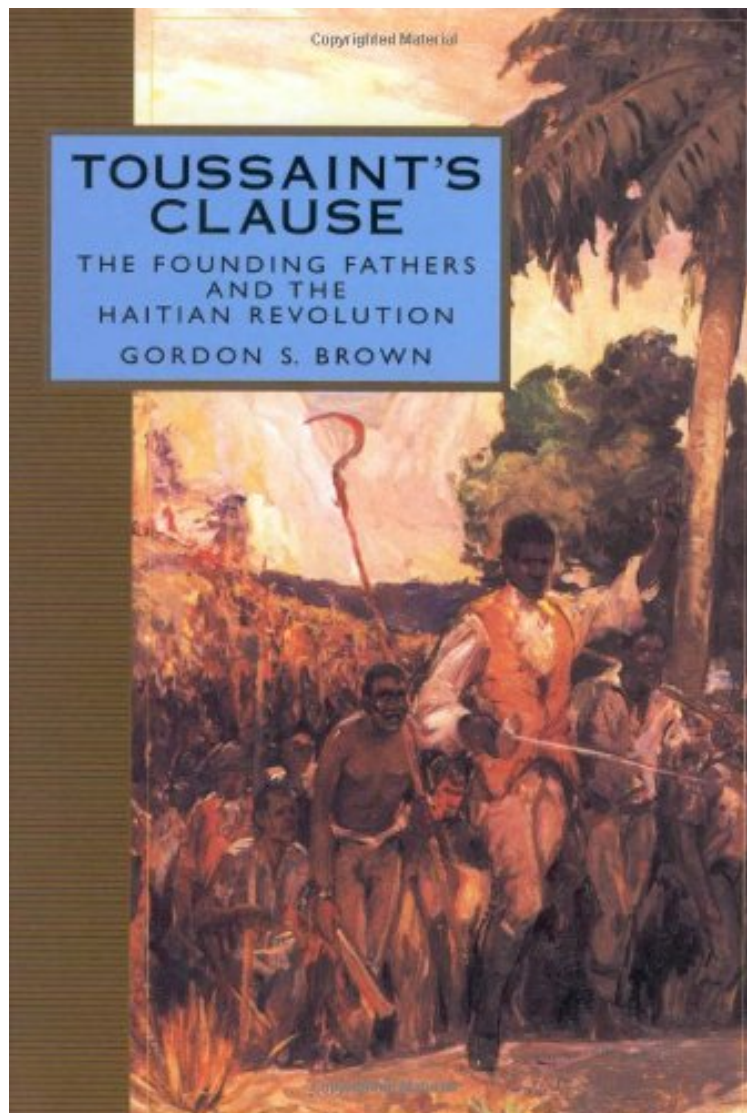


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Toussaint's Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution (Adst-Dacor Diplomats and Diplomacy Book)

