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Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett, United States Minister to Haiti, 1869-1877

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EBENEZER DON CARLOS BASSETT
UNITED STATES MINISTER
TO HAITI 1869-1877

A thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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INTRODUCTION

On November 15, 1908 the New York Times carried the following: "Bassett - 146 Fulton St., Brooklyn, Nov. 14, Ebenezer D. Bassett." This nine word obituary comprises the eulogy for Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett United States Minister Resident and Consul General to Haiti, 1869-1877; the first Negro appointed to a high diplomatic post in the United States.

Very little exists in print on Bassett's life. He is not mentioned in any of the well known encyclopedias; Bassett is omitted from The Dictionary of American Biography and no biography of him is available. He is mentioned in earlier Who's Who but the following is the best known biographical sketch.

Bassett, Ebenezer Don Carlos, Diplomatist, was born at Litchfield, Conn., Oct. 16, 1833, son of Ebenezer Tobias and Susan (Gregory) Bassett. His father was a mulatto, and his mother was an Indian woman belonging to the Shaghticoke branch of the Pequot tribe. He was educated at the high school, Birmingham, Conn., the Wesleyan Academy, Wilbraham, Mass., and the Connecticut State Normal School. He was the principal of a public school in New Haven, Conn., 1853-55, during which he continued his studies at Yale College, and while filling the post of principal of the colored high school in Philadelphia, he attended the University of Pennsylvania in 1857-58. He remained at the head of the high school until 1869, when he was appointed minister resident and consul-general of the United States to Haiti. His was the first appointment ever given to a negro by the U. S. government and he filled the position till the end of 1877. He was consul-general of Haiti at New York,
1879-88. After spending four years in Haiti, 1888-92, he returned to the United States and engaged in literary work. He is the author of the "Hand-Book of Haiti," issued by the Bureau of American Republics at Washington and published in the English, French, Spanish and Portuguese languages. He is a member of the American Geographical Society and the Connecticut Historical Society. He was married Oct. 16, 1855, to Eliza, daughter of Robert M. Park, and has three sons and two daughters.1

The author thought that some additional information might be obtained by writing to the various places listed in the sketch. This proved informative but disappointing. Wilbraham Academy, formerly Wesleyan Academy, could not find any record of Bassett but reported that records were not complete for the 1840's.2 The New Haven Public School wrote that Bassett was a teacher at the Whiting Street School during 1854 and 1855.3 Yale University wrote that they had no record of his attending the University.4 Ebenezer Bassett was the


4Letter, Judith A. Schiff, Head, Manuscripts and Archives Reference Department, Yale University, Mar. 12, 1969, to the author. The letter adds that there was an Ebenezer Bassett who graduated in 1746.
principal at the Institute For Colored Youth in Philadelphia. He served in an administrative capacity for fourteen years and at the same time taught mathematics, natural sciences and classics.\(^5\) The University of Pennsylvania could find no record of Ebenezer D. Bassett. \(^6\) The American Geographical Society wrote that an E. D. Bassett shows membership as of 1884.\(^7\) The Connecticut Historical Society could find no record of him as a member or donor. \(^8\) The Pan American Union, successor to the Bureau of American Republics, advised this writer that Ebenezer D. Bassett does not appear as the author of "Handbook on Haiti" which was issued as Bulletin No. 62 in 1892.\(^9\) During my research of Bassett's despatches, I found one which gives evidence that he could have written the book.


\(^6\) Letter, Maud M. Tracy, Chief Clerk, Alumni Records, University of Pennsylvania, Mar. 5, 1969, to the author. During the period Bassett was in Philadelphia, Negroes were not allowed to attend classes or allowed to sit in the lecture halls at the University of Pennsylvania. See W.E.B. DuBois, The Philadelphia Negro, reissued (New York: Benjamin Blum, 1967), p. 347. It also is noteworthy that the School for Colored Youth is treated on pages 86 and 87, but Bassett is not mentioned.

\(^7\) Letter, Lynn S. Mullins, Assistant Librarian, American Geographical Society, Mar. 6, 1969, to the author.


\(^9\) Letter, Norah Albanell, Chief of Public Services, Columbia Memorial Library, Pan American Union, Feb. 7, 1969, to the author. Also see U.S., Congress, Senate, Handbook of Haiti, S. Ex. Doc. 149 part 11, 52nd Cong., 1st sess., 1892. This is the same book and no author is listed.
Chapter ten of the book covers finances and coinage. A similar despatch was sent by Bassett in 1873. Sections of the despatch are repeated in chapter ten.10

The biographical sketch is inaccurate and incomplete. These discrepancies were brought to the surface only because the writer hoped to provide more background on Bassett. Considering the tone of the letters from the Pan American Union, The Connecticut Historical Society and the other correspondents cited, I feel that further investigation, without travelling to the various cities involved and researching those records personally, would prove equally fruitless.

The records of the National Archives are the principal source of material for Bassett's tour of duty as Minister to Haiti and for his correspondence as the Consul for Haiti in New York from 1879 to 1888. It is also known that he returned to Haiti because Bassett was the secretary to Frederic Douglass who was the United States Minister to Haiti from 1889 to 1891. This period covers the United States Government's unsuccessful attempt to annex Haitian territory known as Mole St. Nicolea.11 After his return to the United States Bassett faded from view. Other than the "Handbook on Haiti" of which Bassett's authorship


is in question, this author could not find any extant work
written by E. D. Bassett.

Ebenezer Bassett was the United States Minister Resi-
dent and Consul General near the government of Haiti for almost
eight years. Conditions were such that Haiti had four presi-
dents and some periods of time with only provisional govern-
ments. Only President Nissage Saget completed his constitutional
term of office. Fires, disease, gunboat diplomacy and intrigue
were the normal fare of Minister Bassett. Haiti feared that a
successful annexation of Santo Domingo by the United States
would eventually include Haiti. The domestic power struggles
between black and mulatto, disputes with foreign governments
and private contractors over debts and traditional recourse to
asylum under foreign flags plagued the Haitian authorities.
Bassett wrote seven volumes of correspondence covering these
events.

From Bassett's correspondence, his instructions and
other papers this study presents many of the problems faced by
Bassett and how he resolved some of them. The diplomatic
relations under the different presidents is an aspect of this
investigation. At one point Spain confronted the United States
in Haiti over a ship called the Hornet. The ship was accused
by Spain, of aiding rebels in Cuba and Bassett struggled for
eleven months to save the Hornet. The United States policy on
asylum brought Bassett into conflict with his superiors as well
as the Haitian Government. This paper will investigate the
asylum of General Boisrond Canal who remained under Bassett's protection for five months.

Another important area is that of claims. The conflict over various claims of Americans on the Haitian Government occupied much of Bassett's time. These claims involve legal interpretations, technical points, attempts to avoid or force payment and long harangues over their validity. Almost all claims were those based on contracts and were dealt with by using the unofficial good offices of the Minister. Each change of government meant practically starting the whole procedure over again. The claims covered in this study are of an official nature or ones that were brought to a conclusion.

It is hoped that this paper will contribute to a further knowledge of Ebenezer D. Bassett while at the same time adding information on United States-Haitian relations from 1869-1877.
CHAPTER I

REVOLUTION

On April 23, 1869 the Secretary of State wrote Ebenezer D. Bassett that President Grant "... having appointed you Minister Resident and Consul General of the United States to Hayti, I transmit herewith your commission."\(^1\) Ebenezer Bassett, then 35 years of age, accepted the appointment and executed the oath of office.\(^2\)

The new Minister was in Washington, D. C. on June 1, 1869. A reporter described Bassett:

of excellent address and good bearing, of polished manner, modest, quick in perception of the situation and well posted on the political questions of the day. He is the first colored gentleman appointed by General Grant to a foreign mission, and certainly appears remarkably well qualified to represent his government abroad.\(^3\)

But the reporter's main interest was in two interviews that Bassett had with President Grant. Little information was

\(^1\)United States, National Archives MSS, Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, Haiti, Vol I, Secretary of State Hamilton Fish to Ebenezer D. Bassett, April 23, 1869. Hereafter cited as Instructions, Haiti.

\(^2\)United States, National Archives MSS, Despatches from United States Minister to Haiti, Vol. III, Minister Ebenezer D. Bassett to Hamilton Fish, April 29, 1869. This letter also confirms Bassett's date of birth in Litchfield, Conn. on Oct. 16, 1833. Hereafter cited as Despatches, Haiti.

\(^3\)New York Herald, June 1, 1869, p. 6.
revealed other than the fact that Bassett spoke of annexation of Santo Domingo which was a major issue at the time and was bound to affect Haiti. The results of the discussion and the President's instructions were not revealed. The instructions were said to be oral "... the General having full faith in his [Bassett's] patriotism, fidelity, and honesty." 4

Ebenezer Bassett took his leave and departed for New York where he boarded the steamer City of Port-au-Prince and sailed for Haiti, June 5, 1869. He arrived at Port-au-Prince on June 14, 1869. He was greeted by his predecessor Gideon H. Hollister. The Legation was in Hollister's home and Bassett became his house guest. Bassett advised the State Department that the formality of presenting letters of credence and recall to the President could not be accomplished at this time. Haitian President Sylvain Salnave was absent from the national capital leading the government troops against the insurgents. However matters of diplomacy could not wait for formalities, and Bassett began to familiarize himself with the Legation archives and matters requiring his immediate attention. 5 His most pressing problem involved one of his own men, Arthur Folsom, the United States Consul at Cape Haytien. Just prior to Bassett's arrival, Folsom's troubles led to his suspension by Minister Hollister pending instructions from the State Department.

4Ibid.

5Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, June 22, 1869, No. 1.
Folsom's troubles began when President Salnave accused Folsom of intrigue against the Salnave government. The Haitian President charged Folsom with improper action in that he nominated Lucien Castera to be the United States Commercial Agent at Port de Paix. Castera was persona non grata because of past questionable behavior towards the Salnave government when Castera represented the French Government. The exequatur for Castera was refused and a demand was made that Castera's and Folsom's Commissions be revoked. The State Department requested that Folsom explain the charges. Before this could be accomplished Hollister informed the State Department that proof was available showing that Folsom was "... an enemy of the President, and has long been trying to overthrow his government." Then Hollister suspended Folsom and temporarily appointed a Charles Brody to discharge the Consular duties. Bassett, after studying the case concurred with Hollister's action and wrote the State Department requesting that the suspension be upheld. However, an instruction approving the suspension of Folsom was already enroute. The case of Folsom was but

6Ibid., Hollister to Seward, Mar. 3, 1869, No. 26, and encl. A.

7Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Hollister, Mar. 20, 1869, No. 29.

8Despatches, Haiti, III, Hollister to Fish, May 3, 1869, No. 36.

9Ibid., Bassett to Fish, June 26, 1869, No. 2, and Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, June 17, 1869, No. 3. After the overthrow of Salnave the Saget government appointed
one example of how the revolution was affecting the perplexing political and diplomatic situation in Haiti.

The revolutionary conditions had prevailed since the election of President Sylvain Salnave in the Spring of 1867. In the North a group of rebels called Cacos were the first to raise arms against Salnave. When Salnave suspended the constitution in 1868 Nissage Saget the Commander of the St. Marc area, in the Artibonite, rebelled against him. Michel Domingue rebelled at Aquin in the South. At Petionville, just outside of Port-au-Prince, Boisrond Canal joined the rebellion. 10

By 1869 rebels had been fighting more than two years. Nissage Saget was declared Provisional President of the "Republic of the North." He was headquartered at St. Marc

Folsom as Haitian Consul to New York. In this position he tried to involve Secretary Fish in a triple treaty between Santo Domingo, Haiti and the U. S. He also informed Fish that annexation of Santo Domingo would not be easy, but if General Cabral, who was fighting Dominican government of Baez, could be put on equal footing with Baez, annexation would be simple. Folsom was just the person to accomplish this task. See United States, National Archives MSS, Notes from the Haitian Legation in the United States to the Department of State, Vol. II, Consul Folsom to Secretary Fish, Jan. 9, Jan. 22, Feb. 1, Feb. 23, Mar. 1, one with no date but received Mar. 11, Mar. 24, 1870. Hereafter cited as Notes, Haitian Legation.

10 Haiti has five departments. The North with the main port of Cape Haytien. The Northwest with the small port of Port de Paix but the Northwest also includes Mole St. Nicolas. The Artibonite with the ports of St. Marc and Gonaives. The West with the capital city of Port-au-Prince. The South with the main port of Aux Cayes. There are many variants in spelling of the Haitian cities and of Haiti. The spellings used are the ones more generally seen in English texts. See map on p. 1. For a short guide to the geography of Haiti see John Mac Pherson, Caribbean Lands: A Geography of the West Indies (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1963), pp. 1-30, 131-139.
and the Cacos were under his banner. Michel Domingue was declared Provisional President of the "Republic of the South" with headquarters at Aux Cayes. The major reason for lack of success on the part of the rebels was lack of unity. The major groups operated individually which gave Salnave an opportunity to concentrate the greater portion of his forces against one group. Although Salnave demonstrated great courage and met with some success he had not defeated either group. In the summer of 1869 Salnave was winning in the South which was the reason for his absence. But the situation at Port-au-Prince was deteriorating.

At Port-au-Prince the government faced the peril of financial collapse. The Haitian dollar had a value of $170 to one gold dollar in March of 1869. By July the rate was $700 to one gold dollar. Some of the merchants were refusing to accept the government currency. This raised the specter.


of possible mob riots with the consequent fear for life and property. Many of the businessmen were Americans and they wanted an effective American warship to replace the two ships that were disabled and departing under orders. Bassett agreed with this position and requested that a warship be sent to Port-au-Prince. 13 Two weeks later fearing his despatch may not have arrived Bassett cabled, "No ship here. Please send one immediately and keep it constantly here." 14

Early in August the Minister again asked the State Department for a ship. The political situation was worse and reliable information said the rebels had obtained two warships and that Port-au-Prince could expect bombardment. Bassett added that the English and French both kept warships in the harbor and respectfully suggested that the United States should be no less concerned. 15 Four days later the worried American Minister Bassett received a despatch from the acting United States Vice Commercial Agent at Gonaives reporting that the insurgents had taken the predicted

13 Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, July 5, 1869, No. 4.

14 Ibid., July 13, 1869. The margin writing indicates that both despatch and cable were sent to the Navy Department. The Navy was operating its Atlantic fleet in Santo Domingo waters due to the annexation proposals. The problem was one of priorities. As luck would have it the ships always seemed to be elsewhere when they were most needed. For the Naval movements during this period see U. S. Congress, Senate, San Domingo Instructions to the Commanders of our Naval Vessels in Dominican Waters and Their Reports and Correspondence from March, 1869 to January 7, 1871. S. Ex Doc. 34, 41st Cong., 3d Sess. (Serial 1440), 1871. Hereafter cited as Sen. Ex. Doc. 34.

15 Ibid., Aug. 7, 1869, No. 11.
offensive. Reinh Berger, the acting Agent, reported that two insurgent warships arrived at Gonaives on August 5, 1869. They "... commenced immediately to bombard this town, doing considerable damage to private property but none to the fortifications." The rebels attacked the following day, damaging the American Consulate but "... did not succeed to dismount a single piece of cannon." Berger wanted an American warship and Bassett once again asked that one be sent.

The Haitian Government reacted quickly and strongly with regard to the insurgent vessels. A circular despatch was communicated to the diplomatic corps. The two steamers in question were the former United States warships Florida and Quaker City now called Republic and Mont Organisé respectively. The circular further stated that the ships, which were purchased by rebel agents, had eluded the American authorities. This was true in spite of warnings given by

16 Ibid., Berger to Bassett, Aug. 7, 1869.
17 Ibid.
19 Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Aug. 11, 1869, No. 12.
20 Ibid., Circular, Foreign Minister Archin to Bassett, Aug. 11, 1869.
the Haitian Chargé d'Affaires in Washington to the American authorities. 21

Once the ships reached the rebel port of St. Marc they were able to arm themselves. But since the rebels were not recognized as belligerents they did not have the legal right to arm vessels or to give commissions, or legally fly the Haitian colors. 22 The rebels were also accused of flying various foreign flags including the American and English colors. 23 The circular then maintained that:

The said vessels cannot be considered according to the spirit of International Maritime law, but real pirates which it is the duty of every Regular Navigator to pursue for the purpose of sinking or capturing them. 24 (Italics mine)

Bassett acknowledged Foreign Secretary Archin's circular on the rebel steamers with this statement:

21 Ibid. Hamilton Fish certainly knew the Quaker City. In the first year of the Civil War the Union Defense Committee of New York (from which Fish resigned because of its secrecy) chartered the war steamer and the vessel captured eight rebel ships. The Quaker City was arrested in May of 1869 but this involved Cuban insurgents and the Spanish Government. See Alan Nevins, Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1936), pp. 82, 186. Hereafter cited as Fish.

22 Despatches, Haiti, III, Circular, Archin to Bassett, Aug. 11, 1869.

23 Lt. Commander Selfridge of the Nipsic, one of the disabled warships that left Port-au-Prince for the U. S., reported that he "... passed the Quaker City the other day entering St. Marc flying English colors." Sen. Ex. Doc. 24, p. 5.

24 Despatches, Haiti, III, Circular, Archin to Bassett, Aug. 11, 1869.
The facts to which you allude and the statements which you make, are well calculated to enlist the sympathy and the serious consideration of every friend of law and civil Government. . . . yet the gravity of the questions discussed seems to me to demand mature deliberation, and I have . . . forwarded . . . your despatch.25

However, with respect to the ships eluding American authorities, Bassett differed from the view presented by Secretary Archin. Minister Bassett pointed out that when the ships departed New York they were not armed, carried no arms as cargo and that they had proper custom's clearances for a British port. He added that the ships were the property of a British subject and that these data were established before a court of law. In view of these facts further intervention by American authorities was at an end.26

Bassett's despatch to the State Department covering this correspondence stated that he felt bound to a principle of neutrality. He did not feel that the United States had to accede to Archin's recommendation and referred to Wheaton to support his argument. The Minister requested precise instructions for the Legation and to any Naval Squadron that might be sent to Haiti.27

The correspondence was received in Washington on September 9, 1869. Secretary Fish began his reply by repeating

25Ibid., Bassett to Archin, Aug. 13, 1869.
26Ibid.
27Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Aug. 13, 1869, No. 13. The reference to Wheaton is most probably Henry Wheaton, Elements of International Law (1836).
the essential points of Foreign Secretary Archin's circular. Then Secretary Fish stated the position of the United States Government. The Haitian Government could treat the ships, officers and crew as pirates as that was a question of municipal law and the United States had "... no occasion, if we had the right, to enter." The American Government knew of no reason that would require it to treat these ships differently than other ships the insurgents employed. But the United States refused to allow the vessels of unrecognized insurgents "... the privileges which attend maritime war, in respect to our citizens or their property intitled to our protection." This meant that the insurgents would not be allowed to stop or search American vessels. America also reserved the right to treat the insurgent vessels as pirates or to recognize insurgents rights "... where facts warrent ... to capture and destroy jure belli." The United States had no evidence that the insurgent vessels intended to plunder. They seemed to have only a political objective. Should the insurgents plan or commit an offense against the United States, the latter reserved the right to take action against the insurgent vessels. Although the American Government

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28 *Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Sep. 14, 1869, No. 11.*


reserved this right it could not "... admit the existence of any obligation to do so in the interest of Haiti or of the general security of commerce." And the United States Minister was instructed to "... read this despatch to the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and leave a copy of it with him if he desires it." 32

Minister Bassett survived his first diplomatic exchange in United States-Haitian relations with an ability that brought forth Grant's approval. 33 But this had not helped the military situation at Gonaives. The government troops under General Victorin Chevallier capitulated to the insurgent forces of

32Ibid., One month later Fish wrote to Bassett and stated:

"The judicious course which you pursued in your answer to the letter of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs dated the 11th of August 1869, is approved by the President."

