

IOWA HISTORICAL REVIEW

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA UNDERGRADUATE HISTORY JOURNAL

Volume 1 | Issue 1 (2007)

pps. 83-95

Filibustering to the Forefront of National Attention

Elliot Andrew Anderson

University of Iowa

Copyright © 2007 Elliot Andrew Anderson

Recommended Citation

Anderson, Elliot Andrew (2007) "Filibustering to the Forefront of National Attention," *Iowa Historical Review*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1: 83-95.
<https://doi.org/10.17077/2373-1842.1004>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by [Iowa Research Online](#). It has been accepted for inclusion in *Iowa Historical Review* by an authorized administrator of [Iowa Research Online](#). For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Filibustering to the Forefront of National Attention

Elliot Andrew Anderson

Only three years prior to the outbreak of the American Civil War, there was an ideological transition that greatly influenced the rapidly increasing polarization between the northern and southern United States. In 1857, the arrest of the notorious filibuster William Walker by Commodore Hiram Paulding caused filibustering to become one of the most important public issues of its time. During the 1800s, *filibusterism* was the term applied to the actions of groups of men, most commonly small groups of adventurers known as *filibusters*, who formed private military forces, and who invaded foreign countries that maintained peaceful relations with the United States with the intention of conquering them.¹ In 1855, Walker and a small militia of fifty-eight men seized control of the Nicaraguan government. He then presided as commander-in-chief over a coalition government, and he later declared himself president of Nicaragua in July of 1856.² One year later he was arrested on foreign soil by the United States Navy and this incident, along with his forced return to the country, became known as the Nicaraguan affair. It called into question the legality of the actions of both filibusters and the United States government among the general public.

The Nicaraguan affair produced an ideological polarization between the North and South, and its rise to prominence on a national stage can be divided into transitional phases that characterize this movement. The first part of this essay uses New York newspaper coverage of William Walker's return to the United States and the reaction to this event among the American population in order to demonstrate the division of public opinion that existed over this affair. It acknowledges the commonly recognized link between filibustering and the yearning to expand the institution of slavery beyond the borders of the United States. Next, evidence is provided to prove that a division existed by examining the public debate that ensued over whether or not filibustering would lead to the democratization of Central America and bring benefits to the territory. Finally, the coverage provided over the division that existed on whether filibustering was legal is examined, and in considering this, how it could function to either hurt or improve the image of the United States on an international level.

As public opinion became increasingly divided over the Nicaraguan affair, the Buchanan administration was driven to take a stance on filibusterism. The media coverage of the public reaction to this administrative position represents the second part of this essay, and the administration's involvement represents another major way that the issue polarized the nation. Buchanan's condemnation of filibusterism

only further divided the nation. As a result, a Senate debate over filibusterism then ensued among the United States' most prominent Northern and Southern senators. This senatorial debate represents the peak of filibustering in its rise to prominence in national attention during the late 1850s. This essay argues that the New York newspaper coverage of William Walker and the Nicaraguan affair demonstrates the sectional divergence that existed over the issue of filibustering in Central America as one of the precursors to the United States Civil War. This polarization can be placed into three primary phases: the media coverage of filibustering upon Walker's return, the sectional reaction to the position of Buchanan administration, and the congressional debate over filibustering.

Media

Southerners, including Walker, did identify with filibustering partly because of the presence of slavery on the South. One well-documented belief tying the two issues together was that through filibustering, Southerners would be able to extend black bondage into Central America. The idea was that the institution would ride in on the heels of filibusters such as Walker, who would have already established control of Central American nations as he had accomplished years before in Nicaragua.³ Though his attempt at resurrecting slavery had been thwarted, it was reported to be a position that some Southerners still supported. On December 23, 1857, the *New York Daily Tribune* published an article from a correspondence relating the events of a meeting in Mobile, Alabama, called to express sympathy for Walker and his expedition. In the article the correspondent offers a glance at the wariness for a new Southern movement, which it claimed was attempting to essentially make Nicaragua into a new Texas, or to occupy the role that Texas had assumed in the year of its annexation.⁴ However, the slavery question and its link to the filibuster missions was not the only important aspect of filibusterism that was dividing public opinion.

