

ORIGINS OF THE NICARAGUAN REINCORPORATION  
OF THE MISKITO COAST

by

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LKL

## PREFACE

In 1894 the Central American Republic of Nicaragua fulfilled a long standing ambition to assert total sovereignty over its Atlantic coastal plain, a region historically known as Mosquitia. This act, called the reincorporation of Mosquitia, was the culmination of four centuries of international competition for control of the tropical, sparsely populated region. The following pages endeavor to bring together a wide range of sources bearing on the history of Mosquitia in order to study the origins of the Nicaraguan behavior toward the coast, primarily in the nineteenth century. While the focus is on the 1800's, the chronological scope is far broader, dealing with Mosquitia in the colonial period in order to get at the roots of the problem and dealing, in a brief concluding chapter, with the aftermath of reincorporation.

A study of this nature presents some major difficulties. The first of these is the unusually great lack of documentary and archival material. In many cases the writer has had to depend on questionable sources because there were no others available. This was especially true for the portions dealing with the internal history of the remote Miskito Indians. Little material exists even for the internal history of Nicaragua. Statistical data is especially negligible in the nineteenth century, but political memoirs, government memorias, newspapers--the stuff of political and diplomatic history--are also scarce.

Another obstacle to understanding is the partisan or biased nature of the secondary literature. A surprisingly great number of writers from many countries have directed attention to the Miskito Shore. Stories of the Miskito Kingdom and its puppet monarchs have fascinated many. Travelers, diplomats, scholars, newspaper reporters and even pirates have all proved susceptible to the enchantment of the mysterious coastal region and many wrote chronicles of their experience there. But, most that has been written to date suffers from the prejudices and narrowness of the individual or national point of view.

For example, to the Nicaraguans of 1894, there was little question but that they were reincorporating territory which had been theirs since the Spanish colonial empire was first established. The Nicaraguans have always referred to their 1894 act as a reincorporation. Relying on various colonial administrative decisions, the former dependencies of Spain, particularly Costa Rica and Colombia, also laid claim to Mosquitia. In view of the fact that this essay does not examine the validity of the various claims the title might be considered a misnomer for it accepts the Nicaraguan claim simply as a matter of convenience in terminology. Furthermore, events since 1894 raise doubts as to whether the Miskito region has ever been truly reincorporated into the mainstream of Nicaraguan life. This essay, however, does not pretend to answer that interesting question.

In part, it has been the objective of this study to look at the Miskito controversy from the many points of view of the nations involved. Significant incidents have been studied, insofar as possible, in published documentary sources of nations participating in the controversy over the



shore. Fortunately, the passage of time and the renewed interest of Nicaraguans in the subject has made sufficient material available from that important sector. Several North American historians have dealt with the reincorporation, but all have failed to approach the subject using relevant sources in Spanish. On the other hand, Nicaraguan historians have not used some important English sources.

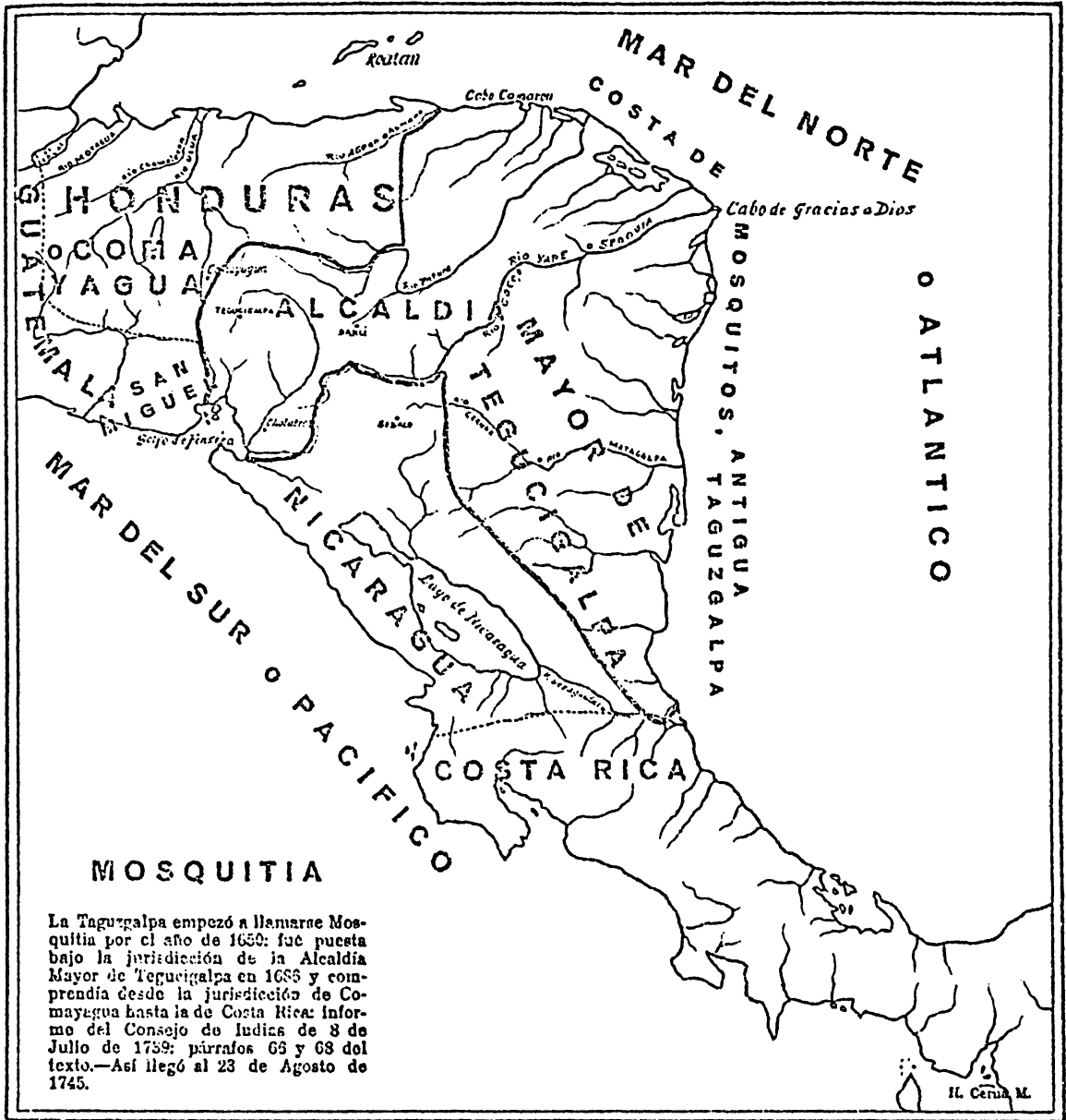
Above all, this essay is intended as a synthesis of Miskito history, with emphasis on the external forces which have frequently shaped it. It is hoped that this study may provide new insights, by which international relations in Central America may be better understood in their historical context.

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MAP OF COLONIAL MOSQUITIA

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: NATURE OF THE MISKITO

#### COAST UNTIL 1843

Since 1502, when Columbus landed at Cape Gracias a Dios, on the eastern shore of present Honduras, the Spanish and their Central American descendants repeatedly attempted to establish hegemony over the vast eastern frontier extending along the isthmian coast from Guatemala to Colombia. That the Spanish did not effectively settle the region is partly attributable to the inhospitable character of the coast. Set off by the mountain ranges which roughly divide Central America in two, the eastern coast is a low lying plain, cut by numerous rivers that flow to the Caribbean. It is hot, humid, tropical and virtually inaccessible. A recent geographical study characterizes the coast as circumscribed within a Caribbean rimland that sets it apart geographically, culturally, and economically from the rest of Central America.<sup>1</sup> While the population within the rimland is ethnically heterogeneous, Negroes form the dominant strain, unlike the Central American highlands, where Euro-Indian or Mestizo groups dominate.

When the Spanish conquerors arrived at the Central American coast, the absence of Indians whose labor could be easily exploited and the lack of precious metals inhibited Spanish settlement, Finding no ready

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<sup>1</sup>Robert C. West and John P. Augelli, Middle America: Its Lands and Peoples (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 11-12.

gold on the unfamiliar coast the conquerors turned instead to the Pacific highlands, where a more favorable climate, an exploitable labor supply in the sedentary tribes, and precious metals, gave the Spanish an opportunity to establish a life style approximating that of Spain. Thus, the Spanish initiated a settlement pattern which neglected a coastal region about 700 miles in length and encompassing half the land area of Central America.<sup>2</sup>

In the centuries that followed the discovery by Columbus the Spanish kings juggled the coastal regions from hand to hand, evidently hoping that some individual or administrative unit would bring the wild, sparsely inhabited region under Spanish control. The Crown was repeatedly disappointed and the names of the region changed almost as frequently as the administrative arrangements.<sup>3</sup> Originally the area was known as Veragua, Carriari or Castilla de Oro but after 1527 these names were superseded by the Spanish-Mexican names, Taguzgalpa and Tologalpa.<sup>4</sup> Finally, by 1650 the region was generally recognized as Mosquitia, being named after a fierce group of Indians called Miskitos, who inhabited the northern section of what is now known as Nicaragua.<sup>5</sup> Also, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, Guatemala (present Antigua) was the capital of the Captaincy-general, with jurisdiction over Mosquitia. However, the regional

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<sup>2</sup>Troy S. Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), pp. 1-16.

<sup>3</sup>Romulo Enrique Duron, Limites de Nicaragua, rectificaciones al Dr. Don Pedro Joaquín Chamorro (Tegucigalpa, Honduras: Tipográficos Nacionales, 1933.) See excellent maps on colonial boundaries.

<sup>4</sup>Edward Conzemius, Ethnographical Survey of the Miskito and Sumu Indians of Honduras and Nicaragua (Washington: Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution Bulletin #106, 1832), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>Duron, Limites de Nicaragua, p. 49.

centers of Comayagua, Leon, and Granada maintained a closer contact with the frontier coastal zone.

The exact origins of the Miskito Indians have not been definitely established but it is generally agreed that the tribe migrated from central Colombia and was directly related to the Chibchan group.<sup>6</sup> Influence of the Caribs from the Caribbean islands may also have been present. A variety of names have been applied to the tribe, including; Misquitos, Musquitos, Moscós, Mosquitos and Misskitos.<sup>7</sup> A number of other tribes, some of which had contact with Nahuatl speaking peoples of Nicaragua and Maya speaking tribes of Guatemala, occupied parts of the Shore. In short, the Shore's population was very heterogeneous. But by the nineteenth century the term Miskito was used to mean any of the indigenous inhabitants of the Mosquitia region.<sup>8</sup> As time passed, inter-marriage, miscegenation and increased foreign presence on the Miskito Coast blurred the tribal distinctions of the Shore's indigenous inhabitants.

A black racial influence among the Miskito Indians was recognized

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<sup>6</sup>Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle, pp. 4-5; Robert Wauchope (ed.), Handbook of Middle American Indians (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press), Article by Doris Z. Stone, pp. 210-33; Luis Pericot y Garcia, América Indígena (Barcelona: Salvat Editores, S.A., 1936), pp. 569-72.

<sup>7</sup>Pericot y Garcia, América Indígena, p. 569; Anthropologists have indicated that the term Miskito is the most nearly correct designation of the tribe and region. Throughout this essay deference has been made to this spelling to avoid confusion.

<sup>8</sup>Alfonso Valle, "Interpretación de nombres geográficos indígenas de Nicaragua," Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano, X, (May, 1965), 31; (Hereafter referred to as RC).

early in the colonial period. When a Portuguese slave ship wrecked on the Shore in 1641, permitting the African Negroes aboard to escape and join the native population, there were probably already Negro elements present.<sup>9</sup> These early Negroes were later augmented by black Caribs of Honduras and escaped Jamaican slaves. Offspring of the Negro-Indian unions were called Zambos and sometimes Zambos-Miskitos by the Spanish.<sup>10</sup> The Spanish grew fearful of the Zambos-Miskitos after the latter acquired weapons from English traders and adventurers. Some joined the corsairs of the Caribbean to plunder Spanish ships and others turned instead to raid the villages of highland Central America.<sup>11</sup>

The Caribbean pirates found it quite easy to manipulate the Miskitos with gifts of rum and glass beads. In turn, the Miskitos, who were well adapted to the rigorous life of the Shore, provided fish and other necessities for the pirates. Some ambitious English traders, attracted by tortoise shell, sarsaparilla roots and mahogany--products much in demand in Europe--gradually established small settlements along the Miskito Coast after 1633. Small settlements at Bluefields (in Nicaragua) and Cape Gracias a Dios grew up in this fashion.<sup>12</sup>

The settlements on the Miskito Coast reflected a growing English interest in the whole Caribbean area. Small, neglected islands, such as

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<sup>9</sup>Ricardo Fernández Guardia, Crónicas coloniales de Costa Rica (San Jose, Costa Rica: Editorial Costa Rica, 1967), p. 161; Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup>Fernandez Guardia, Crónicas coloniales, p. 161.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle, pp. 17-25.



San Andrés and Providencia, lying one hundred miles off the Miskito Coast, were also occupied in the 1630's.<sup>13</sup> Sporadic occupation of Ruatan, an island in the Gulf of Honduras, also began at this time. To the north, on the mainland region surrounding the Gulf of Honduras, Englishmen holding logwood concessions claimed Belize or British Honduras.<sup>14</sup> In the 1650's, Oliver Cromwell's forces extended a war with Spain on the Continent into the New World by capturing Jamaica in 1655. This action was part of Cromwell's "Western Design" and marked the beginning of England's imperial growth.<sup>15</sup> The English remained entrenched in their strategic position at Jamaica to continue harassment of the Spanish.<sup>16</sup>

For the Miskitos, British occupation of Jamaica signaled a new era of intensive trading. This commercial intercourse gave the Miskitos such confidence in the British that they allowed their first King, Jeremy I (1687-1723), to be crowned at Jamaica by the governor. Subsequently, the Miskitos relied on the British at Jamaica or Belize to choose their king from a list of candidates.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>James J. Parsons, San Andrés and Providencia, English-Speaking Islands in the Western Caribbean (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1956).

<sup>14</sup>José A. Calderon Quijano, Belice, 1663(?) - 1821 (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1944).

<sup>15</sup>Arthur Percival Newton, The European Nations in the West Indies 1493-1688 (London: A & C Black Ltd., 1933), pp. 204-23.

<sup>16</sup>Richard Pares, War and Trade in the West Indies 1739-1763 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 97-104, 517-555; Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle, p. 26.

<sup>17</sup>Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle, p. 62.

The English presence effected great changes in the lives of the native inhabitants of the Miskito Shore. Contact with the British, initiated by the trade in tortoise shells, sarsaparilla and logwood, caused the Miskitos to desire "expensive uniforms for the kings and admirals and governors, and firearms, English clothes, and especially rum for the whole tribe."<sup>18</sup> In order to acquire these new products the Miskito men allied themselves with the English buccaneers who repeatedly raided the Spanish frontier. The number of Miskito raiders could not have been too great, for the total population of the Shore in the early eighteenth century probably did not exceed 10,000 individuals.<sup>19</sup> It was the character of the Miskito raids that alarmed the Spanish most. With the superiority of their newly acquired firearms, they terrorized the frontier towns and cacao plantations of Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras, killing the inhabitants and taking captives to be sold in slavery. The Bluefields, Wanks and San Juan river systems opened many paths for raids into the interior, making it difficult for villages and planters to prepare defenses.<sup>20</sup> Costa Rica's and Panama's cacao plantations on the Caribbean lay virtually unprotected from seafaring marauders.

The areas most frequently raided, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, responded by agitating for the complete extermination of the Miskitos. An early leader of the extermination movement was Fray Benito Garret y Arlovi, Bishop of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Not only did Fray Benito make pronouncements from his episcopal chair, but he took an active part in the

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>19</sup> Estimates vary considerably but this number seems reasonable, see; Pares, War and Trade, p. 97; Calderon Quijano, Belize, p. 225, reproduction of map and census by Robert Hodgson.

<sup>20</sup> Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle, p. 64.

armed movements against the Miskitos. In 1711 the Bishop organized his first expedition with 1,200 men and went forth to defend the Spanish settlers, the Catholic religion and the King.<sup>21</sup> Full support for the Bishop's activities did not come from the civil authorities, for many felt that the campaign undermined the civil governments in the provinces.<sup>22</sup> Although Benito's campaigns did not subdue the Miskitos, Spanish attitudes toward them hardened.

Many Central Americans began to see the Miskitos as did Fray Benito: "Barbarians, declared enemies of the law of God and despicable in his divine eyes due to the slavery they impose. By them the honor of the most noble women of this land is condemned, the lives of the innocent children that they steal are ruined and the altars of the church are profaned."<sup>23</sup> In the thinking of the Spanish, the conflict with the Miskitos took on the character of a religious war; Roman Catholics versus heathens, and because of the English presence, Catholics versus Protestants. Aid that the English Shoremen had given the Miskitos reinforced the anti-Protestant bias of the Spanish. Actually, the English preferred peace, since business was better in times of tranquility, but they were not generally successful in convincing their allies, the Miskitos, of the benefits of peace. It is little wonder that Spanish, Mexican and Central American historians persist in blaming the English.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Fernández Guardia, Crónicas coloniales, p. 115.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Fray Benito Garret y Arlovi, "Informe de D. Fray Benito Garret y Arlovi, Obispo de Nicaragua, sobre los mosquitos y el modo de reducirlos; In Manuel M. de Feralta, Costa Rica y Costa de Mosquitos (Paris: Legación de Costa Rica, 1898), pp. 45-6.

<sup>24</sup>Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle, p. 66.

Regardless of their motivations or the kind of war the Spanish fought, they failed to dislodge the English Shoremen or to establish hegemony over the Miskitos. Nevertheless, in the last half of the eighteenth century the British, because of the conciliatory mood of the William Pitt government and the threat of massive Spanish retaliation, repeatedly signed treaties agreeing to evacuate the Mosquito Shore.<sup>25</sup> Such treaties were signed in 1763 and 1783 but were usually ignored by the English Shoremen. In 1786, however, the Anglo-Spanish Convention was signed and the English colonists agreed to ". . . evacuate the country of the Mosquitos, as well as the continent in general, and the islands adjacent, without exception . . ."<sup>26</sup> The majority of the Shoremen actually evacuated but the Spanish were unable to attract settlers to the inhospitable coast and by 1790 the Spanish still did not dominate the region or its inhabitants.<sup>27</sup>

Central American independence terminated Spanish rule of the isthmus in 1821, but because of the weakness of the new Central American confederation, the political vacuum on the Miskito Shore continued as before. The old Shoremen and the Belize mahogany traders did not hesitate to fill the void; by the 1830's British traders had returned to the Shore. In these years the policy of the British government was certainly not synonymous with the commercial interest of her citizens in the area.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>26</sup>Mary W. Williams, Anglo-American Isthmian Diplomacy, 1815-1915 (Washington: American Historical Association, 1916), pp. 22-3.

<sup>27</sup>Floyd, The Anglo-Spanish Struggle, pp. 165-82.

<sup>28</sup>Robert A. Naylor, "The British Role In Central America Prior to the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850," Hispanic American Historical Review, XL, (August, 1960), 376-77; (Hereafter cited as HAHR).

Britishers with economic interests on the Shore, in Belize and in the Bay Islands, desired for the Empire to take a more supportive attitude toward their holdings by denouncing the 1786 agreement to evacuate the area.

After Central America became independent in 1821, England was faced with the question of whom to negotiate with concerning her claims in the region.<sup>29</sup> Her original treaties had, of course, been with the Spanish, not with the Central Americans. The principal question was whether the Central Americans had inherited, in full, the territorial and treaty positions of the Spanish. Naturally the English and the Central Americans took opposing views on this matter. Furthermore, the chaos that ensued in the wake of Central American independence made it difficult to resolve this point of contention.

After a two year interlude of annexation to Iturbide's Mexican Empire, the Central Americans established their own union.<sup>30</sup> But financial pressures and local jealousies arising from separate administrative traditions in the colonial period weakened the Central American Republic. Sharp political differences and barriers to communication between the states added to the uncertainty. Although the Central American hero, Francisco Morazán, generally kept the states united under the liberals from 1830-1839, the union disintegrated in 1838 and 1839.<sup>31</sup> In view of its instability, it is not surprising that Britain refused to grant formal diplomatic

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<sup>29</sup>Mario Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat in Central America, Frederick Chatfield, esq. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1964), p. 57.

<sup>30</sup>Thomas L. Karnes, The Failure of Union: Central America, 1824-1960 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1961), pp. 1-68.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 69-95.

recognition to the Central American Confederation, thus preventing negotiations on the question of sovereignty over the Miskito Shore.

Had it not been for the recurrent Belize or "Honduran Question", England could perhaps have avoided renegotiations over the 1787 Treaty. However, the continuing aggressive commercial policies of the Belizians led to repeated confrontations with the Central Americans in the 1821-1834 period.<sup>32</sup> Essentially, the citizens of Belize wanted to resecure their logwood rights and to expand the boundaries of their claims if possible. They realized that support from Great Britain would greatly strengthen their bargaining position. Thus, a decision was forced upon the British government in 1834 when Belize petitioned to be declared a regular British colony.<sup>33</sup>

Eighteen-thirty-four marked the beginning of an era of renewed interest on the part of Great Britain in Central American affairs. Aside from the Belizian request for colonial status two other factors stimulated British interest. One was that Lord Palmerston became the head of the British Foreign Office and manifested an early interest in Central America. The second factor was Frederick Chatfield. Chatfield, an aggressive young Palmerstonian appointee, arrived in Belize in May, 1834, with instructions to negotiate a commercial treaty with the Central American Confederation. The ambitious policies that Chatfield followed while active in Central America (1834-1852) made him the dominant foreign figure of his era.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat, pp. 55-66.

