## Toussaint L'Ouverture - Hero Of

He fought against Napc eon and won independence for his pec ble.



"L'Ouverture" is French for "the open-

L'Ouverture is the name a former Haitian. slave took when he rose to lead this Caribbean island out of bondage.

Toussaint L'Ouverture was the first leader of Haiti's struggle for independence.

In all ways he was a remarkable man and that nation's greatest hero.

#### Defied Napoleon

He defied Napoleon's armies. He learned rose to high position on the plantation, to speak several languages. He began his fight as a middle-aged man. Without prior military training, he organized a splendid army. Schol ly, thoughtful, none of his fellow

Toussaint is still the brightest memory of West Indies history. This is his story.

be the an to lead the slaves against the Haiti is an Arawak Indian name meaning colonist and push the French off the island. "high lands" but the French settlers renamed To g back a bit, it should be understood # Saint - Domingue (Dough-min-gway) and that Sa Domingue at that time was a it was in Northern - Saint-Domingue that French ssession, having been won from the Toussaint was born about 1743. Spanish ander terms of a treaty drawn in 1697.

His mother was, like himself, a slave. Her name, Pauline. He was the oldest son in a large family. Just who his actual father

Rich rench planters made millions off AFRO Magazine, July 14, 1953 AFRO Magazine,

freedma Pierre Baptiste.

as a co hman.

Father or not, Baptiste had great influ-

ence we the boy. The older man had

been to the by Jesuit priests and he passed

Touse nt and his family were in bondage

Il in bondage. He married a girl

zanne. They had two children.

slaves no his masters realized that he would

Rich Frenchmen

on the F ntation Breda. His first duties were

as a her man, then as stable boy and finally

this kn yledge on to young Toussaint.

It was a rich territory. In a new book, "Liberators and Heroes of the West Indian generals "Liberty, now and forever. The Islands," written by Marion F. Lansing, a rights of Spanish citizenship." clear picture of Haiti's social structure is

the sweat and labor of their slaves. Plantations produced coffee, cotton, cocoa, tobacco Spain still had slave - colonies. and most important, sugar.

"But though on the surface, the colony flourished, its prosperity rested on uneasy foundations. Those who spent the wealth it produced did not do a stroke of work to produce that wealth.

Said the author:

"Its labor was slave labor, carried on under the most cruel and oppressive con-

Miss Lansing also revealed that "there were in the year 1789 only 32,000 resident whites, and 24,000 freedmen (mostly mulattoes with mixed background of white and colored parents) while there were at least 480,000 slaves."

That great mass of oppressed people could not be held in check forever by the French rulers and when the French revolution -89 its battle cry of liberty and equali-

panned the ocean even echoing in the slave cabins.

#### Island Unrest

Unrest spread in Saint-Domingue.

The freed mulattoes, many of whom owned slaves and estates, but were still denied representation in the government, tried to revolt, but their insurrection was put down.

The slaves were still silent, still unorganized. No one gave them much thought despite the unrest in other circles.

Drums, something like African jungle drums, began to pound during the summer of 1791. The plantation owners were told this drumming meant only that the slaves were practicing voodoo ceremonies.

But they were not. The drums beat loudest on August 14, 1791. Their message spelled out revolt. The revolution began eight days later.

The leaders were three slaves, Jean Francois, Bookman, and Bissau. From plantation to plantation, the uprising spread. The colored people burned out plantations, sugar cane fields.

#### Toussaint Waited

Toussaint did not join the first tidal wave

He saw to it that the absent Breda plantation owner's wife was saved from the uprising and only when he knew she was safe, did he gather his people and join forces, with the colored armies.

Toussaint soon proved his ability as a leader. Troops under his command soon became the best division in the new army.

In this confusion, Spanish troops crossed the border into Saint Domingue. They were joined by many Frenchmen angry with the Toust int learned to read and write, cruel ways of the commissioners. Among accomplisaments for a slave. He those who joined was Toussaint.

The Spanish governor offered the colored

Seven months later, Toussaint broke with the Spanish. He had learned that France had just abolished slavery in all the colonies.

#### Kept His Principles

To Toussaint, it would be better to fight with a nation that had renounced slavery than with one that still approved of it.

In 1795, their power spent, Spanish forces left Haiti for good and all of the island was French once more.

For his military victories on the side of the French, Toussaint was made commander in chief of the French troops in Haiti and in 1801, he became the supreme commander.

In full power, Toussaint liberated all slaves, gave them land to work and saw to it that they received a share of the crops they produced.

Toussaint ruled in the name of the French Republic but in time, his rule was endangered by Napoleon who had become dictator of France. The Republic was dying.