Then for Bassett's information Fish described the events that led the U. S. to release the Quaker City and the Florida. The Quaker City was seized by the authorities on representation of the Spanish Minister. The Haitian Charge d'Affaires, Evariste Laroche, withheld information that would have helped the case. He came forward only when Haiti seemed to be threatened and after the ship was released for lack of evidence. As to the Florida, the ship was under scrutiny in Philadelphia but nothing incriminating was found. The vessel went to Boston and loaded openly. The Haitian Consul was cognizant of the Florida's loading. Even more important, the Haitian Foreign Minister was in Boston at the time and in contact with his Consul. It was only after the Florida departed that the Minister requested that the ship be detained and the Minister lacked sufficient evidence. The ship did sail to Jamaica and both ships were converted to warships in Haiti. The Message concludes with a pertinent note on the U. S. position on the rights and obligations of neutrals. See Fish to Bassett, Oct. 16, 1869, No. 16. Also see Logan, Diplomatic Relations, p. 341. Logan feels that Fish probably had the "Alabama Claims" in mind when writing about the rights and obligations of neutrals.

33See footnote 32 above.
Nissage Saget. The surrender was a formal one in which the terms were written out and acknowledged by representatives of both sides. In a part of the preamble to the Articles of Capitulation one found a difficult future for the Salnave government.

Abandoned by a government to which its fidelity has been unswerving, and reduced to the last extremity, we claim the right to withdraw with all the honors of war.

In addition to this, the French Commander of the war steamer D'Estrees acted as the mediator. This was done without the knowledge of the Haitian Government at Port-au-Prince. The government of Haiti protested this highly irregular action to the French Chargé d'Affaires. The protest, however, did not change the fact that Gonaives, was now in insurgent hands. Shortly after this government defeat President Sylvain Salnave returned to Port-au-Prince.

On September 8, 1869, the day following the Haitian President's return, Minister Bassett and Gideon Hollister had their long delayed interview with him. Letters of credence and recall were presented and short speeches exchanged. Bassett noted in his address that:

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34 Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Sep. 9, 1869, No. 15.

35 Ibid., Articles of Capitulation of government forces to the Revolutionary government. Aug. 28, 1869, encl. to Bassett's No. 15. (In early enclosures, letters do not appear.)

36 Ibid., Foreign Secretary Archin to French Chargé d'Affaires DuCourthial, Aug. 30, 1869, encl. to Bassett's No. 15.
It has sometimes happened in the history of nations, that great and liberal principles of government incorporated into the constitution have seemed to be temporarily inoperative.37

President Salnave responded warmly and commented on the Haitian conditions with:

Civil war, provoked by ambition and malice has not ceased to rend the bosom of my country, I nevertheless propose to prove to the world that my only object is to reestablish order in my country.38

Some of President Salnave's ideas as to how he could accomplish the above were soon made known to Bassett.

President Salnave called on Minister Bassett at his residence, on September 14, 1869. Bassett reported that the Haitian President wanted to know if the United States Government would be willing to aid in quelling assaults on the Salnave government. Bassett replied cautiously with:

Great governments must, as Your Excellency well knows, move cautiously in measures of that character and I cannot assure you of anything further than the same friendly sympathy which has heretofore been shown your government.39

The President of Haiti wanted to send a special envoy to Washington to enter into talks on this matter. Bassett assured Salnave that his government would always listen. Bassett informed Fish that the Haitian Government was looking for two to five million dollars. He added that the Haitian Government

37Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Sep. 14, 1869, No. 17, and encl. B. As previously mentioned Salnave suspended the Haitian constitution in 1868.

38Ibid., Encl. D, to No. 17.

39Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Sep. 16, 1869, Private No. 1.
might offer the use of Mole St. Nicolas for a United States Naval Base as security for a loan. But Bassett cautioned Fish that the idea of giving up Haitian territory even on a temporary basis was the position of a few government officials and not the majority of Haitians. Of this he wrote:

there is no mistaking the fact that the universal sentiment of the population of Haiti is violently opposed to aliening, either permanently or for a term of years, a single foot of her territory.  

The military situation continued to deteriorate for the government forces. In early November, 1869, General Chevallier, Secretary of State for War and Commander of the

40 Ibid., Bassett's forecast was correct. President Salnave later sent General Alexander Tate to negotiate a loan using the Mole as a lien. He also wanted an offensive and defensive treaty. See Bassett to Fish, III, Nov. 2, 1869, Private 2. Also see Notes, Haitian Legation, II, the beginning of the volume has the outlines of the treaty. This was the final effort by Salnave who had also offered the Mole to Bassett's predecessor Gideon Hollister. These political moves involved Haiti in the U. S.- Santo Domingo affairs. Dominican Generals Cabral and Luperon opposed President Baez of Santo Domingo. Cabral also supported Nissage Saget against President Salnave who was friendly to President Baez. When Salnave was overthrown and Saget became the Haitian President, opposition to the U. S. attempts to annex Santo Domingo was part of the Haitian policy. Officially Haiti claimed to be neutral but Cabral attacked Santo Domingo from sanctuaries in Haiti with the support of Haitian officials. Most non-American foreign merchants also aided Cabral with Jamaica usually furnishing the supplies. Without the help of Haiti, Cabral and Luperon would have been hard pressed to continue opposition to the Baez government. This indirect involvement of the Haitian Government to Grants' plan for annexation is for the most part glossed over by historians. For details of the Haitian opposition to annexation of Santo Domingo and the offers for a U. S. Naval base at Mole St. Nicolas made by Haiti to Hollister and Bassett see Logan, Diplomatic Relations, pp. 315-352. Also see Ludwell Lee Montague, Haiti and the United States 1714-1938 (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), pp. 91-110.
Army in the South Department went over to the rebel forces with his army. In the North Department Cape Haytién, after an eighteen month siege, fell to the rebel forces under General Nord Alexis. The rebel ships Republic (Florida) and Mont Organisé (Quaker City) played an important roll in the fall of Cape Haytién. They attacked the government vessels Salnave and General Petion and their action resulted in disabling the Salnave and capturing the General Petion. The three ships then sailed for Port-au-Prince the last stronghold of President Salnave.42

Before the arrival of the insurgent warships at Port-au-Prince the revolutionary government notified the Diplomatic Corps that they intended to blockade the port. Bassett advised Fish that since the United States had not recognized the insur- gents as belligerents he could not concede their right to this action and he explained this to his superior with:

it was manifestly my duty to protect the interests of our commerce in these waters from unlawful capture, stoppage or interference.43

Minister Bassett had no American warship available, at that time, which could communicate this decision to the rebel ships. After an informal canvass of his colleagues he found that the French were of the same view with regard to the

41 *New York Times*, Nov. 21, 1869, p. 5, and Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Nov. 20, 1869, No. 26.

42 Ibid., and *New York Times*, Nov. 30, 1869, p. 1. The General Petion was also called the Alexandre Petion.

43Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Dec. 13, 1869, No. 30.
the blockade. Bassett addressed a note to the French Chargé d'Affaires restating the fact that rebels were not recognized belligerents and that he could not acknowledge their right to establish a blockade. Bassett then further explained to his French colleague the American position by writing:

if you sufficiently accord with the view I have taken, you will place at my disposition the War Steamer of your Government Le Limier now in this harbor, not necessarily for the purpose of using force, but for the purpose of communicating to the insurgent vessels, should they attempt their proposed blockade, my intention to defend the interest, of American commerce in this harbor, and protect it from what seems to be a clearly illegal interference. 

The French Chargé d'Affaires replied that he had communicated Bassett's despatch to Captain Conte commanding the French warship. He then assured Bassett:

that officer will guaranty to the commercial vessels carrying the flag of the United States ... a free passage, both coming in and going out of this port, without permitting them to be stopped by the vessels destined to establish the blockade announced by the revolutionists.

For some unknown reason Bassett's despatch and enclosures did not reach the State Department until late in January. Fish approved the action of requesting the French to communicate Bassett's protest against a blockade to the insurgents. Fish regretted, however, that Bassett did not inform the French Chargé d'Affaires that "... any action

\[44\text{Ibid., Bassett to Du Courthial, Dec. 6, 1869, encl. A, to No. 30.}\]

\[45\text{Ibid., Du Courthial to Bassett, Dec. 7, 1869, encl. B, to No. 30. Logan incorrectly states that a Haitian warship was used. Logan, Diplomatic Relations, p. 343.}\]
involving violence would exceed your [Bassett's] request or desire." The Secretary rightfully feared:

that the Commander of a foreign man of war should be invested or allowed to suppose himself invested, with any discretionary power to be exercised on behalf of this government.

Secretary Fish added that this point had to be communicated but he understood the embarrassing situation Bassett was in. This despatch, "... is not intended to convey any reproof of your conduct." 

Actually the rebels did not need a blockade. Port-au-Prince fell quickly after bitter fighting and heavy bombardment from the insurgent vessels. Minister Bassett along with the French and British Chargés d'Affaires attempted to mediate in order to stop the useless fighting but Salnave and his aides refused to accept the offer of mediation. In the short period of December 16, to December 19, 1869, Salnave lost his final hold on the Haitian Government. Over one third of the city was destroyed by fire. The National palace and arsenal were destroyed by bombardment.

The British Legation had offered to take President Salnave to a place of safety in one of their vessels but the

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46 Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Jan 22, 1869, No. 30.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Dec. 16, 1869, No. 33, and Jan. 15, 1870, No. 34. Also see New York Times, Jan. 5, 1870, p. 4, and Jan. 9, 1870, p. 9.
Haitian President had refused. Salnave fought his way through Haiti and into Santo Domingo, where he was captured by General Cabral, the Dominican rebel, who returned him to the Haitians. After a drumhead court-martial Salnave was executed on a command of "Vive la Constitution!" given by General Boisrond Canal. The new government was bitter toward any friends of the former Salnave government. Minister Bassett and his nation were both considered in that category.

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50Ibid., Jan. 28, p. 1. Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Jan 15, 1870, No. 34.

51Ibid., Jan. 15, 1870, Private 3. This message also outlines the British envoy Spenser St. John's favorable position since he had supported the rebels.
CHAPTER II

THE NEW GOVERNMENT

A decree organizing the Provisional Government of Haiti was brought about by mutual concessions among the leaders of the revolution from both the North and the South. The temporary leaders were Nissage Saget, former President of the "Republic of the North," as Provisional President and Michel Domingue, former President of the "Republic of the South," Provisional Vice President.¹ Bassett advised Washington that the Provisional Government ordered immediate elections for deputies to the Chamber of Representatives. The Chamber of Representatives would elect a Senate. The two groups sitting together, as the National Assembly, would elect a President for four years. Bassett predicted that Saget would most likely be elected President. "He is a Mulatto of fair intelligence and is represented to be a mild, humane, religious man." Of Provisional Vice President Domingue Bassett said that he was "... a pure black of an unintellectual mould. ... His violence and barbarities ... have already been reported."²

¹Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 15, 1870, encl. B, to No. 35.
²Ibid., No. 35.
The despatch continued with the persecution that was taking place against former Salnave adherents. General Chevallier, who went over to the insurgents, was shot without a trial. Other Salnave supporters were being imprisoned, exiled or executed in an arbitrary manner. Sixteen prisoners were summarily executed in Petit Goave. Peaceful foreigners, especially Americans, were the object of threats and hatred on the premise that the Salnave government would not "... have obtained the foothold he did," without the help of the United States. The leaders were also very bitter against America for her proposed annexation of Santo Domingo. However, while these things were taking place, the Foreign Secretary wrote to Bassett transmitting the decree that established the Provisional Government and expressed the desire for friendly relations. Minister Bassett replied that he joined with the Secretary in the desire to continue good relations and would transmit a copy of the Secretary's letter to his government.

The State Department replied that it regretted the hostile sentiment shown to the United States. The Department felt that the presence of Naval vessels in the area would prevent any outbreak against the Legation or American citizens. The ship Seminole was in Port-au-Prince and others were

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3Ibid.

ordered to Haitian waters, 5 Where diplomatic relations were
cconcerned Secretary Fish added that the Department:

places confidence in your judgement and discretion.
It relies upon you to take every honorable way to
prevent a collision, which can only result disas-
trously for the persons at present in power in Hayti;
but it expects you to be firm in maintaining the
rights of our citizens and the dignity of the govern-
ment of the United States. 6

The despatch continued with instructions for Bassett in regard
to information relative to Haitian interference in Santo Domingo.

Although I can scarcely credit this information it
comes from such a source that I feel justified in
instructing you to say to the provisional government
of Hayti that unless its troops are immediately with-
drawn from the Dominican territory, you are to termi-
nate diplomatic relations. 7

Foreign Secretary Rameau was informed that strict
neutrality was expected of Hayti during the negotiations pend-
ing between the United States and Santo Domingo. Bassett did
not mention withdrawal of Haitian troops or threaten to termi-
nate relations. 8 While awaiting Rameau's reply Bassett also
despatched a message to any Commander of an American warship
near Samana. He warned that a schooner Dolphin had cleared

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5Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Feb. 4, 1870, No. 32. Also see Sen., Ex. Doc. 34, 1871, p. 11. The ships
Severn and Dictator with Admiral Poor aboard were sent to Port-
au-Prince on Jan. 29, 1870.

6Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Feb 4, 1870,
No. 32.

7Ibid.

8Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Rameau, Jan. 18,
1870, encl. A, to No. 40.
Jamaica for a Haitian port but was really destined for Santo Domingo with arms for the rebel Cabral. Another ship Clare Helene had just completed a successful mission of the same type with English papers and under the English flag. Bassett judged the information worthy of investigation. 9 Secretary Rameau acknowledged Bassett's letter and merely stated that the Provisional Government had carefully noted it. 10

Minister Bassett then advised the Foreign Secretary that he had information on an arms shipment to Cabral. He implicated the acting Haitian Consul at Jamaica in the movements of the schooner Dolphin. Bassett restated, that in the absence of a declaration of neutrality, the United States would have a well grounded cause for displeasure. 11 On February 10, 1871 Admiral Poor, who arrived the day before, was escorted to an interview with the leaders of the Provisional Government. The admiral repeated Bassett's information in that negotiations were pending between the United States and Santo Domingo. Then in direct terms Poor informed Saget and his cabinet that:

Any interference or attack therefore by vessels under the Haytien or any other Flag, upon the Dominicans during the pendence of said negotiations, will be considered an act of hostility to the Flag of the

9Ibid., Bassett to any U. S. Cmdr. of a warship near Samena, Jan. 29, 1870, encl. C, to No. 40.

10Ibid., Rameau to Bassett, Jan. 21, 1870, encl. B, to No. 40.

11Ibid., Bassett to Rameau, Feb. 9, 1870, encl. D, to No. 40.
United States, and will provoke hostility in return.12

The Foreign Secretary acknowledged Bassett's letter and declared that Haiti was officially neutral and so had informed its agents abroad and at home. Haiti had no knowledge of any interference in Santo Domingo affairs. Haiti would prevent any attempts to interfere in Santo Domingo affairs within the limits of its jurisdiction.13 Bassett felt that the Haitian Government's formal declaration of neutrality was acceptable but he would keep a careful watch for Haitian aid to the rebels.14

The United States' warning by Admiral Poor undoubtedly intimidated the Haitian Government. Arms and supplies continued to reach the Dominican rebels but the use of ships such as the **Dolphin** was effectively halted by the United States Navy. The Haitian Government was forced to supply opponents of Baez clandestinely and through its difficult and mountainous interior. Bassett continued to report the aid supplied to the rebels by Haiti. The Minister protested

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12Ibid., Adm. Poor to President Saget, Feb. 10, 1870, encl. E, to No. 40. Adm. Poor's report to the Secretary of the Navy varies slightly from the above but the tone indicates that the Admiral and the Saget government did not get on too well. See Sen. Ex. Doc. 24, p. 14.


violations of the neutrality and the Haitian Government denied
the violations. Some of the exchanges were stormy but none
reached the critical point just described during the remain-
der of Bassett's tenure. ¹⁵

With the neutrality question "officially" settled the
interest shifted to the coming election of the next president.
As Bassett predicted Nissant Saget was elected President of
Haiti, by the National Assembly, on March 19, 1870. The
Haitian President was inaugurated on the following day.
Bassett added that most people looked forward to restoration
of peace "... a somewhat formidable insurrection ... in
the South" notwithstanding. ¹⁶ This insurrection entangled
Bassett in the case of Eugene Wiener the United States Vice
Consul at Jérémie.

¹⁵ Despatches, Haiti, III-VII passim. The opposition
of the U. S. Senate to the Dominican treaty of annexation no
doubt eased Haitian fears. Charles Sumner's opposition to the
treaty made him a local hero in Haiti. The Haitian Government
struck a medal for Sumner and his portrait, by law, went into
the House of Representatives. On Sumner's death Haiti flew
the flag at half mast for three days. See Leger, Haiti,
pp. 220, 221. Bassett also flew the U. S. flag at half mast.
The State Department told Bassett not to do so again without
official authority. Despatches, Haiti, VII, Bassett to Fish,
Mar. 23, 1874, No. 291 and Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to
Bassett, Apr. 20, 1874, No. 191. On the annexation of Santo
Domingo see Nevins, Fish, pp. 249-278, 309-334, 363-371;
Sumner Welles, Naboth's Vineyard (2 vols.; Mamaroneck, N. Y.;
Paul P. Appel, 1966), I, pp. 359-408; Charles Callan Tansill,
The United States and Santo Domingo, 1798-1873 (Baltimore: John
Hopkins Press, 1938), pp. 338-464. For greater details on the
Haitian involvement see references in Chapter I, footnote 42.

