

US-HAITIAN RELATIONS

Adams through Jefferson and Beyond

US-Haitian relations had a rough beginning, as the possible American recognition of Haiti became a fixed point of tension between the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans in domestic and foreign policy from 1797 to 1806. Diplomats, Congresses, and changing administrations struggled to navigate the US's relationship with Haiti while maintaining positive relations with France. Domestically, the debate of recognizing Haiti, a republic of former slaves, cemented the tradition of Southern politicians impeding Congress when any question of slavery was addressed.

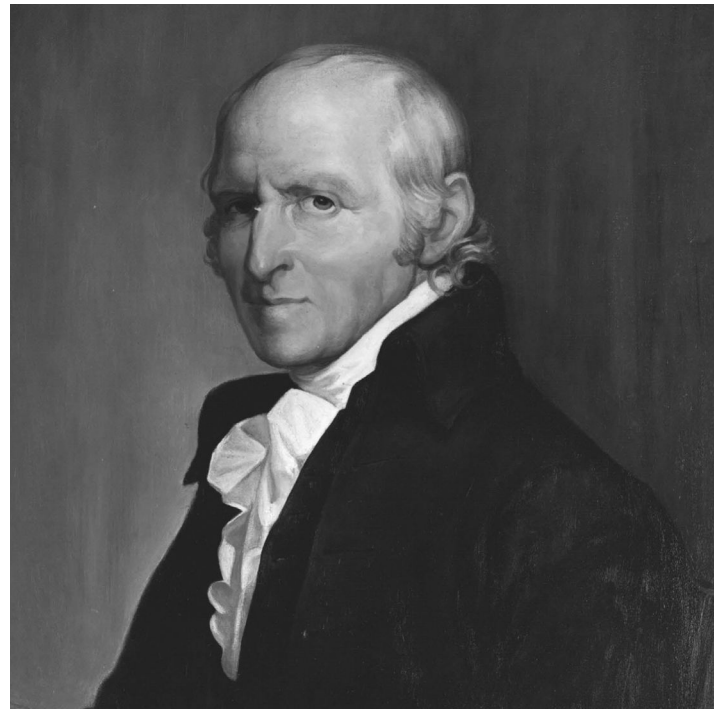
By Shane Andrew Ewing '18
Boston College

What determined the course of US-Haitian relations during the dawn of both republics? An even more curious question may be why did Haiti and the United States have any relationship *at all*?¹ Certainly a slave-owning US and a Haitian nation of former slaves would be at ideological odds. However, any ideological conflicts were shelved in favor of other interests by both parties between 1797 and 1806. Franco-American hostilities, economic impetuses, and geopolitical interests brought Haiti and the US to the discussion table.² These discussions did contain a racial dimension; however, only with conflicts with the French and geopolitical objectives would racist fears pull the US and representatives of its “peculiar institution” out of the US-Haitian dialogue. Amidst this dialogue, US racial policies evolved in a time when “the lines drawn involving slavery were not nearly as fixed.”³ From 1797 to 1806 and beyond, four major relationship arcs followed this dialogue: the John Adams presidency (1797-1801), Thomas Jefferson’s early presidency (1801-1802), Jefferson’s later presidency (1802-1806) and legacy (1806-1863). These arcs were all motivated by changing Franco-American hostilities, economic impetus, and geopolitical interests prompting the rise and fall of this significant New World dialogue.

UNLIKELY ALLIES AND A PROMISING FUTURE

Adams’s presidency (1797-1801) marks the first of the four arcs. From the beginning, Adams took a radical departure from President George Washington’s policy toward Haiti. During the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution, Washington sent aid against the Revolution “with some eight hundred thousand dollars, arm and munitions, food and general support for a plantation society.”⁴ Five years after Washington sent that aid, Adams sent the Haitian revolutionaries “sixty thousand dollars in US government funds and a shipload of flour, salted meats, and dry goods.”⁵ So, what changed? First, Franco-American relations soured with the “Quasi-war” touching many elements of Adams’s administration. The Federalists, on whose platform Adams was elected, were known to align themselves with Britain and to despise France. While Adams did not operate on strict party lines, his Secretary of State, Timothy Pickering, was an uncompromising Federalist and abolitionist, and is described by one historian as a man who hoped “that U.S. policy would provoke a French decla-

ration of war against the United States.”⁶ As French corsairs began attacking US shipping, Pickering’s anti-French sentiments garnered both popular and Congressional support. Thus, an embargo cutting off US ships from all French ports (including Haiti) was enacted on 13 June 1798.⁷



Timothy Pickering, U.S. Secretary of State (c. 1795)
Source: U.S. Department of State