<sup>33</sup> Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat, pp. 53-66; Royal Historical Society, British Diplomatic Representatives 1789-1852 (London: Butler & Tanner. Ltd., 1934), Vol. L, p. 63.

Chatfield turned immediately to the Honduran Question, for upon its favorable settlement rested continued British presence in Central America. The British position on the Mosquito Shore was inextricably linked with a favorable settlement of the Belize problem. The commercial intercourse between the Shore and Belize had created quasi-political ties, as the crowning of the new Mosquito King at Belize in 1816 illustrated.<sup>35</sup> Chatfield struggled with the Honduran Question until 1838 when Francisco Morazán fell from power and the Republic disintegrated.

With the dissolution of the Central American Confederation negotiations over British claims were carried on with individual republics and the course of events began to favor Great Britain. Though Chatfield has recently been acquitted of prime responsibility for the failure of the Morazanista union, there is little doubt that the failure greatly enhanced British interests in Central America.<sup>36</sup> As Morazan's power wavered Chatfield increasingly used the "Mosquito Question" to discredit the unionists. In 1837 Chatfield first made it clear to the Central Americans that they had no right to molest woodcutters from Belize who had received legitimate grants from the Mosquito King, Robert Charles Frederick.<sup>37</sup>

Even before the disintegration of the Central American Confederation Nicaraguans were aware of the importance of the Miskito Shore. Upon

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<sup>35</sup>E. G. Squier, Waikna (New York: Harper & Br., 1855), pp. 345-45; Peter F. Stout, Nicaragua: Past, Present and Future (Philadelphia: John E. Potter, 1859), p. 168.

<sup>36</sup>Karnes, The Failure of Union, pp. 113-25.

<sup>37</sup>Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat, p. 133.

separation from the Confederation, the Nicaraguan government appealed to United States President Andrew Jackson for support against English encroachments. Jackson made it very clear that he felt the United States Government had no business interfering in the matter.<sup>38</sup> Of the situation, one Nicaraguan historian has written: "The English lion was able to play as it wished with the poor Nicaraguan mouse, so weak and forsaken . . ."<sup>39</sup>

The new Republic of Nicaragua learned, in August of 1841, just how hard it would be to protect any claims it might have to the Miskito Shore. An incident arose in which the Superintendent of Belize, Colonel Alexander Macdonald, demonstrated that he would stop at nothing to assert a formal British protectorate over Mosquitia, largely to meet his own personal desires. Cleverly using tactics like those of Chatfield, Macdonald abducted Manuel Quijano, Nicaraguan Commandant at the Port of San Juan de Nicaragua (later San Juan del Norte) and under the guise of collecting back debts finally persuaded the British Foreign Office to support the Protectorate in 1843.<sup>40</sup> The Foreign Office accepted the establishment of the Protectorate as, ". . . a wise and proper measure on the part of the British Government, and that without some official step the Indians would have suffered at the hands of either private individuals or of the Central American States."<sup>41</sup>

Lord Palmerston's decision to commit the Foreign Office to the protection of the Miskitos was based on more than the acts of Superintendent

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<sup>38</sup>José Dolores Gámez, Historia de la Costa de Mosquitos (Hasta 1894) (Managua, Nicaragua: Talleres Nacionales, 1939), p. 175.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.; Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat, pp. 239-50; Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, pp. 41-2.

<sup>41</sup>Richard W. Van Alstyne, "The Central American Policy of Lord Palmerston, 1846-1848," HAHR XVI, (August, 1936), 346.



Macdonald. Of Perhaps greater importance was the threat that New Granada would claim the territory of the Miskitos in order to prevent the development of a rival canal route through the San Juan River.<sup>42</sup> New Granada, still in control of the Panamanian Isthmus, hoped that she could maintain exclusive rights over any canal that might be built across Central America.<sup>43</sup> Granadian claims rested on a Spanish decree of 1803, which, for military purposes, transferred Mosquitia to the Viceroyalty of New Granada.<sup>44</sup> As early as 1824 the Granadian Vice President, Francisco de P. Santander, issued a decree making it illegal for anyone to colonize the Miskito Coast from Cape Gracias a Dios to the River Chagres.<sup>45</sup> At the same time the Granadian representative in London voiced a claim for Mosquitia and denounced a British business operating in the region.<sup>46</sup> Such protests continued until Lord Palmerston had assumed office and they surely contributed to his decision to establish the Protectorate in 1843.

In 1843 British preeminence was thus reestablished along the Miskito Shore. Neither the Central American Confederation, its five offspring, nor New Granada had made good their claims to the region. British representatives, commercial and diplomatic, had reaffirmed the old alliance with the Miskitos and it appeared that they were determined to remain on the Shore for some time to come.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 344-45.

<sup>43</sup>Raimundo Rivas, Historia diplomática de Colombia, 1810-1934 (Bogotá, Colombia: Imprenta Nacional, 1961), p. 215.

<sup>44</sup>Van Alstyne, "Central American Policy," p. 345; Selected portions of this document and a contemporary interpretation of its significance is found in: Raimundo Rivas, Escritos de Don Pedro Fernández Madrid (Bogotá, Colombia: Editorial Minerva, 1932), Vol. I, pp. 178-304.

<sup>45</sup>Rivas, Escritos de Fernández Madrid, pp. 226-29.

<sup>46</sup>Rivas, Colombia, pp. 215-16.

## CHAPTER II

### STRUGGLING OVER THE PROTECTORATE, 1844-1860

The period from 1844-1860 was one of the most complex and chaotic in the history of Central American internal and international affairs. The breakdown of the Morazán-dominated Central American Confederation permitted the five Central American Republics to go their separate ways but threats of foreign intervention frequently caused new attempts at union. The greatest outside threat seemed to be the expanding British interest in the area--personified by the active diplomatic representative Frederick Chatfield. British involvement became increasingly counter-balanced by the United States, which, in its search for a transportation route to its new western acquisitions, turned to the Central American Isthmus. The impact of these broad trends repeatedly influenced the course of local developments in Mosquitia and in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua was in no position to resist the British when the Protectorate was established in 1843. A small country with no more than 250,000 people, Nicaragua was troubled with a wide range of problems--from racial division to government finances. In addition, internal political strife threatened to destroy Nicaragua as local factions fought for control of the government. Rivalry between Nicaragua's principal cities of León and Granada, perpetuated by family groups that dominated in each, accentuated the liberal-conservative ideological split. Liberals usually lived

in Leon and conservatives in Granada.<sup>1</sup> The persistent rivalry between these political factions retarded the early growth of nationalism in Nicaragua and prevented a unified effort to oust the British.

Probably the only way that Nicaragua could have successfully resisted the British encroachment would have been in alliance with her neighbors, or some other outside power. Of her neighbors, at least El Salvador showed a desire to assist Nicaragua against the British aggression. After the Quijano incident at San Juan del Norte, newspapers in these two states put forth a barrage of anti-British articles which helped stimulate another attempt at union to repel the aggressor. On July 27, 1842, the three center states of Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador attempted to form a confederation when they signed the Pact of Chinandega.<sup>2</sup> It appeared that a solid attempt to oust Chatfield would be made but that diplomat instigated a rival or substitute plan of union, referred to as the "Guatemalan Confederation."

The Guatemalan Confederation was a union scheme designed to place power in the hands of the conservatives of Guatemala City, who were called serviles. These serviles were very much under the influence of British representative Chatfield and generally acceded to his wishes regarding Central American affairs. In this case, Chatfield used blockades, threats and inflated financial claims to get the support of the center states for the Guatemalan scheme. First, Honduras, then El Salvador succumbed to

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<sup>1</sup>Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Central America, 1801-1887 (San Francisco: The History Company, 1887), III, pp. 238-263; Ofsman Quintana Orozco, Apuntes de historia de Nicaragua (Managua, D.N.: n. p., 1968), pp. 117-128.

<sup>2</sup>Karnes, Failure of Union, pp. 126-129.

British pressure demanding support for the Guatemalan Confederation. Honduras went so far in her support of British policy as to officially recognize Mosquitia as sovereign.<sup>3</sup> Costa Rica was on the verge of offering recognition also.<sup>4</sup> Finally, Nicaragua was herself blockaded and forced to back claims owed British businessmen. However, Nicaragua neither accepted the Confederation of Guatemala nor did she recognize Mosquitia. In the end, Chatfield found little enthusiasm for his Confederation and it died of neglect.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, Nicaragua appealed to the United States for aid against the British.<sup>6</sup> The Democratic James K. Polk administration of 1845 showed little interest and made no attempt, as one Senator critically put it, "to prevent the acquisition by Great Britain of the entire control of that whole territory [Central America]."<sup>7</sup> This recalcitrance was not new on the part of the United States, for although it had some interest in Central American diplomacy, it had not previously been successful.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Lorenzo Montúfar, Reseña histórica de Centro América (Guatemala: Tipografía de 'El Progreso,' 1881), IV, pp. 112-14.

<sup>4</sup>Bancroft, Central America, p. 251, n. 53.

<sup>5</sup>I have relied heavily in this section on the Rodríguez interpretation in his Palmerstonian Diplomat, pp. 253-66.

<sup>6</sup>Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, p. 49.

<sup>7</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, Senator Fessenden supporting an inquiry into the Clayton-Bulwer agreement, 34th Cong., 1st sess., March 18, 1856, Appendix to the Congressional Globe, p. 303.

<sup>8</sup>For an excellent survey of previous United States diplomacy see, Joseph B. Lockey, "Diplomatic Futility," in Essays on Pan-Americanism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939), pp. 23-50.

With the Mexican War and North American Pacific expansion, interest in Central America grew rapidly.<sup>9</sup> By 1848 interest had grown to the point that the Polk administration dispatched Elijah Hise as a diplomatic representative to Guatemala with instructions to resist British policy by supporting Central American union movements. Acting even beyond this grant of authority, Hise ventured to sign a treaty with Nicaragua whereby the United States would guarantee sovereignty over all lands claimed by Nicaragua.<sup>10</sup> Polk did not present the treaty to the Senate for ratification.

While Hise worked, with no communications from the administration, the Whigs and Zachary Taylor came to power and the Polk Democrats stepped down. The discovery of gold in California pressed the government to develop faster trans-isthmian transportation facilities. In the fervor of "Manifest Destiny", Hise and his unratified treaty were forgotten. Even before Hise returned home, the Whigs had dispatched E. George Squier with instructions to arrange favorable concessions for a group of North American businessmen who wished to develop the needed trans-isthmian route through Nicaragua.<sup>11</sup> Squier was able to negotiate a treaty with Nicaragua for protection of a canal route. The topography of Central America dictated that the only feasible trans-isthmian route through Nicaragua had to be on or along the San Juan River. Even if other routes were found equally practicable on the Atlantic littoral, they still had to pass through the Miskito territory. This meant that intereste

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<sup>9</sup>Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, p. 52.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 55-58.

<sup>11</sup>Instructions to Squier from Secretary of State Clayton, May 1, 1849, found in, William Ray Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States: Inter-American Affairs, 1831-1860 (Washington: 1932-1939). III. p. 38.

transit companies would have to deal with Britain or find some way of subverting her power in the Protectorate.

The British position was now quite firm in Mosquitia, for on June 30, 1847, Lord Palmerston announced that the boundaries of the Miskito nation extended from Cape Honduras to San Juan del Norte, (see map next page).<sup>12</sup> Palmerston's policy was not just one of diplomatic exchanges, for as that statesman had announced earlier, Anglo-Miskito forces occupied San Juan del Norte on January 1, 1848, and renamed it Greytown. Lord Palmerston had many motives for wishing to clarify the extent and nature of the Protectorate. In part he was heeding the warning of his representative, Chatfield, that the, "United States was, or soon be, a real threat to British interests in Central America."<sup>13</sup>

The British grew more apprehensive as the United States became increasingly friendly with New Granada, which was then agitating vigorously for control of Mosquitia.<sup>14</sup> The New Granadians viewed the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty, signed December 12, 1846, as a turning point at which their search for a solution to the Miskito question shifted from London

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<sup>12</sup>Palmerston to Chatfield, June 30, 1847, (a copy of which was sent to the British agent in Bogotá, New Granada), Paper No. 2, Found in Correspondence Respecting the Mosquito Territory (London: T. R. Harrison, Materials presented to the House of Commons on July 3, 1848), p. 1. (Hereafter cited as British Blue Book, 1848).

<sup>13</sup>Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat, p. 285; note that Van Alstyne, "Central American Policy," p. 347, argues that Lord Palmerston was not affected "by the same bogey [as Chatfield] and there is no proof other than that of coincidence in time that he acted in Mosquito to anticipate the United States."

<sup>14</sup>Rivas, Colombia, pp. 263-75.

to Washington.<sup>15</sup> This treaty, negotiated by the North American agent in Bogota, Benjamin Bidlack, and Granadian Foreign Secretary Manuel Maria Mallarino, guaranteed the neutrality of the isthmus of Panama, as well as New Granada's sovereignty over it, in return for an American right-of-way across it.<sup>16</sup> Following the approval of the treaty the communications of the New Granadian Foreign Secretary, Manuel Mosquera, became more demanding.<sup>17</sup> But Palmerston's abrupt response to Mosquera hinted that the territorial limits of the Miskito nation might even be expanded if New Granada did not leave well enough alone:

Her Majesty's Government, . . . do not consider themselves under any obligation to discuss with the Government of New Granada the rightful existence of the Mosquito State, which existed as a separate and independent State nearly two centuries before New Granada had ceased to be a dependent province of Spain.

With respect to the southern boundary of Mosquito, there are certainly strong grounds upon which the King of Mosquito might claim the sea coast as far as the spot called King Buppan's landing; . . . but Her Majesty's Government have recommended the Mosquito Government to confine its claim in a southerly direction to the southern branch of the River St. John [San Juan], and one main reason with Her Majesty's Government for giving that recommendation, was, that thereby all dispute between Mosquito and New Granada would, as they trusted, be avoided.<sup>18</sup>

After the British occupation of San Juan del Norte in 1848, Nicaragua responded with an attack and by January 10, the port was back in her hands.

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 274.

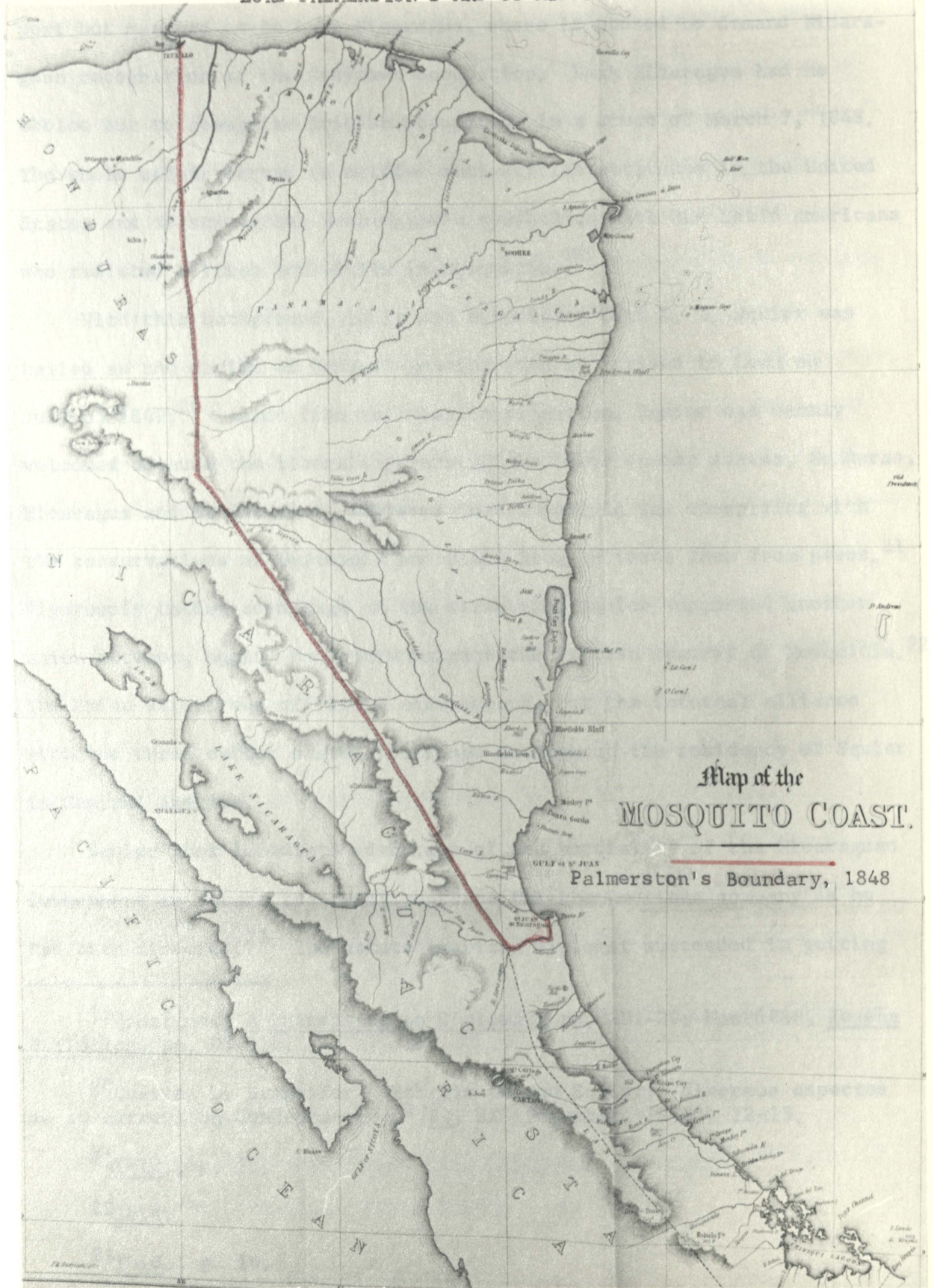
<sup>16</sup>Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat, p. 285.

<sup>17</sup>Mosquera to Palmerston, April 29, 1848, British Blue Book, 1848, Paper No. 32, p. 124.

<sup>18</sup>Palmerston to Mosquera, May 4, 1848, British Blue Book, 1848, Paper No. 33, p. 126.



LORD PALMERSTON'S MAP OF MISKITO BOUNDARIES





Two weeks later a British counteroffensive force not only regained the port but marched on to Lake Nicaragua, where it paused to demand Nicaraguan recognition of the Greytown occupation. Weak Nicaragua had no choice but to recognize British occupation in a truce of March 7, 1848. The whole affair served to stiffen anti-British attitudes in the United States and to strengthen Washington's sympathies with the Latin Americans who resisted British activities in Mosquitia.<sup>19</sup>

With this background, it is not surprising that E. G. Squier was hailed as the savior of Central America when he arrived in Leon on July 5, 1849.<sup>20</sup> Aside from the Miskito situation, Squier was warmly welcomed because the liberals governing the three center states, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador, believed that Chatfield was conspiring with the conservatives of Guatemala and Costa Rica to force them from power.<sup>21</sup> Vigorously taking advantage of the situation, Squier supported another union attempt, hoping to counterbalance the British control of Mosquitia.<sup>22</sup> The Union effort was of little consequence, but the informal alliance with the three center states continued throughout the residency of Squier in Central America.

Squier took immediate advantage of the cordiality of the Nicaraguan Government to secure the canal contract for the American company as he had been directed.<sup>23</sup> The astute American diplomat succeeded in getting

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<sup>19</sup>Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat, pp. 291-29; Montúfar, Reseña Histórica, pp. 93-114.

<sup>20</sup>Charles L. Stansifer, "Ephraim George Squier: diversos aspectos de su carrera en Centroamerica," RC, XX (November, 1968), 12-13.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

the transit concession for the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship-Canal Company, which was organized by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Joseph L. White and Nathaniel Wolfe.<sup>24</sup> Wishing to further consolidate the position of the United States, Squier went even further, and signed a treaty of peace and commerce with the Nicaraguans. The most outstanding feature of this agreement, called the Squier treaty, was that it pledged the United States to guarantee the neutrality of the canal route in exchange for the exclusive right of North American transit.<sup>25</sup>

As was expected, Great Britain protested the canal contract because it gave rights to a passage through territory of the Miskito King, who had not been consulted.<sup>26</sup> The Squier treaty aroused an even stronger protest. United States Secretary of State, John Clayton, felt the treaty provision that guaranteed the neutrality of the route was too strongly worded. Secretary Clayton, in accord with President Taylor, delayed presenting the treaty to the Senate for fear of antagonizing the British any further.<sup>27</sup> The matter might have ended at this juncture, but Squier was negotiating another treaty that would soon confront the two great powers with Central American realities.

While negotiating the Nicaraguan agreements, Squier also signed a general treaty of peace and amity with Honduras. The Honduran treaty of September 28, 1849, was particularly important for it contained a special

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<sup>24</sup>William Oscar Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers: The Story of William Walker and his Associates (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916) p. 79.

<sup>25</sup>Stansifer, "Ephraim George Squier," pp. 14-15.

<sup>26</sup>Manning (ed.), Diplomatic Correspondence, 1831-1860, VIII, p. 57.

