THE LAST YEARS OF MANIFEST DESTINY:

FILIBUSTERING IN NORTHWESTERN

MEXICO, 1848-1862

By

JOSEPH ALLEN STOUT, JR.

Bachelor of Arts
Angelo State College
San Angelo, Texas
1967

Master of Arts
Texas A & M University
College Station, Texas
1968

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Thesis Approved:

Odie B. Faulk
Thesis Adviser

Homer L. Knight

Charles M. Dollar

H. James Henderson

Clifford A. L. Rich

D. Durham
Dean of the Graduate College

803754

PREFACE

It was only natural that adventurous and restless men in the United States during the 1850's and 1860's would turn to northwestern Mexico as the place to make reality their dreams of easy conquest. Americans, along with Frenchmen in California, believed that "natural law" dictated their superiority over lowly Mexicans, and thus that a more enlightened race naturally should come to dominate the lesser people of that region. Further, it was natural that filibusters would invade northwestern Mexico because that region was yet a frontier, and the frontier had always been a source of inspiration for those aspiring to a new start and new adventures. Moreover, Mexico was a land of fascinating appeal: it was foreign, with a language strange to the Anglo and Saxon tongue; it was distant, almost a shimmering mirage; and it was badly governed by its ruling officials, torn by endless revolution, and subject to tyrannical dictators. Thus invasion of this territory carried with it a taste of flavorful adventure, a sense of lifting oppression from the shoulders of an inferior people, and a hope of quick wealth.

This same region also appealed to adventurers for its long history of making impossible dreams come true. Hernán Cortéz had conquered the Aztec empire, thereby gaining a title of nobility and uncountable wealth. Imperious Spanish hidalgos had used Indian labor to found agricultural and pastoral empires. Pearls were known to come from the Gulf of California, while lost gold and silver mines reportedly

abounded in the region. Yet, this was a land of almost irresistible lure, and the breadth of its incredible possibilities had been widely revealed between 1800 and 1848. Men seeking a new beginning, men discredited in more settled parts of the world, and men driven by ambition and ego had rushed to the region during these five decades; there they had conspired and consorted together in a land containing wild deserts, raging rivers, and towering mountains to plot such diverse schemes as a refuge for Napoleon after his downfall, a haven for pirates, and the site of several republics, even an empire or two.

During this same era the United States was expanding rapidly. The Louisiana Territory was purchased from France in 1803 and Florida from Spain in 1819. Then in 1845 came the annexation of Texas, to be followed the next year by the Oregon settlement with England. And in 1848, at the end of the war with Mexico, the nation despoiled Mexico of one-third of its domain. Thus in less than five decades, by piecemeal expansion, the United States had extended its boundaries from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. Not unexpectedly, some Americans dreamed of further conquests, either for annexation to the United States or, more ambitiously, for starting new republics.

Such dreams may have seemed insanity to the mass of Americans, but only a few stout-hearted believers were all that were required to turn seemingly impossible dreams into reality. Had Sam Houston not carved the Republic of Texas from Mexico's little-populated northeastern province with fewer than a thousand men? And had John Charles Frémont with even fewer followers not conquered California under the banner of the Bear Flag Republic? Anything seemed possible on Mexico's northwestern frontier.

Making the region even more attractive in the fifteen years after 1848 was the hope of easy wealth. Spanish missionaries reportedly had discovered rich mines whose locations had been lost or suppressed. These legends, and they were numerous, gained credence with the California gold rush of 1849, for it seemed only logical that the mountains containing gold in California likewise would contain precious metals as they extended into Sonora.

The decade and a half following the end of the war between the United States and Mexico saw six men making major attempts to wrest this territory (mainly Sonora and Baja California) away from its owner. These six men—Joseph C. Morehead, Charles Pindray, Gaston de Raousset Boulbon, William Walker, Henry A. Crabb, and William Gwin—all came to the region ostensibly as colonizers, but in reality they saw themselves as presidents, sultans, or dukes creating new republics, dukedoms, or fiefs. Four of the men were from the American South, while the other two were natives of France. Both Southerners and Frenchmen of this era were noted more for their romantic and quixotic visions than for any grasp of hard reality. All were men who in one way or another had failed to win the fortune, high political office, and fame that they had sought through the usual channels and so turned to visions of themselves as rulers by self-proclamation and strength of arms rather than by election.

In short, the six men encompassed by this study were motivated more by personal ambition than by ideology, more by a sense of adventure than by philosophy, more by hope of quick wealth than by idealism. Yet they also were intensely interesting men, for they did not lead ordinary lives. They performed at the outer edge of human

imagination, and as such have a fascination beyond their own lifetimes. Had they read the poet Robert Browning, they doubtless would not have agreed with him that "A man's reach should exceed his grasp. . .," That they failed is a measure of the magnitude of their grasp.

In making this study I have incurred numerous debts, which I here inadequately acknowledge. For the original idea, for constant encouragement, and for immeasurable guidance, I am indebted to Professor Odie B. Faulk of Oklahoma State University. I am also greatly indebted to Professors Homer L. Knight, H. James Henderson, Charles Dollar, and Clifford A. L. Rich of the same institution. To the archivists and librarians at Oklahoma State University, University of California at Berkeley, and the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, I owe a special debt for making available many documents. Finally, had it not been for the tireless support of my wife, I could never have completed this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As darkness descended on the Mexican pueblo of Querétaro on May 25, 1848, fireworks exploded and flashed brilliantly against the blackened skies, while in the plaza gaily frocked señoritas danced to fiesta music. Peace at last had come between the United States and Mexico, and it was only proper for the people to project a mood of ecstacy at their future prospects now that the Mexican House of Deputies had accepted the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. After suffering interminably over dusty Mexican roads, Nathan H. Clifford, the Attorney General of the United States, and Ambrose H. Sevier, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, arrived at the small town late in the day to be greeted by Luís de la Rosa, the Mexican Secretary of State and Relations. In a specially prepared building, the Mexicans received the American diplomats and hosted a dinner. Careful planning and stiff, formal politeness permeated the placid atmosphere. Five days later ratifications of the treaty were exchanged after both nations had agreed to its terms.[1] Unfortunately, a treaty exchanging territory seldom satisfies all participants, and this agreement was no exception. Many Mexicans disliked the final settlements, but were

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[1]Ambrose H. Sevier and Nathan Clifford to James Buchanan, Queretaro, May 25, 1848, House Exec. Doc. 50, 30th Cong., 2nd sess., Serial 541, pp. 74-76.

unwilling to provoke another war. However, in the United States many men were willing to break international law for self aggrandizement.

Inured to the boisterous, turbulent conditions on the frontier, those Americans who failed to find quick wealth in the gold fields, sought prestige and riches by encouraging illegal filibustering expeditions into northern Mexico. Many factors drove these reckless men. Some Southerners in California may have been interested in acquisition of territory for the expansion of slavery. Others merely wanted wealth and power, fancying themselves as future sultans or presidents of northern Mexico.[2] In the United States the sectional conflict over expansion of slavery influenced most legislation in Congress to a greater or lesser degree--Northerners long had denounced attempts to annex new territory as part of the Southern slaveocracy conspiracy. In Mexico conflict also existed, for although the war with the United States had begun with a degree of popular support and optimism, public opinion soon turned to apathy and discontent. Mexican governments rose and fell with dazzling rapidity. Nevertheless, one constant existed in Mexico--intense dislike and distrust of Americans. "Gringos" were hated or feared, and there were those who did not conceal their antipathy. In Querétaro, when the American diplomats passed, people had energetically hurled rocks and insults. Mexico had lost nearly half of its sovereign territory by the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo--a humiliating experience for the patriotic and proud Mexican.

Complicating the politics of Mexico was the centralist-federalist

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[2]This idea is proposed in John Hope Franklin, The Militant South (Cambridge, 1956), p. 117.

conflict which began anew during this period. The Catholic Church and the Army, along with other traditional oligarchs, supported the conservative centralists, while many elements, including social reformers, supported the liberal federalists. Late in 1848 General José Joaquín de Herrera, a liberal, became president, but reconstruction, lack of credit, and racial war in Yucatán precluded any possibility of reform. In 1851 General Mariano Arista, also a liberal, assumed the presidency through one of the few peaceful elections the country had ever experienced. Attempts to establish a stable economy led to Arista's removal in 1853.[3] With the liberals out of office, the stage once again was set for the final act of one of Mexico's most infamous villains, Antonio López de Santa Anna.

Santa Anna was born in 1796 at Jalapa, and grew to maturity with an admiration for military pomp. This led to his service in the Spanish Army where he gained invaluable experience, and then to his leading a revolt in 1822 against Augustín de Iturbide, self-made emperor of Mexico immediately after independence had been won from Spain. In 1833 Santa Anna became president, serving until 1836 when he led an expedition to crush the Texas revolt. Captured and forced to recognize the independence of the Lone Star State, he fell from favor, and, for a time, was only indirectly involved in politics. He was a man of little administrative ability as well as vindictive, vacillating, and vague character. Unfortunately, he regained national influence during the Pastry War with France in 1838 when he led a

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[3]Numerous works are available. See, Wilfrid H. Callcott, Liberalism in Mexico, 1857-1929 (Stanford, 1931). See also, Daniel Cosio Villegas, Historia Moderna De Mexico: La Republica Restaurada, 7 vols. (Mexico City, 1955-1965).

successful expedition to drive the intruders from Mexico. In this "heroic" campaign Santa Anna lost a leg, becoming an instant hero with the Mexican people. Although he controlled the government again in 1841-44, his old faults soon surfaced, and he was overthrown and exiled again.

During the war with the United States, Santa Anna reappeared and was made provisional president and commander of the army; yet he double crossed the Americans, who had made it possible for him to regain power by aiding in his return to Mexico. As commander he led the Mexican forces in the battles of Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo, and Mexico City. When Mexico lost the war, he faced exile again in 1848, but again was recalled as dictator from 1853 to 1855. Santa Anna's last presidency was brazen deception—a rule of tyranny, corruption, and extravagance. Badly needing money to keep his tottering regime in power, he sold additional territory to the United States by the terms of the Gadsden Purchase agreement. As a result he was exiled finally in 1855. Then an angry mob exhumed his leg, which had been buried with full military honors in 1838, and dragged it through the streets of Mexico City. Throughout his twenty-five years in Mexican politics, Santa Anna supported the wealthy, the army, and the Church—yet he died ignominiously and in poverty after being allowed to return to Mexico City in 1874.[4] Yet Mexico permanently would bear the scars of his rule, while the filibustering activities of the 1850's were largely a result of his misrule of the country.

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[4]Diccionario Porrua de Historia, Biografía y Geografía de Mexico, 2nd. (Mexico City, 1964). See also, Ann F. Crawford, ed., The Eagle: The Autobiography of Santa Anna (Austin, 1967).

The advent of Santa Anna's presidency in 1853 served the United States well. This nation wanted 45,000 square miles in the Mesilla Valley, now a part of Arizona and New Mexico, in order to construct a railroad across it and to define the international boundary then under dispute. Santa Anna sold this territory in 1853 for $10,000,000—only enough to finance his regime's two final years. From 1855 to 1876 Mexico suffered twenty-one years of civil strife, during which the liberals limited the traditional privileges of conservatives and Church, and inaugurated a new economic and social course.

This liberal movement, called "la reforma," began in the southern mountains under the leadership of an illiterate Indian, Juan Álvarez. He became the first effective liberal military leader. Even before the fall of Santa Anna in 1855, Ignacio Comonfort and his moderate followers reinforced the liberal ranks and announced the Plan de Ayuta in March, 1854, calling for Santa Anna's ouster and for a new constitution. In November, 1855, liberal forces occupied Mexico City without firing a shot, and a provisional government was formed with Juan Álvarez as president and Benito Juárez as minister of justice and religion.

Juárez was loved by his countrymen, and he was genuinely interested in bettering their conditions. A full blooded Zapotec Indian, he was born in 1806, near Oaxaca. When he was but three, he lost both his mother and father and went to live with an uncle. At twelve he journeyed to Oaxaca and found employment in the home of a Franciscan lay brother. Juárez's education was sporadic, but good. Briefly he studied for the priesthood, then attended a liberal institute in Oaxaca where he studied law. Later he entered practice, earning a

substantial reputation by 1845. He served in the national congress while his country was at war with the United States, and was governor of his native state from 1847 to 1852. Finally, in 1855, he traveled to Acapulco and joined with Álvarez in the march on the capitol.[5]

As minister of justice and religion Juárez issued the Ley Juárez, reducing the powers of military and ecclasiastical courts. Conservatives launched an immediate protest, and a confused Álvarez resigned in December, leaving the presidency to Ignacio Comonfort. The new leader soon alienated Juárez and other liberals. The Ley Lerdo of 1856 further limited the power of the clergy, but did not redistribute lands as the peasants wanted. The failure of this law to satisfy the desires of the people set the stage for the writing in 1857 of one of Mexico's best constitutions. It was a liberal document, reaffirming the principle of federalism while giving near dictorial powers to congress. Conservatives loudly denounced this constitution, whereupon Comonfort resigned. Juárez assumed the presidency on December 1, 1857, and again conservatives, led by Félix Zuloaga, rebelled. Zuloaga proclaimed himself president on January 11, 1858, thereby giving Mexico two presidents. A three-year war of reform raged between the two presidential aspirants, with Juárez occupying Vera Cruz and Zuloaga remaining in Mexico City. On April 8, 1859, the United States recognized Juárez's government, guaranteeing the ultimate defeat of the conservatives. Juárez was reelected president, and he remained in office until the French drove him out early in 1862.

While the central government was in this state of flux that

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[5]Ralph Roader, _Juárez and His Mexico_, 2 vols. (New York, 1947).

approached anarchy between 1848 and 1862, the frontier areas bordering the United States reflected the same unstable conditions. The region was almost totally unprotected because here also the liberals and conservatives were struggling for positions of power. During the war with the United States, the Indians had decimated the Mexican frontier and made most of the area unsafe. Apache Indians from both sides of the border raided almost at will in Sonora, destroying settlements and attacking even the larger towns.[6] In February of 1848 the central government passed a war tax to finance protection for then exposed states. Yet even after this attempt Apache raids intensified. For example, in less than two weeks in January, 1849, eighty-six people were massacred in Sonora alone. Authorities tried to negotiate a cease fire, but were so unsuccessful that a mass emigration of settlers from Sonora occurred.[7]

Nevertheless, punitive expeditions accomplished very little. And at this critical time the frontier states were further denuded of population as Mexicans joined the gold rush to California. Settlers and troops alike deserted the area despite governmental colonization attempts. In 1848, five military colonies were planned for Sonora, but the national government proved so unstable that by 1850 only one, that at Fronteras, was established. The total troops available to defend Sonora numbered only 527 men—hardly enough to patrol such a great

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[6]For conditions on the frontier see, Daily Alta California, 1850-1860, and the New York Daily Times, 1851-1860.

[7]Joseph F. Park, "The Apaches in Mexican-American Relations, 1848-1861: A Footnote to the Gadsden Treaty," Arizona and the West, III (Summer, 1961), p. 136. See also, Robert C. Stevens, "The Apache Menace in Sonora, 1831-1849," Arizona and the West, VI (Autumn, 1964), pp. 211-222.

expanse of desert and mountains. When the state tried to ease the pressure on this limited force by suggesting a plan to colonize foreigners in this frontier area to fight the Indians, the central government would not support the move.[8]

This national struggle between conservatives and liberals was reflected, perhaps even more intensely, at the state level. Manuel María Gandara, a conservative, was governor of Sonora in 1848, but discontent was so ripe that in March that year a plot to kidnap and dispose of him was considered by his enemies. However, José María Redondo received enough votes in May to become substitute governor. Gandara, who remained a strong force in Sonoran politics in the 1850's, was born in 1801 in northern Mexico and began his political career in 1829, rising to the position of Constitutional Governor of the Department of Sonora in 1837. For the next four decades he would fight for control of the area. In 1841 Gandara supported Santa Anna, for which he received the Order of Guadalupe, and in 1851 he joined the revolt against Mariano Arista. By 1855 he assumed the military and political control of the state of Sonora. During this year his chief rival was Ignacio Pesqueira, who eventually fled to Arizona, but participated in Mexican politics until his death at Hermosillo in 1878.[9]

In elections late in 1848 José Aguilar was chosen governor, a

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[8]Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the North Mexican States and Texas, II (San Francisco, California, 1886). See also, Wigberto Jimenez Moreno and Kieran McCarty, OFM. (compliers) Archivo Historico del Estado de Sonora (Hermosillo: Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sonora, N. D.), micro-copy in Arizona Pioneer's Historical Society, Tucson, Arizona.

[9]Francisco Almada, Diccionario de Historia, Geografía, y Biografía Sonorenses (Chihuahua City, 1952), pp. 288-294.

position he held until October, 1851. Aguilar lost control of the military when Colonel José M. Carrasco—a capable, brave, and enterprising man—was appointed to command troops in the area. Carrasco, allegedly a superior soldier, may have been able to stabilize frontier conditions, but he died six months later of cholera.

Significantly, it was not until the threat of American filibustering became serious that the central government provided troops and supplies for the frontier. In 1853 General Santa Anna and his conservative supporters overthrew the government and established a dictatorship. Under Santa Anna's centralist policies, Sonora was made a subordinate department, and Manuel María Gandara was named governor. However, in 1854 Santa Anna removed Gandara and appointed General José María Yañez as governor because the latter was more highly regarded as a military leader; the dictator believed that military leadership was necessary to repulse the filibustering expeditions then underway in Sonora and Baja California.

Thereafter, the state of Sonora experienced a series of short-term leaders. General Arrellano succeeded General José María Yañez, but commanded only until Gandara saw his chance to reassume power when the Plan de Ayutla was pronounced. He was not supported by the central government, however, but the government acquiesced and appointed him military commander under Aguilar. Quite soon Aguilar was arrested, and Gandara again controlled the state. Aguilar searched diligently for a liberal military supporter and finally enlisted the aid of Ignacio Pesqueira, a long time foe of the Gandarist faction.

Pesqueira had a long varied career, but at heart he remained an intellectual opportunist. Born in 1828 he held numerous local govern-

mental posts in Sonora and northern Mexico. He had traveled to Europe and studied commerce and trade in France and Spain. When he returned to Mexico in 1839, Pesqueira soon became a district sub-prefect. In 1847 he joined the National Guard, and narrowly averted a fatal wound while fighting Indians in 1851. He supported the Plan de Ayutla and fought against Santa Anna as early as 1854.[10] Each year he increased his influence and power in Sonora, and early in 1856 he became the military commander at Ures. That same year he assumed the executive power of the state, initiating a long reign that lasted until 1875. According to a correspondent for the Daily Alta California, Pesqueira was a "fine looking gentleman...of medium height," dark complexion, "with a fine head, intelligent expression of countenance, quite broad across the breast, and shows a form inured to some hardship."[11] On July 17, 1855, he captured the enemy (centralist) garrison at Ures, but Gandara retreated, regrouped his forces, and recruited the aid of the fierce Yaqui Indians as well as the conservative clergy. Together they struggled on until defeated in January, 1857. The conservatives were not beaten permanently, however, for in June they were in the field again. Just when it appeared that Pesqueira would secure complete victory, Gandara moved the war into neighboring Sinaloa, enlisting the aid of more conservatives there. Finally, in April, 1859, after a prolonged siege, the last bastion of conservatism fell when Pesqueira captured Mazatlán. Pesqueira then ruled both in Sonora and Sinaloa. Although uprisings continued throughout the decade, the liberals re-

[10] Ibid., pp. 574-583.

[11] Daily Alta California, April 18, 1857.

mained in control until the French invasion of 1862.

Yet another major problem on the frontier had always been scarcity of population. The Mexican government was aware of this, and had made several attempts to colonize the area.[12] Unfortunately, even those souls who were adventurous enough to attempt settlement were unwilling to remain in the path of hostile Indians. Moreover, with the news of the gold strike in California, Mexicans as well as "gringos" raced for the gold fields, leaving their farms and homes in northern Mexico to the Indians.

Gold had been discovered in California just nine days before the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. James Wilson Marshall, a moody eccentric carpenter and employee of John A. Sutter, had found what he believed to be gold while working on a sawmill in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains early in 1848. Excited by the possibility, Marshall rode rapidly to New Helvitia, and there he and Sutter tested the metal, concluding that it was gold—perhaps as much as twenty-three carats. Marshall was so enthused that he rode through a torrential rain to report his findings to the residents of Coloma. Sutter wanted to maintain secrecy, for he feared the influx of gold seekers would ruin his business enterprises. Few Californians paid much attention to the news until a Morman elder, Samuel Brannan, rode madly down the streets of San Francisco on May 12, shouting "gold, gold,

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[12]See, Patricia R. Herring, "A Plan for the Colonization of Sonora's Northern Frontier: The Paredes Proyectos of 1850," Journal of Arizona History, X (Summer, 1969), pp. 103-114. See also, Odie B. Faulk, ed., "Projected Mexican Colonies in the Borderlands, 1852," Journal of Arizona History, X (Summer, 1969), pp. 115-128.

gold, from the American River."[13]

Shortly afterwards, ships jammed the harbors along the California coast—rotting because crew members and passengers alike had abandoned them for the gold fields. Soon towns were deserted, and by September, 1848, news of the gold strike had reached the eastern United States, propelling people to the gold fields to prospect. Some sailed for months on the 18,000 mile voyage around the tip of South America, suffering extreme hardships and even death. Others caught ships for Panama, believing that once across the Isthmus they could obtain passage to California. However, many of these unfortunates were stranded, as few ships sailed from Panama to California. Many of these eager souls were unable to return to the United States and suffered the rest of their lives in wooden shacks or leantos. Other routes were available, and the most popular was the overland trail. Men who had been responsible citizens in the East carelessly quit their jobs, callously abandoned their families, and incautiously raced for the gold fields. Before the end of 1849 miners swarmed over the region near Coloma, but the placer gold—or that easily mined—was soon gone.

As the gold fever abated, the disillusioned turned back to the cities, only to face harsh reality. The cities swelled with despondent men, many of whom were forced to turn to illegal activities to secure even a meager livelihood. San Francisco was typical of these new lawless cities. Cattle rustlers, horse thieves, murderers, and misplaced gold seekers roamed the streets. The saloons were scenes of shoot-outs, stabbings, and other crimes of violence; men had only to brandish

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[13]Many works are available on this subject, for example, see John Walton Caughey, Gold is the Cornerstone (Berkeley, 1948).

a weapon or utter the word "coward" to provoke a killing. Few women lived in this sordid environment—those who did were churlish dance hall girls, gambling their fates for a few ounces of gold dust. Daily papers contained a sad record of suicides and murders—rarely did a man die from old age. Citizens became increasingly intolerant of this lawlessness. Finally, the editor of the Daily Alta California urged citizens to act: "It is high time this headlong speed to settle difficulties at the muzzle of the pistol in a crowded room, this reckless disregard for the lives of innocent men who happen to be standing by was put a stop to."[14]

The gold rush had created a special kind of man accustomed to disorder and violence, with little regard for the value of life, and it became necessary for the citizens of the area to form vigilante committees to control the lawless element. The only authority in California during the period from 1848 until admission into the Union on September 9, 1850, was the military. The army ruled de facto, even illegally, during this period, while impatient Californians tried many times to establish civilian government. Finally on November 13, 1849, an agreement was reached, a constitution was ratified, and Peter H. Burnett was elected governor. Yet, California was not admitted to the Union until Southern congressmen won new laws protecting slavery. With the Compromise of 1850 providing a fugitive slave law and leaving the "peculiar institutional" up to the inhabitants in the territories the California statehood bill passed Congress and the president signed it

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[14] Daily Alta California, November 19, 1851. See also, any issue Daily Alta California, 1849-1862, for examples of this violence.

on September 9, 1850.[15]

Nevertheless, Indian raids on the California frontier and crime in the cities increased as more and yet more "seekers" came to the golden land of opportunity. To counter the rise of lawlessness in the cities, vigilantes began dispensing justice as "judge lynch" pronounced sentences.

Such an environment quite naturally would spawn and encourage several vain ventures, and, because land represented the wherewithal, filibustering fever flourished on the frontier. Leaders soon came forward—Charles Pindray, Count Raoussett de Boulbon, William Walker, and Henry Alexander Crabb—all with designs of establishing themselves in nearby, weak Mexico. Those that advanced these schemes of filibustering were by necessity inspired recruiters, stronger than the barren desert.

Many of these expeditions would follow the Gila Trail in reverse to southern Arizona. This was a main route to California, followed by many emigrants from the Eastern states. Much of the Gila Trail crossed desert—a sun parched sand where white, shimmering light and hot, searing winds burned the surface by day and where creeping cold chilled the waste by night. There were few animals. Only snakes, scorpions, desert rats, and other equally tough animals could exist. It was a country of few contrasts, where only here and there a tiny oasis broke the monotony of the terrain. But, there also was beauty along the trail. Lieutenant Thomas Sweeny, who followed the trail in 1850-1851

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[15]For an account of the issue of slavery expansion and the Compromise of 1850, see, Allan Nevins, Ordeal of Union, 2 vols. (New York, 1947).

and camped beside the Colorado River, reported that "the stars shine like loop-holes into the Heaven of heavens, and moon like the home of calmness, purity and peace." He also recorded that "there is a never-ceasing hum of millions of insects, and the Colorado murmurs like a huge bronze serpent, whose glittering scales reflect the moonbeams."[16] His record of travel conditions on the desert from San Diego to the Colorado and Gila rivers shows the extreme hardship that man and beast had to endure. He recorded that "it took twenty days to get the wagon across the desert, which is in a wretched condition for travelling, without a drop of water between Cariso [sic] Creek and Alam Mucho [sic], a distance of ninety miles." Men often faced death at the hands of the harsh desert, and in at least one case he knew of

> drivers [who] were compelled to kill one of the oxen and drink the blood or perish of thirst—an occurrence but too common in this desert, which in summer can only be travelled at night, as neither men nor animals can endure the excessive heat of the day.[17]

Few men lingered in the desert—except Indians, renegades, and bandits.

The Mexican government had struggled with frontier problems for several years. From 1848 to 1852 concerned Mexican statesmen suggested that the only way to solve their difficulties was through colonization of the entire frontier. Accordingly, they considered military colonization and importation of foreign colonists—all to no avail.

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[16] Arthur Woodward, ed., Journal of Lt. Thomas W. Sweeny, 1849-1853 (Los Angeles, 1956), p. 61.

[17] Ibid., p. 114.

CHAPTER II

MEXICAN SCHEMES OF COLONIZATION

Along the border the Mexican defense against raids of murderous Apaches and lawless Norte-americanos remained sorely inadequate. From the inception of the Republic, the central government had been unable to cope with the unstable situation, nor had individual states mustered sufficient military strength to control the area. The border was too long. And, although the United States was obligated by the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to patrol the line, its few soldiers in the area were inadequate. Individual Mexican states made alliances with each other and with friendly Commanches, but such efforts likewise were largely ineffective against the warlike and nomadic Apaches. Constantly the Mexican states appealed to the central government for help, but it was never stable enough to respond decisively.

The loss of territory in 1848—one-third of the Republic—and the fear of losing more to the United States, along with the Indian troubles provoked suggestions from sincere statesmen who wished to populate the frontier through colonization. In 1848, 1850, and 1852, three Mexicans suggested plans to create military or civilian colonies in the northern states. Unfortunately all three plans either failed to win national approval or were never implemented. Although these laws, except for that of 1848, were not passed, most American and French intruders during the next decade arrived in Mexico claiming to

be colonists.[1]

On July 19, 1848, Mexican president José Joaquín de Herrera promulgated the first of the colonization laws. According to the decree, military colonies would be established in the northern states along the boundary with the United States in order to populate the region and thereby forestall further alienation of the "patria." To encourage civilians to volunteer to settle near these military installations, Herrera guaranteed that when a colony progressed sufficiently it could form a municipal government and become civilian controlled.[2] The law also provided that the frontier would be divided into three parts: the Eastern Frontier, consisting of the states of Tamaulipas and Coahuila; the Middle Frontier, made up only of Chihuahua; and the Western Frontier, which included Sonora and Baja California. The law also provided for payment of ten thousand pesos each year to those friendly Indians near the colonies, thereby creating badly needed local support. Each area was to be characterized by meticulous military organization. In fact, this entire colonization plan was very similar to the presidial

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[1]For conditions on the frontiers of Baja California and Sonora see, Pablo L. Martinez, A History of Lower California (Mexico, 1960). See also, Robert C. Stevens, "Forsaken Frontier: A History of Sonora, Mexico, 1821-1851," (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1963).

[2]For the Spanish text of this plan see, Colonias Militares, Proyecto Para Su Establecimiento en las Fronteras de Oriente y Occidente (Imprenta de I. Cumplido, Mexico City, 1848) in the Holliday Collection of the Arizona Pioneer's Historical Society. For a translated and edited version see, Odie B. Faulk, ed., "Projected Mexican Military Colonies for the Borderlands, 1848," Journal of Arizona History, X (spring, 1968), pp. 39-47.

system used in the Spanish colonial government.[3] A colonel was to be in command of each area, a lieutenant colonel would have charge of no more than three colonies, and a captain would command individual colonies. Volunteers were to enlist for six years, receive a bonus of ten pesos, and, when their enlistment expired, receive arable land near the military post. To promote the establishment of such colonies, the national government agreed to advance a "six-months' supply of provisions, to be charged to the public treasury" along with "tools, plows, oxen, horses, and whatever is needed to build houses for the colony."[4]

Special incentives were offered for married colonists. The law provided that "those individuals in the colony who are married, or who get married within the first four months of its establishment, are to be excepted from the payment of all taxes, including those of the parishes."[5] This law of 1848 clearly demonstrated the Mexican antipathy for foreigners, as it excluded them from the colonies "either as military colonists or as civilians unless it be done personally and at the responsibility of the inspector, in order that there be no questionable motives behind their joining."[6] This provision was aimed mostly at colonists from the United States; the experience in Texas was not easily forgotten.

Almost from the beginning the attempts to build these colonies

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[3]For a copy of the Royal Regulations of 1722, which describes the Spanish presidial system, see Sidney Brinckerhoff and Odie B. Faulk, Lancers for the King (Phoenix, 1965).

[4]Faulk, "Projected Mexican Military Colonies," p. 43.

[5]Ibid., p. 44.

[6]Ibid.

faced such serious difficulties that some of the military presidios were abandoned during the administrations of Presidents Herrera and Arista. Shortages in financing, poor planning, and incessant delays hindered the planting of the colonies. By 1850 only nine of the eighteen colonies scheduled for the frontier had been partially established, but on the Western Frontier only two of the proposed six colonies had begun operations. After successive Indian raids, the colonists in those two became disheartened, and many just "wandered about in quest of sustenance or deserted to the glittering placers of the gold region."[7] A single colony established in Baja California at the end of 1849 had a small contingent of men ready to return home by the time they reached the location. Government inefficiency and unwillingness to support the colonies fully made their success impossible.

With the failure of this early plan for colonization of the frontier, the Mexican borderlands were on the verge of total collapse by 1850. However, by that year interested Sonoran statesmen had come to realize that although the plan of 1848 had failed, another approach must be attempted if the frontier was to be populated. As early as May 6, 1848, the Sonoran legislature had broached the subject by revising the earlier rulings on colonization into a new and extremely liberal settlement law. Three years later the central government declared this law unconstitutional.

These previous failures caused Sonoran leader Mariano Paredes to suggest still another colonization plan. Paredes, no kin to a

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[7]Bancroft, <u>North Mexican States</u>, II, p. 720.

national leader of the same name, was a representative in the Sonoran legislature and had constantly disagreed with Governor José de Aguilar on the correct way to subdue the Indians while colonizing the frontier. Aguilar believed the best method was to send troops to attack the renegades, then quickly establish military colonies while the Indians were disorganized. Paredes felt that first the colonies should be established, then campaigns against the renegades should follow. Also, Paredes was so disenchanted with the central government that probably his plan of 1850 was more for the sake of disagreement than for real defense of his state.

On August 16, 1850, the Mexican Chamber of Deputies heard Paredes explain his ideas on settlement of the frontier. He suggested extensive colonization of civilians and a comprehensive mercantile development for the entire frontier.[8] He warned the members of the Chamber that they should beware of that "avaricious neighbor" to the north. If something were not done at once, he predicted the United States would take Sonora on the slightest pretext, especially as Sonora was in a state

> of misery, of insecurity, of lack of protection...and it would not be impossible that the madness of its suffering would cause it to throw itself into the hands of a neighbor that offers help, protection, and in fine, an enchanting and improved way of life, as today is enjoyed in Upper

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[8]Mariano Paredes, _Proyactos de layes sobra colonización y comercio en el estado de Sonora, presentados a la Camera de Diputados por el representante de aquel estado, en la sesion extraordinario del día 16 de Agosto de 1850_ (Mexico, D. F. Ignacio Cumplido, 1850). For a translation of this see Odie B. Faulk, ed., "A Colonization Plan for _Northern Sonora_, 1850," _New Mexico Historical Review_, XLIV (October, 1969), pp. 293-314.

