



Henri Christophe Roi D'Haiti (Henry Christophe, King of Haiti)

Date

early 1960s

Primary Maker

Sénèque Obin

Medium

Oil on masonite

Description

Henry Christophe was a leader in the war of Haitian independence (1791–1804) and later president (1807–11) and self-proclaimed King Henry I (1811–20) of northern Haiti. Here he is shown in a red uniform riding a white horse down a rocky green hill in front of a fort/town. After the spirit of the French Revolution spread to Haiti, Christophe in 1793 openly embraced the party of the Haitian independence leader Toussaint Louverture and became one of his chief lieutenants, fighting the French, the British, and the Spaniards. He later joined Jean-Jacques Dessalines in ousting the French and commanded the army under that ruler. After Dessalines's assassination he was appointed provisional chief of the nation by a military council. Alexandre Sabès Pétion,

Christophe's only rival for power, secured control in the south and

west. In northern Haiti, Christophe set up his own domain, which he ruled as King Henry I from 1811 and for which he created a hereditary nobility comprising 4 princes, 8 dukes, 22 counts, 37 barons, and 14 knights. He established an elaborate dress code and court ceremony and built himself eight palaces and six châteaux. During his reign he distributed plantations to military chiefs, restored soldier peasants to their former occupations, and maintained a general prosperity. He built the famous Citadelle Laferrière, a fortress south of his capital at Cap-Haïtien. In August 1820 he suffered a paralytic stroke and subsequently committed suicide at Sans-Souci palace. (SOURCE: Adapted from the Encyclopedia Britannica).

Dimensions

Overall: 44.1 × 35.1 cm (17 3/8 × 13 13/16 in.) Frame: 54 × 45.4 × 3.5 cm (21 1/4 × 17 7/8 × 1 3/8 in.)