophe in his palace at *Sans Souci* and his court of dukes and counts. The popular picture of Christophe's court is that of a semi-savage ludicrously playing at king, surrounded by a nobility that took their titles from the names of things they liked best to eat and drink. Christophe was a remarkable man, and a ruler of great intelligence and energy. He declared himself king because he felt that most could be accomplished for Haiti under the strongest possible form of government. Under his direction, the northern part of Haiti underwent great development. I visited Christophe's palace at *Sans Souci*. It has fallen into ruins, but there is still enough left to show that it was indeed a palace. The buildings and grounds were copied after the palace at Versailles, and were constructed by the best European architects and builders. There is no doubt that when it was erected, it was the most palatial residence on the western hemisphere . . .

It is a people of Negro blood, who have produced a Christophe and a Dessalines, who have given to the world one of its greatest statesmen, Toussaint L'Ouverture, who have behind them a history of which they have every right to be proud, that are now threatened with the loss of their independence; that have now fallen not only under American political domination, but under the domination of American prejudice. Haiti is ruled today by martial law dispensed by Americans. There are nearly three thousand American Marines in Haiti, and American control is maintained by their bayonets. In the five years of American Occupation, more than three thousand innocent Haitians have been slaughtered.

There are three grounds on which the attempt is made to justify American intervention and the military occupation of Haiti. The first is that such a state of anarchy and bloodshed had been

reached as could no longer be tolerated by the civilized world; the second, that the Haitians have demonstrated absolute unfitness to govern themselves; and the third, that great benefits have been brought to Haiti by American control.

### **Alleged Anarchy**

As to the first: The United States Government has wished to make it appear that it was forced on purely humane grounds to intervene in Haiti because of the tragic overthrow and death of President Vilbrun Guillaume, July 27–8, 1915, and that this government has been compelled to keep a military force in Haiti since that time to pacify the country maintain order. The fact is that for nearly a year before the *coup d'état* which overthrew Guillaume, the United States had been bringing pressure on Haiti to compel that country to submit to American control. Three diplomatic attempts had been made by three different missions. It was in May, 1915, that the third attempt was made. The United States sent to Haiti Mr. Paul Fuller, Jr., with the title “Envoy Extraordinary”, on a special mission to apprise the Haitian Government that the Guillaume Administration would not be recognized by the United States unless Haiti agreed to sign a covenant similar to the one which this country had with Santo Domingo. The two governments were interchanging views on this proposition when the events of July 27–8 took place.

On July 27, President Guillaume fled to the French Legation. On the same day, political prisoners in the prison at Port-au-Prince were executed. On the next morning, Guillaume was killed, and that afternoon, an American man-of-war dropped anchor at Port-au-Prince and landed American forces. Immediately after the killing of Guillaume, Port-au-Prince was as quiet as though nothing had happened, and it should be borne in mind that through it all, the life of not a single American citizen had been taken or jeopardized. The overthrow of Guillaume and its attending consequences did not constitute the cause of American intervention in Haiti; it merely furnished an opportunity for which this government was waiting. There never have been the grounds for intervention in Haiti that there have been in Mexico.

### **Fitness To Rule**

The unfitness of the Haitian people to govern themselves has been the subject of propaganda for the last century. Books and pamphlets and articles have been written, and lectures have been delivered many times over to prove that the Haitians not only were incapable of advancement, but were steadily retrograding into barbarism. An observation of the city of Port-au-Prince is sufficient to refute this oft made assertion. Port-au-Prince is a clean, well paved, well lighted city. Its newer business buildings are constructed of concrete and brick. The wooden shanties which one so often sees in magazines and books illustrating the business section of the town are relics of the old French régime. The residential section of Port-au-Prince is built on the slopes of the hills that rise back of the city. The homes of the well-to-do people are beautiful villas with well kept grounds, and there are hundreds of them.