The cut was not clean. American shippers and, more importantly, the black Haitian general Toussaint Louverture appealed to the President to resume trade. This appeal from Louverture came in the form of Joseph Bunel, a white merchant and envoy from Haiti who arrived in Philadelphia on 26 December 1798. He dined clandestinely at the president’s house with Adams and a few select Federalists. This meeting set the bill, soon to be known as the Toussaint Clause, into motion in January 1799.⁸ This clause authorized the president to discontinue the restrictions of the embargo “to any island, port, or place, belonging to [France].”⁹ Emblematic of the Democratic-Republican side of the Toussaint Clause was Senator Albert Gallatin, an abolitionist, from Pennsylvania

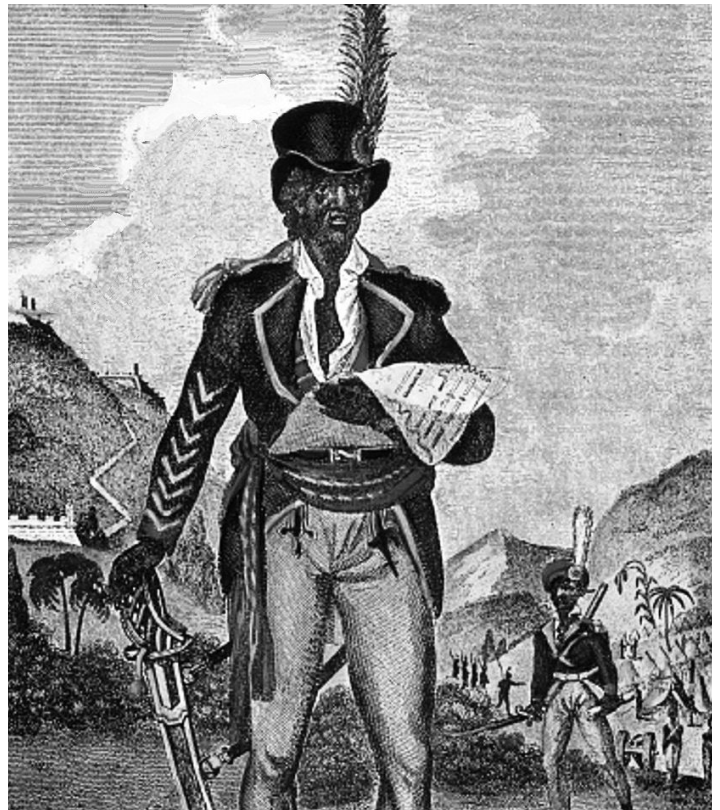
who was weary of Haiti.¹⁰ He believed the country “might become more troublesome to us in our commerce with the West Indies than the Algerians ever were in the Mediterranean.”¹¹ The fear of an “American Algiers,” a piratical state in the Caribbean, would permeate the racial elements of the US-Haiti relationship into Jefferson’s presidency and beyond. While Algerian pirates and French corsairs harassed US merchants, the idea of new pirates close to home frightened US shipping industries, especially those focused in the Caribbean.

On the other side of the Toussaint Clause debate was Thomas Pinckney, a Federalist from South Carolina, who thought that an independent Haiti “would be more advantageous to the Southern States than if it remained under the domain of France.”¹² The possibility of an invasion of the South by an emancipatory France was, for a few years, far greater than one by an independent Haiti. With a Congressional Federalist majority, the bill easily passed. This began a high-water mark in US-Haitian relations with the semi-formal dispatch of Dr. Edward Stevens as US Consul General to Haiti.

Stevens, arriving with money, dry goods, and a letter from Adams to Louverture, garnered Louverture’s respect.¹³ Louverture engaged Stevens with “boldness, good sense, and candor.”¹⁴ He trusted Stevens so much that Stevens alone convinced him to reconsider excluding British general Thomas Maitland from the Stevens-Maitland-Louverture agreement for Haiti not to attack possessions of the US or Jamaica.¹⁵ Maintaining Maitland’s attendance meant Louverture’s rule was better-secured against his political rival, General André Rigaud, who occupied southern Haiti. This agreement allowed the US, Britain, and Haiti to be equal trading partners in Haiti for a time. Trust and trade were so important for Louverture that, in order to receive desperately-needed goods from the two countries, he easily conceded rights to send ships to Jamaica and the US (where free black crews could possibly spread ideas of revolt amongst slaves).

Without Louverture’s leadership, the US and Britain jointly distrusted Haiti, and both felt their interests were at risk from any potential black invasion or insurrection. To diminish this distrust, the nominally French general Louverture kept Stevens in his confidence. For example, “Louverture provided Stevens with copies of detailed French plans to invade Jamaica.”¹⁶ Without Stevens and Louverture’s relationship and mutual suspicion of France (and the probable goal of undermining France in the Caribbean), mistrust between the US, Britain, and Haiti would have emerged earlier than it did.

