

= Hamilton Fish =

Hamilton Fish (August 3 , 1808 ? September 7 , 1893) , was an American statesman and politician who served as the 16th Governor of New York , a United States Senator and United States Secretary of State . Fish is recognized as the " pillar " of the Grant Administration and considered one of the best U.S. Secretaries of State by scholars , known for his judiciousness and efforts towards reform and diplomatic moderation . Fish settled the controversial Alabama Claims with Great Britain through his development of the concept of international arbitration . Fish kept the United States out of war with Spain over Cuban independence by coolly handling the volatile Virginius Incident . In 1875 , Fish initiated the process that would ultimately lead to Hawaiian statehood , by having negotiated a reciprocal trade treaty for the island nation 's sugar production . He also organized a peace conference and treaty in Washington D.C. between South American countries and Spain . Fish worked with James Milton Turner , America 's first African American consul , to settle the Liberian @-@ Grebo war . President Grant said he trusted Fish the most for political advice .

Fish came from a prominent wealthy New York family and attended Columbia College of Columbia University . Upon graduation , Fish passed the bar , worked as New York 's commissioner of deeds , and ran unsuccessfully for New York State Assembly as a Whig candidate in 1834 . After his marriage , Fish returned to New York politics in 1843 and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives . Fish ran for New York 's Lieutenant Governor in 1846 , however , he was defeated by a Democratic Anti @-@ Rent Party contender . When the office was vacated in 1847 , Fish ran and was elected Lieutenant Governor . In 1848 Fish ran and was elected Governor of New York having served only one term . In 1851 , Fish was elected U.S. Senator for the state of New York and served only one term . Fish gained valuable experience serving on the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations . During the 1850s Fish became a Republican after the Whig party dissolved . In terms of the slavery issue , Fish was a moderate , having disapproved of the Kansas ? Nebraska Act and the expansion of slavery .

After traveling to Europe , Fish returned to America and supported Abraham Lincoln as the Republican candidate for President in 1860 . During the American Civil War , Fish raised money for the Union war effort and served on Lincoln 's presidential commission that made successful arrangements for Union and Confederate troop prisoner exchanges . Fish returned to his law practice after the Civil War , and was thought to have retired from political life . When Ulysses S. Grant was elected President in 1868 , he appointed Fish as U.S. Secretary of State in 1869 . Fish took on the State Department with vigor , reorganized the office , and established civil service reform . During his 8 @-@ year tenure , Fish had to contend with Cuban belligerency , the settlement of the Alabama claims , Canadian border disputes , and the Virginius incident . Fish implemented the new concept of international arbitration , where disputes between countries were settled by negotiations , rather than military conflicts . Fish was involved in a political feud between Senator Charles Sumner and President Grant in the latter 's unsuccessful efforts to annex the Dominican Republic . Fish organized a naval expedition in an unsuccessful attempt to open trade with Korea in 1871 . Leaving office and politics in 1877 , Fish returned to private life and continued to serve on various historical associations . Fish 's male descendants would later serve in the U.S. House of Representatives for three generations . Fish died of old age in his luxurious New York State home in 1893 .

= = Early life , education , and career = =

Hamilton Fish was born on August 3 , 1808 at what is now known as the Stuyvesant ? Fish House in Greenwich Village , New York City , to Nicholas Fish and Elizabeth Stuyvesant (a great @-@ great @-@ granddaughter of New Amsterdam 's Peter Stuyvesant) , and his parents named him after their friend Alexander Hamilton . Nicholas Fish (1758 ? 1833) was a leading Federalist politician and notable figure of the American Revolutionary War . Col. Fish was active in the Yorktown Campaign that resulted in the surrender of Lord Cornwallis . Peter Stuyvesant was a prominent founder of New York , then a Dutch Colony , and his family owned much property in

Manhattan .

Fish received his primary education at the private school of M. Bancel . In 1827 , Fish graduated from Columbia College of Columbia University , having obtained high honors . At Columbia , Fish became fluent in French , a language that would later help him as U.S. Secretary of State . After his graduation , Fish studied law for three years in the law office of Peter A. Jay , served as president of the Philolexian Society , and was admitted to the New York bar in 1830 , practicing briefly with William Beach Lawrence . Influenced politically by his father , Fish aligned himself to the Whig Party . He served as commissioner of deeds for the city and county of New York from 1832 through 1833 , and was an unsuccessful Whig candidate for New York State Assembly in 1834 .