¹⁶ Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Mar. 22,
The insurrection in the South involved some eight to ten thousand mountain people. They were fighting to retaliate for Salnave's death "... and to wreak vengeance on the 'aristocratic mulattoes of the cities.' " 17 The Haitian Government offered amnesty to all the insurgents in the South except their leader Delgrace Jacquet. This proclamation was carried, under a flag of truce, to the insurgents by Eugene Wiener the United States Vice Consul at Jérémie, also charged with the Vice Consul of Great Britain and France. Wiener was made a prisoner and taken to Les Abricots. Four of the six men accompanying him were also held by the insurgents. In reporting this to Bassett the Foreign Secretary added his

17 Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Mar. 22, 1870, Private No. 4. These insurgents were called "Piquets." According to Bassett "The term 'Piquet' is applied to the untutored, semi-barbarous, mountain people of the South." It is also a word of contempt and was used against Bassett and Cmdr. Owens of the naval ship Seminole when Salnave was brought back and paraded past the American Legation before his execution. See Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 15, 1870, No. 35. Although it is not the intention of this thesis to treat with the color problem in Haiti, perhaps a word of explanation would aid the reader. A bitter hatred existed (exists?) between mulatto and black. Generally the educated and richer class were predominantly mulatto. They also tended to control the government even though a black might be president. The mulatto lived primarily in the cities. The Haitian constitutions, of which there are many, reflect the hatred for their former rulers or owners in that no white could become a Haitian citizen. Color terms generally seen are mulatto, brown, griffe (almost black) and black. The terms Negro is sometimes used jeeringly in that most books covering color in Haiti mention the saying that the rich are mulattoes and the poor are Negroes. See James G. Leyburn, The Haitian People, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); For the biting criticism of the English Minister, See St. John, Black Republic, Chapter IV. On constitutions see Janvier, Les Constitutions D'Haiti 1801-1885,
regrets that this unfortunate affair had put Eugene Wiener, who acted out of humane reasons, in such jeopardy. To prevent any possibility of danger to the Vice Consul the Haitian Government would hold back its troops pending Bassett's action to obtain Wiener's release. 18

Minister Bassett acknowledged the letter but stated he could not take immediate action as no American warship was in the harbor at the time. Bassett would, however, act in concert with France and Great Britain since Wiener was also their representative. 19 Bassett discussed the situation with the French and the British representatives who had received copies of Rameau's letter to Bassett. 20 The French Chargé d'Affaires had a French gunboat, Latouche Treville, in the harbor under Commandant Basset. He agreed to the use of the ship to try to obtain Wiener's release. 21 Spenser St. John agreed to send the frigate Niobe under Captain Pasley on the same mission. 22 Bassett also wrote to the Foreign Secretary

18 Despatches, Haiti, III, Rameau to Bassett, Mar. 17, encl. A, to No. 46.
19 Ibid., Bassett to Rameau, Mar. 22, 1870, encl B, to No. 46.
20 Ibid., Bassett to Douzan, Mar. 19, 1870, encl. C, to No. 46. During this time Bassett found that Wiener's status with the French and English was of a quasi official nature.
21 Ibid., Douzan to Bassett, Mar. 26, 1870, encl G, to No. 46. The letter merely acknowledges what was verbally agreed upon hence the late date.
22 Ibid., St. John to Bassett, Mar. 29, 1870, encl H, to No. 46. This letter acknowledges what was orally agreed upon and forwards Cmdr. Pasley's report of success.
requesting the amnesty proclamation be changed to include insurgent leader Jacquet. Bassett thought that the probable reason for holding Wiener was the failure to include Delgrace Jacquet in the amnesty proclamation. The granting of amnesty to Jacquet would prove that the Haitian Government truly cared for what Wiener tried to do.23

Bassett also drew up a "to whom it may concern" statement requesting that Wiener be released. He pointed out that Wiener might have been indiscreet in carrying a proclamation which granted amnesty to all but Delgrace Jacquet. However, the American Legation had requested that the Haitian Government grant amnesty to Jacquet. Bassett, in what could be implied as a warning, advised the capturers that Wiener was an American citizen and that he represented the United States commercial interests in Jérémie.24 When the Foreign Secretary sent word by messenger that the amnesty request for Jacquet was refused, Bassett gave the release request to the British and French representatives.25 The English and French Commanders departed immediately for Les Abricots and presented the request for Wiener's release. After some delay by the insurgents,

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23 Ibid., Bassett to Rameau, Mar. 24, 1870, encl. E, to No. 46.

24 Ibid., Bassett's "to whom it may concern" statement, Mar. 24, 1870, encl. F, to No. 46.

25 Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Apr. 12, 1870, No. 46.
Wiener was released and returned to Jérémie by the Niobe in company with the Latouche Treville. 26

While Minister Bassett's despatch with the news of Wiener's release was enroute he received a despatch from Washington which put a new light on the subject. The State Department replied to Bassett's Private Message Number Four and said that it had no knowledge of Wiener's appointment as Vice Consul at Jérémie. The State Department wished to know when Wiener was appointed and who appointed him. 27 Before Bassett could look into this matter his despatch explaining the trouble involved in releasing Wiener arrived in Washington. A report from a Clements of the Consul section is attached to Bassett's message.

It does not appear by the Records of the Department, what is Mr. Weiner's connection with the Consular service. He was nominated by the Acting Commercial Agent at Aux Cayes, as Vice Commercial Agt. at Jérémie in April 1858, but there is no record of the nomination having been approved, although the Commercial Agent at Aux Cayes has forwarded his Report on Commerce, as late as January 31, 1860. 28

Bassett's investigation differed from Clements' report. Eugene Wiener told Bassett he was stationed at Jérémie as the

26Ibid., Pasley to St. John, Mar. 25, 1870, encl I, to No. 46. Captain Pasley spelled Captain Basset of the Latouche Treville, as Bassett. This could give the reader an idea that Minister Bassett was with him if not carefully read.

27Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Apr. 6, 1870, No. 36.

28Despatches, Haiti, III, appended to the analysis sheet on Bassett's No. 46.
Consular Agent in 1856, by and to replace, Arthur Folsom. Folsom's action was approved by the Consul at Aux Cayes and by Ministers Peck and Hollister. Bassett also talked with Hollister who gave "... substantially the same statement." The Consul at Aux Cayes, asked that Bassett forward Eugene Wiener's name for approval to continue in office at Jérémie.

Shortly after the Wiener affair Bassett requested a leave of twenty-five days. He felt that Haiti was tranquil enough to allow him to take care of some personal affairs requiring his presence in the United States. The leave was approved but the slow communications delayed his departure until late August. The Legation archives were left to the care of Henry Conard the Vice Commercial Agent at Port-au-Prince. Conard was specifically instructed not to enter into any correspondence of a diplomatic nature.

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29 Ibid., Bassett to Fish, May 10, 1870, No. 50. Realizing that other errors could exist with the ten consuls or agents throughout Haiti Bassett had them all submit a detailed report on their appointments and duties. Wiener, after 14 years on the job training, received his certificate of appointment in Aug. 1870. Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Aug. 3, 1870, No. 43. One year later at Bassett's request, the Department approved Eugene Wiener Jr. as Consular Agent to succeed his father who had died; Ibid., Fish to Bassett, Aug. 29, 1871, No. 79, and Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Aug. 8, 1871, No. 86.

30 Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, June 14, 1870, No. 52.

31 Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, July 6, 1870, No. 40, and Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Aug 23, 1870, No. 52.

32 Ibid., Bassett to Conard, Aug. 23, 1870, encl. A, to No. 57. Bassett was following instructions laid down by the
Bassett returned to Haiti at the end of October after an absence of nine weeks. The backlog of correspondence was just about cleared away when Bassett found himself involved in a Spanish-Haitian-American controversy over the steamer *Hornet.*

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33 Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Nov. 5, 1870, No. 58.
CHAPTER III

THE HORNET AFFAIR

In December of 1870, Lopez Roberts, the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Spain to the United States, sent a letter to Hamilton Fish. In the letter Roberts included a review of the movements made by the steamer Hornet after the vessel was sold by the United States Navy in 1869. The Spanish position was that the Hornet was attempting to carry arms and men into Cuba to aid the rebels. Since the United States had not recognized belligerency on the part of the Cuban rebels a violation of United States neutrality laws was involved. The Spanish wanted the Hornet seized, libelled and prevented from sailing.¹

The steamer Hornet, according to the Spanish report, was sold to a Senor Macias by the United States Navy in June, 1869. The Hornet sailed from Philadelphia to Halifax, Nova Scotia after some initial legal protests from Spain. At

¹ F.R.U.S., 1871, pp. 778-786. Logan tells the story of the Hornet but is wrong by nine months as to when the ship arrived at Port-au-Prince and the trouble began. Logan used diaries and Spanish sources but failed to bring out the action at Port-au-Prince which leaves the story incomplete and in places incorrect. See Logan, Diplomatic Relations, pp. 353-356. For a brief Haitian view see Leger, Haiti, pp. 218-219.
Halifax the British authorities arrested the Hornet but when no arms were found the ship was released. The ship then proceeded down the east coast where the Hornet took on arms and men near Massachusetts. The Hornet added coal, arms and more men between Long Island Sound and the Fire Island light in New York. After putting to sea Edward Higgins took command and declared the vessel a man-of-war for Cuba.²

The Hornet, for some reason, put into Wilmington, North Carolina in October, 1869. The United States Government seized and libelled the ship.³ However, the report continued with the fact that by June, 1870, the Hornet was released when the owner Macias put up the required bonds. In October, 1870 the ship was again seized and libelled but was released later in the month.⁴ The Spanish maintained that the Hornet intended to take aboard arms and men at sea and run them into Cuba.⁵

The United States District Attorney for the Southern District replied to the Spanish Consul at New York that no evidence of neutrality violations was provided which would

²Ibid., p. 781.
³Ibid., The Spanish said it was to take on coal. Nevins says the Hornet could have put in for coal or Higgins' treachery. There is also the idea of embroiling Spain and the U. S. since the Hornet was flying a Cuban flag. The author ends the Hornet's escapades at this point. Nevins, Fish, pp. 338, 339.
⁵Ibid.
legally allow the United States to hold the ship. He had
done everything possible to determine that the Hornet was not
violating neutrality laws. The Justice Department could not
"... legally act on mere surmise." As far as the attorney
was advised the ship would clear for Nassau in ballast. 6

Secretary Fish's letter to Minister Lopez Roberts
reminded the Minister of how far the United States had gone
to prevent any violation of its neutrality laws. The State
Department even granted the Spanish Consuls the authority to
present legal evidence of neutrality violations directly to
the prosecuting officer. This irregular procedure eliminated
going through the Spanish Legation to the State Department
and thence to the prosecuting officers. Fish added that the
convenience and speed afforded by this authority to the
Spanish Consuls:

show to the government of Spain that the United States
would omit nothing that could be reasonably deemed
essential to the performance of their duties toward
Spain.7

But January, 1871 found the steamer Hornet anchored at Port-
au-Prince, where the ship's mission again came into question
and brought about a diplomatic controversy between Spain and
America with Haiti in the middle.

Bassett's Vice Commercial Agent at Port-au-Prince
provided the Hornet's sailing data since leaving New York in

6Ibid., pp. 781, 782.
7Ibid., p. 787.
December, 1870. The ship arrived at Port-au-Prince via Nassau on December 19, 1870. The Hornet cleared for Vera Cruz on December 21, 1870. On January 10, 1871, the Hornet returned to Port-au-Prince with a clearance from Aspinwall without having gone to Vera Cruz. Bassett advised Secretary Fish that:

A person calling himself Colonel Ryan who was in some way connected with the Hornet, indulged in loud and open talk in the Cafe's and streets here, setting forth his exploits in the cause of the Cuban insurgents and took especial pains to unfold, in the presence of the Spanish Chargé, the Hornet's success in running the Spanish blockade around the Island of Cuba. Bassett continued his report noting that the Spanish Chargé complained orally about the Hornet and the mission in which, "... he claimed she was engaged." Bassett had his Vice Commercial Agent at Port-au-Prince check the papers and mission of the Hornet. The agent found the papers in order, although he did note that a crew list of 67 was extraordinarily large for a ship of that size. Bassett then

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8Despatches, Haiti, IV, Conard to Bassett, Jan. 17, 1871, encl. B, to No. 67. Aspinwall is today's Colon, Panama.

9Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Jan. 25, 1871, No. 67. Ryan was aboard the Virginius when the ship was captured on the high seas in November, 1873. Ryan and three Cubans were the first ones executed. They were sentenced to death in absentia by a Cuban Court about the time the Hornet arrived at Port-au-Prince. See Nevins, Fish, pp. 667, 669, 670.

10Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 25, 1871, No. 67.

submitted the correspondence to Rear Admiral Lee of the United States' ship *Severn* who was in the harbor. The admiral found nothing that would call for his interference. When the *Severn* left Port-au-Prince a Spanish frigate *Isabel la Catolica* entered the port and laid in wait on the *Hornet*. Bassett gathered from the Spanish officers:

that the *Hornet* went to the northside of Cuba and landed several men, one field piece and landed several small arms, that all were taken, and seventeen men shot. Bassett felt that he had to consider the *Hornet* "... as a merchantman engaged in lawful trade." The ship's papers were in order. The *Hornet* was not caught violating the Cuban blockade and the vessel was now in neutral waters. The Minister requested instructions from Washington.

The Spanish, however, persisted in their claim that the *Hornet* was a pirate. Captain Diego Mendez Casariego the commander of the Spanish frigate *Isabel la Catolica* addressed a communication to his Chargé d'Affaires. In it the Captain...

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12 *Ibid.*, Bassett to Lee, Jan. 17, 1871, encl. C, to No. 67, and Lee to Bassett, n.d., encl. D, to No. 67. The Admiral did allude privately to Bassett that "... our Navy were under special orders not to interfere with our merchantmen in foreign waters without strong special reasons."

13 *Ibid.*, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 25, 1871, No. 67. The spelling of *Isabel la Catolica* seems to vary with every message. Bassett's later messages do use *Isabel la Catolica*. Earlier spellings include *Isabella la Catholica*, *Isabel the Catholic* and *Isabel la Catolica*. The translations went from Spanish to French to English. Bassett later complained of the poor French translations of the Spanish that he received. See Bassett to Fish, Oct. 9, 1871, No. 92.

14 *Ibid.*, Bassett to Fish, Jan 25, 1871, No. 67.
described what he claimed to be the movements of the **Hornet**. The **Hornet** after leaving Port-au-Prince did not go to Vera Cruz but to Colon (Aspinwall) arriving on December 19, 1870. At Colon the Ship picked up "... Ryan the Filibuster." The vessel also took on arms, ammunition and some thirty or forty men. The **Hornet** then cleared Colon for Port-au-Prince.\(^\text{15}\)

The **Hornet** departed Colon on December 31, 1870 and went to the coast of Cuba instead of to Haiti. Once the ship arrived on the coast of Cuba the following occurred:

on the seaside at a place named 'Punta Brava,' she made a landing of men and arms, which happily fell into the hands of the Spanish force. Being pursued by this force, she fled coming to this port where she is now anchored.

I must inform you that if the **Hornet** undertakes to go to sea I am decided to take her at all hazards, taking to myself the responsibility.\(^\text{16}\)

Captain Casariego further asked his Chargé d'Affaires to send a copy of his communication to the Haitian Government along with a demand that Haiti seize the steamer **Hornet**. The Captain also felt that Minister Bassett should receive a copy of his letter.\(^\text{17}\)

The Spanish Chargé d'Affaires, Ramon V. Oliveira, did as the Captain requested. To Minister Bassett, Oliveira included another letter on the **Hornet** that said substantially

\(^\text{15}\)Ibid., Captain Casariego to Ramon Oliveira, Jan. 28, 1871, encl. C, to No. 74. Casariego's statement on the movement of the **Hornet** disagrees with the official record. The **Hornet** arrived at Port-au-Prince on Dec. 19, 1870 and did not clear for Vera Cruz until Dec. 21, 1870, two days after Casariego claims the ship arrived at Colon. See page 41.

\(^\text{16}\)Ibid.

\(^\text{17}\)Ibid.
the same thing but carried the Chargé's signature. Oliveira requested an answer that he could communicate to Captain Casariego.18

Minister Bassett acknowledged the letters and said that he had studied the facts and statements presented to him. Bassett replied that the Hornet was a bona fide American vessel and that the ship's papers were in order. The ship was now awaiting repairs and in Haitian waters which were neutral. In reference to the alleged acts of the Hornet Bassett stated:

That while I am much pained to learn from your despatch that she landed on the coast of Cuba in an unfriendly manner, yet accepting all the facts as you state them, I cannot admit that they stamp her as a pirate within the meaning of international law (see Wheaton's Elements Part III, Chapter 2, Section 15) or the municipal law of the United States defining piracy (see Act of Congress approved May 15, 1820).19

Minister Bassett continued with the fact that his government did not question Spain's right to blockade Cuba's coast. Spain could, if the blockade were effective, pursue, capture, convict and punish a vessel provided the vessel was engaged in breaking the blockade.20 The Hornet was not caught forcing a blockade and the ship was in neutral waters with the proper papers. Bassett then cautioned that if the Hornet were

18 Ibid., Oliveira to Bassett, Jan. 30, 1871, encl. D, to No. 74.
19 Ibid., Bassett to Oliveira, Feb 2, 1871, encl. E, to No. 74.
20 Ibid.
pursued and captured the country doing this would be held responsible for the act.21

Bassett also received a letter from the Superintendent of Police for the Republic of Haiti. The Superintendent, General Lorquet, had received the Spanish communication and formally wished to know if the steamer Hornet was a bona fide American vessel. Bassett assured Lorquet that the ship was a bona fide American vessel.22 In forwarding the letters to Washington Bassett informed the State Department that the Spanish warship Pizarro had arrived and relieved the Isabel la Católica. But the United States had the warship Tennessee in the harbor. The Minister considered it prudent to inform Captain Temple of the Tennessee of the Hornet's situation.23

Secretary Fish acknowledged Bassett's despatch requesting instructions but had not, as of yet, received the despatch containing the Spanish threat to capture the Hornet. The Secretary did not feel that any special instructions were required. If any law of the United States were violated by the ship or commander they would "... be liable to answer therefor on their return to the jurisdiction of this government."24

21Ibid.

22Ibid., P. Lorquet to Bassett, Jan. 30, 1871, encl. A, to No. 74. And Bassett to Lorquet, Feb. 2, 1871, encl. B, to No. 74. General Lorquet was actually Secretary of State of Interior. The Republic of Haiti's police came under his jurisdiction. During President Saget's tours throughout Haiti General Lorquet also handled the routine affairs of the government in Port-au-Prince in Saget's name. See Bassett to Fish, Sep. 8, 1871, Private No. 15.

23Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Mar. 7, 1871, No. 74.

24Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Feb. 9, 1871, No. 57.
If the Spanish authorities violated the American treaty with Spain where the Hornet was concerned they "... will [would] be held accountable."  