This section of Port-au-Prince is superior to the residential section in any of the cities of the Central American republics. In fact, Port-au-Prince is one of the most beautiful of the tropical cities which I have seen. Haiti has been independent for more than a century and if the people had been steadily retrograding into barbarism during all of that time, Port-au-Prince today would be an aggregation of filth and decay instead of the city that it is. In Port-au-Prince one will meet Americans who, in response to the exclamation, “Why I am surprised to see what a fine city

Port-au-Prince is!” will answer, “Yes, but you should have seen it before the Occupation.” The implication here is that the American Occupation is responsible for making Port-au-Prince a paved and well kept city. It is true that only one or two of the principal streets of Port-au-Prince were paved at the time of the intervention—five years ago—but the work had already been begun and contracts for paving the whole city had already been let by the Haitian Government. The American Occupation did not pave, and had nothing to do with the paving of a single street in Port-au-Prince. The regulations instituted by the American Health Officer may have something to do with the regularity with which the streets are swept, but my observation showed me that the Haitians have a “sweeping habit” which they must have acquired long years before the American Occupation.

I made a five-day trip through the interior, traveling day and night in an automobile. I noticed in the early morning hours, as I passed cabin after cabin in the rural districts, the women carefully sweeping the yards until they were as clean as a floor. In fact, nowhere in the rural districts of Haiti did I see the filth and squalor which may be observed in any backwoods town in our own South.

The smaller cities of Haiti are replicas of Port-au-Prince. Whatever the Haitians may not be, they are a clean people. Many may be dressed in rags and tatters, but the rags and tatters are periodically washed. A filthy Haitian is a rare exception. On this point, I recall a remark made by a white American who conducts one of the biggest mercantile businesses in Haiti. He was speaking to me about the cleanliness of the Haitians and he made an observation which struck me quite forcible. He showed me statistics to prove that Haiti imports more soap per capita than any country in the world. He told me that three of the largest soap manufacturers in the United States maintain headquarters at Port-au-Prince.

Another point in the propaganda which has been so long circulated to prove the unfitness of the Haitians, is the statement that the people are congenitally and habitually lazy. Not long ago I saw a magazine article on Haiti, and one of the illustrations was a picture of a Haitian man lying asleep in the sun, and under it was the title “the Favorite Attitude of Haiti’s Citizens.” I would wager that the photographer either had to pay or persuade his subject to pose especially for him, because in all of my six weeks in Port-au-Prince, I never saw anybody lying around in the sun asleep. On the contrary, the Haitians are quite a thrifty people. What deceives some observers is the fact that their methods are primitive. The mistake is often made of confounding primitive methods with indolence. Anyone who travels the roads of Haiti will be struck by the sight of scores and hundreds and even thousands of women, boys and girls filing along, mile after mile, with the produce of their farms and gardens on their heads, or loaded on the backs of animals, to dispose of them in the markets of the towns. I do not see how anyone could accuse such people of being lazy. Of course, they might market their stuff more efficiently if they had automobile trucks; they have no automobile trucks, but they are willing to walk. For a woman to walk eight or ten miles with a bundle of produce on her head which may barely realize her a dollar is, undoubtedly, a wasteful expenditure of energy, but it is not a sign of laziness.

The Haitian people have also been accused of being ignorant and degraded. They are not degraded. I had ample opportunity to study the people of the cities, and the people of the country districts, and I found them uniformly kind, courteous and hospitable, living in a simple and

wholesome manner. The absence of crime in Haiti is remarkable, and the morality of the people is strikingly high. Port-au-Prince is a city of more than 100,000, but there is no sign of the prostitution that is so flagrant in many Latin-American cities. I was there for six weeks and in all that time, not a single case of a man being accosted by a woman on the street came to my attention. I heard even from the lips of American Marines tributes to the chastity of the Haitian women.

The charge that the Haitians are ignorant is only partly true. They are naturally quick witted and have lively imaginations. The truth, however, is that the great mass of the Haitian people are illiterate. They are perhaps more illiterate than the people of any Latin-American country, but there is a specific reason for this. For a reason which I cannot explain, the French language in the French-American colonial settlements containing a Negro population divided itself into two branches—French and Creole. This is true of Louisiana, Martinique and Guadeloupe, and also of Haiti. The Creole is an Africanized French, and must not be thought of as a mere dialect. The French-speaking person cannot, with the exception of some words, understand Creole unless he learns it. Creole is a distinct language, a graphic and very expressive language, and in some respects, is, for Haiti, a language superior to French.