= = Marriage and family = =

On December 15 , 1836 Hamilton Fish married Julia Kean (a descendant of a New Yorker who was a New Jersey governor , William Livingston) . The couple 's lengthy married life was described as happy and Mrs. Fish was known for her " sagacity and judgement " . The couple had three sons and five daughters . Hamilton Fish had multiple notable descendants and relatives .

= = New York political career = =

= = = U.S. Representative = = =

For eight years after his defeat as a Representative in the New York State Assembly , Fish was reluctant to run for office . However , Whig party leaders in 1842 convinced him to run for the House of Representatives . In November , Fish was elected to the House of Representatives ; having defeated Democrat John McKeon and serving in the 28th Congress from New York 's 6th District between 1843 and 1845 . The Whigs at this time were in the minority in the House ; however , Fish gained valued national experience serving on the Committee of Military Affairs . Fish failed to win a re @-@ election bid for a second term in the House .

= = = Lieutenant Governor = = =

Fish was the Whig candidate for Lieutenant Governor of New York in 1846 , but was defeated by Democrat Addison Gardiner who had been endorsed by the Anti @-@ Rent Party . Leasing farmers in New York refused to pay rent to large land tract owners and sometimes resorted to violence and intimidation . Fish had opposed the Anti @-@ Rent Party for the use of illegal tactics not to pay rent . Gardiner was elected in May 1847 a judge of the New York Court of Appeals and vacated the office of lieutenant governor . Fish was then in November 1847 elected to fill the vacancy , and was Lieutenant Governor in 1848 . Lieut . Gov. Fish had a favorable reputation for being " conciliatory " and for his " firmness " over the New York Senate .

= = = Governor = = =

In November 1848 , he was elected Governor of New York , defeating John A. Dix and Reuben H. Walworth , and served from January 1 , 1849 , to December 31 , 1850 . At 40 years of age , Fish was one of the youngest governors to be elected in New York history . Fish advocated and signed into law free public education facilities throughout New York state . He also advocated and signed into law the building of an asylum and school for the intellectually disabled . During his tenor the canal system in the state of New York was increased . In 1850 , Fish recommended that the state legislature form a committee to collect and publish the Colonial Laws of New York . None of the bills that Governor Fish vetoed were overturned by the New York legislature . In his annual messages Fish spoke out against the extension of slavery from land acquired from the Mexican American War , including California and New Mexico . His anti @-@ slavery messages gave Fish national attention

and President Zachary Taylor , also a Whig , was going to nominate Fish to the Treasury Department in a cabinet shakeup . However Taylor died in office before he could nominate Fish . Despite his national popularity Fish was not renominated for Governor .

= = = U.S. Senator = = =

After Gov. Fish had retired from office he did not openly seek the nomination to be elected U.S. Senator . However , Fish 's supporters , the William H. Seward @-@ Thurlow Weed Whigs , in January 1851 nominated him as a candidate for U.S. Senator . A deadlock ensued over his nomination because one New York legislature Whig Senator was upset about Fish not publicly supporting the Compromise of 1850 . Before the election Fish had only stated government should enforce the laws . Although Fish did not favor the spread of slavery he was hesitant to support the free soil movement . Finally , when two Democratic Senators who were against Fish 's nomination were conspicuously absent , the Senate took action and voted . On March 19 , 1851 , Fish was elected a U.S. Senator from New York and he took his seat on December 1 , serving alongside future Secretary of State William H. Seward .

In the United States Senate , he was a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations until the end of his term on March 4 , 1857 . Fish became friends with President Franklin Pierce 's Secretary of State William L. Marcy and Attorney General Caleb Cushing . He was a Republican for the latter part of his term and was part of a moderately anti @-@ slavery faction . During the 1850s the Republican Party replaced the Whig Party as the central party against the Democratic Party . By 1856 , Fish privately considered himself a Whig although he knew that the Whig Party was no longer viable politically . Fish was a quiet Senator , rather than an orator , who liked to keep to himself . Fish often was in disagreement with Senator Sumner , who was firmly opposed to slavery and advocated equality for blacks . His policy was to vote for legislation on the side of " justice , economy , and public virtue . " He strongly opposed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise . Fish often voted with the Free Soil faction and was strongly against the Kansas @-@ Nebraska Bill . In February 1855 , merchants represented by Moses H. Grinnell , criticized Fish 's bill on immigration and maritime commerce . Fish 's bill was designed to protect Irish and German immigrants who were dying on merchant ships during oceanic passage to America . The merchants believed that Fish 's bill was oppressive to commercial interests over human interests .