Later in February a newspaper stated that the Hornet was being watched by a Spanish steamer and that two Spanish vessels would soon relieve the Isabel la Católica making it impossible for the Hornet to leave port. The paper added that the crew of the Hornet departed Port-au-Prince on the Haitian warship Republic /Quaker City/ for New York.  

In March, 1871, Secretary Fish replied to Bassett's despatch on the Spanish letters and threats.

The course of the Spanish Chargé d'Affairs and of the Spanish Naval Commander in addressing you the notes of which you send copies, was, to say the least, irregular, and the notes themselves making charges against the Hornet which had not been substantiated, were equally extraordinary. Your proceedings in the matter are approved.  

This was the last despatch on the Hornet between the State Department and Bassett until late Summer. But in Port-au-Prince the Hornet was still an issue among the representatives of Spain, Haiti and the United States as the ship was being repaired.

25Ibid.

26New York Times, Feb. 25, 1871, p. 1. The newspaper had its own correspondent in Haiti. Bassett never reported a departure of the Hornet crew. A crew was aboard during the Hornet's repairs throughout the spring and summer as the following despatches will show.

27Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Mar. 28, 1871, No. 69.
While the vessel underwent repairs the Spanish Commander of the Churrusa stationed small boats around the Hornet each night. The Spaniards were armed and continued to threaten the crew. Bassett feared that a collision between the Hornet's crew and the Spanish force was near at hand. The Minister wrote to the Haitian Government and brought the situation to the attention of the authorities. It seemed extraordinary, to Bassett, that a foreign power was policing the harbor of a neutral friendly power in such a manner. The American Minister wanted the Haitian Government to inform the Spanish, in a friendly way, that his action was not agreeable to the American Legation. Bassett received an oral reply of agreement with his position and the Foreign Secretary acted on the information. Within a short time the Spanish small boats ceased to circle the Hornet at night.

The Haitian Government's action did not, however, stop the threats of violence against the crew of the Hornet. Bassett, therefore, wrote a letter to the American Naval Commander near Samana Bay or St. Domingo City outlining the situation and requesting a Naval vessel be sent to Port-au-Prince. When no reply was received after seven weeks Bassett sent essentially the same message in August but addressed it

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29 Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Sep. 1, 1871, No. 88.
to the United States Commercial Agents at St. Domingo City and Puerto Plata. While the American Minister was waiting for a reply from his messages a British sloop Eliza Beckwith became a casualty in the *Hornet* affair.

The Haitian Government chartered the Eliza Beckwith to transport a Haitian crew to Nassau where their warship Mont Organisé /Florida/ was undergoing repairs. The Spanish gunboat Churrusa, which alternated with the Pizarro and the Isabel la Católica in watching the *Hornet*, was in the harbor. On August 31, 1871 as the Eliza Beckwith passed the Churrusa the gunboat fired into the sloop. The shell grazed the sloop's deck and the Churrusa followed this up by sending small boats with armed men to surround the Eliza Beckwith. The Spaniards boarded the vessel and ordered the crew below at bayonet point. The sloop's Captain showed his papers and explained his mission but the Spaniards towed the Eliza Beckwith back to anchorage.

Bassett reported that the incident caused excitement in the Haitian Capital. Some thought that due to the darkness the Churrusa mistook the Eliza Beckwith for the *Hornet*. Others thought the Spanish suspected the sloop of trying to convoy the *Hornet*'s crew along with others to Cuba. What was fact, was that Spanish Warships had been watching and threatening the *Hornet* for over seven months. Repairs on the *Hornet*

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31 Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Sep. 1, 1871, No. 87.
were now complete. Bassett feared that the Spanish warship might fire on the Hornet "... leaving the three powers the United States, Spain and Haiti to adjust the affair afterwards by diplomacy." Bassett recommended that a Naval vessel be sent to Port-au-Prince to escort the Hornet to the United States.

Secretary Fish wrote Bassett that the Spanish threat against the Hornet was unwarranted in a neutral port. The Hornet's papers were in order. The State Department had written to the Spanish Minister and requested that Spain discontinue the "... virtual blockade of that vessel." The Secretary also gave Bassett the official United States position on Haiti's responsibilities to the Hornet while the vessel was at Port-au-Prince.

the case, may be unpleasant, but they have a duty to perform as a neutral which this government will expect to be faithfully discharged if any violence should be offered to the Hornet in Haytien jurisdiction, that government will be accountable therefor. You will consequently officially inform the Minister for Foreign Affairs to that fact.

On September 22, 1871, the United States war steamer Swatara arrived at Port-au-Prince. The ship's Commander,  

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32 Ibid., Nos. 87 and 88.  
33 Ibid.  
34 Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Oct. 4, 1871, No. 83. For Fish's Communique to Lopez Roberts see Logan, Diplomatic Relations, p. 353.  
Weld N. Allen, conferred with Bassett on the steamer Hornet. Bassett gave Allen all the facts that he possessed on the case and Allen decided that his orders would only allow him to report the situation to Admiral Lee. However, with the Swatara present, the Hornet steamed around the port to check the ship's equipment. The Spanish ship Churrucá made no moves on the Hornet but that evening a second Spanish warship, the Pizarro, was in Port-au-Prince.

The Spanish Chargé d'Affaires wrote to Bassett stating that the newspaper and other sources said the Swatara would convoy the Hornet. Since this would conflict with the Churrucá's instructions the Chargé d'Affaires wanted Bassett to inform him if there was any truth in the rumors. Bassett replied to Oliveira as follows:

I do not feel in any way responsible, either for statements made in the newspapers of this country, or for any rumors which may gain circulation here. And I am sure you will concur with me, when I state that I ought not conceive that it falls within the sphere of my duty to sift any such statements, or rumors, with

36 Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Oct 9, 1871, No. 92. Logan states that Preston informed Fish that the Hornet went two miles out of the port and that two Spanish vessels watched the Hornet but took no action. As can be seen above only one Spanish ship was in the harbor at the time the Hornet sailed around the port, but not out of it. Logan fails to note that the U. S. warsteamer Swatara was present while the Hornet was steaming. Logan also adds that the Tennessee found the Hornet's papers in order. The Tennessee was in port back in March, 1871. Captain Temple received information from Bassett that the Spanish intended to take the Hornet by force when the ship left the port. The Hornet's papers were checked by Adm. Lee aboard the Severn in January, 1870. Logan, Diplomatic Relations, p. 354. Also see pp 40-41 above.
the view of finding the truth or exposing the errors, which may be in them. 37

Oliveria sent another letter couched in different terms and requested to know if the Swatara would convoy the Hornet. Bassett replied that he did not have that information but would advise Oliveira as soon as possible should such information become available. 38

After the Swatara departed, the Haitian Foreign Secretary confidentially told Bassett that the Spanish Admiralty Court in Cuba had stamped the Hornet as a pirate. A few days later Spanish representative presented a formal demand that the Hornet be delivered to the Spanish authorities as a convicted pirate. The Chargé d'Affaires warned that the Haitian Government would be held responsible for all damages to Spain caused by the Hornet if that government chose to protect the pirate. These claims would include any future damages the Hornet might cause if the ship was allowed to leave. The Haitian Government was given thirty hours to deliver the Hornet. The Foreign Secretary forwarded a copy of the demand to Bassett. 39


38 Ibid., Oliveira to Bassett, Sep. 27, 1871, encl. C, to No. 92, and Bassett to Oliveira, Sep. 28, 1871, encl. D, to No. 92.

Bassett promptly replied to the Foreign Secretary stating that the Spanish representative was incorrect in his accusation against the Hornet. The Spanish Government had not proved the charge of piracy against the ship. Bassett added that if all the acts charged against the Hornet were admitted the ship still would not be a pirate according to international law. The Foreign Secretary was invited "... to this subject, as treated in any work on the law of nations within your reach." Bassett then took responsibility for the following:

if under any color of any authority whatsoever, violence contrary to law, is inflicted upon the Hornet, whoever uses this violence will be held to a strict accountability.\textsuperscript{41}

In the despatch covering the enclosures Bassett adds that he suggested to the Foreign Secretary to defer any action demanded until Bassett received further instructions. The Haitian Government also sent messengers to communicate with President Saget and three of his Secretaries of State who were touring the South. The Spanish Chargé d'Affaires extended the ultimatum by thirty hours. Oliveira also struck his flag, closed the Spanish Legation and went aboard the Churrusa with his effects. The Haitian Foreign Secretary sent for Bassett

\textsuperscript{40}Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Denis, Oct. 6, 1871, encl. H, to No. 92.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.; The Haitian Foreign Secretary forwarded the Spanish demands and Bassett's reply to Haiti's Minister in the U. S., and they appear in their French version in Notes, Haitian Legation, II, Preston to Fish, Oct. 28, 1871, and messages appended about Nov. 3, 1871.
who told him he could not alter his position without instructions from Washington. There was another meeting the following morning which included the representatives of England and France. The agreement finally reached was that the Haitian Government could not yield to Oliveira's demand. The furthest that Haiti could allow was that the Haitian Courts might try Oliveira's claim.\textsuperscript{42}

Before Bassett's despatch of October 9, 1871, reached the State Department Secretary Fish sent a confidential note to his Haitian representative. The Secretary had informal information that the \textit{Hornet} could have violated the ship's neutral status by taking on arms at Port-au-Prince. Fish wanted Bassett to quietly investigate and if it were true the vessel's position would be that of a belligerent, Bassett could then advise the Haitian Government to take judicial action against the \textit{Hornet}.\textsuperscript{43}

In mid November the \textit{Hornet} was still under surveillance by the Spanish gunboat \textit{Churruca}. Oliveira was still aboard the Spanish vessel but personal relations between Bassett and Oliveira were still cordial.\textsuperscript{44} Early in December

\textsuperscript{42}Despatches, \textit{Haiti}, IV, Bassett to Fish, Oct. 9, 1871, No. 92.

\textsuperscript{43}Instructions, \textit{Haiti}, I, Fish to Bassett, Nov. 3, 1871, No. 85. Logan states that Lopez Roberts furnished the information to Fish. See Logan, \textit{Diplomatic Relations}, p. 355.

\textsuperscript{44}Despatches, \textit{Haiti}, IV, Bassett to Fish, Nov. 14, 1871, Private No. 16.
Bassett advised Secretary Fish that Oliveira had talked with General Lorquet, the former Secretary of Interior. Oliveira wondered if a proposition on the Hornet might be accepted. The ship was to sail directly to New York and be handed over to the courts there. The Spanish force would not interfere with the Hornet. The Foreign Secretary thought it odd that Oliveira communicated with Lorquet but advised Bassett of the offer. Bassett replied that he would prefer not to be part of this arrangement in an official capacity. If the Spanish representative and the Hornet's owner agreed Bassett did not feel it was his position to interfere.

Oliveira made a second suggestion that the Hornet be sold and a change of flags be made at Port-au-Prince. But an officer from the Churrucha saw the Foreign Secretary and informed him that the Spanish Commander would not accept either of those propositions. The Commander did not believe that Oliveira was authorized to make these propositions to General Lorquet. Bassett closed his confidential message with the fact that he had received no despatches from Washington since Number 81 of September 11, 1871.

The Spanish increased their warships to three at Port-au-Prince in later November. The Haitian President was still


46Ibid., This was the last despatch marked private. Bassett was advised to use the one numbering system and mark the despatch confidential. See Instructions, Haiti, I, J.C.B. Davis to Bassett, Oct. 2, 1871, No. 82.
touring the South and the authorities in the capital city were worried about the Spanish intentions. Some thought that Spain would demand indemnity for the charges made against the Hornet since the Haitian Government had refused the ultimatum. Surprisingly, when the Spanish Chargé d'Affaires did send another despatch it was to ask if he would be better treated by the Haitian people if he returned to his Legation? The surprised Haitian Government assured Oliveira that everyone there would show him respect. 47 However the Chargé d'Affaires remained aboard the Churrucu.

On December 4, 1871, the Spanish Chargé d'Affaires suggested that the Hornet issue be settled in Washington. The Haitian Government was to detain the Hornet while the negotiations were in progress. This could be done by dismantling the Hornet's essential parts and storing them in a depot. The Haitian Government replied that this would require the consent of the American Minister. Bassett not only refused but denied that any foreign government had the right to dismantle an American vessel that had the proper papers. 48 However, in Washington the Secretary of the Navy was taking an interest in the Hornet.

In November J. M. Mayorga, the owner of the Hornet, wrote to Secretary of the Navy Robeson. In his letter Mayorga

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48 Ibid., pp. 258-260.
stated that he had information that his ship Hornet was blockaded at Port-au-Prince by Spanish vessels. Since the Hornet could not leave the port the vessel was useless for trade. Mayorga wanted the American Navy to protect the Hornet so that the ship could leave Port-au-Prince. The owner stated that the other alternative was to turn the ship over to the Spanish Government and file a claim against Spain for damages. 49

December 21, 1871, the Secretary of the Navy informed Mayorga that since a blockade was involved the United States Navy would bring the Hornet out of Port-au-Prince to either New York or Baltimore. Secretary Robeson laid down the conditions that Mayorga must accept and Mayorga agreed to the terms. 50 Secretary Fish informed Bassett of the agreement. Fish added that the United States frigate Congress, under Captain Davenport, would arrive at Port-au-Prince to convoy the Hornet to Baltimore or New York. The Secretary of State hoped there would be no "... obstacle from any quarter." 51

49 Ibid., p. 261. Evidently no one bothered to ask Mayorga why it took him from January to November to decide that "his" ship Hornet was blockaded. When the Hornet left New York the owner was listed as Macias who was a member of Cuba's revolutionary Junta. Would a person buy a ship that another nation has threatened to blow out of the water? The possibility that Macias and Mayorga are one and the same deserves consideration. On Macias see Nevins, Fish, pp. 240, 339.

50 F.R.U.S., 1872, pp. 261, 262. Logan says that Fish was responsible for the decision to bring the Hornet home using a defect in the ships papers as the reason. This decision was reached at a cabinet meeting on Dec. 5, 1871, see Logan, Diplomatic Relations, p. 356.

Early in January Bassett acknowledged receipt of Fish’s instruction of October, 1871 pertaining to the *Hornet*. Bassett felt that the warning was no longer required but delivered the Secretary’s note on the obligations of Haiti towards the *Hornet*. The Spanish warship *Churrucá* had left port on January 2, 1871 and for the first time in eleven months no Spanish man-of-war was in the Harbor.\(^{52}\)

From despatches Bassett saw at the British Legation he advised Fish that the Commander of the *Churrucá* and the Spanish Chargé d’Affaires, Oliveira, had both been suspended from their duties by Spain. The cause of suspension was the firing upon and arresting of the British sloop *Eliza Beckwith*. However, the British Government had declined to join Haiti in demands on Spain for reparation and indemnity.\(^{53}\)

Captain Davenport arrived at Port-au-Prince on January 14, 1871, with the warship *Congress*. Spain’s new representative, Senor Pedrorena, met Bassett and Captain Davenport when he accompanied British Chargé St. John to the American Legation. Pedrorena "... manifested neither surprise nor interest in Captain Davenport’s statement that he was on the point of convoying the *Hornet* to the United States."\(^{54}\) Although the circumstances were changed Captain Davenport decided to

\(^{52}\)Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 11, 1871, Nos. 100 and 101. For Fish’s instructions see p. 49 above.

\(^{53}\)Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Jan 11, 1871, Confidential No. 102.

\(^{54}\)F.R.U.S., 1872, pp. 262, 263.
convoy the *Hornet* in case a Spanish warship was waiting for the *Hornet* outside of Port-au-Prince. The *Hornet* departed for Baltimore on January 18, 1872. 55

In February Bassett answered Secretary Fish's confidential message of November, 1871, on the possibility that the *Hornet* violated her neutrality by arming at Port-au-Prince. Bassett found no grounds for the charges against the *Hornet* made in Washington. But Bassett did find out that a proposition was made to the owners of the *Ernest et Marie*. The *Ernest et Marie* sailed between Haiti and New York under the Haitian flag. The owners were approached in New York with an offer to carry arms secretly to the *Hornet* during the ships final weeks in Port-au-Prince. The offer was "... certainly not accepted." 56 Bassett concluded with the possibility that General Lorquet might have told some of the *Hornet's* officers that he would secretly arm them. But this was during the height of the Spanish threats and the arms would have been for personal defense. 57 Secretary Fish requested a full report on the

55 *Ibid.*, A section omitted from the F.R.U.S. stated that the *Hornet* would go to Baltimore because the Secretary of the Navy preferred that port for an unexplained reason. See Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 17, 1872, No. 107 with ends. A and B. Logan states "... the Spanish Consul returned to Port-au-Prince and had withdrawn his request for surrender of the *Hornet.*" See Logan, Diplomatic Relations, p. 356. For a newspaper account of the *Hornet's* departure and trip to Baltimore, see New York Times, Jan. 28, 1872, p. 1.

56 Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Feb. 8, 1871, No. 109.

persons in New York that made a proposition to arm the Hornet.

Bassett answered the Secretary's request in a confidential despatch. The owner of the Ernest et Marie was Van Bokkel of New York. Bokkel was the Haitian Consul at New York, who spent the winter months in Haiti as Bassett's house guest. It was Van Bokkel and the ship's master, M. M. Gorman, who advised Bassett of the proposition. Their information was such that Bassett felt it was well founded. Nothing more was written on the Hornet in Bassett's despatches.

The Hornet affair finds scant space in written history of this period. Yet the Hornet could have been another Virginius affair between the United States and Spain. That the dispute over the Hornet did not escalate into a major confrontation can be attributed in part to diplomacy. Bassett's firm stand with both the Haitian Government and the Spanish representative undoubtedly played an important role. The diplomacy of the American Minister outmatched the temper and threats of his Spanish colleague. But it is the English sloop Eliza Beckwith that may have unconsciously played the protagonist's role in settling the affair.

The Spanish gunboat Churrusca most likely mistook the English sloop for the Hornet in the darkness. After the

58 Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Mar 22, 1872, No. 94.

59 Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, May 16, 1872, Confidential No. 126.

60 For complete details on the Virginius see Nevins, Fish, Chapter 28.
incident the Spanish raised their threats to an ultimatum. They could have decided to "shoot the works" in hopes of a victory before word of the incident reached Great Britain and Spain. It is a matter of history that the Spanish fleet and officials operating out of Cuba often acted arbitrarily without orders from Spain. But as soon as the story of the Eliza Beckwith reached Great Britain, Spain would have to act. Did Spain conclude that the Hornet could lead to more trouble than it was worth?

By suspending the Captain of the Churruca and Chargé Oleveira Spain could satisfy Great Britain. By removing its ships from Port-au-Prince the United States would be left to escort a vessel back to America with nothing to encounter but water. Haiti's actions in adhering to Bassett's contentions probably rankled Spanish Government in Cuba far more than they did the home office. While Spain was negotiating a settlement over the English sloop it would have been a simple move to eliminate a coming confrontation with the United States over the Hornet. This author feels that Spain followed that course of action.