California, whence many Sonorans return enchanted.[9]

He explained to the national representatives that Sonora was a special case and needed a particular law which "should be very liberal and very generous, one which guarantees to foreign colonists the joy of all their liberties." Thus Paredes realized the dangers to the frontier and favored civilian colonization, for he firmly believed the establishment of military colonies would not work. With the failure of the law of 1848, the situation in Sonora had grown steadily worse. He knew that "gangrene is spreading for there are those who will stir the fire; and, in time with violence, and without losing an opportunity, means for Sonora's salvation will not exist."[10] Furthermore, he was convinced that a new law of the type he proposed would discourage Mexican immigration to Upper California.

Along with many of his countrymen, Paredes feared the United States—that powerful northern neighbor from which Mexico was separated

> only by the Gila River which on our side, serves numerous caravans of wagons as the most level and well supplied route of transit to Upper California. The strip of land on the opposite side will soon be populated. Meanwhile, on our side, years will pass without the same thing happening because of laws enacted but impossible to execute.[11]

To stimulate trade on the Mexican side, he asked that the seaport of Guaymas be declared a free port for twenty-five years. He was convinced such a move was needed, for he envisioned the Colorado River as a major highway, with Guaymas strategically located to control all

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[9]Faulk, "A Colonization Plan for Northern Sonora," p. 299.

[10]Ibid., p. 300.

[11]Ibid., p. 299.

traffic and trade. Paredes reminded the Chamber of the American movements in Baja California. If Guaymas were made a free port, he said, the Americans would lose this area of influence. Paredes apparently believed that this seaport could be the greatest single factor in stimulating the growth of Sonora. Subtly, Paredes suggested that Guaymas, along with individual colonies and inhabitants, would solve the frontier problems. In addition, he felt those colonists should be chosen with great care. He referred to the settlers only as European or Mexican, for he knew it to be inadvisable to encourage Anglo-Americans to settle on Mexican soil.

Paredes' plan was generous, for its author intended to attract settlers. Thus he urged that each head of a family should receive not only 177 acres of irrigable land but also be guaranteed his properties and liberties. For those colonists who choose to raise cattle, rather than farm, the government would allot 4,428 acres of level land. Even the old empresario system was to be employed (an empresario was a contract colonizer), for additional grants could be made to those who, at their own expense, transported European colonists to the Mexican frontier. Paredes envisioned that one day these new residents would become Mexican citizens, and the men would agree voluntarily to enlist in the militia (guardia nacional). Of course,he suggested other enticements for colonists: exemption from extraordinary taxes (forced loans) levied at the national or state level for twenty-five years and exemption from taxes on foods.

This concerned Sonoran official had planned in detail. Every colony would be four square leagues in size. Clauses would be included whereby the colony could become civilian controlled when the population

reached 1,000 inhabitants. In addition, every colonist was guaranteed "the security of all the rights of Mexican citizenship, the only exception being that he may not sell the properties he has thus acquired until he has owned them for eight years."[12] As one final security measure, Paredes asked for the establishment of a coast guard to patrol the area from Cape San Lucas to the mouth of the Colorado River. This naval force could stop all ships and make a list of their cargo—thereby locating not only Americans but other nationals who were filibustering.[13]

Objections to the Paredes project are not known. Even whether it was debated cannot be ascertained, but the bill did not pass the Mexican Congress. The government doubtless feared any foreign colonization on the frontier, but especially at a time when the French were then trying forcefully to occupy Mexican lands in Sonora.

Following Paredes' proposal and his failure to win passage of it, there were other officials who recommended colonization schemes. For example, Minister of Relations José María Lecunza heard a special committee report January 7, 1851, which called for colonization of the entire frontier. As before, nothing was decided; the frontier continued to disintegrate because of the activities of Indians, outlaws,

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[12] Faulk, "A Colonization Plan for Northern Sonora," p. 307.

[13] Herring, "A Plan for the Colonization of Sonora's Northern Frontier," p. 107. It was not surprising that at this time there was talk in both countries of the possibility of annexing northern Mexico to the United States. Knowledge of this attitude was widespread, and therefore, in October, 1852, Count Gaston de Raousset Boulbon, leader of a group of French "colonists," who had just captured Hermosillo, approached Paredes to form an alliance to overthrow the state government. Paredes' reply was a firm rejection and denunciation of those foreigners desiring to alienate more Mexican territory.

and filibustering expeditions.[14]

A year later, in January, 1852, a third major colonization plan was proposed for frontier settlement.[15] The plan was introduced by Juan N. Almonte, an aging soldier who combined his army skills with such diplomacy and patriotism that the government listened to his suggestions about the frontier. He was born in Michoacán in 1803, and later joined with José María Morelos in the Mexican Revolution. Almonte had cause to understand the American desire for territory, for he had represented Morelos in the United States during the war for independence, remaining there until the downfall of Agustín de Iturbide. Later he had traveled throughout the world on diplomatic missions, but significantly, Almonte had headed the boundary survey between the United States and Mexico in 1834. He also had earlier experienced the loss of Mexican soil when he fought against the Texas revolutionary movement in 1836. And he had served as Secretary of War and Marine and as ambassador to the United States under Antonio López de Santa Anna in 1842-1845. In 1850, as a conservative, he was elected a member of the national Senate.[16] Like others he saw the need for a definite and on-going frontier policy, but his ideas on stabilizing the frontier differed significantly from other plans. Unlike his predecessors in proposing colonization schemes, Almonte was not as concerned about the danger of United States expansion as about the crisis of the Indian

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[14]For information on all aspects on Mexican problems on the entire frontier see, Bancroft, North Mexican States, II.

[15]Juan N. Almonte, Proyectos de Leyes Sobre Colonización (Mexico, D. F., 1852).

[16]Diccionario Porrua, p. 60.

menace. He believed it first was necessary to stop the Indian raids before turning to other settlement problems. He believed that once this menace was no more, then the interior wastelands, as well as the frontier, should be colonized. This last feature made his plan the most forward-looking of the era.

Almonte knew conditions on the frontier. He told his colleagues that life was deplorable for the inhabitants of the region, for they

> are murdered, their houses sacked, and their fields burned by the various tribes of barbarians (Indians) that ceaselessly invade their lands. Added to this calamity, there has been a great scarcity of seed for about two years past in these suffering states because of the terrible drought they have experienced.[17]

In sharp contrast to his fellow countrymen, Almonte used the United States as an example to be emulated; Mexico, he said, at least must do what its northern neighbor had done in order to settle the frontier. The United States had grown in wealth and population because that government had surveyed, priced, and opened its public domain very early in its history. Mexican land awaited the settler; therefore, he urged his government to send agents to Europe to extoll the richness of Mexican land and the opportunities that were available. Advertisement of land sales should be translated into all major European languages. Almonte believed that the hard-working Germans would make the best colonists, believing as he did that Mexicans had the wrong habits, dispositions, and customs. Moreover, he added that Belgians could be used to colonize the interior provinces. Under his plan the states would have a degree of self determination in aiding colonists. States could create new towns in the interior of the Republic wherever

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[17]Faulk, "Projected Mexican Colonies," p. 120.

they had enough settlers.

The first step in the colonization process would be a survey, using the acre as unit of measure because this was the one "most commonly known in Europe."[18] Then the government should establish land offices and sell land to the settlers at low prices. Government owned lands could sell for about $1.50 per acre, he felt, but the states could make donations of land to whomever they pleased. In addition, provisions in the plan would make it possible for those without financial means to settle in designated areas. For example, for each family of five persons, the government should supply 500 pesos for transportation to the frontier and for means to establish their farms and homes. The settlers would have to repay such funds as low-interest loans, but the terms were to be extremely liberal. Foreigners would be exempted from taxes, military service, and all municipal obligations for five years. To lessen the paperwork of immigration authorities, Almonte suggested that the foreign settlers be admitted to the country without passports or security cards.

Such was the plan that General Juan Almonte suggested as a solution to the frontier problem. Unfortunately for the frontier, his proposals, like the others made during this period, were never enacted into law. Yet the concern Almonte, Paredes, and other Mexican officials voiced concerning American intrusion into Mexico indeed were justified. There definitely were Americans who had an interest in Mexican territory. And in May, 1853, President Franklin B. Pierce dispatched James Gadsden to Mexico with instructions to resolve the boundary between the

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[18] Ibid., p. 123.

two countries by purchasing territory.[19] It seemed a convenient time—with an unstable Mexican government. One important cause of the instability was the government's inability to solve the frontier dilemma.

The scantily populated Mexican frontier thus was neglected by the national government, while at the same time local politicians vied for power to the detriment of the region. Nor could the United States offer help to the hapless Mexican residents of Sonora by preventing Indians from raiding across the international boundary, as it was obligated to do by terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Ironically the first effort to punish the Indian raiders, made in 1850 by the governor of California, also would result in the first filibuster—but not to a halt in Indian depredations.

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[19] For the negotiations on the Gadsden Treaty see, Paul N. Garber, The Gadsden Treaty (Pennsylvania, 1923).

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST FILIBUSTER

In the summer of 1849 Lieutenant Cave J. Couts commanded a United States military detachment guarding a survey party at the junction of the Colorado and Gila rivers. There he encountered a fiery Mexican colonel, José María Carrasco, who favored American intervention in northern Mexico. While calling on Couts for provisions, the animated but flighty Mexican expounded his beliefs. Plied with champagne, Carrasco talked freely, perhaps with the hope that Couts would take an active interest in Mexican problems.[1] Carrasco saw the United States as "spreading over the world by its good laws, institutions, and management, [while] the other [Mexican government] was dwindling away as a ball of snow before the fire, and all in consequence of old reptiles fighting among themselves for power and plunder."[2] Carrasco believed that Sonora, caught between the vicious Indians and the corrupt officials of the Mexican government, was doomed to be deserted unless circumstances changed on the frontier, and he preferred the alternative to conditions as they were. Fierce Yaqui Indians, attacking villages and killing travelers in northern Mexico, had created a state of anarchy. Unsuccessfully Carrasco had urged wealthy Sonorans

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[1]William McPherson, ed., From San Diego to the Colorado in 1849: The Journal and Maps of Cave J. Couts (Los Angeles, 1932), p. 27.

[2]Ibid.

to contribute money to be used to employ an American adventurer to "rid them of their detested rulers,"[3] but he received little encouragement from the apathetic oligarchy, as well as from the peasants. Other influential Mexicans such as Mariano Paredes may have influenced Carrasco by suggesting that Sonora secede from Mexico in order to seek American help against the Indians.[4] Paredes, the following year, would also suggest plans to colonize northern Mexico, hoping this would populate the area sufficiently to control frontier problems.[5] Such Mexican sentiments as those of Carrasco, as well as Yuma Indian raids, may have been instrumental in bringing Joseph Clayton Morehead to Mexico.

The Morehead family was prominent in Kentucky politics until after the Civil War.[6] Morehead had been born in Kentucky about 1824, the son of James Turner Morehead, governor of Kentucky from 1834 to 1836. Joseph Morehead left Kentucky during the Mexican war and accepted a lieutenant's commission in Stephenson's New York regiment of volunteers destined for California. Once in the far West the wily Kentuckian quickly made critically important connections with local politicians, and after the war represented one of the mining districts in the state legislature.[7] As a law partner of the California attorney general,

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Rufus K. Wyllys, The French in Sonora (Berkeley, 1932), p. 52.

[5]Herring, "A Plan for the Colonization of Sonora's Northern Frontier," pp. 103-114.

[6]Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, XIII, pp. 158-159.

[7]Daily Alta California, January 14, 1851.

Morehead's activities brought him into contact in 1850 with Governor Peter H. Burnett of California,[8] who appointed him quartermaster general of the state. While holding this appointment, Morehead was ordered to aid General Joshua Bean, who was commissioned to track and punish Yuma Indians for killing John Joel Glanton and ten of his men.

Wanted in Texas as an outlaw, Glanton had found the climate south of the border more to his liking. There he organized some renegades to operate a ferry on the Colorado River and to take Indian scalps for the bounty offered by the state of Sonora. The government of that state, in hopes of controlling Indian raids into northern Mexico, was paying well for Indian scalps. The opportunistic and devious Glanton discovered that Mexican authorities could not tell the difference between Indian and Mexican scalps; thus he soon became the scourge of both Indians and Mexicans, murdering innocent peasants and selling their scalps to the Mexican government. Glanton, a merciless killer, cleverly blamed the Indians in the area for such massacres. The Yuma Indians, determined to avenge the deaths of many of their tribesmen, attacked Glanton's party, killing him and ten of his cohorts. Some of the gang survived to reach Los Angeles, however, and there they told a pitiful tale of an Indian "massacre." Unaware of the actual reasons for Glanton's death, and perhaps unwilling to investigate first, the California government sent General Bean and Joseph Morehead to avenge the killings.[9] Thus, an outlaw wanted for numerous crimes in Texas,

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[8]For a biographical sketch of California governors, see Bret Melendy and Benjamin F. Gilbert, The Governors of California (Georgetown, California, 1965).

[9]Daily Alta California, January 14, 1851.

along with an unhappy Mexican colonel, very likely set in motion the series of events that led to the first filibuster into Mexico following the end of the war of 1846-1848.[10]

Until the Yuma expedition, Morehead's career apparently had been as respectable as possible in a frontier state of the 1850's. But early in the expedition General Bean directed Morehead to defray the costs of the expedition by paying state drafts for supplies, and the Kentuckian began to display his true nature. For example, when many of the old ranchers refused to accept his state script, they were threatened, shot, or otherwise intimidated into cooperation by Morehead. In at least one case an old rancher retaliated, and by sheer force re-captured the supplies he had "sold" to Morehead. Nevertheless, most ranchers cooperated with the expedition, believing compliance the wisest and safest policy.[11] To increase the size of his force, Morehead hired transients from Arkansas and Texas, but the entire force was driven away from the Colorado River by strong Indian attacks. After reorganizing his men, Morehead retraced his steps to the Colorado and soundly defeated the Indians.[12] While Morehead fought the Indians, General Bean and the main party was searching for other renegades along the Colorado and Gila rivers. California officials were suspicious, however, when Morehead's troops stayed in the field far beyond the necessary time. The quartermaster general apparently was planning greater exploits. In truth, on this final march to the Colorado,

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[10]Woodward, ed., Journal of Lt. Sweeney, p. 136.

[11]Daily Alta California, January 14, 1851.

[12]Ibid., January 8, 1851.

Morehead even confiscated United States Army supplies en route to Major Samuel P. Heintzelman for the use of the troops whom Heintzelman was taking to the river to establish what would become the celebrated Fort Yuma.[13]

In December, 1850, the Morehead expedition camped with a party building a ferry at the confluence of the Gila and Colorado rivers. Captain George A. Johnson, leader of this group, planned to promote a profitable business ferrying immigrants across the rivers.[14] On October 11, the Indians launched a vicious attack on the combined camp. Morehead's inept military strategy would have brought disaster to the entire force had Johnson not counter-acted the plan. Morehead's unwillingness to gauge the Indians wisely was illustrated again when the expedition tracked the band responsible for the Glanton massacre. After wearing down the Indians, Morehead not only demanded eleven hostages but also wanted all the trinkets and valuables that the warriors had taken from Glanton's party. Thus challenged, the braves fought one last battle before retreating. Then Morehead's band relentlessly pursued the Indians, shooting stragglers and burning villages. The Yuma expedition was not a stunning success despite the victories Morehead achieved; its only real accomplishment was the further alienation of the Indians.

Following this exploit, Morehead soon turned his efforts to more

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[13]Ibid., January 18, 1851.

[14]George A. Johnson, "The Life of Capitan George A. Johnson," typed manuscript in the California State Library, Sacramento, California; variant copy in the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson. For additional biographical details see, Johnson File, Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson.

rewarding channels. Mexican mine workers traveled through the area, and Morehead found them easy victims. He may also have turned to robbing Mexican peasants of their burden animals to secure a means of transporting his booty. Many of the Mexicans who lost their animals were stranded nearly one hundred miles from the nearest water supply, with little hope of reaching civilization.[15] Again Morehead's actions were beyond what was necessary to complete the Yuma expedition. The ferry party's records mentioned the robberies, and they carry Captain Johnson's opinion that the Morehead expedition was preparing to embark on some clandestine venture.[16] The zeal with which Morehead sought supplies for his men and his treatment of Mexicans caused Californians to fear that his actions might lead to a serious diplomatic crisis with Mexico. Critical letters to the newspapers charged Morehead with misusing authority, while others defended his actions as necessary in punishing the Indians, whom many considered little more than barbarians.[17]

Governor Burnett resigned in January, 1851, and John McDougal became the second governor of California. The new chief executive, upon reviewing the report of General Morehead and discovering the $75,000 cost of the expedition, called for an investigation by the California legislature.[18] On April 25, 1851, he reported an irregu-

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[15] Daily Alta California, January 20, 1851.

[16] Johnson, "The Life of Capitan G. A. Johnson."

[17] Daily Alta California, February 10, 1851.

[18] For a discussion of this investigation see Journals of the Legislature of California (Sacramento, California, 1851), pp. 104-105, 277, 452-479, 496-497. See also Daily Alta California, January 14, 1851.

larity had been discovered in the office of the Quartermaster General. He believed Morehead had stolen and sold "400 muskets and 90,000 cartridges without authority and had pocketed the money."[19] McDougal recommended that the entire matter be turned over to an investigatory committee.[20] Five days later the committee asked the legislature to authorize the "governor to offer a reward of $1,500 for Morehead's arrest, and his delivery to the proper officers in this State."[21] However, the legislature only pointed out that Morehead was out of the states, using these funds to finance an expedition of conquest.

In the first half of 1851 Morehead was using the money to organize a secret party to invade Mexico. Recruiting in California for such a grandiose scheme proved easy, for disappointed Forty-Niners who had failed to find their Eldorado were willing, even eager, to join an expedition that held promise of possible riches. On March 30 a body of well-armed men passed through Los Angeles, saying that they were just prospectors headed for the gold fields; they were, in fact, part of the Morehead party. Morehead's plans called for three groups to invade Sonora, with the main party arriving at Mazatlán aboard the bark _Josephine_, a ship he had purchased to facilitate his invasion.

While the expedition prepared at San Francisco, rumors circulated in California of "secret expeditions" preparing to attack Sonora with thousands of men. The _Daily Alta California_ compared these rumored

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[19] Melendy and Gilbert, _Governors of California_, p. 44.

[20] _Daily Alta California_, April 27, 1851.

[21] _Journals of the Legislature of the State of California_, p. 479.

expeditions with "piracy upon the high seas."[22] Meanwhile, Morehead purchased a sloop; later he would acquire the smaller vessel, the _Josephine_. The sloop may have been used by some of the men who were to land at La Paz in Baja California. Regardless of the use of the vessels, their purchase depleted Morehead's finances.

Thus Morehead had to plunge deeply into debt at San Diego to provision his forces for the planned attack on Sonora. Recklessly he bought provisions, incurring the enmity of merchants when he failed to pay his bills. In addition, his men created disturbances and generally sacked the town during the twenty days they remained there. Citizens in the city began arming themselves, and a small war seemed eminent, but, just when it appeared a conflict would explode, Morehead learned that the governor had offered a reward for his arrest. Quickly he crossed the border into Baja California to avoid capture, whereupon post authorities at San Diego boarded the _Josephine_ and searched it for arms and ammunitions, but found nothing.

At this point a number of Morehead's men became disillusioned and returned to northern California.[23] Finally, on May 11, 1851, without adequate supplies, Morehead and 45 men boarded the _Josephine_ to sail for Mazatlán, still envisioning great dreams of conquest. Many citizens in San Diego believed the group was on its way to invade Sonora.[24] Apparently the United States government thought likewise, for shortly after the sailing of the _Josephine_, a schooner touched at San Diego

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[22]_Daily Alta California_, April 27, 1851.

[23]Ibid., May 17, 1851.

[24]Ibid., June 3, 1851.

hotly in pursuit of the expedition. Obviously the schooner was a government cutter: Mexico was a friendly nation, and the United States had an obligation to halt filibustering expeditions.

Some disillusioned members of his party, after deserting, passed through Los Angeles on their way north, spreading rumors of Morehead's inadequate equipment. Two old muskets and one rusty cannon were said to be his entire stock of war supplies. However, these deserts related that Morehead told them of a ship ahead of his group with abundant supplies to defeat all Mexican opposition in Sonora.[25] Morehead obviously was referring to the sloop he had purchased and aboard which he had men sailing to La Paz. These men arrived in Baja California in June only soon dispersed in the face of Mexican opposition and hostility.[26]

Despite Morehead's failure to plan well and to arm his men adequately, Mexican officials on the frontier were angered and worried by these filibustering attempts. They knew there were insufficient Mexican troops in the region to protect their interests. Mexicans were warned of approaching filibusters, for early in April local officials in Sonora alerted the governor and citizens of Americans coming overland. The Prefect of Alamo advised the people under his jurisdiction to be on the lookout near Altar, and urged the people to arm themselves.[27] In Mazatlán Mexican authorities proclaimed that their nation was "exposed to destruction, losing its territory by

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[25]Ibid., June 4, 1851.

[26]Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, p. 721.

[27]Ures, El Sonorense, May 30, 1851, in Pinart Transcripts, IV, p. 312.

fragments until a third of the Republic had been lost."[28] Because officials in Mexico City were apathetic and indolent toward frontier problems, local and state authorities in Sonora feared that many Americans would come to Mexico in search of opportunity. By May, 1851, such fears had encouraged rumors of a force of four thousand men on the trail to invade Sonora. In truth, Morehead did send a land expedition, for some American adventurers, part of his expedition, were reported near Arizpe in July and August.[29] If this group of forty-eight Americans were Morehead's overland group, they were dispersed by the National Guard in November. Upon news of the guard's approach, the group quickly abandoned its plans.[30]

The French newspaper Trait d' Union in Mexico City reported such rumors as prevalent in the Mexican capital. This newspaper constantly urged Mexicans to act in a concerted effort to throw out the "wandering Arabs" who came from the United States. While rumors of larger filibustering efforts permeated Mexican society, the editors of the Daily Alta California criticized American adventurers, and stated that such abuses of Mexican territory were a disgrace to the United States. One editorial declared, "There is not a man who loves his country and glories in her reputation, but must condemn all such attempts to violate our treaty stipulations and tarnish the fame which the world has

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[28]Daily Alta California, May 24, 1851.

[29]Ures, El Sonorense, August 8, 1851, in Pinart Transcripts, IV, p. 329.

[30]Ibid., November 7, 1851, p. 342.

accorded us."[31]

Thus when Morehead's sea expedition reached Mazatlán, Mexican authorities there were prepared to arrest any Americans who came to the port armed or in a large group. When the Josephine arrived at Mazatlán, the authorities swarmed aboard to search for arms and ammunition, but found nothing to justify seizing the boat or arresting the Morehead party. Morehead's men escaped a Mexican dungeon by claiming to be miners seeking work. Still a mystery is what happened to Morehead and his party at Mazatlán, as no further information is to be had about the group.

Some historians suggest that part of the men joined the later William Walker filibustering expedition bound for Baja California, while others reason these men might have joined filibustering activities then being planned for Central and South America. The Daily Alta California of April, 1852, conjectured that Morehead may have returned to California to organize another expedition to invade Mexico.[32] Although he had a questionable reputation, Morehead did indeed return to California early in 1852. Probably he found that most Californians admired his bravery and agreed with his politics of obtaining Mexican territory by conquest. In May, 1852, he was reported in Sacramento--outfitting another expedition. Nothing more is known of his subsequent activities in California.[33]

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[31]Daily Alta California, June 21, 1851. For additional facts see, "Monthly Record of Current Events," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, XIX (December, 1851), p. 124.

[32]Ibid., May 7, 1852.

[33]Ibid., May, 1852.

Eventually Morehead returned to Kentucky late in 1852 and spoke little of his filibustering dreams. He practiced law in Ownesboro until the late 1850's. In 1861, when the Civil War began, he was living in Jackson, Mississippi, practicing law. Once again he saw his chance to command men in battle, and asked influential friends to recommend him for a commission in the Confederate service. General John Bell of Mississippi wrote President Jefferson Davis on April 16 recommending that Morehead be given a commission in the Confederacy. He described Morehead as a "whole souled, Kentuckian and a high toned gentlemen, a man of the best practical sense, [who] is fond of military life, and has had some experience in that branch of public servis [sic]."[34] On April 17, Morehead also addressed a letter to Davis. He apologized for writing when the President was extremely busy, but insisted it was a matter of great urgency that Davis appoint him to the rank of captain. Morehead reminded the president of his eight years experience in the military service of the United States, including service in California during the Mexican War. He added that "tastes, inclinations and association, all incline me to seek for service in that Department for which I was intended to be educated and for which I have the strongest possible attachments."[35] As Davis apparently did not extend the commission, Morehead went to Kentucky to raise his own fighting force of volunteers and thereby obtain the coveted commission.

Evidently Morehead recruited several hundred men to form the

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[34]General John Bell to Jefferson Davis, April 16, 1861, Jackson, Mississippi, Service File of Joseph C. Morehead, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94, National Archives.

[35]Joseph C. Morehead to Jefferson Davis, April 17, 1861, Jackson, Mississippi, Service File of Joseph C. Morehead.

Kentucky Partisan Rangers, but they were not organized in time to fight the Union forces when they invaded that state. By September, 1862, he was ready to lead his men in battle, but his bad luck plagued him again when a Union force in Kentucky captured him without a fight. Seeing his chance at battle frustrated, Morehead clamored to be exchanged—even writing to United States Secretary of War Edward N. Stanton. While a political prisoner at Johnson's Island near Sandusky City, Ohio, his health deteriorated—only increasing his frustration.[36] The commanding Union officer there, Colonel William Hoffman, Commissary-General of Prisoners, advised Stanton that Morehead was being held as a spy because he had been captured at Owensboro, Kentucky, behind Union lines in civilian clothes.[37] Quite likely Morehead was recruiting for his regiment, and in the Union onslaught he moved too slowly and was captured. By June, 1863, Morehead's appeal had yet to be investigated. Hoffman wrote to Lieutenant Colonel William H. Ludlow, agent for the exchange of prisoners, at Fort Monroe, Virginia, on March 14 that most of the prisoners had been exchanged, but Morehead was going to be retained until something could be determined about his status.[38]

Perhaps Morehead was aware of the usual punishment for spies—death—and feared for his life. For example, in May, 1863, the Union executed two Confederate spies guilty of recruiting behind enemy

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[36]<u>The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies</u>, 128 vols in the United States serial set (Washington, 1880-1901), series II, IV, pp. 354-355.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid., series II, V, pp. 354-355.

lines.[39] Finally, on June 30, 1863, R. O. Ould, Exchange Agent for the Confederacy, learned that Colonel Morehead had been released. Ould launched an official complaint about the delay of the exchange, and denounced Union officials for their ill treatment of prisoners. Those Confederates just released had reported as many as eighteen men had been confined together in cells fifteen-feet square, with almost no ventilation--reason that Morehead's imprisonment would have lasting effects on his health.[40] Nevertheless, Morehead was released, his spirit undampened by his captivity.

On July 16, 1863, back in Jackson, Mississippi, Morehead was anxious to reorganize his Kentucky Partisan Rangers and wrote immediately to General Joseph E. Johnson, Confederate Commander of the Department of the West. He reported to Johnson that his command was scattered; however, he declared his certainty that he could reorganize as many as eight hundred men. Morehead added that his capture was unfortunate, but not due to any negligence of duty. He assured the general that he could reorganize his rangers "so speedily that it would occasion no detriment to the service."[41] Perhaps he actually reorganized his men, but his death prevented his fighting further for the South. He died in 1864 at Jackson, Mississippi. Morehead had served the Confederacy well, and his bravery and devotion to the cause showed

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[39] Ibid., p. 702.

[40] Ibid., series II, VI, p. 63.

[41] Joseph C. Morehead to General Joseph E. Johnson, July 16, 1863, Jackson, Mississippi, Service File of Joseph C. Morehead.

the mettle of his Kentucky ancestors.[42]

With recurring filibusters such as the Morehead expedition, the United States government finally began to take steps, at least verbally, to hinder such activities being organized in this country. On May 3, 1851, Secretary of War D. M. Conrad wrote General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, commander in the Pacific area, that one of his duties was to defend Mexican territory against raids by Indians or by others originating from the United States.[43] In his second Annual Message to Congress President Millard Fillmore on December 2, 1851, denounced filibustering expeditions and encouraged the legal authorities to stop such schemes whenever possible.[44] Fillmore referred to the filibustering attempts to free Spanish Cuba that same year, but his statements applied to all such expeditions. In practice the United States government and California authorities made a few attempts to stop raids into Mexico, but very little was accomplished.

Many Americans believed that the United States should have annexed Baja California and Sonora after the Mexican War. The _Daily Alta California_ recorded that "the common dictates of a very simple statesmanship ought to have shown the necessity, at a single glance, of

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[42] H. Levin, ed., _The Lawyers and Lawmakers of Kentucky_ (Chicago, [n.d.]), p. 324. His four-year-old daughter, Margaret L. Morehead, was left orphaned, to be cared for by the soldiers of his regiment. She later was adopted and raised by Major General Simon B. Buckner and his family. On November 30, 1880, Margaret married Reuben Anderson Miller, of Owensboro, the son of another prominent Kentucky family.

[43] C. M. Conrad to General Hitchcock, Washington D. C., May 3, 1851, _Senate Exec. Doc. 1_, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Serial 611, pp. 142-143.

[44] A. M. Schlesinger and F. L. Israel, eds., _The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents_, 1790-1966, (New York, 1966), I, pp. 808-813.

retaining at least one shore of the large Gulf in possession of the American Government."[45] Many still believed that the United States had only to be patient and keep foreign influence out of Baja California and Sonora in order to see these areas eventually fall into the United States' sphere of influence. The editors of the Daily Alta California believed that "we can philosophically 'bide our time,' and patiently wait the unfolding of the 'Manifest Destiny' whose strides are so gigantic, so certain, so rapid and so wonderful."[46] Unfortunately, some Americans were unwilling to wait the desired change of territory by mere "destiny" alone; they wanted to hasten the process, by force of arms if necessary.

Joseph C. Morehead—politician, scoundrel, and adventurer—infused his band of followers with a desire for conquest, but the delay in San Diego and confusion in Mexico demonstrated his inability to direct their actions. However, Morehead's expedition did serve notice on Mexico and Latin America that many Americans believed it was their destiny to dominate the western hemisphere. As a result of the Mexican reaction to this attitude, Americans continued to be in jeopardy when south of the border whether they were peaceful businessmen or government representatives. As late as February, 1859, the United States Consul in Guaymas considered the situation almost untenable. C. P. Stone, acting consul, wrote Lewis Cass, Secretary of State, that "nothing but

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[45] Daily Alta California, September 20, 1851.

[46] Ibid.

material force will suffice to protect Americans in their lives and property."[47] The United States was unwilling to use this "material force," and adventurous Americans continued to gamble their lives in order to fulfill their dreams of power and riches.

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[47]C. P. Stone to Lewis Cass, February 21, 1859, Guaymas, Sonora, Consular Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives (Microfilm copy in the Oklahoma State University Library).

CHAPTER IV

FRENCH SETTLEMENT IN SONORA

On the evening of June 5, 1852, a tiny group of weary Frenchmen straggled into Rayon, Mexico. They had fought Indians, starvation, and Mexican authorities in order to remain in Sonora. The Mexican government had promised financial support for these French settlers to settle on the frontier in the vain hope that the French would be a buffer against the rampaging Apaches. However, these Frenchmen came not so much to settle as to find fortune and power by exploiting abandoned Spanish gold and silver mines. They had no intention of farming or fighting Indians unless forced to do so. Thus neither Frenchmen nor Mexicans were sincere in their agreements. This small French party stopped at Rayon on its way back to the colony at Cocospera. The Frenchmen had been to Ures to demand, to no avail, the supplies promised by the Mexican government. During that night at Rayon, a shot was heard in the cottage where the leader of the expedition was sleeping. The men discovered him in a pool of blood, shot through the forehead. The death weapon lay next to his body. Thus died Count Charles de Pindray. Whether he was murdered or committed suicide was not and is not known. The truth would have made little difference had it been revealed, however, for his dreams of power and wealth had been

shattered and his expedition scattered.[1]

From 1848 to 1852 many thousands of French immigrants had journeyed to California and Mexico to seek their fortunes. France was torn by poverty, revolution, and economic depression during these years. Suffering under extreme hardship in their own country, the emigrating sons of Gaul sought any means of escape. News of the gold strike in California sent these downtrodden French to the United States and Mexico. Most went only for gold; others sought adventure; still others left France for political reasons.[2] Especially after 1849 did the French come in greater numbers. Private and governmental companies organized the emigrants in France to finance their passage to California. By 1851 nearly twenty thousand Frenchmen lived in that area, mostly in the central and northern parts.