Public opinion was also divided over whether or not filibusterism was a vehicle for the democratization of Central America and whether it benefited or adversely affected the nations it was imposed upon. The debate over filibusterism in the media reflected the morals in contention between the North and the South. In other words, some Southerners felt that the imposition of North American government outside of the United States border was of benefit to the afflicted nation regardless of whether it was accomplished through filibustering. More specifically, it was believed that filibusters benefited Nicaraguan society, and that military transgressions in Central America were inherently positive.⁵ This argument is visible in the following excerpts taken from speeches that were reproduced in both Northern and Southern newspapers.

The Southern support for filibustering manifested itself in the media in reports on town meetings regarding the issue. On January 11, 1858, the *New*

Filibustering to the Forefront of National Attention

York Herald published a report on a meeting in Petersburg, Virginia, originally printed in the *Richmond Whig*. The meeting was called to condemn the actions of Commodore Paulding for arresting General Walker and to speak in defense of the filibuster cause. At the meeting, two key speeches were given and were outlined in the article, one identified with a man named Mr. Pryor, and another by Mr. Old.⁶ Pryor, in his speech, “vindicated the character of General Walker, his motives and the objects of his enterprise from the aspersions of his enemies, maintained his entire exemption from responsibility to this government, the legitimacy of his claim to the Presidency of Nicaragua,” and “the advantage to the world of opening Central America to the quickening influences of industry, civilization and good government.”⁷ This dialogue highlighted key beliefs towards the positive influence of filibustering on Central America and pointed to other factors aside from slavery as motivation. Clearly Pryor believed that the invading forces were a benefit to both Central America and the rest of the world. In short, he felt that the filibustering of William Walker could enable the formation of a government that would civilize the region.

At the same time Old supported the above position, he also pointed to other reasons for his advocacy for Southern support of filibustering. In fact, he explicitly presented his beliefs over the issue in a manner that was highly characteristic of the ideological polarization that had become common as a result of the filibuster issue. He “regarded the possession of the tropics as of vital importance to the South” and believed that by securing all of the products of the tropics, the South “might defy all the schemes of Northern fanatics, and British competitors and rivals in commerce.”⁸ Old emphasized the necessity of a Southern occupation of Central America enabled by the filibustering movement, as a bargaining tool with which to stave off the North and retain a competitive hold on the world market. This is clearly not a vision of a unified United States, but instead one where the North and South represent separate entities in a regional competition. This view exemplifies those during this period that proved cataclysmic to the diplomatic ties between the North and the South. Further, this regional competition is exactly what happened only three years later, as a result of the continued exacerbation of sectional digression, upon the outbreak of the American Civil War. Indeed, in reporting on the existence of these Southern sentiments in a Northern newspaper, the media was likely generating animosity, whether intentional or not, between the two regions.

The North, in contrast to the Southern position on filibustering, condemned the filibusters as a misrepresentation of democratic expansion and influence outside of the United States. Specifically, the popular belief was that Walker’s undertaking in Nicaragua was not at all representative of democratic ideals. The January 4 *New York Daily Tribune* stated “Walker and his filibusters, in going to Nicaragua as the allies and abettors of the Democratic Party of that country as against the aristocrats and legitimatists, can only be compared to the wolves... who put themselves forward to be appointed guardians of the sheep-fold.”⁹ It was perceived in the North that

Walker was moving through Central America on a platform of pseudo-democracy, and his intentions were really to conquer Nicaragua and construct non-democratic institutions supported by white supremacist ideals. By assisting the Nicaraguan democrats, a party composed of “Indians, negroes and mixed castes,”¹⁰ Walker was posing as a benefactor in the “overthrow of the doctrine that only white men are fit to govern.”¹¹ By supporting the Nicaraguan Democratic Party, Walker was trying to accomplish the overthrow of a white government by means of a popular mixed-race movement, temporarily assist the establishment of a new government, then usurp power and re-establish his *own* white government. He was not laying the groundwork for democratic expansion in Central America; instead, he was perceived as establishing his own form of autocracy. By exposing this belief, the media portrayed the Northern wariness of Walker’s non-democratic methods within an atmosphere of Southern support.

A final issue that divided public opinion in the media over the Nicaraguan affair was whether filibusterism was a legal institution, and in considering its legality, how it functioned to either improve or hurt the image of the United States. Editorials were published that took positions against the motivations of the filibusters and the reflections that the movement had on the U.S. The *Union* published an extensive piece on the Walker and Paulding affair that highlights this attitude. In the critique, “filibustering expeditions are deprecated as unlawful, wrong intrinsically, and disgraceful to the character of the country”¹² by the author of the editorial. These strong words express a belief that the filibustering expeditions acted contrarily to the author’s conception of United States idealism and it is representative of a dispute that existed against the aggressive action.