During his tenure , the nation and Congress were in tremendous political upheaval over slavery , that included violence , disorder , and disturbances of the peace . In 1856 , pro slavery advocates invaded Kansas and used violent tactics against those who were anti @-@ slavery . In May 1856 , Senator Charles Sumner was viciously attacked by Preston Brooks in the Senate Chamber . At the expiration of his term , he traveled with his family to Europe and remained there until shortly before the opening of the American Civil War , when he returned to begin actively campaigning for the election of Abraham Lincoln . While in France , Fish studied foreign policy with diplomats and distinguished Americans ; having gained valuable experience that would eventually benefit his tenure as Secretary of State .

= = American Civil War = =

After Abraham Lincoln had been elected President in 1860 , Fish spent time with Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott , commander of the Federal Army . Fish 's private secretary had aided the efforts of the Star of the West , an American merchant ship sent by President James Buchanan to bring relief supplies to Major Robert Anderson at Fort Sumter . While Fish was dining with General Scott in New York a telegram was received that announced the Confederates had attacked the Star of the West in Charleston Bay . When Fish stated that this meant war , Scott replied " Don 't utter that word , my friend . You don 't know what a horrid thing war is . "

In 1861 and 1862 Fish joined and participated on the Union Defense Committee of the State of New York , that from April 22 , 1861 , to April 30 , 1862 co @-@ operated with the New York City government in the raising and equipping troops , and disbursed more than \$ 1 million for the relief of

New York volunteers and their families . The committee included chairman John A. Dix , William M. Evarts , William E. Dodge , A.T. Stewart , John Jacob Astor and other New York men . Fish was appointed chairman of the committee after Dix joined the Union Army .

In 1862 Fish was appointed by President Lincoln on a commission to serve with Bishop Edward R. Ames to visit the Union Army prisoners being held in the Confederate States of America capital in Richmond , Virginia . The Confederate government , however , refused to allow the commission to enter the city . Instead , Fish and Rev. Ames were able to start a system of prisoner exchange that remained virtually unchanged throughout the American Civil War . After the war ended Fish went back to private practice as a lawyer in New York .

= = U.S. Secretary of State = =

Hamilton Fish was appointed Secretary of State by President Ulysses S. Grant and served between March 17 , 1869 and March 12 , 1877 . He was President Grant 's longest @-@ serving Cabinet officer . Upon assuming office in 1869 , Fish was initially underrated by some statesmen including former Secretaries of State William H. Seward and John Bigelow . Fish , however , immediately took on the responsibilities of his office with diligence , zeal , and intelligence . Fish 's tenure as Secretary of State was lengthy , almost eight years , and he had to contend with many foreign policy issues including the Cuban insurrection , the Alabama Claims , and the Franco @-@ Prussian War .

= = = Reformed U.S. State Department 1869 = = =

When Fish assumed office he immediately began a series of reforms in the Department of State . After appropriations were given to his office by Congress , Fish cataloged and organized 700 volumes of miscellaneous State Department documents and created the Bureau of Indexes and Archives . Fish introduced indexing of State Department files so subordinates could easily find documents . Fish implemented civil service reform by having State Department applicants be required to pass an entry examination before being appointed consultant . This policy was sometimes hampered , since President Grant could appoint any person to office without the person having to take an examination . However , the policy of testing overall improved the staff at the State Department . Fish 's methods of organization included disciplined staff and prompt copying of dispatches .

The method of record keeping , however , was cumbersome , having remained the same since John Quincy Adams . Rather than world regions , countries were listed in alphabetical order ; the correspondence was embedded in bound diplomatic and consular category archives , rather than by subject matter . Added to countries ' information was a miscellaneous category filed chronologically . This resulted in a tedious and time @-@ consuming process to make briefings for Congress . Diplomatic ministers , only 23 in 1877 , were not kept informed of current world events that took place in other parts of the world .