Almost from the beginning of French settlement in that area, strife had been constant between these "foreigners" and the Anglo-Americans. Many Americans considered the French the same as Mexicans and lumped them together under the inaccurate name "greasers." However, in cities such as San Francisco, Frenchmen enjoyed great success in business. Merchants and importers of luxuries made quick fortunes selling French goods to a culture-starved frontier clientel. Of course, not all Frenchmen were wealthy or successful—some had found neither gold in the wilderness nor security in the cities. This group

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[1] Daily Alta California, August 15, 1852. See also, Horacio Sobarzo, Crónica De La Aventura De Raousset-Boulbon En Sonora (Mexico, 1954), p. 54.

[2] Many works are available describing the situation in France. See, John Plamenatz, Revolutionary Movement in France, 1815-1871 (London, 1952). See also, Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times: 1760 to Present (Chicago, 1960).

of unemployed, dissident, and adventurous argonauts provided a vast pool of ready volunteers for filibustering in Mexico or for a new start in that foreign and slightly exotic land.

Newspapers in California reported that Sonora was possibly even richer in resources than California. Allegedly $5,000,000 in gold was exported from Guaymas in 1848, and, although this was reported to have decreased by one-half in 1851, many people in California believed that the potential for quick mining wealth still existed in Mexico.[3] When Charles de Pindray reached California in 1850, he soon was captivated by the dreams of Mexican gold.

According to French writers of the age, Pindray was eminently suited for the role of adventurer—a man who would have accomplished his mission had he not died so mysteriously.[4] He was described as sullen, morose, restless, and extravagant, but unfortunately his reputation proceeded him wherever he went. In fact, the French minister in Mexico, Andre Levasseur, wrote to the French Consul at Guaymas early in 1852, advising that Pindray had left France because of involvement in illegal activities.

Pindray was born in Poitu, France, scion of a principal family. From his childhood he reportedly was disobedient and devious. Perhaps for this reason he was sent to a Jesuit school where he studied until he was sixteen; then he was expelled as uncontrollable. Next his father sent him to a correctional institute, from which he shortly

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[3] Daily Alta California, October 5, 1852.

[4] Charles de Lambertie, Le Drame de La Sonora, L'Etat De Sonora, M. Le Comte De Raousset-Boulbon Et M. Charles De Pindray (Paris, 1855), pp. 208-209.

escaped. He joined the French cavalry and at eighteen participated in several campaigns in Africa. After the death of his father, however, he inherited some wealth, returned to his homeland, and lived elegantly in Poitiers for a time. Fond of women, drink, and duels, he soon exhausted his inheritance and moved to Paris hoping to recoup his fortune. He only acquired considerable debts there, however, and after involvement in illegal financial activities, fled to North America. He arrived in Massachusetts in 1846 where he remained two years before journeying on to Missouri, Oregon, Nevada, and finally California. Once in California he rarely spoke of himself, for as Maurice Soulé wrote, Pindray was the type of man who would not reveal anything of his past. Pindray was said to have dug gold at Carson Bar in 1849. He was constantly involved in quarrels with American miners, however, supposedly killing one miner and wounding another in a knife fight. Indeed, when he met Count Gaston Raousset-Boulbon, Pindray had just been involved in a knife fight in San Francisco.[5] During his entire life Pindray seemed bothered by a restless spirit, and he often remarked that his only real goal was peace of the soul.[6]

While drifting through San Francisco in 1850, Pindray learned that the Mexican Vice-Consul at San Francisco, William Schleiden, wanted colonists to establish a settlement in northern Mexico. He believed this his golden opportunity and quickly volunteered to lead the expedition. Plans were formulated, and men were recruited easily. So much

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[5]Farrell Symons, tr., The Wolf Cub: The Great Adventures of Count de Raousset-Boulbon in California and Sonora, 1850-1854, by Maurice Soulie, (Indianpolis, 1927), pp. 80-89.

[6]Sobarzo, Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 43-52.

enthusiasm developed for the enterprise that Pindray charged each volunteer forty to fifty dollars to become a member of the company. This provided some financing for the venture; and, moreover, Mexican authorities promised financial assistance and material support when the group reached Guaymas. In addition, Mexican colonization laws were being considered which would legalize French colonization on the frontiers and provide more financial support.[7]

The Mexican government doubtless hoped that French settlements would function as a buffer against Indian attacks, for villages along the frontier were exposed to the fury of fierce Indians, principally Apaches. That tribe had destroyed millions of dollars worth of property during the years 1848 to 1852 and had carried off horses, cattle, women, and children, while laying waste to the entire countryside. Even friendly Indians, unprotected by the Mexican government, were forced to join the warring tribes. Consequently fields remained unplowed, agricultural production virtually stopped, and many thousands starved.[8] Most of northern Mexico was poverty stricken, and the Daily Alta California recorded that the "people do not hesitate to make a living by anything, honorable or dishonorable, and that her [Mexico's] calendar of crime is daily on the increase."[9]

The plight of Sonora was well known in the United States; therefore, many Americans believed that state, if not all of Mexico, was ripe for revolution. Thus even before the launching of the Pindray

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[7]Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 207-209. See also Chapter two.

[8]Daily Alta California, October 5, 1852.

[9]Ibid., August 16, 1852.

expedition, questions arose as to its true intent. Some residents of California believed the French had revolutionary intent, but, according to the _Daily Alta California_, accusations of this nature were "entirely devoid of truth."[10] Pindray and eighty-eight Frenchmen sailed for Mexico aboard the bark _Cumberland_ in November of 1851. Additional reinforcements were soon to follow, increasing the size of the expedition to 150 men.[11] The first group arrived at Guaymas a month later, receiving a favorable welcome from the local citizens.

The Frenchmen had arrived sooner than expected, however, and the Mexican government was taken by surprise. The national Congress had not yet acted on the French colonization bills; consequently, President Mariano Arista sent General Miguel Blanco with a detachment of soldiers to protect Sonora. The troops were not needed, for shortly the Mexican Congress passed all pending colonization bills.[12] In addition, the Sonoran government granted the Frenchmen three leagues of land near Cocospera, a village in the valley of Rio San Miguel, and that state looked upon the French as deliverers from the Apache ravages. A stipulation in the colonization agreement required the French to cultivate the land for ten years before disposing of it. The state of Sonora also gave the French thirty horses, thirty mules, thirty burros,

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[10] Ibid., November 17, 1851.

[11] Lambertie, _Le Drame de Sonora_, pp. 209-211. See also, _Daily Alta California_, November 22, 1851.

[12] _Daily Alta California_, October 5, 1852. Those bills passed were not several colonization plans, such those described in Chapter II; rather they were specific bills to aid particular colonists such as the French in Sonora.

and $1,800 in silver.[13]

The colonists began limited agricultural projects to sustain themselves, but urged the Mexican government to bring five hundred more colonists to the area. The national Congress did not act immediately on this request, but granted additional land on condition that no Americans be allowed to join the settlement. Perhaps Americans tried to join the enterprise, but, if so, they were rejected. It was reported that a Mr. Moore along with a few other Americans had accompanied the French into Sonora. Possibly these Americans were part of the original expedition, but when the French learned of the anti-American sentiment in Mexico, they probably expelled the "gringos" in order to enhance the prospect of success.

The New York Daily Times reported on June 30, 1852, that other Americans entered Sonora during this period. One such newspaper report stated that a party of ten, led by two men known as Thompson and Hays, was fleeing from Indians. While escaping, they encountered Pindray's party in Sonora. The French threatened to kill the intruders, but were stopped by the alcalde at Irmis who provided sanctuary for the Americans.[14] On another occasion an official boundary surveying party, led by John Russell Bartlett, met the French near Hermosillo. Bartlett recorded that he met a party of 150 Frenchmen going to Cocospera: "They were a rather hard-looking and determined set of men, with long beards and sunburnt faces. Each one carried a musket or

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[13]New York Daily Times, June 30, 1852.

[14]Ibid.

rifle, besides which many had pistols."[15]

Pindray and his men reached Cocospera in March and began limited agricultural projects after fighting nearby Apaches.[16] In one early contact with the Indians, the French killed four members of a raiding party and captured at least twenty-one horses. Pindray sent word back to California that because the Indians had no access to lead they were using silver bullets. By the time this information was reported in California, the story had been magnified to such an extent that tales of silver mines in northern Mexico were prevalent. The French thus remained near Cocospera only until a few reinforcements arrived, and then they began searching for lost mines.[17] It was at this point that Mexican authorities turned against the French.

The reasons for the Mexican change of heart were many, but primarily it came as a result of information about Pindray's past. Don Manuel Robles Pezuela, Minister of War for Mexico, wrote to General Miguel Blanco on April 28, 1852, explaining the background of the French leader and warning the local government of potential danger. Robles told Blanco that Pindray should be watched carefully, for the Frenchman had committed several acts against the French Republic and had been forced to leave France quickly to save his life. The minister added that Pindray probably would abuse the hospitality of the state of Sonora, and therefore should be considered dangerous. As a result

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[15] John Russell Bartlett, Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents, I (New York, 1854), p. 472.

[16] El Sonorense, February 4, 1853. See also, Bancroft, North Mexican States, II, p. 676.

[17] Daily Alta California, August 15 and July 14, 1852. See also, El Sonorense, May 14, 1852.

of this information, Blanco refused additional supplies to the French. Pindray was warned that if he disobeyed any Mexican laws his men would be driven out of the country, while he would be imprisoned at Mazatlán.

With the Mexicans withholding support and equipment, the colony began to disintegrate. Pindray tenaciously argued for his right to remain in Sonora, and attempted to force the government to fulfill its agreement.[18] During this period of difficulty with the Mexican government, fifteen or twenty colonists withdrew from the company to look for silver mines. Eventually these deserters did find what they sought at Saint Theresa; however, they had to abandon it when the Apaches attacked in force. Nor did the Frenchmen get title to their mine. Quite conveniently a local judge prolonged the French claims' proceedings for ten days—enough time for a group of Mexicans to pre-empt the French site. With this final failure, the smaller group of Frenchmen left for California—in disgust.[19]

Pindray tried one final time to persuade the Mexican government to support his expedition. With a part of his men, he made a special trip to Ures hoping to force supplies from the authorities. Of course, such a belligerent attitude only seemed to confirm previous Mexican suspicions about him. The Mexicans refused him aid, so he and his men began the trip back to Cocospera. They stopped for the night at Rayon, and there he died—possibly from a Mexican bullet.[20] The _Daily Alta California_ of August 15, 1852, suggested that Pindray "committed suicide

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[18]Sobarzo, _Crónica de la Aventura_, pp. 52-53.

[19]_Daily Alta California_, October 18, 1852.

[20]Lambertie, _Le Drame de la Sonora_, pp. 256-257.

by blowing out his brains...whilst laboring under a high fever, and in a fit of despair."[21] When news of his death reached those survivors at Cocospera, many of them quickly returned to California, some to join other French expeditions already there—parties led by Sainte Amant or by Count Gaston Raousset-Boulbon.

Sainte Amant was the French consular agent at Sacramento, but he was vitally interested in the gold mines of Sonora. Through their wealth he planned to increase his power. His expedition was formed at Placer, California, a center for French settlement in the state. From there he and his men sailed to Guaymas in the barks Sonora and Hermosillo. From Guaymas he planned to explore the interior for gold and silver mines abandoned years before. Allegedly the group had $14,000 in cash when it started and received an additional $500, along with provisions, when it reached Sonora. The Amant party did explore the interior and find some ore which appeared to be gold, but it was too scattered to be of any value. The men soon learned through experience that there was insufficient water for large mining operations, even if gold could be located.

Sainte Amant's expedition suffered greatly in Mexico. One member wrote the Daily Alta California that every day he saw his "unfortunate countrymen, either from Santa Cruz or Cosespera [sic], in a state of misery and prostration difficult to describe, without shoes, without clothes, harrassed by fatigue, without money, dying of hunger and afflicted with the disentery."[22] Records reveal that many of the French

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[21] Daily Alta California, August 15, 1852.

[22] Ibid., October 18, 1852.

adventurers had to beg alms from house to house in the Sonoran villages to sustain themselves. Before long this group also scattered. Thus the early French expeditions in Sonora ended in disaster, as Morehead's had earlier. Despite such reports reaching California, however other men were anxious to follow, gambling their fortunes or lives in this barren land. Thus both Frenchmen and Americans would follow Morehead, Pindray, and Sainte Amant into Mexico.

CHAPTER V

RAOUSSET-BOULBON'S ENTRANCE

Although surviving members of Charles Pindray's colony joined a larger and better organized group of French colonists in Mexico, they still were denied success. Mexican attitudes toward foreigners changed only for the worse. No group could hope to satisfy both local and central authorities, who themselves were toppled from power with such stunning rapidity. Intrigue, danger, and uncertainty continued to characterize Mexican politics during this era. Nevertheless, an enterprising Frenchman, Count Gaston Raousset Boulbon, attempted to make an agreement with Mexican authorities which would allow him to establish French colonies in Mexico. In truth, this French nobleman had more than colonies in mind, for he had a grandiose dream of becoming the "Sultan of Sonora."

Raousset was born in 1817 at Avignon into a wealthy old family which had fallen from political prominence. Unmanageable as a boy he listened to no one and, when disciplined, flew into an unmanageable rage. He was reputed to be irascible and autocratic—so much so that by age seven the browbeaten house servants referred to him as the "wolf cub."[1] Soon after his eighth birthday, his father placed the boy

[1] Maurice Soulie, La Grande Aventura: L'épopée du Comte de Raousset-Boulbon au Mexique, 1850-1854 (Paris, 1926). See also, Daily Alta California, April 5, 1853.

in a German Jesuit school reknown for its discipline. His years there were turbulent, but he did become an excellent student. At seventeen, when he was forced to leave the academy, he was the recognized leader among the students. Unfortunately, he had quarreled with the principal of the college and was expelled.

Once in the world, young Raousset set about proving his abilities. He inherited considerable wealth from his mother's estate, and until he was 28 the young Frenchman lived fashionably in Paris. He allegedly wrote two plays, which were never performed and a novel. He helped publish a journal called _Liberté_. A man of various experiences, he also engaged briefly, and significantly, in colonial speculation in North Africa in 1845. After the revolution of 1848, he entered French politics. He announced for the legislature, but failed to win. Then in 1850, after he had dissipated his mother's inheritance, he acquired additional wealth from his father. This he likewise squandered in Paris. Thereupon Raousset moved to London, and it was there that he heard of that golden opportunity and followed the stream of hopefuls bound for the gold fields of California.[2]

Raousset arrived in the new Eldorado on August 22, 1850, fully expecting—as did most fortune hunters—to get rich quickly. But his previous position as a French nobleman made mining distasteful and dirty; therefore, he made his living by hunting and working for shipping companies as a boatman. Before long in San Francisco, he called on the French Consul, Patrice Dillon, to inquire about opportunities of any type. Doubtless, the Consul advised him to return to France—it was a

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[2]Sobarzo, _Crónica de la Aventura_, pp. 61-64.

difficult time for a French nobleman to live in California.[3] Nevertheless, the count remained in San Francisco, and, according to the French writer Maurice Soulie, Raousset met Charles Pindray in a bar. Seeing the same unfulfilled desire for power and position in each other, they could not have worked together—they were too much alike.

Nevertheless, Pindray may have offered Raousset a position in his expedition planned for Mexico. But probably each insisted on being the sole leader. Whatever the cause, Pindray's expedition left for Mexico early in 1852 without Raousset, who began to organize a similar exploit. The French consul, also intrigued by the possibilities in North Mexico, encouraged the French nobleman's preparations for such a party. As evidence of his interest, Consul Dillon wrote a letter of introduction to Andre Levasseur, the French minister in Mexico. It was in this letter that Raousset's goals were outlined as peaceful and law abiding. On February 17, 1852, Raousset left San Francisco for Mexico, hoping to obtain permission from the Mexican government to bring French colonists to Sonora, allegedly to work in the mines. Levasseur proved very amiable, and through his efforts Raousset secured political support from President Mariano Arista and financial backing from the great Franco-Mexican banking house of Jecker, Torre, and Company. This was only the first in a series of services Levasseur performed in behalf of the French count in Mexico.[4] Thus, Raousset found his entry singularly simple.

On April 7, 1857, a contract was signed with the banking firm,

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[3]Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 130-133.

[4]Ures El Sonorense, September 24, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V. p. 64. See also, Daily Alta California, November 25, 1852.

and a corporation called the Compañia Restaurada de la Mina de la Arizona was established as a subsidiary company to Jacker and Company. According to the contract, Raousset was to recruit 150 Frenchmen in San Francisco and then return to Guaymas, Sonora, to meet with governmental agents who would accompany them to the area of settlement. Jecker and Company agreed to pay all bills incurred in outfitting the party. If mines or other valuables were found, the company would receive one-half as its share.[5] The Daily Alta California was quick to suggest that "according to Raousset's contract with the house of Jecker, Torre and Company, he is bound to take the mines from any parties in whose possession he may find them." The same newspaper reported that "the sum spent already in this enterprise is from $30,000 to $40,000."[6] This was to be a very expensive venture; therefore, to protect its investment and doubtless to keep the Mexican government informed, the company appointed a retired Mexican army colonel as its agent to accompany the French.[7] The contract of the Restaurada called for locating and working mines abandoned since the eighteenth century. Gold and silver had been located in the eighteenth century near the present northern border of Sonora at a place called the Real de Arizona, once a Spanish mining community. Mexican authorities and citizens hoped that if the French settled in that area, the settlers would be a buffer against Indian raids as well as Anglo-American intrusion. To assure

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[5]Wyllys, The French in Sonora, pp. 73-74. See also, Daily Alta California, November 25, 1852.

[6]Daily Alta California, November 25, 1852.

[7]Ures El Sonorense, September 17, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, V. p. 61.

the venture a measure of success, the Jecker Company involved many local and national Mexican officials in the scheme by promising them either political support or a share of the wealth found.[8]

Many Mexican citizens were optimistic about the French colonizers, hoping settlements would help to stabilize the frontier. According to an American living in Guaymas at the time, all the people who had met Raousset were "convinced that this expedition must have the best results."[9] And, while a group of Sonorans had been in New York, they had reported to the New York Daily Times that affairs in their state were "sorrowful indeed. The Apaches are committing depredations in the neighborhood of Hermosillo, and there seems now to be as great a necessity to defend the interior as there has been heretofore to protect the frontier." Taking into consideration all of the problems in Sonora, these people speculated that "the French will eventually succeed in Sonora, which must ultimately come into the possession of the United States."[10]

Meanwhile, on April 10, 1852, Raousset returned to San Francisco to prepare his expedition. While he was away, the central government quarreled with the state over land grants, and a competitor to Jecker and Company emerged. The Barron, Forbes, and Company--another powerful banking house, tied to financial interests in San Francisco--organized a colonization company similar to that of the French, except this company proposed to use only Mexican colonists from the interior in its

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[8] New York Daily Times, August 6, 1852. See also, Daily Alta California, May 24, 1852.

[9] Daily Alta California, August 28, 1852.

[10] New York Daily Times, December 23, 1852.

operations in Sonora. The new company also sought to delay the French venture, influencing Sonoran officials against foreigners living almost autonomously in northern Sonora. The Barron Company propaganda was so effective that even while Raousset was yet in California, Levasseur was forced to ask for a settlement with officials of the competing company.[11]

As others before him, Raousset found recruiting a simple task among disillusioned Frenchmen in and near San Francisco. All members of the expedition were promised a share of the land and wealth found, and this appealed to the weary and desperate. Anglo-Americans were excluded from the venture, as Mexican law forbade them from colonizing in that land. Once the nearly two hundred men were recruited, arms, ammunitions, and other supplies were purchased. With Raousset as supreme commander, the group was divided into sections of twenty men. Raousset chose as leaders of the first four companies N. Lenoir, Achille Garnier, Amedée Fayolle, and Jean Marie Lafranc. Lenoir was described as brave and from a good family, but a man who had suffered considerable reverses because of his excessive drinking. Lefranc was thought to be a fanatical supporter of Raousset. Fayolle was said to be a man of considerable organization genius, while Garnier was a dashing, gallant man of the world.[12] This odd assortment of lieutenants, along with Raousset, was to form the governing body of the company.

Preparations and planning completed, the Raousset expedition

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[11] Ures El Sonorense, September 24, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 65. See also, Sobarzo, Crónica de la Aventura.

[12] Sobarzo, Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 88-89.

prepared to leave for Guaymas. However, before sailing they were detained briefly by United States customs officials who questioned the legality of the expedition.[13] After Dillon and the Mexican consul assured officials that the expedition was operating under Mexican sanction, Raousset and his group were allowed to depart from San Francisco aboard the Archibald Gracie, a leased ship operating under Mexican license. The Daily Alta California reported the departure, adding that the venture was surely legal, as the French were "acting in concert with the authorities of the state of Sonora and an influential company in Mexico, composed of bankers and members of the Mexican Congress."[14]

When Raousset arrived in Mexico, he carried letters of recommendation from Levasseur to all concerned Sonoran officials. Thus he expected to be greeted warmly. However, while he received a cordial welcome from the citizens of Guaymas, he soon learned that state authorities had become almost hostile. These officials insisted that Raousset follow the colonization rules closely and avoid any ostentatious display of military power.[15] Raousset waited in Guaymas until the Jecker, Torre and Company agent, Colonel Giménez, arrived on June 10. After the agent's arrival, the French leader notified state authorities that he was prepared to leave for the colonization site. General Miguel Blanco, commander of state troops, replied, indicating the entire French party was to travel to Pozo, west of Guaymas, before

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[13] Symons, tr., The Wolf Cub, pp. 133-135.

[14] Daily Alta California, May 24, 1852.

[15] Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 22-23. See also, Sobarzo Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 91-92.

doing anything else. With these unusual directions the party knew something obviously was wrong, but neither Raousset nor the port captain at Guaymas realized what was transpiring.

By this time the state governor, as well as other high Mexican officials, had been in contact with rival firm of Barron, Forbes, and Company. And these Mexican leaders were having second thoughts about a well-armed alien force living on the northern border. During this indecisive interim, the captain of the port gave the French permission to leave Pozo and travel to Ures where state officials could be reached. The governor, Fernando Cubillas, heatedly chastized both the port captain and the prefect of Salvación for allowing the Frenchmen freedom of movement. The governor advised the prefect that the port captain "has done very wrong, and you have also done wrong in permitting it."[16] In reporting to the congress of the state Cubillas also said the French had behaved badly by landing at Guaymas in full military style, "with two pieces of artillery at the head, and with other military paraphenalia which was against the laws of the country."[17] At this point in the conflict, the French minister Levasseur deemed it wise officially to withdraw from the Restaurada. After his withdrawal any French governmental interest became unofficial. Several weeks passed with little action on either side. There continued to be speculation in the United States concerning the involvement of the French government in this colonization scheme, but the New York Daily Times reported it

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[16]Cubillas to the Prefect of Salvación, Ures, June 21, 1852, Ures El Sonorense, June 25, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 32.

[17]Cubillas to the State Congress of Sonora, Ures, September 23, 1852, ibid., October 1, 1852, p. 72.

doubtful that the French officially were interested in Mexico. The same newspaper also hinted "that the French government was not a stranger to the enterprises of certain French adventurers on the Pacific Coast."[18]

Raousset quickly made enemies in Mexico, for he referred to himself as "sultan of Sonora," inviting the opinion from Governor Cubillas that Raousset's intentions were not those of a legitimate colonizer, but possibly of an illegal filibuster.[19] At Ures, the state capital, Raousset experienced defeat. Earlier he had met with José Aguilar, then governor of Sonora, and with Interim Governor Cubillas, but no satisfactory settlement could be reached in the colonist's case. After Raousset returned to Guaymas to impose some order on his restless troops, he received word from General Blanco that the main body of the French could move inland to Hermosillo, a city then numbering about 15,000. Blanco added that Raousset and Giménez should not go with the main group but come at once to military headquarters in Arizpe. However, Raousset went with his men to Hermosillo where on July 12, 1852, he wrote to Patrice Dillon of the unfolding of events in Mexico. He reported that after a month's wait at Guaymas, he finally had permission to continue to Arizona. The French leader stated that "the condition of the company is excellent, and I have the greatest confidence in the future, I have come to seek in Sonora."[20]

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[18] New York Daily Times, December 17, 1852.

[19] Cubillas to the State Congress of Sonora, Ures, September 23, 1852, Ures El Sonorense, October 1, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 76.

[20] Daily Alta California, October 25, 1852.

How the French leader could display such confidence in the face of Blanco's restrictions is difficult to understand. Raousset probably did not believe that Blanco would continue to demand the leader's presence in Arizpe. Nevertheless, Blanco again wrote the count to present himself quickly at Arizpe. The Interim Governor Cubillas had decided that all means should be used to detain the French until "they had complied with requisites"[21] set by the government. Although the Mexicans had given permission for the majority of the French force to continue to the frontier, most remained with Raousset expecting more serious trouble to develop. They whiled away their wait working on supplies, practicing shooting, or carousing in local taverns.

While disagreements developed between Raousset and Sonoran officials, a vicious argument erupted between Colonel Giménez, the company agent, and the leader. Giménez charged Raousset with spending funds recklessly and not making an accounting of the money. By the time the expedition prepared to leave Hermosillo, both men distinctly distrusted and disliked the other considerably. On July 27, as the party prepared to leave for Saric, Raousset tentatively agreed to go to Arizpe to talk with Blanco. However, two days later, the entire French force, Raousset in the lead, left Hermosillo in full military uniform. The group left in parade fashion, with their leader in front with his sword drawn. The departure was calculated to impress the local citizens, although the Mexican government had warned the French against any ostentatious display of military power. Not only did

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[21]Cubillas to the State Congress of Sonora, Ures, September 23, 1852, <u>Ures El Sonorense</u>, October 1, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 73.

Raousset leave flaunting the group's strength, but he left without keeping his appointment with the Mexican general.[22] Colonel Giménez immediately withdrew from the group. Later, Giménez rejoined the French when Raousset agreed to stop brandishing weapons and intimidating Mexican citizens. Giménez and Juan Jaroszewski, a mining expert hired by Jecker and Company, rode in advance of Raousset's group, and at the Hacienda de Santa Ana encountered one of General Blanco's messengers. The dispatch from Blanco again ordered Raousset and Giménez to come to military headquarters. Giménez felt they should comply, but Raousset did not acquiese until after he had talked with his officers. After a brief consultation the two men left with the Mexican escort.

En route to Arizpe, Raousset's party was joined by six survivors of Pindray's colony. They camped near Cocospera, where nearly forty French families lived. After talking to these survivors, Raousset decided he would not go to Arizpe but instead would send Achille Garnier as his representative. Raousset made it known that his group would fall apart without his presence; therefore, after a few days rest he rejoined his party.[23] It is likely that while visiting with the remaining colonists of the Pindray settlement, Raousset heard of the mysterious death of Pindray. With this knowledge he may have reconsidered the consequences of the influence being brought to bear by Barron, Forbes and Company. He felt he could no longer continue his

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[22]Sobarzo, Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 97-98.

[23]Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 36-37. See also, Sobarzo, Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 103-104; and Wyllys, The French in Sonora, pp. 95-96.

plans without Mexican help, so he reportedly went to see Manuel María Gandara, seeking aid in overthrowing the state government. Gándara doubtless realized the futility of such careless action for he refused to participate.[24]

Raousett's decision to avoid General Blanco was intuitive, because when Giménez arrived at Arizpe he was placed in a military jail for disregarding earlier orders to appear. The Mexicans were disappointed that Raousset had not arrived, but they still talked of giving terms to the French in the hope of avoiding outright warfare. The French were told they must renounce their French citizenship and obey all Mexican laws; then they would be allowed to petition in Ures for letters of security, which would allow them to proceed to their destination with a Mexican escort and which would provide them with permits for civilian colonization. Finally Blanco urged the French to reduce their force to fifty unarmed men to work the mines; they would be protected by the Mexican military. Raousset knew that the Mexicans previously had been unable to supply adequate military protection on the frontier—compliance with the latter term would be certain suicide.[25]

The count gave the expected reply—the terms were untenable. Blanco reacted by preparing an immediate expedition against the foreign intruders. Throughout Mexico rumors spread that the French had sent "agents to California to bring a larger number of armed Frenchmen and

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[24] Daily Alta California, November 10, 1852. See also, Sobarzo, Crónica de la Aventura, p. 109.

[25] Sobarzo, Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 109-110. See also, Wyllys, The French in Sonora, p. 98.

other resources for resistance."[26] Raousset felt that his word and his contract with the Mexicans indicated his legal right, and chose not to be intimidated by the superior military authorities.[27] Yet his legal underpinings were soon swept away. The Sonoran Congress abrogated all mining claims that the French had filed, and on October 1, 1852, it appropriated funds for a large military campaign against the French.[28] The following day General Blanco advised Governor Cubillas that the army was marching to meet the enemy.[29] In that space the governor made one last attempt to avert bloodshed. He appealed to the good sense of the French, indicating that if Raousset did not comply at once he and his followers would be treated "as pirates and dealt with as such." The governor insisted that foreigners must "strictly submit to the requirements of the laws of the Republic for their permanancy in the Country."[30]

In his appeal to Raousset, the governor urged the count and his men to accept letters of security and to become unarmed civilian settlers. He indicated that he favored the French settling in military colonies as outlined by the colonization plan of 1848. The Mexican leader strongly stated to Raousset that the Mexican government had used

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[26]Cubillas to the State Congress of Sonora, Ures, September 23, 1852, Ures El Sonorense, October 1, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 76. See also, Daily Alta California, December 16, 1852.

[27]Ures El Sonorense, September 24, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 67.

[28]Ibid., October 8, 1852, p. 81.

[29]Blanco to Cubillas, Arizpe, October 2, 1852, in ibid.

[30]Ures El Sonorense, October 15, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 85.

"a greater moderation, prudence and tolerance than you had a right to expect."[31] Again he promised protection from Indians and others if the French would obey all state laws. Raousset knew that protection had proved inadequate in the past, which weakened the governor's argument. The Mexicans were determined, however, and surprisingly Raousset did not perceive that if he and his men continued on their journey only fatal consequences could result. On October 5 Raousset replied with an explanation of the French claims, refusing a peaceful settlement. After four months of deliberation Raousset concluded that what he was doing was in the best interests of Mexico.[32] Even Giménez tried to dissuade Raousset, to no avail.

The Mexicans had been surprisingly tolerant, for on September 24, 1852, shortly before the state congress provided funds to finance an army against the filibusters, General Blanco made a last appeal for peaceful settlement. The Mexican general reminded Raousset that both high Mexican and French officials had placed great confidence in the honesty and integrity of the French expedition. Blanco told the count that he had signed a contract with Mexican authorities—a contract Blanco aimed to see fulfilled.[33] If the French accepted the terms he offered, Blanco advised them to go at once to Arizpe. As an illustration the general reminded Raousset that eighty-three of the Frenchmen who came to Mexico with Charles de Pindray, along with fifty-seven

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[31]Ibid., p. 87.

[32]Ibid., pp. 90-91.

[33]Blanco to Raousset, Arizpe, September 24, 1852, in ibid., October 22, 1852, pp. 93-102. See also, Lambertie, _Le Drame de la Sonora_, pp. 61-63.

who settled near Tucson, had become Mexican citizens. He concluded by giving Raousset ten days to decide whether to comply with orders—or be driven out of the country by force.

The French already had made the decision by the first days of October and departed before receiving Blanco's ultimatum. The group left Saric well armed. After much discussion of the terms offered, the men unanimously favored a fight to the finish. The French foraged nearby towns for supplies, in the process gaining the enmity of villagers who feared the French might take control of the entire state. Luís Redondo, Prefect of Guadalupe, advised Raousset to obey the general's orders, but the count would not go to Arizpe because "he would be imprisoned as Giménez was by military authority--in which case his force would try to liberate him as they could and this would have evil consequences which he wanted to avert."[34] The prefect also reported to Governor Cubillas that remnants of Charles Pindray's party and survivors of Sainte Amant's group had joined with Raousset. He warned that all of "these foreigners are now engaged, where they dwell, in making lances, bayonets, hand grenades, and other articles of war."[35] Thus, when the French left Saric, they were well prepared for a confrontation with Blanco.