The role of Commodore Paulding in the arrest of Walker was also disputed among the American population, encouraging further public division over filibustering, and can be used as further evidence for the split over the legality of filibusterism and its impact on the country. His arrest in 1857 by the United States Navy was the result of the “combined pressure of a Central American Army, Great Britain, and threatened American shipping interests.”¹³ Yet still, Paulding was forced to enter Nicaragua in order to forcefully remove an unwilling Walker. A pro-filibuster position was reflected in the explicit condemnations of Commodore Paulding for this action throughout the South, not because of his violation of the United States Neutrality Law in relation to Nicaragua, but instead due to his forced removal of General Walker from the country. Southerners considered Paulding to have acted illegally by arresting Walker. They resented him for interfering in the actions of the filibusters in Nicaragua and in doing so, again referred to the antagonism that existed between the North and South. One article entitled “Southern Condemnation of Com. Paulding” was printed in the *Herald-Tribune* on January 7 1858 from a correspondent of the *Baltimore Sun*. The opening paragraph, in mentioning the Nicaraguan incident, states “The subject excites a very deep feeling. It becomes complicated with the antagonism which exists between the North and

Filibustering to the Forefront of National Attention

the South.”¹⁴ The impact that the episode was now having on the country was becoming increasingly important as well as increasingly clear. Another article in the January 4 *Herald-Tribune* exposes the reciprocating Northern perception on the Southern position regarding filibustering. Northerners believed that Walker was acting illegally by waging war in Nicaragua and were grateful to Paulding for his actions. “The anxious and indecent haste with which the act has been disavowed and the responsibility thrown upon Capt. Paulding is a strong evidence of the disgraceful influence the extreme South exercises over the Government.”¹⁵ Here the media portrayed the condemnation of Paulding and the action taken against him as a Southern position. Continuing on this line, an article from the *Daily Tribune* on January 4 taken from a correspondence of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* further exemplifies the polarization between the North and South in regard to the judgment of Paulding. In reference to the Northern perception of the Paulding affair, “As for Com. Paulding, he will have his reward in the grateful acknowledgments of the honest, right-minded people of this country.”¹⁶

The Northern support of Commodore Paulding gives an insight into the ideological division between the North and the South over the issues of the use of the military and the legality of filibusterism. This is particularly interesting because in the eyes of the North, Paulding represented a legitimate, officially sanctioned military authority with the right to interject in foreign affairs, if he was acting in the interest of American democracy. Yet in the South, Walker represented this authority and Paulding, instead of the filibusters, was the illegitimate and encroaching force. Both regions viewed one of the parties in the incident as guilty, and the other as leading a positive cause. There was no middle ground or point of reconciliation between the regions, save for President Buchanan, a deft diplomat who did try to mediate the two opposing viewpoints over Paulding’s actions. By the time of William Walker’s return, the North and South had clearly split over the filibustering issue and Buchanan’s involvement now allowed the media to tie the administration into its portrayal of the polarization.

Buchanan

In light of the ideological division existing between the two regions, the Buchanan administration was forced to take a public position. And there was much speculation in the media just what that position would be prior to its inception. Some Northerners maintained a particularly interesting opinion on what the administrative position would be, and both the *New York Daily Tribune* and the *New York Herald* covered the regional distrust that existed between the North and the South over the Buchanan administration. This time however, it was not motivation and legitimization that was argued, but instead, with the new politicization of the filibuster issue, it was the regional association with the administration that became the new battleground.

In the North, the media radiated an air of pessimism towards the administration. There was much speculation of a link between the administration and the South. A correspondence of the *New York Tribune* wrote on January 3 that “the administration and the ultra interest of the South are only separated by a matter of form.”¹⁷ While both the administration and the Southern interest sought the same ends – the acquisition of Central American territories – the manner in which each pursued this was characteristically different¹⁸. It had previously been established in the North that Southern extremists favored the repeal of the Neutrality Laws, military expeditions into Central America by United States citizens, and the conquest of these territories that the expeditions moved through.¹⁹ The argument continued on to say that, in seeking the same ends, conquest in Central America and the Caribbean Basin, Buchanan instead wanted to use diplomacy, discretion and acquisition.²⁰