= = = Cuban belligerency and insurrection 1869 ? 1870 = = =

By 1869 , Cuban nationals were in open rebellion against their mother country Spain , due to the unpopularity of Spanish rule . American sentiment favored the Cuban rebels and President Grant appeared to be on the verge of acknowledging Cuban belligerency . Fish , who desired settlement over the Alabama Claims , did not approve of recognizing the Cuban rebels , since Queen Victoria and her government had recognized Confederate belligerency in 1861 . Recognizing Cuban belligerency would have jeopardized settlement and arbitration with Great Britain . In February 1870 , Senator John Sherman authored a Senate resolution that would have recognized Cuban belligerency . Working behind the scenes Fish counseled Sherman that Cuban recognition would ultimately lead to war with Spain . The resolution went to the House of Representatives and was ready to pass , however , Fish , worked out an agreement with President Grant to send a special message to Congress that urged not to acknowledge the Cuban rebels . On June 13 , 1870 the

message written by Fish was sent to Congress by the President and Congress , after much debate , decided not to recognize Cuban belligerency . President Grant continued the policy of Cuban belligerent non recognition for the rest of his two administrations . This policy , however , was tested in 1873 with the Virginius Affair .

= = = Dominican Republic annexation treaty 1869 ? 1870 = = =

After President Grant assumed office on March 4 , 1869 one of his immediate foreign policy interests was the annexation of the Caribbean island nation of the Dominican Republic , at that time referred to as Santo Domingo , to the United States . President Grant believed the annexation of Santo Domingo would increase the United States ' mineral resources and alleviate the effects of racism against African Americans in the South . Hamilton Fish , though loyal to President Grant , did not desire annexation ; the divided island nation , run by mulatto leader President Buenaventura Báez , had been troubled with civil strife . Báez had imprisoned an American citizen , Davis Hatch , for speaking out against the Báez government . Fish told Grant that the Senate would not be ready to pass a Santo Domingo annexation treaty . In April 1869 Fish gave Grant 's private secretary Orville Babcock " special agent " status to search the island . In September 1869 , Babcock made a preliminary treaty that would annex Santo Domingo to the United States and give it the opportunity to apply for statehood . In October 1869 , Fish drew up a formal treaty that included : a \$ 1 @, @ 500 @, @ 000 payment of the Dominican national debt ; Samaná Bay would be leased to the United States for \$ 150 @, @ 000 yearly payment ; Santo Domingo would eventually be given statehood .

In a private conference with President Grant , Fish agreed to support the Santo Domingo annexation if President Grant sent Congress a non @-@ belligerency statement not to get involved with the Cuban rebellion against Spain . Charles Sumner , chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee , was against the treaty , believing that Santo Domingo needed to remain independent , and that racism against U.S. black citizens in the South needed to be dealt with in the continental United States . Sumner believed that blacks on Santo Domingo did not share Anglo @-@ American values . On January 10 , 1870 Grant submitted the Santo Domingo treaty to the United States Senate . Fish believed Senators would vote for annexation only if statehood was withdrawn ; however , President Grant refused this option . The Senate took its time deliberating , and finally rejected the treaty on June 30 , 1870 . Eighteen Senators led by Charles Sumner defeated the treaty . Pres . Grant , angered at Sumner 's refusal to support the treaty , fired Sumner 's friend J. Lothrop Motley , Grant 's ambassador to England , for disregarding Fish 's instructions regarding the Alabama Claims . Grant believed that Sumner had in January 1870 stated his support for the Santo Domingo treaty . Sumner was then deprived of his chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1871 by Grant 's allies in the Senate .

= = = Colombian inter @-@ oceanic canal treaty 1870 = = =

President Grant and Secretary Fish were interested in establishing an inter @-@ oceanic canal through Panama . Secretary Fish organized a treaty signing on January 26 , 1870 in Bogota between the United States and Colombia that established a Panama route for the inter @-@ oceanic canal . The Colombian Senate , however , amended the treaty so much that the strategic value of the inter @-@ oceanic canal construction became ineffective . As a result , the United States Senate refused to ratify the treaty .

= = = Treaty of Washington 1871 = = =

During the previous administration of President Andrew Johnson , Secretary of State Seward attempted to resolve the Alabama Claims with the Johnson @-@ Clarendon convention and treaty . The Alabama Claims had arisen out of the American Civil War , when Confederate raiding ships built in British ports (most notably the C.S.S. Alabama) had sunk a significant number of Union merchant ships .