As the group neared San Ignacio on September 30, the prefect asked why the foreigners were coming and what was their intent. The count assured the villagers that they were in no danger. Raousset repeated that only if General Blanco threatened violence would he "be forced

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[34] Ures El Sonorense, October 1, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 71.

[35] Ibid.

to resort to arms for the defense of his rights."[36] Raousset steadfastly believed that he and his men were "soldiers of liberty" and the "apostles of civilization."

On September 23 the party moved toward Magdalena, seizing supplies along the road. In at least two instances they captured supplies intended for the Mexicans. One of these was a supply train headed for the Forbes and Company base already in the northern border area. The other was a supply group that Blanco had sent to his northern troops. Since the French were aware of the need for local support, they were reasonably careful to pay for items from local citizens, giving the count's personal script. From October 1 until October 6 the French remained in Magdalena, hoping to secure support for a general uprising or revolution. If Raousset had come to Mexico with honorable intentions, which was doubtful, he had abandoned any pretext of legitimacy by this time. It was in this camp at Magdalena that he received the last ultimatum from Blanco—an exhortation for the French to save themselves.[37]

The Mexican force was poorly prepared, but it expected an attack on Ures. Blanco led his army into the city and began preparing fortifications. However, he received information that the French were going to attack Hermosillo first, and raced there with only 240 men and some volunteers—not enough to defend the city. Nevertheless, Blanco decided to make his stand at this place and therefore fortified the

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[36]Gonzales to Raousset, San Ignacio, in ibid., September 30, 1852.

[37]Sobarzo, Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 125-128. See also, Cubillas to Raousset, Ures, October 2, 1852, in Ures El Sonorense, October 15, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, pp. 84-103.

outskirts of the city as best he could.[38] En route to Hermosillo, Raousset learned of the Mexican occupation. When he stopped to organize his troops for battle, Blanco took the opportunity to send comissioners to advise the French against attacking the city. Probably the French knew their advantage, for Raousset responded with a challenge—he would be in the city in a few hours with the Mexicans fleeing before him for their lives.

Within the hour the French moved into the outskirts of the city, and sporadic fighting began. The attackers found little opposition and moved deeper into the city, pushing the Mexicans before them. In at least one skirmish the Mexicans broke and ran for their lives. Blanco himself tried to lead a charge to stop the onslaught, but it proved hopeless. The invaders had superior organization and were more skillful with their weapons—a probable reason for Blanco's repeated entreaties for Raousset to come willingly to Arizpe. Within two hours the French occupied all of the city, suffering only eighteen killed and thirty-two wounded. Unfortunately, Garnier, Fayolle, and Lefranc—three of Raousset's most dedicated officers—died in the struggle. Mexican losses were twenty-four killed and over fifty wounded.[39] Allegedly, Raousset detained the most important men in Hermosillo as hostages, and "hoisted a free flag, inscribed 'Liberty to the State of Sonora.'"[40] As for all military reverses, someone received the blame, and Mexican Officials, both at the state and national level, criticized

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[38]Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 75-76. See also, Wyllys, The French In Sonora, pp. 111-112.

[39]Ibid., p. 77.

[40]Daily Alta California, December 23, 1852.

Blanco severely for his loss.

With this first military success, Raousset sought more support from Mexican citizens. It is likely that he approached known rebels. The French may even have contacted Manuel María Gandara or his brother Jesus, hoping for more aid in generating a general revolution. If so, these politicians sensed a losing cause and rejected the invitation. In fact, as secretary of the state congress, Jesus helped draft a request to the inhabitants of Sonora to throw out the intruders. This appeal suggested that "the miserable adventurers must be taught that Sonorans are not cowards, but loyal citizens of the Republic."[41]

At this critical moment a stroke of fate, not Mexican firepower, put a temporary end to the French threat. Raousset suffered a violent attack of dysentary. He and several of his officers were incapacitated. Poor medical attention in Hermosillo added to the seriousness of the disorder. In addition, Raousset was said to have had an arm wound from the heated fighting at Hermosillo.[42] With their officers dead or diseased, the French all agreed that Nicholas Martincourt and N. Lenoir would lead them out of the country to safety.[43] These new leaders communicated with Gandara, who was in charge of the Mexicans at Ures, and the group secured permission to go unmolested to Guaymas, leaving all the wounded behind in Hermosillo. According to this agreement, the French were to leave the area peacefully. Blanco did not know of the

[41]Ures El Sonorense, October 22, 1852, p. 107.

[42]Daily Alta California, December 18, 23, 1852.

[43]Bancroft, California, VI, 588; See also Lambertie, Le Drame, p. 82.

agreement, and he was prepared to fortify Guaymas.[44] On October 24 the French left Hermosillo, according to Gandara's terms. Blanco by this time had decided to attack and beseige the French once they arrived at the port city. He intended to "treat with these bandits," and "shew [sic] them that the honor of the Mexican flag was not to be insulted with impunity."[45]

By the time the French party neared Guaymas, Raousset was unable to walk and was being carried on a litter. Vice Consul José Calvo sent a warning to Raousset that a very large Mexican force commanded by Blanco was waiting at Guaymas. At this point, without local support and his health at low-point, Raousset knew he could not continue his struggle. During that evening he sent the message to General Blanco: "It is necessary that I have an interview with you."[46] The general guaranteed the count safe passage to military headquarters for a conference, but Raousset was so ill that he was unable to confer effectively. The truce was extended for two more days so that Blanco could meet with other French leaders—Martincourt and Lenoir—concerning surrender terms.[47] The wily Mexican general also talked with Raousset's men, convincing them of the uselessness of continuing the struggle.

The French signed surrender terms on November 4, denouncing all

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[44]Wyllys, The French in Sonora, pp. 121-122; See also Lambertie, Le Drame, p. 82.

[45]Daily Alta California, December 23, 1852.

[46]Ures El Sonorense, November 12, 1852, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 110.

[47]Ibid., p. 112.

their original intentions, as well as their leader.[48] How Blanco so easily obtained such an extensive surrender was not immediately certain. Blanco acknowledged that on November 4 "the French laid down their arms, delivering them to me, as well as their ammunition, horses, mules, saddles, wagons, artillery--in short all the property of the members of this distinguished company."[49] It was conjectured in the Daily Alta California that Blanco may have bribed the French with nearly eleven thousand dollars to obtain their surrender.[50] The New York Daily Times also speculated that perhaps Blanco had "bought off" the French intruders for a considerable sum of money.[51] It is understandable that probably the group had decided the land was not promising enough to cost them their own blood. It is more probable that Blanco had breached the unity of the expedition, successfully dividing Raousset from his men and officers. Possibly he also persuaded the local merchants of Guaymas to contribute ten thousand pesos for French transportation back to California.[52] No matter the stimuli, the French left the land.

With the end in sight, the party scattered. Most of these Frenchmen returned to San Francisco after securing ship passage from Mazatlán. However, some of the more anxious survivors traveled the difficult overland route back to California. Raousset remained for a time in Mazat-

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[48] Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 90-92.

[49] Daily Alta California, December 22, 1852.

[50] Ibid., December 18, 1852.

[51] New York Daily Times, January 1, 1853.

[52] Ibid., December 22, 23, 1852; see also, Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, p. 92.

lán, recovering from his illnesses, but early in 1853 Patrice Dillon wrote advising Raousset to make his way back to San Francisco—to return later in the year with a greater force.[53] Significantly, almost everyone lost in this episode. Jecker, Torre, and Company paid damages to the government. The eventual winner, General Blanco, nevertheless was relieved of his command and recalled to Mexico City.[54] On May 18, 1854, while leading another expedition to Sonora Raousset wrote a letter to Consul Dillon, claiming that he had been duped in the earlier expedition. He felt the contract signed in Mexico City in April of 1852, had been binding, but the Sonorans had not fulfilled the agreement. The Frenchmen, he said, "were summoned to renounce their allegiance to France, or to reembark...they were reduced for their own defense, and after having received the first fire to combat the General who commanded in Sonora."[55]

One question remained unanswered—that of official French governmental influence in the expedition. Until Levasseur stepped out of the Jecker and Company organization, the French government was at least quasi involved, for Levasseur was the minister to Mexico. Not until the frontier situation deteriorated—and this occurred when the plan was already in motion—did the French officially disassociate themselves. However, the New York Daily Times reported that arguments on the Mexican question in French and English newspaper "were calculated

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[53]Wyllys, The French in Sonora, 132. See also, Daily Alta California, September 24, 1854, and December 18, 1852; and Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 85 and 97.

[54]Ures El Sonorense, February 4, 25, March 18, 1852, pp. 140, 143, and 151-154. Pinart Transcript, Sonora, V.

[55]New York Daily Times, November 2, 1854.

to attract their [French and English citizens] attention, and predispose them to undertake the protectorate of Mexico whenever events shall seem propitious."[56] Thus it seems feasible that, in order to stop the expansion of the United States, a conscious propaganda campaign may have been waged, at least by the French government.

During his first expedition, Raousset failed as a leader largely as a result of bad health. He almost succeeded in his venture to revolutionize Sonora. He said he came as a colonizer, but his actions suggested otherwise. Considering his personality and his background, there is little doubt but that his intentions were to make himself sole ruler of northern Mexico--the "Sultan of Sonora." And his first venture encouraged him sufficiently that he would again filibuster in Sonora at a later date. And it was his near success that inspired others to take personal advantage of the political disorganization in Mexico. Others followed his path. Before Raousset returned to California to organize his second expedition, William Walker--the "grey eyed man of destiny"--was preparing to liberate Baja California and proclaim a Republic.

[56]Ibid., December 17, 1852.

CHAPTER VI

PRESIDENT OF BAJA CALIFORNIA AND SONORA

In 1853 Mexico still was seething with civil strife and shackled by Indian uprisings, but there remained sufficient national pride for the people to repel invaders. Outward instability stiffened into unified resistance when faced with foreign intruders; therefore, when William Walker and Henry Watkins began a bizzare attempt to conquer both Lower California and Sonora, they were met with hostility by officials, peasants, and even bandits. Although they brought a large number of armed men to Mexico, their expedition was doomed almost from the beginning. Walker's character and his poor leadership not only combined to thwart this filibuster, but eventually would cost him his life in Nicaragua.

Walker was born in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1824. His father was a native of Scotland who had settled in Tennessee four years previously. William was the eldest of four children, and did receive a good, even an extraordinary, education. He graduated from the University of Nashville at fourteen and then studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. After receiving his M.D. degree in 1843, he traveled through Europe, returning to Nashville in 1845. Once at home, however, Walker found medicine not to his liking and began the study of law. Next he moved to New Orleans where he practiced law briefly but unsuccessfully. By 1848 he had turned to yet another profession—

assistant editor of the New Orleans Crescent.

This occupation suited him, and while editing this paper he met John Randolph, a clerk of the United States court and grandson of Edmund Randolph of Virginia. The young men formed a lasting friendship; in fact, Randolph would have great influence on Walker's career in California.

Walker had another acquaintance in New Orleans who indirectly may have had even more influence on his subsequent career. She was Helen Martin, a blind girl, whose death in June, 1850, possibly gave Walker the reckless and careless characteristics which dominated him in later life. He allegedly loved only this woman, and after her death he became restless to leave Louisiana.[1] Thereafter his only close friends were men—many of whom swayed him.

News of the gold strike in California came just after his loss, and the heart broken Walker headed west to find his fortune. He arrived at San Francisco in 1850. John Randolph, who already had a good reputation there, helped Walker obtain a job as assistant editor of the San Francisco Daily Herald. In this position he expressed his contempt for the corruption in the California courts—especially Judge Levi Parson. The judge fought back, jailing the itinerant editor, but the people of San Francisco vehemently vocalized their disapproval of the judge's action and demanded Walker's release.

Walker was freed and could have made political capital out of the episode had he known how. Instead he fought a duel with one of Parson's cronies and was wounded slightly, but still he emerged a

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[1]Johnson and Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography, pp. 363-365.

regional hero. Although he had gained recognition in California, Walker seemed incapable of capitalizing on his opportunities. Popular with the people, he was aloof, indifferent, and vacillating—qualities which hindered his leadership.[2]

Thomas Robinson Warren described Walker in 1858 as very slim, weighing no more than a hundred pounds, with light hair, "while his almost white eyebrows and lashes concealed a seemingly pupilless, grey, cold eye, and his face was a mass of yellow freckles, the whole expression very heavy."[3] Regardless of his deficiencies and his appearance, "the grey-eyed man of destiny" was determined to succeed. The doctor-lawyer-turned editor left California and moved to Marysville, where in 1851 and 1852 he practiced law with Henry P. Watkins, his future filibustering associate. Their law business was only meager; consequently, both men looked for something more rewarding. At this time the news of the French filibustering expeditions in Mexico reached the United States. At a later date Walker acknowledged that his idea for establishing Americans in northern Mexico originated among the residents living at Auburn, California, in 1852. The aim of several enterprising citizens of this town was to establish military colonies along the Mexican frontier—probably under the guise of settlement according to Mexican colonization laws. Several of these people had contributed funds for sending two agents to Guaymas to secure land grants near

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[2]For biographical details, see William D. Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers (New York, 1916), and Arthur Woodward, ed., The Republic of Lower California (Los Angeles, 1966), pp. 9-20.

[3]Thomas Robinson Warren, Dust and Foam, or, Three Oceans and Two Continents (New York, 1858), pp. 212-213.

Arizpe. Frederick Emory, later an official in Walker's Republic of Lower California, was one of the men. Unfortunately for the residents of Auburn, the "Sultan of Sonora," Count Gaston Raousset de Boulbon was then in Mexico, and the Mexican attitude towards foreign settlers was extremely negative. The citizens of Auburn therefore temporarily abandoned their plan.

Yet after Raousset's failure, Emory proposed the filibustering idea to Walker. Together they approached General José Castro, a Mexican living in Monterey, and asked his help—they wanted to use his name to incite revolution in northern Mexico. The general declined and later became an official in the government of Antonio López de Santa Anna.[4] Henry Watkins was enthusiastic about the scheme, and both men left almost immediately for Guaymas to test the Mexican reaction towards "colonizers" from the United States.[5]

Walker and Watkins landed at Guaymas seeking colonization permits in June of 1853. They intended to see the governor of Sonora, and for that purpose carried letters of recommendation from the Mexican Vice-Consul in San Francisco. Walker also carried a passport which proved useless in Mexico. After he and Watkins arrived at the Mexican port, the prefect refused to allow them to travel to Ures where they might visit the governor of the state. Manuel María Gandara, then chief executive of Sonora, countermanded the prefect's order and issued the necessary travel permits, but Walker and Watkins hastily left for

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[4]A. P. Nasatir, "The Second Incumbency of Jacques A. Morenhout," California Historical Quarterly, XXVII (June, 1948), pp. 141-148.

[5]William Walker, The War in Nicaragua (Mobile, 1860), pp. 19-20.

California.[6] The future filibusters had heard of Indian raids in Sonora and had left Guaymas firmly convinced that the local citizens would welcome Americans who were willing to help fight the Apaches.

Back in California, Walker "at once hoisted his filibustering banner, and the work of enlistment went on very rapidly; many a ruined gambler, outlaw, and drifter in California flocking to his standard."[7]

However, local Sonoran officials were irate when they heard of Walker's suggestion for American intrusion. Moreover, they were not the only Mexicans concerned, for Manuel Diaz de Bonilla, Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations, advised the United States minister to Mexico, James Gadsden, of Walker's intentions. The Mexican minister told Gadsden that the two Americans were not to be allowed passage to the interior, as he and local authorities suspected "them of complicity with a group of adventurers then intended to invade Sonora."[8] The Mexicans had made only half an accurate appraisal; Walker had designs on both Sonora and Lower California. In fact, Walker—the future president of the "Republic of Sonora"—had already begun selling bonds for his "republic" as early as May, 1853. Thus the Mexicans were fully aware of Walker's plans by the time he arrived at Guaymas.[9] The warning from Bonilla to Gadsden was but the first of many diplomatic messages concerning Walker; in the next year he would have a strong

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[6]Ibid., pp. 20-21.

[7]Warren, Dust and Foam, p. 213.

[8]Manuel Diaz de Bonilla to James Gadsden, August 20, 1853, Mexico City, Ministeral Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

[9]Daily Alta California, December 1, 1853.

influence on relations between the two republics.

Recruiting men for filibustering expeditions to Mexico, as always, proved easy. Newspapers in California gave considerable space to Walker's activities. Soon he had more men than he could equip or transport. By the end of September all preparations were completed, including chartering of the Brig Arrow to transport the group. A delay occurred, however, when near midnight on September 30 United States Army troops seized the ship. The commander of the Department of the Pacific, General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, had orders from President Millard Fillmore to prevent such illegal expeditions to Mexico. Hitchcock had heard of the proposed filibustering expedition the year before, but not until September 30 did he know the ship was loaded with arms, ammunitions, and other supplies and was preparing to leave the bay area.

When Hitchcock verified the rumors, he seized the ship.[10] The army found on board only the ship's captain, a lady and her child, and a sailor. The Daily Alta California recorded that in addition to these persons, "in the hold of the brig were found a quantity of cartridge boxes, paper for making cartridges, a lot of camp kettles, and other cooking utensils for military forces."[11] Army Captain E. D. Keyes and his men turned the ship over to a United States marshal the next day. The affair was so heatedly debated in the press and in public places, however, that the marshal decided he could not legally

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[10] W. A. Croffut, ed., Fifty Years in Camp and Field: Diary of Ethan Allen Hitchcock, U.S.A. (New York, 1909), pp. 400-403.

[11] Daily Alta California, October 2, 1853.

hold the ship, an expedient and popular conclusion. Accordingly, he returned it promptly to the army. Filibusters were local heroes in California in the 1850's, and local newspapers attempted to damage Hitchcock's military reputation. However, one editor speculated that "all will alike smile at the puny attempt of this desappointed [sic] expeditionist to injure the fame of one of the most distinguished soldiers in the U. S. Army."[12]

Walker responded to Hitchcock's seizure by taking out a writ, claiming he owned both vessel and cargo, whereupon the local sheriff urged the army to surrender the ship to its owner. General Hitchcock had presidential orders to stop illegal filibustering expeditions, but the local sheriff was unimpressed--he had the firepower. Fearing the boldness of the local law, Hitchcock ordered the ship anchored in the bay with a small guard detachment. Intent on fulfilling his orders, he then sought help from the United States district attorney in San Francisco, but commented in his diary that this official too "had been corrupted, probably by Senator Gwin."[13] The district attorney responded that he felt pressure and public opinion demanded that the vessel be returned to its rightful owner. Hitchcock angrily replied: "Damn public opinion."[14]

While the Army held the _Arrow_ and while the court case was developing, Walker and several of his men slipped out of San Francisco

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[12]Ibid., October 9, 1853.

[13]Croffut, ed., _Fifty Years in Camp and Field_, p. 401. William Gwin, a United States Senator, obviously favored Walker's plans and may have used his influence with the district attorney.

[14]Ibid. See also, _Daily Alta California_, October 11, 1853.

on board a smaller ship, the Caroline, a ship licensed in Mexico and owned by the son of the United States consul at Guaymas. With some forty-five men on board, the ship sailed from San Francisco on October 16, headed for Cape San Lucas at the Southern tip of Baja California. There the party stopped briefly before proceeding on to La Paz.[15] Because this expedition had departed as hastily, they had left behind many guns, considerable quantity of ammunition, and other supplies still on board the Arrow and on the wharves nearby. At Cape San Lucas the men foraged for what supplies were available and waited for reinforcements that Henry Watkins was to bring from California. Watkins did not arrive, so Walker continued alone.

On November 3, 1853, the Caroline and its party of filibusters sailed into La Paz harbor. There they took possession of the town and arrested Colonel Rafael Espinosa, the Mexican governor. Less than thirty minutes were required for them to capture the poorly defended city. When the Mexican flag was lowered, Walker declared the independence of Lower California. A new flag with two red stripes, a white stripe, and two stars was raised, and the "Republic of Lower California" was therefore established.[16] Walker and his small group contemplated their situation in La Paz for three days. Finally all agreed that they could neither hold La Paz with so few men nor could they invade Sonora, their real goal. Thus they contented themselves with plundering the area, disrupting the economy, and otherwise incurring the hatred of the local Mexicans. Still no actual resistance

[15]Daily Alta California, December 8, 1853. See also, Croffut, ed., Fifty Years in Camp and Field, p. 403.

[16]San Diego Herald, December 3, 1853.

was encountered until November 6 when the group was leaving.

On this same day the Walker expedition complicated United States-Mexican diplomacy. James Gadsden, United States Minister to Mexico, was attempting to complete the purchase of the southern portion of present-day Arizona—and he had more than enough problems without the complication of filibusters. Juan Robinson, United States consul at Guaymas, contacted Gadsden, asking if Americans (obviously referring to Walker and Watkins) could be kept from journeying to the Mexican interior. Robinson specifically mentioned rumors of American filibustering expeditions. He suggested to Gadsden that an American ship should be sent to Guaymas "to dispel in a great measure the existing apprehensions, remove the jealous feelings, and create confidence towards our government."[17] Within three days the filibustering expedition had created a crisis of international proportions. Robinson sent a request to a British warship off the Mexican coast near Guaymas to intercept the Caroline loaded with those "piratical" filibusters. Commander J. C. Prevost replied on November 9 that the Virago could take no such action.[18] The Mexican minister of foreign affairs in Mexico City, Manuel Diaz de Bonilla, informed Gadsden on November 9 that a filibustering expedition comprised of "more than 200 men, with arms and several pieces of artillery" had left San Francisco for

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[17]Juan Robinson to James Gadsden, November 6, 1853, Guaymas, Consular Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

[18]Juan Robinson to J. C. Prevost, November 9, 1853, Guaymas, ibid. See also, J. C. Prevost to Juan Robinson, November 11, 1853, Guaymas, ibid.

Mexico.[19] Gadsden wanted no interference with the treaty he was negotiating. To placate the Mexican authorities Gadsden assured Bonilla that he had issued orders to all United States warships in the waters off Mexico to intercept any suspicious ships containing a large group of men or carrying obvious war supplies.[20] There followed a steady stream of reports pouring into Mexico City from Guaymas. On November 17 Robinson advised Gadsden that the Sonoran seaport was an armed camp, for the <u>commandante militar</u> had recruited all able-bodied men to repel the filibusters.[21] It was the American minister at Mexico City who notified Bonilla of the capture of La Paz. He further alerted the minister that "the party will await reinforcements, and mature their plans for consummating their original designs against the state of Sonora."[22]

While the tempo of diplomatic correspondence increased each day, Walker issued additional decrees for his "republic." He established a free trade policy, and he promulgated the Civil Code of Louisiana as law.[23] Several influential people in the United States viewed Walker's activities as proof of a slaveocracy conspiracy. The <u>Daily Alta</u>

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[19]Manuel Diaz de Bonilla to James Gadsden, November 15, 1853, Mexico City, Ministeral Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

[20]James Gadsden to Manuel Diaz de Bonillas, November 17, 1853, Mexico City, ibid.

[21]Juan Robinson to James Gadsden, November 17, 1853, Guaymas, Consular Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

[22]James Gadsden to Manuel Diaz de Bonillas, November 19, 1853, Mexico City, Ministeral Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

[23]<u>Daily Alta California</u>, December 26, 1853.

California reported on December 16 that "the filibustering scheme was concocted last winter or spring, and it is confidently asserted by some not unacquainted with the leaders, that the introduction of slavery [into Mexico] is one important object in their aggression."[24] To be certain, Walker appeared the harbinger of slavery, for one of his first moves was to establish the Civil Code of Louisiana as the legal guide for Baja California. Although such evidence seems to indicate Walker indeed was part of a Southern slaveocracy conspiracy, no such premeditated plan can be proven to have existed. Of course, Walker and others involved were Southerners who doubtless favored slavery and would have established it if the quixotic Republic of Baja California had succeeded. Yet no concerted involvement on the part of Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, or of any other known Southerner in the United States government, then or now, was evident. The available facts indicate only that Walker was an idealistic individual—albeit occasionally verging on insanity—who sought personal power and fame. Adventure and disappointment, as well as infamous propaganda, were his only rewards.

Before leaving La Paz on November 6, Walker unexpectedly captured the replacement governor of Baja California. Actually, the governor had the misfortune of arriving at the port when Walker's well armed party was in control. Walker realized that the new governor would make a good hostage; therefore, he immediately seized the Mexican before he could muster support. When a party of six men went ashore to collect wood before departing, the group returned to the ship only

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[24] Ibid., December 16, 1853.

after fighting a battle with local patriotic citizens. Walker was angered by the attack, and he intended to prove that he was not to be taken lightly. Therefore while his cannon fired on La Paz, he landed a larger party of men. Seven Mexicans were killed, and once again Walker was master of La Paz. This "Battle of La Paz" was regarded by members of the expedition as symbolizing their establishment of a "Republic."

The Walker party then sailed to Cape San Lucas, arriving there on November 8, 1853. The Americans were sorely disappointed, for the town was small, poor, indefensible, and still too far south. Moreover, a Mexican warship appeared on the horizon, causing Walker to fear that an attack was forthcoming. He decided to move much nearer the United States border to await reinforcements, also knowing that a more northern base would facilitate his conquest of Sonora; thus the next day he sailed for Enseñada (Bahia) de Todos Santos. Then headquartered at Enseñada, one hundred miles below San Diego, Walker awaited news and reinforcements before continuing his venture. And from there he sent his secretary of state, Frederick Emory, to California for supplies.[25]

Emory was well received in California. Filibustering activities almost always proved popular with Californians and received widespread notice in the press. On this occasion the newspapers hailed Walker's efforts "as another advance toward that 'manifest destiny' of the

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[25]Rufus K. Wyllys, "The Republic of Lower California, 1853-1854," Pacific Historical Review, II (June, 1933), pp. 194-213. See also, Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers, pp. 38-39, and Wyllys, "William Walker's Invasion of Sonora, 1854," Arizona Historical Review, pp. 61-67.

Anglo-Saxon race."[26] Californians realized also that should Walker fail, "the Mexican character is too well known to hope or expect that a company, from this country would be shown any mercy if taken prisoners...they can expect no quarter, or hope for no mercy."[27] Therefore, the Daily Alta California recorded that Emory's arrival "excited our American population to the wildest bounds of Joy."[28] In San Francisco Emory opened a recruiting office and unfurled the flag of the Republic of Baja California over the door—a propaganda ploy, for immediately there were too many volunteers.[29]

Shortly after the debarkment of the filibusters at Enseñada and while the captain of the Caroline was still ashore, the first mate of the ship sailed off with the captured Mexican official on board. Perhaps the Mexican on board convinced the first mate that Walker and the ship captain would meet certain failure.[30] It is possible that such Mexican arguments were influential; in addition, the mate may have known that Thomas Robinson, the ship's owner, was unaware of Walker's use of the vessel for filibustering. Significantly, much of the trouble between Juan Robinson, the United States Consul at Guaymas, and Mexican authorities had arisen because of the son's ownership of the Caroline. Juan Robinson tried to vindicate himself and his son, but did not successfully convince the Mexicans of his family's innocence. Robinson wrote to William Marcy, Secretary of State, explaining

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[26] Daily Alta California, December 9, 1853.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., December 8, 1853.

[29] Ibid., December 11, 1853.

[30] Ibid., February 5, 1854.

that the younger Robinson knew nothing of the filibustering expedition, but it mattered little by this time. Juan Robinson was forced to flee from Guaymas, and the United States government appointed another consul.[31]

Walker's problems were greatly intensified by the loss of the ship. He had insufficient supplies, and he was being harrassed by a Mexican bandit-turned-patriot, Guadalupe Melendrez. No sooner had Walker and his men disembarked than the Mexican attacked them. Lieutenant John McKibbin, according to reports from Enseñada, died "while taking deliberate aim at the person of the outlaw, Melendrez."[32] Although faced with these problems, Walker was not content at Enseñada. He sent men to capture Santo Tomas, a Mexican military colony about thirty miles south of his headquarters. The Mexican commander there, Colonel Francisco del Castillo Negrete, drove the filibusters away. The Mexican then sought the help of Melendrez, and in a combined force they laid seige to Enseñada during the middle of December. Wearied by the harrassment, the filibusters launched a surprise attack one dark night and drove the Mexicans back some distance.[33] Not until this attack was a woman reported with the Americans. The Daily Alta California noted that she was "the wife of Capt. Chapman, of the first party of 'old guard;' whose attention to the sick and wounded...and personal heroism, contributed greatly to the success of the

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[31]Juan Robinson to William Marcy, February 24, 1854, Mazatlan, Consular Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

[32]Daily Alta California, January 10, 1854. See also, Woodward, ed., The Republic of Lower California, p. 29.

[33]Daily Alta California, December 27, 1853, and January 10, 1854.

expedition."[34] She must have been the only woman filibuster, for no other mention of her or any other female was ever made in any correspondence.

While at Enseñada in close proximity to the American border, Walker took the opportunity to justify his venture to the people of the United States. He declared that Mexican officials had not faced their responsibilities in Lower California or in Sonora. He said that if the two states remained under Mexican rule, they would be forever "wild, half savage and uncultivated, covered with an indolent and half civilized people."[35] Walker made the same mistake, as others before and after him, of underestimating the nationalistic urges of the local citizens and of ignoring their tolerance for bad government by Mexicans in preference to "enlightened" government by such Americans as himself. In an attempt to placate the local Mexicans, Walker added that he would "guarantee every man possession of what he earns by the sweat of his brow."[36]

Reinforcements arrived at Enseñada on December 28, almost two hundred of them aboard the small brig Anita. According to an anonymous member, whose letter was quoted in the newspaper, the trip was a terrifying experience. He reported that "almost all on board were more less drunk."[37] Nothing was secured below or above deck; the sea was rough; and the ship was ill equipped for so many men. "In the

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[34]Ibid.

[35]San Diego Herald, December 3, 1853. See also, Daily Alta California, December 8, 1853.

[36]Ibid., January 14, 1854.

[37]Woodward, ed., The Republic of Lower California, p. 40.

steerage," he wrote, "the quarters for the men, were several thousand pounds of gunpowder, and yet the men were going about in the most careless manner with lighted segars [sic], pipes, and candles."[38] Despite such carelessness the ship did arrive at Enseñada, and the men disembarked enthusiastically, led by Walker's trusted associate Henry Watkins. Enthusiasm dwindled, however, when the men learned of Walker's problems. The _Anita_ brought men and guns; but, believing the advance guard had been highly successful, Watkins had brought no food—this a most serious handicap.[39] Many of the new men had their own ideas about conquering Sonora. These problems, when complicated by poor diet, led to dissension and desertions. To keep his followers occupied and to find food, Walker sent a party of men to seek and destroy Melendrez and his bandits who allegedly were headquartered at Santo Tomas. Fortunately these few filibusters found no unfriendly forces, and they returned to Enseñada with cattle and sheep stolen from the nearby ranch belonging to the bandit Melendrez.

By December 30 all appeared quiet, and a correspondent from Enseñada wrote the _Daily Alta California_ that Walker's government was doing well and that the bandit, Melendrez "has retired to the lower portion of the Republic without men, arms or ammunition."[40] Some Mexicans may have welcomed the Americans at first, but Walker's party did little to encourage such local trust. In Guaymas the citizens threw stones at any American and cried "mueran a los Yankees" (death

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[38]Ibid.

[39]_Daily Alta California_, January 10, 1854. See also, Scroggs, _Filibusters and Financiers_, p. 41.

[40]Ibid., January 3 and 10, 1854.

to Americans). Two thousand regulars of the Mexican Army formed near the city, expecting to move to Baja California to engage the filibusters shortly.[41] On January 18, 1854, with his "Republic" tottering on the edge of political, financial, and moral bankruptcy, Walker grandiosely annexed Sonora to Baja California and changed the name of the expanded country to the "Republic of Sonora," with Baja California and Sonora as the two states.[42] Foreshadowing his ultimate defeat was a Mexican warship cruising off the coast near Enseñada, which shortly was joined by the U.S.S. Portsmouth.