The upper Haitian classes, say approximately 500,000, speak French, while the masses, probably 2,000,000, speak Creole, and though Haitian Creole is grammatically constructed, it has not been generally, reduced to writing. Therefore, these 2,000,000 people have no way of communication through the written word. They have no books to read. They cannot read the newspapers. They cannot communicate with each other by writing. The children of the masses study French the few years they spend in school, but French never becomes their every-day language. In order for Haiti to abolish illiteracy and thereby reduce the ignorance of her masses, Creole must be made a written, as well as a spoken language for I feel that it is destined to remain the folk language of the country. This offers a fascinating task for the Haitian intellectuals. Before I left, I talked with a group of them concerning it.

I had the opportunity of being received into the homes of the cultured and wealthy people of Port-au-Prince, to attend several of their social affairs and to visit the clubs. Even the most prejudiced writers of Haiti have had to make an exception of this class of Haitians, for they compel it. The majority have been educated in France. They have money. They live in beautiful houses. They are brilliant in conversation and know how to conduct themselves socially. The women dress in fine taste, many of them importing their gowns directly from Paris. Refined people from no part of the world would feel themselves out of place in the best Haitian society. Many of these women are beautiful and all of them vivacious and *chic*. I was deeply impressed with the women of Haiti, not only the society women, but the peasant women. I should like to give my impressions, but space will not allow.

### **American “Benefits”**

The third ground offered as justification is that great benefits have been brought to Haiti by American control. I made an honest effort to find out what things the Americans have done for the benefit of Haiti, during the five years of Occupation. I found that only three things could be advanced, and they were: The Improvement of the public hospital at Port-au-Prince; enforcement of rules of modern sanitation; and the building of the great road from Port-au-Prince to Cape

Haitian. The improvement in the hospital is a worthy piece of work but cannot be made to justify military occupation. The enforcement of certain rules of sanitation is not quite so important as it sounds, for the reason that Haiti, under native rule, has always been a healthy country and never subject to the epidemics which used to sweep the countries circling the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

The building of the road from Port-au-Prince to Cape Haitian is a monumental piece of work, but it is doubtful whether the Occupation had in mind the building of a great highway for the benefit of Haiti, or the construction of a military road which would facilitate the transportation of troops and supplies from one end of the island to the other. At any rate, the manner of building this road was one of the most brutal blunders made by the American Occupation in Haiti. It was built by forced labor. Haitian men were seized on the country roads and taken off their farms and put to work. They were kept in compounds at night and not allowed to go home. They were maltreated, beaten and terrorized. In fact, they were in the same category with the convicts in the Negro chain gangs that are used to build roads in many of our southern states. It was largely out of the methods of building this road that there arose the need for "pacification". The Haitians rebelled. Many of them made their escape and fled to the hills and armed themselves as best they could for revenge. These refugees make up the greatest part of the "caco" forces, and it has now become the duty and sport of American marines to hunt these "cacos" with rifles and machine guns. I was seated at a table one day in company with an American captain of marines and I heard him describe a "caco" hunt. He told how they finally came upon a crowd of natives having a cock fight and how they let them have it with machine guns.

There was one accomplishment which I did expect to find. I expected to find that the Americans had at least made an attempt to develop and improve the system of public education in Haiti. This, at least, they have done in other countries where they have taken control. But I found that the American Occupation has not advanced public education in Haiti a single step. No new school buildings have been erected or new schools established. Not a single Haitian youth has been sent away for training and not a single American teacher, white or colored, has been sent to Haiti to teach.

The United States has absolutely failed in Haiti. It has failed to accomplish any results that justify its military Occupation of that country, and it has made it impossible for those results ever to be accomplished because of the distrust, bitterness and hatred which it has engendered in the Haitian people. Brutalities and atrocities on the part of American Marines have occurred with sufficient frequency to bring about deep resentment and terror on the part of the Haitian people. There have been needless killings of natives by marines. I was told that some marines had cut a notch in the stocks of their rifles for each native killed. Just before I left Port-au-Prince, an American marine caught a Haitian boy stealing sugar on the wharf, and instead of arresting him, he battered his brains out with the butt of his rifle.

