

The Haitian-American Community in the U.S.A

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Haitian Slaves Fighting in Savannah, Georgia





US American Occupation 1915-1934

Marines with Haiti's President Louis Borno



Haitian Boat People and Exclusion



- The American government refused to recognize Haitians who arrived by boat as political refugees in the 1970s and 80s
- Haitians had to mobilize political and legal resources to obtain asylum for the "boat people". At least 40,000 Haitians arrived in South Florida by boat between 1975 and 1980 (NYT,1980)

Protest for Asylum for Haitian Refugees



- Stepick and Portes (1986) estimated the number as high as 70,000.
- Second wave of refugees came after the coup that overthrew President Aristide in 1991
- 12,000 were jailed in makeshift tents in Guantanamo Bay and over 10,000 more were picked up at sea (Wines, 1992).

Haitian Immigrants in the US

- 1960: 4,816
- 1970-1980: 92,395
- 1990 225,393
- 2015 676,000
- New York State: 165,000
- New York City: 118,769

(Sources US census and MPI)

Haitian Immigrants in Flatbush, NY



Haitians in New York City

- In 2011, Haitians were the third largest immigrant group in Brooklyn accounting for 61,550 immigrants (Salvo 2013: 37).
- As Queens experienced increasing demographic changes in the 1970s and 1980's from a predominantly white borough to a mixed race community, more housing in previously restricted neighborhoods became available to Haitian immigrants.
- Haitian small businesses such as bakery stores, barbershops, libraries and restaurants are found on Linden Blvd, Springfield and Hillside Aves in northern Queens.
- About 27% of Haitian immigrants in the city live in Queens and most of them are concentrated in southeastern Queens in neighborhoods such as St Albans, Cambria Heights, Jamaica and Queens Village.

Socio-Economic Status

- A quick socio-economic background of the Haitian immigrants living in the city showed that more than half of them are over 25 years old.
- Less than 1/3 lived in their own home and more than half are in the labor force.
- Over half of them had a household income of \$38,000 which is almost equal to the rest of the city's population.
- More than 45% of the Haitian immigrants had a high school diploma or higher degree (Salvo 2011).
- More than 18% of Haitian immigrants are found in the government sector.
- There is also a great participation of Haitian women in the labor force (56%).

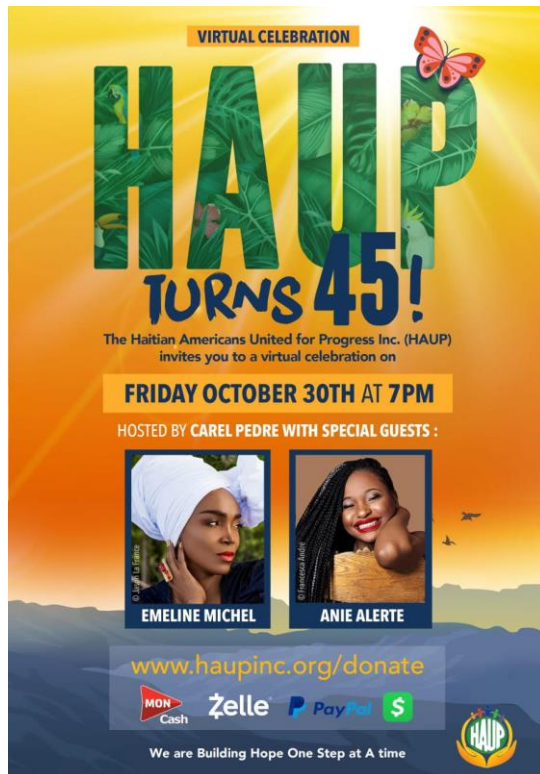
Haitian-Americans in Queens

- Briarwood, Fresh Meadow, Hillcrest 2,414
- Jamaica, Hollis, St Albans 10,268
- *Far Rockaway*, Breezy Point 2,039
- Queens Village Cambria Heights 19,173

US census American Community Survey (2009-2013)

Social Service Agencies

HAUP



Haitian American United for Progress

- The Haitian American United for Progress (HAUP) is the oldest agency in Queens that provides services to Haitian immigrants. These services range from afterschool program, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and employment referral. HAUP also advocates on behalf of the community on education, housing and healthcare issues.

Impact of TPS on Haiti



The Haitian American Community in New York City

- The Haitian community is represented in the City Council, Albany and even Washington DC when Mia Love (Rep) was elected to the US Congress from Utah.
- Data from the Department of Homeland Security showed that the rate of naturalization among Haitian immigrants has been increasing.
- In 2010 the Office of Immigration Statistics reported that 12,291 immigrants became naturalized.
- In 2012, the number jumped to 19,114. As more Haitian immigrants become US citizens, they will have more opportunities to impact public policy in their community as we have seen in New York City in the past two decades (Lee, 2013).

Conclusion

- A younger generation of Haitian Americans is emerging in New York and the rest of the country.
- These young people are active in all sectors of American life and are empowering the community.
- Haitian Americans singer like Wyclef Jean, elected officials and politicians like Carrie Solages, Vanel Andre, Karine Pierre and professional athletes like Pierre Thomas, Patrick Dalembert, as well as writers like Edwidge Danticat, Roxanne Gay have done a great job in changing the narrative about Haitians in the United States.
- They are not embarrassed to speak Creole, to celebrate Haitian flag day and to promote Haiti.
- Despite President Trump's unwelcoming comments about Haiti and Haitian-Americans, the community in New York and the rest of America is definitely here to stay.