The Johnson @-@ Clarendon treaty , presented to Congress by President Ulysses S. Grant , was overwhelmingly defeated by the Senate and the claims remained unresolved . Anglophobia led by Charles Sumner was at an all @-@ time high when Fish became Secretary of State . Sumner had demanded Britain cede Canada to the United States as payment for the Alabama Claims . In late 1870 , an opportunity arrived to settle the Alabama Claims under Prime Minister William E. Gladstone . Fish , who was determined to improve relations with Britain , along with President Grant and Senate supporters , had Charles Sumner removed by vote from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee , and the door was open for renewed negotiations with Britain .

On January 9 , 1871 , Fish met with British representative Sir John Rose in Washington and an agreement was made , under much negotiations , to establish a Joint Commission to settle the Alabama Claims to be held in Washington under the direction of Hamilton Fish . At stake was the financing of America 's debt with British bankers during the Civil War , and peace with Britain was required . On February 14 , 1871 both distinguished High Commissioners representing Britain , led by the Earl of Ripon , George Robinson , and the United States , led by Fish , met in Washington D.C. and negotiations over settlement went remarkably well . Also representing Britain was Canadian Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald . After 37 meetings , on May 8 , 1871 the Treaty of Washington was signed at the State Department and became a " landmark of international conciliation " . The Senate ratified the treaty on May 24 , 1871 . On August 25 , 1872 , the settlement for the Alabama claims was made by an international arbitration committee meeting in Geneva and the United States was awarded \$ 15 @, @ 500 @, @ 000 in gold for damaged done by the Confederate warships . Under the treaty settlement over disputed Atlantic fisheries and the San Juan Boundary (concerning the Oregon boundary line) was made . The treaty was considered an " unprecedented accomplishment " , having solved border disputes , reciprocal trade , and navigation issues . A friendly perpetual relationship between Great Britain and America was established , with Britain having expressed regret over the Alabama damages .

= = = South American détente and armistice 1871 = = =

On April 11 , 1871 a peace conference , presided over by Hamilton Fish , was held in Washington D.C. between Spain and the South American republics of Peru , Chile , Ecuador , and Bolivia , which resulted in an armistice between the countries . These countries had been in a " technical " state of war since 1866 , and the United States in 1871 served as mediator under the direction of Hamilton Fish . Representing Spain was Mauricio Lopez Roberts ; Manuel Freyer represented both Peru and Bolivia ; Joaquín Godoy represented Chile ; and Antonio Flores represented Ecuador . President Grant gave Fish full powers to control negotiations at the détente meeting between the five countries . The signed armistice treaty consisted of seven articles ; hostilities were to cease for a minimum of three years and the countries would allow commercial trade with neutral countries .

= = = Korean expedition and conflict 1871 = = =

In 1871 , Korea was known as the " Hermit Kingdom " , a country determined to remain isolated from other nations , specifically from commerce and trade from Western nations , including the United States . In 1866 , U.S. relations with Korea were troubled when Christian missionaries were beheaded by the Korean tacwongun , regent to King Kojong , and the crew of the General Sherman , a U.S. trading ship , were massacred . Secretary William H. Seward , under President Andrew Johnson , demanded redress for what was perceived as the outrageous actions of the Korean government . U.S. Naval warships were ordered to the Orient , however , when Seward 's term ended in 1869 , he was unable to organize a naval expedition . When Fish took office he organized the Korean naval expedition and broadened the purposes . In April 1871 , Fish ordered Frederick F. Low , minister to China , to take the Asiatic Fleet and voyage to Seoul . The purpose of the expedition was to seek retribution for the assaulted sailors and to open up a commercial treaty with the King of Korea . Fish had told the fleet not to use force unless the honor of the U.S. Flag was infringed by the Koreans .

On May 8 , 1871 , Low and Rear Admiral John Rodgers , commander of the Asiatic Squadron , voyaged to Korea with five warships , eighty @-@ five guns , and 1 @,@ 230 sailors and marines . On May 16 , the naval squadron reached Nagasaki Bay and a week later lowered anchor near the mouth of the Han . The Koreans sent unofficial representatives to stall for time and hope the American squadron would leave . In June , the American fleet while doing nautical survey was fired upon by the Korean forts on the Han River leading to Seoul . The American fleet fired back , damaging the forts . The Americans demanded an apology on the grounds that the honor of the American flag had been violated . On June 10 , a U.S. military expedition was launched after the Koreans failed to apologize for the attack ; the objective was to destroy the Korean forts on Kanghoa Island . The U.S.S. Monocacy pounded the forts with 9 inch guns while 546 sailors and 105 marines landed on the island and captured and destroyed the Korean forts . The " Citadel " fortress , on a steep 115 @-@ foot hillside , put up the stiffest resistance to the American troops , who fought in hand @-@ to @-@ hand combat with the Korean Tiger Hunters . All of the Korean forts taken , were destroyed and leveled on June 11 . Three hundred fifty Korean Tiger Hunters were killed , compared with only one American officer and two American sailors . Lieut . Hugh W. McKee was the first U. S. Navy officer to die in battle in Korea .