As Stevens and Louverture helped to bring the US and Haiti together, the motivations behind Stevens’s respect for Louverture stir contemporary debate. Historian Ronald Angelo Johnson claims that Adams’s formal letter to Louverture at Stevens’s appointment could have eventually brought the US to recognize an independent Haiti. Stevens’s actions in



Toussaint Louverture, leader of the Haitian Revolution (c. 1804)
Source: John Kay (Wikimedia Commons)

areas beside Haitian commerce reveal Stevens’s (and Adams’s) distaste for slavery and geopolitical interests in the Caribbean.¹⁷ Arthur Scherr disagrees with Johnson, claiming that Stevens had ulterior motives to respecting Louverture, like “profit[ing] from the illegal arms sales to St. Domingo conducted by his brother-in-law and business partner, James Yard.”¹⁸ Ulterior motives notwithstanding, what was important to early US-Haitian relations was how Stevens acted toward Louverture. Another, not unfounded, claim is that Adams’s ambivalence to Haiti and to abolitionism allowed Pickering to design the Adams administration’s course of action.¹⁹ Adams’s invocation of the Toussaint Clause, which began 1 August 1799, “originally contained blank dates, and was written by Pickering for Adams’s signature.”²⁰ Pickering may have been deliberately unspecific in order to get as many US ships to Haiti before a confused Britain, another “equal partner” in the Stevens-Maitland-Louverture agreement, could send merchants to Haiti.²¹ Thus, on 1 August 1799, there were a “number of [US] ships... already lying off Cap François, ready to sell their goods.”²² Pickering’s push of US commerce with Haiti helped to strengthen the Federalist Party and to undermine France by lessening its economic influence in the Caribbean.²³ The establishment of US-Haitian dialogue, and the economic benefit of resumed trade (and undermining of France) easily led the abolitionist Pickering to justify quasi-formal relations with Haiti. Economic drive and mutual distrust of France led the US to regard Haiti as an important, informal ally.

US-Haitian Relations

With the reemergence of commerce between the US and Haiti came the nascent US navy. Louverture's promises to make efforts to stop Haitian piracy did not ensure smooth sailing for US ships. In deploying the navy, Adams told Navy Secretary Stoddert his "apprehension that the West Indies Islands would soon become a scene of piracy."²⁴ Haiti, not yet Gallatin's "American Algiers" as a nation, nonetheless had pirates endorsed by the France-loving Rigaud regime. With the onset of resumed commerce, Rigaud, determined to destroy Louverture and reunite Haiti, began attacking US ships. This led to US Commodore Talbot using the US frigate *General Green* to bombard the Rigaud stronghold of Jacmel in February 1800.²⁵

Talbot's bombardment and consequent aid to Louverture hardly came from a personal emancipatory fervor. The majority of US citizens, like Talbot, sought primarily to undermine France by attacking Rigaud while safeguarding their economic interests. Rayford Logan does not note any emancipatory fervor in the US capitol that would have led to Talbot's bombardment. He only posits that with Toussaint's victories, "Congress and the President had not failed to comprehend the increased opportunities for trade."²⁶ Any objective by the Adams administration to ameliorate the condition of blacks in Haiti may have been secondary or nonexistent.²⁷ Here racism, or more specifically, the antithesis of racism, held not as much sway in the development of US-Haiti relations as much as economic interests.

Shortly after Rigaud lost the conflict with the US and Louverture, three events happened in fast succession that severely hurt US-Haitian cooperation. First, the French Directory was overthrown in Napoleon's Brumaire coup. Second, against the will of his party, Adams made peace with France with the Treaty of Mortefontaine on 30 September 1800.²⁸ Third, the Francophile Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson won the election of 1800. This "Revolution of 1800" would cause changes in US foreign policy as the anti-French Federalists in the executive branch were replaced by pro-French Democratic-Republicans. With the temporary placation of France and the loss of Adams, US-Haitian relations stagnated.

JEFFERSONIAN INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES: SECURING THE MISSISSIPPI

This stagnation marks the second arc of the US-Haitian dialogue. At this particular time, the threat of a possible invasion by an independent Haiti became greater than one by France under Napoleon. Also, as Toussaint's war ended against Rigaud and exports hit record lows, US commercial interest in Haiti stagnated.²⁹ Commerce under Jefferson gazed not southward to Haiti, but westward to the Mississippi. This presented a new problem: Spain owned West Florida and Louisiana, at and around the mouth of the Mississippi. For Jefferson and his many western supporters, "Freedom of navigation on the Mississippi was essential."³⁰ With the Third Treaty of San Ildefonso, which returned Louisiana to France

on 1 October 1800, Jefferson had reason to avoid any disagreements with France. As a result, Jefferson quickly moved to replace the anti-French, Louverture-supporting policies of Adams.

