

HISTORY WORKSHOP

The Department of History

Tuesdays ~ 12:30-1:30 pm ~ 203 Munroe Hall

The 1802 Fire at Cap-Français and Women's Market Participation on the Eve of Haitian Independence

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April 30, 2019

12:30-1:30 pm

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Throughout the Haitian Revolution, the northern port city of Cap-Français remained a crucial site of local and Atlantic exchanges. Scholars have determined that women played an active, yet limited, role in the dynamism of the port's pre-revolutionary economy. Drawing on extant merchant records, an 1802 *recensement* (census) of the city's taxpayers, and other related materials, my talk examines the economic activities of women in town and port sectors of the urban economy during the latter years of the Haitian Revolution and the Haitian War of Independence. Tracing the economic activities of women like Marie Rose Poumaroux, a *marchande* (shopkeeper) and woman of color, I show that by late 1802, women dominated certain sectors of the urban economy. I argue that the economic importance of women, especially women of color, expanded in the wake of the Leclerc expedition and destruction of Cap-Français in early 1802, even if their social position grew vulnerable. As French imperial authority waned, absconding commercial figures turned to women of color like Poumaroux to safeguard and dispose of property they left behind.

Please joins us for light refreshments prior to the workshop.