<sup>27</sup>Stansifer, "Ephraim George Squier," pp. 14-15.

protocol whereby that state ceded Tigre Island to the United States for a maximum period of 18 months.<sup>28</sup> This unusual action was taken by Squier in anticipation of the possibility that Chatfield was going to occupy the Island on the pretext of collecting back debts from Honduras, thus giving the British control over the likely Pacific terminus of the proposed canal.<sup>29</sup> The British occupied the Island, as anticipated, on October 16, 1849. An immediate clamor went up from Central America when the news reached the United States in December of 1849, the high level Anglo-American discussions over differences in Central America almost came to a halt. Anti-British feeling ran high and it looked as though the two nations might come to blows.<sup>30</sup>

Fortunately, the diplomatic ability of Secretary of State Clayton and Henry L. Bulwer averted serious confrontation between the two powers and negotiations proceeded for the adjustment of relations in Central America.<sup>31</sup> The formal settlement of the Anglo-American differences was the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of April 19, 1850. Without doubt one of the most discussed treaties ever made concerning Central America, this agreement set the tone of Anglo-American relations in the area until the Twentieth Century. Basically the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty stated that neither the United States nor Great Britain would assume or exercise

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<sup>28</sup>Montúfar, Reseña histórica, VI, p. 197.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.; Mary W. Williams, "Letters of E. George Squier to John M. Clayton, 1849-1850," HAHR, I (November, 1918), 428; Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat, p. 303.

<sup>30</sup>Rodríguez, A Palmerstonian Diplomat, pp. 306-12.

<sup>31</sup>Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, pp. 67-109.

any dominion over the Miskito Coast or any part of Central America.<sup>32</sup> Signed as a stopgap measure to avoid outright hostilities the Treaty left many questions unanswered.

A misunderstanding existed from the beginning as to the effect Clayton-Bulwer was expected to have on Mosquitia. Lord Palmerston did not view the Miskito issue as part of the negotiations and Bulwer later wrote that British policy did not give priority to the matter, hoping at the time only to "open the way to the complete settlement of the Mosquito Question."<sup>33</sup> The basic differences in the interpretation of the Treaty were not clear to both parties until January of 1854. At that time, ". . . in the opinion of the American government, the treaty was meant to be retrospective as well as prospective, and demanded British withdrawal from Central America; to the British government it was only prospective and merely prohibited further territorial and political extensions in the region."<sup>34</sup> With such an interpretation the Americans felt cheated and the Treaty became increasingly unpopular.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>For further information on the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty see: Richard W. Van Alstyne, "British Diplomacy and the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, 1850-1860," HAHR, XIX (June, 1939), 149-83; G. F. Howe, "The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty," American Historical Review, XLII (April, 1937), 484-90; K. Bourne, "The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and the Decline of British Opposition to the Territorial Expansion of the United States, 1857-1860," Journal of Modern History, XXXIII (September, 1961), 287-91; I. D. Travis, The History of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The Association, 1900); L. M. Keasbey, The Terms and Tenor of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 1899).

<sup>33</sup>Bulwer, "History of the Mosquito question," Quoted in Van Alstyne, "British Diplomacy and Clayton-Bulwer," p. 156.

<sup>34</sup>Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, p. 158.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

Conditions in Central America did not create a favorable climate for the settlement of treaty differences. The old Squier-Chatfield rivalry was renewed over interpretation of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty and ceased only when the two diplomats left Central America; Squier in 1850, and Chatfield in 1852. The absence of these diplomats did not terminate the conflict, however, for at the port of San Juan del Norte, there was a growing estrangement between local British elements and the ever increasing number of North Americans who found their way to the port on the ships of the Atlantic and Pacific Ship-Canal Company.<sup>36</sup> This company had established a transit system of steamships and over-land coaches even though it found the building of a canal too costly. The company was successful and as a result it was often at odds with the British authorities at San Juan. Above all, it refused to pay duties to the port authorities.<sup>37</sup> The first of the duty incidents was that of the ship Prometheus, which was fired upon by a British vessel, on November 21, 1851, for refusing to pay its duties. Cornelius Vanderbilt, who happened to be aboard, paid the fee but later protested strongly to the United States government.<sup>38</sup>

Similar incidents throughout the decade continually reminded the home governments of the need for a more practical agreement concerning the Miskito area. As a practical solution to the Miskito question, the Webster-Crampton agreement was signed on April 30, 1852.<sup>39</sup> The substance

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<sup>36</sup>Van Alstyne, "British Diplomacy and Clayton-Bulwer," pp. 165-66.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Mario Rodríguez, "The 'Prometheus' and the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty," Journal of Modern History, XXXVI (September, 1964), 260-78.

<sup>39</sup>For full text of the agreement see, Documents Relative to Central American Affairs and the Enlistment Question (Washington: Cornelius Wendell, printed by direction of the House of Representatives, 1856), pp. 159-63.

of the principal articles was as follows:

(1) Definite boundaries should be established for the Mosquitos, who were to relinquish Greytown and a tract of territory to the north of San Juan River to Nicaragua. In return for this cession, the Mosquitos were to have for three years the net receipts of all duties levied and collected at Greytown, at the rate of ten per cent, ad valorem on all goods imported into the state. The protection of the Indians was to be secured by an agreement on the part of Nicaragua not to molest them within their territorial reserve.

(2) Nothing in the preceding article should prevent the Mosquitos from voluntarily incorporating themselves with the Nicaraguans, in which case they were to be on the same basis as other citizens of Nicaragua. Greytown was to be established as a free port.

(3) Boundaries were to be defined between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, giving to the latter all of the territory south of the San Juan, and limited privileges of navigation in this river.<sup>40</sup>

The agreement was virtually dictated to Nicaragua and Costa Rica, which were not fully consulted as to its provisions.<sup>41</sup> The Nicaraguan Minister to Washington, J. D. Marcoleta, could do little more than inform Secretary of State Daniel Webster that he, "would consider himself as wanting in the performance of his duty if he were not to protest against that act."<sup>42</sup> The Costa Rican government, being on good terms with Great Britain, promptly consented to the agreement.<sup>43</sup> Apparently only the Nicaraguans felt betrayed by the United States government.

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<sup>40</sup>Paraphrased by Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, pp. 132-33.

<sup>41</sup>Marcoleta to Webster, May 2, 1852, Quoted in Documents Relative to Central American Affairs, pp. 165-66.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, pp. 135-36.

The Nicaraguans, too, were dissatisfied with the Clayton-Bulwer agreement and they continued to look to the United States for changes that would favor them. The fact that Nicaragua was not represented at the Webster-Crampton negotiations marked the beginning of that country's suspicion of the United States.<sup>44</sup> Although there were continual rumors that E. George Squier was mounting a filibustering expedition to take the Miskito area, that former diplomat was much too involved in promotion of his Honduran interoceanic railroad project to give much thought to Mosquitia.<sup>45</sup> It seemed the most that Squier was willing to do was to defend Nicaragua's rights by attacking the Millard Fillmore administration in the Democratic Review.<sup>46</sup> Squier's article in the Review reflected the growing sentiment, felt by both Nicaraguans and North Americans, that the Democrats would be more successful than the Whigs had been in solving the Miskito question.<sup>47</sup>

Despite expectations, the Democratic Franklin Pierce administration which entered office in March of 1853, soon found it difficult to achieve great success regarding the Miskito question. Actions by North Americans in Central America so embarrassed the Pierce administration that it was difficult for the President to demand more concessions by the British.

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<sup>44</sup>Webster later maintained that he tried to include Nicaraguans in the proceedings, Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>45</sup>Charles L. Stansifer, "E. George Squier and the Honduras Inter-Oceanic Railroad Project," HAHR, XLVI (February, 1966), 1-27.

<sup>46</sup>E. George Squier, "Our Foreign Relations: Central America and the Crampton-Webster Project," Democratic Review, (October, 1852), pp. 337-38.

<sup>47</sup>Stansifer, "Ephraim George Squier," p. 41.

Continued conflict between the Accessory Transit Company (formerly the Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company), and the citizens of Greytown (San Juan) finally resulted in bombardment and destruction of the town by a North American warship, July 13, 1854.<sup>48</sup> This single act was a total defiance of British claims in Mosquitia and put to a test the extent of the Protectorate. Surprisingly enough, the British did not act as strongly as the North Americans expected, requesting only that the deed of the bombardment be disavowed.<sup>49</sup> Even when the United States did not disavow the bombardment, the British seemed to be so involved in the Crimean War that they dropped their protest for fear of antagonizing that nation.<sup>50</sup> The whole incident was important for it indicated that British claims in Mosquitia were not as inflexible as had been supposed.

As if events were not confused enough, William Walker, citizen of the United States, actively began a filibustering episode in Nicaragua that was to cloud Central American events from 1854 until the end of the decade.<sup>51</sup> The Walker affair came to a head at a time when James Buchanan, a foe of the Clayton-Bulwer agreement, was President. Uncertainty over the new President's policy toward Central America and the Walker episode delayed settlement of the Miskito question until 1860.<sup>52</sup> In the end the British

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<sup>48</sup>Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, pp. 168-195.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>51</sup>For details of the William Walker Filibuster see: Rafael Obregón Loria, La Campaña del tránsito, 1856-1857 (San José, Costa Rica: A. Lehmann, 1956); William Scroggs, Filibusters and Financiers.

<sup>52</sup>Van Alstyne, "British Diplomacy and Clayton-Bulwer," p. 178.



insisted on retention of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, and in return agreed to make individual treaties with the Central American states concerning the British presence on the Miskito Shore.<sup>53</sup>

Along the lines of a United States-Great Britain understanding of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, the British government finally authorized Charles Lennox Wyke, its Central American representative, to negotiate a series of treaties formalizing the diminution of British interests. Wyke signed the first treaty with the Honduran government on November 28, 1859. It stipulated that the disputed Bay Islands would be returned to Honduras and that all British claims on the Honduran portion of the Miskito Shore were ended.<sup>54</sup> Thus British conflicts with Honduras, never too serious, were brought to a definite end. Also in 1859, Wyke concluded a treaty with Guatemala, delimiting the boundaries of Belize more clearly, and temporarily ending controversy there.

The Treaty of Managua, signed January 28, 1860, by Wyke and Pedro Zeledon, was much more complex than the Honduran agreement. Though the treaty gave up the British right to the Protectorate, its various stipulations created a Miskito Indian Reservation within the Nicaraguan state. The importance of the Treaty merits a closer look at some of its basic provisions:

Article I. Her Britannic Majesty . . . will recognize as belonging to and under the sovereignty of the Republic of Nicaragua, the country hitherto occupied or claimed by the Mosquito Indians within the frontier of that Republic, whatever that frontier may be. The British Protectorate of that part of the Mosquito territory shall cease 3 months after the exchange of the ratification of the present Treaty .

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 178-83.

<sup>54</sup>Williams, Anglo-American Diplomacy, p. 264.

II. A district within the territory of the Republic of Nicaragua shall be assigned to the Mosquito Indians, which district shall remain . . . under the sovereignty of the Republic of Nicaragua.

III. The Mosquito Indians . . . shall enjoy the right of governing, according to their own customs, and according to any regulations which may from time to time be adopted by them, not inconsistent with the sovereign rights of the Republic of Nicaragua . . . Subject to the above mentioned reserve, the Republic of Nicaragua agrees to respect and not to interfere with such customs and regulations so established. . .

IV. It is understood that nothing in this Treaty shall be construed to prevent the Mosquito Indians, at any future time, from agreeing to absolute incorporation into the Republic of Nicaragua on the same footing as other citizens of the Republic. . . <sup>55</sup>

The remaining eight provisions of the treaty stipulated that the port of San Juan would be free and under the sovereign authority of Nicaragua. <sup>56</sup>

This British concession on control of San Juan was not without its price, for although Nicaraguans could collect port duties, they had to agree to pay the Miskito Indians 5,000 hard (gold) dollars for each of the next ten years. <sup>57</sup> The Nicaraguans also had to agree to accept any land grants made by the Miskito King after 1848. <sup>58</sup>

In short, the Managua Treaty was a temporary settlement conciliating the interests of the principal parties present on the Mosquito Coast. Nicaraguans were pleased, at least for a time, because their sovereignty over the area had been recognized. Englishmen living on the coast were allowed to stay to protect the Indians and work their land grants. Also

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<sup>55</sup>Lewis Hertslet (ed.), A Complete Collection of Treaties (London: 1840-1901), XI, pp. 446-451.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 448, Article VII.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., Article V.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., Articles VIII-IX.

English honor had been preserved. The United States felt it had finally fulfilled its promises to Nicaragua and no longer felt threatened by the British presence in Central America. The decade thus ended with Mosquitia in peace and arrival at an apparent solution to the Mosquito question endorsed by the great powers.

### CHAPTER III

#### A QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY--THE MISKITO RESERVATION, 1861-1881

The enactment of the Treaty of Managua shifted responsibility for the government of the newly created Miskito Reservation to those who inhabited the coastal region.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, on September 12, 1861, fifty-one duly appointed representatives from different parts of the coast met at Bluefields to establish a new government under the direction of the Miskito King, George Augustus Frederick.<sup>2</sup> Although the assembly was recorded as a "public convention of the Headmen of the Mosquitos, and of the mixed population,"<sup>3</sup> it appears that the British citizens who continued to reside on the Shore dominated the proceedings. The list of the delegates appointed to the Reserve's first main governing body, the General Council, includes such English names as Patrick Quinn, James Porter, William H. Ingram and Samuel Hodgson.<sup>4</sup> Even though most of those present at the first council meeting bore English names,

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<sup>1</sup>Throughout most of the nineteenth century both the British and the Spanish called the Miskitos, by the term Mosquitos; hence, Mosquito Reservation. Here I have continued to use the anthropologically correct term, Miskito, to avoid confusion.

<sup>2</sup>Formation of the Municipal Authority for the Government of the Mosquito Reservation (New York: Burr Printing House, 1884), pp. 1-20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 4-5, 7-8.

it is unlikely that they were an ethnically pure group of Englishmen. The earlier pure-blooded English Shoremen had either died or moved elsewhere by 1860, leaving their mixed-blood offspring behind. As early as 1850, E. G. Squier noted that the English authorities in San Juan "consisted chiefly of Negroes from Jamaica."<sup>5</sup>

Squier also emphasized the heterogeneous nature of the Shore's population: "The inhabitants . . . exhibit every variety of race and complexion, Whites, Indians, Negroes, mestizos and sambos--black, brown, yellow and fair,--all mingle together with the utmost freedom."<sup>6</sup> This constant intermingling of ethnic groups did not seem to make a homogeneous type of Shore inhabitant by 1860, for Charles N. Bell, a resident of the area for sixteen years, emphasized that while the Miskitos comprised nearly half of an estimated population of 10,000 to 15,000 persons in 1860, the ancient tribes of Smoos (Sumu), Twakas, Payas and others retained distinct ethnic identities.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the ethnic diversity of the Shore's native population, His Miskito Majesty, as the British called the King, exercised sufficient power to make his control of the coast complete. Backed by the British pledge to protect the Miskitos, the King had little to fear internationally or domestically. <sup>sic</sup> Speaking before the Assembly of September 12, 1861, King Frederick could confidently indicate that:

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<sup>5</sup>E. G. Squier, Travels in Central America, particularly in Nicaragua (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1853), I, p. 73.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 73-74.

<sup>7</sup>Charles N. Bell, "Remarks on the Mosquito Territory, its Climate, People, Production, etc.," Journal of the Royal Geographic Society, XXXII (1862), 242-68.

My wish and desire is to place the people residing upon the Mosquito reservation--natives and foreigners--in the best possible condition as regards to (sic) their present and future welfare, and you may depend that I shall be always ready to act with you, . . . hoping to place our future government upon a firm and solid basis.<sup>8</sup>

The eloquent English of his address reflected the nature of the government King Frederick actually represented. While yet a Prince, George Augustus Frederick had studied at Jamaica, where he learned English "without the least perceptible foreign accent."<sup>9</sup> In later years the King confessed that he did not know the Miskito language as well as English and that he felt more like an Englishman than anything else. His library contained the works of Shakespeare, Byron and Sir Walter Scott, and he delighted in quoting them for his guests. He was also known for serving good English ale, though he himself preferred to drink the stronger Jamaican liquors.<sup>10</sup>

The King may have had genetic as well as cultural ties with Jamaica. The English always insisted, however, that the Miskito Kings were pure Miskito Indians and that King George Augustus Frederick was no exception.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the Nicaraguan historian, José Dolores Gámez, cast doubt on the purity of the Miskito lineage when he asserted that at least one pure-blooded African Negro (perhaps from Jamaica) was crowned king

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<sup>8</sup>Formation of the Authority of the Mosquito Reservation, pp. 3-4.

<sup>9</sup>Bedford Pim, Dottings on the Roadside in Panama, Nicaragua and Mosquito (London: Chapman and Hall, 1869), p. 269.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 270-71, 267.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 268.

in the years immediately preceding the accession of George Augustus Frederick to the throne.<sup>12</sup> For the British, the Miskito King's actual ethnic heritage was not crucial, as long as he cooperated in safeguarding British interests on the Shore.

The first municipal Constitution of the Miskito Reservation could not have protected local British interests more effectively. Article four of that 1861 Constitution stipulated that the laws of England which were in use since 1848 were to be continued as the laws of the Reservation, providing they were not at variance with the sovereignty of Nicaragua.<sup>13</sup> The Miskito Constitution guaranteed a continuance of the status quo on the Shore, despite the arrangements of the Treaty of Managua. In reality, then, the Treaty of Managua did little more than delimit the extent of the Miskito territory, set it apart, and allow the Reservation to function as an autonomous associate.

As potentially advantageous as was the arrangement of the semi-sovereign Miskito Reservation, it did not halt the region's declining commercial and diplomatic importance to Britain, which was signaled by the signing of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and the subsequent action of Lord Palmerston forbidding further colonization schemes for the Coast.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the conflict between the Vanderbilt Transit Company and local authorities, which eventually resulted in the bombardment of San Juan del Norte in 1854, may very well have discouraged further British

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<sup>12</sup>Gómez, Costa de Mosquitos, pp. 171, 211; little is known of the genealogy of the Miskito kings in the nineteenth century but this and other sources have been compiled in Appendix A, Nineteenth Century Miskito Kings.

<sup>13</sup>Municipal Constitution and Annual Laws of the Mosquito Reservation for the Years 1883 to 1891, Inc. (Savannah, Georgia: The Morning News Print, 1892), p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Van Alstyne, "British Diplomacy and Clayton-Bulwer," p. 162.

investment. Following the bombardment, William Walker's seizure of the Transit Company and the Nicaraguan civil war continued to disrupt the commerce of San Juan. The results of these repeated disruptions of the entrepreneurial activities at San Juan virtually reduced that settlement to "the level of a wretched swampy village."<sup>15</sup> The doom of the former British trade entrepôt was assured when the San Juan harbor silted in rapidly in the 1850's. Two harbor soundings done by the British, one in 1853 and the last in 1860, conclusively show the uselessness of the harbor by 1860.<sup>16</sup> In view of the harbor's condition, it was not surprising that the British surrendered the long coveted port to the Nicaraguans by the Treaty of Managua. The fate of the British merchants who had earlier lived at San Juan remains unknown. If there were any white Englishmen living there, they most likely returned to England or to Jamaica as the commerce declined. The descendants of the English and the Jamaican elements of the population probably remained on the coast but moved northward to the settlements of Bluefields, Cape Gracias a Dios or even into the interior. This shift in population could account for the presence of so many English names in the Miskito government and the overwhelming desire of that government to protect any interests the British then had or might hope to have in the future.

With the decline of the commercial importance of San Juan del Norte, the business outlook for the entire coast became increasingly bleak in the 1860's and the 1870's. Of the products that earlier had attracted traders to the Shore, only mahogany continued to have any importance.

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<sup>15</sup>Bedford Pim, The Gate to the Pacific (London: Lovell Reeve & Co., 1863), pp. 8-13.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 66-68.



A map (see the following page) made by the British resident Charles N. Bell <sup>sic</sup> shows that the mahogany cuttings existed in the interior highlands of the Reservation, along the Bluefields, Awaltara and Toongla Rivers.<sup>17</sup> Mahogany logs cut in the interior were dried and floated to the sea, where they were picked up and shipped to England as "Honduran mahogany." Forests were depleted <sup>sic</sup> because of the extractive nature of the logwood industry and its success was not assured for more than a few decades.

Other schemes were devised for the economic development of the Shore. Captain Bedford Pim, of the British Royal Navy, was one who lamented the decline of British interest in Mosquitia. Pim denounced the "timid and un-English policy"<sup>18</sup> for the region and did his personal best to counteract that policy by trying to promote a railway across Mosquitia from Monkey Point to the Lake of Nicaragua. Pim was successful in getting concessions from the Miskito king and the government of Nicaragua, but he was not able to elicit sufficient interest or capital in either Britain or the United States to make the venture a reality.<sup>19</sup> By 1867 the British Captain recognized that his railway scheme had failed although he still regarded the Shore as an area for colonization and exploitation.