Regarding Adams's peace with France, Jefferson told Edward Thornton "he was pleased with his predecessor's policy."³¹ However, Edward Stevens, in his semi-formal dispatch as US Consul General to Haiti, had to be replaced. He was too pro-abolition for Jefferson's Democratic-Republican government. His successor, Tobias Lear, was a former secretary to George Washington, and, most importantly, was uncontroversial. Lear was sent as a general commercial agent and lacked a formal dispatch or letter to Louverture, which "offended and disappointed Louverture."³² Louverture's lament that "his colour was the cause of his being neglected" was not the case.³³ Jefferson was merely accepting the requests of the new French *chargé d'affaires* and ambassador to the US, Louis-André Pichon.³⁴ In his early term, Jefferson "valued the *rapprochement* with France above any American interest in [Haiti]" and promised Pichon that he would "avoid just causes of complaint."³⁵ He even went so far as to hint to Pichon that if France sent an expedition to Haiti, the US would not interfere.³⁶ Thus, Jefferson's geopolitical interests in western America in his early presidency defined the second major arc of US-Haitian relations between 1797 and 1806.

Many historians consider Jefferson's racism to have contributed to his Haitian policy. He is often referenced to have "disparaged the former slaves as... 'Cannibals of the terrible republic.'"³⁷ However, Jefferson's use of the word "Cannibals" may not have been in reference to the Haitians.³⁸ For him, the word "cannibal" came from his readings of Montaigne, Voltaire, and especially his archenemy Edmund Burke who originated the term cannibal republic and used it exclusively in describing France's atheism and fanaticism.³⁹ Also, in the context of the entire letter, Jefferson may not have been speaking of the Haitians, but of "France's white republican armies" while "mockingly commenting" on the Federalists' fear of France.⁴⁰ It is important to note that Jefferson's neglect of Haiti was perhaps not as influenced by outright racism as once thought, but rather more by other factors.

Jefferson did fear the threat of the "American Algiers" and "dreaded that black sparks might ignite a conflagration in the tinderbox of the south."⁴¹ This fear was not completely unfounded. As Secretary of State under Adams during the Quasi-war, Jefferson was threatened by the French governor of Haiti, the Comte d'Hédouville, who "was preparing to invade the southern states from St. Domingo... to excite an insurrection among the negroes."⁴² As president, Jefferson heard rumors that a major slave uprising, the Gabriel Rebellion, "was closely linked to the Haitian Revolution."⁴³ Jefferson's reported "dread of [Haitian] blacks" did not stem from irrational racism, but instead from legitimate fears.⁴⁴ Legitimate fears do not constitute racism.⁴⁵ With a fearful Jefferson, Pi-



Charles Leclerc, French Army general (19th century)
Source: *Unknown* (Wikimedia Commons)

chon had reason to assume this fear would mean US aid “in reducing Toussaint to starvation” during any attempt by the French to reconquer Haiti.⁴⁶

THE FOOTBALL OF AMERICAN PARTY POLITICS

Pichon was wrong, and between July 1801 and February 1802, Jefferson’s attitude toward Haiti changed, as he neglected his promise to Pichon to end trade to Haiti if France sent an expedition there.⁴⁷ This marks the beginning of the third arc in US-Haitian relations, as commerce with Haiti and trouble with France reemerged. The threat of Leclerc’s army of 20,000 men and women (plus about 20,000 reinforcements), and of the possible consequences for US geopolitical and economic interests, gave cause to Jefferson’s insistence of neutrality. Jefferson’s neutrality began after he was warned by the American minister at Paris that the Leclerc expedition was destined “to proceed to Louisiana.”⁴⁸ To protect Jefferson’s interests along the mouth of the Mississippi, Louverture was now Jefferson’s first line of defense. Paradoxically, Jefferson simultaneously sought to remain at peace with France.⁴⁹ He instructed Lear, the commercial agent in Haiti, to give no reason “for complaint or suspicion on the part of the French Republic.”⁵⁰ Thus, besides protecting interests in Louisiana, a resumed war between Louverture and France meant reinvigorated US-Haitian commerce.⁵¹ Trade in arms and gunpowder significantly contributed to this growing prosperity.⁵² By remaining neutral, Jefferson changed his pro-French, independent-black-fearing policy to one that “provided the

blacks with everything and starved the French.”⁵³ With resumed tensions with France, increased exports to Haiti, and geopolitical interests in Louisiana, Jefferson understandably “provided the blacks” and “starved the French.”

To justify Jefferson’s neutrality to the French, in his correspondence with Pichon, Secretary of State James Madison argued that a US embargo of Haiti would damage the Leclerc expedition. Because of the Stevens-Maitland-Louverture agreement, an embargo would lead to a British monopoly of Haiti, possibly resulting in the English occupation of Haiti, a boon for English commerce, and/or an increased level of Haitian autonomy.⁵⁴ However, this slippery-slope reasoning became even more slippery as the US made excuses for not financing Rochambeau (Leclerc’s successor) and only reluctantly sent supplies to him. With exceeding excuses trying France’s patience, the US’s peace with France and aid to Haiti was time-bounded. Sooner, not later, the consequences of Jefferson’s neutrality would press upon yet another Jeffersonian volte-face.