I learned from the lips of American marines, themselves, of a number of cases of rape on Haitian women by marines. But, perhaps, the worst phase of American brutality in Haiti is, after all, not in the individual cases of cruelty, but in the American attitude. This attitude may be illustrated by a remark made by a marine officer at another time when I was seated at a table with some Americans. We were discussing the Haitian situation when he said, "The trouble with this

business is that some of these people with a little money and education, think they are as good as we are.” The irony of his remark struck me quite forcible since I had already met a number of cultured Haitians in their homes.

The Americans have carried American prejudice to Haiti. Before their advent, there was no such thing in social circles as race prejudice. Social affairs were attended on the same footing by natives and white foreigners. The men in the American Occupation, when they first went down, also attended Haitian social affairs, but now they have set up their own social circle and established their own club to which no Haitian is invited, no matter what his social standing is. The Haitians now retaliate by never inviting Americans to their social affairs or their clubs. Of course, there are some semi-social affairs at which Haitians and Occupation officials meet, but there is a uniform rule among Haitian ladies not to dance with any American official.

A great deal of this prejudice has been brought about because the Administration has seen fit to send southern white men to Haiti. For instance, the man at the head of the customs service is a man who was formerly a parish clerk in Louisiana. The man who is second in charge of the customs service is a man who was formerly Deputy Collector of Customs at Pascagoula, Miss. The man who is Superintendent of Public Instruction was formerly a school teacher in Louisiana. It seems like a practical joke to send a man from Louisiana where they have not good schools even for white children down to Haiti to organize schools for black children. And the mere idea of white Mississippians going down to civilize Haitians and teach them law and order would be laughable except for the fact that the attempt is actually being made to put the idea into execution. These Southerners have found Haiti to be the veritable promised land of “jobs for deserving democrats”. Many of these men, both military and civilian officials, have moved their families to Haiti. In Port-au-Prince many of them live in fine villas. Many of them who could not keep a hired girl in the United States have a half-dozen servants . . .

The United States has failed in Haiti. It should get out as well and as quickly as it can and restore to the Haitian people their independence and sovereignty. The colored people of the United States should be interested in seeing that this is done, for Haiti is the one best chance that the Negro has in the world to prove that he is capable of the highest self-government. If Haiti should ultimately lose her independence, that one best chance will be lost.

### **Document 3: U.S. Senate hearings on U.S. actions in Haiti, 1919-20:**

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4945>

Background information from History Matters: “Largely at the behest of American bankers, U.S. marines occupied Haiti from 1915 to 1934. By 1919, Haitian Charlemagne Péralte had organized more than a thousand *cacos*, or armed guerrillas, to militarily oppose the marine occupation. The marines responded to the resistance with a counterinsurgency campaign that razed villages, killed thousands of Haitians, and destroyed the livelihoods of even more. The military atrocities and abuse of power during the *Caco* War of 1919–1920 led to a U.S. Senate investigation into the occupation. In these excerpts from the “Inquiry into Occupation and Administration of Haiti,” the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Haiti and Santo Domingo interviewed Haitians about marine conduct in the guerrilla war against the *cacos*.”

**Mr. [Ernest] Angell:** Your name is Dilon Victor?

**Mr. Victor:** Yes.

**Angell:** Do you live in Miragoane?

**Victor:** Yes....

**Angell:** Were you arrested and confined in the prison at Miragoane?

**Victor:** Yes....

**Angell:** And how long were you confined in the prison?

**Victor:** Twenty-seven days.

**Angell:** Do you know for what reason you were confined?

**Victor:** Yes.

**Angell:** What?

**Victor:** I am an inhabitant—a planter. I have two pieces of property, one piece of property in the first rural section of the Commune of Miragoane and the other in the fourth section in the plain of Fond des Negres. Each year I spent six months on one property and six months on the other.... I was arrested by Lieut. Jackson [an American officer]. He wished to borrow my horse. I told him no before lending him my horse I wished it to have time to rest, for it had gone 9 leagues distance. I told him this in a polite manner. He invited me to come to the village for a question which would interest me. When I came to the provotal office he told me that I had been making bad reports about him. He caused me to go to the justice court—to the office of the justice of the peace. When we got to the justice court the juge du paix [Justice of the Peace] could not find any reason for trying me. Lieut. Jackson, therefore, took it upon himself to send me to prison.