Pim's optimism about the future of foreign enterprise in the Reservation was partly shaped by the rediscovery of gold in the interior of the region, and the Atlantic side of Lake Nicaragua. These gold deposits had lain dormant since the colonial period, when

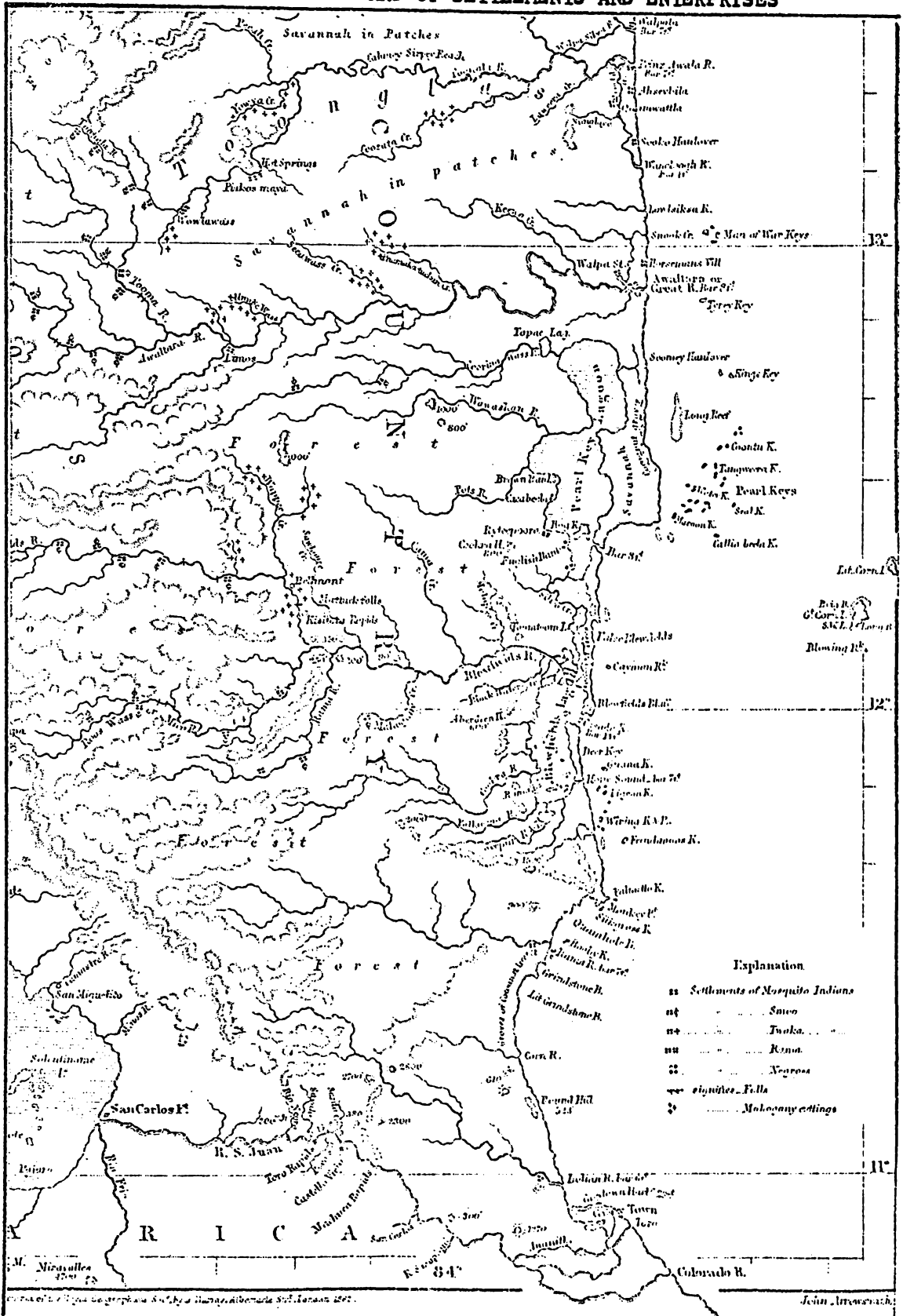
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<sup>17</sup>For the full map, see Appendix B, p. 98.

<sup>18</sup>Pim, Gate of the Pacific, p. vii.

<sup>19</sup>For terms of the concessions, see Pim's Dottings, Appendix, pp. 435-46.

PORTION OF BELL'S 1856 MAP OF SETTLEMENTS AND ENTERPRISES



**Explanation**

- Settlements of Mosquito Indians
- Suro
- ✕ Tzuka
- Rama
- ★ Negroes
- ⋈ signifies Falls
- ⊙ Mahogany cuttings

Copyright of the Geographical Society of America, Baltimore, Md., 1856.

John Brown

the Spanish had extracted gold from one of these areas, called Nueva Segovia, but after the richer veins were exhausted the extraction ceased to be profitable and the mines were abandoned. A new discovery of low grade ore, similar to that of Nueva Segovia, was made in the Chontales area in the early 1850's.<sup>20</sup> Captain Pim pointed out that with improved mining techniques and equipment the extraction of these ores could be profitable and Pim made every effort to attract British capitalists to these gold bearing regions. North Americans seemed to respond to the opportunity as well as did the British, for Pim reported seeing the former group prospering and using the latest mining equipment.<sup>21</sup> The profit margin was low but it was enough to keep adventuresome miners at work. The challenge of living in the fever-ridden mining region, with its lack of sanitation and medical facilities, seemed to create a bond between the English-speaking miners and no conflict erupted out of their competition for the precious metal.

The miners apparently were not sure which government had sovereignty over the region for it was right on the border between the Reservation and Nicaragua. Thomas Belt, company representative for the British Chontales Mines, the largest enterprise in the region, took no chances and paid due tribute to some lower Nicaraguan officials, probably hoping they would not try to get the central government to exercise effective sovereignty over the region. Belt reported that:

The Nicaraguans, like all Spanish Americans, are very litigious and every now and then I would be summoned, as the representative of the Company, to appear at Libertad, Juigalpa or Acoyapa, to answer some frivolous complaint,

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 81-94.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

generally made with the expectation of extorting money . . . by unscrupulous judges, who are so badly paid by the government that they have to depend upon the fees of suitors for their support, and are much open to corruption.<sup>22</sup>

Belt and other miners must have been successful in their dealings with the Nicaraguans for no attempt was made to control the mines.

Even though the gold mines were at their profit peak when Belt wrote in 1873, the company representative admiringly noted the financial gains of another extractive industry, the India-rubber trade. According to reports gathered by Belt, the Miskito Reservation was enjoying its own rubber boom in the 1870's. In 1867 the Reservation exported 401,475 pounds of rubber valued at \$112,403.00. By 1871 the quantity rose to 754,886 pounds and a value of \$226,465.00. From the outset, however, the rubber trade set the pattern for its own decline. Since the Nicaraguan government exercised such nominal sovereignty over the Reservation, and because of its own disinterest, no attempt was made to protect the rubber producing trees.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, the rubber gatherers or native huleros, overtapped the trees to increase their earnings, which were paid on the basis of quantity. Due to this over-exploitation, a peak quantity of 3,693,800 pounds at a value of \$1,662,210.00 was extracted from the trees in 1878. From that year on rubber production fell as much as half a million pounds a year as trees died from overtapping.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Thomas Belt, The Naturalist in Nicaragua, A Narrative of a Residence at the gold mines of Chontales (London: Edward Bumpus, 1888), p. 105.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-33.

<sup>24</sup>"Report on the Agriculture, Manufactures and Commerce of Nicaragua," H. H. Leavitt to Department of State, December 15, 1884, Managua, Nicaragua, Consular Despatches (hereafter cited as MCD), T 634/r. 1.

In addition to the trade in logwood, gold, and rubber, Thomas Belt reported that foreign <sup>sic</sup> residents also controlled the trade in coffee, indigo, hides, cacao and sugar.<sup>25</sup> In short, the economic activities of the Miskito Reservation remained almost exclusively in the hands of the British, their descendants or the few North Americans who migrated to the coast. Most of these economic activities were of an extractive nature, adapted to short run profit, with owners continually wary lest Nicaragua test the meaning of the sovereignty acknowledged to her by Great Britain.

Apprehension that Nicaragua might try to regulate the commercial activities of the Reservation was not the only possibility that concerned the residents of the Shore. A group of Moravian missionaries, who had first come to the Shore from Jamaica in 1848, feared that Nicaragua would interfere with the practice of the Protestant religion and the proselyting of the Indians. On June 11, 1861, a Moravian missionary wrote a letter explaining his supposed plight:

We are sorry that England has given up the protectorate of the Mosquito Territory. We see that it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. The Romish Church in Nicaragua is now doing its utmost to make proselytes, and to destroy our work, if possible. Last week, a Spanish priest was here, sent by the bishop to baptize everyone who comes in his way, without any instruction. Here, the people would not go to him, saying that they had a minister already. But at the Indian villages, he called the poor ignorant people together, and, by the present of a large piece of tobacco to each, induced them to consent to his baptism.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>sic</sup> The opinion of this missionary reflected the thinking of his Moravian brethren who resided on the Reservation; their fear and bias

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<sup>25</sup>Belt, Naturalist in Nicaragua, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>An unknown missionary, quoted in a series of missionary documents in Pim's, Gate to the Pacific, p. 83.

against Roman Catholicism--exaggerated as it was--made them consider abandoning their missions on the coast. However, the Moravian Church was not only the sole religious institution on the coast, it was also the only institution to undertake the education of the Indians, and as such the missionaries felt a moral obligation to remain on the coast and minister to their charges. According to the missionary returns of 1868, there were six missionary stations, permanently occupied by seven married missionaries, six day-schools, one boy's institution for training teachers, and 700 to 800 followers.<sup>27</sup> Instruction at the day-schools was in English. Largely due to this missionary effort the English language became almost universal on the coast, even among the Indians.

Although the missionaries talked of abandoning the Reservation, they were probably never very serious about it. After all, where could they hope to find a better environment for the conversion of heathen Indians? Unmolested by the Nicaraguan or Miskito government, they could exercise a good deal of freedom in their teaching. As Protestants, they were sufficiently akin to the Church of England to secure the approval of the resident British, and thus the cooperation of the Miskito authorities. The Church prospered, the number of its converts grew and it became an integral part of the foreign interests operating within the Reservation.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Pim, Dottings, p. 281.

<sup>28</sup>For the origins and present status of the Moravian Church in Nicaragua in relation to other sects, see Prudencia Damboriena, El Protestantismo en América Latina (Friburgo, Suiza & Bogotá, Colombia: Oficina Internacional de Investigaciones Sociales de FERES, 1962), I, p. 103; II, p. 127-30. This report reveals that the Church remains the strongest Protestant group in Nicaragua, with over 20,000 members.

The test of Nicaraguan sovereignty over the Reservation came not over economic or religious issues, but over the Treaty of Managua. It will be recalled that in exchange for complete control of the port of San Juan, the Nicaraguans agreed to pay the Miskitos \$5,000 for each of the first ten years after the signing of the Managua Treaty.<sup>29</sup> Nicaragua ignored this provision of the treaty. Her reason for doing so is not clear but it may simply have stemmed from inability to pay, from a belated rejection of the humiliating terms of the treaty, or both. Just what brought the matter to a head is also unclear, for apparently the Miskitos did not protest non-payment until 1877. A plausible explanation is that friction between the Miskito authorities and the Nicaraguans increased in the late 1870's, causing the Miskitos to turn to Great Britain for a reiteration of their protected status.<sup>30</sup>

Whatever the motives, the demand was made, and to settle the question, the whole matter was directed to the Emperor, Francis Joseph of Austria, for arbitration.<sup>31</sup> If the Nicaraguans had hoped to benefit by forcing a test of their sovereignty in the Reserve before a third party, the decision of the Austrian Emperor soon revealed their error. On July 2, 1881, the Emperor gave his decision at Vienna and in every respect the award favored the Miskitos and the British. The award not only emphasized the limited nature of Nicaragua's sovereignty over the Miskitos

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<sup>29</sup>See Chapter II, pp. 29-30.

<sup>30</sup>Gómez, Costa de Mosquitos, p. 343. Note: The final chapter of this work, from which this statement comes, was written by Dr. H. A. Castellon, from notes left by Jose Dolores Gamez, who died before completing the work to 1894.

<sup>31</sup>Award of the Emperor of Austria is found in Harrislet's Collection of Treaties, XV, pp. 276-79.

but spelled out particular facets of the limitation. Nicaragua was directed to pay, through the Bank of England, the sum of 30,859 dollars and three cents to the Miskitos. The decision also prohibited Nicaragua from gaining income by taxation of the imports and exports of the Reservation.<sup>32</sup> Regarding extractive industries within the Reservation, the award specifically stated that, "The Republic of Nicaragua is not entitled to grant concessions for the acquisition of natural products in the territory assigned to the Mosquito Indians."<sup>33</sup> Both Nicaragua and the Reservation were allowed to fly their flags over the territory, but the Miskito flag had to have attached to it some emblem of the sovereignty of Nicaragua.<sup>34</sup>

The award of the Austrian Emperor left Nicaragua with little opportunity to exert influence over the Atlantic coast. It looked as though the only way Nicaragua could gain control of the region was by armed force, but if she did so she would have to risk a military clash with Great Britain, against whom she was powerless. At the time of the Austrian award, Nicaragua was midway in an epoch of conservative governments (1861-1891) that lessened inter-city rivalry and brought some peace to the country. In Nicaraguan history the epoch is referred to as, Los Treinta Años or "The Thirty-Years".<sup>35</sup> Although most of the administrations in the Treinta Años desired to solve the Miskito problem, none had the power to achieve the desired control if the Miskitos resisted, as was likely.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., Articles VI-VIII.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., Article V.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., Articles II, IV.

<sup>35</sup>Quintana Orozco, Historia de Nicaragua, pp. — ?



Intimately connected with the question of sovereignty over the Miskito Coast was the issue of the canal. The Atlantic terminus, almost everyone agreed, would be the port of San Juan del Norte. Nicaragua, like her neighbor Costa Rica, and Colombia,<sup>36</sup> continued to shape her foreign policy toward the Atlantic coast on the supposition that one of the great powers would soon build a canal through the region.<sup>37</sup> The Civil War in the United States prevented serious consideration of the canal until after 1865. In 1866, however, Congress ordered a new survey of the Nicaraguan route and by 1867 guaranteed the neutrality of that route by the Dickinson-Ayón Treaty.<sup>38</sup> The 1867 Treaty signed by Andrew Dickinson, Minister of the United States, and Tomás Ayón, Minister of Nicaraguan Foreign Relations, did not threaten the Clayton-Bulwer agreement as the canal was to be privately constructed.<sup>39</sup> But there were no private parties capable of such a vast undertaking. Besides, as a recent study points out, the completion of the first trans-continental railway in the United States in 1869 lessened the economic and migratory need for a trans-isthmian canal.<sup>40</sup> In the 1870's routes

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<sup>36</sup>Previously called Nueva Granada.

<sup>37</sup>A brief survey of the canal attempt is found in, "El canal por Nicaragua," RC, VII, (March, 1964), entire edition; a dated, but reliable source is Lindley Miller Keasbey, The Nicaraguan Canal and the Monroe Doctrine (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896).

<sup>38</sup>Wallace E. Russell, "Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty," (Unpublished, in English version, M.A. Thesis, University of Kansas, 1968), pp. 19-20; A Spanish translation of this thesis has been published, "El Tratado Zavala Frelinghuysen," RC, XXII (September, 1969), El libro del mes.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>David Izatt Folkman, Jr., "Westward Via Nicaragua: The United States and the Nicaraguan Route: 1826-1869," (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Utah, 1966), pp. 36-52.

were surveyed and the Nicaraguans granted at least two concessions for the building of the canal but the companies never commenced operations.<sup>41</sup> In spite of the fact that no canal was actually started, President Tomas Guardia of Costa Rica renewed his country's claims to the San Juan River, just in case the canal was built.<sup>42</sup> Colombia was also ever-mindful of the canal possibility but it was not until 1882 that she sent a special mission to Nicaragua to again exert her Miskito claims, quiescent since the 1840's.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>"El canal por Nicaragua," RC, p. 10.

<sup>42</sup>Gómez, Costa de Mosquitos, p. 344.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 345.

## CHAPTER IV

### NORTH AMERICAN INTERESTS IN THE RESERVATION, 1882-1892

By the 1880's changes within the Reservation foreshadowed another era of international attention for Mosquitia. Immediately after the arbitration award of the Austrian Emperor, a new group of North American settlers arrived at the Bluefields region.<sup>1</sup> Apparently encouraged by the nature of the Austrian Award, which virtually terminated Nicaraguan sovereignty over the Reservation, these North Americans turned to the "tilling of the soil" and the "cultivation of bananas."<sup>2</sup> Judge J. O. Thomas, a resident of the Shore since 1859, participated in the initiation of the banana industry and later recalled:

We commenced in good faith. . . to expend our capital, and invited foreign friends to take part, feeling assured that the lands were well adapted, and that, the markets of the Southern States being near at hand, we would be sure of success. Under the clear and strong conditions of the treaty we invested our moneys and worked hard to carry out the new undertaking. In 1882 bananas were the theme, and the banks of the Bluefields River were made noisy by the ax of the woodman. Plantation after plantation sprung up, and in 1883 the planters were able to make a commencement in shipping about 2,500 bunches per month, or about 30,000 that year.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Minister to Nicaragua Baker to Secretary of State Gresham, May 2, 1894, U.S., Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1894, Appendix I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895), LIV, p. 279; (hereafter the citation Foreign Relations will apply to this group of material).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The expansion of the banana industry in Bluefields was part of a general growth throughout Central America in the late nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Until the end of the century at least twenty small companies produced bananas for an ever increasing market.<sup>5</sup> The Bluefields Steamship Company, which served the banana growers of Mosquitia, was just such an enterprise.<sup>6</sup> Profit or loss in the banana venture depended wholly on the regularity of shipping to New Orleans, the principal receiver of Miskito banana production. The Morgan line provided such service, and during peak seasons daily shipping from Bluefields was available. The marine news of the New Orleans Daily Picayune recorded the arrival and departure of vessels, with a cargo list. Bananas and lumber headed the list of imports from Bluefields; outgoing vessels carried foodstuffs, especially meat.<sup>7</sup> The frequency of sailings and the quantities of the cargoes attested to the thriving business on the Reservation.

That the Bluefields banana operation boomed so rapidly in the 1880's was a reflection of the awakening commercial interest that North Americans were taking throughout Latin America. As never before, the northern entrepreneurs sought markets for their finished goods and raw materials for the booming factories of the United States. Interest again grew in the project to build a canal across the isthmus at Nicaragua. Finally,

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<sup>4</sup>Richard LaBarge, "A Study of United Fruit Company Operations in Isthmian America, 1946-56" (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1959), pp. 1-10.

<sup>5</sup>Charles David Kepner, Jr. and Jay Henry Soothill, El imperio del banano (Buenos Aires: Centro de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales, 1957), p. 42.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 195-96.

<sup>7</sup>New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 10, 1894, p. 16.

on December 1, 1884, Secretary of State Frelinghuysen and General Zavala signed a treaty by which the United States government, not private individuals, pledged to build the canal.<sup>8</sup> A hot public debate followed, for the Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty was a direct violation of the Clayton-Bulwer agreement and threatened to cause serious conflict with Great Britain. The Senate rejected the treaty once, and before it could be acted upon again, President Grover Cleveland, who had just been inaugurated into office, withdrew it from consideration.<sup>9</sup> Although the treaty never received approval, its very consideration revealed that North Americans were seeking to escape British limitations on their freedom of action in Central America.

By the 1880's the North Americans had gained an appreciable foothold in much of the Central American trade. The British, who up to this time had enjoyed the economic advantage in the area, were now faced by "yankee peddlers" in even the most remote spots. The British Trade Journal, a standard guide for those engaged in business, bluntly warned in 1883 that "England's trade with Central America needs to be looked after."<sup>10</sup> The article further warned that Americans were driving out the English in everything from soap to railroad rolling-stock.<sup>11</sup> In Nicaragua, particularly, the same journal later reported that England was losing customers because goods were shipped too slowly and were

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<sup>8</sup>Russell, "Frelinghuysen-Zavala," pp. 105-10.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 110-53.

<sup>10</sup>"How to extend trade with Central America," The British Trade Journal, XXI (August 1, 1883), 310.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

frequently not the ones ordered.<sup>12</sup> In trying to find reasons for the trade lag in all of South America, the Journal concluded that "the fault must be that we are partly demoralized by past success, and, like the children of parvenus, we are above our stations as traders."<sup>13</sup>

Had those critics of the declining economic preeminence of Britain been residents in Latin America, they could have witnessed first hand the character of the economic encroachment of their fellow Anglo-Saxons. In Nicaragua, the United States economic involvement went far beyond the banana industry of Bluefields. In the interior of Nicaragua, especially in the Matagalpa region, adventuresome North American immigrants were engaged in agriculture, participating to a great extent in the Nicaraguan coffee boom of the 1880's.<sup>14</sup> During the same decade, Nicaraguan imports of finished goods were increasing perceptibly and North American merchants scoured the country for buyers.<sup>15</sup>

Although North American commercial interest continued to grow within Nicaragua, proportionally it never reached the level of the Reservation, where, by 1890 it was estimated that 90 to 95 per cent of the

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<sup>12</sup>"Notes from Nicaragua," ibid., XXIII, (April 1, 1885), 209.

<sup>13</sup>"The outlook in South America," ibid., XXII, (February 1, 1884), 77-79.

<sup>14</sup>U.S., Bureau of the American Republics, Bulletin (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895), III, pp. 1-182, VII, pp. 179-83; Consul Newell to Wharton, Department of State, July 31, 1892, MCD, T634/r. 3.

<sup>15</sup>Consul Wills to Department of State, April 24, 1889, MCD, T634/r. 2; Consul Wills to Wharton, February 4, 1890, MCD, T634/r. 2.

commerce was in North American hands.<sup>16</sup> Scholarly attempts to establish the extent of actual United States commercial interests on the Miskito Shore have proven unrewarding. Property and investments in agricultural equipment near Bluefields probably amounted to about two million dollars, but if one included the steamers of the Bluefields Steamship Company the investment could be totaled at ten million dollars.<sup>17</sup>

The arrival of the banana industry marked the beginning of a series of socio-economic changes throughout the whole of the Reservation. The face of the capital and commercial center, Bluefields, changed rapidly; native thatched huts gave way to houses "built of lumber brought from the United States."<sup>18</sup> Along the main thoroughfare (Kings Street) were a few shops, homes, and the office of the Bluefields Sentinel, where print for a local newspaper and governmental documents was set on a North American press.<sup>19</sup> Nearby was the Moravian mission chapel and below it,

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<sup>16</sup>Baker to Gresham, May 10, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 289-90.