Jefferson’s neutrality and continued trade with Haiti led to France’s imperial expulsion from the Western Hemisphere. This was not without other consequences outside Jefferson’s control. Napoleon second-guessed his own plans for a French empire in the New World after Leclerc’s death from yellow fever, the Leclerc expedition running out of funding, and the savagery of Haitian General Jean-Jacques Dessalines’ forces after Louverture’s deportation.⁵⁵ Consequently, Jefferson would obtain his geopolitical objectives in gaining not only the mouth of the Mississippi, but also the entire Louisiana territory, for only \$15 million from Napoleon.⁵⁶ Now, with the Mississippi secured and with exceeding excuses to France, Jefferson again prioritized Franco-American amicability over US-Haitian relations.

A Franco-American re-rapprochement spawned from developments in diplomacy, Haiti, and the question of the Floridas. Pichon, seen by the French as sympathetic to the US, was replaced as French ambassador to the US by Jean Marie Turreau, who had a “no-nonsense air” around US politicians. In addition, there was growing US apathy and hostility to Haiti. Haiti, invigorated with revolutionary spirit, and without Louverture’s indecision in declaring independence from France, finally did under Dessalines on 1 January 1804. US public opinion was against Dessalines’ regime due to stories released of Haitians murdering Captain Tate, an American who was trying to smuggle out French citizens during Dessalines’ massacres.⁵⁷ Chief among these developments leading to a US-French re-rapprochement was Jefferson’s resumed geopolitical interest in the Floridas.⁵⁸ With the reasoning that because the Floridas were “one of the highest stakes in American diplomacy” at the time, “Jefferson was willing to make many concessions in Haiti in return for French support in the Florida question.”⁵⁹ One difficulty to making these concessions was that Americans were still benefitting from

trade with Haiti which “was not insignificant.”⁶⁰ Jefferson’s first attempt at re-rapprochement, the Clearance Act, would attempt to aid in his territorial ambitions, keep trade open to Haiti, and avoid the slavery question and the discussion of what the “American Algiers” could signify for the increasingly fearful South.

same year.⁶⁷ Now a Democratic-Republican Congress was in the complete opposite situation of the Federalist Congress which passed the Toussaint Clause in 1799 because of Franco-American hostilities and burgeoning trade imperatives. Now with geopolitical objectives, this same line of reasoning put Congress in a position to justify cutting ties with Haiti.⁶⁸

“Although the triumph of racism extended to 1863... [a] careful study of US-Haitian relations between 1797 and 1806 shows that political and economic factors helped cause racism’s triumph.”

The Clearance Act met none of Jefferson’s objectives. Passed on 3 March 1805, the Act required merchantmen to post bond equal to double the value of the ship and cargo as a guarantee that any arms and ammunition would not be sold in Haiti.⁶¹ This rather toothless bill, aimed not to stray “into divisive territory, such as the slavery issue,” had little opposition in the Democratic-Republican Congress.⁶² The debate in the popular press was much more unbridled and partisan than in Congress. Boston’s Federalist-leaning *Columbian Centinel* argued against the act, believing that Haiti’s “condition is not dissimilar to that of the people of the United States in 1778.”⁶³ On the contrary, Philadelphia’s Democratic-Republican-leaning *Aurora*, “considered [Haitians] in no better light than land pirates.”⁶⁴ The *Aurora*’s reasonings show that geopolitical interest (through French re-rapprochement) and the threat of an American Algiers were rapidly becoming more important than US-Haitian trade and shared western revolutionary heritage.

Thus comes the end of the third arc in US-Haitian relations where, “[a]pathy and hostility” led to the Embargo Act, which would be the “triumph of racism” and put the nail in the coffin for US-Haitian relations until 1863.⁶⁵ A few months after the passage of the Clearance Act, there was a banquet with leading public figures in attendance held on board the *Indosan* celebrating a successful gunrunning expedition to Haiti. Vice-Presidential candidate Rufus King toasted Haiti to “be durable as its principles are pure.”⁶⁶ Turreau and the French were affronted by these words and the goal of the US to placate the French with a toothless and easily-initiated Clearance Act only aggravated them. With only the Clearance Act, the diplomatic carrot of the Floridas was now out of Jefferson’s reach.