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61 Spain was also suffering from internal political strife at home. See Nevins, Fish, Chapter 26.
CHAPTER IV
MINOR INCIDENTS

The years 1872-1874 presented many incidents that were settled through diplomatic channels. Three of these incidents offer an opportunity to look into some of the internal problems that Bassett contended with in Haiti. As mentioned before the Haitian Government under President Saget was not friendly to the United States. The support that America and its representative gave to former Haitian President Salnave, plus the possible annexation of Santo Domingo were the main causes of friction. This, of course, made Bassett's work more difficult.

The next incident to occupy the time and talents of Bassett was that of Gustave Jastram, the United States acting Vice Commercial Agent at St. Marc. Jastram was physically mistreated by Haitian officials. The second case is that of Charles F. Teel the United States Vice Consul at Miragoane. Teel was arrested and imprisoned for having counterfeit money in his possession. The final occurrence deals with Colin Campbell the Master of the American ship Lucy Holmes. Captain Campbell became involved in a local dispute at Miragoane.

Gustave Jastram was temporarily appointed by Bassett in July, 1870 to be the acting Vice Commercial Agent at St. Marc,
The State Department approved the appointment in August, 1870. For almost two years Jastram handled American Commercial affairs without incident. The Agent had a store at St. Marc and the Consular office took up a portion of the store. On March 20, 1872, Jastram answered a request to go to the home of General Batraville Sr., with whom he often did business.

When Jastram entered the General's house he encountered John De Lande the British Vice Consul. The home was surrounded by soldiers and General Batraville Sr. appealed for help and protection from both men. Jastram and De Lande informed the General that under these circumstances, they could not offer him protection. The British and American representatives returned to Jastram's store. Later as Batraville Sr. and another person passed Jastram's store the General managed to enter on the excuse that he wanted Jastram to take a letter to his wife. Once inside General Batraville Sr. asked for protection under the American flag. Jastram, like his predecessors, followed the time honored custom and granted asylum.

The person accompanying Batraville demanded that Jastram give up the General as the officer was taking Batraville Sr. to prison. Jastram refused and in his letter noted that the

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1 Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, July 18, 1870, No. 54; Nov. 5, 1870, No. 59, and Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Aug. 3, 1870, No. 43; Oct. 11, 1870, No. 47.

2 F.R.U.S., 1872, pp. 266-269. The name of the General is written Batraville aîné. The author has preferred to translate aîné to Sr., for easier understanding and to prevent possible misinterpretation of aîné which becomes "groin" if the accent marks are omitted.
route to prison did not pass by his store. Within a short
time a group of soldiers appeared and demanded that Jastram
surrender Batraville Sr. Jastram once again refused to give
up the General. The armed group then grabbed Jastram and
pulled him through the streets, threatened his life and phy-
sically mistreated the Agent. Jastram was released by the
men through the intercession of the French Vice Consul to the
military commander of the area. After two further attempts
to obtain Batraville were not successful armed men forced the
Consular office and took Batraville Sr out. 3

Jastram left St. Marc by boat for Port-au-Prince to
report the incident to Minister Bassett. Enroute from St. Marc
Jastram flagged the American warship Nantasket. The Nantasket
was enroute from Port-au-Prince to Santiago de Cuba but
returned to Port-au-Prince with Jastram. After hearing Jastram's
report and receiving his written statement Bassett decided that
he should go to St. Marc and investigate. Captain Carpenter
of the Nantasket agreed with Bassett and offered to accompany
Bassett with the ship. 4

During the same period the officials of St. Marc sent
a messenger overland to Port-au-Prince with their report of the
incident. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, L. Ethéart
informed Bassett that he could give him any information that the

3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., pp. 264-268.
Minister might desire on the incident at St. Marc. Bassett saw the Foreign Secretary but felt that Ethéart was covering up for the officials at St. Marc. This attempted cover-up plus the fact the Haitian President and most of his ministers were supposedly at St. Marc gave Bassett further reason for going to the port city.\(^5\)

After Bassett's arrival at St. Marc the Haitian officials refused to cooperate. The French and British representatives corroborated Jastram's statement. President Nissage Saget and his ministers were gone, supposedly to Gonaives. Bassett said that this was partly to avoid meeting them and the chances were that the Haitian President would be absent from Gonaives if they went there. Bassett added "... that neither I nor Captain Carpenter felt that we ought to be roaming around the country looking for the President."\(^6\)

Minister Bassett returned to Port-au-Prince and presented the case to the Foreign Secretary. Bassett informed Ethéart that, he did not intend to discuss the circumstances involving General Batraville Sr. or the seizure of the General in the American Consular office at this time. The point of importance was the assault on Agent Jastram by officials of the Haitian Government and of this there was no doubt in spite of

\(^5\)Ibid.

\(^6\)The comments on the Haitian President were omitted from the printed document. See Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Mar. 25, 1872, No. 119.
the lack of cooperation by the officials at St. Marc. An assault on an official representative of the United States Government was a matter of grave consequence and "... that we have just cause for complaint." Bassett explained that it was his duty to advise the Haitian Government of the reparations asked for because of the assault.

1. That the persons in the service of your government who took part in the assault and violence upon Mr. Jastram, shall be at once made sensible of the displeasure of your government for their action in this particular.
2. That a suitable apology be made to this legation for the proceedings complained of.
3. That a guarantee be given to this legation, that in the future no consular officer of the United States shall be molested by any Haytian authority without due process of law.

In his report to the State Department Bassett noted that the British Vice Consuls at both Cape Haitian and Gonaives had refugees in their consulates. The Haitian Government merely stationed guards at a respectful distance from the British consulates. This disparity in treatment of American officials could become worse if the Jastram incident "... were allowed to go unrebuked." The State Department replied approving of Bassett's action. Secretary Fish further stated that:

the gross, causeless, and unprovoked maltreatment of Mr. Jastram must be regarded as an international grievance. You will consequently press for due reparation from that government, which must at least make

7F.R.U.S., 1872, pp. 269, 270.
8Ibid.
9Ibid., pp. 270, 271.
the officer, who was guilty of the improper conduct adverted to, sensible of its displeasure, and must express to this government its regret for the occurrence.¹⁰

Throughout the month of May, 1872 Bassett continued to ask for a settlement of the case. The Haitian Government consistently pleaded that the irregularity of the mail from St. Marc was delaying its investigation. However, the Foreign Secretary forwarded an abundant amount of information pertaining to the arrest of General Batraville Sr. None of this information contained any accounts of the assault on Jastram. Bassett reminded the Foreign Secretary that the only point under discussion was the assault on Jastram.¹¹

After sixty days Bassett's demand for reparations was still unanswered. Bassett informed the Foreign Secretary on May 31, 1872, that further delay, would indicate that the Haitian Government was not willing to give the reparations "... which is customary in such cases."¹² Bassett added that this conclusion would be forwarded to his government if action was not forthcoming. Within two days an exchange of conversations began and on June 5, 1872, the Haitian Government

¹⁰Ibid., p. 271. The published document left out most of the commas making the passage difficult to understand. The punctuation marks are inserted by the author from the original. See Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, May 3, 1872.


¹²Ibid., p. 283.
acceded to the reparations asked for by Bassett on March 25, 1872.\textsuperscript{13}

On June 26, 1872, the State Department sent Bassett the following message.

The Department congratulates you that the energy and perserverance with which you have followed up that difficult case has at last been crowned with success, and that it has been adjusted upon a basis compatible with the honor of both Governments.\textsuperscript{14}

The settlement also contained assurances that consuls of the United States would receive the proper respect. Unfortunately the assurances were not as convincing as Secretary Ethéart promised. Within a few months Bassett received news that the American representative, at Miragaone, was arrested for possessing counterfeit money.

In February, 1872 Bassett recommended that a consular officer be appointed at Miragaone the chief logwood exporting port in Haiti. Bassett nominated Charles F. Teel for the position. The State Department approved the recommendation and Teel received his commission in April, 1872.\textsuperscript{15}

On July 22, 1872 Charles Teel was accused of having $25,000 Haitian, in counterfeit money in his possession. Teel's

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 283, 284.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 284, 285. Oddly enough though the \textit{New York Times} reported a little later that the U. S. had ordered Bassett to drop the Jastram affair because the Agent had made incorrect statements, See July 12, 1872, p. 5.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Despatches, Haiti, IV, Bassett to Fish, Feb. 8, 1872, No. 111, and Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Apr. 22, 1872, No. 100.}
home and store were forcibly entered, ransacked and all money seized. The consular agent protested this action but Teel was rudely treated and taken to jail at Anse-à-Veau twenty-four miles away. There was no evidence that any of the formalities required by Haitian law were observed and the commander responsible for the arrest knew Teel's official status. 16

During Teel's normal course of business he took in Haitian currency. When Teel sent the money to Emile Sievers & Co. at Port-au-Prince it was refused. When the money was returned to Teel the general of the area used this as pretext to say the money was false and seized it. Four people went through $175,000 Haitian and declared $25,000 of the amount false all in twenty dollar bills. Teel's books showed the source of the money but Teel was the person arrested. Minister

16 F.R.U.S., 1872, p. 288. The rate of exchange for Haitian paper money fluctuated constantly. The value of $25,000 Haitian was probably in the area of $50 gold. The Haitian dollar was also referred to as a gourde. Haiti was flooded with counterfeit currency after the fall of Salnave. The U. S. was the main source of supply for the counterfeit money. The Haitian Minister, Preston, complained to Fish that U. S. authorities were doing nothing to stop this counterfeiting. Preston's argument was sound in that the Haitian representatives pointed out the counterfeiters and that the authorities were doing nothing on the basis that counterfeiting Haitian money was not a violation of U. S. law. This reluctance to act gave the counterfeiters ample time to destroy their plates. Preston pointed out that counterfeit currency also hurt American merchants doing business in Haiti. This perked up U. S. authorities but large amounts of the counterfeit money were transported to Haiti. See Notes, Haitian Legation, II, Preston to Fish, Jun. 30, 1870.
Bassett, after pointing out these facts to Foreign Secretary Ethéart, requested that Teel be released. 17

Ethéart denied any undue proceedings. He enclosed two statements which tended to show that the money was seized and then a visit was made to Teel's home. The police also looked at the money of Gideon Riobe & Co., who had given Teel money, but Riobe's currency was good. The other sources of the currency were not investigated. Teel was sent to Anse-à-Veau for imprisonment because the seat of justice was there. Ethéart added that the case was in the hands of the judiciary and not the executive. However, for the sake of good relations the Secretary of State for Justice wrote hoping to hasten the investigation. 18

Bassett replied pointing out that Teel was not accused of counterfeiting money and no one claimed that Teel received the money in any devious way. Bassett noted the following:

17 F.R.U.S., 1872, p. 288. Bassett had reason to be alarmed. In Haiti counterfeiting or passing counterfeit money could bring the death penalty. Bassett experienced this in 1870 when an American Ernest Grant brought counterfeit money into Haiti. Grant spent eleven months in prison before Bassett, using his good offices, obtained a new trial where Grant was acquitted. See Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Jun. 14, 1870, Private No. 6 and IV, May 27, 1871, No. 82. Also see Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Jun. 27, 1870, No. 40 and Jun. 8, 1871, No. 75.

18 Ibid., pp. 293-295.
It is a matter of common speech and notoriety that, in the present unfortunate condition of the paper currency of this country, the counterfeit notes often escape the greatest care and scrutiny. . . . I cannot myself distinguish them. Can you yourself do so, Mr. Minister, in every case, or even in a majority of cases?  

Bassett felt in view of the circumstances there was no " . . . justifiable ground, or even probably cause, for proceedings against Mr. Teel."  

The American Minister pointed out articles of the Haitian constitution that were not complied with in Teel's arrest, therefore, the proceedings were illegal. As an official of the United States Government Teel had a Commission for the position and Haiti had issued Teel an exequatur. Persons in this category have " . . . the special protection of international law."  

The Haitian Government would be responsible for any injury to Teel inflicted illegally.

Secretary Ethéart once again denied Bassett's contentions and the two men filed counter arguments until the latter part of August. Yet Teel was quietly released on August 8, 1872 and the proceedings against him were dropped at the same time. Since Teel was held in high respect many other merchants were worried about what might happen to them. Bassett in

\[19\text{Ibid., p. 296.}\]
\[20\text{Ibid.}\]
\[21\text{Ibid.}\]
\[22\text{Ibid., p. 297.}\]
\[23\text{Ibid., pp. 297-299.}\]
his despatch to the State Department covering these events on Teel added:

In any well-established country he might find redress through the legal tribunals. But here an appeal to these tribunals would, in my opinion, be utterly useless in such a case.

Bassett requested an instruction on whether or not to demand indemnity for Teel. 24

The State Department acknowledged receipt of the information on Charles F. Teel. Bassett's action was complimented and approved. Secretary Fish felt that there was "an ingredient of malice" in Teel's arrest and imprisonment. "You will, consequently, intimate that it is expected he will be indemnified for the injury he has sustained." 25

In November Bassett informed Washington that Teel was ill. The request for indemnity would be delayed until Teel was well enough to meet with Bassett. 26 The American Minister saw the Foreign Secretary several times and was informed that the Haitian Government "... would prefer to settle the Teel affair without further official correspondence in regard to it." 27 Foreign Secretary Ethéart and Bassett could not agree on the amount of settlement. The Haitian cabinet suggested

24 Ibid., pp. 290, 291. There was the unproven story that one reason for Teel's arrest was money owed him by the General in Miragoane, who ordered Teel's arrest. New York Times, Apr. 17, 1873, p. 1.


26 Despatches, Haiti, V, Bassett to Fish, Nov. 6, 1872, No. 159.

27 Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Jan. 6, 1873, No. 167.
that Bassett allow one of his colleagues to arbitrate the matter. Bassett agreed to this procedure and he along with Ethéart selected Henry Byron, the British Vice Consul. Byron accepted the task and the State Department acknowledged Bassett’s decision.28

In mid-February Consul Byron rendered his decision. After a careful consideration and review of the case Teel was awarded $10,000 American.29 In March, 1873, the Foreign Secretary advised Bassett that the treasurer was ordered to authorize a draft for 53,333.33 francs, for the award to Charles F. Teel.30 On April 4, 1873, Charles F. Teel acknowledged the receipt of his award.31 But within a few months Miragoâne and its authorities were once again the center of a controversy over Colin Campbell the master of the ship Lucy Holmes.

On November 5, 1873, Captain Colin Campbell, and one of his seaman Charles Hopp, were arrested by the authorities

28Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Jan. 30, 1873, No. 173, and Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Jan. 24, 1873, No. 130.

29Despatches, Haiti, V, Bassett to Fish, Feb. 17, 1873, No. 185.

30Ibid., VI, Ethéart to Bassett, Mar. 27, 1873, encl. A, to No. 198.

31Ibid., Teel to Bassett, Apr. 4, 1873, encl. D, to No. 198. Also see New York Times, Apr. 17, 1873, p. 1. The Haitian Government did decree withdrawal of "its wretched paper money." So many of the bills of twenty dollar denominations were counterfeit that they were ordered out of circulation on the same day that the time limit for bills of other denominations was established at four months. See F.R.U.S., 1872, p. 454, and pp. 447-552 for a short history of Haitian currencies.
at Miragoane. Seaman Hopp was arrested for engaging in a fight with Haitians in which Hopp was severely beaten. Campbell stated that he came off his ship to aid seaman Hopp but the General of Police stated that Campbell fired a pistol and wounded one man in the leg. The Lucy Holmes was loaded and ready to sail but Campbell's arrest meant that the ship's departure would be delayed which could lead to a loss of money for the owners.

The acting United States Consular Agent, Ohlmeyer, filed an official protest with authorities. Ohlmeyer pointed out that those who assaulted seaman Hopp were not arrested as required by law. The acting Consular denied that proof of Campbell's guilt existed and that Captain Campbell was ready to make a sworn statement of his innocence. Ohlmeyer's contentions were to no avail. Seeing that the authorities fully intended to take the prisoners to Anse-à-Veau Ohlmeyer furnished Campbell with letters of introduction so that he would be sure of obtaining the necessities of life while in prison.  

Minister Bassett received the information of the men's arrest by special messenger. Bassett knew that under the formalities of Haitian law they could be detained in prison indefinitely. With the schooner Lucy Holmes loaded and ready to sail Bassett pressed for the release of Captain Campbell. Bassett pointed out that if the cargo were damaged by waiting

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32 Despatches, Haiti, VI, Ohlmeyer to Bassett, Nov. 5, Nov. 6, Nov. 7, 1871, encl. A, to No. 265.
and later Campbell were found innocent there could be additional claims.

Foreign Secretary Lamothe informed Bassett that the reports sent by the authorities at Miragoane differed from the details that Bassett presented. Lamothe's reports said that some fifteen shots were fired by Campbell and that the case was serious. But the Foreign Secretary indicated that Campbell might be released on a form of bail. The two representatives agreed to inquire into the details of the affair. The secretary also allowed Bassett to borrow his report of the incident. The courier was sent with despatches from both men to Miragoane.

On November 11, 1873, Ohlmeyer informed Bassett that Campbell was being well treated. The Agent added that the official protest that he sent to Anse-À-Veau was done so at the request of the Commander at Miragoane. In a second note the Agent wrote that Campbell was released and returned to Miragoane on November 14, 1869. Seaman Hopp testified that he fired the shot which wounded the Haitian.\(^33\)

At Miragoane Captain Campbell filed a protest which reiterated his earlier claim of innocence and now added illegal imprisonment. The judge refused to receive his oath of innocence and statement that the Haitians nearly killed one of his men. Captain Campbell claimed his innocence was proved when the seaman admitted firing the shot in self defense. The *Lucy*

\(^33\)Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Nov. 24, 1873, No. 265.
Holmes had been kept from sailing for the past eight days. The Captain claimed $258 gold for the delay and extra expenses. Campbell also claimed $5,000 gold for the ill treatment received, loss of health and loss of reputation. The claim of $5258 gold was filed against the Haitian Government through Ohlmeyer with reserves should more expenses be incurred. Consul Agent Ohlmeyer took the deposition and forwarded it to Bassett adding that he hoped Campbell would succeed.34

Bassett acknowledged the claim but wanted further details. Bassett felt that the Foreign Secretary's despatch to Miragoane was influential in obtaining Campbell's release on bail. Campbell's statement of innocence was not accepted but this appeared to be a procedural error on his part. There was still the question of some fifteen shots that were fired. Also according to the Haitian report Campbell and Hopp were both engaged in the fight and both men were intoxicated. Bassett wondered however, why all the persons engaged in the disturbance were not arrested. In addition there was also the fact that seaman Hopp remained in prison and required aid. Bassett hoped to clear up these matters so that he could make a detailed report to Washington with his recommendations.35

Before Bassett's initial despatch on the affair reached Washington the State Department informed the Minister of a claim filed against the Haitian Government. The State Department

34 Ibid., Ohlmeyer to Bassett, Nov. 18, 1873, encl. G, to No. 265.

35 Ibid., No. 265.
received a letter from the owners of the *Lucy Holmes* claiming damages for the ship. They wanted the claim filed by Campbell to be presented against the Haitian Government. Fish wanted Bassett to investigate and recommend action to be taken on the claim. After the receipt of Bassett's despatch J. C. Bancroft Davis, the acting Secretary of State, advised Bassett that the Department would await further details and results of the proper legal proceedings. Those results would be required before the State Department could decide on what form of action would be required.\(^{36}\)

Bassett acknowledged receipt of the instructions. He added that some time would probably pass before the judicial proceedings could be made available.\(^{37}\) In April, 1874 the results of the case were forwarded to Washington. In Bassett's opinion the long investigation:

failed to develop any facts which appear to me to warrant an application to this Government for indemnity either to Captain Campbell himself or to the owners of his vessel.\(^{38}\)

Bassett's detailed personal investigation of the facts revealed that the Haitian authorities acted with justifiable cause in the steps they took. On the night in question,

\(^{36}\) *Instructions, Haiti, II, Fish to Bassett, Dec. 19, 1873, No. 174, and Davis to Bassett, Dec. 23, 1873, No. 176.*

\(^{37}\) *Despatches, Haiti, VII, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 10, 1874, No. 272.*

\(^{38}\) *Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Apr. 28, 1874, No. 301.*
November 5, 1873, a number of the crew including Captain Campbell were drinking in a saloon. The men were intoxicated when they left the bar and became quarrelsome as well as very noisy. The chief of police asked the men to return to the ship but Campbell threatened him with a pistol.