This comparison is important for one key reason. Despite explicitly distinguishing the administration from the Southern movement over the manner in which they were attempting to acquire Central American territories, the *Daily Tribune* was actually bringing the two closer in the eyes of Northerners by placing them together on the same page in terms of their view on foreign relations and the possession of foreign nations. This is further supported in the same article, “Cuba is the great object of ambition with the President... Hence he is not willing to risk even a remote chance for Cuba by encouraging...enterprise against Nicaragua.”²¹ Indeed, they held the view that the administration was forced to oppose filibustering, not due to a moral indignation towards the movement, but because of the possibility of sacrificing the acquisition of countries other than Nicaragua. Yet, the suspicion within the North did not end with the assumed alignment of the administration with the South on the issue of the acquisition of foreign territory.

Another Northern fear was that Buchanan would side with the South because he was indebted to his Southern supporters. The belief held that Buchanan had been elected largely as a result of his position as minister to the United Kingdom from 1853 to 1856. The Southern Democrats wanted Buchanan in office because he had been absent during the debate of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and supposedly was ambivalent towards the issue.²² Because Southern support had won him the election, it was believed that Buchanan would now be now obliged to govern by ultra-conservative Southern principles. The Nicaraguan affair was demonized in one Northern editorial as a “Central American Conspiracy.”²³ Regional dissatisfaction was bolstered by statements such as “The administration is not now like the ass of the logicians, dying of want between two attractive stacks of hay; it is rather like a more natural and possible ass between two goads, and the most urgent of the two drives it Southward.”²⁴

In the South, one of the principal requests to the administration was to restore Walker to Nicaragua following his arrest. In fact, Southerners demanded not only that Walker be allowed to return to the country, but that he be reinstated immediately by the federal government and the military. New Orleans newspapers

Filibustering to the Forefront of National Attention

ran a report of a pro-filibuster meeting at a hotel in the city where a number of resolutions were adopted. The final resolution claimed that it was the opinion of the meeting that it was “the imperative duty of this government to restore General Walker and his captive companions... to the country from which they have been so unlawfully taken...and also to indemnify them for all losses they have sustained from capture.”²⁵

While Southerners advocated the restoration of Walker as a federal duty, the North maintained a strong view on the implications of this Southern position in relation to the administration. Essentially, if the South was to be represented by Walker as its exemplar, by demanding him to be replaced in Nicaragua the South insults the administration. Stronger words were used in the media. “The South, supporting, defending, and applauding Walker, thus quietly kicks and spits upon the federal government.”²⁶ No longer was the polarization between the two regions a marginal ideological difference. The politicization of the filibuster issue and its presentation in the media had pushed the issue into debate throughout mainstream United States public opinion.

The media-driven increase in public awareness forced the administration to take a position regarding the Walker expedition, the incident of his arrest, and filibustering as an institution. This position differed from the preceding Northern perception of the South as a beneficiary of administrative policy and it served as a vehicle in furthering the already prominent polarization between the regions. In short, while Buchanan reprimanded the action of Commodore Paulding for landing on foreign soil, he also praised his effort in rescuing Nicaragua from invasion by the filibusters. In regard to Walker’s expedition Buchanan stated that “the crime of setting on foot or providing the means for military expeditions within the United States to make war against a foreign State with which we are at peace, is one of an aggravated and dangerous character.”²⁷ He believed that the government had a responsibility to punish the filibusters or it should be considered an accomplice in the crime. By taking this stand against filibustering and declaring the activity to be both illegal and morally reprehensible, the administration surprised those who had believed that it would align itself with the conservative South by endorsing Walker.

In response to the administrative declaration on filibustering, the regional populations sounded off in opposition to and in favor of the administration, creating yet an even stronger sense of polarization between the North and South that was reflected again in the media. The decision to oppose filibustering and condemn Walker’s actions as illegal pushed the South to a more extreme radicalization of its position towards the administration. Keeping in mind that the vote of the Democratic southern states had enabled Buchanan’s election upon his return from Great Britain, some Southerners viewed the President’s position as a stab in the back to the South. Filibuster rallies publicly denouncing Buchanan were carried out in the South as a response to the message. In Mobile, for example, one such rally took

place that strongly represented the divergence of the South from the administration over the Nicaragua affair and the increasing identification among Southerners of the administration as a Northern entity. One speaker at the rally declared that the administration had manifested with regard to Nicaragua, “a very different spirit towards the South from what was expected of it when the Southern people elevated it into power.”²⁸ The speaker continued that “had the sentiments of President Buchanan...been known before the last elections as they have since developed themselves, not a single member of Congress favorable to the administration could have been elected from Alabama.”²⁹ In summing up the newly identified animosity in the South toward the administration, he finished announcing that he was deceived in his support and was now certain that the administration had acted with wrongful conviction to the South.³⁰ The Presidential message opened the door for sectional editorials for and against the position stated and while resentment did reign in the Southern states, in the North the scene was quite the opposite.