#### Drafted . Constitution

To offset this, L'Ouverture had a general assembly elected and this congress drew up a constitution which gave Haiti self - govern-

He sent a copy to Napoleon.

This was like throwing a pie in the dietator's face.

across the ocean to Haiti and after several months of battle gained much of the island.

After defeat, Toussaint agreed to retire to his farm. He did so.

A French general invited him to discuss political matters that still had to be worked out. Toussaint accepted and walked into a

He was made prisoner, taken to France where he was jailed in a fortress.

General Leclerc, in charge of French troops in Haiti, told Napoleon that "You cannot keep Toussaint at too great a distance from the sea nor in a place too se-

The French feared this former slave that

In a tiny cell on April 7, 1803, Toussaint

died after eight months of imprisonment.

The French still held the balance of power in Haiti but it could not last for long. Toussaint L'Ouverture by leading the slaves to freedom had unleashed a black whirlwind that Napoleon and all his armies could not subdue.

Much was still to be done by other men before Haiti was free of foreign yoke but Toussaint had cast the die - he had won freedom for his people so that they could fight to preserve that freedom.

He was this land's first and greatest hero.

#### From The Book

### Liberators And Heroes Of The West Indian Islands

By Marion F. Lansing

Published by L. C. Page and Company, Boston

Price \$4.00



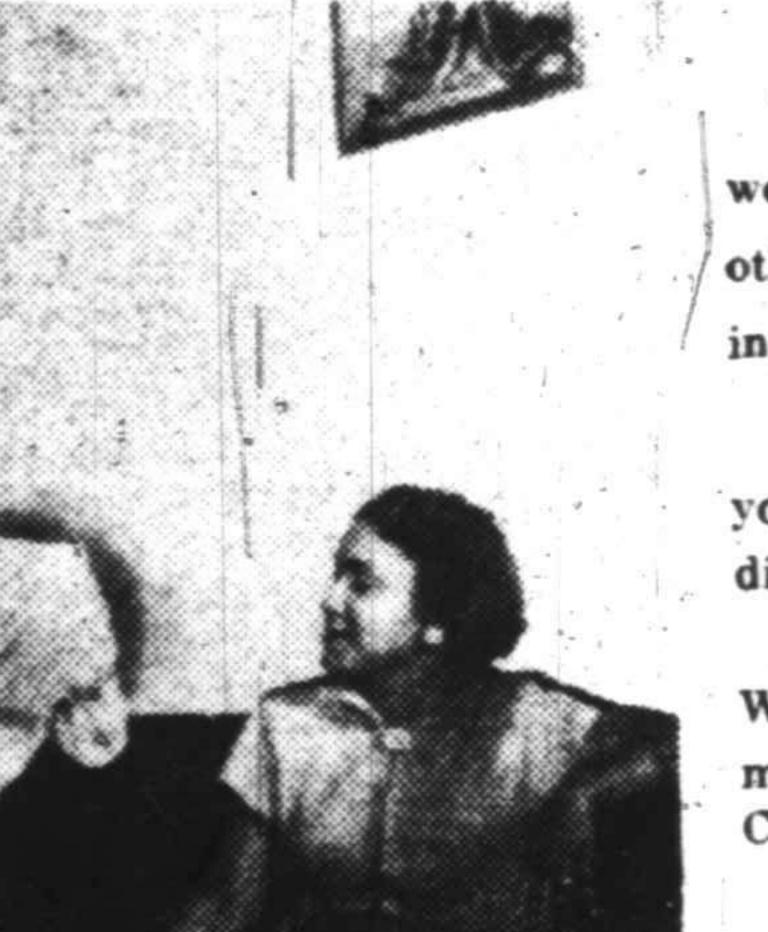




WEDDING PARTY - Mr. and Mrs. Chester Harmon immediately after the ceremony along with matron of honor, Mrs. Elaine Penderhughes, sister to the bride, and best man, Carl Smallwood.

# She Was Wed

AT WORK — Directing the destinies of the Happiland



THE TROUSSEAU - Antoinette selects items for her new bridal wardrobe.

"With this ring I thee wed." What lovely words for a girl to hear, and what month other than June finds so many girls listen-Although June, 1953 has come and gone,

your AFRO Magazine reviews a typical wedding enacted all over the United States. Our bride, Antoinette Cecelia Brazier of

Washington, D.C., now Mrs. Chester E. Harmon, Jr., is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. J.