Besides the threat of resumed war with France and the new objective of obtaining the Floridas, there were also economic reconsiderations at work in 1805. The US’s trade with Haiti only amounted to 4% of total American exports in 1805, which was hardly enough to justify making trouble with France, one of the US’s principal customers, receiving more than triple the percentage of American exports to Haiti in the

To these ends, Democratic-Republicans proposed the Embargo Act. Without the indirectness of the Clearance Act, the Embargo Act would question Haitian sovereignty and prohibit any trade there. It would meet considerable passion in Congress, especially from the South. James Jackson, a Republican from South Carolina, connected the bill to the safety of slaveholder societies. He feared Haitians moving into the US after the war and stated that one of them “was worse than a hundred importations from Africa, and more dangerous to the United States.”⁶⁹ As a result of these Southern fears, many Federalists and northerners in Congress acquiesced to the passionate demands of the South. This was not the case for Samuel White, a Federalist from Delaware, who found it “degrading” and “a precedent against ourselves” that the US would abandon trading rights because of diplomatic bullying. Like the Toussaint Clause, the bill passed on party lines: “Haiti was thus the football of American party politics as she was of international complications.”⁷⁰ Haiti itself was not the subject of Congressional debates. Rather, it was the object of a larger debate over slavery which Southern Congressmen refused to discuss directly. After the resumed threat of potential war with France and geopolitical objectives complicated Federalist and Northern ambitions in Haiti, pure republican and abolitionist fervor was not enough to keep positive US-Haitian relations afloat.

RACISM’S TRIUMPH AND THE LEGACY OF EARLY US-HAITIAN RELATIONS

Southern racist fears secured its place in Congress because the debate of the Embargo Act itself began the Congressional tradition of Southerners using Haiti as “ideological armor” in defense of Northern calls for emancipation. Southerners championed a “new paradigm [which] equated emancipation with economic ruin and the massacre of whites.”⁷¹ As cotton spread and the peculiar institution grew deep in the South, “Haiti continued to be a convenient rhetorical and tactical whipping boy for Southern politicians.”⁷² Southern fear of Haiti grew, so resumed amicability between the US and Haiti could not resume due to no diplomatic tension with France, geopolitical ambitions, nor economic reasons existing. As a consequence, Haiti would not be recognized by



Map of the French part of Santo Domingo (1800)
Source: Norman B. Leventhal Map Center

the US until 1863—only after Southern lawmakers had left Congress to create the Confederacy.

The Embargo Act effectively ended US-Haitian relations through the Monroe Doctrine (1823) and beyond (1806-1863). Among other significant consequences, Jefferson never acquired the Floridas and surrendered Haitian trade “for a will-o’-the-wisp.”⁷³ He did, however, placate France in a time when the US seemed to only have enemies. US-Haitian trade died with the Embargo which was renewed until 1810 as the value of exports to the French Antilles (including Haiti) fell from \$6.7 million in 1806 to \$1.5 million in 1808.⁷⁴ Haitian commerce fell to the British, and the attention of US merchantmen and politicians shifted elsewhere.

The end of US-Haitian relations and the “Triumph of Racism” is visible through the debate over the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Monroe Doctrine.⁷⁵ In 1820, President John Quincy Adams, who pressed for Haitian recognition, changed his mind and made recognition of Haiti “inexpedient” in lieu of the Missouri Compromise debate.⁷⁶ With slavery a hotbed issue, recognition of Haiti would be shelved, even with a new, conciliatory Haitian president, Jean-Pierre Boyer. For the South, “the peace of elevens states [would] not permit the fruits of a successful negro insurrection to be exhibited among them.”⁷⁷ With Southern pressures high, President James Monroe made no mention of Haiti in his doctrine, specifying that it only covered Western countries “whose independence we have, on great consideration and

on just principles [previously] acknowledged.”⁷⁸ This made Haiti vulnerable to reclamation by France.⁷⁹ Most importantly, this omission shows the US’s continued acquiescence to Southern fears through its refusal to acknowledge the fruits of a successful negro insurrection through the 1820s and beyond. As the Missouri Compromise and Monroe Doctrine show, until the Civil War, US-Haitian relations would be shelved in favor of Southern fears, even after the acquisition of the Floridas in 1819-21, resumed legal trade, and the placation of France (the conditions under which Adams would have likely recognized Haiti). Although the triumph of racism extended to 1863, it was not always that way. A careful study of US-Haitian relations between 1797 and 1806 shows that political and economic factors helped cause racism’s triumph.

Franco-American hostilities with France, economic impetus, and geopolitical interest determined the course of US-Haitian relations during the dawn of both republics. In 1797, mutual need prompted this relationship, which was later shelved by the US due to the diplomatic situation of 1804 to 1806 and growing racist fears in the South. President Adams, finding Haiti to be useful leverage against France in the Quasi-war, promptly expanded markets in Haiti to the point where he could even have recognized an independent Haiti. President Jefferson, in his early presidency, found that Haiti no longer had the same benefits as it had during Adams’s presidency. With eyes looking to the Mississippi, and with a (temporarily) placated France and economic stagnation in Haiti, Jefferson neglected US-Haiti relations. When the Leclerc expedition caused the US’s lucrative arms trade with Haiti to resume and threatened Jefferson’s expansionist aims of acquiring the mouth of the Mississippi, Haiti became important to Jefferson even though he ensured no formal relations. The failure of the Leclerc expedition secured Louisiana for Jefferson and aggravated the French. As a consequence and with the desire to obtain the Floridas, Jefferson agreed to follow French demands to embargo Haiti. At this time, white southern slaveowners developed a racist Congressional tradition not to permit the US to acknowledge Haitian independence for fear it would incite a domestic slave revolt. This ensured US-Haitian relations would not resume until 1863. Racially motivated fears, even though they were integral part of the downfall of US-Haitian relations, did not always define the two countries’ relationship. The threat of war with France, economic impetus, and geopolitical interests prompted the rise and fall of the significant New World dialogue between the US and Haiti. 🏛️