Gordon S. Brown

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Gordon S. Brown : Toussaint's Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution (Adst-Dacor Diplomats and Diplomacy Book) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Toussaint's Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution (Adst-Dacor Diplomats and Diplomacy Book):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. American policy debates are the stars of this work. By J. Ron Scholers, novelists, and playwrights have examined the slave revolt that violently and abruptly ousted the French plantation system on the Caribbean island of Saint-Domingue during the 1790s from the viewpoint of the slaves, in the context of the French Revolution, through the eyes of the charismatic leader Toussaint Louverture, and from other perspectives. Treatment of U.S. foreign policy toward the embattled colony has received chapters and articles within larger studies. Gordon S. Brown, however, commits a full-length study of American policy toward Saint-Domingue in his accessible work, *Toussaint's Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005). Brown's thesis is straightforward: competing U.S. economic interests between northern merchants and shippers and southern slaveholders "determined the main lines of America's Haitian policy" (6). He sustains this economic view throughout the work while introducing the reader to the myriad of American, Dominguan, French, and British voices that influenced the resulting and fluctuating policies. Brown handles the complexities of U.S.-Dominguan diplomacy while never losing focus on the overriding economic determinants. *Toussaint's Clause* follows the chronology of events and provides the reader a firm overview of the revolution, which lasted from 1791 to 1804. Internal American policy debates are the stars of this work. Brown's use of primary source correspondence and extended quotes reveals how early American power players like Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, and Timothy Pickens confront the issues of domestic politics, southern slavery, and the French Revolution. He highlights the influence of French ministers and touchy relations with Great Britain on American thinking toward the island. Brown concludes that U.S.-Dominguan trade played an important role in almost every policy discussion of what to do about the rebel slaves. Though three presidential administrations enacted different policies toward Saint-Domingue, one thing is clear from Brown's work: at least one administration maintained a full-fledged foreign policy with an island of black ex-slaves some 65 years before the end of slavery in America. John Adams and his cabinet maintained diplomatic correspondence with Louverture, provided the black regime financial assistance, and the nascent U.S. navy engaged the forces of Louverture's Dominguan rival Andre Rigaud during a hostile struggle for Saint-Dominguan leadership. Brown explains eighteenth-century American diplomatic involvement with a black colony in terms of international politics and trade economics. A primary force behind the policy was careful consideration of its implications for northern merchants and its impact for southern slaveholders. The work helps us better understand the importance of trade and slaves (as commodities and laborers) in the early republican economy. Only one other author has written a monograph that primarily examines U.S. foreign policy toward the French slave colony Saint-Domingue. Tim Matthewson's *A Proslavery Foreign Policy: Haitian-American Relations during the Early Republic* highlights the role of slavery in the political thinking of American policymakers. Brown's *Toussaint's Clause* addresses the discussion of economic interests in America's Dominguan diplomacy. Economics and slavery are important policy factors in U.S.-Dominguan relations. They are not, however, the only ones. More remains to be written on American diplomatic relations with the black regime of Saint-Domingue. Brown's book does not do a lot of things, such as delve into the intricacies of the French Revolution, provide an in-depth understanding of Louverture's valor, or examine slave life on Saint-Domingue. Other works, however, speak to those subjects. The contribution that Brown makes is crafting a readable historical narrative which illuminates the role of the United States, not as only player in the revolution of black Dominguans, but as part of a cast of more powerful global actors. *Toussaint's Clause* is not heavily sourced and would be a useful tool for undergraduate students and general readers. Anyone who reads the book will be a step closer to understanding why a nation whose governmental leadership included white slaveholders would finance and assist a regime of black ex-slaves in their quest for independence. For one book, that is no small feat.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Overview of Haitian-US-French Relations. By H. Campbell. This book is an excellent summary of the domestic and international politics at play in the ongoing drama of the 1790-1804 revolution in St. Domingo (the name for what later became Haiti.) The author describes the southern fears of American slaves being inspired to revolt like the St. Domingans and how these fears tempered the sentiments of key Revolutionary fathers like slave-owning Thomas Jefferson, who for some reason continues to get a free ride from modern historians despite his clear and blatant racism. The book to a lesser extent is concerned with developments in Revolutionary France, but provides enough background to appreciate what was happening on the island itself. The primary concern of the US in the beginning was trade and profit with the revolting slaves. Later, when relations with France became tense as a result of naval insults to our merchant vessels, passive support for the rebels became a key component of America's strategy. Later still, when it seemed that Napoleon had grand designs for a North American Empire centered in Louisiana, prolonging the ongoing quagmire in St. Domingo served the purpose of exhausting French resources to the point the ambitious First Consul threw up his hands and sold the young Republic a huge swath of land that began our Manifest Destiny. After the French withdrew from Haiti, US interest dissolved, with no enthusiasm at all for recognizing the first example of blacks overthrowing their white owners. Indeed, not until after our Civil War started did this country finally and formally recognize Haiti as an independent state (some 40 years after France itself did so.) All in all, a must have for any student of the early American and French Republics, the Napoleonic Wars, Haiti or slavery.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. The Infant US Politics Foreign Affairs- A Grand Survey. By Rank amateur. This short, articulate survey of the the newborn United States' issues with

the St. Domingue (the putative Haiti) touches on virtually everything: The French Revolution; the Louisiana Purchase, the early Federal-state struggles in the United States; the founding fathers' ambivalence about the institution of slavery; the often overriding role of the private sector in American diplomacy, Caribbean piracy in the 18th and early 19th century. All of this and more seen through the lens of the Haitian slave revolt and the vagaries of the historic changes in French (and western) society engendered by the French revolution. A great read that makes one hunger for more of all the issues discussed.

In its formative years, America, birthplace of a revolution, wrestled with a volatile dilemma. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and many other founding fathers clashed. What was to be the new republic's strategy toward a revolution roiling just off its shores? From 1790 to 1810, the disagreement reverberated far beyond Caribbean waters and American coastal ports. War between France and Britain, the great powers of the time, raged on the seas and in Europe. America watched aghast as its trading partner Haiti, a rich hothouse of sugar plantations and French colonial profit, exploded in a rebellion led by former slave Toussaint L'Ouverture. *Toussaint's Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution* narrates the intricate history of one of America's early foreign policy balancing acts and one of the nation's defining moments. The supporters of Toussaint's rebellion against France at first engineered a bold policy of intervention in favor of the rebels. But Southern slaveholders, such as Jefferson, eyed the slave-general's rise and masterful leadership skills with extreme alarm and eventually obtained a reversal of the policy—even while taking advantage of the rebellion to make the fateful Louisiana purchase. Far from petty, the internal squabbles among America's founders resolved themselves in delicate maneuvers in foreign capitals and on the island. The stakes were mortally high—a misstep could have plunged the new, weak, and neutral republic into the great powers' global war. In *Toussaint's Clause*, former diplomat and ambassador Gordon S. Brown details the founding fathers' crisis over Haiti and their rancorous struggle, which very often cut to the core of what America meant by revolution and liberty.

From the Publisher-- Views Haiti's history via the delicate and dangerous maneuvering of Jefferson, Adams, Hamilton, and others -- Shows the founding fathers in a moral quandary with high stakes and national and international implications -- Tells of a test of America's identity and its spirit of liberty and democracy -- Relates the many repercussions of the Haitian revolution and our role in the conflict -- Features an author with a thirty-five-year diplomatic service record
From the Inside Flap
The story of an early American foreign policy crisis and its lasting effect on liberty and the Caribbean
About the Author
During a thirty-five-year Foreign Service career, Gordon S. Brown served mainly in the Middle East and North Africa including assignments as General Norman Schwarzkopf's political advisor in the first Gulf War and ambassador to Mauritania. Since his retirement, he has written *Coalition, Coercion, and Compromise* on the diplomacy of the first Gulf War and *The Norman Conquest of Southern Italy and Sicily*.