On February 13, 1854, Walker had to move. His wounded were left to the care of sailors from the American ship, and he, along with 130 of his men, left Enseñada bound for Sonora. His numbers had dwindled to this size through desertion, many leaving when he had asked them to take an oath of allegiance to him. At one time forty-six men had left together. Although Walker had asked for their guns, "two of the men only gave up their rifles; some hid theirs and smashed them against the rocks, rather than give them up."[43] These deserters reported that Walker personally had shot two deserters and had whipped others severely. Thus the remaining filibusters went to Santo Tomas and on to San Vicente, their enthusiasm very questionable. At this town on February 28, Walker held a forced convention of local citizens and exacted their support.[44] Few in Mexico or in California believed the

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[41]Ibid.

[42]San Diego Herald, January 28, 1854.

[43]Daily Alta California, February 4, 1854.

[44]Ibid., February 22, 1854.

residents of San Vicente willingly signed Walker's oath. They had affixed their signatures to a document which read, "Yesterday, in your camp, we solemnly renounced all allegiance to every other flag or government which was not that of the Republic of Sonora....We passed beneath the two banners in token of submission, and here offer to serve you faithfully unto death."[45] It was this deed that led one American writer to declare this a "bombast declaration, prepared by Walker himself."[46] In January, however, Walker felt ready to leave Baja California and invade Sonora. Emotionally he told his army that "the men of Sonora have been forced to see their wives and daughters ravished—and babes at the breast have been torn from their mothers, and murdered before the eyes of captive parents."[47]

Although Walker sounded convincing and confident, the future was bleak for his "republic." Frederick Emory had been arrested in San Diego for complicity in the filibustering scheme. General Ethan Allen Hitchcock previously had been removed as commander of the Department of the Pacific, and there had been a brief period when America had done little to hinder illegal filibustering expeditions—partly because the local civilian authorities in California worked against the army. But with the arrival of General John E. Wool as commander of the department, the entire military establishment had become more determined to halt filibustering; hence Emory's arrest.

John Ellis Wool had been in the military since 1812. He was

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[45]Ibid., March 15, 1854.

[46]San Diego Herald, January 28, 1854.

[47]Ibid.

breveted a lieutenant colonel in 1814 for gallantry at the Battle of Plattsburg, promoted to brigadier general in 1841, and made major general in 1847 for gallantry at the Battle of Buena Vista. In 1854 Congress would resolve that thanks were due to the general "for his distinguished service in the late war with Mexico, and especially for the skill, enterprise, and courage which distinguished his conduct.... that the president be requested to cause a sword..." to be given the general.[48] Thus, John E. Wool was no ordinary soldier; in fact, even before arriving in California he had begun his campaign against filibustering expeditions. While yet in Washington on January 10, 1854, Wool wrote to Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, concerning the rumored reinforcement of the Walker party. Wool asked Davis to assign more troops in California in order to stop effectively such filibustering expeditions. Davis replied that part of Wool's job indeed was the maintenance of "our international obligations, by preventing unlawful expeditions against the territories of foreign powers."[49] However, the secretary of war seemed relatively unconcerned about filibustering. Nevertheless he agreed with Wool that there were insufficient troops in California. Considering the major problems then threatening to fragment the Union. Davis understandably had little concern about filibusters. Some suggestions have been made that this lack of concern implied involvement in a "conspiracy" to create a slaveocracy in Mexico, but no evidence has ever surfaced to suggest a genuine con-

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[48] Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army (Washington, 1903), I, pp. 1059-1060.

[49] John E. Wool to Jefferson Davis, Washington, January 10, 1854, Senate Exec. Doc. 16, 33 Cong., 2 sess., Serial 751, p. 7.

nection between governmental officials and filibusters. Granted, Davis' ardent Southernism would not have revolted at the extension of "the institution" to Mexico, but he apparently did nothing which actively promoted it.

By mid-February, Wool was in San Francisco. There he received information from Captain T. A. Dornin of the U.S.S. Portsmouth that Walker and his men had left Enseñada--destination unknown. Wool relayed this information to army headquarters in New York City, adding that he believed Count Raousset Boulbon (then organizing another expedition for Sonora) was involved with Henry P. Watkins of the Walker group. Wool also moved immediately to intercept and arrest the filibusters.[50] On March 15 he reported to the adjutant general of the army that he had arrested Watkins and Emory as well as others involved with Walker.[51] That same month he again wrote army headquarters that "the notorious Count Raousset de Boulbon was actively co-operating with Watkins, and that he had Frenchmen and Germans engaged, with whom it was supposed he intended to join Walker either in Lower California or Sonora."[52] Wool also believed it likely that the French consul, Patrice Dillon, was deeply involved and that the Mexican consul, Don Luís del Valle, also sought to support the expeditions, an act of treason against the Mexican government according to Wool.

The crusty old commander was unaware at this time that General

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[50]John E. Wool to Lieutenant Colonel L. Thomas, San Francisco, February 28, 1854, in ibid., pp. 10-11.

[51]John E. Wool to S. Cooper, San Francisco, February 28, 1854, in ibid., pp. 10-11.

[52]John E. Wool to L. Thomas, San Francisco, March 31, 1854, in ibid., p. 28.

Antonio López de Santa Anna, then dictator of Mexico, had encouraged Del Valle in his activities. Consequently at half-past one o'clock on March 31, a United States marshal arrested Del Valle for violation of the American neutrality laws; subsequently Dillon was arrested on the same charge. However, both Dillon and Del Valle were tried and declared innocent, for Del Valle did indeed have orders from Santa Anna to send men to Sonora.[53] General Wool was reprimanded by Jefferson Davis for his part in this farce. The secretary of war wrote that while Wool chose "to hold the high commission of general in the Army, you assume an obligation to render cheerful obedience to the authority and orders of this department."[54] And the general became so unpopular in San Francisco for harrassing the filibusters that he was forced to move his headquarters to Benicia Barracks, north of the Bay city. Within two years Wool was transferred back to the eastern department, but he did successfully interfere with the expeditions invading Mexico. Partially because of his efforts, no filibustering expedition succeeded while the Department of the Pacific was under his command.[55]

Meanwhile, on March 20, the "grey-eyed man of destiny" had determined to lead his men out of San Vicente. With them they drove nearly one hundred head of cattle toward the Colorado River and Sonora, for food was scarce--only beef and corn sustained the men through the desert. En route to the Colorado River, Cocopas Indians joined the

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[53]John E. Wool to John S. Cripps, San Francisco, July 29, 1854, in Ibid., pp. 95-96.

[54]Jefferson Davis to John E. Wool, Washington, August 18, 1854, in Ibid., p. 98.

[55]John E. Wool to L. Thomas, Benica, December 4, 1856, House Exec. Doc. 88, 35 Cong., 1 sess., Serial 956, p. 207.

group long enough to steal thirty head of cattle, losing three of their tribesmen in the process. Rations to the men were so reduced and water was so scarce that more followers deserted each mile. Yet Walker and the remainder did reach the Colorado River about six miles above its mouth (seventy miles south of Fort Yuma and the American border). Major Samuel P. Heintzelman, commander at Fort Yuma, recorded in his diary on April 7 that seven more of Walker's deserters had arrived at the fort.[56] Seventy-eight deserters had arrived two days previously, and the following day more came. Some of the men ultimately decided to return to Mexico with Walker, while perhaps forty-five had remained loyal to their leader throughout this tying march.[57]

At the Colorado River, Walker and his men tried to cross by raft or by swimming. In the process several head of cattle were drowned, but many men successfully crossed. The party then marched a short distance into Sonora and encamped for three days. At this point still more men deserted; those reported by Major Heintzelman began to straggle into Fort Yuma nearly naked, starving, and suffering from extreme exposure. Walker was forced to decide to return to San Vicente, whereupon still more discouraged and disillusioned deserters turned toward San Diego and safety. Only twenty-five men followed Walker back to their old headquarters at San Vicente in Baja California.[58]

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[56]Los Angeles Star, April 22, 1854.

[57]Unpublished journal of Samuel P. Heintzelman, Reel 4, Letter Book 1847, variant copy in Arizona Pioneer's Historical Society, Tucson.

[58]San Diego Herald, May 5, 1854.

The bandit Melendrez had watched every move of the retreat, and he saw the return. Walker was concerned at the bandit's continued presence and sent two men to his headquarters, Rancho de la Calentura, but both were taken prisoner by Melendrez's men. Walker, in anger, ordered an attack. When the main group of filibusters finally took the ranch, they learned that Melendrez also had captured the thirteen men left behind at San Vicente with the cattle. A Mexican, Don Juan Bandini of San Diego, described what followed when the Mexican force saw Walker's band: "After making a sudden attack and while under fire, his [Melendrez's] men succeeded in seizing the cattle in plain view of the filibusters, who shouted at them and berated them as thieves."[59] On April 17 Walker was confronted by Melendrez and about eighty well-armed Mexicans. According to a letter from one of Walker's men, the enemy remained some distance away "and commenced trailing our flag in the dust, and yelling insulting and defiant words at us."[60] Walker and his men retreated to Guadalupe Ranch, six miles distant, and camped there for a few days. On April 20 Melendrez again confronted the Americans and asked them to surrender. Walker refused by "trampling the letter under his foot."[61] The Mexicans charged, only to retreat leaving three dead and several others wounded. Walker then moved his men to the La Crulla road, but found his way to the United States blocked by armed Mexicans. His men were outnumbered four to one, so they had to take cover in the tall grass during the

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[59] Woodward, ed., The Republic of Lower California, p. 70.

[60] San Diego Herald, May 13, 1854. See also, Daily Alta California, April 26, 1854.

[61] Ibid.

ensuing battle. The Mexicans set fire to the grass, whereupon, as one of the party related, "we found it was necessary to leave, particularly as part of our luggage was powder."[62]

The bedraggled and bitter band journeyed back to Enseñada on May 1, and from there they began a torturous march toward San Diego. Snipers followed the band along the way, firing on the open roads from positions in the brush. On May 8, 1854, the Americans at last neared the border and safety, only to find Melendrez and his men blocking the way to the north. Seeing their escape route once again blocked, the filibusters made a wild and desperate charge. The blockade, dissolved, and the party arrived safely on United States soil. The irony of the battle was that a detachment of soldiers from San Diego, under the command of Major J. McKinstry, along with numerous citizens of San Diego, had come out to watch the fight.[63] And they had watched impassively, not joining in to help. Then, when the filibusters were safely on American soil, the troops moved to arrest them. Walker and his men passively agreed to go to San Francisco to face trial. The former "president" of the Republic of Sonora said he had been abused and otherwise treated badly by the Mexicans--and for no good reason, he added. The Daily Alta California reported that the Mexican "government had offered a reward for his head, and that he left the country in order to save the important member advertised."[64] Walker pleaded not guilty at his trial, and popular sentiment so favored Walker that a

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[62] Ibid.

[63] Wyllys, "Republic of Lower California," p. 211. See also, San Diego Herald, May 13, 1854.

[64] Daily Alta California, September 12, 1853.

jury declared him innocent of filibustering after just eight minutes of deliberation. Ironically the first witness that Walker's attorney, John Randolph, called was Henry A. Crabb, then a prominent Whig member of the state senate and later himself to invade Sonora. Walker's sad experience in Baja California and Sonora did not discourage other would-be conquerers, who would lead men southward seeking the illusive, magic pot of gold. Count Gaston Raousset de Boulbon already was preparing his second and final expedition to make himself "Sultan of Sonora."[65] Nor did the experience teach Walker the folly of filibustering. He later died trying to conquer Nicaragua. A Central American firing squad finally ended his career in 1860.

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[65]Wyllys, French in Sonora, p. 87.

CHAPTER VII

SULTAN OF SONORA

Count Gaston Raousset-Boulbon had returned to San Francisco after his first failure to plan for a second attempt to conquer northern Mexico. Soon after his return in January of 1853, he wrote friends and newspapers of his intentions to go to Mexico again. He said that "to return to Sonora, was the one thought of my life."[1] To all who would listen he constantly recalled the treachery of the Mexicans and expressed his optimism at the success of a new venture. This time his expedition would be composed only of Frenchmen with military experience who could be organized into an effective fighting force.

Just as his preparations appeared near completion, rumors spread of the possibility that the United States military might intervene. As the army had been instructed to halt filibustering activities, many San Francisco speculators withdrew their financial support from the venture. Perplexed but not disillusioned, Raousset waited in San Francisco for a better opportunity. And luck seemed to favor him, for André Levasseur, the French minister in Mexico, wrote the French Consul in San Francisco, Patrice Dillon, inviting Raousset to come to Mexico to confer with dictator Antonio López de Santa Anna. Although Levasseur claimed no connection with Raousset, many Mexicans believed he was

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[1]A. De Lachapelle, _Le Comte de Raousset-Boulbon et L'Expedition de la Sonora_ (Paris, 1859), p. 138.

a co-conspirator of the count.[2] When Raousset heard of the invitation to Mexico, he felt certain that rumors of his impending "expedition" had intimidated the Mexican dictator. In this position of power Raousset determined to go to Mexico City and demand that Santa Anna make him military governor of Sonora.[3]

The overly optimistic count left San Francisco on June 15, 1853, and arrived at Mexico City on July 7. He previously had made arrangements to delay his expedition until his return from Mexico, for he reasoned that Santa Anna might well give up Sonora without a fight. At the first meeting of these two opportunists the Mexican dictator greeted the Frenchman as a long lost friend, and offered him the rank of general in the Mexican Army—but nothing beyond the title. Raousset later said that he remained in Mexico City "four months entertaining the purest and most straight forward intentions...." He added that the Mexican leader "trifled with me, deceived me, did everything in a word, to make me his bitterest foe."[4]

During the course of their talks, Raousset offered to bring several thousand "colonists" to the Sonoran frontier to help Santa Anna control the Indians while simultaneously settling the area. This the Mexican dictator quickly rejected. Then the count offered to bring soldiers to Sonora solely for the purpose of fighting the Apaches.

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[2]Sobarzo, Crónica de la Aventura, p. 154. See also, Daily Alta California, September 24, 1854, and Lachapelle, Le Comte, p. 139.

[3]Symons, tr., The Wolf Cub, p. 185.

[4]Raousset-Boulbon to Patrice Dillon, San Francisco, September 23, 1854, in Daily Alta California, September 24, 1854. See also, Lachapelle, Le Comte, pp. 143-145, and New York Daily Times, November 2, 1854.

Through all this Santa Anna waited and watched for signs of the count's true intent.[5] At the same time these discussions were taking place, Manuel María Gandara, the centralist governor of the Department of Sonora, was studying the French activities in California during 1852, and he concluded that these foreigners could not be trusted in Mexico. Gandara therefore was prepared to make a strong, negative recommendation should the central government come to some agreement with Raousset. Early in September, the Mexican minister of war did approach Gandara to test his attitude toward French participation in colonization, whereupon the governor explicitly rejected any scheme using Raousset's men.[6] Gandara wrote the minister of war that "this French citizen will not be well rec.d in the Department. It cannot be easily forgotten that he tried with his foreign followers to break asunder the ties of union which bind the Sonorans with their brethren of the rest of the Rep."[7] The Mexicans in Sonora had taken up arms once before when they expelled the count, and Gandara felt they would do so again. Furthermore, the governor realized that Mexicans, indeed any force, could control the Apaches if only the central government would finance a well-armed expedition of five hundred men. Despite these warnings Santa Anna's government did offer Raousset a contract to bring half a thousand Frenchmen to work in the mines of Sonora and to fight the Indians. Several provisions of the proffered contract were unsatisfactory to the

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[5]Sobarzo, _La Crónica de la Aventura_, pp. 162-165. See also Lachapelle, _Le Comte_, pp. 145-146.

[6]Sobarzo, _La Crónica de la Aventura_, p. 165.

[7]Gandara to Minister of War, Ures, October 26, 1853, _Ures El Nacional_, March 17, 1854, in Pinart Transcript, Sonora, V, p. 206. Hereafter cited as _Ures El Nacional_.

count, however, and he rejected it. An impasse had developed.

Probably Raousset did not get what he wanted from the centralist government because he was involved in a conspiracy with liberal Mexicans to overthrow Santa Anna. Possibly this charge is true, but no evidence survives to substantiate it—or to disprove it.[8] Raousset, disappointed and disillusioned again with the Mexicans, broke off negotiations, and announced he had "resolved to appeal a second time to the use of armed force."[9] When Raousset arrived back in San Francisco on December 6, 1853, he spent several months recruiting among dissatisfied, expatriate Mexicans and Frenchmen. Unfortunately for the count, however, the exiled Mexicans were not willing to join a revolution against Santa Anna—at least not to satisfy the whims of foreigners. In Mexico itself, the local citizens had tired of foreign intervention, whether by nations or individuals. Moreover, the filibustering expedition of William Walker and his associates had stirred up strong nationalistic sentiments.[10]

Early in 1854 newspapers in Mexico City were carrying reports of the second coming of the "Sultan of Sonora." These papers referred to this effort, which was organizing on American soil, as "villiany," "Treason," and an attempt to establish an "iniquitous" government on Mexican soil. Raousset was described as a "ranting revolutionist—

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[8]Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 101-102. See also, New York Daily Herald, February 28, 1854, and Symons, tr., The Wolf Cub, pp. 187-188.

[9]Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 100-101. See also, Lachapelle, Le Comte, p. 149.

[10]Lachapelle, Le Comte, pp. 153-154.

lower than a common trickster."[11] José María Yañez was appointed military commander and governor of Sonora to prepare local defenses. He in turn named Ignacio Pesqueira to lead the frontier troops should the French come overland. While Yañez made preparations to repel the filibusters, Santa Anna seconded such efforts by ordering that no armed foreigners should be allowed to disembark anywhere in Mexico, and that North Americans living along the coast were to be watched carefully.[12] These preparations were occasioned by a rumor that three hundred Frenchmen, led by Raousset, were en route to Sonora. Finally, the Mexicans firmly believed that Raousset and William Walker had combined their efforts.[13]

On January 17, 1854, the Mexican Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Manuel Diaz de Bonilla, wrote Alphonse Dano, French Charge d' Affaires in Mexico, that the Mexican government had documents proving Raousset was a filibuster, not a colonizer. Bonilla felt Dano should urge Patrice Dillon to stop the count. And Bonilla suggested that a French warship should "prevent the disembarkation of those who, trampling under foot justice and the rights of nations, wish like vandals, to take possessions with the armed hand of part of the Mexican territory."[14] Dano answered that he hoped Bonilla was mistaken about Raousset. He also reminded Bonilla that French "relations with the

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[11] Ures El Nacional, March 17, 1854, p. 225. See also, Mexican Manuscript Selection, 140, Ures, March, 1854, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 226.

[12] Ibid., p. 219.

[13] Ibid., March 10, 1854, p. 220.

[14] Bonilla to Dano, Mexico City, January 17, 1854, Senate Exec. Doc. 16, 33 Cong., 2 sess., Serial 751, pp. 43-44.

Government of Gen. Santa Anna are of the most friendly nature, and every violation of the Mexican territory can only be considered by us as an act of infamous piracy."[15]

In order to halt Raousset's recruitment of Frenchmen in California with which to invade Sonora, Santa Anna decided to allow foreigners to settle in Mexico independently of the count's group. On January 31, 1854, the Mexican dictator advised Luís del Valle, the Mexican Consul in San Francisco, to select men for settlement in northern Mexico. Santa Anna also stipulated that as many as three thousand of them could be used, but they could not be sent in groups larger than fifty men each.[16] Del Valle was advised to include Raousset's men in order to undermine the count's expedition. French consul Dillon assisted this scheme, for he was required to sign all passports of the new French recruits. The Mexican government promised those volunteers that their engagement would be for at least one year. Each would be subject to the military regulations in Mexico, as well as to all civilian laws and authorities. Enlisted men would receive the same pay as those in the Mexican Army, while officers would be paid according to French Army standards. In addition, all transportation would be provided by Mexico. As an added attraction, the colonists would receive a quantity of free land when the government discharged them.[17]

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[15] Daily Alta California, April 20, 1854, Dano's reply to Bonilla, Mexico City, January 21, 1854.

[16] Sobarzo, La Crónica de la Aventura, p. 173. See also, Lachapelle, Le Comte, pp. 163-164.

[17] Daily Alta California, April 20, 1854. See also, Lachapelle, Le Comte, p. 144.

With the Mexicans openly luring his men, Raousset felt his cause was vindicated and his actions justified. He claimed his expedition was to aid Mexico, and he asserted that Del Valle and Santa Anna wanted only to paralyze the French plan to further their own selfish motives. Furthermore he said that all the French volunteers knew the true motivations of both parties, and they knew the Mexican government rarely kept its promises.[18] Raousset's efforts were hurt early in 1854, when the United States placed a new commander in charge of the troops of the Department of the Pacific, one who proved a formidable foe of filibusters, both French and American.

General John E. Wool became commander of the Department on January 9, 1854. Just as with Walker's expedition, Wool determined to stop Raousset's group. The general advised Secretary of War Jefferson Davis that the notorious French count again was preparing an expedition of conquest for Mexico, but that the military was determined to "arrest his progress."[19] In fact, Wool learned that Del Valle was recruiting men, and the commander expressed his distrust of the Mexican consul. Del Valle pursued his instructions, and with the help of two Frenchmen, he contracted for a British ship, the Challenge. During the period from March 5 to 20, 1854, a heavy volume of correspondence flowed between Wool, Del Valle, and Dillon, but the latter constantly proclaimed his innocence in the filibustering scheme. He told General Wool that if he [Wool] could prove Raousset's guilt, then the French leader

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[18] Sobarzo, La Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 173-174. See also Daily Alta California, September 30, 1854.

[19] Wool to Davis, San Francisco, March 1, 1854, Senate Exec. Doc. 16, 33 Cong., 2 sess., Serial 751, pp. 11-12.

should be arrested at once. Dillon referred to the count's expedition as a "wild and wicked scheme."[20]

Wool was quite angry and frustrated with Dillon, for the French passports to Mexico were signed. Wool diligently searched San Francisco for clues to prove the expedition's real intent and thus to have an excuse to put an end to the expedition. In one instance, he advised the collector of customs for the port that Raousset had six hundred arms and a quantity of powder hidden "somewhere in the neighborhood of Telegraph Hill."[21] The general was unsure of the filibustering plans and the leading conspirators, but he thought Raousset and Dillon were duping the Mexican consul. At one point Wool asked Del Valle if he were aware of the type of men being recruited by the Mexican government. Wool told Del Valle that the consul was deceived, for the French would become filibusters the minute they landed in Mexico. The general further hinted that there was a strong possibility that Del Valle was receiving a percentage of the money the Mexicans paid for each French volunteer.[22]

Del Valle in reality was aware of Raousset's intentions and planned to foil the French filibuster. He agreed with Wool that the _Challenge_ should not be allowed to sail for Mexico at that time.[23] In

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[20]Dillon to Wool, San Francisco, March 18, 1854, in ibid., p. 34. See also, Lachapelle, _Le Comte_, pp. 165-167, and _Daily Alta California_, April 20, 1854.

[21]Wool to R. S. Hammond, San Francisco, March 15, 1854, in ibid., p. 36.

[22]Wool to L. Thomas, Assistant Adjutant General of the Army, San Francisco, March 31, 1854, in ibid., pp. 27-30.

[23]Del Valle to Wool, San Francisco, March 15, 1854, in ibid., p. 41.

addition, Del Valle sent nearly one thousand French colonists to Guaymas at once—a direct violation of Santa Anna's orders. Actually the Mexican consul had invited Mexicans, Frenchmen, Spanish, Belgians, and other foreigners in California to volunteer to settle in Mexico. Recruitment was very easy, for, as the Daily Alta California reported, this plan was promoted by "the Mexican government, and the passengers will likely be treated with good faith."[24]

Del Valle soon had sufficient volunteers for his group. General Wool was unconcerned about the fate of the passengers on board the Challenge, but he was determined to detain the ship at all costs. Therefore on March 23, 1854, he ordered the port customs collector to detain, but not seize, the ship for violating an old and seldom used law regulating the number of passengers a ship could carry in relation to its size.[25] By March 24, the general said he believed his efforts successfully had

> paralyzed the expedition fitting out in this port by the sanction of Santa Anna, for Guaymas, ostensibly for the settlement of Sonora, and the fence of the frontiers against Indians, but in fact, to aid in the revolution now going on in Guerrero, and, as I believe, to relieve Walker, who, as we are informed, without this aid will be compelled to abandon the country, or surrender himself a prisoner.[26]

Wool constantly sought proof of the probable leaders of these filibustering attempts. Throughout Wool's investigation, Dillon insisted that he was innocent of any conspiracy with Raousset. By March

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[24]Daily Alta California, March 13, 1854.

[25]Ibid., March 30, June 27, 1854.

[26]Wool to T. A. Dornin, San Francisco, March 2, 1854, Senate Exec. Doc. 16, 33 Cong., 2 sess., Serial 751, p. 35.

20, 1854, Wool was partially convinced that this could be true, but he remained determined to get to the bottom of the scheme.[27] He was convinced that Del Valle was indeed a co-conspirator with Raousset. Therefore on March 31, 1854, he requested that local authorities arrest Del Valle and try him for violation of the United States neutrality laws. Specifically Wool believed the Mexican guilty of violating an Act of 1818 which forbade raising an armed force on United States' soil which was destined to attack a friendly foreign power.[28]

Del Valle actually was arrested, and the newspapers carried a detailed account of the story, one hardly flattering the general. The Daily Alta California accused Wool of giving "no notice that the law of the United States forbids enlisting men for foreign service, a law unknown to most Americans and even to most of the press."[29] Wool said that the arrest and conviction of the Mexican Consul would help the army "in a great measure put a stop to filibustering in California."[30] At Del Valle's trial, French Consul Dillon was called to testify, but he refused, claiming diplomatic immunity.[31] Dillon also insisted he had nothing to do with the French filibusters. Nevertheless the Federal District Court subpoenaed him to testify. Again he refused, whereupon he was arrested and taken to court. Dillon

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[27]Wool to Dillon, San Francisco, March 20, 1854, in ibid.

[28]Wool to S. W. Inge, San Francisco, March 20, 1854, in ibid., p. 49.

[29]Daily Alta California, April 27, 1854.

[30]Wool to J. Davis, San Francisco, April 14, 1854, Senate Exec. Doc. 16, 33 Cong. 2 sess., Serial 751, p. 53.

[31]Daily Alta California, April 19 and 23, 1954.

officially protested by lowering the French flag over the consulate, symbolizing the suspension of diplomatic relations with the United States.[32] The entire matter thus had reached international proportions.

Meanwhile, the four hundred members of the French group on the Challenge gave bond of $10,000 to cover any legal action against them, and then sailed for Guaymas on April 1, 1854. Raousset was pleased to see the expedition sail—he had beaten the Mexicans at their own game of duplicity. Rather than try to stop the legal expedition, his men infiltrated the enterprise in order to subvert it to the count's purpose. Raousset naturally had been unable to secure permission to accompany the group, but three of his trusted lieutenants—Leon Desmarais, Edouard Laval, and Nicholas Martincourt—were among those who sailed. Raousset remained behind in San Francisco under the close scrutiny of General Wool's agents. Thus while Del Valle's trial was taking place, the men aboard the Challenge were sailing leisurely toward Guaymas where they would await the arrival of their leader, the infamous count.[33]

In San Francisco the French consul was protesting the trial as improper. He reminded the United States that the local authorities had over-extended their powers and exceeded what was within their purview:

> It will remain with the inhabitants of this city and with the Federal Government to say how far the said authorities have fulfilled that duty prescribed to them, namely: to extend to the representatives and agents of foreign countries, particularly to those of France, the oldest

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[32]Ibid., April 20, 25, 26, and 28, 1854.

[33]John Cripps to William Marcy, May 4, 1854, Mexico City, Ministeral Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

> and most faithful ally of their country, that courtesy which is shown them even by semi-barbarous communities.[34]

Del Valle's trial revealed that he actually was acting under orders of his government. Therefore he was not a Mexican traitor, nor was he guilty of violating American neutrality laws. John S. Cripps, United States Charge d' Affairs in Mexico City, advised Wool on April 22, 1854, that Del Valle was innocent and that both Mexican and American authorities in Mexico wanted Del Valle "to be put at liberty, and left in the free exercise of his functions...."[35] Finally in July, Wool admitted his error in accusing Del Valle of complicity with the filibusters.[36] He re-examined the evidence, concluding that, after all, Dillon was the one most guilty in the case. He thereupon ordered Dillon's arrest, and the Frenchman was brought to trial. Wool now feared French intervention, and had visions of warships attacking San Francisco; he was sufficiently concerned to prepare harbor defenses to repel such an attack. Ten heavy guns were mounted on Alcatraz Island, and ten howitzers were emplaced at Fort Point. He believed these preparations, along with his intervention in Raousset's plans, would "put a stop to his nefarious schemes."[37]

Dillon's trial was held on May 24, 1854. The comic opera aspects of the case became public knowledge when insufficient evidence effected his release. Ironically, if anyone was guilty of aiding Raousset, it

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[34] Daily Alta California, April 27, 1854.

[35] Cripps to Wool, Mexico City, April 22, 1854, Senate Exec. Doc. 16, 33 Cong., 2 sess., Serial 751, p. 94.

[36] Wool to Cripps, San Francisco, July 29, 1854, in ibid., pp. 95-96.

[37] Wool to Davis, San Francisco, May 15, 1854, in ibid., p. 57.

probably was Dillon, for he was a party directly or indirectly to most of the French scheming. Whether he acted as his own agent or that of the French government cannot be ascertained. However, General Wool was definitely embarrassed professionally by the two trials, for Secretary of War Jefferson Davis expressed his dissatisfaction with the problem Wool had caused between the United States and France. This diplomatic impasse eventually was resolved in 1855 when the two governments agreed that French and American warships would meet in San Francisco harbor and fire salutes to each country's flag.[38] James Gadsden, the American Minister to Mexico who had just received Mexican approval for the purchase of southern Arizona, criticized both Mexican and French governments for allowing accredited officers "to connive at, if not encourage, illegal enterprises from an American port...."[39]

While these diplomatic arguments raged, Raousset was continuing his plans. He searched San Francisco for financial backing for his trip, for funds with which to buy rifles and ammunition for his men already in Mexico. Although it seemed the United States was enforcing the integrity of its southern border, the Mexican government did not leave anything to chance. The central government appointed a military man, José María Yañez, as governor and supreme commander of the Department of Sonora.

Yañez had enjoyed a long, prestigious career as a soldier. Born in Mexico City in 1804, he joined the army in 1821 and was wounded

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[38]J. Y. Mason to Count Walewski, Paris, August 3, 1855, <u>House Exec. Doc. 88</u>, 35 Cong., 1 sess., Serial 956, pp. 133-136.

[39]James Gadsden to John E. Wool, August 2, 1854, in ibid., p. 107.

while fighting against the Spanish. In 1833 he was promoted to captain, and, for his service against the centralists, he was elevated to lieutenant colonel the following year. He fought the French at Vera Cruz in 1838, displaying his bravery by saving many men and considerable artillery from being captured. In May of 1853 he was promoted to brigadier general and was made military commander of Guadalajara. Then in June he was transferred to Sinaloa where he had his first encounter with filibusters. He organized opposition to William Walker, and for his actions on the frontier he was awarded the Order of Guadalupe, the prestigious award created by Santa Anna. He then was given command of the Department of Sonora later that fall with express orders from Santa Anna to stop French and American filibustering. Thus Yañez was a loyal officer who had the experience to organize Mexican resistance, directing both military and civilian affairs.[40]

The new commander arrived at Ures, the capital of Sonora, on April 18, 1853. Just a few days later, on April 20, he received reports of Raousset's approach; dispatches arrived from Luís del Valle warning the new governor that the French count had partisans scheduled to arrive at Guaymas. On that same day Yañez issued a proclamation to the people of Sonora calling on them to revitalize their patriotism and to rally to the defense of their national integrity.[41] That same day the Challenge arrived at Guaymas with 480 Frenchmen and other foreigners. The arrival of so many foreigners caused Yañez great consternation, for he had insufficient troops to fight so many people.

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[40]Almada, Diccionario de Historia, pp. 835-842. See also, Sobarzo, La Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 179-182.

[41]Sobarzo, La Crónica de la Aventura, p. 181.

The citizens failed to understand why Santa Anna had allowed so many foreigners to come to colonize, for the expedition led by Raousset in 1851 was still fresh in many minds—especially in those at Guaymas.[42] Nevertheless, the French had arrived at Guaymas to demand the fulfillment of their contracts.