Endnotes

- [1] For continuity, all unquoted references to Haiti, Saint Domingue, St. Domingo, and Dominica are referred to as Haiti. Similarly, I will refer to “Haitians” as the mostly-black peoples of the western half of Hispaniola Island.
- [2] The diplomatic clashing of the US and France, with incidents like the “XYZ Affair,” threatened to bring the two countries to war. (The “Quasi-war” proper was between 1798 and 1800. However, Franco-American hostilities between the US and France recommenced during Jefferson’s later presidency.)
- [3] Ronald Angelo Johnson, *Diplomacy in Black and White: John Adams, Toussaint Louverture, and Their Atlantic World Alliance* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2014), 121.
- [4] Johnson, 26.
- [5] Johnson, 88.
- [6] Tim Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy: Haitian-American Relations during the Early Republic* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 70.
- [7] Gordon S. Brown, *Toussaint’s Clause: The Founding Fathers and the Haitian Revolution*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005), 129.
- [8] Johnson, 42-43.
- [9] United States. Department of the Treasury. & Wolcott, Oliver. & United States. Sir, *Subjoined to this letter is a copy of a proclamation, which has been issued by the president of the United States, dated the 6th instant, remitting and discontinuing the restraints on commercial intercourse with the island of St. Domingo ...* Circular to the collectors of the customs, Treasury Department, Washington, Sept. 27, 1800.
- [10] His lack of support for the Haitians despite being an abolitionist indicates that the US attitudes did not start as: abolitionists are pro-Haiti and anti-abolitionists are anti-Haiti. The question of abolition did not frame this debate.
- [11] *Annals of Congress*, HR. 3rd Cong., 2nd sess., pp. 2742-82 as quoted in Brown, “Toussaint’s Clause,” 141.
- [12] *Annals of Congress* as quoted in Brown, 142.
- [13] Johnson, 88.
- [14] ES to TP, 6 May 1799, Pickering Papers as quoted in Johnson, 95.
- [15] Johnson, 99-100.
- [16] Johnson, 101.
- [17] Johnson, “Diplomacy.”
- [18] Arthur Scherr, “Arms and Men: the Diplomacy of US Weapons Traffic with Saint-Domingue under Adams and Jefferson.” *International History Review* 35, no. 3 (2013): 600-648. *America: History & Life*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 10, 2015), 610; US Consul Jacob Mayer accused Stevens of making profits from goods brought on a shipment to Haiti; Brown, 164.
- [19] This claim is made by Scherr in “Arms and Men.”
- [20] Scherr, “Arms and Men,” 624.
- [21] John Adams, Sir Robert Liston, and United States. *By the President of the United States. A Proclamation. Whereas by an Act of the Congress of the United States, Passed the Ninth Day of February Last, Entitled, “An Act Further to Suspend the Commercial Intercourse between the United States and France, and the Dependencies Thereof” ... I ... Do Hereby Remit and Discontinue the Restraints and Prohibitions Therein Contained ... Given under My Hand ... at Philadelphia, the Twenty-sixth Day of June, in the Year of Our Lord 1799*, Early American Imprints. 1st Series No. 36499. Philadelphia: S.n., 1799.
- [22] Brown, 161.
- [23] Scherr, “Arms and Men,” 637.
- [24] Adams to Stoddard, May 8, 1799, Adams Papers, vol. 119, no. 33 as quoted in Brown, “Toussaint’s Clause,” 167.
- [25] Brown, 171; Scherr, 623; Matthewson, 86.
- [26] Logan is a father figure in US-Haitian historiography. Logan, 110.
- [27] Scherr, “Arms and Men,” 636.
- [28] This was no easy feat. Later in life, Adams asked that his tombstone read “Here lies John Adams, who took upon himself the responsibility of Peace with France in the year 1800.”
- [29] Haitian raw sugar production peaked at 20% (1789): refined sugar and coffee at 35% and 40%, respectively; Brown, 176.
- [30] Brown, 181.
- [31] Thornton to Lord Grenville, 28 March 1801, Henry Adams Transcripts, Library of Congress as quoted in Matthewson, “Proslavery,” 98.
- [32] Johnson, 164.
- [33] Tobias Lear to JM, 17 July 1801, in *Madison Papers*, 1:427, 2:60 as quoted in Johnson, “Diplomacy,” 164.
- [34] The other request in question was to stop US naval aid to Louverture.
- [35] Montague, 42; Logan, 114.
- [36] Brown, 194-195.
- [37] Jefferson to Aaron Burr, 11 February 1799, *Writings of Jefferson* as quoted in Matthewson, “Proslavery,” 101.
- [38] Arthur Scherr, “Jefferson’s “Cannibals” Revisited: A Closer Look at His Notorious Phrase.” *Journal Of Southern History* 77, no. 2 (2011): 251-282; *America: History & Life*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 10, 2015), 254-259.
- [39] Scherr, “Jefferson’s “Cannibals,”” 259.
- [40] *Ibid.*, 263.
- [41] Matthewson, 101.
- [42] Robert Goodloe Harper, circular letter, 20 March 1799, in Noble E. Cunningham Jr., ed., *Circular Letters of Congressmen to Their Constituents, 1799-1829* as quoted in Scherr, “Jefferson’s “Cannibals,”” 273.
- [43] Douglas R. Egerton, *Gabriel’s Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802* (Chapel Hill, 1993) as quoted in Matthewson, “Proslavery,” 101-2.
- [44] Matthewson, 102.
- [45] Here, I emanate from Tahar Ben Jelloun, a sociologist and writer, who says, “Le racisme n’est pas quelque chose de juste ou de raisonnable.” [Racism is not something having fairness nor reason.]; Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy*, 70; Tahar Jelloun, *Le racisme expliqué à ma fille* (Paris: Editions du Seuil as quoted in Bragger, 1998); Jeannette D. Bragger and Donald Rice *Quant À Moi...: Témoignages des Français et des Francophones*. (Boston: Heinle, Cengage Learning, 2013), 260.
- [46] C. A. E., E. U. P., LIV, 62, 145-136, 161-164 as quoted in Logan, “Diplomatic Relations,” 129.
- [47] Matthewson, 105; Logan, 129.
- [48] Livingston to King, Dec. 30, 1801, Despatches, France, VIII as quoted in Montague, “Haiti,” 43.
- [49] Even though he threatened that “the occupation of Louisiana would

