5 NOTABLE WOMEN FROM HAITIAN HISTORY

Haiti's history is filled with influential women. From voodoo priestesses to female combatants, here are a select few whose stories deserve to be told.



Marie-Jeanne Lamartiniére

Lamartiniére is one of the few known Haitian women to serve in the army during the Haitian Revolution. Dressed in a male uniform, she fought alongside her husband, displaying her skill with both rifle and sword during the Battle of Crête-à-Pierrot. When not fighting from the ramparts with admirable courage, she would spend her time nursing the injured soldiers around her. She was known for her ability to make swift decisions in the face of hard situations, a quality that made her a valuable comrade in battle.

Lamartiniére's husband would be killed the same year as the Battle of Crête-à-Pierrot. After the revolution, this heroic female soldier faded more or less into obscurity, though it is rumored that she remarried a fellow combatant.

Suzanne Béliar

Another female soldier during the Haitian Revolution was Suzanne Béliar. After marrying a general, she herself became a sergeant and then a lieutenant. Though she fought valiantly throughout the revolution, she became a prisoner of war during an attack on Corail-Mirrault. Both she and

her husband turned themselves over at the same time to avoid being separated, and they were both sentenced to death. Her bravery in the face of execution is applauded throughout Haiti's histories.

Cécile Fatiman

Cécile Fatiman also lived during the Haitian Revolution, but her contribution was much different than these other two women. Rather than a soldier, she participated in religious ceremonies as a voodoo priestess. During one of her ceremonies, she and other practitioners prophesied the revolution. Some historians believe this actually sparked the revolution, giving the rebels the extra boost they needed to move forward with their actions. Within just a few days of Fatiman's prophecy, the rebels had gone on to destroy nearly 2,000 plantations and, before they knew it, they had a revolution on their hands.

Marie Sainte Dédée Bazile

According to legend, Bazile was a slave during the Haitian Revolution. She gained fame for her heroic actions following the assassination of Haitian leader Emperor Dessalines. Now considered a symbolic heroine of Haitian independence, Marie Sainte Dédée Bazile took the body of Dessalines after his execution and transported it away for a proper burial. She died shortly after the revolution and, while her grave is lost, her lineage and story live on through her four children.

Catherine Flon

Flon is also known as a heroine of the revolution, honored for sewing the first Haitian flag in 1803. Flon now serves as a symbol for women's activist groups and feminism in the country. Many associated social groups are named after her. During national holidays, it's not uncommon to see young women dressed up as Flon to remember her role in Haitian history.

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