The police chief retreated only a short distance when a shot rang out. A Haitian named St. Filex Filosky was shot in the leg by Campbell as he passed the Captain. The Captain and crew fled to the ship where Campbell resisted arrest and fired some twelve to fifteen shots. The Captain was arrested for shooting St. Felix Filosky and seaman Hopp was arrested for brawling. Campbell induced Hopp to say he wounded Filosky. In that way Campbell was released on bail and not freed as the ship’s owners claimed. 39

Seaman Hopp remained in prison at Anse-à-Veau while Bassett was investigating the case. During this period Bassett asked Ohlmeyer to furnish the money required to purchase the necessities of life required by Hopp. The Haitian Government allowed only twenty-five cents per week for food as the custom was that friends or relatives fed the prisoners. Bassett found that Hopp, "... struck him as very illiterate and somewhat stupid person." 40 Charles Hopp admitted that he allowed Campbell to persuade him to say he shot St. Felix Filosky.

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Apr. 28, 1874, No. 302.
Seaman Hopp testified in court at Miragoane that Campbell fired the shot that wounded Filosky. Hopp was an accessory to Filosky's shooting and received a sentence of one month in prison and a fine of fifty cents on November 26, 1873. But in a feature, perhaps singular to Haiti, the court ordered Hopp to pay Filosky one hundred dollars damages "(dommages-interets)." And unless Hopp paid the damages, he would remain in prison.

Bassett worked through informal notes and interviews with the Foreign Secretary to secure Hopp's release. Bassett advised Lamothe that considering Hopp's standing, the damages would probably never be paid. On March 21, 1874, Bassett obtained Hopp's release through a Presidential order.

The State Department replied that from Bassett's investigation Campbell and the owners had no claim against the Haitian Government. Fish also approved of the amount spent in relief of seaman Hopp. Bassett was authorized to draw on the seaman's fund on orders from the State Department.

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{Instructions, Haiti, II, Fish to Bassett, May 10, 1874, No. 198.}\]
CHAPTER V

ELECTIONS AND ASYLUM

The Spring of 1874 saw an election for the presidency in Haiti. President Nissage Saget's constitutional term was drawing to a close in May and Saget was not eligible for reelection without an interval of four years. The main contender for the Presidency was General Michel Domingue who served as Nissage Saget's Vice President. In opposition to Domingue was a group of deputies led by Boyer Brazelais and many of Saget's followers. Bassett felt that if one of these groups succeeded, by itself, in winning the Presidency the country would again see domestic strife on a large scale. Should either of the groups opposing Domingue actually join with him trouble might be averted for some time.

The Chamber of Deputies and the Senate were scheduled to convene on the first Monday in April. The two houses sat separately and were called the Corps Legislatif. For the election of a president the two houses would sit together as the National Assembly. The problem was that the deputies supporting Boyer Brazelais numbered enough to prevent the Chamber from having the required quorum. Without the Chamber of Deputies the National Assembly could not form, thereby, preventing the constitutional selection of a successor to President Nissage
Saget. Boyer Bazelaïs, who was a candidate, could effectively thwart the scheduled election.¹

There was the possibility that President Saget would attempt to find a way to remain in the President’s chair. History certainly favored some move on Saget’s part to retain his power. As Bassett put it:

> it must be remembered that no Haytien chief of state has ever, of his own accord, given up his power, except President Pierrot, who is said to have retired with disgust in 1846. It does not appear to run in Haytien blood voluntarily to renounce authority once obtained.²

Saget could attempt to stay in power, if the National Assembly did not form, by claiming that a successor was not selected according to the constitution. But Bassett felt that the Haitian President could not succeed in this course, and that he would bring about armed opposition if he tried to remain in power.

Domingue’s chances were better than any of the others although his cruelties and bloody deeds were well known. Michel Domingue appealed to many of the deputies who saw in him a man who possessed ability and made decisions. Bassett’s opinion of Domingue was unfavorable. However, the American Minister pointed out that Domingue’s record on cruelties was

¹Despatches, Haiti, VII, Bassett to Fish, Feb. 23, 1874, No. 284. Portions of this despatch are printed in F.R.U.S., 1874, pp. 598-601. The term Corps Legislatif is roughly the equivalent to the American term Congress. The deputies for the chamber were elected by the public and the chamber, in turn, elected the senators. The Chamber of deputies is also called the Chamber of Representatives and often translated from French as the House of Representatives.

²F.R.U.S., 1874, p. 598.
"... scarcely any worse than that of the leaders... against him in the race for the presidency."

With the arrival of April the tension mounted. The Corps Legislatif did not convene on the first Monday as the constitution required. There were allegedly reliable informants who related that Domingue's success was assured. But by the seventeenth of April the opposing parties still had not reached any agreement. Bassett felt that the presence of a Naval vessel might help since the situation was now critical. Almost as if the Navy had sensed the demand, the State Department advised Bassett that the Kansas departed Key West, Florida on April 15, 1874 for Port-au-Prince.

The war steamer Kansas arrived on April 26, 1874. The Commander, Allen V. Reed, advised Bassett that his actual mission was to chart some coral reefs around Saint Louis du Sud and Aquin. Reed offered to remain at Port-au-Prince if Bassett felt the ship might be needed. The Kansas departed on the second of May to begin the task to which it had been assigned by the Navy but the ship returned on the sixth. This behavior on the part of Commander Reed of the Kansas was generated by the opposition of the Haitian authorities in the South.

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3 Ibid., p. 599.
4 Ibid., p. 616.
5 Instructions, Haiti, II, Fish to Bassett, Apr. 20, 1874, No. 197.
Department. Reed wanted Bassett to obtain official permission to map the reefs. The permission was obtained the same day and the Kansas sailed on the seventh of May but was nearby and available should the American Legation need the protection afforded by a warship.

The Haitian President's term was due to expire on May 15, 1869. The Senate was in session but Bazelais and his supporters prevented the Chamber from obtaining the required quorum. There would not be a National Assembly to elect a successor to President Saget. If Saget was still in office after the fifteenth even though no successor was elected Bassett thought that force of arms would settle the issue. General Domingue was in Port-au-Prince quietly and confidently watching the events secure in the knowledge that he had the support of the other military leaders. Fully equipped military forces were nearby and could easily be called. The decision was in President Saget's hands.

The Haitian President was weighing the possibility that if he stayed in office past the fifteenth he could retain power. He made some remarks about upholding the constitution and staying until a successor was chosen. But Saget's friends finally prevailed upon him that the only way to avert a bloody uprising was to resign. President Nissage Saget issued a proclamation in which he publicly resigned upon the completion of

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his term. The Haitian President made Domingue the chief of the Haitian Army and turned the government over to the Secretaries of State. A proclamation was issued calling for the election of a constituent assembly which would elect a President and write a new constitution. 7

The American war steamer Kansas returned to Port-au-Prince on the twenty-sixth of May. The British also had a warship in the harbor of the Haitian capital. It was rumored that General Nord Alexis at Cape Haytien would not accept the proclamation but this proved untrue. The constituent assembly was quietly elected in June, 1874, and voted unanimously for General Michel Domingue as the next President of Haiti. His term of office was to be determined by the new constitution. It was also expected that the president's term would be for seven years. Michel Domingue was in his seventies and had been in public service since 1816. Domingue was considered tractable but very stubborn once he had made a decision. 8

After the inauguration of President Domingue, Bassett requested his first leave in four years. The Minister also informed the State Department that his British colleague, Spenser St. John, would be the new Minister Resident to Peru. Bassett then took ill and was incapacitated for a month and his leave was delayed until October, 1874. 9 Sickness and a poor

7Ibid., p. 611-616. A new constitution would be required to replace this one since the election of a president could be effectively blocked by a minority group.

8Ibid., pp. 618-623.

9Despatches, Haiti, VII, Bassett to Fish, Jun. 23, 1874, No. 324; Jul. 29, 1874, No. 331; Sep. 9, 1871, No. 335, and
sailing schedule kept Bassett away from Haitian events for ninety-five days. He was welcomed back by the acting Foreign Secretary Septimus Rameau. In an early report after his return Bassett could finally inform the State Department that Haiti and Santo Domingo signed a treaty of peace and amity. But other news of Haiti was grim; the government had started repressive measures against its opponents. 10

For Bassett this brought up the possibility that his Legation and home might once again fill with refugees. During the Salnave revolution refugees were in the major consulates and legations of all the larger countries represented in Haiti. In December of 1869, Bassett and St. John even went to Cape Haytien aboard the British warship Cherub to relieve the American Consul of refugees and bring Salnave's family back to Port-au-Prince. Bassett's home and legation were filled with some 3000 refugees at the time. 11

The State Department acknowledged the despatches on refugees in what might be referred to as a somber mood. In firm language Fish outlined the policy of the United States Government with reference to refugees. The message was to play an important part in the events that followed in 1875.


10 Despatches, Haiti, VII, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 28, 1875, No. 336; Feb 3, 1875, No. 345; Feb. 3, 1875, No. 346; and May 8, 1875, No. 363.

11 Ibid., III, Bassett to Fish, Nov. 30, 1869, No. 26, and Dec. 10, 1869, No. 28.
Therefore message number twenty-four of December 16, 1869 is quoted.

Your despatch No. 20 of the 20th ultimo has been received. It represents in consequence of the apprehended triumph of the armed opposition to the existing government in Hayti, the foreign Consulates and even the Legation of the United States, had been sought as asylums for persons and property. Occasions for this have of late years frequently arisen in the independent States of this hemisphere, but the proceeding has never been sanctioned by the Department, which, however, appreciates those impulses of humanity which make it difficult to reject such appeals for refuge. The expediency of granting an asylum in such cases, especially by Consuls is more than questionable, and the obligation to take that course, has no foundation in public law, however in Haiti or elsewhere it may be tolerated and customary.

While you are not required to expel those who may have sought refuge in the legation, you will give them to understand that your government cannot, on that account, assume any responsibility for them, and especially cannot sanction any resistance by you to their arrest by the authorities for the time being.12

As early as May, 1874 Bassett sent a confidential message to all his consuls and agents outlining the provisions of message number twenty-four. Since there was no legal right to receive refugees there could be no legal claim to United States support. Bassett added that humanitarian aspects could

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12 Instructions, Haiti, I, Fish to Bassett, Dec. 16, 1869, No. 24. Bassett's refugees numbered to 3000 in the Salnave revolution. They occupied the Legation in Port-au-Prince and his home just outside of the city. The grounds of the house covered some fifteen acres filled with about 2500 refugees, mostly women and children. By the latter part of January 1870 Bassett had obtained permission to embark the refugees. All indications are that Bassett had to bear the costs from his own salary. See Despatches, Haiti, III, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 15, 1870, No. 34; Jan. 15, 1870, No. 36, and Jan. 22, 1870, No. 39.
be a consideration but the consuls and agents must exercise caution.  

In March, 1875 the British Chargé d'Affaires gave the protection of his legation to General Lamothe, the former Foreign Secretary. The Haitian Government claimed that the general misused funds therefore was not entitled to asylum which supposedly covered only political offenses. Bassett joined his colleagues in the amiable settlement of this affair. The State Department advised Bassett that it regretted his involvement with his British colleague. Fish felt that Bassett's assenting to involve himself in this matter was at variance with Bassett's instruction number twenty-four. However, the Haitian Government's action against those suspected of opposing the government once again made asylum the central issue.

On May 1, 1875, the Holiday of Agriculture in Haiti, government forces began arresting those persons thought to oppose Domingue's Presidency. General Monplaisier Pierre, former Secretary of War, refused to surrender and fought it out with the troops under General Lorquet. Cannon were brought into use which resulted in part of a shell falling into Bassett's yard. Pierre was killed after a brave stand. A second person,

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13 Ibid., VII, Bassett to Consular Officers, May 2, 1874, Confidential encl. A, to No. 308.
15 Instructions, Haiti, II, Fish to Bassett, May 3, 1875, No. 225.
General Brice, the former Haitian Minister Plenipotentiary to Europe fought his attackers, was wounded in the leg and bled to death after being dragged to the safety of the British Legation. A third soldier, General Boisrond Canal, was more fortunate.

At three o'clock in the morning, after thirty-six hours of fighting, Canal was knocking on Bassett’s bedroom door. Canal explained that he and his two relatives were not enemies of society or fighting the government and that they were being pursued by men who were not acting within the law. Canal and his relatives asked for the protection of the American flag. Bassett’s own words best describe his reaction:

I told them I did not see how I could protect them, but to be frank, I could not turn them out when I knew that within two minutes, if I should do so, and close my door behind them, they would be slaughtered without judgment or mercy. It may be that the instinct for humanity got the better of me. The men were not my personal friends. They had never visited my house before, nor I theirs. 16

Bassett made his decision and allowed the group to remain in his home.

The Haitian Government was not long in reacting to Canal’s refuge. Bassett’s home was surrounded by armed troops. Three other house guests of Bassetts named Alertes, Modé and

16 F.R.U.S., 1875, pp. 686-689. There was a report that Pierre, Brice and Canal were involved in a plot to overthrow President Domingue and make Pierre the President. See New York Times, May 16, 1875, p. 1.
were declared enemies of the state because they were still at Bassett's home when Canal arrived. Foreign Secretary Excellent wrote to Bassett demanding that Alerte, Modé and Iacinthe be surrendered since they were sought by the law. Bassett reminded Excellent that the right of asylum was used more in Haiti than any other country in the hemisphere. No one had ever complied with such a request and in view of these facts Secretary Excellent could not expect the United States to be the first one to comply with this demand.  

Bassett, his secretary Lazare and a maid were stopped by the soldiers surrounding his house. The officer, with a drawn sword, lectured the American Minister, in Creole, about obeying military authority. Bassett's complaint about this unwarranted treatment was immediately acknowledged, an apology rendered, and orders were issued to make sure that proper respect would be given to the Minister and his staff.  

The situation brightened somewhat and Bassett managed to embark his three friends Alerte, Modé and Iacinthe for a foreign port. One of the men accompanying Canal was also allowed to leave. Foreign Minister Excellent advised Bassett that the Haitian Government would go to Washington to settle the matter if Canal was not surrendered to the authorities. Bassett replied that he would not accede to this demand and pointed out that his Legation was the only Legation that was being treated in this manner. And since the Foreign Minister had decided to appeal to Washington the subject was necessarily closed until Washington decided the issue. Bassett learned

17 F.R.U.S., 1875, pp. 689-695.
18 Ibid.
from confidential sources that in a private cabinet session President Domingue chastised the Foreign Secretary for closing the door to further negotiations. Foreign Secretary Excellent changed the tone of his letters but Bassett reminded the gentleman once again that no nation had given up a political refugee and the United States would not be the first to do so. Bassett forwarded his correspondence to Fish and requested a Naval vessel which might be used as required in a dangerous situation.19

The State Department informed Bassett that it regretted that he deemed himself "... justified by an impulse of humanity to grant such an asylum."20 Bassett was further informed that the Haitian Government was taking action in Washington. The Haitian Minister, Preston, requested that the State Department order Bassett set the refugees at large. Fish declined to do this, but told Preston to have the Haitian Government apply to Bassett if the refugees were to be brought to trial. Fish added that the Haitian Government would have to give assurances of no punishment and if the refugees were convicted that they would be allowed to leave the country.21

Bassett responded that the Haitian Government had shown no sign of providing the assurances that Fish had stipulated.

19 The sections printed in F.R.U.S., 1875, pp. 696, omit some of the information above. See Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, May 19, 1875, No. 365, and encls. A-D, also May 21, 1875, No. 366.
21 Ibid.
The American Minister reported the situation over Boisrond Canal in this fashion.

I have never seen or even heard of any such downright unreasonableness and obstinacy on the part of this government as it manifests in the case of Boisrond Canal. Of course we all know the controlling reason for this. It is the determination to wreak vengeance upon him or, failing in this, the fear of his power and influence in the future.22

A few days later Bassett informed the State Department that he made further diligent attempts to reach an understanding with the Haitian Government. The authorities would not give the guarantees that Fish stipulated in his instructions. Bassett regreted the situation but could not give up Canal. The moral force of a Naval vessel at Port-au-Prince Bassett thought "...most likely will do much to incline toward a return to reason the government of this peculiar people."23 Bassett added that Preston would receive new instructions to present to Fish. However, Preston's family informed Bassett that the Haitian Minister's sympathies were with Canal and that Preston would do no more than follow the "strict letter of the instructions."24

22 Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, Jun. 26, 1875, No. 374. The printed document omits this and what is worse makes no indication that a part of the original is missing. This leads the reader, incorrectly of course, to believe he is reading the complete document. For some reason this was done in many places to Bassett's correspondence during this exchange over the asylum of Canal. The author found omissions to be properly marked in the printed documents in other sections of F.R.U.S. dealing with Bassett. F.R.U.S., 1875, pp. 705, 706.

23 Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, Jun. 26, 1875, No. 378.

24 Ibid.
On July 1, 1875 Fish sent a copy of Preston's correspondence to Minister Bassett. The letter stated that Bassett failed to give a list of his refugees to the Haitian Government and that the men were received with arms and ammunition. The Secretary of State noted that Bassett's despatches did not mention these points. The Secretary requested an explanation from Bassett. Fish then warned Bassett of his accountability to his government for the course he decided upon and to the government "... to which you are accredited." But in Port-au-Prince Bassett was engaged in a duel of wits with the Haitian Government over the refugees and Canal was the central issue.