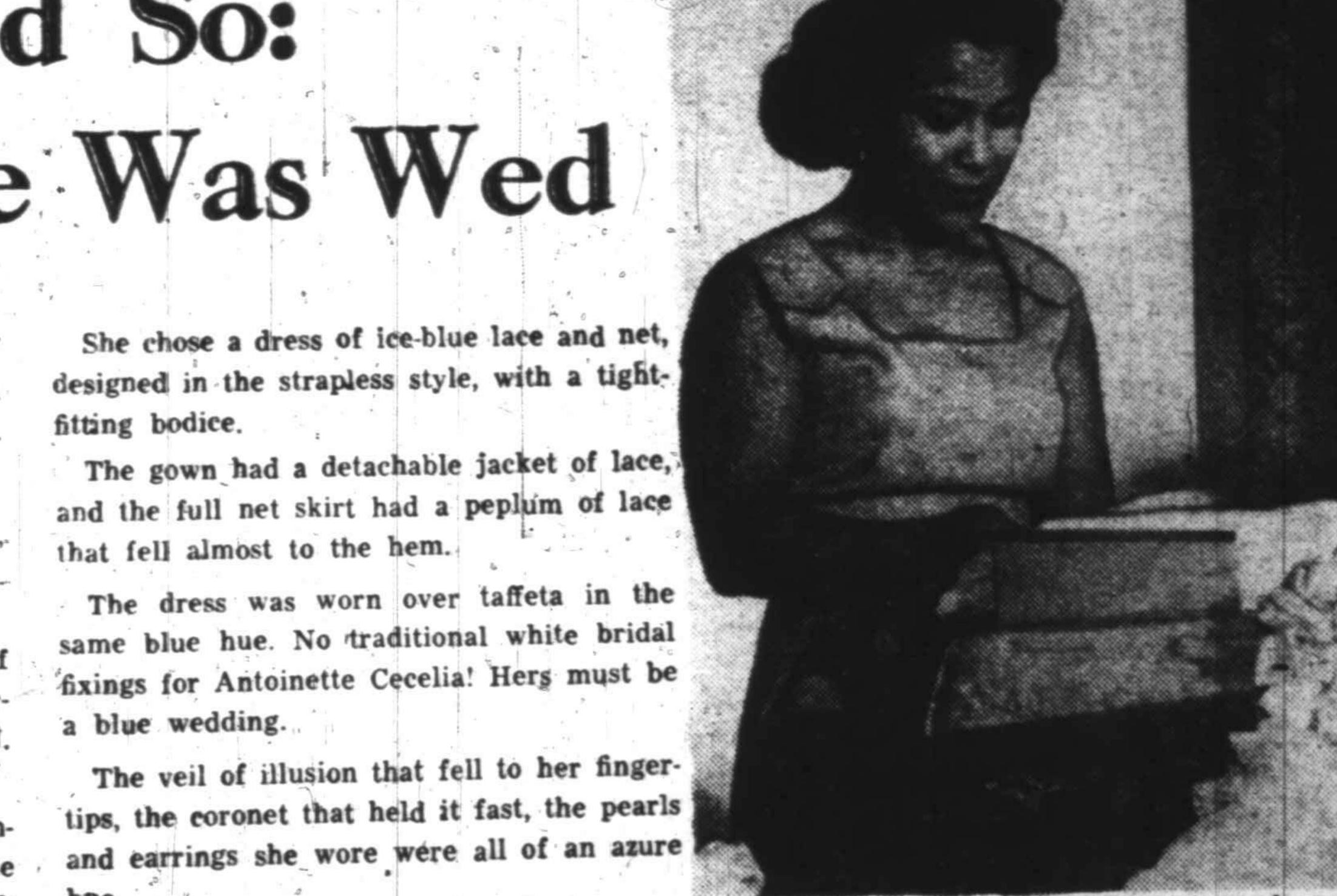
Up to the day of the great moment, Antoinette kept busily occupied directing the destinies of the Happiland Nursery school, of showers given in her behalf.

She chose a dress of ice-blue lace and net, designed in the strapless style, with a tight-

The gown had a detachable jacket of lace, and the full net skirt had a peplum of lace that fell almost to the hem. The dress was worn over taffeta in the same blue hue. No traditional white bridal

fixings for Antoinette Cecelia! Hers must be a blue wedding. The veil of illusion that fell to her fingertips, the coronet that held it fast, the pearls

Even the wedding cake was decorated with ice-blue icing.



GIFTS GALORE - One of the many pleasant tasks surrounding the wedding is the opening of shower gifts.



WEDDING GOWN-Mrs. Harmon shows off the bridal gown.

BRIDAL CAKE - Hands are joined to cut the multi-tiered wedding cake.

AFRO Magazine, July 14, 1953



HONEYMOON DRESS - All set for the Page 7 honeymoon trip to Cambridge, Mass.

Page 6

AFRO Magazine,