<sup>17</sup>One early attempt to establish actual United States investments was made by Rising Lake Morrow, "A Conflict between the Commercial Interests of the United States and its Foreign Policy," HAHR, X (February, 1930), 2-13; an earlier estimate made by Wolfred Nelson, "The Mosquito Reserve," Harper's Weekly, December 22, 1894, p. 1219, asserted that investments were \$10,000,000; also, a recent investigation by Walter Lafeber, "Background of Cleveland's Venezuelan Policy," American Historical Review, LXVI (July, 1961), 956-67, brings to light other new sources that lead Lafeber to assert that investments were worth \$4,000,000; until more research is done, uncertainty over value of investments will continue. However, the fact that North Americans were commercially preeminent is fully established.

<sup>18</sup>R. N. Keely, "Nicaragua and the Mosquito Coast," The Popular Science Monthly, June, 1894, p. 164.

<sup>19</sup>Few publications of this press are extant. A sample is the Annual Laws of the Mosquito Reservation for the year 1892 (Bluefields, M. R., Nicaragua: Bluefields Sentinel, 1892).

the public market, where turtle, cassava and fruits were sold.<sup>20</sup> In the midst of it all stood the Miskito government building, proudly flying the Miskito flag. Of the town, a traveler remarked:

There is not the slightest suggestion of Spanish influence anywhere discernible. It looks decidedly American; not unlike a western mining town in many of its aspects. It bears marks of a rapid growth, a sort of hasty consequential development, suited to present emergencies, until it shall have time to build more permanently.<sup>21</sup>

The population of Bluefields, at the height of the banana boom in 1893, was estimated at 3,500.<sup>22</sup> Of its inhabitants, the majority were descendants of Jamaican Negroes, with a sprinkling of Indians, Spanish and Zambos.<sup>23</sup> The large number of Jamaican Negroes was to be expected, for they, and the whites, chose to reside chiefly in the larger towns.<sup>24</sup> Some of the Negroes counted may have been from the Southern United States, rather than Jamaica, for the Consul reported that because of a labor shortage on the Coast, plantation owners were importing Negro workers through New Orleans.<sup>25</sup> As for whatever pure Indian elements remained, if any, they

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<sup>20</sup> Courtenay De Kalb, "Nicaragua: Studies on the Mosquito Shore," Journal of the American Geographical Society, XXV (1893), 253-256.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 254.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 255; accounts vary considerably but this figure seems most reliable if it encompasses the population of the Bluefields River to the city of Rama. The article by Keely, "Mosquito Coast," p. 164, estimates 1500 persons, and this figure is frequently seen.

<sup>23</sup> Keely, "Mosquito Coast," p. 164.

<sup>24</sup> De Kalb, "Nicaragua," p. 264.

<sup>25</sup> Consul at San Juan del Norte, Brown to Department of State, April 17, 1887, in U.S., Department of Commerce, Reports of the Consuls of the United States, XXIII (July, 1887), 79.





MAIN STREET, BLUEFIELDS, 1894

were to be found residing deep in the interior and away from the cities.<sup>26</sup> If credence is given to the population estimates of Courtenay De Kalb, who spent a brief time on the Shore, it would appear that as much as half of the Reservation's population lived in and around Bluefields.<sup>27</sup>

The nature of the population distribution on the Reservation in 1893 reflected profound changes that had been taking place among the Shore's inhabitants after the region became quasi-independent in 1860. After 1860 the port of San Juan had little economic activity to sustain its population and this, coupled with the British abandonment of the port, caused most of the population to drift northward to the Bluefields region or to leave the country. As the whole Miskito area was of declining importance to the British government, little was done to assist the socio-economic development of the Indians who had been her allies in the past. Outside of diplomatic representations on behalf of the Miskitos and an occasional British adviser, usually the consular representative, the Reservation was ignored.

The semi-autonomous Miskito government left on the Reservation after 1860, regardless of its true ethnic or national composition, did little to improve the lives of the Miskitos. Indeed, the concessions it granted to extractive industries after 1861 most likely further disrupted the hunting-fishing-gathering pattern of the Reservation's indigenous population. Laws to benefit the Indians were passed, such as compulsory education, but were not enforced.<sup>28</sup> By 1893, the sole educational institution, the school conducted by the Moravian Church, reported fewer

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<sup>26</sup>Keely, "Mosquito Coast," pp. 162-63.

<sup>27</sup>De Kalb, "Nicaragua," pp. 263-64.

<sup>28</sup>"An Act to enforce compulsory education within the Mosquito Reservation," Government of the Mosquito Reservation, 1884, pp. 23-4.

students than it had in 1868.<sup>29</sup> All in all, the Miskito government seems to have enacted less than a dozen laws in the years between 1860 and 1882.<sup>30</sup>

After 1882 there was a sudden increase in lawmaking, apparently because of the increased influence of the North Americans who wished to protect their growing banana industry. In 1883 alone, twice as many laws were approved by the Miskito government as had been in all the previous years of the government's existence. Between 1883 and 1892, nearly 200 separate laws were passed for the Miskito Reservation.<sup>31</sup> To some extent the many laws passed between 1883 and 1892 were products of the same old British-Miskito alliance, responding to the crisis of a commercial boom brought by the North Americans. However, that the British made no significant protests about the 'yankee' invasion confirms that British economic interests on the Shore were minimal at the time. Evidence is scanty, but it appears that North Americans began to assume the manipulative role of their British predecessors. Further support for this supposition is found in the nature of the laws promulgated.

The character of the laws enacted after 1883 not only revealed increasing North American influence but formalized the cultural distinction among the elements of the ethnically heterogeneous population which had existed on the shore since the colonial era. Cultural differences that existed between the indigenous population and the foreign elements

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<sup>29</sup>De Kalb, "Nicaragua," p. 269, reports 550 students, compared with Pir's report of 700-800 in 1868, footnote 30, Chapter III.

<sup>30</sup>Tabulations here are based on the collection of Miskito laws that covers the period from 1860-1882. It is the Formation of the Municipal Authority for the Government of the Mosquito Reservation, (New York: Burr Printing House, 1854).

<sup>31</sup>Tabulation based on Municipal Constitution and Annual Laws of the Mosquito Reservation, 1883-1891, (Savannah, Georgia: Morning News Print, 1892).

were not belabored by the early British Shoremen, but the North Americans seemed to be less tolerant. The building of new thatched houses, predominantly used by the Indians, was prohibited in the towns of Bluefields and Pearl Lagoon by 1885.<sup>32</sup> A variety of measures were taken to control the liquor trade and ships were specifically prohibited from delivering liquor up the rivers into the interior. Cattle were to be confined in the cities, peddlers were prohibited, and dogs had to have collars. A 'Sunday Protection Act' prohibited business, card playing, and the unloading of ships. After 1889 there was even an annually enacted law to protect the status of the Reservation, entitled the "Mosquito Reservation Protection Act." The Reservation Protection Act was undoubtedly intended to make it clear to outsiders, especially Nicaraguans, that the status quo was not to be interfered with on the Coast.<sup>33</sup> In short, the Miskito government apparently cooperated fully with the North American entrepreneurs in guaranteeing the latter's new homes and commercial interests.

Close cooperation with the North Americans also came from the Moravian missionaries. By 1889, three of the Bluefields ministers were members of the governing assembly of the Reservation.<sup>34</sup> The missionaries, whose success with the proselyting of the native population was only fair, looked to the North American presence as a guarantee that the Nicaraguans would not dare reincorporate the territory and presumably suspend the mission work.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., scattered references.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>35</sup>"Inclosure No. 3," Moravian missionaries on the Mosquito Coast, W. Sifborger and H. Berkenhagen to Baker, April 30, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 286.

Furthermore, the North Americans assisted them in enacting the laws for the moral welfare of the community, especially on liquor. The missionaries and the North Americans no doubt cooperated in promoting the act for the suppression of necromancy (voodoo) or obeaism in the 1889 laws.<sup>36</sup> The practice of voodooism allied some of the Indians with the lower class Jamaican Negroes, who most frequently practiced it, and estranged both groups from the ruling Jamaican Negroes, the North Americans and the missionaries.

If it had not been so before (see Appendix B), the Miskito government was under the control of the Jamaican Negro elements by the 1890's.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Obeaism was a form of West African magic brought to the New World by the slaves and it especially thrived among the Negroes of Jamaica. An excellent work on the Jamaican backgrounds of the cult is Philip D. Curtin, Two Jamaicas (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), pp. 28-35. The extent to which obeaism was practiced among the Miskitos is difficult to ascertain, however, Keely, "Mosquito Coast," p. 166, confirms its practice. Also, some obea words, such as the one for "ghost or phantom" became part of the Miskito vocabulary. Curtin notes, p. 29, that the Jamaican obea word for shadows or spirits was "duppies." The same term, with the same meaning, is found in the most definitive recent study of the Miskito language; Adolfor I. Vaughan Warman, Diccionario trilingue (Managua: Talleres Nacionales, 1959), p. 76, spelled, "dupis". It is important to note that before the influx of the Jamaican Negroes on the coast in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a reliable vocabulary compiled in the 1840's indicates that the Miskito word for spirits was "Wulasha," and this was evidently replaced by the Jamaican terminology. See, A.I. Cotheal, "A Grammatical Sketch of the Language of the Indians of the Mosquito Shore," Transactions of the American Ethnological Society, II (1848), 237-64. In part the 1889 law read: ". . . any person or persons who practice necromancy, obeaism . . . for any charm or enchantment, or for poison, or for such noxious or hurtful draughts, to stupify, or with the intentions to provoke unlawful love, or to discover hidden treasure, or to restore stolen goods, or use subtle craft, means or device, so as to kill, hurt, deceive, injure or damage any man or beast shall be guilty of misdemeanor." This is from the Annual Laws of the Mosquito Reservation, 1883-1891, p. 91.

<sup>37</sup>De Kalb, "Nicaragua," pp. 271-180, this account confirms in detail how the Negro elements suppressed the Indians and maintained control of the government. Nicaraguan sources agree with this interpretation, as will be seen in the next chapter, and it became part of the rationale for the reincorporation.

That the government was so friendly toward the North Americans was due to a large extent because of the increased revenue the North American trade brought to the government's treasury. The Miskito monarchy, like the missionaries, presumably also felt that its continued existence was guaranteed by the presence of the North Americans. As noted earlier, the plantations themselves provided jobs for Jamaican Negroes and Negroes from the Southern United States. The North Americans, the Miskito (or Jamaican) monarchy, the missionaries, and even the lower class working Negroes all gained something from their unusual arrangement. When the Miskito monarch and his court advisers posed proudly for a passing photographer about 1892, all seemed to forget that genuine Miskito Indians had ever controlled the Shore (see following page).<sup>38</sup>

Absorbed in the booming commercial developemnt of Mosquitia, the majority of North Americans, Jamaicans and certainly the Indians, were probably unaware of the international forces which were shaping their future. Only the United States Consul at San Juan del Norte, William A. Brown, seemed aware of a renewed Nicaraguan interest in the reincorporation of the coast. In 1887, Brown noted that due to the success of the banana project, Nicaraguan capitalists from Granada and Managua had been going to Bluefields in search of lands on which to cultivate bananas.<sup>39</sup> Brown also

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<sup>38</sup>This same photograph is found in De Kalb, ibid, p. 236, and in Keely, "Mosquito Coast," p. 165.

<sup>39</sup>Brown to Department of State, April 17, 1887, Reports of the Consuls of the United States, XXIII, (July, 1887), 80-81.



## THE LAST MISKITO GOVERNMENT AND ITS ETHNIC BACKGROUND\*



FIG. 3.—THE MOSQUITO CHIEF AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL: 1, Robert Henry Clarence, chief; 2, Hon. Charles Patterson, vice president and guardian; 3, Hon. J. W. Cuthbert, attorney general and secretary to the chief; 4, Mr. J. W. Cuthbert, Jr., government secretary; 5, Mr. George Haymond, councilman and headman; 6, Mr. Edward McCrea, councilman and headman.

1. Robert Henry Clarence
  2. Charles Patterson
  3. J. W. Cuthbert, Sr.
  4. James Cuthbert, Jr.
- Others

Native, full blooded Miskito Indian  
 Pearl Lagoon native, quadroon  
 Jamaican mulatto, British subject  
 Pearl Lagoon native, mulatto  
 Unknown

\*Based on observations by John O. Thomas, a judge of the supreme court of the Miskito Reservation, in Foreign Relations, Appendix I, 1894, p. 278; Because Mr. Thomas was himself a mulatto, Jamaican British subject, this designation should be accepted with much caution.

noted that President Adán Cárdenas, in his January 16, 1887 message to the Nicaraguan Congress, called attention to Mosquitia and indicated that his administration supported certain changes, for example:

That the limits of the reservation ought to be marked; that a commissioner of Nicaragua ought to be appointed to reside at Bluefields, and that the regulations which should govern the exercise of the rights of sovereignty of the Republic and the municipal rights of the Mosquito Indians in the assigned district should at once be adopted . . .<sup>40</sup>

President Cárdenas was not alone in his desire to end the autonomy of the Miskito region; his attitude reflected a growing sentiment among Nicaraguan intellectual and social leaders that action needed to be taken.<sup>41</sup> Action came slowly and when Cárdenas left office in 1887, nothing had been done.

His successor, General Evaristo Carazo, realizing that old diplomatic questions had to be solved, appointed Horacio Guzmán to the ministry in Washington, hoping that the United States would endorse the Nicaraguan reincorporation of Mosquitia. Although General Carazo died of a heart attack, August 1, 1889, Senator Roberto Sacasa of León, when elected successor to Carazo, also endorsed the project to reclaim the Coast. Thus, during the administrations of both Carazo and Sacasa, Nicaragua was ably represented in Washington by the astute Horacio Guzmán.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Gómez, Costa de Mosquitos, p. 345.

<sup>42</sup>"Correspondencia diplomática entre el Ministro de Nicaragua en Washington Doctor Don Horacio Guzmán y el Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores Licdo. Don Benjamin Guerra, 1889-1891," Revista de la Academia de Geografía e Historia de Nicaragua, XVII, XIX (January, December, 1959), 1-9, (hereafter this revista will be cited as RAGHN, this issue as the Guzman correspondence).



Minister Guzmán arrived at his important post at a time when United States interest in Nicaragua was renewed because of new attempts to initiate a canal project.<sup>43</sup> After the failure of the Frelinghuysen-Zavala treaty, a group of private investors, led by Aniceto Menocal and Daniel Ammen, organized a canal association, made contracts with both Costa Rica and Nicaragua and actually began dredging the River San Juan.<sup>44</sup> This was the only actual digging effort to build the Nicaraguan passageway. The effort, though ultimately unsuccessful, was important in several respects. As never before, a Nicaraguan representative, in the person of Minister Guzmán, used the canal contracts like a lever to advance Nicaragua's Miskito interests. Demonstrating diplomatic ability heretofore lacking, Minister Guzmán gradually convinced two United States administrations that the canal enterprise would not really be safe unless Mosquitia were reincorporated.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, by 1888 he had sufficiently won the confidence of the Democratic Secretary of State, Thomas F. Bayard, to get the Secretary to explore the British government's attitude toward the Miskito region.

On November 23, 1888, Secretary Bayard sent a despatch on behalf of Nicaragua, protesting the alleged continuance of the British protectorate in Mosquitia and requesting the withdrawal of Great Britain.<sup>46</sup> The note was read to Lord Salisbury, then head of the Foreign Office, by E. J. Phelps, United States Minister in London. Lord Salisbury's reply, dated

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 115-160 for texts of both contract agreements.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 23, 63, 72, 75.

<sup>46</sup>Great Britain, Public Record Office, British and Foreign State Papers, 1888-1889 (London: HMSO, Harrison and Sons, 1889), pp. 746-59.

March 28, 1889, went to the new Republican Secretary of State, James G. Blaine. Surprisingly, it contained an unequivocal renunciation of British interest in Mosquitia. True, Salisbury made some face saving statements about British interest in the past, but in the final paragraph he made Britain's new position clear:

They [the British] have no desire to "assert a Protectorate" in substance or in form, or anything in the nature of a Protectorate, and it would give them the greatest possible satisfaction if the Nicaraguan Government and the Indians would come to an amicable arrangement, under Article IV of the Convention [Treaty of Managua], and thus relieve this country from any further responsibility in regard to their affairs.<sup>47</sup>

What attention Blaine gave the note, or the Miskito matter, is not known.

Minister Guzmán, who may not have learned of Salisbury's reply, started anew to make his case before Blaine. He sought assurances from Secretary Blaine that the United States would support the reincorporation. By June 19, 1890, Guzmán, feeling that he had achieved his goal, wrote to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Nicaragua:

It is doubtless that Mr. Blaine appreciates the importance of this matter [Mosquitia], and you may be sure that shortly he will give a good part of his attention to it. I never fail to speak with him about Mosquitia in every interview that we have and I am absolutely satisfied with the way he sees things.

You have told me that the incorporation of the Reserve perhaps will not be possible, even with the intervention of this government. I hope you will permit me to be a little more optimistic. It is my opinion, as always, that with the aid and support of the United States, Nicaragua is going to recover, in the near future, her absolute sovereignty over Mosquitia.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 762.

<sup>48</sup> Guzmán correspondence, RAGHN, p. 72. This and other material from this source is translated by the author.

A few months later, in Nicaragua, President Sacasa rose before the legislative assembly and pictured Mosquitia as:

. . . that extensive area, larger than the rest of the Republic, [with its] variety of climate; its fertile soil; covered with a profusion of rivers, some navigable; and its unlimited natural resources, beckoning the attention of merchants and working men. Now is the time to prepare the jeweled future reserved for you, and to make the peoples of the Pacific participants and collaborators with the grand future [of Mosquitia].<sup>49</sup>

Who was to doubt the recently reelected President? He was another of a long line of Conservatives who had been peacefully serving their terms. The United States Consul in Managua noted that the administration was "very well spoken of,"<sup>50</sup> and the future looked bright. Even the renewed ambitions of the Colombians and Costa Ricans for control over Mosquitia did not seem too threatening.<sup>51</sup> Besides, Nicaraguan relations were better with the United States than ever before; that great power having given support and approval for the reincorporation of the coveted Mosquitia.<sup>52</sup> To top it all off, a private company was actually digging the long anticipated canal.

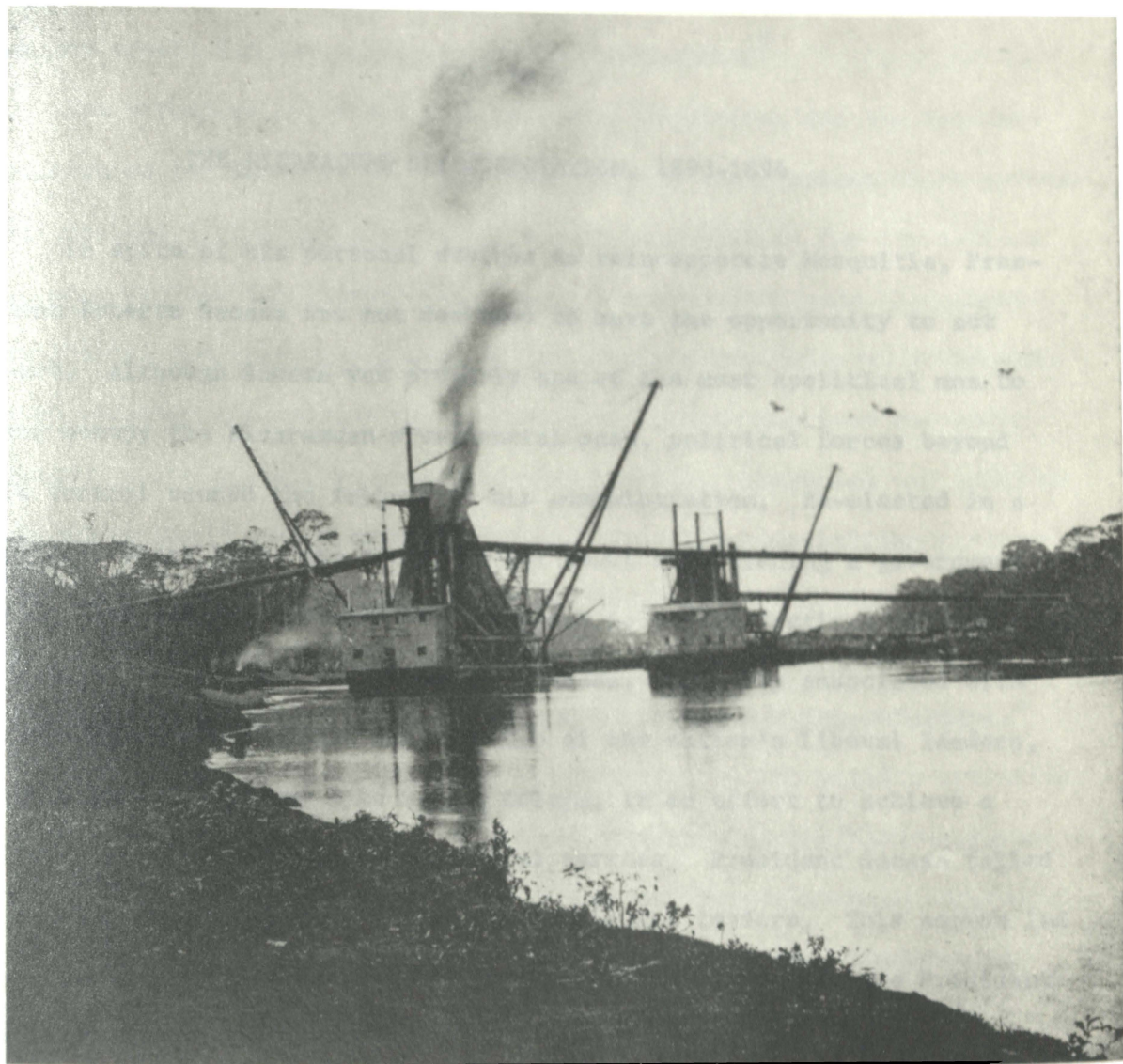
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<sup>49</sup>Manifiesto que el Señor Presidente Doctor Don Roberto Sacasa dirige a los pueblos de la Republica en el acto de depositar el Mando Supremo (Managua, Nicaragua: Tipografía Nacional, 1890), p. 7; this document is found in, Newell to Department of State, December 25, 1890, MCD, T634/r.2.