Yañez was unprepared to oppose the arrivals, even had they not come at the express invitation of President Santa Anna; therefore, he decided upon temporary measures in dealing with the group. He announced that six reals (three-quarters of one peso) would be paid to the men each day and one dollar to the officers. The agreement between Del Valle and the French also had provided that the volunteers would be armed, but Yañez chose to give weapons to only 125 of the men. To these he supplied only out-dated percussion muskets, yet he ordered the caps to remain in the hands of the Mexican Army. More significantly, each man was given only ten bullets, certainly not enough to wage war, or so the general believed. And, while he attempted to placate the French, Yañez simultaneously was preparing his force to engage the foreigners should it prove necessary.[43] The Mexican commander was still receiving other warnings of Raousset's intent to join the foreigners at Guaymas; consequently, he wanted adequate time to prepare his men.[44]

Although Yañez maintained his suspicions, the Mexican minister of

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[42] R. R. Gatton to John Cripps, May 1, 1854, Mazatlán, (Mexico City) Ministeral Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

[43] J. M. Yañez, "Defensa de su Conducta," in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, pp. 230-235.

[44] Del Valle to Yañez, San Francisco, April 24, 1854, <u>Ures El Nacional</u>, May 26, 1854, pp. 228-230.

war wrote that the French volunteers should be divided into smaller, more manageable groups and should be settled on specified land with all possible speed. The central government, although authorizing Del Valle's activity, was also concerned that the consul in San Francisco had sent such a large group to Guaymas.[45]

In San Francisco Raousset was completing his plans to join his men at Guaymas. An Italian banker, Felix Argenti, provided the money to buy a smaller schooner, the Belle, in which the count and a few associates left San Francisco between May 23 and May 25. The ship carried eight men, 180 rifles, and ammunition for several types of weapons. The small ship was so cramped with these munitions and supplies that the men suffered an unpleasant voyage to Guaymas.[46] Before leaving San Francisco, Raousset had left a letter for Dillon which exonerated the French consul of all involvement. Curiously the letter was dated May 19, although the count did not leave until four days later. Possibly the date indicated that the letter was delivered late or, more likely, that Dillon knew the complete plans in advance. The latter is possible—Dillon was wise enough to make certain there was no incriminating evidence.

In the letter Raousset justified his expedition and said that Dillon "had thrown every obstacle in the way of my projects of returning to Sonora, projects of which I never made the slightest mystery."[47]

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[45]Minister of War to Yañez, Mexico City, June 7, 1854, in ibid., August 4, 1854, p. 234.

[46]Lachapelle, Le Comte, pp. 171-177.

[47]Daily Alta California, September 30, 1854, Raousset to Dillon, San Francisco, May 19, 1854.

Raousset also explained that it was Levasseur, the French Minister in Mexico, who transmitted Santa Anna's request for Raousset to come to Mexico. Only for this reason, said Raousset, had he agreed to go to Mexico. Later, after he again was in that nation, Raousset claimed that Santa Anna had treated him badly, and the Frenchman added that the Mexican leader's "conduct towards me bore injustice and persecution so palpably on its face, that even foreign newspapers denounced it unanimously, in severer terms than I now employ."[48] He added that the men on the Challenge, already in Guaymas, saw the insincerity and duplicity of the Mexican government. The French had bided their time and accepted the Mexican terms only provisionally. They awaited Raousset. Their leader claimed he was in no way a filibuster; he only wanted to see his men get the land cessions they had been promised.

The voyage to Guaymas was extremely difficult, for there was inadequate food aboard. Then the Belle capsized near Santa Margarita Island, which encloses Magdalena Bay. Fortunately the men were able after much hard work to salvage both the boat and its cargo. Near the end of June the sea-weary men landed near Guaymas and sought shelter from the rough seas. From there the count sent two men to contact Desmarais, one of his lieutenants already in Guaymas. However, these two men erred in their calculation of the distance to Guaymas and had to camp overnight some distance from the town. That night Governor Yañez learned of their presence, and late the next day, just outside of the city, he arrested both men and imprisoned them in a dark, damp adobe hut used for the city jail. The following day he questioned them,

[48] Ibid. See also, New York Daily Times, November 2, 1854, and Lachapelle, Le Comte, pp. 175-176.

learned of Raousset's presence, and turned them loose, for the French had lost the advantage of surprise.[49] Raousset's messengers then did contact Desmarais. Even with the messengers' news of reinforcements, so much disenchantment existed in this "French Battalion" that little hope remained for complete cooperation against Yañez.

The Belle continued its cruise down the coast and entered Guaymas harbor on July 1, 1854. The count was not aboard the little boat, however. He had disguised himself and entered the port city in secret.[50] On July 3, after establishing his headquarters, Raousset wrote Yañez requesting an interview, and they agreed to discuss a possible settlement. However, both men steadfastly refused to compromise, and Yañez ended by ordering the French out of the country at once. The "French Battalion" chose to disregard the general's order. In truth Raousset had fatally underestimated the Mexican general—he believed Yañez a coward for offering terms.[51]

Meanwhile, Mexican authorities in that nation's capital had asked James Gadsden to use his influence to stop more filibusters from leaving San Francisco to reinforce the French. Gadsden reported to William Marcy, Secretary of State, that Raousset had joined his comrades and that now the French, "being much dissatisfied are in now a state of mutiny threatening a pronuncimiento in Sonora."[52] Actually by

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[49] Sobarzo, La Crónica de la Aventura, pp. 186-188. See also, Lachapelle, Le Comte, p. 177 and Daily Alta California, September 30, 1854.

[50] Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, p. 105.

[51] Ures, El Nacional, July 15, 1854, p. 236; see also, Daily Alta California, September 30, 1854; and New York Daily Times, September 2, 1854.

[52] James Gadsden to William Marcy, Mexico City, Ministeral Despatches, Department of State, RG 59, National Archives.

this time General Yañez had the entire affair under control. He had sought, with some success, to divide Raousset from a portion of his men, but the count's eloquence stirred many of the French to return to his support. In addition, the French leader reminded Yañez that the Mexican had yet to honor agreements made through Del Valle. During this preliminary stage Raousset had military advantage over Yañez, but did not attack; as in his first expedition, his leadership tactics failed. Yañez believed the Mexicans needed reinforcements, and therefore on July 6 and 12 he asked the central government for more men. Then on July 12 a fight broke out between armed Mexican civilians and some of the French. Two Mexicans and four Frenchmen were wounded. This incident served to stir local sentiment against the French, and Yañez received public support at last.

Yañez thereupon ordered his troops to occupy barracks near the bay to avoid unnecessary killing.[53] He also moved his headquarters to the barracks, for he had heard rumors that the French intended to kidnap him. Finally, Colonel Bandara dispatched several hundred troops toward Guaymas, but they did not arrive until after the entire matter had been settled—by bloodshed. Much of the day of July 13 the Mexican general tried to convince the French group to give up their plans and leave quietly, but shortly after noon the discussions ended. Raousset, with the support of many of the French, decided to attack the Mexican headquarters.[54] Raousset was unable to obtain the support of other nationalities in his party, but he determined to defeat the

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[53]Ures, El Nacional, July 15, 1854, pp. 236-240. See also, Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, p. 105.

[54]Ibid.

Mexicans anyway with what men were with him.

Again Raousset's military strategy fell short of the realities of his situation. The French leader wrote out his battle plans and circulated them to his officers; unfortunately a copy fell into the hands of the Mexicans. Yañez thus was able to gather his troops in barracks surrounded by a courtyard, and could position them at the best sites to repel a French attack. Raousset ordered two companies to assault the barracks from the rear, while the others charged the Mexicans from all directions. His plan called for occupation of one barracks and the Hotel de Sonora. From these positions he thought the French could fire on the Mexicans until they surrendered or came out to fight, whereupon the French were to use their bayonets freely.[55] Raousset ordered his men to use their bayonets when possible to conserve ammunition, for each man had only ten to twelve shots.

The battle began at two o'clock in the afternoon and lasted three hours. The initial attack went badly for the French. In the heat of the fight the Belle, whose company was to capture two Mexican ships in the bay, sailed off, leaving Raousset at the mercy of the Mexicans. At the first heavy barrage of fire the "French Battalion" disintegrated, and more than half of the men fled for safety into the house of the American consul.[56] That evening Yañez advised Gandara the victory was secured. Elated with success, the governor bombastically

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[55] Jose N. Yañez, "Detall y Algunes Documentos," Ures, El Nacional, August 25, 1854, pp. 243-246. See also, Lachapelle, Le Comte, pp. 193-196.

[56] Ibid., Ures, El Nacional, August 15, 1854. See also, Lambertie Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 106-107; and Daily Alta California, October 15, 1854; and New York Daily Times, November 10, 1854.

proclaimed "Glory to the Nation! Honor to Sonora and to the Arms of the Republic."[57] When the battle finally ended, forty-eight Frenchmen were dead and seventy-eight wounded, while 313 were being held prisoner, including Raousset. The Mexicans had nineteen dead and forty-five wounded.[58] The French survivors ultimately were given the opportunity to settle in the interior, but most fled to Martinique or to other French settlements. Yañez treated his prisoners fairly well, and he arranged for Barron, Forbes, and Company to finance the deportation of those who wished to leave.

At last Raousset faced his fate at the hands of the Mexicans. He was court martialed on August 9, 1854, convicted of conspiracy to overthrow the government, and sentenced to be shot. While awaiting execution, Raousset wrote several letters exonerating himself of all charges leveled against him in the court martial.[59] According to reports, he behaved with "calmness and courage" as the order to end his life was given. He faced a firing squad on August 12, 1854, after receiving last rites from a local priest. The count was thirty-six at the time of his death.[60]

Yañez did not conceal his joy at the performance of his men during the heat of the battle. They had faced a formidable number and had won, something not overly common in Mexican history. He lauded the

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[57]Ures, El Nacional, July 15, 1854, p. 239.

[58]Yanez, "Detall," Ures, El Nacional, August 25, 1854, 245.

[59]Ures, El Nacional, September 1, 1854, p. 249. See also, New York Daily Times, November 10, 1854.

[60]J. M. Yañez to Prefect, Guaymas, August 9, 1854, in ibid., August 18, 1854, p. 248. See also, Lambertie, Le Drame de la Sonora, pp. 109, 114, and 119.

local citizens for their patriotism by saying

> it is a remarkable fact which must be mentioned in honor of the country that neither in the cause prosecuted agt. Raousset, nor in the great quantity of papers searched and intercepted correspondence appeared the name of any Mexican as implicated in the intrigues plotted aft. the rights of the nation, and the entirety of her territory.[61]

The inhabitants of Ures responded by honoring Yañez as the "Libertador de Sonora," praising his skill in the battle against the French.[62] Although the Mexican general had totally disposed of the French threat, the central government was displeased; the elites of Santa Anna's government believed Yañez had been too liberal with the French survivors. They believed that only Santiago Blanco, whose brother Miguel had been humiliated at Hermosillo, had insisted that the punishment rendered by the court martial be executed. They felt that but for Blanco, the French count might have been spared.

The death of the enterprising count should have indicated that Mexicans would brook no interference or violation of their national sovereignty, that the time for wresting away their territory had passed. Still there seemed to be men in California who dreamed of conquering and controlling part of northwestern Mexico; these men would continue to plot expeditions and gamble their lives recklessly. Especially were there those who believed they could obtain Mexican help by promising governmental stability and safety from the marauding Indians. Yet only one other American came forth to organize a filibustering expedition, Henry A. Crabb, once a prominent California

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[61] Ures El Nacional, September 1, 1854, p. 250.

[62] Ibid., October 1, 1854, p. 254.

state senator. He was the last American to lead an expedition into Mexico—and the last to feel the intensity of Mexican vengeance.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BOUNDARY CONTROVERSY

Between 1848, even before Joseph C. Morehead's expedition, and 1854, the United States and Mexico experienced serious, unsettled border problems, stemming not from filibustering but from the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo itself. Two provisions of that treaty, Article V and Article XI, caused most of the difficulties. Article V established the new boundary between the two republics and provided for a survey to be jointly conducted; Article XI committed the United States to prevent Indian raids into Mexico from originating north of the international boundary. Complications arising from these two provisions, along with incessant infringements on Mexican soil by filibusters from California, led increasingly to a terse diplomatic atmosphere between the two countries. In December of 1853 the boundary dispute and the questions of culpability for Indian depredations would be solved by the terms of the Gadsden purchase agreement, whose origins and terms were almost as complicated as the filibustering problem. The trouble began almost immediately after the peace settlement ending the Mexican War was ratified by both countries.

The treaty called for each nation to name a boundary commission to run and mark the new boundary, and on December 18, 1848, outgoing President James K. Polk nominated ex-Senator Andrew H. Sevier of Arkansas and Andrew B. Gray of Texas as commissioner and surveyor for

this commission. A month later Sevier died, whereupon the president appointed Colonel John B. Weller of Ohio as commissioner. The Mexican government likewise appointed representatives: Pedro Garcia Conde and José Salazar y Larregui.[1] The two teams met in San Diego on July 9, 1849, to begin the survey. Yet not until October 10 did they decide on the initial point on the Pacific Ocean at which to begin working eastward; then they signed a joint declaration which "was placed in a bottle hermetically sealed and deposited in the ground, upon which a temporary monument to mark the spot was placed."[2]

For the next few months these men surveyed and extended the boundary between Upper and Lower California. Weller was very optimistic about the survey, believing the work would "settle the question forever."[3] However, Weller's optimism was premature, for political considerations soon began to interfere with the survey. Weller was a Democrat, and Whigs in the new administration of Zachary Taylor forced a delay of funds needed for continuance of the survey. Before the boundary team could proceed far with its work, Weller heard in September that he was to be officially removed as head of the team. John C. Frémont of "Pathfinder" fame was named to take his place; however, Frémont, was elected to the United States Senate from California and never became the American commissioner. Therefore Weller continued to head the survey. According to William H. Emory, a major

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[1]Senate Exec. Doc. 119, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Serial No. 626, p. 56; hereafter cited as Senate Exec. Doc. 119.

[2]Journal of the Joint Boundary Commission, October 10, 1849, Senate Exec. Doc. 119, p. 59.

[3]Ibid., January 28, 1850, p. 61.

in the First Cavalry accompanying the survey as chief astronomer, Weller did all he could to carry out the work properly. Emory added that

> Colonel Weller's drafts had been protested, his disbursements repudiated, and himself denounced as a defaulter; when at that very time, as the settlement of his account afterwards showed, he was in advance to the government.[4]

Then on February 15, 1850, Weller learned he had been fired by impatient Whigs in Washington. As no replacement was on location, the survey was postponed until November when the joint commission would be reunited at El Paso del Norte (the present Juárez, Chihuahua).[5] Major Emory and Surveyor Gray subsequently completed the California portion of the survey, then went to Washington, where on November 4 they discussed with government officials the problems they had encountered. Emory was angry about the political maneuvering involved in the boundary commission and asked to be relieved of further duty with it. They learned that John Russell Bartlett of Rhode Island had been appointed the new survey commissioner, on August, 1850, and Gray was ordered to rejoin the commission at El Paso.

Bartlett was born in 1805 in Providence,Rhode Island, but moved to Canada where he lived until age eighteen. He was well educated in accounting procedures, art, banking, and history. In the 1830's he became interested in the study of the American Indian and corresponded with important ethnologists of his day. Beginning in 1847, he pub-

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[4]Emory, Report of the United States and Mexican Boundary Commission, Senate Exec. Doc. 108, 34 Cong., 1 sess (2 vols.), p. 3; hereafter cited as Emory, Report.

[5]Journal of the Joint Boundary Commission, February 15, 1850, Senate Exec. Doc. 119, p. 65.

lished several works on history and ethnology, yet such work never adequately supported his wife and four children. Fortunately his political connections with the Whigs secured for him the appointment as commissioner of the boundary survey in mid-1850, for which he was to receive three thousand dollars a year plus expenses—sufficient to untangle his extremely confused financial affairs. In his instructions, he was reminded that Article VI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had made provisions "for the collection of information relative to the construction of a 'road, canal, or railway, which shall, in whole or in part, run upon the river Gila...."[6] Bartlett was therefore to keep the construction of a southern railroute in mind while surveying the disputed territory.

The new commissioner traveled to El Paso as quickly as possible in order to meet the Mexican survey team on November 1, 1850—the time previously agreed upon. From the beginning Bartlett made grave errors of organization owing to amateurishness. Political pressure—the very force which got him the job—caused him to take on many unqualified personnel. After lengthy delays he finally arrived at El Paso on November 13, 1850. On December 3, he met for the first time with General Garcia Conde, who was even later arriving, and the two men disagreed immediately over the location of the initial point on the Rio Grande of the Southeastern boundary line. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo declared that the international boundary would initiate three

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[6] D. C. Goddard (Secretary of the Interior ad interim) to John Bartlett, Washington, August 1, 1850, Senate Exec. Doc. 119, p. 87.

marine leagues out in the Gulf of Mexico, follow the main channel of the Rio Grande to the southern boundary of New Mexico, move along that line three degrees of longitude to the western border of New Mexico, and thence go north to the Gila River. It then would proceed down the deepest channel of the Gila to the junction of that river with the Colorado, and thence to the Pacific one marine league south of the harbor of San Diego. The disagreement arose over a map drawn by J. W. Disturnell in 1847, which incorrectly located the southern boundary of New Mexico by longitude and latitude in such a way as to place El Paso thirty-four miles too far north and 100 miles too far east.[7]

General Conde and Bartlett at first refused to compromise, for any settlement would result in one nation or the other losing considerable territory. Late in December and after considerable debate, however, the men announced that in agreement with Disturnell's map used in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo,

> the line should run up the middle of the Rio Grande 'to the point where it strikes the southern boundary of New Mexico; and, furthermore, it was agreed that, instead of extending west and terminating at the southwestern angle of New Mexico, which would give a line of but one degree, it _should be prolonged three degrees west_....[8]

By agreeing to this line, which began forty-two miles north of El Paso, but which ran westward the entire three degrees of longitude (175.28 miles), Bartlett surrendered several thousand square miles of

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[7]For additional details see, Odie B. Faulk, _Too Far North: Too Far South_ (Los Angeles, 1967). See also, Humber to Escoto Ochoa, _Integracion y Desintegración de Nuestra Frontera Norte_ (Mexico, 1949), pp. 122-123.

[8]Report of J. R. Bartlett, _Senate Exec. Doc. 41_, 32 Cong., 2 sess., Serial 665, p. 3.

United States territory—land of absolutely no value he assured his superiors in Washington. Bartlett insisted that by his compromise the United States had received land that possibly contained valuable ores. Thus, an agreement had been reached, but the terms of Article V required that both commissioner and surveyor sign all agreements. The official surveyor, Andrew B. Gray, was yet in Washington and thus unavailable to sign the agreement. During Gray's absence, Bartlett simply appointed Lieutenant Amiel W. Whipple as a surveyor *ad interim* and ordered him to sign the Bartlett-Conte compromise.

When Gray rejoined the survey in June, 1851, he actively disagreed with this compromise, refusing to sign any paper giving away six thousand square miles of what he thought to be American territory. He emphatically denounced the surveying done according to the compromise and "advised 'an immediate suspension of the work upon the line,' which extended west, and which the engineers of the two commissioners were engaged conjointly in running...."[9] Gray insisted to his superiors that in his opinion

> the point where the southern boundary of new Mexico intersects the Rio Grande, according to the treaty and the treaty map, is about eight miles above the town of El Paso, not forty-two north, as General Conde and Mr. Bartlett agreed....[10]

Bartlett naturally defended his work to officials in Washington, and the official correspondence mounted. Both Bartlett and Gray sent lengthy letters to the secretary of the interior, hoping to be upheld

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[9]Ibid., p. 14.

[10]A. B. Gray to R. McClelland, Secretary of the Interior, Washington, May, 1853, *Senate Exec. Doc. 55*, 33 Cong., 2 sess., Serial 752, p. 5.

in their actions.[11] While the men awaited replies from the government, they decided to survey the Gila River, over which no disagreement existed. Gray and Whipple carried out this survey, while Bartlett went to Mexico seeking supplies. It was during this trip that Bartlett met some of the survivors of Charles Pindray's French colony and learned of their problems.[12] Bartlett was at Ures, Sonora, on his wide-ranging forage for supplies. He did not soon return for from there he went to Hermosillo, Mazatlán, and Acapulco, traveling by ship to San Diego.

On February 9, 1852, Bartlett met Gray and Whipple at San Diego and heard of their survey difficulties along the Gila. The work had progressed well until the group was only sixty miles from the confluence of the Gila and Colorado rivers. There they ran out of supplies and, soon afterward, encountered nearly 1,500 Yuma Indians. The survey party planned to ask the Indians to ferry the group across the Colorado River, but the Indians proved hostile. Probably the Indians would have killed the entire party if Whipple had not earlier befriended the chief's daughter. The Indian girl recognized Whipple, whereupon the tribe helped the survey team to cross the river and to continue their journey to San Diego. In California he met Gray, but then toured north to San Francisco, then back to San Diego. Not until May 31, 1852, did he begin his trip to rejoin the survey, and then he traveled to Fort Yuma, El Paso, Saltillo, and Monterrey before arriving at Ringhold Barracks, Texas, just before Christmas, 1852.

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[11] New York Daily Times, May 19, 1853.

[12] John Russell Bartlett, Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents..., 2 vols. (New York, 1854), facsimile reprinted in 1965.

Whipple and Gray met with Bartlett in California before beginning the arduous return march to El Paso.[13]

In the meantime Whig officials had reached a decision about the Bartlett-Gray appeals. The administration upheld Bartlett. Alexander Stuart, secretary of the interior, advised Gray "to remove the only obstacle which now exists to the completion of this branch of the work, by affixing your signature to the requisite papers."[14] Four days later Stuart wrote Major William H. Emory that he was to replace Gray as surveyor, and if Gray had not signed the agreement, Emory was to "sign the official documents which have been prepared for the purpose, and which only require the signature of the surveyor to settle this important point."[15] Emory arrived at El Paso del Norte on November 25, 1851, to learn that Gray and Bartlett were not there. He found the majority of the survey team in a state of severe disorganization.[16] Immediately he organized the men, nearly one hundred of them, and started them working southeastward surveying the Rio Grande. He arrived at Ringhold Barracks in December, 1852, just 241 miles from the mouth of the river, and there Bartlett and Grey joined him.

The work was progressing well under Emory at that point, but, just as Bartlett arrived, orders came from Washington that the survey was to be suspended. Members of Congress had become dissatisfied with the progress of the boundary survey; in fact, several senators, in-

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[13] New York Daily Times, December 20, 1852.

[14] Stuart to Gray, Washington, October 31, 1851, Senate Exec. Doc. 119, p. 118.

[15] Stuart to Emory, Washington, November 4, 1851, Ibid., p. 121.

[16] New York Daily Times, June 3, 1851.

cluding John Weller—the first boundary commissioner, who had been elected to the senate from California—were demanding an investigation into Bartlett's conduct and the Bartlett-Conde agreement.[17] Bartlett was accused of squandering government funds and of general negligence in all matters surrounding the survey. Although these were the obvious reasons, doubtless it was the loss of territory which resulted in the suspension of the survey. In addition, Southerners believed a railroad route should run through the southern part of the country—a route which demanded the land signed away by Bartlett. A senate resolution forced President Filmore to supply Congress with all instructions and correspondence dealing with the survey.[18]

The result of the Congressional investigation was the attachment of a rider on the appropriations bills concerning the survey. The rider required that no survey could commence until the southern boundary was established just eight miles north of El Paso, thereby giving the disputed territory back to the United States.[19] The Filmore administration had no recourse but to stop the survey, for no money thus could be spent. Accordingly Bartlett was instructed to sell his government equipment and disband his crew. The members of the survey team then went to Corpus Christi where on January 8, 1853, they boarded ships for New Orleans. Meanwhile citizens in New Mexico, led by Governor William C. Lane, tried to extend control over the disputed land, now

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[17]Cong. Globe, 32 Cong., 1st sess. (1851-1852), XXIV, pt. 2, p. 1628.

[18]Ibid., p. 814.

[19]The Statutes at Large of the United States of America, I-IX, (Boston, 1845-1856), X, pp. 94-95.

known as the Mesilla strip. Just as determined to control the disputed area was Governor Angel Trías of Chihuahua, who moved troops into the territory and swore to defend it at all costs. Once again on the brink of war with Mexico, United States officials took a long look at the border problems with its neighboring republic.[20]

Changes in both governments opened the door to reconciliation. A new administration had moved into Washington in March of 1853, and President Franklin Pierce was determined to end problems with Mexico. He appointed a balanced cabinet, but Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, agreed with and influenced the president more than any other member. However, Pierce did not require Davis' influence to pursue an ambitious foreign policy. In his inaugural address he talked of expansion, especially to acquire Cuba. This was the era of the Ostend Manifesto, annexation treaties with Hawaii, Admiral Perry's historical visit to Japan, and the Gadsden Purchase—the President's mood was expansionistic.[21]

In Mexico changes likewise had occurred. Mariano Arista had resigned the presidency on January 6, 1853, and Antonio López de Santa Anna shortly was invited to return as president for one year. He took the oath of office on April 20, and within five days was virtual dictator of Mexico once again, although he did not declare himself so until September. Once in power, Santa Anna desperately needed money. Therefore with strong motivations for settlement on each side, a

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[20]See statement of Governor William C. Lane, New York Daily Times, June 4, 1853.

[21]J. D. Richardson, Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897, 10 vols. (Washington, 1896-1897), V, p. 198.

solution was forthcoming.[22]

In May of 1853 the United States announced the appointment of a new minister to Mexico, James Gadsden of South Carolina. He was a dedicated expansionist and a diplomat with considerable experience. Gadsden had been born in Charleston in 1788, the grandson of Christopher Gadsden of Revolutionary War fame. He graduated from Yale in 1806, and after a brief commercial career joined the army. For more than ten years he participated in campaigns against the British and later the Indians. He was acting adjutant general for eight months in 1821, but, when the Senate refused to ratify his appointment, Gadsden left the army and moved to Florida. From there, he performed diplomatic services for President James Monroe. He later supported nullification in South Carolina, which alienated him from his lifelong friend Andrew Jackson. Finally Gadsden returned to Charleston in 1839 where he became involved in railroads. By 1853 he and his close friend Jefferson Davis were championing a southern route for the proposed transcontinental railroad—which would require land in southern New Mexico. His friendship with Davis and that influence with Pierce got Gadsden the appointment as minister to Mexico.[23]

Gadsden went to Mexico with instructions to get sufficient land for a railroad through the Mesilla strip. Furthermore he was to secure a release from Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which had required the United States to halt Indian raids into northern

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[22] New York Daily Times, May 18, 1853.

[23] Johnson and Malone, Dictionary of American Biographies, VII, pp. 83-84. See also, Gadsden to Marcy, Charleston, May 23, 1853, Ministeral Despatches.

become "more numberous (sic) and more destructive than those that have occurred since the year 1848." The Mexican minister emphasized that where the frontier states were once prosperous, they now were "laid waste and deserted."[28] In fact, he asked that the United States pay damage for destruction wrought in Mexico by the Indians. In those first exchanges Bonilla placed the United States minister on the defensive, and the Mexican continued to compound the complaints. The next day Bonilla dispatched a protest to Gadsden because two thousand United States troops were moving into the disputed territory.[29] Gadsden replied that the troops were only fulfilling the obligations of the United States under Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.[30]

Not until September 9, 1853, was Gadsden able to translate Bonilla's lengthy protest of August 30 and answer in a letter almost as long. He assured Bonilla that "all the obligations of the Treaty of Hidalgo, have in good faith and to the extent of its ability, been respected and fulfilled by the U. States." Furthermore, he adamantly disclaimed American obligation to indemnify Mexicans by saying "that every interpretation which leads to an absurdity ought to be rejected; and that that is deemed absurd; which is not only physically but morally impossible."[31] Finally, in this letter Gadsden submitted several possible boundaries for consideration.

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[28]Bonilla to Gadsden, Mexico City, August 30, 1853, Ministeral Despatches.

[29]Ibid., August 31, 1853.

[30]Gadsden to Bonilla, Mexico City, September 1, 1853, Ministeral Despatches.

[31]Ibid., September 9, 1853.

Gadsden did not receive an answer to this note, but a conference was scheduled between himself and Santa Anna on September 25. Santa Anna later wrote in his memoirs that he had a rather terse conversation with the American minister, who informed him that the railroad to California "must be built by way of the Mesilla Valley, because there is not other feasible route. The Mexican government will be splendidly indemnified. The Valley must belong to the United States by an indemnity, or we will take it."[32] The only agreement reached at this time, however, was one stating that the disputed territory should remain as it was, officially uncontrolled by either government, while negotiations continued. On October 2, Gadsden suggested that the Mexicans consider selling a larger part of their territory to the United States, perhaps even Baja California.[33]

Optimistically Gadsden had advised Marcy several days before of his firm belief that the Mexican dictator would offer "propositions for a convention to arrange all the disagreements between the two countries which may involve the cession of additional territory on the one part; and the payment of an adequate compensation on the other."[34] Gadsden correctly assumed that Santa Anna badly needed money, and with sufficient money the American minister believed he could get nearly anything from the wily Mexican dictator. Gadsden reported to Marcy that "everything connected with the government in

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[32]Clarence R. Wharton, El Presidente: A Sketch of the Life of General Santa Anna (Austin, 1926), p. 189.

[33]Gadsden to Marcy, Mexico City, October 3, 1853, Ministeral Despatches.

[34]Ibid., September 18, 1853.

Mexico is much unsettled. Discontent, disappointment, and faction are still at work." He added that the Mexican dictator was "on a volcano which may explode in a month, and yet he smothered for a more protracted period—money and an Army, that can be continued faithful, are the elements on which he must rely for a continuance of his power."[35]

At this stage the United States sent Christopher L. Ward with memorized instructions as a special agent to Gadsden.[36] He carried six different plans to be suggested to the Mexican government. Plan one called for the United States to purchase Baja California and parts of Sonora, Coahuila, and Chihuahua. Four other plans called for the purchase of diminishing amounts of territory by the United States. As a last resort, Gadsden was to purchase just enough land for a railroad. The United States was willing to pay up to $15,000,000 for the area, however much might be had.

Significantly Ward had sought this appointment to Mexico so he could influence the treaty negotiations, for he had vested interests in the Garay grants. In 1842 José de Garay received from Santa Anna, then president, the right to build a canal or railway across the Mexican Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Garay sold the grant to two British subjects, who in turn sold it to a commercial firm, the P. A. Hargous Company of the New York. This company paid about $25,000 for the grant, but asked $3,500,000 as an indemnity when the grant was annulled by the Mexican Congress on May 22, 1851—largely for

[35]Ibid., October 3, 1853.

[36]Zorilla, Historia, pp. 345-347.

political reasons.[37] Thus, Gadsden not only had to deal with an unstable Mexican government but also with American speculators. Later in 1853 a filibustering expedition from California led by William Walker would add to his problems. Gadsden complained of these hardships in a note to Marcy, but he received little sympathy from the American cabinet member. And failure to secure a settlement with the Mexicans naturally would be blamed on Gadsden.[38]

Making the American minister's job more difficult was the growing Mexican hatred of Americans. The United States had not fulfilled Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, but even worse in Mexican eyes was the American failure to halt filibustering expeditions launched from California. Mexico City El Universal, a major newspaper in the capital, reported that Mexicans were tired of having their sovereignty violated and would defend their national integrity—"when Mexicans once take up arms against foreign enemies, they will not be led to the combat by a presumptuous whim, but by the natural defense of their honor...."[39] On November 15, during the heat of the negotiations over the Mesilla strip, Bonilla charged the United States with extreme negligence for not stopping Walker's filibuster. The Mexicans had heard of the brig Caroline, loaded with arms and ammunition, and the government knew that the expedition had departed

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[37]Gerber, Gadsden Treaty, pp. 43-51.

[38]Gadsden to Marcy, Mexico City, November 20, 1853, Ministeral Despatches.

[39]Mexico City El Universal, October 30, 1853, in Ministeral Despatches.

California with its master intent on conquering Baja California.[40]

Bonilla confirmed the arrival of the American expedition to Gadsden and conjectured that more expeditions were "being fitted out in that State of the American Union in the notorious manner implied by its very publicity." The Mexican also suggested that United States authorities should be punished when "responsible for the failure to suppress those expeditions against a neighboring nation, enjoying peace and friendship with the United States."[41] Walker's expedition, along with American negligence in stopping such illegal intrusions, convinced Santa Anna that the United States intended to annex yet more Mexican territory—either legally or illegally. To satisfy the Mexicans, Gadsden sent a circular note to all American naval vessels in the Pacific instructing them to halt any suspicious crafts and to search for filibusters. He did this when the Mexicans became so concerned with the intrustion of the Walker expedition as to cease the negotiations for several days.[42] Interestingly, if Gadsden had not been faced with Mexican fears about the Walker expedition, he might have been able to secure considerably more Mexican territory in his treaty, perhaps even Baja California. However, had Walker's expedition not convinced Santa Anna that the United States by one method or another was going to secure additional territory, he might not have sold the land he did in his treaty with Gadsden. Thus Walker may have helped

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[40]Zorilla, Historia, p. 347.