Minister Bassett advised Secretary Fish that there was no change in the status of the refugees. The British and Spanish Legations were now subjected to the same demands for surrender of their refugees as Bassett was with Canal. In addition the armed troops around Bassett's residence continued to cause loud noises throughout the night. The noise was made on orders from the Haitian Government and in addition the authorities circulated rumors that Bassett was deserted by his government. The Haitian Government warned Bassett that the soldiers were so excited that the government could not answer for Bassett's or his family's safety.

The action of the soldiers failed to intimidate Bassett so the Haitian Government attempted a new tact. It was announced

\[25_{F.R.U.S., 1875, p. 708, for Preston's letter and Fish's reply see pp. 737-739.}\]
that the refugees in the various legations would be tried for rebellion. The court was a military tribunal and no notice was given as to place or time of the trial. These military men knew nothing of law and would only rule as they were instructed. Those in power and close to President Domingue feared Canal. President Domingue was at least seventy-five years old. There was a good chance he might not finish a seven-year term. The probable successors wanted the competition eliminated. General Septimus Rameau was the Secretary of the State for Finance but as Domingue's trusted nephew he actually ran the Haitian government.26

Bassett hoped that the United States would stand firm on Fish's stipulations for the release of Canal to the authorities. The Haitian Government would not give these assurances of safety required by Fish. Bassett pointed out that if Preston were advised that a Naval vessel was being sent to Port-au-Prince the issue could be settled amicably and quickly. Bassett stated:

one word from you will, in short, give relief from all this sore and trying difficulty. I owe it to candor to say also that I am equally well convinced that any other proceeding less positive than this will only increase the difficulty; increase also the presumption and insolence of these peculiar people toward our country and our countrymen.27

26 Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, July 16, 1875, No. 383.
27 Ibid.
William Hunter, the Second Assistant Secretary, felt that a ship "... must be considered in connexion [sic] with Mr. Preston's objection recently offered." 28

On July 22, 1875 Bassett wrote a despatch, Number 384, summarizing the exchanges that took place over the asylum of Canal since his first two despatches of May 8, 1875. Included was the correspondence between Bassett and Foreign Secretary Excellent. On May 25, 1875 Foreign Secretary Excellent wrote to Bassett that the Haitian Government received reports that Canal entered Bassett's residence with arms and ammunition. The Haitian Government was confident that Bassett would not tolerate such an act. Bassett replied that he was happy to observe that Secretary Excellent placed no confidence in the report. 29

On June 14, 1875 Excellent made another request that Canal be turned over from Bassett's country residence to the authorities for the laws violated on May 1, 1875. The Foreign Secretary stated that his government turned to Washington over the matter of Canal because Bassett's stand on the situation "... resulted in a lack of understanding (entente) between us." 30 Bassett acknowledged the letter and advised Excellent that Bassett and his colleagues had an important unofficial communique on the matter. The diplomatic corps had an

28 Ibid., A department memo attached to Bassett's message.
30 Ibid., p. 716, 717.
appointment that afternoon with President Domingue and hoped to end the official correspondence on the matter. 31

Secretary Excellent wrote on the nineteenth of June that the issue of Canal carrying arms and ammunition into Bassett's country residence were still circulating. The refugees might make some attempt against the public peace. The situation was such that the Haitian Government might not be able to provide the protection required if Bassett remained in his country seat. The Haitian Government suggested that for safety Bassett should move into Port-au-Prince close to his legation. 32

Bassett answered Excellent with three despatches on the twenty-sixth of June. He expressed surprise at the tenor of the despatch. There was no one in refuge at Bassett's residence who had any intention of committing an unfriendly act. The Haitian Government was at peace and there was no sign of public disorder or domestic strife. Why then, should Bassett leave his residence, which was next to the city, for quarters in the city? If Bassett was mistreated or his rights and immunities violated then the offenders would be held responsible.

The second despatch expressed regret that the unofficial meeting with President Domingue apparently failed. Since it was the anniversary of his presidency the diplomatic corps hoped

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
that he would allow the refugees of Great Britain, Spain and
the United States to embark. Bassett also regretted that
all other attempts to lift the embarrassment of the situa-
tion had failed. It appeared that the Haitian Government
had closed the door to other informal suggestions. 33

In Bassett's third message, to Foreign Secretary
Excellent on the twenty-sixth, he referred to the armed men
surrounding his residence. For more than seven weeks hundreds
of armed troops had surrounded his residence. Bassett was
effectively shut off from the rest of the community. No one
could rest with the continued shouting, under government
orders, throughout the night. Bassett and his household
were jeopardized in every way by these unfriendly armed men
who were under the direct orders of Secretary Excellent's
government. This was violation of the treaty guarantees
that the Haitian Government had given the United States.
Everyone who attempted to visit his residence as a friend
or officially risked annoyance and danger. The situation,
if not alleviated or stopped immediately, was to be the
subject of an unfavorable communication to the government
of the United States. Bassett concluded that all the con-
versations with Excellent and his colleagues delayed this
decision in hopes that it could have been avoided. 34

33 Ibid., pp. 718, 719.
34 Ibid., p. 719.
The Foreign Secretary acknowledged the three communiques on the eighth of July. Excellent once again stated that Canal was guilty of criminal acts. Haiti found it impossible to admit that Canal was a political refugee. As a general officer he refused an order to deliver himself to superior authority. The active surveillance on the road to and from Bassett's country residence was a precaution and a necessary measure. Those who caused these necessary measures were the ones responsible for these actions. Excellent added that he would soon inform Bassett of the results of legal proceedings taken against Canal.35

Bassett once more informed Excellent of the instructions given to him by his government. Bassett was only authorized to negotiate with an end in view of embarkation. Excellent sent two more despatches to Bassett couched in the same language and offering no real relief for the situation. Bassett concluded that further correspondence with the Haitian Government over the asylum of Canal was futile. Canal and the other refugees were sentenced to death as Bassett expected. Bassett would wait for the results of Haiti's appeals to the State Department.36

In August, 1875 Bassett replied to Secretary Fish's request for explanations to questions raised by Minister Preston in Washington. Bassett's refusal to submit a list of

refugees at the demand of the Haitian Government was explained in an earlier message. He referred the State to his despatch Number 364 of May 8, 1875. In the enclosures to that message was the correspondence on his refusal to submit a list of refugees. The government of Sylvain Salnave made the same request in 1870 which Bassett refused and which the State Department did not altogether disapprove. The Haitian Government made only one request for names on the day the refugees entered Bassett's residence. Bassett personally offered and subsequently gave to the Foreign Secretary and President Domingue the details on his refugees. Bassett added that the fact that Boisrond Canal was a refugee in his house was no secret at any time.\(^{37}\)

When Boisrond Canal arrived at Bassett's residence both of his ankles were sprained and he was supported by two men. Canal had no arms and could not have fired upon the soldiers about a mile from Bassett's house as the government claimed. Canal's friends did have muskets which Bassett removed and put under lock. These details were given to President Domingue and the Foreign Secretary by Bassett during a meeting. Further correspondence on the matter was enclosed in his message Number 184 of July 22, 1875. Bassett added that in spite of the difficulties his personal relations with the Haitian Government were cordial. "The President talks with me about his affairs almost as if I were a member of his household.\(^{38}\)

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\(^{37}\)Ibid., pp. 693, 694, 722-724.

\(^{38}\)Ibid., In part of the omitted portion Bassett states
On the same day Bassett wrote a second despatch bringing State Department up-to-date on the status of his refugees. Bassett's status was unchanged but the British and Spanish Legation were free of refugees. Calice Carrie, who was condemned to death with Canal, was in asylum in the British Legation. Carrie walked out of his refuge and went to the house of a friend and later boarded a ship without the authorities paying any attention to him. Only Bassett's residence now had refugees.

In Washington John L. Cadwalader, the Assistant Secretary of State, wrote to Preston in reference to the harrassment caused by the Haitian soldiers around Bassett's residence. The American Government expected this to be discontinued. The fact that political refugees were in Bassett's residence contrary to the State Department's wishes and without its approval did not mean Bassett forfeited any rights. Preston acknowledged Cadwalader's message and stated that his government held a like view on the question of asylum. Preston felt that he now knew how the United States would react. Preston interpreted Cadwalader's statement, on the refugees being in Bassett's residence contrary to State Department wishes to mean that the refugees would be given up and placed under the

de Haitian Government would "... exhaust every means, even the smallest, within its power, to arrive at its main object of causing to disappear Boisrond Canal, no more nor less," See Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, Aug. 9, 1875, No. 387.

39 FYR U.S., 1875, pp. 725, 726.
jurisdiction of Haitian authorities. Preston continued with the information that Haiti would use the right of pardon to assure that the refugees' lives were spared. The sentence would be commuted to exile. Stephen Preston did not feel it was necessary to dwell on Cadwalader's demand that the deliberate harassment of Bassett's residence by Haitian soldiers be discontinued.40

Cadwalader replied that the State Department rejected Preston's inference that its course of action might be limited in the matter of Boisrond Canal. The Department also regretted that Preston misunderstood the terms under which Bassett would surrender the refugees. The exercise of the right of pardon was not mentioned. This would mean that the United States not only abandoned the theory of asylum but practically agreed to the violation of asylum. Cadwalader then added:

The United States cannot consent to this. The proposition authorized through Mr. Bassett was based upon the principle of deferring to the dignity of Hayti by acknowledging her right to try the refugees, but also of maintaining the inviolability of the asylum so long as it should generally be tolerated.41

Preston replied that he could not accept the State Department terms. Bassett had offered these terms in Haiti and they were rejected. Preston then brought up a new point. He claimed that Canal was declared outside of the law on May 2, 1875. Boisrond Canal did not reach Bassett's residence until

40bid., pp. 739-741.
41bid., pp. 741, 742.
May 3, 1875. Now if the State Department instructed Bassett to turn Canal over to the Haitian authorities then the Haitian Government would pledge to change the order of May 2, 1875 to one of simple banishment. The individual would immediately leave Haiti. If acting Secretary Cadwalader would accept the proposition Preston would submit it to his Government.  

The State Department withheld an answer from Preston but forwarded copies of the correspondence to Bassett. Washington received Bassett's despatches through Number 389 of August 9, 1875 but did not receive Number 384 of July 22, 1875 which contained the information pertaining to the asylum of Canal since May of that year.

The Acting Secretary of State, William Hunter, lacking the complete details of the situation expressed his unhappiness over the fact that Canal was still in Bassett's residence. The letter added that the State Department's impression was that Bassett allowed his partiality to Canal and his humanitarianism to overcome the discretion that the instructions to Bassett stipulated.

On September 7, 1875 Hunter advised Bassett that his despatch Number 384 of July 22, 1875 arrived on September 2, 1875. The delay could not be accounted for but this message changed the situation. With this despatch the State Department had a complete understanding of the situation on the refugees.

42 Ibid., pp. 742-745.
43 Ibid., pp. 726-728.
at Bassett's residence. The Department was requesting that the Navy send a warship to Port-au-Prince to protect Bassett from insult. It was hoped that the refugee problem could be settled before the ship arrived. 44

The Naval steamer Powhatan was ordered to Port-au-Prince. With this information Bassett settled the issue of Boisrond Canal before the ship could arrive. Preston in Washington asked the State Department to hold the ship. He was ready to conclude an amicable solution to the problem. In consequence Bassett obtained a decree from President Domingue changing Canal's death sentence to banishment for life and Secretary Fish signed a memorandum of agreement with Preston which guaranteed essentially the same thing. Canal was embarked without trouble on October 5, 1875. After five months Bassett's residence was free of surrounding troops and the Powhatan never made the trip to Port-au-Prince. 45

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44 Ibid., p. 728.
45 Ibid., pp. 734-737, 748.
CHAPTER VI

REVOLUTION AND RECALL

Boisrond Canal went into exile in Jamaica. The Haitian Government newspaper *Le Moniteur* reported, in its unofficial section, that Washington had ordered Minister Bassett to surrender Canal to the authorities. The United States Government asked, unofficially, for commutation of Canal's death sentence. The Haitian Government, as a mark of friendship to Washington, commuted the punishment to exile for life. This explanation was essentially the same as the one presented by President Domingue in his report to the legislature.¹ The departure of Canal eased the tense situation but it did not ease the general discontent in Haiti.

In Haiti the chief cause of discontent continued to be Rameau, the nephew of the Haitian President. Rameau's conduct was described by Bassett:

'It is claimed, in fine, that Minister Rameau is a bold intriguing utterly unscrupulous usurper, whose conduct of affairs ought not to be tolerated by the country, and against whom it is useless for any one to say anything to his uncle the President.'²

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¹ *F.R.U.S.*, 1876, p. 321. Also Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 19, 1876, encl. B, to No. 421.
² *F.R.U.S.*, 1876, p. 323.
The employees of the Haitian Government were not paid and other public debts were ignored while Rameau and his favorites increased their riches. Rameau was accused of controlling almost every public act for his own benefit and of plunging Haiti into greater debts.3

The monetary policies that Rameau pursued were alienating the business community. Merchants were suspected of contributing to a revolutionary fund while they professed to be friendly to the government. Rameau did not intend to be caught unaware and kept a spy system operating in Haiti and among the Haitian exiles to forewarn him of any revolutionary movement. It was known that the Haitian exiles sent former Secretary Cameau to the United States to obtain support for a revolutionary movement. The Cuban insurgents were also suspected of supporting the Haitian exiles.4

The Domingue government cooperated with Spain to suppress the Cuban revolutionaries operating out of Haiti. This was in contradiction to the feelings of the Haitian people who supported Cuban independence especially because of Spain's enslavement of blacks in Cuba. President Domingue and Rameau were decorated by the Spanish Government in recognition of their aid which consisted of turning over the $100,000 cargo of the English schooner Laura Pride to the Spanish Chargé.

3Ibid., pp. 323, 324.

4Ibid., The Haitian exiles were trying to obtain a ship along with arms and ammunition. See Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, Nov. 12, 1875, No. 406.
because part of the cargo consisted of arms supposedly destined to the Cuban insurgents. The opponents of the Domingue Government soon received further support from the foreign merchants when a new license law was decreed by the government.

On January 15, 1876 the Haitian Government published a decree dated December 23, 1875. The decree established new license fees for workers, contractors, merchants and many other groups. The license fees for foreign merchants were discriminatory and could force many of them out of business. A foreign merchant would for example, have to pay $1200 for a license that cost a Haitian $150. A foreign merchant selling on consignment could not make a sale for less than $500. A foreign clerk required a license costing $300, which formerly cost five dollars, and a Haitian clerk paid nothing.

The foreign merchants drew up two circulars protesting the severe measures and sent the circulars to members of the diplomatic corps. In one circular the merchants pointed out that the license law was passed by the Chamber of Deputies but the Senate returned the law with amendments. Before the Chamber could act on these amendments the legislative session closed. Without formal passage of both houses the decree was published by executive branch and would take effect March 31, 1876. This

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5 F.R.U.S., 1875, pp. 709, 710, and 1876, p. 323. Also see Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, Jul. 16, 1875, No. 381; Jul. 16, 1875, No. 382; Sep. 24, 1875, No. 391; Dec. 28, 1875, No. 415.

6 Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, Feb. 17, 1876, encl. A, to No. 428.
was in violation of the Haitian constitution which required passage by both houses and the legislature was not scheduled to convene until the first Monday in April.7

The other circular pointed out that there was discrimination in the present license fees plus a four percent surcharge but the merchants had borne these costs rather than complain. The new license fee, however, would put them out of business. It was claimed that Americans had guarantees that taxes not levied against Haitians could not be levied against them. The source of this protection lay in the fifth article of the treaty between Haiti and the United States signed in 1864. The article read:

The citizens of each of the high contracting parties residing or established in the territory of the other, shall be exempt from compulsory military duty by sea or by land and from forced loans, or military exactions or requisitions; nor shall they be compelled to pay any contributions whatever higher or other than those that are or may be paid by native citizens.8

The merchants further pointed to the word "contributions" as meaning a tax according to the dictionary. Since the meaning of contributions was clear, why had the persons drawing up the treaty added "en aucune maniere" [whatever]9 if taxes were not the subject? The merchants wanted to claim these rights under Article five of the treaty.10

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7 Ibid., encl. C, to No. 428.
8 Ibid., encl. B, to No. 428.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.; Article five of the treaty was actually "Exemption from military duty." Article six was the "Rights of residence and business." The first paragraph of article six outlined the rights of business men.
Bassett received visits from the other members of the diplomatic corps. Arguments were presented in favor of using article five of the American treaty to stop the Haitian Government from implementing the license law. Bassett did not agree with his colleagues that article five was a "... clear estoppel to all provisions of laws or decrees which contain discrimination especially in the matter of taxes against Americans." Bassett did feel, however, that the license decree would effectively put foreign merchants out of business and that every attempt should be made to stop the enforcement of the license law. The diplomats decided to request an audience with President Domingue and his cabinet in order to present their views.

"The citizens of each of the contracting parties shall be permitted to enter, sojourn, settle, and reside in all parts of the territories of the other, engage in business, hire and occupy warehouses, provided they submit to the laws, as well general as special, relative to the rights of travelling, residing, or trading. While they conform to these laws and regulations in force, they shall be at liberty to manage themselves their own business, subject to the jurisdiction of either party respectively, as well in respect to the consignment and sale of their goods as with respect to the loading, unloading, and sending off their vessels. They may also employ such agents or brokers as they may deem proper; it being distinctly understood that they are subject also to the same laws."


11If the U. S. could force Haiti to put aside the license law France could claim equal treatment under a most favored nation article in their treaty of 1838 with Haiti. England and Germany did not have any legal right to the same claim as France but the merchants felt those two countries would claim equal treatment. See Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, Feb. 17, 1876, No. 428.

12Ibid.
The audience was granted and on January 22, 1876 the French Minister Plenipotentiary spoke for the diplomatic corps. Secretary Rameau interrupted Minister de Vorges' eloquent presentation and a discussion over the license decree replaced the speech. The diplomatic corps felt that they were about to receive assurances that the license decree would not be enforced until the legislature voted on the matter when the Secretary for Justice spoke. According to Bassett Judge Boco:

interjected a most rude, violent, utterly unreasonable, offensive speech bearing against foreigners and what he called foreign interference in such matters as this decree.\[13\]

Bassett related that Boco's speech had an effect on President Domingue who rose and told the diplomats that the interview was over and left the room.\[14\]

The stunned diplomats could only retire after this unprecedented rebuke by President Domingue. The protest to the license law was put into writing, signed by the diplomats and formally submitted to the Haitian Foreign Secretary. Bassett in forwarding this information to the State Department, strongly recommended that the rebuke to the diplomatic corps not be left unanswered. He added that he would "... await with interest and anxiety the view which you may be pleased to take of the subject."\[15\]

\[13\]Ibid.
\[14\]Ibid.
\[15\]Ibid.
A memo attached to Bassett's despatch gave an indication of the probable view the State Department would take on the license law.