<sup>50</sup>Newell to Wharton, September 24, 1890, MCD, T634/r. 2.

<sup>51</sup>U.S. Minister to Nicaragua, Shannon to Foster, Department of State, September 7, 1892, Diplomatic Despatches from U.S. Ministers to Central America, 1824-1906, M-219/r. 74; ibid., July 26, 1892, M-219/r. 74; ibid., November 26, 1892, M-219/r. 75. (Hereafter materials from this group are cited as DDCA).

<sup>52</sup>A description of a fourth of July celebration reveals the good feeling between Nicaraguans and North Americans. See Consul Wills to Department of State, July 5, 1889, MCD, T634/r. 2.



**DREDGES, NICARAGUA CANAL.  
ON SAN JUAN RIVER**

## CHAPTER V

### THE NICARAGUAN REINCORPORATION, 1893-1894

In spite of his personal desires to reincorporate Mosquitia, President Roberto Sacasa was not destined to have the opportunity to act there. Although Sacasa was probably one of the most apolitical men to ever occupy the Nicaraguan presidential post, political forces beyond his control caused the failure of his administration. Re-elected in a tranquil year, 1891, the President set about establishing a government which included men from the two principal political factions of Nicaragua, the Conservatives and the Liberals. Sacasa, generally associated with the Conservative faction, met with two of the nation's Liberal leaders, José Dolores Gámez and José Santos Zelaya, in an effort to achieve a working alliance between the political parties. President Sacasa failed and subsequently exiled a number of the Liberal leaders. This action led to popular uprisings against the government and ultimately the President declared a state of siege.<sup>1</sup>

Some Nicaraguan Liberals, at the same time, were giving aid to the Liberal Honduran rebel, Policarpo Bonilla, in an effort to overthrow the government of Honduras, then under Conservative control. The Nicaraguan Liberals tried to force President Sacasa to go to war on behalf of the Honduran Liberal cause. When Sacasa refused, the Liberals began a

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<sup>1</sup>A brief but accurate account of these proceedings is found in Quintana Orozco, Historia de Nicaragua, pp. 162-68.

revolution in 1893. After numerous battles and a series of negotiations, José Santos Zelaya became President July 25, 1893, thus ending the thirty years of Conservative domination. To Zelaya was to fall the difficulty and the credit for the reincorporation of Mosquitia.<sup>2</sup>

The situation could not have been more propitious for the reincorporation of the Reservation. Sometime in 1892, the Jamaican Negro government decided it was not getting sufficient compensation for its various duties. Whereas the Reservation's ports had been free ones throughout the 1880's, the 1892 Annual Laws levied numerous new taxes on ships and goods entering and leaving the Reservation.<sup>3</sup> North American merchants reacted to the imposition of duties very quickly. Companies and individuals wrote the United States Minister to Nicaragua, complaining against the Jamaican Negro government and demanding that Bluefields again be a free port. They further expressed hope that the United States would support Nicaragua if she tried to oust the British and the Jamaicans.<sup>4</sup>

The Nicaraguans were not long in responding to the Miskito situation. In retrospect, it is difficult to establish just when the Liberal Party leaders decided definitely to assert Nicaraguan sovereignty in Mosquitia. José Dolores Gámez later stated that his party had a long standing interest in the reincorporation, antedating its rise to power in 1893. Liberal interest in reincorporation was renewed, according to Gámez, by a long article that appeared in El Termometro, a Liberal newspaper that

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Annual Laws of the Mosquito Reservation, 1892 (Bluefields, M.R., Nicaragua: Office of the Bluefields Sentinel, 1892).

<sup>4</sup>Shannon to Department of State, July 19, 1892; Shannon to Secretary of State, September 5, 1892; Shannon to Secretary of State, August 17, 1892, all in DDCA, M-219/r. 74.

assumed publication after Sacasa's rule ended in 1893. The article, which called for the immediate reincorporation of Mosquitia, was purportedly inspired by none other than José Santos Zelaya.<sup>5</sup> Some authorities maintain that as early as December of 1893, party leaders met in the city of Rama and secretly pledged themselves to occupy the territory. The pact was supposedly made between General Rigoberto Cabezas, who later played a primary role in achieving the reincorporation, and Colonel Francisco E. Torres, the governor of Rama. Accounts of the pact assert that the signers agreed to achieve the reincorporation, then inform President Zelaya.<sup>6</sup> The entire account may be conjecture, for it was Zelaya himself who appointed Cabezas to a post in the Reservation, before any attempt was made to seize the territory. At any rate, the matter seemed to be handled with the greatest secrecy and caution. Why Zelaya did not openly declare his plans to the Nicaraguan public remains a mystery, but he may either have feared the failure of the undertaking, or he wished to surprise the unsuspecting inhabitants of the Reservation. The latter justification seems unlikely, for Zelaya actually went about the reincorporation of the coast in a cautious manner, not in a lightning military or diplomatic campaign.

To prepare for the reincorporation Zelaya first named two young Liberals, Carlos Alberto Lacayo and Rigoberto Cabezas, to the posts of

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<sup>5</sup>José Dolores Gámez, "Promesa cumplida," RAGHN, XVI-XVII (January, 1957-December, 1958), 33. This account, though highly partisan, has been relied upon for lack of documentary materials.

<sup>6</sup>Apparently no original manuscript of this purported agreement exists, but the account is included in the work by: Emilio Álvarez Lejarza, Andras Vega Bolaños and Gustavo Aleman Bolaños, Como reincorporó Nicaragua su Costa Oriental (Managua: Talleres Nacionales, 1944), pp. 30-31; also reprinted in RC, May, 1966.

Commissioner of the Republic and Inspector General in the Reservation. Little is available about Lacayo's background; however, that of Cabezas is worthy of note. Rigoberto Domingo de los Dolores Cabezas Figueroa was a native of Cartago, Costa Rica, where he was born in 1860. In 1882 Cabezas migrated to Granada and founded a newspaper called the Diario de Nicaragua.<sup>7</sup> The Liberal leanings of the publication got Cabezas into trouble with the administration of Adán Cárdenas in 1884 and led to the termination of the newspaper and the exile of Cabezas.<sup>8</sup> Cabezas played a part in putting the Liberals in power in 1893, for which his appointment as Inspector General was evidently the reward. In his new position he dedicated himself to ending the quasi-independent status of Mosquitia.<sup>9</sup>

Lacayo was no less adamant in his support for the reincorporation than Cabezas. Early in November of 1893, Lacayo arrived on the Coast and at a consular reception he is alleged to have said:

Gentlemen, I come in the name of the new government, with its new ideas, to represent the sovereignty of Nicaragua here, to make it effective and also to bring changes to the Reservation; I have come to be, in a word, the media for achieving the objectives of my party.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>"Referencias sobre Rigoberto Cabezas," RAGHN, VIII (1946), 99.

<sup>8</sup>"El origen y fin del Diario de Nicaragua," RAGHN, VIII (1946), 69-98.

<sup>9</sup>Gámez, "Promesa cumplida," p. 33.

<sup>10</sup>Versions of this purported speech appear in several Nicaraguan sources, but are not confirmed in British or United States sources. Indeed, the collection entitled, "Mosquito Territory," Foreign Relations, Appendix I, 1894, indicates that residents of the Reservation were not even sure when Lacayo arrived--his coming had little impact on most of the population. This quotation is translated from a recent work by Pedro Joaquín Cuadra Chamorro, La reincorporación de la Mosquitia (León, Nicaragua: Editorial Hospicio, 1964), p. 8; the same quotation is in Gámez, "Promesa cumplida," p. 34.



Just how Lacayo and Cabezas attempted to establish Nicaraguan sovereignty is not clear. Gámez noted that Lacayo built a "beautiful palace" as an example of how much better the Nicaraguan government would be.<sup>11</sup> However, Lacayo did not immediately make concrete attempts to collect taxes and regulate trade in the Reservation.

The two Nicaraguan representatives undoubtedly recognized that any attempts they might make to exert sovereignty over the Reserve would be met with hostility and that military force would ultimately be necessary to consolidate their positions of authority. No Nicaraguan military forces were stationed in Mosquitia when Zelaya came into office but a conflict with neighboring Honduras soon provided the opportunity to move troops into Bluefields. It is unclear whether there was really any threat of invasion from the Honduran quarter, for at the time, a Nicaraguan army was advancing into Honduras from the Pacific Coast in its effort to help the Bonilla rebels take Tegucigalpa. Possibly the troops of the Conservative forces, which were being pushed to Cape Gracias a Dios, on the border of Mosquitia, by the advancing Liberal troops, might strike back at Nicaragua by invading Mosquitia.<sup>12</sup> It was this threat that brought two hundred Nicaraguan soldiers to Bluefields on January 5, 1894.<sup>13</sup> It seems that the troops did not even leave their steamship, Mabel Comeaux, but stayed safely in the harbor awaiting transportation to Cape Gracias a Dios.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Gámez, "Promesa cumplida," p. 34.

<sup>12</sup>A real threat probably did exist, as maintained by Nicaraguan historians; See: Cuadra Chamorro, La reincorporación, pp. 20-21; For the Honduran situation see William S. Stokes, Honduras, An Area Study in Government, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1950) pp. 45, 215.

<sup>13</sup>Baker to Gresham, February 9, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 237.

<sup>14</sup>Seat to Braida, January 22, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 235.

Regardless of the true intentions of the force, fear gripped the inhabitants of Bluefields. On January 13, the Miskito King, Robert Henry Clarence, sent a written protest over the presence of the troops to Commissioner Lacayo. Lacayo's reply to the King made it clear that Nicaragua considered herself sovereign over the Coast, and that defense of the area was her responsibility.<sup>15</sup> On January 25, the North American Consul, B. B. Seat, fearing violence, appealed to the State Department for a man-of-war and the U.S.S. Kearsarge was quickly dispatched.<sup>16</sup> From January 15 until February 10, the Nicaraguan troops were absent, having gone north toward the town of Cape Gracias a Dios to repel the expected invasion. However, no invasion materialized and the troops returned during the night of February 10-11. The feared occupation came when the Nicaraguan forces landed and occupied all the public buildings of the Reservation.<sup>17</sup> On February 12, 1894, Cabezas declared martial law and negated all actions of the Miskito government.<sup>18</sup>

By February 15, twenty North American merchants felt their businesses sufficiently endangered to send a petition to Consul B. B. Seat, requesting assistance from the United States to protect their property. The petition acknowledged Nicaraguan sovereignty but bemoaned the fact that

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Seat to Gresham, January 25, 1894; Gresham to Baker, February 1, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 234-35.

<sup>17</sup> Braida to Uhl, February 13, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 237-38; Nicaraguan tradition has long held that Zelaya ordered the occupation by telegram, saying, "Militarily occupy Bluefields: Depose the Miskito King and leave me the consequences." Some Nicaraguan writers, including Cuadra Chamorro, have questioned the validity of the telegram, La Reincorporación, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Inclosure 8, "Proclamation of Intendente General Cabezas, "in Baker to Gresham, March 8, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 249.

while the Miskito government had been lenient, it now looked as though the Nicaraguans would levy and collect taxes on the products that the North Americans were extracting from the region.<sup>19</sup> The merchants concluded that, "by the action of the said commissioner [Lacayo], the fruits of our own labor, the commerce of the reservation, which had been developed . . . will be eventually ruined."<sup>20</sup> On February 17, Lacayo assured the Americans that their rights would be protected but that this in no way hindered the collection of duties, which the Commissioner proceeded to collect after the nineteenth of February.<sup>21</sup> Merchants also complained about the state of siege Lacayo had declared, since the situation invalidated their insurance policies.<sup>22</sup>

Matters were eased on February 25, when the British warship Cleopatra arrived for the purpose of protecting the lives and properties of British subjects. The man-of-war U.S.S. Kearsarge, dispatched at the outset of the dispute, sank after hitting an uncharted Caribbean reef, and another vessel had to be dispatched from Brazil. The early arrival of the British ship led the North American residents to seek assistance from it, because they felt their own government had abandoned them.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the British representatives, F. H. Bingham, consul at San Juan del Norte, and the British minister in Guatemala, generally showed greatest sympathy for the Reservation's plight and early opposed Nicaraguan

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<sup>19</sup>Inclosure 5, "Saml. Weil & Co., and others," to Seat, no date, in Baker to Gresham, ibid., pp. 246-47.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Lacayo to Seat, February 17, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 247-48.

<sup>22</sup>Seat to Lacayo, February 15, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 243-44.

<sup>23</sup>Seat to Braida, March 11, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 253-54.

intervention.<sup>24</sup> Upon his arrival, the commander of the Cleopatra persuaded Lacayo to lift the state of siege and to join in drafting a modus vivendi, "to adjust . . . the present difficulties arising for [sic] the military occupation of the Reservation . . . while the several governments are debating the question."<sup>25</sup>

The main objective of the modus vivendi was to restore peace and order, something the Nicaraguan authorities had been unable to guarantee. According to the first provision of the settlement, Lacayo agreed to organize a police force in Bluefields. The second provision created a provisional government, called a municipal council, and was to be composed of two persons named by the British consul and three named by the Nicaraguan commissioner.<sup>26</sup> Finally, Lacayo agreed to withdraw Nicaraguan troops from the Reservation and recognize previous treaties with Great Britain regarding the Miskito arrangement. This latter stipulation actually did not threaten Lacayo's claims of sovereignty since the Treaty of Managua had always recognized the right of the Miskitos to incorporate with Nicaragua whenever they so desired.<sup>27</sup>

Most of the provisions of the modus vivendi were subsequently ignored by those who had signed the agreement. The North Americans wanted no part of a provisional government; at first because they did not feel the planned government would be representative, and later, because Secretary Gresham specifically prohibited United States citizens from taking a part in any

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<sup>24</sup>Bingham to Lacayo, February 27, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 238-39; Shannon to Foster, November 9, 1892, DFUS.

<sup>25</sup>Vita to Zelaya, March 6, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 249.

<sup>26</sup>The only text of the original modus vivendi seems to be a translation from a Spanish version and there is a discrepancy as to whether the British or United States consul was to appoint the two members to the provisional council; see, Foreign Relations, pp. 249-50.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., for text of the agreement.

provisional arrangement.<sup>28</sup> Since it proved impossible to establish any kind of provisional government, other provisions of the modus were not enacted. Lacayo periodically returned Nicaraguan soldiers to the Coast.

Taking advantage of the modus vivendi, diplomats of the governments concerned immediately began to work on a permanent settlement. Baker, United States Minister in Managua, met with President Zelaya to find out why the action had been taken. Zelaya indicated that the Jamaican Negroes had usurped the government in the territory, deprived the native Miskitos of their rights, and furthermore, it was the duty of Nicaragua to extend her power over the disputed territory.<sup>29</sup> The ubiquitous Horacio Guzmán, still Nicaraguan Minister in Washington, maintained close contact with Secretary of State Gresham and continually kept the Secretary informed of the Miskito situation.<sup>30</sup> Because of the slow transportation from Nicaragua and Baker's illness, Gresham evidently relied heavily upon the version of events given him by Minister Guzmán. Later, Gresham chided Baker, noting: "your failure to send full information in regard to [the] Bluefields incident has been embarrassing here."<sup>31</sup>

Despite the lack of day to day information, the Department of State acted decisively concerning the Miskito problem. Throughout the month of March, Gresham repeatedly made it clear that he wished Nicaragua to exercise control over the region. A series of notes were sent to T. F. Bayard,

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<sup>28</sup>Gresham to Bayard, April 30, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 271-73.

<sup>29</sup>Baker to Gresham, March 8, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 242.

<sup>30</sup>Guzmán to Gresham, March 5, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 239.

<sup>31</sup>Gresham to Baker, April 17, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 271.

then United States Ambassador to London, asking him to determine why the British ship Cleopatra had been sent, why the modus vivendi was arranged by the ship's commander, and what British objectives in the region generally were.<sup>32</sup> At first the British Foreign Office wavered, apparently also lacking information about the whole affair. Bayard's notes<sup>33</sup> to Gresham reported a strong desire on the part of Lord Kimberly, then head of the Foreign Office, to be cooperative with the United States. Bayard was informed that the last correspondence in regard to Mosquitia was that of Lord Salisbury of March, 1889, which had denounced any British interest in the region.<sup>34</sup> Lord Kimberly accepted Salisbury's viewpoint without exception and by the end of May, it was unequivocally clear to the State Department that the British had no genuine interest in the Reservation. Bayard reported that Kimberly, "appeared to be disposed to follow in the line which should be approved and adopted by the United States, so that a coincidence of view and action should be arrived at by the United States and Great Britain."<sup>35</sup> Actually, there never was a major point of diplomatic contention between these two powers after Salisbury's statements of 1889.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Gresham to Bayard, March 9, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 250; Gresham to Bayard, April 30, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 271.

<sup>33</sup>Bayard to Gresham, March 15, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 250-52; Bayard to Gresham, March 29, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 258-60; Bayard to Gresham, May 28, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 291-93.

<sup>34</sup>For details of this statement see last chapter, p.

<sup>35</sup>Bayard to Gresham, May 28, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 291-93.

<sup>36</sup>A contrary interpretation is found in Walter Lafeber, "Background of Cleveland's Venezuelan Policy," pp. 956-57; Lafeber concludes that Britain offered resistance to the efforts of the United States to solve the Miskito problem. I find little evidence to support this conclusion.

In both Britain and the United States the press interpreted the Miskito confrontation differently than did their respective governments. The New Orleans Daily Picayune, carrying extensive coverage of events in Bluefields, repeatedly emphasized the British threat and hinted that a deal was being made between the British and Nicaraguans to exclude the business interests of the United States.<sup>37</sup> Condemnation of the British was even stronger in the New York Tribune:

Lord Kimberly may make what disclaimers he pleases . . . but the fact remains that the Cleopatra's marines intervened in the political affairs of Central America, and that Great Britain has exercised by force of arms the right of protecting the Mosquito Reservation. That is a direct violation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty.<sup>38</sup>

It was also argued in the Tribune that the Monroe Doctrine should be invoked to resist British ambitions.<sup>39</sup> The New York Times took a more balanced view of events in Nicaragua and was not so critical of Gresham's policy.<sup>40</sup> In the London Times one found only a limited coverage; its correspondent in Mosquitia was so pro-Moravian Church that the articles could not be said to reflect general British thinking on the matter.<sup>41</sup> As time passed, and it became clear that Nicaragua, not Britain, would ultimately control the Reservation, criticism in the newspapers of the United States shifted to the dangers of Nicaraguan control.<sup>42</sup> United States

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<sup>37</sup> New Orleans Daily Picayune, March 10, p. 4; March 11, p. 23; March 14, p. 4; March 16, p. 4; March 19, p. 1; March 24, p. 1; March 26, p. 1; March 28, p. 16, (all 1894).

<sup>38</sup> New York Tribune, March 21, 1894, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., April 8, 1894, p. 6.

<sup>40</sup> New York Times, February-June, numerous references.

<sup>41</sup> London Times, March 27, 1894, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 6, 1894, p. 2.

press criticism of Nicaragua increased when a North American citizen, purportedly named William Wilson, was shot by a Nicaraguan, March 22, 1894, in the city of Rama.<sup>43</sup> Although the killing was probably done in self defense, and was not at all connected with matters in Bluefields, it provided journalists with copy and aroused North American fears over how they might be treated by the Nicaraguans.

From March through June, the modus vivendi was maintained and no great confrontations between Jamaicans, North Americans or Nicaraguans occurred to disrupt the peace. Secretary Gresham continually admonished consular agent Braida to stay out of the political affairs of Mosquitia. In a telegram of March 28, 1894, Gresham stipulated:

You are not authorized to perform diplomatic functions and will not meddle in political affairs in Mosquito. Naval vessel will soon reach Bluefields.<sup>44</sup>

Gresham apparently put little confidence in the reports of his diplomatic and consular agents in Nicaragua and preferred to rely upon information from the commander of the U.S.S. San Francisco which had been ordered from Brazil to Bluefields after the sinking of the Kearsarge.<sup>45</sup> When Minister Baker tried to make an agreement to limit the number of Nicaraguan troops in the Reservation, a constant source of agitation to the Bluefields' residents, his efforts were cut short by Secretary Gresham. The Secretary of State alleged that it was because Baker's efforts "disparaged Nicaragua's paramount sovereignty."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> A typical account is found in the New Orleans Daily Picayune, April 8, 1894, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Gresham to Braida, March 28, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 258.

<sup>45</sup> Gresham to Bayard, April 30, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 271.

<sup>46</sup> Gresham to Baker, June 13, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 296.



On the other side, the evidence indicates that the Nicaraguans were cautious to avoid controversy with the United States or its citizens. José Madriz, a highly respected lawyer and Minister of Foreign Relations, was appointed by Zelaya as a special commissioner of the President to make the diplomatic arrangements following the actual occupation.<sup>47</sup> Diplomatic correspondence between Madriz and Zelaya confirms that the Nicaraguans were continually preoccupied with maintaining good relations with the United States.<sup>48</sup> Efforts to cooperate with North American businessmen brought some good responses. One of the merchants, the Emery mahogany firm, cooperated with Nicaraguans in the collection of duties on wood extracted.<sup>49</sup> It was even reported that the principal merchants of Bluefields had signed a document approving of the Nicaraguan occupation.<sup>50</sup> There is also much evidence that great efforts were honestly made by the Nicaraguan authorities to capture the murderer of the United States citizen, Wilson.<sup>51</sup> From the Nicaraguan point of view, the most troublesome individuals were the United States consuls and those the Nicaraguans labeled as the "North Americans easily led astray."<sup>52</sup>

The continually tense situation created by the Nicaraguan occupation

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<sup>47</sup>Alberto Bendaña, editor, José Madriz, Diplomático (Managua, D.N.: Imprenta Nacional, 1965), p. 6; this series of documents was written by Madriz and selected by the Director of the Nicaraguan National Archives.