In fact, Northerners celebrated their bureaucratic victory by staunchly reinforcing the administrative position on Walker and Nicaragua. The day after the President’s message was printed, one editorial declared that it had “commanded the unanimous approbation of all classes of our intelligent readers. We are equally confident, too, that the high toned, clear and unanswerable views of Mr. Buchanan concerning filibusters and filibustering, the duties of the government and the good faith of the country, will receive a hearty endorsement from the great body of the American people.”³¹

As Northerners applauded the administration for condemning the alleged illegal institution, the media helped to carry the sentiment throughout the country. The North and South had now reached a new peak in their ideological division as a result of the public-induced politicization of the filibustering issue within the United States. Because the media so highly publicized this polarization regarding the administration, the Nicaragua affair needed to reach only one last platform before it became a dominant issue in the pre-Civil War era.

Congress

The position of President Buchanan on the filibuster issue, along with the media coverage of the strongly contrasting public opinion that came as a result of the administration’s stance, caused the issue to spill out onto the floor of the United States Capitol. The heated congressional debate that ensued marked the head of the filibustering issue and its contribution to the resulting sectional difficulties in the years leading to the American Civil War. While Congress debated the issue of the seizure of Walker, the debate primarily focused on the President’s message in response to the filibuster question. Each senator who spoke on the issue clearly revealed his own regional ideology.³²

The attention that some of the most influential personalities in U.S.

Filibustering to the Forefront of National Attention

politics during the late 1850s and the 1860s paid to the filibuster issue during the Congressional debates demonstrates the substantial perceived importance of filibusterism to the future of the United States. The support from James Pearce, a member of the Senate from Maryland between the years 1843 and 1862, for the position on filibustering taken by Buchanan, can be seen as reflecting Maryland's unexpected Union-supporting position among the border states despite its slaveholding population. William H. Seward, the representative of New York and another outspoken defendant of Buchanan served from 1849 to 1861 when he was appointed Secretary of State by Abraham Lincoln. Those who stood against Buchanan on the Congressional floor were similarly significant. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi became the President of the Confederate States after the secession that led to the Civil War. Davis's colleague, Robert Toombs of Georgia also became active in the political agenda of the Confederate States as secretary of state and general of Confederate forces during the Civil War. By 1858, filibustering had become so important on a political and social level that some of the most influential names in American politics were debating for and against the administrative position on the movement.

During the Congressional debates, Senators Pearce and Seward argued in favor of the administrative position on filibusterism. Pearce believed that the Walker expedition from the United States was in flagrant violation of the law and that the President had done his duty in preventing Walker from attacking a people in peace. He argued that disgrace would come to the country as a result of the harmful filibustering expeditions, and that it was the government's duty to end them.³³ Senator Pearce agreed with the President's response to the filibustering issue and Walker's seizure in Nicaragua by Commodore Paulding. He felt that the President had maintained an even keel in censuring the filibusterers while at the same time lauding the good intentions of Paulding while acknowledging the unlawfulness of his actions. He believed that the principle being asserted on the opposing side of the Senate was that the crime of filibustering existed only because Walker was caught. He disagreed strongly with this point and felt that Walker had defied the president and federal law. Despite his unquestioned support of the President, in the eyes of the Congressional reporter for the *New York Daily Tribune*, Seward's argument was at times confused and at some points trifling.³⁴ This may have been testament to his inclination to support the administration in its liberal declaration, the pressure that he felt to maintain an opposition to the impending condemnation of the President by the Southern senators, or the publicly driven anti-filibuster sentiment that had been constructed in New York.