cost a war resulting in the annihilation of the French... and an Anglo-American alliance." Tucker and Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty* 117, 122 as quoted in Matthewson, "Proslavery," 111.

[50] Madison to Lear, Feb. 28, 1802, Cons. Let., Cape Haytien, IV as quoted in Montague, "Haiti," 43.

[51] Exports to French West Indies jumped from \$3.6 million in 1804 to \$7.14 million in 1805.

[52] Brown, 246.

[53] Matthewson, 109.

[54] Logan, 149.

[55] Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Haiti and the United States: The Psychological Moment* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1992), 20; Matthewson, 108.

[56] Plummer, 20.

[57] Brown, 248-9.

[58] Brown, 247; Logan, 169.

[59] Logan, 169.

[60] Brown, 246.

[61] Logan, 171.

[62] The only challenge came from Democratic-Republican John Wayles Eppes, the president's nephew, who suggested the trade be banned altogether. Brown, 255.

[63] *Columbian Centinel*, December 4, 1804 as quoted in Brown, "Toussaint's Clause," 256.

[64] *City Gazette*, December 27, 1804 as quoted in Brown, "Toussaint's Clause," 257.

[65] Brown, 291; Matthewson, 129.

[66] Rey (French commercial agent at New York) to Talleyrand, 15 June 1805, as quoted in Matthewson, "Proslavery," 127.

[67] In "more than triple the percentage," I am comparing Logan's 4% with Irwin's \$13 million of American exports to France out of \$96 million total exports in 1805 (~14%); Logan, 180; Irwin, Douglas A., "Exports, by country of destination: 1790-2001." Table Ee533-550 in *Historical Statistics of the United States, Earliest Times to the Present*, ed. Susan B. Carter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[68] Napoleon even gave Jefferson teasing indicators that if Jefferson let go of Haitian trade and provided France 60 million francs, he would help the US obtain the Floridas; Matthewson, 128.

[69] *Annals of Congress*, Senate, 9th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 29-37 as quoted in Brown, "Toussaint's Clause," 271.

[70] Logan, 178.

[71] Matthewson, 140-141.

[72] Brown, 293.

[73] Brown, 282.

[74] *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 2" 351-52; Madison to Armstrong (1806); *The Writings of James Madison*, ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York, 1900-10), 7, 200-201; Plummer, *Memorandum of Proceedings*, 414, 435, 540-41 as quoted in Matthewson, "Proslavery," 131.

[75] Matthewson, 131.

[76] Logan, 190.

[77] *A. S. P., Foreign Relations*, V, 836 as quoted in Montague, "Haiti," 53.

[78] Richardson, *Messages*, II, 218 as quoted in Logan, "Diplomatic Relations," 208.

[79] Plummer, 33.