<sup>48</sup>Madriz to Zelaya, April 25, 1894, "Segunda Parte de los documentos sobre la reincorporación de la Mosquitia," RAGHN, January-December, 1954, Vol. XIII, No. 1-4, p. 64; (hereafter cited as Documentos . . . Mosquitia); same tone is found in documents in Bendaña, José Madriz, pp. 13-16.

<sup>49</sup>Documentos . . . Mosquitia, pp. 62-63.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 68-9.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

exploded on July 5, 1894, when a force composed primarily of Jamaican Negroes opened heavy fire on the new governmental headquarters of General Cabezas.<sup>53</sup> Firing continued throughout most of the night and the Nicaraguan authorities were unable to leave the government building. The next morning, Robert Henry Clarence, the deposed Miskito King, reassumed his "rightful authority as chief of the Mosquitos."<sup>54</sup> The Bluefields Sentinel Press released an inflammatory bulletin with the following heading:

Patience has ceased to be a virtue--Nicaragua's hostile treatment toward the civilian police creates an uprising-- A reinforcement from the bluff threatens to lay the "niggers" low--Balls whooped through the town last night-- Prisoners set at liberty--Flags torn down--General Cabezas and provisional treasurer Aubert said to be responsible.<sup>55</sup>

That the North Americans continually supported the Nicaraguan government is confirmed by the decisive action taken by Charles O'Neil, commander of the battleship Marblehead, which was stationed in the Bluefields harbor at the time of the revolution. Although delayed by rough seas, United States Marines came to the rescue of the embattled Nicaraguan forces on July 7, 1894. The Marines restored Cabezas to power, recaptured the bluff overlooking the town from the Negro forces, and brought Bluefields almost immediate peace.<sup>56</sup> Yet because of a breakdown in the telegraph system, Nicaraguans in the interior knew little of the real state of affairs on the Coast. They immediately began a massive mobilization of forces to reconquer the territory.<sup>57</sup> Throughout Nicaragua, forces rallied

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<sup>53</sup> Seat to Braida, July 7, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 303-06; Documentos . . . Mosquitia, p. 69.

<sup>54</sup> Proclamation of Robert Henry Clarence, July 6, 1894, Foreign Relations, p. 306.

<sup>55</sup> Newspaper Bulletin, Foreign Relations, pp. 304-05, (underlining mine).

<sup>56</sup> Seat to Braida, July, 7, 1894, Foreign Relations, pp. 303-04.

<sup>57</sup> Documentos . . . Mosquitia, pp. 67-101.

to the side of the government. From Honduras, Liberal President Policarpo Bonilla offered help to his old friend President Zelaya.<sup>58</sup> Volunteers from Costa Rica were joining the march.

It took almost a month for a force of about 1500 Nicaraguan soldiers to prepare for the trek to the Coast. On July 27, 1894, the expeditionary army, ready to embark, met to hear a stirring speech by President Zelaya.

Our country again requires your services to uphold its integrity and its sovereign rights. I have summoned you to march to our Atlantic coast in order to there raise our flag to the height which is demanded by our national dignity.<sup>59</sup>

In late July, the Nicaraguan forces moved from various points to the Miskito Shore. They encountered little, if any, resistance, as the Negro opposition disappeared into the dense forests or caught boats bound for Jamaica. The second of August, United States Marines turned Bluefields and the Bluff over to Nicaraguan forces.<sup>60</sup> Determined to break once and for all the power of those opposing Nicaraguan occupation, Madriz, Lacayo and Cabezas placed under arrest twelve British and two United States citizens who had been implicated in the insurrection. The Nicaraguans also tried to capture the Miskito King and his cabinet, but these men had already escaped to Jamaica. Those who were arrested were taken immediately to Managua for a trial.<sup>61</sup> At this juncture British patience ran out

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Originally printed in the newspaper, E1 93, July 27, 1894; this translation is from Foreign Relations, p. 319.

<sup>60</sup> Documentos . . . Mosquitia, pp. 104-05.

<sup>61</sup> The following men, most of them Jamaican Negroes (but British subjects), were arrested: E. D. Hatch, Vice-Consul at Bluefields; W. H. Brown; Captain Brownrigg; H. C. Ingram; John Taylor; M. Taylor; J. O. Thomas, Miskito court justice; W. Glover; S. Hodgson; George Hodgson; J. W. Cuthbert, former attorney-general & chief advisor to Miskito King; Charles Patterson, late Vice-President of Mosquitia; J. S. Lampton and George B. Wiltbank, U.S. Citizens. From, Foreign Relations, p. 331.

and a formal protest was lodged against the Nicaraguans for the illegal arrest of E. D. Hatch, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bluefields, who was among those taken to Managua.

As a result of the Hatch detention, Nicaragua agreed to pay damages to Great Britain in the amount of 15,500 pounds sterling.<sup>62</sup> Unable to collect the amount, Britain finally blockaded Nicaraguan ports in 1897 and collected only 2,400 pounds in a final settlement.<sup>63</sup> The United States government complained so bitterly against the detention of the two North Americans that the Nicaraguans finally agreed to exile them and drop the court proceedings against them.<sup>64</sup> Later the Nicaraguans relented and permitted the men to return to their homes in Bluefields.

On November 20, 1894, Madriz, Lacayo and Cabezas arranged a Miskito Convention, made up of about fifty native Indians.<sup>65</sup> This Convention passed the decree which formally abolished the Reservation and declared the coastal region incorporated with Nicaragua. The terms of the Convention were extremely favorable to the Miskitos, who were exempted from all military service and taxes. In the final article of the Convention, the Miskitos agreed to extend thanks to President Zelaya for freeing them from their oppressors; and, in his honor, to change the name of the Reservation to the Department of Zelaya. As the native Miskitos were unable to sign the document, U.S. Consul B. B. Seat, the mayor of Bluefields and several Nicaraguans attested to the validity of the document.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Cuadra Chamorro, La reincorporación, pp. 157-59, 161.

<sup>63</sup> Hertslet's Commercial Treaties, XXV, pp. 962-63.

<sup>64</sup> Foreign Relations, pp. 338-50.

<sup>65</sup> Documentos, . . . Mosquitia, p. 128; Cuadra Chamorro, La reincorporación, pp. 147-153.

<sup>66</sup> Foreign Relations, pp. 360-63.

Upon receiving formal notice of the reincorporation from Nicaraguan Minister Guzmán, Secretary Gresham immediately notified Bayard in Great Britain. On December 31, 1894, The United States Secretary congratulated Minister Guzmán:

Having already . . . orally expressed my satisfaction at this outcome of a situation which for nearly a year has demanded careful consideration, I take this opportunity to state the gratification it affords this government to see the voluntary and orderly accomplishment of this important step by the native Mosquito Indians themselves.<sup>67</sup>

It may be doubted, in light of the Miskito history, that the native Indians chose the Nicaraguan government over any other. At any rate, a year of intensive struggle ended with Nicaraguans enjoying the preeminence they had so long desired. On January 1, 1895, President Zelaya spoke to the Nicaraguan Congress:

I have spared no funds, forces, or sacrifice to effectively establish the right of the Republic to Mosquitia. After a year, I have seen my aspirations fulfilled. November 20, 1894, the Miskito people, meeting in a great convention, declared that they are under our flag and will obey our laws and constitutions.<sup>68</sup>

Although President Zelaya was partially justified in his boasts that Nicaraguan objectives had been met in Mosquitia, many diplomatic questions lingered unsettled. Chief among these was the matter of a final settlement with Great Britain. While Great Britain was willing to concede absolute Nicaraguan sovereignty over Mosquitia, it withheld formal recognition of that sovereignty pending a successful settlement of the Hatch affair, discussed earlier. Two postponements of the Hatch damage claim payment and

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Address before the national Congress, quoted in Cuadra Chamorro, La reincorporación, p. 152.

other points of contention delayed the signing of a final treaty until April 19, 1905, more than a decade after Nicaragua had actually occupied the former Reservation. The treaty between Great Britain and Nicaragua in regard to the Mosquito Territory was signed at Managua, Nicaragua by the British Charge d'affaires in Nicaragua, Herbert Harrison, and Adolfo Altamirano, Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>69</sup> The Harrison-Altamirano Treaty, as it came to be called, abrogated the Treaty of Managua of 1860, and in doing so the British recognized the absolute sovereignty of Nicaragua over the former Mosquitia.<sup>70</sup> Although full sovereignty was recognized, the British still fancied themselves as protectors of their former Indian charges and most of the Treaty was concerned with concessions Nicaragua had to extend to the inhabitants of the former reservation.

Nicaraguan concessions included a law exempting for fifty years all the Miskitos and creoles born before 1894, from military service or taxation by Nicaragua. Indian deeds to land made before the reincorporation had to be honored and in cases where no deeds existed the Nicaraguan government was obliged to give each Indian family eight manzanas of land. Public pasture lands were also to be reserved for the Indian villages. The Treaty also provided for the return of former Miskito chief Robert Henry Clarence, as long as he did not try to incite the Indians to revolution. All of the inhabitants of the Reservation were to be admitted with rights equal to that of other Nicaraguan citizens.<sup>71</sup>

It is ironic that ten years after the territory of Mosquitia was supposedly incorporated into Nicaragua, Great Britain could propose such

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<sup>69</sup>Hertslet's Commercial Treaties, XXV, pp. 793-95.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., Articles I, II.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., Articles III, IV, & V.

stipulations as those contained in the Harrison-Altamirano Treaty. It is perhaps more amazing that the Nicaraguan Congress approved the Treaty. Whether either signatory power had any intentions of seeing the treaty provisions enforced is not known. In light of the subsequent attitude of neglect that Nicaraguans have manifested toward the north coast it seems that little attention was given to the Harrison-Altamirano Treaty.

## CHAPTER VI

### TOWARD TRUE REINCORPORATION

The course of events in 1894 and 1895 allowed the Nicaraguan government political preeminence over Mosquitia, but left the nation faced with the difficult task of socially and economically integrating the former Reservation into the mainstream of Nicaraguan life. As an immediate result of the reincorporation, Nicaragua had responsibility for twice as much territory. In addition to its own population of about 380,000, the Nicaraguan government accepted full responsibility for the 31,000 inhabitants of Mosquitia. Neither the land nor the peoples affected by the reincorporation could be readily assimilated by Nicaragua. No series of diplomatic agreements could erase the physical or topographical isolation of the Atlantic Coast that had existed from pre-colonial times. There were no roads connecting the interior of Nicaragua with its sizable new holdings. Rivers continued to serve the Atlantic littoral as the principal mode of transportation but they did not reach far enough into the interior to provide a link with the Pacific region of Nicaragua. The planned canal that might have mitigated this situation was rejected for the shorter trans-isthmian route through Panama. Once the Panama Canal was constructed there was little need for duplication of the canal facility in Nicaragua and consequently no transportation route was established between the coasts.



Aside from the physical separation, the ethnic and cultural heritage of the population of Mosquitia presented an even greater barrier to integration of the area with Nicaragua. The heterogeneity of the Shore's population, a direct inheritance of the colonial period, was the greatest obstacle. Most of the Jamaican Negroes did not flee during the crisis of the reincorporation but remained on the Shore which they regarded as their home. As always, the Indian groups of Miskitos, Payas and Sumus remained scattered in the interior. Many of the North Americans readily adjusted to the new regime and continued to do business as before. The inevitable result of this situation was a disparity between the distinct factions of the Shore's inhabitants and the Pacific Nicaraguans. Dissimilarities in culture existed in the areas of race, language, religion and life style. These dissimilarities have continued to retard the true reincorporation of the coast.

The ethnic or racial dissimilarity of the coastal population was a problem that had been intensified by the immigration of the Jamaican Negroes. Throughout the course of the conflict of the 1890's it became increasingly clear that the racial issue was a significant one. By the time of the July 5, 1894, Negro insurrection, the matter was brought clearly into the open. The tone of newspaper statements made in the numerous broadsides printed by the Jamaican Negro faction revealed that Negro prejudice against Nicaraguans was common. Indicative of the thinking of the Jamaican Negroes is this portion of an editorial from the Bluefields newspaper, La Artilleria, July 23, 1894.

[General Cabezas] ought to be convinced that it is all in vain, as there are men here who, although they are not generals, and have never seen a battlefield, will conquer and put to flight the weak army that he can assemble and bring against us . . . it appears that he and his men are desirous of receiving death here from the mouths of our big cannon, which is all ready and loaded to send men, not to hell, the lake of fire of which the Scriptures speak to us, but many miles beyond, where no "Jesus Maria" nor any other words of salvation are heard. We are not frightened at their arming troops and bringing them against us, as we have powder, guns, bullets and other good combustibles for administering a tonic to every fat, yello, greasy individual that approaches.<sup>1</sup>

Nicaraguan sentiment toward the Negroes showed similar prejudiced attitudes. Nicaraguan correspondents repeatedly referred to the "Jamaican Negroes" in a derogatory manner because they had usurped the government of the Reservation. Of course, it was to be expected that the Nicaraguans, in their quest to assert hegemony, would be antagonistic toward whatever ethnic group represented opposition in the Reservation. Because Negroes consistently supported the Miskito monarch, racial and national antagonism fused.<sup>2</sup>

The North American element had also been involved in the opposition to the Nicaraguan takeover. Many Nicaraguans asserted that the Negro uprising had been instigated and participated in by North Americans.<sup>3</sup> This was the position of diplomat José Madriz, who was in Bluefields at the time of the insurrection. The head of Nicaragua's Foreign Relations

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<sup>1</sup>Found in, "Mosquito Question: Nicaraguan memorial of facts and evidence, 1890-1894," 1 Vol., United States National Archives, Washington, D.C., RG 59/836. (underlining mine).

<sup>2</sup>Documentos . . . Mosquitia, p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>A concise report by Madriz, "Actitud de los ciudadanos americanos y del Consul Von Braida," is found in Bendaña, José Madriz, pp. 46-50.

Department, M. Coronel Matus, drew the unlikely conclusion that the whole thing was inspired by "some [North] American Jews."<sup>4</sup> However, in light of the known evidence, it does not appear that more than a few North Americans participated in the affair and they were opportunistic adventurers of little importance.<sup>5</sup> In any case, the United States government repeatedly denounced anyone who had participated in the revolution, including its own citizens.

Aside from the Jamaican Negroes and the North Americans, the Miskito and other indigenous Indian tribes posed a great barrier to integration. Most of these Indians still spoke their native dialects or a little English. The cultural values of the Indians were unlike those of other inhabitants of Mosquitia. Local customs persisted and forms of witchcraft or obeism were still practiced. Nicaraguans were shocked at the polygamy practiced by the Indians and one traveler from the interior noted that the practice, "was one of the strongest established barriers against civilization."<sup>6</sup> Difficulties which Nicaraguans faced in the assimilation of the Mosquitia Indian tribes were not unlike those that had been faced before in other parts of the Republic.<sup>7</sup> But the success of other assimilation efforts had been limited and the Miskito situation was made more difficult because of its geographical isolation.

From the outset of the reincorporation, then, Nicaragua was faced with at least three disparate groups of new citizens--all of whom spoke English or an Indian language. Faced with this situation, the Nicaraguans

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<sup>4</sup>Documentos, . . . Mosquitia, p. 84.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 99-101.

<sup>6</sup>José Vitta, "La Costa Atlántica," RAGHN, VIII, (August, 1946), 44.

<sup>7</sup>For a brief summary of Nicaraguan Indian policy see, Robert Wauchope, Handbook of Middle American Indians, VI, pp. 483-86.

selected education as the media<sup>sic</sup> by which the former Reservation's population could be Nicaraguanized.<sup>8</sup> President Zelaya seemed to have a sincere interest in the Nicaraguanization of the Department which bore his name, and to accomplish that end, he sent an engineer, named José Vitta, to make a complete study of the Coast in 1894. Concluding his report, Vitta recommended that the government use education, "with good personnel," to "inculcate in the inhabitants that they too are good Nicaraguans."<sup>9</sup> Vitta further noted that, "through education the doors would be opened for the Miskito's transformation. But in actuality, with their different languages and customs, it would not be possible to govern them to their satisfaction."<sup>10</sup> Vitta's prophesies could not have been more accurate. Not only have the Shore's inhabitants resisted Nicaraguan influences but they have repeatedly complained against the poor educational facilities provided by the government.

To some extent, the success or failure of Nicaraguan educational institutions on the Shore serves as an index to the achievements of the Nicaraguanization process. Judged by this standard, Nicaragua has not been too successful in the incorporation of the Department of Zelaya. Although in 1963, the Ministry of Education indicated that there were 139 schools in the Department, many were privately run by the Moravians and others lacked adequate standards.<sup>11</sup> Nicaraguans themselves generally acknowledged that educational problems were more serious on the coast than elsewhere in the Republic.<sup>12</sup> Reasons given for the deficient

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<sup>8</sup>This term was coined by Cuadra Chamorro, La Reincorporacion, p. 162.

<sup>9</sup>Vitta, "Costa Atlántica," p. 46.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>"La Costa Atlántica", RC, XIV, (May, 1966), 1-32.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

educational system were absenteeism, poor teacher preparation, an imbalance of rural to urban schools, and inadequate buildings.<sup>13</sup> Added to this would be the language barrier, for although most of the Department's population can now speak Spanish, English or Miskito is often spoken away from school.

Another factor limiting the success of the Nicaraguan educational program is the traditionally close ties between church and education, both in the Department of Zelaya, and in Nicaragua. These close ties between the church and educational programs would present no particular problems were it not for the fact that the coastal religion remains Protestant, either Moravian or Anglican, while Roman Catholicism is the dominant religion within Nicaragua. Originally the Nicaraguans, as part of their understanding with Britain and the United States, agreed to allow religious freedom on the coast after 1894; in other words, the continuance of Protestantism. The Protestant religion has continued to grow and to support the best schools on the coast, primarily because Nicaragua has been unable to provide better ones. Only in the most recent period has the Nicaraguan Catholic Church demonstrated sufficient enthusiasm to attempt its own educational programs on the coast, and this has been largely due to the encouragement of international development agencies.<sup>14</sup>

In the economic realm, it is more difficult to pass judgment on Nicaragua's relationship toward the coastal region. Nicaragua has been

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Reporte de la cuarta conferencia educacional del vicariato apostólico de Bluefields . . ., Conferencias y discusiones dictadas en Bluefields, con la asistencia de la alianza para el progreso e Infonac (Bluefields, Nicaragua: Mons. Mateo, August 19, 1963), 40 pp. mimeographed report.

characterized as a country which has "many of the social, economic and governmental weaknesses typical of underdeveloped countries."<sup>15</sup> Traditionally the Republic has not been able to develop its interior regions, let alone the Coast, which has never proved attractive to the Spanish descendants. There has been little economic or other incentive for Nicaraguans to migrate to the Department of Zelaya. The 1950 Nicaraguan census reveals that, as in 1920, the Atlantic Coast contained only eight per cent of the total Nicaraguan population.<sup>16</sup> Since the 1950 census there has still not been any notable Nicaraguan migration to the area. This lack of migration partly reflects Nicaragua's low population density, which is only six inhabitants per square mile, as well as the traditional disdain for the climate of the Coast.<sup>17</sup>

During Zelaya's term in the presidency, which ended in 1909, the economic backbone of the coast continued to be the North American businesses. Contrary to some expectations, most of the North Americans appear to have remained near Bluefields after the reincorporation, quietly continuing with their banana and other enterprises. By 1899 Bluefields trade came under the control of the rapidly growing fruit trust that soon became the United Fruit Company.<sup>18</sup> Fruit company representatives Minor

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<sup>15</sup>Report of a mission organized by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, The Economic Development of Nicaragua (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1953), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. xxiii; Roman Perpina Grau, Corología de la población de Nicaragua (Madrid: Instituto "Balmes" de Sociología, 1959), pp. 110-15.

<sup>17</sup>Economic Development of Nicaragua, p. xxiii.

<sup>18</sup>U.S., Bureau of the American Republics, Bulletin (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), VI, p. 35.

C. Keith and J. Lamotte Morgan supervised the production and shipping after 1900 and the banana industry continued to thrive briefly.<sup>19</sup> As United Fruit grew it had less use for small producers, such as those of Bluefields and the banana industry in that region suffered a steady decline after the turn of the century. Nevertheless, in 1899 the consular agent of the United States at Bluefields boasted of the fortunes awaiting North American investors in the Department of Zelaya. This consul reported that the Emery Mahogany Company was continuing the profitable extraction of woods and that gold mining and coconut production was improving.<sup>20</sup> But the Emery wood concession ran out in 1913 and apparently was not renewed for lack of valuable wood. The gold mines proved to be non-profitable and coconuts could be purchased cheaper elsewhere. The demise of the economic importance of the coast apparently came about the same time that Zelaya was forced out of the presidential position.