In contrast, the remaining senators argued against the administrative position and showed their support for filibustering. Senator Davis condemned the actions of Commodore Paulding and the position of the president in regard to the law. He argued that it was not the position of the executive branch to be able to police outside of the borders of the country and that if that was a power that the president wished

to wield, then legislation must be made enabling him to do so. He argued in favor of allowing General Walker and the filibusters to seek any course of action within Central America and that it was not within the rights of the United States government to impede him outside of the national boundary.³⁵ This Southern sentiment from Davis identified unmistakably with the visible Southern agenda in the days prior to the Congressional Debate. Senator Toombs explicitly aligned himself with Senator Davis. He said little about the actual piratical actions of Walker and appears to have been more interested in condemning the federal government for removing him from Nicaraguan soil.³⁶ The third important senator to take a stand against the administration was Senator Douglas. He was seemingly the only Northern senator to outwardly oppose Buchanan in favor of Walker. However, there likely is at least one reason that may account for Douglas breaking the mold with his opposition to the president's message on filibustering. Douglas was believed to support the Southern men on the filibuster question in an attempt to reconcile with the Southern wing of the country.³⁷ He had been a Senatorial opponent of Abraham Lincoln, a presidential aspirant in 1852 and 1856, and was looking forward to a Presidential candidacy that he did receive in 1860.

Douglas' representation of a discrepancy in the otherwise clear Congressional polarization ushered in by the media can perhaps be explained in the context of the other persisting issues in American politics during the period. However, the fact that he aligned himself with the position of the South in order to gain Southern popular support is nonetheless extremely significant because it again highlights the primary, dominant place that filibustering came to occupy within the political scene. There would be no reason for Douglas to display himself as a Southern archetype over the Nicaraguan affair if it had not suddenly become a very important political debate during this period. Indeed, in order to gain Southern support, Douglas had to oppose a president that was identified as a Southern elect, a seemingly ironic condition, but not in consideration of the position taken by the administration and the power that the filibuster issue now commanded over the political ring. To be supported by the South, Douglas, a Northern senator, showed that one had to be in favor of Walker and in favor of filibustering. This is strong evidence of the polarizing role that the Nicaragua affair played in the United States, and how it drove the North and the South apart in the years leading to the Civil War.

Conclusion

Filibustering captured the attention of the United States population and called into question the American foreign policy exemplified by the debate over Walker's aggressions in Nicaragua and his arrest on Nicaraguan soil. As the Nicaraguan affair received increased attention, public opinion would come to reflect regional divisions. It is commonly exhibited in other examinations of Walker's undertakings that slavery played a principal role in the link between the South

Filibustering to the Forefront of National Attention

and filibusterism³⁸. However, while it is true that many Southerners during the mid-nineteenth century viewed Central America as the answer to the increasing abolitionist sentiment within the United States, it is equally important to discern the other factors surrounding the Nicaraguan affair that made it such a key issue. The media played a key role in amplifying the variety of issues that entered into the debate on filibusterism, and it is clear that the questions of the morality and legality of filibustering maintained a significant importance alongside the slavery issue within the ensuing public disputes.

Another idea that has arisen as a result of this analysis is the role of the Nicaraguan affair in catapulting the nation to a Civil War. Public opinion became divided, and no one backed down. In each region people continued to step up and speak out about the issue, holding meetings and rallies and publishing editorials. The public opinion then sparked the administration's condemnation and estrangement from Southern support. As a result of Buchanan's message, Washington became less trustworthy and influential in the Southern states. This helped to lay the groundwork for the inability of the government to maintain relations with the South during its secession. Finally, the Congressional debate that resulted from the president's message featured the most influential players in the oncoming Civil War era. Essentially, filibusterism provided an important insight into the ideological differences that existed between the senators, and this served as a prelude to their approaching disassociation.³⁹

This paper was written for Professor Michel Gobat's Latin America and U.S. Relations: Historical Perspective. Much of Professor Gobat's research focuses on the relations between Nicaragua and the United States, and I was fortunate enough to be able to work as a research assistant for him for a semester. His interest in and support of the process of completing this paper was invaluable, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with him.

Endnotes

1 Robert E. May, "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny: The United States Army as a Cultural Mirror," *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 3. (Dec., 1991).

2 *Ibid.*; Amy S. Greenberg, "A Gray-Eyed Man: Character, Appearance, and Filibustering," *Journal of the Early Republic* 20, no. 4. (Winter, 2000): 673-99.