[41]Bonilla to Gadsden, Mexico City, November 15, 1853, Ministeral Despatches.

[42]Gadsden to Bonilla, Mexico, November 17, 1853, Ministeral Despatches.

Gadsden, but most likely he actually prevented the American purchase of Baja California.

In spite of these interruptions and an extremely unfavorable diplomatic atmosphere, Gadsden remained optimistic for a settlement. By November 29 he knew of the worsening financial condition of the Mexican government, and he expected Santa Anna to be willing to act on one of his six proposals.[43] On November 30 Bonilla advised Gadsden that Santa Anna was ready to grant some concessions providing they were "compatible with the security, independence, interests, and rights of Mexico...."[44] Soon thereafter, the Mexican dictator appointed an ad hoc commission to negotiate the boundary controversy. In the first meeting with the commission, Gadsden wanted to consider the proposal calling for American purchase of Baja California; however, Santa Anna instructed his negotiators to talk only of the sale of the Mesilla territory. Doubtless, the Mexican president knew of his people's discontent and realized that further loss of so much territory would cause his downfall. Doubtless he also realized that if he indicated his willingness to sell more land, the residents of many of the northern states would join with the filibusters and declare independence.

On December 4, 1853, Gadsden reported to Marcy that he now expected "a more protracted negotiation than was at one time anticipated, when I had treated with the President direct, still the conferences had

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[43]Ibid., November 29, 1853. For a Mexican interpretation of parts of the negotiations, see Ochoa, Integracion, pp. 132-135.

[44]Bonilla to Gadsden, Mexico City, November 30, 1853, Ministeral Despatches.

with him have proved favorable...." He was confident that the negotiations would be completed with the government of Santa Anna, but "patience will be necessary, for at this time the President and the cabinet think and dream only of dictatorship with the Empire to follow."[45] At his first meeting with the Mexican negotiators in December, Gadsden presented his version of a projected treaty, one which he said had been "carefully drawn up and reconciling in the most liberal of provisions all the disturbing issues between the two governments...."[46] The Mexican commission was willing to consider the proposal, and the December 24 all disputes were settled. The treaty was signed six days later.

Gadsden agreed to a line designated by Bonilla which gave the United States considerable territory--more than enough for a railroad. Inhabitants in the territory were guaranteed ecclesiastical and property rights, and United States was released from Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In addition, the purchase agreement called for a complete, new survey of the boundary. Gadsden had pressed for the recognition of the Garay grant, but Bonilla refused, telling the American minister the United States would have to assume payment for it. The treaty also stipulated that the United States would pay $15,000,000, as well as assume $5,000,000 more in claims of American citizens against the Mexican government. Bonilla also insisted that both governments be bound by the treaty to halt illegal intrusions

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[45]Gadsden to Marcy, Mexico City, December 4, 1853, Ministeral Despatches.

[46]Ibid., December 16, 1853.

into either nation.[47]

Gadsden returned to the United States on January 12, 1854, with his treaty.[48] Arguments over ratification of the agreement created considerable interest in the United States. Southerners favored the acquisition, while Northerners strongly denounced it. The Senate began considering the treaty in February, 1854—an undesirable time, for Congress was fighting over the Kansas-Nebraska bill at the time. Thus ratification of the Gadsden Treaty, like the boundary survey, involved the sectional struggles then engulfing the nation. The Senate amended the treaty by scaling the purchase price to $10,000,000 and striking out the $5,000,000 for claims. However, Article XI was completely abrogated.[49] Moreover, there was considerable disagreement over how far above the mouth of the Colorado River the boundary should be drawn, but the Mexicans were aware that if the final boundary separated Baja California from Mexico, it would be only a matter of time until this land also became alienated from the Mexican Republic.

It was Juan Nepomucano Almonte, Mexican Minister in Washington, who finally influenced the boundary agreed upon by the Senate. The agreement signed by Gadsden had set the boundary just six miles above the mouth of the Colorado, where extreme tides prevented a bridge being built. At Almonte's urging the final boundary was placed twenty-eight miles down the Colorado from its junction with the Gila

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[47] New York Daily Times, February 15, 1854. See also, Zorilla, Historia, pp. 293-302.

[48] Ibid., January 16, 1854.

[49] For the Mexican version of the ratification controversy see, Zorilla, Historia, pp. 348-351.

River. Gadsden was dissatisfied with the final version, but he could do nothing to stop its approval. Likewise Santa Anna was somewhat dissatisfied, but he needed money so desperately that he could not afford to stall for a better price. Therefore on May 31, 1854, the Mexican dictator signed the amended treaty. Although the House of Representatives was divided over sectional interests and had heatedly debated the appropriations bill for the purchase, it did vote on June 29 to provide the first payment of $7,000,000. The additional $3,000,000 was to be paid when the boundary had been properly surveyed. Thus the United States-Mexican border became stabilized—at least legally. Yet filibustering expeditions continued to influence diplomatic relations between the two countries. Expeditions were organized and launched from California for several more years—creating in Mexico an even more intense hatred for the gringos from the north.

CHAPTER IX

THE ARIZONA COLONIZATION COMPANY

On April 8, 1857, at the edge of the village of Caborca, hogs were feeding on the bodies of dead Americans, while several hundred Mexicans gleefully shouted, "*Muerto a los Gringos*" (Death to Americans). At the town plaza the head of the American leader was floating in a jar of mescal, displayed for all to see. The air was heavy with the smell of death, yet the Mexicans were preparing for a gala celebration. Only a few short months before, the head on display had sat on the shoulders of Henry Alexander Crabb, a California state senator who appeared destined for a brilliant future. Many of his followers were prominent Californians—men unlikely to sacrifice their lives foolishly on a quixotic venture. The entire group of less than one hundred men had followed a dry, dusty, and dangerous trail to Sonora early in 1857, proclaiming their intention of colonizing part of northern Sonora, only to meet a degrading death at Caborca on April 7.

Crabb had firmly believed he was entering Sonora at the invitation of leading citizens—including Ignacio Pesqueira, the potential governor. Upon arrival in Sonora, however, Crabb and his men treacherously were ordered captured and shot by Pesqueira—dead men could tell no stories of betrayal. The only survivor of the massacre was a sixteen-year-old boy, who was spared for reasons of youth. To Mexicans it was made to appear that Crabb and his men were filibusters. Never

resolved—then or yet—was the question of Crabb's real intentions: were he and his men in Sonora to wrest territory from a weak and neighboring republic, or were they innocent colonizers, dupes of a master plan which would give Pesqueira control of Sonora? Whatever the truth, Crabb's entanglement did prove how volatile and unpredictable Mexican politics and politicians could be.

The Mexican frontier in 1857 was a wild, lawless, and dangerous place. Apaches raided within fifteen miles of Guaymas, the principle sea coast village. Indians harassed caravans, killed homesteaders, and mercilessly preyed on all villages in the area.[1] In addition, outlawry had become so serious a problem that in 1857 martial law was declared for many areas of the frontier. Thus, plagued by Indian and outlaw raids, Sonora also suffered the ravages of revolution, as did Mexico at large.

Conservative forces led by Manuel Maria Gandara, the governor, fought liberal leaders such as Ignacio Pesqueira.[2] In the midst of this struggle, rumors spread that one of these groups was seeking support from Americans in California.[3] To some opportunistic Americans a divided Sonora seemed to be a singularly attractive chance to improve their lot. Into this land, replete with hostile men and animals, came Henry A. Crabb and his small band of men, the dupes of a

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[1] Daily Alta California, April 3, 1856. For additional information on Frontier conditions see, Daily Alta California, October 16, 1856. See also, Stevens, "The Apache Menace," pp. 211-222.

[2] See Chapter I for background details on Pesqueira and Gandara; for an excellent biography of Pesqueira see, Rudolph F. Acuña, "Ignacio Pesqueira: Sonoran Caudillo," Arizona and the West, XII (summer, 1970), pp. 139-172.

[3] Daily Alta California, December 24, 1856.

Mexican politico in Sonora, would-be governor Ignacio Pesqueira.

Perhaps in appearance and background Crabb was unsuited to the hard life of a filibuster/colonizer. He was bearded and dark-eyed, resembling in every way the stereotype aristocratic Southerner. A Tennessean by birth, he was a lawyer by trade who came to San Francisco in 1849 and became involved in politics. He served in the California Senate during the years 1853-1854, edited the Stockton Argus, and in 1855-1856 ran unsuccessfully for the United States Senate.[4] Consequently, when Crabb realized early in 1856 that he would not win the senate seat, he withdrew his name. He was at the time a member of the Know Nothing Party, a loosely organized political group comprised of dissident Whigs and Democrats. He was seeking the seat in the United States Senate previously held by William Gwin. Unfortunately California, like the country at large, was torn with factionalism. Opponents and proponents of slavery fought for influence in the state.[5] Crabb was then in his thirties, a pro-slavery supporter, but also a man "of influence, of respectable character and talents."[6] His marriage into the prominent California-Sonoran Ainsa family allowed him access to the leading political faction in Sonora, led by Ignacio Pesqueria. Allegedly, with Pesqueira's encouragement, Crabb agreed to lead a group of "colonizers" to Sonora.

Actually Crabb had thought of going to Mexico for some time before he led his ill-fated group to their deaths. In 1855 he failed

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[4]Ibid., January 27, June 11, July 30, 1856.

[5]Bancroft, History of California, I, pp. 697-699.

[6]House Exec. Doc. 64, 35 Cong., 1st sess., Serial 955, p. 71. Hereafter cited as House Exec. Doc. 64.

to win re-election to the state legislature, and before he ran for the United States Senate he traveled to Mississippi by way of the Isthmus of Nicaragua. He may at this time have considered a scheme for control of Nicaragua. Another filibuster, William Walker later would carry out such a plan, become president of that country, and eventually lose his life. Crabb possibly talked with Walker about such an expedition. Regardless of the dealings between the two men, they each may have greatly influenced the other's future.[7]

In Sonora in 1856 Ignacio Pesqueira's exhausted forces were unable to control the increasing Indian raids while suppressing the opposition Gandarist faction. With the promise of mining concessions and land grants, Crabb became interested in "settling" the frontier. As early as June, 1855, Crabb and his brother-in-law Agustín Ainsa went to Sonora by ship. While he was there, influential merchants and other Pesqueira supporters urged Crabb to lead a larger party overland to help place Pesqueira in power. Actually Crabb and Ainsa had begun to plan their entry into Mexico during the last year of Santa Anna's rule. Working with Jesus Islas, a Sonoran living in California, Crabb and Ainsa approached Jose de Aguilar, then a secretary in General Espejo's administration. Crabb, Ainsa, and Islas planned to bring several thousand Mexicans, then living in California, to colonize northern Mexico. Santa Anna was overthrown in 1855, however, but the government still saw the usefulness of such a colony. Islas returned to California

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[7]Rufus K. Wyllys, "Henry A. Crabb—A Tragedy of the Sonora Frontier," Pacific Historical Review, IX (June, 1940), p. 184.

and waited for the ruling junta to decide its official position. On May 1, 1855, Ainsa and Crabb presented themselves before Governor Aguilar. They talked about the colonization plan for thirty minutes and told the governor they were "precursors of the Islas colony, which abt. the 15th of May was to reach the Colorado mines."[8]

Ainsa and Crabb said they had advanced Islas $13,000 to recruit colonists, and the two financiers believed the Mexican government should repay some of this money and contribute to the colonization effort. The two men also told Aguilar that they had talked with Manuel María Gandara, the military commander of the state, and had obtained his support for their efforts. Aguilar claimed later that he saw the whole manipulation as a method to get money from the Mexican government. He said he knew that as Crabb was an American, he could inspire little confidence in Mexicans living along the border.

Nevertheless, Aguilar ordered the prefects of Altar and San Ignacio to aid the Islas colony of five hundred Mexicans when it reached their areas. They were to advance necessary funds to the colonists by using government credit.[9] About June 15, 1855, Ainsa journeyed through Ures and advised the governor that the colony would arrive soon. Shortly thereafter, the governor issued an order for Ainsa's arrest for talking of Sonoran independence. Ainsa temporarily avoided arrest, and for an unexplained reason Aguilar changed his mind about arresting Ainsa and decided only to have him watched. Aguilar kept close surveillance on Ainsa until he received a report from the

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[8] Jose de Aguilar, Vindicacion de su Conducta, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 265.

[9] Ibid., p. 267.

prefect of San Ignacio. After receiving this report, he finally arrested Ainsa. Captain Juan B. Navarro, an officer under Gandara's command, demanded Ainsa be turned over to the army for court martial, yet Aguilar refused the order.[10]

The Mexico City Integridad Nacional on May 18, 1856, carried a report from the prefect at San Ignacio. This Mexican official claimed that Ainsa had tried to bribe him to help liberate Sonora, Sinaloa, and Baja California from Mexico. Ainsa reportedly had told him the territory then would be annexed to the United States, which would pay $25,000,000 for the expenses incurred. Mexicans easily could recall that this was the period when many expansionists dominated the United States Congress. Moreover, William Gwin, one senator from California was a known expansionist (he later tried his own scheme to establish a republic on Mexican soil). Others unofficially may have encouraged Crabb and Ainsa to secure additional Mexican land in hopes that it could be converted to slave territory.[11]

Aguilar, in his Vindication of his Conduct, may have been trying to protect himself. He possibly was deeply involved with Ainsa. Yet his justification for his actions served to demonstrate his extreme anxiety to clear himself of any connection with Crabb. It is unlikely, however, that Aguilar was completely innocent. In his proclamation of July 11, 1856, to the citizens of Sonora, he was even more adamant about his innocence—and even less convincing.[12] After

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[10]Ibid., p. 269.

[11]Ibid., p. 270.

[12]Manuscript Print 1141, Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 313.

the revolution began in Sonora in 1856, the governor was denounced for his conduct in the Ainsa affair. Reportedly after Aguilar had Ainsa arrested, he allowed Ainsa liberties and even eventually freed the prisoner.[13]

Regardless of the political maneuverings in Mexico, Crabb continued his plans. By the summer of 1856 Crabb was making preparations to lead this overland party. It was also during this summer that revolution began in northern Mexico. Thus when news of the American preparations reached Mexico, the Gandarists used the invasion to charge Pesqueira with betrayal of his country.[14] Regardless of the charges and counter-charges, Pesqueira gained control, and in July he assumed the executive power of the state of Sonora. It was with the encouragement of this man and his associates that, early in 1857, Crabb prepared to move into Mexico. In fact, the Ainsa family probably provided connections for Crabb to conspire with Pesqueira. Crabb's "colonists" were to help Pesqueira defeat Manuel Gandara.[15]

The Arizona Colonization Company, the formal title of Crabb's group, consisted partly of influential citizens of California, former state senators, and men of substantial backgrounds.[16] Eventually the force was projected to total one thousand men; however, less than one hundred men actually made the trip. They sailed from San Francisco in

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[13]Mexico City, Integridad Nacional, July 18, 1856, in Pinart Transcripts, Sonora, V, p. 341.

[14]Rasey Biven to John Forsyth, June 18, 1857, Mazatlan, Ministeral Despatches.

[15]Wyllys, "Henry A. Crabb," p. 186.

[16]Zorrilla, Historia, p. 371.

January of 1857 and grouped near Los Angeles where they assembled supplies. From there they journeyed to Yuma Crossing (the junction of the Colorado and Gila rivers), where they remained for a short time before marching into Mexico.[17]

The Sacramento Union received word from a member of the party that they had reached Fort Yuma on March 1, 1857. This writer indicated that the group suffered greatly on its journey through barren southern California—a desert with sand eight to ten inches deep which made each step as punishing as ten. Still, according to the writer, their spirits were high. The three companies were comprised of "men of courage, energy and enterprises, ready to face any danger, and equal to any emergency."[18] Crabb shared the hardships of his men, wading rivers and pushing the wagons through the sand. Often the men tied themselves to harness and pulled the heavy wagons through the desert. One of the party was said to have remarked that "it was rather hard to leave California in rope harness, acting in the capacity of a horse."[19] Of course, many of the party became ill, and they sorely regretted the medical supplies and wagons left behind in the desert. Even yet, the party remained determined.[20]

Word of Crabb's approaching expedition spread rapidly in Sonora.

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[17] Robert H. Forbes, Crabb's Expedition into Sonora, (Arizona, 1952), p. 8. For additional information on Crabb's preparation see, Daily Alta California, March 20, 1857.

[18] Daily Alta California, March 20, 1857.

[19] Ibid.

[20] J. Y. Ainsa, History of the Crabb Expedition into N. Sonora (Phoenix, 1951), p. 16. See also, Juanita Ruiz, "The Watch of Henry A. Crabb," Journal of Arizona History, VII (summer, 1966), pp. 139-143.

He had made no attempt at secrecy, discussing the expedition freely with California newspapers.[21] The New York Daily Times reported on April 15 that Crabb's colonizing party was, in truth, a filibustering expedition.[22] In Mexico, American ambassador John Forsyth wrote to Lewis Cass that the newspapers in the Mexican capital had been carrying rumors of the American filibustering expedition for two months.[23] Forsyth expressed his fear that an invasion would result in Mexicans showing little mercy to the Americans.

The group now was reduced by sickness to about ninety men. After leaving Yuma they followed the Gila River for some forty-five miles; then they rested at a place later called Filibuster Camp. There they gathered strength for the arduous journey that lay ahead. Only after great suffering did the men arrive at Sonoita on the international border. It was there, on March 26, that Crabb wrote a letter to Don José María Redondo, prefect of Altar. He advised Redondo that the Americans were entering Mexico in accordance with the colonization laws and "in compliance with positive invitations from some of the most influential citizens of Sonora."[24] The party was armed, but Crabb wrote that this was necessary for protection against outlaws and Indians. He also advised Redondo to make a decision about the Americans; "Bear this in mind, if blood is to flow, with all its

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[21]John Forsyth to Don Juan Antonio de la Fuenta, May 30, 1857, Mexico City, House Exec. Doc. 64, p. 40.

[22]New York Daily Times, April 15, 1857.

[23]John Forsyth to Lewis Cass, April 24, 1857, Mexico City, Ministeral Despatches.

[24]Henry A. Crabb to Don José María Redondo, March 26, 1857, Sonoita, House Exec. Doc. 64, p. 31.

horrors, on your head be it, and not on mine."[25] Crabb evidently was warned of hostile Mexican feelings before the end of his march, but he chose to pursue his venture.

Crabb received an answer, indirectly, in the form of a proclamation by Pesqueira. The governor called on free Sonorans to arm themselves and prepare for a bloody battle. He charged the Americans with violation of the national sovereignty of Mexico. Patriotism was his password for promoting unity—and himself—in the hearts of all Mexicans. He called for Sonorans to let their "conciliation become sincere in order to fight this horde of pirates, without country, religion, or honor."[26] Conflicting reports circulated in both countries, and Crabb was expected to attack by land and sea. Americans were told that Mexican authorities might have poisoned the water wells from Sonoita to Caborca.[27] In fact, Crabb's plan called for a march through the arid desert region of Sonora to Caborca, Mexico, an arduous march of over ninety miles. Sixty-nine men set out for Caborca, leaving twenty men to follow later. However, only sixteen of these men would follow Crabb into Mexico. Four were too ill to make the journey.

While the Americans marched into Mexico, Pesqueira prepared his defenses. Don Lorenzo Rodriguez and two hundred men were sent from Altar to Caborca.[28] Mexican citizens were indignant over this American

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Datos Historicos Sobre Filibusteros de 1857, En Caborca, Son (Caborca, Sonora, 1926), p. 10. See also, Mexico City, Estandarte Nacional, April 24, 1857.

[27] New York Daily Times, May 19, 1857; see also, Ibid., May 21, 1857.

[28] Datos Historicos, p. 11.

invasion, but they were especially vehement in their condemnation of those who may have invited Crabb to enter Mexico.[29] This attitude perhaps led to the death sentence later inflicted on the group of filibusters. General Luís Noriega, commander at the Guaymas garrison, called the Americans pirates; he implored his men to "march to meet them. Let there be no mercy shown, no generous sentiment felt for these rascals."[30] In addition, the Mexicans launched a maritime expedition on March 17 from Mazatlán. Led by José Velasquez Cadena, this convoy hoped to attack any Americans invading by sea.

Residents of the Mexican village of Caborca learned of Crabb's approach by land, and on April 1 the first hostile contact was made. The Americans were unprepared for an attack, as they had no scouts in advance. As the Crabb group marched through a wheat field in disorderly formation, the Mexicans opened fire.[31] Although caught unaware, Crabb's men killed several Mexicans, including one of the leaders. After the initial contact, both sides withdrew. The Mexican force returned to Caborca, and later the Americans followed. To enter the village, they had to cross a barren strip of land about four hundred yards from the first houses. This clearing exposed them to intense Mexican rifle fire from fences, houses, and shelters. Still, the Americans attacked and forced the Mexicans to withdraw to a church in the city. The church walls were thick, and the Mexicans very tena-

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[29] For Mexican attitudes see, Mexico City Estandarte Nacional, April 24, 1857, Ministeral Despatches.

[30] New York Daily Times, May 19, 1857.

[31] Sworn Statement of Charles Edward Evans in correspondence, Charles B. Smith to John Forsyth, September 14, 1857, Mazatlán, in House Exec. Doc. 64, p. 65.

ciously held their position.

Five Americans had been killed and fifteen more wounded in the house-to-house fight, but a considerably larger number of Mexicans had been killed. Although the Mexicans had the advantage of position, American fire was deadly accurate.[32] To dislodge the church defenders, Crabb ordered his men to blast the church door down. Fifteen men tried to carry a keg of powder to the door, but intense Mexican fire forced them to take cover. Five men lost their lives, and Crabb and seven more were wounded in this effort.[33] Both the Mexicans and the Americans held their positions for almost six days. The building in which the Americans were stationed was well provisioned with large stores of food and water. During this six-day seige, more Mexican troops came from nearby towns and surrounded the village, swelling their number to 1,500. Moreover, several hundred Papago Indians armed with bows and arrows were with the Mexicans.

On April 6 one of the Indians shot a fire-tipped arrow into the thatched roof of Crabb's stronghold. Crabb attempted to blow the roof off with dynamite, but in the conflagration several men were burned, and others were killed when the magazine exploded.[34] Reluctantly, the Americans asked the Mexicans for terms of surrender. In reply the Mexicans promised to treat the Americans as prisoners of war. Crabb knew that his men must surrender or fight their way out against a superior force. Many of his men distrusted the Mexicans and wanted to

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[32] Forbes, Crabb's Expedition, p. 21.

[33] Daily Alta California, August 3, 1857.

[34] Ibid., May 22, 1857. See also, Ibid., May 31, 1857.

die fighting, but their distrust was overcome by Hilario Gabilondo, who promised medical care for the wounded and fair treatment for the survivors.[35] Crabb sent one man out under a white flag, but Gabilondo took him as a prisoner. The Mexican commander then had him call to his companions that they would be taken as prisoners to Altar if they would march out of the building in single file. At this entreaty the Americans complied and came out unarmed.

Mexican promises quickly proved worthless. The Americans immediately were bound and taken to a nearby corral where they were held until morning. At dawn the men were taken out in groups of five or ten and shot in the back—because, some said, the Mexican troops could not look them in the face.[36] Some reports stated that the "bodies were left where they fell, and Mexicans were heard to boast that their hogs were fattening upon the bodies of 'Los Yankees.'"[37] Crabb alone faced solitary death. In the alcalde's office he talked with another prisoner. He also wrote a letter to his wife. Then he was led out, his hands tied over his head, and his back turned to the executioners. An informant told the San Diego Herald that "at the command 'fire,' at least a hundred [rifle] balls were fixed into his body, and all that was mortal of Henry A. Crabb hung dead, swinging by his tied hands."[38] A Mexican severed Crabb's head and placed it in a jar of mescal so that it could be displayed in the village. The

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[35]Statement of Evans, Smith to Forsyth, House Exec. Doc. 64, p. 66.

[36]House Exec. Doc. 64, pp. 73-74.

[37]Charles Smith to John Forsyth, June 22, 1857, Mazatlán, Ministeral Despatches.

[38]House Exec. Doc. 64, p. 74.

Mexicans spared only Charles Edward Evans, a boy of sixteen.[39] On May 18 the New York Daily Times reported the death of Crabb and his party.[40]

Other associates of the Crabb group suffered various fates. Agustin Ainsa and Rasey Biven were jailed in Sonora, charged with aiding Crabb. Both men were related to Crabb by marriage, and their subsequent stories of the event, while largely accurate, made the Mexicans unquestionable villains. Still other members of the Crabb party died at the hands of Mexicans. After the execution of Crabb's immediate force, the Mexican carefully searched the countryside for additional Americans. Parties traveled as far as Sonoita on the international border. There the four sick men left behind at Edward E. Dunbar's general store on the American side of the border were taken by the Mexican force. Twenty-five Mexicans entered Dunbar's store, dragged the four men out, tied them to stakes, and shot them. Dunbar was out of town and probably escaped the same fate.[41] Although the bodies of the Americans were left to rot, a group of Papago Indians buried them. In addition, the Mexican arrested Jesus Ainsa, Crabb's brother-in-law, and took him to Sonora. When news spread of this violation of the border, Americans clamored for punishment of the guilty Mexicans.

The Mexican force swiftly dealt vengeance upon unsuspecting reinforcements marching to join Crabb's ill-fated group. In Arizona

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[39] Wyllys, "Henry A. Crabb," p. 191.

[40] New York Daily Times, May 18, 1857.

[41] Daily Alta California, May 28, 1857. See also, New York Daily Times, June 13, 1857.

Major R. N. Wood and Captain Granville H. Oury had organized twenty-five to thirty men in what was called the Tucson Valley Company. This party marched from Tucson toward Caborca, intending to link forces with Crabb. On or about April 5, when they were fifteen miles from Caborca, they met a combined Mexican and Indian force numbering almost five hundred men and were ambushed. The Mexican leader, Captain José Moreno of Altar, told the Americans that if they would yield their arms they would be allowed to leave the state unmolested. However, Captain Dury refused to comply as he still hoped to join Crabb in Caborca. The Mexican resistance was so strong that Oury's men were fortunate to retreat in good order to the United States border, losing only four men on the way.[42] One of the four lost was Major R. N. Wood. At every waterhole or resting place, the pursuing Mexicans paid greatly, losing forty men in all. Oury displayed high qualities of leadership in the retreat, and some Americans involved stated that had Oury been with Crabb the execution of that larger party would never have taken place.[43] Deadly aim, coolness under fire, and general bravery, along with good leadership, spared the Tucson Valley Company from Crabb's fate.[44]

Sixteen other Americans, led by Captain Freeman S. McKinney, also

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[42]Daily Alta California, August 3, 1857.

[43]New York Daily Times, June 13, 1857. See also, Ibid., May 21, 1857.

[44]Granville Oury returned to Arizona Territory, and with his brother became involved in territorial politics. Oury served as a Democratic delegate to Congress from Arizona in 1880-1882. He practiced law for several years and died at Washington, D.C., in 1891. For information see, Granville Oury file, Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society; see also, Cornelius Smith, Jr., William Sanders Oury; History Maker of the Southwest (Arizona, 1967).

attempted to join Crabb, but were not so fortunate as those from Tucson. A few days after Crabb's execution, a large Mexican force patroling near Altar discovered this group from California and attacked it. In contrast to Oury's decision, the McKinney party surrendered—and all were quickly shot. Probably the Mexicans did not definitely know that this group was part of Crabb's party, but his made no difference. On the sea the Mexicans also awaited an attack that never materialized.[45] North Americans on any business were unwelcome. Crabb's misadventure precipitated vengeance on all his countrymen.[46]

The Crabb expedition intensified the violent antipathies that had roots in the Mexican War. Americans were appalled and angered at the treatment given Crabb's party, but more especially were they alarmed that Mexicans had apprehended and shot American citizens on United States' soil. John Forsyth wrote an official protest to the Mexican government about the Crabb incident, charging the Mexican government with refusing information and failure to cooperate.[47] Even if Crabb was a filibuster, the United States maintained that he should not have been executed without trial. Forsyth added that "the pirate who roams the ocean with the black emblem of death at his masthead, who robs and murders the people of all nations indiscriminately...when overcome by a cruizer of a civilized state, is not put to death on the spot."[48]

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[45] Ibid., May 21, 1857.

[46] Daily Alta California, August 3, 1857.

[47] Forsyth to Fuente, May 30, 1857, House Exec. Doc. 64, p. 40.

[48] Ibid., p. 42.

Later, Rasey Biven, Crabb's brother-in-law informed the Daily Alta California that Crabb's party was not a filibustering expedition, but a peaceful colonizing company. He insisted that Crabb came to Sonora at the invitation of Don Ignacio Pesqueira, unaware that Pesqueira deemed it was "politic to denounce them as filibusters, and declare war against them until not one of their invited guests are left to tell what they saw in Sonora."[49] Biven also wrote Forsyth, reiterating his willingness to swear that Pesqueira was the guilty party.[50] When Biven's statement was printed, Californians were easily convinced that Crabb was the victim of Mexican politics.[51] To add credence to Biven's version, the New York Daily Times on May 21, 1857, printed a letter from Francis D. Clark, a former friend of Crabb in Stockton, California. Clark said he talked many times with Crabb. They both knew of the William Walker filibuster into Baja California in 1853, as well as of other attempts to take territory.[52] Clark knew their type of operations, and he said that at no time did Crabb mention hostile intentions to Sonora.[53] He recalled that Crabb was a prominent citizen, an influential leader in the Know Nothing movement in California, and not inclined to foolish activities.[54]

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[49]Daily Alta California, May 30, 1857.

[50]Rasey Biven to John Forsyth, June 18, 1857, Mazatlán, Ministeral Despatches.

[51]Daily Alta California, May 31, 1857.

[52]For information on William Walker's expedition to Mexico see, Woodward, ed., The Republic of Lower California.

[53]New York Daily Times, May 21, 1857.

[54]Bancroft, California, VI, p. 697.

Later evidence suggested that Clark was correct. According to C. P. Stone, Acting United States Consul at Guaymas in 1859, Pesqueira was eminently capable of chicanery. Stone reported to Lewis Cass in December, 1858, that Pesqueira roused his constituents against Americans by calling upon Mexicans to repel a large group of filibusters who allegedly were invading Sonora. According to Stone, this was actually a ruse to obtain men and guns for Pesqueira's forces in Sinoloa, not for use against "los gringos." After assembling alarmed citizens, he conscripted some to reinforce his army, while the remainder were sent home after registering their firearms.[55] Soon afterward, Pesqueira forcibly collected these firearms and ammunition. Thus if Stone's report were accurate, Crabb may well have been "invited" to come to Sonora in 1857 only to serve the purpose of furthering Pesqueira's hold on Sonora. Partly as a result of this episode Pesqueira remained the major political figure in Sonora for the next twenty years. The heroism displayed by the citizens of Caborca resulted in the city being renamed Heroica ("H. de Caborca").

In the course of Sonoran politics, it mattered little who was the guilty party in the Crabb incident. During the next several months, Pesqueria and Gandara charged each other with inviting Americans to settle in Sonora.[56] The United States government considered it a potentially dangerous diplomatic incident, and the House of Representatives printed many of the documents surround the event.[57]

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[55]C. P. Stone to Lewis Cass, February 21, 1859, Guaymas, Sonora, Consular Despatches.

[56]Daily Alta California, June 24, 1857.

[57]House Exec. Doc. 64, 35 Cong., 1st sess., Serial 955, pp. 1-84.

However, as the facts presented to the United States government offered no defense of the Crabb affair, the United States overlooked the issue for fear of causing serious diplomatic consequences. Men thereafter were cautious about provoking Mexican wrath. Crabb unfortunately was naive, he entered Mexico at an inopportune time, and he paid with his life. Nevertheless, men continued to dream of that fortune just beyond the horizon, that irresistible urge to "see the elephant." The dream of taking Sonora—of annexing it to the United States or of establishing a separate republic—did not die with Crabb, but like a magnet would lure other adventurous or naive men to march south.[58]

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[58]For several years after Crabb's death men continued to dream of creating a republic including California and part of Mexico. For additional information see, Bancroft, History of California, VII, pp. 279-280.