After an examination it appears to me that the 5th Article of the Treaty between the United States and Haiti was intended to exempt and may be claimed to exempt the citizens of the parties from any other taxation than that to which natives are subjected.16

On the same day, March 6, 1876, that the despatch describing the license law was received by the State Department another message dated February 17, 1876, was received which again warned Fish of a probable revolution in Haiti.

The discontent over Septimus Rameau continued to grow. Secretary Rameau was actually controlling all branches of the Haitian Government. The other Secretaries were merely the scapegoats for Rameau's arbitrary decisions. Bassett informed Fish that the twenty-sixth of February was the day that armed protests would begin. Other representatives were requesting Naval vessels be sent to Port-au-Prince. Bassett suggested that if an American vessel was nearby that the ship be sent to Port-au-Prince.17 On March 11, 1876 Bassett cabled the State Department, "Civil war just inaugurated here. Atrocities

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16 Ibid., The memo is signed by William Hunter, 2nd Assistant Secretary, of the State Department.

17 F.R.U.S., 1876, pp. 324, 325. Hunter commented on Bassett's despatch. "... the despatch should be acknowledged and perhaps the Secretary of the Navy informed of the requirement of a man of war." See Despatches, Haiti, VIII, Bassett to Fish, Feb. 17, 1876, No. 431.
feared. Immediate presence of an American War Vessel desirable."18

Actually the first attempt at armed revolt came on February 26, 1876 as Bassett predicted. A steamer Octavia attempted to land some Haitian exiles at Jacmel and surprise the authorities. The local authorities at Jacmel repulsed the attempt according to the circular put out by the Haitian Government to the diplomatic corps. There was another revolt at Croix de Bouquets near Port-au-Prince. Bassett advised Washington that the unrest would not cease until the tyranny of Rameau was ended. The initial success for Haitian Government at Jacmel changed abruptly on March 7, 1876 when the Commander of the area revolted.19

The Haitian Government declared the commander of Jacmel a traitor and outside the law. The decree also stated that Jacmel was blockaded. On March 13, 1876 the Haitian Foreign Secretary advised Bassett in a circular of the blockade and stated that those wishing to leave the port would have seventy-two hours.20 Bassett replied that international law required that ships necessary to enforce the blockade must be present. The absence of ships rendered the decree a paper blockade which

18 Ibid., IX, Bassett to Fish, Mar. 11, 1876. The cable and previous letters on the revolution were sent to the Navy Department.

19 Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Mar. 11, 1876, No. 435, and encls. A, and B.

20 Ibid., Excellent to Bassett, Mar. 13, 1876, encls. A, and B, to No. 439.
Bassett stated was not acceptable. The Haitian Government issued a second decree on March 17, 1876 granting an additional twenty-four hours to those wishing to leave Jacmel. Three days later the Haitian Foreign Secretary informed Bassett that three vessels had left Port-au-Prince to enforce the blockade.

Minister Bassett acknowledged the Foreign Secretary's letter and a meeting was held at Bassett's office by the diplomatic corps. The diplomatic corps decided to ask the government for a safe pass for a messenger to carry their despatches to Jacmel. The Haitian Government granted this request. The diplomats also decided to send a French warship, which was available, to Jacmel to make sure a blockade was established. The ship would also carry those wishing to leave Jacmel, to Jamaica or Port-au-Prince. In another report of the same date Bassett outlined the pockets of revolt that were spreading

21 Ibid., Bassett to Excellent, Mar. 14, 1876, encl. C, to No. 439.

22 Ibid., Excellent to Bassett, Mar. 20, 1876, encls. D, and E, to No. 439.

23 Ibid., Bassett to Excellent, Mar. 20, 1876, encl. F, to No. 439, and Bassett to Fish, Mar. 25, 1876, No. 439. The State Department agreed that the decree of 8 March was a paper blockade but if the Haitian Government carried out its declaration of 20 March it should have been respected. The sending of a French warship into the port would be a violation of the blockade. The State Department thought that the events might justify Bassett's actions but the State Department wanted the original documents so that they could determine their importance. See Instructions, Haiti, II, Fish to Bassett, May 2, 1876, No. 267. Bassett forwarded the originals and they appear in front of his translations in No. 439. Nothing more was said on the matter.
throughout Haiti. Leadership was the only element lacking. 24

Boisrond Canal could furnish the necessary leadership but the Haitian Government reported that Canal was killed. General Canal supposedly died attempting to land at a small town in the South District called Saltrou. Although many did not believe the report of Canal's death there was hesitation on the part of those who would have joined the revolution under Canal. 25 The Domingue Government, however, was still in power and the effective date for the license law was approaching.

Bassett received his instructions from Washington on the license law decreed by the Haitian Government. The fifth article of the treaty between the United States and Haiti "... was intended to protect and should protect our citizens from any discriminations in matters of trade to the advantage of Haytien citizens." 26 Bassett was to protest officially and claim damages in the name of the United States if any attempt was made to apply such a law. 27

Three days before the effective date of the law Bassett informed the Foreign Secretary of the official view of his government with regard to the license law. If any attempt were made to enforce the decree against American merchants Bassett

24 Despatches, Haiti, IX, Bassett to Fish, Mar. 25, 1876, No. 440.

25 Ibid., The intimation was that those who only join the winning team were still fence straddling.

26 Instructions, Haiti, Fish to Bassett, Mar. 13, 1876, No. 261.

27 Ibid.
was instructed to protest. The United States would claim damages for any losses the contributions might cause as a result of enforcing the license law. 28 Four days after the license law was due to go into effect the Foreign Secretary advised Bassett that the license law was suspended, Bassett would be advised as soon as the Haitian Government made a final decision on the decree. 29

On the same day Minister Bassett received a report on the decision of the Haitian Government, but not the one he expected. The Foreign Secretary informed Bassett:

in the name of the government of Haiti, of its intention to terminate the Treaty of November 3, 1864, concluded between this country and the United States of America, conformably in this respect to the 42nd Article of the said treaty. 30

Bassett in his despatch stated that this was the work of a bitter Rameau. Bassett was sure the government would fall very soon and recommended that the State Department treat the

28. Despatches, Haiti, IX, Bassett to Excellent, Mar. 28, 1876, encl. A, to No. 443.

29. Ibid., Excellent to Bassett, Apr. 4, 1876, encl. B, to No. 443. The strength of the State Department's instruction meant that even the discrimination that existed before the license law would have to be protested against by Bassett. Bassett advised the State Department that he felt that further insistence on the interpretation of Article 5 might not be expedient. The license law was suspended and the merchants had not complained on the other differences since the treaty went into effect. Bassett requested further instructions before applying the strength interpretation presented by the State Department. See Bassett to Fish, Apr. 10, 1876, No. 443.

30. Ibid., Excellent to Bassett, Apr. 4, 1876, encl. A, to No. 448.
notification as information until he could obtain further intelligence. One week after Bassett forwarded the surprising notice on the intended termination of the treaty he informed the State Department that the revolution was a success.

The revolution was really many small revolts against the tyranny of Rameau rather than against the Haitian Government. There was no specific banner under which the revolutionists gathered. At Jacmel the Haitian Admiral refused to bombard the rebels. The Haitian Secretaries of War and Interior went over to the insurgents. The North Department joined the revolt and the insurgents began their march to the capital. There was little or no opposition as town after town joined in the revolution. On April 12, 1876 General Lorquet who was en-route, with government forces, to St. Marc turned and joined the insurgents.

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31 Ibid., Bassett to Fish, Apr. 10, 1876, No. 448. The State Department did not receive this message along with seven others, including the one on the suspension of the license law until May 25, 1876. The news of the revolution's success was received on April 20, 1876. The memo attached to Bassett's despatch shows that concern was evident about Rameau's counterplay to terminate the treaty in spite of the fact that the Domingue Government had fallen. Hunter wrote,

"the right of the Haytien government to terminate the treaty as proposed cannot be questioned, still as the notice was given at a time when the administration for the time being was on the point of being overthrown, Mr. Bassett might be instructed to ask the new administration if it persists in the notice."

Assistant Secretary Davis was firmer.

"Direct him to obtain a written withdrawal of the notice if they do not present one."

32 Despatches, Haiti, IX, Bassett to Fish, Apr. 17, 1876, Cable.

33 F.R.U.S., 1876, p. 326.
In Port-au-Prince Rameau stated he would reduce the city to ashes and he also threatened to turn the revolution into a blood bath against every white and mulatto in the city. Bassett had information that Rameau intended to use "... the semi-civilized blacks of the mountains at that moment." If the revolution reached Port-au-Prince these "... black regiments [were] to attack and cut down in the streets or houses every white or colored person that they could find."35

The diplomatic corps met daily in the American Legation to keep each other abreast of the events. Foreign warships were in the harbor to protect the foreigners from any harm. The diplomats were determined to remain at their posts and "... fulfill every duty which the moral influence of ... [their] official positions imposed ... [on them]."36 Bassett felt that the determination of the diplomats, the delicate warnings to President Domingue and the presence of warships prevented Rameau from carrying out his threats.

On April 15, 1876 as General Lorquet approached the city with several thousand men, the diplomatic corps offered to aid the Haitian President if he wished to quit Haiti, but the offer was refused. Bassett and Major Stuart, the British Chargé d'Affaires, went to confer with the commander of the American

34Ibid., p. 327.
35Ibid.
36Ibid.
warship **Plymouth** on matters of defense. Bassett and Stuart were returning from their meeting with the commander when President Domingue requested their presence at the palace.

Enroute to the palace but near the wharf Bassett and Stuart saw the specie of the Haitian treasury being taken to the wharf and loaded aboard a Haitian schooner flying Dutch colors. In Bassett's words:

A mob, of indescribable appearance, broke open the iron doors of the building from which the money was being taken, smashed in the iron safes, opened the vaults, and nearly murdered some Americans who had, innocently on their part, but, as I believe, maliciously on his part, aided Rameau in taking out the specie. Another mob gathered on the wharf, broke open the boxes containing the money, and what they could not carry off they flung into the sea. All these proceedings were the work of a few moments only.

The diplomats hurried to the palace where President Domingue wanted an armistice of twenty-four hours, to enable him to turn the government over to the cabinet. Domingue asked the diplomats to carry a letter to General Lorquet to this effect. The diplomats accepted and left on horseback to intercept Lorquet. General Lorquet was further out than reports stated so it was decided that the French and Spanish representatives should return to Port-au-Prince.

Bassett and Stuart reached General Lorquet and obtained the necessary armistice. The two men immediately returned to Port-au-Prince and found that the situation had changed completely. The Spanish and French representatives had returned

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in time to see the city up in arms and the palace surrounded. The protectors of President Domingue and Rameau quit their posts when General Pierre's son appeared as the leader of a group of men at the palace. The Spanish and French representatives were requested to come to the palace immediately. The two men requested that guards help them to escort the president's family to the French Legation. "The response was: 'a guard for Domingue and the ladies, yes; for Rameau, never!'" The distance to the French Legation was about 350 yards. The diplomats decided to attempt to escort Domingue and Rameau to the legation. They placed Rameau between them and locked their arms through Rameau's arms. The mob, in no way wished to hurt either diplomat but they wanted Rameau. The group covered some 300 yards and with about fifty yards to go a person managed to trip Rameau. "... causing him to fall to the ground and in an instant his body was riddled with bullets." President Domingue received a bayonet wound and a blow on the head. He reached the French Legation safely and was later allowed to board a French warship. President Domingue, his wife, and Rameau's widow were taken to St. Thomas. On the night of Rameau's death General Lorquet entered Port-au-Prince. The following morning, April 16, 1876, General Lorquet was shot

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38Ibid., pp. 328, 329. General Pierre was killed by Domingue's men during the alleged revolt of May 1, 1875. General Brice was also killed and Boisrond Canal reached asylum at Bassett's residence. See Chapter V.

and killed by a mob. The palace and Lorquet's residence were ransacked but no other excesses of mob rule occurred in Port-au-Prince. General Lorquet's death was considered a personal vendetta. 40

A Haitian Provisional Government was formed with Boisrond Canal as the Provisional President. Elections were ordered throughout Haiti for a constituent assembly. The elections would take about six weeks and the elected deputies would in turn elect members to the senate. The two houses sitting together as the National Assembly would elect a president. It was expected that Boisrond Canal would win the Presidency. 41

The temporary government returned to the constitution of 1867 which was written during the term of the late President Sylvain Salnave. Bassett felt he should approach the temporary government with regard to the treaty termination of the Domingue government. The provisional Foreign Secretary, advised Bassett that the government did not agree with the termination of the treaty. But since the government was temporary the matter would be submitted to the new legislature of the permanent government. 42

The elections proceeded much as Bassett had predicted. Boisrond Canal was elected on the second ballet which was something of a change from the usual automatic first ballot. Canal offered the principle Secretary posts of finance and foreign

40 Ibid., p. 330.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., p. 331, 332.
affairs to his opponent Boyer Bazelaïs who declined. It was hoped that Canal could lift Haiti from the depths that the Domingue government plunged the country. Bassett warned, though, that Canal "... like others, may find that circumstances will control him in spite of himself more than he can control them."  

Minister Bassett wrote to the Haitian Government outlining the previous communique which gave notice that the United States-Haiti Treaty of 1864 was to be terminated. The Foreign Secretary, L. Etchard, advised Bassett that Haiti wished to continue the treaty. Bassett forwarded the formal note to Washington where the news was "... received with satisfaction."  

The problem over the treaty was settled and Bassett prepared for a leave to the United States. The leave kept Bassett away from his post for fifteen weeks. Bassett returned to Haiti in January, 1877. Poor transportation between Haiti and the United States accounted for much of Bassett's delay in returning to Haiti. Bassett found upon his return that the Haitian Legislature, like the legislatures before it, was trying to discredit or annul the claims and contracts from the former administration.  

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43 Ibid., pp. 333-336.
44 Ibid., pp. 337, 338.
45 Instructions, Haiti, Cadwalader to Bassett, Oct. 9, 1876, No. 88.
46 Despatches, Haiti, IX, Bassett to Fish, Jan. 30, 1877, No. 474.
47 Ibid., No. 476 and encls. A-G.
Secretary Fish replied that the United States expressed its dissent to this type of action by the Haitian legislature. The contracts were entered into with the established government. If that government went beyond the power the people placed in the government it is a misfortune but individuals who entered into honest agreements with the government should not be made to suffer. If this were allowed any foreign government could denounce the acts of the former government and escape all of its obligations. Fish wanted Bassett to inform Haiti, in a friendly, way of the United States position.\(^48\)

Bassett devoted much of his time to the many claims of United States citizens against the Haitian Government. Some dated back to the presidency of Sylvain Salnave in 1867 to 1869. The Canal government, as expected was very friendly to Bassett for his firm stand which saved Boisrond Canal's life. Unfortunately, the change of government in the United States brought about the appointment of a new Minister to Haiti before Bassett could bring many of the claims to fruition.\(^49\)

John Mercer Langston was selected to replace Ebenezer D. Bassett as Minister Resident and Consul General near the government of Haiti. On November 27, 1877 Langston presented his letter of credence and Bassett his letter of recall, to the President of Haiti, Boisrond Canal.

\(^48\)Instructions, Haiti, II, Fish to Bassett, Feb 21, 1877, No. 208.
\(^49\)Despatches, Haiti, X, passim.
CONCLUSION

The documents consulted by the author allow him to make some conclusions relative to Ebenezer D. Bassett's tenure in Haiti. Bassett's actions and reports show a strong personality. He was willing to bear the displeasure of the State Department when he was sure his actions pointed the correct course. Bassett was for example, typical of the expansionists of the period who consistently supported annexation of Santo Domingo to the United States. Bassett kept a weather eye on all moves by the Haitian Government to support the rebels opposing the Dominican Government of President Baez. These rebels, such as Cabral and Luperon, were anti Baez rather than anti annexation. Dominican rebel messengers made offers to the United States through Bassett, usually the same as the Baez offer but under their control. Bassett faithfully reported these opportunities for the United States which were ignored by his government.

British interests in Haiti and Santo Domingo clashed with American interests. This situation presented a lively competition between Bassett and Spenser St. John who was later replaced by Major Stuart. When Salnave fell Bassett was at a disadvantage. St. John supported Saget and the revolution thereby gaining a preferred position when Saget won the
revolution. With the exception of their opposite positions on the annexation of Santo Domingo the correspondence seems to reveal an unwritten entente between the two men. The immediate use of the British warship Cherub to relieve the American Consulate at Cape Haytien and to carry the Salnave family and Salnave adherents to safety is but one example. St. John always appeared ready to offer aid should Bassett have need of a vessel. Major Stuart carried on in St. John's place. The reports of Bassett and Stuart conferring with the Commander of the American warship Plymouth over the defense of the Legations during Domingue's fall is a further example of the unwritten entente.

While the writer of this paper is not engaged in analyzing the Haitian failings in government, it is obvious to any reader that Bassett's reports of revolt, carnage, cupidity, savage disregard for life and hatred of foreigners has changed so slightly that current reports could fit into newspapers covering present day Haiti. Haiti was bankrupt in Bassett's time and has shown no great improvement. Perhaps they are a peculiar people as Bassett several times referred to them. The racial hatred and contempt between black and mulatto existed throughout Bassett's stay in Haiti. More current histories do not indicate much change from Bassett's time. MacCorkle's "The Monroe Doctrine and its application to Haiti," was written in 1914 and it reveals that conditions in Haiti as reported by Bassett in the 1870's were little different
in content from those sent up to the time of the United States occupation. Moreover Haiti has the same type of government today that existed in Bassett's time. François Duvalier "Papa Doc" is President of Haiti for life at this writing. Others declared themselves emperors such as Christophe, Soulouge and Salnave while some maneuvered their own election and reelection like Salomon.

A need for further study in Bassett's area is obvious. This was clearly revealed from the few books or periodicals that the author could actually use for other than background. This author could not find any works specifically on Bassett. The many Negro histories that were researched either do not mention him or have only a line or two at the most. Further researchers could spare themselves the time wasted in Negro histories if Bassett is their subject. This is unfortunate because Bassett provides solid achievements as a diplomat for the United States and a representative of the Negro race. Peter Chew in a recent article "Black History or Black Mythology?" for the American Heritage said:

it is disheartening to examine some of the material that has recently been dug up or contrived and offered as legitimate documentation for black history.

Bassett is documented and offers many possibilities for further study especially during his years as the Haitian Consul in New York from 1879-1888 which was not covered in this study.

Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett did his job, did it well and was promptly forgotten.
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