**Angell:** What treatment did you receive in prison?

**Victor:** I was put in handcuffs.

**Angell:** Well, proceed as to any other manner in which you were treated in prison.

**Victor:** He handcuffed me and hanged me up.

**Angell:** How were you hung up and where?

**Victor:** To an iron bar.

**Chairman:** Who hanged you up?

**Victor:** The lieutenant himself.

**Angell:** To what were you hung up?

**Victor:** He hanged me up to an iron bar.

**Angell:** By a rope or by a chain?

**Victor:** By a chain.

**Angell:** And where was the chain attached to your body?

**Victor:** On my wrists.

**Angell:** Have you still the marks of them on your wrists?

**Victor:** Yes. [Exhibiting his wrists to the committee.]

[ . . . ]

**Chairman:** Ask him [Victor] this question, as to what was the reason for hanging him up by the hands in the way he has described.

**Victor:** For my horse.

**Chairman:** What does he mean by that? That is not very definite.

**Victor:** For my horse, which I refused to lend him.

**Chairman:** That is, to Lieut. Jackson?

**Victor:** Yes.

**Chairman:** What was Lieut. Jackson's first name?

**Victor:** I can not tell you.

**Chairman:** Where were his headquarters?

**Victor:** At Miragoane.

**Chairman:** How often had you seen him before this time?

**Victor:** That was the first time I had ever seen him.

**Chairman:** Was he an American?

**Victor:** Yes.

**Chairman:** Was he a white man?

**Victor:** Yes, a white American.

**Chairman:** I think that is all.

[ . . . ]

**Jones:** How long did he [Liet. Jackson] keep you hung up?

**Victor:** Twenty-four days.

**Jones:** Twenty-four days?

**Victor:** Yes; and gave me a bath every day.

**Jones:** Did he give you anything to eat?

**Victor:** He gave me a piece of bread every 24 hours.

**Jones:** That was all he gave you, was it?

**Victor:** Yes.

[....]

**Chairman:** What is your name?

**Madame Onexile:** Madame Exile Onexile.

**Chairman:** Where do you live?

**Onexile:** Section La Guajon.

**Chairman:** Will you explain to the witness that she is to tell only what she herself has seen or heard? Let her begin to tell them.

**Onexile:** The first atrocity was a mule that I had tied up in my garden. I went to take this mule. I did not find him. When I did not find him I came in and made a report to the magistrat communal that I did not find the mule in the yard.

**Chairman:** Then, what happened?

**Onexile:** I took the stamp of this mule from the magistrat and went to Tamoceque or anywhere that I could find him. I found the mules in the hands of Capt. Kelly, who was then at Cercle La Source. When I presented my certificate for the mule the mule was not there, he had sent it to Carquiat to carry food, for the gendarmes. When the mule returned Captain refused to turn the mule over to me and demanded 130 gourds for it. I came back to Hinche to get the 130 gourds. Capt. Kelly then locked me up in the prison of Cercle La Source and two days later Capt. Kelly went out to replace—

**Chairman:** How long did you stay in prison?

**Onexile:** I entered the prison Saturday and they turned me loose Sunday at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and then he did whatever he wished with the mule.... I came back here on a Wednesday.

**Angell:** Came back here to Hinche?

**Onexile:** Yes; to Hinche....

**Chairman:** You had come back here to stay with the children?

**Onexile:** And went back with my children.

**Chairman:** Where were your children?

**Onexile:** At my habitation. When I came back to my habitation, Capt. Kelly came out in charge of a patrol. He took my husband and hung him to the rafters. He took our little bag of money and set fire to the house. Hung him to the rafters, and then set fire to the house. A little brother of mine was there at the time, and they brought the little boy, my brother, to the prison and made him work.

**Angell:** When was it? How long ago that your husband was hung in this manner?

**Onexile:** It will be two years and ten months on the 6th of January.

**Chairman:** Do I understand that he kept him hanging when the house was burning? Was he in the house when it burned down?

**Onexile:** Yes; he was hanging in the house.

**Jones:** Was he burned?

**Onexile:** Yes. I saw that.

[ . . . ]