The Asiatic Squadron remained on the Han River for three weeks , but the Koreans would not open negotiations for a commercial treaty . As the American squadron left , the Koreans believed that they had won a great victory over the Americans . The attempt to open Korea up to trade was similar to how Commodore Matthew Perry in 1854 had approached the opening of Japan . Korea , however , proved to be more isolated than Japan . In 1881 , Commodore Robert W. Shufeldt , without using a naval fleet , went to a more conciliatory Korean government and made a commercial treaty . The U.S. was the first Western nation to establish formal trade with Korea .

= = = Virginius affair 1873 = = =

During the 1870s Cuba was in a state of rebellion against Spain . In the United States , Americans were divided on whether to militarily aid the rebel Cubans . Many jingoists believed the United States needed to fight for the Cuban rebels and pressured the Grant Administration to take action . A privately owned ship , the Virginius , was used to run guns , ammunition , and vital supplies to the Cuban rebels . The captain of the Virginius was Joseph Fry , former officer of the Confederate and Federal Navies . On October 31 , 1873 , the Virginius was run down in neutral waters by the Spanish warship , the Tornado , off of Morant Bay , Jamaica . After being hit , the Virginius took on water and was forced to surrender to the Spanish authorities . The 103 crew members consisted of Cuban rebel recruits and 52 American and British citizens . The Spanish hauled down and trampled the American flag , and brought the prisoners to Santiago . A total of 53 Virginius crew members were executed by the Spanish authorities . The Spanish finally stopped the carnage as a British warship appeared with guns ready to fire on Santiago . The American Navy , at this time , although formidable worldwide , was in decline after the American Civil War .

When news reached the United States of the executions , President Grant and Secretary Fish were forced to make an immediate response . Many Americans demanded a full @-@ scale war with Spain . Fish found out that the registration was falsified under American ownership , however , the executions of Americans demanded action . Fish , coolly handled the situation , called upon Spanish minister , Admiral José Polo de Bernabé in Washington D.C. and held a conference . A settlement was made where Spain relinquished the severely damaged Virginius to the U.S. Navy , while survivors were released that included 13 Americans . The Spanish Captain who ordered the executions was censured , and Spain paid \$ 80 @,@ 000 reparations to American families whose family members were executed in Santiago . The national honor of both Spain and the United States was preserved and it was chiefly due to the restraint and moderation of Fish and Bernabé that a satisfactory settlement of the Virginius ' Affair was reached by the United States and Spain .

= = = Hawaiian reciprocal trade treaty 1875 = = =

Fish also negotiated the Reciprocity Treaty of 1875 with the Kingdom of Hawaii under the reign of King Kalʻaua . Hawaiian sugar was made duty @-@ free , while the importation of manufactured goods and clothing was allowed into the island kingdom . By opening Hawaii to free trade the process for annexation and eventual statehood into the United States had begun .

= = = Liberian @-@ Grebo war 1876 = = =

The U.S. settled the Liberian @-@ Grebo war in 1876 when Hamilton Fish dispatched the USS Alaska , under President Grant 's authority , to Liberia . Liberia was in practice an American colony . U.S. envoy James Milton Turner , the first African American ambassador , requested a warship to protect American property in Liberia . Turner , bolstered by U.S. naval presence in harbor and support of the USS Alaska captain , negotiated the incorporation of Grebo people into Liberian society and the ousting of foreign traders from Liberia .

= = = Republican convention 1876 = = =

As the 1876 Republican convention approached during the U.S. Presidential Election , President Grant , unknown to Fish , had written a letter to Republican leaders to nominate Fish for the Presidential ticket . The letter was never read at the convention and Fish was never nominated . President Grant believed that Fish was a good compromise choice between the rival factions of James G. Blaine and Roscoe Conkling . Cartoonist Thomas Nast drew a caricature of Fish and Rutherford B. Hayes as the Republican Party ticket . Fish , who was ready to retire to private life , did not desire to run for President and was content at returning to private life . Fish found out later President Grant had written the letter to the convention .