CHAPTER X

DUKE OF SONORA

During the American Civil War, the last major expedition was planned by an American adventurer to gain control of northern Mexico. Between 1863 and 1865, ex-California Senator William McKendree Gwin promoted and planned, with the help of the French who were intervening in Mexico, a colonization scheme with himself as the "Duke of Sonora." However, he received almost no support from the Mexicans and so little from Emperor Maximilian that his efforts failed miserably. Shortly thereafter, Napoleon III withdrew French support from Maximilian, and in 1867 the Empire collapsed.[1]

William Gwin was born in Tennessee in 1805--the son of an itinerate Methodist preacher. The future California politician was educated at Transylvania University, from which he earned degrees both in law and medicine. Afterward he moved to Clinton, Mississippi, where he practiced medicine until 1833, when Andrew Jackson named him a United States Marshal. Seven years later he served one term in the lower house of Congress, at the end of which he moved to New Orleans. In 1848 he decided to move again, this time to California, hoping to enter politics. He was quick witted, although often devious, and impressive in bearing. These were necessary qualities to win the

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[1]For a short overview on Maximilian see, Herbert I. Priestly, The Mexican Nation, A History (New York, 1930), pp. 357-364.

political ascendancy and influence he wanted more than anything else.[2] Gwin firmly believed that California was the place to gain power quickly, as the new territory needed political organization when it should become a state in the Union. Gwin was so certain of his abilities that before leaving the East, he told Senator Stephan A. Douglas of Illinois that he intended to be a candidate for the United States Senate from California and would see him soon.[3]

The future California politician arrived in San Francisco on June 4, 1849, just in time to participate in the movement for a constitution for the golden territory aspiring to statehood.[4] Eight days later he attended a mass meeting which ended in the calling of a constitutional convention. By 1850 Gwin had fulfilled his goal and was back in Washington as a California senator.[5] Almost continuously until 1861 he represented his adopted state, but when the Civil War began Gwin grew restive in California. He retired from California politics and considered his southern heritage. Being a Southerener, he naturally sympathized with the Confederacy.[6] Knowing his Mississippi plantation was in the path of General U. S. Grant's army marching toward

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[2]Johnson and Malone, Dictionary of American Biographies, VIII, pp. 64-65.

[3]William H. Ellison, "Constitution Making in the Land of Gold," Pacific Historical Review, XVIII (August, 1949), p. 322.

[4]Bancroft, California, VII, pp. 265-273. See also, James A. B. Scherer, Thirty-First Star (New York, 1942).

[5]For additional information on Gwin's political career see, Bancroft, California, VI.

[6]For more details on Gwin's southern sympathies see, A. Russell Buchanan, David Terry of California, Dueling Judge (San Marino, California, 1956).

Vicksburg, Gwin left California to return to there. En route, however, he was arrested by United States army officers at the Isthmus of Panama and held a prisoner at Fort Lafayette from November 18 to December 2, 1861. Although he was arrested as a Southern sympathizer, no evidence could be found to try him as a traitor. As the Daily Alta California reported, "no documents or other evidence was found to substantiate the charge..." This paper also added that this "lenity" towards Gwin was uncalled for.[7] After his release by United States officials, he journeyed to his plantation in Mississippi where he remained through 1862.

During the winter of 1862-1863, Gwin departed for France aboard the blockade runner Robert E. Lee, which sailed from Wilmington, North Carolina.[8] Gwin knew that while he was in Paris, and even before, California was experiencing internal problems arising from quarrels between secessionists and Unionists. Gwin had lived and served in that atmosphere; therefore, he certainly must have counted on considerable California support for the Mexican colonization plan that he hoped to present to Napoleon III, Emperor of France.[9] Also, Gwin was very aware of Southern interest in Mexico, for the Confederate States badly needed recognition and support to defeat the Northern forces. In fact, Colonel James Reily had been sent to Mexico by General H. H. Sibley,

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[7]Daily Alta California, January 20, 1862.

[8]Evan J. Coleman, ed., "Senator Gwin's Plan for the Colonization of Sonora," Overland Monthly, second series, XVII, p. 606 (1891). Actually, all of the correspondence and documents relating to Gwin's Mexican plan were published during 1891 in the Overland Monthly (January-December).

[9]Daily Alta California, September 8, 30, and November 5, 1861.

Confederate commander of New Mexico, to seek permission for Confederate troops to cross the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The Mexican government, however, was in such a state of chaos that the Confederates gained nothing by these efforts.[10] Yet, others were strongly interested in northern Mexico for other reasons, and Napoleon had heard of the gold and silver mines alleged to be in the area.[11]

The French maintained a steady interest in Mexico from 1848 to 1852. During these years Napoleon III was president of the republic. Then in 1852 he became emperor with dreams of rebuilding the empire. Thus French interest in Mexico ultimately became French intervention and intrigue in Mexico and other parts of the world.

Others wanted the land for private uses. In Paris, Gwin joined a colony of Confederate sympathizers. He entertained prominent Frenchmen and frequently associated with John Slidell and other official representatives of the Confederacy. Ideologically the ex-California senator agreed with the Southerners on slavery, but would take no official stand in support of the Confederacy.[12] Perhaps he wished no problems in presenting his plan, but perhaps he saw that neither Great Britain nor France would officially support the government of the Confederate States of America.[13] Thus Gwin removed himself from that

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[10] James Reily to John H. Reagan, January 1, 1862, in Official Records, series 1, part 1, p. 825.

[11] Hallie M. McPherson, "The Plan of William McKendree Gwin for a Colony in North Mexico, 1863-1865," Pacific Historical Review, II (December, 1933), p. 361.

[12] For Gwin's attitudes on slavery see, B. Sacks, "The Creation of the Territory of Arizona," Arizona and the West, V (Spring, 1963), p. 46.

[13] Overland Monthly, second series, XVIII, p. 497.

issue while making other critically important connections in the Emperor's cabinet. The Marquis de Montholon, Napoleon's minister to Mexico, was intrigued with Gwin's idea of colonization on the Mexican frontier, and they talked at length of the future of Mexico. Both men wished to influence the destiny of northern Mexico, because Gwin had spun stories of the abandoned Spanish gold and silver mines just awaiting anyone with sufficient ingenuity to reap the harvest. According to the Californian, only a few hostile Indians stood in the way of such success.[14]

With the encouragement of Montholon and Count Mercier, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gwin met and visited briefly with the Archduke Maximilian, newly appointed Emperor of Mexico. Gwin reminded the Emperor that

> the weak point of the Mexican Empire is on its northern boundary. The country is sparsely populated; the inhabitants are cowed and disheartened by the extortions of Mexican officials and the depredations of warlike Indian nations.[15]

Finally, in January of 1864, Gwin officially communicated his scheme to Napoleon III, and the French Emperor was very interested in the plan, especially as financing was necessary if all of Mexico was to be subdued.[16] The scheme called for a military law, with grants of land to immigrants, governmental sharing of mineral wealth, and boundaries

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[14]Gwin to Maximilian, Paris, September, 1863, in ibid., p. 499. See also, McPherson, "The Plan of William M. Gwin," p. 363.

[15]William Gwin to Napoleon III, Paris, January 5, 1864, Overland Monthly, XVII, p. 501.

[16]See an interesting article concerning the French in Mexico and William Gwin in Lately Thomas, "The Operator and the Emperors," American Heritage, XV (April, 1864), pp. 4-23, and 83-84.

so "as to exclude, as much as possible, lands actually occupied by the present Mexican population in Sonora and Chihuahua."[17] The colonization plan appeared to offer great promise of success and wealth, but more than potential wealth would be necessary to obtain the unqualified support of the French government. Count Mercier interested the Duc de Morny, Napoleon's half-brother and most influential advisor, in the plan.

De Morny was also an unscrupulous speculator in various projects, the perfect man to back the venture into Mexico. According to Gwin, the Frenchman agreed that the Duc would provide the money necessary to colonize the frontier. Gwin was to be given the title of "Duke of Sonora," with a yearly income of $60,000. For his help De Morny would receive a share of the vast and untouched mineral wealth in Sonora and Chihuahua.[18] With such influence in high echelons of the French government, Gwin received an audience with Napoleon III during which he convinced the Emperor that the plan should have the support of the French government, especially of the French military forces in Mexico. Napoleon was blinded by the brilliant prospects of great gold and silver bonanzas in Mexico, and eagerly he sought to set the American scheme in motion.[19]

Soon thereafter, Napoleon officially presented the plan to the Archduke Maximilian, who consented to meet with Gwin. The ex-Cali-

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[17] "Plan of Colonization in Sonora and Chihuahua," Overland Monthly, XVII, p. 503.

[18] New York Daily Times, July 7, 1862.

[19] William Gwin to Napoleon, Mexico, July 3, 1865, Overland Monthly, XVII, second series, p. 596.

fornia senator later wrote Napoleon that "the Archduke Maximilian, then in Paris after making himself acquainted with my scheme, had approved it in the main, and encouraged me to come to Mexico."[20] In fact, Napoleon's government not only fully adopted the plan, but also took steps to convince both Mexicans and Maximilian that they should support the scheme.[21] Thus with approval from Napoleon and possible help from Maximilian, Gwin prepared to undertake his first journey to Mexico. The French Emperor sent with Gwin a letter to the French military commander in Mexico, Marshall Bazaine, asking that he help Gwin in all possible ways. In addition, Napoleon had become so interested in the mines of Sonora that he forced Maximilian to agree to French ratification of all acts of the Regency. The archduke did not take kindly to this pressure, but he nonetheless tactfully signed the Treaty of Miramon, containing the desired clauses, between the Mexican and French governments. Maximilian and Empress Carlotta embarked for Mexico on April 14, 1864, convinced that they would save Mexico, and Gwin left France two weeks later bound for Mexico City.

Gwin arrived only a month behind the Duke and Empress.[22] He first went to see Marshall Bazaine with credentials from Napoleon. From this official the ex-Californian soon learned that the Mexicans were generally hostile toward his colonization plans. Moreover, José Hidalgo, the Mexican representative in Paris, had held up delivery of

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[20]Ibid.

[21]New York Daily Times, May 2, 1865. See also, McPherson, "The Plan of William Gwin," p. 369.

[22]New York Daily Times, May 2, 1865. See also, McPherson, "The Plan of William Gwin," p. 369.

Gwin's credentials which already were supposed to be in the hands of Maximilian's government. Hidalgo was first a Mexican, and he hoped to stop Gwin before the plan could gain momentum.[23] While awaiting an audience with Maximilian, Gwin wrote his son that "there has been some foul play about my papers. They have never reached the Emperor. For fear of accidents, I shall write the Duke de Morny, to see that no orders countermanding the expedition are issued."[24]

Gwin began to sense serious problems when he could not get an audience with the Mexican Emperor regardless of how hard he tried. Finally, when he met with the head of the Archduke's cabinet, he was abruptly rebuffed. Gwin realized he would never obtain sufficient cooperation from Maximilian, and thus soon thereafter the "Duke of Sonora" decided to join forces with Marshall Bazaine. But Bazaine not only was fighting with Maximilian for influence in the government, but also he was busily courting a seventeen-year-old girl.[25] Consequently, Gwin could accomplish little during the next several months, so he remained in Mexico City trying to make influential connections. He should have realized that Maximilian would not chance incurring more enmity from his fiery Mexican "constituents" just to help an American adventurer.

Although he failed to anticipate Maximilian's intentions, Gwin did correctly assess the state of Mexican affairs. In September of 1864 he

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[23]McPherson, "The Plan of William Gwin," pp. 368-371.

[24]William M. Gwin to his son, Mexico, July 27, 1864, Overland Monthly XVIII, second series, p. 204.

[25]For comment on the Marshall's wedding see, Overland Monthly, XVIII, pp. 207-208.

addressed a letter to Napoleon III about the "deplorable" situation in Mexico. He described Mexico as a country at civil war for fifty years, whose "government is a wreck, and the masses of the people are strangers to order and stability in government, and have no hope of a prosperity they have never been permitted to enjoy."[26] The American opportunist also advised Napoleon that the French army was handicapped in Mexico by poor roads, harsh climate, and constant Indian raids in the north. He added that military expeditions were being outfitted for Sinaloa and Sonora, but even if the government could become established, Gwin queried whether "the Empire [could] be made permanent, and able without foreign aid to sustain itself against foreign aggression or domestic violence?"[27]

The French Emperor also realized that northern Mexico might well become American territory if something were not accomplished quickly. Accordingly, Napoleon urged Maximilian to cooperate with Gwin. The Archduke replied that the regency would be happy to cooperate with the American in any colonization scheme. Unfortunately for Gwin no evidence existed that the Archduke's support was more than consideration.[28] Thus Gwin found himself in the uncomfortable position of being caught between the French and Mexican Emperors at the same time he also was caught between Maximilian and the French army of occupation. No matter how he tried, the hopeful "Duke of Sonora," could not get a commitment from Maximilian. The emperor was too busy traveling through the

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[26]William M. Gwin to Napoleon, Mexico, September 12, 1864, Overland Monthly, XVII, second series, p. 506.

[27]Ibid., p. 507.

[28]McPherson, "The Plan of William Gwin," pp. 371-372.

countryside trying to convince himself that all Mexicans loved him.

Gwin's first ray of hope came from Carlotta. Indeed Carlotta was directing the affairs of state while her husband was away, and she granted Gwin an audience. He had a pleasant and promising conversation with the empress, for she raised only a few objections to the plan. Gwin confided in a letter to his daughter that the empress had suggested an alternate project which "will be at once conceded by Montholon, and then our success is complete."[29] Gwin agreed to all the suggestions Carlotta made and even fully expected her to sign a document guaranteeing the empire's support. Unfortunately she refused to sign any agreement without her husband's approval. In October Maximilian returned. Gwin encountered him at a wedding, and it was during this celebration that Gwin became aware of Maximilian's negative intentions. Gwin wrote his daughter that "the Emperor was also very courteous, but never alluded to our interview in Paris, or business of any kind."[30] In fact, Maximilian never granted Gwin an audience to discuss his colonization scheme. After traveling in much of Mexico the Archduke realized that his support of Gwin could only foster more hatred for his regime—Americans were hated and distrusted perhaps even more than Frenchmen. Gwin finally began to lose all hope late in 1864 when many of the French occupation troops were withdrawn by Napoleon III.

As a last resort Gwin traveled to France to talk directly with the French emperor. On January 19, 1865, he sailed from Vera Cruz.

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[29]William Gwin to his daughter, Mexico, September 29, 1864, Overland Monthly, second series, XVII, p. 509.

[30]Ibid., October, 1864, p. 514.

He arrived in Paris, hoping to obtain immediate help from the Duc de Morny, who had indicated a few weeks before that he still favored the plan. De Morny died four days after Gwin's arrival, however, and with the Duc's death the last real chance for Gwin's success also died. Yet the American adventurer still refused to be totally discouraged.[31] He did gain an audience with Napoleon, who still was strongly interested in northern Mexico, or rather in its mineral potential.[32] The enterprising Gwin presented yet another plan, that of civilizing the Indians and converting Sonora into a highly productive region. Napoleon enthusiastically approved of the plan, which promised to line the royal pocket book; therefore, on March 31, 1865, he gave Gwin a letter which directed Marshall Bazaine to aid the American in every possible way.[33] For the second time, Gwin left Paris for Mexico. At approximately this time Richmond fell to Union forces, ending the Confederate dream; had Napoleon known of this Southern loss, he doubtless would not have cooperated so fully with Gwin, for the United States soon would move to enforce the Monroe Doctrine and evict the French intruders from Mexico.

Bad luck seemed to be Gwin's partner now. By the time the American reached Mexico, Montholon had been transferred to Washington, and Gwin thereby lost his only real support in Mexico.[34] In addition,

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[31]New York Daily Times, May 21, 1865. See also, McPherson, "The Plan of William Gwin," p. 373.

[32]William Gwin to Napoleon, Paris, March 25, 1865, Overland Monthly, second series, XVII, p. 515.

[33]Conti to Gwin, Paris, March 31, 1865, ibid., p. 595.

[34]McPherson, "The Plan of William Gwin," p. 375.

Marshall Bazaine, who was 55, anticipated his approaching marriage to that lovely, young seventeen-year-old girl. Understandably, Bazaine's interest could not be held by colonization plans and politics.[35] Gwin knew that, wedding or no wedding, Marshall Bazaine would not carry out Napoleon's orders.[36] Moreover, rising nationalism in Mexico, coupled with the icy attitude of Maximilian, doomed Gwin's project. And he was constantly assailed by the Mexican press as one trying to fragment the Republic for the "gringos" of the north. Gwin retorted to the Mexico City Diario Del Imperio that he came to Mexico "with letters from the same monarch commending me and my scheme in the most emphatic terms to the active protection of the commander-in-chief of the French forces, and through him to the Emperor Maximilian."[37] Gwin believed himself "the victim of the most unparalleled turpitude that ever disgraced an official minion."[38]

Gwin knew that without support he would be wise to forget his schemes. Therefore he requested a military escort to the United States, reporting to Napoleon that

> from the inception of the scheme of colonization, I have acted with the most unbounded frankness, concealing nothing of my motives and purposes, either from your majesty, or your majesty's representatives here.[39]

Thus the American adventurer departed Mexico, disillusioned about his

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[35]William Gwin to his wife, Mexico, May 11, 1865, Overland Monthly, XVII, second series, p. 593.

[36]William Gwin to Napoleon III, Mexico, July 3, 1865, ibid., p. 596.

[37]Ibid., p. 595.

[38]Ibid., p. 596.

[39]Ibid., p. 597.

failures and dubious about his future.

When Gwin arrived in San Antonio, Texas, General Wesley Merrit, United States Army commander in the area, had orders to send Gwin to New Orleans to see General Phil Sheridan. When the disillusioned colonizer arrived at this headquarters, Sheridan was vague about Gwin's fate. The commander telegraphed Secretary of War Edward Staton for instructions. Gwin was not put in "close confinement," but he was carefully watched.[40] The next day the war department advised Sheridan that Gwin should be arrested and confined at Fort Jackson until further notice.[41] Still no one knew under what charges the ex-California senator was being held.[42] Nevertheless he was detained, and, on January 24, 1866, Sheridan admitted that, although he did not know the charges, he had arrested Gwin because of presidential orders.[43] Gwin recorded in his memoirs that the

> confinement is most rigid. Not a moment night or day, since I was first arrested, have I been out of sight or sound of an armed sentinel, who is relieved every two hours, instructing his successor to permit no one to speak to me but the officer on duty at the time...[44]

Finally President Andrew Johnson ordered Gwin's release on April 13,

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[40]P. Sheridan to E. Stanton, New Orleans, September 28, 1865, Official Records, VIII, p. 755.

[41]E. D. Townsend, Asst. Adjutant Gen. to P. Sheridan, Washington, September 29, 1865, ibid., p. 760.

[42]E. D. Townsend to P. Sheridan, Washington, January 24, 1866, ibid., p. 845.

[43]P. Sheridan to E. D. Townsend, New Orleans, January 24, 1866, ibid., p. 370.

[44]Overland Monthly, XVIII, second series, p. 211.

1866. Gwin was told to leave his native land and not return.[45] But he became ill, and Sheridan asked permission to parole him in New Orleans. This permission was given on May 7, 1866.[46] Nine days later Sheridan reported that Gwin had been released according to orders.[47] For sometime, however, rumors persisted that Gwin again was in Sonora awaiting Confederate soldiers fleeing Union occupation of the South.[48] General U. S. Grant believed that Gwin was enticing renegades from the defeated South to come to Mexico and participate in some filibustering scheme. Yet none of the rumors were true, for, although a few Confederates went to Mexico to settle, Gwin had traveled to New York where he lived twenty more years—unsuccessful and almost forgotten.[49]

Diplomatically the Gwin episode brought the United States and France into a serious international squabble. During Gwin's globe-trotting, Secretary of State W. H. Seward had advised John Bigelow, the American Minister to France,

> that the sympathies of the American people are already considerably excited in favor of the Republic of Mexico, and that they are disposed to regard with impatience

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[45]E. D. Townsend to P. Sheridan, Washington, April 13, 1866, Official Records, VIII, p. 897.

[46]May 7, 1866, ibid., p. 905.

[47]New Orleans, May 16, 1866, ibid., p. 909.

[48]Major General F. Steele to P. Sheridan, Brazos, Santiago, June 10, 1865, ibid., series one, XLVIII, part II, pp. 841-842.

[49]U. S. Grant to Andrew Johnson, Washington, June 19, 1866, ibid., pp. 923-924.

the continued intervention of France in that country.[50] Thus while Gwin was trying to obtain support from the French government, the United States was applying diplomatic pressure to obtain French neutrality. In fact, the United States would have preferred to force the French out of Mexico earlier, but the Civil War prevented such action. Bigelow had relayed Seward's message to the French minister, Drouyn de Lhuys, that Gwin was considered a traitor. And Seward warned the French that if the United States government were correct in believing the emperor had made a contract with Gwin,

> the President of the United States would be forced to the conclusion that his majesty the Emperor of France was pursuing towards Mexico a policy materially at variance with that of neutrality in regard to the political institutions of the country.[51]

Drouyn de Lhuys did not like the blunt approach that Bigelow used, however, and he retorted that the French were not willing to explain anything to the Americans when demands were made "in a comminatory [sic] tone about vague allegations, and based upon documents of a dubious character."[52]

The diplomatic impasse resolved itself, however, for on August 24, 1865, Seward wrote Bigelow that Gwin's project had failed. Seward was apolegetic for the United States' hostile attitude toward the French, and he stated his hope that the episode could be smoothed over with a minimum of trouble. Seward told Bigelow that President Johnson was

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[50]W. H. Seward to J. Bigelow, Washington, July 13, 1865, House Exec. Doc. 73, 39 Cong., 1 sess., p. 539.

[51]J. Bigelow to D. de Lhuys, Paris, August 1, 1865, ibid., p. 541.

[52]D. de Lhuys to Bigelow, Paris, August 7, 1865, ibid., p. 541.

> gratified with the renewed assurance which Mr. Drouyn de Lhuys has given us of the Emperor's resolution to observe an impartial and unscrupulous neutrality upon all internal questions which may agitate or divide the United States.[53]

Thus serious trouble between the United States and France was averted, and Maximilian eventually was executed by supporters of Benito Juárez, after the French army was withdrawn. William Gwin then disappeared from the pages of history.

This final attempt to wrest land from unstable Mexico was the last thrust of Manifest Destiny—or adventurism—under the guise of colonization. Once again an enterprising and opportunistic American had failed to find his fortune from Mexican territory. Significantly, neither the French government nor their representatives in Mexico would admit any connection with Gwin. Yet Gwin had received numerous audiences and had detailed correspondence with French officials of the highest rank. In fact, he advertised much later that the French indeed had agreed to make him the "Duke of Sonora," pay him $60,000 per year, and share the wealth of Sonoran mines with him. Significantly, it may be recalled that while Gwin was an ardent Southerner, he was much too shrewd to become involved in the lost cause of the Confederacy. Doubtless he supported slavery, but nowhere in his memoirs nor in any other documents relating to his life is there evidence that he was trying to expand the institution of slavery. Thus he had no dreams of extending the Southern empire into northern Mexico—only illusions of himself as a "Duke." With all these

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[53]W. H. Seward to J. Bigelow, Washington, August 24, 1855, ibid., p. 542. See also, New York Daily Times, July 15, 1865, for denial of Mexican government of any complicity with Gwin.

failures in the past, the United States remained interested in Mexico and all of Latin America. Unfortunately conditions steadily worsened between the "colossus of the North" and its Latin neighbors to the South in the decades that followed.[54]

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[54]For information on Maximilian and Gwin, see James A. Magner, Men of Mexico (Milwaukee, 1945), pp. 391-439, or any period monograph on Mexico for those years during the American Civil War.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSIONS

Filibustering as a phenomenon was spawned by the frontier and nourished by the spirit of expansionistic adventurism which permeated all facets of American society during the 1850's. With the failure of William Gwin's colonization plans for northern Mexico, the attempts by Americans and Frenchmen to wrest territory from the Mexican Republic ended. From the peace negotiations at the end of the war with Mexico until the twentieth century many Americans believed it their mission, or destiny, to spread their institutions and government from the cold and desolate arctic to the steaming jungles of the tropics. Yet during the Mexican War there was a reluctance to absorb all of Mexico into the United States. There were reasons for this reluctance; as Frederick Merk has suggested, many citizens of the United States did not want "eight millions of a mixed race, obliteration of a republic of foreign tongue, retention of a subjugated province for the indefinite future—these were prospects from which a democracy shrank."[1]

The time came, however, when Americans realized the advantages in gaining power and influence at least to Central America, for there were strong interests in the United States pressuring for the establishment of an interocean canal. Moreover, many maintained that

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[1]Frederick Merk, Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation (New York, 1963), p. 121.

"America's mission is to hold a light aloft to Europe in the great struggle for freedom."[2] Throughout much of the decade of 1850 to 1860, this spirit of "saving" an oppressed and disillusioned people permeated American thinking and shaped the responses of individuals as well as nations. James Gadsden's attempt to purchase Lower California was motivated partly by this spirit. In 1858, President James Buchanan reported in his annual message that the United States should establish a temporary protectorate over Sonora and Chihuahua. A year later he repeated his request only to have Congress refuse a second time.[3]

Nevertheless, as Merk stated, these movements were attempted in the spirit of manifest destiny, and they "were actuated by petty materialism. They were imbued with little of the lofty spirit to annex all of Mexico, which briefly flourished in the United States in 1847, and "none of its altruism of regenerating a benighted people and lifting them to the heights of American citizenship."[4] This materialism, born of the frustrations of manifest destiny, encouraged filibustering expeditions into Mexico. Many Americans ideologically supported filibustering because it seemed in accord with natural laws. One of these "natural" laws, that of racial superiority and inferiority, enforced the expansionist doctrine because the result would be a triumph for the superior Anglo-Saxon race over the inferior Mexican. And it is an unfortunate fact that many Americans were convinced of the

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[2]Ibid., p. 201.

[3]Richardson, Messages and Papers, IV, pp. 2967-2994.

[4]Merk, Manifest Destiny, p. 209.

inferiority of the Mexican.[5] Thus these men who led expeditions into Mexico were shaped by their times, reflecting the spirit of the American mission.

Also significant is the fact that each leader seemed to have characteristics in common with the others. Joseph C. Morehead, William Walker, Henry A. Crabb, and William M. Gwin were all Southerners, loyal to the land of their birth. Yet, while each would have supported the expansion of slavery into Mexico, their main concern was for self aggrandizement and adventure. Of the expedition leaders, only Walker wrote of slavery, and only he provided for its protection when he made himself President of Sonora.

Also, all of the filibusters appeared to have acted in desperation. They were disillusioned men with political and financial aspirations first, and desire for glory and adventure afterwards. Joseph Morehead could not find his fortune in California. With a family tradition to surpass—for he had quit the Military Academy and cast his family heritage aside—he gambled his life for power, wealth, and prestige. After his participation in the Mexican War, he used his military record in the West to try to gain political influence, but he never was accepted by the political elite of California. That Morehead failed in his attempts to conquer Mexico is a comment on his inability to understand not only the Mexican character, but basic human nature as well. Thus he was a victim of the accepted American opinion of the inferiority of the Mexican race.

Charles Pindray and Raousset de Boulbon were not Americans and not

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[5]Albert K. Weinberg, _Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History_ (Baltimore, 1935), pp. 211-212.

motivated by a sense of mission. Yet, they, too, were desperate. These Frenchmen had rushed to California in search of easy wealth in the gold fields, but they soon learned that the tales of easy wealth were largely exaggerated. Both were former aristocrats—disillusioned, disenchanted, and finally desperate—and they turned to converting their dreams of reestablishing their tarnished reputations to reality in any way possible. Raousset envisioned himself as the "Sultan of Sonora", the monarch of a French-speaking country which once was northern Mexico. Pindray and Raousset, although not Americans also were products of the frontier environment. These opportunistic Frenchmen cared not for Mexico nor the United States, perhaps not even for France—their interests were personal.

However, Mexican officials had other ideas concerning infringement of their borders by Americans, as well as Frenchmen, who were determined to fragment the Republic. However, it was common knowledge that these same officials were sorely incapable of maintaining stability all along the northern international boundary. The few Mexican attempts to colonize the frontier were the result of desperation—a fear magnified by the size and seriousness of border problems. Because Mexican politicians knew that a feeling of expansionism was rampant in the United States, they encouraged an equally hazardous undertaking, an attempt to colonize the area with foreigners, who in turn would fight the Indians and hopefully provide the much desired stability.

Occasionally writers have suggested, from the 1850's forward, that the motivation for trying to wrest territory from the Mexicans was a conspiracy to create a slave republic on the southern border of the United States. Doubtless both William Walker and William Gwin

would have supported slavery. In fact, Walker's actions indicated that he would protect the institution of slavery. But slavery was not the absolute cause for filibustering expeditions. The true motivation for all the expeditions can be found in the leaders' past lives more than in some abolitionists' paranoid views of most events in American history prior to the Civil War. For example, William Walker always had been unable to complete anything he started. His entire life seemed confused. Most men would have been happy to have had a career and a profession. Walker had several, but never appeared to be satisfied. Although he had vigorously struggled to rise in the ranks of California politics, he believed his future was limited in that state. Therefore he sought adventure and opportunity in Mexico—not because of a premeditated desire to expand the institution of slavery. Consequently adventure, opportunity, and desperation drove Walker—he is remembered only as the "President" and "Supreme" commander of Sonora.

Likewise, Henry A. Crabb plunged into California politics and could have reached the zenith of state prestige in the realm of politics. Instead Crabb unhappily watched the eclipse of his political career. His driving ambition led him to expose his inabilities of leadership. Crabb made several mistakes, such as joining the Know-Nothing political party in California when it was a dying movement. He misjudged his influence in Mexico through his wife's family. He should have been well acquainted with all previous filibustering attempts. Nevertheless, with the encouragement of influential and conniving Mexicans in Sonora, he believed he could win sufficient support to control the state. Ultimately he may have hoped to annex Sonora to the United States; probably he was not trying to promote a

slave republic in Mexico. In truth, however, Crabb's real intentions were to enhance his own power and wealth. He was nothing more than an adventurer, an opportunist, who finally lost his life in Mexico.

William Gwin honestly tried to promote colonization of Northern Mexico, but he probably was driven most by financial needs. When he saw the South in the throes of a losing war for independence, he vowed to himself that he would find his fortune elsewhere. With his California political career apparently at an end and his Southern homeland threatened, he turned in desperation to promoting a colonizing scheme for northern Mexico. Not to be overlooked is his zeal for accomplishment and adventure. More knowledgeable of Mexico than any of the previous adventurers, he realized that he could not succeed without significant backing. Had the Archduke Maximilian agreed to and supported the American's plan, he may well have achieved his goals, at least temporarily. Gwin was no apostle of manifest destiny, although he did believe that suppression of the Indians on the frontier would be a great service to Mexico. He would have supported slavery, but his loyalty to the South did not extend so far as Paris when he presented his plan to Napoleon III. Gwin supported only himself; the extent of his vision was himself as "Duke of Sonora" with an income of sixty thousand dollars a year.

The decade and a half after the war between the United States and Mexico perhaps were the last years of Manifest Destiny, but the participants in those filibustering expeditions into northwestern Mexico apparently were driven less by lofty ideology than by a spirit of adventure. They were opportunists whose desperation drove them into a hostile land whose people and whose fierce nationalism they little

understood. Thus they represent more the roily age in which they lived than any spirit of expansionism.

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VITA

Joseph Allen Stout, Jr.

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: THE LAST YEARS OF MANIFEST DESTINY: FILIBUSTERING IN NORTHWESTERN MEXICO, 1848-1862

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Sioux City, Iowa, May 27, 1939, the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Stout of San Angelo, Texas.

Education: Received most public school education in Abilene, Texas. In 1960 began night classes at San Angelo Junior College, receiving an A. A. degree in 1965. When the junior college became Angelo State College in 1965, he became student again. Attained scholastic Dean's List, was elected to the foreign language honor society, Alpha Mu Gama, and to Sigma Delta Pi, Spanish honor society. Graduated with a B. A. degree in history in 1967. Following graduation from Angelo State College, received in September, 1967, a National Prospective Teacher Fellowship from Texas A & M University, from where he received an M.A. degree in history in August 1968. Entered Oklahoma State University in June 1969; inducted into history honor society, Phi Alpha Theta; completed requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1971.

Professional Experience: Teacher in public school system at San Angelo, Texas for one year; Graduate assistant at Oklahoma State University, and taught extension courses for the University.