3 May, "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny," 857-86; Amy S. Greenberg, "A Gray-Eyed Man: Character, Appearance, and Filibustering," *Journal of the Early Republic* 20, no. 4. (Winter, 2000): 673-99; also for a broader overview of the slavery issue and its ties with filibustering as well as William Walker's character and expeditions to Nicaragua during the 1850s, see Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld : Filibustering in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 2002); interestingly, Walker attempted to seize Northern Mexico prior to his arrival in Nicaragua and went so far as to declare a Republic and establish slavery, though he ultimately failed to fully accomplish this task. For more in depth coverage of Walker's period in Mexico see Joseph Allen Stout, Jr., *The Liberators; Filibustering Expeditions into Mexico, 1848-1862 and the*

Elliot Anderson

- Last Thrust of Manifest Destiny* (Los Angeles, Westernlore Press, 1973).
- 4 Correspondence of the New York Tribune, *New York Daily Tribune*, 23 December 1857.
 - 5 "The Walker Meeting in Petersburg," *New York Herald*, 11 January 1858.
 - 6 *Ibid.*
 - 7 *Ibid.*
 - 8 *Ibid.*
 - 9 *New York Daily Tribune*, 4 January 1858.
 - 10 *Ibid.*
 - 11 *Ibid.*
 - 12 *Ibid.*
 - 13 Amy S. Greenberg, "A Gray-Eyed Man: Character, Appearance, and Filibustering," *Journal of the Early Republic* 20, no. 4 (Winger, 2000): 673.
 - 14 "Southern Condemnation of Com. Paulding," *New York Daily Tribune*, 7 January 1858.
 - 15 *New York Daily Tribune*, 4 January 1858.
 - 16 "Capt. Levy – Gen. Walker – Commodore Paulding," *New York Daily Tribune*, 4 January 1858.
 - 17 "From Washington," *New York Daily Tribune*, 5 January 1858.
 - 18 *Ibid.*
 - 19 *Ibid.*
 - 20 *Ibid.*
 - 21 *Ibid.*
 - 22 Another important precursor to the United States Civil War was the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 which created these new territories while promoting the utilization of popular sovereignty to decide whether slavery would be permitted north of the 36°30' line of latitude that had been established in 1820. Its consequent repealing of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 also became a heavily debated issue in Congress. The debate made it clear who in the Congressional body was for or against the institution of slavery in these newly opened territories. For more information over the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Congressional debate, see Robert R. Russel, "The Issues in the Congressional Struggle over the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, 1854," *The Journal of Southern History* 29, no. 2 (May, 1963): 187-210.
 - 23 "The Central American Conspiracy," *New York Daily Tribune*, 6 January 1858.
 - 24 *Ibid.*
 - 25 "The Nicaragua Meeting in New Orleans," *New York Herald*, 9 January 1858.
 - 26 "The Central American Conspiracy," *New York Daily Tribune*, 6 January 1858.
 - 27 "The President's Message," *New York Daily Tribune*, 8 January 1858.
 - 28 "The Filibuster Meeting in Mobile," *New York Herald*, 9 January 1858.
 - 29 *Ibid.*
 - 30 *Ibid.*
 - 31 "The President's Special Message on the Nicaragua Filibusters," *New York Herald*, 9 January 1858.
 - 32 "XXXVth Congress..... First Session," *New York Daily Tribune*, 8 January 1858.
 - 33 *Ibid.*
 - 34 *Ibid.*
 - 35 *Ibid.*
 - 36 *Ibid.*
 - 37 *New York Daily Tribune*, 7 January 1858.
 - 38 May, "Young American Males and Filibustering in the Age of Manifest Destiny," *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 3. (Dec., 1991): 857-86.
 - 39 In many ways, it would also be interesting to reflect on the impact of filibusterism on the future of Nicaraguan and Central American politics, as its impact in the United States is so evident. It seems obvious that the unification of Central American forces against the filibusters may have benefited

Filibustering to the Forefront of National Attention

domestic Latin American relations. However, it is clear that in the transition of the Nicaraguan affair from the public to the nation's political sectors, it did seem to have overshadowed the Kansas question's importance as a primary ideologically polarizing force within the United States.

Elliot Andrew Anderson is a senior who is graduating this semester with a major in history and minors in Spanish and Latin American studies as he finishes his final semester in Santiago, Chile with the University Studies Abroad Consortium. Beginning this summer, he will be attending the Indiana University School of Law in Bloomington, Indiana.