= = = Nicaragua inter @-@ oceanic canal negotiations 1877 = = =

President Grant at the close of his second term , and Secretary Fish , remained interested in establishing an inter @-@ oceanic canal treaty . Fish and the State Department negotiated with a special envoy from Nicaragua in February , 1877 for an inter @-@ oceanic treaty . Negotiations , however , failed as the status of the neutral zone could not be established .

= = Later life and health = =

After leaving the Grant Cabinet in 1877 and briefly serving under President Hayes , Fish retired from public office and returned to private life practicing law and managing his real estate in New York City . Fish was revered in the New York community and enjoyed spending time with his family .

Fish resided in Glen Clyffe , his estate near Garrison , New York , in Putnam County , New York , in the Hudson River Valley . His health remained good until around 1884 , having suffered from neuralgia .

= = Death , funeral , and burial = =

On September 6 , 1893 Fish had retired from the evening having played cards with his daughter . The following morning on September 7 , Fish , at the age of 85 , suddenly died . His death was attributed to advanced age .

On September 11 , 1893 Fish was buried in Garrison at St. Philip 's Church @-@ in @-@ the @-@ Highlands Cemetery under waving trees along on the hills by the Hudson River shoreline . He was buried next to his wife and oldest daughter . Fish was buried near the grave of Edwards Pierrepont , President Grant 's U.S. Attorney General . Many notable persons attended Fish 's funeral , while Bishop Potter conducted services . Julia Grant , widowed wife of Ulysses S. Grant , attended Fish 's funeral .

= = Historical reputation = =

Charles Francis Adams described Fish as " a quiet and easy @-@ going man ; but , when aroused , by being , as he thought , ' put upon ' , he became very formidable . Neither was it possible to placate him . " Fish 's 20th Century biographer , A. Elwood Corning , stated that Fish was free from " petty jealousies and prejudices which so often drag the reputation of statesmen down to the level of politicians " and that Fish " used the language and practiced the manners of a gentleman . " As an invaluable member of the Grant Administration , Fish commanded " men 's confidence , and respect by his firmness , candor , and justice . "

A survey of scholars in the December 1981 American Heritage Magazine ranked Fish number 3 on a list of top ten Secretary of States noting his settling of the Alabama Claims in 1871 , for his peaceful settlement of the Virginius Incident obtaining Spanish reparations , and for his Hawaiian treaty , ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1875 , starting the annexation process leading to the eventual statehood of Hawaii .

There is a memorial to Fish at the Cathedral of All Saints (Albany , New York) . The Hamilton Fish Newburgh @-@ Beacon Bridge , which spans the Hudson River 50 miles north of New York City between Dutchess and Orange Counties , is named after Fish .

= = Society of Cincinnati = =

Fish was a long time member of the New York Society of the Cincinnati by right of his father 's service as an officer in the Continental Army . Fish succeeded to his father 's " seat " in the Society upon his father 's death in 1833 . In 1848 , Fish became the Vice President General of the national Society and , in 1854 , he became its President General . In 1855 Fish was elected President of the New York Society . Fish served as both President General of the national Society and President of the New York Society until his death in 1893 . His 39 @-@ year tenure in office as President General is by far the longest in the Society 's history .

= = Notable descendants = =

Three of Fish 's direct descendants , all named Hamilton , served in the U.S. House of Representatives for the state of New York . Hamilton Fish II , Fish 's son , served one term as U.S. Representative from 1909 to 1911 . Fish II also served as assistant to Secretary of State Hamilton Fish . Hamilton Fish III , Fish 's grandson , served as U.S. Representative from 1920 to 1945 . Hamilton Fish IV , Fish 's great @-@ grandson , served as U.S. Representative from 1969 to 1995 . Another son Stuyvesant Fish was an important railroad executive . Another son , Nicholas Fish II , was a U.S. diplomat , who was appointed second secretary of legation at Berlin in 1871 , became secretary in 1874 , and was chargé d'affaires at Berne in 1877 ? 1881 , and minister to Belgium in 1882 ? 1886 , after which he engaged in banking in New York City . Hamilton Fish , Fish 's grandson by Nicholas , was an 1895 graduate of Columbia College of Columbia University , saw service in the Spanish ? American War as one of the storied Rough Riders . He was the first member of that regiment to be killed in action , at the Battle of Las Guasimas , Cuba .

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