The declining economic prosperity of the coast seemed to cause a declining interest by the Nicaraguan government in the region. Zelaya's original interest in reincorporation of Mosquitia was not purely political, for that president was well aware of the tax revenues that Nicaragua might gain by bringing the territory under her control. José Vitta had made a detailed study of the economy in 1894 and he predicted that Nicaragua could collect about \$194,000 annually in taxes from Mosquitia.<sup>21</sup> Such a prospect must have thrilled Zelaya, for like most Nicaraguan presidents, he confronted a perennially empty treasury. Statistics are

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., (1900), VII, pp. 1781-82.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Calculated on projections of José Vitta, "La Costa Atlántica." See Appendix E for details of this study.

not readily available to indicate the amount of taxes collected in the department in the Zelaya years, nor is there any indication of how the tax money was spent. Of course, by the terms of the Harrison-Altamirano Treaty, Nicaragua had agreed to invert<sup>510</sup> the taxes collected on the coast back into the development of the Department of Zelaya.<sup>22</sup> There is abundant evidence indicating that neither Zelaya nor his successors reinverted<sup>5</sup> the taxes collected on the former reservation.<sup>23</sup> Later, when North American investment withdrew and the economic plight of the region became serious the Nicaraguan government gave little attention to the matter.

By 1933 the economic situation on the coast was so bad that the Senator from the Atlantic Coast, Horacio Hodson, submitted a protest to the Nicaraguan Congress. In part the protest read:

Since its reincorporation in the Republic, this department has not made any kind of progress. On the contrary, it has gone backwards; backwards in commerce, in education, and in social and moral development. It is so alarming that a bleak future looms for the Atlantic Coast. It is well to remember that when the Government of Nicaragua incorporated us under its flag, it promised to direct our lives along the path of progress and civilization and to redeem us from our former slavery. . . . However, this has not been done. . . . When the Government of Nicaragua arrived in this region, they did not find us slaves, as the [Miskito] Convention says, but like civilized people; with a good educational system based on Anglo-Saxon methods.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Hertslett's Commercial Treaties, XXIV, pp. 793-95; actually such an agreement was made in 1894, under the Miskito Convention.

<sup>23</sup>Cuadra Chamorro, La Reincorporación, pp. 162-65; "La Costa Atlántica," RC, pp. 1-32.

<sup>24</sup>Quoted in Cuadra Chamorro, La Reincorporación, pp. 163-64.



At the time the protest was made Nicaragua was feeling the effects of the world wide depression and the government was unable to respond to the plea even if it desired to. Besides, other matters were more critical to the Nicaraguan government in those years following the withdrawal of United States marines.

Interest in the economic development of the coast has only recently been renewed, having been generally quiescent since the Zelaya years. Today there is cause to be more optimistic about the social and economic development of the Zelaya department, for in the 1960's the Nicaraguans revealed a renewed interest in development of their northern territory. In a 1961 issue of the Nicaraguan Revista Conservadora, the Nicaraguan Alejandro Cárdenas noted: "It is time that the State try to begin a plan to integrate the rich lands [of the coast] and the inhabitants who have lived abandoned in material and moral misery."<sup>25</sup> In 1966 the Nicaraguan government, assisted by international development agencies, responded to the situation and founded the Comision de Desarrollo de la Costa Atlántica (CODECA), the Commission for the Development of the Atlantic Coast.<sup>26</sup> This Commission recognized that the Atlantic Coast had always been "ethnically, economically and industrially separated" from the rest of the nation.<sup>27</sup> Acting on this assumption the Commission has made a number of concrete suggestions for the development of the infrastructure, the educational and economic systems of the coast.

Any anticipation of coastal improvements should be cautiously made in light of Nicaragua's historic involvement on the Miskito Coast. Always

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<sup>25</sup>Alejandro Cárdenas, "La Costa Atlántica en la economía nacional," RC, II (October, 1961), 26.

<sup>26</sup>"La Costa Atlántica," RC, pp. 1-32.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

lurking in the background is the bitter political partisanship which characterizes Nicaraguan history. Heated controversy still continues among Nicaraguan intellectuals regarding the question of which political party should get the credit for the reincorporation.<sup>28</sup> From what has been presented here there can be little doubt that both the Liberals and the Conservatives share the credit. However, the fact that the controversy even continues is indicative of the tendency on the part of some Nicaraguans to use the coast as a political pawn while neglecting to achieve real development there.

Zelaya's decision to reincorporate was, to a great extent, determined by political conditions. The Conservative faction that had controlled the government for the past thirty years threatened to overthrow Zelaya's newly established Liberal government. This situation of political instability was antagonized by social unrest and an economic recession throughout Nicaragua. The opportunity to reincorporate Mosquitia came when the Liberals needed to consolidate their political position and to distract Nicaraguans from the problems they faced. Whether Zelaya's action kept his party in power at a time when it was in real danger of being overthrown cannot be definitely concluded, but there is little doubt that Liberal prestige was immediately enhanced by the whole affair. Nationalism was growing in Nicaragua and the Miskito incident was perhaps the first in which national pride became a viable force for uniting that Central American country, even if only temporarily. Zelaya seemed aware of this previously untapped force and used it to the advantage of his administration and the Liberal Party. Also, whether Zelaya intended it or not, the success

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<sup>28</sup>For example, see the debate between Liberals and Conservatives in RAGHN, XVI & XVII, (January, 1957 to December, 1958), entire issues.

of the reincorporation may have caused the other Central American states to look with respect to the Liberal Nicaraguan administration. The Zelaya government may have consciously tried to enhance its reputation with the other Central Americans when it circulated a note from José Madriz describing the reincorporation. Generally the note overemphasized the threat of North American and British intervention in order to show Nicaragua in the best possible light.<sup>29</sup> Whether or not the note or the events in Mosquitia played any direct role, there is little doubt that Zelaya became the dominant figure in Central American politics until his demise in 1909.

Had either the British or the United States government wished to support the Miskito monarchy, it is unlikely that Nicaragua would have been able to complete the reincorporation. As it was, British and North American marines had to intervene at crucial points to protect the Nicaraguan government when it was unable to keep order in the Reservation. Surely this was an unusual instance of United States intervention in Latin American affairs, for that nation supported the Nicaraguan government in action that was potentially damaging to the commercial interests of United States citizens. Evidently the Department of State perceived the situation accurately since the economic investments of North Americans were apparently not hurt by the change in government.<sup>30</sup> It was not the reincorporation, but economic and business changes that nearly two decades later spelled the decline of North American enterprises on the coast.

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<sup>29</sup>Bendaña, José Madriz, pp. 149-56.

<sup>30</sup>This interpretation diverges from several previous studies that have implied or stated that United States businessmen generally rejected Nicaraguan control or suffered financially as a result of it. See, Rising Lake Morrow, "A Conflict Between the Commercial Interests of the United States and its Commercial Policy," and Walter LaFeber, "Background of Cleveland's Venezuelan Policy," both previously cited.

In final evaluation of the forces which have influenced the history of the Miskito Shore, it appears that none was greater than the economic one. It was trade that first sparked the international controversy over the control of the Shore. It was rivalry for a canal route that made the coast a hotbed of diplomatic contention in the 1840's and 1850's. It was the growth of a banana enterprise that attracted increased Negro migration from Jamaica in the 1880's. And in the 1890's, it was the bright outlook of a prosperous banana trade that again focused international interest in the region. Only recently has Nicaraguan concern for economic development again brought attention to her vast Atlantic seaboard.

Of course economic contention over Mosquitia falls far short of having determined the course of events in that region. Always present was the individual; the diplomat, the puppet king, or a lesser personage, who in some way had an influence. Today Mosquitia is a composite of all these forces. It unquestionably reflects its past in its present state. Decisions regarding the future of this important region of Nicaragua and of Central America should take cognizance of these facts.

## Appendix A

## NINETEENTH CENTURY MISKITO KINGS

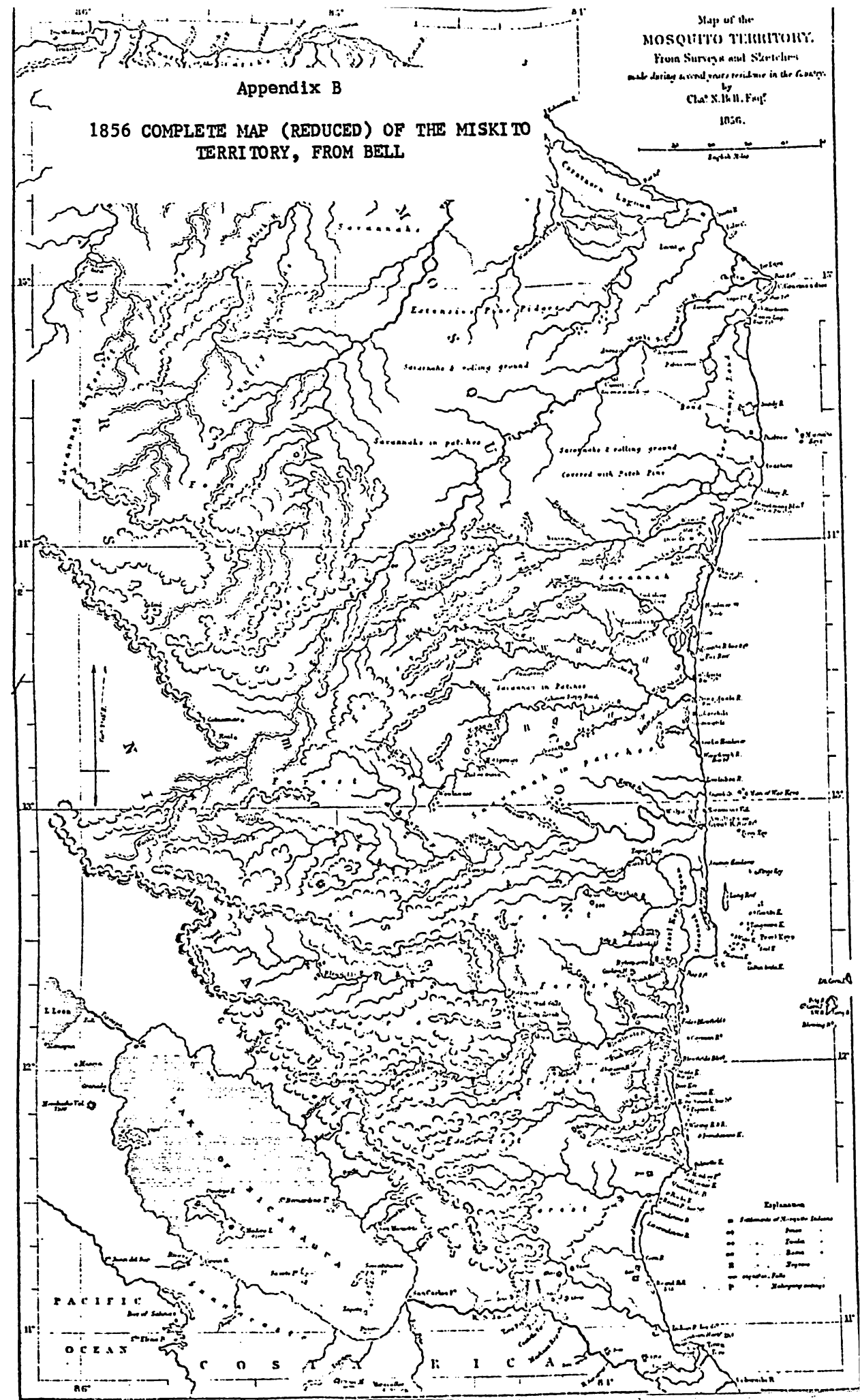
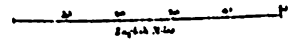
Date	Title	Remarks
pre-1816	George Frederick	Zambo (G)*
1816	George Frederick I	Son of above, died shortly after crowning. (G)
	Roberto Frederick	Deposed by English for favoring Spanish cause, brother of above. (G,D)
	George Frederick II	Arbitrarily substituted for above, Negro, pure African background. Later dethroned. (G,D)
183?-42	Robert Charles Frederick	Zambo (G), will gave Macdonald regency power after death and led to establishment of protectorate. (B)
	Four offspring: George Guillermo Clarence Alexander ? Ines ? Victoria ?	Became next king. Went to Germany for education, princesses, lived with king brother in Bluefields.
1843-46	Regency of Macdonald and Walker.	
1847-	George Guillermo Clarence	Became King at age of 15. (G)
1860-74	George Augustus Frederick	Reservation began. (C)
1875-83	William Henry Clarence	Nephew of above. (FR)
1884-88	G. W. Albert Hendy	Poisoned by Nicaraguan, who was hung in Bluefields. (C,M)
1889	Jonathan Charles Frederick	A brother, Andres Hendy abdicated throne. (C)
1890	Brief period no monarch.	(C)
1891-93	Robert Henry Clarence	Last monarch. (C,D,G)

\*Sources: G=Jose Dolores Gamez; D=De Kalb; B=British Blue Book; C=Miskito Constitutions; FR=United States Foreign Relations, 1894; M=Madriz, U.S. National Archives.

Map of the  
**MOSQUITO TERRITORY.**  
 From Surveys and Sketches  
 made during several years residence in the Country  
 by  
 CLAUDE N. BELL, Esq.  
 1856.

Appendix B

1856 COMPLETE MAP (REDUCED) OF THE MISKITO  
 TERRITORY, FROM BELL



Explanation

○	Settlements of Mosquito Indians
●	Islands
—	Rivers
—	Trails
—	Boundaries
—	Coastline
—	Topography
—	Contours
—	Shading

PACIFIC  
 OCEAN

C O S T A R I C A

## Appendix C

A PARTIAL DIRECTORY OF MERCHANTS, MANUFACTURERS AND SHIPPERS OF MOSQUITIA,  
1892  
BY SETTLEMENT\*

## BLUEFIELDS

Importers.

Brown &amp; Harris.

Levy &amp; Levis.

Sargent, J. I.

Simmons, John H.

Merchants, general merchandise.

Clerici, A.

Ebensperger &amp; Co.

Friedlander, J.

Ingram, H. Clay.

Sing, C. M.

Thomas &amp; Nephew, J. O.

Weil, Samuel &amp; Co.

Wilson &amp; Belanger.

## GREYTOWN

Banks and bankers.

Banco de Nicaragua.

Hoadley, Ingalls &amp; Co.

Commission merchants.

Nicaragua Navigation and Trading Co.

Pellas, J. A.

Saenz &amp; Co.

Scott &amp; Co., C. D.

Merchants, general merchandise.

Bergmann, C. F.

Cohen, S.

D'Sousa &amp; Co., E. L.

Enriquez &amp; Smith.

Gosdensk, J.

Hatch &amp; Brown.

Nicaragua Navigation and Trading Co.

Saenz, L. E.

Solomon &amp; Harris.

Wholesale import and export merchants.

Bergmann, J. J.

Hatch &amp; Brown.

Mongrio y Aragon.

Saenz &amp; Co.

D'Sousa &amp; Co., E. L.

\*Statistics available for only these two principal settlements; there is no data for the other smaller settlements included in Appendix D, for 1900.

\*Source: U.S., International Bureau of the American Republics, Bulletin, Vol. VI, "Commercial Directory of the American Republics," (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), pp. 265-67.

## Appendix D

A PARTIAL DIRECTORY OF MERCHANTS, MANUFACTURERS AND SHIPPERS OF MOSQUITIA,  
1900  
BY SETTLEMENT\*

BLUEFIELDS is principal port of entry on Atlantic coast. Only direct and regular communication with U.S.A. is by way of New Orleans, La. where we have from 6 to 20 trips of steamers per month, same regulated by fruit season. Exports run in following proportions: bananas, mahogany, rubber, gold, coconuts.

Ice Manufacturer.

Waters, Thomas

Mahogany Timber.

Emery Mahogany Works (Sam. D. Spellman, manager)

Merchants.

Allen & Barberro (wholesale & retail)  
Belanger, J. A. & Co. (wholesale & retail)  
Brown & Harris (wholesale & retail)  
Chow, Wing Sing (retail)  
New Orleans & Central American Trading Co. (wholesale)  
Petersen, J. A. (wholesale & retail, lumber)  
Seigert, H. R. (retail)  
Weil, Samuel & Co. (wholesale)  
Wing Sang & Co. (retail)

Mineral Water Manufrs.

Bluefields Bottling Works

Steamship Companies.

Bluefields S. S. Co.  
United Fruit Co.

Tanner.

Frank, B.

GREYTOWN, or SAN JUAN DEL NORTE, port situated near the principal entrance of the river San Juan. The population is about 1,480. Greytown is a free port. Local exportations from Greytown consist of indiarubber and tortoise shell.

Bankers.

Headley, Ingalls & Co.

Commission Merchants.

Nicaragua Navigation & Trading Co.  
Pellas, J. A.  
Saenz & Co.  
Scott, C. D.

Merchants.

Bergmann, C. F.  
Bingham, H. F.  
Enriquez & Smith  
Nicaragua Navigation & Trading Co.

Coast towns north of Bluefields to Cape Gracias:

CAPE GRACIAS (port of entry), 180 miles north of Bluefields. New York steamers touch here semi-monthly (Atlas Line); population, 500.

Merchants.

Cockburn, A. (wholesale & retail)  
Tobner, Charles (transportation co.)  
PEARL LAGOON, 22 miles north of Bluefields; population, 600.

Merchants.

Brantigam, E. & Co.  
PRINZAPOLKA, 90 miles north of Bluefields; population, 700.

Merchants.

Harrison, James.  
Silverstein, M. & Co.

\*Source: Kelly's Directory of Merchants, Manufacturers and Shippers and Guide to the Export and Import, Shipping and Manufacturing Industries of the World, 1900 (London: Kelly's Directories Limited, 1901), pp. 1547-1549.



## Appendix E

POPULATION, ANTICIPATED TAXES AND SCHOOLS IN THE  
 DEPARTMENT OF ZELAYA, 1894<sup>X</sup>  
 (by districts)

District	Population	Projected* Taxes	Schools
San Carlos	1,100		
El Castillo	450		
San Juan Del Norte	2,000	\$20,000	
America	100		
San Jacinto	314		
Bluefields	3,500	\$60,000	1 Moravian
Pearl Lagoon	4,000		1 Moravian
Siquia	4,000		
Rio Grande	3,500	\$18,000	
Prinzapolka	6,500	\$36,000	
Wawa	5,500		
TOTAL	30,964	\$194,000	2 <sup>#</sup>

X: This calculation is based on the report of Engineer Jose Vitta, "La Costa Atlantica," RAGHN, August, 1946, Vol. VIII, No. 2, pp. 1-46.

\*Some have been calculated from raw data included by Vitta.

<sup>#</sup>According to Moravian records there were more schools in the region but many of the outlying schools could hardly be considered as such. There were only two principal schools as indicated here.

## Appendix F

TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE REPUBLIC OF NICARAGUA  
WITH REGARD TO THE MOSQUITO TERRITORY.  
SIGNED AT MANAGUA  
APRIL 19, 1905

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, &c., and His Excellency the President of the Republic of Nicaragua, being desirous of terminating in a friendly manner various questions which have arisen in regard to the Mosquito Reserve, have agreed to conclude a Treaty for that purpose, and have appointed as their Plenipotentiaries:

His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, Herbert William Broadley Harrison, Esquire, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, His Majesty's Charge d'Affaires in the Republic of Nicaragua;

And His Excellency the President of Nicaragua, Doctor Adolfo Altamirano, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

Who, after having communicated to each other their respective full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon the following articles:

Art. I.--The High Contracting Parties agree that the Treaty of Managua of January 28, 1860, is and shall remain abrogated.

II.--His Britannic Majesty agrees to recognise the absolute sovereignty of Nicaragua over the territory that constituted the former Mosquito Reserve, as defined in the aforesaid Treaty of Managua.

III.--In consideration of the fact that the Mosquito Indians were at one time under the protection of Great Britain, and in view of the interest that His Majesty's Government and the Nicaraguan Government take in their welfare, the Nicaraguan Government agree to grant them the following concessions:

(a) The Government will submit to the National Assembly a law exempting, for fifty years from the date of the ratification of this Treaty, all the Mosquito Indians and the Creoles born before the year 1894, from military service, and from all direct taxation on their persons, property, possessions, animals, and means of subsistence.

(b) The Government will allow the Indians to live in their villages enjoying the concessions granted by this Convention, and following their own customs, in so far as they are not opposed to the laws of the country and to public morality.

(c) The Nicaraguan Government will concede a further period of two years for them to legalize their rights to the property acquired in conformity with the Regulations in force before 1894 in the Reserve. The Government will make no charge to the said inhabitants either for the lands or the measurement thereof, or for the grant of title-deeds. For this purpose the title-deeds in the possession of the said Indians and Creoles before 1894 will be renewed in conformity with the laws, and, in cases where no such title-deeds exist, the Government will give to each family, at their place of residence, eight manzanas of land, if the members of the

family do not exceed four in number, and two manzanas for each person if the family exceeds that number.

(d) Public pasture lands will be reserved for the use of the inhabitants in the neighbourhood of each Indian village.

(e) In the event of any Mosquito Indians or Creoles proving that the lands which they held in conformity with the Regulations in force before 1894 have been claimed by and allotted to other persons, the Government will indemnify them by the grant of suitable public lands of approximate value as near as possible to their present residences.

IV. The ex-Chief of the Mosquito Indians, Robert Henry Clarence, will be permitted by the Nicaraguan Government to reside in the Republic of Nicaragua and to enjoy full protection so long as he does not transgress the laws, and provided his acts do not tend to incite the Indians against Nicaragua.

V. The Mosquito Indians, and other inhabitants of the former Reserve, will enjoy the same rights as are secured by the laws of Nicaragua to other Nicaraguan citizens.

VI. The present Treaty shall be ratified, and the ratifications shall be exchanged at London within the period of six months from the date of signature.

In witness whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Treaty, and have affixed thereto their seals.

Done at Managua this 19th day of April, 1905.

(L.S.) Herbert Harrison.

(L.S.) Adolfo Altamirano.

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